

Morgan in the Mirror

by

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## LOGLINE

Morgan was never ambivalent about her gender orientation: at the age of four she announced that she intended to grow up to become a man, just like her brother. As an adult transman, however, the death of his father sends him on a voyage of self-discovery and heterosexual Christen, his love interest, is on a fast ride along the sexuality-gender continuum.

## SYNOPSIS

As a twenty-three year old female-to male transexual looking for a meaningful relationship, Morgan hits the wall and realizes that there is more to becoming a man than injecting testosterone, getting himself a manly chest and packing a prosthetic. The death of his father and a love entanglement with Christen, a detective sergeant in the Australian Police Force, a heterosexual who is twelve years his senior, propel Morgan on a journey of self-discovery as he, and Christen, redefine what it means to be a man.

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FADE IN:

EXT. BRISBANE - AUSTRALIA - PETROL STATION - LATE EVENING

MORGAN - curly hair cut in a manly style, pencil-thin goatee, wiry and fit - some 18 months into Testosterone hormone therapy and 12 weeks post chest reconstruction.\*She\* is a lanky 23 year old, female-to-male transsexual.

Work shirt hanging over a pair of classic cut Levy's and as dusty as his work boots, MORGAN has just come off his shift at a nearby construction site. He is filling up the tank of an old pickup truck. Head cocked, he glances at the group of TRUCKERS who, bottle in hand, are kicking back by the huge rigs parked diagonally to the shop. Morgan pulls the nozzle out, shakes it, returns it to the holder. Loose-limbed and rangy, he strides inside the shop.

INT. PETROL STATION - SHOP - NIGHT

Behind the counter a bright and cheery CASHIER cracks a smile at Morgan. He pulls two crinkled \$20 notes out of his jeans pocket and smooths them out on the counter with the flat of his hand.

CASHIER

That'll be \$34.50, sir. Long day at work?

MORGAN

(pleasant)

An OK day made longer by rounds of beer at the pub. A mate's just got engaged, so -

Cashier gives Morgan an appraising look, flashes a fresh smile, as she flicks her hair away from her face.

CASHIER

Lemme guess - office work's not your thing. Correct?

MORGAN

Correct.

(pats his shirt front and grins)

That's no office dirt on me.

Cashier locks eyes with him.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Construction site up the road.

CASHIER

That huge one beyond the bridge?

Morgan nods. Cashier looks impressed. An R'n'B tune floats down from one of the truck's cabin.

Morgan and the cashier briefly observe the men through the shop's window. Tattooed, and bulky, greasy caps jammed over shaggy hair, the truckers are setting up a game of cards.

CASHIER O/S

I'm Tani.

Morgan returns his attention to the cashier. She points to her name tag and rings up the transaction.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

Gotta name?

MORGAN

Oh yeah! My mamma made sure of that. Morgan.

CASHIER

Nice.

MORGAN

Maybe. What's in a name, anyway? Say ... which way to the Men's?

The cashier slides the change toward Morgan's hand. She looks at him quizzically. He hesitates, drops the coins in his jeans pocket, looks about to say something. Instead, he smiles awkwardly, tweaks his goatee. Clears his throat.

MORGAN

So ... which way to the Men's?

The cashier points through the glass.

CASHIER

On the other side of the rigs. Next to the workshop. Won't need a key.

A flutter of concern on Morgan's face. He tweaks his goatee again, taps his wallet against the palm of his hand, as if undecided, but slips it into his back pocket.

MORGAN

Sweet. Thanks.

Again distracted by the truckers' antics on the other side of the glass panes, he doesn't see the cashier's wistful expression. Abruptly, he wheels around and cocks his head towards the truckers.

MORGAN

You're cool on your own?

CASHIER

You bet! They're loud, but they're OK. Big teddy bears, most of them. Real sweet of you to ask, though.

MORGAN

OK. See ya later.

He pushes the door open, strides past the group of men, avoids eye contact. Near the workshop, he hesitates.

TRUCK DRIVER #1 O/S

(gruff)

For the johns, it's the door that's got the stickers on it.

Morgan spins around to face the voice.

MORGAN

Gotcha. Thanks.

He walks to the door that's splattered with promo stickers like *Havoline Adds More Life to Your Car*. The dangling lock is only held up by one screw. Morgan feels the insidewall for the light switch.

TRUCK DRIVER #1

No lock. No light.

Morgan backs away from the door.

TRUCK DRIVER #1

(CONT'D) Whassup? You afraid of the dark?

A couple of truckers look up from the card game and give Morgan the once over. Increasingly uncomfortable, he glances back towards the shop.

TRUCK DRIVER #2

(dealing cards)

Maybe the boy don't got night vision. Don't like pissing in the dark.

TRUCK DRIVER #3

Don't wanna spray his boots.

TRUCK DRIVER #4

Maybe likes to check what he's palmin' first. 5 card draw. 7 card stud.

Another trucker, perched high on the cabin steps, is tattooing his knuckle with a bottle of ink and a needle. He looks up.

TRUCK DRIVER #4  
 C'mon you, faggots. Why don't you start figurin'  
 what's in your own hand.

TRUCK DRIVER #3  
 Yeah, you lot! Let's get this  
 fuckin' round going!

The first trucker points to a nearby shrub with his bottle.

TRUCK DRIVER #1 If it'd be  
 me, I'd point and shoot at  
 that there bush.

B&W strobe

MORGAN  
 Nah ... that's cool. Can wait.

Subtitle: Morgan - 23 years old - Brisbane - Australia

He walks back to his pickup. The trucker leers at him  
 and calls out.

TRUCK DRIVER #1  
 O/S And one bum-boy trotting off!

Morgan tenses up his shoulders, but keeps walking.

MORGAN  
 (to himself)  
 Whatever, sad ass!

He climbs into his pickup.

INT. PETROL STATION - SHOP - NIGHT

The cashier is attending to new customer.

A door slams O/S

Cashier looks through the glass just as Morgan  
 settles behind the wheel. A little smile breaks on her lips  
 as she returns her attention to the customer in front of  
 her.

INT. PETROL STATION - PICKUP CABIN - NIGHT

Hands hard on the steering wheel, jaws clenched,  
 Morgan squeezes his eyes shut.

MORGAN  
 (muttering)  
 Pin-dick asshole!

EXT. PETROL STATION - NIGHT

Seconds later, the old pickup truck coughs to life and slowly pulls away. The men have returned to the card game. All but Trucker #1 who follows Morgan's taillights with his eyes.

EXT. MORGAN'S PICKUP - STREETS - NIGHT

Little traffic on the road.

Edgy, Morgan turns the knob on the old radio.

Tinny Rock music fills the cabin O/S

Morgan eases back into the seat, adjusts the seat belt over his chest and the fly of his jeans. Fingers of one hand rapping the steering wheel, he shifts gears and accelerates.

Insert: speedometer hand stuck on 20 kph

He glances into the rearview mirror.

Insert : the light rack and white hood of a police car.

MORGAN

Oh, fuckin' hell!

He lifts his foot off the accelerator. His eyes dart to the dusty speedometer.

Insert: speedometer hand still stuck on 20 kph.

Morgan slaps the dashboard to loosen the speedo hand. Tense, he glances again in the rearview mirror.

Flashing blue, red, and orange lights swirl slowly at the police car.

MORGAN

Oh fuck!

INT. POLICE STATION - LOCKUP - NIGHT

A burly Pacific Islander YOUTH paces inside the enclosure. Clad in jeans that hang under his bum and T shirt, he swings his head drowsily. Suddenly, he throws himself against the wall. Bouncing back, he grabs the bars of the cell with two hands and hits his head against them and again. He is silent and methodical.

EXT. MORGAN'S PICKUP - STREETS - NIGHT

Eyes trained on the rearview mirror, Morgan is tense.

Police siren O/S

MORGAN

(mutters)

All right. Here we go again.

(singsongs)

*"This ID says F for Female,  
youngman. Please step out of your  
vehicle."*

INT. POLICE STATION - LOCKUP - NIGHT

Three POLICEMEN rush into the cell to restrain the youth. A third one snaps on latex gloves. Constable JONES pulls the youth's head away from the bars while the other priest his hands off. The third cop tackles him sideways though it is clear that, in a bid to not hurt the boy, the cops are not using maximum force. Though genetically thickset, the youth's strength is that of a demented man. He drags the three cops to the floor.

EXT. MORGAN'S PICKUP - STREETS - NIGHT

The police car pulls away to overtake Morgan. Windows down, he has a clear glimpse of the driver, DS CHRISTEN JENSEN. Swedish blond hair pulled back, high cheekbones, communication device plugged to her ear. The car zooms ahead in full alert mode. Morgan pumps the air with his fist and whoops in relief.

MORGAN

Wooo-hoo!! Go get' em, girl!

INT. POLICE STATION - LOCK UP - NIGHT

The duty DOCTOR arrives as the youth is being restrained, face down, against the concrete the floor. The cops are breathing hard. Constable Jones, a fresh face, still has his arm around the boy's neck while the other two keep him pinned down.

DOCTOR

What's the story?

CONSTABLE JONES

He literally attacked the bars,  
Doc. Wouldn't let go of 'em.

DOCTOR

Flip 'im over.

Though unfocused, the youth still thrashes about. He hits one of the cops across the nose. The cops tighten their hold. The doctor checks the boy's vital signs. He palpates around the forehead gash.

DOCTOR

Nasty business. Did that all by  
himself?



POLICEMAN #2

Sure did, Doc. Like the big boy  
that he is.

POLICEMAN #3

He just lost it!

POLICEMAN #2

He went for the bars like a bull at the gates.

The doctor lifts the white bone carving from the youth's neck.

DOCTOR

You mean, like a *Samoan* bull at  
the gate.

The cops chuckle. The doctor tilts his chin at  
Constable Jones.

DOCTOR

I'd let go of his neck altogether if I were you.  
Wouldn't look good on camera.

Constable Jones scoots away from the youth, as if  
just bitten by a Taipan. The boy's head thuds dully on the  
concrete floor. The doctor prepares an injection.

DOCTOR

Keep 'im steady, lads, or don't  
blame me if I needle the wrong guy.

EXT. POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT

Police siren approaches O/S

Light rack ablaze with gyrating swirls of blue red  
and orange, the white police car enters the parking lot at  
the back of the station and skids to a halt near the  
entrance. The siren stops, lights off. Tall and athletic,  
dressed in white shirt and tie, chevrons on the epaulettes,  
dark blue pants, Detective Sergeant Christen Jensen strides  
into the station.

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

So what's the story? Who's the  
collar?

DUTY OFFICER

Came in at 19.32. Ten minutes ago. That's when  
we patched you. It's Jones who brought him in.  
Samoan kid

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

Jones? The new guy? Is the boss in?

DUTY OFFICER

Couldn't raise him, that's why we patched you.  
Tag, you're it.

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

Lucky me.

INT. POLICE STATION - LOCK UP - NIGHT

The lock-up area is empty except for the youth still sprawled on the cell floor. The doctor flashes a light into his pupils as Christen squats near the youth's shoulders. She sniffs a couple of times.

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

He reeks of petrol, for god's sakes. A chromer?

DOCTOR

I'd say! That's the no-brainer. Question is: what's he doing in lock-up?

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

If that's the question, what's the answer?

The doctor shrugs, lifts the boy by the armpits and, together with Christen, they drag him to a bench and pro him against the wall. Still shaky, nostrils irritated and runny, the boy slumps to one side. The doctor rights him up. The boy mumbles something obscure and swats away the doctor's hand. Christen leaves. The doctor begins dressing the youth's wound.

INT. POLICE STATION - PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Christen is face-to-face with young Constable Jones.

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

You ran out of prac time the second you hit *this* locker room, Jones. No simulations here! A high on solvents aggravated by the anxiety of being locked up - just as good as jamming a firecracker up that kid's ass and standing by for the explosion. How old is he, Jones?

CONSTABLE JONES

His ID checks him at 18.

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

No way!

(intense)

An 18 year old be a real  
friendless son of a bitch to  
keepgassing himself for a high  
whilehis buddies do E, weed and  
booze. (glares)  
What you've brought in, Jones, isa  
juvenile.

CONSTABLE JONES

But his ID says -

Taller than the man, she moves into his space.

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

Screw the ID, Jones! Think for  
yourself! In the state he's in,  
that boy could've had a cardiac  
arrest. You've just flat-footed  
your way into an inquiry,  
Constable Jones.

Constable Jones is stricken. Christen softens.

DS CHRISTEN JENSEN

OK, look --

(shakes her head)

The kid's fine, that's the good  
news. The bad news is that I've  
got to report the incident.  
Can'tdance around an in-house  
inquiry, but it could've been much  
worse  
for you.

INT. POLICE STATION TOILET - NIGHT

Christen pushes the door to the women's toilet and gripsthe  
washbasin with 2 hands. She breathes in deeply,  
splashes water over her face. Grim, she peers into the mirror.

INT. MORGAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Morgan turns on ceiling light, undoes his fly, shuffleshis  
feet, slides a plastic peeing device right against  
theurethra, under the glans of the cheap prosthetic  
devicethat he packs. He relaxes his shoulders and sighs.  
Theflow of urine arcs towards the middle of the bowl.

EXT. CORNER OF ORCHARD - AFTERNOON

DAN, in his 30s, is Morgan and Jarryd's father. He is  
astrapping outdoors man in his khaki work clothes as  
heswings 7 year old Morgan by the wrists. Morgan  
squealswith delight. Dan lowers her gently to the ground.  
Shecatches a glimpse of 10 year old Jarryd behind the  
chickencoop. She sneaks up on him.

EXT. SIDE OF A CHICKEN COOP - AFTERNOON

Jarryd is peeing over a flower bed. Morgan imitates his position legs apart. She pushes down her shorts and knickers. Eyes scrunches in absolute concentration, she releases her bladder. The initial flicker of euphoria is immediately replaced by one of panic. Morgan has wet herself.

JARRYD

(laughs)

You dork! You peed your pants!

He runs back to Dan.

B & W strobe: Morgan with soggy pants around her ankles.

SUBTITLE: Morgan - 7 years old - Tullah - Tasmania

EXT. ORCHARD - AFTERNOON (CONT'D)

JARRYD

(beaming)

Dad! Should've seen her. She tried to do it like me. So funny. She'll never get over that one!

A look of concern crosses Dan's brow. He swings Jarryd atop his shoulders.

DAN

Let's go over and what say we tell her that no one's ever died from peeing standing up?

INT. MORGAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONT'D)

A couple of pictures are stuck around the edge of the bathroom mirror. One of them is of DAN, her father, and 14 year old Morgan side by side. They are flying a yellow Tiger Moth model airplane.

Morgan peers into the mirror, pats his cheeks.

MORGAN

Like the doc said. Acne and headaches piss off after the Testosterone settles. Second puberty's toast.

(tweaks goatee)

He slips a tentative hand under his T shirt to palpate their regular contour of his chest scars.

MORGAN

So, Mirror, Mirror on the wall:  
 What's a man, huh?  
                   (slams a pretend buzzer)  
 Whoever packs a dick and got no  
 boobs? Correct!

He strikes a Michael Jackson crotch-grabbing pose, grins and reaches inside the cabinet to pull out a box - syringes, needles and ampoules.

B&W strobe: jeans around the ankles, pink prosthetic dangling, he holds up an ampoule of Testosterone. He flicks at it a couple of times, draws it inside the syringe, pops an ice cube out of a nearby plastic tray. Herubs it on the outer edge of his thigh.

SUBTITLE: Morgan - 6 months post chest-op

Morgan injects, caps the syringe, tosses it in the bin and applies a ball of cotton to the needled prick.

EXT. TASMANIA - PINE FORREST - LAKE ROSEBERRY - EARLY MORNING

Dense pine forest in Cradle Mountain.

The lake sparkling through pine branches is inviting. Awhip bird calls out at regular intervals.

Dan surveys the canopy of trees as he walks barefoot on the well traveled trail a couple of steps behind MARY, his wife. Thin and blond, somewhat washed-out, even in her casual gear she looks too starched.

4 year old Morgan and 7 year old JARRYD run ahead towards the shallow cove.

MARY

Don't you go into the water, you hear? Morgan?

Sun-tipped brown curls bounce prettily around Morgan's face. A healthy child used to the outdoors. She squeals with delight, as she runs ankle-deep into the water.

MARY

Dan, look at her, will you? I didn't bring them any change of clothes.

DAN

It's only water, for god's sake.

MARY

That water's freezing. If she gets sick, it'll be me who'll have to stay home to look after her.

Morgan splashes about in the shallows.

MARY  
Morgan! Come back here this minute.

Morgan runs back to her mother to stand drenched and shivering in front of her.

MARY  
Look at you, shaking like a half-drowned pup!

DAN  
Mary, don't spoil the moment. She can wear Jarryd's top for now.

JARRYD  
Why you want me to give her my stuff all the time? It's not my fault she's wet.

DAN  
(warns)  
You look after your sister, Jarryd. And there's no need to make a face.

Mary pulls the soggy dress over Morgan's head, and rubs her down vigorously with the sarong she's pulled out of her bag.

MARY  
I wish you'd use your head a bit more --

DAN  
Mary!

Mary slips Jarryd's sweatshirt above Morgan's head. Morgan beams.

MORGAN  
Jarryd smells different from me.  
(nose buried in sweatshirt) That's a good smell.

Jarryd shrugs and stomps away.

B/W strobe: Morgan, nose buried in Jarryd's sweatshirt.

SUBTITLE: Morgan - 4 years old - Lake Roseberry - Tasmania.

INT. INSIDE MAIN TENT - NIGHT

Morgan is still wearing Jarryd's sweatshirt. She rummages through a tote bag, pulls out a pair of girl's underwear. She reaches in again and pulls out a pair of her brother's. Her face lights up.

She glances at the tent flap, slips on the Y-fronts.

MARY O/S

Morgan, you'd better be in bed by the time I get there.

Morgan gets inside her sleeping bag.

MORGAN

(calls out)

I'm in, Mum. Tuck me in?

The beam of a flashlight dances by the tent flap. Mary crawls in and tucks in Morgan.

Morgan tosses and turns until her fingers poke through the Y-front opening.

MORGAN

My weeny.

(giggles)

Jar has a weeny and I have a weeny, too.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MAIN TENT - MIDDAY

Morgan watches her mother's fingers, shiny with scales, grubby with blood, as she cleans out fresh fish. Immaculate and starched in her matching shorts and blouse, she appears disconnected from the moment.

MORGAN

Careful, Mom, you almost cut his chin.

MARY

A fish is not a he. And it doesn't have a chin.

MORGAN

(pokes under the fish's mouth)

So what's that? I say it's a chin.

Mary frowns.

MARY

Why're you so stubborn, Morgan Maddock? Jarryd's not half as stubborn as you.

MORGAN

He's a boy. That's much better than being a girl.

Mary flicks bits of fish gut off her fingers and scrapes the cutting board.

MARY  
 (sighs deeply)  
 Can't argue that point.

Morgan flops on the sandy ground and picks up the stick she has begun whittling with a blunt blade. An old digest of Native American folklore is at her feet.

MORGAN  
 When I grow up, I'll be a *chamum* and I'll collect lots of things and beads and lots of bone bits to make necklaces for all my girlfriends. I'll make one for you too, Mom.

MARY  
 That's sweet thing to say, Morry, but what's a *chamum*?

MORGAN  
 He fixes up people when they're sick. He smokes a peace pipe and he goes to the sweat lodge.

MARY  
 Oh, but you can't be a shaman. A shaman is always a man.

MORGAN  
 When I'm all grown up, I'll be a *chamum* and I'll be a man, too. Like Daddy and Jarryd.

B/W strobe: Morgan whittling. An old children's digest of Indian folklore is at her feet.

INT. MORGAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeans still around his ankles, he hobbles to his bed, kicks off his jeans and flops down on his stomach. Seconds later, he reaches for a pillow and pushes it under his hips. He humps the pillow slowly, rhythmically.

Fantasy Montage

The shifting sensual image of a blonde woman, Christen Jensen, naked under Morgan. She kisses him passionately. He rubs her breasts. She grips his buttocks. He moans. The humping become more focused.



Eyes shielded by the crook of his elbow, post  
orgasmic, Morgan is breathing hard.

EXT. ORCHARD - EARLY MORNING

SUBTITLE: Tullah-Tasmania - 10 years earlier