

## NEWS

# NERDS MAKE BETTER LOVERS. Ready for a real relationship? Ditch the pretty boys and grab yourself a geek

By **TRACEY LOMRANTZ**

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Christina Aguilera recently traded in piercings for petticoats, apparently making the usual Marilyn Monroe morph. But there's more than meets the eye: Sure, she's blond, buxom and sweet-voiced now, but she's also emulating the classic bombshell in matters of the heart.

You see, Aguilera's fiance, like Monroe's husband, playwright Arthur Miller, is kind of a geek.

When Aguilera announced her engagement to smarty-pants music executive Jordan Bratman in February, the 24-year-old pop star demonstrated a tried-and-true dating trick. Geeks have got the goods.

Bratman, with his scrawny frame and oversize ears, has mastered the music industry at just 26 and is Romeo enough to have stolen Aguilera's heart (as well as inspired her new demure-coquette look).

"A nerd is an excellent provider and a guy who puts you first," says F. Jean

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And, she insists that a woman who is willing to stick it out with a nerd and get past his quirks will be handsomely rewarded. “Don’t give up on him too fast,” she said. “If you stick with him, he’s going to turn out to be -really great.

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If Hollywood is any indication, then yes, he will. This month, reality TV celebrates geek love with two shows: Ashton Kutcher’s “Beauty and the Geek,” which pairs braniacs with bimbos for a “social experiment,” and the latest installment of “Average Joe,” in which a pretty girl woos not-so-study dudes (airing on June 22).

On Fox’s “The O.

C.,” the nerdy Seth Cohen (played by Adam Brody) didn’t just land the adorable Summer Roberts (Rachel Bilson) on TV – he managed to get the girl in real life, too. Bilson (and her character) managed to look past the slicked-down hair to find the witty guy beneath. Cohen’s obsession with comic books? Her character deems it sweet. Brody’s nasal drawl? Bilson doesn’t seem to mind.

How can a savvy girl land a geek of her own? Spencer Koppel, a self-proclaimed geek who attends crossword-puzzle tournaments on weekends, has made it easy for girls with their eye on the prize with his “Geek to Geek” dating service, [www.gk2gk.com](http://www.gk2gk.com).

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gk2gk.

com.

Members can meet and select a perfect mate (guys with screen names like “thinkspecs” and “ivygrad”) based on favorite board game and gadget instead of eye color, height and other categories the nerds might be lacking.

And according to Koppel, the pool is stocked with supreme sci-fi fans and accomplished intellectuals.

“I think geeks are more successful. They’re happier in the work they do,” Koppel said. “And they’re pretty faithful people, because they’re certainly grateful for anything they have.



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When it comes to the between-the-sheets aspect of the relationship, Carroll agreed that a girl couldn’t do much better than a less-than-perfect male specimen. “We’ve all been to bed with the guy who is worried about what he looks like, checking the mirror before he gets in bed,” she said. “The nerd, gloriously, stunningly, perfectly, is into the woman. That right there is very stirring, sexually.

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### TIGER's purr-fect

It seems to be enough for the likes of goddess models and Hollywood A-listers. Tiger Woods has a geek-like drive for a stodgy sport, a fat bank account and Swedish model Elin Nordegren on his arm. David Arquette may not have the body of a Greek god, but he managed to land sexy former Friend Courteney Cox with his goofy humor and mismatched wardrobe. For Scott Dennis, a 34-year-old teacher from Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, "geek" and "good guy" are synonymous – and he is both. Although some aspects of his personality make him what he called a "quintessential babe magnet" (former jock, drummer in a rock band), the real qualities that helped him land his girlfriend are the geeky ones.

"Do I know the difference between a knight and a pawn? Certainly," he says. "Am I familiar with the Four Move Checkmate? Well, maybe I am. ... But the truth is I'm a decent guy with diverse interests who actually offers authenticity in his relationships.

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But to get to that authentic nerd, chic women have to be willing to embrace their own inner geek and accept the guy for who he is, chess trophies and all. The caveat to mating with a geek, as some dating experts see it, is coming to terms with his less-than-studly looks and less-than-suave demeanor. All thoughts of embarrassment have to go out the window.

Andrea Lavinthal, who co-authored (with Jessica Rozler) "The Hookup Handbook," a young woman's guide to navigating the waters of singlehood, says that being sure of your choice of guy is first and foremost.

"Girls tend to worry about what their friends are going to think," she said, "and you have to get over it. You can't always be making excuses and apologies. Give him the respect he deserves, and don't always be assuming you're better than him.

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She also said that not all girls are ready for a full-on geek relationship right from the start. Her book has a chapter devoted to "The Snufalufagus Hookup," the one that every girl wishes her friends didn't know about, and that she at first tries to deny happened. "In many ways, it's the first foray into the nerdy guy thing," Lavinthal said. "You're attracted to him because he doesn't screw around. Sure, it's fun to make out with the hot bartender but

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### NOT FALLING FOR THE FAKES

Koppel, however, warns that unserious girls who prowl his site looking for a breadwinner should use caution – his members may be geeky, but they sure aren't stupid. "I think geeks are intelligent enough to be wary of the idea that an attractive woman is interested in them," he said. "They aren't as drawn to beauty as they are to intelligence, and wouldn't just accept a ditz.

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It takes the right kind of girl to love a nerd. Kate Hammer, an NYU student, said she's just that kind of girl. "I have been snagged by nerd charms," she said.

"My ex and I bonded over 'Star Trek,' and on our first date at an amusement park, my current boyfriend impressed me with his intricate understanding of the physics of roller coasters. He's a mechanical engineer.

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For a modern girl who is far from ditzy, the geek could be the mate who brings security and a load of eclectic interests to the relationship. Even the once-naughty Aguilera managed to find a guy who defines devotion and doesn't compete to be the sexiest one in the relationship. Clearly, it's what a girl wants.

charming in fashion freestylist David Arquette.

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