# peak

### **PERFORMANCE**

this time it's personal

## Tales of Seduction

# TO GET A WOMAN TO OPEN UP, SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO EXPOSE YOURSELF. FIVE WOMEN TELL YOU HOW

INTERVIEWS BY SARAH MILLER

# **Seduction 1** DENISE, 24, LAW STUDENT

I never, ever sleep with men I've just met, but I made an exception this one time. I'd just finished two days of exams and was trying to take a nap, but someone in the apartment above me was playing this incredibly loud music. So I went up and knocked on the door. This guy answered: baseball hat, earrings, no shirt, washboard stomach. Definitely someone's dream guy, but right off the bat I was thinking "Poseur." He was pretty nice when I asked him to turn down the music, though, so I left thinking he wasn't a total jerk.

Anyway, I went back downstairs, took my nap, and woke up to the sound of something knocking against the window. It was a clamshell dangling by a string from his window with a note inside: "Sorry about the noise. If you're hungry, come have some dinner." I usually go out of my way to avoid guys who look like they could have anybody, and this guy certainly did. At the same time, he didn't seem so into himself that he wouldn't, say, dangle a clam outside someone's window and risk looking like an idiot. And I was hungry, so I went up. With a shirt on and no hat, he looked a little more like an adult, and he'd made this huge dinner: spaghetti with clam sauce, salad, and dessert. He pulled my chair out, sat me down, and proceeded to wait on me hand and foot. Since I'd assumed he was way too cool for anything resembling effort, the uber-attentiveness was making me wish us back to that period in our relationship when at least one of us was bare-chested. After all the wine and pasta, though, I was too sleepy to do anything about it, so I just kissed him goodbye, told him I'd make dinner that weekend, and stumbled downstairs.

I was lying in bed for like two minutes when I heard this thud at my window-another clamshell with a note: "I really don't think I can wait for the weekend." Suddenly I felt very awake. So for the third time that day, I went upstairs and knocked on his door.

#### **Seduction 2** NINA, 30, LIBRARIAN

It was Valentine's Day. I was alone, in a really bad mood, and had made the perverse decision to treat myself to dinner anyway. On top of that, my waiter was this perfect combination of bony, brooding, and pale that I always go for. He was also being really professional: solicitous and attentive, with not even a hint of interest. In other words, I was just part of his job. Anyway, there were only two things saving me from losing it: tiramisu for dessert, and the knowledge that my apartment was right across the street, so I could crawl into bed as soon as I ate it. But when it came time for the tiramisu, he told me very politely that they were out. I was devastated.

The next night my bell rang pretty late. It was the waiter, standing there with a huge metal pan resting on his shoulder.

"I thought I might be ringing the wrong apartment," he said, half smiling. "Credit card receipts can be pretty blurry."

Grinning-and I'm sure acting-like an idiot, I invited him in and started clearing space in my kitchen for what turned out to be about twenty gallons of tiramisu. I asked him whether he wanted plates or bowls, but instead of answering, he went to the sink, turned on the disposal, and started spooning my favorite dessert into the drain. "What are you doing?" I almost screamed. He continued to say nothing, but washed and then slowly dried the pan, all the while looking straight at me with this "you have no idea what's in store for you" look. I smiled, but his expression didn't change. It was the same attentiveness from the night before, but slightly warmer. I either had to sit down, or jump him. The tension was unbelievable.

"So," he finally said, coming toward me and taking hold of my hand, "now that we don't have any tiramisu, we'll have to find something else to do."

# **Seduction 3** NICOLE, 23, FILM STUDENT

My boyfriend Matt and I were fighting, and we had to go to this semi-fancy birthday party for his boss together. Even when he and I are getting along, watching him network has never been one of my favorite pastimes, so I ditched him as soon as I could and made my way to the bar. I proceeded to get pretty lit pretty quickly, and wound up talking to this guy named Daniel. Daniel, it turned out, was the boss's nephew, and he had the unnerving self-possession of someone who doesn't hear the word no too often. Under normal circumstances I would have gotten tremendous satisfaction from pretending not to notice him at all, but that night I played along. He said he liked to drive. I asked how fast. He said fast. That kind of talk.

He walked me over to the corner of the room, his hand on the small of my back (suggestive, but safe - he knew what he was doing). Then he asked me about boyfriends. "What if I were to have one?" I said. "I'd keep asking until you didn't." He swirled the ice in his drink, his eyes on me hard. "What if the answer never changed?" I asked. "It would," he said, coming a step closer. As I said, I was pretty lit, so the Joe Eszterhas dialogue was totally working. So was the incredibly intense eye contact.

Suddenly I felt someone behind me. The room was crowded, so I assumed it was just some stranger. Then

I felt a hand on my ass. "Hi, Daniel," someone said. It was Matt. I was floored. Matt is usually so

# "The warmth of his fingers was reassuring and erotic at the same time."

concerned with what people think of him that he barely kisses my cheek in public. "Hey, Mart," Daniel said, not taking his eyes from mine. "Glad you could join us." "Me too," Matt said, moving his hand up under my jacket to my breast. Daniel just kept staring, watching Matt grope me. Then Matt slowly pulled me around toward him and bent his head to my ear. "The only person I want to impress right now is you," he whispered. It was the sexiest thing that's ever happened to me.

### Seduction 4

TINA, 28, GRAD STUDENT

I met Chris in college. He was that nice, harmless guy in my life - the one who'd shop with me for dresses I'd wear out with other men. He always claimed in a joking way to be hopelessly in love with me, but never pressed it, and for me it wasn't an issue. I just wasn't attracted to him. Anyway, I hadn't

seen him for maybe two years, and as an excuse for a reunion, he agreed to come to my cousin Anne's wedding with me. I couldn't wait to see him. Anne's family is a nightmare, and-as I made clear to him without an ally I would self-destruct.

So Chris arrived. But instead of the slightly awkward misfit-in-arms I'd been expecting, he was stunning, with a new confidence to back it up. Soon he was yukking it up with the very detestable best man, Hal, who took a break from their little bondoraina to remark that I could be really great looking if I slimmed down a bit and smiled more.

Standing as I was in my bridesmaid's uniform - a drop-waisted, peach-colored sailor dress - all I could manage was a "Fuck

you" before storming out of the room. The two of them continued to chuckle like old pals.

Chris found me in a basement storeroom trying to patch myself up with Visine and pressed powder. He watched, looking familiar and comforting, yet infuriatingly handsome and intimidating at the same time. All of a sudden I found myself screaming at him. He was just another asshole now. A traitor. Chris remained calm, smiling. I kept crying and yelling at him. Then he took hold of my left hand and put two small objects inside it.

"I knew this might be a rough day for you," lie said ' "and I thought these might make it a little more pleasant." I opened my hand and found two gold rings. "Hal's missing something," he said. "Oh," I said dumbly' sniffling and staring at the rings. Then Chris frowned. He was looking at the dress.

"Wish you'd consulted me before agreeing to this, Nina," he said, tugging at the sleeve.

Then he turned me around so my back faced him. The warmth of his fingers was reassuring and erotic at the same time. I reached up to help him find the zipper, hidden on the side of the dress. "I was thinking the same thing," he said. "It's time this thing came off."

And it did. And so did a certain navy suit. The floor was cool, and as we reintroduced ourselves, we could hear Hal upstairs, frantic, ordering everyone to check their pockets.

#### **Seduction 5**

#### KAREN, 27, RESEARCH FELLOW

My grandfather took me to Italy for a college graduation present and spent the entire time grilling me in the loudest, most garish Midwestern accent on how I planned to make a living with a master's in French. During lunch one day, as he ticked off a list of people I should send my resume to, this French guy comes up to our table. "Parlez-vous francais?" he asked.

He looked pretty nerdy - I was not impressed-but my grandfather, eager to see my education put to use, asked him to sit down. I was sort of furious, but I politely moved over.

At first he chatted with both of us in English, and I decided that even though my grandfather seemed to approve of him, he wasn't unattractive. Plus, he was talking, so I didn't have to. Then at one point he turned to me. "Your grandfather can't speak French?" he asked in French. I told him that no, my grandfather didn't speak anything except

English, and as loudly as possible.

"Bon!" he said, and proceeded to explain-in French-how handy that was, given that it would be highly inappropriate for my grandfather to know the specifics of exactly what he'd like to do to me. He was using some terminology I wasn't familiar with, but the idea that restraints might be involved had me crossing and re-crossing my legs for a good minute and a half. I glanced at my grandfather. He was smiling happily.

Michel - that was the guy's name - continued: He would do whatever I wanted for as long as I liked. He would feed me and bathe me and make every minute I'd spent on French classes worth my while. The thing that was turning me on the most was the fact that he was speaking so cheerily, as if he were describing a scenic drive around the Normandy coast instead of wondering aloud what I looked like naked. If some guy had said any of these things in English, I would have laughed in his face. This guy, though, didn't make it seem like a come-on. It just seemed like fun.

Anyway, he sat with us through dessert and coffee, and finally my grandfather got up to go. He told Michel how nice it was to meet him and that he was glad he'd had the chance to see me use my talents. And Michel - who turned out, by the way, to be as good as his word - shook my grandfather's hand and said that he was grateful that he would be able to show me his.

#### **RULES OF SEDUCTION**

- 1. Don't be obvious about it. We know you want to get us into bed. Lighting candles, putting on jazz, and pulling out a chilled bottle of champagne is a recipe for celibacy, not romance. It's good to look like you're happy there's a girl in your apartment. Just don't make it seem like you've been planning it since the last time you got laid or that will forever remain the last time you got laid.
- 2. Ask questions. Then let her answer.

  This last part cannot be overemphasized

   women are trained all their lives to be
  good listeners. Do you really think she
  cares why your next car is going to be an
  import? More likely she's thinking to
  herself what an asshole you are. Lavish
  her with the simplest form of attention—
  genuine inquisitiveness—and she'll
  lavish you with a different kind of
  attention later.
- 3. Don't pull the cool, distant thing. This isn't a screen test. It's a date. If you wanted to spend an evening sullenly peeling labels of beer bottles, you should have called Clint Eastwood.
- 4. Love somebody. Preferably a sibling (dwell too much on Mom and we wonder if you wish you were still living at home; too much on Dad and we wonder if you wish you'd rather be fishing) Expressing love and respect for a sibling demonstrates that you've come to terms with issues of jealousy and competitiveness and also since this is the way that you first learned to relate that you know how to listen, care for someone, and have fun.
- 5. Never bring up your ex-girlfriend. No one wants to sleep with you if she has

- any reason to believe you're thinking, have been thinking, or will be thinking of anyone else in her presence. You're not seated at a table for three.
- Encourage her to order more food. If you tell a women to get dessert, you have made a very good chance of seeing her naked.
- 7. Touch her face while kissing. She won't be able to rip her clothes off fast enough. Also, always make your first strike direct and decisive. Don't make that wimpy fraction of a move and expect her to take care of the rest. Everyone likes to feel desired. That's why she's here in the first place.
- 8. Discuss the future. Casually. "You've never been to that bar? Let's go sometime." It's not telling her you want to get married, just that you plan on seeing her after the two of you have breakfast tomorrow. Sarah Miller

### MAKING MR. RIGHT SHE WANTS YOU, BUT BETTER.

#### HERE'S HOW TO READ BETWEEN YOUR GIRLFRIEND'S WHINES

#### BY SARAH MILLER

I'm in lying in bed with Oliver-the sexiest, smartest, funniest, and generally the most perfect specimen on the planet. I watch him get dressed, feeling a dreamy smile on my face. Look at his rumpled hair! His moles! Then my eyes drop to his midsection and my smile fades. If he's having a meeting today, perhaps it should be with his size 32 boxers to discuss why they no longer meet his needs.

As soon as Oliver leaves, I head for the supermarket, where I buy eighty-three dollars worth of fruit, vegetables, brown rice, sorbet, and some mini plastic containers for the salads he will soon be taking to work. As I hand the checkout guy my credit card, I imagine the delighted look on my boyfriend's face when he sees how quickly I've improved his entire world.

But when Oliver arrives home to what I feel is a truly stunning display of albacore tuna, and stacked boxes of water crackers, he turns around, goes into the bedroom, and shuts the door.

"Go away," he says when I knock. "You think I'm fat."

MALE FRIENDS HAVE TOLD me that women who try to change men are simply estrogen-mad lunatics with displaced ego boundaries who would rather meddle in their boyfriends' lives than deal with their own.

While this is 100 percent correct, it is not the entire story. Some girlfriends are trying to change you for your sake. Others are doing it for theirs. Any woman who mails your

resume to everyone on her brother's softball team without your permission needs a therapist, not a boyfriend. But what about those of us who just want to give you a few nips and tucks so that the rest of the world will see you in the same flattering soft focus we do?

Let's examine my boyfriend's burgeoning gut (I examine it every day-You can do it once). Let's also examine the fact that because Oliver thinks ten or fifteen extra pounds makes him look "filled out," and not, as the case actually is, "completely unfuckable," he is in no position to help himself. 1, however, being an American female who knows everything there is to know about diet and exercise, am.

Now in Oliver's case, I admit my concerns go beyond the mere aesthetics of his current bulge. Also troubling is the image of a small child pulling at my leg saying that Daddy's foot broke through one of the basement stairs again. And while I know man), men would rather find out that their girlfriend formerly answered to the name Greg than ever hear the term "long-term plans," such men ignore us at their own peril.

Just because the woman you're with urges you to circulate at the office Christmas parry so that you can get the promotion you deserve and start shopping for a co-op doesn't mean you shouldn't circulate at the office Christmas party. Get the co-op! You can change the locks anytime.

Regardless of whether we're cataloguing honeymoon brochures (and most of the time

we re not), we can help you. We know that wrapping a belt around a raincoat does not make it an overcoat. We know that if you give your sister tricolor gold earrings, she'll curse you every time she looks at them. We know that no man has ever "gotten away with" sandals, and we know that a futon with a tapestry over it in no way resembles a couch.

Here's what you know: how to read maps. And while this is a useful skill, it won't do you much good if you arrive at your destination wearing an ugly tie.

So if your girlfriend is trying to change you, listen. It's only because she thinks that even though you wear black socks with brown shoes and couldn't network your way out of a paper bag, you're still a pretty good catch.

OLIVER FINALLY COMES OUT of his room. He says that he did notice he was getting chubby, but I thought the fact that he has an "amazing metabolism" would eventually make everything go back to normal. "I don't even eat a lot," he says. "You see what I eat for dinner, and in the morning I just have a mocha and a croissant."

I patiently explain to him that a croissant isn't so much a food as a weapon of mass destruction the French dumped on us as payback for Mickey Rourke. I also explain the exquisitely simple concept of a plain bagel and black coffee.

And, being a guy, within a week lie's thin. Unfortunately that doesn't make him look any better in a belted raincoat.

#### THE BEST MOVES FOR HER ORGASM

I'd like to know the best way for a man to react to a woman's orgasm. Should I speed up, or keep at the same rate and let her enjoy it? - Andrew P., St. Paul, Minn.

HAVE YOU ASKED *her* that question yet? If she won't talk, or doesn't know, try some proven techniques.

**SLOW YOUR THRUSTS AS SHE'S PREPARING TO CLIMAX.** You may feel powerful muscle spasms in her vagina at this point. Then speed up the moment she begins to come. This can trigger multiple orgasms.

#### TRY THE FAST-SLOW-FAST

**TECHNIQUE.** Thrust quickly, slow down for a full minute, and then give tier one deep, surprise thrust. Her muscles will relax during the gentle thrusting, and the final thrust will penetrate the deepest area of her vagina, causing spasms and inviting an orgasm. Then accelerate your thrusting and let her climax stimulate yours. You've earned it.

REACHES ORGASM, ESPECIALLY
DURING ORAL SEX. That's because the clitoris is so sensitive that direct contact can be irritating. This often occurs with women who are aroused quickly with little foreplay. But if a woman's arousal is very gradual-she needs plenty of kissing, touching and thrusting - she's more likely to beg you to continue through her orgasm. Do it; she may be building to the mother of all gushers. - Barbara Keesling, Ph.D., sex therapist and author of Super Sexual Orgasm

When I get an erection, my testicles tighten up so much that it hurts. Anything I can do about it? - Jim H., Tampa, Fla.

Erections cause a response that retracts the testicles into the body, to protect them from injury during sex. (Evolution thinks of everything, eh?) In some men, though, this reflex pulls the testicles higher than the scrotum, which can be painful. Try taking aspirin before sex. If the pain is still severe, see a urologist. A surgical procedure can sever the muscles that retract your testicles, but it's a pretty radical operation and I don't recommend it. This problem may diminish over time, and until then, I'd concentrate on the erection and not the tight sensation in your testicles. - Jon L. Pryor, M.D., director of the Center for Men's Health and Infertility in Minnesota

#### Do You Hear What I Hear?

Study shows how our ears are like those of lesbians

#### SCIENTISTS MAY HAVE

**DISCOVERED** why lesbians share our love for loud music. Researchers at the University of Texas gauged the hearing of 237 homosexual and heterosexual men and women in their 20's by measuring the tiny echoes their ears emitted in response to a short click. The study found that lesbian and bisexual women - like men - display weaker echo responses than heterosexual women. "This shows that lesbians have partially masculinized auditory systems, which may be caused by male hormones before birth," says lead researcher Dennis McFadden, Ph.D., professor of experimental psychology. den warns, a manly inner ear doesn't necessarily mean ting Melissa Etheridge soon.

#### Unleash Your Inner Fabio

If you want to read her mind, try reading romance novels first BY COLIN MC'ENROE

CROW-DARK CLOUDS scudded across the afternoon sky, and a westering wind brewed a tea of rain. Colin turned the collar of his midnight-blue houppelande tip against the driving storm and made his way down the cobbled streets, his silver eyes flashing with pain each time the sinews of his muscled thigh twisted across the spear wound from the Viking lord Turik.

Colin smiled grimly. Physical pain he could endure, but where would he find respite from the searing agony lodged in his heart since the death of his betrothed, Wilhelmina Chisholm?

No, thought Colin, he would never love again. He had pledged upon the first full moon after Wilhelmina's death to harden his heart and devote himself to writing articles for the world's best-loved men's magazine. Even now, the metal rings of the reporter's notebook tucked in his back pocket ground pitilessly against his taut buttock. In a moment he would begin another interview, this time with Ellen, a reader of romance novels. He knocked on her door.

The door opened, and Colin gasped. Her hair fell in a fire-cascade of flame and ringlets, past a tapered neck of soft white flesh upon which he longed to plant his lips. Her eyes were the glistening green of dew-covered swards in Donegal. Colin's gaze fell to the soft, inviting petals of her lips, the lower one jutting slightly with a hint of fierce pride. He would love again, he knew as he looked at her.

"...So when my relationship with my

previous boyfriend broke up I was reading a lot of those books, and I would say, 'I want that guy," and my friend Jeneen would say, "You don't want the guy. You want the writer," Ellen is telling me. She is forking some cruddy-looking leftover lasagna out of a Rubbermaid tub, fresh from the microwave.

After I'd been reading romance novels for a while, I began to imagine how much better my boring life would look if it were refracted through their prism. Hardy anybody in romance novels eats stinky leftover food for lunch, but in real life people do. In real life I don't have silver eyes or Viking problems. (Or any interest in Ellen. I made tip that stuff about her looks because I can't remember what color her eyes and hair are.)

But that's one of the most important things about romance novels. They're about details. "Women love to gather information," explains Kathryn Falk, Publisher of Romantic Times magazine, the trade journal of the industry. "Men are hunters. They don't gather."

SWEET NOTHINGS: Romance guys seduce their women with words. Why would you Care?

Well, somebody spends roughly \$750 million every year on romance novels, and it probably isn't you and Reggie White and Bruce

Willis. The woman you love right now or the next woman you meet may be getting a lot of her ideas about men, love and sex from romance novels. I mean, if you were going up against the Jets next week, wouldn't you like a peek at Parcells' playbook.

In this case, it would involve reading a lot of books with the words "secret," "love," "heart," and "whisper" in their titles.

Which I did for you.

Here's what I found, and how you can use it.

#### The Fabio Thing

If you know anything at all about romance novels, you'll have noticed the "hunk factor" of many colors. "Cute Indian on Human Growth Hormone" is sort of the look. In fact, Daniel Day-Lewis in *Last of the Mohicans* was, I'm convinced, intentionally got tip to look like a romance-novel cover guy Should you feel threatened? The experts swear up and down that you should not.

"It's almost the reverse," says Julie Tetel Andresen, Ph.D., professor of English at Duke University. Andresen, author of 15 romances, says men should not worry about falling short of the ideal.

"The hunk on the cover may not be what the woman is really looking for - it's just a quick way to convey physical attraction," she says. "The text of the novel is actually sending the message that nonphysical virtues are the important ones, and those can be embodied in any man."

The bad news: Those nonphysical virtues are things like honor, courage, loyalty and respect-not "memory for batting averages" and "map-reading ability."

Corrective action needed: Maybe none. The policy, as I understand it, is this: Nobility of spirit trumps taut buttocks if it comes to a choice, but since this is a fantasy, why not give 'em both?

It is the official position of *Men's Health* 

that you should have taut buttocks, not because Lord Fotheringill in your girlfriend's paperback has them, but because they're self actualizing.

#### The Underwear Thing

Romance novels taught me something about the difference between men's and women's attitudes toward underclothing, and therefore toward getting naked, and therefore toward eroticism in general.

A lot of romances are set in times of yore, and the authors seem to relish the sheer number of undergarments and the time it takes to get somebody out of them. Indeed, romance novels routinely feature long scenes of gaspy unbuttoning and breathless unfastening, during which the characters think about the significance of what is happening ("...never before had his yearning obliterated all thoughts of the European Union, but now, now...")

They call them bodice-rippers. It's a misnomer. Complex-garment-manipulators is more like it.

Almost no romance novels are set in the days when people wore togas, and I am convinced that this is because...

- 1. One quick tug and you're out of a toga.
- 2. One part of the toga is called the *sinus*, so you'd have, "Drawing back her sinus, he slaked his desire" an erotic-buzz kill.

Should you feel threatened? No, but you should realize that your personal underwear goals are probably at odds with your partner's. Guys tend to prize women's underwear for such qualities as scantiness and handy Velcro access panels. The way we see things, undressing should happen with such non-fumbling swiftness that she has no

time to entertain second thoughts.

Corrective action needed: If your woman reads romance novels, she's wallowing in four-page disrobing scenes. You might give this a shot, but it means booking some extra time. If you want to catch the Steelers-Dolphins kickoff at 1:00, you have to start your first button at 11:45.

#### The Change Thing

This is my own theory, and the people in the romance novel industry disagree with it: The biggest fantasy being sold in romance novels is that guys change.

When we first meet them, many of the men in romance novels are either...

- arrogant and imperious
- > miserable
- > annoyingly suave, or
- ➤ so deeply wounded by the death of their previous love that they have vowed never to love again. (This last condition is such a persistent theme that I have to assume it's some kind of massive emotional turn-on. This makes sense. It suggests a guy who's into commitment, but it also allows the heroine to seduce and woman's man without feeling guilty about it.) Gradually, the men get nicer and warmer.

**Should you feel threatened?** It's kind of cool that moroseness can, under certain circumstances, be a turn-on. But you should understand that a woman who has steeped herself in these narratives is going to expect you, at some point, to be easier to live with.

Corrective action needed: Bear in mind that what happens in romance novels is often the opposite of what seem, to be the pattern in real life. In real life, guys often start out as Prince Charming, only to reveal themselves later as Marquees de Moody or His Royal

Resentfulness. You may be better off letting her see your dark side at the outset, so you can evolve toward a state of aplomb and sunniness.

I suppose it's asking too much for you to marry somebody else and have her die.

#### The Monogamy Thing

There are actually a lot of variations in the romance genre. Subgenres include Multicultural, Time Travel, Contemporary, Regency, Western, Suspense, and Hairy Guy. (Okay, I made up the last one, but I believe that a line of Hairy Guy romances could take off. I plan to write one as soon as I finish this article.) But the one thread of consistency, the one aspect of romance that will never be sacrificed to changing tastes and mores, is monogamy. "These are the most traditional narratives imaginable" says Andresen.

Should you feel threatened? Well, it's doubtful that she plans to run off with the next Fabio look-alike. Corrective action needed: If you're running around, cut it out. And don't expect her to be up for threesomes.

#### **The Details Thing**

I said early on, romance novels are all about details. About men noticing details. About men seeing women in terms of details. Romance-novel guys notice all kinds of things about women's eyes and clothes and hair and bodies. Then they go a step further and find intricate ways of describing what they notice. "The men verbalize a lot. They turn women on with words," says Falk of Romantic Times.

**Should you feel threatened?** Most women don't expect you to have the descriptive

powers of Keats. They expect you to be able to put into words a few things that you really like about them. They would like you to do it pretty much on a daily basis. And they want the words to be somewhat different every time. massages her feet without being asked," says Falk. "Every other woman in the room was sighing."

#### **Corrective action needed:**

- Bad: "You have a great body."
- > Better: "'You have creamy white thighs."
- Even better: "Today I missed you, and I closed my eyes and pictured your thighs, all their tapered loveliness and that muscle cavity I love to kiss on the inside of your sensuous left hip."
  FEET, DON?

Actually, I'm getting a little turned on myself, so you can imagine how she'll feel.

## FEET, DON'T FAIL ME NOW: Romance studs know how to rub

her the right way ...

Exactly. Because to a man, the whole concept of virile wildness and vitality is inextricably tied

to the ability to acquire new sexual playmates.

In romance novels, the woman gets the pirate king, not the harbor-bound shop-keeper who sells the tallow and jerky to the pirate ship. In real life, the shopkeeper goes to his kids' school plays, doesn't lop off his mother-in-law's head with a cutlass, and comes home every night. And the real pirate king shows up every couple of fortnights and gives her a million laughs, but then he leaves her with hard-to-treat Surriatran genital warts.

So this is confusing.

Should you feel threatened? I say no. Consider this: Romance novels argue that a guy can be responsible, steady, monogamous and affectionate and still have a bit of pirate king in him. This is good, right? I mean, isn't this what every guy on the planet is hoping for? That marriage and commitment will not turn us into sheep?

Corrective action needed: If you're a

#### The Romance Thing

Why is this a \$750 million industry. Because women love love. "Women are disappointed because the man originally does a of romantic things, but then he slacks off" says Michael Adamse, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in Boca Raton, Florida.

Women! They have their nerve. They expect us to keep this romance stuff cooking throughout the whole year, every year - even during March Madness.

**Should you feel threatened?** If a guy is not forthcoming with any romance, the woman can go deeper and deeper into these books, say experts.

Or deeper and deeper into her riding instructor.

**Corrective action needed:** A little attention goes a long way. "The other day a woman was telling some of us that her husband

#### **The Confusing Thing**

All these Viking lords and pirate kings and barons are aggressive, take-charge guys - what psychologists would call *alpha males*. But here's the catch: "A woman in a romance novel gets an alpha male to commit," says Falk. "In real life, alpha males have a lot of trouble committing."

shopkeeper, you need to exhibit some pirate-king tendencies, but it would be a bad idea to say, "Here are some flowers, darling, and I'm there for kindergarten open house Thursday night, but the arrogant, devilish buccaneer in me needs to go to Goldfinger's with the mateys after work on Friday."

In romance novels these days, the women are alpha females. They are horticulturists turned bounty hunters, and unjustly accused murderess she-devils, and sisters risking their lives to avenge dead brothers and ferret out spies in Regency England. So any wild behavior you plan on engaging in had better include her. Climb a mountain with her in a rainstorm and make love on a ledge. Or something.

#### ... but you know all this.

When you come right down to it, except for the underwear thing, romance novels confirm what we knew all along: Women want monogamy, attention, talk, romance, inner strength, and devotion. They understand, however, that all this may not be available in massive doses, so they use romance novels like multivitamins, to supplement their actual diets.

## SEX

# The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Lovers

Sometimes sex can be tricky business. Here's how you can become chairman of the headboard

BY BILL GOTTLIEB

HEY, HABITS, even bad ones, take time to perfect. You don't just pick them up overnight. So the fact that you've had more than your fair share of sex in this life, while undoubtedly a great source of pride to you, probably means that over the years you've developed a few bad habits-maybe learned to Cut a few corners here and there in the bedroom. Happens to the best. Show us a gorgeous woman and we'll show you a man who's making love to her on auto-pilot at least once in a while.

The problem here is that women, under the misguided impression that we men have delicate egos, are not always inclined to point out ways we can improve our lovemaking. So the bad habits endure.

Replacing your bad sexual habits with some of the better ones here will result in a much happier and more satisfied partner, which, being the selfless sort that you are, is the only thing that really interests you. We should mention, in passing, that it could also result in bedpost-rattling, plaster-loosening, forget-your-own-name. animalistic fun for you, too. In case you're interested.

#### Habit #1: Be handy, man.

When it comes to using your hands to get her worked up, you can't afford to be all thumbs, at least according to the *book The Guide to Getting It On!* So next time your fingers are doing their love thing, make sure you...

Get them in the right position. when a woman masturbates, she often rests her wrist on her lower abdomen just above the pubic bone. If this is what your partner does, try to do the same, since it will influence the way your fingers feel on her vulva. Try lying parallel to your partner and reaching your arm over her body until your fingers can reach her crotch. This allows your fingers to approach from the same angle that her own fingers do.

Wait for it to come to you. Great lovers know to start with light, gentle caresses that barely touch the inner thighs and pubic hair. Don't go any further until she spreads her legs and /or her pelvis begins to arch upward. Then tease and caress until the lips of her vulva invite your fingers inside.

Flick your wrist. Men typically use only one finger when they get down around the action zone. When your lover does herself, however, she gets her entire wrist into the motion, even if only one finger is actually touching her vulva. This is a subtle and important detail that the great ones all know.

#### Habit #2: Stay in training.

"A man can learn a lot about being a better lover through masturbation - even if he has a regular partner," says Peter Sandor Cardos, Ph.D., a San Francisco clinical sexologist.
"One of men's biggest concerns during sex is that they'll come too soon. Regular masturbation is the perfect way to learn to recognize the signs that you're getting close to orgasm." Here's how to get the most out of Solo Orgasm 101.

**Slow down.** "The fear of being found out

motivates boys to learn to masturbate to orgasm as quickly as possible," says Patricia Love, Ed.D., a marriage and family therapist in Houston and author of Hot Monogamy. The trouble is, these quickies condition your sexual responses in such a way that you end up climaxing much faster than you'd like to with a partner. An occasional lightning orgasm is okay, but try to set aside some time when you can relax and masturbate for 20 minutes or so.

**Lighten up**. Another danger of high-speed wanking is that a jackhammer strokes creates sensations that can't be reproduced when you're not the only one in the room. "Some men get so used to the hard, fast strokes that they have trouble climaxing with a partner," says Barbara Keesling, Ph.D., a sex therapist and author of Super Sexual Orgasm.

To master a new stroke, try switching hands, which will make you very conscious of every move you make and defeat any "automatic" movements.

#### Habit #3: Broaden your horizons.

An effective lover knows there's more to sex than intercourse. "He doesn't simply grab a woman's breasts and then dive into her crotch," says Robert Birch, Ph.D., a marital and sex therapist in Columbus, Ohio. Instead, he "sees intercourse as one of many options."

Our sex therapists mentioned many possibilities, from using sex toys to rubbing your penis on different parts of your partner's body, to watching her masturbate. "The essential attitude - especially in a long-term relationship - is that nothing in particular has to happen during any sex act," says Constance Avery-Clark, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in Coral Springs, Florida.

#### Habit #4: Float like a butterfly.

They may not want to admit it, but women like receiving oral sex as much as we do. If you've already figured out how to make your partner hear colors, we salute you. But if you could use a bit more time in the lab, try this technique: It's the fabled *Venus butterfly*, described for us here by Ava Cadell, Ph.D., a clinical sexologist in Los Angeles:

Spend some time kissing and touching until your partner starts to become aroused, then gently pull back the hood of her clitoris. Stimulate the clitoris with then long strokes, with either your tongue or your moistened fingers. Ask your partner to tell You when she's reached at least "8" on an excitement scale of 1 to 10.

Then, with small, circular motions, stimulate the entire outside area of the vagina with your tongue and your fingers Until she's back down to "5."

Now, go back to the clitoris. When she reaches "5" again, place the palm of your hand against her genitals and slide one finger into her vagina. With your fingertip, tap a spot about 2 inches inside her vagina, on the upper wall. (Home of the elusive G-spot - some women have it and some don't, but either way, this will feel good.)

Now, just keep stroking or licking her clitoris while tapping her G-spot. She'll let you know when it's time to stop.

#### Habit #5: Keep her waiting.

Teasing doesn't come naturally to most men, but it can be very appealing to women. Why rush the greatest thing in life? Instead, enjoy it more...

**Take 10 times longer.** The stereotypical guy watches his mate undress and then pounces

on her like a linebacker on a loose ball. He grabs hold of her breasts and works them like pizza dough, and soon she's bored out of her mind. So, if you want to make a big impression, surprise her with your slowness. The key: Build steadily and specifically to a nipple crescendo for her, says Linda DeVillers, Ph.D., author of Love Skills. Start at the outermost rim of the nipple and slowly spin inward. As your finger travels, you should notice the rim around her nipple (the areola) darken and the nipple itself stiffen. Place a finger on each side of the nipple and push down lightly, pulling your fingers apart as you go. Making the nipple taut (and ready!) in this way will heighten the sensation for her when you start to lick and tickle it a few moments later.

**Start early in the day.** "Call your lover at work and tell her what you'd like to do to her tonight when she gets home," suggests Gardos. You'll both be thinking about sex for hours.

#### Habit #6: Catch her off guard.

You may have magic hands, but if you make love the same way, time after time, sooner or later she's going to find it as exciting as a rerun of *This Old House*. "When a woman anticipates every move a man is going to make," says John Cray, Ph.D., author of *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, "she may no longer become excited by sex-and this is very common." Here's how to make a few bedroom improvements:

**Try new positions.** "My number-one advice for men is: Change your sexual positions frequently," says Cadell. "Her orgasm will feel different in every position, and she'll be grateful for your creativity."

Get away from it all. "Changing the environment is very important for a woman," says Gray. "If you can't afford a

hotel, camp out. It's not the location so much as the feeling that she doesn't have to worry about the details, that you're doing the thinking. That gets her out of her mind and into her body."

#### Habit #7: Play at the pump.

While you're trying all those new positions and varied positions (woohoo!), don't forget about the most basic technique of intercourse: the thrusting of your penis. "Monotonous pumping can have a numbing effect on the woman, especially if she's not aroused enough to respond to intense sensation," says Felice Dunas, Ph.D., author of Passion Play. Variations in the depth, speed, rhythm and timing of your pelvic thrusts can dramatically enhance the experience for both of you. Dunas suggests starting with mostly shallow, slow thrusts; as your partner becomes more aroused, mix in a higher percentage of deeper thrusts. To really keep her on her toes, try some brief pauses between thrusts.

## **How to Date out of Your League**

She's a goddess. You're a mere mortal. Here's how to make her worship you

#### BY MATT FITZGERALD

YOU SEE THEM everywhere: chatting, smiling, quickly contemplating world peace as they suck on the ends of their Ray-Bans. You want to talk to them, but you wonder if there's any point. After all, you aren't a billionaire. You don't model underwear. You aren't even an actor in rehab.

We are speaking, of course, about the universal beauties you've always assumed were beyond your grasp. Well, you're wrong. In reality, great-looking women fall for nice guys like you, guys who have only one thing you lack: a strategy.

To this end, we have probed the minds of leading relationship experts and the lives of regular guys who have taken their modest, farm-team talent to the Big Show. From the evidence gathered, we have compiled a definitive, eight-point plan to help you attract and keep all those women you've been fantasizing about.

The really good news? None of our steps requires mail-order approdisiacs.

Show her you're a gutsy guy. Because most men are intimidated by overwhelming looks, the amount of competition for beautiful women is much smaller than you might think. In fact, the reason many unassuming guys are with knockouts is simple: They were the only ones who took the risk.

Two of the main traits beautiful women are attracted to in men are power and self-

confidence," says Warren Farrell, Ph.D., author of *The Myth of Male Power* and an expert on man-woman relations.

"If a man is intimidated by a woman's looks, she assumes he's going to be intimidated by the world in general." A guy who takes a risk, however, exudes power by overcoming the initial desire to run when he comes face-to-face with stunning beauty. And while perfect 10s get zillions of propositions from newly brave yokels soaked with alcohol, they encounter comparatively few serious (and sober) suitors. You can score big points with a beautiful woman simply by making a mature, confident approach and by treating her like a normal person-which is probably what she is, underneath that leather mini and skimpy halter top.

Worship at the altar of Larry King. The talk-show host and serial husband is living proof that you can't predict what women will find attractive. "Sometimes beautiful women prefer a handsome man, and sometimes they don't; sometimes they prefer a wealthy man, and sometimes they don't," observes David Deida, a lecturer on the sexes and author of *The War of the Superior Man*.

Although you may not need extraordinary looks or money to attract a ravishing woman, you do need something. So use your best social selling points when you approach her. My buddy, an ad sales representative in San Diego, says humor works well for him.

"If you can make a woman laugh, you can probably make her do anything," he says. He recounts one occasion when he approached a woman at a club and offered to buy her a drink. She curtly refused. He then asked her to dance and received the same response. He finally asked, "Well, can I just stand here?" She laughed despite herself, and within minutes he had her name and phone number.

**Don't hit on her; talk to her.** The problem with an opening line is that it's just that-one sentence that seldom leads to anything.

Him: "Hey, you come here a lot?"

Her: "No." Him: "Oh."

Besides, most good-looking women have had more lines tossed their way than the entire Wallenda family put together.

You'll fare better by starting a real conversation. Farrell recommends hunting for something the two of you have in common, no matter how small. Asking her advice on the relative ripeness of melons in the produce aisle just might punch your ticket. It's been done before, but it demonstrates that you value her opinion.

Another guy I know, a software entrepreneur in San Francisco, made eye contact with Ellen one morning on his commuter bus. She was a knockout; he's an average guy with a big nose. "When I saw her on the same bus a couple weeks later," he says, "I told her, 'I was hoping to see you here again. Do you work downtown?"" She responded, and they were off.

**Don't intimidate her**. What? You intimidate *her*? You bet. Most guys fail to appreciate that romantic approaches make even the prettiest of women just as nervous

as they make you. Making her feel comfortable will calm you both down and improve your odds of success. Smiling, asking for advice ("My parents are coming to town-what show should I take them to") and listening attentively (think about follow-up questions, not about her breasts) The proven ways to put her at ease. "Even the way you breathe makes a difference," adds Deida. (Think slow and deep. And don't drool.)

#### Focus on something other than her looks.

"Beautiful women are like a second-term president: insecure," Farrell. "They know their powers are ephemeral, and that one day inevitably, someone will replace them." (Pray it's not Gore!)

So, even at the height of their radiance, women like to be appreciated. When courting her, catalog her subtler virtues and let her know you admire them. Also, compliment her appearance at the moments when she feels least beautiful - she's sweaty, fired, or just waking up.

But don't ignore her looks. A lot of men believe you should never let a woman know you think she's beautiful because it puts you in a "vulnerable" position. That's a load of bull. Gorgeous women know when they're beautiful, and they know you know it. If you try too to play it cool, they simply see you for you are: a phony. But while you don't want to mask your attraction, neither do you want to express it lewdly ("Nice rack") or in a manner that fails to distinguish you from the scores of other guys who compliment her ("Gee, you're pretty").

Instead, focus on the quieter aspects of her loveliness. "Beautiful women are suspicious of the grand compliment," says Farrell. Tell her you like the way she wrinkles her nose

when she smiles or the way she tilts her head when she talks to you. Notice things that only women notice amongst themselves - how well her scarf matches her eyes - and you'll impress her with your sensitivity and powers of observation. Either that or she'll think you're a closet Elsa Klensch fan.

Use your brain, not your wallet. If your intended is as great-looking as you think she is, she'll still have plenty of opportunities to date other men-rich men, actually, with silvery hair and tight little convertibles. That's just something you have to accept.

Because men tend to associate female beauty with sex, we often mistakenly assume that a beautiful girlfriend is a sex object waiting to be bought by a higher bidder. In the rare case that it's true, say good riddance to the superficial bimbo. Otherwise, advises Deida, "the best way to encourage fidelity is to show her what she'd be missing if she weren't with you. Challenge her beyond her expectations." Does she like to dance? Sign up for ballroom lessons. Does she like to paint? Keep her in brushes. If a woman recognizes that you not only make her happy but also help her grow, she won't want to lose you.

**Don't tie her down.** A ravishing woman has too much beauty for you to hog. Grow up and let her share it with the world. "When a woman realizes that her beauty is a gift, that it can bring joy to other people, then her beauty deepens and she becomes radiant," says Deida.

By encouraging her to smile, strut and show off, you won't lose a piece of her beauty; you'll gain a grateful chunk of her heart-a chunk she has probably never shared with a guy before. What about other guys, who will try to steal her? Your extreme options are to fight or flee, but both choices are foolish. Instead, says my software-selling buddy, "steal the guy's attention yourself and strike up a conversation. When he finds out you're a nice guy, he won't want to disrespect you." If lie does, that's where a martial-arts background really comes in handy.

# THREE LIE'S ABOUT DRINKING

Myths about drinking are as plentiful as manicurists in New Jersey. So think again if you believe...

Tequila secretly hates you.

Everyone knows someone who refuses to drink (a) tequila, (b) rum, (c) red wine, or (d) spiked strawberry-flavored Quik because they've had bad experiences with the stuff (remember the prom?) "Alcohol is alcohol, whether it comes in beer, tequila or a 1995 Merlot," says John Brick, Ph.D., executive director of Intoxikon International and author of Drugs, the Brain and Behavior. But other variables can influence your behavior: an empty stomach, how fast you drink, and whether or not you like the beverage's taste (people dread tequila's effect, but who can stop at one margarita?). Of course, your expectations don't help. "Studies prove that people who have a drink that looks, smells and tastes like it contains alcohol-but really doesn't-show some symptoms of impairment," says Brick. If you expect to do something stupid after drinking rum, it's no wonder you do (and next time, use the men's room, not the corner pocket).

Beer and whiskey, pretty risky. Although you may feel otherwise, there is no medical evidence to suggest that mixing kinds of alcohol will make you any sicker than sticking to one kind, says Adam Chavetz, president of TIPS, which instructs bartenders on signs of intoxication. But you will look funny alternating between B-52s and peppermint schnapps.

Drinking a beer through a straw speeds the buzz. No. I n fact, the absorption will take longer because you drink more slowly through a straw, says Chavetz. Don't ask us about Silly Straws.

# 8 Things you shouldn't say – or do – to a bartender

Just to Be Safe ...

#### Never

- call him "big guy," "dude," or "chief." This isn't a sales conference.
- get his attention, then turn around and ask what everyone else wants. "Know what everyone wants first," says John Doyle. Roll your eyes when ordering the daiquiri for your paid escort.
- tell him you're the designated driver.

  "Using a designated driver sounds great but, oddly, it results in worse drunks," says

  Adam Chavetz. "Having a designated driver raises the expectation that everyone he's driving will become a major idiot."
- ask her if she poured any booze in the drink. "If you want to taste the liquor, order it straight up," says Susan Lee, bartender at Botanica in New York. That means drinks with umbrellas are out.
- begin a sentence with "Stop me if you've heard this before." "We will," says Doyle.
- ask where the cool bars are around here. "That's a slap in the face", Says Mighty Joe Vincent. A sensible bartender will steer you to the scariest biker bar in town. And tell you the drinks are fine if you wear fishnet stockings.
- ask for the cheapest drink. -That means we're not getting a tip," says Mitchell Magera, bartender at the Van Dyke Cafe in South Beach. If you don't have enough

dough to tip, you shouldn't be drinking - you should be working.

- ask for a drink on the house, "If you tip well, we'll buy you a round," says Joe. "Ask for it - forget it." If you want a free drink, get a sex change and flirt a lot. It worked for me.

# And Under Circumstances NEVER Order...

Anything that sounds like a sexual request. "Whether it's a woowoo, a screaming orgasm, sex on the beach, or a slippery nipple, we feel as stupid making it as you should ordering it," says Jimmy G. from Raoul's in New York. Order something manly, like a spritzer.

Anything with five or more ingredients. "The number of ingredients is inversely proportional to the intelligence of the drinker," says Jimmy. This is why John Tesh dies for tequila Sunrises.

Anything frozen (unless you're a hairstylist) "When someone at a big table orders a frozen drink, then everyone else does," says Irene Davis, the National Hotel bartender. "It's a monkey see, monkey do thing." If it's a Slurpee you want, try 7-11.