

Dear Cup Week, I love you and have from the day we first met in the late 1970s, when I attended my first Melbourne Cup on the arm of my new boyfriend.

I wanted to impress you so chose a white crepe de chine suit with a hemline that just grazed the knee (something considered very chic after years of mini-skirts). A red and white silk blouse with wide lapels, a beautiful red silk rose and white high heels, the epitome of fashion according to the admirable and appreciative glances I received as we promenaded through the crowd to take up position on the finishing line.

What could possibly go wrong on this perfect day, as my horse moved to take front position, winning by a short half head.

And then the heavens opened, and opened some more.

"Give me your hand and I'll find us some shelter!" cried my beau.

Aghast, I start to feel a tightening around my shoulder and waist and then to my horror, I heard the cry "Mummy, look what's happened to that lady's skirt!"

My beautiful knee skimming, tres chic, crepe de chine suit was now a bum skimming mini skirt topped by an equally shrunken, long lined jacket that was now a bolero.

And so, began my long, long love affair with Cup Week. From Derby Day through to Stakes Day, I compose my ensemble from hat to toe and all in between. Black and white for Derby – check. A little more flamboyant for Cup – check. Feminine and colourful for Oaks – check and a slightly more relaxed of course for Stakes – check.

But trust me, while I am still in love with you Cup Week, I am not besotted by you; no my love, I am not at your whim and fancy and no longer yield to your will. Alas poor love, the Weatherman has over the years of time slowly stolen my heart and weakened my resolve to always, yes, always look up the weather report each and every morning Cup Week – **CHECK** and **DOUBLE CHECK!**