

CAN THIS BE LOVE?

"FLASH! GROWN MAN REVERTS TO HELPLESS BOY!" Sound familiar?

Does your mate ever act so childishly that you feel less like his partner than his nanny? Then you are in the same boat as a lot of women who fall in love with youthful grins only to find that they are a front for even more youthful behavior. It's up to you to make him understand that boyish charm doesn't mean sulking because you forget to buy his favorite brand of fruit rollups, and that being young at heart doesn't mean greeting everyone at your sister's wedding with a knock-knock joke. If explanations fail, here are some suggestions for shaming him out of behavior appropriate only in those who can't yet spell cat.

1. In one week, your partner loses a pair of gloves, both sets of car keys, and his wallet. When he looks to you for warmth, help and sympathy,

a) find another pair of gloves and attach them to his coat cuffs with safety pins.

b) suggest that instead of driving to work, he use a skateboard.

c) buy him a new wallet embossed with a picture of Papa Smurf.

2. At a party one night, you notice your partner stuffing himself silly with assorted Mexican hors d'oeuvres, going especially heavy on the jalapeño cheese spread and jumbo taco chips. When you get home and he complains of heartburn,

a) give him some Alka Seltzer in a Mr. Peanut cup.

b) tell him you'll get him an antacid tablet after he gets into his Dr. Denton's.

c) ask if he wants you to kiss it and make it all better.

3. At a neighborhood restaurant one night, the waiter tells your partner that they are out of his favorite dish. Hearing this, your mate lets loose with an expletive and throws his menu on the floor in disgust. When he then says sulkily that it's all your fault, since you were the one who wanted to eat out in the first place,

a) suggest he order something else, and ask the waiter to bring him a kiddie menu.

b) draw his attention to all the patrons under age five in the restaurant who are behaving better than he is.

c) suggest he exchange his glass of wine for a Shirley Temple.

4. Your partner comes home from work

with a runny nose and a temperature of 99.5. When he falls moaning on the bed and weakly asks you to bring him tea and toast, cover him with another blanket, and go buy him a good spy novel,

a) ask if he wouldn't also like you to turn on *Sesame Street*.

b) bring him some warm milk and a mashed banana.

c) go out and buy him a comic book.

5. When, at breakfast one morning, your partner asks you to clean his hairbrush, pick up a few of the chocolate croissants he likes for dessert, and buy him four pairs of navy-blue wool socks that day,

a) ask that he make a list of what he wants, then hand him a crayon to write with and offer to help him spell hairbrush.

b) ask if, instead of croissants, he wouldn't prefer Ring Dings.

c) ask which kind of socks he wants, He-Man or G.I. Joe?

6. You mention to your partner that it's your turn to entertain friends. When he makes a face, groans and petulantly asks why you have to be such a goody-goody about social obligations,

a) tell him that he'll be allowed to stay up late the night of the party.

b) tell him that he can lick the stamps on the invitations.

c) tell him that he can do his barnyard animal imitations for your guests.

7. When your partner spends an entire weekend glued to the television set, eating endless packages of nutritionless food and watching hockey games and old horror movies (which he can tell apart but you can't),

a) suggest he vary the weekend's activities with a trip to the sandbox.

b) ask if he wouldn't like to read a book for a change—*Pat the Bunny*, for instance.

c) ask if the two of you couldn't do something together—play house, perhaps, or put on a puppet show.

8. Your partner loses a week's salary on a football bet. When he asks you to help with the one-dollar fare on the bus to work the next morning,

a) suggest he cash in one or two of the autographed pictures from his collection of Fawn Hall memorabilia.

b) suggest he take the school bus.

c) announce to the bus driver you're paying for one adult and one child.

Just remember that if there's a little boy inside every man, it's in your interest to *keep* him inside. And if some men never grow up, it's in your interest to make sure your mate isn't one of them, and that he acts like an adult—even if he is a lifetime member of the Mickey Mouse Club.

by Bette-Jane Raphael