Angelica

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

I had known Helen for years, but we had never gone out together. She was more a friend than a girlfriend. I would have said a close friend, except it turned out that I had failed to stay in touch the way a close friend should. I had no idea that she was pregnant – very pregnant by the time I saw her. It sort of put to death the idea that brought me around to her place so belatedly.

The fact is that I was guilty of being a workaholic. I got a job with a financial services firm that was very results oriented, and when I got busy, they kept me busy. I enjoyed collecting the money, but I never seemed to have time to spend it. Instead, I took advantage of investment opportunities that were visible on screen using my own money, making all the disclosures, of course, and doing my own business off the company clock.

My wealth grew and my clients were also doing better than others. It was noticed, as it should be in such a firm. I had the chance to move up to a junior partnership in the firm, and as a part of that was winning the approval of all the partners in a social setting, combined with a broad strategic discussion in what was known as the annual “Partners’ Retreat”.

“But it’s not just work - it’s a family affair,” the senior partner Magnus Murray, told me. “Stability at home is what we are looking for in a partner. I know you are not married, but I think we assumed that you were in a stable relationship?”

I was thinking – ‘How the Hell could I have any kind of relationship when I am working every waking hour’, but I said – “Yes, I have a girlfriend, and it’s pretty serious.”

But I didn’t have a girlfriend. I was depending on Helen to help me. She knew me well enough – she could fill in as my girlfriend. She was attractive and sensible, and I was sure that she would do this for me. Couples don’t always have to last and I just needed to pass this test. I was not about to ask her over the phone so I went around to her place.

She opened the door. It looked like she had been crying. I just put my arms around her as a friend should, but the moment I did I sensed that I had a problem. Her belly pressed up against me. I could imagine the complications this would cause for me – pregnancy before marriage, poor judgement, lack of precautions – let alone the obvious questions about a baby I would never have. I have to admit, I barely thought about Helen.

“Come in,” she said, obviously in need of company, and with me feeling disappointed with myself for having been unaware of her condition.

But when I walked in, I saw that she was not alone. There was a man with her, although for a moment I thought that it might have been a woman dressed as a man,

“This is Steve,” said Helen. “I suppose that you could call him my boyfriend. We have been living together here for months and I have known him for over a year. You haven’t met one another before, so when was the last time we were together?”

“I apologize for that, Helen,” I said, but I felt awkward as I had clearly walked in a domestic dispute. “It is my job. I am crazy busy, but I love it. I’m just in line for a promotion, and I was going to ask you to partner me for an extended weekend. But with you being pregnant I can see that it would lead to a bunch of difficult questions.”

“I would happily have been your girlfriend - you know I would, but you are right,” she said. “But as it happens, I know somebody who would do a much better job than me … and she would love to do it. And here she is - Angelica.”

She was looking at her boyfriend with what can best be called “a hate stare”. I could see that it had wounded him, as was clearly intended.

“Sweetheart, I’m sorry,” he said. “I just think that you needed to know before we got married.”

I was confused. Where was this Angelica? Who was Angelica? Was it his sister, as I knew that she didn’t have one? Or was it him? Suddenly I realized why I had momentarily thought that the other person in the room might just be female. The long hair was too glossy, there were the traces of makeup on his face and a trace of feminine scent wafting over from him.

“Yes, Mac, my boyfriend likes to dress up like a girl,” sneered Helen. “If what you want is somebody smart and feminine and with a slim figure, quite unlike me at the moment, then Angelica is your girl. I am sure that she would do it. In fact, I am going to insist on it. Do you understand, Angelica? I have a friend in need here – a very close friend. Get back into your pretty things, and show my friend just what a gorgeous girl you can be!”

She was taunting him, cruelly. I was wishing that I had never walked in. More accurately I was wishing that I was somewhere else – immediately. I said – “Obviously, I have picked the wrong time to call on you, Helen. I will leave you two, but let’s catch up soon.”

“Stay where you are,” Helen directed, in a manner all too familiar to me when it came to her. “I want you to meet Angelica first. She will be your girlfriend, won’t you Angelica?”

“You know I’ll do whatever you want,” he whimpered. “I just want to support you and the baby.”

“Then get dressed!” She could have been yelling at him, but it was spat out as a whisper.

When he was gone, she asked whether I would like a drink. “I would love to have one myself right now,” she said. “But I am pregnant, and I do want this baby, even if his father is a tranny.”

I declined the drink. I wanted no more excuse not to leave as soon as I could. But we did end up talking about friends we had in common and what they were doing. It was confirmed that the reason why I had lost contact with everybody was that I had indeed become, a workaholic. I knew nobody close enough to help me out in a bind, except her.

Time must have gone by quickly because when Angelica appeared it was hard to believe that her preparation had not taken a good deal of time. In short, she was a knockout. Here was a fabulous looking woman, who moved with grace and sophistication, albeit with a tinge of embarrassment in being made to perform for me.

“If Helen requires me to, I would happily be your girlfriend.” The words that came out of her painted mouth were so feminine that I found myself checking whether this could be the same person I had just met, but it was.

This was my conundrum – the Partners’ Retreat was only days away and I had said that I would be accompanied by my long-term girlfriend. I had no such girlfriend and no friend to fill in. Could I post a personal ad and hire somebody? Nobody any good, that would be for certain. This Angelica seemed to me to be 100% passable, and certainly not stupid.

“I require it,” said Helen. “And as Mac has told his bosses that you are living together, that starts tonight. I want you away from here while I think about our future … or if there even is one. You can stay with Mac. You will take him, won’t you?” she said to me.

Angelica looked at me and I looked back and then at Helen. This was all happening quickly, but it seemed like I had no choice. I said – “I have a spare room. No matter what happens I am happy to help you get some alone time on this issue, Helen.”

Minutes later I walked out of her place with Angelica. She (as she can only be called) was wheeling behind her only what she called her “Girl Case” containing the women’s clothes that she had revealed to Helen for the first time that evening, to Helen’s horror.

“It is best if you just call me Angelica,” she said. “All I can hope for is that if I do the right thing with you, Helen will understand that I am a good person. It is just that I have a feminine side, and it is quite strong in me. There is nothing I can do about it. I had to tell her. I am the father of the child she is carrying, and I know what I must do, but she needs to know who I am. We were talking about forever, after all.”

“I am just surprised that you managed to keep this side from her for so long – a year is it?” I said. Even as we drove home, I cast a glance or two in her direction and I could not believe that she was not a woman. How could Helen not have seen the same thing?

I showed her the spare room and I suggested that she tried to make herself at home and learn about me and how I lived. I added – “It could be hard because I spend so much time at my office.” I gave her keys to the apartment soi she could come and go as she pleased.

“You should come home early tomorrow so we can talk a bit,” she said. “Do you like French food? I can cook.”

I had to say yes. French food? Only in restaurants that I visited sometimes through work. If not eating out I often ate at my desk, fast food or something raw – sushi or a sandwich. Angelica seemed happy to rummage around the kitchen and make a list of what was needed. She was still doing that when I went to bed.

I was up early and off to work, but there was a note on the coffee machine in a surprisingly feminine hand, with the words – “Be sure to come home for dinner by 7:00 pm. We need to get to know one another to do this right.” It seemed a reasonable request. It would be difficult, with everything I had on, but I resolved to do it, and I did.

She had cooked something very nice – a ragout of some kind, with potatoes gratin and French beans. It was delicious, but so was she. She said that she had decided to dress as a housewife but that she “had no real idea what housewives wore” so she could be excused for dressing in an old-fashioned style. It was her own hair, but it was curled and pinned, and her face was exceptionally smooth and clear – not overly made up as it was the evening before.

“I have done my intelligence on your firm,” she announced. I know the names of all of the partners and their wives, although one of them is a husband.”

“Which one?” I said. I had no idea. But when she told me it made sense. I was impressed. She was smart. I asked about “Steve” the person she was supposed to be underneath, but she just shook her head.

“There is no Steve. I am Angelica, and I am anything that you want me to be,” she said. “This is your lie, so I am putting you in control of it.”

I detected there was a note of disapproval, but I wondered if it might have been said in dry humor. I certainly treated it that way. After dinner we sat down and talked about what my bosses might expect the wife of a junior partner to be.

“She will need to be intelligent, and independent so as not to be too needy and calling on his attention, but very supportive and ambitious for her man,” she said. It was clear that she had given this some thought. “But he in return, needs to lavish her with treats so as not to lose her,” she continued. “He wants her to look good and feel good. He is happy to pay for her beauty treatments, and some of her clothes.”

“But she is independent,” I said, perhaps seeing where this was headed. “She wouldn’t want to be seen as a gold-digger.”

“She will find clever ways to dress well,” she said. “But a lady will need to buy a few things?”

She looked at me with a slightly pleading expression that just seemed so feminine that I had to smile.

“I will allow you a budget to buy a few outfits,” I said. “I wouldn’t want you to not look the part you are playing.” She seemed thrilled by the idea.

I had a lot of work to get out of the way before the retreat, so the next two nights I was late home, but Angelica had prepared interesting meals and left me written instructions as to how to reheat and plate them. It was clear to me that she had gone to some effort and that I was disregarding her, but she let that slide off. She was the perfect uncomplaining partner to a workaholic man, and she wanted to prove it.

But on the Friday before the Partner’s Retreat she was up before me in the morning, with the coffee on, ready to discuss the final plans for the afternoon. She was wearing a feminine gown of some kind, and her hair was tied up in a scarf, but even straight out of bed she looked good. If there was makeup, then it was restrained but effective.

“I am packed for every eventuality, and I have packed for you too,” she said. “You need to check if I have missed something before you go to the office because you and your partners will be heading straight to the airport, and I will have both our bags with me.”

“Actually, that’s right,” I said. “How did you know?”

“I have reached out to Elizabeth Murray, the wife of the senior partner,” she said. “Don’t worry. I will be at the airport. Check your bag and be sure to kiss me on the cheek before you leave this morning, just as you will kiss me when you see me waiting for you at the airport, surrounded by the other wives.”

I was initially shocked that she had made contact with Magnus’s wife, but as she talked on I started to realize that she was just trying to be the person that I wanted her to be – the wife of a hard working financier – organized and self-sufficient. It was hard to criticize what she had done.

She gave me coffee and cooked me an omelet and she had even baked something for me to eat before lunch – “Just to make sure that you are not scoffing unhealthy donuts”.

She handed it to me as she stood by the door offering me her cheek. It all seemed so much like something out a sixties sitcom that I had to join in and place my smiling lips on her smooth fragrant cheek with the obligatory – “Have a wonderful day, darling.” But the strange thing was that the kiss lingered for the whole day, somehow making me look forward to the next time that I could see her and make contact with her pretty face.

It was a little unsettling when I had cause to think of it, but the day was busy, as all the partners were in preparation for their absence and briefing their P.A.s and associates. The retreat was real. The partners could not be contacted from Friday afternoon until midnight on Monday. For some employees that seemed like tectonic plates disappearing from underfoot, and even for me it was disturbing, but I was only excited by the opportunities. If this went well my future was assured.

It was not long before one of the other partners appeared at my door and said – “Drop everything, we’re leaving now! You can bring your phone but avoid all calls except excuses until we get to the resort, and there all phones are impounded.”

A minibus had been booked to take us all to the airport to fly west to a ranch in a desert somewhere – a location still only known to a few – and the wives were waiting at the airport.

Spirits were high when the minibus pulled up at the private plane terminal – we would be flying by executive jet. It was a comfortable lounge and it was full of women including Angelica, and one man.

I knew what I had to do – I had to walk over and kiss her on the cheek. She was looking at me and smiling, and for the first time I realized that there was a light in her eyes that seemed to have a strange effect on me. It seemed that the look that she gave me made everybody else disappear so that it was only me and her in the room. I headed straight for her, and my nose touched her sweet-smelling hair as my lips touched her cheek.

I just felt that it was not enough. I may have lingered a little. She giggled and gently pushed me away, with the whispered word – “Later”.

I was suddenly aware that I was surrounded by women I did not know, but Angelica had all their names and the husband’s names too. They were smiling, but it almost seemed that there was a tinge of jealousy too – to hem Angelica and I we yet to be married and burdened with family – still in the throes of young love.

An older woman came over. She had the look of a woman who spent a lot of money on looking young, with partial success. I had the thought that she could easily have been a man, and Angelica less likely to have been, but she was friendly.

“You must be Mac,” she said. “I am Elizabeth Murray. I have heard about you from my husband and even more from your delightful companion, Angelica.”

“She is special,” I said. Who else could have convinced all of these people that she really was a woman? She would have convinced me had I not known the truth. I found myself wondering how my friend Helen had been with a man for a year without realizing that there was a woman inside. Now that she was freed it seemed to me that she must have always been there.

We climbed on the plane and Angelica took the sea next to me and grabbed my hand.

“I am a little nervous about flying,” she whispered. I found out later that she wasn’t. She just wanted to keep up the physical contact and to be seen to be very attached too me.

In many ways it seemed like the expectations of a prospective partner were wholly unreasonable. The assumption was that we would give every waking hour to the job and still have time to form a relationship and to maintain it. It would take a special woman to accept a man on these terms. Perhaps for some the reward of wealth was enough, or perhaps family that you will always know will be able to live a better life as the offspring of a successful operator in the financial markets. But Angelica was not here for either reason – they did not apply. She was here to be a woman among the company of women and to be admired by men. It seemed to me that she was getting what she wanted.

The resort had its own airstrip suitable for jets like ours cut out of the desert and paved. Rather than a minibus we climbed aboard a variety of off-road vehicles while a large truck took all the suitcases to the place we would be staying. It was clear from what the vehicle drivers were wearing that the theme of this place would be cattle and cowboys, but while the luggage went on via a paved road we would take a “back route” through the desert and receive a nature tour and a briefing from the driver.

Angelica was clearly excited, and her enthusiasm seemed to be rubbing off at least onto the wives. I detected that my hoped-for partners were still coming to grips with the very idea of a few days without a computer screen or a cellphone. Across all the vehicles in the off-road convoy I could see those faces almost in a state of shock with the anxiety of being away from the financial pulse. I have to say that I was suffering a little too, but then I had Angelica to divert me.

The sun was getting low on the horizon and taking on colors that cast shadows from the high cactuses and other unique desert plants. It gave the whole place the feel of an alien planet, with us explorers on it, but the clear dry air and silence when we stopped to watch, gave a feeling of serenity that was refreshing. The venue had been well chosen, and then suddenly, just as we feared having the drive into the night, the lights that flood lit the terrace and the pool, came into view.

We were handed keys to our assigned rooms and a cocktail the moment that we walked in the huge wooden doors to the arched entrance. The foyer was impressive despite the resort having a limited number of rooms so that we were the only guests.

Angelica seemed to positive squeal with joy as she look around at the hacienda finishings and the high ceilings, and loud art on the walls, indigenous pottery on tables and in niches. It all seemed very well done and it was undoubtedly expensive.

The host stepped on to a slight platform to welcome us and to invite us to explore the common areas before suggesting that we go to our rooms when ready to wash and dress for dinner in the banquet hall (opening out onto the terrace) at 8:00 p.m.

Our room was spacious and well appointed with an ensuite bathroom, but there was only one bed – a super king.

“We will have to share,” said Angelica. “On a bed that size it should be no problem.” As a sound sleeper the idea did not worry me.

She opened her suitcase and set about hanging up some of her clothes. She had some evening wear, and even what she said was “a riding outfit” even though we had not even been told that we were coming to a desert ranch. She slipped off the clothes that she had been wearing and for a moment it seemed as if the flawless form of womanhood had been destroyed.

Under her clothes was a close-fitting garment that gave her the female figure. It was padded in the buttocks, smooth in the crotch, drawn in at the waist and had artificial breasts cupped in the front. I also saw that she had a swimsuit in the suitcase unpacked.

“I guess that you won’t be able to go swimming in the that outfit?” I said. Maybe there was a hint of sadness in my voice. I would have liked to have seen her wearing it, but what I was staring at was the artifice that Angelica was using, and it just seemed so wrong.

“I want to wear something with cleavage tonight,” she said. “Will you help me. I do have a good amount of flesh on my chest from my experiment with HRT a year or so ago.”

“HRT?” I had no idea what she was talking about, but suddenly she was naked from the waist up and it was hardly a masculine body. She had another corset thing laid out with rigid bars to push the swollen areas of her chest into a decolletage.

“Before I met Helen I had decided to transition from male to female, but I backed out,” she said. I wanted so much to have a family, and the only way to do that seemed to be to stay as a man and find a good woman to be my wife and the mother of my child. But I think that I made a huge mistake, Mac.”

It could have been a question. She was looking at me for comfort. Despite the flat but flabby chest looking nothing like a woman should, everything else about her looked female. There was the curled hair and the makeup on her face, and the big wet eyes and the trembling lips. I am not a touching kind of person, but the image touched me, and I needed to touch her. I walked over and put my arms around her. She threw her arms around me and clung on, sobbing a little.

“Hey, we don’t want them seeing that you have been crying,” I said. “We still have a job to do, here.” I was trying to tell myself that this was a business transaction between her and me, but the fact that we were in this posture was the lie in that.

“Help me with my boobies then,” she said. “I need to wash my face and change my makeup anyway. It is first night cocktails. After talking with Elizabeth, I know what is expected of me.”

What was expected was glamor. She had bought a dress on my account which she said looked ten times what it cost. She said that the wives would be wearing their jewelry – their way of saying – “my husband loves me more than yours because he gave me all this!” To that Angelica would wear a simple one color dress and no jewelry at all, but she needed to show that cleavage calling for a necklace, and wrists demanding a bracelet, fingers with painted nails inviting rings. She was a proud beginner – a bare canvass, but she looked stunning. She had added more dramatic make up and pinned her curls up at the back. She wore heels that brought her up to my eyelevel. Her eyes sparkled with excitement.

“I’m ready,” she said. “Let’s get you that partnership.”

She could not have done more. She looked wonderful and she played her part to perfection. It was as if she was the person that she pretended to be, and perhaps she was.

She spent most of her time with the women, and she persuaded me to stay with her for a good part of the time.

“If the wives like you they will talk about you,” she said. “And if they like you a lot, they will talk about you all the time.” It made sense. And if they liked her it was hard for them not to like me, even if I just nodded and laughed, and told them all what a lucky man I was to have Angelica in my life.

She made an impact on the men too, because I think for reasons known only o me and o her, she understood men. All she had to do was to tell no lies. As she said it, lies will come out in the end, and deceit can be forgiven (if you are very persuasive and very lucky) but it is never forgotten.

She just had to avoid questions about her past. I remember her saying to Magnus Murray – “Actually, I am enjoying your company so much that I cannot even recall a thing that happened before tonight, so I was clearly of no consequence.” She just exuded intelligence and sophistication, but with a clear desire for fun.

Her banter continued through the sit-down dinner. Elizabeth had Angelica seated her next to herself which mean that I also, had a chair among “the big dogs”.

Among this group, Angelica talked me up. “Mac is so clever and seems to have such a deep understanding. Honestly, I think he is the only person who truly understands who I am, and that is no mean feat.” It was the kind of thing that made me smile and for partners to see me smiling.

“You have a real asset there,” one of them actually said to me. How could I disagree?

After dinner there was more drinking and some dancing. I danced with Angelica, but before too long some partners were cutting in to have their turn with “the belle of the ball”.

She wanted to one of the last standing, even though she whispered how much her high heels were hurting. She decided that she needed to retire to our room while the men remained, the sober of us to discuss plans for a morning business session commencing after breakfast with partners. Some were continuing to drink, and while I considered drunken bonding as a strategy I considered it wiser to retire with the more senior men, to show restraint and good judgment.

When I got back to the room she was sitting up in bed reading a book but waiting for me. She was wearing a red nightie, but had removed all of her makeup. Her curls were still there, and the eyelashes which were clearly the type that remained. Despite all that I knew, I only saw the same woman I had been unable o take my eyes off for most of the night – Angelica. I had to smile and she smiled back.

She said nothing as I got undressed.

“I sleep on that side of the bed,” I told her.

“Well, you’ll have to move me, then,” she said.

I had kept my underpants on, but it was clear to her that a huge erection was growing inside them. Perhaps I was surprised, or perhaps I was wishing I was. Had I turned gay? The fact is that there was a beautiful woman in my bed, wearing nightwear that signaled only one thing. It was as if my physiology had shelved the very notion that this was a man dressed as a woman, even if that was barely anything at all. I just saw the woman that I had spent the evening with, and who had made that evening perhaps he proudest and happiest moment of my life.

As I discarded the underpants and approached the bed where she had thrown the covers to welcome me, I wondered whether I should say he words – ‘I am no gay’ – but who would I be talking to if I did? Instead, I just took her into my arms and I kissed her, parting her pretty lips and tasting her sweet tongue. She went limp in my arms, as I went as hard as I have ever been.

“If you want to make love to me, I’m ready,” she whispered. “But you should know that this is my first time – with flesh that is.”

It seemed like a strange thought. This educated and sexy woman of the world a virgin? Angelica was not gay either, or clearly she would have received a man before now. But the invitation could not be ignored. She was wearing crotchless panties to spare me the sight and feel of a male organ was clearly limp – more yielding than unexcited. I entered her douched and lubricated passage easily – the sensation of being welcomed down a hall to the pleasure room. She gasped and closed her eyes, like a child about to receive a gift.

We made love. I have fucked many women, but this was not that. There were all the motions and noises, but somehow this seemed so pure and perfect. We orgasmed together, with her fluid mixing with mine as I slowly extracted.

“I just wanted you to end the evening on a high note,” she said, lying beneath me glowing with the special sweat that is saved for the best of sex.

“You were the high note from the moment we got here,” I said. I rolled off her and pulled her with me. We kissed again, somehow made electric by the high sensitivity of our bodies.

“The one sad thing is that whatever happens, you know that I can never go back to Helen – I can never go back to being … him – not after this.” She seemed genuinely upset. I wiped a tear away before it even dropped.

“Are you telling me this is who you are now?” I was hoping that it was.

“I never was anybody else, Mac,” she said, with fervent seriousness. “I have always been a woman. I was kidding myself. I have already hurt Helen in all kinds of ways but telling her that is what I have to do. I will do what I can for the baby – I can be a parent but I can never be a father.”

I just held her. She was a woman and she needed to be held.

“I understand that you may not want me. I mean, I will go through transition for real this time. I want to be rid of this body. I want the surgery. But it will never make me the woman you deserve. You need to be a parent too. I can’t give you that. After you get your partnership, we can break up – people do. You don’t have to be shackled …”.

“Stop talking!” I scolded her. “Do I have to put my tongue in your mouth again to stop you?”

“Yes,” she said, so I did.

We just lay there. It was my turn to say something – “I have never met anybody like you, Angelica. I think I have fallen in love with you. I don’t think a man like me ever wants to say those words. It is like admitting that you have lost control, but I have. There is a force driving us together. I hope you feel it too. Nothing can stand in our way, least of all whatever lies in your panties.”

“That has to go, and like I said, that is come what may,” she said.

“Don’t doubt me,” I snapped. “Do you love me or not?”

“I love you,” she said tenderly.

“Well then, we have to be together, and that is all there is to it,” I said. “There may be problems in that, but we will simply climb over them or sweep them away.”

“If you do get the partnership, I won’t be alone,” said Angelica. “I learnt something about Elizabeth Murray tonight that might surprise you – when we went to the Ladies’ Room together. She is a transwoman, like me.”

“Good God!”

“You know that she is Magnus’s second wife,” she started to explain. “Magnus’s first wife ran off with the tennis coach or somebody like that and left him with his three sons on his own. Elizabeth has been a wife to him and a mother to those boys. She is very lucky.

“We can build a future for ourselves with just the two of us, and maybe if fortune shines on us, we can make a family somehow,” I said. “What is important to me for now, is you and me.”

“A future with you and me together?” she said. “It sounds fantastic.”

I got that partnership. I had to go into debt to buy my share and to pay for the surgery that Angelica needed to be complete, but my first distribution almost paid it all back. It was hard work, but with her by my side, ready to see me through the long hours and be there to give me all the joy she could when I got home, we saw it through.

Helen gave birth to a baby girl and she named her Stephanie after her father. Helen had always been a true friend and when we came home from the retreat to explain that a promise had been kept but that Steve was gone for good, she understood.

“What pleases me is that two people that I have cared deeply about are now both happy, and happy together,” she said to us. “I have my daughter, and that is all I need in terms of relationships right now, provided that you can still be my best friends.”

Of course we were – no question about it. We were asked to be Stephanie’s Godparents and we happily accepted the role.

By the time the next Partner’s Retreat came around Angelica was recovering from surgery, and we were engaged to be married, and the year after that, sadly by a tragedy, we became parents. To our horror and great sadness, Helen was diagnosed with uterine cancer and after a brief battle she died. She passed her treasured child to her closest blood relative, Angelica. Two years later by surrogacy and using my sperm, we added a little brother for Stephanie.

To this day my wife Angelica remains the perfect wife and mother and the woman that she has always been. The only people who know of her accident of birth are her and me, and Elizabeth Murray, and none of us have any reason to tell.

She is looking forward to the next partner’s retreat which she has had a hand in organizing. I know that she will do it right, and when she takes center stages as she must that all of my colleagues will say - “You have a real asset there,” or “She’s a keeper, Mac,” because she is.

The End

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Author’s Note: This comes from something sent in by Steph\_Smith – “Guy is up for a promotion but needs a girlfriend to show off at the company retreat. A pregnant friend suggests he take her cross-dressing husband. All the company wives hate how pretty she is and extract revenge. The guy up for promotion stages an elaborate proposal. At the end of the night the guy and the friend have a passionate night with the wife’s blessing. They then have to rush home the next day because the wife is in labor.” I was not sure whether his was an idea or an existing story, so I departed from his idea a little.