

# Why Men Hate

*He thinks he wants you "just the way you are."  
What he doesn't know  
is that it takes 20 minutes to get that way.*

**a** year or so ago, I got a call from the producers of *NBC Nightly News*. They were doing a program about the current graduates from my alma mater, and what they had discovered was a bunch of fiery 22-year-olds who thought they could do and be anything they wanted to do and be, right now, this minute, no waiting. NBC decided to interview a somewhat (ahem) older and wiser group of graduates about life as we know it on earth.

I flew up to Boston for my network debut looking about as good as I am capable of looking. But it was 92 in the shade that June day, and I sat in my unair-conditioned former dorm, feeling all the carefully applied makeup slide off my face into a puddle at my feet. I kept insisting that there should be a disclaimer on the screen: "These women are much better-looking than you think." But one good thing emerged from the wreckage: After the makeup-hating man I was dating had watched a tape of the program, he turned to me and solemnly vowed, "I will never again tell you I hate makeup."

I have seldom met a man who didn't think he preferred a woman with a clean-scrubbed face. Where they get this idea is puzzling because, first of all, they've probably never seen one (I know women who'd been married for five years before they let their husbands see them without waterproof mascara), and second, there is no face over the age of 15 that isn't enhanced by a little lip gloss. No face. No exceptions.

I once watched a young woman in a photographer's loft eat a ham-

burger and peruse a newspaper through horn-rimmed glasses. She was a rather ordinary-looking young woman, with long brown hair and short fingernails and two of everything that girls are supposed to have two of. Except for her height, there was nothing about her that would draw a crowd. A professional makeup artist arrived at the studio to put some paint and gloss on the young woman's face—skillfully but subtly, no big deal, just a smoothed-out complexion and some oomph to the eyes. A hairdresser sprayed her hair with a little water and fluffed with his fingers. And suddenly—I don't know when this transformation took place; I was watching every minute—there was the world's most coveted model, Paulina. Something happened between the hamburger and the hairdresser: It's called makeup. And even the world's most beautiful (or, arguably, most celebrated) model is improved by some artful application.

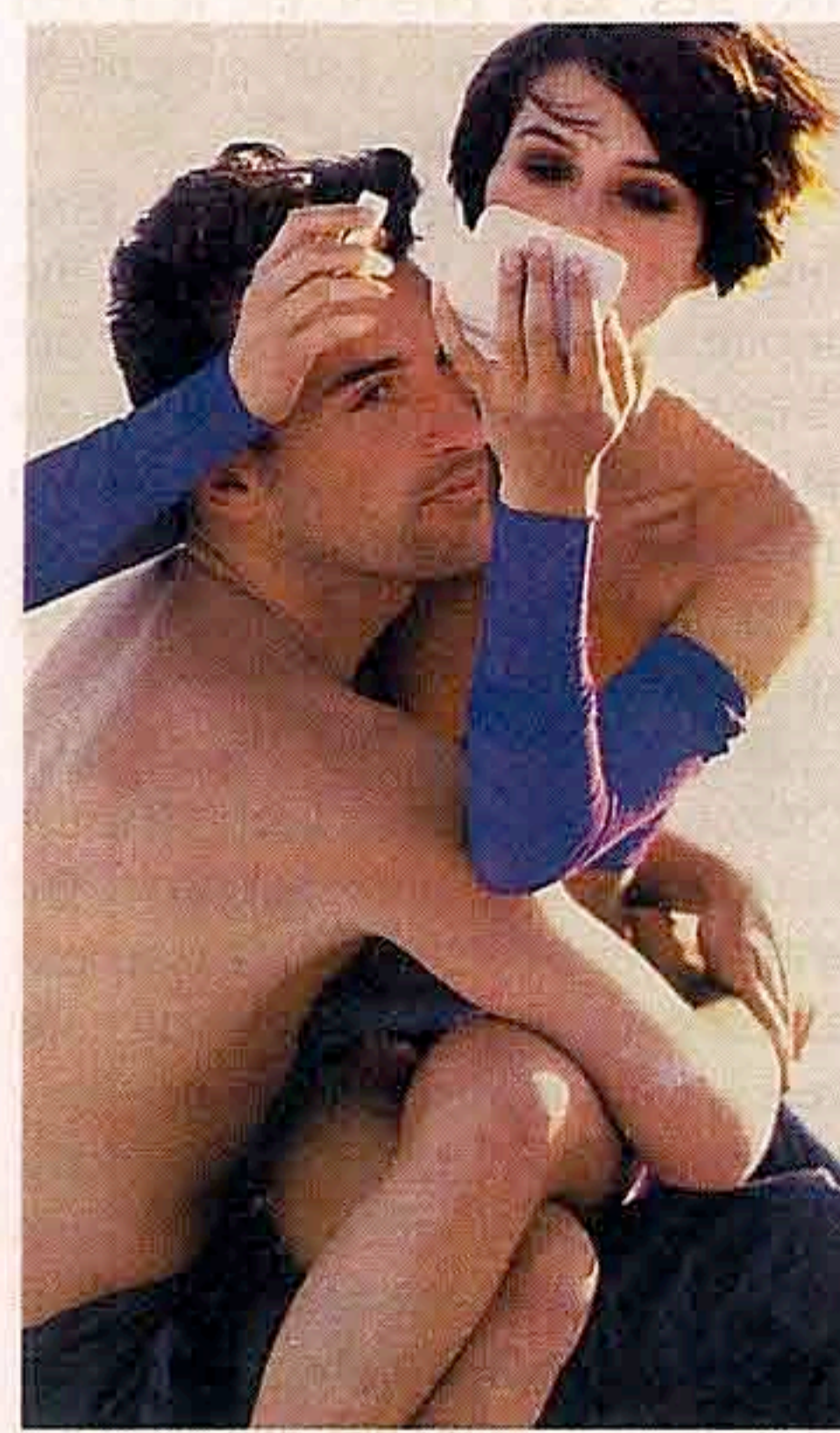
But men persist in this notion that they hate it. "Men are generally reacting against a concept, not a reality, and the concept is extreme, dramatic, almost theatrical," says Thomas Cash, a psychology professor at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, who has extensively studied the subject of women and physical attractiveness. "Men aren't sophisticated about makeup because they don't wear makeup." They know they don't want to be kissed by Joan Collins lips, and they know that a woman's eyelids aren't meant to be turquoise blue, and I couldn't agree more. Next to a run in a black stocking, there is nothing so off-putting or objectionable as inappropriate makeup. But men

don't understand that most of us spend 20 minutes putting on makeup so that it looks like we have no makeup on. If we actually went out with no makeup, we might frighten small children.

Cash and his colleagues did a study in which women ranging from age 18 to 27 were asked to participate in what they thought was a consumer products survey. When each woman arrived at the research lab, she was taken to a room with a washbasin, cleansing cream, mirror, and towel, and asked to remove all her makeup. Then her picture was taken. While the photograph was developing, each woman was asked to complete a brief questionnaire about her satisfaction with her face, body, and overall physical appearance. Then she was asked to reapply her makeup, in the manner and amount most characteristic of her. She was photographed again and asked to rate her picture as she thought others would judge her.

An interesting thing happened: The women had much more positive self-images when they were wearing makeup than when they were fresh-faced, standing around with their pores hanging out. And a group of their male peers who were asked to judge the two sets of photographs rated them more favorably when the women were wearing their typical makeup. This may be useful to remember the next time you hear a man protesting that natural is better.

Perhaps the man who says such things has simply bought into the commercialized prejudice that women should pop up effortlessly gorgeous and in place. Perhaps he's still caught up in ancient clichés, with a naive concept of woman as goddess springing from



**There is no face that isn't enhanced by a little lip gloss.**

the sea. Perhaps he likes the statement that such a woman makes about him: "Not only do I have a beauty, but a natural beauty." Perhaps it has something to do with the idea of women as virgins, pure and untouched. (This may be the same man who wants a lover to say, simultaneously, "I've never done this before" and "You're the best I've ever had.")

Much of this folk wisdom is supported by research, says Linda A. Jackson, who teaches psychology at Michigan State University and is writing a book on physical appearance. "There is some research to indicate that childlike facial characteristics are perceived as attractive on women," she says, "but features associated with babyishness are thought to be unattractive for men." Adolescent girls who experiment with lipstick may be greeted with a swipe of cold cream from a father yelling, "Get that stuff off!" That's because makeup highlights facial features that are alluring, says Jackson, and when sexuality comes into the picture, Daddy can get crazy.

Men want magic: They want us to look fabulous without the irritation of waiting for us to get dressed.

# Makeup

By Aimee Lee Ball

## (Or Say They Do)

They don't understand that makeup is psychological, not just aesthetic. "Waking up in the morning for the first time with a new man is a great leap of faith," says one woman. "I feel naked. And I don't mean my body—I mean my face. *That's* the difficult nudity." Says another: "You know that TV commercial where the woman doesn't want to be kissed in the morning until she's used her mouthwash? What about her eyeliner?" Bad breath is human and understandable, but *looking* bad is unacceptable.

I once interviewed Dustin Hoffman during the filming of *Tootsie*. He was wearing high heels, a corset, and false eyelashes like caterpillars, all of which looked uncomfortable in the extreme, so he was probably not feeling too cordial about the tools of female artifice. Shortly after saying hello, he launched into a discourse about makeup—how he *hated* makeup on women, how he couldn't believe we would willingly invest so much time and money on it. I stood there nodding politely and thinking: *You fool*. If you are a man and look like Dustin Hoffman, you can go quite far indeed, as witness...well, Dustin Hoffman. A woman who looks like Dustin Hoffman and goes out into the world without a little camouflage is liable to be arrested.

There is a great unfairness about all this: Men have just as many blemishes and dark-circled eyes as we do, but they seem to get by and get lucky without the benefit of undereye concealer. Women don't even *want* them covered up. We're people, not peacocks. It's the female of the species who gets to flaunt. Men are permitted surgical but not much cosmetic improvement. They've usurped pierced ears and hair coloring—if we let them have undereye concealer, there will be no living with

them. Thank goodness they haven't quite caught on that makeup is *entertainment*.

"Men don't want to be fooled," says Judith Waters, a professor of psychology at Fairleigh Dickinson University who has studied the effects of appearance on women in the work force. "They think they want to see the real you, the natural package. You're supposed to be the way you fall out of bed in the morning—like that Billy Joel song, 'Just the Way You Are.' We also have to consider the possibility that, in this distaste for makeup, they're concerned about their women being attractive to other men. Some tribes in Africa *scar* their women so they'll be unattractive to others.

"Professional women who relocate to some other countries find that makeup and hair coloring are associated with prostitutes, and a sense of honesty in business is attributed to not looking made-up. For men who say they hate makeup, there must be an association, learned from personal experience or gleaned from the media, between makeup and subterfuge. That doesn't mean the women in their lives have to go barefaced. It just takes a lot longer to look natural than to look artificial."

One man I know objects to what he calls the hoax of makeup, insisting that we should go forth as God or Mother Nature or whoever you like to believe is responsible for these things intended. Carrying his theory to an extreme, we'd all be nudists, since there's nothing "natural" about clothing. "At least clothes have a function of warmth," he argues. "There's no purpose for cosmetics other than a cover-up." There's no purpose to shaved legs either. And I happen to know that this man's girlfriend, unshaven, would look like a wolf-girl.

Another man goes so far as to claim that his opposition to makeup is politically correct. "To conceal yourself is destructive and wrongheaded," he asserts. "You're buying into style, not substance. You feel insecure, so you stick in some shoulder pads or put on persimmon lips. You're enforcing the messages of Madison Avenue. Makeup equals commerce. We've gotten used to the way it looks. But if you all stopped, we would get used to that too. We would like you without it."

He may be sincere. This man used to date a woman who had what he describes as puffy eyes that looked as if they'd been rubbed with brine, and he loved them. This man also comes away from Susan Sarandon movies saying, "Great jowls," so he may be a more evolved human being than most. Most, I think, are like the man a friend of mine met on a Caribbean beach. They chatted for a while, she wearing nothing on her face but number 15 sun block. Later that day, she was sipping a daiquiri under the palm trees, having showered, changed, and put on some makeup in the interim. The same man saw her and asked the bartender to introduce them.

Not long ago I watched the country singer k. d. lang on *Face to Face With Connie Chung*, the two women forming the apotheosis of my theory about makeup, its yin and its yang. Connie was wearing four inches of beige pancake and enough eyeliner to do calligraphy—exactly the sort of mask that men are talking about when they say they hate makeup. Lang was wearing nothing and looked like a boy—exactly what the rest of us would look like if we actually went without the makeup these men supposedly disdain. There's a compromise in there somewhere, and an object lesson. ●

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