



## Love Him Or Leave Him, but Don't Get Stuck With the Tab: Hilarious Advice for Real Women

By Loni Love

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Laugh-out-loud, no-nonsense relationship advice from Loni Love—comedian and co-host of *The Real* on Fox and BET—reminding women that putting yourself first is the path toward lasting love.

A regular panelist on E!'s top-rated *Chelsea Lately* and a staple on Dr. Drew's *Loveline*, audiences first fell in love with Loni for her relatable brand of social commentary and unique take on love, sex, and dating. Now as co-host of the new daytime talk show *The Real*, Loni doles out romantic advice to an audience of millions every day. *Love Him or Leave Him, But Don't Get Stuck with the Tab* offers down-to-earth wisdom and guidance for single girls, girlfriends, wives, baby mamas, and the chick on the side (because she needs advice, too).

In a fun Q&A format complete with hilarious been there-done that tales, Loni delivers answers to women's most pressing relationship questions—about love, sex, fidelity, finances, in-laws, and everything in between. In the end, she says, you may stick with him, you may bail out, but don't ever be left "stuck with the tab," or letting yourself be taken advantage of. Her message is consistent throughout: If women make themselves the priority, everything else will fall into place. "It's something I think women need to hear over and over again," she says. "Like multiple orgasms."

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Loni Love gives wise funny advice straight from the heart. She's the best boo anyone could hope to have."  
(Dr. Drew)

"If Loni Love is half as good at giving advice as she is at drinking Hennessy, the world is about to be a much better place." (Chelsea Handler)

"The *Real* co-host's collection of hilarious relationship advice blends laugh-out-loud punch lines with practical takeaway." (*In Touch*)

"Hilarious and straight-to-the-point (although NSFW) romantic advice on everything from meeting up to breaking up, and even getting hitched." (*Tampa Bay Times*)

"Love's advice is witty and wise, and there's something for readers at every stage in their love lives."  
(*Publishers Weekly*)

"There's no wallowing in man-misery allowed when you're reading this book . . . Loni Love speaks bluntly and truthfully while advocating that women stand up for themselves, take back their strength, and stop being wimpy – whether they're in their first romance or their fiftieth. Along the way, we meet Love's ex-loves, her wild and clueless friends, and her bawdy, wonderful sense of humor." (*WashingtonInformer.com*)

"She's got sass, she's got class and she'll kick your... preconceived notions of dating and courtship to the curb. . . . Any woman who has been treated like a carpet in past relationships should strap this guide to her torso. . . . Through over-the-top humor and blunt truth, Loni Love's how-to book on romance seems to encourage women to love themselves first—and the men will follow." (*ShelfAwareness.com*)

"Listen up: Loni Love is a force to be reckoned with. She will give you confidence, boost your game, and call you out on all your stupid decisions. She's like Simon Cowell with a weave." (Sherri Shepherd)

"Very funny advice for women! In fact, I've never been in favor of banning books, but now I am." (D. L. Hughley)

"The funny stuff comes from Loni, the advice comes from me. When do I get a book deal?" (Momma Love)

#### About the Author

Loni Love is a co-host of Fox and BET's new daytime talk show *The Real*, a regular panelist on *Chelsea Lately*, *Tru TV Presents World's Dumbest*, and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio show, *Cafemocha*. She is one of the few top nationally touring female standup comedians and has performed on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, Comedy Central, and other shows. She lives in Los Angeles and is happily single with no cats.

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Love Him Or Leave Him, But Don't Get Stuck With the Tab



# INTRODUCTION

I first felt the thrill of entertaining back in 1972, when I was crowned Little Miss Detroit. At the pageant, I hit the stage in patent leather shoes and a starched pink dress, but I had so many braids in my hair that my tiara slid right off my head! When I bent down to pick it up, I slipped and landed on my behind. Everyone burst out laughing. But instead of feeling embarrassed I jumped up with a huge smile on my face. I realized that day that making people laugh makes me happy. In fact, it's the very reason I left my job as an engineer to become an entertainer. Most people don't know I used to be an engineer. But I was the worst engineer in America. In fact, I'd like to extend a personal apology to anyone driving a 1992 Cutlass (that was one of the projects I worked on before leaving the field to pursue my dream of being a comic). There's only one thing I love as much as making people laugh, and it's giving advice. Ask anyone who's received one of my Love Lessons and they'll tell you I have a special gift.

I've always had a good head on my shoulders. I grew up in the Brewster-Douglass Housing Projects in Detroit during the height of the crack epidemic. The streets were filled with drug dealers and prostitutes. Coming up in such a rough environment, a girl had to be tough and street-smart to survive. I saw firsthand what happens to women who are foolish in love, or just plain foolish.

When I was a teenager, Peaches was one of my very best friends. Peaches had a smile that lit up her face, and she could do some hair! When we were seniors in high school, Peaches started dating a new guy from the neighborhood. Peaches would brag that her boyfriend was a "businessman." I tried to tell her the truth, that her 16-year-old boo was slinging crack. But Peaches didn't care. Living in the projects could be depressing, and her boyfriend gave her a taste of the glamorous life, buying her clothes, taking her to fancy restaurants in downtown Detroit, and driving her around in a snow white Mercedes-Benz. I didn't want any part of what Peaches's boyfriend was into, so I began to distance myself from my friend. This was a big sacrifice for me because Peaches would do my Jheri curl for free.

One night, I was doing my homework at about eleven o'clock when I heard the blast of gunfire. It was common to hear shots fired in the projects, but that night was different. This sound sent a chill through my veins. A few hours later there was a knock at my door with a neighbor bringing the news—my best friend Peaches was dead. She'd been sitting outside with her boyfriend when she was hit with a bullet that I'm sure was meant for him. For all those occasions she'd done my hair, I did hers one last time, for her funeral. She was only seventeen.

Peaches's death taught me an important life lesson: too many women make sacrifices to be with men. I've seen friends compromise their safety, dignity, money, and even happiness for the sake of a relationship. But I've seen enough. Now I've made it my personal mission to remind women that we need to put ourselves first. I learned this lesson, up close and personal, watching my single mother manage her dating life. After her divorce, my mother, Momma Love, had plenty of boyfriends, but she refused to take crap from anyone. I remember one time, one of her boyfriends, Mr. Herbert, was living with us, and Momma Love found out he'd cheated on her with Miss Bernice, the Bible study teacher. The next day his clothes and his Bible were out in the trash. Her philosophy was: no woman has to put up with second-rate treatment; someone better will always come along. "Never be a side dish," Momma Love would say. "Always be the main course." It's a lesson I took to heart.

I remember the year my friends and I were all set to graduate from high school. All the girls in my class were losing their minds worrying about who was going to take them to the prom. They were getting together in the rec center after school for powwows and conferences like, "If Jimmy doesn't ask me by end-of-day

Wednesday, I'm moving on to plan B and getting with the cousin of the friend of his brother, who's not as cute but has a nicer car." There were schedules, deadlines, backup plans, and emergency ditch plans should the night not go as planned. It was totally ridiculous. I told my friends, "You need to worry about yourselves. Focus on your priorities, like how you're gonna pay for that prom dress."

I don't mean to suggest I didn't have my own share of boy trouble. Back then my boyfriend Mack was the love of my life. But I decided we weren't going to have sex because I was saving myself for marriage. (Of course, that was before I realized I would be living in a coed dorm at college.) Even though I wasn't giving it up, Mack promised me he would take me to the prom, and I believed him. Well, a few weeks before the dance, Mack hooked up with my neighbor Tisha. Of course, I immediately dumped his cheating ass. But then I found myself with no date and a beautiful hoop dress that made me look like an extra from a production of *Gone with the Wind*. After a few days of being down in the dumps, I picked myself up and decided that me and my hoop dress would go to the prom alone. That's when the phone rang. It was Mack's best friend, Albert. He'd heard that Mack and I had broken up and was wondering if I would be his date for the prom. I can still remember the shocked look on Mack's face when his friend Albert and I walked into the dance looking like a black Rhett Butler and his date, Hattie McDaniel. It was a perfect night and the moment when I first realized my mother was right: if you refuse to accept being treated poorly, something better will come along. There is no need to compromise who you are just to be with a man.

Because of my attitude and my confidence, I quickly became the girl who all the other girls went to for advice. I was the one who would listen to their problems and tell them what to do when they had nowhere else to turn. "Love him or leave him," I'd always say. "But don't get stuck with the tab," meaning, respect and protect yourself so you don't end up with an STD, a broken heart, or a two-year friends-and-family data plan you can't get out of.

Twenty years later I'm still spreading that same message to my fans. People see me on television, or they come out to my comedy shows, and they feel like they know me. People approach me in airports, in ladies' rooms, and in the street, talking to me like we're old friends. Like I'm their long-lost sister. Like I'm the one with the answers to all of their problems, even though we've never met.

One time a woman came up to me after a show, introduced herself as Alison, and said, "Can I ask you something?" I thought Alison wanted me to elaborate on my why-I-hate-anal-sex joke. I get that question a lot. Instead, she was seeking advice about her relationship with her husband. The two of them hadn't been intimate for five years. "You seem like a really grounded person," she said. "I really want your opinion." Although I was only half sober, I listened, considered her problem, and gave her the best advice I could: I suggested she try to spark the flame by trying some great sex tips I'd picked up from my friend Lisa, who used to work in the "business" as a "dancer," if you know what I mean. And if that didn't work, I suggested she try a sex therapist (I knew plenty of professionals to recommend, thanks to my friendship with Dr. Drew). And if that didn't work, I suggested Alison think about ending the marriage because she and her husband sounded more like friends than lovers and, I pointed out, her kitty cat wasn't getting any younger. After our talk, I could see the relief on Alison's face. It was as though all she really wanted was to hear someone tell her that her needs were important. As a thank-you she bought me a shot of Hennessy, and we've been friends ever since.

I have hundreds of thousands of fans on Facebook and Twitter, and sometimes it feels as though each one of them is asking for advice. People have consulted me about their sex lives, their health, their kids, and their spouses. A few women have asked how I got to be so confident. But most of all, I get questions about relationships. How do I meet a man? How do I know if I'm ready for marriage? When can I sleep with my ex's best friend? I love my fans, but some of ya'll got some issues!

Well, listen to Loni: you can love him or you can leave him, but always remember that putting yourself first is the most important step in finding love. That's the foundation for all the advice I give, because it's a message so many women need to hear, over and over, like multiple orgasms.

Now, in the following chapters you'll find some of the most popular, crazy, and dumb-ass questions I've ever been asked. Plus some I made up just for fun, because while I was drinking my Hennessy one night, it occurred to me that someone should be asking if it's okay to date your mother's ex. For the record, I don't care how fine a man is, once he's had your momma, he's off-limits. My own mother taught me that. As soon as I started dating, Momma Love explained her loyalty hierarchy: family comes first, then friends, and then, rounding up third place, are men. I learned just how important it is to put your family first after watching two sisters duke it out during a Thanksgiving dinner fiasco. What were they fighting over? A man, of course. You can read all about the sister-on-sister throw down in chapter 9. And family love triangles aren't the only topics I address. In chapter 5, you'll find words of Loni Wisdom for the woman who thinks her boyfriend is picking fights just to have makeup sex, and in chapter 6 I give tips to the wife who is wondering if she should confess to her husband exactly how much "fun" she had on her Caribbean girlfriends' getaway.

Most of my advice comes from personal experience. There's the time I went on a double date with my friend Lisa, who talked so much she scared off our dates, or the night my wig blew off right in the middle of a romantic dinner cruise. You'll even hear plenty about my cousin Skillet. Everyone has a "cousin Skillet" in the family. He's the relative who never seems to have the kind of job that can be discussed in front of children or law enforcement. Cousin Skillet might not be everyone's idea of a great catch, but as far as I'm concerned, everybody can teach you something about love and life, even if the lesson is "Don't do what I'm doing unless you want to end up on TMZ."

So curl up with your fuzzy slippers and a cup of tea (or, if you're like me, a stiff nightcap and a Heineken chaser) and enjoy Love Him or Leave Him, but Don't Get Stuck with the Tab. Great love advice, hilarious stories, and plenty of laughter await! And if you still want more, I'd be happy to fix you up with my cousin Skillet. Love Him Or Leave Him, But Don't Get Stuck With the Tab



## MEETING UP

One of the things I love about the single life is that you get to go on a lot of first dates. I know many women dread going out with a new guy for the first time. The nerves, the awkward conversation, the not knowing if you should order the lobster because he might be a cheap-ass and expect you to go Dutch. It's true some first dates can be awful. Like those times you go to a fancy restaurant and your date spends more time asking the cocktail waitress about her inner-thigh tattoo than talking to you. Or you tell him you admire the relationship he has with his mother and he says, "Great, because I've invited her to join us." But instead of facing first dates with dread, consider each and every one a great opportunity to gather information while getting a free meal. On a first date a man will tell you almost everything you need to know about what kind of person he is. You just need to stay sober enough to remember the next day.

The next time you're on a first date, look around the room. If you're in a restaurant and notice that every woman there—from the coat-check girl to the manager—is giving your date dirty looks, then consider yourself warned. He probably owes them money, a phone call, or both.

When I want to know what kind of man I'm dealing with, I look at his shoes. If he's wearing some nice hard-soled shoes, I know he's solid, dependable, and is probably the type of man to carry a condom in his

wallet. If he's wearing sneakers, that's okay, as long as they're clean and have laces. I don't trust a man who wears shoes that close with Velcro. That's just lazy. Now, if he shows up for dinner wearing flip-flops, you better run for the hills. A man who wears flip-flops to dinner doesn't take anything seriously. He's the kind of man who will make fart jokes when you're trying to tell him about your horrible day at work or laugh at you if you trip and fall on your ass before he checks to see if you're okay. Trust me, even if you have a cushiony ass like mine, falling on your behind hurts. The last thing you need is your man laughing at you like he's a five-year-old at the circus. You want a man who treats you like a prize, not a clown.

The other great thing about first dates is they give you a chance to refine your First Date Look—that's the outfit and hairstyle that makes you feel most comfortable, beautiful, and confident. Even if you think your date might be a dud, it's still a great opportunity to try out a new look, get a new weave, or buy yourself a dress that exposes, er . . . I mean shows off your best assets. For example, you might not know this about me, but I have exquisite knees, so whenever I'm on a date I always wear a skirt that shows them off. When I was growing up, Momma Love always used to tell me, "Don't hide your light under a bushel." Well, the same can be said about dating: don't hide your best features under a tent dress. Got good cans? Show the girls! Well-toned arms? Wear a tube top! You're going on a date, not to Bible study.

Most important of all, on a first date, pay attention to the way the man treats you. Does he give you his undivided attention, or does he check his cell phone every ten minutes? Does he order his meal before you or patiently wait until you've asked the waiter to list all the ingredients of every dish? Does he seem interested in what you have to say, or does he constantly change the topic to sex and when he's going to get some? Even the way he walks down the street with you says a lot. A man who walks side by side with a woman sees her as his equal. A man who walks ahead expects to run the show. And a man who lags behind? Why, that's an ass man! But if you're built like Sofía Vergara, then congratulations, girl! You may just have met your Mr. Right.

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