

## It's Hard Being a Lady

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A shimmering ray of light comes in through the window and caresses my cheek. I slowly open my eyes and blink drowsily for some minutes before getting up. I pay attention to the sounds around me. Some birds twittering outside and the constant hum of the faraway motorway indicate that I'm home alone. There's nothing as comforting as the absence of the four boys who share the apartment with me. It's not that I don't care about them. Each one of them brings a special quality to our home. Still, a girl needs some moments of peace. Mornings are perfect for just that, as the boys are all elsewhere. Richard's at university –he is studying to become a vet–, Simon's at work in the garage, Paul's rehearsing with his band, and Eric's probably at the library, doing some research for his history paper. So, here I am, with the whole flat to myself.

I amble to the kitchen. There's some breakfast ready for me. That must have been Richard: he's the most considerate. After breakfast, I prepare to take my daily stroll around the block. I prefer exercising in the morning, as the streets are less crowded. As soon as I step out onto the pavement, I see the neighbour has decided to walk her dog right now, so I cross the street. I've already had a bad experience with the bulldog's temper and sharp teeth. I raise my head contemptuously and strut on, although the intense stare of the dog from the opposite side of the street makes my hair stand on end. His eyes follow me until I finally turn the corner and continue my morning walk.

But, because I am too concentrated on how to return home avoiding the evil dog, I almost collide into my friend Olly. He lives in the neighbourhood and is a true gossiper. Nothing can happen in town without his hearing about it, somehow or other. Therefore, it's quite pleasant to run into him and have a dose of fresh news. After learning about everything from the weather forecast to the shirt Mrs Green is wearing today, I hear an announcement which interests me above the rest. Our football team is playing an important match today. I shiver at the thought of it. It isn't that I don't enjoy football, but I would enjoy it much more if I didn't live with four enthusiastic football fans. Every match is a nightmare for an introverted lady like myself. All the shouting and jumping and shoving only gets worse. I've got used to their being messy though; otherwise I would find living with them unbearable. I've learned not to expect them to be as clean as I am and they have somehow learned to respect my cleanliness. But, when a match comes around, they forget all about the unspoken house rules we live by. Our house becomes a pigsty and I can't bear it any longer.

So, when I return home, I decide to hide until the match is over. I glance at the clock: if there's an important match, the boys leave all their responsibilities aside

and come home to watch it. So I've got to be quick and find a quiet place. I pace around the flat looking for the perfect spot and then the idea dawns on me. I sneak happily into the only place they would never think of approaching:

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the cleaning products cabinet. And as I hear a key turning in the front door lock, I hope they will someday learn to respect a lady. Meow!