

"According to the results of a recent scientific study, we, as humans, perceive the most average features as being the most beautiful. If you take all the noses in the world, add them together and divide by the total number of noses, you end up with what is perceived as the most beautiful nose."

- Dr. Cyrano Bergerpac



The Rock Says It All

Era: Circa 1990

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Frank and Maisy were lovers. The passion between them was as thick and sweet as honey, as plentiful and tumultuous as the flood waters of the Fraser River.

Maisy basked in how kindly Frank treated her, how he took her to all the nicest restaurants, how he showered her with gifts. He was just plain romantic. So romantic that he made Maisy feel she was special.

The appreciation wasn't just on Maisy's side. Frank revelled in how cute and petite Maisy looked on his arm, and how she always knew just the right thing to say when his ego was floundering.

It was no surprise to Maisy, or anyone else for that matter, when Frank asked her to marry him. Smitten, she floated around like a dead leaf, for over a week, and Frank strutted with the best of the pigeons on the Woolco parking lot.

"She's reeled in a big one," Maisy's mother gushed to her friends. And her friends agreed. Maisy knew where to drop a hook; she had figured out a few years before that the best fish always swam in schools - in this particular case, McGill, the Faculty of Law.

Maisy realized that Frank's devotion gave her access to resources that weren't going to be possible unless she got an education. With his income, Maisy knew, they would be able to buy a house, lots of furniture and a bed - so he could worship her side of it.

Once Maisy and Frank had made the momentous decision to marry, the two of them went shopping for a diamond ring. They looked for a long time, and Frank kept saying, "No. This stone is too small."

Maisy just melted inside. Look at how much he loves me, she thought to herself. My diamond is going to be bigger than any of my friends', because I'm special. Frank loves me so much that he wants to tell the whole world, by buying me a big, big diamond.

When they found the right ring, Frank expanded like bread dough. This will just slay the other guys, he thought. I'm pretty successful to be able to afford a rock that looks like this. Then, he and Maisy headed for the bank so they could start a lasting relationship with the bank manager.

Maisy rushed home after their shopping trip with the ring glowing on her finger. "Look, Mom," she called.

"Wow," Maisy's mother swooned. "He must love you a lot."

Maisy's Dad just looked at the ring, grunted a bit, and thought to himself, it's nice that I managed to raise a kid that's moving up. Frank has a lot of economic potential.

The wedding was full of lace and froth, paid for by Maisy's parents who were hoping to impress their future son in law. They did, of course. So successfully, that he resolved to live on the other side of town. "Relatives are like rugs," he explained to Maisy. "They're always underfoot unless you keep them out of the house."

Maisy gave up her name during the ceremony. She thought it was important that the world perceive her and Frank as a unit. Frank agreed; he thought it was appropriate to label the things he owned. He labelled all his clothing. Or rather his mother labelled it for him.

After the wedding, Maisy worked for a few years, although Frank never liked it. He wanted someone at home to make his meals and bring his slippers. Frank liked to tease Maisy. "The dog can only handle the slipper part," he said. "I need someone with thumbs to take care of the rest."

So, once they had managed a down-payment on the largest house in Varsity Estates, Maisy stayed home to fulfil her responsibilities as Frank's wife. She made sure that she kept her nails polished, hoping that Frank would notice how nice her thumbs were, and she churned out two perfect children. Since theirs was the ideal family, their first-born was a boy, the second a girl.

Through it all, Maisy worked very hard to maintain her figure, and was relatively successful. Frank appreciated her efforts and encouraged her to wear provocative bikinis and low cut dresses. He wanted the other guys to notice what a great looking chick he'd married.

The bikinis let in a lot of UV which was great for Maisy's tan, but not so good for her delicate skin. When she turned 35, she noticed a few crowsfeet and some cheek ridges that showed she spent a lot of time laughing. She decided to give up sun-bathing and humour.

More often now, Frank seemed to be pre-occupied with his legal practice. He didn't worship her quite as nicely as he once had. On her fortieth birthday, he mentioned that he was going to trade her in for two twenties. "Two twenties is only forty bucks. If you got forty bucks for me, you wouldn't know how to spend it," Maisy chirped. "I do all the shopping around here." In spite of

her cheerful response, Maisy felt unappreciated so she spent the next few days weeping like a maple tree.

Things looked up a bit on their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary when Frank told her he'd marry her all over again. He bought her a new diamond. Maisy practically swooned when she saw it. The rock weighed so much that she didn't like wearing it. It aggravated the arthritis in her finger joints.

"He really does love me," Maisy told herself, especially when she found out that Frank had phoned his friend, Art, the day before he purchased the ring. Frank had asked Art how many karats Art's wife's diamond weighed. Maisy's weighed more.

Still, things weren't quite right. The new TV programs that fall were blasé, and Maisy couldn't think of anything to buy for the house.

Three weeks after her birthday, she made an appointment with a psychiatrist who was male. She told him that she was bored with her marriage. He consoled her by telling her that she and her husband were going through menopause.

Reassured, Maisy announced to Frank that she was getting a job.

Frank told Maisy that he didn't want her to work. She should appreciate being able to look after him, he said, and if she did go to work, she had to be home evenings and weekends to make his meals. "I'm at the age where men have heart attacks," he told her, "if their wives don't feed them properly."

On Maisy's forty-fifth birthday, (the kids were grown and had left home). Maisy was washing her hands, at the bathroom sink. She took off her big, big diamond and was absolutely devastated when it skimmed down the drain. She felt like she'd lost her best friend and of course she had.

She called the plumber. The plumber offered to trade for services instead of cash. He was an accommodating man, he told Maisy, and liked lawyer's wives. Maisy was disappointed when he didn't find the ring.

Frank blew up like one of those hot-air balloons with dragon's breath. "How could you be so careless?" he asked. "To replace that ring will cost 15 thousand dollars. It's a good thing I have insurance on it. Be sure you don't tell any of our friends about this."

A couple of days later, Frank felt so fed up that he bought a Porsche and picked up two cuties. They were both twenty.

While he was driving around, a drunk driver hit his car. He and his cuties ended up in the Foothills Hospital. Maisy visited Frank there and found him hanging like a hunk of beef in a meat locker. His legs were in traction.

Maisy realized that Frank had just washed a Porsche down the drain to keep her ring company. That didn't bother her quite as much as the cuties did. She knew that her friends would figure out that her marriage was in trouble.

So she admitted to herself that it was. And felt relieved. She dropped the false front that she had maintained for twenty-five years. A few days after Frank was on his feet, Maisy got a job and kicked him out of the house. Frank was going to pay through the nose, she decided.

Frank figured he already had. "I've been wearing a ring through my nose for years," he told one of his cuties, "and it doesn't have a diamond on it, either."

Maisy didn't think he'd paid enough. She knew the divorce was going to cost her a lot, so she went to church to pray for the Almighty dollar. Then she took Frank to court and sued him for everything he had. She got it.

As for Frank: he stopped at the grocery store when the ruling came down. He was going bananas. The guy has never remarried. This time around, he's settled for labelling his car. He bought a vanity license plate for a hundred and fifty bucks. Cheap.



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