



How 6 Women Handled Their Most Stressful Holiday Moments

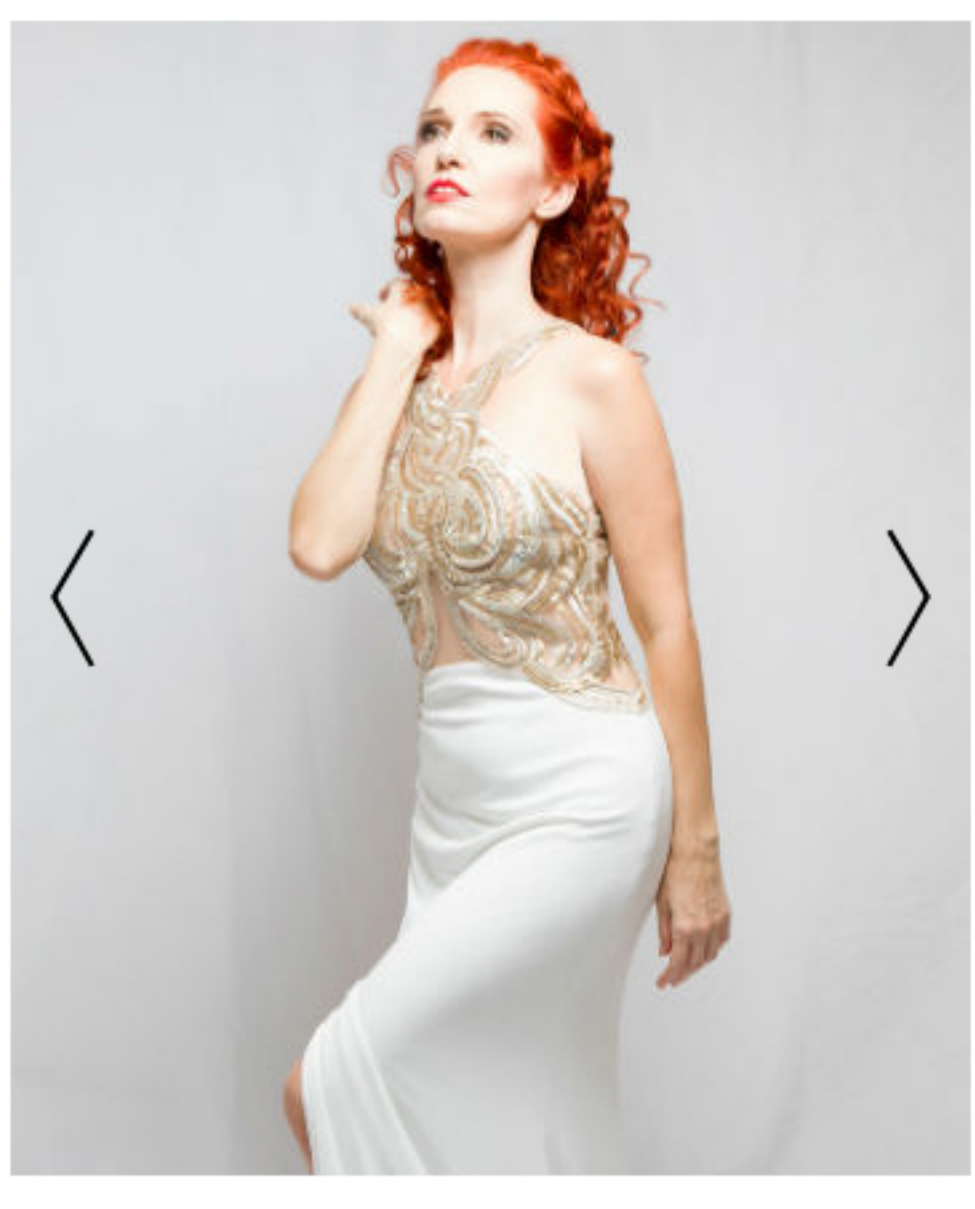
Deciding where to go for the holidays, dealing with the absence of a loved one and other moments that showed these women what they're made of

by LINDSAY TIGAR | COMMENT



The First Christmas Without My Mom Helped Me Find Peace -- And Taught Me How Not to Cook a Turkey

Two months before Christmas, principal dancer and artistic director [Noelle Rose Andressen](#) suffered the loss of her mother. The weight of this traumatic event felt even heavier at the holidays, since her mom always hosted and now the job was left up to her to fulfill the shoes. In addition to the emotional pain, Andressen also didn't know how to cook and didn't have a full-sized oven, so she cut the turkey into smaller pieces and shoved it in a convection oven, thinking it would work. But after her guests arrived -- with music playing and a beautifully set table on display -- she quickly realized her attempt to prepare dinner had, quite literally, burned. Her husband came to her side to clear out the smoke and solve a chaotic moment with the detector: "My husband grabbed a screwdriver to unhinge it but that didn't work. He ended up chiseling it off the ceiling and tried to get the battery out to stop its screeching; ultimately he drowned it in the kitchen sink filled with water," Andressen recalls.



Immediately, she felt like a failure: "There was no way I could come close to what my mother did. If she were stranded on an island she could rub two stones together, gather some berries, and make an amazing dessert or meal; she was that resourceful. It was not me though, I was not her and she was no longer here," she says.

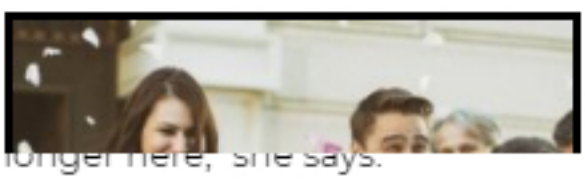
Instead though, she came up with a solution: Grab some snacks and a couch cushion and go around, saying what they're thankful for. Dinner might have been ruined, but there were plenty of reasons to find happiness. "When it came time for me to speak I told a story about my mom. It turned out to be an amazing night and we all got to know more about each other," she shares. "Besides how not to cook a turkey, I learned the most important thing: We are all part of the human race, we all feel, laugh, cry and experience joy and pain. We also fall short of perfection and there is no shame in admitting that we need help. It was a humbling moment for me to realize. The holidays are a time of sharing and caring, the food, while good, it is not what matters the most."

Image via Noelle Rose Andressen

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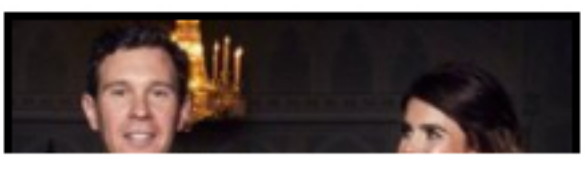
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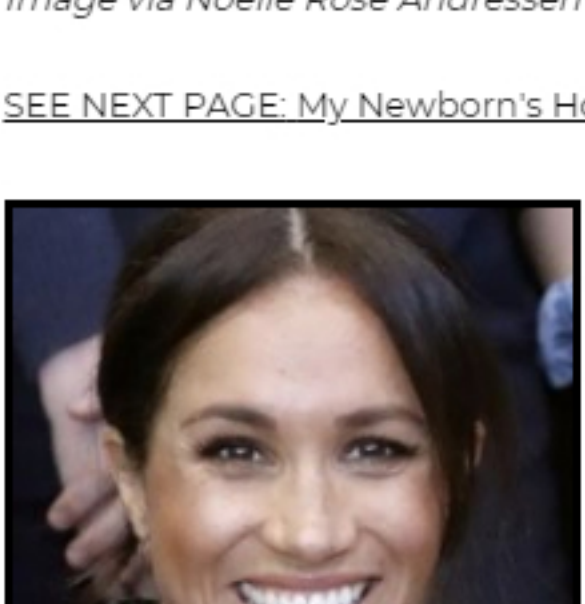
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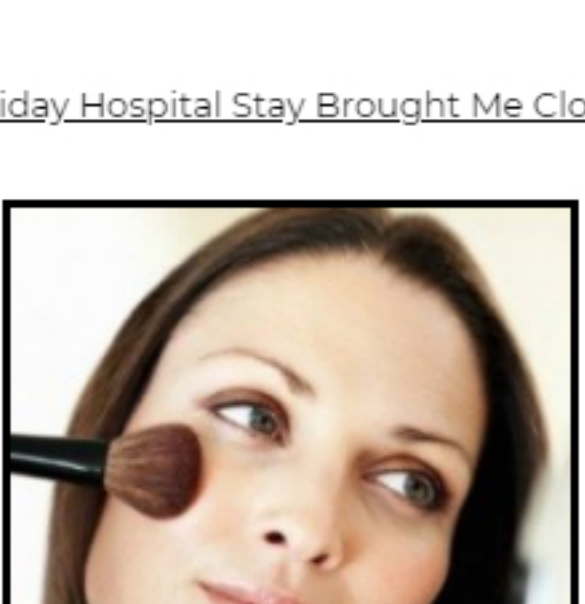
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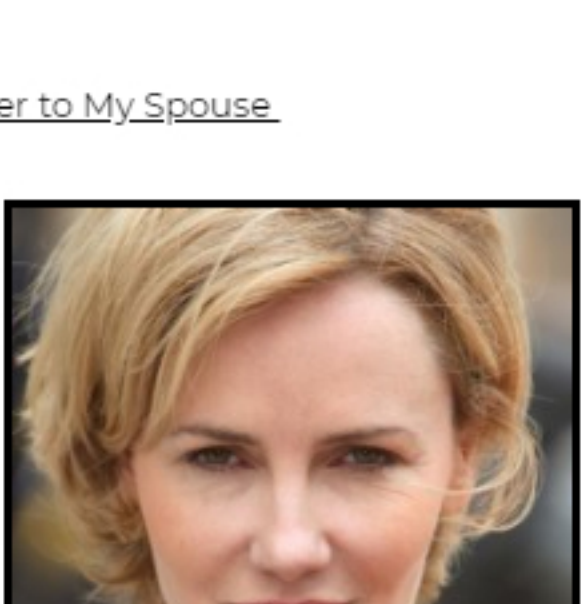
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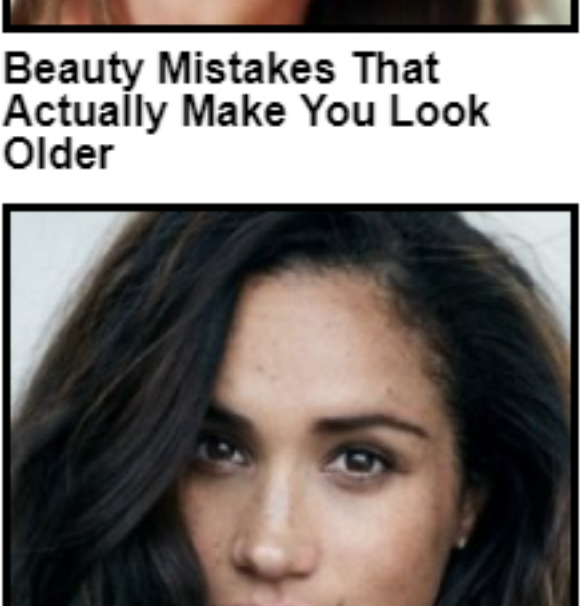
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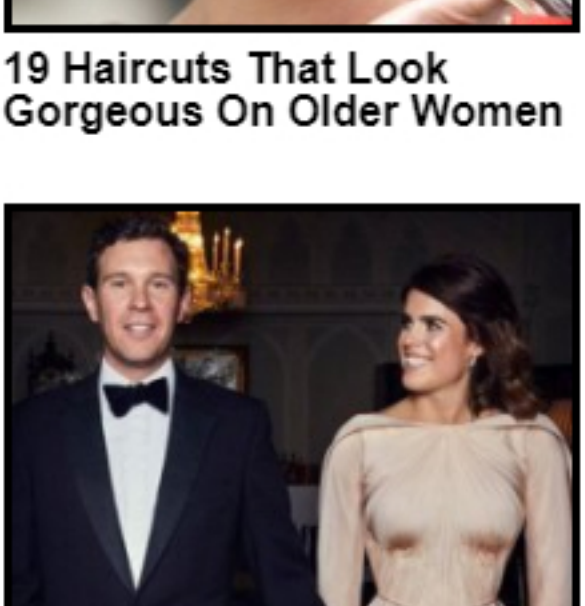
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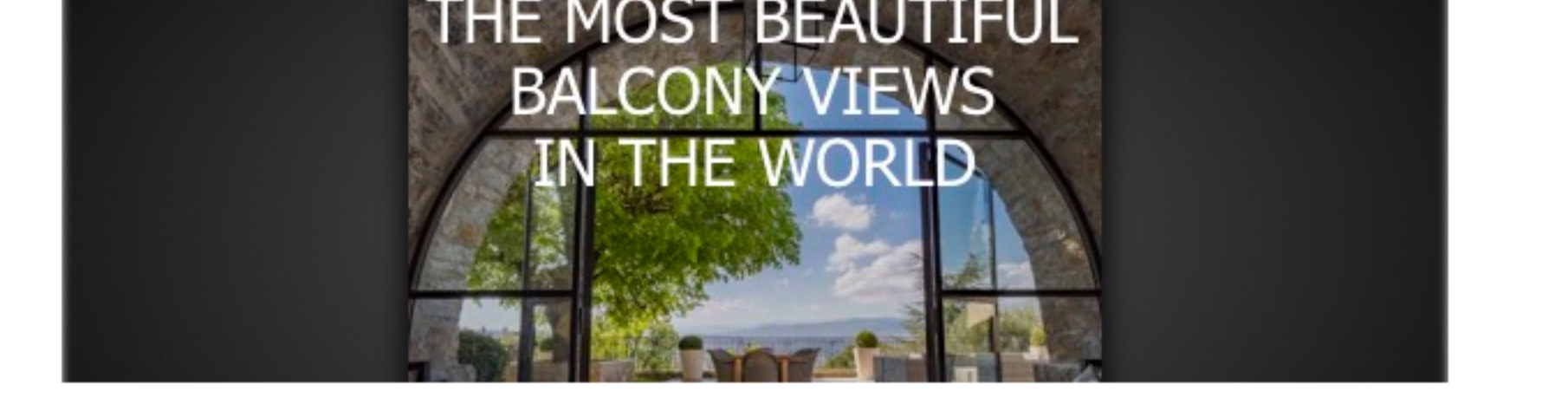
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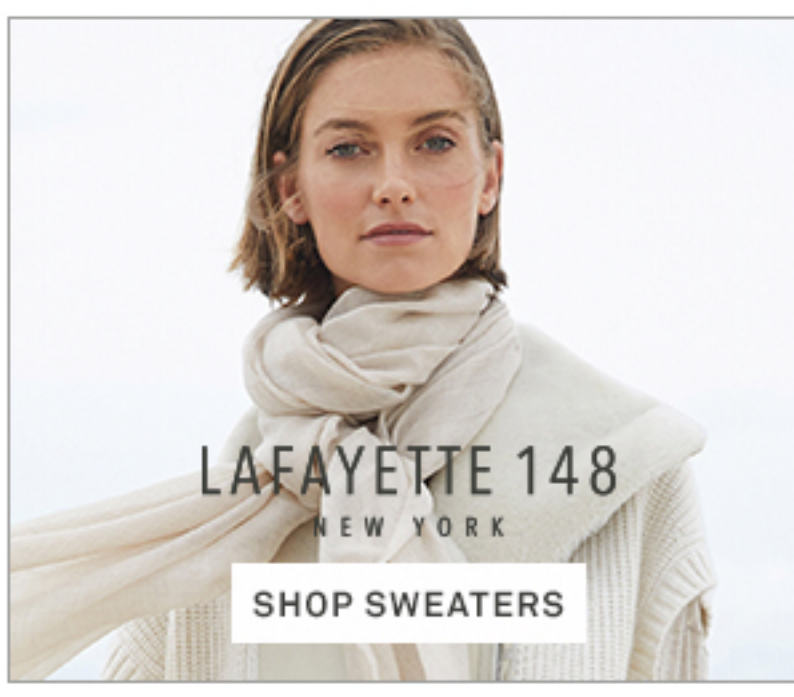


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