

Angels

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This essay was first completed on Tuesday, May 31, 1994 and was most recently revised on Thursday, May 22, 2014.

This document is approximately 678 words long.

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Ladies Beware!

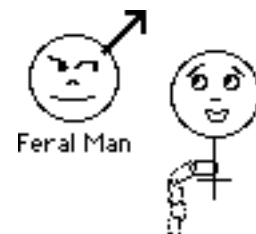
This essay compares women to a very high standard. If you're a feminist, if you're a career woman, or if you go around trying to prove that you're a better man than he is, then you probably shouldn't read the essay. If you read it anyway, then don't say that I didn't warn you.

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caveat lector



The only thing worse than a man you can't control is a man you can.

—Chapter 2, *The Surrendered Wife*, by Laura Doyle

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I recognized them at once, at so young an age that now I do not even remember it, but certainly I knew them for Angels.

As a child, I felt for them a special reverence, whether they were little ones near my own age or adults, unapproachably apart from boyhood understanding. They were a special set of creation, finely forged upon the workbench of Heaven, placed upon the Earth by Divine Inspiration, special and incorruptible. Yet, I could not avoid observation. As I grew, I could not ignore what I observed.

I began to feel a growing unease. Not all was right in the world, for misfortunes befell them from which they ought to have been protected. A man injured was an acceptable reality, but not a woman. A woman should not fall prey to harm. When assailed, she ought to slip between the blades of fate. Faced with danger, she should exercise her special prerogative and be preserved whole and undamaged. To allow a woman to be mangled upon the highway and bleed upon the pavement was a blasphemy. Bombs ought not to fall upon women. Dams ought not to burst upstream from women. In a world containing women, men should be more careful. They should design special precautions into everything that they did. They should always consider that women might get caught in the crossfire, and protect them.

Men's treatment of women was baffling. I did, eventually, reconcile such behavior with the course nature of men. We're a rough and unworthy lot. Maybe, given time, we'll improve. Meanwhile, I expected that women would rise above our violations.

As each disappointment fell into line, I couldn't reconcile the women with the ideal. Their mean, petty, screeching behavior didn't fit my expectations. The image against which I measured them came with me into this world, whole and complete. It remains with me today, uncorrupted, but women have proven to be very corruptible. Imagine my disappointment as, through the years, women refused to be special. Imagine my bitterness as women rejected the high place ordained for them, stridently demanded mere equality with men, and then failed to measure up to even that.

Of course, I learned to distinguish between the real and the ideal. I learned that I cannot change the women. I also learned that I will not change the ideal. Women might descend into a low and alleged equality with men, but without my approval. I acknowledge first the ideal that came with me into this world. She, alone among all women, will never disappoint me.

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