

A Matter of Sex!!

by Lyn Elvey

(At the May 1995 meeting of the Southern Science Fiction group, Graham Stone talked about Australian authors. Only one woman author was mentioned, which I commented on, as well as remarking on the excellence of the plot of a book set in the future where women were in charge. This brought a remark from the editor on my "Feminist" attitude. My reply was that I was not so much a feminist as that I found little to recommend men (and I am not gay).)

I am an intelligent (40 year old) female. I have a university degree (Science) and hold a responsible job (Analyst/programmer) on a good salary (your guess!!). I have managed to run the Southern Group for three and a half years. I am involved in Church, Neighbourhood Watch, Playing Darts, and take an interest in the news, the arts, crafts and most sports as well as being an avid reader.

Like most women I am an organised, multi-tasking individual, able to juggle a busy working life with a large range of commitments and a good circle of friends. I do my utmost to do my work as quickly and as efficiently as possible and to keep my "customers" happy. I endeavour to keep in touch with as many of my friends as possible, meeting them for meals or just having a chat. And from my list of commitments above you can see I devote time to a number of other causes.

So, I ask you, why can't men be like that too? Heaven help you if you ask a man to do two things at the one time. At work if you ask a male if he could please put a new water bottle in the cooler at the same time he is getting a cup of coffee, let me let you the coffee will make it back to the desk, but the water cooler will stand empty. And ask a man if he can go out two weeks ahead and he will look at you astounded. How could he possibly know two weeks ahead what he is doing? Right now I have a diary with items entered up to Christmas - I have to if I want to run a Group successfully. I can certainly go for a meal Friday week - what is the male's problem? I have decided that there is such a wide difference in attitude and approach to life that it is a wonder that males and females ever get together at all. Married, and committed females have exactly the same problems when you talk to them, they have just learned to live with it. Most of us who are divorced wonder how we ever managed in the first place.

Where I work, if someone wants a job to be done, who do you think gets the work - me. Why? Because unlike the rest of the males in the section who put it aside or forget it, I do it. And who answers the phone in our department of 8 males and 3 females, let me assure you it is not the male in the office next to the ringing phone. They seem to have selective deafness when it comes to hearing a phone. Who organises morning teas, nights out, presentations - the women. Not because we have the time but because we get the job done.

So, do we get to management level at work? No - nearly all the management personnel are men. This has been true at all jobs but one where I had a female boss (she was great to work for). And if a vacancy crops up the position is filled from outside by a male. We have a junior staff member at work - he has been with us one year. But he is one of the "boys". So he gets a business card and a title of "manager". I'm still waiting after 5 years!

This may sound a little like sour grapes, but it seems to be a failing of men that if you do the job (and do it well as all women do) then rather than be appreciated you are taken for granted. I have just heard a sigh from all married women who's husbands act exactly like that at home as well. They are no different at work! But don't do the job or make a mistake and let me tell you my boss can break the land-

speed record getting into my office to find out what I did wrong (even if it's not my fault). For that is another quirk - all problems no matter who caused them become your problem if you are the person who fixes it. And why should any man want to bother fixing a problem - let one of the "girls" handle it.

So lets now talk about men as companions (not necessarily a husband). I have spent the last 5 years looking for that impossible person. Because you see despite all men's failings I do still like male companionship occasionally, and let's be honest most of my girlfriends do not really want to go to the footie next week or talk about the game the next day.

Maybe I have set my sights too high, but I have been looking for someone who can handle an intelligent conversation, like Thai, Indian and seafood and follows the football and cricket. Playing cards and reading would be advantageous, and I would like to think they had some kind of hobby or interest. But, the men I meet either work six or seven days a week with no time to develop a relationship or no conversation apart from work, or else they have no hobbies/interests. And they expect women to find them fascinating! Plus most men don't want to commit themselves to a social outing more than a day or two ahead. What are they waiting for - a better offer? Haven't they heard of booking ahead, and planning ahead to have something to look forward to?

And have you read the ads in the papers - no matter what the age they all want slim, stunning, intelligent, liberated... women. Have any of these men looked in the mirror lately, or listened to themselves talking? And what is wrong with being cuddly? I may not be slim but I'm one heck of a cook. And I would be quite happy with a John Goodman look-alike.

Let me tell you I have found my girlfriends (all of whom are still around after ten or twenty years, as opposed to the males in my life who all seem to disappear quickly) much more reliable. They don't drop out at the last moment, or forget about the date, and they will book in ahead with you. They also have more tact and open honesty than males. The last male I went out with left a message on my answering machine of "Forgot to ring you, forgot you were away, forgotten where you've gone, will ring you". Which he didn't. He is probably still wondering why I didn't ring him back. I guess I have to admit failure to have made an impression there but then we had been going out only eleven months (yes, months). Heaven help him if he ever gets serious about anyone!

Where is the man who's dream in life is a room wholly dedicated to being a library, who uses a diary for his personal life, and who thinks there is more to life than work? Who is looking to his retirement not with foreboding but as a time to do the multitude of hobbies, interests and travelling he wants to do with the partner of his choice. Where is the man who wants a companion of his own age and experience rather than a dolly bird twenty years younger (who is not after his body, let me tell you).

He doesn't exist.

Am I a feminist, or have I met all the wrong men? I can't help feeling that women are much more the superior sex. We live longer and manage better single than married (married men live longer!). We are more realistic, practical and let me tell you from daily experience, better drivers.

And if you don't agree with me, why do authors keep writing stories about future societies with women in charge? Because it is the logical conclusion for the superior sex, of course. Rather than being a frightening prospect, it is the golden vista that one can hope and dream for. Do you think women are going to spend multi-millions on armaments rather than food or clothes?

As a final argument to the "logic" of men, in several Asian countries it is the policy to restrict family sizes. Because they value men, these societies have "disposed" of the baby girls and only keep the sons. So now they have populations of adult males in their twenties, thirties and forties with many less females about. They can find wives because there are not enough to go around. What a brilliant piece of logic!!! Particularly when they want sons to carry on the name, etc. Who did they think were going to have them?

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