

# Trust Me

I was visiting my father in a nursing home in West Palm Beach, Florida. Visiting might not be the correct description. Viewing him would be more accurate. He had Alzheimer's and didn't have the foggiest notion who I was. All he did was sit in his wheelchair, staring out in front of him, his eyes glazed and indifferent. Occasionally he made strange sounds. It tore me up to see him like this.

I was there more out of guilt or duty or obligation. I doubt if it had anything to do with love. The man I loved, who was my father, had slowly disintegrated. He had simply disappeared. What I saw before me was merely a vague shadow of a man, barely recognizable as such. It has been said that a man's soul leaves him on death, what they call "giving up the ghost." My father's ghost had left him years ago.

Most of the nursing home workers on the floor were surly and couldn't care less. I guess they thought it was pointless to show any real caring since the patients didn't give a damn. It really hurt to observe that, although I understood why it was so. After all, who would take such jobs? It was depressing and thankless and low-paying.

That's why, I suppose, my attention was directed to a small lady with blue-gray hair, who walked among the living dead slumped in their wheelchairs. She stopped to talk

to each of them, bending low to catch their eyes, smiling and offering pleasant inquiries as to their health and outlook as if they were normal human beings. Of course, they didn't answer, but that did not daunt this lady, and when she left them she would squeeze an arm or a shoulder and offer a farewell that surely fell on deaf ears.

"Remember, you take care now," I heard her say.

She came to my father and performed her routine. I thought I saw a brief spark of recognition, but I wasn't sure. She bent over him and gave him a bear hug. Miraculously, he smiled and hugged her back. He had never done that for me.

"He's a cute guy," she said with a perky laugh, blue eyes twinkling behind silver-rimmed glasses. She had the clear, contented look of a person who took joy in helping other people.

"My dad," I said when she turned her glance at me.

"I mean it. He is cute," she said.

He didn't seem cute to me.

"You come here often?" I asked.

"Make my rounds every day. Just a volunteer, though," she said. "Visiting my kids." She turned to my father. "Right, Paul?" Once again I saw a vague response of recognition in his eyes.

Somehow her presence took the edge off my gloom. I had dreaded this visit, just as I had dreaded all those that came before. I could not remember ever meeting this woman at the home, and yet she had the look of someone I had known.

It puzzled me and since she was so open and friendly, I knew it would not be an intrusion to make some inquiries.

"Where are you from?"

"I live a mile from here."

"I mean where you grew up."

I studied her face, inspected the blue eyes, the lips that smiled broadly, wrinkling her face. I figured her for late sixties.

"Pennsylvania," she said. "My father was a coal miner."

"Never been there. But I do think we've met before."

I told her that I was from Manhattan, a lawyer. I was married with two kids, both grown and on their own. For some reason, I felt compelled to volunteer these details. Often these days I was meeting people that were vaguely familiar, faces out of my past, except that they had not aged. It was, of course, an illusion. Only the image, the snapshot of memory in true time, stays the same. People change.

"I liked Manhattan in the old days," she said, smiling, showing an even set of obviously false teeth.

"You lived there?"

"No." She laughed. "I once worked in Brooklyn for a few months. I hear it's still there." It was then that she winked at some imaginary person over my shoulder.

Of course. I knew instantly. This was Jean Moran. Jean Moran forty-odd years later. A chill rolled up and down my spine. Jean Moran. I wanted to rise up and hold her in my arms. But I didn't, for reasons that you will soon know.

"I lived there when I was a kid," I answered, suddenly stunned by my recall.

She looked at me suddenly as if I had caught her attention. I felt her brief intense inspection and then she smiled again and said goodbye with a cheery wave. I watched her walk spryly down the polished corridors until she turned a corner and was out of sight.

Memories, I thought, looking at my father to whom memory had already died. Memory is history and history is the record of your life, our lives. I felt an overwhelming pity for my father. I know, Dad, I said in my heart. Without memory there is nothing.

Perhaps it was because all memory had vanished in the minds all around me that my memory suddenly became so acute. This was the Alzheimer's floor. But Jean Moran, the young Jean Moran, emerged in my mind full-blown in present time, the Jean Moran who had touched my life so deeply and profoundly when I was eleven years old.

As I sat there watching my mindless father, time slipped away and I was back in my parents' apartment in Brooklyn. We lived in a one-bedroom apartment in an ornate building in the Crown Heights section.

In the style of the times, the building had a large lobby presided over by a doorman. The lobby was dominated by a huge fireplace with an electric simulated fire and suits of armor on each side of it and, in front of it, a suite of dungeon-like furniture. This passed for elegance in those days. It even had a name, which escapes me, except that it ended in "Arms," which, I assume the owners used to summon up images of old English castles.

It had the aura of "fanciness," although the people who

lived there were no more than three decades out of the ghetto and most of them had been hauled across the big pond by their parents escaping the pogroms of Russia. So they were making it in the new world, even though there was a depression on.

Appearances then, like now, had the same shallow façade. My father was a bookkeeper for a clothing firm, but my mother had a keen strategy for making it seem as if he were the owner of the firm. My mother also kept a servant. She called her “the girl,” not the maid. A maid was always colored. A girl was a step up in the pecking order of perceived prestige.

I always felt that hiring a “girl” was also the price my father had to pay for Jerry’s arrival seven years after me. From my mother’s point of view, Jerry put a housekeeping burden on my mother that required the assistance of a full-time sleep-in servant, a “girl.”

The girls didn’t stay long and with good reason. Neither my mother or father was ever harsh to them, but conditions were rather cramped and, after all, the girls got restless. Periodically, after one of them quit, my father would come home with another, apparently from some agency in Manhattan.

They were always fresh, pink-skinned, shy Irish girls from large families of unemployed miners from the coal-fields of Pennsylvania or Ohio. For the most part, they were always pleasant, hardworking, and polite. They had to be. They needed the work.

I am talking, of course, of the deepest darkest days of

the depression. Families were starving. To survive, families sent their daughters to New York to find work, any work. Most of these girls had never left home. I think most of them were in their twenties and I'm sure they worked cheap, since we did not have very much money. My father was glad to have a job in those days.

The main problem with working for our family was space. We lived in a one-bedroom apartment. I slept with my brother Jerry on a double bed in the bedroom. A foot away was another bed in which the girl slept. My parents slept on a daybed in the living room. There was one bathroom.

It didn't seem at all cramped to me. I had no other frame of reference. I can place my state of mind at that time in an odd way. I was a bit of a sissy. I still played with dolls, albeit boy dolls as well as girl dolls. When everyone was out of the house, I would stand in front of the mirror with a doll in hand and imagine myself and my doll in various situations. It can best be described as going into a trance, transporting myself through time to another place, imagining myself and my doll, no longer a doll, of course, but a real person, in some exciting situation. It was a lot like seeing a movie in my mind with me and my doll in starring roles. My father hated my playing with dolls.

"He's too old for it," he would say. There was no way to hide his comments in a one-bedroom apartment. Usually my parents would have their confabulations in bed, within easy earshot of us boys and the girl.

"Stanley is still a child," my mother would counter.

"He'll be twelve."

This worry seemed to occupy my father's mind a great deal at the time. Once they raised their voices over the matter, and, of course, I heard every word.

"It's unhealthy, Martha. I think we should throw away Stanley's dolls."

"You'll break his heart."

"He'll grow up to be a damned pansy."

I had no idea what he meant. There was a long silence after that then my mother said:

"One thing I won't do is throw them away. How could we explain it?"

"Tell him dolls are for girls."

"That will only exaggerate the problem."

"I'm not so sure. He's a big sissy, you know. He's not much for sports and such."

"He'll outgrow it."

"I hope so."

All this was very confusing to me, although I thought I knew what a sissy was. I thought it meant coward and I knew I was no more a coward than any of the other boys. I didn't like team sports and probably deprived my father of the joys of rooting for his boy on the playing field. He loved baseball, which was the big neighborhood sport at the time. I could take it or leave it. I was good at track, though, being a pretty fast runner. But who came out to watch track in those days? Besides, it was all over so damned fast.

Of course appearances had a lot to do with my being perceived as a sissy. I was pretty with blond curly hair and big

brown eyes. I also had the kind of skin that blushed easily and, at times, I looked as if someone had rouged my cheeks.

Also, my mother made sure I was always neat and well dressed with a perfectly clean white shirt and pressed longies with razor-sharp creases. Looking back, I suppose I might agree with my father. I looked like a sissy. I played with dolls. I didn't like contact sports. By those measures, I was, indeed, a sissy.

Jean Moran, as she was then, is vivid in my mind. She came after Josephine who followed Maggie. I remember those blue eyes, her warm smile and sparkling white teeth. She had a milky way of freckles across her nose and joked with me a lot. But it was the wink, that same wink, that she had given me forty-odd years later in the nursing home that branded her, unmistakably, as the Jean Moran I knew.

Before Jean, I never paid much attention to the girls. They were there to help Mother and take care of Jerry. They were peripheral to me. Yet, especially when Mom and Dad weren't around, they had been put in charge and I was supposed to mind them.

Before Jean came, I think I was a lot more modest about my body, always dressing in the bathroom out of sight of the girls who shared our bedroom. I'm not certain if they were as modest as I was. At least, I never paid much attention until one day I saw Jean Moran naked.

It must have been summer because it became light early. I think it was also Sunday and Jean had gotten up to attend mass. She, like the other girls, was a good Sunday Catholic and crossed herself a lot.



I opened my eyes and there was Jean's beautiful rosy tush no more than a foot from my eyes. Jesus. At first I thought I was doing something wrong by keeping my eyes open, but the best I could do was to narrow the slits and take in the sight. Once she turned sideways and I saw her tits, nice-sized with little red nipples, and, lower, a patch of blonde pubic hair.

She was, I'm sure, totally oblivious to my watching her, but watch her I did as she dressed. I suppose, if I really plumbed my memory, I might mark that moment when I first noticed a hard-on. Naturally, I had had hard-ons before. When my mother noticed them, it was always her contention that they were there because I had to go to the bathroom. Even mothers are ignorant of the sexual progress of their sons.

Once when I was taking a bath, my mother came into the bathroom and I pointed out all the hair that was growing around my dingy.

"Just be sure you don't get it into trouble," she told me. I hadn't the faintest idea what she was talking about.

Handing down sexual knowledge, at least as far as my family was concerned, was not very efficient in those days. Such information was called "the facts of life," and the assumption was that fathers told boys how babies were made and mothers told girls. My father somehow neglected to mention anything in this regard. As a matter of fact, he never ever discussed the subject with me, clinically or otherwise.

I, therefore, had to learn about this mysterious subject

from my peers, which was a faulty system at best, especially when you are eleven years old. At that time there was no such thing as formal sex education in the schools. We had no idea about what went where or how, although some of the bigger boys talked among themselves about the thrill you got when you jerked off, whatever that meant.

So here was this ignorant sissy staring agape at a mature naked woman's body and suddenly discovering that the sight of it had something to do with making your dingy hard. I wanted to see more of Jean Moran's body. It sure was exciting and made me feel good. Sometimes she caught me at it.

"Go on with you, peeking at me, you naughty boy."

"I was not," I would protest. A lie, of course. I looked at her every chance I got, through any crack and keyhole.

Naturally she was privy to my parents' conversations about my sissiness, but that probably fell under the heading of information forbidden to servants. I'm sure her folks told her that you only got into trouble by minding your employers' business.

I'm sure, too, that she knew that the sight of her naked or even half-naked body was exciting to me. I have no way of knowing that, but I did have many a quick tantalizing glimpse of her nether parts. Too quick. Because we lived at such close quarters she had developed a way of dressing and undressing under a nightgown, although she did sometimes forget. It was nerve-wracking to sometimes wait up for her to go to sleep, hoping that she would forget to undress under her gown. More often than not, I was disappointed.

She was a good-looking girl and did attract some of the young men in the neighborhood. Occasionally, they showed up to babysit with her when my parents went out at night, although I'm sure my mother had told her that this was forbidden. But that was between her and my mother. I didn't associate it with anything worth thinking about, and I was usually asleep long before my parents came home.

One night I was awakened by a strange sound, repetitious and rhythmical. I listened.

"Trust me?" I heard a male voice say.

"No," Jean Moran replied.

"Trust me?" the male voice said again.

"No," Jean Moran said.

"Trust me?" the male voice repeated.

There was a bit of a hesitation, then Jean said:

"Just a wee bit."

This went on and on. Sometimes Jean said no. Once she said "maybe." Often she said "a wee bit."

Without making a sound, although my heart beat a tattoo in my chest, I crept out of bed and tiptoed to the bedroom door. I knew something odd was happening, but I didn't know what.

Carefully, I opened the door a crack and peeked into the living room. Only the little lamp on the table at the other side of the room was on. I could make out the form of Jean Moran on the daybed where my parents slept. A young man was beside her, leaning on one elbow and moving his hand on her upper body. She lay on her back and I noticed that the upper part of her dress was open.

They were obviously playing some kind of a game. The young man was moving his hand on her body and she was consenting or refusing depending on where his hand was or how she felt. The young man was making a bit of headway, since Jean had trusted him enough to unbutton her dress and unfasten her brassiere. I could tell that had been done, because I could see her breasts were loose.

I watched, mesmerized by the process.

"Trust me," the young man said.

"Maybe."

He got bolder and put his hand under the brassiere. I knew what he was doing, squeezing her tits.

After about fifteen more minutes of "trust me," he had gotten her brassiere off and had even given her nipples a few sucks. Then he started going lower, starting all the way down at her ankles. You can't imagine the effect of this sight on an eleven-year-old boy.

Because the light made it difficult for me to see what was going on down below, I lowered myself to the floor and crept forward through the door's narrow opening as quietly as I could. After all, Jean and her friend were busy as hell. I watched as he challenged her trust all the way up her leg and thigh. Then she had spread her legs and he was challenging this trust all the way up. He had even lifted her dress. I could see her panties very well. They were satiny and seemed to shine in the dark.

At one point, he was getting her to trust him to start rolling down her panties, and when he tried to do it, he had a bit of trouble and needed her to help him. Because of this,

she had to lift her body. It was then that she saw me.

"Oh dear mother of God!" she squealed, jumping up.

"What is it?" the young man said, equally frightened.

At her scream, I had dashed back to bed, but there could be no mistake about it. What I had seen I had seen and I can tell you that it was a powerful sight to me at the time.

Of course I couldn't sleep and it wasn't long after my discovery that Jean came into the bedroom. She sat on her bed and watched me as I pretended to sleep. I heard her sigh lightly and, a few moments later I heard her sobbing. When I finally opened my eyes, she had covered her face with her hands. Her shoulders shook and she was sobbing bitterly, stifling it as best she could so as not to wake Jerry.

"Please don't cry, Jean," I begged. "Please."

"You saw that, Stanley," she whispered between sobs. "And I'm so ashamed."

I didn't know what to say.

"If your mommy and daddy find out, I'm going to lose my job. I can't lose my job, Stanley. It would be awful for me."

"Why would you lose your job?" I asked.

"I did a terrible thing. I had no right to have that boy in here. No right to do what I did."

"Aw please, Jean," I said, sitting beside her on the bed, genuinely frightened for her. I also felt a bit guilty, as if I were the source of her pain.

"You don't know what this means," she said.

"I know what it means," I said bravely. The fact that I was attempting to soothe a crying woman somehow gave

me the false impression that I was more manly than I was.

"You have no idea. Your mother finds out, that's the end of me."

"How will she find out?"

She continued to cry, but less than before. Finally she dried her eyes.

"You won't tell, Stanley?"

"Of course I won't tell."

"Is that a real promise?"

"I won't tell. I promise."

"It's to be a secret between us?"

"I will never, never tell," I assured her, flattered by her confidence and, I suppose, my power. "Cross my heart."

"Thank you, Stanley," Jean said. "I will never forget that."

The sharing of this secret dramatically changed my relationship with Jean. I was now her confidante and, I believe, her friend. She would say things to my mother, then wink at me in her peculiar way.

She impressed my mother as being more and more conscientious, and my mother was very vocal in her praise of Jean's performance, which pleased Jean a lot. It also validated to her that I had, indeed, kept her deep, dark secret.

We even discussed things together in a more intimate way.

"You really shouldn't play with those dolls, you know. Not in front of your mom and dad," she would warn.

"He thinks I'm a sissy."

"Lots of dads think that about their sons."

That made me feel somewhat better. She had six brothers.

I felt really close to Jean Moran and dreaded the day when she would have to leave.

"I hope you never leave us, Jean," I told her often.

"There comes a time," she sighed.

"I hope it never comes."

To my knowledge, she never invited any other young men in when she had to babysit. If she did, I think I might have been very jealous.

One night—I think she had been with us about seven months—we found ourselves together in the living room. Mom and Dad had gone off to the movies. Jean was sitting in a chair reading and I was on the floor playing with one of my boy dolls. Suddenly I looked up and I noted that Jean's dress had hiked up, showing her bare thighs. I maneuvered myself up to a point where I could see the crotch of her panties.

It wasn't long before she saw me and put her legs together, pulling down her skirt. She gave me a mock look of disapproval, then went back to her book. But after awhile I noted that she was watching me playing with my doll.

"Tell me, Stanley," she said quietly, "that night you saw me playing 'Trust me.' What did you feel?"

I shrugged. I couldn't find a way to describe it. She watched me for a while longer, then moved to the daybed, rolled on her side and leaned on her elbow.

"Did you like watching us play?"

"I suppose."

"Would you like to play?"

I shrugged. Words failed me. She waved me forward and

I got on the bed next to her.

"Now start up here," she said.

With some hesitance, but no reluctance, I put my hand on her neck.

"Trust me?" I said hoarsely.

"Yes."

I brought my hand lower.

"Trust me?"

"Maybe."

My hand touched the side of her breast.

"Trust me?"

"No."

But she looked up at me and smiled, showing me that I should press forward. The game, after all, was in the promise.

My hand circled her breast until she finally trusted me to touch it over her brassiere. My God, I felt wonderful. It wasn't long before her beautiful breasts were naked in my hands.

"I'll even trust you to kiss them," she said sweetly. And I did.

Then we got to work on the lower department. By then I had acquired the knack of the game and it wasn't long before her dress was up and her pink satiny panties lay before me. At that point I was somewhat stumped.

"I've trusted you with everything so far, Stanley. Haven't I?"

"Yes," I agreed.

"Now I'm going to trust you with the most important part of all."



"Really?"

"Really."

"But before I do that I want you to show me yours."

"Mine?"

She reached for my hard-on and touched it.

"That," she said.

I really was confused. I had a most confused idea of the geography of sexual conjunction. I was also shy and frightened. A hard-on was a very private thing for a boy. But Jean was so trusting and warm and persuasive that she finally persuaded me to show her my hard-on.

"That is a wonderful, beautiful thing you have there, Stanley. You should be very proud of it."

"Have you seen many things like mine?" I asked.

"I have six brothers and I have occasionally seen other boys. Do you know the use of this?" She caressed it lightly.

"Use?"

She explained it as best she could. In retrospect, I did not think then that she was a woman of great experience, although I know now that she greatly enjoyed this episode in her life.

"Now," she said, "I'm going to show you what I was talking about." She slid down her panties and spread her legs. What I saw sticks with me in vivid detail. I saw it, as they say, in living color. It was, to me then and still in my mind, a marvelous sight, tantalizing. The sheer eye-filling joy of seeing it for the first time can never be replicated. Remember, what I am describing was seen through the eyes of an eleven-year-old boy.

“Now you get on your knees between my legs, Stanley and I want to show you what you must do with this.”

She guided me gently and directly into her. My penis even in its present state was still quite small and it slid in very easily.

“This is what the life of a man and woman means, Stanley. It is a beautiful, wonderful thing. It is not a dirty thing, although it can be dangerous, especially to a girl.”

She let me pump her for a bit, then gently released me and held me in her arms. I felt wonderful, safe, warm, loving. I did not have an orgasm. I don't think she did either.

I don't know how long we stayed together, probably no more than an hour. But after we had dressed, we sat down on the bed holding hands.

“I'll never tell,” I volunteered.

“Of course you won't,” she said gently.

“I love you, Jean,” I said. “And I promise you with all my heart that I will never tell.”

She gave her notice the next day and I never saw her again until a few moments ago, more than forty years later.

But I've often thought about my experience with Jean Moran. How sweet that memory is. Today, I suppose, they might consider our act child abuse, or immoral, or some such euphemism that society has to invent to protect itself from its darkest fears.

I can't even tell you that I truly understood her motives for giving me this lesson in life. Perhaps she was reacting to my father's fears about me being a sissy. Perhaps she just wanted to leave me with this gift of knowledge, to give me

the true taste of human nature. Maybe, deep down, she was just lusting, giving in to her own horniness, manifested in a desire to have sex with young boys. To me, whatever her motives, it was a gift more profound and meaningful than any I have received in my life.

I saw her briefly the next day making her rounds, spreading the joy that I know now was her purpose in life. I even stopped her in the hall. She looked up at me and smiled.

“Thank you, Jean Moran,” I said.

She looked at me for a long moment. I’m sure she had a flash of memory and saw me as that little boy of eleven.

Then she walked away, but I must have continued to look at her. She turned at the end of the corridor and looked back.

“I never did tell,” I whispered.

It was then she did her familiar wink and I was sure she heard me.

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