

single for a reason

Another horrific date? Skip bitching about it to your bestie – two New York girls have created a blog where you can vent away.

We've all had those moments with our girlfriends. You know, the ones slurping wine, bitching or laughing about how useless/weird/arrogant men are. We swap war stories like dating veterans. In the CLEO office alone, we have enough disaster dating stories to give the *Sex and the City* producers all the material they'd ever need to make a third movie. Yep, the sisterhood's tales are equal parts unique and common, and that's why New Yorkers Annabel Gould, 24, and Ashley Riegler, 27, did what most of us have no doubt threatened to do at some point – they started a blog about it.

daters anonymous

Single For A Reason (singleforareason.com) offers a space where women (and a few guys) can anonymously submit their horror dating stories. "Ashley and I are both navigating the dating scene at the moment and last New Year's Day, we were talking about all of our weird experiences with guys," says Annabel. "It was so funny, we were laughing to the point of crying, and we thought, why not share this with the rest of the world?"

Living in a city like New York, where dating is almost treated as sport, Ashley and Annabel were in prime position to

source loads of material for their blog. "It was very grassroots in the beginning," explains Ashley. "We would use our own stories and ones from our friends, but I think it gained momentum because of the anonymity aspect. A lot of girls want to share their ridiculous dating stories and the blog is a space where they can feel comfortable doing that."

And share they have – Single For A Reason (SFAR) has received countless submissions this past year from around the world. Ashley says, "Sometimes we worry whether we're going to get any new submissions, but there are always stories. There are always people going out on awful or awkward dates."

he did not do that?!

Log on to the site at any given time and you will be presented with an array of cringe-worthy dating disasters, from the awkward to the truly horrifying. There's a story about a guy texting a girl he had just met, accusing her of leaving him with blue balls; one about a dude who was so drunk that he fell asleep in the middle of a date; and another about a man who, mid-sex with a woman, jumped up, declared he had a girlfriend and ran out of her apartment.

But if you thought that was bad, Ashley's personal favourite involves cooking oil and a phone call to the emergency services. "A Canadian girl went home with a guy after a date. They get to his place and he asks her to wait in the living room while he prepares his bedroom. After a while he calls her in and she discovers he's stripped his bed, put a rubber sheet down and covered it in cooking oil. He then proceeds to jump on his bed, but because it's slippery, he falls and hits the headboard, knocking himself out. The girl had to call an ambulance and wait with him!"



Annabel and Ashley

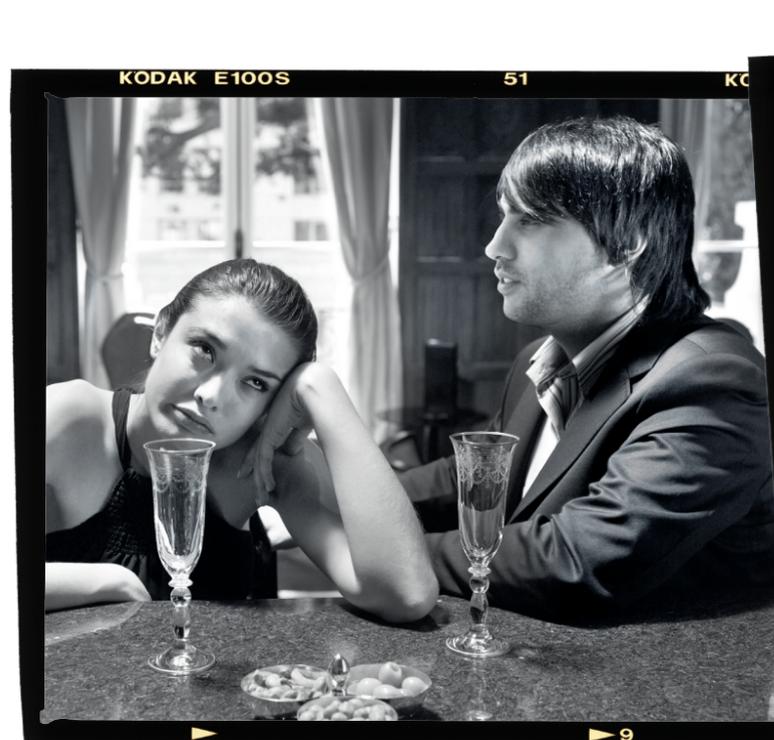
“the guy jumps on his bed, but because it's slippery, he falls and knocks himself out. the girl had to call an ambulance and wait with him!”

an awkward path to love

Oil aficionados notwithstanding, there are many reasons why we can be better off sans boyfriend, but does SFAR have a tendency to blame men too much for our single status? "The idea behind the site wasn't ever about blaming men or man-bashing, it was more, 'I'd rather be single than have to deal with this weird dude who has a shoe fetish'," explains Annabel. "It's not that we don't believe in awesome men, or that we won't ever give them a chance, it's just the path to finding one can be awkward and funny."

"A lot of younger women are finding it hard being in the dating landscape," adds Ashley. "There's a lot of pressure these days to find a man and settle down. The idea of a relationship is just so idealised, we hope the site is a place where we can explore the benefits of being single, a place where it's fine not to have a boyfriend and a place to tell stories. It's healthy venting and I think it's empowering for single women."

And if our hands ever start hurting from too much finger pointing? Well, it's not like we're completely faultless, either. Ashley and Annabel have received a number of submissions from guys about the crazy things that us girls do, too, and they hope to eventually create another version of the blog based solely on men's experiences with women. In the meantime, guys are encouraged to read SFAR for educational purposes. "We've had guys tell us they read the site to learn what not to do; they use the stories as pointers!" Ashley laughs. Single For A Reason: cathartic for us and a community service for men. We think it's definitely a win-win situation. □



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