Hideout

A Short Western Story

By Maryanne Peters

My story is a strange one, and it must start with a description of my condition. I always felt that my nature was more odd than sinful, because I have seen so much sin. I have heard it said that the bible forbids men from dressing as women, but the bible forbids plenty of things that we all do, so what is the problem? I had desires. Some people have a desire to shoot people in the back. I would never do that. What is the harm in dressing like a woman? I always made sure that I did it alone – not just because of the fear of being found out and laughed at, but because if it is done in private, who is affected by my actions? Sure the worst sin is a sin against the golden rule, which means your actions might affect your neighbor, so if your neighbor is not affected, how is that bad.

I always volunteered to patrol the Northern Limits because I enjoyed time on my own, as I will explain. The Northern Limits was the name we gave to the range of rocky hills across the top of the Wallerman Ranch – a natural barrier. It was just that stock would head up there and my job was to find them and bring them back down to the herd. I could go up there for a few days to find the stragglers and then drive them together and then down before branding or the main drive.

When I went up there a few times I discovered that there was a small shack in the rocks. It seemed like an old miner and his wife had been prospecting up there. Maybe the wife had died or something, because there was a grave and he had taken most of what was in the cabin and useful to him away. There was nothing but a bed, and a trunk of women’s clothes, and a mirror.

If I had ever prayed for this I cannot say, but given my weakness this seemed to settle the point for me. Why would this have been placed in front of me the way it had been? It was as if God Himself had said to me – “My son, it is alright to express yourself as if you were a woman, and here have I given unto you, the garments and the place to do just that.”

Even less likely seemed to be the fact that these garments were a perfect fit. It is true that I am not a large man, but nor was this now deceased lady a small woman. Even the shoes that she had fitted me – not just the work shoes but also the heeled boots that looked like a city woman might wear to take her evening promenade along a fashionable shopping street.

On my first visit I found the fine garments and dressed in them, with a bonnet on my head, imagining what it might be like to be a lady and to have men setting to partner me in one of those quadrille dances. But after I had done that, I decided that my time was better spent just wearing working clothes and an apron a living my evenings and mornings as a housewife so that I could still spend the days looking for lost steers.

But my secret became my obsession. I even cut some calves off the back of the herd so I could tell the lead hand that I would need to head up to the Northern Limits for a day or two to find them. I built a small corral at the cabin so I could always return with animals to show what a good cowboy I was. But what I was really doing was being the very opposite of a cowboy. I had it in my head that while I was up that shack in the rocks, I was Rebecca Jones, wife of the bounty hunter Dead-eye Jones, keeping our cabin tidy for his return to me.

I lived for those days, and so I prepared myself to be her as best I could, while still being a cattle drover. I grew my hair as long as I could, and I kept my face close shaved and even my chest, arms and legs free of body hair. I could hide this as a man, but put it on display in the cabin in front of that mirror, once I had tied myself into a corset and arranged my hair in a feminine style.

This may sound like craziness, but I even talked to myself, or rather to my invisible husband, imaging him returning from his travels and bursting in as I was making a meal or washing my hair, and calling out something like – “Where is my beautiful wife? Darling Rebecca, I need to get inside your fanny without further delay, so get on the bed and spread those smooth legs and get ready to take your man!”

I would lie back and imagine him on top of me, and I would get hot and flustered and spill my load in my hand.

I know how this sounds. It sounds perverted and unnatural, but like I say, it was only me and it was only make believe. There was nobody else. It was harmless, and so wonderful. I figure that most folks go through life with dreams that will never come true, but my dream came true for me all the time, or at least once or twice a month, for a day or two.

And then one day everything changed.

I had got up to the Northern Limits early and I had found two steers and roped them both, leading them back to the corral by the shack. Then I had taken the saddle off my horse and tethered him around back with fresh feed and taken off my clothes and folded them neatly putting them in a drawer with my gun belt on top. I liked to hide the man away when I was ready to become Rebecca.

I boiled some water so that I could give myself a warm wash and wash my hair to dress it nicely, and then I laced up my corset and put on my dress, humming happily as I did all of this. The autumn weather was fine but getting a little cool up there. I pinned up my hair and wrapped a pretty shawl around my shoulders, and spent a few moments in front of the mirror talking to myself.

I suppose I tended to get a bit to caught up in myself to even notice the three riders outside. They were already on the porch when I heard one of the steers bellow. By that time the door was opening. There was no time to go to the chest to find my gun, let alone head out the back or try to hide. For the first time I was caught out as Rebecca!

That was the foremost fear in my mind – for one of the other hands at the Wallerman Ranch to walk in and find a fellow cowboy dressed as a woman. Somehow I was almost relieved that this person was a stranger, even though he held a gun in his hand, pointing at me.

“There is no need for that,” I said to him, pointing at the gun. The voice that came out of my mouth was the voice of Rebecca, and it was automatic I guess – it went with the costume.

“I’m sorry Miss,” the man said, holstering his gun. “The place looked deserted. Is it just you here?”

To enter a house with a gun drawn strikes me as less than friendly, and if the house is deserted then unnecessary. And by this time two more men had entered my parlor and none of them looked to have honest intent. I decided to lie.

“My husband is nearby and hunting,” I said. “You may have heard of him - the bounty hunter Dead-eye Jones?”

“I can’t say I have,” said the man in front. “What about you Snow? You Poke? Dead-eye Jones, huh? He sure sounds dangerous.” The man was smiling. He did not believe me.

“She sure looks pretty enough to be expecting company,” said the fair haired one, who answered to “Snow”.

“She does that,” said the first man. “But I can assure you that we mean no harm, Ma,am. We just need to rest up and have a good meal, and something for our horses. You look like you might know how to look after a man or three, and there looks to be some beef outside?”

“That’s Wallerman cattle and they will be up to get that this afternoon,” I said. “You don’t want to be stealing cattle, do you?”

“Well, sadly Ma’am, we’ve done worse,” said the man. “Poke, go outside and kill one of those steers and hang up the carcass. We are all hungry, ain’t we? Including you, perhaps, Ma’am? It ain’t your crime, so we are bringing you meat and asking you politely if you might cook it for us … if you would be so kind.”

Poke had gone outsider already, but it was not like I had much of a choice. As it happened, I had cooked there before. There was a large pot left behind, and behind the shack an overgrown garden could still yield some herbs and potatoes.

“You gentlemen sit down then,” I said. “You can be my guests for the time being, and I expect basic courtesy in return.”

“You will have it, I promise,” said the man. Then he reached out his hand to introduce himself. “Colin Donnelly,” he said. Instead or shaking my hand, he kissed it gently, as if I was a fairy tale princess.

I confess that some strange thoughts entered my head. Clearly, they were convinced that I was female, and that fact seemed to assure me that I was. It was almost as if I was ready to think of myself as a woman who occasionally dressed as a cowboy. A woman who had always wanted to be a wife to a good man, and to cook for him and his friends, and entertain them simply by being attractive and interesting, and attentive to their needs. Such a woman is to be prized, it seemed to me.

The way that Colin looked at me was pleasing to me as well. It seemed clear to me that he and the other two were criminals on the run. Why else would they be up here in the Northern Limits hungry and tired? She heard a shot from outside. A steer was dead. “We’ve done worse” Colin had said – how much worse? And yet there was something about the presence of violent men that made me feel even more feminine. It was fear I suppose, perhaps as a woman in a train car might feel if she were the only woman in it.

The man called Poke brought in a haunch still bleeding and slammed it onto the kitchen bench. Some knives had also been left there – large ones including one that I could hone with a steel and cut up the meat.

“I will need to gather some things for pot,” I said to the three of them, now sitting at the table where (for some reason) there were three chairs, and now a pack of playing cards.

“I’ll come with you,” said Colin. It was clear he wanted to watch me, but whether motivated by suspicion or fascination was not clear. I took a basket and I went to the herb garden for onion weed and sage, and burdock. He did not seem to notice that the garden was poorly tended. I had gathered from it before then, but I never had time normally. Gathering as I did, with my basket and my shawl over my pinned-up hair to keep the sun of my delicate face, made me want to do this more often.

“Is that a flower I can smell?” said Colin, the outlaw now suddenly aware of nature.

“I think you are smelling wild lavender, but it is not here, but further up in the rocks,” I said. “But I washed my hair in lavender water this morning.”

He stepped closer to me to smell my hair. What else was he to do? I had basically invited it. He was so close that I could smell him. A little sweat perhaps, but more like oiled leather – lanolin and linseed – manly smells.

“Yes, that is the smell,” he said. “So, tell me, Mrs. Jones – what is your given name?”

“Rebecca,” I said. “But people call me Becky”. What people? It seemed that the tongue in my head no longer belonged to me.

“Be honest with me Becky,” said Colin. “Mr. Dead-eye Jones is not going to turn up anytime soon, is he? If ever, perhaps.”

“I come up here to get away from things,” I said. For some reason the voice coming out of me wanted to be honest with him. I had to restrain myself and think about my own safety.

“A woman as beautiful as you should not be hidden away,” he said. It seemed to me that he was right, or at least if I was beautiful, then why di I have to hide? Because I was not female, that is why. Because cruelly this beautiful woman was concealed within an ugly male body, except for moments like this – marvelous moments.

“Would you let me kiss you?” he asked me. He took me by the shoulders and I dropped my basket. He was looking into my eyes in a way that no man had ever looked at me before. There were all sorts of things going on in my body, and not many of them in my head. What was clear was that I found myself sexually attracted to this man, but not as another man – as a woman.

I was speechless, but I must have nodded my consent somehow, because he kissed me, and I kissed him back. I was limp in his arms. I was a woman. It was all that I had ever dreamed of. The man that I once had been had drifted out of my body and now was the wispy clouds in the rocks above in the heights of Northern Limits.

He carried my basket back and I clung to his arm. He had offered to hold my hand but I did not want him to feel the callouses on my palms that I carried from rope work despite the fact that I wore heavy gloves when I wrangled cattle. My hands were the least feminine thing about me, and shamed me.

Colin stood beside me or behind me while I prepared the stew and hung it above the fire to cook slowly. He spoke to me about himself, and I listened and laughed as I should. I seemed that the kiss in the garden had opened a passage between two souls and that we were now exchanging knowledge, but it was one way because my soul was a lie.

He turned to his two fellow outlaws who sat at the table and said – “Why don’t you two step outside for a bit and give Mrs. Jones and me a little privacy. Just check for riders down in the valley. I am pretty sure that we have lost anybody chasing or tracking us, but from way up here you should be able to see.”

Snow and Poke looked at one another but they knew what their leader wanted. He wanted time alone with me.

I wanted that too. I ached to have sex with a man in they way that I dreamed of – not in some animal urge driven bumfuck in a stable with axle grease, but a romance between white sheets in the light of a fall afternoon.

Of course, it could never happen. He would discover the truth and if I was lucky he would strangle me and leave me dead in that bed, dressed as a woman and dead as a woman, killed by an angry man as so many often are. Perhaps that is why I rode on, like a wagon without horses rolling towards a high cliff edge.

As he carried me to the bed I said to him – “You’re going to discover something about me that you are not going to like”. For some reason I did not want to tell him what it was. Perhaps I did not even know the words myself, because to say “I am a man” did not seem like truth.

“If you want to tell me that there is no Dead-eye Jones then I think I have worked that out,” said Colin.

I just smiled sweetly. I just felt that as a woman that was my only defense. Maybe as a man I could have fought him off, but he has sucked that out of me with his tongue in the garden. Now all I had was my prettiness and my weakness, and my eyes that I hoped said to him “because I love you, you should forgive me anything”.

He lay me down and I pulled the pins from my hair so that it cascaded across the pillow. He kissed me again. I reached down and I could feel his cock. It was like holding the cock of Dead-eye Jones except that I could not feel the hand but only the cock.

He pulled up my dress, and pulled down my drawers …

It is the nature of women to surrender to fate and suffer the consequences. They marry men for their prospects and their promises, and tie themselves to such men forever, sometimes losing all their property to him. Women allow men to put a seed in them that will change them forever and may even kill them if they cannot bear children as they should. Men are said to control their fate. Women surrender themselves to fate. I had become a woman, and so I surrendered.

I remember the howl he made. I remember that they triggered tears in my eyes. I had never cried before, but then boys might cry, and women always do. I was staring at the rustic ceiling of axe-hewed rafters, crying.

I never when back there after we left. The three of them had found in my pretended home on the slopes of the Northern Limits a hideout for only a few days. Four of us left. A cowboy disappeared in those hills we were told. No trace of him was ever found.

The Donnelly gang pulled off one more heist and it was a good one. It made enough money for the leader of the gang to retire, although the other two squander their shares and ultimately met the ultimate fate for their crimes.

As for Donnelly himself, he was never heard from again either. But the Western half of the United States of America is a huge area, and it is easy for a couple like Mr. and Mrs. Don Jones to find a quiet place to live, with a few cattle and a garden, and a bed with white sheets and romance between them.

The End

Erin’s Seed “A gang discovers a hideout occupied by a secret crossdresser who becomes a sort of camp mother and the gang leader falls for “her”.”

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