Executive Assistant

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

My wife Maddy always loved clothes, and she spent a lot of money looking good. I always loved that about her. She was to archetype professional woman in the city. Smart, elegant, and devoted to her job. Less devoted o me, but I was not concerned. She was a catch. She was my wife. She was my world, until she was gone, in an instant.

In our city, death is only a step away. One early step off the sidewalk. It was typical of her. Always in a hurry. The cross sign was anticipated. He was on an amber light. The blow to the head might not have killed her, but the bleed in the brain was unstoppable. She died well before the machinery keeping her perfect body alive was switched off.

I was beside myself. Have you heard the phrase? I was not in myself – I was somewhere else. The grief was too much. I could not imagine life without her. I could not face anybody. I could not go into work. I couldn’t not face anybody. My employer was understanding but my work required my attention. It had to be farmed out to others. I lost the key accounts. My work was in ruins as my personal life was.

I sat at home and grieved. I say that word because the tear ducts can only produce so may tears, and then the grief can only be expressed by a deep pain in the core of the body. It is a pain without outlet. Crippling and demeaning. Eating at the very soul, so that I barely seemed human anymore. That is how it was for me, for weeks.

Her wardrobe filled our closet, which was huge. My clothes hung in a small wardrobe in the spare room. Her clothes became an object of my grief. Is that so strange? I suppose it started with taking her nightie into bed with me, so I could feel and smell her. But then for some reason I put it on, so that I could feel it against flesh, which needed to be shaved smooth to make it real.

As I said. Her clothes were the essence of who she was. She made good money working as executive assistant to Kevin Williment, executive Chairman of Harrison Williment. She spent all of her income on clothes and beauty, where I paid for everything else. She used to say: “What I earn is my money, to spend on myself, but what you earn is our money”. I was happy with that.

I pulled some of her clothes out and hung them on a stand in the living room, to try to imagine that she was there. Again, an empty garment did not do the job. Why was it that I was the same size as my wife, and I could easily slip into those clothes? Catching a glimpse of somebody in the mirror as you walk by, somebody who could be her, seemed to meet some deep need inside me.

It became a relief for me. Just to see her legs, in her shoes. The legs seemed like hers anyway – shapely. Not scrawny or muscular – good legs. And then I could catch sight of her in the hall mirror as I rushed by, doing the kind of things that she would do around the house. I could almost call out: “Hello Darling”.

I missed her so much, that just a glimpse of somebody who could be her was something that made my life a little easier.

Perhaps it could be called cross-dressing, but it was not like that. I was not for sexual gratification. It was not a turn on, it was more a turn off. It seemed to calm me. Make me feel relaxed and not wracked with sadness. It became my default dress at home. And I suppose that I just wanted to make it perfect. It would be an insult to my wife if I didn’t. I took a little care in looking good, in her honor.

I had to take my car into the shop for some work. That is the reason that it was not parked in the drive. God knows how long he had been watching the place, but it is clear that when he saw the empty garage, he figured that he could come in to go through her stuff.

I was at home in the kitchen and I looked up and he was there. Kevin Williment was standing there looking at me.

“Maddy?” he said. It was almost like the word I wanted to hear. She lives. I could have looked behind me and my dreams could have been answered. But he was looking at me. What a compliment.

“How did you get in?” I asked.

“I have a key.” He held it up on his key ring. A key to our house.

“What do you want?”

“I just came to look for some papers that are not in the office. I didn’t want to trouble anyone. I know where she keeps her office things. I just thought that … there was nobody home.”

I just looked at him disapprovingly. Then he said something that changed my life. He said: “You look fantastic in that dress. Just like Maddy. Actually, even better. It’s incredible.”

“I have all of her papers,” I said. “I have been through everything.” I suddenly realized that there was something in there that he wanted enough to sneak into our house to get. I did not know what it was.

“You are an organized person,” he said.

“Yes,” I said. “Yes, I am.” Because I am.

“I haven’t been organized since she died,” he said. “It’s all in a mess.” He looked at me as if pleading for help. What could I do? What was he expecting me to do? He was standing in my home, looking at me dressed as a woman, and it was clear that he liked what he saw.

I was suddenly aware that I was wearing false eyelashes. For some reason I had paid extra attention to my eyes that morning. I had washed my hair and I had used some spray to give it volume, and I had looked so good that I just had to add a bit more. Maybe I batted my eyes? Just instinctively ... although what instinct was at play, I could not say.

“Some documents have gone missing,” he said. There was a concerned look on his face. It seemed that these documents might have personal repercussions. “These documents are the subject of employee confidentiality.”

“I don’t work for you,” I said. That was a fact, but I was curious.

“Perhaps we could change that,” he said. “I haven’t replaced Maddy. I have a temp in. I can’t replace Maddy. You look just like her, except for the shorter hair, of course. And, you type, don’t you?”

“Faster than she could,” I said. “But I am not a woman, assuming you want a woman in the job.”

“Call me old-fashioned, but I do want a woman in the job,” he said. “And you look like a woman to me. There is nothing that Dorian Garrett couldn’t put right.”

He was talking about the salon downstairs from their offices, where Maddy went almost daily. She said that the office gave her a grooming allowance. It was a chain of beauty shops that was a client of Harrison Williment.

“You misunderstand the position,” I said.

“I don’t think so,” he said. At last a smile was creeping onto his face, as if he was facing a harsh reality with a new plan. “You need to get back to work, and I know that there is no future in your old job. I can offer you the work that Maddy loved. You would work for me. You would sign the confidentiality terms and all the firm’s secrets would stay with the firm. And I get Maddy back, or somebody very close to her.”

I was going to point out that I was not a transvestite. But there I was, standing in a dress and stuffed underwear, with my hair and makeup done, and feeling so comfortable talking to him as a woman.

“Georgina,” I said. “Not Maddy. I’m Georgie.” And I was.

I never really found out what the documents were that Kevin was looking for. But I never let on that I did not have them. I would always say to him that: “The secrets of the firm are safe with me”.

I never returned to my old job. I never even bothered to go back to clear out my desk. How could I? The man I was no longer existed. Somehow the woman had taken over.

I don’t think the person I was really existed at all. He only existed because he was a husband to Maddy. When she was gone, he had no reason to exist. She was the life in our relationship. To stay alive I had to enter her skin and live her life.

And that is exactly what I have done. I am a different person, of course, but I definitely have her style. Smart, elegant, professional. I have her wardrobe and more besides. I like clothes. I like dressing well. I visit Dorian Garrett almost every day. With their help my hair has grown luxuriantly, and I keep it styled to perfection. They tend to my face too, and my hands. Everything is soft and hairless, and decorated appropriately.

The hormones help, and Kevin paid for the breast augmentation and the other surgery. Of course, that is not part of the grooming allowance. No, that is a personal thing. You see, it took me a while to find out. I don’t know Kevin’s secret and I don’t care, but I did discover Maddy’s secret: She and Kevin were having sex. I don’t care about that either. I should do, but I don’t. Her husband really was unimportant. I know that now.

Now Kevin has sex with me. It sometimes seems odd to say it, but somehow, I have just slipped into this role. I am his executive assistant, ad more besides.

The End

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