

His Return, by Percival Wilde

Helen Hartley is overjoyed that her husband John finally is coming home. She and her friend Sylvia prepare Helen to greet him by putting on the very same dress she wore when she saw him off at the train station to war three year earlier. However, the realization that she doesn't fit into the dress anymore forces the once carefree, playful Helen to face her fears of growing older. Helen also reveals a deeper fear that she had for her husband's life while he was away. As she says, she has "painted and powdered and dined and danced with the youngest of them" to try assuaging her true feelings. Now, all that she has buried has resurfaced, and instead of being the haven she hoped to be for her husband upon his return, she feels she is an empty shell of a woman with merely lame attempts to be something better.

Yet John doesn't notice anything like that. He says this is all that can be expected when looking in the mirror for worth, and Helen is wonderful to him because she is Helen and no one else. Because it means so much to her, and he cares about her feelings, John does make sure she knows that she looks beautiful to him, and he even goes so far as to pretend he notices something about her that he knows will make her happy, although he'd never have guessed unless the maid told him to notice it for Helen's sake. Because John turns out to be wrong, Helen realizes how ridiculous her prepping and planning really was in the face of her husband, who would do anything to make her feel worthy and loved.

Sometimes, women try to ignore true negative feelings and feel better about themselves by partying and making themselves look better physically. Having fun and taking care of our bodies aren't bad things, but they can make a real problem worse, because the real problem is ignored. While women tell themselves that they are ignoring the problem for others' sakes – so others don't have to deal with it also – it leaves most men wondering if they are doing anything wrong, because they can tell something is amiss. Furthermore, physical beauty is not what a godly man desires in their sisters in Christ, and it probably would make men's lives a lot easier if women didn't spend all their energy trying to look like an unrealistic Hollywood expectation. Both men and women alike should spend their energy being better people on the inside, which includes taking the time to identify and remedy shortcomings instead of ignoring them in the name of strength.

James 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Proverbs 31:1, 11, 20, 25, 30 "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised."

1 Peter 3:7 "Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life."