

What I Know for Sure About Women

By Mark Leyner



1. Even little girls, in all their blithe, unharrowed innocence, have a presentiment of sorrow, hardship, and adversity... of loss. Women, throughout their lives have an intrinsic and profound understanding of Keats' sentiments about "Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips Bidding adieu."

2. This sage knowledge of, and ability to abide, the inherently fugitive nature of happiness somehow accounts for the

extraordinary beauty of women as they age.

3. Women have an astonishing capacity to maintain their equilibrium in the face of life's mutability, its unceasing and unforeseeable vicissitudes. And this agility is always in stark and frequently comical contradistinction to men's naively bullish and brittle delusions that things can forever remain exactly the same.

4. Women are forgiving but implacably cognizant.

5. Women are almost never gullible but sometimes relax their vigilance out of loneliness. (And I believe most women abhor loneliness.)

6. In their most casual, offhand, sisterly moments, women are capable of discussing sex in such uninhibited detail that it would cause a horde of carousing Cossacks to cringe.

7. Women are, for all intents and purposes, indomitable. It really requires an almost unimaginable confluence of crushing, cataclysmic forces to vanquish a woman.

8. Women's instincts for self-preservation and survival can seem to men to be inscrutably unsentimental and sometimes cruel.

9. Women have a very specific kind of courage that enables them to fling themselves into the open sea – whether it's a new life for themselves, another person's life, or even what might appear to be a kind of madness.

10. Women never – no matter how old they are – completely relinquish their aristocratic assumption of seductiveness.

And here is one last thing I know – and *I know this with a certitude that exceeds anything I've said before*: that men's final thoughts in their waking days and in their lives are of women... ardent, wistful thoughts of wives and lovers and daughters and mothers.

What do you know for sure?

Mark Leyner, a husband, a father, a son, and a brother, is the author of eight books and a co-writer of the movie *War, Inc.*