

Bridget McFadden

Bedtime Routine

Every woman should have a bedtime routine. Putting yourself to bed is necessary. It prepares you for your transition from one conscious state to another. Plus, it drives men wild.

“They don’t make ‘em like you anymore, Mox,” he says as I pull closed not one but two drapes – one a thin white curtain, close to the pane, and on top of that a heavier bronze brocade on a sturdy bracket that blocks out the light. Sometimes, if we go to bed during the day, I just pull the white one. It filters the afternoon sunlight in a way that is flattering. He’s taken to interpret this as a signal: I walk across the room in the afternoon, pull the white shade, and he knows what it means in the way a St. Bernard knows where to find you in the avalanche.

The second part of the bedtime routine is to drape a sheet over the bedspread. Or, if you’re between the sheets, to smooth out a soft, clean towel. This is not just practical (we can’t spend our lives scrubbing semen from sheets!), it too can provoke an excited reaction. Pull the sheet from behind your pillow where you stash it during the day, roll it up the length of the bed, unwinding it from the foot of the bed to the head and he’ll say: “it’s always such a nice sheet.”

The next step in your bedtime routine is a story. The stories we tell ourselves at the close of the day, and always have, and always must, to make sense of what happened when we were out there in the world,

talking about the weather. And if a day should pass that leaves us depleted, a story will help. It will help us inhabit a different spirit, infuse our lives with legend. His extra cocktails at dinner are elevated by every boozy hero. Your childless state harkens the freedoms fought for by bobbed bohemians. It allows for the expanse of your imagination. You have spare hours to study the wing span of a dragonfly.

At the very least, when you are feeling your most disenchanted and disillusioned, pull the drape, roll out the sheet, entwine, spin fantasies of what you might be based just on the Bach on the stereo, based just on the article about a roadtrip along the Amalfi Coast splashed gloriously across the travel section of the paper this morning, which he made you stash in your purse after brunch at the French place.

“This is how you get ahead in the world, Mox. When are you going to learn?” No one is going to hand you inspiration, you have to steal it.

Perform these simple rituals at bedtime and you will see.

And, you will have the chance to reverse the cycle.

When the sun breaks, reverse it.

Open the drapes and emerge: re-enchanted

and brimming with fresh illusion.