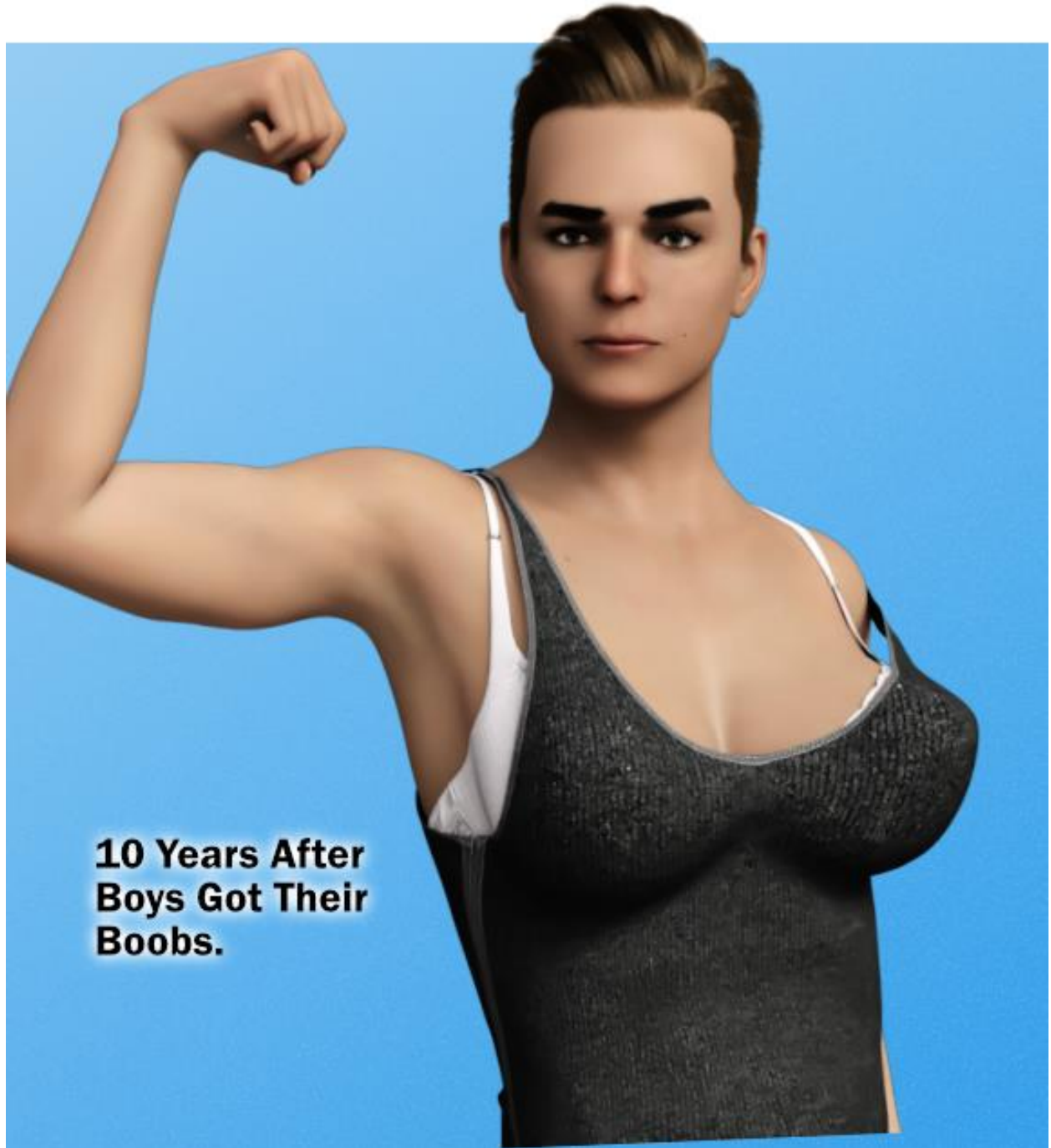


BEV



**10 Years After
Boys Got Their
Boobs.**

BEV
By Cooper

Cute guys, big breasts and the changing face of masculine culture in America.

In singles bars across America, it's becoming an increasingly common sight. A young woman sitting with her friend at the bar spots a really cute guy ordering a drink at the other end. She and her friend huddle, whispering. Finally, the young woman nods, walks down to the other end of the bar and approaches the guy.

"Would you settle a bet between me and my girlfriend?" She asks.

The guy, taking a sip from his beer, smiles confidently. "Sure. What is it?"

The girl glances down at his cleavage. "Are you wearing a padded bra, or are those all you?"

The guy, subconsciously shaking his shoulders and sending off tremors in his chest that cause the girl's mouth to drop open, says, "Why don't you come back to my place and find out?"

These are not, it would seem, their father's sons.

Nor are these their mother's daughters. While the first generation to experience male breast enlargement treated it as something shameful and embarrassing, young people now look at it as something perfectly natural.

Michelle Yo, a bartender at Katie's, where the above scene took place, says she has seen a definite change in the past couple of years. "The first young guys who grew breasts were really ashamed about it," she says. "You started seeing a lot more layers of clothing. They slouched. Now, we see young guys coming in wearing tight jeans, boots and nothing up top but a chemise or a push-up bra."

I asked Brian Anderson, a seventeen-year-old freshman at Grant University, about the new trend. He is wearing a lacey bustier that raises and enhances his bare chest. A bright golden necklace dangles in the swelling of his cleavage. His fraternity brother, Hamish J'amal, is wearing a more conservative tank top. Finally, Kelly Smith, a recent graduate from the college, has on a tight blue polo shirt. It hugs his breasts, but the collar is buttoned all the way to the top.

"I think it shows that a guy's confident when he isn't afraid to show a little cleavage," Brian says. "I'm not going to go around dressed as a nun."

"It drives the girls crazy," Hamish says with a roguish smile. "They go wild when a guy comes in here in a tight shirt. They're just like us now."

Kelly feels differently. At 25 years old, he is seven years older than Brian. When the breast enlargement virus, BEV, hit, he was a fifteen-year-old freshman in high school. "Guys didn't have breasts," he says matter-of-factly. "It was really hard for my generation when we started to develop. We'd spend our middle-school years snapping bra straps, twisting nipples and giving the girls a hard time. Then, suddenly, we woke up one morning with our own knockers. It was very disconcerting."

"We're trying to get this dinosaur to loosen up," Hamish says with a smile. "He dresses like an old man."

I find the same attitude gap among women. Sarah Barnhardt and Shelly Goldberg, both first-year students at Grant, give me a definite "Yes" when I ask them if guys who show cleavage are sexy. "I think guys who try to hide them are sissies," Sarah says. "I mean, all the boys have them, so what's the big deal?"

"When I see a hot guy in a halter top," Shelly says, "my jaw just drops to the floor."

Yet, Maria Sanchez and Yolanda Gutierrez, twenty-eight-year-old graphic designers who come to Katie's about twice a week, find it strange. "I know that most guys have breasts now," Maria says, "but I really don't want to see them bouncing around all over the place."

"I like a traditional guy," Yolanda says. "A coat and tie. He should hide his breasts. It just looks... well, wrong."

Michelle Yo says that as men have started to show off their new assets, other changes have taken place. "Look out at the dance floor," she says. "The guys in the tanks and the bras, they shave their armpits."

Looking out at the scene, I see that she is right. The guys who are showing all have razor-smooth armpits. Just like the girls.

"It's aesthetics," Brian says. "Your chest is smooth, your armpits should be, too."

"Hairy pits are gross," Sarah and Shelly assure me. "I don't care how hot he is. If he has bushy pits, that just makes me want to vomit."

Kelly, sitting stiffly, shakes his head in wonder. "Shaving pits is a girl-thing. I can't believe there are guys who do it to be honest."

Hamish raises his arms to show up his smooth, peachy armpits. "There's a reason I'm getting laid tonight, and you aren't," he boasts.

I ask Michelle Yo how she accounts for the new openness men are showing about their breasts. "Time," she says. "People get used to change over time."

And how does she, I ask, feel about guys who are stacked? "I like to have something to grab on to when I'm making love to a guy," she says. "Once I had a guy who had blossomed, I never wanted to go back."

Shelly shares Michelle's passion for well-endowed men. "It's another thing to play with," Shelly says. "Another way to get and give pleasure."

Sarah is more pragmatic. "Guys with breasts are more sensitive. If he bites me, he knows now that I can bite him right back."

"I get lots more breast-kisses from endowed guys," Michelle agrees. "They are a little more gentle up top, unless I don't want them to be."

While time may account for some of the change in attitude, younger people have been helped in their acceptance of male breasts through changes in school and culture.

"I was about seven when the virus first started to hit, and it was all a big deal. I didn't really care," Brian says. "In elementary school, we read books like Mike's First Training Bra. They showed us videos where boys and girls were at the pool wearing bikini tops. One of the boys tried to take off his top, and all the other guys told him that it wasn't right for guys to be outside without covering their breasts. I knew and expected to have breasts as a normal part of growing up."

Not so with Kelly. "I refused to wear a bra when my breasts started growing. By my sophomore year in high school, they'd gotten pretty big, but I wore T-shirts and just let them hang. That's what most guys were doing. The teasing from the girls was bad enough as it was. We weren't about to start wearing bras and let them get at us about that."

Changes in law that came about in Kelly's junior year brought his days of letting it all hang out to an end. Concerned that bra-less guys were starting to distract co-eds, state and national laws were passed requiring that people "with enhanced breasts" wear bras when on government property.

"My mom brought me my first bra," Kelly tells me. "She told me how to wear it. I cried that night thinking about showing up at school wearing that harness."

"I was really excited when I got my first bra," Hamish counters. "It meant that I was becoming a man. My mom took me to the store, and we picked one out together."

The experiences of Kelly and Mike are not unique. Despite the fact that over 80% of adult males now have breasts, the providing of bras and the training in their use is still a task that falls largely to mothers. In addition, mothers are expected to provide discipline to rebellious boys who refuse to show the proper degree of modesty.

Dr. Angela Richter feels that may one day change. "The men who are fathers now did not grow up in an era when men dealt with such things. Sixty percent buy their own breast support devices on-line. They say that they feel creepy and out of place when in the bra department. They just aren't comfortable with their own breasts, and they surely aren't comfortable talking with their sons about them."

Dr. Harold Pinter is more blunt. "To most older men, breasts are for cheerleaders. They still haven't accepted that it is a part of male culture now.

How can a guy tell his busty young son that it's wrong to go outside without a shirt on when he spent his youth shirtless? There is a lot of cognitive discord among older men about this issue."

Indeed, surveys show that 75% of men still believe that men should be allowed to go topless. Only 6% of women share this view.

Schools now have programs for both boys and girls encouraging modesty. "We have the same policy for guys as girls," Principal Cynthia Moore of Edward's Academy explains. "The guys have to learn just like the girls that if they show up at school wearing a see-through shirt, they are going to cause a distraction."

In addition to educational efforts made by schools, mainstream media has done its bit to help men accept the changes in their bodies. The long-running sitcom "Puppies" made male breast jokes a part of the culture. Jimmy Vavino, who played the father of a teen-age son and an adolescent boy who all had to deal with the trials and tribulations of "growing hooters," says the show's goal was to "tell men that what happening to them was all right."

"The father grew these really big knockers," Jimmy recalls gleefully. "He was like Dolly Parton, and they were always getting in the way when he was trying to do things. A lot of guys felt that way even if their breasts weren't really that large. They were out golfing and all of a sudden, they had these big boobies swinging around while they were teeing off. It was crazy."

Kay Mitchell, who played Jimmy's wife on the show, says the show was also about helping women adjust. "Jimmy had bigger knockers than his wife," Kay explains, "and it made her feel inadequate. We had a lot of jokes where they argued, and Jimmy joked that he didn't need her anymore. 'I can feel myself up when I get horny.' A lot of

women were confused about what was happening. We showed them how to laugh about it. How to be supportive."

Andy Pillman, who played the teen-age son, says that he was going through the same things as his character. "When the virus first hit, only some boys got it.

It took about three years for it to get just about everyone growing. Chaz, my character, was one of the first to blossom, and in the show his girlfriend dumped him for a guy with a flat chest."

That episode still resonates with Kelly, who was a real-life early bloomer. "All of us were really afraid that would happen. In fact, the more my chest swelled the more macho I tried to be. I got in a lot of fights trying to prove to guys-and girls-- that just because I had tits that didn't make me less of a man."

Comedian Kathy Acker says that the changes brought on by BEV and shows like "Puppies" helped female comedians become more mainstream. "If I made a joke about jogger's nipple before," she says, "I lost half the audience. Now the guys are laughing as much as the girls."

The Society for the Preservation of Television has named the episode in which Chaz gets dumped by his girlfriend as the eighth most important moment in television history.

Coming in at number fifteen was an episode where Chaz's new girlfriend buys him a floral print bra and refuses to make out with him unless he wears it. That episode was written by Sheila Stanhope, who now teaches film and feminist theory at Columbia University.

"I felt like the BEV was a great opportunity for the men and women of the world to become more equal. I wanted men to see their breasts as being the same as women's, as components of their sexual identities. I hoped the episode would encourage young men to wear sexy underwear, and young women to demand that they do."

Sheila feels that the work she and others did at the time has paid off. "Men are learning to be proud of their breasts, just like women. And women are learning to take more pleasure in the male breast. It puts us on an equal footing. He can look at my chest while he's talking to me, and now I can look at his." Sheila points to the new lactation drug "His Turn" as another example of how male breast growth has brought the sexes closer together.

"Over a million new fathers tried 'His Turn' last year," Sheila boasts. "Statistics show that 25% of these men shared nursing duties with their wives right up until the time the baby started eating solid food. That's a quarter million men who have now bonded with their wives and children in ways that no man has ever done. When these

guys hear a woman complain about feeding her baby, they aren't going to snicker anymore. They are going to nod in sympathy."

Dr. Andrew Marlin, author of the best seller "Father's Milk" about his experiences nursing his twin daughters, agrees. "It changed my life," he says proudly showing me a picture of him holding his daughter Cassie to his nipple while his wife stands approvingly behind him. "When my first child was born, I really felt divorced from the childcare process. I changed a diaper here and there, but it wasn't until he was older and I could help feed him that I really started to feel like a parent. This time, I was right there with my wife nursing the babies from day one."

I ask him if it helped his relationship with his wife. "Of course," he says. "I learned all about 4 am feedings and raw nipples."

Any drawbacks?

"My breasts got bigger, and they aren't quite as perky as before," he confesses wistfully. "But that's a small price to pay. A very small price."

Popular music and movies also have helped change the view of male breast enlargement. Like their peers, older performers initially hid their breast development. But now, male singers increasingly show their stuff on MTV, which even added the category of Sexiest Male Bust to the video awards. Stud had a number one hit with "Jiggle." And buxom boy-band newcomers Chemise popularized the wearing of a floral print chemise as an over-shirt among teen-age boys and girls this past year. Even old-timer Madonna got in on the act with her song "White Lace and rock hard abs," a testament to her love of hunky males with big breasts and sexy brassieres. "Girly is the new guy," Madonna sings, "and a sweet pair of breasts just gets me high."

Fashion designer says that the fashion statements made by groups like Chemise are not confined to television. "Early on," Gaston Wah explains, "fashion designers really struggled to design underclothes that would give men support while not seeming feminine. We made styles that did not look like traditional female undergarments, and we made them in bland, dull colors. It was embarrassing for men to buy things for their breasts, so we made things that said to the world, "I don't like this, but I have no choice. Male breasts were seen as a freak, a mutation, a disease, and the clothes reflected that."

The results, Mistascha Kyoto says, "were ugly. The worst work. Absolutely." Now, however, she says that with changes in how men are looking at their breasts, designers have been freed up to make better clothes for them. "Male breasts now represent youth, vigor, lust for life. They are starting to be a sign of virility."

Consequently, males are now willing to showcase their breasts in bright colors and patterns that tell the world they are healthy and sexually active. "A man in a floral print shirt that hugs his breasts is very sexual. His breasts are serving as a signal to

women that he is virile. A guy who struts into a room wearing a metallic push-up bra? A stallion," she says. "Hung down to here."

A man who hides or downplays his breasts? Kyoto crinkles her nose. "A limp dick," she says. "A guy who can't get it up."

Gaston Wah agrees. "You already hear women saying that the size of a man's breasts is the size of a man's penis. They are looking at a guy and judging his virility based on his cup-size. We are making more and more items designed to make a guy have a fuller, more impressive bustline."

At the same time, the head fashion designer for Victoria's Secret's male division says males are no longer so averse to more traditionally feminine support. Her company's line of "Lace for Him" bras and accessories has been extraordinarily popular. "Look," she says, "the word is out. Guy's breasts are just as soft and sensitive as women's breasts. I think men are now seeing a traditional lacy bra as a way to show that they are sensitive guys. He still has the big shoulders and the biceps that women like to tell them that he is strong, a lacy white bra tells them that he is not afraid to be vulnerable."

Perhaps the best evidence of this change in attitude toward male breasts comes from plastic surgeon Mel Fister. "When this all started, there was a rush of men coming in to inquire about breast reduction surgery," he says. "Most of us had waiting lists of over a year. Guys were offering ten, twenty grand above the normal fees to get to the front of the line. There were serious mutilations and deaths from guys going to sham clinics in South America to have their breasts removed. These men were in hysterics over their breast development."

Now? "I have young men coming in looking to get implants," he says shaking his head. "The typical candidate for reduction is a middle-aged man or older. It's traumatic for them. But the young guys want cleavage."

On average, men already have slightly larger breasts than their female counterparts. That is not by accident. Dr. Kincaid Rassmussen, the designer of BEV, wanted men to have larger breasts than women. "They have larger upper-bodies," she explained in her now infamous testimony to the federal court that convicted her of biological terrorism, "so they should have larger breasts."

Rassmussen says that the gradual acceptance of male breasts proves that she did not commit an act of terrorism. "When I unleashed the virus," she says, "I did it in order to create real equality among the sexes. I think that instead of imprisoning me, they should have given me the Nobel Peace Prize."

So far, like most viruses, BEV, known popularly as The Hooter Virus and to feminists as Ms. Virus, has proven resistant to treatment. "It works by re-writing a male's DNA so that his body reacts to testosterone as a woman's does to estrogen. He

develops the female secondary characteristic of breasts," Dr. Laura Child of the Center for Disease Control explains. "It mutates rapidly, and it acts very quickly."

Why not simply re-rewrite the male DNA? "We don't know how," Child admits. "Dr. Rassmussen was way ahead of the state of the art. I think men should just be thankful she didn't decide that they should have a uterus."

Republicans claim that not enough funding has been devoted to research to prevent and cure BEV. They point to repeated vetoes on the part of President Hilary Clinton to stop increases in funding as well as bills aimed at giving men a tax credit for breast reduction surgery as proof that liberals oppose efforts to, in their words, "restore masculinity."

Dr. Childs defends current spending levels. "BEV is not a life-threatening disease. No one has died from it. No one has missed a day of work. Yet, we spend as much on it as we do researching breast cancer, a disease both men and women have a lot more to be concerned about. I think the current funding levels are high enough for us to pursue the work without taking away from more pressing needs."

Conservative columnist Riley Rority bristles at the comment, opening his coat to reveal a shirt that barely hides a healthy pair of firm young, B-Cup breasts. I can see the outline of his bra through the material.

"This," he says making cups with his hands beneath his chest, "is a pressing need. Men are not supposed to have breasts. That is a simple fact that liberals cannot ignore. Making me walk around in a bra is all part of the feminist-leftist conspiracy to destroy America."

"How does it destroy America?" I ask.

"I can't expect you to understand," he answers, putting his coat back on, "but it's all part of the end of days."

Economist Alice Rivlin dismisses calls for more funding as "Republican hysteria. My own research shows that men now spend over a billion dollars a year on services and products related to their breasts. Republicans should be celebrating Rassmussen for stimulating business. The simple fact of the matter is that male breasts have been good for the economy."

Rassmussen, who has been fighting her terrorism conviction for years, says she would gladly do it all again. "When I turn on the television and see football players doing ads for Playtex total control sports bras, I can't tell you how proud that makes me feel. For a long time men looked upon their chests as proof of their superiority to women. They can no longer do that."

How does she think history will look upon her legacy?

"History," she says. "I'm not thinking about history. I expect to beat this silly conviction and get out of prison within the next five years. I still have work to do."

If she gets out of prison, do men have any need to worry?

"No," she says. "I've achieved my goals as far as male biology goes. My next project is to work on upper-body strength for women."

Kelly, the buxom young man at the bar, cringes at the thought of Rasmussen ever getting out of prison. "Whatever her feelings about equality," he says, "she had no right to do what she did to our bodies. She caused a lot of people a lot of grief. I hope they never let her out again."

Sarah is ambivalent. "As long as she doesn't do anymore experiments, I don't really care. I don't think it's so bad that men have breasts."

Michelle Yo is more forceful. "Give that woman a medal," she says. "There's a whole generation of girls now who never had to hear one joke from a boy about their breasts. That alone is worth it."

It's a sentiment echoed by Rority. "Men shouldn't have to put up with this," he says. "This is girl stuff for girls to deal with. It isn't fair."

One wonders what his wife thinks about her husband's definition of fairness.

The End