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Shame is Sexy

Study says women find shame hotter than happiness.

By Cindy Kuzma, Men's Health

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Ever wonder what the heck women see in that grumpy, sparkly Twilight dude? On first glance, women find displays of both pride and—get this—shame much hotter than happiness, according to a new study in the journal *Emotion*.

Researchers at the University of British Columbia asked more than 1,000 men and women to play "hot or not" with photos of people expressing these three states of mind. Women were most attracted to proud men with puffed-up chests and those whose heads were lowered in shame. Smiling guys, on the other hand, came in last.

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Arrogance denotes a successful, high-status power player who can provide for future offspring, explains lead author Jessica Tracy, Ph.D., a psychology professor at the University of British Columbia. But why do ladies dig the dark, brooding Robert Pattinson types?

"We've known for a long time that women are attracted to the bad boy," says Tracy. "But it's not the bad boy who's proud of being bad. It's the bad boy who knows he broke society's rules and is kind of tortured by it." The fact that he can admit when he's done wrong makes him trustworthy and sympathetic, she says.

Men in the study scored happy women the hottest, probably because it signals friendliness, availability, and interest, according to Tracy. "But women tend to already assume that men are interested and available. The bigger question is, does he have good genes? Happiness doesn't convey a whole lot about that," she says. (More from MensHealth.com: [Tips for Happiness and Fulfillment](#))

The findings don't necessarily mean you need to stuff a sock in it if you're a cheerful guy. After all, the study only found that on average women like emo guys—there are still plenty of women out there who love a big smile. Plus, the study looked only at pure, animal attraction—when deciding who to date or marry, women naturally consider many other factors, says Tracy.

S But if you don't happen to always be the life of the party, there's no need to fake a winning smile to get the girl. Good news, since trying too hard to be happy may just lead to more disappointment anyway.

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