

The Wedding

by Ann Bogle

Anneliese digested Hymen's lie to the *ipso facto* wife that there was no other lover. Later, witnesses to the wedding at AMPs, to which Anneliese contributed earrings and cashews, must have told Patty otherwise. A bartender from a different bar, a man who looked like Kenny Rogers, performed the ceremony.

Kenny Rogers came into AMPs with another man who looked like the cousin of all the men in upstate New York. His eyes were dull as a dog's and had a predictable closeness; his nose was sharp. They sat next to Anneliese, the way men often did when she was with Hymen, as if she were alone, and began to talk to her. Anneliese enjoyed these conversations more than Hymen did.

Hymen said, "It's Kenny Rogers."

"What are you doing with this ugly faggot?" was Kenny's question.

"I love him," Anneliese said.

"You love him, are you going to marry him?"

"I'm a schoolteacher," she said and wrapped her legs around Hymen's hips from her barstool.

"This is a secret marriage," Hymen said.

"You have to have a ceremony, or you ain't married, and if you ain't married, then I can talk to her."

"That would be up to Anneliese Neumann," Hymen said.

"Let's get married," Anneliese said.

Kenny Rogers crossed himself and said, "Do you, sir ... love, honor, fuck only her. Anneliese, he'll always be sick, take care of him, and never talk to me?"

"I do," Anneliese said.

Hymen, who often lectured Anneliese on the semantics of intercourse, laughed snidely.

"He doesn't use the word 'fuck,' " Anneliese explained.

Anneliese inserted one of her crystal drops in Hymen's left ear and kept her left earring in. For a quarter, she bought a handful of cashews and plopped them on a red napkin.

"There," she said to Hymen, Kenny, and the witnesses.
"That's the reception."

