

"Good morning, ma'am," the office workers chant.

"Good morning, boys," Ms. Janesdaughter replies, as she savors the panorama of beautiful faces and bodies.¹ "Come in immediately, Freddie," she adds to a particularly attractive brunette.

As Freddie slips through the door, Janesdaughter observes the young man's well-endowed, but slender figure. Freddie sits in the chair and crosses his long and shapely legs.

Janesdaughter recites the day's tasks; Freddie writes frantically.

"First, Freddie, go out on your lunch hour today and buy my husband an anniversary gift. I've tried and I can't suit the little man; he's just a househusband, you know. And, anyway, as my right-hand woman, you're good at shopping for another boy."

"Call Dr. Anders's nurse and have him remind Anders of our church finance committee meeting. You know, Anders's nurse is so good; he supports her totally, yet knows his place."

"Make reservations for a flight to the City of Sisterly Love for the eastern district meeting." Mumbling half to herself, Janesdaughter adds: "I hope the stewards are better looking this time. You know, I learned that they're letting them marry, be fathers, and stay on till they're old—even in their forties!"

"Get me a cup of coffee. I do hope it will be better than yesterday's when the women from the shop were here."

Freddie giggles apologetically, and in his haste drops a spoon on the carpet. He mutters something about being so clumsy and thinks: "Why am I such a bungler? No wonder Ms. Janesdaughter gets so irritated at me."

Janesdaughter sips the coffee and says, "That's a good boy, Freddie."

"Next, call a meeting for 2:30 for the department heads. Include the guys from personnel and that new affirmative action officer. The chairwoman of the board is coming over too, so be sure the board room is in top shape. Although the chairwoman serves only as a figurehead, he is married to the mayor, and we want to impress him because of her. Be sure that your work station is womaned while you attend the meeting. Have that new boy Joey White-woman at the meeting as a backup woman for you."

"Now, let's get out some letters. First, Della Knox will retire next month; thus, I'll write her husband and ask him what retirement gift would please her. Address the letter to Mrd. Della Knox, The Krauss Manufacturing Co., 203 North Seventeenth. Anywhere, Alabama, Ladies. . . ."

"Oh, yes, Freddie, stay for a six o'clock meeting Thursday evening. The

decorators will be here, and you boys have good color sense and man's intuition about such things."

After several more letters and instructions, Janesdaughter rises and puts her hand on Freddie's shoulder, saying, "Your new suit is certainly pretty—and fits well in all the right places. I'm glad, because I want you to look good for the chairwoman."

At 3:30 that afternoon, the meeting nears an end. Seated at one end of the table is Janesdaughter and at the other end, Chairwoman Eddie Jones. The department heads (all females) sit on one side of the table, and the head of personnel (Davie Nelsdaughter), the affirmative action officer (Jimmy French), and two aides (all males) sit on the other side. Freddie and Joey hurriedly refill the coffee cups and return to their places behind Janesdaughter to continue making notes.

Janesdaughter speaks: "Now, women, let's take care of some other matters."

"I've become concerned that we've been calling Cleo the 'mail girl.' That's a put-down; she is a grown woman, after all. From now on, we'll call her the 'mail clerk.'"

At that opening, Jimmy French hesitantly says that some of the men in the firm do not like being called "boys" or "guys" or included in such terms as "women" or "chairwomen." He asks whether they might be called "men," "chairpersons," "chairmen," and similar words.

A ripple of laughter goes around the table, and for the first time that afternoon, Chairwoman Jones joins the discussion:

"That's just a lot of 'men's lib' talk. My friends and I enjoy being called 'boys.' It makes us feel young—and you know how a boy is about his age." (Mrd. Jones giggles.) "Chairperson and 'chairman' sound so strange to me. A few radicals can't be allowed to destroy the Queen's English. And, if the 'men's libbers' are concerned about equal pay and such things, they should concentrate on them; words just don't make that much difference."

"We boys accept that behind every good woman, there's a good man and live our lives through our wives. We boys sometimes work through men's auxiliaries, but subordinate ourselves so that we don't destroy the female ego. Why, I've always been protected by my wife and have never been discriminated against; this idea about discrimination is just an old husbands' tale. I'm proud to be Mrd. Penelope Jones and care for her children."

Nelsdaughter says, "Oh, I agree with you. I'm sure that Jimmy does too and that he was just conveying a request from a few of the boys. He's had some three-women committees at work, and only one committee made such a recommendation."

"Yes, that's true," Jimmy replies, nervously. Condescendingly, Janesdaughter says, "Oh, I understand! But it's just too much to expect each person to change her language habits. Would it be fair

¹In "A Tale of Two Sexes" all women have the non-marital-status courtesy title *M.* (pronounced "miz").

²In "A Tale of Two Sexes" all men have marital-status courtesy titles. *Mrgl.* (pronounced "mingle"), the merging of *M* and *single*, refers to single men. *Mrd.* (pronounced "murd"), the abbreviation for "married," refers to married men.

for me to have to give up being called, say, a committee 'chairwoman' when that's what I'm accustomed to being called? And, after all, parliamentary rules list 'chairwoman' as appropriate, and allow for the use of 'Sir Chairwoman' for a boy.

"Mngl. Whitewoman, what do you think?"

Squirming, Joey answers, "Well, when I was a coed in my freshman courses, I was taught to use the female forms; so they must be right."

Freddie adds, "I agree. My business sorority reports that most boys prefer the feminine words."

As Janesdaughter starts to move on, Lou Smith, who heads the finance department, speaks briefly about how she supports the men in their movement for liberation from stereotyped sex roles. Janesdaughter looks startled because she has known Smith only in the capacity of an outstanding finance woman, never dreaming that she embraces any part of the "men's lib" movement. The others also wonder about Smith, thinking that she must be being rooster-pecked and losing her femininity.

Janesdaughter hurries on through the rest of the meeting, with these instructions and comments.

"Allen, have your boy check with mine for completion of the report about the new womanmade fiber we're considering.

"Baker, get that memo out about the new workwomen's compensation provisions.

"Davie, I understand that some customers raise their eyebrows because the husband of a saleswoman—Gordon is the name, I believe—did not have his name changed when they married. I do feel sorry for her. Would you see if you can't have that corrected? Businesswomen are pretty conservative and just don't think it's right for a woman and her husband to have different last names, especially when they have children, as Gordon and her husband do. Even if her husband is a policewoman, I believe he should change his legal name. The woman is the head of the household, and her career is more important than her husband's. These working husbands and fathers do cause problems, don't they!

"Along that same line, Davie, do some checking on Dodd's husband. I hear he's been acting like a tramp. Excuse the expression, Mrd. Jones." (Mrd. Jones giggles and looks down shyly.) "That sort of thing does no good for the company image. I do know that he was drinking, was wearing revealing trousers, and was too loud to be masculine at the last company party.

"And that reminds me, is that new boy Alvie Seymour married? He didn't indicate marital status on his employment forms and signs his letters without the parenthetical 'Mngl.' or 'Mrd.' Freddie, get a memo out telling all boys to use the appropriate titles in all their communication. I think married men should be proud to announce to the world their marital status. After all, finding the right woman and fathering daughters form the most important

accomplishments in their lives. Besides, I just like to know whether an attractive young thing like Alvie is married or single," she says as she winks at the women present. The women look slyly at one another and smile at the embarrassment shown by the men in the room.

"Speaking of children, did you hear that Selby *finally* had a daughter; she was about to give up after four sons. She's so happy; now she'll finally have someone to pass the business on to and to carry on the Selby bloodline and name.

"Compton, for the next news conference, be ready for a number of questions from the newswomen there about our new southern district acquisition. And see if you can't get the camerawomen to do some more close-ups this time. Somewhere during the news conference, stress how we support the working woman in her struggle for enough take-home pay to offset the effects of inflation and how we're working to bring labor and management together into a true sisterhood of women. Add that our sympathies are with the househusband in his efforts at stretching his household allowance.

"Baker, communicate through the company newsletter *The Workwoman* our pleasure at the way that the line forewomen and craftswomen have performed on this last crash project.

"Davie, just call Keeley Boy for some temporary womanpower for that rush job next week.

"Davie, you're simply going to have to hire some more gentleman saleswomen. But be sure that they can type. We're just not making sufficient progress toward our affirmative action plan goals. And, yes, pursue the possibility of obtaining a boy engineer trainee for the same reason. That man lawyer was over here from the local government office again the other day criticizing us for our hiring practices. I just cannot see why the government makes businesswomen do this. Don't they realize that these rules keep good women responsible for husbands and children from jobs and promotions? If boys would just stay home with their children where they belong, all our social problems would be solved. After all, every child has a right to have her father at home. I suppose we do have to hire a few boys and even pay them women's wages, but it's hard to do when they're only working for a second income, they're just working househusbands, and they're here for pin money or the fun of it.

"Compton, back to that news conference: Next week is National Sisterhood Week, so be sure to stress that the goal of our firm is the furtherance of all womankind—the improvement of the lot of the family of women and of this land that our foremothers established. And, say, so that we'll look better to the 'men's libbers' and the government, take one of our best-looking boys along and let him be the spokeswoman on some simple matter that he can handle. Be sure that his subject won't raise any difficult questions from the newswomen. Get a boy who has a bit of showwomanship in him.