

I'm Just Sarah: Being your wife can be terribly invasive... until it isn't...

Submitted for your approval: the plight of one Oswald Tanner, current owner of a certain item of alien technology known for its ability to alter the human form into a skin-tight bodysuit that can then be worn by someone else; a stranger, perhaps... or a lover. Our Mr. Tanner is about to discover that such powers—the ability to be another person, down to the last detail—comes with a price. The piper, it is said, must be paid. But the cost may be too much to bear...

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On the verge of panic, I scabbled at the back of my neck. *Oh my God—where is it?*

Yet my fingers found only flesh—the smooth feminine flesh that rightfully belonged to Sarah, my wife of a mere nine months. There was supposed to be a small fold of skin at the top of my spine: the tag for the bodysuit. It was there yesterday, and the day before that, and the day before that... all the way back to the first time I put the damn thing on.

That was over three weeks ago.

My arm fell to my side. I twisted my neck back and forth, trying to think. The tag *had* to be there. Give it a good firm pinch and a tug, and the seam splits, and your skin turns back into a costume, and then you take it off. First thing every morning, I touched that tag and wondered if the time had come...

But then I thought—why not one more day? How often does a man get to be a woman? A real woman, right down to the slit between my legs and a fully functional uterus. Heck, I

even got her period yesterday; had to stick a tampon in there and everything. That's when it really hit me, that I was an honest-to-god *female*, right down to the ovaries. Funny how banging Sarah's ex-boyfriend didn't do the trick, but a bit of blood in my panty liner *did*.

Still... she wanted me to experience being a woman, with everything that entailed—she said so herself. Otherwise I wouldn't have agreed to this plan; I would never have done something so... invasive. Let's face it, being inside your wife and wearing her skin as a bodysuit is about as invasive as it gets.

She wanted to bring us closer, as a couple. That's what she said. And what better way to accomplish that than for me to actually *be* her? That was the plan. Next month I was gonna take time off work so she could be me and hang out with my buddies, and maybe hook up with one of my old girlfriends. But that can't happen if I don't get this bodysuit off—so where is the goddamn tag?

I lifted my hair and tried again, poking and prodding until my neck felt bruised.

Oh crap... it's gone. It's just gone.

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I finished getting dressed; a colorblock shift dress that I'd worn once before, but not too recently. With the tag missing, I'd have to be Sarah for at least one more day—and I had to get to work. It had been a bit dicey at first, trying to do her job in HR, but I managed to



feel my way through. It was, after all, the same company I worked for as my male self, albeit as a software engineer. It helped that I knew everyone.

Of course, it was only supposed to be for the Memorial Day long weekend. But on the morning when I should have gone back to being plain old Oswald, I found couldn't do it. I felt like a naughty little boy, imagining myself as Sarah at work, wearing her office skirt and blouse and having my co-workers treat *me* with respect for a change.

I knew Sarah would understand. She wanted me to experience the full extent of being her, didn't she? Doing her job had to be part of that. Not to mention the... physical aspects.

So I decided to extend my stay through the following week. It was amazing. Everyone was *so* nice to me; smiling and saying hello, instead of mostly ignoring me. The tough part was coming up with an excuse for my—my husband's, rather—sudden absence; one that hopefully wouldn't get either of us fired. I settled on a family emergency, and sent him back East to visit his father in the hospital. It's sad, but accidents do happen.

By the second week I felt pretty comfortable being Sarah, to the point of doing lunch with her best friend, followed by shoe shopping. I knew both ladies well enough to hold up my end of the conversation—plus, who knew that trying on high heels would be so much fun? That alone should have told me that something had happened to my mind.

By the end of the third week I had an itch that definitely needed scratching. I had begun to think of myself as a woman—like, for real—and we woman have certain needs that only the male of the species can satisfy. Unfortunately, *my* man was still back home hanging out with his parents.

That's when Brayden came along. The guy is *so* full of himself, but there's a reason he never lacks for female company. So when we ran into each other down at the mall, I found myself telling him I was free as a bird and he offered to buy me dinner, and then we ended up back at his place...

Oh my god... that was SO amazing...

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I've been Sarah for nearly a month and, you know, something about being in her body feels different now. I've lived as her, made love as her, bled as her, and it's all starting to feel kind of... normal.

I had to put in for a leave of absence for Oswald. His boss wasn't happy about it, but I explained that my father-in-law was in a coma and it was important for Oswald to be at his bedside every day. He was available for texting, but was simply too upset to talk. I spent nearly an hour each evening texting people on his phone, so they wouldn't think that he'd completely ceased to exist.

Even though he had.

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Another period come and gone. Still no tag.

What if it never comes back? Oh God... what if I'm trapped in this body for the rest of my life? My wonderful, loving, full-of-life Sarah—is she gone forever?

No—no! She's right here with me. How can she be 'gone' when every time I look in the mirror, there she is?

She's not dead, she's... me. I'm *her*. I know what she's thinking, almost as though she's inside my head the same way I'm inside her body. My thoughts are her thoughts. This is what she'd be thinking—and feeling—if she were in my shoes, so doesn't that mean she *is*? I think we're the same person now.

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I had to report Oswald missing. The police found that he never went home, so I guess he lied about that. Everyone's wondering why it took me so long to notice, and why I lied about his father being hurt. The cops searched the condo but found no evidence of a crime. I said we'd been drifting apart and he'd been pretty down about it. No one else is gonna tell 'em any different.

I'm Sarah. I'm young, I'm beautiful—I'll find someone else. Oswald was sweet, but he's gone. It's funny that I have more of his memories than my own. I remember being a little boy instead of a little girl, and growing up with his parents and his sister instead of the single mom that raised me. But I'm sure those memories will return, in time.

I'm not *him*, you see. I'm just Sarah. ■