

I Wish I Was You

Don't cry like a baby, a boy is strong. But it's hurting... You better learn how to be manly, not a weakling; don't be sensitive like a little girl; have only guy friends like other normal boys do; be more practical than creative; nail polish, make-up and dolls are only for girls, you're a boy; cut your hair before it gets to your neck, having long hair as a boy is not manly; now that pink shirt is too girly; change into something more masculine before anyone sees you in that! *I like the color pink though...* Learn to get violent and aggressive so you won't get bullied by others, this is how to be demanding as a young man; be fit and not skinny, a boy must be muscular to be noticed by girls; liking other men is not manly, you can only love a girl. *Does that mean I am not allowed to love my friend, Arlen?* Always figure things out on your own without the help of others, a true man is independent; this is how to hold a gun; this is how to fire a gun. I don't like to use guns though... Learn to get aggressive and violent to show your manliness; always defend your reputation, use physical aggression to do so; go to the military after high school. *But I want to continue my studies...* Get a wife after finishing your military services, a beautiful wife who can carry your children. But dad, what if I'm not ready for marriage or sex? A real man never says no to sex so man up; be the one who proposes to their partner and always keep in mind that you pay for everything as the man; be protective of your future wife and daughters, never let another man near them...

A boy doesn't cry when he's hurt. A boy is manly and strong; is muscular, isn't afraid of guns, likes girls, beautiful girls. I am none of those... Does that mean I am not a boy? Does that mean I wasn't supposed to be born as a boy? I like pink, I also like my friend Arlen, I don't want to be violent or aggressive... I-I wish I could be a girl so I could wear pink, like boys, let my hair get long and study. I wish I didn't have to join the military and to like sex...

Never talk aloud or take up too much space, yo I wish I was not as important or as special as a boy; never your mouth too wide to eat; a girl must have a tiny mouth; remember playing sports is for boys, you can only watch them; never show your slut-like dance to others, neighbors will start to think I am raising a prostitute. *But... I really enjoy dancing.* This is how to greet a man; this is how to thank a man; always agree to whatever the man in the room says, I shall hear no excuses; don't lick or suck on your popsicle, it makes the man uncomfortable; it's rude to make someone uncomfortable you know that. How should I eat my popsicle then? Bite on it. *But I hate biting on cold things...* Always talk to the man with a smile. What if I'm sad? What you think or feel doesn't matter, always make sure the man is satisfied and happy with you; learn how to make tea by the age of 9; never let a man find out about the filthy week of your monthly habit; don't remind him of how gross your body is; don't wear tight clothes, it distracts the man; now wait right there! Don't go out looking like the slut you are! This is how to cook Ghormeh Sabzi, every man's all-favorite food. But I don't like to cook... Never turn your husband's desires down and never ask for anything more of whatever he's already given you; always keep your legs together and closed up, never open them; learn how to be a good housewife by the age of 13, don't be an embarrassment in front of my possible son-in-law. But I don't want to get married at 13 Mom...

A girl is a good housewife, who always behaves the best, likes children, cooking, and their husband, and who doesn't play sports. None of these things are me... I want to play sports, I want to dance, I want to laugh aloud, I don't want marriage, I don't like to cook, I...don't want this gross body... Was I supposed to be born as a boy? Because I am not what my body says I am. I wish I was born as a boy so I could play sports, study, be loud, be myself...