

AN AB DISCOVERY BOOK

A photograph of two young women standing behind a white wooden crib in a nursery. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a pink bonnet and a matching short-sleeved nightgown. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a blue bonnet and a matching short-sleeved nightgown. Both are smiling and looking down at the crib. The background shows a nursery with shelves containing teddy bears and other toys, and a dresser with a lamp on the left.

Becoming Lacey

SALLYANNE CASTLETON

Becoming Lacey by Sallyanne Castleton

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Author: Sallyanne Castleton

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Chapter One: A Girl Inside

Travis sat on the edge of his bed, his knees pulled up to his chest, the dim blue glow of his nightlight casting shadows across his soft-featured face. His pyjamas were clean, made from light cotton with pastel stars, and his nappy was already on, crinkling faintly when he shifted. He hadn't said much all evening, and Marian noticed. Again.

She knocked gently, even though the door was open.

"You okay, sweetheart?" she asked softly, stepping in.

Travis shrugged, eyes fixed on the edge of his blanket. "Yeah, I guess."

Marian sat beside him, carefully brushing back a strand of his fine brown hair from his cheek. He flinched only slightly. "Bad day?"

He nodded.

"You want to talk about it?"

Travis hesitated, then whispered, "It's just... the same. At school. I don't fit in. They all think I'm weird or something."

Marian sighed and put an arm around his narrow shoulders. He leaned into her, resting his head against her side. "I know it's hard, love," she murmured. "But you're not weird. You're just... sensitive. That's not a bad thing."

"They said I'm like a girl," he whispered.

Marian was quiet for a long moment. "Do you feel like a girl?"

Travis was still.

"I... I don't know. Maybe," he admitted. "Sometimes I wish I could just wear what I want. Ou know, like pretty stuff, not boy stuff, not anything tight or... sharp. I just hate it."

She gently stroked his hair. "That's okay."

He looked up at her, startled. "It is?"

"Of course. Sweetheart, I love you, however you are. If you want to wear pretty things, soft things, I can help you. There's no rule that says you have to be a certain way. Not with me."

Travis blinked quickly, eyes watering. "Even if I... if I want... panties?"

Marian smiled faintly. "Especially then. You've always liked soft things. Even when you were little. I remember you trying to wear my scarf like a dress when you were three."

"I just wanted to feel... safe," he said quietly.

"I know, and you still do. You don't have to pretend you don't. And there's nothing wrong with it."

Travis's voice dropped to a whisper. "Could we... buy some? Panties, I mean?"

"Of course we can."

She kissed the top of his head. "We'll go shopping tomorrow. Just the two of us. Somewhere quiet."

He nodded, wiping his cheek with his sleeve. "And maybe... a bra?"

"If that's what you want, love."

He hesitated, chewing his lip. "Is it silly? I'm still... I'm a boy... sort of. I think. But I want to be treated like a girl. I want... people to see me like that. But I still want my nappies too."

"It's not silly at all," Marian said firmly. "You're allowed to be complicated. You're allowed to want comfort. And if part of you feels like a baby sometimes, or a girl, or both, then that's who you are."

She paused. "Do you want a girl's name?"

Travis was silent. "...I think so."

"Want to sleep on it tonight and tell me in the morning?"

He nodded again.

They sat like that for a long time, in silence, his head tucked under her chin. The faint sound of the washing machine in the other room hummed like a lullaby.

The next morning, Marian woke early. She was already setting out breakfast when Travis came into the kitchen, still in his starry pyjamas, soaked nappy visibly puffed beneath.

"Morning, love," she said brightly.

"Morning," he said softly. Then, after a pause, he simply said, "Lacey."

Marian looked up from the toaster. "Hmm?"

"I think I want to be called Lacey. If that's okay."

Her face lit up with a gentle, proud smile. "That's a beautiful name. It suits you. Lacey, it is."

He stood there in the doorway, trembling just a little.

Marian walked over and cupped his cheeks. "Good morning, Lacey," she said, then kissed his forehead.

Lacey smiled, a real one this time. A tiny one, but honest.

Later that day, Marian drove them both to a discreet boutique in the next suburb, the kind of store with relaxing wallpaper and hushed music playing inside and none of the bright lights that so many clothes stores inflicted on you. The saleswoman, a kind-eyed woman in her thirties, didn't flinch when Marian quietly explained that they were shopping for her child, her daughter, who was new to this.

They picked soft panties in lavender and mint, some lace-trimmed camisoles, and a small, padded training bra with tiny bows.

Back home, Lacey tried them on. Marian helped gently, showing her how to smooth the fabric, how to adjust the straps. When Lacey saw herself in the mirror, she touched the bow on her chest with trembling fingers.

"I look like me," she whispered.

"You do," Marian said. "You look beautiful."

For the first time in years, Lacey didn't hate what she saw in the mirror. The soft shape, the way her short hair curved around her face, the gentle swell of the training bra. And yes, the nappy, poking out slightly beneath the waistband of her panties. But even that felt... right.

"Do you want to wear them to bed?" Marian asked gently.

Lacey nodded.

Marian tucked her in that night with a baby bottle of warm milk, another baby thing she had never given up, with her dummy clipped to her shirt, and her new panties worn proudly over her usual nappy.

“Goodnight, baby girl,” Marian whispered, brushing back her bangs.

“Goodnight, Mummy,” Lacey murmured.

And for the first time in months, she didn’t cry herself to sleep.

Chapter Two: The Park Encounter

The sun filtered gently through the gum trees, dappled light dancing across the grass of the quiet park. It was late afternoon on a Wednesday, just after school hours, and perfectly chosen by Marian because she knew there'd be fewer people. She spread out the old blue picnic blanket while Lacey stood nearby, holding her plush bunny and nervously scanning for teenagers.

"It's not crowded," Marian said, glancing up with a reassuring smile. "I promise. Just you and me."

Lacey nodded, thumb brushing her dummy clip where it hung under the collar of her oversized pink hoodie. Her jeans were loose enough to hide the bulk of her nappy, but she still felt exposed and vulnerable.

She sat down cross-legged, the familiar crinkle of her nappy muffled by the blanket. Marian pulled a small thermos and snack container from her tote. "Would you like your bottle, or are you okay with juice today?"

Lacey blushed. "Juice... but in the sippy cup?"

"Of course, baby," Marian said, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

They sat in a peaceful hush for a while. The distant squeals of toddlers from the main playground drifted across the grass. Marian peeled an apple, and Lacey munched on tiny crackers shaped like animals.

"I still feel nervous," Lacey said suddenly.

Marian looked over, concerned. "Right now? You're safe here."

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"I know. But..." She shifted uncomfortably. "It's like my body forgets. I still feel like something bad will happen. Like someone will laugh or... or yell."

"That's your anxiety, sweetpea. It doesn't mean anything's wrong. It's just your mind trying to protect you, even when you don't need protecting anymore."

Lacey nodded, curling her toes in the grass. "That's why I need the daytime nappies," she said softly. "I can't always tell when I'm panicking until it's... too late."

Marian reached out and gently rubbed her daughter's back. "I'm so proud of you for saying that. And for listening to your body. It doesn't matter what other kids think. You're doing what keeps you safe."

"I don't want to be the weird kid in nappies forever," Lacey whispered.

"You're not weird," Marian said. "You're brave. And one day, when you're ready, you can try just panties in the daytime again. Or not. It's your body. Your choice, whenever you are ready. Not everyone gets out of nappies early."

Lacey looked up, eyes filled with gratitude.

Just then, footsteps approached. Two girls, about Lacey's age, walked along the path that curved past the grassy hill. One had short, choppy dyed-blue hair and wore black leggings under a flowy top. The other was blonde with freckles and a pink backpack covered in plush keychains.

"Hey," said the blue-haired girl, noticing them on the blanket.

"Hi," Marian said warmly.

Lacey was still.

The blonde girl tilted her head, noticing the faint line of pink fabric peeking out just above the waistband of Lacey's jeans. Then her eyes caught the slight bulge underneath and the dummy clip. She didn't look mocking, just curious.

"Um..." the blonde said gently. "Are you wearing... like, nappies?"

Lacey turned red, her hand shooting to cover her waist. "I... uh..."

"It's okay," the other girl interrupted. "I still wear them too."

Lacey blinked, looking up.

"I'm Chloe," the girl said, lowering her voice. "I have... some sensory stuff, and anxiety. I wet when I get overwhelmed, like at school. So I wear nappies during the day."

"Me too," Lacey whispered.

"And I'm Hannah," said the girl with blue hair, crouching down to their level. "I used to be a boy. But not anymore. I wear cute panties now, and sometimes nappies too, especially when I'm in 'little mode.'"

Marian looked at both girls with a raised brow. "You two are very open. That's rare."

Chloe giggled. "Our school's kind of different. A lot of us are... well, like this."

Lacey glanced nervously at her mother, who gave a little nod.

"You can talk to them if you want, Lacey," she said gently.

Lacey hesitated. "What do you mean, 'like this'?"

Hannah leaned in. "It's a private school. For girls. But it's *really* for girls like us... trans girls, little girls, girls who still wear nappies, girls who sometimes want to be babies again. It's totally safe there."

"You go to a school where *that's normal*?" Lacey asked in disbelief.

Hannah nodded. "Half the girls still wear nappies. Some of them 24/7. And there's a regression room, like a baby daycare. Nap time, bottles, plushies, everything."

Marian blinked. "Wait... It's a real school?"

"Yeah. We still learn math and history, and everything. But there are extra classes too, like 'feminine expression' and 'identity care' and even 'baby sessions' if you sign up for them."

Chloe chimed in. "They let you choose uniforms, too. Some girls wear the usual blazer and skirt. Others wear... like, toddler-style dresses with bloomers. If they want."

Lacey's heart fluttered. "You mean I could... go there?"

"Maybe," Hannah said with a grin. "If your mum calls and gets an interview. They're strict but kind. You'd fit in, for sure. You are a really pretty girl, you know."

Marian's eyes met Lacey's. "Do you think you'd like that?" she asked softly.

Lacey didn't hesitate. "Yes. Absolutely, yes!"

That night, as Marian tucked Lacey in, she sat beside her on the bed for a long time.

"I looked it up," she said. "It's called St. Dymphna's Academy for Girls. There's even a note on their site about accepting trans girls, girls with disabilities, girls who regress..."

Lacey whispered, "It sounds like heaven."

"They have open days. But I'll just call, directly, and ask for a meeting."

Lacey reached up and gently took Marian's hand.

"Thank you," she whispered. "For everything. For... letting me be this."

Marian kissed her forehead, then pulled the covers up over her.

"There's nothing to *let*, sweet girl. You were always this. I'm just glad you told me. I've known for a long time, I think. You never stopped bedwetting, and I don't think you even ever tried to stop." Lacey blushed. "And you need a dummy, and I never could get you off the bottle and the way you always want day nappies told me a lot. And I would see you looking at my panties and bras, and I could read your mind. You wanted some for yourself. So I understand, Lacey. You are a girl. A special girl with some different bits inside your nappy, but that is all."

Chapter Three: St. Dymphna's Academy

The gates to St. Dymphna's Academy for Girls were white wrought iron with curling vines painted along the edges. Flowers spilled from hanging pots on either side. Lacey clutched her mother's hand tightly, her nappy rustling beneath her denim skirt. She wore her favourite pink hoodie with the satin ribbon ties and her dummy clipped just under her chin. It was technically hidden, but she knew it was there, and that helped. Her dummy was very helpful if she was anxious.

Marian gave her hand a gentle squeeze. "Deep breath, sweetheart."

"I'm nervous."

"That's okay. I am too." She looked down with a smile. "But we're going in together."

The buzzer on the intercom clicked, and a warm voice came through. "Yes?"

"Marian and Lacey Winters. We have an appointment with Headmistress Delphine."

The gate clicked open with a hum.

Inside was like a dream. The path led through a tidy garden filled with pinwheels and shaded benches. There were giggles in the distance and the distant creak of a rocking horse. Lacey spotted a girl about her age in a pinafore dress and hair bows walking hand-in-hand with an older student who wore a blazer and skirt. The younger girl had a plush bunny dangling from one arm and what was unmistakably a crinkly nappy under her bloomers.

Lacey stopped. "She's like me."

"She's just like you," Marian said, smiling.

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They reached the office wing, painted in pale lemon. Inside, the reception area felt more like a nursery lounge than a school office. Cushioned benches, storybooks, and dummy hooks lined the wall. The receptionist wore a peach cardigan and gave Lacey a gentle smile.

“Miss Lacey Winters?” she asked. “The Headmistress is expecting you. You can go straight in.”

Marian thanked her and led Lacey to a frosted-glass door marked Headmistress Delphine Laurent in curving cursive.

She knocked. “Come in,” came a calm, deep voice.

The room smelled faintly of lemon biscuits. A tall woman in her sixties stood by the window. Her silver hair was neatly pinned up, and her dress was a soft blue with a brooch shaped like a dummy on the collar.

“Ah,” she said with a warm smile. “You must be Lacey.”

Lacey nodded shyly.

“And this is your mother, I assume.” She offered a hand. “I’m Delphine Laurent. I’ve been Headmistress here for... goodness, over twenty years now.”

“Thank you for seeing us,” Marian said, shaking her hand.

Delphine sat behind her desk, gesturing for them to sit on the nearby plush chairs in pastel pink with little heart pillows.

“Now,” she said, folding her hands, “Lacey, I’d like to start by saying: everything about you is welcome here. We are a school for girls, yes—but more importantly, we are a school for personal honesty. That means we are trans-affirming, regression-positive, and nappy-inclusive. Sound like what you were hoping for?”

Lacey gave the smallest smile. “Yes. Very much.”

Delphine nodded. “Our students include girls born male, girls with developmental delays, girls with trauma histories, and girls who simply feel safer in the world of infancy. No one is judged here for using nappies, dummies, bottles, or soft toys. In fact, they’re embraced.”

She reached into her drawer and pulled out a laminated chart. “Here’s a rough breakdown. About 50% of our girls wear nappies

full-time. About 30% wear them only at night or during 'baby sessions.' About 20% wear only occasionally. All uniforms are adaptable. You may wear the classic skirt and blouse, or a pinafore, romper, or even a baby dress with bloomers and tights."

Lacey's mouth parted slightly. "Even to class?"

"Even to class," Delphine smiled. "We also have *Regression Sessions*. These are optional, but popular. It's a space where girls can nap, play with plushies, drink bottles, or simply lie in a crib and be held by one of our regression staff. Students who feel they need more structure can enrol in the Baby Track."

Lacey looked at her mum.

"Tell her about the anxiety," Marian prompted gently.

Lacey took a breath. "I wear nappies during the day because... I have panic attacks. I don't always know when I'm scared until it's too late. So... they help. I feel safer."

Delphine gave a nod of deep understanding. "Many of our girls are here for exactly that reason. Emotional safety is the foundation of learning."

"Do some of the... older girls still have baby bottles?" Lacey asked, her voice tiny.

"Of course. Bottles. Dummies. Cribs. We do not put an age limit on care." She looked Lacey directly in the eye. "You are allowed to be a baby here, if that's what you need."

Lacey's eyes welled with tears.

"We've had students who transitioned socially here, some who began hormones with their parents' support. We work closely with families. You don't just enrol a student, we welcome the entire family."

Marian cleared her throat, emotional. "That's... rare."

Delphine nodded. "You'll be invited to the Mummy Circle. It's a parent group. Not all our parents are cis women, but we use 'Mummy' as a spirit of softness, not biology."

Marian gave a small laugh. "I'm not sure I'd be brave enough to join something like that."

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“Many aren’t, at first,” Delphine said with a twinkle. “But some of our Mummies find... unexpected healing. Some are even babies themselves.”

Lacey blinked. “Even the mums?”

Delphine smiled. “Especially the mums. Surprising how many of them still wear nappies.”

After the meeting, Delphine led them on a tour. They passed classrooms with chalkboards, plush corner rugs, and even little rocking chairs. One room had nap mats in the corner. Another room was a full nursery suite with mobiles, bibs, and bottles stacked neatly in a warming unit.

Two girls in matching pinafores waved shyly from across the hall. Both had dummies dangling from clips. One was humming to a plush unicorn. By the time they returned to the office, Lacey was glowing.

“So?” Delphine asked gently.

Lacey turned to Marian. “Can we...? Please?”

Marian wrapped her arms around her daughter and kissed the side of her head. “Yes, baby. Yes.”

Chapter Four: First Day, First Smile

The air smelled faintly of talcum powder and apple juice as Lacey stood in front of her mirror, hands trembling slightly as she smoothed the folds of her new uniform dress.

It wasn't the traditional one. Her mum had ordered the optional "toddler-style" variant: a baby pink smocked dress with puffed sleeves, a Peter Pan collar, and three embroidered hearts across the chest. Underneath, she wore frilly white bloomers over her thick daytime nappy, and her legs were covered in soft white tights. Around her neck, her dummy was clipped with a silver ribbon, and her new backpack, covered in tiny cartoon bunnies, sat by the door.

Marian knelt beside her and adjusted the lace edge of her socks. "There," she whispered. "My beautiful little girl."

Lacey fidgeted. "I'm scared."

Marian cupped her cheek gently. "You're allowed to be. But baby... You don't have to hide here. You don't have to pretend you're someone else. Everyone at St. Dymphna's wants you just the way you are."

Lacey nodded, sucking softly on her dummy for comfort. The pressure behind her nerves softened just a little.

They arrived early. As they stepped through the white gates, a few other girls were being dropped off too, some in skirts and cardigans, others in rompers or thick tights with nursery prints. A tall sixth-form girl with a prefect badge walked past, holding the hand of a smaller first-year student in a footed sleeper. No one batted an eye.

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Lacey clung to Marian's hand as they walked inside. A sign with colourful handwriting read, *Welcome, New Littles! You are safe. You are loved. You are already enough.*

She exhaled deeply.

They were greeted in the foyer by Miss Joy, a bright, motherly woman with thick glasses and a sunflower pin on her apron.

"Lacey!" she beamed, kneeling down to her level. "We're so glad you're here, sweetpea. I'll be your first-day buddy today."

Lacey nodded shyly, hiding a little behind Marian's arm.

Miss Joy turned to her mum. "You're welcome to stay for a bit, or head to the Mummy Lounge. We have coffee. And nappies, if you're so inclined."

Marian laughed nervously. "Maybe later," she said. "For now... just the coffee."

Lacey turned, wide-eyed. "You might wear them too?"

Marian leaned down and whispered, "Only if I miss you too much."

The first period was orientation.

Miss Joy led Lacey to a soft-carpeted room with bean bags, fairy lights, and a circle of floor cushions. Ten or twelve girls sat in a loose circle. Some wore traditional school skirts, others footed sleepers or frilly onesies. Several had dummies in or dangling nearby. No one was teasing. Everyone looked... relaxed.

"Everyone, this is Lacey," Miss Joy said. "She's brand new and looking absolutely precious in her pink outfit."

Lacey curtsied without thinking. A few girls giggled in a friendly way.

"I love your dress," said one girl in a sailor romper. "I had that one in blue."

"I'm Chloe," said another quietly. Lacey recognised her from the park. "You look happy."

"I think I am," Lacey whispered.

The girls introduced themselves, one by one. Mira, a softly-spoken trans girl in her second year, was wearing a lavender pinafore and sucking on a bottle.

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Gracie was a chatterbox who was openly wearing a bib and had a dummy permanently in her mouth unless she was giggling.

April was a big girl who loved helping the littler ones change.

Sophie was a part-time baby who called herself a "toddler princess" and had a bow as big as a bird's nest.

Then came Hannah, walking in late with a big plush owl under her arm. She flopped down beside Lacey like it was the most natural thing in the world.

"You made it," she whispered with a grin. "Told you it'd be magic."

Second Period was Identity Studies, and their class took place in a warmly lit room with walls painted like clouds. The whiteboard read:

Today's Topic: Girlhood in All Its Forms

Miss Ava, the teacher, was young and sparkly-eyed, with a bun full of glittery pencils and a skirt covered in rainbow pins.

"We're going to talk today," she said gently, "about what being a girl means *to you*. There's no wrong answer. You might feel like a big girl, a baby girl, a sissy girl, a strong girl, a scared girl... or all of those."

She looked at Lacey. "Would you like to start?" Lacey clutched her dummy and shook her head. It was only her first day. "That's okay," Miss Ava said warmly. "Anyone else?"

Gracie raised her hand. "I'm a toddler sometimes. But I still like glitter and being bossy."

"Perfect."

April chimed in. "I don't cry much, but I still wear nappies because they help me stay focused."

Mira whispered, "I was told I wasn't a real girl. But I know I am. Because being soft and loving my plushies doesn't make me fake. It makes me *me*."

Lacey raised her hand, slowly.

"When I wear panties and nappies and baby clothes, I feel like... I can finally breathe. Like I don't have to pretend I'm strong or normal. I feel like a girl. A *baby* girl. And I love it."