

Could you switch lives with your boss?

Your boss has the fancy car, elegant home, and best table at the city's hippest restaurant. You've got...not so much.

What would it be like to trade places for 24 hours? Two women explore the hilarious truth about how the other half lives

BY CAROLINE TIGER
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
MARK MANN



Jan, 47, plays

ASSISTANT FOR A DAY

In real life, she is an executive vice president and married with two kids.

"Everything has changed since the days when I was an assistant. It's like starting all over again."

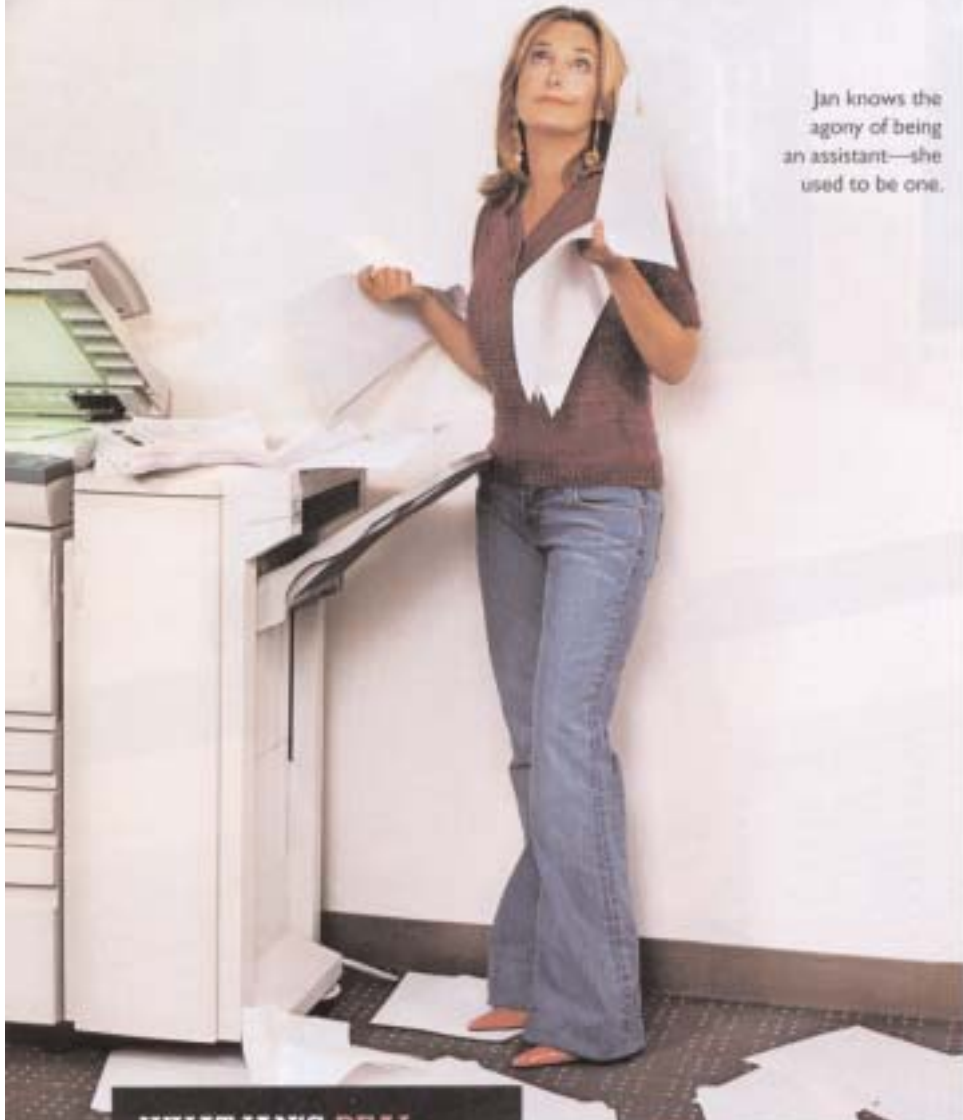
styling: amy reese/anthony colicanni

Katie, 23, plays

BOSS FOR A DAY

In real life, she is Jan's creative assistant, living the life of a single girl in the city.

"I left the office at 5 p.m. sharp—it's good to be boss! But switching gears is harder than I thought."



Jan knows the agony of being an assistant—she used to be one.

WHAT JAN'S REAL LIFE LOOKS LIKE:

Square footage of apartment: 2000 sq. feet

Favorite store: Fred Segal

Typical contents of fridge: eggs, veggies, Go-Gurt, seltzer

Spa visits per month: two

Sheets and linens are from: ABC Carpet and Home, Garnet Hill

Most prized possession: "My lake cabin"

Magazine on living-room table: *The New Yorker*

Dry-cleaning: \$220 a month

Typical weekday dinner: chicken, veggies

Favorite drink: wine

Last vacation: Miami Beach Fontainebleau

Collects: WPA paintings

Favorite hotel to stay at: L'Ermilage Beverly Hills

JAN'S STORY: You'd think, as an executive vice president at Grey Advertising, one of the biggest ad agencies in New York City, doing my assistant's job for a day would be a walk in the park. But everything has changed since I was an assistant—it's like starting all over. I mean, we didn't even use computers! I used to construct storyboards by pasting hand-typed copy onto a 30-by-40-foot board. All that stuff is done electronically now. And then there's the part of Katie's job that involves scanning images. I'm embarrassed to admit I have no idea how to do this! I go into the office to tell Katie that her job is too hard for me, but she just laughs—she thinks I'm joking.

Just as I'm getting into the assistant groove, I'm forced to switch back into boss mode: A celebrity spokesperson for one of our biggest accounts has just been written up on criminal charges, and we've got to do damage control. I'm stressed—there's no way I can

redo the TV scripts before I have to pick up my daughter, Sophie. But then I remember I'm "single" for the next 24 hours—no kids, no worries. So I stay an extra hour at the office to finish up and get "home" at around 7. Actually, it's more like 7:30 by the time I huff and puff my way up five flights of stairs to Katie's Upper East Side walk-up. Now I know why she's so trim! She shares a two-bedroom apartment with two roommates, Camilla and Daniela. But Daniela's temporary—she's crashing in the living room until she finds

"I huff and puff my way up five flights of stairs to Katie's walk-up apartment. Now I know why she's so trim!"

a job and can afford her own place.

The apartment is adorable. The funniest part is the huge StairMaster they've jammed into a corner of the living room. I mean, you can hardly fit a two-person sofa in the tiny space, let alone a nautilus machine! Never mind that the StairMaster isn't exactly user-friendly: Its basic function appears to be as a giant clothing rack.

Katie's bedroom is filled with electronics—computer, DVD player, TV. I slip out of my work clothes and put on a black boatneck sweater for Friday night. Then I return to the living room, where I sit (and sit, and sit) waiting for Camilla and Daniela to finish dressing so we can go out. They need a lot of prep time—an hour and 20 minutes, to be exact—which makes me envious. Between work deadlines and the kids, 20 minutes is my max for primping. I discover that Camilla and Daniela are *zzy* into products—hair products, skin products, eye products, lip products... Having survived my own product phase, I offer to write down the brands I use. They look thrilled. It's ironic: At their age, they're naturally gorgeous, so why are they hiding behind so much make- >>

» up? And at my age, when women need help, we pride ourselves on having as little cosmetic aid as possible.

I can't remember the last time I felt insecure about my outfit, but that's exactly how I feel as we enter the Atlantic Grill, a "see and be seen" restaurant and bar. Everyone is checking each other out, and I'm worried I don't fit in with the young crowd. We squeeze around a little table and order drinks, but after a couple of rounds, I confess that there is no way I can keep up with Katie's schedule.

I'm usually asleep at 10—by 11:30, I can barely keep my eyes open. Camilla and Daniela dutifully walk me back to the apartment to make sure I get in all right, then they go back out, probably glad to unload me. I hear them tiptoeing in the door at around 3:30 a.m.

At 6:30 a.m., I'm up. I'm meeting my "boss" at a recording studio to shoot revisions for the ads and deal with the celebrity crisis from the day before. When Katie arrives, she's on the phone with my husband, trying to work out alternate arrangements for

the kids now that she has to work. It takes 45 minutes for them to sort it out.

When I get back uptown at 2:30 that afternoon, Camilla and Daniela are just getting up. I've already lived a whole day! They make coffee and rehash their night until 5:30. Then I pack my bag for my babysitting job. I could really use a shower, but I decide to wait until I'm back at my place. Nothing against Katie, it's just that I enjoy being in my bathroom with my stuff. I miss my privacy. Being Katie is a blast, but I'm very happy to be 47.



Katie found out that being the boss isn't as glamorous as it looks.

HOW KATIE'S REAL LIFE COMPARES:

Square footage of apartment:
750 sq. feet

Favorite store:
Banana Republic

Typical contents of fridge:
ketchup, jelly, cheese, beer

Spa visits:
"I've never been."

Sheets and linens are from:
Target

Most prized possession:
"My PowerBook"

Magazine on living-room table:
People

Dry-cleaning: \$0

Typical weekday dinner:
cereal

Favorite drink: beer

Last vacation:
a local beach with friends

Collects: "Ex-boyfriends!"

Favorite hotel to stay at:
"Whatever's cheapest"

KATIE'S STORY: I usually wear jeans on Fridays, but for the next 24 hours I'm swapping lives with my boss, Jan, which means I'll be "running things" at Grey Advertising. So I dress up a little. When I arrive at our 20th-floor offices, I brush right past my usual desk and sweep into the sun-filled office where Jan sits. The view is *amazing*: From the huge windows, you can see the East River on one side and New Jersey in the distance on the other. I check out Jan's fancy computer: an Apple Titanium laptop, which beats my clunky G3 hands-down. >>

HAIR: YUSUKE FOR ARTISTBYTROTIVYANO.COM; MAKEUP: NANCY SPAGLIERI; PROP STYLIST: STEPHEN WALLIS AT HOOBOOPE.COM

Queen Latifah,
spokesperson

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Side Shaper Sport provides invisible side shaping for added support and enhanced mobility



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Back Smoother gently supports and provides a smooth line around the body

» I'm jealous! But perks of the job aside, the real question is whether I can act like the boss for a day. Peeking outside my office, it's funny to see Jan answering the phones like I usually do—but most of the calls are for her anyway, so we've basically just cut out the middle man. (A brief moment of excitement: A partner calls because he's missed his plane and desperately needs to get on the next flight. Though Jan hasn't had to make her own business reservations in more than a decade, she doesn't miss a beat.)

For several hours, I sit in on meetings that Jan usually attends and go over layouts with her partner, Ron. Things get dicey at around 3 p.m. That's when we get news that a celebrity spokesperson for one of our most important clients has been charged in a criminal matter. All I can think is, Oh *no!* We've just shot *hours* of TV ad footage with this star! Immediately, Jan switches out of "assistant" gear and jumps back into commander-in-chief mode, meeting with managing partners to discuss how the matter will affect us and what needs to be done to address the crisis. We want to salvage what we can of the TV spots. It's obvious that Jan will have to work this weekend, and I say a silent "thank you" that I don't have her job—until I realize that since I'm Jan until tomorrow night, I have to come in, too. Ugh.

The good news is, as Jan, I get to leave work at 5—early for my usual schedule, but that's when Jan goes to pick up her daughter from a play date. It's good to be boss! But I soon realize that shifting gears so quickly is tough. I'm preoccupied with the mess at work. I almost catch myself wishing I could have stayed to tie up the loose ends. (Almost!)

Jan's daughter, Sophie, and I go home to the family's apartment on beautiful Gramercy Park. I've been here before, but only as a babysitter, trying to make some extra cash on the weekends. Her place is immaculate, down to the brand-new Sub-Zero fridge. She even has someone come in and clean for her!

Joe, Jan's 10-year-old son, has just

arrived home, and soon Jan's husband, Hugh, joins us. Our Friday night is low-key: Leftovers for dinner, followed by board games and TV-watching as a family. Hugh is a really good sport during all of this, even if he thinks his wife is crazy for spending the night in my fifth-floor walk-up. I go to bed in Sophie's room at around 10 p.m. (she bunked with her brother).

At 7 the next morning, I grudgingly roll out of bed. I know Jan's schedule says to hit the gym, but I've got to work this morning. Besides, I usually sleep in until 11 or 12 on Saturdays—then again, I'm normally

"Far from a glamorous day living the life of a high-powered exec, I haven't had one second of 'me time.'"

out until long after midnight on Friday nights. I have breakfast with the kids, then head to the recording studio where Jan will oversee the rerecording of commercials for our client.

I'm totally unprepared for how a change in my schedule throws off the entire family's day—Hugh and I were supposed to take the kids to birthday parties, but now Hugh is playing chaperone for both of us. Eventually, I manage to leave the studio and meet up with Hugh and the kids in the afternoon. By then, I'm exhausted. Despite my dream of a glamorous day living the life of a high-powered exec, I haven't had one second of "me time."

My dose of pampering finally comes at 7 p.m., when the babysitter arrives. It's Jan—playing the role of me! I leave her with her family and head to the salon, where I get a French manicure and a blowout for my hair. It looks so much better when someone else does it! I try not to mess it up on my way home—I'm *definitely* going out tonight. ♦