



“Get Help Quick” & “A Very Nice Man”

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Get Help Quick

If anyone is reading this, please get help quick. I am trapped. This is not a joke. I don't know how it happened, but it could be the work of renegade scientists or it might be a secret government experiment, or some other type of conspiracy. Maybe even an alien abduction scenario. All I know is that I'm trapped in the body of a middle-aged man and I'm only seventeen. I don't know what to do. Should I cut these hairs that have started sprouting out of my ears or will that just make them worse? And when I'm shaving, which I have to do every day because I've been told I'm too old to grow any fashionable stubble as the little flecks of white would make me look like a homeless person, I notice that my eyebrows are getting longer and more tangled. And then I stare into my own eyes, wondering how someone is supposed to behave when they have a job, a wife, a house, a six-year-old son, and a teenage daughter by a previous marriage. I'm only a kid.

The weird thing is, I sometimes get these strange experiences, almost like memories, as if thirty years really have passed since I was seventeen, but the memories are blurred and fuzzy, so I think they may have been implanted by the renegade scientists or whoever, like they did to the replicant babe in Blade Runner.

Imagine how scary all this is for me. Walk a mile in my shoes. Don't worry, I have another pair. In fact, I have around twenty other pairs. I also have a rail full of suits that all look the same. And a ton of other clothes. I even save old clothes, which my wife encourages me to keep in a special drawer. There's nothing wrong with these clothes and I'd be happy to wear them every day but I can only wear them when I do the chores, which are a series of pointless tasks that my wife asks me to perform around the house and garden. She seems to think I'm better at doing them than her, even though I'm not, and there are some that would be much easier, and cheaper, to get a professional to do.

Someone who knows how electricity really works, for example. But at least the chores give me a chance to wear the old clothes. Also, some of the work is simple and repetitive and I find that if I get tired enough I drift into a pleasant kind of fugue state. Whoa! What the hell was that? 'Fugue'? Where did a word like that come from? Maybe the same place as 'redolent' and 'liminal', both of which I used last night, describing some wine I was offering to a jobless hedge fund manager and his wife who were having dinner at our place. The really strange part is that I know what those words mean, and also all the words in the books that are on the little table by my bedside. Some of the books are okay. Don deLillo is pretty cool when he sticks to the point. And Martin Amis, when he can get over himself. But I keep thinking about the graphic novel I was into before all this happened, and wondering how it turned out for the hero, who was a champion snowboarder and also a secret mutant, but a good one, even though he was tormented by guilt about not being able to save his girlfriend from the meteor. John Updike just doesn't pack that kind of punch, apart from the sex scenes, which are pretty raunchy considering they take place between old married people. Like me! I have to keep reminding myself: I'm old, I'm married. Tomorrow at work I'm supposed to fire someone.

Wait - talking about wine has got me thinking. I'm a beer drinker, or I was until this happened. Actually, I only got into drinking pretty recently, when I was sixteen, at a party. My parents were very strict about drinking. Wow. My parents. Now, all of a sudden - thirty years later - my dad has passed away and my mother lives in a place where watching television in the same room as one or more other people is considered to be a vibrant social activity. Anyway, it was pretty much after my first beer that things got weird and I ended up in this insane situation. So, what I'm thinking is, maybe there was something in that drink. Wait, that would be alcohol. Right. I think I may have stumbled across a possible explanation for how this thing happened, where one minute I'm touching a girl's breasts for the first time and the next minute I have an accountant, and a wife with breasts that I can touch at times when it also makes her happy, although there's no way of telling exactly when those times might be, and a personal assistant whose breasts I can also touch at certain times, under very complex terms and conditions.

Okay, so even though I may know the explanation, I'm still a kid trapped in the body of a middle-aged man. There must be someone out there who can do something

about it. So, please, find them for me. But be careful not to choose someone else who is also a kid trapped in an adult body. I have a suspicion there are a lot of us. Sometimes I catch my accountant staring at me with a haunted, helpless look in his eyes, and I think maybe I should say something, but then the moment passes and I don't say anything. So, find a genuine adult, please. Don't look in the following places: any government institution or political organisation; anywhere connected with the entertainment industry; any place of education, except in the research departments of physics of lesser-known universities. Maybe try people who drive trains. Just a hunch. Go, now. Get help quick.

A Very Nice Man

Most of my clients are no trouble at all. You give them a bit of a massage, because that's what it says on the cards you put in the newsagents' windows, but after a few minutes with the baby oil and a bit of chat, you get on with it. I don't get many perverts, because I don't do much kinky stuff. But I had one client, he was a very nice man, and he wanted domination. You know, from a mistress. Not spanking or whipping, thank God, because that really makes your arms tired; no, he wanted me to make him scrub the kitchen floor. I had to pretend to be really cross with him and call him all kinds of names. Then I'd order him to scrub the floor. So, he'd start scrubbing, and I'd take the opportunity to nip out to the shops for half an hour. Trouble was, sometimes when I got back, I'd forget about the domination, and I'd go in the kitchen and he'd be there on his hands and knees, and I'd say, Ooh, that's lovely, that is, you've done a really thorough job, right into the corners, too! And then he'd look at me with a face like a robber's dog, and I'd have to say, No! Actually, your mistress is most displeased! You miserable worm, do it all again! And then he'd start all over again, happy as Larry. I really miss him, I can tell you: he gave that floor a lovely clean every week, and paid me forty quid for the privilege. But he moved away. I heard he's the Customer Service manager in a big electrical store, dealing with all the complaints. I expect it keeps him happy. He was a very nice man.