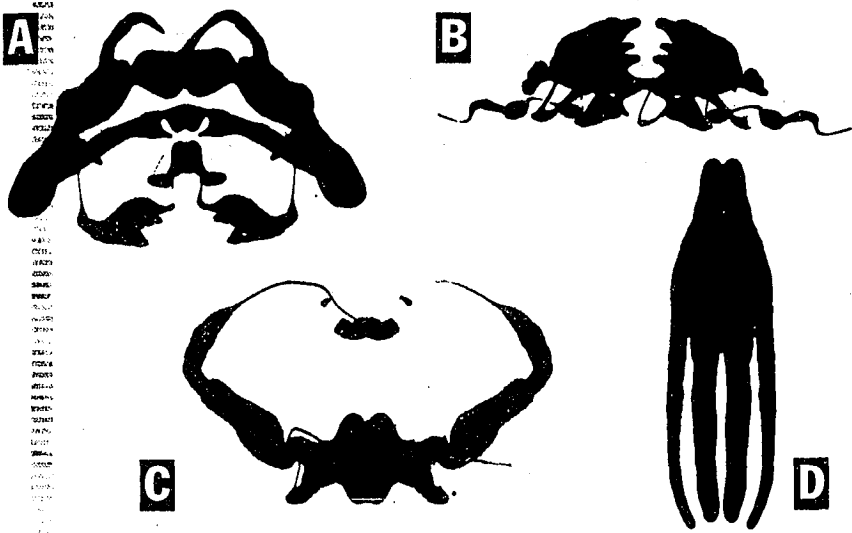


The Style Invitational

WEEK 148: THE RORSCHACH OF THE CROWD IV



This Week's Contest: Interpret these ink blots. Choose one or more. If you rotate an image, make sure you tell us which side is up. First-prize winner gets a four-foot-tall plastic blowup doll of "The Scream" by Edvard Munch, a \$40 value.

Runners-up, as always, get the coveted Style Invitational losers' T-shirts. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper stickers. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to the Style Invitational, Week 148, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, fax them to 202-334-4312, or submit them via the Internet to this address: losers@access.digex.net. Internet users: Please indicate the appropriate Week Number in the 'subject' field. Entries must be received on or before Monday, Jan. 22. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced in three weeks. Editors reserve the right to alter entries for taste, appropriateness or humor. No purchase necessary. The Faerie of the Fine Print & The Ear No One Reads wishes to thank Russell Beland of Springfield for today's Ear No One Reads. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate families are not eligible for prizes.

REPORT FROM WEEK 145,

in which we asked you to come up with cutesy-poo signs for the doors of public bathrooms.

◆ Fourth Runner-Up: **At a transvestite bar—**



Women Men (Jim Tierney, Fairfax Sta.)

◆ Third Runner-Up: **At the West Virginia chapter of Mensa—** Menz and Wimin.

(Kurt Rabin, Fredericksburg; Sarah Worcester, Bowie)

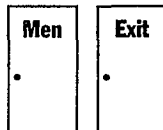
◆ Second Runner-Up: **At the Sigmund Freud Museum—** Cigars and Ashtrays.

(Jean and Bob Sorensen, Herndon)

◆ First Runner-Up: **A Catskill resort—** Ladies and Germs.

(Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

◆ And the Winner of the shoe totes from Burning Tree club: **At Burning Tree club—**



(Susan Reese, Arlington)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

At the Headquarters of the National Organization for Women— Co-Equals and Misogynistic Loud Mouthed Exploitive Chauvinistic Co-Equals. (Tommy Litz, Bowie)

At a Barry Manilow concert— Women and Women. (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

At Microsoft— 0 and 1. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel; Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park; Robert Hershey, Washington)

At Frank Sinatra's House— Men and Two-Bit Hookers. (Helene Haduch, Washington)

At RFK Stadium— Men and Line Forms Here. (Tom Neven, Spotsylvania, Va.)

At the "Hooked on Phonics" Headquarters— Buoulz and Geurlz. (William J. Szymanski, Vienna)

At the Jockey Club— Trophy and Atrophy. (Jerry Podlesak, Arlington)

At the offices of Cellmark DNA testing lab: [Barcode] and [Barcode] (Kevin Mellema, Falls Church)

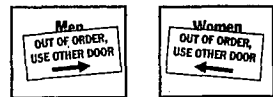
At Jack Kent Cooke's House— Mine and Mine. (Jacki Drucker, Arlington)

In Hell— Prostate Problems and Bladder Infections. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

At adult movie theater— Women and 25 Cents Per View. (Robin D. Grove, Washington)

At a Singles Bar— Professional, Attractive and Stable SF, and Professional, Attractive and Stable SM. (Sue Lin Chong, Washington)

At the Office of Management and Budget—



(Tommy Litz, Bowie)

At Hooters— Men and Employees. (Roger Hall, Harrisonburg)

At a kindergarten— Christophers and Kimberlys. (Annie Wauters, Washington)

At Mama Leone's— Large, Chunky White Gold Pinky Rings and Three-Carat Emerald-Cuts with Two Side Baguettes. (Annie Wauters, Washington)

On the set of "Gerald"— Men Who Were Once Women and Women Who Were Once Men. (Mark Plotrowski, Arlington)

At the Arkansas Jewish Home for the Aged— Bubbas and Bubbies. (Jonathan M. Kaye, Washington)

◆ And Last:

At the National Organization for Women— Men and Women (There is nothing "funny" about gender stereotyping in any form, including so-called "humor" in newspaper "contests.") (Joseph Romm, Washington)

Next Week: It's Like This

MISS MANNERS

A Case for Noontime Nuptials

By Judith Martin

What has happened to the fashionable daytime wedding? Miss Manners blushes to tell you. It has to do with what has happened to the courtship.

"If the wedding is during the day," wail modern brides and bridegrooms, "what are we supposed to do at night?" Miss Manners finds this a shame. She is not referring to the ways of modern courtship, which she tries not to think about, but to the demise of the daytime wedding. Traditionally, this is the most formal and glamorous of all weddings.

Consider how snazzy the gentlemen look at late morning or afternoon weddings in their striped pants and cutaways. Instead of being confined to the strict black and white of proper evening dress (Miss Manners is clearly not addressing herself to those who believe that gentlemen should express their emotions through haberdashery), they break out into exciting touches of pearl, dove and Oxford gray.

They may even be in thrilling possession of high silk hats and gray gloves, possibly even walking sticks, for use on their way to and fro, although they are not supposed to have so much fun whacking fences with their sticks on the way over that they decide not to go in.

The bride and bridesmaids may be just as heavily upholstered in laces, ribbons, bows, and clouds of tulle as at night, and all the other ladies get to wear outrageously flattering, or just outrageously outrageous, hats.

What is more, the admiring world gets to see all these beautifully done up people in clear sunlight. Passersby may be heard to call out, "Look! A wedding!"

The food is daintier and prettier, and fewer people end up being sick in the bushes. Guests haven't gone around all day thinking, "I might as well skip lunch, because I'm going to a wedding tonight"; they don't sit through the ceremony wondering how much longer it's going to last; they don't try so hard to sneak around the receiving line in the hope of finding a waiter.

Instead, they are pleasantly surprised to discover that the "wedding breakfast" to which they were invited is not, after all, cereal and bagels, but the quaint name for a full luncheon. At a tea following an afternoon wedding, guests will actually eat wedding cake, rather than leave clumps of it stuck on their plates because they have already eaten dessert.

For that matter, the guests won't start to leave before the wedding cake is cut because they figure that things are going to drag on all night. Daytime weddings don't just peter out, leaving the bridal couple with a lot of dishes and the band on overtime. They end in a romantic finale, during which the newly married couple sweeps away while their wide-awake guests give them a rousing, if not always decorous, send-off.

Sure, but what then? That depressing question is what has created the endless wedding. Miss Manners does not deny that an evening wedding can be charming, but regrets to see it being regarded as the unrivaled top of the line. There are other reasons to maintain the supremacy of the daytime wedding, starting with the fact that an elaborate daytime wedding costs considerably less than an elaborate evening wedding.

It is also possible that the couple might want to go off on a wedding trip, and a daytime wedding enables them to get started. Between what they save on the wedding and what they save from not hanging around entertaining their wedding guests all weekend, it should be a pretty nice trip.

Miss Manners presumes that a vacation is something that bridal couples still appreciate, even though they may not think of it as a chance finally to be alone together—just what those who give marathon weddings appear to want to avoid.

And this brings her back to the question of what a couple married during the day is expected to do for the evening, other than catch an airplane. Miss Manners has a shocking suggestion for them.

Stay home. Most of them seem already to have homes together, and there is where they might begin married life, over a beautifully prearranged dinner together.

Perhaps they may have had such romantic dinners already, but this one will still be different. They will be married. And no matter how anticipatory modern courtship has become, being married is still different from not being married. The sensation, both delicious and frightening, is one that they should savor together.

But just in case, they could also stop on the way home and pick up a video.

DEAR MISS MANNERS:

A delicate situation exists. What should I do about it?

Gentle Reader:

Handle it delicately. Next question, please.

DEAR MISS MANNERS:

Is it proper to use a computer for very personal letters? They will be legible, but I shudder to think that one day an ex-lover, when asked if he had any old love letters, will pull out my printouts and disappoint his audience.

Then again, love letters aren't meant to be framed and put on display for beauty, but to be read. I have very poor handwriting—a learning disability I have always had, but have found ways around. I use a portable laptop for taking notes in class and for personal correspondence.

Gentle Reader:

Really good love letters are meant to be pressed to the heart and kissed, after which they become illegible anyway.

Miss Manners isn't sure that they are not better off being indecipherable during and after the romance. But surely you are in a better position than she to know whether this gentleman's heart would become more inflamed by exposure to your clarity or to his imagination.

DEAR MISS MANNERS:

I ride a bicycle early in the morning in a "safe" neighborhood, passing a number of walkers and joggers. I am old enough to remember the stipulation that it is always supposed to be the woman who speaks first, but I have noticed that invariably it is the men I pass who say "Good morning" first.

I have concluded that on the unconscious level, they may be trying to reassure the woman that she has nothing to fear from them.

Gentle Reader:

Having seen little politeness on the conscious level, Miss Manners is not about to argue with any that comes up from the floor below.

Etiquette, too, has its underlying foundation—manners. This comprises the principles on which precise rules, such as the one you cite, are based. While etiquette rules may vary and change, the idea is always to keep serving those principles.

The purpose of allowing ladies to speak first was to protect them from danger by giving them the option of ignoring cads. (Some ladies like cads, of course, but trying to protect them is fortunately not etiquette's problem.)

The custom you describe, although the reverse, is also designed to protect the lady. What is more, it protects her from the added danger of falling off her bicycle while she pauses to consider who is a cad and who is not. That alone strikes Miss Manners as a change for the better.

DEAR MISS MANNERS:

All my life, I have never been one for pomp and circumstance, i.e., graduation ceremonies, weddings, funerals. I am in no way a traditional person.

Now that I am getting married, I would be delighted just to let a justice of the peace marry us in his/her office and be done with it. I am compromising by having a few relatives and friends present.

Here's the problem—I thought we could send out announcements after the wedding, but my fiancé says that if we don't send invitations, we won't get any money that his family is famous for giving as gifts. As tacky as it sounds, how do you tell people about the wedding, not get them to come and still get money?

Gentle Reader:

How do you get Miss Manners to dress up a tacky idea so that it sounds socially presentable?

You can't.

She doesn't feel like it.

And don't think she's just sulking because you disdain tradition. It's your unwillingness to allow others to forgo tradition that bothers her. Miss Manners has never been one for the tradition of sending wedding presents to people who (quite aside from whether they make much of their weddings) can't be bothered with the senders.

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Soaps On Call

By Sydney Omarr

The Washington Post provides daily updates of soap operas on Post-Haste, its free telephone information service. Call 202-334-9000 from a touchtone phone and then enter the category code of the soap opera you want: All My Children (8201); Another World (8202); As the World Turns (8203); The Bold and the Beautiful (8204); Days of Our Lives (8205); General Hospital (8206); Guiding Light (8207); Loving (8208); One Life to Live (8209); The Young and the Restless (8211). For a directory of the codes, enter 8200.

Aries (March 21-April 19): Lively dialogue with family member causes you to feel "this is one Sunday I won't soon forget!" Focus on clash of ideas, proposals both business and marriage. Virgo figures prominently.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Emphasis on domestic issues that include possible change of residence, marital status. Libran helps get house in order, arranges for food, entertainment. Another Taurus plays major role.

Gemini (May 21-June 20): Lunar position highlights adventure, discovery, vitality, physical attraction. Play waiting game; don't be coerced into making snap decision. Pisces native declares, "Sunday with you is inspiring!"

Cancer (June 21-July 22): Focus on personal environment, property, home, surprise return of family member. You'll be aided in checking references, invoices, special requests. Capricorn, another Cancer native involved.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Relative talks about foreign food and foreign land. Perceive potential; arrange to dine with one who is bilingual. Project that has laid dormant will be revived, almost momentarily. Aries involved.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Lost article retrieved—close to home, perhaps among laundry. Take initiative; be open to possibility of new love. Highlight showmanship, color coordination, entertainment. Leo represented.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Intuition hits bull's-eye—events, circumstances occur in manner to bring you closer to goal, possible riches. Make personal appearances; wear shades of blue. Aquarian figures in scenario.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Focus on personality, social activity, par-

Horoscope

ticipation in secret meeting. Give full play to intellectual curiosity—different mode of transportation featured. Gemini plays role.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Break the ice! Toss aside excessive shyness, speak up, introduce product and yourself to attractive, creative persons. Break down walls of resistance, including language and distance.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Study Leo, Sagittarius messages for added wisdom. Leadership role on tap; accept with enthusiasm. Get thoughts on paper, disseminate information. Flirtation lends spice. Delicious!

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Check Libra message. Emphasis on restoration of domestic harmony, music, style, fashion. People express desire to be with you. Money you gave up for lost will be back in your hands.

Pisces (Feb. 19-Mar. 20): Accent mystery, intrigue—don't tell all! Another Pisces expresses curiosity, is ambivalent toward you. Protect self at close quarters, refuse to divulge financial facts. Secret mission involved!

If Jan. 14 is your birthday: You are analytical, dynamic, creative, attractive. You have talent for writing, possess intellectual curiosity, get joy from exploring, learning about people and fighting for underdog. Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius persons play significant roles in your life. During February, domestic changes occur, including where you live, lifestyle, income, marital status. Gift received enhances surroundings, could be musical instrument. April your most memorable month of 1996.

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For a detailed horoscope from Sydney Omarr, phone 1-900-656-8488. The cost is \$1 a minute; average call lasts four minutes.

CHRONIC ASTHMA?

If you have year-round asthma and:

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