

The Huntress

The Author, a graduate-type girl, looks on the hunt objectively. She says O.U. is a happy hunting ground and gives a few examples to prove her contention.

“The whole world is strewn with snares, traps, gins and pitfalls for the capture of men by women.”

The remark may be traced to G. B. Shaw's *Man and Superman*. It is, however, a truism which women have known since Eve evolved from the rib.

Men like to think they are the great conquerors, the great hunters. Give a man half a chance and he will drag out his assorted trophies and photographs plus a favorite story about: “the big one that got away.” In short, he will do his best to convince you that, if he had the chance, he could make Frank Buck look like a Pony leaguer.

Men pride themselves on their knowledge of the sport. They like to smile and say knowingly that “out in the bush” you don't count time by days or weeks, but from the day a man shoots a lion or a buffalo. They will add convincingly that one of man's greatest thrills is to meet a charg-

ing rhino with a .470 double. And, if it happens to a man you know, bless you. You're doomed to hearing about it for the rest of your life. (One way or the other.)

But are men really accomplished hunters?

Hunting is just an expensive hobby as far as man is concerned. He may have fun, but what else?

On the other hand, women are developing their weapons, wiles and ways to a fine art when it comes to stalking quarry. They do not have to foot the bills for the expedition. And their catch is duly recorded with a ceremony unsurpassed for its pomp and flourish.

From the cradle to the capture, the fair sex is engaged in a safari.

Most of the techniques for the hunt of the homo sapiens species haven't changed much. Perhaps our grandmothers didn't read anything more complicated than cook-books or Richardson and Ouida. They

weren't even recognized as qualified to vote. But, they knew how to smile agreeably while being slowly choked to death with an 18-inch waistpincher. And they knew exactly how to make the pursued believe that he was really the pursuer.

Like her foremothers, a girl today begins her training early. Some acquire the talent for collecting scalps soon after Mother ties the first ribbon in her curls. Others begin the practice in earnest during junior high and high school. And, hardly before the young damsel can get a good grip on her diploma, Mother sends off for a reservation at O.U.

Why O.U.? This is the happy hunting grounds our foremothers dreamed about. Here, there are all kinds of game—big or little—just wandering around waiting to step in a snare. And, once Poppa finances the necessary equipment, the hapless victims pay for the frivolities.

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The young Dianas pitch their tents at a campsite near the south oval, in a location commonly called the Women's Quadrangle. Here, they collect all the weapons at hand: a frothy new formal or two, silver slippers, a bottle of French perfume that Dad gave Mother last Christmas and as many swishy and clingy things as the budget allows.

Some girls prefer to join one of the 13 specialized hunting clubs organized to aid, encourage and give advance instruction in the finer points of the sport. Some prefer the free lance or "every gal for herself" attitude, although many agree to pass up quarry with certain friendly brands.

In the first few days, they learn the rules of the safari: no closed season and don't give up easily. Look over the species carefully because you can only keep one. And, well, other general hunting tips.

The young huntress may enroll in a few beneficial and instructive courses, such as the survey of the care, feeding and psychological makeup of the quarry offered in a misnomer called Zoo 17, or Manhunting 303 offered under the label of "Personal Appraisal." Of course, the obliging administration provides dozens of other courses in which one can scout the quarry to some extent, such as English 1 and Math A.

However, after these first few days of orientation and introduction to the general terrain, the big safari is underway.

At first, the eager young maiden observes herds of the species loitering near drinking places, at the feeding grounds, or just gazing—sometimes trustfully, sometimes belligerently, sometimes eagerly—after her. Their general playful and care-free attitudes are constant symbols of challenge.

Often her first victim gets into the trap accidentally. Usually, the first one or two to fall in the trap in this manner are turned loose for another season. Immediately thereafter, the specialized hunting clubs organize a tortuous marathon called "blind dates" whereby the huntress is exposed to countless numbers of the species. Most of these also must be turned loose for another season.

A girl has to get around several obstacles before she can finally settle down for one certain victim. For example, a girl's sights may be too high: a BMOC or letterman. The young Diana must track closely and stalk carefully or all she may get is a severe case of moonburn.

It's not that these varieties are invincible. Quite the contrary. It's just that often so many others have their sights on the same creature that he gets a little frisky. So, all things being equal, the novice may lose out to a more experienced huntress.

There is another primary rule of the hunt. If you think you have him, put another rope around his neck. It's usually the "dead" ones that get away.

To some young sportswomen, the serious problem is "which." Shall she capture the first one that looks good or wait around to really look over the field? Ordinarily the safari is only a four-year program. And since the main goal is a MRS. degree and not a bachelors (there ought to be a senate investigation to brand this word as communistic) degree, it does not pose a major problem. For, at least, it obviously does not bother a majority for a very long time.

In any technical treatise, there must be classifications. Take the young huntresses, for example. Mary Lou may stalk the same creature for four long years before she finally lures him in to her trap. Her roommate may be a "trophy hunter" that collects as many victims as possible. (Could these be prosecuted under the anti-trust law?) Alice may be the shy one who never seems to do any stalking at all but who brings home the prize catch. Across the hall, Sissy goes after all the big game, but only has a shrimp or two to show for all her diligence.

As Kipling said in some place or other: "The silliest woman can manage a clever man; but it needs a very clever woman to manage a fool!" So it is in the hunt.

To properly analyze the habits and practices of the game would, if written down and explained in terms of how the huntress should meet each individual problem, do justice as a doctor's dissertation. There are only a limited number of general types, and after about 18 or more years of serious study, any good huntress can classify her prey. Therefore, few women would need to refer to this document. And since men prefer to think of themselves as "unclassifiable" (and it's best that the species retain some illusions), all information of this kind is hereby termed "top secret."

Here's one fairly standard recipe for a successful safari. Mix one warm spring evening, well seasoned with stars and full moon with a dash of Mom's French perfume. Add a carefully selected masculine subject exposed to smiles and jewelry stores. Mix well with pertinent suggestions.

It's said to be practically guaranteed that, if the recipe is timed right, the victim's natural skittishness will dissolve. But,

rest assured, if it fails there are 1001 more, one of which is bound to hit the target.

So, here's to a successful safari!

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down easily, begin to chew your nails and mumble. A good hearty mumble when she can't understand the words will ruin any evening—especially if you mix a few groans. She'll spot you as a perfectionist and make for home like a bumble bee after backing into a buddy.

Or if that shouldn't do the job, get a good case of hiccups. To fake them successfully, let each one come out so the hic is long and low and mournful, and the cup sounds like a dented canteen emptying into a fish bowl. Meanwhile whistle "Old Black Joe" in four flats. She'll hate you.

Better yet, if you know the gal is really out to get you and she knows you too well to swallow these stunts, you can switch tactics.

A good plan is to discuss your life after leaving school. Tell her excitedly of your dreams of living with the pygmies. Show great interest in your hopes of living as they live, to eat grubs and snails and raw elephant. Get a real bang out of it!

Two quick ones you can use. Take out a roll-your-own cigaret and offer it to her as marijuana, confiding slyly that you have been smoking it for years, or, just before picking her up, raise the car windows and burn a roll of film under the front seat. When she gets in, pretend there is nothing unusual taking place. Either of these, though somewhat sadistic, can make for a good evening.

But if all else fails, and if you are desperate to get that home-hungry female off your neck, you have only one recourse left.

When you meet her for a date, act moody. Growl at everything she says. Pick a fight, and if she fights back, stare at her with wide, unblinking eyes for maybe a minute.

By then she'll realize you are—as she had guessed all the time—a madman. But the clincher comes with a twitch that starts in your right shoulder and each second or so gets worse until it draws your chin and shoulder together at every twitch. Keep that going with the stare until she jumps out of the car and screams for help. Done right, that girl would no more get into that car again that she would play patty-cake with a cobra.

And if that doesn't pry her away from you, brother, I don't know. You might as well face up to being caught.

But you will have one satisfaction. You are, after all, marrying a really smart huntress—and she's only getting a skunk!