House on Fire

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Kaif and Leo had just bought their 4x4 rock crawler “Boulder Boy” and were keen to put it into action. This machine had the power, the super-lifted independent suspension and the wheels and tires for the job. The cab was tight but well protected and the seats were good quality. It seemed to be in good order, but then neither of them knew these vehicles that well.

They had driven their jeep on tracks and trials with the local 4x4 club, but “Boulder Boy” was a step up. This was going to be pure excitement. They had seen the videos on the internet and bought a few to watch on TV. They both thought that they would soon be able to acquire all the skills on display, but they were just smart enough to realize that they needed to start small.

Out the back of Tapamola State Forest was Bird Wing Canyon, which seemed like good rough country. “Boulder Boy” was not licenced for the road, and they had no trailer, nor the jeep to tow it having sold it to buy their new thrill. But the forest was close enough to drive there from town in the early morning when there was no traffic. They would need to find a way back before dark.

They met a little traffic and turned a few heads on the way. “Boulder Boy” was certainly a strange machine to see on the road, and it had that big V8 engine to give the power needed to get the vehicle out a spot and up a steep incline. Kaif and Leo felt good in their seats. They were not “little men” anymore.

They dropped off the road at the culvert and headed up the creek bed towards the canyon. There was a small amount of water in the creek, but they knew that most of the canyon was dry. On the flat the silts had left the creek bottom flat and not much of a challenge, but as the walls closed in the big front wheels found rocks and “Boulder Boy” started to bounce.

It seemed to be nothing really that challenging. There were no boulders or sloping rock faces like on the videos – only rocks the size of medicine balls, and plenty of them. But it made for an exciting ride, and they move well up into the canyon. They never noticed when all phone coverage stopped. They keep going with gas to burn and the whole day ahead of them.

Seeing the cabin was a total surprise. They spotted it on a grassy slope above the creek bed beside its own little steam of clean water emptying into the boulders they were driving on and disappearing into the dryness. There was a trail out from the cabin over a bluff – another route should they need it. But for now they stuck to the old watercourse. The rocks were getting bigger and the going more challenging.

Kaif and Leo had little thought for their own safety but they now became concerned that the suspension might be at risk. There were a number of unsettling sounds coming from the undercarriage. It seemed like a good idea to turn around and find an area where they could get underneath. The grassy slope by the cabin seemed ideal. They turned and headed back downstream, with some care.

But it was the motor that failed even before they go there. It seemed to splutter, but it was a brief warning. The next touch on the gas pedal and all those horses under the hood died in a single moment. The canyon seemed eerily quiet.

“We have no cell phone coverage here,” said Leo, holding up his phone to the sky in search of a satellite. “What do we do now?”

“We’ll go back to that cabin,” said Kaif, but even he could not imagine that there was a means of communication to be found there. It seemed like the vehicle would need to be abandoned temporarily, and they would need to walk out.

The cabin had shutters on all the windows locked from the inside as was the front door, but there was a back door with a heavy padlock. It was a lock Kaif recognized. He said – “I can pick that,” and he did.

Inside things were not what they expected. They needed to open the windows and shutters to look around, but if they had been expecting a hunters lodge they were in for a surprise. They should have known even before the first sliver of light had appeared, from the smell. It smelt like a woman’s boudoir, and it seemed that was what it was.

There was a double bed off to one side and bathroom that appeared to be fully plumbed, and there was a kitchen and sitting area on the other side with a small table for two. But the bed was dressed for a fairy-tale princess with patterned cushions and a pink coverlet, the bathroom was full of cosmetics and the sitting area was dominated by a dressmaker’s dummy and two racks of women’s clothes.

“What is this place?” said Leo. “Like some lady who makes dresses comes all the way out here to work weekends?”

“At least it looks like a place we can spend the night,” said Kaif. “The bed looks soft. Let’s check the larder for something to eat.”

There was a cupboard with cans and dry goods – flour, sugar, coffee, dry crackers, preserves, cooking oil. There was a butane stove with a gas feed from outside and a cool box that was empty. It was the kind of place that seemed equipped for stays of one or two days only, by some person or persons who were clearing interested in clothes.

“If they do come here on the weekends then that is only the day after tomorrow,” said Kaif. “Rather than walk out maybe we should stay here for a bit and see whether anybody turns up.”

“I am okay with that,” said Leo. “Nobody is looking out for us back in town. We can stay a few days. There is plenty to eat here, and like you say, that bed looks comfortable.”

“There is hot water too,” said Kaif. “Somebody likes their comforts.”

“Maybe even slip into something comfortable,” sniggered Leo, running his dusty hand across one of the racks of clothing.”

“Hey. Why not?” said Kaif. “We are miles from anywhere. And actually, this stuff looks to be our size. But we should probably wash a little first.”

The bathroom was large for such a small house. It had a separate bath and shower, a basin and a special basin for washing hair, and a makeup table with a mirror. There was an array of products for skin and hair, and the sweet perfume of femininity was thick in the air – almost overpowering.

“Let’s go all out,” said Leo. “Wash my hair in that basin. I am seriously thinking about shaving my legs. If I am going to be trying on women’s clothes, hairy legs don’t seem right.”

“You are getting weird on me, Man,” said Kaif. “But sure – I will wash your hair like I have washed my mom’s. Choose your shampoo, Buddy. Here is one formulated for blondes.”

It seemed to Kaif that his pal giggled quietly, just like a little girl. What was clear was that Leo was looking forward to whatever was coming next. For Kaif this enthusiasm proved to be a little infectious. When Leo stepped out of the shower with shaved legs Kaif resolved that he would do the same. He then set to work on Leo’s greasy hair, and wrapped it in a towel while he took his turn in the shower.

When he came out Leo was playing with a curling wand, although it was clear that he had no idea how to use it. But it seemed that he had more volume to his hair, or was that the shampoo? And it seemed lighter in color.

“Let me try this thing on your hair, Kaif,” he said. They both giggled. They were stuck here for a while, so they had to find something to do.

“What do you think of me in the outfit?”

“Do the walk, Man … you know, like the fashion show walk.”

“Show us some leg. Hey, you actually have pretty good legs, for a guy.”

“Look at me! Who is a pretty girl? I am.”

They laughed and they laughed. Night fell and they took something from the larder and warmed it up eating it with crackers. The game continued with Kaif calling Leo “Elle” and Leo calling Kaif “Kay”.

“I suppose that we will have to share the bed, Elle,” said Kaif. “I just know how much you like girls so will you be able to keep your hands off me?”

“I do like girls, and you certainly are a pretty one,” said Leo. “But not as pretty as me.”

“There is some wonderful sexy night wear here for us. Let’s both find something nice. Let’s see whether we are girl enough to turn the other on.”

A challenge was laid down. It seemed like the one thing that had been missing all day. It had been a day of frustration and disappointment, until they had discovered the joy of cross-dressing, and then the joy of finding in each other the woman they had never seemed to be able to bed.

They paraded in their nighties with growing erections. Instead of reaching down to seek their own satisfaction, Kaif found himself reaching across to touch somebody else’s penis for the first time.

“Let Kay look after that for you,” purred a female voice from within.

Leo reached across to reciprocate, and they looked at one another, telling themselves that the person in front of them who looked like a woman, was a woman, and that she had his cock in her hand.

As they both brought one another to climax they leaned across as one and kissed.

The spray erupted and they pulled together, smearing it over the delicate fabric across their smooth bellies. They fell into bed together, sticky and warm, and awash in pleasure.

They woke in one another’s embrace. The sun was coming in. They looked at one another as if to seek guidance as to what to do next. Should they push away in mutual disgust at what they had done? It seemed that they were both paralyzed with uncertainty.

“Well that was weird,” said Leo, to break the suspense. “But pretty good.” He added it with the hint that it might be a question.

“We have made a bit of a mess,” said Kaif. Then his face broke into a smile. “Like the nighties and the sheets. We can’t leave them like this.”

“There is nowhere to wash them. Maybe just burn them?”

“Let’s get up and get some clothes on,” said Kaif.

“Not our clothes though – right?” said Leo. “I did want to try on that green dress.”

Kaif laughed. On impulse he planted a kiss on Elle’s lips. There was a moment of pause before the kiss was returned.

“It is just while we are chicks – right?” said Leo. “It was like yo said last night. We both like girls. So while the other is a girl that’s not gay or anything? Is that the way you see it?”

“Sure,” said Kaif. “We are not gay. Don’t be stupid.”

They made some breakfast and took some time getting dressed. There was underwear padded for shape, then a slip, then the dresses and the shoes and then makeup and tidying their hair – adding some nice slides or clips.

The is an old drum by the back that we can use to burn the sheets and stuff,” said Leo. It seemed made for the job, except for the fact that it was leaning against the house, a factor neither of them had considered.

They did also not inspect the bottom of the drum, and see the pitch that they thought was just the darkness of an empty barrel. They set fire to some paper and then put the fabric on the flames. It was a few minutes before the pitch started to burn, and by the time it did there would be no putting out this fire.

They did not even have time to get inside the shack to gather anything of theirs. They could only watch, backing away as the heat of the fire forced them to retreat. There was not wind so a wall of flame went straight up, but carrying black smoke from the pitch and other fuels high into the air. Then the butane tank exploded.

Elle and Kay held one another in terror. They never even noticed the arrival of a truck emblazoned “Tapamola State Forest Fire Patrol”

“What are you girls doing?” the first of them shouted as he pulled a large foam fire extinguisher out of the back of the truck. “This canyon is still part of State Forest. Cinders can fly up out of here and set the whole thing alight.”

Elle and Kay looked at one another. The horror was not the fire any more, it was their situation.

“We have the lack of wind in our favor, Jack,” the other man called out. We just have to wait this out and dampen down any cinders or coals left over.”

“You’re right, Matt,” the other said. “But as for you two, you are obviously not Roger, or Rosie as she is while out here, so what is your story?”

“You certainly are a pretty pair of young ladies,” said Matt.

“No, no, you misunderstand,” said Kaif. “We are not ladies. We are a couple of guys just up here to do some rock hopping in our vehicle over there. We are not women.”

“Neither is Rosie,” said Jack. “But that never worried us, did it Matt?”

“Hell no,” said Matt. “And let’s face it, Rosie was nothing much to look at, whereas the blonde one here … well, I am getting hard.”

“Looks like it could be your luck day, Girls,” said Jack.

The End

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