Obsession

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

I know what obsession is. I used to live with it every day.

I just thought that I was a person who just did not like dirt. Dirt harbors germs. Germs cause disease. Disease causes death. Dirt is deadly. You should be clean. I just pushed it a little too far.

It always amazed me that most people seem to be “filth blind”. They cannot see a spot on a plate when to me it is huge and disgusting. There was a time when I could not bear to have an empty plate like that in front of me, let alone eat off it. It would turn my stomach.

But cleanliness must start with yourself and I believed in keeping myself clean. I would shower at least three times per day and wash my hands more than 20 times. My concern about body hair grew out of that – the need to be clean. For me body hair was a place that attracted dirt and odors. You know what odors are? Bacteria, that’s what. Disgusting living organisms on your body excreting foul smelling substances. Where are the smelliest parts? The hairy parts.

It was one thing to pull out the hair from all over my body, my groin and my armpits, but when I started on my face, my mother became concerned. I found the very idea of having a beard revolting – just the part around my mouth. The moustache and the hair on the chin surround your mouth with a habitat for disease. That is where your food enters your body. It needs to be cleared, in a permanent way.

When I did that, my mother said that I had gone too far. She said I looked weird. I was talking about permanently removing even the hair on my head. She said that if I did that I would definitely look like a freak. Did I want to avoid that by wearing a wig? The idea of putting somebody else’s hair on my head was doubly repellent. I needed to stop.

She took me to the doctor and he told me that I had a disease that is not uncommon – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or OCD. There are drugs for it, but they had side effects. He referred me to a therapist to look at whether I could overcome the extremes, and find a happy existence where I could be clean without scrubbing my skin off.

But obsession does not stop there. You can become obsessed with people and relationships too. I was. That is where Chelsea Baraclough comes in.

In those days I was attracted to women, just as any guy might be. Not in a dirty way, of course. Chelsea was a girl worth being attracted to; worth being obsessed about. The problem was, that she disliked me. No, worse than that, initially, she could not even see me. You cannot dislike what you cannot see.

That was until she realized that I was following her and spying on her. Then she freaked out. She saw me then, but only to get me into serious trouble. But when she complained about me to the Police, I could not give her up. I decided to continue to watch her, but in disguise. It had to be a good disguise. No, it was the perfect disguise. She might be looking out for me. Looking for the weird boy. The hairless boy.

Maybe it is just in her nature, being so concerned with herself, that she could not see me behind the wig and glasses. Yes, I did wear a wig, at least until I grew my own hair. CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) had given me the capacity to tolerate the repulsive in small doses, through “Exposure and Response Prevention”. The wig was unpleasant but effective. I could put up with it for a while, until I could grow the hair that I needed to perfect my disguise. There are things that can be done to promote growth.

This marvellous disguise came about because of something my mother said. I was moping around the house, embittered by the informal restraining order the Police had placed on me, when my mother made a remark about my skin – my hairless, clean skin. The skin that I always kept covered when I was at school, in case somebody thought I was a freak. She said that any woman would be glad to have skin that good. Any woman would want to show it off.

That was when I realized that my skin did look like the skin of a woman. I decided to disguise myself as a girl. That was how I could follow Chelsea around without her realizing that it was me. I could change the color of my hair. Maybe get rid of my glasses. And she would not be expecting a girl to be stalking her. Girl’s don’t spy on other girls. Stalking is a guy thing.

It all coincided with graduation. As we live in a college town, most of the high school graduates were going on to college, including Chelsea and me. Or rather, Chelsea and Lily. I chose Lily because the flower is a symbol of purity and cleanliness. Lily and Chelsea were going to the same college. I made sure of that. And hopefully, the same dorm.

I think girls are cleaner than boys. Girls like things tidy. When I had my hair colored I decided that I would keep it very clean and shiny. I had it cut in a bob, which is a very tidy cut and also allowed some locks across my face to further conceal my identity a little.

Girls like clean clothes. If you wear brightly colored clothes, or white, you cannot allow a trace of dirt or it will just look awful. Male clothes seem designed to conceal filth. Jeans are particularly repulsive, but dark sweatshirts and football jerseys? Vile.

I was going to fit right in, except I did not. My mother thought that the whole idea was crazy, but she did suggest that it was no crazier than many things I had done before. She said that if I was going to do this, I should do it right. I should look into attending deportment classes.

“It won’t be your look that will give you away, because you are small and slight. It will be your actions,” she said. She knew that my plan was basically flying in the face of the restraining order, but she was helping me. That is a mother for you, I suppose.

Due to my devotion to it, my hair had grown quite quickly. My mother suggested that because I had killed the growth of all the other disgusting hair on my body, the “hair energy” had nowhere else to go but to promote the hair on my head. The one advantage of that hair is the I could keep it clean, which I did, daily.

Maintaining clean looking hair also required other products and regular brushing, but I am the kind of person who is used to applying regimens of behavior to achieve results. And that is exactly what happened with my hair.

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| I had it cut in a style that was designed to allow me to conceal my face behind a glossy shield. That way there was no possibility that Chelsea might recognize me. But I still needed to paint my face, because that is what girls do. I was just very particular about what was used on my face. Cosmetics come in all different kinds. My preference was to avoid animal products (I find the very idea repulsive) or anything which might promote the growth of bacteria.I also took to wearing gloves. I would have preferred disposable gloves, but that would be weird (and also promoted disgusting sweaty hands) so I found lacy gloves – several pairs in different colors that I could wash daily. I agree that some people thought my gloves were odd. |  |

But girls can get away with being different. Guys who behave in an odd way are seen as freaks. Girls can do the same sort of thing and they can be called exotic or interesting. Really, if you are different, it is better to live as a girl.

Of course, I had things to hide. My body was not womanly, and I had a penis. But everybody understood that Lily was a vey private person, hiding under a veil of shiny hair. As I said, people are accepting if you are female. Nobody wondered why I wore the clothes I wore.

But as I said, I became known for my particular style. I liked dresses because they were loose fitting and did not promote sweaty areas. I like bright colors or white so as not to show dirt. I had my gloves. I wore ladies’ sandals in summer or ankle boots in winter – I find the smell of trainers nauseating. Also, in winter I liked acrylic knit tops, which led to me developing a better understanding of the female shape. I felt that I needed to get myself a bra and stuff it. Just an A cup. Just to make me look normal.

I went about my studies. I suppose that I had always thought that the courses I was doing were sort of a cover for my real reason for being there. I was there because Chelsea was there. But I started to really enjoy my classes, and to learn that I was really quite smart.

I always kept Chelsea in my view and she knew me as Lily, the girl with the idiosyncratic style sense, but I was not in her close circle. That suited me because I was still worried that she might recognize me and then I would be in deep trouble.

I contributed to classes. I spoke softly because that is the way I always spoke, but I lifted my voice a note or two so that it appeared to be a female voice. I found my voice, as they say. It became second nature. I could even sing girl’s songs in the shower – I still do.

I was not trying to be noticed but I suppose that I was coming out of myself a bit. Some girls thought that I was interesting and got me involved in talking about fashion. I knew that Chelsea was interested in that, so I sort of hung with those girls to stay in her wider group, and be close to her. I ended up getting quite interested myself. One thing that I did learn is that to make something stylish – add heels.

 It may seem ironic given that I was hiding, but I became sort of a fashion icon at college. People knew that I was very particular about my presentation. The only concealment that I continued to practice was the hair across my face, but I always made sure that my eyes were made up to look spectacular.

Then, out of the blue, a guy called Reuben turned up. He was in one of my classes, but I had never noticed him, so I apologized to him for that. He asked me why I always wore my hair the way that I did and I told him that it was “just my thing”.

I told him that my name was Lily.

He told me that he loved the fact that I was so clean. He said that he had noticed me and that I smelled of soap and my hair smelled of shampoo. So it ought to. I suppose that I wondered when and how this guy got close enough to me to smell me. But who does not like to be complimented on their cleanliness - right?

He said that he liked clean and he was a bit of a nut about it. It seemed to me that he was a kindred spirit of a kind. I had never really met a person who was like me. I am excluding some of the nutcases I met at my therapist’s office. He seemed so normal, but he was obviously a very tidy and clean person. We talked only for a little while walking between classes and somehow I felt that I could share some of my innermost thoughts with him. But how could I share secrets when I was lying to him just by standing there in my dress.

He asked me whether I would like to have a meal and I told him that I did not really eat out, but maybe some takeout food if franchised with strict hygiene rules. But he told me that he knew of a restaurant that had to be the cleanest kitchen in the city. I must have looked uncertain because he offered to pay. It was almost as if it was a date.

If I thought that, then I was right. He took me to the restaurant which was super-clean – all white tiles and servers in white aprons and disposable gloves. It was called “Sanitize” - I suppose that it was a theme of a sort, but I liked it. The food was quirky but very tasty, and there were so many tiny courses that as we ate and talked about each one the night disappeared. It was very late when he called for the check.

I am not a social sort of person, but I know what a man expects after he takes a girl out, and he thought that I was a girl. I really liked him, and I had enjoyed the evening so much that I felt that it would be wrong of me to lead him on. There is no easy way to say it, but I thought it best to say it then and there, in a restaurant with other members of the public around, just in case he spun out.

He just looked surprised, and maybe disappointed. No, definitely disappointed. I know that I just felt excruciatingly sad. Maybe there was a tear in my eye. I would not be surprised, as I was that sad.

I just told him that I thought that girls were so much cleaner than boys. He agreed. I told him that I kept my body completely clear of hair and totally clean. I showered morning and night and I washed between showers. I did not like baths because you are basically lying in your own filth.

He asked me whether he could see my body. It made me feel very awkward. He told me that if it was as clean as I said it was I should be proud to show it to him. He wanted to see just how clean a person could be, and he thought that I might just be the “acme of cleanliness”. Imagine that. Being the best at something.

He said that he lived nearby. I said that as he had bought me dinner, I owed him a peek. But what I was thinking was that here was somebody who might be interested in the very thing that had everybody else brand me as a freak. My clean body.

His apartment was like a dream come true. Lots of stainless steel and plastic that could be wiped, and the faint smell of pine-scented bleach in the air. Everything was clean and in its place. I could see immediately how much thought had gone into arranging everything. We were so alike it was spooky, except that he looked like a man and I looked like … whatever I looked like.

He wanted to see. I felt very awkward. But I slipped off my dress and then the little padded bra I was wearing. I kept my panties on. He said that I had the most marvellous skin, so pale and smooth. He asked if he could touch it, but only after he had washed his hands.

I have to say that for everything that had happened that day, this was the most difficult thing. Nobody had touched me except my mother. I mean, people could bump into me, and when greeting people, I would use just the slightest contract – a fist bump (handshakes are simply exchanging of filth from palm to palm). To have somebody touch my body - my naked body – was terrifying.

I guess what persuaded me was the admiration in his eyes. He really see me as being somebody very special. Not because of what I was wearing, but because he could see me. I put my arms up and pulled back my hair so that he could see my face as well. It seemed to me to be a reveal, but I had heaps of makeup on.

He washed his hands as he said he would and then he came up to me and ran a still slightly wet finger down my body from my neck to my navel.

I know what sex is. It is not my thing, but I know that if affects people. This was sex. There is no other way to describe it. It thrilled me, and it thrilled him too. He could see it and I could see it.

He asked me whether I practised “internal hygiene as well as external”. Stupidly, I had no idea what he was talking about. But he said that he did, and that it was “transformative”. The way he described it was that if you think about the very dirtiest part of your body and then you make it clean. Your gut contains bacteria and you cannot change that. Your gut needs bacteria to process food. But your colon does not have to be dirty. You can clean it.

I asked him to show me – to show me how.

He boiled up some water with some herbs and flowers and left it to cool down. In his bathroom he had a small square pail hanging on the wall and a soft tube coming out of it with a tap. At the other end was a harder tube connected, which was to be inserted, with a little lubrication. He told me that everything was sterilized so that I could use it, and given how clean his bathroom was, I did not doubt him.

He offered to do it for me. It seems strange now that I should be so willing, but I suppose I thought that he was the expert. I was naked on my hands and knees and a man I barely knew was inserting a tube in my anus, but he was explaining everything that he was doing, and I was not uncomfortable about it.

When he opened the tap, I felt the warm liquid enter me. It took some time to empty the measured amount he had poured into the bucket, warm and fragrant. He said to me that he thought that I had a wonderful body and that it being clean internally would make it perfect. His words seemed as thrilling as that wet finger.

She suggested that I move around a little to wash my insides. It felt odd but not unpleasant. And then I sat on the toilet and let it all go.

I have to say that for somebody like me, who values cleanliness above all things, the simple act of defecation is mortifying. It always has been. To have such diseased filth coming out of you every day is the most disgusting thing. To smell that stuff and to know that it was your making is truly revolting. I always washed thoroughly afterwards. But that day what came out of me smelt like a flower garden after the rain. A little earthy, but perfumed. I felt wonderful.

I stepped out of the toilet just as Reuben was getting out of the shower. He was naked. His body was clean, but it had hair all over it. His cock was huge, and it was partially erect. He told me that it was because he was thinking of me.

I told him that he was right. The experience was transformative. I had not only become internally clean, and had learned that body needed that now – maybe every day. He told me that he could arrange that.

I always thought that the idea of having the bodily fluids of another person inside you was something truly ghastly. But not all bodily fluids are ridden with disease. Semen is one of the purest of substances. When you think about it, it is the seed of humanity swimming in a fluid designed to carry that seed to its home. It is the very last place that you would expect to find something dirty. I was happy to take it. I still am.

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| I find it hard to even picture what Chelsea looks like these days. I only have eyes for Reuben. We live together now. We have matching enema kits but when it comes to post enema treatment, I am happy to be the sole recipient. We like to say that we live a clean life, Reuben and I.The End | Reuben administers post-enema colonics |

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