



The Real Thing

Should one ever date a guy who doesn't "get the point" of diamonds?

BY BETH BERNSTEIN

"I DON'T UNDERSTAND the point of diamonds," says Jake, my love interest for the past six months. We're cuddled on the couch watching a DVD and he's fiddling with one of my double drop mine cut antique earrings. "They're colorless and lack character."

I take a deep breath and pause the DVD. Can I really continue to date a guy who doesn't "get the point" of diamonds?

"First of all, they're not necessarily colorless," I explain patiently. "Don't you remember J.Lo's pink diamond engagement ring or the blue diamond necklace Halle Berry wore to the Oscars?" He looks at me like I'm insane. I forgot that this is a guy who's obsessed with the Discovery Channel. I try a new tact: "They resist fire!" He's unmoved. "Oh, and Marilyn Monroe sang about them." He perks up. "Yeh," he says dreamily. "In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. But weren't they fake in the film?" Great. He knows all about CZ but nothing about fancy colored diamonds.

Over the next few weeks, I also learn that he doesn't "get the point" of Prada, Gucci, Armani or any other designer, since "you can't tell the knock-offs from the real thing."

I begin to see my future flash in front of me — coffee makers,

toaster ovens, gadgets and gizmos as gifts for the rest of my life. Or worse still, cubic zirconia instead of diamonds, rubies and emeralds. And never being able to come out of the closet in my Prada shoes and handbags, of which I own several.

I fell for Jake in the first place because he's intelligent, funny, sensitive and kind. He can deal with my family's neurosis. Plus he looks like a cross between Richard Gere and Kurt Russell. At present, he seems to be morphing into a version of the Al Bundy character in *Married with Children*.

I try to explain that diamonds and designer clothes are about luxury and classic elegance. They're an investment. They're a statement of personal style. And they need to be the real thing. To Jake, unfortunately, they're superfluous, non-essential and extravagant. "Wouldn't you rather invest in a home?" he asks. Sure. But can't I have both?

Later that week, I see Jake after a really bad day. "Do you want to talk about it?" he asks. "If I do, I'll start to cry," I explain. He hugs me tightly for a really long time. "It's alright if you cry. I'm here," he tells me. I immediately begin to feel better. Then, I get the flu. He takes my temperature and makes me soup. When I start feeling better, we go to the movies and he cries with me at the ending. "Man, that really did me in," he admits without a hint of embarrassment. I squeeze his hand and know that I've got the real thing.

Coco Chanel once said that "luxury must be comfortable or else it's not luxury." Jake allows me the luxury to feel comfortable, even if it's with fewer pieces of jewelry.

Or maybe not. To celebrate our six-month anniversary, he surprises me with a pair of platinum earrings with white and yellow diamond briolettes. He says he may never get the point, but thought they'd look great on me, especially with my champagne-colored Prada handbag. ♦