

# Secret shopping

Trying to figure out Victoria's Secret

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I'm the kind of fella who feels comfortable most everywhere I go.

I can be just as comfortable in a fancy French restaurant as I am out in the hay field. I can wear my boots and hat to a punk rock concert and not even feel out of place. I'm a pretty good mixer and I don't embarrass too easily.

Of course, that was before being assigned to the duty of buying lingerie for my new bride.

## Girl stuff

Friends and relatives held a couple of bridal showers for my wife-to-be ahead of the wedding.

Her girlfriends put on a shower for her, and, there, her bridesmaids gave her a gift certificate for some honeymoon lingerie at Victoria's Secret. And I was elected to do the shopping and use the certificate.

I've heard about Victoria's Secret. I've even walked by a couple of their stores at the shopping mall and taken a brief, sideways glance at the displays in their window as I hurried by. I'm always afraid to take too long a look for fear of being labeled a pervert.

Now I was supposed to walk right in that store and do some serious shopping.

I tried to pick a time of low mall traffic to dart in and do the deed. I chose a weekday morning and wore my least-conspicuous cowboy hat to keep from being recognized.

The sales lady took one look at me and knew I wasn't there to browse. "Can I help you, sir?" she asked, much to my relief. With a little expert help I could be in and out of there in no time flat.

I explained my predicament – the gifted gift certificate, getting married, shopping for a little something for the honeymoon, admitting to my status as a first-time customer.

When she heard honeymoon, she steered me clear away from the flannel long johns and took me to the sexy section.

## Down to business

Like I said, I'm usually a pretty comfortable person. But standing there amongst all that underwear and stuff, I was as nervous as a nudist crossing a barbed-wire fence.

The sales lady did what she could to put me at ease. She showed me what was popular with other honeymoon shoppers and she even tried a couple things on – the mannequin, that is – for me.

Judging how one of those outfits would look like on a person by seeing them on a mannequin took all the imagination this imaginative cowboy could muster.

One thing I could never have imagined is the price tag on those skimpy little things. Those little lace contraptions were about the same price as a pair of insulated bib overalls! And I know some ranchers who'd prefer to see their wife in the overalls! But, being a newlywed, I opted for the satin and lace.

I took a few glances around the store to see if I recognized anyone while I was shopping. I monitored the flow of people outside in the mall as I tried to blend in with my surroundings. It's tough to hide a 6-foot-2 cowboy in a lingerie store.

Finally, the choices were made and we headed to the cash register. Thanks to a good sales person, we surpassed the amount of the gift certificate and I dug into my pocket for the extra cash.

I bolted through the door and nonchalantly merged into the flow of shoppers with my pink- and white-striped shopping bag.

The experience didn't scar me too much, but I noticed something that would have been pretty handy as I made my exit.

It was a mail-order catalog.

