



Orchids: My Intersex Adventure ★★★

(2010) 60 min. DVD: \$89; public libraries & high schools; \$295; colleges & universities. Women Make Movies. FPR.

Australian filmmaker Phoebe Hart grew up with a nagging sense of her own difference. Of course, many kids feel this way, but Hart's case was truly unusual: she learned as a teenager that she was born with 46 XY (male) chromosomes, making her an intersex person (once called hermaphrodites). To better understand herself and her occasionally fraught relationship with her family, Hart and her sister Bonnie—who is also intersex—take a road trip across Australia to meet and talk to

others about how the condition has shaped their life journeys. Hart's high school photography teacher is among the people she meets with; his story of being brutally bullied when he started growing breasts in an all-male school is harrowing (he had a bilateral mastectomy out of concern that the abuse would only continue). *Orchids* doesn't explain the conditions that constitute intersex in great detail, as this is more of a personal account. Hart's mother's initial reluctance to talk on camera leads to a deeper relationship when she admits to feeling responsible for—and guilty about—her children's difference. By the end of the documentary, Hart seems to have found what she was looking for, and it's easy to share her hard-won joy. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (H. Seggel)