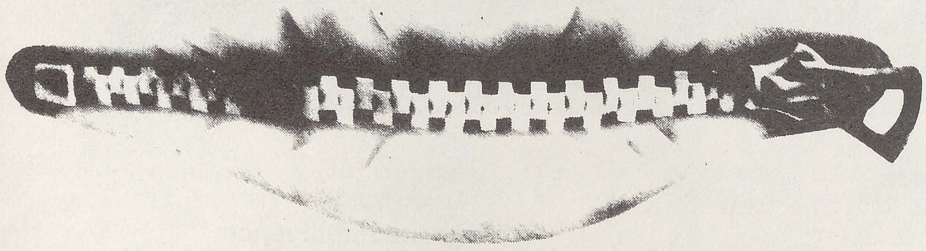


By June Hinkley



KISSES, KISSES

KISSING

It's never had to be learned. Yet poets and philosophers have written words enough to fill many large, dusty books on hundreds of forgotten shelves on its method, meaning and measure.

XXX. OOO. XXX.

The kiss.

Hershey's packaged it. Sweetened it. Chocolated it.

But didn't improve on it.

The kiss. How many dry, tightlipped high school study halls smack with memories of kisses?

The kiss. More formal than a handshake in Russia. Unsanitary and immoral in China.

For centuries consigned to mothers and children only in Japan.

The kiss. What a mystery! Used to seal love and to betray. "If we humans didn't have the kiss, we'd invent it."

Historians are in agreement that the handshake originated in Greece as a gesture to show that no dagger was bound to an acquaintance's wrist hidden under his toga. But it was in both Athens and Rome that kissing was popularized - - for a very practical purpose. While the statesmen and men of importance discussed the affairs of state at their forums or baths, their wives and mistresses often became bored and nipped from their fine collections of wines. In order to detect such extracurricular activities on the part of the female contingent, the men would lift up the faces of their beloveds, take a gentle sniff and taste the lips to ascertain whether or not there were an afterglow from the fruit of the vineyards.

This process became quite habit-forming.

Kissing took on a new meaning, both that of romance and greetings between close friends. With the advent of Christianity, kissing became the symbol of brotherhood. ("Greet each other with a holy kiss," said St. Paul.) And, as more and more Christians escaped the lions, the kissing tradition grew and grew.

This custom posed certain problems to the cultural pattern because kissing tended to compromise chastity, and some pagan husbands objected to their Christian wives being kissed by brethren. There was only one answer. It was ordained that a person might only kiss a member of his or her own sex.

But the kiss proved irrepressible. Word passed from mouth to mouth that kissing was better than not. And so it came to pass that it took its rightful place in many parts of the world. Not all, however, for today India's filmmakers and distributors are not permitted to make or show any motion picture which depicts the mouth-to-mouth greeting. And Oriental groups do not show their affection to others by kissing.

It is true that kissing has power beyond romance, though. University tests show that even a healthy person transmits an army of germs when he kisses his girlfriend. The Polynesians of Hawaii were virtually wiped out with shared influenza and measles when, in their love of life, they learned the European kissing.

Kissing. It's here to stay.

Did kissing evolve, as some anthropologists have suggested, as a sort of genteel version of the primitive compulsion to kiss an enemy and eat him to gain his strength, vigor and beauty? Maybe. But primitive people of the world don't kiss all that much, even now. In the South Seas they rub noses, and Australian aborigines rub entire faces. Mongols show affection in pressing their noses to loved ones' faces and inhaling.

For the truly refined kiss, we gotta turn to us civilized barbarians. Let's give credit where it's due: We Americans, Italians, Germans, English, French, et al., are, shall we And, as with all true trades, lips have mouthed rules as well as license.

For instance: ancient Romans were permitted to kiss only blood relatives. Old Persians, when greeting an equal, would kiss on the mouth. Unequals would kiss a cheek. Very unequals - - a toe, or two.

Medieval kings allowed wives to kiss them on the cheek in public. In private, medieval kings did pretty much as they pleased.

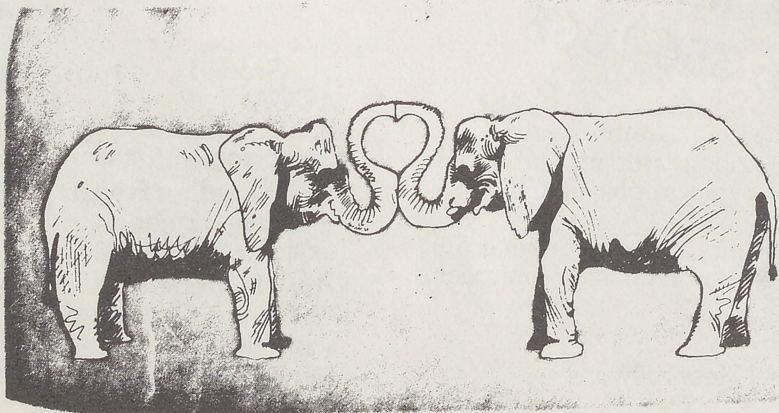
Kissing a married woman in old France by an unmarried man was adultery. The wife died. The kisser lived to kiss again.

And then, in Victorian days, to kiss before marriage, even though engaged, left little to imitate.

Kissing. Always the same. Does time or practice obscure a lover's greeting? A man and woman's seal of marriage? Does even that awkward kid who sits in front of you in geometry class not know what a kiss is?

He knows, baby. He knows.

And so, for that matter, do you.



Oh what lies there are in kisses!

(Heinrich Heine)

A LIGHT WHIMSICAL LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF ****the kiss****

"A kiss on the forehead signifies respect and admiration for intellect.

A kiss on the cheek signifies admiration for beauty.

A kiss on the nose shows awkwardness.

A kiss on the chin shows appreciation for something.

A kiss on the hand shows timidity and homage.

A kiss on the lips signifies love.

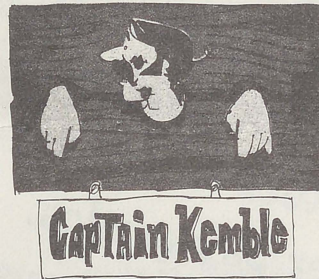
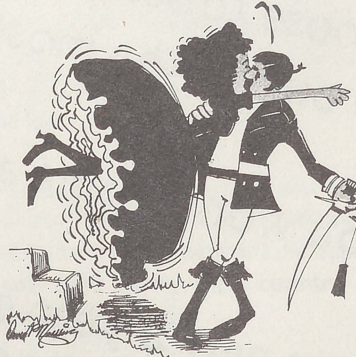
A short kiss, carelessness.

A long kiss, passionate devotion."

(The Curiosities of Kissing, 1905 - - by Alfred Fowler)

"A kiss without a moustache is like an egg without salt."

(Old Spanish saying.)



Much has been made of the fact that in Colonial days kissing in public was regarded as an abomination, and that kissing, even by husband and wife, upon the Sabbath was a criminal offense. The classic example is that of Captain Kemble, who, returning home after a long voyage, kissed his wife on the front steps of their house in Boston and was promptly lodged in the stocks.

Kissing in Cairo movie theaters is punishable by a \$115 fine or three months in jail

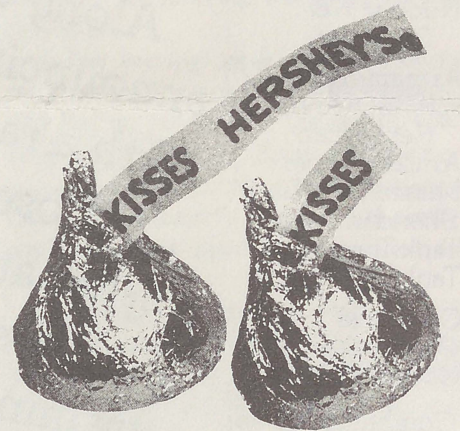


KISSES, KISSES

There are slobbery kisses, dry kisses, And warm hello and goodbye kisses. There are gentle kisses, vigorous kisses. Planned, and quick-on-the-triggerous kisses.

There are passive kisses, kin-type kisses, And fervent, furtive and sin-type kisses, There are ladies' kisses, cousins' kisses. And brief, dispensed-by-the-dozens kisses. There are on-the-cheek kisses, brow kisses, And the long and lingering W-O-W kisses. But whichever kind or type the kiss is, Results are improved by dentifrices.

(Colleen Bare)



Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss! (Christopher Marlowe, DR. FAUSTUS.) "It is wiser to be remembered as the one woman a man wishes he could have kissed than to be forgotten among those he has carressed." (Ella Wheeler Wilcox)

