

Women

*Marta Bidoli Fernandes**

“One simple thing!! ONE!! Not TWO, just ONE!! You see, I don’t expect you to do everything, but for Christ sake, can’t you even change the toilet paper when it’s done?”

“Why are you screaming? I’m not deaf you know...”

“Doesn’t seem like it! Because if you can hear perfectly, there must be some other malfunction in you because you are incapable of changing the toilet paper!!”

“Why are you so worked up? It’s just toilet paper. The game was about to start, I didn’t want to miss it.”

“Well, that calms me down. That tranquilizes my freakin’ soul! You must have a very diverse toilet paper changing technique or perhaps a different perspective on time itself! Where I come from, changing the toilet paper traditionally takes 30 seconds and soccer games last - give or take - AN ETERNITY! So, though I’m not particularly good with numbers, an eternity minus 30 seconds... How much would that be?”

Silence. Paul opens his mouth as if he were about to say something...

“And the game would account for this one time, what about the other thousand times I go mind my business in the bathroom and end up running around pants-to-ankles after toilet paper?”

Paul just sits there, eyes glued to the screen. “Sorry. I didn’t mean to upset you.”

“Upset me? You think you upset me? No... you upset me when you showed up late for my birthday because of work. You upset me when we went to London and you wanted to stay in the hotel rather than take a tour of the city. You upset me when you make me feel invisible. You upset me when you put our DVDs away in the first case

* Undergraduate student at Universidade de São Paulo (USP).

you can find. You upset me when you say the food I've spent hours making, even though I-HATE-cooking-and-you-know-it, tastes funny. You upset me when I have cramps and you decide THAT'S the best moment to do our taxes. Unbelievable! But now?! Now you are not upsetting me... no... we're way past upset... YOU infuriated ME!!!!!"

SLAM!

Paul, alone in the living room. Very shy grin on his face.

"Women; they get so worked up over so little."

You won't believe what S. just told me?"

"Let me guess: someone did something that is none of your business or mine. Did I get it right?"

"Almost. R.'s husband left her!"

"Wow! I have never seen that happen to anyone before. Divorce is so rare these days. I hope they don't throw stones at her."

"Stop being so sour. He found out she almost cheated on him."

"Still none of my business, but is there such a thing as *almost*?"

"Sure there is! Like almost eating chocolate when you forget you are on a diet."

"But when you *almost* eat chocolate, do you make yourself throw up afterwards to avoid the weight gain?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Never mind. So, where are you going for the holiday?"

"Why are you defending her? You see how she walks. Just look! You think she didn't do it another time when no one was looking?"

"What do you mean by 'the way she walks'? One leg in front of the other?"

"She's too confident... I don't know how to explain it, but everyone thinks so."

“You *do* know everyone and no one are almost the same thing, right? And since when is it compulsory that confident-walk-women cheat?”

“They just do. And it’s not just a ‘walk’, it’s her attitude.”

“Hum. Wasn’t there some kind of incident between them a while back?”

“Shhh! You can’t say it out loud, do you want to get fired over gossiping?”

“Are you serious? You have got to be kidding me!”

“Just lower your voice, ok? He hit her. Her husband smacked her up a bit.”

“He did WHAT!?”

“Shush! It is nothing serious. I think she just had a black eye or something. She probably deserved it – the attitude.”

“I see... Can I use a normal voice tone now?”

“As long as you don’t blurt out anything unspeakable...”

“So what he did doesn’t bother you, but the ‘way she walks’ does?”

“That’s not the point, K.”

“No? What *is* the point?”

“Never mind, you don’t understand.”

“I’m the one who doesn’t understand? Perfect! I’m leaving. Next time, don’t try to pull me into your distorted gossipy world. Get a life. And some perspective while you’re at it.”

“Women; we get so worked up over so little.”