

WHISPERS

You're going to want to sit down for this.

MEN WHO MENSTRUATE? AN INVESTIGATION.

Hey, I won't deny it. More than once, I've wished with all my heart that men had periods. Let them deal with the bloating, the cramps, the tender breasts. Especially the tender breasts. Let them go to work and have to worry all day their pads might fail, that they might spring a leak and feel that warm trickle of shame oozing down the inside of their thighs. Let them deal with the mood swings, the tears, the rages.

I mean, let them. Just let them!

So, why the rant, other than the fact that I am always ranting on and on about how unfair shit is **all the time**? Well, dear readers, it's because I happened to hear a rumor about an obscure little town way up in the Rocky Mountains, where men are on the rag. I know. It sounds impossible, or maybe too good to be true. How could men have to dance with the red queen once a month? And, besides, in this day and age, wouldn't something like that be all over the Intertubes?

I admit I had my doubts about a town where the men need Midol. Those doubts grew stronger when I did a little investigating and found out the reason, it is said, the guys in Fair Haven suffer from the girl flu. What is that reason?



ARTIST'S RECREATION FROM MY VIVID DESCRIPTION OF A FORMER BOSS OF MINE AND WHAT IT WOULD LOOK LIKE IF HIS FEMININE PROTECTION SPRUNG A LEAK. NOT THAT I'VE INDULGED IN THIS FANTASY, LIKE, A HUNDRED TIMES OR SOMETHING. NO. IT'S MORE LIKE 47 TIMES, BUT WHO'S COUNTING?

A witch. A curse. Yup. For the boys of Fair Haven, their monthly visitor really **is** a curse. It took a lot for me to convince my editor to send me all the way up into the mountains to investigate the Code Red Curse. Yes, even a magazine like *Whispers*, which runs a story about aliens impregnating men every other day, had doubts about the Rag Witch. Fortunately, my editor, Edith Crane, thought the idea of a town where desperate men run to the drugstore right before it closes hoping to snag a box of HerShields Radiant with Wings was as hilarious as I did.

So, ladies, and I know the only ones still reading are ladies because just the mere mention of the M word makes guys queasy, let me just tell you before I dig into the deets that its all true. There is a town called Fair Haven, and the men there are cursed to ride the cotton pony every 28 days or so, just like the gals.



WHY DID THE POPULATION OF THE TOWN LOOK 100% FEMALE? I WOULD SOON FIND OUT.

Day One

As I drive into the quaint and frankly adorable downtown of Fair Haven, I feel like I am driving into a Norman Rockwell painting. It's that cute. Right away, though, as I gawk at the pedestrians like the annoyingly curious outsider I am, I notice something strange. I actually don't see any men, or at least no one that looks like a man. It's not that everyone is wearing dresses. The townsfolk are dressed like you would expect rustic townsfolk to dress: pants, t-shirts, flannels, sure, a few skirts and dresses, but the thing I am noticing and the reason everyone reads as female is because everyone has breasts. Everyone.

Secondly, the faces. I see only smooth, feminine faces on the street. What's up?

Being the skillful reporter that I am, I had pre-arranged to meet a few people in the **know**. So, resisting the urge to jump out of my car and just shout, "Is it true all the guys here are on the rag? And, where are all the guys, anyway?" I drive to the offices of Doctor Richard Graves, the town physician. I am ready to ask my questions and get me some answers.



*THE SHAPELY DOCTOR GRAVES TELLS ME WHERE THE BOYS ARE--
HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT.*

As I am ushered into Dr. Graves office by a perky little nurse-- aren't they all perky? -- I can't help but note that Dr. Graves looks like a woman, and it isn't just his impressive rack. He has at least a C cup, and is it weird for me to admit I was a little jealous? In addition to his lovely mammaries, Dr. Graves has a smooth, heart shaped face and a woman's figure.

"I guess you're wondering why I look like a woman?" Dr. Graves says with a grin. His voice, while not unusually high pitched, sounds like a mature woman's voice.

"Oh, do you?" I say, trying to be coy even as my eyes lock onto his tits. "I hadn't noticed."

He chuckles. "It's all part of the curse." He has prepared for our meeting, and he slides what appears to be an X-ray across the desk to me. I pick it up and turn it sideways and then upside down, pretending to be an expert at reading X-rays. "Fascinating," I say. "It looks, if I remember from 8th grade sex education class, like a womb and those tube things. Either that, or an alien squid."

"It **is** a womb," Dr. Graves says, chortling, and I can't tell if he laughs because he appreciates my amazing off-beat sense of humor, or if he is just being polite (because no male ever appreciates my sense of humor.) "It's **my** womb."

"Okay, and forgive me if I sound just a little bit skeptical, but men dont have wombs."

"We do," Dr. Graves says. "The men in Fair Haven. That's why we menstruate. Every male born in this town has ovaries, fallopian tubes, a womb. My body is swimming in estrogen. I have the same chemical makeup as you do, as any woman. That's why I have a rack like a stripper."

"Oh, wow, you do have huge bongos," I say. "I hadn't noticed."

He peers at me over his glasses and, deadpan, says, "Ill show 'em to you if you give me 10 dollars."

"Tempting," I say, and I mean it, but I am here on business and my editor wont reimburse me for paying some busty dude to show me his tits. "So, since you have wombs, can you get pregnant?"

"We could if there was some way for our eggs to get fertilized."

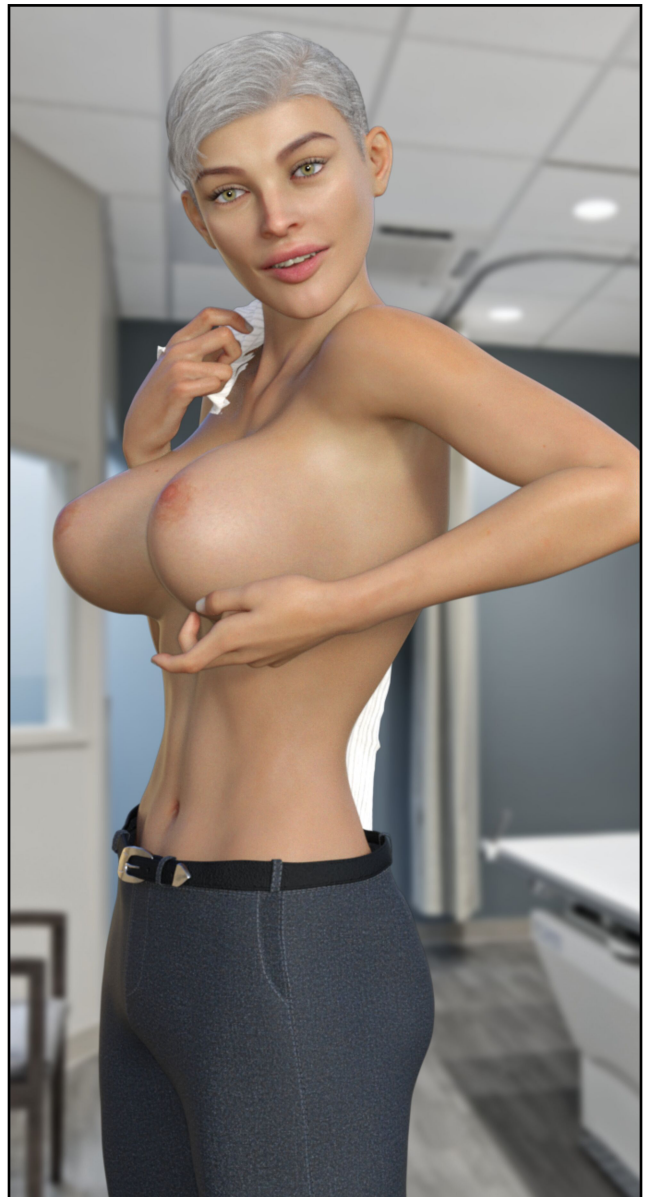
It's even weirder hearing a guy talk about his eggs than his womb. I don't like these men invading our space, taking all our girl's only things. "Oh, so the little tadpole thingies?"

"Right. We don't have a swimming hole for them," Dr. Grant says. "But, we could carry a baby if you put one in us."

I ask Dr. Grant about the curse. "The curse is just superstitious nonsense. I believe there is a scientific explanation for the phenomenon we have experienced here in Fair Haven."

"Which is?"

"Yet to be determined."



DESPITE MY REFUSAL TO PAY DOC 10 DOLLARS TO SHOW ME HIS LADY LUMPS, HE EVENTUALLY WHIPPED OFF HIS SHIRT AND PRACTICALLY HIT ME IN THE FACE WITH THEM.

"PRETTY AMAZING, RIGHT?" HE SAID.

I JUST NODDED AND MUMBLED, "THERE IS NO GOD" AS I COMPARED MY OWN SAGGY, MISMATCHED B CUPS TO HIS GLORIOUS GIRLS. HOW A GUY HIS AGE COULD STILL BE SO PERKY?

Having learned all I could from the lovely Dr. Graves, I leave him to play with his hooters in peace and head to my next appointment. She is someone I am sure believes in curses, mostly because I am ignorant and think all wiccans go around cursing people all the time. Her name is Mother Sun, and not surprisingly, she lives on the edge of town in a magical, mystical glade, in a cabin right out of some kind of modern fairytale where witches not only eat children, but have solar panels on their roofs.

As I park my gas guzzling Land Rover outside her cabin, I am consumed with shame and bracing for a lecture on my carbon footprint, but Mother Sun comes out to greet me with a big smile on her aged face and the kind of warm, loving hug I never got from my hateful, unloving mother.

She welcomes me into her crafty little cabin, and does not offer me herbal tea, but a bottle of the local craft brew, cleverly named Eve's Curse. Sipping the brew, because it's five o'clock somewhere, I am pleasantly surprised. It doesn't taste at all like discharge, though I am pretty sure I detect just the hint of a coppery aftertaste. I ask Mother if she believes in the curse.

"I believe a magic spell was cast," she says. "I don't believe it's a curse. It's actually a blessing that the men in this town find a crime scene in their panties once a month."

"Preach it, Sister." I ask her what happened. "Who cast the spell? Why?"

"Her name was Winnie Masters," Mother Sun says, looking off into the distance. "She came into town back in the Gold Rush days, and one night she was at the saloon and had an accident. Well, the men all started hooting and hollering, making fun of her. The bar keep, a nasty old man by the name of Jedediah Malone, started yelling at her for making his whole bar smell like pennies. Winnie didn't like that. Not one bit. She raised her hands and began to shout in a strange language. Well, right then and there, all the men in that tavern were struck with the worst cramps any of them had ever known!"

Mother Sun stops her story at that point, overcome with laughter. When she finally regains control of herself, there are tears of joy in her eyes. "Next thing you know, all those poor dears felt something hot and sticky in their pants! They were screaming, panicking, thinking they were about to bleed to death! Leak week for the men started right then and there!"



"Oh, they didn't want to believe it, couldn't accept what had happened to 'em, but their wives knew, their mothers. A lot of the womenfolk had a grand old time!"

"What happened to Winnie?"

"Oh, she vanished without a trace. The men went out looking for her for a year, at least when they weren't on the rag, but no one ever did find the first trace of Winnie nor any clues as to where she had gone."

"What happened next?"

"The men started shoving wads of cotton in their pants once a month, getting crying spells, throwing tantrums. The usual. Course, they all got the shock of their lives a few months later when their chests started aching, budding, and they all popped out the nicest pair of soft little boobies a girl could ever dream of! It was a glorious time, I can tell you that. The modern bra had only just been invented, and it ain't made its way all the way up here to Fair Haven."

"So, the men?"

"Honey, the men had to wear corsets! The ladies in town had a field day."

By the time Mother and I got done chortling over the idea of men wearing corsets and dealing with periods, the sun had set. I was tired, and I should probably have gotten some sleep, but I decide to head down to Clancy's, the local dive bar. I want to meet a few locals and get their perspective on life in Fair Haven.

And maybe pay some dude 10 dollars to show me his tits.



AUTHOR: I MADE UP THE DIALOGUE. IF THIS DIDN'T HAPPEN, IT SHOULD HAVE!



ESTHER MEH REPORTS ON ALL THINGS GENDER. THEY ALSO HOST THE WEEKLY PODCAST, "WHATEVER," AND SERVE AS FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF SNARKFEST, HELD EACH YEAR IN TOLEDO, OHIO, FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO FLUCKS TO GIVE, BUT LIKE TO HANG OUT AND BITCH ABOUT STUFF ANYWAY.

*COMING NEXT WEEK: PART II
MORE FAIR HAVEN SECRETS REVEALED AS WE LOOK IN ON HOW THE YOUNGER GENERATION IS DEALING WITH THE "CURSE." I ALSO MEET A CUTE GUY WHO LOOKS KIND OF LIKE MY EX-BOYFRIEND'S SISTER, BUT HAS BETTER TITS.*