

THE BIG WOO

by Ken Bradbury



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The scene is a restaurant table. Two chairs angled slightly toward each other, the actors stand to each side of their respective chairs.

HIM: *(reading from a book)* “Wooing and Winning a Woman. Chapter One. Chivalry is not dead. Even the modern woman wants to be wooed.” Woo?

HER: *(reading from a book)* “Relationships for Dummies. When it comes to relationships, most men are stupid.”

HIM: *(reading)* “Of course, before a young man can court a girl, he must first find a girl.” *(The girl sits in her chair. ... He notices.)* Done.

HER: *(reading)* “The trick is to make the male think he’s controlling the situation. Men are timid by nature and they must think they hold the upper hand even though that is rarely the case in a great relationship. First, find a man.” *(She looks and notices him.)* Check.

HIM: “Assertiveness is the key.” *(He closes the book assertively.)*

HER: “Patience will win the day.” *(She closes her book patiently.)*

HIM: This taken?

HER: Have a seat.

HIM: *(He sits. ... a long pause ... He consults his book quickly.)* “Assertiveness.” *(closes the book)* I’m hungry.

HER: Good. This is a restaurant.

HIM: I want to order.

HER: That’ll make the waiter very happy.

HIM: Are you laughing at me?

HER: (*consults her book*) “Remember: men have fragile egos.”
(*closes book*) No.

HIM: I mean ... of course you’re not. Uh ... look. Could you save this seat for me?

HER: Okay.

HIM: (*stands, reading*) “Don’t be discouraged if your first attempt fails. Women are forgiving.” (*closes book*)

HER: (*reading*) “If he seems awkward, pretend to be forgiving.” (*closes book*)

HIM: Hi.

HER: Hello.

HIM: Is this ... ?

HER: No.

HIM: (*He sits.*) I guess I asked you to save it for me.

HER: Yes. Yes, you did.

HIM: Look, I didn’t catch your name.

HER: That’s true.

HIM: (*a long pause ... nothing ... stands and reads*) “Don’t expect immediate results. Lasting relationships take longer to nurture.” (*closes book*)

HER: (*reading*) “If he seems totally inept at beginning conversation, it’s perfectly acceptable to begin it yourself.” (*closes book*)

HIM: (*extending his hand*) My name’s ...

HER: (*standing, beating him to it with her own hand*) My name’s Jill.

HIM: Uh ... I’m Jack. ...

HER: You’re making that up.

HIM: I’m not. I’m Jack. (*They look at each other a moment, then both laugh.*)

HER: That’s funny.

HIM: That’s funny.

HER: Jack and Jill.

HIM: Jack and Jill. (*another long pause ... They slowly sit. ... Although the ice has been broken a bit, the water is deep. ... finally ...*) Excuse me a moment.

HER: Sure.

HIM: (*He stands and reads.*) “It’s never hopeless.”

HER: (*reading*) “Patience ... patience is the key.”

HIM: (*reading*) “Sometimes it’s the unexpected gesture ... something surprising, off-the-wall that finally leads to a conversational breakthrough.” (*closes book*) I love Chinese food!

HER: (*a long pause ... taken aback, then*) Uh ... wonderful.

HIM: (*sits*) General Tso’s.

HER: What?

HIM: His chicken. It’s like spicy but it’s sweet and ...

HER: Oh.

HIM: And Crab Rangoon. How about you?

HER: Uh . . . I’m vegan.

HIM: Oh.

HER: But that’s ...

HIM: No.

HER: Really.

HIM: I’ll be right back. (*standing, reading*) “It’s not necessary that you agree on everything.” (*closes book*) So ... how about rice?

HER: I love rice.

HIM: Wow. That’s great. (*He sits again.*) What else?

HER: Huh?

HIM: What else do you like?

HER: Well ... music.

HIM: Great. What kind?

HER: Oh ... nothing heavy. I just enjoy it all. You know?

HIM: Yes! Yes, I know. Heavy's really ... you know ... heavy.

HER: Yes.

HIM: (*a long pause ... an uncomfortably long pause*) Excuse me?

HER: Sure.

HIM: (*reading*) "Don't let silence scare you. Sometimes it's what's unsaid that speaks the loudest." (*shuts book*) Great! (*begins to sit again, then stops*) I don't understand that at all. (*opens book*) "Focus on her needs. Get your mind off yourself." (*shuts book*) Okay. (*sits*) What do you need?

HER: Me?

HIM: Yeah.

HER: Uh ... well ... I could use a cup of tea.

HIM: Cool. Tea and rice. It was rice, right?

HER: Yes, but I don't ...

HIM: Stay right there. I'll get a waiter. (*He leaves.*)

HER: (*opens book*) "Try to set him at ease. Most males make no sense when they're anxious or nervous. It may take a long time, but he'll never show his true self as long as he's uneasy."

HIM: I found a waiter.

HER: (*closes book*) Wonderful.

HIM: He had tea. No rice. It's not a rice place.

HER: That's fine. (*they stare at each other a moment, then*) What are you reading?

HIM: Me? Nothing. I'm looking at you.

HER: But that book.

HIM: Book? Oh. This? It's uh ... nothing ... it's ... uh ... Tolstoy.

HER: Really? The Russian novelist?

HIM: Yeah. And he's foreign. But he wrote in English. I mean, somebody wrote it in English for him. It's English. It's a book in English.

HER: How do you like it?

HIM: (*a pause, then*) Boy, he's taking his time with our drinks.

HER: Tolstoy?

HIM: The waiter. I ordered you a tea. I hope that's all right.

HER: I'm in no hurry.

HIM: Good. (*a pause, then*) Look, could you excuse me just one more minute?

HER: Sure.

HIM: (*standing and reading*) "There will come times in all relationships when you run out of conversation. Don't panic. Simply enjoy the act of being together." (*closes book*) How? (*opens book*) "By simply being together, you idiot! Pay attention!" (*closes book*) Oh. Being together.

HER: (*reading*) "When all else fails, fall back onto the compliment. Nothing makes a man feel in charge like a little padding of his ego." (*closes book*)

HIM: Hi.

HER: Nice shirt.

HIM: You like it?

HER: I like it very much. Is it new?

HIM: To me. I got it at Goodwill. I shop there a lot.

HER: That shows good sense.

HIM: Really? Thanks. Uh ... I like your outfit, too.

HER: Thank you. Christmas ... from my mom.

HIM: Oh. Nice. Nice mom.

HER: Yes, she's a very nice mom.



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by Ken Bradbury.

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