The Proposition

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Connor Dunn had never been to the Metropolitan Club, so when Christian Warbeck invited him there for lunch, he felt that he could hardly say no. He had toiled for decades in a Wall Street back room to make money to support his family, so to be standing beneath the portrait of J Pierpont Morgan in the club he founded, was a special treat. Christian met Connor under the portrait and escorted him the rooftop dining area, with its grand view over Central Park.

“I suggested that we meet here because I have a proposition for you,” said Christian. “I have to say that you may find it slightly uncomfortable, so I wanted to put it to you in person, and on neutral ground.”

Christian Warbeck was a young man going places, so Connor was ready to listen, comfortable or not. The younger man was wealthy, well-educated and driven. The very opposite of him, but what he wanted for his three sons. If they could achieve half of what this youth had done, they would be set for life.

“It is about your youngest son, Liam,” said Christian. “You are, of course, aware that he is gay?”

Connor gulped. He knew it, sure enough, but a father can find it hard to concede. “Yes,” he said softly.

“Well, he has developed an interest in me, and I have surprised myself by developing an interest in him, or rather who he could be.”

A pause was left to be filled by Connor. He felt he should say something, even if the realization disgusted him, but in a whisper: “Are you seeking my permission to have gay sex with my son?” He could have used another word, but Christian had chosen the venue well. This room; this place, demanded proper behavior, so he avoided the F word..

“Goodness no,” said Christian. “No. The problem is that I am not gay. My interest in Liam is as an attraction to the woman that he might be.”

“You have lost me,” said Connor.

“I know your circumstances,” said Christian. The tone was not threatening. “I know that your two older sons are at inferior colleges and that Liam himself dropped out of high school. It seems to me that he is unlikely to get out of the mailroom in a hurry. I can help with the education of your older sons and with their careers. Given the recent death of your wife I may be able to offer you some help at home also. And I could offer your youngest child a future.”

“I will concede that we may need help, but what do you want from me?” Connor was above all, a practical man.

“I want Liam to become a woman,” said Christian. “If he wants me then that is what he will need to be. I am in business and while I bear gay people no ill will, I will not join their ranks. But I am ready for a relationship with a woman again. A family is not a priority for me. My first wife gave me that. No, I want somebody to look good on my arm, and who can charm those I want to impress. A gay male partner will not be able to do that. Your new daughter Leanne could be that person. You might be my father in law.”

The words initially appalled Connor, but the final words hammered home to strange effect. This man might be twisted but he was genuine, and the surroundings demanded restraint. That meant not protesting as he might. Here was a person of wealth and influence who could present a way forward for all of his offspring and was seeking his favor. It was an odd situation, even disregarding the whole gender thing.

“What are you offering?” That was his question. Nothing about Liam. No expression of shock. No asking whether Liam had any view on the matter.

“I can have your older boys offered admission to my old ivy league alma mater. I have that influence. My family are donors. And there would be scholarships. As for your daughter, I can assure you that my intentions are honorable, and I would be happy to settle a sum on her provided that she makes some changes in her lifestyle.”

The “she” pronoun grated, but Connor had to ask: “What changes are you talking about?”

“I would be happy to send my housekeeper to your house to help you out and attend to the required transition for her, from male to female.”

“What changes”, said Connor firmly. He suddenly realized that he had some leverage here. Christian Warbeck was serious about this and determined. He was asking Connor for help. Help to do unnatural things. “Are you expecting my son to surrender his genitals.”

“How well you put it,” said Christian. “Yes. That’s what I want. But what does he want? If he says no, then I will walk away. With great sadness I think, but I will not force myself upon her.”

“He may not be the most masculine of men, but he is still a man,” said Connor.

“I don’t see it,” said Christian leaning back. “I only see Leanne. To me she is like a tomboy, just waiting to find her true feminine self. That is who I want, and that is all there is to it. Can you help me or not? I promise you that you will benefit hugely if you do.” He looked to Connor as if to say the conversation was at an end. His proposition had been put.

To seal it Christian sent Connor an email straight after lunch. It had specific details of the benefits to the Dunn family “in the event of Liam agreeing to the changes requested by me”.

Connor showed it to his son Liam. The boy just giggled.

“Were you aware of this?” his father asked with some anger at the smirk opposite him.

“I like him,” said Liam, in the effeminate lisp that infuriated Connor. “He is handsome, and smart, and rich. I would love to get him into bed, but he told me that he doesn’t do man on man. But if I was a bitch, he would take me in a heartbeat. That’s what he said.”

Connor loved his son, but he was not comfortable with homosexuality, in particular when Liam spoke openly about wanting sex with men. The promiscuity of the gay lifestyle worried Connor. Could his youngest son ever find the constancy of a permanent loving relationship? Everything seemed to about sex for these gay men. There was nothing permanent.

“He is offering you a life,” said Connor. “I cannot imagine you agreeing to this, but I want you to have everything he is offering.”

“And the stuff for the rest of you?” Liam accused, pointing at the email.

“I won’t deny that I want that too,” said Connor. “I want what is best for all of my boys. But you all have the right to choose your own futures.”

“If Chris would just accept that he is gay, there would not be a problem,” said Liam. “I could imagine myself being his husband, but not his wife.”

“Whatever you decide I will support you,” said Connor. Liam smiled at him with traces of tears in his eyes. Liam cried easily. He was touched by what his father said. He knew his father disapproved of his life style, but his support was always there, and Liam knew it.

“Maybe we could ask that I be given the chance to try?” Liam asked. He wanted to help his family, but he loved his cock even more and was not ready to give that up.

So, Connor made a counter offer the following day, and on Friday night Margot Younger came to stay.

Margot was in her late thirties Connor guessed – younger than him. She was a little chunky but quite attractive, albeit with a little too much make up. She wore her copper brown hair in a bun, which suited her style – neat and tidy, busy and business-like.

“You’re so pretty,” she said to Liam. “Far too pretty to be a boy. We need to fix that starting as soon as possible. But first it is clear that this house has lacked a woman’s touch for some time. I will need to start in the kitchen. Leanne, you can help.”

“Is that me? Am I Leanne now? I am not sure I like the name.”

“We are given our names,” she said brusquely. “We can change them when we like. Call yourself Loretta-lou if you like, but for now, Leanne is more appropriate than Liam. And for now we will have to find something to wear that matches the name.”

“I have worn drag for Chris, but not in the house,” said “Leanne”.

“This is a change of gender, not a change of clothes,” said Margot. “This is definitely not drag.”

Leanne looked to her father for that support, but Connor looked back at her with a questioning look, as if to say: ‘Are you doing this or not?’. Leanne sighed in exasperation. She thought about Christian, and how he looked at her when she cross-dressed for him in private. She liked being admired that way. That was the positive that she kept in her mind.

Margot had brought some clothes in her size, including a house dress for domestic chores. Even without makeup, the outfit gave Leanne an unmistakably feminine look.

“Even while you work you need to adopt the correct posture and method,” said Margot. “I will help you. We will chip away at those ugly manly traits over the next few weeks, if you will do exactly as I ask. Are you ready to do that?”

Leanne put her hands on her hips and bent across in what might be called a female stance. “Yes,” she promised. That was the new deal. Her brothers would receive an offer from a certain college, but no scholarship, and Leanne would date Christian Warbeck.

They worked together to tidy the kitchen and get about making a meal for six. Connor had invited Leanne’s brothers over, and Jeremy, the oldest, would be bringing his girlfriend Nicolette.

“Now we need to take you upstairs and dress you properly for dinner,” said Margot. “Remember what I have told you about walking, and about table manners appropriate for a young lady.”

Margot was the kind of woman who knew how to multi-task, but while she was downstairs to meet other members of Connor’s family when they arrived, Leanne was still upstairs. It gave Connor the opportunity to explain the new situation.

“Margot has been sent to help me by a benefactor,” he said, to account for her presence and her lively activity. “And she is also here to help your brother Liam experiment with a different kind of life.”

Kevin and the middle brother were barely interested in the youngest brother. He was an embarrassment to Kevin, whose otherwise cared for him greatly, and an inconvenience to Patrick who despite being closer to him in age, and never been close in any other way. But they were both in for a surprise.

Sweeping down the stair in a dress and makeup, and with his hair gelled back, was Leanne, tottering with some skill on heels and despite Margot’s attempt to bar such behavior, affecting an overtly feminine demeanor.

“My name is Leanne,” said Leanne, batting her eyelids to Margot’s increasing fury. “Your new sister.”

The boys looked confused and startled but Nicolette clapped her hands in obvious joy.

“How fantastic,” she said. “Oh Leanne, you are so pretty it is unbelievable! I think that we are going to besties, if that is what you would like.”

Leanne was momentarily surprised, but she said in a half mumble – “That would be really nice.” It seemed that she had suddenly been confronted by the fact that she had no “bestie”. She had scores of friends who she had enjoyed sex with and would enjoy sex with again, but what kind of friends are those?

“I want to be honest with everybody when I say that I have never been comfortable with Liam as a gay man, but as a woman and a daughter, I find I am happy,” said Connor, looking Leanne in the face

Leanne considered telling the family what she knew, but instead she adopted a passive role, which was one she understood. Somehow it as easier in a dress, with her hands in her lap and a satisfied smile on her face. She was giving this round to her father.

Afterall, he had been good to all of them. It did not take much to realize that he was uncomfortable with Liam’s queerness, but he loved his sons regardless. They all knew that well before their mother had dies, but after that tragedy it seemed to be made clear. That had worked through it together, with mutual love. It made it easier to know that they were a family, and a family is a better memorial than a marble headstone, but like marble it needs attention to shine on.

The older brothers had done their bit, and their father everything else. What had Liam given? His contribution to the welfare of the family as a whole was … nothing came to Leanne’s mind. And yet, she knew the offer from Christian - there was the chance for him to change everything for the good.

“When do you start college, Kev?” trilled Leanne.

“Well, I have some good news to report there,” said the oldest brother. “You know that application I made last year which was turned down, well, I have just been advised that there is a vacancy if I want it. Who would have thought that I would get into an ivy league university? If I can afford it I would love to go.”

“You should go,” said Connor. “We will find a way to afford it, together. You too, Pat, if you applications this year are successful. If you have the chance for the best education you can get, take it. Learning is the one thing that nobody can take away from you.”

He did not look at Leanne, but Leanne knew that it was aimed at her. She smiled, and then offered to help Margot in the kitchen.

“I suppose that you are listening to this,” Leanne whispered. “You have done a great job on me. I actually feel a bit like a girl. But just so you know, I would rather lose my hands that lose my cock!”

“Don’t be silly - You’ll need you right hand to sign the marriage register and the left hand to wear the ring,” Margot wryly observed. “You won’t be needing the cock when you have a real man to make love to you.”

“I know he’s your boss, and frankly I think he is so goddam sexy that it hurts, but I am not sacrificing my junk to have sex with Christian Warbeck,” said Leanne adamantly.

They sat down to dinner. Margot sat next to Connor as the hostess, and they talked. The brothers talked and Leanne found herself swapping seats to sit next to Nicolette.

“Who long have you known that you were transgender?” her new bestie asked.

“To be honest I am still not sure,” said Leanne, although in her own mind this was all untrue. “I am attracted to men, and I love so many girly things, but dressing and presenting as female is something new for me. It is not drag, that I have done. It is a new way for living. I like the color and the freedom it gives me, but I am not sure that I could ever live like this.”

“You are certainly pretty enough,” said Nicolette. “Does your boyfriend approve?”

“Which one?” teased Leanne. But she expected all her men would disapprove. All except Christian. “There is one who wants me like this, but it is my call, not his.”

“You are absolutely right, Girl,” said Nicolette.

Hours later, as she as leaving, they hugged as besties. “Perhaps we should go shopping together? Or to a spa? Or just hang out as two girls in the city?” said Nicolette.

“That would be great!” Leanne was ready to live another few days like this, just for fun.

After the brothers and her friend was gone, and Connor had gone to his study to collect papers for the morning, Margot pressed the point – “For the good of your family you should choose the life of a woman and a wife,” she said.

“I like you Margot, but as I told you, I am a man, and that is not going to change. As gay man is no less of a man. You need to tell Christian to get over his homophobia and step out of the closet. If he does that, I will be waiting for him. I will not be a woman for him.”

Leanne went up to bed, stepping out of her clothes and into bed as Liam.

But that was to be the last time he did. Connor left for work as usual, without expecting to see his idle son in the morning. But Liam was not sleeping. He was unconscious. Margot had seen to that. And she was to see to much more besides.

Leanne did not wake up in her own bed, or Liam’s bed as it was, but in a sterile hospital bed located in a place that was not a hospital, and she awoke in pain.

It did not take long to find the source of that pain. The breasts were within easy reach, but that was little more than discomfort compared to the groin. She could feel only bandages, but underneath them she could feel no bulge, even as Liam’s mind told him that everything was there, it was just on fire.

“Help! Help me!” It was all he could think to shout. It was his voice but higher somehow. He reached to the throat but could feel no bandage there.

There was silence. There was a monitor beside the bed and tubes to the right arm. She threw her head back willing this to be a dream and forcing awakening. But the pain proved this was reality.

In desperation she imagined a complex practical joke. Mock medical devices and a tight bandage over genitals rubbed in liniment or chilli oil, on top of compelling him to wear female clothes here was the pretence of post-operative transsexuality. Could it be pretense? Was Christian playing with Liam? Was his father in on it? Margot must have been. She reached back down between her legs. She started to softly sob tears.

A man appeared. He wore scrubs including a cap, but he appeared to be no doctor – a brute of man in a sterile garment.

“I have pain relief if you want it,” the man said, holding up a syringe. “I can stick the needle into this bag and it will go straight into you.”

“Where am I? And what have you done to me?” said Leanne.

“Not saying and I don’t know,” said the man. “Do you want this or not?”

Leanne nodded. Just as he said the effect was close to immediate.

“All I can tell you is that you are no longer a man, if you ever were one,” said the man. “The doctor will visit but I am here to blindfold you and restrain you when he does. He does not want to be recognized. This operation was off the books, as it were. But by all accounts, this guy is the best. I am told that you will have all the sensations of a woman.”

“You have to get me out of here,” said Leanne.

“Even if I wanted to, I wouldn’t,” said the man. “You have had major surgery. You try to get out of bed and you could do yourself an internal injury. Hell, getting flustered like this is not going to be good for you. Just lie back and take in the sedative. You can’t fight what has already happened, Sweetheart.”

Sweetheart? Leanne did fall back into the pillows. This man was talking to a woman. No man had ever called Liam Sweetheart, not even one who was trying to get into his pants.

The pain was gone for now, and would take a while to return, and even longer after the next shot, and longer after the one after that.

There was food too. Bottles of post-surgical liquid nourishment that would have been disgusting had Leanne not been so hungry.

It might have been more than a day – there was no natural light – when the nursing gorilla came with a hood and straps to secure Leanne of the doctor’s visit.

A voice spoke to her, but it was muffled and perhaps even distorted – “Does this hurt? I am going to remove the packing. Can you feel this?”

“What have you done to me?” said Leanne.

“Gender reassignment surgery,” he said. “A successful operation. But rehabilitation is up to you. I am providing three different formers – dildoes if you like. Use the smallest to the largest. In an out and rotate. A daily regimen. It is all written down. You will have female sexual function in a month or so.”

“Doctor, I am the patient here and I am sure that you have professional standards, so if you can tell me who is behind this then perhaps you could be spared prosecution,” said Leanne.

“I am afraid that my standards have been compromised for money,” the muffled voice said. “I can only say that the money she offered will allow me to save somebody very close to me.”

She? Not Christian then. But surely, he is behind this?

“We will care for you for another few days and then I have been asked to have you delivered, blindfolded, to a location of your choice,” said the voice.

“The nearest police station,” snapped Leanne.

“If a police station is what you want, we can do that,” said the voice, but it was clear that was not going to be the drop-off point.

“A hospital that can undo what you have done,” said Leanne.

“No such place exists,” said the voice. “Tissue has been disposed of. There is no rebuilding what has been taken away. When you came to me I saw and an attractive young woman lying on my table, so I assumed that you were transgender. If you are telling me that you are not, then I am sorry that I took this contract, but my suggestion is that you consider adapting to what you have before considering life between the sexes, as neither man nor woman.”

Leanne heard the sound of rubber gloves coming off, as some final gesture before his departure.

“Nurse Cratchit says that I will have feeling down there … like a woman?” said Leanne.

“I promise that you will,” said the voice. “100% of my patients report orgasms better than anything experienced as a man.”

Those words lingered after he had gone.

“Why are you not masked?” Leanne asked her attendant, and the hood and straps were removed.

“Because I am nobody,” he said.

And so it was nobody who delivered Leanne Dunn to the home of her father, allowing her to step out of the back of an unmarked van late one evening, wearing a dress and carrying a bag full of necessary equipment. To say that Leanne had resolved her course from here would not be entirely correct, but she was partly resigned to her fate, and partly bent on vengeance.

Leanne’s father was there. She looked at him accusingly but found herself unable to speak, or unwilling to use the voice she now had.

“Liam, where have you been these last few nights? I was worried sick,” said Connor. “And why are you still wearing women’s clothing?”

“Nice try, Dad,” squeaked Leanne. “You know the answer to that, and here it!” Leanne pulled down the front of her dress so that her father could see the cleavage and see that the breasts were real. “And I am not going to give you the pleasure of seeing what has been done to me below the belt.”

“What are you talking about?” Connor exclaimed. “I had nothing to do with this. It was to be your choice. Christian Warbeck promised me. I would never have agreed to anything you did not want, believe me. What has he done to you? I need to call him, straight away.”

It suddenly occurred to Leanne that her father might be telling the truth.

“Not by telephone, Dad. We need to see him. We need to confront him with his crime. We need to tell him that we are going to the police. He has ruined my life. Look at me, Dad. I’m a eunuch … with tits.”

“It’s late. Perhaps you need rest. Should we take you to the hospital first? Do you think there is anything they can do?”

“Frankly, no,” said Leanne, resigned to the fact but angry for it. “Let’s go to his home now. Do you have a gun in the house, Dad?”

“We are not doing that,” said Connor. “But, yes, we will confront him.”

On the way out the door Leanne grabbed the bag. For some reason it seemed the right thing to do. She even considered freshening her lipstick when she took a look in the vanity mirror. It seemed that the eyeliner was tattooed on, and the eyelashes tinted and curled, but the lipstick was messy. It would have to stay that way. This was not what she wanted.

Connor rang the bell. “I am here with Liam,” he said into the microphone.

“Great,” said Christian, as if oblivious to the trouble he was in.

When the door opened Leanne, still in the dress and with her hair a ness of disarranged curls, forced her way past him to stake her claim to the middle of the living room, as the epicenter of the explosion to come.

“Are you happy, you bastard!” shrieked Leanne in that voice that was likely to make anything sound hysterical.

“Hey, calm down,” Christian lifted his hands. “I am happy to see you still dressed as I like to see you, but where have you been? Why haven’t you responded to my calls and text messages?”

Leanne was puzzled. She reached in her bag for her phone. It was there, but off. She switched it on and it started to boot up.

“You know where I was!” screamed Leanne. “I don’t! Some shit-hole where your ghouls did their work on me, under the watchful gaze of that woman Margot. What is she? Some kind of hit woman?” She could see her phone up now. Scores of missed calls and messages from Christian and a couple from her father and few men seeking a casual hook-up.

“Margot is my old nanny,” said Christian. “I sent her around to help at your house. She is still on the payroll, but she is more like a mother to me, or she would like to be. The poor thing, she is a little demented but she adores me, and only wants the best for me, but …”. He stopped, and his face dropped suddenly. “What has she done?” he said, with a face like thunder.

“I can’t believe that you had no hand in this,” said Leanne. She was starting to cry. It was all too much, and she was tired, and her body was full of hormones.

“What?” said Christian.

“This,” said Leanne, pulling down the front of her dress. “A this!” lifting her skirts.

“Oh my God!” said Christian. “I won’t say that I did not want this, but not without your agreement. Now how can you love me the way I wanted. The way I love you. You have been attacked and injured. What can I say? What can I do? Oh Leanne, believe me, I had no hand in this.”

Did she believe him? She looked at her father for reassurance. Connor saw it.

“Do you swear that this was not your doing,” Connor asked Christian.

“I think that you know that I am a man of honor, Sir,” said Christian. “I made you a proposition. I have kept my part of it, and we were waiting for Leanne. I would never hurt her. I love her.” He turned to Leanne. “I love you, but I love the woman I want you to become, not the gay boy.”

“So do you love me now?” said Leanne. “Because let me tell you, I am as sore as a boil and looking for blood.”

“God yes, I love you, Leanne.”

Leanne turned to her father. “You can leave now Daddy,” she said.

The End

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