

# LOVE?

by Bette-Jane Raphael

*Do you read malevolent meanings into your partner's behavior? Take this P.Q. (Paranoid Quotient) test to see just how crazy you are.*

Every once in a while, in the middle of a fight, my lover will stare at me as if the scales had suddenly fallen from his eyes and deliver this pronouncement on my mental health: "You're crazy." The primary symptom of my disorder, he says, is a pervasive paranoia, most notable in my penchant for reading into his everyday behavior threatening and/or malevolent meanings. Who else but a paranoid, he asks, would interpret his forgetting a goodbye kiss in the morning as conclusive evidence that he was not coming home that night?

In order to disprove his theory, I have developed the following P.Q. (Paranoid Quotient) Test, which I pass along in the hope that it will help other alleged deviates.

1. He comes home one evening, says a barely audible "hello," then sits in the living room, saying almost nothing for the rest of the evening. You immediately assume:

- a) he's had a hard day at work.
- b) he found out you accidentally shrunk

all his wool hats in the dryer and is punishing you by remaining silent.

c) he's decided to leave the relationship but doesn't know how to tell you.

2. You come home to find him on the telephone. When he sees you, he says, "I've got to go now" and hangs up. You think:

a) he's planning a surprise party for your birthday.

b) he was complaining about you to one of his friends.

c) he was making airline reservations to leave the country with another woman.

3. He buys a stationary bicycle and tells you to feel free to use it. You wonder at:

a) how generous he is.

b) how out of touch he is to think you'd ever use that thing!

c) how repulsed he is by your flab.

4. He tells you he has to work late every night for a week. You say:

a) "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

b) "You'd rather work than be with me."

c) "That's a hot one!"

5. He brings you a dozen roses for no apparent reason. You suspect:

a) he's sorry he yelled at you for shrinking his hats.

b) he had lunch with another woman

and feels guilty about it.

c) this is The Kiss-Off!

6. He compliments a mutual female friend on her appearance. You:

a) compliment her too, thinking how nice he is for mentioning it.

b) wonder aloud why *some* people get complimented, while other people *never* get complimented.

c) say to him in the cab going home, "Well, if you're so in love with Marilyn, far be it from me to stand in your way!"

7. He receives a letter with unfamiliar handwriting and no return address. You:

a) don't notice it.

b) hand it to him personally and stand next to him, making expectant noises in your throat, while he reads it.

c) steam it open.

8. You spend forty minutes getting ready to go out and then, when you ask your partner how you look, he says, "Fine." You interpret this to mean:

a) "Fine."

b) "That's the best you can do?"

c) "Besides you, your pet mongrel, Rover, would be an appealing date."

9. You meet an old girlfriend of his at a party. You:

a) talk to her for a while and decide she's an interesting woman.

b) mention to your partner that she seems to eat and drink quite a lot.

c) watch out the corner of your eye, time how long he talks to her, and conclude that he's sorry he's with you and not her.

10. He's going out to dinner with some business associates and says you don't have to come along if you don't want to. You:

a) thank him for not dragging you to yet another boring evening.

b) accuse him of not wanting you to go because he's ashamed of you.

c) follow him.

**Scoring:** Give yourself 1 point for every (a) answer; 2 points for every (b) answer; and 3 points for every (c) answer.

If you got a score of 10-15 points, step this way for your Nobel prize. You're a wonderful human being, a good egg. If anything goes wrong in your relationship, it's all his fault.

If you got a score of 16-23, you are probably a borderline paranoid. Don't let this worry you too much, since *most* people are borderline paranoids. You probably think that people are always laughing at you behind your back, but they are only doing this sometimes. If your partner says you're difficult, he may have a point.

If you got a score of 24-30, you were probably looking over your shoulder to see who was spying on you as you took the test. You may be a true paranoid personality, and your partner is probably right when he says you're crazy. Have you considered checking in to a nearby psychiatric facility?

Say hi to the person in line ahead of you. It might be me.

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