Survival Suit

A Short Science Fiction Story

By Maryanne Peters

We were at the Rockhouse Bar when Opel first told me that he was going to change. I say “he” because he was that then. He had somehow become my best friend. We had become inseparable in a way that had people looking at us strangely, which was something he had become aware of.

We were forced to become close because of his secret, which he had chosen to share only with me. It turned out to be a secret easily kept, because if I had thought to tell anybody they would think me crazy.

“What!? Your pal Opel is an alien being stranded on earth!? You must be nuts!”

It does sound crazy, but it was true – it is true.

I found the wreck in the lake above my uncle’s property. Most of it was submerged, but the manned pod had floated free. I heard a voice, like in my head. It is how they communicate, his species. And he knew our language. He had been sitting in the lake for weeks watching our TV and monitoring radio and telephone signals – deconstructing our language and learning everything that he could.

But he couldn’t leave the capsule without a survival suit. The form of his body was not something we discussed but it was clearly noting like ours. He said that his planet had a very thick atmosphere, so his form allowed him to move in it “like an octopus”. I guess that gave me the idea that he might be like that, but it is something I prefer not to think about – certainly now I don’t.

He asked me whether I could obtain a human body – something that he could use to make a survival suit. It sounded like Frankenstein, and I told him to look that up. I found that he had a sense of humor, which was unexpected but cool. I suppose we bonded as early as that. I wanted to help him, but we agreed that to do that he would ensure that our planet and our people would be protected, and I would help him to get home.

He said that he would be able to make a suit using human DNA – just a tiny sample of my blood. My own blood would do. I was able to use my uncle’s blood sugar test to get it and take it back up to the lake.

“Just so long as you don’t make this suit to look like me,” I said cheerfully.

“I understand how varied your species is,” he said. “I will find something that works.”

It took him a while – a few weeks at least. It is a strange thing to wait all that time carrying the biggest secret on the planet around with you. I mean, this is not just that I have made friends with an alien living in the reservoir above the top paddock, but the fact that alien life even existed at all. Every astronomer out there, and lots of other folk too, were wondering able extra-terrestrial life. I knew that it was true, but I had agreed that I would not tell anybody.

Opel said that when the time was right his people might be able to visit Earth in a formal way, starting with contact and then receiving an invitation, and such. He said that he was not supposed to be there. It was an accident. His spaceship had crashed. It could be repaired, but he would need materials and that meant that he needed human form and a guide.

Like I said, we bonded even before he first appeared in his survival suit. My Mom always taught me to be a good person and to care for others. I guess she meant other humans, but for me Opel was the same – he needed my help and he reached out to me.

I suppose I also had a thought for all those movies where the alien gets locked in a cage and probed. It was like Opel said – proper contact between planets needs to be organized. It can wait. The priority was to help a guy in need and show him and his species that humans are good people.

In appearance Opel looked nothing like me. In hindsight it might have been easier if he had. I was big and dark and Opel was fairly small and fair. He said that he got the look from TV images and the size was because as a creature he was not big and he did not want to live in a suit much bigger than he was.

Like I said, I don’t like to think about him being inside anything. He was just Opel. But when he walked out of the lake naked, I told him that I would need to get him some clothes to fit before we drove down the hill. I went to the general store in town and bought him some stuff.

I took him back to my place and told my uncle and aunt that I had met Opel on my visit to the big city, and if it was okay he was coming to stay for a few days. I have to say that at the start Opel was a bit weird. He seemed to come up with phrases used on TV. It worked for a while and then it just sounded strange.

I suggested that Opel should tell people that he came from Europe, because people expected such folks to act oddly. We found out that Germany makes a car called Opel, so we chose that country.

Opel said that we needed money and that we needed to go into the city and buy some special metals. I figured that if he can make a human body maybe he can make a bunch of cash, but he suggested that the best way was to sell some technology.

From his place in the lake connected to the internet Opel had been looking into how advanced we were in certain areas, and he had looked at some medical technology that we had not yet discovered. He said that this technology would be good for the human race and we were not so far from it that it would appear “extra-terrestrial”. He could produce drawings and a description, and even make a crude form of it in the shed behind the barn. What we needed to do was to get a patent, and then sell it.

We sort of made it together. That allowed Opel to tell me all about it. I would be the owner of the patent as he did not officially exist. The money that we made would go into my bank account. I would buy the materials.

It only took us a few days, and then I explained to my uncle that we would be headed down to the city for a day or two to do some business.

We drove my truck all the way. I introduced Opel to country-rock music and to fast food and roadside diners. He said that he loved to hear me talk. And all the time he was watching people and getting to understand things better. I guess he noticed how people pair off – a man and a woman.

My wallet was open for the trip, but it was shallow. The money paid to the patent attorney almost cleaned me out. We figured that we could now visit the medical technology company to sell the rights, but the attorney told us that we would need to wait for the patent office. Maybe it would take a few weeks.

We went to a bar, and I introduced Opel to liquor and getting drunk when all else fails.

We needed cash and Opel noticed some guys playing pool and some cash changing hands. I told him about betting and games, and I mentioned that there was a casino nearby. He was fascinated by this and by “games of chance”. He talked about probabilities and variables and stuff, and then when he saw a game of poker being played, he said that this was how we could make some cash.

Like I said, communication on his planet is like telepathy – like brain to brain – like the first time he talked to me from the lake. He said poker could not exist on his planet because if people get excited he can read their thoughts. This was how we could make some money.

He said that he was a bit uncomfortable with it. His idea was to get the funds he needed by doing good, and so that nobody lost anything. I could understand that. More than that, this was the kind of thing that convinced me that I was doing the right thing by helping my friend.

We just needed to make enough money at the poker table to pay for the cost of that trip, and to give my aunt a bundle of cash when we got back to the farm, just to help with household expenses while Opel stayed over.

Anyway, Opel sat at the table and played the perfect game. He did not win every hand, but he told me afterwards that he could have. It was not just know when to hold and when to fold, but he said that the other players, no matter how straight-faced they were, their minds were screaming the cards they held. Opel could hear the screams.

We went home and Opel told my aunt that he had made some money and he would like her to have it “for your kind hospitality”. My aunt said he could stay as log as he liked.

So we waited out our time and Opel hung around me while I worked on the farm, and then we would go into town and drink at the Rockhouse Bar so that Opel could work on being less weird.

But Opel was smart. You expect an alien to be smart. He was learning by watching but he also had that ability, if he concentrated, to catch a glimpse of what people were thinking. They were not always screaming their thoughts, so he was not a total mind-reader, but strong thoughts he could latch on to.

“I am going to change my survival suit,” he said. “We will go back to the city tomorrow and I want to wear a new suit. I will stay here tonight. At the Starlight Motel, Unit 1. You can pick me up in the morning and we will go from there.”

In this enterprise Opel was calling the shots, so I was not going to argue. I had no idea what changing the suit might mean. I suppose I figured that it would be the same suit but sort dry-cleaned. We chugged down our last beers and we parted, like maybe for the first time since he walked out of the lake naked and put on the clothes that I bought for him.

And then in the morning I turned at the Starlight Motel, Unit 1, and standing outside with luggage, was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

I had to stare. I tried not to, but she just drew me in. I had to force myself to look behind her for my friend Opel to walk out of the motel room.

But she opened the door to my truck and threw her bag in the back.

“Let’s go,” she said. “What do you think of my new suit?”

I was stunned. She had long blonde hair and a knock-out body, on display in a dress that was low in the top and high in the hem. She lifted a shapely leg and stared at me with big green eyes under long dark lashes. She was showing me what she had. This was the new suit. Inside there was my friend Opel. The guy who, alien or not, had become my best pal.

“Why … why a woman?” I said, trying not to keep staring, and failing.

“Men pair with women, right?” she said – I had to think it was “she” given what I was looking at. “I am not stupid. I know what some people are thinking. They think a large man with a small man looks strange, and they have negative thoughts. People think that a man and a woman together is normal. Am I correct?”

“I suppose so. It will just take some getting used to.” I figured that he knew what he was doing. If negative thoughts were strong then he would be picking them up.

“Drive, then,” said Opal – somehow the change in the spelling of her name makes more sense.

As we covered the miles it became clear that she was different, or she seemed to be. In the time I had known my visitor from another planet, the task was how to pass as human, but Opal knew that there were differences between the sexes and that task was now how to be female.

“I need to pay more attention to my appearance,” she said, using a vanity mirror in the passenger sun visor I never even knew was there. “I have given myself dark surrounds to the eyes, but then there is lipstick. Do you like the color? Or perhaps you are the wrong person to ask because you are a man? And if I wear my hair up like this, or down, then you don’t notice. Is that right?”

I had to keep my eyes on the road. I did not want to watch her playing with that beautiful hair. I had to suppress the idea that this was every farmhand’s fantasy, to have a girl like this sitting in my passenger seat on a long ride, because this was my pal, now looking female. I was thinking that she had to look like a female all the way down too, just as a male had walked out of the lake naked. Thinking about her naked was starting to give an erection. Surely she would know my thoughts?

“Maybe it is not so convenient,” I said. “You have to sit down to pee.” I was trying hard to stay calm.

“I understand the new anatomy. This body is very well ordered externally but internally it is very messy … with the reproductive system being what it is. I will deal with that as other women do.”

She started to talk like a girl. I am not talking about the voice, but the things she said. She was too focussed on views and things outside the car instead of talking about our strategy for selling to patent and getting the money. I raised it with her.

“I bought some clothes in town yesterday,” she said. “But when we get to the city we can go shopping and find something nice for me to wear. Something business-like.

“Do you want me to wear something business like?”

“You’re the inventor, Silly,” she said. “You could turn up in shorts and flip-flops. They might even expect that. I can be your girl friend. I can jus help you with any difficult questions. I will just put the answers in your head. Otherwise they will ignore. This is just what I want. It will be good being female. You like this new arrangement – don’t you?”

“Yeah, sure.” I could see how it was supposed to work. It was just that my crotch was straining.

“I would like to get some scent too,” she said. “I understand that certain appearances and smells can be useful. They can persuade men to pay more than they would otherwise. And if there are women on the other side of negotiations they may also be more generous to another woman, perhaps?

I had no idea. I was just the frontman. I was supposed to be the inventor. My name was on the patent and was to be on the contract. It was my bank account. It had to be. Opal did not exist.

“Would your friend like to wait outside?” somebody asked.

“No,” I said. “This is my girlfriend, Opal. Where I go, she goes.” To confirm it she grabbed my arm and pulled herself close to me.

We played it as she had planned. I told them that the technology was a game changer. They would get exclusive rights for payment of my demanded fee up front, and I would get a royalty on top for every use of the technology. Even I knew that because they were arguing about the royalty rather than the up front payment, they had done the modelling and knew our invention would work.

They had drawn up the documents. I handed a copy to Opal, while I kept talking. She leafed through it with a look of indifference on her pretty face, but I knew that she was reading every word. She hardly spoke. She didn’t need to. Even without prompting from her I went through the technical stuff as an overview. It was already a done thing. It was just like selling a prize bull. They want it and you are only willing to sell for proper value.

We walked out with the money we asked for in my account and a signed agreement.

“I suppose that we should celebrate,” she said as we stepped out onto the sidewalk. “Isn’t that what people do?”

“Sure,” I said. “We will go to an expensive hotel and book a couple of rooms, and order champagne.”

“Just one room,” she said. “Remember that I am your girlfriend.” She gave me a look that got me all excited again, but she was adamant. We were together – a team of two, and this was the best way to keep things – as if we were boyfriend and girlfriend.

“This bed is big enough for both of us,” I said. “We won’t need to fight over the couch.”

She just looked at me, and started to play with her hair. No man could not be turned on. But still it seemed so wrong to have the thoughts I was having. I tried to picture Opel instead of Opal, but she seemed to fill the room. There was only one thing to look at.

“So … what next?” I said, trying to return us to the task we had set out upon. We had money and we were going to spend it on the materials we needed to repair her ship, so that she could leave, and the dream would be over.

“What would you like to do next?” She was not on the same page. Her words sounded like a come on. I wanted to be on the same page as her, but I was fighting it, and telling myself that I could.

Then she slowly moved towards me and looked up at me. Even in heels she was a half head shorter than me. She had to place a delicate hand behind my head to pull my lips down to hers.

Did that survival suit come with the reptile brain governing human instinct? There was no doubt that our kiss triggered mine, but she seemed to be the same. We both knew what to do. We tore off our clothes. We tore off each other’s clothes. We explored our standing bodies with hands and lips, as I sprang to attention.

I picked her up and carried her to the bed. We did not even take the cover off. I laid her down and entered her, without any thought that the suit could not accommodate me. It could and it did – so unbelievably tight and moist. She was gasping, her yes sparkling with sheer joy.

She grabbed my butt cheeks and pulled me into her with each stroke. She knew what she was doing. It never occurred to me until later what she may have watched to know how humans make love. What was clear to me was that all the sensations that she felt were real – just as real as mine. When we climaxed at the very same moment it seemed that galaxies had collided – perhaps they had.

We fell apart and lay on our backs looking up at the ceiling and glowing as people do in that moment.

“I suppose that this makes us really boyfriend and girlfriend,” I said.

“I hope so,” she said. “How often can we do that?”

“Not continuously. But we could try.” We turned our heads and we smiled at one another. Truly she had never looked more beautiful than in the moment.

The champagne arrived, but we could not wait to get the room service waiter out of there. We wanted to put the bed to use, and we did, including some sleep.

Opal had already lined up her purchases online. We spent all the following day collecting the materials and paying from my healthy bank account. We had another night of bliss at that hotel after a romantic dinner where we just stared one another in the candlelight, holding hands across the table.

The drive back to the farm was like that too, except for when she stroked my cock and suggested that we stop somewhere. I laughed and said that we should wait until we got home, when we would have to explain her presence to my uncle and aunt. Opel was just visiting, but in the city I met this girl, curiously with a similar name to my German friend – would that work?

“I like being a woman,” she said. “I am the right size and I feel the right shape.” I could not argue with that. “And I like being able to be close to you, and to please you.” Me too.

But as the trip wore on, I started to think about what it meant that the truck was full of all that she needed. How long would it take to carry out the repairs? How long before she would walk into that lake and out of my life, disappearing into the sky in a flash of light?

“What is wrong?” she said, recognizing the change in my mood.

“I am in love with you,” I said. “Do you know what that means”.

“I thought I did,” she said. “Love is a very used word. I thought that I knew all about it from television. I thought that it was a necessary part of mating and assisted in holding mating human couples together - a sensible adaptation given the long period until maturity for your young. I thought I knew, but now that I am experiencing it, I realize I did not understand it at all. Maybe I still don’t.”

She was telling me that she loved me, so how could she think about leaving?

But this was not her world. She could only survive in a special suit, which just happened to be in the form of the most beautiful woman in the world. Perhaps she could take me? She could make an octopus suit for me, and we could live with our tentacles wrapped around one another’s boneless bodies. But thinking about it like that makes you understand that this was an impossible love. It would have to end even though both of us did not want that.

We told our story to my uncle and aunt and said that we were going to take some more time to be together, camping by the lake at the top of the property. She would walk into the lake and disappear, and then she would walk to be with me, and I would restore her warmth, and then we would make love.

She said that her ship was repaired but would take time to build up take off power. We had a few months at most, and then we would lose one another forever. The thought of it saddened us both, but we drew so much joy from one another that we were able to put it aside.

But that was months ago now. Now that Opal is pregnant it seems that everything might change. I hope so.

The End

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