

Clean Linen

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There's nothing like a clean white shirt on a man, I always think. Ever since I married Graham, I've taken a pride in the state of his clothes when he goes off to work, and there's not much that satisfies me like a row of clean white shirts on the washing line.

I like all kinds of housework, and I'm pretty efficient at it – after all, I've had a lot of practice. I don't understand how some women find time to go to work or raise a family. Each morning I can't wait to pack Graham off to work so that I can start. I keep a duster and a can of Pledge by the front door so that, the minute he leaves, I can snatch it up and get straight on, doing a grand tour of all the rooms before I get the Hoover out for another circuit.

Pledge has to be the favourite weapon in my armoury, which, I have to say, is a powerful one. You should see my broom cupboard – I have seventeen different cleaning products in there, and I'm proud to say I use every one every single day.

No shortcut is worth taking when it comes to house-work, but I do believe in trying to make life a little easier for myself. I keep the place tidy, and wash the pots the minute I've finished using them to avoid the risk of spills. I use only the purest, clearest soap and shampoo in the bathroom, and I gave up wearing make-up a long time ago – it was just a constant source of anxiety as to whether I'd end up with a smudge of rouge on a blouse or cardigan, and as to nail varnish – well, I wouldn't have it in the house.

Of course, that's not to say the dirt doesn't come sneaking into my house when I'm not looking. Take last night, for example. Graham came home, rather later than usual. His dinner was quite dried up in the oven by the time he sat down to eat it, but it didn't seem to bother him particularly. He wolfed it down, and seemed anxious to get out of the kitchen to go and get changed. But he didn't escape before I'd noticed the scarlet smudge on his collar as I leant over his shoulder to sweep his plate and cutlery away to the washing-up bowl.

"Goodness gracious me!" I exclaimed. "Is that lipstick on your collar?"

Graham opened his mouth but said nothing.

"You just take that shirt off this minute!" I cried. "I must get it in the wash before it stains! After all, I don't want people thinking I neglect my husband's needs."

He slipped it off as quickly as he could, ripping off one of the cuff buttons in his haste, and left the room at a run. I sometimes wonder why he isn't more grateful to have such a devoted wife.

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