

Romance/Reproduction as a Quotidian

As an artificial species never designed to reproduce "in the wild", Quotidian romance is heavily skewed towards producing new members that are better at achieving their primary objective (gathering data for their Creator without getting caught).

While Quotidian romance culture has definitely changed over the years, it is primarily rooted in displaying your skills at gathering data while remaining undetected.

Quotidian + Quotidian

A stereotypical Quotidian romantic proposal consists of the following steps:

1. Observe your target for an extended period of time.
 - a. What are their habits? What things do they like or dislike?
 - b. What are their Masks? What identifying marks do each have? What names do they go by? What is their cover?
2. Surprise your target with a private denouement
 - a. Explain everything you know about them, and how you discovered each thing.
 - b. Explain how each Mask relates, and where they had flaws in their secrecy.
 - c. Conspiracy walls are especially useful at this step.
 - d. It's considered polite to omit at least one or two things you know about your target, so you don't come off as significantly out of their league.
 - e. This doubles as both a show of skill AND trust. The presenter is demonstrating actionable intelligence on their spy techniques.
3. Your target responds with their OWN denouement
 - a. Since they weren't confident of their results yet, you can expect it to be smaller than your own. (If it isn't, it's a sign they are a VERY good spy with VERY high standards).
 - b. If they don't have ANY denouement, or a very small one, it's a rejection. They never cared enough about you to gather data. Go nurse your broken heart via reading Crow Wikipedia for a few days.

4. Send out pictures of streets with all the traffic lights circled to any potential other suitors, friends, etc, who would benefit from knowing that the two of you are off the market.
 - a. This is a cultural artifact resulting in the fact that in the Before Times, evolved beings would check for Quotidians in their presence by having them perform specific tasks they found challenging. Quotidians responded by working ability to pass such tests into their cultural romance.
5. Find native birds, zoo keepers, sapients likely to keep pets etc, and lay two eggs (one for each Quotidian) near them in secret. Assume the host family will keep the eggs warm, safe, etc.
6. Fuck off.
7. 19 days later a flock of adult crows (not crow PEOPLE, literal crows) hatch from each egg and scatter to the winds.
 - a. While they are born mimicking crows, you can expect them to mimic any sufficiently intelligent non sapient animal during childhood. (horses, dogs, cephalopds, dolphins, crows, ravens, etc are common targets). Rarely, you might find a juvenile crow not mimicking anything (in which case they look like crow people toddlers/children).
 - b. While juvenile, quotidians are not sentient and are best understood to be an unthinking rule following mimics (much like an Elder Scrolls npc). Juveniles respond to basic training and our Academies often capture them for use as messenger birds and spies.
8. 14 months later each still living baby quotidian will mimic their first sapient being. This is known as Masking.
 - a. At this point they can no longer mimic non sapients without permanently losing their burgeoning sentience.
 - b. Newly Masked quotidians are closer to AI Dungeon or Deep Dream in terms of sentience, but as they grow they begin to flirt with full on sapience.
 - c. Most brood mates all manifest different species and specifics of Masks, but occasionally BROOD CLONES happen and all siblings share one or more mask in its entirety (See Tom Peyote for an example of 19 copies of the same human).
9. 4 months later the Quotidian, at the age of 18 months, is a full adult and considered to be at or near their maximum level of sapience.

Quotidian + Host Species

The Age of Chaos prevented distribution of Quotidian genes, so this path is likely barred for several host-species generations. This form of romance is as follows:

1. Masked Quotidian is approached by a member of their Mask Species intending intimate contact.
2. Intimate contact intent is mirrored.
3. If their romantic partner is capable of bearing young, young of the Mask Species is possible.
4. The young will be a biologically and behaviorally identical member of the Mask Species, dubbed Asymptomatic Quotidian
5. When the young grows up, if they produce offspring with ANOTHER Asymptomatic Quotidian (or descendant thereof for several generations), there is a chance (decreasing with generations) their offspring will be an Egg-Quotidian.
6. Egg-Quotidians appear biologically identical to their Mask Species, though their behavior is off in ways both subtle and non. Egg-Quotidians are not sentient and have no internal conscious processes.
7. At or near puberty, the Egg-Quotidian hatches, splitting into a flock of 19-81 crows that scatter.
 - a. Each crow has the memories of the Egg-Quotidian.
 - b. Each crow, when reaching the sapience mimickry stage, will have the Mask that matches the Egg-Quotidian's species look identical to the Egg-Quotidian. Non matching Masks will vary in appearance.
 - c. Each crow will attempt to locate and report to a Quotidian InfoHoard. If none can be found, one or more crows will start one.
 - d. Each crow will hit puberty/Mask stage within weeks rather than months, as development inside an Egg Quotidian is a superior process.
 - e. One or more crows will likely return within 1-3 weeks to assume the Egg's life. They will swiftly be more accepted within the Egg-Quotidian's peer group than the Egg-Quotidian had been
 - i. compared to the Egg-Quotidian, they have more intelligence and a conscious experience to more closely mimic social norms.
 - f. Quotidians who began life from an Egg-Quotidian have a higher rate of success at mimicking their host species, and a lower rate of success at mimicking non-host species.

Note: This form of romance was never intended by the Creator. It appears to be a side effect of their use of a standard artificial species template.

Additional Note: The lack of Egg Quotidians for millennia has been one of the many factors contributing to the increased instability of the Quotidian Population's Sanity Quotient.

Additional Additional Note: One would expect a Quotidian to go Maskless, (or, far kinkier, as an Extinct Mask) only around romantic partners (under the assumption that they are good enough spies to already know the private secrets). Similarly, the sharing of a True Name is considered an extreme act of trust, though not necessarily a romantic one. (A True Name is the first name a Quotidian uses as a Sapient Masked being, and as such is usually associated with embarrassing lack of sufficient info-sec **(ooc think about how cringe it would be for someone to google your screen name from when you were 14).**)