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Cindy Pearlman

Break-Up Banter

Vince Vaughn is the first to admit he's not always the best boyfriend.

"I don't like to do the dishes. I do like to watch sporting events. I'm not big on the ballet," he says. "The absolute worst is I don't care if the new curtains are white or beige. Women should know that most men are less concerned about curtain color than their mates would like to believe. To be honest, we just want to sign off and have the curtain conversation stop at any cost."

Vaughn clears his throat and offers his romantic attributes. "On the positive side, I have two older sisters. I've always gotten along with women. I guess I really enjoy the friendship part of a romantic relationship as much as anything else."

He stops himself mid-sentence.

"You know what?" Vaughn says. "You make a movie called 'The Break-Up,' and suddenly I feel like I'm Dr. Phil. I'm saying things like, 'Men and women need to give each other space' -- which by the way is true."

In "The Break-Up," Vaughn plays Gary, a Chicago tour bus operator who hits a relationship bump a year into dating Brooke (Jennifer Aniston), an art gallery worker. She wants him to do the dishes, go to the ballet and love the fact that the new curtains don't allow room for his dream pool table.

Q. Did any real-life breakup make you want to co-write and star in a movie called "The Break-Up"?

A. It's based on elements of my relationships. We've all been here. This is a couple who argues when he brings home three lemons and she told him she needed 12 for a centerpiece. As we all know, they're not really arguing about the lemons. It's never about the lemons.

Q. The rumor is Jennifer was the only woman you wanted to cast.

A. It's true that she was the only actress I had in mind. When we rehearsed, I was impressed with her acting and timing. It was also a good role. Unfortunately, a lot of times women in romantic comedies are stuck sort of rolling their eyes at what the guy does. I wanted her to be really funny on screen, too. Jennifer is the heart of this movie.

Q. What was it like for you to come home and make his huge summer film on the streets of Chicago?

A. It really was a dream come true. Growing up, I was such a huge fan of the John Hughes movies, and I loved "The Blues Brothers." Those are great Chicago films. When my friend Jon Favreau did "Made," we filmed it in his city, which is New York. That made me really want to bring a film back to Chicago, but it had to be the right movie.

Q. You and Jennifer were relentlessly tracked by the tabloids. Did that get on your nerves?

A. It really wasn't bad because the people of Chicago left us alone. We even went to a Cubs game and Taste of Chicago. We went to Second City. We went to see Sue the big dinosaur. Let's put a plug in for Sue! That was really cool. It's Chicago. Everyone goes about their business.

Q. Enough about business. We've read all the tabloids. What are you looking for in a relationship?

A. I know that I need friendship and a sense of humor. I like someone who can make me laugh and laugh at myself. I also need a girl who can roll with life. Life is always about peaks and valleys. The biggest thing for me is having someone where there is a trust, too. It's different when you're younger. Your priorities are different. Now, I'm older and in a different place. It's about trust.

Q. What have you learned about women?

A. I've learned that you never make comments about your girlfriend's family. Never. Even if she says, "My cousin is so weird." In the past, I would have said, "Penn and Teller are weird, and your cousin is even weirder." Then she would have replied in anger, "Are you saying something is wrong with my cousin?" The correct answer, men, is to say, "Your cousin isn't weird. He seems OK to me."

SHE SAYS: 'BELIEVE ME, I'M STILL A ROMANTIC'

You might have heard she's single, but please don't try to pick up Jennifer Aniston. Not so long ago, the ex-Mrs. Brad Pitt was in a restaurant when someone tried to do just that.

"Oh god, it was terrible," recalls Aniston. "So, this guy comes up to me in a restaurant and says, 'Hey, I like your salad.'"

"Honestly, I didn't know what he meant," Aniston says, throwing her hands in the air. "So, the guy repeats, 'I really like your salad.' I still didn't know what he meant. So he added, 'You know ... your salad. Your makeup and your hair. That's your salad.'"

"Oh god," Aniston repeats. "How clever." Pause. "I'm sort of a dork about these things," she confesses.

It really doesn't matter because if you believe the tabloids, she's off the market. Aniston supposedly is dating Vince Vaughn, co-star of the shot-in-Chicago romantic comedy "The Break-Up," opening Friday.

Just don't expect her to tell you what the two of them did last night.

Arriving solo for an interview and approximately two hours before Vaughn also will sit down with the Sun-Times, Aniston is happy to clear up the biggest rumor, which is the one that she's moving to Chicago, to a deluxe Michigan Avenue penthouse in the sky.

"Oh, I heard those rumors, too," she says. "Sadly, it's just not true. I love your city. Don't get me wrong. I adore being there. But I'm not moving to Chicago."

In "The Break-Up," Aniston plays Brooke, a young woman who works in a Chicago art gallery. Her upscale self falls in love with a Polish tour guide played by Vaughn. The two move in together and it's bliss -- until he forgets to bring home 12 lemons she needs for a centerpiece. And forgets to help her do the dishes.

Q. Was it ironic to star in a movie called "The Break-Up" after breaking up in real life with Brad Pitt?

A. Yeah, it was pretty ironic, all right. In a way, it was also a cathartic thing. I felt very lucky that this came to me. If this script had come to me at any other time in my life then I don't know if I would have got it on the level I did as an actor.

Q. In the film, your character Brooke freaks out when her boyfriend won't help do the dishes. Are you the picky kind of partner who gets mad if someone isn't helping around the house?

A. Well, you might not believe it, but I do the dishes. In fact, I'm a little crazy about doing them. I'm definitely the type of woman who needs a clean kitchen before I go to bed.

Q. Do you think women do too much in relationships?

A. Yes. Absolutely. I think that's because it's just instinctual as a woman to be the caretaker of your home. Women complain that men don't do enough, but it's only your own fault. You train your man to do nothing. You can't blame someone then for not knowing what his or her job should be if you don't ask for it right off the bat.

Q. In your opinion, why does the romance go out of a relationship?

A. I think it's laziness. I really do.

Q. After the last year and all the tabloid headlines, are you still a romantic?

A. Believe me, I'm still a romantic. I still believe in love.

Q. Are you a flowers or chocolate type of girl in a relationship?

A. I don't like chocolates. I do love flowers. Anyone who wants to capture my heart can get me some good peonies or orchids. See, I like to hit both price points!

Q. Now that we have all of this love stuff on the table, let's talk about Vince Vaughn.

A. Well, he's fantastic. He's interested and interesting. He asks questions. It's not just about him.

Q. Did you two work easily together?

A. We had a ball. He's like working with a pro tennis player. He's so good at his job, plus he's just so funny and he's a great actor. I could just keep volleying to him.