Trading Place

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Stock and commodity trading is a tough business. People say the best traders are the macho types. Men. Men like I was.

It is true that we were an efficient and effective team. We worked hard and handled some big trades and when the bell went, we could drink hard too. It was in one of those sessions, maybe after a few too many, that our head of trading told us the bad news.

“In the old days this was a boy’s club, but now we live in different times – affirmative action – it is now the law in this state. The fact is that we need to have women into the deal room. I am sorry guys, but we are going to have to make room for women in here … unless one of you is prepared to wear a dress to work.”

Everybody laughed, including me. But it was a serious issue. There were only so many seats on the trading floor, only so many terminals.

The mood changed as we started to consider who would have to go. All too young for early retirement, and all too hungry to quit. So LIFO? – that is, last in first out. That meant me.

To that I said: “I might be prepared to wear a dress rather than be tossed off.”

I was serious, or perhaps desperate, but that word applied to most of us. We did not want to break up the team, but more importantly, we did not want to break up the culture. Having a woman hanging around would be like letting the enemy into our camp. It just seemed wrong, even if we never even tried to explain why.

I said that I might be prepared, so I had conditions. No more cutting the junior out of the big deals going. And a girl has to dress right, and have her hair done at least once a week, and be treated right. That was my bottom line. I was the newbie, the junior, and if I was doing this I wanted to be recognized.

Successful traders build their own fund and then work it. If I was going to do this, then I was putting in my capital for the team. It seemed that they all recognized it. Some of them put it to management on my behalf and they were open to it.

“A woman or a transwoman. I don’t think it matters. Just diversity.” Nobody wanted real change. The only thing that needed to change was me.

It was never intended to be a long term thing - that it what we thought – but how we could have thought that, I don’t know. It was just putting things off.

One thing I was sure f was that I did not want to be a transwoman. Sure, if I was outed I could live with it, but it seemed to me that I needed to pass as a woman and not be called out as a freak. Luckily, I had a girlfriend who could help, I thought.

“I just need to pass,” I told her. “It’s your business. You are in hairdressing and beauty. You know all the tricks.”

Out of nothing she got really pissed. She said: “Tricks! There are no tricks! Beauty comes from within. If you want my help with this crazy idea then I will make a woman out of you, starting by scrubbing out the man in you. So lose that attitude. You have to start from the bottom and work your way up. You are right, beauty is my business and I am good at it. I will not do this by halves.”

She was not lying. The ground up meant starting below the skin – right at the root of every hair on my body. Except my scalp of course. She said it had to be my hair. That meant a little surgery to pull my scalp forward, and some drugs to stop further hair loss, and extensions that I would need to care for as my own hair.

“How long are you going to be doing this for?” she asked. “For a year it is worth investing in breast implants.”

“But how will I be able to take a day off with a pair of tits on my chest?”

“There will be no days off. You are taking a woman’s job. Only a woman can do that. This is not a costume – this is a way of life. Your employer needs a woman on the staff – if that is you, then you are a woman until a woman takes your place.”

I thought that she might have some fun with it, but she was serious. She said that all the guys at my office were the worst kind of males, and – “Perhaps you might find that out when you are the only woman.” She said that she did not like doing it, but she would and she would do it properly.

The guys on the floor were ready to chip in some cash to make the changes I was ready to accept. The first stop was the trichologist surgeon who did the work in just an hour with me just sedated and under local anaesthetic. He also suggested some drugs to stop further hair loss and maintain this hairline. He did say that the drug might interfere with sexual function as a side effect, but lots of guys use it and if you manage intake and use Viagra, it should not be a problem.

I did not tell my girlfriend about that, but the truth is I was a little concerned about potential hair loss so I took the guys advice. Even before the hairline stitches came out she got busy with extensions. She trimmed them to just below shoulder length as the right length for a professional woman.

“But you will need to take care of your own hair and learn how to style it,” she said. “I will help you get started but without a childhood with girly hair you have a lot to learn, and you need to learn it fast. You should be able to pin it up and let it down by yourself”.

It was all new to me, but I thought my hair did look good. I had always admired good looking women with long beautiful hair – women like her. I was ready to learn how to look like a young, professional woman.

Then I was lined up for the breast implants, and I was told that female hormones should be used to achieve the extra tissue I needed to make them appear natural. I started to get worried. I started to talk to my girlfriend about just using falsies.

“I am helping to make you a woman to fill a woman’s job,” she said. “A woman can’t just slip her boobs out when she wants to go for a run. You need to accept that this is how it is going to be.”

She was right. From the date of that I was discharged after surgery, everything changed. While I suffered the discomfort of the implants stretching my flesh I was fully aware of them, but more importantly, even while they were not large, they could not be hidden. I could no longer walk a gender neutral path. I needed to go full on female, and that was what I did.

I had been practicing my presentation with my girlfriend acting as my deportment coach and dancing master. She had been pushing me with all her talk of professionalism and being true to my adopted gender. But she had carefully chosen a look that she thought would make it clear that I was not a man anymore. It was an outfit that showed off my new cleavage, my freshly shaved legs, and my body shaped by “foundation garments” paired with my long hair in a French roll and my makeup understated but perfect.

I gave her a little smile and she wished me well – told me to “go out there and bowl ‘em over.”

Looking back, I remember that I saw a trace of a tear in her eye. It was like she could see into the future and see that this meant that we would not be together for much longer. It was like she could see that I was just too pretty to ever go back, even on that first day.

Then I walked onto the trading floor and I did bowl them over. It was not just that I looked good, but I acted the part so well some of them found themselves questioning their own sexuality. And the funny thing was that the more I acted like a woman and saw them react as if I was one, the more I liked it. It made me understand why some women act the way they do – it is the power of female sexuality.

In my case it was based on appearing to be attractive and sexy, yet professional and slightly haughty, so as to be unattainable. You can add to that the fact that I knew these guys and the way that they were thinking. It seemed like the fact that there was something that did not belong heavily strapped into my panties was not even relevant to them. I was sex on a stick – or two legs to be exact.

That was just the first day, and maybe a day or two after that, but in the weeks that followed I understood what the diversity drive was all about. My colleagues started to treat me like a girl, rather than a woman. They started to leer at me and whisper suggestively behind my back in a way that they knew might offend or annoy me, and then would laugh it off and tease me for being “overly sensitive as women are”.

It may have been that, it may have been the hormones or the fact that my girlfriend had just walked out, that saw me sitting in the ladies’ toilets crying one afternoon.

I suppose that was when I decided that it was a them and us situation. I was the only woman female trader on the floor, and I was there by agreement, and they were not honoring that agreement. I was not being cut into the deals going down and I needed to be. I went on the offensive.

I had done all of this to take a step up, but instead it seemed to me that I had taken a step down. I was no longer one of the boys, but I didn’t even feel that I could be, and maybe in didn’t even want to be. It was all very confusing.

“If somebody else wants to wear the skirt and heels, if somebody else wants the breast implants and the Brazilian wax, then let me know, but if you don’t then you had better include me in the deals going down!” I said it firmly, but never dropping my femininity. It seemed like that was now my strength.

I gained more strength from learning that key lesson of my adopted gender – if you are the only woman among men, then you have to be better than them, and you have to love your difference.

With that attitude it was only matter of time before I was the best, and I still am. That plus the fact that I won over to the firm a certain young billionaire who is ready to back some serious plays, but only if he receives a whisper in the ear from me, perhaps with a little tongue as well.

Stock and commodity trading might well be a man’s business, but there are some things a man cannot do. I don’t want it to be said that I was so driven and ruthless that I was prepared to change my sexuality to secure favors. I see it more as discovering my inner woman and preferring her to all those guys on the trading floor. It turns out that my money man is good in bed, and now as a complete woman, so am I.

The End

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