

## The Final Act

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**S**ex cannot continue in this wild and abandoned manner. Invariably it settles down into a **relationship**, occasionally stormy, but hopefully **meaningful**. The word **meaningful** lends the requisite legitimacy to all matters sexual. It makes even the **one-night stand** (mid 20thC, a brief **encounter**, 19thC, an **erection**, i.e., one that is very brief) **relevant** as a **meaningful quickie** (c. 1980s).

A **meaningful quickie** may appear to be a contradiction in terms but as the product of fast-food technology and the sexual revolution, it must be considered **relevant**. All the best things in life are **relevant**. **Relevant** adds yet another dimension to **meaningful**. You can't do much better than a **relationship** that is both **relevant** and **meaningful**.

It was once considered **relevant** to live together **without benefit of clergy** (19thC, a term which originally described denial of the last rites to one who had committed suicide), though it was less so when you were **shacking up** (c. 1940s). We no longer do that kind of thing. Today, we enter into a **primary relationship** with a **significant other** (both c. 1980s).

### *Strangers in the Night*

For one so significant, however, the **other** remains somewhat vague and nondescript. We know him/her only as **partner**, **friend**, **roommate**, **live-in**, **lover**, or **cohabitor**. But politics (in this case the U.S. Census Bureau) makes the strangest bedfellow of all—the **possq**, “the person of the opposite sex sharing living quarters.” Paeans of praise have already been sung on his/her behalf:

There's nothing that I wouldn't do  
If you would be my possq.  
You live with me and I live with you  
Please, dear, be my possq.

—Charles Osgood, CBS Radio, 1982



*A relationship is a fine place to sleep  
But you wouldn't want to live there.*

—Elie (Kevin Pollak) *The Opposite  
Sex and How to Live with Them*, 1993