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Your Men—Your Manners

An Open Letter to Women from

NOEL COWARD

IT isn't your fault, Eve darling!—you don't quite understand what modern man expects of modern woman. He usually succeeds in making himself as clear as mud when talking to you, especially when throwing out gentle hints to you.

You learned in the Great War that we needed your help in many ways, and you have gone on trying to beat us at our own games ever since. Some of you have cropped your hair and are wearing monocles. Some of you are only concerned with your sports or your intellectual progress, while a certain section of femininity remains purely feminine.

Unfortunately, the roguish, coy or ingénue pose is adopted by the plain and dowdy woman who stands about as much chance of social success as a celluloid doll in Hell; and the hail-fellow-well-met-no-nonsense about-me attitude is assumed by the pretty woman who could be perfectly adorable if she wanted to. It is all a trifle disconcerting.

The trouble is that you've got us wrong at heart; you don't know that both the highbrow and the sporting pal type of woman leave a man's deeper needs untouched. What he wants a woman to be is his complement, not his echo.

Personally, I rather like clever women, so long as they take pains to conceal, rather than to reveal, their brains in the presence of men. It is always a fatal mistake for a woman to argue with a man. If she is wrong, it irritates him; if she is right, it infuriates him! It is equally foolish to crow about sex equality and your love of independence if you still expect us to rush to open doors for you, to stand when you stand, to light your cigarettes, carry your parcels, and relinquish our seats to you in buses and trains.

Only the other day I witnessed the horrible sight of a flat-footed superwoman flopping into a seat which a frail young man had given up to her. She didn't even thank him; she took his seat in much the same spirit as she would have taken his watch if he had offered it to her. She considered it her due as a woman when in reality she was but a feeble caricature of a man.

YOU see what I mean, Eve dear.

don't you? If you really mean to usurp all our time-honoured prerogatives, by all means go the whole hog about it and don't complain when we try to treat you as equals. If you will persist in jostling us in the fields of sport and of commerce, you must not object to getting a hearty slap on the back and being called "old chap!" A woman who can beat a man at golf till he looks like a whipped puppy must not expect him to go down on his hands and knees every time she loses a ball in a muddy stream, and she must not expect him to help her over bunkers. Women of that type rob a man of all his chivalrous impulses

—they stifle romance at its very birth.

When you come to throw the whole of human endeavour into the melting pot you will find that love of power is all it boils down to. Men have to fight for power, but women can win it by subtler methods. You should learn to preserve your womanly charm, at all costs, since it is the most vital weapon in the whole battle of life.

I would like to add a few words of protest concerning the manners of women where the men they love are concerned.

I HAVE watched these little side-shows of Life's Pageant very carefully, and it seems to me that



Mr. Noel Coward

once a woman has got a man badly in love with her, she delights in humiliating him in the presence of other people, although (and I have this on good authority?) she is perfectly sweet to him when they are alone. There can only be one reason for this—obviously, she wants to say to the World: "Not only has this rare and precious creature chosen me out of all the billion-trillion women he has met, but I can treat him like a worm or a newly born baby and—*viola!*—he still adores me!" But, does he?

If only you knew how this cheap bravado lowers you and the whole of your sex in his eyes! A man knows no horror more ghastly than to be made a fool of, and he never forgives it.

If I were a woman, my slogan would be: *Save his vanity!* It is the only way women can lure big men to their little feet and keep them there. We want gentle wisdom, not overwhelming brilliance—understanding, tact, and a sense of humour.

When you come to consider how much a man can mean to you—your home and car, your bath salts and caviare, you may as well learn to "treat him right!"