

Zine Verschenken

#13 | july 2023 | dating



Editorial

This issue starts with a confession: I do not date since prehistoric times. There it is. I do not date. Dating was never my thing. When I was younger and as a (slightly over-)sensitive person, I used to fall in love quick and crazily with anyone who seemed interesting (and interested). I went from heartbreak to heartbreak with multi-instrumentalist fuckboys, circus artists and, generally, anyone with a cool-looking haircut and a lousy merch t-shirt til one day I found myself destroyed to the point of crying and blowing my nose with my own panties (and yes, if you really need to know, I had wore them before). This is probably one of the reasons why I'm, already as an adult, some sort of the so-called "monkey girl" swinging the vines without making lots of effort (which means jumping from one night stand to another, sticking to them like a chewing gum only until something else happens). While this might be tightly related to some dangerously untreated dependency issues, this is not the point. The point is here that I do not date and do not miss it either.

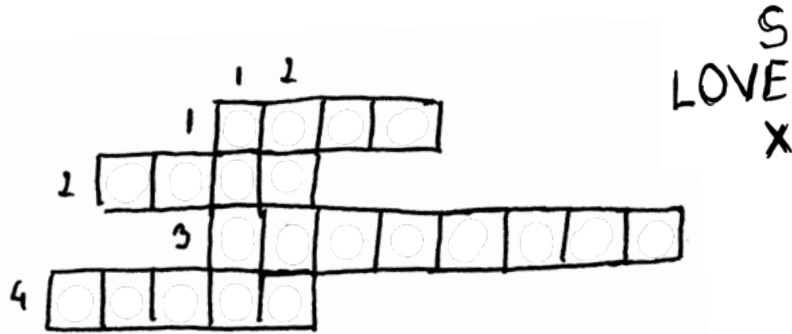
When I was still young and innocent, one of the good wise adults around me gave me exceptionally good advice: "Use the first impression to impress. Use it to be as weird as you can". Given the fact that that same person had taught me to show my naked arse to the moon in sign of respect for good luck just a week before, her statement came off to me as extremely courageous, if not reckless. So far I haven't dared to put it wholly into practice, but still weirdness (recklessness) might be exactly what this whole dating issue is about.

It would be a cliché to start venting about the horrors of dating in Berlin, about swipe left-swipe right, ghosting, emotional (and material) precariousness and the paradox of choice. The world is changing every second and, while it might not be for the better, it would be useless to refuse it, and even less not trying to subvert it. In a society that increasingly praises individuality, it's getting harder and harder to build and keep stable and healthy relationships, not only in the romantic aspect (check Bumble BFF or Tinder profiles searching for just friendships and wondering what did go wrong in the last three years). We try hard and get no results. In fact we might be trying so hard that we forget that love might come in many different ways and not only through the rocky, sometimes terrifying path of dating.

We do not date as our parents and grandparents did and we do not live anymore like them. It seems to me that there's something about dating the way we know it that is getting though technologically up to date, emotionally outdated. We might ask a stranger to come and fuck right away, which is gloriously possible thanks to technology and lightning speedy Uber, but have no idea how (we want) to act next.

In the meantime we forget about the endless possibilities of highly emotional and honest human contact. About the scariness, tragic and snotlike stickiness of sudden goosebumping love but also about the fact that you can kiss a stranger and might never see them again but might also spend the next month with them in Mexico having sex and margaritas half and half. If we only knew that that's what we want.

Dating has always been about disguises, about faking and pretending til ones make them and others don't. And while that might sound like fun for some adventurous Sex and the City like characters, it might not be for everyone. In the meantime we let go. We want to find the Other but wanna be praised. We want to be trophies but get trophies too. We used each other to measure ourselves and get disappointed after giving our best. Well, if you dare to take advice, please do it with a pinch of salt, but stop being your best self. Be weird and scary, be vulnerable. And if dating still doesn't work, you might not even need it.



VERTICAL

- 1. Romantic outing.
- 2. O'Fallon Township High School

HORIZONTAL

- 1. Finished / Tired
- 2. Not this
- 3. Arabian nights minus one
- 4. Multiplied by



The Fisherwomen of Berlin

Most evenings in Berlin, particularly in the summer, you will see the fisherwomen of Berlin. Some might be by the water but these days most are more urbanised. Each has her own method to catch the perfect fish. I once knew one of the more traditional fisherwomen. Her technique was to lay out a blanket and to play some music that she knew fish liked best. When one would come by she would say hello and they would start to chat. Behind her she kept a small cooler filled with beers. Once she sized up the fish and if she decided she liked them, she would offer them a beer and invite them to join her. If it wasn't the right fish for her she would wish them a nice day and set her sights on the next one.

The fisherwomen of Berlin are experts in their field. They know what they are looking for and when to put the fish back. They are so well iconic that they have many apprentices, all watching and learning, asking for advice on how to catch the perfect fish. The modern fisherwomen has seemingly plenty more choices. For they now use advanced technology as their main fishing technique. There are plenty of fishing sites, along with groups of fisherwomen to discuss their approach. Although, naturally these choices come at a price. If the technology is not used correctly, a fisherwomen may think the fish is perfect before they have even attempted to catch it. A wise fisherwomen takes her time and watches the tide, the season and never rushes. For the fisherwomen has sharpened skills. If there are any fisherwomen struggling, perhaps it's time to go back to your roots. Try the traditional method and if in this moment it is not working out, just remember the golden rule: There are plenty more fish in the Spree.

Dating 101

So you've bagged yourself a date! Did you know the word 'date' comes from the Greek word for finger? As you dip your finger, here are some dos and don'ts of a first date.

DO

- Show interest**
Why else would you be going on a date together?
- Listen**
Ask questions and make an effort to engage in conversation.
- Have fun**
Dating shouldn't feel like a job interview. Go to places or do something you both enjoy!
- Make eye contact**
Scientifically proven to increase attraction, there's nothing sexier than a good amount of eye contact.

DON'T

- Over-dress or under-dress** ✕
Wear what's comfortable and reflects your own personal style.
- Check your phone a lot** ✕
Nothing says "I'd rather be elsewhere" than looking at a phone
- Get too personal** ✕
Past relationships, family trauma or airing your insecurities – leave some room for imagination and don't reveal too much too soon.
- Think too far into the future** ✕
Make sure you're having a good time, you're only just getting to know each other.

Rate that date!



COMFORT

- Very comfortable (3 pt)
- It was okay (2 pt)
- Uncomfortable (0 pt)



SEXUAL ATTRACTION

- Mutual || (3pt)
- Some attraction but not sure yet (2 pt)
- Nothing OR only one of us felt attraction (0 pt)



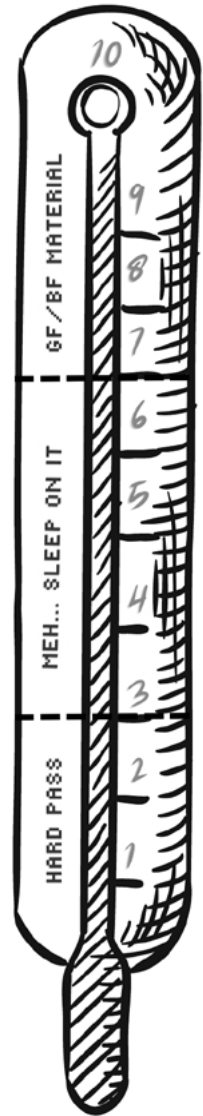
CONVERSATION

- Interesting and funny! (3 pt)
- Interesting OR funny (2 pt)
- Trash, boring and full of red flags || (0 pt)

♡♡ BONUS ROUND ♡♡

- 1 pt: I did or said something I now regret...
- +1 pt: I wouldn't change a thing that happened
- + 2 pt: We had amazing sex

TOP DATE!



RUN!
BLOCK AND DON'T
LOOK BACK



Papa's Date With An Ice Maiden

*Vor der Kaserne
Vor dem großen Tor
Stand eine Laterne
Und steht sie noch davor
Also woll'n wir uns da wieder seh'n
Bei der Laterne wollen wir steh'n
Wie einst Lili Marleen
Wie einst Lili Marleen*

Just like Lili Marlene, my mother waited underneath the lantern by the gate of the British Army Barracks for my father, Corporal 'Algy' Hoare 0486, to come off sentry duty. She'd caught his roving eye in the NAAFI mess a while back, where he'd gone to check out the arrival of an "ice maiden", freshly recruited as a chef in the kitchens. She cut a forbidding figure in her starched hat and apron. You didn't mess with Christa Ranke if you knew what was good for you... But he wasn't put off quite so easily. Underneath the frostiness, he detected a warm heart was beating and, over the next fortnight, chipped away at her icy demeanour with his boyish charm and made her laugh. There was the odd setback: a bad joke, a cheeky comment, but he was eventually forgiven. The ice maiden was thawing..

There followed a whirlwind romance where she would jump into his jeep at Feierabend and tear off into the evening, headscarf fluttering in the wind, to dance parties and music halls, to be safely delivered (almost) to the door by roll call.

For a while she kept it a secret. It was her brother Helmut who let the cat out of the bag. He had wondered why it was that his enthusiastic dance partner was suddenly 'unavailable', and spied her in the arms of a British soldier at a local 'do'. She was forced to spill the beans...

Despite her fears, when she brought him home, he soon won over the Ranke family with his cheerful and prankish ways. It was scarcely 12 years since the end of the war, and there were still mixed feelings on both sides, but it was plain to see that she was not a girl my father was about to leave behind. Besides, the fact he was brave enough to try out his imperfect German on them, that he dared to blow his trumpet in their backyard and knew all the Bavarian beer songs, as well his appetite for anything and everything that was put on the kitchen table, especially Oma's Bratkartoffeln mit Speck, put their minds at rest. Admittedly, there was a last-minute wavering in the ranks when their wedding was announced, but my mother made it clear: the date was set for such and such a time, regardless of who turned

up. Everybody did, of course - you could hear the chink of champagne glasses and the singing down the street - and although her impending departure drew an invisible veil over the proceedings, it was for another day.



Tarot of Tinder

The owl is best known for their late night appearances. You might see them on their profile dj-ing or dressed up in a costume with plenty of glitter. They like the hunt and tend to move on quickly, unless you are an expert chameleon and are able to play hide and seek to captivate their attention.

The Owl

The wolf is an adventurer. Their profile consists of trips to remote regions, biking trips or marathons. They crave solitude and independence. They treasure an experience even more than conversation. Take care to listen to them, sometimes they need to communicate without words.

The Wolf

The parrot is proud and majestic. You may see them on their profile at the gym, dressed chic in an elevator or in their car. They hold themselves to very high standards and will have the same expectations for you. Looking the part of a parrot may be fun for a night but if it isn't your regular routine, they may fly away.

The Parrot

The meerkat is the most social creature. You will recognise their profile by the pictures surrounded by friends. This is them showing you that they value their friends and dedicate plenty of time to them. Although friendly, make sure you are upfront with a meerkat about what you want as you could slip into the friend zone.

The Meerkat

Tarot of Tinder



The Owl



The Wolf



The Parrot



The Meerkat

Mama's Wedding Dress

One rainy day, with nothing to do, I discovered the secretest secret of all. In the far corner of the curtained alcove in Mama and Papa's bedroom, against a bulge on the peeling plaster wall, hung a ghost of a dress - as light and white as a meringue. A fountain of white lace spouted foam from the waist, spilling out onto the floor. White, a be-careful-don't-touch-me colour; white, the cobwebby chiffon that crumples at the touch of a finger; white, like roses that shower petals at a breath; white, a willowy wisp of happiness. I'd seen Mama wearing it on a photograph of her wedding day: a froth of lace at her neck where the silver rose of Hildesheim nestled in the hollow of her throat. As I pushed aside the chintzy curtain, a stray sunbeam rested on its satiny folds and my fingers went out to stroke the slippery cloth, decorated here and there with sprigs of lily-of-the-valley and tiny seed pearls gleaming like the fresh tears on her cheeks. There, in the photoframe of Mama's best and most beautiful time, her face looked all moony in the cast-up glimmer of the dress, her smile misting over as she gazed at the bunch of roses she carried in her arms, cradled like a baby.

"When will it fit me?" I'd asked her just the other day.

"Not for a long time yet," she'd replied.

Now I stood there, wishing I could try it on. "Shall I? Shan't I?" I wondered. Then, as if in answer to my question, the shoulders slipped off the hanger and the dress rustled to the floor with a powdery puff of chalk dust. Giving in to temptation, I clasped my hands around its waist and breathed in, crushing it against me. Somehow it felt like it was hugging me back in a stiff doll-like embrace. Quickly, before I could change my mind, I slid my pudgy arms into the long, lacy sleeves and flapped them about like swans' wings. Then, parcelling up the skirts into a billowy cloud, I peered down at my toes far below and kicked the floaty hems out before me, in front of the wardrobe mirror.

Just then I spied Mama's pretty wreath lying in a hat box on the floor: a white bird's nest, a coronet for a swan, all padded with paper. Picking it up, I squashed it down onto my forehead, but it slipped over one ear. Never mind, I thought, as I whirled around and around, brushing the dress over the floor like a feathery broom.

"Look at me! Look at me!" I said to the mirror, my breath misty on its surface. "You are the prettiest of them all!" it replied - perhaps a bit too loudly. Shhh! Wait a minute, is anyone coming? No. Just a little longer then...

With every whirl I fancied I was a goose girl in a fluttering smock, or a milkmaid in a starched pinafore, or a princess in her party dress. In the magic of the

moment, tiny bells rang inside my head and a shower of confetti blew in through the diamond window. Faster and faster spun the bedroom, a snow globe of my own imagining. I giggled, my voice suddenly as tiny as an angel's in my ear. This was the most beautiful dress in Mama's wardrobe. A dress to wear up to heaven. A dress to dance in the clouds.



1 2
 1 D O N E
 2 T H A T
 3 T H O U S A N D
 4 T I M E S

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Artists Bianca Cheung
Elena Marcos
Erin Johnson
Karen Foster
Nadia Cheung
NINANIÑA

Do you want to contribute to the zine?
Have any questions?
Send us an email:
zine.verschenken@gmail.com or
scan the QR code to access our website:



zineverschenken.de

TOP DATE!



RUN!
BLOCK AND DON'T
LOOK BACK