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Leaving North Dakota

By Susan Hulbert

Olivia still couldn't believe that the reflection in the mirror was truly him. How he had changed.

He stood, frozen and dumbfounded, looking at the image before him. It was a girl with long tumbling locks of light mink blonde hair, falling from an elaborate up do which had started to fall when he removed his veil.

He looked and looked at his exquisitely made-up face, the deep dark lips and the eyes, with their long fluttering lashes, all false, but none the worse for that. His pearl and diamond earrings glittered in his hair as his head turned from side to side.

The single strand of pearls round his neck showed off his bare shoulders and reflected the pearls sewn into the bodice of his pure silk dress. It was his wedding dress, the tight bodice descending to a figure hugging sheath; a fishtail started just above his knee and trailed along the floor behind him, even though his heels were six inches high, in pure white velvet leather.

He half-turned and pulled the fishtail of his dress round, seeing again the way he used his hands, not that he had gotten so used to the long nails attached, this time in a pale oyster pearl shade. The glittering rings on his left ring finger reminded him of the ceremony he had just passed through.

He had married the man. He had repeated vows and held his hand meekly as the rings were placed on his finger. He smiled at the memory, so recent and yet so far away.

He stepped daintily across the room the where an open champagne bottle sat in an ice bucket. He poured, then sipped from a crystal flute, and waited for his husband to arrive from the crowd below in the ballroom who had seemed reluctant to allow them some time alone; time to change their clothes and to spend a few moments together before joining their friends and colleagues in the wedding celebration.

He walked back to the mirror again and silently toasted his refection. He watched the hand with the rings raise the glass. His diamond tennis bracelet slid down his arm. He took in again the dress hugging his womanly figure; such an extravagance. Several thousand dollars spent on a fabulous dress which was destined to remain unworn in his wardrobe, remembered only in a video and in a wedding album.

"Darling, I'm sorry, they wouldn't let me get away." Vern stood inside the door, his tuxedo tailored elegantly to his torso. "You look more beautiful than ever."

The dress rustled as he moved across the room and wrapped his arms round his new husband. A lingering kiss and then a shared glass followed.

He could feel Vern's hands sliding down his back and grasping his cheeks. The hands pulled him closer against the erection he could feel in Vern's tight trousers. Almost instinctively, his hand came from Vern's neck, down to his belt, where his nails failed to grasp the buckle. "You'll have to help your husband here," he said.

"You are definitely my *wife*," Vern said, unbuckling his belt and waiting for a hand to slide through the gap where his erection still strained against his clothing.

"Surely we are husband and husband?" he asked.

"The celebrant pronounced us husband and wife," Vern said, kissing his ear. "That's what you are now and forever; Mrs. Priestley."

"I guess I don't mind." He turned so that his back was to Vern. "You'll have to help me with the zipper on this dress. I don't want to damage it and I can't kneel down unless you help me out."

He heard the zipper going down and the release as the stiffness of the dress dropped from his body. He stepped away from the material on the floor, still in his heels, but now showing pure white lingerie.

His bra held full breasts in half cups which pushed them up and held them firm. They were not too big but proportionate. Vern had been insistent that he wasn't to become an exhibit or an object of ridicule among women and lust among other men; not that he wasn't the latter anyway.

He'd chosen his panties carefully and ended up having then specially made. The lace and delicate ruffles held him smooth and hid his member away but now he could release a press stud and they became open crotch. His penis sprang out, already firm for Vern to touch.

He turned so that Vern could get the full effect of his garter belt and the pure white stockings.

"You like your wife?" he asked.

"Of course I do." Vern stepped closer and pulled him close.

They kissed and Vern slowly manoeuvred him around, nuzzling his neck and making him gasp. Olivia reached for his penis, far bigger than the one in

his own panties, and knelt to lick round the tip. He could feel the tension within Vern. He allowed himself to be lifted from his knees and turned round.

Knowing what was expected, he moved to the rear of the couch in their suite. Olivia's hands supported him as he leaned forwards, exposing his rear to Vern.

"I've something special to lubricate us," Vern said softly. "You'll love the sensation."

"Come on," Olivia said. "You know what sensations I want to love. Look at me; I'm presenting like a bitch would to a dog."

Vern laughed. "That's why I married you," he said, spraying something into Olivia's rear and over his own penis.

"That's cold," Olivia complained and then paused. "It's another sensation altogether, you naughty boy."

"Why so?" Vern positioned himself at the entry and teased by rubbing around before exerting any pressure.

"It feels warm and tingling. I can't explain. It's making your cock feel... it's... I can't explain." Olivia caught the moment and pushed back, making him enter.

As usual, the sphincter muscle resisted.

"Let me do some of the work," Olivia said. "I want to take my pleasure slowly. It's not every day that I get married."

Olivia pushed back and then eased off, slowly making him go a little further, then wait. Judging the moment, Olivia pushed hard and felt him enter properly and deeply. A moan of pleasure and then whimpering sounds which he realised were coming from him as Vern started to move in harmony.

It was as if he could feel every bulge and wrinkle along the length of Vern's penis as it started to work in and out, pushing harder and harder, deep inside him. Olivia was learning very quickly how to use his sex to control this man who he had married so publicly

He could sense when it was going to pass the point of no return. He wanted so much to make Vern lose control, as if by doing so he was taking control of his man, his marriage and his future. A tiny spasm; a harbinger of what he knew was to come rippled through Olivia's secret parts.

He knew he was in control now and that Vern was going to be taken for all that he could give. A deep spasm followed and then another and then more and more. Vern was exploding and pushing all he had to give deep inside Olivia.

It was too much for him. Olivia arched his back and shook his head, feeling his long hair falling all over his shoulders as Vern continued. It was as if time stood still; Olivia held his breath, hoping to hold the moment for ever.

It wasn't to be. Vern's pulsing ebbed and Olivia could feel his erection fading and he subsided and slowly slipped out of him.

"I'm going to be a real mess." Olivia turned and kissed him deeply, tongue wrestling with tongue. "You should be ashamed, husband, making such a mess of your wife before we've even gotten to greet our guests at our very own wedding reception."

"Wasn't it worth it?" Vern grinned stupidly in a post-coital haze.

"Of course, it's *always* worth it," Olivia replied. "Now you get changed and I'll go to the bathroom. I need to do something about this strange liquid seeping from my arse. I don't want it to stain my party dress. It would look awful when we do the first dance."

Vern was still smiling when Olivia kissed him quickly and almost skipped into the bathroom.

Half an hour later, makeup repaired and hair hanging loosely over his shoulders, Olivia took Vern's

arm as they entered the ballroom to applause from their friends. As the band played, they started their first waltz as a married couple.

They turned gracefully and faced their audience. Vern bowed. Olivia curtseyed, with a special smile for Elsa as the guests applauded.

"What are you doing with my makeup?" Mother stood at the bedroom door and looked aghast at her twelve-year-old son with a face full of her makeup.

"I'm practising," Gordon said calmly. "Cousin Becky told me that it's important to learn what you're doing otherwise you're going to look stupid when you get to the age when you're expected to know what you're doing."

"That may be true for girls." Mother struggled to keep calm. "But it's different for boys. They don't use makeup."

"I think that's silly," Gordon replied calmly, studying his face in the mirror. "Boys should be able to use makeup if they want to. We've seen some on the television and they're in your magazines too."

"They're different," Mother replied. "They're what people call drag queens. They dress up like that so that they can entertain people."

"Some of them look strange. I've never seen anyone like that in the supermarket."

Gordon took a mascara tube and started to draw it across his eyelashes. "I think you need new mascara. This one doesn't do much. I think it's dried out."

"You shouldn't be doing this," Mother said softly. "If the other boys find out, they'll make life hard for you."

"They do that anyway, Gordon took a final look at his image in the mirror and turned to his mother.



"Don't worry; I always clean it off when I'm done and make sure that there's nothing left behind."

"Does that mean you've done this before?"

"Yes, lots of times. I didn't think you'd mind."

"But you never told me and I never caught you."

"Maybe I did think you'd find it a bit strange," Gordon said. "But I really like makeup. I like using it and wearing it. Sometimes I think I can make myself look prettier than Becky."

"Boys aren't supposed to look pretty; they're supposed to look handsome."

"I think I'd rather look pretty, Gordon turned back to the mirror. "Don't you think I look good?"

"That's not the point," Mother said. "You should be doing boy things. Cousin Mike got a sports scholar-ship to a good university."

"I don't want to be a football star and I'm no good at ball games anyway."

"You could do track or field athletics."

"Have you seen those guys who do field? They have muscles on their muscles and look out of balance."

Gordon looked as if he knew what he was talking about. "I don't want to look like that."

"Where did you learn to do makeup like that?" Mother looked and saw that his efforts looked more than artistic. "If I didn't know that it was you under all that, I'd think it was a real girl."

"That's the look I'm aiming for, Gordon turned back to the mirror. "I've decided that I'm not going to have my hair cut again. I want it to be really long."

"Your father isn't going to like that."

"He doesn't like much that I do," Gordon said. "And I haven't seen him for months anyway."

"Seriously, Gordon, I don't want you doing makeup like this anymore." Mother started to pack the cosmetics away. "It's not what a boy of your age should be doing."

"It's what I want to do," Gordon replied. "Didn't you realise that I've been doing this since I was about seven?"

"I never did."

"That's only because I'm good at cleaning it off and showering," Gordon replied. "And anyway, I love doing this. I'm not going to stop unless you force me."

"Your father would force you."

"How could he?" Gordon replied. "I don't think you like him any more than I do and we don't see much of him anyway. I thought you'd be happy if I could really upset him."

"You're far too young to think things like that. He is your father."

"But he's abandoned us, Gordon spoke the truth. "He only calls when he thinks it's a good idea. He scowls at you and then takes me to McDonald's where we don't do that father and son bonding thing. He drives me home, gives me a twenty and then dumps me at the door."

"I agree it's not a close relationship."

"It's not any relationship. If it wasn't for the twenty, I'd say I didn't want to go with him."

Mother couldn't think of a good reply. She smiled and ruffled Gordon's hair.

"Hey, you won't be doing that when I get it styled properly," he said.

It was a sleepy sort of town in mid-state. People knew their neighbours and families remained on their properties for generations. Mother was lucky. Her grandfather had prospered and invested well in land and in urban spaces.

As time went on, the family had moved into town and rented out their land in the country. The urban land was developed and re-developed over time so that by the year Gordon came along, they had a steady income from rents and a share of the crops grown on their land.

Mother was an only child of ageing parents who never expected her to come along. She was head-strong and sure of herself from an early age. She had married young and thought her husband would be there forever, but it wasn't to be.

His roving eye and erratic ways made her leave when Gordon was quite small. He had no memory of them being a family together and little of his grandparents who died when he was quite small. He never knew his father's family who'd cut off Mother when they divorced.

As he grew up, Mother managed the family interests, making cautious investments in land and property, never speculating or wasting an opportunity. She didn't want to be super rich but she provided comfort and security as Gordon seemed to thrive.

He was never one of those children that everyone knows as a leader or a troublemaker. He plodded through his classes, always in the middle achievers. His image was that of a quiet and thoughtful boy, with a mature head on his shoulders.

He was good at keeping his secrets though.

"Can we go into the kitchen and talk?" Mother said when they were visiting with her sister and family.

"What have I done?" Becky asked quickly, expecting something unpleasant was going to be discussed.

"Don't worry; you're not in any trouble, I just didn't want anyone to overhear us."

"That sounds really mysterious, Becky led the way into the kitchen. "You've got me intrigued."

Mother followed her, watching as she walked. She was turning from a little girl into a young woman with that grace and charm that few attain. Becky was eighteen, going on twenty-eight in her maturity and attitudes.

"I wanted to talk to you about Gordon," Mother began.

"Is this about makeup?" Becky interrupted. "You look so serious that it can't be about anything else."

"I caught him using my makeup," Mother said. "He mentioned you and I wondered what you'd said or done with him."

"I've not really done anything," Becky said. "He likes to watch me do my makeup when he's visiting. He asks me to show him how I do things and I show him."

"Is that all?"

"He asks if he can try it, and I let him, Becky blushed. "I didn't think I was doing anything wrong. He seems to like it so much and he's got a real talent."

"You didn't lead him on?"

"I didn't do anything. He watched and then asked me," Becky replied. "He's really good. I shouldn't tell you this, but I've asked him to do my makeup a couple of times when you've been here. He does it well and now he's teaching me things that I'd never have thought of myself."

"Oh Becky, I'm afraid for him," Mother said. "If this gets out, he'll never hear the end of it."

"Don't worry. I've given him all the warnings," Becky said.

"Boys can be so cruel though."

"I think he's wise enough to keep safe," Becky said. "Think of it another way though; he could be the most popular guy in the class if he can make the girls look better than they ever dreamed."

"He's too young."

"Now he's too young, but he's got a natural talent," Becky replied. "In a few years, it could all be different."

"I knew you were still stealing in here to use my makeup." Mother stood angrily in the bedroom door.

"I never tried to keep it a secret," Gordon replied. "I'm sixteen now and I think I'm old enough to hide my tracks if I wanted to. I'm fed up of doing it in secret."

"Do you mean that you deliberately set out for me to catch you today?" His mother's voice rose with astonishment.

"Yes, I think it's time we talked," Gordon replied. "I'm not going to give up and I'd like you to help me."

"You'd like me to *help* you?" Mother sounded even more astonished.

"Yes, please," he pleaded. "I think I've learned about all that I can with the things you have. Some of your choices are stuck in the past and that's okay for someone of your age."

"Gee, thanks," Mother said. "You make it sound like I'm ancient."

"I didn't mean it that way. I need my own makeup to do it better. We don't have the same colouring and my face is a different shape from yours."

"You have been thinking," Mother said.

"I've been reading and researching too. I think I need to learn about nails and eyelashes," Gordon said in a cool and composed manner. "And it's about time that I learned to walk in heels and dresses too."

"Where did you get that idea?"

"It's simply what I need to do."

"Your father's going to hate you for this," Mother said.

"But you're not, Gordon knew the answer. "I've only seen him twice this year."

"So you only got forty dollars?" Mother asked.

"Thirty; the last time was a ten, Gordon pulled a face. "He can't even remember my birthday."

"Why are you doing this, Gordon?" Mother asked.

"I like it," he answered. "I guess I should have been born a girl. All the things that they can wear from makeup to heels and pretty dresses are the things I wish I could wear."

"That could get you into a lot of trouble round here."

"Don't worry; I'm not going to do anything silly and get hurt," Gordon replied. "I'm not going to embarrass you either, so don't worry."

"I guess if that's the way you feel..." Mother left the sentence unfinished.

"I think girls have it better. Think of the things they don't have to do," Gordon said. "No football and not having to be macho; no fighting and getting covered in grease under an old car."

"Does that mean you want to be a girl?" Mother felt a shiver up and down her spine as she waited for an answer.

"I don't think so," Gordon replied. "I've read about that kind of thing on the internet. I don't think I'm attracted to boys though. I haven't got a crush on the star football player. I like girls too much; their perfume and their makeup."

"Is that all?"

"No, I like hanging around with the girls; obviously you've guessed that, Gordon sighed. "I guess I'm a bit of a misfit here."

"Graduation will be coming up soon and you'll get your high school diploma." Mother said. "What do you think you'll do after?"

"I've no idea, Gordon looked thoughtful. "My electives were performing arts and computer science, although I only took that to get at the film editing suite."

"What do you learn in performing arts?"

"It's about drama and presentation really. There's music and singing and some dance, mainly modern and tap. I'm quite good at those."

"There's not much call for those skills in North Dakota."

"I know I'll have to move away. I can't see myself in the oil or shale industry. I'm not going mining and the thought of suiting on a tractor or a harvester all day fills me with dread."

"There are jobs with the county or the state," Mother stated the obvious.

"I think getting out of North Dakota may be a better idea," Gordon replied. "But this is the fiftieth most-visited state in the union, so it must have something going for it."

"It's got good people here," Mother said. "Our neighbours and friends are worth everything."

"I'm not saying that the people aren't nice," Gordon replied. "But you freeze in winter, roast in summer, and don't even think about all those insects biting you whenever you're outside."

"You always had sensitive skin." Mother put her arm round his shoulder. "Seriously; have you thought about what you want to do?"

"I think I'm going to be a female impersonator. I want to act and maybe sing. People make a living doing that and I'd like to try."

"What, like those men on 'Drag Race'?" Mother looked suitably shocked, as if she hadn't seen it coming.

"No, they're drag queens. They don't look real. I want to impersonate a real woman, not some caricature."

"I don't think there's much demand for that sort of thing here."

"I know I'll have to move away, but I wouldn't mind that too much."

"Please don't try it here," Mother said. "I'd hate for you to risk getting hurt."

"Don't worry; I know my place," Gordon said. "But I do need to work on my skills before I move anywhere."

"You've another few months before graduation."

"I know and that's why I need you to help me," Gordon replied. "I didn't tell you before but I have a job to start, basically shelf-stacking for minimum wage, but it's going to fund me for a beginning."

"I got a letter from the principal's office," Mother said as Gordon came to the dinner table. "It's about your career guidance and counselling meeting."

"It didn't offer me anything."

"That's more or less what I gathered from the letter. You didn't engage in any of the suggestions from the counsellor." "I could hardly tell him that I was going to dress up as a girl and make a living like that."

"Maybe not, but you could have pretended to have some interest in... well, anything."

"If I had, they would have wanted to send me to work experience in oil or construction," Gordon replied. "I think I'd rather stay with shelf stacking until I've saved enough for a stake to get away."

"Are you so determined?"

"Yes I am, Mother, Gordon took her hand and looked into her eyes. "Don't get this wrong, I'm not gay but I want to do this. It's fascinated me ever since I can remember. I can't explain why but I've got to try."

"I'm going to miss you."

"I know and I'm sorry, but you can imagine what would happen if I did anything like that here, Gordon looked really serious. "I'm eighteen now, it's time to do something with my life."

"You could try it here."

"That would be stupid," Gordon replied. "North Dakota has the highest percentage of churchgoing people of all the states. They'd be calling the devil on me, or worse."

"I guess you're right, but please promise me that you'll be careful."

"I will, Mom."

"So what is it that you need me to help you with?" Becky asked as Gordon hauled a huge rucksack into her room.

"Your mom's away for the weekend, right?" He asked nervously.