

TEN WAYS TO LOSE A HUSBAND

by Lester David with drawings by David Pascal

WHAT IRRITATES husbands most about wives, often to the point of destroying love?

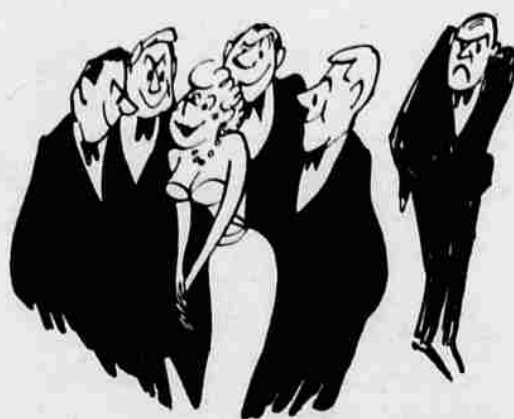
To find out, I studied the files of marriage-counseling agencies and national pollsters and interviewed family-relations experts, divorce lawyers and psychiatrists in many parts of the country.

The answers I got will fascinate every wife and husband, whether wed 40 days or 40 years!

First, though, a caution:

The experts stressed that every wife, at some time or another, might find herself doing or saying several of the things chronicled here. If you do, don't worry. This is perfectly normal, as harmless as an occasional husband-wife quarrel. The danger arises when the trait (like quarreling) becomes continual.

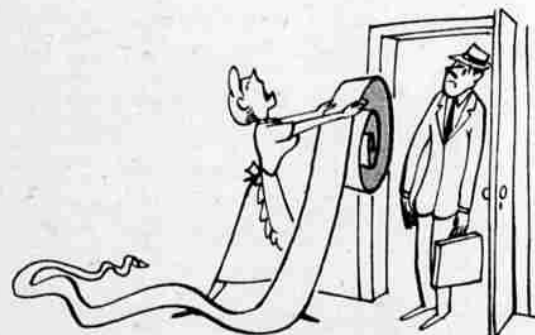
So here they are—the 10 serious marital complaints most frequently directed at wives. Taken another way, they can be considered as 10 sound and solid rules on how to keep a marriage from drifting toward perilous reefs.



"My wife thinks she's a femme fatale, always flirting."

To some wives, particularly insecure ones, this comes as naturally as talking. Generally, they mean nothing by it, but they've been doing it since childhood and find it a hard habit to break.

Whatever the reason, it bothers husbands. One father of two growing children told a Baltimore marriage counselor: "I can't get her to stop making eyes at other men. I'm pretty sure she's not serious, but being 'pretty sure' isn't enough. We fight constantly about it."



"My wife wants too much — too much money and too much of me."

Excessive demands by wives usually center around money. In Florida, a 30-year-old teacher was living apart from his wife. "She insisted I go into business to increase our income," he told an attorney, "but I wanted to teach school." Women who consider material success above all else and goad their men toward the dollar sign may lose out in all directions, including marriage.

Another facet of this problem is to engage in office politics to "help" a husband's career. One wife in Texas tried to make cronies out of wives of her husband's superiors in a campaign for him to "get ahead." He so deeply resented her interference that a domestic battle resulted and his work suffered.

Probably even more ego-shattering is the wife who compares her husband with men more successful, thinking she will prod him into greater efforts. That can hardly make him more confident of his abilities, and confidence is probably what he needs most.

Along different lines are these wifely demands: the wife who wants to hear "all about" hubby's day when he wants only to forget it; the lively lady who wants to go out after he's had a wearying day; the one who greets her husband with a litany of her daily troubles with the neighbors and children.

Maybe these faults seem petty, but take heed—they've ruined more marriages than "the other woman"



"My wife makes plans for parties and outings and tells everybody but me."

Husbands will go to parties even if they don't care much for the other guests. They'll go on a picnic even if they loathe ants and potato salad. But they do expect to be consulted and given the choice of occasionally doing what *they* want. A surprising number of wives don't seem to understand that what they enjoy may be a crushing bore to their mates.



"My wife's a sloppy housekeeper. Home's like a flop house."

This is the sort of recurring complaint that has prompted some tangy comments. Note from an Ohio marriage-counselor's casebook: "A machinist quarreled bitterly with his wife because she had decided to make things easier for herself by making the beds every other day instead of daily." Dr. Blackburn points out that a husband's patience, as well as his love, can be severely strained if he constantly comes home to a messy house, trips over the toys as he enters and finds the breakfast dishes still in the sink.