

MISS LOTTA CHANEL EXPLAINS

A Monologue

by

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Miss Lotta Chanel's home, evening, after her elegant cabaret performance somewhere. There is a loveseat, side table, wig stand, stool, bar and a rack of beautiful dresses along with the clothes one would expect in a stylish young man's closet.

Miss Chanel enters dancing, to suitable music, in full drag makeup, wig and a stunningly beautiful gown. She dances around the stage, then makes herself a drink. In the course of the monologue she will change into "boy clothes", though she will retain the makeup. She may make herself another drink. She does seem to engage the audience, even asking someone to help her unzip her gown and, at other points, directing her speech to particular audience members.

Having finished making her drink, she raises her glass, to salute the audience.

Such a gay audience tonight! (*Long pause.*). Even for cabaret. Now, though...it's good to be home with friends. Enjoy your wine.

But...admit it. I make you uncomfortable, don't I?. My wigs. My makeup. The jewels. They're real, you know. Most of them. My simply *fabulous* dresses. Couture, of course. No knock offs. But...I think you would be a bit *more* comfortable if I weren't so *good* at this. If I displayed more of the *comic* expected of a drag queen. A bit more makeup. A splash more *camp*. Well, I don't do that. Any of that. I'm beautiful. Convincing. And I know it. (*pause*) You know it, too, don't you?

Perhaps you would be more comfortable if I were trans. I know how you *love* "Pose". "Those beautiful women!" I'm not trans. They're women. I'm not. Though I'm beautiful, my gender is male. *Male*. I don't presume to any other. And I fear *you*, my dear don't actually understand male. Or even, for that matter, "female".

Here's your test. Why do you spend so much time in the gym? Health, of course. But you are a bit more devoted to those weights than might be expected of *that* purpose. Then there's what really turns you *on* at the gym. Isn't it the biceps? Sweaty six-packs? Stunning thighs? Butts? *(Pause.)* Oh, you so *want* those guys in the gym. *(Pause.)* And you so *want* to *be* those guys in the gym. *(Pause.)* Narcissus, anyone?

And why is it, that when you go online to look for sex, you demand "Straight acting."? "Masculine"? "No femmes."? Oh, *shush...* I've seen your profile, dear boy. And why do you steer away from the femmes or the swish in the bars... and giggle with your friends over those you see? You call them "silly"; though softly. "Giggle"? Just how *femme* is that? Gave yourself away, didn't you?

You've outed yourself, my dear. Not as gay. That was a while ago. No. As "not gay". As a *wannabe* "straight". As part of that *huge* segment of our gay community who want to be "just like everyone else". Not wanting to offend by being "too weird", "too outrageous", "*too gay*". They simply want to *be* like everyone else. "*See...* we can get to be married or in the military! Look at us, we're parents! Aren't we just *(Pause.)* "normal"? And what, my friend, *pray tell*, is "*normal*"?! My sweet, why do you want to be "just like everyone else"? Why do *you* want to be exactly like the people who've always hated you? Will always hate you?

I make you uncomfortable. Well, that's what I'm supposed to do. I make the "straight" in you uncomfortable.

Oh, *yes!* There's *straight* in you, my boy. The worst sort of "straight". You don't know it, but it's right up *here* (*indicating his forehead*). Where they put the rules and the "rule making machine". Behind which the *last* rule sits. *Enthroned*. The *evil* one. "The one rule to bind them all", dear Frodo.

Be a man! (Pause.) Be a man!

It's so very, *very* primordial. Of all the rules, it's the very most dangerous. The most destructive. For *us*, it folds, warps, and implodes *gayness* into self-loathing and generates its own "inner closet", even for those who have escaped the outer closet our society imposes on us. *That's* why you want "straight acting"... "masculine"... "no femmes" when you look for sex. When you look for friends. Hiding out among the "straight acting", are we? Well *straight* is always an act. Even for the straight.

So, now where did the last rule come from? Where could it *possibly* have come from? "Be a man!" Means, "Don't be shamed! Don't be *feminine*!" (*Long pause.*) And why this aversion to the feminine? Why this... *shame*? Ever wonder about that?

It's founded on an old and very primitive logic. A fossil. An ancient artifact. "When two things are alike, but not identical; one must be *better* than the other...more *perfect* than the other. Men and women are alike but different. Therefore, men are better than women. Superior to women. "Logic proves it!"

And why, dear boy, is that? Well, guess who's running the syllogism here? Hint: it's not a woman.

Aristotle, our old patriarch and a more sophisticated logician, believed everything sought the "fulfillment of its nature". With regard to humanity, that's the *male*. Women didn't quite make it to fulfillment of their nature. They were, for Aristotle, a "birth defect". Passing patriarch to patriarch, Thomas Aquinas made Aristotle the basis of Catholic theology and morality. And we've been "blessed" by those two patriarchs with it ever since. Misogyny: the very foundation of our culture.

Is my major in philosophy showing? (*Pause.*) Well, you should be *very* glad I skipped Plato.

You're a gay *male*. So... *guess* where *you* want to be on that totem pole? Dearest, you were programmed by your culture to be averse to the feminine. You were programmed to be shamed by the feminine. *Afraid* of it... even.

My dear, you *are*, you *are* feminine! You're strong. Powerful. Analytic. Ambitious. Decisive, logical, competitive and a ferocious political activist; a "master of the universe" when it comes to your business. You're *also* sweet, tender, loyal, empathetic and a devoted care giver to your friends. To me. With infinite patience and attention. And you are the worst bawler at sad movies... at plays. Happy when others are happy; sad when they are. You are creative and brilliant, with a deep and abiding aesthetic sensibility. You melt at lyrical and moving musical moments and at *beauty* anywhere displayed. But, don't you rather seem embarrassed by all this (*Pause.*) by this part of you? This *innate* part of you? This *feminine* part of you?

Why is that? Have you ever wondered?

It's the *rule*... working... working... *working*. In you... and every straight man. You share that evil with them. It binds you... and them.

My treasure, my friend, my love... you can't be "out" while the rule works! None of us is! It's what stands between us and *love*! By not loving something so basic to ourselves, not being able to love another! It's what makes some of us the worst homophobes and the most dangerous! It's the *master* rule and the one that binds them all: "Be a man!". And none of us nor any straight man can be *whole* while the rule works.

What tragedy that rule has brought! For straight men: Misogyny! Destroyer of relationships and lives. It generates a dangerous, toxic hyper-masculinity! A "warrior" culture that has been a boon to Hollywood, the basis of right-wing extremism and a catalyst for war!

How many sad, bullied, lonely, doubting young *straight* men have heard "be a man" haunting them with its shaming voice.

Miss Chanel pretends to hold a long gun and sweeps the audience.

And, with body armor and long guns... their weapons of war... have responded “I am! I am! I’ll *show* you!” (*Long pause, then sadly dropping the long gun.*) So many tragedies. The deaths of so many innocents.

I make you uncomfortable because I break that rule so publicly and outrageously. And I challenge *you* to do so! My friend, my love... know this: You break that rule, you break the rule-making machine! You break the machine and you know *you* control the rules and know there is no machine. Never was. Then you change the world. Then you can *fly!*

“Be a man!”. Cast out that rule and, straight or gay, you exile its voice of shame! Doing so, you shatter the machine! You destroy the “warrior culture” which destroys us!! Your masculine ceases to be toxic and your feminine enjoys her full power! Immediately you have both the strength of the masculine and the sweetness, love and creativity of the feminine! Neither is apart from you! Both are who you *are!* Who we are and forever, *will forever be!*

Our power, our brilliance, our *genius*, as gay men, is to know *both* the masculine and the feminine! To access, *use* both. To manipulate, challenge, explode and *create!* We make this world a *new* world! A *better* world! In doing so, to show, even straight men, how to be *better men!* How to dissolve *their* toxic masculinity; escape the “warrior culture” that would lead them to tragedy and destroy them. We can open them to the feminine aspect of their nature and its power!

As gay men, that’s our magic! There’s our power! That’s the thunderbolt we fling down into a sad and blinded culture!

(Stands. Feigns crashing thunderbolts.)

Crash! Gender roles! Be gone, foul beast! Look on me, straight man and be bewitched, cursed, enchanted! I, the most beautiful, glamorous woman you have ever seen, the sexiest woman you might ever have, lust for or dream of; am, in fact, *male!* And like

Samson in the temple, I bring down your whole edifice of patriarchal culture! If I can be female, then so can you! Where then, foul beast, is your power? How then, your dominance? Over women? Over me, a gay man? Challenge me, with your godly texts, for “lying with men as with women”... as if that distinction matters at all!

Look on me! I am here... gay! With the intelligence and power of all and every gender... to give you what we... *gay men*... have always and ever given this world... BEAUTY!

Finis