



until 5pm on weekdays to avoid all but a handful of male-unfriendly shows. Now we must navigate around wall-to-wall *Project Runway* reruns on Bravo, multiple networks dedicated to home design and something called *Men in Trees*.

Even our beloved MTV—the former home of Pauly Shore, *Beavis and Butt-Head* and Warrant videos—has gone girlie with tripe like *The Hills* and *America's Next Top Model*. It is virtually impossible to flip around the dial and not run into at least one show that defies ghost whisperers, preys on the dreams of beauty queens from South Carolina or glamorizes promiscuous urbanites who spend well above their means. And believe me, I've tried.

# KRYPTONITE FOR GUYS

## One man takes a stand against femme-tastic TV

A pop quiz for the ladies out there: What do *Cashmere Mafia* and *Lipstick Jungle* have in common? I mean, besides being *Sex and the City* clones starring gaggles of lovelies who have never been in my kitchen?

Answer: They are both shows I will never watch.

Now, I'm not suggesting that these newcomers aren't top-notch TV shows. For all I know, they are works of art, and admitting I will never watch them is the same as saying I have no interest ever in beholding the Sistine Chapel, the Great Pyramid of Cheops or Rachel Bilson in a bikini. It's just that, well, I'm a guy. And as such, I am obliged to hold sacred the same code of conduct that has been guiding the TV-watching habits of millions of dudes like me for eons, or at least since the debut of *Kate & Allie*. That is, I simply pretend that chick shows—the TV equivalent of Kryptonite for guys—don't exist.

Thankfully, the producers have helped me out by appending wussy modifiers to the kick-ass TV terms *mafia* and *jungle*, thereby branding their products with a secret message, visible only to my brethren and me, that roughly translates to "Run! For the love of Moses, run!"

But it isn't as easy as it used to be to walk our chosen path, which we desperately desire to be devoid of references to McSteamy and Manolo Blahnik. Gone are the days when we needed only to exclude Lifetime from the "favorite channels" setting on our cable boxes and keep our sets turned off

Lest you think I only watch shows that will never cause me to question my manhood, like I did that one time I sat through an episode of *Providence*, let me assure you I am 100 percent behind stuff that appeals as much to women as it does to men—like *Lost*, *30 Rock*, *Battlestar Galactica* and *Survivor*. Furthermore, I want as little to do with *American Gladiators* as I would with a drunk Mel Gibson, and I have no idea how *According to Jim* has lasted so long. And I'm not telling you what to watch. All I'm asking for here is some help in retaining my dignity.

So here's the deal, and I think I speak on behalf of dudes everywhere when I say this: You can have your ballroom-dancing celebrities and your catfighting model wannabes and whatever the hell happens on *Men in Trees*. Just don't ask us to watch it with you. In return, we promise not to take you to Hooters for Valentine's Day again. Ever.

*John Sellers is the author of Perfect From Now On: How Indie Rock Saved My Life (Simon & Schuster)*



MTV went from *Beavis & Butt-Head* to the girls of *The Hills*

