

Bad Form

Written by L.A. Plume

Tuesday, 07 June 2011 12:39



Dear L. A. Plume,

I was given the book Liver by Will Self, but never could read a book by a man called Self. Then, some doctors came to stay and must have written their comments in the flyleaf and through the text, but I only discovered it when I was about to give the book away. It seemed bad form to write in a book, doubly so when it wasn't theirs, and triply so because I couldn't read their writing and erudite comments; they were doctors.

Should I mail them the book?

Mr. X

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Dear Mr. X,

It is terribly bad form to write in someone else's book! Even though you might not care for that author, what if it had been a beloved book? Send it back with a note. Since you didn't want the book anyway and don't want them to replace it, say something like, "Since this book was loaned to me and I have had to replace it with one in it's original pristine condition, I thought you might like to have this copy with your annotations."

If you have a check list for guests who visit when you are away, add to it: "Please don't write in my books!"

(Just for fun, I have read the reviews of this book and found this tidbit: "Self's prose, usually never less than interesting, is equally exhausted, with a lumpen archness that sounds like the sour residue of bar-room banter." All in all, they may have done you a favor, but that's not the point.)

L. A. Plume

Dear Ms.Plume,

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I am in a relatively new relationship. The man I am dating has posted on Facebook that he is in a relationship; since this is a recent posting on his part, I know he is referring to me. I, however, don't want to be tagged as being in a relationship, furthermore he did not discuss this with me. What should I say to him?

Wendy

Dear Wendy,

Since you're dating this man, you should be able to just ask him if you are the one with whom he is in the relationship. If you're not comfortable with doing that, you could tell him that since you're now dating, isn't it about time that he removed the posting that must have referred to a previous relationship, and see what he has to say about that. If he admits that it's a reference to you, tell him that you're not ready to announce your relationship on the internet. But be prepared for the fact that you're probably going to hurt his feelings. It may be his oblique way of telling you that he thinks the relationship is serious, or maybe it's just that he wants his friends to be impressed.

L.A.Plume

Dear L. A. Plume,

I have a friend who never "remembers" to bring her wallet when we go out. She always acts surprised that she has forgotten it and asks someone else to pay when the bill comes, with promises – never kept – of repaying us. What can be done?

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Maggie

Dear Maggie,

- Don't invite her any more.
- Tell her before you go out that it is her turn to pay for everyone and she needs to remember to bring her wallet
- Agree among your group that you will each only bring enough cash to cover your own bills and let her figure it out for herself.

L. A. Plume

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