

that I had about him. One thing I knew, I could never reveal to my mother that since the age of nine, I too, had been violated by the so-called Boogeyman!

Something is Wrong

The summer before entering my first year of high school, Coach Webb gave me a call. He informed me that the coaches at Central High were expecting me to try out for the football team.

“Yes sir, I am considering trying out for the football team this fall,” I replied.

“Great,” he said. “See you in the fall.” Then he hung up. The summer flew by as if it had wings.

Ninth grade marked the beginning of high school. I was mature for my age, I thought. I was muscular, six feet, one inch tall, and had dark sandy hair. But most of all, I was even more noticed by the girls.

At the end of August, my mother dropped me off at school to attend orientation. Victoria, my kick-off mentor, greeted me with a smile. Not only was she outgoing but also pretty. She led me to where the school I.D.s were being taken. As I prepared to take my picture, she said, “Come on, Joseph, show us those pearly whites.” Not only was I smiling on the outside, but also within. I hoped everyone in high school was as kind as Victoria.

Once I paid my fees, I went to the location for class scheduling. My final selection of courses was made from the electives. The number of electives from which to select was enormous. Narrowing it down to animation, industrial arts, public speaking, choir, and culinary arts, I selected the culinary program as one of my electives.

Following class scheduling was the general assembly. After the assembly, I returned to the office to get a printout of my schedule. The secretary said, “Can I help you with anything?”

I said, “Yes, ma’am, I’m waiting for a printout of my schedule.”

With a warm smile, she said, “During registration, did you provide us with your email?”

“Yes, ma’am!”

“You’re in high school now. Your schedule has been emailed to you.”

I wasted little time viewing my schedule on my phone. Once home, I printed out two copies. Placing one copy in my bookbag, I left the other on the kitchen table for my mother.

Never in my wildest dreams did I expect Walter to look at my schedule.

“Are you enrolled in a cooking class?” he smirked. To avoid any negative remarks, I said, “Yes, it is a course requirement for graduation!” Not another question was asked about my schedule by Walter. He was more familiar with the school athletic eligibility requirements than the graduation prerequisites. My mother stood over the sink, chuckling. She knew the cooking class was not a requirement for graduation.

On the first day of my culinary course, we were placed in groups of three and given a list of items that we would need. Mrs. Duncan, the instructor, announced there was a mandatory meeting tomorrow evening after school. The meeting was for students interested in joining the culinary arts club.

During football practice on the evening of the meeting, a deluge of rain poured down. At the end of practice, the entire team looked and smelled like a bunch of filthy pigs. The head coach ordered all of us to take a shower before leaving the athletic facility. It was 4:30, and the meeting to join the culinary arts club was scheduled for 5:00 pm. In the locker room, the shower order was seniors, juniors, then sophomores. Pressed for time, I approached the assistant coaches in charge of the shower. I explained my situation and was given permission to shower with the last group of seniors.

The sixteen showerheads grouped around an open area reminded me of a scene in a movie. Standing in front of shower number 16, I was nervous. I placed my towel on the rack above. It was not long before the warm water pushing against my body forced the grass and mud to disappear. With my right hand, I rotated the soap around and around,

making sure any additional dirt was removed. I was relaxing and reminiscing about my first couple of days in high school. I happened to glance to my right, and my eyes became fixed on a teammate taking a shower next to me. I was captivated by his hairy chest and tall, muscular build. As the warm water splashed against his body, I was overtaken by a powerful desire for him.

Suddenly the taunting voices of my teammates snapped me from my trance. “Dude, what’s on your mind.” Can’t wait to see your girlfriend,” said one senior. “Who is the lucky lady waiting for this dude?” With laughter and fingers pointing toward me, I was now the center of attention and the brunt of all jokes. Coach appearing from around the corner didn’t make matters any better.

“What’s going on fellas? What’s all the fuss about?” he asked.

“My goodness, son, we need to get you over to the nearest brothel.” His response was not what I expected. Not only did an outburst of laughter erupt, but it also drew the attention of others. I was completely embarrassed! Turning off the shower, I reached for my towel. Naked with water rolling off my body like a wet duck, I tried my best to exit the shower quickly.

Next, a teammate called out the name “Stud!” Like a building wave, the chants began— “Stud, stud, stud!” A few seconds later, I was safely hidden in a bathroom stall. There was only one problem! My clothing was in my locker. Soon as the stall door opened, I was bombarded with the chant “Stud, stud, stud!” As I feverishly rotated the numbers on my combination lock, someone said, “Are you going to give her the high hard one, stud?” Someone else said, “Stud is on his way to hit a home run!” It seemed as if their making fun of me would never stop. I tied my shoes and quickly made my way to the exit. When I arrived at the culinary meeting, I signed the list and called my mother to come and pick me up.

While sitting on the bench outside, waiting for my mother, a few of my teammates walked by. They began chanting, “Stud, stud, stud!”

If they only knew, “Stud” had a desire to hit a home run with a male and not a female.

My mother arrived. On our way home, I remained silent.

“How did the culinary meeting go?” she asked.

“Everything went well!”

“Are you ok?”

“Yes, I am fine mother!”

We entered the house. I went straight into the bathroom and shut the door. Standing in front of the mirror, I stared at myself while tears rolled down my face. I removed my clothing and continued gazing at my body. Minutes later, I was sitting on the toilet seat with my head facing the floor, sobbing. As I recollected my thoughts and desires for my teammate, I was frightened. What is wrong with me, I asked?

Finally, I was unable to shed any more tears. There was no better person to talk to about my horrible shower experience than my mother, the school counselor. In the past, she assisted countless numbers of young boys and girls in transition through the awkward and scary puberty stage of life. After drying my eyes instead of seeking her support, I returned to my room and sat in silence.

The next day at practice, I was still the center of attention. No longer did my teammates call me Joseph; now I was Stud. Even the coaches seem to prefer the name Stud.

A few days later before the start of gym class I was the last to enter the dressing room. However, things were different that morning. Instead of getting ready for class, the boys were jockeying for position trying to stand on a bench. Their behavior reminded me of a herd of cattle fighting for position at the last water hole. Doing my best to ignore the commotion, I walked into the stall to get dressed. I went to my locker and placed my belongings inside. Heading toward the gym, a teammate yelled, “Hey Joseph, would you like to take a look?”

“A look at what?”

“At the girl’s boobs, man! The hole in the wall leads directly to the girls’ dressing room! Come on man, come take a look!”

Another teammate said, “Yeah, Stud, come on man!”

Several more turned and said, “You’re Stud?”

Feeling the pressure, I gave in. Standing in line, I waited my turn. What was puzzling was that each boy who looked through the hole walked away with a bulge in the front of his gym shorts. For me, I hoped

my peering through the hole in the wall would confirm my masculinity, and I would walk away with the same happy result.

Next in line, someone said, “Stud, are you wearing your jockstrap?” Laughter exploded!

Nervousness set in. I had seen girls in panties and bras at my sister’s sleepovers, but never fully naked. Climbing onto the bench, I placed my right eye against the crack in the wall. I caught sight of a girl getting undressed. She removed her colorful matching bra and panties. She reached into her bag and pulled out a solid black sports bra and panty. Before putting them on, the young lady pranced around naked. Focusing on her developing body like a laser beam from space, I was hoping to get aroused.

Getting restless, one of the boys said, “Come on, Stud! Class is about to start! Give someone else a turn!”

“Hold on man, just a few more seconds!” I said. Buying time and trying to get stimulated like the other boys but it was not happening. With no physical proof of a bulge in my gym shorts, I pretended like I was overcome with excitement. Echoing sounds of pleasure, I said, “Wow man, look at her! Boy, I wish those nipples were on my bottle!” Grabbing my crotch, I leaped off the bench and ran into the stall. My tactic seemed to work. One of the players called out, “Cool down, Stud!”

I was sitting in the stall, utterly confused. In my health class, our teacher had explained what boys my age should be experiencing. According to him, my hormones should be out of control for girls, not boys.

I walked out of the stall into the gym. Throughout gym class, my eyes remained fixed on the girl who was wearing the black panty and sports bra. After class, the boys’ behavior became chaotic again. The entire dressing room jockeyed for position to see the sweaty and naked female bodies as they prepared to enter the shower. For me, the litmus test was over. Something unexplainable was taking place inside of me that was not “normal” for someone my age. So distraught over the incidents during gym class, I decided to skip football practice.