

the **BIG CHILL**

When the flame goes out

By Kimberly Gadgette

"I have a headache."

The partner decided to respond by employing empathy instead of annoyance. "Aw, hon, a bad one?"

"It's a killer. And I've got that meeting first thing in the morning, and I'm worried about that sound the car's making, and maybe I should call in a plumber about that drip—"

"If you don't feel like sex, it's fine."

"Really? You mean it?" His face relaxed, the constipated look replaced with one of sheer joy. As if he were 8, and his mom had just told him he didn't have to go to school.

But she wasn't going to let him get off that easily. "You know, George," she started, "it wasn't that long ago when your face lit up the exact same way when you were about to screw me into oblivion."

She walked out of the room, his feeble protestations barely audible. All she heard was something that she already knew—this relationship, so very hot just two months ago, was about to receive last rites.

Ever since Cavegirl told Cro-Mag Boy that she wanted to skip a session, there's a myth that we're fussy, frigid, unwilling, etc. But there's a whole other story out there: It's not always us. Sometimes it's them.

There. I've said it. I will ignore the dissenting screams of a thousand indignant comedians named Shecky roaring in my ear. Instead, like a luxurious night with my favorite vibrator, I will press on.

I recall hearing about a woman whose lover's flame had lessened into a sputtering flicker a mere six weeks into their affair. Desperate, she read about a tried-and-true sex tip and followed the instructions. She donned crotchless fishnets and stilettos, and then wrapped herself in "come-unpeel-me-baby" plastic wrap. When she heard his car in the driveway, she arranged herself on the dining room table, sporting a sexy smile. He walked in, grunted in her direction, and went into the bedroom to change. She waited, telling herself he was just distracted by work. When he finally returned, he asked if dinner was ready.



"But ..." she said.

"But what?"

"Don't I look different to you?"

"Yeah—you look cold. Why don't you get dressed?"

Young or old, chubby or thin, blond, redhead, brunette or a tad gray, women of all ages are telling me that there's something funky going on with male sexual desire. Though usually a man has no problem getting it up for a total stranger, the idea of having a constant partner in his bed sometimes seems to be more of a turn-off than oh, say, an alligator nipping at his 'nads.

When the urge to merge (the "mergency," if you will) is gone, when he's no longer shoving his hot new babe

up against a concrete wall or bending her over a gnarled tree stump in the nearest virgin forest, why a sudden winter chill? Does his pilot light go out when the oven in question belongs to him?

It's not that he still can't take her into the forest or pound her against the door of his minivan—but it seems a little silly. Especially since it's so much more comfortable at home. Inside. Without the very real possibility of the nice policeman charging them with all sorts of acts against nature. ("Against nature? Well now that I think about it, I was pounding her pretty hard against that tree stump, so I guess it was an act against nature ...")

These sexy yet so sad women do their best to hang in there. The rationales tumble fast and furious from their neglected, ruby red lips: Maybe when he gets more comfortable in the relationship; maybe when the rush at work eases off, maybe when his ex-wife stops dragging him back into court ...

But here's the fact, which is probably a lot harder than he is: If he isn't dying for his new lover after six weeks, or two months, or six months, then he's not likely to get friskier down the road. Some men, like some women, just don't want that much sex. And if she's experiencing a whole lot of frustration, rejection and sorrow in the bedroom, she needs to get out while her self-esteem is still intact.

We all deserve to be with mates who match our sexual appetite.

No more excuses—the fuck stops here.