Sheltered

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

She struck me as being the very height of feminine sophistication as she sat at the bar. She was dressed well, in an expensive dress that was sexy without being slutty, and she wore her soft blonde curls up on top of her head to reveal her neck and her ears with pearl drops dangling.

I had been talking to the barman previously and he saw me looking at her.

“She is taken,” he said. “She is waiting for her fiancé – the surgeon who turned her into a woman.”

“You’re kidding me,” I said. There seemed no way this could ever have been a man.

“He is always late,” said the barman. “Why don’t you go over and talk to her?”

He slid my drink across, so I nodded to him. I was alone too, for a bit. Why not?

“Excuse me for disturbing you, but it seems that we might both be waiting for somebody?” I said. “I am just a visitor in this town and was looking to chat with a local for a few minutes. Do you mind if I take this seat?”

“Sure, by all means,” she said. Her voice betrayed nothing of her secret, if it was that. “I should say that this is not my town either, although I have been here a while now.”

“Oh, so you are not from here? Are you from nearby?

“I am from a little town called Nusquam a way north of here. My parents sent me here to go to college, me being the smartest kid in our little high school. But before that I had never set foot out of the holler.”

“You don’t strike me as a country girl,” I said. I saw her smile, as if to confirm that she was not even a girl.

“The truth is that I was about as country as you can get. Lived a very sheltered life up there. My father believed that every place outside or valley was corrupted and sinful. He wanted to protect me from sin, and from being attacked for being different.”

“Different?” It seemed that she was ready to confirm what the barman had said, only minutes in to our conversation.

“My brother was like my father, but I was like my mother,” she said. “There seemed nothing wrong with that. People in our holler just accepted some folks are different. We did not have anybody who abused me, but probably because they would have had to answer to my father if they had.”

“Why would you be abused?” I asked, deliberately pushing her into a corner.

“I was a boy,” she said.

“Oh!” I mocked a surprise. But it was not hard. Just hearing those words out of that pretty painted mouth, still seemed hard to grasp.

“Honestly, I knew that I was different, but plenty of kids at school were different for a whole lot of reasons. My parents told me that I was smarter than the other kids and smarter people can often be smaller and weaker. I just thought that applied to me. Even in high school I was a late developer, but I was interested in girls. I now understand that I was interested in them in a different way, but I just thought that I had a lot of girlfriends, rather than just pairing off with one. Does that sound naïve? It does to me now, but it was simpler place, full of simpler people.”

“Sure, I understand,” I said, but I didn’t. She seemed to be describing a rural town straight out an old TV series, full of hillbillies and halfwits. Do such places exist?

“So getting the bus down to the city was like going to another planet. That was how it felt, except that I was the little green man, or some gender neutral being. I didn’t even know what gender was, and I had no idea about sexual orientation. I learned all about that the very day I arrived.”

“What happened?” I could guess, if only I could imagine her with green skin.

“I was shouted at, and then when I walked away, I was followed and mugged. I had my belongings taken. That was on the first day. Alone and bruised and without anything except the clothes II stood up in.”

“How horrible.”

“Wait. It gets worse. A guy sees me sitting on the bench seat. He was a big guy. He told me his name was John. He says that I look like I need a drink, and I say ‘sure’. So we go into a bar – the first one I have ever been inside. We talk a little and all the time he is looking at me funny and putting a hand on my shoulder. I just thought he was being friendly. Honestly, I knew nothing. I was the babe in the woods like the fairy tale, except it was no fairy tale – no happy ending. He says I can come back to his place for the night and go to the police in the morning. So, I get back to his place and he grabs me in the crotch and tries to get me undressed. I was struggling but the guy was big.”

“You’re not so big, so I suppose … it would not be good?” I had a vision of this pretty thing dressed as a boy trying to fight off a huge thug. Is it sick that I found that vision a little exciting?

“I was not going to win but it was not going to make it easy. And I was howling too. I think he figured it would be better to back off. He even apologized. He said that he got the wrong idea and that I seemed to be coming on to him, but I had no idea what he was saying. He said ‘like you wanted to have sex with me’ and I said – ‘Hey, I’m a guy and you’re a guy so we can’t have sex. And why would we want to?’ It seems so stupid now, but that was me, in those days.”

“So, what happened next?” I realized that I had not touched my drink, so I took a slug of it.

“He said that he had a girlfriend who lived nearby and perhaps she might be better able to look after me. It sounded like a good idea to me. After all, back home the majority of my best friends were female, so I said that would be great.”

“So, he didn’t rape you or anything like that?” I hoped that I did not sound disappointed.

“Not then,” she said. “But he came close. Instead, he took me to meet Tina, and she was another surprise. I just thought that she was a big powerful woman, but it later turned out that she had a penis just like John and me. We never had anybody like that in the holler. She starts by telling John off for attacking me, and she looks like she is ready to start rassling with him. But instead, she chases him out and we sit and talk.”

“What about?”

“About things that sounded crazy to me. About men dressed like women in secret, or dancing on the stage, or just living as if they were women. I had never heard of anything like that before. Then she told me that some men can become women. She showed me her breasts. She said that they we part plastic but a whole lot of flesh, because of the hormones. I never learned about those things back home. I guess we didn’t need to know. In the holler, we got men and we got women, and that is all we got.”

“And then there is you?” I had to say it.

“She just said that while I was staying with her and had no clothes, I could wear some of her stuff. She said that I had to “embrace the free life of the city” and that was a good way to start. I sure felt that she had some pretty clothes, except they were a bit big for me. I know what pretty clothes are when a girl is wearing them. I suppose I admitted to her that it seemed unfair that boy’s clothes are so boring. She agreed and told me that now I was staying with her for a bit – “The shackles are off. Wear what you like!” I had nothing else to wear, so I figured that I had to adapt. Ever since then I have not worn male clothes.”

“How long ago was this?” I was looking at her a little more closely. That was not a wig – it was her hair. Her skin was smooth and flawless. And also, the breasts visible by the cut of her dress looked to be natural flesh.

“Three years ago,” she said. “I got my degree, although I did other things to get that. I suppose I learned that if people think that you are female, they will make allowances, or ask for favors and then make allowances.”

There was a hint of shame on her face, as if she had done wrong. I could guess that she might have, but perhaps other women have done as much. Other women? Of course, she was a woman.

“So you had surgery in college?” I regrated the question as soon as it had left my mouth. I had gone too far. But then it was clear that she was not offended. She had a look of naivety that was frankly alluring. An ingenue.

“Oh no,” she said. “I just told people that I was a good Christian girl from up in the hills and I could never do that, but maybe I could do something else instead. It was Tina who told me about it. I had no idea about … or is it these you are talking about?”

She could see me staring at her breasts. It was hard not to.

“These I grew myself,” she said proudly. “It is something called estradiol. Have you ever heard of it? Isn’t it crazy! You can grow breasts even if you are not a woman. Tina says that they grow almost as big as your mamma’s, and well, my mamma had big boobies.”

“Yes,” I said, wishing I could see them in all their glory instead of just these tantalizing half orbs.

In fact as she smiled at me, a stranger, with such open warmth and friendliness, the thoughts that were in my head were all wrong. I pictured her naked on a bed, with those curls cascading across pillows while I rammed her manmade cunt and watched her tits jiggle as she gasped for air. But I am a man, and she most definitely was not.

And then, as things do, the spell was broken by the sudden appearance of a man by her side.

“Oh Maurice,” she said. “I have been waiting for ages, but I have been talking to this nice man … I’m sorry I did not catch your name?”

The man was not handsome, but he was tall and fit-looking and he was looking at me aggressively.

“I am sorry Darling,” he said to her. “I was late and so now we are late. Are you ready to go?”

“I just need to go wee-wees,” she said, using a child’s term to describe what I would happily have witnessed. But then she was gone, leaving me with her fiancé, as I then recalled he was.

“That was quite a story she told me, and you have quite a woman there. A special woman.”

“She has led a sheltered life, and that will be the way it stays,” he said, seeming to look down on me even though we were the same height. “Innocence like hers is to be preserved, and now I am here to shelter her.”

I smiled and nodded. She was his and he wanted me to know it.

“You’re a lucky guy,” I said.

The End

© Maryanne Peters 2022