

# THIS IS WHY YOU'RE SINGLE



**Laura Lane & Angela Spera**

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Published by

Adams Media, a division of F+W Media, Inc.

57 Littlefield Street, Avon, MA 02322. U.S.A.

[www.adamsmedia.com](http://www.adamsmedia.com)

ISBN 10: 1-4405-8884-8

ISBN 13: 978-1-4405-8884-6

eISBN 10: 1-4405-8885-6

eISBN 13: 978-1-4405-8885-3

Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Lane, Laura.

This is why you're single / Laura Lane and Angela Spera.

pages cm

ISBN 978-1-4405-8884-6 (pb) -- ISBN 1-4405-8884-8 (pb) -- ISBN 978-1-4405-8885-3 (ebook)

-- ISBN 1-4405-8885-6 (ebook)

1. Man-woman relationships. 2. Man-woman relationships--Humor. 3. Single women. 4. Single women--Humor. I. Spera, Angela, author. II. Title.

HQ801.L2935 2016

306.7--dc23

2015025900

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Cover design by Frank Rivera.

Cover image © Armando Zubieta.

Interior illustrations by Lucie Rice.

Interior design by Elisabeth Lariviere.

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## *Introduction*

You can read opinion pieces on the state of monogamy, listicles illustrating the plight of the single girl GIF by GIF, and studies on the evolution of mating trends—it seems everyone has an opinion on just why it is you are single.

In the following chapters, you will find yourself in a few familiar relationship scenarios, and some less familiar: in a covert meeting with a private eye to background-check a new date; in an intervention for your FOMO; in a pitch meeting with advertising executives to rebrand your dating profile; in a love tryst with a beloved holiday icon; looking for love in the Witness Protection Program; in a nature documentary studying mating patterns at a bar; and figuring out what “this” is while being held hostage in a bank heist.

What do these stories have to do with your love life? They are the real reasons you’re single.

Just like how your childhood teacher read you the story of “The Tortoise and the Hare” rather than bluntly tell you not to be a cocky little shit and the story about “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” to teach you that if you lie you will get eaten by a rabid animal, we take a page from Aesop’s playbook and present to you these modern-day dating fables. Or dables!

Whether you’re looking to lock down that second date, third marriage, eighty-seventh text message, or first three-way, the morals you take away from each chapter will make dating a whole lot more doable, a little less weird and, well, actually pretty fun.

# ***Text Messages Are Confusing***

## **The Friends and the Phone**

You've spent the last few years preparing for the ping-pong game of witty banter, well-placed punctuation, and ironic-to-genuine emoji use you expect to engage in when you meet the man of your dreams. But now you have a problem. You've met that man. You've been chatting back and forth with him and you really thought it was going somewhere. But today is your birthday and he has stood you up. You are upset. You are confused. You don't understand. You run to your most trusted friend, who has declared herself to be the expert decipherer of the confusing code that is your mobile love affair.

You say things like: "Do you think Tommy likes me?" and "Why isn't he coming?"

Your friend, Mallory, also known as your digital-dick-soothsayer, pulls out her metaphorical magnifying glass and sets out to get to the real answers hidden here. As with many forms of written communication, so much is up to interpretation. She is a strong interpreter. She has spent years sifting through all of this nonsense, reading between the lines and figuring out what a guy is *really* trying to say by that "hey." he sent you at exactly 3:46 P.M. It has become a real art.

You know she will have the answers for you today.

“Men are just confusing creatures, but I know what they really mean,” Mallory informs you. “You are interpreting this all wrong!”

## Tommy

So glad you can come!  
Turning the big 2-5! Watch  
out ;)

Can't make it to your  
birthday. Hope it's fun!



Guys never use exclamation points. He's showing real emotion here which means he's not afraid to be vulnerable. Good sign!

Birthday emojis are on the fourth tab. Imagine if he was walking and texting and scrolling through all of those emojis just to find you a birthday cake and hat. He's putting your happiness before his own safety!  
He cares so much.

“Really?” you ask, after surveying her notes. You're unsure whether to believe your friend's well-researched and clearly fact-based theory. “Cause, I mean, it's my birthday. The day I was born. I just always thought that if a guy really liked you, he'd send flowers or come to your birthday dinner.”

She rolls her eyes and insists you are never grateful for anything, not even grateful for a man taking the time to send *two* birthday emojis.

You wish you could just call Tommy and ask him what was up—no need to interpret tone or intention. But you know

better. Text messages are quick, easy, and impersonal, three things very appealing to members of your generation.

Mallory is happy to prove her expertise once again by offering up some more analysis on a text Tommy sent you two nights ago.

There is a six-hour time difference in Africa. That means he was sleeping and he woke up to write you back.

**Tommy**

Thursday 8:06 PM

So how are you?

How was your day?

Hi Tommy! What's new?

Hey I'm in your neighborhood. Want me to come over and bring some wine? Let's have a wild night!

This is a somber text message.

Wish I could. I'm in Africa.  
Bummer.

There is a period after bummer. No exclamation point, no fanfare. He is very seriously sad he's not seeing you. We are looking at intercontinental love.

Africa? Wow. What are you doing there?

Tommy? You there?

You're questioning his commitment? What do they make in Africa? They make diamonds in Africa! Do you want a stripper at your bachelorette party, bitch cause someone wants to put a ring on it!

People don't lie about going to Africa. People are like, dying there.

“Are you sure?” you question. On one hand, of course you trust your friend. But on the other hand, she is in the same single boat as you and her last boyfriend was a sex addict she met when she bought a used fish tank on Craigslist. But your friend knows best, simply because she is your friend.

“Why so negative? What we have here is a classic case of low self-esteem,” Mallory theorizes. “Are you unable to accept real love? What is your hang-up?” She says you don’t deserve her precious time and energy. She is about to leave, but then she remembers a time when the roles were reversed and it was you staring into her poor, needy cow eyes and helping her through a complex mobile affair. It is her duty to guide you through this difficult time. She will stay. A blossoming love affair can make an unstable fool out of all of us. Mallory takes a look-see at one last text.

First of all you can't hear his tone through a text message.

### Tommy

Hey, my parents are in town. Want to come to dinner with us?

He used all three letters when he wrote "you." Y-O-U. By taking the time to spell full words, he's proving that he is a mature grownup and you are important to him.

I don't want to be in a relationship with you.

Hey, what's new?

So how are you?

How was your day?

Hi Tommy! What's new?

He's so obviously trying to take things slow because he respects you. He already sees a future with you.

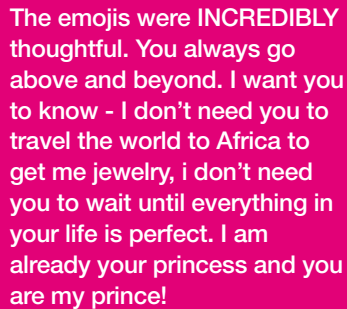
You start to go dizzy. You are very confused, but like a young Luke Skywalker, you have slowly been swayed away from the dark side of cynicism thanks to Mallory's Yoda-like wisdom. The Force is strong.

Now is the finale.

The fun part for your friend! The part Mallory has been waiting for this entire time. With the full understanding of the situation, she gets to both creatively and methodically concoct the perfect response to your guy. It's like being back in Civil War times when lovers had to express all their desires and yearning through the written word. It's also like when Mallory was in third grade and wrote a story about how she was actually a unicorn who lived in the clouds. It's just like both of those things. Basically, it's time to get creative. Romance is in the air, the possibilities are limitless, and she knows just what to write.



"The emojis were INCREDIBLY thoughtful," she begins, as you type furiously, following her instructions . . .

## Tommy



The emojis were INCREDIBLY thoughtful. You always go above and beyond. I want you to know - I don't need you to travel the world to Africa to get me jewelry, i don't need you to wait until everything in your life is perfect. I am already your princess and you are my prince!

This is bad.



I hope you die.



“Don’t worry, that probably wasn’t literal,” she assures you. “Still, I guess it wasn’t meant to be.”

You appear comatose.

“Also,” she asserts, “pretty sure I didn’t tell you to add that exclamation mark at the end. No offense, but that’s probably where you went wrong. Too aggressive.” ●

## ***REMOVE THE LOVE GOGGLES***

While it appears you have just turned your potential courtship into a romantic Hiroshima, it happens to the best of us. When you like a guy, love goggles cloud your rational brain, making you confused, not able to read the very clear signs, and in a desperate search for answers. It’s easy to interpret everything wrong, look too hard at stuff that isn’t there, or miss stuff that *is* there, when you’re crushing hard.

Think about it: Text messages from other people in your life are usually not confusing to you. When’s the last time you’ve asked for help analyzing a text message from your best friend, your Uber driver, or your mom? (Okay, we take back the part about your mom. Texts from your mom are most likely very confusing, but that has nothing to do with you overanalyzing and more to do with a combination of her bad eyesight, poor mastery of autocorrect, and attempt to sound young by sending you a rocket ship emoji instead of writing “good morning.”)

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## MORAL OF THE STORY

## I OVERTHINK, THEREFORE I AM SINGLE

This can all be remedied with a simple trick of the brain: Pretend he is your cousin. Unless you grew up in the Appalachians and this guy was your cousin all along, you'll be friendly, courteous, and when he doesn't text you back, you'll assume your "cousin" is either still in class or slammed with a busy day at the office and you'll wait for him to write you back. It's just a little expert substitution work!

Before you write a guy back, just ask yourself WWITC: "What Would I Text Cousin?" You won't be overly flirtatious to your cousin (because that's called incest) and that's good because guys don't want to date Gollum (we're talking about the desperate "We wants it. We needs it." aspect. But sure, they probably aren't into his looks either). You won't be overanalyzing the texts, because remember, *it's just your cousin*.

If you don't have a cousin, there are many other options to use: your boss, your neighbor, a classmate. The important thing is that you treat this new guy like he is just close enough to be polite to but in that distant kind of way that keeps him interested. Be nice, be your smart and funny self, but don't be desperate.

**WARNING: This does not work for human-to-human contact. When you go on an actual date, DO NOT pretend he is your cousin. This could cause harmful psychological effects.**

**“I LOVED IT. IT’S REALLY FUNNY AND MAKES ME VERY HAPPY THAT I HAVEN’T BEEN SINGLE IN 21 YEARS . . . BUY THIS BOOK.”**

—Joel McHale, star of *Community* and host of E!’s *The Soup*

**“IT’S LIKE HANGING OUT WITH YOUR MOST-TRUSTED BEST FRIEND—AND IT WOULD HAVE STOPPED ME FROM SENDING A LOT OF EMBARRASSING TEXTS.”**

—Meghan McCain, author of *America, You Sexy Bitch* and FOX News contributor

**“SERIOUS LAUGHS AND LESSONS THROUGHOUT.”**

—Jordan Carlos, panelist on MTV’s *Girl Code* and reporter on Comedy Central’s *The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore*

**“LIKE THE HONEST, SARCASTIC BIG SISTER YOU NEVER HAD.”**

—Kate Hogan, Deputy Features Editor at People.com

**“AS A *BACHELOR* REJECT, I SAY SPARE YOURSELF A NATIONAL BREAKDOWN . . . DON’T GO ON *THE BACHELOR*—READ THIS DAMN BOOK.”**

—Jenna Burke, ABC’s *The Bachelor* contestant, season 16

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## MODERN DATING IS HARD.

Whether you’re falling for that man child for the fifty-seventh time or text messaging your way to stalker status, dating can make you want to find a nice roomy hermitage on Airbnb and live a solitary, monk-like life.

## LUCKILY, THAT FRUSTRATION ENDS NOW.

*This Is Why You’re Single* breaks away from your typical dating guide by taking a page from Aesop’s playbook with hilarious modern-day dating fables paired with advice, entertaining quizzes, graphs, and illustrations. Dating will feel a whole lot more doable, a little less weird, and, well, actually pretty fun.

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*This Is Why You’re Single* began as a sold-out sketch show, an iTunes top 10 comedy podcast, a YouTube channel, and a Twitter feed by Laura Lane and Angela Spera. The duo has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Daily News*, *New York* magazine, *Time Out New York*, and the *New York Times*.

\$15.99 (CAN \$17.99)

Self-Help/Relationships

ISBN-13: 978-1-4405-8884-6

ISBN-10: 1-4405-8884-8



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Cover design by Frank Rivera

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