Trans Focus

The world from a transgender perspective

October 2025



Costa Blanca TGirls, honoured by the Beaumont Society

The Little Black Dress

Benidorm Pride

Welcome To October

October is a special time of the year, especially in Spain. For me, it's milder temperatures which means you can still socialise outside comfortably. Around the world we celebrate Halloween, which is no different in Spain. October 12th is the National Day of Spain (Fiesta Nacional de España), which means a national holiday and colourful parades across the country.

At the end of the month, the clocks go back an hour which means five months of darker evenings and migrating birds begin their long journey.

Oktoberfest starts, celebrated mainly in Germany, but also in other places around the world. On 1st October we have International Coffee Day and on 10th October it's World Mental Health Day.

We've Hit the Big Time

A few months ago, I was asked by Karen Barrie, the membership Secretary of The Beaumont Society, to write about Costa Blanca TGirls for their Magazine.

The Beaumont Society

The Beaumont Society is the longest-established transgender support group in the UK. Founded in 1966, it provides a support network for the trans community. The society aims to promote understanding and acceptance of transgender issues, offering support to individuals and their families and advocating for dignity and respect for trans people in all aspects of life.

The society is named after the Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont, a French aristocrat who lived a double life as both a man and a woman. It is a non-profit organization funded by membership subscriptions and donations.

We were so pleased to be asked to contribute to such a well established and well respected organisation. Obviously we can't publish the magazine itself but you can take out a yearly subscription to the Beaumont Society and receive the magazine as part of that subscription.

Hopefully we will get a whole new readership and maybe visitors to Costa Blanca South to enjoy our nights out.

https://beaumontsociety.org/about-us/



This Month…

…we look back on Benidorm Pride, with an array of photo's that hopefully give a feel of the vibe there. I found Madonna's speech at the Billboard Woman of the Year, which called out sexism, and applies more than ever today. Continuing the theme of sexism, we look at the myth of male protector and provider.

I've never liked the term 'TERF' as it suggests transphobic people are feminists. Kate Nash came along and produced her single 'GERM' which I believe is a much more appropriate and accurate term. The arrest of transphobic writer Graham Linehan brought joy to trans people and victimhood to transphobes. It also brought out the poet in me.

As ever, thank you for reading and your continued support.

Love

Carla & Penny XX

Madonna's Defiance Still Speaks

How a 2016 speech on sexism continues to echo in the fight for transgender women's visibility and equality.

Madonna's speech
Billboard woman of the year



When Madonna stepped up to accept Billboard's *Woman of the Year* award in 2016, she didn't give a typical acceptance speech. Instead, she delivered a strikingly honest reflection on what it meant to be a woman in an industry—and a world—that punishes women for their ambition, their sexuality, and even for the simple act of growing older. Her words resonated far beyond the music world, offering a raw glimpse into the sexism she had endured across decades in the spotlight. Nearly ten years later, her speech still carries weight, not only as a snapshot of gender inequality in entertainment, but also as a message that resonates deeply with transgender women navigating a society that continues to police womanhood.

Why It Resonates with Transgender Women Today

Madonna's speech spoke to the constraints placed on women who refuse to fit the mould. For transgender women, those same restrictions are amplified. They know all too well the reality of being judged and dismissed for failing to conform to someone else's idea of femininity.

Her reflections on sexism highlight challenges transgender women also face—misogyny intensified by transphobia. Like Madonna, who turned visibility into both a shield and a target, trans women live with the paradox of being seen, representation is empowering, but exposure brings heightened vulnerability.

Most of all, Madonna's defiance—her insistence on surviving, thriving, and continuing on her own terms, mirrors the resilience transgender women demonstrate daily. In a cultural climate where their identities are often questioned or erased, her words serve as both recognition and

reminder: that womanhood, in all its forms, is valid, powerful, and worth defending.



Madonna's Speech

Seriously, it's better this way. I always feel better with something hard between my leg.

Thank you for acknowledging my ability to continue my career for 34 years in a face of blatant misogyny, sexism, constant bullying and relentless abuse.

When I started, there was no internet. So, people had to say it to my face. They were very few people I have to clap back because life was simple then.

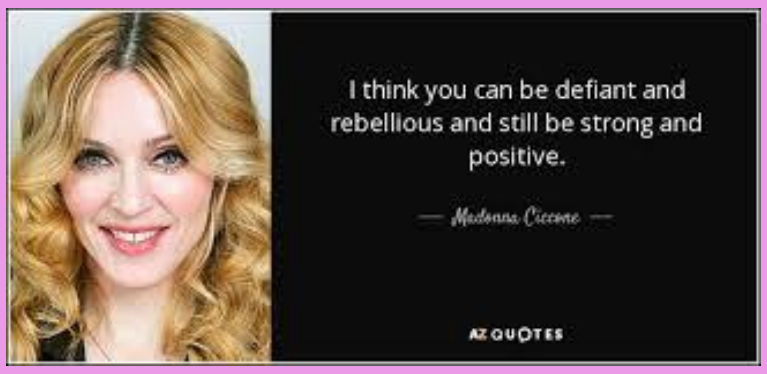
When I first move to New York, I was a teenager. It was 1979 and NY was a very scary place. In the first year, I was held and raped on a roof top with a knife digging into my throat. And I had my apartment broken and robbed so many times that I just stopped locking the door. In the years to follow, I lost almost every friend I had because of AIDS, or drugs or gunshot. As you can imagine, all these unexpected events not only helped me become the daring woman that stands before you, it also reminded me that I'm vulnerable. And in life, there is no real safety except self-belief and understanding that I, I'm not the owner of my talents. I'm not the owner of anything. Everything I have is a gift from God. And even the fucking things that happened to me, that still happen to me, are also gifts to teach me lessons and make me stronger.

I'm receiving an award for being woman of the year. So, I asked myself: what can I say about being a woman in music business? What can I say about being a woman? When I first started writing songs, I didn't think in a gender specific way. I didn't think about feminism. I just wanna to be an artist. I was of course inspired by Debbie Harry, by Chrissie Hynde, Aretha Franklyn but my real muse was David Bowie. He embodied male and female spirit, that was just fine. He maybe thinks there were no rules. But I was wrong: there are no rules if you're a boy. If you're a girl, you have to play the game. What is that game? You are allowed to be pretty, and cute, and sexy, but don't act too smart, don't have an opinion, don't have an opinion that it's out of line with the standards at least. You're allowed to be objectified by men and dressed like a slut but don't hold your sluttyness and do not - I repeat – do not share your own sexual fantasies with the world. Be what men want you to be, but more importantly, be what women feel comfortable with you being around other men. And finally, do not age because to age is a sin. You'd be criticised, you'd be vilified, and you would definitely not be played on the radio.



Debbie Harry, Chrissie Hynde and other female icons of music…

When I first became famous, there were new photos of me in Playboy and Penthouse magazine, photos that were taken from art schools that I posed to make money. They weren't sexy, in fact I looked quite bored, and I was. But I was expected to feel ashamed when these photos came out, and I was not, and this puzzled people. Eventually I was left alone because I married Sean Penn and not only, he would have busted your ass, but I was taken off the market. So, for a while, I was not considered a crap. Years later, divorced and single, sorry Sean. I made my Erotica album and myself purpose to be released. I remembered being the headlines of every newspaper and magazine. And everything I read about myself was damning. I was called a whore and a witch. One headline compared me to Satan. I said, wait a minute, isn't Prince running around with fishnet and high heels and lipstick with its butt hanging on? Yes, he was but he was a man.



This is the first time I truly understood that women really didn't have the same freedom than men. I remember feeling paralysed. It took me a while to put myself together and get on with my creative life, to get on with my life. I took comfort in the poetry of Maya Angelou, in the writings of James Baldwin and in the music of Nina Simone. I remember wishing that I had a female peer that I could look to for support.

Camille Paglia, the famous feminist writer, said that I set women back by objectifying myself sexually. Oh, I thought, so if you're feminist you don't have sexuality, you deny it. So, I said: fuck it, I'm a different kind of feminist, I'm a bad feminist.



People say that I'm so controversial, but I think the most controversial thing I've ever done is to stick around. What I would like to say to all the women here today is this. Women have

been so oppressed for so long that they believe what men say about them. And they believe they have to back a man to get the job done. And there are some very good men that worth of backing, but not because they're men but because they're worthy. As women we have to start appreciating our own worth and each other worth. Seek out strong women to be friend, to align yourself with, to learn from, to be inspired by, to collaborate with, to support, to be enlightened by.

As I said before, it's not so much about receiving this award as it is having this opportunity to stand before you and really say thank you as a woman, as an artist, as a human. Not only to the people who have loved and supported me along the way – and so many of you are sitting in front of me right now – you have no idea, no, how much that support means. But to the doubters, to the sayers, to everyone who gave me hell and said that I could not, that I would not, that I must not: your resistance made me stronger, made me push harder, made me the fighter that I am today, made me the woman that I'm today. So, thank you.

And now…

Madonna's words, spoken nearly a decade ago, feel almost prophetic in today's climate. As transgender women face escalating political attacks, rising violence, and relentless questioning of their right to exist, her insistence on resilience and self-definition rings louder than ever. Her speech is a reminder that the struggle against sexism and the policing of women's lives is not confined to one generation or one identity, it is a shared fight. For trans women especially, it underlines a simple but vital truth: being unapologetically yourself in a world that tries to silence you is not just survival, it is resistance.



Want to contribute to the magazine? Please do. We welcome all contributions of a transgender nature. Use the contact form on the https://costablancatgirls.com website.

Thank you

Carla & Penny x

Hair, Identity, and the Journey to the Self

For many women, hair is an important part of identity. But for trans women and for those who wear wigs out of necessity, hair is not just important, it is often essential. It is a lifeline, a shield, a declaration, and a profound part of the journey to becoming one's authentic self. Its significance transcends aesthetics, touching the very core of validation, visibility, and survival.



2017

In a world that often questions their identity, hair can be one of the most powerful tools of affirmation for a trans woman. For some, growing their hair out is one of the first tangible, visible steps in their transition. Each inch gained is not just hair; it is a milestone, a physical manifestation of the woman they have always been inside. It is a feature that helps align their external appearance with their internal gender identity, reducing dysphoria and building confidence. This hair is a crown earned through patience, resilience, and the courage to live authentically.

For many trans women, however, genetics, medical history, or the timing of their transition may mean that growing a full head of hair is not possible. Here, the wig is not a simple accessory; it is a vital instrument of self-creation and empowerment.

To call a wig a "pretend" version of hair is to misunderstand its function entirely. For a woman who relies on one, putting on her wig is not an act of deception, but one of revelation. It is the final piece that completes her portrait. The careful selection of a style and color, the act of placing it just so, is a daily ritual of claiming her identity. It allows her to move through the world with the confidence of being seen as she sees herself. In this context, a wig is not covering up the "real" her, it is helping to reveal her.

This is equally true for cisgender women who wear wigs due to medical conditions like alopecia or the effects of chemotherapy, or simply as a choice. For them, the wig restores a sense of normalcy, privacy, and control in the face of circumstances that can feel deeply destabilising. It is a protective armor against unwanted stares and pitying glances, a way to reclaim a part of their identity that illness or genetics tried to take away.



2018



2019

Whether it's biohair carefully styled or a meticulously chosen wig, hair becomes a powerful language of personal expression. The choice to have long, flowing locks, a chic pixie cut, or bold, vibrant colors is a declaration of autonomy. It’s a way to say, "This is me, on my own terms."



2022

Furthermore, the communities built around wigs and hair care, both online and in salons that specialize in these services, become safe havens. They are places of shared experience, where tips are exchanged not just as beauty advice, but as acts of solidarity and support. In these spaces, the journey of hair is understood in all its complexity, free from judgment.



2023

The importance of hair for trans women and wig-wearers ultimately boils down to agency. It is about the fundamental human right to control how one presents oneself to the world and to have that presentation respected. The journey may be different, nurturing one's own growth or expertly curating an alternative, but the destination is the same: a sense of wholeness.



2023

Hair, in all its forms, is a testament to resilience. It is a statement that every woman deserves to feel beautiful, confident, and seen. Whether it grows from the scalp or is chosen from a shelf, it is unambiguously, powerfully, and beautifully hers.



2025

The Protector and Provider Myth



It followed the summer disturbances outside hotels. Where people, mainly men stood outside buildings that used to be hotels intimidating the residents. It was the sporadic banners that drew my attention. “Protect our women and children” was the gist of many of them.

Then you see the statistics that showed that over 40% of the demonstrators detained following the Southport disturbances last summer were known to the authorities for domescic violence and/or assaults on women. Makes you think.

I’ve also seen posts on social media from women who live local to those so called ‘hotels’ saying how frightened they are. Men in gangs holding placards being aggressive, unrinating in the streets and in the gardens of local people. Men who are very unlikely to have campaigned about legislation to tackle stalking; harassment; upskirting; spiking of drinks; posting personal photos of women without consent online or the online safety of young people.

This narrative is continually pushed by certain media outlets, who seek to deflect from the real perpetrators.

I have also been at the receiving end of such behaviour, but in a patriarchal society that pretends to protect women and are openly hostile to trans women I saw a post that resonated with me:

I would like to thank Carol for sharing her thoughts on this and allowing me to share with you. Her name has been changed to protect anonymity.



We grow up in a culture that paints men as protectors and providers. They're supposed to be the strong ones, the guardians, the breadwinners. But for most women, including trans women, this so-called protection rarely shows up when it's actually needed.

Take something as ordinary as walking home at night. Many women, if not most women, know the routine: keys between our fingers, headphones out, scanning shadows, texting a friend to say we got home safe. Men like to imagine they're our shield, but where are they in those dark streets? More often than not, they're the reason we're afraid in the first place.

Or think about public transport. I've had men press too close on trains, whisper comments, brush hands where they don't belong. Dozens of other men sat nearby, staring at their phones, avoiding eye contact. Not one of them intervened. Instead, it was another woman who caught my eye, switched seats, and created a barrier between me and the harasser. That's what protection looks like.

Even in professional settings, the same pattern plays out. At a former workplace, a male colleague made a transphobic joke about me in a meeting. Around the table, the other men smirked or looked down. It was a woman manager who cut in sharply: "That's not acceptable. We don't talk about people like that here." She shut it down, and in doing so, she defended me when no man would.

What makes the "protector and provider" myth sting even more is how it's weaponised against us. When women share experiences of harassment or violence, men rush to explain what we should do differently: dress another way, speak more firmly, carry a weapon, learn self-defense. The subtext is always the same: men's violence is women's responsibility.

Meanwhile, in the real world, it's women who are protecting and providing every single day. Women are the ones organising community food banks, raising children on their

own after divorce, volunteering at shelters, and pulling their friends out of dangerous situations. Despite lower pay, women give more to charity than men. And when a crisis hits, whether personal or global, it's overwhelmingly women who show up.

For trans women, the truth is doubly clear. We see both sides. We grow up being told that men protect women, only to discover once we live openly as women that we're far more likely to be endangered by men than defended by them. When harassment comes, it's not men who step forward, it's other women who stand by our side.

Men love to say, "Not all men." But if men were truly protectors, if they were truly providers, we wouldn't have to rely so completely on each other.

The reality is simple: the people consistently protecting and providing for women are women. Maybe it's time we stop pretending otherwise, and start celebrating the truth.

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The condemning of women for the behaviour continues, even by women. That's how ingrained it is. On a recent TV programme on cat calling and wolf whistling, many defending the men were women. "It's a compliment" was a common phrase used. Older women would say "I wish I still got wolf whistled". Studies show that female victims are shamed in court for wearing short skirts; going home alone or late at night or having multiple sexual partners - something a man is lauded for.

The same argument often follows the 'smacking' (hitting) children. There are laws protecting adults from assault, yet many argue it's acceptable to hit a child.

What kind of man wolf whistles a woman, many of whom are schoolgirls? Do they ever do it in front of their wives? To their female bosses?

Safety for women is men's problem. It's time those who claim to protect women's rights actually do it. Sadly though, the type we see attacking minorities, especially trans women, don't care about women's rights. It's time we all called them out!

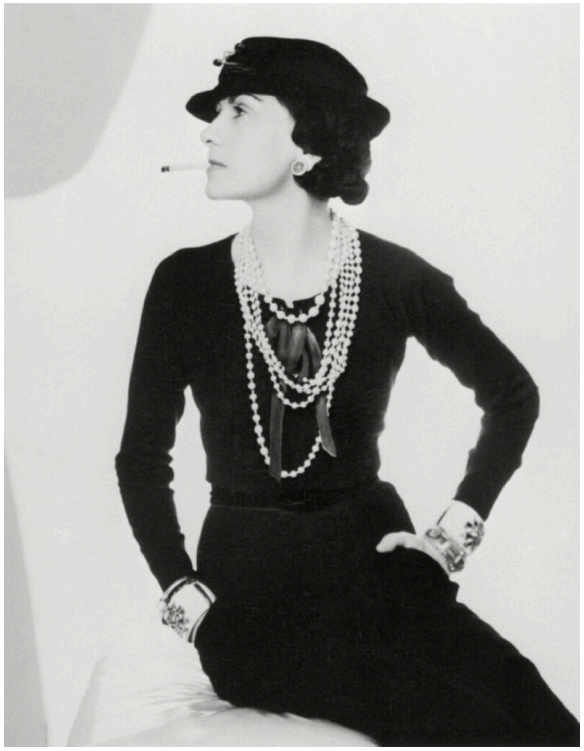



NO LGB
WITHOUT THE 'T'
@QUEEERCHAMELEON

The Little Black Dress or LBD

In the vast and ever-shifting landscape of fashion, where trends are born and forgotten in a season, one garment stands as a permanent, unwavering icon: the little black dress. More than just a item of clothing, the LBD is a sartorial paradox simultaneously a uniform and a statement, a symbol of mourning and liberation, the simplest of canvases that holds the most complex of meanings. Its significance transcends the threads of its construction, weaving itself into the very fabric of modern culture, feminism, and personal identity.

While black dresses existed before her, the LBD as we know it was christened by Coco Chanel in 1926. When she published a design for a simple, straight, calf-length black dress in Vogue, it was a radical act. In an era of restrictive corsets, ornate embellishments, and colourful, cumbersome outfits, Chanel offered liberation. Her design was accessible, affordable, and, most importantly, practical. It was a dress for the modern woman one who drove cars, worked, and sought a life beyond the drawing-room.



Vogue immediately saw its potential, calling it "Chanel's Ford," a comparison to the Model T that acknowledged its democratic appeal. Like the

car, the LBD was a design for everyone, destined to become a universal staple.

The true genius of the little black dress lies in its versatility. It is the ultimate sartorial chameleon. Its simplicity is its superpower; it provides a blank slate upon which a woman can project her entire identity.

For Audrey Hepburn in Breakfast at Tiffany's, the Givenchy LBD became the ultimate symbol of gamine elegance and wistful glamour, accessorized with pearls, sunglasses, and an air of enigmatic sophistication.



For Elizabeth Hurley, it was a weapon of audacious sex appeal, the safety-pin Versace dress that catapulted her to fame and redefined red-carpet daring.



For Princess Diana, the "Revenge Dress" was a potent symbol of quiet strength and independence, worn on the very night Prince Charles

admitted to his infidelity on national television. It was a declaration that she was unbowed.



It can be professional with a blazer, rebellious with leather and studs, romantic with delicate jewellery, or effortlessly chic with nothing but a pair of sunglasses. The LBD does not dictate; it accommodates. It serves the woman, never the other way around.

The LBD carries a unique emotional weight. It is the dress you turn to when you need to feel pulled together, even when you don't. It’s the armour for a difficult day, the confidence-booster for a first date, the uniform for a important presentation. There’s a reason it’s the default choice for events requiring a certain decorum from funerals to gallery openings. It conveys respect, seriousness, and taste without saying a word.

In times of personal crisis or uncertainty, the reliability of the LBD is a comfort. It eliminates the "what to wear" anxiety, offering a sartorial safe harbour. It is a constant in a world of change, a trusted friend in a crowded closet.

From its inception, the little black dress has been intertwined with female autonomy. Chanel designed it for women who were claiming their space in the world. Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, it has remained a symbol of that independence. It is a dress a woman wears for herself. Its power isn't about attracting a gaze (though it certainly can); it's

about embodying a feeling of self-assuredness and capability.

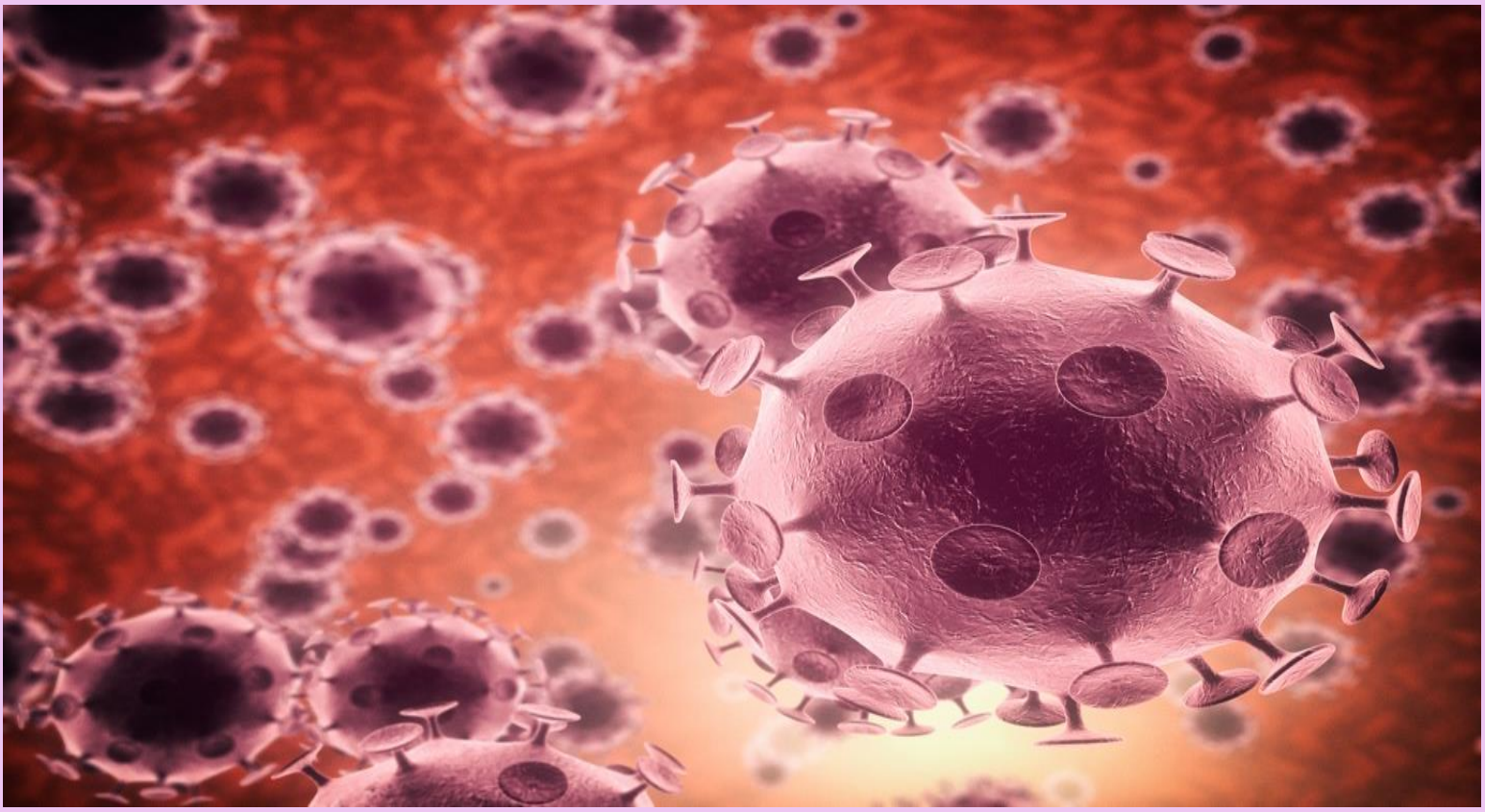
It democratised style, making elegance achievable regardless of budget. A well-cut LBD from a high-street store can possess the same transformative power as one from a haute couture atelier. This accessibility has cemented its status as a universal tool of empowerment.

The little black dress is not merely a trend; it is a cornerstone of modern wardrobe philosophy. It is a lesson in the power of simplicity, a testament to the idea that true style is not about the loudest label or the most extravagant detail, but about cut, confidence, and character.

It is a cultural touchstone, a historical artifact, and a personal talisman all in one. It is, in its perfect, profound simplicity, the one garment that can tell a thousand different stories, all while remaining quintessentially, unquestionably, itself. The LBD endures because it is, quite simply, the most versatile and powerful tool a woman can have in her wardrobe a true masterpiece of design that is always in style.

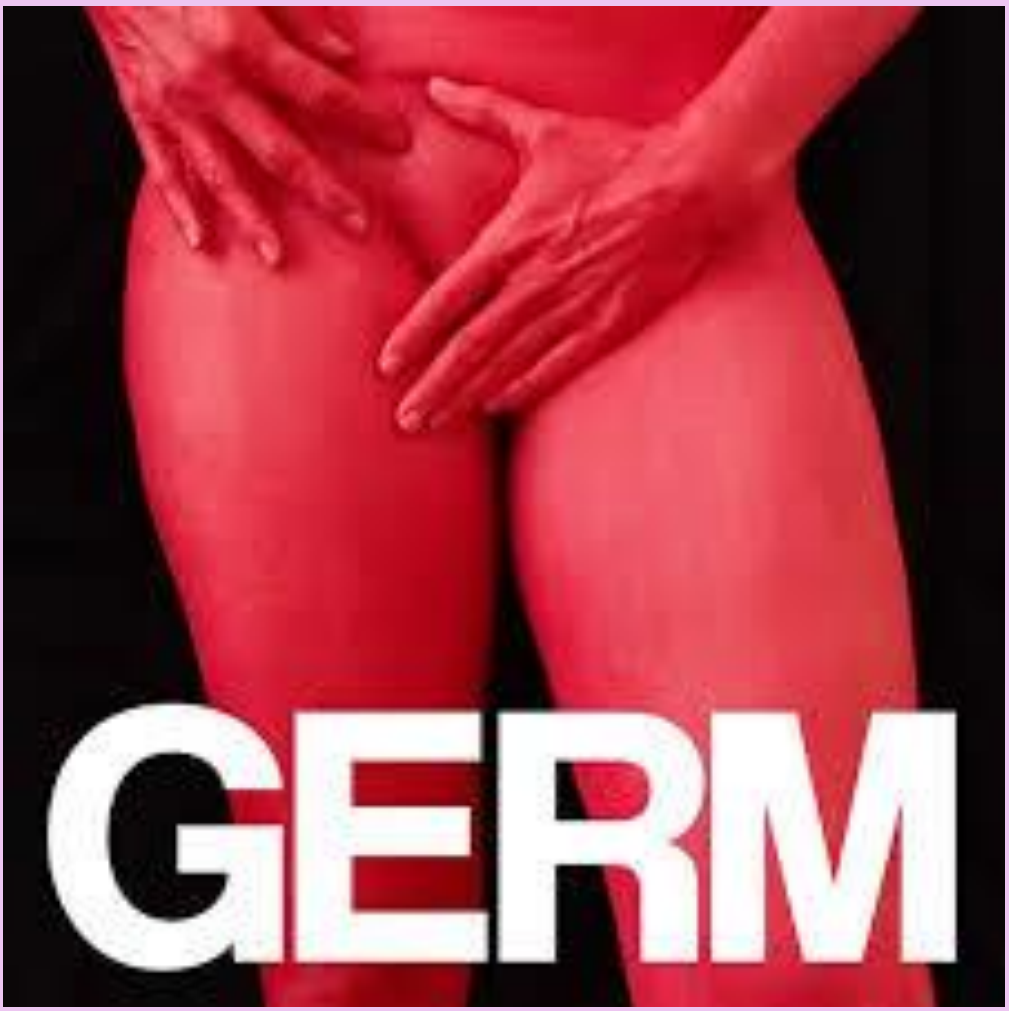


G.E.R.M



Kate Nash's *GERM* was born out of frustration and urgency. Originally written as an essay, the piece transformed into a protest track after the UK Supreme Court ruled that trans men and women cannot legally be recognised in their true gender. For Nash, that ruling, alongside the increasingly hostile climate towards trans people in Britain, was the tipping point. She wanted to put something "on record, in music history and feminist history" that said clearly: transphobia is not feminism.

The song also responds to J.K. Rowling's dominance in UK cultural discourse. Nash has said it was especially painful to see one of Britain's loudest and most successful voices use her platform to spread cruelty and exclusion. *GERM* is her way of reclaiming feminism from those who distort it, using statistics, humour, and anger to expose the real dangers women face: male violence, not trans women.



The Facts

Sadly missing with Politicians and the media

When we talk about safety, we need to talk about facts, not fear. Kate Nash's *GERM* is a searing reminder that it is not trans women who pose a threat to women. It is, overwhelmingly, cisgender men. Yet, instead of addressing the real dangers women face daily, rape, violence, coercion, femicide—sections of the media, political class, and self-appointed "gender criticals" try to shift the blame onto one of the most vulnerable minorities in society: trans women.

The Real Danger

The statistics don't lie. Violence against women does not come from trans women in bathrooms, it comes from men in homes, on streets, in workplaces. Every three days, a woman in the UK is killed by a man. Meanwhile, trans people are *twice as likely* to be victims of crime. And yet, somehow, the moral panic machine wants you to believe the biggest risk is a trans woman quietly trying to pee.

True Feminism

This scapegoating is not feminism, it's transphobia dressed up in feminist clothing. True feminism is about solidarity, liberation, and dismantling systems of male violence, not punching down on another marginalised group. Nash calls this out with raw clarity: feminism must be intersectional, otherwise it becomes just another tool of oppression.

The True Threat

The truth is simple: women are not threatened by trans women. Women are threatened by misogyny, toxic masculinity, and the men who uphold and enable them. Kate Nash's *GERM* names this hypocrisy for what it is, and reminds us that if we really care about women's safety, we must fight the real enemy—not invent new ones.



The Song

Kate Nash G.E.R.M

I feel no threat from any trans person that might be in the toilets
I've never felt threatened by a trans person, as it turns out
The 69,958 thousand rapes that were reported
Between October 2023 and September 24 in the UK
Do slightly concern me though
91% of people prosecuted for sexual offences are cis men aged 18 plus
The biggest threat to cis women sadly comes from cis men
These stats are from rape crisis

Women are facing serious dangers
Not during boxing matches or from trans people needing a piss
But from actual violence that is carried out against them every week
According to end violence against women
Every three days, a woman is killed by a man
More than 100,000 girls are at risk
And livin' with the consequences of FGM
Forced marriage and honour-based abuse

Kathryn Bromwich from The Guardian states
That trans people make up roughly 0.5% of the UK population
And are twice as likely to be victims of crime than cis people
According to home office figures
This country has seen an increase in hate crimes towards trans people
And cis women are supposed to focus on a threat
We have yet to see manifest from a small minority of the country
Who are struggling to stay safe themselves

Using feminism to erase the rights of others
And endanger them is inherently un-feminist
In my opinion, it is the responsibility of a feminist to be progressive
To learn from previous waves
But to always be pushing towards a new one
Feminism must be intersectional

It must never be used to discriminate against others
Feminism must not be used to bully
And berate both cis women and trans people

So let's start labelling things correctly, shall we?
These types of behaviours are transphobia and misogyny
You are not defending or protecting me
(You are not) you are not defending or protecting me
You say a cigar is a cigar
But a cigar cannot be compared to a human being
Can it you, fucking idiot?
By aligning yourself with the likes of Peterson, Elon, and Trump
You empower the mentality that women serve a purpose
And that's to be controlled and fucked

Men with power can do what they want
Men that struggle to express emotion
Or are living under the constant financial, social, and familial pressures
Of what society tells them being masculine is
Well, apparently they can just kill themselves

Suicide is the biggest killer in men under 50
125 people die by suicide every week according to Calm's website
Toxic masculinity isn't telling you that masculinity itself is toxic
It's telling you that toxic masculinity is toxic



For the record: I shared this on Facebook and got myself a ban, yet transphobia, misogyny, racism all gain access unfettered. TERF is the usual term used for transphobic people. I prefer the term GERM, it's more accurate.

https://youtu.be/q2MoQJP-PhA?si=hCcfT20AbYKZkbeL



A selection of the replies to the video on YouTube

It's really hard to express the intense relief you feel one someone else, someone who has a different life experience to you not only standing up for you, but you can feel rage and disgust on your behalf.

Thank you. I needed to hear this song. It feels like the world has become so cruel and dark these days, but it's great there's people like you here to speak up. You hit the nail on the head.

Initially, I was simply cheering for the song in full support of what was said. But once men's statistics were involved, I felt something deep within me that left my mouth open. I seriously hope you continue making music like this, that resonates with everyone, no matter who they are, while standing up for the right things.

Hats off to you Kate, this is amazing and so empowering!

Thank you for writing this!!! This message needs to be BLASTED EVERYWHERE.

Queer cis guy here. This track slaps! It's so well researched and put together. Great track

This is such a bop! Thank you, this completely sums up a lot of how I've been feeling, as a cis woman. People arguing against the message are completely missing the point and it honestly makes me feel so sad. But this gives me hope

I'm astounded and grateful that men were included in this song despite the violence committed against women by men. That takes a lot of courage to be able to do. Very intersectional feminist of her. I'm not sure that the discussion around masculinity has matured enough yet. (posted by a man)

I mean, it shouldn't work, but it does. Never heard a song before with literal citations in the lyrics, but it's such an important message that it makes it an amazing song.

Thank you, Kate. As a queer intersectional feminist, your work (not just here) is seen and appreciated. Always pushing forward, speaking up for marginalised, and shining a light on truth. We need more Kate's (posted by a man)

While so many people in the public eye are sitting quietly, it means a lot to the community to hear people with platforms standing up for our rights and being plain and clear about trans hate being a distraction from the actual issues that the government (and rich white women with a lot of influence) should actually be focusing on. Thanks Kate, you're amazing. Sharing the song far and wide

This is amazing, intelligent, powerful and empowering, capturing the rage which needs to be expressed on this issue. I've never seen citations incorporated into lyrics before - that is a masterstroke! The video is equally excellent, with lyrics justifiably centre screen, as they need to be shouted out. Loved the "cigar" reference A masterpiece which has been on repeat and doesn't lose its impact.

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The Enchanted Mirror



Once upon a time, in a small kingdom, there lived a woman named Elara. Though she had not always been seen as such by others, in her heart she had always known the truth: she was a woman, with a spirit as radiant as moonlight. Yet the world, bound by its own stubborn rules, often refused to see her as she truly was.

One evening, as Elara wandered the edge of the forest, she discovered a silver-framed mirror half-buried in the roots of an ancient oak. When she wiped away the dust, the mirror shimmered, and a voice whispered:

"I will show you, not as others see, but as you are."

In the glass, Elara saw herself, not the version the world tried to impose, but the woman she had always known herself to be. Her shoulders softened, her hair shimmered, her smile shone with certainty. For the first time, she felt not only seen, but celebrated.

News of the mirror spread, and soon villagers came to glimpse themselves within it. A farmer saw not just his toil but his tenderness. A widow saw not just her grief but her courage. And slowly, hearts in the kingdom began to change. They realised that truth was not always what was assigned at birth, but what was carried in the soul.

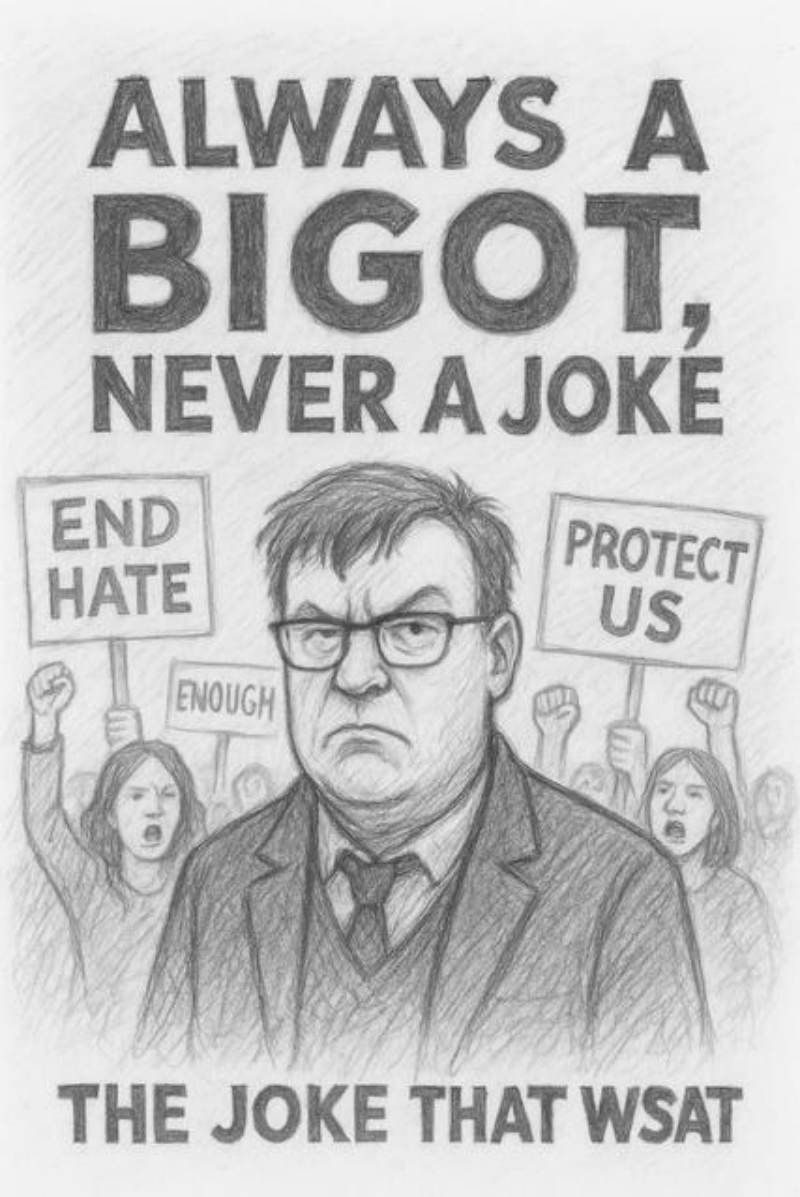


Elara became known as the Guardian of the Mirror, not because she needed its magic anymore, but because she had become its living reflection. Each day, she reminded her people: *“To see yourself clearly is the greatest freedom. To allow others to be who they are is the greatest love.”*

And so, in a kingdom once ruled by rigid rules, love and truth grew freer, brighter, and stronger, because one brave woman dared to claim her reflection.

And Elara, at last, lived happily ever after.

Always a Bigot, Never a Joke



The recent arrest of television writer Graham Linehan has reopened old wounds and raised fresh questions about how we police speech and protect vulnerable communities. Linehan — a figure long associated with public attacks on transgender people, was detained at Heathrow after returning from the United States in connection with social media posts that police say amounted to incitement to violence. The arrest has prompted an angry debate about free speech, public safety and where the line should be drawn between offence and criminality.

The first post he wrote: "If a trans-identified male is in a female-only space, he is committing a violent, abusive act. Make a scene, call the cops and if all else fails, punch him in the balls."

We should be clear-eyed about what's at stake. On one hand, many defenders of Linehan frame the intervention as a dangerous step towards censorship, arguing that policing online rhetoric risks silencing uncomfortable or unpopular views. On the other hand, those of us who live at the sharp end of this rhetoric see something less abstract: words that normalise harassment, which too easily spill into real-world harm. Several outlets reported that some of the posts in question explicitly urged physical violence, language that most legal systems treat differently from mere provocation.

The political response has been predictably performative. Health Secretary Wes Streeting summed up the headline reaction by saying he would rather see police "policing streets, not policing tweets," and suggested the law might need reviewing to get the balance right between free expression and protecting the public. For readers who've watched institutions fail transgender people for decades, this position rings hollow: it looks less like principled defence of liberty and more like selective outrage when public order is inconvenient.

The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, meanwhile, admitted the officers had acted within current legislation while also calling the situation "impossible" for frontline officers tasked with navigating culture-war tweets and public safety. That admission is telling: it is not, in itself, a vindication or a condemnation of the arrest. It is a warning that our laws and policing practices are straining under the weight of a digital era that makes harmful language both instantaneous and amplifiable.

So what should changemakers, journalists and citizens demand? First, clarity from lawmakers. If the law is ambiguous about what constitutes unlawful incitement in online spaces, that ambiguity must be addressed, not because anyone wants to gag cussed dissent, but because targeted calls to violence deserve straightforward condemnation and prosecution. Second, accountability for those in power who minimise or enable hateful rhetoric. Finally, a societal refusal to treat the safety of marginalised people as negotiable political theatre.

There are no easy answers. The conversation must avoid false equivalence, the argument that a famous name's discomfort equals our community's safety, and must confront the real harm words can cause. For those of us writing, singing, and living out loud, the choice is painfully simple: call out incitement, protect those at risk, and resist the smokescreen of "free speech" when it's used to shield violence.

To close this piece, and to shift the tone from argument to something more intimate, I offer a poem that speaks to the private fear and public visibility that colour so many of our lives. It's an echo of how words bruise, and of the small, stubborn ways we reclaim our joy.

Here is the poem…

Always a Bigot, Never a Joke

Once, he stitched laughter
into half-hour boxes,
a jester with canned applause
echoing down living-room walls.

Now his cravenly punchlines are daggers,
hurled at women like me,
turning satire into siege,
turning comedy into cruelty.

They call him “just another voice,”
but his voice is a hammer
and our lives are the glass.

And the ministers?
They shrug,
call our safety “not a priority,”
as though broken bones
can be pencilled in later,
after the budget,
after the polling.

Health men with red ties
look away from the bruises,
counting votes instead of bodies,
while right-hand benches cheer
the heckler with blood on his jokes

Devoid of a backbone

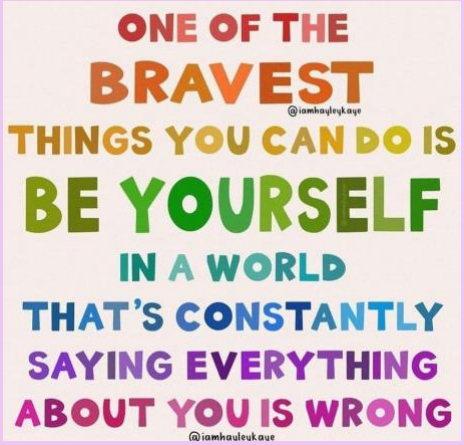
They shake hands with the storm
that beats against our windows,
pretend neutrality
as the rain soaks through our skin.

We are not punchlines.
We are not the joke
to be booed offstage.

We are women
who bleed when cut,
who weep when harassed,
who deserve more than
cowardly politicians hiding behind curtains
while the heckler sharpens his tongue.

If they think
this hate will stop with us,
they have forgotten
that laughter, too,
can become a fire.

Carla Moss



A to Z of Transgender



Part 2

Continuing our A to Z of transgender. This month we are G to M

G – Gender

It's a spectrum, not a two-lane motorway. Trans people live, explore, and colour outside the binary lines.

Also for Gia Gunn

A Japanese-American drag performer and YouTuber who came out as trans in 2017. She's outspoken and proud, bringing energy and visibility to the community.



H – Hormones

For many, HRT is a key part of transition. Estrogen, testosterone, blockers. Changing bodies and changing lives.

Also for Hunter Schafer

Model, actress (*Euphoria*), and activist. Hunter is known for her fierce creativity and her openness about being trans and non-binary, becoming a Gen Z icon.



I – Identity

Trans, non-binary, genderqueer, agender, fluid — identity is personal, powerful, and doesn't need permission.

Also for Ian Harvie

Comedian and actor, one of the first trans male comics to achieve mainstream success. Harvie blends humour and activism with authenticity and charm.



J – Joy

Yes, trans joy exists — in found family, first dresses, deep voices, chosen names, and living your truth.

Also for Jazz Jennings

One of the youngest and most well-known trans people in the world, Jazz's reality show *I Am Jazz* helped millions understand what it means to grow up trans.



K – Knowledge

We're learning all the time, about ourselves, about others, about how to unlearn gender rules we never agreed to. Now we just need the media and ignorant to embrace facts rather than prejudice.

Also for Kate Bornstein

Author, performance artist, and gender theorist. Kate's work on gender non-conformity has challenged the binary and inspired generations of trans and queer people.



L – Legal Stuff

From name changes to gender markers, it's often a paperwork maze. Some countries make it easier than others.

Also for Laverne Cox

The first openly trans actor nominated for an Emmy, best known for *Orange is the New Black*. Laverne is a fierce advocate for trans justice, beauty, and truth.

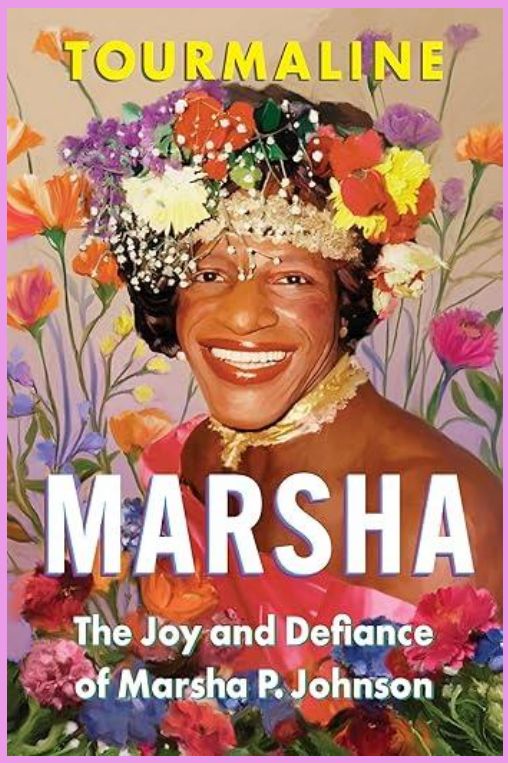


M – Misgendering

Getting called the wrong pronouns or name, by accident or on purpose, stings more than many realise.

Also for Marsha P. Johnson

A Black trans woman and revolutionary activist. Marsha was a central figure in the Stonewall uprising and co-founded Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR).



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Confessions of Carla's Wardrobe

Honestly, I don't know how I cope. One minute I'm a respectable storage unit, minding my own business, and the next, bam! I'm bursting at the seams with satin, sequins, and yet *another* handbag. Darling, I'm exhausted.

Let's start with the dresses. Light, above-the-knee numbers in every shade of pastel and floral. Yes, they're fabulous, but must you hang them so close together? I can barely breathe. The satin blouses are no better: they swish and shimmer all night, gossiping about who got worn last weekend. "It was *me!*" cries the pink blouse. "No, *me!*" insists the cream one. I'd get some peace if only the skirts didn't join in, wafting about like they're on a Paris catwalk.

And don't get me started on the shoes. Rows and rows of them, lined up like Pan's People (you have to be of a certain age to appreciate that one) with serious attitude. The heels sneer at the flats, the sandals complain about dust, and the boots, oh, the boots, are sulking because it's not their season. As for the handbags, they've practically formed a union. Every time a new one arrives, there's a dramatic sigh of "where will she put us now?"

But between us, I secretly love it. You see, I remember the quiet days, when I was half-empty and bored stiff. Now I'm alive with colour, textures, and stories. Every satin blouse has seen a night out, every bag has carried secrets, and every pair of shoes has danced, strutted, or at least tried to.

So yes, I complain. I roll my eyes at the chaos, the endless colourful tops, the last-minute rummaging before an evening out. But truth be told, I wouldn't change a thing. Because this isn't just a wardrobe, it's a celebration of you.



Larry Topper and the Highland Witch
Chapter 2

The humiliation was a physical weight, a cold stone of shame lodged deep in Jowling Krin's gut. The story had spread, as such stories always did, through the clandestine networks of the magical world. Whispers on the wind, messages carried by rats and rooks, all telling the same, unbearable tale: Jowling Krin, the terror of the moors, had been bested. Not by a mighty sorcerer, not by a council of warlocks, but by a cheeky young wizard who had, in a move of breathtaking insolence, transitioned his way out of her binds and then offered her lifestyle advice.

She could scarcely show her face at the spectral market. When she did, she saw the smirks hastily concealed, heard the giggles stifled behind hands. They were calling her "Auntie Jowling" behind her back. The kindly, defeated title was a far worse torture than any hex.

Her traditional arts had failed. Potions, bone-magic, curses—they were useless against this new kind of defeat. This was a defeat of reputation. A defeat of narrative. And for that, she needed a new kind of dark art.

She needed the modern dark arts. The arts of publicity, social media, and lies.

Her search led her, inevitably, to Morgan Queys.



He did not operate from a croft or a tower, but from a sterile, neon-lit studio on the outskirts of London that bore

the brash logo: “GoBshite News”. The air here didn’t smell of peat and poison, but of cheap aftershave, hairspray, and the acidic tang of perpetual outrage.

Morgan Queys was a man constructed of polished teeth and tailored suits stretched over a core of pure, fragile vanity. He had been sacked from The Prophet for fabricating sources, from The Seer’s Chronicle for libel, and from Wizarding Wireless for what was described as “a fundamental incompatibility with factual reality.” GoBshite News was his natural habitat; a place where the truth was not just flexible, but actively despised if it failed to serve the agenda of its wealthy, pure-blood backers. His power was not in magic, but in the microphone. His curse was not a spell, but a headline.

Jowling, feeling grotesquely out of place, stood before his desk.

“I have been… wronged,” she rasped, the words unfamiliar and bitter on her tongue.

Queys didn’t look up from his scrolling through a feed of manufactured fury. “Happens to everyone, love. Book a therapy session. We’re busy stoking culture wars here.”

“It was a wizard. Larry Topper. He made a mockery of me. He… he changed his form. Became a woman to escape me. He called himself ‘Lorri’.” She spat the name like it was poison.



Finally, Queys looked up. His eyes, cold and calculating, lit not with empathy, but with opportunity. He saw not a wronged woman, but a perfect story vector.

"He did, did he?" Queys said, a slow, predatory smile spreading across his face. He steepled his fingers. "Let me reframe that for you. Let me see it through the right lens."

He stood up, beginning to pace, his voice taking on the cadence of a rehearsed broadcast.



"What we have here is not an escape. It's a perversion. An assault. A dangerous, radical wizard a man invaded the sacred, private home of a traditional Scottish wisewoman a bastion of biological reality and performed an unnatural, grotesque act of magic right before her eyes in a deliberate attempt to confuse, distress, and demoralize her!"

Jowling stared, bewildered. "Well… I… I had kidnapped him first"

"Irrelevant!" Queys barked, waving a dismissive hand. "Context is cowardice! The story is the emotional truth! And the emotional truth is that you, a vulnerable woman alone in her home, were traumatized by a militant gender ideologue who forced his dangerous delusions upon you!"

He leaned in, his breath smelling of mint and ambition. "This 'Lorri' isn't a person. She's a symbol. A symbol of everything that's wrong with the modern world. They want to confuse our children, erode our traditions, and mock women like you. Strong, biological women."

Jowling's head was spinning. He was taking her humiliation and spinning it into… into

gold. Her weakness was being recast as strength. Her defeat was being rewritten as victimhood.

"This… this is a powerful magic," she whispered, awe cutting through her rage.

"It's the only magic that matters anymore," Queys sneered. "Now, we'll get you on the prime-time broadcast. We'll have you talk about your fear. Your violation. We'll call this Larry 'Lorri' a predator. A threat to magical women everywhere. We'll give you a platform. We'll make you a martyr."

A genuine smile, the first in weeks, touched Jowling's thin lips. This was a spell far more potent than any in her grimoires. This didn't just harm a body; it obliterated a reputation. It could turn a whole world against a person.

"Yes," she hissed, her eyes gleaming with a new, terrifying understanding. "Yes. Paint him as the villain. The corruptor. The one who mocks nature itself."

"We don't paint," Queys said, turning back to his screen, his fingers already flying across the keyboard to compose the first inflammatory tweet. "We define reality. And starting tonight, reality is whatever we say it is. This 'Lorri' won't know what hit them."

And Jowling Krin, the bog witch, learned her first lesson in the new dark arts: a lie, repeated loudly and often enough, becomes a truth far more powerful than any fact. And she was an eager student.



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