

# The Healing Of Vanessa

by [skin2279](#)

THE STARES DID GET TIRESOME, sometimes. Erica pointedly returned the gaze of the two boys who were watching her refuel her car.

“Hey, four-legs,” one of them called.

“These are not legs, these are arms,” she replied, raising her arms. “See? Elbows, not knees,” she added, pointing to the relevant joints in turn. “But these are feet on the ends, not hands.” She wiggled her arm-extremities. “I call them my arm-feet, while these”—she pointed down and raised a leg—“are my leg-feet. I walk on my leg-feet. I don’t walk on my arm-feet. I use them like hands. I can hold things with my toes.” Which she demonstrated, by picking up and putting away the nozzle, gripped in the toes of just one foot.

After being suitably impressed and chastened, the two boys went away and found something else to occupy their time.

From long practice, Erica’s front feet had become almost as supple as hands, her big toes doing a creditable job of working like opposable thumbs. Some things were still tricky, though.

After she had paid, the attendant as usual slid her card back at her across the counter. Somebody with fingers—and fingernails—would have had little trouble picking it up. When all one had was toes, one had to adapt. In this case, it was actually fairly easy: slide it with the toes of one front foot until an edge of the card was overhanging the edge of the counter; then she could use the toes of her other front foot to pick it up. Mission accomplished.

She walked into the toilet at the back of the station. In the cubicle, she undid her jeans, revealing the second mouth she had at her crotch, a near-perfect replica of the one in its usual place on her face, including the immediately-surrounding musculature. She looked down with distaste at the grimy appearance of the cubicle seat, and felt relieved that she didn’t have to sit on it. The reconstruction of her sex left the urethral opening located in the middle of the upper lip, and she had found that, by pouting her sex-lips, she could aim the stream and pee quite satisfactorily standing up.

As often happened, she found herself pursing her face-mouth unconsciously along with her sex-mouth. She smiled at this little oddity, and to amuse herself she made a crotch-smile to echo her face-smile. Which made her smile even more, both ways.

Yes, there were some consolations to being a freak.



"I'M SORRY TO HEAR you and Vanessa didn't quite hit it off," Doctor Valens said.

"I didn't feel ready—that is to say, I wasn't sure what she'd—" Erica mumbled.

Valens nodded slowly. "It was really my fault. I assumed you would get to discover each other's situations, and take it from there." He sighed. "That didn't quite happen." Then, after a pause, "I was rather hoping you might be able to advise her."

"Advise her? On what?"

"On your, ah, orogenital homomorphism reconstruction."

"On my sexmouth?"

"That is right. She, too, has suffered genital damage. And like you, it has gone far beyond what can be handled by conventional surgical techniques. She has been without, um, the capacity for sexual enjoyment, for some time now."

"I didn't know ..." Erica looked stricken.

"I have already recommended to her the same procedure that you have undergone. But she is, as you can understand, a little uncertain about whether to go ahead. I was hoping that you might be able to share your experience—for better or for worse." He gave a little self-deprecating smile. "Help her make a more informed choice."

"If there's anything I can do to help..."

"We have a pretty good idea where she is. She has a cabin by a lake, up in the mountains. Lovely area, so her brother tells me—quiet, and secluded. He tried visiting for a day or two with her, but says he couldn't seem to get through." The Doctor stroked his chin thoughtfully. "Do you think you might be able to make a connection this time?"



SHE REMEMBERED Derek. She thought back to the first time they met: this young man squatting down on the sidewalk, fumbling. He was trying to pick up a coin for the parking meter, that he had dropped. And he was having trouble because he, too, had feet in place of his hands.

"Need a hand?" she had asked, a little diffidently. "Or at least another foot."

"No thank you, I can manage—" he had begun brusquely. Then he looked up at her, at the armfoot she was waving. "Oh," he said, embarrassed.

"There is a kind of a trick to this," explained Erica. "You have to turn both your front feet over, so the toenails are at the bottom, and put one on each side. Then you can pinch it between both sets of toes and lift it up."

He followed the instructions; it took a few attempts, but finally he straightened up, coin

successfully retrieved, and popped it in the meter. “*Voilà*. You’ve been coping with this longer than I have.”

“Longer than just about anybody. I was one of the first.”

“With Doctor Valens, the original pioneer? Yes, he treated me, too.” Then he did a double-take. “I’ve seen you somewhere before ... you’re that model girl!”

“That’s me. Erica’s my name.”

“My name’s Derek.” He held out a front foot to shake, then seemed to think better of it. Erica took it anyway, with both armfeet, curling her toes around his, which made him laugh. He had a lovely laugh.



THIS WAS DEFINITELY A leave-the-top-down kind of day. Erica pulled out of the service station, and floored the throttle of her little sportster as soon as she reached the city limits. Already the road was perceptibly sloping up, up towards the mass of blue mountains that seemed so near ahead she could touch them.

There was the cabin. And just beyond it, a little jetty, jutting out into a mirror-smooth, flawlessly-reflecting-the-blue-of-the-sky expanse that looked more like glass than water.

Erica pulled up, thought about sounding the horn, then decided against it. It seemed almost sacrilegious in this quiet retreat, somehow. The air was cool, yet the Sun was hot in the blue, blue sky. She kicked off her shoes, and relished the feel of the cold grass and moist soil between her leg-toes. With no more than a momentary glance around, she undid her top and jeans. Naked, she strolled up to the door, which was open. “Knock, knock!” she called, hesitantly. There was no reply.



“AND HOW DO YOU FEEL about having feet in place of hands?” the Doctor wanted to know.

Erica made a half-nodding, half-shrugging gesture. “I manage OK, most of the time.” Hesitantly, “I don’t want to seem ungrateful...”

“I fully understand.”

“I thought it would get easier after the first year. But I fully appreciate it’s better to have these than no hands at all.” She bunched up her arm-toes. “Just sometimes it’s hard to pick up things. Every now and then I forget that I don’t have hands and fingers any more, and I feel clumsy, just like those first days. And then people stare.”

The Doctor nodded slowly.

"And you know another thing I miss? The ability to snap my fingers." She tried to make a complicated gesture involving the relevant arm-toes, that might have been equivalent to a finger-snap, only it wasn't.

"With the best will in the world, toes are still not fingers," said the Doctor gently. He was tapping his pen against his lip, seemingly preoccupied with the flowering bushes outside the window.

"No," agreed Erica. "Toes are not fingers."



DEREK WAS THE FIRST one she revealed herself to. His combination of diffidence and brusqueness at people's reactions to his substitutes for hands reminded Erica somewhat of her own early feelings. It had taken some time to get over them, which was why she dreaded having to relive the whole experience again by revealing her other difference.

But Derek for some reason gave her confidence. As embarrassed as he might have been about his own oddity, he never had any problems with the differences of others.

He was spending the day at her place, and she suggested a swim in the pool. He was willing, but hadn't brought any swimming trunks.

"Do you normally wear trunks while swimming?" she had asked lightly.

"Well, it depends," he had replied. "On how the company takes it."

"This company doesn't mind."

"That's the way I like it. Just so long as you do the same, of course."

"Of course!" Erica laughed. "But ... Derek ..."

"Yes?"

"I thought you should know ... there's something different about me."

"You mean, something other than this?" He waved an armfoot.

"Yes, something other than that."

And so, taking a deep breath, she had exposed herself to him.

"Wow," was all he said for a minute. "Is that a copy of your mouth?"

"Just the outside—the lips and surrounding muscles. The inside is still regular lady-parts. And no ... 'moustache'. My pubes were also gone in the accident."

"Muscles, you said? Can you control them? Smile, and pout, and stuff?"

“Yes.” And she demonstrated a few moves with her sexmouth.

Derek whistled.

Hesitantly: “Does it bother you?”

He smiled, a little mischievously. “Just so long as you don’t bite.”

For some reason that broke them both up, giggling.



SHE TURNED AND WALKED OUT on the jetty, to the little flat-bottomed dinghy that was moored there. She turned to face the cabin, certain that she could be seen clearly from the inside. She stretched, stood with legs apart, and did some crossover touching of her toes with ... her toes.

Several minutes passed with nothing happening. Erica was trying to decide whether the combination of the chill of the air with the heat of the sun was comfortable or not, when a movement came from the cabin doorway. A somewhat dishevelled figure in a grimy housecoat, long dark hair looking like an absolute fright, appeared and came forward.

“Oh, it’s you,” came a somewhat hoarse voice.

“I hope you don’t mind,” Erica replied. “I ... I thought I’d come by and say hello. And say sorry for ... chasing you out ... that other night.”

Vanessa came forward, stopped, and frowned. “Is that ... what I think it is?”

Erica nodded.

“That’s what you were afraid to show me?”

Erica nodded again.

“It looks .. fantastic.”

“I’ll tell you all about it,” replied Erica. “But look at you: you look bloody terrible. What have you been doing to yourself?”

Vanessa laughed, a little painfully. “Sorry. I feel terrible. Self-pity is not good for you.”

Erica gestured toward the lake. “How’s the water?”

“It’s cold. Bracing, even.”

“Care to join me? Get that sleep and ... crap out of your eyes.” And without another word Erica jumped into the lake. And yelled. “Shit! That **IS** cold!”



"Was I the first?" asked Derek.

"Since the operation, you mean? Yes."

"How was it? As good as before?"

"Better than before! I'd been pleasuring myself regularly, of course—the Doctor said to do that, to build up the new muscles, learn to control them, get used to how it all feels, and everything. But I'd forgotten what it was like to have a real man's penis inside me again. That part hasn't changed."

"Do you enjoy it more with a man or a woman?"

"I wouldn't say it's more or less. Just—different."

"Even with a partner who doesn't have a penis?"

"There are other things to enjoy with a woman."

"I know that, but I have a penis to enjoy them with."

Erica giggled. "I enjoy them in other ways."

"What you can do with those ... sex-lips of yours is amazing."

"It was nice for you too? I must have come about twice, just from rubbing my lips along your shaft."

"Now you're making me envious."

"And hard, I see. Want to do it again?"



VANESSA LAUGHED, and stepped towards the edge of the jetty, as Erica stood in the water. Slowly she stripped off her housecoat, to reveal she wore nothing underneath. She pointed to her crotch, smooth and blank, except for the merest dimple of a pee-hole. "Look at this. It looks so clean, don't you think? I have nothing to hide! No 'private' parts!" She parted her legs, and gave a brief laugh. "But once the novelty wears off, it's no fun at all. Every now and then, I feel the urge to have a good wank, give myself a good sex-rub. But there's nothing there." She sighed. "Nipples will only get you so far."

"It was like that for me, too. For a whole year. Until I got ... this ... done."

"You feel pleasure there?"

"Oh, yes. Even though the outside parts were all gone, the Doctor assured me the sexual nerves were still intact inside. So he was able to reconnect them to the new tissue. I don't have a clitoris

any more, but the whole of these sex-lips now take the place of my clit.”

“That must be ... amazing.”

“It is. You have no idea. Especially with all those mouth muscles. Once I learned to control them.”

“And ... I could have that, too?”

“I don’t see why not.”



“I MISS HAVING HANDS,” said Derek.

“So do I.”

“These things are so clumsy.”

“It gets better with time. With practice, they get more flexible, more like real fingers.”

“Sometimes, it gets so frustrating. I feel I just want to give up, tell them OK, the joke’s over, can I go back to being normal again? But I can’t. I’m stuck like this.”

“I’m here, babe. I know what it’s like. I can help.”

“Now and then I get the urge to ...”

“... Cry?”

He nodded.

“I cried. A lot.”

“But you’re a girl. A man’s not supposed to cry.”

“I know. I get it. It’s a sign of weakness. So what the hell’s wrong with being weak once in a while?”

And they embraced, and cried together. And wiped each other’s tears. And cried again.



SHE SAT DOWN on the edge of the jetty, letting her leg-fingers make wavelets in the water. “Just give me a moment to get—**AH!**” Erica had grabbed a leg and pulled her in.

They splashed around for a few more minutes, near the jetty, the water no more than chest-deep. Then they waded ashore, both shivering, and went inside the cabin. Vanessa found a pair of towels, and they wiped themselves down.

Erica checked the kitchen cupboards. “You don’t have much in supplies.” She turned to look at her somewhat gaunt friend. “When was the last time you ate something?”

Vanessa shook her head absently. “Maybe a few days. I kind of lost track.”

“Well then, you’d better get dressed. We’ll go into town and get a good meal, and then we’ll pick up some groceries.”

“Do you want to get dressed, too?” Vanessa responded, with just a hint of mischievousness.

Erica looked down at her own bare skin. “Oh yeah.”



CAME THE TIME when the dalliance with Derek had to end. He was rejoining his army unit. The front-line bomb-disposal work that had cost him his hands was out of the question, of course; but he was now going to be involved with the robotics side of things.

“You are right, these toes are starting to work more like fingers.”

“Have you noticed that happens with *all* your feet? You leg-toes become more fingerlike, too, and you can pick things up with them as well?”

“Yeah, I have been trying that. I thought I was imagining things.”

“The Doctor told me that would happen. The process of making copies of your feet is not an entirely static operation — there’s some kind of ongoing back and forth interaction, so any further development of one affects the other.”

“So if I use my front feet as hands, my back feet become more like hands as well?”

“Something like that.”



THEY GOT THE GROCERIES back to the cabin. Erica struggled with the cap on a jar of cooking sauce. “Darn, I can’t manage this,” she complained.

Vanessa sat at the table. “Bring it here,” she said. She rested her leg-hands on the table top, firmly gripped the jar in one and twisted the cap with the other, getting it off with the usual audible pop. “Legs are stronger than arms,” she explained.

“Hey, I should learn to do that, too,” replied Erica. “I can use my leg-feet same as my arm-feet.” She brought the next jar to the table, and sat in front of it. Putting her legs up, she tried to imitate what Vanessa had done. A few grunts later, and she was gratified to see the lid come off.

“I thought I was the only one who could do that,” remarked Vanessa.

"I don't do it much," replied Erica. "I just keep forgetting I can do it. I use my front feet as hands, my back feet work as hands too."

"I do it all the time," explained Vanessa. "When I'm alone, that is. I feel it's like a party trick, having these extra hands. But I'd be kind of embarrassed doing it in front of anybody else. Except maybe you."

"I often have trouble with some of this other packaging," said Erica. "Maybe I should try opening it with my legs, too." She picked up a plastic-wrapped box in one leg-foot, and pinched at the wrapping with the other until it tore.

"You know, it's uncanny, but I'd swear your big toes are moving almost like thumbs," remarked Vanessa.

"Yeah, I learned to do that with my armfeet, but it's funny how that works with my legfeet as well. Pass me another pack? This is fun." She carefully dug the nail of a big toe under a cardboard flap. "Almost makes me stop wishing I had fingers again, instead of toes."



"YOU KNOW, YOU'VE spoiled me for normal women," he would say, during those last few bittersweet days.

"My dear sweet, beautiful soldier-man," she responded, drawing herself up in feigned indignation. "Are you saying I'm *abnormal*?"

And he would laugh sheepishly.



"DO YOU LIKE to go for a run?"

"I used to, so much. I can walk, but I can't run, much, any more," replied Vanessa. "My leg-wrists can't take the pounding, and they start to hurt. They're not strong, like ankles."

"It seems like we both wish we could have regular hands and feet, like normal people."

"Yes, having only hands or only feet can only take you so far, even if you have four of them."

"You know, Doctor Valens said something to me before I left, about a new procedure he was working on."

"Really?"

"Yeah, something about the next step beyond copying forms between different parts of a person's body. This was being able to transfer forms of parts between different people's bodies."

“Like, swapping my back hands for your front feet?”

“Something like that. Shall we go see him?”



THE DOCTOR LOOKED THOUGHTFULLY at the two women. “Now, I should point out that this procedure is perhaps not quite what you were expecting,” he began. “Transference of body-part configurations is possible, but it has to be on an all-instances basis.”

“What does that mean?” asked Vanessa.

“It means, unfortunately, that you cannot have two hands and two feet. Because you, Erica, have two copies of each of your original feet, and you, Vanessa, have two copies of each of your original hands, the dynamic synchronicity between them means that both copies of each extremity will inevitably be affected by any form transference. This is an inescapable limitation of the technology as it exists today. If one foot becomes a hand, the other copy of that same foot will become a hand, and vice versa. The net result is, all four extremities must be hands or all four must be feet. Or you could have hands on one side of your body and feet on the other, but that is probably not as useful—”

“You mean I would just become like her, or she like me? But then we would be no better off!” Erica wailed.

The Doctor made a calming gesture. “*However* ... you would be able to switch configurations on demand,” he explained. “You would have your choice of all hands or all feet, as was most convenient for the occasion. Or perhaps I should say, least inconvenient. You would become what we call a *syncheiropod*.”

There was a pause while the two women let this sink in.

“We would be able to choose?” asked Erica.

“Any time you wanted to switch, you could switch,” replied the Doctor. “Not instantaneously, of course—it would take maybe ten minutes for the transformation each time. And you would have to wait at least a few hours until you could do it again. There is an energy cost.”

“Well, that’s something,” said Vanessa. “I could have feet outdoors for walking and running. Then take off my shoes and switch to hands indoors, when I don’t have to walk far, for holding things. And you would have the same too.”

“Sounds better than what I have now,” agreed Erica. “OK.” She took a deep breath. “Let’s do it.”



“HOW DO I LOOK?” asked Vanessa.

"You look beautiful. Even with no clothes on. Especially with no clothes on."

"I feel weird ... down there. It was peculiar enough not having anything at all. Now, this mouth thing."

"I felt the same way. But you know what? Now I think it's pretty cool."

"I'm looking forward to seeing what this vagina is like. It's basically all cloned mouth tissue in there, hooked up to the sex nerves. And the Doctor found a way to give me back my penis as well."

"Uh ... penis?" Erica was nonplussed.

"I never told you, did I? I never had a vagina before. I used to be a male. As feminine as you see me now, but born with balls and a cock. And they were fully working too, and gave me great pleasure. But the male hormones somehow never had an effect outside of my crotch.

"Restricted Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome", they call it. So the rest of me became a girl."

"Penis?" Erica said, again.

"Oh, yeah," Vanessa replied. "Look at this." She pouted her sex-mouth, and opened the lips into an O-shape. Then from inside, she protruded what looked like a tongue. "The Doctor cloned my tongue as well," she explained. "Then he reshaped it a bit, kind of rounder and longer. But it's all still muscle. And all under voluntary control. With a pee-hole at the tip. Isn't that neat?" Vanessa made a concerned face. "Erica, are you all right? Would you like to sit down?"

"Did you say ... *Penis*?"

