Chemistry

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Chapter 1

Wendell Westwood found it hard to consider himself a criminal, perhaps because he had always nursed the idea that he was a victim. He has been that at high school, and he had been that at college, and then as a pharmacist it seemed that he was still picked on. He thought that becoming a health professional might bring him respect, but it did not happen that way.

But he was a criminal. He had supplied ingredients for the manufacture of methamphetamines, in the full knowledge of what they were to be used for. He had been pressured, he might say, but he had given in. He had taken the advice to stay silent, and to deny his wrongs even to himself, but if it came down to it, he knew that he was guilty. This is party to manufacturing serious drugs – this is serious time in prison.

And there he was, with his lawyer beside him, to discuss “a plea deal”.

The two law enforcement officers walked and sat down. He guessed not necessarily policemen. The smaller of the two spoke first.

“Wendell … can I call you Wendell? Your lawyer will have advised you of the strength of our case and the likely sentence you would face if found guilty, and all of that is very bad for you. But what might be good for you is that we have a need of a pharmacist ... and that is what you are – right?”

“Yes,” said Wendell. He was not relieved. He was thinking about the shadow of iron bars on a small bunk bed, with him in it. And there might be another person in the cell – somebody violent.

“We may be able to discuss a deal which may see you do no prison time if you can help us with our case against the principal manufacturer.”

Wendell perked up a little, but then had to concede: “I don’t know him. I have never even met him.”

“That is not important. If you help us, you will meet him. He is unaware of your arrest. We kept it that way. We could arrange for your dismissal from you present job so that you can go and work for him. Because you are a crooked chemist you should get the job. You can get in there and gather evidence.”

“What guarantee of personal safety will my client have?” His lawyer was trying to earn his fee.

“No more than we could offer him in jail,” said the bigger officer. Then, addressing Wendell he said: “But in prison what we can guarantee that there will be a lot of big guys coming for your sissy ass!”

Wendell gulped. It was as if this officer was the man he had imagined in the cell. He was dead, or whether better or worse who can say? – maimed by anal dilation.

“I’ll do it”, he said. And then: “What will I do exactly?”

The smaller man rejoined. “They are moving into other drugs. Growth hormones and illegal sports drugs. These are not drugs that can be cooked up common lawbreakers. It will allow you to get into their secret lab and give us the location, but not before you feed us information on suppliers.”

“Look, I want to help”, said Wendell. “But I am not a courageous person. I don’t know whether I will be able to do this”.

“Try doing time, then”, said the big one.

Wendell looked at his lawyer, pleadingly.

“For zero time, you should do this,” he whispered to Wendell. He then spoke aloud with waiting for consent. “My client will do this if we get confirmation that charges will be dropped and never laid again, and if there is an assurance that he will be pulled out if he is in danger”.

“We will be the judge of danger”, said the big man. “But as his evidence will be required, he is no use to us dead”.

Wendell could appreciate the logic. But he knew that wherever the lab might be it would be out of the reach of the law for long enough to see him dead. But dead there, or dead in jail?

“Where do I sign”? he asked.

To his disappointment it was the larger cop who would be his point of contract. He told Wendell that he should be addressed as “Mac”. Wendell was advised that his employer would refer to some missing paperwork as a grounds for dismissal, and that Wendell would need to make a call.

“I am in trouble”, Wendell told his contact over the burner phone that he used. “They have discovered that the buyer for the stuff I send you is a phony. I have lost my job. If they were not so worried about the publicity they would have gone to the cops. I have no job and cannot afford my apartment. You have to help me. I can help you cook maybe”?

Chapter 2

A couple of days went by before he got the call. He was told to go to the Southside Aquatic Centre and put all his clothes in a locker and wait outside the back entrance in only his speedos. They picked him up like that in a dark SUV and gave me only a black hood over my head. We seemed to drive for ages. They then led him for a distance across a concrete floor barefoot and almost naked into a room with carpet on the floor, before the hood came off.

It was a large office. The only window was an internal one that looked down on a large pharmaceutical manufacturing setup. He could see boilers and agitators and other equipment and standing by this window looking over the manufacturing laboratory was a well-dressed man.

When he turned to look at the near-naked Wendell, he smiled in a way that made Wendell feel very odd.

“You must be Wendell Westwood”, he said. “But no sign of any wood down there”.

One of his escorts sniggered, but Wendell did his best to pull himself up to full height.

“I understand that you might be looking for an industrial chemist”? said Wendell.

“We know you”, said the well-dressed man. “You have been a source of supply, and that’s all. We know of your qualifications, and we understand greed. But what do you know about synthesizing hormones using recombinant DNA processes”?

In fact Wendell had known very little about this until his arrangement with the authorities had been settled, but since then he had made it his area of study. This criminal organization was looking for another profit center beyond mind altering drugs. The new market was in body altering. The objective was to know enough to be employed and stay employed long enough to gather the key information.

“I know a bit”, said Wendell, not wishing to overstate things. “Are you talking about Synthetic Human Growth Hormone – HGH”?

“I am sorry, I did not introduce myself,” said the man, moving forward to shake Wendell’s hand. “My name is Seth. HGH? Yes, that sells. But I have become interested in all hormones. There is a big market for many of them, unprescribed. But what interests me is not just the market. I have to say that I find hormones fascinating. I mean drugs that alter the mind for a few minutes or hours seem so unimportant when you start looking at a drug which can alter the body so drastically, and so permanently”.

“Yes, the endocrine system is … interesting”. Wendell was a little uncertain.

“Please excuse the security precautions, but here you stand, and I wonder what hormones could do for you”, said Seth. “For instance you are small, and hormones could make you taller. You have very little body hair, and hormones could change that. Maybe even fill those speedos”?

But Seth was not thinking of how manly he might be able to make Wendell. Quite the opposite in fact.

“I am familiar with the processes”, said Wendell, becoming increasing uncomfortable with this person looking him up and down. “I can also make methamphetamine”.

“My dog could make methamphetamine”, said Seth. “I have higher expectations of you”.

“You know that I am in trouble”, said Wendell, following the script. “I am concerned that it is only a matter of time before my ex-employer discovers the full extent of my past business with you and puts two and two together. They will know that I have been indirectly involved in the manufacture of serious drugs. My time is up, or close to it”.

“I understand”, said Seth. “You need to disappear, and we have a place for you to disappear to. All you have to do is say yes. Today you have choices. Tomorrow … probably not”.

“Can I ask about pay and conditions”? It might have been cheeky, but Wendell felt that he needed to not appear too willing. He was doing a job for the feds and could not have Seth suspect that.

“This is skilled work, so you will get well paid. But you will not have to spend it. You will be living in and have all your needs met. All that you earn can be paid into a bank account of your choice. So at the end of this, you should be a very wealthy man. That is what you want to be, is it not”?

“Yes”, Wendell said. He thrust my hand out to confirm the deal, but Seth seemed reluctant to take it at first. When he finally took it Wendell realized how small his was compared to his new boss, and he also knew that this man was aware of just that fact.

Chapter 3

The hacienda was known as Roca di Castillo. It was set under the outcrop of that name, but spread around it so that it was more a castle than a rock. On the south side facing the sun there was a plaza with a swimming pool and below that gardens under shade cloth. To the north with the US border many miles distant, was the headquarters of a small private army. The entrance was to the west, and the manufacturing facilities to the east. I had a small self-contained house on the eastern side, with a terrace above a sheer drop to the desert below.

Wendell was told that he was not a prisoner, but he felt like one.

Still, there was work to do and he had to entrench myself and earn trust to get the information I had promised.

In keeping with the practice of many involved in making or repackaging drugs, clothing in the facilities was limited. Workers entered and exited the workplace wearing only underwear. Protective or sterile clothing remained on the premised. Wendell was subject to the same rules. He wore boxers only most of the day.

The desert was hot, so he would not wear much more at night either. He had board shorts to use the pool, and a singlet for use in the gymnasium, and he had free access to both. He could dine at the suite set aside for him or in the workers canteen outside the controlled work area, or sometimes he was invited to join Seth in his dining room with an enlarged entourage including his head of security and others whose roles were unknown.

Surnames were never used. In many cases nicknames were used instead of proper given names. It seemed that it would be difficult to pass on details of the personnel, but Wendell gathered knowledge as best he could about the facilities in the hope that he could pinpoint the location.

But in the meantime he threw himself into the work and became very interested in what he was doing. It seemed that the work that he had done before arriving here was just measuring and mixing on an industrial scale, but working with living media to construct new molecules was truly exciting. As can happen in biochemistry, sometimes the processes would throw up something entirely new, and he would store that for research at some future date. The need was to supply the key hormones in demand – growth hormones, muscle building hormones, hormones that assisted in sex, and female hormones to promote youth in women. There was also demand for female hormones from the transgender community, in particular drugs that worked faster than the FDA approved standard orally taken prescriptions.

What happened to all the drugs that he was producing was not his concern. But as it happened some of them were being applied right there, to people working at Roca do Castillo, without their knowledge or consent. Some of the security personnel were receiving growth hormones to make them bigger and stronger, and he was receiving female hormones and blockers against male hormones without his knowledge or consent.

Seth had decided to experiment on his new chemist on the very first day that he met Wendell. The idea came into his head quite suddenly, perhaps because he saw something in this person. But he justified his decision by assuming that the effect of these drugs would be to make Wendell a more passive and pliant person without numbing any intellectual capacity that was needed for his work. Seth never gave a thought to the morality of it. He was not strong on scruples. He was a criminal after all.

Like the frog in the slowly warming water, Wendell remained unaware of the gradual changes. He just assumed that the good food and limited exercise was making him flabby. In accordance with practice and because of the heat he walked around wearing only boxers and his lab coat, but when his coat flapped open it was somebody else who pointed to the huge nipples.

In the shower that evening Wendell examined his chest and discovered that I could cup the area around his nipple with his hand. These were without doubt, incipient breasts.

At first he thought that he might be the victim of some accidental exposure, and this was of concern from a technical aspect. Hormones can pass through the skin, and some are dispensed in that way. He knew that they were dealing with high volumes and in some concentration, and the staff were substantially naked. Yet nobody else was affected and many worked more closely with the materials than he did.

Still it seemed hard to believe that somebody was feeding him hormones. When he showed his chest to the cook she seemed to him to be shamefaced and perhaps concealing something, but she spoke no English. The lab staff were bilingual but they seemed to know nothing.

Wendell was convinced that this was deliberate, so he asked to meet with Seth.

“Why are you so upset”? said Seth. “I think it is an improvement, Wendell. Although, I would much rather call you Wendy”.

Chapter 4

“Good morning, Wendy”. The words were said out loud into the mirror, as now seemed to happen every morning before attending to breakfast with Seth and then work at the lab. Daily breakfast with the boss was surely a sign of advancement in organization, but it was reserved for Wendy, not Wendell. She had to be she.

It seemed so automatic after only six months – the removal of the night cream, the shower and washing the hair taking care not to disturb the anchors for the extensions, the breast cream to help the skin make room for the orbs beneath, fragrant oils, hairdryer and curling wand, foundation, eyeliner, lipstick, mascara, a then a touch of scent.

Seth was very particular, and he was in charge. There had been only one protest, on the first day the name Wendy had been used. She disliked the name. He ha met the protest with laughter and then a look that has no name, except maybe death.

“This is the way I want things,” he said. “If I am not happy with what there is, I will simply destroy it an start again. Do you understand me?” It was not as if there was any kind of choice.

And Wendy had realized that giving him what he wanted was not too hard. He wanted him to take his hormones and dress as a woman, and join him for meals and talk to him in English about things that his other employees could not.

She actually enjoyed talking with him. He was intelligent. He had travelled. They shared tastes in music and art. It was just that he was a man without scruples, or much in the way of practical morality. He could easily talk about right and wrong, and goodness and conscience – it was just that when it came down to the practice of these things, he simply didn’t.

They had left Roca di Castillo on several occasions but she was never alone. She could not make contact with Mac. Perhaps Mac assumed that Wendell was dead - another secret grave in the desert. How would he know? How did that leave things? Should he even bother to reach out?

The fact is that he felt like a prisoner. Even tough Seth showed her the money going into the bank account of W. Westwood, and even when he gave assurances that the gates were open to him, Wendy felt unable to leave.

She applied the mascara with skill and batted her lashes. The big surprise was that she looked very good. Wendell had always had small and uninteresting features, but as the basis for a woman’s face those features were perfect. The eyes and lips could be brought to prominence in the hands of somebody who had learned how to do it.

The dress was hanging up. She could wear this all day – the open or under the lab coat. He trusted her. Those he did not still went in and out of the factory area naked or near naked. It was simple but pretty, and very light and cool in the desert airs. Pants were not something that she missed in this heat. The only oddity in a dress was the kink in it at the groin, but that had become less prominent recently.

Seth had fresh flowers placed in her room. Wendell had never really understood flowers, but now it seemed that Wendy was different. She was not just a chemist who understood how plants had evolved color and scent to expand their gene pool – she could understand the beauty of both of those things. She took a frangipani blossom and put it in her hair. She slipped on her wedge sandals and walked across the rooftop plaza of the factory and up to the hacienda.

“You look wonderful today, Wendy,” said Seth, putting down his juice.

“I think I look awful,” she said. “I want to go to see the hairdresser in the village. I want to lighten the color of my hair. I just don’t feel right with this shade anymore.”

She knew that he loved to hear her talk feminine things. She was sure that it gave him an erection. Surely this whole dress-like-a-woman thing was about him getting off on it? She had learned the things that pleased him, and the things that didn’t. He was the tiger she lived with. He needed to be fed what he wanted, and treated with what he liked. It was about staying alive.

“I would like to take you out on Saturday night,” he said. “So go and have your hair done today if you like. Ask Esteban to drive you down to the village after work.”

“You know nothing about hair,” she said. “I will be taking the afternoon off.”

Seth smiled. It seemed that he would make a woman of Wendell after all.

Chapter 5

There was a bonnet on Wendy’s head with the color fixing, but with a scarf around it she could walk the block to the telephone shop and pick up a phone and prepaid card. She just needed to make one call and then dispose of the phone. She just needed to contact Mac and tell him where she was.

She rang the number. It was a dedicated line – untraceable.

“Good afternoon, Plafond Ceilings, you are speaking with Mac,” It was his voice alright.

“Hi Mac. It’s me. Happy Birthday.” She had information.

“I’m sorry Miss?”

Wendy realized that she was speaking in an unrecognizable tone, so he had to ratchet down a little and say: “It’s Wendell here. Your cousin Wendell Westwood. I am just calling to wish you happy birthday. I am in Mexico, at a place called Roca di Castillo. I have a job down here. Good pay and everything. I am calling from the village just west of the factory. Nice little town.”

He had to assume that even cellular communications were being tapped. Mac had spoken about sites used south of the border where a single cell site or tower could be used to listen in on any cell phone conversation in the vicinity. That meant treating all conversations as compromised. Why would she make a call? She could simply say that Mac was a relative who would be worried. Information against criminals would need to be delivered face to face. Mac would come down and find a way. Until then, ay conversation should be treated and being not private.

“Why are you talking like a girl, Wendell”, said Mac, clearly confused by the voice even though he knew it was his informant talking.

“You would not believe what is going on, but I can’t talk about it, as you probably know. Industrial secrets and everything. Really interesting work. Cutting edge and all that. I cannot say a word about it but working with some nice people. Not much English spoken down here.” Wendy found herself blabbering, as he sometimes did in front of Seth.

“Hey, thanks for the call, cuz,” said Mac. “Would you believe it; I got a card from Aunt Hedy? I will be going to visit her on Saturday.”

It was code. Saturday. He was to come on Saturday. He needed a meeting place. Wendy needed to give him a meeting place. She was going to scratch her head but it was in the bonnet. That made her decide to revert to his Wendy voice.

“That reminds me, I will be getting my hair done on Saturday mid-afternoon. And I really have to go. I will call later. Bye Cuz.” She hung up.

She thought that Mac might be confused, but not as confused as he would be when he saw the person he had become. She walked back to the salon and took her seat looking at herself in the mirror. She hardly recognized herself, but she was not unhappy with what she saw. Wendell was not particularly sexually active, but if he was, he could go for a woman like this. Even in the hairdresser’s bonnet she looked good – attractive in a special way.

“I need another appointment on Saturday,” she said.

“So soon after the color goes in?” said Maria, the only one who spoke any English.

“I think that I would like a special style for Saturday,” she said.

“You have a man you want to please? You will have beautiful long blonde hair. We will do a special styling for you … Saturday.”

Chapter 6

“I love your hair,” said Seth. “You seem to have really taken to those hormones and my demands of you.”

“Maybe those hormones have affected my brain?” she said. “Sometimes I think that they must have. I have looked into it a little. Isn’t chemistry incredible. This synthetic estrogen can improve imagination, perception, memory and even social abilities, and it increases sexual desire.”

She gave him a look which excited him for a moment. This was a game, but now things seemed different, and that confused Seth. He could tell himself that the idea of using some of his new product on the new chemist was to render him passive, but the truth was something different. When he had first brought him to his meth lab north of the border and had been talking to him about the miracle of hormones, he had been wondering what this little man would look like as a woman. Now the woman stood before him, and he wanted her.

“I would be interested to look at your body,” he said. He felt that he needed to add – “Just to fully appreciate the effects of the hormones that you are making for me.”

“I would have thought the effect was obvious,” she teased. “I am more woman than man these days, and certainly woman enough to demand that a man at least invite me out on a date before he demands to see me naked.”

Seth laughed out loud. “We are miles from any city where I could treat you like the woman you have become,” he said. “So what kind of date were you thinking of?”

“I am sure that the cook could arrange something special. You said that you would take me out on Saturday night, remember? I have already booked to have my hair and makeup done in a special way down at the village. And I will need a nice dress to wear, and nice underwear. Make it a date. Then you can take me out to dinner and charm me as a man should. Then I might take off my clothes for you.”

“It would have to be a definite yes,” he said. He stood up and walked over to her. Her hair shone like spun gold. She wore just a little mascara and lipstick, something that had become a habit for her to apply. The miracle of chemistry had made her face and her body smooth and soft. He felt compelled to touch her – just the back of his hand sliding against her cheek.

She gasped involuntarily.

Seth clenched that hand into a fist. He turned and left the room without a word. He felt angry with himself. He had desired the hired help before, but this was not even a woman. The whole idea was outrageous. He needed to find one of the Mexican women who were there to attend to his urges, and he would then fuck her hard.

It was easily done. Too easily. After he had done it her found that it had given him little satisfaction.

A few hours later still with an image of Wendy in his head, he took another girl and butt-fucked her. That felt a little better. He imagined that it was Wendy.

But Seth decided that he could do whatever he wanted. Nobody would judge him. This was his kingdom. Wendy Westwood belonged to him. He could snuff out her flame if her felt like it. He could demand anything, but from Wendy he wanted something more.

On the intranet connected to Wendy’s PC he sent a message. “Please join me for dinner 7:00pm Saturday. I will arrange a wardrobe. Get your hair done. I want to see you. All of you. Seth”.

When Wendy read the note, perhaps she should have been fearful, but she found herself slightly excited – perhaps even more than slightly.

Chapter 7

There was something about that week that was different. Maybe it was the hair? She took more time looking into the mirror in the morning. The color looked ever better in sunlight. She played with a few styles – just twisting and holding it up. There was really nothing that she had beyond the scrunchies to tie it back. She needed things.

She may her way to the lab and invited Consuela, one of the women on her team to share a cup of coffee in her office.

“You always look so good, Consuela,” she said. “You hair is always so shiny and tidy.”

“I love your blonde coloring,” said Consuela. “And now it is long enough to wear in some different styles. Would you like me to help you?”

Wendy had been dressing in female clothes for many months, and had been encouraged to do more to appear feminine by Seth, but she had no real female friends. Here was somebody reaching out to her, and she felt the need to embrace her and share a special bond as only two women can. In many ways this was more important than any of Seth’s compliments. This was acceptance.

Theirs was a working relationship, and that must continue, but there would be times when a woman, especially a new woman like Wendy, just needs girl time with a girlfriend.

“Seth has invited me to go to dinner with him,” she explained. “What do you think he wants from me?”

“He is a man,” said Consuela. “He wants sex.”

“But I am not a woman,” said Wendy, even betraying a trace of disappointment.

“Maybe you do not have the equipment, but that does not mean you are not a woman,” said Consuela. “If you want to give him what he wants, then you will have to find another way to do it. That’s all.”

“I am not sure that I want to have sex with a man,” she said.

“Would you rather have sex with me?”

“No. Of course not! You’re a friend.” The very idea seemed strange. But Consuela was attractive. Perhaps the best-looking woman in the lab – why had Wendy not noticed before. Of course, she had, but only to admire her presentation and to ask for her help to do the same.

There are things that girls do if they want to remain a virgin but give a man something to play into,” said Consuela. Let me show you. There is not reason why it should be any less as pleasurable for you as it is for him. It is about preparation.”

“I am not sure that I want to have sex as a woman,” she said.

“Chica, that is what you are,” said Consuela.

Chapter 8

Esteban dropped her off at the salon at 3:00pm. She hoped that Mac would understand that this was “Saturday mid-afternoon”. But it was up to him to arrange a meeting.

“I need to have my hair put up for a special date tonight,” she said to Maria.

“I will sit you next to another gringa who is with us today,” said Maria. “So you can talk English with somebody other than me.”

Wendy could guess that the lady having her hair washed in the corner had been sent by Mac. Once they were seated together she expected some signal, but this woman was still focused on the door as if expecting somebody else.

“My name is Wendy,” she said, introducing herself. “I don’t see many Americans around here. It is not much of a tourist spot.”

the conversation danced around to conceal the truth from anybody listening in.

“By the way, my name is Hannah,” the lady said. “My husband and I have been out in the desert overnight and just had to find the nearest place to do my hair before we head back to civilization.” I sounded like a rehearsed statement. She was with the law, but not signalling.

“What does your husband do?” Wendy asked. She would be unlikely to say anything useful.

“He is a conservationist. We are down here looking for the kit fox. It is endangered in the States and he is looking to catch a few down here to help re-establish them north of the border.” It was a good story. “What about you. What do you do here?”

“I am a chemist, on a contract in Mexico …”. Wendy stopped when she saw the woman’s mouth drop open. Of course, she had been expecting Wendell, not this blonde sitting in the chair beside hers. “Actually, I think I have seen some kit foxes quite near here.”

“My husband would love to hear about that. When I am finished, could you come across to the Cantina and meet him?”

Wendy looked at Maria in the mirror as if seeking consent.

“Curlers first,” said Maria.

But about 15 minutes later, Hannah had summoned Mac and he was sitting in the car outside.

“Your wife did not recognize me,” said Wendy as she stepped into the passenger seat.

“I don’t recognize you,” said Mac looking at Wendy up and down. “And she is not my wife.” It seemed an odd thing to add. “Why are you dressed like this? Why do you look the way you do?”

“Female hormones,” she said. “We make them, and he has been experimenting on me. I just hope you guys realize what I have to do to stay alive down here. Now for over a half a year I have been sweating down here with no ability to contact you until this week. Now what?”

“It’s the meth and the coke and the heroin that we are interested in, not the hormones,” said Mac bluntly. But he was staring at her – almost drooling. “Hormones did this to you?”

“They are still illegal. They are still going into the States.”

“How are they getting in? If they are taking the same route as the narcotics then that may work for us. Can you find out. We need routes and names of people running the drugs.”

“I am getting close to the guy running this. We talk every day. How will I get you the information.

“We are setting up a cover right here. We have a conservation organization. It is called “Desert Wildlife Restoration”. We will set up an office in this village and run a truck close to the place you mentioned - Roca di Castillo.”

“It would be better to do it here. Roca di Castillo is on a hill surrounded by flat desert. The security can see for miles.”

“I just can’t get over the way you look,” said Mac. “I mean, you’re just gorgeous. Hormones did this?”

Chapter 9

She met Seth at the bottom of the staircase, expecting to step into the Mercedes reserved for special occasions. He had laid out a dress and some jewellery – a necklace and drop earrings in traditional local jade, but expensive. The underwear was tight and with padding made her breasts appear full and her crotch appear empty. Over it was the dress that was so tight that underwear was necessary, but short to show off her legs. Her blond hair was in curls piled high and her makeup was dramatic.

He was impressed and she knew it. She smiled. She asked – “Where are we going?”

“My Dear, we are miles from anywhere. So I have had the best restaurant in Torreon moved here move here for the evening. They have set up on the tennis court. But as you can see, I have dressed for the occasion too. It will be a special night.”

He took her hand and held it to his lips.

There was still a part of Wendy that thought this a little unnatural, but that was a part that had faded. Instead, she felt a fluttering in her belly and a hot flush in her face. She caught sight of herself in the mirror and felt that she looked like a princess. It seemed that she had dreamt of a moment like this in her childhood, but the memory was fuzzy and fractured.

She watched herself being led away.

There was a tent on the tennis court with a table set for two and a violinist playing. Instead of the smells of Mexican food which she had come to enjoy, there were other smells of fine food. The restaurant in Torreon was something special. The wine was French – champagne and then a Bordeaux. Seth had pulled out all stops to impress.

“I must be employee of the month,” she said.

You are much more than that,” he said. He was looking into her eyes across the table with an intensity that alarmed her slightly, but also made her feel desired. There was even a feeling in her groin. It was a part of her that seemed to have been rendered inert by the heavy doses of hormones, but suddenly seemed to be coming back to life. But it was not a swelling that might threaten to disturb her delicate silk and lace panties, but something deeper.

“I owe you an apology,” said Seth. “I have done you a wrong and I find myself feeling guilty, which is not a feeling that I know well. When you arrived here, I played with your body. Without you consent or even your knowledge, I bathed you in the vey drugs you were making. That was wrong. But I think I understand now that I saw something in you that called out to me. I could have taken anybody to test the capacity to feminize, but it had to be you.”

He reached out across the table, as if inviting her to take his hands. And then her hands were in his, apparently without her even being aware of it, as if she was a puppet in the control of another. Him, or maybe her.

“I know what you are. I know who you are,” Seth continued. “But somehow to me that does not matter anymore. To me you are a woman who attracts me more than any other woman I have ever known.”

“Perhaps because you made me,” said Wendy. It was not an accusation, although it could well have been. Wendy was just trying to rationalize this. She knew that Seth had women who visited him – beautiful women, who lay beside the pool and then presumably lay beside him in bed, but they never shared breakfast with him the way she did.

“Did I? Did I make you? It seems to me that you were always here. It seems to me that you never resisted.”

“How could I? You control me. Here I am in a foreign country without papers and not even in a body that anybody back home would recognize. You are a drug dealer. My life means nothing to you. I am dead on a whim. How could I resist?”

“You don’t want to resist me,” he said. “Let me prove it. Stand up … please.”

He stood without releasing her hands and pulled her towards him, firmly but gently. Then he kissed her, firmly but gently, his mouth opening hers, their tongues playing with one another. Wendy found her eyes closing to better drink him in. Her head was light, and if in a trance. She felt a thrill that was new to her.

“Don’t tell me that is fear,” he said.

“I don’t know what this is,” she said.

He led her upstairs to his bedroom and undressed her slowly, leaving only her panties to conceal what was left of Wendell. The rest of her he worshiped with his hands and his tongue, as she stood and as she lay, and she basked in it.

Consuela had taught her well how a woman can have sex without using her vagina, and she was able to offer herself to Seth in a way that brought pleasure to both of them. Her now loose across the pillow she moaned like a woman should.

The chemistry was there.

Chapter 10

One of the young men who had been pursuing Consuela had trapped for her a kit fox – a young male. Wendy had asked her whether it could be done. To secure one gave her the excuse she needed to take it into the village and hand it over to Desert Wildlife Restoration.

Seth had heard that it was funded by Americans, but it employed locals. American volunteers appeared occasionally. Simply because the presence of any foreigners in the village was his concerns, Seth had asked some people to check it out and it seemed legit.

He rolled over in the bed to face her and pushed a lock of lovely blonde hair from her face.

“If you want to take your little furry animal and give it to the Americans, then by all means go into the village,” he said. “I know this place to too small for you. It is too small for me too. And I want the world to see the beautiful woman on my arm. We can go to Mexico City, and when we have got some new papers for you, we can go through to Texas.”

“That would be nice,” she said. She kissed him. Her mind was full of doubts. “But first, I must get to the lab and see that everybody is working.”

She got up and showered, winding her hair up into a messy bun with skill.

She had duties to perform before she headed to the village. But there she had a meeting with Mac scheduled. He was expecting something. She had promised him that she would press Seth for the information, but she had broken that promise.

“He does not seem to be making narcotics anymore,” she said to Mac. “He deals in hormones and performance enhancing drugs. They are illegal too.”

“But they are not my responsibility,” said Mac. “He is still making meth somewhere.”

“It would be the place he first took me to,” she said. “It must be north of the border.”

“Can you get him to take you there?”

That very morning she and Seth had made love. She did not want to see him taken away from her, and thrown into jail, and yet he was a criminal. It seemed to her that it was only a matter of time. Or worse still, he could be dead at the hands of some other dealer or local Mexican drug lord. It was well known that the life expectancy lowered the higher up the order a criminal climbed in this trade.

It was all too much. From nowhere the tears started to flow.

“Look at me Mac,” she wailed. “I agreed to this but look what they have done to me. They have turned me into a woman. I have breasts. Look at these. And what I have left of male genitals are so insignificant that I can wear pants like these – look. And now I am even having sex like a woman. I am a mess!”

Then she felt his arms around her, so she hugged him back and she sobbed.

“You look pretty good to me,” said Mac.

“Pretty good? I look gorgeous,” she protested through her tears. “What chance have I got of going back to manhood from this? None. It’s in my head now. I am Wendy now. A woman except where it counts.”

“That can be fixed,” said Mac, stroking her long blond hair. “The agency will pay. We got you into this. If we can get evidence enough to start a prosecution we can set you up in witness protection, as a complete woman.”

“A woman alone,” sniffed Wendy.

“You don’t have to be,” said Mac. “It seems to me that you could have any man – just look at yourself. But maybe … just maybe, you might want to have me? Wendy, I don’t know quite how to say this, and maybe the time is wrong, but I think that I have fallen for you. I mean, if you were to get things fixed and all, I would be proud for you to be my … my wife.”

She broke the embrace to look into the face of this man.

There was a sincerity there that seemed foreign to the face of Seth, her criminal lover. Here was a man who seemed, for now anyway, to be incapable of guile. Here was an honest man. Here was a good man, a hard working man engaged in the honorable service of law enforcement. Here was a man who might risk danger, but whose life offered a future of happy tranquillity at some future stage.

She kissed him. It seemed the right thing to do. He was not the first man she had kissed. He was only the second.

The passion that he returned surprised her, but also delighted her. Their embrace was desperate and hungry. They were alone as arranged, and now loving for a place to consummate their desires.

There was chemistry here to.

As she lay on the floor only minutes later, Wendy Westwood faced her decision.

The End

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