

**there were barely any butch characters.**

I can understand why people felt not represented. But I think as lesbians we tend to be hyper-political. Which I like; we push the envelope because we have to. We have to make space for ourselves, and each inch is hard fought for. But I do think it's hard to expect one show to show everybody.

**What's your character like?**

She's *awesome*. I really like her. She's really sweet, kind, and a totally butch Midwestern girl. She's a gentlemanly butch: she opens the doors, she'll carry heavy stuff for people, she's always the friend that will help people out. She's in love with Jenny, so she loves the femme, heady, intellectual type.

**The show's been pretty racy; do we have hot stuff to look forward with you?**

My first scene was a sex scene, actually. They told me that I got the job on a Tuesday night. Wednesday morning they picked me up at five in the morning, and Thursday morning I'm shooting a scene. It was so funny.

**Do you worry at all about being typecast as a butch character?**

Well, I can definitely play that part and I [do] get those kinds of parts. And I am really interested in them because I feel like it's my life. I definitely go through the world having people think I'm a guy a lot of the time.

But I also feel confident and excited because I've been reading for some roles that are more on the femme side. I've noticed that people are interested in casting me in different kinds of roles, so I think that the industry has definitely opened up.

**You and Leisha Hailey are the only out actresses on the show.**

Yeah. My dad's gay, and I was raised going to [Gay Pride] marches in L.A. since I was a kid, so for me it was never, "Oh, will I be out?" I came out when I was nineteen, and I'm really proud to be gay. I think it's definitely helped me in my career: Just as much as some straight dude who's proud to be married to a woman and have kids, I want to be proud of who I am and my

community that I come from. I feel [being gay is] a cultural thing, just as much as people from different ethnic backgrounds.

**Was your dad married to your mom?**

He was married to my mom and then he came out and then they divorced.

**Until now, have you made your way in the world mostly as a musician?**

When I lived in Europe, I lived usually collectively with other artists and performers. We would play street theater festivals, in front of cafés... I was a half-man-half-woman in a circus in northern Europe for a while.

**Would you literally do up half your face as one gender?**

Yeah. It was so cool. I had this cool haircut: it could be slicked back Elvis-guy [style on one side], and on the other side was a Liza Minnelli short cut with a little curl in the front. Then I had a gown I made on one side and the other side was a tuxedo. It was one of the first expressions—besides just dressing like a boy—of dealing with this gender binary thing, like, "Am I a guy, am I a girl?" It would be fun to go through a crowd of people and present myself on one side of me and then flip it around.

**You also spent some time living in India as a man.**

I had already spent weeks at a time in this Romanian village as a guy. I realized it would offer me certain freedoms in traditional landscapes. But when we got into Pakistan, we were going to stay with a very traditional Muslim family, so I dressed as a woman.

**Did you wear a shadere?**

Yes, I did. Not the kind where you can see just the eyes. More like a shawl to hide my hair, basically. Still, I realized, "Wow, this is pretty restrictive." I didn't mind the guys not being able to see my hair, but I couldn't talk to all different kinds of people, and I wanted to be free to be able to do whatever I wanted to do. So going into India, I got my hair cut maybe a bit shorter than nor-

mal and I just started wearing guys' clothes. It was never like someone asked me, "Are you a guy or are you a girl?" I just moved in the world in a way I would normally move.

**What's that like living like that?**

I really liked it. It was a little bit stressful, but only because of the fear of discovery. But it was not stressful in the ways it would have been if I was dressed as a girl, like people trying to pick up on me.

I really learned a lot about myself and about the world, some of which was sad. It's just this understood, common bond sometimes, that subjugating women is the thing that bonds men. Not all men, obviously, but in a lot of cultures. On the other side, it felt a little bit like what I always dreamed of when I was young: going to other lands and being a guy. It was a whole mixed bag, but I definitely came back a bit different from the whole journey.

**Do you feel transgendered?**

I identify more as a tomboy. That's the first thing that someone teased me about when I realized that there was something "off" about me, even at the age of seven, wearing my brother's clothes. I didn't realize I was a girl until I went through puberty. I'd always moved in the world like a boy.

So I can relate to a lot of the stories my friends tell me about what it's like to be transgendered. But I wonder if there's something different about me from the people who choose to take action and change, physically. Because I don't want to do that. I do identify as a woman. I'm never sure if that's a political choice I'm making because I'm a feminist, or if it's there, something different, between me and my friends who choose to take hormones.

I see the world in this spiritual way, way more fluid than how we're asked to define it. I actually think there's a whole spectrum of gender, not just men and women. In a lot of cultures there's not just two.

But I'm glad when people take their destiny into their own hands and make actions that they think will make them happy. **91**