His Wives

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

I knew that it was private land, but as the son of a man who rode the range I had inherited a hatred of barbed wire. It had destroyed a lifestyle that I had always learned was to be the essence of my life. My father would have cut the wire, had he been alive to help me, but I could shuffle under it.

The thing is that the lifestyle I am talking about is the idea that a man is free to take what he needs, and the land is for all people, and not to be cut up and fenced off. The words “Private Property were like blasphemy to my father. But the truth is that the law doesn’t see things that way. When you take things that the law says belongs to him and not you, then the law chases you down. My horse had been shot out from under me and I had to leave it behind and run into the purple sage brush. The fact is that when I came to that fence I had nothing but the clothes on my back and a bullet in my shoulder.

I had been able to staunch the blood flow with a bandana, but it needed attention. I decided to leave what I had behind, including my gun belt that I hid in the rocks, to crawl under that wire and into private land – what I soon learned was The Purple Sage Dairy Farm.

I could see smoke rising in the still of the afternoon so I headed for that, and as dusk approached I could see that it was rising from the chimney in the distance nearer the bottom of the valley. It was clearly the nearest place I could walk to get assistance - I was badly injured and there was a bullet still in the wound.

As the brush thinned out, I could see that grass was growing, thick and lush unlike other valleys around these parts, and there was another fence. On this one there was a sign, and unlike my father I could read this one. It was not “Private Property “ but “Trespassers will be shot”. I was already shot, so what was the worst that could happen?

I figured that I could ask for help. I was injured – a person in distress. It was clear that I was carrying nothing. Get close enough to the occupier and the pain on my face was clear to see. I pushed on.

The house seemed very large. Perhaps an old farm cottage but added to recently with additional structures. There were also extensive outbuildings. It was getting dark, but I could see somebody on the porch. It was a woman wearing a long dress and a scarf covering her hair. I adopted a stagger to show that I was in distress.

She came towards me, and I saw the door open, and another woman step out, with two children beside her. Then I saw a large man fill the doorway behind this family. Somehow even at that distance and without seeing his face in the growing darkness, I could feel his hostility. I decided to drop to my knees and to expose the blood soaked rag on my chest.

The first woman had reached me and assessed that I was hurt.

“This man is injured,” she called out over her shoulder. “We need to get him inside.”

“No men!” The voice of the man in the doorway was deep and powerful. “Leave him. Send him down the valley. I will get my gun to make sure that he leaves.”

“We can treat him a little, Husband,” said the woman, who had lifted the cloth and seen the wound. “We can close this wound and send him on his way.”

The man stood in angry silence for a moment, before he motioned the woman closer to him to go to me. He said – “Bring him inside, then, the sooner to get him away from here.” He turned and led the children inside.

“I am Patience,” said the woman. “This is Charity”. They both lifted me to my feet and supported me as we walked to the house.

“My name is Morris,” I said. “It was a hunting accident. My rifle backfired on me. I think I have lost a lot of blood.” It was an overstatement, the wound was not as bad as it looked as I had been able to get this far without too much trouble, but I was looking forward to warmth and hopefully hot food.

They took me inside and laid me down on a sofa with a piece of purlap spread across it to catch any blood. Charity seemed the older of the two, and she evidently had some medical knowledge. She seemed to have charge of the two children but she placed them in the care of the younger Patience and prepared to attend to my wound. She washed her hands thoroughly and sterilized a pair of needle-nosed pliers on the stove before using them to probe the wound. I was in agony.

“There is a small piece of metal in here, which is to be expected. I will need to carefully pull it out, hopefully without starting the bleeding all over again.”

“Go for it,” I said through gritted teeth. It hurt like hell, but it seemed like the right thing to do. Sure enough she pulled out the bullet and dropped it into a steel bowl filled with bloody swabs that concealed it for the time being. This was no hunting accident, but she said nothing. She cleaned the wound with some stinging liquid, and then bandaged me.

“I could do with some of that,” I said, pointing at the bottle which I assumed was alcohol. I looked at the man, the husband of Patience as she had described him by calling him that. He had been glowering at me through the whole procedure.

“That is not alcohol, and you will not find any in this house,” he said. Then, without even addressing me he said - “I have no room for guests. Patch him up and put him outside. This is a family home. Only my family may reside here and partake of God’s gifts to us.”

The pain was real, but my fainting of it, was not. It just seemed like the best policy was to pass out and leave them to deal with me. I was in no mood to walk out in the state I was. I was at their mercy whether conscious or unconscious.

“He needs time to recover,” said Charity. “Let him lay here overnight.”

“And we should get some liquid into him,” said Patience who was working in the kitchen at the far end of the room, with the children playing nearby. “Some hot bone broth, to help with the blood lost.”

It sounded so good that I had to pretend to have recovered consciousness. A short while later a mug was brought to my lips by Patience with Charity supporting me in sitting up to brink it. Both women seemed to smell of soap, but nothing that could mask the scents that excite a man. Fortunately my arousal was not visible to them, but then I looked across at the man standing looking at me – could he see it?

I drank the broth. It was good. I had no intention of being thrown out into the cold night that had now fallen, and that was before Patience came to me.

The room that I lay in was a large living area that included a kitchen with a large wood burning stove. As the fire died the room remained warm, even after the lights had been turned off and everybody was in bed. The only light was from the last coals in the grate, and orange light that flickered on the walls.

She was wearing a nightshirt, and her long brown hair that been tied back with a scarf fell freely upon her shoulders. She did not say a word at first, she just walked up to where I lay on my back, with the wound up and o blood coming through the bandage. My pants and boots were on the floor but under the blanket I still wore my undershorts. I opened my eyes. Was she there to check whether I was still alive? It seemed that she had something else on her mind.

She stroked my thick hair back with her left hand, and looked at me in the dappled light as if I was a stray kitten. And then I felt her right hand on my cock. She had pulled down my shorts and taken it gently into her hand, and she was toying with it, forcing it to swell.

“I can only offer you my back passage,” she said. “I am a married woman.”

I nodded in agreement, crazy to get inside her. She did not delay further.

She wore bloomers, and rather than pull them down she just pulled them aside to reveal what I assumed was a menstruation pad, and behind that an oiled butthole, ready to receive me. She placed her finger to her lips to ask for silence but as she rose and dropped on top of me. Silence seemed almost impossible. It took all the self-control I had, not to to cry out in ecstasy, and it seemed the same for her. I bit my lip and spilled my load into her. Perhaps it was just the circumstances, the act of sex, and the presence of her husband nearby, but it seemed to me to be the best sex I had ever had.

I had decided that I wanted to stay – at least for as long as I could.

In the morning the women appeared before he did, and Charity checked the wound for blood and any signs of pus that might have hinted at infection. It was only when they had already prepared his breakfast that he appeared. He hardly gave me a glance, so it was me who spoke first.

“I want to thank you for your Christian hospitality,” I said, playing on the religious thing. “I owe you, Sir. Let me regain my strength and do some work around this place for you, to offer something in return. It would seem only morally right that I should.”

“I provide for my family,” he snarled. “When I can no longer do that I will surrender my role as head of this household. But women always seem to be in need of assistance. I have two wives, as you can see. Do I really need three?”

So that was it. I had happened on a polygamist, one of the Mormon religion who had settled parts well North and West of where I was. I had heard about them. They drink no liquor. They stick to themselves but invite others to join them and do the same.

But behind him I could see Patience there, the one who had stolen my heart, or more precisely my cock, nodding furiously.

“Yes,” I said, simply giving the answer that she wanted me to. “If I can help in any way to make things better for your family, the I will do it.”

“Only as a member of this family,” he said.

It sounded like a welcome into the fold, and behind his Patience was beaming. So, I simply said – “Yes. Thank you, Sir.”

I really had no idea what would happen next. Men often surrender their brains in favor of their cocks – it is deep in the nature of males. I was imaging nights of Patience bouncing on my cock. It was the only thought in my head.

They fed me and I ate, and it was later in the day when Charity examined the wound and told me that she would need to - “do another surgical procedure”. I suppose I assumed that there was some infection that needed to be cut out. I don’t know enough about this kind of stuff.

“To dull the pain you can have a little of Abel’s special liquor without alcohol,” she said, revealing the man’s name for the first time and then the bottle. It was strong and bitter but did not have the familiar taste of alcohol about it, but it seemed to have a similar effect. I felt dizzy and before I knew it, I had passed out.

When I came to, I was in pain, but not where I expected. There was a fresh dressing on the wound in my chest, but there was a new location of pain, and that was in my groin. I reached down to find my cock in its place, but heavy bandaging below it. It seemed hard to comprehend what had happened at first. I was confused. It was more than the liquor, that was for sure.

Even when I first contemplated the idea that I had been “unmanned” it seemed impossible. It was such a serious mutilation it would seem that nobody would take my nuts without taking my life soon afterwards. But why by these people who had seemed so gentle?

I was in a bed and they were all there – Patience and Charity, and Abel standing over them and way over me lying on my back.

“From now on you will be known as Hope,” said Abel. “You will have the right to join this family, by way of matrimony, when you are ready.”

“What have you done?” I almost screamed it. In my imagination my voice sounded shrill, as if the old joke were true, and castration had made my voice higher. “You need to take me to a doctor”.

“We have no need of a doctor here,” said Abel. “We believe in the power of prayer and of the human hand guided by prayer. My hand knows this work, and it is God’s work. For you it has secured a future, Hope. A future in the true faith, following the teachings of the latter day saints. A future in a family where faith comes first. A future with us.”

The words sounded like madness, but that gave me cause for greater concern. How do you deal with insanity, or even collective insanity? You need to get a grip, keep things calm, and plan an escape. There was one thing that I knew for sure – my life had changed forever, but maybe some male functionality could be restored. For now, I needed to recover.

“Can I have something to drink?” I asked. “Something strong like the drink that sent me to sleep?”

“We have chicken soup.” said Charity. “You need to restore your body, and Indian herbs to improve it”.

That was not what I wanted, but soup was certainly what I needed. I was guessing that I had lost blood although it seemed that the wound in my groin had been stitched well, and it would heal quickly. But the healing of the mind was something that I thought could never happen, in that place or anywhere else.

Of course, Hope is a woman’s name, and it was clear that was what I was expected to be from that day forward. Patience and Charity tended to my body, ripping all hair from my face and my body and tying back the hair on my head to grow long beneath a bonnet. I was given the clothes of a woman to wear over an undergarment intended to give me a feminine shape. In addition, I learned that the “Indian herbs” that I had been given and would take daily as a tea, was a concoction used by nearby Indians to promote the feminine appearance of a class of men who had cast aside manhood to become witches of some kind. I consumed not for that purpose but because it made me feel a little light-headed, and that was a feeling I craved.

The farm where I had been offered a place was a dairy farm, which was something I had no real knowledge of. There could be no open range dairy farming. The herd of cows would need to graze by rotation in one of four green paddocks around the farm buildings kept green with water from a spring higher up the valley. Every day Abel would bring the cows in and the women of the household would milk them, and then he would take them to another paddock after they were done.

After milking a quantity of fresh milk stored in vessels immersed in spring water would be collected and take down the valley in a wagon driven by Abel’s much younger brother Abner. That was the only fresh supply for the region that included two fast growing towns. For the remaining milk and cream Patience and Charity would make cheese curds, hard cheese and butter, which could also be sold.

Patience introduced me to the work that I was expected to do to earn my place. I had worked with cattle all my life and attended cows at calving, but I had never milked a cow that had been kept in a state of post-delivery so that its udder was full to bursting.

“Warm your hands and learn to be gentle,” said Patience. “A cow will give milk as an act of love for its young. Respect that as if you are calling for it. Remember how you would like your own brasts to be treated, when the Indian herbs work their miracle. And when we are finished with milking we always massage our own breasts with the oils that come from the udder – we expect you to do the same.

The advantage of having a third “woman” was that either Patience or Charity could tend to the children and we could be finished with the milking early and see Abel walk away with the herd. It was clear to me that neither Pateience nor Charity had any love for the man. My feeling was one of hatred.

But perhaps it was the loss of my balls that had changed me, the way they do gelded stallion or a bull gelded to pull a plough. But if I thought about escape from this place then it was fleeting. In this condition, where could I go? It was not the Sheriff that I feared but all men. How could I rejoin them as I was, castrated and with my male form wasting away to nothing and my hands soften by my work as a milkmaid? How could I find any other work as this person?

And I felt close to the Patience and Charity. Although I was not married to Abel, although that is what he intended, I was still to be treated as “a sister wife” and that was the closest that I had ever felt to other persons.

My mother died giving birth to mem and my father never forgave me. In any case he was a hard man and he treaed my older brother as harshly as he did me. My brother seemed to hate me too, but he was shot when I was still a child, and my father after him when I was barely a man. Now I was not even that.

I felt that before I could consider what to do next what I needed to do was to recover my mind. Winter was approaching and it seemed wise to see that through in Abel’s household, as his betrothed and as a guest in his house.

If only I was man enough to seek my pleasure with Patience, but the removal of my manhood seemed to have destroyed all desire. It was only when I started to consider how I might be expected to function if Abel were to make me his wife as he clearly intended, that I went to Patience with questions.

“You need not be concerned with our husband,” she said. “He is impotent and he has been for years … leastways he has never been able to have sex with me. But as a good Mormon he is expected to take more than one wife. And yet as a good Christian he believes that he should not take wives who can carry and bear children – that would be to deprive Our Lord of the faithful children his followers are expected to produce. So instead, he has sought to take as his wives, women who are not of that kind. Women like you and me.”

“Like me, you mean?” I said. “A man turned into a woman for his crazed beliefs.”

“No. I mean like you and me,” she said. And with that she raised her skirts and pulled down her drawers to reveal that her groin was like mine – a small cock and an empty sack.

I was amazed and slightly disgusted – I had enjoyed sex with this person. Looking back I coud see how she did it – by keeping what I was staring at concealed in her underwear while stil being able to offer me a point of entry – a place I had thoroughly enjoyed and still remembered as my last ever experience of sex as a man.

“And Charity?” I asked. “What kind of woman is she?”

“She is the only woman here who was born as one,” said Patience. The children are born of her, but Abel is not the father.”

“Who is the father then?” I had to ask.

“The older one is mine,” said Patience with some pride. “He invited me to stay and work on the farm and I enjoyed Charity’s company for quite a while, before he found out and went into a fury. He called it a righteous rage like Jesus throwing the sellers from the temple. He said it justified what he did to me. He made me his wife. Charity taught me the ways of a woman, including how to mother the child I fathered. I am here for my child.”

“And the younger one?”

“There was another young man, and another,” said Patience. “The one who arrived after me was brought in to help Abel on the land when I chose to help mother my child. It was not long before he was placing his seed in Charity in the hay loft. And I confess that I learned that I needed sex, even if it was only the sort of sex a woman can receive. I should have known what would happen. It was what happened to me and what happened to you. He gave her the name “Honor” but she was anything but that.”

“The man who replaced her as the male help had sex with me and with Honor but for some reason he preferred us to Charity, not this worried her. Still, had Abel discovered what he was doing that last cowhand would have gone the same way if Honor and he had not run off together. Honor has written in secret to Charity pretending to be her sister. She and her young man are living as husband and wife in Texas, we are told. Maybe such a life is possible?”

“So, Honor warned the man who came here before me?” I asked angrily, “Why didn’t you warn me?”

“I’m sorry for that. I thought that Abel would want another child. Chastity and I want at least one more. Two children from two wives is not enough. I thought we had time. I mean Abel called out to us that he would take in no more men, but we did not believe that. We thought we had time. It could have been fun for you, and then when Chastity fell pregnant you could have headed out of here. It was just that he decided he was finished with growing a family that was not even his. I am truly sorry for what has happened.”

I was ready to faint. It seemed like a curiously feminine thing – perhaps because I was in a laced cloth corset and had been eating sparingly to stay slight. I just slumped into a chair.

“Our life does not need to be without pleasure,” said Patience. “Being a woman and receiving a man can be a wonderful thing. And then I also make candles and they have a dual purpose.”

I had no idea what she was talking about then – why would I? But by the time I had learned all of this I had already spent many months at The Purple Sage Dairy Farm and with every day I had become more immersed in life as a woman, a wife, an occasional mother and a milkmaid. It was true that breasts had appeared as promised, although that was only the beginning. My hair had grown too, just as thick and dark as before, but somehow softer and looking a little coppery in the sunlight. Was it the loss of my nuts that saw me take more care in my appearance? Our was it the example of my two sister wives and our growing closeness.

Perhaps it was that closeness that saw me react as I did the first and last time I ever saw Abel do violence to one of us. I had always assumed that he was a man of bad temper that was only projected by harsh words, but it seemed that I had only been spared knowledge of the real Abel while we were just his three happy women and the children. But even now I am unsure what it was that set him off to beat Charity the way he did. She was the best of us, without doubt. She would never harm a living thing. Patience and I were not the same.

We sent word of his death. We said that he had been kicked in the head by one of the cows. It was an almighty kick, for sure. His skull was stove in and he died in that very instant.

The truth is that when he was absent we learned that if it was one of us women who stod at the bottom of the paddock with the gate open, our cows would come to our call. It seemed to me that if I was ever in doubt it was those cows who convinced me that I had truly become a woman. The female sex know one another even across species. We have warm hands and we know what our breasts are for. No wonder that Abel would complain that he had to climb up behind them and drive them to the gate with his shouts and long stick. He was a man, except where it mattered.

It seemed that we could run the farm by ourselves, but that is not how it is in Mormon country.

Patience introduced me to Abner, who was Abel’s brother but very different from him. He was much younger and a handsome man, recently married to Susan, who was carrying his first child.

“It is the Mormon custom that a brother should marry his brother’s widows – all of them including his betrothed,” said Abner. “I intend to honor that tradition.”

“But what of our secret,” I whispered to Patience.

“Oh, you need not be concerned on that score,” said Patience out loud. “I have a sin to confess to you my sister wives. The fact is that before Abner married Susan he and I would know one another, in the biblical sense, quite regularly. In fact whenever he collected our milk, you might say I collected his. He has no trouble with women like us, Hope. In fact, if he has four wives and only two to bear children, that has some advantages for the mothers.”

Abner just looked at me and smiled. Susan was not there, but when she was she was welcoming of the arrangement.

My only concern was that as a wife I might be expected to receive a man into my fundament, which was not something I ever expected to have to do. I suppose that I had become enough of a woman in having lived as one for well over a year on my e=wedding nnight that I was ready to at least try, having made a promise to my husband and our God in the afternoon.

Patience had coached me and Abner was gentle and skilled. I quickly learned that my transformation was complete. Soon after I learned that I was almost as hungry for sex as my sister wife Patience.

Now we have more children on the way, but the farm is going well. The women run it and Abner just carries the product. People tell him that his life is perfect, being married to four beautiful and industrious women. But you must know that we keep him busy in other ways.

The End

© Maryanne Peters 2023

4820

Author’s Note: Zane Grey wrote a number of stories about Mormon settlers with the main one being “Riders of the Purple Sage”. I have not read any of them, but it seemed that religious extremism and polygamy would make for a good story.