

I Know What Butch Is

I know what butch is. I know, and I'm going to tell you, so listen up and take notes. First of all, butch is a noun. And an adjective. And a verb.

Butches only ever wear jeans, and boots, except if they're wearing suits, and they keep their hair clipped down to a flattop you could putt off. Except if they have to for work. Or if they want to for sex. Or if they want to for some other reason. But otherwise it's denim and leather and butch wax, kid, and don't you forget it. Unless you're vegan.

Toughness, even at the expense of gentleness, is a butch trait. Butches are outlaws. Also gentlemen. Gentlemen who open doors and pick up checks and say "after you" and hold your umbrella over you in the rain while the water drips down their sleeves. But not gentlemen if being a gentleman means imposing their sexist modes of acting out the cultural paradigm of the helplessness of women on the unsuspecting. Except if the unsuspecting are crying and need a handkerchief, or elderly and need a seat to sit down in, then it's all right. Probably. But butches should never wait for a femme to tell them specifically that it is all right to behave in a gentlemanly fashion, they should just go ahead and do it because femmes like a butch with confidence, unless it turns out that she finds it offensive and feels as though you have imposed your gender fetish on her, you arrogant bastard.

And butches are monosyllabic, until you get to know them, which they will not allow but want, or will allow and want, or will allow but don't want, or won't allow and don't want, so you may or may not get to know them but you should try, or not. But, butches are monosyllabic because all that talking is girl stuff, you know? Butches grunt

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in answer to questions, they speak sharply and emphatically. They do not share, process, or explain, because these are activities which bring nothing but trouble, unless they are bringing relief to the troubled heart of a butch carrying around too much hurt or pain, though butches do not actually feel pain, they're tough enough to either slough it off like dead skin or deal with all of that themselves. Unless someone wants for them to be emotionally available in which case they can feel their feelings even though the presence of feelings is suspect in the first place, but they must stop immediately as soon as someone else is having a tough time so that all their resources can be directed to soothing that person.

I know what butch is. Butches are not beginner FTMs, except that sometimes they are, but it's not a continuum except when it is. Butch is not a trans identity unless the butch in questions says it is, in which case it is, unless the tranny in question says it isn't, in which case it's not. There is no such thing as butch flight, no matter what the femmes or elders say, unless saying that invalidates the opinion of femmes in a sexist fashion or the opinions of elders in an ageist fashion. Or if they're right. But they are not, because butch and transgender are the same thing with different names, except that butch is not a trans identity, unless it is; see above.

Butches are always tops, they always fuck the girls and for that matter their partners are always girls; there is no such thing as a butch who is attracted to men. Well, transmen, but that's just butch-on-butch repackaged as faggotry. But no non-trans-men. Unless the butch in question is a non-trans-man, then it's okay. Except that non-trans-men cannot be butches, because butch is a queering of gender that assigned-male people cannot embody, unless they occasionally can, in which case they have to be gay men. Or

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the partners of femmes. Or not. But no one with an assigned-female body can be a butch and do it with assigned-male men. Unless they're femmes. Or butches. I'm really putting my foot down on this one.

I know what butch is, and butches definitely, absolutely, do not get fucked, even if it feels so good to have someone slide in sweet and hard and rock them just right. They might eat pussy but they never suck cock, because licking pussy is chivalry without pants and of course any butch would want to do anything to please the femme in hir life, if there is a femme. Which there has to be, in order to be a true butch, except if there does not have to be but you cannot be a misogynist about it either, which a lack of interest in femmes and their attendant delights may be read as, if there is a lack which there shouldn't be. But anyway cocksucking is about ownership and dominance, so butches must always be the ones having their cocks sucked, unless the owner of the cock being sucked by a butch is tied to something, but if a butch was tying down someone with a cock of some variety then the above rule would quite likely be violated, and I think I've been very clear about that so never mind.

Butch has a lot of privilege, because butches pass as men a lot and butches also have a lot of privilege in the queer community because butch reads as queer and femme doesn't always, and being able to pass to keep one's self safe isn't privilege if you're a femme but it is if you're a butch. Unless this is a butch who can pass as a heteronormative woman in which case ze's not really a butch anyway because no butch could do such a thing. Except that some of them can and also having kids really helps even though no butch could have kids because of the rule about not getting fucked and also because that's a femme's job but not everyone really understood their butchness all

the way along and also sometimes there are fertility issues and also sometimes there's not a femme so we'll grandfather in some children but we'll be suspicious of those butches. Unless they're really great butch dads of whatever sex in which case we'll think it's the damn cutest thing in the world and punch them on the arm, or if they're awesome butch moms we'll make approving comments about their ability to raise feminist men but otherwise no children and no heteronormativity for sure except for assigned-male butches who do not exist.

Besides all of that, the butch pays. If there's only one butch on the date. Unless the femme wants to. If there's a femme present. If there's a femme present the butch pays unless hir paying would upset the femme or unless it creates class issues for the butch or patriarchy issues for the femme. If it's two butches on a date, which they shouldn't be. Or they should. In any case, they armwrestle for it. Except in such situations in which a public display of aggression on the part of butches or an interaction which may be read as such could potentially be detrimental to the community, to the mental health of those witnessing the act, to the butches themselves for feeling compelled to act out normative masculine gendered conflict-resolution tactics, or to the glassware of the dining establishment which so often gets broken. But otherwise, the butch always pays, and there's just no getting around that.

I know what butch is. Butches are a brotherhood, or possibly a sisterhood, which would be a marvelous way to reclaim butch's roots in the lesbian community except some butches were never part of the lesbian community and some were but aren't any more, but placing masculine identities on butches is disrespectful, except when it's desirable, but anyway butches are a tribe, a tribe of people who have been maligned

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endlessly for, and in fact forged an identity in part out of, not fitting the gendered expectations of the culture in which they exist (until or unless they work to pass as men, which always or never or sometimes happens and is absolutely a great or problematic thing) so butches are very open to gendered variations in others and would never, ever try to make another butch feel like shit for having displayed a behavior which does not fit the microculture's standard of what it means to be a butch which is a useful or idealized or ridiculous or just plain complicated standard, so it should be adhered to, or critiqued, or aspired to, or not. Butches would also certainly never try to school younger butches in ways that are angry and dangerous because they feel like the process of toughening has disappeared from modern culture and butches need to be tough, damnit. Butches who do those sorts of things either are Real Butches or are Not Real Butches, depending who you ask.

There, that should be perfectly clear.