

Anne Lindley Killheffer

Radio Love Extermination

To Beatrice Goodwife, Editor of the *Ladies' Home Gazette*:

I write today to address a topic not previously addressed in the pages of your magazine: How to fall out of love when necessary. Perhaps the *Ladies' Home Gazette* has been silent on this issue because your primary readership is married women; presumably, married women need no help from anyone to fall out of love.

Yet I assume that at least some of your readers are, like me, single professional women. For our sad sisterhood of self-supporting spinsters, the question of how to end a wretched love affair may be a live one from time to time, like how to irrigate an infected wound or expel rats from the house.

To begin, I state the obvious: When a woman falls in love with a man, there is no correspondence between the depth of her ardor and his merits as a person. We all have seen an intelligent female pine and sigh for the companionship of a certain male, no matter how lackluster his behavior or appearance might be. So it is when a woman discovers the man she adores does not deserve her devotion, she cannot assume Cupid will simply remove from her heart the painful yearning she feels. Sometimes a woman must expel Cupid's fancies from her life by an act of will.

For that reason, I offer this solution to any woman who wishes to sever the ties of longing and affection that chain her to a man who is defective, whether he is unresponsive, undeserving, unavailable, or all three. I call it the Radio Love Extermination Method.

You will be aware, from casual conversation with the object of your unwanted attachment, what his favorite radio program is. Is it the light orchestral dance program or the interminable adventures of Mike Flynn, gang-busting federal agent? Perhaps you are enamored of a man who

RADIO LOVE EXTERMINATION

worships the gospel of hog futures reports. Romantic Love is not only blind but also deaf and half-witted.

The method is as follows. First, while you are alone in your home, tune your radio to your beloved's favorite program. Next, brew a cup of hot tea and stir in a heaping tablespoonful of salt. Return to your parlor, sit comfortably by the radio, and adjust the tuning dial so that the broadcast is mixed with static. You may catch a few words or snatches of melody now and then, but by and large the radio should produce an irritating scrim of noise. Listen to the program while you drink your salted tea.

It is crucial to the success of this method that while you sip your hot brine and listen to the buzz of static, you must maintain the same nurturing smile which would adorn your face if the man himself were sitting in the parlor with you.

Just a half-hour of this practice will have an effect on your nerves equal to three months of marriage. Repeat this practice several nights in a row, as needed, until apathy or revulsion has set in.

If you find you are still attracted to this man after twenty half-hour sessions of static and salt, your desire will have withstood the equivalent of five years of marriage. You are fully entitled at that point to purchase yourself a gift suitable for a fifth wedding anniversary, such as a silver tea service or a cuckoo clock.

You may think it absurd that I, an unmarried lady, should proffer advice to Beatrice Goodwife, the nation's leading expert on the feminine role at home by the hearth. But as it is equally absurd to expect me to believe that the *Ladies' Home Gazette* is the product of an actual woman named Beatrice Goodwife, I think we are even.

Cordially,
A Helpful Reader