

CAN THIS BE LOVE?

SEEING HIM THROUGH A DAD-O-SCOPE

How well would he cope with a kid?

Sooner or later, each of us is bound to speculate on her partner's suitability for fatherhood. Would he make a loving, nurturing Dad, we wonder, or one more along the lines of the father tiger who regularly eats its young? If you're not sure of the answer, study the following situations and speculate as honestly as possible on your partner's probable responses to them. This exercise should help you decide whether he's a good candidate for parenthood, or whether he'd be happier living in a planned community for the intentionally childless.

1. Your brother and his wife have a Saturday afternoon wedding to attend and ask if you could baby-sit for your six-year-old niece. When you inform your partner that the child is coming to your home for a few hours, he

a) looks through the paper to see if the circus is in town, then trots over and buys three expensive tickets.

b) nervously asks whether she's still in diapers.

c) suddenly decides that Saturday afternoon would be the perfect time to visit his dentist for a checkup, something he hasn't done since the latter relocated his office to another state in 1985.

2. You learn that your best friend is pregnant with her first child. When you relate the news to your partner, he asks

a) whether her situation gives *you* any ideas.

b) whether her husband knows.

c) whether she looks like a blimp yet.

3. When his parents hint that they'd love to have grandchildren, your partner

a) looks slyly in your direction and says, "That can be arranged."

b) suggests they've been watching too many greeting-card commercials.

c) suggests they adopt.

4. You wake up feeling nauseous two mornings in a row. When you mention this to your partner, he

a) goes out to buy a book called *What To Name Your Baby*.

b) pours vodka into his orange juice.

c) goes out and buys a ticket to Tahiti.

5. The two of you are sitting in the park when some children start a noisy game of baseball nearby. Almost immediately, your partner

a) offers to be their umpire.

b) suggests the two of you move to a quieter spot, preferably in a home for the aged.

c) offers to have them arrested.

6. Your neighbors' child comes to the door selling Girl Scout Cookies. Answering the bell, your partner

a) buys several boxes, then pulls some string out of a drawer and starts to show her all the knots he learned to tie when he was a Boy Scout.

b) calls you to handle the transaction.

c) warns her that there's a city ordinance against peddlers.

7. You watch a television rerun of *Kramer vs. Kramer*, in which Dustin Hoffman fights with Meryl Streep over who will have custody of their little boy. Somewhere in the middle of the movie, your partner

a) starts to cry.

b) falls asleep.

c) wonders aloud why they don't just cut the kid in half.

8. Watching the news one evening, you and your partner see a father of three receive the "Father of the Year" award. As this man is handed his plaque, your mate

a) applauds vigorously.

b) yawns loudly.

c) laughs derisively.

9. When asked point blank how he likes children, your partner

a) hopefully wonders if you are asking him because you are pregnant.

b) guardedly wonders why you ask.

c) says that he likes them fried, with butter and salt.

SCORING: After predicting your partner's probable reactions to the above situations, give him 1 point for every a) answer, 2 points for every b) answer, and 3 points for every c) answer. If he garners from 9 to 13 points, he's got excellent parent potential. In fact, unless he's as wonderful a partner as he would be a father, you might consider telling him *you're* up for adoption. If he scores between 14 and 20 points, the chances of his making a good father are only so-so (about the same as the chances of his making a good pie). If he scores between 21 and 27 points, get a dog.

by Bette-Jane Raphael