



**“WOMEN WERE
NEVER MEANT
FOR THIS
ASSEMBLY”**

King Creon, The Burial at Thebes

The archetypal male geek is ill-at-ease around women, particularly desirable women. I wear glasses, enjoy Alain De Botton and like Rick Moranis in Ghostbusters, I take vitamins. I am a geek. I however, am not discomfited around women; I am terrified of men.

When I say men, I mean men. Manly men. Men's men. The men of the manliest men-like leanings. Rugged, troglodyte, loincloth and Brut-perfumed men. Men with fingernails blackened through endless shifts down endless mineshafts; men whose sagging, leather texture faces roar Black & Decker workbench madness; men who chew tobacco and spit drill bits.

Despite being raised chiefly by a father only, somewhere along the way I missed that memo about the 'initiation into manly manhood' meeting. I think I was trying out anklets or playing with dolls, or something. This is no reflection on my father by the way, Heavens no. My father grew up in bombed-to-fuck Hull during the forties and fifties, working twelve hour shifts on the local farm from the tender age of eleven. By comparison, at the exact same stage in my life I was weaning myself off Catherine Cookson books, soon to embark upon a dalliance with hypercolour T-shirts. Yes, it's easy to recall an affinity with femininity, even as far back as my eleventh year. It was around this time that I visited my local 'Ritz' rental store and picked up a VHS copy of Edward Scissorhands. The desexed titular character's milquetoast disposition spoke to my own amplified sensitivity; his ill-fated exposure to unsympathetic, Xerox suburbanites resonated with my own misfit. Soon after this I discovered Maya Angelou whilst other boys read bravado-filled

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comic books. Even during my obligatory 'action-hero' phase of the 80s I was drawn to the bipolar ballet dancer, Jean-Claude Van Damme. The trend continued when in my teens Esther Greenwood showed me how stirring literature could truly be. Maybe you'd expect a child raised by a man to grow up a little bit manlier. Going off that theory, one can only imagine the fate of that lass raised by Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg and Ted Danson.

I guess it just shows that you can't blame your parents for everything.

It seems men and women speak the same language, that being sex. It just appears that there is a slight disparity with dialects, as if Jimmy Nail were crawling onto a pissed Scrooge McDuck who is acting as conduit for William Hague. My own wavelength doesn't seem attuned to the distorted cant of the Alpha male vernacular, the arc of which bends to such a base level that I can't find a reception. Holding discourse with most male adults proves as fruitful as if I were to boil a kettle and idly banter with a Pot Noodle. As they speak a melange of ticks play across the faces of the real men; I follow its cadence and try my best to accent the ebb and flow at appropriate moments using suitably gruff onomatopoeia:

"Weyawuzgannindoontheshep smanhewwiththamissus..."

"WUFF!"

"Ayerightlikethatandweyapro pawentacresstharoadman...."

"HAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRTY!"

"Likeiwouldn'tbelieve....."

"WOAHBABE!"

In my experience and in general, when I sit down to talk to a woman I am comfortable (unless she's a psycho-bitch or smells like Marmite). Women, for all the garrisons they line around their femininity, reveal their keen intuition when they speak and don't feel the need to grunt inaudibly with the affectation of the real men. I'd just like to point you toward my disclaimer again before we go any further; this is a

generalisation of sorts and based on my overall experiences. I'm sure you'd find a woman who'd liberally pepper her speech with inaudible grunts, especially if said woman is a resident of Benwell, Newcastle. Besides, I've found that women who mirror their man's machismo do it for self-preservation so that he might think twice before he does what every man eventually does to women and shits on his own doorstep. Women don't hide behind the stereotype as the real men do. The Alphas have a ready-made persona to adopt; talk about the man-things in front of the boys, like tits and Paul Weller, then drink yourself into oblivion. It's convenient enough to require zero thought, just fall into character. Women will only tolerate this imbecilic behaviour because it's even more transparent than your average transparent-as-fuck male. Counter their dumb insensibility by mirroring it. Women drop the façade



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in conversation though and have no need to play 'who's got the biggest dick' (for more than one reason). I find a lot of women very discerning when I talk to them. They've got the goods on it all. Many dumbfound me with their alleged naiveté, but it's usually the case that they've simply thrown me off the scent or bewildered me deliberately. I like that, they're very smart.

Alpha males surround themselves with a utility belt's worth of gadgetry, as if the ubiquitous presence of one giant (or modest, as the case may be) tool wasn't enough. It's a genetic pre-disposition. It's the Neolith in us that we can't expunge. Give the man all manner of protruding, vibrating, pulsating, undulating apparatus and let us jam it into something. That is truly as sophisticated as we get. Next time daddy comes home bubbleheaded gaga over a pen-knife that inflates tyres and unlocks bank vaults, bear that in mind. No male has quite the proclivity for contraptions than the tradesman and it is this peculiar subset of man that unsettles me most. The HI-vis, the home-made tattoos, the Rigger boots. Good Christ, that vermilion skin that tells you he's spent the day outside, sweating and doing real work. Whenever I call upon say a gas engineer, I greet them with a sheepish smile, throw myself at their feet and submit unto them. I may as well be wearing a dress, screaming to be rescued. I may as well be putting up the fucking Bat-signal. My hero!

"Areet, problem with the boiler mate"

Said so that I'm not sure whether or not it's a question or a really intense statement.

"Er, yeah. Major fucking problem on the boiler, er, mate."

Swearing and the use of the word 'mate' really compensate for my pathetically girly demeanour and help ingratiate me with their World. Love me, Batman.

"Aye right, well let's have a look."

Now the Alpha male is in my house. Shit, best shift that Werner Herzog box set lest he think me a posh student

poofa. Oh God, the kitchen is far too tidy, I hope he doesn't mind.

"So er, mate. You want a brew?"

He doesn't reply. He's fixing things. I've read about this, it's what men do. I've avoided DIY all my life. I do often think about putting up a few shelves but then I think there are only so many hours in the day and I could be reading Proust.

"Right mate, it's your flow switch." He says.

"Yeah, I like, right properly suspected such...I mean, **that**."

"See, it's the pressure on your hot water....." this is where I lose reception. Just take my money Batman. All of it. Just please fix my heat-box thingy. Whatever it is. Defeat engulfs me; those arrogant bastards, exalted by their own jargon. Can you quote from Bukowski you fucking twat? Do you know who Matisse is, huh? Coming into my house and talking about parts and that. I'd throw books at these men if these men weren't so fucking big and heroic.

Of course, it's all the rage now to be a fey speccy, which I abhor. It reminds me of a scene from American Splendor in which Paul Giamatti, as Harvey Pekar is talking to the self-professed geek Toby Radloff. Toby is excited that his demographic is being represented in the 1984 film *Revenge of the Nerds*. Pekar, incredulous, wails "Look Toby, the guys in that movie are not 28 year-old file clerks who live with their grandmothers in an ethnic ghetto... They didn't get their computers like you did, by trading in a bunch of box tops and \$49.50 at the supermarket... Sure, go to the movies and daydream, but *Revenge of the Nerds* ain't reality. It's just Hollywood bullshit." I bet these fair-weather geeks are not like us real freaks. I bet under their faux-lenses beat the heart of the Alpha-male because now, the eternally dim-witted man is hip to the fact that a lot of modern women like sensitive and effeminate men. It's just another permutation of the Neolith, looking for another means, another play, and another angle to jam something up



something.

Ironically, as I was writing part of this article in a waiting room, I was approached by a seemingly genteel, elderly fellow. He was replete in padded gilet and corduroys. He even cradled a pipe in his hands, crowned with liver spots and veins. Aw, a good old country fellow! What wonderful discourse we'll have!

"You studying for college?" He enquires.

"Yeah, Uni work." I lie, not wanting to reveal to a real-life man that I'm writing about being a girly man for a magazine.

"What you studying?" He continues

"History of the Arts." I offer, awaiting the imminent tête à tête concerning all things gloriously geeky and refined.

"What a waste of fucking time!"