

## 17. Zits

Some people are just hornier than others. Ted thinks this is in large part genetic. There must be a gene that can be *H* (horny) or *h* (not horny). As with all genes, a person has two of these, one from the father and one from the mother. A person who has the *HH* combination will be very horny, while a person who has *Hh* (or *hH*) will be of average horniness, and a person who has *hh* is likely to be barely interested in sex at all.

This gene apparently does not exist in bears. *All* female bears come into estrus once a year, unless they are too young or too old or there is physically something wrong with them, and when they do they are more horny than a person can possibly imagine. And *all* male bears are willing and even eager to be polite to a female in estrus, whereas they have zero interest in females who are not in estrus.

Ted believes that Kristin is *HH* and that Piotr is probably *Hh*. Piotr disagrees. Like almost all males, he thinks he is *HH*. He just thinks that Kristin probably has some sort of genetic abnormality and is *HHHH*. (Also like almost all males, he thinks that his penis is larger than average, and Kristin is experienced enough in these matters to know that, about that issue at least, he is right.) This controversy could go on and on, because at present there is no genetic test for the *H/h* gene. In fact, there is no scientific evidence that such a gene exists, or, if it does exist, which chromosome it is on. Because “H” is the eighth letter in the English alphabet, Ted thinks it must be on chromosome number eight. However, it is hard to believe that the chromosomal location of this gene (if it exists) would be different for people like Greeks or Russians or Koreans who use a different alphabet. Ted has applied for a grant to study whether or not Greeks or Russians or Koreans are different from native English-speakers in their levels of intrinsic horniness.

Besides genetics, Ted believes that the major factor affecting a person's intrinsic level of horniness is testosterone. He sets out his views in his recent bestseller, *Testosterone: The Horny Hormone*. Men have more testosterone than women, which explains why (with some spectacular exceptions like Kristin) men are generally hornier than women. Also, for men, testosterone declines with age, which explains why young men are generally hornier than old men. In Ted's view, these two facts explain why older men and younger women tend to pair up – it is an attempt to match sex drives. If you put a 35 year old man with a 35 year old women, or a 50 year old man with a 50 year old woman, the man will want to do it more often than the woman and serious trouble can result. However, if you pair a 50 year old man with a 35 year old woman, on average you have a sexually compatible match.

Unlike *H/h* hormone status, testosterone levels are measurable with current technology. Ted is not sure why people do not routinely measure and publicize their testosterone levels in order to find their proper soul-mate (or bed-mate). Currently, the usual personal ad reads something like this: *Single white female, 36, slim, large boobs, seeks compatible male. Likes travel, concerts, walks on the beach and quiet times at home.* Ted thinks it would be much more informative if it read something like this: *Single white female, 36, slim, large boobs, testosterone level = 53, prefers twice a week, seeks sexually compatible male.* However, he acknowledges that if the ad says both *slim* and *large boobs* there will probably be a lot of responses regardless of what the rest of the ad says. And, upon reflection, maybe it would get even more responses if it said *four times per week*.

Given that women do not routinely disclose their testosterone level, Ted believes that men need to find good ways of guessing what it might be. Some of the signs of a high testosterone level are obvious, like broad shoulders, a husky voice and facial hair. But another

sign that often goes unheeded is zits. Ted believes that young women with a bad complexion tend to have high testosterone levels and therefore to be good sexual choices in the longer run. This was of course the thesis of his best-selling book, *Pick the One with Zits*, that changed forever the way that men viewed young women's complexions.

Not surprisingly, it also changed the way that young women viewed their complexions. Suddenly zits were good. Before Ted's book, the popular young women (the prom queens, so to speak) had great complexions, large boobs, and firm but soft and non-prominent musculature. If they participated in athletics, they were cheerleaders, or possibly they were on the women's tennis team. After Ted's book, the popular young women had broad shoulders, visible biceps, large boobs and poor complexions. They often had facial hair, and they were likely to be the captain of the field hockey team, or maybe a sprinter on the track team. One result of this change in attitudes is that many high schools were forced to add a field hockey team. But a more serious change is that young women began to take active steps to make their complexions worse. Some of the things they did, like eating chocolate in hopes of developing zits, were fundamentally harmless. However, other things, like deliberately scratching themselves, or putting harsh chemicals on their face to make it have irritated red areas, or seeking out mosquito-infested areas, were potentially harmful and could even cause lasting damage. In the interest of both convenience and safety, Ted started a chain of shops, called ZitsRSexy, to try to spoil young ladies' complexions in a safe, professionally sound manner. For example, technicians could paint very realistic zits on a girl's face, and these would last several months before they had to be renewed. At age 24, or after the wearer was safely married, or in fact whenever was desirable, they could just be allowed to fade away. However, the American "do it yourself"

attitude (and the desire to save money) meant that for zits, as for many things having to do with feminine beauty, home treatment would remain common.

Naturally Ted had a line of products ready to help out. His most successful was the zit bandaid, which featured a clear adhesive patch with a prominent fake zit. They came in a choice of blackhead or whitehead. Larger patches contained an entire fake rash.

Muscles were a more difficult problem because gyms already existed where young women (or anyone else) could pump iron to develop better muscles. But that involved work, and teenage girls, like many other people, do not always seem very interested in things that involve work. Steroids can help to develop muscle mass, and also have the added advantage of stimulating the growth of facial hair, but Ted did not want to get involved in illegal activities. He considered hiring Serena Williams as a spokeswoman for his Strong Sixteen line of clothing, on the grounds that if young women dressed like Serena guys would *think* they had muscles. However, after a few of his customers dressed like Serena Williams and were arrested on suspicion of prostitution, he gave up this idea and concentrated on complexion products. (And, although it is easy to make fun of the way Serena dresses, Piotr says that she clearly proves that young women with large boobs and visible muscles can be sexy.)

Piotr is happy to see Ted endorse muscle-building, and also to see him make money. But he has to admit that it takes some effort to get used to the sight of the lingerie models in the Victoria's Silly catalog with dozens of zits on their faces.