Marketing

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

After completing his degree in marketing, Fabian worked for a while as a minor brand manager for a large cereal company before entering the medical industry, working for a supplier of specialized medical equipment. With so many graduates carrying that degree, it was only through hard work and commitment that Fabian quickly rose in the business.

Part of marketing in “health food” involved contact with the medical profession, and through a series of liaisons Fabian made the move through to pharmaceuticals. It was through this that he came to meet Joshua Williamson and ultimately to accept employment as Director of Marketing for the “Signax Clinic”, a leading cosmetic and plastic surgery facility.

Josh had trained as a specialist maxillofacial surgeon, with the intention of working to repair deformities and the consequences of serious head injuries or radical surgery. However, Fabian had suggested that the clinic offer “facial feminization surgery” as a particularly profitable area where demand was growing. It was not long before Josh had developed a reputation for great work in softening the male lines of the faces of his patients, as well as improving hairlines, and improving the shape of necks.

The marketing strategy that Fabian had adopted was to promote facial feminization, together with skin treatments and breast augmentation, as a first step in transition. Essentially this approach appealed to those who were uncertain as to whether they could ever appear female. As Fabian would say to prospective patients: “Elective scalp and facial surgery requires no special assessment and will give you the chance to see whether you can pass as a woman. If you decide not to proceed, all procedures are completely reversible.”

What annoyed Fabian was that his last representation was not always believed. In many cases the surgery appeared to change the appearance so radically that the statement “all procedures are completely reversible” did not appear entirely credible. Josh assured him that what he was saying was correct but acknowledged that reticence would dissuade many from undergoing the procedure.

Fabian was convinced that there needed to be a practical demonstration of restorative surgery. But, Josh’s work was so good nobody ever reversed transition. All of his patients acquired features sufficiently feminine to allow them to live as women, if not to proceed to full re-assignment surgery. Nobody wanted to go back.

“You’ll need to find me a volunteer,” said Josh. “Somebody who we can show detailed images of before and after, and then back to before.”

“I could do it. I could be your surgical subject,” said Fabian. He was, after all, committed to his job and to his own business plan to shift Signax into specializing in FFS – Facial Feminization Surgery. It would not have to interfere with his work significantly.

“I suggest the full procedure, including breast augmentation and skin treatments, and laryngeal surgery – if you are up for it,” said Josh. “We need a full image library including video, and then the same after. We can show the patients and then introduce you to them, fully restored. It will convince anybody who has reservations.”

“That is the idea,” said Fabian. But in truth, there was a sense of foreboding present, even then.

“I am 100% confident that I can bring you back to the same person you are now, although it may take a few months for the hormones to work through the system,” said Josh.

“Hormones?” said Fabian. “Is that necessary?”

“If we want you to be an advertisement for my work, then we need for you to you to go through a proper transition,” said Josh. “That means hormones and depilation, but the effect of these will not be permanent. This is your idea, so you can pull out now if you like. I’m still not 100% comfortable with it myself, so perhaps we could go with another strategy? But if you want to do this right, you have to do the whole thing – it has to be the works.”

“I suppose we can video it,” said Fabian, further considering the plan. “The before, the transition, the after, and then the de-transition, and the result of that.”

“That is what we are looking for,” said Josh. “To show the doubting customer that they have nothing to fear. They can back up so long as they postpone the orchidectomy, the penectomy and the vaginoplasty. And that is not my area. I don’t do that work. So I don’t care whether they have that or not.”

For Fabian it seemed that there was no risk. All he could think to say was: “Will it hurt?”

“All surgery has pain, Fabian,” said Josh. “But everybody experiences pain differently. But hopefully with proper management, pain will be minimal. As you are trialling the procedure you will be well able to describe it. What better than to have a marketer who has tried the product, and is talking about it dispassionately, not be transgendered himself? I could learn to like this idea.”

So, it was agreed. Fabian would be feminized – temporarily.

Josh suggested that an ex patient help Fabian through the other aspects of transition while he ran the blood tests and otherwise prepared for surgery. Kathy had gone through the whole thing and has undergone affirmation surgery only six months before.

“I understand that you are in on our plan,” said Fabian. “This is a temporary procedure to prove that any surgery that Josh does, Josh can undo.”

“You just be careful,” said Kathy. “You may find that you like being a woman too much to want to go back.”

Fabian laughed. He said: “No chance of that. As a man, I love women. I am interested in seeing things from the other side, even if it is only for a month or so, but I enjoy women too much to ever want to be one. I just want to show off the Clinic’s product as best I can. I want to look as womanly as possible, before I reverse back.”

Kathy felt that it was time to spell things out for Josh: “Well, ‘the Clinic’s product’ as you call it, is maybe 20% of looking like a woman. If the prettiest thing in the world strides down the street and tries to put her hands in her pockets, or call down a cab, everyone will know that is not a woman. It’s called poise. If you have feminine poise and you move well, even if you are wearing men’s clothes people will think that you are female.”

“I am ready to receive instruction,” said Fabian. He may have sniggered, but it was not long before he knew that he had a lot of work to do.

When he was wheeled in a gurney a week later, Josh gave him the option to pull out. He said: “Alright, you have talked me into this idea, but I am saying that you do not need to do this. I am going to be grinding away your skull. That will be permanent. When we reverse everything, we will be using plastic inserts to replace the bone.”

“Let’s go,” said Fabian. “When I see you on the other side, you be sure to treat me like a lady.”

Counting back for 100 he only got to 96.

And then the next thing he knew was waking in pain. The chest was the least of it. He could feel the tightness of his skin over the implants, but the incisions were small, and closed with small clips. It was the face that was the most uncomfortable, with heavy bruising compressed with a sock bandage, with holes cut for the eyes and mouth.

It would be weeks until the bandages could be removed, but Fabian was mobile and able to do office work. He had time to get used to his new shape.

“I have implanted some hormone release capsules,” said Josh. These will assist the skin expanding on your chest and the pliability of the skin on your face, but hormones are an important part of appearing totally female. You are an advertisement for my work, or you will be when you are healed. I am confident that I have done an excellent job. You should look 100% female, Fabian.”

“You should call me Faith,” he said. “It is a clear indication that I have confidence in you that you will have me 100% back to normal when this is all over.”

“Faith, I like the name,” said Josh. “It suits you.”

Faith’s head was still wrapped in bandages with only slightly longish hair projecting out the top. He or she, could have been either sex, but there was office work to be done, and the forthcoming presentation of the masterful work of the clinic and its key surgeon, was impending. She needed to be she. That meant enlisting the female staff to coach the recuperating Faith in feminine behavior.

Nurses and office assistants at the Clinic took to the task with gusto and good humor. Fabian was a popular member of staff, and his commitment to his job was now clear to all of them. Faith would be just as popular, even more so with her apparent enthusiasm to learn more about the procedures that the clinic sold, from the subject’s point of view.

A good starting point, so Faith learned, was clothing. That meant learning to tuck away his (Fabian’s) genitalia, something that she learned from the sole member of staff who was a transwoman, now happily post-operative and no longer in need of those particular skills and the underwear or tape needed. Then there were dresses and skirts, and how to sit or enter and exit vehicles. Then shoes, and how to walk, and to run. Faith was enjoying herself. Time moved quickly.

But when the time came to remove the bandages, Faith was perplexed.

“Don’t worry,” said Josh. “The swelling has almost gone. We have discoloration. That is normal. The lines are perfect. You will be spectacular.”

“You get one shot at cutting me up, and another at putting me back, so I had better be,” said Faith.

“Can I suggest that you work on the voice?” said Josh. “It might not be necessary while you are in the clinic presenting yourself as an ordinary man feminized as a demonstration, but outside the clinic, that voice is totally incongruous.”

Josh had a point. She had yet another thing to do.

“And the first trip outside the Clinic will be to go down the road and get yourself some hair,” said Josh. “Take one of the female staff with you. Go down to that special salon and spa place. Get the works. The clinic pays the bill. And lots of before and after photos. Remember what this is all for.”

It was only walking distance away. Faith and her work colleague walked to entire distance in heels. She gained confidence with every step. She felt that she could be a woman for as long as this exercise required. But surely, that would not be long. Faith had lined up some marketing presentations with herself having the starring role. Perhaps meeting with some customers, a few photo shoots, then back under the knife. But she would need to heel first.

The lady at the salon was not concerned about the bruising.

“Sadly, we know all about how to conceal bruising,” she said. “It is the woman’s lot in life, and in your circumstances, you will probably never know it.” She knew the whole plan. “But we will get you some quality hair extensions and a full wax job. But we won’t need depilation on your face. That has been looked after already.”

It suddenly occurred to Faith that she was right. Her face had been in bandages for a week but it was smooth. No beard at all.

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| She was told that she was there to relax. Beautification should be a pleasure overall, even if the first part of it was the pain of hot wax then tearing it from her body. She was there for hours. But the finished product was more than she had hoped for.  The hair cascaded over her shoulders dark brown with a slight wave. The sculptured face was highlighted with makeup and the eyes were given a dramatic look.  She was captivating. Faith spent a full five minutes in front of the mirror examining her new face.  She knew that she had a product of real value right here. Josh was a genius. FFS was going to make them both a fortune. She needed to show the world what Josh could do. Take an ordinary guy and turn him into this! | A person wearing a white shirt  Description automatically generated |

Her mind was moving at speed. She could not wait to tell Josh about the plans she was developing, and to get them down on paper. She hurried back to the clinic and burst into his office, beaming from ear to ear.

“This is fantastic!” she said.

Josh rose to his feet slowly with his mouth open. Even though he had designed this face and seen the computer simulation of the outcome many times, it did not initially click that it was Fabian who had entered his office and who stood before him in the white dress. But when he did, all he could do was agree.

“Yes,” he said. “Fantastic!”

“No, I mean, as a product this is more than marketable. This is game-changing. Look at me.”

“I’m looking,” said Josh. He was - and doing more than just admiring his surgical skills.

“Let’s go out for dinner,” said Faith excitedly. “I will pay. I want to show off the new me.”

“I’ll pay,” said Josh. “I couldn’t let the lady pay.”

Faith looked at him, checking for a smile. Josh was just staring at her. She said: “Ok. I like the sound of that. Another advantage of being a woman I guess.”

“An advantage in being a beautiful one,” said Josh.

They went out to a restaurant by the beach. Faith was keen to be seen. She was. Men stared at her. Women did too. She was looking for it. She felt good.

“Women as beautiful as you ignore people staring,” Josh said. “As you know I have been more engaged in reparative rather than cosmetic surgery, but I know how a newly beautified woman can find the looks you are getting … discomforting.”

“Are you kidding,” said Faith. “This is the highest compliment. I can guarantee if I was wearing a “Signax Facial Surgery Clinic” tee Shirt, people would be up asking for the phone number.”

There was no such tee shirt, but Faith had one made, with a vee neck. She wore it proudly, along with an array of other garments that showed off her new breasts.

Faith became the face and body of Signax, and she loved being that. She appeared prominently on the new website, which included videos of her speaking, and walking, and doing her makeup. She presented to trans groups and even appeared on daytime TV.

“It’s purely a marketing exercise,” she explained. “Signax can make almost anybody a beautiful woman, even a regular guy like me.”

She would cross her legs and flick her hair to confirm how complete the transformation was.

“And it is fully reversable”. Those were the words, but she had yet to hear anybody ask for confirmation of that by demonstration. There was no demand for it. People wanted to see her.

There had been a scheduled date for Faith’s re-transformation back to Fabian, but that date came and went. Faith’s diary was full of commitments as a part of the marketing effort that was hugely successful.

But with success came an increased workload on Jason. His theater time was maxed out and he spent many hours into the night working on all the preparatory and post-surgical work. Faith was working late too.

“You must be exhausted,” said Faith, breezing into his office. Jason had been hunched behind his screen and was stretching. “Would you like me to rub that neck of yours?” said Faith.

“We have created a monster,” said Jason. But the feeling of her fingers on his neck made him relax.

“We need a bigger surgical team,” she said.

“We need to slacken off the marketing effort,” he responded.

“We are getting rich,” said Faith. “But now I understand just what good work we are doing. We are helping people. You are changing lives. You are making sad people happy beyond their dreams. We are doing good, Jason. I can scarcely believe that I am saying this, but somehow that is more important than the money.”

She had long manicured nails, but she was not scratching as she kneaded the flesh on the back of his neck. She was wearing perfume, and a wisp of her hair had dropped beside his face. There was an erection growing in his pants.

“Don’t go back,” said Jason.

“What?” she said.

“Don’t go back to being Fabian. I like you like this. I like having you around.”

“I like you liking me around,” said Faith. She spun him around in his swivel chair so that she could look into his eyes. What she saw in them thrilled her. She straddled him and sat on his groin. She could feel his sex against what was left of hers.

He took her face in his hands and kissed her. She shuddered with joy.

“I don’t do bottom surgery,” he said.

“I am sure we can find somebody,” she said.

The End

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