

I realize that there are certain hardships that only females must endure, such as childbirth, waiting in lines for public-restroom stalls, and a crippling, psychotic obsession with shoe color. Also, females tend to reach emotional maturity very quickly, so that by age 7 they are no longer capable of seeing the humor in loud inadvertent public blasts of flatulence, whereas males can continue to derive vast enjoyment from this well into their 80s.

So I grant that it is not easy being a female. But I contend that nature has given males the heaviest burden of all: the burden of always having to Make the First Move, and thereby risk getting Shot Down. I don't know WHY males get stuck with this burden, but it's true throughout the animal kingdom. If you watch the nature shows on the Discovery Channel, you'll note that whatever species they are talking about - birds, crabs, spiders, clams - it is ALWAYS the male who has to take the initiative. It's always the male bird who does the courting dance, making a total moron of himself, while the female bird just stands there, looking aloof, thinking about what she's going to tell her girlfriends. ("And then he hopped around on one foot! Like I'm supposed to be impressed by THAT!").

Male insects have it the worst. The Discovery Channel announcer is always saying things like: "After the mating, the female mantis bites off the male mantis' head, and then she and her girlfriend mantises use it to play a game that looks a lot like Skee Ball."

Because I live in Florida, my patio is basically a giant singles bar for lizards. On any given day during mating season, I'll see dozens of male lizards out there making their most suave lizard move, which consists of inflating and deflating a red pouch under their

chins. They seem to think that female lizards really go for a guy with a big chin pouch, but I have never once, in 14 years of close observation, seen a female respond. They just squat there looking bored, while all around them males are blinking on and off like defective warning lights.