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SPECIAL BIRTHDAY ISSUE

SECRETS, LIES & BIGAMY

My husband's other wife

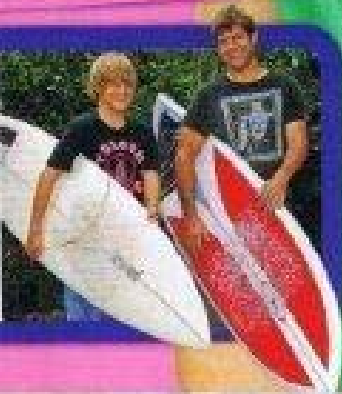


KIWI EXCLUSIVE
MY FAIRY GODMOTHER GAVE ME BOOBS



TRAPPED! IN A TARANAKI twister!

MY SON SAVED ME FROM A SHARK



It's our birthday

\$86,000
IN CASH AND PRIZES

MORE PUZZLES
Each with 20 or more
challenging life puzzles

Kiwis win!

LOTTO FOR A YEAR!



A LIFE-CHAN

Tugging my unruly blonde hair into a ponytail, I looked in the mirror and sighed. Princesses didn't have frizzy hair, horrible skin, or noses like mine.

"I hope you've started a nose job fund for me," I said to my mum, Leigh, later that day. "I hate the way I look. I want to be pretty when I grow up."

"Yes dear, whatever," she shrugged dismissively on her way out to move the sheep.

At just eight years old I was already the odd one out in my family.

My tomboy mother and younger sister, Frances, were more likely to help dad build a retaining wall for fun, than play dress-ups and paint their nails with me.

Stranded on a farm in the small town of Raethi, near Mount Ruapehu, desperate to trade my gumboots for high heels, I waited for a fairy godmother that never came. I was equally out of place at school.

Extremely pale, I was teased a lot

because of the colour of my skin. Glasses, braces, a completely flat chest, and more than the usual smattering of zits at puberty didn't help much either.

Laughing at a joke someone made in class when I was about 14, I noticed my friends whispering and giggling behind my back.

"What's so funny?" I asked them.

"Nothing," they chimed, falling off their chairs with hysterical laughter.

Later that night my best friend rang me.

"I feel bad about today and thought I should ring and tell you what we were laughing about," she explained. "It's just that, well, when you laugh your nose kind of looks like it has a golf ball on the end."

Mortified, I didn't so much as smile from then on, unless my nose was covered with my hand.

Escaping to a New Plymouth boarding school for the last two years of my education, I decided I wanted to become a beauty therapist.

"Surely you'd be better off doing a university degree than a fluffy beauty therapy course?" my mum suggested when I told her.

I duly signed up for a Bachelor of Arts at Victoria University.

Moving to Wellington, I quickly discovered I hated university, got a job as a secretary instead, and met my first real boyfriend, Nigel".

"Well," I told myself, unable to believe he'd actually asked me out on a second date,



Before surgery



After surgery

"This is probably your one chance at a relationship, so you'd better make the most of it."

An army recruit, Nigel was sent to Waiouru and, although there was nothing there for me, I tagged along behind him.

Looking back now, I can see he showed the neighbour's dog more respect than he ever showed me, but at the time my self-esteem was so low I didn't expect any better.

Before I knew it, I was pregnant, engaged, and once more trapped in a place I knew I didn't belong.

When our beautiful daughter, Hunter, was nine months old, Nigel left the army, got a farm job, and said good riddance to me.

"What's wrong with me?" I sobbed to Mum on the phone. "Even the biggest loser in the world doesn't want me."

Moving to Palmerston North, where I hoped to enroll in beauty therapy school, I soon discovered

I was wrong. Nigel wasn't the biggest loser in the world – my next boyfriend was. Not only emotionally, but also physically abusive towards me, he soon had me fearing for my life.

Fleeing to Taupo, I didn't truly relax until I heard he'd gone to jail for beating up his girlfriend before me.

At around this time, Nigel, who was now living in Australia, contacted me about spending more time with Hunter. I decided to fly across the Tasman for a short holiday and sort something out with him.

Sitting next to an old friend, Corina, who'd coincidentally boarded the same flight on her way back to Australia, I didn't realise my life was about to change forever.

"I'm going to Thailand in a few months with a bunch of friends to have cosmetic surgery," she told me.

Fascinated, I told her I'd always been unhappy with the way I looked, but hadn't done anything about it because of the exorbitant cost.



The now strongly confident woman

overseas trip changed everything

GING

holiday

"It's way cheaper in Thailand," she explained. "You should come with us."

That was it. She'd planted the seed. Before we even touched down in Australia it had grown into a tree.

"Okay, I'll do it," I told her, excitedly.

When it was time to go, however, I was devastated to learn no-one else had saved any money.

"Can you wait?" Corina asked apologetically.

"No," I shook my head. "I really can't, I'm sorry."

Determinedly, I researched the breast and nose procedures I wanted, checked the credentials of the surgeons, and investigated the hospital I would be staying at.

Mum had a complete meltdown when I told her.

"No way! You can't do that! You'll wake up in a bathroom somewhere minus your kidneys!" she panicked.

"I'm not completely stupid. I have researched it. It'll be fine. Don't worry," I reassured her.

By then I'd met my first nice boyfriend, Shane. Driving me to the airport, he made silly jokes, and acted oddly out of character.

"He's worried about me," I realised.

It wasn't until I boarded the plane that the reality of what I was doing really hit

me – travelling on my own to a country where English

wasn't even the main language to undergo major surgery!

Waking up from the anaesthetic a few days later, I was ecstatic to find an obvious big lump under the heavy bandages on my chest. All my life I'd been waiting for my boobs to grow, but they never did.

When the bandages came off I could hardly believe my eyes.

I'd always been unhappy with the way I looked

"Whoah! This is so great, I just love them!" I gushed, beaming at the surgeon.

He wasn't exactly how I imagined my fairy godmother would look, but I didn't care in the slightest. Finally, I would be able to go into a bra shop and feel like a grown-up lady.

My nose, once the swelling went down, was also a dream come true. The surgery didn't radically change my appearance, but it altered it enough to stop me feeling self-conscious.

"Wow, that's going to take some getting used to!" exclaimed Mum when I arrived home.

"I know, isn't it fantastic," I threw my head back and laughed, unself-consciously, without covering my nose, for the first time since I was a teenager.

My confidence soared, my relationship with Shane blossomed and I completed the beauty therapy course I'd always dreamed about.

"Having that surgery has made such a positive difference in my life," I commented to Shane one evening over a glass of wine. "There must be other people in the same boat. I'd love to be able to make this happen for them too."

Putting together a business plan, I stumbled across a company already doing what I hoped to do. Restored Beauty Getaways organised escorted group tours to Thailand for people to have cosmetic surgery and a holiday at the same time. They were also selling franchises.

Now I run my own Restored Beauty Getaways franchise, not only arranging affordable cosmetic surgery for people, but also dentistry and eye surgery at a

fraction of the normal cost. Everyone's heard stories about dodgy boob jobs in Bangkok, but the surgeons and nurses I deal with are all highly qualified and couldn't be more attentive. I received the best care I've received anywhere when I was in Thailand.

The other day I ran into an old school friend.

"Wow, is that you Jessie?" she exclaimed. "You look amazing!"

"It sure is," I laughed, handing her a business card. "Let me know if there's anything I can do for you."

Jessie Ryland, 29, Taupo.



With my daughter, Hannah

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