



LOOK SHARP + LIVE SMART

# \*LOVE SEX AND MADNESS

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ISSUE

*Starring*

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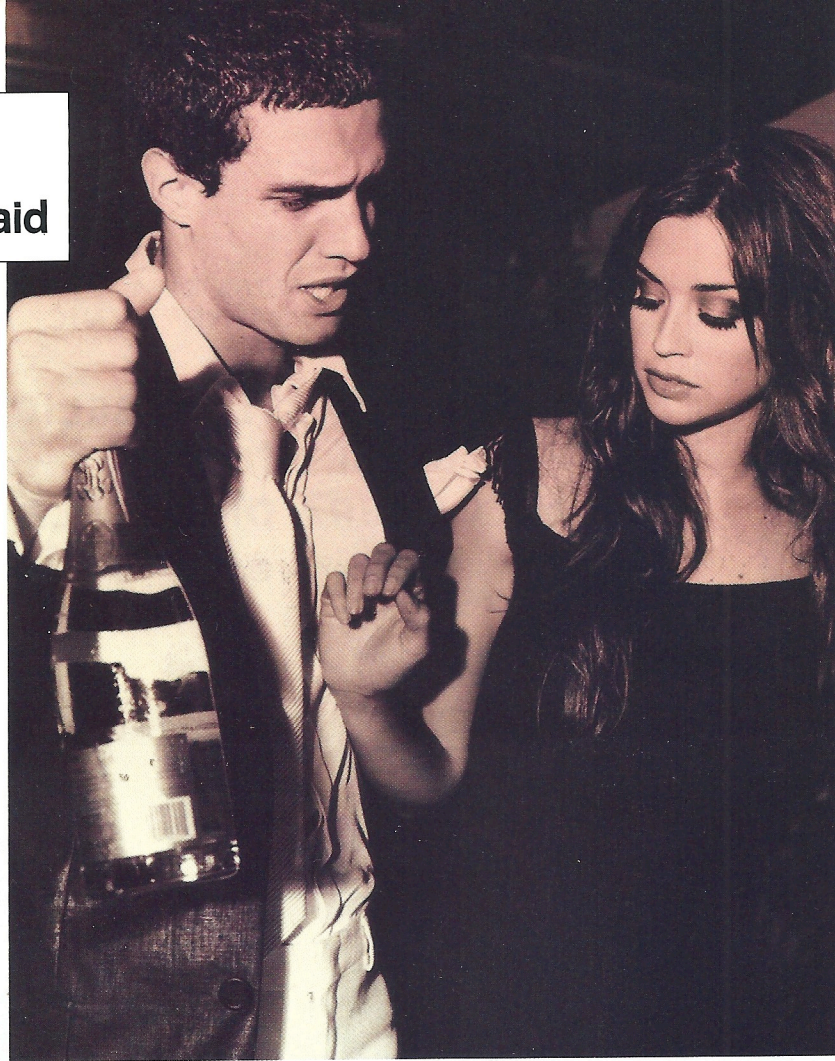
## What She Said

→ Today I went rummaging through my own trash. I flung off the lid and dug through peels of things to locate the envelope I had just thrown away. I breathed a sigh of relief, because there, in calligraphy, was my name, followed by the two best words in wedding language: *and guest*. Having attended weddings firmly ensconced in all three states of romance—a steady relationship, an ill-defined relationship, and a relationship with myself—it is with some authority that I say going it alone is the most daunting of these adventures. The possibility of ending the night in the arms/Holiday Inn suite of a new friend *can* be a fairly awesome one, but what about all those hours in between “Ave Maria” and “Last Dance”?

I remember one particular ceremony that had all the trappings of get-busy bliss: a destination wedding in a castle outside Edinburgh. But as I sat in a pew, yanking up my strapless dress, I wasn't thinking about whom I'd be hooking up with that night. Instead, I was filing through my loves past on the metaphorical Rolodex in my head, wheeling through everyone I'd ever dated with a combination of relief and regret and *Dammit, what ever happened to that bra?*

Given this inhospitable puddle of thinking, in the middle of which my designated date decided to introduce himself, it is perhaps unfair to criticize his behavior. But I'm going to do it anyway. The bride and groom had nudged him in my direction (there's a reason the world's arranged marriages are not arranged by our peers), but I'm pretty sure they meant us to meet at the reception. Not during the ceremony, where I found myself shushing him as he fired off abnormally loud questions about white dresses and the number of kids I intended on having.

After which we were seated at a large table where I got a nice preview of being 80 years old and unable to parse conversation through ambient noise. My new friend parked himself next to my ear and made jokes about being each other's hook-up and about how stupid Scottish sheep were because they “always do what they're told, like even sexually.” During the best man's toast, he put his arm around me and left it there, almost carelessly, like a grandfather might. But then he started rubbing my bare shoulder, like a grandfather (hopefully) wouldn't. I made a lot of trips to the bathroom for no apparent reason. I offered to help people locate lost contact lenses. I danced with Aunt Mildred. I'll just say it: I bummed a clove cigarette. While smoking it, I heard someone meander down the castle steps behind me. Right then, looking at his profile, stars above his eyebrows, rolling hills beneath his nostrils, well—he started to look pretty damn good. Then he lunged for a kiss.



Asking her if she'd like to dance is a smart move; ▲ applying the full-court press is not.

## I, Groomsman, Take This Hot, Hammered Bridesmaid

Going stag to a wedding? Congratulations. Now don't get all Ben Roethlisberger. Sloane Crosley explains what a girl does—and doesn't—want to hear from your rabid, frothing mouth

“I'm sorry,” I said, stomping out my hippie stick. “I can't do this.”

“Why not?” He did the shoulder thing again. “It's a wedding, baby.”

*Baby?!*

“I don't know.” I pecked him on the cheek. “I think maybe it has something to do with being told what to do.”

So what would I have preferred? What would I have told him had he been sober enough to hear it? At a wedding, women just want to be rescued. Not seduced, rescued. We want to feel like we're here by choice and that we chose you. We have a lifetime of pop culture telling us it's okay to hook up with a random guy tonight. We get it. We heard you the first million times. What we need now is to know that it's also okay *not* to hook up with you.

Does this mean we won't? I mean, is that a vodka and soda in your pocket? Of course

we're thinking about it, too. It just means we like to avoid cliché; it's a mood killer for us, whereas men seem to have no problem with cliché if it gets them some action. Thus out pours the awkward commentary about how you used to sleep with the bride and how overcooked this salmon is compared with the salmon you made for your ex-girlfriend. And when that happens, I promise you, we are waking up alone. It's a wedding, not a deep-sea dive; leave the buddy system at the door. Lend us your jacket, laugh at our jokes, and ask us to dance. Let us know we're rescuing you right back, and maybe a few weddings from now your name will be the answer to some girl's *Dammit, what ever happened to that bra?*

SLOANE CROSELY'S new book of essays, *How Did You Get This Number*, is in stores on June 15.