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Women Are Ugly

By Eliot Fintushel

21 June 2004

"We suffer insofar as we are incomplete."

--Spinoza

Women are so ugly. It scares you. You want to love them, and then you see their teeth. You see how their skin bunches and sags. You want to run away. They secrete repulsive fluids. They conceal their ugliness with tinctures and creams. They have instruments to pluck and mold their ugly parts. Sometimes they sneak off by themselves. Powder rooms. If for some in their youth the ugliness is hidden, it is a case of leaves strewn over compost: soon the wind will scatter them, and the stink will rise.

I just narrowly escaped a close relationship with a woman. That thing happened where, after a time of being bumfuzzled by lust, I began to see her. Only thing. This one didn't take it so well. Stabbed me with a scissors. "We'll see who's ugly."

I didn't want to hurt her, so I ran. The cut wasn't bad, though it could have been. Yes, I can bleed. I can die. Took a little divot from the hollow of my shoulder. I shudder to think. But I'm okay. Rubbing alcohol and a couple of Band-Aids.

How did I get involved. They are beautiful at first. I saw her hanging up clothes on a line in the yard behind the empty house next door. (Empty, I'd thought it was.) Pulley, clothesline, basket of wet things. Old-fashioned, yes? In the sun. Under a blue sky. The glint of faraway grass, knolls like curves on a woman's flank, smell of birds' wings and sunlight: a day like that, your senses got mixed up. In all that, we're the same as you. They don't tell you that.

One breath and you knew the season. It swelled her sheets, her blouses. Arms swathed for a moment in blowing fabric. Mouthful of clothespins. She stood on tiptoes, the wind took her skirt, and I saw the sweet arcs of her calves.

[Before Paphos](#)

by Loretta Casteen

8 January 2007

It starts again. The baby begins to cough and choke.

[Locked Doors](#)

by Stephanie Burgis

1 January 2007

You can never let anyone suspect, his mother told him. That was the first rule she taught him, and the last, before she left him here alone with It.

[Heroic Measures](#)

by Matthew Johnson

18 December 2006

Pale as he was, it was hard to believe he would never rise from this bed. Even in the darkest times, she had never really feared for him; he had always been strong, so strong.

[Love Among the Talus](#)

by Elizabeth Bear

11 December 2006

Nilufer raised her eyes to his. It was not what women did to men, but she was a princess, and he was only a bandit. "I want to be a Witch," she said. "A Witch and not a Queen. I wish to be not loved, but wise. Tell your bandit lord, if he can give me that, I might accept his gift."

[Archived Fiction Dating back to 9/1/00](#)

