

How to Make a Baby

by Jon Davies

Requires

1 red suit
1 cup frozen yogurt
2 sparkly hanging balls
1 palm tree
1 car, new
1 field
lowing cows, to taste

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Don the red suit, the one that always garnered praise.

Enter the frozen yogurt shop an hour early so as not to miss the rendezvous. Order 1 cup. Take a seat near the entrance, your back to the window, where you will not be noticed until after the person has entered and cannot escape. Place 1 chair to your left. Remove all others.

Eat slowly. Wait. Do not bring reading material. Do not bring headphones. Avoid distractions.

Place the box of sparkly hanging balls conspicuously on the table in front of you, to your right.

Keep your eyes open for the one you are looking for. You will know the person by the coconut smell and the gait, having shared an apartment with the person for 15 months, a bed for 14.

Repeat this mantra as necessary:

"I love this person. I will change as necessary to get this person back. This person is worth it. I am worth it. We are worth it together. I love this person. I will not let this person discourage me."

Do not entertain negative thoughts. Think on the bright sheen of this person's skin on the couch underneath the apartment's halogen lamp while you read to one another. Think on this person's laugh over the phone and on the time the two of you replaced Lin's stereo equipment with toy lookalikes, the look on Lin's face, all that shopping together the week before.

When the person enters, your heart will skip. Stay calm. Repeat the mantra.

The person will not notice you. The person will order yogurt and only then, turning a head, see you at the table by the entrance. Wave. Smile.

The person will not smile back. Do not be alarmed. Repeat the mantra.

Gesture to the chair to your left.

The person will turn to face away in a manner meant to offend. Do not take offense. Sit patiently while the yogurt is served.

As the person pays, stand and take a position by the door. Maintain an open and welcoming stance. Place the left hand on your waist. Leave the right hand free. Do not cross your arms.

The person will hesitate before walking to the door. Take this moment to explain. Apologize for hacking the computer, for reading the person's e-mail, for asking Lin to spy. Note your shortcomings, your lack of trust. Grovel in a way that will inspire pity, but not too much. Do not blame. Do not bring up the waitperson in Cancún, even though you know--from good sources--what happened there.

Invite the person to join you at the table. Do not move. Wait till the

person is on the way to the seat.

Sit down. Ask the person how things have been, how the person is feeling. Expect the person to be vague, possibly rude.

Say something witty to nullify this reaction and earn a smile. Try this: "Have you found a name for the chihuahua yet?" Wait for a response. Then ask: "How about Lin?"

If the above does not work, introduce a topic of conversation. Ask about the freelance work, the painting, the velvet chair. Compliment 1 element of the person's apparel. Ask where the person got it. If it is something old, pretend you don't remember and listen intently, unless it proves to have been a gift from you, in which case now would be another good time to grovel.

Note the stud in the right ear. Place your hand on the box of sparkly hanging balls. Wait for the person to ask about it. Tell the person that you had intended to give these to someone you care about very deeply. Do not use the word "love." That is sappy, and it is too early for sappiness. Say such shiny things are no use to you now. Ask if the person would please take them off your hands.

The person will demur.

Open the box. Show off the sparkly balls by hanging them from your fingers. Volunteer to place 1 in the person's ear. Do not put the balls away until the person agrees.

Hang a ball from an ear. Admire it. Assert how nice it looks. Suggest a glance in the mirror.

Hand over the box.

Declare that you need to leave now. Casually mention the new car.

Do not provide its make. Be coy, mysterious. Play it up. Give the person a reason to follow.

After you walk outside, wait for the person to join you. Stroll leisurely toward the vehicle. Mention the time the two of you drove down the coast together, all the way to the peninsula's end, the meal you shared at that waterfront restaurant, the one with aquariums as tabletops. What was that restaurant's name?

At the first palm tree, take the person's hand. Do not let go until you have reached the car. Open the passenger door first. Act like this is natural.

Drive inland. Drive to the fields where the grass is as long as your former roommate's hair once was. Stop. Open the windows. Listen to the lowing cows. Make light conversation, then let silence fall.

Take the person's hand again. Breathe deeply. Relax. Use the mantra. Think on the times you have done this before. When the moment is appropriate, run your hands up the body. Place your arms around the person. Lean in. Kiss.

Once suitable, dispense with the red suit and the lining inside it. Remove all clothes. Ease onto the person.

At this point, you have come to the magical spot. Do whatever the person tells you, whatever is proper. The person will appreciate it, will appreciate you, for a time.

Wait 6-9 months for delivery.

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Makes 1 baby, sometimes 2-3, more rarely 4-9.

