

MISS BECKY'S CHARM SCHOOL

*Using Southern Belle Secrets
to Land Your Man*

Becky Rutledge, Ph.D.



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Dedication

~~*To all girls everywhere—you deserve the best, so go and get it!*~~

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Introduction

I was born in the South, raised in the South, and have lived in the South all my life. I am married to a Southerner, and a pretty handsome one at that! Although I have traveled all over the world, nothing feels like home as much as being here—in the South.

What makes us so special, you may ask? It's hard to put into a nice, neat little package, but I'll try. We *are* different down here—from the way we talk, laugh, and sing, to the way we think.

One thing here about how we talk: We talk *a lot*! Southerners have been said to never know a stranger. That's because by the time you make it through the grocery store line, you know all about the lady in front of you—her husband's preference for beans over asparagus, her nasty cold, and her weekend plans! It doesn't matter that you may never see her again. That's not the point. We are simply friendly, engaging people.

Now I might be biased, but I do believe people in the South are more sentimental as a rule. What we carry in our memories is different, and that might explain a lot about why we love to tell stories. What is really a three-minute story can easily be drawn out to five or seven minutes, complete with a good bit of embellishment and humor, if a Southerner is doing the talking!

I became a psychologist in part because of my Southern heritage. I was taught that people are so intriguing, and if you listen very closely, they all have tales to tell. Relationships are particularly fun to observe as partners dance and squirm in all sorts of directions to make another person happy. And Southerners love anything that is “family.”

You will notice that I try to be funny about the subject of getting a man. You may also notice that I poke fun at the South, its ways and its inhabitants. Why? Well, first, the process of getting a man is just plain funny, don't you think? And second, if you can't laugh at yourself, you are going to be one unhappy camper for the rest of your life!

I was raised in a Methodist home, and went to an all-girl Catholic prep school. You probably don't care to know this, but I *am* getting ready to make a point. There was this one nun, Sister Agnes Ricarda, who had to be 180 years old because she had been there forever! Every Friday before we left for the weekend, she would say, “Remember girls, don't sell yourself short.” Actually, I think she was trying to warn us to behave over the weekend and not to “put out.” Nonetheless, as I have grown up (a little), I think of it in a different way. Each of us has something special to offer someone else. But if we don't recognize it, no one else will either. So my biggest advice to you as you start down the road to nailing a man is to never, ever sell yourself short!

The point of this book is pretty simple. There are some tried-and-true techniques that work when it comes to getting a man, and you can read all about them here. Enjoy yourself. Let me know how you like it or how you didn't, but I might have one big hissy fit if you send really nasty mail!

Here's my website: www.askdrbecky.com. Go to it and find out what's going on—and to tell me about your experiences. I look forward to hearing from you.

CHAPTER ONE

Honey, What Is It You Want Him For?

Women rule the world, but it's supposed to be a secret.

—Molly Haskell

If you are ready to snag a man Southern belle style, there are a few things you need to know before you get started. Sidlin' up to the buffet without knowing what you're after can get you in a heap of trouble! Before you go after what you want, doesn't it make sense to narrow your focus by doing a little research? Whether hunting for a boyfriend, a husband, or something in between, there are plenty of breeds to pick from.

Relationships and men are like ships (actually, down here in the South, we call them plain ol' boats, but ships sounds better). You can ride the waves of romance on many different kinds of ships, or you can pick one ship and cruise along. But picking the type of ship you want can be tricky. Most men can be found somewhere between the Disney Big Red Boat (think twelve-year-ol' mentality) and the *Titanic* (totally disabled). So what sort of "ship" do you want to launch? Platonic? Passion with no commitment? Just a good date? A mate?

Sometimes you get on one kind of "ship" and you think you like where it's going, but then you end up going in a completely different direction. Y'all need to think about what kind of a "relationship" would make you happy *right now*. We girls from the South believe you deserve the best, and it's up to you to decide what that might be. Let's get started by answering a few questions. Circle the one which you most identify.

1. *In terms of a man's physical appearance, I . . .*
 - a. Want a man so hot that you could fry an egg on his behind.
 - b. Want a man who is long and lean, with slow hands and a soft touch.
 - c. Want a man who is cute, but no cuter than I am.
 - d. Want a man who appreciates how long it takes to get dressed.
 - e. Want a man with good genes who looks good in those tight jeans!
2. *Are "smarts" important?*
 - a. Only to the extent he doesn't embarrass himself in public.
 - b. Yes, but only when it comes to finding my G-spot.
 - c. He should be as smart as I am and he should "get" me.
 - d. Not really, he just needs to be smart enough to adore me!
 - e. Hell, yes!
3. *Is money important?*
 - a. Not as much as the appearance of having it.
 - b. Only to the extent it will cover the cost of a room and room service.
 - c. As long as we can split the tab, it's not important.
 - d. It's about how he spends it rather than what he has.
 - e. Yes! I want to drive the nicest damn minivan in the carpool line!
4. *If I could be anywhere with a man, I'd be . . .*
 - a. The envy of all of my friends at the hottest party in town.

- b.** In bed.
- ~~**c.** Watching a movie that *I* picked out, and eating popcorn.~~
- d.** Antiquing and picking out stemware from Pier One.
- e.** Shopping for wedding bands and child-friendly neighborhoods.
5. *When I'm out to dinner with a man . . .*
- a.** I expect him to cater to whatever I want.
- b.** Who cares? Dinner is only the “appetizer” for the evening ahead!
- c.** I want fun company and comfort food.
- d.** I want to be able to discuss the food presentation and what’s in the recipe.
- e.** Whatever *he* would enjoy is fine with me.
6. *If I made more money than a man, I would expect him to . . .*
- a.** Enjoy the ride.
- b.** Be appreciative of my 1,500-thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets.
- c.** Let me pick up the dinner tab now and then.
- d.** Go on a shopping spree with me.
- e.** Work it out if it were an issue for him.
7. *I want a man who finds me at my most attractive when . . .*
- a.** He feels like *he* is the most attractive!
- b.** I’m on his mind.
- c.** I’m at my most needy.
- d.** I am concerned about being pretty.
- e.** I am knee-deep in whatever it is I am doing at the moment.
8. *I have to buy a new car. My man . . .*
- a.** Encourages me to buy the fastest and hottest car around so he can borrow it.
- b.** Wants me to buy a car with a big backseat.
- c.** Is all about practicality and helping me get the best car for the money.
- d.** Wants the car to reflect who I am and that matches my pretty little eyes and hair color.
- e.** Wants me to have a car I would enjoy driving as long as it’s safe.
9. *If I got a speeding ticket, while driving my man’s car . . .*
- a.** He wouldn’t care.
- b.** I wouldn’t dare drive his car—someone might recognize me!
- c.** He would worry about my insurance rates.
- d.** He would be outraged and horrified for me, and then help me fight it.
- e.** He would insist that I go to driving school to avoid paying higher insurance.
10. *If I were having a crying spell, my man would . . .*
- a.** Run.
- b.** Put me to bed and “comfort” me.
- c.** Be there for me “just in case” I needed comforting.
- d.** Bring me a box of tissues, a stack of my favorite chick flicks, and a tub of chocolate chunk ice cream.
- e.** Brainstorm logical ways to fix the problem.
11. *For my birthday, my man would . . .*
- a.** Do whatever I want because I’m paying for it.
- b.** Grant my every naughty wish!
- c.** Help me celebrate however I wish.
- d.** Treat me to a deluxe mani/pedi.
- e.** Top what he’s done for birthdays past.

12. *A perfect vacation with a man would be . . .*

a. Anywhere that's fun.

b. In a location that requires little socializing and a *lot* of fantasy fulfillment.

c. Camping and sex—but only if we both feel like it!

d. At an exclusive spa—his treat.

e. A cruise that includes all the things *I* like.

13. *If my man had a pet . . .*

a. He wouldn't. He's too busy going out to have time for pets.

b. He'd have an aquarium.

c. He'd have a mutt he rescued from the pound.

d. He'd have a cat.

e. He'd have a Lab.

14. *If I were to meet his parents . . .*

a. I have no need whatsoever to meet his parents.

b. It would only be by accident.

c. They would treat me like one of their own.

d. I'd be his "cover" girlfriend.

e. I'd be nervous as a whore in church!

15. *If I were to meet his friends . . .*

a. I'd be bored with them.

b. I doubt I'd ever meet any of his friends.

c. I'd be seen as "one of the guys."

d. I'd be the queen bee.

e. I'd be treated like a treasure.

16. *The most important thing a man needs to know about me is . . .*

a. How to make me look good.

b. What makes me feel sexiest.

c. My favorite ice cream.

d. My shoe size.

e. What makes me tick.

17. *I need a man who will . . .*

a. "Show good" like a hog at the county fair.

b. Know when it's time to go home.

c. Have no expectations about the future.

d. Fit in with the girls.

e. Be the man I can count on to do what a man's supposed to do.

You're probably wondering what some of these questions mean and how in the world it would help with your research. Read on, read on, for you are going to see what "ship" you're about to set sail on!

Mostly a's: If you picked mostly a's, you want the "Oh my God, he's so hot, like *Matthe McConaughey dipped in homemade ice cream, I can hardly breathe because if I do I might go into cardiac arrest!*" ship. Girls, this is what I like to call your eye candy. You've heard of men who have "hood ornaments" or "trophy wives," haven't you? Well, you, too, can have a hood ornament if that's what *you* want or need.

A hood ornament is handsome, personable, and knows how to act at a party! Like I said in the quiz, he "shows good," and can work a room just by walking into it. He doesn't have to be smart as long as he can make what we call "cocktail conversation." He is shallow, but in the nicest possible way—ju

don't expect him to be able to handle any heavy emotional stuff. He is the man who makes you the envy of all the other women in the room and makes you feel fantastic about yourself. In other words, he is the target, but you, my dear, are the bull's eye! Of course, he probably spends more time on his looks and getting ready than you do, but who cares? He is gorgeous, but he is *all about you!* And the best part of it is this: Guys are like dogs, and I mean this in a good way. If one dog has a treat, all the other dogs just seem to naturally want that treat, too. And in this case, *you* are the treat!

My personal version of the hood ornament is tall, lean, and tan. His steely blue eyes look right through you and leave your stomach in a little knot. He knows just how to walk beside you with his hand at the small of your back . . . oh sorry, I'm getting carried away by my fantasy. Back to work . . .

True, this guy is gorgeous. And even though he may not be the brightest bulb in the bunch, remember one thing: He may be a little dumb, but he's not stupid. He's still a guy with a penis and a big ego, so be careful about how you approach him.

Take my friend JoBeth (yep that's her real name!). She met her hottie—a twenty-year-old man who was tall and lean—at her brother's barbecue. Steven—with a v—was the best dancer in town and looked better in a suit or tux than anyone we knew. He loved the social scene but, since he was new to town, he didn't get out much. JoBeth didn't want a strings-attached relationship at the time, and Steven was an aspiring actor (read: a waiter) who needed some experience, so she concocted a three-step plan.

Steven had a motorcycle and couldn't stop talking about it. JoBeth could give a rat's \$#!* about Harleys, but she pretended real well (#1). He took the bait and bought her a helmet, gloves, and boots. JoBeth felt “just awful” that he had spent a week's pay on her and told him so (#2). She wanted to make it up to him somehow so she offered to help with his “acting” career (#3). She would take him to Saks and pay for a Giorgio Armani suit in exchange for his being her date to a bunch of Christmas parties. It was a match made in heaven.

You have to understand JoBeth a little here. Her daddy divorced her mama when she was about fifteen. He's been married four times now and, with each new union, the ornament gets younger and younger. This last whippersnapper he married is JoBeth's age! When JoBeth commented about this to her daddy told her that “she makes me feel young and attractive.” Since JoBeth has always been daddy's girl, she decided she wanted to see what the stir was all about.

Not long ago, me and the girls were invited to a high-falutin' party at the club. As we were checking out the crowd, in walked JoBeth. Of course, she looked fantastic, but that's not what we noticed. It was *him!* In all my born days I've never seen anything like this most gorgeous, tall drink of water. We were all so blown away by him that we were speechless, and believe me, that is definitely not characteristic of us. She introduced us to Steven and before you knew it we were giggling, stammering, and generally acting like teenagers. His smile was slightly transparent, but oh my goodness, his teeth were soooo white. She smiled demurely at him and asked if he could get her a drink. He kissed her cheek, winked, tossed us an infectious grin, and was off to the bar like a beagle after a rabbit. JoBeth immediately launched into how she met him and what she was up to, but no one cared. All we wanted to know is where we could get one. And did he have a brother???

Mostly b's: You say you picked mostly b's? Then you might want the “*Paul will be here in an hour; I need more time to put something sexy together, and I wonder if we'll even make it to dinner?*” relationship. This, y'all, is your very sexy, makes-you-weak-in-the-knees lover. The sexual tension is electrifying, and you may have a few things in common, but there's not much more to it—and that's enough for this “deal.” Neither of you is interested in a relationship that requires commitment, emotional intimacy, or any other of that time-consuming stuff.

This relationship is your delicious secret. His job is to be available when you want him, and

please you like you've never been pleased before. When he looks at you, he's undressing you with his eyes. Intelligence is really not necessary here since you're not going to be discussing quantum physics—your conversations consist mostly of witty banter and sexual innuendo. And there's no need for you to introduce him to your friends—in fact, his smoldering sexuality is the very reason you haven't seen as much of your friends as usual. You will definitely enjoy him, but you don't feel compelled to explain it.

Caroline has always been a no-nonsense kind of Southern belle. She spends so much time at her law practice that we hardly ever see her, so she has even less time for the demands of a boyfriend. Until she met her “special friend” Thomas, Caroline had never worn anything but sensible white panties and cotton bras. Not too long ago, she called me to go shopping with her. I was thrilled—a Southern lady never passes up an opportunity to see her friends and to shop! You could've knocked me over with a feather when she stopped in front of Victoria's Secret and suggested we go in. She spent God knows how much money on these tiny silk thongs and matching lacy push-up bras. Then we went all over hell's half-acre to find the perfect pair of stilettos because she'd heard they would make her thighs look thinner. All I could do was stare at her—who was this person and what had she done to my friend? When I called her last Wednesday to go out for fried chicken, she was too busy shaving her legs, lotioning her body, and picking out her lingerie getup for Thomas that night. It's downright exasperating, if you ask me. Or maybe I'm just jealous. Caroline gets to have great sex, and sends him home afterward so that she can down a half-pint of chocolate chip ice cream alone in bed. Really, it's just not fair! I mean, it's been six weeks since I've seen Caroline and has she even bothered to introduce me?

Of course, this type of arrangement can get complicated, especially if one of you starts to develop feelings for the other. The rules of this type of “ship” imply that there won't be any emotional commitment, and that neither of you has to be monogamous. That leaves little room for possessiveness or jealousy. When these rules are broken, someone is likely to get hurt, so be careful!

Mostly c's: If you answered mostly c's, then perhaps you need the “*Yeah, I've been drinking, haven't brushed my teeth all day, and my face is still in the cabinet, but sure—come on over*”-ship. This, my friends, is the “buddy with benefits.” First and foremost, he is a friend. If you are needy, he can be counted on to be there for you with a pint of your favorite Ben and Jerry's in tow. He's practical, he worries about you, and he has no unrealistic expectations about your relationship. The two of you can stay home and watch a movie, or you can hang out with friends. Your friendship is based on equality, so you each pay your own way. His friends consider you to be “one of the guys.” You can ask him if your butt looks big in your new jeans and he'll actually tell you the truth. Sounds a little boring? Think again. This relationship *does* have benefits, if you know what I mean. The sex is not a one-night stand. While it doesn't always have to be particularly hot, it's usually easy and comforting. Sex is not an issue in this relationship, but it's not a problem, either. There's simply no obligation to have sex but, if you do, there's no guilt.

Bob and Mary Kate have been friends since college. They have been through a lot together, and their friendship is more important than lemonade and sunshine. Bob has nursed Mary Kate through several breakups that she didn't handle particularly well. He recounted to us that after one boyfriend dumped her, she didn't bathe for a week, never changed her clothes, and her hair was so matted he had to help her cut some of the lumps out! But he was there and never left her, bless his soul. They have even vacationed together. Bob's parents include Mary Kate in get-togethers and have even designated one of the bedrooms in their house as her “home away from home.” The sex between them is not frequent, but it has been a part of their relationship off and on for years. The only problem is when one of them is dating. Bob and Mary Kate continue their friendship whether they are in other relationships.

or not, and, of course, they don't have sex when dating other people. But many potential "keeper" have been intimidated by their bond and find it hard to compete. I mean, just imagine being Bob's new girlfriend, going to dinner to meet his buddy, Mary Kate. Over appetizers, they share inside jokes and finish each other's sentences. When you finally get the gumption to jump in and try saying something witty, Mary Kate gives Bob the "Where inarnation did you find this one?" look.

I must warn you, however. This type of relationship can become so comfortable that you don't want to look for another relationship. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but be sure you aren't settling for "Mr. Okay for Now" just because it's easier than getting out there and finding "Mr. Right."

Mostly d's: For those of you who picked mostly d's, it sounds like you're on the "*Girlfriend, let's go out for margaritas and then we'll shop for antiques and look at boys!*"-ship. Every Southern gentleman knows the value of having a fabulous gay friend. It's the second best thing next to having a beautiful girlfriend. Although it might be a stereotype, most gay men I know love to have lunch, shop, gossip, and are endlessly fascinated by your hair color, your waxing rituals, your shoes, and your jewelry. His companionship is immeasurable, and he always finds you funny. His friends think you are positive, fabulous, and when you're with him, you're a true queen bee! On the few occasions you've met his ultraconservative parents, you've found yourself pretending that your relationship with him is something different, but you don't mind doing a favor for a friend. When you are down to the last bit of spare change in the bottom of your spent-too-much-on-it-but-had-to-have-it Kate Spade, he'll always pick up the tab. Other times, you pay the way. It is a nonstop adoration fest between the two of you!

My niece, Kelly, had a best friend named Sebastian while she lived in New York City. They had this instant connection. They spent all of their nonworking time shopping, eating at all of the best restaurants, going to the theater, and of course, checking out the hot guys. Sebastian sent her flowers for no reason—and she didn't even have to shave her legs! The relationship was blissful—that is, until Sebastian had the nerve to find the love of his life! Kelly was thrilled for him, but she had a hard time coming to terms with the fact that in order for Sebastian to have a successful relationship with his boyfriend, it meant he had to "break up" with her first. So be warned, if you are looking for a life of happiness with your gay man. The popular saying "All the good men are either taken or gay" will surely prove it to be true. Except in your case, the good men will be taken *and* gay!

Mostly e's: If you picked mostly e's, you probably want a more permanent arrangement: the "*I can see us growing old together, rocking on the porch, and playing with our grandchildren*"-ship. This is the man who wants you to pursue your dreams and is your biggest fan. He thinks the way you snore when you laugh is adorable. In other words, he thinks you hung the moon and wants to make you happy for the rest of your life!

This is *the* mate, the husband material, the man you flip over so badly that you find yourself writing your name with *his* last name on a napkin "just to see how it would look"! That's all well and good, but remember one of the cardinal rules: Southern belles know that appearances aren't everything. The blackberry patch may be tempting, but the juiciest fruit is often found in its thorniest thicket, and often the one who is described as "just not your type" is the very one with whom you fall in love.

He may have some characteristics of each of the categories, but you find that they all blend together into one amazing man. Unlike the hood ornament, you discover that you have a lot in common. Unlike the hot lover, he finds out what makes you feel loved—in *and* out of the bedroom—and then he does it. He treats your best friend like a queen even though he doesn't understand half of what the two of you are discussing. His friends welcome you into their circle. When it comes time to meet his parents, you really *are* nervous as a whore in church!

Mary (pronounced down here as “Maaaaary”) grew up in Atlanta and fancies herself quite the high class, educated, sophisticated belle. She always dated nothing but wealthy, eligible bachelors from the country club that her parents belong to, and, if I may say so myself, she is a bit of a snob. So imagine my shock when she called to announce she was engaged to a fella who was nowhere to be found on the social register! Now, I always love a good wedding, but I have had about enough of those bridesmaid gowns designed especially to make you look less attractive than the bride! I had images of a frou-frou wedding with twenty bridesmaids in pink tulle gowns and was not looking forward to that! But I digress.

Mary met TJ (short for Thomas, Junior) when she was at a spa in Arkansas. If you’re laughing right now, I have to wonder if it’s because she fell in love with a guy from Arkansas or because she actually went to a spa in Arkansas! Anyway, get this: TJ’s family owns a big ol’ pig farm! Evidently, it’s quite a grueling business, so TJ was at the spa for some relaxation. In addition to the fact that he’s a pig farmer, he doesn’t look anything like the men Mary had been attracted to in the past. Now I’ve got nothing against the less-than-handsome man, but poor TJ. He is shorter than my ever-shrinking granny, and is about two-thirds of the way toward total baldness. He is also, regrettably, a bit pudgy. But despite all that, when I went to a pig roast on his farm to celebrate their engagement, I have to say I have never seen a couple so in love or a fiancé so attentive. Ironically, Mary has this annoying habit of squealing like a stuck pig when she gets excited. But then I guess TJ is probably already used to such noises. I like thinking that it doesn’t bother him, I’m sure he embraces the best and worst of his friend. In fact, I think he actually *does* believe she hung the moon. I just hope she likes life on a pig farm, bless her heart.

Now that you have an idea of what type of *relationship* into which you are prepared to invest, the second piece of research is to decide what *type* of man you prefer. There are about as many choices as there are flavors of ice cream, so let’s get started.

Top 5 Reasons a Southern Belle Needs a Man

- 1 Those doors just won’t open themselves.
- 2 A girl shouldn’t have to buy her own lobster.
- 3 Sometimes it’s easier than calling a repairman.
- 4 It’s just too cold (too rainy, too hot . . .) to pump your own gas.
- 5 It keeps my mama from asking too many questions.

CHAPTER TWO

Separating the Possums from the Bunnies

Only a Southerner both knows and understands the difference between a redneck, a good ol' boy, and po' white trash.

—Anonymous

There are about as many types of men as there are furry little creatures on this great, green earth. Big ones, short ones, fat and skinny, stupid and wise, rich and poor. Speaking of rich and poor, let me tell you what Southern mothers have taught their daughters: It's just as easy to fall in love with a rich man as a poor man. On the other hand, the same mothers might tell you that when you marry money, "you earn every penny of it!"

Anyway, out of that wide, vast herd of men out there, you have to know what kind of man you are *not* attracted to, so you can slim your pickin's to a more manageable size. Figuring out a man is like nailing jelly to a tree, so I enlisted a couple of my girlfriends, with the promise of free drinks, to come up with our Southern favorites. Now you need to know I mean no disrespect to any particular man, but we have to be able to label them somehow, so please excuse me if I offend anyone. I'm willing to betcha that wherever you live, you can identify some of these guys.

There is an important little lesson I must impart to you before going any further. In the South, little girls are taught that the way to spot a good man (a.k.a. "good husband material") is to check out how he treats his mama. Most of us laughed at that when we were too young to know better, but we learned our lesson later on.

Why do you need to know how to separate a great man from a not-so-great one? First, so you can better define what you want. Second and most important, you'll be able to look at a man, size him up rather quickly, and know whether you want to avoid him or get closer. So while I'm giving you a primer on the types of men out there, I'll also explain to you their relationships to their mamas and you can see firsthand that, dang it, this mama-rule *was* right!

THE REDNECK

Wade is a fine example of our first specimen—a **Redneck**. While Wade might be country as turnip green, he doesn't have to live in the country to belong to this herd. The Redneck has no time for listening to others and what they think, and he's not out to impress anyone or put on airs. With the Redneck, what you see is what you get. This is the guy who has a fierce loyalty to the Old South, and expresses his pride by displaying the Rebel flag prominently somewhere on his truck. He loves women, and, to prove it, he'll probably have a chrome metal female cutout on his mud flaps. He has adopted his views on things based on what he was taught, so he doesn't have the sense God gave him to have an independent thought, bless his soul. He sees himself as a God-fearing man but has little tolerance for anyone who isn't like him.

His idea of high fashion is to wear white socks with every outfit along with a camouflage shirt from the sporting goods store. His jeans don't fit quite right, and if you're lucky (or not), when he bends over you can see almost all the way to Texas. He buys his underwear in threepacks (\$8.95) from the

local Wal-Mart, and the “spit can” for his Redman chew is never far from his side when he’s driving. The Redneck isn’t concerned with superficial outside appearances. He doesn’t own a suit. He cleans his nails with a pocketknife.

A Redneck treats his mama with respect, but he was raised by his daddy to know that the man is the King of the House, and he lives strictly by this rule. His mama was the type who stayed home and took care of everything while Daddy was at work. She expected dinner to be on the table at a certain hour and wanted everyone present. She always had the laundry and housework done before Daddy got home, and when he arrived, the TV remote was set right next to the Naugahyde recliner along with a cold beer. Mama did most of the raising of those little hellions on her own. Most of her discipline came in the form of, “Joe Ray, you better get your butt in here or I’ll have to tell your daddy.”

The Redneck adheres to the Southern expression of “Just ’cause I made it don’t mean you can spend it.” He won’t think twice about buying a \$6,000 four-wheeler but he’ll give you hell for wasting three bucks on an electric can opener. Even if he could help it, he wouldn’t see the need for change and that means you can’t change him, either. Ladies, this guy is set in his ways, and if you can love him for that, then you’ll do okay.

So what can you expect from your very own Redneck? I’m not saying he’ll be mean because he won’t, but he doesn’t have much of a feminine side. It’s not his fault—he just doesn’t know any better. He’ll expect you to be as excited as he is about his deer hunting, fishing, new wide-screen TV, and whatever happened at work that day. When you don’t show gushing enthusiasm, he won’t get it. He just doesn’t understand the difference between the sexes at all. His idea of romance is to grab you from behind and mutter, “Hey, baby, how ’bout some sugar?” On your anniversary, he’ll proudly present you with a matching set of camouflage bra and panties. Girls, he ain’t paying attention to the stuff and you’d be better off not to expect much else from him. One other thing, he is the jealous type—he doesn’t want to see you dancing, talking, or looking in the direction of another man. You belong to him and no one else should mess with his honey!

Don’t get me wrong—he’s difficult, but just because he’s difficult doesn’t mean he’s a bad guy. But he’s definitely not the type of guy a girl with “high society” on her mind will go for. The Redneck is exactly how he presents himself to you. He’s not full of surprises so, if this works for you, he may be perfect. He will love *you*, but all that other stuff—fancy panties and jewelry—just doesn’t matter.

THE GOOD OL’ BOY

My friend, Big L is a **Good Ol’ Boy**. I’ve known Big L for years and he hasn’t changed a whit. His needs are simple: if given the choice, he’d rather be hunting or fishing. One of his favorite destinations is the Bass Pro Shop. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with Bass Pro, it is a humongous sporting goods store where you can buy anything you can imagine for the fisherman, hunter, and camper. If they don’t have it, you don’t need it. Anyway, this man is more comfortable outside communing with nature and the boys. At any other time, he prefers to stay around home. You won’t find him anywhere near the kitchen. He prefers to stay in the background while his wife, Darlene, takes care of the company, doing girlie duties like servin’ up the appetizers and making small talk. But he can build one helluva fire, and that man can cook the most melt-in-your-mouth steaks on the grill.

Big L eats with his mouth closed, but he hasn’t mastered keeping his elbows off the table and refraining from shoveling his food in like a pig at the trough. His views of women fall on the traditional side. He prefers a gal who isn’t flashy and who is happy pursuing whatever makes her little heart sing! But I have to give Big L credit. While the redneck could care less what others think unless

it agrees with what *he* thinks, a Good Ol' Boy *will* listen to what others say, and he will offer up his own opinion when the occasion arises. Big L has a good heart and, under the right conditions, I've seen his tough exterior melt.

Believe it or not, Big L has an extremely deep, but private, relationship with his wife, Darlene. He adores her. But Darlene knows the true secret to making it work with a Good Ol' Boy: While she can influence him, she *can't* change him. You gotta love Big L because there's really nothing not to love.

As you might suspect, Big L reveres his mama. And any man who reveres his mama will probably feel the same about you. For a Good Ol' Boy, meeting a woman as terrific as you are is a big surprise. He simply cannot believe his good fortune. Unlike the Redneck, he is much more thoughtful, more doting, and more aware of the treasure he has in you.

Your independence and fiery spirit is admired by men like Big L. He will see you as the epitome of womanhood just like his mama. In this relationship, it's okay for you to have a career. The Good Ol' Boy will be respectful of that and even supportive. He just won't be that into hearing about it or gushing about giving you advice. He is way more proud of your domestic prowess!

THE RABBLE ROUSER

My friend Lilly dates Johnny. He is what we call a **Rabble Rouser**. Fun is his top priority. He's an acceptable dresser, and is somewhat smart. He likes things mostly clean and orderly, but his favorite activity is raisin' hell. Johnny stays out all weekend with the boys, but during the week he's home with Lilly. Although his carousing makes her madder than a hornet, she can't help but like him because he's full of excitement and mischief. He keeps a tab at the local bar in their neighborhood and he's been known to jump behind the counter and serve up the beer for his buddies. He's also the one who's always yelling for some Lynyrd Skynyrd music. He's not happy unless there is a little trouble brewing somewhere and rules are being broken. He's a practical joker—he's the one with the remote-control fart machine, who'll use it at the most inopportune time!

Johnny loves a party and is usually smack-dab in the middle of it, drunker than Cooter Brown. Every year he's at the Grove in Oxford, Mississippi, for the Ole Miss/Mississippi State game, and his tailgating parties are legendary. His antics and running wild are not intended to hurt Lilly, but he can't seem to control himself. Why does Lilly put up with him? Because she can't resist his little-boy grin and his easy charm. He may never grow up, but hell's fire, he sure is a lot of fun! And, when he is with Lilly, she gets to be the center of his universe, and he treats her like a queen.

So what can you expect if you're this guy's gal? A Rabble Rouser is the type of guy for whom Mother's Day was created. The only reason he remembers Mother's Day or her birthday is because his little sister reminds him. Don't get me wrong, he loves his mama but, if it's not all about him, the day isn't on his radar. So he goes through the motions and gets the flowers, the perfect Hallmark card, and whatever else he is "supposed to do." His mama forgives his attempts at thoughtfulness with a sigh and a smile because in the South, everyone knows that "boys will be boys."

A Rabble Rouser *will* treat *you* well, but when you're absent, it's out of sight, out of mind. He is a "in the moment" kind of boy, so whatever is happening is what's on his mind. If you want him to remember where you went on your first date and when you had your first kiss, you'll have to remind him yourself. He might recall the month of your birthday, but the exact date will escape him. And don't get your panties in a wad when he *does* have the memory for the date of the next Ole Miss/State game or who won the last five NASCAR races. It's just his way, and if you're planning on sticking with him for the long term, you'll have to get used to it.

If you are hell-bent on being with a Rabble Rouser, remember one thing: At heart, he is just

twelve-year-old who wants to have fun. That means you will have to take care of him and, if you want anything done, you'll most likely have to do it yourself. While that can be frustrating as hell, you have to look at the flip side to put up with him. Life with him will be unpredictable, exciting, and a real joyride.

THE LONE WOLF

The **Lone Wolf** is a guy who is somewhat unattainable, but very attractive in a dangerous sort of way. He is self-absorbed and aloof—a real challenge for some girls. This guy has PMS just like we do. He's intense, and when things are going his way, he'll take you to the moon! But—and there's always a “but” with the Lone Wolf—he's moody. If things don't go his way, he can be pure hell to be around.

My friend Mimi is involved with Beau, a musician in a local band. There is something sort of artistic and mysterious about him. Since she's started dating Beau, Mimi has changed before our very eyes. Why, in the past, she'd never seen the point of poetry because to her, “It's just a bunch of mumbo jumbo and people tryin' to look smart.” Suddenly, if Beau wants to go to hear a poetry reading, Mimi wants to go, too. He has a tattoo, so she got one. You should've seen her mama's face when she walked in with a butterfly the size of a dollar sitting right there above her butt! Anyway, a Lone Wolf expects you to do what he does, love what he likes. This is fine with Mimi because she never did have many independent thoughts. Beau is not very sociable and isn't interested in meeting any of Mimi's friends.

A Lone Wolf's mother was absent from his life in one way or the other. She might have been dead or she might have been so preoccupied with the relationship with her husband that she barely had time for her children. The female in this child's life might have been a stepmother who didn't have the heart or knack for raising a kid. The bond with the major female in his childhood might be described as a “love/hate” kind of thing. He was never exposed to a healthy male/female relationship. Therefore, he had to come up with his own idea of what women are like, what they want, and how they figure into his life.

A word of caution about the Lone Wolf must be offered here. A Lone Wolf is only comfortable in *his* world, on his turf. Even if you manage to attract and snag a Lone Wolf, it may not last long because there's no room for personal growth. If you decide to become a chameleon and take on his interests, you'd better not outdo him because he can't handle the competition. Then, if you want to do something different from what he wants, he will look at your pursuits with disdain and superiority. So as long as you want to stay in the same spot, never really changing, never really growing, this is the man for you.

I am not trying to scare you away from your Lone Wolf if that's what you want. All I'm saying here is that he is conflicted about women, and is likely to treat you according to how he feels that day. So my advice is pretty simple: either lower your expectations or run!

THE MAMA'S BOY

This guy is extremely loyal, and understands the importance of respecting the women in his life. He is a great guy, really, but he comes with some tough, leathery baggage—his mother.

You see, a **Mama's Boy** has been taught by his mama that his “s*&# don't stink.” He believes he and she will never be replaced by another woman in his life. He has grown up accustomed to constant adoration and mothering. He'd be damn near anal about his own life if not for one thing: A Mama's Boy expects his *mother* to show up and do all the cleaning and organizing for him. It's probably not

surprise that his mama has run off many a girl that he liked because, after all, she knew better how to take care of him, how to fix his favorite meal, and how he is the symbol of perfection to which everyone else, when compared, falls short. Perhaps the most dangerous thing about dating a mama's boy is that no matter what, in his mama's eyes, nothing a Mama's Boy does wrong is ever his fault. And that means if you're thinking of having a long-term relationship with him, a lot of the disagreements will be two on one—him and his mama against you!

My good friend Peter is a Mama's Boy who lives over his mama's garage apartment. When he met Anna, she was everything he'd dreamed of, and he told me he thought she was *the one*. "Have you introduced her to your mother yet?" I asked Peter this because I knew what a formidable force she could be. (She only met me once a few years ago and quickly informed him that under no circumstances did I measure up to her adorable boy.) No, he responded, he'd been much too busy. That was code for "Hell, no, 'cause if I did, Anna would be history!" Given the way his mother treated past girlfriends, you can't blame him for being terrified.

A Southern woman knows and accepts the importance of family, especially mothers. She's family-oriented and she's been credited for raising this wonderful, if not perfect, man. He gets his validation from his mother, and is not expected to do a thing in their relationship. He truly doesn't get why all of his relationships with women can't be this easy because, after all, he's been taught that the sun rises and sets with him! His mother is totally in control of their relationship, and his end of the bargain is to make a big to-do over her when it counts—her birthday, anniversary, holidays, and so on.

If you are in love with a Mama's Boy, at first you might expect that his mama won't be first place anymore now that you're in the picture. But honey, it just doesn't work that way. A Mama's Boy typically doesn't get that he must accommodate two women in his life, and so he doesn't take the necessary steps to nip any potential trouble in the bud. You will be expected to idolize him just as his mother does. You will always have to compete with Mama, which makes for a terribly difficult situation where no one wins. The best you can hope for is to make points with his mama and one sure way to do it is to let her continue to be number one—or at least let her *think* she is—so that she won't feel threatened.

With that said, although Anna loved her Mama's Boy dearly, it became evident very early on that there were three people in that relationship, and there would continue to be until one of them died. Anna wasn't sure she could stick it out that long. Peter's family had a reputation for living well in their nineties!

So if you are attracted to a Mama's Boy, just know that while he may be crazy about you, it will be crucial that Mama likes you, too, because you'll be spending lots of time together. They say "three's a crowd," but when it comes to a Mama's Boy, it's just the way it is!

THE SERIAL DATER

The **Serial Dater** is one hotbed of competition, but what he's really doing is competing with himself. This guy is never satisfied, moving from one woman to the next. Every woman is a potential challenge for him.

Take Richard, for example. Richard is not really my friend, but more of an acquaintance of mine because he can't really be friends with women—mostly because he always winds up dating them. He thinks he's the expert on women and what they want. What's funny is that he always seems to know the wants and needs of all the women in the world—except for the one he's currently got!

Even though he says he wants to settle down, Richard never seems able to be satisfied with the sight of his trophy. Last summer, he was dating Tiffany, the most gorgeous thing you've ever laid eyes on

Her shiny brown hair was perfectly coiffed, and she had legs that went on forever! Richard confirmed that Tiffany was indeed really hot, but was “so dumb she needed instructions to climb a ladder.” So he moved on to Linda who was not only beautiful, but also number one in her medical school class. You’re thinking that finally it looks as though Richard met his perfect match, right? Oh, no ma’am—that would be too easy. It seems that Richard now wants a woman who has her own money and doesn’t need his—now he wants beautiful, smart, and *rich*. Are you getting my point? This is a man who cannot be trusted and who perhaps doesn’t really know what he wants, despite all his big talk. While women see this sort of man as a challenge, a man they can tame or fix, don’t fall into the trap of the Serial Dater! There’s a saying my friend Sally used to repeat: “There will always be more silk blouses.” The Serial Dater wants someone who is pretty, smart, nice, rich, successful, fit . . . you get the idea. He wants a woman to be all of these things and once he realizes she isn’t (because, let’s face it, no one is perfect), then he will go lookin’ for another silk blouse.

If you’re still hell-bent on having him, just remember that you might just be practice for the next “Miss Perfect” he thinks up! So if you’re up for it, simply enjoy the ride until *he’s* ready for it to be over.

How did the Serial Dater get this way? His mama was all about appearances—mainly her own. She’d spend God knows how much money and time getting herself all dolled up for the country club dance, but didn’t care what her child had to wear to his Homecoming Dance. Her life revolved around her social events, not her children. As a boy, the Serial Dater wanted what his friends had. He wanted a mama as pretty as Toby’s who went to all of his football games. He wanted a mama as smart as Jack’s who always helped with school projects and was probably the reason Jack won the Science Fair every year! He wanted a mama who could cook like Junior’s, who always fed all the boys when they went to her house.

So no wonder a Serial Dater always thinks the grass is greener, or there are more “silk blouses.” He came up with a fantasy woman based a little on his mama, but a whole lot more on his friends’ moms. He truly believes there is a perfect woman out there and will search ad infinitum ’til he finds her.

THE PREP

A close relative of the Mama’s Boy is the **Prep**. He is always a part of the herd, but never really the leader. In other words, if everybody else is jumping off into that big, dirty ol’ Mississippi River, he’ll do it, too, but never first! Appearances matter immensely, and he is consumed by his own. The only reason he is concerned about a woman’s appearance is because he sees it as a reflection of his own taste.

My favorite Prep friend is Preston III. But you have to say Preston *the* Third because it sounds so much more pretentious than it ought to that way. You also have to understand that this is generational. His dad has been introducing him as “Preston *the* Third” since he was born. He is a trust fund baby who doesn’t have his grandfather’s money yet, but knows it’ll be his one day. He has been taught that cowshit is cowshit whether it comes with a college degree or not—the only difference is he thinks his smells better!

Preston buys Polo and Izod shirts—he’s plumb naked without a logo on his chest—and his loafers are always polished. His khakis are starched with a formidable crease on each leg. He has a near-nondescript haircut, but displays no individual personal style. He drives the “in” car, and always knows the most high-falutin’ restaurant to dine in or the most posh club for dancing. At the country club, Preston *the* Third is barely distinguishable from the others in the pool of Preps having cocktails and steaks. He’s not going to stick his neck out and do anything risky or controversial. If he hears

something is classy, then that is what he does. At the center of the Prep's world are the country club, his mother and father's social status, and his old fraternity brothers from college. He's a nice guy, but he just ain't got no backbone! He's safe, predictable, and at least you know he won't embarrass you. But rowdy women beware: If you like to have a good time and cause a little trouble now and then, you might find yourself stifled by the Prep's rule-following ways. So if you're serious about dating a prep, you'll need to be on your best behavior!

A Prep has never heard his mama fart or burp. When she was young and single, she was taught to think that social graces are more desirable than, let's say, her skills in the bedroom. She never misses her weekly manicure, pedicure, and facial because what she presents outwardly is paramount over what is on the inside, and she has passed this on to her son. The menus at the fancy restaurants she frequents are far superior to anything she might cook. What she knows trumps what she knows, any day of the week. Well, you get my point. If you want a Prep, understand this: while he is a perfect, nice, respectable man, he gives little, if none at all, thought to who he is, what he really wants, and whether it's okay to stray from his zone of class and comfort. He just doesn't understand the *need* to be any other way.

THE PRISS

The **Priss** is a third cousin of the Mama's Boy. I know you might immediately think he is gay, but not necessarily. A Southern Priss knows his food, wines, furniture, fabrics, and operas. All of his senses are accentuated. Take clothing, for example. A Prep buys whatever is considered classic. You, a Good Ol' Boy wouldn't know cotton from silk, nor would he care. Not Mimi's brother, Niles, though. He can look at a sweater and tell you whether it's 100 percent cashmere or a wool blend. He knows the right wine to serve with veal. He hates wrinkles, so he puts more starch in his shirts than you'd find in a whole field of rice. In fact, Niles hates wrinkles in his life as well. For him, order is everything. Surprises are very annoying and are seen threatening to topple the safe world he has created. He doesn't date much because his standards, in my humble opinion, are way too high. But when Niles does meet his "Miss Right," there's no doubt she'll be as knowledgeable as he is, and just as predictable.

While the Priss claims to be nothing like his mama, he can't help but resemble her. The Priss's daddy was probably gone a lot with his work, so Mama did most of the raising, and she wanted her son to have the best. He was taught many things, and was assured there was nothing he couldn't master. The downside of this is that a Priss is not interested in anything or anyone he can't master. So if you find yourself attracted to a Priss, you can't ever let him know that you are more knowledgeable about *anything* than he is, because he won't be able to handle it! You can expect to have a great friendship with a Priss, but there will be little romance or sex. He'll be much more impressed with the thread count of the sheets than what goes on between them!

THE SOUTHERN HEART/YANKEE BRAIN

Next to last, you have your **Southern Heart/Yankee Brain**. This is a man who is dissatisfied with the South. Although he was raised here, he's convinced that the South needs to change and that living elsewhere has *got* to be better: yet he doesn't really want to leave. He is direct, up front, and independent minded. Clothing and other outward appearances don't matter to him because he doesn't care what others think about him. Henry is my best example. He reminds me of one of those 1960 Southern Kennedy democrats. He is liberal in his opinions and politics, and progressive about what

he'd like to see changed. I love Henry on 'count of he's the real deal. Down here though, his forwardness and openness make Southerners uncomfortable. Southerners would rather "talk around" something instead of going directly at it. Down South, there's something unsettling about being a "what-you-see-is-what-you-get" guy. That's unfortunate for a lot of folks, because Henry has a strong sense of responsibility, of what's right and wrong, and of what makes life meaningful. If you date him, you'd better be as comfortable in your skin as he is in his own since he doesn't suffer fools. If you are lucky enough to be called his friend, he will always be loyal and true. That doesn't sound so bad to me, does it to you?

A Southern Heart/Yankee Brain's mom takes no crap off of anyone. She was the mom who pissed off the other mothers after she was the first to give the household help a raise. She figured if it was okay in her mind, then it *was* okay, and she didn't need anyone's permission or approval. She is wise and practical, and a real firebrand when she makes up her mind. Her influence on her son is tremendous. She understands him as a man, and fosters his self-reliance. This guy has a very close relationship with his mom, and he can talk to her about anything—even the gory details of a date, if she asks. He is intolerant of clingy, smothering people and refuses to go along with the crowd.

When you are involved with a Southern Heart/Yankee Brain, you'd better be independent and not afraid to show it. Being with him might not always make you popular, since some of his conversations or opinions will probably make people uncomfortable. He won't sit still if you are wallowing in self-pity—he'll expect you to get up, put your big-girl panties on and deal with it!

THE SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN

Last, we've got the **Southern Gentleman**, the epitome of grace. He's comfortable in both a man's and a woman's world, and he is confident in just about every situation. He doesn't have to be perfect, but he's sure to be able to handle whatever you dish out. He is not intimidated by strong women because, deep down, he really doesn't believe that they are. A woman might be strong in the boardroom, but he knows she is just as likely to go home and drown her stress in a half-gallon of chocolate chip ice cream and the Lifetime channel.

Claire is married to a Southern Gentleman. Jim is well mannered, but masculine. He's a good listener, an eager learner, and a kind person. He knows to walk behind a lady when going up the stairs and in front of her going down in case she falls. Because he has an infinite amount of respect and appreciation for them, he puts the women in his life on a pedestal. He is protective of them, but not possessive. Jim loves to cook dinner for Claire and me, and is completely at ease with being the only guy in the room. He also likes to get up early to go hunting. He's as comfortable riding in a Porsche as he is in a pickup truck, and probably knows the inner workings of both. He loves to have a good time, but he knows how to be responsible. Jim is loyal to his family and is crazy about his friends. I guess the best way to sum up a Southern Gentleman's relationship with a woman is this: he doesn't need you in an independent, clingy way—instead, he *wants* you.

A Southern Gentleman's relationship with his mama is fluid so as to meet her needs. The approach is one of give-and-take, and he is well aware that she is the matriarch of the family. Regardless of her age, he treats her well. As a teenager, he is respectful; in his twenties, he is kind and helpful; in his thirties, he begins to be more of an equal once he has children of his own. He can talk to her about many things, but also knows there are certain topics that are taboo. He wants to please her, but will not sell his soul to do it. He will not expect you to do it, either, so there is the possibility that you can have a comfortable, easy, and perhaps even close relationship with her. But he *is* looking for the same great qualities in a woman that he values in himself. If this is the kind of man you want, know that life will

a Southern Gentleman will be better than fat-free chocolate!

Just so you know it, there are no purebreds of these categories. The various concoctions are endless. You can have a mixture of a Redneck and a Rabble Rouser. A Yankee/Midwestern Wannabe and a Southern Gentleman. Or maybe a Serial Dater, Mama's Boy, with a bit of Lone Wolf thrown in. You get the picture, right? These categories are a starting point, and you might want to add some of your own. But remember, no man will ever fit neatly into just one package. If you want a certain type of man in your life, it's up to you to figure out how to get the one you want, bless your little heart!

Top 5 Things a Southern Belle Never Wants to See in a Man

1 Nose and ear hair

2 Missing teeth

3 Toe jam

4 Skidmarks in his underwear

5 _____

(fill in this blank yourself!)

CHAPTER THREE

Picture Yourself as a Southern Belle

The biggest myth about Southern women is that we are frail types—fainting on our sofas . . . Nobody where I grew up ever acted like that. We were about as fragile as coal trucks.

—Lee Smith

When preparing to nab yourself a man in Southern-belle style, you not only need to know about the types of men that are out there, you also have to know about the Southern belle personality. After canvassing many a Southern lady for their opinions and input, I've come up with four really strong types of Southern female personalities. Now you might be asking yourself if there are only four types because Southern belles are just that simple. My heavenly days! There are plenty of distinctive Southern women out there, but I had to narrow it down somehow. Plus, do you really want to spend your time reading a book about women? We're here to get you a man, so I'm fixin' to offer up a little twelve-question quiz here to figure out the belle with whom you most identify. Please don't go off with your pistol half-cocked and sneak a peek at the answers! And another thing, in case you haven't got the sense God gave a monkey, remember this quiz is supposed to be fun, so keep your mind open and have a good time with it.

Circle the letter beside the answer that sounds most like you.

- What's your favorite pastime?*
 - Shopping, gossip, and looking at myself in the mirror
 - Reading and listening to/attending the opera
 - Taking a class or learning a new skill
 - Baking cookies for the needy
- What techniques do you use to get a man to notice you?*
 - All I have to do is walk into the room.
 - I make him feel he's the most interesting man in the room.
 - I try to engage in a lively discussion about our jobs, common interests, etc.
 - I wait for him to notice me or I send a friend over to "test the waters."
- Describe your perfect date.*
 - Dinner, champagne, and of course, a gift
 - Picnic, wine, and a romantic walk
 - Meeting at the local bar to drink, party, and dance
 - A movie and popcorn, and maybe ice cream afterward
- If you were going camping with your man, what would you take along?*
 - Hotel reservations, my eye mask, and a scented candle
 - A portable coffeemaker—I don't want to suffer.
 - My iPod, Blackberry, and sleeping pills
 - A good, warm sleeping bag, sensible shoes, and a map
- What's in your purse?*
 - Hairspray, makeup and mirror, and credit cards (not necessarily my own)
 - Lipstick, breath mints, and an emergency twenty

c. My day planner, cell phone, and business card holder

d. First-aid kit, a pen and paper, and a scrunchy

6. *What did your mama teach you about men?*

a. It's just as easy to love a rich one as a poor one.

b. Character and class make the man.

c. Anything he can do, I can do better.

d. The right man will take care of me, and my job is to make him happy.

7. *In times of stress, what puts you at ease?*

a. Booze and my friend's valium

b. A long, hot bubble bath and a glass of good wine

c. A long, hard run

d. Prayer and family

8. *What's your signature dish that you like to prepare for your man?*

a. A four-course French meal prepared by someone else, but I fib a little and say I cooked it

b. Handmade yeast rolls and a glazed ham, both of which were my grandmother's recipes

c. Reservations to his favorite restaurant, or take-out

d. Whatever he likes

9. *What's the most important thing you learned from watching your mama?*

a. Appearances are everything—never, ever, never leave the house without “your face on.”

b. Perfect manners and etiquette will take you further than anything in life.

c. Not to be my mama!

d. Cooking makes everyone feel loved.

10. *How would you handle a friend who tries to steal your man?*

a. Tell everyone at the club that she's a backstabbing hussy who should never be trusted.

b. Hold my head up high because my man would never fall for that piece of trash.

c. Move on and let her have him—there are plenty of fish in the sea.

d. A true friend wouldn't do that.

11. *How soon should you have sex with someone you are seeing?*

a. After I see the the ring.

b. A lady never tells!

c. As soon as my schedule allows.

d. I will only have sex with my husband.

12. *What's your idea of the perfect wedding?*

a. Twelve bridesmaids, taffeta dresses, big flowers, a poufy white wedding gown, and lots of presents

b. A classy affair, and a Vera Wang gown

c. Elope—to Vegas or somewhere warm

d. A big family celebration, my mama's wedding dress, and no alcohol

Alrighty then, are you ready to score your answers? If you don't have a majority of answers in one category, don't worry. It just means you are an even more complex woman than this quiz indicates!

Mostly a's: If you answered mostly a's, you are what I like to think of as a Scarlett O'Hara (*Gone With the Wind*) or Suzanne Sugarbaker (*Designing Women*) character. “High Maintenance” might be your middle name. Like Scarlett and Suzanne, you have needs—mostly related to your appearance, but needs nonetheless. You *never* leave the house without makeup and your attire perfectly planned. You have a standing appointment at your favorite beauty parlor to get your hair, nails, and footsies done. In the words of Suzanne, you're the one who will get pulled over by the police “because all of the mirrors

in my Mercedes were turned so I could see myself.”

~~While you have a few friends whom you trust, you are usually wary of other people and think they want something from you. If you had been in beauty pageants, you'd have swept every category but one—congeniality. You have your ways of getting what you want, and you do it so well that your target doesn't know what hit him when it's all over. You are industrious and in charge, and you are never without a plan. Your exploits are designed to get what you want while deftly managing to ignore the carnage you leave behind. You have the tendency to be a bit on the melodramatic side—well, really, you are the quintessential drama queen! You love a good calamity and usually you are in the center of it. You are famous for a bitchiness that started pretty much from the time you were in a crib. Your daddy spoiled you rotten and you expect the same treatment from all men.~~

Nothing in your closet is over six months old because you'd never be caught dead in an outfit worn more than twice. You are the girl who not only dressed beautifully for the prom, but also got a decked out just for final exams. When you started dating, your mama taught you to always keep a man waiting. So if your date is at seven o'clock, you'll be the one still shopping for the perfect pair of shoes at six thirty. You truly don't believe that tardiness is a problem: seven means anywhere from seven to seven thirty. In other words, you're “not late 'til it's almost eight!”

What makes you special is that you expect the best to come to you. You have extremely high expectations and thus you do not believe there is such a thing as “second place.” You know that the man who is truly able to capture your heart will love your devious, cunning ways, and would never wish to change you. That's a good thing, too, because he couldn't change you if he wanted to!

Scooter was everything a Scarlett should be. She got her first pedicure and manicure at the age of six. She only had to raise her voice just a tiny bit to get exactly what she wanted. If her parents were intimidated by her manipulating, dramatic ways, they didn't show it. Her every whim was indulged. Her first public appearance was on her uncle's local furniture store commercial, where she proudly proclaimed, “I only sleep in beds from Uncle John's store.” (Of course, this was a false prediction 'cause by the time she grew up, she'd found herself in a whole lot more beds than that!) Her television debut led to her entry in the Tomato Festival Pageant, where she was easily crowned queen. She won the Miss Boll Weevil Beauty Pageant when she was twelve. Her mama thought Scooter had a wonderful future ahead of her, but, by then, Scooter had discovered boys, and they became the new trophies she competed for.

Not long ago, I had a reunion with four friends from All Saints High School. We met at Magnolia's, a fancy-pants restaurant in the heart of town. Scooter was late, of course, but slid into her seat squealing and caterwauling about how “goood” it was to see us. She had married the high school quarterback (I thought that only happened in books and movies!), Ted, and he was the president of the bank in Jackson, Mississippi. She was in town visiting her mama and daddy. She showed me what seemed like thousands of pictures of the twins, Alexander (named after Daddy, naturally!) and Catherine, named after her mama. They weren't dressed alike, but, I kid you not, there wasn't a single photo where they weren't color-coordinated right down to their shoes and sandals. When anyone tried to change the subject to talk about themselves, she did a very poor job of pretending to be interested. So we gave in and returned to her favorite topic—Scooter. It turns out that Scooter hadn't changed a bit, and, in her case, I wasn't surprised. Scooter still believes the world revolves around her and assumes the rest of us aren't revolving around her star because we don't know how. She can't fathom why we wouldn't want to be just like her.

In the end, though, you can't help but love a girl like Scooter. She is what she is, and she doesn't pretend to be anything else. She knows she is wonderful, and is pretty sure everyone else knows it.

Mostly b's: If you answered mostly b's, you are more like Julia Sugarbaker, Suzanne's sister. Even

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