Snowstorm

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Did you ever see the movie “The Shining”? A writer takes a job as a winter caretaker of a big hotel in the mountains and dead guests come out to haunt him into madness. At least I think that was what it was about. Anyway, it turns out he was crazy. It seems more believable for me having been there.

It was not the same place. That place was fiction. The Nalder Peak Resort and Spa was a real place. It had mountain view and a lake, but no ski fields or anything like that. And the road up there was prone to avalanches over winter. That means that in the place has to be closed in the winter, just like in the movie. Three months out of action.

But this is a modern set up. There are barriers and shutters and cameras everywhere. It ought to be empty. If it hadn’t been for the communications fault just before Christmas, it would have been. That was when I was called in. I was told that I could go in while the passes were low risk, but if the was any substantial snowfall I would need to stay in. It could be for weeks.

“But if you are trapped, we will be paying you, and you will have free board.” That sounded good. I had quit my place to go home to my parents for Christmas, but we were not getting on. The idea of being away for a while and then collecting a few weeks wages with no expenses seemed OK.

I didn’t even mind being alone. The guy who drove me in heard saw the first snow slide of the season and was all for turning around then and there.

“I have not come all this way not to do the fix, so if you want to go you can leave me here.” That is what I said. That is what he did.

I had the instructions on how I could live – a bulky manual. There was a self-contained apartment on the first floor off the reception area and the boutiques. On the basement floor was the spa and on the floor above reception and the lounge were the restaurants and the main kitchen. Two 3 storey wings of accommodation snaked around the hillside either side of reception.

The views were spectacular, but even then I could see that the weather was closing in.

Communications were on the roof, and I had my first look at the problem while the sun still shone. It looked like an easy fix, but I would need tools from the sub-basement room, close to the boilers that which were not operating, and the generator which was.

Once I had done what I had to do on the roof I had the choice of restoring communications or not. If I did not, I would be stranded alone, perhaps for weeks or even months.

I am not really a solitary person, although I am a private person. But I saw in this moment an opportunity. Perhaps I always saw it, or even dreamed of it before I took this job. Perhaps that was why I said to my colleague that he should leave me there. So I could be alone for more than a while … and be Jessica.

I can say that I dabbled in cross-dressing. Just every now and again. It was my secret. I wanted to appear as a man. I was a tradesman and a guy. I was not that big or muscular, but I was male, and that is how I wanted to appear, except in private. In private I could be Jessica.

I used to stand in front of the mirror and think how beautiful she could be, how beautiful I could be, if I was just free to live as her for longer than an evening in my home. Do other transvestites think this way? Perhaps others would take chances.

I wore a black stud in each ear, even at the risk of appearing less than a man. But that allowed me to wear drop earrings when I was Jessica. My chest was largely hairless so I could stick on the false breasts, but when I squeezed the latex nipples I longed for the sensation that they denied me.

I used to shave my legs after the end of summer. In long pants I could hide them. Stockings over hairy legs just look so horrible. I could brush my eyebrows but never pluck them. I could wear a wig but what I really wanted was to have curlers in my hair.

So before the job I had let my hair grow as long as I could. I had it pulled back in a rough low ponytail, but when I was Jessica I was learning all the things that I could do with longer hair. All of this in planning for the moment that was now mine.

So I sat and the main control screen behind reception. I would not put up the cameras. I would not restore the voice calling. I just sent a message.

‘Weather closing in. Settling in for a long stay. All well. Please give me advance notice of when I might be relieved.’

Is this the ultimate cross-dressing fantasy? Alone in a resort hotel with boutiques full of fashion clothes and a spa full of treatment facilities equipped for hairdressers and beauticians? I could be Jessica unrestrained and walk these halls as her. I would need to pretend of the company I had – girls like me to giggle with a share thoughts on fashion, hairstyles and lipstick colors; or perhaps men who admired me and wanted to have sex with me.

It may sound sad, or even pathetic, but for me the prospect was thrilling beyond explanation.

I decided that the apartment was not for me. There was a suite on the floor above. The suites had different decors and I chose the one that I regarded as the most feminine – primrose yellow rather than pink, but with lots of lace trimmings. Then I accessed the boutique and laid out some clothes in my size – day wear for just walking the halls, and gowns for the ball room on the first floor.

As the snow arrived, heating would be an issue. I understood that I needed to use portable electric heaters and plan where I would be to enjoy the garments, especially if they included a lot of bare skin.

I knew the hardest part would be the hair and beauty. This is where you really ought to have somebody else doing the work, but I knew what I had to do and now I had all the supplies and equipment to do it.

And there were manuals too. I really knew nothing about giving myself a facial, but the “Depilation and Deep-cleansing Face Pack” came with instructions. This is the thing about being out of contact for weeks. What guy would want to turn up at work with the face of a woman? But nobody would see my woman’s face except me. Me and my imaginary friends, who could all of them appreciate beauty.

The same with the eyebrows. Plucked eyebrows are for women and queers, but they can grow back in time for my return to civilization. For now I can enjoy what it feels like to really look as feminine as I can be. And there were templates with wax strips. Just pick the best shape for your face, position them right, press and heat, wait and then pull away.

It was so easy, and delightfully painful in the moment, that I decided to wax everything. I even waxed away all but a tiny part of my pubic hair so that I could tuck back and look like a real girl even while naked.

One of the few things that I had brough from home was my fake breasts. I had intended to stick them on with proper adhesive and wear them the whole time, but frankly they looked cheap, and there were gel inserts among the vast drawers of female accoutrement.

So I was ready to do my hair. I decided that I would go blonde. I found something close to my natural hair color to go back to when the time came, and then I chose the shade of blonde I was looking for, and the array of wiglets and hairpieces that came in that color to give me style options. But for now I wanted to wash and condition my hair with the right stuff, and repeat what I had been playing with at home – a curler set.

I had seen my mother do it. We lived on a farm and she would prepare herself to go into town starting with her hair. I used to love to watch her. She even asked me to help her sometimes. Maybe that was where this fascination started. I am not about to analyze myself. I know that I am not alone. I mean I was then, but not alone with my urges.

It was not perfect, but with the blow dryer I got what I was looking for – volume and curls. It was definitely girly hair. And it was on top of girly eyebrows and a smooth (although slightly inflamed) girly face. It could only get better, but for now it was enough for me to jack off and enjoy a moment of pleasure beyond my hopes.

This is what I had to look forward to. The only question was whether I had enough seminal fluid to keep going at this rate. And I had not even put any makeup on!

That followed, then and everyday after that. A daily routine but endless varieties of hair styles, makeup looks, and clothes and accessories. I walked the halls in my heels, with stocking and furs because the halls were unheated. But in my warm suite or in the rooms of the spa and the kitchen where I ate, I was warm while the snow fell outside, building a barrier and keeping me safe from prying and judging eyes.

It was everything that I dreamed it would be. I was Jessica at last.

It seemed that she might be taking over. Why else would I have put hormones up my ass?

In the spa there was a drawer for special treatments clearly aimed at middle-aged ladies. It included something called “HRT Pessaries” said to promote “youthful skin, hair and body”. I am not a fool. I knew what it was. I just did not understand how much more effective it is administered anally. It was just that female hormones seemed like the ultimate expression of my desires. I had to try them.

It is a compulsion. My isolation simply removed all the barriers. That was the reason I was here. I was a cross-dresser burdened by my male existence now free to flit and dance in my silk negligees and wedge slippers - uninhibited. That is the word. Or was it “out of control”.

Jessica made Christmas dinner for herself and three of her closest friends. There was Jilly and Milly, and a guy that I just had to call Wilson, although there was no ball in his seat. You can sneer, but it was Jessica’s first Christmas and so it had to be her best. And because of that it was the best I had.

I sent a message: ‘All well. Snow heavy. Do not worry – I can cope indefinitely. Merry Christmas’

I meant it. I was not coping. I was thriving.

I mentioned the movie “The Shining”. I suppose that I wondered at times whether isolation causes madness. I found myself talking to Jessica about it. But it was not a real conversation. It would have been insanity if I thought it was. It was just me in my voice talking about the real world and Jessica talking back in her feminine voice saying things like: “But it is so beautiful up here. Our very own winter wonderland. Tell me that I am pretty.”

I recorded these conversations sometimes so I could listen in like a third person. He sounded so rough. She sounded so sweet, and her voice was getting better with each conversation – higher and lighter somehow.

It seemed that I could not tire of her. I would wake up in my suite with my soft perfumed curls in my face; I would go to the mirror and stroke my smooth face to check for any awful male whisker that might dare poke up; I would take off my nightie and put on my bra over my slightly enlarged and tender breasts, poking in the inserts to give proper shape, I would slip on my wonderfully feminine panties over a penis that now seemed incongruous and mercifully inactive; I would roll on my stockings over my smooth legs; then I would step into my dress of the day, and my heels and admire myself in the mirror.

I would usually go to the salon to arrange my hair and put on my makeup before making breakfast. The kitchen was always cold in the morning, but could warm quickly with appliances on. Beyond those three areas I would need something warm to wear to do my rounds before lunch.

Afternoons and evenings were fantasy time. I could not attend a ball every night – that would make them less than special. But what cross-dresser does not want to dress for a ball? I learned how to use the hairpieces to put my hair up, and I could follow the instructions to achieve dramatic evening makeup. And a ball requires champagne. The cellars were full, and I had learned to pick the lock. Just one bottle per ball, although maybe start with a cocktail?

The ballroom needed the whole day to heat, but with a backless dress I had to do that. I would always chose something spectacular. I just had to be the prettiest girl in the room. I always was. And my hair was as perfect as I could do it. And I was never short of imaginary dance partners. Jessica – the belle of the ball. What a life she could lead.

It made that man seem so small and ugly – like a worm in the dirt.

But he was real, and she was not. I knew that. As I said, to think otherwise is insanity.

Then Jake arrived.

It was February. I was almost three months in. I was starting to think about when it would end. I was dreading it. I had basically decided that I had pluck the last hair from my eyebrows or my chin, shaved my legs for the last time, considering when I needed to cut off my hair. It would be an end of my happiness. I needed release. It was time for a ball. Maybe Jessica’s last.

I was sitting at the bar looking at myself in the mirror behind the bottles. My blonde hair had been freshly colored and highlighted and I was wearing it up, with extra curls on top and a long fake tendril hanging down on one side. My make up was a bridal style – not overdone but gorgeous. My gown took full advantage of the flabbiness on my chest made spectacular with a special bra and inserts. I wore jewelled drop earrings and a necklace – fake, but good fakes.

I never even heard him. Maybe it was the stealth that makes a good hunter, but there was music playing too – it was a Mozart string quartet. Cocktail background music. In the mirror I saw him. He had got into the building and followed the light and music to the ballroom. He was still wearing his hunter’s camouflage, but he had been wearing a bright orange balaclava which was now in his hand. His rifle was slung over his shoulder.

I spun around in shock more than surprise. It was my worst fear. I had been found out.

“Good evening,” he said. “I hope that I am not intruding Miss.”

Was that supposed to be a joke. Anybody could see that I was alone. Alone in a gigantic hotel in the middle of nowhere. Overdressed and drinking. And yet there was not even a flicker of a smile. The absurdity of it seemed lost on him. What was not lost on me was the word “Miss”.

So it was Jessica who said: “Well actually, I party alone these days”.

He said: “But clearly I must have been expected. The choice of music. Is that Mozart’s dedication to Haydn “The Hunt” we are listening to?”

Here he was. He was big with hair messed by days in the same hat, and whiskers showing the same time without a razor, wearing hunting kits and stout boots, but talking to me about classical music as if he was wearing a tuxedo.

I had a sudden thought that my lipstick might need touching up so I turned to check myself in the mirror. He must have thought I was turning away from him.

“Please, it was getting dark and I saw a light on up here,” he said. “This place is normally empty over winter. I sometimes camp out in the woodshed. I saw the light, and I know a way in through the chute to the boiler room. I can leave?”

“No,” I said. “You don’t seem dressed for the occasion, but the weather is still bad. I could hardly turn you out.”

“I didn’t pack any evening wear,” he said. “When I am hunting I travel light.” He patted the large knife that he wore on his belt as if that was an explanation.

“What size are you?” I asked him. “The boutique has some tuxedos including rentals.”

“Can I wash?” he said, clearly interested in joining my fantasy.

“The caretakers apartment is on this floor,” I said. “I am not in residence … although I should be.”

He looked at me quizzically, as if he knew that I had a story to tell, but it would not be told at that point. He said: “If you would allow me, and allow me a little time, I would love to join you this evening.”

“I would love for you to do that,” said Jessica.

He went to the apartment and I went to the boutique and laid out a couple of formal dress options for him to choose from.

It was then that a slow panic started to wash around me like an incoming tide that might drown me. As I laid it those clothes on the bed in the apartment while I listened to him in the shower, the woman in the mirror across the room could have been in any home. She was dressed and her man was late home. She was smoothing out his clothes think how good he might look in them. She looks up and sees her own reflection – blonde hair piled high, makeup perfect, dress better than that. What could be more romantic?

But it was a lie, and a dangerous one. Under this dress was a man. This fantasy could only end in tears, and I was lucky, just tears and not blood.

And yet this accidental extension to the fantasy seemed worth a risk. So he finds out? I should tell him, and soon. But he is a stranger. I don’t know him and he doesn’t know me. He will walk away in disgust and I will never see him again. Even if he did, he would pass man in the street and not recognize him.

I was not hiding my secret life from this man, I was hiding my real life. I could do that. He only knew Jessica, and I should keep it that way.

I went back to the bar to wait. I put the champagne on ice on the bar. I checked my makeup and arranged my tendril across my breast.

I was surprised when he entered and I am sure he saw it. The dinner suit was a good fit, but more importantly it looked like he was born to wear it. He had shaved and his thick hair had been brushed with a parting. I had laid out a real bow tie and he had tied it himself, perfectly. Here was a man who had been to a ball before.

He looked wonderful. Jessica responded inside me. It was her. It could not have been me feeling that sexual warmth from within.

He came up to me and said: “I’m Jacob, and who might you be?” It sounded as if he had just asked me to come to bed. He breathed it with desire, if that has its own sound.

“I’m Jessica,” I said.

He saw the champagne and the two flutes, and seemed to motion to me should I wish him to open the bottle. I cannot even recall that I nodded. It seemed that we were talking without speaking, as if words were for people who did not know one another as we did each other.

I took the glass he offered me, and we looked into one another’s eyes. But I was not there. She was. It seemed that I might be buried in the basement under a yard of concrete.

“Here’s to spring,” he said. We could both hear that the wind had risen. In the picture window at the end of the ballroom wind driven snowflakes spattered against the double glazed panes.

“I’m a winter creature,” said Jessica. “I die in the spring”.

“Then let’s drink to winter.” Our glasses chinked. “But you need to explain …”.

The music changed. It provided me with the opportunity to interrupt him, and not to explain. I asked him: “Do you dance? I think this is a waltz.’

“It is,” he said. “I do.” He offered me a hand. I put mine in his. Manicured and moisturized and small enough in his to be called feminine.

I could not dance a waltz. If I had I might have danced like a man. This wild hunter could not only dance but draw me in with his lead so that I could too. His hold on my body was gentle but firm. I let him move me, and he did, in every sense.

I had to smile. I tried to lift my head and look away as I had seen women dancers do in the hold, but he was watching me. He was looking at my ear with its jewels, and the line of my neck, smooth and pale. It seemed for a moment that I was like his prey – a frightened doe he had somehow captured with his bare hands. Next his knife would appear, and I would be dead.

It seemed that I was almost willing it to happen, as if I wanted to be his victim. The tune ended.

“You are beautiful,” he said. “Enchanting.”

“You are a good dancer,” I said. “I’m not.”

“You move in those heels with true grace. Not many women can”. The next tune was another slow dance but not a waltz. He adjusted his grip. I put my head on his chest. It seemed like such a natural thing to do.

“Who could believe that I could walk in here and find you here,” he said. “It is like walking into an enchanted castle and finding a hidden princess.”

“I guess that makes you prince charming,” I said. I lifted my head to see his grin, but it was not there. The mouth I saw was trembling, and the eyes were hungry. I knew what was going to happen next. Would he, or would I? I still don’t know. Our lips just came together as if drawn by magnets of huge power, beyond even our own strength.

Again, it was natural, as in the opposite of unnatural.

People must wish that a night like that lasts forever, but in fact passion flies at speed. One moment you meet, and then you kiss, and then he lies you on a bed. We must have talked. We must have finished the champagne because the bottle was empty in the morning. There must have been more, but you have heard all that I remembered.

And then we were on my bed not his – a super king in the primrose suite.

“We can’t go any further,” I said. “I would like to, but I just can’t.” A woman has the right to say no. For that night I was a woman. And because I was not, I had to say no. I looked at him for anger, but it was only disappointment.

“I understand,” he said, to my surprise. “It has been a perfect evening. I would not wish it to end in discomfort for you. If it would be uncomfortable … for you?

The last phrase had me puzzled for a moment. Until I realized that he was talking about sex, and not of the normal kind.

“How long have you known?”

“Well I knew that there was an electronic technician up here for the winter, and I knew that she was not a Jessica,” he said. “But to my great pleasure I met Jessica, and that was clearly my good fortune.”

“So you have some connection to this place?”

He lay down on the bed beside me. He played a little with my hair. He said: “My darling girl, I own this place. I run it for three seasons in the year and when it is not open for business, I indulge in my hunting hobby on the grounds, which is this whole valley”.

He leaned over and kissed me on the forehead. I was confused but in a happy way. He knew who I was and yet called me a girl. A darling girl. And the kiss – that was not sexual, it was adoration. There was something inside of me that was totally strange but yet recognizable. It was like comfort and security. It was being wanted and being protected. It was seeing how fragile I was and loving that.

“The only thing missing in this place is a hostess,” he said. “Somebody with beauty and class, but who is resourceful and in control. I may just have found that person.”

“So you own everything. The champagne? The clothes?” It was not an accusation. I was gasping from the shock. “This is your bed?”

“No - it’s your bed. You can decide whether you want me in it or not. But I hope you do. Afterall, there is a snowstorm outside, and I can think of no place I would rather be.”

The End

© Maryanne Peters 2020