Commitment

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

I am a scientist and so I am by nature and inclination, drawn to logic.

Human beings are living organisms so we are drawn to procreate. I have done my duty in that regard. I fathered two children which is a responsible number. I required a woman to bear and mother them, and she did that well. But we never got on. Love? Yes, I think so, in that there is a chemistry that drives humans together and a euphoria that lasts long enough to make the commitment that is an essential part of human reproduction. The human child is more dependent than any other mammal and so needs parents in attendance in the early years.

But the truth of it is that close company with a woman was difficult for me. I can enjoy the company of women, but that is not what I am talking about. Certainly, I like the look of women, in particular women who take the time to make themselves look attractive. We all understand the signals behind sexual attraction and what they are there for.

Heterosexuality is the natural state of creatures that wish to pass on their genetic material. I am not saying that homosexuals are not natural – they exist in other species as science makes clear. I am not one of them. But I have to say that men marriage between two men became legal in our state, I started to wonder whether I might find a man to be my permanent partner.

I am not an island. The truth is that I like the company of other people and being totally alone does not suit my character. I have always thought that to have somebody close to you to exchange a thought or idea with at any time, is a wonderful thing. Experience has just taught me that if that person is a woman then you are headed for trouble.

They say men are from Mars and women are from Venus to show that men and women are miles apart. It seems to me to be an apt metaphor. The god of war must be driven by objectives, strategy, planning and strokes of bold behavior that are the essence of the male character. The goddess of love is a deity over something that is nothing more than an idea or a feeling. Her characteristics are driven by the unreal, the impulsive and the unreasoned.

Please do not misunderstand me – there are logical women. I have worked with some and enjoyed working with them, but it seems that just when you think that they might be completely acceptable you find that in an instant they have turned into something else and for some reason all communication must cease.

The internet was invented as a scientific tool and remains the best means of exchange of information, but nowadays it seems devoted to pairing off the ignorant with the even more ignorant, and for allowing the displays of meaningless emotion across continents. Nevertheless, it struck me as a useful tool to pursue the answer to my conundrum.

I found myself a useful anonymous “handle” and I posted a request to the effect “Highly educated male scientist seeks similar male companion for long term platonic relationship – no sex intended”.

It seemed like a reasonable thing to post. I felt that it covered the points succinctly. “Platonic” and “no sex” mean the same thing, but one should read that as emphasis. So why is it that I was inundated with sexual advances by homosexuals? I suppose that is the internet that has resulted from it falling into the wrong hands.

I deliberately did not mention marriage, but I was serious about a commitment. I am not that elderly but I am old enough to know that a companion who leaves when infirmity appears is not the one I wanted. Still, such a discussion could wait for the right man.

Then out of the blue I received one message that intrigued me.

“My name is Scott but I occasionally go by the name Susie when I crossdress. I am a science graduate presently working in research. I enjoy intellectual conversation and I am not moody or capricious. I am looking to develop a lasting relationship with somebody who shares my interests and values. I find that women cannot accept the feminine side of me, but I was wondering if you might be able to?”

It seemed to me that this might provide me with a solution, and when I asked for a photograph of “Susie” and received that back, it seemed that I might have found it. As I have explained, I find women attractive and the person in the image was that. It is just that in my experience women are “moody or capricious” – the very words used.

I decided that I wanted to meet this person, and the real question was whether I should meet Scott or Susie. I decided to ask whether it might be Susie.

We face-timed first. Susie wore a wig and makeup and was initially a little shy speaking in a slightly annoying little girl voice, but when we moved onto a discussion about some recent research in a field that neither of us knew well, our conversation became animated and even exciting. We reached the point where we both agreed that neither of us knew enough about this interesting area of science and perhaps we both should. There was a period of silence.

“I would like to meet you,” I said, to break the hush. “We could discuss a relationship … of the nature we have been talking about.”

“I am really only Susie part-time,” Susie said. “But if you would prefer, I could be her on a more permanent basis?”

I felt that I needed to say it. “I would not be ashamed to have a committed non-sexual relationship with a man,” I said. “As I scientist I am less interested in what people might think about me than whether they have the capacity to think at all. But it might be more convenient if you could be Susie.”

I think the truth was that I liked the way she looked, even then, and I did not want to break the spell.

Perhaps I should have been more logical. I was ready to accept the illusion that this could be a woman, with the intellectual qualities of a man.

When she actually appeared at my door it seemed even easier. She wore a woman’s scent – one of those concoctions designed to lure a man through pheromones that go to the most primitive parts of the brain. And then she found some excuse to access my kitchen and started to tidy the place up.

“The truth is that I have always had the fantasy of being a housewife,” she said. “I love to cook and clean when I am dressed as Susie.”

She made us some lunch from the scarce provisions that I had and then we sat down and talked about the work that she was doing, and something of the work that was my life.

“The truth is that I partly own and head a major research facility,” I explained. “The details are highly secret but we have need of people with your talent. How quickly could you leave your existing position? How soon could you start working at my facility? You could come and stay with me here. You could be Susie and live your fantasy.”

I blurted it all out in a manner that is not my custom. I think that even Susie was a little startled. But then she looked at me very directly and seriously.

“This would be a huge move for me,” she said. “I would be leaving my town, my job and my life as a man. I could not make that move unless I was confident that there was certainty.”

“If you mean commitment, then I would marry you,” I exclaimed in the same stream. “I have looked into this – two males can marry in this state. I would not ask you to make sacrifices for a mere friendship. I am thinking about something permanent.”

Two sensible men would never have let this happen, but at the time we were both driven by dreams of a future that seemed to have suddenly become real in that moment.

“So you are proposing?” her hands went up to her face like every woman in every movie faced with this. I should have seen the signs.

But I said yes, and she said yes, and two weeks later she moved in.

I found a position for Susie at the facility that was perfect. She started an hour after I did and finished two hours before me. The work was rewarding and the people working with her were friendly. She told them that she was transgender presenting full time as a woman, and she did not disclose that she was living with the boss.

We actually had little interaction at work, but when we did we kept it professional. It worked.

She took one of the spare rooms in my house and otherwise took charge of the place. She rearranged things in a fashion that I never objected to as she always consulted with me. She started to make breakfast for me, which I decided was proper dietary practice. She could tidy up and then drive to the facility in the car I bought for her. And when I got home she had already been there long enough to make me a wonderful meal.

These were all additional comforts that I could only have dreamed of but it was the conversation over dinner and into the evening that I truly valued.

Perhaps a man could have delivered all of these things to me, but Susie was not that.

To me she seemed to become more beautiful and more sexually attractive each day. I now understand that hormones may have had a big part in that. She never discussed it with me but she was in full transgender transition. The true extent of it would only become apparent over time, but the physical relationship was to start before that.

One day I came home and she had made something very special for dinner. She looked as beautiful as ever but something was different. Every man must have had that look from a woman, and I was getting it from Susie.

“It’s my hair,” she said indignantly. “It’s not a wig. My hair is long enough to style, and this is what I have done with it.” Of course it was very pretty and I was very apologetic, but it had been a busy day, and I really expected Susie to be interested in me.

Anyway, it was a nice meal and we watched a nature documentary on TV that night. Winter was almost on us and she snuggled up with me, thrusting her new hair into my face. A wig is a wig, and I suppose that she knew that.

The documentary depicted some animals copulating and she started to giggle and reach down to see whether I was excited. It was feeling her hand on my genitals that did the job. I would relieve myself sexually on a schedule, but this was well outside that, certainly unexpected and massively potent.

I took her into my bed that night, or maybe she took me there. We had incredible sex. The presence of an extra set of male anatomy never even entered into it. I entered her and it was a thrill for both of us. Afterwards we held one another. I think that it was love – that neurochemistry that is promoted by coitus. She would not be sleeping in the spare room after that and we were both happy about that.

She started to talk about a wedding. For me the whole idea was about a commitment between two people, and I was even more ready to do that now that we had become physically intimate. But she started to talk about the importance of witnesses to the commitment and a celebration of it. She wanted to make it a party.

She also spoke about revealing our relationship to those of us we worked with. The truth was that the guest list was almost all people from work, or that I knew through work. The exception was her parents and a few people from her hometown.

Clearly, she had revealed to those people that she was living as a woman in a relationship with a man, and that seemed sensible to me. I welcomed the chance to meet these people so I finally agreed to a wedding ceremony to accompany our civil vows.

I now understand that “weddings are about the bride”. I heard the phrase often enough in the weeks leading up to the grand affair. She wanted a celebrant, a wedding dress, a cake, speeches and champagne. If it was important to her it seemed like a trifle to me. It seemed to me that I had the good fortune to find somebody who was an intellectual equal, by disposition male but by all appearances a very beautiful woman. I had hit the jackpot. What she wanted was hers.

I met her parents. They were clever and decent people, but still reeling from the changes to their only child. I assured them that I was besotted with her, and I was.

She had friends from her hometown who were mainly female. They all spoke of how they understood that this was the true person and how I was going to make her life complete.

The guests from the facility warmly congratulated me on my choice of a bride. They all knew that Susie was male but they all referred to her as being female, which is exactly the way we wanted it.

I also invited my ex-wife and my two adult children as Susie had insisted. My ex-wife declined but my son and daughter attended with their families. They all seemed as puzzled as I was about the whole thing, but accepting of our choices.

When I saw her in the wedding dress what struck me most was how large her breasts were. It sounds foolish to say it because I was aware that her shape had changed as I could feel it through her nightie when we were in bed together, but now I saw her as being so completely female, that I was almost shocked. There is nothing negative in this. I felt proud to be standing beside her. Any man would.

I spoke at the wedding about having found “my soulmate”. I know that it is a phrase overused but for me it seemed 100% accurate. Man or woman Susie was somebody that I could spend my life with, but as I observed the fact that she was beautiful, a great cook and a general domestic goddess was a bonus.

She spoke too. She spoke about her huge respect for my intellect and all that I had achieved in my career, but said that my achievements had required sacrifices in my personal life. She said that was going to change and that she was going to be the perfect wife and companion that I deserved.

I am not entirely immune to emotion. I felt it, but not as strongly as she did. Perhaps her tears should have told me something.

We took a week off and went on a Caribbean cruise. It involved plenty of sex and more cocktails than I may have consumed ever to that point, but she did complain about not being able to appear in public in a swimming costume.

“I want to have surgery to become a real woman,” she said.

I was a little stunned I have to say, but on reflection it made perfect sense. It seemed to me that if she was prepared to do that our marriage would be more conventional yet Susie’s character would be unaffected. I mean logically the removal of the penis and testicles does not change the person that you are.

It took a very long time for her to heal and before I could get my first taste of Susie’s vagina, but the truth is that perhaps she enjoyed it more than I did. I did not fully understand it, but this is what she had always wanted.

So did she really ever change, or was it me as she claims? She says that I became less empathetic, which would seem odd, as in my view I have never been that ever. It seemed to me that little things would bring her to tears and that I was suddenly expected to understand things that I did not, and which I doubt anybody could.

She said things like “not all problems can be resolved by logical analysis.” But that is wrong and she ought to know that. Logical analysis is exactly how problems should be solved.

Thinking about it is more likely that chemistry rather than surgery made Susie into somebody else. Whatever did it, she began to crave “emotional support” that I was not able to provide. I find it hard to understand what that is, but therefore I must accept that I cannot provide it. Instead she found it in the arms of another man.

If I was an emotional being such as her I would burst into tears at the thought of so perfect a relationship turning to failure. But I am not such a person. I have work to do and problems to solve that I can solve by application of principles that I understand.

But alone in my bed, I have to say that I dream of Susie with longing and regret. It is just that I must recommit myself to science. It just seems so much easier to do that.

The End

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