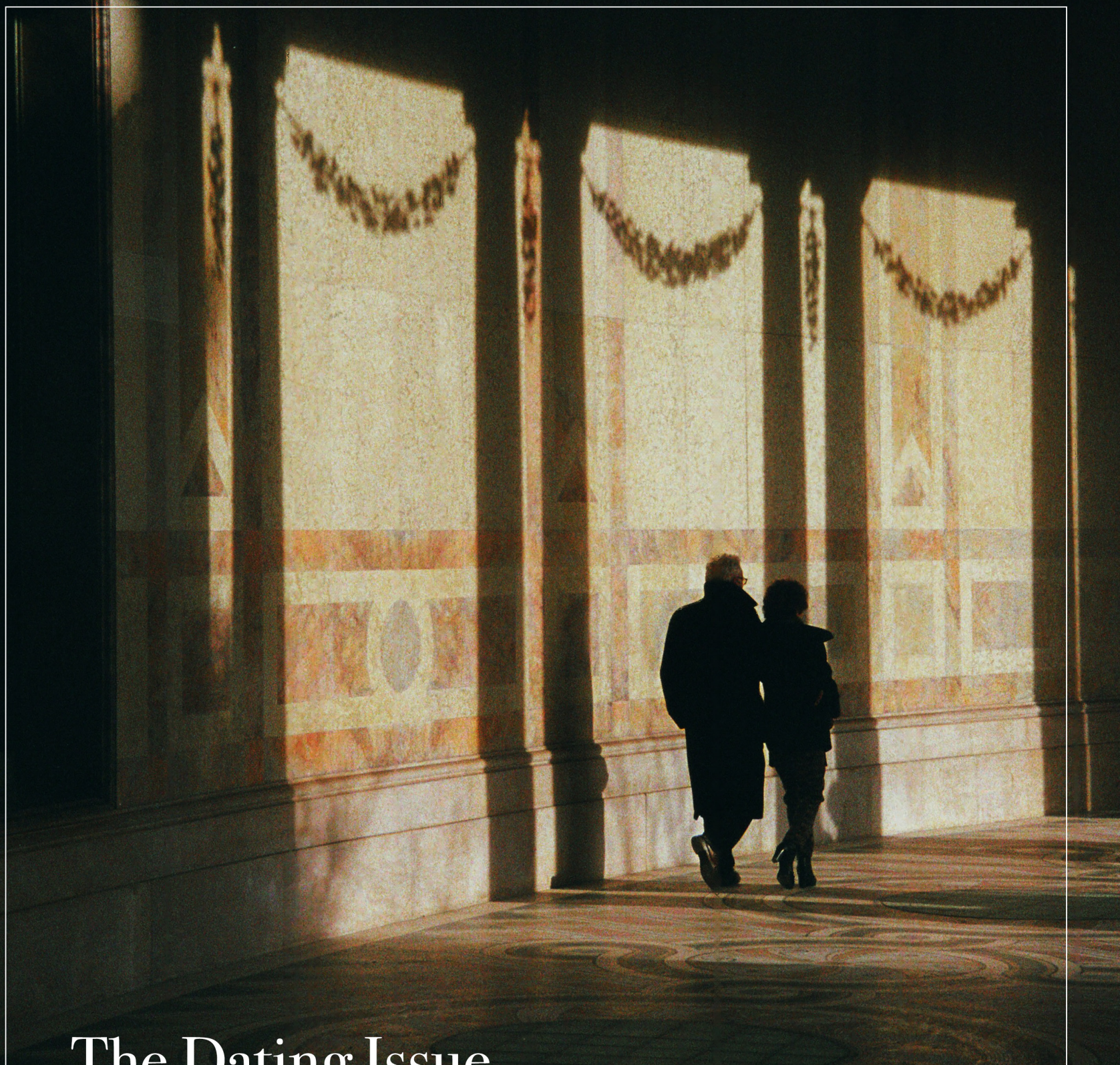


This week, we shackled up, settled down, and cuffed ourselves into oblivion.

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The Dating Issue



THE DATING ISSUE

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What is there even to say? How much is required? In the intervening week since the recent election, a resounding aphasia has settled across this school and the country beyond it like pollen or volcanic ash. At the Nass, we solicited short submissions on the subject. In the end, we received one (1) response. We opted not to publish it.

Here, we offer, instead, our treatise on dating and the pitiless struggle of holding your heart out for others to touch, kiss, or caress. Some of us have found success in it. Others have been wounded. Across the long and narrow range of experience, we have a lot of words to spill all over the place when it comes to love, and this, at least, I am appreciative for. It feels like an antivenom for aphasic inhibition.

In some ways, this issue is a sequel to the Sex Issue, which we released last November, which feels like ages ago. I hope you love it, and I hope, maybe, you pick up a thing or two.

**Lovingly yours,
Charlie Nuermberger, EIC**

This Week:

Fri	7:00p Men's Ice Hockey vs Dartmouth	8:00p Wallace Theater LCA A Life Worth Living, a new musical by Jefferey Chen '25 - Free tickets required	Tues	4:15p McCosh Hall, 50 New and Effective Ideas to Promote a More Inclusive, Productive, and Healthy Economy for Ally	4:30p Richardson Auditorium Conversations on Art-making in a Vexed Era — Jennifer Finney Boylan, Meredith Monk & Maria Stepanova
Sat	1:00p Fields Center 106 Cafe The Peoples' Sky Dinner - learn about local Native American cuisine and culture	2:00p Wallace Theater LCA A Life Worth Living, a new musical by Jefferey Chen '25 - Free tickets required	Wed	7:30p Richardson Auditorium Princeton University Concerts presents Ébène and Belcea String Quartets	7:00p Jadwin Gymnasium Women's Basketball vs Villanova
Sun	11:00a Chapel Worship Service	2:00p Taplin Auditorium A Masterclass with Elaine Douvas, oboist	Thurs	12:00p Simpson International Building, A71 Designing Mechanisms for Addressing Political Polarization in Voter Behavior	12:30p Discovery Hub, Firestone Library Crafternoon: Create a Beaded Keychain
Mon	4:30p Bowen Hall, 222 Amna Khalid and Jeff Snyder Speaking Event	6:00p PNI A00B Activism at Princeton Through The Years	Got Events?	Email Emmett Souder at js0735@princeton.edu with your event and why it should be featured.	For advertisements, contact Isabelle Clayton at ic4953@princeton.edu

Verbatim:

Overheard at Charter
Softie, drenched in their own spit: "I can't believe he actually thought I was crying in the corner and never apologized and on top of that made fun of my country's potassium production."

Overheard in Coffee Club
Grad student who's too into Tinder: "You should always be with the one you're eye-fucking."

Overheard in Bloomberg 044
Fabulous frosh: "I've been told my hair is half my aura."

Overheard at dinner
Prego@-matist: "I want a sauce-focused pizza."

Overheard after the clock strikes twelve
Anti-breakfast date: "No one feels romantic before noon."
Overheard on Halloween
Angsty and topical: "I would hook up with a ghost. You could see through their bullshit."

Overheard in Little
Legal adult: "I thought it was giggly."

Overheard in group chat
English-major: "It's called a joke with alliteration."
ESL: "It did not land in our lands."

Overheard in Whig-Clio
Voted blue: "I apologize for the dissonance in our humour cognition."
Voted red: "I'm not even going to bother looking up dissonance."

Overheard in Tower
Struggles with words: "I think I will likewise receive the same great pleasure."

Overheard in girl dorm
Judger of men: "Bot...I would say."
Lover of men: "Why is everyone a bot these days?"
Judger of men: "AI Era."

Overheard on Election Day
Mentally-ill: "The real question here is who's tapped into Peanut the Squirrel?"

Submit to Verbatim

Email thenassauweekly@gmail.com

About us:

The *Nassau Weekly* is Princeton University's weekly news magazine and features news, op-eds, reviews, fiction, poetry and art submitted by students. *There is no formal membership of the Nassau Weekly and all are encouraged to attend meetings and submit writing and art. To submit, email your work to thenassauweekly@gmail.com by 10 p.m. on Thursday. Include your name, netid, word count, and title. We hope to see you soon!*

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Join us: We meet on Mondays and Thursdays at 5 p.m. in Bloomberg 044!

“It’s Just a Sex Thing”

Hookup Culture and the Death of Movement Feminism

This *Nass* writer assembles anecdotes from six Princeton women to answer the question: Where do we go from here?

By FRANCES BROGAN

This spring, I took Professor Margot Canaday’s wonderful class on the history of gender and sexuality in modern America. In her final lecture, Professor Canaday told us she’s deeply troubled by the state of feminism in 2024, because young women have no cohesive movement to look to for guidance. We’ve had organic explosions of reactions to the cultural and legal misogyny of Trumpism – like #Metoo and the post-Dobbs midterm election blue wave. But we don’t have leaders who are household names or mass protests like those in the ‘70s in support of an Equal Rights Amendment.

Nowadays, even the word “feminist” carries a stigma. I kind of get it, because “feminism” evokes a well-meaning yet narrow-minded ‘60s caricature who only cares about the predicament of white women in the suburbs, or like, your mom wearing a pink pussy hat in 2017. It’s a vision Gen Z has transcended in our admirable concern for intersectionality.

Yet Professor Canaday is right (of course she is). We’ve regressed.

Legally, obviously, but culturally too. It’s tempting to zero in on those more palpable legal regressions and neglect the cultural ones. But I learned from Professor Canaday that the cultural and radical feminists, the consciousness raisers and commune dwellers, were just as influential as their more mainstream, reform-minded counterparts. In other words, cultural change matters. I think this particular cultural change, this turn away from reading politics into the personal, has made us incredibly confused about sex.

For our grandmothers, the Feminine Mystique generation, the bra burners, emerging from the phenobarbital-induced oblivion of the ‘50s, I’d hypothesize that casual sex was empowering. It must have felt amazing, after decades of having your eroticism only tolerated as a means to domestic contentment, to fuck a lot, and a lot of different people, and because you wanted to do it. Then for our mothers, saturated with late-stage capitalism, sick of waifish Victoria’s Secret models and shaving their legs, learning about sexual harassment from Anita Hill and realizing yes, they’d experienced it too, monogamy was probably empowering. They were some of the first who could love other women openly, at least in some spaces. And even for straight girls, it must have felt amazing to reject the commodification of sex and reserve their bodies for those they loved. Our

grandmothers had the second-wave feminists. Our mothers had the third wave. But feminism as an organized political crusade is dead, and we have no visionaries to idolize, no movement to lead us to healthy expressions of our sexual agency.

Now that our bodies are state property once again—an injustice not inflicted on our mothers and grandmothers—how do we reclaim them as our own? When I talk to my female friends about the sexual encounters we’ve had with men we didn’t love or even like, our feelings are complicated, resentful, and even regretful. We want to take back the orgasms we’ve induced, for the sweaty rando in a greasy-pizza-box-strewn Annex dorm or the nice Hinge date who took us to an Italian restaurant or the long-term long-distance low-commitment casual boyfriend. In the absence of an active school of feminism, in an era of increased government control over female bodies, we need to find a new way to explore our sexuality that doesn’t leave us bitter and convinced that all men are trash.

I rather presumptuously set out to address this problem by reading up on hookup culture, talking to Professor Canaday, and compiling data from a range of women, anonymized here as A., B., C., D., E, and F, who’ve hooked up with Princeton men.

A. has engaged in casual hookups, but doesn’t want to be sexually

involved with anyone she couldn’t envision eventually becoming important to her. “How is it fair that [situations] get sexual satisfaction and I don’t get the emotional bond that I want?” she fumed. She believes hookup culture is a copout that enables us to shirk the emotional labor inherent in relationships. She thinks the social environment of Princeton exacerbates hookup culture’s harms; she told me that racial and economic privilege makes some men behave as though they’re entitled to sex. “I almost felt like I would owe men a good experience even if I wasn’t comfortable with it,” she said of her younger self. She also pinpointed a tension between Princeton students’ fixation on their reputations and the difficulty of discretion on such a small campus.

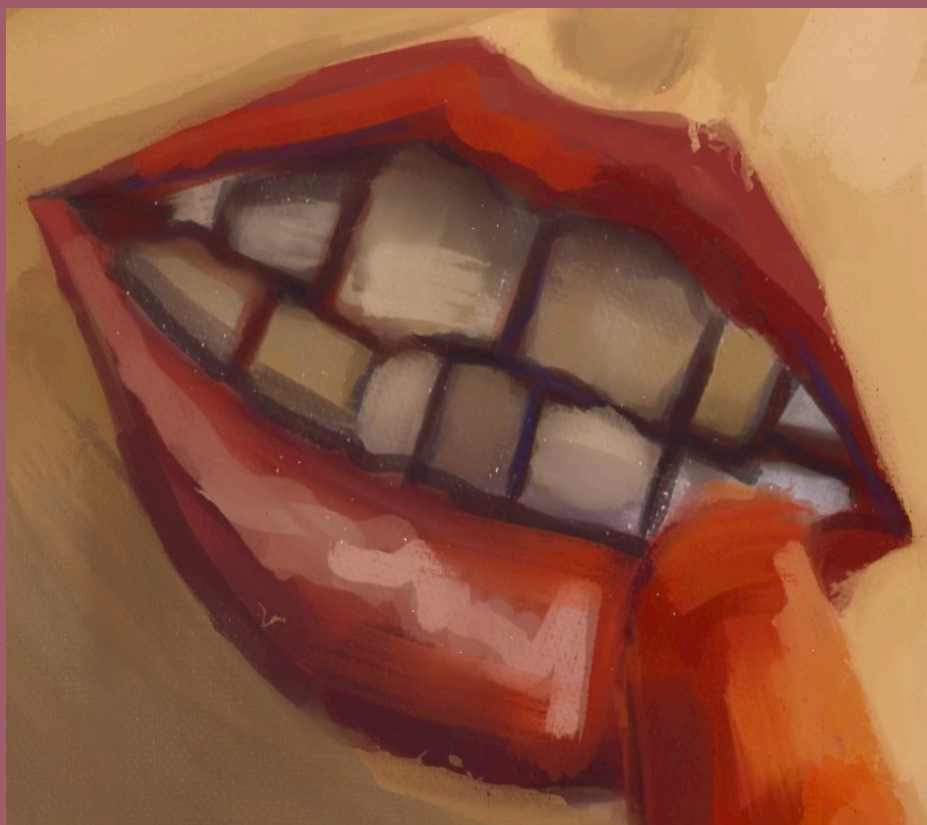
B. is a “big dater” with a limited bandwidth for bullshit – once, she walked out of a hookup halfway through. She has a nuanced understanding of the social politics of hookup culture, describing in her undergrad years, certain men were more appealing to her because of their eating club affiliations, and she felt that their sexual attention increased her social capital. Now that she is older and a member of a prestigious eating club herself, she’s a lot less concerned with how the social status of her romantic partners influences how she is perceived. She cited the insidious nature of gossip as well, musing, “I know

teams talk to each other a certain way . . . I don't like the transparency. In situationships and hookups the loyalty to the other person isn't as strong." Hookup culture hasn't offered her what she's looking for sexually, either. She believes it facilitates disregard for female pleasure, and told me she returned to a situationship primarily because the emotional connection made the sex better than it would have been with someone random.

C. also thinks relationship sex is intrinsically better. "The simple explanation is that [a hookup] doesn't know you and doesn't know what you like, but there is also a difference between having sex and making love," she said. She is acutely aware of how Princeton's social politics shape sexual dynamics, relaying how a friend once told her to avoid public makeouts at certain eating clubs because of potential ramifications during bicker. She has felt volatile after a breakup, and thinks that her coping mechanism of going out, getting drunk, looking hot, and seeking male attention might be harmful. "The helpless girl act works on Princeton men especially well because of conservatism in the culture," she said. "I've been conditioned to flirt by making myself seem small."

In contrast, D. has found mastering flirting to be empowering. Hookups have been a fun avenue for her to develop "people skills." But although she doesn't typically wait long to hookup, she's picky about her partners. "Everyone knows a lot about everyone else at Princeton," she said. "I'm definitely influenced by talking to my friends." Throughout college, she's become a better advocate for herself, and now has a much lower tolerance for mistreatment. Although she finds it "warranted" that you can't expect the same things in a hookup as you would in a relationship, she asserted, "I can want to be respected as a whole person in a casual scenario."

Like D., E. is an acolyte of the plot. She believes hookups have been good for her; being an object of desire absent emotional connection has increased her confidence. She is averse to relationships because she doesn't want to be publicly associated with a man. But she also ruminated that her preference for hookups might originate with "a tiny urge to wreck [her] self." And like others, she's had moments of discomfort, positing that



because guys can be "a bit more pushy physically, things can happen that you don't intend, but it's not necessarily non-consensual."

F. is also versed in gray areas. She reflected that she's "never felt coerced but [she] has felt compromised. It's not a question of consent but of pushing myself too far and not realizing I had a limit." She has felt "disposable" — once after casual sex, she was immediately handed her clothes and kicked

out of the guy's room. She cried on the walk home. She calls her old approach (only pursuing people who were emotionally unavailable in order to avoid hurt) unhealthy, and now needs to have an emotional connection with any prospective sexual partner. She called Princeton guys a "weird network" that reduces girls to their past flings, and feels anxious that the number of people she's hooked up with on campus is preventing her from finding

about hookup culture serve as preliminary evidence that there is an element of groupthink, conscious or subconscious, that influences individual feelings. We have a milieu—we just need a political vernacular through which to understand it.

We haven't eradicated the gender dynamics of the past. Sociologists Laura Hamilton and Elizabeth Armstrong argue that today, "women's ability to get sexual (as opposed to romantic) attention from men [is] viewed positively by their peers," but this feels imprecise. Most of the women I talked to are worried about being slut-shamed. Concerns like these aren't unfounded: a male friend once announced to me that he would never hookup with any girl who's slept with more than three guys. I was disgusted but not surprised. Beneath our veneer of progress, the old Madonna-whore hypocrisies and insecurities persist.

As Professor Canaday pointed out to me, the feminism stigma is resilient, shape shifting across generations. Today, a lot of young people don't want to be identified with feminism because we consider it insufficiently progressive. Out of all the distinctly 21st century developments in gender relations, hookup culture seems most indicative of a belief that we've outgrown feminism. Sociologist Lisa Wade writes that many women in hookups and situationships strive to project emotional detachment because they view being "powerless to separate sex from feelings" as a "failure to be liberated, modern, strong, and independent." We've dismissed our feminist foremothers' worldviews as obsolete, but their activism made it possible for us to openly aspire to independence.

There are gender politics, and then there are social politics. Hamilton and Armstrong postulate that hooking up has replaced dating in "determining college womens' erotic status." If true,

something real.

These women have remarkably similar stories. They've gone in seeking validation and left feeling cynical. Their boundaries have been jeopardized, if not exactly violated. They're extremely aware of how their sexual decisions affect their social destiny. They understandably reject being defined by their sex life—and yet it's integral to their self-image and experience of growing up. Their shared sentiments

this association of hookups with status instrumentalizes sex, and by extension, our sexual partners, as props in our ascendancy. The women I talked to acknowledged this, drawing links between hookups and social rituals like bicker. Maybe it seems empowering to treat sex like conquest because

becomes a political decision. Who we choose to associate with is an assertion of identity, but when hookups—perhaps the one domain in which we prefer to keep our associations mostly private—become a gossip topic, we lose agency over our public personas, maybe even feel less steady in our

'80s, when relationships were regarded as central to young adulthood. “It’s nice that [dating] doesn’t define the social ecology anymore,” she mused. The sexual flexibility that hookup culture affords enables ambitious women to have it all—their academic and professional commitments, their independent self-image, and sex.

culture as more benign than their skeptical peers. After meticulously evaluating its pros and cons, D. qualified that she doesn’t see these characteristics as “gendered.” But E. was adamant that “it all feels gendered... all of my sexual and romantic experiences feel impossible to separate from my experience as a woman.”

Because if hookup culture was universally corrosive, more of us would go on strike. But we keep buying in. We generate anecdotes for our friends to laugh at and men for them to villainize, just silly men in beanies, holding iced vanilla lattes, shuffling around campus looking bemused, wondering if they’re supposed to small talk with us or just keep walking. And we know we’ll do it again, because we were drunk, or horny, or secretly in love with him (but not really secretly, because all of our friends knew, and some of them have big mouths), or because we were feeling bad about our bodies and were just craving some affirmation that our tits are perfect, actually, even if that affirmation was murmured in a dark dorm room on a twin bed that can hardly contain two grown-ups.

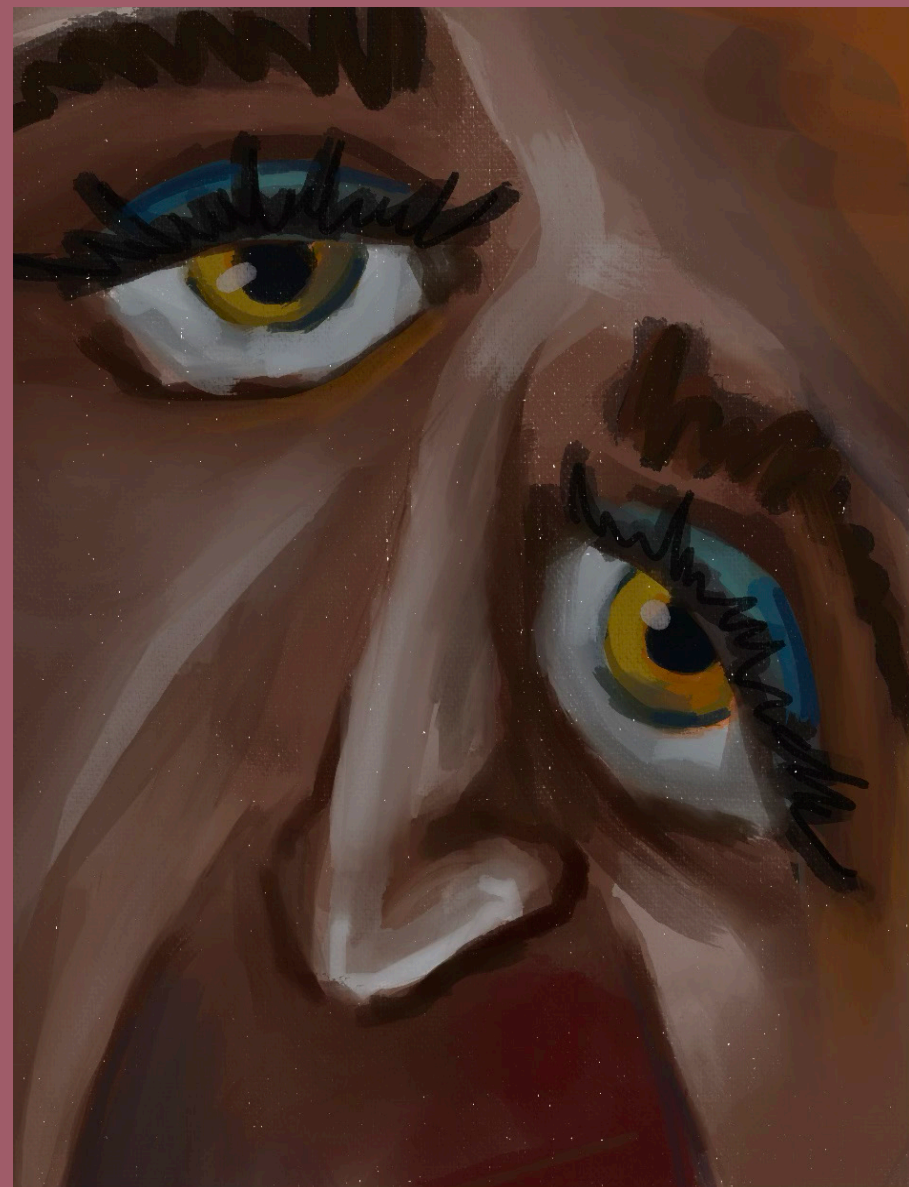
For me, some hookups have been silly fun, but more often than not, they’ve brought unnecessary emotional turmoil. That makes me exactly like other girls, despite my occasional indulgence in delusions of originality. However, that shared experience, and its facilitation of female bonding, is maybe the one positive I’ve extracted from hookup culture. I think that’s the case for a lot of other women, at Princeton and elsewhere. That seems like a compelling argument for reviving the second-wave tradition of political friendships, of consciousness raising groups, of seeing our interactions with men as extensions of political phenomenons.

One essential difference between D. and E.’s perspectives exemplifies our fragmentation. Of the women I interviewed, D. and E. had the most similar sexual approach, and saw hookup

I saw evidence of our need to rectify that fragmentation, or at least create social, intellectual, and political spaces dedicated to exploring it, in these women’s openness with me. They all had so much to say. They liberally shared personal details; some semi-jokingly offered to drop names. It suggested paradoxically greater loyalty to me, someone some of them barely know, than the men with whom they’ve been deeply intimate. It revealed an urgency to connect, to repair the alienation produced by a sexual status quo that encourages minimization of the significance of something that is inexorably significant, even when casual. As C. implied, love is about vulnerability; hookup culture is grounded in aversion to it. If we can’t or don’t want to be vulnerable with men, we seem to crave heightened vulnerability with other women.

According to Professor Canaday, the ‘70s saw a “broadscale cultural withdrawal from women’s relationships with men.” Some women realized they were lesbian, others experimented, others went on romance hiatus. Professor Canaday thinks this break from men was a “necessary phase” for a lot of women, but it wasn’t sustainable. We know now that we don’t need men to be happy, and while it’s sometimes tempting to form Amazonian enclaves and block all the boys in our phones, we’d miss them if they weren’t around.

But we do need women. Maybe we need feminism, too.



it’s what men have always done, because high-fiving each other for our exploits is an implicit acknowledgement that we want it too, that we are active players in the game instead of passive receptacles for male desire.

Everyone I talked to reiterated that who you go home with after a night out

sense of self.

If we manage to keep our hookups under wraps, maybe the permission to pursue them grants us more autonomy over our identity. Professor Canaday identified the social acceptability of E’s disinterest in dating as a potential benefit of hookup culture for young women, at least in contrast with the

Nass Recommends: Four Books of Theory to Impress Your Crush

A little bit of theory to fill you in on human emancipation and elevate your reputation

By NARGES ANZALI

Picture this: you see your crush at the library. They're finishing their homework, so you only have a little time to get their attention. They're way too cool for you, and they have jorts and sambas on today. What to do? Say hello? Ask for their Instagram? NO!

Instead, you're going to lie! Don't feel bad, you're following in a long tradition of students trying to convince their crushes that they're cool enough (e.g. Barack Obama telling his college crush he was bisexual). You'll put these following books in your backpack, and then walk by your crush while they're studying in the library. Suddenly, (pretend) disaster strikes! The zipper on your bag, which was coincidentally left open, fails you. Your books scatter across the library table.

"“Oh no! My leftist theory books!” you'll exclaim, pretending to be embarrassed.

The sexy aura of all these leftist theory books immediately entrances your crush, and you live happily ever after. Or at least, you live happily ever after until they find out you haven't actually read these books. So you should probably get on that.

“But which books?” you ask, filled with the dread of not skipping into the sunset holding hands. Fear not. I have a couple of recommendations.

1. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon

This is a classic of post-colonial literature and a great gateway into Fanon's work. Fanon wrote this book shortly before his death, and encompasses his

experiences as a member of the Algerian Liberation Front during their struggle against the French. Fanon asserts one of the most controversial perspectives in modern political theory—that anti-colonial violence is perfectly justified. He makes a very persuasive argument—after all, poverty and colonialism are themselves forms of extreme violence which people in the Global South have been subject to for decades, if not centuries. Our moral and ethical systems, it seems, monopolizes and justifies violence for ruling powers. Minorities are time and time again expected to turn the other cheek. However, Fanon fails in detailing a future beyond the violence. If the revolution can only truly be achieved after violence, then what? Does the state continue to propagate violence against others? It's a shame that we never got an expansion of the ideas in this book, but it's worth reading just for exposure to a voice that is so radically and starkly different to any you've ever read before.

2. *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir

This is her most well-known work for a reason. Coming in at a whopping 800 pages, the *Second Sex* is Beauvoir's complete historical analysis on the oppression of women. Analyzing historical events from the stone age until the mid 1900's, Beauvoir's book isn't for the faint of heart. She combines Freudian psychoanalysis with philosophical arguments from contemporaries, such as Sartre, to come up with a quasi-legal case against sexism. While her Freudian analyses aren't my favorite, as they seem to be less rooted in verifiable fact, Beauvoir takes apart current arguments against feminism in a way that's both methodical and almost impossible to argue against, given the sheer amount of evidence she presents. Some weird

opinions about lesbians, though. You can't win them all, I guess.

3. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire

Written primarily for educators, this book is helpful for teachers and students alike. What is the dynamic of our education? Why does it seem to be based on positions of power and focused on reproducing systems of power? Freire advocates for a dynamic model of education in which students are encouraged to question the oppressive structures which they find themselves in. One of the most iconic liberal thinkers of his time, Freire is firmly against the concept of neutrality, institutional or otherwise. Dynamics of power must be stood up against in order to change them, and it must be done as a community. While I'm not sure how realistically his theories of education can be applied in a kindergarten science classroom, his opinions on education are especially relevant given the current conflicts on college campuses.

4. *All About Love*, bell hooks

While not traditionally what many would consider 'political' theory, bell

hooks' revelations on love are applied not only to interpersonal dynamics of relationships but societal interactions as well. It's just a book that young people need to read—not only to end situation culture, but also to face a fresh idea of what love can and should be. The love described in this book includes justice, aid, and respect. It's an uncomfortable read—hooks defies some of our most ingrained societal lessons about what love and respect should be in relationships, especially when it comes to our parents. Even though I don't necessarily agree with the extreme that she takes her concept of love to, I think that an essential understanding of activism is rooted in love, and the dedication we have to continue making towards it. Besides, you and your crush can read it together—totally romantic.

So get to reading! After all, when you secure that date, she'll probably ask you questions about the books...

The sexy aura of the *Nassau Weekly* immediately entrances you and you live happily ever after with *Narges Anzali*.



Dating, in Five Metaphors

A *Nass* writer pulls out the real multiplicity of love in five little analogies

By HARPER VANCE

I. Dating as Theatre

Dating is as much theatre as it is love. Every audition echoes the uncertainty of a first date, but at least this time, you know what you're going to say. I'll read my lines, take my cues, and wait for you to do the same. Sometimes, the curtain closes after a couple drinks, sometimes it never does, and I'll wait on stage with my script in my back pocket until that happens. I'll wonder how good of an actor you are – how badly you want to prove yourself and how loud the applause will be at the end.

Maybe it's a contest of who's better under the lights. I mean, what are the chances we both walk away with the Oscar? I can't even tell how much I'm acting anymore, and I want to feel like a person who truly likes, but at some point it may have become for show. I'm afraid I can only read my lines so many times before they fall flat. I hope they don't blame me for my pessimism, just as I don't blame them for their delusion. They can play whatever part they want – morph into the character the role calls for and call me honey sweet. It's not cruelty if it's art, and I'm the best audience you could ever want.

The stage lights will brush my skin the same way they did in a time that never belonged to me. One day, you could win best actor, me best actress, and at that point maybe we're no longer pretending.

II. Dating as Growing Up

We're both playing tag, yet neither of us knows who's it, and we're addicted to the chase, aren't we? We're trying to emulate the escape of youth as we sit on your navy sheets, and I tap my foot on the carpet. We're ignoring the images of your race car bed and my princess sheets from way back when, and maybe we should go back to the sandbox to play in it. Maybe I need some crayons, finger paints, pipe cleaners, anything to fill my hands that isn't you. I just wish to be the little girl walking barefoot in the summer sun, climbing the oak tree in the front yard and blowing on dandelion puffs. It's all too familiar, and we've both been here before. We keep on aching to get lost in something so much larger than ourselves, but all I want is to be that girl again.

You're cupping my face half past midnight, rotten naivety flowing under a teenage moon. She's giggling because boys have cooties while I'm kicking myself for the way my breath hitches as you whisper in my ear. Maybe the butterflies I feel are the same ones that kissed my shoulder when I was

six. We're playing on the schoolyard, and you're mean to me, and I'm told it's because you like me. You're pulling my hair, you're calling me names, and my face burns red all the same. I feel the same way I did when I came home from the river, my clothes muddy and shoes squishing with every step. My mom told me that I needed to take a shower immediately, that I was filthy. I couldn't disagree. I don't know when things got this far, when I got so distant from who I used to be. What I would give to be laughing on the swingset again with my feet painting the sky.

III. Dating as Obsession

I want to be where you lay. I want to sink my teeth into the places you've been. I want to do all you've done. Tell me the stories from when you were young and dumb, sword fighting with sticks in the Alabama sun. Let your mother tell me how you laughed when you were little and show me pictures of you on Halloween so many years ago. You were dressed up as Batman with your mask falling into your eyes and chocolate smeared on your upper lip. Take me to where you call home, and it will be mine too.

I'm tracing the lines in my palm, pretending it's yours, and I can't seem to find myself even when I'm right in front of myself. I'm heaving and begging and pleading. My

chin's between your thumb and index finger and you could snap my neck with one movement. Your eyes are everything I'll ever know and, please, please, I'll do anything to have you never look away. I'll change the shape that I'm in. I'll bleed even better than before. I press my lips to yours and let my kisses be an apology for everything I'm not.

I'm drinking tonight, and it's going to be ugly. I'll think of you when the alcohol scorches the back of my mouth, and I'm glaring at myself in the bathroom mirror. Somewhere in that liquor-soaked haze, I see your ghost next to me and you have feral gnashing teeth, desperate and ferocious. I'll give myself over, expose the white of my neck and let the bruises show in the morning. My love for you breathes on its own; it's hurting my chest, my body creaks with it. "I love you more." You can't. You can't. Make me your martyr. I want my last breath to be between your lips. Feel free to rip me apart, spread me open—you're holding my bones together after all.

IV. Dating as Home

You smile your cherry stained lips, and I can see the bag of gas station gummy worms hanging out of your jeans pocket. Our backs are cradled by a languid sun as the day settles into something balmy and hopeful. We don't have to worry

about making it out. We've quieted down; we laugh loudly. You know the most authentic version of me, the one wearing the sleep shirt, torn up and from cross country in tenth grade, and sleeping with a pink unicorn stuffed animal from when I was seven. The name of the street that I grew up on is the name of the bakery a couple blocks down the road. Our neighbor's dog has the same name as the lab you had growing up. Your smile is soft and warm, and it feels like forever.

This summer, we'll go to the quarry, and the days will be tinged with unspoiled hope as the water makes us feel light, dreamy and distant, in its embrace. In the fall, we'll carve out pumpkins and roll cookie dough between our hands, so that by December, we'll be cozy by the firelight. You hold my face in the morning and tell me you love me, and maybe that's all I ever needed.

V. Dating as Memory

I wish we could be normal people. We were confused, star-crossed, and my knees are bruised from throwing myself at our grave. I choke on your name in hopes of feeling your heartbeat next to mine. Maybe there's a world where the sun sets in the east and I don't remember where on your hips I'd run my thumb in circles. I palm the sky as if it's your cheek and configure false constellations of

your face. It starts to rain at some point, and I want to tell you that you have so little to be sorry for, that no river could wipe my memory of you, so please don't try. At some point, some time ago, your hair was stuck to my skin as you sewed kisses on my jaw and down my chest, and now I'm rubbing my ribs from which our love was born. Why couldn't we be normal? We held each other in the back of the car I still drive, and I can't get rid of the smell of your cologne. I look for you in every stranger I meet. I wonder how the morning light would caress the contours of their collarbone and whether or not it would feel the same under my fingers.

I'm trying to break you down in soft fistfuls in my mind, make you evaporate with a feather's touch, yet instead, I have two hands clasped, pounding on your chest. Maybe I can feel your ribs break under the pressure, maybe they're mine, maybe there's no difference. I'm thinking of you holding me when the thunder started to yell last December, and I thought about how I hoped our kids would get your eyes. I knew more than what you looked like naked. I knew the shape of your soul. I don't think I'll ever forget it.

NASS LIST: WHAT'S YOUR TYPE?

1. Jewish or Jewish-adjacent men
2. Gay Elvis impersonators
3. Male architects who look good in **dark green**
4. Girls that are like explosions / bombs / earthquakes
5. Big buff strong man like Popeye
6. The "girl" I built in my lab
7. Someone who lets me bite them and bites me back
8. Line cooks
9. Narcissist, stalkers, pathological liars
10. The homoromantic **Tin Man** and **Scarecrow** in the most recent Broadway revival of The Wiz
11. The few, the truly elegant. Big bazonkas though
12. Vasectomized men
13. **AB negative**
14. The Barefoot Contessa
15. Individuals with broken and unfixable spirits
16. Man with pockets
17. Man with **deep pockets**
18. Men who have nightmares about their mothers
19. Guys that get it
20. Guys that have border-line incestuous relationships with their sisters
21. I am obsessed with the TYPE OF PERSON WHO CAN **LOVE WITHOUT FEAR** like actually if you love tf out of your friends and partners you are literally MY BEST FRIEND. Everyone is so fucking fake these days. I'm all about true **love**
22. Bruh girls
23. Who even knows at this point
24. When hairy meets silly
25. Finance bros who keep me in a situationship for eight years and end up marrying a Catholic-school slut
26. Catholic school sluts
27. Obviously Dua Lipa
28. Girls who look like they can do manual labor
29. Guys who wear hooters costumes on halloween
30. Zayn Malik but 6ft
31. Men whose legs are alabaster columns, set on bases of **gold**
32. Bone structure from the gods
33. Conjoined twins
34. The good people of Butler County, Pennsylvania
35. The wonderful souls of Bucks County, PA
36. Dilfs
37. Friends, romans, countrymen
38. That one specific security guard at the Firestone entry desk. If you know, you know
39. Mother figures
40. **Irish**
41. Men with bad teeth
42. Guys who call Halloween gay
43. Daily show hosts
44. Guys in suits who've yelled at me in debate rounds
45. A godly woman
46. 1,412 liked songs, no playlists
47. Ornithologists
48. Old enough to repaint, young enough to sell
49. Girls with dragon tattoos
50. Extremely tall and a little stupid
51. Golden retriever or german shepherd
52. **Joe Biden**
53. Hunter Biden
54. Bald
55. I like a big ass dick. Guilty!
56. FUPA
57. Rower guys but then I tried out rowing and it really ruined things for me
58. Rower guys but then I tried out rower guys and it really ruined things for me
59. Being honest, **J.D. Vance**
60. Those shirtless Amish guys who fixed my parents' roof
61. The strong, silent type
62. The weak, loud type
63. Professors who put face pics as their **Grindr** profile

line cooks, bruh girls, conjoined twins, oh my!

64. Eddie Redmayne
65. Ken Bone
66. Lady mafia boss
67. A man who will dip his fingers inside me searching for **honey** that will not come for him
68. I think I'm asexual
69. Deep thinkers (article readers and video essayists)
70. Will pay for the date with **paw points**
71. Men who will restate my ideas but louder for me in precept
72. Men who will say something quietly so I can restate their ideas but louder in precept
73. Tender people who can cook and clean
74. Tim Curry
75. Nuns
76. Cartoonishly thick eyebrows
77. Beautiful, evil spell casting women
78. Traditional, silent men
79. My TA
80. Not you, bitch
81. Buffoons, clowns, and court jesters. Twinkly appendages and harlequin fits a MUST
82. Girls who talk like they've taken lots of philosophy classes
83. Girls who just want a regular coffee. Those white-girl pumpkin spice lattes annoy me
84. The main character in Eraserhead, or men who like to explain the whole plot of Eraserhead
85. Uzbek dandy
86. The Wright Brothers
87. Mary Antoinette
88. Queer elders
89. Girls with good elbows. Preferably with light eczema. Small red bumps. I hope she doesn't pick at them. Dry skin near the eczema. No flaking. No lotion for the eczema. Dry. Cracking, perhaps. Pointy. Bony. If the bumps are too big I don't like it. Small red bumps
90. Ceramists
91. Ventriloquists who make a living off of it
92. Someone with nothing to lose
93. Attached earlobes
94. Can't tell what he wants from me
95. RNC lawyers wearing underwear that says "**TOO BIG TO RIG**" on the ass
96. My table's waitress from an Italian restaurant one year and five months ago
97. Feral
98. Cameltoe
99. Veterans
100. Senators named Elizabeth

LIST LIST LIST

REIGNING

On the value of platonic love, *Saltburn*, and the nuclear unit

By MIA MANN-SHA FIR

Perched on my bed in my lair – Holder entrance 8 – I watch as various bodies move in and out of my guest chair. I study them and I smile, actively *not* wishing these various bodies would get in bed with me. Hi guys! These bodies belong to my friends. One day they are wearing penny loafers, gladiator sandals another, sometimes velvet slippers, bubble clogs occasionally, post-pedicure foam flip flops just once, but notably, Frye boots every now and then. I name their shoes because– and this is key– they will be keeping their shoes on. They will not be getting in bed with me.

In other news... my screen time is up. And I'm not sufficiently horrified by it. I should be horrified by it still, but at least I can say that the perpetrator isn't the Instagram app nor some crush whom I am sending weird text messages to all day long. Actually, it's precisely not that one. Day and night, I sit here, there, wherever, pointer and thumb pinching in, out, in, out on Find my Friends. Literally, all the time, all I want to do, is find my fucking friends.

See, currently (right now), I am in love. And, simultaneously, I wish we'd shut up about romance a little more.

I'll explain. For the large part of my sentient, sapient career– granted, I'm two months shy of twenty-one so it's been short– I was in love. I was in

love in the way we usually mean by “in love.” I experienced an intoxicating, romantic “first love.” It was thrilling. I was consumed and distracted. Under its reign, what previously felt thrilling was demoted to “a fun time *smiley face*!” Luckily, my existing best friends and family still love me despite my momentary hiatus from feeling thrilled by them, and really, how lucky is that! Because again, I promise, I'm now re-thrilled (by them). In the wake of that long adolescent relationship, I have taken somewhat of a vow to, well, not do that again. And I can feel myself falling delightfully in love with that which already existed, but I had previously deprived of my attention.

My mother indulges these medium-interesting musings in her typically indulgent manner. She was born in New York in the 70s and had many friends and also boyfriends, and it seems like the consensus back then– at least for straight women– was that romance was supreme. She is obsessed with this new façon d'être for me, obsessed with my saying, “mom, I'm in love” and not going on to describe the next boy who's older than twenty, younger than twenty four, and drives too fast. She recently sent me this article. Now I'm obsessed with this article. Its central ideas are stored in my most frequently accessed mental library– On the shelf above them is everything Iris Apfel and Linda Rodin ever wore. Beside them is Francesco Risso's Vogue apartment tour. Can't tell you what's below.

This article is part of the Ask Polly series, and its called I am So Bored. In

the series, a hopeless romantic – writing under the moniker “Bored with Boredom”– asks “Polly” (columnist Heather Havrilesky) for advice. Her grievance is as follows:

“I know that magic and novelty do not exclusively exist in romantic parameters, and I'm fed up with feeling like they do.... there is so much more that I find conceptually more exciting than romance and so many other types of love I'd rather be focusing on right now. And yet, the one thing that I have found chemically, epicly, dizzyingly thrilling is fleeting romantic connection.”

Relatable? Polly's response is long, but I hope I've captured its essence:

“What separates an artist from a regular citizen is merely the determination to soak up the magic and novelty of everyday reality and experience it as sublime...Our fixation on romantic love does a grave disservice to the inherent romance of our lives... All you need is focus, patience, and belief in the romance that lives inside your cells.”

I have purposefully excluded specific elements of Polly's answer, such as when she suggests that “cicadas in their chorus” can be oh-so romantic. (Mary Oliver honestly might have a spot in that mental library across from Apfel. But Oliver and romance? Meh. I like my dinner and dessert separately.) What I took from Polly's answer was something along the lines of: Instead of waiting around passively–or worse, searching frantically– for romance, we ought to turn our focus to *that which already is*, and do our best to imbue it with the very

magic we imagine romance will bring us. Polly does not focus specifically on friendship— she really implies that any and everything (even invasive insects!) can be made to feel like electric, thrilling life sources. I'm excited for that longer journey, but for now, I think I'll focus on honing the effervescence of friendship.

And, to my great delight, I might just be in one of the best places ever to engage in that practice. If you're reading this, you likely are too. Here we stand, at this age where we're still kind of in our original nuclear units. Like, we're our parents' kids and our siblings' siblings still more than we are any partner's partner or kids' parent (generally speaking). We have been partially untethered, and not yet retethered. In other words, this place is one big bachelor pad. For seven-ish months of the year, we're here. And when we're here, we exist as these independent entities among thousands of other independent entities— *Thousands* of others right there for our knowing, imagine!! We're bachelors, units of one. This is something we might not be forever. In this position, we have the opportunity to do what we'd do on the TV show *The Bachelor* (I've never seen it but I'm assuming they have a lot of sex and talk about the sex they are having) but we also have the opportunity to form myriad pairings and clusters and blobs called friendships. The sheer scale and complexity of the people around us makes it hard to take it all in. And if anything makes it harder, it's that we get so distracted by that one entity or a very small subset: subjects of our romantic interest. Some ludicrous hierarchy has been established, and in

it, romance reigns.

We all know that pact: ***If neither of us is married by forty, we'll get married.***

It posits friendship as the back-up plan. *Only* on the condition that both friends have not found love, the real kind, by forty, can they officiate, consummate, their mutual adoration. Friendship is the scrawny understudy to hot romantic love. If Idris Elba is busy, maybe Ryan Gosling will get a ring. But why?

Furthermore, in a world where romance and friendship coexist, the friends we do have become sounding boards for friends' romantic grievances and advice— another wonderful thing about friendship. But there is always the danger that friends will start to feel like a Terrier next to a Saint Bernard, Oliver (Barry Keoghan) next to Felix (Jacob Elordi) in *Saltburn*. (I don't mean to declare once and for all that Jacob Elordi is obviously hotter, but its pretty clear the movie posits Keoghan as the comparative runt.) Hearing about their thrilling romantic love for the thousandth time, friend-A rues the days friend-B became so lovesick the two could no longer get through an hour without mention of lover du jour. I have been both friend-A and friend-B, and it sucks.

I am wary, as I write this, of suggesting that one has to fully banish romance in order for friendship to feel magical. Frankly, to imply this would be to concede that romantic love is, indeed, superior and will therefore trump platonic love anytime the two coexist. I definitely hope that isn't true. And if it sounds like

I am saying this, it's only because I have not yet fully figured out how to have the two share space in a way where neither gets pushed out. Until we've cracked the code, though, I think it's a good idea to turn our gazes a few degrees further in the direction of friendship— that's all I'm saying. First of all, why not shake things up? Romantic love has had a long turn on centerstage. Second, we know— I know I do— that romantic love has the tendency to push out platonic love in its reign. By affording friendships a disproportionate amount of attention, and by actively meditating on them as sources of bliss and joy and thrill, perhaps this imbalance will be mitigated.

Let us be bachelors who celebrate the status, not just because of the romantic love we can pursue and obsess over, but also because we have the time and energy and guest chairs to dedicate to the **many** souls with whom we happen to share this very place at this very moment in time, ***because how thrilling is that?!***

By actively meditating on the *Nassau Weekly* as a source of bliss and joy and thrill, perhaps *Mia Mann-Shafir* can mitigate this love imbalance.

FRIENDSHIP

The Problem with the Modern Love Novel

An epistolary account of sex, love, literature, and tragedy

By AMAYA TAYLOR

Dearest reader, I am in love with the idea of true romance. When I think of romance in literature, I am transported to the latter half of 16th century Venice, Italy, amid the Ottoman and Venetian War. Othello follows the story of a black military commander who falls in love with Desdemona, the daughter of a Venetian senator. The pair can overcome the social barriers and stigmatization of interracial relationships, but their story ultimately ends in tragedy. Iago, the play's main protagonist and Othello's attendant, successfully manipulates the general into believing his wife is having an affair. Desdemona, although sincerely loved by Othello throughout the play, tragically dies as a result of her husband's jealousy. After learning of her innocence, Othello is unable to grapple with his grief and commits suicide to atone for his crimes.

I don't think the tragedy of this story tears apart ideas of love; in fact, I think it only amplifies them. There is a quote by Nicholas Sparks in his novel *Nights in Rodanthe* that says, "The greater the love, the greater the tragedy when it's over. Those two elements always go together." The end of Desdemona and Othello's story has a greater emotional impact because the audience can see that they truly love each other. Their relationship doesn't come across as manufactured, like many of today's modern

love novels. Their love is authentic and believable because it is created organically; Desdemona falls in love with Othello after listening to his stories about his adventures and life at war. They both commit to each other despite the contention surrounding their elope. The audience is convinced of their love because they are willing to go against the social conventions of their time to be with each other.

Their tragic ending does not necessarily "destroy the idea of love." Othello was revolutionary for its time because it explored an unconventional, genuine relationship that challenges the disapproval of love between race and social class. It sets the stage for common humanity by reflecting the racial tension of the time without forcing Othello into a caricature and has a unique ability to resonate with the audience by depicting how fleeting love can be.

There is something poetic about the portrayal of love that persists even in a society that does not believe in the validity of interracial love, so much so that Othello is accused of using witchcraft to make Desdemona fall in love with him. I also think there is something poetic in a love story that ends in tragedy. I am not against happy endings; there are times when a fairytale ending is exactly what we need to escape our cruel reality. However, there is a reason why we still read Shakespeare. Having a representation of love that is so incredibly realistic and raw is one of the main reasons why the themes in Othello are so timeless.

Sometimes, love is tragic. I think older forms of literature demonstrate this beautifully. Modern love novels are so

concerned with providing their audience with the picture of the perfect "boyfriend" that they lose their authenticity. I was never interested in the "troubled bad boy meets the innocent smart girl" or "golden-retriever boy meets black-cat girl" tropes. I first noticed the resurgence in popularity of these tropes towards the end of quarantine, which marks the increased traction of "BookTok". This subculture of TikTok has arguably transformed the world of literature by placing a new emphasis on tropes and sexual themes in literature. One of the biggest problems with modern love novels is that they are so hypersexualized that they lose sight of the multifaceted experience that comes with being in a relationship (which sometimes ends in tragedy). Post quarantine, it seems like authors are more concerned with creating surface-level characters that fit into a trope rather than crafting a storyline that portrays a more natural character development. I think immediately of books published soon after 2020 like *IceBreaker*, *Twisted Love*, *Dating Dr. Dil*, and *It Happened One Summer* that gained popularity on BookTok for fulfilling various tropes and having an abundance of "spicy scenes".

I don't think sex should be a taboo subject; it is a part of life that has always been present in literature. However, the obsession with "spicy" scenes in books has placed a huge strain on the quality of modern literature. There is more to love than lust. In Chapter 9 of Hannah Grace's *Icebreaker*, Nate finds Anastasia's G-spot "in 2.5 seconds." In Chapter 9 of E.M. Forster's *Maurice*, Maurice is confronted with an unconventional identity as a gay man when

Clive whispers "I love you" for the first time. Modern novels fail to follow the trend of revolutionary themes that have made classics so compelling. It's almost as if they are manufactured to check a series of boxes: typical trope dynamic, spicy scenes, bright colorful covers with faceless illustrations of people, and more spicy scenes.

The development of how relationships have been portrayed in literature since the 19th century is fascinating. Love is a special feeling because it transcends time. I think good examples of romance in literature portray relationships that can resonate with any audience. People loved each other during the 18th century, and they still love each other in the 21st century and will continue to love until the end of human civilization. The problem with the modern love novel is that the idea of romance in media has been ruined by capitalistic motivations to sell a specific fantasy to a tailored audience. Life no longer imitates art far more than art imitates life in this respect.

I think everyone should be able to read the books they like without judgment; if you enjoy YA romance novels, indulge to your heart's content. As a hopeless romantic, I can't help but miss some of the romantic elements present in classic literature.

With Love,
M.T
Nassau Weekly Staff Writer

The end of the *Nassau Weekly* has a greater emotional impact because *Maya Taylor* can see that they truly love to write.

The Bride Wore Black (and Orange)

A *Nass* writer and maid-of-honor offers an inquiry into the phenomenon of Princeton couples at the scene of some nuptials

By ELLIE DIAMOND

After the fourth and final Princeton alumnus (or student) had spoken for the evening, my brother ('16), acting in his duty as the emcee of the wedding, enlisted the rest of the motley Princeton crew for a photo. The nuptials in question were between my sister ('18) and her now-husband ('19). Seats emptied as over a quarter of the wedding got up for the photo. A similar drainage (though a much smaller contingent according to my mother) took place over 30 years ago during my parents' wedding, both '86. The sheer number of guests in attendance who were alumni of the school is not what shocked me. The unbridled joy that wafted from the group got me thinking: I, too, might one day marry someone from the University.

Princeton has a unique knack for drawing people together no matter their spatio-temporal distance from graduation day. What I'll avoid alluding to is the myth, or reality, that over 50% of Princeton graduates marry other graduates. Whether or not you believe the statistic, I write to you as the offspring of one of those marriages, and the literal witness to another. Having not been present for the union between my parents, I'd never really confronted my feelings on Princeton couples until the preparations began for my sister's wedding, long before the eve of September 21st, when I went to Punta Cana for a "bachelorette weekend." The guest list included the bride and her 10 bridesmaids, eight of whom, myself included, had attended Princeton. Their conversations, cycling between memories of

Ivy formals, old college boyfriends, who did what at last reunions and what will be worn at the upcoming ones, made me feel like shit. Is this really how we operate? The non-Princetonian bridesmaids, having nothing to add, spent the majority of the first day and a half awkwardly laughing at the anecdotes they all shared. Princeton felt parasitic, infecting every aspect of your social network, alienating the 20 percent of people in your life who didn't go there.

But it was in my prerogative to have hope that there was more to life after Princeton. I watched my brother and sister go through studenthood, anxiously awaiting that same future for myself. When the time for applying to college came, my family didn't push their alma mater on me. Despite their lack of effort and claims to have abated any Princeton talk for the time being, Princeton became an inevitability for me as well. The night I was admitted, fanfare poured in from across the vast alumni network I had at my disposal. The reward for enduring an abstract association to the school for 18 years had presented itself: at least until I got to campus, I could feel like I belonged to the school, and it belonged to me. It also was around this time that things got serious between my sister and the man she would soon marry.

Getting into and going to Princeton are two very different things. As a legacy, there is a heightened tension that lies between having to match one's inevitable rocky first months here against the years of stories that naturally omit that rockiness. Having overcome that tension, I attended the wedding with an individual understanding of my relationship to Princeton, entirely separate from my family. How the Princeton marriage factors into that relationship still remained to be seen. Standing dead-center amidst

members of Great Classes of the 1980s, '90s, 20-teens, and '20s I confronted the question head-on. Of the ~70 people in the picture, 12 Princeton couples can be counted, some of whom were in attendance at my parents' wedding 33 years ago. Surrounded by Princeton's past, I thought back to the feeling from the night of my acceptance, now returning the favor to the newlyweds. The power of this school was undeniable, more so than I've felt at Reunions or other alumni-focused events. Princeton is so much more than an ill-recalled memory of four insignificant and, at times, painfully horrible years. I'm the biological and legal witness to the fact that, after graduation, it stakes a claim on your life, on your present and your future. It forms the basis for my current friend- and relationships, and will almost certainly play a role in any future ones. It's a place, I think, worth sending my children and grandchildren to, like my family did before me.

So I rescind my initial derision of my sister and her friends for looking into their past (though I still maintain my abhorrence at some of the things that passed for "jokes" that weekend). Princeton didn't end when they graduated six and a half years ago. It underscores their daily lives. It binds them together not just with each other, but with their partners, families, and the generations of people before and ahead of them who are part of Princeton's history. "Legacy" can feel like a dirty word on this campus. Some may be ashamed to admit it, but simply by attending, they're beginning a legacy themselves. But it doesn't feel so evil backlit by the joy of a wedding.

I Got with an Alum, and I Liked It: A True Story



“We both have husbands,’ replied the other man, and they leaned in for a passionate kiss.”

By ASHER COHEN

“Are you a Princeton student?” asked the headless, chiseled, hairy torso of a middle-aged Caucasian male on the application’s crowded, black screen, filled with unopened messages from blank profiles and photos of men older than my parents.

Startled at the abruptness of his question and unclear whether that was a misguided pickup line, I replied, “Why do you ask?”

“I am staying at the Nassau Inn for the next two nights until Saturday and am looking for some fun,” said the older man.

“Lol, what brings you here?” I asked.

“An alumni convention. It starts tomorrow. Hope to see you ;-).”

Creeped out, I blocked him and moved on with my day.

...

Walking past Richardson Thursday morning, it clicked.

“That was what the white tent was for,” I thought. “The convention.”

I Googled Princeton alumni events on campus and found what brought him into town.

“Thursday night (tonight), 8:30-10:30 PM, Edwards Courtyard: Drinks & Reception” read the browser.

...

Later that night, unable to resist the temptation of an open bar and meeting alumni, I found myself at the reception.

“A glass of sauvignon—make that prosecco, please,” I told the droopy-faced bartender with the crooked glasses.

He gave a quick nod and poured the golden-colored wine into a shiny flute. I was elated, and amused by the

bartender’s assumption that I was a legal drinking-age alum rather than a twinkish college freshman. I managed to maintain my composure, though, savoring the unexpected confidence the moment brought, not having to pull my wallet out of my khaki corduroys and show him the Connecticut ID I keep in a secret pocket.

Leaning on the makeshift bar table, I began to sip on my drink, scanning the tent and keeping an eye out for anyone particularly bodacious. Much to my chagrin, the majority of the people I could find were either too old, oversized, or occupied in heavy discussion. At least there weren’t any other students as far as I could tell, so if someone were to turn up, I would have a decent shot.

“The thing that always gets me each time I come back to visit,” resounded a deep, alluring voice near where I stood, “is how this place never changes. Of course, the buildings and construction are new, but the atmosphere, the bubble of this place, never goes away.”

Several voices chimed in affirmation, and I slowly turned around to face a group of four men, ranging from late 20s to mid-40s.

Nodding my head, I turned to the speaker of the group—a nice-looking, six-foot-tall, athletically toned but not too muscular, clean-shaven, hopefully hung verse-top who appeared to be in his early 30s. Admiring his sculpted jawline and piercing blue eyes, I put my hand out to be shaken and politely stated, “Asher Cohen, freshman, Class of 2028, a pleasure to meet you.”

“Grayson Fletcher, senior plus 16, Class of ’09, the pleasure is all mine,” replied the man, as his firm hand enveloped mine.

I felt a pit forming in my stomach and my breathing hasten. I could still feel his hand, reflected in the jitters I felt within my core. And his voice—so masculine, so...seductive. I had never been

so enticed by anyone before. I mean, I had my stints with other guys my age and the no-strings-attached hookups, but the thought of getting with someone nearly twenty years my senior was beyond comparison. I liked it. Scratch that. I loved it. The thought of it at least: an experienced, professional, clean-cut man who went to the same school I attended and was visiting here to reflect on his time at college.

Resisting the urge to be silent and admire Grayson, I decided to ask the group of guys about their experiences at college and their careers. The oldest of them, Raphael, Class of '04, was a big investment banker and tech founder in California and had a husband who was coming up to visit on Saturday. Raphael always knew he was gay, but in college, he was fully closeted and never told a soul—except for some of the other closeted men he hooked up with. The other two guys, both gay, spoke about their careers, and I listened half-heartedly, tuning out their words and thinking of Grayson. Once they finally finished discussing what felt like their entire life stories, I asked Grayson about his time at Princeton and whether he knew he was gay during his years here.

“I guess I was so far in the closet that I had no idea that I could possibly be anything other than straight,” answered Grayson.

“I was an officer in Charter, and I would black out with my lax buddies every weekend.” He paused for a moment and then added, “But now, yeah, I’m pretty open; most people know I’m gay.”

With a wry smile forming on his lips, he remarked, “It’s no longer a thing I conceal.”

I nodded my head and thanked him. Vulnerability is hot. Meanwhile, the prosecco was getting dryer by the second, and I lifted the glass to my quenched lips. But before I could even swallow, Grayson’s friends asked if I were open

about my sexuality.

“I never have to tell anyone. People just get it. It’s...lovely,” I stated.

“Well,” started Grayson. “A bunch of us are going to the Yankee Doodle Tap Room tonight at the Nassau Inn, if you’re interested. You’re more than welcome to come.”

Shrugging my shoulders, I replied, “Why not?” and we exchanged numbers.

...

“Come on!! We have to go,” I proclaimed to my friends Aurora and Emerald in the cramped hallway of our antiquated dorm.

“When will we ever get this chance again?” I asked.

“When will you ever get this chance again, you mean,” retorted Aurora.

The air in the room vanished for a moment until Emerald broke the silence: “Okay, fine. We’ll aid and abet in slutting you out.”

...

“Three pornstar martinis, please,” I whispered into the ear of an old, shiny-headed bald man I had no interest in.

A few minutes later, when I had reunited with Aurora and Emerald, the bartender handed us our golden-yellow-colored drinks, and I decided to set my sights on Grayson. Across the floor, Grayson was standing with another 30-something man—leaving no room for Jesus, or whatever entity.

Approaching Grayson and the other man, I casually greeted the two of them with a drink in hand.

“Nice maneuver,” Grayson remarked, gesturing to my martini, half-finished by now.

Beaming with pride from Grayson’s validation, my legs stiffened, and I felt a warm rush radiating through my body, filling me with a sense of accomplishment and acceptance. I thanked him and turned my attention to the other man’s hands, one of which was fully

grabbing Grayson’s waist and the other stroking his head and ear.

Envious of the two of them and feeling the effect of my non-watered-down cocktail, I blurted in a sultry, suggestive tone, “So are you guys open or closed?”

“We both have husbands,” replied the other man, and they leaned in for a passionate kiss.

My heart sank.

And then Grayson pulled away from the guy, leaned into me, and pulled me in for a kiss.

It was perfect.

With Grayson’s breath tasting of alcohol and his tongue teasing my mouth, I was transfixed. I was in heaven.

His jaunt hand brushed the curly lock of hair behind my ear, and he caressed my cheek, flush as a summer sunset.

I opened my eyes, and it was over. The moment ended, but it never went away.

...

I woke up the next morning and checked my phone for any texts.

“Asher, it was very nice to meet you last night ;-)” read a text.

Grayson!

A yelp of joy erupted from me, and I rushed to text back: “Likewise. By the way, Charter is hosting tonight if you want to come. You were an officer, right? You should be good. Come and bring your friends. It’ll be a lot of fun.”

...

At 11:30 PM, outside the club, I was admitted, while Grayson was told by the bouncer that he needed to prove he was an officer by showing his name and photo on a class placard. An easy feat, Grayson pointed his name and year on the Charter wall and was allowed to stay.

Thrilled at his success and aroused at his determination, I drank and danced with him in the packed basement—and didn’t leave any space for anyone.

His eyes glued on mine, his arms

wrapped around mine, his mouth pressing against mine. It was even better than the previous night.

I didn’t care about the other people watching us or people giving questioning looks wondering why he was here or why I was with someone older. He was perfect. We were perfect. We were perfect together.

The time flew by, and before we knew it, we were on the street, sharing one final kiss. He made me promise to text him when I got back home safely, and he told me he would reach out in the morning for breakfast plans before heading back home.

...

The next day, I woke up and quickly checked my phone, only to find zero missed calls or messages.

“This has to be a mistake,” I thought, as I frantically sent Grayson a message: “Hey, hope you’re well. Still on for breakfast?”

No response.

An hour passed. Still nothing.

“He’s probably asleep—or his phone is dead,” I justified to myself and sent him another message: “Wanted to see you before you left. Hope you’re not too busy.”

Another hour passed. Then another. And another. Still no response.

It became clear, that even though he didn’t have the courage to say it, he had already headed back, to a life with his husband, while I was left behind, still waiting to find someone like him.

Room for Romance?

Residential Colleges and Their Dating Prospects

By WENDY WANG & CLARA DOCHERTY

Rocky and Mathey

They're objectively beautiful. Cultured. Nuanced. The only problem is our age gap.

I really like their history lectures, but I worry our relationship can only exist in les amphithéâtres. They drink their coffee black, they enjoy cold cigarettes, and they are too knowledgeable about Hegel to limit our small talk to one minute.

Wait, there's two! They're like Fred and George Weasley, except they're actually from The Secret History. They've got everything figured out, from tasteful dinner playlists to tweed jackets. When we're together, I wonder if they are thinking deeper thoughts just because they have undergone darker desolations of life. I don't know, this age gap makes me insecure. I didn't get chosen to take the freshman seminar "FRS 101: Navigating Relationships with Seniors" because my problem was even more somber—no professor could teach a class on navigating relationships with professors.

At the end of the day, we can't date. I'm too Julia and they're too Shakespearean. Alas, perhaps I should look for someone who isn't teaching the HUM sequence.

Butler

A walking brick red flag. I'm intrigued but mama said no.

New College West

Addy hall? More like daddy hall.

They actually kissed me at a party a while ago, though they avoided eye contact when we walked past each other by the grill that promised untold thrills. Daytime coffee fiend, nighttime party friend. The fact that they

inherited an entire coffee shop at such a young age is just wild—they're not just serving coffee, they're serving Dionysian hedonism. Artistic melancholy dies in front of them; who cares about tortured souls? Unable to imagine rooms with no AC, this spoiled trust fund babe has never known the delicious anguish of old carpets. ARGH! I'm obsessed.

But to date or not to date, that is the question. Despite their urban glam and their undeniable rizz, there are no wedding bells. I could only walk up to them and ask for a small salty situationship, then pay the emotional price. (If you're not their customer, you wouldn't get it.)

Forbes

So demure. So cottage core. So endearingly feminine and nature-loving. I just want to hold them in my hands until they agree to take me out for brunch every weekend. But they might spoil me with food, and it's not quite compatible with my gym goals. Whenever I mention gym, they just laugh at me and hand me a chocolate-covered strawberry fresh from the fountain. The chocolate one, not the SPIA one.

They don't get out much—so distant, both physically and emotionally. If I were to date them, the talking stage would last all four years of my Princeton career. It's not even a slow burn, it's a continental drift K-drama series. But I can't quite blame their reserved, introspective side, because they did have a lowkey slutty hotel phase. That's long ago though.

I feel guilty, but I don't think we can date. Their equation has both high avoidance and high anxiety... and I don't have the emotional capacity to handle this killer combo.

Whitman

Always in dark academia fits even though they're literally the younger one. Perhaps it's for the plot. Of course they didn't get it when I said "for the plot," because they're such a classicist—as we casually frolic, they keep talking about Cicero, albeit repeating that they don't want to be the Cicero dude. It's okay, I still appreciate their comfort-meets-cozy aesthetic, Pinterest-level #oldmoney, niche playlist with music hinting at bisexuality.

If I remember correctly, they ghosted me for a week for some reason. When I asked, they just said they went on a mission. W hitman, I guess. My friends keep saying they're gaslighting me, but I think they're just Hamletcore (aka suffering clinical depression). How could anyone be mad at someone who isn't even old enough to attend a PUID Eating Club event? Watching Dead Poets Society as a PG-13 evening pastime, they silently sniffled when Neil decided to leave this stupid world behind. I couldn't help but wonder how tortured their young soul really is. Poor kid.

I could fix them. Would totally date.

Yeh

They broke the rules—double majoring in Poe and Pardee fields of study.

Actually, during their freshman fall they were so set on majoring in ORFE, they accepted the outrageously high-paying scam internships questionable employers injected into their Princeton Gmail account. Turns out, the employers wanted not only their Net ID, but also their post-gym arm pics; so, now, traumatized, they spend all their free time investing in the stock market. It's not for the money, it's for the Rolex. Nobody will notice that they've been wearing the same pair of shoes since Day 1 as long as the wrist is iced.

Of course they highkey got drip. Brutalist fits hit hard, paying homage to Olivia Rodrigo's "God, it's brutal out here!" But actually, they would never listen to her, because they exclusively listen to Ty Dolla \$ign and 50 Cent. Last time, DM-ing me on LinkedIn, they offered to cook a multi-course cross-cultural meal on our first date (if we were to go on one). But when they showed me around their kitchen, their black plates made me wonder if I wasn't ORFE-coded enough to appreciate this ambiguously arbitrary design. They just think they're cool; it's part of the new money mindset. I have a small crush on them, but would I actually want to date them?

If they asked me out and I said yeah, would that be oddly intimate because I'd be essentially calling their name? Even if nothing works out, Hobson is just a hop away.

The Nassau Weekly has both Wendy Wang and Clara Docherty... and we don't have the emotional capacity to handle this killer combo.



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NASSIFIEDS

Femboy Born Without A Joystick - nonbinary icon seeks temporary life partner. Monogamy averse... looking for Jesus-look (not religious) himbo (gender unimportant) with a big member :) rocks are not the only things I like to climb xx My major is chemistry if you know what I mean (Drugs. Obviously).

Looking for an extinction event to end my single era! - I'm an EEB girlie from Colorado, I have two adorable puppies, and I play on the club volleyball team. I love hiking, skiing, reading sci-fi (Ursula K. Le Guin!), and knitting cozy sweaters (check out @peytons_art_account to see what I've been crafting lately!). Contact me if you like gymming, scientific curiosity, and deep conversations.
P.S. Are you a saber-toothed tiger? Because I want to make you smile-odon :)

Mathlete looking for his duo! - 18M math major from da bay. I am a USAPO and USACO medalist. I am currently taking writing sem, history, COS226, and MAT215. Feminist, 73, Olympian, dashing handsome, Corolla/Lamborghini owner, part-time nonchalant, basketball player, ifykyk, and emotionally vulnerable. I have over 200 hours on CounterStrike2 and over 10,000 hours watching anime on Crunchyroll. I would wash my face (first time) for a date with an ABG, but any 57" mixed Arabic Democratic man from Charlotte, NC will do also. Maybe she could teach me skincare. I would even shower! No bangs allowed! Good with my fingers on piano (decade of experience :)). I love slurping balls - boba and backshots! Office hours from 11PM to 3AM, bring handcuffs.

COULD YOU BE MY NATIONAL ANTHEM? - Gay, 6ft, dirty ;) blonde looking for a man. Enjoys performatively reading, dropping French into conversation, and wearing blazers out to dinner. If you like grilling with friends in the summer, have a rich inner life and that je-ne-sais-quoi that gets moms going, ask the editor for my number. Preferably, no mutual female friends.

Outgoing, silly, and wonderfully good looking girl looking for ROMANCE and a HUSBAND! - LIKES: the Irish, Addison Rae, flowers in strange vases, treats, Fiona Apple, sparkles, 1D, Toni Morrison, sewing, cooking, jammy eggs, Noodle Village NYC, Frank Ocean, Lana, the slightly alternative, being incredible at micro-economics, ski-racing, politics and popular culture. DISLIKES: the British, pumping gas. Seeking a tall, charming, well-dressed, perhaps athletic, and dashing handsome man. Has kind eyes and will treat me like the Irish Royalty that I am. Is gentle of heart and somewhat slow of mind. Possess a beautiful spirit and affinities for Barefoot wine, Tik Tok, and free Youtube movies. Illustrious and long lasting love finds its home with me, as I hope you will too.

Jewish Girl Attracts Gay Men But Is Definitely Straight - 20F New York, looking for New York man to fund my shopping addiction while still being artsy and funny and having the allure of making no money. Ironic vaper + gummycandy fanatic + knows the meaning of praxis + dabs, unironically. Make me laugh and I'll love you forever, probably. Photo?

Constitutional Scholar - Looking for someone who enjoys free speech and a good time ;). You don't need to exercise institutional restraint with me... can be found at 1 Nassau Hall or eisgruber@princeton.edu

Blonde Bombshell Seeks Questionably Gay Male - Sexy, stunning, sophisticated, frosh interested in art, architecture, literature, culture, and anything romantic. People think me a Southern girl, but I'm actually from the Northeast. You share similar interests and are very attractive and stylish—to the point where it becomes unclear whether you're gay or just a straight man with elegance. Pluses: you can lull me with 19th-century prose; play an instrument; speak another language fluently; write in cursive; and cook. Please have a six-pack and/or fit, athletic body. Looking for whatever, maybe long-term?

Protein-focused. Central Asian. Woman in STEM. - Presents as 20% gay but is actually 100% straight (and it's only because she has an immaculate wardrobe and loves too hard). Searching for a traditional man (preferably campus-based) who cooks, cleans, and looks lean in a suit, with just the right sense of humour. He doesn't have to talk if he doesn't want to. She lifts, she codes, is bound to be a billionaire herself (bonus! big win!) so not in it for the money, only for the memories. Future plans include a California based start-up and mansion with four dogs.

Looking for a REAL woman - the Dinkle to my Shminkle. I'm round, snail-like, charming, and wealthy beyond imagination. You are elegant, sexy, and yet in all likelihood shockingly desperate since you are reading personal ads in the Nass. Send a note and a photo, if selected you will be contacted by my life-partner, Horacio.

Thirsty for a Third - Berlinesque couple seeks Bauhaus baddie for bawdy bisexual bacchanal. She's a sultry soprano with a soft spot for sensitive guys who aren't afraid to get a little gay in the bedroom. He's a ginger who's not really sure if he's into all that but trying to be supportive. You're brainy as Barbara Nagel, hung as Hal Foster, and you fuck like Florian Fuchs. Send us your most recent work of art theory and a black-and-white film photo of your genitals.

Of the baggy jeans, cigarette-smoking persuasion - Blonde, sexy, funny and unafraid, this woman seeks a 6-foot-plus man (preferably alternative with a mustache) or a bewitching and artistic girl. Let's talk about art, music, and esoteric films, but in a really chill and normal way. Otherwise enjoys small treats, Ugg boots, and Nicki Minaj. Hates balconette bras, picky eaters, and murderers. Above all, aspires for a devastatingly ruinous fling that could bloom into a beautiful marriage. Send a witty e-mail and a photo with a cool outfit.

Heartthrob of the geoscience department - 19M. Outdoorsy. From The City. Only child. Loves his mom. Hilarious drunk or sober. Can't drive. Insatiable and selfless lover (probably). May need light coercion. Coercible. Short-ish. Leave seductive e-mail(s).

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