

Clothes Encounters

Written by L.A. Plume
Tuesday, 21 April 2015 13:59



Dear Ms. Plume,

I attended a lovely afternoon tea this past weekend. I expected it to be a very civilized affair and it was until some woman who seemed to be dressed like “Barbie Goes to Tea,” in what I guess was her rendition of a Victorian wedding gown – complete with froufrou hat, wrist length white kid gloves, and patent leather shoes – approached my friend and chided her for taking off her gloves! My friend was perhaps the most beautifully dressed woman in the room and her gloves were placed atop her handbag. She graciously didn’t respond, but what is the proper etiquette for gloves at tea?

LuLu

Dear LuLu,

People who have of no idea of what the rules are should keep quiet. According to Emily Post, a woman always must remove her gloves when eating, tea foods or otherwise; and it is proper to place them on top of her handbag, as your friend did. Just for the record, patent leather, in the truest form, is not worn until after Memorial Day and kid gloves are for evening; she should have worn cotton. Obviously she didn’t know any better, but it sounds like she went all out to the best of her ability for the affair so she may be forgiven.

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L. A. Plume

Dear Ms. Plume,

I was out to lunch the other day when an acquaintance of mine came over and complimented my skirt. Since everyone knows I love thrift shopping, I had no problem confiding that I'd purchased it at Goodwill. She said, "Yes, I know, I'm the one who donated it." On another occasion, someone did just about the same thing in reference to a handbag I was carrying; she said, "How do you like my handbag?" I looked at hers with the assumption that she had one identical to it herself. Nope, apparently I had bought hers at the thrift shop. When people donate items to thrift shops, don't they expect that other people will buy them? Or maybe just people they don't know? Would they stop a stranger on the street and make the same comment? Should I have said something, or was standing there with my jaw dropped open comment enough?

Thrifty

Dear Thrifty,

I'm going to a party tonight and I fully expect someone to come up to me and tell me they were the one who donated the dress I will be wearing to the Boys and Girls Thrift Store. I will simply evoke Dorothy Parker and say some thing like, "I'm so glad you had such good taste and so sorry you outgrew it. I love this dress!" Clothes and other assorted items can be so much more interesting if they have some sort of provenance. Imagine the parties that dress may have attended! I once bought a pair of men's pajamas at a *brocante* in France and I had dreams in French every time I wore them, it was so much fun. Enjoy what you have. They were probably sad they gave those things away when they saw how much better they looked on you!

L.A. Plume