

How to Score With Freudian Chicks

by Con Chapman

Back in my bachelor days, whenever I'd hit a . . . uh . . . dry patch, I'd consult with my friend Gino.



Maybe “friend” is too strong a word. It's hard to get close to a self-described “Italian Stallion” whose conversation is composed of little more than tales of his sexual prowess and the occasional sports anecdote, but Gino was a friend of a friend and he *was* good at breaking the ice.



Breaking the ice.

Where someone like me—introverted, diffident, haunted by the memory of being kicked off my 7th grade basketball team in Catholic school for hosting a boy-girl party—would lean against the wall in a singles bar looking at his feet, Gino would walk up to a group of unattached women and say something sensitive and thoughtful like “Hey, hey, hey!”—and all of a sudden the fun would begin.

She's just waiting to spritz you.

Gino could get a phone number from a waitress, a stewardess on a two-day layover, or a perfume counter spritzer girl before you could say "Casanova." He could talk a dog off a meat wagon, or a fly off a shit wagon, if the animals in question were female.

And so it was that I found myself picking Gino's brain one Friday night after work, a lonely weekend, as Charlie Rich would describe it, staring me straight in the face.

"It's so freaking simple," Gino said. "All you got to do is *talk* to them."

"That's easy for you to say," I replied. "The kind of women I want to attract tend to be somewhat more . . . intellectual . . . than the bimbos you chat up in bars."

"So? All you got to do is adjust your settings," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Just crank the I.Q. content up a notch," he said. "And hang out in the right places."



"Like where?"

"Like a bookstore, you mook!"

I had to give the devil his due. Gino may not have been the brightest guy in the world, but he had detected the fatal flaw in my strategy. Like the Maginot Line, the fortification that the French

built after World War I, I was preparing for the wrong battle of the sexes by hanging out in bars.



Maginot Line

"Okay," I said. "You seem to know your stuff. Would you mind coming with me to a bookstore and just, like, get me started?"

"No problemo," Gino said, lapsing into the bogus Italian that was one of the most powerful tools in his charmbbox.

We paid up and walked around the corner from T.G.I.Friday's to the Borders store that had been put into the old Exeter Theatre. "First thing you've got to know," Gino said as he tucked his gold chains into the white polyester undershirt that lay beneath his leather jacket, the better to be able to approach women with the startled-fawn look that I find irresistible, "is not all books are equal."



"Ooo—you startled me!"

"How so?"

"Well, a lot of guys would head straight to fiction and pick something by D.H. Lawrence off the shelf," Gino said, making a disapproving scowl.



D.H. Lawrence and Frieda

"Sounds good to me," I said. "Can't get any sexier than 'Lady Chatterly's Lover', can you?"

"Problem is," Gino said as we stepped off the escalator, "while Lawrence is generally viewed as a ground-breaking champion of human sexuality, a lot of your feminist-types object to his attitudes toward women."

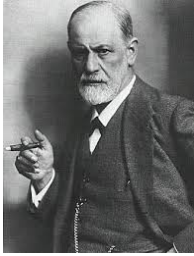
"Hmm—I didn't know that."



"Absolutely," he said as he led me past the music and video departments. "And have you ever seen a picture of his wife, Frieda?"

"Yeah, in the New York Times Book Review."

"Save the manatee, huh?" he snorted. "Nope, for my money, the guy who's the A-number-one catalyst for sexually-suggestive small talk is none other than Sigismund-Schlomo-Freud."



"Some cigars are phallic symbols, but this cigar is a Dutch Masters."

"But," I objected, "he's so dry, so clinical."

"That's why he's so great," Gino remonstrated. I was shocked—I didn't know he owned a remonstrator.

Gasp—there she is!

"You want to start things off slowly—like dipping your toe in the ocean," he continued. "You go down to the magazine rack and read Playboy, how many egghead chicks you think you're gonna attract?"

"Well, uh, none."

"Precisely. Whereas Freud was the guy who figured out how to talk about sex and get paid for it without drawing suspicion to himself. He's the master!"

I had to admit it sounded plausible. "Okay—let's do it."



Gino stopped to ask directions from a bookish-looking sales woman. "Where's psychology?" he said, his voice breaking the silence that hung over the reading area.

"Aisle 5," she said, batting her eyelashes coquettishly.

"Thanks, sweetheart." The guy just couldn't turn it off.

We made our way past biography to sociology, took a right at self-help and came to aisle five. I looked down between the shelves of books and saw—her! Brunette, bespectacled, bodacious—a bookworm's dream!

"Okay, pal," Gino said under his breath. "I want you to walk down the aisle . . ."

"And give her the eye?"

He slammed me up against the shelves. "No, you mook—you completely ignore her!"

"Okay, sorry," I said. "Then what?"

"Then, you take a Freud title off the shelves."

"Which one?"

"If I was you, I'd go for *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* if it's in stock. The title just screams sensuality."

"Okay, then what?"

"You begin to peruse it thoughtfully," he said. "After a while, you let go with a little laugh, then a snort."

"A snort?"

"Not a big one, like *unnnnk*, like you're snoring. Just a little *schnuk*. Then when she looks at you, you gave her a little smile."

“Okay.”

“She's gonna smile back at you, then you say ‘Listen to this’—and you read her a passage.”

“Which one?”

“*It doesn't matter, you stupid dinglebrain!*” Gino seethed at me between clenched teeth. “*Just do it!*”



I pursed my lips together, and took a mental inventory of my pathetic excuse of a life. I could go home and watch *Ghostbusters* for the 39th time, or I could take a flying leap off the ten-meter spring board to whose edge Gino had led me. Yes, there was risk involved, but the potential reward, a clean entry into a chlorine pool—I mean, the love of a *simpatico* woman—was great as well.

“Okay,” I said with determination. “I’m going in.”

“Attaboy,” Gino said. “I’m gonna take off. Let me know how it turns out.”

“Okay.” We exchanged a high-five, and he left. I squared myself up and stepped confidently down the aisle, scanning the spines of the books—arranged alphabetically by author—until I came to the works of the master. I picked a paperback copy of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*—way beyond baby!—off the shelf and began to read.



I could tell that the woman was looking at me out of the corner of her eye. I played it cool, opened the book, waited for a few moments, then gave out a knowing little laugh. I allowed myself a peek to see if she'd noticed. Yep—ol' Gino had her number all right.

I turned back to the book and, after rolling some phlegm around on my soft palate, let go with the most sensuous snort I was capable of. I looked up and saw her staring at me, an expression of concern on her face.

"Are you all right?" she asked.

"Sure, sure," I said. "I was just chortling over one particularly trenchant . . . "

"You mean insightful?"

"Yes—like 'pithy'—passage in this seminal (was I spreading it on too thick?) work by Freud."

"Oh really?" she said. She turned to face me—she was interested. She took a step towards me and removed her horn-rimmed glasses. "Read it to me," she said with a sultry tone.

"Sure." I looked down, then embarked upon the reading that could determine my current and future happiness, and the hair and eye color of my immediate descendants. *"What consciousness yields consists essentially of perceptions of excitations coming from the external world,"* I said.

"Um-hmm," she said, looking me up and down. If there was a problem, it was too late to fix my fly. "Go on."

" . . . and of feelings of pleasure and unpleasure which can only arise from"—here I paused for effect— *"mental apparatus"*.

"That is so true," she said, fiddling with her little string of pearls. "Sexual attraction starts with the mind—not the body." I could hear her breathing, and noticed her blouse undulating up and down. "More," she begged.

"Okay," I said and cleared my throat. *"It is therefore possible to assign to the system Pcpt.-Cs. a position in space."*

The change in her countenance was sharp and sudden. It was as if I'd stepped on her toe, or dropped a cold drink in her lap. "What the hell does that mean?" she asked.

"Uh, I don't know," I said. I could have felt more sheepish than I did just then, but only if I could grow wool.

"So, you were laughing—and snorting—at something you didn't understand?"

I could tell that the spell was broken. "Uh, yeah."

"Why?"

"It . . . just . . . struck me as funny."



She looked at me as if I were a Lean Cuisine Frozen Lasagna, when what she wanted was a night out at an Italian restaurant.

"You're weird," she said as she turned on her heel and went back to her book. I knew I'd blown it, but I tried to recover.

"Uh, what is it *you're* reading?"

"*Involuntary Laughter and Inappropriate Hilarity*" by Mendez, Nakawatase and Brown," she said icily. "You ought to flip through it sometime. It might do you good."

Available in Kindle format on amazon.com as part of the collection "Boston Baroques."

