Motherhood

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

How can I begin to describe the shock of being told by the woman that you love that she is not a woman at all, or at least was not born a woman? To be honest, it is hard for me now because I have buried it, but I remember that it hit me hard.

She sat me down to have a serious conversation with me. I had invited her to move in. We had been going out for a while and we had enjoyed sex quite a few times. To me she was completely female, with breasts and a pussy like any other girl’s. She had broader shoulders perhaps, and narrower hips, but to me that was the perfect body – I am not a lover of the pear shape or a massive butt.

I thought that she was going to lecture me about the toilet seat or some personal habit that she found objectionable, or maybe some habit of her own. I remember looking at her pretty face in all its seriousness, and thinking that I could accept anything if she would be mine. I was just not expecting that.

I remember being stunned. I could see that she was too, but she was prepared for my response. She offered me a way out “before it is too late – before you make a commitment you will regret”. I could see that she was holding back tears, perhaps because she knew that my urge would be to comfort her. She needed me to stay unemotional so that I could make the right decision.

I just sat there is disbelief, wishing that it was not true.

She told me that because she had no womb and no eggs she could never have children. It should not have mattered because there are plenty of infertile woman, but the thing is that I had started thinking about her being the mother of my children, and now that was never going to be.

She said that she was the same person, but that I might not be able to see past her past. That was exactly how she said it.

And she told me that she loved me, which I why she needed to set me free, to live another life if that was important to me. She said that it hurt because she had never loved before, or not like this. I felt the same way, but the news had disoriented me.

She got up to leave. She said that I would need time, as if time could unsay what had been said.

I asked her to sit back down. Even while my mind was awash I knew that I did not want her to leave. Perhaps if she had we would not still be together? Perhaps she would have walked and I would consigned her to bad memories – the time I fell for a tranny. But there she stayed, this beautiful and sexy woman who everybody told me was better than I deserved.

“I don’t want to lose you.” That was what I said. We embraced and I could feel her body shaking. I realized that it had been a bigger ordeal for her than it had been for me.

Over her shoulder I saw the book of photographs on the bookshelf, and I was suddenly confused all over again.

“Just a minute,” I said. “What about all those photographs of you in your childhood? Who was that girl?”

“This is where it gets complicated,” she said. “And this is why I have told you that I no longer have any contact with my mother.”

What followed was her story and with it the opportunity to fall in love with her all over again.

“My mother raised me on her own. She was from a broken home herself. Her father (my grandfather) was a successful businessman. He had another woman and walked out on his wife when my mother was quite young, and started a new family. My grandmother then had a number of relationships with abusive men until one of them finally killed her, shortly after my mother gave birth to me, while she was still in high school. That left my mother with no parents, but she did have the family house and her father out of a sense of guilt I guess, ready to pay for the welfare of his first child and her child – me.”

I had never met her mother, but if she had given birth in high school she would still be quite young.

“It is not up to me to make excuses for what my mother did, but I guess that she only had bad examples of men in her life. Her father was unfaithful and had then abandoned her, her mother’s boyfriends had been violent and demeaning and one was a murderer, and even her own boyfriend (my father) had wanted nothing to do with her. She wanted no men in her life, but the child in her arms was a boy. It was her decision to deny that. She was the one who decided that I should be raised as a girl, not a boy. There was a birth certificate but she ignored it. She gave me a girl’s name and raised me as a girl.

“That is why in all those photos of my childhood I am dressed like a girl. The thing is that I never felt totally comfortable being a girl, but I could not understand why. My mother told me that I had a birth defect that I needed to hid and so I did that, and I always did things like sitting down to pee, but I used to love to do more active things with neighborhood boys. I was a boy inside, although I was an only child so I did my best to be a the good daughter my mother expected.

“If you look at those photos with me smiling at the camera they are all for her – me dressed as a princess for Halloween, me at ballet class, or the junior beauty pageant. She did her best to make me into the perfect daughter. The truth is that she did it more effectively that I could ever have believed.

“Looking back I remember when one of the boys I used to play with started to show signs of early pberty my mother started asking him a lot of questions. I now know that was when she started to put hormone blockers in my morning milkshake to chemically castrate me. They did just that. If you start with thse chemicals early enough and don’t monitor things they actually kill off the testes. That is what my mother did! My mother maimed me out of her own crazed hatred for men!

It was only when I was in high school that I learned about things like intersex and transgender. I started to realize that things were not right. I imagined that I might be intersexed, like having been identified at birth as having been a female child with some growth in my groin. I did not find out the truth until I went through her private papers and discovered my own birth certificate. It could not be more clear – “Sex: Male”. Everything else was a lie.

“I went nuts at my mother. She had ruined my life. I was really a boy, but I didn’t look like one and I did not act like one. I even had breasts that had sprouted on my chest, although whether it was just because I had not nuts or because she was adding estrogen into my breakfast I never found out. Either way I had developed a female body, but unlike all the girls in my class there was no sign of menstruation. I was neither one nor the other and it was my mother’s doing.

“I supposed that I was most like a female to male transgender man, except I had a penis, but one that didn’t function other than to pee through. I decided that I would leave home, bind my breasts, cut off my hair and get a buzz cut, and set forth out into the world as a man, on the hunt of male hormones to get me back on track. So that is what I did.

“Except that I had doubts straight away. When I saw my beautiful hair lying on the barbershop floor I started to cry. When I looked in the mirror I did not see the boy I expected to see – I saw a girl with an ugly buzz cut, and I saw her wearing ugly boy’s clothes, and still behaving in a girlish way. Boys would assume that I was gay, and girls would assume that I was lesbian.

“My mother really had done a number on me! But I only had one thing that I needed to do. I opened a gmail account in my birth name and used it to email a selfie of myself as a man saying that I was free to live who I was no thanks to her, and that she should never try to contact me. I even wore a fake moustache to appear more manly. I couldn’t grow one if I tried, and as for testosterone, I could not bear the thought of taking it. I like my skin and my hair.

“But there I was a homeless high school drop out and of indeterminate sex. I stayed with a girl from school living above her garage and I went to get a job waiting tables. I used my birth name but when the boss offered me the job he said – “You’re smart and personable, but if you want the tips I suggest that you grow out your hair and wear something nice to work.” He thought I was a girl pretending to be gender neutral. As it happened, I only had girl’s clothes and the friend I was staying with was the same. I told myself that I was just slipping back into girl mode until I got myself sorted out.

“I supposed that I discovered that I couldn’t make it as a guy and I quite liked being a girl. And it turned out that I was attracted to men, and not gay men. I did well as a waitress – really well. I actually liked the work, but it was true that being pretty is worth money, and breasts help too, so I went on estrogen. It just became harder to slip out of girl mode, but it was still an option.

I guess I walked the fence. But I figured I had to make a decision one day, so when my grandfather died and left me a decent chunk of money, and nothing for my mother, I decided to get the surgery and become a woman, or as close to it as I possibly could. And then I met you, and my life seemed perfect.”

“Maybe it could be,” I said.

I took her to bed, and we made love. I must have run my hands over every inch of her that day, perhaps searching for any sign that she was less than female. I could not find anything that was not perfect. I just needed to make her life like that.

But when I proposed to her, I said that I wanted to meet her mother and close the rift. I am close to my family, and I could not understand how two people so close could be estranged form one another. It seemed so wrong. I wanted her mother to be at the wedding.

“But you don’t understand – she thinks that I am living as a man. I want her to think that. I want her to feel that se has failed to make me what she wanted.”

“You shouldn’t look at it that way,” I said. “Or maybe she saw the woman in you even as a child. Look at yourself now. How much of this is of her making and how much of it yours?”

I found her mother and I told her that I was going to visit her whether or not she went with me, and tell her that we were getting married. In the end she went with me, pretending to be furious. It was going to be an awkward moment for all of us and it was, but for her mother it was time for a heavy expression of guilt that I think surprised my fiancée.

“I want you try to put things right,” her mother said. “I want you both to have a family as you both deserve. I am only just 40 years old and I want to offer myself as a surrogate.”

Well, that was years ago now. We were married and within a year we had our first child, and 2 years later second, and then a third. We have a boy and a girl and our third child, a dead ringer for their mother … well, we are considering giving them the opportunity to chose.

The End

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Author’s Note: This idea comes from one John Sinclair who review a story of mine early in May saying - “I have a suggestion: a single mother gives birth to a boy, but she wants a daughter, so she raises him as a girl from birth.” I am not sure whether he imagined the story being told like this, but this is how it came.

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