

A Little Maturity

A Short Story and a Sequel to “Underage”

By Maryanne Peters

You might remember me. A couple of years ago I told my story right here – about how Grady became de-Grady-ed. And then after that, degraded.

Looking back on it now I can see how everything went wrong. All I wanted was to experience life as an adult before I was ready. Pretending to be a girl, pretending to be Grace, gave me that.

But there is a reason why children are shielded from those experiences until they have a little maturity. Children are not ready. And I was a child, back then.

Sure I was tech-savvy and smart enough to arrange the fake IDs, and I knew enough from TV and the internet to be able to pass off as an adult female where I never would have succeeded pretending to be an adult male. But I was a kid, at that time.

I tried to live two lives for a while: Grady Lynch, the nerdy student trying to impress the guys at school, and Grace No-second-name-necessary, the femme fatale and incorrigible party girl. She was a drunk. I know that now.

I gave up my real life when I started taking the puberty blockers and the hormones, and then when I told my parents that I was transgender, I got the breast implants. I may have been lying to them, but I wanted boobs. It was just that I had a vision for Grace as being more busty. Or maybe it was because everybody else expected her to be that way. From the moment I had breasts I just had to show them off. Grace had become a bit of a slut. I know that now.

Even when I told my story, I thought that I understood what alcoholism was and how I could control myself. My sister gave it up, because she found and a guy, and now they are talking about marriage and kids. That seemed never in my future. I was the good-time girl, who was not really a girl at all.

After I left school it all went to pieces. I got work as a hostess in a club. I had no assets except my body. I had blonde hair, blue eyes and fulsome breasts, and I enjoyed a good time. That was all I needed. I got paid, I got tips, and I worked in a place full of liquor and drugs.

As long as I was drunk, I had nothing to think about, and while I was sober I only thought about getting drunk.

If I had a sad moment I might blame my sister for dressing me up in the first place, or blame my parents for not exercising control when they should have, and then allowing me to live as a woman because they believed my lies and they felt guilty. But sad moments were more easily dealt with by a few quick shots, paid for by somebody else.

I wish I could say that it was a loving relative who sent me to rehab, but it was my boss after I turned up black and blue one day. A drunken girl is a victim waiting to be taken advantage of, but a drunken girl with a penis is a victim waiting to be beaten, if she is lucky.

He sent my wages to the rehab centre and they took me in. I was one of a few charity cases. Other’s paid top dollar for two weeks of cold turkey, groups sessions and private consultations with a shrink.

In private I could explain that I had fallen into this by accident. I was a regular guy who just wanted to experience life before I was ready, and that was how I became Grace. But the doctor did not believe it for a minute. She said that I might be “gender uncertain” but more likely I was “a repressed transwoman”. I suppose I was just not ready to listen.

There were questions about my sexual preference. I think I said: “My preference is for any guy who will buy me a drink, and so yes, it’s always guys”. It seemed to me that it was not gay if they were not fucking me up the ass. Kisses don’t count – do they?

I never told anybody in group that I was not a woman. It was clear that I was. I mean, they asked for truth, but I had left truth behind long before then.

But group therapy is not like a party. I was so good at parties. I can play truth or dare, so long as I can lie when I have to. But group therapy is serious. I mean a room full of serious people. It was not my scene.

Then in walked Gregor Haffell. He took a sit one away from me on my side of the circle so it was hard to look at him. But that is what I wanted to do. I had to lean forward to do it, like I was staring at the newcomer. I always thought that I see guys, but I never look at them, at least not the way they look at me. Sure, I can give them the eye, to get a drink or a favor, but I am not looking. So why him?

He was handsome. I know what that is. And confident. Too confident to belong in this place. And well dressed – I mean, casual, but expensive.

He said nothing, except his name, and the admission that he was a coke addict. His voice was like strong, sweet coffee – intoxicating in an arresting way.

I thought of a dozen ways to go up and introduce myself too him as the session was winding up, but none of them seemed right, so like a fool I just timed my exit to deliberately bumped into him in the doorway.

“I’m sorry,” he said. He was taller than me, and I was close enough to smell him. Whatever it was, it was good.

“No, it was my fault …”. I had to stop myself from telling him that it was deliberate. There was something about him that demanded the truth. I had never felt that before. I had become a grifter. This was no room for these thoughts. I swallowed and said: “I am Grace.”

“Yes you are,” he said. And I knew what it was. It was love.

Can it really happen that way? It can and it did. But the crazy thing was that I had always assumed that I would fall in love with a girl. Or rather, it seemed that Grady would fall in love with a girl. But he was not there, looking into Gregor’s eyes. It was Grace.

We drank some tea and we talked. I told him some of my problems and he told me some of his, but I think none of those things mattered to us in that moment. We sat together at dinner. There were other people at the table but I cannot tell you who. I think now that the must have seen that we were not really among them, but somewhere else.

We parted to our rooms and I lay in bed staring at the ceiling. The afternoon and evening had brought me to a realization that I seemed to have been refusing to face for years: There was no Grady. There never had been. I joked about being de-Grady-ed, but you cannot cease to be what you never were. Love changed everything. I knew in that moment that I was a woman and I always had been.

With that, everything became so clear to me. My sister may have seen it in me. My parents believed me telling them that I was trans not because they were stupid but because they were smarter than me, I spent my teen years fighting my inner being and getting drunk rather than facing the truth. And the truth was that I was a woman, but a woman with a man’s body … well, only a tiny bit of my body was that.

I could face the truth, but could Gregor?

And I realized that this was the problem that so many people like me had to face. If you fall for a guy so hard that you want something permanent, how can you risk losing that by telling him the truth? But without the truth there can be nothing permanent. God, I needed a drink. A whole bottle.

We met for breakfast. He said: “I’ve been thinking about you all night.”

“Me too,” I said. “But I’m a basket case. You really don’t know what you are getting into with me.” I felt that I had to push him away, but I wanted so badly for him to take me into his arms and tell me that none of it mattered.

“I never thought it mattered, any of this, even life itself,” he said, as if proving that he too had experienced a similar epiphany. “Until now. Until you.”

“Could you really accept me, warts and all?” I asked him. I was thinking of one particular wart. A very ugly one.

“Yes,” he said. And he did.

The End

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