

"I'm Engaged to My Friend's Online Date"

Finding a great guy online, without going online? Sometimes you get lucky.

by [Rachel Epstein](#) ([users/rachelepstein](#))

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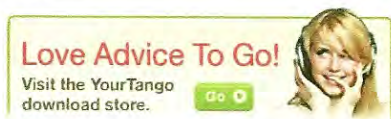
([/20083101/im-engaged-to-my-friends-j-date.html/3202/](#)) When my friend Meredith decided to join JDate, the biggest online Jewish dating network, I encouraged her participation, but I didn't follow suit.

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The idea of uploading flattering photos, filling out mile-long surveys, and presenting the well thought-out, wittier version of myself had no part in my lackadaisical lifestyle. The notion of engaging in cheeky e-banter and phone calls exhausted me; I had no idea how I would have any energy left to set up dates and subsequently go on them. Besides, I had a boyfriend.

Meredith was prepared for the bouts of typed exchanges. Unlucky in love, she referred to recent dates not by their given names but by their offense: there was the guy who sent her a bill through the mail for half the cost of their dinner and movie; the guy who went to the bathroom to "freshen up" and returned with no clothes and jazz hands; the guy who told her he'd take her to Hawaii on a business trip if she dated him.

Meredith hoped the internet held better prospects than the New York City bars. At the very least, she could see potential suitors without the obscuring haze of dim lights and alcohol.



My life seemed so much easier in comparison. I had a perma-date for movies and coffee, dinners and plays. I didn't overanalyze what to wear, when to call, or how much makeup to put on. I forgot what it felt like not to be a "we."

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Then I got dumped. I was stunned into inactivity, unable to decide on a next move. That's when Meredith convinced me to skip the Ben & Jerry's, don my best bikini, and dive into the dating pool.

It had always been important to me to marry Jewish, so I tried to search strategically. Growing up on Long Island, I attended youth group activities organized by my synagogue, hoping to find my soulmate nibbling a piece of matzo in the corner. When that didn't work, I enrolled at Brandeis University after reading about its massive Jewish population. When destiny didn't come to my rescue, I moved to Manhattan and awaited fate on the 6 train.

Instead, once in the city, I found myself thrown into a world of single twentysomethings, all prowling for love. Be proactive, I told myself, the perfect guy isn't going to show up on your doorstep.

So I wore higher heels, darkened my eye liner, and didn't mind much if the laundry shrunk my clothes a bit. I talked to strangers on the bus, at the post office, and in the laundromat. And, while it's often difficult to dissect religious beliefs over happy hour, I seemed to meet a lot of men while holding a cocktail.

Meredith, meanwhile, had gone on a few "JDates" with limited success: the men were always too short, too old, or too boring. She formed a platonic relationship with John, a fellow online dater with whom there was no romantic connection.

When she offered to set me up with him, it seemed perfect: I could reap the benefits of online dating without doing any of the work. Besides, as a casual dater, I thought it was my duty.

That I knew nothing about John didn't deter me.

We met at a lounge the following week.

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I had spent the past few days envisioning him (Meredith's mention of "good-looking" didn't conjure up a particular picture, and I didn't really grill her.) So I was sure a white, Jewish Steve Urkel would walk in at any moment.

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Perched at the bar, clutching my half-finished drink, I had my eyes trained on the back door, in case I had to make a quick exit. That's how I almost missed John's entrance.

In fact, he was standing over me before I got a clear look at his face, and "good-looking" was an understatement: John was tall and gorgeous and smiling at me. By the time we got a table, I was enamored. We laughed into the morning.

He called me two days later, and we made plans for the following weekend. I was worried it had been a one-time attraction, fueled by alcohol and the pressure of living up to Meredith's expectations of us both. But it wasn't. We had folded into each other before the night ended.



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Now together for two years and counting, John and I share an apartment, expenses, and socks (the last by accident). Our single friends and co-workers are charmed by how we met ("The JDate of a JDate? Seriously? I've never even heard of that!").

I had, by accident, cheated the system. And what I learned along the way is that second-hand degree dating can result in first rate-success.