

## To love or not to love?

### Parisian Tip

#### THE JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

*Yes, we're in Paris, so let's begin with a little philosophy! Sartre said something that is really pretty wise: "Existence precedes essence." Very (very) roughly, that means: Look at yourself, observe what gives you pleasure, go where you feel happy, and you will know who you are (and who you like)! If that shocks people, blame Jean-Paul.*

When it comes to love, you sometimes feel as if you just don't know what you're doing. You may feel that finding a guy—if only a decent one—is a bit like making slow-cooked lamb: too complicated! You find yourself wandering the streets feeling envy for the lovers kissing on benches while you hum a sad love song about heartbreak and loneliness. And yet, and yet . . . you dream of love, real love, true love, and of a hot guy.

So, here is the first rule of love: Listen to yourself. Ask yourself what you really want. Sometimes you just want to have fun—and that's absolutely fine! Enjoy yourself without guilt. Paris is also made for that.

And if you are dreaming of real love? Be careful: You need to be wise with your time and energy. So don't be under any illusions about him or about yourself: If what you like is bars packed with budding artists, don't waste your time with futile fantasies about socialites at a five-star Plaza Athénée hotel!

**GOLDEN RULE:**  
Know yourself! Stop comparing yourself to other people. Dare to be who you are, with your contradictions, your craziness, and your strange tastes. Look at your friends who are in relationships: Sometimes their choice of partner makes no sense to you. So forget the perfect man. What matters is your happiness!

## I've forgotten how to hit on someone.

### Parisian Tip

#### NOTRE DAME FROM BEHIND!

*Have you ever admired Notre Dame from behind? Stand on the Archevêché Bridge and get lost in admiration: those vaults rising up above the lime trees and horse chestnuts, those pointed arches, those aisles, those flanges, those columns, those towering abutments, those spires! Take inspiration from the immortal lady by turning your back on the guy and letting yourself be admired from behind (all the better to turn round again).*

"Do you know how beautiful your eyes are?" to every passerby. Yes, take all the advice you can get about leaving your comfort zone (and your neighborhood, or arrondissement!). To parrot Georges Danton's famous words during the French Revolution, "We must dare, and dare again, and go on daring!" But don't lose your head! Techniques for hitting on someone, for both men and women, will get you nowhere. It is still better for you to wait to be approached.

Men are primitive? Indeed, and so much the better—so are you. We are nothing more than two animals on a small planet, two *Homo pseudo-erectis* impatient to rediscover fire. Let him play the caveman. Or let him believe he approached you, when, in fact, it was you who maneuvered it all.

**GOLDEN RULE:**  
No frontal attacks. A few pointed looks, a laugh, a gesture replacing a stray lock of hair, that's all! You may be an independent, free woman, but for once you let someone else make the first move and you play the game. That's the fundamental rule!

# Boulangerie Patisserie



## Where do you find him?

Find your pleasures wherever you're happy, anywhere that gives you a kick. You just want an exotic night to file away in your memories? Then live out your digressions with a handsome tourist at the top of the Eiffel Tower, a PhD student on the paths of the Luxembourg Garden, or even an actor on the sofa of a flashy club on the Champs Élysées.

And finding the right one? Or rather one of the right ones, because we hate the idea that there is only one Louboutin that fits your foot? He may even be right under your nose. At the bus stop, at a luxury department store, or as you moan, "There aren't any taxis!" outside

the nightclub one evening. A real meeting is shared by three: you, him, and a social place that you both enjoy. Without sharing a sense of place, it won't last. Which is not to say you can't find fleeting pleasures in a strange place! In short, open your eyes: The elusive specimen is often closer than you think.

### GOLDEN RULE:

Be sexy everywhere! In the bistro or the movies, at the grocery store or the airport. Always cool and always prepared. That is the secret of Parisian style. So no Uggs or sequined tops—you need to adopt a quietly seductive style, a look that works as much for going out to pick up some bread as for ascending to seventh heaven. Coco Chanel always used to say to her seamstresses, "Never leave the house without looking perfect, my dear—it might be the day you find love!"

## Know his habitat!

In France we say “Impossible n’est pas Français”—in other words, “impossible” is not a Parisienne midset. But we do use common sense: You don’t look for a hipster near the swanky Muette metro station or a banker at the flea market.

Here’s a little map of Paris arrondissements to inspire you to look for your type in the right neighborhood—so you don’t have to wander around for too long!

- 1<sup>ST</sup> A communications king • An elderly lawyer • A celebrity
- 2<sup>ND</sup> A realtor who’s a bit of a womanizer but who dreams of marrying and having lots of kids • A DJ who at the moment is mainly a sales clerk at the fashionable men’s clothing store AMI • A fashion photographer
- 3<sup>RD</sup> A journalist who’d really like to shack up with someone, but who isn’t really sure . . . • An American staying in an Airbnb
- 4<sup>TH</sup> A bisexual interior decorator • A left-wing politician disguising his wealth • A rather famous sports coach
- 5<sup>TH</sup> A divorced literature professor who takes his children to the Jardin des Plantes . . . and is a bit of a dinosaur • Someone in cinema • A house-sharing student
- 6<sup>TH</sup> A writer who likes to look at himself in the mirrors of the Café de Flore • A publisher who loves literature • A young civil servant who’s already bald
- 7<sup>TH</sup> A business lawyer, perhaps married—at least to his smartphone • An Italian collector • A newly rich journalist

- 8<sup>TH</sup> An elderly producer who’s a reluctant clubber and loves women but already has lots of children • A gigolo • A guy who’s started a business—it’s not clear in what—that is doing well
- 9<sup>TH</sup> A young restaurateur just arrived from the Basque country with a very high profile and who is handsome, free, full of pep, and all the rage • A trendsetter who’s in a relationship—depending on the time of day • A pianist
- 10<sup>TH</sup> A political activist, passionate about his cause and about anything that moves • A sociologist who drives you crazy going on about Pierre Bourdieu
- 11<sup>TH</sup> A student who needs a grant and lots of sex • A single dad who talks about the stock exchange and sex • A previous candidate on the cooking program *Top Chef*
- 12<sup>TH</sup> A nice dentist • A jazz musician! • A retiree who likes to watch the swans in the public park
- 13<sup>TH</sup> A nice, single hypnotherapist—great for finally giving up smoking • A medical intern at the Val-de-Grâce hospital • A composer who has a home in the trendy Butte-aux-Cailles neighborhood, paid for in cash after his big hit



14<sup>TH</sup> A bartender, free during the day • A geek

15<sup>TH</sup> A climbing instructor, recently descended from the Alps and in search of a woman • An office colleague • Your cousin and the men who vaguely resemble him

16<sup>TH</sup> A family man who is not so faithful • A former party animal • An aristocrat who lives with his mother

17<sup>TH</sup> An ambitious young guy in finance, divorced with a child, as risky as a hedge fund • A bourgeois who thinks he is a “bourgeois bohemian” because he lives in the fashionable Batignolles neighborhood

18<sup>TH</sup> A successful actor, to test for an evening if you have the heart to climb up to Montmartre • An artistic director whose apartment is “really very nice” • An advertising man who is fiftysomething . . . and looks it

19<sup>TH</sup> A failed actor, needing to be pampered • A construction worker • A crazy Argentinian who’s crazy about you

20<sup>TH</sup> A ceramics artist who is funny and gifted with his hands • A deacon who works at a Catholic charity • An ultra-heady multimedia artist

## Dressing for the first date . . .

You're already an hour late, and you've got nothing to wear? Of course you have. Just go for the light touch, a suggestion rather than statement . . . sexy without saying so. Nothing predictable! Simple lines, a sleeveless T-shirt with bare shoulders, a white shirt giving a glimpse of black bra.

Underneath? Aim for your target: jeans for the hipster and a skirt for the business lawyer; heels for the man in finance and flats for the up-and-coming artist. Take note: heels with a miniskirt are a definite no (too "exotic dancer with an excessive libido") but obligatory if he is over forty-two (unless he is as short as France's recent presidents). The heels should never be too high—the aim is to seduce, not put yourself on display.

### GOLDEN RULE:

Reveal only a little. Consider François Truffaut's film *The Man Who Loved Women*, about a man who was capable of fantasizing for hours about a piece of calf glimpsed in the street. Think of Romy Schneider before she dives into the water in the film *The Swimming Pool* and of her dresses revealing just a shoulder or a bare back. You don't need to display your cleavage or underwear; you can have a sensible blouse with just the top buttons undone. You don't have to dress like a dancer at the Crazy Horse cabaret to drive him crazy!

### THE MEN LIKE FEMME S FATA LES CLICHÉ

Yes, sometimes men do like women dressed as femmes fatales, but what really seduces them is femininity. No need to arm yourself with a military arsenal of costume effects—heels + skirt + plunging neckline—which, when all is said and done, is very aggressive and even disturbing. Put the emphasis on simplicity. Men like outfits they can understand. A skirt that gives a glimpse of leg (soon to be stretched out in bed with him!), or subtle cleavage that hints at the sacred treasure that lies beneath. Parisienne style is obvious chic and sobriety. Stay low-key.

## Quick, I need an outfit for tonight!

Where a Parisienne goes for a last-minute ensemble

### Addresses

**LE BON MARCHÉ:** Housed in the famous building with four pointed corners and with lots of relatively affordable smaller labels. Recent favorites: Bellerose, Gat Rimon. 24, rue de Sèvres, 75007 Paris.

And if you still haven't found what you're looking for, dash across the street to:

**BRAND BAZAR:** A Left Bank "label melting pot": two levels bringing together big-label clothes (Carven) and young designers (Sœur, Reiko, Momoni). 33, rue de Sèvres, 75007 Paris.

West of the capital, **LE 66 ÉLYSÉE**, on the Champs Élysées, offers a carefully chosen but broad selection with Majestic Fluid T-shirts, romantic dresses by Mes Demoiselles, and auspiciously named Catch Me Maybe clutch purses.

**CENTRE COMMERCIAL:** A "bourgeois bohemian" concept store decorated in white, wood, and antiques furniture for chic shopping. Look for Roseanna slippers, Paraboots, Larose hats, striped ponchos designed by La Méricaine, or adorable sailing dresses from Saint James. 2, rue de Marseille, 75010 Paris. Tel: 01 42 02 26 08.

And, of course, there's always **ZARA** or the H&M chic labels & **OTHER STORIES** and **COS**, all places where you can find something fun and sexy without overdoing it.

### For the eco-minded

If you want to recycle, conserve the planet, and improve the conditions of textile workers, go to:

**KILIWATCH:** A Parisian haunt for vintage fashion where you can unearth a fur hat, a little leather jacket, or a silk blouse. 64, rue Tiquetonne, 75002 Paris. Tel: 01 42 21 17 37. [www.kiliwatch.fr](http://www.kiliwatch.fr)

**NOIR KENNEDY:** A vintage rock boutique and the ideal place to pick up Cheap Monday jeans, rock T-shirts, beautiful leather boots, or secondhand clothes. 22, rue du Roi de Sicile, 75004 Paris. Tel: 01 44 61 30 90.

### On the web

**VESTIAIRE COLLECTIVE:** This website is all the rage; use it when you want to buy yourself that little Chanel bag your wardrobe is missing or the Classic bag from Céline you really like, for much less than in a shop. You post an alert and as soon as a fashionista puts one up for sale, you grab the opportunity. Experts guarantee the authenticity of the products. [www.vestiairecollective.com](http://www.vestiairecollective.com)