

Suiting Another Man's Life

A short story by Henry Cavanaugh



Jonny hadn't been too thrilled when his ex-girlfriend remarked that he'd never make anything of himself because he had dropped out of school at sixteen and never continued his education. According to her all he cared about was his muscles and even with a good body he'd never achieve anything more than being another pair of hands in his father's building company. Jonny didn't consider himself a sensitive person - he'd been raised to believe that boys weren't supposed to show anything that could be considered weakness, after all - but the words stung. Ever since dropping out of school he had been on the hunt for something more and it had continually escaped him.

At fifteen he had been scouted by a fitness modeling company and had worked a few shoots for them although they chose to terminate his contract only a year later due to what they referred to as his "immature

attitude". Although Jonny had attempted to continue his fledgling modeling career apparently news traveled fast and he found himself facing opposition wherever he turned. Nobody wanted to hire him - nobody except his father who was all too happy to have his son join the family business. Being a builder was never what Jonny had wanted for himself though and despite his attempts to break away and start a more exciting life, he found himself entirely stuck and unable to progress in any meaningful way.

The only escape Jonny had was the gym. He was well aware of the fact that he had one of the best bodies there and at the ripe age of twenty there was no doubting that he still had a lot of time to make further improvements to his physique. That wasn't to say that he was surrounded by stick insects though - no, his gym had a reputation for being the go-to place for bodybuilders and professional athletes. The pros definitely outweighed the casuals in terms of populating the underground bunker-like gym complex and many of them had even become good friends of Jonny's. He couldn't help but envy those who

seemed to have their lives more together than him in one way or another, be it as a personal trainer, stock trader, soccer player or even a model. Being surrounded by success stories when he himself was a failure was a tough pill for Jonny to swallow and soon it led him to make a life-altering decision.

Everybody in the town knew of Castella, the middle-aged woman who had long ago declared herself to be a student of the arcane arts and had lived in a tent on the outskirts of town ever since. Jonny had only had a few passing encounters with her in the past but it was enough for him to agree with the general consensus that she was a raving lunatic as opposed to a genuine witch, even if there were a few individuals who swore down that she had been instrumental in getting them the promotion that had evaded them for years or helping couples that should have been infertile conceive a child. As doubtful as Jonny ultimately was, he knew that she was his best chance of escaping his mediocre life and truly becoming someone *great*.

Castella lived a humble lifestyle, preparing all of her own meals from plants she could scavenge from the nearby forest. Her tent had a strong smell of lavender that hit Jonny like a train as he stepped between the curtain folds that led directly into her living space. The woman was sat in the middle of a salt circle, legs crossed and eyes closed. She murmured a jaunty tune to herself, content in a world all of her own, and only paused when Jonny cleared his throat. As her eyes opened, he was met by the piercing violet glare of her irises and the thin snake-like smile that spread across her lips. "Hello, dear boy," she purred, her eyes scanning him from head to toe and smile only growing wider. Jonny was hardly surprised - he was used to receiving such a positive reaction from women.

"I'm sorry for the intrusion, ma'am," he began, his voice dripping with charm as he laid the charisma on as thick as could be. "I'm having some... struggles and I think you and your, uh... *gifts* might be able to help me out." There was every chance that Jonny was making a fool of himself but he wasn't sure there was much else he could do other than accept that he would never make anything great of his life and he was too damn stubborn to accept that as a possibility.

Castella beckoned him closer and promptly reached out to snatch his hand when he was close enough. She was cold to the touch and Jonny tensed immediately, a shiver running down his spine at the croaking chuckle that followed from the older woman. "An inferiority complex? From somebody with such aesthetics as yourself?" she inquired,

her gaze locked on his own as if she was staring right through to his innermost thoughts and fears, putting them on stark display. Jonny had never felt so exposed while being fully dressed before. Perhaps she was merely a good judge of character or a great guesser but he couldn't deny that he was at least just a little more accepting of the possibility that Castella had some ability beyond average comprehension. "How very interesting."

"I don't feel *inferior*," Jonny insisted, although his voice betrayed his attempts to hide the lie. "I just... know I can be more. I'm meant for more." He felt sure of that much at least, even if it wasn't much. "So can you do it? Can you help me?" Anxiety spread throughout him like a plague, infecting everything it touched with the vulnerability that felt so alien to him. "Please?"

"Oh dear boy, *of course* I could help you," the woman confirmed, stars twinkling in her violet eyes. "The factor you need to consider is what you're willing to pay." She traced a finger across the palm of his hands before letting go and rising to her feet. At five-five Jonny wasn't the tallest guy - something his bros in the gym had teased him about before, only to eat swift jabs to the gut in response - and he found himself surprisingly dwarfed by Castella's titan height. She looked down at him with a mischievous smile, leaving the question open for him to extract from her words.

"I have money," he announced quickly, "I-if that's what you want." He didn't make much as a builder but he had a small pile set aside for emergencies and, well this had begun to feel like one. "How much are we talking?"



The laugh that escaped Castella's lips was surprisingly delicate and pretty, a contrast to the visuals that - in Jonny's humble opinion - left much to be desired. "We aren't talking money, dear boy," she advised, "You want to rewrite your own future... that's not something a few dollar bills can buy, nor a hundred. It needs something *more* from you."

Jonny had a bad feeling he knew where this was going. An old crone who probably hadn't received action from a lover in several decades? Yeah, there was probably a particular form of payment she wanted from Jonny. She wouldn't be the first either - he was always a hit with the ladies. Much to his disgust, a fair few guys seemed to take interest too, although he had always been quick to put that homo nonsense to rest as quickly as possible lest they think they actually had a shot with him. No chance in hell.

Before he could so much as lift his shirt to give her a view of his perfectly cut six-pack abs though, she took his hand again and began to trace a pattern across his palm. As she did so black marks began to appear across the lines that her finger moved across, sinking into his skin like tattoo ink. At the first sign of something clearly supernatural Jonny tensed and attempted to pull his hand back but found himself frozen in place, invisible hands with a tight grip on his feet keeping him locked in place. "Just relax," she advised. "The magic in rune will give you precisely what you want from your future. All you have to do is find the life you want and pull it on. The rune will do all the rest."

Jonny had a thousand questions but before his lips could even formulate the first Castella returned to her circle of salt, dropped back onto her knees and began to sing to herself again. His questions went seemingly unheard as she continued to chant and soon Jonny accepted that he was being given the cold shoulder and decided to take his leave, still attempting to interpret the ambiguous guidance he had been given. How was a damn hand tattoo supposed to help him turn his life around? And what was all that nonsense about 'pulling on' a new life? Had he not seen a display of Castella's power with his own eyes Jonny would really have considered the woman to be a raving lunatic.

At a loss for what his next action was supposed to be, Jonny decided to retreat to his safe place: the gym. Indeed it was there that he stumbled across the answer to his questions, albeit in a fashion that he hadn't been anticipating. While in the locker room, changing into his usual workout gear of a tank top that would show off his broad shoulders and dense arms and pants that clung desperately to the thick muscles of his quads and calves, he found his attention caught by a two-piece suit that had been left hanging over the top of a locker door.

It was a light grey with a blue check pattern, the pants matching the suit jacket, and all made with material that was pleasant to the touch. The jacket even featured a silk inner lining and Jonny found himself amazed at the obvious cost of the garment. It was well out of his price range, that was for sure. He'd never even owned a suit before - never



needed one, truthfully - but even if he did it wouldn't be of such high quality. He couldn't help but try and imagine the man who had come into the gym wearing it. He was probably highly successful, more so than Jonny could ever be, especially if he was confident enough to leave his suit on display for anyone to steal. His bank balance was probably a mountain compared to Jonny's molehill and the young builder soon found himself feeling jealous of this man he had designed in his imagination.

Despite his logical brain insisting that it was a bad idea, Jonny slipped the suit jacket off of its hanger and around his shoulders. It was a tight fit, too slender for his broadness and the sleeves were stretched to the seams around his bulging biceps. Pulling the front across his torso was a challenge but he was able to button it up with some struggle. Wearing a suit jacket and his usual gym shorts was ridiculous though so

Jonny made the decision to switch them out for the accompanying suit pants. They were similarly tight around his thick calves - whoever the suit belonged to was a fair amount slimmer than Jonny, although given his muscular stature that was hardly surprising. They also seemed to be somewhat taller than him too, judging from how the bottom of the pants formed a small pool around his ankle.

Now dressed in another man's suit, Jonny took a moment in front of the mirror to inspect himself. It was a comical sight, the garments too tight around his muscles and too long for his limbs. It was quite the mismatched sight to say the least but the more Jonny looked at his reflection, the more natural it seemed. The lapels weren't quite pushed so far open by his pecs and the seams of the pants weren't quite at such risk of exploding. It was only when his blond hair began to darken that he realized something very *strange* was happening to him.

The palm of Jonny's hand began to flare up with warmth as his body began to adjust to fit the suit better - stretching, slimming, weakening. The sensations flood his body like nothing he had ever experienced before, sending him floundering into an ocean of changes. The strength that had once felt so natural to him was depleted, leaving him

missing a sensation he had never truly appreciated before. With every inch off of his biceps and quads he felt emptier like a glass of water having its contents poured out in slow, torturous trickles.

While Jonny had been preoccupied with the changes happening to his arms, torso and legs, his facial features had begun to shift. His strong jawline took on a weaker, rounder shape and even appeared to be uneven, one side sharper than the other. His once average nose began to dominate more of his face, adopting a Roman bridge and wider nostrils. His chocolate irises became pond water green and the thick blonde hair that adorned his head had not only begun to darken to a muddy brown but also thinned out to leave a small bald-patch at the crown of his skull. His youthful features faded away to allow the presence of lines of age and even a few blemishes from a lack of skincare.

Needless to say, Jonny wasn't enamoured with the face he saw in the mirror. It wasn't dreadful but he definitely didn't feel quite so confident in his reflection as he had when he entered the gym earlier that day.

Stripping back out of the suit faster than a cheetah chasing down its prey, Jonny was disappointed to find that not only did his body not transition back to his own five-foot-five muscle-bound form but also that the body he now occupied was lean and minimal in its definition. He even had a small pouch of a stomach that suggested he much preferred his pizza to his core workouts and ab exercises. Strangely, as he thought about it, Jonny had to admit that the thought of pizza was making him salivate a little. If he already rocking a little bit of 'skinny fat' then would it hurt to indulge just a little? He'd always been so strict on himself with his diet!

After taking a few moments to inspect the tall and pale body he now possessed, Jonny returned to the locker from which he had taken the suit and began to root around in the backpack until he discovered a wallet. A quick investigation told him everything he needed to know about the man whose body he now wore: the name Peter Emsfield and age of twenty-six came from the driver's license that he discovered and a school staff badge identified him as an English teacher. Jonny's mind boggled at the thought. He'd hated school and had always been terrible at reading. How the hell was he supposed to be an English teacher?

Stood in only the boxers that now hung loose around his skinny thighs, Jonny knew that he looked quite the sight. Nobody would expect him to be one of the most popular guys in the gym - indeed he now appeared to be one of the guys who merely blended into

the background or only ever got noticed for rather unsubtly checking the bigger guys out. The former amateur bodybuilder could only consider what is next action was when the door to the locker room burst open and his own body entered the room.

From an outsider's perspective the body of Jonathan Abernathy was absolutely beautiful. Thick with muscle, blessed with good looks and sporting a golden tan from long days of working under the hot sun, he was an absolute treat to the eyes. His muscles were strong and firm as if he'd stepped off the pages of an old greek legend about fearless warriors and his face might as well have been painted by the finest artists in history. He was simply stunning to behold and Jonny's breath was taken away as he regarded the other.

As the two men locked eyes, a cloud began to settle over Jonny's mind prompting many of his memories to end up mixed and confused. Even his own name seemed uncertain - hadn't his ID called him Peter, after all? Where had he even got the name Jonny from anyway? The confusion caused him to tense up and remain rooted to the spot his eyes wide and mouth slightly agape as he stared at the other man. Across from him the young stud sneered in disgust and spat out a crude, "Take a picture, fag. It'll last longer."

Cheeks flushing in embarrassment, Peter turned away from the other and stared down at his hands. The ink that had been on his palm had vanished entirely and as soon as he could acknowledge it his memory of the encounter with Castella and the results of her spell faded away entirely. That was the final moment of crossover from his life as Jonny Abernathy to Peter Emsfield and he was ultimately consumed by the new identity he had unwittingly chosen for himself.

Pulling his suit back on in a hurry and doing his best to ignore the other man present even as he continued to torment him for his seeming depravity - "What's the matter,



faggot? Don't go all shy on me now!" - Peter was eventually able to escape the confines of the gym locker room and make his way out into the cold evening air. He couldn't understand why he'd spent so long in the gym when he knew he had a full day of lessons to plan and homework essays to mark. As usual he'd gotten a little too caught up admiring all of the gym's hunks and now he was going to have a long night ahead of him as a result.

At the very least the humiliation he'd felt as a result of the other man's remarks would be good material for his jerk-off session later that night. He couldn't help but think that the young stud probably had a great life - so much easier than being a constantly overworked teacher who couldn't attract the attention of any guy, that was for sure! Maybe that would make another great fantasy for him to tease himself with as he drifted away for a few hours before starting another day imprisoned in the hell of a life he was forced to exist in. It was a shame there was no such thing as body swapping or



Peter would love nothing more than to get out of teaching and be that bodybuilding hunk!