



Moose in a Moose

Sue Fagalde Lick

They were discussing thongs when I walked in. Not the rubber flip-flops we used to wear to the swimming pool, but the sexy underwear my sister-in-law calls “dental floss.”

“What would you recommend for my first thong?” asked a young woman.

“Oh, I like this one,” the proprietor of the lingerie shop said, holding up a frilly pink bit of lace.

“Is it really comfortable?”

“You’d be amazed. I just love mine.”

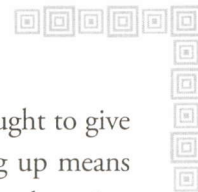
“Will it cover my belly button?”

I stood in the middle of the closet-sized store, gawking at the tiny bras and panties, and felt like a moose—an aging, overweight moose.

I wanted to cut and run, but this was the only place in town to buy a smoothie, a miracle garment that would allegedly make me



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look sleek and sexy under the new formal I had just bought to give a speech at a banquet. Living in a town where dressing up means putting on clean blue jeans without holes, I confess to not knowing much about formal wear. It took two hours to find a dress that didn’t show too much of me and didn’t make me look like the mother of the bride. Once I got it zipped up, there was my belly poking out, saying, “Look at me; I’m made out of mayonnaise.” That’s when the dress shop lady told me to go buy a smoothie.

The only smoothies I knew about were the milk and fruit concoctions they sell at health food stores, but I headed over to Thongville feeling hopeful.

“How can I help you?” asked the store owner, who was young enough to be my daughter.

“I need something called a smoothie to go under a formal.”

“What are you trying to smooth?”

I patted my belly. “What else?”

She opened a drawer and pulled out a faded pink circle of elastic. It looked like something my grandmother wore to keep her varicose veins from popping out.

I must have blanched.

“No?” She reached back into the drawer for a shorter variation, same color, same elastic the consistency of new tires.

“Um . . .”

“Well,” she said, “You could just buy the control top pantyhose that go up high.”



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"OK, I'll try that." I was halfway out the door, but I had another problem. "I need to find a bra that won't show over my dress."

"What size do you wear?"

I looked away and mumbled "38C." She started swooshing bras past on their little hangers. Numbers flashed by: 30, 32, 34. I saw a \$120 price tag. For a bra? She found my size way in the back. The garment was black, accented with scratchy gold threads. She handed me two more in similar styles and led me into the dressing room.

As I stripped off my stretchy top and my full-figure white bra, my breasts flopped downward, pointing at my rounded belly under the blue stretch pants. I picked up the first bra. It was like trying to dress a walrus. Grabbing both ends of the bra, fearful it would snap me in the face if I let go, I stretched it as far as I could. It wouldn't hook. Neither would the second. Too much me, too little bra. I got the third bra on, but it hurt, and any second it would explode, killing anyone within fifty yards.

I got dressed and opened the door. "I have to think about it," I said. I couldn't tell this thong-wearing babe that I needed something even bigger!

I went home, tried on my old bras and found one that would work under my dress if I pinned it in the right places. A trip to Wal-Mart yielded a pair of black extra-large high-rise, belly-smoothing briefs for eighteen dollars. Ugliest things you ever saw—and strong. You could carry a cord of wood in them and they wouldn't even stretch out. I added control-top pantyhose to the ensemble for double squashing action.

Yes, sir, I was going to look like a million bucks. Thank God nobody would be peeking underneath to see what was holding it all together. I guess that's why they call it Victoria's *Secret*.



PWSD (Pre-watersport Stress Disorder)

Karen Scalb Linamen

I think women are amazing; I really do.

After all, we know how to give birth, change tires, run major corporations and small kitchen appliances, raise children, mend broken hearts with chocolate, analyze our friends' marriages and even our own, cook a Thanksgiving turkey, *and* redecorate an entire house using a single charge card.

So—if I'm a woman and I've got all that going for me—how come every summer I can be induced to panic, anxiety, and insecurity by a single sentence?

Let's go to the pool.

It's not that I hate my body. The problem is that I have not been professionally airbrushed. This is the reason that, whenever I put on a swimsuit, I don't look like the models in the magazines who *have* been professionally airbrushed. Diet, genes, and personal trainers have nothing to do with it. I have no doubt that,

