

The Rose & the Sword

How To Balance Your Feminine & Masculine Energies



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Introduction

The popular ideal of finding one's "soul mate" in a partner stems from the relationship between the two basic energies that exist, beyond gender and sexual identity, in each of us. We all possess a mix of these energies. When the inner feminine energy is weak and the inner masculine energy is dominant, a person loses his or her inner direction, for feminine energy is like a guiding system; without its guidance, actions can lead to unchecked aggression. When the inner masculine energy is undeveloped and the inner feminine energy is strong, swirls of inspired thought dissolve like mist, ungrounded in the action needed for manifestation. When these two energies are equally developed, the individual is richly endowed with inspiration and intuition (the feminine) as well as the ability to express these riches in the world (the masculine).

In *The Rose and the Sword: How to Balance Your Feminine and Masculine Energies*, we invite our readers to enter a realm of both contemporary and fantasy tales that will stimulate both their minds and their emotions. Each tale addresses different aspects of the feminine and masculine energies. Four archetypal characters will appear throughout the book: Sophia and William represent the positive feminine and masculine energies; Lillith and Ruel represent the negative feminine and masculine energies. Our heroines and heroes will face bright visions of dazzling beauty and dark views of the abyss while discovering other worlds that overlay the mundane.

There is a psychological commentary at the end of each story, which provides readers with a deeper understanding of the chapter's subject, and an exercise, inviting readers, at their discretion, to begin the process of integrating the energies highlighted in the chapter into their own lives.

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Tend the Light

One of the positive qualities of the feminine energy is beauty—beauty in all its forms. The experience of beauty opens one’s heart, and also changes relationships.

People often think of beauty in a superficial way and fail to appreciate its impact on their lives. The sheer number of people who frequent art museums is always striking; although some may be drawn to one particular artist, or are knowledgeable about art in an intellectual sense, it is essentially the beauty that draws them in; beauty is the magnet.

A similar experience can occur through all arts: listening to a concert, watching a dance, absorbing a great piece of writing—all forms of artistic beauty can touch our hearts, as can nature. Why are we so drawn to beautiful sunsets and sunrises? When nature paints glorious images on the canvas of the sky, are we not reborn in some way?

The following tale illustrates the transformative power of beauty:

Robert sat at his desk with the bile of anger rising in him. He fantasized about charging into his boss’s office in the executive wing, slamming his resignation down on the desk and yelling, “I quit!” at that bland, expressionless face. Ah, that would get a rise out of him, wouldn’t it?

He sighed, and stared down at the shoppers going in and out of the store. Viewed from the top floor they looked like little robots dodging toy cars in the street. It was drizzling. Spring was refusing to come this year; maybe he’d feel better when it warmed up. He shivered, and tried to shake off his bleak mood.

Lately, he always felt either angry or listless. At least when he was angry he had some energy. Every morning the corridor leading to his corner office seemed to stretch endlessly into a gray void. He recalled earlier days, bouncing down that corridor full of life and enthusiasm.

Robert was a manager at Sykes Department Store. He'd started working there at the age of twenty-four. How ambitious he'd been back then, hoping eventually to take over a whole floor, or, who knows, even become a vice-president! He was a good salesman and had achieved his present position fairly quickly, but then everything stopped. He was aware of the "glass ceiling" in the corporate world, which keeps women from being promoted to top positions, and he realized he'd bumped into his own. For the last ten years he had felt stalled in his life.

Oh, well, he comforted himself yet again. At least if I stay long enough I'll have a pension and there will be enough money for the family to live comfortably. The store was very solid and offered great stock bonuses. When he retired he and Arlene would be well off enough to travel as much as they wanted. He grinned as he heard his grandson Johnny's voice chant out, "Bo-ring!" It was the boy's current refrain about the state of his adolescent world. He hoped Johnny would never end up like him. Now there's a depressing thought!

Robert managed the household goods department. In the early days, all department managers reported directly to the president, but since the store had grown, with branches all over the country, a layer of vice-presidents was created, and all managers now reported to them. So, although he'd started as a sales clerk and worked his way up to manager, he now felt he was moving down in the hierarchy. He hardly saw the president on a day-to-day basis anymore. His job had become lack-luster. What made things worse, he thought, pounding his fist tiredly on his desk, was that whenever a vacancy for vice-president came up, everyone around him was promoted, not him. It seemed as if a stream of younger and less experienced people was passing him by. Let's face it. I'm thoroughly stuck! It wasn't that he hadn't said anything. He'd asked the big boss about it several times, but he always got the same answer: a big wink, a smile, a pat on the back, and a "Your department is doing so well that we can't afford to take a chance on someone else!"

At first he was flattered, but then he wondered what was really going on. Some years back he even went on a job search. His resume was excellent, but no company could pay him what he was making at Sykes with the raises and bonuses that had built up over the years.

He began to think about his young assistant, Ruel. Ambitious, energetic and, let's face it, pushy. He knew the younger man was after his job. He sighed wearily. Well, that was me, too. I used to have that kind of energy. All I thought about was getting ahead, and look at me now! I'm getting nowhere. For all I know, he'll end up with my job, and I'll be out on the street.

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He plunged into his work, checking inventory, meeting with the sales staff, his usual routine. By 11 o'clock he was already thinking about lunch and watching the infuriatingly slow minutes crawl by. He recalled how he used to feel at school watching the clock. It felt the same way. Has nothing changed? Is this what life is all about? For the first time he understood why people killed themselves. Not that I would ever do that. He believed there must be something he could do to make life more interesting, more challenging! I can do this job with my eyes closed, he thought dismally.

At noon, he heaved a sigh and arranged his sandwich and newspaper on his desk. The street below was packed with cars that were barely moving. It was much too rainy to eat in the park today. Sometimes a colleague would join him down there, and they would talk about everything except work. That was a rule they'd set up many years ago, to have the freedom of the hour to relax.

Today, he read the paper with little energy. After a few minutes he put it down. Josie needs talking to. What a bother. She gets defensive every time I try to tell her something. Why can't Arlene do it for a change?

Josie was their late-life surprise. The other children were all married, but she was only sixteen, and a handful, wanting her own way and not listening to sensible advice. He sighed. I guess I should be happy. At least she's not on drugs.

As he was munching his sandwich there was a knock on the door. Before he could respond, his assistant, Ruel, rushed in, shouting, "Come on, hurry! We just caught someone shoplifting."

Not again, he thought, annoyed at the intrusion and Ruel's attitude of self-importance. Good-looking and full of himself too. If he didn't watch out, he'd walk in one day and find Ruel at his desk. He stood up wearily to deal with the thief. His department had been hit more than usual recently after putting in some expensive knickknack items and toiletries. Kids, it's always kids! He followed the younger man to the security office, where the guard was hovering over a well-dressed elderly woman who was sitting very upright in her chair.

"What's going on?" Robert asked the guard. He then turned to Ruel and said, "Alright, you can go. I'll take care of this."

The younger man frowned and started to protest but then left reluctantly.

"Caught her red-handed putting this in her purse." The guard held up a 10-inch tall statue of a woman reclining on a bed made out of a shell.

Robert sat down opposite the woman. She was wearing an expensive-looking grey silk suit and a pearl necklace that gave her a final touch of elegance. Her white hair was pulled back into a French knot, and she was holding a large black shopping bag tightly in her hands. She looked very poised and calm. Only the twitching of her hands on the clasp of her bag betrayed her anxiety.

"Did you call the police?" he asked the guard.

"Right away. They'll be here shortly."

Tears slipped down the woman's cheeks from her glistening blue eyes. She looked downward, as if resigned to the outcome.

As he pulled a chair to sit opposite her, he dismissed the guard. "Why did you do it? You don't have the appearance of a shoplifter." As he spoke, he was thinking that this was just another case of kleptomania. She looked so pathetic that he wanted to pat her on the head. He stifled the impulse and repeated his question.

"I had to have that statue." Her voice was soft and low. "I know it was wrong to do, but I needed that statue."

She then looked up at him. Her gaze was strong and unwavering. "I have never done this before. Believe me!"

How many times had he heard that?

"There's always a first time for stealing," Robert said. He picked up a pad from the desk and started writing up the incident report required by the store.

Once the particulars were addressed, he turned to her and said, "Who you are doesn't matter to me. What you just did, does. I need a statement from you for my report."

"Who I am does matter to me, and certainly needs to be part of your report!" She glared sternly at him. "I did not steal this statue. It belongs to me. My name is Roselyn Hastings."

She paused, as if waiting for him to acknowledge her. When he didn't, she continued, "I'm certain you have heard of the Hastings family. I have owned this statue since I was eight. It was stolen from me five years ago. A new handyman came into my house to do some repairs, and I found it was missing, along with some other pieces, soon afterward. It is a very valuable piece. Obviously you were not aware of its true value, as the marked price was very low."

"But, why didn't you tell the store, or just buy it?" Robert interrupted.

"I know I should have, but I was terrified that something would happen and I wouldn't get it back if I told the store; and frankly, I couldn't afford to buy it even at this low price. Also, perhaps I wouldn't have been believed if I told the truth. My reaction when I saw it was to just take it."

Robert picked up the statue, which had been placed on the table. Looking at it closely, he saw that it was made of bronze and was exquisitely crafted: smooth in some areas, textured in others. The shell cupped the woman's body as if she had been sleeping in its depth and was now being born anew. He recalled having bought it in an assortment of less valuable pieces. He hadn't examined it carefully but had just assumed it was of the same quality as the others.

"Well, what you did was wrong, but under the circumstances, we won't press charges. But, we do need proof from you that you owned this piece and that it was stolen."

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"I have proof. A police report was filed at the time; and since this piece is worth a half million dollars, I assure you it was well described."

"A half million dollars?" Robert was shocked.

"It's an original Rodin." She smiled for the first time, and Robert saw the beauty of her face.

"A Rodin!" Robert looked at the piece again and realized that it could indeed be a Rodin.

"I bought it at an auction with a lot of inexpensive things. It never dawned on me that it could be that valuable. It must have gone through the hands of quite a few people who never questioned it either."

She continued, "You can imagine how surprised I was to see it sitting here in the store. I thought it must be a copy of mine, but when I examined it, I saw a mark in the bronze that has always been there, and I knew it had to be mine."

At that moment, the police arrived. When everything was explained, the police said they would hold on to the statue until they received verification that it belonged to Roselyn. Robert saw fear in her eyes as they reached for the statue.

"No," he said. "This is still the property of the store, until it's proven otherwise. I'll take care of it personally and keep it safely locked up." Robert smiled at Roselyn. "It shouldn't take long to verify that it belongs to you. I promise to take good care of it." She thanked him with a grateful smile.

When Robert returned to his office, he put the statue on his desk. Just for now. I'll put it in the store vault later.

But he couldn't get back to work. In spite of the pile of inventory he needed to go through, he found himself just gazing at the statue. He had never been big on art, particularly sculptures, but this piece was different. The woman's body was full and voluptuous, her curves accentuated by the contour of the shell. Robert was mesmerized. He even picked the statue up a few times and turned it in the sunlight that was streaming through the window so he could see all the details. The piece was so alive that at any moment he expected the woman to reach out to him for help stepping out of the shell.

A strange feeling crept into his heart, a kind of warmth. What was it? He felt happy. Maybe that was it, but it was more than that. It was not happy like 'fun happy'; it was a happiness that filled his whole body, as if his heart was simply content with life. How could that be? He looked around his boring office, at the work that he hated piled up on the table, but now everything felt exciting and challenging. Nothing would be boring again, not with the statue there. She made life beautiful. That's it! She's the cause of my euphoria.

Then he began working. In less than two hours he went through the tedious task of checking the inventory, noting what he needed to reorder, and recording the income received and spent by the store; his heart was happy the entire time.

The phone rang. It was his wife, complaining, yet again, about Josie. At least every other day he would receive such a call, and he would half listen, and say, “yes, yes,” not bothering to comment to any real extent as it was usually the same complaints. This time, however, he listened fully, and instead of agreeing, he said, “How do you feel when she doesn’t listen to your advice?”

The silence was long. “What do you mean, how do I feel?”

“Just what I said. When she acts up around you, how does that make you feel?”

“I guess I feel frustrated.”

“Anything else?”

“Maybe scared that she won’t turn out okay?”

“So it sounds like you worry about her.”

“Of course I worry.”

“You know, Arlene, worrying isn’t going to help her. Maybe it would be better just to love her and believe in her.”

When Robert hung up the phone, he sat in silence. The words had come out of his mouth from nowhere. What was happening to him?

Again he looked at the statue, and he knew that it was changing him, making him softer. Like the curves that flowed from the shell to the figure, everything he did now flowed with a gentle movement. It was feminine, but not in a way that he would normally attribute to femininity; it was a more internal way of being. He still felt masculine, but even his masculine energy was now softer and not as demanding.

I can’t let this happen to me. Robert experienced a shot of fear. He didn’t want to become feminine. That’s the last thing he wanted.

Just then, Ruel showed up. Robert felt embarrassed about the fact that the statue was still sitting on his desk. Ruel looked like he was smirking—or was it his imagination? Suddenly uncomfortable that he had spent so much time gazing at the voluptuous figure, and wondering what Ruel was thinking, Robert abruptly told him to find a box for the piece. When the younger man returned with the box, Robert sent him on his way.

Before placing the statue in the box, Robert sat and gazed at it one last time. His earlier embarrassment vanished as the outlines of the statue seemed to pulsate and an essence of some kind radiated from it and touched his heart with a gentle joy. No, he thought, no young idiot who doesn’t understand anything is going to get to me. At that moment he decided he was going to learn more about art. It would be a great thing to share with Arlene, and Josie too.

As he placed the statue inside the box, he had difficulty closing the lid. It wasn’t because of the fit – there was plenty of room. It was his hands. They seemed to have a life of their own, and they were reluctant to close him off from the figure that had brought him so much happiness.

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He finally carefully sealed the box, wrote his name on it and took it to Security to be placed in the vault. Returning to his office, he sat at his desk and sighed. Everything was back to normal again.

That evening things were quiet at home. Even Josie and Arlene were calm. There were no fights. He was still feeling serene, but he was certain the effect of the statue would wear off and he would soon be his old self again.

The next day at work, Robert had a staff meeting with the buyers. It was a weekly meeting, during which he routinely discussed what new goods needed to be acquired and then gave instructions to be carried out. Even though he had several buyers working for him, Robert still insisted on doing most of the work himself. The result was that the buyers had very little input; they simply followed his directions. The buyers often left his department because of this, but Robert didn't care. Selecting new goods was his favorite part of the job, and his only creative outlet.

Today, the meeting was droning along as usual, until he found himself saying to his oldest buyer, "Pauline, I need you to determine the new line. There's some beautiful bed linen coming out that I'd like you to look at. I'm going to leave the decision up to you."

Robert then gave similar instructions to the other two buyers, who glanced at each other, excited and utterly flabbergasted. There was a very different energy in the room, a quality of lightness that seemed to replace the tired, humdrum feeling that usually permeated these meetings.

When they left, Robert again felt very happy, almost joyful. He looked at his desk, expecting to see the statue sitting there, but no, there was only the usual picture of his wife and kids.

After several days, he was still acting in this new, strange way. By now everyone had noticed. His wife and daughter were getting along so well that home was a loving place for the first time in years. He no longer had to work such long hours in order to finish everything because he delegated work to the staff, and they all seemed much happier too. His friends asked if everything was all right: Was he on some kind of medication?

One day several months later, Robert's boss, Frank, called him into his office and informed him that the Executive Board members were very pleased with his new policies, and they had decided to give him the new vice-president position.

When Robert returned to his office and pondered these recent events, he suddenly recalled the statue. It was the statue that had caused his transformation! Yes, that must be it! Everything had changed since then. He didn't understand how it had happened. Now he wondered why he hadn't ever received a notice to return the statue to the woman. Immediately, he phoned the police and inquired about the event.

After a long moment, the desk officer reported, "I'm looking at the records of the dispatch unit for that day. There's no record of your store calling us and no report was filed. Are you sure you have the right day?"

"Of course," he replied. "I made out the report myself, and I am holding the statue for verification."

"Let me do a search on the Roselyn Hastings robbery and get back to you."

Later that day the policeman called. "Mr. Burns? This is Adam Ferguson, the policeman you spoke to earlier."

"Yes? What have you found out?"

"We've investigated the supposed robbery of five years ago. We even went as far back as ten years." Adam paused. "We found no record of any robbery. So, I called the Hastings home and was told by the maid that there was a Roselyn Hastings, but she's been dead for five years."

"But, that's impossible. I saw her! Several people saw her."

"Well, I asked the maid to describe her, and it fits the description you gave me earlier today."

"That's not possible!" Robert was speechless.

"I also asked about the statue," Adam continued, "and the maid said that yes, there was a Rodin statue that belonged to Roselyn, and it now belongs to her son, Robert."

After he hung up, Robert slumped down in his chair. His stomach was churning and his head spinning. He took some time to calm down, and then he stood up, headed for the Security office and asked the guard for the box. When the guard handed it over, Robert realized it was much too light. Upon returning to his office, he opened the box with shaking hands. It was empty.

Commentary

In this story, Robert's heart is awakened through the experience of beauty. Just as the statue affected Robert, we are affected and changed when we relate to the work of an artist who has conveyed different realms of beauty through canvas, clay or any other medium. When we leave a gallery or a museum where such beauty exists, we leave with a more open heart and uplifted spirit.

Robert's experience brings him a new sense of understanding as the exquisite statue awakens his inner feminine energy. One of the qualities deepened by the feminine is the ability to relate to others; Robert therefore finds himself communicating with his staff and his family with greater ease and understanding. He no longer needs to control them—an aspect of the negative masculine energy. His young assistant, Ruel, who carries echoes of a younger Robert, embodies other aspects of the negative masculine: ambition and single-mindedness, without a shred of understanding or compassion.

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As Robert grows to accept the qualities of the feminine, he is able to approach his job with renewed vitality, creativity and interest, and he finds a deepening sense of peace and joy in his life. His journey provides a map for readers to use on their own inner quests.

Neither the masculine nor the feminine can stand alone. If we are predominately one or the other, then we are literally living half a life: either an inner one that we cannot express in the world, or an outer one, like Robert's, that is lacking in inspiration and compassion. It is only when we strive to achieve balance that we can fully enjoy the richness of life that is our birthright.

The following exercise invites you to experience the effects of beauty:

Find something that you feel is really beautiful. It can be a painting, a flower, a piece of music, et cetera.

Find a place to sit comfortably and just be with what you have chosen. Try to see or hear it as much as you can. For example, if it is a painting, look closely at the colors and see how they blend together. If it's a piece of music, listen to it several times, exploring the nuances of its tones. Let yourself absorb the beauty as deeply as you can.

When you are ready, imagine bringing the experience into your heart, and feeling it. Breathe it in, and feel its energy. Keep doing this for a few moments, and then close your eyes and continue feeling and experiencing the beauty within your whole being.

As you open your eyes and come back to the room you're in, take time to notice the effects this experience had on you.