



The Arts of the Gentleman: SEDUCTION

Tom Cutler continues his instruction in the gentlemanly arts by giving some useful tips on seducing the ladies

When I was a boy, during the Middle Ages, my school band and I were invited to visit a North German town situated on a flat blanket of ploughed mud, sprinkled with snow-covered cabbages and the occasional stainless steel factory. In this desert of wind and brassicas, I was put up in a remote farmhouse with electric shutters and a basement stocked like a good-size Londis. One day, the family's eldest son led me down the back garden to some wooden boxes on stilts. 'I will show to you my hairs', he announced startingly. I soon realized that he meant 'hares', or 'rabbits', which is what he was taking me to see. It was turning out to be not the holiday for which one had been hoping.

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SHOW ME ROUND HER
POTATO CLAMP

But things were to change, for the mayor of Dorsten had put on a party that evening in the town's Alte Rathaus to encourage a mass comingling of us minstrels and our German hosts. And so it was that under the rafters of this historic municipal erection the svelte outlines of the rabbit-fancier's cousin caught my eye.

Now, I'm a brunette-man myself but Ingeborg was a 17-year-old blonde corker whose sultry credentials were altogether unimpeachable. I therefore swiftly decided to forget my colour prejudice and persuade this pneumatic creature to show me round her potato clamp.

Even as a callow 15-year-old, I recognised the female laugh as an inaugural index of surrender in any seduction campaign – a kind of Maginot Line,



which the foot soldier must cross for any hope of final victory. So I launched my Ingeborg-invasion strategy with a round of tactical small-arms badinage. Over a glass of alcohol-free 'punch' ladled out by a giantess in a commodious dirndl, I began by pretending that I believed Ingeborg to be called 'Ironing board'. This seemed frightfully hilarious to me but, as a more practised lady-killer might have explained, it was a maladroit start and I succeeded only in arousing the indignation of Ingeborg's impossibly sleek elder brother.



Fritz cut a Teutonic dash as he stepped from behind a tree, dressed in Country Estate style or what he called *Landhausmode*: long white socks, lederhosen, and a pointy hat with scarlet

tassel. "So, what are you named?" he oozed. We were round the back of St Agatha's Cathedral, where he had ambushed Ingeborg and I, as he thought *delicto*, though not exactly *in flagrante*. I affected indifference, and, with a stab at heroic disdain, told him my name. Unfortunately, I chose this moment to allow some punch to dribble down my shirtfront on to my battered desert boots. He looked me over, expertly knocking a particle of ash off the end of his cigarette. "I shall call you 'Arse,'" he said, "because you are an arse." His grasp of English idiom was uncanny and his pronunciation exquisite. I myself spoke only a form of sporadic *Schule Deutsch* and, in any case, would never have been able to trump his Prince-Oscar-of-Prussia-esque refinement with my ungainly Jim Davidson-ness. Things were going badly.

But Ingeborg was showing signs of resentment at her brother's attitude, so, embracing simplicity, I seized my chance. "Do you realise what you look like in those shorts?" I said. Fritz made a noise like a man who has just taken a boot in the loins and Ingeborg let out a muffled laugh. It felt like the Liberation



If this is more or less how you look when confronted with a lady...



Read the tips on the right, so that you'll look more like this

of Paris all over again, so I pressed my advantage: "We're going for a walk," I remarked, encircling Ingeborg's minute waist with my arm, "Why don't you push off." It was not very gentlemanly behaviour but, despite my gross tactical errors, the initial skirmish in the seduction offensive seemed to have gone my way. As we turned to go I noticed for the first time the undue tightness of Fritz's lederhosen, the mark, I felt, of a repressed sex pervert.

The point of all this *recherche du temps perdu* is that, when it comes to inveigling ladies, confidence can trounce sophistication and experience. Indeed, for many women a prospective mate's personality will override his physical shortcomings. Top of the list of essential traits is a 'good sense of humour'. So important is this requisite that ladies have boiled it down to an abbreviation to be used in what used to be called 'lonely hearts' advertisements. A 'GSOH', if you've got one, is a powerful romantic tool, and married women who describe their husbands as 'witty' – which is different from 'humorous', but let's not split hairs – say they are more satisfied with their marriage than women who say their men lack a GSOH. The trouble

is that the people I meet who claim to have a GSOH often turn out to have a remarkably BSOH or even a FASOH.

But there is no doubt that women are sexually attracted to men who can make them laugh – including Ken Dodd, apparently. Humour is a sign of poise, aplomb and intelligence – a dodge by which the refined gentleman can, nay, often does, dominate the rippling hunk. And it's so much cheaper than flowers. So do not fret if you lose all the arm-wrestling contests, for there is truth in the notion that a man can laugh a woman into bed. Moreover, superior seduction is commonly a slow-burn affair and the connoisseur will often take pleasure in overwhelming his subject unhurriedly. Tom Baker once said that 'the joy of seduction is the manipulation', and how much more gentlemanly is the measured inexorable engulfment than a drunken rugby tackle.

For those in search of tips, I have here assembled a tear-out list of the best of the lowdown in this department. My book, *Slap and Tickle: the unusual history of sex and the people who have it*, contains a good deal more on the subject. ↗

HOW TO SEDUCE A LADY

1. Do pay attention to your body language: look into her eyes and point your anatomy directly at hers. Stand in a forthrightly masculine pose – not like Frank Spencer in *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* – your glance, voice, and dominant bearing exuding sexuality. Your feet should be wide apart and your thumbs frequently pointing towards your 'gentleman's area'. Standing like this raises her temperature while saving on a lot of chat.

2. Don't bother with intensive grooming – you don't want to look continental – neat and tidy will do. Neither need you be handsome; this has little to do with it, despite what you might think. Better to be rich, actually.

3. Be as tall as possible.

4. Don't be too 'nice': being 'nice' will get you nowhere. Being a bit of a bounder – though never a cad – is the thing.

5. Do be assertive, confident, and persistent – but don't be a boor.

6. Do touch her: don't grab hold of her bottom or pull her hair. Instead, touch her lightly on the 'safe' areas – forearms are a good place. You'll have plenty of time later for the other, unsafe, bits.

7. Don't try too hard: it shows you care, which you shouldn't. Indifference is much more alluring. Maintain a cool, elusive intrigue.

8. Do share danger with her: scientists have discovered that going on a fast toboggan ride with a man causes a woman to become attracted to him. Worth knowing. I mean, how much does a ride on the ghost train cost? Just feel her cling to you.

9. Do be funny (if you can): after all, the guffaw is the orgasm a lady is permitted to have in public.

10. Do shut up about yourself: instead, ask her



about herself. 'What's your favourite sexual fantasy?' is a good question, though 'Are you a virgin?' will tend to diminish your mysterious allure.

II. A chap may pay a woman the occasional compliment but should steer clear of disasters such as, 'I like older ladies; You don't sweat much for a fat lass; You disguise your heavy midriff cleverly with that poncho; and, Do you want to see a trick I learned in prison?'

12. Do keep your eye on the ball: you'll know quickly (within seconds, actually) how interested she is. If you can't spot this you're lost, for now is the time to kick chivalry into the long grass and overwhelm her with the bold move.

13. As a final tip in the seduction game, I should point out that you must never buy a lady flowers from a petrol station, or anywhere like Londis. Girls can sniff out cheap flowers a mile off. Incidentally, 'Londis' is an interesting brand name, the origin of which is unusual. In an attempt to glamorise his shops, the 'inventor' of Londis seems to have conflated the Lond- of London and the -is of Paris, just as 1930s marketers added the NY of New York to the -Lon of London to concoct the word nylon. 'Londis' is not a very glamorous conjunction but is better, I suppose, than the alternative, which would have been 'Pardon'.