

# Mammary Dearest

These are the breast years of our lives.

**W**e are living in the most boob-centric time since Napoleon dated Josephine. At no time since the days when ancient Minoan ladies were riding around on the back of bulls in those fetching frontless bodice things have pop culture platters been on such full display. It must be said—and it must be said by a female, because any male acknowledgement of the fruited plains, even those offered up in a Frederick’s of Hollywood bustier, will be met with a self-righteous “Eyes up here, mister!”—that America’s purple mountain majesties are hanging out there in ways that used to require a subscription to *National Geographic*. (To which you might reply, variously, “No duh” or “Come out of the cave and put your bayonet down. The emperor has ordered all loyal subjects to surrender to the American conquerors. And, PS, he’s not actually a god after all.”)

I have been aware of women with enormous flotation devices strapped to their chests ever since my stint as a screenwriter in the nineties. I completed postgraduate work on the engorgement and exhibition of the American female pectoralis major while visiting Hollywood, where all advances in mammarian hydroponification and exploitation come from. As an observer from Amish country, I was allowed to gape openly at women with the body fat of tsetse flies—women who had not ingested a carb since their last teething biscuit—tottering down Rodeo Drive, wobbling beneath the weight of anatomically incorrect udders.

The first surgically amplified and exhibited pair I observed at close range belonged to a celebrated producer for whom I was adapting a screenplay. Whilst caught up in the frenzy of hectoring her assistant over lethal macchiato foam inconsistencies, said producer happened to bump into me. On a molecular level, I registered that the ultrasproingy contact with her hood ornaments was unlike any I had known before. The collision was so odd that during the next dress-



ing-down—during which she pelted the assistant with the capers she didn’t want on her grilled salmon—I copped another feel. Again, sproing. What was in her bra? Flubber? Or something even more unnatural?

My suspicions were confirmed when we got down to work. The producer’s “process” involved “spitballing” ideas such as “We have to have a scene with Jayden and Penelope riding in a car. They’re royally pissed at each other. Not speaking. Then, all of a sudden, Penelope starts fanning the air, holds her nose, and opens her window. The camera moves in. Hold on Jayden’s triumphant grin. And *scene*.” Brilliant. Maybe we should add a caption: “P.U.”

Since generating ideas of this caliber required maximum blood flow to the brain, she conducted these sessions while lying on her couch. That was when I noticed that, unlike regular breast tissue—which, after the age of eighteen or

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so, tends to flow in the direction of the armpits when horizontal—hers didn't migrate either west or east; it remained mounded atop her chest, immobile as a speed bump. This was a configuration I would not witness again until the Internet brought forth its great bounty of sites where the women came defoliated and with those speed-bump chests as droop-proof as Brunhilde's breastplate.

But all of this mammo-fixation, both the enhancement and exhibition of, never seemed to have anything to do with me. I simply assumed that it was undertaken on Planet Low Self-Esteem by the colorful local Daddy Isuans where it was one of the life-threatening rites, like bikini waxing and bulimia, that they used to celebrate their passage to eternal girlhood. Then something happened that shattered my innocent belief: Tina Fey busted out.

From her first appearance on *Saturday Night Live*, the comic goddess and paradigm shifter had always been one of us, a regular girl making it on brains, not breasts, a girl much like the cheese-loving überschlub Liz Lemon, the character she created and plays on *30 Rock*. Then Fey, well, she never augmented, but suddenly we were seeing a

whole lot more of the Liz Lemon cheese balls than ever before. It was all explained in a *Vanity Fair* article in which Alec Baldwin admitted that he was the one who advised her to self-actualize by hefting them out there. "I'd say to her, 'You know, you're a really beautiful girl. . . . You are a very attractive woman and you've got to work that. You've got to pop one more button on that blouse.'" (When the topic is female empowerment, who wouldn't listen to the only dad who cares enough to bring it to his eleven-year-old daughter's attention that she is a "thoughtless little pig"?)

And so I had my own come-to-sleazes moment. As is often the case, it happened at a major airport. I'd been invited to Houston to give a speech to a conference of businesswomen. Since I'm light on biz-chick wardrobe, I scored a Diane Von Furstenberg-esque wrap at one of my favorite thrift stores. It was a one-size-fits-all number that I didn't need to try on, which was good, since the dressing rooms were being used for intravenous drug injection.

Consequently, I was in Houston, getting ready to give my speech, when I discovered that the dress was cut from an ancient Minoan pattern. Since my only other choice was the flip-flops and T-shirt I'd traveled in, I was

forced into an unprecedented unveiling of my own personal bodacious tatas. Taking the podium was a version of the wearing-your-pajamas-to-school nightmare. Luckily, all the biz chicks had also left themselves plenty of room to breathe, and I blended right in. But this was not the case at Bush Intercontinental, where, thanks to my plunging neckline, I experienced a whole new dimension of security "screening." Harnessing the hitherto unknown power of my pillows of pulchritude, I deflected all male eye contact. I could have had a Molotov cocktail in each hand, but unless I'd painted a skull and crossbones across my chest, very few men I encountered that day would have sensed a threat.

This was remarkable, since I have been able to pass construction sites for decades now without the slightest whisper of a hubba hubba. It was unnerving to be released from so many years of invisibility. As I walked the twins to my flight, I wondered what other secret powers awaited if I would just follow Alec Baldwin's advice and "pop one more button." But there was no need. I had demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt the new and unparalleled might of the mammary. ♣

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