

Fag Hag Forever

By Linda Parker Horowitz

Fact: I am a Jewish mother. **Fact:** I am a fag hag.

You might think that those two facts are mutually exclusive. They are not. This is because gay men love me, and I love them. This has been true since elementary school when I befriended Aaron Borden even though he threw-up every Friday before spelling tests in second grade. Though I did not join him, albeit in the girls' bathroom, I must have empathized with his test anxiety in that pre-Prozac era.

By the time I got to college, as a theater major, I was in heaven surrounded by young, closeted queers, though one of my best friends to this day, Michaelangelo, was definitely OUT. We bonded in the angst of our youth, sang through our pain, full-voiced, throughout the theater building, ignoring the judgmental looks of our fellow students and enjoying the reverberation from the concrete floors and small stairwells. "You'll Never Walk Alone," our anthem.

After college, I moved to New York City to pursue my acting dream. A group of pals from Brandeis formed a new-age rock band and rented a large house on Long Island we named "Big Gray". Me and four straight guys in the band. No worries that perhaps I'd given up my fag-hag ways. My theater friends came to visit, had discovered their true sexuality in the big city, and came out en masse. One of my house-mates noted that all my friends had universally come out and commented, "Linda, one day you're going to marry one of your gay friends and have children with no wrist bones."

Was it just circumstances that my friendships consisted almost exclusively of gay men, or some other yet-to-be-defined, deep-seated psychosis? I went into therapy while living in New York City. I discovered that my therapist was gay. I should have suspected since the referral came from my friend, Tom (gay, naturally).

As a starving New York actress, I was living in a shabby brownstone in a rather questionable Brooklyn neighborhood. When the first floor apartment downstairs became vacant, I called my friend, Spencer, who moved in and decorated immediately. He was the first person I met when I got to Brandeis University's theater department. I thought he was gorgeous in a Jewish Omar-Shariff-way. He spoke like Niles Crane on "Frasier" and was brilliant, a Phi Beta Kappa. His interest outside of theater was politics, and he had an extraordinary knowledge of the international political landscape. Aside from the usual collection of gay porn, he read political commentary and got the most erudite junk mail.

About 7:00 AM one morning, there was a knock at my door. "Who is it?" I asked tentatively, since I never had visitors at that hour. Listening for a response, I continued to rush to get ready for work. "It's Spencer," he intoned despondently. I immediately opened my door. There he was, dramatically draped in my doorway in his brown velour bathrobe. "I've had a very Kafkaesque experience," he declared despairingly. He continued, still clinging to the door frame like Garbo, "First, I hear scratching on my wall. Then, I am awakened by Pat's voice on her

answering machine, though she's moved out." "I worked until 4:00 AM," he moaned, "I MUST get some sleep. May I use your bed?" Only Spencer. "Sure. Shut the door when you leave. Gotta run!" He fell onto the bed as I dashed.

Jeffrey was my Jewish dentist pal. He was classically Jewish – short, round, swarthy skinned with a full head of black curls. If he was straight, I'd be married to him and have short dark sons. We met in a New York City acting class. He invited Tom and me out for a beach day at Fire Island, THE tres chic gay summer hang-out. On our way back to the City, Tom commented, "Did you realize that you were the only straight person and only woman there?" I'd just spent a very long, incredibly fun day with 10 gay men and truthfully, hadn't noticed.

When my theater dream disappeared, I left Brooklyn to attend graduate business school. I was the only ex-actress amongst 250 bankers and engineers – not nearly as entertaining as Fire Island. After graduating, I searched for a job for over a year. Who finally hired me? A gay man, of course. We worked together for four years, never had a fight, and became great friends. Ever soul searching, I asked him why gay men liked me. He said it was because I said "fabulous" JUST like a drag queen.

When he accepted a new job up north, I bought him a gift of all kinds of naughty items at a renowned West Hollywood sex shop. I put them in a Tiffany's box then took him to lunch at an upscale downtown establishment to present it. It was a soggy lunch as I cried non-stop, but through my tears, I clearly remember his face upon opening the box. But the *real* laugh was the astonished look of the man walking past at that very moment when he looked down and saw the contents!

Recently, at my "Highly Significant" birthday party, we played Linda's Life Jeopardy. The answer, worth one "Best of Duran Duran" CD, "You can't have too many gay friends." Answer? "What is Linda's axiom of life?"

Unfortunately, despite every gay man coming out to me at my recent corporate job, hiring two gay men to my team at that corporation, AND living in L.A. (though not in West Hollywood), I do not have enough gay pals in my life.

Here is my Personal Ad:

Straight, married, middle-aged mom seeks gay guy for flamboyant fun. If you are still in mourning for Judy Garland, can quote Stephen Sondheim musicals, go to Palm Springs whenever possible, and swear that all great-looking men are actually gay, then call me immediately for a date. We'll have meaningful conversations over the trendiest martini at the most excruciatingly hip restaurant of the nano-second. Discussions to include the evils of the Religious Right, the Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage, why firemen are incredibly hot, and the best skin care products to fight the ravages of aging. We'll ponder the current state of the film industry and delve into why there is a depressing dearth of gladiator movies. This will be followed by hours of dancing at your favorite club. If it works out, you can decorate my home.