An Indentation in the Shape of You
by objectlesson

Summary

On summer camp, shaving, and not.

Notes

This was my prompt!

"#31, Harry’s insecure about her hairy legs at summer camp because she forgot her razor but luckily her hot lesbian cabin mate helps her feel better in more ways than one."

I used the tag dysphoria to be safe because there’s a lot of discomfort and feelings of inherent wrongness and out of bodies and not fitting in, but it should be noted the dysphoria is not specifically about gender, i.e., Harry does not feel like she's the right sort of girl but she doesn't feel like a boy. This is more an exploration on feeling butch and other in regards to being GNC in women's spaces. Just wanted to clarify for those of you who might be reading this and unsure if it could be triggering or not.

Enjoy!!!

One day into camp, and Harry already feels like she’s not the right sort of girl to be here.

She stupidly thought she might actually fit in as a counselor. After all, it was an adventure camp. There was archery and horseback riding and hiking, so it seemed like a well-suited summer job. She didn’t delude herself into thinking there would be other lesbians here, let alone other butch
lesbians, but she thought maybe girls wouldn’t be so concerned with the rituals of femininity which still escaped her. The shaving, the lotions, the plucking, the leave-in conditioner. She thought she’d be surrounded by the sort of rough-and-tumble, skinned-knee girls who were so busy adventuring they didn’t mind letting their leg-hair grow for a few weeks. She thought counseling summer camp would be like attending summer camp, back when she was ten and didn’t know what she was, only that she was. Wild piney air, the ice of the lake, hot, sun-bleached dock-boards warm under her back as she laid side-by-side with a half-remembered friend. Gap-tooth, hot-palmed. Soft experimental lips pressed flush on a top bunk when everyone else was at campfire. An Ouija board moving under their laughing, curious fingers, the planchet sweeping up to yes, yes, yes, over and over again.

But that’s not what happens, up in the Sierras’ thin air. One of the first conversations she overhears at orientation is two of her fellow counselors commiserating about the upcoming weeks without anything but the military style showers, tile cubicles separated by mildew-slick curtains.

“I always look like a werewolf when camp’s over,” one whines, rubbing anxiously at her smooth pale legs, fingertips sweeping from her knees to the high-tops of her old school vans. Harry looks down at her own beat-to-shit REI hiking boots, and feels like she went overboard, like she’s already too much, too strange, too rough. An unhewn rock needing to be tumbled. “I brought some disposable Daisies but it’s just not the same as my Venus,” she says to her friend, who’s examining a fistful of split ends with a pout.

“Girl I know. The dust always fucks up my hair. It gets so frizzy,” she says, finger-combing the chestnut brown waves it before tying them up into a neat bun. “But it’s not worth using a masque or anything, it just gets oily out here.”

Harry bunched in on herself like a fist, staring at the dead campfire, the pile of white-grey ash. It’s always like this, around other girls. Every since she turned twelve and everything changed and she stopped being able to separate her longing from her longing to belong. They speak in a foreign language that makes her feel outside this thing she knows she is. This thing she desires.

But…you guys are so pretty she wants to tell the girls, voice low, awkward, earnest because that’s the only way she can make it come out. But she’s always terrified of telling girls they’re pretty, because she’s not the sort of girl who can get away with it coming across as comforting camaraderie, a nonthreatening attempt to connect, even if it is. So, she stays silent. She takes notes as the head-counselor outlines emergency protocol. She thinks about her hairy legs in her worn in Levis, how she hasn’t shaved since September, how she doesn’t judge other girls for the stuff they do to feel beautiful but she doesn’t trust them not to judge her for her inability to do the same.

A pinecone falls from the nearest tree, and makes her jump as he strikes the earth like a drum beat.

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The senior counselor in their cabin is everything Harry wants to but could never be, wants to fuck but could never fuck, because fear is real and crawls through her veins like poison.

Her name is Taylor Swift and she's from Tennessee and looks it, big blonde Southern hair in artificial curls, a smile like sunshine, long coltish legs in tattered denim. She talks like a camp counselor constantly, even though there aren’t even any kids there yet. She’s just that sort of girl: forever enthusiastic and new-penny bright. All smiles, and smoothness, and shine. Her shoulders are browned instead of burnt, and Harry was to be the girl who gets to rub sunscreen into her but she knows she’s never, ever let herself be that girl.
Harry has a crush on her right away. That sort of irritating crush she can't place, can't trace back to a source: does she wish she was a girl like Taylor Swift, every ritual of girlhood coming to her with effortless grace? Or does she want girls like that? To gently palm up the outside of a smooth calf, smell their shaving-cream skin, lose her hands in the thick springy landscape of their hair? Does she wish she liked lipgloss, or does she want to lick that sugar-sweetness of of Taylor’s lips?

She doesn’t know. She only knows Taylor makes her feel awkward by comparison, big and ungainly even though she’s pretty sure Taylor might be the only counselor in the cabin who’s technically taller than her. She whirls around the cabin, she leaves a wake of strawberries and laundry detergent and Harry smells it on her sheets when she falls asleep, and then again, when she wakes.

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The first night of orientation, she has a dream they’re drowning in the lake together during their swim-test. When she reaches out into the cold green to grip Taylor’s arm tight and bring her to the surface, she leaves a smudge of emerald black rot in the shape of her fingers, and she pulls away because Taylor screams like she hurt her, bubbles erupting in a torrent from her gaping mouth. Harry wakes up nauseated, paranoid she’s been snoring, and homesick even though most days, she just wants to get away from home.

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The second night, Taylor brings out a guitar and plays songs for the whole cabin. Her voice is soft and honey-gold like a angel and Harry is embarassed she brought her own guitar, which she can really only pick a few careful tunes on. She’s much more of a singer, and even then her voice isn’t like Taylor Swift’s. Her register is low and raspy and always hurt sounding, so she’s resigned to singing the blues, to writing songs about heartbreak.

Taylor sounds like a church-auditorium darling, but that doesn't stop her from writing about heartbreak, too. She sings about being invisible, about sitting in the bleachers, about boys with names and boys without names and her eyes glisten alongside the lyrics and Harry watches, rapt, digging her nails into her own ankles because there’s nowhere else for the surge of feeling in her throat to go.

“Thanks, I’ll be here all week,” Taylor giggles after she’s through, bowing, blowing kisses, winking across the room where Harry is jammed between two bottom bunks, watching. She feels like that wink is for her, but she knows that’s impossible.

She claps and whoops all the same, averting her gaze shyly when Taylor Smiles at her, something conspiratorial flickering in the watery blue of her eyes.

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The third and final night, Taylor skips over to her, point to her name tag and asks. “Harry is the cutest nickname. Is it short for Harriet?”

“For Harold,” Harry manages to joke, because it’s the same thing she’s deadpanned one hundred other times in one hundred lower stakes situations. It works, and Taylor doubles over giggling, blonde curls spilling like something from a fairy-tale. Harry is frozen in front of the first aid kit she’s stocking, heart in her throat.

“Hey, after the last training session we’re gonna have a little counselor’s only party in the campground near the bathrooms,” Taylor says then, reaching out and flicking Harry’s shoulder

Harry nods and swallows, because she can’t speak.

The party is a blue of Takis, Wine coolers, the pull-apart sort of Twizzler. Someone digs out some peppermint schnapps from where it was wrapped away safely in camisoles and PINK brand velour sweat pants, and after that the forest smells like toothpaste and wood-smoke and everyone but Harry is talking about boys.

Their names blend together. John, Jake, Josh. She zones out staring at the darkness, listening to the crackle of the fire, thinking no wonder it’s so hard to make friends, when the material girls used to bond over is the one thing she can’t relate to. Eventually they shift from boys to the periphery around them: the ways they impress them, how they’re all so annoyed they won’t be able to do that out here. No shaving, no lotions, no plucking, no leave in conditioner. Disposable Daisies instead of a trusty Venus, and how that’s just not the same. Eventually Harry excuses herself, waving awkwardly as the other girls as they bid her a sweet, distracted goodbye, and half drunk she stumbles along the dark dirty path back to the cabin to collapse, alone, into bed.

Taylor follows soon after, and Harry wonders how she could have missed having her so close, stumbling towards her shadow in the inky night. She would have offered her arm, her jacket, her flashlight, if she knew. She would have waited up, so she says so. “Hey. I hope it—hope you weren’t walking in the dark. Sorry I didn’t hear you, I would have—”

“You want a smoke?” Taylor asks, producing a pack of camels from the sleeve of her University hoodie easily, grinning. Her eyebrows are so thin, her lips so pink, her leg so long. Harry’s mouth is peppermint cool and vodka hot so she stares, not sure how she’s managed not to the last few days.

“Fuck yeah,” she says; hauling herself out of bed, winding behind that long tan back onto the cabin balcony, mouth slack and stunned as Taylor turns to daintily stick a cigarette between her lips. She cups her palms to help light it, big blonde hair smelling like camp fire smoke over the buried sweetness of shampoo. “How did you sneak these in?” Harry asks after inhaling and exhaling, a pillar of white sweeping into the black around them, same color as the stars.

Taylor steps close, so their sides brush. “M’not the sweet, nice, goody-two-shoes girl everyone thinks I am, Harold-Harriet Styles,” she teases, looking up. There’s that unmistakable, unspeakable glint again. The secret they’re both supposed to know, that Harry doesn’t know because she’s always on the outside of secrets between girls.

It’s too much, the cutting blue, so she has to sit. She just drops right there, knees bent on the balcony with her feet pressed between the railing slats, a few inches of her calves exposed between the hem of her jeans the the top of her sock. After a few moments of smoking and silence, Taylor sits down beside her, and reaches out with tentative fingers to brush the hair growing on that revealed strip of skin. “This is hot,” she says.

Like people say that. Like girls like her say that, in the same Paris Hilton drawl Harry remembers from the Simple Life, which she watched with dueling confusion and want and self-hatred in her eleven year old gut. “Are you making fun of me?” she asks, because she’s not sure. Because she’s drunk. Because it seems like the most plausible explanation for this situation.
Taylor makes a face: open mouth, wide eyes, plucked brows pulled up to incredulous arches. “Oh my god! No! I legit think its hot. You—I love when girls don’t shave. That tough, I don’t give a fuck thing? Damn. Be still my heart.”

Harry does not know what to make of this, so she pulls away defensively, skin prickling like she’s fallen into nettles. “You shave,” she mumbles, tapping ash off the butt of her cigarette and gesturing towards Taylor’s mile-long legs with a jut of her chin. “Baby-soft. Like everyone else here.”

Taylor nods, shrugging dismissively. “Well yeah, maybe, but what I do doesn’t reflect what I like. And fuck everyone else here… who did I run after, huh? I’m here. I’m not with them,” she says, shooting Harry a sly grin, knocking their shoulders together.

Harry stares resolutely at the slats of wood between her knees. At her hands. At the glowing cherry of her cigarette. This conversation might make sense if Taylor was gay, but—but she can’t be. It would shake the foundation of this whole camp for her to have slipped so easily through the cracks, to have snuck up on Harry like this, grinding all her expectations and assumptions and spit-brittle walls to dust. “I don’t understand.” She mumbles. And then, because she’s in a habit of apologizing for things, for the way she is. “M’sorry.”

Taylor coughs, shakes her head, and smiles. “I’m trying to flirt with you, dummy,” she says then. “But you don’t—it’s hard, you know. Being a girl like me. We gotta try ten times harder to get noticed. To be seen.” She reaches out, touches Harry’s leg hair again with muted tenderness, careful and deliberate. This time, Harry’s breath catches, her heart stops, but she doesn’t fall away. Taylor’s angel-sweet voice resounds in her head on a never-ending loop. “It’s hard, you know, being a girl like me.

“So, I’m glad for girls like you,” Taylor continues, putting out her cigarette on the balcony, sliding her hand lower, tucking it into Harry’s sock to brush over the thin, formerly untouched skin of her ankle. “Stuff like body hair helps girls like me know they can get bold,” she murmurs, hand falling away so she can get up on all fours, hair making a halo around them as she leans in close, breathes peppermint-sweet breath over Harry’s lips. “And greedy.”

Harry kisses her first. She can’t help it, the want hits her like a flood, like something she can’t control. It crashes over her like a tidal wave and Taylor tastes like smoke and liquor and sweetness. The whole of her is soft like kissing a cloud, and Harry might float away so she pushes one hand into her hair, makes a fist, anchors herself there to keep from dissolving.

Taylor makes a breathy whining sound, and it twists like a fishhook in Harry’s gut. Then she’s straddling her, narrow gold hips, long long legs bracketing belted denim and the shift and grind of feather light, spun-sugar bones on top of her. Harry pulls away from the wet-hot burn of their kiss to tell her, “You can—you can really sit on me, if you want, you don’t weight anything.”

So Taylor sinks gratefully onto her lap, slender spindly fingers spreading over her shoulders, up into the fly-away brown curls at her neck. When she grinds down, it feels like an earthquake, like Harry is breaking open. “I’ve been wet ever since I saw you open that beer-bottle against a rock. Feel,” Taylor demands, popping the button on her shorts so there’s room to guide Harry’s hand inside.

There’s some struggling, some grappling. But most of all, there’s softness, and fever-heat. Taylor isn’t totally shaved between her legs, there’s some downy blonde hair growing in on her pubic mound like peach fuzz, making Harry long for a version of her body that is not all hard lines and coarseness. But that longing does not even come close to this longing: the sensation of folds parting, of slickness, of trembles. Her fingers dip into a sinkhole and they both gasp, Harry in the back of her throat, Taylor high and tinny and into the night. She’s so sticky, so flooded, and Harry
has dreamed of this, wondered about it. What it might feel like to have a girl’s insides clutching at her, what it might feel like to push second-knuckle deep into the hungry suck of a wet, wanting pussy. And she’s wanted to be good at it, all these times she’s dreamed, but now she’s frozen in awe, forearm flexing, heart like thunder in her chest.

“Crook your fingers,” Taylor whimpers, sounding like she’s hurt, or crying, even though she clearly isn’t either of those thing. She braces her weight with one hand on Harry’s shoulder, reaches down and finds the sweet-pink nub of her clit with the other, rubbing in frantic circular motions. Harry is hypnotized but she can take orders, so she does as she’s told, bends and hooks and fucks Taylor just like that. “Oh—yes, yeah, good. Oh god,” Taylor forces out in a shaky voice, crumpling so her brow is pressed to Harry’s and they’re sharing the same boozy, candy-cane air. “Been lookin’ at your hands, staring for days,” she groans, sounding more southern now that she’s got two fingers thrusting inside of her. “And now—now m’gonna come in them.”

“Yeah? Fuck, please, come with me in you,” Harry murmurs hating that she doesn’t sound in control, she doesn’t sound suave, she doesn’t sound sexy the way she’s always wanted to sound. She’s thought, all this time, she could only get a girl if she embodied the most perfect version of the sort of girl she was destined to be: hard, gruff, in charge. But instead she’s shaking, she’s gasping, she’s locking up right as Taylor locks up, mouth open as she feels the rhythmic hug of her cunt around her knuckles. But it doesn’t seem to matter, that her performance is imperfect, that she doesn’t know what she’s doing. Taylor is yelping and gasping on top of her, she’s seismic against her hip bones all the same, bucking with her head thrown back and that mane of gold looking silver in the moonlight.

They both flatten out on the deck, giggling. Harry’s wrist hurts from the angle but she doesn’t want to be forced from that warmth, so she stays. “You’re the prettiest girl I’ve ever seen,” she says then, petting Taylor’s huge blonde curls with her free hand. “I never—you’re like something from a magazine. I feel crazy.”

“What magazine, Christian Weekly?” Taylor jokes, mouth open on the speeding pulse at Harry’s throat. “M’so boring, I look like every other preacher’s daughter in Tennessee. Where are you from? Are preacher’s daughters exotic there? Because lemme tell you what’s in short supply in my book: girls as tall as me who don’t shave. Who have short hair and those green green candy fucking green eyes and big ass hands to fuck me with. So in my book, m’the one who lucked out, here.”

Harry grins to the stars. “S’really nice you’re not freaked out by my hair.”

“Freaked out? Harry, I want to lick it. Tell me, do you have a thick bush too?” she asks, pulling away, palming messily down between Harry’s legs to grab at the seam of her jeans, where she might have soaked through she’s so wet from all of this. She chokes, blushing, squirming.

“Yeah, I guess. I trim in the summer because my mom tells me to, but,—“

“Well I want to stick my face in it,” Taylor says, batting her lashes, licking her lips, giving Harry the most bemused, electric look. It makes her stomach drop so hard she feels like she’s falling. “How’s that for a good pick-up line? God, m’so embarrassing when I’m thirsty.”

And Harry doesn’t think it’s embarrassing, she thinks its magic, so. She tips her back, and kisses her hard, grabbing the inside of her thigh as her fingers slide out in a mess of slippery wet. They’re puckered like she was in the bath, and that might be the most amazing thing she’s learned about fucking girls. That their wetness changes you, that you’re indelibly marked even after you’ve come. That the rituals of girlhood are more than shaving, lotions, plucking, leave in conditioner. That there are darker, more secret things to discover and partake in and hold close to your heart,
like a secret. The smell of spice, your skin after a long long swim. “Well, we’ve got two weeks,” she murmurs into Taylor’s lip-gloss lips. “So, sure.”

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