



Reluctant Press presents:

Trans-Love

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTA HAIGHT

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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“Transsexual Love Knows No Borders

by E.B. Stevenson

The winter of 1990 was a long, cold one. I had been in a steady relationship with a genetic female named Kara for seven and a half years; we had been living together for a year and a half. We met when I was a freshman in college, and she was a freshman in high school. By that point, she was twenty-two and I was twenty-six. I was at the point where I was ready to propose marriage to her. Little did I know that she would drop a major bombshell.

We had arranged a date for just after Valentine’s Day. I had already bought the engagement ring, and was looking forward to spending the rest of my life with her. It was five months prior to this that she began to have doubts about our relationship. I had hoped her doubts would subside.

It was a cold night in St. Louis, where we lived at the time. We were sitting in my car; we couldn’t find anything to talk about. Suddenly, she spoke.

“Eric, I want to tell you something. I wanted to tell you in front of your family, but I don’t think I would hear the end of it,” she sheepishly said to me.

“What is it?” I asked her.

“I think it’s time we broke up,” she replied.

“After all I went through? I was going to ask you to marry me,” I added, rather shocked at what she said.

“If you asked me to marry you, I would have said ‘no’,” she added.

“Why would you turn me down?” I asked.

“For the last five months, I’ve been having doubts about our relationship. I have become interested in dating other men. Face it, Eric...we’ve been together too long. I never wanted to marry; at least not while I’m still young. I’m sure you’ll find someone else someday,” she replied.

“How many times do I have to explain that finding someone else is very difficult in this town?” I asked her in slight consternation.

“I don’t know if you realize this, but there’s more single women than you know,” she pointed out.

“I don’t believe you for a second, Kara. It took me two years after the end of my last relationship to find you; it’ll take much longer if we split, as you’re insisting we do,” I added with a touch of anger.

“Why do you say that?” she asked with a puzzled look.

“I’ve read the statistics. There are just far too many single men in this town. I’ve asked many people at work and at church, and they don’t seem to know any single women. The only singles they know are men. It seems that every woman in this town are either married or in a steady relationship. There’s practically no place where I can still meet available women these days,” I explained with a bit of desperation.

“You’re saying that if we split, you’ll never be able to find anyone around here?” she asked, rather shocked.

“That’s the truth,” I replied, by this point angry.

“Are you afraid that the same thing that happened to you nine years ago will happen again?” she then asked.

“Yes, I’m afraid that I’ll be traumatized again,” I replied, this time frustrated.

“You were in high school then, Eric. The chances of another girl’s boyfriend emotionally and physically abusing you at this point in your life are very remote,” she added.

“Kara, I’m sorry, but I’m afraid that it’ll happen again; if it does, the consequences could be more severe, even fatal,” I then added, this time trembling with fear. I drove back to her house to drop her off. On the way home, I stopped at a park, where I cried for almost an hour. When I came home, my mother was in the living room, talking with my younger sister Brenda. Her husband, Kurt, was working late that night. She immediately noticed the gloomy look on my face.

“What’s wrong, Eric?” Brenda asked.

“It’s over between me and Kara,” I replied.

“What happened?” asked my mother.

“She was having doubts about our relationship. I was getting ready to ask her to marry me, and she told me that she wouldn’t. She went on with something about marriage not being in her plans, and that we’ve been together too long. I told her that I don’t have much of a chance of establishing another relationship, and she didn’t believe me. She rambled on about there being more single women in this town, which I don’t believe for a minute. I

never made it to dinner; I wound up taking her back to her house. I stopped at a nearby park, where I cried for almost an hour before I regained my composure and returned home. The breakup hasn't sunk in yet," I explained.

"Did you ask your friends if they knew any single women?" Brenda then asked.

"I did; they didn't know any single women. The only single people they know are men," I replied, feeling depressed.

The next day, I tried to put the whole episode out of my mind while I worked the mid-day shift at a local radio station. It was hard to keep the fact that I lost my only true love out of my mind, but I made an honest effort to not let it effect my presentation. I took on some extra work to take my mind off what had happened between me and Kara. When I got home that evening, I made myself a gallon of tea, and sat in my room all evening. Around nine o'clock, my father returned from a business trip to California. Mother told him what had happened.

"Could we have a talk, Eric?" he asked me.

"I definitely need one right now," I replied.

"Your mother told me what had happened between you and Kara. Your mother and I had seen this coming for some time. When you first introduced her to us, we didn't approve of her. Your mother worked with her cousin a few years ago; she told her some bad things about Kara," he added.

"What do you mean, Dad?" I asked him.

"When Kara was a little girl, she was emotionally and mentally abused by her father. She was not the only one in her family that was abused; her mother was emotionally, mentally and physically abused by him. Their history of abuse doesn't end there. When she was younger, her mother was abused by her own father. She needed a man that was the opposite of her father, and she found that man in you. Unfortunately, she kept a lot of things secret from you," he replied.

"Dad, things haven't been going well in her family in recent months. Almost a year ago, her mother filed for divorce, charging that he was mentally and physically cruel to her. The divorce is still pending; her father was getting ready to move out of their house. Her mother had started to become more and more dictatorial in recent months, too. No one went out on dates or anything without her prior knowledge. We had been looking for our own place to live, which we would have been willing to share with her siblings, so we could take some pressure of her mother so that she could concentrate full-time on her job as a parole officer. But, once her mother filed for divorce, she had started to have doubts about our relationship. I must admit, I stayed in that relationship out of fear," I added.

"Fear of what?" he then asked.

"I'm afraid I'll never be able to find a girlfriend again, as long as I live," I replied, feeling depressed.

"Why would you say that?" he asked with a bit of concern.

"I've asked nearly everyone I know if there were any single women looking for a loving single man, but they don't know any single women," I replied, still depressed.

“You may have to search for her in another city,” he added.

“I don’t know...it seems that it’s the same way in other cities,” I said, sounding like I was admitting defeat.

“Well, Eric, I just don’t know what to say, but I feel that breaking up with Kara was for the best. I just couldn’t see her as your wife, especially after the history of abuse in her family,” he told me, trying to soften the blow.

“Thanks, Dad,” I said before he left the room.

This would be the start of a trying time in my life. Would I ever be able to find true love again? That was a question only time would tell.

Kara moved out of the apartment we shared within forty-eight hours of our split. Ten months after I broke up with Kara, I received a letter from an old friend from my college days. Chris Bolland had been one of my closest friends; the one thing I remember about him was that we infiltrated a gay bar as part of an initiation stunt into one of the student clubs we were in. In his letter, he revealed that he was going through a major change in his life. What it was, I didn’t know.

We had set up a meeting for two days after Christmas. Our meeting point was a local shopping center. I hadn’t seen Chris since we graduated from college in 1986. He had short blonde hair and a heavy build when I knew him; he was always dressed in very fashionable clothes. It was around three o’clock when I saw a heavy set woman with shoulder-length blonde hair, and wearing a white blouse and floral print pants. She immediately noticed me.

“Eric Benson?” she asked me.

“Is that you, Chris?” I asked her.

“Yes, silly...but you can call me Christina now,” she replied.

“Let me guess...the change you’re going through is a sex change?” I inquired.

“Your guess is correct. I have been keeping a secret from you, Eric. When we were in college, I was living a masquerade. I had tried so hard to be something that I felt I really wasn’t. I never felt that I was really a man. I really felt that I should have been a woman. Two years ago, I realized that I couldn’t live my life as a man anymore, and began to gradually start living as a woman. I was able to get permission from my employer to dress as a woman on the job; I also got approval from my therapist to live full-time as a woman. I’m now awaiting final approval for sex reassignment surgery,” she explained.

“That’s a major change, if I ever saw one,” I added, amazed at what she was going through.

“Whatever happened to Kara? I thought you two would be married by now,” she asked.

“Kara and I split up on Valentine’s Day. She was having problems in her family, with her mother’s divorce and my parents’ apparent disapproval of her. She started to have doubts about our relationship after her mother filed for divorce,” I replied.

“Have you ever considered dating a transsexual?” she then asked.

"I have at one point or another, Christina. I've never felt threatened by the presence of a male-to-female transsexual. As long as she's the woman she has become, that's fine by me," I honestly replied.

"What would make you decide to go out with a transsexual?" she then asked.

"Part of my decision is that I wanted a change of pace. Dating the same genetic female for a long, long time can make you itch to date another woman, regardless of her birth sex. I've always been curious about what it would be like to date a transsexual. Now, if you were asking the major part of the decision, I would say, to be honest with you, that I've had a lot of problems getting dates with genetic females," I replied with honesty.

"Did you have problems getting dates with genetic females before you met Kara?" she asked, somewhat concerned.

"Frankly, I did. When I was younger, I was rejected by every girl I asked on a date. I didn't know what the reasons were. Granted, some of them were already involved in a relationship, but most of them just didn't want to be seen with me. I've always considered myself to be a nice guy, but they were a very tough sell. What really changed things was my being verbally and physically assaulted by the boyfriend of a girl I really liked when I was sixteen. I was severely traumatized by this incident; it made me scared of girls for the first time in my life. When I finally built up enough guts to try to ask girls out on a date again, it was too late. Every girl in town had been taken," I explained, feeling depressed.

"Eric, you've been through a lot. I don't blame you for feeling depressed about how love has failed you," she added, caressing my hand in the process.

"Thanks, Christina," I added with a smile.

We walked around and did some shopping for a while; she bought some compact discs at the record store. Since I was parked three blocks from the shopping center, she offered to drive me to my car.

When she pulled up in front of my car, I told her: "Christina, thanks for such a wonderful time. You've taken my mind off what has happened to me the last several months." I then asked her: "Would you like for us to get together again sometime?"

"I would love that, Eric," she replied.

I then moved toward her. "Did anyone ever tell you that you're beautiful?" I asked her.

"This is the first time I've heard that from a guy," she said, then asked me why I hadn't moved closer to her. "Because I am a gentleman," I replied before we exchanged a smooch.

After I left her car to get into mine, I had a good feeling about her. However, I didn't want to get into another relationship just yet; I wanted to get to know her a little better before I committed to another relationship.

The next time I saw her, it was almost a month later. It was late in the afternoon when I visited her at her apartment in Maplewood. She had just gotten home from work at a nearby university, where she was a cafeteria worker. We sat and talked for a while. "Do your parents know that you're seeing a transsexual?" she asked me.

"No, they don't know I'm seeing a transsexual. If I told them, I'm afraid they wouldn't approve," I replied.

“But, what if they did?” she then asked.

“I don’t know...maybe I’ll bring you home to meet them someday,” I replied; then I asked her; “How did your parents feel about you becoming a woman?”

“I kept it a secret from them for a long time. When they finally found out that I was transsexual, they asked me why I didn’t tell them this sooner. I told them that I was afraid they would disapprove of my becoming a woman. They’re happy that they now have another daughter,” she replied.

“Do you want to know something, Christina?” I asked her.

“What?” she then asked me.

“If you started your transition sooner, I would have started going out with you when you began living full-time as a woman. I think I would have fallen in love with you,” I replied.

“I think you’re working a bit fast,” she added.

“One thing I would love to see you do is model some lingerie,” I said to her.

“Not at this hour of the day,” she informed me.

When I got up from the couch, she got up from her swivel chair at the same time. This time, we exchanged a hug before passionately kissing each other. We managed to add a little tongue to our kiss. “Until we meet again,” I whispered.

We had continued to stay in contact with each other for a few more months after that; unfortunately, by the end of June 1991, she had found another boyfriend. I stayed in touch with her via her answering machine until she had her sex-change operation in 1992. Not long thereafter, she would move out of the St. Louis area. Of course, I would never see her again. I thought she had some potential as a romantic interest; however, she was more interested in her own desires than thinking about the potential I would have had as a boyfriend.

It was then I started to have even more doubts about the level of interest that women had in me. I was starting to think that women closer to my own age were rapidly losing interest in me. I thought that a male-to-female transsexual’s potential as a romantic interest would be as strong as a genetic female’s. Then again, maybe neither group would have much potential, if any at all. That would remain to be seen.

Following that experience, I took a year and a half away from dating to straighten some things out in my personal life. While I was still working in the commercial radio field, I continued to have a very difficult time dealing with the broken relationship I had. I was sorting through these problems with the aid of a therapist. I had also struck up a long-distance relationship with a young post-op transsexual named Jenni; we kept in touch via E-mail. She had left St. Louis in the late 1980s for San Francisco to transition. She had her sex-change operation in 1991, and had even thought of returning home by the time we had struck up that relationship in 1992. However, she had fallen in love with a guy in San Francisco by the latter part of 1992, so I had given up on her. By the middle of 1993, I was itching to date again. That would have to be put off because I was putting so much time, not only into my job, but also helping out with emergency communications during the big flood that hit the St. Louis area that year.

While I would keep in touch with a number of local women, all born female, via E-mail during the fall of 1993, I would only meet one in person. Like all the others, she found another boyfriend; however, that would last only a few months. The first local transsexual I met online was another big, beautiful woman. Her name was Michelle; she was four years my junior. We decided to meet at the airport where I spent so much time when I was younger.

She was driving her mother's mid-1980s vintage coupe. We talked for a while, about general things. "How long have you been living as a woman?" I asked her.

"I've been living as a woman since I was sixteen years old. I have always felt that I was a girl; I never really felt like a boy. I've had hormone treatments, but I haven't had enough money for a sex-change operation yet," she replied.

"I hope you have the operation, Michelle. That way, you could legally be able to marry a man, should you meet the right one," I added.

"Haven't you met the right girl yet?" she asked me.

"I thought I did meet the right girl. We met in the spring of 1982; she was fifteen when I met her, and I was nineteen. I was not able to find a girl closer to my own age where I lived. We spent a lot of time together, and even thought about proposing marriage to her. Unfortunately, our relationship fell apart; she ended our relationship three years ago. I found out that her parents' marriage had been in decline for a decade. What's even worse? Her family had a two-generation history of abuse. While I have dated both genetic females and male-to-female transsexuals since that time, I haven't been able to find a decent, loving woman around here," I lamented.

"I'm sorry to hear that. I've had a hard time establishing relationships, myself, due in part to my transsexual nature. I've dated several guys, but they freaked



out when I revealed my past to them. It seems that we both have been unlucky in love," she added.

"That's so true. I'm hoping she will come along, but I'm not counting on it," I added with a touch of frustration.

During the whole time, I was tempted to kiss her. I put my arm around her a number of times; but when it came time for us to part ways, I embraced her. I thought about it for a moment before I gave her a smooch. I would later find out that she was a flirt; she was dating several other guys. The next date was three months later; again, it was with a pre-op transsexual, named Robin. My impression of her was that she was unsure of herself, having started transition late in life. She was in her mid-forties at the time. After a few months, we parted company. I was kind of sweet on her roommate, Anna, another pre-op, who had a sexy body. After that, I was focused on dating genetic females exclusively, in which I was hoping to finally find the woman I could settle down with and marry. Unfortunately, I was stood up more often by the women I dated than I actually met in person.

By the middle of 1996, things were changing. The deregulation of the media in the United States had started to make many radio personalities anxious, myself included. On May 24, 1996, I was called into the office of my boss, Earl Slaughter. I was expecting bad news. Once I got into the office, my worst fears were confirmed.

"The reason why I called you into my office, Eric, is that we've had a change in ownership at the station. The new owners feel that you don't appeal to a younger audience, which they want for the station. I know you've been getting good ratings in recent years, but the new owners feel that it's not good enough. They want to bring in talent from out of town that will appeal to the younger audience they want," Earl told me succinctly.

"I still have two years left to go on my contract. What are you going to do?" I asked him.

"The new owners want to buy out the remaining two years of your contract; the remaining \$110,000 of the deal will be paid in full," he replied.

"I'll accept the buyout," I added.

For the next five months, I was searching for broadcast employment in the United States, but wasn't successful. In August, I moved out of the apartment I once shared with Kara, after living there for seven years. In September, I looked at the possibility of moving overseas for my next assignment. On November 10, 1996, I received a letter from one of my mentors. I knew that Karl Sears had become Karen Sears in the years since we worked together; she was now living in Ottawa with her husband of six years, Clark Venable. Both had emigrated from the United States after getting married; they had lived in Dayton before moving to Canada. I called Karen from my home.

"Karen, Eric Benson speaking. How are you today?" I asked her.

"I'm doing fine, Eric...I haven't spoken to you since before I had my sex change," Karen replied.

"What do you have in mind?" I inquired.

"Eric, I'm now the president of the organization operating a community radio station in Ottawa. My husband is the chairman of the board of the organization. The position of

general manager of the station has been open for the last four months, since the last person to hold the job took a position programming a commercial FM station in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Clark suggested I contact you, and talk to you about the position," she replied.

"When should I make it to Ottawa?" I then asked.

"We can get you here the day after tomorrow; Clark has procured the airfare to get you into town," she replied.

The next evening, I left St. Louis for my interview in Ottawa. I took a flight into Toronto, and made a connecting flight to Ottawa. When I got there late that evening, I immediately went to my hotel room to check in. I was exhausted, so I went immediately to sleep before my job interview the next morning.

I arrived before my scheduled ten o'clock appointment; I decided to wear my best suit. I signed the visitor register before I sat down and relaxed. Just after ten o'clock, Karen came out with her notebook. She had shoulder-length dark brown hair, wearing a red dress, matching high heels and a faux pearl necklace. "Would you come back, please?" she asked me. I followed her to her rather modest office.

"So, what brings you to this point in your career?" she asked me.

"Six months ago, the station I worked at got bought out. The ownership I worked under was based in St. Louis; I had a good relationship with them. They unsuccessfully fought a hostile takeover attempt by a large media conglomerate out of New York. The new ownership group was seeking a younger audience; despite the fact I still got good ratings, the new owners felt I couldn't appeal to the youth audience. The last two years of my contract were bought out for face value; over one hundred thousand American dollars. I have tried to find new employment in the United States; I've been turned away every time. Two months ago, I began to consider looking for work outside the United States. So, it was a surprise when I received your letter," I replied.

"Eric, we feel we can use your experience in Ottawa. The Capital Region Community Radio Authority has been looking for an experienced person to take the reins of General Manager of our community radio station, for the last eight months. We have not been able to find a suitable Canadian citizen to take over, since our previous General Manager left to program a commercial FM station in Halifax. Since someone with your background isn't as much in demand on the U.S. side of the border, Clark and I felt it was time that we seek out qualified people in the United States. When I read a posting on the Internet demanding your return to the local airwaves, I felt that you would better serve us in Ottawa than continuing to serve listeners in what we see as an increasingly hostile marketplace in the United States," she added.

"I've been looking for a new challenge since being laid off," I informed her.

"We feel that this is the challenge you're looking for. We're going to offer you 125,000 Canadian dollars per year, plus associated benefits, to take over as General Manager of our radio station. We'll take care of the paperwork for the necessary documents permitting you to work here in Canada," she informed me.

"I'd take it I would start as soon as the paperwork with immigration is processed and approved," I added.