

True Confessions of an Online ~~Dating~~ Addict

texting
facebook
~~tweeting~~
foursquare

A Graphic Novel About Finding Love in the
Crazy Modern Online World

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Overview

Hi! My name is Amy and I'm an Internet Dating Addict. And a Crackberry, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Blogging addict too.

I wasn't always this way. In fact, I was once a Luddite. At age 32 I thought I was set: for marriage, kids, the suburbs, a Stepford life where I wouldn't need to learn the new technology skills that my newspaper editors were always pressing me to acquire. I knew that as soon as I'd get that ring on my finger I wouldn't need to blog, and once I'd have kids I'd be too busy to text. But on the night the love of my life is supposed to propose to me, he dumps me, saying he “needs more time.” *Time* this, you rat-face fink!

And so, after the requisite breakup depression (Chunky Monkey, anyone?), I get back out there – but where the hell is “there?” I try coffee shops, book clubs, random fix-ups (*thanks*, Desperate Dad, but please don't proposition men for me at funerals) singles parties and bars (Is that an Iphone in your pocket or are you a little *too* happy to sit next to me?) and even a speed-dating party, where I learn that seven minutes with someone is six minutes too long. Finally, I am forced to admit that my friends – Bitter Beth, Smug Susan and Homosexual Harry – are right: I have to go back online and find Mr. Right.

As I get involved in the modern world – *too* involved, according to my friends – I meet Mr. Just-for-Tonight, Mr. No-Way-in Hell, Mr. Who-Should-I-Choose? And Mr. Almost-Right.

Will I be able to make one relationship work? Or am I really an **Internet Dating/Facebook/Twitter/Addict?**

I have cataloged this journey in “True Confessions of An Internet Dating Addict,” the first humorous look at modern dating in a graphic memoir format.

Based on my successful weekly illustrated dating column (www.datingaddictblogspot.com), this graphic memoir tells the story of one woman's search for love in the modern world, where everyone is dating five people at once – now that texting, IMing, Facebooking, tweeting and hooking up all qualify as “dating.”

Internet dating is not new. In fact, more than 20 million people visit at least one internet dating site a month. Everyone's doing it – from the twenty-somethings who take the internet for granted to the Baby Boomers who are newly divorced or widowed and trying for a second shot at love – but no one quite knows how to navigate this impersonal, fast-paced world. That's why a graphic memoir—animated, colorful and reality-breaking—perfectly captures the surreal quality of a multimedia world, where I'm meeting with one person, texting a second one, cyber-stalking a third and blog-warring with a fourth.

“True Confessions of an Internet Dating Addict” is a funny, poignant book about how we juggle our complex relationships – with friends, family, work, boyfriends, and this crazy social networking world – while still holding on to each other.

Part One – “GOODBYE, MY LOVE”

Why I am forced to join the (gulp, horrible) 21st century, with blogging, social networking, texting and online dating.

Chapter 1: GETTING DUMPED

Mark is the love of my life. On the night I expect him to propose, he ends the relationship. :(. I thought he was “The One!” I thought I done! I thought I was going to quit my job, have some babies and move to the suburbs (or at least the exurbs). I thought I'd get to skip the internet revolution. Stinging from his rejection and failed life, I retreat to my bed with my best friends Ms. Netflix and Mr. Ben & Jerry. I'm only 32 and I'm wondering, *Will I ever love again?* Who knows if I will ever leave my *apartment* again!

Splash Page: *Face-ups: The shame of a Facebook Breakup in front of 123 online witnesses.*

Chapter 2: WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...

Okay, I'm not *completely* alone — I have friends and family who try to console me. Bitter Beth is a comfort because, well, she's bitter. At “37” (so she claims; her crows feet tell another story), she hates men and online dating, which she thinks is “*sooo* 2001.” Desperate Dad just want me to get married already (to *anyone!*), and Smug Susan is confident I'll meet my match if I just market myself right (“It's all about *branding*, Amy.”) and join the new millennium. I'm reluctant to go back online because of my cyberstalker.

Diary Text: Once Upon a cyberstalker

Splash Page: *Harry the Homosexual Superhero – Have a boyfriend and play the field, too!*

Chapter 3: YOU GO, GIRL!

My friends pull me out of my cave of gloom (goodbye “Real Housewives,” hello, Blackberry!), and back out there. But where exactly is “there”? I go to coffee shops, bookstores, even an internet “meetup” party, where all the guys are 22-year-old hipsters incubating a mustache (“*Hello* cougar...”) I head to a bar, but everyone is looking for lust, not love. I try my luck at speed dating and find out seven minutes with these strangers (emphasis on “strange”) is just six minutes too long. I troll my little black book (now transferred to my smartphone) to reignite old flames, but I end up on an ambiguous Wonder Date (“I wonder if we're on a date?”). Beth's party is no better, because I feel even more alone in the midst of a crowd — especially when I stumble into my ex, Mark..

Splash Page: *Museum Hall of Rejects – A gallery of the guys I've encountered in the past online.*

Chapter 4: HELLO, MY NAME IS THE WEB

I am busted at work for not blogging or Vlogging (whatever *that* is), told I'll become a journalism “dinosaur” (at age 32!!). Bitter Beth sympathizes with me about how this fast-paced world, and shows me her profile and why she's given up the whole online thing. Smug Susan – at 27, ten year's Beth's junior – charges in and sets us straight: “If you want to succeed in business and in love, you *must* tweet, gather a following on different sites – I have 8,500 followers – and brand *every single thing* you do according to your image,” she says. Harry believes I just need to sit around and imagine my future boyfriend and gives me a copy of “The Secret.” I decide I'll do it all – even internet dating, which I'd sworn off years ago. Susan shows me the new internet, with niche dating sites for horse-lovers, military aficionados and millionaire seekers. My dad has agreed to pay for a subscription for J-date, so that's where I'll go.

Splash Page: *Amy's New Profile*

Part Two – WWW.DATE-EVERYONE.COM!

This section mimics the intense pace and complete bizarreness of living life online.

Chapter 5: MEET BRIAN

OMG! I have so many cyber-responses including dirty grandpas, cougar-hunters, bad spellers and my cyber-stalker. Then there's *Brian*, who looks dreamy. I spend so much time at work examining his FB profile (I can't believe I found a guy who likes both "The Matrix" and "The Notebook!"), that now I get busted for spending *too* much time online. For weeks Brian and I email and text and trade videos of stupid puppies walking into a mirror, and although we hardly talk, I'm so *in-like* with Brian. That is, until I meet him. How can someone resemble his picture so much and be nothing like the person I imagined? I've wasted a month on one guy. Smug Susan says I have to date a lot of people till I meet "The One." Harry tells me to date lot of people "forever!" Beth believes everyone's a two-timer, so I should be too.

Splash Page: *Wastebook.com – I try to work but spends all her time in the blogosphere.*

Chapter 6: BRING IT ON

Multiple dating, here I come! I write 10 guys at once. I meet people on dating sites, on Facebook, Twitter, everywhere! I go out on four dates a week, sometimes two in one night. I neglect my work (what's that?), spending all my free time plotting dates with different men (thanks, Excel! And Google Calendar), and the outfits that go with this crazy life. I update my friends via Twitter. Whee, this is fun!

Splash Page: *"So, What Did You Do Today?" – A girl's daylong grooming prep time.*

Text page: *Customer satisfaction survey – How did I do on my date?*

Chapter 7: STANDARDS, SCHMANDARDS

...Or maybe it's not so much fun. I date a former AA person (sex, drugs *and* alcohol), a choking fetishist, and a man with an affinity for collecting garbage on the street. Another guy mines me for screenplay ideas and actually takes notes (!). When I wake up one morning at a house where flies are buzzing over the kitchen sink like a CSI episode, I flee – wondering if maybe I should raise my standards.

Splash Page: *Amy, the One-Date Wonder – I flirt! I smile! Amazing dating stunts.*

Chapter 8: ARE YOU MY LOVER?

If dating is like going shopping, I should pick someone heart-stoppingly, death-defyingly perfect. At least that's what Harry says on our killer hike (while worrying his 25-year-old boyfriend with a six-pack is too old and flabby). After throwing all my high expectations ("6 foot, 35-year-old man who lives within 10 miles from me") into a witch-like brew (and meditating upon it), the computer spouts out RYAN. Best. Date. Ever. Better than the chocolate sundae we eat, better than Mark!

Splash Page: *The Morning After – Girl time moves slowly when you're waiting for **The Call**.*

Text Insert: "Is it OK to have sex on a first date?" – Article from "*The Guardian*" newspaper

Chapter 9: HEARTBREAK HOTEL

Waiting for Ryan to call, I endure some more pain at the dentist, aka my Dad: "Did he call you back yet?" Beth can't believe I slept with Ryan, and lectures me on the fact that guys have been hormonally programmed to flee since the beginning of time (Adam to Eve, after sex: "Anything to eat around here besides an apple?"). Beth still views sex as something that women "bestow" on men. Sue, on the other hand, is more worried about my "brand." Maybe, I tell them, Ryan hasn't called yet because:

- a) a weird weather storm on his grid knocked out the power so he can't call.
- b) he was kidnapped by a band of aliens.
- c) the FBI relocated him and now he can't risk his life calling me.

Beth can't believe all the guys who haven't called her back. Harry says everyone doesn't call back. Sue says if you're marketed right they'll call back.

Splash Page: *Amber Alert! – An APB is put out for Ryan, the missing person.*

Chapter 10: HE'S JUST THAT INTO YOU!

WAH! I'm in bed again moping over Ryan's failure to appear in my court, while trying to cyber-stalk him, figure out which websites he's been on. "Well, at least you're not sad about Michael anymore," Harry concedes. My dad, mid-Novocaine shot, points out that all I need is a nice guy. (*How ironic, I think, aren't all my poor choices modeled after him?*) If my instincts are so bad — if the guys I'm attracted to are so wrong for me, so unavailable — maybe I should try picking someone who's the opposite of said instincts? But finding a nice guy is not so easy. Meet Terry, of octopus hands, Tom, of zero chemistry, and Joel, who is so interesting that I injure myself trying to stay awake.

Splash Page: *The Most Boring Man On Earth – Leaps over any conversation with a single word.*

Chapter 11: MAYBE IT'S ME?

"My dating life is not working," I complain to the gang: "Not my branding, my positive visioning, my 4,700 Facebook friends, and certainly not online dating," I say, especially since this most recent guy Peter is always out of town. Does he even exist? Beth suggests we bring down the dating websites with shadow blog (Baddate.com) where women can pass on information about bad dates. She sees herself as the superhero who sets men straight. Susan and Harry want me to keep trying. "Beth, there can't be something wrong with everything else," Sue says, "it Amy's *messaging*." Harry thinks that by focusing on what I don't have, I keep getting it. "Just go and have fun," he says. One date won't kill you.

Text Page: *"One Date Won't Kill You" – Spoof news stories of people who die on dates.*

[Splash Page: *Dissection of a Profile – What men (like Ryan) say and what it really means.]*

Part Three – "THE ONE?"

My hard work pays off and I finally meet someone! Now comes the tough part: The relationship.

Chapter 12: LAST SHOT

Greg seems normal. We walk along the beach and get a drink (I just *cannot* date while sober) and I think I like him. And he seems to like me too. *So this is what a good date feels like*, I think. He kisses me goodnight *on the forehead*. I melt. Literally.

Splash Page: *A Word About Kissing – an illustrated guide to the poky, the slobbery and the limp.*

Chapter 13: CAN THE BUCK STOP HERE?

"Peter's in town," I tell the gang. "What should I do? I really like Greg, and I want to just date him."

"You can't just put your eggs in one basket," Beth says over our group lunch, where everyone's on their phones. "What are my eggs?" I want to say but don't want to hear her answer. Today, the minute you like someone you have to bring another guy into the mix.

Susan says to go out with Peter, to play hard to get with Greg. Harry says I should just play. Beth warns me that Greg has issues, and we get into a major bitch-out. "I just want you to be *careful*," Beth says.

"You just want me to be *alone*," I reply. So I return to my comforting world of technology, checking my home phone (yes, I still have one), my cell phone, my three emails, my internet dating email account and my 1,900 Facebook friends. (I really shouldn't "friend" guys I wanna date.) Greg's still on the site! What should I do?

Splash Page: *Relationship Twister – How the dating books tie you up in knots!*

Chapter 14: DOUBLE DATING

Peter is a great guy – he makes a picnic for me, asks me about myself and calls me all the time. But

Greg is *nibble, kiss, kiss*, um, *compelling* in other ways. While shopping for Sue's (horrific) bridesmaid dress, she tells me I should give Peter a chance. Harry says that you never hear in the movies, "Ooh, I **should** kiss you. Oooh I **so should** make love to you. **Should me** baby, **should me.**"

Splash Page: *Greg vs. Peter, an in-depth analysis.*

Text Page: Article about soulmates

Chapter 15: TRUE LOVE: Wow. Wow. Wow.

In a *Bachelorette* scene, Amy gives Greg a rose and sends Peter packing. It's kind of nerve-wracking to only have one guy in the picture (should I get someone new as backup?), but Greg pops the question: Will you take your profile offline and change your FB status?

Splash Page: *Montage of Love – Everything's better when you have someone in your life.*

Chapter 16: LOVE, SCHMOVE

I'm so happy to be in a relationship for five months!! OK, I'm happy to not be out there *dating*, but I'm not so sure I'm happy with Greg. He gets along *too* well with my dad, but not too well with me: We bicker, we fight, we bring out the worst in each other (I'm no saint, either). One night things get a little...tense. And now I need to decide: should I stay or should I go?

Splash Page: *Montage of Annoyances – The darker side of dating.*

Part Four: "GOODBYE, AMY#2453"

Here, the denouement, the end ...or is it the beginning? I become almost too good at living in the modern world.

Chapter 17: ALL BY MYSELF

I have a dream (nightmare) that I walked out on my wedding with Greg (Dad: "Nooooooooo!"), and I realize I made the right decision by ending the relationship, even though it's hard to be alone. I wake Especially at Sue's engagement party, where everyone's coupled off – even (not-so-bitter) Beth is dating Paul, owner of the very website Beth had tried to sabotage. I run into that mofo Mark – who is marrying his high school sweetheart. (They reconnected at Reunion.com.) My dad's a *real* comfort: "Why are you still single, do you think?"

Splash Page: *Snappy Answers to Stupid Dating Questions – A Mad Magazine Spoof.*

Text Insert: Dear Diary, Greg's a Jerk, but Mark's really got a lot of nerve. Wah!

Chapter 18: SIREN SONG OF THE INTERNET

While getting myself into post-breakup shape, I ponder the error of my ways (*♪I've fallen many times in love/And every time it's been with the wrong man.♪*). While blogging full-time for work (I got promoted) I go out to look at a murder new story and figure out, CSI-style, the guy was offed by one of his internet dates. That sucks back into internet dating (literally). But all the magic of "the first time" is gone. All the same people are there, including Peter, who won't give me a second chance. "That's the problem with internet dating, Amy. Everyone's always looking for someone better. You had someone you liked better and now that you're done with him you want me?"

Splash Page: *Night of the Living Exes – The horror film featuring your former boyfriends..*

Chapter 19: THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE THE LOVE BUSINESS

"Maybe you just don't *want* to meet someone," my so-called friends tell me. Yeah? I'll show them! No unemployed, underemployed, "fun" guys or the "just for now" guys. I get serious, searching for employed, stable, serious-minded men who are ready to get married, who would be good life partners. I become like a robot, going to the same coffee shop in the same outfit, with different guys, scoring them in my head like a reality show.

Splash Page: *Groundhog Date – The nightmare of living the same date again and again and again.*

Chapter 20: THE INTERVENTION

I wake up in a cold sweat from my nightmare of endless dating. (“No more coffee! Noooooooooooooooooo!”) All my friends are there to talk to me. They think I'm *addicted* to my blackberry, to FB, to Twitter, to internet dating! “When was the last time you had a real conversation?” Harry asks. “Do you even know any of your FB friends?” Beth says. “Would you even recognize a good date if it slapped you in the face?” Sue wants to know. Just to show them they're wrong, I promise to give it up – just after this one last date...

Splash Page: *Choose Your Own Ending – Am I alone and single or happily coupled? You decide.*