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

THE ART OF SEDUCTION

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

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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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THE ART OF SEDUCTION

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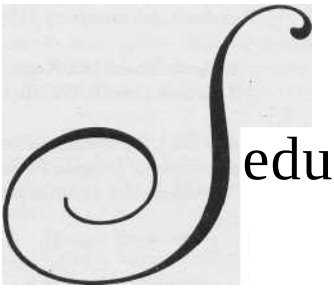
the art of  eduction

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To the memory of my father

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With heavy heart I would like to pay tribute to my cat Boris, who for thirteen years watched over me as I wrote and whose presence is sorely missed. His successor, Brutus, has proven to be a worthy muse.

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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Part One

The Seductive Character page 1

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.

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 defensivencss 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.

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

The Seductive Process page 161

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—approach through a third party, or seem to cultivate a relatively neutral relationship, 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 innocent 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.

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.

Phase Two: Lead Astray—Creating Pleasure and Confusion

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.

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. Inflame 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.

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 ham' 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 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, nonchalant 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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Appendix B: Soft Seduction: How to Sell Anything to the Masses *page 441*

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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.

Of course men had one weakness: their insatiable desire for sex. A woman could always toy with this desire, but once she gave in to sex the man was back in control; and if she withheld sex, he could simply look elsewhere—or exert force. What good was a power that was so temporary and frail? Yet women had no choice but to submit to this condition. There were some, though, whose hunger for power was too great, and who, over the years, through much cleverness and creativity, invented a way of turning the dynamic around, creating a more lasting and effective form of power.

These women—among them Bathsheba, from the Old Testament; Helen of Troy; the Chinese siren Hsi Shi; and the greatest of them all, Cleopatra—invented seduction. First they would draw a man in with an alluring appearance, designing their makeup and adornment to fashion the image of a goddess come to life. By showing only glimpses of flesh, they would tease a man's imagination, stimulating the desire not just for sex but for something greater: the chance to possess a fantasy figure. Once they had their victims' interest, these women would lure them away from the masculine world of war and politics and get them to spend time in the feminine world—a world of luxury, spectacle, and pleasure. They might also lead them astray literally, taking them on a journey, as Cleopatra lured Julius Caesar on a trip down the Nile. Men would grow hooked on these refined, sensual pleasures—they would fall in love. But then, invariably, the women would turn cold and indifferent, confusing their victims. Just when the men wanted more, they found their pleasures withdrawn. They would be forced into pursuit, trying anything to win back the favors they once had tasted and growing weak and emotional in the process. Men who had physical force and all the social power—men like King David, the Trojan Paris, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, King Fu Chai—would find themselves becoming the slave of a woman.

In the face of violence and brutality, these women made seduction a

Oppression and scorn, thus, were and must have been generally the share of women in emerging societies; this state lasted in all its force until centuries of experience taught them to substitute skill for force. Women at last sensed that, since they were weaker, their only resource was to seduce; they understood that if they were dependent on men through force, men could become dependent on them through pleasure. More unhappy than men, they must have thought and reflected earlier than did men; they were the first to know that pleasure was always beneath the idea that one formed of it, and that the imagination went farther than nature. Once these basic truths were known, they learned first to veil their charms in order to awaken curiosity; they practiced the difficult art of refusing even as they wished to consent; from that moment on, they knew how to set men's imagination afire, they knew how to arouse and direct desires as they pleased: thus did beauty and love come into being; now the lot of women

became less harsh, not that they had managed to liberate themselves entirely from the state of oppression to which their weakness condemned them; but, in the state of perpetual war that continues to exist between women and men, one has seen them, with the help of the caresses they have been able to invent, combat ceaselessly, sometimes vanquish, and often more skillfully take advantage of the forces directed against them; sometimes, too, men have turned against women these weapons the women had forged to combat them, and their slavery has become all the harsher for it.

—CHODERLOS DE LACLOS, ON *THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN,* TRANSLATED BY LYDIA DAVIS, IN *THE LIBERTINE READER,* EDITED BY MICHAEL FEHER

sophisticated art, the ultimate form of power and persuasion. They learned to work on the mind first, stimulating fantasies, keeping a man wanting more, creating patterns of hope and despair—the essence of seduction. Their power was not physical but psychological, not forceful but indirect and cunning. These first great seductresses were like military generals planning the destruction of an enemy, and indeed early accounts of seduction often compare it to battle, the feminine version of warfare. For Cleopatra, it was a means of consolidating an empire. In seduction, the woman was no longer a passive sex object; she had become an active agent, a figure of power.

With a few exceptions—the Latin poet Ovid, the medieval troubadours—men did not much concern themselves with such a frivolous art as seduction. Then, in the seventeenth century came a great change: men grew interested in seduction as a way to overcome a young woman's resistance to sex. History's first great male seducers—the Duke de Lauzun, the different Spaniards who inspired the Don Juan legend—began to adopt the methods traditionally employed by women. They learned to dazzle with their appearance (often androgynous in nature), to stimulate the imagination, to play the coquette. They also added a new, masculine element to the game: seductive language, for they had discovered a woman's weakness for soft words. These two forms of seduction—the feminine use of appearances and the masculine use of language—would often cross gender lines: Casanova would dazzle a woman with his clothes; Ninon de l'Enclos would charm a man with her words.

Much more genius is needed to make love than to command armies.

—NINON DE L'ENCLOS

At the same time that men were developing their version of seduction, others began to adapt the art for social purposes. As Europe's feudal system of government faded into the past, courtiers needed to get their way in court without the use of force. They learned the power to be gained by seducing 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 over their audience and social milieu. In the nineteenth century another great change occurred: politicians like Napoleon consciously saw themselves as seducers, on a grand scale. These men depended on the art of seductive oratory, but they also mastered what had once been feminine strategies: staging vast spectacles, using theatrical devices, creating a charged physical presence. All this, they learned, was the essence of charisma—and remains so today. By seducing the masses they could accumulate immense power without the use of force.

Menelaus, if you are really going to kill her, \ Then my blessing go with you, but you must do it now, \ Before her looks so twist the strings of your heart \ That they turn your mind; for her eyes are like armies, \And where her glances fall, there cities burn, \ Until the dust of their ashes is blown \ By her sighs. I know her, Menelans, \ And so do you. And all those who know her suffer.

—HECUBA SPEAKING ABOUT HELEN OF TROY IN EURIPIDES, *THE TROJAN WOMEN,* TRANSLATED BY NEIL CURRY

Today we have reached the ultimate point in the evolution of seduction. Now more than ever, force or brutality of any kind is discouraged. All areas of social life require the ability to persuade people in a way that does not offend or impose itself. Forms of seduction can be found everywhere, blending male and female strategies. Advertisements insinuate, the soft sell dominates. If we are to change people's opinions—and affecting opinion is basic to seduction—we must act in subtle, subliminal ways. Today no politi-

cal campaign can work without seduction. Since the era of John F. Kennedy, political figures are required to have a degree of charisma, a fascinating presence to keep their audience's attention, which is half the battle. 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 confusion, inducing psychological surrender. In seduction as it is practiced today, the methods of Cleopatra still hold.

No man hath it in his power to over-rule the deceitfulness of a woman.

—MARGUERITE OF NAVARRE

People are constantly trying to influence us, to tell us what to do, and just as often we tune them out, resisting their attempts at persuasion. There is a moment in our lives, however, when we all act differently—when we are in love. We fall under a kind of spell. Our minds are usually preoccupied with our own concerns; now they become filled with thoughts of the loved one. We grow emotional, lose the ability to think straight, act in foolish ways that we would never do otherwise. If this goes on long enough something inside us gives way: we surrender to the will of the loved one, and to our desire to possess them.

Seducers are people who understand the tremendous power contained in such moments of surrender. They analyze what happens when people are in love, study the psychological components of the process—what spurs the imagination, what casts a spell. By instinct and through practice they master the art of making people fall in love. As the first seductresses knew, it is much more effective to create love than lust. A person in love is emotional, pliable, and easily misled. (The origin of the word "seduction" is the Latin for "to lead astray") A person in lust is harder to control and, once satisfied, may easily leave you. Seducers take their time, create enchantment and the bonds of love, so that when sex ensues it only further enslaves the victim. Creating love and enchantment becomes the model for all seductions—sexual, social, political. A person in love will surrender.

It is pointless to try to argue against such power, to imagine that you are not interested in it, or that it is evil and ugly. The harder you try to resist the lure of seduction—as an idea, as a form of power—the more you will find yourself fascinated. The reason is simple: most of us have known the power of having someone fall in love with us. Our actions, gestures, the things we say, all have positive effects on this person; we may not completely understand what we have done right, but this feeling of power is intoxicating. It gives us confidence, which makes us more seductive. We may also experience this in a social or work setting—one day we are in an elevated mood and people seem more responsive, more charmed by us. These moments of power are fleeting, but they resonate in the memory with great intensity. We want them back. Nobody likes to feel awkward or timid or unable to reach people. The siren call of seduction is irresistible because 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

This important side-track, by which woman succeeded in evading man's strength and establishing herself in power, has not been given due consideration by historians. From the moment when the woman detached herself from the crowd, an individual finished product, offering delights which could not be obtained by force, but only by flattery . . . . the reign of love's priestesses was inaugurated. It was a development of far-reaching importance in the history of civilization. . . . Only by the circuitous route of the art of love could woman again assert authority, and this she did by asserting herself at the very point at which she would normally be a slave at the man's mercy. She had discovered the might of lust, the secret of the art of love, the daemonic power of a passion artificially aroused and never satiated. The force tints unchained was thenceforth to count among the most tremendous of the world's forces and at moments to have power even over life and death. . . . • The deliberate spell-binding of man's senses was to have a magical effect upon him, opening up an infinitely wider range of sensation and spurring him on as if impelled by an inspired dream.

—ALEXANDER VON GLEICHEN-RUSSWURM, *THE WORLD'S LURE,* TRANSLATED BY HANNAH WALLER

The first thing to get in your head is that every single \ Girl can be caught—and that you'll catch her if \ You set your toils right. Birds will sooner fall dumb in \ Springtime, \ Cicadas in summer, or a hunting-dog \ Turn his back on a hare, than a lover's bland inducements \ Can fail with a woman, Even one you suppose \ Reluctant will want it.

—OVID, *THE ART OF LOVE*, TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

The combination of these two elements, enchantment and surrender, is, then, essential to the love which we are discussing. . . . What exists in love is surrender due to enchantment.

—JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET, *ON LOVE*, TRANSLATED BY TOBY TALBOT

What is good?—All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. • What is bad?—All that proceeds from weakness. • What is happiness?—The feeling that power increases—that a resistance is overcome.

—FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, *THE ANTI—CHRIST*, TRANSLATED BY R. J. HOLLINGDALE

hysterical reaction, revealing your deep-down fascination with the process; you are only making your desires stronger. Some day they will come to the surface.

To have such power does not require a total transformation in your character or any kind of physical improvement in your looks. Seduction is a game of psychology, not beauty, and it is within the grasp of any person to become a master at the game. All that is required is that you look at the world differently, through the eyes of a seducer.

A seducer does not turn the power off and on—every social and personal interaction is seen as a potential seduction. There is never a moment to waste. This is so for several reasons. The power seducers have over a man or woman works in social environments because they have learned how to tone down the sexual element without getting rid of it. We may think we 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. Erotic desire and love lurk beneath the surface of almost every human encounter; better to give free rein to your skills than to try to use them only in the bedroom. (In fact, the seducer sees the world as his or her bedroom.) This attitude creates great seductive momentum, and with each seduction you gain experience and practice. One social or sexual seduction makes the next one easier, your confidence growing and making you more alluring. People are drawn to you in greater numbers as the seducer's aura descends upon you.

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 defense. Once seducers have penetrated the mind, making the target fantasize about them, it is easy to lower resistance and create physical surrender. Seducers do not improvise; they do not leave this process to chance. Like any good general, they plan and strategize, aiming at the target's particular weaknesses.

The main obstacle to becoming a seducer is this foolish prejudice we have of seeing love and romance as some kind of sacred, magical realm where things just fall into place, if they are meant to. This might seem romantic and quaint, but it is really just a cover for our laziness. What will seduce 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-

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. Everyone has insecurities, but seducers manage to ignore them, finding therapy for moments of self-doubt by being absorbed in the world. This gives them a buoyant spirit—we want to be around them. Second, getting into someone's skin, imagining what it is like to be them, helps the seducer gather valuable information, learn what makes that person tick, what will make them lose their ability to think straight and fall into a trap. Armed with such information, they can provide focused and individualized attention—a rare commodity in a world in which most people see us only from behind the screen of their own prejudices. Getting into the targets' skin is the first important tactical move in the war of penetration.

Seducers see themselves as providers of pleasure, like bees that gather pollen from some flowers and deliver it to others. As children we mostly devoted our lives to play and pleasure. Adults often have feelings of being cut off from this paradise, of being weighed down by responsibilities. The seducer knows that people are waiting for pleasure—they never get enough of it from friends and lovers, and they cannot get it by themselves. A person who enters their lives offering adventure and romance cannot be resisted. Pleasure is a feeling of being taken past our limits, of being overwhelmed—by another person, by an experience. People are dying to be overwhelmed, 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 make someone open up, weak to the touch. They also train themselves to be sensitive to pleasure, knowing that feeling pleasure themselves will make it that much easier for them to infect the people around them.

A seducer sees all of life as theater, everyone an actor. Most people feel they have constricted roles in life, which makes them unhappy. Seducers, 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

The disaffection, neurosis, anguish and frustration encountered by psychoanalysis comes no doubt from being unable to love or to be loved, from being unable to give or take pleasure, but the radical disenchantment comes from seduction and its failure. Only those who lie completely outside seduction are ill, even if they remain fully capable of loving and making love. Psychoanalysis believes it treats the disorder of sex and desire, but in reality it is dealing with the disorders of seduction. . . . The most serious deficiencies always concern charm and not pleasure, enchantment and not some vital or sexual satisfaction.

—JEAN BAUDRILLARD, *SEDUCTION*

Whatever is done from love always occurs beyond good and evil.

—FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, *BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL*, TRANSLATED BY WALTER KAUFMANN

Should anyone here in Rome lack finesse at love-making, \ Let him \ Try me—read my book, and results are guaranteed! \ Technique is the secret. Charioteer, sailor, oarsman, \ All need it. Technique can control \ Love himself.

—OVID, *THE ART OF LOVE*, TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

pliant, fluid, like life itself. Seduction is a form of deception, but people want to be led astray, they yearn to be seduced. If they didn't, seducers would not find so many willing victims. Get rid of any moralizing tendencies, adopt the seducer's playful philosophy, and you will find the rest of the process easy and natural.

The Art of Seduction is designed to arm you with weapons of persuasion and charm, so that those around you will slowly lose their ability to resist without knowing how or why it has happened. It is an art of war for delicate 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 twenty-four 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.

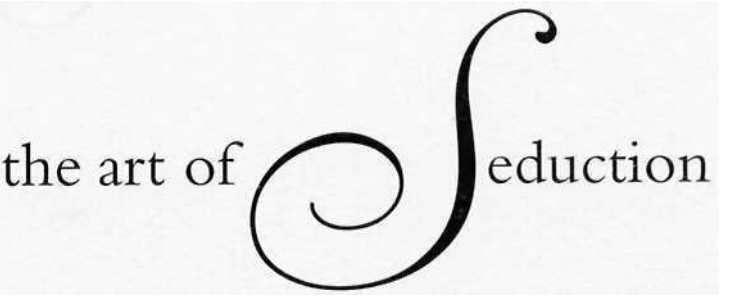
The ideas and strategies in *The Art of Seduction* are based on the writings and historical accounts of the most successful seducers in history. The sources include the seducers' own memoirs (by Casanova, Errol Flynn, Natalie Barney, Marilyn Monroe); biographies (of Cleopatra, Josephine Bonaparte, John 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

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 op-

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 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 world of pure pleasure. She is dangerous, and in pursuing 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 particular appearance and manner. 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 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, discussing strategy, when a guard entered to report that a Greek merchant was at the door bearing a large and valuable gift for the Roman leader. Caesar, in the mood for a little fun, gave the merchant permission to enter. The man came in, carrying on his shoulders a large rolled-up carpet. He undid the rope around the bundle and with a snap of his wrists unfurled it—revealing the young Cleopatra, who had been hidden inside, and who rose up half clothed before Caesar and his guests, like Venus emerging from the waves.

Everyone was dazzled at the sight of the beautiful young queen (only twenty-one at the time) appearing before them suddenly as if in a dream. They were astounded at her daring and theatricality—smuggled into the harbor at night with only one man to protect her, risking everything on a bold move. No one was more enchanted than Caesar. According to the Roman writer Dio Cassius, "Cleopatra was in the prime of life. She had a delightful voice which could not fail to cast a spell over all who heard it. Such was the charm of her person and her speech that they drew the coldest and most determined misogynist into her toils. Caesar was spellbound as soon as he set eyes on her and she opened her mouth to speak." That same evening Cleopatra became Caesar s lover.

Caesar had had numerous mistresses before, to divert him from the rigors of his campaigns. But he had always disposed of them quickly to return to what really thrilled him—political intrigue, the challenges of warfare, the Roman theater. Caesar had seen women try anything to keep him under their spell. Yet nothing prepared him for Cleopatra. One night she would tell him how together they could revive the glory of Alexander the Great, and rule the world like gods. The next she would entertain him dressed as the goddess Isis, surrounded by the opulence of her court. Cleopatra initiated Caesar in the most decadent revelries, presenting herself as the incarnation of the Egyptian exotic. His life with her was a constant game, as challenging as warfare, for the moment he felt secure with her she

In the mean time our good ship, with that perfect wind to drive her, fast approached the Sirens' Isle. But now the breeze dropped, some power lulled the waves, and a breathless calm set in. Rising from their seats my men drew in the sail and threw it into the hold, then sat down at the oars and churned the water white with their blades of polished pine. Meanwhile I took a large round of wax, cut it up small with my sword, and kneaded the pieces with all the strength of my fingers. The wax soon yielded to my vigorous treatment and grew warm, for I had the rays of my Lord the Sun to help me. I took each of my men in turn and plugged their ears with it. They then made me a prisoner on my ship by binding me hand and foot, standing me up by the step of the mast and tying the rope's ends to the mast itself. This done, they sat down once more and struck the grey water with their oars. • We made good progress and had just come within call of the shore when the Sirens became aware that a ship was swiftly bearing

down upon them, and broke into their liquid song. • "Draw near," they sang, "illustrious Odysseus, flower of Achaean chivalry, and bring your ship to rest so that you may hear our voices. No seaman ever sailed his black ship past this spot without listening to the sweet tones that flow from our lips . . ." • The lovely voices came to me across the water, and my heart was filled with such a longing to listen that with nod and frown I signed to my men to set me free.

—HOMER, *THE ODYSSEY*, BOOK XII, TRANSLATED BY E.V. RIEU

The charm of [Cleopatra's] presence was irresistible, and there was an attraction in her person and talk, together with a peculiar force of character, which pervaded her every word and action, and laid all who associated with her under its spell. It was a delight merely to hear the sound of her voice, with which, like an instrument of many strings, she could pass from one language to another.

—PLUTARCH, *MAKERS OF ROME*, TRANSLATED BY IAN SCOTT-KILVERT

The immediate attraction of a song, a voice, or scent. The attraction of the panther with his perfumed scent . . . According to the ancients, the panther is the only animal who emits a perfumed odor. It uses this scent to draw and capture its victims. . . . But what is it that seduces in a scent? . . . What is it in the song of the Sirens that seduces us, or in the beauty of a face, in the depths

would suddenly turn cold or angry and he would have to find a way to regain her favor.

The weeks went by. Caesar got rid of all Cleopatra's rivals and found excuses to stay in Egypt. At one point she led him on a lavish historical expedition down the Nile. In a boat of unimaginable splendor—towering fifty-four feet out of the water, including several terraced levels and a pillared temple to the god Dionysus—Caesar became one of the few Romans to gaze on the pyramids. And while he stayed long in Egypt, away from his throne in Rome, all kinds of turmoil erupted throughout the Roman Empire.

When Caesar was murdered, in 44 B.C., he was succeeded by a triumvirate of rulers including Mark Antony, a brave soldier who loved pleasure and spectacle and fancied himself a kind of Roman Dionysus. A few years later, while Antony was in Syria, Cleopatra invited him to come meet her in the Egyptian town of Tarsus. There—once she had made him wait for 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 boat were beautiful young girls dressed as nymphs and mythological figures. Cleopatra sat on deck, surrounded and fanned by cupids and posed as the goddess Aphrodite, whose name the crowd chanted enthusiastically.

Like all of Cleopatra's victims, Antony felt mixed emotions. The exotic pleasures she offered were hard to resist. But he also wanted to tame her—to defeat this proud and illustrious woman would prove his greatness. And so he stayed, and, like Caesar, fell slowly under her spell. She indulged him in all of his weaknesses—gambling, raucous parties, elaborate rituals, lavish spectacles. To get him to come back to Rome, Octavius, another member of the Roman triumvirate, offered him a wife: Octavius's own sister, Octavia, one of the most beautiful women in Rome. Known for her virtue and goodness, she could surely keep Antony away from the "Egyptian whore." The ploy worked for a while, but Antony was unable to forget Cleopatra, and after three years he went back to her. This time it was for good: he had in essence become Cleopatra's slave, granting her immense powers, adopting Egyptian dress and customs, and renouncing the ways *of* Rome.

Only one image of Cleopatra survives—a barely visible profile on a coin—but we have numerous written descriptions. She had a long thin face and a somewhat pointed nose; her dominant features were her wonderfully large eyes. Her seductive power, however, did not lie in her looks—indeed many among the women of Alexandria were considered more beautiful than she. What she did have above all other women was the ability to distract a man. In reality, Cleopatra was physically unexceptional and had no political power, yet both Caesar and Antony, brave and clever men, saw none of this. What they saw was a woman who constantly transformed herself before their eyes, a one-woman spectacle. Her dress and makeup changed from day to day, but always gave her a heightened, goddesslike appearance.

Her voice, which all writers talk of, was lilting and intoxicating. Her words could be banal enough, but were spoken so sweetly that listeners would find themselves remembering not what she said but how she said it.

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 her, your mind was spinning with images and dreams. And just when you thought you had this fluid, larger-than-life woman, she would turn distant or angry, making it clear that everything was on her terms. You never possessed Cleopatra, you worshiped her. In this way a woman who had been exiled and destined for an early death managed to turn it all around and rule Egypt for close to twenty years.

From Cleopatra we learn that it is not beauty that makes a Siren but rather a theatrical streak that allows a woman to embody a man's fantasies. A man grows bored with a woman, no matter how beautiful; he yearns for different pleasures, and for adventure. All a woman needs to turn this around is to create the illusion that she offers such variety and adventure. A 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 never let him see who you really are. He will follow you until he drowns.

of an abyss . . . ? Seduction lies in the annulment of signs and their meaning, in pure appearance. The eyes that seduce have no meaning, they end in the gaze, as the face with makeup ends in only pure appearance. . . . The scent of the panther is also a meaningless message—and behind the message the panther is invisible, as is the woman beneath her makeup. The Sirens too remained unseen. The enchantment lies in what is hidden.

—JEAN BAUDRILLARD, *DE LA SÉDUCTION*

The Sex Siren

Norma Jean Mortensen, the future Marilyn Monroe, spent part of her childhood in Los Angeles orphanages. Her days were filled with chores and no play. At school, she kept to herself, smiled rarely, and 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 gather around her wherever she went (she was extremely well-developed for her age). She wrote in her diary, "They stared at my sweater as if it were a gold mine."

The revelation was simple but startling. Previously ignored and even ridiculed by the other students, Norma Jean now sensed a way to gain attention, maybe even power, for she was wildly ambitious. She started to smile more, wear makeup, dress differently. And soon she noticed something equally startling: without her having to say or do anything, boys fell passionately in love with her. "My admirers all said the same thing in different ways," she wrote. "It was my fault, their wanting to kiss me and hug me. Some said it was the way I looked at them—with eyes full of passion. Others said it was my voice that lured them on. Still others said I gave off vibrations that floored them."

We're dazzled by feminine adornment, by the surface, \ All gold and jewels: so little of what we observe \ Is the girl herself And where (you may ask) amid such plenty \ Can our object of passion be found? The eye's deceived \ By Love's smart camouflage.

—OVID, *CURES FOR LOVE,* TRANSLATED BY PETER GREEN

He was herding his cattle on Mount Gargarus, the highest peak of Ida, when Hermes, accompanied by Hera, Athene, and Aphrodite delivered the golden apple and Zeus's message: "Paris, since you are as handsome as you are wise in affairs of the heart, Zeus commands you to judge which of these goddesses is the fairest." • "So be it," sighed Paris. "But first I beg the losers not to be vexed with me. I am only a human being, liable to make the stupidest