Breasted

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

You may have heard the beginning of my story. It hit the papers a few years ago – “Man Loses Bet and Gets Breast Implants”. I was not the first, as it turns out. Apparently, the other guy still has his breasts, and lives a normal life as a married man. My story is different.

Just like the other guy, I was ready to bet on anything. I moved to Las Vegas and played the Blackjack tables working the odds rather than counting the cards. But I would take the odds on almost anything. I did well, but as with any type of gambling, there is always the risk of losing more than you figured. You factor that in -you have to.

When a gambler loses too big, what does he do? Double down, that’s what. The debt goes away, or it is twice what you owe, and if you are already cleaned out then two times zero is still zero.

Poker is just another game. It is a about understanding the odds. The odds say that if you have a truly great hand, it is less likely that there will be two such hands in a single deal. That is just the kind of thinking that gets you into trouble.

Mac Kinloch knew I was out. We had locked horns before. Like me he was a gambler. Gambling buddies you might say, except when you are betting against somebody, they can’t be your buddy. But he didn’t need the money and I didn’t have it. He had won and I had lost, along with the others at the table, but I was ready to double down.

“Okay,” he said. “We toss a coin. Heads the debt disappears. Tails you pay up all that you owe … plus what? What are you putting on the table to stay in? I know. Like that guy you were talking about – breast implants. Tails come up and you get breast implants and keep them in for a year. Oh, and if you keep playing and keep losing, they stay in.”

What was I going to do? As I said, in was all in for everything I had. I had to say yes. I had to watch that coin spin above my head and fall onto the green baize. Tails.

I wrote out the cheque for everything in my account. He agreed to take my car in lieu of cash. I was still a little short, but not much.

“But you can see that I can’t pay for any surgery,” I shrugged.

“I will pay,” said Mac. “I have recently come into some money”. He pointed to the cash and car registration on the table.

You can’t cry about these things. You live by the sword, so you die by the sword, except here I had to live on, wounded by the sword I waved around.

“I’ve got nowhere to stay,” I said. “No money for food. Nothing.”

“Stay here,” he said. “In the casino hotel. I will pay for a room. I will book the surgery and you can move into the clinic for a day or two. After that, maybe somebody will stake you to get back in the game. You should have stuck to blackjack.”

I was not like a I had a choice. I took the hospitality. A limo picked me up a day later and took me to the clinic.

“Where do I sign?” was all I said. The doctor talked to me about exploring all other options. He showed me the breasts that Max had requested. They were big, but I guess they could have been bigger. I just said – “Let’s get this over with.”

I woke up with breasts.

They were too big to hide under a baggy shirt like the other guy, so I figured I just had to let them be seen and take it on the chin. I sketched out the T-shirt I was going to have printed – “Yes, I lost a bet”. I decided that I would go out in front and go on local TV wearing jeans and a top that showed off my tits. Of course it was screened. The interviewer asked some stupid questions:

“Is it painful? I mean the skin has been stretched.”

“I can’t lie, it is uncomfortable,” I said. “But I am using hormone patches under them that the surgeon recommended to relax the skin. I have them for a year. I will just have to get used to them.”

“Are you finding them awkward?”

“Hey, women walk around with breasts bigger than these,” I said. “They might be pleased to hear that there is at least one guy who knows what they are going through. The nurse attending me has given me advice about sports bras that will allow me to exercise without getting two black eyes. Again I will just have to learn to cope.”

“Will they affect your work? I mean, they are fairly obvious.”

“I am a professional gambler,” I said. “It doesn’t matter what we look like so long as we win.”

But winning needs a stake, and people are not keen on funding you if you have no security and a T-shirt that tells them that you are a loser.

I asked around, but the only person who contacted me was Mac.

“I saw you on TV last night,” he said. “Man, those breasts look good. Too good to be on a guy. I tell you what, I will stake you back on the blackjack tables if you play at the casino dressed to match those tits – dressed as a woman.”

I told him - “Thanks but no thanks”. I guess I felt that he was rubbing salt in. But it was not long before I called him back. I needed to get back to the tables.

“What is the deal? So you want to make a fool of me?” It sounded lame. He had already done that. The truth is a felt a fool. I was too desperate to be concerned about shame.

“No, you have me all wrong,” he said. “The implants might make you look foolish because they look out of place on a guy, but if you looked like a woman, or even somebody dressing like a woman, they don’t look out of place at all.”

When he said “dress as a woman, he was not talking about drag - outrageous outfits, wigs and makeup. He said that he just a cocktail dress revealing the breasts and a natural hairstyle and look. People might know that it was me, but figure I had found a way to fit in. If they did not know me they might think me a transwoman, or even a manly looking woman. Maybe after a while I would just disappear from view. I figured that there was no harm in trying it.

I just needed some cash to get back to the tables. I figured that once I was in surplus, I could buy back my freedom and lose the look. Maybe I could then hide the tits, or maybe buy my way out of the bet somehow and get the tits taken out.

I heard that another guy learned to live with his implants, but for me after laughing about them for a few weeks, now they seemed to be threat. I felt that somehow they made me a different person.

Mac offered to send me somewhere to get me set up. I thought it might be one of those places where they say they can transform men into women, but instead he set me up at some classy salon, headed by a lady called Kat.

“That is not what we do here,” she said. “We don’t transform men. We take women and make them look better, so if you are a customer of ours we are going to assume you are female, and with breasts like those we cannot be wrong.”

I thought she was making fun of me, but she wasn’t. She seemed concerned to get things right. I needed a comprehensive waxing, a good makeup job and a hairstyle that used my own hair plus some extensions, all colored to look right.

“We are not here to tell our clients how to behave, but we try to honest, and frankly some of your actions are just plain ugly,” she said. “You just need to know where to put your hands if you do not want to look out of place. Men wave their arms around – women don’t. Let me show you.”

The first time you get shown how differently men and women behave it comes as a surprise. You tend not to notice until you realize that you don’t right in a cocktail dress and swinging your arms as you walk. You start to look at women differently. You start to look for thinks like posture and poise. You start to imitate of at least I did.

I can tell myself that I was doing this so that I was not going to be distracted, or I was not going to stad out as an oddity. Gamblers like to be low key, and look like the average guy. Mac was right, being a guy with tits was not a good idea. All women have tits. I just needed to pass as a woman.

The shoes were a problem, even though I chose ones with not too much heel. I walked around the casino to get used to them, and to get used to looking the part. There are mirrors in casinos to help the punters see the lights and the movement, so I could look at myself more than others were looking at me. I looked good and my confidence grew.

Mac arrived with some chips and I signed for them.

“You look good,” he said. “Way better than I expected. But watch that voice.”

At Blackjack you don’t need to use your voice if you don’t want to. People who don’t speak a word of English can play the table for hours without anybody realizing they are foreign. It was easy enough for me to start playing and start winning.

I kept the stake in chips and cashed up some for the bank. It is the only way to pay off a big debt – stay in business and ringfence the surplus. It may be slow, but it works.

“So you are calling it a night?” said Mac, suddenly appearing at the cashier counter. “Let me take you out for a nightcap? I am happy to pay. I have done well too.” He was not playing where I was, but he was now a high roller, so probably playing on the private floor.

I agreed to go with him. I guess that it did feel like a date with a guy, but the truth is that I was hungry (you never think about food when you are gambling) and I was happy to keep all I had to put on the day the following night.

“You really do make a good-looking woman,” he said. Of course that made me feel good. It was a compliment, or I took it as one. “Maybe I can get you into a higher stakes game if you are ready? But the “man with tits” thing does not work in the company I am talking about. You will certainly need to do something about that voice before you come with me, and we might get some other work done too.”

I had done well that night, but I was a long way off paying him back, and then once I was there I was at zero, and there was a lot more to go before I got back to where I had been. You can play for years on small stakes tables to get what he could on the tables playing for high stakes.

We talked it through, but I was already prepared to do whatever was required to go with him.

“There is some surgery that could be done on your throat,” he said. It will stretch the vocal cords. You could try to train yourself but that takes time, and you may relapse under tension. The surgery I am talking about does not meaning losing you voice for a week. It is mainly superficial. It might be an idea to fix you nose a little too and plump up those lips.”

He made it sound like it was a spa treatment, but it was surgery – smaller than the boob job, but surgery non the less. And I did lose my voice for a week, and have to wear a bandage on my nose for that week too.

Mac looked after my bills while I was unable to work at my profession – gambling. He said that he was happy to wait for his money, but he said that interest would need to be paid. I was not surprised. This is a tough town. I could expect interest to be just as tough.

“No, not interest in cash,” he said. “Just a date every now and again. To be honest I am enjoying watching your transition.”

My transition? I really did not understand what he was talking about. From my perspective the only transition I had made was from winner to loser, and I had two reminders of that fact growing out of my chest. I think that I just shrugged and agreed. That was not interest. But whatever he wanted – I was like his plaything.

But when I got up in the morning in the hotel room he was paying for, and I looked in the mirror I found myself wondering if he was seeing something that I wasn’t. I was not me. Not any more.

I said before that I was worried that the breasts made me somehow feel a different person. When I looked at myself that morning, there was no doubt. My hair looked awful, and I had worn some eyeliner the night before and done a bad job of removing it, but there was not a hair on my face. I splashed myself with cold water, and with my eyes refreshed and the moisture on my eyelashes I suddenly felt strangely happy that with a bit of work I could really be quite attractive.

It was not a thought that belonged, but it was so pleasant that I did not try to fight it. I played a little with my hair. I thought about how it might look longer, or blonde, or up. It made me smile, and I realized that I did not smile often, and never in the mirror.

What kind of a person is a gambler? Not a happy person, that is for sure. A professional is not playing for pleasure. You have to be serious, and that means serious about everything you do. And there is no room for optimism. Optimism is for fools, whose money you can win. You need to assume the worst, and only make your call based on the count of the cards and the probability of outcomes. There can never be joy in what you do, only calculation.

I started to wonder what it might be like just to watch. I don’t mean to watch a dealer to see how he plays the cards in balance for future reference, I mean just watch a gambler at work, and share the excitement of watching the cards fall, or even the ball bounce, in a game of chance. What would that be like? What would it be like to find pleasure in something that most people find is just that, But I could not?

I needed to do some work on the face in the mirror. I needed to build on the smile. I did my best, but I was no expert then, so I went down to the beauty salon on the second floor and charged their work up to my room. I needed to add some color to my face and my body. I needed to step out into the sun

I bought a dress from the hotel boutique too. It was not a gambling woman’s dress, it was a day dress, and I made sure that my breasts were on display. I bought sunglasses too. I wanted to step into the sun. I wanted to feel the warmth and the swirl of my skirt on my freshly shave legs. I wanted to feel alive.

We gamblers joke about being nocturnal, but it is true that the sun is not or habitat. Our eyes and our ears must be attuned to the environment in which we live. I wanted to leave that behind.

I stepped out and felt as if everything was different. I just walked, and my modest heels allowed that, while still putting a swing in my butt. I felt so good that it was unbelievable. I could not stop smiling. People would look at me, and smile back.

I felt that I had suddenly realized what life was.

I was just strolling around the shops just like a woman might, when I got a call from Mac. He was asking me about possibly getting access to a high roller table.

“To be honest Mac, I am not sure that I want that at the moment,” I said.

“The bigger the win, the sooner you can pay me off. That is what you want. Isn’t it?” he said.

“Maybe it isn’t,” I said. It was the voice of the new me. I was not driven any more. I wanted some things to just wash over me.

“Are you coming to the casino,” he asked.

“Maybe I will just watch you tonight,” I said. “But I am not dressed for the lounges upstairs. I am wearing a sun dress and I am out in the sun.”

He paused a little, as if not quite believing that it was me on the other end of the call. He said – “Is it sunny today? I will meet you outside, by the Greek statue. Can you be there in ten minutes?”

“Make it twenty,” I said. “I am strolling.”

Somehow it no longer mattered that I was in debt to him. What was the worse that he could do? I might be stuck with my breasts forever. I smiled at the thought. I was still smiling when I caught the eye of a man just about to walk past me.”

“Hey Gorgeous! You look like you just won the jackpot,” he said cheerfully, and then he was gone. He had called me Gorgeous. As for the jackpot, I don’t play with machines, but if I won it would not make me smile. Life did that.

Mac was waiting for me. I must have strolled slower than I thought.

“Wow!” he said. “You look fabulous. What have you done? Is it the hair? That looks nice. Maybe it’s just the dress, or seeing you in daylight?”

He walked up close to me – closer than he had ever been. It was as if things had changed between us, and he needed to touch me to prove it. I was waiting for that – even craving it.

“I don’t think that I want to gamble anymore,” I said. “So what does that me for me? I guess you call in your debt. I guess that means I belong to you?”

“Only if you want to?” he said. “Belong to me, that is.” He was so close that I could feel his breath on my face.

I did not know what to say. But it was as if that whole day I was being governed by emotion for the first time in my life. I was alive to sensations and finding pleasures in small things. Thoughts of debts and obligations were gone. That day was about feelings and impulses.

Which is probably why I threw my arms around his neck and kissed him.

And Mac kissed me back.

I did not play blackjack that night, or ever again. He did not pay it that night either, but he still has to make a living, and provide for me.

But we did go into the casino from the garden. He played roulette and I watched. And when the ball fell on the numbers he needed I jumped about in sheer excitement. I had discovered another joy. If it is not a living it can be fun.

The End

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