

A YOUNG GIRL'S PRIMER ON HOW TO ATTAIN TO THE LEISURE CLASS
(Non-fictional article reprinted from Cavalier magazine 1966)

by

VALERIE SOLANAS

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"Men."

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"Yeah, but not for you."

"Could I interest you in some dirty words?" I have a corner on the market.

"Honey, you can inter...."

"Officer! That girl! She's panhandling!"

"If I catch you one more time panhandling on Sixth Avenue, I'm gonna run you in."

"Okay, I'll wheel over to Sheridan Square." I wheel over to Sheridan Square and pan around in front of Jack Delaney's.

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"I got a lot more than fifteen cents."

"Swinging! then you can buy me dinner." Steer him into Jack Delaney's fast before he has a chance to protest.

"Sorry, we don't serve panhandlers in here."

"Your loss, you fat asshole; I'm a big eater."

So we'll eat at the Blue Mill Tavern. It's a good three blocks, but keep him talking and walk fast, and he'll still be intact when we get there.

"Are you a Lesbian?"

"Yeah."

"Tell me - what do you Lesbians do?"

"Well, first we...."

"Yeah?"

"Then we...."

"Yeeeahh?"

"And then...."

His eyes're glassy: "YEEERAAHHH? Hey, that I'd like to see."

"For twenty-five bucks apiece I think I could arrange it."

Wheel over to Sixth Avenue and Eighth Street. "Hey, Gwen...."

Room for three at the Hotel Earle. This one's a cheapey - watches and beats his meat; saves an additional twenty-fi...

Three days off, then back to work.

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"No entiendo."

"Tiene Usted quince centavos?" Few can escape.

"Yeah, I guess so. Here."

Here comes that old derelict:

"Say, Miss, could you help me out? All I need's another seven cents and I can get me a drink."

"You lying mother, you don't want a drink; you're collecting money for mutual funds. Pardon me, little boy, do you have fifteen cents?"

"Sorry, Lady, all I got's a nickel."

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"Tell me where there's some girls and I'll give you a dollar."

"Okay, give me the dollar."

"Here."

"There're girls all over the street. See ya."

I pass a sidewalk speaker. I'll grab a listen. A socialist. I listen awhile, then leave, continuing to do my bit toward bringing about socialism by remaining off the labor market. But first

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a few little acquisitions from the 5 & 10, since it's right here. I enter, considering what more I, as a woman, can do for my country - shoplift.

I pan my way home with the goods, then pan down to Bleecker Street.

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"In change?"

"If you'd prefer bills, that's all right with me."

"I'm gonna want something for bills."

"Then just give me fifteen cents."

"No, wait a minute, maybe we can make a deal."

"Give me fifteen cents, or I'm leaving."

"Okay, here's fifty cents. Now, wait a minute; don't go."

"Look, my time's valuable. Standing here talking to you'll cost me four-fifty an hour."

"Then give me fifteen minutes worth for a dollar thirteen."

"Okay, you're on. Now, what d'ya want to talk about?"

"Where can I get a girl?"

"For ten bucks I'll introduce you to one."

"That's all? Just ten bucks?"

"That's my price for the introduction. Then you'll have to negotiate with her. Come on, this girl's a knockout.....Hey, Mary Lou...."

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"What's it for?"

"Subway fare."

"Why don't you ask a cop?"

"I did. He told me to see you."

"Here."

That girl handing out those advertisements for a lecture seems to be handing them to men only. I'll follow her awhile and see. Yes, that's exactly what she's doing.

"Say, Miss, why're you handing those out to men only?"

"Was I? I hadn't realized it. Instinct, I guess. I don't have too many of these, and this lecture's rather intellectual, you know, so I hit those who...well...you know, seem intellectual."

I must admit I'm impressed - she's been programmed beautifully.

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"You're one of those bums at your age? Get out of here before I call a cop." I should know better than to approach crotchety old men.

"Val, pan me up a john, will ya? I been cruising in and out of bars for two hours and there's not a john in sight."

"What d'ya mean? The bars're crawling with guys."

"Yeah, but none of them'll talk to me - they're shy."

"So talk to them."

"And get bounced out? What? Are you kidding?"

"So hang out in front of the bars. Hit them at four when they're closing; they'll stagger out, all drunk and horny, and there you'll be - Miss Last Chance."

"Aaah, I'm sick of turning tricks. Money, I hate it. Why do we have to need money? Hey, why can't I panhandle with you."

"Why don't you panhandle by yourself?"

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"Oh, I could never do it alone."
 "How would the two of us work it?"
 "We'll approach a guy together and you ask him for thirty cents."
 "Nah, they know we didn't both lose our carfare. Besides, I usually get at least thirty, anyway, and besides, you'll slow me down and just generally cramp my act. I'll tell you what - I'll panhandle over here and you panhandle across the street."
 "But what'll I do?"
 "Just ask them for fifteen cents."
 "But what if they refuse?"
 "You ask some more guys. Look, ask this guy coming along now."
 "Aw, he wouldn't give it to me."
 "How do you know?"
 "I just do. I'll hit that guy wearing a suit."
 "Doesn't mean a thing, but go ahead, hit him."
 "Uh, do you have fif.... He just kept walking; didn't even notice me."
 "Follow him! Bug him! Bug him!"
 "Aw, it wouldn't do any good. Let me try this one coming along."
 She approaches a guy accompanying a woman: "Do you have fifteen cents?"
 "Sorry."
 "Tony, there's so much scum around here."
 "Don't hit on a guy with a broad. Like he's gonna let her know he's a mark?"
 "I'll try this guy: Do you have fifteen cents?"
 "Nope, sorry."
 "Sell him a dirty word."
 "Who the hell's gonna buy a dirty word?"
 "Look, why don't you just beat it. You're making me lose money."
 The girl's an incompetent and'll wind up with a job.
 "Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"
 "Why you hitting on me? Do I look like a tourist? Must be this uptown suit I'm wearing."
 "No, you look like a connoisseur of conversation. Want to buy an hour's worth for six bucks?"
 "Hours worth of what?"
 "Conversation."
 "Do I get to talk about anything I want?"
 "Anything."
 "Anything?"
 "Anything."
 "Even sex?"
 "Even that, and for an additional four bucks I do illustrations on the napkin."
 "Six bucks, huh? Okay, where'll we go for this conversation?"
 "A restaurant; you get to buy me dinner while we talk."
 "How 'bout Feenjon's right here?"
 "No good - they don't serve panhandlers in there."
 "Say, can I ask you a personal question? Are you a Lesbian?"

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"Yeah, why?"

"Do you mind telling me what you Lesbians do?"

"Well, first we...."

"Yeah?"

"Then we...."

"Yeeeahh?"

"And then...."

His eyes're glassy: "YEEEAHHH? Hey, that I'd like to see."

"For twenty-five bucks I think I could arrange it." Wheel over to Sixth Avenue and Eighth Street.

"Hey, Mary Lou...." Room for three at the Hotel Earle.

Won't take tomorrow off, despite a good night tonight. Can't - I need winter clothes. But it'll be short and sweet, no dilly-dallying. I pan my way home, planning the next night's agenda: pan around, six bucks for the opportunity to try, chomp a fast snatch, then home. Think I'll eat in Lindy's tomorrow.

I pan my way to the subway, get off at Fiftieth Street, and pan over to Lindy's. There's a john leering out front of it, ready and waiting. How'd he know I'd be here?

"Pardon me, Sir...."

I pan my way back to the Village.

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"Hey, how far'd you go in school?"

"That's conversation. I charge six bucks an hour for that."

"You from around here?"

"That's conversation."

"Ah, come on. Just tell me - where's there a party?"

"That's conversation."

"Okay, Okay, here." Off for another dashing encounter with the brilliant, inventive male mind.

"Pardon me, Sir, do you have fifteen cents?"

"I've never been hit by a lady panhandler before, so I guess that entitles you to something. Here's fifty cents."

There's Betsy and Eileen necking it up as usual.

"Don't you two ever do anything else?"

"Man, what else is there?"

"Tony, more scum. It's all over."

I pan along the tables of the outside patio of Granada's and on around the block. This job offers broad opportunity for travel - around and around around the block. And to think - some girls settle for Europe.

"Pardon me, Sirs, do you have fifteen cents?"

"S-u-u-u-re, here's a quarter. Give the girl a quarter, Pete. Give her a quarter, Joe. Now tell us - where's the action?"

"I'm the action."

"Well, then let's go."

"Hold it. I gotta eat first, and if you wanta talk to me while I eat, that's six bucks an hour."

"Then tell you what - just tell us where there's a good spot."

"For three bucks apiece I'll show you an out-of-this-world, simply unbelievable spot. The broads they got in there! Oooooo, the dirty broads they got in there!!"

"YEEAAHH!! You know, Pete, it just might be worth three bucks apiece."

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