

# ***Pretty & Sulky***

*A short story by Henry Cavanaugh*

## ***The Observer***

Some might consider going to a gym full of hunks and studs to be a blessing, particularly for those with a wandering eye, but at times I found it somewhat bothersome.

Not only did I find myself subconsciously measuring myself up to them and feeling disappointed with the results but I also grew irritated at how distracted I could get while checking them out, causing me to run long on my rest periods or falter out on reps I otherwise would have been able to hit.



Of course, another frequent distraction were my own thoughts about how it would feel to possess any one of those muscular bodies or hypnotize the hunks to be under my control.

As such, I was trying to keep to myself during my workout that particular day. After several days of hitting personal bests and pushing my limits, I was content to just have a 'fun' workout where I didn't necessarily stick to one muscle group and allowed myself to try my hand at whatever took my fancy. It was during my sets of pull-ups that I first encountered the two that I would quickly come to nickname 'Pretty' and 'Sulky'.

It was 'Pretty' that approached me first and he more than lived up to the nickname I assigned him. With matching brown hair and brown eyes as well as a square jaw and handsome features, he was exactly the type to cause a slight twisting in my gut. As with almost every other guy at the gym who had previously caught my eye, whether I was longing his body for myself or for him as a sexual partner I still hadn't been able to identify but I knew immediately that I would agree to anything he could ask. Sure enough, he asked to share the space to complete his own pull-up reps and with limited equipment in the gym and an eagerness to introduce myself, I agreed.

Unfortunately before the opportunity to exchange pleasantries with 'Pretty' arose, we were joined by 'Sulky' who promptly took my place and engaged the other in conversation. It was clear that the two knew each other well from the casualness of their body language and conversation and, not wanting to intrude, I took a step back to allow them to talk without feeling as if they were being intruded upon. The distance also allowed me to get a better look at the new arrival and while he was clearly just as well-groomed and as muscular as 'Pretty', the surly expression on his face and the glare

he had levelled in my direction throughout his approach led to his somewhat less complimentary nickname in my mind.

With it soon becoming clear that in order to finish up my pull-up sets I would have to move elsewhere in the gym, I excused myself and allowed the two friends to talk. Despite this, I felt a slight irritation towards 'Sulky' and his unwelcoming expression. I did my best to ignore the two and proceed with my workout in peace but the two always seemed to find their way into my direct vision and I couldn't help but monitor them, trying to assess the situation between the two. There was no doubt that both young men were straight and merely friends as opposed to anything more, but I could sense a hostility from 'Sulky' that radiated from him like a beacon, impossible to miss.

Through my initially unwilling observations I noticed that while 'Pretty' was pushing himself hard on every exercise and working up quite the sweat, 'Sulky' did nothing other than follow him around and look sullen. He hadn't tried a single exercise since arriving at the gym and yet his muscular shape told me he was no stranger to working out. He appeared to grow more irate every time they moved to a new station, soon beginning to neglect conversation with his friend in favor of checking his phone.

Despite my curiosity, I knew better than to pry and wasn't nearly close enough to anyone who provide me with any sort of satisfactory answer. Eventually I finished up my workout and left the gym, sparing one last glance towards the pretty brown-haired man and his moody friend. I would just have to be content imagining what had gone on between the pair prior and during their workout...

## ***Pretty***

I'm probably a bad friend for saying this but fuck it, I'm having the time of my damn life!

I've always respected my bro Johnny - he's cool and knows his way around the gym, but at times I could even get pretty jealous. His personal bests always exceeded my own and despite having relatively similar diets and exercise patterns, his body always bulked up and then leaned out faster than my own. Feeling second best on such a consistent basis had me feeling irate and when I tore a muscle in my back that would keep me out of the gym for several months I was pretty much reaching rock bottom while my best friend was only getting better and better.

Johnny was supportive of me at first, keeping me up to date on how things were progressing in the gym and what our lifting buddies were up to, but soon he began to chide me for talking about my injury too much or even excusing me of sulking. Me, a grown man, sulking! It pissed me off because clueless Johnny had no idea just how good he had it. I knew for a fact that if our roles had been reversed and he had been injured I never would have made feel like crap for complaining about back pains and missing out on opportunities. That wasn't how a best friend should act and I was rightfully angry at how casually he had slighted me, without even so much as taking a moment to consider how I might be feeling.

As such, I thought my decision to switch bodies with Johnny was perfectly justified.

It wasn't a decision I took lightly. I liked my own body, after all - loved it even - but not being able to put my back under any duress was driving me crazy. I missed the gym and all its inhabitants but most of all I missed working up a sweat and feeling like a beast. There was nothing that could replace that feeling while I attempted to rehab the injury, not video games or movies and certainly not reading or even jerking it to porn.

Eventually the need to fill what was missing from my current situation was too strong and I gave in, taking Johnny's body for myself and leaving him with my injured back and strict doctor's orders. I felt an immediate rush of energy and immediately started to get hard



in his body, not out of any sudden homosexual urges but instead because of just how *pumped* I felt with all of his strong muscles ready and willing to cooperate without any of the twinges of pain I had been experiencing in my own body.

Of course Johnny decided to play the victim once I had switched our bodies and started yelling about how I was a terrible friend and jealous of him and all of this other bullshit that didn't make sense. I'd had enough of listening to him talk as if the world revolved around him and I would always have to be second best to me.

The thing is, I didn't exactly trust him with my body either and I didn't want him causing him further damage to my back that my body wouldn't be able to recover from. It would be just like him to pull a stunt like that to punish me for some supposed crime I was committing! To keep an eye on him I decided that he'd have to accompany me to the gym and watch me work out in his body. A part of me was excited by the prospect of showing off what I had temporarily taken from him but another part was genuinely sure that it would be the best place for the other. At least then he couldn't complain that he hadn't missed any gym time!

It was obvious from the way people reacted to me in Johnny's body that they had always preferred him and the jealousy I would have felt at that revelation was instead replaced by smug satisfaction at stealing all that attention away from my best friend. I even found myself enjoying the adoring looks of the gay men, relishing in the fact their desire was solely in my direction for once. They'd never get what they really wanted but there was a lot of fun to be had in teasing them at the very least.

How did I get Johnny to come to the gym with me? Oh, it was easy. All I had to do was say that he'd never get his body back if he didn't do as I told him and the spineless idiot fell for it. There wasn't any truth to what I was saying but considering I'm hitting new personal bests in his body and my original body's back is no closer to healing, maybe staying as perfect pretty Johnny won't be too bad...

## ***Sulky***

Once we switch back, I'm done being Josh's friend. How the fuck he can justify stealing his best friend's body is beyond me - and making sure I hang around just so he can rub it in my face? That's just too far, even for him.

I'd tried my very best to support him through his back injury but the simple truth was that he could get unbearable whiny at times and I was sick of being taken for granted and even made to feel guilty because I wasn't injured. I had gone out of my way to try and make him feel included and was only ever met with a cold shoulder and look of disdain, as if I was personally responsible for his injury.

The issue with Josh had always been his ego. He'd always wanted to be the biggest guy in the room and alienated a lot of people because of it. I got asked a lot why I still put up with him and the truth was that I was too sentimental and could still remember the good times we'd had growing up together. I'd been blind to how much he changed over the years until he showed his true colors by stealing my body so he could keep on enjoying the gym while I had to suffer through his injury. To say I felt betrayed would be an understatement.

It wasn't like Josh had a bad body by any means. He was bulkier than me and was lifting some pretty impressive weights but he never seemed happy with himself and sometimes I even got the sense that he was jealous of me for outperforming him. At times I deliberately played down my achievements just because I didn't want to hurt his feelings but I guess Josh's ego was even more fragile than I had realized. He only injured his back trying to prove that he could lift just as much as I could, not that it was necessary for him to prove himself at all, at least not to me.

I wanted to prove that I could work through the pain of Josh's injury but even more than a single pull-up was enough to send pain flaring through the muscles of my back and I fought back at the tears welling in my eyes. Even worse, Josh seemed to get some smug satisfaction out of seeing me struggle in his body and it was enough to make my mood plummet further.

Watching Josh use my body to chat up the local gym babes and even taunt some of the gay guys



we both knew hung around to stare at us drove me crazy. He was being out of character for me and yet nobody seemed any the wiser - they were probably just glad that 'Josh' was keeping to himself.

Considering the real Josh didn't want me out of his sight and had even threatened to keep my body if I didn't do as he said, I had taken to following him around the gym and paying more attention to the games on my phone than what he was doing. People were commenting on how 'Josh' was being more antisocial than usual and I even heard a few muttered comments about him being an asshole but even weirder was how much those comments irritated me, as if I really was Josh. It was a troubling thought.

Unfortunately I only had so much patience and it was seriously being tested. I knew for a fact that I was eventually going to snap and end up throwing a punch at my own face if I had to endure him flexing in front of the mirror one more time. I'd probably only injure my - *Josh's* - back more but it would be worth it to wipe that smug look off my own face for even a moment.

Truthfully though I knew I'd have to keep my cool for as long as possible. As much as I didn't want to admit it, Josh had all the power in the situation and if he decided that we weren't going to be switching back to our rightful bodies... well, I didn't want to think about that. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life always feeling like second best!