

Martha and Belinda's Excellent Adventure: Part 10

Part 10: Into Vermont & the Epilogue

Belinda Darcy

If you've never heard *The Sound of Music* while driving through the pristine Vermont countryside, you don't know what you're missing. (Martha would like it noted that she, being the culture-free little philistine that she is, does not endorse this sentiment). Being late September, the hills were indeed alive, with the colors of fall. I felt like I was in a car commercial, As the orchestra swelled and Mother Superior warbled *Climb Every Mountain*, Martha lunged for the Sony Walkman and jammed in her well-worn Pet Shop Boys tape. She slept the rest of the way, until we reached the outskirts of Burlington,

whereupon she leapt to life. We decided to drive straight to her sister's house for an official welcome, and because we couldn't wait to see her munchkins, ages 3 and 1 1/2. At first they didn't know who we were, and then, just as Emily seemed to remember me, Alina pulled her away to watch Barney on video. Martha's sister shrugged and offered us a snack.

Next stop was Martha's parents' house (aka "the Big House") to unpack. We had the place to ourselves for two weeks while they were away on vacation. We sat outside with a couple of drinks and watched an amazing sunset over Lake Champlain. The only sound was a chipmunk scurrying up a tree. Martha turned to me and said, "Gee honey, I can't think why we left LA..."

December 1993

Well, we found a great apartment and we survived the Dreaded Vermont Winter with very few complaints, despite a daily commute to Waterbury. Frankly it was a breeze, compared to sitting in bumper-to-bumper, noisy LA traffic, surrounded by graffiti-covered concrete and steel buildings and having to worry about stray bullets and carjackers. I did have a couple of nasty skids and soon learned that black ice is not a cocktail.

Martha endured a six-week stint at Sweetwaters where she was the only female in a tiny kitchen full of straight men, most of whom had an abundance of facial hair and a penchant for Led Zepelin. She was mercifully rescued from that "hell hole" and landed a job working for a small business run by two wonderful lesbians.

Meeting dykes proved to be harder than we had anticipated. For one thing, here in Vermont, straight women look exactly

like lesbians. They like short hair, minimal makeup and sensible shoes. It makes things very confusing. I considered writing a letter of protest to the Free Press, demanding that straight women show some consideration for lesbians, especially single ones, and wear some sort of sign clearly indicating that they were merely Homo Wannabes, and no substitute for the real thing. But then I decided it was more fun to assume that they were all dykes after all.

We stumbled upon the underground lesbian scene quite by accident one cold December night. Being on a tight budget, Martha had convinced me to go to a UVM women's basketball game. I didn't know the first thing about basketball, so the idea didn't thrill me, but I was tired of TV so I reluctantly agreed. It wasn't until we sat down in our row and started looking around that we discovered we were surrounded by dykes! Suffice to say that we began attending the games regularly, and I am now on intimate terms with every nuance of the game.

I was a travel agent for a bicycle touring company in Waterbury until it was bought and downsized. The I was an "elf" at the Christmas Loft for 2 weeks. Two long weeks. That was an experience ("Oh you must just love working here!" eighteen times a day) It had its moments though, like the day I discovered another lesbian elf who was just as fed up with the homophobic comments as I was. Then I found my current job, working for a local silkscreening shop, which I really enjoy. More importantly we've made some great new friends. So to anyone out there contemplating a radical geographic move, I wish you the best of luck and hope this little tale has encouraged you to take that leap of faith and "just do it". We're mighty glad we did. ▼

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