

From the author of the
NATIONAL BESTSELLER
*The 48 Laws of
POWER*

THE
ART OF

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ROBERT
GREENE



A JOOST ELFFERS BOOK

- 1 Choose the Right Victim
- 2 Create a False Sense of Security—Approach Indirectly
- 3 Send Mixed Signals
- 4 Appear to Be an Object of Desire—Create Triangles
- 5 Create a Need—Stir Anxiety and Discontent
- 6 Master the Art of Insinuation
- 7 Enter Their Spirit
- 8 Create Temptation
- 9 Keep Them in Suspense—What Comes Next?
- 10 Use the Demonic Power of Words to Sow Confusion
- 11 Pay Attention to Detail



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THE ART OF
SEDUCTION
ROBERT GREENE
A JOOST ELFFERS BOOK

Get what you want by manipulating everyone's greatest weakness: the desire for pleasure

Seduction is the most subtle, elusive, and effective form of power. It's as evident in John F. Kennedy's hold over the masses as it is in Cleopatra's hold over Antony. Now, the author of the bestselling *The 48 Laws of Power* has written a handbook synthesizing the classic literature of seduction from Freud to Kierkegaard and Ovid to Casanova, with cunning strategies illustrated by the successes and failures of characters throughout history. And once again Robert Greene identifies the rules of a timeless, amoral game and explores how to cast a spell, break down resistance, and, ultimately, compel a target to surrender. *The Art of Seduction* takes us through the characters and qualities of the ten archetypal figures of seduction (including the Siren, the Ideal Lover, the Dandy, the Natural, the Charismatic, and the Star) and the twenty-four maneuvers by which anyone can overcome a victim's futile resistance to the practice of this devastating and timeless art form. Every bit as essential as *The 48 Laws of Power*, *The Art of Seduction* is an indispensable primer of persuasion that reveals one of history's greatest weapons and the ultimate form of power.

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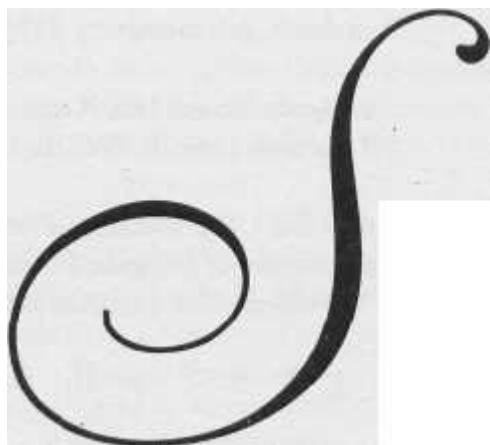
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THE ART OF SEDUCTION

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the art of

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Robert Greene

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To the memory of my father

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Finally, I would like to honor my father. Words cannot express how much I miss him and how much he has inspired my work.

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The Siren page 5

A man is often secretly oppressed by the role he has to play— by always having to be responsible, in control, and rational. The Siren is the ultimate male fantasy figure because she offers a total release from the limitations of his life. In her presence, which is always heightened and sexually charged, the male feels transported to a realm of pure pleasure. In a world where women are often too timid to project such an image, learn to take control of the male libido by embodying his fantasy.

The Rake page 17

A woman never quite feels desired and appreciated enough. She wants attention, but a man is too often distracted and unresponsive. The Rake is a great female fantasy-figure—when he desires a woman, brief though that moment may be, he will go to the ends of the earth for her. He may be disloyal, dishonest, and amoral, but that only adds to his appeal. Stir a woman's repressed longings by adapting the Rake's mix of danger and pleasure. The Ideal Lover page 29

Most people have dreams in their youth that get shattered or worn down with age. They find themselves disappointed by people, events, reality, which cannot match their youthful ideals. Ideal Lovers thrive on people's broken dreams, which become lifelong fantasies. You long for romance? Adventure? Lofty spiritual communion? The Ideal Lover reflects your fantasy. He or she is an artist in creating the illusion you require. In a world of disenchantment and baseness, there is limitless seductive power in following the path of the Ideal Lover. xi

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The Dandy page 41

Most of us feel trapped within the limited roles that the world expects us to play. We are instantly attracted to those who are more fluid than we are—those who create their own persona. Dandies excite us because they cannot be categorized, and hint at a freedom we want for ourselves. They play with masculinity and femininity; they fashion their own physical image, which is always startling. Use the power of the Dandy to create an ambiguous, alluring presence that stirs repressed desires.

The Natural page 53

Childhood is the golden paradise we are always consciously or unconsciously trying to re-create. The Natural embodies the longed-for qualities of childhood—spontaneity, sincerity, unpretentiousness. In the presence of Naturals, we feel at

ease, caught up in their playful spirit, transported back to that golden age. Adopt the pose of the Natural to neutralize people's defensiveness and infect them with helpless delight.

The Coquette page 67

The ability to delay satisfaction is the ultimate art of seduction—while waiting, the victim is held in thrall. Coquettes are the grand masters of the game, orchestrating a back-and-forth movement between hope and frustration. They bait with the promise of reward—the hope of physical pleasure, happiness, fame by association, power—all of which, however, proves elusive; yet this only makes their targets pursue them the more. Imitate the alternating heat and coolness of the Coquette and you will keep the seduced at your heels. The Charmer page 79

Charm is seduction without sex. Charmers are consummate manipulators, masking their cleverness by creating a mood of pleasure and comfort. Their method is simple: They deflect attention from themselves and focus it on their target. They understand your spirit, feel your pain, adapt to your moods. In the presence of a Charmer you feel better about yourself. Learn to cast the Charmer's spell by aiming at people's primary weaknesses: vanity and self-esteem. The Charismatic page 95

Charisma is a presence that excites us. It comes from an inner quality—self-confidence, sexual energy, sense of purpose, contentment—that most people lack and want. This quality radiates outward, permeating the gestures of Charismatics, making them seem extraordinary and superior. They learn to heighten their charisma with a piercing gaze, fiery oratory, an air of mystery. Create the charismatic illusion by radiating intensity while remaining detached. The Star page 119

Daily life is harsh, and most of us constantly seek escape from it in fantasies and dreams. Stars feed on this weakness; standing out from others through a distinctive and appealing style, they make us want to watch them. At the same time, they are vague and ethereal, keeping their distance, and letting us imagine more than is there. Their dreamlike quality works on our unconscious. Learn to become an object of fascination by projecting the glittering but elusive presence of the Star.

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The Anti-Seducer page 131

Seducers draw you in by the focused, individualized attention they pay to you. Anti-seducers are the opposite: insecure, self-absorbed, and unable to grasp the psychology of another person, they literally repel Anti-Seducers have no self-awareness, and never realize when they are pestering, imposing, talking too much. Root out anti-seductive qualities in yourself and recognize them in others—there is no pleasure or profit in dealing with the Anti-Seducer. The Seducer's Victims—The Eighteen Types page 147

Part Two

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Phase One: Separation— Stirring Interest and Desire

1 Choose the Right Victim *page 167*

Everything depends on the target of your seduction. Study your prey thoroughly, and choose only those who will prove susceptible to your charms. The right victims are those for whom you can fill a void, who see in you something exotic. They are often isolated or unhappy, or can easily be made so—for the completely contented person is almost impossible to seduce. The perfect victim has some quality that inspires strong emotions in you, making your seductive maneuvers seem more natural and dynamic. The perfect victim allows for the perfect chase. 2 Create a False Sense of Security—Approach Indirectly *page 177*

If you are too direct early on, you risk stirring up a resistance that will never be lowered. At first there must be nothing of the seducer in your manner. The seduction should begin at an angle, indirectly, so that the target only gradually becomes aware of you. Haunt the periphery of your target's life—a approach through a third party, or seem to cultivate a relatively neutral re- lationship, moving gradually from friend to lover. Lull the target into feeling secure, then strike. 3 Send Mixed Signals *page 185*

Once people are aware of your presence, and perhaps vaguely intrigued, you need to stir their interest before it settles on someone else. Most of us are much too obvious— instead, be hard to figure out. Send mixed signals: both tough and tender, both spiritual and earthly, both inno- cent and cunning. A mix of qualities suggests depth, which fascinates even as it confuses. An elusive, enigmatic aura will make people want to know more, drawing them into your circle. Create such a power by hinting at something contradictory within you. 4 Appear to Be an Object of Desire—Create Triangles *page 195*

Few are drawn to the person whom others avoid or neglect; people gather around those who have already attracted interest. To draw your victims closer and make them hungry to possess you, you must create an aura of desirability— of being wanted and courted by many. It will become a point of vanity for them to be the preferred object of your attention, to win you away from a crowd of admirers. Build a reputation that precedes you: If many have succumbed to your charms, there must be a reason.

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5 Create a Need—Stir Anxiety and Discontent *page 203*

A perfectly satisfied person cannot be seduced. Tension and disharmony must be instilled in your targets minds. Stir within them feelings of discontent, an unhappiness with their circumstances and with themselves. The feelings of inadequacy that you create will give you space to insinuate yourself, to make them see you as the answer to their problems. Pain and anxiety are the proper precursors to pleasure. Learn to manufacture the need that you can fill. 6 Master the Art of Insinuation page 211

Making your targets feel dissatisfied and in need of your attention is essential, but if you are too obvious, they will see through you and grow defensive. There is no known defense, however, against insinuation—the art of planting ideas in people's minds by dropping elusive hints that take root days later, even appearing to them as their own idea. Create a sublanguage—

bold statements followed by retraction and apology, ambiguous comments, banal talk combined with alluring glances—that enters the target's unconscious to convey your real meaning. Make everything suggestive.

7 Enter Their Spirit page 219

Most people are locked in their own worlds, making them stubborn and hard to persuade. The way to lure them out of their shell and set up your seduction is to enter their spirit. Play by their rules, enjoy what they enjoy, adapt yourself to their moods. In doing so you will stroke their deep-rooted narcissism and lower their defenses. Indulge your targets' every mood and whim, giving them nothing to react against or resist.

8 Create Temptation page 229

Lure the target deep into your seduction by creating the proper temptation: a glimpse of the pleasures to come. As the serpent tempted Eve with the promise of forbidden knowledge, you must awaken a desire in your targets that they cannot control. Find that weakness of theirs, that fantasy that has yet to be realized, and hint that you can lead them toward it. The key is to keep it vague. Stimulate a curiosity stronger than the doubts and anxieties that go with it, and they will follow you.

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9 Keep Them in Suspense—What Comes Next? page 241

The moment people feel they know what to expect from you, your spell on them is broken. More: You have ceded them power. The only way to lead the seduced along and keep the upper hand is to create suspense, a calculated surprise. Doing something they do not expect from you will give them a delightful sense of spontaneity—they will not be able to foresee what comes next. You are always one step ahead and in control. Give the victim a thrill with a sudden change of direction.

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10 Use the Demonic Power of Words to Sow Confusion *page 251*

It is hard to make people listen; they are consumed with their own thoughts and desires, and have little time for yours. The trick to making them listen is to say what they want to hear, to fill their ears with whatever is pleasant to them. This is the essence of seductive language. In- flame people's emotions with loaded phrases, flatter them, comfort their insecurities, envelop them in sweet words and promises, and not only will they listen to you, they will lose their will to resist you.

11 Pay Attention to Detail *page 265*

Lofty words of love and grand gestures can be suspicious: Why are you trying so hard to please? The details of a seduction—the subtle gestures, the offhand things you do—are often more charming and revealing. You must learn to distract your victims with a myriad of pleasant little rituals—thoughtful gifts tailored just for them, clothes and adornments designed to please them, gestures that show the time and attention you are paying them. Mesmerized by what they see, they will not notice what you are really up to.

12 Poeticize Your Presence *page 277*

Important things happen when your targets are alone: The slightest feeling of relief that you are not there, and it is all over. Familiarity and overexposure will cause this reaction. Remain elusive, then. Intrigue your targets by alternating an exciting presence with a cool distance, exuberant moments followed by calculated absences. Associate yourself with poetic images and objects, so that when they think of you, they begin to see you through an idealized halo. The more you figure in their minds, the more they will envelop you in seductive fantasies. 13 Disarm Through Strategic Weakness and Vulnerability *page 285*

Too much maneuvering on your part may raise suspicion. The best way to cover your tracks is to make the other person feel superior and stronger. If you seem to be weak, vulnerable, enthralled by the other person, and unable to control yourself you will make your actions look more natural, less calculated. Physical weakness—tears, bashfulness, paleness—will help create the effect. Play the victim, then transform your target's sympathy into love. 14 Confuse Desire and Reality—The Perfect Illusion *page 295*

To compensate for the difficulties in their lives, people spend a lot of their time daydreaming, imagining a future full of adventure, success, and romance. If you can create the illusion that through you they can live out their dreams, you will have them at your mercy. Aim at secret wishes that have been thwarted or repressed, stirring up uncontrollable emotions, clouding their powers of reason. Lead the seduced to a point of confusion in which they can no longer tell the difference between illusion and reality.

15 Isolate the Victim *page 309*

An isolated person is weak. By slowly isolating your victims, you make them more vulnerable to your influence. Take them away from their normal milieu, friends,

family, home. Give them the sense of being marginalized, in limbo— they are leaving one world behind and entering another. Once isolated like this, they have no outside support, and in their confusion they are easily led astray. Lure the seduced into your lair, where nothing is familiar. xvi • Contents

Phase Three: The Precipice— Deepening the Effect Through Extreme Measures 16
Prove Yourself page 321

Most people want to be seduced. If they resist your efforts, it is probably because you haven't gone far enough to allay their doubts— about your motives, the depth of your feelings, and so on. One well-timed action that shows how far you are willing to go to win them over will dispel their doubts. Do not worry about looking foolish or making a mistake— any kind of deed that is self-sacrificing and for your targets' sake will so overwhelm their emotions, they won't notice anything else.

17 Effect a Regression *page 333*

People who have experienced a certain kind of pleasure in the past will try to repeat or relive it. The deepest-rooted and most pleasurable memories are usually those from earliest childhood, and are often unconsciously associated with a parental figure. Bring your targets back to that point by placing yourself in the oedipal triangle and positioning them as the needy child. Unaware of the cause of their emotional response, they will fall in love with you. 18 Stir Up the Transgressive and Taboo *page 349*

There are always social limits on what one can do. Some of these, the most elemental taboos, go back centuries; others are more superficial, simply defining polite and acceptable behavior. Making your targets feel that you are leading them past either kind of limit is immensely seductive. People yearn to explore their dark side. Once the desire to transgress draws your targets to you, it will be hard for them to stop. Take them farther than they imagined— the shared feeling of guilt and complicity will create a powerful bond. 19 Use Spiritual Lures *page 359*

Everyone has doubts and insecurities— about their body, their self-worth, their sexuality. If your seduction appeals exclusively to the physical, you will stir up these doubts and make your targets self-conscious. Instead, lure them out of their insecurities by making them focus on something sublime and spiritual: a religious experience, a lofty work of art, the occult. Lost in a spiritual mist, the target will feel light and uninhibited. Deepen the effect of your seduction by making its sexual culmination seem like the spiritual union of two souls. 20 Mix Pleasure with Pain *page 369*

The greatest mistake in seduction is being too nice. At first, perhaps, your kindness is charming, but it soon grows monotonous; you are trying too hard to please, and seem insecure. Instead of overwhelming your targets with niceness, try inflicting some pain. Make them feel guilty and insecure. Instigate a breakup— now a rapprochement, a return to your earlier kindness, will turn them weak at the knees. The lower the lows you create, the greater the highs. To heighten the erotic charge, create the excitement of fear.

Phase Four: Moving In for the Kill

21 Give Them Space to Fall—The Pursuer Is Pursued *page 383*

If your targets become too used to you as the aggressor, they will give less of their own energy, and the tension will slacken. You need to wake them up, turn the tables. Once they are under your spell, take a step back and they will start to come after you. Hint that you are growing bored. Seem interested in someone else. Soon they will want to possess you physically, and restraint will go out the window. Create the illusion that the seducer is being seduced. 22 Use Physical Lures *page 393*

Targets with active minds are dangerous: If they see through your manipulations, they may suddenly develop doubts. Put their minds gently to rest, and waken their dormant senses, by combining a nondefensive attitude with a charged sexual presence. While your cool, nonchalance air is lowering their inhibitions, your glances, voice, and bearing—oozing sex and desire—are getting under their skin and raising their temperature. Never force the physical; instead infect your targets with heat, lure them into lust. Morality, judgment, and concern for the future will all melt away.

23 Master the Art of the Bold Move *page 405*

A moment has arrived: Your victim clearly desires you, but is not ready to admit it openly, let alone act on it. This is the time to throw aside chivalry, kindness, and coquetry and to overwhelm with a bold move. Don't give the victim time to consider the consequences. Showing hesitation or awkwardness means you are thinking of yourself as opposed to being overwhelmed by the victim's charms. One person must go on the offensive, and it is you. 24 Beware the Aftereffects *page 415*

Danger follows in the aftermath of a successful seduction. After emotions have reached a pitch, they often swing in the opposite direction—toward lassitude, distrust, disappointment. If you are to part, make the sacrifice swift and sudden. If you are to stay in a relationship, beware a flagging of energy, a creeping familiarity that will spoil the fantasy. A second seduction is required. Never let the other person take you for granted—use absence, create pain and conflict, to keep the seduced on tenterhooks.

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Preface

Thousands of years ago, power was mostly gained through physical violence and maintained with brute strength. There was little need for subtlety—a king or emperor had to be merciless. Only a select few had power, but no one suffered under this scheme of things more than women. They had no way to compete, no weapon at their disposal that could make a man do what they wanted—politically, socially, or even in the home. *Oppression and scorn,*

Of course men had one weakness: their insatiable desire for sex. A *thus, were and must have* woman could always toy with this desire, but once she gave in to sex the *been generally the share of women in emerging*

man was back in control; and if she withheld sex, he could simply look *societies; this state lasted in elsewhere*—or exert force. What good was a power that was so temporary *all its force until centuries* and frail? Yet women had no choice but to submit to this condition. There *of experience taught them to substitute skill for force.*

were some, though, whose hunger for power was too great, and who, over *Women at last sensed that*, the years, through much cleverness and creativity, invented a way of turn- *since they were weaker*; ing the dynamic around, creating a more lasting and effective form of *their only resource was to seduce; they understood*

power.

that if they were dependent

These women—among them Bathsheba, from the Old Testament; *on men through force, men* Helen of Troy; the Chinese siren Hsi Shi; and the greatest of them all, *could become dependent on them through pleasure.*

Cleopatra—invented seduction. First they would draw a man in with an al- *More unhappy than men*, luring appearance, designing their makeup and adornment to fashion the *they must have thought* image of a goddess come to life. By showing only glimpses of flesh, *they and reflected earlier than* would tease a man's imagination, stimulating the desire not just for sex but *did men; they were the first to know that pleasure was*

for something greater: the chance to possess a fantasy figure. Once they had *always beneath the idea* their victims' interest, these women would lure them away from the masculi- *that one formed of it, and* line world of war and politics and get them to spend time in the feminine *that the imagination went farther than nature. Once*

world—a world of luxury, spectacle, and pleasure. They might also lead *these basic truths were them astray* literally, taking them on a journey, as Cleopatra lured Julius known, *they learned first Caesar on a trip down the Nile. Men would grow hooked on these refined, to veil their charms in order to awaken curiosity; they*

sensual pleasures—they would fall in love. But then, invariably, the women *practiced the difficult art of* would turn cold and indifferent, confusing their victims. Just when the *refusing even as they* men wanted more, they found their

pleasures withdrawn. They would be *wished to consent; from* forced into pursuit, trying anything to win back the favors they once had *that moment on, they knew how to set men's*

tasted and growing weak and emotional in the process. Men who had *imagination afire, they* physical force and all the social power—men like King David, the Trojan *knew how to arouse and* Paris, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, King Fu Chai—would find themselves *direct desires as they pleased: thus did beauty*

becoming the slave of a woman.

and love come into being;

In the face of violence and brutality, these women made seduction a *now the lot of women* xx • *Preface*

became less harsh, not that

sophisticated art, the ultimate form of power and persuasion. They learned *they had managed to*

to work on the mind first, stimulating fantasies, keeping a man wanting *liberate themselves entirely*

more, creating patterns of hope and despair—the essence of seduction. *from the state of oppression*

to which their weakness

Their power was not physical but psychological, not forceful but indirect *condemned them; but, in*

and cunning. These first great seductresses were like military generals plan *the state of perpetual war* ning the destruction of an enemy, and indeed early accounts of seduction *that continues to exist*

between women and men,

often compare it to battle, the feminine version of warfare. For Cleopatra, *one has seen them, with*

it was a means of consolidating an empire. In seduction, the woman was no *the help of the caresses they*

longer a passive sex object; she had become an active agent, a figure of *have been able to invent,*

power.

combat ceaselessly,

sometimes vanquish, and

With a few exceptions—the Latin poet Ovid, the medieval
often more skillfully take

troubadours—men did not much concern themselves with such a frivolous
advantage of the forces

art as seduction. Then, in the seventeenth century came a great change: *directed against them;*

sometimes, too, men have

men grew interested in seduction as a way to overcome a young woman's *turned against women*

resistance to sex. History's first great male seducers—the Duke de Lauzun, *these weapons the women*

the different Spaniards who inspired the Don Juan legend—began to adopt *had forged to combat them,*

and their slavery has

the methods traditionally employed by women. They learned to dazzle *become all the harsher*

with their appearance (often androgynous in nature), to stimulate the *for it.*

imagination, to play the coquette. They also added a new, masculine ele— C H O D E R L O S DE LACLOS, ON

ment to the game: seductive language, for they had discovered a woman's *THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN,*

weakness for soft words. These two forms of seduction—the feminine use
TRANSLATED BY LYDIA DAVIS, IN

THE LIBERTINE READER,

of appearances and the masculine use of language—would often cross

EDITED BY MICHAEL FEHER

gender lines: Casanova would dazzle a woman with his clothes; Ninon de l'Enclos would charm a man with her words.

At the same time that men were developing their version of seduction, *Much more genius is*

others began to adapt the art for social purposes. As Europe's feudal system *needed to make love than*

of government faded into the past, courtiers needed to get their way in *to command armies.*

court without the use of force. They learned the power to be gained by se—N I N O N D E L ' E N C L O S

ducing their superiors and competitors through psychological games, soft words, a little coquetry. As culture became democratized, actors, dandies, and artists came to use the tactics of seduction as a way to charm and win *Menelaus, if you are really*

going to kill her, \ Then

over their audience and social milieu. In the nineteenth century another *my blessing go with you,*

great change occurred: politicians like Napoleon consciously saw them *but you must do it now, *

selves as seducers, on a grand scale. These men depended on the art of se *Before her looks so twist the strings of your heart *

ductive oratory, but they also mastered what had once been feminine *That they turn your mind;*

strategies: staging vast spectacles, using theatrical devices, creating a charged *for her eyes are like armies,*

physical presence. All this, they learned, was the essence of charisma—and

\And where her glances

*fall, there cities burn, *

remains so today. By seducing the masses they could accumulate immense *Until the dust of their*

power without the use of force.

ashes is blown \ By her

Today we have reached the ultimate point in the evolution of seduc *sighs*. *I know her; tion*. Now more than ever, force or brutality of any kind is discouraged. All *Men elans, \ And so do*

you. And all those who

areas of social life require the ability to persuade people in a way that does *know her suffer*.

not offend or impose itself. Forms of seduction can be found everywhere,

— H E C U B A SPEAKING ABOUT

blending male and female strategies. Advertisements insinuate, the soft sell HELEN OF TROY IN EURIPIDES,

dominates. If we are to change people's opinions—and affecting opinion is *THE TROJAN WOMEN*,

TRANSLATED BY NEIL CURRY

basic to seduction—we must act in subtle, subliminal ways. Today no political campaign can work without seduction. Since the era of John F. *No man hath it in his Kennedy*, political figures are required to have a degree of charisma, a fasci- power to over-rule the deceitfulness of a woman.

nating presence to keep their audience's attention, which is half the battle.

— M A R G U E R I T E OF NAVARRE

The film world and media create a galaxy of seductive stars and images. We are saturated in the seductive. But even if much has changed in degree and scope, the essence of seduction is constant: never be forceful or direct; instead, use pleasure as bait, playing on people's emotions, stirring desire and *This important side-track, by which woman succeeded*

confusion, inducing psychological surrender. In seduction as it is practiced *in evading man's strength* today, the methods of Cleopatra still hold.

and establishing herself in

power, has not been given

due consideration by

People are constantly trying to influence us, to tell us what to do, and just historians. *From the* as often we tune them out, resisting their attempts at persuasion. There is a *moment when the woman* moment in our lives, however, when we all act differently—when we are in *detached herself from the crowd, an individual*

love. We fall under a kind of spell. Our minds are usually preoccupied with *finished product, offering* our own concerns; now they become filled with thoughts of the loved one. *delights which could not be* We grow emotional, lose the ability to think straight, act in foolish ways *obtained by force, but only* that we would never do otherwise. If this goes on long enough something *by flattery . . . the reign of love's priestesses was*

inside us gives way: we surrender to the will of the loved one, and to our *inaugurated. It was a desire to possess them.*

development of far-reaching

Seducers are people who understand the tremendous power contained *importance in the history of civilization. . . Only by*

in such moments of surrender. They analyze what happens when people *the circuitous route of the* are in love, study the psychological components of the

process—what spurs *art of love could woman* the imagination, what casts a spell. By instinct and through practice they *again assert authority, and this she did by asserting*

master the art of making people fall in love. As the first seductresses knew, *herself at the very point at* it is much more effective to create love than lust. A person in love is *emo-* which *she would normally* tional, pliable, and easily misled. (The origin of the word "seduction" is the *be a slave at the man's mercy. She had discovered*

Latin for "to lead astray") A person in lust is harder to control and, once *the might of lust, the secret* satisfied, may easily leave you. Seducers take their time, create *enchantment of the art of love, the* and the bonds of love, so that when sex ensues it only further enslaves *daemonic power of a* the victim. Creating love and *enchantment becomes the model for all passion artificially aroused and never satiated. The*

seductions—sexual, social, political. A person in love will surrender. *force tints unchained was*

It is pointless to try to argue against such power, to imagine that you are *thenceforth to count among* not interested in it, or that it is evil and ugly. The harder you try to resist *the most tremendous of the world's forces and at*

the lure of seduction—as an idea, as a form of power—the more you will *moments to have power* find yourself fascinated. The reason is simple: most of us have known the *even over life and death. . . . power of having someone fall in love with us. Our actions, gestures, the • The deliberate spell- binding of man's senses*

things we say, all have positive effects on this person; we may not com- *was to have a magical effect* pletely understand what we have done right, but this feeling of power is in- *upon him, opening up an* toxicating. It gives us confidence, which makes us more seductive. We may *infinitely wider range of* also experience this in a social or work setting—one day we are in an ele- *sensation and spurring him on as if impelled by an*

vated mood and people seem more responsive, more charmed by us. These *inspired dream.* moments of power are fleeting, but they resonate in the memory with — ALEXANDER VON GLEICHEN great intensity. We want them back. Nobody likes to feel awkward or timid RUSSWURM, *THE WORLD'S*

or unable to reach people. The siren call of seduction is irresistible because *LURE,* TRANSLATED BY HANNAH

WALLER

power is irresistible, and nothing will bring you more power in the modern world than the ability to seduce. Repressing the desire to seduce is a kind of *xxii • Preface*

The first thing to get in

hysterical reaction, revealing your deep-down fascination with the process; *your head is that every*

you are only making your desires stronger. Some day they will come to the *single \ Girl can be*

surface.

caught—a nd that you'll

catch her if \ You set your

To have such power does not require a total transformation in your

toils right. Birds will

character or any kind of physical improvement in your looks. Seduction is a *sooner fall dumb in *

game of psychology, not beauty, and it is within the grasp of any person to *Springtime, \ Cicadas in*

*summer, or a hunting-dog *

become a master at the game. All that is required is that you look at the *Turn his back on a hare,*

world differently, through the eyes of a seducer.

than a lover's bland

A seducer does not turn the power off and on—every social and per *inducements \ Can fail* sonal interaction is seen as a potential seduction. There is never a moment *with a woman, Even one*

you suppose \ Reluctant

to waste. This is so for several reasons. The power seducers have over a man *will want it.*

or woman works in social environments because they have learned how to

—OVID, *THE ART OF LOVE*,

tone down the sexual element without getting rid of it. We may think we

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

see through them, but they are so pleasant to be around anyway that it does not matter. Trying to divide your life into moments in which you seduce and others in which you hold back will only confuse and constrain you. *The combination of these*

Erotic desire and love lurk beneath the surface of almost every human *en two elements, enchantment and surrender; is, then,*

counter; better to give free rein to your skills than to try to use them only *essential to the love which*

in the bedroom. (In fact, the seducer sees the world as his or her bedroom.) *we are discussing. . . .*

This attitude creates great seductive momentum, and with each seduction *What exists in love is*

you gain experience and practice. One social or sexual seduction makes the *surrender due to*

enchantment.

next one easier, your confidence growing and making you more alluring.

—JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET, *ON*

People are drawn to you in greater numbers as the seducer's aura descends LOVE,
TRANSLATED BY TOBY

upon you.

TALBOT

Seducers have a warrior's outlook on life. They see each person as a kind of walled castle to which they are laying siege. Seduction is a process of penetration: initially penetrating the target's mind, their first point of *What is good?* — *All that*

defense. Once seducers have penetrated the mind, making the target fanta *heightens the feeling of power, the will to power;*

size about them, it is easy to lower resistance and create physical surrender. *power itself in man.* •

Seducers do not improvise; they do not leave this process to chance. Like *What is bad?* — *All that*

any good general, they plan and strategize, aiming at the target's particular *proceeds from weakness.* •

weaknesses.

What is happiness? — *The
feeling that power*

The main obstacle to becoming a seducer is this foolish prejudice we *increases—that a resistance*

have of seeing love and romance as some kind of sacred, magical realm *is overcome.*

where things just fall into place, if they are meant to. This might seem ro— F R I E D R I C H NIETZSCHE, *THE*

mantic and quaint, but it is really just a cover for our laziness. What will se *ANTI-CHRIST*, TRANSLATED BY

R. J. HOLLINGDALE

duce a person is the effort we expend on their behalf, showing how much we care, how much they are worth. Leaving things to chance is a recipe for disaster, and reveals that we do not take love and romance very seriously. It was the effort Casanova expended, the artfulness he applied to each affair that made him so devilishly seductive. Falling in love is a matter not of magic but of psychology. Once you understand your target's psychology, and strategize to suit it, you will be better able to cast a "magical" spell. A seducer sees love not as sacred but as warfare, where all is fair.

Seducers are never self-absorbed. Their gaze is directed outward, not inward. When they meet someone their first move is to get inside that per- *Preface* • *xxiii* son's

skin, to see the world through their eyes. The reasons for this are several. First, self-absorption is a sign of insecurity; it is anti-seductive. Every-anguish and frustration encountered by

one has insecurities, but seducers manage to ignore them, finding therapy *psychoanalysis comes no* for moments of self-doubt by being absorbed in the world. This gives them *doubt from being unable to* a buoyant spirit—we want to be around them. Second, getting into some-*love or to be loved, from being unable to give or take*

one's skin, imagining what it is like to be them, helps the seducer gather *pleasure, but the radical* valuable information, learn what makes that person tick, what will make *disenchantment comes from* them lose their ability to think straight and fall into a trap. Armed with *seduction and its failure. Only those who lie*

such information, they can provide focused and individualized attention—a *completely outside* rare commodity in a world in which most people see us only from behind *seduction are ill, even if* the screen of their own prejudices. Getting into the targets' skin is the first *they remain fully capable of* important tactical move in the war of penetration.

loving and making love.

Psychoanalysis believes it

Seducers see themselves as providers of pleasure, like bees that gather *treats the disorder of sex* pollen from some flowers and deliver it to others. As children we mostly *and desire, but in reality it* devoted our lives to play and pleasure. Adults often have feelings of being *is dealing with the disorders of seduction. . .*

cut off from this paradise, of being weighed down by responsibilities. The *The most serious* seducer knows that people are waiting for pleasure—they never get enough *deficiencies always concern* of it from friends and lovers, and they cannot get it by themselves. A person *charm and not pleasure, enchantment and not some*

who enters their lives offering adventure and romance cannot be resisted. *vital or sexual satisfaction.* Pleasure is a feeling of being taken past our limits, of being overwhelmed—JEAN BAUDRILLARD, by another person, by an experience. People are dying to be overwhelmed, *SEDUCTION*

to let go of their usual stubbornness. Sometimes their resistance to us is a way of saying, Please seduce me. Seducers know that the possibility of pleasure will make a person follow them, and the experience of it will *Whatever is done from love* make someone open up, weak to the touch. They also train themselves to *always occurs beyond good* be sensitive to pleasure, knowing that feeling pleasure themselves will make *and evil.* it that much easier for them to infect the people around them.

— F R I E D R I C H NIETZSCHE,

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL,

A seducer sees all of life as theater, everyone an actor. Most people feel
TRANSLATED BY WALTER

they have constricted roles in life, which makes them unhappy. Seducers,
KAUFMANN

on the other hand, can be anyone and can assume many roles. (The archetype here is the god Zeus, insatiable seducer of young maidens, whose main weapon was the ability to assume the form of whatever person or animal would most appeal to his victim.) Seducers take pleasure in performing and are not weighed down by their identity, or by some need to be themselves, or to be natural. This freedom of theirs, this fluidity in body and spirit, is what makes them attractive. What people lack in life is not more reality but illusion, fantasy, play. The clothes that seducers wear, the places they take you to, their words and actions, are slightly heightened—not overly theatrical but with a delightful edge of unreality, as if the two of you were living out a piece of fiction or were characters in a film. Seduction is a kind of theater in real life, the meeting of illusion and reality. Finally, seducers are completely amoral in their approach to life. It is all a game, an arena for play. Knowing that the moralists, the crabbed repressed types who croak about the evils of the seducer, secretly envy their power, they do not concern themselves with other people's opinions. They do not deal in moral judgments—nothing could be less seductive. Everything is *xxiv • Preface*

Should anyone here in

pliant, fluid, like life itself. Seduction is a form of deception, but people Rome lack finesse at love-

want to be led astray, they yearn to be seduced. If they didn't, seducers *making, \ Let him \ Try*

would not find so many willing victims. Get rid of any moralizing tendency—*read my book, and results are guaranteed! *

cies, adopt the seducer's playful philosophy, and you will find the rest of the Technique is the secret.

process easy and natural.

Charioteer, sailor,

oarsman, \ All need it.

*Technique can control *

The Art of Seduction is designed to arm you with weapons of persuasion and *Love himself.*

charm, so that those around you will slowly lose their ability to resist with—O V I D , *THE ART OF LOVE*, out knowing how or why it has happened. It is an art of

war for delicate

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

times.

Every seduction has two elements that you must analyze and understand: first, yourself and what is seductive about you; and second, your target and the actions that will penetrate their defenses and create surrender. The two sides are equally important. If you strategize without paying attention to the parts of your character that draw people to you, you will be seen as a mechanical seducer, slimy and manipulative. If you rely on your seductive personality without paying attention to the other person, you will make terrible mistakes and limit your potential.

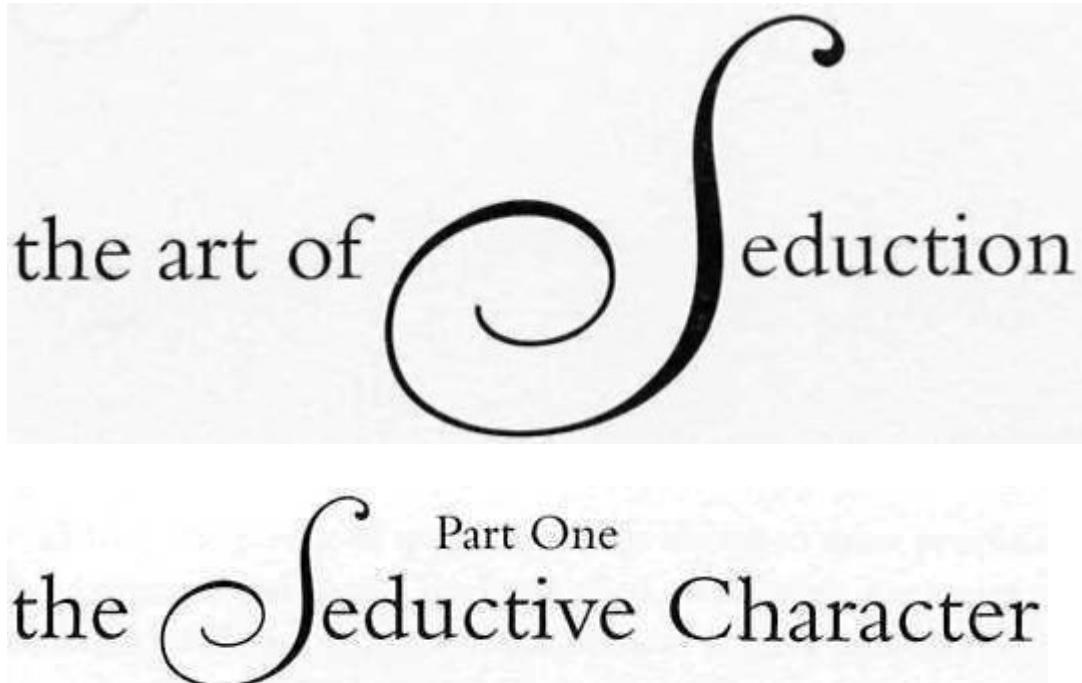
Consequently, *The Art of Seduction* is divided into two parts. The first half, "The Seductive Character," describes the nine types of seducer, plus the Anti-Seducer. Studying these types will make you aware of what is inherently seductive in your character, the basic building block of any seduction. The second half, "The Seductive Process," includes the twentyfour maneuvers and strategies that will instruct you on how to create a spell, break down people's resistance, give movement and force to your seduction, and induce surrender in your target. As a kind of bridge between the two parts, there is a chapter on the eighteen types of victims of a seduction—each of them missing something from their lives, each cradling an emptiness you can fill. Knowing what type you are dealing with will help you put into practice the ideas in both sections. Ignore any part of this book and you will be an incomplete seducer.

The ideas and strategies in *The Art of Seduction* are based on the writings and historical accounts of the most successful seducers in history. The sources include the seducers' own memoirs (by Casanova, Errol Flynn, Natalie Barney, Marilyn Monroe); biographies (of Cleopatra, Josephine Bonaparte, John F. Kennedy, Duke Ellington); handbooks on the subject (most notably Ovid's *Art of Love*); and fictional accounts of seductions (Choderlos de Laclos's *Dangerous Liaisons*, Søren Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary*, Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*). The heroes and heroines of these literary works are generally modeled on real-life seducers. The strategies they employ reveal the intimate connection between fiction and seduction, creating illusion and leading a person along. In putting the book's lessons into practice, you will be following in the path of the greatest masters of the art. Finally, the spirit that will make you a consummate seducer is the spirit in which you should read this book. The French writer Denis Diderot once wrote, "I give my mind the liberty to follow the first wise or foolish *Preface* • xxv

idea that presents itself, just as in the avenue de Foy our dissolute youths follow close on the heels of some strumpet, then leave her to pursue another, attacking all of them and attaching themselves to none. My thoughts are my strumpets." He meant that he let himself be seduced by ideas, following whichever one caught his fancy until a better one came along, his thoughts infused with a kind of sexual excitement. Once you enter these pages, do as Diderot advised: let yourself be lured by the stories and ideas, your mind open and your thoughts fluid. Slowly you will find yourself absorbing the poison through the skin and you will begin to see everything as a seduction, including the way you think and how you look at the

world. *Most virtue is a demand for greater seduction.*

—NATALIE BARNEY



the art of  seduction

Part One

the  Seductive Character

We all have the power of attraction—the ability to draw people in and hold them in our thrall. Far from all of us, though, are aware of this inner potential, and we imagine attractiveness instead as a near-mystical trait that a select few are born with and the rest will never command. Yet all we need to do to realize our potential is understand what it is in a person's character that naturally excites people and develop these latent qualities within us.

Successful seductions rarely begin with an obvious maneuver or strategic device. That is certain to arouse suspicion. Successful seductions begin with your character, your ability to radiate some quality that attracts people and stirs their emotions in a way that is beyond their control. Hypnotized by your seductive character, your victims will not notice your subsequent manipulations. It will then be child's play to mislead and seduce them. There are nine seducer types in the world. Each type has a particular character trait that comes from deep within and creates a seductive pull. *Sirens* have an abundance of sexual energy and know how to use it. *Rakes* insatiably adore the opposite sex, and their desire is infectious. *Ideal Lovers* have an aesthetic sensibility that they apply to romance. *Dandies* like to play with their image, creating a striking and androgynous allure. *Naturals* are spontaneous and open. *Coquettes* are self-sufficient, with a fascinating cool at their core. *Charmers* want and know how to please—they are social creatures. *Charismatics* have an unusual confidence in themselves. *Stars* are ethereal and envelop themselves in mystery. The chapters in this section will take you inside each of the nine types. At least one of the chapters should strike a chord—you will recognize part of yourself. That chapter will be the key to developing your own powers of attraction. Let us say you have coquettish tendencies. The Coquette chapter will show you how to build upon your own self-sufficiency, alternating heat and coldness to ensnare your victims. It will show you how to take your natural

qualities further, becoming a grand Coquette, the type we fight over. There is no point in being timid with a seductive quality. We are charmed by an unabashed Rake and excuse his excesses, but a halfhearted Rake gets no respect. Once you have cultivated your dominant character trait, adding some art to what nature has given you, you can then develop a second or third trait, adding depth and mystery to your persona. Finally the section's tenth chapter, on the *Anti-Seducer*, will make you aware of the op3

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posite potential within you—the power of repulsion. At all cost you must root out any anti-seductive tendencies you may have.

Think of the nine types as shadows, silhouettes. Only by stepping into one of them and letting it grow inside you can you begin to develop the seductive character that will bring you limitless power.

the Siren

A

man is often

secretly oppressed by

the role he has to

play—by always having to

be responsible, in control, and

rational. The Siren is the ulti-

mate male fantasy figure because

she offers a total release from the

limitations of his life. In her pres-

ence, which is always heightened and

sexually charged, the male feels

transported to a world of pure plea-

sure. She is dangerous, and in pursu-

*ing her energetically the man can lose
control over himself something he
yearns to do. The Siren is a mirage;
she lures men by cultivating a par-
ticular appearance and manner.*

*In a world where women are
often too timid to project such
an image, learn to take
control of the male li-
bido by embodying
his fantasy.*

The Spectacular Siren

In the year 48 B.C., Ptolemy XIV of Egypt managed to depose and exile his sister and wife, Queen Cleopatra. He secured the country's borders against her return and began to rule on his own. Later that year, Julius Caesar came to Alexandria to ensure that despite the local power struggles, Egypt would remain loyal to Rome.

One night Caesar was meeting with his generals in the Egyptian palace, *In the mean time our good* discussing strategy, when a guard entered to report that a Greek merchant *ship, with that perfect wind* was at the door bearing a large and valuable gift for the Roman leader. *to drive her, fast approached the Sirens' Isle.*

Caesar, in the mood for a little fun, gave the merchant permission to enter. *But now the breeze* The man came in, carrying on his shoulders a large rolled-up carpet. He *dropped, some power lulled* undid the rope around the bundle and with a snap of his wrists unfurled *the waves, and a breathless calm set in. Rising from*

it—revealing the young Cleopatra, who had been hidden inside, and who their seats my men drew rose up half clothed before Caesar and his guests, like Venus emerging from *in the sail and threw it into the waves.*

*the hold, then sat down
at the oars and churned the*

Everyone was dazzled at the sight of the beautiful young queen (only *water white with their* twenty-one at the time) appearing before them suddenly as if in a dream. *blades of polished pine.* They were astounded at her daring and theatricality—

smuggled into the *Meanwhile I took a large harbor at night with only one man to protect her, risking everything on a round of wax, cut it up small with my sword, and*

bold move. No one was more enchanted than Caesar. According to the *kneaded the pieces with all* Roman writer Dio Cassius, "Cleopatra was in the prime of life. She had a *the strength of my fingers*. delightful voice which could not fail to cast a spell over all who heard it. *The wax soon yielded to my vigorous treatment and*

Such was the charm of her person and her speech that they drew the cold- *grew warm, for I had the* est and most determined misogynist into her toils. Caesar was spellbound as *rays of my Lord the Sun* to soon as he set eyes on her and she opened her mouth to speak." That same *help me. I took each of my men in turn and plugged* evening Cleopatra became Caesar s lover.

their ears with it. They

Caesar had had numerous mistresses before, to divert him from the rig- *then made me a prisoner* ors of his campaigns. But he had always disposed of them quickly to return *on my ship by binding me hand and foot, standing*

to what really thrilled him—political intrigue, the challenges of warfare, *me up by the step of the* the Roman theater. Caesar had seen women try anything to keep him un- *mast and tying the rope's* der their spell. Yet nothing prepared him for Cleopatra. One night she *ends to the mast itself*. would tell him how together they could revive the glory of Alexander the *This done, they sat down once more and struck the*

Great, and rule the world like gods. The next she would entertain him *grey water with their oars*. dressed as the goddess Isis, surrounded by the opulence of her court. • *We made good progress* Cleopatra initiated Caesar in the most decadent revelries, presenting herself *and had just come within call of the shore when the*

as the incarnation of the Egyptian exotic. His life with her was a constant *Sirens became aware that a game, as challenging as warfare, for the moment he felt secure with her she ship was swiftly bearing* 7

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down upon them, and

would suddenly turn cold or angry and he would have to find a way to re *broke into their liquid song*. gain her favor.

• " *Draw near;*" *they sang,*

The weeks went by. Caesar got rid of all Cleopatra's rivals and found "*illustrious Odysseus,*

flower of Achaean chivalry,

excuses to stay in Egypt. At one point she led him on a lavish historical *ex and bring your ship to rest* petition down the Nile. In a boat of unimaginable splendor —towering *so that you may hear our* fifty-four feet out of the water, including several terraced levels and a *pil voices*. *No seaman ever sailed his black ship past* lared temple to the god Dionysus—Caesar became one of the few Romans *this spot without listening to gaze on the pyramids*. And while he stayed long in Egypt, away from *to the sweet tones that flow his throne in Rome*, all kinds of turmoil erupted throughout the Roman *from our lips . . .*" • *The Empire.*

lovely voices came to me

across the water, and my

When Caesar was murdered, in 44 B.C., he was succeeded by a triumvi *heart was filled with such a rate of rulers* including Mark Antony, a brave soldier who loved pleasure *longing to listen that with* and spectacle and fancied himself a kind of Roman Dionysus. A few years *nod and frown I signed to*

my men to set me free. later, while Antony was in Syria, Cleopatra invited him to come meet her

— H O M E R , *THE ODYSSEY*, BOOK

in the Egyptian town of Tarsus. There—once she had made him wait for X I I , T R A N S L A T E D B Y E . V . R I E U

her—her appearance was as startling in its way as her first before Caesar. A magnificent gold barge with purple sails appeared on the river Cydnus. The oarsmen rowed to the accompaniment of ethereal music; all around the *The charm of* [Cleopatra's] boat were beautiful young girls dressed as nymphs and mythological figures. *presence was irresistible,*

and there was an attraction Cleopatra sat on deck, surrounded and fanned by cupids and posed as the *in her person and talk*, goddess Aphrodite, whose name the crowd chanted enthusiastically. *together with a peculiar*

Like all of Cleopatra's victims, Antony felt mixed emotions. The exotic *force of character, which*

pervaded her every word pleasures she offered were hard to resist. But he also wanted to tame her—to *and action, and laid all* defeat this proud and illustrious woman would prove his greatness. And so *who associated with her* he stayed, and, like Caesar, fell slowly under her spell. She indulged him in *under its spell. It was a* all of his weaknesses—gambling, raucous parties, elaborate rituals, lavish *delight merely to hear the*

sound of her voice, with spectacles. To get him to come back to Rome, Octavius, another member of *which, like an instrument* the Roman triumvirate, offered him a

wife: Octavius's own sister, Octavia, *of many strings, she could*
one of the most beautiful women in Rome. Known for her virtue and
pass from one language to
another.

goodness, she could surely keep Antony away from the "Egyptian whore."

— P L U T A R C H , *MAKERS OF*

The ploy worked for a while, but Antony was unable to forget Cleopatra, *ROME*,
TRANSLATED BY IAN

and after three years he went back to her. This time it was for good: he had SCOTT-KILVERT

in essence become Cleopatra's slave, granting her immense powers, adopting
Egyptian dress and customs, and renouncing the ways of Rome. *The immediate*
attraction

of a song, a voice, or scent. Only one image of Cleopatra survives—a barely visible
profile on a coin—

The attraction of the but we have numerous written descriptions. She had a long
thin face and a *panther with his perfumed* somewhat pointed nose; her dominant
features were her wonderfully large *scent* . . . *According to the*

ancients, the panther is eyes. Her seductive power, however, did not lie in her looks
—indeed many *the only animal who emits* among the women of Alexandria were
considered more beautiful than she. *a perfumed odor. It uses* What she did have
above all other women was the ability to distract a man. *this scent to draw and*

capture its victims. . . . In reality, Cleopatra was physically unexceptional and had
no political *But what is it that seduces* power, yet both Caesar and Antony, brave
and clever men, saw none of *in a scent?* . . . *What is it this.* What they saw was a
woman who constantly transformed herself *be in the song of the Sirens* fore their
eyes, a one-woman spectacle. Her dress and makeup changed *that seduces us, or in*
the

beauty of a face, in the depths from day to day, but always gave her a heightened,
goddesslike appearance. *The Siren • 9*

Her voice, which all writers talk of, was lilting and intoxicating. Her words *of an*
abyss . . . ?

could be banal enough, but were spoken so sweetly that listeners would *Seduction*
lies in the annulment of signs and

find themselves remembering not what she said but how she said it.

their meaning, in pure

Cleopatra provided constant variety—tributes, mock battles, expeditions, costumed orgies. Everything had a touch of drama and was accomplished with great energy. By the time your head lay on the pillow beside *they end in the gaze, as the face with makeup*

her, your mind was spinning with images and dreams. And just when you *ends in only pure* thought you had this fluid, larger-than-life woman, she would turn distant *appearance. . . . The scent* or angry, making it clear that everything was on her terms. You never *pos-* of the *panther is also a meaningless message— and*

sessed Cleopatra, you worshiped her. In this way a woman who had been behind the message the exiled and destined for an early death managed to turn it all around and panther is invisible, as is rule Egypt for close to twenty years.

the woman beneath her

makeup. The Sirens too

From Cleopatra we learn that it is not beauty that makes a Siren but *remained unseen*. *The* rather a theatrical streak that allows a woman to embody a man's fantasies. *enchantment lies in what* A man grows bored with a woman, no matter how beautiful; he yearns for *is hidden*. different pleasures, and for adventure. All a woman needs to turn this—JEAN BAUDRILLARD, *DE LA* around is to create the illusion that she offers such variety and adventure. A *SÉDUCTION*

man is easily deceived by appearances; he has a weakness for the visual. Create the physical presence of a Siren (heightened sexual allure mixed with a regal and theatrical manner) and he is trapped. He cannot grow bored with you yet he cannot discard you. Keep up the distractions, and *We're dazzled by feminine*

adornment, by the surface,

never let him see who you really are. He will follow you until he drowns.

| *All gold and jewels: so*

little of what we observe |

Is the girl herself And

The Sex Siren

where (you may ask) amid

such plenty | Can our

object of passion be found?

Norma Jean Mortensen, the future Marilyn Monroe, spent part of her *The eye's deceived* \ By childhood in Los Angeles orphanages. Her days were filled with *Love's smart camouflage.*

chores and no play. At school, she kept to herself, smiled rarely, and — O V I D ,
CURES FOR LOVE,

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

dreamed a lot. One day when she was thirteen, as she was dressing for school, she noticed that the white blouse the orphanage provided for her was torn, so she had to borrow a sweater from a younger girl in the house. The sweater was several sizes too small. That day, suddenly, boys seemed to *He was herding his cattle* gather around her wherever she went (she was extremely well-developed *on Mount Gargarus, the highest peak of Ida, when*

for her age). She wrote in her diary, "They stared at my sweater as if it were *Hermes, accompanied by a gold mine.*"

Hera, Athene, and

The revelation was simple but startling. Previously ignored and even *Aphrodite delivered the golden apple and Zeus's*

ridiculed by the other students, Norma Jean now sensed a way to gain at- *message: Paris, since you* tention, maybe even power, for she was wildly ambitious. She started to *are as handsome as you are* smile more, wear makeup, dress differently. And soon she noticed some- *wise in affairs of the heart, Zeus commands you to*

thing equally startling: without her having to say or do anything, boys fell *judge which of these* passionately in love with her. "My admirers all said the same thing in differ- *goddesses is the fairest.* " •

ent ways," she wrote. "It was my fault, their wanting to kiss me and hug

"So be it," sighed Paris.

me. Some said it was the way I looked at them—with eyes full of passion.

"But first I beg the losers

not to be vexed with me. I

Others said it was my voice that lured them on. Still others said I gave off *am only a human being,* vibrations that floored them."

liable to make the stupidest

10 • The Art of Seduction

mistakes." • The

A few years later Marilyn was trying to make it in the film business. *goddesses all agreed to*

Producers would tell her the same thing: she was attractive enough in *per abide by his decision.* •

son, but her face wasn't pretty enough for the movies. She was getting

"Will it be enough to

judge them as they are?"

work as an extra, and when she was on-screen—even if only for a few seconds *Paris asked Hermes, "or onds*—the men in the audience would go wild, and the theaters would

should they be naked?" •

erupt in catcalls. But nobody saw any star quality in this. One day in 1949,

"The rules of the contest

are for you to decide,"

only twenty-three at the time and her career at a standstill, Monroe met *Hermes answered with a*

someone at a diner who told her that a producer casting a new Groucho *discreet smile.* • *"In that*

Marx movie, *Love Happy*, was looking for an actress for the part of a blond *case, will they kindly*

bombshell who could walk by Groucho in a way that would, in his words, *disrobe?"* • *Hermes told*

the goddesses to do so, and

"arouse my elderly libido and cause smoke to issue from my ears." Talking *politely turned his back.* •

her way into an audition, she improvised this walk. "It's Mae West, Theda *Aphrodite was soon ready,*

Bara, and Bo Peep all rolled into one," said Groucho after watching her *but Athene insisted that*

she should remove the

saunter by. "We shoot the scene tomorrow morning." And so Marilyn created her infamous *magic girdle, which* added her infamous walk, a walk that was hardly natural but offered a strange *gave her an unfair mix of innocence and sex.*

advantage by making

everyone fall in love

Over the next few years, Marilyn taught herself through trial and error *with the wearer*. "Very soon how to heighten the effect she had on men. Her voice had always been well" said Aphrodite

attractive—it was the voice of a little girl. But on film it had limitations unspitefully. "I will, on until someone finally taught her to lower it, giving it the deep, breathy tones *condition that you remove*

your helmet—you look

that became her seductive trademark, a mix of the little girl and the vixen. *hideous without it.*" • Before appearing on set, or even at a party, Marilyn would spend hours before the mirror. Most people assumed this was vanity—she was in love with *must judge you one at*

a time" announced

her image. The truth was that image took hours to create. Marilyn spent *Paris*. . . . *Come here,*

years studying and practicing the art of makeup. The voice, the walk, the *Divine Hera! Will you*

face and look were all constructions, an act. At the height of her fame, she *other two goddesses be good*

enough to leave us for a

would get a thrill by going into bars in New York City without her makeup *while?"* • *"Examine me*

or glamorous clothes and passing unnoticed.

conscientiously," said Hera,

Success finally came, but with it came something deeply annoying to *turning slowly around, and*

displaying her magnificent

her: the studios would only cast her as the blond bombshell. She wanted *se figure, and remember that* various roles, but no one took her seriously for those parts, no matter how *if you judge me the fairest,*

hard she downplayed the siren qualities she had built up. One day, while she *I will make you lord of all* was rehearsing a scene from *The Cherry Orchard*, her acting

instructor, Mi Asia, and the richest man alive. " • " *I am not to be*
chael Chekhov, asked her, "Were you thinking of sex while we played the *bribed*
my Lady . . . Very
scene?" When she said no, he continued, "All through our playing of the *well,*
thank you. Now I
scene I kept receiving sex vibrations from you. As if you were a woman in *have*
seen all that I need to
see. Come, Divine
the grip of passion. . . . I understand your problem with your studio now, *Athene!*" •
"Here I am,"
Marilyn. You are a woman who gives off sex vibrations—no matter what *said*
Athene, striding
you are doing or thinking. The whole world has already responded to those
purposefully forward.

"Listen, Paris, if you have
vibrations. They come off the movie screens when you are on them." *enough*
common sense to
award me the prize, I will
Marilyn Monroe loved the effect her body could have on the male libido. *make you*
victorious in
all your battles, as well

She tuned her physical presence like an instrument, making herself reek of *as the*
handsomest and
sex and gaining a glamorous, larger-than-life appearance. Other women *wisest man*
in the world."

knew just as many tricks for heightening their sexual appeal, but what sepa• " *I am*
a humble rated Marilyn from them was an unconscious element. Her background

The Siren • 11
had deprived her of something critical: affection. Her deepest need was to
herdsman, not a soldier," feel loved and desired, which made her seem constantly
vulnerable, like a *said Paris. . . . "But I promise to consider fairly*
little girl craving protection. She emanated this need for love before the *your claim*
to the apple. camera; it was effortless, coming from somewhere real and deep

inside. A *Now you are at liberty to look or gesture that she did not intend to arouse desire would do so doubly put on your clothes and powerfully just because it was unintended—its innocence was precisely helmet again. Is Aphrodite ready?*" • *Aphrodite sidled*

what excited a man.

up to him, and Paris

The Sex Siren has a more urgent and immediate effect than the Spec- *blushed because she came* tacular Siren does. The incarnation of sex and desire, she does not bother *so close that they were almost touching*. • "Look

to appeal to extraneous senses, or to create a theatrical buildup. Her time *carefully, please, pass* never seems to be taken up by work or chores; she gives the impression that *nothing over. . . . By the* she lives for pleasure and is always available. What separates the Sex Siren way, *as soon as I saw you, I said to myself: 'Upon my*

from the courtesan or whore is her touch of innocence and vulnerability. *word, there goes the* The mix is perversely satisfying: it gives the male the critical illusion that he *handsomest young man in* is a protector, the father figure, although it is actually the Sex Siren who *Phrygia! Why does he waste himself here in the*

controls the dynamic.

wilderness herding stupid

A woman doesn't have to be born with the attributes of a Marilyn *cattle?' Well, why do you, Monroe* to fill the role of the Sex Siren. Most of the physical elements are *Paris? Why not move into* a construction; the key is the air of schoolgirl innocence. While one part of *a city and lead a civilized life? What have you to lose*

you seems to scream sex, the other part is coy and naive, as if you were in- by marrying someone like capable of understanding the effect you are having. Your walk, your voice, *Helen of Sparta, who is as* your manner are delightfully ambiguous—you are both the experienced, *beautiful as I am, and no less passionate? . . . I*

desiring woman and the innocent gamine.

suggest now that you tour

Greece with my son Eros

Your next encounter will be with the Sirens, who bewitch

as your guide. Once you

every man that approaches them. . . . For with the music reach Sparta, he and I will

*see that Helen falls head
of their song the Sirens cast their spell upon him, as they
over heels in love with
sit there in a meadow piled high with the moldering skele-
you." • "Would you swear
tons of men, whose withered skin still hangs upon their
to that?" Paris asked
bones.*

*excitedly. • Aphrodite
uttered a solemn oath, and
—CIRCE TO ODYSSEUS, *THE ODYSSEY*, BOOK XII
Paris, without a second
thought, awarded her the
golden apple.*

Keys to the Character

— R O B E R T GRAVES, *THE GREEK
MYTHS*, VOLUME I

The Siren is the most ancient seductress of them all. Her prototype is the goddess Aphrodite—it is her nature to have a mythic quality about her—but do not imagine she is a thing of the past, or of legend and history: she represents a powerful male fantasy of a highly sexual, supremely confident, alluring female offering endless pleasure and a bit of danger. In today's world this fantasy can only appeal the more strongly to the male psyche, for now more than ever he lives in a world that circumscribes his aggressive instincts by making everything safe and secure, a world that offers less chance for adventure and risk than ever before. In the past, a man had some outlets for these drives—warfare, the high seas, political intrigue. In the sexual realm, courtesans and mistresses were practically a social institu- 12 • *The Art of Seduction To whom aw I compare*

tion, and offered him the variety and the chase that he craved. Without any *the
lovely girl, so blessed by*

outlets, his drives turn inward and gnaw at him, becoming all the more *fortune, if not to the volatile* for being repressed. Sometimes a powerful man will do the most *ir Sirens, who with their lodestone draw the ships*

rational things, have an affair when it is least called for, just for a thrill, the *towards them? Thus, I*

danger of it all. The irrational can prove immensely seductive, even more *imagine, did Isolde attract*

so for men, who must always seem so reasonable.

many thoughts and hearts

that deemed themselves

If it is seductive power you are after, the Siren is the most potent of all. *safe from love's*

She operates on a man's most basic emotions, and if she plays her role prop *disquietude. And indeed* erly, she can transform a normally strong and responsible male into a child *these two— anchorless* ish slave. The Siren operates well on the rigid masculine type—the soldier *ships and stray thoughts—*

provide a good comparison.

or hero—just as Cleopatra overwhelmed Mark Antony and Marilyn Mon *They are both so seldom* roe Joe DiMaggio. But never imagine that these are the only types the *on a straight course, lie so*

Siren can affect. Julius Caesar was a writer and thinker, who had transferred *often in unsure havens,*

pitching and tossing and

his intellectual abilities onto the battlefield and into the political arena; the *heaving to and fro. Just so,*

playwright Arthur Miller fell as deeply under Monroe's spell as DiMaggio. *in the same way, do*

The intellectual is often the one most susceptible to the Siren call of pure *aimless desire and random*

love-longing drift like an physical pleasure, because his life so lacks it. The Siren does not have to *anchorless ship. This*

worry about finding the right victim. Her magic works on one and all. *charming young princess,*

First and foremost, a Siren must distinguish herself from other women. *discreet and courteous*

Isolde, drew thoughts from

She is by nature a rare thing, mythic, only one to a group; she is also a valuable prize to be wrested away from other men. Cleopatra made herself dif *them as a lodestone draws* ferent through her sense of high drama; the Empress Josephine Bonaparte's *in ships to the sound of the*

device was her extreme languorousness; Marilyn Monroe's was her little *Sirens' song. She sang openly and secretly, in*

girl quality. Physicality offers the best opportunities here, since a Siren is *through ears and eyes to* preeminently a sight to behold. A highly feminine and sexual presence, *where many a heart was*

even to the point of caricature, will quickly differentiate you, since most *stirred. The song which she*

sang openly in this and

women lack the confidence to project such an image.

other places was her own

Once the Siren has made herself stand out from others, she must have *sweet singing and soft*

two other critical qualities: the ability to get the male to pursue her so *sounding of strings that*

echoed for all to hear feverishly that he loses control; and a touch of the dangerous. Danger is *through the kingdom of the* surprisingly seductive. To get the male to pursue you is relatively simple: a *ears deep down into the* highly sexual presence will do this quite well. But you must not resemble a *heart. But her secret song*

courtesan or whore, whom the male may pursue only to quickly lose interest *was her wondrous beauty that stole with its rapturous*

est in her. Instead, you are slightly elusive and distant, a fantasy come to life. *music hidden and unseen*

During the Renaissance, the great Sirens, such as Tullia d'Aragona, would *through the windows of the*

act and look like Grecian goddesses—the fantasy of the day. Today you *eyes into many noble*

hearts and smoothed on the might model yourself on a film goddess—anything that seems larger than *magic which took thoughts*

life, even awe inspiring. These qualities will make a man chase you *vehe prisoner suddenly, and, mently*, and the more he chases, the more he will feel that he is acting on *taking them, fettered them*

with desire!

his own initiative. This is an excellent way of disguising how deeply you

—GOTTFRIED VON STRASSBURG,

are manipulating him.

TRISTAN, TRANSLATED BY

The notion of danger, challenge, sometimes death, might seem outA . T . HATTO

dated, but danger is critical in seduction. It adds emotional spice and is particularly appealing to men today, who are normally so rational and repressed. Danger is present in the original myth of the Siren. In Homer's *Odyssey*, the hero Odysseus must sail by the rocks where the Sirens, strange *The Siren • 13*

female creatures, sing and beckon sailors to their destruction. They sing of *Falling in love with statues* the glories of the past, of a world like childhood, without responsibilities, a *and paintings, even making love to them is an*

world of pure pleasure. Their voices are like water, liquid and inviting. *ancient fantasy, one of* Sailors would leap into the water to join them, and drown; or, *distracted which the Renaissance was*

and entranced, they would steer their ship into the rocks. To protect his *keenly aware. Giorgio* sailors from the Sirens, Odysseus has their ears filled with wax; he himself is *Vasari, writing in the*

introductory section of the

tied to the mast, so he can both hear the Sirens and live to tell of it—a *Lives about art in*

strange desire, since the thrill of the Sirens is giving in to the temptation to *antiquity, tells how men follow them.*

violated the laws, going

into the temples at night

Just as the ancient sailors had to row and steer, ignoring all distractions, *and making love with* a man today must work and follow a straight path in life. The call

of some- *statues of Venus*. In the thing dangerous, emotional, unknown is all the more powerful because it is *morning, priests would enter the sanctuaries to find*

so forbidden. Think of the victims of the great Sirens of history: Paris *stains on the marble* causes a war for the sake of Helen of Troy, Caesar risks an empire and *figures*. Antony loses his power and his life for Cleopatra, Napoleon becomes a — LYNNE LAWNER, laughingstock over Josephine, DiMaggio never gets over Marilyn, and *LIVES OF THE COURTESANS*

Arthur Miller can't write for years. A man is often ruined by a Siren, yet cannot tear himself away. (Many powerful men have a masochistic streak.) An element of danger is easy to hint at, and will enhance your other Siren characteristics—the touch of madness in Marilyn, for example, that pulled men in. Sirens are often fantastically irrational, which is immensely attractive to men who are oppressed by their own reasonableness. An element of fear is also critical: keeping a man at a proper distance creates respect, so that he doesn't get close enough to see through you or notice your weaker qualities. Create such fear by suddenly changing your moods, keeping the man off balance, occasionally intimidating him with capricious behavior. The most important element for an aspiring Siren is always the physical, the Siren's main instrument of power. Physical qualities—a scent, a heightened femininity evoked through makeup or through elaborate or seductive clothing—act all the more powerfully on men because they have no meaning. In their immediacy they bypass rational processes, having the same effect that a decoy has on an animal, or the movement of a cape on a bull. The proper Siren appearance is often confused with physical beauty, particularly the face. But a beautiful face does not a Siren make: instead it creates too much distance and coldness. (Neither Cleopatra nor Marilyn Monroe, the two greatest Sirens in history, were known for their beautiful faces.) Although a smile and an inviting look are infinitely seductive, they must never dominate your appearance. They are too obvious and direct. The Siren must stimulate a generalized desire, and the best way to do this is by creating an overall impression that is both distracting and alluring. It is not one particular trait, but a combination of qualities:

The voice. Clearly a critical quality, as the legend indicates, the Siren's voice has an immediate animal presence with incredible suggestive power. Perhaps that power is regressive, recalling the ability of the mother's voice 14 • *The Art of Seduction*

to calm or excite her child even before the child understood what she was saying. The Siren must have an insinuating voice that hints at the erotic, more often subliminally than overtly. Almost everyone who met Cleopatra commented on her delightful, sweet-sounding voice, which had a mesmerizing quality. The Empress Josephine, one of the great seductresses of the late eighteenth century, had a languorous voice that men found exotic, and suggestive of her Creole origins. Marilyn Monroe was born with her

breathy, childlike voice, but she learned to lower to make it truly seductive. Lauren Bacall's voice is naturally low; its seductive power comes from its slow, suggestive delivery. The Siren never speaks quickly, aggressively, or at a high pitch. Her voice is calm and unhurried, as if she had never quite woken up—or left her bed.

Body and adornment. If the voice must lull, the body and its adornment must dazzle. It is with her clothes that the Siren aims to create the goddess effect that Baudelaire described in his essay "In Praise of Makeup":

"Woman is well within her rights, and indeed she is accomplishing a kind of duty in striving to appear magical and supernatural. She must astonish and bewitch; an idol, she must adorn herself with gold in order to be adored. She must borrow from all of the arts in order to raise herself above nature, the better to subjugate hearts and stir souls."

A Siren who was a genius of clothes and adornment was Pauline Bonaparte, sister of Napoleon. Pauline consciously strove for a goddess effect, fashioning hair, makeup, and clothes to evoke the look and air of Venus, the goddess of love. No one in history could boast a more extensive and elaborate wardrobe. Pauline's entrance at a ball in 1798 created an astounding effect. She asked the hostess, Madame Permon, if she could dress at her house, so no one would see her clothes as she came in. When she came down the stairs, everyone stopped dead in stunned silence. She wore the headdress of a bacchante—clusters of gold grapes interlaced in her hair, which was done up in the Greek style. Her Greek tunic, with its goldembroidered hem, showed off her goddesslike figure. Below her breasts was a girdle of burnished gold, held by a magnificent jewel. "No words can convey the loveliness of her appearance," wrote the Duchess d'Abrantes.

"The very room grew brighter as she entered. The whole ensemble was so harmonious that her appearance was greeted with a buzz of admiration which continued with utter disregard of all the other women."

The key: everything must dazzle, but must also be harmonious, so that no single ornament draws attention. Your presence must be charged, larger than life, a fantasy come true. Ornament is used to cast a spell and distract. The Siren can also use clothing to hint at the sexual, at times overtly but more often by suggesting it rather than screaming it—that would make you seem manipulative. Related to this is the notion of selective disclosure, the revealing of only a part of the body—but a part that will excite and stir the imagination. In the late sixteenth century, Marguerite de Valois, the infa- *The Siren • 15*

mous daughter of Queen Catherine de Médicis of France, was one of the first women ever to incorporate decolletage in her wardrobe, simply because she had the most beautiful breasts in the realm. For Josephine Bonaparte it was her arms, which she carefully always left bare. *Movement and demeanor.* In the fifth century B.C., King Kou Chien chose the Chinese Siren Hsi Shih from among all the women of his realm to seduce and destroy his rival Fu Chai, King of Wu; for this purpose, he had the young woman instructed in the arts of seduction. Most important of these was movement—how to move gracefully and suggestively. Hsi

Shih learned to give the impression of floating across the floor in her court robes. When she was finally unleashed on Fu Chai, he quickly fell under her spell. She walked and moved like no one he had ever seen. He became obsessed with her tremulous presence, her manner and nonchalant air. Fu Chai fell so deeply in love that he let his kingdom fall to pieces, allowing Kou Chien to march in and conquer

it without a fight.

The Siren moves gracefully and unhurriedly. The proper gestures,

movement, and demeanor for a Siren are like the proper voice: they hint at something exciting, stirring desire without being obvious. Your air must be languorous, as if you had all the time in the world for love and pleasure. Your gestures must have a certain ambiguity, suggesting something both innocent and erotic. Anything that cannot immediately be understood is supremely seductive, and all the more so if it permeates your manner.

Symbol: Water

*The song of the Siren is liquid and
enticing, and the Siren herself is fluid and un-
graspable. Like the sea, the Siren lures you with the
promise of infinite adventure and pleasure. Forgetting past
and future, men follow her far out to sea, where they drown.*

16 • The Art of Seduction

Dangers

No matter how enlightened the age, no woman can maintain the image of being devoted to pleasure completely comfortably. And no matter

how hard she tries to distance herself from it, the taint of being easy always follows the Siren. Cleopatra was hated in Rome as the Egyptian whore. That hatred eventually lead to her downfall, as Octavius and the Roman army sought to extirpate the stain on Roman manhood that she came to represent. Even so, men are often forgiving when it comes to the Siren's reputation. But danger often lies in the envy she stirs up among other women; much of Rome's hatred for Cleopatra originated in the resentment she provoked among the city's stern matrons. By playing up her innocence, by making herself seem the victim of male desire, the Siren can somewhat blunt the effects of feminine envy. But on the whole there is little she can do—her power comes from her effect on men, and she must learn to accept, or ignore, the envy of other women. Finally, the intense attention that the Siren attracts can prove irritating and worse. Sometimes she will pine for relief from it; sometimes, too, she will want to attract an attention that is not sexual. Also, unfortunately, physical beauty fades; although the Siren effect depends not on a beautiful face but on an overall impression, past a certain age that impression gets hard to project. Both of these factors contributed to the suicide of Marilyn Monroe. It takes a genius on the level of Madame de Pompadour, the Siren mistress of King Louis XV, to make the transition into the role of the spirited older woman who continues to seduce with her nonphysical charms. Cleopatra had such an intellect, and had she lived long enough, she would have remained a potent seductress for

many years. The Siren must prepare for age by paying attention early on to the more psychological, less physical forms of coquetry that can continue to bring her power once her beauty starts to fade.

the Rake

A woman

never quite feels desired and appreciated

enough. She wants attention, but a man is too often

distracted and unresponsive. The Rake is a great female fantasy figure—when he desires a woman, brief though that moment may be, he will go to the ends of the earth for her. He may be disloyal, dishonest, and amoral, but that only adds to his appeal. Unlike the normal, cautious male, the Rake is delightfully unrestrained, a slave to his love of women. There is the added lure of his reputation: so many women have succumbed to him, there has to be a reason. Words are a woman's weakness, and the Rake is a master of seductive language. Stir a

woman's repressed longings by adapting the Rake's

mix of danger and pleasure.

The Ardent Rake

For the court of Louis XIV, the king's last years were gloomy—he was old, and had become both insufferably religious and personally unpleasant. The court was bored and desperate for novelty. So in 1710, the arrival of a fifteen-year-old lad who was both devilishly handsome and charming had a particularly strong effect on the ladies. His name was Fronsac, the future Duke de Richelieu (his granduncle being the infamous Cardinal [*After an accident at sea, Richelieu*]). He was impudent and witty. The ladies would play with him *Don Juan finds himself washed up on a beach,*

like a toy, but he would kiss them on the lips in return, his hands wandering *where he is discovered by a far for an inexperienced boy.* When those hands strayed up the skirts of a *young woman.*] • TISBEA: duchess who was not so indulgent, the king was furious, and sent the youth *Wake up, handsomest of all men, and be yourself*

to the Bastille to teach him a lesson. But the ladies who had found him so *again.* • D O N JUAN: *If the amusing could not endure his absence. Compared to the stiffness in court, here sea gives me death, you was someone incredibly bold, his eyes boring into you, his hands quicker give me life. But the sea than was safe. Nothing could stop him, his novelty was irresistible. The really saved me only to be killed by you. Oh the sea*

court ladies pleaded and his stay in the Bastille was cut short.

tosses me from one torment

Several years later, the young Mademoiselle de Valois was walking in a *to the other; for I no sooner* Paris park with her chaperone, an older woman who never left her side. *De pulled myself from the water than I met this*

Valois's father, the Duke d'Orléans, was determined to protect her, his *siren—y
ourself. Why fill* youngest daughter, from all the court seducers until she could be married *my ears with wax, since off*, so he had attached to her this chaperone, a woman of impeccable *you kill me with your eyes? I was dying in the*

virtue and sourness. In the park, however, de Valois saw a young man who *sea, but
from today I shall* gave her a look that set her heart on fire. He walked on by, but the look was *die of love*. • TISBEA: *YOU*

intense and clear. It was her chaperone who told her his name: the now in- *have
abundant breath for a man almost drowned. You*

famous Duke de Richelieu, blasphemer, seducer, heartbreaker. Someone to *suffered
much, but who* avoid at all cost.

knows what suffering you

A few days later, the chaperone took de Valois to a different park, and *are
preparing for me? . . . lo and behold, Richelieu crossed their path again. This time
he was in dis- I found you at my feet all water, and now you are all*

guise, dressed as a beggar, but the look in his eye was unforgettable. *Made- fire. If
you burn when you* Mademoiselle de Valois returned his gaze: at last something exciting in her drab *are so wet, what will you* life. Given her father's sternness, no man had dared approach her. And now *do when you're dry again?*

You promise a scorching

this notorious courtier was pursuing her, instead of all the other ladies at *flame; I
hope to God* court—what a thrill! Soon he was smuggling beautifully written notes to *you're not lying*. • D O N

her expressing his uncontrollable desire for her. She responded timidly, but JUAN: *Dear girl, God should have drowned me*

soon the notes were all she was living for. In one of them he promised to *before I
could be charred by* arrange everything if she would spend the night with him; imagining it was *you. Perhaps love was wise* 19

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to drench me before I felt

impossible to bring such a thing to pass, she did not mind playing along and *your scalding touch. But*

agreeing to his bold proposal.

your fire is such that even

Mademoiselle de Valois had a chambermaid named Angelique, who

in water I burn. • T I S B E A :

So cold and yet burning? •

dressed her for bed and slept in an adjoining room. One night as the chapD O N J U A N : *So much fire* erone was knitting, de Valois looked up from the book she was reading to *is in you. • T I S B E A : How*

see Angelique carrying her mistress's nightclothes to her room, but for some *well you talk! • D O N*

J U A N : *How well you*

strange reason Angelique looked back at her and smiled—it was Richelieu, *understand! • T I S B E A : I*

expertly dressed as the maid! De Valois nearly gasped from fright, but caught *hope to God you're not*

herself, realizing the danger she was in: if she said anything her family *lying*.

would find out about the notes, and about her part in the whole affair.

—TIRSO DE MOLINA, *THE*

PLAYBOY OF SEVILLE,

What could she do? She decided to go to her room and talk the young
TRANSLATED BY ADRIENNE M.

duke out of his ridiculously dangerous maneuver. She said good night to her

SCHIZZANO AND OSCAR

chaperone, but once she was in her bedroom, the words she had planned

M A N D E L

were useless. When she tried to reason with Richelieu, he responded with that look in his eye, and then with his arms around her. She could not yell, but now she was unsure what to do. His impetuous words, his caresses, the *Pleased with my first*

danger of it all—her head was whirling, she was lost. What was virtue and *success, I determined to*

her prior boredom compared to an evening with the court's most notorious *profit by this happy*

reconciliation. I called them

rake? So while the chaperone knitted away, the duke initiated her into the *my dear wives, my faithful*

rituals of libertinage.

companions, the two beings

Months later, de Valois's father had reason to suspect that Richelieu had *chosen to make me happy.*

broken through his lines of defense. The chaperone was fired, the preau *I sought to turn their heads, and to rouse in*

tions were doubled. D'Orléans did not realize that to Richelieu such mea *them desires the strength of* sures were a challenge, and he lived for challenges. He bought the house *which I knew and which*

next door under an assumed name and secretly tunneled a trapdoor through *would drive away any*

reflections contrary to my

the wall adjoining the duke's kitchen cupboard. In this cupboard, over the *plans. The skillful man*

next few months—until the novelty wore off—de Valois and Richelieu en *who knows how to* joyed endless trysts. *communicate gradually the*

heat of love to the senses of

Everyone in Paris knew of Richelieu's exploits, for he made it a point *the most virtuous woman*

to publicize them as loudly as possible. Every week a new story would cir *is quite certain of soon* culate through the court. A husband had locked his wife in an

upstairs *being absolute master of*

her mind and her person;

room at night, worried the duke was after her; to reach her the duke had *you cannot reflect when*

crawled in darkness along a thin wooden plank suspended between two *you have lost your head;*

upper-floor windows. Two women who lived in the same house, one a

and, moreover, principles of widow, the other married and quite religious, had discovered to their mutual wisdom, however deeply engraved they may be on

tual horror that the duke was having an affair with both of them at the the mind, are effaced in

same time, leaving one in the middle of the night to be with the other. *that moment when the* When they confronted him, the duke, always on the prowl for something *heart yearns only for*

pleasure: pleasure alone novel, and a devilish talker, had neither apologized nor backed down, but *then commands and is* proceeded to talk them into a menage a trois, playing on the wounded *obeyed. The man who has* vanity of each woman, who could not stand the thought of him preferring *had experience of conquests*

nearly always succeeds

the other. Year after year, the stories of his remarkable seductions spread. *where he who is only timid*

One woman admired his audacity and bravery, another his gallantry in *and in love fails. . . . • thwarting a husband.* Women competed for his attention: if he did not *When I had brought my* want to seduce you, there had to be something wrong with you. To be the *two belles to the state of*

abandonment in which I

target of his attentions became a great fantasy. At one point two ladies *The Rake • 21*

fought a pistol duel over the duke, and one of them was seriously *wanted them, I expressed a* wounded. The Duchess d'Orléans, Richelieu's most bitter enemy, once *more eager desire; their eyes lit up; my caresses*

wrote, "If I believed in sorcery I should think that the Duke possessed *were returned; and it was* some supernatural secret, for I have never known a woman to oppose the *plain that their resistance* very least resistance to him."

would not delay for more

than a few moments the

next scene I desired them

In seduction there is often a dilemma: to seduce you need planning and calculation, but if your victim suspects that you have ulterior motives, she will each should accompany me grow defensive. Furthermore, if you seem to be in control, you will inspire in turn into a charming closet, next to the room in

fear instead of desire. The Ardent Rake solves this dilemma in the most art- which we were, which I ful manner. Of course he must calculate and plan—he has to find a way wanted them to admire. around the jealous husband, or whatever the obstacle is. It is exhausting They both remained silent.

• "You hesitate?" I said to

work. But by nature, the Ardent Rake also has the advantage of an uncon- them. "I will see which of trollable libido. When he pursues a woman, he really is aglow with desire; you is the more attached the victim senses this and is inflamed, even despite herself. How can she to me. The one who loves me the more will be the

imagine that he is a heartless seducer who will abandon her when he so ar- first to follow the lover she dently braves all dangers and obstacles to get to her? And even if she is wishes to convince of her aware of his rakish past, of his incorrigible amorality, it doesn't matter, be- affection. . . ." • I knew cause she also sees his weakness. He cannot control himself; he actually is a my puritan, and I was well aware that, after a few

slave to all women. As such he inspires no fear.

Struggles, she gave herself

The Ardent Rake teaches us a simple lesson: intense desire has a dis- up completely to the tracting power on a woman, just as the Siren's physical presence does on a present moment. 'This one appeared to be as agreeable

man. A woman is often defensive and can sense insincerity or calculation. to her as the others we had But if she feels consumed by your attentions, and is confident you will do previously spent together; anything for her, she will notice nothing else about you, or will find a way she forgot that she was sharing me [with Madame

to forgive your indiscretions. This is the perfect cover for a seducer. The Renaud] . . . • [When key is to show no hesitation, to abandon all restraint, to let yourself go, to her turn came] Madame show that you cannot control yourself and are fundamentally weak. Do not Renaud responded with a transport that proved her

worry about inspiring mistrust; as long as you are the slave to her charms, contentment, and she left she will not think of the aftermath.

the sitting only after having

repeated continually:

"What a man! What a

The Demonic Rake

man! He is astonishing!

How often you could be

happy with him if he were

In the early 1880s, members of Roman high society began to talk of a *only faithful!* young journalist who had arrived on the scene, a certain Gabriele D'Annunzio. — *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE*

MARSHAL DUKE OF RICHELIEU,

nunzio. This was strange in itself, for Italian royalty had only the deepest contempt for anyone outside their circle, and a newspaper society reporter was almost as low as you could go. Indeed well-born men paid D'Annunzio little attention. He had no money and few connections, coming from a strictly middle-class background. Besides, to them he was downright ugly—short and stocky, with a dark, splotchy complexion and bulging eyes. The men thought him so unappealing they gladly let him mingle with their wives and daughters, certain that their women would be safe with this gargoyle and happy to get this gossip hunter off their hands. No, it was not the men who talked of D'Annunzio; it was their wives.

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His very successes in love,

Introduced to D'Annunzio by their husbands, these duchesses and mar *even more than the* chionesses would find themselves entertaining this strange-looking man, *marvellous voice of this* and when he was alone with them, his manner would suddenly change. *little, bald seducer with a*

nose like Punch, swept Within minutes these ladies would be spellbound. First, he had the most *along in his train a whole* magnificent voice they had ever heard—soft and low, each syllable *articu procession of enamoured* lated, with a flowing rhythm and inflection that was almost musical. One *women, both opulent and* woman compared it to the ringing of church bells in the distance. Others *tormented. D'Annunzio*

had successfully revived the said his voice had a "hypnotic" effect. The words that voice spoke were in *Byronic legend: as he* teresting as well—alliterative phrases, charming locutions, poetic images, *passed by full-breasted* and a way of offering

praise that could melt a woman's heart. D'Annunzio *women, standing in his way as Boldoni would* had mastered the art of flattery. He seemed to know each woman's weak *paint them, strings of* ness: one he would call a goddess of nature, another an incomparable artist *pearls anchoring them to* in the making, another a romantic figure out of a novel. A woman's heart *life—princesses and actresses, great Russian* would flutter as he described the effect she had on him. Everything was *ladies and even middle-* suggestive, hinting at sex or romance. That night she would ponder his *class Bordeaux* words, recalling little in particular that he had said, because he never said *housewives—t hey would offer themselves up to him.* anything concrete, but rather the feeling it had given her. The next day she would receive from him a poem that seemed to have been written spe— P H I L I P P E JULLIAN, *PRINCE OF*

AESTHETES: COUNT ROBERT

cifically for her. (In fact he wrote dozens of very similar poems, slightly *DE MONTESQUIEOU, TRANSLATED*

tailoring each one for its intended victim.)

BY JOHN HAYLOCK AND FRANCIS

KING

A few years after D'Annunzio began work as a society reporter, he married the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Gallese. Shortly thereafter, with the unshakeable support of society ladies, he began publishing novels and books of poetry. The number of his conquests was remarkable, and *In short, nothing is so*

sweet as to triumph over also the quality—not only marchionesses would fall at his feet, but great *the Resistance of a* artists, such as the actress Eleanor Duse, who helped him become a *re beautiful Person; and in* spected dramatist and literary celebrity. The dancer Isadora Duncan, an *that I have the Ambition of Conquerors, who fly* other who eventually fell under his spell, explained his magic: "Perhaps the *perpetually from Victory to* most remarkable lover of our time is Gabriele D'Annunzio. And this *Victory and can never* notwithstanding that he is small, bald, and, except when his face lights up *prevail with themselves to*

put a bound to their with enthusiasm, ugly But when he speaks to a woman he likes, his face is *Wishes. Nothing can* transfigured, so that he suddenly becomes Apollo. . . . His effect on women *restrain the Impetuosity of* is remarkable. The lady he is talking to suddenly feels that her very soul and *my Desires; I have an* being are lifted."

Heart for the whole Earth;

and like Alexander, I could

At the outbreak of World War I, the fifty-two-year-old D'Annunzio

wish for New Worlds joined the army. Although he had no military experience, he had a flair for *wherein to extend my* the dramatic and a burning desire to prove his bravery. He learned to fly *Amorous Conquests.*

and led dangerous but highly effective missions. By the end of the war, he

—MOLIÈRE, *DON JOHN OR*

THE LIBERTINE, TRANSLATED BY

was Italy's most decorated hero. His exploits made him a beloved national

JOHN OZELL

figure, and after the war, crowds would gather outside his hotel wherever in Italy he went. He would address them from a balcony, discussing politics, railing against the current Italian government. A witness of one of these speeches, the American writer Walter Starkie, was initially disappointed at the appearance of the famous D'Annunzio on a balcony in Venice; he was short, and looked grotesque. "Little by little, however, I began to sink under the fascination of the voice, which penetrated into my consciousness. . . . *The Rake* • 23

Never a hurried, jerky gesture. . . . He played upon the emotions of the *Among the many modes of crowd* as a supreme violinist does upon a Stradivarius. The eyes of the *handling Don Juan's effect on women, the motif of the*

thousands were fixed upon him as though hypnotized by his power." Once *irresistible hero is worth* again, it was the sound of the voice and the poetic connotations of the *singling out, for it* words that seduced the masses. Arguing that modern Italy should reclaim *illustrates a curious change in our sensibility. Don*

the greatness of the Roman Empire, D'Annunzio would craft slogans for *Juan did not become* the audience to repeat, or would ask emotionally loaded questions for them *irresistible to women until* to answer. He flattered the crowd, made them feel they were part of some *the Romantic age, and I* drama. Everything was vague and suggestive.

am disposed to think that

it is a trait of the female

The issue of the day was the ownership of the city of Fiume, just across *imagination to make him* the border in neighboring Yugoslavia. Many Italians believed that Italy's re- so. *When the female voice* ward for siding with the Allies in the recent war should be the annexation *began to assert itself and even, perhaps, to dominate*

of Fiume. D'Annunzio championed this cause, and because of his status as *in literature, Don Juan* a war hero the army was ready to side with him, although the government *evolved to become the* opposed any action. In September of 1919, with soldiers rallying around *women's rather than the man's ideal. . . . Don*

him, D'Annunzio led his infamous march on Fiume. When an Italian general stopped him along the way, and threatened to shoot him, D'Annunzio *dream of the perfect lover*, opened his coat to show his medals, and said in his magnetic voice, "If you *fugitive, passionate, daring*. must kill me, fire first on this!" The general stood there stunned, then *He gives her the one unforgettable moment, the*

broke into tears. He joined up with D'Annunzio.

magnificent exaltation of

When D'Annunzio entered Fiume, he was greeted as a liberator. The *the flesh which is too often* next day he was declared leader of the Free State of Fiume. Soon he was *denied her by the real husband, who thinks that*

giving daily speeches from a balcony overlooking the town's main square, *men are gross and women holding tens of thousands of people spellbound without benefit of loud- spiritual. To be the fatal speakers.* He initiated all kinds of celebrations and rituals harking back to *Don Juan may be the dream of a few men; but to*

the Roman Empire. The citizens of Fiume began to imitate him, particu- *meet him is the dream of larly his sexual exploits; the city became like a giant bordello. His popu- many women. larity was so high that the Italian government feared a march on Rome, —OSCAR MANDEL,* "THE

which at that point, had D'Annunzio decided to do it—and he had the LEGEND OF DON JUAN," *THE*

support of a large part of the military—might actually have succeeded; *THEATRE OF DON JUAN*

D'Annunzio could have beaten Mussolini to the punch and changed the course of history. (He was not a Fascist, but a kind of aesthetic socialist.) He decided to stay in Fiume, however, and ruled there for sixteen months before the Italian government finally bombed him out of the city.

Seduction is a psychological process that transcends gender, except in a few key areas where each gender has its own weakness. The male is traditionally vulnerable to the visual. The Siren who can concoct the right physical appearance will seduce in large numbers. For women the weakness is language and words: as was written by one of D'Annunzio's victims, the French actress Simone, "How can one explain his conquests except by his extraordinary verbal power, and the musical timbre of his voice, put to the service of exceptional eloquence? For my sex is susceptible to words, bewitched by them, longing to be dominated by them." The Rake is as promiscuous with words as he is with women. He

chooses words for their ability to suggest, insinuate, hypnotize, elevate, in- 24 • *The Art of Seduction* feet. The words of the Rake are the equivalent of the bodily adornment of the Siren: a powerful sensual distraction, a narcotic. The Rake's use of language is demonic because it is designed not to communicate or convey information but to persuade, flatter, stir emotional turmoil, much as the serpent in the Garden of Eden used words to lead Eve into temptation. The example of D'Annunzio reveals the link between the erotic Rake, who seduces women, and the political Rake, who seduces the masses. Both depend on words. Adapt the character of the Rake and you will find that the use of words as a subtle poison has infinite applications. Remember: it is the form that matters, not the content. The less your targets focus on what you say, and the more on how it makes them feel, the more seductive your effect. Give your words a lofty, spiritual, literary flavor the better to insinuate desire in your unwitting victims. *But what is this force, then, by which*

Don Juan seduces?

It is desire, the energy of sensuous desire. He desires in every woman the whole of womanhood. The reaction to this gigantic passion beautifies and develops the one desired, who flushes in enhanced beauty by his reflection. As the enthusiast's fire with seductive splendor illumines even those who stand in a casual relation to him, so Don Juan transfigures in a far deeper sense every girl.

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD, *EITHER/OR*

Keys to the Character

At first it may seem strange that a man who is clearly dishonest, disloyal, and has no interest in marriage would have any appeal to a woman.

But throughout all of history, and in all cultures, this type has had a fatal effect. What the Rake offers is what society normally does not allow women: an affair of pure pleasure, an exciting brush with danger. A woman is often deeply oppressed by the role she is expected to play. She is supposed to be the tender, civilizing force in society, and to want commitment and lifelong loyalty. But often her marriages and relationships give her not romance and devotion but routine and an endlessly distracted mate. It remains an abiding female fantasy to meet a man who gives totally of himself, who lives for her, even if only for a while.

This dark, repressed side of female desire found expression in the legend of Don Juan. At first the legend was a male fantasy: the adventurous knight who could have any woman he wanted. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Don Juan slowly evolved from the masculine adventurer to a more feminized version: a man who lived only for women. This evolution came from women's interest in the story, and was a result of their frustrated desires. Marriage for them was a form of indentured servitude; but Don Juan offered pleasure for its own sake, desire with no strings at- *The Rake* • 25

tached. For the time he crossed your path, you were all he thought about. His desire for you was so powerful that he gave you no time to think or to worry about the consequences. He would come in the night, give you an unforgettable moment, and then vanish. He might have conquered a thousand women before you, but that only made him more interesting; better to be abandoned than undesired by such a man.

The great seducers do not offer the mild pleasures that society condones. They touch a person's unconscious, those repressed desires that cry out for liberation. Do not imagine that women are the tender creatures that some people would like them to be. Like men, they are deeply attracted to the forbidden, the dangerous, even the

slightly evil. (Don Juan ends by going to hell, and the word "rake" comes from "rakehell," a man who rakes the coals of hell; the devilish component, clearly, is an important part of the fantasy.) Always remember: if you are to play the Rake, you must convey a sense of risk and darkness, suggesting to your victim that she is participating in something rare and thrilling—a chance to play out her own rakish desires.

To play the Rake, the most obvious requirement is the ability to let yourself go, to draw a woman into the kind of purely sensual moment in which past and future lose meaning. You must be able to abandon yourself to the moment. (When the Rake Valmont—a character modeled after the Duke de Richelieu—in Laclos' eighteenth-century novel *Dangerous Liaisons* writes letters that are obviously calculated to have a certain effect on his chosen victim, Madame de Tourvel, she sees right through them; but when his letters really do burn with passion, she begins to relent.) An added benefit of this quality is that it makes you seem unable to control yourself, a display of weakness that a woman enjoys. By abandoning yourself to the seduced, you make them feel that you exist for them alone—a feeling reflecting a truth, though a temporary one. Of the hundreds of women that Pablo Picasso, consummate rake, seduced over the years, most of them had the feeling that they were the only one he truly loved.

The Rake never worries about a woman's resistance to him, or for that matter about any other obstacle in his path—a husband, a physical barrier. Resistance is only the spur to his desire, enflaming him all the more. When Picasso was seducing Françoise Gilot, in fact, he begged her to resist; he needed resistance to add to the thrill. In any case, an obstacle in your way gives you the opportunity to prove yourself, and the creativity you bring to matters of love. In the eleventh-century Japanese novel *The Tale of Genji*, by the court lady Murasaki Shikibu, the Rake Prince Niou is not disturbed by the sudden disappearance of Ukifune, the woman he loves. She has fled because although she is interested in the prince, she is in love with another man; but her absence allows the prince to go to extreme lengths to track her down. His sudden appearance to whisk her away to a house deep in the woods, and the gallantry he displays in doing so, overwhelm her. Remember: if no resistances or obstacles face you, you must create them. No seduction can proceed without them. 26 • *The Art of Seduction*

The Rake is an extreme personality. Impudent, sarcastic, and bitingly witty, he cares nothing for what anyone thinks. Paradoxically, this only makes him more seductive. In the courtlike atmosphere of studio-era Hollywood, when most of the actors behaved like dutiful sheep, the great Rake Errol Flynn stood out in his insolence. He defied the studio chiefs, engaged in the most extreme pranks, reveled in his reputation as Hollywood's supreme seducer—all of which enhanced his popularity. The Rake needs a backdrop of convention—a stultified court, a humdrum marriage, a conservative culture—to shine, to be appreciated for the breath of fresh air he provides. Never worry about going too far: the Rake's essence is that he goes further than anyone else.

When the Earl of Rochester, seventeenth-century England's most notorious Rake and poet, abducted Elizabeth Malet, one of the most sought-after young ladies of the court, he was duly punished. But lo and behold, a few years later young Elizabeth, though wooed by the most eligible bachelors in the country, chose Rochester to be

her husband. In demonstrating his audacious desire, he made himself stand out from the crowd.

Related to the Rake's extremism is the sense of danger, taboo, perhaps even the hint of cruelty about him. This was the appeal of another poet Rake, one of the greatest in history: Lord Byron. Byron disliked any kind of convention, and happily played this up. When he had an affair with his half sister, who bore a child by him, he made sure that all of England knew about it. He could be uncommonly cruel, as he was to his wife. But all of this only made him that much more desirable. Danger and taboo appeal to a repressed side in women, who are supposed to represent a civilizing, moralizing force in culture. Just as a man may fall victim to the Siren through his desire to be free of his sense of masculine responsibility, a woman may succumb to the Rake through her yearning to be free of the constraints of virtue and decency. Indeed it is often the most virtuous woman who falls most deeply in love with the Rake.

Among the Rake's most seductive qualities is his ability to make women want to reform him. How many thought they would be the one to tame

Lord Byron; how many of Picasso's women thought they would finally be the one with whom he would spend the rest of his life. You must exploit this tendency to the fullest. When caught red-handed in rakishness, fall back on your weakness—your desire to change, and your inability to do so. With so many women at your feet, what can you do? You are the one who is the victim. You need help. Women will jump at this opportunity; they are uncommonly indulgent of the Rake, for he is such a pleasant, dashing figure. The desire to reform him disguises the true nature of their desire, the secret thrill they get from him. When President Bill Clinton was clearly caught out as a Rake, it was women who rushed to his defense, finding every possible excuse for him. The fact that the Rake is so devoted to women, in his own strange way, makes him lovable and seductive to them. Finally, a Rake's greatest asset is his reputation. Never downplay your bad name, or seem to apologize for it. Instead, embrace it, enhance it. It is *The Rake* • 27

what draws women to you. There are several things you must be known for: your irresistible attractiveness to women; your uncontrollable devotion to pleasure (this will make you seem weak, but also exciting to be around); your disdain for convention; a rebellious streak that makes you seem dangerous. This last element can be slightly hidden; on the surface, be polite and civil, while letting it be known that behind the scenes you are incorrigible. Duke de Richelieu made his conquests as public as possible, exciting other women's competitive desire to join the club of the seduced. It was by reputation that Lord Byron attracted his willing victims. A woman may feel ambivalent about President Clinton's reputation, but beneath that ambivalence is an underlying interest. Do not leave your reputation to chance or gossip; it is your life's artwork, and you must craft it, hone it, and display it with the care of an artist.

Symbol: *Fire.*

The Rake burns with a desire that

enflames the woman he is seducing. It is

extreme, uncontrollable, and dangerous. The Rake may end in hell, but the flames surrounding him often make him seem that much more desirable to women.

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Dangers

Like the Siren, the Rake faces the most danger from members of his own sex, who are far less indulgent than women are of his constant skirt chasing. In the old days, a Rake was often an aristocrat, and no matter how many people he offended or even killed, in the end he would go unpunished. Today, only stars and the very wealthy can play the Rake with impunity; the rest of us need to be careful.

Elvis Presley had been a shy young man. Attaining early stardom, and seeing the power it gave him over women, he went berserk, becoming a Rake almost overnight. Like many Rakes, Elvis had a predilection for women who were already taken. He found himself cornered by an angry husband or boyfriend on numerous occasions, and came away with a few cuts and bruises. This might seem to suggest that you should step lightly around husbands and boyfriends, especially early on in your career. But the charm of the Rake is that such dangers don't matter to them. You cannot be a Rake by being fearful and prudent; the occasional pummeling is part of the game. Later on, in any case, at the height of Elvis's fame, no husband would dare touch him.

The greater danger for the Rake comes not from the violently offended husband but from those insecure men who feel threatened by the Don Juan figure. Although they will not admit it, they envy the Rake's life of pleasure, and like everyone envious, they will attack in hidden ways, often masking their persecutions as morality. The Rake may find his career endangered by such men (or by the occasional woman who is equally insecure, and who feels hurt because the Rake does not want her). There is little the Rake can do to avoid envy; if everyone was as successful in seduction, society would not function. So accept envy as a badge of honor. Don't be naive, be aware. When

attacked by a moralist persecutor, do not be taken in by their crusade; it is motivated by envy, pure and simple. You can blunt it by being less of a Rake, asking forgiveness, claiming to have reformed, but this will damage your reputation, making you seem less lovably rakish. In the end, it is better to suffer attacks with dignity and keep on seducing. Seduction is the source of your power; and you can always count on the infinite indulgence of women.

the *I*deal lover

Most

*people have dreams in their
youth that get shattered or worn
down with age. They find themselves dis-
appointed by people, events, reality, which can-
not match their youthful ideals. Ideal Lovers thrive
on people's broken dreams, which become lifelong
fantasies. You long for romance? Adventure? Lofty
spiritual communion? The Ideal Lover reflects your
fantasy. He or she is an artist in creating the illu-
sion you require, idealizing your portrait. In a
world of disenchantment and baseness,
there is limitless seductive power in
following the path of the
Ideal Lover.*

The Romantic Ideal

One evening around 1760, at the opera in the city of Cologne, a beautiful young woman sat in her box, watching the audience. Beside her was her husband, the town burgomaster—a middle-aged man and amiable enough, but dull. Through her opera glasses the young woman noticed a handsome man wearing a stunning outfit. Evidently her stare was noticed, for after the opera the man introduced himself: his name was Giovanni Gi- *If at first sight a girl does a como Casanova.*

*not make such a deep
impression on a person that*

The stranger kissed the woman's hand. She was going to a ball the following night, she told him; would he like to come? "If I might dare to then ordinarily the hope, Madame," he replied, "that you will dance only with me." *actuality is not especially*

desirable; but if she does,

The next night, after the ball, the woman could think only of Casanova. *then no matter how* He had seemed to anticipate her thoughts—had been so pleasant, and yet *experienced a person is he* so bold. A few days later he dined at her house, and after her husband had *usually is rather* retired for the evening she showed him around. In her boudoir she pointed *overwhelmed* out a wing of the house, a chapel, just outside her window. Sure enough, as —SØREN KIERKEGAARD, *THE*

SEDUCER'S DIARY, TRANSLATED

if he had read her mind, Casanova came to the chapel the next day to attend Mass, and seeing her at the theater that evening he mentioned to her EDNA H. HONG AND

tend Mass, and seeing her at the theater that evening he mentioned to her EDNA H. HONG

that he had noticed a door there that must lead to her bedroom. She laughed, and pretended to be surprised. In the most innocent of tones, he said that he would find a way to hide in the chapel the next day—and all *A good lover will behave as* most without thinking, she whispered she would visit him there after every- *elegantly at dawn as at any other time. He drags*

one had gone to bed.

himself out of bed with a

So Casanova hid in the chapel's tiny confessional, waiting all day and *look of dismay on his face.* evening. There were rats, and he had nothing to lie upon; yet when the *The lady urges him on:*

"Come, my friend, it's

burgomaster's wife finally came, late at night, he did not complain, but quietly followed her to her room. They continued their trysts for several days. *want anyone to find you* By day she could hardly wait for night: finally something to live for, an *ad- here.* " *He gives a deep sigh, as if to say that the*

venture. She left him food, books, and candles to ease his long and tedious *night has not been nearly* stays in the chapel—it seemed wrong to use a place of worship for such a *long enough and that it is* purpose, but that only made the affair more exciting. A few days later, *agony to leave. Once up,* however, she had to take a journey with her husband. By the time she got *he does not instantly pull on his trousers. Instead he*

back, Casanova had disappeared, as quickly and gracefully as he had come. *comes close to the lady and*

Some years later, in London, a young woman named Miss Pauline no- *whispers whatever was left* ticed an ad in a local newspaper. A gentleman was looking for a lady lodger *unsaid during the night. Even when he is dressed,*

to rent a part of his house. Miss Pauline came from Portugal, and was of *he still lingers, vaguely* the nobility; she had eloped to London with a lover, but he had been *pretending to be fastening 31*

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his sash. • Presently he forced to return home and she had had to stay on alone for some while be *raises the lattice, and the* fore she could join him. Now she was lonely, and had little money, and was *two lovers stand together by*

depressed by her squalid circumstances—after all, she had been raised as a *the side door while he tells*

her how he dreads the lady. She answered the ad.

coining day, which will

The gentleman turned out to be Casanova, and what a gentleman he

keep them apart; then he

was. The room he offered was nice, and the rent was low; he asked only for *slips away. The lady*

watches him go, and this

occasional companionship. Miss Pauline moved in. They played chess, went *moment of parting will* riding, discussed literature. He was so well-bred, polite, and generous. A se *remain among her most rious and high-minded girl, she came to depend on their friendship; here charming memories. • was a man she could talk to for hours. Then one day Casanova seemed Indeed, one's attachment to*

a man depends largely on

changed, upset, excited: he confessed that he was in love with her. She was *the elegance of his leave-*

going back to Portugal soon, to rejoin her lover, and this was not what she *taking. When he jumps* wanted to hear. She told him he should go riding to calm down. *out of bed, scurries about*

the room, tightly fastens

Later that evening she received news: he had fallen from his horse. Feeling *his trouser sash, rolls up* ing responsible for his accident, she rushed to him, found him in bed, and *the sleeves of his coat* fell into his arms, unable to control herself. The two became lovers that *cloak, overrobe, or hunting*

costume, stuffs his

night, and remained so for the rest of Miss Pauline's stay in London. Yet *belongings into the breast*

when it came time for her to leave for Portugal, he did not try to stop her; *of his robe and then briskly* instead, he comforted her, reasoning that each of them had offered the *secures the outer sash— one*

other the perfect, temporary antidote to their loneliness, and that they *really begins to hate him.*

would be friends for life.

— *THE PILLOW BOOK OF SEI*

SHONAGON, TRANSLATED AND

Some years later, in a small Spanish town, a young and beautiful girl

EDITED BY IVAN M O R R I S

named Ignazia was leaving church after confession. She was approached by Casanova. Walking her home, he explained that he had a passion for dancing the fandango, and invited her to a ball the following evening. He was so different from anyone in the town, which bored her so—she desperately wanted to go. Her parents were against the arrangement, but she persuaded her mother to act as a chaperone. After an unforgettable evening of dancing (and he danced the fandango remarkably well for a foreigner), Casanova confessed that he was madly in love with her. She replied (very sadly, though) that she already had a fiancé. Casanova did not force the issue, but over the next few days he took Ignazia to more dances and to the bullfights. On one of these occasions he introduced her to a friend of his, a duchess, who flirted with him brazenly; Ignazia was terribly jealous. By now she was desperately in love with Casanova, but her sense of duty and religion forbade such thoughts. Finally, after days of torment, Ignazia sought out Casanova and took his hand: "My confessor tried to make me promise to never be alone with you again," she said, "and as I could not, he refused to give me absolution. It is the first time in my life such a thing has happened to me. I have put myself in God's hands. I have made up my mind, so long as you are here, to do all you wish. When to my sorrow you leave Spain, I shall find another confessor. My fancy for you is, after all, only a passing madness." Casanova was perhaps the most successful seducer in history; few women could resist him. His method was simple: on meeting a woman, he would *The Ideal Lover* • 33

study her, go along with her moods, find out what was missing in her life, *During the early 1970s*,

and provide it. He made himself the Ideal Lover. The bored burgomaster's *against a turbulent political backdrop that included the*

wife needed adventure and romance; she wanted someone who would *sacrifice* time and comfort to have her. For Miss Pauline what was missing was *involvement in the* friendship, lofty ideals, serious conversation; she wanted a man of breeding *Vietnam War and the*

downfall of President

and generosity who would treat her like a lady. For Ignazia, what was missing was suffering and torment. Her life was too easy; to feel truly alive, and *presidency in the Watergate* to have something real to confess, she needed to sin. In each case Casanova *scandal, a "me generation"* adapted himself to the woman's ideals, brought her fantasy to life. Once she *sprang to prominence* —and

[Andy] Warhol was there

had fallen under his spell, a little ruse or calculation would seal the romance *to hold up its mirror*. (a day among rats, a contrived fall from a horse, an encounter with another *Unlike the radicalized*

woman to make Ignazia jealous).

protesters of the 1960s

who wanted to change all

The Ideal Lover is rare in the modern world, for the role takes effort. *the ills of society, the self-*

You will have to focus intensely on the other person, fathom what she is *absorbed "me" people* missing, what he is disappointed by. People will often reveal this in *subtle sought to improve their bodies and to "get in*

ways: through gesture, tone of voice, a look in the eye. By seeming to be *touch" with their own* what they lack, you will fit their ideal.

feelings. They cared

To create this effect requires patience and attention to detail. Most *passionately about their appearance, health, life-*

people are so wrapped up in their own desires, so impatient, they are *inca- style, and bank accounts*. pable of the Ideal Lover role. Let that be a source of infinite opportunity. *Andy catered to their self-* Be an oasis in the desert of the self-absorbed; few can resist the temptation *centeredness and inflated* of following a person who seems so attuned to their desires, to bringing to *pride by offering his services as a portraitist. By*

life their fantasies. And as with Casanova, your reputation as one who *the end of the decade, he*

gives such pleasure will precede you and make your seductions that much *would be internationally*

recognized as one of the

leading portraitists of his

era. . . • Warhol offered

The cultivation of the pleasures of the senses was ever my

his clients an irresistible

principal aim in life. Knowing that I was personally calcu- product: a stylish and

lated to please the fair sex, I always strove to make myself

*flattering portrait by a
famous artist who was
agreeable to it.
himself a certified celebrity.*

—CASANOVA

*Conferring an alluring star
presence upon even the
most celebrated offaces, he
transformed his subjects*

*The Beauty Ideal
into glamorous apparitions,
presenting their faces as he
thought they wanted to be*

In 1730, when Jeanne Poisson was a mere nine years old, a fortune-teller *seen and remembered*. By predicted that one day she would be the mistress of Louis XV. The *pre-filtering his sitters' good* diction was quite ridiculous, since Jeanne came from the middle class, and *features through his silkscreens and*

*it was a tradition stretching back for centuries that the king's mistress be
exaggerating their vivacity, chosen from among the nobility. To make matters
worse, Jeanne's father he enabled them to gain*

was a notorious rake, and her mother had been a courtesan.

*entree to a more mythic
and rarefied level of*

*Fortunately for Jeanne, one of her mother's lovers was a man of great *existence*.
The possession*

*wealth who took a liking to the pretty girl and paid for her education. *of great
wealth and power**

*Jeanne learned to sing, to play the clavichord, to ride with uncommon skill, *might
do for everyday life*,*

to act and dance; she was schooled in literature and history as if she were a *but the commissioning of a*

portrait by Warhol was a

boy. The playwright Crébillon instructed her in the art of conversation. 34 • *The Art of Seduction*

sure indication that the

On top of it all, Jeanne was beautiful, and had a charm and grace that set *sitter intended to secure a*

her apart early on. In 1741, she married a man of the lower nobility. Now *posthumous fame as well.*

known as Madame d'Etioles, she could realize a great ambition: she opened *Warhol's portraits were not*

so much realistic documents

a literary salon. All of the great writers and philosophers of the time frequented the salon, many because they were enamored of the hostess. One *they were designer icons*

of these was Voltaire, who became a lifelong friend.

awaiting future devotions.

Through all Jeanne's success, she never forgot the fortune-teller's pre— D A V I D B O U R D O N , *WARHOL*

diction, and still believed that she would one day conquer the king's heart. It happened that one of her husband's country estates bordered on King Louis's favorite hunting grounds. She would spy on him through the fence, *Women have served all*

or find ways to cross his path, always while she happened to be wearing an *these centuries as looking*

glasses possessing the magic elegant, yet fetching outfit. Soon the king was sending her gifts of game, and delicious power of When his official mistress died, in 1744, all of the court beauties vied to *reflecting the figure of a*

take her place; but he began to spend more and more time with Madame *man at twice its natural*

size.

d'Etioles, dazzled by her beauty and charm. To the astonishment of the

— V I R G I N I A WOOLF, *A ROOM*

court, that same year he made this middle-class woman his official mistress, *OF ONE'S OWN*

ennobling her with the title of the Marquise de Pompadour.

The king's need for novelty was notorious: a mistress would beguile him with her looks, but he would soon grow bored with her and find

someone else. After the shock of his choice of Jeanne Poisson wore off, the courtiers reassured themselves that it could not last—that he had only chosen her for the novelty of having a middle-class mistress. Little did they know that Jeanne's first seduction of the king was not the last seduction she had in mind.

As time went by, the king found himself visiting his mistress more and more often. As he ascended the hidden stair that led from his quarters to hers in the palace of Versailles, anticipation of the delights that awaited him at the top would begin to turn his head. First, the room was always warm, and was filled with delightful scents. Then there were the visual delights: Madame de Pompadour always wore a different costume, each one elegant and surprising in its own way. She loved beautiful objects—fine porcelain, Chinese fans, golden flowerpots—and every time he visited, there would be something new and enchanting to see. Her manner was always lighthearted; she was never defensive or resentful. Everything for pleasure. Then there was their conversation: he had never been really able to talk with a woman before, or to laugh, but the marquise could discourse skillfully on any subject, and her voice was a pleasure to hear. And if the conversation waned, she would move to the piano, play a tune, and sing wonderfully. If ever the king seemed bored or sad, Madame de Pompadour would

propose some project—perhaps the building of a new country house. He would have to advise in the design, the layout of the gardens, the decor. Back at Versailles, Madame de Pompadour put herself in charge of the palace amusements, building a private theater for weekly performances under her direction. Actors were chosen from among the courtiers, but the female lead was always played by Madame de Pompadour, who was one of the finest amateur actresses in France. The king became obsessed with this *The Ideal Lover* • 35

theater; he could barely wait for its performances. Along with this interest came an increasing expenditure of money on the arts, and an involvement in philosophy and literature. A man who had cared only for hunting and gambling was spending less and less time with his male companions and becoming a great patron of the arts. Indeed he stamped a whole era with an aesthetic style, which became known as "Louis Quinze," rivaling the style associated with his illustrious predecessor, Louis XIV.

Lo and behold, year after year went by without Louis tiring of his mistress. In fact he made her a duchess, and her power and influence extended well beyond culture into politics. For twenty years, Madame de Pompadour ruled both the court and the king's heart, until her untimely death, in 1764, at the age of forty-three.

Louis XV had a powerful inferiority complex. The successor to Louis XIV, the most powerful king in French history, he had been educated and

trained for the throne—yet who could follow his predecessor's act? Eventually he gave up trying, devoting himself instead to physical pleasures, which came to define how he was seen; the people around him knew they could sway him by appealing to the basest parts of his character.

Madame de Pompadour, genius of seduction, understood that inside

Louis XV was a great man yearning to come out, and that his obsession with pretty young women indicated a hunger for a more lasting kind of beauty. Her first step was to cure his incessant bouts of boredom. It is easy for kings to be bored—everything they want is given to them, and they seldom learn to be satisfied with what they have. The Marquise de Pompadour dealt with this by bringing all sorts of fantasies to life, and creating constant suspense. She had many skills and talents, and just as important, she deployed them so artfully that he never discovered their limits. Once she had accustomed him to more refined pleasures, she appealed to the crushed ideals within him; in the mirror she held up to him, he saw his aspiration to be great, a desire that, in France, inevitably included leadership in culture. His previous series of mistresses had tickled only his sensual desires. In Madame de Pompadour he found a woman who made him feel greatness in himself. The other mistresses could easily be replaced, but he could never find another Madame de Pompadour.

Most people believe themselves to be inwardly greater than they outwardly appear to the world. They are full of unrealized ideals: they could be artists, thinkers, leaders, spiritual figures, but the world has crushed them, denied them the chance to let their abilities flourish. This is the key to their seduction—and to keeping them seduced over time. The Ideal Lover knows how to conjure up this kind of magic. Appeal only to people's physical side, as many amateur seducers do, and they will resent you for playing upon their basest instincts. But appeal to their better selves, to a higher standard of beauty, and they will hardly notice that they have been seduced. Make them feel elevated, lofty, spiritual, and your power over them will be limitless.

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Love brings to light a lover's noble and hidden qualities—

his rare and exceptional traits: it is thus liable to be deceptive as to his normal character.

—FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Keys to the Character

Each of us carries inside us an ideal, either of what we would like to become, or of what we want another person to be for us. This ideal goes back to our earliest years—to what we once felt was missing in our lives, what others did not give to us,

what we could not give to ourselves. Maybe we were smothered in comfort, and we long for danger and rebellion. If we want danger but it frightens us, perhaps we look for someone who seems at home with it. Or perhaps our ideal is more elevated—we want to be more creative, nobler, and kinder than we ever manage to be. Our ideal is something we feel is missing inside us. Our ideal may be buried in disappointment, but it lurks underneath, waiting to be sparked. If another person seems to have that ideal quality, or to have the ability to bring it out in us, we fall in love. That is the response to Ideal Lovers. Attuned to what is missing inside you, to the fantasy that will stir you, they reflect your ideal—and you do the rest, projecting on to them your deepest desires and yearnings. Casanova and Madame de Pompadour did not merely seduce their targets into a sexual affair, they made them fall in love.

The key to following the path of the Ideal Lover is the ability to observe. Ignore your targets' words and conscious behavior; focus on the tone of their voice, a blush here, a look there—those signs that betray what their words won't say. Often the ideal is expressed in contradiction. King Louis XV seemed to care only about chasing deer and young girls, but that in fact covered up his disappointment in himself; he yearned to have his nobler qualities flattered. Never has there been a better moment than now to play the Ideal

Lover. That is because we live in a world in which everything must seem elevated and well-intentioned. Power is the most taboo topic of all: although it is the reality we deal with every day in our struggles with people, there is nothing noble, self-sacrificing, or spiritual about it. Ideal Lovers make you feel nobler, make the sensual and sexual seem spiritual and aesthetic. Like all seducers, they play with power, but they disguise their manipulations behind the facade of an ideal. Few people see through them and their seductions last longer.

Some ideals resemble Jungian archetypes—they go back a long way

in our culture, and their hold is almost unconscious. One such dream is that of the chivalrous knight. In the courtly love tradition of the Middle Ages, a troubadour/knight would find a lady, almost always a married one, *The Ideal Lover*
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and would serve as her vassal. He would go through terrible trials on her behalf, undertake dangerous pilgrimages in her name, suffer awful tortures to prove his love. (This could include bodily mutilation, such as tearing off of fingernails, the cutting of an ear, etc.) He would also write poems and sing beautiful songs to her, for no troubadour could succeed without some kind of aesthetic or spiritual quality to impress his lady. The key to the archetype is a sense of absolute devotion. A man who will not let matters of warfare, glory, or money intrude into the fantasy of courtship has limitless power. The troubadour role is an ideal because people who do not put themselves and their own interests first are truly rare. For a woman to attract the intense attention of such a man is immensely appealing to her vanity.

In eighteenth-century Osaka, a man named Nisan took the courtesan

Dewa out walking, first taking care to sprinkle the clover bushes along the path with water, which looked like morning dew. Dewa was greatly moved by this

beautiful sight. "I have heard," she said, "that loving couples of deer are wont to lie behind clover bushes. How I should like to see this in real life!" Nisan had heard enough. That very day he had a section of her house torn down and ordered the planting of dozens of clover bushes in what had once been a part of her bedroom. That night, he arranged for peasants to round up wild deer from the mountains and bring them to the house. The next day Dewa awoke to precisely the scene she had described. Once she appeared overwhelmed and moved, he had the clover and deer taken away and the house rebuilt.

One of history's most gallant lovers, Sergei Saltykov, had the misfortune to fall in love with one of history's least available women: the Grand Duchess Catherine, future empress of Russia. Catherine's every move was watched over by her husband, Peter, who suspected her of trying to cheat on him and appointed servants to keep an eye on her. She was isolated, unloved, and unable to do anything about it. Saltykov, a handsome young army officer, was determined to be her rescuer. In 1752 he befriended Peter, and also the couple in charge of watching over Catherine. In this way he was able to see her and occasionally exchange a word or two with her that revealed his intentions. He performed the most foolhardy and dangerous maneuvers to be able to see her alone, including diverting her horse during a royal hunt and riding off into the forest with her. He told her how much he sympathized with her plight, and that he would do anything to help her. To be caught courting Catherine would have meant death, and eventually Peter came to suspect that something was up between his wife and Saltykov, though he was never sure. His enmity did not discourage the dashing officer, who just put still more energy and ingenuity into finding ways to arrange secret trysts. The couple were lovers for two years, and Saltykov was undoubtedly the father of Catherine's son Paul, later the emperor of Russia. When Peter finally got rid of him by sending him off to Sweden, news of his gallantry traveled ahead of him, and women swooned 38 • *The Art of Seduction*

to be his next conquest. You may not have to go to as much trouble or risk, but you will always be rewarded for actions that reveal a sense of selfsacrifice or devotion. The embodiment of the Ideal Lover for the 1920s was Rudolph Valentino, or at least the image created of him in film. Everything he did—the gifts, the flowers, the dancing, the way he took a woman's hand—showed a scrupulous attention to the details that would signify how much he was thinking of her. The image was of a man who made courtship take time, transforming it into an aesthetic experience. Men hated Valentino, because women now expected them to match the ideal of patience and attentiveness that he represented. Yet nothing is more seductive than patient attentiveness. It makes the affair seem lofty, aesthetic, not really about sex. The power of a Valentino, particularly nowadays, is that people like this are so rare. The art of playing to a woman's ideal has almost disappeared—which only makes it that much more alluring.

If the chivalrous lover remains the ideal for women, men often idealize the Madonna/whore, a woman who combines sensuality with an air of

spirituality or innocence. Think of the great courtesans of the Italian Renaissance, such as Tullia d'Aragona—essentially a prostitute, like all courtesans, but able to disguise her social role by establishing a reputation as a poet and philosopher. Tullia was what was then known as an "honest courtesan." Honest courtesans

would go to church, but they had an ulterior motive: for men, their presence at Mass was exciting. Their houses were pleasure palaces, but what made these homes so visually delightful was their artworks and shelves full of books, volumes of Petrarch and Dante. For the man, the thrill, the fantasy, was to sleep with a woman who was sexual yet had the ideal qualities of a mother and the spirit and intellect of an artist. Where the pure prostitute excited desire but also disgust, the honest courtesan made sex seem elevated and innocent, as if it were happening in the Garden of Eden. Such women held immense power over men. To this day they remain an ideal, if for no other reason than that they offer such a range of pleasures. The key is ambiguity—to combine the appearance of sensitivity to the pleasures of the flesh with an air of innocence, spirituality, a poetic sensibility. This mix of the high and the low is immensely seductive. The dynamics of the Ideal Lover have limitless possibilities, not all of them erotic. In politics, Talleyrand essentially played the role of the Ideal Lover with Napoleon, whose ideal in both a cabinet minister and a friend was a man who was aristocratic, smooth with the ladies—all the things that Napoleon himself was not. In 1798, when Talleyrand was the French foreign minister, he hosted a party in Napoleon's honor after the great general's dazzling military victories in Italy. To the day Napoleon died, he remembered this party as the best he had ever attended. It was a lavish affair, and Talleyrand wove a subtle message into it by placing Roman busts around the house, and by talking to Napoleon of reviving the imperial glories of ancient Rome. This sparked a glint in the leader's eye, and indeed, a few years later, Napoleon gave himself the title of emperor—a move that *The Ideal Lover* • 39

only made Talleyrand more powerful. The key to Talleyrand's power was his ability to fathom Napoleon's secret ideal: his desire to be an emperor, a dictator. Talleyrand simply held up a mirror to Napoleon and let him glimpse that possibility. People are always vulnerable to insinuations like this, which stroke their vanity, almost everyone's weak spot. Hint at something for them to aspire to, reveal your faith in some untapped potential you see in them, and you will soon have them eating out of your hand. If Ideal Lovers are masters at seducing people by appealing to their higher selves, to something lost from their childhood, politicians can benefit by applying this skill on a mass scale, to an entire electorate. This was what John F. Kennedy quite deliberately did with the American public, most obviously in creating the "Camelot" aura around himself. The word

"Camelot" was applied to his presidency only after his death, but the romance he consciously projected through his youth and good looks was fully functioning during his lifetime. More subtly, he also played with America's images of its own greatness and lost ideals. Many Americans felt that with the wealth and comfort of the late 1950s had come great losses; ease and conformity had buried the country's pioneer spirit. Kennedy appealed to those lost ideals through the imagery of the New Frontier, which was exemplified by the space race. The American instinct for adventure could find outlets here, even if most of them were symbolic. And there were other calls for public service, such as the creation of the Peace Corps. Through appeals like these, Kennedy resparked the uniting sense of mission that had gone missing in America during the years since World War II. He also attracted to himself a more emotional response than presidents commonly got. People literally fell in love with him and the image. Politicians can gain seductive power by digging into a country's past, bringing images and ideals that have been abandoned or repressed back to the surface. They only need the symbol; they do

not really have to worry about re-creating the reality behind it. The good feelings they stir up are enough to ensure a positive response.

Symbol: The

*Portrait Painter. Under his eye, all of
your physical imperfections disappear. He brings
out noble qualities in you, frames you in a myth, makes
you godlike, immortalizes you. For his ability to create
such fantasies, he is rewarded with great power.*

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Dangers

The main dangers in the role of the Ideal Lover are the consequences that arise if you let reality creep in. You are creating a fantasy that involves an idealization of your own character. And this is a precarious task, for you are human, and imperfect. If your faults are ugly enough, or intrusive enough, they will burst the bubble you have blown, and your target will revile you. Whenever Tullia d'Aragona was caught acting like a common prostitute (when, for instance, she was caught having an affair just for money), she would have to leave town and establish herself elsewhere. The fantasy of her as a spiritual figure was broken. Casanova too faced this danger, but was usually able to surmount it by finding a clever way to break off the relationship before the woman realized that he was not what she had imagined: he would find some excuse to leave town, or, better still, he would choose a victim who was herself leaving town soon, and whose

awareness that the affair would be short-lived would make her idealizing of him all the more intense. Reality and long intimate exposure have a way of dulling a person's perfection. The nineteenth-century poet Alfred de Musset was seduced by the writer George Sand, whose larger-than-life character appealed to his romantic nature. But when the couple visited Venice together, and Sand came down with dysentery, she was suddenly no longer an idealized figure but a woman with an unappealing physical problem. De Musset himself showed a whiny, babyish side on this trip, and the lovers separated. Once apart, however, they were able to idealize each other again, and reunited a few months later. When reality intrudes, distance is often a solution.

In politics the dangers are similar. Years after Kennedy's death, a string of revelations (his incessant sexual affairs, his excessively dangerous brinkmanship style of diplomacy, etc.) belied the myth he had created. His image has survived this tarnishing; poll after poll shows that he is still revered. Kennedy is a special case, perhaps, in that his assassination made him a martyr, reinforcing the process of idealization that he had already set in motion. But he is not the only example of an Ideal Lover whose attraction survives unpleasant revelations; these figures unleash such powerful fantasies, and there is such a hunger for the myths and ideals

they have to sell, that they are often quickly forgiven. Still, it is always wise to be prudent, and to keep people from glimpsing the less-than-ideal side of your character.

the *D*andy

Most

of us feel trapped within the limited roles that the world expects us to play. We are instantly attracted to those who are more fluid, more ambiguous, than we are—those who create their own persona. Dandies excite us because they cannot be categorized, and hint at a freedom we want for ourselves. They play with masculinity and femininity; they fashion their own physical image, which is always startling; they are mysterious and elusive. They also appeal to the narcissism of each sex: to a woman they are psychologically female, to a man they are male. Dandies fascinate and seduce in large numbers. Use the power of the Dandy to create an ambiguous, alluring presence that stirs repressed desires.

The Feminine Dandy

When the eighteen-year-old Rodolpho Guglielmi emigrated from Italy to the United States in 1913, he came with no particular skills apart from his good looks and his dancing prowess. To put these qualities to advantage, he found work in the thes dansants, the Manhattan dance halls where young girls would go alone or with friends and hire a taxi dancer for a brief thrill. The taxi dancer would expertly twirl them around the dance *Once a son was born to* floor, flirting and chatting, all for a small fee. Guglielmi soon made a name *Mercury and the goddess Venus, and he was brought*

up by the naiads in Ida's

In working as a taxi dancer, Guglielmi spent a great deal of time around *caves. In his features, it* women. He quickly learned what pleased them—how to mirror them in *was easy to trace* subtle ways, how to put them at ease (but not too much). He began to pay *resemblance to his father and to his mother. He was*

attention to his clothes, creating his own dapper look: he danced with a *called after them, too, for* corset under his shirt to give himself a trim figure, sported a wristwatch *his name was* (considered effeminate in those days), and claimed to be a marquis. In 1915, *Hermaphroditus. As soon as he was fifteen, he left*

he landed a job demonstrating the tango in fancy restaurants, and changed *his native hills, and Ida* his name to the more evocative Rodolfo di Valentina. A year later he *where he had been brought* moved to Los Angeles: he wanted to try to make it in Hollywood.

up, and for the sheer joy of

Now known as Rudolph Valentino, Guglielmi appeared as an extra in *travelling visited remote places. . . . He went as far*

several low-budget pictures. He eventually landed a somewhat larger role in *as the cities of Lycia, and* the 1919 film *Eyes of Youth*, in which he played a seducer, and caught *on to the Carians, who* women's attention by how different a seducer he was: his movements were *dwell nearby. In this region he spied a pool of water, so*

graceful and delicate, his skin so smooth and his face so pretty that when *clear that he could see right* he swooped down on his victim and drowned her protests with a kiss, *he to the bottom. . . . The* seemed more thrilling than sinister. Next came *The Four Horsemen of the water was like crystal, and the edges of the pool were*

Apocalypse, in which Valentino played the male lead, Julio the playboy, and *ringed with fresh turf and* became an overnight sex symbol through a tango sequence in which he *se- grass that was always* duced a young woman by leading her through the dance. The scene *encap- green. A nymph*

[Salmacis] dwelt

sulated the essence of his appeal: his feet smooth and fluid, his poise almost *there. . . . Often she would* feminine, combined with an air of control. Female members of the audi- *gather flowers, and it so* ence literally swooned as he raised a married woman's hands to his lips, or *happened that she was* shared the fragrance of a rose with his lover. He seemed so much more at- *engaged in this pastime when she caught sight of*

tentive to women than other men did; but mixed in with this delicacy was *the boy, Hermaphroditus. a hint of cruelty and menace that drove women wild.*

As soon as she had seen

In his most famous film, *The Sheik*, Valentino played an Arab prince *him, she longed to possess him. . . .She addressed*

(later revealed to be a Scottish lord abandoned in the Sahara as a baby) who *him: "Fair boy, you surely rescues a proud English lady in the desert, then conquers her in a manner deserve to be thought a 43*

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god. If you are, perhaps that borders on rape. When she asks, "Why have you brought me here?", you may be Cupid? . . . If

he replies, "Are you not woman enough to know?" Yet she ends up falling there is such a girl [engaged in love with him, as indeed women did in movie audiences all over the to you], let me enjoy your

*love in secret: but if there is world, thrilling at his strange blend of the feminine and the masculine. In not, then I pray that I may one scene in *The Sheik*, the English lady points a gun at Valentino; his re be your bride, and that we sponse is to point a delicate cigarette holder back at her. She wears pants; may enter upon marriage*

together." The naiad said he wears long flowing robes and abundant eye makeup. Later films would no more; but a blush include scenes of Valentino dressing and undressing, a kind of striptease stained the boy's cheeks, for showing glimpses of his trim body. In almost all of his films he played some he did not know what love exotic period character—a Spanish bullfighter, an Indian rajah, an Arab was. Even blushing became

him: his cheeks were the sheik, a French nobleman—and he seemed to delight in dressing up in jew colour of ripe apples, els and tight uniforms. hanging in a sunny orchard,

In the 1920s, women were beginning to play with a new sexual free *like painted ivory or like the moon when, in eclipse, dom. Instead of waiting for a man to be interested in them, they wanted to she shows a reddish hue be able to initiate the affair, but they still wanted the man to end up sweep beneath her brightness. . . . ing them off their feet. Valentino understood this perfectly. His off-screen Incessantly the nymph*

demanded at least sisterly life corresponded to his movie image: he wore bracelets on his arm, dressed kisses, and tried to put her impeccably, and reportedly was cruel to his wife, and hit her. (His adoring arms round his ivory neck. public carefully ignored his two failed marriages and his apparently nonex "Will you stop!" he cried, istent sex life.) When he suddenly died—in New York in August 1926, at

"or I shall run away and

leave this place and you!" the age of thirty-one, from complications after surgery for an ulcer—the Salmacis was afraid: "I response was unprecedented: more than

100,000 people filed by his coffin, *yield the spot to you*, many female mourners became hysterical, and the whole nation was spell *stranger, I shall not intrude*, "she said; and, bound. Nothing like this had happened before for a mere actor. *turning from him, pretended*

to go away. . . . The boy, There is a film of Valentino's, *Monsieur Beaucaire*, in which he plays a total *meanwhile, thinking*

himself unobserved and fop, a much more effeminate role than he normally played, and without his *alone, strolled this way and* usual hint of dangerousness. The film was a flop. Women did not respond *that on the grassy sward*, to Valentino as a swish. They were thrilled by the ambiguity of a man who *and dipped his toes in the*

lapping water—then his shared many of their own feminine traits, yet remained a man. Valentino *feet, up to the ankles*, dressed and played with his physicality like a woman, but his image was *Then, tempted by the* masculine. He wooed as a woman would woo if she were a man—slowly, *enticing coolness of the* attentively, paying attention to details, setting a rhythm instead of hurrying *waters, he quickly stripped*

his young body of its soft to a conclusion. Yet when the time came for boldness and conquest, his *garments. At the sight*, timing was impeccable, overwhelming his victim and giving her no chance *Salmacis was spell-bound*. to protest. In his movies, Valentino practiced the same gigolo's art of leading *She was on fire with*

passion to possess his a woman on that he had mastered as a teenager on the dance floor—

naked beauty, and her very chatting, flirting, pleasing, but always in control. *eyes flamed with a*

Valentino remains an enigma to this day. His private life and his charac *brilliance like that of the dazzling sun, when his* ter are wrapped in mystery; his image continues to seduce as it did during *bright disc is reflected in a* his lifetime. He served as the model for Elvis Presley, who was obsessed *mirror. . . . She longed to* with this star of the silents, and also for the modern male dandy who plays *embrace him then, and*

with difficulty restrained with gender but retains an edge of danger and cruelty. *her frenzy.*

Seduction was and will always remain the female form of power and

Hermaphroditus, clapping warfare. It was originally the antidote to rape and violence. The man who *his hollow palms against* uses this form of power on a woman is in essence turning the game around, *The Dandy • 45*

employing feminine weapons against her; without losing his masculine *his body, dived quickly into* identity, the more subtly feminine he becomes the more effective the se- *the stream. As he raised first one arm and then the*

duction. Do not be one of those who believe that what is most seductive is *other, his body gleamed in* being devastatingly masculine. The Feminine Dandy has a much more sin- *the clear water, as if* ister effect. He lures the woman in with exactly what she wants—a familiar, *someone had encased* pleasing, graceful presence. Mirroring feminine psychology, he displays at- *an ivory statue or white lilies in transparent glass.*

tention to his appearance, sensitivity to detail, a slight coquettishness—but

"I have won! He is

also a hint of male cruelty. Women are narcissists, in love with the charms *mine!" cried the nymph,* of their own sex. By showing them feminine charm, a man can mesmerize and flinging aside her garments, plunged into the

and disarm them, leaving them vulnerable to a bold, masculine move. *heart of the pool. The boy*

The Feminine Dandy can seduce on a mass scale. No single woman *fought against her, but she* really possesses him—he is too elusive—but all can fantasize about doing so. *held him, and snatched kisses as he struggled,*

The key is ambiguity: your sexuality is decidedly heterosexual, but your *placing her hands beneath* body and psychology float delightfully back and forth between the two *him, stroking* poles.

his unwilling breast, and

clinging to him, now on

this side, and now on that.

I am a woman. Every artist is a woman and should have a

• *Finally, in spite of all his*

taste for other women. Artists who are homosexual cannot

efforts to slip from her

be true artists because they like men, and since they them-

grasp, she twined around

selves are women they are reverting to normality.

him, like a serpent when it

is being carried off into the

—PABLO PICASSO

*air by the king of birds: for,
as it hangs from the eagle's
beak, the snake coils round
his head and talons and*

The Masculine Dandy

*with its tail hampers his
beating wings. . . ."You
may fight, you rogue, but*

In the 1870s, Pastor Henrik Gillot was the darling of the St. Petersburg *you will not escape. May* intelligentsia. He was young, handsome, well-read in philosophy and *lit- the gods grant me this, may* erature, and he preached a kind of enlightened Christianity. Dozens of *no time to come ever* young girls had crushes on him and would flock to his sermons just to look *separate him from me, or me from him!"*
Her prayers

at him. In 1878, however, he met a girl who changed his life. Her name *found favour with the gods:* was Lou von Salomé (later known as Lou Andreas-Salomé), and she was *for, as they lay together,* seventeen; he was forty-two.

*their bodies were united
and from being two persons*

Salomé was pretty, with radiant blue eyes. She had read a lot, particu- *they became one. As when* larly for a girl her age, and was interested in the gravest philosophical and *a gardener grafts a branch* religious issues. Her intensity, her intelligence, her responsiveness to ideas *on to a tree, and sees the two unite as they grow,*

cast a spell over Gillot. When she entered his office for her increasingly fre- *and come to maturity* quent discussions with him, the place seemed brighter and more alive. Per- *together, so when their* haps she was flirting with him, in the unconscious manner of a young *limbs met in that clinging embrace the nymph and the*

girl—yet when Gillot admitted to himself that he was in love with her, and *boy were no longer two, but* proposed marriage, Salomé was horrified. The confused pastor never quite *a single form, possessed of* got over Lou von Salomé, becoming the first of a long string of famous *a dual nature, which could* men to be the victim of a lifelong unfulfilled infatuation with her. *not be called male or*

female, but seemed to be at

In 1882, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was wandering *once both and neither*: around Italy alone. In Genoa he received a letter from his friend Paul Réé, —OVID, *METAMORPHOSES*, a Prussian philosopher whom he admired, recounting his discussions with a TRANSLATED BY MARY M. INNES

remarkable young Russian woman, Lou von Salomé, in Rome. Salomé was 46 • *The Art of Seduction*

Dandyism is not even, as there on holiday with her mother; Réé had managed to accompany her on many unthinking people long walks through the city, unchaperoned, and they had had many conver seem to suppose, an sations. Her ideas on God and Christianity were quite similar to Nietz immoderate interest in personal appearance and

sche's, and when Réé had told her that the famous philosopher was a friend *material elegance. For the of his, she had insisted that he invite Nietzsche to join them. In subsequent true dandy these things are letters Ree described how mysteriously captivating Salomé was, and how only a symbol of the*

aristocratic superiority of his anxious she was to meet Nietzsche. The philosopher soon went to Rome. personality. . . . • What,

When Nietzsche finally met Salomé, he was overwhelmed. She had the

then, is this ruling passion most beautiful eyes he had ever seen, and during their first long talk those that has turned into a creed

and created its own skilled

eyes lit up so intensely that he could not help feeling there was something *tyrants? What is this erotic about her excitement. Yet he was also confused: Salomé kept her dis unwritten constitution that tance, and did not respond to his compliments. What a devilish young has created so haughty a woman. A few days later she read him a poem of hers, and he cried; her caste? It is, above all, a*

burning need to acquire ideas about life were so like his own. Deciding to seize the moment, Nietz originality, within the sche proposed marriage. (He did not know that Ree had done so as well.) apparent bounds of

Salomé declined. She was interested in philosophy, life, adventure, not mar *convention. It is a sort of cult of oneself, which can riage. Undaunted, Nietzsche continued to court her. On an excursion to dispense even with what are Lake Orta with Réé, Salomé, and her mother, he managed to get the girl commonly called illusions. It alone, accompanying her on a walk up Monte Sacro while the others stayed is the delight in causing*

astonishment, and the behind. Apparently the views and Nietzsche's words had the proper pas proud satisfaction of sionate effect; in a later letter to her, he described

this walk as "the most *never oneself being* beautiful dream of my life." Now he was a man possessed: all he could *astonished*. . . . think about was marrying Salomé and having her all to himself.

—CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, *THE*

A few months later Salomé visited Nietzsche in Germany. They took

DANDY, QUOTED IN *VICE: AN*

ANTHOLOGY, EDITED BY

long walks together, and stayed up all night discussing philosophy. She mirR I C H A R D DAVENPORT-HINES

rored his deepest thoughts, anticipated his ideas about religion. Yet when he again proposed marriage, she scolded him as conventional: it was Nietzsche, after all, who had developed a philosophical defense of the superman, *In the midst of this display* the man above everyday morality, yet Salomé was by nature far less *conven of statesmanship*, tional than he was. Her firm, uncompromising manner only deepened the *eloquence, cleverness, and*

exalted ambition, spell she cast over him, as did her hint of cruelty When she finally left him, *Alcibiades lived a life of* making it clear that she had no intention of marrying him, Nietzsche was *prodigious luxury*, devastated. As an antidote to his pain, he wrote *Thus Spake Zarathustra, a drunkenness, debauchery,*

and insolence. He was book full of sublimated eroticism and deeply inspired by his talks with her. *effeminate in his dress and*

From then on Salomé was known throughout Europe as the woman who

would walk through the had broken Nietzsche's heart.

market-place trailing his

Salomé moved to Berlin. Soon the city's greatest intellectuals were *long purple robes, and he*

spent extravagantly. He falling under the spell of her independence and free spirit. The playwrights *had the decks of his* Gerhart Hauptmann and Franz Wedekind became infatuated with her; in *triremes cut away to allow*

1897, the great Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke fell in love with her. By *him to sleep more*

comfortably, and his that time her reputation was widely known, and she was a published novel *bedding was slung on cords*, ist. This certainly played a part in seducing Rilke, but he was also attracted *rather than spread on the* by a kind of masculine energy he found in her that he had never seen in a *hard planks. He had a*

golden shield made for woman. Rilke was then twenty-two, Salomé thirty-six. He wrote her love *him, which was* letters and poems, followed her everywhere, and began an affair with her *emblazoned not with any* that was to last several years. She corrected his poetry, imposed discipline *The Dandy* • 41

on his overly romantic verse, inspired ideas for new poems. But she was put *ancestral device, but with*

off by his childish dependence on her, his weakness. Unable to stand weak *the figure of Eros armed with a thunderbolt. The*

ness of any kind, she eventually left him. Consumed by her memory, Rilke *leading men of Athens*

long continued to pursue her. In 1926, lying on his deathbed, he begged *watched all this with*

his doctors, "Ask Lou what is wrong with me. She is the only one who *disgust and indignation*

knows."

and they were deeply

disturbed by his

One man wrote of Salomé, "There was something terrifying about her *contemptuous and lawless* embrace. Looking at you with her radiant blue eyes, she would say, 'The behaviour, which seemed to

reception of the semen is for me the height of ecstasy.' And she had an in *them monstrous and suggested the habits of a*

satisfiable appetite for it. She was completely amoral . . . a vampire." The *tyrant. The people's feelings*

Swedish psychotherapist Poul Bjerre, one of her later conquests, wrote, "I towards him have been very

think Nietzsche was right when he said that Lou was a thoroughly evil *aptly expressed by Aristophanes in the line:*

woman. Evil however in the Goethean sense: evil that produces good. . . .

"They long for him, they

She may have destroyed lives and marriages but her presence was exciting." *hate him, they cannot do without him. . . .*" • *The*

fact was that his voluntary

The two emotions that almost every male felt in the presence of Lou *donations, the public shows*

Andreas-Salomé were confusion and excitement—the two prerequisite

he supported, his unrivalled

feelings for any successful seduction. People were intoxicated by her strange *munificence to the state, the*

mix of the masculine and the feminine; she was beautiful, with a radiant *fame of his ancestry, the power of his oratory and*

smile and a graceful, flirtatious manner, but her independence and her in- *his physical strength and* tensely analytical nature made her seem oddly male. This ambiguity was *beauty . . . all combined to*

expressed in her eyes, which were both coquettish and probing. It was con *make the Athenians forgive him everything else, and*

fusion that kept men interested and curious: no other woman was like this. *they were constantly finding*

They wanted to know more. The excitement stemmed from her ability to *euphemisms for his lapses*

stir up repressed desires. She was a complete nonconformist, and to be in- *and putting them down to youthful high spirits*

volved with her was to break all kinds of taboos. Her masculinity made the *and honourable ambition.*

relationship seem vaguely homosexual; her slightly cruel, slightly domi—
PLUTARCH, "THE LIFE OF

neering streak could stir up masochistic yearnings, as it did in Nietzsche.
ALCIBIADES," *THE RISE AND*

Salomé radiated a forbidden sexuality. Her powerful effect on men—the *FALL OF ATHENS: NINE GREEK*

lifelong infatuations, the suicides (there were several), the periods of intense *LIVES, TRANSLATED BY IAN*

SCOTT-KILVERT

creativity, the descriptions of her as a vampire or a devil—attest to the obscure depths of the psyche that she was able to reach and disturb. The Masculine Dandy succeeds by reversing the normal pattern of

male superiority in matters of love and seduction. A man's apparent inde- *Further light—a whole flood of it—is thrown*

pendence, his capacity for detachment, often seems to give him the upper *upon this attraction of*

hand in the dynamic between men and women. A purely feminine woman

the male in petticoats for

will arouse desire, but is always vulnerable to the man's capricious loss of *the female, in the diary of the Abbé de Choisy, one*

interest; a purely masculine woman, on the other hand, will not arouse that *of the most brilliant men-*

interest at all. Follow the path of the Masculine Dandy, however, and you *women of history, of whom*

neutralize all a man's powers. Never give completely of yourself; while you *we shall hear a great deal*

are passionate and sexual, always retain an air of independence and self *more later. The abbé, a churchman of Paris, was a*

possession. You might move on to the next man, or so he will think. You *constant masquerader in*

have other, more important matters to concern yourself with, such as your *female attire. He lived in work. Men do not know how to fight women who use their own weapons*

the days of Louis XIV, and

was a great friend of Louis'

against them; they are intrigued, aroused, and disarmed. Few men can resist *brother; also addicted to*

the taboo pleasures offered up to them by the Masculine Dandy.

women's clothes. A young

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girl, Mademoiselle

The seduction emanating from a person of uncertain or dis-

Charlotte, thrown much

simulated sex is powerful.

into his company, fell

—COLETTE

desperately in love with the

abbé, and when the affair

had progressed to a

liaison, the abbé asked her

Keys to the Character

how she came to be won . . .

• " *I stood in no need of*

caution as I should have

with a man. I saw nothing

but a beautiful woman, Many of us today imagine that sexual freedom has progressed in recent years—that everything has changed, for better or worse. This is

mostly an illusion; a reading of history reveals periods of licentiousness *and why should I be*

forbidden to love you?

(imperial Rome, late-seventeenth-century England, the "floating world" of *What advantages a*

eighteenth-century Japan) far in excess of what we are currently experiencing *woman's dress gives you!*

Gender roles are certainly changing, but they have changed before. *The heart of a man is*

there, and that makes a

Society is in a state of constant flux, but there is something that does not great impression upon us,

change: the vast majority of people conform to whatever is normal for the *and on the other hand, all*

time. They play the role allotted to them. Conformity is a constant because *the charms of the fair sex fascinate us, and prevent us*

humans are social creatures who are always imitating one another. At certain points in history it may be fashionable to be different and rebellious,

— C . J . B U L L I E T ,

but if a lot of people are playing that role, there is nothing different or remarkable about it.

We should never complain about most people's slavish conformity,

however, for it offers untold possibilities of power and seduction to those *Beau Brummell* was who are up for a few risks. Dandies have existed in all ages and cultures (Al regarded as unbalanced in cibiades in ancient Greece, Korechika in late-tenth-century Japan), and *his passion for daily* wherever they have gone they have thrived on the conformist role playing *ablutions. His ritualistic*

morning toilet took upward

of others. The Dandy displays a true and radical difference from other people, a difference of appearance and manner. Since most of us are secretly *spent inching himself into*

oppressed by our lack of freedom, we are drawn to those who are more *his skin-tight buckskin*

fluid and flaunt their difference.

breeches, an hour with the

hairdresser and another two

Dandies seduce socially as well as sexually; groups form around them, *hours tying and "creasing*

their style is wildly imitated, an entire court or crowd will fall in love *down" a series of starched*

with them. In adapting the Dandy character for your own purposes, re *cravats until perfection was achieved. But first of all*

member that the Dandy is by nature a rare and beautiful flower. Be different *two hours were spent* in ways that are both striking and aesthetic, never vulgar; poke fun at *scrubbing himself with*

current trends and styles, go in a novel direction, and be supremely uninter *fetish*
zeal from head to toe in milk, water and eau de

ested in what anyone else is doing. Most people are insecure; they will
Cologne. . . . Beau

wonder what you are up to, and slowly they will come to admire and imi *Brummell*
said he used tate you, because you express yourself with total confidence.

only the froth of

champagne to polish his

The Dandy has traditionally been defined by clothing, and certainly *Hessian boots*.
He had

most Dandies create a unique visual style. Beau Brummel, the most famous *365 snuff boxes*, those Dandy of all, would spend hours on his toilette, particularly the inimitably *suitable for summer wear* styled knot in his necktie, for which he was famous throughout early *being quite unthinkable in winter, and the fit of his*

nineteenth-century England. But a Dandy's style cannot be obvious, for *gloves was achieved by*

Dandies are subtle, and never try hard for attention—attention comes to *entrusting their cut to two*

them. The person whose clothes are flagrantly different has little *imagine firms—one for the fingers, the other for the thumbs*.

tion or taste. Dandies show their difference in the little touches that mark *The Dandy • 49*

their disdain for convention: Théophile Gautier's red vest, Oscar Wilde's *Sometimes, however, the* green velvet suit, Andy Warhol's silver wigs. The great English Prime Min- *tyranny of elegance became altogether insupportable. A*

ister Benjamin Disraeli had two magnificent canes, one for morning, one *Mr. Boothby committed* for evening; at noon he would change canes, no matter where he was. The *suicide and left a note* female Dandy works similarly. She may adopt male clothing, say, but if she *saying he could no longer* does, a touch here or there will set her truly apart: no man ever dressed *endure the ennui of buttoning and unbuttoning*.

quite like George Sand. The overall hat, the riding boots worn on the

— *THE GAME OF HEARTS*:

streets of Paris, made her a sight to behold.

HARRIETTE WILSON'S

Remember, there must be a reference point. If your visual style is to- *MEMOIRS*,
EDITED BY LESLEY

tally unfamiliar, people will think you at best an obvious attention-getter, at
BLANCH

worst crazy. Instead, create your own fashion sense by adapting and altering
prevailing styles to make yourself an object of fascination. Do this right and you
will be wildly imitated. The Count d'Orsay, a great London dandy of *This royal
manner which*

[*the dandy*] *raises to the*

the 1830s and 1840s, was closely watched by fashionable people; one day, *height of
true royalty, the* caught in a sudden London rainstorm, he bought a *paltrok*, a kind
of heavy, *dandy has taken this from* hooded duffle coat, off the back of a Dutch
sailor. The *paltrok* immediately *women, who alone seem naturally made for such a*

*became the coat to wear. Having people imitate you, of course, is a sign of role. It
is a somewhat by your powers of seduction.*

using the manner and the

The nonconformity of Dandies, however, goes far beyond appearances. *method of
women that* It is an attitude toward life that sets them apart; adopt that attitude and
a the dandy dominates. And this usurpation of

circle of followers will form around you.

femininity, he makes

Dandies are supremely impudent. They don't give a damn about other *women
themselves approve* people, and never try to please. In the court of Louis XIV, the
writer La *of this. . . . The dandy has something antinatural*

Bruyere noticed that courtiers who tried hard to please were invariably on *and
androgynous about* the way down; nothing was more anti-seductive. As Barbey
d'Aurevilly *him, which is precisely how* wrote, "Dandies please women by
displeasing them."

he is able to endlessly

seduce.

Impudence was fundamental to the appeal of Oscar Wilde. In a London theater one
night, after the first performance of one of Wilde's plays,

— J U L E S LEMAÎTRE,

LES CONTEMPORAINS

the ecstatic audience yelled for the author to appear onstage. Wilde made them wait and wait, then finally emerged, smoking a cigarette and wearing an expression of total disdain. "It may be bad manners to appear here smoking, but it is far worse to disturb me when I am smoking," he scolded his fans. The Count d'Orsay was equally impudent. At a London club one night, a Rothschild who was notoriously cheap accidentally dropped a gold coin on the floor, then bent down to look for it. The count immediately whipped out a thousand-franc note (worth much more than the coin),

rolled it up, lit it like a candle, and got down on all fours, as if to help light the way in the search. Only a Dandy could get away with such audacity. The insolence of the Rake is tied up with his desire to conquer a woman; he cares for nothing else. The insolence of the Dandy, on the other hand, is aimed at society and its conventions. It is not a woman he cares to conquer but a whole group, an entire social world. And since people are generally oppressed by the obligation of always being polite and self-sacrificing, they are delighted to spend time around a person who disdains such niceties. Dandies are masters of the art of living. They live for pleasure, not for work; they surround themselves with beautiful objects and eat and drink 50 • *The Art of Seduction*

with the same relish they show for their clothes. This was how the great Roman writer Petronius, author of the *Satyricon*, was able to seduce the emperor Nero. Unlike the dull Seneca, the great Stoic thinker and Nero's tutor, Petronius knew how to make every detail of life a grand aesthetic adventure, from a feast to a simple conversation. This is not an attitude you should impose on those around you —you can't make yourself a nuisance—

but if you simply seem socially confident and sure of your taste, people will be drawn to you. The key is to make everything an aesthetic choice. Your ability to alleviate boredom by making life an art will make your company highly prized.

The opposite sex is a strange country we can never know, and this excites us, creates the proper sexual tension. But it is also a source of annoyance and frustration. Men do not understand how women think, and vice versa; each tries to make the other act more like a member of their own sex. Dandies may never try to please, but in this one area they have a pleasing effect: by adopting psychological traits of the opposite sex, they appeal to our inherent narcissism. Women identified with Rudolph Valentino's delicacy and attention to detail in courtship; men identified with Lou Andreas-Salomé's lack of interest in commitment. In the Heian court of eleventh-century Japan, Sei Shonagon, the writer of *The Pillow Book*, was powerfully seductive for men, especially literary types. She was fiercely independent, wrote poetry with the best, and had a certain emotional distance. Men wanted more from her than just to be her friend or companion, as if she were another man; charmed by her empathy for male psychology, they fell in love with her. This kind of mental transvestism—the ability to enter the spirit of the opposite sex, adapt to their way of thinking, mirror their tastes and attitudes—can be a key element in seduction. It is a way of mesmerizing your victim.

According to Freud, the human libido is essentially bisexual; most people are in some way attracted to people of their own sex, but social constraints (varying with culture and historical period) repress these impulses. The Dandy represents a release from such constraints. In several of Shakespeare's plays, a young girl (back then, the female roles in the theater were actually played by male actors) has to go into disguise and dresses up as a boy, eliciting all kinds of sexual interest from men, who later are delighted to find out that the boy is actually a girl. (Think, for example, of Rosalind in *As You Like It*.) Entertainers such as Josephine Baker (known as the Chocolate Dandy) and Marlene Dietrich would dress up as men in their acts, making themselves wildly popular—among men. Meanwhile the slightly

feminized male, the pretty boy, has always been seductive to women. Valentino embodied this quality. Elvis Presley had feminine features (the face, the hips), wore frilly pink shirts and eye makeup, and attracted the attention of women early on. The filmmaker Kenneth Anger said of Mick Jagger that it was "a bisexual charm which constituted an important part of the attraction he had over young girls . . . and which acted upon their unconscious." In Western culture for centuries, in fact, feminine beauty has been far more *The Dandy* • 51

fetishized than male beauty, so it is understandable that a feminine-looking face like that of Montgomery Clift would have more seductive power than that of John Wayne.

The Dandy figure has a place in politics as well. John F. Kennedy was a strange mix of the masculine and feminine, virile in his toughness with the Russians, and in his White House lawn football games, yet feminine in his graceful and dapper appearance. This ambiguity was a large part of his appeal. Disraeli was an incorrigible Dandy in dress and manner; some were suspicious of him as a result, but his courage in not caring what people thought of him also won him respect. And women of course adored him, for women always adore a Dandy. They appreciated the gentleness of his manner, his aesthetic sense, his love of clothes—in other words, his feminine qualities. The mainstay of Disraeli's power was in fact a female fan: Queen Victoria.

Do not be misled by the surface disapproval your Dandy pose may

elicit. Society may publicize its distrust of androgyny (in Christian theology, Satan is often represented as androgynous), but this conceals its fascination; what is most seductive is often what is most repressed. Learn a playful dandyism and you will become the magnet for people's dark, unrealized yearnings. The key to such power is ambiguity. In a society where the roles everyone plays are obvious, the refusal to conform to any standard will excite interest. Be both masculine and feminine, impudent and charming, subtle and outrageous. Let other people worry about being socially acceptable; those types are a dime a dozen, and you are after a power greater than they can imagine.

Symbol: The

Orchid. Its shape and color oddly sug-

gest both sexes, its odor is sweet and decadent

— it is a tropical flower of evil. Delicate and highly cul-

tivated, it is prized for its rarity; it is unlike any other flower. 52 • The Art of Seduction

Dangers

The Dandy's strength, but also the Dandy's problem, is that he or she often works through transgressive feelings relating to sex roles. Although this activity is highly charged and seductive, it is also dangerous, since it touches on a source of great anxiety and insecurity. The greater dangers will often come from your own sex. Valentino had immense appeal for women, but men hated him. He was constantly dogged with accusations of being perversely unmasculine, and this caused him great pain. Salomé was equally disliked by women; Nietzsche's sister, and perhaps his closest friend, considered her an evil witch, and led a virulent campaign against her in the press long after the philosopher's death. There is little to be done in the face of resentment like this. Some Dandies try to fight the image they themselves have created, but this is unwise: to prove his masculinity, Valentino would engage in a boxing match, anything to prove his masculinity. He wound up looking only desperate. Better to accept society's occasional gibes with grace and insolence. After all, the Dandies' charm is that they don't really care what people think of them. That is how Andy Warhol played the game: when people tired of his antics or some scandal erupted, instead of trying to defend himself he would simply move on to some new image—decadent bohemian, high-society portraitist, etc.—as if to say, with a hint of disdain, that the problem lay not with him but with other people's attention span.

Another danger for the Dandy is the fact that insolence has its limits. Beau Brummel prided himself on two things: his trimness of figure and his acerbic wit. His main social patron was the Prince of Wales, who, in later years, grew plump. One night at dinner, the prince rang for the butler, and Brummel snidely remarked, "Do ring, Big Ben." The prince did not appreciate the joke, had Brummel shown out, and never spoke to him again. Without royal patronage, Brummel fell into poverty and madness.

Even a Dandy, then, must measure out his impudence. A true Dandy

knows the difference between a theatrically staged teasing of the powerful and a remark that will truly hurt, offend, or insult. It is particularly important to avoid insulting those in a position to injure you. In fact the pose may work best for those who can afford to offend—artists, bohemians, etc. In the work world, you will probably have to modify and tone down your Dandy image. Be pleasantly different, an amusement, rather than a person who challenges the group's conventions and makes others feel insecure.

the *N*atural

Child-

*hood is the golden paradise we
are always consciously or unconsciously try-
ing to re-create. The Natural embodies the longed-
for qualities of childhood—spontaneity, sincerity, unpre-tentiousness. In the
presence of Naturals, we feel at ease,
caught up in their playful spirit, transported back to that
golden age. Naturals also make a virtue out of weakness, eliciting our sympathy
for their trials, making us want to protect
them and help them. As with a child, much of this is natu-
ral, but some of it is exaggerated, a conscious seductive
maneuver. Adopt the pose of the Natural to
neutralize people's natural defensiveness
and infect them with helpless
delight.*

Psychological Traits of the Natural

Children are not as guileless as we like to imagine. They suffer from feelings of helplessness, and sense early on the power of their natural charm to remedy their weakness in the adult world. They learn to play a game: if their natural innocence can persuade a parent to yield to their desires in one instance, then it is something they can use strategically in another instance, laying it on thick at the right moment to get their way. If *Long-past ages have a* their vulnerability and weakness is so attractive, then it is something they *great and often puzzling attraction for men's* can use for effect.

imagination. Whenever

Why are we seduced by children's naturalness? First, because anything *they are dissatisfied with* natural has an uncanny effect on us. Since the beginning of time,

natural *their present surroundings—and this happens*

phenomena—such as lightning storms or eclipses—have instilled in human *often enough*—they turn beings an awe tinged with fear. The more civilized we become, the greater *back to the past and hope* the effect such natural events have on us; the modern world surrounds us *that they will now be able to prove the truth of the*

with so much that is manufactured and artificial that something sudden and *inextinguishable dream of inexplicable fascinates us*. Children also have this natural power, but be- *a golden age. They are* cause they are unthreatening and human, they are not so much awe inspir- *probably still under the* ing as charming. Most people try to please, but the pleasantness of the child *spell of their childhood, which is presented to them*

comes effortlessly, defying logical explanation—and what is irrational is *by their not impartial* often dangerously seductive.

memory as a time of

More important, a child represents a world from which we have been *uninterrupted bliss*. forever exiled. Because adult life is full of boredom and compromise, we —
SIGMUND FREUD, *THE*

STASDARD EDITION OF THE

harbor an illusion of childhood as a kind of golden age, even though it can *COMPLETE PSYCHOLOGICAL*

often be a period of great confusion and pain. It cannot be denied, how- *WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD*, ever, that childhood had certain privileges, and as children we had a plea-VOLUME 23

surable attitude to life. Confronted with a particularly charming child, we often feel wistful: we remember our own golden past, the qualities we have lost and wish we had again. And in the presence of the child, we get a little *When Hermes was born on Mount Cyllene his*

of that goldenness back.

mother Maia laid him in

Natural seducers are people who somehow avoided getting certain *swaddling bands on a* childish traits drummed out of them by adult experience. Such people can *winnowing fan, but he grew with astonishing*

be as powerfully seductive as any child, because it seems uncanny and mar- *quickness into a little boy*, velous that they have preserved such qualities. They are not literally like *and as soon as her back* children, of course; that would make them obnoxious or pitiful. Rather it *was turned, slipped off and* is the spirit that they have retained. Do not imagine that this childishness is *went looking for adventure*.

Arrived at Pieria, where

something beyond their control. Natural seducers learn early on the value *Apollo was tending a fine* of retaining a particular quality, and the seductive power it contains; they *herd of cows, he decided to 55*

56 • The Art of Seduction

steal them. But, fearing to adapt and build upon those childlike traits that they managed to preserve, be betrayed by their tracks,

exactly as the child learns to play with its natural charm. This is the key. It *he quickly made a number* is within your power to do the same, since there is lurking within all of us a *o j shoes from the bark of a*

fallen oak and tied them devilish child straining to be let loose. To do this successfully, you have to *until plaited grass to the* be able to let go to a degree, since there is nothing less natural than seeming *feet of the cows, which he* hesitant. Remember the spirit you once had; let it return, without self *then drove off by night along the road. Apollo* consciousness. People are much more forgiving of those who go all the *discovered the loss, but* way, who seem uncontrollably foolish, than the halfhearted adult with a *Hermes's trick deceived*

childish streak. Remember who you were before you became so polite and *him, and though he went* self-effacing. To assume the role of the Natural, mentally position yourself *as far as Pylus in his*

westward search, and to in any relationship as the child, the younger one. *Onchestus in his eastern,*

The following are the main types of the adult Natural. Keep in mind *he was forced, in the end,*

that the greatest natural seducers are often a blend of more than one of *to offer a reward for the*

apprehension of the thief. these qualities.

Silens and his satyrs,

greedy of reward, spread

out in different directions to

track him down but, for a

The innocent. The primary qualities of innocence are weakness and mis *long while, without success.* understanding of the world. Innocence is weak because it is doomed to *At last, as a party of them* vanish in a harsh, cruel world; the child cannot protect or hold on to its in *passed through Arcadia, nocence.* The misunderstandings come from the child's not knowing about *they heard the muffled*

sound of music such as good and evil, and seeing everything through uncorrupted eyes. The weak they had never heard ness of children elicits sympathy, their misunderstandings make us laugh, before, and the nymph

and nothing is more seductive than a mixture of laughter and sympathy. Cyllene, from the mouth of

a cave, told them that a

The adult Natural is not truly innocent—it is impossible to grow up in most gifted child had

this world and retain total innocence. Yet Naturals yearn so deeply to hold recently been born there, to on to their innocent outlook that they manage to preserve the illusion of whom she was acting as

nurse: he had constructed

innocence. They exaggerate their weakness to elicit the proper sympathy. an ingenious musical toy They act like they still see the world through innocent eyes, which in an from the shell of a tortoise adult proves doubly humorous. Much of this is conscious, but to be effec and some cow-gut, with tive, adult Naturals must make it seem subtle and effortless—if they are which he had lulled his

mother to sleep. • "And

seen as trying to act innocent, it will come across as pathetic. It is better for from whom did he get the them to communicate weakness indirectly, through looks and glances, or cow-gut?" asked the alert through the situations they get themselves into, rather than anything obvi satyrs, noticing two hides stretched outside the cave.

ous. Since this type of innocence is mostly an act, it is easily adaptable for

"Do you charge the poor your own purposes. Learn to play up any natural weaknesses or flaws. child with theft?" asked

Cyllene. Harsh words were

exchanged. • At that

moment Apollo came up,

The imp. Impish children have a fearlessness that we adults have lost. That having discovered the is because they do not see the possible consequences of their actions —how thief's identity by observing

the suspicious behaviour of some people might be offended, how they might physically hurt themselves a long-winged bird. in the process. Imps are brazen, blissfully uncaring. They infect you with Entering the cave, he their lighthearted spirit. Such children have not yet had their natural energy awakened Maia and told

and spirit scolded out of them by the need to be polite and civil. Secretly, *her severely that Hermes*

must restore the stolen we envy them; we want to be naughty too. cows. Maia pointed to the

Adult imps are seductive because of how different they are from the rest *child, still wrapped in his* of us. Breaths of fresh air in a cautious world, they go full throttle, as if *The Natural* • 57

their impishness were uncontrollable, and thus natural. If you play the part, *swaddling bands and* do not worry about offending people now and then—you are too lovable *feigning sleep. "What an absurd charge!" she cried.*

and inevitably they will forgive you. Just don't apologize or look contrite, *But Apollo had already* for that would break the spell. Whatever you say or do, keep a glint in your *recognized the hides. He* eye to show that you do not take anything seriously.

picked up Hermes, carried

him to Olympus, and there

formally accused him of

theft, offering the hides as

The wonder. A wonder child has a special, inexplicable talent: a gift for *evidence. Zeus, loth to* music, for mathematics, for chess, for sport. At work in the field in which *believe that his own new-born son was a thief*

they have such prodigal skill, these children seem possessed, and their *encouraged him to plead* tions effortless. If they are artists or musicians, Mozart types, their work *not guilty, but Apollo* seems to spring from some inborn impulse, requiring remarkably little *would not be put off and Hermes, at last, weakened*

thought. If it is a physical talent that they have, they are blessed with un- *and confessed.* • "Very usual energy, dexterity, and spontaneity. In both cases they seem talented *well, come with me,*" he beyond their years. This fascinates us.

said, "and you may have

Adult wonders are often former wonder children who have managed,

your herd. I slaughtered

only two, and those I cut

remarkably, to retain their youthful impulsiveness and improvisational skills. *up into twelve equal* True spontaneity is a delightful rarity, for everything in life

conspires to rob *portions as a sacrifice to the us* of it—we have to learn to act carefully and deliberately, to think about *twelve gods*" • " *Twelve gods?*" asked *Apollo*.

how we look in other people's eyes. To play the wonder you need some

"Who is the twelfth?" •

skill that seems easy and natural, along with the ability to improvise. If in

"Your servant, sir" replied

fact your skill takes practice, you must hide this and learn to make your *Hermes modestly*. *"I ate no more than my share,*

work appear effortless. The more you hide the sweat behind what you do, *though I was very hungry*, the more natural and seductive it will appear.

and duly burned the rest. "

• *The two gods [Hermes*

and Apollo] returned to

Mount Cyllene, where

The undefensive lover. As people get older, they protect themselves against *Hermes greeted his mother* painful experiences by closing themselves off. The price for this is that they *and retrieved something* grow rigid, physically and mentally. But children are by nature unprotected *that he had hidden underneath a sheepskin.* •

and open to experience, and this receptiveness is extremely attractive. In

"What have you there?"

the presence of children we become less rigid, infected with their open- *asked Apollo.* • *In answer,* ness. That is why we want to be around them.

Hermes showed his newly-

invented tortoise-shell lyre,

Undefensive lovers have somehow circumvented the self-protective *and played such a process*, retaining the playful, receptive spirit of the child. They often *ravishing tune on it with* manifest this spirit physically: they are graceful, and seem to age less rapidly *the plectrum he had also invented, at the same time*

than other people. Of all the Natural's character qualities, this one is the *singing in praise of* most useful. Defensiveness is deadly in seduction; act defensive and you'll *Apollo's nobility*, bring out defensiveness in other people. The undefensive lover, on the *intelligence, and generosity*, other hand, lowers the inhibitions of his

or her target, a critical part of seduction. It is important to learn to not react defensively: bend instead of *and delighted Apollo to resist*, be open to influence from others, and they will more easily fall under *Pylus, playing all the way*, your spell.

and there gave him the remainder of the cattle, which he had hidden in a cave. • "A bargain!" cried Apollo. "You keep the cows, and I take the lyre. "

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• "Agreed," said *Hermes*,

Examples of Natural Seducers

and they shook hands on it. • . . Apollo, taking

1. As a child growing up in England, Charlie Chaplin spent years in dire *the child back to Olympus*,

told Zeus all that had poverty, particularly after his mother was committed to an asylum. In his *happened*, *Zeus warned*

early teens, forced to work to live, he landed a job in vaudeville, eventually *Hermes that henceforth he gained* some success as a comedian. But Chaplin was wildly ambitious, and *must respect the rights of* so, in 1910, when he was only nineteen, he emigrated to the United States, *property and refrain from*

telling downright lies; but hoping to break into the film business. Making his way to Hollywood, he *he could not help being* found occasional bit parts, but success seemed elusive: the competition was *amused*. *"You seem to be a fierce, and although Chaplin had a repertoire of gags that he had learned in very ingenious, eloquent,*

and persuasive godling," he vaudeville, he did not particularly excel at physical humor, a critical part of *said*. • "Then make me silent comedy. He was not a gymnast like Buster Keaton. *your herald, Father;*"

In 1914, Chaplin managed to get the lead in a film short called *Making Hermes answered, "and I*

will he responsible for the a Living. His role was that of a con artist. In playing around with the cos *safety of all divine* tume for the part, he put on a pair of pants several sizes too large, then *property, and never tell lies*, added a derby hat, enormous boots that he wore on the wrong feet, a walk *though I cannot promise* ing cane, and a pasted-on mustache. With the clothes, a whole new charac *always to tell the whole truth.*" • "That would not ter seemed to come to life—first the silly walk, then the twirling of the *be expected of you,*" said

cane, then all sorts of gags. Mack Sennett, the head of the studio, did not *Zeus with a smile.* . . . find *Making a Living* very funny, and doubted whether Chaplin had a future *Zeus gave him a herald's*

staff with white ribbons, in the movies, but a few critics felt otherwise. A review in a trade magazine *which everyone was ordered* read, "The clever player who takes the role of a nervy and very nifty *to respect; a round hat* sharper in this picture is a comedian of the first water, who acts like one of *against the rain, and*

winged golden sandals Nature's own naturals." And audiences also responded—the film made *which carried him about* money.

with the swiftness of the

What seemed to touch a nerve in *Making a Living*, setting Chaplin apart *wind.*

from the horde of other comedians working in silent film, was the almost

—ROBERT GRAVES,

THE GREEK MYTHS, VOLUME I

pathetic naiveté of the character he played. Sensing he was onto something, Chaplin shaped the role further in subsequent movies, rendering him more and more naive. The key was to make the character seem to see the world through the eyes of a child. In *The Bank*, he is the bank janitor who day *A man may meet a woman and be shocked by her* dreams of great deeds while robbers are at work in the building; in *The ugliness. Soon, if she is Pawnbroker*; he is an unprepared shop assistant who wreaks havoc on a *natural and unaffected, her grandfather* clock; in *Shoulder Arms*, he is a soldier in the bloody trenches of *expression makes him*

overlook the fault of her World War I, reacting to the horrors of war like an innocent child. Chaplin *features. He begins to find* made sure to cast actors in his films who were physically larger than he was, *her charming, it enters his* subliminally positioning them as adult bullies and himself as the helpless in *head that she might be loved, and a week later he* fant. And as he went deeper into his character, something strange hap *is living in hope. The* pened: the character and the real-life man began to merge. Although he *following week he has been* had had a troubled childhood, he was obsessed with it. (For his film *Easy snubbed into despair, and*

Street he built a set in Hollywood that duplicated the London streets he had the week afterwards he has

gone mad. known as a boy.) He mistrusted the adult world, preferring the company of

— S T E N D H A L , *LOVE*,

the young, or the young at heart: three of his four wives were teenagers

TRANSLATED BY GILBERT AND

when he married them.

SUZANNE SALE

More than any other comedian, Chaplin aroused a mix of laughter and sentiment. He made you empathize with him as the victim, feel sorry for *The Natural* • 59

him the way you would for a lost dog. You both laughed and cried. And

"Geographical" escapism

audiences sensed that the role Chaplin played came from somewhere deep *has been rendered ineffective by the spread of*

inside—that he was sincere, that he was actually playing himself. Within *air routes*. *What remains is* a few years after *Making a Living*, Chaplin was the most famous actor

"evolutionary" escapism—

in the world. There were Chaplin dolls, comic books, toys; popular songs *a downward course in one's development, back to the*

and short stories were written about him; he became a universal icon. In *ideas and emotions of*

1921, when he returned to London for the first time since he had left it, he

"golden childhood," which

was greeted by enormous crowds, as if at the triumphant return of a great *may well be defined as general*.

"regress towards

infantilism," escape to a

personal world of childish

The greatest seducers, those who seduce mass audiences, nations, the *ideas*. • *In a strictly- world, have a way of playing on people's unconscious, making them react regulated society, where life follows strictly-defined*

in a way they can neither understand nor control. Chaplin inadvertently hit *canons, the urge to escape* on this power when he discovered the effect he could have on audiences by *from the chain of things* playing up his weakness, by suggesting that he had a child's mind in an adult

"established once and for

all" must be felt

body. In the early twentieth century, the world was radically and rapidly *particularly strongly*. . . . •

changing. People were working longer and longer hours at increasingly *And the most perfect of mechanical jobs*; life was becoming steadily more inhuman and heartless, as *them [comedians] does this* the ravages of World War I made clear. Caught in the midst of revolution- *with utmost perfection, for he [Chaplin] serves this*

ary change, people yearned for a lost childhood that they imagined as a *principle . . . through the golden paradise*.

subtlety of his method

An adult child like Chaplin has immense seductive power, for he offers *which, offering the*

spectactor an infantile

the illusion that life was once simpler and easier, and that for a moment, or *pattern to be imitated*, for as long as the movie lasts, you can win that life back. In a cruel, amoral *pscyholigically infects him* world, naivete has enormous appeal. The key is to bring it off with an air with *infantilism and draws him into the "golden age"*

of total seriousness, as the straight man does in stand-up comedy. More im- *of the infantile paradise of portant*, however, is the creation of sympathy. Overt strength and power is *childhood*. rarely seductive—it makes us afraid, or envious. The royal road to seduction —SERGEI EISENSTEIN, "CHARLIE

is to play up your vulnerability and helplessness. You cannot make this ob-*THE KID,"* FROM *NOTES OF A* vious; to seem to be begging for sympathy is to seem needy, which is en- *FILM DIRECTOR*

tirely anti-seductive. Do not proclaim yourself a victim or underdog, but reveal it in your manner, in your confusion. A display of "natural" weakness will make you instantly lovable, both lowering people's defenses and making them feel delightfully superior to you. Put yourself in situations that make you seem weak, in which someone else has the advantage; they are the bully, you are the innocent lamb. Without any effort on your part, people will feel sympathy for you. Once people's eyes cloud over with sentimental mist, they will not see how you are manipulating them.

2. Emma Crouch, born in 1842 in Plymouth, England, came from a respectable middle-class family. Her father was a composer and music professor who dreamed of success in the world of light opera. Among his many children, Emma was his favorite: she was a delightful child, lively and flirtatious, with red hair and a freckled face. Her father doted on her, and promised her a brilliant future in the theater. Unfortunately Mr. Crouch had a *60 • The Art of Seduction*

Prince Gortschakoff used

dark side: he was an adventurer, a gambler, and a rake, and in 1849 he *to say that she* [*Cora*

abandoned his family and left for America. The Crouches were now in dire *Pearl*] *was the last word in straits*. Emma was told that her father had died in an accident and she was *luxury, and that he would*

have tried to steal the sun sent off to a convent. The loss of her father affected her deeply, and as the *to satisfy one of her whims*. years went by she seemed lost in the past, acting as if he still doted on her.

—GUSTAVE CLAUDIN, CORA

One day in 1856, when Emma was walking home from church, a wellPEARL CONTEMPORARY

dressed gentleman invited her home for some cakes. She followed him to his house, where he proceeded to take advantage of her. The next morning this man, a diamond merchant, promised to set her up in a house of her *Apparently the possession of* own, treat her well, and give her plenty of money. She took the money but *humor implies the* left him, determined to do what she had always wanted: never see her *possession of a number of*

typical habit-systems. The family again, never depend on anyone, and lead the grand life that her *fa first is an emotional one: the* ther had promised her. *habit of playfulness. Why*

With the money the diamond merchant had given her, Emma bought
should one be proud of

being playful? For a double nice clothes and rented a cheap flat. Adopting the flamboyant name of reason. First, playfulness

Cora Pearl, she began to frequent London's Argyll Rooms, a fancy gin *connotes childhood and*

palace where harlots and gentlemen rubbed elbows. The proprietor of the *youth. If one can be playful,*

one still possesses something Argyll, a Mr. Bignell, took note of this newcomer to his establishment—

of the vigor and the joy of she was so brazen for a young girl. At forty-five, he was much older *young life . . . • But there* than she was, but he decided to be her lover and protector, lavishing her *is a deeper implication. To* with money and attention. The following year he took her to Paris, which *be playful is, in a sense, to*

be free. When a person is was at the height of its Second Empire prosperity. Cora was enthralled by *playful, he momentarily* Paris, and of all its sights, but what

impressed her the most was the parade *disregards the binding*

of rich coaches in the Bois de Boulogne. Here the fashionable came to take *necessities which compel*

him, in business and morals, the air—the empress, the princesses, and, not least the grand courtesans, in domestic and community who had the most opulent carriages of all. This was the way to lead the *life*. . . . • *What galls us is* kind of life Cora's father had wanted for her. She promptly told Bignell that *that the binding necessities*

do not permit us to shape when he went back to London, she would stay on alone. *our world as we please*. . . .

Frequenting all the right places, Cora soon came to the attention of *What we most deeply wealthy French gentlemen*. They would see her walking the streets in a *desire, however, is to create* bright pink dress, to complement her flaming red hair, pale face, and freckle *our world for ourselves. Whenever we can do* les. They would glimpse her riding wildly through the Bois de Boulogne, *that, even in the slightest cracking her whip left and right*. They would see her in cafes surrounded *degree, we are happy. Now by men, her witty insults making them laugh*. They also heard of her *in play we create our own*

world. . . .

exploits—of her delight in showing her body to one and all. The elite of

— P R O F E S S O R H . A .

Paris society began to court her, particularly the older men who had grown
OVERSTREET, *INFLUENCING*

tired of the cold and calculating courtesans, and who admired her girlish *HUMAN BEHAVIOR*

spirit. As money began to pour in from her various conquests (the Duc de Mornay, heir to the Dutch throne; Prince Napoleon, cousin to the Emperor), Cora spent it on the most outrageous things—a multicolored carriage pulled by a team of cream-colored horses, a rose-marble bathtub with her initials inlaid in gold. Gentlemen vied to be the one who would spoil her the most. An Irish lover wasted his entire fortune on her, in only eight weeks. But money could not buy Cora's loyalty; she would leave a man on the slightest whim.

Cora Pearl's wild behavior and disdain for etiquette had all of Paris on *The Natural*
• 61

edge. In 1864, she was to appear as Cupid in the Offenbach operetta *Or-All was quiet again. (Genji pheus in the Underworld.* Society was dying to see what she would do to *slipped the latch open and tried the doors. They had*

cause a sensation, and soon found out: she came on stage practically naked, *not been bolted. A curtain except for expensive diamonds here and there, barely covering her. As she had been set up just inside, pranced on stage, the diamonds fell off, each one worth a fortune; she did and in the dim light he* not stoop to pick them up, but let them roll off into the footlights. The *could make out Chinese chests and other furniture*

gentlemen in the audience, some of whom had given her those diamonds, *scattered in some disorder*: applauded her wildly. Antics like this made Cora the toast of Paris, and she *He made his way through* reigned as the city's supreme courtesan for over a decade, until the Franco- *to her side. She lay by herself, a slight little figure.*

Prussian War of 1870 put an end to the Second Empire.

Though vaguely annoyed

at being disturbed, she

People often mistakenly believe that what makes a person desirable and *se-evidently took him for the woman Chujo until he*

ductive is physical beauty, elegance, or overt sexuality. Yet Cora Pearl was *pulled back the covers*: not dramatically beautiful; her body was boyish, and her style was garish • . . . *His manner was so* and tasteless. Even so, the most dashing men of Europe vied for her favors, *gently persuasive that devils and demons could*

often ruining themselves in the process. It was Cora's spirit and attitude that *not have gainsaid him*: enthralled them. Spoiled by her father, she imagined that spoiling her was • . . . *She was so small* natural—that all men should do the same. The consequence was that, like a *that he lifted her easily*. As child, she never felt she had to try to please. It was Cora's powerful air of *he passed through the doors to his own room, he came*

independence that made men want to possess her, tame her. She never pre- *upon Chujo who had been* tended to be anything more than a courtesan, so the brazenness that in a *summoned earlier*: *He* lady would have been uncivil in her seemed natural and fun. And as with a *called out in surprise. Surprised in turn, Chujo*

spoiled child, a man's relationship with her was on her terms. The moment *peered into the darkness*: he tried to change that, she lost interest. This was the secret of her astound- *The perfume that came* ing success.

from his robes like a cloud

of smoke told her who he

Spoiled children have an undeservedly bad reputation: while those who *was* . . . [*Chujo*] *followed* are spoiled with material things are indeed often insufferable, those who are *after*; but *Genji* was quite spoiled with affection know themselves to

be deeply seductive. This be- *unmoved by her pleas.* •

"Come for her in the

comes a distinct advantage when they grow up. According to Freud (who *morning, he said, sliding* was speaking from experience, since he was his mother's darling), spoiled *the doors closed.* • The children have a confidence that stays with them all their lives. This quality *lady was bathed in* radiates outward, drawing others to them, and, in a circular process, making *perspiration and quite beside herself at the*

people spoil them still more. Since their spirit and natural energy were *thought of what Chujo,* never tamed by a disciplining parent, as adults they are adventurous and *and the others too, would* bold, and often impish or brazen.

be thinking. Genji had to

feel sorry for her. Yet the

The lesson is simple: it may be too late to be spoiled by a parent, but it *sweet words poured forth,* is never too late to make other people spoil you. It is all in your attitude. *the whole gamut of pretty* People are drawn to those who expect a lot out of life, whereas they tend *devices for making a woman surrender. . . .* •

to disrespect those who are fearful and undemanding. Wild independence *One may imagine that* has a provocative effect on us: it appeals to us, while also presenting us with *he found many kind* a challenge—we want to be the one to tame it, to make the spirited person *promises with which to* dependent on us. Half of seduction is stirring such competitive desires. *comfort her. . . .*

—MURASAKI SHIKIBU,

THE TALE OF GENJI,

TRANSLATED BY EDWARD G.

3. In October of 1925, Paris society was all excited about the opening of SEIDENSTICKER

the Revue Negre. Jazz, or in fact anything that came from black America, 62 • *The Art of Seduction*

was the latest fashion, and the Broadway dancers and performers who made up the Revue Nègre were African-American. On opening night, artists and high society packed the hall. The show was spectacular, as they expected, but nothing prepared them for the last number, performed by a somewhat gawky long-legged woman with the prettiest face: Josephine Baker, a twenty-year-old chorus girl from East St. Louis. She came onstage bare-breasted, wearing a skirt of feathers over a satin bikini bottom, with feathers around her neck and ankles. Although she performed her number, called "*Danse Sauvage,*" with another dancer, also clad in feathers, all eyes were riveted on her: her whole body seemed to come alive in a way the audience had never seen before, her legs moving with the liteness of a cat, her rear

end gyrating in patterns that one critic likened to a hummingbird's. As the dance went on, she seemed possessed, feeding off the crowd's ecstatic reaction. And then there was the look on her face: she was having such fun. She radiated a joy that made her erotic dance oddly innocent, even slightly comic.

By the following day, word had spread: a star was born. Josephine became the heart of the Revue Nègre, and Paris was at her feet. Within a year, her face was on posters everywhere; there were Josephine Baker perfumes, dolls, clothes; fashionable Frenchwomen were slicking their hair back a la Baker, using a product called Bakerfix. They were even trying to darken their skin.

Such sudden fame represented quite a change, for just a few years earlier, Josephine had been a young girl growing up in East St. Louis, one of America's worst slums. She had gone to work at the age of eight, cleaning houses for a white woman who beat her. She had sometimes slept in a ratinfested basement; there had never been heat in the winter. (She had taught herself to dance in her wild fashion to help keep herself warm.) In 1919, Josephine had run away and become a part-time vaudeville performer, landing in New York two years later without money or connections. She had had some success as a clowning chorus girl, providing comic relief with her crossed eyes and screwed-up face, but she hadn't stood out. Then she was invited to Paris. Some other black performers had declined, fearing things might be still worse for them in France than in America, but Josephine jumped at the chance.

Despite her success with the Revue Nègre, Josephine did not delude

herself: Parisians were notoriously fickle. She decided to turn the relationship around. First, she refused to be aligned with any club, and developed a reputation for breaking contracts at will, making it clear that she was ready to leave in an instant. Since childhood she had been afraid of dependence on anyone; now no one could take her for granted. This only made impresarios chase her and the public appreciate her the more. Second, she was aware that although black culture had become the vogue, what the French had fallen in love with was a kind of caricature. If that was what it took to be successful, so be it, but Josephine made it clear that she did not take the caricature seriously; instead she reversed it, becoming the ultimate *The Natural* • 63

Frenchwoman of fashion, a caricature not of blackness but of whiteness. Everything was a role to play—the comedienne, the primitive dancer, the ultrastylish Parisian. And everything Josephine did, she did with such a light spirit, such a lack of pretension, that she continued to seduce the jaded French for years. Her funeral, in 1975, was nationally televised, a huge cultural event. She was buried with the kind of pomp normally reserved only for heads of state.

From very early on, Josephine Baker could not stand the feeling of having no control over the world. Yet what could she do in the face of her unpromising circumstances? Some young girls put all their hopes on a husband, but Josephine's father had left her mother soon after she was born, and she saw marriage as something that would only make her more miserable. Her solution was something children often do: confronted with a hopeless environment, she closed herself off in a world of her own making, oblivious to the ugliness around her. This world was

filled with dancing, clowning, dreams of great things. Let other people wail and moan; Josephine would smile, remain confident and self-reliant. Almost everyone who met her, from her earliest years to her last, commented on how seductive this quality was. Her refusal to compromise, or to be what she was expected to be, made everything she did seem authentic and natural.

A child loves to play, and to create a little self-contained world. When children are absorbed in make believe, they are hopelessly charming. They infuse their imaginings with such seriousness and feeling. Adult Naturals do something similar, particularly if they are artists: they create their own fantasy world, and live in it as if it were the real one. Fantasy is so much more pleasant than reality, and since most people do not have the power or courage to create such a world, they enjoy being around those who do. Remember: the role you were given in life is not the role you have to accept. You can always live out a role of your own creation, a role that fits your fantasy. Learn to play with your image, never taking it too seriously. The key is to infuse your play with the conviction and feeling of a child, making it seem natural. The more absorbed you seem in your own joy-filled world, the more seductive you become. Do not go halfway: make the fantasy you inhabit as radical and exotic as possible, and you will attract attention like a magnet.

4. It was the Festival of the Cherry Blossom at the Heian court, in latetenth-century Japan. In the emperor's palace, many of the courtiers were drunk, and others were fast asleep, but the young princess Oborozukiyo, the emperor's sister-in-law, was awake and reciting a poem: "What can compare with a misty moon of spring?" Her voice was smooth and delicate. She moved to the door of her apartment to look at the moon. Then, suddenly, she smelled something sweet, and a hand clutched the sleeve of her robe. "Who are you?" she said, frightened. "There is nothing to be

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afraid of," came a man's voice, and continued with a poem of his own:

"Late in the night we enjoy a misty moon. There is nothing misty about the bond between us." Without another word, the man pulled the princess to him and picked her up, carrying her into a gallery outside her room, sliding the door closed behind him. She was terrified, and tried to call for help. In the darkness she heard him say, a little louder now, "It will do you no good. I am always allowed my way. Just be quiet, if you will, please." Now the princess recognized the voice, and the scent: it was Genji, the young son of the late emperor's concubine, whose robes bore a distinctive perfume. This calmed her somewhat, since the man was someone she

knew, but on the other hand she also knew of his reputation: Genji was the court's most incorrigible seducer, a man who stopped at nothing. He was drunk, it was near dawn, and the watchmen would soon be on their

rounds; she did not want to be discovered with him. But then she began to make out the outlines of his face—so pretty, his look so sincere, without a trace of malice. Then came more poems, recited in that charming voice, the words so insinuating. The images he conjured filled her mind, and distracted her from his hands. She could not resist him. As the light began to rise, Genji got to his feet. He said a few tender words, they exchanged fans, and then he quickly left. The serving women were coming through the emperor's rooms by now, and when they saw

Genji scurrying away, the perfume of his robes lingering after him, they smiled, knowing he was up to his usual tricks; but they never imagined he would dare approach the sister of the emperor's wife.

In the days that followed, Oborozukiyo could only think of Genji. She knew he had other mistresses, but when she tried to put him out of her mind, a letter from him would arrive, and she would be back to square one. In truth, she had started the correspondence, haunted by his midnight visit. She had to see him again. Despite the risk of discovery, and the fact that her sister Kokiden, the emperor's wife, hated Genji, she arranged for further trysts in her apartment. But one night an envious courtier found them together. Word reached Kokiden, who naturally was furious. She demanded that Genji be banished from court and the emperor had no choice but to agree.

Genji went far away, and things settled down. Then the emperor died and his son took over. A kind of emptiness had come to the court: the dozens of women whom Genji had seduced could not endure his absence, and flooded him with letters. Even women who had never known him intimately would weep over any relic he had left behind—a robe, for instance, in which his scent still lingered. And the young emperor missed his jocular presence. And the princesses missed the music he had played on the koto. And Oborozukiyo pined for his midnight visits. Finally even Kokiden broke down, realizing that she could not resist him. So Genji was summoned back to the court. And not only was he forgiven, he was given a hero's welcome; the young emperor himself greeted the scoundrel with tears in his eyes.

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The story of Genji's life is told in the eleventh-century novel *The Tale of Genji*, written by Murasaki Shikibu, a woman of the Heian court. The character was most likely based on a real-life man, Fujiwara no Korechika. Indeed another book of the period, *The Pillow Book* of Sei Shonagon, describes an encounter between the female author and Korechika, and reveals his incredible charm and his almost hypnotic effect on women. Genji is a Natural, an undefensive lover, a man who has a lifelong obsession with women but whose appreciation of and affection for them makes him irresistible. As he says to Oborozukiyo in the novel, "I am always allowed my way." This self-belief is half of Genji's charm. Resistance does not make him defensive; he retreats gracefully, reciting a little poetry, and as he leaves, the perfume of his robes trailing behind him, his victim wonders why she has been so afraid, and what she is missing by spurning him, and she finds a way to let him know that the next time things will be different. Genji takes nothing seriously or personally, and at the age of forty, an age at which most men of the eleventh century were already looking old and worn, he still seems like a boy. His seductive powers never leave him.

Human beings are immensely suggestible; their moods will easily spread to the people around them. In fact seduction depends on mimesis, on the conscious creation of a mood or feeling that is then reproduced by the other person. But hesitation and awkwardness are also contagious, and are deadly to seduction. If in a key moment you seem indecisive or selfconscious, the other person will sense that you are thinking of yourself, instead of being overwhelmed by his or her charms.

The spell will be broken. As an undefensive lover, though, you produce the opposite effect: your victim might be hesitant or worried, but confronted with someone so sure and natural, he or she will be caught up in the mood. Like dancing with someone you lead effortlessly across the dance floor, it is a skill you can learn. It is a matter of rooting out the fear and awkwardness that have built up in you over the years, of becoming more graceful with your approach, less defensive when others seem to resist. Often people's resistance is a way of testing you, and if you show any awkwardness or hesitation, you not only will fail the test, but you will risk infecting them with your doubts.

Symbol: The

Lamb. So soft and endearing. At

two days old the lamb can gambol gracefully;

within a week it is playing "Follow the Leader."

Its weakness is part of its charm. The Lamb is pure innocence, so innocent we want to possess it, even devour it.

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Dangers

A childlike quality can be charming but it can also be irritating; the innocent have no experience of the world, and their sweetness can prove cloying. In Milan Kundera's novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, the hero dreams that he is trapped on an island with a group of children. Soon their wonderful qualities become intensely annoying to him; after a few days of exposure to them he cannot relate to them at all. The dream turns into a nightmare, and he longs to be back among adults, with real things to do and talk about. Because total childishness can quickly grate, the most seductive Naturals are those who, like Josephine Baker, combine adult experience and wisdom with a childlike manner. It is this mixture of qualities that is most alluring.

Society cannot tolerate too many Naturals. Given a crowd of Cora

Pearls or Charlie Chaplins, their charm would quickly wear off. In any case it is usually only artists, or people with abundant leisure time, who can afford to go all the way. The best way to use the Natural character type is in specific situations when a touch of innocence or impishness will help lower your target's defenses. A con man plays dumb to make the other person trust him and feel superior. This kind of feigned naturalness has countless applications in daily life, where nothing is more dangerous than looking smarter than the next person; the Natural pose is the perfect way to disguise your cleverness. But if you are uncontrollably childish and cannot turn it off, you run the risk of seeming pathetic, earning not sympathy but pity and disgust.

Similarly, the seductive traits of the Natural work best in one who is still young enough for them to *seem* natural. They are much harder for an older person to pull off. Cora Pearl did not seem so charming when she was still wearing her pink flouncy dresses in her fifties. The Duke of Buckingham, who seduced everyone in the English court in the 1620s (including the homosexual King James I himself), was wondrously childish in looks and manner; but this became obnoxious and off-putting as he grew older, and he eventually made enough enemies that he ended up being murdered. As you age, then, your natural qualities should suggest more the child's open spirit, less an innocence that will no longer convince anyone.

the Coquette

The

ability to delay satisfaction is

the ultimate art of seduction— while

waiting, the victim is held in thrall. Coquettes

are the grand masters of this game, orchestrating a

back-and-forth movement between hope and frustration.

They bait with the promise of reward—the hope of physical pleasure, happiness, fame by association, power—all of which, however, proves elusive; yet this only makes their targets pursue them the more. Coquettes seem totally self-sufficient: they do

not need you, they seem to say, and their narcissism proves devil-ishly attractive. You want to conquer them but they hold the cards. The strategy of the Coquette is never to offer total satisfaction. Imitate the alternating heat and coolness of the Coquette

and you will keep the seduced at your heels.

The Hot and Cold Coquette

In the autumn of 1795, Paris was caught up in a strange giddiness. The Reign of Terror that had followed the French Revolution had ended; the sound of the guillotine was gone. The city breathed a collective sigh of relief, and gave way to wild parties and endless festivals. The young Napoleon Bonaparte, twenty-six at the time, had no interest in such revelries. He had made a name for himself as a bright, audacious general who had helped quell rebellion in the provinces, but his ambition *There are indeed men who are attached more by*

was boundless and he burned with desire for new conquests. So when, in *resistance than by yielding* October of that year, the infamous thirty-three-year-old widow Josephine and who unwittingly prefer de Beauharnais visited his offices, he couldn't help but be confused. Jose- *a variable sky, now splendid, now black and*

phine was so exotic, and everything about her was languorous and sensual. *vexed by lightnings, to* (She capitalized on her foreignness—she came from the island of Mar- *love's unclouded blue. Let* tinique.) On the other hand she had a reputation as a loose woman, and the *us not forget that Josephine had to deal with a*

shy Napoleon believed in marriage. Even so, when Josephine invited him *conqueror and that love* to one of her weekly soirees, he found himself accepting.

resembles war. She did not

At the soiree he felt totally out of his element. All of the city's great *surrender, she let herself be* writers and wits were there, as well as the few of the nobility who had *conquered. Had she been more tender, more*

survived—Josephine herself was a vicomtesse, and had narrowly escaped *attentive, more loving*, the guillotine. The women were dazzling, some of them more beautiful *perhaps Bonaparte would* than the hostess, but all the men congregated around Josephine, drawn by *have loved her less*. her graceful presence and queenly manner. Several times she left the men —IMBERT DE SAINT-AMAND,
QUOTED IN *THE EMPRESS*

behind and went to Napoleon's side; nothing could have flattered his inse-
JOSEPHINE: NAPOLEON'S

cure ego more than such attention.

ENCHANTRESS, PHILIP W .

He began to pay her visits. Sometimes she would ignore him, and he SERGEANT would leave in a fit of anger. Yet the next day a passionate letter would arrive from Josephine, and he would rush to see her. Soon he was spending most of his time with her. Her occasional shows of sadness, her bouts of *Coquettes know how to please; not how to love,*

anger or of tears, only deepened his attachment. In March of 1796, Napo- *which is why men love* leon married Josephine.

them so much.

Two days after his wedding, Napoleon left to lead a campaign in northern —
PIERRE MARIVAUX

Italy against the Austrians. "You are the constant object of my thoughts," he wrote to his wife from abroad. "My imagination exhausts itself in guessing what you are

doing." His generals saw him distracted: he would leave meetings early, spend hours writing letters, or stare at the miniature of Josephine he wore around his neck. He had been driven to this state by the unbearable distance between them and by a slight coldness he now detected 69

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An absence, the declining in her—she wrote infrequently, and her letters lacked passion; nor did she *of an invitation to dinner*, join him in Italy. He had to finish his war fast, so that he could return to *an unintentional*,

her side. Engaging the enemy with unusual zeal, he began to make mis *unconscious harshness are of more service than all* takes. "To live for Josephine!" he wrote to her. "I work to get near you; I *the cosmetics and fine* kill myself to reach you." His letters became more passionate and erotic; a *clothes in the world*. friend of Josephine's who saw them wrote, "The handwriting [was] almost

— MARCEL PROUST

indecipherable, the spelling shaky, the style bizarre and confused . . . What a position for a woman to find herself in—being the motivating force behind the triumphal march of an entire army." *There's also nightly, to the*

Months went by in which Napoleon begged Josephine to come to Italy

uninitiated, \ A peril—not

and she made endless excuses. But finally she agreed to come, and left Paris *indeed like love or*

marriage, \ But not the less for Brescia, where he was headquartered. A near encounter with the enemy *for this to he depreciated: \ along the way, however, forced her to detour to Milan. Napoleon was away It is— I meant and mean from Brescia, in battle; when he returned to find her still absent, he blamed not to disparage \ The*

show of virtue even in the his General Würmser and swore revenge. For the next few months he *vitiated— \ It adds an* seemed to pursue two targets with equal energy: Wiirmser and Josephine. *outward grace unto their* His wife was never where she was supposed to be: "I reach Milan, rush to *carriage— \ But to your house, having thrown aside everything in order to clasp you in my denounce the amphibious*

sort of harlot, \ C o u l e u r arms. You are not there!" Napoleon would turn angry and jealous, but de rose, who's neither when he finally caught up with Josephine, the slightest of her favors melted white nor scarlet. \ Such is his heart. He took long rides with her in a darkened carriage, while his your cold coquette, who

can't say say "no," \And

generals fumed—meetings were missed, orders and strategies improvised. *won't say "yes," and keeps*

"Never," he later wrote to her, "has a woman been in such complete mas *you on-and off-ing* \ *On a* tery of another's heart." And yet their time together was so short. *During a lee shore, till it begins to*

blow—\ Then sees your campaign that lasted almost a year, Napoleon spent a mere fifteen nights *heart wreck'd with an* with his new bride.

inward scoffing. \ This

Napoleon later heard rumors that Josephine had taken a lover while he *works a world of*

sentimental woe, \ And

was in Italy. His feelings toward her cooled, and he himself took an endless *sends new Werters yearly* series of mistresses. Yet Josephine was never really concerned about this *to the coffin; \ But yet is* threat to her power over her husband; a few tears, some theatrics, a little *merely innocent flirtation, \ coldness on her part, and he remained her slave.* In 1804, he had her *Not quite adultery, but*

adulteration.

crowned empress, and had she born him a son, she would have remained

— L O R D B Y R O N ,

empress to the end. When Napoleon lay on his deathbed, the last word he *THE COLD COQUETTE*

uttered was "Josephine."

During the French Revolution, Josephine had come within minutes of los *There is a way to represent ing her head on the guillotine.* The experience left her without illusions, *one's cause and in doing so* and with two goals in mind: to live a life of pleasure, and to find the man *to treat the audience in*

such a cool and who could best supply it. She set her sights on Napoleon early on. He was *condescending manner that* young, and had a brilliant future. Beneath his calm exterior, Josephine *they are bound to notice* sensed, he was highly emotional and aggressive, but this did not intimidate *one is not doing it to please her—it only revealed his insecurity and weakness.* He would be easy to en *them. The principle should always be not to make slave.* First, Josephine adapted to his moods, charmed him with her femi *concessions to those who* nine grace, warmed him with her looks and manner. He wanted to possess *don't have anything to give her.* And once she had aroused this desire, her power lay in postponing its *but who have everything to*

gain from us. We can wait satisfaction, withdrawing from him, frustrating him. In fact the torture of *The Coquette* • 71

the chase gave Napoleon a masochistic pleasure. He yearned to subdue her *until they are begging on* independent spirit, as if she were an enemy in battle.

their knees even if it takes

a very long time.

People are inherently perverse. An easy conquest has a lower value than a difficult one; we are only really excited by what is denied us, by what we —SIGMUND FREUD, IN A LETTER

TO A PUPIL, QUOTED IN PAUL

cannot possess in full. Your greatest power in seduction is your ability to ROAZEN, FREUD AND HIS

turn away, to make others come after you, delaying their satisfaction. Most FOLLOWERS

people miscalculate and surrender too soon, worried that the other person will lose interest, or that giving the other what he or she wants will grant the giver a kind of power. The truth is the opposite: once you satisfy some *When her time was come*, one, you no longer have the initiative, and you open yourself to the possi- *that nymph most fair* bility that he or she will lose interest at the slightest whim. Remember: *brought forth a child with whom one could have*

vanity is critical in love. Make your targets afraid that you may be with- *fallen in love even in his* drawing, that you may not really be interested, and you arouse their innate *cradle, and she called him* insecurity, their fear that as you have gotten to know them they have be- *Narcissus. . . . Cephisus's* come less exciting to you. These insecurities are devastating. Then, once *child had reached his sixteenth year, and could*

you have made them uncertain of you and of themselves, reignite their *be counted as at once boy* hope, making them feel desired again. Hot and cold, hot and cold— such *and man. Many lads and* coquetry is perversely pleasurable, heightening interest and keeping the ini- *many girls fell in love with him, but his soft young*

tiative on your side. Never be put off by your target's anger; it is a sure sign *body housed a pride so* of enslavement.

unyielding that none of

those boys or girls dared to

touch him. One day, as he

She who would long retain her power must use her lover ill.

was driving timid deer into

— OVID

his nets, he was seen by

that talkative nymph who

cannot stay silent when

another speaks, but yet has

The Cold Coquette

not learned to speak first

herself. Her name is Echo,

and she always answers

In 1952, the writer Truman Capote, a recent success in literary and social *back*. . . .

• *So when she circles, began to receive an almost daily barrage of fan mail from a young saw Narcissus wandering man named Andy Warhol. An illustrator for shoe designers, fashion maga- through the lonely zines, and the like, Warhol made pretty, stylized drawings, some of which countryside, Echo fell in love with him and followed*

he sent to Capote, hoping the author would include them in one of his *secretly in his steps. The books*. Capote did not respond. One day he came home to find Warhol *more closely she followed*, talking to his mother, with whom Capote lived. And Warhol began to tele- *the nearer was the fire which scorched her: just as*

phone almost daily. Finally Capote put an end to all this: "He seemed one *sulphur, smeared round the* of those hopeless people that you just know nothing's ever going to happen *tops of torches, is quickly*

to. Just a hopeless, born loser," the writer later said.

kindled when aflame is

brought near it. How often

Ten years later, Andy Warhol, aspiring artist, had his first one-man *she wished to make show at the Stable Gallery in Manhattan. On the walls were a series of flattering overtures to him, silkscreened paintings based on the Campbell's soup can and the Coca-Cola to approach him with*

bottle. At the opening and at the party afterward, Warhol stood to the side, *tender pleas!* • *The boy, by*

chance, had wandered

staring blankly, talking little. What a contrast he was to the older generation *away from his faithful band* of artists, the abstract expressionists—mostly hard-drinking womanizers full of *comrades, and he called* of bluster and aggression, big talkers who had dominated the art scene for *out: "Is there anybody here?" Echo answered:*

the previous fifteen years. And what a change from the Warhol who had

"Here!" Narcissus stood

badgered Capote, and art dealers and patrons as well. The critics were both *still in astonishment, 72* • *The Art of Seduction*

looking round in every baffled and intrigued by the coldness of Warhol's work; they could not fig direction. . . . He looked ure out how the artist felt about his subjects. What was his position? What behind him, and when no was he trying to say? When they asked, he would simply reply, "I just do it one appeared, cried again:

"Why are you avoiding because I like it," or, "I love soup." The critics went wild with their inter me?" But all he heard pretations: "An art like Warhol's is necessarily parasitic upon the myths of were his own words echoed its time," one wrote; another, "The decision not to decide is a paradox that back. Still he persisted,

deceived by what he took to is equal to an idea which expresses nothing but then gives it dimension." be another's voice, and

The show was a huge success, establishing Warhol as a leading figure in a *said, "Come here, and let* new movement, pop art.

us meet!" Echo answered:

"Let us meet!" Never

In 1963, Warhol rented a large Manhattan loft space that he called the *again would she reply more* Factory, and that soon became the hub of a large entourage—*hangers-on, willingly to any sound. To* actors, aspiring artists. Here, particularly at night, Warhol would simply *make good her words she*

came out of the wood and wander about, or stand in a corner. People would gather around him, fight made to throw her arms for his attention, throw questions at him, and he would answer, in his non round the neck she loved: committal way. But no one could get close to him, physically or mentally; but he fled from her, crying he would not allow it. At the same time, if he walked by you without giv as he did so, "A w a y with these embraces! I would die ing you his usual "Oh, hi," you were devastated. He hadn't noticed you; before I would have you perhaps you were on

the way out.

touch me!" . . . Thus

Increasingly interested in filmmaking, Warhol cast his friends in his *scorned, she concealed*

herself in the woods, hiding movies. In effect he was offering them a kind of instant celebrity (their *her shamed face in the* "fifteen minutes of fame"—the phrase is Warhol's). Soon people were *shelter of the leaves, and*

competing for roles. He groomed women in particular for stardom: Edie *ever since that day she*

dwells in lonely caves. Yet Sedgwick, Viva, Nico. Just being around him offered a kind of celebrity by *still her love remained*

association. The Factory became *the place to be seen*, and stars like Judy *firmly rooted in her heart*, Garland and Tennessee Williams would go to parties there, rubbing elbows *and was increased by the* with Sedgwick, Viva, and the bohemian lower echelons whom Warhol had *pain of having been*

rejected. . . . • Narcissus befriended. People began sending limos to bring him to parties of their *had played with her own*; his presence alone was enough to turn a social evening into a scene—

affections, treating her as he even though he would pass through in near silence, keeping to himself and *had previously treated other*

spirits of the waters and leaving early.

the woods, and his male

In 1967, Warhol was asked to lecture at various colleges. He hated to *admirers too. Then one of*

talk, particularly about his own art; "The less something has to say," he felt, *those he had scorned raised*

up his hands to heaven

"the more perfect it is." But the money was good and Warhol always found *and prayed*: "May he it hard to say no. His solution was simple: he asked an actor, Allen *himself fall in love with* Midgette, to impersonate him. Midgette was dark-haired, tan, part Chero *another, as we have done* kee Indian. He did not resemble Warhol in the least. But Warhol and *with him! May he too be*

unable to gain his loved

friends covered his face with powder, sprayed his brown hair silver, gave *one!" Nemesis heard and* him dark glasses, and dressed him in Warhol's clothes. Since

Midgette knew granted *his righteous* nothing about art, his answers to students' questions tended to be as short *prayer*. . . . • *Narcissus*,

wearied with hunting in and enigmatic as Warhol's own. The impersonation worked. Warhol may *the heat of the day, lay* have been an icon, but no one really knew him, and since he often wore *down here* [*by a clear dark glasses*, even his face was unfamiliar in any detail. The lecture *audi pool*] : *for he was attracted by the beauty of the place, ences were far enough away to be teased by the thought of his presence, and by the spring. While* and no one got close enough to catch the deception. He remained elusive. *he sought to quench his*

* * *

thirst, another thirst grew

The Coquette • 73

Early on in life, Andy Warhol was plagued by conflicting emotions: he des *in him, and as he drank*, perately wanted fame, but he was naturally passive and shy "I've always had *he was enchanted by the*

beautiful reflection that he

a conflict," he later said, "because I'm shy and yet I like to take up a lot of *saw. He fell in love with* personal space. Mom always said, 'Don't be pushy, but let everyone know *an insubstantial hope*,

you're around.' " At first Warhol tried to make himself more aggressive, *mistaking a mere shadow*

for a real body. Spellbound

straining to please and court. It didn't work. After ten futile years he *by his own self, he*

stopped trying and gave in to his own passivity—only to discover the power *remained there motionless*,

that withdrawal commands.

with fixed gaze, like a

Warhol began this process in his artwork, which changed dramatically *statue carved from Parian marble*. . . . *Unwittingly*,

in the early 1960s. His new paintings of soup cans, green stamps, and other *he desired himself, and was*

widely known images did not assault you with meaning; in fact their mean *himself the object of his* ing was totally elusive, which only heightened their fascination. They drew *own approval, at once*

seeking and sought, himself

you in by their immediacy, their visual power, their coldness. Having trans *kindling the flame with* formed his art, Warhol also transformed himself: like his paintings, he be which he burned. How came pure surface. He trained himself to hold himself back, to stop talking. *often did he vainly kiss the*

treacherous pool, how often

The world is full of people who try, people who impose themselves ag- *plunge his arms deep in the* gressively. They may gain temporary victories, but the longer they are waters, *as he tried to clasp*

around, the more people want to confound them. They leave no space

the neck he saw! But he

could not lay hold upon

around themselves, and without space there can be no seduction. Cold Co *himself. He did not know* quettes create space by remaining elusive and making others pursue them. *what he was looking at,*

Their coolness suggests a comfortable confidence that is exciting to be *but was fired by the sight,*

around, even though it may not actually exist; their silence makes you want *and excited by the very*

illusion that deceived his

to talk. Their self-containment, their appearance of having no need for *eyes. Poor foolish boy, why*

other people, only makes us want to do things for them, hungry for the *vainly grasp at the fleeting*

slightest sign of recognition and favor. Cold Coquettes may be maddening *image that eludes you?*

The thing you are seeking

to deal with—never committing but never saying no, never allowing close *does not exist: only turn ness*—but more often than not we find ourselves coming back to them, ad *aside and you will lose* dictated to the coldness they project. Remember: seduction is a process of *what you love. What you see is but the shadow cast*

drawing people in, making them want to pursue and possess you. Seem dis *by your reflection; in itself* tant and people will go mad to win your favor. Humans, like nature, hate a *it is nothing. It comes with*

vacuum, and emotional distance and silence make them strain to fill up the *you, and lasts while you*

empty space with words and heat of their own. Like Warhol, stand back *are there; it will go when*

you go, if go you can. . . .

and let them fight over you.

• *He laid down his weary*

head on the green grass,

[Narcissistic] women have the greatest fascination for

and death closed the eyes

which so admired their

men. . . . The charm of a child lies to a great extent in his owner's beauty. Even then,

narcissism, his self-sufficiency and inaccessibility, just as

when he was received into

does the charm of certain animals which seem not to con-

the abode of the dead, he

cern themselves about us, such as cats. . . . It is as if we

kept looking at himself in

envied them their power of retaining a blissful state of

the waters of the Styx. His

sisters, the nymphs of the

mind—an unassailable libido-position which we ourselves spring, mourned for him,

have since abandoned.

and cut off their hair in

tribute to their brother. The

—SIGMUND FREUD

*wood nymphs mourned
him too, and Echo sang her
refrain to their lament. •*

The pyre, the tossing

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torches, and the bier, were

Keys to the Character

now being prepared, but

his body was nowhere to be

found. Instead of his

corpse, they discovered a According to the popular concept, Coquettes are consummate teases, experts at arousing desire through a provocative appearance or an al *flower with a circle of white* luring attitude. But the real essence of Coquettes is in fact their ability to *petals round a yellow*

trap people emotionally, and to keep their victims in their clutches long af *centre*. ter that first titillation of desire. This is the skill that puts them in the ranks

— OVID, *METAMORPHOSES*,

of the most effective seducers. Their success may seem somewhat odd,

TRANSLATED BY

MARY M. INNES

since they are essentially cold and distant creatures; should you ever get to know one well, you will sense his or her inner core of detachment and selflove. It may seem logical that once you become aware of this quality you *Selfishness is one of the*

will see through the Coquette's manipulations and lose interest, but more *qualities apt to inspire love*.

often we see the opposite. After years of Josephine's coquettish games,

— NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Napoleon was well aware of how manipulative she was. Yet this conqueror of kingdoms, this skeptic and cynic, could not leave her.

To understand the peculiar power of the Coquette, you must first

The Socrates whom you

understand a critical property of love and desire: the more obviously you *see has a tendency to fall in*

pursue a person, the more likely you are to chase them away. Too much at *love with good-looking* tention can be interesting for a while, but it soon grows cloying and finally *young men, and is always*

in their society and in an becomes claustrophobic and frightening. It signals weakness and neediness, *ecstasy about them . . . but*

an unseductive combination. How often we make this mistake, thinking *once you see beneath the*

our persistent presence will reassure. But Coquettes have an inherent un *surface you will discover a degree of self-control of*

derstanding of this particular dynamic. Masters of selective withdrawal, *which you can hardly form*

they hint at coldness, absenting themselves at times to keep their victim off a *notion, gentlemen. . .*

balance, surprised, intrigued. Their withdrawals make them mysterious, *He spends his whole life*

pretending and playing

and we build them up in our imaginations. (Familiarity, on the other hand, *with people, and I doubt*

undermines what we have built.) A bout of distance engages the emotions *whether anyone has ever* further; instead of making us angry, it makes us insecure. Perhaps they *seen the treasures which are*

don't really like us, perhaps we have lost their interest. Once our vanity is at *revealed when he grows*

serious and exposes what

stake, we succumb to the Coquette just to prove we are still desirable. Re *he keeps inside*. • member: the essence of the Coquette lies not in the tease and temptation

. . . *Believing that he was* but in the subsequent step back, the emotional withdrawal. That is the key *serious in his admiration of*

my charms, I supposed that

to enslaving desire.

a wonderful piece of good

To adopt the power of the Coquette, you must understand one other

luck had befallen me; I

quality: narcissism. Sigmund Freud characterized the "narcissistic woman" *should now be able, in*

return for my favours, to

(most often obsessed with her appearance) as the type with the greatest *ef find out all that Socrates* fact on men. As children, he explains, we pass through a narcissistic phase *knew; for you must know*

that is immensely pleasurable. Happily self-contained and self-involved, we *that there was no limit to*

the pride that I felt in my

have little psychic need of other people. Then, slowly, we are socialized and *good looks. With this end*

taught to pay attention to others—but we secretly yearn for those blissful *in view I sent away my*

early days. The narcissistic woman reminds a man of that period, and makes *attendant, whom hitherto I*

him envious. Perhaps contact with her will restore that feeling of self *had always kept with me in my encounters with*

involvement.

Socrates, and left myself

A man is also challenged by the female Coquette's independence—he

alone with him. I must tell

wants to be the one to make her dependent, to burst her bubble. It is far *you the whole truth; attend*

carefully, and do you,

more likely, though, that he will end up becoming her slave, giving her in- *The Coquette • 75*

cessant attention to gain her love, and failing. For the narcissistic woman is *Socrates, pull me up if not emotionally needy; she is self-sufficient. And this is surprisingly seduc-* *anything I say is false. I allowed myself to be alone*

tive. Self-esteem is critical in seduction. (Your attitude toward yourself is *with him, I say*, read by the other person in subtle and unconscious ways.) Low self-esteem *gentlemen, and I naturally* repels, confidence and self-sufficiency attract. The less you seem to need *supposed that he would* other people, the more likely others will be drawn to you. Understand the *embark on conversation of the type that a lover*

importance of this in all relationships and you will find your neediness *usually addresses to his* easier to suppress. But do not confuse self-absorption with seductive narcissism. Talking endlessly about yourself is eminently anti-seductive, revealing tête-à-tête, *and I was glad. Nothing of the kind;*

not self-sufficiency but insecurity.

he spent the day with me

The Coquette is traditionally thought of as female, and certainly the *in the sort of talk which is* strategy was for centuries one of the few weapons women had to engage *habitual with him, and then left me and went*

and enslave a man's desire. One ploy of the Coquette is the withdrawal of *away. Next I invited him* sexual favors, and we see women using this trick throughout history: the *to train with me in the* great seventeenth-century French courtesan Ninon de l'Enclos was desired *gymnasium, and I accompanied him there,*

by all the preeminent men of France, but only attained real power when *believing that I should* she made it clear that she would no longer sleep with a man as part of her *succeed with him now. He* duty. This drove her admirers to despair, which she

knew how to make *took exercise and wrestled* worse by favoring a man temporarily, granting him access to her body for a *with me frequently, with no one else present, but I*

few months, then returning him to the pack of the unsatisfied. Queen *need hardly say that I was* Elizabeth I of England took coquettishness to the extreme, deliberately *no nearer my goal. Finding* arousing the desires of her courtiers but sleeping with none of them. *that this was no good*

either, I resolved to make a

Long a tool of social power for women, coquettishness was slowly adapted *direct assault on him, and* by men, particularly the great seducers of the seventeenth and eighteenth *not to give up what I had* centuries who envied the power of such women. One seventeenth-century *once undertaken; I felt that I must get to the bottom of*

seducer, the Duc de Lauzun, was a master at exciting a woman, then sud- *the matter. So I invited* denly acting aloof. Women went wild over him. Today, coquetry is gender- *him to dine with me, less. In a world that discourages direct confrontation, teasing, coldness, and behaving just like a lover who has designs upon his*

selective aloofness are a form of indirect power that brilliantly disguises its favourite. *He was in no own aggression.*

hurry to accept this

The Coquette must first and foremost be able to excite the target of his *invitation, but at last he agreed to come. The first*

or her attention. The attraction can be sexual, the lure of celebrity, what- *time he came he rose to go* ever it takes. At the same time, the Coquette sends contrary signals that *away immediately after* stimulate contrary responses, plunging the victim into confusion. The *dinner, and on that occasion* eponymous heroine of Marivaux's eighteenth-century French novel *Mari-I was ashamed and let him go. But I returned to the*

anne is the consummate Coquette. Going to church, she dresses tastefully, *attack, and this time I kept* but leaves her hair slightly uncombed. In the middle of the service she *him in conversation after* seems to notice this error and starts to fix it, revealing her bare arm as she *dinner far into the night, and then, when he wanted*

does so; such things were not to be seen in an eighteenth-century church, *to be going, I compelled* and all male eyes fix on her for that moment. The tension is much more *him to stay, on the plea* powerful than if she were outside, or were tartly dressed. Remember: ob- *that it was too late for him to go. • So he betook*

vious flirting will reveal your intentions too clearly. Better to be ambiguous himself to rest, using as a and even contradictory, frustrating at the same time that you stimulate. *bed the couch on which he*

The great spiritual leader Jiddu Krishnamurti was an unconscious co- *had reclined at dinner, next to mine, and there was*

quette. Revered by theosophists as their "World Teacher," Krishnamurti was *nobody sleeping in the* also a dandy. He loved elegant clothing and was devilishly handsome. At the 76 • *The Art of Seduction*

room but ourselves. • . . . *I* same time, he practiced celibacy, and had a horror of being touched. In *swear by all the gods in* 1929 he shocked theosophists around the world by proclaiming that he was *heaven that for anything*

that had happened between not a god or even a guru, and did not want any followers. This only height *us when I got up after* ended his appeal: women fell in love with him in great numbers, and his *ad sleeping with Socrates, I* visitors grew even more devoted. Physically and psychologically, Krishnamurti *might have been sleeping* was sending contrary signals. While preaching a generalized love and accept *with my father or elder brother.* • *What do you* tance, in his personal life he pushed people away. His attractiveness and his *suppose to have been my* obsession with his appearance might have gained him attention but by *state of mind after that?* themselves would not have made women fall in love with him; his lessons of *On the one hand I*

realized that I had been celibacy and spiritual virtue would have created disciples but not physical slighted, but on the other *I* love. The combination of these traits, however, both drew people in and *felt a reverence for Socrates'* frustrated them, a coquettish dynamic that created an emotional and physical *character, his self-control*

and courage . . . The result attachment to a man who shunned such things. His withdrawal from the *was that I could neither* world had the effect of only heightening the devotion of his followers. *bring myself to be angry*

Coquetry depends on developing a pattern to keep the other person off with him and tear myself balance. The strategy is extremely effective. Experiencing a pleasure once, away from his society, nor

find a way of subduing we yearn to repeat it; so the Coquette gives us pleasure, then withdraws it. *him to my will. . . . I was* The alternation of heat and cold is the most common pattern, and has several utterly disconcerted, and several variations. The eighth-century Chinese Coquette Yang Kuei-Fei to wandered about in a state of enslavement to the man tally enslaved the Emperor Ming Huang through a pattern of kindness and the like of which has never bitterness: having charmed him with kindness, she would suddenly get an been known. angry, blaming him harshly for the slightest mistake. Unable to live without

—ALCIBIADES, QUOTED IN

the pleasure she gave him, the emperor would turn the court upside down PLATO, *THE SYMPOSIUM*

to please her when she was angry or upset. Her tears had a similar effect: what had he done, why was she so sad? He eventually ruined himself and his kingdom trying to keep her happy. Tears, anger, and the production of guilt are all the tools of the Coquette. A similar dynamic appears in a lover's quarrel: when a couple fights, then reconciles, the joys of reconciliation only make the attachment stronger. Sadness of any sort is also seductive, particularly if it seems deep-rooted, even spiritual, rather than needy or pathetic—it makes people come to you.

Coquettes are never jealous—that would undermine their image of

fundamental self-sufficiency. But they are masters at inciting jealousy: by paying attention to a third party, creating a triangle of desire, they signal to their victims that they may not be that interested. This triangulation is extremely seductive, in social contexts as well as erotic ones. Interested in narcissistic women, Freud was a narcissist himself, and his aloofness drove his disciples crazy. (They even had a name for it—his "god complex.") Behaving like a kind of messiah, too lofty for petty emotions, Freud always maintained a distance between himself and his students, hardly ever inviting them over for dinner, say, and keeping his private life shrouded in mystery. Yet he would occasionally choose an acolyte to confide in—Carl Jung, Otto Rank, Lou Andreas-Salomé. The result was that his disciples went berserk trying to win his favor, to be the one he chose. Their jealousy when he suddenly favored one of them only increased his power over

them. People's natural insecurities are heightened in group settings; by *The Coquette* • 77

maintaining aloofness, Coquettes start a competition to win their favor. If the ability to use third parties to make targets jealous is a critical seductive skill, Sigmund Freud was a grand Coquette.

All of the tactics of the Coquette have been adapted by political leaders to make the public fall in love. While exciting the masses, these leaders remain inwardly detached, which keeps them in control. The political scientist Roberto Michels has even referred to such politicians as Cold Coquettes. Napoleon played the Coquette with the French: after the grand successes of the Italian campaign had made him a beloved hero, he left France to conquer Egypt, knowing that in his absence the government would fall apart, the people would hunger for his return, and their love would serve as the base for an expansion of his power. After exciting the masses with a rousing speech, Mao Zedong would disappear from sight for days on end, making himself an object of cultish worship. And no one was more of a Coquette than Yugoslav leader Josef Tito, who alternated between distance from and emotional identification with his people. All of these political leaders were confirmed narcissists. In times of trouble, when people feel insecure, the effect of such political coquetry is even more powerful. It is important to realize that coquetry is extremely effective on a group, stimulating jealousy, love, and intense devotion. If you play such a role with a group, remember to keep an emotional and physical distance. This will allow you to cry and laugh on command, project self-sufficiency, and with such detachment you will be able to play people's emotions like a piano.

Symbol: The

*Shadow. It cannot be grasped. Chase
your shadow and it will flee; turn your back on
it and it will follow you. It is also a person's dark side,
the thing that makes them mysterious. After they have given
us pleasure, the shadow of their withdrawal makes us yearn
for their return, much as clouds make us yearn for the sun.*

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Dangers

Coquettes face an obvious danger: they play with volatile emotions. Every time the pendulum swings, love shifts to hate. So they must orchestrate everything carefully. Their absences cannot be too long, their bouts of anger must be quickly followed by smiles. Coquettes can keep their victims emotionally entrapped for a long time, but over months or years the dynamic can begin to prove tiresome. Jiang Qing, later known as Madame Mao, used coquettish skills to capture the heart of Mao Tse-tung, but after ten years the quarreling, the tears and the coolness became intensely irritating, and once irritation proved stronger than love, Mao was able to detach. Josephine, a more brilliant Coquette, was able to adapt, by spending a whole year without playing coy or withdrawing from Napoleon. Timing is everything. On the other hand, though, the Coquette stirs up powerful emotions, and breakups often prove temporary. The Coquette is addictive: after the failure of the social plan Mao called the Great Leap Forward, Madame Mao was able to reestablish her power over her devastated husband.

The Cold Coquette can stimulate a particularly deep hatred. Valerie Solanas was a young woman who fell under Andy Warhol's spell. She had written a play that amused him, and she was given the impression he might turn it into a film. She imagined becoming a celebrity. She also got involved in the feminist movement, and when, in June 1968, it dawned on her that Warhol was toying with her, she directed her growing rage at men on him and shot him three times, nearly killing him. Cold Coquettes may stimulate feelings that are not so much erotic as intellectual, less passion and more fascination. The hatred they can stir up is all the more insidious and dangerous, for it may not be counterbalanced by a deep love. They must realize the limits of the game, and the disturbing effects they can have on less stable people.

the *Charmer*

Charm is seduction without sex. Charmers are consummate manipulators, masking their cleverness by creating a mood of pleasure and comfort. Their method is simple: they deflect attention from themselves and focus it on their target. They understand your spirit, feel your pain, adapt to your moods. In the presence of a Charmer you feel better about yourself. Charmers do not argue or fight, complain, or pester—what could be more seductive? By drawing you in with their indulgence they make

you dependent on them, and their power grows. Learn to cast the Charmer's spell by aiming at people's primary weaknesses: vanity and self-esteem.

The Art of Charm

Sexuality is extremely disruptive. The insecurities and emotions it stirs up can often cut short a relationship that would otherwise be deeper and longer lasting. The Charmer's solution is to fulfill the aspects of sexuality that are so alluring and addictive—the focused attention, the boosted self-esteem, the pleasurable wooing, the understanding (real or illusory)—but subtract the sex itself. It's not that the Charmer represses *Birds are taken with pipes* or discourages sexuality; lurking beneath the surface of any attempt at *that imitate their own charm* is a sexual tease, a possibility. Charm cannot exist without a hint of *voices, and men with those sayings that are most*

sexual tension. It cannot be maintained, however, unless sex is kept at bay *agreeable to their own* or in the background.

opinions.

The word "charm" comes from the Latin *carmen*, a song, but also an in—
SAMUEL BUTLER

cantation tied to the casting of a magical spell. The Charmer implicitly grasps this history, casting a spell by giving people something that holds their attention, that fascinates them. And the secret to capturing people's *Go with the bough, you'll* attention, while lowering their powers of reason, is to strike at the things *bend it; Use brute force*, they have the least control over: their ego, their vanity, and their self- *it'll snap. Go with the esteem*. As Benjamin Disraeli said, "Talk to a man about himself and *current: that's how to swim* he will listen for hours." The strategy can never be obvious; subtlety is the *across rivers— Fighting upstream's no good. Go*

Charmer's great skill. If the target is to be kept from seeing through *easy with lions or tigers if* the Charmer's efforts, and from growing suspicious, maybe even tiring of the *you aim to tame them; Go*

attention, a light touch is essential. The Charmer is like a beam of light that *The bull gets inured to the plough by slow degrees. . . .* \

doesn't play directly on a target but throws a pleasantly diffused glow over it. *So, yield if she shows* Charm can be applied to a group as well as to an individual: a leader *resistance: \ That way* can charm the public. The dynamic is similar. The following are the laws of *you'll win in the end. just be sure to play \ The part*

charm, culled from the stories of the most successful charmers in history. *she allots you. Censure the*

*things she censures, *

Endorse her endorsements,

echo her every word, \ Pro

Make your target the center of attention. Charmers fade into the back- *or con, and laugh whenever* ground; their targets become the subject of their interest. To be a Charmer *she laughs; remember, \ If* you have to learn to listen and observe. Let your targets talk, revealing *she weeps, to weep too:* themselves in the process. As you find out more about them—their *take your cue \ From her every expression. Suppose*

strengths, and more important their weaknesses—you can individualize *she's playing a board game*, your attention, appealing to their specific desires and needs, tailoring your *\ Then throw the dice* flatteries to their insecurities. By adapting to their spirit and empathizing *carelessly, move \ Your pieces all wrong. . . .* \

with their woes, you can make them feel bigger and better, validating their *Don't jib at a slavish task* sense of self-worth. Make them the star of the show and they will become *like holding \ Her mirror: 81*

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slavish or not, such

addicted to you and grow dependent on you. On a mass level, make *ges attentions please. . . .* tures of self-sacrifice (no matter how fake) to show the public that you

—OVID, *THE ART OF LOVE,*

share their pain and are working in their interest, self-interest being the

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

public form of egotism.

Disraeli was asked to

Be a source of pleasure. No one wants to hear about your problems and *dinner, and came in green*

troubles. Listen to your targets' complaints, but more important, distract *velvet trousers, with a*

canary waistcoat, buckle them from their problems by giving them pleasure. (Do this often enough *shoes, and lace cuffs. His*

and they will fall under your spell.) Being lighthearted and fun is always *appearance at first proved*

more charming than being serious and critical. An energetic presence is *disquieting, but on leaving*

the table the guests

likewise more charming than lethargy, which hints at boredom, an enor *remarked to each other that* mous social taboo; and elegance and style will usually win out over vul *the wittiest talker at the garity*, since most people like to associate themselves with whatever they *luncheon-party was the*

man in the yellow think elevated and cultured. In politics, provide illusion and myth rather *waistcoat. Benjamin had*

than reality. Instead of asking people to sacrifice for the greater good, talk *made great advances in*

of grand moral issues. An appeal that makes people feel good will translate *social conversation since the* into votes and power.

days of Murray's dinners.

Faithful to his method, he

noted the stages: "Do not

talk too much at present;

Bring antagonism into harmony. The court is a cauldron of resentment *do not try to talk. But*

whenever you speak, speak

and envy, where the sourness of a single brooding Cassius can quickly turn *with self-possession. Speak*

into a conspiracy. The Charmer knows how to smooth out conflict. Never *in a subdued tone, and*

stir up antagonisms that will prove immune to your charm; in the face of *always look at the person*

whom you are addressing.

those who are aggressive, retreat, let them have their little victories. Yield *Before one can engage in* and indulgence will charm the fight out of any potential enemies. *general conversation with*

Never criticize people overtly—that will make them insecure, and resistant *any effect, there is a certain*

to change. Plant ideas, insinuate suggestions. Charmed by your diplomatic *acquaintance with trifling*

but amusing subjects which

skills, people will not notice your growing power.

must be first attained. You

will soon pick up sufficient

by listening and observing.

Never argue. In society

Lull your victims into ease and comfort. Charm is like the hypnotist's *nothing must be discussed;*

trick with the swinging watch: the more relaxed the target, the easier it is *give only results. If any*

to bend him or her to your will. The key to making your victims feel *com person differ from you, bow and turn the conversation.*

fortable is to mirror them, adapt to their moods. People are narcissists—

In society never think;

they are drawn to those most similar to themselves. Seem to share their *always be on the watch, or* values and tastes, to understand their spirit, and they will fall *under your you will miss many*

spell. This works particularly well if you are an outsider: showing that you *opportunities and say*

many disagreeable things.

share the values of your adopted group or country (you have learned their *Talk to women, talk to language*, you prefer their customs, etc.) is immensely charming, since for *women as much as you*

you this preference is a choice, not a question of birth. Never pester or be *can. This is the best*

school. This is the way to

overly persistent—these uncharming qualities will disrupt the relaxation *gain fluency, because you*

you need to cast your spell.

need not care what you say,

and had better not be

sensible. They, too, will

rally you on many points,

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Show calm and self-possession in the face of adversity. Adversity and *and as they are women you* setbacks actually provide the perfect setting for charm. Showing a calm, un- *will not be offended. Nothing is of so much*

ruffled exterior in the face of unpleasantness puts people at ease. You seem *importance and of so patient*, as if waiting for destiny to deal you a better card—or as if you were *much use to a young man* confident you could charm the Fates themselves. Never show anger, ill *entering life as to be well temper*, or vengefulness, all disruptive emotions that will make people de- *criticised by women.*" fensive. In the politics of large groups, welcome adversity as a chance to
—ANDRÉ MAUROIS, *DISRAELI*,

TRANSLATED BY HAMISH MILES

show the charming qualities of magnanimity and poise. Let others get flustered and upset—the contrast will redound to your favor. Never whine, never complain, never try to justify yourself.

You know what charm is:

a way of getting the answer

yes without having asked

Make yourself useful. If done subtly, your ability to enhance the lives of *any clear question.* others will be devilishly seductive. Your social skills will prove important
—ALBERT CAMUS

here: creating a wide network of allies will give you the power to link people up with each other, which will make them feel that by knowing you they can make their lives easier. This is something no one can resist. *A speech that carries its* Follow-through is key: so many people will charm by promising a person *audience along with it and is applauded is often less*

great things—a better job, a new contact, a big favor—but if they do not *suggestive simply because it* follow through they make enemies instead of friends. Anyone can make a *is clear that it sets out to be* promise; what sets you apart, and makes you charming, is your ability to *persuasive. People talking* come through in the end, following up your promise with a definite action. *together influence each other in close proximity by*

Conversely, if someone does you a favor, show your gratitude concretely. *means of the tone of voice* In a world of bluff and smoke, real action and true helpfulness are perhaps *they adopt and the way* the ultimate charm.

they look at each other and

not only by the kind of

language they use. We are

right to call a good

Examples of Charmers

conversationalist a charmer

in the magical sense of the

word.

1. In the early 1870s, Queen Victoria of England had reached a low point —
GUSTAVE TARDE, *L'OPINION*

in her life. Her beloved husband, Prince Albert, had died in 1861, leaving *ET LA FOULE*, QUOTED IN SERGE

her more than grief stricken. In all of her decisions she had relied on his
MOSCOVICI, *THE AGE OF THE*

CROWD

advice; she was too uneducated and inexperienced to do otherwise, or so everyone made her feel. In fact, with Albert's death, political discussions and policy issues had come to bore her to tears. Now Victoria gradually withdrew from the public eye. As a result, the monarchy became less popular and therefore less powerful. In 1874, the Conservative Party came to power, and its leader, the

seventy-year-old Benjamin Disraeli, became prime minister. The protocol of his accession to his seat demanded that he come to the palace for a private meeting with the queen, who was fifty-five at the time. Two more unlikely associates could not be imagined: Disraeli, who was Jewish by birth, had dark skin and exotic features by English standards; as a young man he had been a dandy, his dress bordering on the flamboyant, and he had written popular novels that were romantic or even Gothic in style. The queen, on the other hand, was dour and stubborn, formal in manner and simple in style. *The Art of Seduction*

Wax, a substance naturally

taste. To please her, Disraeli was advised, he should curb his natural ele *hard and brittle, can be* gance; but he disregarded what everyone had told him and appeared before *made soft by the*

her as a gallant prince, falling to one knee, taking her hand, and kissing it, *application of a little*

warmth, so that it will take

saying, "I plight my troth to the kindest of mistresses." Disraeli pledged that *any shape you please. In*

his work now was to realize Victoria's dreams. He praised her qualities so *the same way, by being*

fulsomely that she blushed; yet strangely enough, she did not find him *polite and friendly, you can*

make people pliable and

comical or offensive, but came out of the encounter smiling. Perhaps she *obliging, even though they*

should give this strange man a chance, she thought, and she waited to see *are apt to be crabbed and*

what he would do next.

malevolent. Hence

Victoria soon began receiving reports from Disraeli—on parliamentary *politeness is to human*

nature what warmth is to

debates, policy issues, and so forth—that were unlike anything other ministers had written. Addressing her as the "Faery Queen," and giving the

—A R T H U R SCHOPENHAUER,

monarchy's various enemies all kinds of villainous code names, he filled his *COUNSELS AND MAXIMS*,

notes with gossip. In a note about a new cabinet member, Disraeli wrote,
TRANSLATED BY T. BAILEY

SAUNDERS

"He is more than six feet four inches in stature; like St. Peter's at Rome no one is at first aware of his dimensions. But he has the sagacity of the elephant as well as its form." The minister's blithe, informal spirit bordered on *Never explain. Never*

disrespect, but the queen was enchanted. She read his reports voraciously, *complain.*

and almost without her realizing it, her interest in politics was rekindled.

— B E N J A M I N DISRAELI

At the start of their relationship, Disraeli sent the queen all of his novels as a gift. She in return presented him with the one book she had written, *Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*. From then on he would toss out in his letters and conversations with her the phrase, "We authors." The queen would beam with pride. She would overhear him praising her to others—

her ideas, common sense, and feminine instincts, he said, made her the equal of Elizabeth I. He rarely disagreed with her. At meetings with other ministers, he would suddenly turn and ask her for advice. In 1875, when Disraeli managed to finagle the purchase of the Suez Canal from the debtridden khedive of Egypt, he presented his accomplishment to the queen as if it were a realization of her own ideas about expanding the British Empire. She did not realize the cause, but her confidence was growing by leaps and bounds.

Victoria once sent flowers to her prime minister. He later returned the favor, sending primroses, a flower so ordinary that some recipients might have been insulted; but his gift came with a note: "Of all the flowers, the one that retains its beauty longest, is sweet primrose." Disraeli was enveloping Victoria in a fantasy atmosphere in which everything was a metaphor, and the simplicity of the flower of course symbolized the queen—and also the relationship between the two leaders. Victoria fell for the bait; primroses were soon her favorite flower. In fact everything Disraeli did now met with her approval. She allowed him to sit in her presence, an unheardof privilege. The two began to exchange valentines every February. The queen would ask people what Disraeli had said at a party; when he paid a little too much attention to Empress Augusta of Germany, she grew jealous. The courtiers wondered what had happened to the stubborn, formal woman they had known—she was acting like an infatuated girl.

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In 1876, Disraeli steered through Parliament a bill declaring Queen Victoria a "Queen-Empress." The queen was beside herself with joy. Out of gratitude and certainly love, she elevated this Jewish dandy and novelist to the peerage, making him Earl of Beaconsfield, the realization of a lifelong dream. Disraeli knew how deceptive appearances can be: people were always judging him by his face and by his clothes, and he had learned never to do the same to them. So he was not

deceived by Queen Victoria's dour, sober exterior. Beneath it, he sensed, was a woman who yearned for a man to appeal to her feminine side, a woman who was affectionate, warm, even sexual. The extent to which this side of Victoria had been repressed merely revealed the strength of the feelings he would stir once he melted her reserve.

Disraeli's approach was to appeal to two aspects of Victoria's personality that other people had squashed: her confidence and her sexuality. He was a master at flattering a person's ego. As one English princess remarked,

"When I left the dining room after sitting next to Mr. Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England. But after sitting next to Mr. Disraeli, I thought I was the cleverest woman in England." Disraeli worked his magic with a delicate touch, insinuating an atmosphere of amusement and relaxation, particularly in relation to politics. Once the queen's guard was down, he made that mood a little warmer, a little more suggestive, subtly sexual—

though of course without overt flirtation. Disraeli made Victoria feel desirable as a woman and gifted as a monarch. How could she resist? How could she deny him anything?

Our personalities are often molded by how we are treated: if a parent or spouse is defensive or argumentative in dealing with us, we tend to respond the same way. Never mistake people's exterior characteristics for reality, for the character they show on the surface may be merely a reflection of the people with whom they have been most in contact, or a front disguising its own opposite. A gruff exterior may hide a person dying for warmth; a repressed, sober-looking type may actually be struggling to conceal uncontrollable emotions. That is the key to charm—feeding what has been repressed or denied.

By indulging the queen, by making himself a source of pleasure, Disraeli was able to soften a woman who had grown hard and cantankerous. Indulgence is a powerful tool of seduction: it is hard to be angry or defensive with someone who seems to agree with your opinions and tastes. Charmers may appear to be weaker than their targets but in the end they are the more powerful side because they have stolen the ability to resist. 2. In 1971, the American financier and Democratic Party power-player Averell Harriman saw his life drawing to a close. He was seventy-nine, his wife of many years, Marie, had just died, and with the Democrats out 86 • *The Art of Seduction*

of office his political career seemed over. Feeling old and depressed, he resigned himself to spending his last years with his grandchildren in quiet retirement.

A few months after Marie's death, Harriman was talked into attending a Washington party. There he met an old friend, Pamela Churchill, whom he had known during World War II, in London, where he had been sent as a personal envoy of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. She was twenty-one at the time, and was the wife of Winston Churchill's son Randolph. There had certainly been more beautiful women in the city, but none had been more pleasant to be around: she was so attentive, listening to his problems, befriending his daughter (they were the same age), and calming him whenever he saw her. Marie had remained in the States, and

Randolph was in the army, so while bombs rained on London Averell and Pamela had begun an affair. And in the many years since the war, she had kept in touch with him: he knew about the breakup of her marriage, and about her endless series of affairs with Europe's wealthiest playboys. Yet he had not seen her since his return to America, and to his wife. What a strange coincidence to run into her at this particular moment in his life.

At the party Pamela pulled Harriman out of his shell, laughing at his jokes and getting him to talk about London in the glory days of the war. He felt his old power returning—it was as if *he* were charming *her*. A few days later she dropped in on him at one of his weekend homes. Harriman was one of the wealthiest men in the world, but was no lavish spender; he and Marie had lived a Spartan life. Pamela made no comment, but when she invited him to her own home, he could not help but notice the brightness and vibrancy of her life—flowers everywhere, beautiful linens on the bed, wonderful meals (she seemed to know all of his favorite foods). He had heard of her reputation as a courtesan and understood the lure of his wealth, yet being around her was invigorating, and eight weeks after that party, he married her.

Pamela did not stop there. She persuaded her husband to donate the art that Marie had collected to the National Gallery. She got him to part with some of his money—a trust fund for her son Winston, new houses, constant redecorations. Her approach was subtle and patient; she made him somehow feel good about giving her what she wanted. Within a few years, hardly any traces of Marie remained in their life. Harriman spent less time with his children and grandchildren. He seemed to be going through a second youth. In Washington, politicians and their wives viewed Pamela with suspicion. They saw through her, and were immune to her charm, or so they thought. Yet they always came to the frequent parties she hosted, justifying themselves with the thought that powerful people would be there. Everything at these parties was calibrated to create a relaxed, intimate atmosphere. No one felt ignored: the least important people would find themselves talking to Pamela, opening up to that attentive look of hers. She made them feel powerful and respected. Afterward she would send them a *The Charmer* • 87

personal note or gift, often referring to something they had mentioned in conversation. The wives who had called her a courtesan and worse slowly changed their minds. The men found her not only beguiling but useful—

her worldwide contacts were invaluable. She could put them in touch with exactly the right person without them even having to ask. The Harrimans'

parties soon evolved into fundraising events for the Democratic Party. Put at their ease, feeling elevated by the aristocratic atmosphere Pamela created and the sense of importance she gave them, visitors would empty their wallets without realizing quite why. This, of course, was exactly what all the men in her life had done.

In 1986, Averell Harriman died. By then Pamela was powerful and wealthy enough that she no longer needed a man. In 1993, she was named the U.S. ambassador to France, and easily transferred her personal and social charm into the world of political diplomacy. She was still working when she died, in 1997.

We often recognize Charmers as such; we sense their cleverness. (Surely Harriman must have realized that his meeting with Pamela Churchill in 1971 was no coincidence.) Nevertheless, we fall under their spell. The reason is simple: the feeling that Charmers provide is so rare as to be worth the price we pay.

The world is full of self-absorbed people. In their presence, we know that everything in our relationship with them is directed toward themselves—

their insecurities, their neediness, their hunger for attention. That reinforces our own egocentric tendencies; we protectively close ourselves up. It is a syndrome that only makes us the more helpless with Charmers. First, they don't talk much about themselves, which heightens their mystery and disguises their limitations. Second, they seem to be interested in us, and their interest is so delightfully focused that we relax and open up to them. Finally, Charmers are pleasant to be around. They have none of most people's ugly qualities—nagging, complaining, self-assertion. They seem to know what pleases. Theirs is a diffused warmth; union without sex. (You may think a geisha is sexual as well as charming; her power, however, lies not in the sexual favors she provides but in her rare self-effacing attentiveness.) Inevitably, we become addicted, and dependent. And dependence is the source of the Charmer's power.

People who are physically beautiful, and who play on their beauty to create a sexually charged presence, have little power in the end; the bloom of youth fades, there is always someone younger and more beautiful, and in any case people tire of beauty without social grace. But they never tire of feeling their self-worth validated. Learn the power you can wield by making the other person feel like the star. The key is to diffuse your sexual presence: create a vaguer, more beguiling sense of excitement through a generalized flirtation, a socialized sexuality that is constant, addictive, and never totally satisfied.

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3. In December of 1936, Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Chinese Nationalists, was captured by a group of his own soldiers who were angry with his policies: instead of fighting the Japanese, who had just invaded China, he was continuing his civil war against the Communist armies of Mao Zedong. The soldiers saw no threat in Mao—Chiang had almost annihilated the Communists. In fact, they believed he should join forces with Mao against the common enemy—it was the only patriotic thing to do. The soldiers thought by capturing him they could compel Chiang to change his mind, but he was a stubborn man. Since Chiang was the main impediment to a unified war against the Japanese, the soldiers contemplated having him executed, or turned over to the Communists.

As Chiang lay in prison, he could only imagine the worst. Several days later he received a visit from Zhou Enlai—a former friend and now a leading Communist. Politely and respectfully, Zhou argued for a united front: Communists and Nationalists against the Japanese. Chiang could not begin to hear such talk; he hated the Communists with a passion, and became hopelessly emotional. To sign an agreement with the Communists in these circumstances, he yelled, would be humiliating, and would lose me all honor among my own army. It's out of the

question. Kill me if you must. Zhou listened, smiled, said barely a word. As Chiang's rant ended he told the Nationalist general that a concern for honor was something he understood, but that the honorable thing for them to do was actually to forget their differences and fight the invader. Chiang could lead both armies. Finally, Zhou said that under no circumstances would he allow his fellow Communists, or anyone for that matter, to execute such a great man as Chiang Kai-shek. The Nationalist leader was stunned and moved.

The next day, Chiang was escorted out of prison by Communist guards, transferred to one of his own army's planes, and sent back to his own headquarters. Apparently Zhou had executed this policy on his own, for when word of it reached the other Communist leaders, they were outraged: Zhou should have forced Chiang to fight the Japanese, or else should have ordered his execution—to release him without concessions was the height of pusillanimity, and Zhou would pay. Zhou said nothing and

waited. A few months later, Chiang signed an agreement to halt the civil war and join with the Communists against the Japanese. He seemed to have come to his decision on his own, and his army respected it—they could not doubt his motives.

Working together, the Nationalists and the Communists expelled the Japanese from China. But the Communists, whom Chiang had previously almost destroyed, took advantage of this period of collaboration to regain strength. Once the Japanese had left, they turned on the Nationalists, who, in 1949, were forced to evacuate mainland China for the island of Formosa, now Taiwan. Now Mao paid a visit to the Soviet Union. China was in terrible shape and in desperate need of assistance, but Stalin was wary of the Chinese, and lectured Mao about the many mistakes he had made. Mao argued back.

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Stalin decided to teach the young upstart a lesson; he would give China nothing. Tempers rose. Mao sent urgently for Zhou Enlai who arrived the next day and went right to work.

In the long negotiating sessions, Zhou made a show of enjoying his hosts' vodka. He never argued, and in fact agreed that the Chinese had made many mistakes, had much to learn from the more experienced Soviets: "Comrade Stalin," he said, "we are the first large Asian country to join the socialist camp under *your* guidance." Zhou had come prepared with all kinds of neatly drawn diagrams and charts, knowing the Russians loved such things. Stalin warmed up to him. The negotiations proceeded, and a few days after Zhou's arrival, the two parties signed a treaty of mutual aid—

a treaty far more useful to the Chinese than to the Soviets.

In 1959, China was again in deep trouble. Mao's Great Leap Forward, an attempt to spark an overnight industrial revolution in China, had been a devastating failure.

The people were angry: they were starving while Beijing bureaucrats lived well. Many Beijing officials, Zhou among them, returned to their native towns to try to bring order. Most of them managed by bribes—by promising all kinds of favors—but Zhou proceeded differently: he visited his ancestral graveyard, where generations of his family were buried, and ordered that the tombstones be removed and the coffins buried deeper. Now the land could be farmed for food. In Confucian

terms (and Zhou was an obedient Confucian), this was sacrilege, but everyone knew what it meant: Zhou was willing to suffer personally. Everyone had to sacrifice, even the leaders. His gesture had immense symbolic impact.

When Zhou died, in 1976, an unofficial and unorganized outpouring

of public grief caught the government by surprise. They could not understand how a man who had worked behind the scenes, and had shunned the adoration of the masses, could have won such affection.

The capture of Chiang Kai-shek was a turning point in the civil war. To execute him might have been disastrous: it had been Chiang who had held the Nationalist army together, and without him it could have broken up into factions, allowing the Japanese to overrun the country. To force him to sign an agreement would have not helped either: he would have lost face before his army, would never have honored the agreement, and would have done everything he could to avenge his humiliation. Zhou knew that to execute or compel a captive will only embolden your enemy, and will have repercussions you cannot control. Charm, on the other hand, is a manipulative weapon that disguises its own manipulativeness, letting you gain a victory without stirring the desire for revenge.

Zhou worked on Chiang perfectly, paying him respect, playing the inferior, letting him pass from the fear of execution to the relief of unexpected release. The general was allowed to leave with his dignity intact. Zhou knew all this would soften him up, planting the seed of the idea that perhaps the Communists were not so bad after all, and that he could change *90 • The Art of Seduction*

his mind about them without looking weak, particularly if he did so independently rather than while he was in prison. Zhou applied the same philosophy to every situation: play the inferior, unthreatening and humble. What will this matter if in the end you get what you want: time to recover from a civil war, a treaty, the good will of the masses.

Time is the greatest weapon you have. Patiently keep in mind a longterm goal and neither person nor army can resist you. And charm is the best way of playing for time, of widening your options in any situation. Through charm you can seduce your enemy into backing off, giving you the psychological space to plot an effective counterstrategy. The key is to make other people emotional while you remain detached. They may feel grateful, happy, moved, arrogant—it doesn't matter, as long as they feel. An emotional person is a distracted person. Give them what they want, appeal to their self-interest, make them feel superior to you. When a baby has grabbed a sharp knife, do not try to grab it back; instead, stay calm, offer candy, and the baby will drop the knife to pick up the tempting morsel you offer.

4. In 1761, Empress Elizabeth of Russia died, and her nephew ascended to the throne as Czar Peter III. Peter had always been a little boy at heart—he played with toy soldiers long past the appropriate age—and now, as czar, he could finally do whatever he pleased and the world be damned. Peter concluded a treaty with Frederick the Great that was highly favorable to the foreign ruler (Peter adored Frederick, and particularly the disciplined way his Prussian soldiers marched). This was a practical debacle, but in matters of emotion and etiquette, Peter was even more offensive: he refused to properly mourn his aunt the empress, resuming his war games and parties a few days after the funeral. What a contrast he was to his wife, Catherine. She was respectful during the funeral, was still wearing black months later, and could be seen at all hours beside Elizabeth's tomb, praying and crying. She was not even Russian, but a German princess who had come east to marry Peter in 1745 without speaking a word of the language. Even the lowest peasant knew that Catherine had converted to the Russian Orthodox Church, and had learned to speak Russian with incredible speed, and beautifully. At heart, they thought, she was more Russian than all of those fops in the court.

During these difficult months, while Peter offended almost everyone in the country, Catherine discreetly kept a lover, Gregory Orlov, a lieutenant in the guards. It was through Orlov that word spread of her piety, her patriotism, her worthiness for rule; how much better to follow such a woman than to serve Peter. Late into the night, Catherine and Orlov would talk, and he would tell her the army was behind her and would urge her to stage a coup. She would listen attentively, but would always reply that this was not the time for such things. Orlov wondered to himself: perhaps she was too gentle and passive for such a great step.

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Peter's regime was repressive, and the arrests and executions piled up. He also grew more abusive toward his wife, threatening to divorce her and marry his mistress. One drunken evening, driven to distraction by Catherine's silence and his inability to provoke her, he ordered her arrest. The news spread fast, and Orlov hurried to warn Catherine that she would be imprisoned or executed unless she acted fast. This time Catherine did not argue; she put on her simplest mourning gown, left her hair half undone, followed Orlov to a waiting carriage, and rushed to the army barracks. Here the soldiers fell to the ground, kissing the hem of her dress—they had heard so much about her but had never seen her in person, and she seemed to them like a statue of the Madonna come to life. They gave her an army uniform, marveling at how beautiful she looked in men's clothes, and set off under Orlov's command for the Winter Palace. The procession grew as it passed through the streets of St. Petersburg. Everyone applauded Catherine, everyone felt that Peter should be dethroned. Soon priests arrived to give Catherine their blessing, making the people even more excited. And through it all, she was silent and dignified, as if all were in the hands of fate. When news reached Peter of this peaceful rebellion, he grew hysterical, and agreed to abdicate that very night. Catherine became empress without a single battle or even a single gunshot.

As a child, Catherine was intelligent and spirited. Since her mother had wanted a daughter who was obedient rather than dazzling, and who would therefore make a better match, the child was subjected to a constant barrage of criticism, against

which she developed a defense: she learned to seem to defer to other people totally as a way to neutralize their aggression. If she was patient and did not force the issue, instead of attacking her they would fall under her spell.

When Catherine came to Russia—at the age of sixteen, without a friend or ally in the country—she applied the skills she had learned in dealing with her difficult mother. In the face of all the court monsters—

the imposing Empress Elizabeth, her own infantile husband, the endless schemers and betrayers—she curtsied, deferred, waited, and charmed. She had long wanted to rule as empress, and knew how hopeless her husband was. But what good would it do to seize power violently, laying a claim that some would certainly see as illegitimate, and then have to worry endlessly that she would be dethroned in turn? No, the moment had to be ripe, and she had to make the people carry her into power. It was a feminine style of revolution: by being passive and patient, Catherine suggested that she had no interest in power. The effect was soothing—charming.

There will always be difficult people for us to face—the chronically insecure, the hopelessly stubborn, the hysterical complainers. Your ability to disarm these people will prove an invaluable skill. You do have to be careful, though: if you are passive they will run all over you; if assertive you will make their monstrous qualities worse. Seduction and charm are the most effective counterweapons. Outwardly, be gracious. Adapt to their every 92 • *The Art of Seduction*

mood. Enter their spirit. Inwardly, calculate and wait: your surrender is a strategy, not a way of life. When the time comes, and it inevitably will, the tables will turn. Their aggression will land them in trouble, and that will put you in a position to rescue them, regaining superiority. (You could also decide that you had had enough, and consign them to oblivion.) Your charm has prevented them from foreseeing this or growing suspicious. A whole revolution can be enacted without a single act of violence, simply by waiting for the apple to ripen and fall.

Symbol: The

*Mirror. Your spirit holds a mirror up
to others. When they see you they see them-
selves: their values, their tastes, even their flaws. Their
lifelong love affair with their own image is comfortable and
hypnotic; so feed it. No one ever sees what is behind the mirror. The Charmer • 93*

Dangers

There are those who are immune to a Charmer; particularly cynics, and confident types who do not need validation. These people tend to

view Charmers as slippery and deceitful, and they can make problems for you. The solution is to do what most Charmers do by nature: befriend and charm as many people as possible. Secure your power through numbers and you will not have to worry about the few you cannot seduce. Catherine the Great's kindness to everyone she met created a vast amount of good will that paid off later. Also, it is sometimes charming to reveal a strategic flaw. There is one person you dislike? Confess it openly, do not try to charm such an enemy, and people will think you more human, less slippery. Disraeli had such a scapegoat with his great nemesis, William Gladstone. The dangers of political charm are harder to handle: your conciliatory, shifting, flexible approach to politics will make enemies out of everyone who is a rigid believer in a cause. Social seducers such as Bill Clinton and Henry Kissinger could often win over the most hardened opponent with their personal charm, but they could not be everywhere at once. Many members of the English Parliament thought Disraeli a shifty conniver; in person his engaging manner could dispel such feelings, but he could not address the entire Parliament one-on-one. In difficult times, when people yearn for something substantial and firm, the political charmer may be in danger.

As Catherine the Great proved, timing is everything. Charmers must know when to hibernate and when the times are ripe for their persuasive powers. Known for their flexibility, they should sometimes be flexible enough to act inflexibly. Zhou Enlai, the consummate chameleon, could play the hard-core Communist when it suited him. Never become the slave to your own powers of charm; keep it under control, something you can turn off and on at will.

the Charismatic

Charisma

is a presence that excites us. It comes from an inner quality—self-confidence, sexual energy, sense of purpose, contentment—that most people lack and want. This quality radiates outward, permeating the gestures of Charismatics, making them seem extraordinary and superior, and making us imagine there is more to them than meets the eye: they are gods, saints, stars. Charismatics can learn to heighten their

*charisma with a piercing gaze, fiery oratory,
an air of mystery. They can seduce on a
grand scale. Learn to create the
charismatic illusion by radiating
intensity while remain-
ing detached.*

Charisma and Seduction

Charisma is seduction on a mass level. Charismatics make crowds of

people fall in love with them, then lead them along. The process of making them fall in love is simple and follows a path similar to that of a one-on-one seduction. Charismatics have certain qualities that are powerfully attractive and that make them stand out. This could be their selfbelief, their boldness, their serenity. They keep the source of these qualities mysterious. They do not explain where their confidence or contentment *"Charisma" shall be understood to refer to an*

comes from, but it can be felt by everyone; it radiates outward, without the extraordinary quality of a appearance of conscious effort. The face of the Charismatic is usually ani- person, regardless of mated, full of energy, desire, alertness—the look of a lover, one that is in- whether this quality is actual, alleged or

stantly appealing, even vaguely sexual. We happily follow Charismatics *presumed. "Charismatic* because we like to be led, particularly by people who promise adventure or *authority, " hence, shall* prosperity. We lose ourselves in their cause, become emotionally attached *refer to a rule over men*, to them, feel more alive by believing in them—we fall in love. Charisma *whether predominately ex tern al or p redominately*

plays on repressed sexuality, creates an erotic charge. Yet the origins of the *internal, to which the word lie not in sexuality but in religion, and religion remains deeply em- governed submit because of* bedded in modern charisma.

*their belief in the
extraordinary quality of the*

Thousands of years ago, people believed in gods and spirits, but few *specific person*. could ever say that they had witnessed a miracle, a physical demonstration —MAX WEBER, FROM MAX

of divine power. A man, however, who seemed possessed by a divine WEBER: ESSAYS IN SOCIOLOGY, spirit—speaking in tongues, ecstatic raptures, the

expression of intense EDITED BY HANS GERTH AND

C . W R I G H T M I L L S

visions—would stand out as one whom the gods had singled out. And this man, a priest or a prophet, gained great power over others. What made the Hebrews believe in Moses, follow him out of Egypt, and remain loyal to him despite their endless wandering in the desert? The look in his eye, his inspired and inspiring words, the face that literally glowed when he came down from Mount Sinai—all these things gave him the appearance of having direct communication with God, and were the source of his authority. And these were what was meant by "charisma," a Greek word referring to prophets and to Christ himself. In early Christianity, charisma was a gift or talent vouchsafed by God's grace and revealing His presence. Most of the great religions were founded by a Charismatic, a person who physically displayed the signs of God's favor. Over the years, the world became more rational. Eventually people

came to hold power not by divine right but because they won votes, or proved their competence. The great early-twentieth-century German soci 97

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And the Lord said to ologist Max Weber, however, noticed that despite our supposed progress, *Moses*, "Write these there were more Charismatics than ever. What characterized a modern words; in accordance with Charismatic, according to Weber, was the appearance of an extraordinary these words I have made a

covenant with you and

quality in their character, the equivalent of a sign of God's favor. How else *with Israel*." *And he was* to explain the power of a Robespierre or a Lenin? More than anything it *there with the Lord forty* was the force of their magnetic personalities that made these men stand out *days and forty nights; he* was the source of their power. They did not speak of God but of a *neither ate bread nor drank*

water. And he wrote upon great cause, visions of a future society. Their appeal was emotional; they *the tables the words of the* seemed possessed. And their audiences reacted as euphorically as earlier *au covenant, the ten* diences had to a prophet. When Lenin died, in 1924, a cult formed around *commandments. When*

Moses came down from his memory, transforming the communist leader into a deity. *Mount Sinai, with the two*

Today, anyone who has presence, who attracts attention when he or she *tables of the testimony in* enters a room, is said to possess charisma. But even these less-exalted types *his hand as he came down*

from the mountain, Moses reveal a trace of the quality suggested by the word's original meaning. *did not know that the skin* Their charisma is mysterious and inexplicable, never obvious. They have an *of his face shone because he* unusual confidence. They have a gift—often a smoothness with language—

had been talking with

God. And when Aaron that makes them stand out from the crowd. They express a vision. We may *and all the people of Israel* not realize it, but in their presence we have a kind of religious experience: *saw Moses, behold, the* we believe in these people, without having any rational evidence for doing *skin of his face shone, and* so. When trying to concoct an effect of charisma, never forget the religious *they were afraid to come*

near him. But Moses source of its power. You must radiate an inward quality that has a saintly or *called to them; and Aaron* spiritual edge to it. Your eyes must glow with the fire of a prophet. Your *and all the leaders of the* charisma must seem natural, as if it came from something mysteriously be *congregation returned to him, and Moses talked* yond your control, a gift of the gods. In our rational, disenchanted world, *with them. And afterward* people crave a religious experience, particularly on a group level. Any sign *all the people of Israel came* of charisma plays to this desire to believe in something. And there is noth *near, and he gave them in commandment all that the* ing more seductive than giving people something to believe in and follow. *Lord had spoken with him*

Charisma must seem mystical, but that does not mean you cannot learn *in Mount Sinai. And*

certain tricks that will enhance the charisma you already possess, or will when Moses had finished

speaking with them, he put give you the outward appearance of it. The following are basic qualities *a veil on his face; but* that will help create the illusion of charisma: *whenever Moses went in*

before the Lord to speak

with him, he took the veil

off, until he came out; and

Purpose. If people believe you have a plan, that you know where you are *when he came out, and* going, they will follow you instinctively. The direction does not matter: *told the people of Israel* pick a cause, an ideal, a vision and show that you will not sway from your *what he was commanded,*

the people of Israel saw the goal. People will imagine that your confidence comes from something *face of Moses, that the skin real*—just as the ancient Hebrews believed Moses was in communion with *of Moses's face shone; and*

God, simply because he showed the outward signs.

Moses would put the veil

upon his face again, until

Purposefulness is doubly charismatic in times of trouble. Since most *he went in to speak* people hesitate before taking bold action (even when action is what is required), single-minded self-assurance will make you the focus of attention.

— E X O D U S 34:27 O L D

People will believe in you through the simple force of your character. When

TESTAMENT

Franklin Delano Roosevelt came to power amidst the Depression, much of the public had little faith he could turn things around. But in his first few months in office he displayed such confidence, such decisiveness and clarity *The Charismatic* • 99

in dealing with the country's many problems, that the public began to see *That devil of a man*

him as their savior, someone with intense charisma.

exercises a fascination on

me that I cannot explain

even to myself, and in such

a degree that, though I fear

Mystery. Mystery lies at charisma's heart, but it is a particular kind of *neither God nor devil*, mystery—a mystery expressed by contradiction. The Charismatic may be *when I am in his presence I am ready to tremble like*

both proletarian and aristocratic (Mao Zedong), both cruel and kind (Peter *a child, and he could make* the Great), both excitable and icily detached (Charles de Gaulle), both inti- *me go through the eye of a mate* and distant (Sigmund Freud). Since most people are predictable, the *needle to throw myself into the fire*.

effect of these contradictions is devastatingly charismatic. They make you

—GENERAL VANDAMME, ON

hard to fathom, add richness to your character, make people talk about you.
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

It is often better to reveal your contradictions slowly and subtly—if you throw them out one on top of the other, people may think you have an erratic personality. Show your mysteriousness gradually and word will spread. [*The masses*] have never You must also keep people at arm's length, to keep them from figuring *thirsted after truth. They* you out.

demand illusions, and

Another aspect of mystery is a hint of the uncanny. The appearance of *cannot do without them. They constantly give what*

prophetic or psychic gifts will add to your aura. Predict things authorita- *is unreal precedence over* tively and people will often imagine that what you have said has

come true. *what is real; they are almost as strongly influenced by what is untrue as by what is true.*

Saintliness. Most of us must compromise constantly to survive; saints do *They have an evident*

not. They must live out their ideals without caring about the consequences. *tendency not to distinguish between the two.*

The saintly effect bestows charisma.

Saintliness goes far beyond religion: politicians as disparate as George — SIGMUND FREUD, *THE*

STANDARD EDITION OF THE

Washington and Lenin won saintly reputations by living simply, despite *COMPLETE PSYCHOLOGICAL*

their power—by matching their political values to their personal lives. Both *WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD,*

VOLUME I8

men were virtually deified after they died. Albert Einstein too had a saintly aura—childlike, unwilling to compromise, lost in his own world. The key is that you must already have some deeply held values; that part cannot be faked, at least not without risking accusations of charlatanry that will destroy your charisma in the long run. The next step is to show, as simply and subtly as possible, that you live what you believe. Finally, the appearance of being mild and unassuming can eventually turn into charisma, as long as you seem completely comfortable with it. The source of Harry Truman's charisma, and even of Abraham Lincoln's, was to appear to be an Everyman. *Eloquence*. A Charismatic relies on the power of words. The reason is simple: words are the quickest way to create emotional disturbance. They can uplift, elevate, stir anger, without referring to anything real. During the Spanish Civil War, Dolores Gómez Ibarruri, known as La Pasionaria, gave pro-Communist speeches that were so emotionally powerful as to determine several key moments in the war. To bring off this kind of eloquence, it helps if the speaker is as emotional, as caught up in words, as the audience is. Yet eloquence can be learned: the devices La Pasionaria used—

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catchwords, slogans, rhythmic repetitions, phrases for the audience to repeat—can easily be acquired. Roosevelt, a calm, patrician type, was able to make himself a dynamic speaker, both through his style of delivery, which was slow and hypnotic, and through his brilliant use of imagery, alliteration, and biblical rhetoric. The crowds at his rallies were often moved to tears. The slow, authoritative style is often more effective than passion in the long run, for it is more subtly spellbinding, and less tiring.

Theatricality. A Charismatic is larger than life, has extra presence. Actors have studied this kind of presence for centuries; they know how to stand on a crowded stage and command attention. Surprisingly, it is not the actor who screams the loudest or gestures the most wildly who works this magic best, but the actor who stays calm, radiating self-assurance. The effect is ruined by trying too hard. It is essential to be self-aware, to have the ability to see yourself as others see you. De Gaulle understood that self-awareness was key to his charisma; in the most turbulent circumstances—the Nazi occupation of France, the national reconstruction after World War II, an army rebellion in Algeria—he retained an Olympian composure that played beautifully against the hysteria of his colleagues. When he spoke, no one could take their eyes off him. Once you know how to command attention this way, heighten the effect by appearing in ceremonial and ritual events that are full of exciting imagery, making you look regal and godlike. Flamboyancy has nothing to do with charisma—it attracts the wrong kind of attention.

Uninhibitedness. Most people are repressed, and have little access to their unconscious—a problem that creates opportunities for the Charismatic, who can become a kind of screen on which others project their secret fantasies and longings. You will first have to show that you are less inhibited than your audience—that you

radiate a dangerous sexuality, have no fear of death, are delightfully spontaneous. Even a hint of these qualities will make people think you more powerful than you are. In the 1850s a bohemian American actress, Adah Isaacs Menken, took the world by storm through her unbridled sexual energy, and her fearlessness. She would appear on stage half-naked, performing death-defying acts; few women could dare such things in the Victorian period, and a rather mediocre actress became a figure of cultlike adoration.

An extension of your being uninhibited is a dreamlike quality in your work and character that reveals your openness to your unconscious. It was the possession of this quality that transformed artists like Wagner and Picasso into charismatic idols. Its cousin is a fluidity of body and spirit; while the repressed are rigid, Charismatics have an ease and an adaptability that show their openness to experience.

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Fervency. You need to believe in something, and to believe in it strongly enough for it to animate all your gestures and make your eyes light up. This cannot be faked. Politicians inevitably lie to the public; what distinguishes Charismatics is that they believe their own lies, which makes them that much more believable. A prerequisite for fiery belief is some great cause to rally around—a crusade. Become the rallying point for people's discontent, and show that you share none of the doubts that plague normal humans. In 1490, the Florentine Girolamo Savonarola railed at the immorality of the pope and the Catholic Church. Claiming to be divinely inspired, he became so animated during his sermons that hysteria would sweep the crowd. Savonarola developed such a following that he briefly took over the city, until the pope had him captured and burned at the stake. People believed in him because of the depth of his conviction. His example has more relevance today than ever: people are more and more isolated, and long for communal experience. Let your own fervent and contagious faith, in virtually anything, give them something to believe in. *Vulnerability.* Charismatics display a need for love and affection. They are open to their audience, and in fact feed off its energy; the audience in turn is electrified by the Charismatic, the current increasing as it passes back and forth. This vulnerable side to charisma softens the self-confident side, which can seem fanatical and frightening.

Since charisma involves feelings akin to love, you in turn must reveal your love for your followers. This was a key component to the charisma that Marilyn Monroe radiated on camera. "I knew I belonged to the Public," she wrote in her diary, "and to the world, not because I was talented or even beautiful but because I had never belonged to anything or anyone else. The Public was the only family, the only Prince Charming and the only home I had ever dreamed of." In front of a camera, Monroe suddenly came to life, flirting with and exciting her unseen public. If the audience does not sense this quality in you they will turn away from you. On the other hand, you must never seem manipulative or needy. Imagine your public as a single person whom you are trying to seduce—nothing is more seductive to people than the feeling that they are desired.

Adventurousness. Charismatics are unconventional. They have an air of adventure and risk that attracts the bored. Be brazen and courageous in your actions—be seen taking risks for the good of others. Napoleon made sure his soldiers saw him at the

cannons in battle. Lenin walked openly on the streets, despite the death threats he had received. Charismatics thrive in troubled waters; a crisis situation allows them to flaunt their daring, which enhances their aura. John F. Kennedy came to life in dealing with the Cuban missile crisis, Charles de Gaulle when he confronted rebellion in 102 • *The Art of Seduction*

In such conditions, where Algeria. They needed these problems to seem charismatic, and in fact some half the battle was hand-

have even accused them of stirring up situations (Kennedy through his *to-hand, concentrated into* brinkmanship style of diplomacy, for instance) that played to their love of *a small space, the spirit*

and example of the leader adventure. Show heroism to give yourself a charisma that will last you a counted for much. When lifetime. Conversely, the slightest sign of cowardice or timidity will ruin we remember this, it whatever charisma you had.

becomes easier to

understand the astonishing

efect of Joan's presence

upon the French troops.

Magnetism. If any physical attribute is crucial in seduction, it is the eyes. *Her position as a leader* They reveal excitement, tension, detachment, without a word being spo *was a unique one. She was not a professional soldier; ken. Indirect communication is critical in seduction, and also in charisma. she was not really a soldier* The demeanor of Charismatics may be poised and calm, but their eyes are *at all; she was not even a*

magnetic; they have a piercing gaze that disturbs their targets' emotions, man. She was ignorant of

war. She was a girl dressed

exerting force without words or action. Fidel Castro's aggressive gaze can up. But she believed, and

reduce his opponents to silence. When Benito Mussolini was challenged, had made others willing to he would roll his eyes, showing the whites in a way that frightened people. believe, that she was the

mouthpiece of God. • On

President Kusnasosro Sukarno of Indonesia had a gaze that seemed as if it *Friday, April 29th, 1429,*

could have read thoughts. Roosevelt could dilate his pupils at will, making *the news spread in Orléans* his stare both hypnotizing and intimidating. The eyes of the

Charismatic *that a force, led by the* never show fear or nerves.

Pucelle of Domrémy, was

on its way to the relief of

All of these skills are acquirable. Napoleon spent hours in front of a *the city, a piece of news* mirror, modeling his gaze on that of the great contemporary actor Talma. *which, as the chronicler* The key is self-control. The look does not necessarily have to be aggressive; *remarks, comforted them*

greatly.

it can also show contentment. Remember: your eyes can emanate charisma,

— VITA SACKVILLE-WEST,

but they can also give you away as a faker. Do not leave such an important *SAINT JOAN OF ARC*

attribute to chance. Practice the effect you desire.

Genuine charisma thus means the ability to internally generate and externally express extreme excitement, an ability which makes one the object of intense attention and unflective imitation by others.

— LIAH GREENFIELD

Charismatic Types—Historical Examples

The miraculous prophet. In the year 1425, Joan of Arc, a peasant girl from the French village of Domrémy, had her first vision: "I was in my thirteenth year when God sent a voice to guide me." The voice was that of Saint Michael and he came with a message from God: Joan had been chosen to rid France of the English invaders who now ruled most of the country, and of the resulting chaos and war. She was also to restore the French crown to the prince—the Dauphin, later Charles VII—who was its rightful heir. Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret also spoke to Joan. Her visions were extraordinarily vivid: she saw Saint Michael, touched him, smelled him.

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At first Joan told no one what she had seen; for all anyone knew, she *Amongst the surplus* was a quiet farm girl. But the visions became even more intense, and so in *population living on the margin of society [in the*

1429 she left Domrémy, determined to realize the mission for which God *Middle Ages*] there was had chosen her. Her goal was to meet Charles in the town of Chinon, *always a strong tendency to* where he had established his court in exile. The obstacles were enormous: *take as leader a layman, or* mous: Chinon was far, the journey was dangerous, and Charles, even if she *maybe an apostate friar or monk, who imposed*

reached him, was a lazy and cowardly young man who was unlikely to crusade *himself not simply as a sade* against the English. Undaunted, she moved from village to village, *ex- holy man but as a prophet* plainning her mission to soldiers and asking them to escort her to Chinon. *or even as a living god. On the strength of inspirations*

Young girls with religious visions were a dime a dozen at the time, and *or revelations for which he* there was nothing in Joan's appearance to inspire confidence; one soldier, *claimed divine origin this* however, Jean de Metz, was intrigued with her. What fascinated him was *leader would decree for his followers a communal*

the detail of her visions: she would liberate the besieged town of Orléans, *mission of vast dimensions* have the king crowned at the cathedral in Reims, lead the army to Paris; *and world-shaking* she knew how she would be wounded, and where; the words she attributed *importance. The conviction*

of having such a mission,

to Saint Michael were quite unlike the language of a farm girl; and she was *of being divinely appointed* so calmly confident, she glowed with conviction. De Metz fell under her *to carry out a prodigious spell*. He swore allegiance and set out with her for Chinon. Soon others of- task, *provided the* fered assistance, too, and word reached Charles of the strange young girl on *disoriented and the frustrated with new*

her way to meet him.

bearings and new hope. It

On the 350-mile road to Chinon, accompanied only by a handful of *gave them not simply a* soldiers, through a land infested with warring bands, Joan showed neither *place in the world but a unique and resplendent*

fear nor hesitation. The journey took several months. When she finally arrived, the Dauphin decided to meet the girl who had promised to restore *kind felt itself an elite, set him to his throne, despite the advice of his counselors; but he was bored, infinitely apart from and above ordinary mortals,*

and wanted amusement, and decided to play a trick on her. She was to *sharing also in his* meet him in a hall packed with courtiers; to test her prophetic powers, he *miraculous powers*. disguised himself as one of these men, and dressed another man as the —NORMAN COHN, prince. Yet when Joan arrived, to the amazement

of the crowd, she walked *THE PURSUIT OF THE*

straight up to Charles and curtseyed: "The King of Heaven sends me to
MILLENNIUM

you with the message that you shall be the lieutenant of the King of Heaven, who is the king of France." In the talk that followed, Joan seemed to echo Charles's most private thoughts, while once again recounting in extraordinary detail the feats she would accomplish. Days later, this indecisive, flighty man declared himself convinced and gave her his blessing to lead a French army against the English.

Miracles and saintliness aside, Joan of Arc had certain basic qualities that made her exceptional. Her visions were intense; she could describe them in such detail that they had to be real. Details have that effect: they lend a sense of reality to even the most preposterous statements. Furthermore, in a time of great disorder, she was supremely focused, as if her strength came from somewhere unworldly. She spoke with authority, and she predicted things people wanted: the English would be defeated, prosperity would return. She also had a peasant's earthy common sense. She had surely heard descriptions of Charles on the road to Chinon; once at court, she could 104 • *The Art of Seduction*

"How peculiar have sensed the trick he was playing on her, and could have confidently

[*Rasputin's*] eyes are," picked out his pampered face in the crowd. The following year, her visions *confesses a woman who*

abandoned her, and her confidence as well—she made many mistakes,

had made efforts to resist

his influence. She goes on

leading to her capture by the English. She was indeed human.

to say that every time she

We may no longer believe in miracles, but anything that hints at

met him she was always

strange, unworldly, even supernatural powers will create charisma. The psy *amazed afresh at the power of his glance, which it was*

chology is the same: you have visions of the future, and of the wondrous *impossible to withstand for* things you can accomplish. Describe these things in great detail, with an air *any considerable time*.

of authority, and suddenly you stand out. And if your prophecy—of pros *There was something oppressive in this kind and*

perity, say—is just what people want to hear, they are likely to fall under *gentle, but at the same* your spell and to see later events as a confirmation of your predictions. Ex time *sly and cunning*, habit remarkable confidence and people will think your confidence comes *glance; people were helpless*

from real knowledge. You will create a self-fulfilling prophecy: people's be *under the spell of the powerful will which could*

lief in you will translate into actions that help realize your visions. Any hint be felt in his whole being.

of success will make them see miracles, uncanny powers, the glow of *However tired you might*

charisma.

be of this charm, and

however much you wanted

to escape it, somehow or

other you always found

The authentic animal. One day in 1905, the St. Petersburg salon of *yourself attracted back and*

Countess Ignatiev was unusually full. Politicians, society ladies, and courtiers *held.*
• *A young girl who*

had heard of the strange

had all arrived early to await the remarkable guest of honor: Grigori Efi *new saint came from her* movich Rasputin, a forty-year-old Siberian monk who had made a name *province to the capital, and*

for himself throughout Russia as a healer, perhaps a saint. When Rasputin *visited him in search of*

edification and spiritual

arrived, few could disguise their disappointment: his face was ugly, his hair *instruction. She had never* was stringy, he was gangly and awkward. They wondered why they had *seen either him or a*

come. But then Rasputin approached them one by one, wrapping his big *portrait of him before, and*

met him for the first time

hands around their fingers and gazing deep into their eyes. At first his gaze *in his house. When he was unsettling*: as he looked them up and down, he seemed to be probing *came up to her and spoke*

and judging them. Yet suddenly his expression would change, and kindness, *to her; she thought him like* joy, and understanding would radiate from his face. Several of the ladies he *one of the peasant*

preachers she had often

actually hugged, in a most effusive manner. This startling contrast had pro *seen in her own country* found effects.

home. His gentle, monastic

The mood in the salon soon changed from disappointment to excite *gaze and the plainly parted light brown hair around the*

ment. Rasputin's voice was so calm and deep; his language was coarse, yet *worthy simple face, all at*

the ideas it expressed were delightfully simple, and had the ring of great *first inspired her confidence.*

spiritual truth. Then, just as the guests were beginning to relax with this *But when he came nearer*

to her, she felt immediately

dirty-looking peasant, his mood suddenly changed to anger: "I know you, *that another quite different*

I can read your souls. You are all too pampered. . . . These fine clothes and *man, mysterious, crafty,*

arts of yours are useless and pernicious. Men must learn to humble them *and corrupting, looked out from behind the eyes that*

selves! You must be simpler, far, far simpler. Only then will God come *radiated goodness and*

nearer to you." The monk's face grew animated, his pupils expanded, he *gentleness.*
• *He sat down*

looked completely different. How impressive that angry look was, recalling *opposite her, edged quite* Jesus throwing the moneylenders from the temple. Now Rasputin calmed *close up to her, and his*

light blue eyes changed

down, returned to being gracious, but the guests already saw him as some *color, and became deep and* one strange and remarkable. Next, in a performance he would soon repeat *The Charismatic* • 105

in salons throughout the city, he led the guests in a folk song, and as they *dark. A keen glance* sang, he began to dance, a strange uninhibited dance of his own design, *reached her from the corner of his eyes, bored into her,*

and as he danced, he circled the most attractive women there, and with his *and held her fascinated.* eyes invited them to join him. The dance turned vaguely sexual; as his *A leaden heaviness* partners fell under his spell, he whispered suggestive comments in their *overpowered her limbs as his great wrinkled face,*

ears. Yet none of them seemed to be offended.

distorted with desire, came

Over the next few months, women from every level of St. Petersburg *closer to hers. She felt his* society visited Rasputin in his apartment. He would talk to them of *spirit- hot breath on her cheeks, tual* matters, but then without warning he would turn sexual, murmuring *and saw how his eyes, burning from the depths of*

the crassest come-ons. He would justify himself through spiritual dogma: *their sockets, furtively roved* how can you repent if you have not sinned? Salvation only comes to those *over her helpless body, until* who go astray. One of the few who rejected his advances was asked by a *he dropped his lids with a sensuous expression. His*

friend, "How can one refuse anything to a saint?" "Does a saint need sinful *voice had fallen to a love?*" she replied. Her friend said, "He makes everything that comes near *passionate whisper, and he him holy.* I have already belonged to him, and I am proud and happy to *murmured strange, voluptuous words in her*

have done so." "But you are married! What does your husband say?" "He *ear. • Just as she was on* considers it a very great honor. If Rasputin desires a woman we all think it *the point of abandoning* a blessing and a distinction, our husbands as well as ourselves." *herself to her seducer, a*

memory stirred in her

Rasputin's spell soon extended over Czar Nicholas and more particu- *dimly and as if from some larly* over his wife, the Czarina Alexandra, after he apparently healed their *far distance; she recalled* son from a life-threatening injury. Within a few years, he had become the *that she had come to ask* most powerful man in Russia, with total sway over the royal couple. *him about God.*

—RENÉ FÜLÖP-MILLER,

RASPUTIN: THE HOLY DEVIL

People are more complicated than the masks they wear in society. The man who seems so noble and gentle is probably disguising a dark side, which will often come out in strange ways; if his nobility and refinement are in fact a put-on, sooner or later the truth will out, and his hypocrisy will disappoint and alienate. On the other hand, we are drawn to people who seem more comfortably human, who do not bother to disguise their contradictions. This was the source of Rasputin's charisma. A man so authentically himself, so devoid of self-consciousness or hypocrisy, was immensely appealing. His wickedness and saintliness were so extreme that it made him seem larger than life. The result was a charismatic aura that was immediate and preverbal; it radiated from his eyes, and from the touch of his hands. Most of us are a mix of the devil and the saint, the noble and the ignoble, and we spend our lives trying to repress the dark side. Few of us can give free rein to both sides, as Rasputin did, but we can create charisma to a smaller degree by ridding ourselves of self-consciousness, and of the discomfort most of us feel about our complicated natures. You cannot help being the way you are, so be genuine. That is what attracts us to animals: beautiful and cruel, they have no self-doubt. That quality is doubly fascinating in humans. Outwardly people may condemn your dark side, but it is not virtue alone that creates charisma; anything extraordinary will do. Do not apologize or go halfway. The more unbridled you seem, the more magnetic the effect. 106 •

The Art of Seduction

By its very nature, the

The demonic performer. Throughout his childhood Elvis Presley was *existence of charismatic* thought a strange boy who kept pretty much to himself. In high school in *authority is specifically* Memphis, Tennessee, he attracted attention with his pompadoured hair and *unstable. The holder may*

forego his charisma; he sideburns, his pink and black clothing, but people who tried to talk to him *may feel "forsaken by his* found nothing there—he was either terribly bland or hopelessly shy. At the *God, " as Jesus did on the* high school prom, he was the only boy who didn't dance. He seemed lost *cross; he may prove to his*

followers that "virtue in a private world, in love with the guitar he took everywhere. At the Ellis is gone out of him. " It is Auditorium, at the end of an evening of gospel music or wrestling, the then that his mission

concessions manager would often find Elvis onstage, miming a *perfor is extinguished, and hope mance* and taking bows before an imaginary audience. Asked to leave, he *waits and searches for a*

new holder of charisma. would quietly walk away. He was a very polite young man.

—MAX WEBER, FROM *MAX*

In 1953, just out of high school, Elvis recorded his first song, in a local *WEBER: ESSAYS IN SOCIOLOGY,*

studio. The record was a test, a chance for him to hear his own voice. A

EDITED BY HANS GERTH AND

year later the owner of the studio, Sam Phillips, called him in to record two C .
WRIGHT M I L L S

blues songs with a couple of professional musicians. They worked for hours, but nothing seemed to click; Elvis was nervous and inhibited. Then, near the end of the evening, giddy with exhaustion, he suddenly let loose and started to jump around like a child, in a moment of complete selfabandon. The other musicians joined in, the song getting wilder and wilder. Phillips's eyes lit up—he had something here.

A month later Elvis gave his first public performance, outdoors in a Memphis park. He was as nervous as he had been at the recording session, and could only stutter when he had to speak; but once he broke into song, the words came out. The crowd responded excitedly, rising to peaks at certain moments. Elvis couldn't figure out why. "I went over to the manager after the song," he later said, "and I asked him what was making the crowd go nuts. He told me, 'I'm not really sure, but I think that every time you wiggle your left leg, they start to scream. Whatever it is, just don't stop.'

A single Elvis recorded in 1954 became a hit. Soon he was in demand. Going onstage filled him with anxiety and emotion, so much so that he became a different person, as if possessed. "I've talked to some singers and they get a little nervous, but they say their nerves kind of settle down after they get into it. Mine never do. It's sort of this energy . . . something maybe like sex." Over the next few months he discovered more gestures and sounds—twitching dance movements, a more tremulous voice—that

made the crowds go crazy, particularly teenage girls. Within a year he had become the hottest musician in America. His concerts were exercises in mass hysteria.

Elvis Presley had a dark side, a secret life. (Some have attributed it to the death, at birth, of his twin brother.) This dark side he deeply repressed as a young man; it included all kinds of fantasies which he could only give in to when he was alone, although his unconventional clothing may also have been a symptom of it. When he performed, though, he was able to let these demons loose. They came out as a dangerous sexual power. Twitch- *The Charismatic* • 107

ing, androgynous, uninhibited, he was a man enacting strange fantasies be- *He is their god. He leads* fore the public. The audience sensed this and was excited by it. It wasn't a *them like a thing* | *Made by some other deity than*

flamboyant style and appearance that gave Elvis charisma, but rather the *nature*, | *That shapes man* electrifying expression of his inner turmoil.

better; and they follow him

A crowd or group of any sort has a unique energy. Just below the sur- | *Against us brats with no less confidence* | *Than boys*

face is desire, a constant sexual excitement that has to be repressed because *pursuing summer butterflies* it is socially unacceptable. If you have the ability to rouse those desires, the \ *Or butchers killing* crowd will see you as having charisma. The key is learning to access your *flies*. . . . own unconscious, as Elvis did when he let go. You are full of an excite—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, ment that seems to come from some mysterious inner source. Your unin *CORIOLANUS*

hibitedness will invite other people to open up, sparking a chain reaction: their excitement in turn will animate you still more. The fantasies you bring to the surface do not have to be sexual—any social taboo, anything *The roof did lift as Presley*

came onstage. He sang for

repressed and yearning for an outlet, will suffice. Make this felt in your *twenty-five minutes while*

recordings, your artwork, your books. Social pressure keeps people so re- *the audience erupted like* pressed that they will be attracted to your charisma before they have even *Mount Vesuvius*. "I never met you in person.

saw such excitement and

screaming in my entire life,

ever before or since," said

[film director Hal] Kanter.

The Savior. In March of 1917, the Russian parliament forced the coun- *As an observer, he describ-ed being stunned by*

try's ruler, Czar Nicholas, to abdicate and established a provisional govern "an *exhibition of public ment*. Russia was in rums. Its participation in World War I had been a *mass hysteria . . . a tidal*

disaster; famine was spreading widely, the vast countryside was riven by *wave of adoration surging*

up from 9,000 people,

looting and lynch law, and soldiers were deserting from the army en masse. *over the wall of police* Politically the country was bitterly divided; the main factions were the *flanking the stage, up over* right, the social democrats, and the left-wing revolutionaries, and each of *the flood-lights, to the performer and beyond him,*

these groups was itself afflicted by dissension.

lifting him to frenzied

Into this chaos came the forty-seven-year-old Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. A *heights of response.*" Marxist revolutionary, the leader of the Bolshevik Communist party, he
—A DESCRIPTION OF ELVIS

had suffered a twelve-year exile in Europe until, recognizing the chaos
PRESLEY'S CONCERT AT THE

overcoming Russia as the chance he had long been waiting for, he had hur-
HAYRIDE THEATER, SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA, DECEMBER 17, 1956,

ried back home. Now he called for the country to end its participation in IN PETER
WHITMER, *THE INNER*

the war and for an immediate socialist revolution. In the first weeks after his
ELVIS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL

arrival, nothing could have seemed more ridiculous. As a man, Lenin *BIOGRAPHY*
OF ELVIS AARON

PRESLEY

looked unimpressive; he was short and plain-featured. He had also spent years away in Europe, isolated from his people and immersed in reading and intellectual argument. Most important, his party was small, representing only a splinter group within the loosely organized left coalition. Few took him seriously as a national leader.

Undaunted, Lenin went to work. Wherever he went, he repeated the

same simple message: end the war, establish the rule of the proletariat, abolish private property, redistribute wealth. Exhausted with the nation's endless political infighting and the complexity of its problems, people began to listen. Lenin was so determined, so confident. He never lost his cool. In the midst of a raucous debate, he would simply and logically debunk each one of his adversaries' points. Workers and soldiers were im- 108 • *The Art of Seduction No one could so fire others*

pressed by his firmness. Once, in the midst of a brewing riot, Lenin amazed *with theif plans, no one*

his chauffeur by jumping onto the running board of his car and directing *could so impose his will*

the way through the crowd, at considerable personal risk. Told that his ideas *and conquer by force of his*
personality as this

had nothing to do with reality, he would answer, "So much the worse for *seemingly so ordinary and*

reality!"

somewhat coarse man who

Allied to Lenin's messianic confidence in his cause was his ability to or *lacked any obvious sources of charm. . . . Neither*

ganize. Exiled in Europe, his party had been scattered and diminished; in *Plekhanov nor Martov nor* keeping them together he had developed immense practical skills. In front *anyone else possessed the*

of a large crowd, he was also powerful orator. His speech at the First All *secret radiating from Lenin* Russian Soviet Congress made a sensation; either revolution or a bourgeois of *positively hypnotic effect*

upon people—I would

government, he cried, but nothing in between—enough of this compro *even say, domination of* mise in which the left was sharing. At a time when other politicians were *them. Plekhanov was*

scrambling desperately to adapt to the national crisis, and seemed weak in *treated with deference,*

Martov was loved, but

the process, Lenin was rock stable. His prestige soared, as did the member *Lenin alone was followed* ship of the Bolshevik party

unhesitatingly as the only

Most astounding of all was Lenin's effect on workers, soldiers, and peas *indisputable leader. For only Lenin represented that*

ants. He would address these common people wherever he found them—in *rare phenomenon,*

the street, standing on a chair, his thumbs in his lapel, his speech an odd *especially rare in Russia, of*

mix of ideology, peasant aphorisms, and revolutionary slogans. They would *a man of iron will and*

listen, enraptured. When Lenin died, in 1924—seven years after single *indomitable energy who combines fanatical faith in*

handedly opening the way to the October Revolution of 1917, which had *the movement, the cause,*

swept him and the Bolsheviks into power—these same ordinary Russians *with no less faith in*

went into mourning. They worshiped at his tomb, where his body was *himself.*

preserved on view; they told stories about him, developing a body of

—A. N. POTESOV, QUOTED IN

DANKWARTA. RUSTOW, ED.,

Lenin folklore; thousands of newborn girls were christened "Ninel," Lenin *PHILOSOPHERS AND KINGS:*

spelled backwards. This cult of Lenin assumed religious proportions. *STUDIES IN LEADERSHIP*

There all kinds of misconceptions about charisma, which, paradoxically, only add to its mystique. Charisma has little to do with an exciting physical

"I had hoped to see the

appearance or a colorful personality, qualities that elicit short—term interest. *mountain eagle of our*

party, the great man, great

Particularly in times of trouble, people are not looking for entertainment—

physically as well as

they want security, a better quality of life, social cohesion. Believe it or not, *politically. I had fancied*

a plain-looking man or woman with a clear vision, a quality of single *Lenin as a giant, stately and imposing. How great*

mindedness, and practical skills can be devastatingly charismatic, provided it *was my disappointment to*

is matched with some success. Never underestimate the power of success in *see a most ordinary-looking*

enhancing one's aura. But in a world teeming with compromisers and

man, below average height,

fudgers whose indecisiveness only creates more disorder, one clear-minded *in no way, literally in no*

way distinguishable from

soul will be a magnet of attention—will have charisma.

ordinary mortals. "

One on one, or in a Zurich cafe before the revolution, Lenin had little

— J O S E P H STALIN, ON MEETING

or no charisma. (His confidence was attractive, but many found his strident

LENIN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN

manner irritating.) He won charisma when he was seen as the man who 1905 , QUOTED IN RONALD W.

CLARK, *LENIN: THE MAN*

could save the country. Charisma is not a mysterious quality that inhabits *BEHIND THE MASK*

you outside your control; it is an illusion in the eyes of those who see you as having what they lack. Particularly in times of trouble, you can enhance that illusion through calmness, resolution, and clear-minded practicality. It also helps to have a seductively simple message. Call it the Savior Syn- *The Charismatic* • 109

drome: once people imagine you can save them from chaos, they will fall in *First and foremost there* love with you, like a person who melts in the arms of his or her rescuer. *can be no prestige without mystery, for familiarity*

And mass love equals charisma. How else to explain the love ordinary Rus- *breeds contempt*. . . . *I*n sians felt for a man as emotionless and unexciting as Vladimir Lenin. *the design, the demeanor*

and the mental operations

of a leader there must

always be a "something"

The guru. According to the beliefs of the Theosophical Society, every two *which others cannot* thousand years or so the spirit of the World Teacher, Lord Maitreya, *inhab- altogether fathom, which* its the body of a human. First there was Sri Krishna, born two thousand *puzzles them, stirs them, and rivets their*

years before Christ; then there was Jesus himself; and at the start of the *attention . . . to hold in* twentieth century another incarnation was due. One day in 1909, the *reserve some piece of secret* theosophist Charles Leadbeater saw a boy on an Indian beach and had an *knowledge which may any moment intervene, and the*

epiphany: this fourteen-year-old lad, Jiddu Krishnamurti, would be the *more effectively from being* World Teacher's next vehicle. Leadbeater was struck by the simplicity of *in the nature of a surprise*. the boy, who seemed to lack the slightest trace of selfishness. The members *The latent faith of the*

of the Theosophical Society agreed with his assessment and adopted this *masses will do the rest. Once the leader has been*

scraggly underfed youth, whose teachers had repeatedly beaten him for stu- *fudged capable of adding* pidity. They fed and clothed him and began his spiritual

instruction. The *the weight of his* scruffy urchin turned into a devilishly handsome young man.

personality to the known

factors of any situation, the

In 1911, the theosophists formed the Order of the Star in the East, a *ensuing hope and* group intended to prepare the way for the coming of the World Teacher. *confidence will add* Krishnamurti was made head of the order. He was taken to England, where *immensely to the faith reposed in him.*

his education continued, and everywhere he went he was pampered and revered. His air of simplicity and contentment could not help but impress.

—CHARLES DE GAULLE, *THE*

E D G E OF THE SWORD, IN DAVID

Soon Krishnamurti began to have visions. In 1922 he declared, "I have *SCHOENBRUN, THE THREE*

drunk at the fountain of Joy and eternal Beauty. I am God-intoxicated." *LIVES OF CHARLES DE GAULLE*

Over the next few years he had psychic experiences that the theosophists interpreted as visits from the World Teacher. But Krishnamurti had actually had a different kind of revelation: the truth of the universe came from within. No god, no guru, no dogma could ever make one realize it. He himself was no god or messiah, but just another man. The reverence that he was treated with disgusted him. In 1929, much to his followers' shock, he disbanded the Order of the Star and resigned from the Theosophical Society.

And so Krishnamurti became a philosopher, determined to spread the

truth he had discovered: you must be simple, removing the screen of language and past experience. Through these means anyone could attain contentment of the kind that radiated from Krishnamurti. The theosophists abandoned him but his following grew larger than ever. In California, where he spent much of his time, the interest in him verged on cultic adoration. The poet Robinson Jeffers said that whenever Krishnamurti entered a room you could feel a brightness filling the space. The writer Aldous Huxley met him in Los Angeles and fell under his spell. Hearing him speak, he wrote: "It was like listening to the discourse of the Buddha—

such power, such intrinsic authority." The man radiated enlightenment. The actor John Barrymore asked him to play the role of Buddha in a film. *110 • The Art of Seduction*

Only a month after Evita's

(Krishnamurti politely declined.) When he visited India, hands would *death, the newspaper*

reach out from the crowd to try to touch him through the open car window *vendors' union put forward* down. People prostrated themselves before him.

her name for canonization,

and although this gesture

Repulsed by all this adoration, Krishnamurti grew more and more *de was an isolated one and* tached. He even talked about himself in the third person. In fact, the ability *was never taken seriously*

to disengage from one's past and view the world anew was part of his *phi by the Vatican, the idea of* losophy, yet once again the effect was the opposite of what he expected: *Evita's holiness remained*

with many people and was

the affection and reverence people felt for him only grew. His followers *reinforced by the* fought jealously for signs of his favor. Women in particular fell deeply in *publication of devotional*

love with him, although he was a lifelong celibate.

literature subsidized by

the government; by the

renaming of cities, schools,

Krishnamurti had no desire to be a guru or a Charismatic, but he inadvertently *and subway stations; and* tently discovered a law of human psychology that disturbed him. People do *by the stamping of*

medallions, the casting

not want to hear that your power comes from years of effort or discipline. *of busts, and the issuing of* They prefer to think that it comes from your personality, your character, *ceremonial stamps. The*

something you were born with. They also hope that proximity to the guru *time of the evening news*

broadcast was changed from

or Charismatic will make some of that power rub off on them. They did *8:30 P.M. to 8:25 P.M.,*

not want to have to read Krishnamurti's books, or to spend years practicing *the time when Evita had*

his lessons—they simply wanted to be near him, soak up his aura, hear him *"passed into immortality,"*

speak, feel the light that entered the room with him. Krishnamurti advo *and each month there were torch-lit processions on the*

cated simplicity as a way of opening up to the truth, but his own simplicity *twenty-sixth of the month*, just allowed people to see what they wanted in him, attributing powers to *the day of her death. On*

him that he not only denied but ridiculed.

the first anniversary of her

death, La P r e n s a printed a

This is the guru effect, and it is surprisingly simple to create. The aura *story about one of its* you are after is not the fiery one of most Charismatics, but one of incan *readers seeing Evita's face* descente, enlightenment. An enlightened person has understood some *in the face of the moon, and after this there were*

thing that makes him or her content, and this contentment radiates outward. *many more such sightings*

That is the appearance you want: you do not need anything or anyone, you *reported in the newspapers.*

are fulfilled. People are naturally drawn to those who emit happiness; *For the most part, official*

maybe they can catch it from you. The less obvious you are, the better: let *publications stopped short*

of claiming sainthood for people conclude that you are happy, rather than hearing it from you. Let *her, but their restraint was*

them see it in your unhurried manner, your gentle smile, your ease and *not always convincing. . .*

comfort. Keep your words vague, letting people imagine what they will. *In the calendar for 1953 of*

the Buenos Aires

Remember: being aloof and distant only stimulates the effect. People *newspaper vendors, as in* will fight for the slightest sign of your interest. A guru is content and

*other unofficial images,
detached—a deadly Charismatic combination.*

*she was depicted in the
traditional blue robes of the
Virgin, her hands crossed,
her sad head to one side*

The drama saint. It began on the radio. Throughout the late 1930s and *and surrounded by a halo.*

early 1940s, Argentine women would hear the plaintive, musical voice of

— N I C H O L A S FRASER AND

Eva Duarte in one of the lavishly produced soap operas that were so popular at the time. She never made you laugh, but how often she could make you cry—with the complaints of a betrayed lover, or the last words of Marie Antoinette. The very thought of her voice made you shiver with emotion. And she was pretty, with her flowing blond hair and her serious face, which was often on the covers of the gossip magazines.

The Charismatic • 111

In 1943, those magazines published a most exciting story: Eva had *As for me, I have the gift* begun an affair with one of the most dashing men in the new military of *electrifying men.* government, Colonel Juan Perón. Now Argentines heard her doing propaganda—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, IN

ganda spots for the government, lauding the "New Argentina" that glorified PIETER GEYL, NAPOLEON: FOR

AND AGAINST

tended in the future. And finally, this fairy tale story reached its perfect conclusion: in 1945 Juan and Eva married, and the following year, the handsome colonel, after many trials and tribulations (including a spell in *I do not pretend to be a* prison, from which he was freed by the efforts of his devoted wife) was *divine man, but I do* elected president. He was a champion of the *descamisados*—the "shirtless ones," the workers and the poor, just as his wife was. Only twenty-six at the *divine power, and divine prophecy. I am not*

time, she had grown up in poverty herself.

educated, nor am I an

Now that this star was the first lady of the republic, she seemed to *expert in any particular* change. She lost weight, most definitely; her outfits became less flamboy-*field*—but *I am sincere and my sincerity is my*

ant, even downright austere; and that beautiful flowing hair was now pulled *credentials*. back, rather severely. It was a shame—the young star had grown up. But as —MALCOLM X, QUOTED IN

Argentines saw more of the new Evita, as she was now known, her new EUGENE VICTORWOLFENSTEIN, look affected them more strongly. It was the look of a saintly, serious *THE VICTIMS OF DEMOCRACY*:

woman, one who was indeed what her husband called the "Bridge of *MALCOLM X AND THIS BLACK*

REVOLUTION

Love" between himself and his people. She was now on the radio all the time, and listening to her was as emotional as ever, but she also spoke magnificently in public. Her voice was lower and her delivery slower; she stabbed the air with her fingers, reached out as if to touch the audience. And her words pierced you to the core: "I left my dreams by the wayside in order to watch over the dreams of others. . . . I now place my soul at the side of the soul of my people. I offer them all my energies so that my body may be a bridge erected toward the happiness of all. Pass over it . . . toward the supreme destiny of the new fatherland."

It was no longer only through magazines and the radio that Evita made herself felt. Almost everyone was personally touched by her in some way. Everyone seemed to know someone who had met her, or who had visited her in her office, where a line of supplicants wound its way through the hallways to her door. Behind her desk she sat, so calm and full of love. Film crews recorded her acts of charity: to a woman who had lost everything, Evita would give a house; to one with a sick child, free care in the finest hospital. She worked so hard, no wonder rumor had it that she was ill. And everyone heard of her visits to the shanty towns and to hospitals for the poor, where, against the wishes of her staff, she would kiss people with all kinds of maladies (lepers, syphilitic men, etc.) on the cheek. Once an assistant appalled by this habit tried to dab Evita's lips with alcohol, to sterilize them. This saint of a woman grabbed the bottle and smashed it against the wall.

Yes, Evita was a saint, a living madonna. Her appearance alone could heal the sick. And when she died of cancer, in 1952, no outsider to Argentina could possibly understand the sense of grief and loss she left behind. For some, the country never recovered.

* * *

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Most of us live in a semi-somnambulistic state: we do our daily tasks and the days fly by. The two exceptions to this are childhood and those moments when we are in

love. In both cases, our emotions are more engaged, more open and active. And we equate feeling emotional with feeling more alive. A public figure who can affect people's emotions, who can make them feel communal sadness, joy, or hope, has a similar effect. An appeal to the emotions is far more powerful than an appeal to reason.

Eva Perón knew this power early on, as a radio actress. Her tremulous voice could make audiences weep; because of this, people saw in her great charisma. She never forgot the experience. Her every public act was framed in dramatic and religious motifs. Drama is condensed emotion, and the Catholic religion is a force that reaches into your childhood, hits you where you cannot help yourself. Evita's uplifted arms, her staged acts of charity, her sacrifices for the common folk—all this went straight to the heart. It was not her goodness alone that was charismatic, although the appearance of goodness is alluring enough. It was her ability to dramatize her goodness.

You must learn to exploit the two great purveyors of emotion: drama and religion. Drama cuts out the useless and banal in life, focusing on moments of pity and terror; religion deals with matters of life and death. Make your charitable actions dramatic, give your loving words religious import, bathe everything in rituals and myths going back to childhood. Caught up in the emotions you stir, people will see over your head the halo of charisma.

The deliverer. In Harlem in the early 1950s, few African-Americans knew much about the Nation of Islam, or ever stepped into its temple. The Nation preached that white people were descended from the devil and that someday Allah would liberate the black race. This doctrine had little meaning for Harlemites, who went to church for spiritual solace and turned in practical matters to their local politicians. But in 1954, a new minister for the Nation of Islam arrived in Harlem.

The minister's name was Malcolm X, and he was well-read and eloquent, yet his gestures and words were angry. Word spread: whites had lynched Malcolm's father. He had grown up in a juvenile facility, then had survived as a small-time hustler before being arrested for burglary and spending six years in prison. His short life (he was only twenty-nine at the time) had been one long run-in with the law, yet look at him now—so confident and educated. No one had helped him; he had done it all on his own. Harlemites began to see Malcolm X everywhere, handing out fliers, addressing the young. He would stand outside their churches, and as the congregation dispersed, he would point to the preacher and say, "He represents the white man's god; I represent the black man's god." The curious began to come to hear him preach at a Nation of Islam temple. He would ask them to look at the actual conditions of their lives: "When you get *The Charismatic* • 113

through looking at where you live, then . . . take a walk across Central Park," he would tell them. "Look at the white man's apartments. Look at his Wall Street!" His words were powerful, particularly coming from a minister.

In 1957, a young Muslim in Harlem witnessed the beating of a

drunken black man by several policemen. When the Muslim protested, the police pummeled him senseless and carted him off to jail. An angry crowd gathered

outside the police station, ready to riot. Told that only Malcolm X could forestall violence, the police commissioner brought him in and told him to break up the mob. Malcolm refused. Speaking more temperately, the commissioner begged him to reconsider. Malcolm calmly set conditions for his cooperation: medical care for the beaten Muslim, and proper punishment for the police officers. The commissioner reluctantly agreed. Outside the station, Malcolm explained the agreement and the crowd

dispersed. In Harlem and around the country, he was an overnight hero—finally a man who took action. Membership in his temple soared.

Malcolm began to speak all over the United States. He never read from a text; looking out at the audience, he made eye contact, pointed his finger. His anger was obvious, not so much in his tone—he was always controlled and articulate—as in his fierce energy, the veins popping out on his neck. Many earlier black leaders had used cautious words, and had asked their followers to deal patiently and politely with their social lot, no matter how unfair. What a relief Malcolm was. He ridiculed the racists, he ridiculed the liberals, he ridiculed the president; no white person escaped his scorn. If whites were violent, Malcolm said, the language of violence should be spoken back to them, for it was the only language they understood. "Hostility is good!" he cried out. "It's been bottled up too long." In response to the growing popularity of the nonviolent leader Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm said, "Anybody can sit. An old woman can sit. A coward can sit. . . . It takes a man to stand."

Malcolm X had a bracing effect on many who felt the same anger he did but were frightened to express it. At his funeral—he was assassinated in 1965, at one of his speeches—the actor Ossie Davis delivered the eulogy before a large and emotional crowd: "Malcolm," he said, "was our own black shining prince."

Malcolm X was a Charismatic of Moses' kind: he was a deliverer. The power of this sort of Charismatic comes from his or her expression of dark emotions that have built up over years of oppression. In doing so, the deliverer provides an opportunity for the release of bottled-up emotions by other people—of the hostility masked by forced politeness and smiles. Deliverers have to be one of the suffering crowd, only more so: their pain must be exemplary. Malcolm's personal history was an integral part of his charisma. His lesson—that blacks should help themselves, not wait for whites to lift them up—meant a great deal more because of his own years in prison, and because he had followed his own doctrine by educating him-*114 • The Art of Seduction* self, lifting himself up from the bottom. The deliverer must be a living example of personal redemption. The essence of charisma is an overpowering emotion that communicates itself in your gestures, In your tone of voice, in subtle signs that are the more powerful for being unspoken. You feel something more deeply than others, and no emotion is more powerful and more capable of creating a charismatic reaction than hatred, particularly if it comes from deeprooted feelings of oppression. Express what others are afraid to express and they will see great power in you. Say what they want to say but cannot. Never be afraid of going too far. If you represent a release from oppression, you have the

leeway to go still farther. Moses spoke of violence, of destroying every last one of his enemies. Language like this brings the oppressed together and makes them feel more alive. This is not, however, something that is uncontrollable on your part. Malcolm X felt rage from early on, but only in prison did he teach himself the art of oratory, and how to channel his emotions. Nothing is more charismatic than the sense that someone is struggling with great emotion rather than simply giving in to it.

The Olympian actor. On January 24, 1960 an insurrection broke out in Algeria, then still a French colony. Led by right-wing French soldiers, its purpose was to forestall the proposal of President Charles de Gaulle to grant Algeria the right of self-determination. If necessary, the insurrectionists would take over Algeria in the name of France. For several tense days, the seventy-year-old de Gaulle maintained a strange silence. Then on January 29, at eight in the evening, he appeared on French national television. Before he had uttered a word, the audience was astonished, for he wore his old uniform from World War II, a uniform that everyone recognized and that created a strong emotional response. De Gaulle had been the hero of the resistance, the savior of the country at its darkest moment. But that uniform had not been seen for quite some time. Then de Gaulle spoke, reminding his public, in his cool and confident manner, of all they had accomplished together in liberating France from the Germans. Slowly he moved from these charged patriotic issues to the rebellion in Algeria, and the affront it presented to the spirit of the liberation. He finished his address by repeating his famous words of June 18, 1940: "Once again I call all Frenchmen, wherever they are, whatever they are, to reunite with France. *Vive la République! Vive la France!*" The speech had two purposes. It showed that de Gaulle was determined not to give an inch to the rebels, and it reached for the heart of all patriotic Frenchmen, particularly in the army. The insurrection quickly died, and no one doubted the connection between its failure and de

Gaulle's performance on television.

The following year, the French voted overwhelmingly in favor of Algerian self-determination. On April 11, 1961, de Gaulle gave a press conference in which he made it clear that France would soon grant the *The Charismatic • 115*

country full independence. Eleven days later, French generals in Algeria issued a communique stating that they had taken over the country and declaring a state of siege. This was the most dangerous moment of all: faced with Algeria's imminent independence, these right-wing generals would go all the way. A civil war could break out, toppling de Gaulle's government. The following night, de Gaulle appeared once again on television, once again wearing his old uniform. He mocked the generals, comparing them to a South American junta. He talked calmly and sternly. Then, suddenly, at the very end of the address, his voice rose and even trembled as he called out to the audience: "*Françaises, Français, aidez-moi!*" ("Frenchwomen, Frenchmen, help me!") It was the most stirring moment of all his television appearances. French soldiers in Algeria, listening on transistor radios, were overwhelmed. The next day they held a mass demonstration in favor of de Gaulle. Two days later the generals surrendered. On July 1, 1962, de Gaulle proclaimed Algeria's independence.

In 1940, after the German invasion of France, de Gaulle escaped to England to recruit an army that would eventually return to France for the liberation. At the beginning, he was alone, and his mission seemed hopeless. But he had the support of Winston Churchill, and with Churchill's blessing he gave a series of radio talks that the BBC broadcast to France. His strange, hypnotic voice, with its dramatic tremolos, would enter French living rooms in the evenings. Few of his listeners even knew what he looked like, but his tone was so confident, so stirring, that he recruited a silent army of believers. In person, de Gaulle was a strange, brooding man whose confident manner could just as easily irritate as win over. But over the radio that voice had intense charisma. De Gaulle was the first great master of modern media, for he easily transferred his dramatic skills to television, where his iciness, his calmness, his total self-possession, made audiences feel both comforted and inspired.

The world has grown more fractured. A nation no longer comes together on the streets or in the squares; it is brought together in living rooms, where people watching television all over the country can simultaneously be alone and with others. Charisma must now be communicable over the airwaves or it has no power. But it is in some ways easier to project on television, both because television makes a direct one-on-one appeal (the Charismatic seems to address *you*) and because charisma is fairly easy to fake for the few moments you spend in front of the camera. As de Gaulle understood, when appearing on television it is best to radiate calmness and control, to use dramatic effects sparingly. De Gaulle's overall iciness made doubly effective the brief moments in which he raised his voice, or let loose a biting joke. By remaining calm and underplaying it, he hypnotized his audience. (Your face can express much more if your voice is less strident.) He conveyed emotion visually—the uniform, the setting—and through the use of certain charged words: the liberation, Joan of Arc. The less he strained for effect, the more sincere he appeared.

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All this must be carefully orchestrated. Punctuate your calmness with surprises; rise to a climax; keep things short and terse. The only thing that cannot be faked is self-confidence, the key component to charisma since the days of Moses. Should the camera lights betray your insecurity, all the tricks in the world will not put your charisma back together again.

Symbol: *The Lamp. Invisible to the eye, a current flowing through a wire in a glass vessel generates a heat that*

turns into candescence. All we see is the glow.

In the prevailing darkness, the Lamp

lights the way.

Dangers

On a pleasant May day in 1794, the citizens of Paris gathered in a park for the Festival of the Supreme Being. The focus of their attention was Maximilien de Robespierre, head of the Committee of Public Safety, and the man who had thought up the festival in the first place. The idea was simple: to combat atheism, "to recognize the existence of a Supreme Being and the Immortality of the Soul as the guiding forces of the universe." It was Robespierre's day of triumph. Standing before the masses in his sky-blue suit and white stockings, he initiated the festivities. The crowd adored him; after all, he had safeguarded the purposes of the French Revolution through the intense politicking that had followed it. The year before, he had initiated the Reign of Terror, which cleansed the revolution of its enemies by sending them to the guillotine. He had also helped guide the country through a war against the Austrians and the Prussians. What made crowds, and particularly women, love him was his incorruptible virtue (he lived very modestly), his refusal to compromise, the passion for the revolution that was evident in everything he did, and the romantic language of his speeches, which could not fail to inspire. He was a god. The day was beautiful and augured a great future for the revolution.

Two months later, on July 26, Robespierre delivered a speech that he *The Charismatic* • 117

thought would ensure his place in history, for he intended to hint at the end of the Terror and a new era for France. Rumor also had it that he was to call for a last handful of people to be sent to the guillotine, a final group that threatened the safety of the revolution. Mounting the rostrum to address the country's governing convention, Robespierre wore the same clothes he had worn on the day of the festival. The speech was long, almost three hours, and included an impassioned description of the values and virtues he had helped protect. There was also talk of conspiracies, treachery, unnamed enemies. The response was enthusiastic, but a little less so than usual. The speech had tired many representatives. Then a lone voice was heard, that of a man named Bourdon, who spoke against printing Robespierre's speech, a veiled sign of disapproval. Suddenly others stood up on all sides, and accused him of vagueness: he had talked of conspiracies and threats without naming the guilty. Asked to be specific, he refused, preferring to name names later on. The next day Robespierre stood to defend his speech, and the representatives shouted him down. A few hours later, he was the one sent to the guillotine. On July 28, amid a gathering of citizens who seemed to be in an even more festive mood than at the Festival of the Supreme Being, Robespierre's head fell into the basket, to resounding cheers. The Reign of Terror was over. Many of those who seemed to admire Robespierre actually harbored a

gnawing resentment of him—he was *so* virtuous, *so* superior, it was oppressive. Some of these men had plotted against him, and were waiting for the slightest sign of weakness—which appeared on that fateful day when he gave his last speech. In refusing to name his enemies, he had shown either a desire to end the bloodshed or a fear that they would strike at him before he could have them killed. Fed by the conspirators, this one spark turned into fire. Within two days, first a governing body and then a nation turned against a Charismatic who two months before had been revered.

Charisma is as volatile as the emotions it stirs. Most often it stirs sentiments of love. But such feelings are hard to maintain. Psychologists talk of

"erotic fatigue"—the moments after love in which you feel tired of it, resentful. Reality creeps in, love turns to hate. Erotic fatigue is a threat to all Charismatics. The Charismatic often wins love by acting the savior, rescuing people from some difficult circumstance, but once they feel secure, charisma is less seductive to them. Charismatics need danger and risk. They are not plodding bureaucrats; some of them deliberately keep danger going, as de Gaulle and Kennedy were wont to do, or as Robespierre did through the Reign of Terror. But people tire of this, and at your first sign of weakness they turn on you. The love they showed before will be

matched by their hatred now.

The only defense is to master your charisma. Your passion, your anger, your confidence make you charismatic, but too much charisma for too long creates fatigue, and a desire for calmness and order. The better kind of *118 • The Art of Seduction*

charisma is created consciously and is kept under control. When you need to you can glow with confidence and fervor, inspiring the masses. But when the adventure is over, you can settle into a routine, turning the heat, not out, but down.

(Robespierre may have been planning that move, but it came a day too late.) People will admire your self-control and adaptability. Their love affair with you will move closer to the habitual affection of a man and wife. You will even have the leeway to look a little boring, a little simple—a role that can also seem charismatic, if played correctly. Remember: charisma depends on success, and the best way to maintain success, after the initial charismatic rush, is to be practical and even cautious. Mao Zedong was a distant, enigmatic man who for many had an awe-inspiring charisma. He suffered many setbacks that would have spelled the end of a less clever man, but after each reversal he retreated, becoming practical, tolerant, flexible; at least for a while. This protected him from the dangers of a counterreaction.

There is another alternative: to play the armed prophet. According to Machiavelli, although a prophet may acquire power through his charismatic personality, he cannot long survive without the strength to back it up. He needs an army. The masses will tire of him; they will need to be forced. Being an armed prophet may not literally involve arms, but it demands a forceful side to your character, which you can back up with action. Unfortunately this means being merciless with your enemies for as long as you retain power. And no one creates more bitter enemies than the Charismatic. Finally, there is nothing more dangerous than succeeding a Charismatic. These characters are unconventional, and their rule is personal in style, being stamped with the wildness of their personalities. They often leave chaos in their wake. The one who follows after a Charismatic is left with a mess, which the people, however, do not see. They miss their inspirer and blame the successor. Avoid this situation at all costs. If it is unavoidable, do not try to continue what the Charismatic started; go in a new direction. By being practical, trustworthy, and plain-speaking, you can often generate a strange kind of charisma through contrast. That was how Harry Truman not only survived the legacy of Roosevelt but established his own type of charisma.

the ⚜ Star

*Daily life is harsh, and most of us
constantly seek escape from it in fantasies and
dreams. Stars feed on this weakness; standing
out from others through a distinctive and appeal-
ing style, they make us want to watch them. At
the same time, they are vague and ethereal,
keeping their distance, and letting us imagine
more than is there. Their dreamlike quality
works on our unconscious; we are not even
aware how much we imitate them. Learn to be-
come an object of fascination by projecting the
glittering but elusive presence of the Star.*

The Fetishistic Star

One day in 1922, in Berlin, Germany, a casting call went out for the part of a voluptuous young woman in a film called *Tragedy of Love*. Of the hundreds of struggling young actresses who showed up, most would do anything to get the casting director's attention, including exposing themselves. There was one young woman in the line, however, who was simply dressed, and performed none of the other girls' desperate antics. Yet she stood out anyway.

The cool, bright face which

didn't ask for anything,

The girl carried a puppy on a leash, and had draped an elegant necklace *which simply existed*, around the puppy's neck. The casting director noticed her immediately. He *waiting—i t was an empty* watched her as she stood in line, calmly holding the dog in her arms and face, *he thought; a face that could change with any*

keeping to herself. When she smoked a cigarette, her gestures were slow wind of expression. One and suggestive. He was fascinated by her legs and face, the sinuous way she could dream into it moved, the hint of coldness in her eyes. By the

time she had come to the *anything. It was like a beautiful empty house* front, he had already cast her. Her name was Marlene Dietrich. *waiting for carpets and*

By 1929, when the Austrian-American director Josef von Sternberg arrived in Berlin to begin work on the film *The Blue Angel*, the twenty-possibilities—*it could become a palace or a*

seven-year-old Dietrich was well known in the Berlin film and theater *brothel. It depended on the world. The Blue Angel* was to be about a woman called Lola-Lola who preys *one who filled it. How sadistically* on men, and all of Berlin's best actresses wanted the part—except, *limited by comparison was* apparently, Dietrich, who made it known that she thought the role demeaned *all that was already completed and labeled.*

ing; von Sternberg should choose from the other actresses he had in mind.

— E R I C H M A R I A REMARQUE,

Shortly after arriving in Berlin, however, von Sternberg attended a performance of a musical to watch a male actor he was considering for *The Blue ARCH OF TRIUMPH*

Angel The star of the musical was Dietrich, and as soon as she came onstage, von Sternberg found that he could not take his eyes off her. She stared at him directly, insolently, like a man; and then there were those legs, *Marlene Dietrich is not an actress, like Sarah Bernhardt; she is a myth,*

about the actor he had come to see. He had found his Lola-Lola.

like Phryne.

Von Sternberg managed to convince Dietrich to take the part, and immediately—ANDRÉ: MALRAUX, QUOTED IN

mediately he went to work, molding her into the Lola of his imagination. EDGAR MORIN, *THE STARS*, He changed her hair, drew a silver line down her nose to make it seem TRANSLATED BY RICHARD

HOWARD

thinner, taught her to look at the camera with the insolence he had seen onstage. When filming began, he created a lighting system just for her—a light that tracked her wherever she went, and was strategically heightened *When Pygmalion saw by gauze and smoke*. Obsessed with his "creation," he followed her every- *these women, living such where*. No one else could go near her.

wicked lives, he was

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revolted by the many faults

The Blue Angel was a huge success in Germany. Audiences were fasci *which nature has nated with Dietrich*: that cold, brutal stare as she spread her legs over a *implanted in the female stool*, baring her underwear; her effortless way of commanding attention *sex, and long lived a*

bachelor existence, without

on screen. Others besides von Sternberg became obsessed with her. A man *any wife to share his home*.

dying of cancer, Count Sascha Kolowrat, had one last wish: to see Mar *But meanwhile, with lene's legs in person*. Dietrich obliged, visiting him in the hospital and lift *marvelous artistry, he* ing up her skirt; he sighed and said "Thank you. Now I can die happy." *skillfully carved a snowy*

ivory statue. He made it

Soon Paramount Studios brought Dietrich to Hollywood, where everyone *lovelier than any woman* was quickly talking about her. At a party, all eyes would turn toward her *born, and fell in love with* when she came into the room. She would be escorted by the most hand *his own creation. The statue had all the* some men in Hollywood, and would be wearing an outfit both beautiful *appearance of a real girl, so*

and unusual—gold-lame pajamas, a sailor suit with a yachting cap. The *that it seemed to be alive,*

next day the look would be copied by women all over town; next it would *to want to move, did not*

modesty forbid. So cleverly

spread to magazines, and a whole new trend would start.

did his art conceal its art.

The real object of fascination, however, was unquestionably Dietrich's *Pygmalion gazed in* face. What had enthralled von Sternberg was her blankness—with a simple *wonder, and in his heart* lighting trick he could make that face do whatever he wanted. Dietrich *there rose a passionate love*

for this image of a human

eventually stopped working with von Sternberg, but never forgot what he *form. Often he ran his* had taught her. One night in 1951, the director Fritz Lang, who was about *hands over the work,*

to direct her in the film *Rancho Notorious*, was driving past his office when *feeling it to see whether it*

was flesh or ivory, and

he saw a light flash in the window. Fearing a burglary, he got out of his car, *would not yet admit that*

crept up the stairs, and peeked through the crack in the door: it was Diet *ivory was all it was. He* rich taking pictures of herself in the mirror, studying her face from every *kissed the statue, and*

imagined that it kissed him

angle.

back, spoke to it and

embraced it, and thought Marlene Dietrich had a distance from her own self: she could study her *he felt his fingers sink into*

the limbs he touched, so face, her legs, her body, as if she were someone else. This gave her the *that he was afraid lest a*

ability to mold her look, transforming her appearance for effect. She could *bruise appear where he had*

pose in just the way that would most excite a man, her blankness letting *pressed the flesh.*

him see her according to his fantasy, whether of sadism, voluptuousness, or *Sometimes he addressed it*

in flattering speeches,

danger. And every man who met her, or who watched her on screen, fan *sometimes brought the kind* tasized endlessly about her. The effect worked on women as well;

in the *of presents that girls* words of one writer, she projected "sex without gender." But this self *enjoy. . . He dressed the limbs of his statue in*

distance gave her a certain coldness, whether on film or in person. She was *woman's robes, and put* like a beautiful object, something to fetishize and admire the way we ad *rings on its fingers, long mire a work of art. necklaces round its neck. . . All this finery*

The fetish is an object that commands an emotional response and that *became the image well, but* makes us breathe life into it. Because it is an object we can imagine what *it was no less lovely* ever we want to about it. Most people are too moody, complex, and reac *unadorned. Pygmalion then placed the statue on a*

tive to let us see them as objects that we can fetishize. The power of the *couch that was covered with*

Fetishistic Star comes from an ability to become an object, and not just any *cloths of Tynan purple,*

object but an object we fetishize, one that stimulates a variety of fantasies. *laid its head to rest on soft*

Fetishistic Stars are perfect, like the statue of a Greek god or goddess. The *down pillows, as if it could*

appreciate them, and called

effect is startling, and seductive. Its principal requirement is self-distance. If *it his bedfellow. • The* you see yourself as an object, then others will too. An ethereal, dreamlike *festival of Venus, which is*

air will heighten the effect.

celebrated with the greatest

The Star • 123

You are a blank screen. Float through life noncommittally and people *pomp all through Cyprus, will want to seize you and consume you. Of all the parts of your body that was now in progress, and heifers, their crooked horns*

draw this fetishistic attention, the strongest is the face; so learn to tune your *gilded for the occasion, had* face like an instrument, making it radiate a fascinating vagueness for effect. *fallen at the altar as the* And since you will have to stand out from other Stars in the sky, you will *axe struck their snowy* need to develop an attention-getting style. Dietrich was the great practi- *necks. Smoke was rising from the incense, when*

tioner of this art; her style was chic enough to dazzle, weird enough to en- *Pygmalion, having made* thrall. Remember, your own image and presence are

materials you can *his offering, stood by the* control. The sense that you are engaged in this kind of play will make *peo- altar and timidly prayed, saying: "If you gods can*

ple see you as superior and worthy of imitation.

give all things, may I have

as my wife, I pray—" he

She had such natural poise . . . such an economy of ges- did not dare to say: "the ture, that she became as absorbing as a Modigliani. . . .

ivory maiden," but

finished: "one like the

She had the one essential star quality: she could be mag-

ivory maid." However,

nificent doing nothing.

golden Venus, present at

her festival in person,

— B E R L I N A C T R E S S L I L I D A R V A S O N M A R L E N E D I E T R I C H

understood what his

prayers meant, and as a

sign that the gods were

The Mythic Star

kindly disposed, the flames

burned up three times,

shooting a tongue of fire

On July 2, 1960, a few weeks before that year's Democratic National *into the air. When* Convention, former President Harry Truman publicly stated that *Pygmalion returned home, he made straight for the*

John F. Kennedy—who had won enough delegates to be chosen his party's *statue of the girl he loved*, candidate for the presidency—was too young and inexperienced

for the *leaned over the couch, and* job. Kennedy's response was startling: he called a press conference, to be *kissed her. She seemed warm: he laid his lips on*

televised live, and nationwide, on July 4. The conference's drama was *hers again, and touched her* heightened by the fact that he was away on vacation, so that no one saw or *breast with his hands— at* heard from him until the event itself. Then, at the appointed hour, *his touch the ivory lost its* Kennedy strode into the conference room like a sheriff entering Dodge *hardness, and grew soft*. City. He began by stating that he had run in all of the state primaries, at —OVID,
METAMORPHOSES, T R A N S L A T E D B Y M A R Y M . I N N E S

considerable expense of money and effort, and had beaten his opponents fairly and squarely. Who was Truman to circumvent the democratic

process? "This is a young country," Kennedy went on, his voice getting louder, "founded by young men . . . and still young in heart. . . . The [*John F. Kennedy*] world is changing, the old ways will not do, . . . It is time for a new genera- *brought to television news and photojournalism the*

tion of leadership to cope with new problems and new opportunities." *components most prevalent* Even Kennedy's enemies agreed that his speech that day was stirring. He *in the world of film: star* turned Truman's challenge around: the issue was not his inexperience but *quality and mythic story. With his telegenic looks,*

the older generation's monopoly on power. His style was as eloquent as *skills at self presentation*, his words, for his performance evoked films of the time—Alan Ladd in *heroic fantasies, and Shane* confronting the corrupt older ranchers, or James Dean in *Rebel With-creative intelligence, Kennedy was brilliantly*

out a Cause. Kennedy even resembled Dean, particularly in his air of cool prepared to project a major detachment.

screen persona. He

A few months later, now approved as the Democrats' presidential can- *appropriated the discourses of mass culture, especially*

didate, Kennedy squared off against his Republican opponent, Richard of Hollywood, and Nixon, in their first nationally televised debate. Nixon was sharp; he knew transferred them to the 124 • The Art of Seduction

news. By this strategy he the answers to the questions and debated with aplomb, quoting statistics on *made the news like dreams* the accomplishments of the Eisenhower administration, in which he had *and like the movies—a*

served as vice-president. But beneath the glare of the cameras, on black and *realm in which images*

played out scenarios that white television, he was a ghastly figure—his five o'clock shadow covered *accorded with the viewer's* up with powder, streaks of sweat on his brow and cheeks, his face drooping *deepest yearnings. . . . with fatigue, his eyes*

shifting and blinking, his body rigid. What was he so *Never appearing in an actual film, but rather* worried about? The contrast with Kennedy was startling. If Nixon looked *turning the television*

only at his opponent, Kennedy looked out at the audience, making eye *apparatus into his screen*, contact with his viewers, addressing them in their living rooms as no politi *he became the greatest* cian had ever done before. If Nixon talked data and niggling points of de *movie star of the twentieth century*.

bate, Kennedy spoke of freedom, of building a new society, of recapturing

— J O H N H E L L M A N N, *T H E*

America's pioneer spirit. His manner was sincere and emphatic. His words *KENNEDY OBSESSION: THE*

were not specific, but he made his listeners imagine a wonderful future.
AMERICAN MYTH OF JFK

The day after the debate, Kennedy's poll numbers soared miraculously, and wherever he went he was greeted by crowds of young girls, screaming and jumping. His beautiful wife Jackie by his side, he was a kind of demo *But we have seen that*, cratic prince. Now his television appearances were events. He was in due *considered as a total* course elected president, and his inaugural address, also broadcast on televi *phenomenon, the history of sion*, was stirring. It was a cold and wintry day. In the background, Eisen *the stars repeats, in its own proportions, the history of*

hower sat huddled in coat and scarf, looking old and beaten. But Kennedy *the gods. Before the gods* stood hatless and coatless to address the nation: "I do not believe that any of (*before the stars*) the us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. *mythical universe (the*

screen) was peopled with The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will *specters or phantoms* light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can *endowed with the glamour* truly light the world."

and magic of the double. •

Several of these presences

Over the months to come Kennedy gave innumerable live press confer *have progressively assumed* ences before the TV cameras, something no previous president had dared. *body and substance, have* Facing the firing squad of lenses and questions, he was unafraid, speaking *taken form, amplified, and*
flowered into gods and

coolly and slightly ironically. What was going on behind those eyes, that *goddesses. And even as smile?* People wanted to know more about him. The

magazines teased its *certain major gods of the* readers with information—photographs of Kennedy with his wife and *ancient pantheons meta-*children, or playing football on the White House lawn, interviews creating *morphose themselves into*
hero -gods of salvation, th e a sense of him as a devoted family man, yet one who mingled as an equal *star-goddesses humanize* with glamorous stars. The images all melted together—the space race, the *themselves and become new* Peace Corps, Kennedy facing up to the Soviets during the Cuban missile *mediators between the*
fantastic world of dreams crisis just as he had faced up to Truman. *and man's daily life on*

After Kennedy was assassinated, Jackie said in an interview that before *earth. . . .* • *The heroes of*

he went to bed, he would often play the soundtracks to Broadway musicals, *the movies . . . are, in an*

obviously attenuated way,

and his favorite of these was *Camelot*, with its lines, "Don't let it be forgot / *mythological heroes in this*

that once there was a spot / For one brief shining moment / That was sense of becoming divine.

known as Camelot." There would be great presidents again, Jackie said, but *The star is the actor or never "another Camelot."* The name "Camelot" seemed to stick, making *actress who absorbs some of*

the heroic— i.e., divinized

Kennedy's thousand days in office resonate as myth.

and mythic— substance of

the hero or heroine of the Kennedy's seduction of the American public was conscious and calculated. *movies, and who in turn*

enriches this substance by

It was also more Hollywood than Washington, which was not surprising: *The Star* • 125

Kennedy's father, Joseph, had once been a movie producer, and Kennedy *his or her own contrib-* himself had spent time in Hollywood, hobnobbing with actors and trying ution. *When we speak of the myth of the star, we*

to figure out what made them stars. He was particularly fascinated with *mean first of all the process* Gary Cooper, Montgomery Clift, and Cary Grant; he often called Grant *of divinization which the* for advice.

movie actor undergoes, a

process that makes him the

Hollywood had found ways to unite the entire country around certain themes, or myths—often the great American myth of the West. The —EDGAR MORIN, *THE STARS*, great stars embodied mythic types: John Wayne the patriarch, Clift TRANSLATED BY RICHARD

the Promethean rebel, Jimmy Stewart the noble hero, Marilyn Monroe the HOWARD

siren. These were not mere mortals but gods and goddesses to be dreamed and fantasized about. All of Kennedy's actions were framed in the conventions of Hollywood. He did not argue with his opponents, he confronted *Age: 22, Sex: female*, them dramatically. He posed, and in visually fascinating ways—whether *Nationality: British*, with his wife, with his children, or alone onstage. He copied the facial *Profession: medical student*

" [*Deanna Durbin*] became

expressions, the presence, of a Dean or a Cooper. He did not discuss *my first and only screen* policy details but waxed eloquent about grand mythic themes, the kind *idol*. *I wanted to be as* that could unite a divided nation. And all this was calculated for television, *much like her as possible*, for Kennedy mostly existed as a televised image. That image haunted *both in my manners and clothes*. *Whenever I was to*

our dreams. Well before his assassination, Kennedy attracted fantasies of *get a new dress, I would* America's lost innocence with his call for a renaissance of the pioneer spirit, *find from my collection a* a New Frontier.

particularly nice picture of

Deanna and ask for a dress

Of all the character types, the Mythic Star is perhaps the most powerful *like she was wearing. I did* of all. People are divided by all kinds of consciously recognized categories—*my hair as much like hers* race, gender, class, religion, politics. It is impossible, then, to gain power on *as I could manage. If I found myself in any*

a grand scale, or to win an election, by drawing on conscious awareness; an *annoying or aggravating* appeal to any one group will only alienate another. Unconsciously, how- *situation . . . I found* ever, there is much we share. All of us are mortal, all of us know fear, all of *myself wondering what Deanna would do and*

us have been stamped with the imprint of parent figures; and nothing con- *modified my own reactions* jures up this shared experience more than myth. The patterns of myth, *accordingly*. . . . " • *Age*: born out of warring feelings of helplessness on the one hand and thirst for *26, Sex: female, Nation-* immortality on the other, are deeply engraved in us all.

ality: British "I only fell in

love once with a movie

Mythic Stars are figures of myth come to life. To appropriate their *actor. It was Conrad Veidt*. power, you must first study their physical presence—how they adopt a dis- *His magnetism and his tinctive style*, are cool and visually arresting. Then you must assume the *personality got me. His voice and gestures fascin-*

pose of a mythic figure: the rebel, the wise patriarch, the adventurer. (The *ated me. I hated him*, pose of a Star who has struck one of these mythic poses might do the trick.) *feared him, loved him*. Make these connections vague; they should never be obvious to the con *When he died it seemed to me that a vital part of my*

scious mind. Your words and actions should invite interpretation beyond *imagination died too, and* their surface appearance; you should seem to be dealing not with specific, *my world of dreams was* nitty-gritty issues and details but with matters of life and death, love and *bare. " hate, authority and chaos*. Your opponent, similarly, should be framed

—J. P. MAYER, *BRITISH*

not merely as an enemy for reasons of ideology or competition but as a vil
CINEMAS AND THEIR

AUDIENCES

lain, a demon. People are hopelessly susceptible to myth, so make yourself the hero of a great drama. And keep your distance—let people identify with you without being able to touch you. They can only watch and

dream.

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The savage worships idols

Jack's life had more to do with myth, magic, legend, saga,

of wood and stone; the

and story than with political theory or political science.

civilized man, idols of flesh

—JACQUELINE KENNEDY, A WEEK AFTER JOHN KENNEDY'S DEATH

and blood.

— G E O R G E BERNARD SHAW

Keys to the Character

When the eye's rays

encounter some clear, well-

polished object— be it Seduction is a form of persuasion that seeks to bypass consciousness, stirring the unconscious mind instead. The reason for this is simple: we are *burnished steel or glass or* so surrounded by stimuli that compete for our attention, bombarding us *water, a brilliant stone, or* with obvious messages, and by people who are overtly political and manipu *any other polished and gleaming substance* lative, that we are rarely charmed or deceived by them. We have grown *having luster, glitter, and* increasingly cynical. Try to persuade a person by appealing to their *con sparkle . . . those rays of* sciousness, by saying outright what you want, by showing all your cards, and *the eye are reflected back*, what hope do you have? You are just one more irritation to be tuned out. *and the observer then*

beholds himself and

To avoid this fate you must learn the art of insinuation, of reaching the *obtains an ocular vision of*

unconscious. The most eloquent expression of the unconscious is the *his own person. This is* dream, which is intricately connected to myth; waking from a dream, we *what you see when you*

look into a mirror; in that are often haunted by its images and ambiguous messages. Dreams obsess us *situation you are as it were* because they mix the real and the unreal. They are filled with real charac *looking at yourself through* ters, and often deal with real situations, yet they are delightfully irrational, *the eyes of another.*

pushing realities to the extremes of delirium. If everything in a dream were

—IBN HAZM, *THE RING OF*

THE D O V E : A TREATISE ON THE

realistic, it would have no power over us; if everything were unreal, we *ART AND PRACTICE OF ARAB*

would feel less involved in its pleasures and fears. Its fusion of the two is *LOVE*, TRANSLATED BY A . J .

what makes it haunting. This is what Freud called the "uncanny": some ARBERRY thing that seems simultaneously strange and familiar.

We sometimes experience the uncanny in waking life—in a *déjà vu*, a miraculous coincidence, a weird event that recalls a childhood experience. *The only important*

constellation of collective People can have a similar effect. The gestures, the words, the very being of *seduction produced* by men like Kennedy or Andy Warhol, for example, evoke both the real and *modern times* [*is*] *that of* the unreal: we may not realize it (and how could we, really), but they are *film stars or cinema* like dream figures to us. They have qualities that anchor them in reality—

idols. . . . They were our

only myth in an age sincerity, playfulness, sensuality—but at the same time their aloofness, their *incapable of generating* superiority, their almost surreal quality makes them seem like something *great myths or figures of* out of a movie.

seduction comparable to

those of mythology or art. •

These types have a haunting, obsessive effect on people. Whether in *The cinema's power lives in* public or in private, they seduce us, making us want to possess them both *its myth. Its stones, its* physically and psychologically. But how can we possess a person from a *psychological portraits*,

its imagination or realism, dream, or a movie star or political star, or even one of those real-life fasci the meaningful impressions nators, like a Warhol, who may cross our path? Unable to have them, we *it leaves—t hese are all* become obsessed with them—they haunt our thoughts, our dreams, our *secondary. Only the myth* fantasies. We imitate them unconsciously. The psychologist Sandor Fer *is powerful, and at the heart of the enczi* calls this "introjection": another person becomes part of our ego, we *cinematographic myth lies* internalize their character. That is the insidious seductive power of a Star, a *seduction—that of the power you can appropriate by making yourself into a cipher, a mix of the renowned seductive figure,*

a man or woman (but real and the unreal. Most people are hopelessly banal; that is, far too real. The Star • 127

What you need to do is etherealize yourself. Your words and actions seem *above all a woman) linked* to come from your unconscious—have a certain looseness to them. You *to the ravishing but specious power of the*

hold yourself back, occasionally revealing a trait that makes people wonder *cinematographic image* whether they really know you.

itself. . . . • The star is by

The Star is a creation of modern cinema. That is no surprise: film re- *no means an ideal or sublime being: she is*

creates the dream world. We watch a movie in the dark, in a semisomno-
artificial. . . . Her presence lent state. The images are real enough, and to varying degrees depict *serves to submerge all* realistic situations, but they are projections, flickering lights, images—we *sensibility and expression* know they are not real. It as if we were watching someone else's dream. It *beneath a ritual fascination with the void, beneath*

was the cinema, not the theater, that created the Star.

ecstasy of her gaze and the

On a theater stage, actors are far away, lost in the crowd, too real in *nullity of her smile. This is* their bodily presence. What enabled film to manufacture the Star was the *how she achieves mythical status and becomes subject*

close-up, which suddenly separates actors from their contexts, filling your *to collective rites of* mind with their image. The close-up seems to reveal something not *sacrificial adulation. • The* so much about the character they are playing but about themselves. We *ascension of the cinema idols, the masses'*

glimpse something of Greta Garbo herself when we look so closely into *divinities, was and remains* her face. Never forget this while fashioning yourself as a Star. First, you *a central story of modern* must have such a large presence that you can fill your target's mind the way *times. . . . There is no point in dismissing it as*

a close-up fills the screen. You must have a style or presence that makes you *merely the dreams of* stand out from everyone else. Be vague and dreamlike, yet not distant or *mystified masses. It is a* absent—you don't want people to be unable to focus on or remember you. *seductive occurrence. . . . •*

They have to be seeing you in their minds when you're not there.

To be sure, seduction in the

age of the masses is no

Second, cultivate a blank, mysterious face, the center that radiates Star- *longer like that of. . . . Les ness. This allows people to read into you whatever they want to, imagining Liaisons Dangereuses or they can see your character, even your soul. Instead of signaling moods and The Seducer's Diary, nor for that matter, like that*

emotions, instead of emoting or overemoting, the Star draws in interpreta- *found in ancient tions. That is the obsessive power in the face of Garbo or Dietrich, or even mythology, which of Kennedy, who molded his expressions on James Dean's.*

*undoubtedly contains the
stories richest in seduction.*

A living thing is dynamic and changing while an object or image is passive; *In these seduction is hot, sive, but in its passivity it stimulates our fantasies. A person can gain that while that of our modern power by becoming a kind of object. The great eighteenth-century charlatan Count Saint-Germain was in many ways a precursor of the Star. He mediums, that of the image would suddenly appear in town, no one knew from where; he spoke many and that of the languages, but his accent belonged to no single country. Nor was it clear masses. . . . • The great how old he was—not young, clearly, but his face had a healthy glow. The stars or seductresses never dazzle because of their count only went out at night. He always wore black, and also spectacular talent or intelligence, but jewels. Arriving at the court of Louis XV, he was an instant sensation; he because of their absence. reeked wealth, but no one knew its source. He made the king and Madame They are dazzling in their nullity, and in their de Pompadour believe he had fantastic powers, including even the ability to coldness—t he coldness of turn base matter into gold (the gift of the Philosopher's Stone), but he makeup and ritual never made any great claims for himself; it was all insinuation. He never hieraticism. . . . • These great seductive effigies are said yes or no, only perhaps. He would sit down for dinner but was never our masks, our Eastern seen eating. He once gave Madame de Pompadour a gift of candies in a Island statues. box that changed color and aspect depending on how she held it; this —JEAN BAUDRILLARD, entrancing object, she said, reminded her of the count himself. Saint- SEDUCTION, TRANSLATED BY*

Germain painted the strangest paintings anyone had ever seen—the colors BRIAN SINGER

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If you want to know all were so vibrant that when he painted jewels, people thought they were real. about Andy Warhol, just Painters were desperate to know his secrets but he never revealed them. He look at the surface of my would leave town as he had entered, suddenly and quietly. His greatest ad paintings and films and me, and there I am.

mirer was Casanova, who met him and never forgot him. When he died, *There's nothing behind it.*

no one believed it; years, decades, a century later, people were certain he

—A N D Y W A R H O L , QUOTED IN

was hiding somewhere. A person with powers like his never dies.

STEPHEN K O C H , *STARGAZER*:

The count had all the Star qualities. Everything about him was ambigu *THE LIFE, WORLD & FILMS OF*

ANDY WARHOL

ous and open to interpretation. Colorful and vibrant, he stood out from the crowd. People thought he was immortal, just as a star seems neither to age nor to disappear. His words were like his presence—fascinating, diverse, strange, their meaning unclear. Such is the power you can command by transforming yourself into a glittering object.

Andy Warhol too obsessed everyone who knew him. He had a distinctive style—those silver wigs—and his face was blank and mysterious. People never knew what he was thinking; like his paintings, he was pure surface. In the quality of their presence Warhol and Saint-Germain recall the great *trompe l'oeil* paintings of the seventeenth century, or the prints of M. C. Escher—fascinating mixtures of realism and impossibility, which make people wonder if they are real or imaginary.

A Star must stand out, and this may involve a certain dramatic flair, of the kind that Dietrich revealed in her appearances at parties. Sometimes, though, a more haunting, dreamlike effect can be created by subtle touches: the way you smoke a cigarette, a vocal inflection, a way of walking. It is often the little things that get under people's skin, and make them imitate you—the lock of hair over Veronica Lake's right eye, Cary Grant's voice, Kennedy's ironic smile. Although these nuances may barely register to the conscious mind, subliminally they can be as attractive as an object with a striking shape or odd color. Unconsciously we are strangely drawn to things that have no meaning beyond their fascinating appearance.

Stars make us want to know more about them. You must learn to stir

people's curiosity by letting them glimpse something in your private life, something that seems to reveal an element of your personality. Let them fantasize and imagine. A trait that often triggers this reaction is a hint of spirituality, which can be devilishly seductive, like James Dean's interest in Eastern philosophy and the occult. Hints of goodness and big-heartedness can have a similar effect. Stars are like the gods on Mount Olympus, who live for love and play. The things you love—people, hobbies, animals—

reveal the kind of moral beauty that people like to see in a Star. Exploit this desire by showing people peeks of your private life, the causes you fight for, the person you are in love with (for the moment).

Another way Stars seduce is by making us identify with them, giving us a vicarious thrill. This was what Kennedy did in his press conference about Truman: in positioning himself as a young man wronged by an older man, evoking an

archetypal generational conflict, he made young people identify with him. (The popularity in Hollywood movies of the figure of the disaffected, wronged adolescent helped him here.) The key is to represent a *The Star* • 129

type, as Jimmy Stewart represented the quintessential middle-American, Cary Grant the smooth aristocrat. People of your type will gravitate to you, identify with you, share your joy or pain. The attraction must be unconscious, conveyed not in your words but in your pose, your attitude. Now more than ever, people are insecure, and their identities are in flux. Help them fix on a role to play in life and they will flock to identify with you. Simply make your type dramatic, noticeable, and easy to imitate. The power you have in influencing people's sense of self in this manner is insidious and profound. Remember: everyone is a public performer. People never know exactly what you think or feel; they judge you on your appearance. You are an actor. And the most effective actors have an inner distance: like Dietrich, they can mold their physical presence as if they perceived it from the outside. This inner distance fascinates us. Stars are playful about themselves, always adjusting their image, adapting it to the times. Nothing is more laughable than an image that was fashionable ten years ago but isn't any more. Stars must always renew their luster or face the worst possible fate: oblivion.

Symbol: The

*Idol. A piece of stone carved into the
shape of a god, perhaps glittering with gold
and jewels. The eyes of the worshippers fill the stone
with life, imagining it to have real powers. Its shape allows
them to see what they want to see—a god—but it is actually just a piece of stone.
The god lives in their imaginations.*

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Dangers

Stars create illusions that are pleasurable to see. The danger is that people tire of them—the illusion no longer fascinates—and turn to another

Star. Let this happen and you will find it very difficult to regain your place in the galaxy. You must keep all eyes on you at any cost.

Do not worry about notoriety, or about slurs on your image; we are remarkably forgiving of our Stars. After the death of President Kennedy, all kinds of unpleasant truths came to light about him—the endless affairs, the addiction to risk and danger. None of this diminished his appeal, and in fact the public still considers him one of America's greatest presidents. Errol Flynn faced many scandals, including a notorious rape case; they only enhanced his rakish image. Once people have recognized a Star, any kind of publicity, even bad, simply feeds the obsession. Of course you can go too far: people like a Star to have a transcendent beauty, and too

much human frailty will eventually disillusion them. But bad publicity is less of a danger than disappearing for too long, or growing too distant. You cannot haunt people's dreams if they never see you. At the same time, you cannot let the public get too familiar with you, or let your image become predictable. People will turn against you in an instant if you begin to bore them, for boredom is the ultimate social evil.

Perhaps the greatest danger Stars face is the endless attention they elicit. Obsessive attention can become disconcerting and worse. As any attractive woman can attest, it is tiring to be gazed at all the time, and the effect can be destructive, as is shown by the story of Marilyn Monroe. The solution is to develop the kind of distance from yourself that Dietrich had—take the attention and idolatry with a grain of salt, and maintain a certain detachment from them. Approach your own image playfully. Most important, never become obsessed with the obsessive quality of people's interest in you.

the anti-*Seducer*

*Se-
ducers draw
you in by the fo-
cused, individualized atten-
tion they pay to you. Anti-Seducers
are the opposite: insecure, self-absorbed,
and unable to grasp the psychology of an-
other person, they literally repel. Anti-
Seducers have no self-awareness, and never
realize when they are pestering, imposing,
talking too much. They lack the subtlety
to create the promise of pleasure that seduc-
tion requires. Root out anti-seductive
qualities in yourself, and recognize them
in others—there is no pleasure or profit*

in dealing with the Anti-Seducer.

Typology of the Anti-Seducers

Anti-Seducers come in many shapes and kinds, but almost all of them share a single attribute, the source of their repellence: insecurity. We are all insecure, and we suffer for it. Yet we are able to surmount these feelings at times; a seductive engagement can bring us out of our usual selfabsorption, and to the degree that we seduce or are seduced, we feel charged and confident. Anti-Seducers, however, are insecure to such a degree that they cannot be drawn into the seductive process. Their needs, *remarked with a smile*:

"I promise you that our

their anxieties, their self-consciousness close them off. They interpret the *sensible courtier will never* slightest ambiguity on your part as a slight to their ego; they see the merest *act so stupidly to gain a* hint of withdrawal as a betrayal, and are likely to complain bitterly about it. *woman's favor.*" • *Cesare* It seems easy: Anti-Seducers repel, so be repelled—avoid them. Unfor- *Gonzaga replied*: *"Nor so stupidly as a gentleman I*

tunately, however, many Anti-Seducers cannot be detected as such at first *remember, of some repute, glance*. They are more subtle, and unless you are careful they will ensnare *whom to spare men's* you in a most unsatisfying relationship. You must look for clues to their *blushes I don't wish to mention by name.*" •

self-involvement and insecurity: perhaps they are ungenerous, or they argue *"Well, at least tell us what* with unusual tenacity, or are excessively judgmental. Perhaps they lavish *he did,*" *said the Duchess.* you with undeserved praise, declaring their love before knowing anything • *Then Cesare continued:*

"He was loved by a very

about you. Or, most important, they pay no attention to details. Since they *great lady, and at her* cannot see what makes you different, they cannot surprise you with *nu- request he came secretly to* a nced attention.

the town where she was.

After he had seen her and

It is critical to recognize anti-seductive qualities not only in others but *enjoyed her company for as* also in ourselves. Almost all of us have one or two of the Anti-Seducer's *long as she would let him* qualities latent in our character, and to the extent that we can consciously *in the time, he sighed and* root them out, we become more seductive. A lack of generosity, for in- *wept bitterly, to show the anguish he was suffering at*

stance, need not signal an Anti-Seducer if it is a person's only fault, but an *having to leave her, and he* ungenerous person is seldom truly attractive. Seduction implies

opening begged her never to forget yourself up, even if only for the purposes of deception; being unable to him; and then he added that she should pay for his give by spending money usually means being unable to give in general. *lodging at the inn, since it* Stamp ungenerosity out. It is an impediment to power and a gross sin in was she who had sent for seduction.

him and he thought it only

right, therefore, that he

It is best to disengage from Anti-Seducers early on, before they sink *shouldn't be involved in* their needy tentacles into you, so learn to read the signs. These are the any expense over the main types.

journey." • At this, all the

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ladies began to laugh and

The Brute. If seduction is a kind of ceremony or ritual, part of the plea *to say that the man* sure is its duration—the time it takes, the waiting that increases anticipa concerned hardly deserved tion. Brutes have no patience for such things; they are concerned only with the name of gentleman;

and many of the men felt their own pleasure, never with yours. To be patient is to show that you are as ashamed as he should

thinking of the other person, which never fails to impress. Impatience has have been, had he ever had

the opposite effect: assuming you are so interested in them you have no rea the sense to recognize such disgraceful behavior for son to wait, Brutes offend you with their egotism. Underneath that ego what it was. tism, too, there is often a gnawing sense of inferiority, and if you spurn

—BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE,

them or make them wait, they overreact. If you suspect you are dealing *THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER*,

with a Brute, do a test—make that person wait. His or her response will tell

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE BULL

you everything you need to know.

Let us see now how love is

The Suffocator. Suffocators fall in love with you before you are even half diminished. This happens aware of their existence. The trait is deceptive—you might think they have *through the easy*

accessibility of its found you overwhelming—but the fact is they suffer from an inner void, a *consolations, through one's*

deep well of need that cannot be filled. Never get involved with Suffoca *being able to see and* tors; they are almost impossible to free yourself from without trauma. They *converse lengthily with a*

lover, through a lover's

cling to you until you are forced to pull back, whereupon they smother you *unsuitable garb and gait*, with guilt. We tend to idealize a loved one, but love takes time to develop. *and by the sudden onset of* Recognize Suffocators by how quickly they adore you. To be so admired *poverty*. . . . • *Another*

cause of diminution of love may give a momentary boost to your ego, but deep inside you sense that *is the realization of the* their intense emotions are not related to anything you have done. Trust *notoriety of one's lover, and*

these instincts.

accounts of his miserliness,

A subvariant of the Suffocator is the Doormat, a person who slavishly *bad character, and general*

wickedness; also any affair imitates you. Spot these types early on by seeing whether they are capable *with another woman, even*

of having an idea of their own. An inability to disagree with you is a bad *if it involves no feelings of* sign.

love. Love is also

diminished if a woman

realizes that her lover is

foolish and undiscerning, or

The Moralizer. Seduction is a game, and should be undertaken with a *if she sees him going too far*

in demands of love, giving light heart. All is fair in love and seduction; morality never enters the pic *no thought to his partner's ture.* The character of the Moralizer, however, is rigid. These are people *modesty nor wishing to* who follow fixed ideas and try to make you bend to their standards. They *pardon her blushes.* A want to change you, to make you a better person, so they endlessly criticize *faithful lover ought to*

choose the harshest pains of and judge—that is their pleasure in life. In truth, their moral ideas stem *love rather than by his* from their own unhappiness, and mask their desire to dominate those *demands cause his partner* around them. Their inability to adapt and to enjoy makes them easy to rec *embarrassment, or take pleasure in spurning her* ognize; their mental rigidity may also be accompanied by a physical stiff *modesty; for one who ness.* It is hard not to take their criticisms personally so it is better to avoid *thinks only of the outcome* their presence and their poisoned comments. *of his own pleasure, and*

ignores the welfare of his

partner, should be called a

traitor rather than a lover. •

The Tightwad. Cheapness signals more than a problem with money. It is a *Love also suffers decrease if* sign of something constricted in a person's character—something that *the woman realizes that*

her lover is fearful in war,

keeps them from letting go or taking a risk. It is the most anti-seductive *The Anti-Seducer* • 135

trait of all, and you cannot allow yourself to give in to it. Most tightwads *or sees that he has no* do not realize they have a problem; they actually imagine that when they *patience, or is stained with the vice of pride.* There is

give someone some paltry crumb, they are being generous. Take a hard *nothing which appears* look at yourself—you are probably cheaper than you think. Try giving *more appropriate to the* more freely of both your money and yourself and you will see the seduc- *character of any lover than* tive potential in selective generosity. Of course you must keep your gener- *to be clad in the adornment of humility, utterly*

osity under control. Giving too much can be a sign of desperation, as if *untouched by the* you were trying to buy someone.

nakedness of pride. • Then

too the prolixity of a fool

or a madman often

diminishes love. There are

The Bumbler. Bumblers are self-conscious, and their self-consciousness *many keen to prolong their heightens* your own. At first you may think they are thinking about you, *crazy words in the presence of a woman, thinking that*

and so much so that it makes them awkward. In fact they are only thinking *they please her if they of themselves—worrying about how they look, or about the consequences employ foolish, ill-judged* for them of their attempt to seduce you. Their worry is usually contagious: *language, but in fact they soon you are worrying too, about yourself.* Bumblers rarely reach the final *are strangely deceived. Indeed, he who thinks that*

stages of a seduction, but if they get that far, they bungle that too. In *se- his foolish behavior pleases* duction, the key weapon is boldness, refusing the target the time to stop *a wise woman suffers from* and think. Bumblers have no sense of timing. You might find it amusing *the greatest poverty of sense.*

to try to train or educate them, but if they are still Bumblers past a certain age, the case is probably hopeless—they are incapable of getting outside —ANDREAS CAPELLANUS,"HOW

LOVE IS DIMINISHED,"

themselves.

TRANSLATED BY P. G. WALSH

The Windbag. The most effective seductions are driven by looks, indirect *Real men* \ *Shouldn't* actions, physical lures. Words have a place, but too much talk will generally *primp their good* break the spell, heightening surface differences and weighing things down. *looks. . . . \ Keep*

pleasantly clean, take

People who talk a lot most often talk about themselves. They have never *exercise, work up an* acquired that inner voice that wonders, Am I boring you? To be a Windbag *outdoor \ Tan; make quite* is to have a deep-rooted selfishness. Never interrupt or argue with these *sure that your toga fits *

types—that only fuels their windbaggery. At all costs learn to control your *And doesn't show spots; don't lace your shoes too*

own tongue.

tightly \ Or ignore any

*rusty buckles, or slop *

Around in too large a

fitting. Don't let some

The Reactor. Reactors are far too sensitive, not to you but to their own *incompetent barber \ Ruin*

egos. They comb your every word and action for signs of a slight to their *your looks: both hair and vanity*. If you strategically back off, as you sometimes must in seduction, *beard demand \ Expert attention. Keep your nails*

they will brood and lash out at you. They are prone to whining and *com- pared, and dirt-free; *

plaining, two very anti-seductive traits. Test them by telling a gentle joke or *Don't let those long hairs* story at their expense: we should all be able to laugh at ourselves a little, but *sprout \ In your nostrils*, the Reactor cannot. You can read the resentment in their eyes. Erase any *make sure your breath is never offensive, \ Avoid the*

reactive qualities in your own character—they unconsciously repel people. *rank male stench \ That*

wrinkles noses. . . . \ I was

about to warn you

[women] against rank

The Vulgarian. Vulgarians are inattentive to the details that are so impor- *goatish armpits \ And* tant in seduction. You can see this in their personal appearance—their *bristling hair on your legs, *

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But I'm not instructing

clothes are tasteless by any standard—and in their actions: they do not *hillbilly girls from the*

know that it is sometimes better to control oneself and refuse to give in to *Caucasus, \ Or Mysian*

one's impulses. Vulgarians will blab, saying anything in public. They have *river-hoydens—so what*

need \ To remind you not

no sense of timing and are rarely in harmony with your tastes. Indiscretion *to let your teeth get all*

is a sure sign of the Vulgarian (talking to others of your affair, for example); *discolored \ Through*

it may seem impulsive, but its real source is their radical selfishness, their *in neglect, or forget to wash *

Your hands every morning?

ability to see themselves as others see them. More than just avoiding Vul *You know how to brighten garians, you must make yourself their opposite—tact, style, and attention to your complexion \ With*

detail are all basic requirements of a seducer.

powder, add rouge to a

bloodless face, \ Skillfully

block in the crude outline

of an eyebrow, \ Stick a

Examples of the Anti-Seducer

patch on one flawless

cheek. \ You don't shrink

from lining your eyes with

1. Claudius, the step-grandson of the great Roman emperor Augustus, was *dark mascara \ Or a touch*

considered something of an imbecile as a young man, and was treated badly *of Cilician saffron. . . . \ by almost everyone in his family. His nephew Caligula, who became em But don't let your lover find all those jars and*

peror in A.D. 37, made it a sport to torture him, making him run around *bottles \ On your dressing-*

the palace at top speed as penance for his stupidity, having soiled sandals *table: the best \ Makeup*

tied to his hands at supper, and so on. As Claudius grew older, he seemed *remains unobtrusive. A*

to become even more slow-witted, and while all of his relatives lived under *face so thickly plastered* \

With pancake it runs

the constant threat of assassination, he was left alone. So it came as a great *down your sweaty neck* \ *Is*

surprise to everyone, including Claudius himself, that when, in A.D. 41, a *bound to create repulsion*.

cabal of soldiers assassinated Caligula, they also proclaimed Claudius em *And that goo from unwashed fleeces*— \ *peror*. Having no desire to rule, he delegated most of the governing to *Athenian maybe, but my*

confidantes (a group of freed slaves) and spent his time doing what he loved *dear, the smell!* — \ *That's*

best: eating, drinking, gambling, and whoring.

used for face-cream: avoid

it. When you have

Claudius's wife, Valeria Messalina, was one of the most beautiful

company \ *Don't dab stuff* women in Rome. Although he seemed fond of her, Claudius paid her no *on your pimples, don't start*

attention, and she started to have affairs. At first she was discreet, but over *cleaning your teeth*: \ *The*

result may be attractive, but

the years, provoked by her husband's neglect, she became more and more *the process is*

debauched. She had a room built for her in the palace where she enter *sickening*. . . . tained scores of men, doing her best to imitate the most notorious prosti— O V I D , *THE ART OF LOVE*, tute in Rome, whose name was written on the door. Any man who refused

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

her advances was put to death. Almost everyone in Rome knew about these frolics, but Claudius said nothing; he seemed oblivious.

So great was Messalina's passion for her favorite lover, Gaius Silius, that she decided to marry him, although both of them were married already. While Claudius was away, they held a wedding ceremony, authorized by a marriage contract that Claudius himself had been tricked into signing. After the ceremony, Gaius moved into the palace. Now the shock and disgust of the whole city finally forced Claudius into action, and he ordered the execution of Gaius and of Messalina's other lovers—but not of Messalina herself. Nevertheless, a gang of soldiers, inflamed by the scandal, hunted her down and stabbed her to death. When this was reported to the emperor, he merely ordered more wine and continued his meal. Several nights *The Anti-Seducer* • 137

later, to the amazement of his slaves, he asked why the empress was not *But if, like the winter cat* joining him for dinner.

upon the hearth, the lover

clings when he is

dismissed, and cannot bear

Nothing is more infuriating than being paid no attention. In the process of *to go, certain means must* seduction, you may have to pull back at times, subjecting your target to *be taken to make him* moments of doubt. But prolonged inattention will not only break the *se- understand; and these should be progressively*

ductive spell, it can create hatred. Claudius was an extreme of this behavior. *ruder and ruder, until they* His insensitivity was created by necessity: in acting like an imbecile, he hid *touch him to the quick of his ambition* and protected himself among dangerous competitors. But the *his flesh. • She should refuse him the bed, and*

insensitivity became second nature. Claudius grew slovenly, and no longer *jeer at him, and make him* noticed what was going on around him. His inattentiveness had a profound *angry; she should stir up* effect on his wife: How, she wondered, can a man, especially a physically *her mother's enmity against him; she should treat him*

unappealing man like Claudius, not notice me, or care about my affairs *with an obvious lack of* with other men? But nothing she did seemed to matter to him.

candor, and spread herself

Claudius marks the extreme, but the spectrum of inattention is wide. A *in long considerations about his ruin; his*

lot of people pay too little attention to the details, the signals another per- *departure should be openly* son gives. Their senses are dulled by work, by hardship, by self-absorption. *anticipated, his tastes and* We often see this turning off the seductive charge between two people, no- *desires should be thwarted,* tably between couples who have been together for years. Carried further, it *his poverty outraged; she should let him see that she*

will stir angry, bitter feelings. Often, the one who has been cheated on by a *is in sympathy with* partner started the dynamic by patterns of inattention.

another man, she should

blame him with harsh

words on every occasion;

she should tell lies about

2. In 1639, a French army besieged and took possession of the Italian city of *him to her parasites, she* Turin. Two French officers, the Chevalier (later Count) de Grammont and *should interrupt his sentences, and send him on*

his friend Matta, decided to turn their attention to the city's beautiful *frequent errands away from* women. The wives of some of Turin's most illustrious men were more than *the house. She should seek* susceptible—their husbands were busy, and kept mistresses of their own. The *occasions of quarrel, and* wives' only requirement was that the suitor play by the rules of gallantry. *make him the victim of a*

thousand domestic

The chevalier and Matta were quick to find partners, the chevalier *perfidies; she should rack* choosing the beautiful Mademoiselle de Saint-Germain, who was soon to *her brains to vex him; she* be betrothed, and Matta offering his services to an older and more experi- *should play with the glances of another in his*

enced woman, Madame de Senantes. The chevalier took to wearing green, presence, and give herself Matta blue, these being their ladies' favorite colors. On the second day of *up to reprehensible* their courtships the couples visited a palace outside the city. The chevalier *profligacy before his face; she should leave the house*

was all charm, making Mademoiselle de Saint-Germain laugh uproariously *as often as possible, and let* at his witticisms, but Matta did not fare so well; he had no patience for this *it be seen that she has no gallantry business, and when he and Madame de Senantes took a stroll, he real need to do so. All these means are good for*

squeezed her hand and boldly declared his affections. The lady of course *showing a man the door.* was aghast, and when they got back to Turin she left without looking at

—EASTERN LOVE, VOLUME II:

him. Unaware that he had offended her, Matta imagined that she was over- *THE HARLOT'S BREVIARY OF*

come with emotion, and felt rather pleased with himself. But the Chevalier *KSHEMENDRA, TRANSLATED BY*

de Grammont, wondering why the pair had parted, visited Madame de E. POWYS MATHERS

Senantes and asked her how it went. She told him the truth—Matta had dispensed with the formalities and was ready to bed her. The chevalier 138 • *The Art of Seduction*

Just as ladies do love men

laughed and thought to himself how differently he would manage affairs if *which be valiant and bold*

he were the one wooing the lovely Madame.

under arms, so likewise do

Over the next few days Matta continued to misread the signs. He did *they love such as be of like*

sort in love; and the man

not pay a visit to Madame de Senantes's husband, as custom required. He *which is cowardly and over* did not wear her colors. When the two went riding together, he went *chas and above respectful toward* ing after hares, as if they were the more interesting prey, and when he took *them, will never win their*

good favor. Not that they

snuff he failed to offer her some. Meanwhile he continued to make his *would have them so*

overforward advances. Finally Madame had had enough, and complained to *overweening, bold, and*

him directly. Matta apologized; he had not realized his errors. Moved by his *presumptuous, as that they*

should by main force lay

apology, the lady was more than ready to resume the courtship—but a few *them on the floor; but*

days later, after a few trifling stabs at wooing, Matta once again assumed *rather they desire in them a*

that she was ready for bed. To his dismay, she refused him as before. "I do *certain hardy modesty, or* not think that [women] can be mightily offended," Matta told the cheva *perhaps better a certain modest hardihood. For* lier, "if one sometimes leaves off trifling, to come to the point." But *while themselves are not*

Madame de Senantes would have nothing more to do with him, and the *exactly wantons, and will*

Chevalier de Grammont, seeing an opportunity he could not pass by, took *neither solicit a man nor*

yet actually offer their advantage of her displeasure by secretly courting her properly, and eventu *favors, yet do they know* ally winning the favors that Matta had tried to force. *well how to rouse the*

appetites and passions, and

There is nothing more anti-seductive than feeling that someone has assumed *prettily allure to the*

skirmish in such wise that

that you are theirs, that you cannot possibly resist them. The slightest ap *he which doth not take* pearance of this kind of conceit is deadly to seduction; you must prove *occasion by the forelock and*

yourself, take your time, win your target's heart. Perhaps you fear that he or *join encounter, and that*

without the least awe of

she will be offended by a slower pace, or will lose interest. It is more likely, *rank and greatness, without*

however, that your fear reflects your own insecurity, and insecurity is always *a scruple of conscience or a*

anti-seductive. In truth, the longer you take, the more you show the depth *fear or any sort of*

hesitation, he verily is a

of your interest, and the deeper the spell you create.

fool and a spiritless

In a world of few formalities and ceremony, seduction is one of the few *poltroon, and one which*

remnants from the past that retains the ancient patterns. It is a ritual, and its *doth merit to be forever*

abandoned of kind fortune.

rites must be observed. Haste reveals not the depth of your feelings but the

• *I have heard of two* degree of your self-absorption. It may be possible sometimes to hurry *honorable gentlemen and*

someone into love, but you will only be repaid by the lack of pleasure this *comrades, for the which two* kind of love affords. If you are naturally impetuous, do what you can to *very honorable ladies, and*

of by no means humble disguise it. Strangely enough, the effort you spend on holding yourself *quality, made tryst one day* back may be read by your target as deeply seductive. *at Paris to go walking in a*

garden. Being come thither,

each lady did separate

apart one from the other,

3. In Paris in the 1730s lived a young man named Meilcour, who was just *each alone with her own*

of an age to have his first affair. His mother's friend Madame de Lursay, a *cavalier, each in a several*

alley of the garden, that widow of around forty, was beautiful and charming, but had a reputation *was so close covered in with* for being untouchable; as a boy, Meilcour had been infatuated with her, but *a fair trellis of boughs as* never expected his love would be returned. So it was with great surprise *that daylight could really*

and excitement that he realized that now that he was old enough, Madame *scarce penetrate there at all,*

and the coolness of the de Lursay's tender looks seemed to indicate a more than motherly interest *place was very grateful.*

in him.

For two months Meilcour trembled in de Lursay's presence. He was *Now one of the twain was afraid of her, and did not know what to do. One evening they were dis- a bold man, and well knowing how the party*

cussing a recent play. How well one character had declared his love to a *had been made for* woman, Madame remarked. Noting Meilcour's obvious discomfort, she *something else than merely* went on, "If I am not mistaken, a declaration can only seem such an em- *to walk and take the air*, barrassing matter because you yourself have one to make." Madame *de and judging by his lady's face, which he saw to be all*

Lursay knew full well that she was the source of the young man's awkward- *a-fire, that she had* ness, but she was a tease; you must tell me, she said, with whom you are in *longings to taste other fare* love. Finally Meilcour confessed: it was indeed Madame whom he desired. *than the muscatels that hung on the trellis, as also*

His mother's friend advised him to not think of her that way, but she also *by her hot, wanton, and* sighed, and gave him a long and languid look. Her words said one thing, *wild speech, he did* her eyes another—perhaps she was not as untouchable as he had thought. *promptly seize on so fair an opportunity. So catching*

As the evening ended, though, Madame de Lursay said she doubted his *hold of her without the* feelings would last, and she left young Meilcour troubled that she had said *least ceremony, he did lay* nothing about reciprocating his love.

her on a little couch that

was there made of turf and

Over the next few days, Meilcour repeatedly asked de Lursay to declare *clods of earth, and did very* her love for him, and she repeatedly refused. Eventually the young man *de- pleasantly work his will of cided* his cause was hopeless, and gave up; but a few nights later, at a soiree *her, without her ever at her house, her dress seemed more enticing than usual, and her looks at uttering a word but only:*

"Heavens! Sir, what are

him stirred his blood. He returned them, and followed her around, while *you at? Surely you be the* she took care to keep a bit of distance, lest others sense what was happen- *maddest and strangest* ing. Yet she also managed to arrange that he could stay without arousing *fellow ever was! If anyone comes, whatever will they*

suspicion when the other visitors left.

say? Great heavens! get

When they were finally alone, she made him sit beside her on the sofa. *out!" But the gentleman,* He could barely speak; the silence was uncomfortable. To get him talking *without disturbing himself, did so well continue what*

she raised the same old subject: his youth would make his love for her a *he had begun that he did* passing fancy. Instead of denying it he looked dejected, and continued to *finish, and she to boot*, keep a polite distance, so that she finally exclaimed, with obvious irony, "If with such content as that after taking three or four

it were known that you were here with my consent, that I had voluntarily *turns up and down the* arranged it with you . . . what might not people say? And yet how wrong *alley, they did presently* they would be, for no one could be more respectful than you are." Goaded *start afresh. Anon, coming* into action, Meilcour grabbed her hand and looked her in the eye. She *forth into another, open, alley, they did see in*

blushed and told him he should go, but the way she arranged herself on the *another part of the garden* sofa and looked back at him suggested he should do the opposite. Yet Meil- *the other pair, who were* cour still hesitated: she had told him to go, and if he disobeyed she might *walking about together just as they had left them at*

cause a scene, and might never forgive him; he would have made a fool of *first. Whereupon the lady, himself, and everyone, including his mother, would hear of it. He soon got well content, did say to the* up, apologizing for his momentary boldness. Her astonished and somewhat *gentleman in the like condition, "I verily believe*

cold look meant he had indeed gone too far, he imagined, and he said *so and so hath played the* goodbye and left.

silly prude, and hath given

his lady no other

entertainment but only

Meilcour and Madame de Lursay appear in the novel *The Wayward Head* words, *fine speeches, and*

and Heart, written in 1738 by Cr  billon fils, who based his characters on *promenading.*" • *Afterward libertines he knew in the France of the time. For Cr  billon fils, seduction is when all four were come all about signs—about being able to send them and read them. This is not together, the two ladies did*

fall to asking one another

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how it had fared with each.

because sexuality is repressed and requires speaking in code. It is rather be *Then the one which was* cause wordless communication (through clothes, gestures, actions) is the *well content did reply she*

most pleasurable, exciting, and seductive form of language.

was exceeding well, indeed

she was; indeed for the

In Cr  billon fils's novel, Madame de Lursay is an ingenious seductress *nonce she could scarce be*

who finds it exciting to initiate young men. But even she cannot overcome *better. The other, which*

the youthful stupidity of Meilcour, who is incapable of reading her signs *was ill content, did declare*

for her part she had had to because he is absorbed in his own thoughts. Later in the story, she does *do with the biggest fool and*

manage to educate him, but in real life there are many who cannot be *most coward lover she had*

educated. They are too literal and insensitive to the details that contain *ever seen; and all the time*

seductive power. They do not so much repel as irritate and infuriate you *the two gentlemen could*

see them laughing together

by their constant misinterpretations, always viewing life from behind *as they walked and crying*

the screen of their ego and unable to see things as they really are. Meilcour *out: "O h ! the silly fool!*

is so caught up in himself he cannot see that Madame is expecting him to *the shamefaced poltroon*

and coward!" At this the

make the bold move to which she will have to succumb. His hesitation *successful gallant said to his*

shows that he is thinking of himself, not of her; that he is worrying about *companion: "Hark to our*

how he will look, not feeling overwhelmed by her charms. Nothing could *ladies, which do cry out at*

you, and mock you sore.

be more anti-seductive. Recognize such types, and if they are past the *You will find you have*

young age that would give them an excuse, do not entangle yourself in *overplayed the prude and*

their awkwardness—they will infect you with doubt.

coxcomb this bout." So

much he did allow; but

there was no more time to

remedy his error, for

4. In the Heian court of late-tenth-century Japan, the young nobleman *opportunity gave him*

Kaoru, purported son of the great seducer Genji himself, had had nothing *no other handle to seize*

her by.

but misfortune in love. He had become infatuated with a young princess,

— S E I G N E U R DE BRANTÔME,

Oigimi, who lived in a dilapidated home in the countryside, her father *LIVES OF FAIR & GALLANT*

having fallen on hard times. Then one day he had an encounter with

LADIES, TRANSLATED BY A. R..

Oigimi's sister, Nakanokimi, that convinced him she was the one he actuALLINSON

ally loved. Confused, he returned to court, and did not visit the sisters for some time. Then their father died, followed shortly thereafter by Oigimi herself.

Now Kaoru realized his mistake: he had loved Oigimi all along, and she had died out of despair that he did not care for her. He would never meet her like again; she was all he could think about. When Nakanokimi, her father and sister dead, came to live at court, Kaoru had the house where Oigimi and her family had lived turned into a shrine.

One day, Nakanokimi, seeing the melancholy into which Kaoru had

fallen, told him that there was a third sister, Ukifune, who resembled his beloved Oigimi and lived hidden away in the countryside. Kaoru came to life—perhaps he had a chance to redeem himself, to change the past. But how could he meet this woman? There came a time when he visited the shrine to pay his respects to the departed Oigimi, and heard that the mysterious Ukifune was there as well. Agitated and excited, he managed to catch a glimpse of her through the crack in a door. The sight of her took his breath away: although she was a plain-looking country girl, in Kaoru's eyes she was the living incarnation of Oigimi. Her voice, meanwhile, was like *The Anti-Seducer* • 141

the voice of Nakanokimi, whom he had loved as well. Tears welled up in his eyes.

A few months later Kaoru managed to find the house in the mountains where Ukifune lived. He visited her there, and she did not disappoint. "I once had a glimpse of you through a crack in a door," he told her, and

"you have been very much on my mind ever since." Then he picked her up in his arms and carried her to a waiting carriage. He was taking her back to the shrine, and the journey there brought back to him the image of

Oigimi; again his eyes clouded with tears. Looking at Ukifune, he silently compared her to Oigimi—her clothes were less nice but she had beautiful hair.

When Oigimi was alive, she and Kaoru had played the koto together,

so once at the shrine he had kotos brought out. Ukifune did not play as well as Oigimi had, and her manners were less refined. Not to worry—he would give her lessons, change her into a lady. But then, as he had done with Oigimi, Kaoru returned to court, leaving Ukifune languishing at the shrine. Some time passed before he visited her again; she had improved, was more beautiful than before, but he could not stop thinking of Oigimi. Once again he left her, promising to bring her to court, but more weeks passed, and finally he received the news that Ukifune had disappeared, last seen heading toward a river. She had most likely committed suicide. At the funeral ceremony for Ukifune, Kaoru was wracked with guilt:

why had he not come for her earlier? She deserved a better fate.

Kaoru and the others appear in the eleventh-century Japanese novel *The Tale of Genji*, by the noblewoman Murasaki Shikibu. The characters are based on people the author knew, but Kaoru's type appears in every culture and period: these are men and women who seem to be searching for an ideal partner. The one they have is never quite right; at first glance a person excites them, but they soon see faults, and when a new person crosses their path, he or she looks better and the first person is forgotten. These types often try to work on the imperfect mortal who has excited them, to improve them culturally and morally. But this proves extremely unsatisfactory for both parties.

The truth about this type is not that they are searching for an ideal but that they are hopelessly unhappy with themselves. You may mistake their dissatisfaction for a perfectionist's high standards, but in point of fact nothing will really satisfy them,

for their unhappiness is deep-rooted. You can recognize them by their past, which will be littered with short-lived, stormy romances. Also, they will tend to compare you to others, and to try to remake you. You may not realize at first what you have gotten into, but people like this will eventually prove hopelessly anti-seductive because they cannot see your individual qualities. Cut the romance off before it happens. These types are closet sadists and will torture you with their unreachable goals.

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5. In 1762, in the city of Turin, Italy, Giovanni Giacomo Casanova made the acquaintance of one Count A.B., a Milanese gentleman who seemed to like him enormously. The count had fallen on hard times and Casanova lent him some money. In gratitude, the count invited Casanova to stay with him and his wife in Milan. His wife, he said, was from Barcelona, and was admired far and wide for her beauty. He showed Casanova her letters, which had an intriguing wit; Casanova imagined her as a prize worth seducing. He went to Milan. Arriving at the house of Count A.B., Casanova found that the Spanish lady was certainly beautiful, but that she was also quiet and serious. Something about her bothered him. As he was unpacking his clothes, the countess saw a stunning red dress, trimmed with sable, among his belongings. It was a gift, Casanova explained, for any Milanese lady who won his heart. The following evening at dinner, the countess was suddenly more

friendly, teasing and bantering with Casanova. She described the dress as a bribe—he would use it to persuade a woman to give in to him. On the contrary, said Casanova, he only gave gifts afterward, as tokens of his appreciation. That evening, in a carriage on the way back from the opera, she asked him if a wealthy friend of hers could buy the dress, and when he said no, she was clearly vexed. Sensing her game, Casanova offered to give her the sable dress if she was kind to him. This only made her angry, and they quarreled.

Finally Casanova had had enough of the countess's moods: he sold the dress for 15,000 francs to her wealthy friend, who in turn gave it to her, as she had planned all along. But to prove his lack of interest in money, Casanova told the countess he would give her the 15,000 francs, no strings attached. "You are a very bad man," she said, "but you can stay, you amuse me." She resumed her coquettish manner, but Casanova was not fooled. "It is not my fault, madame, if your charms have so little power over me," he told her. "Here are 15,000 francs to console you." He laid the money on a table and walked out, leaving the countess fuming and vowing revenge. When Casanova first met the Spanish lady, two things about her repelled him. First, her pride: rather than engaging in the give-and-take of seduction, she demanded a man's subjugation. Pride can reflect self-assurance, signaling that you will not abase yourself before others. Just as often, though, it stems from an inferiority complex, which demands that others abase themselves before you. Seduction requires an openness to the other person, a willingness to bend and adapt. Excessive pride, without anything to justify it, is highly anti-seductive.

The second quality that disgusted Casanova was the countess's greed: her coquettish little games were designed only to get the dress—she had no interest in romance. For Casanova, seduction was a lighthearted game that people played for

their mutual amusement. In his scheme of things, it was fine if a woman wanted money and gifts as well; he could understand that desire, and he was a generous man. But he also felt that this was a desire a *The Anti-Seducer* • 143

woman should disguise—she should create the impression that what she was after was pleasure. The person who is obviously angling for money or other material reward can only repel. If that is your intention, if you are looking for something other than pleasure—for money, for power—never show it. The suspicion of an ulterior motive is anti-seductive. Never let anything break the illusion.

6. In 1868, Queen Victoria of England hosted her first private meeting with the country's new prime minister, William Gladstone. She had met him before, and knew his reputation as a moral absolutist, but this was to be a ceremony, an exchange of pleasantries. Gladstone, however, had no patience for such things. At that first meeting he explained to the queen his theory of royalty: the queen, he believed, had to play an exemplary role in England—a role she had lately failed to live up to, for she was overly private.

This lecture set a bad tone for the future, and things only got worse: soon Victoria was receiving letters from Gladstone, addressing the subject in even greater depth. Half of them she never bothered to read, and soon she was doing everything she could to avoid contact with the leader of her government; if she had to see him, she made the meeting as brief as possible. To that end, she never allowed him to sit down in her presence, hoping that a man his age would soon tire and leave. For once he got going on a subject dear to his heart, he did not notice your look of disinterest or the tears in your eyes from yawning. His memoranda on even the simplest of issues would have to be translated into plain English for her by a member of her staff. Worst of all, Gladstone argued with her, and his arguments had a way of making her feel stupid. She soon learned to nod her head and appear to agree with whatever abstract point he was trying to make. In a letter to her secretary, referring to herself in the third person, she wrote, "She always felt in [Gladstone's] manner an overbearing obstinacy and imperiousness . . . which she never experienced from *anyone* else, and which she found most disagreeable." Over the years, these feelings hardened into an unwavering hatred.

As the head of the Liberal Party, Gladstone had a nemesis, Benjamin Disraeli, the head of the Conservative Party. He considered Disraeli amoral, a devilish Jew. At one session of Parliament, Gladstone tore into his rival, scoring point after point as he described where his opponents policies would lead. Growing angry as he spoke (as usually happened when he

talked of Disraeli), he pounded the speaker's table with such force that pens and papers went flying. Through all of this Disraeli seemed half-asleep. When Gladstone had finished, he opened his eyes, rose to his feet, and calmly walked up to the table. "The right honorable gentleman," he said,

"has spoken with much passion, much eloquence, and much—*ahem*—

violence." Then, after a drawn-out pause, he continued, "But the damage can be repaired"—and he proceeded to gather up everything that had fallen 144 • *The Art of Seduction*

from the table and put them back in place. The speech that followed was all the more masterful for its calm and ironic contrast to Gladstone's. The members of Parliament were spellbound, and all of them agreed he had won the day.

If Disraeli was the consummate social seducer and charmer, Gladstone was the Anti-Seducer. Of course he had supporters, mostly among the more puritanical elements of society—he twice defeated Disraeli in a general election. But he found it hard to broaden his appeal beyond the circle of believers. Women in particular found him insufferable. Of course they had no vote at the time, so they were little political liability; but Gladstone had no patience for a feminine point of view. A woman, he felt, had to learn to see things as a man did, and it was his purpose in life to educate those he felt were irrational or abandoned by God.

It did not take long for Gladstone to wear on anyone's nerves. That is the nature of people who are convinced of some truth, but have no patience for a different perspective or for dealing with someone else's psychology. These types are bullies, and in the short term they often get their way, particularly among the less aggressive. But they stir up a lot of resentment and unspoken antipathy, which eventually trips them up. People see through their righteous moral stance, which is most often a cover for a power play—morality is a form of power. A seducer never seeks to persuade directly, never parades his or her morality, never lectures or imposes. Everything is subtle, psychological, and indirect.

Symbol: The

Crab. In a harsh world, the crab survives by its hardened shell, by the threat of its pincers, and by burrowing into the sand. No one dares get too close. But the Crab cannot surprise its enemy and has little mobility. Its defensive strength is its supreme limitation. The Anti-Seducer • 145

Uses of Anti-Seduction

The best way to avoid entanglements with Anti-Seducers is to recognize them right away and give them a wide berth, but they often deceive

us. Involvements with these types are painful, and are hard to disengage from, because the more emotional response you show, the more engaged you seem to be. Do not get angry—that may only encourage them or

exacerbate their anti-seductive tendencies. Instead, act distant and indifferent, pay no attention to them, make them feel how little they matter to you. The best antidote to an Anti-Seducer is often to be anti-seductive yourself.

Cleopatra had a devastating effect on every man who crossed her path. Octavius—the future Emperor Augustus, and the man who would defeat and destroy Cleopatra's lover Mark Antony—was well aware of her power, and defended himself against it by being always extremely amiable with her, courteous to the extreme, but never showing the slightest emotion, whether of interest or dislike. In other words, he treated her as if she were any other woman. Facing this front, she could not sink her hooks into him. Octavius made anti-seduction his defense against the most irresistible woman in history. Remember: seduction is a game of attention, of slowly filling the other person's mind with your presence. Distance and inattention will create the opposite effect, and can be used as a tactic when the need arises.

Finally, if you really want to "anti-seduce," simply feign the qualities listed at the beginning of the chapter. Nag; talk a lot, particularly about yourself; dress against the other person's tastes; pay no attention to detail; suffocate, and so on. A word of warning: with the arguing type, the Windbag, never talk back too much. Words will only fan the flames. Adopt the Queen Victoria strategy: nod, seem to agree, then find an excuse to cut the conversation short. This is the only defense.

the seducer's *Q*uicK victims—

The Eighteen Types

The people around you are all potential victims of a seduction, but first you must know what type of victim you are dealing with. Victims are categorized by what they feel they are missing in life—adventure, attention, romance, a naughty experience, mental or physical stimulation, etc.

Once you identify their type, you have

the necessary ingredients for a seduc-

tion: you will be the one to give

them what they lack and cannot

get on their own. In studying

potential victims, learn to see

the reality behind the appearance. A timid person may yearn to play the star; a prude may long for a transgressive thrill.

Never try to seduce your own type.

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Victim Theory

Nobody in this world feels whole and complete. We all sense some gap in our character, something we need or want but cannot get on our

own. When we fall in love, it is often with someone who seems to fill that gap. The process is usually unconscious and depends on luck: we wait for the right person to cross our path, and when we fall for them we hope they return our love. But the seducer does not leave such things to chance. Look at the people around you. Forget their social exterior, their obvious character traits; look behind all of that, focusing on the gaps, the missing pieces in their psyche. That is the raw material of any seduction. Pay close attention to their clothes, their gestures, their offhand comments, the things in their house, certain looks in their eyes; get them to talk about their past, particularly past romances. And slowly the outline of those missing pieces will come into view. Understand: people are constantly giving out signals as to what they lack. They long for completeness, whether the illusion of it or the reality, and if it has to come from another person, that person has tremendous power over them. We may call them victims of a seduction, but they are almost always willing victims.

This chapter outlines the eighteen types of victims, each one of which has a dominant lack. Although your target may well reveal the qualities of more than one type, there is usually a common need that ties them together. Perhaps you see someone as both a New Prude and a Crushed Star, but what is common to both is a feeling of repression, and therefore a desire to be naughty, along with a fear of not being able or daring enough. In identifying your victim's type, be careful to not be

taken in by outward appearances. Both deliberately and unconsciously, we often develop a social exterior designed specifically to disguise our weaknesses and lacks. For instance, you may think you are dealing with someone who is tough and cynical, without realizing that deep inside they have a soft sentimental core. They secretly pine for romance. And unless you identify their type and the emotions beneath their toughness, you lose the chance to truly seduce them. Most important: expunge the nasty habit of thinking that other people have the same lacks you do. You may crave comfort and security, but in giving comfort and security to someone else, on the assumption they must want them as well, you are more likely smothering and pushing them away. Never try to seduce someone who is of your own type. You will be like two puzzles missing the same parts.

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The Eighteen Types

The Reformed Rake or Siren. People of this type were once happy-golucky seducers who had their way with the opposite sex. But the day came when they were forced to give this up—someone corralled them into a relationship, they were encountering too much social hostility, they were getting older and decided to settle down. Whatever the reason, you can be sure they feel some resentment and a sense of loss, as if a limb were missing. We are always trying to recapture pleasures we experienced in the past, but the temptation is particularly great for the Reformed Rake or Siren because the pleasures they found in seduction were intense. These types are ripe for the picking: all that is required is that you cross their path and offer them the opportunity to resume their rakish or siren ways. Their blood will stir and the call of their youth will overwhelm them.

It is critical, though, to give these types the illusion that they are the ones doing the seducing. With the Reformed Rake, you must spark his interest indirectly, then let him burn and glow with desire. With the Reformed Siren, you want to give her the impression that she still has the irresistible power to draw a man in and make him give up everything for her. Remember that what you are offering these types is not another relationship, another constriction, but rather the chance to escape the corral and have some ran. Do not be put off if they are in a relationship; a preexisting commitment is often the perfect foil. If hooking them into a relationship is what you want, hide it as best you can and realize it may not be possible. The Rake or Siren is unfaithful by nature; your ability to spark the old feeling gives you power, but then you will have to live with the consequences of their feckless ways. *The Disappointed Dreamer.* As children, these types probably spent a lot of time alone. To entertain themselves they developed a powerful fantasy life, fed by books and films and other kinds of popular culture. And as they get older, it becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile their fantasy life with reality, and so they are often disappointed by what they get. This is particularly true in relationships. They have been dreaming of romantic heroes, of danger and excitement, but what they have is lovers with human frailties, the petty weaknesses of everyday life. As the years pass, they may force themselves to compromise, because otherwise they would have to spend their lives alone; but beneath the surface they are bitter and still hungering for something grand and romantic. You can recognize this type by

the books they read and films they go to, the way their ears prick up when told of the real-life adventures some people manage to live out. In their clothes and home furnishings, a taste for exuberant romance or drama will peek through. They are often trapped in drab relationships, and little comments here and there will reveal their disappointment and inner tension. *The Seducer's Victims—The Eighteen Types* • 151

These types make for excellent and satisfying victims. First, they usually have a great deal of pent-up passion and energy, which you can release and focus on yourself. They also have great imaginations and will respond to anything vaguely mysterious or romantic that you offer them. All you need do is disguise some of your less than exalted qualities and give them a part of their dream. This could be the chance to live out their adventures or be courted by a chivalrous soul. If you give them a part of what they want they will imagine the rest. At all cost, do not let reality break the illusion you are creating. One moment of pettiness and they will be gone, more bitterly disappointed than ever.

The Pampered Royal. These people were the classic spoiled children. All of their wants and desires were met by an adoring parent—endless entertainments, a parade of toys, whatever kept them happy for a day or two. Where many children learn to entertain themselves, inventing games and finding friends, Pampered Royals are taught that others will do the entertaining for them. Being spoiled, they get lazy, and as they get older and the parent is no longer there to pamper them, they tend to feel quite bored and restless. Their solution is to find pleasure in variety, to move quickly from person to person, job to job, or place to place before boredom sets in. They do not settle into relationships well because habit and routine of some kind are inevitable in such affairs. But their ceaseless search for variety is tiring for them and comes with a price: work problems, strings of unsatisfying romances, friends scattered across the globe. Do not mistake their restlessness and infidelity for reality—what the Pampered Prince or Princess is really looking for is one person, that parental figure, who will give them the spoiling they crave.

To seduce this type, be ready to provide a lot of distraction—new

places to visit, novel experiences, color, spectacle. You will have to maintain an air of mystery, continually surprising your target with a new side to your character. Variety is the key. Once Pampered Royals are hooked, things get easier for they will quickly grow dependent on you and you can put out less effort. Unless their childhood pampering has made them too difficult and lazy, these types make excellent victims—they will be as loyal to you as they once were to mommy or daddy. But you will have to do much of the work. If you are after a long relationship, disguise it. Offer long-term security to a Pampered Royal and you will induce a panicked flight. Recognize these types by the turmoil in their past—job changes, travel, short-term relationships—and by the air of aristocracy, no matter their social class, that comes from once being treated like royalty. *The New Prude.* Sexual prudery still exists, but it is less common than it was. Prudery, however, is never just about sex; a prude is someone who is excessively concerned with appearances, with what society considers appropriate and acceptable behavior. Prudes rigorously stay within the boundaries of correctness because more than anything they fear society's judgment. Seen in this light, prudery is just as prevalent as it always was. The New Prude is excessively

concerned with standards of goodness,

fairness, political sensitivity, tastefulness, etc. What marks the New Prude, though, as well as the old one, is that deep down they are actually excited and intrigued by guilty, transgressive pleasures. Frightened by this attraction, they run in the opposite direction and become the most correct of all. They tend to wear drab colors; they certainly never take fashion risks. They can be very judgmental and critical of people who do take risks and are less correct. They are also addicted to routine, which gives them a way to tamp down their inner turmoil.

New Prudes are secretly oppressed by their correctness and long to

transgress. Just as sexual prudes make prime targets for a Rake or Siren, the New Prude will often be most tempted by someone with a dangerous or naughty side. If you desire a New Prude, do not be taken in by their judgments of you or their criticisms. That is only a sign of how deeply you fascinate them; you are on their mind. You can often draw a New Prude into a seduction, in fact, by giving them the chance to criticize you or even try to reform you. Take nothing of what they say to heart, of course, but now you have the perfect excuse to spend time with them—and New Prudes

can be seduced simply through being in contact with you. These types actually make excellent and rewarding victims. Once you open them up and get them to let go of their correctness, they are flooded with feelings and energies. They may even overwhelm you. Perhaps they are in a relationship with someone as drab as they themselves seem to be—do not be put off. They are simply asleep, waiting to be awakened.

The Crushed Star. We all want attention, we all want to shine, but with most of us these desires are fleeting and easily quieted. The problem with Crushed Stars is that at one point in their lives they did find themselves the center of attention—perhaps they were beautiful, charming and effervescent, perhaps they were athletes, or had some other talent—but those days are gone. They may seem to have accepted this, but the memory of having once shone is hard to get over. In general, the appearance of wanting attention, of trying to stand out, is not seen too kindly in polite society or in the workplace. So to get along, Crushed Stars learn to tamp down their desires; but failing to get the attention they feel they deserve, they also become resentful. You can recognize Crushed Stars by certain unguarded moments: they suddenly receive some attention in a social setting, and it makes them glow; they mention their glory days, and there is a little glint in the eye; a little wine in the system, and they become effervescent.

Seducing this type is simple: just make them the center of attention. When you are with them, act as if they were stars and you were basking in their glow. Get them to talk, particularly about themselves. In social situa- *The Seducer's Victims—The Eighteen Types* • 153

tions, mute your own colors and let them look funny and radiant by comparison. In general, play the Charmer. The reward of seducing Crushed Stars is that you stir up powerful emotions. They will feel intensely grateful to you for letting them shine. To whatever extent they had felt crushed and bottled up, the easing of that pain

releases intensity and passion, all directed at you. They will fall madly in love. If you yourself have any star or dandy tendencies it is wise to avoid such victims. Sooner or later those tendencies will come out, and the competition between you will be ugly.

The Novice. What separates Novices from ordinary innocent young people is that they are fatally curious. They have little or no experience of the world, but have been exposed to it secondhand—in newspapers, films, books. Finding their innocence a burden, they long to be initiated into the ways of the world. Everyone sees them as so sweet and innocent, but they know this isn't so—they cannot be as angelic as people think them.

Seducing a Novice is easy. To do it well, however, requires a bit of art. Novices are interested in people with experience, particularly people with a touch of corruption and evil. Make that touch too strong, though, and it will intimidate and frighten them. What works best with a Novice is a mix of qualities. You are somewhat childlike yourself, with a playful spirit. At the same time, it is clear that you have hidden depths, even sinister ones. (This was the secret of Lord Byron's success with so many innocent

women.) You are initiating your Novices not just sexually but experientially, exposing them to new ideas, taking them to new places, new worlds both literal and metaphoric. Do not make your seduction ugly or seedy—

everything must be romantic, even including the evil and dark side of life. Young people have their ideals; it is best to initiate them with an aesthetic touch. Seductive language works wonders on Novices, as does attention to detail. Spectacles and colorful events appeal to their sensitive senses. They are easily misled by these tactics, because they lack the experience to see through them.

Sometimes Novices are a little older and have been at least somewhat educated in the ways of the world. Yet they put on a show of innocence, for they see the power it has over older people. These are coy Novices, aware of the game they are playing—but Novices they remain. They may be less easily misled than purer Novices, but the way to seduce them is pretty much the same—mix innocence and corruption and you will fascinate them. *The Conqueror.* These types have an unusual amount of energy, which they find difficult to control. They are always on the prowl for people to conquer, obstacles to surmount. You will not always recognize Conquerors by their exterior—they can seem a little shy in social situations and can have a degree of reserve. Look not at their words or appearance but at their 154 • *The Art of Seduction*

actions, in work and in relationships. They love power, and by hook or by crook they get it.

Conquerors tend to be emotional, but their emotion only comes out in outbursts, when pushed. In matters of romance, the worst thing you can do with them is lie down and make yourself easy prey; they may take advantage of your weakness, but they will quickly discard you and leave you the worse for wear. You want to give Conquerors a chance to be aggressive, to overcome some resistance or obstacle, before letting them think they have overwhelmed you. You want to give them a

good chase. Being a little difficult or moody, using coquetry, will often do the trick. Do not be intimidated by their aggressiveness and energy—that is precisely what you can turn to your advantage. To break them in, keep them charging back and forth like a bull. Eventually they will grow weak and dependent, as Napoleon became the slave of Josephine.

The Conqueror is generally male but there are plenty of female Conquerors out there—Lou Andreas-Salomé and Natalie Barney are famous ones. Female Conquerors will succumb to coquetry, though, just as the male ones will.

The Exotic Fetishist. Most of us are excited and intrigued by the exotic. What separates Exotic Fetishists from the rest of us is the degree of this interest, which seems to govern all their choices in life. In truth they feel empty inside and have a strong dose of self-loathing. They do not like wherever it is they come from, their social class (usually middle or upper), and their culture because they do not like themselves.

These types are easy to recognize. They like to travel; their houses are filled with *objets* from faraway places; they fetishize the music or art of this or that foreign culture. They often have a strong rebellious streak. Clearly the way to seduce them is to position yourself as exotic—if you do not at least appear to come from a different background or race, or to have some alien aura, you should not even bother. But it is always possible to play up what makes you exotic, to make it a kind of theater for their amusement. Your clothes, the things you talk about, the places you take them, make a show of your difference. Exaggerate a little and they will imagine the rest, because such types tend to be self-deluders. Exotic Fetishists, however, do not make particularly good victims. Whatever exoticism you have will soon seem banal to them, and they will want something else. It will be a struggle to hold their interest. Their underlying insecurity will also keep you on edge.

One variation on this type is the man or woman who is trapped in a stultifying relationship, a banal occupation, a dead-end town. It is circumstance, as opposed to personal neurosis, that makes such people fetishize the exotic; and these Exotic Fetishists are better victims than the self-loathing kind, because you can offer them a temporary escape from whatever op- *The Seducer's Victims—The Eighteen Types • 155*

presses them. Nothing, however, will offer true Exotic Fetishists escape from themselves.

The Drama Queen. There are people who cannot do without some constant drama in their lives—it is their way of deflecting boredom. The greatest mistake you can make in seducing these Drama Queens is to come offering stability and security. That will only make them run for the hills. Most often, Drama Queens (and there are plenty of men in this category) enjoy playing the victim. They want something to complain about, they want pain. Pain is a source of pleasure for them. With this type, you have to be willing and able to give them the mental rough treatment they desire. That is the only way to seduce them in a deep manner. The moment you turn too nice, they will find some reason to quarrel or get rid of you. You will recognize Drama Queens by the number of people who have

hurt them, the tragedies and traumas that have befallen them. At the extreme, they can be hopelessly selfish and anti-seductive, but most of them are relatively harmless and will make fine victims if you can live with the *sturm und drang*. If for some reason you want something long term with this type, you will constantly have to inject drama into your relationship. For some this can be an exciting challenge and a source for constantly renewing the relationship. Generally, however, you should see an involvement with a Drama Queen as something fleeting and a way to bring a little drama into your own life.

The Professor. These types cannot get out of the trap of analyzing and criticizing everything that crosses their path. Their minds are overdeveloped and overstimulated. Even when they talk about love or sex, it is with great thought and analysis. Having developed their minds at the expense of their bodies, many of them feel physically inferior and compensate by lording their mental superiority over others. Their conversation is often wry or ironic—you never quite know what they are saying, but you sense them looking down on you. They would like to escape their mental prisons, they would like pure physicality, without any analysis, but they cannot get there on their own. Professor types sometimes engage in relationships with other professor types, or with people they can treat as inferiors. But deep down they long to be overwhelmed by someone with physical presence—a Rake or a Siren, for instance.

Professors can make excellent victims, for underneath their intellectual strength lie gnawing insecurities. Make them feel like Don Juans or Sirens, to even the slightest degree, and they are your slaves. Many of them have a masochistic streak that will come out once you stir their dormant senses. You are offering an escape from the mind, so make it as complete as possible: if you have intellectual tendencies yourself, hide them. They will only 156 • *The Art of Seduction*

stir your target's competitive juices and get their minds turning. Let your Professors keep their sense of mental superiority; let them judge you. You will know what they will try to hide: that you are the one in control, for you are giving them what no one else can give them—physical stimulation. *The Beauty.* From early on in life, the Beauty is gazed at by others. Their desire to look at her is the source of her power, but also the source of much unhappiness: she constantly worries that her powers are waning, that she is no longer attracting attention. If she is honest with herself, she also senses that being worshiped only for one's appearance is monotonous and unsatisfying—and lonely. Many men are intimidated by beauty and prefer to worship it from afar; others are drawn in, but not for the purpose of conversation. The Beauty suffers from isolation.

Because she has so many lacks, the Beauty is relatively easy to seduce, and if done right, you will have won not only a much prized catch but someone who will grow dependent on what you provide. Most important in this seduction is to validate those parts of the Beauty that no one else appreciates—her intelligence (generally higher than people imagine), her skills, her character. Of course you must worship her body—you cannot stir up any insecurities in the one area in which she knows her strength, and the strength on which she most depends—but you also must worship her mind and soul. Intellectual stimulation will work well on the Beauty, distracting her from her doubts and insecurities, and making it seem that you value

that side of her personality.

Because the Beauty is always being looked at, she tends to be passive. Beneath her passivity, though, there often lies frustration: the Beauty would love to be more active and to actually do some chasing of her own. A little coquettishness can work well here: at some point in all your worshiping, you might go a little cold, inviting her to come after you. Train her to be more active and you will have an excellent victim. The only downside is that her many insecurities require constant attention and care.

The Aging Baby. Some people refuse to grow up. Perhaps they are afraid of death or of growing old; perhaps they are passionately attached to the life they led as children. Disliking responsibility, they struggle to turn everything into play and recreation. In their twenties they can be charming, in their thirties interesting, but by the time they reach their forties they are beginning to wear thin.

Contrary to what you might imagine, one Aging Baby does not want

to be involved with another Aging Baby, even though the combination might seem to increase the chances for play and frivolity. The Aging Baby does not want competition, but an adult figure. If you desire to seduce this type, you must be prepared to be the responsible, staid one. That may be a *The Seducer's Victims—The Eighteen Types* • 157

strange way of seducing, but in this case it works. You should appear to like the Aging Baby's youthful spirit (it helps if you actually do), can engage with it, but you remain the indulgent adult. By being responsible you free the Baby to play. Act the loving adult to the hilt, never judging or criticizing their behavior, and a strong attachment will form. Aging Babies can be amusing for a while, but, like all children, they are often potently narcissistic. This limits the pleasure you can have with them. You should see them as short-term amusements or temporary outlets for your frustrated parental instincts.

The Rescuer. We are often drawn to people who seem vulnerable or weak—their sadness or depression can actually be quite seductive. There are people, however, who take this much further, who seem to be attracted only to people with problems. This may seem noble, but Rescuers usually have complicated motives: they often have sensitive natures and truly want to help. At the same time, solving people's problems gives them a kind of power they relish—it makes them feel superior and in control. It is also the perfect way to distract them from their own problems. You will recognize these types by their empathy—they listen well and try to get you to open up and talk. You will also notice they have histories of relationships with dependent and troubled people.

Rescuers can make excellent victims, particularly if you enjoy chivalrous or maternal attention. If you are a woman, play the damsel in distress, giving a man the chance so many men long for—to act the knight. If you are a man, play the boy who cannot deal with this harsh world; a female Rescuer will envelop you in maternal attention, gaining for herself the added satisfaction of feeling more powerful and in control than a man. An air of sadness will draw either gender in. Exaggerate your weaknesses, but not through overt words or gestures—let them

sense that you have had too little love, that you have had a string of bad relationships, that you have gotten a raw deal in life. Having lured your Rescuer in with the chance to help you, you can then stoke the relationship's fires with a steady supply of needs and vulnerabilities. You can also invite moral rescue: you are bad. You have done bad things. You need a stern yet loving hand. In this case the Rescuer gets to feel morally superior, but also the vicarious thrill of involvement with someone naughty. *The Roué*. These types have lived the good life and experienced many pleasures. They probably have, or once had, a good deal of money to finance their hedonistic lives. On the outside they tend to seem cynical and jaded, but their worldliness often hides a sentimentality that they have struggled to repress. Roués are consummate seducers, but there is one type that can easily seduce them—the young and the innocent. As they get 158 • *The Art of Seduction*

older, they hanker after their lost youth; missing their long-lost innocence, they begin to covet it in others.

If you should want to seduce them, you will probably have to be somewhat young and to have retained at least the appearance of innocence. It is easy to play this up—make a show of how little experience you have in the world, how you still see things as a child. It is also good to seem to resist their advances: Roués will think it lively and exciting to chase you. You can even seem to dislike or distrust them—that will really spur them on. By being the one who resists, you control the dynamic. And since you have the youth that they are missing, you can maintain the upper hand and make them fall deeply in love. They will often be susceptible to such a fall, because they have tamped down their own romantic tendencies for so long that when it bursts forth, they lose control. Never give in too early, and never let your guard down—such types can be dangerous.

The Idol Worshiper. Everyone feels an inner lack, but Idol Worshipers have a bigger emptiness than most people. They cannot be satisfied with themselves, so they search the world for something to worship, something to fill their inner void. This often assumes the form of a great interest in spiritual matters or in some worthwhile cause; by focusing on something supposedly elevated, they distract themselves from their own void, from what they dislike about themselves. Idol Worshipers are easy to spot—they are the ones pouring their energies into some cause or religion. They often move around over the years, leaving one cult for another.

The way to seduce these types is to simply become their object of worship, to take the place of the cause or religion to which they are so dedicated. At first you may have to seem to share their spiritual interest, joining them in their worship, or perhaps exposing them to a new cause; eventually you will displace it. With this type you have to hide your flaws, or at least to give them a saintly sheen. Be banal and Idol Worshipers will pass you by. But mirror the qualities they aspire to have for themselves and they will slowly transfer their adoration to you. Keep everything on an elevated plane—let romance and religion flow into one.

Keep two things in mind when seducing this type. First, they tend to have overactive minds, which can make them quite suspicious. Because they often lack physical stimulation, and because physical stimulation will distract them, give them some: a mountain trek, a boat trip, or sex will do the trick. But this takes a lot of

work, for their minds are always ticking. Second, they often suffer from low self-esteem. Do not try to raise it; they will see through you, and your efforts at praising them will clash with their own self-image. They are to worship you; you are not to worship them. Idol Worshipers make perfectly adequate victims in the short term, but their endless need to search will eventually lead them to look for something new to adore.

The Seducer's Victims—The Eighteen Types • 159

The Sensualist. What marks these types is not their love of pleasure but their overactive senses. Sometimes they show this quality in their appearance—their interest in fashion, color, style. But sometimes it is more subtle: because they are so sensitive, they are often quite shy, and they will shrink from standing out or being flamboyant. You will recognize them by how responsive they are to their environment, how they cannot stand a room without sunlight, are depressed by certain colors, or excited by certain smells. They happen to live in a culture that deemphasizes sensual experience (except perhaps for the sense of sight). And so what the Sensualist lacks is precisely enough sensual experiences to appreciate and relish. The key to seducing them is to aim for their senses, to take them to beautiful places, pay attention to detail, envelop them in spectacle, and of course use plenty of physical lures. Sensualists, like animals, can be baited with colors and smells. Appeal to as many senses as possible, keeping your targets distracted and weak. Seductions of Sensualists are often easy and quick, and you can use the same tactics again and again to keep them interested, although it is wise to vary your sensual appeals somewhat, in kind if not in quality. That is how Cleopatra worked on Mark Antony, an inveterate Sensualist. These types make superb victims because they are relatively docile if you give them what they want.

The Lonely Leader. Powerful people are not necessarily different from everyone else, but they are treated differently, and this has a big effect on their personalities. Everyone around them tends to be fawning and

courtierlike, to have an angle, to want something from them. This makes them suspicious and distrustful, and a little hard around the edges, but do not mistake the appearance for the reality: Lonely Leaders long to be seduced, to have someone break through their isolation and overwhelm them. The problem is that most people are too intimidated to try, or use the kind of tactics—flattery, charm—that they see through and despise. To seduce such types, it is better to act like their equal or even their superior—

the kind of treatment they never get. If you are blunt with them you will seem genuine, and they will be touched—you care enough to be honest, even perhaps at some risk. (Being blunt with the powerful can be dangerous.) Lonely Leaders can be made emotional by inflicting some pain, followed by tenderness. This is one of the hardest types to seduce, not only because they are suspicious but because their minds are burdened with cares and responsibilities. They have less mental space for a seduction. You will have to be patient and clever, slowly filling their minds with thoughts of you. Succeed, though, and you can gain great power in turn, for in their loneliness they will come to depend on you.

The Floating Gender. All of us have a mix of the masculine and the feminine in our characters, but most of us learn to develop and exhibit the socially acceptable side while repressing the other. People of the Floating Gender type feel that the separation of the sexes into such distinct genders is a burden. They are sometimes thought to be repressed or latent homosexuals, but this is a misunderstanding: they may well be heterosexual but their masculine and feminine sides are in flux, and because this may discomfit others if they show it, they learn to repress it, perhaps by going to one extreme. They would actually love to be able to play with their gender, to give full expression to both sides. Many people fall into this type without its being obvious: a woman may have a masculine energy, a man a developed aesthetic side. Do not look for obvious signs, because these types often go underground, keeping it under wraps. This makes them vulnerable to a powerful seduction. What Floating Gender types are really looking for is another person of uncertain gender, their counterpart from the opposite sex. Show them that in your presence and they can relax, express the repressed side of their character. If you have such proclivities, this is the one instance where it would be best to seduce the same type of the opposite sex. Each person will stir up repressed desires in the other and will suddenly have license to explore all kinds of gender combinations, without fear of judgment. If you are not of the Floating Gender, leave this type alone. You will only inhibit them and create more discomfort.

Part Two the Seductive process

Most of us understand that certain actions on our part will have a pleasing and seductive effect on the person we would like to seduce. The problem is that we are generally too self-absorbed: We think more about what we want from others than what they could want from us. We may occasionally do something that is seductive, but often we follow this up with a selfish or aggressive action (we are in a hurry to get what we want); or, unaware of what we are doing, we show a side of ourselves that is petty and banal, deflating any illusions or fantasies a person might have about us. Our attempts at seduction usually do not last long enough to create much of an effect. You will not seduce anyone by simply depending on your engaging

personality, or by occasionally doing something noble or alluring. Seduction is a process that occurs over time—the longer you take and the slower you go, the deeper you will penetrate into the mind of your victim. It is an art that requires patience, focus, and strategic thinking. You need to always be one step ahead of your victim, throwing dust in their eyes, casting a spell, keeping them off balance.

The twenty-four chapters in this section will arm you with a series of tactics that will help you get out of yourself and into the mind of your victim, so that you can play it like an instrument. The chapters are placed in a loose order, going from the initial contact with your victim to the successful conclusion. This order is based on

certain timeless laws of human psychology. Because people's thoughts tend to revolve around their daily concerns and insecurities, you cannot proceed with a seduction until you slowly put their anxieties to sleep and fill their distracted minds with thoughts of you. The opening chapters will help you accomplish this. There is a natural tendency in relationships for people to become so familiar with one another that boredom and stagnation set in. Mystery is the lifeblood of seduction and to maintain it you have to constantly surprise your victims, stir things up, even shock them. A seduction should never settle into a comfortable routine. The middle and later chapters will instruct you in the art of alternating hope and despair, pleasure and pain, until your victims weaken and succumb. In each instance, one tactic is setting up the next one, allowing you to push it further with something bolder and more violent. A seducer cannot be timid or merciful.

To help you move the seduction along, the chapters are arranged in

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four phases, each phase with a particular goal to aim for: getting the victim to think of you; gaining access to their emotions by creating moments of pleasure and confusion; going deeper by working on their unconscious, stirring up repressed desires; and finally, inducing physical surrender. (The phases are clearly marked and explained with a short introduction.) By following these phases you will work more effectively on your victim's mind and create the slow and hypnotic pace of a ritual. In fact, the seductive process may be thought of as a kind of initiation ritual, in which you are uprooting people from their habits, giving them novel experiences, putting them through tests, before initiating them into a new life.

It is best to read all of the chapters and gain as much knowledge as possible. When it comes time to apply these tactics, you will want to pick and choose which ones are appropriate for your particular victim; sometimes only a few are sufficient, depending on the level of resistance you meet and the complexity of your victim's problems. These tactics are equally applicable to social and political seductions, minus the sexual component in Phase Four.

At all cost, resist the temptation to hurry to the climax of your seduction, or to improvise. You are not being seductive but selfish. Everything in daily life is hurried and improvised, and you need to offer something different. By taking your time and respecting the seductive process you will not only break down your victim's resistance, you will make them fall in love. Phase One

Separation—

Stirring Interest and Desire

Your victims live in their own worlds, their minds occupied with anxieties and daily concerns. Your goal in this initial phase is to slowly separate them from that closed world and fill their minds with thoughts of you. Once you have decided whom to seduce

(1: Choose the right victim), your first task is to get your victims' attention, to stir interest in you. For those who might be more resistant or difficult, you should try a slower and more insidious approach, first winning their friendship (2: Create a

false sense of security—approach indirectly); for those who are bored and less difficult to reach, a more dramatic approach will work, either fascinating them with a mysterious presence (3:

Send mixed signals) or seeming to be someone who is coveted

and fought over by others (4: Appear to be an object of desire). Once the victim is properly intrigued, you need to transform

their interest into something stronger—desire. Desire is generally preceded by feelings of emptiness, of something missing inside

that needs fulfillment. You must deliberately instill such feelings, make your victims aware of the adventure and romance that are

lacking in their lives (5: Create a need—stir anxiety and discontent). If they see you as the one to fill their emptiness, interest will blossom into desire. The desire should be stoked by

subtly planting ideas in their minds, hints of the seductive pleasures that await them (6: Master the art of insinuation). Mir-

roring your victims' values, indulging them in their wants and

moods will charm and delight them (7: Enter their spirit).

Without realizing how it has happened, more and more of their

thoughts now revolve around you. The time has come for some-

thing stronger. Lure them with an irresistible pleasure or adventure (8: Create temptation) and they will follow your lead.

1

Choose the Right Victim

Everything de-

pends on the target of your seduc-

tion. Study your prey thoroughly, and choose

only those who will prove susceptible to your

charms. The right victims are those for whom you can fill a void, who see in you something exotic. They are often isolated or at least somewhat unhappy (perhaps because of recent adverse circumstances), or can easily be made so—for the completely contented person is almost impossible to seduce.

The perfect victim has some natural quality that attracts you. The strong emotions this quality inspires will help make your seductive maneuvers seem more natural and dynamic. The perfect victim allows for the perfect chase.

Preparing for the Hunt

The young Vicomte de Valmont was a notorious libertine in the Paris of the 1770s, the ruin of many a young girl and the ingenious seducer of the wives of illustrious aristocrats. But after a while the repetitiveness of it all began to bore him; his successes came too easily. So one year, during the sweltering, slow month of August, he decided to take a break from Paris and visit his aunt at her château in the provinces. Life there was not what *The ninth • Have I*

he was used to—there were country walks, chats with the local vicar, card *become blind? Has the games*. His city friends, particularly his fellow libertine and confidante the *inner eye of the soul lost its power? I have seen her, but*

Marquise de Merteuil, expected him to hurry back.

it is as if I had seen a

There were other guests at the château, however, including the Présidente—*heavenly revelation—s o dente de Tourvel*, a twenty-two-year-old woman whose husband was tem—*completely has her image vanished again for me. In*

porarily absent, having work to do elsewhere. The Présidente had been *vain do I summon all the languishing at the château, waiting for him to join her. Valmont had met powers of my soul in order her before; she was certainly beautiful, but had a reputation as a prude who to conjure up this image. If I ever see her again, I shall*

was extremely devoted to her husband. She was not a court lady; her taste be able to recognize her in clothing was atrocious (she always covered her neck with ghastly frills) instantly, even though she

and her conversation lacked wit. For some reason, however, far from Paris, *stands among a hundred others. Now she has fled,*

Valmont began to see these traits in a new light. He followed her to the *and the eye of my soul tries* chapel where she went every morning to pray. He caught glimpses of her at *in vain to overtake her* dinner, or playing cards. Unlike the ladies of Paris, she seemed unaware of *with its longing. I was* her charms; this excited him. Because of the heat, she wore a simple linen *walking along Langelinie, seemingly nonchalantly*

dress, which revealed her figure. A piece of muslin covered her breasts, let- *and without paying* ting him more than imagine them. Her hair, unfashionable in its slight dis- *attention to my order*, conjured the bedroom. And her face—he had never noticed how *surroundings, although my reconnoitering glance left-*

expressive it was. Her features lit up when she gave alms to a beggar; she *nothing unobserved— and blushed* at the slightest praise. She was so natural and unself-conscious. And *then my eyes fell upon her*: when she talked of her husband, or religious matters, he could sense the *My eyes fixed unswervingly upon her.*

depth of her feelings. If such a passionate nature were ever detoured into a *They no longer obeyed*

love affair. . . .

their master's will; it was

Valmont extended his stay at the château, much to the delight of his *impossible for me to shift my gaze and thus overlook*

aunt, who could not have guessed at the reason. And he wrote to the Mar- *the object I wanted to* quise de Merteuil, explaining his new ambition: to seduce Madame de *see—I did not look, I* Tourvel. The Marquise was incredulous. He wanted to seduce this prude? *stared. As a fencer freezes* If he succeeded, how little pleasure she would give him, and if he failed, *in his lunge, so my eyes were fixed, petrified in the*

what a disgrace—the great libertine unable to seduce a wife whose husband *direction initially taken. It was far away!* She wrote a sarcastic letter, which only inflamed Valmont fur- *was impossible to look 169*

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down, impossible to ther. The conquest of this notoriously virtuous woman would prove his *withdraw my glance, greatest seduction.* His reputation would only be enhanced. *impossible to see, because I*

There was an obstacle, though, that seemed to make success almost *saw far too much. The only thing I have retained*

possible: everyone knew Valmont's reputation, including the Présidente. *is that she had on a green* She knew how dangerous it was to ever be alone with him, how people *cloak, that is all—o ne* would talk about the least association with him. Valmont did everything *could call it capturing the*

cloud instead of Juno; she to belie his reputation, even going so far as to attend church services and has escaped me . . . and

seem repentant of his ways. The Présidente noticed, but still kept her *dis left only her cloak tance*. The challenge she presented to Valmont was irresistible, but could he *behind. . . . The girl made* meet it?

an impression on me. •

The sixteenth • . . . I feel

Valmont decided to test the waters. One day he arranged a little walk *no impatience, for she must* with the Présidente and his aunt. He chose a delightful path that they had *live here in the city, and at* never taken before, but at a certain point they reached a little ditch, unsuit *this moment that is enough for me. This possibility is* able for a lady to cross on her own. And yet, Valmont said, the rest of the *the condition for the proper* walk was too nice for them to turn back, and he gallantly picked up his *appearance of her image*— aunt in his arms and carried her across the ditch, making the Présidente *everything*

will be enjoyed in slow laugh uproariously. But then it was her turn, and Valmont purposefully drafts. . . . • The picked her up a little awkwardly, so that she caught at his arms, and while *nineteenth • Cordelia*, he was holding her against him he could feel her heart beating faster, and *then, is her name!* saw her blush. His aunt saw this too, and cried out, "The child is afraid!" *Cordelia! It is a beautiful*

name, and that, too, is But Valmont sensed otherwise. Now he knew that the challenge could be *important, since it can* met, that the Présidente could be won. The seduction could proceed. *often be very disturbing to*

have to name an ugly

name together with the

most tender adjectives.

Interpretation. Valmont, the Présidente de Tourvel, and the Marquise de

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD, *THE*

Merteuil are all characters in the eighteenth-century French novel *Danger-SEDUCTER'S DIARY, TRANSLATED*

ous Liaisons, by Choderlos de Laclos. (The character of Valmont was in BY HOWARD V. H O N G AND

EDNA H . H O N G

spired by several real-life libertines of the time, most prominent of all the Duke de Richelieu.) In the story, Valmont worries that his seductions have become mechanical; he makes a move, and the woman almost always responds the same way. But no two seductions should be the same—a differ *Love as understood by Don Juan is a feeling akin* ent target should change the whole dynamic. Valmont's problem is that he *to a taste for hunting. It is* is always seducing the same type—the *wrong* type. He realizes this when he *a craving for an activity* meets Madame de Tourvel.

which needs an incessant

diversity of stimuli to

It is not because her husband is a count that he decides to seduce her, *challenge skill.*

or because she is stylishly dressed, or is desired by other men—the usual

— S T E N D H A L , *L O V E*,

reasons. He chooses her because, in her unconscious way, she has already

TRANSLATED BY GILBERT AND

seduced him. A bare arm, an unrehearsed laugh, a playful manner—all

SUZANNE SALE

these have captured his attention, because none of them is contrived. Once he falls under her spell, the strength of his desire will make his subsequent maneuvers seem less calculated; he is apparently unable to help himself. *It is not the quality of the And his strong emotions will slowly infect her. desired object that gives us*

Beyond the effect the Présidente has on Valmont, she has other traits *pleasure, but rather the*

energy of our appetites. that make her the perfect victim. She is bored, which draws her toward adventure. She is naive, and unable to see through his tricks. Finally, the

— C H A R L E S BAUDELAIRE, *THE*

END OF DON JUAN

Achilles' heel: she believes herself immune to seduction. Almost all of us *Choose the Right Victim • 171*

are vulnerable to the attractions of other people, and we take precautions *The daughter of desire*

against unwanted lapses. Madame de Tourvel takes none. Once Valmont *should strive to have the following lovers in their*

has tested her at the ditch, and has seen she is physically vulnerable, he *turn, as being mutually*

knows that eventually she will fall.

restful to her: a boy who

Life is short, and should not be wasted pursuing and seducing the *has been loosed too soon* wrong people. The choice of target is critical; it is the set up of the seducer *from the authority and counsel of his father, an*

tion and it will determine everything else that follows. The perfect victim *author enjoying office with* does not have certain facial features, or the same taste in music, or similar *a rather simple-minded* goals in life. That is how a banal seducer chooses his or her targets. The *prince, a merchant's son whose pride is in rivaling*

perfect victim is the person who stirs you in a way that cannot be explained *other lovers, an ascetic who*

in words, whose effect on you has nothing to do with superficialities. He or *is the slave of love in*

she often has a quality that you yourself lack, and may even secretly envy—*secret, a king's son whose follies are boundless and*

the Présidente, for example, has an innocence that Valmont long ago lost or *who has a taste for rascals,*

never had. There should be a little bit of tension—the victim may fear you *the countrified son of some*

a little, even slightly dislike you. Such tension is full of erotic potential and *village Brahman, a married woman's lover, a*

will make the seduction much livelier. Be more creative in choosing your *singer who has just* prey and you will be rewarded with a more exciting seduction. Of course, *pocketed a very large sum* it means nothing if the potential victim is not open to your influence. *Test of money, the master of a*

the person first. Once you feel that he or she is also vulnerable to you then *caravan but recently come in. . . . These brief*

the hunting can begin.

instructions admit of

infinitely varied

It is a stroke of good fortune to find one who is worth se-

interpretation, dear child,

according to the

ducing. . . . Most people rush ahead, become engaged or do circumstance; and it

other stupid things, and in a turn of the hand everything is

requires intelligence, insight

over, and they know neither what they have won nor what

and reflection to make the

they have lost.

best of each particular case.

—*E A S T E R N L O V E*, VOLUME II:

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD

THE HARLOT'S BREVIARY OF
KSHEMENDRA, TRANSLATED BY
E. POWYS MATHERS

Keys to Seduction

Throughout life we find ourselves having to persuade people—to se- *The women who can* duce them. Some will be relatively open to our influence, if only in *be easily won over to*

subtle ways, while others seem impervious to our charms. Perhaps we find *congress: . . . a woman who looks sideways at*

this a mystery beyond our control, but that is an ineffective way of dealing *you; . . . a woman who* with life. Seducers, whether sexual or social, prefer to pick the odds. *As hates her husband, or who*

often as possible they go toward people who betray some vulnerability to *is hated by him; . . . a*

them, and avoid the ones who cannot be moved. To leave people who are *woman who has not had any children; . . . a*

inaccessible to you alone is a wise path; you cannot seduce everyone. On the *woman who is very fond of* other hand, you must actively hunt out the prey that responds the right way. *society; a woman who* This will make your seductions that much more pleasurable and satisfying. *is apparently very*

affectionate toward her

How do you recognize your victims? By the way they respond to you.

husband; the wife of an

You should not pay so much attention to their conscious responses—a per- *actor; a widow; . . . a son who* is obviously trying to please or charm you is probably playing to *woman fond of*

enjoyments; . . . a vain

your vanity, and wants something from you. Instead, pay greater attention *woman; a woman whose* to those responses outside conscious control—a blush, an involuntary mir- *husband is inferior to her* 172 • *The Art of Seduction*

in rank or ability; a

rroring of some gesture of yours, an unusual shyness, even perhaps a flash of *woman who is proud of her* anger or resentment. All of these show that you are

having an effect on a *skill in the arts*; . . . a

person who is open to your influence.

woman who is slighted by

her husband without any

Like Valmont, you can also recognize the right targets by the effect they *cause*; . . . *a woman whose*

are having on you. Perhaps they make you uneasy—perhaps they corre *husband is devoted to* spond to a deep-rooted childhood ideal, or represent some kind of personal *travelling; the wife of a*

jeweler; a jealous woman;

taboo that excites you, or suggest the person you imagine you would be if *a covetous woman*. you were the opposite sex. When a person has such a deep effect on you, it

— *THE HINDI: ART OF LOVE,*

transforms all of your subsequent maneuvers. Your face and gestures beEDITED BY EDWARD WINDSOR

come more animated. You have more energy; when victims resist you (as a good victim should) you in turn will be more creative, more motivated to overcome their resistance. The seduction will move forward like a good *Leisure stimulates love*,

play. Your strong desire will infect the target and give them the dangerous *leisure watches the*

sensation that they have a power over you. Of course, you are the one ulti *lovelorn, \ Leisure's the cause and sustenance of* mately in control since you are making your victims emotional at the right *this sweet \ Evil.*

moments, leading them back and forth. Good seducers choose targets that *Eliminate leisure, and*

inspire them but they know how and when to restrain themselves.

*Cupid's bow is broken, *

His torches lie lightless,

Never rush into the waiting arms of the first person who seems to like *scorned. \ As a plane-tree* you. That is not seduction but insecurity. The need that draws you will *rejoices in wine, as a poplar* make for a low-level attachment, and interest on both sides will sag. Look *in water, \ As a marsh-reed*

at the types you have not considered before—that is where you will find *in swampy ground, so*

Venus loves \ Leisure. . . .

challenge and adventure. Experienced hunters do not choose their prey by

\ *Why do you think*

how easily it is caught; they want the thrill of the chase, a life-and-death *Aegisthus \ Became an*

struggle—the fiercer the better.

adulterer? Easy: he was

*idle—and bored. *

Although the victim who is perfect for you depends on you, certain

Everyone else was away at

types lend themselves to a more satisfying seduction. Casanova liked young *Troy on a lengthy \ women who were unhappy, or had suffered a recent misfortune. Such Campaign: all Greece had*

shipped \ Its contingent

women appealed to his desire to play the savior, but it also responded to *ne across. Suppose he cessity: happy people are much harder to seduce. Their contentment makes hankered for warfare?*

them inaccessible. It is always easier to fish in troubled waters. Also, an air *Argos \ Had no wars to*

of sadness is itself quite seductive—Genji, the hero of the Japanese novel *offer. Suppose he fancied*

the courts? \ Argos lacked

The Tale of Genji, could not resist a woman with a melancholic air. In *litigation. Love was better* Kierkegaard's book *The Seducer's Diary*, the narrator, Johannes, has one *than doing nothing. \ main requirement in his victim: she must have imagination. That is why he That's how Cupid slips*

in; that's how he stays.

chooses a woman who lives in a fantasy world, a woman who will envelop

— O V I D , C U R E S F O R L O V E ,

his every gesture in poetry, imagining far more than is there. Just as it is

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

hard to seduce a person who is happy, it is hard to seduce a person who has no imagination.

For women, the manly man is often the perfect victim. Mark Antony

The Chinese have a

was of this type—he loved pleasure, was quite emotional, and when it *proverb*:
"When Yang is in

came to women, found it hard to think straight. He was easy for Cleopatra *the ascendant, Yin is*

to manipulate. Once she gained a hold on his emotions, she kept him per *born*, "*which means, translated into our* manently on a string. A woman should never be put off by a man who *language, that when a man*

seems overly aggressive. He is often the perfect victim. It is easy, with a few *has devoted the better of* coquettish tricks, to turn that aggression around and make him your slave. *his life to the ordinary*

business of living, the Yin,

Such men actually enjoy being made to chase after a woman.

Choose the Right Victim • 173

Be careful with appearances. The person who seems volcanically *pas- or emotional side of his sionate* is often hiding insecurity and self-involvement. This was what *most nature, rises to the surface and demands its rights*.

men failed to perceive in the nineteenth-century courtesan Lola Montez. *When such a period occurs,*

She seemed so dramatic, so exciting. In fact, she was a troubled, self- *all that which has formerly* obsessed woman, but by the time men discovered this it was too late —they *seemed important loses its* had become involved with her and could not extricate themselves without *significance. The will-of- the-wisp of illusion leads*

months of drama and torture. People who are outwardly distant or shy are *the man hither and thither,*

often better targets than extroverts. They are dying to be drawn out, and *taking him on strange and*

still waters run deep.

complicated deviations from

his former path in life.

People with a lot of time on their hands are extremely susceptible to seduction. They have mental space for you to fill. Tullia d'Aragona, the infanta-Emperor of the Tang mous sixteenth-century Italian courtesan, preferred young men as her dynasty, was an example of the profound truth of

victims; besides the physical reason for such a preference, they were more this theory. From the

idle than working men with careers, and therefore more defenseless against moment he saw Yang

an ingenious seductress. On the other hand, you should generally avoid Kuei-fei bathing in the lake near his palace in the

people who are preoccupied with business or work—seduction demands Li mountains, he was attention, and busy people have too little space in their minds for you to destined to sit at her feet, occupy.

learning from her the

According to Freud, seduction begins early in life, in our relationship emotional mysteries of what the Chinese call Yin.

with our parents. They seduce us physically, both with bodily contact and

— E L O I S E TALCOTT H I B B E R T ,

by satisfying desires such as hunger, and we in turn try to seduce them into EMBROIDERED GAUZE: paying us attention. We are creatures by nature vulnerable to seduction PORTRAITS OF FAMOUS

throughout our lives. We all want to be seduced; we yearn to be drawn out CHINESE LADIES

of ourselves, out of our routines and into the drama of eros. And what draws us more than anything is the feeling that someone has something we don't, a quality we desire. Your perfect victims are often people who think you have something they don't, and who will be enchanted to have it provided for them. Such victims may have a temperament quite the opposite of yours, and this difference will create an exciting tension.

When Jiang Qing, later known as Madame Mao, first met Mao Tsetung in 1937 in his mountain retreat in western China, she could sense how desperate he was for a bit of color and spice in his life: all the camp's women dressed like the men, and abjured any feminine finery. Jiang had been an actress in Shanghai, and was

anything but austere. She supplied what he lacked, and she also gave him the added thrill of being able to educate her in communism, appealing to his Pygmalion complex—the desire to dominate, control, and remake a person. In fact it was Jiang Qing who controlled her future husband.

The greatest lack of all is excitement and adventure, which is precisely what seduction offers. In 1964, the Chinese actor Shi Pei Pu, a man who had gained fame as a female impersonator, met Bernard Bouriscout, a young diplomat assigned to the French embassy in China. Bouriscout had come to China looking for adventure, and was disappointed to have little contact with Chinese people. Pretending to be a woman who, when still a child, had been forced to live as a boy—supposedly the family already had too many daughters—Shi Pei Pu used the young Frenchman's boredom and

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discontent to manipulate him. Inventing a story of the deceptions he had had to go through, he slowly drew Bouriscout into an affair that would last many years. (Bouriscout had had previous homosexual encounters, but considered himself heterosexual.) Eventually the diplomat was led into spying for the Chinese. All the while, he believed Shi Pei Pu was a woman—his yearning for adventure had made him that vulnerable. Repressed types are perfect victims for a deep seduction.

People who repress the appetite for pleasure make ripe victims, particularly later in their lives. The eighth-century Chinese Emperor Ming Huang spent much of his reign trying to rid his court of its costly addiction to luxuries, and was himself a model of austerity and virtue. But the moment he saw the concubine Yang Kuei-fei bathing in a palace lake, everything changed. The most charming woman in the realm, she was the mistress of his son. Exerting his power, the emperor won her away—only to become her abject slave.

The choice of the right victim is equally important in politics. Mass seducers such as Napoleon or John F. Kennedy offer their public just what it lacks. When Napoleon came to power, the French people's sense of pride was beaten down by the bloody aftermath of the French Revolution. He offered them glory and conquest. Kennedy recognized that Americans

were bored with the stultifying comfort of the Eisenhower years; he gave them adventure and risk. More important, he tailored his appeal to the group most vulnerable to it: the younger generation. Successful politicians know that not everyone will be susceptible to their charm, but if they can find a group of believers with a need to be filled, they have supporters who will stand by them no matter what.

Symbol:

*Big Game. Lions are dangerous—to hunt
them is to know the thrill of risk. Leopards are clever
and swift, offering the excitement of a difficult chase. Never*

rush into the hunt. Know your prey and choose it carefully. Do not waste time with small game—the rabbits that back into snares, the mink that walk into a scented trap. Challenge is pleasure.

Choose the Right Victim • 175

Reversal

There is no possible reversal. There is nothing to be gained from trying to seduce the person who is closed to you, or who cannot provide the pleasure and chase that you need.

2

Create a False Sense of Security Approach Indirectly

If you are too direct early on, you risk stirring up a resistance that will never be lowered. At first there must be nothing of the seducer in your manner. The seduction should begin at an angle, indirectly, so that the target only gradually becomes aware of you. Haunt the periphery of your target's life—approach through a third party, or seem to cultivate a relatively neutral relationship, moving gradually from friend to lover. Arrange an occasional "chance" encounter, as if you and your target were destined to become acquainted—nothing is more seductive than a sense of destiny. Lull the target into feeling secure, then strike.

Friend to Lover

Anne Marie Louis d'Orléans, the Duchess de Montpensier, known in seventeenth-century France as *La Grande Mademoiselle*, had never known love in her life. Her mother had died when she was young; her father remarried and ignored her. She came from one of Europe's most illustrious families: her grandfather had been King Henry IV; the future King Louis XIV was her cousin. When she was young, matches had been proposed. Many women adore the posed between her and the widowed king of Spain, the son of the Holy *elusive, \ Hate overeagerness. So, play*

Roman emperor, and even cousin Louis himself, among many others. But *hard to get, | Stop boredom* all of these matches were designed for political purposes, or because of her *developing. And don't let* family's enormous wealth. No one bothered to woo her; she rarely even *your entreaties | Sound too* met her suitors. To make matters worse, the Grande Mademoiselle was an *confident of possession. Insinuate sex |*

idealist who believed in the old-fashioned values of chivalry: courage, honor, *Camouflaged as friendship. esty, virtue.* She loathed the schemers whose motives in courting her were *I've seen ultrastubborn* dubious at best. Whom could she trust? One by one she found a reason to *creatures | Fooled by this gemit, the switch from* spurn them. Spinsterhood seemed to be her fate.

companion to stud.

In April of 1669, the Grande Mademoiselle, then forty-two, met one —OVID, *THEART OF LOVE*, of the strangest men in the court: the Marquis Antonin Peguilin, later TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

known as the Duke de Lauzun. A favorite of Louis XIV's, the thirty-sixyear-old Marquis was a brave soldier with an acid wit. He was also an incurable Don Juan. Although he was short, and certainly not handsome, his impudent manners and his military exploits made him irresistible to *On the street, I do not stop* women. The Grande Mademoiselle had noticed him some years before, *ad- her; or I exchange a* miring his elegance and boldness. But it was only this time, in 1669, that *greeting with her but never come close, but always*

she had a real conversation with him, if a short one, and although she knew *strive for distance.* of his lady-killer reputation, she found him charming. A few days later they *Presumably our repeated* ran into each other again; this time the conversation was longer, and *encounters are clearly noticeable to her;*

Lauzun proved more intelligent than she had imagined—they talked of the *presumably she does* playwright Corneille (her favorite), of heroism, and of other elevated top- *perceive that on her ics.* Now their encounters became more frequent. They had become *horizon a new planet has* friends. Anne Marie noted in her diary that her conversations with Lauzun, *loomed, which in its course has encroached disturbingly*

when they occurred, were the highlight of her day; when he was not at *upon hers in a curiously court*, she felt his absence. Surely her encounters with him came frequently *undisturbing way, but* enough that they could not be accidental on his part, but he always seemed *she has no inkling of the law underlying this*

surprised to see her. At the same time, she recorded feeling uneasy—*movement. . . Before I* strange emotions were stealing up on her, she did not know why.

begin my attack, I must

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first become acquainted

Time passed, and the Grande Mademoiselle was to leave Paris for a

with her and her whole week or two. Now Lauzun approached her without warning and made an mental state.

emotional plea to be considered her confidante, the great friend who

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD, *THE*

*would execute any commission she needed done while she was away. He
SEDUCTER'S DIARY, TRANSLATED*

BY H O W A R D V. H O N G A N D

was poetic and chivalrous, but what did he really mean? In her diary, Anne E D N A H . H O N G

Marie finally confronted the emotions that had been stirring in her since their first conversation: "I told myself, these are not vague musings; there must be an object to all of these feelings, and I could not imagine who it was. . . . Finally, after troubling myself with this for several days, I realized *No sooner had he spoken*

than the bullocks, driven

that it was M. de Lauzun whom I loved, it was he who had somehow

from their mountain

slipped into my heart and captured it."

pastures, were on their way

Made aware of the source of her feelings, the Grande Mademoiselle

to the beach, as Jove had

directed; they were making became more direct. If Lauzun was to be her confidante, she could talk to *for the sands where the* him of marriage, of the matches that were still being offered to her. The *daughter [Europa] of the*

topic might give him a chance to express his feelings; perhaps he might *great king used to play*

with the young girls of show jealousy. Unfortunately Lauzun did not seem to take the hint. In *Tyre, who were her com-* stead, he asked her why she was thinking of marriage at all—she seemed *panions*. • . . . *Aban-*

so happy. Besides, who could possibly be worthy of her? This went

doning the dignity of his

on for weeks. She could pry nothing personal out of him. In a way, she *scepter, the father and ruler*

of the gods, whose hand

understood—there were the differences in rank (she was far above him) and *wields the flaming three-*

age (she was six years older). Then, a few months later, the wife of the *forked bolt, whose nod*

king's brother died, and King Louis suggested to the Grande Mademoiselle *shakes the universe,*

adopted the guise of a bull; that she replace his late sister-in-law—that is, that she marry his brother. *and, mingling with the* Anne Marie was disgusted; clearly the brother was trying to get his hands *other bullocks, joined in the*

on her fortune. She asked Lauzun his opinion. As the king's loyal servants, *lowing and ambled in the*

tender grass, a fair sight to he replied, they must obey the royal wish. His answer did not please her, *sec. His hide was white as* and to make things worse, he stopped visiting her, as if it were no longer *untrodden snow, snow not* proper for them to be friends. This was the last straw. The Grande Made *yet melted by the rainy* moiselle told the king she would not marry his brother, and that was that. *South wind. The muscles*

stood out on his neck, and

Now Anne Marie met with Lauzun, and told him she would write on a

deep folds of skin hung piece of paper the name of the man she had wanted to marry all along. He *along his flanks. His horns* was to put the paper under his pillow and read it the next morning. When *were small, it is true, but*

so beautifully made that he did, he found the words "*C'est vous*"—It is you. Seeing the Grande *you would swear they were* Mademoiselle the following evening, Lauzun said she must have been *jok the work of an artist, more* ing; she would make him the laughing stock of the court. She insisted that *polished and shining than*

any jewel. There was no she was serious. He seemed shocked, surprised—but not as surprised as the *menace in the set of his*

rest of the court was a few weeks later, when an engagement was an *head or in his eyes; he* nounced between this relatively low-ranking Don Juan and the second *looked completely placid.* •

Agenor's daughter highest-ranking lady in France, a woman known for both her virtue and

[Europa] was filled with her skill at defending it. *admiration for one so handsome and so friendly.*

But, gentle though he

seemed, she was afraid at

Interpretation. The Duke de Lauzun was one of the greatest seducers in *first to touch him; then she* history, and his slow and steady seduction of the Grande Mademoiselle was *went closer, and held out* his masterpiece. His method was simple: indirection. Sensing her interest in *flowers to his shining lips.*

The lover was delighted

him in that first conversation, he decided to beguile her with friendship. *Create a False Sense of Security—Approach Indirectly* • 181

He would become her most devoted friend. At first this was charming; a *and, until he could achieve* man was taking the time to talk to her, of poetry, history, the deeds of *h is hoped-for pleasure, kissed her hands. He could*

war—her favorite subjects. She slowly began to confide in him. Then, *al- scarcely wait for the rest,* most without her realizing it, her feelings shifted: the consummate ladies' *only with great difficulty* man was only interested in friendship? He was not attracted to her as a *did he restrain himself.* •

woman? Such thoughts made her aware that she had fallen in love with *Now he frolicked and played on the green turf*

him. This, in part, was what eventually made her turn down the match *now lay down, all snowy* with the king's brother—a decision cleverly and indirectly provoked by *white on the yellow sand.* Lauzun himself, when he stopped visiting her. And how could he be after *Gradually the princess lost*

her fear, and with her

money or position, or sex, when he had never made any kind of move? *innocent hands she stroked* No, the brilliance of Lauzun's seduction was that the Grande Mademoiselle *his breast when he offered* believed it was she who was making all

the moves.

it for her caress, and hung

fresh garlands on his horns:

Once you have chosen the right victim, you must get his or her at- *till finally she even tention and stir desire*. To move from friendship to love can win success *ventured to mount the bull*, without calling attention to itself as a maneuver. First, your friendly con- *little knowing on whose back she was resting. Then*

versations with your targets will bring you valuable information about their *the god drew away from* characters, their tastes, their weaknesses, the childhood yearnings that gov- *the shore by easy stages*, earn their adult behavior. (Lauzun, for example, could adapt cleverly to *first planting the hooves* Anne Marie's tastes once he had studied her close up.) Second, by spending *that were part of his disguise in the surf at the*

time with your targets you can make them comfortable with you. Believing *water's edge, and then* you are interested only in their thoughts, in their company, they will lower *proceeding farther out to* their resistance, dissipating the usual tension between the sexes. Now they *sea, till he bore his booty away over the wide*

are vulnerable, for your friendship with them has opened the golden gate to *stretches of mid ocean*. their body: their mind. At this point any offhand comment, any slight—OVID, *METAMORPHOSES*, physical contact, will spark a different thought, which will catch them off-TRANSLATED BY MARY M. INNES

guard: perhaps there could be something else between you. Once that feeling has stirred, they will wonder why you haven't made a move, and will take the initiative themselves, enjoying the illusion that they are in control. *These few reflections lead*

There is nothing more effective in seduction than making the seduced *us to the understanding* think that they are the ones doing the seducing.

that, since in attempting a

seduction it is up to the

man to make the first steps,

I do not approach her, I merely skirt the periphery of her

for the seducer, to seduce is

existence. . . . This is the first web into which she must be

nothing more than reducing

spun.

the distance, in this case

that of the difference

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD

between the sexes and that,

in order to accomplish this,

it is necessary to feminize

Key to Seduction

himself or at least identify

himself with the object of

his seduction. . . As

What you are after as a seducer is the ability to move people in the direction you want them to go. But the game is perilous; the moment they suspect they are acting under your influence, they will become *astray, in the sense that he* resentful. We are creatures who cannot stand feeling that we are obeying *abdicates his own sex. . . someone else's will*. Should your targets catch on, sooner or later they will *Seduction undoubtedly aims at sexual*

turn against you. But what if you can make them do what you want them *consummation, but it only* to without their realizing it? What if they think *they* are in control? That is *gets there in creating a kind 182 • The Art of Seduction*

of simulacra of Gomorrah.

the power of indirection and no seducer can work his or her magic with *The seducer is nothing* out it.

more than a lesbian."

The first move to master is simple: once you have chosen the right person—FRÉDÉRIC MONGEON, son, you must make the target come to you. If, in the opening stages, you SÉDUIRE: *L'IMAGINAIRE DE LA*

SÉDUCTION DE DON GIOVANNI

can make your targets think that they are the ones making the first approach *À MICK JAGGER*

proach, you have won the game. There will be no resentment, no perverse counterreaction, no paranoia.

To make them come to you requires giving them space. This can be

As he [Jupiter] was

hurrying busily to and fro,

accomplished in several ways. You can haunt the periphery of their exis *he stopped short at the tence*, letting them notice you in different places but never approaching *sight of an Arcadian*

them. You will get their attention this way, and if they want to bridge the *maiden*. *The fire of*

passion kindled the very

gap, they will have to come to you. You can befriend them, as Lauzun did *marrow of his bones*. *This*

the Grande Mademoiselle, moving steadily closer while always maintaining *girl was not one who spent*

the distance appropriate for friends of the opposite sex. You can also play *her time in spinning soft*

fibers of wool, or in

cat and mouse with them, first seeming interested, then stepping back—

arranging her hair in

actively luring them to follow you into your web. Whatever you do, and *different styles*. *She was*

whatever kind of seduction you are practicing, you must at all cost avoid *one of Diana's warriors*,

the natural tendency to crowd your targets. Do not make the mistake of *wearing her tunic pinned*

together with a brooch, her thinking they will lose interest unless you apply pressure, or that they will *tresses carelessly caught*

enjoy a flood of attention. Too much attention early on will actually just *back by a white ribbon*,

suggest insecurity, and raise doubts as to your motives. Worst of all, it gives *and carrying in her hand a*

light javelin or her your targets no room for imagination. Take a step back; let the thoughts *bow*. . . . • *The sun on*

you are provoking come to them as if they were their own. This is doubly *high had passed its zenith*,

important if you are dealing with someone who has a deep effect on you. *when she entered a grove*

whose trees had never felt

We can never really understand the opposite sex. They are always mys *the axe*. *Here she took her* terious to us, and it is this mystery that provides the tension so delightful in *quiver from her shoulders*,

seduction; but it is also a source of unease. Freud famously wondered what *unstrung her pliant bow*,

and lay down on the women really wanted; even to this most insightful of psychological *turf*, *resting her head on*

thinkers, the opposite sex was a foreign land. For both men and women, *her painted quiver*. *When*

there are deep-rooted feelings of fear and anxiety in relation to the oppo *Jupiter saw her thus, tired* site sex. In the initial stages of a seduction, then, you must find ways to *and unprotected, he*

said: "Here is a secret of

calm any sense of mistrust that the other person may experience. (A sense *which my wife will know*

of danger and fear can heighten the seduction later on, but if you stir such *nothing; or if she does get*

emotions in the first stages, you will more likely scare the target away.) Es *to know of it, it will be worth her reproaches!"* • tablish a neutral distance, seem harmless, and you give yourself room to *Without wasting time he*

move. Casanova cultivated a slight femininity in his character—an interest *assumed the appearance* in clothes, theater, domestic matters—that young girls found comforting. *and the dress of Diana*,

and spoke to the girl.

The Renaissance courtesan Tullia d'Aragona, developing friendships with the

'Dearest of all my

great thinkers and poets of her time, talked of literature and philosophy—

companions," he said,

anything but the boudoir (and anything but the money that was also her

"where have you been

goal). Johannes, the narrator of Søren Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary*, fol-
hunting? On what mountain ridges?" She bows his target, Cordelia, from a distance;
when their paths cross, he is *po raised herself from the* lime and apparently shy. As
Cordelia gets to know him, he doesn't frighten grass: *"Greeting, divine*

her. In fact he is so innocuous she begins to wish he were less so. *mistress," she*
cried,

"greater in my sight than

Duke Ellington, the great jazz artist and a consummate seducer, would *Create a*
False Sense of Security— Approach Indirectly • 183

initially dazzle the ladies with his good looks, stylish clothing, and cha- *Jove*
himself—I care not risma. But once he was alone with a woman, he would take a
slight step if *he hears me!" Jove laughed to hear her words.*

back, becoming excessively polite, making only small talk. Banal conversa-
Delighted to be preferred to tion can be a brilliant tactic; it hypnotizes the target.
The dullness of your *himself, he kissed her—not* front gives the subtlest suggestive
word, the slightest look, an amplified *with the restraint becoming* power. Never
mention love and you make its absence speak volumes—your *to a maiden's kisses:*
and as she began to tell of her

victims will wonder why you never discuss your emotions, and as they have
hunting exploits in the such thoughts, they will go further, imagining what else is
going on in your *forest, he prevented her by* mind. They will be the ones to bring up
the topic of love or affection. De- *his embrace, and betrayed his real self by a*
shameful

liberate dullness has many applications. In psychotherapy, the doctor makes *action.*
So far from monosyllabic responses to draw patients in, making them relax and
open *complying, she resisted* up. In international negotiations, Henry Kissinger
would lull diplomats *him as far as a woman could . . . but how could a*

with boring details, then strike with bold demands. Early in a seduction, *girl*
overcome a man, and less-colorful words are often more effective than vivid ones
—the target *who could defeat Jupiter?*

tunes them out, looks at your face, begins to imagine, fantasize, fall under *He had*
his way, and returned to the upper air.

your spell.

Getting to your targets through other people is extremely effective; in— O V I D ,
METAMORPHOSES, TRANSLATED BY MARY M. INNES

filtrate their circle and you are no longer a stranger. Before the seventeenth century seducer Count de Grammont made a move, he would befriend his target's chambermaid, her valet, a friend, even a lover. In this way he could *I had rather hear my dog gather information, finding a way to approach her in an unthreatening bark at a crow than a man manner*. He could also plant ideas, saying things the third party was likely *swear he loves me*. to repeat, things that would intrigue the lady, particularly when they came —BEATRICE, IN WILLIAM

from someone she knew.

SHAKESPEARE, *MUCH ADO*

ABOUT NOTHING

Ninon de l'Enclos, the seventeenth-century courtesan and strategist of seduction, believed that disguising one's intentions was not only a necessity, it added to the pleasure of the game. A man should never declare his feelings, she felt, particularly early on. It is irritating and provokes mistrust. "A beloved was completely woman is much better persuaded that she is loved by what she guesses than friendly and at ease with by what she is told," Ninon once remarked. Often a person's haste in declaring his or her feelings comes from a false desire to please, thinking this *gesture that he was in love*, will flatter the other. But the desire to please can annoy and offend. Charming the beloved would have drawn, cats, and coquettes draw us to them by apparently not trying, even by *become as remote from him as the Pleiades, whose*

seeming uninterested. Learn to disguise your feelings and let people figure *stars hang so high in out what is happening for themselves*.

heaven. It is a sort of

In all arenas of life, you should never give the impression that you are *statesmanship that is required in such cases; the*

angling for something—that will raise a resistance that you will never lower. *party concerned was* Learn to approach people from the side. Mute your colors, blend in, seem *enjoying the pleasure of his unthreatening*, and you will have more room to maneuver later on. The *loved one's company* same holds true in politics, where overt ambition often frightens people. *intensely and to the last degree, but if he had so*

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin at first glance looked like an everyday Russian; he *much as hinted at his inner* dressed like a worker, spoke with a peasant accent, had no air of greatness. *feelings he would have* This made the public feel comfortable and

identify with him. Yet beneath *attained but a miserable fraction of the beloved's* this apparently bland appearance, of course, was a deeply clever man who *favor, and endured into the* was always maneuvering. By the time people realized this it was too late. *bargain all the arrogance*

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and caprice of which love is

Symbol: *The Spider's Web. The spider finds an innocuous corner in capable.*

which to spin its web. The longer the web takes, the more fabulous

—IBN HAZM; *THE RING OF*

THE DOVE: A TREATISE ON THE

its construction, yet few really notice it— its gossamer threads are ART AND PRACTICE OF ARAB

LOVE, TRANSLATED BY A. J.

nearly invisible. The spider has no need to chase for food, or

ARBERRY

even to move. It quietly sits in the corner, waiting for its victims to come to it on their own, and ensnare themselves in the web.

Reversal

In warfare, you need space to align your troops, room to maneuver. The more space you have, the more intricate your strategy can be. But sometimes it is better to overwhelm the enemy, giving them no time to think or react. Although Casanova adapted his strategies to the woman in question, he would often try to make an immediate impression, stirring her desire at the first encounter. Perhaps he would perform some gallantry, rescuing a woman in danger; perhaps he would dress so that his target would notice him in a crowd. In either case, once he had the woman's attention he would move with lightning speed. A Siren like Cleopatra tries to have an immediate physical effect on men, giving her victims no time or space to retreat. She uses the element of surprise. The first period of your contact with someone can involve a level of desire that will never be repeated; boldness will carry the day.

But these are short seductions. The Sirens and the Casanovas only get pleasure from the number of their victims, moving quickly from conquest to conquest, and this can be tiring. Casanova burned himself out; Sirens, insatiable, are never satisfied. The indirect, carefully constructed seduction may reduce the number of your conquests, but more than compensate by their quality.

3

Send Mixed Signals

Once people are aware of your presence, and perhaps vaguely intrigued, you need to stir their interest before it settles on someone else. What is obvious and striking may attract their attention at first, but that attention is often short-lived; in the long run, ambiguity is much more potent. Most of us are much too obvious—instead, be hard to figure out. Send mixed signals: both tough and tender, both spiritual and earthy, both inno-

cent and cunning. A mix of qualities suggests depth, which fascinates even as it confuses. An elusive, enigmatic aura will make people want to know more, drawing them into your circle. Create such a power by hinting at something contradictory within you.

Good and Bad

In 1806, when Prussia and France were at war, Auguste, the handsome twenty-four-year-old prince of Prussia and nephew of Frederick the

Great, was captured by Napoleon. Instead of locking him up, Napoleon allowed him to wander around French territory, keeping a close watch on him through spies. The prince was devoted to pleasure, and spent his time *Reichardt had seen Juliette* moving from town to town, seducing young girls. In 1807 he decided to *at another ball, protesting* visit the Château de Coppet, in Switzerland, where lived the great French *coyly that she would not* writer Madame de Staë'l.

dance, and then, after a

while, throwing off her

Auguste was greeted by his hostess with as much ceremony as she could *heavy evening gown, to muster*. After she had introduced him to her other guests, they all retired to *reveal a light dress* a drawing room, where they talked of Napoleon's war in Spain, the current *underneath. On all sides, there were murmurs and*

Paris fashions, and so on. Suddenly the door opened and another guest entered, a woman who had somehow stayed in her room during the hubbub *coquetry and affectation*. of the prince's entrance. It was the thirty-year-old Madame Récamier, *As ever, she wore white satin, cut very low in the*

Madame de Staë'l's closest friend. She introduced herself to the prince, then *back, revealing her* quickly retired to her bedroom.

charming shoulders. The

Auguste had known that Madame Récamier was at the château. In fact *men implored her to dance for them. . . . To soft*

he had heard many stories about this infamous woman, who, in the years *music she floated into the* after the French Revolution, was considered the most beautiful in France. *room in her diaphanous* Men had gone wild over her, particularly at balls when she would take off *Greek robe. Her head was bound with a muslin fichu.*

her evening wrap, revealing the diaphanous white dresses that she had made *She bowed timidly to the famous, and dance with such abandon. The painters Gérard and David had audience, and then, immortalized her face and fashions, and even her feet, considered the most spinning round lightly, she shook a transparent scarf*

beautiful anyone had ever seen; and she had broken the heart of Lucien with her fingertips, so that Bonaparte, the Emperor Napoleon's brother. Auguste liked his girls in turns it billowed into the younger than Madame Récamier, and he had come to the château to rest. semblance of a drapery, a But those few moments in which she had stolen the scene with her sudden veil, a cloud. All this with a strange blend of precision

entrance caught him off guard: she was as beautiful as people had said, but *and languor. She used her more striking than her beauty was that look of hers that seemed so sweet, eyes in a subtle fascinating indeed heavenly, with a hint of sadness in the eyes. The other guests con- way— "she danced with her eyes." The women*

tinued their conversations, but Auguste could only think of Madame *thought that all that Récamier.*

serpentine undulating of

the body, all that

Over dinner that evening, he watched her. She did not talk much, and *nonchalant rhythmic* kept her eyes downward, but once or twice she looked up—directly at the *nodding of the head, were* prince. After dinner the guests assembled in the gallery, and a harp was *sensuous; the men were wafted into a realm of*

brought in. To the prince's delight, Madame Récamier began to play, 187

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unearthly bliss. Juliette was singing a love song. And now, suddenly, she changed: there was a roguish *an a n g e fatal, and much* look in her eye as she glanced at him. The angelic voice, the glances, the *more dangerous for looking* energy animating her face, sent his mind reeling. He was confused. When *like an angel!* *The music*

grew fainter. Suddenly, by the same thing happened the next night, the prince decided to extend his a deft trick, Juliette's stay at the château.

chestnut hair was loosened

In the days that followed, the prince and Madame Récamier took walks *and fell in clouds around*

her. A little out of breath, together, rowed out on the lake, and attended dances, where he finally held she disappeared into her her in his arms. They would talk late

into the night. But nothing grew clear *dimly lit boudoir. And* to him: she would seem so spiritual, so noble, and then there would be *there the crowd followed* *her and beheld her reclining* a touch of the hand, a sudden flirtatious remark. After two weeks at the *on her daybed in a loose château*, the most eligible bachelor in Europe forgot all his libertine habits *tea-gown, looking* and proposed marriage to Madame Récamier. He would convert to Catholicism, *fashionably pale, like a cism*, her religion, and she would divorce her much older husband. (She *Gérard's Psyche, while her*

maids cooled her brow with had told him her marriage had never been consummated and so the *toilet water*.

Catholic church could annul it.) She would then come to live with him in

— M A R G A R E T T R O U N C E R,

Prussia. Madame promised to do as he wished. The prince hurried off to *MADAME RÉCAMIER*

Prussia to seek the approval of his family, and Madame returned to Paris to secure the required annulment. Auguste flooded her with love letters, and waited. Time passed; he felt he was going mad. Then, finally, a letter: *The idea that two distinct elements are combined in* she had changed her mind.

Mona Lisa's smile is one

Some months later, Madame Récamier sent Auguste a gift: Gérard's *fa that has struck several* mouse painting of her reclining on a sofa. The prince spent hours in front of *critics. They accordingly*

find in the beautiful it, trying to pierce the mystery behind her gaze. He had joined the *com Florentine's expression* company of her conquests—of men like the writer Benjamin Constant, who *most perfect representation* said of her, "She was my last love. For the rest of my life I was like a tree *of the contrasts that struck by lightning.*"

dominate the erotic life of

women; the contrast

between reserve and

seduction, and between the

Interpretation. Madame Récamier's list of conquests became only more *most devoted tenderness*

and a sensuality that is impressive as she grew older: there was Prince Metternich, the Duke of ruthlessly demanding— Wellington, the writers Constant and Chateaubriand. For all of these men consuming men as if they she was an obsession, which only increased in intensity when they were alien beings. away from her. The source of her power was twofold. First, she had an an— S I G M U N D FREUD, *LEONARDO*

gelic face, which drew men to her. It appealed to paternal instincts, charm *DA VINCI AND A MEMORY OF*

HIS CHILDHOOD, TRANSLATED

ing with its innocence. But then there was a second quality peeking

BY ALAN TYSON

through, in the flirtatious looks, the wild dancing, the sudden gaiety—all these caught men off guard. Clearly there was more to her than they had thought, an intriguing complexity. When alone, they would find them *[Oscar Wilde's] hands* selves pondering these contradictions, as if a poison were coursing through *were fat and flabby; his*

handshake lacked grip, and their blood. Madame Récamier was an enigma, a problem that had to be *at a first encounter one* solved. Whatever it was that you wanted, whether a coquettish she-devil or *recoiled from its plushy* an unattainable goddess, she could seem to be. She surely encouraged this *limpness, but this aversion*

was soon overcome when illusion by keeping her men at a certain distance, so they could never figure *he began to talk, for his* her out. And she was the queen of the calculated effect, like her surprise *genuine kindliness and*

entrance at the Château de Coppet, which made her the center of attention *desire to please made one forget what was unpleasant* tion, if only for a few seconds. *Send Mixed Signals • 189*

The seductive process involves filling someone's mind with your image. *in his physical appearance* Your innocence, or your beauty, or your flirtatiousness can attract their attention and contact, *gave charm to his manners, and grace to*

tention but not their obsession; they will soon move on to the next striking *his precision of speech. The image.* To deepen their interest, you must hint at a complexity that cannot *first sight of him affected* be grasped in a week or two. You are an elusive mystery, an irresistible lure, *people in various ways.* promising great pleasure if only it can be possessed. Once they begin to *Some could hardly restrain their laughter, others felt*

fantasize about you, they are on the brink of the slippery slope of seduction, *hostile, a few were afflicted* tion, and will not be able to stop themselves from sliding down.

with the "creeps" many

were conscious of being

uneasy, but except for a

small minority who could

Artificial and Natural

never recover from the first

sensation of distaste and so

kept out of his way, both

The big Broadway hit of 1881 was Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *Pa-sexes found him irresistible, tience*, a satire on the bohemian world of aesthetes and dandies that had *and to the young men of* become so fashionable in London. To cash in on this vogue, the operetta's *his time, says W. B. Yeats, he was like a triumphant*

promoters decided to invite one of England's most infamous aesthetes to *and audacious figure from America* for a lecture tour: Oscar Wilde. Only twenty-seven at the time, *another age*. Wilde was more famous for his public persona than for his small body of —HESKETH PEARSON, *OSCAR*

work. The American promoters were confident that their public would be *WILDE: HIS LIFE AND WIT*

fascinated by this man, whom they imagined as always walking around with a flower in his hand, but they did not expect it to last; he would do a few lectures, then the novelty would wear off, and they would ship him home. *Once upon a time there* The money was good and Wilde accepted. On his arrival in New York, a *was a magnet, and in its customs* man asked him whether he had anything to declare: "I have noth- *close neighborhood lived some steel filings. One day*

ing to declare," he replied, "except my genius."

two or three little filings felt

The invitations poured in—New York society was curious to meet this *a sudden desire to go and oddity*. Women found Wilde enchanting, but the newspapers were less *visit the magnet, and they kind*; *The New York Times* called him an "aesthetic sham." Then, a week af- *began to talk of what a pleasant thing it would be*

ter his arrival, he gave his first lecture. The hall was packed; more than a *to do. Other filings nearby* thousand people came, many of them just to see what he looked like. They *overheard their* were not disappointed. Wilde did not carry a flower, and was taller than *conversation, and they, too, became infected with the*

they had expected, but he had long flowing hair and wore a green velvet *same desire. Still others* suit and cravat, as well as knee breeches and silk stockings. Many in the au- *joined them, till at last all* dience were put off; as they looked up at him from their seats, the combi- *the filings began to discuss the matter, and more and*

nation of his large size and pretty attire were rather repulsive. Some people *more their vague desire* openly laughed, others could not hide their unease. They expected to hate *grew into an impulse.* the man. Then he began to speak.

"Why not go today?" said

one of them; but others

The subject was the "English Renaissance," the "art for art's sake" *were of opinion that it* movement in late-nineteenth-century England. Wilde's voice proved hyp-
would be better to wait notic; he spoke in a kind of meter, mannered and artificial, and few really *until tomorrow* understood what he was saying, but the speech was so witty, and it flowed. *Meanwhile, without their having noticed it, they had*

His appearance was certainly strange, but overall, no New Yorker had ever *been involuntarily moving* seen or heard such an intriguing man, and the lecture was a huge success. *nearer to the magnet*, Even the newspapers warmed up to it. In Boston a few weeks later, some *which lay there quite still, apparently taking no heed*

sixty Harvard boys had prepared an ambush: they would make fun of this *of them*. *And so they went effeminate poet by dressing in knee breeches, carrying flowers, and ap- on discussing, all the time 190 • The Art of Seduction*

insensibly drawing nearer plauding far too loudly at his entrance. Wilde was not the least bit flustered. *to their neighbor; and the* The audience laughed hysterically at his improvised comments, and when *more they talked, the more* the boys heckled him he kept his dignity, betraying no anger at all. Once *they felt the impulse*

growing stronger, till the again, the contrast between his manner and his physical appearance made *more impatient ones* him seem rather extraordinary. Many were deeply impressed, and Wilde *declared that they would go* was well on his way to becoming a sensation. *that day, whatever the rest*

did. Some were heard to

The short lecture tour turned into a cross-country affair. In San Fran *say that it was their duty* cisco, this visiting lecturer on art and aesthetics proved able to drink every *to visit the magnet, and one under the table and play poker*, which made him the hit of the season. *they ought to have gone* On his way back from the West Coast, Wilde was to make stops in Colo *long ago*. *And, while they talked, they moved always* rado, and was warned that if the pretty-boy poet dared to show up in the *nearer and nearer, without* mining town of Leadville, he would be hung from the highest tree. It was *realizing that they had* an invitation Wilde could not refuse. Arriving in Leadville, he ignored the *moved*. *Then, at last, the*

impatient ones prevailed, hecklers and nasty looks; he toured the mines, drank and played cards, then *and, with one irresistible* lectured on Botticelli and Cellini in the saloons. Like everyone else, the *impulse, the whole body* miners fell under his spell, even naming a mine after him. One cowboy was *cried out, "There is no use*

waiting. We will go today. heard to say, "That fellow is some art guy, but he can drink any of us under *We will go now. We will* the table and afterwards carry us home two at a time." *go at once.*" *And then in*

one unanimous mass they

swept along, and in

another moment were

Interpretation. In a fable he improvised at dinner once, Oscar Wilde talked *clinging fast to the magnet* about some steel filings that had a sudden desire to visit a nearby magnet. *on every side. Then the* As they talked to each other about this, they found themselves moving *magnet smiled—for the*

steel filings had no doubt closer to the magnet without realizing how or why. Finally they were swept *at all but that they were* in one mass to the magnet's side. "Then the magnet smiled—for the steel *paying that visit of their* filings had no doubt at all but that they were paying that visit of their *own free will.* own free will." Such was the effect that Wilde himself had on everyone

— OSCAR WILDE, AS QUOTED BY

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE IN

around him.

HESKETH PEARSON, OSCAR

Wilde's attractiveness was more than just a by-product of his character, *WILDE: HIS LIFE AND WIT*

it was quite calculated. An adorer of paradox, he consciously played up his own weirdness and ambiguity, the contrast between his mannered appear *Now that the bohort ance and his witty, effortless performance. Naturally warm and sponta[impromptu joust] was over and the knights were neous*, he constructed an image that ran counter to his nature. People were *dispersing and each making repelled, confused, intrigued, and finally drawn to this man who seemed his way to where his impossible to figure out.*

thoughts inclined him, it

chanced that Rivalin was

Paradox is seductive because it plays with meaning. We are secretly op *heading for where lovely* pressed by the rationality in our lives, where everything is meant to mean *Blancheflor was sitting*. something; seduction, by contrast, thrives on ambiguity, on mixed signals, *Seeing this, he galloped up on anything that eludes interpretation. Most people are painfully obvious. to her and looking her in*

the eyes saluted her most If their character is showy, we may be momentarily attracted, but the at *pleasantly*. • "God save traction wears off; there is no depth, no contrary motion, to pull us in. The *you, lovely woman!*" • key to both attracting and holding attention is to radiate mystery. And no

"Thank you," said the

girl, and continued very one is naturally mysterious, at least not for long; mystery is something you *bashfully*, "may God have to work at, a ploy on your part, and something that must be used early *Almighty, who makes all* on in the seduction. Let one part of your character show, so everyone no *hearts glad, gladden your heart and mind!* And my tices it. (In the example of Wilde, this was the mannered affectation con- *Send Mixed Signals* • 191

veyed by his clothes and poses.) But also send out a mixed signal—some *grateful thanks to you!* —

sign that you are not what you seem, a paradox. Do not worry if this *yet not forgetting a bone I have to pick with you.*" •

underquality is a negative one, like danger, cruelty, or amorality; people

"Ah, sweet woman, what

will be drawn to the enigma anyway, and pure goodness is rarely seductive. *have I done?" was courteous Rivalin's reply.* •

Paradox with him was only truth standing on its head to

"You have annoyed me

through a friend of mine,

attract attention.

the best I ever had. " •

"Good heavens," thought

— RICHARD GALLIENNE, ON HIS FRIEND OSCAR WILDE

he, "what does this mean?

What have I done to

displease her? What does

Keys to Seduction

she say I have done?" and

he imagined that

unwittingly he must have

Nothing can proceed in seduction unless you can attract and hold your *injured a kinsman of hers* victim's attention, your physical presence becoming a haunting men- *some time at their knightly* tal presence. It is actually quite easy to create that first stir—an alluring style *sports and that was why she was vexed with him.*

of dress, a suggestive glance, something extreme about you. But what hap- *But no, the friend she pens next?* Our minds are barraged with images—not just from media but *referred to was her heart, in*

from the disorder of daily life. And many of these images are quite striking. *which he made her suffer:* You become just one more thing screaming for attention; your attractive- *that was the friend she spoke of* *But he knew*

ness will pass unless you spark the more enduring kind of spell that makes *nothing of that.* • *"Lovely people think of you in your absence. That means engaging their imagina- woman," he said with all tions,* making them think there is more to you than what they see. Once *his accustomed charm, "I do not want you to be*

they start embellishing your image with their fantasies, they are hooked. *angry with me or bear me*

This must, however, be done early on, before your targets know too *any ill will. So, if what* much and their impressions of you are set. It should occur the moment *you tell me is true, pronounce sentence on me*

they lay eyes on you. By sending mixed signals in that first encounter, you *yourself: I will do whatever* create a little surprise, a little tension: you seem to be one thing (*innocent, you command.*) • "I do brash, intellectual, witty), but you also throw them a glimpse of something *not hate you overmuch for what has happened,*" was

else (devilish, shy, spontaneous, sad). Keep things subtle: if the second *the sweet girl's answer*; quality is too strong, you will seem schizophrenic. But make them wonder

"nor do I love you for it.

why you might be shy or sad underneath your brash intellectual wit, and *But to see what amends* you will have their attention. Give them an ambiguity that lets them *see you will make for the wrong you have done me, I*

what they want to see, capture their imagination with little voyeuristic *shall test you another* glimpses into your dark soul.

time." • *And so he bowed*

The Greek philosopher Socrates was one of history's greatest seducers; *as if to go, and she, lovely girl, sighed at him most*

the young men who followed him as students were not just fascinated by *secretly and said with* his ideas, they fell in love with him. One such youth was Alcibiades, the *tender feeling:* • "Ah, dear notorious playboy who became a powerful political figure near the end of friend, *God bless you!" From this time on the*

the fifth century B.C. In Plato's *Symposium*, Alcibiades describes Socrates's *thoughts of each ran on the* seductive powers by comparing him to the little figures of Silenus that were *other.* • *Rivalin turned* made back then. In Greek myth, Silenus was quite ugly, but also a wise *away, pondering many things. He pondered from*

prophet. Accordingly the statues of Silenus were hollow, and when you *many sides why*

took them apart, you would find little figures of gods inside them—the in- *Blancheflor should be* ner truth and beauty under the unappealing exterior. And so, for Alci- *vexed, and what lay biades*, it was the same with Socrates, who was so ugly as to be repellent but *behind it all. He considered her greeting, her*

whose face radiated inner beauty and contentment. The effect was confus- 192 • *The Art of Seduction* words; *he examined her* ing and attractive. Antiquity's other great seducer, Cleopatra, also sent out *sigh minutely, her farewell,*

mixed signals: by all accounts physically alluring, in voice, face, body, and *he whole behavior. . . But*

manner, she also had a brilliantly active mind, which for many writers of *since he was uncertain of*

her motive—whether she the time made her seem somewhat masculine in spirit. These contrary *had acted from enmity or* qualities gave her complexity, and complexity gave her power. *love—he wavered in*

To capture and hold attention, you need to show attributes that go

perplexity. He wavered

in his thoughts now here,

against your physical appearance, creating depth and mystery. If you have a *now there. At one moment*

sweet face and an innocent air, let out hints of something dark, even *he was off in one direction,*

vaguely cruel in your character. It is not advertised in your words, but in *then suddenly in another,*

till he had so ensnared

your manner. The actor Errol Flynn had a boyishly angelic face and a slight *himself in the toils of his*

air of sadness. Beneath this outward appearance, however, women could *own desire that he was*

sense an underlying cruelty, a criminal streak, an exciting kind of danger *powerless to escape . . . • ousness.* This play of contrary qualities attracted obsessive interest. The *His entanglement had*

placed him in a quandary, female equivalent is the type epitomized by Marilyn Monroe; she had *for he did not know* the face and voice of a little girl, but something sexual and naughty em *whether she wished him* anated powerfully from her as well. Madame Récamier did it all with her *well or ill; he could not*

make out whether she eyes—the gaze of an angel, suddenly interrupted by something sensual and *loved or hated him. No flirtatious.*

hope or despair did he

Playing with gender roles is a kind of intriguing paradox that has a long *consider which did not*

forbid him either to advance history in seduction. The greatest Don Juans have had a touch of prettiness *or retreat—hope and*

and femininity, and the most attractive courtesans have had a masculine *despair led him to and fro* streak. The strategy, though, is only powerful when the underquality is *in unresolved dissension*.

merely hinted at; if the mix is too obvious or striking it will seem bizarre or *Hope spoke to him of love*,

despair of hatred. Because even threatening. The great seventeenth-century French courtesan Ninon *of this discord he could*

de l'Enclos was decidedly feminine in appearance, yet everyone who met *yield his firm belief neither* her was struck by a touch of aggressiveness and independence in her—but *to hatred nor yet to love*.

Thus his feelings drifted in just a touch. The late nineteenth-century Italian novelist Gabriele d'An *an unsure haven—hope* nunzio was certainly masculine in his approaches, but there was a gentle *bore him on, despair away*. ness, a consideration, mixed in, and an interest in feminine finery The *He found no constancy in*

either; they agreed neither combinations can be juggled every which way: Oscar Wilde was quite *one way or another. When*

feminine in appearance and manner, but the underlying suggestion that he *despair came and told him*

was actually quite masculine drew both men and women to him.

that his Blancheflor was

his enemy he faltered and

A potent variation on this theme is the blending of physical heat and *sought to escape: but at*

emotional coldness. Dandies like Beau Brummel and Andy Warhol com *once came hope, bringing* bine striking physical appearances with a kind of coldness of manner, a dis *him her love, and a fond tance* from everything and everyone. They are both enticing and elusive, *aspiration, and so perforce*

he remained. In the face of and people spend lifetimes chasing after such men, trying to shatter their *such discord he did not* unattainability. (The power of apparently unattainable people is devilishly *know where to turn: no-*

seductive; we want to be the one to break them down.) They also wrap *where could he go forward*.

The more he strove to flee,

themselves in ambiguity and mystery, either talking very little or talking *the more firmly love forced*

only of surface matters, hinting at a depth of character you can never reach. *him back. The harder he* When Marlene Dietrich entered a room, or arrived at a party, all eyes in *struggled to escape, love drew him back more firmly.*

evitably turned to her. First there were her startling clothes, chosen to make heads turn. Then there was her air of nonchalant indifference. Men, and

— G O T T F R I E D VON STRASSBURG,

TRISTAN, TRANSLATED BY A . T .

women too, became obsessed with her, thinking of her long after other

HATTO

memories of the evening had faded. Remember: that first impression, that *Send Mixed Signals* • 193

entrance, is critical. To show too much desire for attention is to signal insecurity, and will often drive people away; play it too cold and disinterested, on the other hand, and no one will bother coming near. The trick is to combine the two attitudes at the same moment. It is the essence of coquetry.

Perhaps you have a reputation for a particular quality, which immediately comes to mind when people see you. You will better hold their attention by suggesting that behind this reputation some other quality lies lurking. No one had a darker, more sinful reputation than Lord Byron. What drove women wild was that behind his somewhat cold and disdainful exterior, they could sense that he was actually quite romantic, even spiritual. Byron played this up with his melancholic airs and occasional kind deed. Transfixed and confused, many women thought that they could be the one to lead him back to goodness, to make him a faithful lover. Once a woman entertained such a thought, she was completely under his spell. It is not difficult to create such a seductive effect. Should you be known as eminently rational, say, hint at something irrational. Johannes, the narrator in Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary*, first treats the young Cordelia with businesslike politeness, as his reputation would lead her to expect. Yet she very soon overhears him making remarks that hint at a wild, poetic streak in his character; and she is excited and intrigued.

These principles have applications far beyond sexual seduction. To hold the attention of a broad public, to seduce them into thinking about you, you need to mix your signals. Display too much of one quality—even if it is a noble one, like knowledge or efficiency—and people will feel that you lack humanity. We are all complex and ambiguous, full of contradictory impulses; if you show only one side, even if it is your good side, you will wear on people's nerves. They will suspect you are a hypocrite. Mahatma Gandhi, a saintly figure, openly confessed to feelings of anger and vengefulness. John F. Kennedy, the most seductive American public figure of modern times, was a walking paradox: an East Coast aristocrat with a love of the common man, an obviously masculine man—a war hero—with a

vulnerability you could sense underneath, an intellectual who loved popular culture. People were drawn to Kennedy like the steel filings in Wilde's fable. A bright surface may have a decorative charm, but what draws your eye into a painting is a depth of field, an inexpressible ambiguity, a surreal complexity.

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Symbol: The Theater Curtain. *Onstage, the curtain's heavy deep-red folds attract your eye with their hypnotic surface. But what really fascinates and draws you in is what you think might be happen-*

ing behind the curtain—the light peeking through, the

suggestion of a secret, something about to happen.

*You feel the thrill of a voyeur about to
watch a performance.*

Reversal

The complexity you signal to other people will only affect them properly if they have the capacity to enjoy a mystery. Some people like things simple, and lack the patience to pursue a person who confuses them. They prefer to be dazzled and overwhelmed. The great Belle Epoque courtesan known as La Belle Otero would work a complex magic on artists and political figures who fell for her, but in dealing with the more uncomplicated, sensual male she would astound them with spectacle and beauty. When meeting a woman for the first time, Casanova might dress in the most fantastic outfit, with jewels and brilliant colors to dazzle the eye; he would use the target's reaction to gauge whether or not she would demand a more complicated seduction. Some of his victims, particularly young girls, needed no more than the glittering and spellbinding appearance, which was really what they wanted, and the seduction would stay on that level.

Everything depends on your target: do not bother creating depth for people who are insensitive to it, or who may even be put off or disturbed by it. You can recognize such types by their preference for the simpler pleasures in life, their lack of patience for a more nuanced story. With them, keep it simple.

4

Appear to Be an Object of Desire

—Create Triangles

Few are drawn to the person whom others avoid or neglect; people gather around those who have already attracted interest. We want what other people want. To draw your victims closer and make them hungry to possess you, you must create an aura of desirability—of being wanted and courted by many. It will become a point of vanity for them to be the preferred object of your attention, to win you away from a crowd of admirers. Manufacture the illusion of popularity by surrounding yourself with members of the opposite

sex—friends, former lovers, present suitors. Create tri- angles that stimulate rivalry and raise your value.

Build a reputation that precedes you: if many have succumbed to your charms, there must be a reason.

Creating Triangles

One evening in 1882, the thirty-two-year-old Prussian philosopher

Paul Rée, living in Rome at the time, visited the house of an older woman who ran a salon for writers and artists. Rée noticed a newcomer there, a twenty-one-year-old Russian girl named Lou von Salomé, who had come to Rome on holiday with her mother. Rée introduced himself and they began a conversation that lasted well into the night. Her ideas *Let me tell you about a* about God and morality were like his own; she talked with such intensity, *gentleman I once knew* yet at the same time her eyes seemed to flirt with him. Over the next few *who, although he was of pleasing appearance and*

days Rée and Salomé took long walks through the city. Intrigued by her *modest behavior, and also a* mind yet confused by the emotions she aroused, he wanted to spend more *very capable warrior, was* time with her. Then, one day, she startled him with a proposition: she *not so outstanding as regards any of these*

knew he was a close friend of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, then *qualities that there were* also visiting Italy. The three of them, she said, should travel together—no, *not to be found many who* actually live together, in a kind of philosophers' menage a trois. A fierce *were his equal and even better. However, as luck*

critic of Christian morals, Rée found this idea delightful. He wrote to his *would have it, a certain* friend about Salomé, describing how desperate she was to meet him. After *lady fell very deeply in love* a few such letters, Nietzsche hurried to Rome.

*with him. She saw that he
felt the same way, and as*

Rée had made this invitation to please Salomé, and to impress her; he *her love grew day by day, also wanted to see if Nietzsche shared his enthusiasm for the young girl's there not being any way for* ideas. But as soon as Nietzsche arrived, something unpleasant happened: *them to speak to each* the great philosopher, who had always been a loner, was obviously smitten *other, she revealed her sentiments to another lady,*

with Salomé. Instead of the three of them sharing intellectual conversations together, Nietzsche seemed to be conspiring to get the girl alone. *service to her in this affair*. When Réé caught glimpses of Nietzsche and Salomé talking without including him, he felt shivers of jealousy. Forget about some philosophers' *inferior to the first; and it menage a trois*: Salomé was his, he had discovered her, and he would not *came about that when she share her*, even with his good friend. Somehow he had to get her alone. *heard the young man (whom she had never seen)*

Only then could he woo and win her.

spoken of so affectionately,

Madame Salomé had planned to escort her daughter back to Russia, *and came to realize that* but Salomé wanted to stay in Europe. Réé intervened, offering to travel *the other woman, whom* with the Salomés to Germany and introduce them to his own mother, *she knew was extremely discreet and intelligent*,

who, he promised, would look after the girl and act as a chaperone. (Réé *loved him beyond words*, knew that his mother would be a lax guardian at best.) Madame Salomé *she straight away began to agreed* to this proposal, but Nietzsche was harder to shake: he decided to *imagine that he must be the most handsome, the*

join them on their northward journey to Réé's home in Prussia. At one wisest, the most discreet of point in the trip, Nietzsche and Salomé took a walk by themselves, and men, and, in short, the 197

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man most worthy of her when they came back, Réé had the feeling that something physical had *love in all the world. So,*

happened between them. His blood boiled; Salomé was slipping from his *never having set eyes on*

grasp.

him, she fell in love with

him so passionately that

Finally the group split up, the mother returning to Russia, Nietzsche to *she set out to win him not*

his summer place in Tautenburg, Réé and Salomé staying behind at Réé's *for her friend but for*

home. But Salomé did not stay long: she accepted an invitation of Nietzsche *And in this she succeeded with little effort*,

sche's to visit him, unchaperoned, in Tautenburg. In her absence Réé was *for indeed she was a*

consumed with doubts and anger. He wanted her more than ever, and was *woman more to be wooed*

prepared to redouble his efforts. When she finally came back, Réé vented *than to do the wooing.*

his bitterness, railing against Nietzsche, criticizing his philosophy, and quies *And now listen to the splendid sequel: not long*

tioning his motives toward the girl. But Salomé took Nietzsche's side. Réé *afterward it happened that*

was in despair; he felt he had lost her for good. Yet a few days later she sur *a letter which she had prised him again: she had decided she wanted to live with him, and with written to her lover fell into*

the hands of another

him alone.

woman of comparable

At last Réé had what he had wanted, or so he thought. The couple set *rank, charm, and beauty;* tied in Berlin, where they rented an apartment together. But now, to Réé's *and since she, like most*

women, was curious and

dismay, the old pattern repeated. They lived together but Salomé was *eager to learn secrets, she*

courted on all sides by young men. The darling of Berlin's intellectuals, *opened the letter and read*

who admired her independent spirit, her refusal to compromise, she was *it. Realizing that it was*

written from the depths of

constantly surrounded by a harem of men, who referred to her as "Her Ex passion, in the most loving cellency." Once again Réé found himself competing for her attention. *and ardent terms, she was*

Driven to despair, he left her a few years later, and eventually committed *at first moved with*

suicide.

compassion, for she knew

very well from whom the

In 1911, Sigmund Freud met Salomé (now known as Lou Andreas *letter came and to whom it Salomé*) at a conference in Germany. She wanted to devote herself to the *was addressed; then,*

psychoanalytical movement, she said, and Freud found her enchanting, al however, such was the power of the words she

though, like everyone else, he knew the story of her infamous affair with read, turning them over in

Nietzsche (see page 46, "The Dandy"). Salomé had no background in psy her mind and considering choanalysis or in therapy of any kind, but Freud admitted her into the in what kind of man it must be who had been able to

ner circle of followers who attended his private lectures. Soon after she arouse such great love, she joined the circle, one of Freud's most promising and brilliant students, Dr. at once began to fall in love

Victor Tausk, sixteen years younger than Salomé, fell in love with her. Sa with him herself; and the lomé's relationship with Freud had been platonic, but he had grown ex letter was without doubt far more effective than if the

tremely fond of her. He was depressed when she missed a lecture, and young man had himself

would send her notes and flowers. Her involvement in a love affair with written it to her. And just

Tausk made him intensely jealous, and he began to compete for her atten as it sometimes happens that the poison prepared for

tion. Tausk had been like a son to him, but the son was threatening to steal a prince kills the one who

the father's platonic lover. Soon, however, Salomé left Tausk. Now her tastes his food, so that poor

friendship with Freud was stronger than ever, and so it lasted until her woman, in her greediness,

drank the love potion

death, in 1937.

prepared for another. What

*more is there to say? The
affair was no secret, and
things so developed that*

Interpretation. Men did not just fall in love with Lou Andreas-Salomé; *many other women besides,*

they were overwhelmed with the desire to possess her, to wrest her away *partly to spite the others*

from others, to be the proud owner of her body and spirit. They rarely saw *and partly to follow their*

her alone; she always in some way surrounded herself with other men. *Appear to Be an Object of Desire—Create Triangles • 199*

When she saw that Réé was interested in her, she mentioned her desire to *example, put every care* meet Nietzsche. This inflamed Réé, and made him want to marry her and *and effort into winning this man's love, squabbling over*

to keep him for himself, but she insisted on meeting his friend. His letters *it for a while as boys do* to Nietzsche betrayed his desire for this woman, and this in turn kindled *for cherries*. Nietzsche's own desire for her, even before he had met her. Every time one —BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE, of the two men was alone with her, the other was in the background. *THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER,*

Then, later on, most of the men who met her knew of the infamous TRANSLATED BY GEORGE BULL

Nietzsche affair, and this only increased their desire to possess her, to compete with Nietzsche's memory. Freud's affection for her, similarly, turned into potent desire when he had to vie with Tausk for her attention. Salomé *Most of the time we prefer one thing to another*

was intelligent and attractive enough on her own account; but her constant *because that is what our strategy of imposing a triangle of relationships on her suitors made her de-friends already prefer or* sirability intense. And while they fought over her, she had the power, being *because that object has* desired by all and subject to none.

marked social significance.

Adults, when they are

Our desire for another person almost always involves social considera- *hungry, are just like* tions: we are attracted to those who are attractive to other people. We want *children in that they seek to possess them and steal them away.* You can believe all the sentimental *out the foods that others take. In their love affairs,*

nonsense you want to about desire, but in the end, much of it has to do *they seek out the man or* with vanity and greed. Do not whine and moralize about people's selfish- *woman whom others find* ness, but simply use it to your advantage. The illusion that you are desired *attractive and abandon those who are not sought*

by others will make you more attractive to your victims than your beautiful *after. When we say of a face or your perfect body.* And the most effective way to create that illusion *man or woman that he or* is to create a triangle: impose another person between you and your victim, *she is desirable, what we really mean is that others*

and subtly make your victim aware of how much this other person wants *desire them. It is not that you.* The third point on the triangle does not have to be just one person: *they have some particular* surround yourself with admirers, reveal your past conquests—in other *quality, but because they* words, envelop yourself in an aura of desirability. Make your targets com- *conform to some currently modish model.*

pete with your past and your present. They will long to possess you all to

— S E R G E MOSCOVICI, *THE AGE*

themselves, giving you great power for as long as you elude their grasp. Fail *OF THE CROWD: A HISTORICAL*

to make yourself an object of desire right from the start, and you will end *TREATISE ON MASS PSYCHOL-* up the sorry slave to the whims of your lovers—they will abandon you the *OGY, TRANSLATED BY J. C.*

WHITEHOUSE

moment they lose interest.

[A person] will desire any object so long as he is convinced that it is desired by another person whom he admires.

*It will be greatly to your
advantage to entertain the*

—RENÉ GIRARD

*lady you would win with
an account of the number
of women who are in love
with you, and of the*

Keys to Seduction

*decided advances which
they have made to you; for
this will not only prove*

We are social creatures, and are immensely influenced by the tastes and *that you are a great favorite* desires of other people. Imagine a large social gathering. You see a *with the ladies, and a man* man alone, whom nobody talks to for any length of time, and who is *want- of true honor, but it will* dering around without company; isn't there a kind of self-fulfilling isola- *convince her that she may have the honor of being*

tion about him? Why is he alone, why is he avoided? There has to be a *enrolled in the same list*, reason. Until someone takes pity on this man and starts up a conversation *and of being praised in the 200 • The Art of Seduction*

same way, in the presence

with him, he will look unwanted and unwanted. But over there, in an *of your other female* other corner, is a woman surrounded by people. They laugh at her remarks, *friends. This will greatly*

and as they laugh, others join the group, attracted by its gaiety. When she *delight her, and you need*

not be surprised if she

moves around, people follow. Her face is glowing with attention. There has *testifies her admiration of* to be a reason.

your character by throwing

In both cases, of course, there doesn't actually have to be a reason at *her arms around your neck*

on the spot.

all. The neglected man may have quite charming qualities, supposing you ever talk to him; but most likely you won't. Desirability is a social illu— L O L A M O N T E Z , *THE ARTS*

AND SECRETS OF BEAUTY, WITH

sion. Its source is less what you say or do, or any kind of boasting or self *HINTS TO GENTLEMEN ON THE*

advertisement, than the sense that other people desire you. To turn your *ART OF FASCINATING*

targets' interest into something deeper, into desire, you must make them see you as a person whom others cherish and covet. Desire is both imitative (we like what others like) and competitive (we want to take away from oth[René] Girard's mimetic ers what they have). As children, we wanted to monopolize the attention of *desire occurs when an*

individual subject desires

a parent, to draw it away from other siblings. This sense of rivalry pervades *an object because it is*

human desire, repeating throughout our lives. Make people compete for *desired by another subject,*

your attention, make them see you as sought after by everyone else. The *here designated as the*

rival: desire is modeled on

aura of desirability will envelop you.

the wishes or actions of

Your admirers can be friends or even suitors. Call it the harem effect. *another.* *Philippe Lacoue-*

Pauline Bonaparte, sister of Napoleon, raised her value in men's eyes by al
Labarthe says that "the basic hypothesis upon

ways having a group of worshipful men around her at balls and parties. If *which rests Girard's famous*

she went for a walk, it was never with one man, always with two or three. *analysis [is that] every*

Perhaps these men were simply friends, or even just props and hangers-on; *desire is the desire of the*

the sight of them was enough to suggest that she was prized and desired, a *other (and not immediately*

desire of an object), every

woman worth fighting over. Andy Warhol, too, surrounded himself with *structure of desire is*

the most glamorous, interesting people he could find. To be part of his in *triangular (including the ner circle meant that you were desirable as well. By placing himself in the other—mediator or*

model—whose desire desire

middle but keeping himself aloof from it all, he made everyone compete *imitates), every desire is*

for his attention. He stirred people's desire to possess him by holding back. *thus from its inception*

Practices like these not only stimulate competitive desires, they take aim *tapped by hatred and*

rivalry; in short, the origin

at people's prime weakness: their vanity and self-esteem. We can endure *of desire is mimesis—*

feeling that another person has more talent, or more money, but the sense *mimeticism—and no*

that a rival is more desirable than we are—that is unbearable. In the early *desire is ever forged which*

eighteenth century, the Duke de Richelieu, a great rake, managed to se *does not desire forthwith the death or disappearance*

duce a young woman who was rather religious but whose husband, a dolt, *of the model or exemplary*

was often away. He then proceeded to seduce her upstairs neighbor, a *character which gave rise*

young widow. When the two women discovered that he was going from
to it.

one to the other in the same night, they confronted him. A lesser man

—JAMES MANDRELL,

DON JUAN AND THE POINT OF

would have fled, but not the duke; he understood the dynamic of vanity *HONOR*

and desire. Neither woman wanted to feel that he preferred the other. And so he managed to arrange a little *menage a trois*, knowing that now they would struggle between themselves to be the favorite. When people's vanity is at risk, you can make them do whatever you want. According to Stendhal, if there is a woman you are interested in, pay attention to her sister. That will stir a triangular desire. Your reputation—your illustrious past as a seducer—is an effective way *Appear to Be an Object of Desire—Create Triangles • 201*

of creating an aura of desirability. Women threw themselves at Errol Flynn's *It's annoying that our new feet*, not because of his handsome face, and certainly not because of his *acquaintance likes the boy. But aren't the best things*

acting skills, but because of his reputation. They knew that other women *in life free to all? The sun*

had found him irresistible. Once he had established that reputation, he did *shines on everyone. The* not have to chase women anymore; they came to him. Men who believe *moon, accompanied by* that a rakish reputation will make women fear or distrust them, and should *countless stars, leads even the beasts to pasture. What*

be played down, are quite wrong. On the contrary, it makes them more at- *can you think of lovelier* tractive. The virtuous Duchess de Montpensier, the *Grande Mademoiselle of than water? But it flows* seventeenth-century France, began by enjoying a friendship with the rake *for the whole world. Is love alone then something*

Lauzun, but a troubling thought soon occurred to her: if a man with *furtive rather than Lauzun's past* did not see her as a possible lover, something had to be wrong *something to be gloried in?*

with her. This anxiety eventually pushed her into his arms. To be part of a *Exactly, that's just it—I don't want any of the good*

great seducer's club of conquests can be a matter of vanity and pride. We *things of life unless people* are happy to be in such company, to have our name broadcast as this man or *are envious of them*. woman's lover. Your own reputation may not be so alluring, but you must —PETRONIUS, *THE SATYRICON*, find a way to suggest to your victim that others, many others, have found TRANSLATED BY J. P. SULLIVAN

you desirable. It is reassuring. There is nothing like a restaurant full of empty tables to persuade you not to go in.

A variation on the triangle strategy is the use of contrasts: careful exploitation of people who are dull or unattractive may enhance your desirability by comparison. At a social affair, for instance, make sure that your target has to chat with the most boring person available. Come to the rescue and your target will be delighted to see you. In *The Seducer's Diary*, by Søren Kierkegaard, Johannes has designs on the innocent young Cordelia. Knowing that his friend Edward is hopelessly shy and dull, he encourages this man to court her; a few weeks of Edward's attentions will make her eyes wander in search of someone else, *anyone* else, and Johannes will make sure that they settle on him. Johannes chose to strategize and maneuver, but almost any social environment will contain contrasts you can make use of almost naturally. The seventeenth-century English actress Nell Gwyn became the main mistress of King Charles II because her humor and unaffectedness made her that much more desirable among the many stiff and pretentious ladies of Charles's court. When the Shanghai actress Jiang Qing met Mao Zedong, in 1937, she did not have to do much to seduce him; the other women in his mountain camp in Yenan dressed like men, and were decidedly unfeminine. The sight alone of Jiang was enough to seduce Mao, who soon left his wife for her. To make use of contrasts, either develop and display those attractive attributes (humor, vivacity, and so on) that are the rarest in your own social group, or choose a group in which your natural qualities are rare, and will shine.

The use of contrasts has vast political ramifications, for a political figure must also seduce and seem desirable. Learn to play up the qualities that your rivals lack. Peter II, czar in eighteenth-century Russia, was arrogant and irresponsible, so his wife, Catherine the Great, did all she could to seem modest and dependable. When Vladimir Lenin returned to Russia in 1917

after Czar Nicholas II had been deposed, he made a show of decisiveness 202 • *The Art of Seduction*

and discipline—precisely what no other leader had at the time. In the American presidential race of 1980, the irresoluteness of Jimmy Carter made the single-mindedness of Ronald Reagan look desirable. Contrasts are eminently seductive because they do not depend on your own words or self-advertisements. The public reads them unconsciously, and sees what it wants to see.

Finally, appearing to be desired by others will raise your value, but often how you carry yourself can influence this as well. Do not let your targets see you so often; keep your distance, seem unattainable, out of their reach. An object that is rare and hard to obtain is generally more prized.

Symbol: The Trophy.

What makes you want to win the trophy, and to see it as

something worth having, is the sight of the other competitors. Some, out of a spirit of kindness, may want to reward everyone for trying, but the Trophy then loses its value. It must represent not only

your victory but everyone else's defeat.

Reversal

There is no reversal. It is essential to appear desirable in the eyes of others.

5

Create a Need—

Stir Anxiety and Discontent

A perfectly satisfied

person cannot be seduced. Tension and

disharmony must be instilled in your targets' minds. Stir

within them feelings of discontent, an unhappiness with their

circumstances and with themselves: their life lacks adventure, they have strayed from the ideals of their youth, they have become boring. The feelings of inadequacy that you create will give you space to insinuate yourself, to make them see you as the answer to their

problems. Pain and anxiety are the proper precursors to

pleasure. Learn to manufacture the need

that you can fill.

Opening a Wound

In the coal-mining town of Eastwood, in central England, David Herbert Lawrence was considered something of a strange lad. Pale and delicate, he had no time for games or boyish pursuits, but was interested in literature; and he preferred the company of girls, who made up most of his friends. Lawrence often visited the Chambers family, who had been his neighbors until they moved out of Eastwood to a farm not far away. He liked to study with the Chambers sisters, particularly Jessie; she was shy and *No one can fall in love if he is even partially satisfied*

serious, and getting her to open up and confide in him was a pleasurable *with what he has or who* challenge. Jessie grew quite attached to Lawrence over the years, and they *he is*. *The experience of* became good friends.

falling in love originates in

an extreme depression, an

One day in 1906, Lawrence, twenty-one at the time, did not show up *inability to find something* at the usual hour for his study session with Jessie. He finally arrived much *that has value in everyday* later, in a mood she had never seen before—preoccupied and quiet. Now it *life*. *The "symptom" of the predisposition to fall in*

was her turn to make him open up. Finally he talked: he felt she was getting *love is not the conscious* too close to him. What about her future? Whom would she marry? *Cer- desire to do so, the intense* tainly not him, he said, for they were just friends. But it was unfair of him *desire to enrich our lives; it is the profound sense of*

to keep her from seeing others. They should of course remain friends and *being worthless and of* have their talks, but maybe less often. When he finished and left, she felt a *having nothing that is* strange emptiness. She had yet to think much about love or marriage. Sud- *valuable and the shame of* denly she had doubts. What would her future be? Why wasn't she thinking *not having it. . . For this reason, falling in love*

about it? She felt anxious and upset, without understanding why.

occurs more frequently

Lawrence continued to visit, but everything had changed. He criticized *among young people, since* her for this and that. She wasn't very physical. What kind of wife would *they are profoundly uncertain, unsure of their*

she make anyway? A man needed more from a woman than just talk. He worth, and often ashamed likened her to a nun. They began to see each other less often. When, *some of themselves. The same* time later, Lawrence accepted a teaching position at a school outside Lon- *thing applies to people of other ages when they lose*

don, she felt part relieved to be rid of him for a while. But when he said something in their lives—

goodbye to her, and intimated that it might be for the last time, she broke when their youth ends or down and cried. Then he started sending her weekly letters. He would *when they start to grow old.*

write about girls he was seeing; maybe one of them would be his wife. Finally, at his behest, she visited him in London. They got along well, as in —FRANCESCO ALBERONI, *FALLING IN LOVE*, TRANSLATED

the old times, but he continued to badger her about her future, picking at BY LAWRENCE VENUTI that old wound. At Christmas he was back in Eastwood, and when he visited her he seemed exultant. He had decided that it was Jessie he should marry, that he had in fact been attracted to her all along. They should keep it quiet for a while; although his writing career was taking off (his first 205

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"What can Love be

novel was about to be published), he needed to make more money. Caught *then?*" I said. "A

off guard by this sudden announcement, and overwhelmed with happiness, *mortal?*" "Far from it." Jessie agreed to everything, and they became lovers.

"Well, what?" "As in my

previous examples, he is

Soon, however, the familiar pattern repeated: criticisms, breakups, an *half-way between mortal* nouncements that he was engaged to another girl. This only deepened his *and immortal.*" *What sort*

hold on her. It was not until 1912 that she finally decided never to see him *of being is he then,*

Diotima?" "He is a great

again, disturbed by his portrayal of her in the autobiographical novel *Sons spirit, Socrates; everything*

and Lovers. But Lawrence remained a lifelong obsession for her. *that is of the nature of a*

In 1913, a young English woman named Ivy Low, who had read

spirit is half-god and half-

man." . . . "Who are his

Lawrence's novels, began to correspond with him, her letters gushing with *parents?" I asked. "That*

admiration. By now Lawrence was married, to a German woman, the

is rather a long story," she Baroness Frieda von Richthofen. To Low's surprise, though, he invited her *answered, "but I will tell*

to visit him and his wife in Italy. She knew he was probably something of a *you. On the day that*

Aphrodite was born the

Don Juan, but was eager to meet him, and accepted his invitation.

gods were feasting, among

Lawrence was not what she had expected: his voice was high-pitched, his *them Contrivance the son*

eyes were piercing, and there was something vaguely feminine about him. *of Invention; and after*

dinner, seeing that a party

Soon they were taking walks together, with Lawrence confiding in Low. *was in progress, Poverty*

She felt that they were becoming friends, which delighted her. Then suddenly *came to beg and stood at* denly, just before she was to leave, he launched into a series of criticisms of *the door. Now Contrivance*

was drunk with nectar—

her—she was so unspontaneous, so predictable, less human being than row *wine, I may say, had not* bot. Devastated by this unexpected attack, she nevertheless had to agree—

yet been discovered— and

what he had said was true. What could he have seen in her in the first *went out into the garden of* place? Who was she anyway? Low left Italy feeling empty—but then *Zeus, and was overcome by*

sleep. So Poverty, thinking

Lawrence continued to write to her, as if nothing had happened. She soon to *alleviate her wretched*

realized that she had fallen hopelessly in love with him, despite everything *condition by bearing a child*

he had said to her. Or was it not despite what he had said, but because of it?

to Contrivance, lay with

him and conceived Love.

In 1914, the writer John Middleton-Murry received a letter from

Since Love was begotten on

Lawrence, a good friend of his. In the letter, out of nowhere, Lawrence *Aphrodite's birthday, and*

criticized Middleton-Murry for being passionless and not gallant enough *since he has also an innate*

passion for the beautiful,

with his wife, the novelist Katherine Mansfield. Middleton-Murry later *and so for the beauty of* wrote, "I had never felt for a man before what his letter made me feel for *Aphrodite herself, he*

him. It was a new thing, a unique thing, in my experience; and it was to re *became her follower and servant. Again, having*

main unique." He felt that beneath Lawrence's criticisms lay some weird *Contrivance for his father*

kind of affection. Whenever he saw Lawrence from then on, he felt a *and Poverty for his*

strange physical attraction that he could not explain.

mother, he bears the

following character. He is

always poor, and, far from

being sensitive and

Interpretation. The number of women, and of men, who fell under *beautiful, as most people*

Lawrence's spell is astonishing given how unpleasant he could be. In almost *imagine, he is hard and*

weather-beaten, shoeless

every case the relationship began in friendship—with frank talks, exchanges *and homeless, always*

of confidences, a spiritual bond. Then, invariably, he would suddenly turn *sleeping out for want of a*

against them, voicing harsh personal criticisms. He would know them well *bed, on the ground, on*

doorsteps, and in the street.

by that time, and the criticisms were often quite accurate, and hit a nerve. *So far he takes after his*

This would inevitably trigger confusion in his victims, and a sense of *anxi mother and lives in want.* ety, a feeling that something was wrong with them. Jolted out of their usual *But, being also his father's*

sense of normality, they would feel divided inside. With half of their minds *Create a Need—Stir Anxiety and Discontent • 207*

they wondered why he was doing this, and felt he was unfair; with the *son, he schemes to get for* other half, they believed it was all true. Then, in those moments of self- *himself whatever is beautiful and good; he is*

doubt, they would get a letter or a visit from him in which he was his old *bold and forward and charming self.*

strenuous, always devising

Now they saw him differently. Now they were weak and vulnerable, in *tricks like a cunning* need of something; and he would seem so strong. Now he drew them to *huntsman.*" him, feelings of friendship turning into affection and desire. Once they felt —PLATO, *SYMPOSIUM,*

TRANSLATED BY WALTER

uncertain about themselves, they were susceptible to falling in love.

HAMILTON

Most of us protect ourselves from the harshness of life by succumbing to routines and patterns, by closing ourselves off from others. But underlying these habits is a tremendous sense of insecurity and defensiveness. We *We are all like pieces of the*

feel we are not really living. The seducer must pick at this wound and bring coins that children break in half for keepsakes—

these semiconscious thoughts into full awareness. This was what Lawrence *making two out of one*, did: his sudden, brutally unexpected jabs would hit people at their weak *like the flatfish— and each spot.*

of us is forever seeking the

half that will tally with

Although Lawrence had great success with his frontal approach, it is *himself...* *And so all* often better to stir thoughts of inadequacy and uncertainty indirectly, by *this to-do is a relic of that* hinting at comparisons to yourself or to others, and by insinuating some- *original state of ours when we were whole, and now,*

how that your victims' lives are less grand than they had imagined. You *when we are longing for* want them to feel at war with themselves, torn in two directions, and *anx- and following after that* ious about it. Anxiety, a feeling of lack and need, is the precursor of all *de- primeval wholeness, we say we are in love.*

sire. These jolts in the victim's mind create space for you to insinuate your poison, the siren call of adventure or fulfillment that will make them follow —

ARISTOPHANES'S SPEECH IN

PLATO'S *SYMPOSIUM*, QUOTED IN

you into your web. Without anxiety and a sense of lack there can be no JAMES MANDRELL, *DON JUAN*

seduction.

AND THE POINT OF HONOR

Desire and love have for their object things or qualities

which a man does not at present possess but which he

Don John: Well met,

pretty lass! What! Are

lacks.

there such handsome

—SOCRATES

Creatures as you amongst

these Fields, these Trees,

and Rocks? • Charlotta: I

am as you see, Sir. • Don

Keys to Seduction

John: Are you of this

Village? • Charlotta: Yes,

Sir. • Don John: What's

Everyone wears a mask in society; we pretend to be more sure of our- *your name?* • *Charlotta: selves than we are. We do not want other people to glimpse that Charlotta, Sir; at your doubting self within us. In truth, our egos and personalities are much more Service.* • *Don John: Ah* fragile than they appear to be; they cover up feelings of confusion and *what a fine Person 'tis!*

What piercing Eyes! •

emptiness. As a seducer, you must never mistake a person's appearance for *Charlotta: Sir, you make* the reality. People are always susceptible to being seduced, because in fact *me ashamed.* . . . • *Don* everyone lacks a sense of completeness, feels something missing deep in- *John: Pretty Charlotta, you are not marry'd, are*

side. Bring their doubts and anxieties to the surface and they can be led and *you?* • *Charlotta: No, Sir;* lured to follow you.

but I am soon to be, with

No one can see you as someone to follow or fall in love with unless *Pierrot, son to Goody Simonetta.* • *Don John:*

they first reflect on themselves somehow, and on what they are missing. Be *What! Shou'd such a one* fore the seduction proceeds, you must place a mirror in front of them in *as you be Wife to a 208* • *The Art of Seduction*

Peasant! No, no; that's a

which they glimpse that inner emptiness. Made aware of a lack, they now *profanation of so much*

can focus on you as the person who can fill that empty space. Remember: *Beauty. You was not born*

most of us are lazy. To relieve our feelings of boredom or inadequacy on *to live in a Village. You*

certainly deserve a better

our own takes too much effort; letting someone else do the job is both *Fortune, and Heaven,*

easier and more exciting. The desire to have someone fill up our emptiness *which knows it well,*

is the weakness on which all seducers prey. Make people anxious about the *brought me hither on*

purpose to hinder this

future, make them depressed, make them question their identity, make *Marriage and do justice to*

them sense the boredom that gnaws at their life. The ground is prepared. *your Charms; for in short,*

The seeds of seduction can be sown.

fair Charlotta, I love you

In Plato's dialogue *Symposium*—the West's oldest treatise on love, and a *with all my Heart, and if*

you'll consent I'll deliver text that has had a determining influence on our ideas of desire—the cour *you from this miserable* tesan Diotima explains to Socrates the parentage of Eros, the god of love. *Place, and put you in the* Eros's father was Contrivance, or Cunning, and his mother was Poverty, or *Condition you deserve.*

This Love is doubtless

Need. Eros takes after his parents: he is constantly in need, which he is con *sudden, but 'tis an Effect of* stantly contriving to fill. As the god of love, he knows that love cannot be *your great Beauty. I love*

induced in another person unless they too feel need. And that is what his *you as much in a quarter of*

an Hour as I shou'd

arrows do: piercing people's flesh, they make them feel a lack, an ache, a *another in six Months.*

hunger. This is the essence of your task as a seducer. Like Eros, you must

—MOLIÈRE, *DON JOHN; OR,*

create a wound in your victim, aiming at their soft spot, the chink in their *THE LIBERTINE*, TRANSLATED BY

self-esteem. If they are stuck in a rut, make them feel it more deeply, "in J O H N O Z E L L , IN OSCAR

nocently" bringing it up and talking about it. What you want is a wound, M A N D E L , ED., *THE THEATRE OF*

DON JUAN

an insecurity you can expand a little, an anxiety that can best be relieved by involvement with another person, namely you. They must feel the wound before they fall in love. Notice how Lawrence stirred anxiety, always hitting *For I stand tonight facing*

at his victims' weak spot: for Jessie Chambers, her physical coldness; for Ivy *west on what was once the*

last frontier. From the

Low, her lack of spontaneity; for Middleton-Murry, his lack of gallantry. *lands that stretch three*

Cleopatra got Julius Caesar to sleep with her the first night he met her, *thousand miles behind me,*

but the real seduction, the one that made him her slave, began later. In their *the pioneers of old gave up*

their safety, their comfort,

ensuing conversations she talked repeatedly of Alexander the Great, the *and sometimes their lives to*

hero from whom she was supposedly descended. No one could compare to *build a new world here in*

him. By implication, Caesar was made to feel inferior. Understanding that *the West. They were not*

beneath his bravado Caesar was insecure, Cleopatra awakened in him an *the captives of their own*

doubts, the prisoners of

anxiety, a hunger to prove his greatness. Once he felt this way he was easily *their own price tags. Their*

further seduced. Doubts about his masculinity was his tender spot.

motto was not "every man

When Caesar was assassinated, Cleopatra turned her sights on Mark

for himself—but "all for

the common cause." They

Antony, one of Caesar's successors in the leadership of Rome. Antony *were determined to make*

loved pleasure and spectacle, and his tastes were crude. She appeared to him *that new world strong and*

first on her royal barge, then wined and dined and banqueted him. Every *free, to overcome its hazards and its hardships,*

thing was geared to suggest to him the superiority of the Egyptian way of *to conquer the enemies that*

life over the Roman, at least when it came to pleasure. The Romans were *threatened from without*

boring and unsophisticated by comparison. And once Antony was made to *and within. . . • Today*

feel how much he was missing in spending his time with his dull soldiers *some would say that those*

struggles are all over—that

and his matronly Roman wife, he could be made to see Cleopatra as the in *all the horizons have been* carnation of all that was exciting. He became her slave.

explored, that all the

This is the lure of the exotic. In your role of seducer, try to position *battles have been won, that*

there is no longer an yourself as coming from outside, as a stranger of sorts. You represent *Create a Need—Stir Anxiety and Discontent • 209*

change, difference, a breakup of routines. Make your victims feel that by *American frontier. • But I* comparison their lives are boring and their friends less interesting than they *trust that no one in this vast assemblage will agree*

had thought. Lawrence made his targets feel personally inadequate; if you *with those sentiments*. . . .

find it hard to be so brutal, concentrate on their friends, their circum-• . . *I tell you the New stances, the externals of their lives. There are many legends of Don Juan, Frontier is here, whether but they often describe him seducing a village girl by making her feel that we seek it or not. . . . It would be easier to shrink*

her life is horribly provincial. He, meanwhile, wears glittering clothes and *back from that frontier, to*

has a noble bearing. Strange and exotic, he is always from somewhere else. *look to the safe mediocrity* First she feels the boredom of her life, then she sees him as her salvation. *of the past, to be lulled by good intentions and high*

Remember: people prefer to feel that if their life is uninteresting, it not be- *rhetoric — and those who* cause of themselves but because of their circumstances, the dull people *prefer that course should* they know, the town into which they were born. Once you make them feel *not cast their votes for me, regardless of party.* • *But I*

the lure of the exotic, seduction is easy.

believe that the times

Another devilishly seductive area to aim at is the victim's past. To grow *demand invention, old* is to renounce or compromise youthful ideals, to become less sponta-*innovation, imagination, decision. I am asking each*

neous, less alive in a way. This knowledge lies dormant in all of us. As a se- *of you to be new pioneers* ducer you must bring it to the surface, make it clear how far people have *on that New Frontier. My* strayed from their past goals and ideals. You, in turn, present yourself as *call is to the young in* representing that ideal, as offering a chance to recapture lost youth through *heart, regardless of age.* adventure—through seduction. In her later years, Queen Elizabeth I of En—JOHN F. KENNEDY,

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH AS THE

gland was known as a rather stern and demanding ruler. She made it a point
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE OF THE

not to let her courtiers see anything soft or weak in her. But then Robert
DEMOCRATIC PARTY, QUOTED IN

Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, came to court. Much younger than JOHN
HELLMANN, *THE*

KENNEDY OBSESSION: THE

the queen, the dashing Essex would often chastize her for her sourness.
AMERICAN MYTH OF JFK

The queen would forgive him—he was so exuberant and spontaneous, he could not control himself. But his comments got under her skin; in the presence of Essex she came to remember all the youthful ideals—spiritedness, feminine charm—that had since vanished from her life. She also felt a little *The normal rhythm of life*

oscillates in general between

of that girlish spirit return when she was around him. He quickly became *a mild satisfaction with her favorite*, and soon she was in love with him. Old age is constantly *se- oneself and a slight* duced by youth, but first the young people must make it clear what the *discomfort, originating in the knowledge of one's*

older ones are missing, how they have lost their ideals. Only then will they *personal shortcomings*. We feel that the presence of the young will let them recapture that spark, the *should like to be as* rebellious spirit that age and society have conspired to repress.

handsome, young, strong or

clever as other people of our

This concept has infinite applications. Corporations and politicians *acquaintance*. We wish we know that they cannot seduce their public into buying what they want *could achieve as much as* them to buy, or doing what they want them to do, unless they first awaken *they do, long for similar advantages, positions, the*

a sense of need and discontent. Make the masses uncertain about their *same or greater success*. To identity and you can help define it for them. It is as true of groups or na- *be delighted with oneself is* tions as it is of individuals: they cannot be seduced without being made to *the exception and, often* feel some lack. Part of John F. Kennedy's election strategy in 1960 was to *enough, a smoke screen which we produce for*

make Americans unhappy about the 1950s, and how far the country had *ourselves and of course for* strayed from its ideals. In talking about the 1950s, he did not mention the *others*. *Somewhere in it is* nation's economic stability or its emergence as a superpower. Instead, he *a lingering feeling of discomfort with ourselves*

implied that the period was marked by conformity, a lack of risk and ad- *and a slight self-dislike*. I venture, a loss of our frontier values. To vote for Kennedy was to embark *assert that an increase of 210 • The Art of Seduction*

this spirit of discontent

on a collective adventure, to go back to ideals we had given up. But before *renders a person especially*

anyone joined his crusade they had to be made aware of how much they *susceptible to "falling in* had lost, what was missing. A group, like an individual, can get mired in *love*. . . . *In most cases*

this attitude of disquiet is routine, losing track of its original goals. Too much prosperity saps it of *unconscious, but in some* its strength. You can seduce an entire nation by aiming at its collective insecu *reaches the threshold of* rity, that latent sense that not everything is what it seems. Stirring dissatis *awareness in the form of a slight uneasiness, or a*

faction with the present and reminding people about the glorious past can *stagnant dissatisfaction, or* unsettle their sense of identity. Then you can be the one to redefine it—a *a realization of being upset* grand seduction.

without knowing why.

— THEODORE EIK,

OF LOVE AND LUST

Symbol: *Cupid's Arrow. What awakens desire in the seduced is not a soft touch or a pleasant sensation; it is a wound. The arrow creates a pain, an ache, a need for relief Before desire*

there must be pain. Aim the arrow at the victim's

weakest spot, creating a wound that you

can open and reopen.

Reversal

If you go too far in lowering the targets' self-esteem they may feel too insecure to enter into your seduction. Do not be heavy-handed; like Lawrence, always follow up the wounding attack with a soothing gesture. Otherwise you will simply alienate them.

Charm is often a subtler and more effective route to seduction. The Victorian Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli always made people feel *better* about themselves. He deferred to them, made them the center of attention, made them feel witty and vibrant. He was a boon to their vanity, and they grew addicted to him. This is a kind of diffused seduction, lacking in tension and in the deep emotions that the sexual variety stirs; it bypasses people's hunger, their need for some kind of fulfillment. But if you are subtle and clever, it can be a way of lowering their defenses, creating an unthreatening friendship. Once they are under your spell in this way, you can then open the wound. Indeed, after Disraeli had charmed Queen Victoria and established a friendship with her, he made her feel vaguely inadequate in the establishment of an empire and the realization of her ideals. Everything depends on the target. People who are riddled with insecurities may require the gentler variety. Once they feel comfortable with you, aim your arrows.

6

Master the Art of Insinuation

Making your targets feel dissatisfied and in need of your attention is essential, but if you are too obvious, they will see through you and grow defensive.

There is no known defense, however, against insinuation—the art of planting ideas in people's minds by dropping elusive hints that

take root days later, even

appearing to them as

their own idea. Insinuation is the supreme means

of influencing people. Create a sublanguage—bold statements followed by retraction and

*apology, ambiguous comments, banal talk
combined with alluring glances— that enters
the target's unconscious to convey your real
meaning. Make everything suggestive.*

Insinuating Desire

One evening in the 1770s, a young man went to the Paris Opera to meet his lover, the Countess de . The couple had been fighting, and he was anxious to see her again. The countess had not arrived yet at her box, but from an adjacent one a friend of hers, Madame de T , called out to the young man to join her, remarking that it was an excellent stroke of luck that they had met that evening—he must keep her company *As we were about to enter* on a trip she had to take. The young man wanted urgently to see the *the chamber, she stopped me. "Remember," she said*

countess, but Madame was charming and insistent and he agreed to go with *gravely, "you are supposed* her. Before he could ask why or where, she quickly escorted him to her *never to have seen, never* carriage outside, which then sped off.

even suspected, the

Now the young man enjoined his hostess to tell him where she was *sanctuary you're about to enter. . . .* • . . All this

taking him. At first she just laughed, but finally she told him: to her hus- *was like an initiation rite.* band's château. The couple had been estranged, but had decided to recon- *She led me by the hand* cile; her husband was a bore, however, and she felt a charming young man *across a small, dark corridor. My heart was*

like himself would liven things up. The young man was intrigued: Madame *pounding as though I were* was an older woman, with a reputation for being rather formal, though he *a young proselyte being put* also knew she had a lover, a marquis. Why had she chosen him for this ex- *to the test before the celebration of the great*

cursion? Her story was not quite credible. Then, as they traveled, she sug- *mysteries. . . .* • "But gested he look out the window at the passing landscape, as she was doing. *your Countess . . .*" she He had to lean over toward her to do so, and just as he did, the carriage *said, stopping. I was about* jolted. She grabbed his hand and fell into his arms. She stayed there for a *to reply when the doors opened; my answer was*

moment, then pulled away from him rather abruptly. After an awkward silence, interrupted by admiration, she said, "Do you intend to convince me of my imprudence in your *I was astonished*, regard?" He protested that the incident had been an accident and reassured *delighted*, *I no longer know what became of me*,

her he would behave himself. In truth, however, having her in his arms had *and I began in good faith* made him think otherwise.

to believe in magic. . . . In

They arrived at the château. The husband came to meet them, and the *truth, I found myself in a vast cage of mirrors on*

young man expressed his admiration of the building: "What you see is *which images were so nothing*," Madame interrupted, "I must take you to Monsieur's apartment." *artistically painted that* Before he could ask what she meant, the subject was quickly changed. The *they produced the illusion of all the objects they*

husband was indeed a bore, but he excused himself after supper. Now *represented*. Madame and the young man were alone. She invited him to walk with her — VIVANT DENON,"NO

in the gardens; it was a splendid evening, and as they walked, she slipped *TOMORROW*," IN MICHEL FEHER, her arm in his. She was not worried that he would take advantage of her, ED., *THE LIBERTINE READER*

she said, because she knew how attached he was to her good friend the countess. They talked of other things, and then she returned to the topic of 213

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A few short years ago, in

his lover: "Is she making you quite happy? Oh, I fear the contrary, and this *our native city, where fraud distresses me. . . .* Are you not often the victim of her strange whims?" To *and cunning prosper more* the young man's surprise, Madame began to talk of the countess in a way *than love or loyalty, there*

was a noblewoman of that made it seem that she had been unfaithful to him (which was some *striking beauty and* thing he had suspected). Madame sighed—she regretted saying such things *impeccable breeding, who* about her friend, and asked him to forgive her; then, as if a new thought *was endowed by Nature*

with as lofty a had occurred to her, she mentioned a nearby pavilion, a delightful place, *temperament and shrewd* full of pleasant memories. But the shame of it was, it was locked and she *an intellect as could be* had no key. And yet they found their way to the pavilion, and lo and behold, *found in any other woman* hold, the door had been left open. It was dark inside, but the young man *of her time. . . . • This*

lady, being of gentle birth could sense that it was a place for trysts. They entered and sank onto a sofa, and finding herself married and before he knew what had come over him, he took her in his arms. off to a master woollen- Madame seemed to push him away, but then gave in. Finally she came to draper because he happened

to be very rich, was unable her senses: they must return to the house. Had he gone too far? He must to stifle her heartfelt try to control himself.

contempt, for she was

As they strolled back to the house, Madame remarked, "What a deli *firmly of the opinion that no man of low condition,*

cious night we've just spent." Was she referring to what had happened in *however wealthy, was the pavilion? "There is an even more charming room in the château,*" she *deserving of a noble wife.* went on, "but I can't show you anything," implying he had been too for *And on discovering that all he was capable of despite ward.* She had mentioned this room ("Monsieur's apartment") several times *his massive wealth, was* before; he could not imagine what could be so interesting about it, but by *distinguishing wool from* now he was dying to see it and insisted she show it to him. "If you promise *cotton, supervising the* to be good," she replied, her eyes widening. Through the darkness of the *setting up of a loom, or*

debating the virtues of a house she led him into the room, which, to his delight, was a kind of tem particular yarn with a ple of pleasure: there were mirrors on the walls, trompe l'oeil paintings spinner-woman, she evoking a forest scene, even a dark grotto, and a garlanded statue of Eros. resolved that as far as it lay

within her power she Overwhelmed by the mood of the place, the young man quickly resumed would have nothing what he had started in the pavilion, and would have lost all track of time whatsoever to do with his if a servant had not rushed in and warned them that it was getting light beastly caresses. Moreover

she was determined to seek

outside—Monsieur would soon be up.

her pleasure elsewhere, in

They quickly separated. Later that day, as the young man prepared to *the company of one who leave,* his hostess said, "Goodbye, Monsieur; I owe you so many pleasures; *seemed more worthy of her*

affection, and so it was that but I have paid you with a beautiful dream. Now your love summons you she fell deeply in love with to return. . . . Don't give the Countess cause to quarrel with me." Reflect an extremely eligible man ing on his experience on the way back, he could not figure out what it in his middle thirties. And

meant. He had the vague sensation of having been used, but the pleasures *whenever a day passed*

without her having set eyes he remembered outweighed his doubts. *upon him, she was restless*

for the whole of the

following night. •

However, the gentleman

Interpretation. Madame de T is a character in the eighteenth-century *suspected nothing of all* libertine short story "No Tomorrow," by Vivant Denon. The young man is *this, and took no notice of*

the story's narrator. Although fictional, Madame's techniques were clearly *her; and for her part, being*

very cautious, she would based on those of several well-known libertines of the time, masters of *not venture to declare her* the game of seduction. And the most dangerous of their weapons was *love by dispatching a* insinuation—the means by which Madame cast her spell on the young man, *maidservant or writing him* making him seem the aggressor, giving her the night of pleasure she desired, *Master the Art of Insinuation • 215*

and safeguarding her guiltless reputation, all in one stroke. After all, he was *a letter, for fear of the* the one who initiated physical contact, or so it seemed. In truth, she was the *dangers that this might entail. But having*

one in control, planting precisely the ideas in his mind that she wanted. That *perceived that he was on* first physical encounter in the carriage, for instance, that she had set up by *very friendly terms with a* inviting him closer: she later rebuked him for being forward, but what *lin- certain priest, a rotund, gered* in his mind was the excitement of the moment. Her talk of the *uncouth, individual who was nevertheless regarded*

countess made him confused and guilty; but then she hinted that his lover *as an outstandingly able* was unfaithful, planting a different seed in his mind: anger, and the desire for *friar on account of his very* revenge. Then she asked him to forget what she had said and forgive her *saintly way of life, she calculated that this fellow*

for saying it, a key insinuating tactic: "I am asking you to forget what I have *would serve as an ideal go-* said, but I know you cannot; the thought will remain in your mind." *Pro- between for her and the* voked this way, it was inevitable he would grab her in the pavilion. She *sev- man she loved. And so, after reflecting on the*

eral times mentioned the room in the château—of course he insisted on *strategy she would adopt*, going there. She enveloped the evening in an air of ambiguity. Even her *she paid a visit, at an* words "If you promise to be good" could be read several

ways. The young *appropriate hour of the man's head and heart were inflamed with all of the feelings—discontent, day, to the church where he was to be found, and confusion, desire—that she had indirectly instilled in him.*

having sought him out, she

Particularly in the early phases of a seduction, learn to make everything *asked him whether he* you say and do a kind of insinuation. Insinuate doubt with a comment *here would agree to confess her.*

• *Since he could tell at a*

and there about other people in the victim's life, making the victim feel *glance that she was a lady* vulnerable. Slight physical contact insinuates desire, as does a fleeting but *of quality, the friar gladly* memorable look, or an unusually warm tone of voice, both for the briefest *heard her confession, and when she had got to the*

of moments. A passing comment suggests that something about the victim *end of it, she continued as* interests you; but keep it subtle, your words revealing a possibility, creating a *follows:* • "Father, as I doubt. You are planting seeds that will take root in the weeks to come. *shall explain to you presently, there is a certain*

When you are not there, your targets will fantasize about the ideas you have *matter about which I am* stirred up, and brood upon the doubts. They are slowly being led into your *compelled to seek your web*, unaware that you are in control. How can they resist or become de- *advice and assistance.* fensive if they cannot even see what is happening?

Having already told you

my name, I feel sure you

will know my family and

What distinguishes a suggestion from other kinds of psy-

my husband. He loves me

chical influence, such as a command or the giving of a piece

more dearly than life itself,

and since he is enormously

of information or instruction, is that in the case of a sug-

rich, he never has the

gestion an idea is aroused in another person's brain which

*slightest difficulty or
is not examined in regard to its origin but is accepted just
hesitation in supplying me
as though it had arisen spontaneously in that brain.
with every single object for
which I display a yearning.*

—SIGMUND FREUD

*Consequently, my love for
him is quite unbounded,
and if my mere thoughts,
to say nothing of my actual*

Keys to Seduction

*behavior, were to run
contrary to his wishes and
his honor, I would be more*

You cannot pass through life without in one way or another trying to *deserving of hellfire than persuade people of something. Take the direct route, saying exactly the wickedest woman who* what you want, and your honesty may make you feel good but you are *ever lived.* • "Now, there is probably not getting anywhere. People have their own sets of ideas, which *a certain person, of respectable outward*

are hardened into stone by habit; your words, entering their minds, com- 216 • *The Art of Seduction appearance, who unless I* pete with the thousands of preconceived notions that are already there, and *am mistaken is a close* get nowhere. Besides, people resent your attempt to persuade them, as if *acquaintance of yours. I* they were incapable of deciding by themselves—as if you knew better. *really couldn't say what his*

name is, but he is tall and

Consider instead the power of insinuation and suggestion. It requires some *handsome, his clothes are* patience and art, but the results are more than worth it. *brown and elegantly cut,*

The way insinuation works is simple: disguised in a banal remark or *en and, possibly because he is unaware of my resolute* counter, a hint is dropped. It is about some emotional issue—a possible *nature, he appears to have* pleasure not yet attained, a lack of excitement in a person's life. The hint *laid siege to me. He turns* registers in the back of the target's mind, a subtle stab at his or her *insecuri up* *infallibly whenever I either look out of my ties; its source is quickly forgotten.* It is too subtle to be memorable at the *window or stand at the time*, and later, when it takes root and grows, it seems to have emerged *front door or leave the* naturally from the target's own mind, as if it was there all along. Insinuation *house, and I am surprised, lets you bypass people's natural resistance, for they seem to be listening only in fact, that he is not here*

now. Needless to say, I am to what has originated in themselves. It is a language on its own, communi very upset about all this, cating directly with the unconscious. No seducer, no persuader, can hope because his sort of conduct to succeed without mastering the language and art of insinuation. frequently gives an honest

woman a bad name, even

A strange man once arrived at the court of Louis XV. No one knew

though she is quite anything about him, and his accent and age were unplaceable. He called innocent. • " . . . For the himself Count Saint-Germain. He was obviously wealthy; all kinds of gems love of God, therefore, I

implore you to speak to and diamonds glittered on his jacket, his sleeves, his shoes, his fingers. He him severely and persuade could play the violin to perfection, paint magnificently. But the most in him to refrain from his toxicating thing about him was his conversation. importunities. There are

In truth, the count was the greatest charlatan of the eighteenth

plenty of other women who

doubtless find this sort of

century—a man who had mastered the art of insinuation. As he spoke, a *thing amusing, and who* word here and there would slip out—a vague allusion to the philosopher's *will enjoy being ogled and*

stone, which turned base metal into gold, or to the elixir of life. He did not *spied upon by him, but I*

personally have no say he possessed these things, but he made you associate him with their inclination for it powers. Had he simply claimed to have them, no one would have believed whatsoever, and I find his him and people would have turned away. The count might refer to a man behavior exceedingly

disagreeable." • And

who had died forty years earlier as if he had known him personally; had *having reached the end of this* been so, the count would have had to be in his eighties, although he *her speech, the lady bowed*

looked to be in his forties. He mentioned the elixir of life. . . . he seems so *her head as though she* young. . . .

were going to burst into

tears. • The reverend friar

The key to the count's words was vagueness. He always dropped his

realized immediately who hints into a lively conversation, grace notes in an ongoing melody. Only *it was to whom she was* later would people reflect on what he had said. After a while, people started *referring, and having*

warmly commended her to come to him, inquiring about the philosopher's stone and the elixir of *purity of mind* . . . *he* life, not realizing that it was he who had planted these ideas in their minds. *promised to take all* Remember: to sow a seductive idea you must engage people's imaginations, *necessary steps to ensure*

that the fellow ceased to their fantasies, their deepest yearnings. What sets the wheels spinning is *annoy her*. . . . • *Shortly suggesting* things that people already want to hear—the possibility of plea *afterward, the gentleman in* sure, wealth, health, adventure. In the end, these good things turn out to be *question paid one of his*

regular visits to the precisely what you seem to offer them. They will come to you as if on *reverend friar, and after* their own, unaware that you insinuated the idea in their heads. *they had conversed together*

In 1807, Napoleon Bonaparte decided it was critical for him to win

for a while on general

the Russian Czar Alexander I to his side. He wanted two things out of the *Master the Art of Insinuation* • 217

czar: a peace treaty in which they agreed to carve up Europe and the Mid- *topics, the friar drew him to* the East; and a marriage alliance, in which he would divorce his wife *one side and reproached him in a very kindly sort of*

Josephine and marry into the czar's family. Instead of proposing these *way for the amorous* things directly, Napoleon decided to seduce the czar. Using polite social *glances which, as the lady* encounters and friendly conversations as his battlefields, he went to work. *had given him to* An apparent slip of the tongue revealed that Josephine could not bear *chil- understand, he believed him to be casting in her*

dren; Napoleon quickly changed the subject. A comment here and there *direction*. • *Not* seemed to suggest a linking of the destinies of France and Russia. Just *unnaturally, the gentleman* fore they were to part one evening, he talked of his desire for children, *was amazed, for he had never so much as looked at*

sighed sadly, then excused himself for bed, leaving the czar to sleep on *the lady and it was very* this. He escorted the czar to a play on the themes of glory, honor, and *seldom that he passed by* empire; now, in later conversations, he could disguise his insinuations un- *her house*. . . . • *The gentleman, being rather*

der the cover of discussing the play. Within a few weeks, the czar was *more perceptive than the* speaking to his ministers of a marriage alliance and a treaty with France as *reverend friar, was not* if they were his own ideas.

exactly slow to appreciate

the lady's cleverness, and

Slips of the tongue, apparently inadvertent "sleep on it" comments, al- *putting on a somewhat* luring references, statements for which you quickly apologize—all of these *sheepish expression, he* have immense insinuating power. They get under people's skin like a poi- *promised not to bother her son, and take on a life of their own. The key to succeeding with your in- any more. But after leaving the friar, he made his way*

sinuations is to make them when your targets are at their most relaxed or *toward the house of the* distracted, so that they are not aware of what is happening. Polite banter is *lady, who was keeping* often the perfect front for this; people are thinking about what they will say *continuous vigil at a tiny little window so that she*

next, or are absorbed in their own thoughts. Your insinuations will barely *would see him if he* register, which is how you want it.

happened to pass by. . . .

In one of his early campaigns, John F. Kennedy addressed a group of *And from that day forward, proceeding with*

veterans. Kennedy's brave exploits during World War II—the PT-109 inci- *the maximum prudence* dent had made him a war hero—were known to all; but in the speech, he *and conveying the* talked of the other men on the boat, never mentioning himself. He knew, *impression that he was engaged in some other*

however, that what he had done was on everyone's mind, because in fact he *business entirely, he became* had put it there. Not only did his silence on the subject make them think of *a regular visitor to the* it on their own, it made Kennedy seem humble and modest, qualities that *neighborhood*. go well with heroism. In seduction, as the French courtesan Ninon de —GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *THE*

l'Enclos advised, it is better not to talk about your love for a person. Let
DECAMERON, TRANSLATED BY

G . H . M C W I L L I A M

your target read it in your manner. Your silence on the subject will have more insinuating power than if you had addressed it directly.

Not only words insinuate; pay attention to gestures and looks. Madame *Glances are the heavy* Récamier's favorite technique was to keep her words banal and the look in *artillery of the flirt*: her eyes enticing. The flow of conversation would keep men from thinking *everything can be conveyed* too deeply about these occasional looks, but they would be haunted by *in a look, yet that look can always be denied, for it*

them. Lord Byron had his famous "underlook": while everyone was dis- *cannot be quoted word for* cussing some uninteresting subject, he would seem to hang his head, but *word*. then a young woman (the target) would see him glancing upward at her, his —STENDHAL, QUOTED IN

head still tilted. It was a look that seemed dangerous, challenging, but also RICHARD DAVENPORT-HINES, ambiguous; many women were hooked by it. The face speaks its own lan-ED., *VICE: AN ANTHOLOGY*

guage. We are used to trying to read people's faces, which are often better indicators of their feelings than what they say, which is so easy to control. 218 • *The Art of Seduction*

Since people are always reading your looks, use them to transmit the insinuating signals you choose. Finally, the reason insinuation works so well is not just that it bypasses people's natural resistance. It is also the language of pleasure. There is too little mystery in the world; too many people say exactly what they feel or want. We yearn for something enigmatic, for something to feed our fantasies. Because of the lack of suggestion and ambiguity in daily life, the person who uses them suddenly seems to have something alluring and full of promise. It is a kind of titillating game —what is this person up to? What does he or she mean? Hints, suggestions, and insinuations create a seductive atmosphere, signaling that their victim is no longer involved in the routines of daily life but has entered another realm.

Symbol: The Seed.

The soil is carefully prepared. The seeds are planted months in advance. Once they are in the ground, no one knows what hand threw them there. They are part of the earth. Disguise your manipulations by planting seeds that take root on their own.

Reversal

The danger in insinuation is that when you leave things ambiguous your target may misread them. There are moments, particularly later on in a seduction, when it is best to communicate your idea directly, particularly once you know the target will welcome it, Casanova often played things that way. When he could sense that a woman desired him, and needed little preparation, he would use a direct, sincere, gushing comment to go straight to her head like a drug and make her fall under his spell. When the rake and writer Gabriele D'Annunzio met a woman he desired, he rarely delayed. Flattery flowed from his mouth and pen. He would charm with his "sincerity" (sincerity can be feigned, and is just one stratagem among others). This only works, however, when you sense that the target is easily yours. If not, the defenses and suspicions you raise by direct attack will make your seduction impossible. When in doubt, indirection is the better route.

7

Enter Their Spirit

Most

*people are locked in their
own worlds, making them stubborn
and hard to persuade. The way to lure
them out of their shell and set up your seduction is
to enter their spirit. Play by their rules, enjoy what they
enjoy, adapt yourself to their moods. In doing so you will
stroke their deep-rooted narcissism and lower their defenses.*

*Hypnotized by the mirror image you present, they will open up,
becoming vulnerable to your subtle influence. Soon you can
shift the dynamic: once you have entered their spirit you
can make them enter yours, at a point when it is
too late to turn back. Indulge your targets'
every mood and whim, giving them*

*nothing to react against or
resist.*

The Indulgent Strategy

In October of 1961, the American journalist Cindy Adams was granted an exclusive interview with President Sukarno of Indonesia. It was a remarkable coup, for Adams was a little-known journalist at the time, while Sukarno was a world figure in the midst of a crisis. A leader of the fight for Indonesia's independence, he had been the country's president since 1949, when the Dutch finally gave up the colony. By the early 1960s, his daring foreign policy had made him hated in the United States, some calling him *You're anxious to keep your mistress? | Convince*

the Hitler of Asia.

her she's knocked you all of

Adams decided that in the interests of a lively interview, she would not *a heap | With her stunning* be cowed or overawed by Sukarno, and she began the conversation by *jok- looks. If it's purple she's wearing, praise purple; |*

ing with him. To her pleasant surprise, her ice-breaking tactic seemed to *When she's in a silk dress, work: Sukarno warmed up to her. He let the interview run well over an say silk | Suits her best of hour, and when it was over he loaded her with gifts. Her success was re- all. . . Admire | Her singing voice, her gestures*

markable enough, but even more so were the friendly letters she began *as she dances, | Cry* to receive from Sukarno after she and her husband had returned to New "Encore!" when she stops. York. A few years later, he proposed that she collaborate with him on his *You can even praise | Her autobiography.*

performance in bed, her

talent for love-making— |

Adams, who was used to doing puff pieces on third-rate celebrities, was *Spell out what turned you confused. She knew Sukarno had a reputation as a devilish Don Juan— le on. | Though she may grand seducteur, the French called him. He had had four wives and hundreds show fiercer in action than any Medusa, | Her lover*

of conquests. He was handsome, and obviously he was attracted to her, but *will always describe her as why choose her for this prestigious task? Perhaps his libido was too power- kind | And gentle. But ful for him to care about such things. Nevertheless, it was an offer she could take care not to give yourself away while |*

not refuse.

Making such tongue-in-

In January of 1964, Adams returned to Indonesia. Her strategy, she had *cheek compliments, don't* decided, would stay the same: she would be the brassy, straight-talking lady *allow | Your expression to ruin the message. Art's*

who had seemed to charm Sukarno three years earlier. During her first in- *most effective | When* terview with him for the book, she complained in rather strong terms *concealed. Detection* about the rooms she had been given as lodgings. As if he were her secre- *discredits you for good.* tary, she dictated a letter to him, which he was to sign, detailing the special — O V I D , *THE ART OF LOVE*, treatment she was to be given by one and all. To her amazement, he duti-TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

fully copied out the letter, and signed it.

Next on Adams's schedule was a tour of Indonesia to interview people who had known Sukarno in his youth. So she complained to him about the *The little boy (or girl) seeks to fascinate his or her*

plane she had to fly on, which she said was unsafe. "I tell you what, honey," *parents. In Oriental* she told him, "I think you should give me my own plane." "Okay," he an- *literature, imitation is 221*

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reckoned to be one of the swered, apparently somewhat abashed. One, however, was not enough, she *ways of attracting.* *The* went on; she required several planes, and a helicopter, and her own per *Sanskrit texts, for* sonal pilot, a good one. He agreed to everything. The leader of Indonesia *example, give an important*

part to the trick of the seemed to be not just intimidated by Adams but totally under her spell. He *woman copying the dress,* praised her intelligence and wit. At one point he confided, "Do you know *expressions, and speech of* why I'm doing this biography? . . . Only because of you, that's why." He *her beloved. This kind of*

mimetic drama is urged on paid attention to her clothes, complimenting her outfits, noticing any *the woman who, "being* change in them. He was more like a fawning suitor than the "Hitler of *unable to unite with her Asia.*"

beloved, imitates him to

distract his thoughts." •

Inevitably, of course, he made passes at her. She was an attractive *The child too, using the woman.* First there was the hand on top of her hand, then a stolen kiss. She *devices of imitating* spurned him every time, making it clear she was happily married, but she *attitudes, dress, and so on,* was worried: if all he had wanted was an affair, the whole book deal could *seeks to fascinate, until a*

magical intention, the fall apart. Once again, though, her straightforward strategy seemed the *father or mother and thus* right one. Surprisingly, he backed down

without anger or resentment. He to "distract its thoughts." promised that his affection for her would remain platonic. She had to admit *Identification means that*

one is abandoning and not that he was not at all what she had expected, or what had been described to *abandoning amorous* her. Perhaps he liked being dominated by a woman. *desires. It is a lure which*

The interviews continued for several months, and she noticed slight *the child uses to capture his*

parents and which, it must changes in him. She still addressed him familiarly, spicing the conversation *be admitted, they fall for.* with brazen comments, but now he returned them, delighting in this kind *The same is true for the* of saucy banter. He assumed the same lively mood that she strategically *masses, who imitate their* forced on herself. At first he had dressed in military uniform, or in his Ital *leader, bear his name and repeat his gestures. They* ian suits. Now he dressed casually, even going barefoot, conforming to the *bow to him, but at the* casual style of their relationship. One night he remarked that he liked the *same time they are* color of her hair. It was Clairol, blue-black, she explained. He wanted to *unconsciously baiting a trap*

to hold him. Great have the same color; she had to bring him a bottle. She did as he asked, *ceremonies and imagining* he was joking, but a few days later he requested her presence at *demonstrations are just as* the palace to dye his hair for him. She did so, and now they had the exact *much occasions when the*

multitudes charm the same hair color.

leader as vice versa.

The book, *Sukarno: An Autobiography as Told to Cindy Adams*, was pub—SERGE MOSCOVICI, *THE AGE*

lished in 1965. To American readers' surprise, Sukarno came across as re *OF THE CROWD, TRANSLATED BY*

markably charming and lovable, which was indeed how Adams described J . C . W H I T E H O U S E

him to one and all. If anyone argued, she would say that they did not know him the way she did. Sukarno was well pleased, and had the book distributed far and wide. It helped gain sympathy for him in Indonesia, where he *My sixth brother, he who* was now being threatened with a military coup. And Sukarno was not *had both his lips cut off*, surprised—he had known all along that Adams would do a far better job *Prince of the Faithful, is*

called Shakashik. • In his with his memoirs than any "serious" journalist. *youth he was very poor.*

One day, as he was

begging in the streets of Interpretation. Who was seducing whom? It was Sukarno who was doing Baghdad, he passed by a

splendid mansion, at the the seducing, and his seduction of Adams followed a classical sequence. gates of which stood an First, he chose the right victim. An experienced journalist would have re impressive array of sisted the lure of a personal relationship with the subject, and a man would attendants. Upon inquiry

my brother was informed

have been less susceptible to his charm. And so he picked a woman, and *Enter Their Spirit* • 223

one whose journalistic experience lay elsewhere. At his first meeting with *that the house belonged to Adams*, he sent mixed signals: he was friendly to her, but hinted at another *a member of the wealthy and powerful Barmecide*

kind of interest as well. Then, having insinuated a doubt in her mind (*Per- family. Shakashik* haps he just wants an affair?), he proceeded to mirror her. He indulged her *approached the door-* every mood, retreating every time she complained. Indulging a person is a *keepers and solicited alms.* form of entering their spirit, letting them dominate for the time being.

• "Go in," they said,

"and our master will give

Perhaps Sukarno's passes at Adams showed his uncontrollable libido at *you all that you desire.*" •

work, or perhaps they were more cunning. He had a reputation as a Don *My brother entered the Juan;* failing to make a pass at her would have hurt her feelings. (*Women lofty vestibule and proceeded to a spacious,*

are often less offended at being found attractive than one imagines, and *marble-paved hall, hung* Sukarno was clever enough to have given each of his four wives the im- *with tapestry and pression* that she was his favorite.) The pass out of the way, he moved fur- *overlooking a beautiful garden. He stood*

ther into her spirit, taking on her casual air, even slightly feminizing himself *bewildered for a moment*, by adopting her hair color. The result was that she decided he was not what *not knowing where to turn* she had expected or feared him to be. He was not in the least threatening, *his steps, and then advanced to the far end of*

and after all, she was the one in control. What Adams failed to realize was *the hall. There, among the* that once her defenses were lowered, she was oblivious to how deeply he *cushions, reclined a* had engaged her emotions. She had not charmed him, he had charmed her. *handsome old man with a* What he wanted all along was what he got: a personal memoir written by a *long beard, whom my brother*

recognized at once

sympathetic foreigner, who gave the world a rather engaging portrait of a *as the master of the house*. man of whom many were suspicious.

• "What can I do for you,

Of all the seductive tactics, entering someone's spirit is perhaps the *my friend?*" asked the old man, as he rose to welcome

most devilish of all. It gives your victims the feeling that they are seducing *my brother*. • When you. The fact that you are indulging them, imitating them, entering their *Shakashik replied that he* spirit, suggests that you are under their spell. You are not a dangerous se- was a hungry beggar, the old man expressed the

ducer to be wary of, but someone compliant and unthreatening. The atten- deepest compassion and tion you pay to them is intoxicating—since you are mirroring them, *rent his fine robes, crying*: everything they see and hear from you reflects their own ego and tastes.

"Is it possible that there

should be a man as hungry

What a boost to their vanity. All this sets up the seduction, the series of ma- as yourself in a city where neuvers that will turn the dynamic around. Once their defenses are down, *I am living? It is, indeed, a* they are open to your subtle influence. Soon you will begin to take over the *disgrace that I cannot* dance, and without even noticing the shift, they will find themselves enter- endure!" Then he comforted my brother;

ing your spirit. This is the endgame.

adding: "I insist that you

stay with me and partake

Women are not at their ease except with those who take

of my dinner." • With this

the master of the house

chances with them, and enter into their spirit.

clapped his hands and

— N I N O N D E L ' E N C L O S

called out to one of the

slaves: "Bring in the basin

and ewer." Then he said to

my brother: "Come

Keys to Seduction

forward, my friend, and

wash your hands." •

Shakashik rose to do so,

One of the great sources of frustration in our lives is other people's *but saw neither ewer nor stubbornness*. How hard it is to reach them, to make them see things *basin. He was bewildered our way*. We often have the impression that when they seem to be listening *to see his host make* to us, and apparently agreeing with us, it is all superficial—the moment we *gestures as though he were pouring water on his hands*

are gone, they revert to their own ideas. We spend our lives butting up 224 • *The Art of Seduction*

from an invisible vessel and

against people, as if they were stone walls. But instead of complaining *then drying them with an* about how misunderstood or ignored you are, why not try something *dif invisible towel. When he ferent*: instead of seeing other people as spiteful or indifferent, instead of *finished, the host called out*

to his attendants: "Bring trying to figure out why they act the way they do, look at them through in the table!" • Numerous the eyes of the seducer. The way to lure people out of their natural in *servants hurried in and out* tractability and self-obsession is to enter their spirit. *of the hall, as though they*

were preparing for a meal.

All of us are narcissists. When we were children our narcissism was *My brother could still see physical*: we were interested in our own image, our own body, as if it were *nothing. Yet his host a separate being*. As we grow older, our narcissism grows more psychologi *invited him to sit at the cal*: we become absorbed in our own tastes, opinions, experiences. A hard *imaginary table, saying*,

"Honor me by eating of shell forms around us. Paradoxically, the way to entice people out of this this meat." • The old man shell is to become more like them, in fact a kind of mirror image of them. moved his hands about as You do not have to spend days studying their minds; simply conform to though he were touching

invisible dishes, and also their moods, adapt to their tastes, play along with whatever they send your *moved his jaws and lips as* way. In doing so you will lower their natural defensiveness. Their sense of *though he were chewing*, self-esteem does not feel threatened by your strangeness or different habits. *Then said he to*

Shakashik: "E a t your fill, People truly love themselves, but what they love most of all is to see their *my friend, for you must be* ideas and tastes reflected in another person. This validates them. Their *ha famished.*" • *My brother* bitual insecurity vanishes. Hypnotized by their mirror image, they relax. *began to move his jaws, to* Now that their inner wall has crumbled, you can slowly draw them out, *chew and swallow, as*

though he were eating, and eventually turn the dynamic around. Once they are open to you, it be *while the old man still* comes easy to infect them with your own moods and heat. Entering the *coaxed him, saying:* "Eat, other person's spirit is a kind of hypnosis; it is the most insidious and effec *my friend, and note the excellence of this bread and*

tive form of persuasion known to man.

its whiteness." • *"This*

In the eighteenth-century Chinese novel *The Dream of the Red Cham- man,*" *thought Shakashik,*

ber; all the young girls in the prosperous house of Chia are in love with the

"must be fond of practical

jokes." So he said, "It is, rakish Pao Yu. He is certainly handsome, but what makes him irresistible is *sir, the whitest bread I have* his uncanny ability to enter a young girl's spirit. Pao Yu has spent his youth *ever seen, and I have never* around girls, whose company he has always preferred. As a result, he never *tasted the like in all my*

life." • *"This bread," said*

comes over as threatening and aggressive. He is granted entry to girls'

the host, "was baked by a

rooms, they see him everywhere, and the more they see him the more they *slave girl whom I bought* fall under his spell. It is not that Pao Yu is feminine; he remains a man, but *for five hundred dinars.*"

one who can be more or less masculine as the situation requires. His famil *Then he called out to one of his slaves: "Bring in the* iarity with young girls allows him the flexibility to enter their spirit. *meat pudding, and let there*

This is a great advantage. The difference between the sexes is what *be plenty offat in it!"*

makes love and seduction possible, but it also involves an element of fear

• . . . *Thereupon the host*

moved his fingers as though and distrust. A woman may fear male aggression and violence; a man is *to pick up a morsel from an* often unable to enter a woman's spirit, and so he remains strange and *imaginary dish, and*

threatening. The greatest seducers in history, from Casanova to John F. *popped the invisible*

delicacy into my brother's Kennedy, grew up surrounded by women and had a touch of femininity *mouth.* • *The old man* themselves. The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, in his novel *The Seducer's continued to enlarge upon Diary,* recommends spending more time with the opposite sex, getting to *the excellences of the* know the "enemy" and its weaknesses, so that you can turn this knowledge *various dishes, while my*

brother became so to your advantage.

ravenously hungry that he

Ninon de l'Enclos, one of the greatest seductresses who ever lived, had *would have willingly died*

definite masculine qualities. She could impress a man with her intense *Enter Their Spirit* • 225

philosophical keenness, and charm him by seeming to share his interest in *for a crust of barley bread.* politics and warfare. Many men first formed deep friendships with her, • *"Have you ever tasted anything more delicious,"*

only to later fall madly in love. The masculine in a woman is as soothing to *went on the old man*, men as the feminine in a man is to women. To a man, a woman's strange *"than the spices in these ness* can create frustration and even hostility. He may be lured into a sexual *dishes?"* • *"Never,* encounter, but a longer-lasting spell cannot be created without an accom- *indeed," replied Shakashik.* • *"Eat*

panying mental seduction. The key is to enter his spirit. Men are often *heartily, then," said his* seduced by the masculine element in a woman's behavior or character. *host, "and do not be*

In the novel *Clarissa* (1748) by Samuel Richardson, the young and de- *ashamed!"* • *"I thank you, sir;" answered*

vout Clarissa Harlowe is being courted by the notorious rake Lovelace. *Shakashik,* *"but I have* Clarissa knows Lovelace's reputation, but for the most part he has not

acted *already eaten my fill.* " •

as she would expect: he is polite, seems a little sad and confused. At one *Presently, however, the old man clapped his hands*

point she finds out that he has done a most noble and charitable deed to a *again and cried: "Bring in family in distress, giving the father money, helping the man's daughter get the wine!"* • . . . " *Sir,*" married, giving them wholesome advice. At last Lovelace confesses to *said Shakashik, "your generosity overwhelms*

Clarissa what she has suspected: he wants to repent, to change his ways. His *me!*" *He lifted the invisible letters to her are emotional, almost religious in their passion.* Perhaps she *cup to his lips, and made* will be the one to lead him to righteousness? But of course Lovelace has *as if to drain it at one gulp.* trapped her: he is using the seducer's tactic of mirroring her tastes, in this • *"Health and joy to you!" exclaimed the old*

case her spirituality. Once she lets her guard down, once she believes she *man, as he pretended to can reform him,* she is doomed: now he can slowly insinuate his own spirit *pour himself some wine* into his letters and encounters with her. Remember: the operative word is *and drink it off. He handed another cup to his*

"spirit," and that is often exactly where to take aim. By seeming to mirror *guest, and they both* someone's spiritual values you can seem to establish a deep-rooted harmony *continued to act in this* between the two of you, which can then be transferred to the physical *fashion until Shakashik, feigning himself drunk,*

plane.

began to roll his head from

When Josephine Baker moved to Paris, in 1925, as part of an all-black *side to side. Then, taking revue,* her exoticism made her an overnight sensation. But the French are *his bounteous host* notoriously fickle, and Baker sensed that their interest in her would quickly *unawares, he suddenly raised his arm so high that*

pass to someone else. To seduce them for good, she entered their spirit. She *the white of his armpit* learned French and began to sing in it. She started dressing and acting as a *could be seen, and dealt* stylish French lady, as if to say that she preferred the French way of life to *him a blow on the neck which made the hall echo*

the American. Countries are like people: they have vast insecurities, and *with the sound. And this* they feel threatened by other customs. It is often quite seductive to a people *he followed by a second* to see an outsider adopting their ways. Benjamin Disraeli was born and *blow.* • *The old man rose in anger and cried: "What*

lived all his life in England, but he was Jewish by birth, and had exotic fea- *are you doing, vile tures;* the provincial English considered him an outsider. Yet he was more *creature?"* • *"Sir" replied* English in his manners and tastes than many an Englishman, and this was *my brother, "you have received your humble slave*

part of his charm, which he proved by becoming the leader of the Conservative Party. Should you be an outsider (as most of us ultimately are), turn *him with your generosity*; it to advantage: play on your alien nature in such a way as to show the *you have fed him with the* group how deeply you prefer their tastes and customs to your own.

choicest food and quenched

his thirst with the most

In 1752, the notorious rake Saltykov determined to be the first man in *potent wines*. *Alas, he* the Russian court to seduce the twenty-three-year-old grand duchess, the *became drunk, and forgot* future Empress Catherine the Great. He knew that she was lonely; her husband *his manners! But you are so noble, sir, that you will*

band Peter ignored her, as did many of the other courtiers. And yet the old man • 226 • *The Art of Seduction surely pardon his offence.* "

stacles were immense: she was spied on day and night. Still, Saltykov managed to befriend the young woman, and to enter her all-too-small circle. *When he heard these words, the old man burst*

He finally got her alone, and made it clear to her how well he understood *out laughing and said:*

"For a long time I have her loneliness, how deeply he disliked her husband, and how much he *jesting with all types of* shared her interest in the new ideas that were sweeping Europe. Soon he *men, but no one has ever* found himself able to arrange further meetings, where he gave her the impression *had the patience or the wit to enter into my humors as* pression that when he was with her, nothing else in the world mattered. *you have done. Now,*

Catherine fell deeply in love with him, and he did in fact become her first *therefore, I pardon you,*

lover. Saltykov had entered her spirit.

and ask you in truth to eat

and drink with me, and to

When you mirror people, you focus intense attention on them. They

he my companion as long will sense the effort you are making, and will find it flattering. Obviously *as I live.* " • *Then the old*

you have chosen them, separating them out from the rest. There seems to *man ordered his attendants* be nothing else in your life but them—their moods, their tastes, their spirit. *to serve all the dishes*

which they had consumed

The more you focus on them, the deeper the spell you produce, and the in *in fancy, and when he and* toxicating effect you have on their vanity.

my brother had eaten their

Many of us have difficulty reconciling the person we are right now

fill they repaired to the

drinking chamber, where with the person we want to be. We are disappointed that we have compro *beautiful young women* mised our youthful ideals, and we still imagine ourselves as that person *sang and made music*. *The* who had so much promise, but whom circumstances prevented from real *old Barmecide gave Shakashik a robe of honor izing* it. When you are mirroring someone, do not stop at the person they *and made him his constant*

have become; enter the spirit of that ideal person they wanted to be. This *companion*.

is how the French writer Chateaubriand managed to become a great se— " T H E TALE OF SHAKASHIK, ducer, despite his physical ugliness. When he was growing up, in the latter THE BARBER'S SIXTH BROTHER,"

eighteenth century, romanticism was coming into fashion, and many

TALES FROM THE THOUSAND

AND ONE NIGHTS, TRANSLATED

young women felt deeply oppressed by the lack of romance in their lives. BY N.J. DAWOOD

Chateaubriand would reawaken the fantasy they had had as young girls of being swept off their feet, of fulfilling romantic ideals. This form of entering another's spirit is perhaps the most effective kind, because it makes people feel better about themselves. In your presence, they live the life of the person they had wanted to be —a great lover, a romantic hero, whatever it is. Discover those crushed ideals and mirror them, bringing them back to life by reflecting them back to your target. Few can resist such a lure.

Symbol: The

Hunter's Mirror. The lark is a sa-

vory bird, but difficult to catch. In the field, the

hunter places a mirror on a stand. The lark lands in

front of the glass, steps back and forth, entranced by its own moving image and by the imitative mating dance it sees performed before its eyes. Hypnotized, the bird loses all sense of its surroundings, until the hunter's net traps it against the mirror. Enter Their Spirit • 227

Reversal

This desire for a double of the other sex that resembles us absolutely while still

In 1897 in Berlin, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, whose reputation would *being other, for a magical* later circle the world, met Lou Andreas-Salomé, the Russian-born writer *creature who is ourself* and beauty who was notorious for having broken Nietzsche's heart. She *while possessing the* was the darling of Berlin intellectuals, and although Rilke was twenty-two *advantage, over all our imaginings, of an*

and she was thirty-six, he fell head over heels in love with her. He flooded *autonomous existence. . . . her* with love letters, which showed that he had read all her books and *We find traces of it in even*

knew her tastes intimately. The two became friends. Soon she was editing *the most banal circumstances of love: in*

his poetry, and he hung on her every word.

the attraction linked to any

Salomé was flattered by Rilke's mirroring of her spirit, enchanted by *change, any disguise, as in* the intense attention he paid her and the spiritual communion they began *the importance of unison and the repetition of self in*

to develop. She became his lover. But she was worried about his future; it *the other. . . . The great,* was difficult to make a living as a poet, and she encouraged him to learn *the implacable amorous* her native language, Russian, and become a translator. He followed her ad- *passions are all linked to the fact that a being*

vice so avidly that within months he could speak Russian. They visited *imagines he sees his most Russia together, and Rilke was overwhelmed by what he saw—the peas- secret self spying upon him* ants, the folk customs, the art, the architecture. Back in Berlin, he turned *behind the curtain of his rooms* into a kind of shrine to Russia, and started wearing Russian peas- *another's eyes.* ant blouses and peppering his conversation with Russian phrases. Now the —ROBERT MUSIL, QUOTED IN

D E N I S DE ROUGEMONT, *LOVE*

charm of his mirroring soon wore off. At first Salomé had been flattered
DECLARED, TRANSLATED BY

that he shared her interests so intensely, but now she saw this as something
RICHARD HOWARD

else: he seemed to have no real identity. He had become dependent on her for his own self-esteem. It was all so slavish. In 1899, much to his horror, she broke off the relationship.

The lesson is simple: your entry into a person's spirit must be a tactic, a way to bring him or her under your spell. You cannot be simply a sponge, soaking up the other person's moods. Mirror them for too long and they will see through you and be repelled by you. Beneath the similarity to them that you make them see, you must have a strong underlying sense of your own identity. When the time comes, you will want to lead them into your spirit; you cannot live on their turf. Never take mirroring too far, then. It is only useful in the first phase of a seduction; at some point the dynamic must be reversed.

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Create Temptation

Lure the target deep into your seduction by creating the proper temptation: a glimpse of the pleasures to come. As the serpent tempted Eve with the promise of forbidden knowledge, you must awaken a desire in your targets that they cannot control. Find that weakness of theirs, that fantasy that has yet to be realized, and hint that you can lead them toward it. It could be wealth, it could be adventure, it could be forbidden and guilty pleasures; the key is to keep it vague. Dangle the prize before their eyes, postponing satisfaction, and let their

minds do the rest. The future seems ripe with possibility. Stimulate a curiosity stronger than the doubts and anxieties that go with it, and they will follow you.

The Tantalizing Object

Some time in the 1880s, a gentleman named Don Juan de Todellas was wandering through a park in Madrid when he saw a woman in her early twenties getting out of a coach, followed by a two-year-old child and a nursemaid. The young woman was elegantly dressed, but what took Don Juan's breath away was her resemblance to a woman he had known nearly three years before. Surely she could not be the same person. The woman he had known, Cristeta Moreruela, was a showgirl in a second-rate theater. *For these two crimes Tantalus was punished*

She had been an orphan and was quite poor—her circumstances could not with the ruin of his have changed that much. He moved closer: the same beautiful face. And kingdom and, after his then he heard her voice. He was so shocked that he had to sit down: it was death by Zeus's own hand, with eternal torment in the

indeed the same woman.

company of Ixion,

Don Juan was an incorrigible seducer, whose conquests were innu- *Sisyphus, Tityus, the merable and of every variety. But he remembered his affair with Cristeta Danaids, and others. Now quite clearly, because she had been so young—the most charming girl he he hangs, perennially consumed by thirst and*

had ever met. He had seen her in the theater, had courted her assiduously, hunger, from the bough of and had managed to persuade her to take a trip with him to a seaside town. a fruit tree which leans over Although they had separate rooms, nothing could stop Don Juan: he made a marshy lake. Its waves lap against his waist, and

up a story about business troubles, gained her sympathy, and in a tender sometimes reach his chin, moment took advantage of her weakness. A few days later he left her, on yet whenever he bends the pretext that he had to attend to business. He believed he would never down to drink, they slip away, and nothing remains

see her again. Feeling a little guilty—a rare occurrence with him—he sent but the black mud at his her 5,000 pesetas, pretending he would eventually rejoin her. Instead he feet; or, if he ever succeeds went to Paris. He had only recently returned to Madrid.

in scooping up a handful of

water, it slips through his

As he sat and remembered all this, an idea troubled him: the child. *fingers before he can do* Could the boy possibly be his? If not, she must have married almost immediately after their affair. How could she do such a thing? She was obviously *lips, leaving him thirstier* wealthy now. Who could her husband be? Did he know her past? Mixed *than ever. The tree is laden with pears, shining apples,*

with his confusion was intense desire. She was so young and beautiful. Why *sweet figs, ripe olives and* had he given her up so easily? Somehow, even if she was married, he had to *pomegranates, which* get her back.

dangle against his shoulders; but whenever he

Don Juan began to frequent the park every day. He saw her a few more *reaches for the luscious* times; their eyes met, but she pretended not to notice him. Tracing the *fruit, a gust of wind whirls* nursemaid during one of her errands, he struck up a conversation with her, *them out of his reach.* and asked her about her mistress's husband. She told him the man's name —ROBERT GRAVES, *THE GREEK*

was Señor Martínez, and that he was away on an extended business trip; she
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also told him where Cristeta now lived. Don Juan gave her a note to give to 231

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Don Juan: Arminta, listen her mistress. Then he strolled by Cristeta's house—a beautiful palace. His *to the truth—-for are not* worst suspicions were confirmed: she had married for money. *women friends of truth? I*

Cristeta refused to see him. He persisted, sending more notes. Finally, *am a nobleman, heir to the*

ancient family of the to avoid a scene, she agreed to meet him, just once, in the park. He pre *Tenorios, the conquerors of* pared for the meeting carefully: seducing her again would be a delicate op *Seville. After the king, my* eration. But when he saw her coming toward him, in her beautiful clothes, *father is the most powerful*

and considered man at his emotions, and his lust, got the better of him. She could only belong to court. . . . By chance I him, never to another man, he told her. Cristeta took offense at this; obvi *happened on this road and* ously her present circumstances prevented even one more meeting. Still, *saw you. Love sometimes* beneath her coolness he could sense strong emotions. He begged to see her *behaves in a manner that*

surprises even himself. . . . again, but she left without promising anything. He sent her more letters,

• *Arminta: I don't know if meanwhile wracking his brains trying to piece it all together: Who was this what you're saying is truth Señor Martínez? Why would he marry a showgirl? How could Cristeta be or lying rhetoric. I am married to Batricio, wrested away from him? everybody knows it. How*

Finally Cristeta agreed to meet Don Juan one more time, in the theater, *can the marriage be* where he dared not risk a scandal. They took a box, where they could talk. *annulled, even if he*

abandons me? • *Don Juan:* She reassured him the child was not his. She said he only wanted her now *When the marriage is not* because she belonged to another, because he could not have her. No, he *consummated, whether by* said, he had changed; he would do anything to get her back. *Disconcert malice or deceit, it can be annulled. . . .* • *Arminta:* ingly, at moments her eyes seemed to be flirting with him. But then she *You are right. But, God* seemed to be about to cry, and rested her head on his shoulder—only to *help me, won't you desert* get up immediately, as if realizing this was a mistake. This was their last *me the moment you have* meeting, she said, and quickly fled. Don Juan was beside himself. She was *separated me from my*

husband? . . . • *Don* playing with him; she was a coquette. He had only been claiming to have *Juan: Arminta, light of my* changed, but perhaps it was true: no woman had ever treated him this way *eyes, tomorrow your* before. He would never have allowed it. *beautiful feet will slip into*

polished silver slippers with

For the next few nights Don Juan slept poorly. All he could think about *buttons of the purest gold*. was Cristeta. He had nightmares about killing her husband, about growing *And your alabaster throat* old and being alone. It was all too much. He had to leave town. He sent *will be imprisoned in*

beautiful necklaces; on her a goodbye note, and to his amazement, she replied: she wanted to see your fingers, rings set with him, she had something to tell him. By now he was too weak to resist. As amethysts will shine like she had requested, he met her on a bridge, at night. This time she made no stars, *and from your ears* effort to control herself: yes, she still loved Don Juan, and was ready to run *will dangle oriental pearls.*

• *Arminta: I am yours.* away with him. But he should come to her house tomorrow, in broad day—TIRSO DE MOLINA, light, and take her away. There could be no secrecy.

THE PLAYBOY OF SEVILLE,

Beside himself with joy, Don Juan agreed to her demands. The next day
TRANSLATED BY ADRIENNE M.

he showed up at her palace at the appointed hour, and asked for Señora

SCHIZZANO AND OSCAR

M A N D L L , I N M A N D E L , E D . ,

Martinez. There was no one there by that name, said the woman at the *THE THEATRE OF DON JUAN*

door. Don Juan insisted: her name is Cristeta. Ah, Cristeta, the woman said: she lives in the back, with the other tenants. Confused, Don Juan went to the back of the palace. There he thought he saw her son, playing in the street in dirty clothes. But no, he said to himself, it must be some other *Now the serpent was more*

subtle than any other wild

child. He came to Cristeta's door, and instead of her servant, Cristeta herself *creature that the LORD opened it*. He entered. It was the room of a poor person. Hanging on *im GOD had made. He said* provised racks, however, were Cristeta's elegant clothes. As if in a dream, he *to the woman, "Did God*

say, 'You shall not eat of

sat down, dumbfounded, and listened as Cristeta revealed the truth. *Create Temptation • 233*

She was not married, she had no child. Months after he had left her, *any tree of the garden'?"*

she had realized that she had been the victim of a consummate seducer. She *And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of*

still loved Don Juan, but she was determined to turn the tables. Finding out *the fruit of the trees of the*

through a mutual friend that he had returned to Madrid, she took the five *garden; but God said*, thousand pesetas he had sent her and bought expensive clothes. She bor *'You shall not eat of the* rowed a neighbor's child, asked the neighbor's cousin to play the child's *fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden,*

nursemaid, and rented a coach—all to create an elaborate fantasy that ex *neither shall you touch it*, isted only in his mind. Cristeta did not even have to lie: she never actually *lest you die.'* "But the

said she was married or had a child. She knew that being unable to have her *serpent said to the woman,*

"You will not die. For

would make him want her more than ever. It was the only way to seduce a *God knows that when you*

man like him.

eat of it your eyes will be

Overwhelmed by the lengths she had gone to, and by the emotions she *opened, and you will be like God, knowing good*

had so skillfully stirred in him, Don Juan forgave Cristeta and offered to *and evil. " So when the marry her. To his surprise, and perhaps to his relief, she politely declined. woman saw that the tree*

The moment they married, she said, his eyes would wander elsewhere. *was good for food, and that*

it was a delight to the eyes,

Only if they stayed as they were could she maintain the upper hand. Don *and that the tree was to be*

Juan had no choice but to agree.

desired to make one wise,

she took of its fruit and

ate; and she also gave some

to her husband, and he ate.

Interpretation. Cristeta and Don Juan are characters in the novel *Dulce y*

—GENESIS 3:1 , O L D TESTAMENT

Sabrosa (Sweet and Savory, 1891), by the Spanish writer Jacinto Octavio Picon. Most of Picon's work deals with male seducers and their feminine victims, a subject he studied and knew much about. Abandoned by Don Juan, and reflecting on his nature, Cristeta decided to kill two birds with *Thou strong seducer,*

one stone: she would get revenge and get him back. But how could she *Opportunity.*

lure such a man? The fruit once tasted, he no longer wanted it. What came ——
JOHN DRYDEN

easily to him, or fell into his arms, held no allure for him. What would tempt Don Juan into desiring Cristeta again, into pursuing her, was the sense that she was already taken, that she was forbidden fruit. That was his *As he listened, Masetto* weakness—that was why he pursued virgins and married women, women

experienced such a longing

he was not supposed to have. To a man, she reasoned, the grass always *to go and stay with these*

nuns that his whole body

seems greener somewhere else. She would make herself that distant, allur *tingled with excitement, for* ing object, just out of reach, tantalizing him, stirring up emotions he could *it was clear from what he*

not control. He knew how charming and desirable she had once been to *had heard that he should*

be able to achieve what he

him. The idea of possessing her again, and the pleasure he imagined it *had in mind. Realizing,*

would bring, were too much for him: he swallowed the bait.

however, that he would get

Temptation is a twofold process. First you are coquettish, flirtatious; *nowhere by revealing his*

intentions to Nuto, he

you stimulate a desire by promising pleasure and distraction from daily life. *replied: • "H o w right you*

At the same time, you make it clear to your targets that they cannot have *were to come away from*

you, at least not right away. You are establishing a barrier, some kind of *the [nunnery] ! What sort tension.*

of a life can any man lead

when he's surrounded by a

In days gone by such barriers were easy to create, by taking advantage *lot of women? He might as*

of preexisting social obstacles—of class, race, marriage, religion. Today the *well be living with a pack* barriers have to be more psychological: your heart is taken by someone *of devils. Why, six times*

out of seven they don't

else; you are really not interested in the target; some secret holds you back; *even know their own*

the timing is bad; you are not good enough for the other person; the other *minds*." •
But when they

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had finished talking, person is not good enough for you; and so on. Conversely, you can choose *Masetto began to consider* someone who has a built-in barrier: they are taken, they are not meant to *what steps he ought to take* want you. These barriers are more subtle than the social or religious variety, *so that he could go and*

stay with them. Knowing but they are barriers nevertheless, and the psychology remains the same. *himself to be perfectly* People are perversely excited by what they cannot or should not have. *capable of carrying out the* Create this inner conflict—there is excitement and interest, but you are *duties mentioned by Nuto*, unavailable—and you will have them grasping like Tantalus for water. And *he had no worries about*

losing the job on that as with Don Juan and Cristeta, the more you make your targets pursue you, *particular score, but he was the more* they imagine that it is they who are the aggressors. Your seduc *afraid lest he should be* tion is perfectly disguised. *turned down because of his*

youth and his unusually

attractive appearance. And

The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.

so, having rejected a

—OSCAR WILDE.

number of other possible

expedients, he eventually

thought to himself: "The

convent is a long way off,

Keys to Seduction

and there's nobody there

who knows me. If I can

pretend to be dumb, they'll

take me on for sure."

Clinging firmly to this Most of the time, people struggle to maintain security and a sense of balance in their lives. If they were always uprooting themselves in pursuit of every new person or fantasy that passed them by, they could not *conjecture, he therefore*

dressed himself in pauper's survive the daily grind. They usually win the struggle, but it does not come *rags and slung an ax over* easy. The world is full of temptation. They read about people who have *his shoulder, and without* more than they do, about adventures others are having, about people who *telling anyone where he*

was going, he set out for have found wealth and happiness. The security that they strive for, and that *the convent. On his* they seem to have in their lives, is actually an illusion. It covers up a con *arrival, he wandered into* stant tension. *the courtyard, where as*

As a seducer, you can never mistake people's appearance for reality. You *luck would have it he came*

across the steward, and

know that their fight to keep order in their lives is exhausting, and that they *with the aid of gestures* are gnawed by doubts and regrets. It is hard to be good and virtuous, always *such as dumb people use*, having to repress the strongest desires. With that knowledge in mind, se *he conveyed the impression that he was begging for* duction is easier. What people want is not temptation; temptation happens *something to eat, in return* every day. What people want is to give into temptation, to yield. That is the *for which he would attend*

only way to get rid of the tension in their lives. It costs much more to resist *to any wood-chopping that*

needed to be done. • The temptation than to surrender. steward gladly provided

Your task, then, is to create a temptation that is stronger than the daily *him with something to eat, variety*. It has to be focused on them, aimed at them as individuals —at their *after which he presented*

him with a pile of logs that weakness. Understand: everyone has a principal weakness, from which oth *Nuto had been unable to* ers stem. Find that childhood insecurity, that lack in their life, and you hold *chop. . . . Mow, when the* the key to tempting them. Their weakness may be greed, vanity, boredom, *steward had discovered* some deeply repressed desire, a hunger for forbidden fruit. They signal it in *what an excellent gardener*

he was, he gestured to little details that elude their conscious control: their style of clothing, an *Masetto, asking him*

offhand comment. Their past, and particularly their past romances, will be *whether he would like to* littered with clues. Give them a potent temptation, tailored to their

weak stay there, and the latter made signs to indicate that ness, and you can make the hope of pleasure that you stir in them figure *he was willing to do* more prominently than the doubts and anxieties that accompany it. *whatever the steward*

In 1621, King Philip III of Spain desperately wanted to forge an al- *Create Temptation* • 235

liance with England by marrying his daughter to the son of the English *wanted*. . . . • *Now, one king, James I. James seemed open to the idea, but he stalled for time. day, when Masetto*

Spain's ambassador to the English court, a man called Gondomar, was given *happened to he taking a*

rest after a spell of

the task of advancing Philip's plan. He set his sights on the king's favorite, *strenuous work, he was* the Duke (former Earl) of Buckingham.

approached by two very

Gondomar knew the duke's main weakness: vanity. Buckingham hun- *young nuns who were out walking in the garden.*

gered for the glory and adventure that would add to his fame; he was bored *Since he gave them the*

with his limited tasks, and he pouted and whined about this. The ambas- *impression that he was* sador first flattered him profusely—the duke was the ablest man in the *asleep, they began to stare at him, and the bolder of*

country and it was a shame he was given so little to do. Then, he began to *the two said to her*

whisper to him of a great adventure. The duke, as Gondomar knew, was in *companion: • "If I could* favor of the match with the Spanish princess, but these damned marriage *be sure that you would keep it a secret, I would*

negotiations with King James were taking so long, and getting nowhere. *tell you about an idea that*

What if the duke were to accompany the king's son, his good friend Prince *has often crossed my mind*, Charles, to Spain? Of course, this would have to be done in secret, without *and one that might well*

guards or escorts, for the English government and its ministers would never *work out to our mutual benefit.*" • *"Do tell me,"*

sanction such a trip. But that would make it all the more dangerous and ro *replied the other. "You can* mantic. Once in Madrid, the prince could throw himself at Princess

be quite certain that I

Maria's feet, declare his undying love, and carry her back to England in *tri-shan't talk about it to anyone.*" • *The bold one*

umph. What a chivalrous deed it would be and all for love. The duke *began to speak more*

would get all the credit and it would make his name famous for centuries. *plainly.* • *"I wonder," she*

The duke fell for the idea, and convinced Charles to go along; after *said*, "whether you have ever considered what a

much arguing, they also convinced a reluctant King James. The trip was a *strict life we have to lead*, near disaster (Charles would have had to convert to Catholicism to win *and how the only men who*

Maria), and the marriage never happened, but Gondomar had done his job. *ever dare set foot in this*

place are the steward, who

He did not bribe the duke with offers of money or power—he aimed at *is elderly, and this dumb*

the childlike part of him that never grew up. A child has little power to *re-gardener of ours. Yet I have* *sist*. It wants everything, now, and rarely thinks of the consequences. A *often heard it said*, by child lies lurking in everyone—a pleasure that was denied them, a desire *several of the ladies who have come to visit us, that*

that was repressed. Hit at that point, tempt them with the proper toy (*ad-all other pleasures in the venture, money, fun*), and they will slough off their normal adult *reason-world are mere trifles by ableness*. Recognize their weakness by whatever childlike behavior they *comparison with the one experienced by a woman*

reveal in daily life—it is the tip of the iceberg.

when she goes with a man.

Napoleon Bonaparte was appointed the supreme general of the French

I have thus been thinking,

army in 1796. His commission was to defeat the Austrian forces that had *since I have nobody else to hand, that I would like to*

taken over northern Italy. The obstacles were immense: Napoleon was only *discover with the aid of this*

twenty-six at the time; the generals below him were envious of his position *dumb fellow whether they*

and doubtful of his abilities. His soldiers were tired, underfed, underpaid, *are telling the truth. As it*

happens, there couldn't be

and grumpy. How could he motivate this group to fight the highly experienced Austrian army? As he prepared to cross the Alps into Italy, Napoleon *purpose, because even if he* gave a speech to his troops that may have been the turning point in his career: *wanted to let the cat out of the bag, and in his life: "Soldiers, you are half starved and half naked. The gov the bag, he wouldn't be able to. He wouldn't even*

ernment owes you much, but can do nothing for you. Your patience, your *know how to explain, for*

courage, do you honor, but give you no glory. . . . I will lead you into the *you can see for yourself* most fertile plains of the world. There you will find flourishing cities, *what a mentally retarded,*

dim-witted hulk of a youth

teeming provinces. There you will reap honor, glory, and wealth." The 236 • *The Art of Seduction*

the fellow is. I would be speech had a powerful effect. Days later these same soldiers, after a rough glad to know what you climb over the mountains, gazed down on the Piedmont valley. Napoleon's think of the idea." • words echoed in their ears, and a ragged, grumbling gang became an

"Dear me!" said the other.

"Don't you realize that we inspired army that would sweep across northern Italy in pursuit of the have promised God to Austrians.

preserve our virginity?" •

Napoleon's use of temptation had two elements: behind you is a grim

"Pah!" she said. "We are

constantly making Him past; ahead of you is a future of wealth and glory, if you follow me. Integral promises that we never to the temptation strategy is a clear demonstration that the target has not keep! What does it matter ing to lose and everything to gain. The present offers little hope, the future if we fail to keep this can be full of pleasure and excitement. Remember to keep the future gains one? He can always

find other girls to preserve vague, though, and somewhat out of reach. Be too specific and you will their virginity for Him. " • disappoint; make the promise too close at hand, and you will not be able to

. . . Before the time came postpone satisfaction long enough to get what you want. for them to leave, they had

each made repeated trials of

The barriers and tensions in temptation are there to stop people from *the dumb fellow's riding* giving in too easily and too superficially. You *want* them to struggle, to *ability, and later on, when* resist, to be anxious. Queen Victoria surely fell in love with her prime *they were busily swapping*

tales about it all, they minister, Benjamin Disraeli, but there were barriers of religion (he was a agreed that it was every bit dark-skinned Jew), class (she, of course, was a queen), social taste (she was as pleasant an experience a paragon of virtue, he a notorious dandy). The relationship was never as they had been led to consummated, but what deliciousness those barriers gave to their daily en believe, indeed more so. And from then on, counters, which were full of constant flirtation. whenever the opportunity

Many such social barriers are gone today, so they have to be

arose, they whiled away manufactured—it is the only way to put spice into seduction. Taboos of many a pleasant hour in

the dumb fellow's arms. • any kind are a source of tension, and they are psychological now, not reli One day, however, a gious. You are looking for some repression, some secret desire that will companion of theirs make your victim squirm uncomfortably if you hit upon it, but will tempt happened to look out from

the window of her cell, saw them all the more. Search in their past; whatever they seem to fear or flee the goings-on, and drew from might hold the key. It could be a yearning for a mother or father fig the attention of two others ure, or a latent homosexual desire. Perhaps you can satisfy that desire by to what was afoot.

Having

talked the matter over presenting yourself as a masculine woman or a feminine man. For others between themselves, they at you play the Lolita, or the dadd— someone they are not supposed to have, first decided to report the the dark side of their personality. Keep the connection vague—you want pair to the abbess. But then them to reach for something elusive, something that comes out of their they changed their minds,

and by common agreement own mind.

with the other two, they

In London in 1769, Casanova met a young woman named Charpillon.

took up shares in Masetto 's She was much younger than he, as beautiful a woman as he had ever holding. And because of

various indiscretions, these known, and with a reputation for destroying men. In one of their first en five were subsequently counters she told him straight out that he would fall for her and she would joined by the remaining ruin him. To everyone's disbelief, Casanova pursued her. In each encounter three, one after the other. •

Finally, the abbess, who she hinted she might give in—perhaps the next time, if he was nice to her. was still unaware of all She inflamed his curiosity—what pleasure she would yield; he would be this, was taking a stroll one the first, he would tame her. "The venom of desire penetrated my whole very hot day in the garden,

all by herself when she being so completely," he later wrote, "that had she so wished it, she could came across Masetto have despoiled me of everything I possessed. I would have beggared myself stretched out fast asleep in for one little kiss." This "affair" indeed proved his ruin; she humiliated him. the shade of an almond

Charpillon had rightly gauged that Casanova's primary weakness was his *Create Temptation* • 237

need for conquest, to overcome challenge, to taste what no other man had *tree. Too much riding by* tasted. Beneath this was a kind of masochism, a pleasure in the pain a *night had left him with very little strength for the*

woman could give him. Playing the impossible woman, enticing and then *day's labors, and so there* frustrating him, she offered the ultimate temptation. What will often do the *he lay, with his clothes* trick is to give the target the sense that you are a challenge, a prize to be *ruffled up in front by the* won. In possessing you they will get what no other has had. They may even *wind, leaving him all exposed. Finding herself*

get pain; but pain is close to pleasure, and offers its own temptations. *alone, the lady stood with*

In the Old Testament we read that "David arose from his couch and *her eyes riveted to this* was walking upon the roof of the king's house . . . [and] he saw from the *spectacle, and she was seized by the same craving*

roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful." The woman *to which her young charges* was Bathsheba. David summoned her, seduced her (supposedly), then pro- *had already succumbed.* ceeded to get rid of her husband, Uriah, in battle. In fact, however, it was *So, having roused Masetto, she led him away to her*

Bathsheba who had seduced David. She bathed on her roof at an hour *room, where she kept him* when she knew he would be standing on his balcony. After tempting a man *for several days, thus* she knew had a weakness for women, she played the coquette, forcing him *provoking bitter complaints* to come after her. This is the

opportunity strategy: give someone weak the *from the nuns over the fact that the handyman had*

chance to have what they lust after by merely placing yourself within their *suspended work in the reach*, as if by accident. Temptation is often a matter of timing, of crossing *garden*. *Before sending him the path of the weak at the right moment, giving them the opportunity to back to his own quarters, she repeatedly savored the*

surrender.

one pleasure for which she

Bathsheba used her entire body as a lure, but it is often more effective *had always reserved her to use only a part of the body*, creating a fetishlike effect. Madame Re-*most fierce disapproval, and from then on she*

camier would let you glimpse her body beneath the sheer dresses she wore, *demanded regular* but only briefly, when she took off her overgarment to dance. Men would *supplementary allocations*, leave that evening dreaming of what little they had seen. Empress Josephine *amounting to considerably more than her fair share*.

made a point of baring her beautiful arms in public. Give the target only a part of you to fantasize about, thereby creating a constant temptation in —GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *THE DECAMERON*, TRANSLATED

their mind.

B Y G . H . M C W I L L I A M

Symbol:

The Apple in the Garden

*of Eden. The fruit looks deeply
inviting, and you are not supposed to
eat of it; it is forbidden. But that is pre-
cisely why you think of it day and night.*

*You see it but cannot have it. And the
only way to get rid of this tempta-
tion is to yield and taste
the fruit.*

Reversal

The reverse of temptation is security or satisfaction, and both are fatal to seduction. If you cannot tempt someone out of their habitual comfort, you cannot seduce them. If you satisfy the desire you have awakened, the seduction is over. There is no reversal to temptation. Although some stages can be passed over, no seduction can proceed without some form of temptation, so it is always better to plan it carefully, tailoring it to the weakness and childishness in your particular target.

Phase Two

Lead Astray—

Creating Pleasure and Confusion

Your victims are sufficiently intrigued and their desire for you is growing, but their attachment is weak and at any moment they could decide to turn back. The goal in this phase is to lead your victims so far astray—keeping them emotional and confused, giving them pleasure but making them want more—that retreat is no longer possible. Springing on them a pleasant surprise will make them see you as delightfully unpredictable, but will also keep them off balance (9: Keep them in suspense—what comes next?). The artful use of soft and pleasant words will intoxicate them and stimulate fantasies (10: Use the demonic power of words to sow confusion). Aesthetic touches and pleasant little rituals will titillate their senses, distract their minds (11: Pay attention to detail).

Your greatest danger in this phase is the mere hint of routine or familiarity. You need to maintain some mystery, to keep a little distance so that in your absence your victims become obsessed with you (12: Poetry- cize your presence). They may realize they are falling for you, but they must never suspect how much of this has come from your manipulations. A well-timed display of your weakness, of how emotional you have become under their influence will help cover your tracks (13: Dis- arm through strategic weakness and vulnerability). To excite your victims and make them highly emotional, you must give them the feeling that they are actually living some of the fantasies you have stirred in their imagination (14: Confuse desire and reality). By giving them only a part of the fantasy, you will keep them coming back for more. Focusing your attention on them so that the rest of the world fades away, even taking them on a trip, will lead them far astray (15: Isolate your victim). There is no turning back.

9

Keep Them in SuspenseWhat Comes Next?

The moment people feel they know what to expect from

you, your spell on them is broken. More: you have ceded them power. The only way to lead the seduced along and keep the upper hand is to create suspense, a calculated surprise. People love a mystery, and this is the key to luring them further into your web. Behave in a way that leaves them wondering, What are you up to? Doing something they do not expect from you will give them a delightful sense of spontaneity—they will not be able to foresee what comes next. You are always one step ahead and in control. Give the victim a thrill with a sudden change of direction.

The Calculated Surprise

In 1753, the twenty-eight-old Giovanni Casanova met a young girl named Caterina with whom he fell in love. Her father knew what kind of man Casanova was, and to prevent some mishap before he could marry her off, he sent her away to a convent on the Venetian island of Murano, where she was to remain for four years.

Casanova, however, was not one to be daunted. He smuggled letters to *I count upon taking [the Caterina. He began to attend Mass at the convent several times a week, French people] by surprise. A bold deed upsets people's*

catching glimpses of her. The nuns began to talk among themselves: who *equanimity, and they are* was this handsome young man who appeared so often? One morning, as *dumbfounded by a great Casanova*, leaving Mass, was about to board a gondola, a servant girl from *novelty*, the convent passed by and dropped a letter at his feet. Thinking it might be —NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, from Caterina, he picked it up. It was indeed intended for him, but it was QUOTED IN EMIL LUDWIG, *NAPOLEON, TRANSLATED BY*

not from Caterina; its author was a nun at the convent, who had noticed EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL

him on his many visits and wanted to make his acquaintance. Was he interested? If so, he should come to the convent's parlor at a particular time, when the nun would

be receiving a visitor from the outside world, a friend *The first care of any dandy* of hers who was a countess. He could stand at a distance, observe her, and *is to never do what one* decide whether she was to his liking.

expects them to do, to

always go beyond. . . .

Casanova was most intrigued by the letter: its style was dignified, but *The unexpected can be* there was something naughty about it as well—particularly from a nun. He *nothing more than a* had to find out more. At the appointed day and time, he stood to the side *gesture, but a gesture that is totally uncommon.*

in the convent parlor and saw an elegantly dressed woman talking with a *Alcibiades cut off the tail of* nun seated behind a grating. He heard the nun's name mentioned, and was *his dog in order to surprise* astonished: it was Mathilde M., a well-known Venetian in her early twen- people. *When he saw the looks on his friends as they*

ties, whose decision to enter a convent had surprised the whole city. But gazed upon the mutilated what astonished him most was that beneath her nun's habit, he could see *animal, he said: "Ah, that* that she was a beautiful young woman, particularly in her eyes, which were *is precisely what I wanted to happen: as long as the*

a brilliant blue. Perhaps she needed a favor done, and intended that he *Athenians gossip about* would serve as her cat's-paw.

this, they will not say

His curiosity got the better of him. A few days later he returned to the *anything worse about me.*" convent and asked to see her. As he waited for her, his heart was beating a • *Attracting attention is not the only goal of a*

mile a minute—he did not know what to expect. She finally appeared and *dandy, he wants to hold it* sat down behind the grating. They were alone in the room, and she said *by unexpected, even* that she could arrange for them to have supper together at a little villa *ridiculous means. After Alcibiades, how many*

nearby. Casanova was delighted, but wondered what kind of nun he was *apprentice dandies cut off* dealing with. "And—have you no lover but me?" he asked. "I have a *the tails of their dogs! The 243*

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baron of Saint-Cricq, for

friend, who is also absolutely my master," she replied. "It is to him I owe *example, with his ice cream*

my wealth." She asked if he had a lover. Yes, he replied. She then said, in a *boots: one very hot day, he*

mysterious tone, "I warn you that if you once allow me to take her place in *ordered at Tortoni's two ice*

creams, the vanilla served

your heart, no power on earth can tear me from it." She then gave him the *in his right boot, the*

key to the villa and told him to meet her there in two nights. He kissed her *strawberry in his left*

through the grating and left in a daze. "I passed the next two days in a state *boot. . . . The Count*

Saint-Germain loved to

of feverish impatience," he wrote, "which prevented me from sleeping or *bring his friends to the*

eating. Over and above birth, beauty, and wit, my new conquest possessed *theater; in his voluptuous*

an additional charm: she was forbidden fruit. I was about to become a rival *carriage lined in pink satin*

of the Church." He imagined her in her habit, and with her shaven head. *and drawn by two black*

horses with enormous tails;

He arrived at the villa at the appointed hour. Mathilde was waiting for *he asked his friends in that*

him. To his surprise, she wore an elegant dress, and somehow she had *inimitable tone of his:*

avoided having her head shaved, for her hair was in a magnificent chignon.

"Which piece of

entertainment did you wish

Casanova began to kiss her. She resisted, but only slightly, and then pulled *to see? Vaudeville, the*

back, saying a meal was ready for them. Over dinner she filled in a few *Variety show, the Palais-*

more of the gaps: her money allowed her to bribe certain people, so that *Royal theater? I took the*

liberty of purchasing a box

she could escape from the convent every so often. She had mentioned *for all three of them.*"

Casanova to her friend and master, and he had approved their liaison. He *Once the choice was made,*

must be old? Casanova asked. No, she replied, a glint in her eye, he is in his *with a look of great*

forties, and quite handsome. After supper, a bell rang—her signal to hurry *disdain, he would take the*

unused tickets, roll them

back to the convent, or she would be caught. She changed back into her *up, and use them to light*

habit and left.

his cigar.

A beautiful vista now seemed to stretch before Casanova, of months

— M A U D D E BELLEROCHE,

spent in the villa with this delightful creature, all of it courtesy of the mys *DU DANDY AU PLAY-BOY*

terious master who paid for it all. He soon returned to the convent to arrange the next meeting. They would rendezvous in a square in Venice, then retire to the villa. At the appointed time and place, Casanova saw a *While Shahzaman sat at*

man approach him. Fearing it was her mysterious friend, or some other *one of the windows*

man sent to kill him, he recoiled. The man circled behind him, then came *overlooking the king's*

garden, he saw a door open

up close: it was Mathilde, wearing a mask and men's clothes. She laughed at *in the palace, through*

the fright she had given him. What a devilish nun. He had to admit that *which came twenty slave*

dressed as a man she excited him even more.

girls and twenty negroes.

In their midst was his

Casanova began to suspect that all was not as it seemed. For one, he *brother's* [
King

found a collection of libertine novels and pamphlets in Mathilde's house.
Shahriyar's] *queen, a*

Then she made blasphemous comments, for example about the joy they

woman of surpassing

beauty. They made their

would have together during Lent, "mortifying their flesh." Now she re *way to the fountain, where* ferred to her mysterious friend as her lover. A plan evolved in his mind to *they all undressed and sat*

take her away from this man and from the convent, eloping with her and *on the grass. The king's*

wife then called out:

possessing her himself.

"Come Mass'ood!" and

A few days later he received a letter from her, in which she made a con *there promptly came to her* fession: during one of their more passionate trysts at the villa, her lover *a black slave, who mounted*

had hidden in a closet, watching the whole thing. The lover, she told him, *her after smothering her*

with embraces and kisses.

was the French ambassador to Venice, and Casanova had impressed him. *So also did the negroes*

Casanova was not one to be fooled with like this, yet the next day he was *with the slave girls, reveling*

back at the convent, submissively arranging for another tryst. This time she *together till the approach of*

night. . . . • . . And so

showed up at the hour they had named, and he embraced her—only to

find that he was embracing Caterina, dressed up in Mathilde's clothes. *Shahzaman related to [his Mathilde had befriended Caterina and learned her story. Apparently taking brother King Shahriyar] all that he had seen in the*

pity on her, she had arranged it so that Caterina could leave the convent for king's garden that day. . . . the evening, and meet up with Casanova. Only a few months before • Upon this Shahriyar Casanova had been in love with this girl, but he had forgotten about her. announced his intention to Compared to the ingenious Mathilde, Caterina was a simpering bore. He set forth on another expedition. The troops

could not conceal his disappointment. He burned to see Mathilde.

went out of the city with

Casanova was angry at the trick Mathilde had played. But a few days *the tents, and King later, when he saw her again, all was forgiven. As she had predicted during Shahriyar followed them. And after he had stayed a*

their first interview, her power over him was complete. He had become her while in the camp, he gave slave, addicted to her whims, and to the dangerous pleasures she offered. orders to his slaves that no Who knows what rash act he might have committed on her behalf had one was to be admitted to the king's tent. He then

their affair not been cut short by circumstance.

disguised himself and

returned unnoticed to the

palace, where his brother

was waiting for him. They

Interpretation. Casanova was almost always in control in his seductions. *both sat at one of the* He was the one who led, taking his victim on a trip to an unknown destination, *overlooking the nation, luring her into his web. In all of his memoirs the story of Mathilde garden; and when they had* is the only seduction in which the tables are happily turned: he is the seducer, *been there a short time, the queen and her women*

duced, the bewildered victim.

appeared with the black

What made Casanova Mathilde's slave was the same tactic he had used *slaves, and behaved as* on countless girls: the irresistible lure of being led by another person, *the Shahzaman had described. . . . • As soon*

thrill of being surprised, the power of mystery. Each time he left Mathilde *as they entered the palace*, his head was spinning with questions. Her ability to go on surprising him *King Shahriyar put his* kept her always in his mind, deepening her spell and blotting Caterina out. *wife to death, together with her women and the black*

Each surprise was carefully calculated for the effect it would produce. The *slaves. Thenceforth he* first unexpected letter piqued his curiosity, as did that first sight of her in *made it his custom to take* the waiting room; suddenly seeing her dressed as an elegant woman stirred *a virgin in marriage to his* intense desire; then seeing her dressed as a man intensified the excitingly *bed each night, and kill her the next morning. This he*

transgressive nature of their liaison. The surprises put him off balance, yet *continued to do for three* left him quivering with anticipation of the next one. Even an unpleasant *years, until a clamor rose* surprise, such as the encounter with Caterina that Mathilde had set up, kept *among the people, some of whom fled the country with*

him emotional and weak. Meeting the somewhat bland Caterina at that *their daughters. • Now the moment only made him long that much more for Mathilde.*

vizier had two daughters.

In seduction, you need to create constant tension and suspense, a feel- *The elder was called Shahrazad, and the*

ing that with you nothing is predictable. Do not think of this as a painful *younger Dunyazad*. challenge. You are creating drama in real life, so pour your creative energies *Shahrazad possessed many* into it, have some fun. There are all kinds of calculated surprises you can *accomplishments and was versed in the wisdom of the*

spring on your victims—sending a letter from out of the blue, showing up *poets and the legends of* unexpectedly, taking them to a place they have never been. But best of all *ancient kings. • That day* are surprises that reveal something new about your character. This needs to *Shahrazad noticed her* be set up. In those first few weeks, your targets will tend to make certain *father's anxiety and asked him what it was that*

snap judgments about you, based on appearances. Perhaps they see you as *troubled him. When the* a bit shy, practical, puritanical. You know that this is not the real you, but it *vizier told her of his* is how you act in social situations. Let them, however, have these impres- *predicament, she said:*

"Give me in marriage to

sions, and in fact accentuate them a little, without overacting: for instance, 246 • *The Art of Seduction*

this king; either I shall die

seem a little more reserved than usual. Now you have room to suddenly *and be a ransom for the*

surprise them with some bold or poetic or naughty action. Once they have *daughters of Moslems, or*

changed their minds about you, surprise them again, as Mathilde did with *live and be the cause of*

their deliverance." He

Casanova—first a nun who wants an affair, then a libertine, then a seduc *earnestly pleaded with her* tress with a sadistic streak. As they strain to figure you out, they will be *against such a hazard; but*

thinking about you all of the time, and will want to know more about you. *Shahrazad was resolved,*

and would not yield to her Their curiosity will lead them further into your web, until it is too late for *father's entreaties. . . . •*

them to turn back.

So the vizier arrayed his

daughter in bridal garments

This is always the law for the interesting. . . . If one just

and decked her with jewels

and made ready to

knows how to surprise, one always wins the game. The en-

announce Shahrazad's

ergy of the person involved is temporarily suspended; one

wedding to the king. •

makes it impossible for her to act.

Before saying farewell to

her sister, Shahrazad gave

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD

her these instructions:

"When I am received by

the king, I shall send for

you. Then when the king

Keys to Seduction

has finished his act with

me, you must say: 'Tell

me, my sister, some tale of

marvel to beguile the Achild is usually a willful, stubborn creature who will deliberately do the opposite of what we ask. But there is one scenario in which children will happily give up their usual willfulness: when they are promised a *a tale which, if Allah wills,*

surprise. Perhaps it is a present hidden in a box, a game with an unforeseeable ending, a journey with an unknown destination, a suspenseful story *deliverance.* " • *The vizier*

went with his daughter to

with a surprise finish. In those moments when children are waiting for a *the king.* *And when the*

surprise, their willpower is suspended. They are in your thrall for as long as *king had taken the maiden*

you dangle possibility before them. This childish habit is buried deep *Shahrazad to his chamber*

and had lain with her, she

within us, and is the source of an elemental human pleasure: being led by a *wept and said: "I have a*

person who knows where they are going, and who takes us on a journey. *young sister to whom I*

(Maybe our joy in being carried along involves a buried memory of being *wish to bid farewell.*" • literally carried, by a parent, when we are small.) *The king sent for*

Dunyazad. When she

We get a similar thrill when we watch a movie or read a thriller: we are *arrived, she threw her arms*

in the hands of a director or author who is leading us along, taking us *around her sister's neck*,

through twists and turns. We stay in our seats, we turn the pages, happily *and seated herself by her*

side. • *Then Dunyazad*

enslaved by the suspense. It is the pleasure a woman has in being led by a *said to Shahrazad: "Tell*

confident dancer, letting go of any defensiveness she may feel and letting us, my sister; a tale of another person do the work. Falling in love involves anticipation; we are marvel, so that the night

may pass pleasantly." • about to head off in a new direction, enter a new life, where everything

"Gladly," she answered,

will be strange. The seduced wants to be led, to be carried along like a

"if the king permits. " •

child. If you are predictable, the charm wears off; everyday life is pre *And the king, who was dictable. In the Arabian Tales from the Thousand and One Nights, each night troubled with sleeplessness,*

eagerly listened to the tale

King Shahriyar takes a virgin as his wife, then kills her the following morn of *Shahrazad: Once upon ing. One such virgin, Shahrazad, manages to escape this fate by telling the the time, in the city of king a story that can only be completed the following day. She does this Basrah, there lived a*

prosperous tailor who was

night after night, keeping the king in constant suspense. When one story *fond of sport and*

finishes, she quickly starts up another. She does this for nearly three years, *merriment. . . . [Nearly*

until the king finally decides to spare her life. You are like Shahrazad: with- *Keep Them in Suspense—What Comes Next?* • 247

out new stories, without a feeling of anticipation, your seduction will die. *three years pass.] Now Keep stoking the fires night after night. Your targets must never know during this time Shahrazad had borne King*

what's coming next—what surprises you have in store for them. As with *Shahriyar three sous*. On King Shahriyar, they will be under your control for as long as you can keep *the thousand and first* them guessing.

night, when she had ended

the tale of Ma'aruf she

In 1765, Casanova met a young Italian countess named Clementina *rose and kissed the ground* who lived with her two sisters in a château. Clementina loved to read, and *before him, saying*: "Great had little interest in the men who swarmed around her. Casanova added *King, for a thousand and himself* to their number, buying her books, engaging her in literary discus- *one nights I have been recounting to you the fables*

sions, but she was no less indifferent to him than she had been to them. *of past ages and the* Then one day he invited the entire family on a little trip. He would not tell *legends of ancient kings*. them where they were going. They piled into the carriage, all the way try- *May I be so bold as to crave a favor of your*

ing to guess their destination. A few hours later they entered Milan—what *majesty?" • The king* joy, the sisters had never been there. Casanova led them to his apartment, *replied*: "Ask, and it shall where three dresses had been laid out—the most magnificent dresses the *be granted*. " • *Shahrazad called out to the nurses*,

girls had ever seen. There was one for each of the sisters, he told them, and *saying*: "Bring me my the green one was for Clementina. Stunned, she put it on, and her face lit *children*. " • . . . "Behold up. The surprises did not stop—there was a delicious meal, champagne, *these three [little boys]*

whom Allah has granted to

games. By the time they returned to the château, late in the evening, *us. For their sake I implore* Clementina had fallen hopelessly in love with Casanova.

you to spare my life. For if

The reason was simple: surprise creates a moment when people's de- *you destroy the mother of these infants, they will find*

fenses come down and new emotions can rush in. If the surprise is pleasurable, the seductive poison enters their veins without their realizing it. Any *them as I would*. " • *The sudden event has a similar effect, striking directly at our emotions before king embraced his three* we get defensive. Rakes know this power well.

sous, and his eyes filled

with tears as he answered:

A young married woman in the court of Louis XV, in eighteenth "I swear by Allah, century France, noticed a handsome young courtier watching her, first at *Shahrazad, that you were* the opera, then in church. Making inquiries, she found it was the Duc de *already pardoned before the coming of these children*.

Richelieu, the most notorious rake in France. No woman was safe from *I loved you because I* this man, she was warned; he was impossible to resist, and she should avoid *found you chaste and* him at all costs. Nonsense, she replied, she was happily married. He could *tender, wise and eloquent. May Allah bless you,*

not possibly seduce her. Seeing him again, she laughed at his persistence. *and bless your father and* He would disguise himself as a beggar and approach her in the park, or his *mother, your ancestors, coach* would suddenly come alongside hers. He was never aggressive, and *and all your descendants.* seemed harmless enough. She let him talk to her at court; he was charming *O, Shahrazad, this thousand and first night*

and witty, and even asked to meet her husband.

is brighter for us than

The weeks passed, and the woman realized she had made a mistake: she *the day!*" looked forward to seeing the marquis. She had let down her guard. This — *TALES FROM THE THOUSAND*

had to stop. Now she started avoiding him, and he seemed to respect her *AND ONE NIGHTS, TRANSLATED*

BY N.J. DAWOOD

feelings: he stopped bothering her. Then one day, weeks later, she was at the country manor of a friend when the marquis suddenly appeared. She blushed, trembled, walked away, but his unexpected appearance had caught her unawares—it had pushed her over the edge. A few days later she became another of Richelieu's victims. Of course he had set the whole thing up, including the supposed surprise encounter.

Not only does suddenness create a seductive jolt, it conceals manipulations. Appear somewhere unexpectedly, say or do something sudden, and people will not have time to figure out that your move was calculated. Take them to some new place as if it only just occurred to you, suddenly reveal some secret. Make emotionally vulnerable, they will be too bewildered to see through you. Anything that happens suddenly seems natural, and anything that seems natural has a seductive charm. Only months after arriving in Paris in 1926, Josephine Baker had completely charmed and seduced the French public with her wild dancing. But less than a year later she could feel their interest wane. Since childhood she had hated feeling out of control of her life. Why be at the mercy of the fickle public? She left Paris and returned a year later, her manner completely altered—now she played the part of an elegant Frenchwoman, who happened to be an ingenious dancer and performer. The French fell in love again; the power was

back on her side. If you are in the public eye, you must learn from this trick of surprise. People are bored, not only with their own lives but with people who are meant to keep them from being bored. The minute they feel they can predict your next step, they will eat you alive. The artist Andy Warhol kept moving from incarnation to incarnation, and no one could predict the next one—artist, filmmaker, society man. Always keep a surprise up your sleeve. To keep the public's attention, keep them guessing. Let the moralists accuse you of insincerity, of having no core or center. They are actually jealous of the freedom and playfulness you reveal in your public persona.

Finally, you might think it wiser to present yourself as someone reliable, not given to caprice. If so, you are in fact merely timid. It takes courage and effort to mount a seduction. Reliability is fine for drawing people in, but stay reliable and you stay a bore. Dogs are reliable, a seducer is not. If, on the other hand, you prefer to improvise, imagining that any kind of planning or calculation is antithetical to the spirit of surprise, you are making a grave mistake. Constant improvisation simply means you are lazy, and thinking only about yourself. What often seduces a person is the feeling that you have expended effort on their behalf. You do not need to trumpet this too loudly, but make it clear in the gifts you make, the little journeys you plan, the little teases you lure people with. Little efforts like these will be more than amply rewarded by the conquest of the heart and willpower of the seduced.

Symbol: The Roller Coaster

The car rises slowly to the top, then suddenly hurtles you into space, whips you to the side, throws you upside down, in every possible direction. The riders laugh and scream. What thrills them is to let go, to grant control to someone else, who propels them in unexpected directions. What new thrill awaits them around the next corner?

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Reversal

Surprise can be unsurprising if you keep doing the same thing again and again. Jiang Qing would try to surprise her husband Mao Zedong with sudden changes of mood, from harshness to kindness and back. At first he was captivated; he loved the feeling of never knowing what was coming. But it went on for years, and was always the same. Soon, Madame Mao's supposedly unpredictable mood swings just annoyed him. You need to vary the method of your surprises. When Madame de Pompadour was the lover of the inveterately bored King Louis XV, she made each surprise different—

a new amusement, a new game, a new fashion, a new mood. He could never predict what would come next, and while he waited for the next surprise, his willpower was temporarily suspended. No man was ever more of a slave to a woman than was Louis to Madame de Pompadour. When you change direction, make the new direction truly new.

10

Use the Demonic Power of Words

to Sow Confusion

It

is hard to make

people listen; they are consumed

with their own thoughts and desires, and

have little time for yours. The trick to making them

listen is to say what they want to hear, to fill their ears

with whatever is pleasant to them. This is the essence of seductive language.
Inflame people's emotions with loaded phrases,

flatter them, comfort their insecurities, envelop them in fantasies, sweet words, and
promises, and not only will they listen to

you, they will lose their will to resist you. Keep your lan-

guage vague, letting them read into it what

they want. Use writing to stir up fantasies

and to create an idealized

portrait of your-

self.

Seductive Oratory

On May 13, 1958, right-wing Frenchmen and their sympathizers in the army seized control of Algeria, which was then a French colony.

They had been afraid that France's socialist government would grant Algeria its independence. Now, with Algeria under their control, they threatened to take over all of France. Civil war seemed imminent. At this dire moment all eyes turned to General Charles de Gaulle, the World War II hero who had played a crucial role in liberating France from *After Operation Sedition, we are being treated to*

the Nazis. For the last ten years de Gaulle had stayed away from politics, dis-
Operation Seduction. gusted with the infighting among the various parties. He remained very —MAURICE KRIEGEL popular, and was generally seen as the one man who could unite the country, VALRIMONT ON CHARLES DE

but he was also a conservative, and the right-wingers felt certain that if he
GAULLE, SHORTLY AFTER THE

GENERAL ASSUMED POWER

came to power he would support their cause. Days after the May 13 coup, the French government—the Fourth Republic—collapsed, and the parliament called on de Gaulle to help form a new government, the Fifth Republic. *My mistress staged a lock- lic.* He asked for and was granted full powers for four months. On June 4, *out. . . . I went back to days after becoming the head of government, de Gaulle flew to Algeria. verses and compliments, |*

The French colonials were ecstatic. It was their coup that had indirectly *My natural weapons. Soft* brought de Gaulle to power; surely, they imagined, he was coming to thank words *| Remove harsh door-chains. There's magic*

them, and to reassure them that Algeria would remain French. When he *in poetry, its power | Can* arrived in Algiers, thousands of people filled the city's main plaza. The *pull down the bloody* mood was extremely festive—there were banners, music, and endless chants *moon, | Turn back the sun, make serpents burst*

of "Algérie française," the French-colonial slogan. Suddenly de Gaulle ap- *asunder | Or rivers flow* peared on a balcony overlooking the plaza. The crowd went wild. The *upstream. | Doors are no* general, an extremely tall man, raised his arms above his head, and the *match for such spellbinding, the toughest |*

chanting doubled in volume. The crowd was begging him to join in. In- *Locks can be opeu-sesamed* stead he lowered his arms until silence fell, then opened them wide, and *by its charms. | But epic's a* slowly intoned, in his deep voice, "Je vous ai compris"—I have understood *dead loss for me. I'll get you.* There was a moment of quiet, and then, as his words sank in, a *deaf- nowhere with swift-footed |*

Achilles, or with either of

ening roar: he understood them. That was all they needed to hear.

Atreus' sons. | Old what's-

De Gaulle proceeded to talk of the greatness of France. More cheers. *his-name wasting twenty* He promised there would be new elections, and "with those elected repre- *years on war and travel, |*

Poor Hector dragged in the

sentatives we will see how to do the rest." Yes, a new government, just what *dust— | No good. But* the crowd wanted—more cheers. He would "find the place for Algeria" in *lavish fine words on some* the French "ensemble." There must be "total discipline, without qualifica- *young girl's profile | And sooner or later shell tender*

*tion and without conditions"—who could argue with that? He closed with *herself as the fee, | An* a loud call: "Vive la République! Vive la France!" the emotional slogan that *ample reward for your 253**

labors. So farewell, heroic \ had been the rallying cry in the fight against the Nazis. Everyone shouted it *Figures of legend*—*the back*. In the next few days de Gaulle made similar speeches around Algeria, *quid* \ *Pro quo you offer* to equally delirious crowds.

won't tempt me. A bevy of

beauties \ *All swooning*

Only after de Gaulle had returned to France did the words of his

over my love-songs—*that's* speeches sink in: not once had he promised to keep Algeria French. In fact *what I want*. he had hinted that he might give the Arabs the vote, and might grant an

—OVID, *THE AMORES*,

amnesty to the Algerian rebels who had been fighting to force the French

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

from the country. Somehow, in the excitement his words had created, the colonists had failed to focus on what they had actually meant. De Gaulle had duped them. And indeed, in the months to come, he worked to grant *When she has received a* Algeria its independence—a task he finally accomplished in 1962. *letter, when its sweet*

poison has entered her

blood, then a word is

sufficient to wake her love

Interpretation. De Gaulle cared little about an old French colony, and *burst forth. . . . My* about what it symbolized to some French people. Nor did he have any *personal presence will*

prevent ecstasy. If I am sympathy for anyone who fomented civil war. His one concern was to *present only in a letter,* make France a modern power. And so, when he went to Algiers, he had a *then she can easily cope* long-term plan: weaken the right-wingers by getting them to fight among *with me; to some extent,*

she mistakes me for a more themselves, and work toward Algerian independence. His short-term goal *universal creature* who had to be to defuse the tension and buy himself some time. He would not *dwells in her love. Then,* lie to the colonials by saying he supported their cause—that would cause *too, in a letter one can*

more readily have free rein; trouble back home. Instead he would beguile them with seductive oratory, *in a letter I can throw* intoxicate them with words. His famous "I have understood you" could *myself at her feet in superb* easily have meant, "I understand what a danger you represent." But a *jubi fashion, etc. — something* lant crowd expecting his support read it the way they wanted. To keep *that would easily seem like*

nonsense if I did it in them at a fever pitch, de Gaulle made emotional references—to the French *person, and the illusion* Resistance during World War II, for example, and to the need for "disci would be lost. . . . • On pline," a word with great appeal to right-wingers. He filled their ears with *the whole, letters are and*

will continue to be a promises—a new government, a glorious future. He got them to chant, *priceless means of making* creating an emotional bond. He spoke with dramatic pitch and quivering *an impression on a young* emotion. His words created a kind of delirium. *girl; the dead letter of*

writing often has much

De Gaulle was not trying to express his feelings or speak the truth; he *more influence than the* was trying to produce an effect. This is the key to seductive

oratory. *living word. A letter is a* Whether you are talking to a single individual or to a crowd, try a little ex *secretive communication; one is master of the* periment: rein in your desire to speak your mind. Before you open your *situation, feels no pressure* mouth, ask yourself a question: what can I say that will have the most *from anyone's actual* pleasant effect on my listeners? Often this entails flattering their egos, *presence, and I do believe a* assuaging their insecurities, giving them vague hopes for the future, *sympa young girl would prefer to be alone with her ideal.* thizing with their travails ("I have understood you"). Start off with some— S Ø R E N KIERKEGAARD, thing pleasant and everything to come will be easy: people's defenses will *THE SEDUCER'S DIARY,*

go down. They will grow amenable, open to suggestion. Think of your
TRANSLATED BY HOWARD V.

words as an intoxicating drug that will make people emotional and conH O N G A
N D E D N A H . H O N G

fused. Keep your language vague and ambiguous, letting your listeners fill in the gaps with their fantasies and imaginings. Instead of tuning you out, getting irritated or defensive, being impatient for you to shut up, they will be pliant, happy with your sweet-sounding words.

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Seductive Writing

*Let wax pave the way for
you, spread out on smooth
tablets, \ Let wax go before*

One spring afternoon in the late 1830s, in a street in Copenhagen, a *as witness to
your mind—*

man named Johannes caught a glimpse of a beautiful young girl. Self-\ *Bring her
your flattering* absorbed yet delightfully innocent, she fascinated him, and he followed her, *words, words that ape the*

from a distance, and found out where she lived. Over the next few weeks *lover: \ And remember, whoever you are, to throw*

he made inquiries and found out more about her. Her name was Cordelia *in some
good \ Entreaties.*

Wahl, and she lived with her aunt. The two led a quiet existence; Cordelia *Entreaties are what made* liked to read, and to be alone. Seducing young girls was Johannes's specialty, *Achilles give back *

Hector's Body to Priam;

but Cordelia would be a catch: she had already turned down several eligible *even an angry god* | *Is* suitors.

moved by the voice of

Johannes imagined that Cordelia might hunger for something more *prayer. Make promises, what's the harm in* |

out of life, something grand, something resembling the books she had *Promising? Here's where* read and the daydreams that presumably filled her solitude. He arranged *anyone can play rich....* an introduction and began to frequent her house, accompanied by a friend

| *A persuasive letter's* | *The*

thing to lead off with,

of his named Edward. This young man had his own thoughts of court- *explore her mind,* |

ing Cordelia, but he was awkward, and strained to please her. Johannes, *Reconnointer the landscape.* on the other hand, virtually ignored her, instead befriending her aunt. *A message scratched on an* They would talk about the most banal things—farm life, whatever was in *apple* | *Betrayed Cydippe: she was snared by her own*

the news. Occasionally Johannes would veer off into a more philosophical *words.* | *My advice, then,* discussion, for he had noticed, out of the corner of his eye, that on these *young men of Rome, is to* occasions Cordelia would listen to him closely, while still pretending to lis- *learn the noble* | *Advocate's arts—n ot only to let you*

ten to Edward.

defend | *Some trembling*

This went on for several weeks. Johannes and Cordelia barely spoke, *client: a woman, no less* but he could tell that he intrigued her, and that Edward irritated her to no *than the populace,* | *Elite*

senator, or grave judge, |

end. One morning, knowing her aunt was out, he visited their house. It *Will surrender to*

was the first time he and Cordelia had been alone together. As dryly and *eloquence. Nevertheless,*

politely as possible, he proceeded to propose to her. Needless to say she was *dissemble* | *Your powers, avoid long words,* | *Don't*

shocked and flustered. A man who had shown not the slightest interest in *look too highbrow. Who*

her suddenly wanted to marry her? She was so surprised that she referred *but a mindless ninny* |

the matter to her aunt, who, as Johannes had expected, gave her approval. *Declaims to his mistress?*

Had Cordelia resisted, her aunt would have respected her wishes; but she *An overlettered style* |

Repels girls as often as not.

did not.

Use ordinary language, |

On the outside, everything had changed. The couple were engaged. Jo- *Familiar yet coaxing* hannes now came to the house alone, sat with Cordelia, held her hand, *words—a s though* | You

were there, in her presence.

talked with her. But inwardly he made sure things were the same. He re- *If she refuses your letter,* |

mained distant and polite. He would sometimes warm up, particularly *Sends it back unread,*

when talking about literature (Cordelia's favorite subject), but at a certain *persist.* point he always went back to more mundane matters. He knew this frus— O V I D , *THE ART OF LOVE.*, trated Cordelia, who had expected that now he would be different. Yet TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

even when they went out together, he took her to formal socials arranged for engaged couples. How conventional! Was this what love and marriage were supposed to be about, these prematurely aged people talking about houses and their own drab futures? Cordelia, who was shy at the best of times, asked Johannes to stop dragging her to these affairs.

The battlefield was prepared. Cordelia was confused and anxious.

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Therefore, the person who Then, a few weeks after their engagement, Johannes sent her a letter. Here is *unable to write letters* he described the state of his soul, and his certainty that he loved her. He *and notes never becomes a spoke* in metaphor, suggesting that he had been waiting for years, lantern in *dangerous seducer.*

hand, for Cordelia's appearance; metaphor melted into reality, back and

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD,

EITHER/OR, TRANSLATED BY

forth. The style was poetic, the words glowed with desire, but the whole HOWARD V. H O N G

was delightfully ambiguous—Cordelia could reread the letter ten times AND E D N A H . H O N G

without being sure what it said. The next day Johannes received a response. The writing was simple and straightforward, but full of sentiment: his letter had made her so happy, Cordelia wrote, and she had not imagined this side *Standing on a crag of*

to his character. He replied by writing that *he had changed*. He did not say *Olympus \ Gold-throned* how or why, but the implication was that it was because of her. *Hera saw her brother; *

Now his letters came almost daily. They were mostly of the same

Who was her husband's

brother too, \ Busy on the length, in a poetic style that had a touch of madness to it, as if he were in fields of human glory, \ intoxicated with love. He talked of Greek myth, comparing Cordelia to a And her heart sang. Then nymph and himself to a river that fell in love with a maiden. His soul, he she saw Zeus \ Sitting on

the topmost peak of Ida \ said, merely reflected back her image; she was all he could see or think of. And was filled with Meanwhile he detected changes in Cordelia: her letters became more po resentment. Cow-eyed etic, less restrained. Without realizing it she repeated his ideas, imitating his Hera \ Mused for a while

*on how to trick \ The mind style and his imagery as if they were her own. Also, when they saw each of Zeus Aegis-holder, \ other in person, she was nervous. He made a point of remaining the same, And the plan that seemed aloof and regal, but he could tell that she saw him differently, sensing best to her \ Was to make depths in him that she could not fathom. In public she hung on his every herself up and go to Ida, *

*Seduce him, and then shed word. She must have memorized his letters, for she referred to them con on his eyelids \ And stantly in their talks. It was a secret life they shared. When she held his cunning mind a sleep hand, she did so more tightly than before. Her eyes expressed an impa gentle and warm. . . . *

When everything was tience, as if she were hoping that at any moment he would do something perfect, she stepped \ Out bold.

of her room and called

Johannes made his letters shorter but more numerous, sometimes

Aphrodite \ And had a

word with her in private: \ sending several in one day. The imagery became more physical and more

"My dear child, will you suggestive, the style more disjointed, as if he could barely organize his do something for me, \ I thoughts. Sometimes he sent a note of just a sentence or two. Once, at a wonder, or will you refuse, party at Cordelia's house, he dropped such a note into her knitting basket angry because \ I favor the

Greeks and you the and watched as she ran away to read it, her face flushed. In her letters he Trojans?" \ And Zeus' saw signs of emotion and turmoil. Echoing a sentiment he had hinted at in daughter Aphrodite an earlier letter, she wrote that she hated the whole engagement business—

replied: \ "Goddess revered

as Cronus's daughter, \ it was so beneath their love.

Speak your mind. Tell me

Everything was ready. Soon she would be his, the way he wanted it.

what you want \And I'll She would break off the engagement. A rendezvous in the country would oblige you if I possibly

can." \And Hera, with be simple to arrange—in fact she would be the one to propose it. This every intention to deceive: \ would be his most skillful seduction.

"Give me now the Sex

and Desire \ You use to

subdue immortals and

humans. . . ." \And

*Interpretation. Johannes and Cordelia are characters in the loosely auto Aphrodite, who loved to biographical novel *The Seducer's Diary* (1843), by the Danish philosopher smile: \ "How could I, or Søren Kierkegaard. Johannes is a most experienced seducer, who specializes would I, refuse someone *

Who sleeps in the anus of

in working on his victim's mind. This is precisely where Cordelia's previous *Use the Demonic Power of Words to Sow Confusion* • 257

suitors have failed: they have begun by imposing themselves, a common *almighty Zeus?*" | And

mistake. We think that by being persistent, by overwhelming our targets *with that she unbound*

from her breast | An ornate

with romantic attention, we are convincing them of our affection. Instead *sash inlaid with magical* we are convincing them of our impatience and insecurity. Aggressive attention- *charms.* | *Sex is in it, and* tion is not flattering because it is not personalized. It is unbridled libido at *Desire, and seductive |*

work; the target sees through it. Johannes is too clever to begin so obvi *Sweet Talk, that fools even the wise. . . . | Hera was*

ously. Instead, he takes a step back, intriguing Cordelia by acting a little *fast approaching Gargarus*, cold, and carefully creating the impression of a formal, somewhat secretive

| *Ida's highest peak, when*

man. Only then does he surprise her with his first letter. Obviously there is *Zeus saw her.* | *And when*

he saw her; lust enveloped

more to him than she has thought, and once she has come to believe this, *him,* | *Just as it had the*

her imagination runs rampant. Now he can intoxicate her with his letters, *first time they made love,* |

creating a presence that haunts her like a ghost. His words, with their im *Slipping off to bed behind their parents' backs.* | *He*

ages and poetic references, are constantly in her mind. And this is theulti- *stood close to her and said:* mate seduction: to possess her mind before moving to conquer her body.

| "Hera, why have you left

The story of Johannes shows what a weapon in a seducer's armory a

Olympus? | *And where are*

your horses and chariot?" |

letter can be. But it is important to learn how to incorporate letters in se- *And Hera, with every duction.* It is best not to begin your correspondence until at least several

intention to deceive: \ "I'm weeks after your initial contact. Let your victims get an impression of you: off to visit the ends of the you seem intriguing, yet you show no particular interest in them. When earth \ And Father Ocean

and Mother Tethys \ Who

you sense that they are thinking about you, that is the time to hit them nursed and doted on me in

with your first letter. Any desire you express for them will come as a sur their house. . . . " \ And prise; their vanity will be tickled and they will want more. Now make your Zeus, clouds scudding

about him: \ "You can go

*letters frequent, in fact more frequent than your personal appearances. This there later just as well. *

will give them the time and space to idealize you, which would be more Let's get in bed now am I

difficult if you were always in their face. After they have fallen under your make love. \ No goddess or

woman has ever \ Made

spell, you can always take a step back, making the letters fewer—let them me feel so overwhelmed think you are losing interest and they will be hungry for more.

with lust. . . . \ I've never

Design your letters as homages to your targets. Make everything you loved anyone as I love you

now, \ Never been in the

*write come back to them, as if they were all you could think about—a grip of desire so sweet. " *

*delirious effect. If you tell an anecdote, make it somehow relate to them. And Hera, with every Your correspondence is a kind of mirror you are holding up to them—they intention to deceive: *

"What a thing to say, my

get to see themselves reflected through your desire. If for some reason they awesome lord. \ The

do not like you, write to them as if they did. Remember: the tone of your thought of us lying down

letters is what will get under their skin. If your language is elevated, poetic, *here on Ida \ Ami making*

creative in its praise, it will infect them despite themselves. Never argue, *love outdoors in broad*

daylight! \ What if one of

never defend yourself, never accuse them of being heartless. That would *the Immortals saw us *

ruin the spell.

Asleep, and went to all the

A letter can suggest emotion by seeming disordered, rambling from one *other gods \ Aud told them? I could never get up*

subject to another. Clearly it is hard for you to think; your love has un *\ And go back home. It hinged you. Disordered thoughts are exciting thoughts. Do not waste time would be shameful. \ But if*

on real information; focus on feelings and sensations, using expressions that *you really do want to do*

this, \ There is the bedroom

are ripe with connotation. Plant ideas by dropping hints, writing *sugges your dear son Hephaestus *

tively without explaining yourself. Never lecture, never seem intellectual or *Built for you, with good*

superior—you will only make yourself pompous, which is deadly. Far bet- *solid doors. Let's go *

ter to speak colloquially, though with a poetic edge to lift the language *There and lie down, since*

*you're in the mood. " *

above the commonplace. Do not become sentimental—it is tiring, and too 258 • *The Art of Seduction*

And Zeus, who masses the direct. Better to suggest the effect your target has on you than to gush clouds, replied: \ "Hera, about how you feel. Stay vague and ambiguous, allowing the reader the don't worry about any god space to imagine and fantasize. The goal of your writing is not to ex or man \ Seeing us. I'll enfold you in a cloud so press yourself but to create emotion in the reader, spreading confusion and dense \ And golden not desire.

even Helios could spy on

You will know that your letters are having the proper effect when your *us, \ And his light is the*

sharpest vision there is." targets come to mirror your thoughts, repeating words you wrote, whether in their own letters or in person. This is the time to move to the more

— H O M E R , *THE ILIAD*,

TRANSLATED BY STANLEY

physical and erotic. Use language that quivers with sexual connotation, or,

LOMBARDO

better still, suggest sexuality by making your letters shorter, more frequent, and even more disordered than before. There is nothing more erotic than the short abrupt note. Your thoughts are unfinished; they can only be completed by the other person.

*Romans, countrymen, lend
me your ears; \ I come to
Sganarelle to Don Juan: Well, what I have to say is . . . I
bury Caesar, not to praise
don't know what to say; for you turn things in such a
him. \ The evil that men
do lives after them; \ The
manner with your words, that it seems that you are right;
good is oft interred with
and yet, the truth of it is, you are not. I had the finest
their bones. \ So let it be
thoughts in the world, and your words have totally scram-
with Caesar. . . . \ I speak
bled them up.
not to disprove what
Brutus spoke, \ But here I
—MOLIÈRE
am to speak what I do
know. \ You all did love
him once, not without
cause. \ What cause*

Keys to Seduction

withholds you then to

mourn for him? | O

judgment, thou art fled to

brutish beasts, | And men We rarely think before we talk. It is human nature to say the first thing that comes into our head—and usually what comes first is some *have lost their reason! Bear* thing about ourselves. We primarily use words to express our own feelings, *with me. | My heart is in* ideas, and opinions. (Also to complain and to argue.) This is because we are *the coffin there with Caesar;*

| And I must pause till it generally self-absorbed—the person who interests us most is our own self. *come back to me. . . . | To a certain extent this is inevitable, and through much of our lives there is PLEBEIAN: Poor soul! his* nothing much wrong with it; we can function quite well this way. *In se eyes are red as fire with weeping. | PLEBEIAN:*

duction, however, it limits our potential.

There's not a nobler man

You cannot seduce without an ability to get outside your own skin and *in Rome than Antony. | inside another person's, piercing their psychology. The key to seductive PLEBEIAN: Now mark*

him. He begins again to language is not the words you utter, or your seductive tone of voice; it is a *speak. | ANTONY: But*

radical shift in perspective and habit. You have to stop saying the first thing *yesterday the word of* that comes to your mind—you have to control the urge to prattle and vent *Caesar might | Have stood* your opinions. The key is to see words as a tool not for communicating *against the world. Now*

lies he there, | And none so true thoughts and feelings but for confusing, delighting, and intoxicating. poor to do him reverence. |

The difference between normal language and seductive language is like *O masters! If I were* the difference between noise and music. Noise is a constant in modern life, *disposed to stir | Your*

hearts and minds to something irritating we tune out if we can. Our normal language is like *mutiny and rage, | I should noise*—people may half-listen to us as we go on about ourselves, but just as *do Brutus wrong, and often their thoughts are a million miles away. Every now and then their ears Cassius wrong, | Who,*

you all know, are prick up when something we say touches on them, but this lasts only until *Use the Demonic Power of Words to Sow Confusion • 259*

we return to yet another story about ourselves. As early as childhood we *honorable men*. | *I will not* learn to tune out this kind of noise (particularly when it comes from our *do them wrong*. . . . | *But here's a parchment with the parents*).

seal of Caesar. | *I found it*

Music, on the other hand, is seductive, and gets under our skin. It is in- *in his closet*; *'tis his will*. |

tended for pleasure. A melody or rhythm stays in our blood for days after we *Let but the commons hear* have heard it, altering our moods and emotions, relaxing or exciting us. To *this testament*, | *Which*

(pardon me) I do not mean

make music instead of noise, you must say things that please—things that re- *to read*, | *And they would* late to people's lives, that touch their vanity. If they have many problems, *go and kiss dead Caesar's* you can produce the same effect by distracting them, focusing their attention *wounds* | *And dip their*

napkins in his sacred

away from themselves by saying things that are witty and entertaining, or *blood*. . . . | *PLEBEIAN*:

that make the future seem bright and hopeful. Promises and flattery are mu *We'll hear the will! Read* sic to anyone's ears. This is language designed to move people and lower *it*, *Mark Antony*. | *ALL: The will, the will! We will*

their resistance. It is language designed for them, not directed at them. *hear Caesar's will!* |

The Italian writer Gabriele D'Annunzio was physically unattractive, yet *ANTONY: Have patience*, women could not resist him. Even those who knew of his Don Juan repu- *gentle friends*; *I must not read it*. | *It is not meet you*

tation and disliked him for it (the actress Eleanora Duse and the dancer *know how Caesar loved*

Isadora Duncan, for instance) fell under his spell. The secret was the flow of *you*. | *You are not wood*, words in which he enveloped a woman. His voice was musical, his language *you are not stones, but*

poetic, and most devastating of all, he knew how to flatter. His flattery was *men*; | *And being men*,

hearing the will of Caesar,

aimed precisely at a woman's weaknesses, the areas where she needed vali | *It will inflame you, it dation.* A woman was beautiful, yet lacked confidence in her own wit and *will make you mad.* | *'Tis intelligence?* He made sure to say that he was bewitched not by her beauty *good you know not that you are his heirs;* | *For if*

but by her mind. He might compare her to a heroine of literature, or to a *you should, O, what*

carefully chosen mythological figure. Talking to him, her ego would dou *would come of it? . . .* | *If* ble in size.

you have tears, prepare to

shed them now. | *You all*

Flattery is seductive language in its purest form. Its purpose is not to *do know this mantle. I*

express a truth or a real feeling, but only to create an effect on the recipient. *remember | The first time*

Like D'Annunzio, learn to aim your flattery directly at a person's insecuri- *ever Caesar put it on. . . .*

| *Look, in this place ran*

ties. For instance, if a man is a fine actor and feels confident about his pro *Cassius' dagger through.* |

fessional skills, to flatter him about his acting will have little effect, and may *See what a rent the*

even accomplish the opposite—he could feel that he is above the need to *envious Casca made.* |

have his ego stroked, and your flattery will seem to say otherwise. But let us *Through this the well-*

beloved Brutus stabbed; |

say that this actor is an amateur musician or painter. He does this work on *And as he plucked his* his own, without professional support or publicity, and he is well aware that *cursed steel away,* | *Mark others make their living at it.* Flattery of his artistic pretensions will go *how the blood of Caesar*

followed it. . . . | *For*

straight to his head and earn you double points. Learn to sniff out the parts *Brutus, as you know, was*

of a person's ego that need validation. Make it a surprise, something no one
Caesar's angel. \ Judge, O

else has thought to flatter before—something you can describe as a talent or *you gods, how dearly*

Caesar loved him! \ This

positive quality that others have not noticed. Speak with a little tremor, as if *was the most unkindest cut* your target's charms had overwhelmed you and made you emotional.

of all; \ For when the noble

Flattery can be a kind of verbal foreplay. Aphrodite's powers of seduc *Caesar saw him stab, *

Ingratitude, more strong

tion, which were said to come from the magnificent girdle she wore, in *than traitors' arms, \ Quite* volved a sweetness of language—a skill with the soft, flattering words that *vanquished him. . . . \ O,*

prepare the way for erotic thoughts. Insecurities and nagging self-doubts *now you weep, and I*

have a dampening effect on the libido. Make your targets feel secure and al-*perceive you feel \ The dint of pity. These are gracious*

luring through your flattering words and their resistance will melt away. 260 • *The Art of Seduction*

drops. \ Kind souls, what

Sometimes the most pleasant thing to hear is the promise of something *weep you when you but* wonderful, a vague but rosy future that is just around the corner. President *behold \ Our Caesar's* Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in his public speeches, talked little about spe *vesture wounded? Look you here! \ Here is himself,* cific programs for dealing with the Depression; instead he used rousing *marred as you see until* rhetoric to paint a picture of America's glorious future. In the various leg *traitors.* ends of Don Juan, the great seducer would immediately focus women's at —WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, tention on the future, a fantastic world to which he promised to whisk *J U L I U S C A E S A R*

them off. Tailor your sweet words to your targets' particular problems and fantasies. Promise something realizable, something possible, but do not make it too specific; you are inviting them to dream. If they are mired in dull routine, talk of adventure, preferably with you. Do not discuss how it will be accomplished; speak as if it magically already existed, somewhere in the future. Lift people's thoughts into the clouds and they will relax, their defenses will come down, and it will be that much

easier to maneuver and lead them astray. Your words become a kind of elevating drug.

The most anti-seductive form of language is argument. How many

silent enemies do we create by arguing? There is a superior way to get people to listen and be persuaded: humor and a light touch. The nineteenth-century English politician Benjamin Disraeli was a master at this game. In Parliament, to fail to reply to an accusation or slanderous comment was a deadly mistake: silence meant the accuser was right. Yet to respond angrily, to get into an argument, was to look ugly and defensive. Disraeli used a different tactic: he stayed calm. When the time came to reply to an attack, he would slowly make his way to the speaker's table, pause, then utter a humorous or sarcastic retort. Everyone would laugh. Now that he had warmed people up, he would proceed to refute his enemy, still mixing in amusing comments; or perhaps he would simply move on to another subject, as if he were above it all. His humor took out the sting of any attack on him. Laughter and applause have a domino effect: once your listeners have laughed, they are more likely to laugh again. In this lighthearted mood they are also more apt to listen. A subtle touch and a bit of irony give you room to persuade them, move them to your side, mock your enemies. That is the seductive form of argument.

Shortly after the murder of Julius Caesar, the head of the band of conspirators who had killed him, Brutus, addressed an angry mob. He tried to reason with the crowd, explaining that he had wanted to save the Roman Republic from dictatorship. The people were momentarily convinced—

yes, Brutus seemed a decent man. Then Mark Antony took the stage, and he in turn delivered a eulogy for Caesar. He seemed overwhelmed with emotion. He talked of his love for Caesar, and of Caesar's love for the Roman people. He mentioned Caesar's will; the crowd clamored to hear it, but Antony said no, for if he read it they would know how deeply Caesar had loved them, and how dastardly this murder was. The crowd again insisted he read the will; instead he held up Caesar's bloodstained cloak, noting its rents and tears. This was where Brutus had stabbed the great general, he said; Cassius had stabbed him here. Then finally he read the will, which *Use the Demonic Power of Words to Sow Confusion* • 261

told how much wealth Caesar had left to the Roman people. This was the coup de grace—the crowd turned against the conspirators and went off to lynch them.

Antony was a clever man, who knew how to stir a crowd. According to the Greek historian Plutarch, "When he saw that his oratory had cast a spell over the people and that they were deeply stirred by his words, he began to introduce into his praises [of Caesar] a note of pity and of indignation at Caesar's fate." Seductive language aims at people's emotions, for emotional people are easier to deceive. Antony used various devices to stir the crowd: a tremor in his voice, a distraught and then an angry tone. An emotional voice has an immediate, contagious effect on the listener. Antony also teased the crowd with the will, holding off the reading of it to the end, knowing it would push people over the edge. Holding up the cloak, he made his imagery visceral.

Perhaps you are not trying to whip a crowd into a frenzy; you just want to bring people over to your side. Choose your strategy and words carefully. You might think it is better to reason with people, explain your ideas. But it is hard for an audience to decide whether an argument is reasonable as they listen to you talk. They have to concentrate and listen closely, which requires great effort. People are easily distracted by other stimuli, and if they miss a part of your argument, they will feel confused, intellectually inferior, and vaguely insecure. It is more persuasive to appeal to people's hearts than their heads. Everyone shares emotions, and no one feels inferior to a speaker who stirs up their feelings. The crowd bonds together, everyone contagiously experiencing the same emotions. Antony talked of Caesar as if he and the listeners were experiencing the murder from Caesar's point of view. What could be more provocative? Use such changes of perspective to make your listeners feel what you are saying. Orchestrate your effects. It is more effective to move from one emotion to another than to just hit one note. The contrast between Antony's affection for Caesar and his indignation at the murderers was much more powerful than if he had stayed with one feeling or the other.

The emotions you are trying to arouse should be strong ones. Do not speak of friendship and disagreement; speak of love and hate. And it is crucial to try to feel something of the emotions you are trying to elicit. You will be more believable that way. This should not be difficult: imagine the reasons for loving or hating before you speak. If necessary, think of something from your past that fills you with rage. Emotions are contagious; it is easier to make someone cry if you are crying yourself. Make your voice an instrument, and train it to communicate emotion. Learn to seem sincere. Napoleon studied the greatest actors of his time, and when he was alone he would practice putting emotion into his voice.

The goal of seductive speech is often to create a kind of hypnosis: you are distracting people, lowering their defenses, making them more vulnerable to suggestion. Learn the hypnotist's lessons of repetition and affirmation, key elements in putting a subject to sleep. Repetition involves using 262 • *The Art of Seduction*

the same words over and over, preferably a word with emotional content:

"taxes," "liberals," "bigots." The effect is mesmerizing—ideas can be permanently implanted in people's unconscious simply by being repeated often enough. Affirmation is simply the making of strong positive statements, like the hypnotist's commands. Seductive language should have a kind of boldness, which will cover up a multitude of sins. Your audience will be so caught up in your bold language that they won't have time to reflect on whether or not it is true. Never say "I don't think the other side made a wise decision"; say "We deserve better," or "They have made a mess of things." Affirmative language is active language, full of verbs, imperatives, and short sentences. Cut out "I believe," "Perhaps," "In my opinion." Head straight for the heart.

You are learning to speak a different kind of language. Most people employ symbolic language—their words stand for something real, the feelings, ideas, and beliefs they really have. Or they stand for concrete things in the real world. (The origin of the word "symbolic" lies in a Greek word meaning "to bring things

together"—in this case, a word and something real.) As a seducer you are using the opposite: *diabolic* language. Your words do not stand for anything real; their sound, and the feelings they evoke, are more important than what they are supposed to stand for. (The word "diabolic" ultimately means to separate, to throw things apart—here, words and reality.) The more you make people focus on your sweet-sounding language, and on the illusions and fantasies it conjures, the more you diminish their contact with reality. You lead them into the clouds, where it is hard to distinguish truth from untruth, real from unreal. Keep your words vague and ambiguous, so people are never quite sure what you mean. Envelop them in demonic, diabolical language and they will not be able to focus on your maneuvers, on the possible consequences of your seduction. And the more they lose themselves in illusion, the easier it will be to lead them astray and seduce them.

Symbol: *The Clouds. In the clouds it is hard to see*

the exact forms of things. Everything seems vague;

the imagination runs wild, seeing things that are

not there. Your words must lift people into

the clouds, where it is easy for them

to lose their way.

Use the Demonic Power of Words to Sow Confusion • 263

Reversal

Do not confuse flowery language with seduction: in using flowery language you run the risk of wearing on people's nerves, of seeming pretentious. Excess verbiage is a sign of selfishness, of your inability to rein in your natural tendencies. Often with language, less is more; the elusive, vague, ambiguous phrase leaves the listener more room for imagination than does a sentence full of bombast and self-indulgence.

You must always think first of your targets, and of what will be pleasant to their ears. There will be many times when silence is best. What you do not say can be suggestive and eloquent, making you seem mysterious. In the eleventh-century Japanese court diary *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon*, the counselor Yoshichika is intrigued by a lady he sees in a carriage, silent and beautiful. He sends her a note, and she sends one back; he is the only one to read it, but by his reaction everyone can tell it is in bad taste, or badly written. It spoils the effect of her beauty. Shonagon writes, "I have heard people suggest that no reply at all is better than a bad one." If you are not eloquent, if you cannot master seductive language, at least learn to curb your tongue—use silence to cultivate an enigmatic presence.

Finally, seduction has a pace and rhythm. In phase one, you are cautious and indirect. It is often best to disguise your intentions, to put your target at ease with deliberately neutral words. Your conversation should be harmless, even a bit bland. In this second phase, you turn more to the attack; this is the time for seductive

language. Now when you envelop them in your seductive words and letters, it comes as a pleasant surprise. It gives them the immensely pleasing feeling that they are the ones to suddenly inspire you with such poetry and intoxicating words.

11

Pay Attention to Detail

Lofty

words and grand

gestures can be suspi-

cious: why are you trying

so hard to please? The details

of a seduction—the subtle ges-

tures, the offhand things you do—

are often more charming and

revealing. You must learn to distract

your victims with a myriad of pleasant

little rituals—thoughtful gifts tailored

just for them, clothes and adornments

designed to please them, gestures that

show the time and attention you are

paying them. All of their senses are

engaged in the details you orchestrate.

Create spectacles to dazzle their

eyes; mesmerized by what they

see, they will not notice what

you are really up to. Learn to

suggest the proper feelings

and moods through

details.

The Mesmerizing Effect

In December 1898, the wives of the seven major Western ambassadors to China received a strange invitation: the sixty-three-year-old Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi was hosting a banquet in their honor in the Forbidden City in Beijing. The ambassadors themselves had been quite displeased with the empress dowager, for several reasons. She was a Manchu, a race of northerners who had conquered China in the early seventeenth century, *The barge she sat in, like a* establishing the Ching Dynasty and ruling the country for nearly three *burnish'd throne, \ Burn'd* hundred years. By the 1890s, the Western powers had begun to carve up *on the water: the* *poop was beaten gold; \ Purple the*

parts of China, a country they considered backward. They wanted China sails, and so perfumed that to modernize, but the Manchus were conservative, and resisted all reform. \ The winds were love-sick Earlier in 1898, the Chinese Emperor Kuang Hsu, the empress dowager's *with them; the oars were silver; \ Which to the tune*

*twenty-seven-year-old nephew, had actually begun a series of reforms, of flutes kept stroke, and with the blessings of the West. Then, one hundred days into this period of made \ The water which reform, word reached the Western diplomats from the Forbidden City that they beat to follow faster, *

As amorous of their

the emperor was quite ill, and that the empress dowager had taken power. strokes. For her own They suspected foul play; the empress had probably acted to stop the *re- person, \ It beggar'd all* forms. The emperor was being mistreated, probably poisoned—*description: she did lie \ In* perhaps he was already dead. When the seven ambassadors' wives were *her pavilion—cloth-of-gold of tissue—\ O'er* picturing

*preparing for their unusual visit, their husbands warned them: Do not trust that Venus where we see *

the empress dowager. A wily woman with a cruel streak, she had risen from The fancy outwork nature: obscurity to become the concubine of a previous emperor and had man- on each side her \ Stood pretty dimpled boys, like

aged over the years to accumulate great power. Far more than the emperor, smiling Cupids, \ With she was the most feared person in China.

divers-colour'd fans, whose

On the appointed day, the women were borne into the Forbidden City wind did seem \ To glow the delicate cheeks which

in a procession of sedan chairs carried by court eunuchs in dazzling uni- *they did cool, | And* forms. The women themselves, not to be outdone, wore the latest Western *what they undid did. . . |*

fashions—tight corsets, long velvet dresses with leg-of-mutton sleeves, bil- *Her gentlewomen, like the Nereids, | So many*

lowing petticoats, tall plumed hats. The residents of the Forbidden City *mermaids, tended her i' the* looked at their clothes in amazement, and particularly at the way their *eyes, | And made their* dresses displayed their prominent bosoms. The wives felt sure they had im- *bends adornings: at the* pressed their hosts. At the Audience Hall they were greeted by princes and *helm | A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle |*

princesses, as well as lower royalty. The Chinese women were wearing *Swell with the touches of* magnificent Manchu costumes with the traditional high, jewel- encrusted *those flower-soft hands |*

black headdresses; they were arranged in a hierarchical order reflected in *That yarely frame the office. From the barge | A*

the color of their dresses, an astounding rainbow of color.

strange invisible perfume

The wives were served tea in the most delicate porcelain cups, then *hits the sense | Of the* 267

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adjacent wharfs. The city

were escorted into the presence of the empress dowager. The sight took *cast | Her people out upon*

their breath away. The empress was seated on the Dragon Throne, which *her; and Antony, |* was studded with jewels. She wore heavily brocaded robes, a magnificent *Enthron'd i' the market-*

place, did sit alone, | headdress bearing diamonds, pearls, and jade, and an enormous necklace of *Whistling to the air;*

perfectly matched pearls. She was a tiny woman, but on the throne, in that *which, but for vacancy, |* dress, she seemed a giant. She smiled at the ladies with much warmth and *Had gone to gaze on*

Cleopatra too | And made sincerity. To their relief, seated below her on a smaller throne was her *a gap in nature.*

nephew the emperor. He looked pale, but he greeted them enthusiastically

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,

and seemed in good spirits. Maybe he was indeed simply ill.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

The empress shook the hand of each of the women. As she did so, an

attendant eunuch handed her a large gold ring set with a large pearl, which she slipped onto each woman's hand. After this introduction, the wives *In the palmy days of the* were escorted into another room, where they again took tea, and then were *gay quarters at Edo there* led into a banqueting hall, where the empress now sat on a chair of yellow *was a connoisseur of*

fashion named Sakakura

satin—yellow being the imperial color. She spoke to them for a while; she *who grew intimate with the* had a beautiful voice. (It was said that her voice could literally charm birds *great courtesan Chitose*.

out of trees.) At the end of the conversation, she took the hand of each *This woman was much*

given to drinking sake; as

woman again, and with much emotion, told them, "One family—all one *a side dish she relished the family.*" The women then saw a performance in the imperial theater. *Fi so-called flower crabs, to be* nally the empress received them one last time. She apologized for the per *found in the Mogami River in the East, and*

formance they had just seen, which was certainly inferior to what they *these she had pickled in* were used to in the West. There was one more round of tea, and this time, *salt for her enjoyment.*

as the wife of the American ambassador reported it, the empress "stepped *Knowing this, Sakakura*

forward and tipped each cup of tea to her own lips and took a sip, then *commissioned a painter of*

the Kano School to execute lifted the cup on the other side, to our lips, and said again, 'One family—all *her bamboo crest in*

*one family' " The women were given more gifts, then were escorted back *powdered gold on the tiny**

to their sedan chairs and borne out of the Forbidden City.

shells of these crabs; he

fixed the price of each

The women relayed to their husbands their earnest belief that they had *painted shell at one*

all been wrong about the empress. The American ambassador's wife re *rectangular piece of gold*, ported, "She was bright and happy and her face glowed with good will. *and presented them to*

Chitose throughout the There was no trace of cruelty to be seen. . . . Her actions were full of free year, so that she never dom and warmth. . . . [We left] full of admiration for her majesty and lacked for them.

hopes for China." The husbands reported back to their governments: the

— I H A R A SAIKAKU, *THE LIFE OF*

emperor was fine, and the empress could be trusted.

AN AMOROUS WOMAN, AND

OTHER WRITINGS, TRANSLATED

BY IVAN MORRIS

Interpretation. The foreign contingent in China had no idea what was really happening in the Forbidden City. In truth, the emperor had conspired to arrest and possibly murder his aunt. Discovering the plot, a terrible crime in Confucian terms, she forced him to sign his own abdication, held this a sound maxim had him confined, and told the outside world that he was ill. As part of his that there is naught to be punishment, he was to appear at state functions and act as if nothing had compared with a woman in

her clothes. Again when

happened.

you reflect how a man doth

The empress dowager loathed Westerners, whom she considered bar brave, rumple, squeeze and barians. She disliked the ambassadors' wives, with their ugly fashions and make light of his lady's

finery, and how he doth

simpering ways. The banquet was a show, a seduction, to appease the West- *Pay Attention to Detail • 269*

ern powers, which had been threatening invasion if the emperor had been work ruin and loss to the killed. The goal of the seduction was simple: dazzle the wives with color, grand cloth of gold and web of silver, to tinsel

spectacle, theater. The empress applied all her expertise to the task, and she and silken stuffs, pearls and was a genius for detail. She had designed the spectacles in a rising order—precious stones, 'tis plain the uniformed eunuchs first, then the Manchu ladies in their headdresses, how his ardour and and finally the empress herself. It was pure theater, and it was overwhelm- satisfaction be increased manifold—far more than

ing. Then the empress brought the spectacle down a notch, humanizing it with some simple with gifts, warm greetings, the reassuring presence of the emperor, teas, shepherdess or other woman and entertainments, which were in no way inferior to anything in the West. of like quality, be she as fair as she may. • And why

She ended the banquet on another high note—the little drama with the of yore was Venus found so sharing of the teacups, followed by even more magnificent gifts. The fair and so desirable, if not women's heads were spinning when they left. In truth they had never seen that with all her beauty she

was always gracefully

such exotic splendor—and they never understood how carefully its details *attired likewise, and* had been orchestrated by the empress. Charmed by the spectacle, they trans- *generally scented, that she* ferred their happy feelings to the empress and gave her their approval—all *did ever smell sweet an hundred paces away? For it*

that she required.

hath ever been held of all

The key to distracting people (seduction is distraction) is to fill their *how that perfumes be a* eyes and ears with details, little rituals, colorful objects. Detail is what *great incitement to love.* •

makes things seem real and substantial. A thoughtful gift won't seem to *This is the reason why the*

Empresses and great dames

have an ulterior motive. A ritual full of charming little actions is so enjoy- *of Rome did make much able to watch.* Jewelry, handsome furnishings, touches of color in clothing, *usage of these perfumes, as* dazzle the eye. It is a childish weakness of ours: we prefer to focus on the *do likewise our great ladies of France—and above all*

pleasant little details rather than on the larger picture. The more senses you *those of Spain and Italy,*

appeal to, the more mesmerizing the effect. The objects you use in your se- *which from the oldest times* duction (gifts, clothes, etc.) speak their own language, and it is a powerful *have been more curious and more exquisite in luxury*

one. Never ignore a detail or leave one to chance. Orchestrate them into a *than Frenchwomen, as well* spectacle and no one will notice how manipulative you are being.

in perfumes as in costumes

and magnificent attire,

whereof the fair ones of

France have since borrowed

The Sensuous Effect

the patterns and copied the

dainty workmanship.

Moreover the others, Italian

One day a messenger told Prince Genji—the aging but still consum- *and Spanish, had learned* mate seducer in the Heian court of late-tenth-century Japan—that *the same from old models* one of his youthful conquests had suddenly died, leaving behind an or- *and ancient statues of* phan, a young woman named Tamakazura. Genji was not Tamakazura's *fa- Roman ladies, the which are to be seen among*

ther, but he decided to bring her to court and be her protector anyway. *sundry other antiquities yet* Soon after her arrival, men of the highest rank began to woo her. Genji *extant in Spain and Italy;* had told everyone she was a lost daughter of his; as a result, they assumed *the which, if any man will regard them carefully, will*

that she was beautiful, for Genji was the handsomest man in the court. (At *be found very perfect in* the time, men rarely saw a young girl's face before marriage; in theory, they *mode of hair-dressing and* were allowed to talk to her only if she was on the other side of a screen.) *fashion of robes, and very meet to incite love.*

Genji showered her with attention, helping her sort through all the love letters she was receiving and advising her on the right match.

—SEIGNEUR DE BRANTÔME,

LIVES OF FAIR & GALLANT

As Tamakazura's protector, Genji was able to see her face, and she was *LADIES, TRANSLATED BY A. R.* indeed beautiful. He fell in love with her. What a shame, he thought, to ALLINSON

give this lovely creature away to another man. One night, overwhelmed by 270 • *The Art of Seduction*

For years after her entry her charms, he held her hand and told her how much she resembled her *into the palace, a large* mother, whom he once had loved. She trembled—not with excitement, *number of court-maidens* however, but with fear, for although he was not her father, he was supposed *were especially set aside for*

preparing Kuei-fei's to be her protector, not a suitor. Her attendants were away and it was a *dresses, which were chosen* beautiful night. Genji silently threw off his perfumed robe and pulled her *and fashioned according to* down beside him. She began to cry, and to resist. Always a gentleman, *the flowers of the season.*

For instance, for New Year Genji told her that he would respect her wishes, he would always care for *(spring) she had blossoms* her, and she had nothing to fear. He then politely excused himself. *of apricot, plum and*

Several days later Genji was helping Tamakazura with her correspon *narcissus; for summer, she dence* when he read a love letter from his younger brother, Prince Hotaru, *adopted the lotus; for*

autumn, she patterned who numbered among her suitors. In the letter, Hotaru berated Tama *them after the peony; for kazura* for not letting him get physically

close enough to talk to her and tell *winter, she employed the* his feelings. Tamakazura had not replied; unused to the manners of the *chrysanthemum. Of jewelry she was fondest of* court, she had felt shy and intimidated. As if to help her, Genji got one of *pearls, and the finest* his servants to write to Hotaru in her name. The letter, written on *beauti products of the world found* ful perfumed paper, warmly invited the prince to visit her. *their way into her boudoir and were frequently*

Hotaru appeared at the appointed hour. He smelled a beguiling in *embroidered on her cense, mysterious and seductive.* (Mixed into this scent was Genji's own *numerous dresses.* • *Kuei-* perfume.) The prince felt a wave of excitement. Approaching the screen *fei was the embodiment of* behind which Tamakazura sat, he confessed his love for her. Without mak *all that was lovely and extravagant.* No wonder ing a sound, she retreated to another screen, farther away. Suddenly there *that no king, prince,* was a flash of light, as if a torch had flared up, and Hotaru saw her profile *courtier or humble* behind the screen: she was more beautiful than he had imagined. Two *attendant who ever met her*

could resist the allurement things delighted the prince: the sudden, mysterious flash of light, and the *of her charms. Besides, she brief glimpse of his beloved.* Now he was truly in love. *was the most artful of*

Hotaru began to court her assiduously. Meanwhile, feeling reassured that *women and knew how to*

use her natural gifts to the Genji was no longer chasing her, Tamakazura saw her protector more often. *best purpose. . . . The* And now she could not help noticing little details: Genji's robes seemed to *Emperor Ming Huang,* glow, in pleasing and vibrant colors, as if dyed by unworldly hands. Hotaru's *supreme in the land and* robes seemed drab by comparison. And the perfumes burned into Genji's *with thousands of the most*

handsome maidens to garments, how intoxicating they were. No one else bore such a scent. Ho *choose from, became a* taru's letters were polite and well written, but the letters Genji sent her were *complete slave to her* on magnificent paper, perfumed and dyed, and they quoted lines of poetry, *magnetic powers . . .*

spending day and night in always surprising yet always appropriate for the occasion. Genji also grew *her company and giving up* and gathered flowers—wild carnations, for instance—that he gave as gifts *his whole kingdom* and that seemed to symbolize his unique charm. *for her sake.*

One evening Genji proposed to teach Tamakazura how to play the

— S H U - C H I U N G , *YANG KUEI-*

FEI: THE MOST FAMOUS

koto. She was delighted. She loved to read romance novels, and whenever *BEAUTY OF CHINA*

Genji played the koto, she felt as if she were transported into one of her books. No one played the instrument better than Genji; she would be honored to learn from him. Now he saw her often, and the method of his lessons was simple: she would choose a song for him to play, and then *Then [Pao-yu] called*

Bright Design to him and would try to imitate him. After they played, they would lie down side by side *said to her*, "Go and see side, their heads resting on the koto, staring up at the moon. Genji would *what [Black Jade] is doing*. have torches set up in the garden, giving the view the softest glow. *If she asks about me, just*

say that I am quite all

The more Tamakazura saw of the court—of Prince Hotaru, the other

Pay Attention to Detail • 271

suitors, the emperor himself—the more she realized that none could come *right now*. " • "You'll have time to Genji. He was supposed to be her protector, yes, that was still true, *to think of a better excuse*

than that, " Bright Design

but was it such a sin to fall in love with him? Confused, she found herself *said*. "Isn't there anything giving in to the caresses and kisses that he began to surprise her with, now that you can send or want that she was too weak to resist.

to borrow? I don't want to

go there and feel like a fool

without anything to say. " •

Pao-yu thought for a

Interpretation. Genji is the protagonist in the eleventh-century novel *The moment and then took two Tale of Genji*, written by Murasaki Shikibu, a woman of the Heian court. *handkerchiefs from under*

his pillow and gave them

The character was most likely inspired by the real-life seducer Fujiwara no to the maid, saying, "Well

Korechika.

then, tell her that I sent

In his seduction of Tamakazura, Genji's strategy was simple: he would *you with these*," • "What

a strange present to send"

make her realize indirectly how charming and irresistible he was by sur *the maid smiled*. "What rounding her with unspoken details. He also brought her in contact with *does she want two old*

his brother; comparison with this drab, stiff figure would make Genji's su-
handkerchiefs for? She will periority clear. The night Hotaru first visited her, Genji set everything up, *be angry again and say*

that you are trying to make

as if to support Hotaru's seducing—the mysterious scent, then the flash of *fun of her*." • "Don't light by the screen. (The light came from a novel effect: earlier in the eve- *worry*" *Pao-yu assured her*: ning, Genji had collected hundreds of fireflies in a cloth bag. At the proper

"*She will understand*." •

Black Jade had already

moment he let them all go at once.) But when Tamakazura saw Genji en *retired when Bright Design* couraging Hotaru's pursuit of her, her defenses against her protector re- *arrived at the Bamboo* laxed, allowing her senses to be filled by this master of seductive effects. *Retreat. What brought*

you at this hour?" Black

Genji orchestrated every possible detail—the scented paper, the colored *Jade asked*. • "[*Pao-yu*]

robes, the lights in the garden, the wild carnations, the apt poetry, the koto *asked me to bring these*

lessons which induced an irresistible feeling of harmony. Tamakazura found *handkerchiefs for [Black*

Jade] ." • *For a moment*

herself dragged into a sensual whirlpool. Bypassing the shyness and mistrust *Black Jade was at a loss to*

that words or actions would only have worsened, Genji surrounded his *see why Pao-yu should* ward with objects, sights, sounds, and scents that symbolized the pleasure of *send her such a present at* his company far more than his actual physical presence would have—in fact *that particular moment*.

She said, "I suppose they

his presence could only have been threatening. He knew that a young girl's *must be something unusual*

senses are her most vulnerable point.

that somebody gave him.

The key to Genji's masterful orchestration of detail was his attention to *Tell him to keep them*

himself or give them to

the target of his seduction. Like Genji, you must attune your own senses to *someone who will* your targets, watching them carefully, adapting to their moods. You sense *appreciate them. I have no* when they are defensive and retreat. You also sense when they are giving in, *need of them.*" • "They

are nothing unusual,"

and move forward. In between, the details you set up—gifts, entertain *Bright Design* said. "Just ments, the clothes you wear, the flowers you choose—are aimed precisely *two ordinary handkerchiefs*

at their tastes and predilections. Genji knew he was dealing with a young *that he happened to have*

around. "Black Jade was

girl who loved romantic novels; his wild flowers, koto playing, and poetry *even more puzzled, and*

brought their world to life for her. Attend to your targets' every move and *then it suddenly dawned*

desire, and reveal your attentiveness in the details and objects you surround *upon her: Pao-yu knew*

them with, filling their senses with the mood you need to inspire. They can *that she would weep for*

him and so sent two

argue with your words, but not with the effect you have on their senses. *handkerchiefs of his own.* •

"You can leave them,

then," she said to Bright

Design, who in turn was

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surprised that Black Jade

Therefore in my view when the courtier wishes to declare

did not take offense at

his love he should do so by his actions rather than by

what seemed to her a crude

speech, for a man's feelings are sometimes more clearly re-

joke. • As Black Jade

vealed by . . . a gesture of respect or a certain shyness than thought over the signif-

icance of the handkerchiefs

by volumes of words.

she was happy and sad by

—BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE

turns: happy because Pao-

yu read her innermost

thoughts and sad because

she wondered if what was

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uppermost in her thoughts

would ever be fulfilled.

Thinking thus to herself of

the future and of the past, When we were children, our senses were much more active. The colors of a new toy, or a spectacle such as a circus, held us in thrall; a she could not fall asleep.

smell or a sound could fascinate us. In the games we created, many of them *Despite Purple Cuckoo's*

remonstrances, she had her reproducing something in the adult world on a smaller scale, what pleasure *lamp relit and began to* we took in orchestrating every detail. We noticed everything. *compose a series of*

As we grow older our senses get dulled. We no longer notice as much, *quatrains, writing them*

for we are constantly hurrying to get things done, to move on to the next *directly on the*

handkerchiefs which

task. In seduction, you are always trying to bring the target back to the *Pao-yu had sent.*

golden moments of childhood. A child is less rational, more easily de— T S A O H S U E H C H I N , ceived. A child is also more attuned to the pleasures of the senses. So when *DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER*,

your targets are with you, you must never give them the feeling they
nor TRANSLATED BY C H I - C H E N

WANG

mally get in the real world, where we are all rushed, ruthless, out for ourselves. You need to deliberately slow things down, and return them to the simpler times of their youth. The details that you orchestrate—colors, gifts, little ceremonies—are aimed at their senses, at the childish delight we take in the immediate charms of the natural world. Their senses filled with delightful things, they grow less capable of reason and rationality. Pay attention to detail and you will find yourself assuming a slower pace; your targets will not focus on what you might be after (sexual favors, power, etc.) because you seem so considerate, so attentive. In the childish realm of the senses in which you envelop them, they get a clear sense that you are involving them in something distinct from the real world—an essential ingredient of seduction. Remember: the more you get people to focus on the little things, the less they will notice your larger direction. The seduction will assume the slow, hypnotic pace of a ritual, in which the details have a heightened importance and the moments are full of ceremony.

In eighth-century China, Emperor Ming Huang caught a glimpse of a

beautiful young woman, combing her hair beside an imperial pool. Her name was Yang Kuei-fei, and even though she was the concubine of the emperor's son, he had to have her for himself. Since he was emperor, nobody could stop him. The emperor was a practical man—he had many concubines, and they all had their charms, but he had never lost his head over a woman. Yang Kuei-fei, though, was different. Her body exuded the most wonderful fragrance. She wore gowns made of the sheerest silk gauze, each embroidered with different flowers, depending on the season. In walking she seemed to float, her tiny steps invisible beneath her gown. She *Pay Attention to Detail • 273*

danced to perfection, wrote songs in his honor that she sang magnificently, had a way of looking at him that made his blood boil with desire. She quickly became his favorite.

Yang Kuei-fei drove the emperor to distraction. He built palaces for her, spent all his time with her, satisfied her every whim. Before long his kingdom was bankrupt and ruined. Yang Kuei-fei was an artful seductress who had a devastating effect on all of the men who crossed her path. There were so many ways her presence charmed—the scents, the voice, the movements, the witty conversation, the artful glances, the embroidered gowns. These pleasurable details turned a mighty king into a distracted baby.

Since time immemorial, women have known that within the most apparently self-possessed man is an animal whom they can lead by filling his senses with the proper physical lures. The key is to attack on as many fronts as possible. Do not ignore your voice, your gestures, your walk, your clothes, your glances. Some of the most alluring women in history have so distracted their victims with sensual detail that the men fail to notice it is all an illusion.

From the 1940s on into the early 1960s, Pamela Churchill Harriman

had a series of affairs with some of the most prominent and wealthy men in the world—Averill Harriman (whom years later she married), Gianni Agnelli (heir to the Fiat fortune), Baron Elie de Rothschild. What attracted these men, and kept them in thrall, was not her beauty or her lineage or her vivacious personality, but her extraordinary attention to detail. It began with her attentive look as she listened to your every word, soaking up your tastes. Once she found her way into your home, she would fill it with your favorite flowers, get your chef to cook that dish you had tasted only in the finest restaurants. You mentioned an artist you liked? A few days later that artist would be attending one of your parties. She found the perfect antiques for you, dressed in the way that most pleased or excited you, and she did this without your saying a word—she spied, gathered information from third parties, overheard you talking to someone else. Harriman's attention to detail had an intoxicating effect on all the men in her life. It had something in common with the pampering of a mother, there to bring order and comfort into their lives, attending to their needs. Life is harsh and competitive. Attending to detail in a way that is soothing to the other person makes them dependent upon you. The key is probing their needs in a way that is not too obvious, so that when you make precisely the right gesture, it seems uncanny, as if you had read their mind. This is another way of returning your targets to childhood, when all of their needs were met. In the eyes of women all over the world, Rudolph Valentino reigned

as the Great Lover through much of the 1920s. The qualities behind his appeal certainly included his handsome, almost pretty face, his dancing skills, the strangely exciting streak of cruelty in his manner. But his perhaps most endearing trait was his time-consuming approach to courtship. His films would show him seducing a woman *slowly*, with careful details—

sending her flowers (choosing the variety to match the mood he wanted to 274 •
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induce), taking her hand, lighting her cigarette, escorting her to romantic places, leading her on the dance floor. These were silent movies, and his audiences never got to hear him speak—it was all in his gestures. Men came to hate him, for their wives and girlfriends now expected the slow, careful Valentino treatment.

Valentino had a feminine streak; it was said that he wooed a woman the way another woman would. But femininity need not figure in this approach to seduction. In the early 1770s, Prince Gregory Potemkin began an affair with Empress Catherine the Great of Russia that was to last many years. Potemkin was a manly man, and not at all handsome. But he managed to win the empress's heart by the many little things he did, and continued to do long after the affair had begun. He spoiled her with wonderful gifts, never tired of writing her long letters, arranged for all kinds of entertainments for her, composed songs to her beauty. Yet he would appear before her barefoot, hair uncombed, clothes wrinkled. There was no kind of fussiness in his attention, which, however, did make it clear he would go to the ends of the earth for her. A woman's senses are more refined than a man's; to a woman, Yang Kuei-fei's overt sensual appeal would seem too hurried and direct. What that means, though, is that all the man really has to do is take it slowly, making seduction a ritual full of all kinds of little things he has to do for his target. If he takes his time, he will have her eating out of his hand. Everything in seduction is a sign, and nothing more so than clothes. It is not that you have to dress interestingly, elegantly, or provocatively, but that you have to dress for your target—have to appeal to your target's tastes. When Cleopatra was seducing Mark Antony, her dress was not brazenly sexual; she dressed as a Greek goddess, knowing his weakness for such fantasy figures. Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of King Louis XV, knew the king's weakness, his chronic boredom; she constantly wore different clothes, changing not only their color but their style, supplying the king with a constant feast for his eyes. Pamela Harriman was subdued in the fashions she wore, befitting her role as a high-society geisha and reflecting the sober tastes of the men she seduced. Contrast works well here: at work or at home, you might dress nonchalantly—Marilyn Monroe, for example, wore jeans and a T-shirt at home—but when you are with the target you wear something elaborate, as if you were putting on a costume. Your Cinderella transformation will stir excitement, and the feeling that you have done something just for the person you are with. Whenever your attention is individualized (you would not dress like that for anyone else), it is infinitely more seductive. In the 1870s, Queen Victoria found herself wooed by Benjamin Disraeli, her own prime minister. Disraeli's words were flattering and his manner insinuating; he also sent her flowers, valentines, gifts—but not just any flowers or gifts, the kind that most men would send. The flowers were primroses, symbols of their simple yet beautiful friendship. From then on, whenever Victoria saw a primrose she thought of Disraeli. Or he would *Pay Attention to Detail* • 275

write on a valentine that he, "no longer in the sunset, but the twilight of his existence, must encounter a life of anxiety and toil; but this, too, has its romance, when he remembers that he labors for the most gracious of beings!" Or he might send her a little box, with no inscription, but with a heart transfixated by an arrow on one side and the word "Fideliter," or

"Faithfully," on the other. Victoria fell in love with Disraeli. A gift has immense seductive power, but the object itself is less important than the gesture, and the subtle thought or emotion that it communicates. Perhaps the choice relates to something from the target's past, or symbolizes something between you, or merely represents the lengths you will go to to please. It was not the money Disraeli spent that impressed Victoria, but the time he took to find the appropriate thing or make the appropriate gesture. Expensive gifts have no sentiment attached; they may temporarily excite their recipient but they are quickly forgotten, as a child forgets a new toy. The object that reflects its giver's attentiveness has a lingering sentimental power, which resurfaces every time its owner sees it. In 1919, the Italian writer and war hero Gabriele D'Annunzio managed to put together a band of followers and take over the town of Fiume, on the Adriatic coast (now part of Slovenia). They established their own government there, which lasted for over a year. D'Annunzio initiated a series of public spectacles that were to be immensely influential on politicians elsewhere. He would address the public from a balcony overlooking the town's main square, which would be full of colorful banners, flags, pagan religious symbols, and, at night, torches. The speeches would be followed by processions. Although D'Annunzio was not at all a Fascist, what he did in Fiume crucially affected Benito Mussolini, who borrowed his Roman salutes, his use of symbols, his mode of public address. Spectacles like these have been used since then by governments everywhere, even democratic ones. Their overall impression may be grand, but it is the orchestrated details that make them work—the number of senses they appeal to, the variety of emotions they stir. You are aiming to distract people, and nothing is more distracting than a wealth of detail—fireworks, flags, music, uniforms, marching soldiers, the feel of the crowd packed together. It becomes difficult to think straight, particularly if the symbols and details stir up patriotic emotions.

Finally, words are important in seduction, and have a great deal of power to confuse, distract, and boost the vanity of the target. But what is most seductive in the long run is what you do not say, what you communicate indirectly. Words come easily, and people distrust them. Anyone can say the right words; and once they are said, nothing is binding, and they may even be forgotten altogether. The gesture, the thoughtful gift, the little details seem much more real and substantial. They are also much more charming than lofty words about love, precisely because they speak for themselves and let the seduced read into them more than is there. Never tell someone what you are feeling; let them guess it in your looks and gestures. That is the more convincing language. 276 • *The Art of Seduction*

Symbol: The Banquet. *A*

feast has been prepared in your honor. Everything has been elaborately coordinated—the flowers, the decorations, the selection of guests, the dancers, the music, the five-course meal, the endlessly flowing wine. The Banquet loosens your tongue,

and also your inhibitions.

Reversal

There is no reversal. Details are essential to any successful seduction, and cannot be ignored.

12

Poeticize Your Presence

Important things happen when your targets are alone: the slightest feeling of relief that you are not there, and it is all over. Familiarity and overexposure will cause this reaction. Remain elusive, then, so that when you are away, they will yearn to see you again, and will associate you only with pleasant thoughts. Occupy their minds by alternating an exciting presence with a cool distance, exuberant moments followed by calculated absences.

Associate yourself with poetic images and objects, so that when they think of you, they begin to see you through an idealized halo. The more you figure in their minds, the more they will envelop you in seductive fantasies. Feed these fantasies by subtle inconsistencies and changes in your behavior.

Poetic Presence/Absence

In 1943, the Argentine military overthrew the government. A popular forty-eight-year old colonel, Juan Perón, was named secretary of labor and social affairs. Perón was a widow who had a fondness for young girls; at the time of his appointment he was involved with a teenager whom he introduced to one and all as his daughter. One evening in January of 1944, Perón was seated among the other

military leaders in a Buenos Aires stadium, attending an artists' festival. It *He who does not know how to encircle a girl so*

was late and there were some empty seats around him; out of nowhere two *that she loses sight of* beautiful young actresses asked his permission to sit down. Were they *jok- everything he does not ing?* He would be delighted. He recognized one of the actresses—it was *want her to see, he who* Eva Duarte, a star of radio soap operas whose photograph was often on the *does not know how to poetize himself into a girl*

covers of the tabloids. The other actress was younger and prettier, but *so that it is from her that* Perón could not take his eyes off Eva, who was talking to another colonel. *everything proceeds as he* She was really not his type at all. She was twenty-four, far too old for his *wants it—he is and remains a bungler. . .*

taste; she was dressed rather garishly; and there was something a little icy in *To poetize oneself into a* her manner. But she looked at him occasionally, and her *glance excited girl is an art.* him. He looked away for a moment, and the next thing he knew she had—SØREN KIERKEGAARD, changed seats and was sitting next to him. They started to talk. She hung *THE SEDUCER'S DIARY, TRANSLATED BY HOWARD V.*

on his every word. Yes, everything he said was precisely how she felt—the HONG; AND EDNA H. HONG; poor, the workers, they were the future of Argentina. She had known poverty herself. There were almost tears in her eyes when she said, at the end of the conversation, "Thank you for existing."

What else? If she's out,

In the next few days, Eva managed to get rid of Perón's "daughter" and *reclining in her litter, *

establish herself in his apartment. Everywhere he turned, there she was, *Make your approach discreet, \ And—just to fox*

fixing him meals, caring for him when he was ill, advising him on politics. *the sharp ears of those* Why did he let her stay? Usually he would have a fling with a superficial *around you—\ Cleverly* young girl, then get rid of her when she seemed to be sticking around too *riddle each phrase \ With* much. But there was nothing superficial about Eva. As time went by he *ambiguous subtleties. If she's taking a leisurely *

found himself getting addicted to the feeling she gave him. She was in- *Stroll down the colonnade*, tensely loyal, mirroring his every idea, puffing him up endlessly. He felt *then you stroll there too*—

more masculine in her presence, that was it, and more powerful—she be- \ *Vary your pace to hers, march ahead, drop behind*

lied he would make the country's ideal leader, and her belief affected *her*, \ *Dawdling and brisk* him. She was like the women in the tango ballads he loved so much—the *by turns. Be bold*, \ *Dodge* suffering women of the streets who became saintly mother figures and *in round the columns between you, brush your*

looked after their men. Perón saw her every day, but he never felt he fully *person* \ *Lingeringly past* knew her; one day her comments were a little obscene, the next she was *hers. You must never fail* \

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To attend the theater when the perfect lady. He had one worry: she was angling to get married, and he *she does, gaze at her* could never marry her—she was an actress with a dubious past. The other *beauty*— \ *From the colonels were already scandalized by his involvement with her. Neverthe shoulders up she's time* \

Most delectably spent, a less, the affair went on.

*feast for adoring glances, *

In 1945, Perón was dismissed from his post and jailed. The colonels *For the eloquence of* feared his growing popularity and distrusted the power of his mistress, who *eyebrows, the speaking*

sign. \ Applaud when some seemed to have total influence over him. It was the first time in almost two *male dancer struts on* as years that he was truly alone, and truly separated from Eva. Suddenly he felt *the heroine, \ Cheer* for new emotions sweeping over him: he pinned her photographs all over the *each lover's role. \ When* wall. Outside, massive strikes were being organized to protest his imprisonment *she leaves, leave too—b ut sit there as long as she* ment, but all he could think about was Eva. She was a saint, a woman of *does: \ Waste time at your* destiny, a heroine. He wrote to her, "It is only being apart from loved ones *mistress's whim. . . . \ Get*

that we can measure our affection. From the day I left you . . . I have not *her accustomed to you; *

Habit's the key, spare no been able to calm my sad heart. . . . My immense solitude is full of your *pains till that's achieved. \ memory.*" Now he promised to marry her. *Let her always see you*

The strikes grew in intensity. After eight days, Perón was released from *around, always hear you*

talking, | Show her your prison; he promptly married Eva. A few months later he was elected president night and day. | When dent. As first lady, Eva attended state functions in her somewhat gaudy *you're confident you'll be* dresses and jewelry; she was seen as a former actress with a large wardrobe. *missed, when your absence*

| Seems sure to cause her Then, in 1947, she left for a tour of Europe, and Argentines followed her regret, | Then give her every move—the ecstatic crowds that greeted her in Spain, her audience some respite: a field

with the pope—and in her absence their opinion of her changed. How

improves when fallow, | well she represented the Argentine spirit, its noble simplicity, its flair for Parched soil soaks up the

rain. | Demophoön's drama. When she returned a few weeks later, they overwhelmed her with presence gave Phyllis no attention.

more than mild excitement;

Eva too had changed during her trip to Europe: now her dyed blond

| It was his sailing caused

arson in her heart. | hair was pulled into a severe chignon, and she wore tailored suits. It was a Penelope was racked by serious look, befitting a woman who was to become the savior of the poor. crafty Ulysses's absence, | Soon her image could be seen everywhere—her initials on the walls, the Protesilaus, abroad, made

Laodameia burn. | Short sheets, the towels of the hospitals for the poor; her profile on the jerseys of partings do best, though: a soccer team from the poorest part of Argentina, whose club she spon time wears out affections, | sored; her giant smiling face covering the sides of buildings. Since finding The absent love fades, a

out anything personal about her had become impossible, all kinds of elabo new one takes its place. |

With Menelaus away,

rate fantasies began to spring up about her. And when cancer cut her life *Helen's disinclination for* short, in 1952, at the age of thirty-three (the age of Christ when he died), *sleeping | Alone led her* the country went into mourning. Millions filed past her embalmed body. *into her guest's | Warm bed*

at night. Were you crazy,

She was no longer a radio actress, a wife, a first lady, but Evita, a saint. *Menelaus?*

—OVID, *THE ART OF LOVE*,

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

Interpretation. Eva Duarte was an illegitimate child who had grown up in poverty, escaped to Buenos Aires to become an actress, and been forced to do many tawdry things to survive and get ahead in the theater world. Her *Concerning the Birth of* dream was to escape all of the constraints on her future, for she was in *Love • Here is what* tensely ambitious. Perón was the perfect victim. He imagined himself a *happens in the soul:* • great leader, but the reality was that he was fast becoming a lecherous old *1. Admiration. • 2. You*

think, "How delightful it man who was too weak to raise himself up. Eva injected poetry into his *Poeticize Your Presence • 281*

life. Her language was florid and theatrical; she surrounded him with attention, *would be to kiss her, to* him, indeed to the point of suffocation, but a woman's dutiful service to a *be kissed by her,* and so on. . . . • 3. *Hope. You*

great man was a classic image, and was celebrated in innumerable tango ballads. *observe her perfections, and* lads. Yet she managed to remain elusive, mysterious, like a movie star you *it is at this moment that a* see all the time on the screen but never really know. And when Perón was *woman really ought to surrender, for the utmost*

finally alone, in prison, these poetic images and associations burst forth in *physical pleasure. Even the* his mind. He idealized her madly; as far as he was concerned, she was *no most reserved women* blush longer an actress with a tawdry past. She seduced an entire nation the same to *the whites of their eyes* way. The secret was her dramatic poetic presence, combined with a touch *at this moment of hope. The passion is so strong,*

of elusive distance; over time, you would see whatever you wanted to in *and the pleasure so sharp,* her. To this day people fantasize about what Eva was really like.

that they betray themselves

Familiarity destroys seduction. This rarely happens early on; there is so *unmistakably.* • 4. *Love is born. To love is to enjoy*

much to learn about a new person. But a midpoint may arrive when the *seeing, touching, and* target has begun to idealize and fantasize about you, only to discover that *sensing with all the senses,* you are not what he or she thought. It is not a question of being seen too *as closely as possible, a lovable object which loves*

often, of being too available, as some imagine. In fact, if your targets see *in return.* • 5. *The first* you too rarely, you give them nothing to feed on, and their attention may *crystallization begins. If* be caught by someone else; you have to occupy their mind. It is more a *you are sure that a woman loves you, it is a pleasure*

matter of being too consistent, too obvious, too human and real. Your tar- *to endow her with a* gets cannot idealize you if they know too much about you, if they start to *thousand perfections and to see you as all too human*. Not only must you maintain a degree of distance, *count your blessings with* but there must be something fantastical and bewitching about you, sparking *infinite satisfaction*. *In the end you overrate wildly,*

all kinds of delightful possibilities in their mind. The possibility Eva held *and regard her as* out was the possibility that she was what in Argentine culture was *consid- something fallen from* ered the ideal woman—devoted, motherly, saintly—but there are any num- *Heaven, unknown as yet, but certain to be yours.* •

ber of poetic ideals you can try to embody. Chivalry, adventure, romance, *Leave a lover with his* and so on, are just as potent, and if you have a whiff of them about you, *thoughts for twenty four* you can breathe enough poetry into the air to fill people's minds with fan- *hours, and this is what will happen:* • *At the salt*

tasies and dreams. At all costs, you must embody something, even if it is mines of Salzburg, they roguery and evil. Anything to avoid the taint of familiarity and commonness. *throw a leafless wintry bough into one of the*

What I need is a woman who is something, anything; ei-

abandoned workings. Two

or three months later they

ther very beautiful or very kind or in the last resort very

haul it out covered with a

wicked; very witty or very stupid, but something.

shining deposit of crystals.

The smallest twig, no

—ALFRED DE MUSSET

bigger than a torn-tit's claw,

is studded with a galaxy of

scintillating diamonds. The

Keys to Seduction

original branch is no longer

recognizable. • What I

have called crystallization

We all have a self-image that is more flattering than the truth: we *is a mental process which* think of ourselves as more generous, selfless, honest, kindly, intelligent—*draws from everything that happens new proofs of the*

gent, or good-looking than in fact we are. It is extremely difficult for us to *perfection of the loved* be honest with ourselves about our own limitations; we have a desperate *one*. . . . • *A man in love* need to idealize ourselves. As the writer Angela Carter remarks, we would *sees every perfection in the* rather align ourselves with angels than with the higher primates from *object of his love, but his attention is liable to*

which we are actually descended.

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wander after a time because

This need to idealize extends to our romantic entanglements, because *one gets tired of anything* when we fall in love, or under the spell of another person, we see a reflected uniform, even perfect reflection of ourselves. The choice we make in deciding to become involved *happiness*. • *This is what*

happens next to fix the with another person reveals something important and intimate about us: we *attention*: • 6. *Doubt* resist seeing ourselves as having fallen for someone who is cheap or tacky or *creeps in*. . . . *He is met* tasteless, because it reflects badly on who we are. Furthermore, we are often *with indifference, coldness*, likely to fall for someone who resembles us in some way. Should that person even anger if he appears too confident. . . . *The son* be deficient, or worst of all ordinary, then there is something deficient *lover begins to be less sure* and ordinary about us. No, at all costs the loved one must be overvalued of the good fortune he was and idealized, at least for the sake of our own self-esteem. Besides, in a *anticipating and subjects*

his grounds for hope to a world that is harsh and full of disappointment, it is a great pleasure to be critical examination. • *He* able to fantasize about a person you are involved with. *tries to recoup by indulging*

This makes the seducer's task easy: people are dying to be given the *in other pleasures but finds*

them inane. He is seized

chance to fantasize about *you*. Do not spoil this golden opportunity by *by the dread of a frightful* overexposing yourself, or becoming so familiar and banal that the target *calamity and now sees you exactly as you are*. You do not have to be an angel, or a paragon of *concentrates fully. Thus virtue*—that would be quite boring. You can be dangerous, naughty, even *begins*: • 7. *The second*

crystallization, which somewhat vulgar, depending on the tastes of your victim. But never be or *deposits diamond layers of* dinary or limited. In poetry (as opposed to reality), anything is possible. *proof that "she loves me."*

Soon after we fall under a person's spell, we form an image in our

• *Every few minutes*

throughout the night which minds of who they are and what pleasures they might offer. Thinking of *follows the birth of doubt*, them when we are alone, we tend to make this image more and more ide *the lover has a moment of* alized. The novelist Stendhal, in his book *On Love*, calls this phenomenon *dreadful misgiving, and*

then reassures himself "she "crystallization," telling the story of how, in Salzburg, Austria, they used to loves me"; and throw a leafless branch into the abandoned depths of a salt mine in the *crystallization begins to* middle of winter. When the branch was pulled out months later, it would *reveal new charms. Then*

once again the haggard eye be covered with spectacular crystals. That is what happens to a loved one in *of doubt pierces him and he* our minds.

stops transfixed. He forgets

According to Stendhal, though, there are two crystallizations. The first *to draw breath and mutters*, happens when we first meet the person. The second and more important

"But does she love me?"

Torn between doubt and

one happens later, when a bit of doubt creeps in—you desire the other per *delight, the poor lover* son, but they elude you, you are not sure they are yours. This bit of doubt *convinces himself that she* is critical—it makes your imagination work double, deepens the poeticizing *could give him such*

pleasure as he could find process. In the seventeenth century, the great rake the Duc de Lauzun *nowhere else on earth.* pulled off one of the most spectacular seductions in history—that of the

— S T E N D H A L , *L O V E* ,

Grande Mademoiselle, the cousin of King Louis XIV, and the wealthiest

TRANSLATED BY GILBERT AND

and most powerful woman in France. He tickled her imagination with a

SUZANNE SALE

few brief encounters at the court, letting her catch glimpses of his wit, his audacity, his cool manner. She would begin to think of him when she was alone. Next she started to bump into him more often at court, and they would have little conversations or walks. When these meetings were over, *Falling in love* she would be left with a doubt: is he or is he not interested in me? This *automatically tends toward*

madness. Left to itself, it made her want to see him more, in order to allay her doubts. She began to *goes to utter extremes. This* idealize him all out of proportion to the reality, for the duke was an *incor is well known by the* rigible scoundrel.

"conquistadors" of both

sexes. Once a woman's

Remember: if you are easily had, you cannot be worth that much. It is *Poeticize Your Presence* • 283

hard to wax poetic about a person who comes so cheaply. If, after the initial *attention is fixed upon a* interest, you make it clear that you cannot be taken for granted, if you stir a *man, it is very easy for him to dominate her*

bit of doubt, the target will imagine there is something special, lofty, and *thoughts completely. A*

unattainable about you. Your image will *crystallize* in the other person's *simple game of blowing* mind.

hot and cold, of

Cleopatra knew that she was really no different from any other woman, *solicitousness and disdain, of presence and absence is*

and in fact her face was not particularly beautiful. But she knew that men *all that is required. The* have a tendency to overvalue a woman. All that is required is to hint that *rhythm of that technique* there is something different about you, to make them associate you with *acts upon a woman's attention like a pneumatic*

something grand or poetic. She made Caesar aware of her connection to *machine and ends* by the great kings and queens of Egypt's past; with Antony, she created the *emptying her of all the rest* fantasy that she was descended from Aphrodite herself. These men were *ca- of the world. How well our people put it: "to suck*

vorting not just with a strong-willed woman but a kind of goddess. Such one's senses"! In fact: one associations might be difficult to pull off today, but people still get *deep is absorbed— absorbed by*

pleasure from associating others with some kind of childhood fantasy figure! Most "love affairs" are reduced to this

ure. John F. Kennedy presented himself as a figure of chivalry—noble, *mechanical play of the brave*, charming. Pablo Picasso was not just a great painter with a thirst for *beloved upon the lover's* young girls, he was the Minotaur of Greek legend, or the devilish trickster *attention*. • *The only thing* figure that is so seductive to women. These associations should not be made *that can save a lover is a*

violent shock from the

too early; they are only powerful once the target has begun to fall under *outside, a treatment which* your spell, and is vulnerable to suggestion. A man who had just met *is forced upon him. Many Cleopatra* would have found the Aphrodite association ludicrous. But a *think that absence and long*

trips are a good cure for

person who is falling in love will believe almost anything. The trick is to as- *lovers. Observe that these* associate your image with something mythic, through the clothes you wear, *are cures for one's* the things you say, the places you go.

attention. Distance from

the beloved starves our

In Marcel Proust's novel *Remembrance of Things Past*, the character *attention toward him; it* Swann finds himself gradually seduced by a woman who is not really his *prevents anything further* type. He is an aesthete, and loves the finer things in life. She is of a lower *from rekindling the attention. Journeys, by*

class, less refined, even a little tasteless. What poeticizes her in his mind is a *physically obliging us to* series of exuberant moments they share together, moments that from then *come out of ourselves and* on he associates with her. One of these is a concert in a salon that they at- *resolve hundreds of little* tend, in which he is intoxicated by a little melody in a sonata. Whenever he *problems, by uprooting us from our habitual setting*

thinks of her, he remembers this little phrase. Little gifts she has given him, *and forcing hundreds of* objects she has touched or handled, begin to assume a life of their own. *unexpected objects upon us,*

Any kind of heightened experience, artistic or spiritual, lingers in the mind *succeed in breaking down the maniac's haven and*

much longer than normal experience. You must find a way to share such *opening channels in his* moments with your targets—a concert, a play, a spiritual encounter, what- *sealed consciousness, ever it takes—so that they associate something elevated with you. Shared through which fresh air and*

normal perspective enter.

moments of exuberance have immense seductive pull. Also, any kind of object can be imbued with poetic resonance and sentimental associations, as —JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET, *ON LOVE: ASPECTS OF A*

discussed in the last chapter. The gifts you give and other objects can be- *SINGLE THEME, TRANSLATED BY*

come imbued with your presence; if they are associated with pleasant TOBY TALBOT

memories, the sight of them keeps you in mind and accelerates the poeticization process. Although it is said that absence makes the heart grow fonder, an absence too early will prove deadly to the crystallization process. Like Eva 284 • *The Art of Seduction*

Excessive familiarity can Perón, you must surround your targets with focused attention, so that in *destroy* crystallization. *A*

those critical moments when they are alone, their mind is spinning with a *charming girl of sixteen*

kind of afterglow. Do everything you can to keep the target thinking about *was becoming too fond of a*

handsome young man of you. Letters, mementos, gifts, unexpected meetings—all these give you an *the same age, who used to*

omnipresence. Everything must remind them of you.

make a practice of passing

Finally, if your targets should see you as elevated and poetic, there is *beneath her window* every much to be gained by making them feel elevated and poeticized in their *evening at nightfall. Her*

mother invited him to turn. The French writer Chateaubriand would make a woman feel like a *spend a week with them*

goddess, she had such a powerful effect on him. He would send her poems *in the country. It was a*

that she supposedly had inspired. To make Queen Victoria feel as if she *bold remedy, I admit,*

but the girl was of a were both a seductive woman and a great leader, Benjamin Disraeli would *romantic disposition, and*

compare her to mythological figures and great predecessors, such as Queen *the young man a triflē* Elizabeth I. By idealizing your targets this way, you will make them idealize *dull; within three days she*

despised him. you in return, since you must be equally great to be able to appreciate and see all of their fine qualities. They will also grow addicted to the elevated

— S T E N D H A L , *L O V E*,

TRANSLATED BY GILBERT AND

feeling you give them.

SUZANNE SALE

Symbol: *The Halo.*

Slowly, when the target is alone, he or she begins to

imagine a kind of faint glow around your head, formed by all of the possible pleasures you might offer, the radiance of your charged presence, your noble qualities. The Halo separates you from other people. Do not make it disappear by becoming fa-

miliar and ordinary.

Reversal

It might seem that the reverse tactic would be to reveal everything about yourself, to be completely honest about your faults and virtues. This kind of sincerity was a quality Lord Byron had—he almost got a thrill out of disclosing all of his nasty, ugly qualities, even going so far, later on in his life, as to tell people about his incestuous involvements with his half sister. This kind of dangerous intimacy can be immensely seductive. The target will poeticize your vices, and your honesty about them; they will start to see more than is there. In other words, the idealization process is unavoidable. The only thing that cannot be idealized is mediocrity, but there is nothing seductive about mediocrity. There is no possible way to seduce without creating some kind of fantasy and poeticization.

13

Disarm Through Strategic Weakness

and Vulnerability

Too much ma-

neuvering on your part may raise

suspicion. The best way to cover your tracks

is to make the other person feel superior and

stronger. If you seem to be weak, vulnerable, enthralled

by the other person, and unable to control yourself, you will

make your actions look more natural, less calculated. Physical

weakness—tears, bashfulness, paleness—will help create the effect. To further win trust, exchange honesty for virtue: establish your "sincerity" by confessing some sin on your part—it doesn't have to be real. Sincerity is more important than goodness. Play the victim, then transform your target's sympathy into love.

The Victim Strategy

That sweltering August in the 1770s when the Présidente de Tourvel was visiting the château of her old friend Madame de Rosemonde, leaving her husband at home, she was expecting to be enjoying the peace and quiet of country life more or less on her own. But she loved the simple pleasures, and soon her daily life at the château assumed a comfortable pattern—daily Mass, walks in the country, charitable work in the neighborhood. *The weak ones do have a ring villages, card games in the evening. When Madame de Rosemonde's power over us. The clear, forceful ones I can do*

nephew arrived for a visit, then, the Présidente felt uncomfortable—but *without. I am weak and also curious.*

indecisive by nature myself,

The nephew, the Vicomte de Valmont, was the most notorious libertine in Paris. He was certainly handsome, but he was not what she had expected: he seemed sad, somewhat downtrodden, and strangest of all, he *to the point of letting paid* hardly any attention to her. The Présidente was no coquette; she *herself be used has much the greater appeal. A man*

dressed simply, ignored fashions, and loved her husband. Still, she was *can shape and mold her as* young and beautiful, and was used to fending off men's attentions. In the *he wishes, and becomes* back of her mind, she was slightly perturbed that he took so little notice of *fonder of her all the while.* her. Then, at Mass one day, she caught a glimpse of Valmont apparently lost—MURASAKI SHIKIBU, in prayer. The idea dawned on her that he was in the midst of a period of *THE TALE OF GENJI*, TRANSLATED BY EDWARD G.

soul-searching.

SEIDENSTICKER

As soon as word had leaked out that Valmont was at the château, the Présidente had received a letter from a friend warning her against this dangerous man. But she thought of herself as the last woman in the world to *Hera, daughter of Cronus* be vulnerable to him. Besides, he seemed on the verge of repenting his evil *and Rhea, having been* past; perhaps she could help move him in that direction. What a wonderful *born on the island of Samos or, some say, at*

victory that would be for God. And so the Présidente took note of Val- *Argos, was brought up in* mont's comings and goings, trying to understand what was happening in *Arcadia by Temenus, sou* his head. It was strange, for instance, that he would often leave in the *of Pelasgus. The Seasons were her nurses. After*

morning to go hunting, yet would never return with any game. One day, *banishing their father* she decided to have her servant do a little harmless spying, and she was *Cronus, Hera's twin* amazed and delighted to learn that Valmont had not gone hunting at all; he *brother Zeus sought her* had visited a local village, where he had doled out money to a poor family *out at Cnossus in Crete or, some say, on Mount*

about to be evicted from their home. Yes, she was right, his passionate soul *Thornax (now called* was moving from sensuality to virtue. How happy that made her feel. *Cuckoo Mountain) in*

That evening, Valmont and the Présidente found themselves alone for *Argolis, where he courted her, at first unsuccessfully.*

the first time, and Valmont suddenly burst out with a startling confession. *She took pity on him only* He was head-over-heels in love with the Présidente, and with a love he had *when he adopted the 287*

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disguise of a bedraggled

never experienced before: her virtue, her goodness, her beauty, her kind *cuckoo and tenderly* ways had completely overwhelmed him. His generosity to the poor that *warmed him in her bosom.*

afternoon had been for her sake—perhaps inspired by her, perhaps some *There he at once resumed his true shape and ravished*

thing more sinister: it had been to impress her. He would never have con *her, so that she was fessed to this, but finding himself alone with her, he could not control his shamed into marrying him.*

emotions. Then he got down on his knees and begged for her to help him,

— R O B E R T GRAVES,

to guide him in his misery.

THE GREEK MYTHS

The Présidente was caught off guard, and began to cry. Intensely embarrassed, she ran from the room, and for the next few days pretended to be ill. She did not know how to react to the letters Valmont now began to *In a strategy (?) of send her, begging her to forgive him. He praised her beautiful face and her seduction one draws the*

other into one's area of beautiful soul, and claimed she had made him rethink his whole life. These weakness, which is also his

emotional letters produced disturbing emotions, and Tourvel prided herself *or her area of weakness. A* on her calmness and prudence. She knew she should insist that he leave the *calculated weakness, an*

incalculable weakness: one château, and wrote him to that effect; he reluctantly agreed, but on one challenges the other to be condition—that she allow him to write to her from Paris. She consented, as taken in . . . • To seduce long as the letters were not offensive. When he told Madame de Rose is to appear weak. To seduce is to render weak. monde that he was leaving, the Présidente felt a pang of guilt: his host We seduce with our ess and aunt would miss him, and he looked so pale. He was obviously weakness, never with suffering.

strong signs or powers. In

seduction we enact this

Now the letters from Valmont began to arrive, and Tourvel soon re *weakness, and this is what* gretted allowing him this liberty. He ignored her request that he avoid the *gives seduction its strength.*

subject of love—indeed he vowed to love her forever. He rebuked her for

• *We seduce with our her coldness and insensitivity. He explained his bad path in life—it was not death, our vulnerability,*

and with the void that his fault, he had had no direction, had been led astray by others. Without haunts us. The secret is to her help he would fall back into that world. Do not be cruel, he said, you know how to play with are the one who seduced me. I am your slave, the victim of your charms death in the absence of a

gaze or gesture, in the and goodness; since you are strong, and do not feel as I do, you have noth absence of knowledge or ing to fear. Indeed the Présidente de Tourvel came to pity Valmont—he meaning. • Psychoanalysis seemed so weak, so out of control. How could she help him? And why was tells us to assume our

fragility and passivity, but she even thinking of him, which she now did more and more? She was a in almost religious terms, happily married woman. No, she must

at least put an end to this tiresome *turns them into a form of* correspondence. No more talk of love, she wrote, or she would not reply. *resignation and acceptance* His letters stopped coming. She felt relief. Finally some peace and quiet. *in order to promote a well-*

tempered psychic

One evening, however, as she was seated at the dinner table, she sud *equilibrium*. *Seduction*, by denly heard Valmont's voice from behind her, addressing Madame de Rose *contrast, plays triumph monde*. On the spur of the moment, he said, he had decided to return for *antty with weakness*,

making a game of it, with a short visit. She felt a shiver up and down her spine, her face flushed; he *its own rules*.

approached and sat down beside her. He looked at her, she looked away,

— J E A N BAUDRILLARD,

and soon made an excuse to leave the table and go up to her room. But she
SEDUCTION, TRANSLATED BY

could not completely avoid him over the next few days, and she saw that he

BRIAN SINGER

seemed paler than ever. He was polite, and a whole day might pass without her seeing him, but these brief absences had a paradoxical effect: now Tourvel realized what had happened. She missed him, she wanted to see him. This paragon of virtue and goodness had somehow fallen in love with an incorrigible rake. Disgusted with herself and what she had allowed to *Disarm Through Strategic Weakness and Vulnerability* • 289

happen, she left the château in the middle of the night, without telling *The old American proverb* anyone, and headed for Paris, where she planned somehow to repent this *says if you want to con someone, you must first get*

awful sin.

him to trust you, or at least

feel superior to you (these

two ideas are related), and

Interpretation. The character of Valmont in Choderlos de Laclos's *get him to let down his guard. The proverb*

epistolary novel *Dangerous Liaisons* is based on several of the great real-life *explains a great deal about libertines of eighteenth-century France. Everything Valmont does is calcu- television commercials. If lated for effect—the ambiguous actions that make Tourvel curious about we assume that people are not stupid, they must react*

him, the act of charity in the village (he knows he is being followed), the *to TV commercials with a return visit to the château, the paleness of his face (he is having an affair feeling of superiority that with a girl at the château, and their all-night carousals give him a wasted permits them to believe they are in control. As long*

look). Most devastating of all is his positioning of himself as the weak one, *as this illusion of volition the seduced, the victim. How can the Présidente imagine he is manipulat- persists, they would ing her when everything suggests he is simply overwhelmed by her beauty, consciously have nothing to whether physical or spiritual? He cannot be a deceiver when he repeatedly fear from the commercials. People are prone to trust*

makes a point of confessing the "truth" about himself: he admits that his *anything over which they charity was questionably motivated, he explains why he has gone astray, he believe they have lets her in on his emotions. (All of this "honesty," of course, is calculated.) control. . . • TV com- mercials appear foolish,*

In essence he is like a woman, or at least like a woman of those times— *clumsy, and ineffectual on emotional, unable to control himself, moody, insecure. She is the*

one who *purpose*. *They are made to* is cold and cruel, like a man. In positioning himself as Tourvel's victim, Val- *appear this way at the conscious level in order to*

mont can not only disguise his manipulations but elicit pity and concern. *be consciously ridiculed and* Playing the victim, he can stir up the tender emotions produced by a sick *rejected*. . . . *Most ad men* child or a wounded animal. And these emotions are easily channeled into *will confirm that over the love*—as the Présidente discovers to her dismay.

years the seemingly worst

commercials have sold the

Seduction is a game of reducing suspicion and resistance. The cleverest *best. An effective TV*

way to do this is to make the other person feel stronger, more in control of *commercial is purposefully designed to insult the*

things. Suspicion usually comes out of insecurity; if your targets feel super- *viewer's conscious* rior and secure in your presence, they are unlikely to doubt your motives. *intelligence, thereby* You are too weak, too emotional, to be up to something. Take this game as *penetrating his defenses*. far as it will go. Flaunt your emotions and how deeply they have affected—WILSON BRYAN KEY, you. Making people feel the power they have over you is immensely flatter- *SUBLIMINAL SEDUCTION*

ing to them. Confess to something bad, or even to something bad that you did, or contemplated doing, to them. Honesty is more important than virtue, and one honest gesture will blind them to many deceitful acts. Cre- *It takes great art to use* ate an impression of weakness—physical, mental, emotional. Strength and *bashfulness, but one does achieve a great deal with it.*

confidence can be frightening. Make your weakness a comfort, and play *How often I have used* the victim—of their power over you, of circumstances, of life in general. *bashfulness to trick a little* This is the best way to cover your tracks.

miss! Ordinarily, young

girls speak very harshly

about bashful men, but

You know, a man ain't worth a damn if he can't cry at the

secretly they like them. A

right time.

little bashfulness flatters a

teenage girl's vanity, makes

— L Y N D O N BAINES JOHNSON

her feel superior; it is her

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earnest money. When they

Keys to Seduction

are lulled to sleep, then at

the very time they believe

you are about to perish

from bashfulness, you show We all have weaknesses, vulnerabilities, frailnesses in our mental makeup. Perhaps we are shy or oversensitive, or need attention—

them that you are so far whatever the weakness is, it is something we cannot control. We may try to *from it that you are quite*

compensate for it, or to hide it, but this is often a mistake: people sense *self-reliant. Bashfulness*

makes a man lose his

something inauthentic or unnatural. Remember: what is natural to your masculine significance, and

character is inherently seductive. A person's vulnerability, what they seem therefore it is a relatively

to be unable to control, is often what is most seductive about them. People good means for who display no weaknesses, on the other hand, often elicit envy, fear, and neutralizing the sex

relation.

anger—we want to sabotage them just to bring them down.

— S Ø R E N KIERKEGAARD,

Do not struggle against your vulnerabilities, or try to repress them, but *THE SEDUCER'S DIARY*,

put them into play. Learn to transform them into power. The game is
subTRANSLATED BY HOWARD V. tle: if you wallow in your weakness,
overplay your hand, you will be seen as H O N G AND EDNA H . H O N G

angling for sympathy, or, worse, as pathetic. No, what works best is to allow people an occasional glimpse into the soft, frail side of your character, and usually only after they have known you for a while. That glimpse will help *Yet another form of manize you, lowering their suspicions, and preparing the ground for a Charity is there, which is*

deeper attachment. Normally strong and in control, at moments you let go, *oft times practised towards*

poor prisoners who are shut

give in to your weakness, let them see it.

up in dungeons and robbed

Valmont used his weakness this way. He had lost his innocence long

of all enjoyments with

ago, and yet, somewhere inside, he regretted it. He was vulnerable to *women. On such do the*

gaolers' wives and women

someone truly innocent. His seduction of the Présidente was successful because *that have charge over them*, cause it was not totally an act; there was a genuine weakness on his part, *or chatelaines who have*

which even allowed him to cry at times. He let the Présidente see this side *prisoners of war in their*

Castle, take pity and give

to him at key moments, in order to disarm her. Like Valmont, you can be *them share of their love out*

acting and sincere at the same time. Suppose you are genuinely shy—at certain *very charity and tain moments*, give your shyness a little weight, lay it on a little thick. It *mercifulness. . . . • Thus*

should be easy for you to embellish a quality you already have.

do these gaolers' wives,

noble chatelaines and

After Lord Byron published his first major poem, in 1812, he became *others, treat their prisoners,*

an instant celebrity. Beyond being a talented writer, he was so handsome, *the which, captive and*

even pretty, and he was as brooding and enigmatic as the characters he *unhappy though they be,*

yet cease not for that to feel

wrote about. Women went wild over Lord Byron. He had an infamous

the prickings of the flesh,

"underlook," slightly lowering his head and glancing upward at a woman, *as much as ever they did in*

making her tremble. But Byron had other qualities: when you first met *their best days. . . • To*

confirm what I say, I will

him, you could not help noticing his fidgety movements, his ill-fitting *instance a tale that*

clothes, his strange shyness, and his noticeable limp. This infamous man, *Captain Beaulieu,*

who scorned all conventions and seemed so dangerous, was personally inse *Captain of the King's Galleys, of whom I have*

cure and vulnerable.

before spoke once and

In Byron's poem *Don Juan*, the hero is less a seducer of women than a *again, did tell me. He was*

man constantly pursued by them. The poem was autobiographical; women *in the service of the late*

wanted to take care of this somewhat fragile man, who seemed to have lit *Grand Prior of France, a member of the house of*

tle control over his emotions. More than a century later, John F. Kennedy, *Lorraine, who was much*

as a boy, became obsessed with Byron, the man he most wanted to emulate. *attached to him. Going*

He even tried to borrow Byron's "underlook." Kennedy himself was a frail *one time to take his patron*

on board at Malta in a

youth, with constant health problems. He was also a little pretty, and friends
Disarm Through Strategic Weakness and Vulnerability • 291

saw something slightly feminine in him. Kennedy's weaknesses—physical *frigate, he was taken by the* and mental, for he too was insecure, shy, and oversensitive—were exactly *Sicilian galleys, and carried prisoner to the Castel-à-*

what drew women to him. If Byron and Kennedy had tried to cover up *mare at Palermo, where he* their vulnerabilities with a masculine swagger they would have had no *was shut up in an* seductive charm. Instead, they learned how to subtly display their weak- *exceeding narrow, dark and* nesses, letting women sense this soft side to them.

wretched dungeon, and

very ill entreated by the

There are fears and insecurities peculiar to each sex; your use of strate- *space of three months. By* gic weakness must always take these differences into account. A woman, for *good hap the Governor of* instance, may be attracted by a man's strength and self-confidence, but too *the Castle, who was a Spaniard, had two very*

much of it can create fear, seeming unnatural, even ugly. Particularly intimi- *fair daughters, who hearing* dating is the sense that the man is cold and unfeeling. She may feel insecure *him complaining and* that he is only after sex, and nothing else. Male seducers long ago learned *making moan, did one day ask leave of their father to*

to become more feminine—to show their emotions, and to seem interested *visit him, for the honor of* in their targets' lives. The medieval troubadours were the first to master this *the good God; and this he* strategy; they wrote poetry in honor of women, emoted endlessly about *did freely give them permission to do. And*

their feelings, and spent hours in their ladies' boudoirs, listening to the *seeing the Captain was of* women's complaints and soaking up their spirit. In return for their willing- *a surety a right gallant ness to play weak,* the troubadours earned the right to love.

gentleman, and as ready-

tongued as most, he was

Little has changed since then. Some of the greatest seducers in recent *able so to win them over at* history—Gabriele D' Annunzio, Duke Ellington, Errol Flynn—understood *this, the very first visit,* the value of acting slavishly to a woman, like a troubadour on bended knee. *that they did gain their* The key is to indulge your softer side while still remaining as masculine as *father's leave for him to quit his wretched dungeon*

possible. This may include an occasional show of bashfulness, which the *and to be put in a seemly* philosopher Søren Kierkegaard thought an extremely seductive tactic for a *enough chamber and man*—it gives the woman a sense of comfort, and even of superiority. *Re- receive better treatment. Nor was this all, for they*

member, though, to keep everything in moderation. A glimpse of shyness *did crave and get* is sufficient; too much of it and the target will despair, afraid that she will *permission to come and see* end up having to do all the work.

him freely every day and

converse with him. • And

A man's fears and insecurities often concern his sense of masculinity; he *this did fall out so well that* usually will feel threatened by a woman who is too overtly manipulative, *presently both the twain of* who is too much in control. The greatest seductresses in history knew how *them were in love with him, albeit he was not*

to cover up their manipulations by playing the little girl in need of *handsome to look upon, line protection*. A famous courtesan of ancient China, Su Shou, used to *and they very fair ladies*. make up her face to look particularly pale and weak. She would also walk *And so, without a thought* in a way that made her seem frail. The great nineteenth-century courtesan *of the chance of more rigorous imprisonment or*

Cora Pearl would literally dress and act like a little girl. Marilyn Monroe *even death, but rather* knew how to give the impression that she depended on a man's strength to *tempted by such* survive. In all of these instances, the women were the ones in control of *opportunities, he did set himself to the enjoyment of*

the dynamic, boosting a man's sense of masculinity in order to ultimately *the two girls with good will* enslave him. To make this most effective, a woman should seem both in *and hearty appetite. And* need of protection and sexually excitable, giving the man his ultimate *these pleasures did continue without any scandal, for so*

fantasy.

fortunate was he in this

The Empress Josephine, wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, won dominance *conquest of his for the space* over her husband early on through a calculated coquetry. Later on, though, *of eight whole months, that no scandal did ever hap all*

she held on to that power through her constant—and not so innocent—use *that time, and no ill, of tears*. Seeing someone cry usually has an immediate effect on our emo- 292 • *The Art of Seduction inconvenience, nor any*

tions: we cannot remain neutral. We feel sympathy, and most often will do *surprise or discovery at all*.

anything to stop the tears—including things that we normally would not *For indeed the two sisters do*. Weeping is an incredibly potent tactic, but the weeper is not always so *had so good an understanding between them and*

innocent. There is usually something real behind the tears, but there may *did so generously lend a*

also be an element of acting, of playing for effect. (And if the target senses *hand to each other and so this the tactic is doomed*.) Beyond the emotional impact of tears, there is *obligingly play sentinel to*

one another, that no ill hap something seductive about sadness. We want to comfort the other person, *did ever occur. And he* and as Tourvel discovered, that desire quickly turns into love. Affecting sad *swore to me, being my very ness*, even crying sometimes, has great strategic value, even for a man. It is a *intimate friend as he was,*

that never in his days of skill you can learn. The central character of the eighteenth-century French *greatest liberty had he* novel *Marianne*, by Marivaux, would think of something sad in her past to *enjoyed so excellent* make herself cry or look sad in the present. *entertainment or felt keener*

Use tears sparingly, and save them for the right moment. Perhaps this *ardor or better appetite for*

it than in the said

might be a time when the target seems suspicious of your motives, or when *prison — which truly was a* you are worrying about having no effect on him or her. Tears are a sure *right good prison for him*, barometer of how deeply the other person is falling for you. If they seem *albeit folk say no prison*

can be good. And this annoyed, or resist the bait, your case is probably hopeless. happy time did continue for

In social and political situations, seeming too ambitious, or too con *the space of eight months*, trolled, will make people fear you; it is crucial to show your soft side. The *till the truce was made*

betwixt the Emperor and

display of a single weakness will hide a multitude of manipulations. Emo *Henri II., King of France*, tion or even tears will work here too. Most seductive of all is playing the *whereby all prisoners did*

victim. For his first speech in Parliament, Benjamin Disraeli prepared an *leave their dungeons and*

were released. He sware elaborate oration, but when he delivered it the opposition yelled and that never was he more laughed so loudly that hardly any of it could be heard. He plowed ahead grieved than at quitting and gave the whole speech, but by the time he sat down he felt he had this good prison of his, but failed miserably. Much to his amazement, his colleagues told him the was exceeding sorry to

leave these fair maids, with speech was a marvelous success. It would have been a failure if he had com whom he was in such high plained or given up; but by going ahead as he did, he positioned himself as favor, and who did express the victim of a cruel and unreasonable faction. Almost everyone sympa all possible regrets at his departing.

thized with him now, which would serve him well in the future. Attacking your mean-spirited opponents can make you seem ugly as well; instead,

— S E I G N E U R D E BRANTÔME,

LIVES OF FAIR & GALLANT

soak up their blows, and play the victim. The public will rally to your side,
LADIES, TRANSLATED BY A. R.

in an emotional response that will lay the groundwork for a grand political

ALLINSON

seduction.

Symbol: The Blemish. A beautiful face is a delight to look at, but if it is too perfect it leaves us cold, and even slightly intimidated. It is the little mole, the beauty mark, that makes the face

human and lovable. So do not conceal all of your blemishes. You need them to soften your features and elicit tender feelings.

Disarm Through Strategic Weakness and Vulnerability • 293

Reversal

Timing is everything in seduction; you should always look for signs that the target is falling under your spell. A person falling in love tends to ignore the other person's weaknesses, or to see them as endearing. An unseduced, rational person, on the other hand, may find bashfulness or emotional outbursts pathetic. There are also certain weaknesses that have no seductive value, no matter how in love the target may be.

The great seventeenth-century courtesan Ninon de l'Enclos liked men with a soft side. But sometimes a man would go too far, complaining that she did not love him enough, that she was too fickle and independent, that he was being mistreated and wronged. For Ninon, such behavior would break the spell, and she would quickly end the relationship. Complaining, whining, neediness, and actively appealing for sympathy will appear to your targets not as charming weaknesses but as manipulative attempts at a kind of negative power. So when you play the victim, do it subtly, without overadvertising it. The only weaknesses worth playing up are the ones that will make you seem lovable. All others should be repressed and eradicated at all costs.

14

Confuse Desire and Reality—

The Perfect Illusion

To

compensate for the difficulties in their

lives, people spend a lot of their time daydreaming, imagining a future full of adventure, success, and romance. If you can create the illusion that through you they can live out their dreams, you will have them at your mercy. It is important to start slowly, gaining their trust, and gradually constructing the fantasy that matches their desires. Aim at secret wishes that have been thwarted or repressed, stirring up uncontrollable emotions, clouding their powers of reason. The perfect illusion is one that does not depart too much from reality, but has a touch of the unreal to it, like a waking dream, head the seduced to a point of confusion in which they can no longer tell the difference between illusion and reality.

Fantasy in the Flesh

In 1964, a twenty-year-old Frenchman named Bernard Bouriscout arrived in Beijing, China, to work as an accountant in the French embassy. His first weeks there were not what he had expected. Bouriscout had grown up in the French provinces, dreaming of travel and adventure. When he had been assigned to come to China, images of the Forbidden City, and of the gambling dens of Macao, had danced in his mind. But this *Lovers and madmen have* was Communist China, and contact between Westerners and Chinese was *such seething brains, \ Such* almost impossible at the time. Bouriscout had to socialize with the other *shaping fantasies, that* Europeans stationed in the city, and what a boring and cliquish lot they *apprehend \ More than cool reason ever comprehends.*

were. He grew lonely, regretted taking the assignment, and began making plans to leave.

— W I L L I A M SHAKESPEARE,

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S

Then, at a Christmas party that year, Bouriscout's eyes were drawn to a *DREAM*

young Chinese man in a corner of the room. He had never seen anyone Chinese at any of these affairs. The man was intriguing: he was slender and short, a bit reserved, but he had an attractive presence. Bouriscout went up *He was not a sex person*, and introduced himself. The man, Shi Pei Pu, proved to be a writer of *He was like . . . somebody* Chinese-opera librettos who also taught Chinese to members of the *who had come down from the clouds*. *He was not*

French embassy. Aged twenty-six, he spoke perfect French. Everything *human*. *You could not say* about him fascinated Bouriscout; his voice was like music, soft and whis- *he was a man friend or a pery*, and he left you wanting to know more about him. Bouriscout, al- *woman friend*; *he was somebody different*

though usually shy, insisted on exchanging telephone numbers. Perhaps Pei *anyway*. . . . *You feel he* Pu could be his Chinese tutor.

was only a friend who was

They met a few days later in a restaurant. Bouriscout was the only *coming from another planet and so nice also, so*

Westerner there—at last a taste of something real and exotic. Pei Pu, it *overwhelming and turned out*, had been a well-known actor in Chinese operas and came from *separated from the life of a family with connections to the former ruling dynasty*. Now he wrote *the ground* operas about the workers, but he said this with a look of irony They began—BERNARD BOURISCOUT, IN

to meet regularly, Pei Pu showing Bouriscout the sights of Beijing. Bouris-JOYCE WADLER, *LIAISON*

cout loved his stories—Pei Pu talked slowly, and every historical detail seemed to come alive as he spoke, his hands moving to embellish his words. This, he might say, is where the last Ming emperor hung himself, pointing *Romance had again come her way personified by a*

to the spot and telling the story at the same time. Or, the cook in the *handsome young German* restaurant we just ate in once served in the palace of the last emperor, and *officer, Lieutenant Konrad* then another magnificent tale would follow. Pei Pu also talked of life in the *Friedrich, who called upon her at Neuilly to ask her*

Beijing Opera, where men often played women's parts, and sometimes be- *help. He wanted Pauline* came famous for it.

[Bonaparte] to use her

291

298 • *The Art of Seduction*

influence with Napoleon in

The two men became friends. Chinese contact with foreigners was re *connection with providing* stricted, but they managed to find ways to meet. One evening Bouriscout *for the needs of the French*

tagged along when Pei Pu visited the home of a French official to tutor the *troops in the Papal States*.

He made an instantaneous

children. He listened as Pei Pu told them "The Story of the Butterfly," a *impression on the princess*,

tale from the Chinese opera: a young girl yearns to attend an imperial *who escorted him around*

school, but girls are not accepted there. She disguises herself as a boy, passes *her garden until they*

arrived at the rockery.

the exams, and enters the school. A fellow student falls in love with her, *There she stopped and,*

and she is attracted to him, so she tells him that she is actually a girl. Like *looking into the young*

most of these tales, the story ends tragically. Pei Pu told it with unusual *man's eyes mysteriously,*

emotion; in fact he had played the role of the girl in the opera.

commanded him to return

to this same spot at the

A few nights later, as they were walking before the gates of the Forbid *same hour next day when* den City, Pei Pu returned to "The Story of the Butterfly" "Look at my *she might have some good*

hands," he said, "Look at my face. That story of the butterfly, it is my story news for him. The young

officer bowed and took his

too." In his slow, dramatic delivery he explained that his mother's first two leave. . . . In his memoirs

children had been girls. Sons were far more important in China; if the third he revealed in detail what

child was a girl, the father would have to take a second wife. The third child *took place after the first*

meeting with Pauline: •

came: another girl. But the mother was too frightened to reveal the truth,

"At the hour agreed on I

and made an agreement with the midwife: they would say that the child *again proceeded to Neuilly*,

was a boy, and it would be raised as such. This third child was Pei Pu. *made my way to the*

Over the years, Pei Pu had had to go to extreme lengths to disguise her *appointed spot in the*

garden and stood waiting

sex. She never used public bathrooms, plucked her hairline to look as if she *at the rockery. I had not*

were balding, on and on. Bouriscout was enthralled by the story, and also *been there very long when*

relieved, for like the boy in the butterfly tale, deep down he felt attracted to *a lady made her*

appearance, greeted me

Pei Pu. Now everything made sense—the small hands, the high-pitched *pleasantly and led me* voice, the delicate neck. He had fallen in love with her, and, it seemed, the *through a side door into the*

feelings were reciprocated.

interior of the rockery

where there were several

Pei Pu started visiting Bouriscout's apartment, and soon they were

rooms and galleries and in

sleeping together. She continued to dress as a man, even in his apartment, *one splendid salon a*

but women in China wore men's clothes anyway, and Pei Pu acted more *luxurious-looking bath.*

like a woman than any of the Chinese women he had seen. In bed, she had *The adventure was*

beginning to strike me as

a shyness and a way of directing his hands that was both exciting and *femi very romantic, almost like* nine. She made everything romantic and heightened. When he was away *a fairy tale, and just as I* from her, her every word and gesture resonated in his mind. What made *was wondering what the*

outcome might be a woman

the affair all the more exciting was the fact that they had to keep it secret. *in a robe of the sheerest*

In December of 1965, Bouriscout left Beijing and returned to Paris. He *cambric entered by a side*

traveled, had other affairs, but his thoughts kept returning to Pei Pu. The *door, came up to me, and*

smilingly asked how I liked

Cultural Revolution broke out in China, and he lost contact with her. Be *being there. I at once* fore he had left, she had told him she was pregnant with their child. He had *recognized Napoleon's*

no idea whether the baby had been born. His obsession with her grew too *beautiful sister, whose*

strong, and in 1969 he finagled another government job in Beijing.

perfect figure was clearly

outlined by every

Contact with foreigners was now even more discouraged than on his

movement of her robe. She

first visit, but he managed to track Pei Pu down. She told him she had *held out her hand for me to*

borne a son, in 1966, but he had looked like Bouriscout, and given the *kiss and told me to sit*

down on the couch beside

growing hatred of foreigners in China, and the need to keep the secret of *her. On this occasion I*

her sex, she had him sent him away to an isolated region near Russia. It was *certainly was not the*

so cold there—perhaps he was dead. She showed Bouriscout photographs *Confuse Desire and Reality—The Perfect Illusion* • 299

of the boy, and he did see some resemblance. Over the next few weeks they *seduced*. . . . After an managed to meet here and there, and then Bouriscout had an idea: he sym- interval *Pauline pulled a pathized with the Cultural Revolution, and he wanted to get around the hell rope and ordered the woman who answered to*

prohibitions that were preventing him from seeing Pei Pu, so he offered to *prepare a hath which she do some spying*. The offer was passed along to the right people, and soon *asked me to share*. Bouriscout was stealing documents for the Communists. The son, named *Wearing bathgowns of the*

finest linen we remained

Bertrand, was recalled to Beijing, and Bouriscout finally met him. Now a *for nearly an hour in the threefold adventure filled Bouriscout's life: the alluring Pei Pu, the thrill of crystal-clear bluish water, being a spy, and the illicit child, whom he wanted to bring back to France. Then we had a grand*

dinner served in another

In 1972, Bouriscout left Beijing. Over the next few years he tried *room and lingered on* repeatedly to get Pei Pu and his son to France, and a decade later he *fi-together until dusk. When nally succeeded; the three became a family* In 1983, though, the French *I left I had to promise to return again soon and I*

authorities grew suspicious of this relationship between a Foreign Office *spent many afternoons* official and a Chinese man, and with a little investigating they uncovered *with the princess in the Bouriscout's spying*. He was arrested, and soon made a startling confession: *same way*." the man he was living with was really a woman. Confused, the French or—HARRISON BRENT, dered an examination of Pei Pu; as they had thought, he was very much a *PAULINE BONAPARTE: A WOMAN OF AFFAIRS*

man. Bouriscout went to prison.

Even after Bouriscout had heard his former lover's own confession, he was still convinced that Pei Pu was a woman. Her soft body, their intimate relationship—how could he be wrong? Only when Pei Pu, impris- *The courtesan is meant to be a half-defined, floating*

oned in the same jail, showed him the incontrovertible proof of his sex did *figure never fixing herself* Bouriscout finally accept it.

surely in the imagination.

*She is the memory of an
experience, the point at
which a dream is*

Interpretation. The moment Pei Pu met Bouriscout, he realized he had *transformed into reality* or found the perfect victim. Bouriscout was lonely, bored, desperate. The way *reality into a dream*. *The* he responded to Pei Pu suggested that he was probably also homosexual, or *bright colors fade, her name becomes a mere echo—echo*

perhaps bisexual—at least confused. (Bouriscout in fact had had homo- *of an echo, since she has* sexual encounters as a boy; guilty about them, he had tried to repress this *probably adopted it from* side of himself.) Pei Pu had played women's parts before, and was quite *some ancient predecessor. The idea of the courtesan*

good at it; he was slight and effeminate; physically it was not a stretch. But *is a garden of delights in* who would believe such a story, or at least not be skeptical of it?

which the lover walks,

The critical component of Pei Pu's seduction, in which he brought the *smelling first this flower and then that but never*

Frenchman's fantasy of adventure to life, was to start slowly and set up an *understanding whence* idea in his victim's mind. In his perfect French (which, however, was full of *comes the fragrance that* interesting Chinese expressions), he got Bouriscout used to hearing stories *intoxicates him. Why* and tales, some true, some not, but all delivered in that dramatic yet believ- *should the courtesan not elude analysis? She does*

able tone. Then he planted the idea of gender impersonation with his *not want to be recognized*

"Story of the Butterfly." By the time he confessed the "truth" of his gen- *for what she is, but rather* der, Bouriscout was already completely enchanted with him.

to be allowed to be potent

and effective. She offers the

Bouriscout warded off all suspicious thoughts because he *wanted to be- truth of herself—o r, rather, lieve* Pei Pu's story. From there it was easy Pei Pu faked his periods; it didn't *of the passions that become* take much money to get hold of a child he could reasonably pass off as *directed toward her. And what she gives back is one's*

their son. More important, he played the fantasy role to the hilt, remaining *self and an hour of grace in* elusive and mysterious (which was what a Westerner would expect from an *her presence. Love revives 300 • The Art of Seduction*

when you look at her: is Asian woman) while enveloping his past and indeed their whole experience that not enough? She is

in titillating bits of history. As Bouriscout later explained, "Pei Pu screwed *the generative force of an*

me in the head. . . . I was having relations and in my thoughts, my dreams, illusion, the birth point of

desire, the threshold of

I was light-years away from what was true."

contemplation of bodily

Bouriscout thought he was having an exotic adventure, an enduring *beauty.*

fantasy of his. Less consciously, he had an outlet for his repressed homo— L Y N N E LAWNER, *LIVES OF*

sexuality. Pei Pu embodied his fantasy, giving it flesh, by working first on *THE COURTESANS: PORTRAITS*

OF THE RENAISSANCE

his mind. The mind has two currents: it wants to believe in things that are pleasant to believe in, yet it has a self-protective need to be suspicious of people. If you start off too theatrical, trying too hard to create a fantasy, you will feed that suspicious side of the mind, and once fed, the doubts will *It was on March 16, the*

not go away. Instead, you must start slowly, building trust, while perhaps *same day the Duke of*

Gloucester wrote to Sir letting people see a little touch of something strange or exciting about you William, that Goethe

to tease their interest. Then you build up your story, like any piece of fic *recorded the first known tion. You have established a foundation of trust—now the fantasies and performance of what were*

destined to be called

dreams you envelop them in are suddenly believable.

Emma's Attitudes. Just

Remember: people want to believe in the extraordinary; with a little *what these were, we shall*

groundwork, a little mental foreplay, they will fall for your illusion. If any *learn shortly. First, it must be emphasized that the*

thing, err on the side of reality: use real props (like the child Pei Pu showed *Attitudes were a show Bouriscout*) and add the fantastical touches in your words, or an occasional *for favored eyes only*.

gesture that gives you a slight unreality. Once you sense that they are

• . . . *Goethe, disciple of hooked, you can deepen the spell, go further and further into the fantasy. Winckelmann, was at this*

date thrilled by the human

At that point they will have gone so far into their own minds that you will *form, as a contemporary*

no longer have to bother with verisimilitude.

writes. Here was the ideal

spectator for the classical

drama Emma and Sir

William had wrought in

Wish Fulfillment

the long winter evenings.

Let us take our seats beside

Goethe and settle to watch

the show as he describes In 1762, Catherine, wife of Czar Peter III, staged a coup against her ineffectual husband and proclaimed herself empress of Russia. Over the next it. • "Sit William

few years Catherine ruled alone, but kept a series of lovers. The Russians *Hamilton . . . has now,*

called these men the *vremienchiki*, "the men of the moment," and in 1774

after many years of

devotion to the arts and the

the man of the moment was Gregory Potemkin, a thirty-five-year-old lieu *study of nature, found the tenant*, ten years younger than Catherine, and a most unlikely candidate for *acme of these delights in*

the role. Potemkin was coarse and not at all handsome (he had lost an eye *the person of an English*

girl of twenty with a

in an accident). But he knew how to make Catherine laugh, and he won *beautiful face and a perfect* shined her so intensely that she eventually succumbed. He quickly became *figure. He has had a*

the love of her life.

Greek costume made for

her which becomes her

Catherine promoted Potemkin higher and higher in the hierarchy,

extremely. Dressed in this,

eventually making him the governor of White Russia, a large southwestern *he lets down her hair and,*

area including the Ukraine. As governor, Potemkin had to leave St. Peters *with a few shawls, gives so* burg and go to live in the south. He knew that Catherine could not do *much variety to her poses,*

gestures, expressions, etc.

without male companionship, so he took it upon himself to name Cather *that the spectator can* ine's subsequent *vremienchiki*. She not only approved of this arrangement, *hardly believe his eyes. He*

she made it clear that Potemkin would always remain her favorite.

sees what thousands of

artists would have liked to

Catherine's dream was to start a war with Turkey, recapture Constan- *Confuse Desire and Reality— The Perfect Illusion • 301*

tinople for the Orthodox Church, and drive the Turks out of Europe. She *express realized before him* offered to share this crusade with the young Hapsburg emperor, Joseph II, *in movements and surprising transformations—*

but Joseph never quite brought himself to sign the treaty that would unite *standing, kneeling, sitting*, them in war. Growing impatient, in 1783 Catherine annexed the Crimea, a *reclining, serious, sad*, southern peninsula that was mostly populated by Muslim Tartars. She asked *playful, ecstatic, contrite*, Potemkin to do there what he had already managed to do in the Ukraine—*alluring, threatening, anxious, one pose follows*

rid the area of bandits, build roads, modernize the ports, bring prosperity *another without a break*. to the poor. Once he had cleaned it up, the Crimea would make the perfect launching post for the war against Turkey

the folds of her veil to

match each mood, and has

The Crimea was a backward wasteland, but Potemkin loved the challenge—*a hundred ways of turning* lenge. Getting to work on a hundred different projects, he grew intoxicated *it into a headdress*. *The old* with visions of the miracles he would perform there. He would establish a *knight idolizes her and is quite enthusiastic about*

capital on the Dnieper River, Ekaterinoslav ("To the glory of Catherine"), *everything she does. In her* that would rival St. Petersburg and would house a university outshining *he has found all the* anything in Europe. The countryside would hold endless fields of corn, or—*antiquities, all the profiles of Sicilian coins, even the*

chards with rare fruits from the Orient, silkworm farms, new towns with *Apollo Belvedere. This* bustling marketplaces. On a visit to the empress in 1785, Potemkin talked *much is certain: as a* of these things as if they already existed, so vivid were his descriptions. The *performance it's like* empress was delighted, but her ministers were skeptical—Potemkin loved *nothing you ever saw before in your life. We have*

to talk. Ignoring their warnings, in 1787 Catherine arranged for a tour *already enjoyed it on two* of the area. She asked Joseph II to join her—he would be so impressed *evenings.*" with the modernization of the Crimea that he would immediately sign on—FLORA FRASER, for the war against Turkey. Potemkin, naturally, was to organize the whole *EMMA, LADY HAMILTON*

affair.

And so, in May of that year, after the Dnieper had thawed, Catherine prepared for a journey from Kiev, in the Ukraine, to Sebastopol, in the *For this uncanny is in* Crimea. Potemkin arranged for seven floating palaces to carry Catherine *reality nothing new or* and her retinue down the river. The journey began, and as Catherine, *alien, but something which is familiar and old-*

Joseph, and the courtiers looked at the shores to either side, they saw *tri-established in the mind* umphal arches in front of clean-looking towns, their walls freshly painted; *and which has become* healthy-looking cattle grazing in the

pastures; streams of marching troops *alienated from it only through the process of*

on the roads; buildings going up everywhere. At dusk they were enter- *repression*. *This reference to* tained by bright-costumed peasants, and smiling girls with flowers in their *the factor of repression* hair, dancing on the shore. Catherine had traveled through this area many *enables us, furthermore, to understand Schelling's*

years before, and the poverty of the peasantry there had saddened her—she *definition of the uncanny* had determined then that she would somehow change their lot. To see be- *as something which ought* fore her eyes the signs of such a transformation overwhelmed her, and she *to have remained hidden* berated Potemkin's critics: Look at what my favorite has accomplished, *but has come to light*. . . .

• . . . *There is one more*

look at these miracles!

point of general application

They anchored at three towns along the way, staying in each place in a *which I should like to add*. magnificent, newly built palace with artificial waterfalls in the English-style . . . *This is that an uncanny effect is often and*

gardens. On land they moved through villages with vibrant marketplaces; *easily produced when the* the peasants were happily at work, building and repairing. Everywhere they *distinction between* spent the night, some spectacle filled their eyes—dances, parades, mytho- *imagination and reality is effaced, as when something*

logical tableaux vivants, artificial volcanoes illuminating Moorish gardens. *that we have hitherto* Finally, at the end of the trip, in the palace at Sebastopol, Catherine and *regarded as imaginary* 302 • *The Art of Seduction*

appears before us in reality, Joseph discussed the war with Turkey. Joseph reiterated his concerns. Sud or *when a symbol takes* denly Potemkin interrupted: "I have 100,000 troops waiting for me to say *over the full functions of 'Go!'*" At that moment the windows of the palace were flung open, and to *the thing it symbolizes*,

and so on. It is this factor the sounds of booming cannons they saw lines of troops as far as the eye *which contributes not a*

could see, and a fleet of ships filling the harbor. Awed by the sight, images *little to the uncanny effect*

of Eastern European cities retaken from the Turks dancing in his mind, *attaching to magical*

practices. The infantile Joseph II finally signed the treaty. Catherine was ecstatic, and her love for *element in this, which also* Potemkin reached new heights. He had made her dreams come true. *dominates the minds of*

Catherine never suspected that almost everything she had seen was pure *neurotics, is the*

overaccentuation of fakery, perhaps the most elaborate illusion ever conjured up by one man. psychical reality in

comparison with material

reality—a feature closely

Interpretation. In the four years that he had been governor of the Crimea, *allied to the belief in the*

omnipotence of thoughts. Potemkin had accomplished little, for this backwater would take decades to

— S I G M U N D FREUD,

improve. But in the few months before Catherine's visit he had done the

"THE UNCANNY," IN

following: every building that faced the road or the shore was given a fresh
PSYCHOLOGICAL WRITINGS

coat of paint; artificial trees were set up to hide unseemly spots in the view; *AND LETTERS*

broken roofs were repaired with flimsy boards painted to look like tile; everyone the party would see was instructed to wear their best clothes and look happy; everyone old and infirm was to stay indoors. Floating in their palaces down the Dnieper, the imperial entourage saw brand-new villages, but most of the buildings were only facades. The herds of cattle were shipped from great distances, and were moved at night to fresh fields along the route. The dancing peasants were trained for the entertainments; after each one they were loaded into carts and hurriedly transported to a new downriver location, as were the marching soldiers who seemed to be everywhere. The gardens of the new palaces were filled with transplanted trees that died a few days later. The palaces themselves were quickly and badly built, but were so magnificently furnished that no one noticed. One fortress along the way had been built of sand, and was destroyed a little later by a thunderstorm.

The cost of this vast illusion had been enormous, and the war with

Turkey would fail, but Potemkin had accomplished his goal. To the observant, of course, there were signs along the way that all was not as it seemed, but when the empress herself insisted that everything was real and glorious, the courtiers could only agree. This was the essence of the seduction: Catherine had wanted so desperately to be seen as a loving and progressive ruler, one who would defeat the Turks and liberate Europe, that when she saw signs of change in the Crimea, her mind filled in the picture.

When our emotions are engaged, we often have trouble seeing things as they are. Feelings of love cloud our vision, making us color events to coincide with our desires. To make people believe in the illusions you create, you need to feed the emotions over which they have least control. Often the best way to do this is to ascertain their unsatisfied desires, their wishes crying out for fulfillment. Perhaps they want to see themselves as noble or romantic, but life has thwarted them. Perhaps they want an adventure. If *Confuse Desire and Reality—The Perfect Illusion* • 303

something seems to validate this wish, they become emotional and irrational, almost to the point of hallucination. Remember to envelop them in your illusion *slowly*. Potemkin did not start with grand spectacles, but with simple sights along the way, such as grazing cattle. Then he brought them on land, heightening the drama, until the calculated climax when the windows were flung open to reveal a mighty war machine—actually a few thousand men and boats lined up in such a way as to suggest many more. Like Potemkin, involve the target in some kind of journey, physical or otherwise. The feeling of a shared adventure is rife with fantasy associations. Make people feel that they are getting to see and live out something that relates to their deepest yearnings and they will see happy, prosperous villages where there are only facades. *Here the real journey through Potemkin's fairyland began. It*

*was like a dream—the waking dream of some magician who
had discovered the secret of materializing his visions. . . .*

*[Catherine] and her companions had left the world of reality behind. . . . Their talk
was of Iphigenia and the ancient
gods, and Catherine felt that she was both Alexander and
Cleopatra.*

— G I N A KAUS

Keys to Seduction

The real world can be unforgiving: events occur over which we have little control, other people ignore our feelings in their quests to get what they need, time runs out before we accomplish what we had wanted. If we ever stopped to look at the present and future in a completely objective way, we would despair. Fortunately we develop the habit of dreaming early on. In this other, mental world that we inhabit, the future is full of rosy possibilities. Perhaps tomorrow we will sell that brilliant idea, or meet the person who will change our lives. Our culture stimulates these fantasies with constant images and stories of marvelous occurrences and happy romances.

The problem is, these images and fantasies exist only in our minds, or on-screen. They really aren't enough—we crave the real thing, not this endless daydreaming and titillation. Your task as a seducer is to bring some flesh and blood into

someone's fantasy life by embodying a fantasy figure, or creating a scenario resembling that person's dreams. No one can resist the pull of a secret desire that has come to life before their eyes. You must first choose targets who have some repression or dream unrealized—always the most likely victims of a seduction. Slowly and gradually, you will build up the illusion that they are getting to see and feel and live those dreams of theirs. Once they have this sensation they will lose contact with reality, and begin to see your fantasy as more real than anything else. And once they *304 • The Art of Seduction*

lose touch with reality, they are (to quote Stendhal on Lord Byron's female victims) like roasted larks that fall into your mouth.

Most people have a misconception about illusion. As any magician

knows, it need not be built out of anything grand or theatrical; the grand and theatrical can in fact be destructive, calling too much attention to you and your schemes. Instead create the appearance of normality. Once your targets feel secure—nothing is out of the ordinary—you have room to deceive them. Pei Pu did not spin the lie about his gender immediately; he took his time, made Bouriscout come to him. Once Bouriscout had fallen for it, Pei Pu continued to wear men's clothes. In animating a fantasy, the great mistake is imagining it must be larger than life. That would border on camp, which is entertaining but rarely seductive. Instead, what you aim for is what Freud called the "uncanny," something strange and familiar at the same time, like a *deja vu*, or a childhood memory—anything slightly irrational and dreamlike. The uncanny, the mix of the real and the unreal, has immense power over our imaginations. The fantasies you bring to life for your targets should not be bizarre or exceptional; they should be rooted in reality, with a hint of the strange, the theatrical, the occult (in talk of destiny, for example). You vaguely remind people of something in their childhood, or a character in a film or book. Even before Bouriscout heard Pei Pu's story, he had the uncanny feeling of something remarkable and fantastical in this normal-looking man. The secret to creating an uncanny effect is to keep it subtle and suggestive.

Emma Hart came from a prosaic background, her father a country

blacksmith in eighteenth-century England. Emma was beautiful, but had no other talents to her credit. Yet she rose to become one of the greatest seductresses in history, seducing first Sir William Hamilton, the English ambassador to the court of Naples, and then (as Lady Hamilton, Sir William's wife) Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson. What was strangest when you met her was an uncanny sense that she was a figure from the past, a woman out of Greek myth or ancient history. Sir William was a collector of Greek and Roman antiquities; to seduce him, Emma cleverly made herself resemble a Greek statue, and mythical figures in paintings of the time. It was not just the way she wore her hair, or dressed, but her poses, the way she carried herself. It was as if one of the paintings he collected had come to life. Soon Sir William began to host parties in his home in Naples at which Emma would wear costumes and pose, re-creating images from mythology and history. Dozens of men fell in love with her, for she embodied an image from their childhood, an image of beauty and perfection. The key to this fantasy creation was some shared cultural association—mythology, historical seductresses like Cleopatra. Every culture has a pool of such figures from the distant and not-so-distant past. You hint at a

similarity, in spirit and in appearance—but you are flesh and blood. What could be more thrilling than the sense of being in the presence of some fantasy figure going back to your earliest memories?

One night Pauline Bonaparte, the sister of Napoleon, held a gala affair *Confuse Desire and Reality—The Perfect Illusion* • 305

in her house. Afterward, a handsome German officer approached her in the garden and asked for her help in passing along a request to the emperor. Pauline said she would do her best, and then, with a rather mysterious look in her eye, asked him to come back to the same spot the next night. The officer returned, and was greeted by a young woman who led him to some rooms near the garden and then to a magnificent salon, complete with an extravagant bath. Moments later, another young woman entered through a side door, dressed in the sheerest garments. It was Pauline. Bells were rung, ropes were pulled, and maids appeared, preparing the bath, giving the officer a dressing gown, then disappearing. The officer later described the evening as something out of a fairy tale, and he had the feeling that Pauline was deliberately acting the part of some mythical seductress. Pauline was beautiful and powerful enough to get almost any man she wanted, and she wasn't interested simply in luring a man into bed; she wanted to envelop him in romantic adventure, seduce his mind. Part of the adventure was the feeling that she was playing a role, and was inviting her target along into this shared fantasy.

Role playing is immensely pleasurable. Its appeal goes back to childhood, where we first learn the thrill of trying on different parts, imitating adults or figures out of fiction. As we get older and society fixes a role on us, a part of us yearns for the playful approach we once had, the masks we were able to wear. We still want to play that game, to act a different role in life. Indulge your targets in this wish by first making it clear that you are playing a role, then inviting them to join you in a shared fantasy. The more you set things up like a play or a piece of fiction, the better. Notice how Pauline began the seduction with a mysterious request that the officer reappear the next night; then a second woman led him into a magical series of rooms. Pauline herself delayed her entrance, and when she appeared, she did not mention his business with Napoleon, or anything remotely banal. She had an ethereal air about her; he was being invited to enter a fairy tale. The evening was real, but had an uncanny resemblance to an erotic dream.

Casanova took role playing still further. He traveled with an enormous wardrobe and a trunk full of props, many of them gifts for his targets—

fans, jewels, other accouterments. And some of the things he said and did were borrowed from novels he had read and stories he had heard. He enveloped women in a romantic atmosphere that was heightened yet quite real to their senses. Like Casanova, you must see the world as a kind of theater. Inject a certain lightness into the roles you are playing; try to create a sense of drama and illusion; confuse people with the slight unreality of words and gestures inspired by fiction; in daily life, be the consummate actor. Our culture reveres actors because of their freedom to play roles. It is something that all of us envy.

For years, the Cardinal de Rohan had been afraid that he had somehow offended his queen, Marie Antoinette. She would not so much as look at him. Then, in 1784, the

the queen was prepared not only to change this situation but actually to befriend him. The queen, said Lamotte-Valois, would indicate this in her next formal reception—she would nod to him in a particular way.

During the reception, Rohan indeed noticed a slight change in the

queen's behavior toward him, and a barely perceptible glance at him. He was overjoyed. Now the countess suggested they exchange letters, and Rohan spent days writing and rewriting his first letter to the queen. To his delight he received one back. Next the queen requested a private interview with him in the gardens of Versailles. Rohan was beside himself with happiness and anxiety. At nightfall he met the queen in the gardens, fell to the ground, and kissed the hem of her dress. "You may hope that the past will be forgotten," she said. At this moment they heard voices approaching, and the queen, frightened that someone would see them together, quickly fled with her servants. But Rohan soon received a request from her, again through the countess: she desperately wanted to acquire the most beautiful diamond necklace ever created. She needed a go-between to purchase it for her, since the king thought it too expensive. She had chosen Rohan for the task. The cardinal was only too willing; in performing this task he would prove his loyalty, and the queen would be indebted to him forever. Rohan acquired the necklace. The countess was to deliver it to the queen. Now Rohan waited for the queen both to thank him and slowly to pay him

back.

Yet this never happened. The countess was in fact a grand swindler; the queen had never nodded to him, he had only imagined it. The letters he had received from her were forgeries, and not even very good ones. The woman he had met in the park had been a prostitute paid to dress and act the part. The necklace was of course real, but once Rohan had paid for it, and handed it over to the countess, it disappeared. It was broken into parts, which were hawked all over Europe for enormous amounts. And when

Rohan finally complained to the queen, news of the extravagant purchase spread rapidly. The public believed Rohan's story—that the queen had indeed bought the necklace, and was pretending otherwise. This fiction was the first step in the ruin of her reputation.

Everyone has lost something in life, has felt the pangs of disappointment. The idea that we can get something back, that a mistake can be righted, is immensely seductive. Under the impression that the queen was prepared to forgive some mistake he had made, Rohan hallucinated all kinds of things—nods that did not exist, letters that were the flimsiest of forgeries, a prostitute who became Marie Antoinette. The mind is infinitely vulnerable to suggestion, and even more so when strong desires are involved. And nothing is stronger than the desire to change the past, right a wrong, satisfy a disappointment. Find these desires in your victims and creating a believable fantasy will be simple for you: few have the power to see through an illusion they desperately want to believe in.

Symbol: *Shangri-La. Everyone has a vision in their mind of a perfect place where people are kind and noble, where their dreams can be realized and their wishes fulfilled, where life is full of adventure and romance. Lead the target on a journey there, give them a glimpse of Shangri-La through the mists on the mountain, and they will fall in love.*

Reversal

There is no reversal to this chapter. No seduction can proceed without creating illusion, the sense of a world that is real but separate from reality.

15

Isolate the Victim

An isolated person is weak. By slowly isolating your victims, you make them more vulnerable to your influence. Their isolation may be psychological: by filling their field of vision through the pleasurable attention you pay them, you crowd out everything else in their mind. They see and think only of you. The isolation may also be physical: you take them away from their normal milieu, friends, family, home. Give them the

*sense of being marginalized, in limbo—they
are leaving one world behind and entering
another. Once isolated like this, they have
no outside support, and in their confu-
sion they are easily led astray.*

*Lure the seduced into your
lair, where nothing is
familiar.*

Isolation—the Exotic Effect

In the early fifth century B.C., Fu Chai, the Chinese king of Wu, defeated his great enemy, Kou Chien, the king of Yueh, in a series of battles. Kou Chien was captured and forced to serve as a groom in Fu Chai's stables. He was finally allowed to return home, but every year he had to pay a large tribute of money and gifts to Fu Chai. Over the years, this tribute added up, so that the kingdom of Wu prospered and Fu Chai grew wealthy

One year Kou Chien sent a delegation to Fu Chai: they wanted to *In the state of Wu great know if he would accept a gift of two beautiful maidens as part of the trib-preparations had been made for the reception of*

ute. Fu Chai was curious, and accepted the offer. The women arrived a few *the two beauties. The king* days later, amid much anticipation, and the king received them in his *received them in audience* palace. The two approached the throne—their hair was magnificently coif- *surrounded by his ministers and all his court. As they*

fured, in what was called "the cloud-cluster" style, ornamented with pearl approached him the jade ornaments and kingfisher feathers. As they walked, jade pendants hanging pendants attached to their from their girdles made the most delicate sound. The air was full of some girdles made a musical sound and the air was

delightful perfume. The king was extremely pleased. The beauty of one of fragrant with the scent of the girls far surpassed that of the other; her name was Hsi Shih. She looked their gowns. Pearl him in the eye without a hint of shyness; in fact she was confident and co- ornaments and kingfisher feathers adorned their hair.

quettish, something he was not used to seeing in such a young girl.

• *Fu Chai, the king of*

Fu Chai called for festivities to commemorate the occasion. The halls *Wu, looked into the lovely* of the palace filled with revelers; inflamed with wine, Hsi Shih danced *be- eyes of Hsi Shih* fore the king. She sang, and her voice was beautiful. Reclining on a couch (495-472 B.C.) *and forgot his people and his*

of white jade, she looked like a goddess. The king could not leave her side. *state. Now she did not* The next day he followed her everywhere. To his astonishment, she was *turn away and blush as she* witty, sharp, and knowledgeable, and could quote the classics better than he *had done three years previously beside the little*

could. When he had to leave her to deal with royal affairs, his mind was full *brook. She was complete* of her image. Soon he brought her with him to his councils, asking her *ad- mistress of the art of vice* on important matters. She told him to listen less to his ministers; he *seduction and she knew how to encourage the king*

was wiser than they were, his judgment superior.

to look again. Fu Chai

Hsi Shih's power grew daily. Yet she was not easy to please; if the king *hardly noticed the second* failed to grant some wish of hers, tears would fill her eyes, his heart would *girl, whose quiet charms did not attract him. He*

melt, and he would yield. One day she begged him to build her a palace *had eyes only for Hsi* outside the capital. Of course, he obliged her. And when he visited the *Shih, and before the* palace, he was astounded at its magnificence, even though he had paid *audience was over those at the bills*: Hsi Shih had filled it with the most extravagant furnishings. The *court realized that the girl would be a force to be*

grounds contained an artificial lake with marble bridges crossing over it. Fu *reckoned with and that she* Chai spent more and more time here, sitting by a pool and watching *Hsi would be able to influence 311*

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the king either for good

Shih comb her hair, using the pool as a mirror. He would watch her play *or ill. . . .* • *Amidst the* ing with her birds, in their jeweled cages, or simply walking through the *revelers in the halls of Wu*, palace, for she moved like a willow in the breeze. The months went by; he *Hsi Shih wove her net*

of fascination about the stayed in the palace. He missed councils, ignored his family and friends, ne *heart of the susceptible* glected his public functions. He lost track of time. When a delegation came *monarch. . . . "Inflamed*

to talk to him of urgent matters, he was too distracted to listen. If anything *by wine, she now begins to*

sing / The songs of Wu to but Hsi Shih took up his time, he worried unbearably that she would be please the fatuous king; / angry.

And in the dance of Tsu

Finally word reached him of a growing crisis: the fortune he had spent *she subtly blends /All*

rhythmic movements to her on the palace had bankrupted the treasury, and the people were discon *sensuous ends.*" . . . But tented. He returned to the capital, but it was too late: an army from the *she could do more than* kingdom of Yueh had invaded Wu, and had reached the capital. All was *sing and dance to amuse* lost. Fu Chai had no time to rejoin his beloved Hsi Shih. Instead of letting *the king. She had wit, and*

her grasp of politics himself be captured by the king of Yueh, the man who had once served in *astonished him. When* his stables, he committed suicide.

there was anything she

Little did he know that Kou Chien had plotted this invasion for years, *wanted she could shed tears*

which so moved her lover's

and that Hsi Shih's elaborate seduction was the main part of his plan. *heart that he could refuse*

her nothing. For she was,

as Fan Li had said, the

one and only, the

Interpretation. Kou Chien wanted to make sure that his invasion of Wu *incomparable Hsi Shih,* would not fail. His enemy was not Fu Chai's armies, or his wealth and his *whose magnetic personality*

resources, but his mind. If he could be deeply distracted, his mind filled *attracted everyone, many* with something other than affairs of state, he would fall like ripe fruit. *even against their own*

will. . . . • Embroidered

Kou Chien found the most beautiful maiden in his realm. For three

silk curtains encrusted with years he had her trained in all of the arts—not just singing, dancing, and *coral and gems, scented*

calligraphy, but how to dress, how to talk, how to play the coquette. And it
furniture and screens inlaid

with jade and mother-of-

worked: Hsi Shih did not allow Fu Chai a moment's rest. Everything about *pearl*
were among the her was exotic and unfamiliar. The more attention he paid to her
hair, her *luxuries which surrounded*

moods, her glances, the way she moved, the less he thought about diplo *the*
favorite. . . . On one of the hills near the palace macy and war. He was driven to
distraction. *there was a celebrated pool*

All of us today are kings protecting the tiny realm of our own lives, *of clear water*
which has weighed down by all kinds of responsibilities, surrounded by ministers
and *been known ever since as*

the pool of the king of advisers. A wall forms around us—we are immune to the
influence of other *Wu. Here, to amuse her* people, because we are so preoccupied.
Like Hsi Shih, then, you must lure *lover; Hsi Shih would* your targets away, gently,
slowly, from the affairs that fill their mind. And *make her toilet, using the* what will
best lure them from their castles is the whiff of the exotic. Offer *pool as a mirror*
while

the infatuated king combed

something unfamiliar that will fascinate them and hold their attention. Be *her*
hair. . . .

different in your manners and appearance, and slowly envelop them in this

—ELOISE TALCOTT HIBBERT,

different world of yours. Keep your targets off balance with coquettish
EMBROIDERED GAUZE:

changes of mood. Do not worry that the disruption you represent is mak
PORTRAITS OR FAMOUS

CHINESE LADIES

ing them emotional—that is a sign of their growing weakness. Most people are
ambivalent: on the one hand they feel comforted by their habits and duties, on the
other they are bored, and ripe for anything that seems exotic, that seems to come
from somewhere else. They may struggle or have

doubts, but exotic pleasures are irresistible. The more you can get them *Isolate the*
Victim • 313

into your world, the weaker they become. As with the king of Wu, by the *In Cairo* *Aly* bumped into time they realize what has happened, it is too late.

[the singer] *Juliette Greco*

again. He asked her to

dance. • "You have too bad

a reputation," she replied.

Isolation—The "Only You" Effect

"We're going to sit very

much apart. " • "What are

you doing tomorrow?" he

In 1948, the twenty-nine-year-old actress Rita Hayworth, known as *insisted.* • *"Tomorrow I* Hollywood's Love Goddess, was at a low point in her life. Her marriage *take a plane to Beirut.*" •

to Orson Welles was breaking up, her mother had died, and her career *When she boarded the*

plane, Aly was already

seemed stalled. That summer she headed for Europe. Welles was in Italy at *on it, grinning at her* the time, and in the back of her mind she was dreaming of a reconciliation. *surprise. . . .* • *Dressed in* Rita stopped first at the French Riviera. Invitations poured in, particu- *tight black leather slacks and a black sweater*

larly from wealthy men, for at the time she was considered the most beauti-[*Greco] stretched* ful woman in the world. Aristotle Onassis and the Shah of Iran telephoned *languorously in an* her almost daily, begging for a date. She turned them all down. A few days *armchair of her Paris house* after her arrival, though, she received an invitation from Elsa Maxwell, the *and observed:* • *"They say I am a dangerous woman.*

society hostess, who was giving a little party in Cannes. Rita balked but *Well, Aly was a dangerous*

Maxwell insisted, telling her to buy a new dress, show up a little late, and *man. He was charming in* make a grand entrance.

a very special way. There is

a kind of man who is very

Rita played along, and arrived at the party wearing a white Grecian *clever with women. He* gown, her red hair falling over her bare shoulders. She was greeted by a re-takes you out to a action she had grown used to: all conversation stopped as both men and *restaurant and if the most beautiful woman comes in,*

women turned in their chairs, the men gazing in amazement, the women *he doesn't look at her. He* jealous. A man hurried to her side and escorted her to her table. It was *makes you feel you are a* thirty-seven-year-old Prince Aly Khan, the son of the Aga Khan III, who *queen. Of course, I understood it. I didn't*

was the worldwide leader of the Islamic Ismaili sect and one of the richest *believe it. I would laugh* men in the world. Rita had been warned about Aly Khan, a notorious rake. *and point out the* To her dismay, they were seated next to each other, and he never left her *beautiful woman. But that* side. He asked her a million questions—about Hollywood, her interests, on *is me. . . . Most women are made very happy by*

and on. She began to relax a little and open up. There were other beautiful *that kind of attention. It's* women there, princesses, actresses, but Aly Khan ignored them all, acting as *pure vanity. She thinks,* if Rita were the only woman there. He led her onto the dance floor, and

'I'll be the one and the

others will leave.'

though he was an expert dancer, she felt uncomfortable—he held her a lit-• " . . . *With Aly, how* tle too close. Still, when he offered to drive her back to her hotel, she *the woman felt was most* agreed. They sped along the Grande Corniche; it was a beautiful night. For *important. . . . He was a great charmer, a great*

one evening she had managed to forget her many problems, and she was *seducer. He made you feel grateful,* but she was still in love with Welles, and an affair with a rake like *fine and that everything* Aly Khan was not what she needed.

was easy. No problems.

Nothing to worry about.

Aly Khan had to fly off on business for a few days; he begged her to *Or regret. It was always,*

stay at the Riviera until he got back. While he was away, he telephoned

'What can I do for you?

constantly. Every morning a giant bouquet of flowers arrived. On the tele *What do you need?'*

phone he seemed particularly annoyed that the Shah of Iran was trying *Airplane tickets, cars, boats; you felt you were on*

hard to see her, and he made her promise to break the date to which she *a pink cloud.*" had finally agreed. During this time, a gypsy fortune-teller visited the hotel,—LEONARD SLATER, and Rita agreed to have her fortune read. "You are about to embark on the *ALY: A BIOGRAPHY*

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ANNE: Didst thou not kill greatest romance of your life," the gypsy told her. "He is somebody you al *this king [Henry VI]* ? \ ready know. . . . You must relent and give in to him totally. Only if you do *RICHARD: I grant ye. . . .* \ that will you find happiness at long last." Not knowing who this man could *ANNE: And thou unfit for*

any place, but hell. \ be, Rita, who had a weakness for the occult, decided to extend her stay. *RICHARD: Yes, one place*

Aly Khan came back; he told her that his château overlooking the Mediter *else, if you will hear me* ranean was the perfect place to escape from the press and forget her trou *name it.* \ *ANNE: Some dungeon.* \ *RICHARD:*

bles, and that he would behave himself. She relented. Life in the château *Your bedchamber,* \ *ANNE:* was like a fairy tale; wherever she turned, his Indian helpers were there to *Ill rest betide the chamber* attend to her every wish. At night he would take her into his enormous *where thou liest!* \ ballroom, where they would dance all by themselves. Could this be the *RICHARD: So will it,*

madam, till I lie with you. man the fortune-teller meant?

. . . *But gentle Lady*

Aly Khan invited his friends over to meet her. Among this strange

Anne . . . \ *Is not the company* she felt alone again, and depressed; she decided to leave the *causer of the timeless*

deaths \ *Of these* château. Just then, as if he had read her thoughts, Aly Khan whisked her off *Plantagenets, Henry and*

to Spain, the country that fascinated her most. The press caught on to the *Edward,* \ *As blameful as affair,* and began to hound them in Spain: Rita had had a daughter with the *executioner?* \ *ANNE:*

Thou wast the cause and Welles—was this any way for a mother to act? Aly Khan's reputation did *most accursed effect.* \ not help, but he stood by her, shielding her from the press as best he could. *RICHARD: Your beauty* Now she was more alone than ever, and more dependent on him. *was the cause of that*

effect— \ *Your beauty, that*

Near the end of the trip, Aly Khan proposed to Rita. She turned him *did haunt me in my sleep* | down; she did not think he was the kind of man you married. He followed *To undertake the death of* her to Hollywood, where her former friends were less friendly than be *all the world*, | *So I might* fore. Thank God she had Aly Khan to help her. A year later she finally *live one hour in your sweet bosom.*

succumbed, abandoning her career, moving to Aly Khan's château, and

— W I L L I A M SHAKESPEARE,

marrying him.

THE TRAGEDY OF KING

RICHARD III

Interpretation. Aly Khan, like a lot of men, fell in love with Rita Hayworth the moment he saw the film *Gilda*, in 1948. He made up his mind *My child, my sister, dream* that he would seduce her somehow. The moment he heard she was coming

| *How sweet all things* to the Riviera, he got his friend Elsa Maxwell to lure her to the party and *would seem* | *Were we in* seat her next to him. He knew about the breakup of her marriage, and *that kind land to live*

together; And there love how vulnerable she was. His strategy was to block out everything else in *slow and long*, | *There love* her world—problems, other men, suspicion of him and his motives, etc. *and die among* | *Those* His campaign began with the display of an intense interest in her life—

scenes that image you, that

sumptuous weather. | constant phone calls, flowers, gifts, all to keep him in her mind. He set up *Drowned suns* that the fortune-teller to plant the seed. When she began to fall for him, he in *glimmer there* | *Through* trduced her to his friends, knowing she would feel alienated among them, *cloud-dishevelled air* |

Move me with such a and therefore dependent on him. Her dependence was heightened by the *mystery as appears* | trip to Spain, where she was on unfamiliar territory, besieged by reporters, *Within those other skies* | and forced to cling to him for help. He slowly came to dominate her *Of your treacherous eyes* | thoughts. Everywhere she turned, there he was. Finally she succumbed, out *When I behold them*

shining through their tears. of weakness and the boost to her vanity that his attention represented. Un | *There, there is nothing* der his spell, she forgot about his horrid reputation, relinquishing the suspi *else but grace and measure*, cions that were the only thing protecting her from him.

\ *Richness, quietness, and*

pleasure. . . . \ See,

It was not Aly Khan's wealth or looks that made him a great seducer. *Isolate the Victim* • 315

He was not in fact very handsome, and his wealth was more than offset by *sheltered from the swells* \

his bad reputation. His success was strategic: he isolated his victims, work *There in the still canals* \

Those drowsy ships that

ing so slowly and subtly that they did not notice it. The intensity of his at- *dream of sailing forth*; \ *It* tention made a woman feel that in his eyes, at that moment, she was the *is to satisfy* \ *Your least* only woman in the world. This isolation was experienced as pleasure; the *desire, they ply* \ *Hither through all the waters of*

woman did not notice her growing dependence, how the way he filled up *the earth*. \ *The sun at* her mind with his attention slowly isolated her from her friends and her *close of day* \ *Clothes the* milieu. Her natural suspicions of the man were drowned out by his intoxic- *fields of hay*, \ *Then the* cating effect on her ego. Aly Khan almost always capped off his seductions *canals, at last the town entire* \ *In hyacinth and*

by taking the woman to some enchanted place on the globe—a place that *gold*: \ *Slowly the land is* he knew well, but where the woman felt lost.

rolled \ Sleepward under a

Do not give your targets the time or space to worry about, suspect, or *sea of gentle fire*. \ *There, there is nothing else but*

resist you. Flood them with the kind of attention that crowds out all other *grace and measure*, \

thoughts, concerns, and problems. Remember—people secretly yearn to be *Richness, quietness, and* led astray by someone who knows where they are going. It can be a plea- *pleasure*. sure to let go, and even to feel isolated and weak, if the seduction is done—CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, slowly and gracefully.

"INVITATION TO THE VOYAGE,"

THE FLOWERS OF EVIL,

TRANSLATED BY RICHARD

Put them in a spot where they have no place to go, and

WILBUR

they will die before fleeing.

—SUN-TZU

Keys to Seduction

The people around you may seem strong, and more or less in control of their lives, but that is merely a facade. Underneath, people are more brittle than they let on. What lets them seem strong is the series of nests and safety nets they envelop themselves in—their friends, their families, their daily routines, which give them a feeling of continuity, safety, and control. Suddenly pull the rug out from under them, drop them alone into some foreign place where the familiar signposts are gone or scrambled, and you will see a very different person.

A target who is strong and settled is hard to seduce. But even the strongest people can be made vulnerable if you can isolate them from their nests and safety nets. Block out their friends and family with your constant presence, alienate them from the world they are used to, and take them to places they do not know. Get them to spend time in *your* environment. Deliberately disturb their habits, get them to do things they have never done. They will grow emotional, making it easier to lead them astray. Disguise all this in the form of a pleasurable experience, and your targets will wake up one day distanced from everything that normally comforts them. Then they will turn to you for help, like a child crying out for its mother when the lights are turned out. In seduction, as in warfare, the isolated target is weak and vulnerable.

In Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*, written in 1748, the rake Lovelace is 316 • *The Art of Seduction*

attempting to seduce the novel's beautiful heroine. Clarissa is young, virtuous, and very much protected by her family. But Lovelace is a conniving seducer. First he courts Clarissa's sister, Arabella. A match between them seems likely. Then he suddenly switches attention to Clarissa, playing on sibling rivalry to make Arabella furious. Their brother, James, is angered by Lovelace's change in sentiments; he fights with Lovelace and is wounded. The whole family is in an uproar, united against Lovelace, who, however, manages to smuggle letters to Clarissa, and to visit her when she is at the house of a friend. The family finds out, and accuses her of disloyalty. Clarissa is innocent; she has not encouraged Lovelace's letters or visits. But now her parents are determined to marry her off, to a rich older man. Alone in the world, about to be married to a man she finds repulsive, she turns to Lovelace as the only one who can save her from this mess. Eventually he rescues her by getting her to London, where she can escape this dreaded marriage, but where she is also hopelessly isolated. In these circumstances her feelings toward him soften. All of this has been masterfully orchestrated by Lovelace himself—the turmoil within the family, Clarissa's eventual alienation from them, the whole scenario.

Your worst enemies in a seduction are often your targets' family and friends. They are outside your circle and immune to your charms; they may provide a voice of reason to the seduced. You must work silently and subtly to alienate the target from them. Insinuate that they are jealous of your target's good fortune in finding you, or that they are parental figures who have lost a taste for adventure. The latter argument is extremely effective with young people, whose identities are in flux and who are more than ready to rebel against any authority figure, particularly their parents. You represent excitement and life; the friends and parents represent habit and boredom. In Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Richard III*, Richard, when still the Duke of Gloucester, has murdered King Henry VI and his son, Prince Edward. Shortly thereafter he accosts Lady Anne, Prince Edward's widow, who knows what he has done to the two men closest to her, and who hates him as much as a woman can hate. Yet Richard attempts to seduce her. His method is simple: he tells her that what he did, he did because of his love for her. He wanted there to be no one in her life but him. His feelings were so strong he was driven to murder. Of course Lady Anne not only resists this line of reasoning, she abhors him. But he persists. Anne is at a moment of extreme vulnerability—alone in the world, with no one to support her, at the height of grief. Incredibly, his words begin to have an effect. Murder is not a seductive tactic, but the seducer does enact a kind of killing—a psychological one. Our past attachments are a barrier to the present. Even people we have left behind can continue to have a hold on us. As a seducer you will be held up to the past, compared to previous suitors, perhaps found inferior. *Do not let it get to that point.* Crowd out the past with your attentions in the present. If necessary, find ways to disparage their previous lovers—subtly or not so subtly, depending on the situation. Even go so far as to open old wounds, making them feel old pain and seeing by con- *Isolate the Victim* • 317

trast how much better the present is. The more you can isolate them from their past, the deeper they will sink with you into the present.

The principle of isolation can be taken literally by whisking the target off to an exotic locale. This was Aly Khan's method; a secluded island worked best, and indeed islands, cut off from the rest of the world, have always been associated with the pursuit of sensual pleasures. The Roman Emperor Tiberius descended into debauchery once he made his home on the island of Capri. The danger of travel is that your targets are intimately exposed to you—it is hard to maintain an air of mystery. But if you take them to a place alluring enough to distract them, you will prevent them from focusing on anything banal in your character. Cleopatra lured Julius Caesar into taking a voyage down the Nile. Moving deeper into Egypt, he was further isolated from Rome, and Cleopatra was all the more seductive. The early-twentieth-century lesbian seductress Natalie Barney had an onagain-off-again affair with the poet Renée Vivien; to regain her affections, she took Renée on a trip to the island of Lesbos, a place Natalie had visited many times. In doing so she not only isolated Renée but disarmed and distracted her with the associations of the place, the home of the legendary lesbian poet Sappho. Vivien even began to imagine that Natalie was Sappho herself. Do not take the target just anywhere; pick the place that will have the most effective associations.

The seductive power of isolation goes beyond the sexual realm. When new adherents joined Mahatma Gandhi's circle of devoted followers, they were

encouraged to cut off their ties with the past—with their family and friends. This kind of renunciation has been a requirement of many religious sects over the centuries. People who isolate themselves in this way are much more vulnerable to influence and persuasion. A charismatic politician feeds off and even encourages people's feelings of alienation. John F. Kennedy did this to great effect when he subtly disparaged the Eisenhower years; the comfort of the 1950s, he implied, compromised American ideals. He invited Americans to join him in a new life, on a "New Frontier," full of danger and excitement. It was an extremely seductive lure, particularly for the young, who were Kennedy's most enthusiastic supporters.

Finally, at some point in the seduction there must be a hint of danger in the mix. Your targets should feel that they are gaining a great adventure in following you, but are also losing something—a part of their past, their cherished comfort. Actively encourage these ambivalent feelings. An element of fear is the proper spice; although too much fear is debilitating, in small doses it makes us feel alive. Like diving out of an airplane, it is exciting, a thrill, at the same time that it is a little frightening. And the only person there to break the fall, or catch them, is you.

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Symbol: *The Pied Piper. A jolly fellow in his red and yellow cloak, he lures the children from their homes with the delightful sounds of his flute. Enchanted, they do not notice how far they are walking, how they are leaving their families behind. They do not even notice the cave he eventually leads them into, and which closes upon them forever.* Reversal

The risks of this strategy are simple: isolate someone too quickly and you will induce a sense of panic that may end up in the target's taking flight. The isolation you bring must be gradual, and disguised as pleasure—

the pleasure of knowing you, leaving the world behind. In any case, some people are too fragile to be cut off from their base of support. The great modern courtesan Pamela Harriman had a solution to this problem: she isolated her victims from their families, their former or present wives, and in place of those old connections she quickly set up new comforts for her lovers. She overwhelmed them with attention, attending to their every need. In the case of Averill Harriman, the billionaire who eventually married her, she literally established a new home for him, one that had no associations with the past and was full of the pleasures of the present. It is unwise to keep the seduced dangling in midair for too long, with nothing familiar or comforting in sight. Instead, replace the familiar things you have cut them off from with a new home, a new series of comforts.

Phase Three

The Precipice—

Deepening the Effect Through

Extreme Measures

The goal in this phase is to make everything deeper—the effect you have on their mind, feelings of love and attachment, tension within your victims. With your

hooks deep into them, you can then push them back and forth, between hope and despair, until they weaken and snap. Showing how far you are willing to go for your victims, doing some noble or chivalrous deed (16: Prove yourself) will create a powerful jolt, spark an intensely positive reaction. Everyone has scars, repressed desires, and un-finished business from childhood. Bring these desires and wounds to the surface, make your victims feel they are getting what they never got as a child and you will penetrate deep into their psyche, stir uncontrollable emotions (17: Effect a regression). Now you can take your victims past their limits, getting them to act out their dark sides, adding a sense of danger to your seduction (18: Stir up the transgressive and taboo). You need to deepen the spell, and nothing will more confuse and enchant your victims than giving your seduction a spiritual veneer. It is not lust that motivates you, but destiny, divine thoughts and everything elevated (19: Use spiritual lures). The erotic lurks beneath the spiritual. Now your victims have been properly set up. By deliberately hurting them, instilling fears and anxieties, you will lead them to the edge of the precipice from which it will be easy to push and make them fall (20: Mix pleasure with pain). They feel great tension and are yearning for relief.

16

Prove Yourself

Most

people want to be seduced. If they resist your efforts, it is probably because you have not gone far enough to allay their doubts—about your motives, the depth of your feelings, and so on. One well-timed action that shows how far you are willing to go to win them over will dispel their doubts. Do not worry about looking foolish or making a mistake—any kind of deed that is self-sacrificing and for your targets' sake will so overwhelm their emo-

tions, they won't notice anything else.

Never appear discouraged by people's

resistance, or complain. Instead, meet

the challenge by doing something ex-

treme or chivalrous. Conversely, spur

others to prove themselves by making

yourself hard to reach, unattain-

able, worth fighting over.

Seductive Evidence

Anyone can talk big, say lofty things about their feelings, insist on how much they care for us, and also for all oppressed peoples in the far reaches of the planet. But if they never behave in a way that will back up their words, we begin to doubt their sincerity—perhaps we are dealing with a charlatan, or a hypocrite or a coward. Flattery and fine words can only go so far. A time will eventually arrive when you will have to show your victim some evidence, to match your words with deeds.

Love is a species of warfare.

Slack troopers, go

This kind of evidence has two functions. First, it allays any lingering *elsewhere!* \ *It takes more* doubts about you. Second, an action that reveals some positive quality in *than cowards to guard* \

you is immensely seductive in and of itself. Brave or selfless deeds create a *These standards. Night-duty in winter, long-route*

powerful and positive emotional reaction. Don't worry, your deeds do not *marches, every* \ *Hardship*, have to be so brave and selfless that you lose everything in the process. The *all forms of suffering: these* appearance alone of nobility will often suffice. In fact, in a world where *await* \ *The recruit who expects a soft option*.

people overanalyze and talk too much, any kind of action has a bracing, se- *You'll often be out in* \

ductive effect.

Cloudbursts, and bivouac

It is normal in the course of a seduction to encounter resistance. The *on the bare* \ *Ground*. . . more obstacles you overcome, of course, the greater the pleasure that

awaits *Is lasting \ Love your ambition? Then put away*

you, but many a seduction fails because the seducer does not correctly read *all pride. \ The simple*, the resistances of the target. More often than not, you give up too easily. *straightforward way in may* First, understand a primary law of seduction: resistance is a sign that the *be denied you, \ Doors bolted, shut in your face* —

other person's emotions are engaged in the process. The only person you \ *So be ready to slip down* cannot seduce is somebody distant and cold. Resistance is emotional, and *from the roof through a* can be transformed into its opposite, much as, in jujitsu, the physical resis- *lightwell, \ Or sneak in by an upper-floor window*.

tance of an opponent can be used to make him fall. If people resist you be- *She'll be glad \ To know* cause they don't trust you, an apparently selfless deed, showing how far you *you 're risking your neck*, are willing to go to prove yourself, is a powerful remedy. If they resist be- *and for her sake: that will offer \ Any mistress sure*

cause they are virtuous, or because they are loyal to someone else, all the *proof of your love*. better—virtue and repressed desire are easily overcome by action. As the

— OVID, *THE ART OF LOVE*,

great seductress Natalie Barney once wrote, "Most virtue is a demand for
TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

greater seduction."

There are two ways to prove yourself. First, the spontaneous action: a situation arises in which the target needs help, a problem needs solving, or, *The man says: ". . . A* simply, he or she needs a favor. You cannot foresee these situations, but you *fruit picked from one's own* must be ready for them, for they can spring up at any time. Impress the tar- *orchard ought to taste sweeter than one obtained*

get by going further than really necessary—sacrificing more money, more *from a stranger's tree, and* time, more effort than they had expected. Your target will often use these *what has been attained by* 323

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greater effort is cherished

moments, or even manufacture them, as a kind of test: will you retreat? Or *more dearly than what is* will you rise to the occasion? You cannot hesitate or flinch, even for a *mo gained with little trouble*. *As the proverb says:* *ment, or all is lost*. If necessary, make the deed seem to have cost you more

'Prizes great cannot be than it has, never with words, but indirectly—exhausted looks, reports won unless some heavy

spread through a third party, whatever it takes.

labor's done. " • The

The second way to prove yourself is the brave deed that you plan and *woman says:*
"If no great

prizes can be won unless

execute in advance, on your own and at the right moment—preferably

some heavy labor's done,

some way into the seduction, when any doubts the victim still has about *you must suffer the* you are more dangerous than earlier on. Choose a dramatic, difficult action *exhaustion of many toils to*

be able to attain the favors

that reveals the painful time and effort involved. Danger can be extremely *you seek, since what you*

seductive. Cleverly lead your victim into a crisis, a moment of danger, or *ask for is a greater prize. "*

indirectly put them in an uncomfortable position, and you can play the res• *The man says: "I give you all the thanks that I cuer, the gallant knight. The powerful feelings and emotions this elicits can can express for so sagely*

easily be redirected into love.

promising me your love

when I have performed

great toils. God forbid that

I or any other could win

Some Examples

the love of so worthy a

woman without first

1. In France in the 1640s, Marion de l'Orme was the courtesan men lusted *attaining it by many*

labors. "

after the most. Renowned for her beauty, she had been the mistress of Cardinal Richelieu, among other notable political and military figures. To win

—ANDREAS CAPELLANUS

ON LOVE, TRANSLATED BY

her bed was a sign of achievement.

P. G. WALSH

For weeks the rake Count Grammont had wooed de l'Orme, and finally she had given him an appointment for a particular evening. The count prepared himself for a delightful encounter, but on the day of the appoint *One day, [Saint-Preuil]*

ment he received a letter from her in which she expressed, in polite and *pleaded more than usual*

tender terms, her terrible regrets—she had the most awful headache, and *that [Madame de la*

Maisonfort] grant him the would have to stay in bed that evening. Their appointment would have to *ultimate favors a woman* be postponed. The count felt certain he was being pushed to the side for *could offer, and he went*

someone else, for de l'Orme was as capricious as she was beautiful. *beyond just words in his*

Grammont did not hesitate. At nightfall he rode to the Marais, where *pleading. Madame, saying*

he had gone way too far,

de l'Orme lived, and scouted the area. In a square near her home he spot *ordered him to never ever* led a man approaching on foot. Recognizing the Duc de Brissac, he imme *appear before her again.* diately knew that this man was to supplant him in the courtesan's bed. *He left her room. Only an*

hour later, the lady was Brissac seemed unhappy to see the count, and so Grammont approached *taking her customary walk*

him hurriedly and said, "Brissac, my friend, you must do me a service of *along one of those beautiful*

the greatest importance: I have an appointment, for the first time, with a *canals at Bagnolet, when*

Saint-Preuil leapt out from

girl who lives near this place; and as this visit is only to concert measures, I *behind a hedge, totally*

shall make but a very short stay. Be so kind as to lend me your cloak, and *naked, and standing before* walk my horse a little, until I return; but above all, do not go far from this *his mistress in this state, he*

place." Without waiting for an answer, Grammont took the duke's cloak *cried out, "For the last*

time, Madame—

and handed him the bridle of his horse. Looking back, he saw that Brissac *Goodbye!" Thereupon, he*

was watching him, so he pretended to enter a house, slipped out through *threw himself into the*

the back, circled around, and reached de l'Orme's house without being *canal, head first. The lady,*

terrified by such a sight,

seen.

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Grammont knocked at the door, and a servant, mistaking him for the *began to cry and to run in* duke, let him in. He headed straight for the lady's chamber, where he found *the direction of her house*, her lying on a couch, in a sheer gown. He threw off Brissac's cloak and she *where upon arriving, she fainted. As soon as she*

gasped in fright. "What is the matter, my fair one?" he asked. "Your *could speak, she ordered* headache, to all appearance, is gone?" She seemed put out, exclaimed she *that someone go and see* still had the headache, and insisted that he leave. It was up to her, she said, *what had happened to Saint-Preuil, who in truth*

to make or break appointments. "Madam," Grammont said calmly, "I know *had not stayed very long in* what perplexes you: you are afraid lest Brissac should meet me here; but *the canal, and having* you may make yourself easy on that account." He then opened the window *quickly put his clothes back on, hurried to Paris where*

and revealed Brissac out in the square, dutifully walking back and forth *he hid himself for several* with a horse, like a common stable boy. He looked ridiculous; de l'Orme days. *Meanwhile, the* burst out laughing, threw her arms around the count, and exclaimed, "My rumor spread that he had died. Madame de la

dear Chevalier, I can hold out no longer; you are too amiable and too ec- *Maisnfort was deeply* centric not to be pardoned." He told her the whole story, and she promised *moved by the extreme* that the duke could exercise horses all night, but she would not let him in. *measures he had adopted* They made an appointment for the following evening. Outside, the count *to prove his sentiments. This act of his* appeared to

returned the cloak, apologized for taking so long, and thanked the duke. *her to be a sign of an* Brissac was most gracious, even holding Grammont's horse for him to *extraordinary love; and* mount, and waving goodbye as he rode off.

having perhaps noticed

some charms in his naked

presence that she had not

seen fully clothed, she

Interpretation. Count Grammont knew that most would-be seducers give *deeply regretted her cruelty, and publicly stated her*

up too easily, mistaking capriciousness or apparent coolness as a sign of a *feeling of loss. Word of this* genuine lack of interest. In fact it can mean many things: perhaps the per- *reached Saint-Preuil, and* son is testing you, wondering if you are really serious. Prickly behavior is *he immediately resurrected himself and did not lose*

exactly this kind of test—if you give up at the first sign of difficulty, you *time in taking advantage of* obviously do not want them that much. Or it could be that they themselves *such a favorable feeling in* are uncertain about you, or are trying to choose between you and someone *his mistress*. else. In any event, it is absurd to give up. One incontrovertible demonstra— C O U N T BUSSY-RABUTIN, tion of how far you are willing to go will overwhelm all doubts. It will also *HISTOIRES AMOUREUSES DES*

GAULES

defeat your rivals, since most people are timid, worried about making fools of themselves, and so rarely risk anything.

When dealing with difficult or resistant targets, it is usually best to im *To become a lady's* provise, the way Grammont did. If your action seems sudden and a sur- *vassal . . . the troubadour* prise, it will make them more emotional, loosen them up. A little *was expected to pass* roundabout accumulation of information—a little spying—is always a

through four stages, i.e.:

good idea. Most important is the spirit in which you enact your proof. If *aspirant, supplicant, postulant, and lover.*

you are lighthearted and playful, if you make the target laugh, proving *When he had attained the*

yourself and amusing them at the same time, it won't matter if you mess *last stage of amorous* up, or if they see you have employed a little trickery. They will give in to *initiation he made a vow of fidelity and this homage*

the pleasant mood you have created. Notice that the count never whined *was sealed by a kiss*. • *In* or grew angry or defensive. All he had to do was pull back the curtain and *this idealistic form of* reveal the duke walking his horse, melting de l'Orme's resistance with *courtly love reserved for the aristocratic elite of chivalry*,

laughter. In one well-executed act, he showed what he would do for a *the phenomenon of love* night of her favors.

was considered to be a state

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of grace, while the

2. Pauline Bonaparte, the sister of Napoleon, had so many affairs with different men over the years that doctors were afraid for her health. She could *and the final sealing of the* not stay with one man for more than a few weeks; novelty was her only *pact—o r equivalent of*

the knightly accolade— pleasure. After Napoleon married her off to Prince Camillo Borghese, in were linked with the rest of 1803, her affairs only multiplied. And so, when she met the dashing Major a nobleman's training and Jules de Canouville, in 1810, everyone assumed the affair would last no valorous exploits. The

hallmarks of a true lover longer than the others. Of course the major was a decorated soldier, well and of a perfect knight educated, an accomplished dancer, and one of the most handsome men in were almost identical. The the army. But Pauline, thirty years old at the time, had had affairs with lover was bound to serve dozens of men who could have matched that resume. and obey his lady as a

knight served his lord. In

A few days after the affair began, the imperial dentist arrived chez *both cases the pledge was of Pauline*. A toothache had been causing her sleepless nights, and the dentist *a sacred nature*. saw he would have to pull out the bad tooth right then and there. No

— NINA EPTON,

painkillers were used at the time, and as the man began to take out his vari *LOVE AND THE FRENCH*

ous instruments, Pauline grew terrified. Despite the pain of the tooth, she changed her mind and refused to have it pulled.

Major Canouville was lounging on a couch in a silken robe. Taking all *In one of the goodly towns*

of the kingdom of France this in, he tried to encourage her to have it done: "A moment or two of *there dwelt a nobleman* of pain and it's over forever. . . . A child

could go through with it and not ut *good birth, who attended* ter a sound." "I'd like to see you do it," she said. Canouville got up, went *the schools that he might* over to the dentist, chose a tooth in the back of his own mouth, and or *learn how virtue and honor are to be acquired among* dered that it be pulled. A perfectly good tooth was extracted, and Canou *virtuous men. But* ville barely batted an eyelash. After this, not only did Pauline let the dentist *although he was so* do his job, her opinion of Canouville changed: no man had ever done any *accomplished that at the age of seventeen or eighteen* thing like this for her before. *years he was, as it were,*

The affair had been going to last but a few weeks; now it stretched on. *both precept and example* Napoleon was not pleased. Pauline was a married woman; short affairs to others, *Love failed not to*

add his lesson to the rest; were allowed, but a deep attachment was embarrassing. He sent Canouville *and, that he might be the* to Spain, to deliver a message to a general there. The mission would take *better harkened to and* weeks, and in the meantime Pauline would find someone else. *received, concealed himself*

in the face and the eyes of

Canouville, though, was not your average lover. Riding day and night, *the fairest lady in the* without stopping to eat or sleep, he arrived in Salamanca within a few days. *whole country round, who* There he found that he could proceed no farther, since communications *had come to the city in* had been cut off, and so, without waiting for further orders, he rode back *order to advance a suit-at-*

law. But before Love to Paris, without an escort, through enemy territory. He could meet with sought to vanquish the Pauline only briefly; Napoleon sent him right back to Spain. It was months *gentleman by means of this* before he was finally allowed to return, but when he did, Pauline immedi *lady's beauty, he had first won her heart by letting* ately resumed her affair with him—an unheard-of act of loyalty on her *her see the perfections of* part. This time Napoleon sent Canouville to Germany and finally to Rus *this young lord; for in good* sia, where he died bravely in battle in 1812. He was the only lover Pauline *looks, grace, sense and*

excellence of speech he was ever waited for, and the only one she ever mourned. surpassed by none. • You,

who know what speedy

way is made by the fire of Interpretation. In seduction, the time often comes when the target has be *love when once it fastens on the heart and fancy, will* gun to fall for you, but suddenly pulls back. Your motives have begun to *Prove Yourself* • 327

seem dubious—perhaps all you are after is sexual favors, or power, or *readily imagine that*

money. Most people are insecure and doubts like these can ruin the seduc *between two subjects so perfect as these it knew*

tive illusion. In the case of Pauline Bonaparte, she was quite accustomed to *little pause until it had*

using men for pleasure, and she knew perfectly well that she was being used *them at its will, and had*

in turn. She was totally cynical. But people often use cynicism to cover up *so filled them with its clear* insecurity. Pauline's secret anxiety was that none of her lovers had ever *light, that thought, wish,*

and speech were all aflame

really loved her—that all of them to a man had really just wanted sex or *with it. Youth, begetting* political favors from her. When Canouville showed, through concrete *ac- fear in the young lord, led* tions, the sacrifices he would make for her —his tooth, his career, his life— *him to urge his suit with all the gentleness*

he transformed a deeply selfish woman into a devoted lover. Not that her *imaginable; but she, being*

response was completely unselfish: his deeds were a boost to her vanity. If *conquered by love, had no* she could inspire these actions from him, she must be worth it. But if he *need of force to win her.*

Nevertheless, shame, which

was going to appeal to the noble sede of her nature, she had to rise to that *tarries with ladies as long*

level as well, and prove herself by remaining loyal to him.

as it can, for some time

Making your deed as dashing and chivalrous as possible will elevate the *restrained her from*

declaring her mind. But at

seduction to a new level, stir up deep emotions, and conceal any ulterior *last the heart's fortress,*

motives you may have. The sacrifices you are making must be visible; talk- *which is honor's abode, was* ing about them, or explaining what they have cost you, will seem like brag- *shattered in such sort that* ging. Lose sleep, fall ill, lose valuable time, put your career on the line, *the poor lady consented to*

that which she had never

spend more money than you can afford. You can exaggerate all this for ef- *been minded to refuse.* • *In* fact, but don't get caught boasting about it or feeling sorry for

yourself: *order, however, to make*

cause yourself pain and let them see it. Since almost everyone else in *trial of her lover's patience*,

constancy, and love, she

the world seems to have an angle, your noble and selfless deed will be *granted him what he* irresistible.

sought on a very hard

condition, assuring him

that if he fulfilled it she

would love him perfectly

3. Throughout the 1890s and into the early twentieth century, Gabriele *forever; whereas, if he* D'Annunzio was considered one of Italy's premier novelists and *play-failed in it, he would certainly never win her as*

wrights. Yet many Italians could not stand the man. His writing was florid, *long as he lived. And the*

and in person he seemed full of himself, overdramatic—riding horses naked *condition was this: she* on the beach, pretending to be a Renaissance man, and more of the kind. *would be willing to talk*

His novels were often about war, and about the glory of facing and defeat- *with him, both being in bed together, clad in their*

ing death—an entertaining subject for someone who had never actually *linen only, but he was to*

done so. And so, at the start of World War I, no one was surprised that *ask nothing inore from her* D'Annunzio led the call for Italy to side with the Allies and enter the fray. *than words and kisses.* •

He, thinking there was no

Everywhere you turned, there he was, giving a speech in favor of war—*joy to be compared to that* a campaign that succeeded in 1915, when Italy finally declared war on *which she promised him*, Germany and Austria. D'Annunzio's role so far had been completely pre- *agreed to the proposal, and that evening the promise*

dictable. But what did surprise the Italian public was what this fifty-two *was kept; in such wise* year-old man did next: he joined the army. He had never served in the *that, despite all the caresses*

military, boats made him seasick, but he could not be dissuaded. Eventually *she bestowed on him and* the authorities gave him a post in a cavalry division, hoping to keep him *the temptations that beset*

him, he would not break

out of combat.

his oath. And albeit his

Italy had little experience in war, and its military was somewhat

torment seemed to him no

chaotic. The generals somehow lost track of D'Annunzio—who, in any

less than that of Purgatory,

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yet was his love so great

case, had decided to leave his cavalry division and form units of his own. *and his hope so strong,*

(He was an artist, after all, and could not be subjected to army discipline.) *sure as he felt of the*

Calling himself *Commandante*, he overcame his habitual seasickness and di
ceaseless continuance of the love he had thus painfully

rected a series of daring raids, leading groups of motorboats in the middle *won, that he preserved his*

of the night into Austrian harbors and firing torpedoes at anchored ships. *patience and rose from*

He also learned how to fly, and began to lead dangerous sorties. In August *beside her without having*

of 1915, he flew over the city of Trieste, then in enemy hands, and dropped *done anything contrary to*

her expressed wish. • The

Italian flags and thousands of pamphlets containing a message of hope, *writ lady was, I think, more* ten in his inimitable style: "The end of your martyrdom is at hand! The *astonished than pleased by*

dawn of your joy is imminent. From the heights of heaven, on the wings of *such virtue; and giving no*

heed to the honor, patience,

Italy, I throw you this pledge, this message from my heart." He flew at alti *and faithfulness her lover* tudes unheard of at the time, and through thick enemy fire. The Austrians *had shown in the keeping*

put a price on his head.

of his oath, she forthwith

suspected that his love was

On a mission in 1916, D'Annunzio fell against his machine gun, per *not so great as she had* manently injuring one eye and seriously damaging the other. Told his fly *thought, or else that he had* ing days were over, he convalesced in his home in Venice. At the time, the *found her less pleasing*

than he had expected. • most beautiful and fashionable woman in Italy was generally considered to *She therefore resolved,*

be the Countess Morosini, former mistress of the German Kaiser. Her *before keeping her promise,*

palace was on the Grand Canal, opposite the home of D'Annunzio. Now *to make a further trial of* she found herself besieged by letters and poems from the writer-soldier, *the love he bore her; and to*

this end she begged him to

mixing details of his flying exploits with declarations of his love. In the *talk to a girl in her service,*

middle of air raids on Venice, he would cross the canal, barely able to see *who was younger than*

out of one eye, to deliver his latest poem. D'Annunzio was much beneath *herself and very beautiful,*

bidding him make love

Morosini's station, a mere writer, but his willingness to brave anything on *speeches to her; so that*

her behalf won her over. The fact that his reckless behavior could get him *those who saw him come so*

killed any day only hastened the seduction.

often to the house might

think that it was for the

D'Annunzio ignored the doctors' advice and returned to flying, leading *sake of this
damsel and not*

even more daring raids than before. By the end of the war, he was Italy's *of herself* •
The young

most decorated hero. Now, wherever in the nation he appeared, the public *lord,
feeling sure that his*

own love was returned in

filled the piazzas to hear his speeches. After the war, he led a march on *equal
measure, was wholly*

Fiume, on the Adriatic coast. In the negotiations to settle the war, Italians *obedient
to her commands,*

believed they should have been awarded this city, but the Allies had not *and for
love of her* agreed. D'Annunzio's forces took over the city and the poet became a
compelled himself to make

love to the girl; and she,

leader, ruling Fiume for more than a year as an autonomous republic. By *finding
him so handsome*

then, everyone had forgotten about his less-than-glorious past as a decadent *and
well-spoken, believed*

writer. Now he could do no wrong.

his lies more than other

truth, and loved him as

much as though she herself

were greatly loved by him.

Interpretation. The appeal of seduction is that of being separated from our

• *The mistress finding that*

matters were thus well

normal routines, experiencing the thrill of the unknown. Death is the ultimate *advanced, albeit the young mate unknown*. In periods of chaos, confusion, and death—the plagues *lord did not cease to claim*

that swept Europe in the Middle Ages, the Terror of the French Revolution *her promise, granted him* *tion*, the air raids on London during World War II—people often let go of *permission to come and see*

her at one hour after

their usual caution and do things they never would otherwise. They experience *midnight, saying that after* *ience* a kind of delirium. There is something immensely seductive about *Prove Yourself* • 329

danger, about heading into the unknown. Show that you have a reckless *having so fully tested the streak and a daring nature, that you lack the usual fear of death, and you are love and obedience he had shown towards her, it was*

instantly fascinating to the bulk of humanity.

but just that he should be

What you are proving in this instance is not how you feel toward another person but something about yourself: you are willing to go out on a *patience. Of the lover's joy limb*. You are not just another talker and braggart. It is a recipe for instant *on hearing this you need have no doubt, and he*

charisma. Any political figure—Churchill, de Gaulle, Kennedy—who has failed not to arrive at the proven himself on the battlefield has an unmatched appeal. Many had appointed time. • But the thought of D'Annunzio as a foppish womanizer; his experience in the war *lady, still wishing to try the strength of his love, had*

gave him a heroic sheen, a Napoleonic aura. In fact he had always been an *said to her beautiful* effective seducer, but now he was even more devilishly appealing. You do *damsel*— "I am well aware not necessarily have to risk death, but putting yourself in its vicinity will of the love a certain nobleman bears to you,

give you a seductive charge. (It is often best to do this some way into the *and I think you are no less* seduction, making it come as a pleasant surprise.) You are willing to enter *in love with him; and I feel* the unknown. No one is more seductive than the person who has had a *so much pity for you both*, brush with death. People will be drawn to you; perhaps they are hoping that *I have resolved to afford you time and place*

that some of your adventurous spirit will rub off on them.

that you may converse

together at your ease. •

The damsel was so

enchanted that she could

4. According to one version of the Arthurian legend, the great knight Sir *not conceal her longings*, Lancelot once caught a glimpse of Queen Guinevere, King Arthur's wife, *but answered that she* and that glimpse was enough—he fell madly in love. And so when word *would not fail to be present*. • *In obedience,*

reached him that Queen Guinevere had been kidnapped by an evil knight, *therefore, to her mistress's* Lancelot did not hesitate—he forgot his other chivalrous tasks and hurried *counsel and command, she* in pursuit. His horse collapsed from the chase, so he continued on foot. *Fi- undressed herself and lay down on a handsome bed,*

nally it seemed that he was close, but he was exhausted and could go no *in a room the door of* farther. A horse-driven cart passed by; the cart was filled with loathsome- *which the lady left half* looking men shackled together. In those days it was the tradition to place *open, whilst within she set* criminals—murderers, traitors, cowards, thieves—in such a cart, which *a light so that the maiden's beauty might be clearly*

then passed through every street in town so that people could see it. Once *seen. Then she herself* you had ridden in the cart, you lost all feudal rights for the rest of your life. *pretended to go away, but* The cart was such a dreadful symbol that seeing an empty one made you *hid herself near to the bed so carefully that she could*

shiver and give the sign of the cross. Even so, Sir Lancelot accosted the *not be seen*. • *Her poor cart's* driver, a dwarf: "In the name of God, tell me if you've seen my lady *lover, thinking to find her* the queen pass by this way?" "If you want to get into this cart I'm driving," *according to her promise, failed not to enter the room*

said the dwarf, "by tomorrow you'll know what has become of the queen." *as softly as he could, at the* Then he drove the cart onward. Lancelot hesitated for but two of the *appointed hour; and after* horse's steps, then ran after it and climbed in.

he had shut the door and

put off his garments and

Wherever the cart went, townspeople heckled it. They were most curi- *fur shoes, he got into the* ous about the knight among the passengers. What was his crime? How will *bed, where he looked to* he be put to death—flayed? Drowned? Burned upon a fire of thorns? *Fi- find what he desired. But* nally the dwarf let him get out, without a word as to the whereabouts of *no sooner did he put out his arms to embrace her*

the queen. To make matters worse, no one now would go near or talk to *whom he believed to be his* Lancelot, for he had been in the cart. He kept on chasing the queen, and all *mistress, than the poor girl*, along the way he was cursed at, spat upon, challenged by other knights. *He believing him entirely her* 330 • *The Art of*

Seduction

own, had her arms round

had disgraced knighthood by riding in the cart. But no one could stop him *his neck, speaking to him*

or slow him down, and finally he discovered that the queen's kidnapper was *the while in such loving*

the wicked Meleagant. He caught up with Meleagant and the two fought a *words and with so*

beautiful a countenance,

duel. Still weak from the chase, Lancelot seemed to be near defeat, but *that there is not a hermit* when word reached him that the queen was watching the battle, he *recov so holy but he would have ered his strength and was on the verge of killing Meleagant when a truce forgotten his beads for love*

of her. • But when the was called. Guinevere was handed over to him. gentleman recognized her

Lancelot could hardly contain his joy at the thought of finally being in *with both eye and ear, and*

his lady's presence. But to his shock, she seemed angry, and would not look *found he was not with her* at her rescuer. She told Meleagant's father, "Sire, in truth he has wasted his *for whose sake he had so*

greatly suffered, the love efforts. I shall always deny that I feel any gratitude toward him." Lancelot that had made him get so was mortified but he did not complain. Much later, after undergoing innu quickly into the bed, made merable further trials, she finally relented and they became lovers. One day him rise from it still more

quickly. And in anger he asked her: when she had been abducted by Meleagant, had she heard the equally with mistress and

story of the cart, and how he had disgraced knighthood? Was that why she *damsel, he said— "Neither had treated him so coldly that day? The queen replied, "By delaying for your folly nor the malice of*

her who put you there can

two steps you showed your unwillingness to climb into it. That, to tell the *make me other than I am.*

truth, is why I didn't wish to see you or speak with you."

But do you try to be an

honest woman, for you

shall never lose that good

name through me. " • So

Interpretation. The opportunity to do your selfless deed often comes upon *saying he rushed out of the* you suddenly. You have to show your worth in an instant, right there on *room in the greatest wrath*

the spot. It could be a rescue situation, a gift you could make or a favor you *imaginable, and it was long*

before he returned to see his

could do, a sudden request to drop everything and come to their aid. What *mistress. However love,*

matters most is not whether you act rashly, make a mistake, and do some *which is never without* thing foolish, but that you seem to act on their behalf without thought for *hope, assured him that the*

greater and more manifest yourself or the consequences.

his constancy was proved to

At moments like these, hesitation, even for a few seconds, can ruin all *be by all these trials, the* the hard work of your seduction, revealing you as self-absorbed, *unchival longer and more delightful would be his bliss. • The* rous, and cowardly. This, at any rate, is the moral of Chrétien de Troyes's *lady, who had seen and*

twelfth-century version of the story of Lancelot. Remember: not only *heard all that passed, was* what you do matters, but how you do it. If you are naturally self-absorbed, *so delighted and amazed at* learn to disguise it. React as spontaneously as possible, exaggerating the *ef beholding the depth and constancy of his love, that* feft by seeming flustered, overexcited, even foolish—love has driven you to *she was impatient to sec* that point. If you have to jump into the cart for Guinevere's sake, make sure *him again in order to ask*

she sees that you do it without the slightest hesitation.

h is fo rgiven ess for the

sorrow that she had caused

him to endure. And as

soon as she could meet

5. In Rome sometime around 1531, word spread of a sensational young *with him, she failed not to*

address him in such woman named Tullia d'Aragona. By the standards of the period, Tullia was *excellent and pleasant* not a classic beauty; she was tall and thin, at a time when the plump and *words, that he not only* voluptuous woman was considered the ideal. And she lacked the cloying, *forgot all his troubles but giggling* manner of most young girls who wanted masculine attention. No, *even deemed them very*

fortunate, seeing that their her quality was nobler. Her Latin was perfect, she could discuss the latest *issue was to the glory of his* literature, she played the lute and sang. In other words, she was a novelty, *constancy and the perfect*

and since that was all most men were looking for, they began to visit her in *Prove Yourself* • 331

great numbers. She had a lover, a diplomat, and the thought that one man *assurance of his love, the* had won her physical favors drove them all mad. Her male visitors began to *fruit of which he enjoyed from that time as fully as*

compete for her attention, writing poems in her honor, vying to become *he could desire* her favorite. None of them succeeded, but they kept on trying.

— Q U E E N MARGARET OF

Of course there were some who were offended by her, stating publicly NAVARRE, *THE HEPTAMERON*, that she was no more than a high-class whore. They repeated the rumor QUOTED IN *THE VICE*

(perhaps true) that she had made older men dance while she played the *ANTHOLOGY, EDITED BY*

R I C H A R D DAVENPORT-HINES

lute, and if their dancing pleased her, they could hold her in their arms. To Tullia's faithful followers, all of noble birth, this was slander. They wrote a document that was distributed far and wide: "Our honored mistress, the *A soldier lays siege to* well-born and honorable lady Tullia d'Aragona, doth surpass all ladies of *cities, a lover to girls'*

the past, present, or future by her dazzling qualities. . . . Anyone who re- *houses, \ The one assaults* fuses to conform to this statement is hereby charged to enter the lists with *city gates, the other front doors. \ Love, like war, is a*

one of the undersigned knights, who will convince him in the customary *toss-up. The defeated can* manner."

recover; \ While some you

Tullia left Rome in 1535, going first to Venice, where the poet Tasso *might think invincible collapse; \ So if you've got*

became her lover, and eventually to Ferrara, which was then perhaps the *love written off as an easy* most civilized court in Italy. And what a sensation she caused there. Her *option \ You'd better think* voice, her singing, even her poems were praised far and wide. She opened a *twice. Love calls \ For guts*

and initiative. Great

literary academy devoted to ideas of freethinking. She called herself a muse *Achilles sulks for Briseis—*

and, as in Rome, a group of young men collected around her. They would \ *Quick, Trojans, smash* follow her around the city, carving her name in trees, writing sonnets in her *through the Argive wall! *

Hector went into battle

honor, and singing them to anyone who would listen.

from Andromache's

One young nobleman was driven to distraction by this cult of adora- *embraces \ Helmeted by his* tion: it seemed that everyone loved Tullia but no one received her love in *wife. \ Agamemnon*

return. Determined to steal her away and marry her, this young man *himself, the Supremo, was struck into raptures \ At*

tricked her into allowing him to visit her at night. He proclaimed his undy- *the sight of Cassandra's* ing devotion, showered her with jewels and presents, and asked for her *tumbled hair; \ Even Mars*

hand. She refused. He pulled out a knife, she still refused, and so he stabbed *was caught on the job, felt*

the blacksmith's meshes—

himself. He lived, but now Tullia's reputation was even greater than before: \ *Heaven's best scandal in* not even money could buy her favors, or so it seemed. As the years went *years. Then take \ My own* by and her beauty faded, some poet or intellectual would always come to *case. I was idle, born to leisure en deshabille, *

her defense and protect her. Few of them ever pondered the reality: that *Mind softened by lazy* Tullia was indeed a courtesan, one of the most popular and well paid in the *scribbling in the shade. *

profession.

But love for a pretty girl

*soon drove the sluggard *

To action, made him join

up. \And just look at me

Interpretation. All of us have defects of some sort. Some of these we are *now—fighting fit, dead*

born with, and cannot help. Tullia had many such defects. Physically she *keen on night exercises: \ If you want a cure for*

was not the Renaissance ideal. Also, her mother had been a courtesan, and *slackness, fall in love!*

she was illegitimate. Yet the men who fell under her spell did not care. —OVID, *THE AMORES*. They were too distracted by her image—the image of an elevated woman, TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

a woman you would have to fight over to win. Her pose came straight out of the Middle Ages, the days of knights and troubadours. Then, a woman, most often married, was able to control the power dynamic between the sexes by withholding her favors until the knight somehow proved his worth 332 • *The Art of Seduction*

and the sincerity of his sentiments. He could be sent on a quest, or made to live among lepers, or compete in a possibly fatal joust for her honor. And this he had to do without complaint. Although the days of the troubadour are long gone, the pattern remains: a man actually loves to be able to prove himself, to be challenged, to compete, to undergo tests and trials and emerge victorious. He has a masochistic streak; a part of him loves pain. And strangely enough, the more a woman asks for, the worthier she seems. A woman who is easy to get cannot be worth much.

Make people compete for your attention, make them prove themselves

in some way, and you will find them rising to the challenge. The heat of seduction is raised by such challenges—show me that you *really* love me. When one person (of either sex) rises to the occasion, often the other person is now expected to do the same, and the seduction heightens. By making people prove themselves, too, you raise your value and cover up your defects. Your targets are too busy trying to prove themselves to notice your blemishes and faults.

Symbol: The Tour-

nament. On the field, with its bright pennants

and caparisoned horses, the lady looks on as knights fight for

her hand. She has heard them declare love on bended knee, their endless songs and pretty promises. They are all good at such things. But then the trumpet sounds and the combat begins. In the tournament there can be no faking or hesitation. The knight she

chooses must have blood on his face, and a few broken limbs.

Reversal

When trying to prove that you are worthy of your target, remember

that every target sees things differently. A show of physical prowess will not impress someone who does not value physical prowess; it will just show that you are after attention, flaunting yourself. Seducers must adapt their way of proving themselves to the doubts and weaknesses of the seduced. For some, fine words are better proofs than daredevil deeds, particularly if they are written down. With these people show your sentiments in a letter—a different kind of physical proof, and one with more poetic appeal than some showy bit of action. Know your target well, and aim your seductive evidence at the source of their doubts or resistance.

17

Effect a Regression

People who

have experienced a certain kind of pleasure in the past will try to repeat or relive

it. The deepest-rooted and most pleasurable memories are usually those from earliest childhood, and are often unconsciously associated with a parental figure. Bring your tar-

gets back to that point by placing yourself in the oedipal triangle and positioning them as the needy child. Unaware of the cause of their emotional response, they will fall in love with you. Alternatively, you too can regress, letting them play the role of the protective, nursing parent. In either case you are offering the

ultimate fantasy: the chance to have an intimate relationship with mommy or daddy, son or daughter.

The Erotic Regression

As adults we tend to overvalue our childhood. In their dependency and powerlessness, children genuinely suffer, yet when we get older we

conveniently forget about that and sentimentalize the supposed paradise we have left behind. We forget the pain and remember only the pleasure. Why? Because the responsibilities of adult life are a burden so oppressive at times that we secretly yearn for the dependency of childhood, for that per-[*In Japan,] much in the son* who looked after our every need, assumed our cares and worries. This *traditional way of child- daydream of ours has a strong erotic component, for the child's feeling of rearing seems to foster passive dependence. The*

being dependent on the parent is charged with sexual undertones. Give child is rarely left alone, people a sensation similar to that protected, dependent feeling of childhood day or night, for it usually and they will project all kinds of fantasies onto you, including feelings of sleeps with the mother. love or sexual attraction that they will attribute to something else. We When it goes out the child is not pushed ahead in a

won't admit it, but we long to regress, to shed our adult exterior and vent *pram, to face the world* the childish emotions that linger beneath the surface.

alone, but is tightly bound

Early in his career, Sigmund Freud confronted a strange problem: many *to the mother's back in a snug cocoon. When the*

of his female patients were falling in love with him. He thought he knew *mother bows, the child does* what was happening: encouraged by Freud, the patient would delve into *too, so the social graces are* her childhood, which of course was the source of her illness or neurosis. *acquired automatically while feeling the mother's*

She would talk about her relationship with her father, her earliest experi- *heartbeat. Thus emotional ences of tenderness and love, and also of neglect and abandonment. The security tends to depend* process would stir up powerful emotions and memories. In a way, she *almost entirely on the physical presence of the*

would be transported back into her childhood. Intensifying this effect was *mother. • . . Children* the fact that Freud himself said little and made himself a little cold and dis- *learn that a show of tant, although he seemed to be caring—in other words, quite like the tradi- passive dependence is the best way to get favors as*

tional father figure. Meanwhile the patient was lying on a couch, in a *well as affection. There is a helpless or passive position, so that the situation duplicated the roles of par- verb for this in Japanese: ent and child. Eventually she would begin to direct some of the confused amaeru, translated in the emotions she was dealing with toward Freud himself. Unaware of what was dictionary as "to presume upon another's love; to*

happening, she would relate to him as to her father. She would regress and *play the baby. According* fall in love. Freud called this phenomenon "transference," and it

would be- *to the psychiatrist Doi* come an active part of his therapy. By getting patients to transfer some of *Takeo this is the main key to understanding the* their repressed feelings onto the therapist, he would bring their problems *Japanese personality. It* into the open, where they could be dealt with on a conscious level. *goes on in adult life too:*

The transference effect was so potent, though, that Freud was often un- *juniors do it to seniors in companies, or any other*

able to move his patients past their infatuation. In fact transference is a *group, women do it to* powerful way of creating an emotional attachment—the goal of any *seduc- men, men do it to their* 335

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mothers, and sometimes

tion. The method has infinite applications outside psychoanalysis. To *prac wives. ... • A* tice it in real life, you need to play the therapist, encouraging people to talk *magazine called Y o u n g* about their childhood. Most of us are only too happy to oblige; and our *L a d y* *featured an article*

(January 1982) on "how memories are so vivid and emotional that a part of us regresses just in talk *to make ourselves* ing about our early years. Also, in the course of talking, little secrets slip *beautiful.*" *How, in other* out: we reveal all kinds of valuable information about our weaknesses and *words, to attract men. An*

American or European

our mental makeup, information you must attend to and remember. Do *magazine would then go*

not take your targets' words at face value; they will often sugarcoat or over *on to tell the reader how to* dramatize events in childhood. But pay attention to their tone of voice, *to be sexually desirable, no*

any nervous tics as they talk, and particularly to anything they do not want *doubt suggesting various*

puffs, creams, and sprays.

to talk about, anything they deny or that makes them emotional. Many state *Not so with Y o u n g* Lady. ments actually mean their opposite: should they say they hated their father,

"The most attractive for instance, you can be sure that they are hiding a lot of disappointment—

women," it informs us,

"are women full of that they actually loved their father only too much, and perhaps never quite maternal love. Women

got what they wanted from him. Listen closely for recurring themes and without maternal love are stories. Most important, learn to analyze emotional responses and see what the types men never want to marry. . . . One has to lies behind them.

look at men through the

While they talk, maintain the therapist's pose—attentive but quiet, eyes of a mother."

making occasional, nonjudgmental comments. Be caring yet distant—

— I A N BURUMA, *BEHIND THE*

somewhat blank, in fact—and they will begin to transfer emotions and project MASK: ON SEXUAL DEMONS, ject fantasies onto you. With the information you have gathered about their SACRED MOTHERS,

TRANSVESTITES, GANGSTERS,

childhood, and the trusting bond you have forged, you can now begin to DRIFTERS AND OTHER

effect the regression. Perhaps you have uncovered a powerful attachment to JAPANESE CULTURAL HEROES

a parent, a sibling, a teacher, or any early infatuation, a person who casts a shadow over their present lives. Knowing what it was about this person that affected them so powerfully, you can now take over that role. Or perhaps *I have stressed the fact that you have learned of an immense gap in their childhood—a neglectful father the beloved person is a therapist, for instance. You act like that parent now, but you replace the original substitute for the ideal ego.*

neglect with the attention and affection that the real parent never supplied. Two people who love each

other are interchanging Everyone has unfinished business from childhood—disappointments, lacks,

. their ego-ideals. That they painful memories. Finish what is unfinished. Discover what your target love each other means they

never got and you have the ingredients for a deep-rooted seduction. love the ideal of themselves

in the other one. There

The key is not just to talk about memories—that is weak. What you *would be no love on earth* want is to get people to act out in their present old issues from their past, *if this phantom were not* without their being aware of what is happening. The regressions you can *there. We fall in love*

because we cannot attain

effect fall into four main types.

the image that is our better

self and the best of our self

From this concept it is

obvious that love itself is

The Infantile Regression. The first bond—the bond between a mother *only possible on a certain*

and her infant—is the most powerful one. Unlike other animals, human *at a cultural level or after a* bies have a long period of helplessness during which they are dependent on *certain phase in the* their mother, creating an attachment that influences the rest of their lives. *development of the*

personality has been

The key to effecting this regression is to reproduce the sense of *uncondi reached. The creation of an* tional love a mother has for her child. Never judge your targets —let them *ego-ideal itself marks*

do whatever they want, including behaving badly; at the same time sur *human progress. When people are entirely satisfied*

round them with loving attention, smother them with comfort. A part of *Effect a Regression* • 331

them will regress to those earliest years when their mother took care of *with their actual selves*, everything and rarely left them alone. This works on almost everyone, for *love is impossible.* • *The transfer of the ego-ideal to*

unconditional love is the rarest and most treasured form. You do not even *a person is the most* have to tailor your behavior to anything specific in their childhood; most of *characteristic trait of love.* us have experienced this kind of attention. Meanwhile, create atmospheres —THEODOR REIK, *OF LOVE*

that reinforce the feeling you are generating—warm environments, playful *AND LUST*

activities, bright, happy colors.

I gave [S ylphide] the eyes

The Oedipal Regression. After the bond between mother and child *of one girl in the village, the fresh complexion of*

comes the oedipal triangle of mother, father, and child. This triangle forms *another. The portraits of* during the period of the child's earliest erotic fantasies. A boy wants his *great ladies of the time of* mother to himself, a girl does the same with her father, but they never *Francis I, Henry IV, and Louis XIV, hanging in our*

quite have it that way, for a parent will always have competing connections *drawing room, lent me* to a spouse or to other adults. Unconditional love has gone; now, inevitably *other features, and I even bly*, the parent must sometimes deny what the child desires. Transport your *borrowed beauties from the* victims back to this period. Play a parental role, be loving, but also sometimes *pictures of the Madonna in the churches. This magic*

times scold and instill some discipline. Children actually love a little *creature followed me* discipline—it makes them feel that the adult cares about them. And *adult invisibly everywhere, I*

children too will be thrilled if you mix your tenderness with a little tough-*conversed with her as if with a real person; she*

ness and punishment.

changed her appearance

Unlike infantile regression, oedipal regression must be tailored to your *according to the degree of target.* It depends on the information you have gathered. Without *knowing my madness; Aphrodite without a veil, Diana*

enough, you might treat a person like a child, scolding them now and then, *shrouded in azure and* only to discover that you are stirring up ugly memories—they had too *rose, Thalia in a laughing* much discipline as child. Or you might stir up memories of a parent they *mask, Hebe with the goblet of youth—o r she became a*

loathed, and they will transfer those feelings to you. Do not go ahead *fairy, giving me dominion* with the regression until you have learned everything you can about their *over nature. . . . The childhood—what they had too much of, what they lacked, and so on.* If *delusion lasted two whole* the target was strongly attached to a parent, but that attachment was *par- years, in the course of which my soul attained the*

tially negative, the oedipal regression strategy can still be quite effective. We *highest peak of exaltation.* always feel ambivalent toward a parent; even as we love them, we resent —CHATEAUBRIAND, *MEMOIRS*

having had to depend on them. Don't worry about stirring up these am- *FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE*, bivalences, which don't keep us from being tied to our parents. Remember QUOTED IN FRIEDRICH SIEBURG, *CHATEAUBRIAND*, TRANSLATED

to include an erotic component in your parental behavior. Now your tar-BY
VIOLET M. MACDONALD

gets are not only getting their mother or father all to themselves, they are getting something more, something previously forbidden but now allowed. *The Ego Ideal Regression*. As children, we often form an ideal figure out of our dreams and ambitions. First, that ideal figure is the person we want to be. We imagine ourselves as brave adventurers, romantic figures. Then, in our adolescence, we turn our attention to others, often projecting our ideals onto them. The first boy or girl we fall in love with may seem to have the ideal qualities we wanted for ourselves, or else may make us feel that we can play that ideal role in relation to them. Most of us carry these 338 • *The Art of Seduction*

ideals around with us, buried just below the surface. We are secretly disappointed in how much we have had to compromise, how far below the ideal we have fallen as we have gotten older. Make your targets feel they are living out this youthful ideal, and coming closer to being the person they wanted to be, and you will effect a different kind of regression, creating a feeling reminiscent of adolescence. The relationship between you and the seduced is in this instance more equal than in the previous kinds of regressions—more like the affection between siblings. In fact the ideal is often modeled on a brother or sister. To create this effect, strive to reproduce the intense, innocent mood of a youthful infatuation. *The Reverse Parental Regression*. Here you are the one to regress: you deliberately play the role of the cute, adorable, yet also sexually charged child. Older people always find younger people incredibly seductive. In the presence of youth, they feel a little of their own youth return; but they are in fact older, and mixed into the invigoration they feel in young people's company is the pleasure of playing the mother or father to them. If a child has erotic feelings toward a parent, feelings that are quickly repressed, the parent must deal with the same problem in reverse. Assume the role of the child in relation to your targets, however, and they get to act out some of those repressed erotic sentiments. The strategy may seem to call for a difference in age, but this is actually not critical. Marilyn Monroe's exaggerated little-girl qualities worked just fine on men her age. Emphasizing a weakness or vulnerability on your part will give the target a chance to play the protector.

Some Examples

1. The parents of Victor Hugo separated shortly after the novelist was born, in 1802. Hugo's mother, Sophie, had been carrying on an affair with her husband's superior officer, a general. She took the three Hugo boys away from their father and went off to Paris to raise them on her own. Now the boys led a tumultuous life, featuring bouts of poverty, frequent moves, and their mother's continued affair with the general. Of all the boys, Victor was the most attached to his mother, adopting all her ideas and pet peeves, particularly her hatred of his father. But with all the turmoil in his childhood he never felt he got enough love and attention from the

mother he adored. When she died, in 1821, poor and debt-ridden, he was devastated.

The following year Hugo married his childhood sweetheart, Adèle,

who physically resembled his mother. It was a happy marriage for a while, but soon Adèle came to resemble his mother in more ways than one: in 1832, he discovered that she was having an affair with the French literary critic Sainte-Beuve, who also happened to be Hugo's best friend at the *Effect a Regression* • 339

time. Hugo was a celebrated writer by now, but he was not the calculating type. He generally wore his heart on his sleeve. Yet he could not confide in anyone about Adèle's affair; it was too humiliating. His only solution was to have affairs of his own, with actresses, courtesans, married women. Hugo had a prodigious appetite, sometimes visiting three different women in the same day.

Near the end of 1832, production began on one of Hugo's plays, and

he was to supervise the casting. A twenty-six-year-old actress named Juliette Drouet auditioned for one of the smaller roles. Normally quite adroit with the ladies, Hugo found himself stuttering in Juliette's presence. She was quite simply the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and this and her composed manner intimidated him. Naturally, Juliette won the part. He found himself thinking about her all the time. She always seemed to be surrounded by a group of adoring men. Clearly she was not interested in him, or so he thought. One evening, though, after a performance of the play, he followed her home, to find that she was neither angry nor surprised—

indeed she invited him up to her apartment. He spent the night, and soon he was spending almost every night there.

Hugo was happy again. To his delight, Juliette quit her career in the theater, dropped her former friends, and learned to cook. She had loved fancy clothes and social affairs; now she became Hugo's secretary, rarely leaving the apartment in which he had established her and seeming to live only for his visits. After a while, however, Hugo returned to his old ways and started to have little affairs on the side. She did not complain—as long as she remained the one woman he kept returning to. And Hugo had in fact grown quite dependent on her.

In 1843, Hugo's beloved daughter died in an accident and he sank into a depression. The only way he knew to get over his grief was to have an affair with someone new. And so, shortly thereafter, he fell in love with a young married aristocrat named Léonie d'Aunet. He began to see Juliette less and less. A few years later, Léonie, feeling certain she was the preferred one, gave him an ultimatum: stop seeing Juliette altogether, or it was over. Hugo refused. Instead he decided to stage a contest: he would continue to see both women, and in a few months his heart would tell him which one he preferred. Léonie was furious, but she had no choice. Her affair with Hugo had already ruined her marriage and her standing in society; she was dependent on him. Anyway, how could she lose—she was in the prime of life, whereas Juliette had gray hair by now. So she pretended to go along with this contest, but as time went on, she grew increasingly resentful about it, and

complained. Juliette, on the other hand, behaved as if nothing had changed. Whenever he visited, she treated him as she always had, dropping everything to comfort and mother him.

The contest lasted several years. In 1851, Hugo was in trouble with Louis-Napoleon, the cousin of Napoleon Bonaparte and now the president of France. Hugo had attacked his dictatorial tendencies in the press, bitterly and perhaps recklessly, for Louis-Napoleon was a vengeful man. Fearing for 340 • *The Art of Seduction*

the writer's life, Juliette managed to hide him in a friend's house and arranged for a false passport, a disguise, and safe passage to Brussels. Everything went according to plan; Juliette joined him a few days later, carrying his most valuable possessions. Clearly her heroic actions had won the contest for her. And yet, after the novelty of Hugo's new life wore off, his affairs resumed. Finally, fearing for his health, and worried that she could no longer compete with yet another twenty-year-old coquette, Juliette made a calm but stern demand: no more women or she was leaving him. Taken completely by surprise, yet certain that she meant every word, Hugo broke down and sobbed. An old man by now, he got down on his knees and

swore, on the Bible and then on a copy of his famous novel *Les Misérables*, that he would stray no more. Until Juliette's death, in 1883, her spell over him was complete.

Interpretation. Hugo's love life was determined by his relationship with his mother. He never felt she had loved him enough. Almost all the women he had affairs with bore a physical resemblance to her; somehow he would make up for her lack of love for him by sheer volume. When Juliette met him, she could not have known all this, but she must have sensed two things: he was extremely disappointed in his wife, and he had never really grown up. His emotional outbursts and his need for attention made him more a little boy than a man. She would gain ascendancy over him for the rest of his life by supplying the one thing he had never had: complete, unconditional mother-love. Juliette never judged Hugo, or criticized him for his naughty ways. She lavished him with attention; visiting her was like returning to the womb. In her presence, in fact, he was more a little boy than ever. How could he refuse her a favor or ever leave her? And when she finally threatened to leave him, he was reduced to the state of a wailing infant crying for his mother. In the end she had total power over him.

Unconditional love is rare and hard to find, yet it is what we all crave, since we either experienced it once or wish we had. You do not have to go as far as Juliette Drouet; the mere hint of devoted attention, of accepting your lovers for who they are, of meeting their needs, will place them in an infantile position. A sense of dependency may frighten them a little, and they may feel an undercurrent of ambivalence, a need to assert themselves periodically, as Hugo did through his affairs. But their ties to you will be strong and they will keep coming back for more, bound by the illusion that they are recapturing the mother-love they had seemingly lost forever, or never had.

2. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Professor Mut, a schoolmaster at a college for young men in a small German town, began to de- *Effect a Regression* •

velop a keen hatred of his students. Mut was in his late fifties, and had worked at the same school for many years. He taught Greek and Latin and was a distinguished classical scholar. He had always felt a need to impose discipline, but now it was getting ugly: the students were simply not interested in Homer anymore. They listened to bad music and only liked modern literature. Although they were rebellious, Mut considered them soft and undisciplined. He wanted to teach them a lesson and make their lives miserable; his usual way of dealing with their bouts of rowdiness was sheer bullying, and most often it worked.

One day a student Mut loathed—a haughty, well-dressed young man

named Lohmann—stood up in class and said, "I can't go on working in this room, Professor. There is such a smell of mud." Mud was the boys' nickname for Professor Mut. The professor seized Lohmann by the arm, twisted it hard, then banished him from the room. He later noticed that Lohmann had left his exercise book behind, and thumbing through it he saw a paragraph about an actress named Rosa Fröhlich. A plot hatched in Mut's mind: he would catch Lohmann cavorting with this actress, no doubt a woman of ill repute, and would get the boy kicked out of school.

First he had to find out where she performed. He searched high and

low, finally finding her name up outside a club called the Blue Angel. He went in. It was a smoke-filled place, full of the working-class types he looked down on. Rosa was onstage. She was singing a song; the way she looked everyone in the audience in the eye was rather brazen, but for some reason Mut found this disarming. He relaxed a little, had some wine. After her performance he made his way to her dressing room, determined to grill her about Lohmann. Once there he felt strangely uncomfortable, but he gathered up his courage, accused her of leading schoolboys astray, and threatened to get the police to close the place down. Rosa, however, was not intimidated. She turned all of Mut's sentences around: perhaps *he* was the one leading boys astray. Her tone was cajoling and teasing. Yes, Lohmann had bought her flowers and champagne—so what? No one had

ever talked to Mut this way before; his authoritative tone usually made people give way. He should have felt offended: she was low class and a woman, and he was a schoolmaster, but she was talking to him as if they were equals. Instead, however, he neither got angry nor left—something compelled him to stay. Now she was silent. She picked up a stocking and started to darn it, ignoring him; his eyes followed her every move, particularly the way she rubbed her bare knee. Finally he brought up Lohmann again, and the police. "You've no idea what this life's like," she said. "Everyone who comes here thinks he's the only pebble on the beach. If you don't give them what they want they threaten you with the police!" "I certainly regret having hurt a lady's feelings," he replied sheepishly. As she got up from her chair, their knees rubbed, and he felt a shiver up his spine. Now she was nice to him again, and poured him some more wine. She invited him to come

back, then left abruptly to perform another number.

The next day he kept thinking about her words, her looks. Thinking

about her while he was teaching gave him a kind of naughty thrill. That night he went back to the club, still determined to catch Lohmann in the act, and once again found himself in Rosa's dressing room, drinking wine and becoming strangely passive. She asked him to help her get dressed; that seemed quite an honor and he obliged her. Helping her with her corset and her makeup, he forgot about Lohmann. He felt he was being initiated into some new world. She pinched his cheeks and stroked his chin, and occasionally let him glimpse her bare leg as she rolled up a stocking. Now Professor Mut showed up night after night, helping her dress,

watching her perform, all with a strange kind of pride. He was there so often that Lohmann and his friends no longer showed up. He had taken their place—he was the one to bring her flowers, pay for her champagne, the one to serve her. Yes, an old man like himself had bested the youthful Lohmann, who thought himself so suave! He liked it when she stroked his chin, complimented him for doing things right, but he felt even more excited when she rebuked him, throwing a powder puff in his face or pushing him off a chair. It meant she liked him. And so, gradually, he began to pay for all her caprices. It cost him a pretty penny but kept her away from other men. Eventually he proposed to her. They married, and scandal ensued: he lost his job, and soon all his money; finally he landed in prison. To the very end, however, he could never get angry with Rosa. Instead he felt guilty: he had never done enough for her.

Interpretation. Professor Mut and Rosa Fröhlich are characters in the novel *The Blue Angel*, written by Heinrich Mann in 1905, and later made into a film starring Marlene Dietrich. Rosa's seduction of Mut follows the classic oedipal regression pattern. First, the woman treats the man the way a mother would treat a little boy. She scolds him, but the scolding is not threatening; it is tender, and has a teasing edge. Like a mother, she knows she is dealing with someone weak, who cannot help his naughty behavior. She mixes plenty of praise and approval in with her taunts. Once the man begins to regress, she adds physical excitement—some bodily contact to excite him, subtle sexual overtones. As a reward for his regression, the man may get the thrill of finally sleeping with his mother. But there is always an element of competition, which the mother figure must heighten. The man gets to possess her all on his own, something he could not do with father in the way, but he first has to win her away from others.

The key to this kind of regression is to see and treat your targets as children. Nothing about them intimidates you, no matter how much authority or social standing they have. Your manner makes it clear that you feel you are the stronger party. To accomplish this it may be helpful to imagine or visualize them as the children they once were; suddenly, powerful people do not seem so powerful and threatening when you regress them in your imagination. Keep in mind that certain types are more vulnerable to an *Effect a Regression* • 343

oedipal regression. Look for those who, like Professor Mut, seem outwardly the most adult—straitlaced, serious, a little full of themselves. They are struggling to

repress their regressive tendencies, overcompensating for their weaknesses. Often those who seem the most in command of themselves are the ripest for regression. In fact they are secretly longing for it, because their power, position, and responsibilities are more a burden than a pleasure. 3. Born in 1768, the French writer François René de Chateaubriand grew up in a medieval castle in Brittany. The castle was cold and gloomy, as if inhabited by the ghosts of its past. The family lived there in semiseclusion. Chateaubriand spent much of his time with his sister Lucile, and his attachment to her was strong enough that rumors of incest made the rounds. But when he was around fifteen, a new woman named Sylphide entered his

life—a woman he created in his imagination, a composite of all the heroines, goddesses, and courtesans he had read about in books. He was constantly seeing her features in his mind, and hearing her voice. Soon she was taking walks with him, carrying on conversations. He imagined her innocent and exalted, yet they would sometimes do things that were not so innocent. He carried on this relationship for two whole years, until finally he left for Paris, and replaced Sylphide with women of flesh and blood. The French public, weary after the terrors of the 1790s, greeted

Chateaubriand's first books enthusiastically, sensing a new spirit in them. His novels were full of windswept castles, brooding heroes, and passionate heroines. Romanticism was in the air. Chateaubriand himself resembled the characters in his novels, and despite his rather unattractive appearance, women went wild over him—with him, they could escape their boring

marriages and live out the kind of turbulent romance he wrote about. Chateaubriand's nickname was the Enchanter, and although he was married, and an ardent Catholic, the number of his affairs increased with the years. But he had a restless nature—he traveled to the Middle East, to the United States, all over Europe. He could not find what he was looking for anywhere, and not the right woman either: after the novelty of an affair wore off, he would leave. By 1807 he had had so many affairs, and still felt so unsatisfied, that he decided to retire to his country estate, called Vallée aux Loups. He filled the place with trees from all over the world, transforming the grounds into something out of one of his novels. There he began to write the memoirs that he envisioned would be his masterpiece. By 1817, however, Chateaubriand's life had fallen apart. Money problems had forced him to sell Vallée aux Loups. Almost fifty, he suddenly felt old, his inspiration dried up. That year he visited the writer Madame de Staël, who had been ill and was now close to death. He spent several days at her bedside, along with her closest friend, Juliette Récamier. Madame Récamier's affairs were infamous. She was married to a much older man, but they had not lived together for some time; she had broken the hearts of the most illustrious men in Europe, including Prince Metternich, the Duke of 344 • *The Art of Seduction*

Wellington, and the writer Benjamin Constant. It had also been rumored that despite all her flirtations she was still a virgin. She was now almost forty, but she was the type of woman who seems youthful at any age. Drawn together by their grief over de Staël's death, she and Chateaubriand became friends. She listened so attentively to him, adopting his moods and echoing his sentiments, that he felt that he had at last met a woman who understood him. There was also something rather ethereal about Madame Récamier. Her walk, her voice, her eyes—more than one

man had compared her to some unearthly angel. Chateaubriand soon burned with the desire to possess her physically.

The year after their friendship began, she had a surprise for him: she had convinced a friend to purchase Vallée aux Loups. The friend was away for a few weeks, and she invited Chateaubriand to spend some time with her at his former estate. He happily accepted. He showed her around, explaining what each little patch of ground had meant to him, the memories the place conjured up. He felt youthful feelings welling up inside him, feelings he had forgotten about. He delved further into the past, describing events in his childhood. At moments, walking with Madame Récamier and looking into those kind eyes, he felt a shiver of recognition, but he could not quite identify it. All he knew was that he had to go back to the memoirs that he had laid aside. "I intend to employ the little time that is left to me in describing my youth," he said, "so long as its essence remains palpable to me." It seemed that Madame Récamier returned Chateaubriand's love, but as usual she struggled to keep it a spiritual affair. The Enchanter, however, deserved his nickname. His poetry, his air of melancholy, and his persistence finally won the day and she succumbed, perhaps for the first time in her life. Now, as lovers, they were inseparable. But as always with Chateaubriand, over time one woman was not enough. The restless spirit returned. He began to have affairs again. Soon he and Récamier stopped seeing each other.

In 1832, Chateaubriand was traveling through Switzerland. Once again his life had taken a downward turn; only this time he truly was old, in body and spirit. In the Alps, strange thoughts of his youth began to assail him, memories of the castle in Brittany. Word reached him that Madame Récamier was in the area. He had not seen her in years, and he hurried to the inn where she was staying. She was as kind to him as ever; during the day they took walks together, and at night they stayed up late, talking. One day, Chateaubriand told Récamier he had finally decided to finish his memoirs. And he had a confession to make: he told her the story of Sylphide, his imaginary lover when he was growing up. He had once

hoped to meet a Sylphide in real life, but the women he had known had paled in comparison. Over the years he had forgotten about his imaginary lover, but now he was an old man, and he not only thought of her again, he could see her face and hear her voice. And with those memories he realized that he had in fact met Sylphide in real life—it was Madame Ré- *Effect a Regression* • 345

camier. The face and voice were close. More important, there was the calm spirit, the innocent, virginal quality. Reading to her the prayer to Sylphide he had just written, he told her he wanted to be young again, and seeing her had brought his youth back to him. Reconciled with Madame Récamier, he began to work again on the memoirs, which were eventually published under the title *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave*. Most critics agreed that the book was his masterpiece. The memoirs were dedicated to

Madame Récamier, to whom he remained devoted until his death, in

Interpretation. All of us carry within us an image of an ideal type of person whom we yearn to meet and love. Most often the type is a composite made up of bits and pieces of different people from our youth, and even of characters in books and movies. People who influenced us inordinately—a teacher for instance—may also figure. The traits have nothing to do with superficial interests. Rather, they are unconscious, hard to verbalize. We searched hardest for this ideal type in our adolescence, when we were more idealistic. Often our first loves have more of these traits than our subsequent affairs. For Chateaubriand, living with his family in their secluded castle, his first love was his sister Lucile, whom he adored and idealized. But since love with her was impossible, he created a figure out of his imagination who had all her positive attributes—nobility of spirit, innocence, courage. Madame Récamier could not have known about Chateaubriand's ideal

type, but she did know something about him, well before she ever met him. She had read all of his books, and his characters were highly autobiographical. She knew of his obsession with his lost youth; and everyone knew of his endless and unsatisfying affairs with women, his hyperrestless spirit. Madame Récamier knew how to mirror people, entering their spirit, and one of her first acts was to take Chateaubriand to Vallée aux Loups, where he felt he had left part of his youth. Alive with memories, he regressed further into his childhood, to the days in the castle. She actively encouraged this. Most important, she embodied a spirit that came naturally to her, but that matched his youthful ideal: innocent, noble, kind. (The fact that so many men fell in love with her suggests that many men had the same ideals.) Madame Récamier was Lucile/Sylphide. It took him years to realize it, but when he did, her spell over him was complete.

It is nearly impossible to embody someone's ideal completely. But if you come close enough, if you evoke some of that ideal spirit, you can lead that person into a deep seduction. To effect this regression you must play the role of the therapist. Get your targets to open up about their past, particularly their former loves and most particularly their first love. Pay attention to any expressions of disappointment, how this or that person did not give them what they wanted. Take them to places that evoke their youth. In this regression you are creating not so much a relationship of dependency and immaturity but rather the adolescent spirit of a first love. There is a touch of innocence to the relationship. So much of adult life involves compromise, conniving, and a certain toughness. Create the ideal atmosphere by keeping such things out, drawing the other person into a kind of mutual weakness, conjuring a second virginity. There should be a dreamlike quality to the affair, as if the target were reliving that first love but could not quite believe it. Let all of this unfold slowly, each encounter revealing more ideal qualities. The sense of reliving a past pleasure is simply impossible to resist.

4. Some time in the summer of 1614, several members of England's upper nobility, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, met to decide what to do about the Earl of Somerset, the favorite of King James I, who was forty-eight at the time. After eight years as the favorite, the young earl had accumulated such power and wealth, and so many titles, that nothing was left for anyone else. But how to get rid of this powerful man? For the time being the conspirators had no answer.

A few weeks later the king was inspecting the royal stables when he caught sight of a young man who was new to the court: the twenty-two-year-old George Villiers, a member of the lower nobility. The courtiers who accompanied the king that day watched the king's eyes following Villiers, and saw with what interest he asked about this young man. Indeed everyone had to agree that he was a most handsome youth, with the face of an angel and a charmingly childish manner. When news of the king's interest in Villiers reached the conspirators, they instantly knew they had found what they had been looking for: a young man who could seduce the king and supplant the dreaded favorite. Left to nature, though, the seduction would never happen. They had to help it along. So, without telling Villiers of their plan, they befriended him.

King James was the son of Mary Queen of Scots. His childhood had been a nightmare: his father, his mother's favorite, and his own regents had all been murdered; his mother had first been exiled, later executed. When James was young, to escape suspicion he played the part of a fool. He hated the sight of a sword and could not stand the slightest sign of argument. When his cousin Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, leaving no heir, he became king of England. James surrounded himself with bright, happy young men, and seemed

to prefer the company of boys. In 1612, his son, Prince Henry, died. The king was inconsolable. He needed distraction and good cheer, and his favorite, the Earl of Somerset, was no longer so young and attractive. The timing for a seduction was perfect. And so the conspirators went to work on Villiers, under the guise of trying to help him advance within the court. They supplied him with a magnificent wardrobe, jewels, a glittering carriage, the kind of things the king noticed. They worked on his riding, *Effect a Regression* • 347

fencing, tennis, dancing, his skills with birds and dogs. He was instructed in the art of conversation—how to flatter, tell a joke, sigh at the right moment. Fortunately Villiers was easy to work with; he had a naturally buoyant manner and nothing seemed to bother him. That same year the conspirators managed to get him appointed the royal cup-bearer: every night he poured out the king's wine, so that the king could see him up close. After a few weeks, the king was in love. The boy seemed to crave attention and tenderness, exactly what he yearned to offer. How wonderful it would be to mold and educate him. And what a perfect figure he had!

The conspirators convinced Villiers to break off his engagement to a young lady; the king was single-minded in his affections, and could not stand competition. Soon James wanted to be around Villiers all the time, for he had the qualities the king admired: innocence and a lighthearted spirit. The king appointed Villiers gentleman of the bedchamber, making it possible for them to be alone together. What particularly charmed James was that Villiers never asked for anything, which made it all the more delightful to spoil him. By 1616, Villiers had completely supplanted the former favorite. He was now the Earl of Buckingham, and a member of the king's privy council. To the conspirators' dismay, however, he quickly accumulated even more privileges than the Earl of Somerset had done. The king would call him sweetheart in public, fix his doublets, comb his hair. James zealously protected his favorite, anxious to preserve the young man's innocence. He tended to the youth's

every whim, in effect became his slave. In fact the king seemed to regress; whenever Steenie, his nickname for Villiers, entered the room, he started to act like a child. The two were inseparable until the king's death, in 1625. *Interpretation*. We are most definitely stamped forever by our parents, in ways we can never fully understand. But the parents are equally influenced and seduced by the child. They may play the role of the protector, but in the process they absorb the child's spirit and energy, relive a part of their own childhood. And just as the child struggles against sexual feelings toward the parent, the parent must repress comparable erotic feelings that lie just beneath the tenderness they feel. The best and most insidious way to seduce people is often to position yourself as the child. Imagining themselves stronger, more in control, they will be lured into your web. They will feel they have nothing to fear. Emphasize your immaturity, your weakness, and you let them indulge in fantasies of protecting and parenting you—a strong desire as people get older. What they do not realize is that you are getting under their skin, insinuating yourself—it is the child who is controlling the adult. Your innocence makes them want to protect you, but it is also sexually charged. Innocence is highly seductive; some people even long to play the corrupter of innocence. Stir up their latent sexual feelings and 348 • *The Art of Seduction*

you can lead them astray with the hope of fulfilling a strong yet repressed fantasy: sleeping with the child figure. In your presence, too, they will begin to regress as well, infected by your childish, playful spirit. Most of this came naturally to Villiers, but you will probably have to use some calculation. Fortunately, all of us have strong childish tendencies within us that are easy to access and exaggerate. Make your gestures seem spontaneous and unplanned. Any sexual element of your behavior should seem innocent, unconscious. Like Villiers, don't push for favors. Parents prefer to spoil children who don't ask for things but invite them in their manner. Seeming nonjudgmental and uncritical of those around you will make everything you do seem more natural and naive. Have a happy, cheerful demeanor, but with a playful edge. Emphasize any weaknesses you might have, things you cannot control. Remember: most of us remember our early years fondly, but often, paradoxically, the people with the strongest attachment to those times are the ones who had the most difficult childhoods. Actually, circumstances kept them from getting to *be* children, so they never really grew up, and they long for the paradise they never got to experience. James I falls into this category. These types are ripe targets for a reverse regression.

Symbol: The Bed. Lying alone in bed, the child

feels unprotected, afraid, and needy. In a nearby room, there is the parent's bed. It is large and forbidding, site of things you are not supposed to know about. Give the seduced both feelings—helplessness and transgression—as you lay them into bed and put them to sleep. Reversal

To reverse the strategies of regression, the parties to a seduction would have to remain adults during the process. This is not only rare, it is not very pleasurable. Seduction means realizing certain fantasies. Being a mature and responsible adult is not a fantasy, it is a duty. Furthermore, a person who remains an adult in relation to you is harder to seduce. In all kinds of seduction—political, media, personal—the target must regress. The only danger is that the child, wearying of dependence, turns against the parent and rebels. You must be prepared for this, and unlike a

parent, never take it personally.

18

Stir Up the Transgressive and Taboo

There are always social limits on what one can do.

Some of these, the most elemental taboos, go back centuries;

others are more superficial, simply defining polite and acceptable behavior. Making your targets feel that you are leading them past either kind of limit is immensely seductive. People yearn to explore their dark side. Not everything in romantic love is supposed to be tender and soft; hint that you have a cruel, even sadistic streak. You do not respect age differences, marriage vows, family ties. Once the desire to transgress draws your targets to you, it will be hard for them to stop. Take them further than they imagined—the shared feeling of guilt and complicity will create a powerful bond.

The Lost Self

In March of 1812, the twenty-four-year-old George Gordon Byron published the first cantos of his poem *Childe Harold*. The poem was filled with familiar gothic imagery—a dilapidated abbey, debauchery, travels to the mysterious East—but what made it different was that the hero of the poem was also its villain: Harold was a man who led a life of vice, disdaining society's conventions yet somehow going unpunished. Also, the poem was not set in some faraway land but in present-day England. *Childe Harold* *It is a matter of a certain kind of feeling: that of*

created an instant stir, becoming the talk of London. The first printing being overwhelmed. There quickly sold out. Within days a rumor made the rounds: the poem, about a are many who have a great debauched young nobleman, was in fact autobiographical.

fear of being overwhelmed

by someone; for example,

Now the cream of society clamored to meet Lord Byron, and many of *someone who makes them* them left their calling cards at his London residence. Soon he was showing *laugh against their will, or* up at their homes. Strangely enough, he exceeded their expectations. He *tickles them to death, or, worse, tells them things*

was devilishly handsome, with curling hair and the face of an angel. His that they sense to be black attire set off his pale complexion. He did not talk much, which made accurate but which they do an impression of itself, and when he did, his voice was low and hypnotic not quite understand, and his tone a little disdainful. He had a limp (he was born with a clubfoot), things that go beyond their prejudices and received

so when an orchestra struck up a waltz (the dance craze of 1812), he would *wisdom, In other words*, stand to the side, a faraway look in his eye. The ladies went wild over By- *they do not want to be* ron. Upon meeting him, Lady Roseberry felt her heart beating so violently *seduced, since seduction means confronting people*

(a mix of fear and excitement) that she had to walk away. Women fought to *with their limits, limits* be seated next to him, to win his attention, to be seduced by him. Was it *that are supposed to be set* true that he was guilty of a secret sin, like the hero of his poem?

and stable but that the

seducer suddenly causes to

Lady Caroline Lamb—wife of William Lamb, son of Lord and Lady *waver. Seduction is the* Melbourne—was a glittering young woman on the social scene, but deep *desire of being* inside she was unhappy. As a young girl she had dreamt of adventure, *ro- overwhelmed, taken beyond.*

mance, travel. Now she was expected to play the role of the polite young wife, and it did not suit her. Lady Caroline was one of the first to read —DANIEL SIBONY, *L 'A M O U R INCONSCIENT*

Childe Harold, and something more than its novelty stirred her. When she saw Lord Byron at a dinner party, surrounded by women, she looked at his face, then walked away; that night she wrote of him in her journal, "Mad, *Just lately I saw a tight-* bad, and dangerous to know." She added, "That beautiful pale face is my *reined stallion* | *Get the bit fate.*"

in his teeth and bolt | Like

The next day, to Lady Caroline's surprise, Lord Byron called on her. *lightning— yet the minute he felt the reins slacken, |*

Evidently he had seen her walking away from him, and her shyness had in- *Drop loose on his flying* trigued him—he disliked the aggressive women who were constantly at his *mane, | He stopped dead.* 351

352 • *The Art of Seduction*

We eternally chafe at heels, as it seemed he disdained everything, including his success. Soon he *restrictions, covet |* was visiting Lady Caroline daily. He lingered in her boudoir, played with *Whatever's forbidden.*

her children, helped her choose her dress for the day. She pressed him to (*Look how a sick man*

who's told | No immersion talk of his life: he described his brutal father, the untimely deaths that *hangs round the bath-*

seemed to be a family curse, the crumbling abbey he had inherited, his ad *house*.)
| . . . *Desire* | ventures in Turkey and Greece. His life was indeed as gothic as that of *Mounts for what's kept out*

Childe Harold.

of reach. A thief's attracted

| *By burglar-proof*

Within days the two became lovers. Now, though, the tables turned:

premises. How often will Lady Caroline pursued Byron with unladylike aggression. She dressed as a *love* | *Thrive on a rival's page* and sneaked into his carriage, wrote him extravagantly emotional let *approval? It's not your wife's beauty, but your own*

ters, flaunted the affair. At last, a chance to play the grand romantic role of

| *Passion for her that gets her girlhood fantasies.* Byron began to turn against her. He already loved to *us—she must* | *Have* shock; now he confessed to her the nature of the secret sin he had alluded *something, just to have*

hooked you. A girl locked

to in *Childe Harold*—his homosexual affairs during his travels. He made *up by her* | *Husband's not*

cruel remarks, grew indifferent. But this only seemed to push her further. *chaste but pursued, her* She sent him the customary lock of hair, but from her pubis; she followed *fear's* | *A bigger draw than*

her figure. Illicit passion—

him in the street, made public scenes—finally her family sent her abroad to *like it* | *Or not—is*

avoid further scandal. After Byron made it clear the affair was over, she de *sweeter. It only turns me* scended into a madness that would last several years. *on* | *When the girl says,*

"I'm frightened."

In 1813, an old friend of Byron's, James Webster, invited the poet to stay at his country estate. Webster had a young and beautiful wife, Lady

— O V I D , *THE AMORES*,

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

Frances, and he knew Byron's reputation as a seducer, but his wife was quiet and chaste—surely she would resist the temptation of a man such as Byron. To Webster's relief, Byron barely spoke to Frances, who seemed equally uninterested in him. Yet several days into Byron's stay, she contrived *It is often not possible for*

[women] later on to undo to be alone with him in the billiards room, where she asked him a question: *the connection thus formed*

how could a woman who liked a man inform him of it when he did not

in their minds between perceive it? Byron scribbled a racy reply on a piece of paper, which made *sensual activities and*

her blush as she read it. Soon thereafter he invited the couple to stay with *something forbidden, and*

they turn out to be him at his infamous abbey. There, the prim and proper Lady Frances saw *psychically impotent, i.e.*

him drink wine from a human skull. They stayed up late in one of the *frigid, when at last such*

abbey's secret chambers, reading poetry and kissing. With Byron, it seemed, *activities do become*

permissible. This is the Lady Frances was only too eager to explore adultery. *source of the desire in so*

That same year, Lord Byron's half sister Augusta arrived in London to *many women to keep even*

get away from her husband, who was having money troubles. Byron had *legitimate relations secret*

for a time; and of the not seen Augusta for some time. The two were physically similar—the *appearance of the capacity* same face, the same mannerisms; she was Lord Byron as a woman. And his *for normal sensation in behavior toward her* was more than brotherly. He took her to the theater, *others as soon as the* to dances, received her at home, treating her with an intimate spirit that *condition of prohibition is*

restored by a secret Augusta soon returned. Indeed the kind and tender attention that Byron *intrigue— untrue to the* showered on her soon became physical. *husband, they can keep a*

Augusta was a devoted wife with three children, yet she yielded to her *second order of faith with*

the lover. • *In my opinion* half brother's advances. How could she help herself? He stirred up a strange *the necessary condition* of passion in her, a stronger passion than she felt for any other man, including *forbiddenness in the erotic* her husband. For Byron, his relationship with Augusta was the ultimate and *life of women holds the*

same place as the man's

crowning sin of his career. And soon he was writing to his friends, openly *Stir Up the Transgressive and Taboo* • 353

confessing it. Indeed he delighted in their shocked responses, and his long *need to lower his sexual* narrative poem, *The Bride of Abydos*, takes brother-sister incest as its theme. *object. . . Women* Rumors began to spread of Byron's relations with Augusta, who was now *belonging to the higher levels of civilization do not*

pregnant with his child. Polite society shunned him—but women were *usually transgress the* more drawn to him than before, and his books were more popular than *prohibition against sexual* ever.

activities during the period

of waiting, and thus they

Annabella Milbanke, Lady Caroline Lamb's cousin, had met Byron in *acquire this close association* those first months of 1812 when he was the toast of London.

Annabella *between the forbidden and* was sober and down to earth, and her interests were science and religion. *the sexual. . . • The injurious results of the*

But there was something about Byron that attracted her. And the feeling *deprivation of sexual* seemed to be returned: not only did the two become friends, to her bewil- *enjoyment at the beginning* derment he showed another kind of interest in her, even at one point *manifest themselves in lack of full satisfaction when*

proposing marriage. This was in the midst of the scandal over Byron and *sexual desire is later given* Caroline Lamb, and Annabella did not take the proposal seriously. Over the *free rein in marriage. But*, next few months she followed his career from a distance, and heard the *on the other hand*, troubling rumors of incest. Yet in 1813, she wrote her aunt, "I consider his *unrestrained sexual liberty from the beginning leads to*

acquaintance as so desirable that I would incur the risk of being called a *no better result. It is easy* Flirt for the sake of enjoying it." Reading his new poems, she wrote that his *to show that the value the*

"description of Love almost makes *me in love.*" She was developing an ob- *mind sets on erotic needs instantly sinks as soon as*

session with Byron, of which word soon reached him. They renewed their *satisfaction becomes readily* friendship, and in 1814 he proposed again; this time

she accepted. Byron *obtainable. Some obstacle* was a fallen angel and she would be the one to reform him.

is necessary to swell the

tide of the libido to its

It did not turn out that way. Byron had hoped that married life would *height; and at all periods of calm him down*, but after the ceremony he realized it was a mistake. He *history, wherever natural* told Annabella, "Now you will find that you have married a devil." Within *barriers in the way of satisfaction have not*

a few years the marriage fell apart.

sufficed, mankind has

In 1816, Byron left England, never to return. He traveled through Italy *erected conventional ones in* for a while; everyone knew his story—the affairs, the incest, the cruelty to *order to be able to enjoy love. This is true both of*

his lovers. But wherever he went, Italian women, particularly married no-*individuals and of nations*. blewomen, pursued him, making it clear in their own way how prepared *In times during which no* they were to be the next Byronic victim. In truth, the women had become *obstacles to sexual* the aggressors. As Byron told the poet Shelley, "No one has been more car- *satisfaction existed, such as, maybe, during the*

ried off than poor dear me—I've been ravished more often than anyone *decline of the civilizations* since the Trojan war."

of antiquity, love became

worthless, life became

empty, and strong reaction-

formations were necessary

Interpretation. Women of Byron's time were longing to play a different *before the indispensable* role than society allowed them. They were supposed to be the decent, *emotional value of love could be recovered.*

moralizing force in culture; only men had outlets for their darker impulses. Underlying the social restrictions on women, perhaps, was a fear of the — SIGMUND FREUD,

"C O N T R I B U T I O N S TO THE

more amoral and unbridled part of the female psyche.

PSYCHOLOGY OF LOVE,"

Feeling repressed and restless, women of the time devoured gothic novels and romances, stories in which women were adventurous, and had the

SEXUALITY AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LOVE, TRANSLATED BY JOAN RIVIÈRE

same capacity for good and evil as men. Books like these helped to trigger a revolt, with women like Lady Caroline playing out a little of the fantasy life they had had in their girlhood, where it had to some extent been permitted. 354 • *The Art of Seduction* *This is how Monsieur* did. Byron arrived on the scene at the right time. He became the lightning *Maudair analyzed men's rod* for women's unexpressed desires; with him they could go beyond the *attitude toward prostitutes*: limits society had imposed. For some the lure was adultery, for others it was

"Neither the love of a

passionate but well- romantic rebellion, or a chance to become irrational and uncivilized. (The brought-up mistress, nor desire to reform him merely covered up the truth—the desire to be over his marriage to a woman whelmed by him.) In all cases it was the lure of the forbidden, which in this whom he respects, can

replace the prostitute for the case was more than merely a superficial temptation: once you became in human animal in those volved with Lord Byron, he took you further than you had imagined or perverse moments when he wanted, since he recognized no limits. Women did not just fall in love with covets the pleasure of

debasing himself without him, they let him turn their lives upside down, even ruin them. They pre affecting his social prestige. ferred that fate to the safe confines of marriage. Nothing can replace this

In some ways, the situation of women in the early nineteenth century *bizarre and powerful* has become generalized in the early twenty-first. The outlets for male bad pleasure of being able to

say everything, do behavior—war, dirty politics, the institution of mistresses and courtesans—

everything, profane and have faded away; today, not just women but men are supposed to be emi parody without any fear of nently civilized and reasonable. And many have a hard time living up to retribution, remorse, or

responsibility. It is a this. As children we are able to vent the darker side of our characters, a side complete revolt against that all of us have. But under pressure from society (at first in the form organized society, his of our parents), we slowly repress the naughty, rebellious, perverse streaks organized, educated self

and especially his in our characters. To get along, we learn to repress our dark sides, which religion." Monsieur become a kind of lost self, a part of our psyche buried beneath our polite Mauclair hears the call of appearance.

the Devil in this dark

As adults, we secretly want to recapture that lost self—the more *adven passion poetized by Baudelaire*. "The turous, less respectful, childhood part of us. We are drawn to those who *prostitute represents the* live out their lost selves as adults, even if it involves some evil or destruc *unconscious which enables* tion. Like Byron, you can become the lightning rod for such desires. You *us to put aside our responsibilities.*"

must learn, however, to keep this potential under control, and to use it

— NINA EPTON,

strategically. As the aura of the forbidden around you is drawing targets into *LOVE AND THE FRENCH*

your web, do not overplay your dangerousness, or they will be frightened away. Once you feel them falling under your spell, you have freer rein. If they begin to imitate you, as Lady Caroline imitated Byron, then take it further—mix in some cruelty, involve them in sin, crime, taboo activity, *Hearts and eye go traveling*

along the paths that have whatever it takes. Unleash the lost self within them; the more they act it *always brought them joy*; out, the deeper your hold over them. Going halfway will break the spell and if anyone attempts to and create self-consciousness. Take it as far as you can. *spoil their game, he only*

makes them the more

passionate about it, God

Baseness attracts everybody.

knows. . . . so it was with

—JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE

Tristan and Isolde. As

soon as they were forbidden

their desires, and prevented

from enjoying one another

Keys to Seduction

by spies and guards, they

began to suffer intensely.

Desire now seriously

tormented them by its

magic, many times worse Society and culture are based on limits—this kind of behavior is acceptable, that is not. The limits are fluid and change with time, but there are always limits. The alternative is anarchy, the lawlessness of nature, which we *than before; their need for*

one another was more dread. But we are strange animals: the moment any kind of limit is im- *Stir Up the Transgressive and Taboo* • 355

posed, physically or psychologically, we are instantly curious. A part of us *painful and urgent than it* wants to go beyond that limit, to explore what is forbidden.

had ever been. • . .

Women do lots of things

If, as children, we are told not to go past a certain point in the woods, *just because they are* that is precisely where we want to go. But we grow older, and become *po-forbidden, which they* like and deferential; more and more boundaries encumber our lives. Do not *would certainly not do if they were not*

confuse politeness with happiness, however. It covers up frustration, *un-forbidden. . . Our Lord* wanted compromise. How can we explore the shadow side of our person *God gave Eve the freedom* ality without incurring punishment or ostracism? It seeps out in our *to do what she would with* dreams. We sometimes wake up with a sense of guilt at the murder, incest, *all the fruits, flowers, and plants there were in*

adultery, and mayhem that goes on in our dreams, until we realize no one *Paradise, except for only* needs to know about it but ourselves. But give a person the sense that with *one, which he forbade* you they will have a chance to explore the outer reaches of acceptable, *po- her to touch on pain of death. . . She look the*

lite behavior, that with you they can vent some of their closeted person- fruit and broke God's ality, and you create the ingredients for a deep and powerful seduction. commandment . . . but it

You will have to go beyond the point of merely teasing them with an *is my firm belief now that*

Eve would never have done

elusive fantasy. The shock and seductive power will come from the reality *this, if she had not been* of what you are offering them. Like Byron, at a certain point you can even *forbidden to* press it further than they may want to go. If they have followed you merely —GOTTFRIED VON STRASSBURG, out of curiosity, they may feel some fear and hesitation, but once they are *TRISTAN UND ISOLDE*,

QUOTED

hooked, they will fond you hard to resist, for it is hard to return to a limit IN
ANDREA HOPKINS, *THE*

BOOK OF COURTLY LOVE

once you have transgressed and gone past it. The human cries out for more, and does not know when to stop. You will determine for them when it is time to stop.

One of Monsieur Leopold

The moment people feel that something is prohibited, a part of them *Stern's friends rented a* will want it. That is what makes a married man or woman such a delicious *bachelor's pied-à-terre* target—the more someone is prohibited, the greater the desire. George Vil- *where he received his wife as a mistress, served her*

liers, the Earl of Buckingham, was the favorite first of King James I, then of *with port and petits-fours* James's son, King Charles I. Nothing was ever denied him. In 1625, on a *and "experienced all the* visit to France, he met the beautiful Queen Anne and fell hopelessly in *tingling excitement of*

adultery." He told Stern

love. What could be more impossible, more out of reach, than the queen of *that it was a delightful* a rival power? He could have had almost any other woman, but the prohib- *sensation to cuckold* ited nature of the queen completely enflamed him, until he embarrassed *himself*. himself and his country by trying to kiss her in public.

— N I N A E P T O N ,

Since what is forbidden is desired, somehow you must make yourself *LOVE AND THE FRENCH*

seem forbidden. The most blatant way to do this is to engage in behavior that gives you a dark and forbidden aura. Theoretically you are someone to avoid; in fact you are too seductive to resist. That was the allure of the actor Errol Flynn, who, like Byron, often found himself the pursued rather than the pursuer. Flynn was devilishly handsome, but he also had something else: a definite criminal streak. In his wild youth he engaged in all kinds of shady activities. In the 1950s he was charged with rape, a permanent stain on his reputation even though he was acquitted; but his popularity among women only increased. Play up your dark side and you will have a similar effect. For your targets to be involved with you means going beyond their limits, doing something naughty and unacceptable—to society, to their peers. For many that is reason to bite the bait.

356 • *The Art of Seduction*

In Junichiro Tanazaki's 1928 novel *Quicksand*, Sonoko Kakiuchi, the wife of a respectable lawyer, is bored and decides to take art classes to wile away the time.

There, she finds herself fascinated with a fellow female student, the beautiful Mitsuko, who befriends her, then seduces her. Kakiuchi is forced to tell endless lies to her husband about her involvement with Mitsuko and their frequent trysts. Mitsuko slowly involves her in all kinds of nefarious activities, including a love triangle with a bizarre young man. Each time Kakiuchi is made to explore some forbidden pleasure, Mitsuko challenges her to go further and further. Kakiuchi hesitates, feels remorse—

she knows she is in the clutches of a devilish young seductress who has played on her boredom to lead her astray. But in the end, she cannot help following Mitsuko's lead—each transgressive act makes her want more. Once your targets are drawn by the lure of the forbidden, dare them to match you in transgressive behavior. Any kind of challenge is seductive. Take it slowly heightening the challenge only after they show signs of yielding to you. Once they are under your spell, they may not even notice how far out on a limb you have taken them.

The great eighteenth-century rake Duc de Richelieu had a predilection for young girls and he would often heighten the seduction by enveloping them in transgressive behavior, to which the young are particularly susceptible. For instance, he would find a way into the young girl's house and lure her into her bed; the parents would be just down the hall, adding the proper spice. Sometimes he would act as if they were about to be discovered, the momentary fright sharpening the overall thrill. In all cases, he would try to turn the young girl against her parents, ridiculing their religious zeal or prudery or pious behavior. The duke's strategy was to attack the values that his targets held dearest—precisely the values that represent a limit. In a young person, family ties, religious ties, and the like are useful to the seducer; young people barely need a reason to rebel against them. The strategy, though, can be applied to a person of any age: for every deeply held value there is a shadow side, a doubt, a desire to explore what those values forbid.

In Renaissance Italy, a prostitute would dress as a lady and go to church. Nothing was more exciting to a man than to exchange glances with a woman whom he knew to be a whore as he was surrounded by his wife, family, peers, and church officials. Every religion or value system creates a dark side, the shadow realm of everything it prohibits. Tease your targets, get them to flirt with whatever transgresses their family values, which are often emotional yet superficial, since they are imposed from the outside.

One of the most seductive men of the twentieth century, Rudolph Valentino, was known as the Sex Menace. His appeal for women was twofold: he could be tender and attentive, but he also hinted of cruelty. At any moment he could become dangerously bold, perhaps even a little violent. The studios played up this double image as much as possible—when it was reported that he had been abusive to his wife, for example, they ex- *Stir Up the Transgressive and Taboo* • 357

ploited the story. A mix of the masculine and the feminine, the violent and the tender, will always seem transgressive and appealing. Love is supposed to be tender

and delicate, but in fact it can release violent and destructive emotions; and the possible violence of love, the way it breaks down our normal reasonableness, is just what attracts us. Approach romance's violent side by mixing a cruel streak into your tender attentions, particularly in the latter stages of the seduction, when the target is in your clutches. The courtesan Lola Montez was known to turn to violence, using a whip now and then, and Lou Andreas-Salomé could be exceptionally cruel to her men, playing coquettish games, turning alternately icy and demanding. Her cruelty only kept her targets coming back for more. A masochistic involvement can represent a great transgressive release. The more illicit your seduction feels, the more powerful its effect. Give your targets the feeling that they are committing a kind of crime, a deed whose guilt they share with you. Create public moments in which the two of you know something that those around you do not. It could be phrases and looks that only you recognize, a secret. Byron's seductive appeal to Lady Frances was connected to the nearness of her husband—in his company, for example, she had a love letter of Byron's hidden in her bosom. Johannes, the protagonist of Søren Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary*, sent a message to his target, the young Cordelia, in the middle of a dinner party they were both attending; she could not reveal to the other guests that it was from him, for then she would have to do some explaining. He might also say something in public that would have a special meaning for her, since it referred to something in one of his letters. All of this added spice to the affair by giving it a feeling of a shared secret, even a guilty crime. It is critical to play on tensions like these in public, creating a sense of complicity and collusion against the world. In the Tristan and Isolde legend, the famous lovers reach the heights of bliss and exhilaration exactly *because* of the taboos they break. Isolde is engaged to King Mark; she will soon be a married woman. Tristan is a loyal subject and warrior in the service of King Mark, who is his father's age. The whole affair has a feeling of stealing away the bride from the father. Epitomizing the concept of love in the Western world, the legend has had immense influence over the ages, and a crucial part of it is the idea that without obstacles, without a feeling of transgression, love is weak and flavorless.

People may be straining to remove restrictions on private behavior, to make everything freer, in the world today, but that only makes seduction more difficult and less exciting. Do what you can to reintroduce a feeling of transgression and crime, even if it is only psychological or illusory. There must be obstacles to overcome, social norms to flout, laws to break, before the seduction can be consummated. It might seem that a permissive society imposes few limits; find some. There will always be limits, sacred cows, behavioral standards—endless ammunition for stirring up the transgressive and taboo. 358 • *The Art of Seduction*

Symbol: The Forest. *The children are told not to go into the forest that lies just beyond the safe confines of their home.*

There is no law there, only wilderness, wild animals, and criminals. But the chance to explore, the alluring darkness, and the fact that it is prohibited are impossible to resist. And once inside, they want

to go farther and farther.

Reversal

The reversal of stirring up taboos would be to stay within the limits of acceptable behavior. That would make for a very tepid seduction. Which is not to say that only evil or wild behavior is seductive; goodness, kindness, and an aura of spirituality can be tremendously attractive, since they are rare qualities. But notice that the game is the same. A person who is kind or good or spiritual within the limits that society prescribes has a weak appeal. It is those who go to the extreme—the Gandhis, the Krishnamurtis—who seduce us. They do not merely expound a spiritual lifestyle, they do away with all personal material comfort to live out their ascetic ideals. They too go beyond the limits, transgressing acceptable behavior, because societies would find it hard to function if everyone went to such lengths. In seduction, there is absolutely no power in respecting boundaries and limits.

19

Use Spiritual Lures

Every-
one has doubts and in-
securities—about their body,
their self-worth, their sexuality. If
your seduction appeals exclusively to the
physical, you will stir up these doubts and
make your targets self-conscious. Instead, lure
them out of their insecurities by making them fo-
cus on something sublime and spiritual: a religious
experience, a lofty work of art, the occult. Play up
your divine qualities; affect an air of discontent with
worldly things; speak of the stars, destiny, the hidden
threads that unite you and the object of the seduc-
tion. Lost in a spiritual mist, the target will feel

*light and uninhibited. Deepen the effect of
your seduction by making its sexual cul-
mination seem like the spiritual
union of two souls.*

Object of Worship

Liane de Pougy was the reigning courtesan of 1890s Paris. Slender and androgynous, she was a novelty, and the wealthiest men in Europe vied to possess her. By late in the decade, however, she had grown tired of it all.

"What a sterile life," she wrote a friend. "Always the same routine: the *Bois*, the races, fittings; and to end an insipid day: dinner!" What wearied the courtesan most was the constant attention of her male admirers, who sought to monopolize her physical charms.

*Ah! always to be able to
freely love the one whom*

One spring day in 1899, Liane was riding in an open carriage through *one loves! To spend my life* the Bois de Boulogne. As usual, men tipped their hats at her as she passed *at your feet like our last* by. But one of these admirers caught her by surprise: a young woman with *days together*. *To protect* long blond hair, who gave her an intense, worshipful stare. Liane smiled at *you against imaginary satyrs so that I can be the*

the woman, who smiled and bowed in return.
only one to throw you on

A few days later Liane began to receive cards and flowers from a *this bed of moss. . . . twenty-three-year-old American named Natalie Barney, who identified We'll find each other again in Lesbos, and when dusk*

herself as the blond admirer in the Bois de Boulogne, and asked for a *ren-falls, we'll go deep in the dezvous*. Liane invited Natalie to visit, but to amuse herself she decided to *woods to lose the paths* play a little joke: a friend would take her place, lounging on her bed in the *leading to this century. I want to imagine us in this*

dark boudoir, while Liane would hide behind a screen. Natalie arrived at *enchanted island* of the appointed hour. She wore the costume of a Florentine page and carried *immortals. I picture it as* a bouquet of flowers. Kneeling before the bed, she began to praise the *being so beautiful. Come, I'll describe for you those*

courtesan, comparing her to a Fra Angelico painting. All too soon, she *delicate female couples, and* heard someone laugh—and standing up she realized the joke

that had been *far from the cities and the* played on her. She blushed and made for the door. When Liane hurried *din, we'll forget everything* out from behind the screen, Natalie chastised her: the courtesan had the *but the Ethics of Beauty.* face of an angel, but apparently not the spirit. Contrite, Liane whispered, —NATALIE BARNEY, LETTER TO

LIANE DE POURQUOI, QUOTED IN

"Come back tomorrow morning. I'll be alone."

JEAN CHALON, *PORTRAIT OF A*

The young American showed up the next day, wearing the same outfit.
SEDUCTRESS: THE WORLD OF

She was witty and spirited; Liane relaxed in her presence, and invited her to
NATALIE BARNEY, TRANSLATED

BY CAROL BARKO

stay for the courtesan's morning ritual—the elaborate makeup, clothes, and jewelry she put on before heading out into the world. Watching reverently, Natalie remarked that she worshiped beauty, and that Liane was the most *Terrible Natalie, who used* beautiful woman she had ever seen. Playing the part of the page, she followed *ravage the land of love*. lowed Liane to the carriage, opened the door for her with a bow, and accompanied her on her habitual ride through the Bois de Boulogne. Once *by husbands since no one could resist her*

inside the park, Natalie knelt on the floor, out of sight of the passing *seductiveness*. *And one* gentlemen who tipped their hats to Liane. She recited poems she had written *could see how women* 361

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would abandon their ten in Liane's honor, and she told the courtesan she considered it a mission husbands, homes, children,

to rescue her from the seamy career into which she had fallen.

to follow this Circe of

That evening Natalie took her to the theater to see Sarah Bernhardt *Lesbos*. •
Circe's method

was to concoct magic play Hamlet. During the intermission, she told Liane that she identified potions. Natalie preferred

with Hamlet—his hunger for the sublime, his hatred of tyranny—which, *writing poems; she always* for her, was the tyranny of men over women. Over the next few days Liane knew how to blend the

physical and the spiritual.

received a steady flow of flowers from Natalie, and telegrams with little poems—
JEAN C H A L O N , *PORTRAIT OF*

ems in her honor. Slowly the worshipful words and looks became more *A SEDUCTRESS: THE WORLD OF*

physical, with the occasional touch, then a caress, even a kiss—and a kiss *NATALIE BARNEY, TRANSLATED*

that felt different from any in Liane's experience. One morning, with

BY CAROL BARKO

Natalie in attendance, Liane prepared to take a bath. As she slipped out of her nightgown, Natalie suddenly flung herself at her friend's feet, kissing her ankles. The courtesan freed herself and hurried into the bath, only for *There once lived in the* Natalie to throw off her clothes and join her. Within a few days, all Paris *town of Gafsa, in Barbary,*

a very rich man who had

knew that Liane de Pougy had a new lover: Natalie Barney.

numerous children, among

Liane made no effort to disguise her new affair, publishing a novel, *them a lovely and graceful*

Idylle Saphique, detailing every aspect of Natalie's seduction. She had never *young daughter called*

Alibech. She was not

had an affair with a woman before, and she described her involvement with *herself a Christian, but*

Natalie as something like a mystical experience. Even at the end of her *there were many* long life, she remembered the affair as by far her most intense. *Christians in the town,*

Renée Vivien was a young Englishwoman who had come to Paris to

and one day, having on

occasion heard them extol write poetry and flee the marriage that her father was trying to arrange for *the Christian faith and the* her. Renée was obsessed with death; she also felt there was something *service of God, she asked*

wrong with her, experiencing moments of intense self-loathing. In 1900, *one of them for his opinion*

on the best and easiest way

Renée met Natalie at the theater. Something about the American's kind *for a person to "serve*

eyes melted Renée's normal reserve, and she began sending poems to Na God," as *they put it. He* talie, who responded with poems of her own. They soon became friends. *answered her by saying*

that the ones who served

Renée confessed that she had had an intense friendship with another *God best were those who* woman, but that it remained platonic—the thought of physical involve *put the greatest distance* ment repulsed her. Natalie told her about the ancient Greek poet Sappho, *between themselves and*

who celebrated love between women as the only love that is innocent and *earthly goods, as happened*

in the case of people who pure. One night Renée, inspired by their discussions, invited Natalie to her *had gone to live in the* apartment, which she had transformed into a kind of chapel. The room *remoter parts of the* was filled with candles and with white lilies, the flowers she associated with *Sahara*. • *She said no*

more about it to anyone,

Natalie. That night the two women became lovers. They soon moved in *but next morning, being a*

together, but when Renée realized that Natalie could not be faithful to her, *very simple-natured*

her love turned into hatred. She broke off the relationship, moved out, and *creature of fourteen or*

thereabouts, Alibech set out

vowed to never see her again.

all alone, in secret, and

Over the next few months Natalie sent her letters and poems, and

made her way toward the

showed up at her new home—all to no avail. Renée would have nothing to *desert, prompted by*

nothing more logical than a

do with her. One evening at the opera, though, Natalie sat down beside *strong adolescent impulse*.

her and gave her a poem she had written in her honor. She expressed her *A few days later,*

regrets for the past, and also a simple request: the two women should go on *exhausted from fatigue and*

a pilgrimage to the Greek island of Lesbos, Sappho's home. Only there *hunger, she arrived in the*

heart of the wilderness,

could they purify themselves and their relationship. Renée could not resist. *Use Spiritual Lures* • 36 3

On the island they retraced the poetess's steps, imagining they were trans- *where, catching sight of a ported back into the pagan, innocent days of ancient Greece. For Renée, small hut in the distance, she stumbled toward it,*

Natalie had become Sappho herself. When they finally returned to Paris, *and in the doorway she* Renée wrote her, "My blond Siren, I don't want you to become like those *found a holy man, who who dwell on earth. . . . I want you to stay yourself, for this is the way you was astonished to see her in those parts and asked her*

cast your spell over me." Their affair lasted until Renée's death, in 1909. *what she was doing there.*

She told him that she had

been inspired by God, and

Interpretation. Liane de Pougy and Renée Vivien both suffered a similar *that she was trying, not only to serve Him, but also*

oppression: they were self-absorbed, hyperaware of themselves. The source *to find someone who could* of this habit in Liane was men's constant attention to her body. She could *teach her how she should* never escape their looks, which plagued her with a feeling of heavi- *go about it.* • *On observing how young and*

ness. Renée, meanwhile, thought too much about her own problems— *exceedingly pretty she was*, her repression of her lesbianism, her mortality. She felt consumed with *the good man was afraid to self-hatred.*

take her under his wing

lest the devil should catch

Natalie Barney, on the other hand, was buoyant, lighthearted, absorbed *him unawares. So he* in the world around her. Her seductions—and by the end of her life they *praised her for her good* numbered well into the hundreds—all had a similar quality: she took the *intentions, and having given her a quantity of*

victim outside herself, directing her attention toward beauty, poetry, the in- *herb roots, wild apples, and* nocence of Sapphic love. She invited her women to participate in a kind of *dates to eat, and some* cult in which they would worship these sublimities. To heighten the cult- *water to drink, he said to* like feeling, she involved them in little rituals: they would call each other by *her:* • *"My daughter,*

not- very far from here there is a

new names, send each other poems in daily telegrams, wear costumes, *holy man who is much* make pilgrimages to holy sites. Two things would inevitably happen: the *more capable than I* of women would start to direct some of the worshipful feelings they were ex- *teaching you what you want to know. Go along to*

periencing toward Natalie, who seemed as lofty and beautiful as the things *him.*" *And he sent her* she held up to be adored; and, pleasantly diverted into this spiritualized *upon her way.* • *When she* realm, they would also lose any heaviness they had felt about their bodies, *came to this second man, she was told precisely the*

their selves, their identities. Their repression of their sexuality would melt *same thing, and so she* away. By the time Natalie kissed or caressed them, it would feel like some- *went on until she arrived* thing innocent, pure, as if they had returned to the Garden of Eden before *at the cell of a young* the fall.

hermit, a very devout and

kindly fellow called

Religion is the great balm of existence because it takes us outside our- *Rustico, to whom she put* selves, connects us to something larger. As we contemplate the object of *the same inquiry as she* worship (God, nature), our burdens are lifted away. It is wonderful to feel *had addressed to the others. Being anxious to prove to*

raised up from the earth, to experience that kind of lightness. No matter *himself that he possessed a* how progressive the times, many of us feel uncomfortable with our bodies, *will of iron, he did not*, our animal drives. A seducer who focuses too much attention on the *like the others, send her away or direct her*

physical will stir up self-consciousness, and a residue of disgust. So focus *elsewhere, but kept her* attention on something else. Invite the other person to worship some- *with him in his cell, in a* thing beautiful in the world. It could be nature, a work of art, even God *corner of which, when night descended, he*

(or gods—paganism never goes out of fashion); people are dying to be- *prepared a makeshift bed* lieve in something. Add some rituals. If you can make yourself seem to *out of palm leaves, upon* resemble the thing you are worshiping—you are natural, aesthetic, noble, *which he invited her to lie* and sublime—your targets will transfer their worship to you. Religion and *down and rest.* • *Once he*

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had taken this step, very

spirituality are full of sexual undertones that can be brought to the surface *little time elapsed before*

once you have made your targets lose their self-awareness. From spiritual *temptation went to war* ecstasy to sexual ecstasy is but one small step. *against his*

willpower, and

after the first few assaults,

finding himself

Come back to take me, quickly, and lead me far away. Pu-

outmaneuvered on all

rify me with a great fire of divine love, none of the animal

fronts, he laid down his

kind. You are all soul when you want to be, when you feel

arms and surrendered.

Casting aside pious

it, take me far away from my body.

thoughts, prayers, and

—LIANE DE POURY

penitential exercises, he

began to concentrate his

mental faculties upon the

youth and beauty of the

Keys to Seduction

girl, and to devise suitable

ways and means for

approaching her in such a

fashion that she should not R eligion is the most seductive system that mankind has created. Death is our greatest fear, and religion offers us the illusion that we are im think it lewd of him to mortal, that something about us will live on. The idea that we are an infini make the sort of proposal he had in mind. By

tesimal part of a vast and indifferent universe is terrifying; religion putting certain questions to humanizes this universe, makes us feel important and loved. We are not ani her; he soon discovered that mals governed by uncontrollable drives, animals that die for no apparent she had never been

reason, but creatures made in the image of a supreme being. We too can be *intimate with the opposite*

sex and was every hit as

sublime, rational, and good. Anything that feeds a desire or a wished-for il *innocent as she seemed; lusion is seductive, and nothing can match religion in this arena. and he therefore thought of*

Pleasure is the bait that you use to lure a person into your web. But no *a possible way to persuade*

her; with the pretext of matter how clever a seducer you are, in the back of your targets' mind they serving God, to grant his

are aware of the endgame, the physical conclusion toward which you are *desires. He began by*

heading. You may think your target is unrepressed and hungry for pleasure, *delivering a long speech in*

which he showed her how but almost all of us are plagued by an underlying unease with our animal powerful an enemy the nature. Unless you deal with this unease, your seduction, even when suc devil was to the Lord God, cessful in the short term, will be superficial and temporary. Instead, like and followed this up by

Natalie Barney, try to capture your target's soul, to build the foundation of *impressing upon her that of*

all the ways of serving

a deep and lasting seduction. Lure the victim deep into your web with *God, the one that He most*

spirituality, making physical pleasure seem sublime and transcendent. Spiri *appreciated consisted in tuality will disguise your manipulations, suggesting that your relationship is putting the devil back in*

Hell, to which the

timeless, and creating a space for ecstasy in the victim's mind. Remember *Almighty had consigned*

that seduction is a mental process, and nothing is more mentally intoxicat *him in the first place. • ing than religion, spirituality, and the occult. The girl asked him how*

this was done, and Rustico

In Gustave Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary*, Rodolphe Boulanger visits *replied*: • "You will soon

the country doctor Bovary and finds himself interested in the doctor's *find out, but just do* beautiful wife, Emma. Boulanger was brutal and shrewd. He was some *whatever you see me doing for the present. "And so*

thing of a connoisseur: there had been many women in his life." He senses *saying, he began to divest*

that Emma is bored. A few weeks later he manages to run into her at a *himself of the few clothes*

county fair, where he gets her alone. He affects an air of sadness and *he was wearing, leaving*

gloom: "Many's the time I've passed a cemetery in the moonlight and asked *himself completely naked.*

The girl followed his

myself if I wouldn't be better off lying there with the rest. . . ." He men *example, and he sank to* tions his bad reputation; he deserves it, he says, but is it his fault? "Do you *his knees as though he* really not know that there exist souls that are ceaselessly in torment?" Sev- *Use Spiritual Lures* • 365

eral times he takes Emma's hand, but she politely withdraws it. He talks of *were about to pray, getting* love, the magnetic force that draws two people together. Perhaps it has *her to kneel directly opposite.* • *In this posture,*

roots in some earlier existence, some previous incarnation of their souls. *the girl's beauty was*

"Take us, for example. Why should we have met? How did it happen? It *displayed to Rustico in all* can only be that something in our particular inclinations made us come *its glory, and his longings blazed more fiercely than*

closer and closer across the distance that separated us, the way two rivers *ever, bringing about the* flow together." He takes her hand again and this time she lets him hold it. *res u rrectio n of the flesh.* After the fair, he avoids her for a few weeks, then suddenly shows up, *Alibech stared at this in amazement and said:* •

claiming that he tried to stay away but that fate, destiny, has pulled him

"Rustico, what is that I see

back. He takes Emma riding. When he finally makes his move, in the *sticking out in front of* woods, she seems frightened and rejects his advances. "You must have some *you, which I do not* mistaken idea," he protests. "I have you in my heart like a Madonna on a possess?" • "Oh, my daughter," said *Rustico,*

pedestal. . . . I beseech you: be my friend, my sister, my angel!" Under the

"this is the devil I was

spell of his words, she lets him hold her and lead her deeper into the *telling you about. Do you* woods, where she succumbs.

see what he's doing? He's

hurting me so much that I

Rodolphe's strategy is threefold. First he talks of sadness, melancholy, *can hardly endure it.*" •

discontent, talk that makes him seem nobler than other people, as if life's

"Oh, praise be to God,"

common material pursuits could not satisfy him. Next he talks of destiny, *said the girl, "I can see that I am better off than*

the magnetic attraction of two souls. This makes his interest in Emma seem *you are, for I have no such* not so much a momentary impulse as something timeless, linked to the *devil to contend with.*" •

movement of the stars. Finally he talks of angels, the elevated and the sub *"You're right there;" said* lime. By placing everything on the spiritual plane, he distracts Emma from *Rustico. "But you have something else instead, that*

the physical, makes her feel giddy, and packs a seduction that could have *I haven't.*" • *"Oh?" said* taken months into a matter of a few encounters.

Alibech. "And what's

The references Rodolphe uses might seem cliched by today's standards, *that?" "You have Hell,*" said *Rustico. "And I*

but the strategy itself will never grow old. Simply adapt it to the occult fads *honestly believe that God* of the day. Affect a spiritual air by displaying a discontent with the banal- *has sent you here for the* ties of life. It is not money or sex or success that moves you; your drives are *salvation of my soul, because if this devil*

never so base. No, something much deeper motivates you. Whatever this is, *continues to plague the life* keep it vague, letting the target imagine your hidden depths. The stars, as- *out of me, and if you are* trilogy, fate, are always appealing; create the sense that destiny has brought *prepared to take sufficient pity upon me to let me put*

you and your target together. That will make your seduction feel more *him back into Hell, you* natural. In a world where too much is controlled and manufactured, the *will be giving me* sense that fate, necessity, or some higher power is guiding your relationship *marvelous relief, as well as* is doubly seductive. If you want to weave religious motifs into your seduction- *rendering incalculable service and pleasure to*

tion, it is always best to choose some distant, exotic religion with a slightly *God, which is what you*

pagan air. It is easy to move from pagan spirituality to pagan earthiness. *say you came here for in* Timing counts: once you have stirred your targets' souls, move quickly to *the first place.*" • "Oh, Father," replied the girl in

the physical, making sexuality seem merely an extension of the spiritual *vi- all innocence, "if I really* brations you are experiencing. In other words, employ the spiritual strategy *do have Hell, let's do as* as close to the time for your bold move as possible.

you suggest just as soon as

you are ready." • "God

The spiritual is not exclusively the religious or the occult. It is anything *bless you, my daughter,*" that will add a sublime, timeless quality to your seduction. In the modern *said Rustico.* "Let's go and world, culture and art have in some ways taken the place of religion. There *put him back, and then perhaps he'll leave me*

are two ways to use art in your seduction: first, create it yourself, in the tar- *alone.*" • *At which point* get's honor. Natalie Barney wrote poems, and barraged her targets with 366 • *The Art of Seduction*

he conveyed the girl to one them. Half of Picasso's appeal to many women was the hope that he would *of their beds, where he* immortalize them in his paintings—for *Ars longa, vita brevis* (Art is long, life *instructed her in the art of* is short), as they used to say in Rome. Even if your love is a passing fancy, *incarcerating that accursed*

fiend. • *Never having put* by capturing it in a work of art you give it a seductive illusion of eternity. *a single devil into Hell* The second way to use art is to make it ennable the affair, giving your *se before, the girl found the* duction an elevated edge. Natalie Barney took her targets to the theater, to *first experience a little* the opera, to museums, to places full of history and atmosphere. In such *painful, and she said to*

Rustico: • "This devil places your souls can vibrate to the same spiritual wavelength. Of course *must certainly be a bad lot*, you should avoid works of art that are earthy or vulgar, calling attention to *Father, and a true enemy* your intentions. The play, movie, or book can be contemporary, even a lit *of God, for as well as plaguing mankind, he even* the raw, as long as it contains a noble message

and is tied to some just cause. *hurts Hell when he's Even a political movement can be spiritually uplifting. Remember to tailor driven back inside it. " • your spiritual lures to the target. If the target is earthy and cynical, pagan "Daughter," said Rustico,*

"it will not always be like ism or art will be more productive than the occult or religious piety. that." And in order to

The Russian mystic Rasputin was revered for his saintliness and his *ensure that it wouldn't,*

healing powers. Women in particular were fascinated with Rasputin and *before moving from the bed*

would visit him in his St. Petersburg apartment for spiritual guidance. He *they put him back half a*

dozen times, curbing his

would talk to them of the simple goodness of the Russian peasantry, God's *arrogance to such good*

forgiveness, and other lofty matters. But after a few minutes of this, he *effect that he was positively* would inject a comment or two that were of a much different nature—

glad to keep still for the rest

of the day. • During the something about the woman's beauty, her lips that were so inviting, the *de next few days, however, the* sires she could inspire in a man. He would talk of different kinds of *devil's pride frequently* love—love of God, love between friends, love between a man and a *reared its head again, and*

the girl, ever ready to obey woman—but mix them all up as if they were one. Then as he returned to *the call to duty and bring*

discussing spiritual matters, he would suddenly take the woman's hand, or *him under control*, whisper into her ear. All this would have an intoxicating effect—women *happened to develop a taste* would find themselves dragged into a kind of maelstrom, both spiritually *for the sport, and began*

saying to Rustico: • "I can

uplifted and sexually excited. Hundreds of women succumbed during

certainly see what those these spiritual visits, for he would also tell them that they could not repent *worthy men in Gafsa*

until they had sinned, and who better to sin with than Rasputin.

meant when they said that

serving God was so

*Rasputin understood the intimate connection between the sexual and
agreeable. I don't honestly*

*the spiritual. Spirituality, the love of God, is a sublimated version of sexual *recall*
ever having done love. The language of the religious mystics of the Middle Ages is
full of anything that gave me so*

much pleasure and

*erotic images; the contemplation of God and of the sublime can offer a *satisfaction*
as I get from*

*kind of mental orgasm. There is no more seductive brew than the combi *putting the
devil back in* nation of the spiritual and the sexual, the high and the low. When you
talk *Hell. To my way of**

thinking, anyone who

*of spiritual matters, then, let your looks and physical presence hint of sexu *devotes
his energies to* ality at the same time. Make the harmony of the universe and union
with anything but the service of God seem to confuse with physical harmony and
the union between two God is a complete people. If you can make the endgame of
your seduction appear as a spiri *blockhead.*" • . . And so, young ladies, if you stand*

*tual experience, you will heighten the physical pleasure and create a seduc in need
of God's grace, see tion with a deep and lasting effect.*

Use Spiritual Lures • 367

*Symbol: The Stars in the sky. Objects of worship for cen- that you learn to put the
devil back in Hell, for it is*

*turies, and symbols of the sublime and divine. In contemplat-
greatly to His liking and
pleasurable to the parties*

*ing them, we are momentarily distracted from everything
concerned, and a great deal
of good can arise and flow
mundane and mortal. We feel lightness. Lift your tar-*

in the process.

gets' minds up to the stars and they will not

— G I O V A N N I BOCCACCIO,

THE DECAMERON, TRANSLATED

notice what is happening here

B Y G . H . M C W I L L I A M

on earth.

Reversal

Letting your targets feel that your affection is neither temporary nor superficial will often make them fall deeper under your spell. In some, though, it can arouse an anxiety: the fear of commitment, of a claustrophobic relationship with no exits. Never let your spiritual lures seem to be leading in that direction, then. To focus attention on the distant future may implicitly constrict their freedom; you should be seducing them, not offering to marry them. What you want is to make them lose themselves in the moment, experiencing the timeless depth of your feelings in the present tense. Religious ecstasy is about intensity, not temporal extensy. Giovanni Casanova used many spiritual lures in his seductions—the occult, anything that would inspire lofty sentiments. For the time that he was involved with a woman, she would feel that he would do anything for her, that he was not just using her only to abandon her. But she also knew that when it became convenient to end the affair, he would cry, give her a magnificent gift, then quietly leave. This was just what many young women wanted—a temporary diversion from marriage or an oppressive family. Sometimes pleasure is best when we know it is fleeting.

20

Mix Pleasure with Pain

The

greatest mistake in seduction is being too nice.

At first, perhaps, your kindness is charming, but it soon grows monotonous; you are trying too hard to please, and seem insecure. Instead of overwhelming your targets with niceness, try inflicting some pain. Lure them in with focused attention, then change direction, appearing suddenly uninterested. Make them feel guilty and insecure. Even instigate a breakup, subjecting them to an emptiness and pain that will give you room to maneuver—now a rapprochement, an apology, a return to your earlier kindness, will turn them weak at the knees. The lower the lows you create, the greater the highs. To heighten the erotic charge, create the excitement

of fear.

The Emotional Roller Coaster

One hot summer afternoon in 1894, Don Mateo Díaz, a thirty-eightyear-old resident of Seville, decided to visit a local tobacco factory. Because of his connections Don Mateo was allowed to tour the place, but his interest was not in the business side. Don Mateo liked young girls, and hundreds of them worked in the factory. Just as he had expected, that day many of them were in a state of near undress because of the heat—it was quite a spectacle. He enjoyed the sights for a while, but the noise and the *The more one pleases generally, the less one*

temperature soon got to him. As he was heading for the door, though, a *pleases profoundly*. worker of no more than sixteen called out to him: "Caballero, if you will—STENDHAL, *LOVE*, give me a penny I will sing you a little song."

TRANSLATED BY GILBERT AND

The girl's name was Conchita Pérez, and she looked young and inno-SUZANNE
SALE

cent, in fact beautiful, with a sparkle in her eye that suggested a taste for adventure. The perfect prey. He listened to her song (which seemed vaguely suggestive), tossed her a coin that was equal to a month's salary, tipped his *You should mix in the odd hat*, then left. It was never good to come on too strong too early. As he *rebuff*\ *With your cheerful fun. Shut him out of the*

walked along the street, he plotted how he would lure her into an affair. *house, let him wait there* \

Suddenly he felt a hand on his arm and he turned to see her walking along- *Cursing that locked front side him*. It was too hot to work—would he be a gentleman and escort her *door; let him plead* \ *And threaten all he's a mind to.*

home? Of course. Do you have a lover? he asked her. No, she said, "I am *Sweetness cloy* the palate, *mozita*"—pure, a virgin.

\ *Bitter juice is a freshener.*

Conchita lived with her mother in a rundown part of town. Don Ma- *Often a small skiff*\ *Is sunk by favoring winds: it's*

teo exchanged pleasantries, slipped the mother some money (he knew from *their husbands' access to* experience how important it was to keep the mother happy), then left. He *them*, \ *At will, that* considered waiting a few days, but he was impatient, and returned the fol- *deprives so many wives of love.* \ *Let her put in a*

lowing morning. The mother was out. He and Conchita resumed their *door, with a hard-faced* playful banter from the day before, and to his surprise she suddenly sat in *porter to tell him* \ *"Keep his lap, put her arms around him, and kissed him. His strategy flying out out," and he'll soon be* the window, he took hold of her and returned the kiss. She immediately *touched with desire* \

Through frustration. Put

jumped up, her eyes flashing with anger: you are trifling with me, she said, *down your blunt foils, fight* using me for a quick thrill. Don Mateo denied having any such intentions, *with sharpened weapons* \

and apologized for going too far. When he left, he felt confused: she had *(I don't doubt that my own shafts* \ *Will be turned*

started it all; why should he feel guilty? And yet he did. Young girls can be *against me*). *When a* so unpredictable; it is best to break them in slowly

new-captured lover \ Is

Over the next few days Don Mateo was the perfect gentleman. He *stumbling into the toils, then let him believe \ He*

visited every day, showered mother and daughter with gifts, made no *alone has rights to your advances—at least not at first. The damned girl had become so familiar bed—but later, make him 371*

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conscious \ Of rivals, of

with him that she would dress in front of him, or greet him in her night *shared delights. Neglect \ gown. These glimpses of her body drove him crazy, and he would some These devices— his ardor times try to steal a kiss or caress, only to have her push him away and scold will wane. A racehorse runs*

most strongly \ When the him. Weeks went by; clearly he had shown that his was not a passing fancy. field's ahead, to be paced \ Tired of the endless courtship, he took Conchita's mother aside one day And passed. So the dying

and proposed that he set the girl up in a house of her own. He would treat *embers of passion can be*

fanned to \ Fresh flame by

her like a queen; she would have everything she wanted. (So, of course, *some outrage—I can only* would her mother.) Surely his proposal would satisfy the two women—but *love, \ Myself, I confess it,*

the next day, a note came from Conchita, expressing not gratitude but re *when wronged. But don't let the cause of \ Pain be*

crimination: he was trying to buy her love. "You shall never see me again," *too obvious: let a lover* she concluded. He hurried to the house only to discover that the women *suspect \ More than he* had moved out that very morning, without leaving word where they were *knows. Invent a slave who*

going.

*watches your every *

Movement, make clear

Don Mateo felt terrible. Yes, he had acted like a boor. Next time he *what a jealous martinet * would wait months, or years if need be, before being so bold. Soon, how *That man of yours is—*

ever, another thought assailed him: he would never see Conchita again. *such things will excite him.*

Pleasure \ Too safely

Only then did he realize how much he loved her.

enjoyed lacks zest. You

The winter passed, the worst of Mateo's life. One spring day he was *want to be free \ As Thaïs?* walking down the street when he heard someone calling his name. He *Act scared. Though the*

door's quite safe, let him in looked up: Conchita was standing in an open window, beaming with ex by \ *The window. Look* citement. She bent down toward him and he kissed her hand, beside him *nervous. Have a smart \ self* with joy. Why had she disappeared so suddenly? It was all going too *Maid rush in, scream*

quickly, she said. She had been afraid—of his intentions, and of her own

"We're caught!" while you

bundle the quaking \ Youth feelings. But seeing him again, she was certain that she loved him. Yes, she *out of sight. But be sure * was ready to be his mistress. She would prove it, she would come to him. *To offset his fright with* Being apart had changed them both, he thought. *some moments of carefree*

pleasure— \ Or he'll think

A few nights later, as promised, she appeared at his house. They kissed *a night with you isn't*

and began to undress. He wanted to savor every minute, to take it slowly, *worth the risk.*

but he felt like a caged bull finally set free. He followed her into bed, his

— O V I D . *THE ART OF LOVE,*

hands all over her. He started to take off her underwear but it was laced up

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

in some complicated way. Eventually he had to sit up and take a look: she was wearing some elaborate canvas contraption, of a kind he had never seen. No matter how hard he tugged and pulled, it would not come off.

"Certainly," I said, "I

He felt like hitting Conchita, he was so distraught, but instead he started to *have often told you that*

pain holds a peculiar cry. She explained: she wanted to do everything with him, yet to remain a *attraction for me, and that*

mozita. This was her protection. Exasperated, he sent her home. *nothing kindles my passion*

Over the next few weeks, Don Mateo began to reassess his opinion of *quite so much as tyranny*

cruelty and above all

Conchita. He saw her flirting with other men, and dancing a suggestive fla *unfaithfulness in a menco* in a bar: she was not a *mozita*, he decided, she was playing him for *beautiful woman.*"

money. And yet he could not leave her. Another man would take his

— L E O P O L D VON SACHERplace—an unbearable thought. She would invite him to spend the night in M A S O C H , *VENUS IN FURS*,

TRANSLATED BY JEAN MC NEIL

L

r bed, as long as he promised not to force himself on her; and then, as if to torture him beyond reason, she would get into bed naked (supposedly because of the heat). All this he put up with on the grounds that no other man had such privileges. But one night, pushed to the limits of frustration, he exploded with anger, and issued an ultimatum: either give me what I *Mix Pleasure with Pain* • 373

want or you will never see me again. Suddenly Conchita started to cry. He *Oderint, dum metuant* had never seen her cry, and it moved him. She too was tired of all this, she [*Let them hate me so long as they fear me*], as if only

said, her voice trembling; if it was not too late, she was ready to accept the *fear and hate belong* proposal she had once turned down. Set her up in a house, and he would *together, whereas fear and* see what a devoted mistress she would be.

love have nothing to do

with each other, as if it

Don Mateo wasted no time. He bought her a villa, gave her plenty of *were not fear that makes* money to decorate it. After eight days the house was ready. She would *re-love interesting. With what* receive him there at midnight. What joys awaited him.

kind of love do we embrace

nature? Is there not a

Don Mateo showed up at the appointed hour. The barred door to the *secretive anxiety and horror* courtyard was closed. He rang the bell. She came to the other side of the *in it, because its beautiful* door. "Kiss my hands," she said through the bars. "Now kiss the hem of my *harmony works its way out* skirt, and the tip of my foot in its slipper." He did as she requested. "That is *of lawlessness and wild confusion, its security out*

good," she said. "Now you may go." His shocked expression just made her *of perfidy? But precisely* laugh. She ridiculed him, then made a confession: she was repulsed by him. *this anxiety captivates the* Now that she had a villa in her name, she was free of him at last. She called *most. So also with love, if it is to be interesting.*

out, and a young man appeared from the shadows of the courtyard. As Don *Behind it ought to brood* Mateo watched, too stunned to move, they began to make love on the *the deep, anxious night* floor, right before his eyes.

*from which springs the
flower of love.*

The next morning Conchita appeared at Don Mateo's house, supposedly to see if he had committed suicide. To her surprise, he hadn't—in fact —SØREN KIERKEGAARD, *THE SEDUCER'S DIARY*,

he slapped her so hard she fell to the ground. "Conchita," he said, "you TRANSLATED BY HOWARD V. have made me suffer beyond all human strength. You have invented moral HONG AND EDNA H. HONG

tortures to try them on the only man who loved you passionately. I now declare that I am going to possess you by force." Conchita screamed she would never be his, but he hit her again and again. Finally, moved by her *The lovely marble creature* tears, he stopped. Now she looked up at him lovingly. Forget the past, she *coughed and rearranged the* said, forget all that I have done. Now that he hit her, now that she could see *sable around her shoulders*. his pain, she felt certain he truly loved her. She was still a *mozita*—the affair • "Thank you for the lesson in classics," *I replied,*

with the young man the night before had been only for show, ending as

"but I cannot deny that in

soon as he had left—and she still belonged to him. "You are not going to *your peaceful and sunny* take me by force. I await you in my arms." Finally she was sincere. To his *world just as in our misty climate man and woman*

supreme delight, he discovered that she was indeed still a virgin.

are natural enemies. Love

may unite them briefly to

form one mind, one heart,

one will, but all too soon

Interpretation. Don Mateo and Conchita Perez are characters in the 1896 *they are torn asunder. And* novella *Woman and Puppet*, by Pierre Louÿs. Based on a true story—the *this you know better than*

"Miss Charpillon" episode in Casanova's *Memoirs*—the novella has served as *I: either one of them must bend the other to his will,*

the basis for two films: Josef von Sternberg's *Devil Is a Woman*, with Mar- or else *he must let himself*lene Dietrich, and Luis Buñuel's *That Obscure Object of Desire*. In Louÿs's *be trampled underfoot.* " •

story, Conchita takes a proud and aggressive older man and in the space of a

"Under the woman's foot,

few months turns him into an abject slave. Her method is simple: she stimu- *of course,*" said *Lady Venus impertinently.* "And

lates as many emotions as possible, including heavy doses of pain. She ex- *that you know better than* cites his lust, then makes him feel base for taking advantage of her. She gets *I.*" • "Of course, that is him to play the protector, then makes him feel guilty for trying to buy her. *why I have no illusions.*" •

"In other words you are

Her sudden disappearance anguishes him—he has lost her—so that when *now my slave without* she reappears (never by accident) he feels intense joy; which, however, she *illusions, and I shall* 374 • *The Art of Seduction*

trample you mercilessly." • quickly turns back into tears. Jealousy and humiliation then precede the fi *"Madam!"* • "You do not nal moment when she gives him her virginity. (Even after this, according to *know me yet. I admit that* the story, she finds ways to continue to torment him.) Each low she *I am cruel—since the word*

gives you so much inspires—guilt, despair, jealousy, emptiness—creates the space for a more *delight—but am I not* intense high. He becomes an addict, hooked on the alternation of charge *entitled to be so? It is man* and withdrawal.

who desires, woman who is

Your seduction should never follow a simple course upward toward

desired; this is woman's

only advantage, but it is a pleasure and harmony. The climax will come too soon, and the pleasure *decisive one.* By making will be weak. What makes us intensely appreciate something is previous *man so vulnerable to suffering.* A brush with death makes us fall in love with life; a long journey *passion, nature has placed*

him at woman's mercy, and makes a return home that much more pleasurable. Your task is to create *she who has not the sense* moments of sadness, despair, and anguish, to create the tension that allows to *treat him like a humble* for a great release. Do not worry about making people angry; anger is a *subject, a slave, a*

plaything, and finally to sure sign that you have your hooks in them. Nor should you be afraid that *betray him with a laugh*—if you make yourself difficult people will flee—we only abandon those *well, she is a woman of* who bore us. The ride on which you take your victims can be tortuous but *little wisdom.*" • "My never dull. At all costs, keep your targets emotional and on edge. Create *dear, your principles . . .*"

I protested. • "Are enough highs and lows and you will wear away the last vestiges of their founded on the experience willpower.

of a thousand years," she

replied mischievously,

running her white fingers

through the dark fur. "The

Harshness and Kindness

more submissive woman is,

the more readily man

recovers his self-possession

and becomes domineering; In 1972, Henry Kissinger, then President Richard Nixon's assistant for national security affairs, received a request for an interview from the fa but the more cruel and mous Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci. Kissinger rarely gave interviews; he faithless she is, the more

she ill-treats him, the had no control over the final product, and he was a man who needed to be more wantonly she toys in control. But he had read Fallaci's interview with a North Vietnamese with him and the harsher general, and it had been instructive. She was extremely well informed on she is, the more she the Vietnam War; perhaps he could gather some information of his own, quickens his desire and

secures his love and pick her brain. He decided to ask for a preinterview, a preliminary meeting. admiration. It has always He would grill her on different subjects; if she passed the test, he would been so, from the time of grant her an interview proper. They met, and he was impressed; she was Helen and Delilah all the

way to Catherine the extremely intelligent—and tough. It would be an enjoyable challenge to Great and Lola Montez. "

outwit her and prove that he was tougher. He agreed to a short interview a

— L E O P O L D VON SACHERfew days later.

M A S O C H , V E N U S I N F U R S ,

To Kissinger's annoyance, Fallaci began the interview by asking him

TRANSLATED BY JEAN MCNEIL

whether he was disappointed by the slow pace of the peace negotiations with North Vietnam. He would not discuss the negotiations—he had made that clear in the preinterview. Yet she continued the same line of question *In essence, the domain* *ing.* He grew a little angry "That's enough," he said. "I don't want to *of eroticism is the domain of* talk any more about Vietnam." Although she didn't immediately abandon *violence, of violation. . . . The whole business of* don the subject, her questions became gentler: what were his personal feelings *eroticism is to strike to the* ings toward the leaders of South and North Vietnam? Still, he ducked: *inmost core of the living* "I'm not the kind of person to be swayed by emotion. Emotions serve *being, so that the heart*

stands still. . . . The no purpose." She moved to grander philosophical issues—war, peace. She *Mix Pleasure with Pain* • 375

praised him for his role in the rapprochement with China. Without real- *whole business of* izing it, Kissinger began to open up. He talked of the pain he felt in dealing *eroticism is to destroy the self-contained character of*

with Vietnam, the pleasures of wielding power. Then suddenly the harsher *the participants as they are* questions returned—was he simply Nixon's lackey, as many suspected? Up *in their normal lives. . . .* and down she went, alternately baiting and flattering him. His goal had *We ought never to forget*

been to pump her for information while revealing nothing about himself; *that in spite of the bliss love promises its first effect*

by the end, though, she had given him nothing, while he had revealed a *is one of turmoil and* range of embarrassing opinions—his view of women as playthings, for in- *distress. Passion fulfilled* stance, and his belief that he was popular with the public because people *itself provokes such violent agitation that the*

saw him as a kind of lonesome cowboy, the hero who cleans things up by *happiness involved, before* himself. When the interview was published, Nixon, Kissinger's boss, was *being a happiness to be* livid about it.

enjoyed, is so great as to be

more like its opposite,

In 1973, the Shah of Iran, Mohammed Riza Pahlavi, granted Fallaci an *suffering. . . . The* interview. He knew how to handle the press—be noncommittal, speak in *likelihood of suffering is all* generalities, seem firm, yet polite. This approach had worked a thousand *the greater since suffering* times before. Fallaci began the interview on a personal level, asking how it *alone reveals the total significance of the beloved*

felt to be a king, to be the target of assassination attempts, and why the *object*. shah always seemed so sad. He talked of the burdens of his position, the —GEORGES BATAILLE, pain and loneliness he felt. It seemed a release of sorts to talk about his pro- *EROTISM: DEATH AND*

fessional problems. As he talked, Fallaci said little, her silence goading him
SENSUALITY, TRANSLATED BY

MARY DALWOOD

on. Then she suddenly changed the subject: he was having difficulties with his second wife. Surely that must hurt him? This was a sore spot, and Pahlavi got angry. He tried to change the subject, but she kept returning to it. Why waste time talking about wives and women, he said. He then went *Always a little doubt to set* so far as to criticize women in general—their lack of creativity, their cru- *at rest—that's what keeps one craving in passionate*

elty. Fallaci kept at him: he had dictatorial tendencies and his country *love. Because the keenest* lacked basic freedoms. Fallaci's own books were on his government's black- *misgivings are always* list. Hearing this, the shah seemed somewhat taken aback—perhaps he was *there, its pleasures never become tedious.* • *Saint-*

dealing with a subversive writer. But then she softened her tone again, *Simon, the only historian* asked him about his many achievements. The pattern repeated: the mo- *France has ever possessed,* ment he relaxed, she blindsided him with a sharp question; when he grew says: *"After many passing fancies the Duchesse de*

bitter, she lightened the mood. Like Kissinger, he found himself opening *Berry had fallen deeply in* up despite himself and mentioning things he would later regret, such as his *love with Riom, a junior* intention to raise the price of oil. Slowly he fell under her spell, even began *member of the d'Aydie* to flirt with her. "Even if you're on the blacklist of my authorities," he said *family, the son of one of Madame de Biron's sisters.*

at the end of the interview, "I'll put you on the white list of my heart." *He had neither looks nor*

brains; he was fat, short,

chubby-cheeked, pale, and

had such a crop of pimples

Interpretation. Most of Fallaci's interviews were with powerful leaders, *that he seemed one large* men and women with an overwhelming need to control the situation, to *abscess; he had beautiful* avoid revealing anything embarrassing. This put her and her subjects in con- *teeth, but not the least idea that he was going to inspire*

flict, since getting them to open up—grow emotional, give up control—*a passion which quickly got* was exactly what she wanted. The classic seductive approach of charm and *out of control, a passion* flattery would get her nowhere with these people; they would see right *which lasted a lifetime, notwithstanding a number*

through it. Instead, Fallaci preyed on their emotions, alternating harshness of *subsidiary flirtations and* and kindness. She would ask a cruel question that touched on the deepest *affairs. . . . • He would 376 • The Art of Seduction*

excite but not requite the insecurities of the subject, who would get emotional and defensive; deep desire of the princess; he down, though, something else would stir inside them—the desire to prove delighted in making her to Fallaci that they did not deserve her implicit criticisms. Unconsciously jealous, or pretending to be

jealous himself. He would

they wanted to please her, to make her like them. When she then shifted *often drive her to tears.*

tone, indirectly praising them, they felt they were winning her over and *Gradually he forced her* were encouraged to open up. Without realizing it, they would give *freer into the position of doing*

nothing without his leave, rein to their emotions.

even trifles of no

In social situations we all wear masks, and keep our defenses up. It is *importance. Sometimes,*

embarrassing, after all, to reveal one's true feelings. As a seducer you must *when she was ready to go* find a way to lower these resistances. The Charmer's approach of flattery *to the Opera, he insisted*

that she stay at home; and

and attention can be effective here, particularly with the insecure, but it can *sometimes he made her go* take months of work, and can also backfire. To get a quicker result, and to *there against her will. He* break down more inaccessible people, it is often better to alternate harsh *obliged her to grant favours to ladies she did not like or* ness and kindness. By being harsh you create inner tensions—your targets *of whom she was jealous.* may be upset with you, but they are also asking themselves questions. What *She was not even free to have they done to earn your dislike?* When you then are kind, they feel *dress as she chose; he*

would amuse himself by relieved, but also concerned that at any moment they might somehow dis *making her change her* please you again. Make use of this pattern to keep them in suspense—

coiffure or her dress at the dreading your harshness and keen to keep you kind. Your kindness and *last minute; he did this so* harshness should be subtle; indirect digs and compliments are best. Play the *often and so publicly that*

she became accustomed to psychoanalyst: make cutting comments concerning their unconscious mo *take his orders in the tives* (you are only being truthful), then sit back and listen. Your silence will *evening for what she would*

goad them into embarrassing admissions. Leaven your judgments with oc *do and wear the following day; then the next day he* casional praise and they will strive to

please you, like dogs. *would alter everything, and*

the princess would cry all

Love is a costly flower, but one must have the desire to

the more. In the end she

took to sending him

pluck it from the edge of a precipice.

messages by trusted

—STENDHAL

footmen, for from the first

he had taken up residence

in Luxembourg; messages

which continued

Keys to Seduction

throughout her toilette, to

know what ribbons she

would wear, what gown

*and other ornaments; Almost everyone is more or less polite. We learn early on not to tell people what we really think of them; we smile at their jokes, act inter *almost invariably he made* ested in their stories and problems. It is the only way to live with them. *her wear something she did**

Eventually this becomes a habit; we are nice, even when it isn't really nec *not wish to. When she occasionally dared to do* essay. We try to please other people, to not step on their toes, to avoid dis *anything, however small*, agreements and conflict.

without his leave, he

Niceness in seduction, however, though it may at first draw someone to *treated her like a servant*,

and she was in tears for you (it is soothing and comforting), soon loses all effect. Being too nice can *several days. • . . Before* literally push the target away from you. Erotic feeling depends on the *cre assembled company he* ation of tension. Without tension, without anxiety and suspense, there can *would give her such be no* feeling of release, of true pleasure and joy. It is your task to create *brusque replies*

that

everyone lowered their eyes, that tension in the target, to stimulate feelings of anxiety, to lead them to and the Duchess would

and fro, so that the culmination of the seduction has real weight and intense *blush, though her passion* sity. So rid yourself of your nasty habit of avoiding conflict, which is in any *Mix Pleasure with Pain* • 377

case unnatural. You are most often nice not out of your own inner good- *for him was in no way ness* but out of fear of displeasing, out of insecurity. Go beyond that fear *curtailed.*" • *For the princess, Riom was a*

and you suddenly have options—the freedom to create pain, then magically *sovereign remedy against* dissolve it. Your seductive powers will increase tenfold.

boredom.

People will be less upset by your hurtful actions than you might imagine—
STENDHAL, *LOVE*, in. In the world today, we often feel starved for experience. We crave TRANSLATED BY GILBERT AND

emotion, even if it is negative. The pain you cause your targets, then, is SUZANNE SALE

bracing—it makes them feel more alive. They have something to complain about, they get to play the victim. As a result, once you have turned the pain into pleasure they will readily forgive you. Stir up their jealousy, make them feel insecure, and the validation you later give their ego by preferring them over their rivals is doubly delightful. Remember: you have more to fear by boring your targets than by shaking them up. Wounding people binds them to you more deeply than kindness. Create tension so you can release it. If you need inspiration, find the part of the target that most irritates you and use it as a springboard for some therapeutic conflict. The more real your cruelty, the more effective it is.

In 1818, the French writer Stendhal, then living in Milan, met the

Countess Metilda Viscontini. For him, it was love at first sight. She was a proud, somewhat difficult woman, and she intimidated Stendhal, who was terribly afraid of displeasing her with a stupid comment or undignified act. Finally, unable to take it any longer, he one day took her hand and confessed his love. Horrified, the countess told him to leave and never come back. Stendhal flooded Viscontini with letters, begging her to forgive him. At last, she relented: she would see him again, but under one condition—he could visit only once every two weeks, for no more than an hour, and only in the presence of company. Stendhal agreed; he had no choice. He now lived for those short fortnightly visits, which became occasions of intense anxiety and fear, since he was never quite sure whether she would change her mind and banish him forever. This went on for over two years, during which the countess never showed him the slightest sign of favor. Stendhal never found out why she had insisted on this arrangement—perhaps she wanted to toy with him or keep him at a distance. All he knew was that his love for her only grew stronger,

became unbearably intense, until finally he had to leave Milan.

To get over this sad affair, Stendhal wrote his famous book *On Love*, in which he described the effect of fear on desire. First, if you fear the loved one, you can never get too close or familiar with him or her. The beloved then retains an element of mystery, which only intensifies your love. Second, there is something bracing about fear. It makes you vibrate with sensation, heightens your awareness, is intensely erotic. According to Stendhal, the closer the loved one brings you to the edge of the precipice, to the feeling that they could abandon you, the dizzier and more lost you will become. Falling in love means literally falling—losing control, a mix of fear and excitement.

Apply this wisdom in reverse: never let your targets get too comfortable 378 • *The Art of Seduction*

with you. They need to feel fear and anxiety. Show them some coldness, a flash of anger they did not expect. Be irrational if necessary. There is always the trump card: a breakup. Let them feel they have lost you forever, make them fear that they have lost the power to charm you. Let these feelings sit with them for a while, then pull them back from the precipice. The reconciliation will be intense. In 33 B.C., Mark Antony heard a rumor that Cleopatra, his lover of

several years, had decided to seduce his rival, Octavius, and that she was planning to poison Antony. Cleopatra had poisoned people before; in fact she was an expert in the art. Antony grew paranoid, and finally one day confronted her. Cleopatra did not protest her innocence. Yes, that was true, it was quite within her power to poison Antony at any moment; there were no precautions he could take. Only the love she felt for him could protect him. To demonstrate, she took some flowers and dropped them into his wine. Antony hesitated, then raised the cup to his lips; Cleopatra grabbed his arm and stopped him. She had a prisoner brought in to drink the wine, and the prisoner promptly dropped dead. Falling at Cleopatra's feet, Antony professed that he loved her now more than ever. He did not speak out of cowardice; there was no man braver than he, and if Cleopatra could have poisoned him, he for his part could have left her and gone back to Rome. No, what pushed him over the edge was the feeling that she had control over his emotions, over life and death. He was her slave. Her demonstration of her power over him was not only effective but erotic. Like Antony, many of us have masochistic yearnings without realizing it. It takes someone to inflict some pain on us for these deeply repressed desires to come to the surface. You must learn to recognize the types of hidden masochists out there, for each one enjoys a particular kind of pain. For instance, there are people who feel that they deserve nothing good in life, and who, unable to deal with success, sabotage themselves constantly. Be nice to them, admit that you admire them, and they are uncomfortable, since they feel that they cannot possibly match up to the ideal figure you have clearly imagined them to be. Such self-saboteurs do better with a little punishment; scold them, make them aware of their inadequacies. They feel they deserve such criticism and when it comes it is with a sense of relief. It is also easy to make them feel guilty, a feeling that deep down they enjoy. Other people experience the responsibilities and duties of modern life as such a heavy burden, they long to give it all up. These people are often looking for someone or something to worship—a cause, a religion, a guru. Make them worship you. And then there are those who want to play the martyr.

Recognize them by the joy they take in complaining, in feeling righteous and wronged; then give them a reason to complain. Remember: appearances deceive. Often the strongest-looking people—the Kissingers and Don Mateos—may secretly want to be punished. In any event, follow up pain with pleasure and you will create a state of dependency that will last for a long time.

Mix Pleasure with Pain • 379

Symbol: *The Precipice. At the edge of a cliff, people often feel lightheaded, both fearful and dizzy. For a moment they can imagine themselves falling headlong. At the same time, a part of them is tempted. Lead your targets as close to the edge as possible, then pull them back. No thrill without fear.*

Reversal

People who have recently experienced a lot of pain or a loss will flee if you try to inflict more on them. They have enough in their lives already. Far better to surround these types with pleasure—that will put them under your spell. The technique of inflicting pain works best on those who have it easy, who have power and few problems. People with comfortable lives may also feel a gnawing sense of guilt, as if they had gotten away with something. They may not consciously know it, but secretly they long for some punishment, a good mental thrashing, something that will bring them back down to earth.

Also, remember to not use the pleasure-through-pain tactic too early on. Some of the greatest seducers in history—Byron, Jiang Qing (Madame Mao), Picasso—had a sadistic streak, an ability to inflict mental torture. If their victims had known in advance what they were getting themselves into, they would have run for the hills. In truth, most of these seducers lured their targets into their webs by appearing to be paragons of sweetness and affection. Even Byron seemed like an angel when he first met a

woman, so that she tended to doubt his devilish reputation—a seductive doubt, for it allowed her to think of herself as the only one who really understood him. His cruelty would come out later on, but by then it would be too late. The victim's emotions were engaged, and his harshness would only intensify her feelings.

In the beginning, then, wear the mask of a lamb, making pleasure and attentiveness your bait. First get under their skin, then lead them on a wild ride.

Phase Four

Moving In for the Kill

First you worked on their mind—the mental seduction. Then you confused and stirred them up—the emotional seduction. Now the time has come for hand-to-hand combat—the physical seduction.

At this point, your victims are weak and ripe with desire: by showing a little coldness or uninterest, you will spark panic—they will come after you with impatience and erotic energy (21: Give them space to fall—the pursuer is pursued). To bring them to a boil, you need to put their minds to sleep and heat up their senses. It is best to lure them into lust by sending certain loaded signals that will get under their skin and spread sexual desire like a poison (22: Use physical lures). The moment to strike and move in for the kill is when your victim is brimming with desire, but not consciously expecting the climax to come (23: Master the art of the bold move). Once the seduction is over, there is the danger that disenchantment will set in and ruin all your hard work (24: Beware the aftereffects). If you are after a relationship, then you must constantly re-seduce the victim, creating tension and releasing it. If your victim is to be sacrificed, then it must be done swiftly and cleanly, leaving you free (physically and psychologically) to move on to the next victim. Then the game begins all over.

21

Give Them Space to Fall—

The Pursuer Is Pursued

If your targets become too used to you as the aggressor, they will give less of their own energy, and the tension will slacken. You need to wake them up, turn the tables. Once they are under your spell, take a step back and they will start to come after you. Begin with a touch of aloofness, an unexpected nonappearance, a hint that you are growing bored. Stir the pot by seeming interested in someone else.

Make none of this explicit; let them only sense it and their imagination will do the rest, creating the doubt you desire. Soon they will want to possess you physically, and re-

straint will go out the window. The goal is to have them fall into your arms of their own will. Create the illusion that the seducer is being seduced.

Seductive Gravity

In the early 1840s, the center of attention in the French art world was a young woman named Apollonie Sabatier. She was so much the natural beauty that sculptors and painters vied to immortalize her in their works, and she was also charming, easy to talk to, and seductively self-sufficient—men were drawn to her. Her Paris apartment became a gathering spot for writers and artists, and soon Madame Sabatier—as she came to be known, *Omissions, denials*, although she was not married—was hosting one of the most important literary salons in France. Writers such as Gustave Flaubert, the elder Alexandre Dumas, and Theophile Gautier were among her regular guests.

second state, the secret of

Near the end of 1852, when she was thirty, Madame Sabatier received *true seduction. Vulgar seduction might proceed by*

an anonymous letter. The writer confessed that he loved her deeply. Worried that she would find his sentiments ridiculous, he would not reveal his *name; yet he had to let her know that he adored her. Sabatier was used to . . It is like fencing: one such attentions—* one man after another had fallen in love with her—but *needs a field for the feint. Throughout this period,*

this letter was different: in this man she seemed to have inspired a quasi- the seducer [Johannes] , far religious ardor. The letter, written in a disguised handwriting, contained a from seeking to close in on poem dedicated to her; titled "To One Who Is Too Gay," it began by praising her; seeks to maintain his distance by various ploys:

ing her beauty, yet ended with the lines

he does not speak directly

to her but only to her aunt,

And so, one night, I'd like to sneak,

and then about trivial or

stupid subjects; he neutral-

When darkness tolls the hour of pleasure,

izes everything by irony

A craven thief, toward the treasure

and feigned pedanticism;

Which is your person, plump and sleek. . . .

he fails to respond to any

feminine or erotic move-

And, most vertiginous delight!

ment, and even finds her a

Into those lips, so freshly striking

sitcom suitor to disenchant

And daily lovelier to my liking—

and deceive her, to the

Infuse the venom of my spite.

point where she herself

takes the initiative and

breaks off her engagement,

Mixed in with her admirer's adoration, clearly, was a strange kind of lust, *thus completing the seduction and creating the*

with a touch of cruelty to it. The poem both intrigued and disturbed *ideal situation for her total* her—and she had no idea who had written it.

abandon.

A few weeks later another letter arrived. As before, the writer en—JEAN BAUDRILLARD, developed Sabatier in cultlike worship, mixing the physical and the spiritual. *SEDUCTION, TRANSLATED BY*

And as before, there was a poem, "All in One," in which he wrote,

BRIAN SINGER

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The rumor spread

No single beauty is the best,

everywhere. It was even

Since she is all one flower divine

told to the queen

O mystic metamorphosis!

[*Guinevere*], who was

seated at dinner. She

My senses into one sense flow—

nearly killed herself when

Her voice makes perfume when she speaks,

she heard the perfidious

Her breath is music faint and low!

rumor of Lancelot's death.

She thought it was true

and was so greatly

Clearly the author was haunted by Sabatier's presence, and thought of her
perturbed that she was

constantly—but now she began to be haunted by *him*, thinking of him *scarcely able to speak. . . .*

night and day, and wondering who he was. His subsequent letters only *She arose at once from the*

table, and was able to give

deepened the spell. It was flattering to hear that he was enchanted by more *vent to her grief without*

than her beauty, yet also flattering to know that he was not immune to her *being noticed or overheard.*

physical charms.

*She was so crazed with the
thought of killing herself*

One day an idea occurred to Madame Sabatier as to who the writer
that she repeatedly grabbed

might be: a young poet who had frequented her salon for several years, *at her throat. Yet first she*

Charles Baudelaire. He seemed shy, in fact had hardly spoken to her, but *confessed in conscience,*

repented and asked God's

she had read some of his poetry, and although the poems in the letters were *pardon; she accused herself* more polished, the style was similar. At her apartment Baudelaire would al *of having sinned against* ways sit politely in a corner, but now that she thought of it, he would smile *the one she knew had*

always been hers, and who

at her strangely, nervously. It was the look of a young man in love. Now *would still be, were he*

when he visited she watched him carefully, and the more she watched, the *alive. . . . She counted all*

surer she was that he was the writer, but she never confirmed her intuition, *of the unkindnesses and*

because she did not want to confront him—he might be shy, but he was a *recalled each individual*

unkindness; she noted

man, and at some point he would have to come to her. And she felt certain *every one, and repeated*

that he would. Then, suddenly the letters stopped coming—and Madame *often: "Oh misery! What*

Sabatier could not understand why, since the last one had been even more *was I thinking, when my*

lover came before me and I

adoring than all of the others before.

did not deign to welcome

Several years went by, in which she often thought of her anonymous

him, nor even care to

admirer's letters, but they were never renewed. In 1857, however, Baude *listen!*
Was I not a fool to refuse to speak or even look

laire published a book of poetry, *The Flowers of Evil*, and Madame Sabatier *at him? A fool? No, so*

recognized several of the verses—they were the ones he had written for *help me God, I was cruel*

her. Now they were out in the open for everyone to see. A little while later *and deceitful! . . . I believe*

the poet sent her a gift: a specially bound copy of the book, and a letter, *that it was I alone who*

struck him that mortal

this time signed with his name. Yes, he wrote, he was the anonymous *blow. When he came*

writer—would she forgive him for being so mysterious in the past?

happily before me expecting

Furthermore, his feelings for her were as strong as ever: "You didn't think *me to receive him joyfully*

and I shunned him and

for a moment that I could have forgotten you? . . . You to me are more *would never even look at*

than a cherished image conjured up in dream, you're my superstition . . . *him, was this not a mortal*

my constant companion, my secret! Farewell, dear Madame. I kiss your *blow? At that moment,*

*when I refused to speak, I
hands with profound devotion."*

believe I severed both his

This letter had a stronger effect on Madame Sabatier than the others *heart and his life. Those*

had. Perhaps it was his childlike sincerity, and the fact that he had finally *two blows killed him, I*

think, and not any hired

written to her directly; perhaps it was that he loved her but asked nothing *killers. • Ah God! Will I*

of her, unlike all the other men she knew who at some point had always *be forgiven this murder, this*

turned out to want something. Whatever it was, she had an uncontrollable *sin? Never! All the rivers*

desire to see him. The next day she invited him to her apartment, alone. *Give Them Space to Fall— The Pursuer Is Pursued • 387*

Baudelaire appeared at the appointed hour. He sat nervously in his seat, *and the seas will dry up gazing at her with his large eyes, saying little, and what he did say was for- first! Oh, misery! How it would have brought me*

mal and polite. He seemed aloof. After he left a kind of panic seized *comfort and healing if I* Madame Sabatier, and the next day she wrote him a first letter of her own: *had held him in my arms*

"Today I'm more calm, and I can feel more clearly the impression of our *once before he died. How?*

Yes, quite naked next to

Tuesday evening together. I can tell you, without the danger of your think- *him, in order to enjoy him* ing I'm exaggerating, that I'm the happiest woman on the face of the earth, *fully. . . " • . . When* that I've never felt more truly that I love you, and that I've never seen you *they came within six or* look more beautiful, more adorable, my divine friend!"

seven leagues of the castle

where King Bademagu was

Madame Sabatier had never before written such a letter; she had always *staying, news that was* been the one who was pursued. Now she had lost her usual self-possession. *pleasing came to him about* And it only got worse: Baudelaire did not answer right away. When she saw *Lancelot*—*news that he was glad to hear; Lancelot*

him next, he was colder than before. She had the feeling there was some- *was alive and was* one else, that his old mistress, Jeanne Duval, had suddenly reappeared in his *returning, hale and hearty* life and was pulling him away from her. One night she turned aggressive, *He behaved most properly in going to inform the*

embracing him, trying to kiss him, but he did not respond, and quickly *queen. "Good sir,"* she found an excuse to leave. Why was he suddenly inaccessible? She began to *told him, "I believe it,* flood him with letters, begging him to come to her. Unable to sleep, she *since you have told me. But were he dead, I assure*

would wait all night for him to show up. She had never experienced such *you that I could never* desperation. Somehow she had to seduce him, possess him, have him all *again be happy.*" to herself. She tried everything—letters, coquetry, all kinds of promises—• . . . Now *Lancelot had* until he finally wrote that he was no longer in love with her and that was *his every wish: the queen willingly sought his*

that.

company and affection as

he held her in his arms and

she held him in hers. Her

love-play seemed so gentle

Interpretation. Baudelaire was an intellectual seducer. He wanted to over- *and good to him, both her* whelm Madame Sabatier with words, dominate her thoughts, make her fall *kisses and caresses, that in* in love with him. Physically, he knew, he could not compete with her *truth the two of them felt a joy and wonder of which*

many other admirers—he was shy, awkward, not particularly handsome. So *has never been heard or* he resorted to his one strength, poetry. Haunting her with anonymous let- *known. But I shall let it* ters gave him a perverse thrill. He had to know she would realize, eventu- *remain a secret for ever,* ally, that he was her correspondent—no one else wrote like him—but he *since it should not be written of: the most*

wanted her to figure this out on her own. He stopped writing to her be- *delightful and choicest* cause he had become interested in someone else, but he knew she would be *pleasure is that which is* thinking of him, wondering, perhaps waiting for him. And when he pub- *hinted at, but never told.* lished his book, he decided to write to her again, this time directly, stirring —CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES, up the old venom he had injected in her. When they were alone, he could *ARTHURIAN*

ROMANCES, TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM W.

see she was waiting for him to do something, to take hold of her, but he KIBLER was not that kind of seducer. Besides, it gave him pleasure to hold himself back, to sense his power over a woman whom so many desired. By the time she turned physical and aggressive, the seduction was over for him. He had *He was sometimes so* made her fall in love; that was enough.

intellectual that I felt

The devastating effect of Baudelaire's push-and-pull on Madame *myself annihilated as a Sabatier* teaches us a great lesson in seduction. First, it is always best to keep *woman; at other times he was so wild and*

at some distance from your targets. You do not have to go as far as remain-*passionate, so desiring, ing anonymous, but you do not want to be seen too often, or to be seen as that I almost trembled 388 • The Art of Seduction*

before him. At times I was intrusive. If you are always in their face, always the aggressor, they will be like a stranger to him; at come used to being passive, and the tension in your seduction will flag. Use times he surrendered letters to make them think about you all the time, to feed their imagina completely. Then when I threw my arms around tion. Cultivate mystery—stop them from figuring you out. Baudelaire's let him, everything changed, ters were delightfully ambiguous, mixing the physical and the spiritual, and I embraced a cloud. teasing Sabatier with their multiplicity of possible interpretations.

— C O R D E L I A DESCRIBING

Then, at the point when they are ripe with desire and interest, when JOHANNES, IN SØREN

KIERKEGAARD, *THE SEDUCER'S*

perhaps they are expecting you to make a move—as Madame Sabatier ex *DIARY, TRANSLATED BY HOWARD*

pected that day in her apartment—take a step back. You are unexpectedly V. H O N G AND EDNA V. H O N G

distant, friendly but no more than that—certainly not sexual. Let this sink in for a day or two. Your withdrawal will trigger anxiety; the only way to relieve this anxiety is to pursue and possess you. Step back now and you *It is true that we could not* make your targets fall into your arms like ripe fruit, blind to the force of *love if there were not some* gravity that is drawing them to you. The more they participate, the more *memory in us—to the* their willpower is engaged, the deeper the erotic effect. You have chal *greatest extent an unconscious memory—that* lenged them to use their own seductive powers on you, and when they're *we were once loved. But* spond, the tables will turn and they will pursue you with desperate energy. *neither could we love if this*

*feeling of being loved had
/ retreat and thereby teach her to be victorious as she pur-
not at some time suffered
doubt; if we had always
sues me. I continually fall back, and in this backward
been sure of it. In other
movement I teach her to know through me all the powers of
words, love would not be
erotic love, its turbulent thoughts, its passion, what longing
possible without having
is, and hope, and impatient expectancy.*

been loved and then having

missed the certainty of

—SØREN KIERKEGAARD

being loved. . . . • The

need to be loved is not

elementary. This need is

certainly acquired by

Keys to Seduction

experience in later

childhood. It would be

better to say: by many

experiences or by a Since humans are naturally obstinate and willful creatures, and prone to suspicions of people's motives, it is only natural, in the course of any *repetition of similar ones. I* duction, that in some ways your target will resist you. Seductions, then, are *believe that these*

experiences are of a rarely easy or without setbacks. But once your victims overcome some of negative kind. The child their doubts, and begin to fall under your spell, they will reach a point becomes aware that he is where they start to let go. They may sense that you are leading them along, not loved or that his but they are enjoying it. No one likes things to be complicated and diffi mother's love is not unconditional. The baby cult, and your target will expect the conclusion to come quickly. That is learns that his mother can the point, however, where you must train yourself to hold back. Deliver be dissatisfied with him, the pleasurable climax they are so greedily awaiting, succumb to the natural that she can withdraw her

affection if he does not tendency to bring the seduction to a rapid end, and you will have missed an behave as she wishes, that opportunity to ratchet up the tension, to make the affair more heated. After she can be angry or cross. I all, you don't want a passive little victim to toy with; you want the seduced believe that this experience

arouses feelings of anxiety to engage their will in all its force, to become active participants in the se in the infant. The duction. You want them to pursue you, hopelessly ensnaring themselves in possibility of losing his your web in the process. The only way to accomplish this is to take a step mother's love certainly back and make them anxious.

strikes the child with a

force which can no more be

You have strategically retreated before (see chapter 12), but this is dif- *Give Them Space to Fall—The Pursuer Is Pursued* • 389

ferent. The target is falling for you now, and your retreat will lead to pan- coped with than an icky thoughts: you are losing interest, it is somehow my fault, perhaps it is earthquake. . . . • The something I have done. Rather than think you are rejecting them on your child who experiences his mother's dissatisfaction and

own, your targets will want to make this interpretation, since if the cause of apparent withdrawal of the problem is something they have done, they have the power to win you affection reacts to this back by changing their behavior. If you are simply rejecting them, on the menace at first with fear. He tries to regain what seems

other hand, they have no control. People always want to preserve hope. lost by expressing hostility Now they will come to you, turn aggressive, thinking that will do the trick. and aggressiveness. . . . They will raise the erotic temperature.

Understand: a person's willpower is The change of its character

comes about only after

directly linked to their libido, their erotic desire. When your victims are failure: when the child passively waiting for you, their erotic level is low. When they turn pursuer, realizes that the effort is a getting involved in the process, brimming with tension and anxiety, the failure. And now something very strange

temperature is raised. So raise it as high as you can.

takes place, something

When you withdraw, make it subtle; you are instilling unease. Your *which is foreign to our* coldness or distance should dawn on your targets when they are alone, in *conscious thinking* but the form of a poisonous doubt creeping into their mind. Their paranoia *which is very near to the infantile way. Instead of*

will become self-generating. Your subtle step back will make them want to *grasping the object directly* possess you, so they will willingly advance into your arms without being *and taking possession of it* pushed. This is different from the strategy in chapter 20, in which you are *in an aggressive way, the child identifies with the*

inflicting deep wounds, creating a pattern of pain and pleasure. There the *object as it was before*. The goal is to make your victims weak and dependent, here it is to make them *child does the same that* active and aggressive. Which strategy you prefer to use (the two cannot be *the mother did to him in that happy time which has*

combined) depends on what you want and the proclivities of your victim. *passed. The process is very*

In Søren Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary*, Johannes aims to seduce the *illuminating because it* young and beautiful Cordelia. He begins by being rather intellectual with *shapes the pattern of love in general. The little boy*

her, and slowly intriguing her. Then he sends her letters that are romantic *thus demonstrates in his* and seductive. Now her fascination blossoms into love. Although in person *own behavior what he* he remains a little distant, she senses in him great depths and is certain that *wants his mother to do to* he loves her. Then one day, while they're talking, Cordelia has a strange *him, how she should behave to him. He*

sensation: something about him is different. He seems more interested in *announces this wish by* ideas than in her. Over the next few days, this doubt gets stronger—the let- *displaying his tenderness* ters are a little less romantic, something is missing. Feeling anxious, she *and affection toward his mother who gave these*

slowly turns aggressive, becomes the pursuer instead of the pursued. The *before to him. It is an* seduction is now much more exciting, at least for Johannes.

attempt to overcome the

Johannes's step back is subtle; he merely gives Cordelia the impression *despair and sense of loss in taking over the role of the*

that his interest is a little less romantic than the day before. He returns to *mother. The boy tries to* being the intellectual. This stirs the worrisome thought that her

natural *demonstrate what he charms* and beauty no longer have as much effect on him. She must try *wishes by doing it himself: look, I would like you to*

harder, provoke him sexually, prove to herself that she has some power over *act thus toward me, to be him*. She is now brimming with erotic desire, brought to that point by Jo- *thus tender and loving to* hannes's subtle withdrawal of affection.

me. Of course this attitude

is not the result of

Each gender has its own seductive lures, which come naturally to them. *consideration or reasoned* When you seem interested in someone but do not respond sexually, it is *planning but an emotional* disturbing, and presents a challenge: they will find a way to seduce you. To *process by identification, a* produce this effect, first reveal an interest in your targets, through letters or *natural exchange of roles with the unconscious aim*

subtle insinuation. But when you are in their presence, assume a kind of 390 • *The Art of Seduction*

of seducing the mother into sexless neutrality. Be friendly, even warm, but no more. You are pushing fulfilling his wish. He them into arming themselves with the seductive charms that are natural to demonstrates by his own

their sex—exactly what you want.

actions how he wants to be

loved. It is a primitive

In the latter stages of the seduction, let your targets feel that you are be *presentation through* coming interested in another person—this is another form of taking a step *reversal, an example of* back. When Napoleon Bonaparte first met the young widow Josephine de *how to do the thing which*

he wishes done by her. In Beauharnais in 1795, he was excited by her exotic beauty and the looks she this presentation lives the gave him. He began to attend her weekly soirees and, to his delight, she memory of the attentions,

would ignore the other men and remain at his side, listening to him so at *tendernesses, and endearments once received*

tentively. He found himself falling in love with Josephine, and had every *from the mother or* reason to believe she felt the same.

loving persons.

Then, at one soiree, she was friendly and attentive, as usual—except

— T H E O D O R R E I K ,

that she was equally friendly to another man there, a former aristocrat, like *OF LOVE AND LUST*

Josephine, the kind of man that Napoleon could never compete with when it came to manners and wit. Doubts and jealousies began to stir within. As a military man, he knew the value of going on the offensive, and after a few weeks of a swift and aggressive campaign he had her all to himself, eventually marrying her. Of course Josephine, a clever seductress, had set it all up. She did not say she was interested in another man, but his mere presence at her house, a look here and there, subtle gestures, made it seem that way. There is no more powerful way to hint that you are losing your desire. Make your interest in another too obvious, though, and it could backfire. This is not the situation in which you want to seem cruel; doubt and anxiety are the effects you are after. Make your possible interest in another barely perceptible to the naked eye.

Once someone has fallen for you, any physical absence will create unease. You are literally creating space. The Russian seductress Lou Andreas-Salomé had an intense presence; when a man was with her, he felt her eyes boring into him, and often became entranced with her coquettish ways and spirit. But then, almost invariably, something would come up—she would have to leave town for a while, or would be too busy to see him. It was during her absences that men fell hopelessly in love with her, and vowed to be more aggressive next time they were with her. Your absences at this latter point of the seduction should seem at least somewhat justified. You are insinuating not a blatant brush-off but a slight doubt: perhaps you could have found some reason to stay, perhaps you are losing interest, perhaps there is someone else. In your absence, their appreciation of you will grow. They will forget your faults, forgive your sins. The moment you return, they will chase after you as you desire. It will be as if you had come back from the dead.

According to the psychologist Theodor Reik, we learn to love only through rejection. As infants, we are showered with love by our mother—we know nothing else. But when we get a little older, we begin to sense that her love is not unconditional. If we do not behave, if we do not please her, she can withdraw it. The idea that she will withdraw her affection fills us with anxiety, and, at first, with anger—we will show her, we will throw *Give Them Space to Fall—The Pursuer Is Pursued* • 391

a tantrum. But that never works, and we slowly realize that the only way to keep her from rejecting us again is to imitate her—to be as loving, kind, and affectionate as she is. This will bond her to us in the deepest way. The pattern is ingrained in us for the rest of our lives: by experiencing a rejection or a coldness, we learn to court and pursue, to love. Re-create this primal pattern in your seduction. First, shower your targets with affection. They will not be sure where this is coming from, but it is a delightful feeling, and they will never want to lose it. When it does go away, in your strategic step back, they will have moments of anxiety and anger, perhaps throwing a tantrum, and then the same childlike reaction: the only way to win you back, to have you for sure, will be to reverse the pattern, to imitate you, to be the affectionate, giving one. It is the terror of rejection that turns the tables.

This pattern will often repeat itself naturally in an affair or relationship. One person goes cold, the other pursues, then goes cold in turn, making the first person the pursuer, and on and on. As a seducer, do not leave this to chance. Make it happen. You are teaching the other person to become a seducer, just as the mother in her own way taught the child to return her love by turning her back. For your own sake learn to relish this reversal of roles. Do not merely play at being the pursued, but enjoy it, give in to it. The pleasure of being pursued by your victim can often surpass the thrill of the hunt.

Symbol: The

Pomegranate. Carefully cultivated and tended, the pomegranate begins to ripen. Do not gather it too early or force it off the stem—it will be hard and bitter. Let the fruit grow heavy and full of juice, then stand back—it will fall on its own. That is when its pulp is most delicious. 392 • *The Art of Seduction*

Reversal

There are moments when creating space and absence will blow up in your face. An absence at a critical moment in the seduction can make the target lose interest in you. It also leaves too much to chance—while you are away, they could find another person, who will distract their thoughts from you. Cleopatra easily seduced Mark Antony, but after their first encounters, he returned to Rome. Cleopatra was mysterious and alluring, but if she let too much time pass, he would forget her charms. So she let go of her usual coquetry and came after him when he was on one of his military campaigns. She knew that once he saw her, he would fall under her spell again and pursue her.

Use absence only when you are sure of the target's affection, and never let it go on too long. It is most effective later in the seduction. Also, never create too much space—don't write too rarely, don't act too cold, don't show too much interest in someone else. That is the strategy of mixing pleasure with pain, detailed in chapter 20, and will create a dependent victim, or will even make him or her give up completely. Some people, too, are inveterately passive: they are waiting for you to make the bold move, and if you don't, they will think you are weak. The pleasure to be had from such a victim is less than the pleasure you will get from someone more active. But if you are involved with such a type, do what you need to if you are to have your way, then end the affair and move on.

22

Use Physical Lures

Targets with active minds

are dangerous: if they see through your manipulations, they may suddenly develop doubts. Put their minds gently to rest, and waken their dormant senses, by combining a nondefensive attitude with a charged sexual presence.

While your cool, nonchalant air is calming their minds and lowering their inhibitions, your glances, voice, and bearing—oozing sex and desire—are getting under their skin, agitating their senses and raising their temperature.

Never force the physical; instead infect your targets with heat, lure them into lust. Lead them into the moment—an intensified present in which morality, judgment, and concern for the future all melt away and the body succumbs to pleasure.

Raising the Temperature

In 1889, the top New York theatrical manager Ernest Jurgens visited France on one of his many scouting trips. Jurgens was known for his honesty, a rare commodity in the shady entertainment world, and for his ability to find unusual acts. He had to spend the night in Marseilles, and while wandering along the quay of the old harbor, he heard excited catcalls issuing from a working-class cabaret, and decided to go in. A twenty-one- *The year was 1907 and* year-old Spanish dancer named Caroline Otero was performing, and the *La Belle [Otero]*, by then, minute Jurgens laid eyes on her he was a changed man. Her appearance was *had been an international figure for over a dozen*

startling—five foot ten, fiery dark eyes, black waist-length hair, her body *years. The story was told* corseted into a perfect hourglass figure. But it was the way she danced that *by M. Maurice Chevalier* made his heart pound—her whole body alive, writhing like an animal in • *"I was a young star about to make my first*

heat, as she performed a fandango. Her dancing was hardly professional, but *appearance at the Folies*. she enjoyed herself so much and was so unrestrained that none of that mat- *Otero had been the tered*. Jurgens also could not help but notice the men in the cabaret watch- *headliner there for several weeks and although I*

ing her, their mouths agape.

knew who she was I had

After the show, Jurgens went backstage to introduce himself. Otero's *never seen her before on* eyes came alive as he spoke of his job and of New York. He felt a heat, a *stage or off* • "I was scurrying along, head bent,

twitching, in his body as she looked him up and down. Her voice was deep *thinking of something or* and raspy, the tongue constantly in play as she rolled her Rs. Closing the *other, when I looked up*. door, Otero ignored the knocks and pleas of the admirers dying to speak to *There was La Belle, in the* her. She said that her way of dancing was natural—her mother was a gypsy, *company of another woman, walking in my*

Soon she asked Jurgens to be her escort that evening, and as he helped her *direction. Otero was then* with her coat, she leaned back toward him slightly, as if she had lost her *nearly forty and I was not* balance. As they walked around the city, her arm in his, she would occa- *yet out of my teens but*—

ah! —s he was so beautiful!

sionally whisper in his ear. Jurgens felt his usual reserve melt away. He held • "She was tall, dark- her tighter. He was a family man, had never considered cheating on his *haired, with a magnificent wife*, but without thinking, he brought Otero back to his hotel room. She *body, like the bodies of the* began to take off some of her clothes—coat, gloves, hat—a perfectly nor- *women of those days, not like the lightweight ones of*

mal thing to do, but the way she did it made him lose all restraint. The nor- *today.*" • *Chevalier smiled.* mally timid Jurgens went on the attack.

• "Of course I like modern

The next morning Jurgens signed Otero to a lucrative contract—a great *women, too, but there was something of a fatal charm*

risk, considering that she was an amateur at best. He brought her to Paris *about Otero. We three* and assigned a top theatrical coach to her. Hurrying back to New York, he *stood there for a moment or* fed the newspapers with reports of this mysterious Spanish beauty poised to *two, not saying a word, I staring at La Belle, not so*

conquer the city. Soon rival papers were claiming she was an Andalusian *young as she once was and countess, an escaped harem girl, the widow of a sheik, on and on.*

He *maybe not so beautiful, but 395*

396 • *The Art of Seduction*

still quite a woman. • made frequent trips to Paris to be with her, forgetting about his family, lav "She looked right at me, ishing money and gifts on her.

then turned to the lady she

Otero's New York debut, in October of 1890, was an astounding suc *was with—some friend, I guess—and spoke to her in*

cess. "Otero dances with abandon," read an article in *The New York Times. English, which she thought*

"Her lithe and supple body looks like that of a serpent writhing in quick, *I didn't understand.*

graceful curves." In a few short weeks she became the toast of New York *However, I did.* •

" 'Who's the very society, performing at private parties late into the night. The tycoon Wil *handsome young man?*'

liam Vanderbilt courted her with expensive jewels and evenings on his *Otero asked.*

• "The other yacht. Other millionaires vied for her attention. Meanwhile Jurgens was *one answered, 'He's*

dipping into the company till to pay for presents for her—he would do *Chevalier.*" • "He has

such beautiful eyes' ha

anything to keep her, a task in which he was facing heavy competition. A *Belle said, looking straight*

few months later, after his embezzling became public, he was a ruined man. *at me, right up and down.*

He eventually committed suicide.

• "Then she almost floored

me with her frankness. •

Otero went back to France, to Paris, and over the next few years rose to

" 'I wonder if he'd like to become the most infamous courtesan of the Belle Epoque. Word spread go to bed with me. I think

quickly: a night with La Belle Otero (as she was now known) was more ef *I'll ask him!* Only she didn't say it so delicately.

fective than all the aphrodisiacs in the world. She had a temper, and was de *She was much cruder and* manding, but that was to be expected. Prince Albert of Monaco, a man *more to the point.* • "It

who had been plagued by doubts of his virility, felt like an insatiable tiger *was at this moment I had*

after a night with Otero. She became his mistress. Other royalty followed—

to make up my mind

rather quickly. La Belle

Prince Albert of Wales (later King Edward VII), the Shah of Persia, Grand *moved toward me. Instead*

Duke Nicholas of Russia. Less wealthy men emptied their bank accounts, *of introducing myself and*

and Jurgens was only the first of many whom Otero drove to suicide. *succumbing to the*

consequences, I pretended I

During World War I, a twenty-nine-year-old American soldier named

didn't understand what

Frederick, stationed in France, won \$37,000 in a four-day crap game. On *she'd said, uttered some*

his next leave he went to Nice and checked himself into the finest hotel. *pleasantry in French and*

moved away to my dressing

On his first night in the hotel restaurant, he recognized Otero sitting alone *room.* • "I could see *La*

at a table. He had seen her perform in Paris ten years before, and had be *Belle smile in an odd* come obsessed with her. She was now close to fifty, but was more alluring *fashion as I passed her;*

than ever. He greased some palms and was able to sit at her table. He could *like a sleek tigress watching*

its dinner go away. For a

hardly talk: the way her eyes bored into him, a simple readjustment in her *fleeting second I thought*

chair, her body brushing up against him as she got up, the way she managed *she might turn around and*

to walk in front of him and display herself. Later, strolling along a boule *follow me.*
"• *What would Chevalier have done had*

yard, they passed a jewelry store. He went inside, and moments later found *she pursued him? His*

himself plopping down \$31,000 for a diamond necklace. For three nights *lower lip dropped into that*

La Belle Otero was his. Never in his life had he felt so masculine and im *half pout which is the Frenchman's exclusive* petuous. Years later, he still believed it was well worth the price he had *possession. Then he paid.*

grinned. • "I'd have

slowed down and let her

catch up."

Interpretation. Although La Belle Otero was beautiful, hundreds of

— A R T H U R H . LEWIS,

LA BELLE OTERO

women were more so, or were more charming and talented. But Otero was constantly on fire. Men could read it in her eyes, the way her body moved, a dozen other signs. The heat that radiated out from her came from her own inner desires: she was insatiably sexual. But she was also a practiced and calculating courtesan, and knew how to put her sexuality to effect. *Use Physical Lures • 397*

Onstage she made every man in the audience come alive, abandoning her *You're anxiously expecting* self in dance. In person she was cooler, or slightly so. A man likes to feel *me to escort you* | *To parties: here too solicit my*

that a woman is enflamed not because she has an insatiable appetite but be- *advice.* | *Arrive late, when* cause of him; so Otero personalized her sexuality, using glances, a brushing *the lamps are lit; make a* of skin, a more languorous tone of voice, a saucy comment, to suggest that *graceful entrance*— | *Delay enhances charm, delay's a*

the man was heating her up. In her memoirs she revealed that Prince Albert *great bawd.* | *Plain you* was a most inept lover. Yet he believed, along with many other men, that *may be, but at night you'll* with her he was Hercules himself. Her

sexuality actually originated from *look fine to the tipsy*: |

her, but she created the illusion that the man was the aggressor.

Soft lights and shadows

will mask your faults. |

The key to luring the target into the final act of your seduction is not *Take your food with dainty*

to make it obvious, not to announce that you are ready (to pounce or be *fingers: good table manners* pounced upon). Everything should be geared, not to the conscious mind, *matter*: | *Don't besmear your whole face with a*

but to the senses. You want your target to read cues not from your words or *greasy paw*. | *Don't cat* actions but from your body. You must make your body glow with desire—*first at home, and nibble*—

for the target. Your desire should be read in your eyes, in a trembling in *but equally, don't indulge your Appetite to the full*,

your voice, in your reaction when your bodies draw near.

leave something in hand. |

You cannot train your body to act this way, but by choosing a victim *If Paris saw Helen stuffing* (see chapter 1) who has this effect on you, it will all flow naturally. During *herself to the eyeballs* |

He'd detest her; he'd feel

the seduction, you will have had to hold yourself back, to intrigue and *her abduction had been* | *A*

frustrate the victim. You will have frustrated yourself in the process, and *stupid mistake*. . . . | *Each* will already be champing at the bit. Once you sense that the target has *woman should know* fallen for you and cannot turn back, let those frustrated desires course *herself, pick methods* | *To suit her body: one fashion* .

through your blood and warm you up. You do not need to touch your tar- *won't do for all*. | *Let the gets*, or become physical. As La Belle Otero understood, sexual desire is *girl with a pretty face lie* contagious. They will catch your heat and glow in return. Let them make *supine, let the lady* | *Who boasts a good back be*

the first move. It will cover your tracks. The second and third moves are *viewed* | *From behind*. yours.

Milanion bore Atalanta's

legs on | *His shoulders*:

nice legs should always be

Spell SEX with capital letters when you talk about Otero.

used this way \ The petite

She exuded it.

should ride a horse

(Andromache, Hector's

—MAURICE CHEVALIER

Theban \ Bride, was too

tall for these games: no

jockey she); \ If you 're

Lowering Inhibitions

built like a fashion model,

*with a willowy figure, *

Then kneel on the bed,

One day in 1931, in a village in New Guinea, a young girl named Tu- *your neck \ A little arched*; perselai heard some happy news: her father, Allaman, who had left

the girl who has perfect legs

some months before to work on a tobacco plantation, had returned for a *and bosom \ Should lie*

sideways on, and make her

visit. Tuperselai ran to greet him. Accompanying her father was a white *lover stand. \ Don't blush* man, an unusual sight in these parts. He was a twenty-two-year-old Aus- *to unbind your hair like* tralian from Tasmania, and he was the owner of the plantation. His name *some ecstatic maenad *

And tumble long tresses

was Errol Flynn.

about \ Your uncurved

Flynn smiled warmly at Tuperselai, seeming particularly interested in *throat.*

her bare breasts. (As was the custom in New Guinea then, she wore only a —
OVID, *THE ART OF LOVE*, grass skirt.) He said in pidgin English how beautiful
she was, and kept re-TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

peating her name, which he pronounced remarkably well. He did not say 398 • *The Art of Seduction*

"How do you attract a much else, mind you—he did not speak her language—so she said goodbye man," the Paris and walked away with her father. But later that day she discovered, to her correspondent of the dismay, that Mr. Flynn had taken a liking to her and had purchased her Stockholm A f t o n b l a d e t

asked La Belle on July 3, from her father for two pigs, some English coins, and some seashell money. 1910. • "Make yourself The family was poor and the father liked the price. Tuperselai had a as feminine as possible; boyfriend in the village whom she did not want to leave, but she did not dress so that the most

interesting portions of your dare disobey her father, and she left with Mr. Flynn for the tobacco planta anatomy are emphasized; tion. On the other hand, she had no intention of being friendly with this and subtly allow the man, from whom she expected the worst kind of treatment. gentleman to know you are

In the first few days, Tuperselai missed her village terribly, and felt ner *willing to yield at the proper time. . . .* • *"The vous and out of sorts. But Mr. Flynn was polite, and talked in a soothing way to hold a man" Otero voice. She began to relax, and since he kept his distance, she decided it was revealed a little later to a*

safe to approach him. His white skin was tasty to the mosquitoes, so she be *staff writer from the Johannesburg M o r n i n g gan to wash him every night with scented bush herbs to keep them away. J o u r n a l , "is to keep acting Soon she had a thought: Mr. Flynn was lonely, and wanted a companion. as though every time you That was why he had bought her. At night he usually read; instead, she be meet him you are overcome with fresh enthusiasm and, gan to entertain him by singing and dancing. Sometimes he tried to com with barely restrained municate in words and gestures, struggling in pidgin. She had no idea what eagerness, you await his he was trying to say, but he made her laugh. And one day she did under impetuosity." stand something: the word "swim." He was inviting her to go swimming*

— A R T H U R H . LEWIS,

with him in the Laloki River. She was happy to go along, but the river was *LA BELLE OTERO*

full of crocodiles, so she brought along her spear just in case.

At the sight of the river, Mr. Flynn seemed to come alive—he tore off his clothes and dove in. She followed and swam after him. He put his arms

"I missed the mental around her and kissed her. They drifted downstream, and she clung to him. stimulation when I was

younger," he answered. She had forgotten about the crocodiles; she had also forgotten about her fa *"But from the time I began ther,* her boyfriend, her village, and everything else there was to forget. *to have women, shall we* Around a bend of the river, he picked her up and carried her to a secluded *say, on the assembly-line* grove near the river's edge. It all happened rather suddenly, which was fine *basis, I discovered that the*

only thing you need, want, with Tuperselai. From then on this was a daily ritual—the river, the or should have is the grove—until the time came when the tobacco plantation was no longer absolutely physical. Simply doing so well, and Mr. Flynn left New Guinea. the physical. No mind at

all. A woman's mind will

One day some ten years later, a young girl named Blanca Rosa Welter *get in the way.* • *"Really?"* went to a party at the Ritz Hotel in Mexico City. As she wandered through

• *"For me . . . I am the bar, looking for her friends, a tall older man blocked her path and said speaking of myself. I don't*

speak for male humankind. in a charming accent, "You must be Blanca Rosa." He did not have to in *I am speaking for what I've* troduce himself—he was the famous Hollywood actor Errol Flynn. His *discovered or what I need:* face was plastered on posters everywhere, and he was friends of the party's *the body, the face, the*

physical motion, the voice, hosts, the Davises, and had heard them praise the beauty of Blanca Rosa, the femaleness, the female who was turning eighteen the following day. He led her to a table in the *presence . . . totally that, corner.* His manner was graceful and confident, and listening to him talk, *nothing else. That's the* she forgot about her friends. He spoke of her beauty, repeated her name, *best. There's no*

possessiveness in that."

said he could make her a star. Before she knew what was happening, he had

• *I watched him closely.* • invited her to join him in Acapulco, where he was vacationing. The

"I'm serious," he said. Davises, their mutual friends, could come along as chaperones. That would

"That's my view and

feeling. Just the elementary be wonderful, she said, but her mother would never agree. Don't worry *Use Physical Lures* • 399

about that, Flynn replied; and the following day he showed up at their *physical female. Nothing* house with a beautiful gift for Blanca, a ring with her birthstone. Melting more than that. When you get hold of that—hang on

under his charming smile, Blanca's mother agreed to his plan. Later that *to it, for a short while.*"

day, Blanca found herself on a plane to Acapulco. It was all like a dream.

— E A R L CONRAD,

The Davises, under orders from Blanca's mother, tried not to let her *ERROL FLYNN: A MEMOIR*

out of their sight, so Flynn put her on a raft and they drifted out into the ocean, far from the shore. His flattering words filled her ears, and she let him hold her hand and kiss her cheek. That night they danced together, *A sweet disorder in the and when the evening was over he escorted her to her room and serenaded dress | Kindles in clothes a*

her with a song as they finally parted. It was the end of a perfect day. In the *wantonness: | A lawn*

about the shoulders thrown

middle of the night, she woke up to hear him calling her name, from her

| Into a fine distraction: |

hotel-room balcony. How had he gotten there? His room was a floor *An erring lace, which here above; he must have somehow jumped or swung down, a dangerous ma- and there | Enthralls the never. She approached, not at all afraid, but curious. He pulled her gently crimson stomacher: | A cuff neglectful, and thereby |*

into his arms and kissed her. Her body convulsed; overwhelmed with new *Ribbands to flow*

sensations, totally at sea, she began to cry—out of happiness, she said. *confusedly: | A winning*

Flynn comforted her with a kiss and returned to his room above, in the *wave (deserving note) | In the tempestuous petticoat: |*

same inexplicable way he had arrived. Now Blanca was hopelessly in love *A careless shoestring, in with him and would do anything he asked of her. A few weeks later, in whose tie | I see a wild*

fact, she followed him to Hollywood, where she went on to become a suc- *civility: | Do more bewitch me, than when art | Is too*

cessful actress, known as Linda Christian.

precise in every part.

In 1942, an eighteen-year-old girl named Nora Eddington had a tem—ROBERT HERRICK, "DELIGHT

porary job selling cigarettes at the Los Angeles County courthouse. The IN DISORDER," QUOTED IN

place was a madhouse at the time, teeming with tabloid journalists: two PETER WASHINGTON, ED.,

EROTIC POEMS

young girls had charged Errol Flynn with rape. Nora of course noticed Flynn, a tall, dashing man who occasionally bought cigarettes from her, but her thoughts were with her boyfriend, a young Marine. A few weeks later Flynn was acquitted, the trial ended, and the place settled down. A man she *Satni, the son of Pharaoh*

Usimares, saw a very

had met during the trial called her up one day: he was Flynn's right-hand *beautiful woman on the*

man, and on Flynn's behalf, he wanted to invite her up to the actor's house *plain-stones of the temple*. on Mulholland Drive. Nora had no interest in Flynn, and in fact she was a *He called his page, and*

said, "Go and tell her that

little afraid of him, but a girlfriend who was dying to meet him talked her *I, Pharaoh's son, shall give* into going and bringing her along. What did she have to lose? Nora agreed *her ten pieces of gold to* to go. On the day, Flynn's friend showed up and drove them to a splendid *spend an hour with me.*"

"I am a Pure One, I am

house on top of a hill. When they arrived, Flynn was standing shirtless by *not a low person,*" answers

his swimming pool. He came to greet her and her girlfriend, moving so *the Lady Thubuit. "If you*

gracefully—like a lithe cat—and his manner so relaxed, she felt her jitters wish to have your pleasure

melt away. He gave them a tour of the house, which was full of artifacts of with me, you will come to my house at Bubastis.

his various sea voyages. He talked so delightfully of his love of adventure *Everything will be ready* that she wished she had had adventures of her own. He was the perfect *there.* " *Satni went to*

gentleman, and even let her talk about her boyfriend without the slightest *Bubastis by boat.* " *By my*

life," said *Thubuit,* "come

sign of jealousy.

upstairs with me." *On the*

Nora had a visit from her boyfriend the next day. Somehow he didn't *upper floor, sanded with*

seem so interesting anymore; they had a fight and broke up on the spot. *dust of lapis lazuli and*

turquoise, Satni saw

That night, Flynn took her out on the town, to the famous Mocambo *several beds covered with nightclub.* He was drinking and joking, and she fell into the spirit, and *hap royal linen and many gold 400 • The Art of Seduction*

bowls on a table. "Please pily let him touch her hand. Then suddenly she panicked. "I'm a Catholic *take your meal,*" said

and a virgin," she blurted out, "and some day I'm going to walk down the *Thubuit.* " *That is not*

church aisle wearing a veil—and if you think you're going to sleep with *what I have come to do,*"

answered Satni, while the me, you're mistaken." Totally calm and unruffled, Flynn said she had noth *slaves put aromatic wood ing to fear.* He simply liked being with her. She relaxed, and politely asked *on the fire and scattered*

him to put his hand back. Over the next few weeks she saw him almost *scent about.* " *Do that for*

which we have come here,"

every day. She became his secretary. Soon she was spending weekend nights *Satni repeated.* " *First you as his house guest.* He took her on skiing and boating trips. He remained *will make out a deed for* the perfect gentleman, but when he looked at her or touched her hand, she *my maintenance,*" *Thubuit* felt overwhelmed by an exhilarating sensation, a tingling on her skin that *replied,* " *and you will*

establish a dowry for me of she compared to stepping into a cold-needle shower on a red-hot day. Soon all the things and goods she was going to church less often, drifting away from the life she had which belong to you, in known. Although outwardly nothing had changed between them, inwardly writing." Satni acquiesced,

saying, "Bring me the all semblance of resistance to him had melted away. One night, after a party, scribe of the school." • she succumbed. She and Flynn eventually engaged in a stormy marriage When he had done what that lasted seven years.

she asked, Thubuit rose

and dressed herself in a

robe of fine linen, through

which Satni could see all

Interpretation. The women who became involved with Errol Flynn (and *her limbs. His passion*

increased, but she said, "If by the end of his life they numbered in the thousands) had every reason in it is true that you desire to the world to feel suspicious of him: he was real life's closest thing to a Don have your pleasure of me, Juan. (In fact he had played the legendary seducer in a film.) He was con you will make your stantly surrounded by women, who knew that no involvement with him children subscribe to my

deed, that they may not

could last. And then there were the rumors of his temper, and his love of *seek a quarrel with my*

danger and adventure. No woman had greater reason to resist him than *children.*" Satni sent for Nora Eddington: when she met him he stood accused of rape; she was in *his children.* "If it is true that you desire to have volved with another man; she was a God-fearing Catholic. Yet she fell un *your pleasure of me, you* der his spell, just like all the rest. Some seducers—D. H. Lawrence for *will cause your children to* instance—operate mostly on the mind, creating fascination, stirring up the *be killed, that they may*

not seek a quarrel with my

need to possess them. Flynn operated on the body. His cool, nonchalant *children.*" Satni consented

manner infected women, lowering their resistance. This happened almost *again:* "Let any *crime* be the minute they met him, like a drug: he was at ease around women, grace *done to them which your* ful and confident. They fell into this spirit, drifting along on a current he *heart desires.*" "Go into

that room," said Thubuit;

created, leaving the world and its heaviness behind—it was only you and *and while the little corpses* him. Then—perhaps that same day, perhaps a few weeks later—there would *were thrown out to the* come a touch of his hand, a certain look, that would make them feel a *tin stray dogs and cats, Satni at last lay on a bed of ivory* gling, a vibration, a dangerously physical excitement. They would betray *and ebony, that his love* that moment in their eyes, a blush, a nervous laugh, and he would swoop in *might be rewarded, and*

for the kill. No one moved faster than Errol Flynn.

Thubuit lay down at his

side. "Then," the texts

The greatest obstacle to the physical part of the seduction is the target's *modestly say, "magic and*

education, the degree to which he or she has been civilized and socialized. *the god Amen did much."*

Such education conspires to constrain the body, dull the senses, fill the

• *The charms of the*

Divine Women must have mind with doubts and worries. Flynn had the ability to return a woman to *been irresistible, if even*

a more natural state, in which desire, pleasure, and sex had nothing negative

"the wisest men" were attached to them. He lured women into adventure not with arguments but Use Physical Lures • 401

with an open, unrestrained attitude that infected their minds. Understand: *ready to do anything in* it all starts from you. When the time comes to make the seduction physical, *their desire to abandon themselves, even for a few*

train yourself to let go of your own inhibitions, your doubts, your linger- *moments, to their trained* ing feelings of guilt and anxiety. Your confidence and ease will have more *embraces.* power to intoxicate the victim than all the alcohol you could apply. Exhibit —G. R. TABOUI, *THE PRIVATE*

a lightness of spirit—nothing bothers you, nothing daunts you, you take *LIFE OF TUTANKHAMEN*, nothing personally. You are inviting your targets to shed the burdens of T R A N S L A T E D B Y M . R . D O B I E

civilization, to follow your lead and drift. Do not talk of work, duty, marriage, the past or future. Plenty of other people will do that. Instead, offer the rare thrill of losing oneself in the moment, where the senses come dive *CÉLIE: What is the*

and the mind is left behind.

moment, and how do you

define it? Because I must

say in all good honesty that

When he kissed me, it evoked a response I had never

I do not understand you. •

known or imagined before, a giddying of all my senses. It

THE DUKE: A certain

was instinctive joy, against which no warning, reasoning

disposition of the senses, as

unexpected as it is

monitor within me availed. It was new and irresistible and

involuntary, which a

finally overpowering. Seduction—the word implies being

woman can conceal, but

led—and so gently, so tenderly.

which, should it be

perceived or sensed by

— L I N D A C H R I S T I A N

someone who might profit

from it, puts her in the

greatest danger of being a

Keys to Seduction

little more willing than she

thought she ever should or

could be.

Now more than ever, our minds are in a state of constant distraction, —
CRÉBILLON FILS, *LE HASARD*

barraged with endless information, pulled in every direction. Many *AU COIN DU FEU*, QUOTED IN

M I C H E L F E H E R, ED., *THE*

of us recognize the problem: articles are written, studies are completed, but
LIBERTINE READER

they simply become more information to digest. It is almost impossible to turn off an overactive mind; the attempt simply triggers more thoughts—

an inescapable hall of mirrors. Perhaps we turn to alcohol, to drugs, to physical activity—anything to help us slow the mind, be more present in *When, on an autumn*

*evening, with closed eyes, *

the moment. Our discontent presents the crafty seducer with infinite op- *I breathe the warm dark portunity*. The waters around you are teeming with people seeking some *fragrance of your breast, *

kind of release from mental overstimulation. The lure of unencumbered *Before me blissful shores unfold, caressed \ By*

physical pleasure will make them take your bait, but as you prowl the wa- *dazzling fires from blue* ters, understand: the only way to relax a distracted mind is to make it focus *unchanging skies. \ And* on one thing. A hypnotist asks the patient to focus on a watch swinging *there, upon that calm and* back and forth. Once the patient focuses, the mind relaxes, the senses *drowsing isle, \ Grow luscious fruits amid*

awaken, the body becomes prone to all kinds of novel sensations and sug- *fantastic trees: \ There, gestions*. As a seducer, you are a hypnotist, and what you are making the *men are lithe: the women* target focus on is you.

of those seas \ Amaze one

with their gaze that knows

Throughout the seductive process you have been filling the target's *no guile. \ Your perfume* mind. Letters, mementos, shared experiences keep you constantly present, *wafts me thither like a* even when you are not there. Now, as you shift to the physical part of *wind: \ I see a harbor thronged with masts and*

the seduction, you must see your targets more often. Your attention must *sails \ Still weary from the* become more intense. Errol Flynn was a master at this game. When

he *tumult of the gales*; \ And 402 • *The Art of Seduction*

with the sailors' song that

honied in on a victim, he dropped everything else. The woman was made *drifts to me* \ *Are mingled*

to feel that everything came second to her—his career, his friends, every *odors of the tamarind*, \ thing. Then he would take her on a little trip, preferably with water

— *A n d all my soul is scent*

and melody.

around. Slowly the rest of the world would fade into the background, and

— C H A R L E S BAUDELAIRE,

Flynn would take center stage. The more your targets think of you, the less

" E X O T I C PERFUME,"

they are distracted by thoughts of work and duty. When the mind focuses *THE FLOWERS OF EVIL*,

on one thing it relaxes, and when the mind relaxes, all the little paranoid

TRANSLATED BY ALAN CONDER

thoughts that we are prone to—do you really like me, am I intelligent or beautiful enough, what does the future hold—vanish from the surface. Remember: it all starts with you. Be undistracted, present in the moment, and the target will follow suit. The intense gaze of the hypnotist creates a similar reaction in the patient. Once the target's overactive mind starts to slow down, their senses will come to life, and your physical lures will have double their power. Now a heated glance will give them flush. You will have a tendency to employ physical lures that work primarily on the eyes, the sense we most rely on in our culture. Physical appearances are critical, but you are after a general agitation of the senses. La Belle Otero made sure men noticed her breasts, her figure, her perfume, her walk; no part was allowed to predominate. The senses are interconnected—an appeal to smell will trigger touch, an appeal to touch will trigger vision: casual or "accidental" contact—better a brushing of the skin than something more forceful right now—will create a jolt and activate the eyes. Subtly modulate the voice, make it slower and deeper. Living senses will crowd out rational thought.

In the eighteenth-century libertine novel *The Wayward Head and Heart*, by Cr  billon fils, Madame de Lursay is trying to seduce a younger man, Meilcour. Her weapons are several. One night at a party she is hosting, she wears a revealing gown; her hair is slightly tousled; she throws him heated glances; her voice trembles a bit. When they are alone, she innocently gets him to sit close to her, and talks more slowly; at one point she starts to cry. Meilcour has many reasons to resist her; he has fallen in love with a girl his own age, and he has heard rumors about Madame de Lursay that should make him distrust her. But the clothes, the looks, the perfume, the voice, the closeness of her body, the tears—it all begins to overwhelm him. "An indescribable agitation stirred my senses." Meilcour succumbs. The French libertines of the eighteenth century called this "the moment." The seducer leads the victim to a point where he or she reveals involuntary signs of physical excitation that can be read in various symptoms. Once those signs are detected, the seducer must work quickly, applying pressure on the target to get lost in the moment—the past, the future, all moral scruples vanishing in air. Once your victims lose themselves in the moment, it is all over—their mind, their conscience, no longer holds them back. The body gives in to pleasure. Madame de Lursay lures Meilcour into the moment by creating a generalized disorder of the senses, rendering him incapable of thinking straight.

In leading your victims into the moment, remember a few things. First, *Use Physical Lures* • 403

a disordered look (Madame de Lursay's tousled hair, her ruffled dress) has more effect on the senses than a neat appearance. It suggests the bedroom. Second, be alert to the signs of physical excitation. Blushing, trembling of the voice, tears, unusually forceful laughter, relaxing movements of the body (any kind of involuntary mirroring, their gestures imitating yours), a revealing slip of the tongue —these are signs that the victim is slipping into the moment and pressure is to be applied.

In 1934, a Chinese football player named Li met a young actress named Lan Ping in Shanghai. He began to see her often at his matches, cheering him on. They would meet at public affairs, and he would notice her glancing at him with her "strange, yearning eyes," then looking away. One evening he found her seated next to him at a reception. Her leg brushed up against his. They chatted, and she asked him to see a movie with her at a nearby cinema. Once they were there, her head found its way onto his shoulder; she whispered into his ear, something about the film. Later they strolled the streets, and she put her arm around his waist. She brought him to a restaurant where they drank some wine. Li took her to his hotel room, and there he found himself overwhelmed by caresses and sweet words. She gave him no room to retreat, no time to cool down. Three years later Lan Ping—soon to be renamed Jiang Qing—played a similar game on Mao Zedong. She was to become Mao's wife—the infamous Madame Mao, leader of the Gang of Four.

Seduction, like warfare, is often a game of distance and closeness. At first you track your enemy from a distance. Your main weapons are your eyes, and a mysterious manner. Byron had his famous underlook, Madame Mao her yearning eyes. The key is to make the look short and to the point, then look away, like a rapier glancing the flesh. Make your eyes reveal desire, and keep the rest of the face still. (A smile will spoil the effect.) Once the victim is heated up, you quickly bridge the distance, turning to hand-to-hand combat in which you give the enemy no room to withdraw, no time to think or to consider the position in which you have placed him or her. To take the element of fear out of this, use flattery, make the target feel more masculine or feminine, praise their charms. It is *their* fault that you have become so physical and aggressive. There is no greater physical lure than to make the target feel alluring. Remember: the girdle of Aphrodite, which gave her untold seductive powers, included that of sweet flattery. Shared physical activity is always an excellent lure. The Russian mystic Rasputin would begin his seductions with a spiritual lure—the promise of a shared religious experience. But then his eyes would bore into his target at a party, and inevitably he would lead her in a dance, which would become more and more suggestive as he moved closer to her. Hundreds of women succumbed to this technique. For Flynn it was swimming or sailing. In such physical activity, the mind turns off and the body operates according to its own laws. The target's body will follow your lead, will mirror your moves, as far as you want it to go.

In the moment, all moral considerations fade away, and the body re- 404 • *The Art of Seduction* turns to a state of innocence. You can partly create that feeling through a devil-may-care attitude. You do not worry about the world, or what people think of you; you do not judge your target in any way. Part of Flynn's appeal was his total acceptance of a woman. He was not interested in a particular body type, a woman's race, her level of education, her political beliefs. He was in love with her feminine presence. He was luring her into an adventure, free of society's strictures and moral judgments. With him she could act out a fantasy—which, for many, was the chance to be aggressive or transgressive, to experience danger. So empty yourself of your tendency to moralize and judge. You have lured your targets into a momentary world of pleasure—soft and accommodating, all rules and taboos thrown out the window.

Symbol: *The Raft. Floating out to sea, drifting with the current. Soon the shoreline disappears from sight, and the two of you are alone. The water invites you to forget all cares and worries, to submerge yourself. Without anchor or direction, cut off from the past, you give in to the drifting sensation and slowly lose all restraint.*

Reversal

Some people panic when they sense they are falling into the moment. Often, using spiritual lures will help disguise the increasingly physical nature of the seduction. That is how the lesbian seductress Natalie Barney operated. In her heyday, at the turn of the twentieth century, lesbian sex was immensely transgressive, and women new to it often felt a sense of shame or dirtiness. Barney led them into the physical, but so enveloped it in poetry and mysticism that they relaxed and felt purified by the experience. Today, few people feel repulsed by their sexual nature, but many are uncomfortable with their bodies. A purely physical approach will frighten and disturb them. Instead, make it seem a spiritual, mystical union, and they will take less notice of your physical manipulations.

23

Master the Art of the Bold Move

A moment has

arrived: your victim clearly desires you,

but is not ready to admit it openly, let alone act on it.

This is the time to throw aside chivalry, kindness, and coquetry and to overwhelm with a bold move. Don't give the victim time to consider the consequences; create conflict, stir up tension, so that the bold move comes as a great release. Showing hesitation or awkwardness means you are thinking of yourself, as opposed to being overwhelmed by the victim's charms. Never hold back or meet the target halfway, under the belief that you are being correct and considerate; you must be seductive now, not

political. One person must go on the of-

fensive, and it is you.

The Perfect Climax

Through a campaign of deception—the misleading appearance of a

transformation into goodness—the rake Valmont laid siege to the virtuous young Présidente de Tourvel until the day came when, disturbed by his confession of love for her, she insisted he leave the château where both of them were staying as guests. He complied. From Paris, however, he flooded her with letters, describing his love for her in the most intense terms; she begged him to stop, and once again

he complied. Then, several *It afforded, moreover, another advantage: that of weeks later, he paid a surprise visit to the château. In his company Tourvel observing at my leisure her* was flushed and jumpy, and kept her eyes averted—all signs of his effect on *charming face, more* her. Again she asked him to leave. What have you to fear? he replied, *I have beautiful than ever, as it proffered the powerful always done what you have asked, I have never forced myself on you. He enticement of tears. My* kept his distance and she slowly relaxed. She no longer left the room when *blood was on fire, and I* he entered, and she could look at him directly. When he offered to accom- *was so little in control of myself that I was tempted*

pany her on a walk, she did not refuse. They were friends, she said. She *to make the most of the even put her arm in his as they strolled, a friendly gesture.*

occasion. • How weak we

One rainy day they could not take their usual walk. He met her in the *must be, how strong the dominion of circumstance,*

hallway as she was entering her room; for the first time, she invited him in. *if even I, without a* She seemed relaxed, and Valmont sat near her on a sofa. He talked of his *thought for my plans, could* love for her. She gave the faintest protest. He took her hand; she left it *risk losing all the charm of* there and leaned against his arm. Her voice trembled. She looked at him, *a prolonged struggle, all the fascination of a laboriously*

and he felt his heart flutter—it was a tender, loving look. She started to *administered defeat, by speak—"Well! yes, I . . ."*—then suddenly collapsed into his arms, crying. It *concluding a premature* was a moment of weakness, yet Valmont held himself back. Her crying be- *victory; if distracted by the most puerile of desires, I*

came convulsive; she begged him to help her, to leave the room before *could be willing that the* something terrible happened. He did so. The following morning he awoke *conqueror of Madame de* to some surprising news: in the middle of the night, claiming she was feel- *Tourvel should take nothing for the fruit of his*

ing ill, Tourvel had suddenly left the château and returned home.

labors but the tasteless

Valmont did not follow her to Paris. Instead he began staying up late, *distinction of having added* and using no powder to hide the peaked looks that soon ensued. He went *one more name to the roll. Ah, let her surrender; but*

to the chapel every day, and dragged himself despondently around the *let her fight! Let her be too* château. He knew that his hostess would be writing to the Présidente, who *weak to prevail but strong* would hear of his sad state. Next he wrote to a church father in Paris, and *enough to resist; let her* asked him to pass along a

message to Tourvel: he was ready to change his *savor the knowledge of her weakness at her leisure, but*

life for good. He wanted one last meeting, to say goodbye and to return the *let her be unwilling to* letters she had written him over the last few months. The father arranged a *admit defeat. Leave the* 407

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humble poacher to kill the meeting, and so, one late afternoon in Paris, Valmont found himself once stag where he has surprised

again alone with Tourvel, in a room in her house.

it in its hiding place;

the true hunter will

The Présidente was clearly on edge; she could not look him in the eye. *bring it to bay.*

They exchanged pleasantries, but then Valmont turned harsh: she had

—VICOMTE DE VALMONT,

treated him cruelly, had apparently been determined to make him unhappy. IN CHODERLOS DE LACLOS,

Well, this was the end, they were separating for good, since that was how *D A N G E R O U S LIAISONS,*

she wanted it. Tourvel argued back: she was a married woman, she had no
TRANSLATED BY P. W. K. STONE,

IN M I C H E L FEHER, ED.,

choice. Valmont softened his tone and apologized: he was unused to having *THE LIBERTINE READER*

such strong feelings, he said, and could not control himself. Still, he would never trouble her again. Then he laid on a table the letters he had come to return.

Don't you know that

Tourvel came closer: the sight of her letters, and the memory of all the *however willing, however*

eager we are to give turmoil they represented, affected her powerfully. She had thought his *de ourselves, we must* cision to renounce his libertine way of life was voluntary, she said—with a *nevertheless have an* touch of bitterness in her voice, as if she resented being abandoned. No, it *excuse? And is there any*

more convenient than an was not voluntary, he replied, it was because she had spurned him. Then *appearance of yielding to* he suddenly stepped closer and took her in his arms. She did not resist. *force? As for me, I shall*

"Adorable woman!" he cried. "You have no idea of the love you inspire. *admit that one thing that*

most flatters me is a lively You will never know how I have worshipped you, how much dearer my *and well-executed attack*, feelings have been to me than life! . . . May [your days] be blessed with all *when everything happens*

of the happiness of which you have deprived me!" Then he let her go and *in quick but orderly* turned to leave.

succession; which never

puts us in the painfully

Tourvel suddenly snapped. "You shall listen to me. I insist," she said, *embarrassing position of* and grabbed his arm. He turned around and they embraced. This time he *having to cover up some* waited no longer, picking her up, carrying her to an ottoman, overwhelm *blunder of which, on the contrary, we ought to be* ing her with kisses and sweet words of the happiness he now felt. Before *taking advantage; which*

this sudden flood of caresses, all her resistance gave way. "From this *mo keeps up an appearance of* ment on I am yours," she said, "and you will hear neither refusals nor re *taking by storm even that which we are quite* grets from my lips." Tourvel was true to her word, and Valmont's suspicions *prepared to surrender; and*

were to prove correct: the pleasures he won from her were far greater than *adroitley flatters our two* with any other woman he had seduced. *favorite passions—the*

pride of defense and the

pleasure of defeat.

— M A R Q U I S E DE MERTEUIL IN

Interpretation. Valmont—a character in Choderlos de Laclos's eighteenth CHODERLOS DE LACLOS, century novel *Dangerous Liaisons*—can sense several things about the Prési *D A N G E R O U S LIAISONS*, dente at first glance. She is timid and nervous. Her husband almost TRANSLATED BY P.W.K. STONE

IN M I C H E L FEHER, ED.,

certainly treats her with respect—probably too much of it. Beneath her in *THE LIBERTINE READER*

terest in God, religion, and virtue is a passionate woman, vulnerable to the lure of a romance and to the flattering attention of an ardent suitor. No one, not even her husband, has given her this feeling, because they have all *What sensible man will* been so daunted by her prudish exterior. *not intersperse his coaxing* |

With kisses? Even if she

Valmont begins his seduction, then, by being indirect. He knows

doesn't kiss back, | Still Tourvel is secretly fascinated with his bad reputation. By acting as if he is *force on regardless! She* contemplating a change in his life, he can make her want to reform him—a *may struggle, cry* desire that is unconsciously a desire to love him. Once she has opened up

"Naughty!" | Yet she

wants to be overcome. Just

ever so slightly to his influence, he strikes at her vanity: she has never felt *Master the Art of the Bold Move* • 409

desired as a woman, and on some level cannot help but enjoy his love for *take care* | *Not to bruise her.* Of course she struggles and resists, but that is only a sign that her *emo- her tender lips with such hard-snatched kisses,* |

tions are engaged. (Indifference is the single most effective deterrent to *Don't give her a chance to seduction.*) By taking his time, by making no bold moves even when he has *protest | You're too rough.* the opportunity for them, he instills in her a false sense of security and *Those who grab their*

kisses, but not what

proves himself by being patient. On what he pretends is his last visit to her, *follows, | Deserve to lose* however, he can sense she is ready—weak, confused, more afraid of losing *all they've gained. How* the addictive feeling of being desired than of suffering the consequences of *short were you | Of the adultery.* He deliberately makes her emotional, dramatically displays her let- *ultimate goal after all your kissing? That was* |

ters, creates some tension by playing a game of push-and-pull, and when *Gaucheness, not modesty,*

she takes his arm, he knows it is the time to strike. Now he moves quickly, *I'm afraid . . .* allowing her no time for doubts or second thoughts. But his move seems to — O V I D , *THE ART OF LOVE*, arise out of love, not lust. After so much resistance and tension, what a TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

pleasure to finally surrender. The climax now comes as a great release. Never underestimate the role of vanity in love and seduction. If you seem impatient, champing at the bit for sex, you signal that it is all about *I have tested all manner of*

pleasures, and known every

libido, and that it has little to do with the target's own charms. That is *variety of joy; and I have* why you must defer the climax. A lengthier courtship will feed the target's *found that neither intimacy* vanity, and will make the effect of your bold move all the more powerful *with princes, nor wealth* and enduring. Wait *too long*, though—showing desire, but then proving *acquired, nor finding after lacking, nor returning after*

too timid to make your move—and you will stir up a different kind of inse- *long absence, nor security* curity: "You found me desirable, but you are not acting on your desires; *after fear and repose in a* maybe you're not so interested." Doubts like these affront your target's *safe refuge—none of these things so powerfully affects*

vanity (if you're not interested, maybe I'm not so interesting), and are fatal *the soul as union with the* in the latter stages of seduction; awkwardness and misunderstandings will *beloved, especially if it* spring up everywhere. Once you read in your targets' gestures that they are *come after long denial and continual banishment. For*

ready and open—a look in the eye, mirroring behavior, a strange nervous- *then the flame of passion* ness in your presence—you must go on the offensive, make them feel that *waxes exceeding hot, and* their charms have unhinged you and pushed you into the bold move. They *the furnace of yearning* will then have the ultimate pleasure: physical surrender and a psychological *blazes up, and the fire of eager hope rages ever more*

boost to their vanity.

fiercely.

— I B N H A Z M , *THE RING OF*

The more timidity a lover shows with us the more it con-

THE DOVE: A TREATISE ON THE

cerns our pride to goad him on; the more respect he has for

ART AND PRACTICE OF ARAB

our resistance, the more respect we demand of him. We

L O V E , T R A N S L A T E D B Y A . J .

ARBERRY

would willingly say to you men: "Ah, in pity's name do not suppose us to be so very virtuous; you are forcing us to have too much of it."

I knew once two great

— N I N O N D E L'ENCLOS

lords, brothers, both of

them highly bred and

highly accomplished

Keys to Seduction

gentlemen which did love

two ladies, but the one of

these was of much higher

Think of seduction as a world you enter, a world that is separate and *quality and more account than the other in all*

distinct from the real world. The rules are different here; what works *respects*. Now *being entered* in daily life can have the opposite effect in seduction. The real world fea- *both into the chamber of 410 • The Art of Seduction*

this great lady, who for the tures a democratizing, leveling impulse, in which everything has to seem at time being was keeping her least something like equal. An overt imbalance of power, an overt desire for bed, each did withdraw power, will stir envy and resentment; we learn to be kind and polite, at least apart for to entertain his

mistress. The one did

on the surface. Even those who have power generally try to act humble and *converse with the high-born* modest—they do not want to offend. In seduction, on the other hand, you *dame with every possible* can throw all of that out, revel in your dark side, inflict a little pain—in *respect and humble saluta-*

tion and kissing of hands, some ways be more yourself. Your naturalness in this respect will prove se with words of honor and ductive in itself. The problem is that after years of living in the real world, stately compliment, without we lose the

ability to be ourselves. We become timid, humble, overpolite. *making ever an attempt to Your task is to regain some of your childhood qualities, to root out all this come near and try to force*

the place. The other brother; false humility. And the most important quality to recapture is boldness. without any ceremony of

No one is born timid; timidity is a protection we develop. If we never *words or fine phrases, did* stick our necks out, if we never try, we will never have to suffer the conse *take his fair one to a recessed window, and*

quences of failure or success. If we are kind and unobtrusive, no one will *incontinently making free* be offended—in fact we will seem saintly and likable. In truth, timid peo with her (*for he was very* ple are often self-absorbed, obsessed with the way people see them, and not strong), *he did soon show*

her 'twas not his way to at all saintly. And humility may have its social uses, but it is deadly in seduc *love à l'espagnole, with* tion. You need to be able to play the humble saint at times; it is a mask you *eyes and tricks off face and* wear. But in seduction, take it off. Boldness is bracing, erotic, and ab *words, but in the genuine fashion and proper mode* solutely necessary to bring the seduction to its conclusion. Done right, it *every true lover should*

tells your targets that they have made you lose your normal restraint, and *desire*. *Presently having* gives them license to do so as well. People are yearning to have a chance to *finished his task, he doth* play out the repressed sides of their personality. At the final stage of a se *quit the chamber; but as he goes, saith to his brother,* duction, boldness eliminates any awkwardness or doubts. In a dance, two *loud enough for his lady to* people cannot lead. One takes over, sweeping the other along. Seduction is *hear the words: "Do you not egalitarian; it is not a harmonic convergence. Holding back at the end as I have done, brother*

mine; else you do naught at out of fear of offending, or thinking it correct to share the power, is a *all. Be you as brave and* recipe for disaster. This is an arena not for politics but for pleasure. It can be *hardy as you will else-* by the man or woman, but a bold move is required. If you are so con *where, yet if you show not your hardihood here and*

cerned about the other person, console yourself with the thought that *now, you are disgraced; for* the pleasure of the one who surrenders is often greater than that of the *here is no place of cere-* aggressor.

mony and respect, but one

As a young man, the actor Errol Flynn was uncontrollably bold. This *where you do see your lady*

before you, which doth but often got him into trouble; he became too aggressive around desirable wait your attack." So with women. Then, while traveling through the Far East, he became interested this he did leave his brother, in the Asian practice of tantric sex, in which the male must train himself which yet for that while

did

refrain him and put it off to not to ejaculate, preserving his potency and heightening both partners'

another time. But for this pleasure in the process. Flynn later applied this principle to his seductions as the lady did by no means well, teaching himself to restrain his natural boldness and delay the end of esteem him more highly,

whether it was she did put the seduction as long as possible. So, while boldness can work wonders, un it down to an overchilliness controllable boldness is not seductive but frightening; you need to be able in love, or a lack of courage, to turn it on and off at will, know when to use it. As in Tantrism, you can or a defect of bodily vigor.

create more pleasure by delaying the inevitable.

— S E I G N E U R DE BRANTÔME,

In the 1720s, the Duc de Richelieu developed an infatuation with a

LIVES OF FAIR & GALLANT

LADIES, TRANSLATED B Y A . R .

certain duchess. The woman was exceptionally beautiful, and was desired

ALLINSON

by one and all, but she was far too virtuous to take a lover, although she *Master the Art of the Bold Move* • 411

could be quite coquettish. Richelieu bided his time. He befriended her, *A man should proceed to charming her with the wit that had made him the favorite of the ladies. enjoy any woman when she gives him an*

One night a group of such women, including the duchess, decided to play *opportunity and makes her a practical joke on him, in which he was to be forced naked out of his own love manifest to him room at the palace of Versailles. The joke worked to perfection, the ladies by the following signs: she all got to see him in his native glory, and had a good chuckle watching him calls out to a man without first being addressed by*

run away. There were many places Richelieu could have hidden; the place *him; she shows herself to* he chose was the duchess's bedroom. Minutes later he watched her enter *him in secret places; she* and undress, and once the candles were extinguished, he crept into bed *speaks to him tremblingly and inarticulately; her face*

with her. She protested, tried to scream. He covered her mouth with kisses, *blooms with delight and* and she eventually and happily relented. Richelieu had decided to make his *her fingers or toes perspire; bold move then for several reasons. First, the duchess had come to like him, and sometimes she remains with both hands placed on*

and even to harbor a secret desire for him. She would never act upon it or *his body as if she had been* admit it, but he was certain it existed. Second, she had seen him naked, and *surprised by something, or* could not help but be impressed. Third, she would feel a touch of pity for *as if overcome with fatigue.*

• *After a woman has*

his predicament, and for the joke played on him. Richelieu, a consummate *manifested her love to him* seducer, would find no more perfect moment.

by outward signs, and by

The bold move should come as a pleasant surprise, but not too much of *the motions of her body, the man should make every*

a surprise. Learn to read the signs that the target is falling for you. His or *possible attempt to conquer* her manner toward you will have changed—it will be more pliant, with *her. There should be no*

more words and gestures mirroring yours—yet there will still be a touch of *indecision or hesitancy: if* nervousness and uncertainty. Inwardly they have given

in to you, but they *an opening is found the man should make the most* •

do not expect a bold move. This is the time to strike. If you wait too long, *of it. The woman, indeed, to the point where they consciously desire and expect you to make a move, becomes disgusted with the*

*it loses the piquancy of coming as a surprise. You want a degree of tension *man if he is timid about his chances and throws**

and ambivalence, so that the move represents a great release. Their surren- *them away. Boldness is the* der will relieve tension like a long-awaited summer storm. Don't plan your *rule, for everything is to be* bold move in advance; it cannot seem calculated. Wait for the opportune *gained, and nothing lost.* moment, as Richelieu did. Be attentive to favorable circumstances. This — *THE HINDU ART OF LOVE*, will give you room to improvise and go with the moment, which will

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

EDWARD WINDSOR

heighten the impression you want to create of being suddenly overwhelmed by desire. If you ever sense that the victim is expecting the bold move, take a step back, lull them into a false sense of security, then strike. Sometime in the fifteenth century, the writer Bandello relates, a young Venetian widow had a sudden lust for a handsome nobleman. She had her father invite him to their palace to discuss business, but during the meeting the father had to leave, and she offered to give the young man a tour of the place. His curiosity was piqued by her bedroom, which she described as the most splendid room in the palace, but which she also passed by without letting him enter. He begged to be shown the room, and she granted his wish. He was spellbound: the velvets, the rare *objets*, the suggestive paintings, the delicate white candles. A beguiling scent filled the room. The widow put out all of the candles but one, then led the man to the bed, which had been heated with a warming pan. He quickly succumbed to her caresses. Follow the widow's example: your bold move should have a theatrical quality to it. That will make it memorable, and make your aggressiveness seem pleasant, 412 • *The Art of Seduction*

part of the drama. The theatricality can come from the setting—an exotic or sensual location. It can also come from your actions. The widow piqued her victim's curiosity by creating the suspense about her bedroom. An element of fear—someone might find you, say—will heighten the tension. Remember: you are creating a moment that must stand out from the sameness of daily life. Keeping your targets emotional will both weaken them and heighten

the drama of the moment. And the best way to keep them at an emotional pitch is by infecting them with emotions of your own. When Valmont

wanted the Presidents to become calm, angry, or tender, he showed that emotion first, and she mirrored it. People are very susceptible to the moods of those around them; this is particularly acute at the latter stages of a seduction, when resistance is low and the target has fallen under your spell. At the point of the bold move, learn to infect your target with whatever emotional mood you require, as opposed to suggesting the mood with

words. You want access to the target's unconscious, which is best obtained by infecting them with emotions, bypassing their conscious ability to resist. It may seem expected for the male to make the bold move, but history is full of successfully bold females. There are two main forms of feminine boldness. In the first, more traditional form, the coquettish woman stirs male desire, is completely in control, then at the last minute, after bringing her victim to a boil, steps back and lets him make the bold move. She sets it up, then signals with her eyes, her gestures, that she is ready for him. Courtesans have used this method throughout history; it is how Cleopatra worked on Antony, how Josephine seduced Napoleon, how La Belle Otero amassed a fortune during the Belle Epoque. It lets the man maintain his masculine illusions, although the woman is really the aggressor.

The second form of feminine boldness does not bother with such illusions: the woman simply takes charge, initiates the first kiss, pounces on her victim. This is

how Marguerite de Valois, Lou Andreas-Salomé, and Madame Mao operated, and many men find it not emasculating at all but very exciting. It all depends on the insecurities and proclivities of the victim. This kind of feminine boldness has its allure because it is more rare than the first kind, but then all boldness is somewhat rare. A bold move will always stand out compared to the usual treatment afforded by the tepid husband, the timid lover, the hesitant suitor. That is how you want it. If everyone were bold, boldness would quickly lose its allure. *Master the Art of the Bold Move* • 413

Symbol: *The Summer Storm.* The hot days follow one another, with no end in sight. The earth is parched and dry. Then there

comes a stillness in the air, thick and oppressive—the calm before the storm.

Suddenly gusts of wind arrive, and

flashes of lightning, exciting and frightening. Allow-

ing no time to react or run for shelter, the rain

comes, and brings with it a sense of

release. At last.

Reversal

If two people come together by mutual consent, that is not a seduction. There is no reversal.

24

Beware the Aftereffects

Danger follows

in the aftermath of a successful se-

duction. After emotions have reached a pitch,

they often swing in the opposite direction—toward

lassitude, distrust, disappointment. Beware of the long,

drawn-out goodbye; insecure, the victim will cling and claw,

and both sides will suffer. If you are to part, make the sacrifice swift and sudden. If necessary, deliberately break the spell you have created. If you are to stay in a relationship, beware a flag- ging of energy, a creeping familiarity that will spoil the

fantasy. If the game is to go on, a second seduction is

required. Never let the other person take you for granted—use absence, create pain and conflict, to keep the seduced on tenerhooks.

Disenchantment

Seduction is a kind of spell, an *enchantment*. When you seduce, you are not quite your normal self; your presence is heightened, you are playing more than one role, you are strategically concealing your tics and insecurities. You have deliberately created mystery and suspense to make the victim experience a real-life drama. Under your spell, the seduced gets to feel *In a word, woe to the transported away from the world of work and responsibility.*

woman of too monotonous

You will keep this going for as long as you want or can, heightening the a temperament; her monotony satiates and

tension, stirring the emotions, until the time finally comes to complete the disgusts. She is always the seduction. After that, disenchantment almost inevitably sets in. The release of same statue, with her a tension is followed by a letdown—of excitement, of energy—that can even man is always right. She is so good, so gentle, that she

materialize as a kind of disgust directed at you by your victim, even though takes away from people the what is happening is really a natural emotional course. It is as if a drug were privilege of quarreling with wearing off, allowing the target to see you as you are—and being disappointed her, and this is often such a great pleasure! Put in her

pointed by the flaws that are inevitably there. On your side, you too have place a vivacious woman, probably tended to idealize your targets somewhat, and once your desire is capricious, decided, to a satisfied, you may see them as weak. (After all, they have given in to you.) certain limit, however, and You too may feel disappointed. Even in the best of circumstances, you are things assume a different aspect. The lover will find

dealing now with the reality rather than the fantasy, and the flames will in the same person the slowly die down—unless you start up a second seduction.

pleasure of variety. Temper

You may think that if the victim is to be sacrificed, none of this mat- is the salt, the quality which prevents it front

ters. But sometimes your effort to break off the relationship will inadvertently revive the spell for the other person, causing him or her to cling to *Restlessness, jealousy*, you tenaciously. No, in either direction—sacrifice, or the integration of the *quarrels, making friends again, spitefulness, all are*

two of you into a couple—you must take disenchantment into account. the food of love. Enchant- There is an art to the post-seduction as well.

ing variety? . . . Too

Master the following tactics to avoid undesired aftereffects.

constant a peace is productive of a deadly ennui.

Uniformity kills love, for as soon as the spirit of

Fight against inertia. The sense that you are trying less hard is often *method mingles in an affair of the heart, the passion*

enough to disenchant your victims. Reflecting back on what you did during the seduction, they will see you as manipulative: you wanted something *venes, weariness begins to then, and so you worked at it, but now you are taking them for granted. wear, and disgust ends the* After the first seduction is over, then, show that it isn't really over—that *chapter: you want to keep proving yourself, focusing your attention on them, luring* — N I N O N D E L ' E N C L O S , *LIFE, LETTERS AND EPICUREAN*

them. That is often enough to keep them enchanted. Fight the tendency to *PHILOSOPHY OF NINON DE*

let things settle into comfort and routine. Stir the pot, even if that means a *L'ENCLOS*

417

418 • *The Art of Seduction*

Age cannot wither her, nor return to inflicting pain and pulling back. Never rely on your physical custom stale | Her infinite charms; even beauty loses its appeal with repeated exposure. Only strategy variety: other women cloy | and effort will fight off inertia. The appetites they feed;

but she makes hungry |

Where most she satisfies.

— W I L L I A M SHAKESPEARE,

Maintain mystery. Familiarity is the death of seduction. If the target *A N T O N Y AND CLEOPATRA*

knows everything about you, the relationship gains a level of comfort but loses the elements of fantasy and anxiety. Without anxiety and a touch of fear, the erotic tension is dissolved. Remember: reality is not seductive. *Cry hurrah, and hurrah* Keep some dark corners in your character, flout expectations, use absences *again, for a splendid*

to fragment the clinging, possessive pull that allows familiarity to creep in. *triumph* — \ *The quarry I Maintain* some mystery or be taken for granted. You will have only yourself *sought has fallen into my*

toils. . . . \ Why hurry, to blame for what follows.

young man? Your ship's

still in mid-passage, \ And

the harbor I seek is far Maintain lightness. Seduction is a game, not a matter of life and death. *away \ Through my verses,*

it's true, you may have There will be a tendency in the "post" phase to take things more seriously *acquired a mistress, \ But* and personally, and to whine about behavior that does not please you. Fight *that's not enough. If my* this as much as possible, for it will create exactly the effect you do not want. *art \ Caught her, my art*

must keep her. To guard a You cannot control the other person by nagging and complaining; it will *conquest's \ As tricky as* make them defensive, exacerbating the problem. You will have more *con making it. There was luck* trol if you maintain the proper spirit. Your playfulness, the little ruses you *in the chase, \ But this task*

will call for skill. If ever I employ to please and delight them, your indulgence of their faults, will needed support from \ make your victims compliant and easy to handle. Never try to change your *Venus and Son, and* victims; instead, induce them to follow your lead. *Erato—the Muse \ Erotic*

by name— it's now, for my

too-ambitious project \ To

relate some techniques that Avoid the slow burnout. Often, one person becomes disenchanted but *might restrain \ That fickle* lacks the courage to make the break. Instead, he or she withdraws inside. As *young globetrotter,*

Love. . . . \ To be loved

an absence, this psychological step back may inadvertently reignite the *you must show yourself* other person's desire, and a frustrating cycle begins of pursuit and retreat. *lovable—\ Something* Everything unravels, slowly. Once you feel disenchanted and know it is *good looks alone \ Can*

never achieve. You may be over, end it quickly, without apology. That would only insult the other per *handsome as Homer's son*. A quick separation is often easier to get over—it is as if you had a *Nireus, \ Or young Hylas*, problem being faithful, as opposed to your feeling that the seduced was no *snatched by those bad \ longer* being desirable. Once you are truly disenchanted, there is no going *Naiads; but all the same,*

to avoid a surprise back, so don't hang on out of false pity. It is more compassionate to make a *desertion \And keep your* clean break. If that seems inappropriate or too ugly, then deliberately disen *girl, it's best you have gifts* chant the victim with anti-seductive behavior. *of mind \ In addition to*

physical charms. Beauty's

fragile, the passing \ Years

diminish its substance, eat

Examples of Sacrifice and Integration

it away. \ Violets and

bell-mouthed lilies do not

bloom for ever, \ Hard

1. In the 1770s, the handsome Chevalier de Belleroche began an affair *thorns are all that's left of* with an older woman, the Marquise de Merteuil. He saw a lot of her, but *the blown rose. \ So with*

you, my handsome youth: soon she began to pick quarrels with him. Entranced by her unpredictable *Beware the Aftereffects • 419*

moods, he worked hard to please her, showering her with attention and *soon wrinkles will furrow *

tenderness. Eventually the quarreling stopped, and as the days went by, de *Your body; soon, too soon,*

your hair turn gray. \ Then

Belleroche felt confident that Merteuil loved him—until one day, when he *build an enduring mind*, came to visit, and found that she was not at home. Her footman greeted *add that to your beauty: *

him at the door, and said he would take the chevalier to a secret house of *It alone will last till the flames | Consume you.*

Merteuil's outside Paris. There the marquise was waiting for him, in a re- *Keep your wits sharp*, newed mood of coquettishness: she acted as if this were their first tryst. *explore the liberal \Arts*, The chevalier had never seen her so ardent. He left at daybreak more in *win mastery over Greek *

love than ever, but a few days later they quarreled again. The marquise *As well as Latin. Ulysses was eloquent, not*

seemed cold after that, and he saw her flirt with another man at a party. *handsome — \ Yet he filled* He felt horribly jealous, but as before, his solution was to become more *sea-goddesses' hearts *

attentive and loving. This, he thought, was the way to appease a difficult *With aching passion. . . .*

\ Nothing works on a

woman.

mood like tactful tolerance:

Now Merteuil had to spend a few weeks at her country home to han- *harshness \ Provokes* dle some business there. She invited de Belleroche to join her for an *ex-hatred, makes nasty rows. *

We detest the hawk and

tended stay, and he happily agreed, remembering the new life an earlier stay *the wolf, those natural* there had brought to their affair. Once again she surprised him: her affec- *hunters, \ Always preying* tion and desire to please him were rejuvenated. This time, though, he did *on timid flocks; \ But the gentle swallow goes safe*

not have to leave the next morning. Days went by, and she refused to enter- *from man's snares, we tain* any guests. The world would not intrude on them. And this time there *fashion \ Little turreted* was no coldness or quarreling, only good cheer and love. Yet now de Belle- *houses for doves. \ Keep* roche began to grow a little tired of the marquise. He thought of Paris and *clear of all quarrels, sharp- tongued recriminations— *

the balls he was missing; a week later he cut short his stay on some business *Love's sensitive, needs to pretext* and hurried back to the city. Somehow the marquise did not seem *be fed \ With gentle words.* so charming anymore.

Leave nagging to wives

and husbands, \ Let them,

if they want, think it a

natural law, \ A permanent

Interpretation. The Marquise de Merteuil, a character in Choderlos de La- *state of feud. Wives thrive on wrangling, \ That's their*

clos's novel *Dangerous Liaisons*, is a practiced seductress who never lets her *dowry. A mistress should* affairs drag on too long. De Belleroche is young and handsome but that is *always hear \ What she* all. As her interest in him wanes, she decides to bring him to the secret *wants to be told. . . . *

house to try to inject some novelty into the affair. This works for a while, *Use tender blandishments,*

*language that caresses *

but it isn't enough. The chevalier must be gotten rid of. She tries coldness, *The ear, make her glad*

anger (hoping to start a fight), even a show of interest in another man. All *you came.* this only intensifies his attachment. She can't just leave him—he might be—
OVID, *THE ART OF LOVE*, come vengeful, or try even harder to win her back. The solution: she delib-TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

erately breaks the spell by overwhelming him with attention. Abandoning the pattern of alternating warmth with coldness, she acts hopelessly in love. Alone with her day after day, with no space to fantasize, he no longer sees *In Paris the band played a* her as enchanting and breaks off the affair. This was her goal all along. *concert at the Palais*

If a break with the victim is too messy or difficult (or you lack the *Chaleux. They played the*

first half, and then there

nerve), then do the next best thing: deliberately break the spell that ties him *was an hour interval—*

or her to you. Aloofness or anger will only stir the other person's insecurity, *intermission, we call it—*

producing a clinging horror. Instead, try suffocating them with love and at- *during which there was a fabulous buffet on a great*

tention: be clinging and possessive yourself, moon over the lover's every ac- *long table laden with* tion and character trait, create the sense that this monotonous affection will *delicious foods and cognac, 420 • The Art of Seduction*

champagne, wine and that go on forever. No more mystery, no more coquetry, no more retreats—just rarity in Paris . . . Scotch.

endless love. Few can endure such a threat. A few weeks of it and they will *The people, aristocrats and be gone.*

servants, some on their

hands and knees, were

busily searching for

something on the floor. A

2. King Charles II of England was a devoted libertine. He kept a stable of *duchess, who was one of* lovers: there was always a favorite mistress from the aristocracy, and count *the hostesses, had lost one of her larger diamonds. . . .*

less other less important women. He craved variety. One evening in 1668, *The duchess finally got* the king spent an evening at the theater, where he conceived a sudden *de bored seeing people looking* sire for a young actress called Nell Gwyn. She was pretty and innocent *all over the floor for the*

ring. She looked around

looking (only eighteen at the time), with a girlish glow in her cheeks, but *haughtily, then took Duke* the lines she recited onstage were so impudent and saucy. Deeply excited, *by the arm, saying, "It* the king decided he had to have her. After the performance he took her *doesn't mean anything. I*

can always get diamonds,

out for a night of drinking and merriment, then led her to his royal bed. *but how often can I get a*

Nell was the daughter of a fishmonger, and had begun by selling or *man like Duke* anges in the theater. She rose to the status of actress by sleeping with *writ Ellington?" • She* ers and other theater men. She had no shame about this. (When a footman *disappeared with Duke.*

The band started the of hers got into a fight with someone who said he worked for a whore, she second half by themselves, broke it up by saying, "I am a whore. Find something better to fight and eventually Duke about.") Nell's humor and sass amused the king greatly, but she was low *smilingly reappeared to finish the concert.* born, and an actress, and he could hardly make her a favorite. After several

— D O N GEORGE, S W E E T M A N :

nights with "pretty, witty Nell," he returned to his principal mistress, *THE REAL DUKE ELLINGTON*

Louise Keroualle, a well-born Frenchwoman.

Keroualle was a clever seductress. She played hard to get, and made it clear she would not give the king her virginity until he had promised her a title. It was the kind of chase Charles enjoyed, and he made her the *I do know, however, that*

men become bigger-hearted

Duchess of Portsmouth. But soon her greed and difficultness began to wear *and better lovers once they* on his nerves. To divert himself, he turned back to Nell. Whenever he *vis get the suspicion that their* ited her, he was royally entertained with food, drink, and her great good *mistresses care less about*

them. When a man humor. The king was bored or melancholy? She took him drinking or *believes himself to be the* gambling, or out to the country, where she taught him to fish. She always *one and only lover in a*

had a pleasant surprise up her sleeve. What he loved most of all was her *woman's life, he'll whistle*

and go his way. • / ought wit, the way she mocked the pretentious Keroualle. The duchess had the *to know; I have followed*

habit of going into mourning whenever a nobleman of another country *this profession for the last*

died, as if he were a relation. Nell, too, would show up at the palace on *twenty years. If you want* these occasions dressed in black, and would sorrowfully say that she was *me to, I will tell you what*

happened to me a few years mourning for the "Cham of Tartary" or the "Boog of Oronooko"—grand *ago. • At that time I had a*

relatives of her own. To her face, she called the duchess "Squintabella" and *steady lover, a certain* the "Weeping Willow," because of her simpering manners and melancholic *Demophantos, a usurer*

living near Poikile. He had

airs. Soon the king was spending more time with Nell than with the

never given me more than duchess. By the time Keroualle fell out of favor, Nell had in essence be *five drachmas and he come* the king's favorite, which she remained until his death, in 1685. *pretended to be my man.*

But his love was only

superficial, Chrysis. He

never sighed, he never shed

Interpretation. Nell Gwyn was ambitious. She wanted power and fame, *tears for me and he never*

spent the night waiting at but in the seventeenth century the only way a woman could get those *Beware the Aftereffects* • 421

things was through a man—and who better than the king? But to get in- *my door*. *One day he came* volved with Charles was a dangerous game. A man like him, easily bored *to see me, knocked at my*

door; but I did not open it.

and in need of variety, would use her for a fling, then find someone else. *You see, I had the painter,*

Nell's strategy for the problem was simple: she let the king have his *Callides, in my room*;

other girls, and never complained. Every time he saw her, though, she *Callides had given me ten*

made sure he was entertained and diverted. She filled his senses with *plea- drachmas. Demophantos swore and beat his fists on*

sure, acting as if his position had nothing to do with her love for him. *Vari- the door and left cursing* ety in women could wear on the nerves, tiring a busy king. They all made *me. Several days passed* so many demands. If one woman could provide the same variety (and Nell, *without my sending for him; Callides was still in*

as an actress, knew how to play different roles), she had a big advantage. *my house. Thereupon* Nell never asked for money, so Charles plied her with wealth. She never *Demophantos, who was asked to be the favorite—how could she? She was a commoner—but he ele- already quite excited, went wild. He broke open my*

vated her to the position.

door, wept, pulled me

Many of your targets will be like kings and queens, particularly those *about, threatened to kill* who are easily bored. Once the seduction is over they will not only have *me, tore my tunic, and did everything, in fact, that a*

trouble idealizing you, they may also turn to another man or woman whose *jealous man would do, and unfamiliarity seems exciting and poetic. Needing other people to divert finally presented me with them, they often satisfy this need through variety. Do not play into the six thousand drachmas. In* hands of these bored royals by complaining, becoming self-pitying, or de- *consideration of this sum, I was his for a period of*

manding privileges. That would only further their natural disenchantment *eight months. His wife* once the seduction is over. Instead, make them see that you are not the per- *used to say that I had* son they thought you were. Make it a delightful game to play new roles, to *bewitched him with some powder. That bewitching*

surprise them, to be an endless source of entertainment. It is almost impos- powder, to be sure, was sible to resist a person who provides pleasure with no strings attached. *jealousy. That is why, When they are with you, keep the spirit light and playful. Play up the parts Chrysis, I advise you to act*

likewise with Corgi as.

of your character they find delightful, but never let them feel they know you too well. In the end you will control the dynamic, and a haughty king —LUCIAN, *DIALOGUES OF THE*

COURTESANS, TRANSLATED BY

or queen will become your abject slave.

A . L . H .

3. When the great jazz composer Duke Ellington came to town, he and his

" *A wife is someone on*

band were always a big attraction, but especially so for the ladies of the area. *whom one gazes all one's*

They came to hear his music, of course, but once there they were mesmer- *life; yet it is just as well if* ized by "the Duke" himself. Onstage, Ellington was relaxed and elegant, *she be not beautiful" — so spake Jinta of the Gion.*

and seemed to be having such a good time. His face was very handsome, *I'll is may be the flippant*

and his bedroom eyes were infamous. (He slept very little, and his eyes had *saying of a go-between, but* permanent pouches under them.) After the performance, some woman *it is not to be dismissed too lightly. . . . Besides, it is*

would inevitably invite him to her table, another would sneak into his *with beautiful women as*

dressing room, yet another would approach him on his way out. Duke *with beautiful views: if one* made a point of being accessible, and when he kissed a woman's hand, his *is forever looking at them*, eyes and hers would meet for a moment. Sometimes she would signal an *one soon tires of their charm. This I can judge*

interest in him, and his glance in return would say he was more than ready. *from my own experience*. Sometimes his eyes were the first to speak; few women could resist that *One year I went to*

look, even the most happily married.

Matsushima, and, though

at first I was moved by the

With the night's music still ringing in her ears, the woman would show *beauty of the place and up at Ellington's hotel room*. He would be dressed in a stylish suit—*he clapped my hands with 422 • The Art of Seduction*

admiration, saying to loved good clothes—and the room would be full of flowers; there would *myself, "Oh, if only I be a piano in the corner*. He would play some music. His playing, and his *could bring some poet here* elegant, nonchalant manner, would come across to the woman as pure the *to show him this great wonder!"*—*y et, after I had ater, a pleasant continuation of the performance she had just witnessed. been gazing at the scene* And when it was over, and Ellington had to leave town, he would give her *from morning until night*, a thoughtful gift. He would make it seem that the only thing taking him *the myriad islands began to* away from her was his touring. A few weeks later, the woman might hear a *smell unpleasantly of*

seaweed, the waves that new Ellington song on the radio, with lyrics suggesting that she had in *beat on Matsuyama Point* spired it. If ever he passed through the area again, she would find a way to *became obstreperous; before* be there, and Ellington would often renew the affair, if only for a night. *I knew it I had let all the*

cherry blossoms at

Sometime in the 1940s, two young women from Alabama came to

Shiogama scatter; in the Chicago to attend a debutante ball. Ellington and his band were the enter *morning I overslept and tainment*. He was the women's favorite musician, and after the show, they *missed the dawn snow on*

Mount Kinka; nor was I asked him for an autograph. He was so charming and engaging that one of *much impressed by the* the girls found herself asking what hotel he was staying at. He told them, *evening moon at Nagané* with a big grin. The girls switched hotels, and later that day they called up *or Oshima; and in the end* Ellington and invited him to their room for a drink. He accepted. They *I picked up a few white*

and black pebbles on the wore beautiful negligees that they had just bought. When Ellington ar *cove and became engrossed* rived, he acted completely naturally, as if the warm greeting they gave him *in a game of Six Musashi* were completely usual. The three of them ended up in the bedroom, when *with some children*.

one of the young women had an idea: her mother adored Ellington. She

—IHARA SAIKAKU, *THE LIFE OF*

AN AMOROUS WOMAN,

had to call her now and put Ellington on the phone. Not at all put out by

TRANSLATED BY IVAN MORRIS

the suggestion, Ellington played along. For several minutes he talked to the mother on the telephone, lavishing her with compliments on the charming daughter she had raised, and telling her not to worry—he was taking good *Men despise women who care of the girl*. The daughter got back on the phone and said, "We're fine *love too much and because we're with Mr. Ellington and he's such a perfect gentleman*." As *unwisely*.

soon as she hung up, the three of them resumed the naughtiness they had

— L U C I A N , *DIALOGUES*

started. To the two girls, it later seemed an innocent but unforgettable night *OF THE COURTESANS*,

T R A N S L A T E D B Y A . L . H . of pleasure.

Sometimes several of these far-flung mistresses would show up at the same concert. Ellington would go up and kiss each of them four times (a *I shall endeavor briefly to habit of his designed for just this dilemma*). And each of the ladies would *outline to you how a love assume she was the one with whom the kisses really mattered. when gained can be*

deepened. They say it can

be increased in particular

by making it an infrequent

Interpretation. Duke Ellington had two passions: music and women. The *and difficult business for two* were interrelated. His endless affairs were a constant inspiration for his *lovers to set eyes on each* music; he also treated them as if they were theater, a work of art in them *other, for the greater the difficulty of offering and selves*. When it came time to separate, he always managed it with a theatri *receiving shared cal touch*. A clever remark and a gift would make it seem that for him the *consolations, the greater affair* was hardly over. Song lyrics referring to their night together would *become the desire for, and*

*feeling of love. Love also keep up the aesthetic atmosphere long after he had left town. No wonder grows if one of the lovers women kept coming back for more. This was not a sexual affair, a tawdry *shows anger to the other*, one-nighter, but a heightened moment in the woman's life. And his care *for a lover is at once sorely afraid that a partner's free attitude made it impossible to feel guilty; thoughts of one's mother or Beware the Aftereffects* • 423*

husband would not spoil the illusion. Ellington was never defensive or *wrath when roused may*

apologetic about his appetite for women; it was his nature and never the *harden indefinitely. Love*

fault of the woman that he was unfaithful. And if he could not help his de *again experiences increase when genuine jealousy*

sires, how could she hold him responsible? It was impossible to hold a *preoccupies one of the grudge* against such a man or complain about his behavior.

lovers, for jealousy is called

Ellington was an Aesthetic Rake, a type whose obsession with women

the nurturer of love. In fact

even if the lover is

can only be satisfied by endless variety. A normal man's tomcatting will *oppressed not by genuine*

eventually land him in hot water, but the Aesthetic Rake rarely stirs up ugly *jealousy but by base* emotions. After he seduces a woman, there is neither an integration nor a *suspicion, love always*

increases because of it, and

sacrifice. He keeps them hanging and hoping. The spell is not broken the *becomes more powerful by*

next day, because the Aesthetic Rake makes the separation a pleasant, even *its own strength.*

elegant experience. The spell Ellington cast on a woman never went away.

— *ANDREAS CAPELLANUS*

The lesson is simple: keep the moments after the seduction and the

ON LOVE, TRANSLATED

separation in the same key as before, heightened, aesthetic, and pleasant. If BY P. G. WALSH

you do not act guilty for your feckless behavior, it is hard for the other person to feel angry or resentful. Seduction is a lighthearted game, in which you invest all of your energy in the moment. The separation should be *You've seen the fire that*

lighthearted and stylish as well: it is work, travel, some dreaded responsi- smolders \ Down to nothing, grows a crown of

bility that calls you away. Create a memorable experience and then move *pale ash* |
Over its hidden on, and your victim will most likely remember the delightful
seduction, embers (yet a sprinkling of

not the separation. You will have made no enemies, and will have a lifelong *sulphur*
| *Will suffice to rekindle the flame*)? | So

harem of lovers to whom you can always return when you feel so inclined. *with the*
heart. It grows

torpid from lack of worry, |

Needs a sharp stimulus to

4. In 1899, twenty-year-old Baroness Frieda von Richthofen married an *elicit love*.
| *Get her*

anxious about you, reheat

Englishman named Ernest Weekley, a professor at the University of Not *her tepid*
passions, | Tell tingham, and soon settled into the role of the professor's wife.
Weekley her your guilty secrets,

treated her well, but she grew bored with their quiet life and his tepid love *watch*
her blanch. | Thrice fortunate that man, lucky

making. On trips home to Germany she had a few love affairs, but this *past*
calculation, | Who can wasn't what she wanted either, and so she returned to being
faithful and *make some poor injured*

caring for their three children.

girl | Torture herself over

him, lose voice, go pale,

One day in 1912, a former student of Weekley's, David Herbert *pass out when | The*
Lawrence, paid a visit to the couple's house. A struggling writer, Lawrence
unwelcome news reaches

wanted the professor's professional advice. He was not home yet so Frieda *her. Ah,*
may I | Be the

entertained him. She had never met such an intense young man. He talked *one*
whose hair she tears

out in her fury, the one

of his impoverished youth, his inability to understand women. And he lis *whose |*
Soft cheeks she rips tened attentively to her own complaints. He even scolded her

for the bad *with her nails*, \ *Whom she*

tea she had made him—somehow, even though she was a baroness, this ex sees, eyes glaring, through a rain of tears; without

cited her.

whom, \ Try as she will,

Lawrence returned for later visits, but now to see Frieda, not Weekley. *she cannot live! \ How long*

One day he confessed to her that he had fallen deeply in love with her. She (*you may ask*) *should you*

leave her lamenting her

admitted to similar feelings, and proposed they find a trysting spot. Instead *wrong? A little \ While*

Lawrence had a proposal of his own: Leave your husband tomorrow—leave *only, lest rage gather*

him for me. What about the children? Frieda asked. If the children are *strength \ Through*

procrastination. By then

more important than our love, Lawrence replied, then stay with them. But *you should have her*

if you don't run away with me within a few days, you will never see me *sobbing \ All over your*

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chest, your arms tight

again. To Frieda the choice was horrific. She did not care at all about her *around her neck. \ You*

husband, but the children were what she lived for. Even so, a few days later, *want peace? Give her* she succumbed to Lawrence's proposal. How could she resist a man who *kisses, make love to the girl*

while she's crying—\ was willing to ask for so much, to take such a gamble? If she refused she That's the only way to

would always wonder, for such a man only passes once through your life. *melt her angry mood.*

The couple left England and headed for Germany. Frieda would men—O V I D ,
THE ARTOFLOVE , tion sometimes how much she missed her children, but
Lawrence had no

TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

patience with her: You are free to go back to them at any moment, he would say, but if you stay, don't look back. He took her on an arduous mountaineering trip in the Alps. A baroness, she had never experienced such hardship, but Lawrence was firm: if two people are in love, why should comfort matter?

In 1914, Frieda and Lawrence were married, but over the following

years the same pattern repeated. He would scold her for her laziness, the nostalgia for her children, her abysmal housekeeping. He would take her on trips around the world, on very little money, never letting her settle down, although it was her fondest wish. They fought and fought. Once in New Mexico, in front of friends, he yelled at her, "Take that dirty cigarette out of your mouth! And stop sticking out that fat belly of yours!" "You'd better stop that talk or I'll tell about *your* things," she yelled back. (She had learned to give him a taste of his own medicine.) They both went outside. Their friends watched, worried it might turn violent. They disappeared from sight only to reappear moments later, arm in arm, laughing and mooning over one another. That was the most disconcerting thing about the Lawrences: married for years, they often behaved like infatuated newlyweds. *Interpretation.* When Lawrence first met Frieda, he could sense right away what her weakness was: she felt trapped, in a stultifying relationship and a pampered life. Her husband, like so many husbands, was kind, but never paid enough attention to her. She craved drama and adventure, but was too lazy to get it on her own. Drama and adventure were just what Lawrence would provide. Instead of feeling trapped, she had the freedom to leave him at any moment. Instead of ignoring her, he criticized her constantly—

at least he was paying attention, never taking her for granted. Instead of comfort and boredom, he gave her adventure and romance. The fights he picked with ritualistic frequency also ensured nonstop drama and the space for a powerful reconciliation. He inspired a touch of fear in her, which kept her off balance, never quite sure of him. As a result, the relationship never grew stale. It kept renewing itself.

If it is integration you are after, seduction must never stop. Otherwise boredom will creep in. And the best way to keep the process going is often to inject intermittent drama. This can be painful—opening old wounds, stirring up jealousy, withdrawing a little. (Do not confuse this behavior with nagging or carping criticism—this pain is strategic, designed to break up rigid patterns.) On the other hand it can also be pleasant: think about *Beware the Aftereffects* • 425

proving yourself all over again, paying attention to nice little details, creating new temptations. In fact you should mix the two aspects, for too much pain or pleasure will not prove seductive. You are not repeating the first seduction, for the target has already surrendered. You are simply supplying little jolts, little wake-up calls that show two things: you have not stopped trying, and they cannot take you for granted. The little jolt will stir up the old poison, stoke the embers, bring you temporarily back to the beginning, when your involvement had a most pleasant

freshness and tension.

Remember: comfort and security are the death of seduction. A shared journey with a little bit of hardship will do more to create a deep bond than will expensive gifts and luxuries. The young are right to not care about comfort in matters of love, and when you return to that sentiment, a youthful spark will reignite.

5. In 1652, the famous French courtesan Ninon de l'Enclos met and fell in love with the Marquis de Villarceaux. Ninon was a libertine; philosophy and pleasure were more important to her than love. But the marquis inspired new sensations: he was so bold, so impetuous, that for once in her life she let herself lose a little control. The marquis was possessive, a trait she normally abhorred. But in him it seemed natural, almost charming: he simply could not help himself. And so Ninon accepted his conditions: there were to be no other men in her life. For her part she told him that she would accept no money or gifts from him. This was to be about love, nothing else. She rented a house opposite his in Paris, and they saw each other daily. One afternoon the marquis suddenly burst in and accused her of having another lover. His suspicions were unfounded, his accusations absurd, and she told him so. This did not satisfy him, and he stormed out. The next day Ninon received news that he had fallen quite ill. She was deeply concerned. As a desperate recourse, a sign of her love and submission, she decided to cut off her beautiful long hair, for which she was famous, and send it to him. The gesture worked, the marquis recovered, and they resumed their affair still more passionately. Friends and former lovers complained of her sudden transformation into the devoted woman, but she did not care—

she was happy.

Now Ninon suggested that they go away together. The marquis, a married man, could not take her to his château, but a friend offered his own in the country as a refuge for the lovers. Weeks became months, and their little stay turned into a prolonged honeymoon. Slowly, though, Ninon had the feeling that something was wrong: the marquis was acting more like a husband. Although he was as passionate as before, he seemed so confident, as if he had certain rights and privileges that no other man could expect. The possessiveness that once had charmed her began to seem

oppressive. Nor did he stimulate her mind. She could get other men, and equally handsome ones, to satisfy her physically without all that jealousy. 426 • *The Art of Seduction*

Once this realization set in, Ninon wasted no time. She told the marquis that she was returning to Paris, and that it was over for good. He begged and pleaded his case with much emotion—how could she be so

heartless? Although moved, Ninon was firm. Explanations would only make it worse. She returned to Paris and resumed the life of a courtesan. Her abrupt departure apparently shook up the marquis, but apparently not too badly, for a few months later word reached her that he had fallen in love with another woman.

Interpretation. A woman often spends months pondering the subtle changes in her lover's behavior. She might complain or grow angry; she might even blame herself. Under the weight of her complaints, the man may change for a while, but an ugly dynamic and endless misunderstandings will ensue. What is the point of all of this? Once you are disenchanted it is really too late. Ninon could have tried to figure out what had disenchanted her—the good looks that now bored her, the lack of mental stimulation, the feeling of being taken for granted. But why waste time figuring it out? The spell was broken, so she moved on. She did not bother to explain, to worry about de Villarceaux's feelings, to make it all soft and easy for him. She simply left. The person who seems so considerate of the other, who tries to mend things or make excuses, is really just timid. Being kind in such matters can be rather cruel. The marquis was able to blame everything on his mistress's heartless, fickle nature. His vanity and pride intact, he could easily move on to another affair and put her behind him. Not only does the long, lingering death of a relationship cause your partner needless pain, it will have long-term consequences for you as well, making you more skittish in the future, and weighing you down with guilt. Never feel guilty, even if you were both the seducer and the one who now feels disenchanted. It is not your fault. Nothing can last forever. You have created pleasure for your victims, stirring them out of their rut. If you make a clean quick break, in the long run they will appreciate it. The more you apologize, the more you insult their pride, stirring up negative feelings that will reverberate for years. Spare them the disingenuous explanations that only complicate matters. The victim should be sacrificed, not tortured. 6. After fifteen years under the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte, the French were exhausted. Too many wars, too much drama. When Napoleon was

defeated in 1814, and was imprisoned on the island of Elba, the French were more than ready for peace and quiet. The Bourbons—the royal family deposed by the revolution of 1789—returned to power. The king was

Louis XVIII; he was fat, boring, and pompous, but at least there would be peace.

Then, in February of 1815, news reached France of Napoleon's dramatic escape from Elba, with seven small ships and a thousand men. He *Beware the Aftereffects* • 427

could head for America, start all over, but instead he was just crazy enough to land at Cannes. What was he thinking? A thousand men against all the armies of France? He set off toward Grenoble with his ragtag army. One at least had to admire his courage, his insatiable love of glory and of France. Then, too, the French peasantry were spellbound at the sight of their former emperor. This man, after all, had redistributed a great deal of land to them, which the new king was trying to take back. They swooned at the sight of his famous eagle standards, revivals of symbols from the revolution. They left their fields and joined his march. Outside Grenoble, the first of the troops that the king sent to stop Napoleon caught up with him.

Napoleon dismounted and walked on foot toward them. "Soldiers of the Fifth Army Corps!" he cried out. "Don't you know me? If there is one among you who wishes to kill his emperor, let him come forward and do so. Here I am!" He threw open his gray cloak, inviting them to take aim. There was a moment of silence, and then,

from all sides, cries rang out of

"Vive l'Empereur!" In one stroke, Napoleon's army had doubled in size. The march continued. More soldiers, remembering the glory he had

given them, changed sides. The city of Lyons fell without a battle. Generals with larger armies were dispatched to stop him, but the sight of Napoleon at the head of his troops was an overwhelmingly emotional experience for them, and they switched allegiance. King Louis fled France, abdicating in the process. On March 20, Napoleon reentered Paris and returned to the palace he had left only thirteen months before—all without having had to fire a single shot.

The peasantry and the soldiers had embraced Napoleon, but Parisians were less enthusiastic, particularly those who had served in his government. They feared the storms he would bring. Napoleon ruled the country for one hundred days, until the allies and his enemies from within defeated him. This time he was shipped off to the remote island of St. Helena, where he was to die.

Interpretation. Napoleon always thought of France, and his army, as a target to be wooed and seduced. As General de Ségur wrote of Napoleon: "In moments of sublime power, he no longer commands like a man, but seduces like a woman." In the case of his escape from Elba, he planned a bold, surprising gesture that would titillate a bored nation. He began his return to France among the people who would be most receptive to him: the peasantry who had revered him. He revived the symbols—the revolutionary colors, the eagle standards—that would stir up the old sentiments. He placed himself at the head of his army, daring his former soldiers to fire on him. The march on Paris that brought him back to power was pure theater, calculated for emotional effect every step of the way. What a contrast this former amour presented to the dolt of a king who now ruled them.

Napoleon's second seduction of France was not a classical seduction, following the usual steps, but a re-seduction. It was built on old emotions 428 • *The Art of Seduction*

and revived an old love. Once you have seduced a person (or a nation) there is almost always a lull, a slight letdown, which sometimes leads to a separation; it is surprisingly easy, though, to re-seduce the same target. The old feelings never go away, they lie dormant, and in a flash you can take your target by surprise.

It is a rare pleasure to be able to relive the past, and one's youth—to feel the old emotions. Like Napoleon, add a dramatic flair to your re-seduction: revive the old images, the symbols, the expressions that will stir memory. Like the French, your targets will tend to forget the ugliness of the separation and will remember only the good things. You should make this second seduction bold and quick, giving your targets no time to reflect or wonder. Like Napoleon, play on the contrast to their current lover, making his or her behavior seem timid and stodgy by comparison.

Not everyone will be receptive to a re-seduction, and some moments

will be inappropriate. When Napoleon came back from Elba, the Parisians were too sophisticated for him, and could see right through him. Unlike the peasants of the

South, they already knew him well; and his reentry came too soon, they were too worn out by him. If you want to re-seduce someone, choose one who does not know you so well, whose memories of you are cleaner, who is less suspicious by nature, and who is dissatisfied with present circumstances. Also, you might want to let some time pass. Time will restore your luster and make your faults fade away. Never see a separation or sacrifice as final. With a little drama and planning, a victim can be retaken in no time.

Symbol: Em-

bers, the remains of the fire on the morning after. Left to themselves, the embers will slowly die out. Do not leave the fire to chance and to the elements. To put it out, douse it, suffocate it, give it nothing to feed on. To bring it back to life, fan it, stoke it, until it blazes anew. Only your constant attention and vigilance will keep it burning. Beware the Aftereffects • 429

Reversal

To keep a person enchanted, you will have to re-seduce them constantly. But you can allow a little familiarity to creep in. The target wants to feel that he or she is getting to know you. Too much mystery will create doubt. It will also be tiring for you, who will have to sustain it. The point is not to remain completely unfamiliar but rather, on occasion, to jolt victims out of their complacency, surprising them as you surprised them in the past. Do this right and they will have the delightful feeling that they are constantly getting to know more about you—but never too much.

Appendix A

Seductive Environment/Seductive Time

In se-

duction, your vic-tims must slowly come to feel an inner change.

Under your influence, they lower their defenses, feeling free to act differently, to be a different person. Certain places, environments,

*and experiences will greatly aid you in
your quest to change and transform the
seduced. Spaces with a theatrical,
heightened quality—opulence, glittering
surfaces, a playful spirit—create a buoy-
ant, childlike feeling that make it hard
for the victim to think straight. The cre-
ation of an altered sense of time has a
similar effect—memorable, dizzying
moments that stand out, a mood of
festival and play. You must make
your victims feel that being
with you gives them a dif-
ferent experience from
being in the real
world.*

Festival Time and Place

Centuries ago, life in most cultures was filled with work and routine. But at certain moments in the year, this life was interrupted by festival. During these festivals—saturnalias of ancient Rome, the maypole festivals of Europe, the great potlatches of the Chinook Indians—work in the fields or marketplace stopped. The entire tribe or town gathered in a sacred space set apart for the festival. Temporarily relieved of duty and responsibility, people were granted license to run amok; they would wear masks or costumes, which gave them other identities, sometimes those of powerful figures reenacting the great myths of their culture. The festival was a tremendous release from the burdens of daily life. It altered people's sense of time, bringing moments in which they stepped outside of themselves. Time seemed to stand still. Something like this experience can still be found in the world's great surviving carnivals.

The festival represented a break in a person's daily life, a radically different experience from routine. On a more intimate level, that is how you must envision your seductions. As the process advances, your targets experience a radical

difference from daily life—a freedom from work or responsibility. Plunged into pleasure and play, they can act differently, can become someone else, as if they were wearing a mask. The time you spend with them is devoted to them and nothing else. Instead of the usual rotation of work and rest, you are giving them grand, dramatic moments that stand out. You bring them to places unlike the places they see in daily life—

heightened, theatrical places. Physical environment strongly affects people's moods; a place dedicated to pleasure and play insinuates thoughts of pleasure and play. When your victims return to their duties and to the real world, they feel the contrast strongly and they will start to crave that other place into which you have drawn them. What you are essentially creating is festival time and place, moments when the real world stops and fantasy takes over. Our culture no longer supplies such experiences, and people yearn for them. That is why almost everyone is waiting to be seduced and why they will fall into your arms if you play this right.

The following are key components to reproducing festival time and place: *Create theatrical effects*. Theater creates a sense of a separate, magical world. The actors' makeup, the fake but alluring sets, the slightly unreal 433

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costumes—these heightened visuals, along with the story of the play, create illusion. To produce this effect in real life, you must fashion your clothes, makeup, and attitude to have a playful, artificial, edge—a feeling that you have dressed for the pleasure of your audience. This is the goddesslike effect of a Marlene Dietrich, or the fascinating effect of a dandy like Beau Brummel. Your encounters with your targets should also have a sense of drama, achieved through the settings you choose and through your actions. The target should not know what will happen next. Create suspense through twists and turns that lead to the happy ending; you are performing. Whenever your targets meet you, they are returned to this vague feeling of being in a play. You both have the thrill of wearing masks, of playing a different role from the one your life has allotted you.

Use the visual language of pleasure. Certain kinds of visual stimuli signal that you are not in the real world. You want to avoid images that have depth, which might provoke thought, or guilt; instead, you should work in environments that are all surface, full of glittering objects, mirrors, pools of water, a constant play of light. The sensory overload of these spaces creates an intoxicating, buoyant feeling. The more artificial, the better. Show your targets a playful world, full of the sights and sounds that excite the baby or child within them. Luxury—the sense that money has been spent or even wasted—adds to the feeling that the real world of duty and morality has been banished. Call it the brothel effect.

Keep it crowded or close. People crowding together raise the psychological temperature to hothouse levels. Festivals and carnivals depend on the contagious feeling a crowd creates. Bring your target to such environments sometimes, to lower their normal defensiveness. Similarly, any kind of situation that brings people together in a small space for a long period of time is extremely conducive to seduction. For years, Sigmund Freud had a small, tight-knit stable of disciples who attended his private lectures and who engaged in an astonishing number of love

affairs. Either lead the seduced into a crowded, festivallike environment or go trolling for targets in a closed world.

Manufacture mystical effects. Spiritual or mystical effects distract people's minds from reality, making them feel elevated and euphoric. From here it is but a small step to physical pleasure. Use whatever props are at hand—

astrology books, angelic imagery, mystical-sounding music from some faroff culture. The great eighteenth-century Austrian charlatan Franz Mesmer filled his salons with harp music, the perfume of exotic incense, and a female voice singing in a distant room. On the walls he put stained glass and *Appendix A: Seductive Environment/Seductive Time* • 435

mirrors. His dupes would feel relaxed, uplifted, and as they sat in the room where he used magnets for their healing powers, they would feel a kind of spiritual tingling pass from body to body. Anything vaguely mystical helps block out the real world, and it is easy to move from the spiritual to the sexual.

Distort their sense of time—speed and youth. Festival time has a kind of speed and frenzy that make people feel more alive. Seduction should make the heart beat faster, so that the seduced loses track of time passing. Take them to places of constant activity and movement. Embark with them on some kind of journey together, distracting their minds with new sights. Youth may fade and disappear, but seduction brings the feeling of being young, no matter the age of those involved. And youth is mostly energy. The pace of the seduction must pick up at a certain moment, creating a whirling effect in the mind. It is no wonder that Casanova did much of his seducing at balls, or that the waltz was the preferred tool of many a nineteenth-century rake.

Create moments. Everyday life is a drudgery in which the same actions endlessly repeat. The festival, on the other hand, we remember as a moment when everything was transformed—when a little bit of eternity and myth entered our lives. Your seduction must have such peaks, moments when something dramatic happens and time is experienced differently. You must give your targets such moments, whether by staging the seduction in a place—a carnival, a theater—where they naturally occur or by creating them yourself, with dramatic actions that stir up strong emotions. Those moments should be pure leisure and pleasure—no thoughts of work or morality can intrude. Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of King Louis XV, had to re-seduce her easily bored lover every few months; intensely creative, she devised parties, balls, games, a little theater at Versailles. The seduced revels in affairs like this, sensing the effort you have expended to divert and enchant them. Scenes from *Seductive Time and Place*

1. Around the year 1710, a young man whose father was a prosperous wine dealer in Osaka, Japan, found himself daydreaming more and more. He worked night and day for his father, and the burden of family life and all of its duties was oppressive. Like every young man, he had heard of the pleasure districts of the city—the quarters where the normally strict laws of the shogunate could be violated. It was here that you would find the *ukiyo*, the "floating world" of transient pleasures, a place where actors and courtesans ruled. This was what the young man was daydreaming about. Biding his

time, he managed to find an evening when he could slip out unnoticed. He headed straight for the pleasure quarters.

This was a cluster of buildings—restaurants, exclusive clubs, teahouses—that stood out from the rest of the city by their magnificence and color. The moment the young man stepped into it, he knew he was in

a different world. Actors wandered the streets in elaborately dyed kimonos. They had such manners and attitudes, as if they were still on stage. The streets bustled with energy; the pace was fast. Bright lanterns stood out against the night, as did the colorful posters for the nearby kabuki theater. The women had a completely different air about them. They stared at him brazenly, acting with the freedom of a man. He caught sight of an *onnagata*, one of the men who played female roles in the theater—a man more beautiful than most women he had seen and whom the passersby treated like royalty.

The young man saw other young men like himself entering a teahouse, so he followed them in. Here the highest class of courtesans, the great *tayus*, plied their trade. A few minutes after the young man sat down, he heard a noise and bustle, and down the stairs came a few of the *tayus*, followed by musicians and jesters. The women's eyebrows were shaved, replaced by a thick black painted line. Their hair was swept up in a perfect fold, and he had never seen such beautiful kimonos. The *tayus* seemed to float across the floor, using different kinds of steps (suggestive, creeping, cautious, etc.), depending on whom they were approaching and what they wanted to communicate to him. They ignored the young man; he had no idea how to invite them over, but he noticed that some of the older men had a way of bantering with them that was a language all its own. The wine began to flow, music was played, and finally some lower-level courtesans came in. By then the young man's tongue was loosened. These courtesans were much friendlier and the young man began to lose all track of time. Later he managed to stagger home, and only the next morning did he realize how much money he had spent. If father ever found out . . . Yet a few weeks later he was back. Like hundreds of such sons in Japan whose stories filled the literature of the period, he was on the path toward squandering his father's wealth on the "floating world."

Seduction is another world into which you initiate your victims. Like the *ukiyo*, it depends on a strict separation from the day-to-day world. When your victims are in your presence, the outside world—with its morality, its codes, its responsibilities—is banished. Anything is allowed, particularly anything normally repressed. The conversation is lighter and more suggestive. Clothes and places have a touch of theatricality. The license exists to act differently, to be someone else, without any heaviness or judging. It is a kind of concentrated psychological "floating world" that you create for the others, and it becomes addictive. When they leave you and return to their routines, they are doubly aware of what they are missing. The moment

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they crave the atmosphere you have created, the seduction is complete. As in the floating world, money is to be wasted. Generosity and luxury go hand in hand with a seductive environment.

2. It began in the early 1960s: people would come to Andy Warhol's New York studio, soak up the atmosphere, and stay awhile. Then in 1963, the artist moved into a new Manhattan space and a member of his entourage covered some of the walls and pillars in tin foil and spray-painted a brick wall and other things silver. A red quilted couch in the center, some fivefoot-high plastic candy bars, a turntable that glittered with tiny mirrors, and helium-filled silver pillows that floated in the air completed the set. Now the L-shaped space became known as The Factory, and a scene began to develop. More and more people started showing up—why not just leave the door open, Andy reasoned, and come what may. During the day, while Andy would work on his paintings and films, people would gather—actors, hustlers, drug dealers, other artists. And the elevator would keep groaning all night as the beautiful people began to make the place their home. Here might be Montgomery Clift, nursing a drink by himself; over there, a beautiful young socialite chatting with a drag queen and a museum curator. They kept pouring in, all of them young and glamorously dressed. It was like one of those children's shows on TV, Andy once said to a friend, where guests keep dropping in on the endless party and there's always some new bit of entertainment. And that was indeed what it seemed like—with nothing serious happening, just lots of talk and flirting and flashbulbs popping and endless posing, as if everyone were in a film. The museum curator would begin to giggle like a teenager and the socialite would flounce about like a hooker.

By midnight everyone would be packed together. You could hardly move. The band would arrive, the light show would begin, and it would all career in a new direction, wilder and wilder. Somehow the crowd would disperse at some point, then in the afternoon it would all start up again as the entourage trickled back. Hardly anyone went to The Factory just once.

It is oppressive always to have to act the same way, playing the same boring role that work or duty imposes on you. People yearn for a place or a moment when they can wear a mask, act differently, be someone else. That is why we glorify actors: they have the freedom and playfulness in relation to their own ego that we would love to have. Any environment that offers a chance to play a different role, to be an actor, is immensely seductive. It can be an environment that you create, like The Factory. Or a place where you take your target. In such environments you simply cannot be defensive; the playful atmosphere, the sense that anything is allowed (except seriousness), dispels any kind of reactivity. Being in such a place becomes a drug. To re-create the effect, remember Warhol's metaphor of the children's TV

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show. Keep everything light and playful, full of distractions, noise, color, and a bit of chaos. No weight, responsibilities, or judgments. A place to lose yourself in.

3. In 1746, a seventeen-year-old girl named Cristina had come to the city of Venice, Italy, with her uncle, a priest, in search of a husband. Cristina was from a small village but had a substantial dowry to offer. The Venetian men who were willing to marry her, however, did not please her. So after two weeks of futile searching, she

and her uncle prepared to return to their village. They were seated in their gondola, about to leave the city, when Cristina saw an elegantly dressed young man walking toward them.

"There's a handsome fellow!" she said to her uncle. "I wish he was in the boat with us." The gentleman could not have heard this, yet he approached, handed the gondolier some money, and sat down beside Cristina, much to her delight. He introduced himself as Jacques Casanova. When the priest complimented him on his friendly manners, Casanova replied, "Perhaps I should not have been so friendly, my reverend father, if I had not been attracted by the beauty of your niece." Cristina told him why they had come to Venice and why they were

leaving. Casanova laughed and chided her—a man cannot decide to marry a girl after seeing her for a few days. He must know more about her character; it would take at least six months. He himself was looking for a wife, and he explained to her why he had been as disappointed by the girls he had met as she had been disappointed by the men. Casanova seemed to have no destination; he simply accompanied them, entertaining Cristina the whole way with witty conversation. When the gondola arrived at the edge of Venice, Casanova hired a carriage to the nearby city of Treviso and invited them to join him. From there they could catch a chaise to their village. The uncle accepted, and on the way to their carriage, Casanova offered his arm to Cristina. What would his mistress say if she saw them, she asked. "I have no mistress," he answered, "and I shall never have one again, for I shall never find such a pretty girl as you—no, not in Venice." His words went to her head, filling it with all kinds of strange thoughts, and she began to talk and act in a manner that was new to her, becoming almost brazen. What a pity she could not stay in Venice for the six months he needed to get to know a girl, she told Casanova. Without hesitation he offered to pay her expenses in Venice for that period while he courted her. On the carriage ride she turned this offer over in her mind, and once in Treviso she got her uncle alone and begged him to return to the village by himself, then come back for her in a few days. She was in love with Casanova; she wanted to know him better; he was a perfect gentleman, who could be trusted. The uncle agreed to do as she wished.

The following day Casanova never left her side. There was not the slightest hint of disagreement in his nature. They spent the day wandering around the city, shopping and talking. He took her to a play in the evening *Appendix A: Seductive Environment/Seductive Time • 439*

and to the casino after that, supplying her with a domino and a mask. He gave her money to gamble and she won. By the time the uncle returned to Treviso, she had all but forgotten about her marriage plans—all she could think of was the six months she would spend with Casanova. But she returned to her village with her uncle and waited for Casanova to visit her. He showed up a few weeks later, bringing with him a handsome young

man named Charles. Alone with Cristina, Casanova explained the situation: Charles was the most eligible bachelor in Venice, a man who would make a much better husband than he would. Cristina admitted to Casanova that she too had had her doubts. He was too exciting, had made her think of other things besides marriage,

things she was ashamed of. Perhaps it was for the better. She thanked him for taking such pains to find her a husband. Over the next few days Charles courted her, and they were married several weeks later. The fantasy and allure of Casanova, however, remained in her mind forever.

Casanova could not marry—it was against everything in his nature. But it was also against his nature to force himself on a young girl. Better to leave her with the perfect fantasy image than to ruin her life. Besides, he enjoyed the courting and flirting more than anything else.

Casanova supplied a young woman with the ultimate fantasy. While he was in her orbit he devoted every moment to her. He never mentioned work, allowing no boring, mundane details to interrupt the fantasy. And he added great theater. He wore the most spectacular outfits, full of sparkling jewels. He led her to the most wonderful entertainments—carnivals,

masked balls, the casinos, journeys with no destination. He was the great master at creating seductive time and environment.

Casanova is the model to aspire to. While in your presence your targets must sense a change. Time has a different rhythm—they barely notice its passing. They have the feeling that everything is stopping for them, just as all normal activity comes to a halt at a festival. The idle pleasures you provide them are contagious—one leads to another and to another, until it is too late to turn back.

Appendix B

Soft Seduction: How to Sell

Anything to the Masses

The less you seem to be

*selling something—including yourself—the better. By being too obvious in your pitch, you will raise suspicion; you will also bore your audience, an unforgivable sin. Instead, make your approach soft, seductive, and insidious. **Soft:** be indirect. Create news and events for the media to pick up, spreading your name in a way that seems spontaneous, not hard or calculated. **Seductive:** keep it entertaining. Your name and image are bathed in positive associations; you are selling pleasure and promise. **Insidious:** aim at the unconscious, using images that linger in the mind, placing your message in the visuals. Frame what you are selling as part of a new trend, and it will become one. It is almost impossible to*

resist the soft seduction.

The Soft Sell

Seduction is the ultimate form of power. Those who give in to it do so willingly and happily. There is rarely any resentment on their part; they forgive you any kind of manipulation because you have brought them pleasure, a rare commodity in the world. With such power at your fingertips, though, why stop at the conquest of a

man or woman? A crowd, an electorate, a nation can be brought under your sway simply by applying on a mass level the tactics that work so well on an individual. The only difference is the goal—not sex but influence, a vote, people's attention—and the degree of tension. When you are after sex, you deliberately create anxiety, a touch of pain, twists, and turns. Seduction on the mass level is more diffuse and soft. Creating a constant titillation, you fascinate the masses with what you are offering. They pay attention to you because it is pleasant to do so. Let us say your goal is to sell yourself—as a personality, a trendsetter, a candidate for office. There are two ways to go: the hard sell (the direct approach) and the soft sell (the indirect approach). In the hard sell you state your case strongly and directly, explaining why your talents, your ideas, your political message are superior to anyone else's. You tout your achievements, quote statistics, bring in expert opinions, even go so far as to induce a bit of fear if the audience ignores your message. The approach is a tad aggressive and might have unwanted consequences: some people will be offended, resisting your message, even if what you say is true. Others will feel you are manipulating them—who can trust experts and statistics, and why are you trying so hard? You will also grate on people's nerves, becoming unpleasant to listen to. In a world in which you cannot succeed without selling to large numbers, the direct approach won't take you far.

The soft sell, on the other hand, has the potential to draw in millions because it is entertaining, gentle on the ears, and can be repeated without irritating people. The technique was invented by the great charlatans of seventeenth-century Europe. To peddle their elixirs and alchemic concoctions, they would first put on a show—clowns, music, vaudeville-type routines—that had nothing to do with what they were selling. A crowd would form, and as the audience laughed and relaxed, the charlatan would come onstage and briefly and dramatically discuss the miraculous effects of the elixir. By honing this technique, the charlatans discovered that instead of selling a few dozen bottles of the dubious medicine, they were suddenly selling scores or even hundreds.

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444 • Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses In the centuries since, publicists, advertisers, political strategists, and others have taken this method to new heights, but the rudiments of the soft sell remain the same. First bring pleasure by creating a positive atmosphere around your name or message. Induce a warm, relaxed feeling. Never seem to be selling something—that will look manipulative and suspicious. Instead, let entertainment value and good feelings take center stage, sneaking the sale through the side door. And in that sale, you do not seem to be selling yourself or a particular idea or candidate; you are selling a life-style, a good mood, a sense of adventure, a feeling of hipness, or a neatly packaged rebellion.

Here are some of the key components of the soft sell.

Appear as news, never as publicity. First impressions are critical. If your audience first sees you in the context of an advertisement or publicity item, you instantly join the mass of other advertisements screaming for attention—and everyone knows that advertisements are artful manipulations, a kind of deception. So, for your first appearance in the public eye, manufacture an event, some kind of attention-getting

situation that the media will "inadvertently" pick up as if it were news. People pay more attention to what is broadcast as news—it seems more real. You suddenly stand out from everything else, if only for a moment—but that moment has more credibility than hours of advertising time. The key is to orchestrate the details thoroughly, creating a story with dramatic impact and movement, tension and resolution. The media will cover it for days. Conceal your real purpose—to sell yourself—at any cost. *Stir basic emotions.* Never promote your message through a rational, direct argument. That will take effort on your audience's part and will not gain its attention. Aim for the heart, not the head. Design your words and images to stir basic emotions—lust, patriotism, family values. It is easier to gain and hold people's attention once you have made them think of their family, their children, their future. They feel stirred, uplifted. Now you have their attention and the space to insinuate your true message. Days later the audience will remember your name, and remembering your name is

half the game. Similarly, find ways to surround yourself with emotional magnets—war heroes, children, saints, small animals, whatever it takes. Make your appearance bring these emotionally positive associations to mind, giving you extra presence. Never let these associations be defined or created for you, and never leave them to chance.

Make the medium the message. Pay more attention to the form of your message than to the content. Images are more seductive than words, and visuals—soothing colors, appropriate backdrop, the suggestion of speed *Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* • 445

or movement—should actually be your real message. The audience may

focus superficially on the content or moral you are preaching, but they are really absorbing the visuals, which get under their skin and stay there longer than any words or preachy pronouncements. Your visuals should have a hypnotic effect. They should make people feel happy or sad, depending on what you want to accomplish. And the more they are distracted by visual cues, the harder it will be for them to think straight or see through your manipulations.

Speak the target's language—be chummy. At all costs, avoid appearing superior to your audience. Any hint of smugness, the use of complicated words or ideas, quoting too many statistics—all that is fatal. Instead, make yourself seem equal to your targets and on intimate terms with them. You understand them, you share their spirit, their language. If people are cynical about the manipulations of advertisers and politicians, exploit their cynicism for your own purposes. Portray yourself as one of the folk, warts and all. Show that you share your audience's skepticism by revealing the tricks of the trade. Make your publicity as down-home and minimal as possible, so that your competitors look sophisticated and snobby in comparison. Your selective honesty and strategic weakness will get people to trust you. You are the audience's friend, an intimate. Enter their spirit and they will relax and listen to you.

Start a chain reaction—everyone is doing it. People who seem to be desired by others are immediately more seductive to their targets. Apply this to the soft seduction. You need to act as if you have already excited crowds of people; your

behavior will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Seem to be in the vanguard of a trend or life-style and the public will lap you up for fear of being left behind. Spread your image, with a logo, slogans, posters, so that it appears everywhere. Announce your message as a trend and it will become one. The goal is to create a kind of viral effect in which more and more people become infected with the desire to have whatever you are offering. This is the easiest and most seductive way to sell. *Tell people who they are.* It is always unwise to engage an individual or the public in any kind of argument. They will resist you. Instead of trying to change people's ideas, try to change their identity, their perception of reality, and you will have far more control of them in the long run. Tell them who they are, create an image, an identity that they will want to assume. Make them dissatisfied with their current status. Making them unhappy with themselves gives you room to suggest a new life-style, a new identity. Only by listening to you can they find out who they are. At the same time, you want to change their perception of the world outside them 446 • Appendix B: *Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* by controlling what they look at. Use as many media as possible to create a kind of total environment for their perceptions. Your image should be seen not as an advertisement but as part of the atmosphere.

Some Soft Seductions

1. Andrew Jackson was a true American hero. In 1814, in the Battle of New Orleans, he led a ragtag band of American soldiers against a superior English army and won. He also conquered Indians in Florida. Jackson's army loved him for his rough-hewn ways: he fed on acorns when there was nothing else to eat, he slept on a hard bed, he drank hard cider, just like his men. Then, after he lost or was cheated out of the presidential election of 1824 (in fact he won the popular vote, but so narrowly that the election was thrown into the House of Representatives, which chose John Quincy Adams, after much deal making), he retired to his farm in Tennessee, where he lived the simple life, tilling the soil, reading the Bible, staying far from the corruptions of Washington. Where Adams had gone to Harvard, played billiards, drunk soda water, and relished European finery, Jackson, like many Americans of the time, had been raised in a log cabin. He was an uneducated man, a man of the earth. This, at any rate, was what Americans read in their newspapers in the months after the controversial 1824 election. Spurred on by these articles, people in taverns and halls across the country began talking of how the war hero Andrew Jackson had been wronged, how an insidious aristocratic elite was conspiring to take over the country. So when Jackson declared that he would run again against Adams in the presidential election of 1828—but this time as the leader of a new organization, the Democratic Party—the public was thrilled. Jackson was the first major political figure to have a nickname, Old Hickory, and soon Hickory clubs were sprouting up in

America's towns and cities. Their meetings resembled spiritual revivals. The hot-button issues of the day were discussed (tariffs, the abolition of slavery), and club members felt certain that Jackson was on their side. It was hard to know for sure—he was a little vague on the issues—but this election was about something larger than issues: it was about restoring democracy and restoring basic American values to the White House. Soon the Hickory clubs were sponsoring events like town barbecues,

the planting of hickory trees, dances around a hickory pole. They organized lavish public feasts, always including large quantities of liquor. In the cities there were parades, and these were stirring events. They often took place at night so that urbanites would witness a procession of Jackson supporters holding torches. Others would carry colorful banners with portraits of Jackson or caricatures of Adams and slogans ridiculing his decadent ways. And everywhere there was hickory—hickory sticks, hickory brooms, hickory canes, hickory leaves in people's hats. Men on horseback would *Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* • 447

ride through the crowd, spurring people into "huzzahs!" for Jackson. Others would lead the crowd in songs about Old Hickory. The Democrats, for the first time in an election, conducted opinion polls, finding out what the common man thought about the candidates. These polls were published in the papers, and the overwhelming conclusion was that Jackson was ahead. Yes, a new movement was sweeping the country. It all came to a head when Jackson made a personal appearance in New Orleans as part of a celebration commemorating the battle he had fought so bravely there fourteen years earlier. This was unprecedented: no presidential candidate had ever campaigned in person before, and in fact such an appearance would have been considered improper. But Jackson was a new kind of politician, a true man of the people. Besides, he insisted that his purpose for the visit was patriotism, not politics. The spectacle was unforgettable—Jackson entering New Orleans on a steamboat as the fog lifted, cannon fire ringing out from all sides, grand speeches, endless feasts, a kind of mass delirium taking over the city. One man said it was

"like a dream. The world has never witnessed so glorious, so wonderful a celebration—never have gratitude and patriotism so happily united." This time the will of the people prevailed. Jackson was elected president. And it was not one region that brought him victory: New Englanders, Southerners, Westerners, merchants, farmers, and workers were all infected with the Jackson fever.

Interpretation. After the debacle of 1824, Jackson and his supporters were determined to do things differently in 1828. America was becoming more diverse, developing populations of immigrants, Westerners, urban laborers, and so on. To win a mandate Jackson would have to overcome new regional and class differences. One of the first and most important steps his supporters took was to found newspapers all around the country. While he himself seemed to have retired from public life, these papers promulgated an image of him as the wronged war hero, the victimized man of the people. In truth, Jackson was wealthy, as were all of his major backers. He owned one of the largest plantations in Tennessee, and he owned many slaves. He drank more fine liquor than hard cider and slept on a soft bed with European linens. And while he might have been uneducated, he was extremely shrewd, with a shrewdness built on years of army combat.

The image of the man of the earth disguised all this, and, once it was established, it could be contrasted with the aristocratic image of Adams. In this way Jackson's strategists covered up his political inexperience and made the election turn on questions of character and values. Instead of political issues they raised trivial matters like drinking habits and church attendance. To keep up the enthusiasm they staged spectacles that seemed to be spontaneous celebrations but in fact were

carefully choreographed. The support for Jackson seemed to be a movement, as evidenced (and advanced) 448 • *Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* by the opinion polls. The event in New Orleans—hardly nonpolitical, and Louisiana was a swing state—bathed Jackson in an aura of patriotic, quasireligious grandeur. Society has fractured into smaller and smaller units. Communities are less cohesive; even individuals feel more inner conflict. To win an election or to sell anything in large numbers, you have to paper over these differences somehow—you have to unify the masses. The only way to accomplish this is to create an inclusive image, one that attracts and excites people on a basic, almost unconscious level. You are not talking about the truth, or about reality; you are forging a myth.

Myths create identification. Build a myth about yourself and the common people will identify with your character, your plight, your aspirations, just as you identify with theirs. This image should include your flaws, highlight the fact that you are not the best orator, the most educated man, the smoothest politician. Seeming human and down to earth disguises the manufactured quality of your image. To sell this image you need to have the proper vagueness. It is not that you avoid talk of issues and details—that will make you seem insubstantial—but that all your talk of issues is framed within the softer context of character, values, and vision. You want to lower taxes, say, because it will help families—and you are a family person. You must not only be inspiring but also entertaining—that is a popular, friendly touch. This strategy will infuriate your opponents, who will try to unmask you, reveal the truth behind the myth; but that will only make them seem smug, overserious, defensive, and snobbish. That now becomes part of their image, and it will help sink them.

2. On Easter Sunday, March 31, 1929, New York churchgoers began to pour onto Fifth Avenue after the morning service for the annual Easter parade. The streets were blocked off, and as had been the custom for years, people were wearing their finest outfits, women in particular showing off the latest in spring fashions. But this year the promenaders on Fifth Avenue noticed something else. Two young women were coming down the steps of Saint Thomas's Church. At the bottom they reached into their purses, took out cigarettes—Lucky Strikes—and lit up. Then they walked down the

avenue with their escorts, laughing and puffing away. A buzz went through the crowd. Women had only recently begun smoking cigarettes, and it was considered improper for a lady to be seen smoking in the street. Only a certain kind of woman would do that. These two, however, were elegant and fashionable. People watched them intently, and were further astounded several minutes later when they reached the next church along the avenue. Here two more young ladies—equally elegant and well bred—left the

church, approached the two holding cigarettes, and, as if suddenly inspired to join them, pulled out Lucky Strikes of their own and asked for a light. Now the four women were marching together down the avenue. They

were steadily joined by more, and soon ten young women were holding *Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* • 449

cigarettes in public, as if nothing were more natural. Photographers appeared and took pictures of this novel sight. Usually at the Easter parade, people would have been whispering about a new hat style or the new

spring color. This year everyone was talking about the daring young women and their cigarettes. The next day, photographs and articles appeared in the papers about them. A United Press dispatch read, "Just as Miss Federica Freylinghusen, conspicuous in a tailored outfit of dark grey, pushed her way thru the jam in front of St. Patrick's, Miss Bertha Hunt and six colleagues struck another blow in behalf of the liberty of women. Down Fifth Avenue they strolled, puffing at cigarettes. Miss Hunt issued the following communique from the smoke-clouded battlefield: 'I hope that we have started something and that these torches of freedom, with no particular brand favored, will smash the discriminatory taboo on cigarettes for women and that our sex will go on breaking down all discriminations.' " The story was picked up by newspapers around the country, and soon

women in other cities began to light up in the streets. The controversy raged for weeks, some papers decrying this new habit, others coming to the women's defense. A few months later, though, public smoking by women had become a socially acceptable practice. Few people bothered to protest it anymore.

Interpretation. In January 1929, several New York debutantes received the same telegram from a Miss Bertha Hunt: "In the interests of equality of the sexes . . . I and other young women will light another torch of freedom by smoking cigarettes while strolling on Fifth Avenue Easter Sunday." The debutantes who ended up participating met beforehand in the office where Hunt worked as a secretary. They planned what churches to appear at, how to link up with each other, all the details. Hunt handed out packs of Lucky Strikes. Everything worked to perfection on the appointed day.

Little did the debutantes know, though, that the whole affair had been masterminded by a man—Miss Hunt's boss, Edward Bernays, a public relations adviser to the American Tobacco Company, makers of Lucky Strike. American Tobacco had been luring women into smoking with all kinds of clever ads, but the consumption was limited by the fact that smoking in the street was considered unladylike. The head of American Tobacco had asked Bernays for his help and Mr. Bernays had obliged him by applying a technique that was to become his trademark: gain public attention by creating an event that the media would cover as news. Orchestrate every detail but make them seem spontaneous. As more people heard of this "event," it would spark imitative behavior—in this case more women smoking in the streets.

Bernays, a nephew of Sigmund Freud and perhaps the greatest public

relations genius of the twentieth century, understood a fundamental law of any kind of sell. The moment the targets know you are after something—a vote, a sale—they become resistant. But disguise your sales pitch as a news 450 • *Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* event and not only will you bypass their resistance, you can also create a social trend that does the selling for you. To make this work, the event you set up must stand out from all the other events that

are covered by the media, yet it cannot stand out too far or it will seem contrived. In the case of the Easter parade, Bernays (through Bertha Hunt) chose women who would

seem elegant and proper even with their cigarettes in their hands. Yet in breaking a social taboo, and doing so as a group, such women would create an image so dramatic and startling that the media would be unable to pass it up. An event that is picked up by the news has the imprimatur of reality. It is important to give this manufactured event positive associations, as Bernays did in creating a feeling of rebellion, of women banding together. Associations that are patriotic, say, or subtly sexual, or spiritual—anything pleasant and seductive—take on a life of their own. Who can resist? People essentially persuade themselves to join the crowd without even realizing that a sale has taken place. The feeling of active participation is vital to seduction. No one wants to feel left out of a growing movement. 3. In the presidential campaign of 1984, President Ronald Reagan, running for reelection, told the public, "It's morning again in America." His presidency, he claimed, had restored American pride. The recent, successful Olympics in Los Angeles were symbolic of the country's return to strength and confidence. Who could possibly want to turn the clock back to 1980, which Reagan's predecessor, Jimmy Carter, had termed a time of malaise?

Reagan's Democratic challenger, Walter Mondale, thought Americans

had had enough of the Reagan soft touch. They were ready for honesty, and that would be Mondale's appeal. Before a nationwide television audience, Mondale declared, "Let's tell the truth. Mr. Reagan will raise taxes, and so will I. He won't tell you. I just did." He repeated this straightforward approach on numerous occasions. By October his poll numbers had plunged to all-time lows.

The CBS News reporter Lesley Stahl had been covering the campaign,

and as Election Day neared, she had an uneasy feeling. It wasn't so much that Reagan had focused on emotions and moods rather than hard issues. It was more that the media was giving him a free ride; he and his election team, she felt, were playing the press like a fiddle. They always managed to get him photographed in the perfect setting, looking strong and presidential. They fed the press snappy headlines along with dramatic footage of Reagan in action. They were putting on a great show.

Stahl decided to assemble a news piece that would show the public how Reagan used television to cover up the negative effects of his policies. The piece began with a montage of images that his team had orchestrated over the years: Reagan relaxing on his ranch in jeans; standing tall at the Normandy invasion tribute in France; throwing a football with his Secret Service bodyguards; sitting in an inner-city classroom. . . . Over these images Stahl asked, "How does Ronald Reagan use television? Brilliantly. He's *Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* • 451

been criticized as the rich man's president, but the TV pictures say it isn't so. At seventy-three, Mr. Reagan could have an age problem. But the TV

pictures say it isn't so. Americans want to feel proud of their country again, and of their president. And the TV pictures say you can. The orchestration of television coverage absorbs the White House. Their goal? To emphasize the president's greatest asset, which, his aides say, is his personality. They provide pictures of him looking like a leader. Confident, with his Marlboro man walk."

Over images of Reagan shaking hands with handicapped athletes in

wheelchairs and cutting the ribbon at a new facility for seniors, Stahl continued, "They also aim to erase the negatives. Mr. Reagan tried to counter the memory of an unpopular issue with a carefully chosen backdrop that actually contradicts the president's policy. Look at the handicapped Olympics, or the opening ceremony of an old-age home. No hint that he tried to cut the budgets for the disabled and for federally subsidized housing for the elderly." On and on went the piece, showing the gap between the feelgood images that played on the screen and the reality of Reagan's actions.

"President Reagan," Stahl concluded, "is accused of running a campaign in which he highlights the images and hides from the issues. But there's no evidence that the charges will hurt him because when people see the president on television, he makes them feel good, about America, about themselves, and about him." Stahl depended on the good will of the Reagan people in covering the White House, but her piece was strongly negative, so she braced herself for trouble. Yet a senior White House official telephoned her that evening:

"Great piece," he said. "What?" asked a stunned Stahl. "Great piece," he repeated. "Did you listen to what I said?" she asked. "Lesley, when you're showing four and a half minutes of great pictures of Ronald Reagan, no one listens to what you say. Don't you know that the pictures are overriding your message because they conflict with your message? The public sees those pictures and they block your message. They didn't even hear what you said. So, in our minds, it was a four-and-a-half-minute free ad for the Ronald Reagan campaign for reelection."

Interpretation. Most of the men who worked on communications for Reagan had a background in marketing. They knew the importance of

telling a story crisply, sharply, and with good visuals. Each morning they went over what the headline of the day should be, and how they could shape this into a short visual piece, getting the president into a video opportunity. They paid detailed attention to the backdrop behind the president in the Oval Office, to the way the camera framed him when he was with other world leaders, and to having him filmed in motion, with his confident walk. The visuals carried the message better than any words could do. As one Reagan official said, "What are you going to believe, the facts or your eyes?"

452 • Appendix B: *Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* Free yourself from the need to communicate in the normal direct manner and you will present yourself with greater opportunities for the soft sell. Make the words you say unobtrusive, vague, alluring. And pay much greater attention to your style, the visuals, the story they tell. Convey a sense of movement and progress by showing

yourself in motion. Express confidence not through facts and figures but through colors and positive imagery, appealing to the infant in everyone. Let the media cover you unguided and you are at their mercy. So turn the dynamic around—the press needs drama and visuals? Provide them. It is fine to discuss issues or "truth" as long as you package it entertainingly. Remember: images linger in the mind long after words are forgotten. Do not preach to the public—that never works. Learn to express your message through visuals that insinuate positive emotions and happy feelings.

4. In 1919, the movie press agent Harry Reichenbach was asked to do advance publicity for a picture called *The Virgin of Stamboul*. It was the usual romantic potboiler in an exotic locale, and normally a publicist would mount a campaign with alluring posters and advertisements. But Harry never operated the usual way. He had begun his career as a carnival barker, and there the only way to get the public into your tent was to stand out from the other barkers. So Harry dug up eight scruffy Turks whom he found living in Manhattan, dressed them up in costumes (flowing sea-green trousers, gold-crescented turbans) provided by the movie studio, rehearsed them in every line and gesture, and checked them into an expensive hotel. Word quickly spread to the newspapers (with a little help from Harry) that a delegation of Turks had arrived in New York on a secret diplomatic mission.

Reporters converged on the hotel. Since his appearance in New York

was clearly no longer a secret, the head of the mission, "Sheikh Ali Ben Mohammed," invited them up to his suite. The newspapermen were impressed by the Turks' colorful outfits, salaams, and rituals. The sheikh then explained why he had come to New York. A beautiful young woman

named Sari, known as the Virgin of Stamboul, had been betrothed to the sheikh's brother. An American soldier passing through had fallen in love with her and had managed to steal her from her home and take her to America. Her mother had died from grief. The sheikh had found out she was in New York, and had come to bring her back.

Mesmerized by the sheikh's colorful language and by the romantic tale he told, the reporters filled the papers with stories of the Virgin of Stamboul for the next several days. The sheikh was filmed in Central Park and feted by the cream of New York society. Finally "Sari" was found, and the press reported the reunion between the sheikh and the hysterical girl (an actress with an exotic look). Soon after, *The Virgin of Stamboul* opened in New York. Its story was much like the "real" events reported in the papers. Was this a coincidence? A quickly made film version of the true story? No *Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* • 453

one seemed to know, but the public was too curious to care, and *The Virgin of Stamboul* broke box office records.

A year later Harry was asked to publicize a film called *The Forbidden Woman*. It was one of the worst movies he had ever seen. Theater owners had no interest in showing it. Harry went to work. For eighteen days straight he ran an ad in all of the major New York newspapers: WATCH THE

SKY ON THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 21ST! IF IT IS GREEN—GO THE CAPITOL IF

IT IS RED—GO THE RIVOLI IF IT IS PINK—GO TO THE STRAND IF IT IS BLUE—

GO TO THE RIALTO FOR ON FEBRUARY 21ST THE SKY WILL TELL YOU WHERE

THE BEST SHOW IN TOWN CAN BE SEEN! (The Capitol, the Rivoli, the

Strand, and the Rialto were the four big first-run movie houses on Broadway.) Almost everyone saw the ad and wondered what this fabulous show was. The owner of the Capitol asked Harry if he knew anything about it, and Harry let him in on the secret: it was all a publicity stunt for an unbooked picture. The owner asked to see a screening of *The Forbidden Woman*; through most of the film, Harry yakked about the publicity campaign, distracting the man from the dullness onscreen. The theater owner decided to show the film for a week, and so, on the evening of February 21, as a heavy snowstorm blanketed the city and all eyes turned to the sky, giant rays of light poured out from the tallest buildings—a brilliant show of green. An enormous crowd flocked to the Capitol theater. Those who did not get in kept coming back. Somehow, with a packed house and an excited crowd, the film did not seem quite so bad.

The following year Harry was asked to publicize a gangster picture

called *Outside the Law*. On high-ways across the country he set up billboards that read, in giant letters, IF Y O U DANCE O N SUNDAY, Y O U ARE OUTSIDE T H E

L A W . On other billboards the word "dance" was replaced by "play golf" or

"play pool" and so on. On a top corner of the billboards was a shield bearing the initials "PD." The public assumed this meant "police department" (actually, it stood for Priscilla Dean, the star of the movie) and that the police, backed by religious organizations, were prepared to enforce decades-old blue laws prohibiting "sinful" activities on a Sunday. Suddenly a controversy was sparked. Theater owners, golfing associations, and dance organizations led a countercampaign against the blue laws; they put up their own billboards, exclaiming that if you did those things on Sunday, you were not "OUTSIDE THE LAW" and issuing a call for Americans to have some fun in their lives. For weeks the words "Outside the Law" were everywhere seen and everywhere on people's lips. In the midst of this the film opened—on a Sunday—in four New York theaters simultaneously, something that had never happened before. And it ran for months throughout the country, also on Sundays. It was one of the big hits of the year. *Interpretation*. Harry Reichenbach, perhaps the greatest press agent in movie history, never forgot the lessons he had learned as a barker. The carnival is full of bright lights, color, noise, and the ebb and flow of the 454 • Appendix B: *Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses* crowd. Such environments have profound effects on people. A clearheaded person could probably tell that the magic shows are fake, the fierce animals trained,

the dangerous stunts relatively safe. But people want to be entertained; it is one of their greatest needs. Surrounded by color and excitement, they suspend their disbelief for a while and imagine that the magic and danger are real. They are fascinated by what seems to be both fake and real at the same time. Harry's publicity stunts merely re-created the carnival on a larger scale. He pulled people in with the lure of colorful costumes, a great story, irresistible spectacle. He held their attention with mystery, controversy, whatever it took. Catching a kind of fever, as they would at the carnival, they flocked without thinking to the films he publicized. The lines between fiction and reality, news and entertainment are even more blurred today than in Harry Reichenbach's time. What opportunities that presents for soft seduction! The media is desperate for events with entertainment value, inherent drama. Feed that need. The public has a weakness for what seems both realistic and slightly fantastical—for real events with a cinematic edge. Play to that weakness. Stage events the way Bernays did, events the media can pick up as news. But here you are not starting a social trend, you are after something more short term: to win people's attention, to create a momentary stir, to lure them into your tent. Make your events and publicity stunts plausible and somewhat realistic, but make their colors a little brighter than usual, the characters larger than life, the drama higher. Provide an edge of sex and danger. You are creating a confluence of real life and fiction—the essence of any seduction.

It is not enough, however, to win people's attention: you need to hold it long enough to hook them. This can always be done by sparking controversy, the way Harry liked to stir up debates about morals. While the media argues about the effect you are having on people's values, it is broadcasting your name everywhere and inadvertently bestowing upon you the edge

that will make you so attractive to the public.

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