Family Counselling

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Scene 1 The Consulting Rooms of Dr. M T Shieff

“I am sympathetic to your position, but I also have ethical considerations.” As he spoke Doctor Martin Shieff was ting about a solution that could accommodate this young man. He liked him. His daily fodder was the anxious and the depressed but here he faced somebody who seemed to be in control, albeit directing his considerable intellect towards antisocial behavior.

“When you are stretching ethics then I am sure that you price will go up,” said Dorian Hale, his patient. “But surely it only has the appearance of irregular conduct. If addresses my mental issues, if you like to call them that, then where is the issue?”.

“It is true that we are talking about curing what ails you,” Martin said. “So it must do that.” He gave his firmest glare. What Dorian said was true – here was a young man whose parents were very rich very willing to pay whatever price that was needed to put their child back on track. So, it had to work.

“They are waiting outside,” said Dorian, leaning back in his chair to bask in his perceived achievement. “You will want to discuss your diagnosis alone, I assume?”

“Yes. You can go outside and send them in. We will do it the way you suggest. I understand your reasons.

Dorian leapt to his feet. He was lean and athletic, fresh out of his private high school education, with lank hair and a wispy beard. He was clever, but according to his parents irrational and aggressive. It was a description that Dorian was proud of. He adopted a snarl as he greeted his parents.

“The headshrinker will see you now,” he snapped. “I will wait here while he now wastes your time.”

Winton and Georgina Hale closed the door to Dr. Shieff’s consulting room behind them.

“Come in Mr. and Mrs. Hale,” the psychiatrist said. “I have reached some conclusions. I think that I have got to the heart of the matter.”

“I am so glad to hear it,” said Georgina Hale. “Honestly, Dorian is driving us crazy with his moods and his violence.”

“Well, such behaviors usually indicate the presence of some deep seated frustration – something that cannot be easily resolved to the subject lashes out.”

“What is wrong with our boy?” Winton Hale seemed genuinely concerned. That was good.

After a long conversation with you son I think that his problem is repressed gender dysphoria. Do you know what that is? Or perhaps you can guess?”

“Please don’t play games with us, Doctor. How are we going to deal with him.”

Martin was ready to get to the point. He said – “Gender dysphoria is the belief that a person is born into a body of the wrong sex. We use it to describe the symptoms exhibited by transgender or transsexual patients.”

“Are you suggesting that Dorian is transsexual?” said Winton Hale. “I have raised five sons and Dorian is the fourth. I can assure you that all are 100% male. There are no such issues in our family.”

“Dorian may well agree with you, but that is not the point. I said that his dysphoria was repressed. Perhaps your reaction shows me why. ‘We have no such issues in our family’. Well, let me explain that gender dysphoria is fairly common and has nothing to do with either genetics or upbringing. But repression has a lot to do with upbringing, and repression is why your son is a problem. Now, do you want my advice or not?”

“Please, Doctor,” said Georgina. “Please explain what you propose.”

“Well, I am going to propose something that is not totally by the book, so if you don’t want to do it you can walk out of here no charge – you were never here. But if you go along with this, it stays with us. In my view it will resolve everything.” Martin needed to be firm with the parents as well.

“Alright. We’ll hear you out,” said Winton

And so, Martin set out his plan – “In my assessment the cause of all of Dorian’s frustrations is that he has to hide from you his true feminine self. He let slip that he wished that he had been born Dora. That is the real him, and the one that we need to draw out. There are some drugs that I can administer to help. Nothing neural, just hormonal. And you need to promote his ability to be Dora at home, perhaps even address her by that name?”

“Her? Are you crazy?” Winton could listen, but then he had to speak.

“Perhaps you should try it. It will do this youth no harm to adopt my plan, just for a few weeks to see if it works. It is up to you. I have a treatment, but if you want to reject it, then he will be the only one to suffer. And maybe you in the end.”

“And you think that he will stop being violent and destructive?” said Georgina.

“Mrs. Hale, your daughter Dora is the gentlest person in the world, if you just let her be her.”

Georgina looked across at her husband. Five sons. She had always wanted just one daughter. Perhaps he could see that in her pleading look.

Scene 2 The Beauty Salon on the Big Day

“Mom, you’re crying. Don’t be so silly.” Her arms were there to embrace her mother.

“It is just that I am so happy,” choked Georgina. “I thought that I would never be able to do this – that I would never be able to see a daughter as a beautiful bride, and yet here you are. I am just so happy, and so happy for you.”

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| Dora smiled with a look of love, while holding back her own tears. The limousine had arrived. It was an emotional moment. But they both needed to disengage and make one final check in the mirror. Dora checked her hair and her makeup, and the way that her full breasts nestled in the cups of her bodice. It all looked so perfect.“And you father is so proud of you,” said Georgina. After all your problems you have now found true happiness, and it is only just beginning.”“I know Mom, that’s how I feel about this. Like you I could never have imagined this.” But the truth is she had.“And you father just adores Albert. He is the perfect son in law,” said Georgina. “They have so much in common that it is almost uncanny.” | A picture containing indoor, person, wedding  Description automatically generated |

“They say a girl goes looking for her father’s best features,” said Dora, still admiring her reflection – the woman she had become looking her very best. “And I did not have to go far given they practically work together.”

“You chose well, my Darling,” cooed her mother. “I have told you so many times over the past year and some, how much I wanted a daughter, but I could never have hoped for one and beautiful and as clever as you. And if you think I am gushing, let me tell you that , I have seen your father’s speech, so you can expect a whole lot more. Now he is waiting outside. We have to get moving.”

They held hands as they left the salon.

Scene 3 The Consulting Rooms of Dr. M T Shieff

Oliver Hale did not want to wait in the reception area. He pushed straight past his parents to the exit and was gone. With evident concern Winton and Georgina Hale entered and too their seats while Dr. Martin Shieff closed the door.

“As you can see, exactly the same as Dorian, when he was that, but perhaps even worse,” said Georgina. “After you success with Dora we find ourselves coming back to you to seek your help.”

“Dora is a true gift,” said Winton Hale. “I think our gratitude in well recorded not only in doubling the fee that you requested but also in our gift to your Mental Health Foundation.”

“I am very grateful for that and very happy to help,” said Martin. He was. Dora Hale had been a gift for him too.

“We need your help again,” said Winton Hale. “We wondered if it might be the same problem – you know the repressed gender thing. We would happily see our Oliver become our Olivia. Honestly, this is becoming a real issue.”

Martin leaned forward to speak but then leaned back and looked at the ceiling. How to say this, her wondered – “Mr. and Mrs. Hale, I have examined your son Oliver for the last half an hour and I have concluded that his problem is not a medical or psychological one – quite simply your youngest son is a shit. No simple way to say it except that. Some people are born shits, and he is one of those. Dorian’s only issue was an imability to face up to you with his true self. But with Oliver what you see is his true self – a shit’. How do you say that?

“Do you think that the same treatment might work?” asked Georgina. “We would happily pay the same fee for the same treatment.”

“I think it might be worth a try,” said Martin.

The End

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*Erin’s seed: A troublesome young man is sent by his family to a psychiatrist who tell the family that he is acting out through gender dysphoria what you have to do is start treating him as his female self. It seems outlandish but they agree to try it. The boy resists and the family fails frequently but the psychiatrist uses drugs and hypnosis to help her adjust since he tells them that part of her dysphoria is that she wants to be forced to become female. it's successful and she becomes a happy and blushing bride the family is very pleased with the results but still somewhat ... disturbed that it worked so well but they want to congratulate the psychiatrist and reward him since they are very wealthy he's gracious in accepting their thanks and while there another youngster of the family acts up -- and the family says they know EXACTLY how to handle this*