

The Family Gift

A short story by Henry Cavanaugh

Jeremy's father had largely been missing in his life since he was ten, so he was rather surprised when the man showed up just a week after his eighteenth birthday and convinced Jeremy's mother to let him go on a "long overdue father and son trip" up the East Coast. Considering he had almost no relationship with his father whatsoever, Jeremy was actually rather reluctant to go. He had always wanted to see San Francisco though and that was the destination his father had in mind for them, so the recent high school graduate relented and packed a bag for a long weekend away from home.

The conversation between the two men was awkward and stilted throughout the first part of their journey, largely thanks to Jeremy's frostiness towards his father. Even though the man had never been entirely absent from his life (he'd spend a weekend with Jeremy and his mother every five or six months), not having him there as a daily presence had taken a toll on Jeremy. He didn't really have any male role models to look up to or emulate and as such, he had adopted mannerisms and interests that would have conventionally been considered feminine. As such, it was hardly a surprise to anyone when Jeremy came out as gay. It was a relatively recent development though, so that car journey was actually the first opportunity he had to share the news with his father. Much to his relief, the mid-forties father instantly responded in supporting fashion and expressed pride in his son for living his truth. Such support didn't make up for all the years of absence, but it was at least a start.

By the time they were within an hour of San Francisco, the atmosphere in the vehicle had settled somewhat. Knowing that he would be spending the next four days in close quarters with his father had forced Jeremy to swallow his pride and attempt to get to know the man who had been such a mystery to him for so long. All he really knew about his father's departure was that the marriage between his parents had broken down (although they remained amicable) and his father had felt trapped and stagnant after spending so much of his youth living on the road. That second piece of knowledge had caused Jeremy to resent his father to quite a great extent, but he was forcing himself not to dwell on it for the weekend. This was finally his chance to see what kind of a man his father was for himself!

They arrived in the city just as the sun was disappearing beyond the Bay and although Jeremy was anxious to see what San Francisco had to offer, he couldn't deny that he was fighting off tiredness. Long traveling days always did this to him, so he was glad when his father swung the car into a parking garage and then led the way up to the hotel lobby. Jeremy was stunned by the elegance of the place and couldn't help but

wonder how much it cost to stay there for the long weekend like they were. It seemed pretty clear that it was incredibly expensive, so where had his father got that much money from? What did he do to afford such extravagant lodgings and act so casually about it? Jeremy's old man was becoming more and more of an enigma with every passing minute...

It soon emerged that his father hadn't just booked a single room for them but rather a small apartment suite with two bedrooms, raising Jeremy's cost estimations even higher. Once they were in the suite and had dumped their bags in their respective bedrooms, Jeremy met his father back in the communal space. The older man had grabbed them both a drink from the minibar and even though the eighteen year old wasn't the biggest fan of beer, he decided it was just easier to drink it rather than causing an issue. Jeremy thought the ensuing conversation would be short, meaningless and ultimately just a way to pass the time before they parted ways to get some sleep. He was wrong. When all was said and done, it actually turned out to be one of the most enlightening exchanges of his entire life.

"The men in our family have... a gift," his father had started, still smiling but with a much more serious tone than Jeremy had heard from him all day. "We're capable of living our lives beyond anything you've probably considered before and, trust me, I'm not exaggerating. That's where I've been all those years: using the gift to live the most rewarding life I can make for myself."

Jeremy bristled at the reminder that simply being a father to him wouldn't have been rewarding enough for the old man, but he had other things to focus on instead. "What do you mean, a gift? Like a family heirloom or something?" His father's sudden use of riddles was baffling, but Jeremy would be lying if he said that he wasn't interested in where the conversation was going. It seemed he would finally be getting some of those long sought after answers!

"Kind of, but it's much more valuable than some shiny trinket," his father responded, "It'll sound insane at first but I promise you, I'm telling you the truth." He hesitated for a moment and for the first time he could actively remember, Jeremy noted that his father appeared somewhat nervous. "We have the supernatural ability to take over the bodies of other men."

For a second, neither of them spoke. Then a chuckle escaped Jeremy's lips before he could help it. "You're right, that does sound insane," he agreed, waiting for his father's serious demeanor to break and for the older man to join him in laughing. That didn't happen though. His father remained completely stone-faced and simply shook his head. "Come on, Dad, you don't actually expect me to believe this, do you? I'm eighteen now,

not eight! I know magic isn't real." *I learned that when I wished on every shooting star for two years that you would come home.*

"Like I said, I know it sounds crazy but I really am telling the truth. I've spent the last eight years traveling the country and possessing any guy whose life I thought might be interesting. I've lost track of how many different faces I've seen in the mirror!" His father sighed and shrugged his shoulders. "You can choose to believe or not, but tomorrow I'm going to be out there having a blast in some other guy's flesh and if you just trust me, you could be doing the same too."

The reference to the following day's plans caught Jeremy's interest, as throughout the long journey his father had refused to divulge any of his plans for their weekend getaway. "What are we even doing here, dad? What's so special about tomorrow?"

"Only the biggest annual bodybuilding convention in all of California. All those stupidly muscular bodies, ripe for the taking! I've been crashing the party every year for half a decade and now that you're of age, I thought you'd like to join in on the fun! I'm usually there picking up chicks, but think of all the dudes you'd be able to score!"

Jeremy wasn't sure what he had been expecting but the discovery that they were in the city to attend a bodybuilding show felt completely out of left field. Never in his life had he shown an interest in the sport (which was obvious from his slender frame) and to his knowledge, his father hadn't either. If the insane tale that he was being told about supernatural abilities though... Well, Jeremy supposed he could see his father's logic. They would be prime bodies to take over and the young gay men was already beginning to imagine just how nice it would be to draw the lustful gazes of hunks for a change rather than having them look right through him.

"Let's say I buy into anything you're telling me for a second," Jeremy started cautiously, "How do you do it? This *possession* thing. How do you take over their bodies?" He wasn't sure why he was even humoring the insanity that his father was offering, but it was perhaps due to that quiet whispering voice in the back of his mind that was strangely fascinated by the whole concept.

"It's really simple. You've just gotta make physical contact and think hard about how much you wanna be the one in control of that body. The tough part is actually getting them in a private enough space that nobody sees you performing the takeover. It's better not to put yourself in a position for people to start asking questions." After finishing his explanation, the older man glanced down at his watch. "It's getting late and we've got a big day tomorrow. Take the night to think about all this and then decide for yourself in the morning, will you?"

Jeremy hesitated for nodding in agreement. He still had very severe doubts about what his father had just shared with him, but there was at least a part of him that wanted it to be true. Even as he returned to his bedroom and settled under the sheets, the young man couldn't stop thinking about how exciting it would be to settle into the driver's seat of a massive bodybuilder. His dreams that night even revolved around huge muscular bodies flexing, posing and begging Jeremy to claim them as his own.

When he rose from this arousing slumber the next morning, Jeremy had gained a serious case of morning wood but had lost his father once again. After jerking off and cleaning himself up, Jeremy investigated the whole hotel suite and found himself totally alone. It took him some time to notice the piece of paper left on the table they had been sat at the night prior. The message scribbled on it was short and sweet: *Try and find me in the convention center. Look for the biggest guy surrounded by the most babes!* Jeremy wasn't sure if he was amused or slightly disgusted by the message, but it was clear what his father meant. Now all the young man could do was hope that this wasn't some big practical joke being played at his expense.

To say that Jeremy felt out of place at a bodybuilding convention would have been a complete understatement. He was an ant among giants and couldn't help but stare at his muscular surroundings in complete awe. He'd always had a fascination with muscle despite being able to build much himself and never in his life had he been around such roided up beasts! Every single one of the guys in the building could have dominated the



arrogant jocks that Jeremy had gone to high school with. Such a thought brought a smile to his lips but it still didn't stop him from feeling awkward and even ridiculous when he was so distinct from everybody around him. Even the women were bigger than him!

Feeling the call of nature and being eager to escape the crowded hall for even a brief moment, Jeremy entered the nearest bathroom and was relieved to find it almost completely empty. There was only one other individual present: a bodybuilder wearing a backwards cap and gray sweatpants. It seemed the man hadn't yet noticed Jeremy's entry, likely because he was focused on his reflection as he ran through a series of poses that made his muscles bulge. The sight was so spectacular that Jeremy's breath was stolen right from his lungs.

This is your shot, a voice in Jeremy's head insisted. It wasn't even his own voice, but rather his father's. Loathful as he was to admit it, Jeremy knew that it was as good an opportunity as he was going to get. There was nobody else around to see them and whoever this hunk was, he definitely ticked all of the right boxes...

Before he could second guess his decision, the young man charged forward. He could see confusion flash across the bodybuilder's face in the mirror, but before the huge man could react, Jeremy slapped his hand down on the man's muscular back. Once physical contact had been established, he summoned up every ounce of willpower he had and chanted a mantra in his mind: *I want your body and I want to be you, I want your body and I want to be you, I want your body and I want to be you...*

The sensation that followed was unlike anything Jeremy had ever experienced before. It was as if an invisible chain had wrapped itself around his entire being and was pulling him forward. The distance between his own less-than-average frame and the bodybuilder's bulk quickly diminished, but at the point where they should have been pressed together, Jeremy instead sunk right into the other man's flesh. The other man's body had tensed up and left him frozen in one of his bodybuilding poses and his lack of resistance suggested to Jeremy that he *couldn't* resist. That was a relief as there was no doubt in his mind that the bodybuilder would have been able to beat him to a bloody pulp if he'd managed to break free!

Once he had been completely consumed by the larger man's body, Jeremy began to spread out to better fit within the taller and broader physique. It was a bewildering feeling to suddenly control an extra 150lbs of pure muscle on, but it was also intoxicating and arousing. *No wonder Dad loves doing this so much*, Jeremy thought to himself as he felt the front of the gray sweats start to tighten around the growing bulge.

It was mere seconds until he was in complete control of the bodybuilder. The first thing Jeremy did was roll his broad shoulders and turn his thick neck from side to side, then crane it forward so he could look down at the massive body he had invaded so easily! Seeing a pair of thick pecs and the sculpted abs beneath



drove Jeremy even further into a complete haze of lust. *I think I might owe Dad an apology for thinking he was crazy.* There was no denying that his old man had been telling the truth anymore, as Jeremy could see for himself just how real the family gift had turned out to be! While it definitely didn't absolve the older man from being a bad father, it at least allowed Jeremy to see things from his perspective a little easier. He'd only just taken over his first body and yet he was already thinking about how much fun he could have in the future with his newly discovered power! He had so many questions too, like how long could he remain within another man's body and would he need time to recharge between possessions?

Before he let himself get too carried away with thinking about the exciting future though, Jeremy knew he had a decision to make in the current moment. Should he spend some more time in the restroom getting better acquainted with his new body, or should he head back out onto the convention floor in order to soak up the admiration of other men and potentially even seek out his father? He was pretty sure that with all of his new size, he'd be able to turn even the straight guy there a little bisexual! Both were incredibly tempting options and promised a lot of incomparable fun, so what was it going to be?