Just a Suggestion

A Short Story for the Mind and Body Book

By Maryanne Peters

“I don’t normally discuss my act. Performance secrets, and all that.” Somehow he did not look as impressive in the daylight. Was it stage makeup? Or lighting? He did not look like “The Incredible Michael Muldoon – Master Hypnotist”. He looked ordinary. “But you are buying the lunch, so … and please call me Mike.”

The performer’s assistant had told Blake that a free lunch would secure him an audience, so there they were. Blake had waited for the food to arrive before saying what he wanted to.

“My friend Mel and I attended your show a few weeks ago, and to be very frank, my friend has not been the same since,” said Blake.

“Many people are affected by what I do. There are disbelievers out there - people who do not understand the power of hypnotic suggestion.” Mike plunged a fork full into his mouth.

“I am a skeptic,” said Blake. “Which is why I have to ask whether your suggestions can linger?” Blake had to linger while Mike chewed.

“Tell me about his behavior,” spluttered Mike still chewing.

“You had a part of your show where you had three volunteers behave like women. Mel was one of those volunteers. The other two were mincing around and flapping their wrists, but Mel just sat there and looked three times the women they did. And now I am seeing just small feminine traits in him ever since. It is weird. Is this some residual effect?”

“I actually recall that show,” said Mike. “I recall your friend precisely because he did not deliver a man’s idea of women’s gestures. What that means is that he is a sharper observer of women. If I were to suggest that a person behave like a cat, those with cats do it better. I do remember him.”

“And what about his actions since?” Blake watched the man take another mouthful and had to wait.

“Hypnosis produces a trace like state when a person is open to suggestions. Your friend is not in a trace, is he? That ends when I end it, or it ends anyway after a brief period. If suggested behavior continues then it was likely always there. Perhaps this says more about you? You just never notice it until his actions on my stage made you aware?”

“Are you saying that I am seeing things?”

“Not at all. And this is very good by the way.” He held up his fork and beamed. “Perhaps your friend has always had feminine traits that you were not aware of?”

Blake moved in his seat a little. There was discomfort somewhere.

Blake had known Mel since high school, so casting his mind back to confirm what the hypnotist had said would be a long trawl through his memory in search of the smallest sprat. The mind is an incredible organ, and he worked it well, but there was nothing. He decided to eat something from the plate in front of him.

“Perhaps ask him to do something overtly feminine?” said Mike. “If you think he is open to suggestion then test him. But it will not be from any trance that I induced, I can assure you.”

Blake’s guest was mopping up the last of his lunch, and then gulped down the last of the drink Blake had bought him. He rose and they shook hands, leaving Blake to finish his lunch alone, and still in a state of confusion. This was not an imagined thing. Something had happened that night. The person on the stage sitting quietly with legs crossed and hands in the lap looking at the other mincing fools with a perfectly feminine disdain, was nothing like Mel. And now he saw hints of the same all the time in his friend – hints of her.

He decided to call Mel. “Test him” was the suggestion. “Something overtly feminine”.

“Hey Pal, I thought that we might go out tonight,” he said.

“Sound’s great,” came back Mel’s chirpy reply. It was him – not her. “Where are we going.”

“I will come round to your place early and we can make plans,” said Blake.

“Cool”. That was all there was, and all there needed to be.

Blake paid the check and stepped out into the street. Across the street was a dress shop.

“What size is your girlfriend?” the woman said.

“About your size, I guess,” he said.

“This is a style which suits a busty woman. Is she a busty woman?”

“She could do with some help in that direction,” said Blake.

“We stock suitable undergarments,” the lady said. “I can find something with a selection of padding options which might suit her. We also stock hosiery.”

But not shoes. Another shop for that. Their advice? “Why don’t you bring your girlfriend in. We close late tonight.”

Mel had a crumby apartment in a low level block. He opened the door to Blake. He looked clean shaven after a shower and was wearing a robe and hotel slippers.

“Come in, I am not dressed yet,” said Mel.

“That’s just as well,” said Blake. “I have actually brought you something to wear tonight. If you don’t want to wear it that is Okay, but here it is.” Blake put down the shopping bag.

Mel pulled out the dress first. He looked confused. He looked at it back and front, without even looking at Blake. When he did his eyes looked wild. Wild with rage? Or wild with excitement? Blake was unsure. But this would be the test Mike had asked for.

“It’s gorgeous,” said Mel.

“You’re kidding?” said Blake.

“Do you want me to wear it or not? And what else do you have in here. Oh Blake, lingerie and stockings! You have thought of everything.”

Blake felt punch drunk. He found himself saying – “Not shoes. Not women’s shoes. If that is what you want then we will have to go to the store on the way. The mall closes late tonight.”

“Wait here while I get changed.” squealed Mel. It seemed like in the last few seconds the tone of voice had gone up an octave – maybe two. The bedroom door slammed behind the disappearing figure.

Blake called Mike.

“I am telling you, Mel still thinks that he is a woman,” said Blake. “You have to meet us and snap your fingers or whatever. Or better still come over here. Having him realize how much like a dick he looks while we are out, would not be good.”

“Has it occurred to you that your friend might be trans?” asked Mike. “Maybe this fact has just been kept secret from you, but now it is out. Has that occurred to you? I am telling you that this person is not in a suggestive trance. These things don’t last. There must be another explanation.”

“We are going to ‘The Crow Bar’. Can you meet us there later? Just to see what I am talking about?” said Blake. He wanted to demand that Mike be there, but that might just get his back up. “Please come.”

“Alright,” said Mike. “I can be there in an hour.”

“How is this?” That voice called from behind him – the feminized version of the voice he knew so well.

He turned to see the girl in the doorway to the bedroom. It was the dress alright. It was filled as the lady in the shop had promised. Mel was suddenly a busty woman, but with long shapely legs that needed to be shown off, shown off. Her hair was gelled and parted on the side, and she was wearing makeup – dramatic makeup apparently applied with skill – dark eyes with wings and lips painted with color and gloss, and the shadows of cheekbones cut with color. Though holes Blake had not seen before, shiny hoop earrings hung.

“This is madness,” said Blake.

“We all need a little madness in our lives every now and again,” said Mel brightly.

Blake checked the time and realized that Mike would be at the bar soon. On impulse he held the door open for Mel and “she” slid past him with a smile.

“Have I been to this place before,” said Mel as the drew nearer. When Blake assured her, she had she seemed a little puzzled.

They walked in and Blake could see all eyes were on Mel – men admiring and women assessing a threat. She was not holding his arm – she was fiddling with something in the small bag she was carrying, but if she had been he wondered how people who did not know who she was might envy him.

“What would you and your pretty lady like to drink?” said the barkeep. “Crowbar” was one of those places and Mel seemed happier for that.

“I will have a glass of Chardonnay if you have it,” she said, grabbing Blake’s shoulder and leaning over it so that he could smell her scent and once more be disturbed.

“I’ll have a beer,” said Blake. “But one of those special brews … this one will do.” The one served in a glass, like her drink was.

He was looking out for Mike and he arrived in time to accept a glass of the same beer.

“Mel! So pleased to meet the new you,” said Mike, holding out his hand and accepting hers but barely shaking it. Blake wondered if he might be doing his thing, looking into her eyes.

“So, you can see that Mel is very different from before?” Blake stared at Mike.

“Well, she’s beautiful,” said Mike, and then to Mel – “You look stunning. An amazing transformation.”

“I have been studying,” said Mel proudly. “So much to learn but so exciting.”

“Do something, Mike,” said Blake. “Snap your fingers or whatever.”

Mike beckoned them over to a quiet place in the bar, a small booth where Mel could sidle in between the men, pulling down the hem of her short dress as she did. Mike could speak with her directly and Blake could hear but nobody else.

“Mel, I want you to speak the truth to us,” Mike said. Blake was not sure if this was another trance he had engineered, but Mel nodded. “Blake thinks that you are under the influence of some hypnotic spell. Are you?”

“No!” Mel giggled. It seemed to affect Blake. It was an adorable laugh. Blake straightened himself.

“Do you remember my show a few weeks ago where I had three volunteers, including you, behaving like women?” said Mike. “Why don’t you explain to Blake what happened there.”

“It was just a suggestion by you. Not that we behave like women but that we become women just for that short moment on stage. I suppose it was not something that any of us would normally do, but it just seemed like a good idea to go along with. I remember the other guys put on what they probably though was some kind of drag performance, but it was different for me. Being a woman was just like becoming alive for the first time. I watched the other guys make fools of themselves. I just had an epiphany, I guess.” Mel’s eyes seemed so large and innocent, Blake found himself disordered yet again.

“So, you are not responding to that suggestion now?” said Mike.

“No. This is me. I suppose I have you to thank Mike for helping me to realize who I really was.”

Mike turned to Blake with a questioning look.

“So, what about the old Mel?” Blake posed his question to Mel, but it was difficult to look at her when she looked the way she did. “I mean, we did some shit together. We had girls and double dates and stuff. What about that?”

“The truth?” whispered Mel.

“Yes,” said Blake. “Please.”

“They were nothing. I was never attracted to them,” said Mel. “The truth is that I am attracted to you Blake, and I always have been. Just being around you is enough for me. It did not even feel sexual. I did not feel gay, and I know that you are not. What I did not understand until Mike’s show was that I am a woman and I always have been. My admiration for you is as a woman. There’s the truth.” A small tear rolled down one of her pretty cheeks.

Blake looked at Mel in horror.

“Well, for my part, when I look at you Mel, I am only seeing a woman,” said Mike. “What do you see, Blake?”

“Huh?” Blake’s world seemed to be in turmoil.

“Can’t you see that Mel is a woman?” said Mike, placing a hand on Blake’s shoulder and squeezing it. “I suggest that you look at her again and see the woman as I do.”

Blake looked at his friend staring back at him with those pleading eyes. She was begging him. She was. It was her, not him. Where was he? Had he ever been there? There were moments in the past when … he refused to even think about such moments.”

“I see her,” he said. “I see you Mel.” He reached out his hands and hers were there.

“Well, I think that I will leave you now,” said Mike, but nobody seemed to hear him. “I would suggest somewhere else for a nice meal. That Italian place on the corner perhaps. It is just a suggestion, but that is what I do.”

The End

© Maryanne Peters 2022

*Erin’s Seed: A guy gets egged into being in a hypnosis act and is hypnotized to act like a woman - he's really good at it – well, he should be he - practices at home a lot. Now his bud just wants to see him dressed – he finally gives in and does his best girliness. “Oh wow” says his bud, “will you go on a date with me” – “Wait a minute - next you'll be wanting to have sex with me … and then to marry you”. “Okay”, says the bud, “But let’s see how the first date goes…”*