

# Hook up with weird strangers on-line

*An in-depth experiment into the wild and woolly world of on-line dating*

I am a lover—not a fighter. Let's just say that more unique ways of using duct tape come to mind than those that have been broadcast over the television and radio waves simultaneously with the "high alert" caution notice by the government. Frankly, there is really no fun in having a bomb shelter if there is no one sexy you can share it with. Remember kids—Uncle Sam needs you to build his army or repopulate the country in the event of genocide, so get to it.

But how can you manage to "do it," or anything else for that matter in a busy city like Boston. Sure, you can go to the bars or the clubs, but not only is it a meat market—with the likes of Guido and Britney on every barstool—but it is dark, noisy and not really conducive to finding a long-term partner. We live in a society where everything is fast-paced, super-sized, made-to-order and drive-thru, and if it isn't, we aren't using it. Why can't something like dating be as fast, easy and user-friendly? The college application process felt easier than the hunt for a soulmate in the pool of applicants that is Boston's twenty-something crowd. Even finding a good-paying job within our nation's feeble economy is more promising.

Granted, I may not be the too-good-to-be-true fairy tale

princess Zora, but I am not out there in pursuit of my Joe Millionaire. Hell, I attend a school that costs more than twice of Zora's annual income. Is it only the charity cases that find their prince in the end? That's what it feels like, unless you are Trista and have your own show like "The Bachelorette."

**Theresa Sanchez**

Where can an independent-minded, smart, decent-looking individual find a mate you ask? It's as simple opening your mind, flexing your fingertips and turning on the computer—a dating Mecca, believe it or not. It's safer than being matched up by a family member or friend and not too damaging on your wallet. Plus, you get to experience the anonymous superficiality that comes with surfing countless profiles from the convenience of the home or office.

Sound like a sales pitch? It's not, and I speak from experience. Trust me, I have earned a place in online dating history. My profile has been viewed on Match.com by at over 7,672 people in the last year, and I have been asked to have my profile published in a spring partner publication.

I met my last two boyfriends online. However, the reason they were online became quickly apparent. The first guy—who we'll call John—was too busy working for a major financial firm,

going to Northeastern for his second bachelor's degree, running marathons and attending political protests to recall he had a girlfriend.

The second guy was quite handsome and believe it or not lives across the street from me. We completely hit it off. However, he made it a point to tell me he resented the fact that I shared a good relationship with my parents and couldn't get past the fact they have some money in the bank. That being said, I was dumped. Soon, I was back in the circuit and out on the town.

Last week, for instance, I went on five different blind dates, with five very different walks of life. The first guy I met was rather conceited. We met at a trendy little bar in Cambridge for drinks. Two hours into the "date" he got an urgent phone call from his mother imploring him to take her to the emergency room for a midnight cameo appearance as someone pretending to have an asthma attack. Much to the bartender's surprise my date abandoned me, right after dropping some money for the pricey tab.

The next evening I had reservations at a neat little restaurant in Jamaica Plain. I was able to locate my date with a cell phone, because he looked nothing like the pictures he sent. Conversation was forced but the cuisine was delectable and filling. After debating who

would pay the check we compromised at splitting it.

The next two dates are really not worth mentioning. One guy didn't eat, the other guy ate too much. One guy e-mailed me and said I would be too much for him, while the other guy can't understand what the phrase "I'm not interested" means. At this point I decided I was going to enlist in a war we stand some chance at winning, seek firearms and get shipped out as far away from Boston as possible.

Prince Charming was looming on the horizon, disguised as blind date No. 5. After a couple months of interrupted emails and one lengthy IM chat session, "Mr. K." invited me to meet him and hang out with his friends. Being the fearless female I am, I hopped in my car and met him at his chateau—a.k.a. his Somerville home. Finally, this story has a happy ending—or beginning rather—that everyone reads about or sees when "Oprah" and "Dateline" decide to cover the online dating trend. I think I have met my match for now. The two of us clicked and you can too.

Who needs war games when you can play the game of love? Here are a few quick tips to get started on an online adventure of your own. When you Google the phrase "online dating," 4,030,000 different sites pop up. If you are in search of a quick hook-up or a place to

meet friends, I suggest going to LavaLife or Match.com, two popular sites. However, Match.com requires membership, which costs at least \$25. I use JaneDates.com, which is a dating service through *Jane Magazine*. What's so great about this site is that it is connected to several other well-known sites like Nerve.com and Boston.com. This site is sassy and has a handsome group of hotties (both male and female) to cruise through. Don't pick a stupid nickname or headline, and make sure you post a picture, because it maximizes responses. Just remember, when you go to meet him/her make sure you know where all the exits are for obvious safety reasons. But keep in mind—you might need to escape for other reasons.

So even if you didn't get shot by Cupid's arrow, and are still in the mood for making love and not war, give this a try. If you don't find a date, you can at least get a quick chuckle or even an ego boost. During these uncertain times, any positive experience is worth it. You'll thank me when you get some quality down time in the bunker with your Mr. or Ms. Right and a couple chilled bottles of water and duct tape.

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