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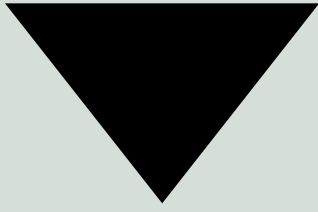
WHY SHE WANTS A JERK



You've seen too many hot women go home with too many dirtbags. It's sad but true: Chicks dig bad boys—to a point. How can you be one of the good guys who still gets the girl? It's just a matter of confidence and appreciation—and a little bit of patience

BY
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ON A SUNNY SATURDAY AFTERNOON

THE SUMMER AFTER GRADUATION,
 I SAT THROUGH BRUNCH WITH FRIENDS,
 NURSING A MIMOSA AND A HANGOVER.
 THE NIGHT BEFORE, I'D TALKED AND
 THEN DANCED AND THEN MADE OUT
 WITH A BEARDED GUY IN A BAR—
 A WHISKEY-SOAKED NECKING THAT LEFT
 MY CHIN RED AND RAW.



My phone chimed as I picked at my omelet, and when I read the text, I cringed. “This is from the guy last night,” I reported, passing the Razr to my left. My friends cringed too.

“He wants to take you to dinner?” one of them scoffed.

“I know,” I said. “Why can’t we just meet up at another dark bar at midnight?”

I’d liked him enough during the buzzy night: He was confident and direct and hair-grabbingly aggressive to the right degree. I felt pretty and desirable and a bit like prey in his hands.

He was kind of a Bad Boy. It was hot, it was fun. Now here he was acting like a Nice Guy. This softer side—the one that wanted to consult on a bottle of wine and split dessert—threw me, a commitment-phobic postgrad, for a loop.

Which makes you shake your head (and maybe a fist), right? Here’s a decent guy, perhaps like yourself, being derided over brunch. Meanwhile you watch your female friends date assholes and see hot girls at clubs climb into cabs with world-class douche bags.

Yes, we’re guilty of this behavior, and there’s a briefcase full of evidence to prove it. Research shows that men who rate high in narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (traits cinematically called the “Dark Triad”) do get more tail. Conversely, a new study finds that being too nice too early isn’t sexually appealing.

But the bad boy’s allure is limited. The women he attracts (like the younger me) aren’t the type that a smart guy wants to end up with. And thankfully for both sides, you can adopt his more enchanting strategies without becoming a jerk yourself. A sweet-salty mix is catnip for today’s cool women—and that’s the kind of woman you want. We love a suave charmer who’s adept at both cooking chicken for dinner and unhooking a bra at night.

I wasn’t ready for the New Chivalry back then, still being childish and a bit uncool, so I failed to give this guy the props he rightfully deserved. Allow me—and a few research scientists—to make it up to mankind (and kind men) by explaining what it is that we really want.



THE NEW CHIVALRY GIVES LITTLE guidance on whether or not to open her car door. This isn’t about etiquette. It’s based on respect and equality, not 1950s notions of protection and possession. I know, I know—that doesn’t help you when the check arrives. Amy Muise, Ph.D., a psychologist at the University of Toronto who studies sexuality and relationships (in that land of polite people), says research confirms that modern life “is pretty perplexing for men.” For instance, “there’s tons of confusion about expectations during first dates. As a society, we’ve become more egalitarian and equal, but many people still adhere to gender norms on first dates.”

In other words, one woman’s “aw” is another woman’s “ugh.” But really, if a woman is falling for you, a superficial detail—say, whether or not you help her put on her coat—will not make or break the relationship.

My sweet spot: when a man acts gentlemanly while acknowledging that I’m not prissily demanding it. At the end of a recent date, a definite Hot Nice Guy waved away my insincere wallet reach and said, “If we split this, neither of us will feel good about it. I would like to have the pleasure of taking you to dinner. You can pick up the tab some other time.” Swoon.

This sexy chivalry is about a lot more than money. It’s a way of interacting with women, and it involves channeling confidence without coming across as arrogant. It’s no surprise that self-assurance is sexy; take this amusing study from the *International Journal of Cosmetic Science*. Researchers shot 15-second clips of men after the men had used either a scented body spray or one without scent, and then asked women to watch the videos and rate the men for attractiveness. The ladies judged the deodorant-blasted men as better looking, on average, though obviously they couldn’t smell them. Apparently, the scented guys felt more confident, and their self-assured body language made women’s hearts flutter.

You can stand tall and approach women in a self-assured way without morphing into an arrogant ass. Give yourself a little pep talk, and be yourself. Here’s how my buddy David, a 27-year-old business student, does it: “I remind myself that there are plenty of people who love me and like me and that it wouldn’t be the end of the world if one woman rejected me. After you get shot down a few times, you realize it’s not so bad, and then you conquer the fear and come across as even more confident.”

The chivalrous man’s level of confidence is just right. He asks questions, listens to the answers, and treats a woman as an intellectual equal. “We’re drawn to people who make us feel interesting and smart,” Muise says. That alone

Styling: Jill Roth; hair: David Keough/John Frieda; Celestine Agency; makeup: Helen Robertson/Smashbox/Celestine Agency; manicure: Beth Fricks/O.P.I./Aristisy/TimothyPrimo.com; production: Stardust Visions; previous spread: Mink Pink shirt, Textile by Elizabeth and James shorts; this spread: Levi’s Red Tab jacket, Urban Outfitters tank, Bellerose skirt, Lisa Hoffman necklace, Urban Outfitters love necklace, stylist’s own diamond bracelet



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DARWIN-WISE, WOMEN ARE INCLINED TO THINK IT'S WORTH THE RISK TO MATE WITH A HIGH-STATUS GUY EVEN THOUGH HE MIGHT BAIL ON HER.



14 Ways to Make Sure You Won't Get the Girl

▶ UGH—YOU'RE DEFINITELY A JERK!

You break up by ignoring calls and texts • You're consistently late by half an hour or more • You joke by insulting her, then say, "Just kidding!" • You describe other women in overly sexual terms • You text during dates • You wait a week to follow up after a first date • You invite friends to meet you during dates

▶ UM—YOU'RE WAY TOO NICE!

You say, "I'm sorry" for no reason • You're a frequent, affectionate poster on her Facebook wall • You say, "I miss you" when apart only a few hours • You always let her choose the date spot • You're too eager to meet her family • You send a gushing text 10 minutes after a date • You prefer a night in over a night out with the boys

Source: Survey of 1,077 women on MensHealth.com

gives you an advantage over both the negging jerk and the spineless blob who can't hold up his end of a conversation.

One of the worst first dates I ever went on was with a man who arrived an hour late and then talked nonstop. You're smarter than that. But a new study also notes that a man who listens too intently to a woman he just met is likely to be viewed suspiciously. Study author Gurit E. Birnbaum, Ph.D., of the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel, says the oh-so-understanding guy may be perceived as "inappropriately nice and manipulative, or eager to please, perhaps even desperate, and therefore less sexually appealing." She's right. So have an actual conversation—a relaxed back-and-forth—and you'll seem curious, engaged, and comfortable giving and receiving. Sounds like chivalry to me.

A chivalrous man does his own thing but lets a woman into it; this translates to an I-could-sweep-you-off-to-Paris quality that women find irresistible. Mention your involvement in the foodie scene, or indie art spaces—whatever makes you *you*. And respect her quirky circles too. If you're already coupled, surprise her with a weekend getaway or tickets to a show.

Women have a deep desire for savvy, adventurous types. Kristina Durante, Ph.D., a psychologist at the University of Texas at Austin, studies how young women respond to dependable good guys versus mysterious bad boys. In one study, women chatted with a man followed by his "twin brother" (actually the same actor) at separate sessions. The guy followed a family-man script in one encounter and an exciting, wanderlusty script for the other.

"It was incredible to watch the difference in the women's behavior," Durante says. "When the 'good dad' asked about travel, we'd hear a woman say, 'I was just in Vegas with my boyfriend.' But with the sexy cad, she said, 'I was in Vegas with a friend.' Consciously or not, she wanted to keep the possibility of a relationship open."

We can't help but drool over guys doing manly, slightly dangerous things. I once hooked up with a professional skateboarder and later confessed to a girlfriend that I'd looked him up on YouTube afterward and admired how hot he looked in motion. "Remember Greg?" she replied. "He was a dirt biker. I did the same thing." And squee girls we are not.

Blame biology. "Masculinity is intensely connected to testosterone," says David Ley, Ph.D., author of *The Myth of Sex Addiction*. Not to reduce the bad-boy strategy to that single hormone, but we do know that women find the body odor of men with high testosterone very attractive. Sure, you can increase your levels through bar fights (not chivalrous) or through exercise and competition in sports, politics, or business (hot). "Men who want to have masculinity 'ooze out of their pores,' so to speak, should try things like martial arts, competitive sports, or even high-adrenaline activities like skydiving," all of which bolster confidence and spike testosterone levels, Ley says.



JOHN MAYER SMILED AT ME. NO, really—true story. Okay, we never chatted, but we were in the same bar in Brooklyn, and he was at the other end, and he shot me a little grin. Now, I'm a smart woman, and when TMZ reports that Mayer has a new plaything, my friends and I think, *What a bimbo—does she really think he's going to be faithful?*

But that grin! I instantly reevaluated the man as an upstanding citizen and future boyfriend. Female brains developed this hell-I'd-jump-him mechanism because, Darwin-wise, it's worth the risk to mate with a high-status guy, even though he might bail. We'd prefer strong children with an estranged partner to weak offspring with a dumb but devoted schmuck.

When observing the bad boy in his habitat, it's easy to see what attracts the female. Off-the-charts testosterone, social dominance, risk taking—all indicate a healthy immune system. "In evolutionary terms, women on the savanna desperately wanted to mate with healthy specimens for the sake of passing on their genes," says Durante. A weaker man may not have been able to secure resources as readily, "so he had lower mate value." Nice guys died first.

Fast-forward a few thousand years, and no matter how much we say we want a good man who'll stick around, we can't help but feel a pull

in our loins toward the James Bonds (or John Mayers) of the world.

That tug grows stronger midcycle, when our bodies are urging us to get laid already. "It's been well demonstrated that women are more attracted to bad-boy types when they're ovulating," says Christopher Ryan, Ph.D., coauthor of *Sex at Dawn*, "while they're more drawn to a sweet, stable man when they're unlikely to get pregnant." In baby-making mode, we also grow more delusional. Durante's research shows that ovulating women were likeliest to believe that a "sexy cad" (her words) would morph into a "good dad"—for them and them alone.

"They'd look at the bad boy through rose-colored glasses and think, 'He might be a jerk to anyone else, but he would commit to me,'" Durante says. "We really have the ability to deceive ourselves about how committed a non-committal guy will be if we find him exciting."

Thankfully, once John exited the bar and "Your Body Is a Wonderland" stopped playing in my head, the spell broke.

YOU HAVE TO TRUST US: WE WOMEN are generally smart enough to overcome our primitive instincts when choosing boyfriends, even if good-looking bad boys temporarily short-circuit our brains. And "women who are looking for long-term, committed relationships place more emphasis on good-guy traits, like stability and dependability, than those women who are looking for short-term, casual relationships," Muise says.

Be the Brad Pitt of *Thelma & Louise* and she'll go home with you; be the Brad Pitt of shepherding kids through the airport and she'll love you. If you're just interested in getting laid, fine, have your fun. But when you're ready to find the One, know this: No sane woman wants to settle down with an asshole.

Assholes by definition make others unhappy, and research shows that we like partners who make us feel good. Assholes laugh at people's misfortunes and embarrass their girlfriends by berating waiters. They are also, judging from my personal experience, bad in bed because they've never in their sexual adulthood thought to poke their head up and ask, "Say, how is this for you?" A Penn *Continued on page 139*



State study found that arrogant men gave women less-satisfying orgasms, and they didn't even ask me. We might fantasize about Don Draper, but most women don't want to be Megan (or, shudder, Betty). The fictional character that we good catches want is Coach Taylor of *Friday Night Lights*, Certified Good Guy.

Here's the distinction: Cool girls—the ones you'd want to call your girlfriend—won't stand for a man who has nothing to offer but that slick bad-boy charm. Remember those Dark Triad guys reeling in scores of chicks? Research by Peter Jonason, Ph.D., of the University of Western Sydney, demonstrated that women with “avoidant attachment” strategies (right, she wasn't loved enough as a child) are the likeliest to fall for that type. If you let your jerk flag fly, you'll nab ladies, but they'll likely be of the needing-years-of-therapy camp.

There's also a kind of woman who thinks she can handle a cocky guy—the kind who, Jonason says, believes the “toxic, narcissistic” idea that he'll be good to her while treating others like crap. “Of course, you're setting yourself up for disaster,” he says, “because he'll eventually be a jerk to you as well.” (I dated that guy, too.)

If you come off as a dick, you'll pick up women who are less mature, because immature chicks see appeal in the bad boy's unpredictability. “Especially in younger women, the idea that this guy is a challenge makes her attribute more value to him,” Jonason says. And a man who's there one minute and gone another can come off as, well, exciting.

Case in point: In one study, researchers at the University of Virginia asked college women to look at men's Facebook profiles. They told them one of three things: These men saw your profile and were interested; these men saw your profile and weren't too excited; or these men saw your profile and marked whether they're interested or not, but we can't tell you what they said. The women in the study found the ambiguous ones to be most appealing. They mistook mystery for attraction.

The upshot: If a woman is confused and mistreated by a man she's seeing and she doesn't have the maturity to think, *Wow, this guy is manipulative and mistreats me*, then, yes, she may hang around, thinking she's in love with him. Said woman is not the One for you.

I sincerely hope the guy who seduced me in a bar booth and then wanted to take me out on a dinner date recognized that I just wasn't cool enough for him at the time. We went out a few times (bar dates, at my urging, though he always paid and walked me home) and then mutually broke things off.

I moved on to a tattooed painter whose bed lacked a frame (ah, to be 22 years old!), and have thankfully come a long way in the 4 years since. And I'm sure an awesome woman, more mature than myself, snatched up the chivalrous bad boy. Because a guy with swagger in the bar and manners at the dinner table? He's every cool woman's dream. ■