

ADVICE TO THE LOVELORN

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In these decadent times, no newspaper is complete without a column of advice for the lovelorn and for others with problems. Since newspapers consist of words and we specialize in words, it follows with logic absolute that we, too, must address ourselves to the problems of the lovelorn.

As we see it, frankly, the central problem of someone writing a letter to a newspaper column is to choose an appropriate alias as his or her signature. Many writers, obviously inexperienced, pick simple pseudonyms worn threadbare with overuse. Since originality is a supreme desideratum, we have been scanning advice columns for some time, culling the more novel signatures. Some of our finds are being listed here, for your benefit, quite free of charge.

The most frequently used type of signature is an adjectival one, exemplified by old standbys like "confused", "hurt", and "desperate". If you are of a philosophical bent of mind, you will prefer to choose a pen name from among the following:

Always in the wrong	Not guilty but sentenced
Battered and bruised	Outclassed
Born too late	Outside looking in
Caught between	Ready to listen
Deeply concerned	Running out of friends
Disgusted with life	Seeking a solution
Driven to the brink	Shackled
Feeling no pain	Sorry it happened
In but out	Still single but wearing a ring
In the know	Tired of the rat race
Looking beyond	Torn apart
Looking for a spark	Unappreciated
Much in a hurry	

Some of you are young, lighthearted, and not philosophically inclined. For such, we have prepared a second list:

Befuddled	Fractionated
Blonde and cute	Getting madder by the minute
Brainy but not smart	Hopeful
Chomping at the bit	Impatient
Curious	In love
Done in	Inquisitive
Eager	Interested
Fat	Just asking

Lovesick	Too good
Mad as hops	Wondering how
Puzzled	Young and confused
Snowed	Young and innocent
Tired of this master of deceit	

Finally, there are those of you with a substantive rather than an adjectival personality. Here is a third list, designed particularly with the nounal advice-seeker in mind:

Big decision	Pipeline
Closed mind	Question mark
Cupid's Plato	Red eyes
Daughter of sorrow	Sacrificial lamb
Friend of a friend	Standing duck
Guilty secret	Sweet 16
Little girl, big problem	Third fiddle
Lover of reason	Tomato face
Memories	Valley of indecision
Moral worrier	Victim number one
New wrinkle	Wayward 16
No bumpkin	Wife of a tyrant
No stranger to trouble	

Space does not permit us to go into the subject of signatures as thoroughly as would be desirable, but we hope that the short lists included in this section will prove helpful to you in your future correspondence with advice columns. Please feel free to use any signature given here.

A DICTIONARY OF NUMERICAL ALLUSIONS

This book is a gallimaufry of number-related words from a bewildering variety of fields. The inclusion of some items is obvious (The Vancouver Five, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Twelve Tribes of Israel, Catch-22) but others are more mysterious. Did you know that Barbarossa is associated with the number 7 because he reportedly changed his position in sleep every seven years? Or that Thalia is placed under 23 because it was the twenty-third planetoid to be discovered? Or that Henry IV goes with 14 because there are eleven events of his life related to this number? As a matter of interest, the first number with no entry is 29 - curiously, a publicity flyer notes that floccinaucinihilipilification, the longest word in the OED, has 29 letters, but this fact does not appear in the book.

Most readers will probably enjoy browsing through this book, much as one does with a trivia encyclopedia, but there seems to be no legitimate research need served by it. The book was compiled by Laurence Urdang and published by Facts on File for \$21.95 in 1986; it contains 324 pages, including an 88-page alphabetical index.