

A woman's place is at home

BY AMOS
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Each autumn I go squirrel hunting.

I have never considered hunting to be a sport. People can argue all they want to about an animal's keen sense of habitat. But these things are partially erased by a shotgun, and completely erased by the human brain. The animal hasn't got a chance.

So hunting for me is simply a means of supplying my family, and myself, with food. It is enjoyable only because I have those few days each fall to get out of the house and into the woods. I never tire of seeing sunlight filter through huge oak trees, or watching playful streams ripple happily over shiny rocks. I listen to the birds and watch the merry antics of the chipmunks. The loud, raucous squawk of the crow mingles with the sound of wind rustled leaves. I watch the turtle wend its slow deliberate way to nowhere, and this communing with nature is most beneficial to a man's soul.

This year I went squirrel hunting again. I took my shells, and my gun, and the Lord have mercy, I took my wife. I know I'm going to sound like a male chauvinist pig but women should not be allowed in the woods. There definitely should be a law against it.

I have no idea what prompted my wife to go hunting with me. We have been married almost thirty years and I have hunted every one of those years without the benefit of her company. But this year she insisted that she tag along.

The morning of the hunt I got up very early because dawn is just a wonderful

time to hunt squirrels. I had on my hunting jacket and was all ready to go when my wife walked into the kitchen. I couldn't believe it. She was wearing a very thin, silky dress, earrings, and sandals.

"Aren't you going hunting?" I inquired hopefully.

"Certainly" she says. "Why do you ask?"

"Well you certainly can't go dressed like that. Golly, you will freeze to death in no time at all."

"Look turniphead" she snarled, "I'm a redblooded American female. I like the cold. I'm tough and strong and the colder it is the better I like it."

I didn't argue with her. We went out to the car and drove to the woods that I always hunt in. We walked into the woods, silently, for about twenty yards. I was looking intently all around me. Everything was peaceful and quiet until this voice boomed out behind me. "GOOD JUMPING COW EYES... I'M FREEZING TO DEATH."

Of course this thunderous voice scared every animal within twelve miles. I turned around angrily, and hissed. "Will you please keep your voice down. I told you it was cold. Why in the hell didn't you wear some clothing instead of that ridiculous nothing you have on?"

"Honey," she pleaded, "I have goosepimples on my goosepimples."

I felt sorry for her. I took off my jacket and placed it around her shoulders. "Now baby, will you please be quiet. When you hunt you have to be awfully still or the squirrels will hear you."

She nodded her head and we continued into the forest. I saw some cut hickory nuts and I knew that there were squirrels around. Each step was slow and deliberate. THERE...IN THAT OAK TREE...A SQUIRREL. I raised my gun, took aim, and was just about fire when I felt this tugging at my sleeve.

"Darn it honey...I had a squirrel in my sight. What is it you want?"

"I want to go home," she said.

I couldn't believe I had heard right. I looked her right in the eye, and inquired, "And why do you want to go home?"

She leaned closer. "Because," she whispered, "I have to go to the bathroom."

I shook my head. "Look baby, just go over there behind that big tree."

She looked at me like I had lost my mind. "WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM? YOU WANT ME TO GO TO THE BATHROOM WITH ALL THESE PEOPLE LOOKING?"

"What people?" I asked.

"People...just people. You have no way of knowing how many men are walking around these woods."

I walked her back to the car. We got in and I started driving home. My day had been completely ruined. We drove in silence.

"Is the little boy mad?"

"You're damn right I'm mad. Big redblooded American female. Ha! You were frozen stiff in two minutes... and then your stupid lousy bladder and your juvenile, demented modesty. Yes...you're right...the little boy IS mad."



We drove on a few more miles in silence.

"You hate my mother."

I glanced over toward my wife. I knew that it was hard to understand a woman, any woman, but this was impossible. I just drove on without replying.

"I'll never speak to you again."

"Is that a promise?"

"You eat rotten pickles."

We argued all the way home. When she got into the house she turned to me and said, "Amos, I'm sorry. I have acted just terrible today. I don't know what possessed me. Can you ever forgive me?"

I uttered a faint, "Of course."

"And tomorrow," she cooed, "I promise to be good. We will hunt together and have the time of our lives."

The next morning she came into the kitchen wearing a very thin, silky dress, earrings, and sandals.

"Honey...you're going to freeze to death in that outfit."

"Look turniphead," she snarled, "I'm a redblooded American female. I like the cold. I'm tough and strong and the colder it is the better I like it."

I punched her right in the mouth.