

## THE COST

By Jena Newman

HA,... picture this: you enter the parking garage and find a perfect spot near the elevator door. You get in, you go up to the top floor, the door opens, and you immediately know that smell—a sale.

Undisputedly,... I LOVE a bargain. Buying below retail is a skill... and I am not only good at it, I have a passion for it—a lethal combination.

The shoes I'm wearing were 40% off, and I had a 10% coupon.  
SCORE !!!... and the crowd goes wild! Cheeples... cheeples... cheeples!!

Cut to FOX TV news alert...Mench gets shoes 50% off... details at 6pm!

I get untold pleasures from purchasing below retail,... but I get freakin' elated when I tell people how much it cost! Face it people, shopping is not really about buying, it's about bragging.

Epiphany!:

5% off on expired baby food... woo hoo!!!

Half price on returned underwear.... Yippee!!

The "mail-in rebate" oh geez, I think I need to sit down!!

I can say with confidence that I am smarter than the rest. I know all the deals and when they're coming. You might say I'm like the Buddha of bargains. Now, I have bragging rights which induct me into a long line of cheep Jewish women— Yes, I am part of the clan. My mother calls me and tells me that "people who pay full price aren't careless, they're lazy"... as my grandmother can be heard shouting in the background "meshuginah too!" Even my father has crossed the gender gap and become a card-carrying member of the HHA—the Half-priced Hebrew Association. Say it with me "HHAaaaa"—doesn't that feel good... that magical moment: when it all "clicks."

Poem:

Two isles diverged in a Jersey mall,  
And too wise I was to travel both  
And be one shopper, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To a land of promise, and filled hope

In my ponderance, I hear a click.  
Familiar, yet far away.  
Could it be true??,  
Is this my fate??

Is this my “double markdown day”?

Therapist: “If you went to a desert island, and could only bring one thing, what would you chose?”

Patient: *I didn't think long or hard before saying...*“My coupon folder!”

Therapist: “Very interesting indeed. In fact, I think your therapy is now complete!”

So what have I learned?...Life's a bargain... and it's all about the HHA!