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Amazon Trail: The Last U-Haul

There comes a time in a dyke's life when she has to say no – I haven't gotten there yet. These last few years of living in town, single, have been rich with self-discovery, friends and independence. I wouldn't have missed it for the world, but something was missing. I guess I'm just the marrying kind.

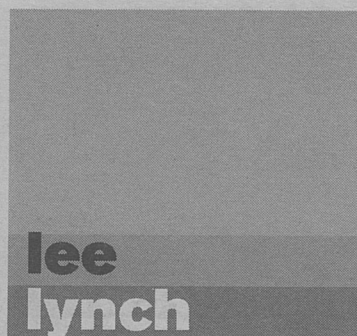
Who wouldn't be? My girl is the best thing since sliced bread. So I'm moving in.

This is an entirely new experience – I have never moved in with someone else. The closest I've gotten is parking a travel trailer out back of a girlfriend's house. Not this time. My girl is getting the works – me and all my stuff. I keep expecting her to cry uncle; instead she fills up her van every time she visits and trucks it on home.

It's as if I'm reassembling my identity at my girl's house. There's a melding going on even before we cohabit. So far a chunk of my library has moved into her guest room, and my cat figurine collection awaits me in a closet. Two-thirds of my t-shirts and most of my jeans are set to go, while a conga line of furniture has already danced to its destination. Every time I turn around there's another item that needs to be packed up for our combining-households garage sale. I am amazed at the number of pieces of who I am I've hauled around from place to place.

So many of these possessions are veterans of setting up a single household: the little garage-sale stereo, the donated recliner, the battered end table with its drawers for stashing stuff. It's hard to sell some of the things that need to go. The couch sags with memories, the sheets absorbed a fountain of tears. The green table held so many of us at Thanksgiving and the card table extender was central to 4th of July gatherings – they'll both go back to my innkeeper friends. My girl and I will still do holidays, but we don't need two of everything.

It's just that – well, every piece of furniture has a story, every pot and pan collected in my bachelorhood is like a medal of survival. I'm kind of proud that with the help of my friends, I actually have survived. I may have nearly depleted my savings, but I've made the payments on my house and kept it in good enough repair that it's found a buyer. It was friends, again, who



helped me get it in shape to sell. Not two weeks after a swarm of lesbians weeded, mowed, trimmed, cleaned and repaired, the buyer bit. Hallelujah – my girl and I can stop commuting and can nest together.

But what friends! First they helped me set up housekeeping, now they're helping me dismantle my life here. With good

one. I was through with love. These friends became my family. It was wrenching to learn that I needed to leave my family, but it's exactly what I need to do. Unlike the parting I experienced at 18, I get to do it right this time – to leave with their acceptance, love and blessings on my queer head.

So I'm moving again, hiring my last U-Haul. Because this is it, the one I've been hoping for, the one I didn't think could happen. We're a matched set, two halves of a whole, star-crossed lovers and, after a few years alone – with friends helping me to see a lot more than just a house clearly – I know this is right. I couldn't be more smitten – and I couldn't be more astonished at what has grown between us. She was one of those friends who helped me to survive my time alone. Just a kind, gentle,

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cheer they are letting me go, though it's as painful for them as for me. I remember one of the innkeepers accompanying me on my house-buying expeditions. She showed me the need for a lot of light in a house, made repairs seem do-able, helped me to recognize the value of the house I bought. I remember the retired schoolteacher working in my front garden, pulling weeds I couldn't keep up with. This house is more than four walls, it is filled with generous, sustaining energy that is hard to leave behind.

With these friends, I didn't need a girlfriend. Wasn't looking for one. Didn't, frankly, want

supportive friend. Isn't that the way it often happens?

I have to admit that the single life was not exactly heaven on earth for me, but it had its attractions, one of which was stability. Moving would not have been in the picture until I was too rickety to handle a house. Instead, here I go again, feeling like a lesbian vagabond, but headed for the home I've been searching for all these years. My girl, who's been as surprised by the turn of events as I, keeps saying, "Who knew?"

Who knew I had one last U-Haul trip in me? ▼

Copyright Lee Lynch 2004. Lee Lynch is the author of eleven books including The Swashbuckler and the Morton River Valley Trilogy. She lives on the Oregon Coast. Her web page is at leelynch6.tripod.com

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