

DETHRONED:



*One master of
the house*

*This husband tried
to outwit his wife
at her own game.*

by Dick Emmons

REPORTS FILTERING down to me from agents strategically deployed in homes across the country indicate that American husbands haven't the haziest notion of where the household whisk-broom is kept.

At first I was inclined to treat this information with polite unconcern. But then I began to understand that the whisk-broom ignorance is but a telltale thread in the cloak of incompetence our wives have been weaving about us for ages.

No man can honestly regard himself as the head of his house when repeatedly he cannot find objects in it; objects, I hasten to add, whose whereabouts always are known to his wife.

This basic truth came home to me with a resounding thump the other day when my wife, a small, determined woman with a memory like a bear trap, called down to me to bring her the vacuum cleaner.

I darted from closet to closet, my panic increasing.

"It's been stolen!" I finally shouted up to her.

She marched down the stairs, passed me with a hard stare, and drew the machine out from under our bed.

"Odd spot for a vacuum cleaner," I offered weakly.

"I have been keeping it there, off and on, since 1949," she replied quickly. "Except, of course, when I tuck it away in the medicine chest," she added.



"How long are you staying there?
I want to make a phone call."

Humbled, I carried the vacuum cleaner upstairs, resolving firmly that this latest insult should not go unavenged. A plan formed in my mind. I would fight fire with fire, or, in this instance, vacuum cleaners with pipe racks.

That night after the rest of the family had retired, I moved my pipe rack from my desk down to the preserve closet in the basement.

A smug smile twitched at the corners of my amiable mouth the next evening when I came home from work, slumped behind my newspaper, and asked my wife to bring me one of my pipes.

I couldn't resist a chuckle as she left the room, savoring the moment when I would stalk downstairs to the preserve shelves and remark stiffly that I'd been keeping the rack there since '49.

But she reappeared in a moment with my pipe in hand.

"Sorry to be so long but the rack is down in the basement," she purred. "That where you want to keep it?"

I mumbled something.

"I don't mind," she breezed, "only I think it's important to know where things are. Next time you want to change the location of something tell me or write a little note," she smiled sweetly.

"I'll tell you," I promised. We both know that I've never been able to find any writing paper around here.

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