Niece

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

I can look back now and see the kind of person her nephew was – more to understand than to judge.

He was not a bad person. An opportunist thief perhaps, in the way that so many good people can be tempted to cross the line. He was lazy more than anything, and selfish. Such people easily become thieves. They see it and they feel entitled. They do not think of the owner’s feelings or rights, but only themselves.

She knew that it must be him, and she said that I should secure video evidence for her. It was one of my roles, I have to admit. Driver, head of security, sometimes male host should she need me. None of these things would keep me from my writing and much of it provided me with rich material. It was an ideal job. I agreed to help.

Cash is always tempting. It is untraceable. We just had to ensure that it was seen without being displayed, and that it was concealed where he could search for it and take and be seen doing so. Call it entrapment, but we are not the law, and had no reason to stand before the courts.

I filmed the confrontation too, as she asked it of me. That too, was in a planned venue. She would extract a confession, and then a penalty. It would have to be other than money, though. He had none, and no ability to keep it. She would have something in mind, but I had no idea what it was.

“You will no longer be a guest here,” she said to him. “You have lost that privilege. If you stay then you stay as a member of staff, but for the next few months what you have taken will be deducted from your pay, so expect nothing.”

Lazy and selfish, but not stupid. I watched him squirm on the screen. I knew that while he may have wanted to abuse his aunt and leave, he knew that outside these walls he could never make it on the streets. He never to swallow hard and accept it, whatever it was.

“I am ready auntie. Anything you like.”

“It seems to me that the only position that we might have, is as a maid under Mrs. Pratt. Perhaps we can put that long hair of yours to some use”.

“You want me to work in drag, Aunty!”

“We have standards here, young man! Standards that you have ignored! This is down to you.”

“Can’t I work for Pratt, or the Gardener?”

“Mr. Pratt needs no assistance, as you well know. Nor does Miguel. Nor does the cook – whose name is Hannah, by the way – not Ham. Nor does Bede.” She turned her head as if to acknowledge me watching them from my security station.

He looked defeated, which is what she wanted. There really was no option for him. Work of what he had stolen and do so as a prisoner – bound by shame, not chain.

I never gave any thought as to what he might look like dressed as “Amelia the Maid”. It seemed that the chosen name was a taunt too – so wonderfully feminine. He trudged off to let the housekeeper Amanda Pratt work her miracle.

Amanda really did need assistance as she was the hardest working of the domestic team. As well as making sure that the house was perfect (her husband did help) she was a sought of personal attendant to her employer when she needed it. She had the skills in beauty and was always well-turned-out herself. I suppose I should not have been surprised to see the emergence of Amelia when we returned from some business engagements in the city.

I was expecting to see and dejected youth in drag, but I was surprised and slightly confused to see a pretty young woman walk forward to greet her aunt in a manner clearly drilled into her. Amanda Pratt had clearly stripped rather than shaved the body hair as some inflammation still showed, but the face was painted in concealer in a subtle way with only the eyes and lips dressed. But it was the hair that was so unnerving. It was naturally fair in a beach bum way but it now seemed soft and shiny and very full as it had been wound into a high bun on Amelia’s head held only by pins.

“Welcome home Auntie,” this pretty thing whispered, in a voice that had been so well practised in the hours we had been away that it could easily have been the voice of a woman. “This is what you want? Here I am, ready to serve.” The last few words were spoken facetiously, with the trace of the boy, hostility restrained, peeking through.

“Very presentable indeed,” she replied. “Just watch your tone. The door is only feet away.”

It was Amanda who asked me whether I could procure the hormones. It was the kind of thing I was called upon to do from time to time. Amanda said that it was needed to control his mood – perhaps ground up in his morning OJ?

I looked into it and decided that subcutaneous capsules were the best way. It would just mean stupefying the youngster every 4 weeks and following instructions on how to insert them in the armpits with direct access to the lymphatic system. The dosage was high, but the targeted slow release would ensure that the liver did not expel the substance – every bit would help to grow his breasts and subdue his masculinity.

It was such a gradual process that it is hard to pin down when things changed. From the very beginning all staff were directed to refer to the additional servant as Amelia and use the female pronouns. It seemed to rankle “her” at first, but she quickly came to understand that we would be doing as our employer asked, which is the very definition of service.

The early attempts to conspire with other employees were quickly dismissed by all of us. The fact as that her aunt was a great employer – we were well paid and well treated. In fact when it came to Amelia she very easily forgot her station and would find herself relapsing and treating us as her servants. It was something that we would not tolerate.

The fact is that when the only company you have is your coworkers alienating them is never a good idea, especially when you are gregarious as Amelia was, just as the boy had been.

I am no psychologist, but it seems to me that the boy had always hungered for attention and approval, and young men seem to crave that from their associates – who may not always be their friends. Now in her girly condition, Amelia could only seek what she needed from her colleagues and her aunt, and we all wanted the same thing from her – contribution.

Work such as ours even in a large home, need not be demanding. Amanda and Amelia could easy keep the place clean and tidy, Miguel could look after the grounds, and Hannah the kitchen, and Connor Pratt and myself could help out as could to keep ourselves occupied. We came into help when there was to be a function at the house, and when the next of those came up Amelia was told that she needed to adapt too.

“You will have to help out serving guests,” Amanda told her. “You and I will have matching attire. It will be a chance for you to put those little breasts of yours on display.”

Amelia had been complaining about them bitterly, believing that the underwear she had to wear was responsible. It seems hard to believe that she could not have been aware of the chemical changes going on within her body. Perhaps she was and chose to ignore it.

“Tell me what I need to do,” said Amelia. “I have to say that I am quite excited at the thought of having others in the house after months of just us.”

“You need to adjust your voice,” Amanda scolded. “You sound like a man. You wouldn’t want people to think you were a man, would you? You would spend too much time explaining yourself. Is that what you want.”

“No,” said Amelia, sheepishly. She took immediate steps to practice her girl voice.

I could also assist in service, but my primary duty being in charge of security as well as vehicles, was to remain close to the hostess. The man in charge of the function would be Connor Pratt as butler and Head of Staff.

Amanda and Amelia were sent down to the village to get their hair styled. I drove them and also sourced some special decorations. When I saw Amelia step out of the salon I think that may have been the point that I understood things were different. She could hardly conceal her exhilaration.

“What do you think, Bede?” she gushed. “Do you think that I am pretty with my hair like this?”

I was intending to agree and smile and look away, but I have to admit that I was transfixed. There was no sign of the boy that I had always felt still lingered underneath. He was gone. Amelia had arrived, sitting in the back seat primping herself in the vanity mirror.

“Stop it girl and get a grip,” said Amanda, who also looked very nice. “You are not Cinderella you are here to pass around canapes with me while Bede and Mr. Pratt serve drinks.”

It seemed that she really did not care what she was doing just so long as she was looking good doing it. Please don’t think ill of me for calling that a feminine trait.

The fact is that she won my heart that night, and I wonder if she did not win her aunt’s heart to, but in a different way. She worked hard and she engaged with people naturally in carrying out her work. She is wasted in domestic work and really belongs in hospitality.

But as I pointed out to her, that kind of work can have its own rewards, but it is hard. The hours can be long because they are dictated by the customer. If they are partying, then you are catering – it is that simple.

The fact is that Amelia has learned about hard work. She is still learning but she has made the breakthrough in understanding that it can feel good, especially when service is recognized and praised. Attention and approval for a job well done is the finest compliment, and far exceeds in value the nod of a fellow wastrel for an act of lazy dishonesty.

She has started talking with me about moving on and perhaps becoming our own Mr. and Mrs. Pratt in some household worth more money and with more parties.

She seems to have completely forgotten that there might be just one small hidden impediment to her future as a dazzling hostess and efficient housekeeper, and that lies in her panties. But then again, I have basically forgotten about that too.

The End

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*Erin’s Seed: A rich old woman is convinced her nephew is stealing from her and catches him in the act with video evidence … she will destroy the evidence if he will do whatever she says for a year, he reluctantly agrees and she proceeds to feminize him, which he comes to enjoy though at the same time hating the whole thing. But wow, he sure gets treated a lot better when he is an industrious pretty young woman than when he was a lazy thieving slacker boy*

A person posing for a picture

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