

A Change of Mind



Dee Dee Perri

A "New Woman" Novel

Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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A CHANGE OF MIND

By Dee Dee Perri

CHAPTER 1

Jeff had tried to describe his out-of-body experiences to whomever would listen but nobody believed him.

Today he had even gone to a shrink.

Gads! What a waste!

“Metaphorically speaking, of course...” the old man had begun.

“No! No!” Jeff had retorted. “It actually happens. I CAN leave my body!”

It was an expensive lesson in frustration. Never again, he promised himself. No more ridicule, incredulous glances or people nodding their head behind his back with a doleful look muttering...poor Mr. Parker.

He would keep it to himself. There! Enough said!

Maybe as a small consolation for his aborted visit to the shrink, the fates had allowed him to discover a seat in the crowded subway car. At least he wouldn't have to stand on the long ride home.

The vacant seat next to him was greedily claimed by an enormous woman. Her massive rear end and fat filled thighs spread out as the seat received her bulk. The lateral thrust of her flesh shoved him firmly against the adjacent bulkhead.

Jeff was suddenly and completely immobilized. He felt claustrophobic, like he was going to be crushed or worst yet, smothered. This was not the first time Jeff had experience panic in a confined space, nor was it the worst bout he had ever experienced.

He knew what he had to do.

He concentrated on his breathing: deeply and slowly; deeply and slowly he told himself. The trick was to ignore the fact that his body was completely trapped by the woman's bulk.

As the car continued to fill, even standing room reached a premium. Finally an old gentleman with a huge gut dominated his field of view.

With nowhere to go and now closed in from all directions, Jeff's anxiety escalated. He was beginning to lose it. His breathing became more ragged as his heart rate accelerated. He tried to shut everything out of his mind. He reminded himself that in a few minutes he would be at the next stop. One can tolerate absolutely anything for a few minutes, right?

The train doors remained open as if time itself had stopped. It wasn't just the wait that was becoming increasingly intolerable. A seemingly endless stream the commuters continued to squeeze aboard in nearly impossible numbers.

Jeff's anxiety was now alarm. He couldn't breathe! Smothered in the crush of flesh, he couldn't move...he couldn't escape. The old man immediately in front of him was brutally shoved from behind. The man's protruding gut smashed against Jeff's face. The press of humanity was no longer an impression but a vivid reality. Flesh was closing in from all sides! Abruptly, panic swept away reason.

ESCAPE!

Never before had Jeff achieved an out-of-body experience in public. But there he was, above and safely removed from the horrid crush. Instantly a sense of relief surged through his consciousness, his claustrophobic impulse was gone. His uncon-

scious body, supported by the mass around him, looked uncommonly peaceful, relaxed. When seen from this perspective, the swarm of humanity no longer seemed so frightening.

Jeff's relief was short lived however.

With a lurch the train began to move. And in that instant Jeff learned a fundamental truth regarding the physics of his out-of-body existence. His conscious entity, that bodiless "self" still retained it's initial geophysical position. His physical body, firmly wedged between the partition and the fat lady, was leaving along with everything and everyone that was contained within the vehicle.

Jeff's conscious self made a desperate dive toward his receding corpse.

He missed his body! An old woman yelped as his consciousness attempt to slip into hers. Abruptly, almost instantaneously, Jeff felt his consciousness forcibly repelled. Now disorientated, Jeff was completely unprepared when his essence crashed into yet another body.

And again he was expelled.

As the train picked up speed, the rate at which bodies seemed to smash into his consciousness accelerated. More and more, faster and faster until the union and rejection melted into a single, continuous, hellish stream. Emotionally and intellectually he was overwhelmed as the universe exploded into unimaginable disorder.

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When awareness finally returned, Jeff's consciousness floated above the now empty tracks. How long had he been there? He had absolutely no idea. Jeff realized, with horror, his essence had dissipated considerably. His sensory capacities, or what passed for such abilities in this dimension, were severely degraded as well.

The station platform was beginning to fill with commuters once again. He could scarcely hear the forming multitude, or SEE anyone! He moved toward the now silent, shadowy, humanoid blobs. With each passing moment he could sense his existence unraveling and his psychic essence weakening.

Now, out of desperation, he attempted to unite with the nearest form. Fine threadlike elements extending in apparent random patterns filled the amorphous shape. Even as he tried to slip into this network, the structure reacted in an amebic fashion, quickly surrounding Jeff's consciousness and then forcibly expelling him from the safety of the seemingly random matrix.

Moving from form to form, obeying an increasingly urgent need, Jeff repeated his efforts. Without a body, his life force would soon expire, of that he was now certain!

And each attempt was costing him irreplaceable resources.

The multitude that now occupied the platform gave Jeff nearly an endless supply of opportunities. But there would not be enough time or energy to try them all. Finally, even as his sensations dimmed to a final twilight he saw one form that was different from all the rest. The threads making up the form lacked the brilliance so obvious in the others he had tried.

In a final, desperate lunge, Jeff's consciousness met and entered the network. As before, the entity reacted to his presence, but slowly and with little vigor. Still it was not easy. Jeff's essence clung to the wriggling mass with all the power he had remaining.

Energy! Life! A solid existence began to form around him once again. Lights-images! Sounds! Flesh!

"OH Hell"! he gasped.

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It became all too obvious exactly how, after all the failed attempts, he had managed to hitch a ride on this particular being. It wasn't just that the eyes refused to come into focus or that the field of view swayed with disconcerting randomness, no!

A wrenching sickness welled up in his patron's stomach. The acid taste of vomit was rising up in their common throat. God how Jeff hated throwing up. And unlike his close companion, he would have to ride it out "nearly" sober.

Nearly sober?

Already his awareness began to synchronize with the new body he inhabited. Even as he felt the surge of vomit up his throat, the intense spasms of his diaphragm and the involuntary

opening of his mouth, he was becoming giddy with the drug or alcohol that ran through their common system. He hardly noted or cared between the drug induced disorientation and discomfort when his borrowed hands flashed into view. As the body bent at the waist, a mass of hair descended around his face. Finally the body relieved itself of its burden.

The proper owner of the body was on the lowest edge of consciousness, indeed, it was all that Jeff could do to keep the body from collapsing into an unmanageable heap.

Her?

The small, slight hands with the slender fingers that terminated in vivid red nails that he had just seen could only belong to a female. For the first time, he made a determined effort to control the body. Although the body continued to sway and the eyes still refused to focus properly, Jeff managed to look down. The blurry vista of well defined cleavage eliminated any remaining doubt.

All of this took place in seconds.

The first thing Jeff wanted was to be reunited with his errant body and the last thing that he could afford was to be arrested for disorderly conduct. It seemed likely that when his host recovered her full mental capacity, he might very well find himself flung into that dark never-never land from which he had just escaped.

No! A few hours in a drunk tank could be the death of him. He had to find his body before he lost control of this one. With a supreme effort he threw the borrowed body through the closing train doors.

Jeff took little notice of the press of bodies around him, some considerably more intimate than he would have expected. But for once the crush served a useful function; it kept the body standing.

It took all of Jeff's attention just to keep the legs locked so that he wouldn't fall to the floor. At the first stop, he fell into a seat. The blissful release from his Herculean effort was almost his undoing. As soon as he began to relax, he started to slide into unconsciousness. With a jerk he forced his borrowed body to stand once again.

“Twenty minutes, that’s all I need to get home!” he kept repeating like a mantra under his breath. And then what? He would have to take things one step at a time, that’s all. How long would it take to find his body? How long would the proper owner of this body allow him to remain? Would he die today?

He gritted HER teeth and hung on literally for dear life.

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The trip seemed to last for an eternity. Between the constant struggle to retain both physical and emotional control, there passed several more waves of incipient nausea.

And her bladder! He expected to feel a warm stream of urine flowing down his leg at any moment.

As he lunged for the door at his stop, he became all too aware of the heels and tight skirt. But it wasn’t just the lack of coordination engendered by his unfamiliar garb, his sense of balance had been whacked by whatever she had ingested.

He caught himself as he started to enter the Men’s room.

“Ho Nellie!”

The feminine voice that rose from his throat and slipped through his full lips grabbed his attention and brought him back to the uniqueness of his predicament. He was in a woman’s body. On unsteady legs he pulled back from the abyss, turned and entered the relative safety of the Women’s rest room.

His, or rather HER bladder screamed for release. He slapped at three stall doors before he finally found one that was unoccupied. Tottering there on his high heels, he lifted his skirt, inserted his thumbs into the tops of the panty hose and yanked them down towards his knees and then squatted and let go- it felt so GOOD!

For the first time in nearly half an hour, Jeff didn’t feel as if he were on the brink of instant, total disaster. He wasn’t nauseated, at the moment at least. He was sitting down and alone, well, more or less alone. A spiky heeled shoe, just visible under the stall partition, shifted suddenly as its owner prepared to leave.

A minute later Jeff also left the rest room and started the long walk home.

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Night was descending and the Southern California air was rapidly cooling. The almost chilly breeze that sprang up and the effort of walking was doing wonders for Jeff's borrowed body. For the first time he was actually aware of his new form. The previously muted sensations of flesh and bone became increasingly crisp and immediate.

He could now feel the hem of his skirt as it slid along his nylon encased legs until they caught and restrained his stride. His breasts, swaying side to side with each rolling motion of his hips, struggled against the confines of his bra.

The click of his heels rang in the South Pasadena night; each step signaling to the world that here was a woman!

The sound changed abruptly as he swept up the cobblestone walkway toward the back door of his house. His BMW gleamed brightly in the otherwise muted twilight that had seeped into his garage. Finally, with fumbling fingers he found the spare house key and unlocked and entered his home. He hurriedly entered his study.

He could now feel her presence, dimly, as if at a great distance. His host was returning to consciousness!

But he could determine nothing more than that. A presence without content. He tried to tell her in thoughts and images exactly what had happened but he had no way to know whether or not she received his messages.

Finally he began to talk out loud as if by doing so she might hear and understand more readily and not be afraid.

"My name's Jeffrey Parker. I'm a System's Engineer...for Ma Bell. I know it sounds crazy but I lost my body and borrowed yours. Sorry. Really! As soon as I find my body I'll get out of yours. I PROMISE!"

Even as he talked, he booted up his Sun Work Station. The 34 inch, high resolution screen snicked on. In moments he was in communication with the Metro data channel. His normal, almost lightning quick key strokes turned his ordered commands into hash as his errant nails intruded.

Finally, slowly, poking each key deliberately with but the tip of one of his long finger nails, he began to configure his system.

If his body had been found anywhere along the nearly 200 miles of the Metro system, he would know.

“Please, be patient.” he called out to his unseen companion. “A few minutes more.”

After he had created his search module, he leaned back against the chair and waited. Within seconds, the screen began to scroll with the requested data. At the end of nearly 10 minutes it was clear that the system found NO TRACE of his missing body!

Tears of anxiety welled up in his borrowed eyes as he began to set up a wide scale sweep of hospitals, emergency wards, clinics and even police data traffic.

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More than an hour had been spent in front of the computer now. Jeff swilled down his second cup of over cooked coffee. The bitter taste caused his female body to shudder momentarily and his none too stable stomach immediately threatened to rebel. The sick, sour smell wafted up from the front of his vomit stained blouse and jacket.

Jeff was hopelessly over extended with the flood of, as yet, useless data that paraded across the screen and the growing nausea was simply the last straw. Again speaking out loud for the benefit of his host he said, “I hope you don’t take offense but- I think that a change of clothes is in order.”

He stood there listening for a few moments but no reply was evident. He finally pushed himself away from the work station and headed upstairs to the master bedroom.

There was still a whole closet full of Megan’s clothes.

A regular clothes horse, he thought to himself. The negative image helped to still the pain he still felt every time he was reminded of his wife.

She had dumped him, abruptly and coldly, for the wealthy embrace of her new lover.

Jeff’s borrowed skin crawled as he recalled his resentment and anger. He plucked at the leavings, her discards, at random until he found a simple house dress. He held it against his body: a little large but it would do.

He tossed it on to the bed and entered the bathroom.

The image that the mirror flung back at him hit with a jolt. A total stranger stood there mimicking his every gesture. It was hard to judge the face considering the strain that showed in the eyes and the wrecked hair and makeup: used up, tired looking but passably attractive. The body, on the other hand was lush, fully mature and completely feminine. As he twisted his body to the side and back he could affirm the substantial swell of his breasts, hips and fanny.

“Nice.” He said out loud. “Really, you’re quite attractive. I hope you understand.”

He shrugged his shoulders as if to say sorry and then, with fluttery feelings welling up in his stomach, started to unbutton his blouse.

If she was directly aware of his consciousness then there would be no hiding from her the sexual surge that was erupting. His masculine mind was responding to the adequate stimulus before him. And yet the response was being carried by this female body. Downright strange, he thought, as he felt his clit engorge and his vagina begin to lubricate.

“Sorry.” he muttered out loud to his omnipresent partner. “It’s just an involuntary reaction. Too many months without sex and well...” he stammered to an embarrassed conclusion.

The buttons were all backwards or something and the long unfamiliar nails didn’t help but eventually he solved the challenge of the blouse for it now flapped open. He wiggled out of the slick, clinging top, all the while watching with fascination at HIS boob’s reaction. It was like a striptease but with a unique twist, he was both the audience and the show itself.

In spite of himself, he could hardly wait to see the breasts and yet he felt embarrassed at the same time. Once free of their confinement, they bounced in a complex and hypnotic dance in a delayed response to every movement of his body. It wasn’t just the sight of them wiggling about, pinwheeling this way and that- that so completely caught his attention but the sense of their warm, substantial mass pulling and twisting against his chest that really brought home their “reality”. Like the clit, the tan nipples were engorged. The erect, blood swollen points seemed to be directly connected to his cunt.

A tactile bolt surged down his spinal cord and entered his female groin the instant his tentative fingers lightly slid across one of these rigid, elongated cones. A groan grew in his throat as he wanted to continued to pull and twist at these elastic knobs. Beads of sweat were beginning to form on his forehead and a distinct flush was darkening his neck. Jeff sat down heavily on the side of the tub.

Too much! He paused to get his breath and to quiet the mounting lust. No time for this and besides, this was rape, of sorts. If only he could communicate with his host. God! He wondered what she was thinking. Was this hell for her? He might never know unless he could set her free again.

Finally he returned to this business of undressing his female body.

As he worked the panty hose down, he could not help but appreciate the soft, smoothness of his legs. The slender, hairless limbs and tiny feet were so unlike his own. Even the toe nails were shaped and painted. It was obvious that the owner of this body put a lot of effort into its maintenance. He stood up again.

All that remained was the panties. Like the bra, it was made of some kind of nylon material that gave it a metallic sheen but was as soft as a doe's eye. And elastic too, for even though it clung to his groin like a second skin, it slipped easily over his ample hips and soft, round bottom and collapsed into a puddle of softness at his feet.

There was nothing there between his legs to suggest the maleness that now resided inside this form. The triangle of hair was a familiar sight, but not from this exact perspective.

The legs seemed unusually long but again, he had never seen a woman's body exactly from this perspective before.

Steam billowed around him as he opened the door and extended one dainty foot into the shower.

The warm embrace of the hot water skittering down his body, the slippery slickness of his lathered skin, the feel of the full breasts and rounded contours and most of all the feel of being touched in a body already on fire was just too much for Jeff. His resolve melted in the flare of his own passion. Cautiously but with a will rewarded by raw pleasure, Jeff began to masturbate. With one hand working between his legs, alternating between his

clit and vagina, and the second, stroking his breasts and toying with his erect nipples, his legs melted under him. As he slid to the floor of the shower, his body poised on the brink of eruption, muscles inside him began to quiver expectantly. Suddenly the shower door snapped open with a metallic snick. MY GOD! he observed with a rude shock.

Jeff had never appreciated exactly how tiny he had become until he confronted “himself” standing there. Jeff, or rather Jeff’s old body towered above him even after he scrambled up. Craning his neck upward to hold his old visage in his gaze, Jeff saw that the man’s face- rather...his face, well it was all so confusing.

“WHO IN THE HELL ARE YOU..” Jeff or rather Jeff’s male self yelled. The man’s eyes grew wide in shock in reaction to the unanticipated image. There was a total stranger in his shower!

A naked, blond and obviously female person who, for reasons unknown, had been clutching her genitals while sitting prone on the floor of HIS shower. After a brief but pregnant pause he sputtered in a slightly more civil tone, “How’d you get in? Why?” He was at last- speechless as a continuous stream of conflicting emotions cascaded through his awareness: embarrassment, surprise, anger, but most of all confusion. He looked around to confirm that this was indeed HIS bathroom, HIS house.

As startled as the male Jeff was, that was nothing compared to the shock given to the male consciousness that now resided inside the blond, female body.

Me? He kept repeating to himself. How is that possible? Me? Thank God!

As he turned off the water and reached for a towel, his mind was a whirl of questions and some growing relief. His body had found its way home!

“Hang on- Ah Jeff! I’ll be right out” Pulling on a bathrobe but still dripping wet he followed his retreating male self into the bedroom.

His body- it HAD to be JUST a body! was sitting on the side of the bed. The body’s face carried a worried, almost hangdog expression, it was undoubtedly inhabited by some kind of consciousness. That fact alone was driving Jeff to distraction. How was this possible. But before he could issue an inquiry the body spoke.

“Megan? Did she put you up to this? Damn her! What next? Some damn photographer is supposed to ”pop-in” and catch us...right?”

Jeff’s feminine features took on an incredulous look.

His old body nodded dumbly and then his eyebrows crunched together as he queried again. “So who are you?”

Jeff didn’t know exactly what to say to that. He’d have to take this one small step at a time. “A friend?”

“Must be SOME friend!” the man erupted as he continued to look at the dripping wet woman now wrapped in his bathrobe. Dark suspicion lurked in his hooded eyes.

Jeff’s small, borrowed body made him feel vulnerable and his much bigger male self was decidedly hostile. Nervously he walked over and sat down next to his old body. Tentatively he hovered there on the edge of flight and folded his small hands on his lap. The body- HIS BODY was there- right before him!

In spite of his anxiety, he couldn’t take his eyes off of it. So close and yet still so far from safety. How could he even begin to explain. But then why waste breath when all he had to do was jump into it.

Then all the questions would be answered- all at once! And this abnormal existence would be terminated once and for all.

Even while his male self continued to glower down at him, Jeff drew together his essence and prepared to leap back into where he belonged- his own body!

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It hadn’t worked! Although he had felt, momentarily, what seemed to be his male essence leaving this feminine body followed by a mild disorientation, it was all too obvious that he was STILL trapped inside HER!

If anything, his male self seemed even more hostile- more agitated than a few moments before. He suddenly became aware of his exposed condition. Somehow his terry cloth robe had fallen open, exposing his naked, vulnerable form. Embarrassed, he covered his exposed breasts with one hand. With but a momentary hesitation he extended the other hand toward his male self.

“Hello, I don’t think we have been properly introduced. My name is AH-!” His cheeks broke into a bright crimson red as his voice strained to finish, “Jeff Parker!”

CHAPTER 2

He was looking down at the two bodies below him. The woman, his former host, fell back on the bed like a sack of flour. As she fell, her arms splayed out across the bed and her robe gaped open. First one and then the other breast poked out from behind the terry cloth.

The male body- his REAL body- recoiled from the collapsing woman.

Jeff gathered in his ethereal essence and dove down into the luminescence that was his body. The grid work flared at the instant of contact. Stunned, Jeff found himself once again above and still outside himself. Three more times he attempted to rejoin his body.

With each rejection, he could feel his existence dim.

The woman had pulled herself up again by this time. Her features were no longer slack.

Resigned to obvious failure, at least for the moment, Jeff once again drew together his dissipating “self” and dropped down on his host body. Tendrils of Jeff’s pseudo plasma entered her matrix through a raw gap that was only now beginning to close.

Too late! Jeff clung, desperately to that one opening for as long as he could but the woman’s matrix finally blocked off his essence and then, with a powerful, almost painful surge, it expelled him.

An exhausted, confused and frightened entity now floated above the couple that continued to interact as if they were alone in the bedroom!.

She was extending her hand toward his old body as if to invite a hand shake.

In Jeff’s weakened condition, he watched their rapidly fading forms interact in the absence of sound. Like watching an old black and white silent film. In no way did they act as if they had any awareness of his existence but a scant few inches above their

heads. Nor did they seem to be aware of his painful plight. From the body he had given back to its rightful owner, no sign of appreciation was evident. Their life obviously was continuing, but his?

Death, real death, was only minutes away. He could not continue without a body, that was clear. Why had his body not accepted him back, it had always done so before. Why could he not return to his host? He gradually drifted through the ceiling, then through the roof and finally into the early evening air above his house, lost, confused and afraid.

Jeff's bodiless self, his "essence" eventually reached a conclusion in this state between life and death. He was no more Jeffrey Parker than the skin of a snake after it had been shed was a snake. His consciousness must have been created by his brain and, in his absence from his body, his brain had simply re-created "HIM". The body could live without his essence but he could not live without his body.

I'm a goddamn Ghost! He hung on to that thought as he continued to drift higher and higher into the black night.

BUT I EXIST! he railed. *I think, therefore I am...Voltaire, right? Besides, my body is alive, so how can I be a ghost?*

But he realized that none of that really mattered. What mattered was that he existed!

What mattered was that he wished to continue to exist. Indeed, his desire for life had never been stronger, more compelling, than it was at this moment as he faced almost certain extinction. It hadn't been bad at all existing in that woman's body. He didn't have to have his own. Any body would do. But quickly, he had to find a body- soon. And not just any body, but one that would allow entry. Someone unconscious or maybe asleep or maybe weakened by drugs or whatever! Something, some condition had allowed his entry into that woman at the subway station!

Suddenly he realized he knew exactly where to find what he needed.

His pseudo-impressions on the electromagnetic spectrum had already dimmed considerably. In spite of this, his target, a huge complex of buildings, was visible less than a mile away. With his remaining energy he flowed, as rapidly as he could, toward his destination and hopefully a continuation of...life?

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Ghoul or ghost, mused the ethereal remnant of Jeff, here is where the bodies are. His consciousness swept into one of the lower floors of Huntington Memorial Hospital. He was already in full eclipse. Almost blind and fully exhausted he found a room crowded with poorly defined matrices. A bonanza for the desperate!

He dove at random. The host offered absolutely no resistance.

Instantly he could feel his depleted existence surge with the rich life force. Even as the experience of flesh, sound and light came back into being however, a heavy, tiredness pulled him down and down. Against his will, without regard to the considerable effort that he committed to the control of his new host's muscles, he felt an overpowering command to sleep. He flailed his limbs ineffectively for a few brief moments before being fully overcome.

He was trapped like a wayward fly on fly paper!

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Later, possibly hours later, he had no way of knowing, something stirred him to consciousness once again. Maybe it was the fact that his host had been moved, or maybe it was the fact that his upper body had been exposed to chilly air but something wordless had drawn him up and out of the oblivion into which he had fallen. He found it frightfully difficult to open his eyes and when he finally succeeded, *everything* was out of focus. And then he saw IT!

Huge, almost frightening, it was rushing at him at a frightful speed!

It was a female breast the size of...his HEAD! It seemed to fill his universe. And the nipple! His mouth wouldn't fit around it, that was for sure. Jeff had always liked breasts- loved them in fact, but this was ridiculous! Abruptly his face was shoved tightly against this mammoth gland. Fingers, that could have belonged to King Kong, loomed briefly near his eyes and then, guided by some unseen force, shoved his whole face upon the nipple with a moist squish. Reflexively- blindly, Jeff's mouth began to suck! And the nipple reacted- vigorously.

The milk was sweet, almost too sweet for his mature mind to tolerate, but his host was greedy for it. The sucking continued vigorously and seemed to supersede all other behaviors. Jeff was trying, without success, to explore the situation. But his face, pressed firmly against the soft, warm mountain of flesh, allowed him no field of view at all. Indeed, all that he could see was breast! And the nipple, harder and more resistive, now completely filled and distended his mouth. With each suck, the harder, wrinkled member ejected copious quantities of the sweet fluid. His mouth was filled to overflowing. It dribbled down his chin and onto his baby chest. Suck-swallow. Swallow-suck!

One action seemed to compel the other in an endless cycle. Against his will, his eyes began to close once again and he could sense the overpowering desire for sleep. Warm, inside and out, the milk now flowed effortlessly, most now going down into his stomach. The last thing he heard was a woman's voice, a huge, loud voice that said, "Look, the poor dear is falling asleep. Wow! Tom? You got to see this, he's still sucking."

Somehow, this wasn't precisely Jeff's idea of a quality existence.

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The waiter, having just taken their order, turned away. At La Petit Mason, it would be some time before the first course would be served, plenty of time to talk.

He held his new hands together in front of him as if prayer. His long, dark red nails were just at the edge of his field of view as he stared at his male self setting across the small booth. He was surprised just how good looking he really was. Thirty-two years in that body, and he had never really seen himself. His angular chin just avoided appearing brutish. Aggressive, clean cut, rugged, yes! Rugged! From his heavy eye brows and a no nonsense nose to his square chin. Quite manly.

"Jeff?" His soft, feminine voice slithered across the thick cotton table cloth and interrupted his male aspect's introspection. "For the first time I think I finally understand why Megan married me."

"Hum?" His eyes swung around to look at his companion of the last few hours.

“All this time I thought that I was, you know, OK. But Jeff, from a few feet away and in this dim light, well I’m not half bad.”

“I’d appreciate you not bring HER up again. You can’t imagine how much it hurts...”

The blond woman abruptly sat up, her hands pressing down onto the table, glared across the table at her companion.

“HURT? YOU?” She shot back. “Since when is YOUR hurt any more than MINE?”

Jeff’s male aspect looked bewildered for a moment.

“Sorry I keep forgetting. You got to admit, it’s weird sitting here talking to yourself.”

“Shit.” Hissed Jeff’s female aspect. “You don’t know nothing about weird until you look down and see cleavage where God never meant it to be! Look mind-of-my-mind, body-of-my-body, less than five hours ago you and I were ”I” and don’t forget that. Everything you know- I know. And more!”

“More?”

His female aspect blushed, something she seemed to be particularly good at doing. With a droopy smile she said, “Yea, more...like in...basket case.”

Finally the first course arrived. As the feminine Jeff wolfed down the tiny offering, The male Jeff growled something under his breath.

“Huh?” Retorted the blond.

“You heard me. Christ, you eat like a- a- a man!”

“I’m hungry. Besides,” Jeff pouted with his lush lips. “If you think I’m going to sit here with limp wrists and play little birdie with my food you got another think coming. You want a dainty eater sitting across from you making moony eyes, your going to have to find a real gal.”

Jeff didn’t reply for a few moments. He just sat there looking at his alter ego. A small smile played across his lips.

“It is still the most incredible thing that I have ever heard of, kind of like smashing the atomic psyche- or something. I guess I just can’t help liking you. I mean, you’re absolutely unlike any woman I have ever known. I don’t have to ask, I know exactly

what you'll like and what you'll not like. Hell, you'll never try to get me to go to, I don't know..."

"Shopping!" The feminine Jeff interrupted with a giggle.

"Right! And you'll be just as avid a Dodger fan..."

"And I wouldn't have to explain the ..."

"Right!" Interrupted The male Jeff again. "You know, getting the Konrad report in, it's due..."

"Right!" The female Jeff jumped in. "Damn! Working together. It would be great to have someone..."

"You can trust." Jeff beamed across at his female companion. "Maybe we can finally..."

"Yeah! Start that consulting business, like I always..."

Jeff's large hand had quietly crossed the open space between them. He deliberately entrapped one of the small hands of his dinner companion. Like a small bird, it fluttered momentarily before accepting its cage. "I really think we could make a wonderful combination. It's like discovering a long lost, identical twin."

"No Jeff. Not a twin, identical or otherwise. No two humans have ever been as close as we. Not until this afternoon at least. I am you. You are me. One and the same."

Jeff's male half nodded solemnly. "But no longer exactly the same, right. If you stay in that body, you'll..."

"Change? Humbug. Why, 'cause I got tits, a slit between my legs and an ass that gets all wiggly when I walk? Because people will react differently to me than to ME?"

"Yeah babe. You got that right. See, like I'm looking at you right now. You are totally different in a fundamental way...like I'm getting aroused just looking at your boobies wiggling every time you gesture, like I would never really be comfortable holding a man's hand the way I'm holding yours at this moment."

Jeff's eyes widened as he blushed. He gently pulled his hand out of his alter ego's hand and tucked it down onto his lap, out of sight. His eyes followed. Both just sat there in a somber silence, the feminine with down cast eyes and the male, still looking at his empty hand. Neither moved. Neither sought a verbal advantage at this moment. The actual enormity of what had happened

and what might yet lie before them was now fully revealed. Throughout most of the meal that followed, both remained relatively silent, introspective.

There was still the problem of the real owner of this female body. Morally, they both knew that it had to be returned to her. But both now realized that their newly created relationship was simply too valuable to throw away. A potential intimacy that probably no one ever before had attained. And yet? Knowing someone that well, might it not turn into some kind of horror?

And finally, there was still the problem of sex. For the male Jeff, it seemed to be no insurmountable issue. But for the female? The male consciousness lurking in the petite female body still retained his male identity. He still found the female form “sexy”. And men, they were people you could talk to, enjoy in many ways, but sex?

Yes, of the two of them, Jeff’s feminine aspect was far less sure of the direction to be taken.

XXXXX

The tiny infant was in a complete rage as the night nurse bent over to pick him up. His little hands, clutched at each side of his face, seemed to focus his surprisingly strong voice.

“Now, now.” she said as she held him against her bosom, the little head tucked against her neck. As she continued to coo to him, he began to hiccup between ever less frequent cries. “Now, now, that’s a good boy.”

Jeff was losing it.

He was completely at the mercy of this host body.

Jeff didn’t know for sure but he now suspected that the immature brain could not sustain the adult matrix. His memories were coming apart but not in a haphazard fashion. Like the layers of an onion, his most recent memories were in many cases but fragments while his older ones were still largely intact.

He knew he was an adult, that in fact he’d been or was? married to an amazing woman, but these “facts” were no longer fully connected.

The little boy that he had been was becoming more and more real with each passing hour. Skills, especially skills he had developed in the last decade, were becoming obscure abstractions.

He could feel his host body beginning to relax. Next would come sleep. Maybe Jeffrey Parker would not be there at feeding time, whenever that was.

The world was becoming such a big, incomprehensible thing. It was fear of the loss of his identity that finally overcame the obstacles imposed by his body.

Once again, Jeff poised to leap into the great nothing.

The now familiar surge of displacement hit and then, all too quickly, was gone. As the dark oblivion of sleep began to come down over Jeff's consciousness, he knew that he had failed. His consciousness was still trapped inside this tiny frame.

He, Jeffrey Parker, would probably not survive the night.

He was afraid of the darkness that loomed before him. His identity was unpeeling at an alarming rate. Baby thoughts and baby dreams soon crowded out what remained of Jeff Parker.

The nurse clutched the newborn protectively when it jerked in her arms. She was wondering what one so young could be dreaming about. Ah, the mysteries of life, she mused. She loved working in the nursery.

XXXXXX

The latest projection of Jeff hovered over the nurse and her charge for only an instant. If his fleshless phantom could have shuddered, it would have. He had come so close to oblivion. But the damage his essence had suffered was considerable. He was too confused, too fragmented to even think about a meaningful course of action. He even contemplated finding his own body so as to end this madness, but he was horrified when he realized that he hadn't the faintest idea of where he would find it or even precisely where he was now.

Places and times were now terribly confusing.

He was only a boy now, his adult existence had been all but obliterated. The boy needed to heal. He needed a host- almost any host. He swept down the hall into another section of the hospital looking, once again, for a safe haven.

Something more mature.

XXXXX

The two Jeffreys did what most men do when they are avoiding dealing with something that makes them uncomfortable, they talked shop. The Konrad report was all but written as they examined the dessert tray. Possibly it was the pleasure of working together or of eliminating a bothersome task or more likely it was the effects of two bottles of wine and the after dinner drinks, but both had loosened up considerably. As soon as they were alone again, Jeff flipped back his long blond hair and wiggled deeper into his seat. Looking up at the ceiling as he took a drag on his cigarette he muttered something to himself.

“What?” Queried his male companion.

“Nothing. Well, ah- we can’t go on calling each other hey you and two Jeff’s in one house seems kind of, well confusing.” With a smirk on his face he said, “Why don’t you change your name to George, or something.”

“Me? Hey, I look a sight more like a Jeff than you sweetheart. How about Jill or maybe Tammy?”

“Yuck! You just can’t help but try to define me as a female can you!”

“Well if the suit fits...”

Abruptly the woman’s face took on a frightened look.

Jeff reached across the table and took both of his small hands into his. “What’s wrong?” He asked. His face was a mask of concern.

“I don’t think I could handle it.”

“What?”

“Getting pregnant. Geez! You ever actually look at a woman who is say 8-9 months gone? What it does to the body...”

“Hey! A pregnant woman can be beautiful, especially if you love her...”

“Easy for you to say. Put yourself in my place. Imagine, really imagine carrying around this tremendously huge beach ball. Waddling around, feet spayed out to keep from pitching over...”

His male counterpart was nodding his head in agreement, yeah, it's a pretty frightening concept all right if you try to apply it to yourself directly. "Maybe you need to get on the pill or something..."

"Or something is right. You know Jeff, I'm no one. I mean, no social security number, no work history, nothing. We're going to have to create a whole new identity before you can put me on your health plan- right!"

"Sounds like you're committed to keeping this body."

"No! But Jeff I tried to leave, to set her free. It even felt as if I had done it you know..."

"That's when you collapsed on the bed?"

"Huh? I don't remember..."

"You did. You just kind of fell over, maybe 10-20 seconds. Like a rag doll."

"Funny, I have absolutely no memory of that. One instant I felt the release and the next, you were there gaping at these *TITS*."

"Com'on let's blow this joint. It's getting late and I'm tired, really tired."

XXXXX

The night nurse continued working her way down the very long corridor. Some thirty minutes later, at the other end of the hospital and literally in more ways than one, at the other end of the world, lay "Alice", A.K.A. "Pip". Comatose since she arrived D.O.D., the woman, not more than twenty, was pronounced "brain dead" early this afternoon. The street urchin was already, in her brief life, an accomplished whore and petty thief. She lay there unclaimed by family or friends. Indeed, the log indicated "Family unknown"- "Residence Unknown".

The county had to pick up the tab, which explained why life support was terminated so quickly.

Now entering the small cubicle, the night nurse's eyes flicked over the monitor. The flat E.E.G. contrasted with Pip's E.K.G. record. Even without life support, the heart continued to beat and beat and beat. She should be dead by morning, that was the staff Physician's assessment- hope? The nurse made her entry and

documented the time. As the night nurse turned to leave, she noted that the girl's pale white hair caught and reflected back the green light from the cathode tube. Green, like a corpse- dead.

So alone and so young! the nurse thought. And this made her sad.

Nurse Piskins would have been amazed and then delighted to know, that a miracle had just occurred.

Pip's E.E.G. now etched out a complex, low frequency wave form that was reflected off the back of her white uniform as she turned and once again stepped into the hallway.

CHAPTER 3

The first wispy light of dawn transformed the gray-black shadows in the guest bedroom into a blushing pink landscape. The blond man-woman flung back the quilt, groaning as she-he clutched at his-her skull. The dilated pupils focused upon everything and yet saw nothing in the room.

A flood gate had been open!

Memories: hundreds followed hundreds more- in a frenzied, jumbled outpouring. Not just scenes and faces and words spoken, not just birthdays and Christmas mornings remembered, but feelings; emotions unexpressed, fears and hopes...

"Too many!" Groaned Jeff as he clutched his head in a vice-like grip. "Too...painful!"

He gasped, his borrowed heart accelerating until it threatened to tear itself apart.

LACY TRUEMAN? LACY TRUEMAN! It was Lacy Trueman's life, every bittersweet morsel of it, that had erupted, lanced into Jeff's consciousness and shredded his dreams. Her overbearing, and all too near, mother and three successful sisters. Her younger sisters! Successful in the only coin her mother understood: husband and children, and in that order! But not Lacy! And at 37, her biological clock ticked so loud it had threatened to drown out everything else.

It wasn't Lacy Trueman's consciousness that had found its voice but rather something even more overwhelming, the accumulated total of all HER experiences over the last 34 years now

leaking and mingling with the fragile aggregate that had been transferred from the male Jeff Parker. His fundamental essence was becoming tainted- shot through- with Lacy Trueman's memories.

Her memories and desires and fears and well, essence were now almost indistinguishable from the memories he had when he had gone to bed. So much so that "her" mother was now as much "his" as "his" was...well, almost and it was all very confusing. The experience of trying on "her" first bra, and how embarrassed and yet proud "she" was at that moment or when Charlie Palson grabbed a "feel" in the theater only to come away with tissue paper "she" had put in to make "her" breasts look bigger now nestled in with his memories of "himself" screwing Janet Abergast or watching, with fascination, Ms. Brown, his math teacher in 8th grade, lean across her desk. His thoughts and her thoughts were becoming a jumbled confusion.

And the outpouring continued.

She-he moved on his-her hands and knees toward the foot of the bed as if to escape this onrush of raw memory but finally "they" collapsed and curled into a fetal position, too spent to continue the escape. Her! More and more of HER existence welled up, diluting and weakening Jeff's residual consciousness until it seemed as if his male essence would be reduced to an abstraction. Yet it was his consciousness that continued to rule, for the real Lacy apparently had been obliterated.

Finally he rolled over on his back, opened his eyes and stared vacantly at the ceiling.

I am Jeffrey Parker in a woman's body. No! That can't be right! He extended his now full lower lip in a thoughtful pout.

Jeffrey Parker has breasts and wants to make babies, is that a man?

I am Jeffrey Parker, he thought. I am sure of that! Now his eyebrows formed into a frown. *And Jeffrey Parker IS a man! And I want...*

And he began to fantasize some of the things he might want. Absolutely WRONG images continued to intrude. He was being cuddled by....his former self- not Megan!