

Batman and Barbie, best friends forever?

By Amanda Moln



Photo:the resource.com

I started to realise that men and women were treated differently in this world when I was about 7 years old. I have started school and were very excited to meet so many new friends, but my excitement faded when I, as I tried to play with some of my new classmates, was pushed away with the words 'we won't play with girls!'. The children that I tried to befriend were boys, but until

then I had simply never thought of not being an equal to boys. I knew that girls and boys looked different; I knew that men and women played different roles when it came to reproduction. I also knew that boys' and girls' toys looked different and that boys could be louder and meaner than girls. But I never thought boys were better than girls, not until I was rejected for being a girl.

I went to complain to our teacher, an old and disciplined woman, always dressed in grey with bible studies as her favorite subject. She frowned at me and told me to go play with the other girls. I went to tell our help teacher, who was a newly graduated and confused young woman, but she was too busy separating some fighting boys to hear me. No one ever gave me an answer.

After that incident I swore that I will try my best to be an accepted member of the boys' secret club. So I learned how to be boyish and tough, I learned to hide my tears and I did everything to become accepted. Everything. I befriended many boys and some of them became my best friends, but I could never get rid of the feeling that I had to adapt to their rules, their game. It became even more complicated when we all became older and became teenagers, since hormones and feelings played their roles and I was in love with boys that just saw me as a friend. It came to me one day when I was fifteen and I started to think about the friendship between men and women and how these kinds of bonds were constructed. Does a girl have to be a tomboy to befriend a boy? Does a boy have to be feminine to become friends with a girl? Can't Batman just accept Barbie as she is and be friends with her?

Society tells us that the romantic relationship is the prototypical relationship between men and women and media, movies and TV keep on feed-

ing us with the norm from a long-ago era, when women and men just met with intentions of romance. The friendship is being trivialized because of the lack of rules. The romantic, heterosexual relationship has rules: the woman should be soft and caring and the man strong and protective. Boys who are friends use to hang together, girlfriends use to talk and share.

But there are no such social rules for a friendship between a man and woman, which makes this phenomenon more problematic and confusing. Society tells us that the heterosexual relationship between men and women always ends up being a love story. That somehow seems so wrong. There are many challenges we have to overcome, but it is worth it. The physical attraction is of course one, but the equality-issue is even more important. Women are at risk of subconsciously adopting a more submissive and passive role in cross-sex friendships, even if that is slowly changing as society begins to treat both genders more equally.

So I decided, after trying for many years to have equal friendships with men, that I will find friends who fit my personality. Can't we all agree to the fact that a good friend will respect you, stand up for you and be there for you no matter whether that person is a man or a woman, straight or gay, transsexual or asexual. I think that as long as we choose friends who reflects our good sides, Barbie and Batman can be best friends forever.

Photo: african swcethearts.com



'JUST FRIENDS'