Surrogate

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

We used to laugh at people who said that you can’t buy happiness. Poor people say shit like that. Poor or sad people, or probably both – don’t those things go together. That is wat we used to say.

Isn’t that what money is for? Fathers might say that it is there to keep score; mothers might say that it is there to set the pecking order at the country club; but rich kids know – money is there to buy you happiness. Buy, buy, buy. Happiness, happiness, happiness.

Burton Fielding had money. He was born to a wealthy family. I thought I was too, but as it turns out I was only brought up by a wealthy family. But it was recent so it would not have mattered even if I had known.

It was a society wedding – Catherine Shedleigh of the Northampton married to Burton Fielding of Manhattan. Every who was anybody was there. Anybody who was nobody was not. Not just champagne and caviar but Dom Perignon and Caspian Black. Catering by Boulard – food for the gods that has everybody nodding approval. A gown by Versace to set the crowd gasping. That is the kind of happiness money can buy.

Burt and I looked forward to ensuring that our children would have everything that we had. We could hardly offer them more.

And then you learn that your body is a cannibal. And worse still, you cannot buy your way out of this.

It has a name, but it is so rare that it should not really have one. It does not describe it properly anyway. My body eats my children – that is what it is.

The doctor said - “You will never get cancer. You body is hyper-responsive to anything that is not your DNA. That is probably the reason you have never had a sick day in your life.” He was not counting all the days when I was not sick but just felt like a day at the spa.

There was a gene involved, but none of my family had anything like it. That was when my father told us that I was not of their blood. Looking at them in the light of that made me think how foolish I was not to think that. Such a dowdy pair, and me … well – “fabulous” was what some said of me.

The fabulous child eating cannibal Catherine Fielding.

It was not easy to track down my birth parents, but that is what money is for, amongst other things. They were both dead – killed in a car accident. But I had a full brother who had also been adopted, but not by a rich family. Quite the opposite in fact – dirt poor and living in Maine. Still, I was told that he was a smart kid and was doing some courses while in juvenile detention for a series of minor offences.

I paid somebody to talk to him in there. He said that his father (that would be our father) had never been sick in his life and once gave blood and was told that it was like poison. His mother (our mother) was not so healthy but gave birth to two healthy children. He was one, and there was an older sister out there somewhere – and that would be me.

I learnt that his name was John David Castellano but people called him JD. He had been sick a few times. He had given blood and it was not poison. He was a minor criminal and occasional drug user, but not an addict.

The doctor said that the information was useful, but it was a pity that JD was not a girl. I had to ask why, even though I dislike being led into questions.

“Your eggs are fine. We can fertilize them with Burton’s sperm, but they just cannot live in your body. A full sister could be a surrogate. I am not confident that somebody who was not a family member could do it because if the baby took after you the fetus once it has developed might attack the mother.”

I was ready to take that chance if I could pay a surrogate enough to take a chance, but as the doctor pointed out I could not just keep placing time bombs inside the bodies of women – even if they were poor ones.

It was then I that came up with the crazy idea of having my brother by blood, carry my child through to birth. Could such a thing be done?

The doctor was ready to laugh, but when he saw how serious I was, he started to think out loud.

“The male and the female body are not so different,” he pondered. “The male body contains Mullerian structures which are the vestige of a womb. The placenta is a creation of the embryo. It does not need a womb – we have something we call ectopic pregnancies which take place outside the wo. The placenta just needs to be fed from the blood supply. And for all of this the body needs to be flooded with maternal hormones, but these we have had synthesized for years. So … it is possible - barely possible.”

So there you have it.

“But your brother would have to agree. It might change his body forever. And there are risks in carrying and birthing a child, even for women who are structured to do it.”

“That is what money is for, Doc”. I probably did not say it. So what if I did. I certainly thought it.

Burt said pay him. “Pay this JD whatever you have to”. Burt is a pushover. But I was ready to work out a deal.

I sent my man back up there. He told JD my deal – I was his sister and was unable to bear a child. I needed a surrogate of my blood and he was the only relative. If he would agree to become the worlds first pregnant man born as a man, then I would get him out of jail, set him up in luxury and pay him $100,000 when the baby was delivered.

JD’s response annoyed me. He said that he wanted to meet me and get to know me. I was now his only living relative, and he wanted a family ink. Yes, he would do it, but he wanted to move in with us and live with us. He would take $1,000,000 after the birth, and would want to remain in contact with the child as his new niece or nephew.

Burt said that $1,000,000 was nothing and he was right, but having this guy in our home?

I have to say that I resisted meeting him. I got him out of detention on a bond and I had the doctor attend to him to check compatibility. I even insisted that JD sign the release forms and take the conditioning shots before I agreed to invite him into our home.

I had the maid bring him in to the conservatory. I could see the family likeness immediately – the large dark eyes and the straight nose, the full lips and the round chin, but his with just the smallest wisp of a beard, and a little light hair above the top lip. He must have been impressed by our house but he fixed his gaze on me.

“High Sis,” he said. The cheek of it was galling. I had pulled this young man out of the gutter. Call me his sister? But I had to restrain any feelings, at least until embryo implantation.

“You must be JD. Come and sit,” I did not get up. I wanted to avoid contact. But I could smile and be pleasant. I move in circles where that is obligatory. I can even make it sincere, and the time for that was that moment.

“I was told that this is going to throw my body around,” he said. “I am going to earn my money.”

“Pregnancy is hard,” I gave a sympathetic smile. “Men are spared the discomfort, but women just have to take it in their stride.”

“I am going to grow tits. My muscles are going to turn to soft flab.” He did not sound too upset. He was reciting what some doctor had told him in a way that might secure more money.

“Would you do this for me, JD?” I made my eyes as big as they would go, and they moistened a little. “You have already agreed, but I mean, as my only living flesh and blood … my little brother.”

“Like you say, I have agreed,” he said. “But like I said, not holed up somewhere, but with you. We may never be friends, but at least I will know you.”

Somehow that seemed to make sense, from his point of view. From my point of view knowing people of no importance was a total waste of time.

“How true,” I said. “And I will know you. So you are welcome. But I do have a few rules. Cleanliness, decorum, table manners – that sort of thing.”

“What I don’t know I can learn,” he said. “This is your house – your rules. I am just … family.”

“Wonderful. Let’s get you cleaned up.”

And he did clean up quite well. I suggested a shave and that he wash his hair and brush out the knots. He put on one of Burt’s shirts that was far too big for him, and a pair of my slacks and loafers to go to the clinic. The embryo had been prepared and a place in his body had been selected. It was keyhole surgery. The embryo was a pin head but had been growing. An area of high blood flow in the gut had been selected.

“The rest is over to the hormones,” the doctor explained to all of us. “The conditioning that we started a few days ago will make the embryo believe that this is a female body. What you have to face up to for a while JD, is that your body will be female for the duration of this pregnancy, if the attachment is successful.”

“I have agreed to this, Doc,” said JD. “It’s for my sister, and for Burt.”

He gave Burt a smile, and there was an odd look back. They had barely spoken to one another – just a perfunctory shake of the hand as Burt was compelled to do everyday in his father’s broking firm.

It was Jaydee’s idea that during the pregnancy some “maternity-type clothes” be worn. It was certainly nothing that I suggested. It started with some of Burt’s old shirts and my discarded leggings. It was something about being ready “for when the bump comes”. But that was months away, if at all. It was only after 5 weeks that we got confirmation that the embryo had attached and the placenta had formed as was functioning.

To be fair to Jaydee, there was a real effort to fit in – to learn the way that we did things in our household and to even adopt something of our conversation style. There were daytime soaps and more than a few of those British costume dramas that Jaydee seemed to just lap up. Jaydee seemed to take pleasure in putting on the airs and graces of an Edwardian lady – almost as if making fun of me for the way I behaved.

But I took the view that the whole thing became something of an exercise in training, like disciplining an errant puppy. It was made pleasant because the puppy was responding and the improvement in behavior was pleasing for everybody. I am not saying that JD was treated like an animal – in fact JD was becoming a guest that we could accept, and not just for the fact that our child was growing inside that belly. That was what mattered.

Jaydee did remark upon the effect of the hormones as the “pregnancy” developed. Not just the breast growth and softening of the flesh, but also the hair, which seemed to be growing very long very quickly. Skin too. It is often said that during a pregnancy a woman “glows” and I could see that in Jaydee’s face. Apparently, it is down to the hormones.

There are behavioral effects, as people tell me are well known. It was as if all male traits were slowly fading away. I wondered what had existed before, but even when I witnessed that “Hello Sis” moment there had been a masculine swagger that now seemed gone. And there are more gestational-specific effects too - the nesting instinct grows stronger – women become compulsively organized and neat. But they can also be prone to emotional swings, and cravings for strange foods. It all seemed very odd in a man, but there you are – JD had signed up for this.

In Jaydee here was a joy in all of this that I found annoying – a humming happiness that was a little exasperating.

All of this I watched with some envy, I have to say. Because of my affliction I was denied these things. I felt that they were a woman’s right, but instead a man – JD – was enjoying them by virtue of my embryo. It just seemed wrong.

But it seemed that Jaydee was less of a man, in particular when the breasts and the belly became obvious. I had no idea what was going on below the belly, and I did not care. Part of me was happy that my baby was taking shape, but there was that bitterness too. I started to imagine that Jaydee was flaunting the new form of the body, with clothes that showed the bump.

The breasts too, were now larger than mine. I could not help but notice that Burt would ogle them as we shared breakfast. Jaydee had taken to wearing a bra and tops that showed off the cleavage. “It is simply a matter of necessity” I was told. And then they swelled to the extent that something more was needed.

“We need to go out,” said Jaydee. “I need to find something to hold my breasts. I have been reading about being fitted for something with room for expansion.” The word breasts was used for the first time, almost lovingly. JD had always called them “these damn tits” before.

Jaydee was not a captive. Going out was just not in my plan. My plan was to just go about my usual business until Jaydee started to show, and then retreat until the birth. I could then announce that I now had a child, carried in secret. I would not have to refer to a surrogate or lie about it. But if Jaydee were to be seen with me, how could I explain.

“You will need to dress as a woman so as not to get undue attention,” I said. “We will not go to places where I might be known.”

“Let’s get you a pregnancy suit,” Jaydee suggested. “I have no problem dressing as a woman. I look like one – or certainly not like a man. But why should you hide. We can be pregnant together. The child is yours so why not?”

It had some appeal. I have nothing against lying – it is just that in my experience it causes complications. This would be a big lie. Why did I have to pretend? People with money use surrogates all the time – right? It was just that I did want to be pregnant. I wanted people to let me into the cab ahead of them, or just smile me.

I had the suit delivered. It came with padding to imitate expansion. Who would invent such a thing? It was ugly, and made it essential that I have a wardrobe that I wanted avoid. My plan was easier, but this would mean that I would for a few months as a pregnant woman, and it now seemed that this was somehow important to me.

Jaydee wore stuff that was not that much different to what was worn around the house. The only thing I did was to arrange a ponytail and some lipstick and mascara, and a pair of my sandals which were surprisingly a perfect fit. For myself I wore something expensive – high fashion maternity wear over that awful suit.

We went to the right place – a lingerie shop that had the bra we needed. Jaydee surprised me again by coming up with a convincing feminine voice – practiced over time following tips on the internet I was told.

“We’re sisters,” Jaydee told the sales assistant. The only problem with that was that as a sister of mine she looked distinctly under-class. It was embarrassing.

I could have said – “Don’t say that. We are not sisters”. But where would that go? A brother? I decided instead that if Jaydee was my sister “she” had better brush up. So instead, I said that we needed to find a dress like mine, and that we should both go for a makeover.

I went to Antoine’s. I should probably have gone somewhere else, where I was not known, but the problem is can I really trust a stranger with my hair?

“This must be your sister,” he shrieked, the moment we entered. “I recognize the family likeness”

“I am Jade,” she said. It was “she” – I was forced to spin around to check. Not JD or Jaydee, but Jade, speaking in those haughty tones straight from Brit Box TV. Antoine was all over her, telling her how beautiful she was.

I could well have been pissed, but I was more worried that “Jade” might drop the feminine sophistication and suddenly reveal herself to be male, or worse still, from the gutter. But “Jade” was in character and relishing it. The look on her face when he was done, with her hair in soft curls and that perfect make up, was priceless. I made me smile for a moment until I realized that she was much prettier than I was.

How could this be possible. Jade was not even female, but she was carrying my child strutting around with her belly on display, and now with a beauty and elegance that would have put me to shame, if I were not strong enough to deal with it.

Worse still, for her it was just a joke. For me being the perfect woman is essential. And yet there I was with a man doing the woman’s job for me.

I should not have let it get to me, but it did.

Then, when we got home and Jade put on her new maternity dress and paraded in front of Burt, it got even worse. Do not tell me that I cannot see arousal in a man. Least of all my man.

“You look great … just be careful that your cock doesn’t show,” I said to her, looking across to Burt to watch his reaction. He was still almost panting like a dog. It was sickening.

I ad a notion that I should turn Jade out of the house then and there, but she suddenly called out something that knocked that idea right out of my head.

“Oh, he is kicking,” she said, grinning at Burt. “Come over here, Daddy, and feel your son inside me.”

I was burning up. Burt rushed over and caressed that person’s belly with a loving greater than any hand he had placed upon me since our wedding night all those years before. And yet, I had to grit my teeth, just whispering to myself – “Think about the baby. Think about the baby.”

It was all that kept me from strangling her – Jade I mean. She was a she now, there was no denying that. It was not really an act anymore. Was it the hormones that she was continuing to receive, or was it just the presence of a child, and a placenta, and some form of womb, that had changed this person from male to female? Or was it the way Burton treated her, or looked at her.

When JD arrived he was nothing but a stooge, and Burt knew how to use them. But then JD became Jade and things changed. Burton would hardly look at me. I came downstairs once and found them sitting together on the sofa, his head on her belly, her fingers in his hair.

“Listening to the baby”, he said.

“You were almost sucking her cock,” was my reply.

“She is not keeping that,” he said. That knocked me over, I have to say. They were talking about things behind my back. Talking about the future, and not involving me.

I just wanted it over. I wanted my baby cut from her belly and for her to be left to bleed to death. But Burt started talking about another baby.

“Would you?” he asked her.

“If you would arrange that operation as your promised,” came the simpering reply from that witch. “I would not dream of a carrying another child if I was not a full woman with a functioning vagina, even if it cannot be used for birthing.”

I sleep in the spare room now, while they share a bed, even before she has that fucking vagina.

It is like I am the surrogate now – I only exist to provide the eggs for him to fertilize and her to carry.

The End

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