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## Jules and Julia

by Vera Gajic

“Why is this happening to me?” said Sue, “I keep thinking I’m somewhere else.”

“Where?” asked Jules.

They’d started to worry about Mum ever since telling her that they were non-binary and were now Jules not Julia and were to be referred to as *they*.

Mum didn’t take it well, refusing to understand what it meant and how important it was to Jules. She’d pleaded with Jules saying life was complicated enough without having to worry about what her daughter was.

Jules was an only child of a single mother, the worst combination they always thought. If they’d had a sibling to share their mother’s love, hatred and sometimes madness with they were sure it would have been easier growing up, or a second parent to diffuse the intensity of being the sole recipient of everything their mother threw at them.

“In the other house, you know, home, with the swing and the pond in the garden and lots of frogs,” said Mum.

“That was your home Mum, where you grew up. That was sold over twenty years ago when grandma died.”

“I know that, but I keep thinking about it. I keep expecting to be inside it when I come through the door. I sometimes don’t recognise this place, I don’t know what is in the other rooms.”

“Of course you do Mum, we’ve been here forever,” said Jules.

“You haven’t been here, when were you here? I brought up my daughter here but you aren’t my daughter, who are you?”

“Oh is that what this is about, you know I was your daughter, are you just making a point again? I was your daughter and I will always be your child.”

Jules couldn’t work out whether to get angry at their mother’s prejudice or whether to worry that she was losing it like her mother had. Surely not yet, she was only 65.

“I just can’t work out what is going on. I can remember being a child but I keep forgetting what happened to me once I grew up. There is a big hole in my memory.”

“I’m sure it is still in there Mum, you just need to find it. Memory is the thing you forget with. The fact that you know you have forgotten it means that you have a memory of it, otherwise you wouldn’t know you’d ever known it, if you see what I mean.”

“Oh but what about my memories of you as a girl, do I forget them now that you aren’t a girl anymore?”

“So you remember me as a girl then? That’s what you did when you grew up you had a child and brought them up,” Jules pointed out.

“Well yes I remember some of that but I can’t be sure it’s real anymore. I think I remember and then you tell me that you are my child but it doesn’t make sense if you are not my daughter, I can’t put two and two together.”

“Mum, it really isn’t that difficult, I am the same person, I look like me. I haven’t had my boobs chopped off or anything drastic. I was never very girly, you know I hated the dresses you tried to put me in. Look I have to go soon, what was it you wanted me to come over for?”

“I wanted you to meet Peter, he is about to arrive. He is going to help us with this problem. I met him at church, he understands all about gender stuff. He’s helped other people.”

Jules looked worried, it was time to leave, this was a trick that their mother had cooked up. Of course she wasn’t losing her marbles, she got them over here on false pretences to get someone to talk them out of their “problem” as Mum would call it.

“There is no way I am going to be lectured about my life by some bigoted, prejudice, religious nut. I’m leaving.”

Jules put on their coat and marched to the door and opened it to find two men in white coats standing on the doorstep.

“Hello Julia, please come with us,” said the taller of the men.

“My name is Jules and there is no way I am coming with you!” shouted Jules as she tried to push past them.

“I am afraid we have a section notice here, you have no choice,” said the taller man as they grabbed Jules and pushed her inside the waiting van.

“Don’t worry Mrs Drumster, we’ll get your daughter back,” said the man as they drove Jules away.