

the anti-Seducer

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. They lack the subtlety to create the promise of pleasure that seduction 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 repulsion: 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 self-absorption, 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, their anxieties, their self-consciousness close them off. They interpret the slightest ambiguity on your part as a slight to their ego; they see the merest hint of withdrawal as a betrayal, and are likely to complain bitterly about it.

It seems easy: Anti-Seducers repel, so be repelled—avoid them. Unfortunately, however, many Anti-Seducers cannot be detected as such at first glance. They are more subtle, and unless you are careful they will ensnare you in a most unsatisfying relationship. You must look for clues to their self-involvement and insecurity: perhaps they are ungenerous, or they argue with unusual tenacity, or are excessively judgmental. Perhaps they lavish you with undeserved praise, declaring their love before knowing anything about you. Or, most important, they pay no attention to details. Since they cannot see what makes you different, they cannot surprise you with nuanced attention.

It is critical to recognize anti-seductive qualities not only in others but also in ourselves. Almost all of us have one or two of the Anti-Seducer's qualities latent in our character, and to the extent that we can consciously root them out, we become more seductive. A lack of generosity, for instance, need not signal an Anti-Seducer if it is a person's only fault, but an ungenerous person is seldom truly attractive. Seduction implies opening yourself up, even if only for the purposes of deception; being unable to give by spending money usually means being unable to give in general. Stamp ungenerosity out. It is an impediment to power and a gross sin in seduction.

It is best to disengage from Anti-Seducers early on, before they sink their needy tentacles into you, so learn to read the signs. These are the main types.

Count Lodovico then remarked with a smile: "I promise you that our sensible courtier will never act so stupidly to gain a woman's favor." • Cesare Gonzaga replied: "Nor so stupidly as a gentleman I remember, of some repute, whom to spare men's blushes I don't wish to mention by name." • "Well, at least tell us what he did," said the Duchess. • Then Cesare continued: "He was loved by a very great lady, and at her request he came secretly to the town where she was. After he had seen her and enjoyed her company for as long as she would let him in the time, he sighed and wept bitterly, to show the anguish he was suffering at having to leave her, and he begged her never to forget him; and then he added that she should pay for his lodging at the inn, since it was she who had sent for him and he thought it only right, therefore, that he shouldn't be involved in any expense over the journey." • At this, all the

ladies began to laugh and to say that the man concerned hardly deserved the name of gentleman; and many of the men felt as ashamed as he should have been, had he ever had the sense to recognize such disgraceful behavior for what it was.

—BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE,
THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER,
TRANSLATED BY GEORGE BULL

Let us see now how love is diminished. This happens through the easy accessibility of its consolations, through one's being able to see and converse lengthily with a lover, through a lover's unsuitable garb and gait, and by the sudden onset of poverty. . . . • Another cause of diminution of love is the realization of the notoriety of one's lover, and accounts of his miserliness, bad character, and general wickedness; also any affair with another woman, even if it involves no feelings of love. Love is also diminished if a woman realizes that her lover is foolish and undiscerning, or if she sees him going too far in demands of love, giving no thought to his partner's modesty nor wishing to pardon her blushes. A faithful lover ought to choose the harshest pains of love rather than by his demands cause his partner embarrassment, or take pleasure in spurning her modesty; for one who thinks only of the outcome of his own pleasure, and ignores the welfare of his partner, should be called a traitor rather than a lover. • Love also suffers decrease if the woman realizes that her lover is fearful in war,

The Brute. If seduction is a kind of ceremony or ritual, part of the pleasure is its duration—the time it takes, the waiting that increases anticipation. Brutes have no patience for such things; they are concerned only with their own pleasure, never with yours. To be patient is to show that you are thinking of the other person, which never fails to impress. Impatience has the opposite effect: assuming you are so interested in them you have no reason to wait, Brutes offend you with their egotism. Underneath that egotism, too, there is often a gnawing sense of inferiority, and if you spurn them or make them wait, they overreact. If you suspect you are dealing with a Brute, do a test—make that person wait. His or her response will tell you everything you need to know.

The Suffocator. Suffocators fall in love with you before you are even half-aware of their existence. The trait is deceptive—you might think they have found you overwhelming—but the fact is they suffer from an inner void, a deep well of need that cannot be filled. Never get involved with Suffocators; they are almost impossible to free yourself from without trauma. They cling to you until you are forced to pull back, whereupon they smother you with guilt. We tend to idealize a loved one, but love takes time to develop. Recognize Suffocators by how quickly they adore you. To be so admired may give a momentary boost to your ego, but deep inside you sense that their intense emotions are not related to anything you have done. Trust these instincts.

A subvariant of the Suffocator is the Doormat, a person who slavishly imitates you. Spot these types early on by seeing whether they are capable of having an idea of their own. An inability to disagree with you is a bad sign.

The Moralizer. Seduction is a game, and should be undertaken with a light heart. All is fair in love and seduction; morality never enters the picture. The character of the Moralizer, however, is rigid. These are people who follow fixed ideas and try to make you bend to their standards. They want to change you, to make you a better person, so they endlessly criticize and judge—that is their pleasure in life. In truth, their moral ideas stem from their own unhappiness, and mask their desire to dominate those around them. Their inability to adapt and to enjoy makes them easy to recognize; their mental rigidity may also be accompanied by a physical stiffness. It is hard not to take their criticisms personally so it is better to avoid their presence and their poisoned comments.

The Tightwad. Cheapness signals more than a problem with money. It is a sign of something constricted in a person's character—something that keeps them from letting go or taking a risk. It is the most anti-seductive

trait of all, and you cannot allow yourself to give in to it. Most tightwads do not realize they have a problem; they actually imagine that when they give someone some paltry crumb, they are being generous. Take a hard look at yourself—you are probably cheaper than you think. Try giving more freely of both your money and yourself and you will see the seductive potential in selective generosity. Of course you must keep your generosity under control. Giving too much can be a sign of desperation, as if you were trying to buy someone.

The Bumbler. Bumpers are self-conscious, and their self-consciousness heightens your own. At first you may think they are thinking about you, and so much so that it makes them awkward. In fact they are only thinking of themselves—worrying about how they look, or about the consequences for them of their attempt to seduce you. Their worry is usually contagious: soon you are worrying too, about yourself. Bumpers rarely reach the final stages of a seduction, but if they get that far, they bungle that too. In seduction, the key weapon is boldness, refusing the target the time to stop and think. Bumpers have no sense of timing. You might find it amusing to try to train or educate them, but if they are still Bumpers past a certain age, the case is probably hopeless—they are incapable of getting outside themselves.

The Windbag. The most effective seductions are driven by looks, indirect actions, physical lures. Words have a place, but too much talk will generally break the spell, heightening surface differences and weighing things down. People who talk a lot most often talk about themselves. They have never acquired that inner voice that wonders, Am I boring you? To be a Windbag is to have a deep-rooted selfishness. Never interrupt or argue with these types—that only fuels their windbaggy. At all costs learn to control your own tongue.

The Reactor. Reactors are far too sensitive, not to you but to their own egos. They comb your every word and action for signs of a slight to their vanity. If you strategically back off, as you sometimes must in seduction, they will brood and lash out at you. They are prone to whining and complaining, two very anti-seductive traits. Test them by telling a gentle joke or story at their expense: we should all be able to laugh at ourselves a little, but the Reactor cannot. You can read the resentment in their eyes. Erase any reactive qualities in your own character—they unconsciously repel people.

The Vulgarian. Vulgarians are inattentive to the details that are so important in seduction. You can see this in their personal appearance—their

or sees that he has no patience, or is stained with the vice of pride. There is nothing which appears more appropriate to the character of any lover than to be clad in the adornment of humility, utterly untouched by the nakedness of pride. • Then too the prolixity of a fool or a madman often diminishes love. There are many keen to prolong their crazy words in the presence of a woman, thinking that they please her if they employ foolish, ill-judged language, but in fact they are strangely deceived. Indeed, he who thinks that his foolish behavior pleases a wise woman suffers from the greatest poverty of sense.

—ANDREAS CAPELLANUS, "HOW LOVE IS DIMINISHED."

TRANSLATED BY P. G. WALSH

Real men \ Shouldn't
primp their good
looks. . . . \ Keep
pleasantly clean, take
exercise, work up an
outdoor \ Tan; make quite
sure that your toga fits \
And doesn't show spots;
don't lace your shoes too
tightly \ Or ignore any
rusty buckles, or slop \
Around in too large a
fitting. Don't let some
incompetent barber \ Ruin
your looks: both hair and
beard demand \ Expert
attention. Keep your nails
pared, and dirt-free; \
Don't let those long hairs
sprout \ In your nostrils,
make sure your breath is
never offensive, \ Avoid the
rank male stench \ That
wrinkles noses. . . . \ I was
about to warn you
[women] against rank
goatish armpits \ And
bristling hair on your legs, \

But I'm not instructing
 hillbilly girls from the
 Caucasus, \ Or Mysian
 river-hoydens—so what
 need \ To remind you not
 to let your teeth get all
 discolored \ Through
 neglect, or forget to wash \
 Your hands every morning?
 You know how to brighten
 your complexion \ With
 powder, add rouge to a
 bloodless face, \ Skillfully
 block in the crude outline
 of an eyebrow, \ Stick a
 patch on one flawless
 cheek. \ You don't shrink
 from lining your eyes with
 dark mascara \ Or a touch
 of Cilician saffron. . . . \
 But don't let your lover
 find all those jars and
 bottles \ On your dressing-
 table: the best \ Makeup
 remains unobtrusive. A
 face so thickly plastered \
 With pancake it runs
 down your sweaty neck \ Is
 bound to create repulsion.
 And that goo from
 unwashed fleeces— \
 Athenian maybe, but my
 dear, the smell!— \ That's
 used for face-cream: avoid
 it. When you have
 company \ Don't dab stuff
 on your pimples, don't start
 cleaning your teeth: \ The
 result may be attractive, but
 the process is
 sickening. . . .

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

clothes are tasteless by any standard—and in their actions: they do not know that it is sometimes better to control oneself and refuse to give in to one's impulses. Vulgarians will blab, saying anything in public. They have no sense of timing and are rarely in harmony with your tastes. Indiscretion is a sure sign of the Vulgarian (talking to others of your affair, for example); it may seem impulsive, but its real source is their radical selfishness, their inability to see themselves as others see them. More than just avoiding Vulgarians, you must make yourself their opposite—tact, style, and attention to detail are all basic requirements of a seducer.

Examples of the Anti-Seducer

1. Claudius, the step-grandson of the great Roman emperor Augustus, was considered something of an imbecile as a young man, and was treated badly by almost everyone in his family. His nephew Caligula, who became emperor in A.D. 37, made it a sport to torture him, making him run around the palace at top speed as penance for his stupidity, having soiled sandals tied to his hands at supper, and so on. As Claudius grew older, he seemed to become even more slow-witted, and while all of his relatives lived under the constant threat of assassination, he was left alone. So it came as a great surprise to everyone, including Claudius himself, that when, in A.D. 41, a cabal of soldiers assassinated Caligula, they also proclaimed Claudius emperor. Having no desire to rule, he delegated most of the governing to confidantes (a group of freed slaves) and spent his time doing what he loved best: eating, drinking, gambling, and whoring.

Claudius's wife, Valeria Messalina, was one of the most beautiful women in Rome. Although he seemed fond of her, Claudius paid her no attention, and she started to have affairs. At first she was discreet, but over the years, provoked by her husband's neglect, she became more and more debauched. She had a room built for her in the palace where she entertained scores of men, doing her best to imitate the most notorious prostitute in Rome, whose name was written on the door. Any man who refused 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

later, to the amazement of his slaves, he asked why the empress was not joining him for dinner.

Nothing is more infuriating than being paid no attention. In the process of seduction, you may have to pull back at times, subjecting your target to moments of doubt. But prolonged inattention will not only break the seductive spell, it can create hatred. Claudius was an extreme of this behavior. His insensitivity was created by necessity: in acting like an imbecile, he hid his ambition and protected himself among dangerous competitors. But the insensitivity became second nature. Claudius grew slovenly, and no longer noticed what was going on around him. His inattentiveness had a profound effect on his wife: How, she wondered, can a man, especially a physically unappealing man like Claudius, not notice me, or care about my affairs with other men? But nothing she did seemed to matter to him.

Claudius marks the extreme, but the spectrum of inattention is wide. A lot of people pay too little attention to the details, the signals another person gives. Their senses are dulled by work, by hardship, by self-absorption. We often see this turning off the seductive charge between two people, notably between couples who have been together for years. Carried further, it will stir angry, bitter feelings. Often, the one who has been cheated on by a partner started the dynamic by patterns of inattention.

2. In 1639, a French army besieged and took possession of the Italian city of Turin. Two French officers, the Chevalier (later Count) de Grammont and his friend Matta, decided to turn their attention to the city's beautiful women. The wives of some of Turin's most illustrious men were more than susceptible—their husbands were busy, and kept mistresses of their own. The wives' only requirement was that the suitor play by the rules of gallantry.

The chevalier and Matta were quick to find partners, the chevalier choosing the beautiful Mademoiselle de Saint-Germain, who was soon to be betrothed, and Matta offering his services to an older and more experienced woman, Madame de Senantes. The chevalier took to wearing green, Matta blue, these being their ladies' favorite colors. On the second day of their courtships the couples visited a palace outside the city. The chevalier was all charm, making Mademoiselle de Saint-Germain laugh uproariously at his witticisms, but Matta did not fare so well; he had no patience for this gallantry business, and when he and Madame de Senantes took a stroll, he squeezed her hand and boldly declared his affections. The lady of course was aghast, and when they got back to Turin she left without looking at him. Unaware that he had offended her, Matta imagined that she was overcome with emotion, and felt rather pleased with himself. But the Chevalier de Grammont, wondering why the pair had parted, visited Madame de 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

But if, like the winter cat upon the hearth, the lover clings when he is dismissed, and cannot bear to go, certain means must be taken to make him understand; and these should be progressively ruder and ruder, until they touch him to the quick of his flesh. • She should refuse him the bed, and jeer at him, and make him angry; she should stir up her mother's enmity against him; she should treat him with an obvious lack of candor, and spread herself in long considerations about his ruin; his departure should be openly anticipated, his tastes and desires should be thwarted, his poverty outraged; she should let him see that she is in sympathy with another man, she should blame him with harsh words on every occasion; she should tell lies about him to her parasites, she should interrupt his sentences, and send him on frequent errands away from the house. She should seek occasions of quarrel, and make him the victim of a thousand domestic perfidies; she should rack her brains to vex him; she should play with the glances of another in his presence, and give herself up to reprehensible profligacy before his face; she should leave the house as often as possible, and let it be seen that she has no real need to do so. All these means are good for showing a man the door.

—EASTERN LOVE, VOLUME II:
THE HARLOT'S BRIEVARY OF
KSHEMENDRA, TRANSLATED BY
E. POWYS MATHERS

Just as ladies do love men which be valiant and bold under arms, so likewise do they love such as be of like sort in love; and the man which is cowardly and over and above respectful toward them, will never win their good favor. Not that they would have them so overweening, bold, and presumptuous, as that they should by main force lay them on the floor; but rather they desire in them a certain hardy modesty, or perhaps better a certain modest hardihood. For while themselves are not exactly wantons, and will neither solicit a man nor yet actually offer their favors, yet do they know well how to rouse the appetites and passions, and prettily allure to the skirmish in such wise that he which doth not take occasion by the forelock and join encounter, and that without the least awe of rank and greatness, without a scruple of conscience or a fear or any sort of hesitation, he verily is a fool and a spiritless poltroon, and one which doth merit to be forever abandoned of kind fortune.

• I have heard of two honorable gentlemen and comrades, for the which two very honorable ladies, and of by no means humble quality, made tryst one day at Paris to go walking in a garden. Being come thither, each lady did separate apart one from the other, each alone with her own cavalier, each in a several alley of the garden, that was so close covered in with a fair trellis of boughs as that daylight could really scarce penetrate there at all, and the coolness of the place was very grateful.

laughed and thought to himself how differently he would manage affairs if he were the one wooing the lovely Madame.

Over the next few days Matta continued to misread the signs. He did not pay a visit to Madame de Senantes's husband, as custom required. He did not wear her colors. When the two went riding together, he went chasing after hares, as if they were the more interesting prey, and when he took snuff he failed to offer her some. Meanwhile he continued to make his overforward advances. Finally Madame had had enough, and complained to him directly. Matta apologized; he had not realized his errors. Moved by his apology, the lady was more than ready to resume the courtship—but a few days later, after a few trifling stabs at wooing, Matta once again assumed that she was ready for bed. To his dismay, she refused him as before. "I do not think that [women] can be mightily offended," Matta told the chevalier, "if one sometimes leaves off trifling, to come to the point." But Madame de Senantes would have nothing more to do with him, and the Chevalier de Grammont, seeing an opportunity he could not pass by, took advantage of her displeasure by secretly courting her properly, and eventually winning the favors that Matta had tried to force.

There is nothing more anti-seductive than feeling that someone has assumed that you are theirs, that you cannot possibly resist them. The slightest appearance of this kind of conceit is deadly to seduction; you must prove yourself, take your time, win your target's heart. Perhaps you fear that he or she will be offended by a slower pace, or will lose interest. It is more likely, however, that your fear reflects your own insecurity, and insecurity is always anti-seductive. In truth, the longer you take, the more you show the depth of your interest, and the deeper the spell you create.

In a world of few formalities and ceremony, seduction is one of the few remnants from the past that retains the ancient patterns. It is a ritual, and its rites must be observed. Haste reveals not the depth of your feelings but the degree of your self-absorption. It may be possible sometimes to hurry someone into love, but you will only be repaid by the lack of pleasure this kind of love affords. If you are naturally impetuous, do what you can to disguise it. Strangely enough, the effort you spend on holding yourself back may be read by your target as deeply seductive.

3. In Paris in the 1730s lived a young man named Meilcour, who was just of an age to have his first affair. His mother's friend Madame de Lursay, a widow of around forty, was beautiful and charming, but had a reputation for being untouchable; as a boy, Meilcour had been infatuated with her, but never expected his love would be returned. So it was with great surprise and excitement that he realized that now that he was old enough, Madame de Lursay's tender looks seemed to indicate a more than motherly interest in him.

For two months Meilcour trembled in de Lursay's presence. He was afraid of her, and did not know what to do. One evening they were discussing a recent play. How well one character had declared his love to a woman, Madame remarked. Noting Meilcour's obvious discomfort, she went on, "If I am not mistaken, a declaration can only seem such an embarrassing matter because you yourself have one to make." Madame de Lursay knew full well that she was the source of the young man's awkwardness, but she was a tease; you must tell me, she said, with whom you are in love. Finally Meilcour confessed: it was indeed Madame whom he desired. His mother's friend advised him to not think of her that way, but she also sighed, and gave him a long and languid look. Her words said one thing, her eyes another—perhaps she was not as untouchable as he had thought. As the evening ended, though, Madame de Lursay said she doubted his feelings would last, and she left young Meilcour troubled that she had said nothing about reciprocating his love.

Over the next few days, Meilcour repeatedly asked de Lursay to declare her love for him, and she repeatedly refused. Eventually the young man decided his cause was hopeless, and gave up; but a few nights later, at a soiree at her house, her dress seemed more enticing than usual, and her looks at him stirred his blood. He returned them, and followed her around, while she took care to keep a bit of distance, lest others sense what was happening. Yet she also managed to arrange that he could stay without arousing suspicion when the other visitors left.

When they were finally alone, she made him sit beside her on the sofa. He could barely speak; the silence was uncomfortable. To get him talking she raised the same old subject: his youth would make his love for her a passing fancy. Instead of denying it he looked dejected, and continued to keep a polite distance, so that she finally exclaimed, with obvious irony, "If it were known that you were here with my consent, that I had voluntarily arranged it with you . . . what might not people say? And yet how wrong they would be, for no one could be more respectful than you are." Goaded into action, Meilcour grabbed her hand and looked her in the eye. She blushed and told him he should go, but the way she arranged herself on the sofa and looked back at him suggested he should do the opposite. Yet Meilcour still hesitated: she had told him to go, and if he disobeyed she might cause a scene, and might never forgive him; he would have made a fool of himself, and everyone, including his mother, would hear of it. He soon got up, apologizing for his momentary boldness. Her astonished and somewhat cold look meant he had indeed gone too far, he imagined, and he said goodbye and left.

Meilcour and Madame de Lursay appear in the novel *The Wayward Head and Heart*, written in 1738 by Crébillon fils, who based his characters on libertines he knew in the France of the time. For Crébillon fils, seduction is all about signs—about being able to send them and read them. This is not

Now one of the twain was a bold man, and well knowing how the party had been made for something else than merely to walk and take the air, and judging by his lady's face, which he saw to be all a-fire, that she had longings to taste other fare than the muscatels that hung on the trellis, as also by her hot, wanton, and wild speech, he did promptly seize on so fair an opportunity. So catching hold of her without the least ceremony, he did lay her on a little couch that was there made of turf and clods of earth, and did very pleasantly work his will of her, without her ever uttering a word but only: "Heavens! Sir, what are you at? Surely you be the maddest and strangest fellow ever was! If anyone comes, whatever will they say? Great heavens! get out!" But the gentleman, without disturbing himself, did so well continue what he had begun that he did finish, and she to boot, with such content as that after taking three or four turns up and down the alley, they did presently start afresh. Anon, coming forth into another, open, alley, they did see in another part of the garden the other pair, who were walking about together just as they had left them at first. Whereupon the lady, well content, did say to the gentleman in the like condition, "I verily believe so and so hath played the silly prude, and hath given his lady no other entertainment but only words, fine speeches, and promenading." • Afterward when all four were come together, the two ladies did fall to asking one another

how it had fared with each.

Then the one which was well content did reply she was exceeding well, indeed she was; indeed for the nonce she could scarce be better. The other, which was ill content, did declare for her part she had had to do with the biggest fool and most coward lover she had ever seen; and all the time the two gentlemen could see them laughing together as they walked and crying out: "Oh! the silly fool! the shamefaced poltroon and coward!" At this the successful gallant said to his companion: "Hark to our ladies, which do cry out at you, and mock you sore.

You will find you have overplayed the prude and coxcomb this bout." So much he did allow; but there was no more time to remedy his error, for opportunity gave him no other handle to seize her by.

—SEIGNEUR DE BRANTÔME,
LIVES OF FAIR & GALLANT
LADIES, TRANSLATED BY A. R.
ALLINSON

because sexuality is repressed and requires speaking in code. It is rather because wordless communication (through clothes, gestures, actions) is the most pleasurable, exciting, and seductive form of language.

In Crébillon fil's novel, Madame de Lursay is an ingenious seductress who finds it exciting to initiate young men. But even she cannot overcome the youthful stupidity of Meilcour, who is incapable of reading her signs because he is absorbed in his own thoughts. Later in the story, she does manage to educate him, but in real life there are many who cannot be educated. They are too literal and insensitive to the details that contain seductive power. They do not so much repel as irritate and infuriate you by their constant misinterpretations, always viewing life from behind the screen of their ego and unable to see things as they really are. Meilcour is so caught up in himself he cannot see that Madame is expecting him to make the bold move to which she will have to succumb. His hesitation shows that he is thinking of himself, not of her; that he is worrying about how he will look, not feeling overwhelmed by her charms. Nothing could be more anti-seductive. Recognize such types, and if they are past the young age that would give them an excuse, do not entangle yourself in their awkwardness—they will infect you with doubt.

4. In the Heian court of late-tenth-century Japan, the young nobleman Kaoru, purported son of the great seducer Genji himself, had had nothing but misfortune in love. He had become infatuated with a young princess, Oigimi, who lived in a dilapidated home in the countryside, her father having fallen on hard times. Then one day he had an encounter with Oigimi's sister, Nakanokimi, that convinced him she was the one he actually 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 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.

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

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 unwaning 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

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.

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.