

# Marilyn and the Helpless Male



I loved *One Week with Marilyn*, the film that tells the story of the shooting of the film *The Prince and the Showgirl*, starring Marilyn Munroe and Sir Laurence Olivier. In the process of shooting the film, a third Production Assistant falls madly in love with Marilyn. Well, every man on set falls in love with her, but Marilyn develops a thing for this young man, and of course, what chance does he have? There is another young, attractive woman, who is available and appropriate, but he drops her like a bad habit to be with Marilyn. And every man I know understands his “decision”.

What is it about feminine beauty that turns men into mush? We have many icons of feminine beauty—Sophia Lorenz, Bridgit Bardot, Marilyn Munroe, and Penelope Cruz (ok, I admit, she’s my own addition), but we don’t really have the same thing going on when it comes to men. Yes, there are men who are considered sexy. Women apparently threw panties at Tom Jones when he performed, and George Clooney seems to do it for a lot of women in our age. In popular psychology, (and there is some support for this theory in evolutionary psychology) it’s power and status that does it for women. But I have this sense that, while women fall in love, they don’t fall as hard or fast. Contrary to popular myth, it’s my sense most women are actually more rational when it comes to love than men.

Feminine beauty elicits something approximating worship in men. Think of Leonard Cohen’s music. A couple songs come to mind. In *Light As the Breeze*, Cohen writes:

*She stands before you naked  
you can see it, you can taste it  
but she comes to you light as the breeze  
You can drink it or you can nurse it  
it don't matter how you worship  
as long as you're  
down on your knees.*

*So I knelt there at the delta  
at the alpha and the omega  
at the cradle of the river  
and the seas  
And like a blessing come from heaven  
for something like a second  
I was healed, and my heart  
was at ease.*

For something "like a second" Cohen is healed and his heart is finally at ease? Healed of what? And what was going on with his heart that it needed to find a resting place? Cohen kneels at the delta, bringing to mind references to Greek Temples and the triangular shape of the vagina. This is an act of worship—of the feminine.

Or take another famous (and perhaps over-covered) song of his, *Hallelujah*, describing King David's murderous love for Bathsheba.

*Well your faith was strong but you needed proof  
You saw her bathing on the roof  
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you  
she tied you to her kitchen chair  
And she broke your throne and she cut your hair  
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah*

Here again, David is portrayed as helpless before Bathsheba's beauty, and powerless —she broke his throne and cut his hair (the sources of his power). And then from his lips she drew

the act of devotion, the hallelujah of praise. Notice the passive voice. It's happening to David. Finally, he is out of control and one gets the sense that this is the blessed relief Cohen is describing in *Light As a Breeze*.



One thinks as well of the Odyssey, when Ulysses orders his men to put wax in their ears, tie him to a mast, and not obey any of his orders while their ship passes by The Sirens. He is driven temporarily insane by their call as they pass by. Such is the power of feminine power and beauty. The Sirens possessed the power to possess him and his men and draw him off course.

My hypothesis is that the course that we do not want to be drawn off is the path of the cultural definitions of masculinity—Breadwinner, Marlborough Man, Violent Warrior. This is what giving in to The Sirens threatens. The problem is that this is the very same path that we are trying desperately (but unconsciously) to escape.

The Promise:

I'm thinking that a woman's physical beauty is just the trigger, or the doorway, to a deeper promise that lies behind the surface beauty. The promise for men is the reintegration of a lost connection, first with Mother, with the lost feminine, and by extension with life itself. Bear

with me.



There is nothing more beautiful than a mother's face for an infant (and vice versa). It is Beauty itself, the standard by which all other experiences of beauty will come to be measured. There is a kind of adoration that is elicited, a surrender to a beauty bliss before which there is a blessed helplessness, an absolute sweet willingness to surrender. Female babies can stay connected to this organic, natural devotion. But male babies and toddlers are required to disconnect in order for our identities to form around our male identity. (See Dorothy Dinnerstein and [Carol Gilligan](#) on this. )

We need to have access to a deep intimacy with our fathers at this critical time in our development. But historically fathers have not been emotionally present for this kind of connection. They've been off to war, or bringing home the bacon, or having a drink after work, etc. Staying connected in intimate relationships is often less complicated for women than men (obviously women can have attachment issues as well). But it was developmentally more complicated for boys. To get lost and rest in the beauty of the other is to risk not realizing our gendered self. Culturally definitions of masculinity, (autonomy, control, mastery, and self-determination) rushed in to fill the vacuum. But this is a terrible loss, so painful that we tend to disassociate from it as men.

And then along comes Marilyn. This iconic vision of beauty reminds us of a primal bliss in getting lost in the ecstasy of

intimate connection with mother. This is the Promise that life held for us before the strange requirement to disconnect set in. This is why (perhaps) a woman's beauty can be so absolutely devastating. It crashes through our dissociated state. An ancient longing rushes in like a tide that has been kept at bay and breaks down the fascist architecture of culturally defined masculinity.

This is what Cohen meant when he found himself kneeling at the delta of the feminine, with his heart being healed and finally at rest (if only for a second). It is truly exhausting for men to walk around fulfilling definitions of identity that don't actually fit, that deny us access to the deep restfulness of getting lost in the beauty of an easy intimacy with the other.



The surfacing of this yearning, and the enactment of this level of intimacy in our relationships is still a largely unacknowledged part of men's journey. This might also be an explanation of why it is so difficult for men to engage in devotional spiritual practices. The act of true devotion is very complicated for men. It is a trigger for deep and unconscious grief at what it has cost to be a "man". My own experience of gazing into the eyes of another (and it can even be a stranger) is that after an initial discomfort, a love comes through—an original love that religion has called "God"—which we are simply conduits of. This is the promise that we see in each other. This is what we want and want to become. Maybe 2012 will be a year in which we consent to be the promise for each other. The trick is (men) to fall in love with Love itself, and not with every woman who ignites this promise in us. This too is spiritual practice.

Seeing as there are so various families buying online and likewise exploring the internet market place, it has become increasingly famous to purchase medications online. So the next question is where can you get information that is reliable. You can find useful information fleetly and conveniently by going online. The most common sexual problems in men are erectile dysfunction and ejaculation disorders. A lot of doctors think about "[levitra cost](#)". Did learned something about "[buy levitra online usa](#)"? Other question we are going to is "[buy generic levitra online](#)". In effect, a medical reviews found that up to three quarters of people on such preparation experiment side effects. Luckily, most cases of sexual dysfunction are treatable, so it is momentous to share your concerns with your partner and physician. Today, there are many options for men who suffer from erectile dysfunction. Get emergency help if you have any of these signs of a side effect to this treatment. Talk to your soundness care purveyor to see if it's sure to make the switch.