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More About Dating

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Dear Lynn,

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Dear Lynn,

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Lynn Alexander

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Dear Lynn,

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Sincerely,
Janey

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LETTERS TO LYNN ABOUT DATING

In this first pamphlet on dating Lynn Alexander answers such questions as: What is the right age to start dating? How to convince parents about dating? Why don't boys like me well enough to ask me to parties and dances? Why am I so shy with girls? How can I meet a girl who lives up to my ideals? Is the Church a fuddy-duddy about non-Catholics? How can I find a Catholic girl? What is the proper time for a girl to come home from a date? To kiss or not to kiss? When does kissing become a sin? How to handle the "fresh guys"? What about "going steady"?

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Many a teen-ager wonders why is it that some teens are sprinkled with stardust and others are dim by comparison. This new pamphlet by Lynn Alexander answers the questions teen-agers ask most frequently about popularity. Here are some of the problems discussed in the pamphlet: The Magic of popularity, Your Million Dollars, But I'm a Catholic! In My own backyard, What about Sororities? Blind dates, Going Steady, Hobbies, Let's have a party! Self-confidence.

This pamphlet should be read not only by teen-agers but also by all who work among and train teen-agers.

64 pages — 20¢.

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Letters To Lynn
MORE ABOUT DATING

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Letters to Lynn

*More
About Dating*

*by
Lynn Alexander*

THE FRANCISCAN PRINTERY
Pulaski, Wisconsin
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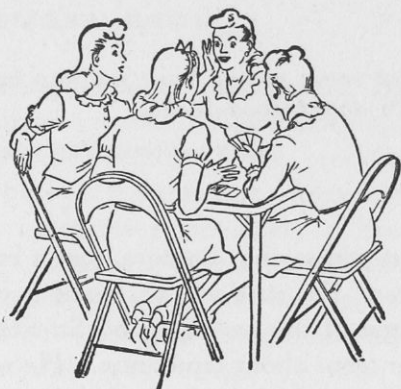
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CHAPTER

The first part of the book is devoted to a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world. It is divided into two main sections, the first of which is devoted to the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day. The second section is devoted to the history of the world from the present day to the future. The first section is divided into three main parts, the first of which is devoted to the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day. The second part is devoted to the history of the world from the present day to the future. The third part is devoted to the history of the world from the future to the present day. The second section is divided into three main parts, the first of which is devoted to the history of the world from the present day to the future. The second part is devoted to the history of the world from the future to the present day. The third part is devoted to the history of the world from the present day to the future.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Dear Lynn,

I have a problem that concerns my parents. They are so strict about my dating. I feel as if I were in a strait jacket. I am sixteen years old. My parents lay down so many rules that I might as well be six instead of sixteen. Whenever I complain about the restrictions on dating, they say, "Well, you have to watch your reputation!"

I am so tired of hearing about my reputation. Isn't it rather silly to be so careful all the time about what others will say? My idea is that if these people want to be gossipy and make up stories, they have only themselves to blame. I am a good girl and don't do anything wrong. Where I go, whom I date, and what hour I come home is my own business. I don't see why I should regulate my life by the opinions of nosey neighbors!

Please help me with this problem. It is disgusting



to think that some people have nothing better to do than to talk about good teens.

Many thanks for your help,

Barbara

There is a very old saying, Barbara, that a book is judged by its cover. I'm sure you've heard it before. Even before the origin of this saying, good St. Francis de Sales had a word for teens about reputation. He wrote, "Moreover, as the leaves, which in themselves are of little or no value, are nevertheless necessary, not only to beautify the tree, but also to preserve its young and tender fruits; so a good reputation . . . is very profitable, not only for the ornament of life, but also for the preservation of virtue, especially of those virtues which are as yet but weak and tender."

Trite and old-fashioned? I'm afraid not, Barbara. Good and bad reputations have been with us since the day of Adam and Eve. People have always been judged and evaluated, not by what they **think**, but by what they **do!** Others cannot detect our innermost thoughts. They cannot know that a situation is entirely innocent when all evidence points to the opposite. If, as a teen, you act wild and unruly, undisciplined, and violate the laws which Christ and mankind have set down as a standard of Christian living . . . how can you expect others to know what is really in your heart?

But why should others judge us? Why should they be concerned with what we do? Doesn't the Scripture tell us to judge not, so that we won't be judged? People

can't help having opinions and attitudes, Barbara. That's human. Look at yourself. Each morning you form an opinion about the weather, your breakfast cereal, the stranger you pass on the street, the homework assignment, the way Sister addresses the class . . . You react to all of these things, constantly forming opinions and attitudes. It is not a reaction to which you have given a great deal of thought. You've scarcely thought about it at all. Your opinion or attitude was formed by what you saw and heard, smelled, felt, or tasted. In other words, you derived it through the five senses. In some cases, it may have been flavored by your past experiences.

But what does this have to do with reputation? Just this, Barbara: just as **you** react to things and people, forming your opinions, **others** react to you. They couldn't help it if they wanted to. They see and hear and form an attitude toward you. On the basis of past experience, they determine whether what you do indicates a bad or good girl. Their future decisions toward you (and your family!) are made upon this determination.

Actually, you react to others in the same manner. By what you see and hear you decide whether you want to date a boy or not, whether you will like the girl who sits next to you in class. At first there is no question about how many times a week the other teen attends Mass or the type of family background or whether the person covers a sneeze. These things you learn in time. They will color your later judgement only if their subsequent actions are in accord with what you have learned. In other words, if the boy attends Mass every day, yet is seen

in the local beer parlor every night, you will distrust the incongruity and call him a hypocrite.

You want others to like you and to know that you are a fine Catholic girl. If you want this badly enough, then you must live in accordance with accepted standards. A girl who is seen in a Bikini may have modest thoughts at heart, but who is going to know about it? Even if she paraded around in a big sign saying "I am really modest!", who is going to believe it? The girl who violates the code set down for the protection of morals by staying out late, appearing in bars, drinking, choosing immoral companions is scarcely advertising her good morals. She is cataloguing herself with the type of girls who have no character.

What you do or say is an advertisement of what you are. It's like a clear window through which others peek to discover your character and worth.

Not only is your reputation at stake with the "gossipy neighbors," it is at stake with the other teens. Fine clean-cut teens who know that you do not accept or abide by the mores of your community will not accept you. You will be cutting yourself off from the sort of friends you would like to have. You will find yourself relying for companionship on those who act as you do. In 99% of the cases, they will not have the morals which you have!

The pitiful thing about losing a good reputation is that it is seldom regained. As Shakespeare wrote in *Henry IV*, "I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought." People remember. They never forget. You're like that yourself,

Barbara. You buy a brand of lipstick. If it doesn't live up to your standards, you never try it again. Later on, the manufacturer may turn out an excellent product, a superior lipstick. But you have been burned once. You have formed your opinion of that lipstick. Very little could be said to convince you that it is the best on the market.

It's that way with people too. Even after you are married and have children, people will remember what you have done in your teens. It won't matter that you are now a respectable citizen whose desire in life is to live according to the highest standards. Folks may note that you have changed. But the word "change" itself implies that you were something different than you now are! Do you see what I mean? The things that you do while you are a teen will live with you all of your life. You'll never escape them. It's often been said that what we do, good or bad, lives after us. That's true of reputations also.

The brunt of a teen's poor reputation, unfortunately, falls upon all the other members of the family. Parents are regarded in the light of how their children behave. If the teen shows poor moral character, it will be said of the parents, "Well, they can't be much! Look at the child they raised!" Brothers and sisters suffer from their relationship to the unruly member of the family. They are greeted with, "I'd like to date you — but I have to look after my own good name. After all, you come from that family, and they say birds of a feather . . . !" Worse, they cannot defend you. To do so would admit

a tolerance which has no place in the Faith. They must listen to the gossip about you and keep their silence.

Old-fashioned? Yes, I suppose that anything which goes back to the time of Adam and Eve could be regarded as old-fashioned. But reputations project into the future too, living after us. They are not only old-fashioned — they are immortal!

But what if popularity with the crowd depends upon joining them in activities which might injure your reputation?



BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Dear Lynn,

I just read your column in which you asked "if a girl stands by her morals, does she lose her popularity?" At present, my answer to this question would be "yes." I'll explain.

For years I went with a large crowd my age, and five girls in particular. Suddenly I discovered that one of these girls had absolutely no morals. The first thing that I did was to stop going with this girl. Then, the others stopped going with me. When the boys got curious, the girls said I had decided to be a "nun" and didn't think they were good enough for me. There being nothing morally wrong with these others as far as the boys knew, they thought I had gone

Two letters taken from "Teen Time," Catholic Home Messenger.

"high-hat," and I haven't seen or heard from them since.

That all happened over a year ago, and I have been the loneliest girl alive ever since. My mother, my confessor, and the nuns in school all tell me that I was right in my actions, but that doesn't help me any. The girls give parties to which I am not invited. They go out every evening while I sit at home with a book.

Yes, I know, I'll be pure when I marry, but I am only sixteen; and marriage is a long way off. What about the present?

I have to travel to school, so I can't go out much with the girls at school because I'd have to come alone. Recently, the girls have stopped going with the one in question, but I cannot pal around with them again. Their kind of fun is not mine because I don't drink and refuse to hang out in bars. I have lost my popularity, haven't I? Could you advise me on what to do next?

Yours truly,

Betsy

Have you really lost your popularity? Think about it for a moment, Betsy. You haven't lost your popularity with God, with Christ His Son, with Mary His Blessed Mother (who loves purity so!). You haven't lost your popularity with your mother, or the other loved ones in your family. You haven't lost your popularity with your confessor or with the Sisters.

You have lost your popularity only with five girls and their associates.

As you and I well know, it would have been possible

to remain popular with these girls. You could have paid the price. But what would it have cost?

First, it would have cost your popularity with all those others on earth and in heaven whom you love. Secondly, it would have cost you your popularity with yourself. And finally, it would have cost you the future popularity with a **truly fine young Catholic fellow whom you would have liked for a husband**. That's quite a price to pay, isn't it, Betsy? Could the fleeting popularity with these five girls possibly have been worth the cost?

And how far would you go, Betsy, to keep your popularity with these girls? Eventually, you would have to face that question. Teen-age girls who drink and hang out in bars generally do much more in the way of breaking down their moral fibre. It's not unusual to find them picking up strange boys, staying out till all hours of the night, parking in dark cars in shady lanes. The first time that you refused to go "all out" in sharing their moral breakdown, your popularity would fly out the window. After all, you had identified yourself with them. You gave evidence that you were one of the crowd. But sooner or later, unless you were willing to accept a total deterioration of your moral character, you would have to balk. You would have to say, "I'm not really one of the crowd, after all, girls!"

With this class of fast teens, you would never be able to find the kind of enjoyment you are seeking on dates. But rather than stay at home, you would be accepting second-best.

Believe me, Betsy, second-best doesn't solve any

problems. It multiplies them. Because these teens do not live by your standards, you would be surrounded with unhappy situations. There would be pangs of guilt about being in that bar out on the highway. There would be moments of dread and uncertainty as you and your date downed the drinks. There would be the feeling that you would like to shrink to your toes when the party became noisy and boisterous. And could you gracefully refuse to laugh at the dirty jokes? Either you would have the embarrassment of being the first to suggest going home, or the pain of letting your parents down by staying out past the appointed hour. Then the drive home . . . can the boy drive safely after so many drinks? What are you going to do about the unwanted and degrading advances? And always, Betsy, for a teen whose training has been as thorough as yours there is that automatic "examination of conscience" in the morning.

It's not a pretty picture. In fact, it is far less enjoyable than sitting at home with a good book! Second-best can never live up to your standards. It is an impossible situation. In order to retain your popularity with these teens, you must lower the moral barrier until conscience is a thing of the past. You must become like the girls whose very morals you despise!

There are many things in this world much worse than loneliness. To endure time and time again experiences which are disgusting and degrading is worse. To part with the deep faith which Holy Mother Church has given you is worse. To know in your heart that you have failed to fulfill the dreams and hopes of those who truly love you

is worse. To realize, undeniably, that you have failed yourself is worse.

Naturally, you don't want to sit at home night after night. So, actually, therein lies your problem. It's not difficult to solve, believe me.

The crux of your difficulty has been that you were going with the wrong crowd. The solution is in finding the right crowd.

There are plenty of other fine Catholic teens like yourself, Betsy, who want to live forever and not just for the day. Their moral standards are as Christlike as your own. Their object in dating is clean, wholesome fun with friends who desire the same enjoyment. Like you, they may have been disappointed by their failure to achieve popularity among teens of poor character. But also like you, Betsy, they will find that **with the teens of their own moral code** they will easily attain the popularity they seek! They were in the wrong group. They were misfits among those who haven't a care in the world about morals. They could never expect to be well received by them. Fast teens would feel that they were dragging along a conscience. And a conscience has no place in their lives!

The strange thing is that these other teens would be as much out of place and unpopular with this group whose ideals are high, as you were in the former group.

The object, then, is to find the **right** crowd. Rather than sit at home feeling sorry for yourself or enduring the evenings of loneliness, wouldn't it be better to make an effort to seek these new friends? The young peoples' Sodalities, C.Y.O., and associations at Church are a good

place to begin. Young people's civic and service groups offer the opportunity to meet worthwhile teens. Extracurricular activities at school provide excellent contacts. By associating with these groups, you will discover a wide new range of friends whose activities and interests surpass those of the teens with whom you were friends.

There is no reason for any teen to be unpopular. Unpopularity with your crowd indicates only that you are not in the right circle of friends. It is up to each of us, unless we want to become hermits, to find that right niche!

Once you have associated yourself with these worthwhile organizations, transportation will be no problem. Others in the group may be going your way. Car pools can be organized. The supervisors or leaders will be glad to offer a lift. Perhaps your parents or big brother could assist. These new teen friends won't let you down.

Yes, Betsy, when a girl stands by her morals, she sometimes loses her popularity. But she is losing it only with those who have no morals! She hasn't really lost very much, has she?

Dear Lynn,

I was very much surprised to see my letter in your column. Since you took such a great interest, I want to let you know how things worked out.

I did as you advised, and now I am very glad that I did. I have met a very nice fellow, and I know that he is in love with me. We are both still young for marriage, but even if we don't marry, I can never thank God enough for helping me through my loneliness.

Now, I understand. I know things like this happen to many girls. They are lonely and begin to wonder whether it pays to be good. It does. I know from my own experience. I am happy now and no longer will I ever be lonely. Even if I never have a real friend in the world, the fact that God and His Blessed Mother are on my side and will not leave me will always console me.

I wish I could talk with every girl who was or is in the same predicament I found myself.

As you told me, loneliness isn't the most horrible thing in the world.

The girls I spoke of are not happy nor are they popular. People began to talk "birds of a feather," and soon the talk got around to the boys. The girls are having a hard time and a sad job of living down a reputation. Decent boys want no part of them. I feel very sorry for them, but there is nothing I can do, except tell others so they will not find themselves in such a situation.

Lynn, please, as often as you can tell them, advise them as you did me. I know what they are going through, and I have learned it pays to be a "nice girl." May God bless you.

Yours truly,

Betsy



LONELY AND BLUE

Dear Mrs. Alexander,

I am writing in hopes that you will help me. You have in the past, and I hope you will again.

I am now 19 years old. And this year has been ever so hard. I lost my father in February at the early age of 45. He had not been sick; it just happened so quickly while at work. Well, right after, my mother took sick. Again, I lost a lot of work. I had been working at a carbon plant. Well, I just could not get caught up with the work. We live on a farm of about 200 acres and have 17 milking cows plus horses and all the rest. So, I quit at the plant.

Then my two brothers got sick. This left mostly all the work for me because there are only six in the family — mother, four brothers, and I. They are still sick.

Note: this chapter based on "Teen Topics," The Catholic Lamp.

Well, this doesn't leave me very much time to go anywhere. I get so down-hearted when all the other girls are out having a good time. All my girl friends are either going steady or planning their weddings. (I don't go with anyone.) They get mad at me because I can't go where they go or on the nights they go. They don't seem to understand that it is my responsibility to do the work here at home. I am losing all my friends. What can I do? How can I make more friends in spite of having to stay at home?

Another thing, this one boy I met, we never were on a date, but he talks to me all the time. I do like him, he is very nice. But he tells me that I have a bitter way about me. What do I do about this in order to get him to like me better? Please try and help me. I am lonely, tired, and blue but will listen to any advice you can give me. You see, I have no one here I can go to who will help me. They laugh at me and tell me not to keep at all the work. But somebody has to do it — outside barn work as well as inside house work.

May God bless you — love,

Mary

What a fitting name for this teen friend! Another Mary also knew moments of loneliness, weariness, and surely down-heartedness.

It's a strange thing about our friends and even those who are very close to us. Unless they have experienced the same thing that we have experienced, they appear to be unfeeling, entirely unsympathetic about our troubles. It's not just your friends, Mary. It's a universal human failing. Perhaps we too appear the same way when others have

problems which have not touched our lives. It's true in so many ways. A person who has never undergone an operation is likely to think (if not say aloud!), "Oh, what's all the fuss about? Operations are nothing these days!" A slim person thinks of the fat person, "Why does he (or she) allow himself to get that way? There's no excuse for it!" The individual who has never suffered the agonies of sinus infection thinks inwardly, "A headache? Well, why carry on so much about it? Why not take an aspirin?"

Usually, Mary, we suffer alone. (Alone, except that in our hearts we know that any suffering unites us with Christ.)

It's best to take it for granted then that **most people** will not understand our heartaches. That's nothing against our friends. They are not being cold-blooded or hard-hearted. They simply have not experienced the same difficulties.

The practical solution is to make light of our troubles, to the best of our ability, when we are with our friends. Don't emphasize the burdens you carry. Don't dwell upon them and allow them to monopolize your conversation. Because then you will be termed a chronic complainer in the minds of those around you. When that happens, even the surface sympathy disappears.

With a schedule as heavy and over-loaded as yours, it's difficult to make room for relaxation. But it's not impossible. My own solution has been to set an approximate stopping time. If my duties are not completed by that time, they will wait. Only a limited amount of duties

can be accomplished in one day. No matter how much we worry or fret, we can complete no more than that. Psychologically, when we attempt to complete more than we are capable of, we develop that "slave feeling." All work and no play for a steady diet is a sure formula for the blues. We must, therefore, make room for relaxation, no matter how difficult it may seem. At nineteen, Mary, the companionship of friends and the fun of dating should not be shuffled aside.

The bitterness is a natural result of the terrific responsibility. With an attitude of "I'll do the best I can!" and a deliberate schedule of relaxation (no matter how few the hours), the bitterness will disappear. To help banish it, a hobby can be worked in during those leisure moments. (I repeat, even if those leisure moments amount to no more than 30 minutes per day!)

The importance of your social life during these years, Mary, cannot be emphasized too strongly. As you have already seen, without it you are developing a bitter and withdrawn personality. We need friends, all of us. While it is true that you cannot date as frequently as the other girls, you must not abandon a social life altogether. Remember, too, your mother and brothers will not always be ill. In time, they will be well enough to help you.

Responsibility is important, yes, but so is teen friendship.



WHICH WAY DID THEY GO, MA?

Dear Mrs. Alexander,

I hope you can help me. We have a swell group of teens at school, both boys and girls. All of us like to date in a crowd; but, of course, we ask some special girl for a date. My trouble is that, while I have no difficulty in getting the first date, the girls won't ever date me again. One date — and that's all.

I don't know what I do wrong. I try to be considerate and show the girl a good time. While I don't have the best personality in the world, I'm considered fair company. Also, I'm not bad to look at. So, why don't they like me well enough to give me another date? The other fellows in our crowd don't have this trouble. Girls date them as often as they call up. What's the matter with me?

Also, how should a boy ask a girl for a date?

What does he do if she refuses? How should he feel about the situation?

I'd be very glad if you would help me with this problem.

Thanking you very much,

Tony

I was reminded by your letter, Tony, of the old western cowboy shows. Invariably, at the height of action and suspense, a stray character dashed onto the scene and yelled, "Which way did they go, Ma?" And Ma, resplendent in apron, yelled back, "They went thataway!"

In your case, the girls have gone thataway, too — evidently to other dates.

Assuming that you do not have halitosis or B.O., Tony, there must be some factor in your personality which is irritating to the girls who have accepted a date with you. It's not normal that every girl you date inevitably declines a second date. By the very fact that they all refuse, the blame probably lies with you.

What is it that you do? Perhaps you could check yourself honestly by answering the following questions:

1. Are you overly-awed by the girl? Do you find it difficult to carry on a normal conversation? Does this make you look like a "droop" in her eyes?

Girls are not much different from boys, Tony, except physically. They have the same emotions and the same feelings that you do. They are just as excited before a date, just as shy with a new friend, and just as sensitive to your estimation of their personality. They react the

same way that you do. Though externally they may appear cool, calm and well-poised, they are sharing the same trepidations which you feel.

Rather than set the girl apart and place her on a pedestal to be awed, why not accept her as a good friend? After all, she's just as anxious to please you as you are to please her. With the firm and solid basis of friendship between you, there will be no difficulty in carrying on an ordinary conversation. You will find plenty to talk about!

2. Do you smother the girl with possessiveness? Some teens feel that in order to impress their dates, they have to choke them with attention. Girls don't like to have a fellow gush over them all the time. They don't appreciate having the evening completely monopolized either. While they want to give you the majority of their attention, they also want to chat and dance with other friends. Are you the type of guy who gets peeved if the girl so much as glances in the opposite direction?

3. What about your "line"? Do you have one? Girls can spot a phoney a mile away, Tony. There is nothing more irking than insincerity. Most girls have been around enough to hear the line repeated like a broken record. Coming from a date whom they thought initially they might like, it's a sad disappointment. Any boy who is trying to sound like Rock Hudson or Tony Curtis is not trusting his own personality. And if he is so insincere as to polish up a line for the occasion, certainly his other conversation cannot be trusted.

It is terribly important to a girl, Tony, to be able to trust a boy. There is nothing that dispels that trust as quickly as a trite line.

Girls appreciate sincere compliments. They love them. But they are made to feel foolish if they know that the compliments do not come from the heart.

4. Are you too flip? Do you pretend to have a devil-may-care attitude just because you believe it appears sophisticated? That too is insincerity and is annoying to a date. She wants to be out with a real person, not a caricature of what you think the Man of Distinction might be like!

5. Are you a table hopper? Do you feel that it's your duty to hold a full scale conversation with every acquaintance you chance to meet? Girls not only are peeved about being so ignored, they are generally just plain unhappy! It's no fun being left out on a limb, either at a party or the dance floor. The girl is embarrassed by the fact others see and realize that her date doesn't give a whingding for her. She thinks that he just wagged her along for appearances.

All of us, both boys and girls, like to feel that we are important. It's a blow to our ego and pride to discover that someone asked us for a date just for the sake of appearances. We have the most dreadful feeling of aloneness. And we are constantly on guard against the ridicule of friends who can see through the situation.

In the same category as the table hopper (who is hopping just to show everyone how popular he is!) is the

fellow who confines all of his conversation to other boys. He has interests in common with them, sure. But it is not fair to the girl to have to sit and listen all evening to shop talk about football and other sports.

Girls appreciate attention from their dates. They like to feel that they were asked because they were important enough to share with you this evening of enjoyment.

6. Are you mannerly? A boy who leaves his manners at home is not a good recommendation for a repeat date. Again, the girl feels conspicuous if the boy is not thoughtful enough to open car doors, allow her to go first down the aisle at the movie, seat her at a table, etc.

Manners never grow old. They are as modern as you and I. And they never lose their value because they are a gesture of kindness and gentleness. They are an indication of good breeding.

7. Do you offend their moral sense? Do you tell off-color jokes, speak facetiously of the beliefs of Holy Mother Church, make fun of your family, deliberately slander your friends, or demand a goodnight kiss at the door in payment for the evening? Any of these offenses could well be your answer.

A girl of high moral caliber is not going to endanger her own morals by accepting your invitations. She knows that doing so, she eventually will be placing herself in an occasion of sin. Not only will she dislike you intensely for your own lack of morals, she will shun your company in the future.

8. Are you too conceited? No girl likes to spend an evening listening to a fellow toot his own horn.

These are a few of the irritations, Tony, which might answer the question of why girls refuse you a second date. If you are guilty of even one of them, you have the solution.

In answer to your question about how to ask a girl for a date . . . ask her in person, if possible. However, telephoning will do. When you telephone, be sure to identify yourself. Say something like, "This is Tony Smith . . . I was wondering if you would like to go to the Halloween dance with me next Saturday night at the high school." Be sure to give her all of the information right away — the date, the time, the place. Her parents will want to know the details before they consent. Never ask a girl for a date by saying, "What are you doing next Saturday night?"

If the girl is unable to accept, it's all right to show your disappointment. But don't attempt to dissuade her. Indicate, rather, that you will ask her again for a future date.

It is unfair to the girl to assume that one refusal means that she will not date you. She may have a prior engagement. Her parents may have refused permission. There may be many reasons. If the girl continually refuses, you may assume after the third refusal that she does not care to be in your company.



IT DOESN'T GROW ON TREES

Dear Lynn,

I am seventeen years old. I enjoy dating and always have a good time no matter what the occasion.

The big problem in my life is money. These days it takes a lot of money to date. I am still going to High, and although I have a part-time job on Saturdays, most of my check must be turned over to the family to help in our support. There is a little left — but not much.

I don't want to date every night, but I do like to date on Friday or Saturday. However, I can't afford to take a girl to dinner and dancing and maybe buy her a corsage. Can you suggest any inexpensive dates that girls would like?

Several of my friends are in the same boat. We'd appreciate any help.

Sincerely,
Bill

Note: this chapter based on "Teen Topics," The Catholic Lamp.

The problem of inexpensive dates is almost universal in these days. Several years back, teens had a wide selection of entertainment at a nominal cost. Today that same entertainment easily will swallow a \$20 bill. What to do? How can a fellow show a girl an enjoyable evening when his wallet contains little more than a ragged identification card?

To answer Bill's question, I discussed the problem with a large group of teen-age girls. "What about this dating dilemma?" I asked.

Janey was the first to answer. "Most boys," she said, "are a little tetchd when it comes to the subject of dating. Maybe it's the male ego. They think that unless they have a fortune to toss away on a girl that the date will be a failure. Teen-age girls don't expect a millionaire for an escort. Most of us girls have side jobs, too, in order to earn spending money. We know the value of a dime."

"And that's where the boys are wrong," Margie cut in. "They haven't learned that a girl can have just as much fun on an inexpensive date as any other. In fact," she added emphatically, "the most-fun dates I've ever had cost next to nothing!"

"Some boys are just too proud to ask a girl for a date if they are not carrying a \$20 bill in their wallet," Mary Sue explained. "Actually, if boys would give us girls credit for fairness and a little common sense, we could plan our dates together and have lots more fun without spending so much money!"

"How about this going 'Dutch'?" I asked.

Simultaneously every girl in the room screamed. "It's not the money," Janey said. "It's just that going Dutch lowers a girl's reputation. At least, it's that way in our school. People figure she has to go Dutch in order to have a date at all. Too, the boys feel squeamish when a girl picks up the check. There are a lot of other ways to handle the situation better."

"What, for instance?" I asked. "What do you like to do that costs very little money?"

The first choice of all the girls was a "Platter Party." Any home with a vacant room, garage, or basement is ideal. Each person invited to the Platter Party brings his own records. Whether it's Bop or dreamy, the evening is spent in dancing. Often a contest is held in which each person guesses the identity of the owner of each record. The person who has the most correct answers at the end of the evening receives a small prize. For refreshments, cokes and fudge — or homemade popcorn.

Television parties were popular with the girls. Several couples are invited to the home of a girl who has a television set. Favorite programs are shared and discussed. Most channels present fairly good movies occasionally, and these are especially enjoyed. Other Saturday night programs which include teen panels or talent also rate high on the list. Quiz programs are top favorites. For refreshments — soft drinks and potato chips.

Picture Parties are fun. Each teen invited brings his family album. "It's hilarious," Dolores grinned, "to see

some of the old fashions and quaint styles. Too, it's fun taking a peek at your date during his babyhood and various stages of childhood. We have laughed more at our Picture Parties than at any Martin and Lewis performance!"

If any friends have a barbecue pit, barbecue parties are ideal for crisp evenings. The group gathers around the fiery embers glowing in the pit for singing and games. Hot dogs, marshmallows, or even hamburgers are inexpensive refreshments. If the cost of the refreshments is divided among the boys, it amounts to less than a dollar. Chili dogs are a popular variation. The chili is spread on the hot dog with pickle relish and finely chopped onions, and is a delicious, warming taste treat.

Rated high with girls are the inexpensive sports. Tennis, badminton, swimming, miniature golf, ping pong, roller skating, and ice skating are tops. Inexpensive boating sometimes can be found too. And if you live near a lake or a stream stocked with fish, fishing parties answer the problem. (It might be well to take along the refreshments in case the fish aren't biting!)

Scavenger hunts deserve a second glance if your crowd has imagination. In case they are new to you, the planners compose a list of articles to be sought by each couple. Usually the list contains something like: a red garter, a pair of red flannels, an old castor oil bottle, a pine cone, a 1951 newspaper, etc. If transportation is unavailable, the list should contain items which can be acquired by walking. The couple who returns at the appointed hour with the most articles on the list wins the

prize. And incidentally, the prizes don't have to be expensive. A 79¢ hit parade record or a new photo album will serve well.

If you live near a television or radio station, you and your date can enjoy many interesting evenings by watching the presentation of live programs. Check the schedules in the newspaper. Sunday afternoons are particularly good. In our city, almost every radio and television station carries a live Saturday night broadcast.

In addition to picnics and hikes, a bike brigade to the local airfield is exciting. To most of us, it is still breathtaking to watch the planes take off and land.

Sure, money helps, Bill. But in the final analysis, fun can never be measured in dollars and cents!



YOUR BEST CALLING CARD

Dear Lynn,

I would like to know if it is a sin to wear clothing that definitely shows the shape of the body. What I mean to say is, when I wear a dress, even though the dress isn't cut with a low neckline, I still feel that wearing a dress that fits snugly is a sin. Anyway, it makes me feel more conscious of my body. Is this really a sin?

Another thing, as to the color of clothing, they always say (if you will excuse, please, the expression) that black looks sexy. There is doubt in my mind about wearing a black dress or blouse. What is your opinion?

Note: this chapter based on "Teen Time," Catholic Home Messenger, and "Teen Talk," Crosier Missionary.

*I am sure you will advise me in these matters.
Thank you!*

Sincerely yours,

Evelyn

The question of suitable clothing is becoming more and more prominent among all teen-age girls. When adult women set one standard and expect their teen-age daughters to follow another, there is bound to be some doubt raised.

If there is any question as to whether certain types of clothing might constitute a sin, you can always consult the parish priest or a local Sister. But in the matter of good taste and suitability, there can be little question. Clothes which exaggerate the feminine form or which are designed primarily to attract attention to various parts of the body are definitely taboo. That doesn't mean that clothes can't be well-fitted and becoming. It means only that any wise teen remembers that modesty is one of her finest calling cards. (Wasn't it Fielding who said, "Thy modesty's a candle to thy merit"?) Clothes should be fitted to the individual shape. None of us wants to look like a tow-sack on legs! But tight sweaters, jeans three sizes too small, low necklines, and skirts that fairly split at the seams are out!

"But look at the clothes they wear in the movies and on television," one teen recently protested. "No one complains about those clothes — or the lack of modesty of the girls who wear them!" True. While complaints should be forthcoming on much of the apparel . . . most

folks nod indulgently and murmur, "Well, they have to dress like that for show business!" These actresses also wear tons of glass jewelry, spangles, and a pound of make-up too . . . but that doesn't indicate that it would be good taste for you and me to do the same!

You advertise your morals by the clothes you wear. What more can be said? As far as being self-conscious in snug clothes, there are many popular styles which do not fit closely. The full Bop skirts with stiff petticoats are very attractive. Boxer jackets are constantly in the style news. If you feel uncomfortable in a sweater, a simple little white blouse worn beneath the sweater will eliminate that self-consciousness — and it looks perky too!

An excellent criterion for all of us in selecting apparel is the code of S.D.S. Ever hear about it? It's a rebellion, a rebellion by teens who love Mary more than movie styles. If the uprising is new to you, then let me introduce you to S.D.S.

What do the initials mean? **Supply the Demand for the Supply!** If that is still a bit vague, it means simply that teens everywhere are joining hands to insist upon more modesty in women's apparel. For the first time in years, fashion designers, apparel manufacturers, and retail department stores and shops are sitting up to take notice. The voice of S.D.S. is growing louder by the days as more teens join the movement for modesty.

Are these a bunch of prudes pushing a new promotion? Definitely not! They are boys and girls who believe that Mary, the mother of us all, is a far more valuable

model than any movie star! The success with which the movement has met to date is a tribute to ingenuity, able leadership, zealous enthusiasm, and hard work. Originating in Cincinnati, the campaign has spread rapidly to Cleveland, Dallas, St. Louis, New Orleans, Chicago, and other major cities. School-wide assemblies, style shows, speaking teams, newspaper articles, slogan and poster contests, store canvassing, and an S.D.S. tag day have all been used to acquaint the public with its potential aims in modesty.

Spokesman for the group is the S.D.S. news which says, "The violation of the very basic standards of decency in dress has been so pronounced during the last two decades that youth is faced with the grave danger of developing a warped conscience in so fundamental a matter. The incessant pressure of high-powered advertising in fashion magazines and newspapers has been added to by the development of television on a nation-wide scale. The Christian sense of values in relation to wearing apparel is being lost sight of. There is a need at the present time for a reassertion of and a reaffirmation of our stand regarding this serious matter. A pagan or atheistic culture cannot be expected to change the people's attitudes in favor of a more decent world of fashions. This is a job for the Soldiers of Christ and the Children of Mary. The restoration of wholesome standards of dress and the promotion of a new appreciation and love for the virtue of modesty, which protects purity, is the task that lies before us."

What's so important about whether a girl dresses modestly or not? The *Cisca News*, a weekly newspaper

for Catholic Chicago High School and College students points out, "Modesty with men and women . . . a natural instinct dating back to Adam and Eve covering their nakedness in shame. Not satisfied with the make-shift fig leaf 'aprons' . . . **God Himself became the first dress-maker.** 'And the Lord God made Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them' — Genesis, Chap. 3. The very first result of guilt: 'they perceived themselves to be naked' and in shame, hid themselves from God. Ever since there has been a tug of war between God and man . . . the flesh is in constant rebellion against the spirit. Those who run away from God . . . accent the animal in them. Those same creatures who know why they were created and strive to come close to their Creator . . . **clothe their bodies in modesty and let real spiritual beauty shine in their eyes, face, and demeanor.** A close relationship between the morals of a woman and the clothes she wears!"

Purity is not a Victorian ideal. It is part and parcel of the belief of each of us. It is not old-fashioned. It is as modern today as it was in the time of Adam and Eve. It explains why you may admire the physical proportions of the girl in the scanty bathing suit — but mentally, you place her morals on the ground floor. She is what we call an exhibitionist. In the eyes of most males, she is regarded as an easy target where her morals are concerned. If she fails to follow through in her bid for lust, she establishes herself as a rank hypocrite.

An exaggeration? Not in the least! When a girl appears half naked in public, her appearance is interpreted

by males with loose morals as a bid to sin. Granted, we're being pretty frank about it. But so is the girl. When, in horror at the results of her appearance, she begs purity or innocence, the incongruity is ridiculous. And it's taken as a personal insult by the boy she tempted! The general conclusion is, "Well, I'll bet she wouldn't be so pure with someone else!"

A girl is judged by the clothes she wears. Whereas most fellows will excuse the glamorous guest star on TV with a chuckle or whistle, the girls he meets in everyday life will receive no such condonation or tolerance. If the girl dresses immodestly, she is put in the category of "that type." If she dresses modestly and in good taste, he knows that she desires his respect as well as his attention.

Perhaps it is the nature of man to regard respect for a girl as highly as sex appeal. Surely that truth is borne out by the husbands in the world. Very few husbands have been known to approve of seeing their wives publicly expose themselves in scanty clothes! It is not that the man has changed his viewpoint after marriage. That admiration of modesty has been there right along!

Modesty, simplified, is good taste. It is never out of place.

As for black, Evelyn, certainly the color cannot be considered sexy. It is still traditionally worn for mourning. It is the apparel itself, rather than the color, which determines its suitability. Black should never be worn by young teens, however. It is unbecoming and far too subdued for the teen years.



WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL NIGHTS?

Dear Lynn,

Our group has a problem, and I hope you can help us. Although we are all in our senior year of high school, our parents still will not allow us to date on school nights. We feel that this is very unfair and that we are old enough to have this privilege.

Our parents won't listen to our arguments. They say we see enough of each other during the school day and on week-ends. They say it's not necessary to be together so much and that it is not good for us. We feel that they are wrong and figure if we keep our grades up, it shouldn't make any difference whether the date is on a school night or not.

What do you think? How about coming to our rescue?

Sincerely in Christ,

Bob

Well, Bob, actually, I don't believe you need a rescue.

Your parents already are doing just that!

Sure, I know it seems stuffy and senseless to you to have this restriction imposed at your age. But, honestly, age has nothing to do with it. It would be just as harmful for you to date regularly on school nights as it would be for a teen of thirteen.

The main thing right now is your education. That should come first. **What you learn and accomplish during these teen years will determine the type of man you will be in the future.** Consider that for a moment. Give it some thought. Your whole future is being moulded right now, not only the sort of person that you will be — but your career and your income hang in the balance. You want to be successful and hold a responsible position in your community. You want to be intelligent and well-educated. Well, Bob, Rome wasn't built in a day. It's being built right now — by what you accomplish during these teen years.

A person doesn't necessarily become well-educated just by attending school. Education requires more elbow grease than that. It demands that we apply ourselves, absorbing our teachings, and working diligently to comprehend the lessons which have been provided during the day. The good student does not gauge his work solely by his grades. Whether he is an "A" or a "B" student, he digs more deeply into the well of knowledge, going beyond the assignments.

Social development is an important aspect of our

lives, but it should never be exaggerated at the expense of our other growth — in this case, intellectual.

The reason most teens enjoy getting together in the evening during week nights is to discuss the events of the day. This can easily be done on the way home from school or over the phone before the dinner hour. Phone calls should not be made after the dinner hour unless they pertain to an assignment or unless they are vitally important.

As with anything else, there are exceptions. School and Church functions which are scheduled during the middle of the week can be allowed in **moderation**. Occasional extra-curricular activities such as a one-act play, debate, extemporaneous speech meets, etc. are permissible. Or, if one teen needs help with an assignment, it would be necessary to get together. But with the exception of some of the school and Church functions, these are not strictly social dating.

Time remaining after the homework assignment has been finished should be devoted to good reading, hobbies, and improving your personal appearance. There is a great deal in this world outside of dating. Extra time could be spent in exploring these many new facets.



SELF-CONSCIOUS ME

Dear Lynn,

I hope you don't mind my informality, but I find it much easier to write a letter if I don't have to be formal.

I am a young lady of eighteen years and stand 5'2" from the floor if I stand very straight. I have brown eyes to match my hair, and I have a physical handicap. When I was three years old, I contracted polio, and now I am left with its after-effects, which is a stiff left leg which causes me to walk with a limp. My ever-lasting faith in our Blessed Mother has made it possible to lead a normal life. I managed to graduate this past June from high school, and I am proud to say I received several honors. I thank God for His help.

Note: this chapter based on "Teen Topics," The Catholic Lamp.

Lynn, my problem is one that every handicapped person is faced with, that of self-consciousness. I am not conscious of my handicap until people stare or glance at my leg. For example, I might be having a wonderful time at a dance and then I catch some fellow or girl looking at my limp or leg and I feel self-conscious for the rest of the dance. Can you help me?

I am looking forward with eager anticipation to your reply to my letter. Until I hear from you, I'll remain

*Always,
Fran*

Well, teens, there's Fran's problem. It's pretty rugged to be always feeling self-conscious, isn't it? You distort the slightest glance or word in your imagination, and life becomes a continual round of embarrassments. Just about the time you think people have accepted you as you are, someone stares or asks an irritating question. Then, plunk! Your confidence sags to zero!

To those who are self-conscious about a handicap, it comes as a remarkable surprise that actually everyone is handicapped. Some handicaps include lack of education, others pertain to our home or background, still others concern our physical appearance. But in reality, each of us is handicapped in some way! And none of us is exempt from the constant self-awareness that accompanies that handicap.

Take a look at some of the outstanding personalities in the world. Theodore Roosevelt was physically handicapped as was Franklin D. Roosevelt. Undoubtedly Mrs.

F.D.R. would admit to being handicapped by not being strikingly beautiful. (Having met Mrs. Roosevelt, I can vouch that her charm and winning personality are far more of an asset than glamor!) Mrs. Eisenhower may be self-conscious about her high forehead. Abraham Lincoln was constantly embarrassed throughout his life by an awkwardness in the social graces. Take a look at the number of movie stars who have undergone surgery to trim their noses. And remember the giant of a man who was so popular in the movies who dieted himself to death? Mickey Rooney has always been self-conscious about his lack of stature, and many of his impetuous acts have been attributed to that self-consciousness.

Anything that tends to make us different from what we consider the average can be a constant source of misery. In my own neighborhood, one girl is handicapped by poor English. Having quit school in the fourth grade, she failed to receive sufficient training and constantly feels inferior to her friends. A young husband in the block feels handicapped because he came from a rural community. A newly-wed is self-conscious because she was reared in an orphanage. A thirteen-year-old is never at ease because she is overweight.

I too have my handicaps — plenty of them! During my early teens, I resembled a pillow with a sash tied around the middle. I just couldn't steer clear of those chocolate fudge sundaes; I dreaded joining the gang for swimming. I imagined all sorts of cruel remarks spoken behind my ample back. (I am now a trim 108 — nature's doing, not mine!) During the middle teens, I felt handicapped

because my hair was too curly. I could never wear the smooth hair styles or achieve that neatly coiffeured look of my friends. (My hair is now satisfactory.) In high school I was constantly kidded about "baby talk," something that was entirely unintentional on my part. I wasn't even aware of it. (Two years of debate training eliminated that handicap.) Because of the interest engendered during that speech training, I worked until I attained a college degree in Speech.

Granted, we all have something about our physical appearance or our personality that causes us self-consciousness. What are we going to do about it? First, we admit honestly that we exaggerate the effect of the handicap upon others. In Fran's case, it is more than possible that anyone who stares or contemplates the lame leg is thinking, "Golly, I wonder what happened to cause the limp?" Or, "It's wonderful how people can recover from polio these days! How lucky she was to get out with nothing more than a limp!" Or again, "It's grand to see a girl so graceful in spite of a limp!"

In other words, people who stare at our handicap are just as likely to be thinking something very complimentary! They are not necessarily criticizing or belittling with their glance. And when Fran catches anyone in a frank stare, the easiest way to make the person a solid friend is to explain the limp with a little humor. "I went out for football last Fall," Fran could say with a twinkle in her eye. Or she might explain, "The last dance I attended was with St. Mary's left tackle!" And then, she might add, "No, seriously, I had polio when I was a child.

Wasn't I the lucky one to get out with nothing but a limp?"

If you yourself are not self-conscious about a defect, other people will ignore it. Actually, a handicap such as Fran's can make new friends for her. People just naturally appreciate being put at ease by friendly understanding.



THE SEX URGE

Dear Lynn,

I date one of the sweetest girls in the world. We have been going together for about two years, and I'm sure that this is really love. Kathy is not only pretty, but she has one of the finest characters you'll find anywhere. Both of us attend Mass every Sunday and receive Communion together. We both have high ideals and want a happy marriage in the future. Right now, I am only nineteen and she is eighteen, so we will have to wait for a couple of years.

My problem, Lynn, is that when I am with Kathy, I have to fight the urge to get fresh. Sometimes it is very difficult not to give in to the urge. I don't know what makes me this way. I wouldn't have our love spoiled by anything cheap and immoral for a million dollars.

I know Kathy would be terribly hurt if I ever tried anything I shouldn't. What can I do? How can I keep from having such thoughts? I don't want to lose Kathy.

God bless you,

Ken

Yours is not an unusual problem, Ken. Believe me, many boys in their older teens encounter the same temptation on occasion. The fact that you have such urges is nature's way of preparing you physically for marriage. So, there is nothing disgraceful about the fact that nature is at work maturing you.

The fact that you are arriving at maturity places a tremendous responsibility upon you. It demands that you exercise the moral character and knowledge which have been growing and maturing also. As a thinking teen, you know right from wrong. Having been granted a God-given free will, you can make it work for right. The thing furthest from your desire is that either you or Kathy should fall into sins against purity. You would never feel the same toward each other after such a slip. You can never regain the same holiness and purity for your love.

If your love is real and lasting, Ken, you will have a definite protective attitude toward Kathy. That's an integral part of love. You will want to protect her in all things. You will want to keep her from all harm — physical and moral. You should wish no sooner to become a party to the deterioration of her morals than you would shove her off a cliff. Together you have discovered

a love that is fine and good. You should never deliberately destroy it. On the contrary, you should do everything in your power to increase and perpetuate it.

The first consideration on your part must be to avoid occasions of sin. Quite often such occasions stimulate the sex urge. That's why Holy Mother Church is so cautious about condemned books and movies. She's not being a fuddy-duddy or a busybody trying to run your life. She knows the results of such movies and books. She realizes how difficult it is for the teens to battle sins against purity after they have been exposed to stories of lust and passion. Make sure, Ken, that you and Kathy avoid movies, dances, plays, books, magazines, etc. that might arouse this feeling.

Being in each other's company too often is sometimes the underlying reason for your problem. Though you want to be together all the time, it's a good idea to limit your dates. (After all, you are faced with a waiting period of two years. That's a long time! And the urge will grow stronger during these years.) As a protective measure for both, date in groups frequently or with several other couples whose morals match your own. Group dating is often the solution. It may be yours.

Engaging in active sports is a good idea. Tennis, bowling, skating, badminton, and ping pong distract your thoughts and absorb much of your energy.

Perhaps, Ken, there is something which exists in your dates which is exciting you. It may be that you and Kathy are too familiar in your relationship. It may be the type of perfume that Kathy wears. It could also be her choice

of apparel. During the next date, keep an eye open for such a possibility. If you discover the cause in your relationship, make every attempt to eliminate it. Should the cause be something that Kathy is doing (or wearing), seriously discuss the issue with her. After all, you are mature teens. You have been going together for two years. You are planning marriage in the future. Rather than avoid the issue and endanger your morals, it would be better to discuss earnestly the matter and seek a logical solution. It is quite possible, Ken, that whatever it is that has been bothering you has also bothered Kathy. She too is human — and in love.

Love is a magical word, isn't it? It holds a great many meanings. But love, to be of any merit, must be pure. Purity isn't something you buy. Once it is lost, it can never be restored. And with its loss, the very basis of that love withers and dies. The fine and beautiful relationship is gone. In its place is a "love" which is purely physical. Generally, it amounts to nothing more than sex attraction. That's not much of a basis on which to build a future life together, is it?

If you are truly in love, Ken, you and Kathy will devote these years of waiting to building a firm foundation on which your marriage will stand. You will work together, side by side, protecting each other's moral character so that when you stand before God — and with God — to receive His Blessing, you will know that it is truly merited.



POST OFFICE 'N SUCH

Dear Lynn,

I would like to know why it is so wrong to go to kissing parties. To tell you the truth, I can see nothing sinful in playing such games. Our crowd plays Post Office, Wink, Spin the Bottle, etc.; and it is all out in the open in front of everyone. We girls do not go off alone with the boys.

Everyone takes the games in the spirit of good fun. No one gets serious about the kissing part.

I would appreciate your ideas.

Sincerely,

Ruthie

You can hold a match in your hand just so long, Ruthie, but eventually it's going to burn your fingers.

On the surface, it's true, kissing parties look innocent enough. But there is a great deal more than meets the eye!

In the first place, promiscuous kissing is as inconsistent with purity as is peanut butter on watermelon. In itself, it is at least an occasion of sin. By engaging in such parties, then, you're placing yourself in an occasion of sin each time. You are also contributing to the delinquency of the morals of the others at the party. To put it bluntly, whether you know it or not, you are stimulating in them the sex urge. There is no good reason for it (not even an excusing reason), nor is there a logical conclusion to this stimulation. The fact that you seemingly have escaped the consequences thus far doesn't mean that you will always be so lucky!

Occasion of sin . . . that's a rather awesome, ponderous phrase, isn't it? What does it mean, actually, in this case? Well, it means that you are encouraging yourself and someone else to commit a sin actually. You may have no intention of pushing the other fellow into a sin — but you're doing it, just the same. In your heart, you know that kissing parties aren't consistent with purity and the best morals. Even in this modern day and time teens who attend such gatherings are considered by other teens as "fast." Their morals are open to question. And there is always that inevitable doubt that arises in the minds of others, "Is that really as far as they go? Simple kissing? I doubt it!" The very fact that you have brought up the question at all indicates that there is a doubt in your mind. If any doubt remains, just ask yourself honestly, "Would the Blessed Virgin have attended such parties?" She is our model, you know.

Just exactly how are you encouraging others to sin?

Kissing and bodily contact stimulate the sex urge. Witnessing such actions is also a stimulation. The idea that these boys you kiss might lose their sense of moral balance and become "fresh" may not have entered your mind. After all, you have told them by promiscuous kissing that your morals are not above reproach. What's to keep them from assuming the attitude that you desire for them to make further advances?

It will be a nasty experience, Ruthie, when you encounter it. The boy, going on the basis of your actions, will attempt to pet, i.e. touch the intimate parts of your body. The shame of such familiarity will burn in your memory for a long time. Worse, you will know that you have been to blame. Had your actions been consistent with good morals, the experience never would have happened. By your refusal you will have lost the friendship of the boy who made the attempt. (Thank heavens!) After all, he's not dumb, Ruthie. He knows you encouraged him. And in the future, you will find that it will be very difficult even to look at the boy without re-living the shame which you brought on both of you.

It is never a sin to kiss, Ruthie, unless you make it so. A simple goodnight kiss with a boy whom you know well and for whom you feel a deep affection is not sinful. What you feel for the boy is good and clean and pure. How different from the sloppy exchange of kisses with fellows you scarcely know!

Added to the fact that you are endangering your own and the morals of others by engaging in kissing games, you

have your reputation to consider. We have already discussed reputation, and you know how important it is. You can't hope to maintain a good name or the esteem of others if you deliberately engage in activities which are an occasion of sin.

Will you lose your popularity if you refuse invitations to such parties? The answer is yes. You'll find that you no longer are popular with the teens who participate in kissing games. But again, Ruthie, you will find that you are all the more popular with teens whose morals match your own! The key to the problem is in seeking a new group of friends, a group who share your distaste for loose morals — teens who, like yourself, respect the meaning of a kiss.

When you marry, my dear, you will want the very best in a husband. Your husband will want the highest type of girl for a wife. Can you honestly offer anything but second-best if you have been passed among the fellows, kissing promiscuously as you go? Think it over. It's worth a thought.

But what about pick ups? Are they really so dangerous?



PICK UPS AND LET DOWNS

Dear Lynn,

Dad has always warned me never to pick up strange girls. However, I am now in the Air Force and away from home, and I don't know any girls. I am stationed in San Antonio, many miles from family and friends. It gets awfully lonesome on week-ends, and I would like to date. But so far, no luck. There doesn't seem to be any way of getting an introduction to nice girls. Many of the families don't like to have their daughters going with servicemen.

Lots of times we guys run into a group of girls at the park or downtown. Wouldn't it be all right to ask these girls for a date?

Gratefully,

Sid

Sid's letter is so typical of the many, many letters that arrive from our servicemen. It makes you wonder, doesn't it, if we are doing everything in our power to help this fine group of fellows? We were so conscientious during the war years. But now that those years are behind us, we've closed our eyes to the loneliness of these boys in strange cities. It is not surprising that some of the fellows fall into mischief. For the first time in their lives, they are apart from family and friends, totally among strangers. Their heart aches for the beloved familiar sights and sounds of home. They long to feel at home in their new surroundings but are met with the rebuff that they are (ugh) servicemen.

It is such a temptation, I know, Sid, to ask the strange girl that you meet on the street for a date. You feel that even if her morals are not of the best, yours are. Added to that, she's better than no date at all.

Actually, Sid, she isn't. A girl who accepts dates with strange fellows either cannot get a date on her own (too many folks know of her poor reputation!) or she is out for a good time spending spree. Rather than sit at home, she is willing to risk her life accepting a date from a stranger!

The fact that the girl is accompanied by a group of girls is not against her, unless she is in a place of poor reputation. She may enjoy the companionship of her girl friends. BUT the fact that she would leave her friends and go with you does indicate the inadequacy of her morals.

What does she want of you, Sid? Most likely, she wants someone to foot the bill for an evening's entertainment. As much of a blow as that may be to your normal ego, that's the truth. She is interested in your pocket-book. Disappoint her by not spending every last cent, and she will be sulky.

Of you, in all likelihood, she also wants sex, Sid. A tremendous percentage of the girls hanging out in public places are looking for a fellow with the sole idea of sharing an evening of sex. How far the girl will go depends upon her previous experiences. But it's safe to say that she will expect a necking party. She will encourage you to put aside your morals for an evening that is cheap and shoddy. Often she thinks that she is paying you for the evening. But more often, she is selfishly attempting to stimulate (and/or satisfy) her desire for sex.

No, Sid, you don't want the type of girl who is an available pick up. (We haven't even mentioned the percentage of these girls who are professional pick ups.) You want to meet a girl whom you can respect and admire, one with whom you will be proud to be seen. You don't meet this girl walking the streets or picking up strange fellows!

You **do** meet her in the right places. The U.S.O., Church, the young people's groups in church, and through other worthwhile organizations. Just because you are not in your own hometown doesn't mean that you can't participate in these activities. Joining the Choir at Church or offering to help out with the bazaar may be your answer.

Through the adults you meet, you'll encounter lots of teen girls. It would be an excellent idea to ask Father to help you. I happen to know that in your city there is a wonderful Catholic girls' college. Perhaps the good Father could arrange for you to meet some of these girls and attend their socials.

Pick ups are never the answer, Sid. Invariably, you will find that they are not pick ups at all — but rather, let downs!



IS IT LOVE?

Dear Lynn,

Could you please give me some advice on how to know whether it is really love? I hear so much about infatuation. Lots of couples who are just infatuated make the mistake of getting married. Then they have to spend the rest of their lives with someone they never really loved. I think this is what causes so many divorces.

I have been going with a boy for over a year now. He is nineteen and I am seventeen and a half. We both feel that we are in love, but we want to make sure before we consider marriage.

Will you advise us about real love?

Sincerely,

Margaret

How do you know it's love? Well, contrary to the idea that love and goose pimples are synonymous, love is a feeling of perfect contentment. The magic is there, yes, and the physical symptoms such as heart fluttering, blushing, stammering, and weakness in the knees. But these also can be the warning signals of a bad head cold!

By definition, "infatuation" means to make foolish; affect with folly; deprive of sound judgement. When a person is infatuated, he or she gives no **thought** to the situation. If the person with whom they fancy themselves in love has poor morals, they are likely to shrug and say, "Oh, well, we all have our faults!" If the person comes from a background totally different, the justification is, "Background isn't the important thing!" If the person has no religion, you would be likely to hear, "He'll change after marriage. After all, he loves me enough to share my religion!" Those statements, Margaret, are the product of no thought. They are the by-product of infatuation.

Generally, in a situation where infatuation alone exists, the person is not so much infatuated with the other party as they are with the situation itself. It may seem terribly romantic to marry the son of a doctor or lawyer. Or it may be thrilling to marry an older man, one who is already established in business. Or it could be the idea of marrying into a high income catches the fancy. In each case, the persons are in love with the situation and not the mate whom they are choosing. They do not stop to ponder about the chances for future happiness. They feel that they will cross their bridges when they come to them.

The point that they do **not** understand is that there will be many, many bridges to cross that otherwise would not have existed. By the very fact that they do not give the prospects of their future marriage an honest and open-minded appraisal builds those bridges for the future!

Infatuation, then, is not love. It is a romantic situation.

Sex attraction also is one of the leading causes for divorce. Teens often misunderstand the meaning of sex attraction. They mistake it for love. Actually, we can be attracted to any number of people by sex. There is something in their physical bearing which arouses us and stimulates the sex urge. Though this feeling is present in love, it does not constitute love itself. Love is not solely a physical thing — and sex in marriage eventually occupies a minor role. It is important, yes. But it is not all-consuming.

When what you feel is really love, you have a sense of well-being. You want more than anything else to be with this person — alone, quiet, just the two of you. There is no need to seek dances, friends, movies or relatives. You **like** the person (as distinguished from love), and there is happiness just being in his or her presence. Because you have a great deal in common, you want to talk with each other to your heart's content. You feel a **need** for the person — to the exclusion of material needs. An excellent criterion would be: could I sit and talk with this person every night and ask for nothing more?

If, as in many cases, you discover that the person

is a lot of fun to be out with in a crowd, the life of the party, and a laugh a minute . . . **but you are bored when you are together alone**, it is not love. If you feel the need of family and friends to keep the conversation from lagging, a warning signal is flashing. If you feel that it is necessary that your love be physically demonstrated each time you are together, you have only touched the surface of this emotion. If you insist upon continually having your own way (or tactfully convincing the other party that your way is best!), you'd better uncover that microscope and examine your feelings more closely. Love and unselfishness go hand in hand.

Unselfishness, Margaret, is the real meaning of love. It is the final test and the final answer.

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