

## "My Fair Lady"

When I was young, and had just discovered the opposite sex, I wondered why all women didn't look like the women on the silver screen. Now that I'm older, I can't figure out why they don't stop trying to look that way.

I'm not dumping on Audrey Hepburn or anything. I can still close my eyes and conjure up visions of Audrey silently descending the stairs of Henry Higgins' mansion in that exquisite Cecil Beaton gown.

When she poised at the foot of the stairs, gathered her red velvet cape about her shoulders and waited for an arm to lead her to the ball, I wanted more than anything to be able to provide mine.

Or who can forget the screen-swallowing gowns Deborah Kerr led around in "The King and I" or the period costumes Faye Dunaway wore in "Bonnie and Clyde" or the gold creation Elizabeth Taylor used to stop the breath of multitudes when she descended her Sphinx in "Cleopatra."

Those gowns and those illusions were, and will always remain, breathtaking. They should also stay where they belong: on the big screen.

As most women know, you just can't stuff a gown like Scarlett O'Hara's into the back seat of a car on a double date. Elizabeth Taylor might have looked smashing in her 500 or so outfits in "Ash Wednesday," but what male would wait all that time for her to get ready.

What all this leads to, I guess, is the observation that what's good for the screen isn't necessarily good for everyday life.

That goes for the fashion magazine layouts, too.

Try some of those outfits in cross-town traffic or up an escalator or in even the slightest breeze and see what happens.

If I have anything to advise a woman about her clothes or her looks, it's keep it simple, make it easy. Evenings are too short to spend hours preening in front of a mirror before putting on a gorgeous dress that mustn't wrinkle.

As a man, I naturally detest being kept waiting. But, worse than that, is accompanying an uncrush-proof date who has to worry about where she sits or on what part of her carefully made-up face I may plant a kiss (should I be so moved).

Nothing is more appealing than a woman who plays it loose and

natural. When my date walks toward me I want to notice her, not her dress.

Getting along with people is difficult enough without letting clothes get in the way. Shy people can be captivating and a challenge to get to know. People who are self-conscious because they are wearing the latest fashion (which their subconscious tells them is all wrong for them) are a drag.

I think most women know this already. The important thing is find your style and run with it. Once you have found what suits you and your personality best, you can free your mind for livelier concerns.

I wouldn't know what to do if someone dressed like Mia Farrow in "The Great Gatsby" greeted me at the door. Only women content to remain on pedestals dress like that.

I realize this sounds like Robert Preston in "The Music Man," chirping "The Quiet but Simple Girl for Me." That's not what I want. I want to know a woman who looks good but in a way that pleases not me or the mirror, but herself.

I want a woman to be whatever she is—brassy, loving, talkative, argumentative, informative, competitive, whatever. I just don't want clothes standing in the way of my understanding of her.

For too many years I think women dressed to please men. I think they were too unselfish. Pleasing yourself is the first commandment of looking good. If you feel satisfied and comfortable then the part of the world worth meeting will meet and appreciate you—but on your own terms.

Keep up with styles. Choose what you can comfortably make your own. I don't understand those who look different every time a boatful of European designers hits the mainland with their new creations.

Strive for some continuity when you choose new things. Use new things to build on what you've already got going for you.

Leave the showy trappings to the actresses who have artificial sound stages to move around in and to those undernourished models who look great on slick magazine paper. Those effects sell tickets and books. In everyday life, women shouldn't have to sell anything, much less themselves.



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