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WHAT A WEDDING

The Story of two Queens at the Dutch Royal Wedding

by MIKE DAWN

David and me, my name's Eddy, we both work for this small airline. We're stewards. We don't work on the same flight very often but we still get to spend a lot of time together. Now don't you go getting it all wrong, there's nothing between us except we're «sisters». Usually we just fly around the States, mostly we're in New York or L.A. or Frisco. We get to go to a lot of gay bars all over the place. It's okay.

We got a friend who works for a Dutch airline. We often see him in New York and sometimes he comes to the bars with us, once we even went to the steam baths together, all three of us—but that's another story. Well, this Dutch, he's always telling us about Amsterdam—how gay it is, with nightclubs and everything—and how it's legal and okay to be gay. And even the newspapers are always printing articles about it being a Mecca for homosexuals from all over the world and everything.

Well, when both of us, David and me, got calls from the office and they told us we had to work on charter flights from JFK to Schiphol at Amsterdam we were really excited. The flights were going over specially for the wedding of the Princess over there. Her name is Beatrix and she was marrying some German guy named Clause or something like that.

David was happy to go and see Amsterdam—it's such a quaint beautiful old City and all, but he said that he didn't want to go to the wedding or anything because he read in the newspaper or someplace that this Clause guy that Beatrix was going to marry used to be a Nazi or in Hitler Youth or something. Well, David being Jewish he's sensitive about Germans and Nazis and all that. But I told him to forget about it. Like, I said to him «Who do you think you are, Anne Frank or somebody! Don't be a silly, the past is past».

Well, like I said, our Dutch friend, Cor told us all about Amsterdam. He told us all the places to go, even wrote some of them down for us. And he gave us the name of this friend of his we were supposed to look up if we ever got there. Well, we were going.

Cor had told us that there'd be a big drag party the night of the wedding so we packed our gowns and everything, even two fur stoles that David got from his father's store. He said that he wanted to borrow them for the stewardesses, ha! We had so much drag that there was hardly room for our toothbrushes and we had to leave out pyjamas and all that sort of stuff that wasn't really necessary. We prayed that they wouldn't ask us to open up at customs or anything.

The passengers were mostly rich, snobby old women but the flight was okay except that it was ever so elegant and very dull.

We got through customs and everything but we got quite a big surprise when we reported to the office to find out where we were staying. All the hotels in Amsterdam were very busy because of the wedding and all the visitors and tourists and all. Just about every place was booked up solid and the only spot where the office could get us a room of any kind was at the Amsterdam Hilton. We were just thrilled.

The first thing we did after we got there was to phone this friend of Cor's,

his name was Peter. He was real swell. He went with us on a boat ride through the canals and he took us for a fabulous walk through the City. He even explained to us why it was that we kept walking around in circles. He showed us on a map how the City is laid out in a circle, all the canals curve around and come back to where they start from.

Well, like I said, this friend of Cor's, Peter, was real swell to us. We told him about the drag we had brought with us and he said that he'd like to see it. He was really so very nice but such a swish. He fell for David and he had to say «What do you think I am, a lesbian or something» because he wanted to go to bed with him.

But he didn't mind too much and he still asked us to come over to his place and watch the ceremonies and everything. He lives right across the canal from the Westerkirk, the Church where they were being married and he had a TV too so we could see most of the things on TV and still see them in person too. And we wanted to because it would be a crying shame to have come over 3000 miles and not see them in the flesh.

Well, let me tell you, Amsterdam is everything they say it is, even gayer!

Our first night there, Wednesday, the night before the wedding we went to a lot of super camp bars and then to this place called the DOK. Girl, was it gay! You can dance with men there and everything; it's just fabulous! We had a ball.

We didn't get back to the hotel until almost six o'clock in the morning on the day of the wedding so we decided not to go to bed at all. We took a shower but we were still a little tipsy from all the drinks, the night on the town and everything. We thought it would be fun to put on our drag and makeup and everything and get a taxi over to Peter's place.

By the time we were dressed and had our makeup on and our wigs combed—they were a mess from being in a suitcase—it was almost eight o'clock. So, we got the elevator down to the lobby and went over to the doorman and I was just going to ask him to get us a taxi when he bowed to us and said «This way please ladies». And he led us out to this little Ford car.

Well, we thought that it was a funny kind of taxi but everything is different in Holland—a little smaller than at home—so we got in. But when I said Westerkirk to the driver he said. «First you must go to the Raadhuis for the ceremony there ladies». Well, I didn't know what to say so I didn't say anything.

Then I noticed that we were driving in a long procession of little Ford cars. And we drove all through the City to the Raadhuis—that's Dutch for City Hall. A footman or something opened the car door for us, helped us out and escorted us into the building. We were in some sort of lineup again and we went right up along with the rest and went to these seats just a few yards—or meters like the Dutch say—from the Queen and the Princess and that guy, Clause and everybody.

We couldn't understand much of what was going on because it was all in Dutch but it was very beautiful and exciting. We got a kick out of the two flower girls and the little boys because they kept talking to the Princess and Clause, the Bride's Maids and everybody and they kept doing stupid things and wouldn't keep still and it almost broke everybody up.

Well, pretty soon they had said everything and signed everything; it was cute the way the Princess wanted to keep the pens and got Clause to put them

in his pocket. The Princess and Clause then the Queen and everybody started to leave and we followed right along in the crowd the way we had come in. Outside, the same little Ford that brought us there came along in line and stopped for us. That same footman or whatever he was opened the car door for us again and helped us in.

We knew that we were on the way to the Church and so I took out my compact with my rouge and powder to freshen up my face. But David started to act up; he said that he didn't want to go to the Church because of that business of Clause being a German. I tried to talk him out of his foolish notions but he just wouldn't listen. He made me mad and so I said «Listen here you silly queen, don't be such a schnook!» Well, he got really furious at me for calling him a schnook and he tried to slap me. Well, like I told you, I had my makeup out and I was trying to freshen up, so, when he swung at me he knocked the powder and everything right out of my hand and right out of the car because my window was open. It was just as we were driving past the Palace—they call it the Dam—an awful name for a Palace! There were crowds everywhere and my powder and stuff flew all over the place and everyone got very excited because it looked like a smoke bomb or something. A bunch of hoodlums and beatniks—provos they call them—had put bikes in the street in front of the procession and the crowd thought that this same bunch had set off a smoke bomb. A mob of people grabbed these kids with beatle hair cuts and funny clothes, bell bottom pants and all, and they threw them off a bridge into the canal. Cops came running all over the place even some on horses and motorcycles and it was very exciting but our car kept moving along in line and we left all the action behind us as we drove on to the Church.

David sort of calmed down and we went in. It was pretty much a repeat of what had happened at the City Hall; a lot of speeches and stuff. But they sang hymns and exchanged rings and his was too small and they had an awful job getting it on him. And those kids still acted up and talked too much.

Really though it was all just too grand, fabulous, ultra-camp, even supercali-fragilisticexpialidocious. What a wedding! We could hardly wait to get back home and tell everybody how we got to see a real Royal Wedding with all kinds of real Queens and even Princes and all.

But that business of David knocking my powder out of my hand and everyone thinking it was a smoke bomb, even the TV and the newspapers, well, we decided not to tell anyone about that because they'd never believe us anyway.

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