Wedding Dates

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Sarah abandoned me, but I would still do anything for her. It sounds so pathetic, but that is the way I felt. On her wedding day I knew that there was no chance of winning her back. That was the day she married Jason - the guy she dropped me for. My friend Jason. Up until that day I still nursed some forlorn hope that she would see what I was prepared to sacrifice for her and love me for it. Even if she married him, she might still love me, in some lesser way. Maybe that would be enough. It does not just sound pathetic. It is pathetic.

Jason was the opposite of me. He was the boisterous one – the more manly. There is no doubt of that. His view was that she only went out with me because she was sorry for me. He did not say it is a cruel way. He said it because friends should be honest. He said that it should never break us apart, and it never could. Even taking my girl has not broken our bond. I know that he could not help falling in love with her. The same thing happened to me.

We talked about it and I now know that he was right: It was her choice, not his. He says that maybe if she had not already told him that it was over with me, he would never would have gone out with her, and he would never would have fallen for her. But that is what it is, he says. It certainly seems that way.

He said that she wants a guy who will look after her. He said that is not who I am. I need somebody to look after me. The way he says it, I was like a stray puppy that she picked up and cuddled for a bit. It is like I was never really her boyfriend, so why should I feel jilted? I knew that he was just trying to comfort me. He said that if I did not want to come to the wedding, he was OK with that.

“But you’re not inviting me. She has asked me to be one of the official bridal party - on her side.”

He said back: “No buddy. Her official party are three bridesmaids.”

“That’s right Jason. I am one of them.”

Yes. Three bridesmaids, and her friend Cheryl pulled out at the last minute. Some trip to Europe. She was not a true friend. I was. I told her that I would step in, and even wear the dress. That was what I was prepared to sacrifice for her – my pride, my manhood. I wanted her to know it. Jason would never do that. Who loved her more? It had to be me.

“That is not right, Man,” said Jason. Let me talk to her.”

“No Jase. I want to do it. I want to be part of her team. I want her to know that even if she does not want me, I will be there for her, in any capacity she wants me,” I told him.

“I can’t believe that she is ready to humiliate you. I love her, but this is so not cool.”

“She is arranging everything so I can participate to the full,” I explained. “She is yours now, but I want to be by her side. You can understand that, can’t you.”

“You have to let it go, Buddy. It cuts me up that you are carrying this torch for her, and it’s burning you up. You have to move on.”

I know Jason is still a friend. They say a true friend would never steal another’s girl, but I know love is stronger than anything. I know that only too well. I smiled. I made light of it. I said: “I have heard that she is even arranging an escort for me. Some guy called Kurt.”

“I know that guy,” said Jason. “He is on the football team. Rich and smart too. But there is a rumor that he might be gay, or at least bi.”

“Oh yeah?”

“He is actually a really nice guy. A bit like Sarah. Picks up strays and likes looking after them. Maybe Sarah is just trying to help you. Not that she has ever experienced, but I guess she understands that it sucks to be jilted.”

I wondered how she could ever think that, arranging such a guy as my escort. I was not gay. This guy might be, but not me. I might have had a guy crush or two, but I was in love with a woman. That means that you can’t be gay – right? I was in love with Sarah. I was, then.

Sarah was as good as her promise to me. She said: “You are a friend, and you always will be. You and the other girls. All three of you will share my day with me because I want you there. And it starts now with the final fitting for the dresses, and then we are off to the salon for the works.”

They all wore dresses low cut but for me there was a lacy yoke concealing my lack of a bosom. Still there were tight undergarments that seemed to find enough flesh on my upper body to create a cleavage with the assistance of gel filled bags. After the initial discomfort I relaxed into the underwear that I would be wearing all day, even peeing through a little hole between my legs.

“The works” at the salon started with us all having a body wax, and sharing the pain with giggles. I cried out with the first tear but the girls said that I would need to eliminate the male in my voice if I was to be one of them for the day. We spent a good part of our prep time singing to get my voice in tune, and I received instruction on the right way to behave. I did not want to stand out as a guy in a dress. I wanted to appear as one of her bridesmaids, so that people attending the wedding who did not know me would never know my tragic story. And perhaps those who did know about “the ex-boyfriend” may not even know it was me. Afterall, why would the ex-boyfriend come to the wedding?

After that my whiskers and part of my eyebrows being removed with some chemical which took ages for the sting to go away. Then I had extensions put into my hair, and I had my ears pierced, while the other girls had a facial.

We then got into our dresses and had our hair styled. We all wore our hair down with soft waves. I had curlers in my hair for the first time, but not the last. Somehow having your hair in curlers and then released and brushed out is something special – like releasing and inner beauty with a spring. It is hard to explain.

The makeup came last. It is supposed to transform, but in my case it was transformative. It changed something in me. We had been going through all of this the way girls do, and I was playing it up with my squeaky voice and my newly manicured hands moving almost automatically in a girly way, but it was a game. When I saw myself in the mirror fully made up I did not see the man at all. I was looking at a woman. A very beautiful woman. It was a shock. She was shocked, but then I saw her start to smile.

It was like falling in love. The truth is that I had never really like the person that I was, but this person? She tossed her curls a little, and seemed to beckon me to kiss the mirror.

“Oh my God! Look at the time! We have to go girls!” Sarah broke my bubble and we had to race to our marks for the big event.

When the ceremony was concluded she just kissed me on the cheek and whispered: “Thank you for being here, Julia”. And that was my name, from then on.

A group of women in wedding dresses

Description automatically generated with low confidence

She pointed out Kurt as we walked out after the ceremony. I could not resist giving him a little smile.

I discovered that I don’t cry at weddings – I just had a smile on the my face the whole way through.

Sarah gave a speech and in it she thanked the bridesmaids: “And in particular Julia, who looks so beautiful today. It is a special day for her as well, today.” I blew her a kiss to thank her for allowing me to be a part of her special day.

“Julia?” It was my name, so I turned around and he was standing there. “I’m Kurt.”

I am not sure what was going on in my head the first time I met him. I had been a bundle of emotions from the moment I woke up that day. There was the deep hurt of loss, later tempered by sharing the excitement of the bride’s anticipation, combined with all the new experiences that I had opened my mind to. It was as if I had become another person, or even a ghost watching the living live their lives in front of me. So my reaction in that moment seemed other-worldly.

“Kurt!” I breathed the word as if it were an indecent suggestion. “You are my escort, I believe?”

“I had not expected you to be this beautiful.” He took my hand like some fairy tale prince and kissed it. Did I blush? Whatever it was it was hot and not unpleasant.

He was bigger than me. Even in heels my nose could nuzzle his chin, strong and showing the early traces of whiskers coming through the morning’s shave. It seemed as if masculinity exuded from his every pore. It made me feel positively girly.

“Let’s join the bride and groom on the dancefloor,” he said. He had such self-assuredness, that he did not even wait for my consent. He had me by the hand and then he had me in his arms and we were dancing, some slow semblance of a waltz.

My eyes scanned the dance floor, simply so that I did not have to look up. I suppose that I had guessed that if I looked into his eyes something would happen – something that would change me. But I had to look up. I was drawn to do it. And he was looking down at me.

Can two strangers meet and fall in love? Do they need to be man and woman?

Let us call it an attraction. We were thrown together, and he was attracted to me. I had been warned that he might be. It seemed that he was, indeed, gay. That seemed the explanation. Maybe he liked men who dressed as women? But what could explain my feelings? Why was I attracted to him? The only explanation was that I had got so caught up in being a bridesmaid that I was not myself.

“Who are you?” he asked, almost as if he could read my mind. What he was really asking was ‘What are you?’ It was something I had no answer to.

“I am the bridesmaid,” I said, with a coy smile. The voice that came out of my mouth was soft and feminine, and involuntary. It was just the way that this creature spoke.

“I was told that you were a guy, but I see that must be a lie,” he said.

“It’s a magical day,” I said. “On Sarah’s wedding day it seems as if anything is possible.” Which is exactly how it did feel.

We danced and then we took a break and we sat and talked – or rather he talked and I listened. I am not even sure what he talked about. Himself, I think, as men do. I just listened to the ssound of his voice as if that was all I ever wanted to hear. If there were other people who spoke to either of us that night, I never noticed.

And before either of us realized, the first guests had started to leave, and we were back on the dancefloor, we me draped over him and with our lips locked together.

And somehow there seemed to be nothing wrong with this … nothing at all. It was a magical day. I was not myself. Somebody else was inside me – a fleeting feminine spirit momentarily in control. And she was loving this. She was loving being held by Kurt and being kissed by him.

“I have a room in this hotel,” he said. “Upstairs, if you have no plans for this evening.”

That seemed right too. What woman would want this night to end? No woman, but I was not that. And yet, I just smiled and took his hand. It seemed as if there was nobody left to wave goodbye to. We floated out of the room, through to the lobby and the elevator, down the corridor and into his room … and the door closed behind me.

It was like the Cinderella spell was broken and I was standing in rags beside a pumpkin.

“I can’t Kurt. I mean, I am not able to.” What did that mean? Not able to what? To be his? To let him make love to me?”

“We can just lie together,” he said. The look on his face was pleading me. Whatever I had to offer would be enough for him. He just wanted me. I realized that I just wanted him. But I could not help but notice the swelling in his pants. I had to reach out and confirm what it was.

“I am not sure that I can give you what you want,” I said.

“Just share my bed tonight,” he said. And so I did.

I learned two things that night. I learned that Kurt was not gay. And I learned that I was not either. I was a woman. My fascination with Sarah was not love. It was probably envy. Love is what Kurt and I have. It took over a year before I was ready to marry him, what with the hormones and the surgery, but I never ceased to be Julia after that night. That was the wedding night, only eclipsed by our own.

We got the old bridal party back together and did it all again, except with me as the bride. There is just something about a wedding – don’t you think?

The End

© Maryanne Peters 2020

Author’s Note:

I have done a couple of shorts on the classic boyfriend-becomes-bridesmaid thing, but for the one “Jilted” behind this story I received calls for a follow up or a longer tale. The image comes from another “Just Another Bridesmaid” inspired by Always Fem.