

The Gentle Art Of Kissing

New York (NAPS)--To a kid, it's "Mush." To a girl, it's bliss. To the cold-blooded scientist it's simply "the juxtaposition of two orbicularis oris muscles in a state of contraction."
But no matter how you slice or define--it, it's that pleasurable proposition, a kiss.

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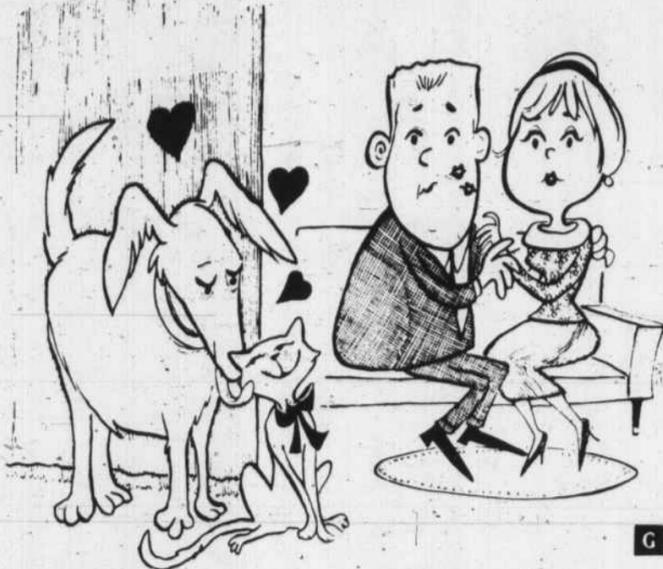
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Kisses come in a variety of sizes--ranging from the tiny peck to the giant economy smack! They can say, "Hello," "My how you've grown," "Goodbye," "Good-bye--come again!" or "Good-

bye forever." They can make you feel like William the Conqueror; they can make you feel like Little Orphan Annie.

Kisses have been known to cause wars, strengthen peace, seal men's doom. Where-- and when--did all this begin? No one really knows, although there has been a good deal of theorizing.

To the Greeks, according to information sent in by a researcher at the Shulton company, kissing was a precious gift from the gods. On the other hand, the practice stemmed from the Devil, in the opinion of a few sour philosophers of the Middle Ages. Early naturalists thought of it as a "modified bite," stemming from our primitive cannibalistic past--hence, the saying, "I love you so much, I could eat you up." And Charles Darwin tried to trace the kiss back to the act of lower animals who seize their prey with their teeth.

Whatever its origin, one thing seems certain: Kissing has a long history, during which it has also been known to have some "smacking" repercussions. Cleopatra, who was not really a raving beauty, according to historical accounts, used perfume made from the flowers of the desert to make herself the most kissable woman of that day. Whether it was her Desert Flower scent that went straight to Marc Antony's head isn't certain, but Cleopatra's kisses, say some historians, sealed the doom of Rome.

Paris, Prince of Troy, precipitated the ten-year-long Trojan War when he dared to kiss Helen. One kiss led to another, and before you knew it, one jealous husband was leading a Greek army to teach those Trojans to keep their lips to themselves.

It didn't take men long to realize that kissing could get a fellow into trouble. An ancient Greek who was caught kissing a gal on the streets --wife or not--was subject to death. The Greeks, who were anything but slow-witted, did their best to keep temptation away from their fellow citizens. Husbands made their wives eat onions before they left home! However, while they didn't condone kissing in public between people of opposite sexes, in private it was an entirely different matter. In both ancient Greece and Rome, kissing became so popular as a form of salutation that it made perfumed lips fashionable.

A popular 17th century belief was that spirits could kiss. English preacher William Cartwright wrote in 1951, "Tell me no more. . . That two un bodied essences may kiss, And then like angels, twist and feel one bliss." A different kind of essence figures in mortal kisses today, as modern women dab a touch of Desert Flower perfume behind their ears to help make a "husbandly peck" blossom into a full-blown kiss.

In fact, a 20th century manual by Hugh Morris, called "The Art of Kissing," states: "Odors are as necessary to love as love, itself. . . Sometimes it is advisable to touch the corners of the mouth with perfume. But be certain that there is only the faintest suggestion of an odor and no more."

During its long history, kissing has also given rise to a host of superstitions--several of which we still observe today.

Know why men line up to

kiss a new bride? Because an old English belief has it that all who kiss the bride after the ceremony but before the husband will have good luck for a year.

Ever wonder why we "kiss to make well"? It goes back to the knightly practice of sucking the blood from wounds.

The Welsh believe that the sex of the first baby kissed by a bride fore-tells the sex of her own first-born. The French say that if a dark-complexioned man, who is in love with you, kisses you, expect a proposal--but not necessarily from him! And in the Dark Ages, kissing a pretty woman was declared a sure cure for a headache.

Kissing, of course, like any fine art, is executed differently in different lands. For example, pressing the lips together--as we do-- would startle a Mongolian. He prefers to bring his nose into light contact with his beloved's cheek or forehead while breathing slowly through his nostrils. An Abyssinian kneels down and kisses the ground to express his love. A Turk kisses his own hand, then places it on his forehead. Other methods include: Blowing on each other's hands, rubbing one's right ear and sticking out the tongue, smacking each other on the stomach.

Sound silly? Well, the way we carry on amuses other people, too. The Japanese find the American habit of kissing in public not only very funny--but just a little indecent. But it seems too late to change our ways. Thanks to movies, novels and television, the art of kissing has become hopelessly standardized.

But perhaps it always was. Note this sage cynicism of Rudyard Kipling, who had been around a bit, some 75 years

ago:
"My Son, if a maiden deny thee and scuffling bid thee give o'er, Yet lip meets with lip at the lastward. Get out! She has been there before."
And Further. . .
"They are pecked on the ear and the chin and the nose who are lacking in love."
Who was the greatest advocate of kissing? Perhaps it was the gal in the London play of 1616, "Scornful Lady," who would "kiss till the cow comes home."
On the other hand, the poor "Mademoiselle from Armentieres" of 1915 "hasn't been kissed in forty years"! But she could comfort herself with Thomas Gray's words: "Full many a flower is born to blush un-

seen, And waste its sweetness on the desert air." The modern answer to this problem is expressed by Desert Flower's new slogan: "Why wait till tonight--you're a woman all day, aren't you?"
And if you're lucky enough to get a daytime kiss, you should be happy indeed. For the poet Shelley once wrote: "See the mountains kiss high heaven, And the waves clasp one another. No sister flower would be forgiven If it disdained its brother. And the sunlight clasps the earth, And the moonbeams kiss the

sea; What are all these kissings worth If thou kiss not me?"

On Farm Price Aids

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Born in Spring Hope, North Carolina, 1921. Lived in Wilson, N.C. since one year old. Graduated with honors from Atlantic Christian College, 1943. Worked as legal secretary for six years. Graduated with honors from U. N. C. Law School, 1955. Practiced as associate 2 years and partner 10 years in Wilson law firm, 1955-67. Now serving as Judge of Court of Appeals under gubernatorial appointment. Baptist. Active worker with young people. Member State Democratic Committee. Member Pilot Club. Past President Junior Woman's Club and Woman's Club. Former member Salvation Army Advisory Board. Single. Resides with mother in Wilson, N.C.

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