

“Once More With Feelings”

A new story by *(the)* Night Hawk

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Chapter One: Another Life to Live

“Pat, sweetheart... Can you hear me?”

I could hear a woman’s voice, and I tried to open my eyes to see who was talking to me. More importantly, what woman in her right mind would be calling me sweetheart!

“Oh look, she’s trying to open her eyes.”

WHAT THE FUCK?

“Patti, honey, wake up,” said a man’s voice.

PATTI? Uh uh. No way was I going to open my eyes now. This was a bad dream, and I let myself slide into blackness once more.

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When next I woke, I was propped up on pillows in a quiet ward, dark except for the faint glow from the nurse’s station around the corner. I was wondering what woke me when I heard a kid scream from somewhere beyond the curtain to my left, fading to hysterical sobbing.

What the hell was going on? What was a kid doing in cardiac recovery screaming his fool head off?

I felt ... peculiar, somehow lighter, breathed more easily. If this is what bypass surgery can do, I should have had it done five years ago. I moved my strangely light arms, discovering an IV in my left, then reached down to scratch my itchy groin with my right. Instead of the flab I expected, I felt tape and gauze. What the hell? I was here for a bypass! Why had they cut below my stomach? I moved my hand up to carefully trace my fingers across where they told me I’d be wearing my scar, and instead of pain or numbness, my fingers traced the shape of a BREAST! Not the man-boob that matched my belly, but a real, honest-to-goodness breast, complete with sensitive nipple. I knew it was attached to me from the feeling it produced as it erected under my light touch. This was too weird! Then the kid screamed again.

“What did you do to me??!!”

I could hear nurses trying to settle the kid down and as I twisted in bed, I felt a pain in my side. I groaned out loud.

One of the nurses came through the curtain and turned on a light over my bed. “Sweetie, you shouldn’t be moving around yet. You just had your appendix out. Do you need something for the pain?”

*Huh? My appendix?*

“Let’s take a look at your dressing. Hopefully you didn’t tear your stitches.”

As she pulled the blankets off my body, I looked down. I saw two long narrow feet, straight toes with short, clear toe-nails. I craned my neck to see more. The feet were attached to two slender feminine legs which disappeared under the green surgical gown. They weren’t mine. My feet were big, with toes crushed from thirty years of cheap shoes. My legs were big and hairy.

“Now, let’s see,” she said, and as she pulled up the bottom of my hospital gown, I felt the blood drain from my face. I was looking at a flat stomach and a little patch of partially shaved pubic hair. My dick! My dick was gone! I opened my mouth to scream, but all I could do was gasp, and then I heard a little whimper.

The nurse looked at me, seeing my white face. “Are you okay, sweetie?”

I whimpered again, and she quickly poured a little water into the glass on the bedside unit, and then held my head as she held it to my lips. “Here, take little sips, sweetie, it’s okay, it’s okay.”

As she held the glass to my lips, there was another scream of “I’m not a boy! I’m a girl! What have you done with my body?”

I gasped and sucked in some water, immediately going into a coughing fit. The spasm ripped at my belly like fire and my body tried to curl around the pain as the nurse held me, tears running down my cheeks. Eventually the fire died to a fierce throbbing in time to my heartbeat as I regained my breath.

“Are you okay, sweetie?” she asked.

I nodded mutely, still gasping a little.

“What... what happened?” I managed to get out.

“You’ve just had your appendix out,” she replied.

*Has the world gone crazy?*

Another nurse popped her head through the curtain. "It's the O'Donnell boy again. I called the doctor but he doesn't want us to give him anything. He figures it might be a reaction to the morphine."

*The O'Donnell boy???*

"Can we move him to isolation?" asked the one beside my bed. "He's disturbing the whole ward."

"I'll check," she replied, disappearing back through the curtain.

Her attention returned to me. "Are you feeling better now, sweetie?"

"What happened to me?" I asked. My voice! I sounded like a little girl!

"You were quite a sick girl for a little while, sweetie. Your appendix burst and you were rushed in to get it out, but you're going to be okay."

"My appendix?" *My appendix!!?? Girl??*

"Yes, but you're going to be okay now. Now, let me check your dressing."

As the nurse checked the dressing on the lower part of my stomach, I looked at her closely. She couldn't have been more than 25, but her uniform was all wrong, and she was wearing one of those silly white starched caps with a black line around it. "Toto... we ain't in Kansas anymore," I thought to myself as my head started spinning. I felt that familiar feeling that used to come after too many drinks. I was going to puke.

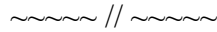
"Nurse," I whispered, shocked by the feminine voice that came out of my mouth, "Can I get something for my stomach? I feel really nauseated."

"Sure sweetie. I can get you some Gravol. Do you need anything for the pain?"

"Not if it will do to me what it's doing for that kid down the hall," I said.

She laughed. "The O'Donnell kid? I think it's all an act. The police are waiting to talk to him about some broken school windows. Maybe he figures that acting crazy is going to get him off the hook." With that she turned and left.

I remembered that I hadn't gotten off the hook, as a matter of fact; it had been my attitude in court that got me a juvenile record. I tried hard to remember how long I had been in the hospital back then. I was pretty sure it was six days. I was going to have to try and talk to this kid and make sure he straightened up his act. And then I giggled. ***I was going to talk to myself back in 1974?*** Yeah, right! And the moon really is made out of cheese.



The nurse brought me a couple of pills in a paper cup and a small glass of water. I eyed her up as she turned away. She would have gotten my attention in my earlier life, but now looking at her the way I did would probably get me labeled and locked up as well!

I swallowed the Graval and she went to put the covers back on me.

“Just leave them at my waist please,” I asked politely. “I’m hot.”

Now that had to be a first for me. I actually said please! But I was rewarded with a smile as she folded the blankets at my waist so I could pull them up without reaching. Then she stuck a thermometer in my mouth.

“Just to make sure you don’t have a fever,” she said.

Satisfied, she left me after I asked with a very polite please to leave the light on.

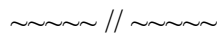
I waited until things quieted down. If I remembered correctly, the night shift nurses just hung around at a desk at the end of the hall, making rounds every hour or so.

As I waited for calm to descend on the floor I got thinking. Unless I woke up and this turned out to have been a dream, I was back in 1974, but as a girl. According to the kid down the hall, I had to be Patricia Johnson. I wondered how Patricia felt about being me.

Even though it hurt a bit, I just couldn’t resist. I lifted the blankets to examine the plumbing. Damn! I hadn’t seen any real ones when I was 14, and now I had one of my very own! A genuine pussy!

I gently touched it, feeling the curly hairs and sliding my fingers down to explore further. In later years I had seen plenty of them, but never did quite understand them. Now was the chance to really find out how they worked.

After amusing myself for ten minutes with that, I pulled the blankets up a bit higher and tugged and pulled on my new breasts. They weren’t big exactly, I remembered girls in school having bigger ones, but they were fun to play with. But I found myself getting tired and soon drifted off to sleep.



The next morning I woke to find a couple sitting by my bed, regarding me with concern on their faces. Patricia Johnson’s parents? They looked old enough to be the parents of a 14 year old, but I wasn’t going to take the chance I was wrong, so just mumbled “Hello.”

“Patricia? Sweetheart? How do you feel?” asked the woman, showing her worry.

“Hiya, baby girl,” said the man. “The doctor said you’re going to be just fine, though you scared your mother half to death!”

Jesus! What were their names!!?? Oh!

“Mom?” and I saw her worried look ease a little. “I’m fine, Mom,” I said, and then I smiled at the man beside her. “Hi, Daddy,” and got a smile in return.

“Mom?”

“Yes, honey?”

“Mom, what happened to me?” I asked in a small voice, feeling the echo of my early morning panic.

She jumped from her chair and leaned over me, holding my head to her breasts. “Oh honey, it’s alright, you’re alright, it’s okay now. Sshh, it’s okay.” Gently, she pushed my hair back and looked down at me. “Your appendix burst, honey. I found you on the kitchen floor when I got home from work.”

I snuggled against her as she stroked my hair, just enjoying the feeling of being held for a few minutes, and then an orderly came in carrying a tray.

“Patricia Johnson?” he asked to verify the tray was for me. “Sorry miss, but you’re restricted to a liquid diet for a few days. But you can have all that you want,” he added with a chuckle. He cranked the bed up to a slight incline so I could see the tray and I could feel the stab in my side. He must have seen me wince as he said, “I guess that’s as high as you’re going to get today young lady.”

**‘Young Lady?’** It was bad enough finding myself trapped inside a young girl’s body, but I had been retrofitted to 1974. While I’m sure the orderly was being polite, those terms were politically incorrect where – *when* - I had come from.

I looked at the tray. Two containers of milk, two of apple juice and one that I hoped was coffee, but turned out to be a soup broth. Damn but I could sure use a coffee.

“Dad,” I said in the sweetest way I knew how, “could you ask if I could have a coffee?”

“Coffee?” my ‘mother’ said. “You know that you aren’t allowed to drink coffee!”

Damn. If something as basic as coffee was off limits, how was I going to get by with the more complicated things in this girl's life? I needed information or a damn good reason for not remembering. I decided I had better try the amnesia stunt.

"I'm sorry Mom," I said starting to sob. "I don't seem to remember."

"Drink your milk dear," my 'mother' said soothingly, and then she whispered something into my 'father's' ear. He got up and left as I fumbled with the container of milk.

Ugh. I couldn't remember the last time I drank plain milk, but I figured it was better to drink and keep busy than to give her an opportunity to ask any questions.

She wasn't a bad looking woman, and she did seem to have genuine concern for me. I guessed her age to be around 34. Since she was sitting I couldn't guess at how tall she was, but she looked in good shape. Well groomed, just slightly overweight, then I remembered that this was 1974, the trend to go ultra slim hadn't become popular yet. She had light brown hair that she wore down, and it covered her shoulders. That was something I had forgotten to check out last night. I had been so busy checking out my new pussy and boobs that I never even thought to see what color my hair was or how long it was. Hell, I might be as ugly as sin!

Trying to do it casually, I ran my fingers over my scalp and trailed them through my hair. It was long, past my shoulders and from my peripheral vision it looked dark. It felt greasy though.

By the time I got both containers of milk done, and had started on the juice, my 'Dad' came back in. He didn't pretend not to be concerned. "The doctor will be here in just a few minutes Ann," he said to my 'mother.'

I checked him out. He was maybe 36 and was tall - I figured six feet easy and with his dark hair cut in a military style buzz-cut. Well built too, erect stance. Maybe ex-military. Not the kind of guy I'd want to get into a scrap with.

"Didn't he say anything Mike?" she asked him.

"He didn't want to say anything until he saw Pat himself. Said he might run some tests."

Hmm... Mike and Ann Johnson. I could learn a lot if I just kept my mouth shut and listened. Maybe if I had tried that in my other life...

I was finishing my second container of juice when an older man, obviously a doctor based on his white coat and stethoscope, entered. He was carrying a tray similar to the one my 'breakfast' had been delivered on. I nearly laughed out loud when I saw

his pants. I had forgotten all about the seersucker days of the 70's. Loud plaid pants over top of a pair of crepe-soled shoes. He squeaked as he walked.

He put the tray aside and asked my 'parents' to give us a few minutes alone.

When they had gone, he took the stethoscope and listened to my heart and lungs for a minute. It felt weird. Here was a guy touching my boobs and probing around my new flat belly. I wasn't sure if I should be upset or not, after all, this was my body now! But I remembered there weren't a lot of female doctors in the early 70's, and I had no idea of how a 14-year-old girl would respond to this.

"Patti?" he finally said picking up my chart, "can you tell me what day it is today?"

Shit! I had been scheduled for my surgery on a Monday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, but my memory was hollering at me that I had busted my knee on the last day in August and that had been a Sunday.

"Tuesday?" I asked, figuring I had spent at least one night in the hospital.

He made a note on the chart and then asked me what month it was. What the hell? I wasn't going to have to play at amnesia, I wasn't sure myself. I shook my head.

"Okay Patti, how about we try for the year?"

Now this one should be simple, I mean, I **knew** that I had busted my leg in 74. "1974?" I said tentatively. That one must have been right cause he nodded his head and made another note on my chart.

"And can you tell me what your birth date is?"

Yeah right. I'd had this body for less than a day and he wanted to know the same stuff I did. I shook my head.

"Can you tell me your middle name?"

Oh this was just ... ***fucking*** ... wonderful! He was asking the wrong person those questions. I nearly suggested that he go down the hall and ask Patrick O'Donnell but thought better of it. I wanted to get out of here eventually and the prospect of ending up in the psych ward was looking more and more like my destination. I did the only thing I could think of... I started to cry. And they weren't fake tears either. Last night I thought this was a trip. Waking up as a girl and being young again and knowing what the future held in store, but now, the novelty had become a practical joke, and I was the butt of it.

"There, there," he said in his most soothing bedside manner. "Let's try this instead."

He pulled the tray that he had brought with him closer and I could clearly smell industrial coffee. He uncovered a plastic cup that had a lid and beside it I could see a couple of containers of non-dairy creamer and sugar cubes. "I understand you wanted a coffee," he said. "I think that will be okay. What do you take in it?"

Yeah... I could see which way this was heading. I couldn't remember my name or my birthday, but I was supposed to know how I took my coffee. Uh uh. No way. If I told him, that would make everything look really suspicious. I could have told him that I wanted an espresso or latte, and really freaked him out but in this case, I figured that ignorance would be the better part of valor.

"I don't know," I said. "I don't even know why I asked for it." I was really hoping he would buy this, even though I knew it would taste like crap, I really wanted that coffee.

"Okay," he said as he took the tray away. "Let me call your parents back."

"So," he was explaining to 'Mom' and 'Dad,' "I think it's temporary amnesia brought on by the anesthetic and the trauma of the burst appendix. We'll have to keep her a little longer than normal, just for observation, but I think as she heals her memory will come back."

Mike and Ann thanked him and he left. 'Dad' said they were going to move me to the pediatric wing since I didn't seem to have any complications from the surgery, and that he and 'Mom' would be back to see me later that night. 'Mom' gave me a kiss and told me that everything was going to be okay, and 'Dad' squeezed my leg and asked if there was anything I wanted them to bring when they came back. I desperately wanted to ask for 'my' diary, hoping that Patricia Johnson kept one. A pack of smokes would have suited me fine too, but I realized I was getting a second chance. Why screw it up by starting that bad habit again?

I gave them my most loving smile and said, "Thanks, but I don't think I need anything."

After they left, I knew that what I really needed was to find myself, or rather my former body. I needed to know more about who I was now.

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I was restricted to bed rest for the next three days and I thought I would go nuts. Mike had been really cool about it though and had rented me a small TV so that I could pass the time, and Ann had brought me some crossword puzzles, fresh underwear, even though I couldn't wear any yet, and what I guessed was Patti's favorite nightgowns and my transistor radio. This was so weird.

The TV was black and white and there were only three channels, and two of them went off the air at midnight! The radio was a bit better but it was strictly AM all the way. I could only listen to it with an earphone, but I did get a kick out of hearing them play “Golden Oldies.”

The nurses were pretty cool and they treated me like an adult and stopped in often to tell me jokes or to ask about my boyfriends. They all knew that I had suffered from severe long-term memory loss, but I don’t think they were trying to see if I could remember anything as much as they were just trying to make a young girl feel comfortable. The sponge baths were the worst though.

Every night after visiting hours were through, two nurses would come in and wash me from head to toe. Now this was frustrating cause these nurses, the ones with the least seniority, were also the youngest and best looking. Thank God I didn’t have a boner to pop! They wore miniskirt uniforms, white stockings and the nylon uniforms displayed some great sets of boobs.

They’d take me and undress me, checking carefully to see how I was healing, and made lots of promises that soon I could have a shower or a bath. They changed the dressing every night and pretty soon I got to see the size of the cut in my abdomen. I remembered from my male days in the same ward that the nurses were pretty abrupt with me and made me wash everything I could reach by myself.

Maybe it was the change in my attitude or maybe it was just because I was a girl, but either way, I didn’t have to do anything. They were gentle with me and always rubbed me down with lotion afterwards. It was on the third night that I finally dared to broach the subject of my appearance.

“I must look awful,” I said. “My hair feels all greasy and my face must look like I was run over by a truck.”

One of the nurses looked at the other and winked. She picked up the chart and said, “You’re supposed to be allowed out of bed tomorrow and into a wheel chair. How about we start after midnight? Can you stay awake that long?”

I gushed my thanks to the two nurses and promised I would be awake. This was a completely different level of nursing care than what awaited me in the future. Under our new health care ‘guidelines,’ I would have been pushed into a shower a long time ago.

I wasn’t sure at this point what I wanted more - to shower, to see myself for the first time or to be able to use the bathroom by myself. This whole bedpan ordeal was really aggravating. Unlike when I had a dick, I couldn’t aim a stream if I wanted to. There was nothing to hold onto. Thankfully, I hadn’t needed to empty my bowels yet because of the liquid diet. Hopefully that would change tomorrow as well.

True to their word, after the entire ward had settled down for the night, the nurses came back to get me. One was pushing a wheelchair; the other was carrying a small makeup case. I had been listening to the news on the transistor, something I really paid attention to now 'cause I needed to rediscover 1974. I was pretty well caught up on current events and the day and month of the year, but I still needed to find my old body to get information from the mind of the person who had inherited it.

Mom and Dad had stopped coming twice a day secure in the knowledge that I was healing and it's funny but I had started to accept them as "my" Mom and Dad. They seemed like really nice people.

Linda and Julie, the two nurses who had come to my rescue were really good to me and very gentle. They helped me into the wheelchair; IV still attached, and wheeled me to a big bathroom complete with a whirlpool tub for those who needed muscle therapy. I know they had to have gotten permission from the head nurse cause they had the key and didn't try to sneak around any corners.

As Julie started up the tub, she added some bubble bath, while Linda helped me get out of the chair. There was a large sink in the room complete with a large mirror above it. "Are you ready?" she asked.

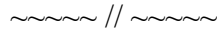
My heart was racing, and it wasn't from the physical exertion of standing on my own. I was finally going to see what I looked like.

I gasped when I saw my new body for the first time. Not only was I thin but tall as well. 5'10" easy and knew instantly I would be teased for that at school. But I also knew that in a few years, tall and thin would be in. I could handle any kind of cruel jokes at school when I went back, and there was no doubt that I would be going back. Mike and Ann were not going to let their daughter drop out at the start of grade 9!

I was surprised with my face though. I wasn't pretty in the sense of raving beauty, but I had clear skin and a pleasant, friendly face. Not bad at all I thought. I had straight light brown hair like Mom, but mine was parted in the middle. It hung pretty limp right now, but I could see promise there. But I wasn't satisfied with just seeing my face, even though I had big blue eyes that sparkled. They hadn't turned filmy or clouded by years of alcohol and tobacco abuse. I wanted to see the rest of me and I started to struggle out of the nightgown. Every night I had to go through this ordeal when the nurses bathed me. They could get it off over my head and then weave it over my arm and over the IV bag. I turned to Linda and begged her to pull the needle out of my arm.

"Please Linda? I've been real good drinking everything three times a day and even going double on that stuff the cafeteria calls soup."

Linda laughed and said she would see if they could take it out, leaving me in Julie's care while she went to get the head nurse.



Mrs. MacDonald, the night shift head nurse, came back with Linda, concern on her face. “Are you sure you’re strong enough to stand on your own Patti? You’re scheduled to go on solid food tomorrow anyway, but I don’t want you passing out on us.”

I figured the only way to convince her was to do the equivalent of what cops would use in the future for roadside sobriety tests. I tilted my head back and closed my eyes and stretched my arms out and then alternately took turns with each hand touching my nose.

Mrs. MacDonald laughed which made me feel better, so I decided to take it one step further. I moved back till I was against the wall and then walked heel to toe in a straight line following the tiles in the floor, towing the IV stand with me. When I got to the other side of the room I tried standing on one foot while reciting the alphabet.

“Enough already!” Mrs. MacDonald said laughing. “You’ve proven your point. If you’re sure you want it out, then let’s take it out.” From the emergency medical cabinet she pulled out some cotton swabbing and a roll of tape. “I’ll put a bit on now so that you don’t bleed, but,” she said turning to Julie and Linda, “after Patricia gets out of the tub, I want you to clean it and put on a fresh one.”

Both girls nodded solemnly and Mrs. MacDonald had me sit down while she gently withdrew the needle. “And I want to see a fresh dressing on her stitches before she goes to sleep for the night.” With those last words she left, taking the IV bag and tubing with her.

I got back out of the wheelchair and slipped my nightgown off and stood before the mirror again. It was as I had thought. My boobs weren’t very big at all and my nipples, though darker, were little more than pink erasers. I had no clue as to what size my bust was, but I was figuring they wouldn’t even make a dent in a bra.

As I looked in the mirror, it began to sink in that the reflection showed *me*, a tall thin *girl*. I was a GIRL! The overweight forty five year old man was gone, erased from the world, and that was *me*! I felt myself begin to tremble, and tears formed in the eyes before me.

“Are you alright, honey?” asked Julie, putting her arm around me.

“I... I...” I turned to her and buried my face in the warm crook of her shoulder, wetting her uniform with my tears. She put her arms around me and held me to her, making reassuring noises in a low voice.

Eventually, my tears slowed, and I pulled away. “Thank you,” I said, sniffing.

“Here, honey,” said Linda, handing me a wad of tissues. “What brought that on?”

I wiped my eyes and blew my nose. Weird. Even blowing my nose was only a delicate 'ssshhh', rather than the 'BLAT' I was used to. "I don't know," I replied honestly. "I never saw myself quite like that before."

"Well, don't worry about your size, honey, it's how sensitive they are that counts!" Linda said.

"I've seen your Mother," said Julie, "and you're only fourteen, so you'll probably grow some more."

Linda agreed, saying, "Julie's right, they might still grow, but in the meantime," she said with a big smile, "You'll be able to get away without having to wear a bra!"

Julie nodded in agreement so I figured this must be a good thing.

The whirlpool was filling quickly with bubbles and I prepared to take the plunge, but a restraining hand from Linda introduced me to the one thing I would come to despise most as a female.

"Don't you want to shave first?" she asked.

During the last few days I had been looking at all the pro's and con's of being a female and one thing I had decided I was not going to miss from my former life was having to shave, but here was Linda with a razor in one hand and can of shaving cream in the other.

The girls must have seen the confusion on my face.

"Another symptom of your memory loss," said Julie, "Sorry Patti, but we're going to have to make a note of this on your chart."

"That's okay," I said feeling braver because I knew these two would be willing to teach me these things about a woman's body.

Julie told me to do my legs first as I wouldn't want any deodorant from my underarms causing a rash on my legs. Putting the shaving cream on my legs was easy enough but working the razor around my ankles was harder than I had thought, and I was still stiff from the surgery. I nicked myself a few times, especially on the back of my ankles right on the thin skinned region above my heel, and Linda stopped me from shaving higher than my knees. I wiped off the excess cream with a hot cloth and inspected the damage. Julie reassured me that this too would heal and that in time I would get really good at it. I wasn't sure I wanted to get good at it and wondered in what year waxing became popular.

Doing under my arms was a breeze compared to my legs and within a few minutes I was ready for the tub. It was the most luxurious bath I had ever had. As a male, I had always despised baths, preferring to take a shower, but the feeling of the jets washing over my body was incredible!

Julie and Linda helped me wash my hair as I was still pretty weak, and the feeling of them running their fingers over my scalp was heavenly. All too soon they announced my hair was clean.

Julie checked the time and said I could soak for another ten minutes and then they had to get me back to my bed because they would have to do rounds.

I washed myself as best as I could, spending extra time soaping my breasts. I loved the feel of them. Linda laughed as she watched me, and pulled a pack of cigarettes out of her uniform pocket. I seriously considered telling her about the health hazards that face women who smoke, but this information would not come to light until the 90's and I would sound foolish, especially since in 1974, smoking was still allowed in hospitals.

I raised my leg out of the tub to look at the nicks on my ankle and was caught off guard when one of the whirlpool jet streams hit me right in my pussy! Oh wow! Now that felt good!

I let my leg rest on the top of the rail and maneuvered myself to where it felt even better. This was a strange feeling but a really good one and I closed my eyes as my breath started to come in shorter and shorter gulps. Then BANG! I felt like a shot of lightning had gone through my body. I squirmed and twisted and soon I was under water struggling to get up. Julie grabbed my arm and helped me to stabilize myself. She was smiling at me.

"Feels good doesn't it?" she asked.

I flushed with embarrassment realizing I had just had my first orgasm as a female. This was way better than any climax I had ever had as a male. It had reached down and touched my toes and made my hair stand on end all at the same time!

Linda laughed and said not to be embarrassed. A lot of the nurses used the whirlpool at night specifically for that purpose. Julie nodded. "Better than a man any day. It'll keep going until you can't take it anymore. I've gotten off five times in a row with the jets. It stays on target, stays hard and doesn't tell all its friends."

I could do this more than once without stopping? Is this what I had heard about all my grown up life about multiple orgasms? I had always thought they were a myth.

Linda asked Julie if she could do the rounds by herself, as she wanted to fix my hair and put some makeup on me before I had to go back to my bed.

Seeing the look of anticipation on my face, Julie agreed and after the two of them helped me out of the whirlpool and a quick rinse in the shower, she left, promising to be back shortly to help out.

I toweled off and put my nightgown on. Linda went to work on my hair. First she put me under one of those old-fashioned hair dryers until I thought I was going to start sweating all over. Then she got me to sit on a stool in front of the mirror and really worked a brush through my hair. She brushed it from under the hair line and from the top of my head in long sweeping motions. "Remember Patti, 100 times a night keeps your hair strong and bright!"

Okay, I could do this. It seemed like a waste of time to me, but I did like the results as my hair started to develop body and fullness. Turns out I wasn't such a 'Plain Jane' after all. Linda was just starting to put some eyeliner on me when Julie came back. "And how's our little duckling doing?" she asked.

"Turning into a swan," said Linda, and I was! I still had lots more to learn about mascara and how to apply it, but I figured by the time I left the hospital I should be able to manage on my own.

"Mrs. MacDonald said we have to speed things up," said Julie. "It's way too late for Patti to be up."

Damn. I was just getting to feel comfortable too.

They promised to help again the next night but it was time for me to go and I was getting tired, but I looked good.

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Just before six the next morning I was roused out of my sleep by a surprise visit from Linda and Julie.

They helped me sit up in bed and working with Julie's makeup kit, they first refreshed my eyeliner, and then helped me apply a light shade of lipstick. Linda and Julie fussed over me putting some blush on my cheeks and just a hint of eye-shadow. Looking into the mirror that they held for me, I saw what a difference a touch of color properly applied made. I looked healthy! And I felt good.

Linda and Julie left reminding me of their promise to see me later tonight.

My good feelings were about to come to an abrupt end though.

When Mom came by later in the morning with the same doctor, I knew it was exam time.

Yes, I obviously knew what day of the week it was and what month. I also knew who was running the country and the city. I found that if I wanted to, I could manage to bluff a lot more stuff than I realized. The key was in listening, whether it was to the radio, the TV News, or just to people, but I couldn't fill in the blanks that remained regarding who I was. And of course the doctor, a psychiatrist no doubt, noticed this quickly. He told Mom that he was going to run some basic tests on my ability to remember and that for the time being I was going to have to stay in the hospital, but since I seemed to be bright girl, he was sure I was going to regain my full memory soon.

Little did the doctor know just how soon I was going to have a nearly complete memory recovery.

Mom didn't approve of the makeup one bit, and told the doctor as much, but he turned out to be my unwitting ally. He told her that since I didn't remember my past, I couldn't know about her rules for make-up and dating and such. Then he surprised me by saying he thought the make-up made me look a lot more alive. This brought a small gasp from Mom who had been the one to discover me at death's door. She quickly agreed and said that as long as I was responsible with it and didn't paint my face too much, it would be okay with her, but said that dating was definitely out of the question until I turned 16.

I guess I did look a lot different with color in my cheeks than the deathly pale girl she had found lying on the kitchen floor.

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Just after lunch, I wheeled myself down to the common room of the 'peed's' wing. This is where all the kids who were able to get out of bed usually spent the day. There was a color television there along with a ping-pong table and lots of board games. Most of the kids, and the bulk of them were much younger than my current age, were watching General Hospital, while others were playing cards. I wasn't in the mood for TV or games, and I didn't have much in common with the kids that were there. It was easier for me to talk to the adults who ran the ward and even they were a lot younger than I was... or had been.

Then I saw myself.

In a wheelchair with his leg in a cast sat Patrick O'Donnell, moping. I laughed as I realized that was pretty well the way I had been when I wore that body and was stuck in the hospital, but I also knew that *this* time, it held the mind of Patricia Johnson...

To be continued...