

Sweatpants

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“Why in the world did you spend \$199 on a pair of sweatpants?”

I looked up at Jamie with a raised eyebrow, holding the invoice and packing slip from the package that she’d handed me. She wasn’t exactly the sort of person who was careless with money.

For example: Last weekend I’d gotten a lecture about recycling an empty container of sour cream instead of adding it to our horde of scavenged but reusable plastic containers. Keep in mind this is all despite her making a six-figure salary as an Electrical Engineer.

“They’re a gift for you Sam! I thought they’d be the perfect hiking pants.” she said with a smirk. I knew this look. She was not a very good liar.

There also wasn’t an occasion for gift giving – our five year anniversary had just past, my birthday wasn’t for another few months, and it was still April.

We were also about to leave to go on a hike, so even the timing of being presented with this had seemed awkward. Or just ... purposeful.

“Sure, but I can get pants online for like twenty bucks, what’s so great about these?”

“Maybe you should put them on and I’ll show you,” she said.

I started to un-package them. They were at least clearly expensive. The fabric was stretchy and pleasantly soft, the color was an appealing but neutral gray, the pockets

even had zippers. Plus there was the brand, printed on thick cardboard that looked like it was hand-inked with a custom stamp.

“‘Fancy Pants’ is a good brand name,” I remarked.

“I thought so too, but that wasn’t why I splurged on them.”

I changed pants in our kitchen, tossing the other pair of joggers I was already wearing onto a chair. Then I removed the tag.

“What do you think?”

“I mean, they’re very comfy,” I said. “I don’t know about two hundred bucks comfy, but I have no objections.”

“Great,” said Jamie. She held out a black plastic fob and pressed a button on it.

All of a sudden magic was happening. To me.

If you’ve never experienced a magic-driven transformation, it’s a hard to describe experience. In one sense time seems to stretch out and you sort of notice details you’d never think about otherwise. In another sense it seems to speed up and you’re unable to respond to or react to anything. The reason for this is that reality matrix has to realign with the current quantum paradigm. Because time and space aren’t actually separate things, this means the usual ‘flow’ of time that we understand doesn’t apply during the transformation (okay I might be a bit of a magic nerd).

In any case, what I’m getting at was that it felt like it took almost half a minute, but probably was over and done with in about half a second.

And then it was done. My mind was able to catch up with the world again.

I realized two things simultaneously:

- I no longer existed from the waist up. The rest of me had been magically folded away and I was now only a pair of legs.
- I absolutely had this coming.

- There was a sudden breeze in the room from the air moving into the space I no longer existed in, and this had blown our mortgage statement off the fridge.

"Oh my god that is so cool," said Jamie. She tucked the fob into the pocket of her tights. "I have a clicker for my boyfriend!"

I responded by taking an experimental step towards her. My balance was different like this, but I'd usually get used to it after a moment.

"You can hear me right?" she said. "Give me a little shimmy if you can hear me."

I performed a shimmy for her. I wasn't really in any position to negotiate. Who knew what else that clicker could do.

"Perfect," said Jamie. "And sorry not to ask you about this, but I didn't want to spoil the surprise – and you have to admit that you sort of had this coming."

That was a very fair assessment. I tried to make a slight bow to indicate agreement.

She knelt down so her face was level with my hips.

"You're cool with this right?" she said.

I responded as I could by shifting my butt side to side.

"I think we're going to need a system of communication," she said. "So right foot is yes, left foot is no."

I tapped my right foot.

"Good," she said. "Now we're still in for this hike right?"

Right foot.

"Oh my god you're adorable like this," she said, hugging my hips to her face and giving me a kiss. "Just a nice little piece of ass."

She gave my butt a fondle.

“The only downside,” she added, standing back up. “Is that now I have to drive.”

The Backstory

On the car ride over, I had time to think of just how much I’d earned this result. I wasn’t able to ‘see’ out the windows, so there wasn’t much else to think about.

To start with, while it was definitely inconvenient, I didn’t mind this shape one bit. If anything, it was exciting to try out something new and weird. That it made Jamie happy was a multiplier on that account.

Replacing my senses of sight and hearing, I now had what magic-nerds call “Sensory Understanding.” It wasn’t the same as seeing or hearing, but it came pretty close. I’d experienced this already when Jamie had talked me into spending a week without a head.

In either case, what had lead up to this was that when the pandemic started and we all suddenly had way to much time on our hands, I began teaching myself magic. And since Jamie and I lived together, she became the de facto guinea pig for anything I was learning.

Not that she minded at all – Jamie loved magic. She’d use any excuse at all to make a visit to the studio and say, get rid of her limbs for a weekend (my birthday), or perhaps get rid of my head for a week (her birthday), or I don’t know, have herself decapitated so she could box her own head up as a present and make jokes about ‘giving head’ to all our friends (Christmas).

So initially anyway, Jamie was always a willing participant. Until I got good enough that I realized I could prank her with sudden magical transformations.

The first thing I got pretty good at was removing her head. I could snap my fingers, and then poof, no more head for Jamie. Admittedly, there's a bit more to it than "poof" – there's a quantum bridging algorithm and a parallel universe involved, and it takes a lot of memorization of prime numbers to do it quickly – but that's the net effect.

Let me tell you vanishing your partners head is good way to win an argument in the short term, and a really bad idea to use to win arguments in the long term.

But I did get in the habit of doing it anytime I thought it might be funny. Which luckily enough, Jamie shares my sense of humor and spontaneity. Mostly.

And while Jamie tolerated that I might vanish her head at the same moment as she attempts to take a sip of water, she also enjoyed and often requested I vanish her head too.

Headache? Easy answer.

Taking a nap? Perfect way to unwind.

In the mood? It's an absolute game changer.

It also became the first party trick she wanted me to show off when life started to return to something resembling normal. The reaction among our friends was a bit more mixed-results, but Becca told me I'd unlocked a kink for her that she'd never known about, and simply insisted that she reward us both with a threesome.

So in some ways, magic has really paid off for me.

The other thing I'd been working on was divisions. They're a more difficult spell to learn – you have to work out some linear algebra and adjust the variables to match the current angle of the extra-dimensional energy field – but there are some shortcuts you can learn once you've got the pattern down.

The end result of this was that I could now not only make Jamie's head disappear, I could just come up and yank it off her shoulders. Or similarly, I could just pull her arms and legs off. Or split her apart at the waist.

The one I'm not allowed to do any more is split her in half vertically. The main reason for this being that while it's easy to put her back in one piece, the same can't be said for her clothing.

That said sometimes karate chopping your girlfriend in half is a hard urge to resist.

So all of this history amounts to this – for Jamie to finally find a way to turn the tables on me – and for her to do it her way (with technology and well, money) – all of that made complete sense.

Plus, the pants were quite comfy.

The Walk

"That is such an amazing view," said Jamie. She looked down at me next to her. We'd been hiking for about twenty minutes and had made it to the first overlook.

I wasn't, for reasons I won't get into, able to really take in the view. Mostly the magical perception only concerns a person's (okay some of a person) immediate surroundings.

Jamie knelt down and snapped a selfie of both of us.

"What do you think of the hashtag #halfboihike," she said.

I tapped my right foot. It wasn't like I had any way to express an alternative.

"Eh," she continued. "No signal up here. We'll post it later."

She put her phone in my pocket.

The was a scuffling sound behind us. We turned and a friendly-looking black dog was coming over unleashed.

"Oh my god you're so cute," said Jamie, holding her hands out wide. The dog bounded over to her for pets.

"Hey! Marty!"

Running down the trail came a somewhat out of breath girl, about our age.

"Sorry," she said. "He sulks when I put him on the leash."

"It's no problem," said Jamie. Then to the dog she added, "Of course you're a Marty! What a good doggo!"

"He's adorbs," she said to the girl who'd approached, as the dog returned to her.

"Thanks," she said. Then she noticed me.

"I could say the same thing," she continued. "About your ... companion."

I'd been wondering how I'd come across to strangers. So far the other hikers who'd crossed our path had either purposefully ignored me, or two girls who at least said "Mmm!" to one another, in what context I couldn't be exactly sure.

"This is my boyfriend Sam," said Jamie. "He's only half a guy."

"Major props to you half-guy Sam," said the girl. "If it was up to me, we'd cut all guys in half. It'd be the law."

"Oh, swoon," said Jamie. "That'd be the perfect world, wouldn't it."

"Totally," she replied. "I'm Julia by the way."

"Jamie."

They shook hands.

"Say hi, Sam," said Jamie, bumping my hip with hers.

I rocked forward on my tiptoes.

"Oh god I'm going to melt," said Julia, crouching down.

"Take a handful if you want," said Jamie, grabbing my ass. "There's plenty to share."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah, totes."

"Is it okay with you if I grab your butt?" she asked me.

I replied by turning around for her. She gave me a tentative fondle, until Jamie pushed me further into her hands. She kept her hand on my ass while turning back to Jamie.

"I guess you two are kinda into magic," she said.

"You could say that," said Jamie with a laugh. "He's the actual magician though, but I just got him these magic pants."

"They're amazing," said Julia. "I'm definitely going to have to buy a pair."

"It's a company called Fancy Pants," said Jamie. "Apparently they have a whole lineup of different stuff now, but Sam only ever wears sweatpants, so..."

She nodded at me.

"You know," said Julia. "I've always thought magic was really cool, but I just don't know that many people who are into it."

"Yeah, it's ... like our friends are also not really the type. Mostly."

"The last time I was in the Bay Area, my friend took me to this place called SMASH," said Julia. "And uh, maybe this is a lot of information for someone you just met, but they turned me into something called a lady pot?"

"I know what a lady pot is," said Jamie, with a grin.

They paused. There was definitely a vibe going on.

"We should hang out," said Jamie, taking the obvious next step.

"Oh my god, really?" said Julia. "I was just trying to figure out how to get you to say that."

"Yeah," said Jamie. "Like I said, I can't really do magic myself, but Sam has gotten pretty good at it. When he's – you know – an entire guy."

"I don't know about that," said Julia, offering a final goodbye fondle to my ass as she pushed me back towards Jamie. "I'm kinda liking his vibe of being less than an entire guy. But I also really want to try more magic. It's a conundrum."

"Well maybe we'll get him to show off some magic and then we just zap him back down again," said Jamie.

"Perfect," said Julia, snapping her fingers.

They fist bumped.

"Lets get them digits girl," said Jamie. "Then I guess you and Marty can finish your hike."

The Change Up

We'd made it to the top of the climb. Jamie was gulping water from her Nalgene.

I stood by awkwardly. Without a mouth to feel thirsty, I wasn't exactly sure how hydrated I was or wasn't.

"You want some?" said Jamie.

I tapped both feet alternately, which we'd arrived at as a way of saying "Maybe."

"I suppose you might also like to get a proper view in," said Jamie.

She got the clicker out of her pocket. It occurred to me how very-possible it was that she might lose it.

"And for my next trick," she said, squinting at the fob. Then she pushed something on it.

I felt magic happening again. Space and time got real weird for a moment.

Then I was back. Sort of.

I had a head again.

But, a head was pretty much the only bit of me that had been restored. I had kind of a neck and shoulders too, but those were effectively the same thing as my hips.

"Wow," I said, finding my jaw was somehow stiff and my mouth was dry. Talking, breathing, seeing all kind of felt unfamiliar.

"Here you go," said Jamie, bending over to offer me some water. I took an awkward sip, letting her pour it into my mouth and then wipe my face with her sleeve.

"Thanks," I said. "Apparently I was thirsty."

"Of course, anything for my little half-guy," she said, planting a kiss on my cheek.

"So the pants can make shorties too, huh?" I said.

"They sure can," she said.

"Anything else they can do?"

"Well, there's one other setting. This isn't quite the place for a demonstration though," said Jamie.

"Any hints?"

"Let's just say your legs are now 'optional,'" she said. "And that you can expect to spent the evening as just a pair of hips."

"Will that include my head?"

"If you're nice to me it might," said Jamie, with a grin.

"I guess I should stop chopping your head in half when you're doing your hair," I said.

"Actually I kind of love it when you do that," said Jamie. "And the same goes for all the magic you do to me. I just wanted a way that I could, once in a while, turn things around."

"That's very fair," I said. "And to be honest, I ... well actually I like this a lot."

"Good," said Jamie. "Because I already ordered the hoody they make."

"What does the hoody do?"

"You'll find out."

"I suppose I will," I said with a laugh.

"Actually I'm too excited so I'll just tell you," said Jamie. "Among other things, your head will be detachable, and in fact we can use it to vanish your whole body. And the other one I'm really excited for is..."

She paused and grinned.

"Nugget mode," she said.

"Wait," I said with a laugh. "They actually call it nugget mode?"

"No," she said with a shrug. "Their website just says 'headless quad' but we all know it's really Nugget mode."

"Fair enough," I said. "Something to look forward to."

"Speaking of things to look forward to," said Jamie. "What do you think of Julia?"

"She's um... nice," I said.

"She wanted to fuck the shit out of you," said Jamie.

"Yeah I picked up on the vibe," I said.

"I think you should hit it," she said, with a grin.

"I think *you* should hit it," I said.

"Oh that was already a done deal," she said. "You know the rules, girl-on-girl stuff is never cheating."

"There's like a hundred ways that isn't true," I said, laughing. "But I suppose it applies here."

"Anyway," said Jamie. "I guess we should start back down here. Now the real question is, do you still need a head for the way down?"

She held up the fob, with her finger over the button.

"Of course not," I said.

"Exactly," she agreed.

She clicked the button.