Don’t Be a Drag, Just Be a Queen

I felt powerful. And it wasn’t just from looking beautiful.

August 21, 2019 By JMV

Today has felt rough for no particular reason. I’ve felt strange all day, just off somehow. My heart and soul are on the mend, though, as I sit in the dark over the water of the bay in Cape Cod. I’m just outside of Provincetown where I can see the Pilgrim Monument lit and I hear the tide quietly roll in. It’s really beautiful.

Classical music is playing from my iPhone as I find inspiration to write. My life has brought me here. My life has brought me many wonderful places. It’s all because of these beautiful nights where I’ve sat with myself and meditated, simply listening to the wonders the world has to offer me.

I just released my previous blog post today. Titled “Putting My HIV Status Out There for the First Time,” it tells you of when my life started to really take a turn for the better. What I didn’t mention was that during that time, I continued to grow up and learn more day-by-day—I even explored what it’s like getting into drag.

Sherry Vine is this amazing, legendary drag queen I call “mama.” She has taught me so much of what I know, and for her birthday in February of 2016, I decided I’d get dolled up and do a number for her as “Jenny Craigslist.”

Unfortunately, I had never gotten into drag by myself, so it’s a good thing I had plenty of friends who were queens. The first time I did drag, it was years before this birthday number, and Sherry Vine had painted me. It was an all-day processthat started with running errands before the major transformation. Then I needed 30 minutes to shave my face up to my hairline—plus, I had to give myself at least three hours to get painted.

For the grand debut of Jenny Craigslist, I called on a favor from Miss Fame. I wanted to be gorgeous, and I . knew she couldn’t fail at that—just look at her! We joked around for hours. After all, getting into drag is supposed to be fun. The moment she finished applying the lashes, I needed help tucking, and she gave an extra set of hands. And when we finished the look, I was a beauty.

I felt powerful. It was like the world made sense. It wasn’t just the drag and being beautiful, it was that I had disclosed my status in my article with HIV Smart—that had helped my insecurities dissipate for a while. I had the world at my fingertips, not just for the taking, but also to give to others. Life just seemed right, and I was comfortable in my own skin, with or without makeup on. I still had demons to work through, but I knew I was on the right path just for that day.

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