Fishier

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Trip 1

They met in a fishing tackle shop. They started talked about lures and rigs, and the right line for the fish they were looking for. Conor enjoyed the lively conversation of the younger man – and he had plenty of fishing tales that Fabian wanted to hear more of. And Conor had a boat and Fabian did not.

“Come out on my boat on Sunday if you like,” said Conor. Fabian was more than keen, and grateful too. Arrangements were made, and Fabian was welcomed aboard “Concorde” only a few days later.

It was only after they were well at sea that Conor noticed Fabian legs were shaved smooth. When they first met at the store Fabian was in long pants, but even in these longer shorts Conor found himself thinking that those legs would look good on any woman. They would be at sea alone for hours so he felt that he may be able to and perhaps should ask.

“It looks like you shave your legs,” Conor said to Fabian. It was meant to be a matter of fact statement, but the moment that the words were out he felt awkward.

“I should explain that I moonlight on the stage 3 nights a week,” said Fabian. That might have been enough, but he felt compelled to continue: “I actually do drag.”

“Interesting,” said Conor, looking at the face of his new companion for clues, but with dark glasses on the young man betrayed nothing.

“You what drag is, right?” said Fabian. “It is just a performance”.

“We are going to have a good day fishing together,” Conor predicted. “It does not matter to me at all, and you don’t have to answer this question, but does that mean you are gay?”

“To be honest I sometimes think that gay men do not make the best drag artistes,” said Fabian, settling into the other chair on the flying bridge. “If you don’t love women then you risk degrading them in you act. Who would want to do that?”

It sounded to Conor that Fabian was not gay, although he had not answered the question directly. Conor shrugged internally. He asked: “How did you get into it?”

“Actually, my mother was a showgirl and a singer. She never really made it. But she had all the outfits and knew how to present herself. She made me laugh by bursting into song around the house – dancing with the vacuum cleaner. A fantastic woman, my mother. I just channel her when I am on stage. It is almost an act of love … certainly respect. She died a few years ago. I just wanted to her to live on a bit, if you can understand that.”

The cruised on a bit further before Conor asked: “Would you mind if I came to see you?”

“Not at all, but for now we should get some hooks and traces lined up. We are out her to catch fish after all.”

Trip 2

He had to smile when he saw Fabian walking down the jetty. His short pants were very short, showing off the full length of legs that he has seen at the drag show, but this time with flat sandals just a little too ornate to be worn by a man. The shirt was a floral pattern that a man might wear, but it was knotted at the navel. And his hair was gelled up on top and he was carrying a basket with a gingham cloth on top..

“Well, you told me to express myself?” Fabian struck a pose before stepping aboard.

“I told you that you should be comfortable,” Conor laughed. “That’s important when you are fishing. It should be relaxing. Like I said last trip, we are on our own out there, so don’t be afraid to be the real you. Is this the real you?”

“Not quite,” said Fabian. “And I have brought lunch as promised.”

“We will get underway then.”

A few days before Conor had attended what might have been his first drag show. He wanted to see what his new fishing companion did for his second job. He wondered when she would appear. There seemed to be three principal performers who had a mixture of comedy and slapstick, and there were some dancers who appeared to be women. But there was no sign of Fabian on stage anywhere.

He had checked by text and he said that he would be on stage, but where was he.

It was not until one of the women sat down at his table during a break that he got the shock of his life.

“Are you enjoying the show?” she said.

“Yes, it’s got some real style … great costumes and … Fabian?”

“Don’t tell me you didn’t spot me!” Fabian said. “I don’t know whether to be mad at you … or flattered.”

“Be flattered,” he said. “Honestly, you look fantastic. I was looking for a guy I drag, but you are one of the girls.”

“We’re all guys in the chorus line – it-s an all-male revue. But we dress down so the stars of the show can go way over the top.”

As Fabian walked away from his table Conor realized that the person he had only just come to know was not really a man at all, but quite what he was he did not know then.

He turned into the swell and a wave bucked the bow of the boat.

“I hope that you won’t be upset with me but I contacted your employer yesterday,” he said.

“At the drag show?” asked Fabian, holding on as the boat rode this patch of heavy sea.

“No. Your main job. It turns out that the firm substantially owned by my investment business. I told him that I was impressed by you and that I thought that as you do not interact with the public you should be able to go to work as you like.”

“I am not going to be angry, but you really shouldn’t have done that,” scolded Fabian. “I appreciate that you are trying to help, but that cannot look good for me.”

“No, I mean it,” said Conor. “In all of the businesses that depend on talent the most important thing is that the talent has a comfortable working environment. You should wear what you like at work – not just nights and weekends.

“This is not really fishing clothes,” said Fabian, tugging his shirt.

“It’s a statement about you,” said Conor. And then with a smile: “But I have to say it is a statement I am struggling to understand.

“Maybe I will come fully dressed next week? Would that embarrass you?”

“If I were to be embarrassed then having you walk around the marina and onto my boat in that outfit might, well, … but frankly I am secure enough not to care.”

“You a man alright,” said Fabian. “And you know what you are.”

Trip 3

“You didn’t expect me to wear a dress, did you?” Fabian had thrown off the stern line and Conor opened the throttles.

He might have been a little disappointed that those legs were not exposed, but they were still on display in tight leggings – practical for fishing. Which more that could be said for the makeup and the dangling earrings and the hairdo, which seemed to make Fabian’s hair look much thicker. But the big difference was the top. It was tight and with a large keyhole in the front displaying a cleavage that Conor knew was false but was still incredibly sexy.

“The hem of a dress will be the least of your worries when you have frontal accessories like those,” he grinned. “Not that I am disapproving.”

“Well, I am happy to earn your approval, but this is not for you,” said Fabian. I am stepping out into the daylight as Felicia. It is for me.”

“So, on this trip I should call you Felicia?”

“It should be easy for you to draw the distinction,” said Fabian wryly. “Fabian does not have tits.”

“Really? Not even little ones?”

“Alright, so I have played around with hormones,” Fabian admitted. “I am not on them now.”

“Why not?”

“Because I enjoy fishing too much,” Fabian grinned. “Life as a guy is not so bad.”

“You don’t look like a guy to me. You look more Felicia than Fabian.”

“I feel more Felicia.” There was a moment of introspection. “Thank you for talking to my boss. But the truth is that work was always my excuse for not going further. You have removed a barrier that I now wonder was ever there in the first place.”

“Then move forward.”

“This is just a game … isn’t it?”

“You came all the way from you place down the marina dressed as a woman, in broad daylight … a broad in the daylight. Did anyone stare and say: ‘look at the guy dressed as a woman’? I don’t think so.”

“I am still not sure.”

“I am not pushing you. This is your journey. I am just a spectator.” But it occurred to Conor that he was more than that. He was a very interested spectator. That top was sexy, and as Fabian took a set he noticed that the crotch area seemed devoid of a bulge beyond what you might expect of a ripe woman. “But a dress would have been nice,” he said with a smile.

“Not for fishing,” said Fabian. “If you want to see me in a dress you will have to take me out to dinner.”

“I don’t normally take my fishing pals out to dinner but I will propose you this: If you catch a bigger fish that me I will take you out to dinner, in a dress.”

For the first time in his life, he found himself hoping that the day would be less successful.

Trip 4

Felicia was wearing a dress. He saw her walking down the floating wharf in her wedge heeled sandals. It was not like the cocktail dress she had worn that night. That was special. This was a simple sundress.

He reached out a hand to help her aboard. It was the first time that he had done it. She smiled at him approvingly.

“This is completely impractical for fishing,” she said in that wonderful feminine voice he had been entranced by all that night. “But I have a one-piece swimsuit on underneath, and it will be warm today.”

“Can I dare to say that I am looking forward to that,” he said suavely as she put her soft hand in his and lifted a hem with the other.

“I am not going to be baiting hooks, gaffing or filleting,” she said. “I am just letting you know. If this is the way you want your fishing companion, then this is what you are going to get.”

She did a little twirl on the deck. Her hair was long enough to carry curls tied with a band of scarf in colors to match the dress. She was beautiful, but more importantly she was she. He knew it from the moment she walked into the restaurant. Fabian was buried. Felicia was the only reality. And that is how Conor wanted it.

All this he had come to know in that moment. And when she had opened her mouth she emerged as rich and complex a character as any woman should be. And she talked and he listened, as a man should.

She had talked about her job and the slow acceptance that had already started – some pushing her away and others drawing closer. Priorities changing. The drag thing no longer important to her because it had been a release that was now not needed. But she would stay until they found a replacement.

The night had ended with him taking her home, and with a kiss.

It was an awkward moment, but it now seemed right. It was just a kiss on the cheek. It said: ‘Thank you for a wonderful evening, and by the way, I am a woman so this is how I say good night’. But there was a moment before the kiss was pecked, and for a moment after as their heads parted. He felt it and he felt it in her too. It was a trembling longing to lock lips. But it did not happen. And now they were aboard together as they were on days like this. The fish were running, and they were running throttle down towards them.

“I really enjoyed our evening together,” he said.

“So did I.” Was there a trace of sadness in her voice? Was she saying that it could never happen again?

“We should make it a standing bet. The biggest fish does not pay for dinner,” he said.

“If you catch a bigger fish it will be burger and fries. I could not afford that place you took me to.”

“I wanted you to dress up,” he said. “It is extending yourself. If this is who you are then be the best woman you can be.”

They powered on in silence for a while before she asked: “Do you want me to be a woman?”

“It is not what I want,” he said quickly. “It is what you want. I said on our first trip together that I don’t want either of us to spend a fishing trip pretending to be somebody we are not. We are on the ocean alone out here. Be who you are.”

“Who are you?” she asked.

“I am exactly what I appear to be,” he said. “I am a man who enjoys life, and the sea, and a good boat that handles the swells, and an engine in it that makes me feel powerful, and a … a companion who makes the trip better.”

She reached over and placed a hand on his hairy arm. He could see that the nails were manicured, and the nails painted. It was not a hand that would be scaling fish that day. But he did not mind at all.

Trip 8

The Concorde sat on the ocean as if on a millpond. The sea was like glass. And yet the boat rocked gently. It was the action of those aboard. Felicia was lying across the bed in the bow cabin, with shaved legs in the air, and Conor was deep inside her.

It was where he loved to be. He loved the way her tiny growing breasts could now jiggle on her chest; the way her hair was now long enough to cascade over the pillow; how that other bit could now be called nothing more than an obscenely large clitoris, easily fixed with surgery. He sweet moans were all that was needed to trigger his final spasm and bring him to nirvana.

She shared in his delight with her own squeal. The sound of a woman brought to climax – proof of his power and competence. The bed surface was vinyl – proofed against salt water and other salty substances. It could be easily wiped. He slumped beside her so that he could share her happy sighs.

“Move in with me, so we can do this all the time,” he said.

“But what on earth would we do out here?” she teased.

“Fish,” he said. “Catch fish, like we used to.”

She kissed him, opening her mouth to accept his tongue this time – yet another penetration. This was who she was now. Felicia.

“I am told that my fishy days are just beginning,” she said.

“Oh. What do you mean?”

“I have quit the show. I am too fishy.”

“I am glad that you have quit the show,” he said. “It strikes me that it is not for you anymore. But I am not sure what that has to do with fish.”

“Drag queens are men, and when one of their number becomes too female they call her fishy. It is a reference to the smell of a vagina. I am too close to being female, so I am fishy.”

“Does that mean that you will be getting us a vagina?” he asked, with evident excitement.

“That would be the fishiest of fishy, wouldn’t it?”

“Move in with me,” he repeated, propping himself up to look down at her pretty face and stroke her hair. “Be my woman. Be as much of a woman as you want to be but just be mine. Please. Fishy or not be mine.”

She pulled his face down to hers to kiss again.

“First let put some hooks in the water,” she said. “Until I can offer you a fishy dinner out of myself, we had better catch something.

The End

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