

Book reviews

Reviewer [Dianne Dicks](#), Publisher

Review July 2006

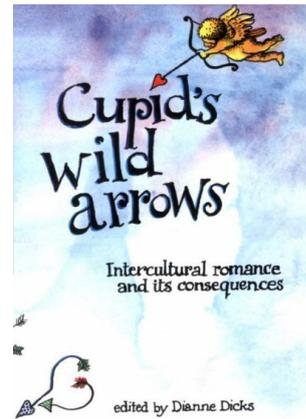
Author Dianne Dicks (ed.)

Title Cupid Wild Arrows
Intercultural romance and its
consequences

Publisher [Bergli Books](#)

Details Published 1993. ISBN: 3952000221
Also available in German as Amors wilde
Pfeile

Links [Bergli Books](#)



Editor's comment:

“Cupid Wild Arrows” was edited by Dianne Dicks and published at Bergli Books in 1993. This book is a must for everyone considering intercultural marriage as it covers many aspects of intercultural family life. Personal stories, shared by contributors from different nationalities and different combination of intercultural matches make this book exciting to read.

Expected Response Syndrome

By Claire Bonne

(Excerpts published with the permission of [Bergli Books](#))

It is difficult for me to write about inter-cultural marriages, not having participated in any other one. It is an important topic to think about though. When we have troubles in marriage, we often forget to depersonalize them and to realize that at least some of these – not all – are due to cultural differences. I think when communication runs through different channels and that these channels are, for the most part, culturally formed.

If I had to pinpoint the single most difficult element in a dual-cultural marriage, I would define it as ERS – the Expected Response Syndrome. ERS means that whatever you expect to happen in a given situation is not going to happen and whatever you never dreamed would happen surely will...

...The loss of intimacy and the loss of historical dimensions that occur through the loss of a common language is sad. If I say something consciously old fashioned like “Four score and seven years ago” every nuance of that goes down the drain. It becomes a literal epithet. Try out “In Xanadu did Kubla Kahn...” on your foreign spouse and see what kind of reaction you get. Old ditties on TV commercials that do so much to hold the American culture together – the lead song from the “The Jetsons” on television or screaming “The Shadow Knows” is scary voice – stuff like that just does not exist between us. You learn to simplify your statements and you always have the feeling that your mind is simplifying itself proportionally...

... “But what is good about being interculturally married?” I asked my husband this morning. We are thrown upon each other without really understanding each others, without our collective selves. Our telephone bills are high and our travel expenses leave our annual budget in shambles. He answered that the relationship is a little perforation in is otherwise grim reality. It creates fresh air and more space. He said that without this type of marriage, he would feel trapped in a static time warp. He actually convinced me that we have the feeling that our world is big and that we are world citizens in it. If we actually do get beyond language and free ourselves from our conventionalities, and sometimes we do, we find a much deeper bond holding us together. As if our very naked selves and souls, free of cultural baggage and foregone conclusions, do really want to meld.

Goulash

by Germaine W. Shames

(Excerpts published with the permission of [Bergli Books](#))

My lover infuriates me. In many ways, too many to count. He stays up half the night, he hugs other women, his pate is greasy with hair tonic, he smothers his food in hot paprika, his political tirades border on fascism, he looses his emotions like a whirlwind over the smallest things...

Even before he senses my anger, he has his excuse ready. Always the same, arrogant excuse: “But, my dear, I’m Hungarian!”...

... Our romance is very much a goulash, full of zing yet hard to digest.

Janos lives at an emotional pitch that gives me chronic gooseflesh. He pulls me from bed at midnight to waltz with him through the over-decorated rooms of his apartment, impossibly cluttered with the memorabilia from Budapest. He cries over album after album of decomposed family photographs then burst into song. If I suggest we go to sleep, he snaps, “But, my dear, I’m Hungarian!”...

... His words of consolation? “But my dear, I am Hungarian!”

There is no rebuttal. After six months of stewing over his habits and quirks, customs and manias, I have ceased to look for one.

Instead, I tell myself that like any good goulash, in time our various ingredients will mingle, our flavours and spices coalesce. Janos will mellow, I will take on piquancy. What an exquisite meal love’s alchemy will make of our differences!...

Caress

by Nicole Oundjian

(Excerpts published with the permission of [Bergli Books](#))

When I was a little girl in Cincinnati, Ohio, my second grade teacher, Mrs. Nixon, slapped her large, silver-spotted hands on each of my knees and crashed them together. The inside of my knees were bruised for a week, but I never again sat with my legs spread apart.

I still say thank-you, I still don’t point and I still press my knees together. I tell my boyfriend that the sum is greater than the parts, but he says I’m old-fashioned...

... Without a world, Lene put her head into the crook of her boyfriend's neck, and licked it from base to the ear. She straddled one of his legs, and still looked at me.

"Do you know Arne? He's an accountant, and great with numbers, especially my numbers," Lene laughed. I guess I must have blushed.

"You Americans don't like this, do you? I noticed it before, when I spent two weeks in Michigan. I was with a family – and the two boys wore suits all the time and prayed. They told me I looked cheap since I didn't wear a bra. Ha! Just say no! But don't mean it."...

...By that time the guest had begun to clear the table. I was collecting my plate, when Erik leaned over, kissed me and touched my breast.

"What the hell are you doing? Don't you ever, ever do that in front of other people." Even though he is my boyfriend, I felt invaded and exposed.

"Oh for Chrise sake, relax. This isn't America. The police aren't going to break down the doors because we're having a little fun."...

...As we were going into the yard, I saw one of Erik's friends lying on the floor, his wife, I assume it was his wife, sitting on top of him, gyrating to the music.

"Doesn't she work at the Ministry of Culture? Geez, Erik, I mean why do this in front of each other?"

"Why the hell not? What difference does it make? Do you have to be behind a door to express your love?"

"That's not what I said"

"Yea it is. What are you afraid of? Afraid somebody might see you? Might see your body? Your feelings? Might see you out of control?" He licked his lips and laughed at me.

"I can't believe this. You never talked this way in the U.S.?"

"Well, now I'm home and this is the way I feel home. Don't you think I can feel this way? Don't you think I just want to feel you sometimes in front of my friends? Don't you think I can do things I can't always explain?"...