

The Magic of Marriage

“Not tonight love,” said Nick. “There’s a match on TV.”

The problem was, ‘not tonight’ had turned into ‘not this week’, then ‘not this month’ and would soon be ‘not this year’!

Cindy was starting to despair of ever having a normal married life again. She’d tried everything she could think of to rouse her husband’s interest. She’d tempted him with steak and red wine, oysters and champagne on his birthday; massaging, lap dancing, flirting with other men in front of him to inspire a manly response. As she lay in bed and listened to him snoring, she thought there must be a healthier way to restore his libido.

“Fancy taking the dog for a walk?” she asked him, after work one day. Maybe a run on the common would bring back Nick’s natural bounce.

“I’m worn out,” he said, collapsing on the sofa. “Can’t one of the kids do it?”

At the weekend, she suggested they go kite-flying on the hill, hoping that the wind might blow their cobwebs off. They used to do it years ago, and she hadn’t forgotten the thrill of his arms around her as they struggled together against the pull of a stiff breeze.

“I’ve got to wash the car,” Nick replied. “The only parking space left yesterday was under a tree, and it’s covered in...”

But Cindy had left the room. Crashing around in the kitchen, she decided to leave him in peace for a while. Their relationship was fine as it was. He worked hard, loved the kids, never raised a hand to his wife in anger. That was more than some women had.

So Cindy tried not to feel there was something missing; but she looked at the other mums on the school run and wondered if they’d ‘had it’ last night; she looked at everybody in the supermarket and wondered if you could tell from what was in their trolleys whether they were sexually satisfied?

Barely registering what she was doing, Cindy bought a set of frilly underwear, trimmed with pink lace and pearls, and took it home in a carrier bag along with the bread and milk.

She put it on, after the kids had gone to bed on Saturday night. Downstairs, the frustrated housewife paused, shivering in the hallway outside the living-room door. Nick was watching a James Bond movie; blasts of loud music and gunfire came from the room. Cindy tiptoed inside.

Sitting on the sofa, Nick was entranced; he didn’t notice his wife come in. On TV one of Bond’s babes had just entered; a tall, blonde model in a tight black swimsuit.

Cindy looked down at her own body, and fled before Nick could look up and compare the two. She stuffed the new underwear at the back of a drawer, climbed into bed and cried.

She couldn’t help blurting out the problem to her friend Cathy, as they stood outside the school gates on Monday, waiting for the bell to ring.

“Nick’s gone off me,” she whispered. “I don’t know what to do.”

Cathy smiled mysteriously.

“I may have just the thing,” she replied.

Next morning, Cathy pressed a magazine article into Cindy’s hand.

“Magic spells,” she said, “potions for your marriage problems.”

There it was; how to restore your husband's sex drive. Normally, Cindy would have laughed, but now she was desperate enough to give it a try.

"It says I need to collect his toenail clippings."

"Sounds simple enough," Cathy replied.

But it was harder than it sounded. Nick always cut his in the bath, and let the water drain the horny half-moons away. Cindy had to get them first. She checked the plughole every time he bathed and found nothing but hair. That was for a spell against baldness and her husband didn't have a problem with that.

Cindy was dying for a nail as well as a screw, now. Everything else was in place; the wax candles, the photograph of him, the magic words. She was just waiting for the vital ingredient.

On Sunday afternoon, Cindy couldn't hold on any longer. The children were playing football in the park. Nick had spent the morning fixing a dripping tap in the downstairs loo and was now relaxing on the sofa with a newspaper.

His wife appeared with a bowl of warm water, a sponge and some scissors.

"Darling," she said, laying the equipment out in front of him, "I'm going to give you a pedicure."

"Oh," Nick shrugged behind the sports page, "okay then."

Cindy unlaced his shoes, and peeled off his socks. As she suspected, he hadn't cut his toenails for some time. There would easily be enough to make the spell work.

She started to wash his feet, trickling the soapy water between his toes, scrubbing the hard heels, stroking his insteps with her rounded sponge.

At first Nick giggled, but when it stopped tickling he sighed.

"That feels nice."

She soaked his feet in the bowl of deep water, carefully trimming off hoary yellow claws to reveal soft pink skin underneath. Cindy made a neat pile of ten toenail clippings, but she no longer needed them for witchcraft.

While Songs of Praise gasped silently from the TV, one thing led to another on Nick and Cindy's sofa that Sunday afternoon. They were sitting at the altar of marriage, till the kids came home for tea.