

# The Game Summary

By Neil Strauss

*'To win the game was to leave it.'*

*The Game* is the controversial advice book that explores the subtle art of picking up women. Author Neil Strauss metamorphoses from virgin to veritable lady's man, while also exploring the burgeoning pick-up artist community and sub-culture.

We've all watched rom-coms where the school nerd miraculously transforms from the butt of all jokes, to the prom king or queen. Then the aforementioned nerd seeks out a mentor, removes their glasses. And then, throw in a fashion montage for good measure, and voila! Transformation complete. But, can this metamorphosis be done from the other side of the movie screen?

Enter Neil Strauss, author, journalist, and exemplary nerd. Strauss was under the impression that he didn't have what it takes to woo a woman. He believed that he lacked the charm, confidence, and charisma to be attractive to the opposite sex.

We'll briefly look at how our author's assignment escalated from a step-by-step guide to picking up women, to becoming part of the seduction community. We'll also uncover some of the tactics and strategies discussed and executed by this subculture. Finally, we'll look at what Strauss learned about the history and context of the pick-up artist community.

# Man of Mystery

Seduction has long been considered an art form – just look at the legends of Casanova and the Marquis de Sade. But times move on, and tactics change. Or do they?

Eric Weber wrote *How to Pick Up Girls in 1970*, and then when online communities opened up, the Internet became the go-to place to seek seduction advice. Websites, chatrooms, blogs, you name it, the Internet has somewhere for even the most socially challenged to go to learn tricks of the trade.

The seduction community is structured like most communities. At the top of the pyramid, you have leaders, who, in this case, are called gurus. The P.U.A (pick-up artist) gurus teach their disciples everything they know. No guru is the same, and they're all renowned for their own unique and specific tactics such as psychology, magic, and even hypnosis. These gurus emerged from their online advice, and then began going "real life" with it and hosting face-to-face workshops with apprentice pick-up artists.

Strauss wanted to interview as many gurus as possible. The first guru he met was a Canadian called Mystery. Mystery saw massive potential in Strauss, and offered to teach him the "Mystery Method."

As a 21-year-old virgin, Mystery began analyzing women and social interaction, and through this developed the Mystery Method. The basic premise of the method is subtlety, and the idea is that the pick-up is so subtle that the woman doesn't know she's being seduced. However, she wants to be.

The Mystery Method means focusing on what makes you worth getting to know. You want to come across as the person that people gravitate towards, the most interesting person in the room. Then you want to act as if you're a fighter pilot and confuse your target with chaff. Chaff is a decoy used by military aircraft, and it's effective in confusing the enemy. Mystery refers to these decoys as "negs."

Negs are little insults or backhanded compliments. Basically, it's the adult equivalent of pulling a girl's ponytail or teasing her, "treating her mean to keep her keen." Once you've deployed your best negs, you can move on to dazzling her with your skills. You want to impress her with gimmicks and tricks. Some pick-up artists use magic; some use psychological tests; others use general knowledge. As with fishing, you don't want to reel her in straight away; you want to toy with her a little bit and show that she's not the only woman in the room who has your attention. To be blunt, and continue down the line of the fishing metaphor, she's not the only fish in the sea.

The Mystery Method is all about being aloof but vaguely interested, and if you adopt this approach, she'll be offering up her number in no time. Or so the theory goes. Oh yes, that's right, never ask for her number. She should make the first move.

# I Put A Spell On You

You may have heard of Speed Seduction?

Speed Seduction was thrown out into the world in 1988, by a guru called Ross Jeffries. Jeffries gained huge respect and was revered for this method, becoming the "godfather" of pick-up artists. Based on NLP or neuro-linguistic programming, speed seduction uses psychology and hypnosis. Basically, the idea is that humans are suggestible, and that when used effectively, we can use body language to influence another person. We can effectively hone in on someone's thoughts and emotions by getting to grips with their subconscious.

For pick-up artists, it's all about heightening arousal, so the concept is to develop an attraction based on a physical cue. Blushing is an example of this. Often when we meet someone's gaze, we blush because we associate the physical cue of eye contact with flirting, which then manifests as going red in the face.

## Style Over Substance?

Strauss was a hit within the community and, after just one month, was invited to be Mystery's wing, or wingman, at a workshop. So it was that Neil Strauss became known as Style.

Becoming Style meant that he had to hone his skills and develop his persona. Style worked on his body language and posture, improved his speech, and embraced peacocking. Peacocking is the idea that you

attract potential mates by drawing attention to yourself through your clothing or accessories.

Believing that practice makes perfect, Style went "sarging" with a range of different pick-up artists. Sarging, or hitting on women, is a technique that can be honed by trying out a range of techniques and strategies. And while there are numerous sarging techniques, the one that reigns supreme is confidence.

## **A Step-By-Step Guide**

The art of the pick-up is a step-by-step process.

Step one is the approach. You need to move with purpose and assess any obstacles that might stand in the way of you and your goal. Coming in close to the obstacle is an excellent way to show vague interest. You're close enough to the woman you want to pick up, but not being obvious about it.

Once you've approached the general area where the woman of interest is, you can move on to step two. Step two is getting into position. This is where you eliminate or move past the obstacle between you and the woman you want to seduce. It's good to have an opening line, and if the woman takes the proverbial bait, you can create a ruse to show her something or find an excuse to get closer to her.

Now that you're in position, you can move onto the next step. Step three is joining in. You want to be able to join the woman or group of women, so you aren't just hovering. The advice given by Style is that if you have to steal a woman's seat so that you can park on it, that's absolutely okay.

Who knows, it may just develop rapport?

Which brings us to step four, building rapport. Developing rapport with someone can be challenging, but with enough confidence, you'll be able to push a few boundaries without overstepping. But you don't want to come across as a sure thing. Step five means introducing a time limit. You need to tell the woman that you're saying that you have a limited timeframe so that there's a sense of urgency. This move also highlights that you're not going to be around for the whole night. The last step? Well, this is the wrap-up, or "number close." If you give a woman a time limit, but indicate that you're interested in seeing her again, she'll more than likely give you her number. Or that's the theory anyway.

## **Upping the Ante**

Once he'd honed his basic pick-up and seduction skills, Style learned some additional tips from other popular pick-up artist gurus.

Juggler's method was to operate with high confidence and dazzling boldness. He taught disciples the art of cold calling random women and initiating conversation with them. He also told pick-up artists in training, to seriously downplay themselves, by saying that they had menial jobs and drove old cars.

You've probably heard of David DeAngelo. Otherwise known as Eban Pagan, he's written several dating books and has become an online dating influencer. His go-to strategy is "cocky funny," which combines humor and arrogance. He found out that women liked him a lot more when he teased them slightly and didn't just compliment them all the time.

Other gurus use hypnotism, and some claim to be so successful that women allegedly pay to have sex with them. Some argue that you need to be deliberately obtuse and facetious, by using the method of winding her up. Then there are those that apply the "brutal honesty" approach. This focus on honesty means that you can date multiple women. Framing yourself as highly prized, while simultaneously being intensely moral, implies that women can't be surprised or hurt about your other sexual partners.

## **But Is There Delivery After Pick-Up?**

So are women just conquests? Another notch in the belt?

Women reading this might well be rolling their eyes. But don't worry, there's a lesson to be learned. Our author was no longer just an author on an assignment; he'd become Style. And Strauss was unfulfilled despite having oodles of newfound confidence, and a string of conquests. His new persona added to his life by building him up, but he also found himself lacking.

The trouble with seduction is it's a short-term game. What comes after? In the case of Style, his interactions had no substance, and he couldn't connect with women. Furthermore, a lot of the junior pick-up artists started mimicking others, rather than using lessons and techniques to become better versions of themselves. The next generation was becoming inauthentic. And the trouble with games is that people want to win. What exactly is winning in this context? By spending too much time sarging, a lot of men destroyed existing relationships, left their jobs, quit studying, and became obsessed with playing the game.

So how do you cash in on the positives of the pick-up community values, and create something more long-term? It all comes down to connection. When Style met his now-wife Lisa, he went back to basics to woo her. He reverted back to Neil Strauss, and the results were dazzling. Sure, he argues that the seduction community helped him to build confidence, but at the end of the day, authenticity is the only thing that sustains connection.

## **In Conclusion**

Many argue that the game isn't just about picking up women; it's about building confidence and seeking self-improvement. Taking part in the game helps with interactions, and generally, men who opt-in, end up being fitter and healthier because they want to be highly prized.

You may have seen the Hollywood rom-com *Crazy Stupid Love*, where Steve Carell's character, Cal Weaver, gets a whole new lease on life after meeting the guru extraordinaire Jacob Palmer, played by Ryan Gosling. However, as is the way with many rom-coms, the roles reverse, and Cal ends up showing Jacob that there's more to life than meaningless one-night stands. Nonetheless, Cal Weaver ends up as a better version of himself after meeting Jacob, because he builds his confidence and gains perspective.

Many pick-up artists echo this sentiment. They explain that being part of this subculture is more than just adding notches to a bedpost; it's about a newfound pride in appearance and increased confidence. It's also about ridding yourself of bad habits and adopting new and better habits. However, the book does a great job of describing men and their egos, and how there's inevitably a scuffle for dominance. At one point, Strauss



recognizes that women became secondary, and ego and winning took precedence. Strauss frequently found himself surrounded by men, rather than women.

The central and fundamental message isn't to assume that there's a one size fits all approach to women. After all, many have read *The Game* and are a step ahead of your tactics and strategies. And, all the best games have two evenly-matched partners, where everyone knows the rules.