

## TARTAN

Paul Beere

It was Tuesday, 19 October 2004.

I had just been to the bank and was about to negotiate the zebra crossing. Just ahead of me was a tall, slim, young woman pushing a buggy occupied by a child. The woman had very dark hair, almost Chinese black, but without the sheen, and was wearing a short little blue denim jacket. She also wore black tights of medium density and a very short red tartan skirt which fluttered in the wind.

People were looking at her but she did not mind or was oblivious to this attention. The men were looking at her with sexual pleasure and the women, including some young ones, were showing various degrees of disapproval or shock.

Unfortunately, I had to go the same way as she. The wind, which was neither noisy nor strong, lifted her skirt and showed her black bottom. Some women turned away in angry disbelief and others muttered their 'tut-tuts'.

When the young woman reached Boots the chemist, she bent over the buggy to undo the straps securing her child. Her long legs were stretched making them look longer and all her bottom was on display. One could make out the line of her knickers and, at one stage; it appeared that they might be white.

Customers made their noises of disapproval.

The child, being released, held her mother's hand as they walked into the shop. The child was well-dressed with a light brown coat with white fur at the hem.

I had to go into Boots for some razor blades but I was embarrassed at the sight of her and did not want to follow her. Consequently, I went into Superdrug but they did not have the blades I wanted. As some time had elapsed, I thought it was safe to return to Boots.

I found what I wanted and went to the counter. The assistant was dealing with another customer and I had to wait to be served. Leisurely, I turned and saw the young woman sitting on her haunches looking at some products on a low shelf. Fortunately, she was sideways on and the child was standing next to her.

I felt uncomfortable. I took my change and the razor blades but was shaking. I hurried to the door.

The woman was pushing the buggy towards the door and saying, "Come on, Rebecca!"

The gentleman in me opened the door for her and the woman said, "Thank you! She'll be here all day!"

The child arrived and the woman thanked me again. She spoke in a civilised and cultured manner.

I was behind her and we walked along the High Street. The wind lifted the back of her skirt again but she indicated no concern.

She went into Peacocks and I went home.

## QUESTIONS

What would her husband, partner or boy friend think of this?

Should he be concerned or angry?

Were the men right to stare at her and the women to show disapproval?

What do you think the woman's attitude to the staring and disapproval should be?

Do you think she minded?

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I know what I would think if I were her husband or partner!