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## 11 "Don't-Tell-the-Husband" Secrets All Wives Keep

Jeannie Kim

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**We women are well aware that most of the time we're a profound mystery to men. And for the most part, we like it that way. But the thought has occurred to just about every woman: Would it really be so bad if he knew \_\_\_\_\_ about me? Wouldn't it help him understand me better? And more importantly, Wouldn't he annoy me less if he knew what I really wanted?**

So for the benefit of women everywhere (and for your benefit too, guys-remember, a happy woman makes for a much happier man), we're going to let men in on a little of what really makes us tick, deep down. Read on for 11 near-universal secrets of womankind. Some may shock you, others may be things you've suspected for a long time (but never had the nerve to ask about). But know this: the woman in your life? She's hiding more secrets than these, including a few you'd never imagine. Lucky you-you get to spend a lifetime learning them all.

### **1. Everything we buy for ourselves-shoes, a skirt, even just stuff from the drugstore-really costs 20 percent more than we tell you it did.**

Just because it's a classic sitcom plot doesn't mean it isn't true. "Sometimes I'll buy an outfit and charge half of it on our credit card and pay for the other half in cash so my husband doesn't know what I'm actually spending," admits one 32-year-old, who requested anonymity to protect her sneaky secret. Yeah, we know honesty is the best policy, hiding your spending habits is bad, blah blah blah. But sometimes we just don't want the hassle of arguing over the price of the fancy shampoo. Is that so wrong? We don't think so.

### **2. We actually think about sex-with you!-a lot**

Sometimes we think about it all day long. It's just that by the end of the day we're too damn tired to do anything about it. Now, if you could only catch us at lunchtime....

### **3. We're just as nervous about commitment as you are.**

True, many girls grow up dreaming of Prince Charming, the white wedding, and happily ever after. But we're human, just like you, and when it comes down to the reality of tying our life to another person's, we get scared, too. "The idea of getting married completely freaked me out at first," says my friend Lisa, 34. "I know this sounds like a guy cliché, but I saw it as giving up my independence and being tied down." The good news is, once we're hitched, we're generally pretty delighted about it. Says Lisa, "Now that I am married, having a life commitment is so comforting and wonderful. I love knowing that we are a team and that we're going to be on the same team forever."

### **4. We may be modern and independent, but we still want you to be "the man."**

We do want you to be sensitive, caring 21st-century males, but even the most ass-kicking, take-no-prisoners woman still wants to feel taken care of by her man somehow. Whether that means you take charge in bed, know how to fix the car and kill spiders, or even just carry the big suitcase when we're on vacation-when you act all manly, even if you're 98 pounds soaking wet, it makes us feel more feminine, more safe.

"I love that my friends and family always comment on how my husband opens the door for me and does all kinds of other chivalrous things-especially when I was pregnant, when he was so protective of me and my belly," says

Lorraine, 29, of New Hartford, NY. "At the end of the day, being in his strong arms is definitely a good feeling, no matter how independent I know I am."

### **5. Our ex-boyfriends were not completely terrible in bed.**

You know how we're always telling you things like, "Oh yeah, you're definitely the biggest I've ever had" or "No one does it like you do"? Um, yeah. Well, we may have been stretching the truth just a teensy bit. But we'll never actually tell you that a past lover was a bedroom dynamo—we're smarter than that. Just know that whatever toe-curling orgasms the other guy gave us, sex with you really is a million times better—because it's you, and you're the one we really want.

### **6. We're scared that we'll turn into our mothers.**

We love our mothers, really. We admire them, we're grateful to them, we think they're the most amazing women on the planet. We just don't want to be them. That's why one of the worst insults you can hurl at a woman is, "You're acting just like your mother."

But here's one that's even worse: "You're acting just like my mother." It sends a horrible oedipal shiver down our spines—did he marry me because I'm like his mom? Will he start expecting me to cut the crusts off his PB&J? So please, if you value your sex life, never ever compare your wife to your mother. Out loud, anyway.

### **7. We want you to be jealous—but just a little bit.**

We want you to notice—and care!—when the waiter flirts with us, or when other guys check us out on the street. It makes us feel that we matter to you. But please don't get all Neanderthal and possessive on us. "I'm very loyal, and if my guy can't understand that I would never do anything with anyone else, then that just makes me mad," says Paulina, 22, from Brooklyn. So, to recap: Raising your eyebrows when we introduce you to our cute coworker—good. Punching him out—very, very bad.

### **8. Yes, we fantasize about hot celebrity guys, but that doesn't mean we want you to be them.**

Christian Bale is sexy and all, but can you imagine having to clean that Batcave?

### **9. We tell our girlfriends more than we admit to you (but less than you fear).**

Yes, we tell them about the latest marital spat, complain about our mothers-in-law, and sigh over the hobby that sucks up all your free time. But we don't tell them how big your you-know-what is or that you cried in our arms when your dad died. Some things are just too important and intimate to share. "I definitely don't tell my girlfriends details like what my husband said when he proposed, the feeling I have every time I see him look at our daughter, and the little wonderful things he does for me every day," says Lorraine. "Those are just for me."

### **10. We really do notice and appreciate all the chores you do.**

Why don't we say so often enough? Because we can't get over all the things you don't do. My husband, for example, is incredibly diligent about keeping a 6-by-10-foot carpeted patch of our apartment vacuumed and cat hair-free, and I love that. But it kills me that it never occurs to him to dust the furniture sitting on top of that piece of carpet, or to sweep the hardwood floor adjoining it.

Blame our lack of positive feedback on that stubborn female belief that there is Only One Right Way to do any given household task—our way. It's probably the real reason why men don't shoulder a greater share of housekeeping duties; we complain about how you did it wrong, so you never want to do it again. (Sounds familiar, right?) Let's make a deal: You promise to dust the lampshade (or wipe down the kitchen counter after you wash the dishes, or take out the garbage and then put a new liner in the can) once in a while, and we promise to sing your praises. Agreed?

### **11. We love you with all our hearts, but we still get wistful about the fact that we'll never feel that falling-in-love sizzle and spark again.**

I'll just come right out and say it: Most women are love addicts. And while we appreciate the depth and richness of long-time love, there is simply nothing like the giddy, fluttery, crazy feeling we get (or rather, used to get) with a brand-new guy. We know we'll never feel that high again, and there's a little part of us that will always miss it. (Why do you think we watch so many romantic comedies?) But in the end, what we get instead—you, and a lifetime of true devotion—is more than worth the price.