Caring

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Nobody wants to be a burden on their family and friends, but a man with Multiple Sclerosis is a burden.

MS is an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system. It is more common in women than in men and is usually diagnosed much earlier that it was for me. Less than 5% of MS sufferers are diagnosed after the age of 50. I was 51.

MS causes widespread nerve damage which leads to a number of symptoms including difficulty walking or moving limbs, loss of balance, as well as bowel and bladder problems. For some these symptoms are on-going basis and progressively debilitating, while for others, like me, there are attacks that may last for weeks or even months at a time. If those attacks are severe, I am effectively immobilized and unable to care for myself.

There is no cure for MS, so the best that I can hope for is medications or therapies that minimize the severity of the attacks and slow the progression of the disease overall.

I had been successful in 25 years in business, and so I had money for the treatments available to only a few. And, being largely alone in the world because of my devotion to my business I had money to pay for care when I needed it.

I had two children, raised by my ex-wife, but I could not expect them to attend to my needs. Since my wife left, my relationship with all women was casual, which suited me. Only a handful of friends would visit me as my activities in business declined. I was left to hire strangers to attend to my most personal needs, during bouts of debilitation. And that seemed convenient.

But there was one friend who suggested an alternative, and it was an interesting one.

Kevin Duckworth was the son of an older associate of mine. He was a keen golfer and had joined his father to play with me and friends on several occasions. Kevin was a little aimless and his father had prevailed upon me to find him employment in one of the businesses I had invested in. He had not lasted.

I thought of Kevin when I was turning out my golf clubs. They were an expensive set, but it was unlikely that I would play again. He came to visit me. Of course, by way of explanation for the gift of the clubs, although it was not my habit to do so, I told him something of my illness.

“I could be you carer,” he said. “I would like to be. But I would do it only if you could tolerate my transition.”

I had no idea what he was talking about, but I liked the man, and I could see some advantage in having somebody I knew living in my house.

“Transition?”

“I am transgender,” he said. “I plan on transitioning from male to female. If I could do that while I work here with you, that would be ideal.”

Well, I had no idea. I had always thought of Kevin as being a normal man. He did not seem effeminate in any way “gay”.

“Does you father know of this?” I suppose the reason for the question was because I felt that some approval would be required, although Kevin must be almost 30.

“I have been staying with him, but I need to move out,” said Kevin. “don’t worry. I will tell him. I have to. Things will start to show soon.”

I wondered what he was talking about, so I forced myself to examine him a little more closely. His hair was longer and tied back in a style not un-masculine, and he sported the usual sparse facial hair that passes for fashion. But otherwise, nothing.

I thought that maybe as I went through some of my disabilities during severe bouts he might rethink his offer, but he nodded his way through everything and he seemed genuinely interested and thoughtful. I offered him the job and he took it.

A few days later he moved in.

I learned later that he had not told his father until the moment he walked out the door. It was not something that I approved of, and it did awkward later, but perhaps I understood why he would not want to endure a long period of angst under the same roof. I was resolved to be more accepting.

The utility of it became very clear later on. Her was somebody with the soft touch of a woman for those tender tasks, but the strength of a man for when I needed to be moved. But from the moment that Kevin arrived he asked that I call him Kate and when speaking of him to others I use she and her. Of course, I would, even though other than the clothes he did not appear that different to me.

The clothes were practical for around the house. Because of my condition I liked to keep things warm, so “she” favored shorts and tops that had collars or details around the collar that were clearly feminine, but not outrageously so. The only thing that marked Kate as feminine was the shaved legs and something in her hair – a different clip or band every day, always colorful.

When people would call upon me she would answer the door and escort them in, and some would refer to her as “The unusual young man”. I would always say: “No that’s Kate. She’s not a man. Not anymore”. Or something like that – to reaffirm her chosen gender.

Kate did not seem to be putting much effort into being beautiful. She was, if you like, the very opposite of a drag artiste. She was concentrating on being a woman rather than looking like one. I mean the beard had been plucked out and the hair made to look full and feminine, but otherwise that was not her focus. Instead, she spent a lot of time talking to me in a feminine voice, and exercising the higher notes. She worked on the way that she walked (including clpping around in heels in the kitchen), or the way she held her hands, or took a stance. It really was very interesting. I never knew how much was involved. I never realized that there was a feminine way of pouring a cup of coffee, but Kate could do it.

She would say something like: “Do you thing that what I am doing is feminine behavior?”

Sometimes I might say: “Maybe not. I can’t tell you why, but no, that seems not feminine.”

That was what she wanted. She was perfecting her presentation. It was an interesting exercise and I enjoyed being a part of it. I felt that I was helping her while she was helping me.

Of course, I was paying her, but she was just saving it up. She lived in a room in my house, she ate with me, and never wanted to go out. We would sit together and read. Sometimes there was something that we could both watch on TV, such as a major gold tournament. She would spend just a small amount of money buying some clothes on line and dressing in her room. Otherwise she was saving money towards medical procedures.

I was sure that she did not go out because she was worried about what people might think. I did say to her that she should perhaps try some makeup or something.

“If we need to go out together, I will try not to shame you,” she said.

It was some weeks before I first heard from her father who gave me a dressing down for: “aiding and abetting this awful charade”. I have to say that as Kate had proved herself such a capable carer and a pleasant companion that I responded with both barrels. I did not hear from him again, until much later.

It was my habit not to go out when I was incapacitated, but the occasion arose when I needed to, and I wanted Kate to go with me. She said that it might be a little too early in her progress, so I offered to buy for her a “makeover” at the local salon. She made a show of declining, but I could see that she was excited.

On the morning of our engagement, which was a shareholders meeting of a company I held a majority stake in, she went off to the salon wearing a simple dress. I was hopeful that when she returned, she would feel confident enough to be able to appear in public and attend to any problem with me that arose. I was totally unprepared for what returned to my home that afternoon.

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| When she walked into the room, I could barely believe what I saw. I understand that there are TV shows that display fabulous makeovers, but this was not like that. What had been done was very subtle, but the effect was remarkable. Her hair had been colored and styled and put up at the back. Her eyebrows had been shaped and there was just a little eye makeup and lipstick. She looked sensational. A woman, without a shadow of a doubt.  “What do you think?” she asked.  “I think that you look fantastic,” I said. “Have you eaten yet? The meeting starts at 3:00pm so I would like to take you to lunch. Maybe we should stop off somewhere to buy you something to wear. Something a little more professional looking. |  |

She insisted that she had money, but I waved that away. She was my carer at home. If I was asking her to attend to my needs outside the house, and I expected a standard of presentation, I should pay for that. As for lunch, who would not want to take this beautiful woman to lunch?

It had the effect that I hoped for her, it would have. She was happy with what she saw in the mirror, perhaps for the first time ever, in her life. It allowed her to lift her head high.

We went to a boutique that my ex-wife had spent a fortune in, so I was remembered there. I told them that my assistant would need something suitable to wear to a business meeting. It should be powerful but feminine.

“She has excellent legs,” the saleslady said. “We should show those off with the right hemline, good stockings and elegant shoes.”

And that was how she was dressed when we had lunch at a very nice restaurant in the city. I felt so proud to be sitting with her. I had frequented the place often, when I was working in the city. It was in the heart of the financial area and was close the shareholders’ meeting venue. It was the kind of attended by financiers so women were in the minority at lunch. I could see men at other tables look at her and stare, and whisper to one another. Probably something like: “Look at that lovely young woman having lunch with the guy in the wheelchair – assistant, mistress or daughter?”

At the shareholders meeting she was definitely my assistant. I needed to be there because there was going to be a attempt to change the board. I was out to stop that, but my presence allowed for some negotiation. I was prepared to let one of the interlopers join the board of the corporation. In my experience the best way to show people that everything is well, is to allow one of them inside. But which one. I asked Kate for her opinion.

“I think Joel,” she said. “I think that they trust him, and I think he will give them the facts, if that’s what you want.”

It was. Had her call Joel over. I watched her walk over to him. She looked spectacular from behind. She whispered in his ear and he came over, following her and enjoying the same view I just had.

“I support you,” I told him. ‘But on the basis that whatever you report to your colleagues you report to me as well. Kate will give you my number.”

I didn’t know it at the time, but she gave him her number as well. Only because he asked for it.

Kate had chosen well. Joel was honest and direct, which is more than be said for the others in the discontented group. It struck me that for a person who had only just become a woman, Kate had a woman’s intuition. It was a useful thing, and I made use of it again, more than once.

I suppose she became my assistant first, as well as my carer. It was only after that, that she became my mistress.

Mistress is the wrong word. It implies something dishonest, but also something of a sexual nature beyond my capacity, and also, at the time, beyond hers. What she did for me was to allow a man to experience the joy of sex while incapacitated. I will not do her the disservice of describing the details, save that I experienced climax beyond all my expectation, and if she did not then she had fun watching my joy. Kate was a giving person.

“I long for a vagina,” she told me. I wanted her to have one. Not because of me, but because of her.

“I cannot let you pay,” she said. But I could not let her pay. I told her that if she would accept this gift from me it would make me truly happy. And it did.

Being without her was hard. Much harder than I imagined. But when she returned it was hard to know which of us was happier. She was so full of joy she seemed to bring our home alive. It was really our home by that time.

As a reward not for my gift, but for enduring her absence with acceptance, she offered me an unveiling. She sat me on naked on my showering chair with a Kleenex in my hand while she stood in front of me in just a bathrobe. Then she let it fall.

My God. I have never seen anything so breathtaking. Her hair was longer now and fell around her broad shoulders. Her breasts were perfect with a little augmentation but not appearing at all artificial. He waist and hips were in perfect proportion, and then there was the slightest hint of pubic hair atop the most perfect female genitals I had ever seen, and then those legs that seemed to go on forever. She had something inside her. She put on a mock show of surprise about it, or was it me, or the part of me gaining height. She pulled it out from between her legs. It seemed huge to me. It was pink and plastic and had “Thank you” written on it.

I erupted. The best solo sex in the shower I had ever had, and I didn’t even lay a hand on myself.

I enjoyed every such thing she could do to me, but more than that I enjoyed what she did for me. Sometimes it was enough for me that she could just sit on my lap or curl up beside me in bed.

Mistress is the wrong word too, because it implies something transient, whereas this was more like family. Would it be too weird to call her a “daughter with benefits”? I knew that she would always be mine but not mine to have to the exclusion of the love that I could not give her.

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| So when Joel came calling upon her, I received him with some satisfaction, rather than jealousy. I will always believe that I made Kate a woman, and that when I give her away on her wedding day she will know just how much I care for her.  The End  © Maryanne Peters 2019  Kate - before and after |  |