Genesis

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Ghost Boy

Chapter 1

"Here is your card, miss. You can enter the art gallery." I look away, my face flushing red. "I'm a boy." I hate how my voice sounds. No wonder she thought I was a girl. My eyes well up with tears, and I blink them away quickly. I'm in an art gallery! This isn't the time to cry over my gender. "Sorry." I bite my lip and try to steady my voice. "It's fine." But it's really not fine; it ruined my day. Not that she would care. No one cares about me. I pick up the card and hurry away.

When I reach the restrooms, I glance at the signs for the girls' and boys' restrooms. I wish I could walk into the boys' restroom without people giving me strange looks. Tears threaten to spill again. I sigh and walk into the girls' restroom. I see a few girls standing in front of the mirror, applying their makeup. I feel a wave of jealousy wash over me. I hate being transgender. If I were cis, my life would be so much easier. Why was I born in the wrong body? Why me? I step into a stall and start crying, biting my finger to keep my sobs quiet. I stay there for a few

minutes, trying to compose myself. Eventually, I hear the makeup girls leave. I can't stay here all day; that card wasn't cheap. I wipe my eyes and walk into the art gallery.

With my mouth agape, I look around. It's breathtaking—so detailed and beautiful. I've always loved art, and I create it myself. I enjoy painting and drawing. Suddenly, jealousy creeps in. I wish my paintings were displayed here. I wish they were as good as these. Part of me wants to destroy all those paintings so mine could shine the brightest. I glance down and bite my finger again. I

shouldn't be thinking like this. I should just appreciate the stunning artwork. Those artists are truly talented—better than I am. I swallow hard and continue walking. It's too crowded here. Everyone is with their friends or family. I have neither; I have no friends and my family is transphobic. I'm envious of everyone around me. Why am I the only one who's alone? I despise it when people laugh and have fun; it only amplifies my loneliness. All I do is draw and paint, which helps me express my feelings.

After wandering for a few minutes, I find myself in a room filled with intriguing paintings. There's no one else here. I examine the artwork and spot a pink and blue painting of a transgender boy. He has a female body, just like mine. I once created a painting like this, but mine wasn't nearly as pretty. Why is everyone's art better than mine? And why do I feel so jealous? It was a mistake to look at other people's work. I hope someday my art will hang in a gallery like this. On the verge of tears, I walk out of the room and further away from the entrance. The art grows darker and more unsettling. I

see paintings of dead bodies, and I don't feel like I belong here. The artwork sends shivers down my spine. My heart begins to race as I stare at a painting of a dead man. He grins menacingly and winks at me. Panic surges, and I run away.

Suddenly, pain shoots through my ribs. They hurt horribly, and I can't breathe. What's happening? I want to scream, but no sound escapes my mouth. My entire body begins to tremble, and my vision blurs. Then everything fades to black. I blink and find myself in a dark ocean. A massive fish emerges, unlike any I've

ever seen. Its teeth are sharp, and its skin glistens with blue and green scales. I try to swim away, but it's faster. It grabs me with its fins. I struggle to escape, but it's too strong. The fish drags me deeper and deeper into the dark ocean. I attempt to scream, but only a few bubbles escape my mouth. No one can hear me, and even if someone could, no one would care. I slap the giant fish, desperate to free myself from its grip. It lets out a terrifying sound and swims even faster. Am I dying? If I am, I hope that in my next life, I'm born into the right body. If I were a real boy, my life