

My History With Bras

by Jennifer Donnell

1.

I've decided to stop wearing a bra. Sure, it has only been an hour but the feeling of liberation astounds me. Instead of saying hello, I answer the telephone with,

"I've decided to stop wearing a bra."

It's my mother and she gasps at the thought.

I'm not deterred by her vocalized shock and look winningly at the hot pink bra I've discarded in my trash bin.

"Jenny! You don't want to do that! Haven't you seen the women who don't wear bras in..." and she lists an impoverished country where she has seen bra-less women on the pages of National Geographic magazine.

She knows this for sure, as she ordered us a subscription two months ago.

"Mom, I read an entire article... er, blog, and it says that isn't true. Your muscles get stronger and Millennials aren't wearing bras. It's a thing."

I curl thick strands of my shoulder length blonde hair around my index finger, wondering if I'll have more time to style it now I've stopped wearing a bra. My mother interrupts my victorious rumination.

"Maybe so, but you have seen those photos in the National Geographic, right? Do you really want to risk it?" she demands and I sigh in defeat, then answer,

"No."

2.

Sometimes I wonder what his face looked like, when he did it. Would he sport the same expression he does now, as he lies over me- on, around, inside me. Neutral, but lustful. Intense, but in rapture. Did he hold her bra in one hand and his imagination in the other.

I tell him that I had a dream about the two of them, where they played a sex game called "Pop Up".

"What's that?" he asks, as confused as I was when I dreamt it.

"She'd lie with her head in your lap. When you'd clap your hands she'd sit up real quickly. If she didn't, you'd thrust your pelvis into her face."

"What weird dreams you have." he replies, confused. His brow crinkles until it looks prematurely old. He smiles, but I can tell he's perturbed by my psyche.

All I want him to say is, "that never happened."

I tell him that.

"That never happened." he affirms, then adds, "...and Humpty Dumpty never sat on a wall and the sky didn't fall on Chicken Little, either. Need anything else cleared up?"

I shake my head and shrug. He smiles, pats my hip in reassurance, and tells me he loves me. I reach for his hand and forgive him for the reason I had that dream.

3.

The first bra I ever tried on was thrown in a plastic bag and left outside my bedroom door. My mother brought a few home from a department store and I was humiliated. I knew that my body had betrayed me through my t-shirt, if it had become so obvious that even my mother knew.

She left the bag on my bed but I threw it into the hallway in protest.

"Try them on when you're ready and decide which one you want to keep." my mother said calmly, through a crack of the door, knowing she was just as bashful at my age.

Later, when no one was home, I tried them on in the bathroom mirror. Both white and of simple design, but it was the first time I'd ever felt that grown up and glamorous. That realization felt as secret as the blossoming of my body.

4.

"I might as well tell you." he says, decisively, over quick phone call from the office. He's stepped outside to call me and the heat of July makes him feel rushed. He wipes a trail of sweat from the neckline of his baby blue shirt.

"Tell me what?" I demand, immediately suspicious. I swallow an extra gulp of unsweetened iced tea, glad I opted for decaffeinated.

"I've been thinking about what you wrote in that story and it makes me feel mad at you again."

"Which story?" I ask and simultaneously thank god for my being blonde and an atheist.

"THE story." he answers loudly, so I can't play dumb.

I apologize, genuinely sorry I hurt him,

"Yeah, I'm not sure what I was thinking." It's not my first apology and probably won't be my last.

He doesn't say much after that and makes an excuse to get off the phone.

I knew he'd come for me this week. He had a crummy one and I figured I was next on his list of resentments. I want to write a story about that, just to get it out of my system, but then I'll just have more apologizing to do.

I try on my favorite black bra and send him a selfie where I pose with my lips puckered and red.

"Sexy!" he writes back, with a bunch of banana emojis, a kiss, and two thumbs up.

Lust is a universal language.

5.

I dream he's a rabbit, as am I, and we sleep in a bunny hole safe and sound.

We don't care about bras. Her's, mine, anyone's.

6.

I wake up at midnight, hot from too many blankets and pull my bra off through the sleeves of my shirt. I throw it across the room. It lands in a clunk on the wall, heavy from all those old expectations.

7.

I decide to only wear bras in the daytime.

8.

I wear a black bra under a white shirt to church. I get some looks from passersby, but don't care, as I'm already an atheist.

