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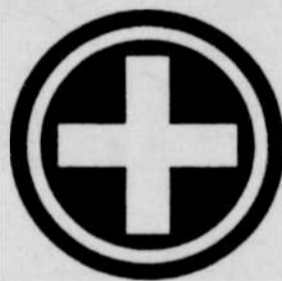
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HUMOR

Last man on earth

How my boyfriend convinced me to become a lesbian

Where do lesbians come from? Are we born this way? Do we choose it? Is there a maniacal Dr. Dykenstein in some cliffside la-BOR-at'ry piecing together exhumed body parts and jolting them to life on stormy nights with a giant Hitachi Magic Wand?

Born, chosen or created, lesbians roam the earth trying to find each other. Not an easy task in a world where all our identifying hairstyles are co-opted by mainstream fashion. If we are lucky enough to detect others of our kind, we must initiate contact.

But some of us are slow. I didn't jump into the arms of my first lesbian lover; I was pushed. Thank God(dess)! I may have stayed lost in hetspace forever if it hadn't been for my final boyfriend.

Kind and gentle was he—nothing like the other overpowering, self-absorbed, clit-ignorant college boys I knew. Boyfriend had a pretty face and was as sweet as a bee charmer. His high tenor warbled through "Bridge Over Troubled Water" like a choir boy, which he had been.

We hiked to our special woodland hideout where he sang to me while I braided wildflowers into his long, silky hair. We pranced and spun in the meadow. We were stardust. We were golden. And oh, so high.

Boyfriend lived across from an all-women communal household where he bought his monthly lid. They didn't like men coming over, so he asked me if I'd be his weed runner. I crossed the street with his money folded up in the pocket of my long tie-dyed skirt.

The pot-women were friendly. I enjoyed visiting the commune but was eager to get back across the street and enjoy the purchase with my far-out guy.

Boyfriend was a good dancer, meaning he'd just slip off into his own world while I did the same. We liked to go out dancing, but I always got hit on at straight clubs.

Not being the "keep your hands off my woman" sort of man, Boyfriend suggested we try our town's only gay bar. We went on a Thursday—"Women's Night." I had no idea my own queer streak was as wide as k.d. lang's vocal range, but somehow I felt right at home.

I adored being surrounded by strong, confident, manless women. I relaxed around them. But I also felt kind of sorry for them because they didn't have a great guy like my long-haired swirly boy groovin' over there in the corner of the dance floor.

Visions of the bar women danced in my head when Boyfriend and I went back to his place. He complied with my request for dickless sex and cheerfully indulged my fantasy



Living OUT

by Sally Sheklow

of him being a woman worshipper at my goddess temple. I had one terrific guy.

One day in our woodland hideout, my dancing queen gently suggested I might be a lesbian. That really hurt. It meant I'd failed at my efforts to comply with years of conditioning to be more feminine, more soft-spoken (so boys' feelings wouldn't get hurt and so I wouldn't come off as some kind of queer).

Boyfriend's comment stung. But he'd planted the seed.

Back at the bar, he danced, and I studied the bar dykes. I searched for any indication I might be one of them. I didn't walk or dress the way they did. I was terrible at shooting pool. I didn't even own one single bandanna.

But I got all tingly imagining what kissing one would feel like. In a mysterious bout of overactive bladder, I kept dashing off to the women's

restroom. I leaned against the stall and longed for one of those bar dykes to pounce and smooch me into submission.

Boyfriend's need for my weed-running services suddenly increased. He sent me over to the commune so often, I finally ended up staying the night. One of the roommates shared her bed with me and taught me everything I needed to know about being a happy lesbian. Really happy!

Before long, I only went across the street to Boyfriend's house to make my monthly deliveries. He was good-natured about it and never once said, "I told you so," although he certainly had.

After college he moved away. I like to think his next girlfriend pushed him into the arms of the Radical Faeries, with whom he traipsed off into the woods to dance and sing with his kindred spirits.

The "born vs. choice" argument reminds me of him. Was I born this way? Did I choose it? Or did I just happen to have a wonderful boyfriend who steered me toward my natural destiny? If you run into him swirling around the dance floor, please thank him for me. I may have forgotten to do that. ☺

This is the final installment of SALLY SHEKLOW's column in Just Out. You can still find her in Eugene Weekly as well as queer publications around the country. Find archives at www.sallysheklow.com.

