

COSMOPOLITAN

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YOU'LL GET TURNED ON JUST READING THEM

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Naked!

5 Ways to Keep Lust Alive

#TBT Butterflies

When His Diet Makes You Feel Fat

“Please Don’t Ask Us How We Met”

EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD MEET CUTE STORY. EXCEPT... YOU DON'T HAVE ONE.

BY LAURA LANE AND ANGELA SPERA

IT ALL STARTS innocently enough. Someone asks you and your guy, “Sooo...how did you two meet?”

Suddenly, you're sweating, scrambling for an explanation for the completely unromantic way you paired up: on a dating app.

Think of something, quick! “We met on Bumble, er...a bumble bee stung him,

and he had an allergic reaction! I, uh, basically saved his life.”

Or “We met on JSwipe...I mean, swiping credit cards! He was buying the exact same snowblower. Fate.”

Admit it, we're all a little obsessed with how-we-met stories. We grow up thinking all great romances must have an equally romantic backstory (thanks, Disney!), as if it's a reflection of the relation-

ship. And it's why Instagram accounts like The Way We Met, a feed of pics and stories from real couples, has more than 255,000 followers—a sort of *New York Times* Vows section for millennials.

And yet, you are *not* your story. Proof: Once upon a time, a young, charismatic guy strolling the boardwalk struck up a conversation about philosophy with a pretty girl. Sweet, right? Well, his name was Charles Manson, and she became one of his cult members. So why do we place so much significance on these stories (especially since 38 percent of singles have met online or via mobile app, according to a Pew Research Center survey)?

“In the U.S., there's this focus on the fairy tale of falling in love,” says Ty Tashiro, PhD, author of *The Science of Happily Ever After*. “From childhood, those are the stories you hear, so people try to shape their experience of meeting their

partner and falling in love to fit that cultural narrative.”

But lovey-dovey tales are increasingly difficult to find. Your grandparents might have met when he accidentally delivered a newspaper to the wrong house on his bike route. Your parents may have exchanged mix tapes when they were both just friends in a computer class. But you? You'll be explaining to your grandchildren, “I saw his height listed at 5 feet 11 and I was completely smitten!” In an age when first encounters involve swiping right on someone's face, things can feel, well, not so magical.

“People used to be embarrassed to say they met at a bar,” says Daniel Jones, author of *Love Illuminated*. “That was like the Tinder of old. Now, meeting at a bar would seem so authentic by comparison.”

How to deal with a seemingly weak story? Well, you could, like many couples who met à la internet, just make one up. “My girlfriend tells people we met at Bible camp, so then when we eventually say ‘Tinder,’ it usually gets a laugh,” says David, 29, who has been with Ana, 26, for more than a year.

“I met my boyfriend on Grindr, but for the sake of not sounding slutty, we told everyone we met on OkCupid,” says John, 32, who didn't think friends would take his relationship seriously if they knew he met him on an app famous for encouraging one-night stands.

The good news: By the time you sit down to tell your grandkids your story, it will probably sound a whole lot more charming than whatever space-hologram technology they'll be working with. Plus, like most stories, making yours sound interesting is all in the delivery. If you believe your meeting rivals Fitz and



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Olivia's, so will everyone else. Even one of us, Angela, used to mumble her story: “We met on OkCupid.” Then with a slight tweak of attitude, she found the romance in their tale: “He texted me after our first date to stop eating Lean Cuisines because he would cook for me. That sealed the deal.” Instead of saying how you met online, recounting the defining moment that got you hooked (finding out you

both binge-watched *Master of None* in one night) or his first sweet gesture (messaging your BFF to figure out your favorite restaurant) will make your story sound great to anyone. Then again, you could just commit to the online bit and say how he kept matching with you on multiple apps and who were you to mess with destiny?

“Not all the stories on The Way We Met are cute because of the way they met,” says Brooklyn Sherman, the keeper of the account. “Every story has something special—it's all about finding details that excite people.”

If we're all being real, it doesn't matter how you met. It's that you did. ■

Lane and Spera's new book, *This Is Why You're Single*, is out now.

LOVE LUST

ONLINE MEET CUTES

Your story can still be totally adorable, even if it began with your swiping on his #ShirtlessSelfie.

“I forgot I even had Happn on my phone when I saw I had been Charmed by a guy named Adrian, who turned out to be a smoking-hot Australian. We realized we were both going to Coachella, and from the moment we met in front of the main-stage bar, we've been inseparable. We moved in together last October!”

—KATIE, 27, LOS ANGELES

“My husband and I met on Tinder, and we had two things in common on our profiles: our alma mater and a pastor who we both listen to. We met for dinner a few weeks later and ended up talking until the restaurant closed. We were married after a year and a half, and I will forever be grateful that I decided to take a chance on Tinder.”

—NATALIE, 28, DALLAS

“After matching on Hinge, Brennan and I went out on a date during a big snowstorm. Between trying to dress to impress in a million layers, sitting next to the wrong guy when I arrived, and taking a few spills on the ice, it was a very honest and humorous first meeting. We had a great time and have now been together for a year.”

—JESSICA, 31, NEW YORK CITY