MADELINE. All of them, I'm her agent. *What Women Think, What Men Think, What Men Think Woman Think.*

JANE. *What Men Think Woman Think Men Think.*

MADELINE. There's a new one out. My hair stylist, Julian, lent it to me. *Men Are From Mars, Men Are from Venus.*

JANE. You mean, *Women Are From Venus.*

MADELINE. No, *Men Are From Venus.* It's for gay couples.

JANE. I hope it works for someone. Those self-help books haven't done me any good.

MADELINE. Tell me about it. We could read every self-help book in print, and we'd still wind up in therapy.

*(***ALLISON** *enters from outside door.)*

ALLISON. Oh, hello. I'm Allison Taylor. I'm here to join the support group.

(They all stand and shake hands.)

JANE. I'm Jane Rudolf and this is Madeline Weinberg.

MADELINE. A pleasure to meet you.

ALLISON. Where's Doctor Monahan?

MADELINE. She'll be down shortly. I think she's having a little domestic problem.

ALLISON. Is this the whole group? Just the three of us?

JANE. Oh my, no, Loretta should be here any minute. She works for a slave-driver who keeps her locked up at that desk from nine to five-thirty every day. The she has to rush across town to get here.

MADELINE. She told me she has to eat lunch at her desk, ask permission to go to the bathroom, and sneak outside to have a smoke.

ALLISON. Really? What's her occupation?

JANE. Assistant to a stress therapist.

*(***LORETTA** *enters.)*

LORETTA. Hi, everyone. Sorry I'm late.

MADELINE. Loretta Morris, Allison Taylor.

ALLISON. Pleased to meet you.

(**ALLISON** *reaches out to shake hands.*)

LORETTA. *(taking out pillow)* Do you know what that bastard did to me today!?

ALLISON. Who, the slave driver?

(**LORETTA** *gives* **ALLISON** *a skeptical glance.*)

MADELINE. We told her about your boss.

LORETTA. No, not that bastard. "That" bastard.

JANE. She means Frank, her boyfriend. He is still your boyfriend, isn't he?

LORETTA. Who knows. I can't get a straight answer out of him, much less a commitment.

MADELINE. What did I tell you about dating cops? In the five years I've know her, she's dated three cops.

JANE. Yeah, can't you give a fireman a chance? They're a lot more reliable. You know where they are half the time, and they learn how to cook at the firehouse.

LORETTA. I don't know, it doesn't really feel the same. Cops are so forceful, so...I don't know...

ALLISON. Dangerous?

LORETTA. Yeah, that's it. Why, did you ever date a policeman?

ALLISON. No, but my sister is married to one, and we're pretty close. We work together.

JANE. Who, you and your sister, or you and the cop?

ALLISON. No, me and my sister. We used to double date a lot before we started the beauty salon.

LORETTA. Unisex?

ALLISON. No, we just dated men, but, whatever floats your boat.

MADELINE. What's the name of your shop?

ALLISON. "Hair Apparent."

JANE. *(thinking it over)* Hair apparent, hair apparent. I don't get it?

ALLISON. Neither do I.

LORETTA. Well, I know what I get. *(punches pillow)* A big pain in the neck from a big fathead cop I'm allegedly dating. He goes down to Atlantic City with his buddies for the weekend then comes back and has the nerve to ask me if he can borrow for the rent. Like I'm made of money or something. I'm barely getting by now. Ohhh, he really pisses me off. I think I need a cigarette.

ALLISON. Well, you see, there's your problem.

LORETTA. What do you mean?

ALLISON. The cigarettes.

LORETTA. Don't tell me you're one of those ex-smokers! OHH, you are the worst. I don't think I need a lecture from you honey, my cardiologist is doing just fine.

ALLISON. I'm not even referring to your health, which is a legitimate problem. I'm talking about your lack of money problem.

LORETTA. I'm not following you.

ALLISON. How many packs a day do you smoke?

LORETTA. Oh, not much, maybe a half.

MADELINE. *(correcting her)* Maybe two and a half..

ALLISON. Okay, we'll say it's a pack and a half. At seven dollars a pack, that's ten-fifty times 365 days. Let's see, carry the five and add the…

LORETTA. Three thousand, eight hundred and thirty two dollars. You're not the first one who's told me.

JANE. You spend close to four thousand dollars a year on cigarettes?

MADELINE. Don't even get her started on the three cups of Starbuck's coffee she drinks a day.

ALLISON. There you go. How much for a latte? Three, four bucks a cup, times three a day, carry the eight, divide by three…

LORETTA. All right, all right, I get the point. Are we here discuss to my net worth or bash men?

JANE. *(referring to* **ALLISON***)* I think Blondie's actually starting to make sense.

End #5