



Straight Talk

by Muriel Sluyter

Women & the Jungle of 2003

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Greetings, Gentle Reader,

In his book, "The Substance of Things Hoped For: A Memoir of African-American Faith," Dr Samuel D. Proctor illuminates what American women lost through the social and political goings-on of the 20th century.

"One of my white students entered an elevator that I was in already, and I removed my hat. Doctor Proctor,' she said, Why in h___ did you take your hat off when I got on the elevator? You are living in the Victorian age.' She laughed congenially.

"If you will get off the elevator with me for a moment, I'll tell you.' At my stop, we both stepped off. I'm not a Victorian,' I said, but some things stay in place from one generation to another, and certain manners stand for values that I hold dear. I believe that a society that ceases to respect women is on its way out. Women bear and raise our children, they are bound to them in early infancy; they need our support and security through this process. When we forget that, the keystone of family and home is lost. When we neglect and abuse women, the family falls apart and children are less well parented, and they fill up the jails and are buried in early graves. I believe that respect for women is the linchpin of the family and of the society.

"Therefore, when you entered the elevator, I wanted you to have automatic, immediate, unqualified assurance that if the elevator caught fire, I would help you out through the top first. If a strange man boarded, and began to slap you around and tear your clothes off, he would have to kill me first. If the elevator broke down and stopped between floors, I would not leave you in here. If you fainted and slumped to the floor, I would stop everything and get you to a hospital. Now it would take a lot of time to say all of that, so when I removed my hat, I meant all of the above.' Tears sprang to her eyes. There are some values that abide. They have no racial or ethnic label."

During the past 35 or so years, men with these convictions, indeed these noble attributes, have been brutally denigrated by women who were outraged at being treated with reverence. They have been sworn at, verbally

attacked, even accused of treating women like sex objects.

Some modern women have become what is consistently modeled by Hollywood slime filthy mouthed, verbally abusive and sexually aggressive. Any gentleman who dares treat them with deferential respect may expect a torrent of vile language, designed to discourage such behavior in the future.

Once upon a time in America, a decent woman could expect men to "fight for her honor," if she came under attack.

Fortunately though there aren't as many of them as there used to be there are still American men who would do precisely that. They have managed to retain their values, in spite of the aberrant behavior of some modern women. They revere women, and know as Dr. Proctor says that a society which treats women disrespectfully "is on its way out."

When he says such respect is the "linchpin" of the family and society, he's right. On a wagon, the linchpin holds the wheel on the axle. Could Dr. Proctor have found any words to illustrate his premise more accurately? Let's consider: No wagon can run without linchpins; no society can run without families. Moreover, no family can "run" if the woman is treated badly.

Now, if we women who enjoy being treated with reverence will strive to merit it, that will help the program along.