

OPEN LETTER

REALITY CHECK /// AFTER 40 YEARS OF FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY, WOMEN WANT TO GO BACK TO THE ORIGINAL DEAL? SORRY LADIES – WE'RE NOT HALF THE MEN OUR GRANDDADS WERE.

Dear post-feminist women,

It's been brought to our attention that you want we 21st century gents to caveman up. That you're, like, so over busting a navel-pierced gut in the workforce. That you want to spend your days catching up with the girls for a hit of tennis and chardy-sodden lunch while your poor sap of a corporate-drone husband supports you in the Menzies-era style to which you'd like to become accustomed. That it's a woman's prerogative to change her mind and the fairer sex have collectively decided they want to party like it's 1959.

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Appallingly, this retrograde campaign to bring back old-school sex roles has received support from some high-profile gender Judases who would apparently be happy to see their brothers reduced to uncomplaining workhorses, rather have them be appreciated for the sophistication of their manscaping, the fashion-forwardness of their outfits and their dab hand with soft furnishings. For instance, James May, one of *Top Gear's* resident boofheads, recently labelled modern men "useless morons", going on to opine, "The decline of practical skills... is very worrying. They can't put up a shelf, wire a plug, countersink a screw."

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Look, speaking for all good-for-nothing fops who've never counterthingamajigged a watchamacallit in our lives, we get that you women would rather be bent over the settee and masterfully ravished by *Mad Men's* Don Draper than by *Kath & Kim's* Kel Knight.

Trust us, we understand how the whole high-powered career caper begins to lose its appeal after a decade or two of putting in

80-hour weeks for The Man (who these days is more likely to be The Woman, but we'll get to that shortly).

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And, sure, some of the sizzle has gone out of male-female relationships now chicks are wearing the bossy pants and dudes are wearing designer-label sarongs. But like the old bra-burning anthem goes, yes, you've paid a price, but look how much you've gained. You are strong. You are invincible. You are woman. Hear you roar!

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THE WEAKER SEX

Like male model Andrej Pejic (middle), we men would now like to be judged solely on our looks.

In contrast, we're nowhere near being the real men our take-a-bullet-in-the-guts-and-laugh-it-off forefathers were. We might rock one of those hipster lumberjack beards, but that's as far as we're now willing to take it in the macho-man stakes. Let's face it — once a guy has waxed his back, sack and crack, he never goes back.

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Now, now — don't pout. It's not like you didn't bring this on yourself, ladies. When you were all being girly swots back in high school so you'd get the marks to study something impressive at uni, did you ever consider where your male classmates, who were busy playing with Transformers dolls

and stabbing each other with compasses in the back row, were going to end up? Having spitefully outperformed us educationally for the last three decades, it's a bit late now to complain there are no rich doctors or lawyers around to marry.

Perhaps if you'd spent a little less time hitting the books and making something of yourselves, all the guys messaging you on RSVP wouldn't be ditch diggers still living with their parents at the age of 35.

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And don't even get us started about the way you've messed with our heads about what it is you supposedly want from a man. Being the simple creatures we are, we took you at your word when you promised us we'd get loads of sex if we stopped lighting our farts and became emotionally intelligent enough to weep unselfconsciously during Oprah's farewell special.

If we'd known that, all that time, you were secretly fantasising about being given a vigorous seeing-to by a muscle-bound, monosyllabic fireman/cold-blooded 1000-year-old vampire/proud and prejudiced 19th-century English gentleman, well, we might not have put so much effort into fashioning our testicles into earrings.

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But now there's no going back to the good old/bad old days, girlfriends. After several millennia of gathering in smoke-filled back rooms to keep the patriarchy chugging along, we men are exhausted. It's your turn at the steering wheel — we're retiring to the back seat to experiment with nail polish and do some online clothes shopping. After all, this is a woman's world now.

Just ask Kevin Rudd.

YOU SISTERS KEEP ON DOING IT FOR YOURSELVES.