Sense of a Woman

Dominic enters the Golden Gates

June 1, 1996 By Dominic Hamilton-Little

I finally make the pilgrimage to San Francisco (the hajj that is the duty of every queen) three summers after testing positive. The city puts its loving legs around me, and on this sun-drenched sojourn, every day blesses me with a holy lay. But ultimate rebirth comes to me on my last night in the shape of Hera -- a petite red-headed pixie with whom I trip the orgasm fantastic. How perfect, I think, walking home as the cold early-morning sun cuts through the coiling mists and the eucalyptus trees, that it should be at the top of an old Haight-Ashbury Victorian that this gay boy once again finds lust and good company in the arms of a woman.

Ironically, it was a woman, Eve, who first showed me years ago that the frightened, awkward, precocious youth I then was could be loved by another. And though I am more physically drawn to men, over the years I have often found solace and joy with these creatures of water and moonlight -- always ensuring that they knew of my primary predilections.

But following my HIV diagnosis, I felt that sex with womankind would be but iridescent memory. Rightly or wrongly, I believed that being HIV positive meant I could no longer have sex with women. In the lives of most gays, AIDS is familiar territory, and in my naïveté I could not imagine meeting a straight woman for whom this would not be an insurmountable obstacle. Until San Francisco; until Hera.

We meet the best way possible -- through a friend. Darling Bubbles, whom I am visiting for the first time since he made the transcontinental move, invites Hera to join us for a day at the beach. But an unexpected fog bank prevents us from discovering our inner sea nymphs, so we spend the afternoon driving up and down the ridiculously beautiful coastal hills and getting cozy in the back of the car, whilst ever-impatient Bubbles swears at the other drivers. And Hera suggests we all join her the next day for dinner.

Inevitably, following the delicious meal, we go dancing. San Francisco seems to slightly alter everything, as though an unseen current of lazy euphoric excess makes every action and exchange rampant with libidinal possibilities. And though I have been enjoying Hera's company, I never imagined we'd suddenly be grinding pelvises on a crowded, smoky, sweaty dance floor.

All at once her face is looking up into mine, and we start kissing furiously -- deeply enjoying lips and tongues, oblivious to the shock wrought upon our friends by this queer's not-so-latent bi side.

But then Hera is, in a word, hot. I tell her I am HIV positive. She says she knows and doesn't care. And thus, having had sex with approximately eight men in the preceding week in a variety of fascinating San Franciscan locales -- including a Polk Street booth-store and Buena Vista Park -- I am suddenly thrilled that the Goddess has deigned to bless my visit with frisky Hera, who is currently running her tongue along my throat and fondling my crotch.

More than a little startled, and vaguely amused, Bubbles drops us off at Hera's abode -- the top floor of an old "painted lady." Her room has a vast bay window overlooking the picturesque roofs with a view of Twin Peaks; the faint smell of incense warms the air. Ripping off our clothes and falling onto her large white bed, I am enthralled with her creamy, pale skin and delightful, tight body. I am obsessed with pleasuring every inch of it. Holding her and tasting her reminds me so much of raptures past. I can only gasp in bliss that her petite frame fits so neatly into the curve of my body.

A huge bowl of condoms lies beneath the bedside lamp, next to cigarettes, cassette tapes and poppers (she is a San Franciscan, remember). No demure, retiring creature she -- Hera is obviously always prepared. And after some of the most exquisite foreplay I've enjoyed in a while -- and a healthy tongue workout -- I rip open a condom, and we have a fabulous rock 'n' roll in the heart of gay Mecca while the sun crests the eastern hills, tinting them with pink and purple light. The circle is now complete -- how perfect, how wonderful, and so very right.

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