

# BEING JO

By: Jo and Dr. Tal Croitoru



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Graphic Design: Tut Blumental



This book is part of a charity project to support  
detransitioners and those who regret  
gender transition.

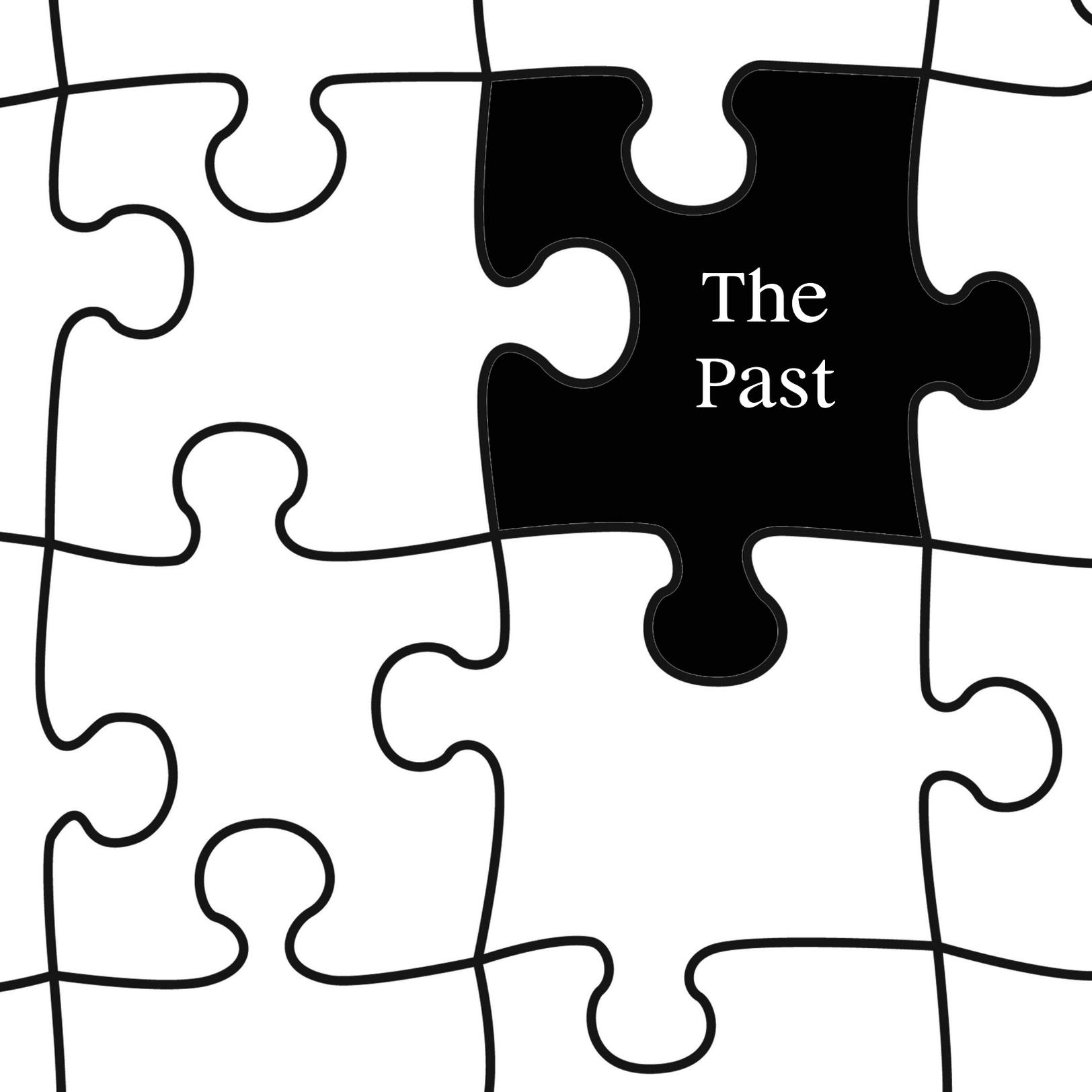
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All proceeds go towards supporting the legal and  
rehabilitation costs of detransitioners  
and regretters.



Hi, my name is Jo.  
I'm 23 now. My gender  
dysphoria story began  
when I was 5 years old.

A black and white illustration of a puzzle. One puzzle piece is filled with solid black and contains the text "The Past" in a white serif font. The other puzzle pieces are represented by black outlines on a white background.

The  
Past



From the age of 5, I felt like I was a boy.  
Being a boy is not actually a feeling. I just really, really,  
(really) wanted to be a boy. I thought my body was wrong.  
I wished I had a penis. I felt sad that I didn't.

My “trans” story didn’t fit the stereotype. I didn’t only play with “boy” toys, like cars. I also really enjoyed playing with “girl” toys, such as dolls.





I was an ordinary girl. Some considered me a bit of a tomboy, but the only unusual thing about me was my delayed speech (due to autism, which was subsequently diagnosed).



I didn't do anything about my feelings. I just went on with my life, hoping that the feelings would pass. I imagined that I would grow a penis at age 13. Then I would be a boy!



My breasts started to develop when I was 11, near the end of 5th grade. The changes to my body really frightened me.

Panicking, I approached my mother for advice, wondering what was happening to my body. We saw the doctor, who said I was starting puberty.



I fell into a depression  
from that point.





For so many years, I had soothed myself with the idea that I would grow a penis when I was 13 and it would all be okay. Now I was faced with the reality of an unwanted female puberty.



When I started high school, I began wearing baggy black sweatshirts, hoping to hide my breasts.



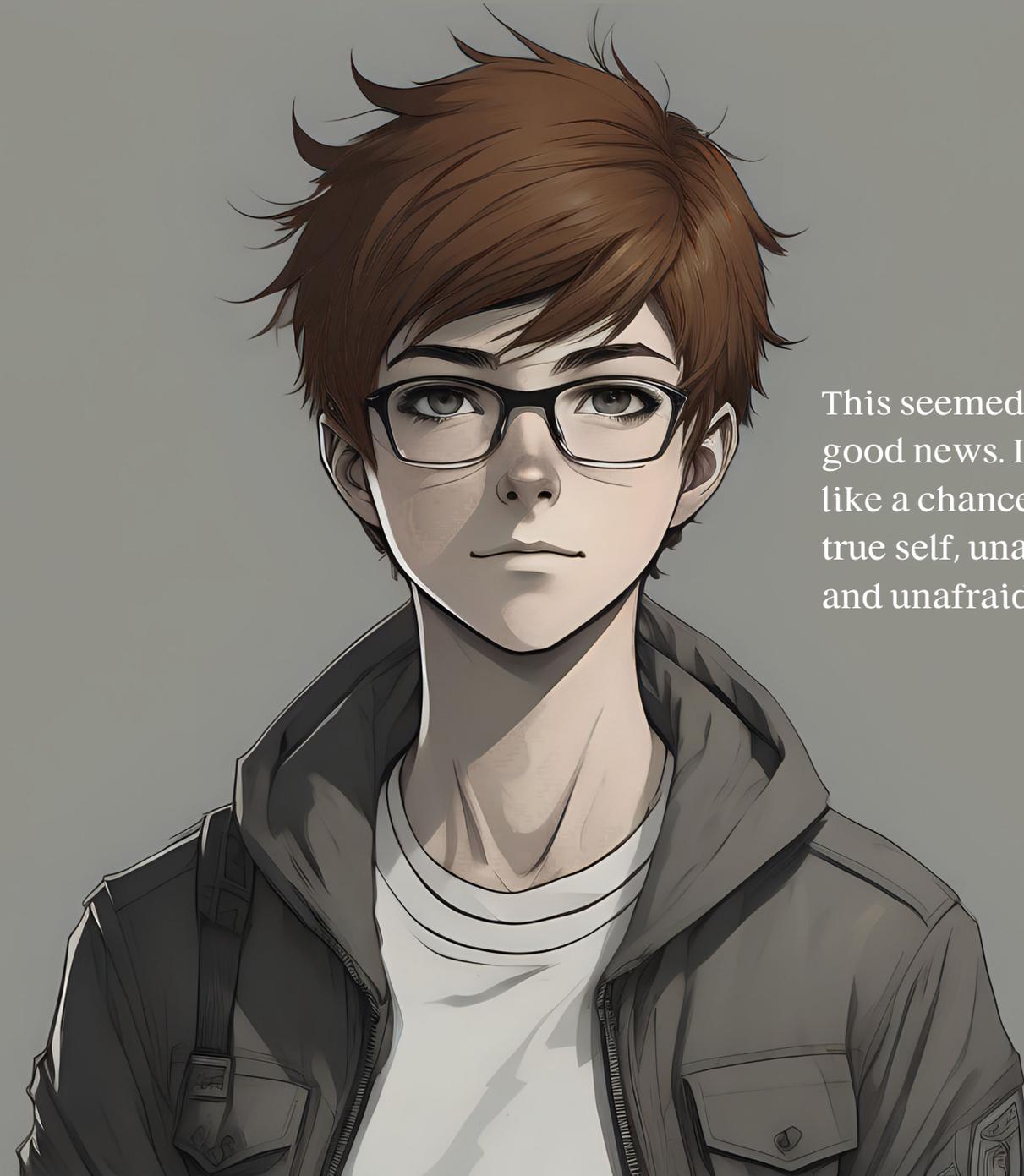
In truth, my breasts were never very big. I just felt like they were under a microscope, as if everyone was staring at me and examining them.



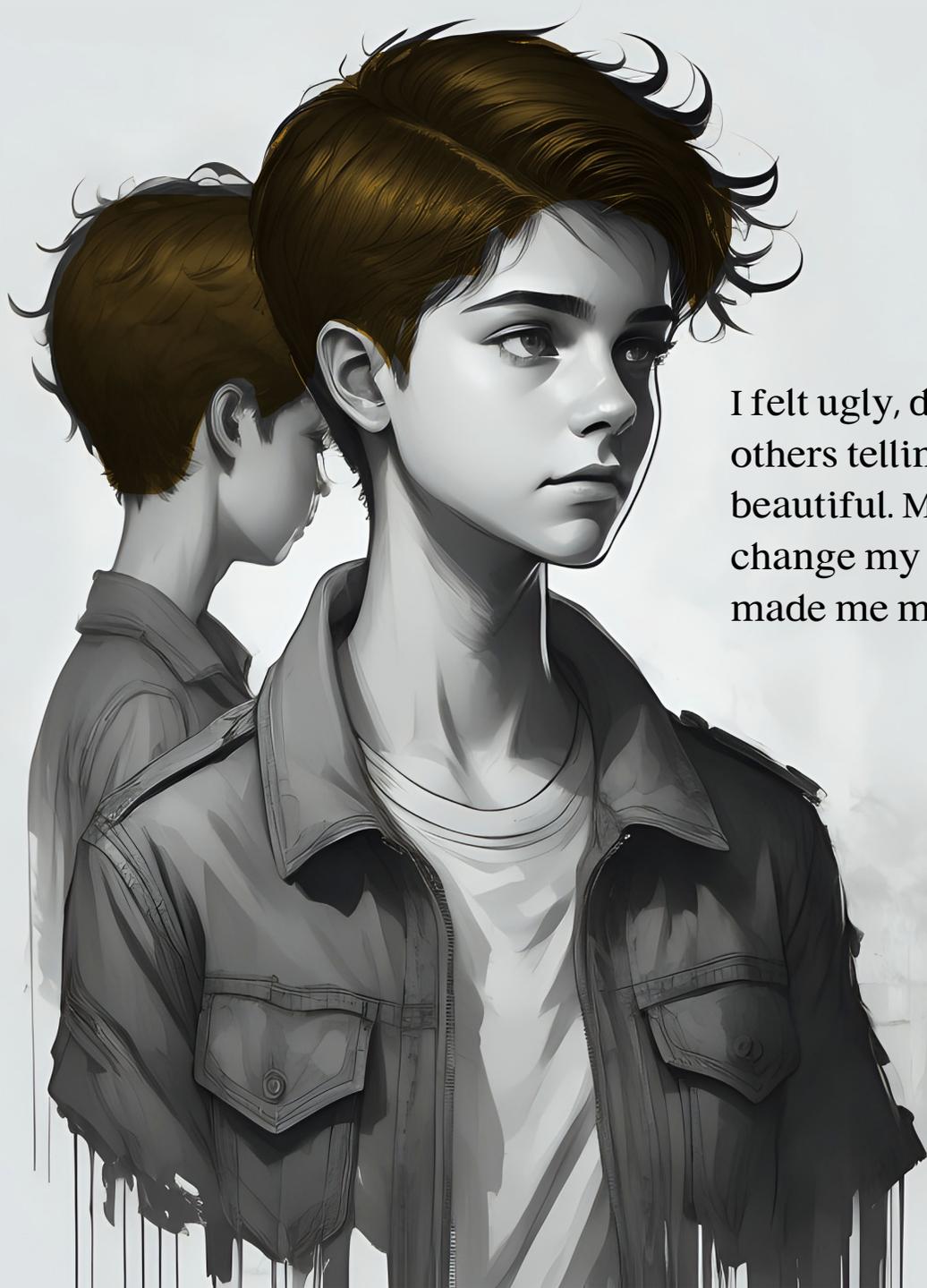
The more my body developed, the more depressed I felt.  
I had so much shame around my body.



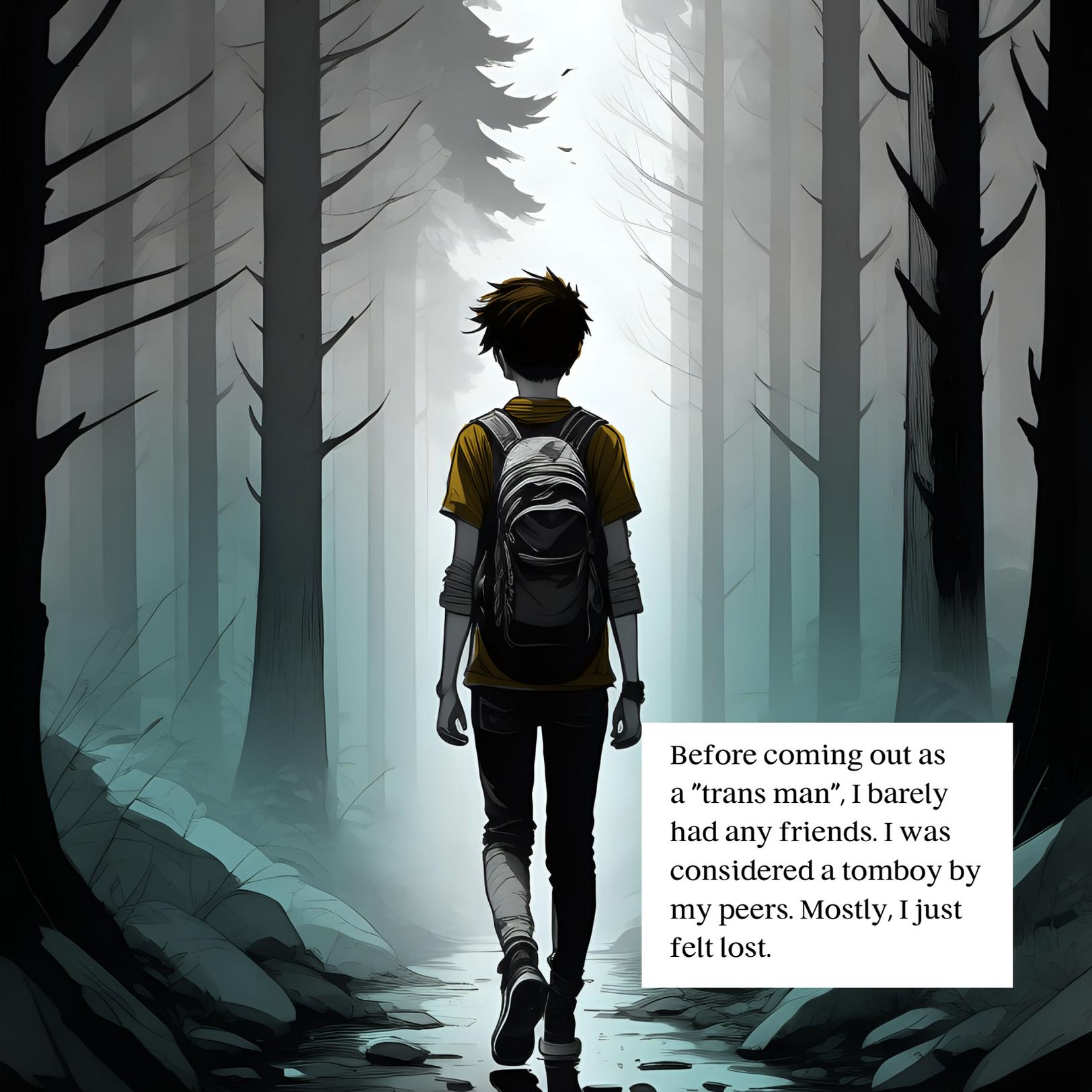
When I was 17, I heard  
about someone who  
had sexual  
reassignment surgery.  
I then felt even more  
strongly that I had  
been born in the  
wrong body.



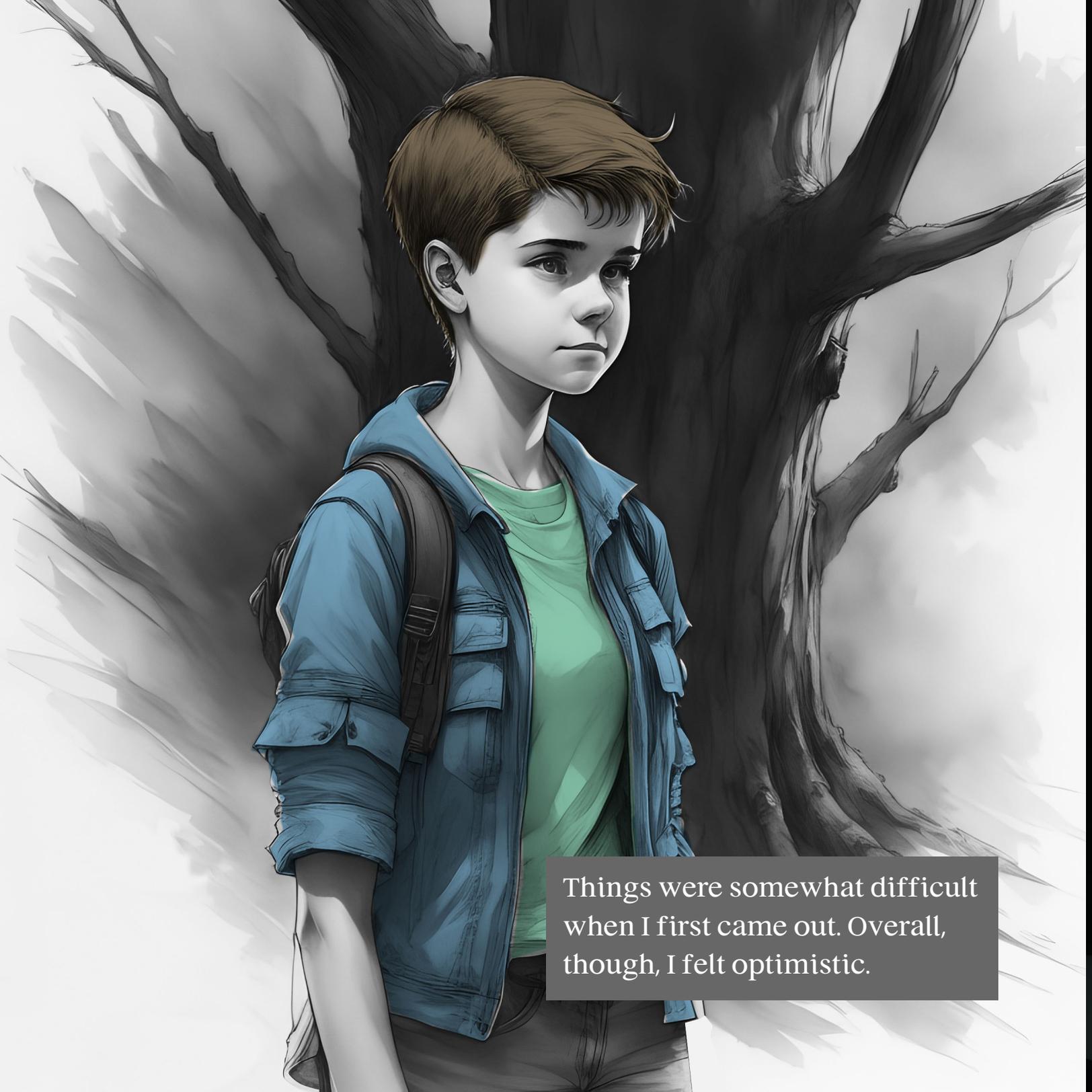
This seemed to me like good news. It seemed like a chance to be my true self, unashamed and unafraid.



I felt ugly, despite others telling me I was beautiful. My inability to change my appearance made me miserable.



Before coming out as a "trans man", I barely had any friends. I was considered a tomboy by my peers. Mostly, I just felt lost.



Things were somewhat difficult when I first came out. Overall, though, I felt optimistic.

My family had some difficulty  
adjusting to my new male pronouns,  
but they did so with time.





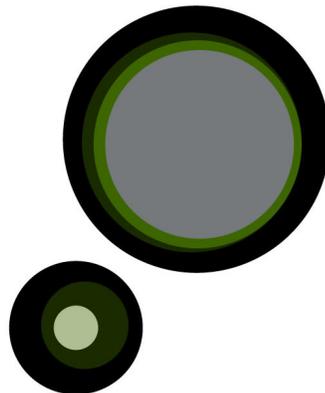
I found new friends who used male pronouns for me. Suddenly I was considered "cool." I was part of a new community!



These first years seem to me now like a period of innocence. Subsequently, I began the process of physical transition.



Initially, I wanted a full surgical and hormonal transition. I wanted to resemble a man to the greatest possible extent. I wanted to get both "top" and "bottom surgery". This would mean a bilateral mastectomy and one or more types of genital surgery, metoidioplasty and phalloplasty being two of the options.



I enthusiastically informed my mother of my plans. My mother responded with far less enthusiasm, which I did not understand at the time.





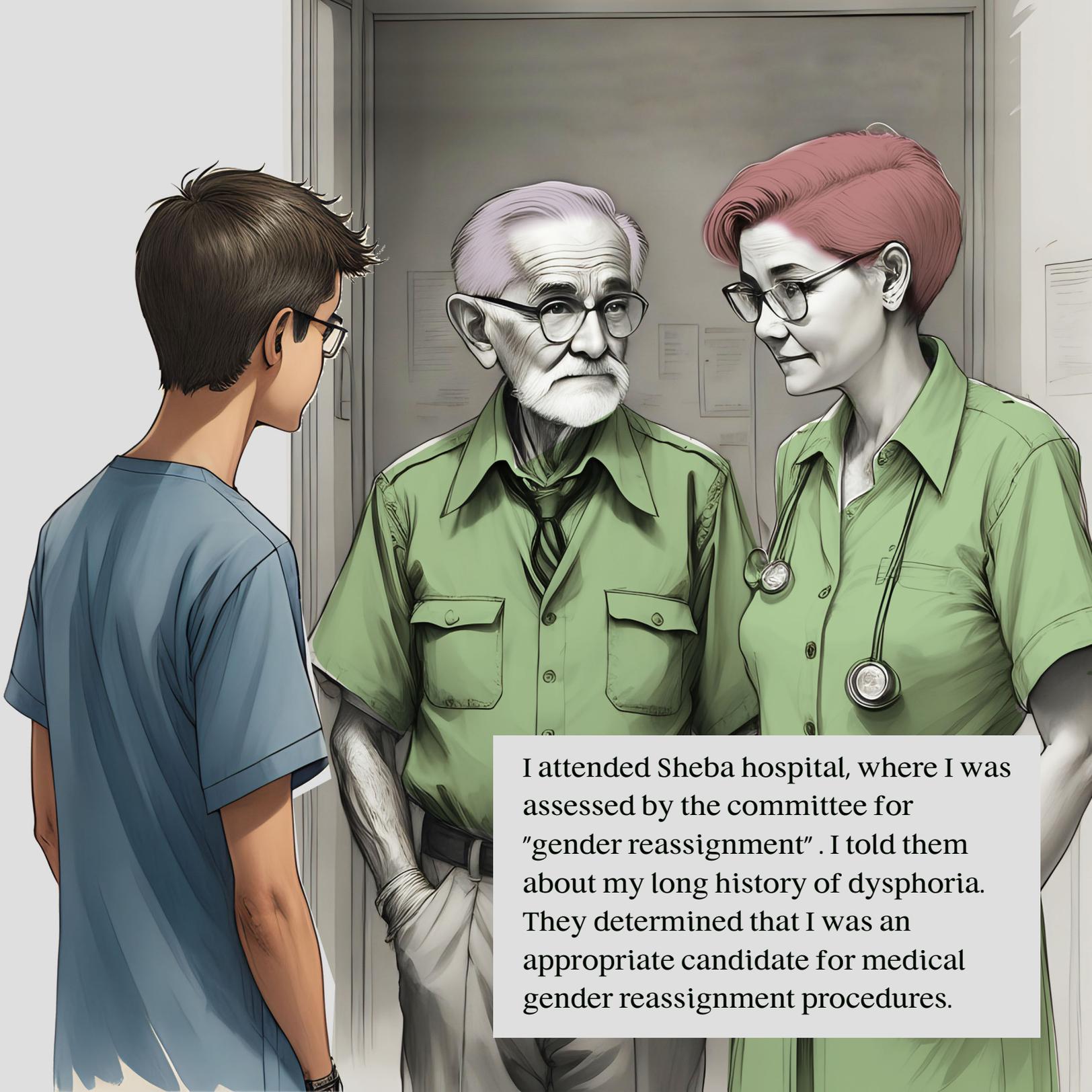
In truth, it was some time  
before I actually attended  
the gender clinic.

There was a year-long period when I was more accepting of my body in its natural state. During this time, I thought that perhaps I didn't need to undergo any procedures to change my appearance.



However, the insecurity returned. I again felt dysphoric about some parts of my body. I was especially self-conscious about my voice.





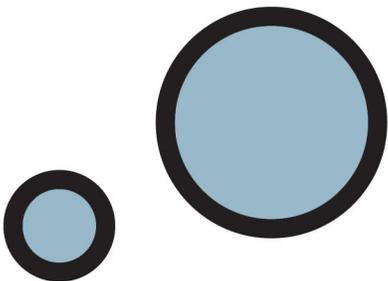
I attended Sheba hospital, where I was assessed by the committee for "gender reassignment" . I told them about my long history of dysphoria. They determined that I was an appropriate candidate for medical gender reassignment procedures.



Nonetheless, in  
my heart, this felt  
wrong to me.



The committee explained that I should undergo a fertility preservation procedure before starting my transition, in case I wanted to become a “father” in the future. I’d always wanted to be a parent. However, in adolescence (ages 15-19), the idea of pregnancy and childbirth terrified me. This abated by the time I was 21. I don’t know how or why my feelings changed, and I’d had no idea that they were going to.





I began the process of fertility preservation. My feelings started changing after that.



While receiving estrogen injections for the fertility preservation procedure, I suddenly felt more connected to my body. The hatred I had felt for my body started melting away. I began feeling more loving towards it.



Once I'd completed the process of fertility preservation, my body-hatred completely disappeared. Slowly but surely, I started to love my body as it was.

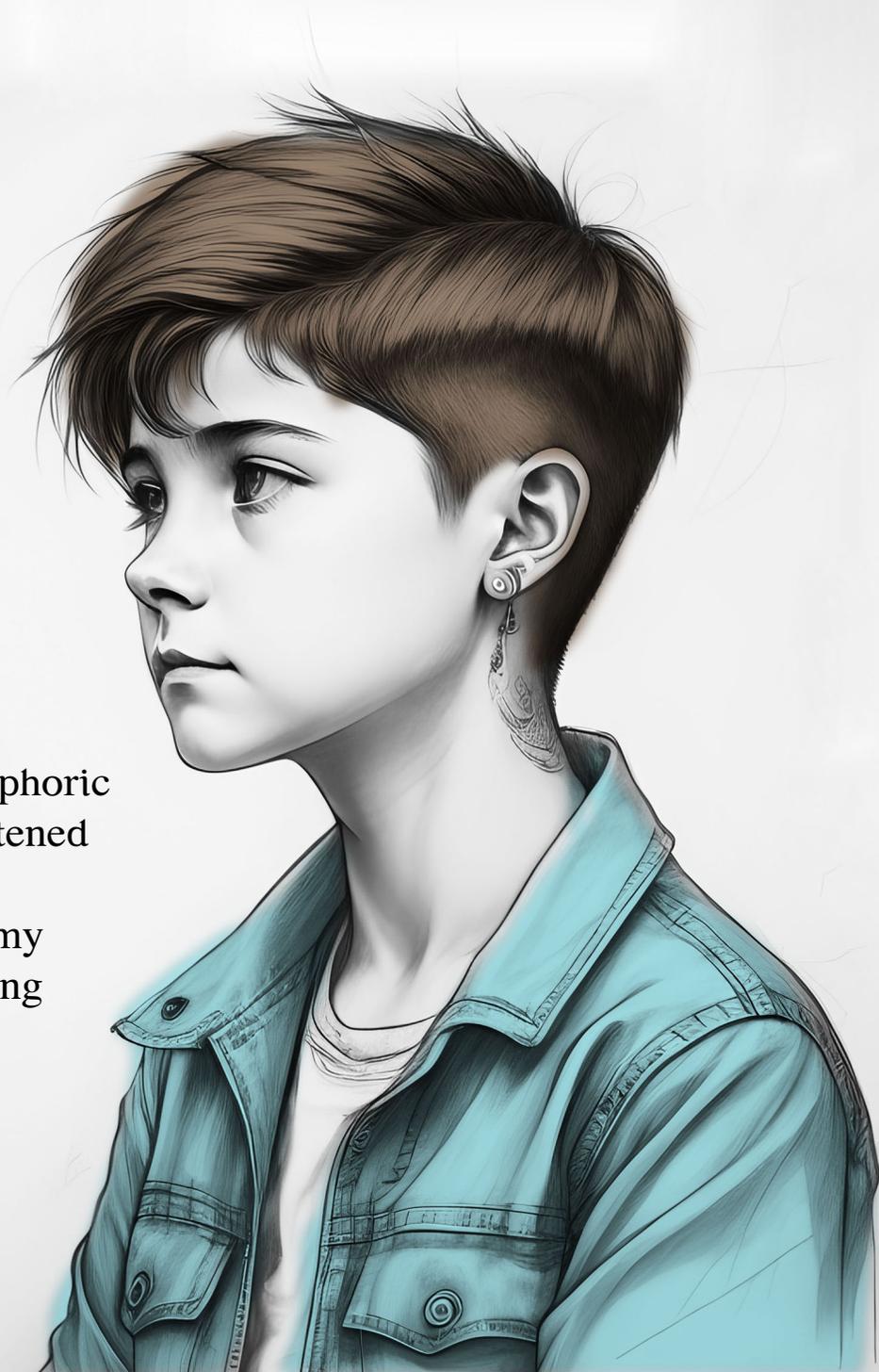


However, my gender dysphoria never entirely went away.

I lived in daily fear of social interactions.  
I didn't want anyone to hear my high-pitched  
voice and see me as a woman because of it.

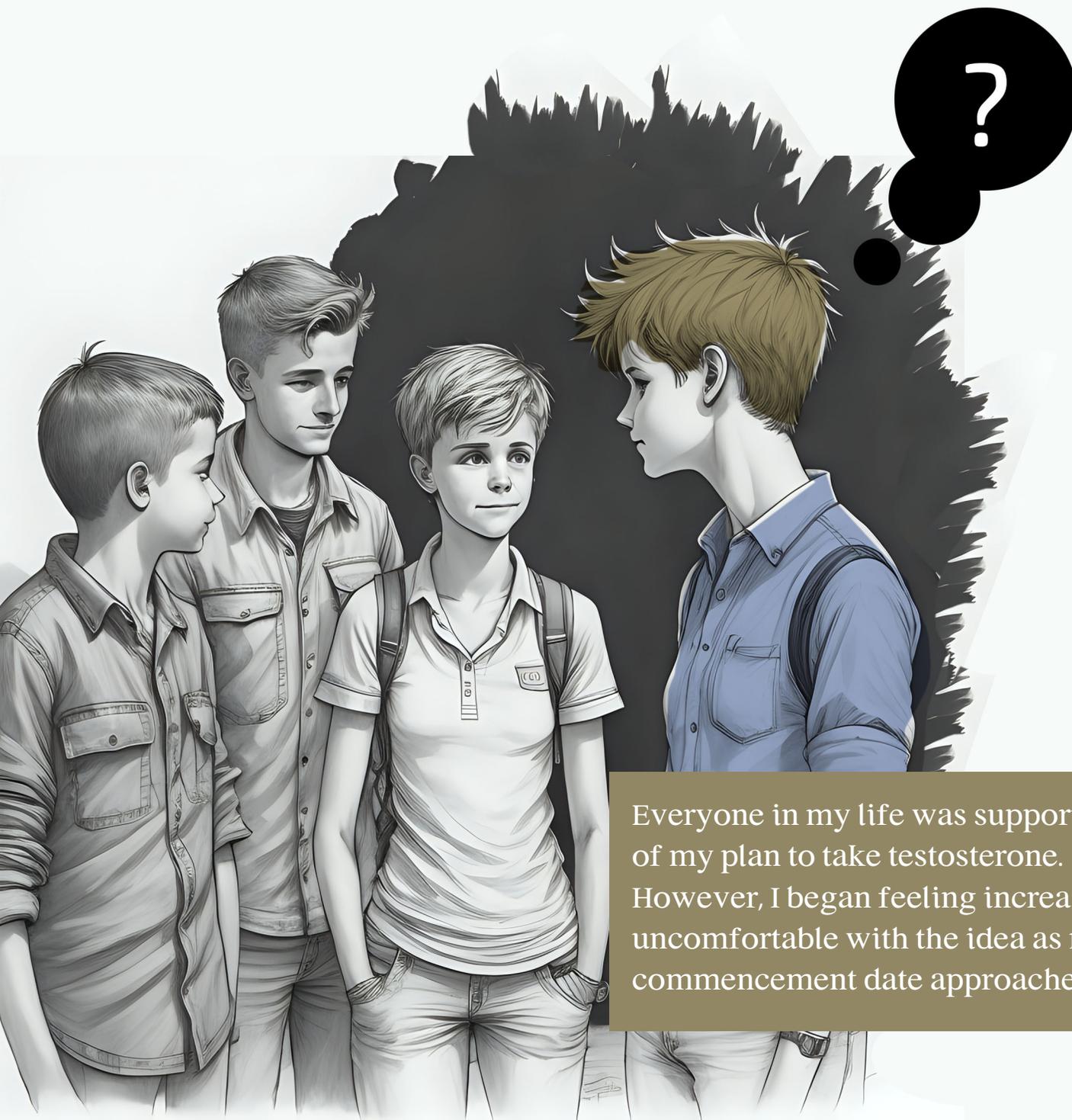


Life was difficult.  
I gave into my dysphoric  
feelings daily. I listened  
uncritically to the  
negative voice in my  
head, not even trying  
to fight it.



I isolated myself because of my dysphoric feelings. I thought I would be seen as a woman because of my voice, so I stayed away from people. I often avoided going to the pool in the summer, frightened I would be perceived as female.

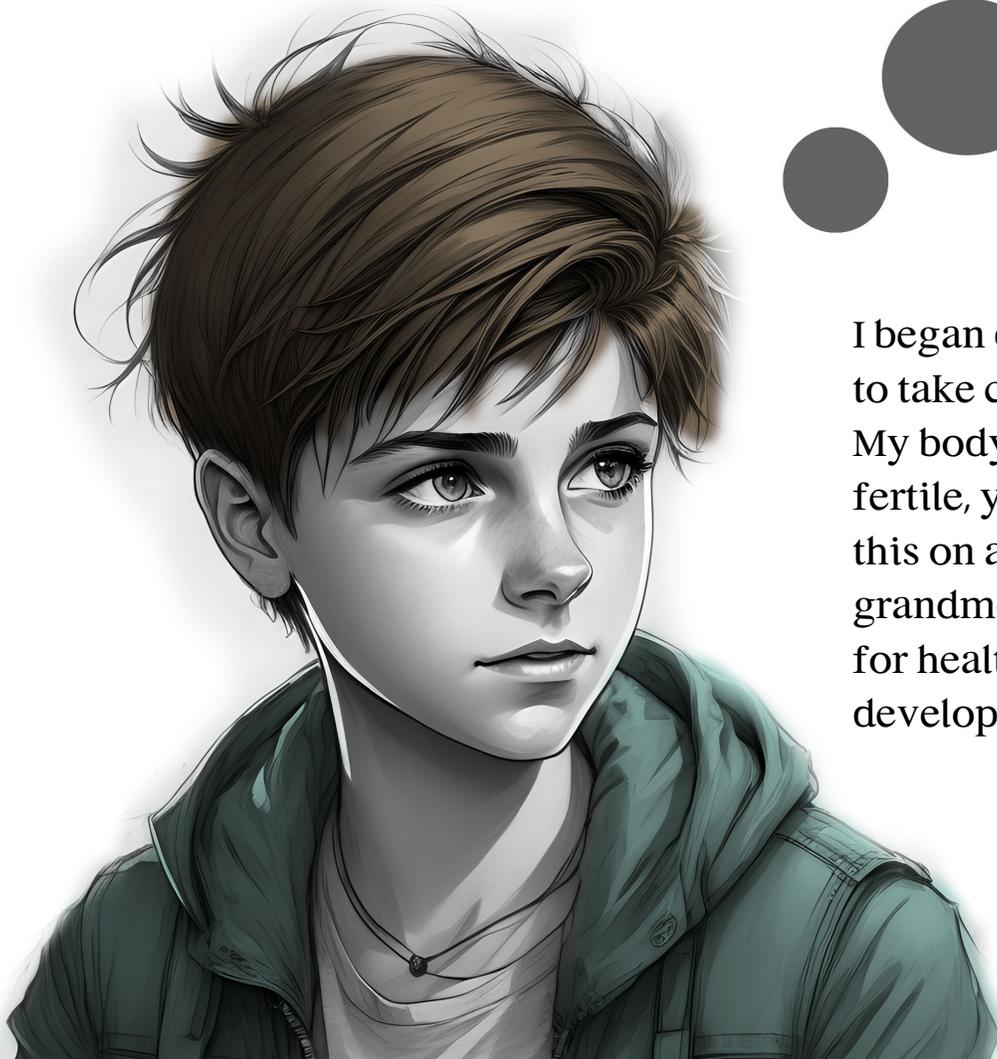




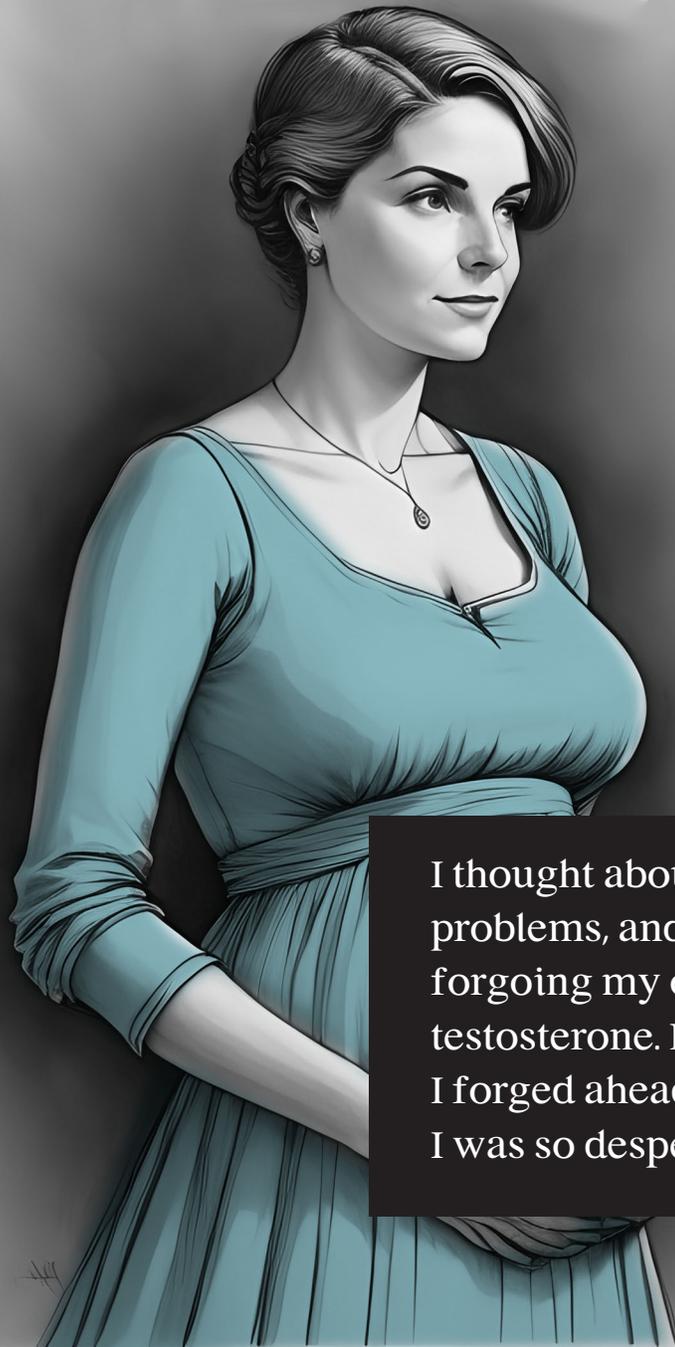
Everyone in my life was supportive of my plan to take testosterone. However, I began feeling increasingly uncomfortable with the idea as my commencement date approached.



I suddenly remembered that  
my grandmother had cancer  
twice due to estrogen therapy.



I began questioning my plan to take cross- sex hormones. My body was healthy and fertile, yet I was planning to do this on a voluntary basis. My grandmother had taken estrogen for health reasons and had developed cancer as a result.



I thought about women with fertility problems, and how I would be voluntarily forgoing my own fertility by taking testosterone. Despite these doubts, I forged ahead with the process, because I was so desperate to deepen my voice.



The truth was  
that I had always  
questioned  
trans ideology.



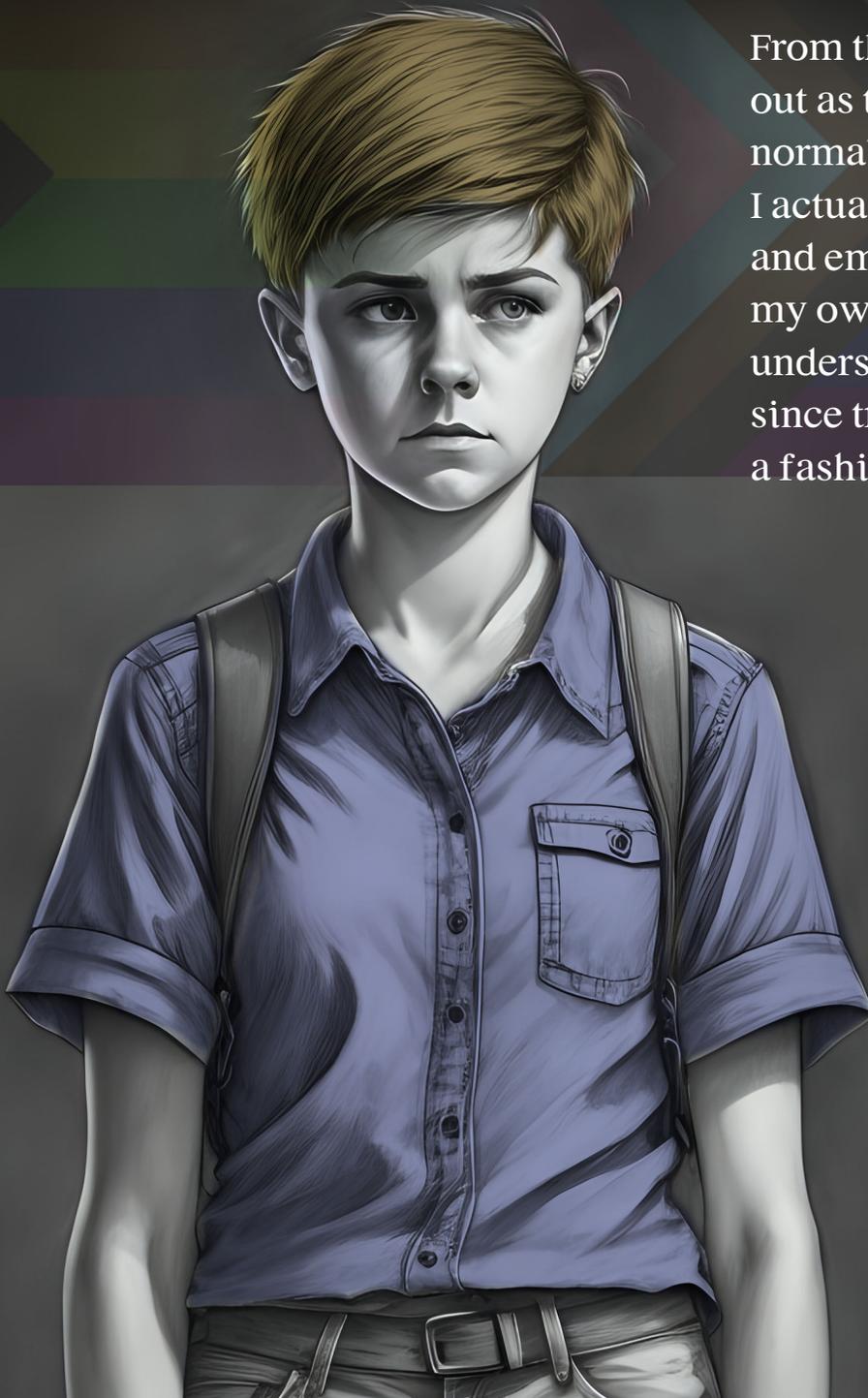
Even as part of the trans community, some things seemed strange to me.

Two examples:

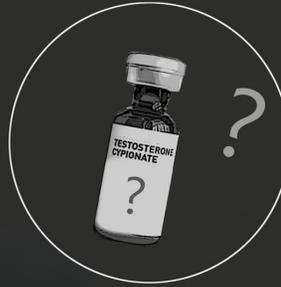
1. People who claimed to be neither male nor female.
2. People who sought to be addressed in the plural.

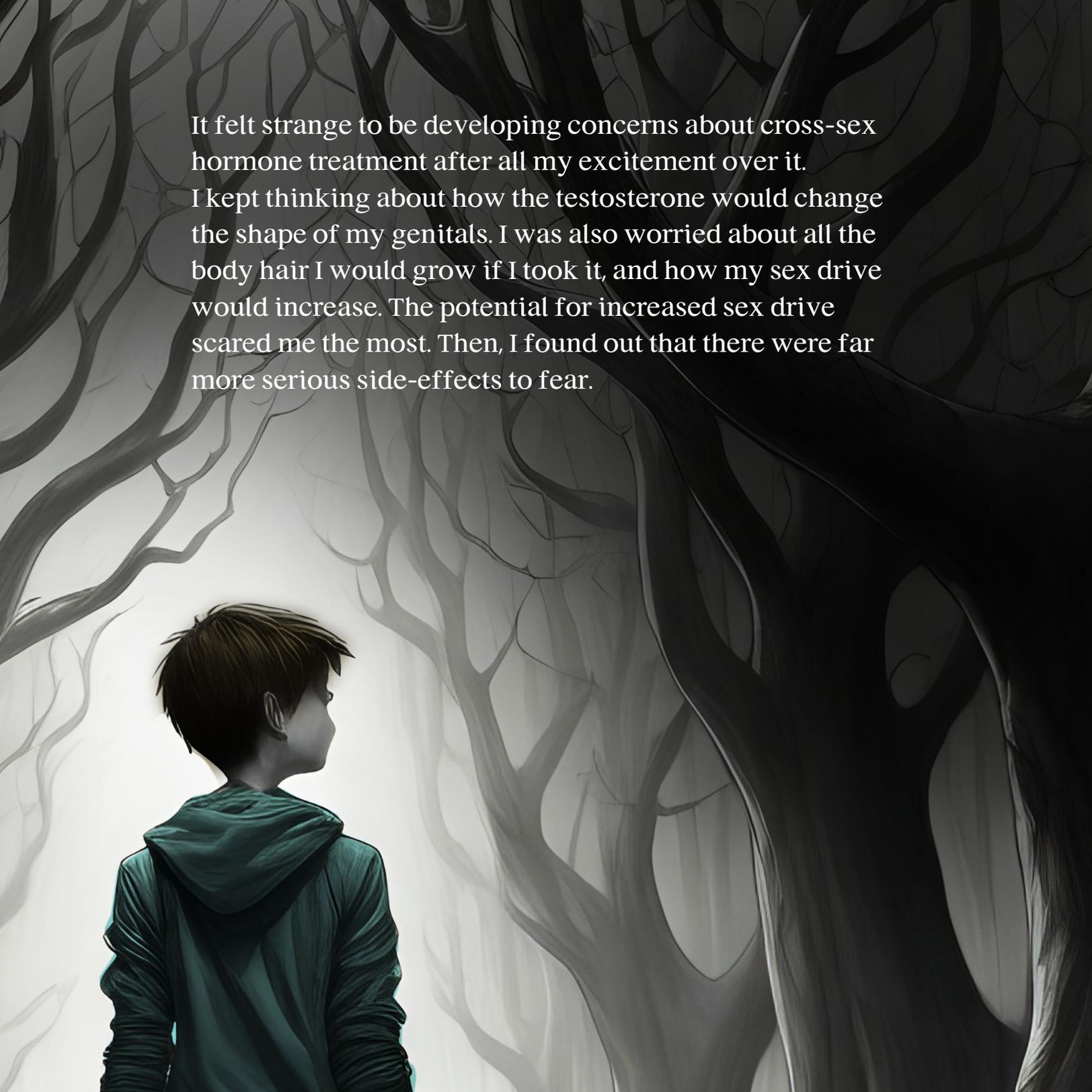


From the time of my coming out as trans, I questioned the normality of trans identity. I actually felt enormous shame and embarrassment around my own trans identity. I didn't understand why I felt that way, since trans identity was such a fashionable thing.

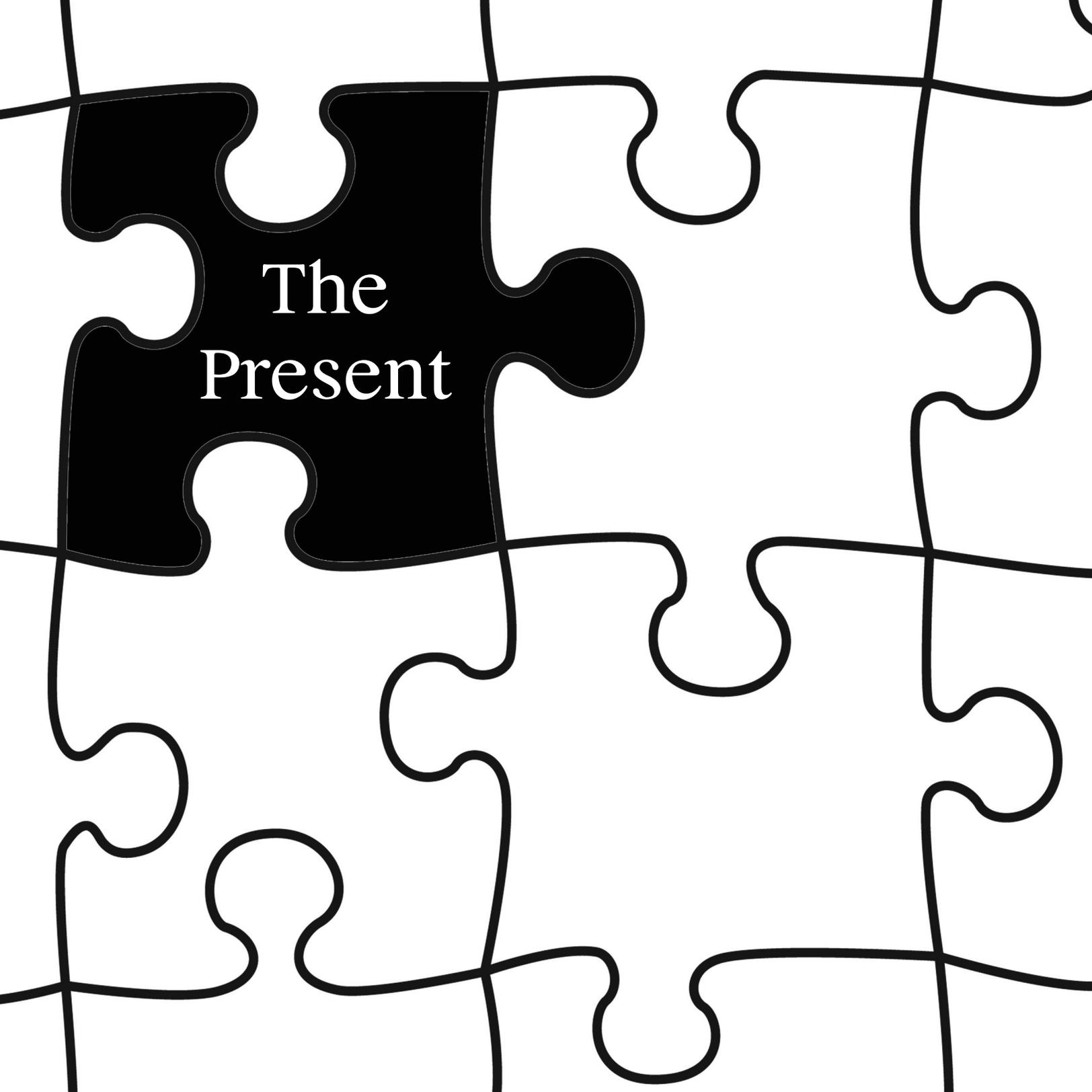


While waiting to start testosterone, something felt wrong. I had waited so many years for this, yet all my enthusiasm and excitement around it was suddenly gone.

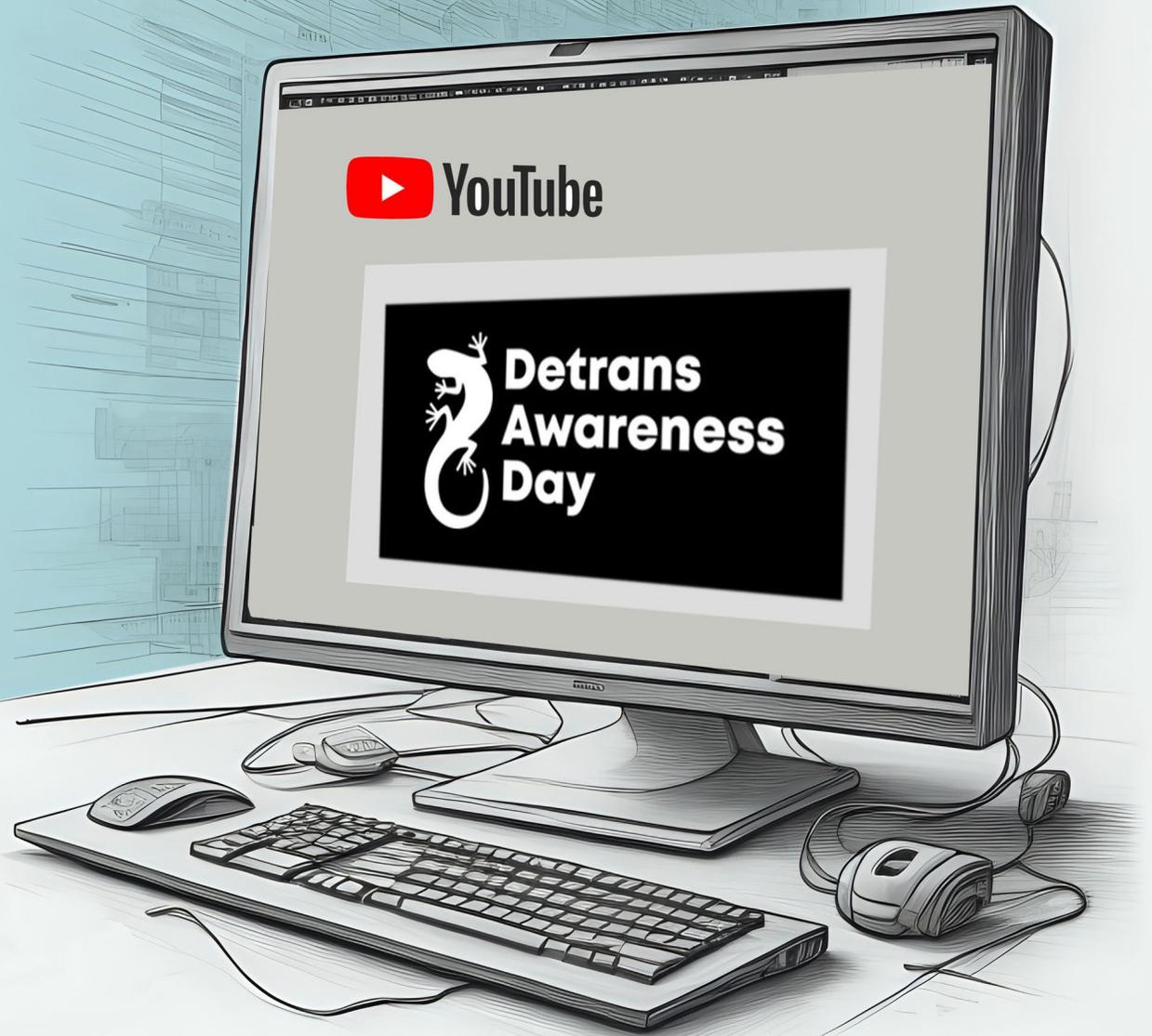


A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a teal hoodie, is shown in profile from the back, looking towards a dense forest of bare, dark trees. The scene is dimly lit, with a soft light source behind the trees, creating a somber and contemplative atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

It felt strange to be developing concerns about cross-sex hormone treatment after all my excitement over it. I kept thinking about how the testosterone would change the shape of my genitals. I was also worried about all the body hair I would grow if I took it, and how my sex drive would increase. The potential for increased sex drive scared me the most. Then, I found out that there were far more serious side-effects to fear.

A black puzzle piece is centered in the frame, containing the text "The Present" in a white serif font. The piece is surrounded by other puzzle pieces, some of which are only partially visible as outlines. The background is white.

The  
Present



My disillusionment began with seeing videos of people who had come out against transition procedures. These exposed me to new perspectives and to the possibility of hidden risks and harms.



To my surprise, these video creators were not “transphobes”, though the trans community referred to them that way. These were people who cared about children’s health. They didn’t want to see children damaged physically or mentally.



The shock really set in when I discovered detransitioner videos.



I started asking myself many questions that had never previously occurred to me. Nobody - not doctors, social workers, or psychologists - had explained any of these things. I began questioning why people were being transitioned when the negative effects were known. I discovered that some transition drugs are not even FDA approved.

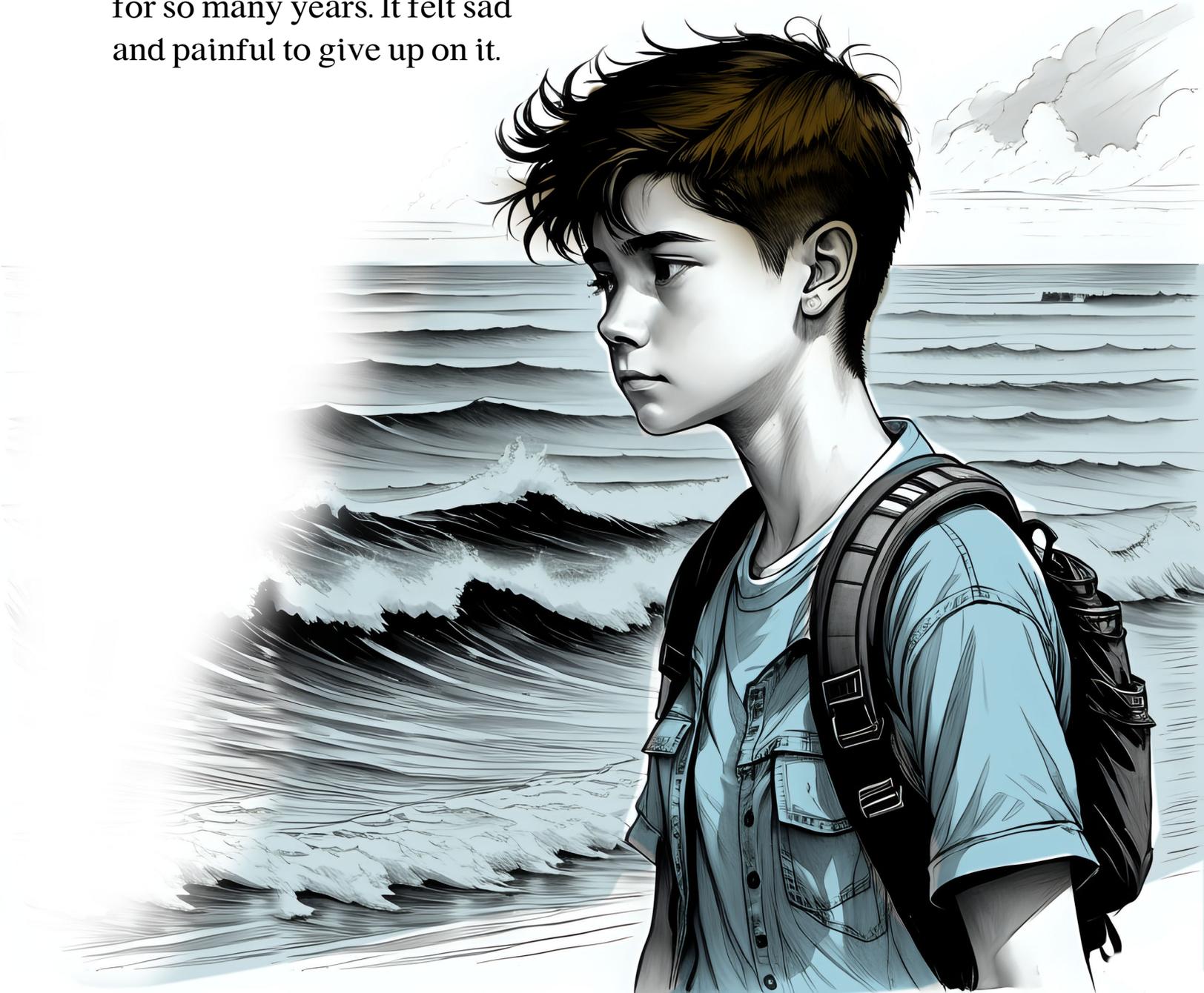


I now know that trans conferences are funded by pharmaceutical companies. Trans associations collectively generate millions of dollars annually.



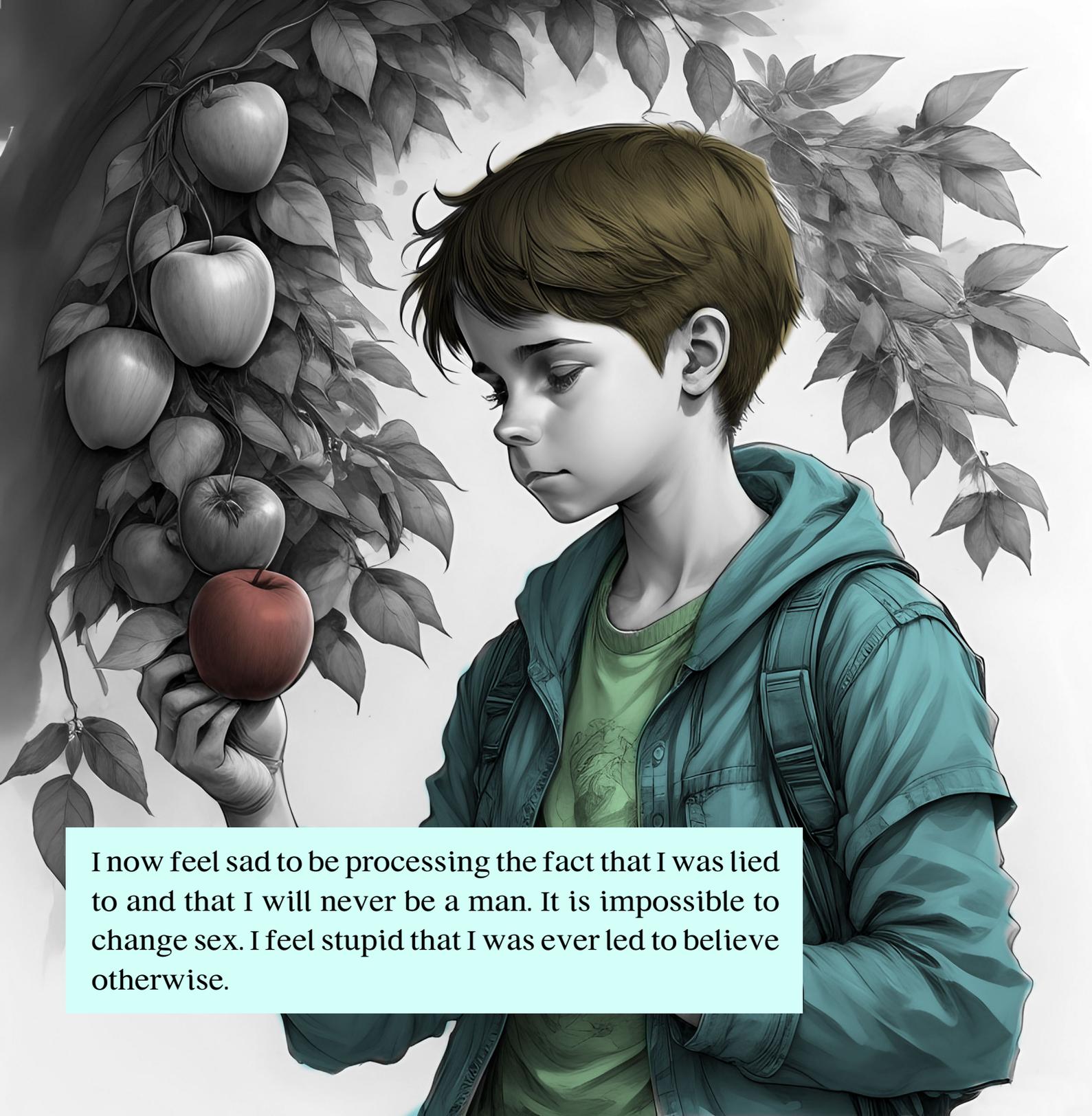
After my exposure to all this new information, I became increasingly disconnected from my trans identity.

Transgenderism was such an important part of my identity for so many years. It felt sad and painful to give up on it.

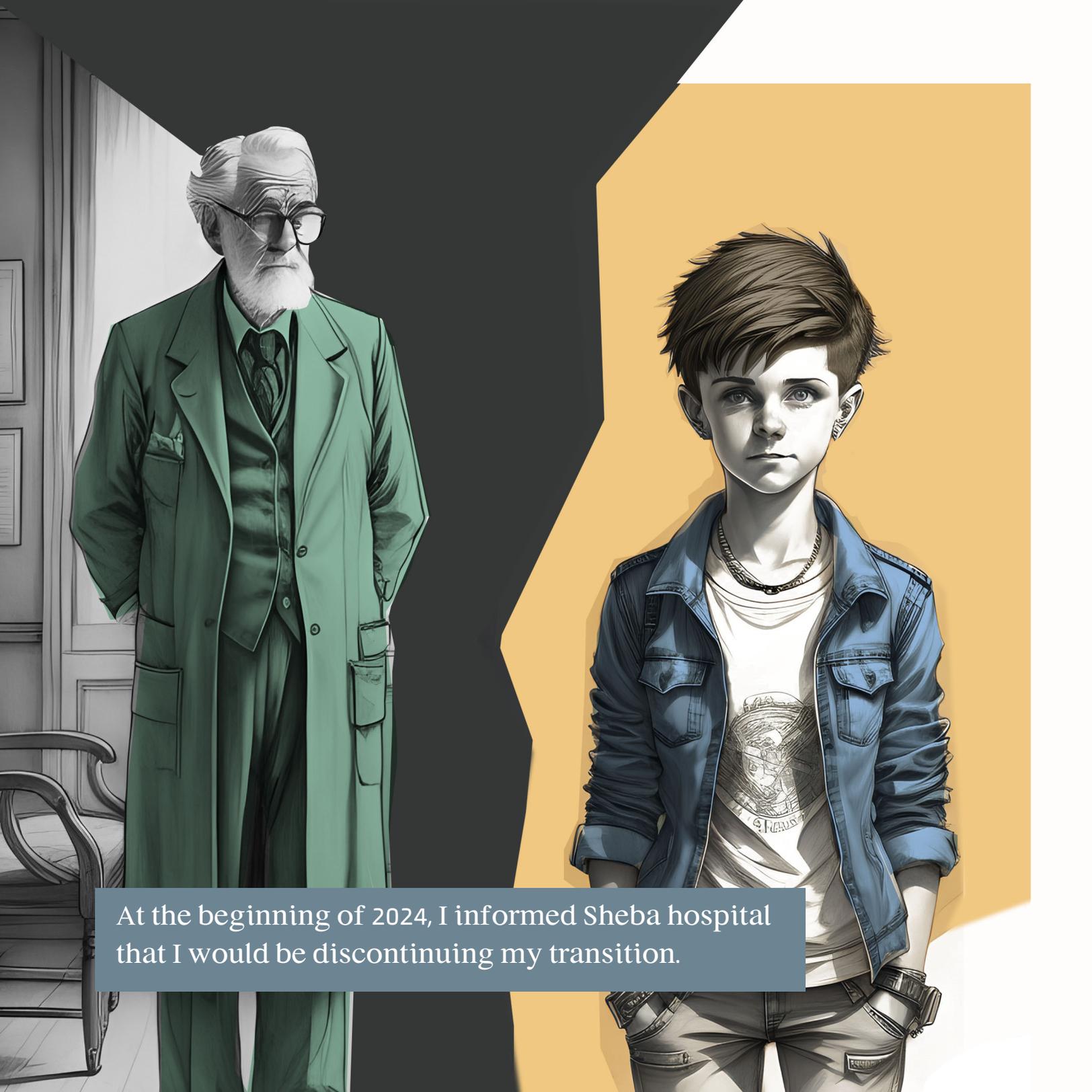




The lies destroyed me mentally. All that time I couldn't understand why I didn't look "man enough," and why I was born "in the wrong body" , the answer was right under my nose. I am not a man, I am a woman dealing with gender dysphoria.



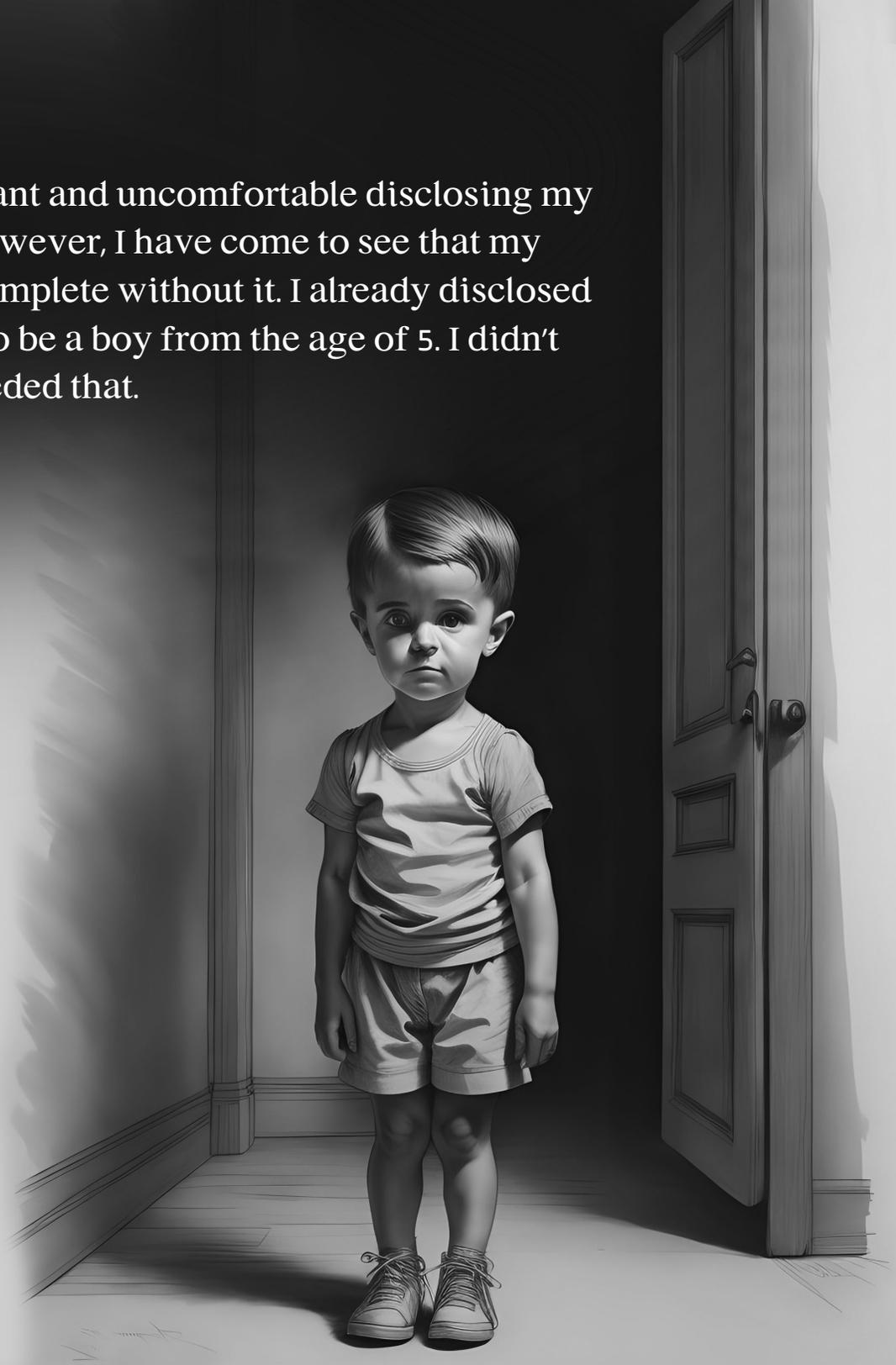
I now feel sad to be processing the fact that I was lied to and that I will never be a man. It is impossible to change sex. I feel stupid that I was ever led to believe otherwise.

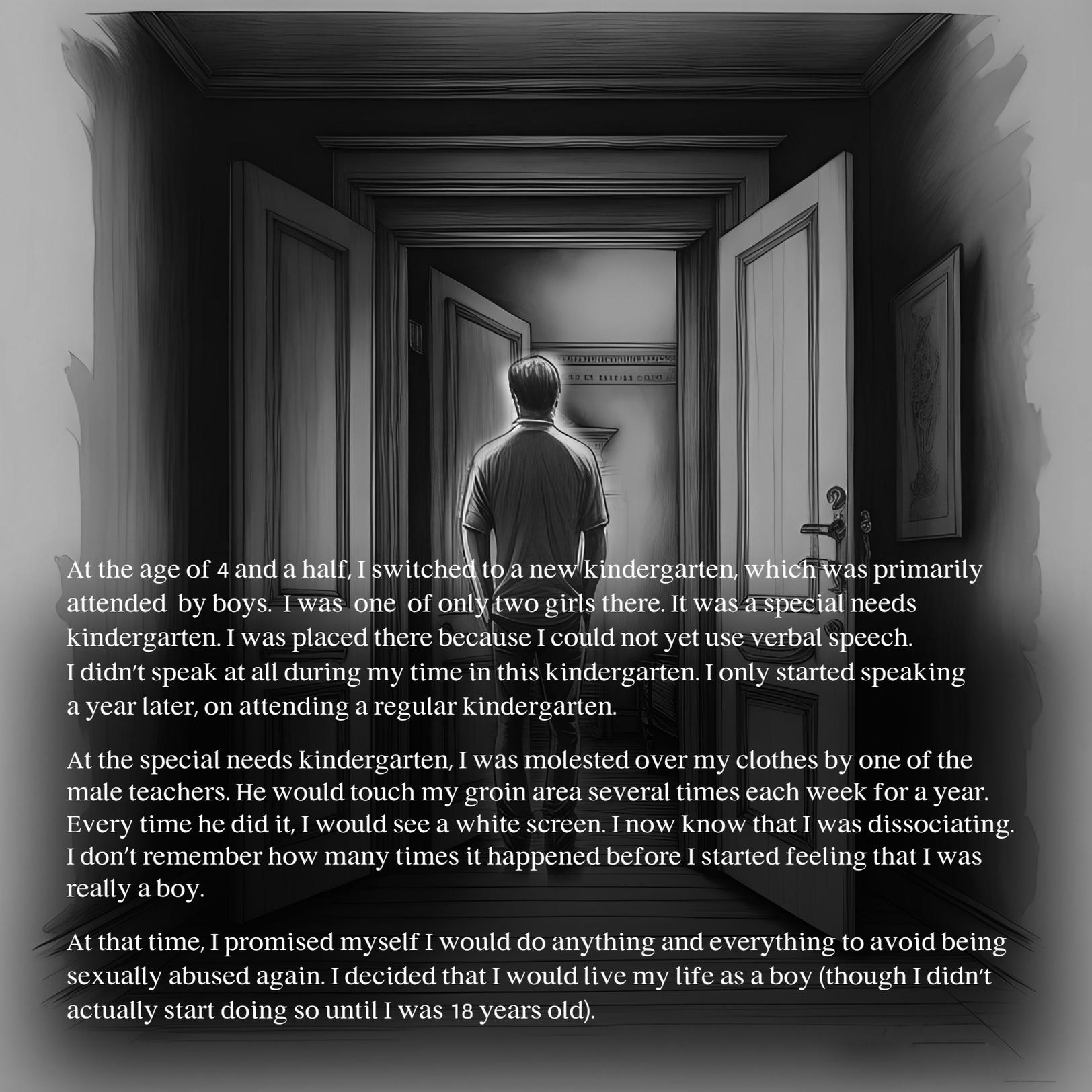


At the beginning of 2024, I informed Sheba hospital that I would be discontinuing my transition.

## **Late addition:**

I initially felt reluctant and uncomfortable disclosing my full background. However, I have come to see that my story would be incomplete without it. I already disclosed that I'd felt myself to be a boy from the age of 5. I didn't mention what preceded that.





At the age of 4 and a half, I switched to a new kindergarten, which was primarily attended by boys. I was one of only two girls there. It was a special needs kindergarten. I was placed there because I could not yet use verbal speech. I didn't speak at all during my time in this kindergarten. I only started speaking a year later, on attending a regular kindergarten.

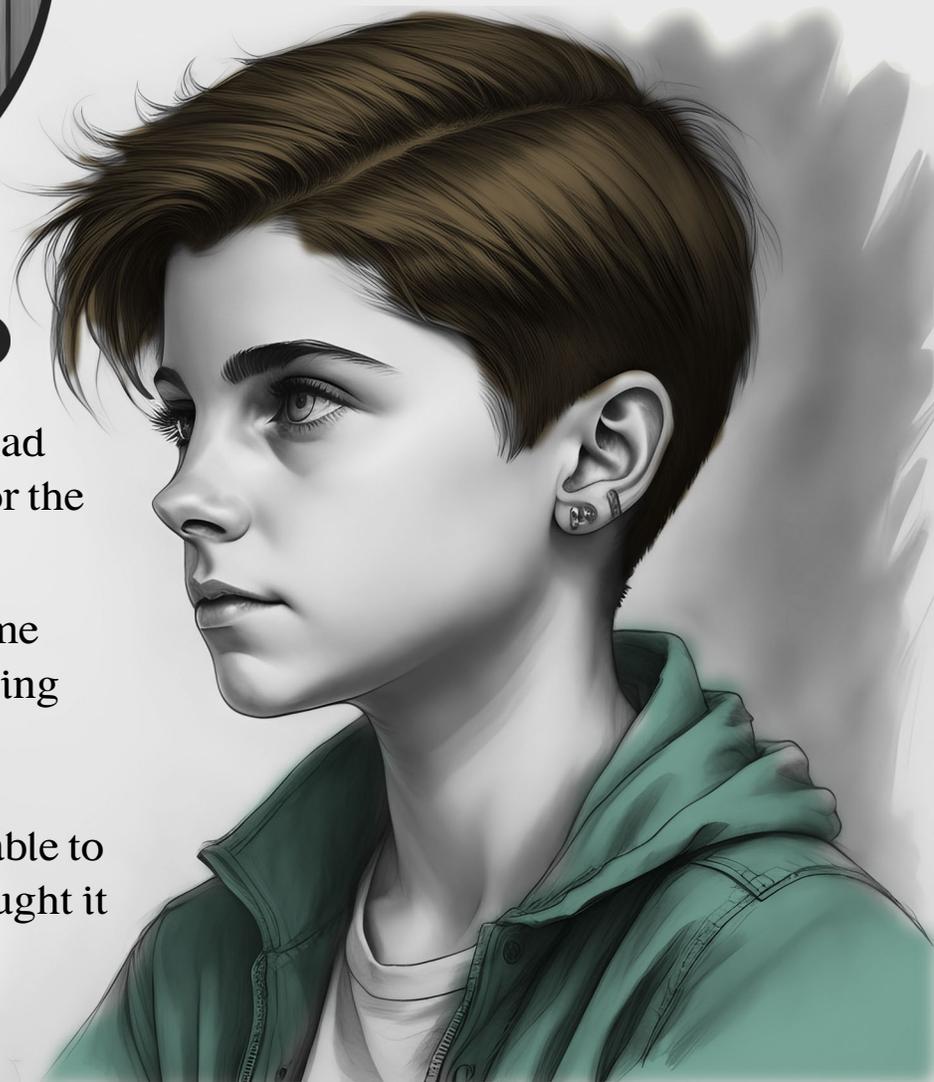
At the special needs kindergarten, I was molested over my clothes by one of the male teachers. He would touch my groin area several times each week for a year. Every time he did it, I would see a white screen. I now know that I was dissociating. I don't remember how many times it happened before I started feeling that I was really a boy.

At that time, I promised myself I would do anything and everything to avoid being sexually abused again. I decided that I would live my life as a boy (though I didn't actually start doing so until I was 18 years old).



When I first came out as trans, I had no memory of the sexual abuse or the extent of it.

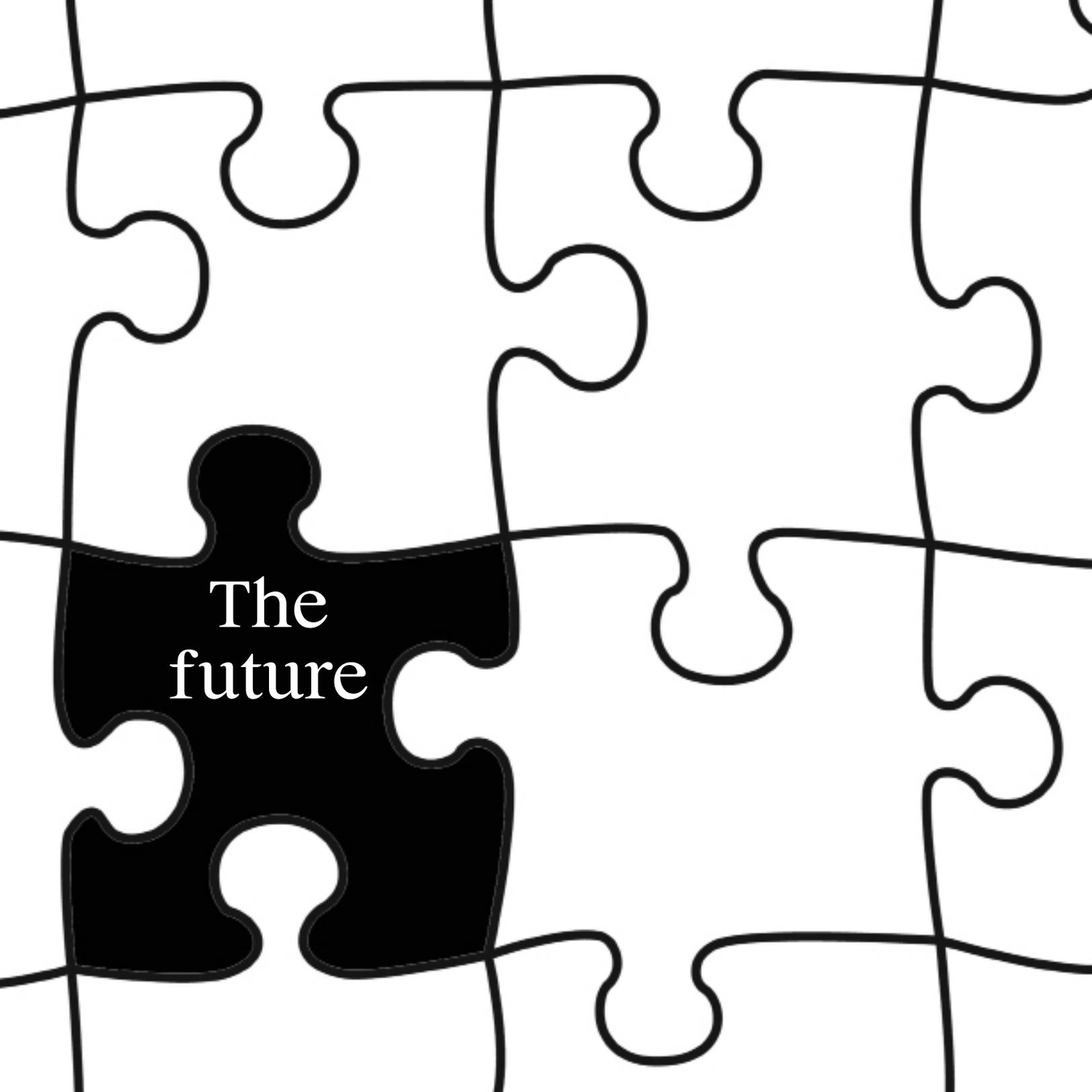
When the memories from that time finally came up, I started wondering whether there was a connection between the abuse and my trans identity. I had previously felt unable to even question this, because I thought it was transphobic to do so.



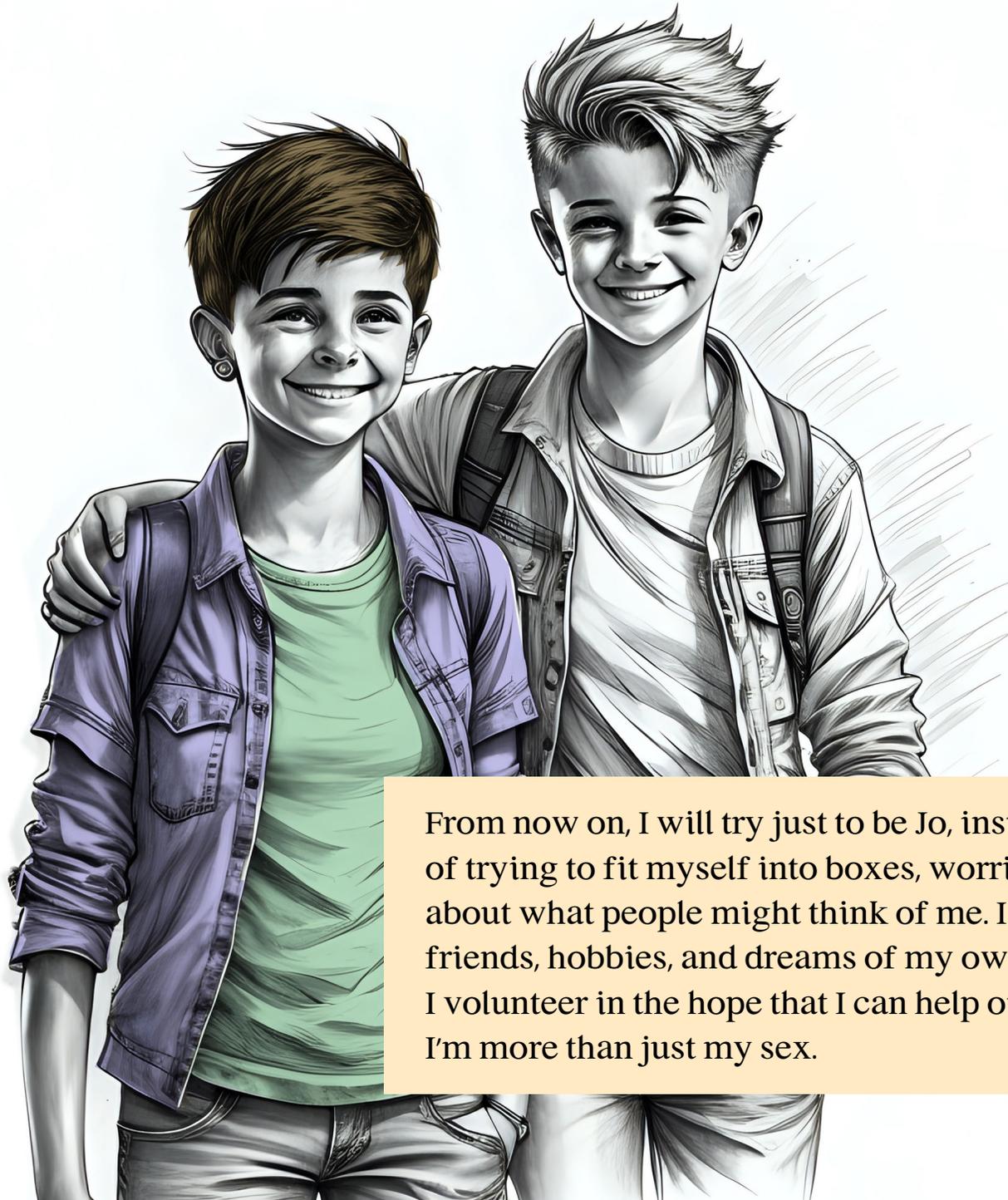


My mother believes there is a connection. However, the professionals who knew about the sexual abuse never explored any possible relationship with my dysphoria.

Now that I have dared to question this myself, I feel sure that my dysphoria is connected to the sexual abuse.

A black and white illustration of a puzzle. One puzzle piece is solid black and contains the text "The future" in white. The other puzzle pieces are white with black outlines, forming a grid around the central piece.

The  
future



From now on, I will try just to be Jo, instead of trying to fit myself into boxes, worried about what people might think of me. I have friends, hobbies, and dreams of my own. I volunteer in the hope that I can help others. I'm more than just my sex.

I'm afraid that I might not be able to recover from my involvement with the trans ideology and agenda.





However, my fear is not a fact. It's just a feeling, and feelings change with time and maturity. My whole life story is proof of that.

## Testosterone risks for women

(partial list):

- Sterilization.
- Pelvic pain.
- Clitoral growth.
- Reproductive organ atrophy  
(potentially causing pain during intercourse  
and necessitating hysterectomy).
- Increased bodily inflammation  
(can lead to lost teeth).
- Increased risk of urinary tract infections,  
possibly necessitating lifelong catheterization.
- Loss of cognitive capacity.

## **Testosterone risks for women**

(partial list):

- Balding.
- Weight gain.
- Acne.
- Sleep Apnea.
- Raised cholesterol levels.
- Several hundred percent increase in heart attack risk (several hundred percent more than men, not just other women)
- Increased red blood cell density.
- Diabetes.
- Blood clots.
- Increased risk of stroke and subsequent paralysis.

## **The risks of estrogen for men** (partial list):

- Osteoporosis.
- Increased heart attack risk.
- Damage to brain structures.
- Infertility.
- Sexual function impairment.
- Blood clots.
- Increased triglycerides.
- Increased blood prolactin.
- Weight gain.
- High blood pressure.
- Diabetes.
- Stroke.
- Depression and mood disorders.



## **A personal message to finish**

It's important for me to stress that not everything is rosy for me now, even though my personal story has a happy ending. Not everyone has the lucky escape I did. Some people with similar experiences also feel unable to speak out because the repercussions can be so severe.



Due to my change of heart, many trans people who I truly thought were friends have cut ties with me.

It has now become clear that these friendships were only ever conditional on my adherence to their ideology. To be accepted by these people, I had to believe that it was possible to exist in the wrong body. I also had to believe that dysphoric feelings necessitate mutilation. I no longer hold these views.



I have now made new friends, and I've strengthened my connections with people who knew and supported me before, during and after my trans journey. These people have no association with the trans community. I want them by my side for the rest of my life.



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