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Coming Out

by Lou Beckerman

It was all rather embarrassing really. Up to this very moment I'd led a hugely sheltered life you see. We'd always had allergies in the family and I'd been protected in a big way – *over-protected* - just in case; suspicious of anything my body came into contact with, though this hypothetical problem had never really been put to the test.

Growing up in a sterile bubble meant having no physical interaction with anyone outside family. There was always a barrier. The very air I breathed had to be filtered and scrutinised.

But I was sixteen now - like any other sixteen year-old, and SO curious. I wanted to taste the world outside. My bubble had to be burst. I'd be fastidious and alert to danger.

When I sneaked out it was early morning. I was fearful - yes – but felt driven to do this. Wearing my protective casing and mask, I cautiously closed the door behind me.

There were a few people on the street and I'm beginning to feel a sense of shock to find that EVERYONE is in their own bubble. So, I reason, I'm safe – I couldn't react. Longing to feel normal, natural air on my body, I finally, tentatively, climb out of my covering.

I was free! Bursting with sheer elation I practically danced down the road.

It took only moments for two semi-bubble-clad wardens to apprehend me. One of them grasped my arm – I felt exposed and helpless.

I shouted 'Don't touch me - I'm NAKED!' With those words he released me - which I was glad of, for his hand smelt of scented soap. It didn't take long. My skin was already itching and blistering and hot as hell. My throat was closing and that's when I collapsed.