

The Parade Story
By Kristina Villarini

When all you know is high school, everything is as serious as World War II and nothing seems to go the way it's supposed to. This is the age when everyone starts telling you life stories, and why you don't want to make the same choices they did and end up like them.

“If I had only ignored your mother when she'd asked me to Prom... I always knew I'd have a much better time with the Homecoming Queen, and I heard she put out that night. Instead, I had to date your mom all through college and then, she got knocked up and had you.

The thing is; you always think that you won't be in that position. I am better, smarter, and have higher standards than [insert relative's name here]. I will be the anomaly. I only thought this because I had just graduated from an all-girls parochial school in New York City. I dated girls there, so the same rules most definitely did not apply, right?

Wrong. I got caught up seeing the worst possible girl for a long time, missed out on opportunity after opportunity to talk to (read: sleep with) other girls, and when we finally hated each other enough to part ways, I was wrecked. Unsure of myself, awkward and with little confidence, I was certain my lesbian career was over. It was at this point that I had the most phenomenal epiphany – There are lots of women in the world; half of which are lesbians, and if not, I'll make them! Worst case scenario: at least, I couldn't get them pregnant.

Using the power of the internet and the summer season to my advantage, I chatted up girls across the globe. Behind the monitor, I was a confident asshole with no remorse for any of the sweet nothings I told women. In the midst of this, something amazing happened: I started believing my own hype. A friend of mine invited me to the NYC Pride Parade. I was a nineteen year old, single lesbian working in New York City and I had never been to the Pride Parade. I know, I know.

I had visions of readily available food and breasts dancing in my head. All of the complaints that lesbians made about trouble meeting one another became nil in an instant. Dirty jeans-check. Sleeveless tee-check. Hair combed-well, that's never the case. Hot girls, here you come.

But meeting up with my friends was easier said than done. Getting through ANY New York parade is a feat in itself, but trying to part the furry-chested sea of gay, sweaty men was something that no one should ever have to experience alone unless they are: 1. well equipped, or 2. Jim McGreevey. After cell phone contact with a friend of mine was made, I soon discovered the problem.

“Hey.”

“Hey, Kristina, are you here?”

“Yeah, just got off the train. Where are you?”

“Uh... Looks like I'm in front a bread store or bakery.”

When I looked around, I noticed said bread store... Across the street. Trying to cross the street during a New York parade is impossible. The only way around it is to go north about fifteen hundred avenue blocks to where there is no parade, cross the street, and then come back down. Hot girls would have to take a backseat to navigating my way to my friends. The plans were to head as far away from the parade as possible, and then take an alternate route back.

But while playing “divide the sausages” I bumped into a gay friend, Mark, who was having a lot more fun than I was.

“Hey! Where are you going?”

“I’m trying to get to Rebecca.”

“Yeah? Me too. Buddy System?”

“Good idea.”

And so, the cowardly lesbian and the gay scare-cock made our way toward the emerald isle of bread baking. On the way, taking the less crowded, but equally homosexual alternate streets, I received my first proposition as an older woman who obviously left just stepped off the white trash mobile parked next to me.

“Hi there, cutie. Mind if I walk with you guys for a minute?”

I stared at the creature from the gay lagoon and then looked at Mark. He stated, in the kindest of terms:

“She’s not interested. You’re old enough to be her mother! You should be ashamed of yourself!”

Crisis averted.

When we finally did meet up with our friend and her friends, luck would have it that she would have to work. Mark and I ended up roughing it alone. My first Pride parade and I’m arm-in-arm with the butt sensei? Good times. When we finally reached the festive aspects of the Parade, it was heaven for both of us. Think street fairs with corn on the cob and lemonade stands, DJs and giveaways, and then throw in hundreds of gays and lesbians. I was overwhelmed, but pretty sure that I had no shot with any of the hotties I kept walking past. After a few passes, I noticed I kept bumping into the same blonde, so I raised my eyebrows at her, pointed and mouthed the words, ‘Are you following me?’ She bit her lip, fluttered her eyes and smiled. Perfect teeth, perfect body, she’s with her friends, totally digging on me and she’s two feet away. You could imagine what I did, right?

I gulped and stared at my feet. Up ‘til and including when we relocated to the infamous pier on the West Side of Manhattan where the gays frequent for shenanigans after the Parade. While walking hand-in-hand with my comrade, he stopped abruptly and squeezed my palm tightly. I looked at him, surprised.

“What, what’s up?”

“Kris... Turn around... And run.”

He said this in the calmest voice EVER. But I couldn’t have imagined what he saw so I just remained still, wondering if he was trying to pull one on me.

“Dude, what are you—“

“Run!”

We ran, as did hundreds of other gays. I saw some kid trip and get caught up in the stampede. When we got about four blocks away, we stopped. While catching my breath, I looked at him, eyes wide as saucers. “What the fuck?”

“Someone yelled 'gun,' and people started taking off towards us on the boardwalk. All I saw was every color of the rainbow flying toward us. So I tried to make sure we didn't die.”

“Jesus! A gun? At the Pride parade? What the fuck?”

“No clue, honey. People get stupid. Probably some right-winger hunting some gays.”

We retreated to a local bar, where I drank two Coronas before I found out the next day that the gun stampede was caused by a girl I had been dating. This psycho was supposed to be my date to the parade, but I lied and told her I wasn't going, so I could hang with my friends.

I discovered this during a conversation that included such details as what she was wearing: a mini-skirt that said “Taste the Rainbow” on the back, and how her night ended: “my homegirl asked me to hold her piece in my bag and some girl kept talking \$h*t so I just opened the bag to shut her up...” I suppose that for everyone she had dated prior to me, they were relatively impressed by details such as that, however I was in stunned silence. She proceeded to say “hah, I was just kidding, I didn't have a gun.” But the truth or non-truth did not concern me.

I never called her again, because she inadvertently almost killed my friends and I. However, something like this would only happen to me... And only during my first Pride parade. So, during June, when everyone asks why I don't get excited to celebrate my homosexuality in New York... I'll be sure to refer them to this story right here.