

Ladies

When I think back over that long line of women staggering Zombie-like through my life pausing just long enough to suck some of my life's blood from me, I'm ever so grateful for my current wife, Michelle. We're married, but she kept her maiden name, Hess, because she's proud of her Nazi heritage. I'm kidding! Her family left all that behind when they fled Germany at the end of WW2. Again, kidding! Actually, she has traced one branch of her family back to King Carter, a Virginia land owner, which is where she's from, Virginia.

However, some of those other women... I don't know. One time when I was about thirty-years-old, I was walking up to the entrance to a store and a young lady about twenty-years-old was standing near the doors, and she was looking me up and down, smiling, and flirting with her eyes. When I got closer, she said, "Get away from me you old fart."

One time I had a first date with a young lady that ended with us going back to her place. When we walked in her apartment, she put her purse on the kitchen counter, stepped out of her shoes, got a couple of glasses and opened the freezer. She held the glasses in one hand, reached in the freezer, and started putting ice in the glasses. So far, so good.

I stepped up behind her, put my hands on her waist and kissed her neck. She started dropping ice on the floor and kicking it under the refrigerator. I looked down and saw two of the ugliest feet I've ever seen, gnarly toes, unpainted, dirty toe nails, and her second and third toes were webbed, grown together. I stepped back in horror.

Normally, something like that would be a deal breaker, I like those pink, painted, and pedicured toes, with maybe a toe ring. But these things... the tops of her feet were hairy for Christ's sake. I almost walked out, but then, one thing led to another and before the night was over I had accidentally fallen in love with her.

We dated for a while, I just made her wear socks.

Then there was this girl who made a play that caused me to say, "But we're cousins" and she said, "Yeah, but we're not first cousins, c'mon." I thought she was beautiful, she had big, green eyes that looked like emeralds, they twinkled with an inner light. That was until I playfully tried to put my sunglasses on her. She stopped me, and said, "You don't want to do that."

I said, "Why not?"

She put them on, they covered her eyes, and for the first time I realized that the rest of her face was, how shall I put it... homely.

Then without meaning to, I grimaced, and she said, "That's why you never see me wearing sunglasses."

When we got to her double-wide in Valrico, the first thing she did was open the curtains on the front picture window. When I asked why, she said, “I want that damn ex-husband of mine to see this.”

One night decades ago, I was talking to a young lady I’d never seen before in a Tampa bar that I frequented when it came up in conversation that she was only in town for a few days, and was from, as she put it, Hotlanta. It was the first time I had ever heard that expression, Hotlanta.

She was in her mid-thirties, and she wasn’t pretty but she was making the best with what she had to work with. She was very well-dressed, her make-up, nails, and jewelry were all perfect. She spoke and carried herself with confidence.

After we had been talking for a while she said, “Why isn’t anyone Line Dancing, in Hotlanta the latest thing is Line Dancing, everybody Line Dances, and that’s a good song to do it to.”

Although the bar was crowded, there was no one on the dance floor.

I said, “I don’t know, I’ve never seen anyone Line Dance in here. Why don’t you show us how it’s done?” I was kidding.

She said, “Okay” and then walked to the middle of the empty dance floor and started Line Dancing. In a few seconds, a couple of timid looking girls got behind her and started trying to follow her. Then a guy joined

them. Then two couples, then more girls, then... Before the song was half over the dance floor was crowded with people following her lead, and loving it.

At that point, she looked over at me, smiled and gave me a look and a shrug that said, "See, that wasn't so hard." Also at that point, she was starting to look pretty good to me.

When the song was over, she came back to where I was standing, I said, "Wow, that was amazing. Can I buy you a drink?" She said, "No" and walked out, never to be seen again.

Once while on a first date I asked my new friend what she wanted to do. I was driving, and my date looked around, then pointed and said, "Let's go there."

The sign she pointed to was white with black letters that spelled out, "Madame Simza Psychic Readings" and under that was a red hand with black lines drawn on the palm.

After I paid Madame Simza twenty dollars for both of us, Date went behind a curtain with Madame Simza while I waited in a dimly lit room among candles, incense, and Gypsy décor. Music from someplace I've never been played in the background.

Later, when I went in, Madame Simza sat across from me and with a sing-song chant looked me up and down rapidly while saying, "Your body tells me through your mind that..." and then one after another mostly positive,

general remarks like, “You are going to be very successful and make a lot of money” and “You are very personable and people like you” and on and on with feel good platitudes. She didn’t say anything insightful.

When we left I asked Date what Madame Simza had said to her. She laughed and answered with, “She said that every time I brought a guy there she’d split the money with me.”

I was staying in a campground in Albuquerque, when I met this 38-year-old woman who was traveling around with her very pretty, 12-year-old daughter in a new, big, class A motorhome. I was 40-years-old and living day to day in my funky, old, class C motorhome. The mother and I saw each other a lot for 4 days during which time it came out that she had been married 3 times and that each of her husbands had died.

On the fourth evening, we were sitting poolside by ourselves when she told me that she and her daughter were leaving in the morning, and she asked if I wanted to go with them.

The name, Black Widow, rose unbidden in the back of my mind, but I said, “Sounds great, I’ll meet you at the clubhouse in the morning.”

In the middle of the night, I quietly unhooked my motorhome and... down the road I went.

This has been a small sample from my lifetime of female companions. I often remember what my old Daddy used to say, “You have to take the bad with the good.” And where I am now is finally, definitely good.