

## Chapter 39

### First Date Do's & Don'ts Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup>

*“One must make peace with the past to manifest a peaceful present.”*  
– Lauren Gale

#### **Daily Highlights**

***Contacts from McBlue Eyes:*** *I (he instant-messaged me while I was responding to McNice's email; his “RADAR” is still working very strongly.)* ***First date:*** *I Friday night date with McNew York (great date actually, but ended on a sour note).* ***First dates I am excited about for tomorrow:*** *I (FINALLY a much anticipated date with McNice).*

**7:00 a.m.** It was yet another Southern CAL perfect morning. With my eyes still half-closed, I somehow made my way to the bathroom. I stood in front of the mirror, opened my eyes, and almost screamed in horror when I couldn't really recognize the person staring back at me. You would think that since I have seen this person every morning for the past thirty-something years I would be used to it, but not so much. I looked like a cross between a deranged Chia pet and a white-as-a-ghost convict who had spent each and every night in confinement for the past twenty years.

To add insult to injury, despite my recent dieting efforts, it seemed as though I had gained just about 10 pounds of water-weight pretty much overnight and it all went to my face. I thanked God for the wonders of makeup and for being a girl ('cause I got to stay positive), and did some damage control by applying some colors. That way, I could at least bear to look in the mirror at my own self. (Note to self: *Definitely should be doing some work on my self-esteem, maybe after finding a boyfriend.*)

On a good note though, I am feeling so much better today. Got my second wind going and blowing, and am realizing that McBlue Eyes is not for me... *again* (probably will un-realize it later, but works for now).

Until he has a job anyway, I'm moving on and letting him go.

**9:00 a.m.** I was determined to concentrate on work and selling office supplies to my commercial accounts, but then my mind wandered to my long past due, much anticipated first date with McNice tomorrow. *I am very excited!* We're gonna go on a road trip (LOVE road trips). While staring at my work emails which seemed to be multiplying right in front of me, I decided to check the weather just in case for tomorrow, and *THEN* get back to work, *for real*. I felt great when the weather report promised a lovely day for Saturday in the eighties (again, LOVE Southern CAL). After that, I opened my daily planner and looked at my "to do list" helplessly. Since there was so much to do and I didn't even know where to start my day, I thought about McNice again and then got a little stressed about him flaking which could be either a warning sign or an indication that I do like him. (Note to self: Are these abandonment issues that get triggered with him the reason I like him???).

McNice and I had agreed that we were going to talk today or tomorrow.

*What if I don't hear from him by tomorrow morning?*

*Can I call?*

*Should I call?*

If I don't hear by tomorrow, I should call him, I thought. I mean, we kind of made plans, tentative plans, but still plans... Saturday, like prime real estate, was a very wanted

day (wanted by everyone, really!). But there I was obsessing again. Hadn't been this excited about a first date in a *REALLY* long time (at least since last week).

**12:45 p.m.** Since I hadn't been able to concentrate on anything productive nor work-related, I decided that maybe a nice lunch with a co-worker would be motivational. I called my friend and co-worker Chatty Kathy who also works from home and has earned her name, well, by talking (A LOT). We decided to meet at the *Century City Mall* for lunch.

**1:30 p.m.** I met Kathy at the very crowded food court. We managed to get some food (Kathy – huge burger with fries; me, huge very leafy Greek Salad) and then grabbed a central table. It was very noisy but like always Chatty Kathy still managed to talk my ear off all about her bird McParrot and what he did last night, or how he ate her wedding ring (one could say at least she *had* a wedding ring). Blah, blah, blah... While being bored almost to death, I questioned my decision to embark on this lunch escapade while trying to look like I was intently listening. I stared for a moment at my miserable Greek Salad sadly and then at Chatty Kathy who was mastering eating and talking at the very same time.

“I just can't gain weight,” my skinny co-worker told me as I tried to force another bite of my boring salad. Meanwhile she could not seem to eat her fries quickly enough. I concluded that life just isn't fair (either that, or I must have been a really bad person in my past life, if not this one). I mean, she is the one with the loving husband and cannot gain a pound, when I seem to have to struggle with weight and men.

However, almost despite myself, I did enjoy our lunch since Kathy did most of the talking and she was being very supportive of my singlehood status. Unlike most of my married friends, Chatty Kathy doesn't bombard me with too many questions in the likes of:

*"When the hell are you finally going to find a man and settle down?"*

Or: *"Why can't you get someone to marry you?"*

Or my ultimate favorite: *"You're not getting any younger. Don't you want to have babies?"*

Also, since I hardly got a word in, I didn't give her too much information about my tumultuous dating life, which was *excellent progress*.

Instead, we bitched and gossiped about other people who used to work for our company and how awful they were (they're no longer with the company, so it was fair...).

**2:30 p.m.** We were headed for the parking structure when Chatty Kathy said she wanted to stop to have a smoke.

"Smoking is very bad for you," I lectured.

"I'll quit as soon as I'm ready," she promised.

Noticing a card store (yes, my addiction is buying and sending cards, guilty as charged!), I gave up on my lecture (for the moment), left her sitting on a bench smoking her cancer stick, and I stepped into the shop.

After a little searching around, I found the perfect card, which said: *"Men are like clothes. You can never have too many."* I bought it for myself, and felt much better about

“having” all these men. Then I re-remembered that I didn’t have all these men; in fact, I didn’t even have one. But, oh well, I liked the card anyway.

**3:30 p.m.** Back home. I was staring at my computer again. I decided that perhaps I should get ready for my evening with McNew York first, *THEN* do some work.

I went over some rules of what I am allowed, and more so, *not allowed* to talk about on a first date:

**DO NOT TALK ABOUT:**

1. Any of my exes (*you would think I’d know this rule by now... however, as you might have noticed, McBlue Eyes has been my favorite conversation topic on all my recent dates*).
2. My bad childhood and how my father left us (*save that information to terrorize him with later if we ever do get into a long-term relationship or even have a second date*).
3. My mother’s death (*not a positive and uplifting subject for any date!*).
4. My cats (*in case my date is allergic... any reminder of why we can’t work out isn’t good first-date material*).
5. My recent transformation into a man-magnet/player (*i.e. no talking about any of my dating habits or giving way too much information about who I’m dating, how many, why... no matter how funny and entertaining I think it all is*).
6. Writing (*as I am writing about dating, and being a man-magnet/player, and not supposed to talk about dating and being a player (see Rule #5), hence, not supposed to talk about my writing*).

7. Work (*frustrating topic for a first date, as I'm not passionate about my job, and at times feel it is a dead-end*).
8. Religion or politics (*i.e. never a good idea for a first date, as I don't know their views or how strongly they feel about them*).
9. Therapy (*'cause it might be too much information for a first date or a new relationship...one may get the wrong idea that I have issues, which I totally might, but I'd rather one fell helplessly in love with me first, before exposing painful truths*).
10. **DO NOT** under **ANY** circumstances tell my date that I have a wedding dress in my closet (*it sounds more than a bit crazy, I know, not to mention desperate; even though I have a perfectly reasonable explanation. I simply won it at a wedding expo while engaged to McBlue Eyes, and have been saving it for my future wedding just in case*).
11. **DO NOT** tell my dates all about my biological clock that is so way beyond ticking (*more like a time bomb*) or that I want nice cute little children preferably with blonde hair... truthfully, yesterday.
12. **DO NOT** tell my date all about my destination dream wedding in Hawaii. Nor how I not only have all my bridesmaids picked out, but also that if we can get engaged by September, we could be married by November. Nor that I still buy and save wedding magazines, and have my whole honeymoon planned out (*I always liked being prepared*).
13. **DO NOT** tell my date that I have already practiced his last name as mine (*just to get the feeling for it and know what it sounds like*).

## **DO TALK ABOUT:**

*Hmmm... Nothing left to talk about really.* I suppose I can just listen, be mysterious, and look pretty.

**4:00 p.m.** I finally got into work mode and forgot all about McNice, but then I received an email from him telling me work had been wonderful since we last spoke (*one could say I'm his lucky charm, but I am not saying that*). McNice also wrote that he thought about calling to discuss tomorrow, but since he'd end up talking with me forever (*oh my goodness, I knew it, been talking to him on the phone way too long when he calls*), he wanted to confirm by email and tell me that he was thinking about heading north together for some wine-tasting.

**4:10 p.m.** I was just about to reply to McNice, when out of nowhere McBlue Eyes instant-messaged me (of course, McBlue Eyes had his "radar" going, and he could sense from 2,000 miles away that I was pulling away and liking McNice).

He asked me if I had seen the World Trade Center movie and I said no.

We were having a nice online chat when he typed, "I am looking for a job..." and despite myself, I almost got emotional (it was a *BIG* step, not to mention excellent progress for McBlue Eyes, *really*, at least to admit that he *needs* a job).

Being nice, I wrote, "You should do positive affirmations," and then, "I gotta get back to work and place some orders..." (*actually, respond to McNice*).

Since strangely enough, I remained somewhat calm as I signed off, the following thought popped up in my brain: *“Perhaps one must make peace with the past to manifest a peaceful present and future.”*

**4:15 p.m.** I did much better at the “being mysterious and not giving too much information” thing (*practice does make perfect*) when I wrote back to tell McNice I would be at a dinner party with friends tonight (i.e. first date with McNew York, but that’s classified information) and should be back late.

**4:20 p.m.** McNice and I engaged in a flirtatious email frenzy, and then we finally agreed to get together at 10:30 a.m. the next morning for our date/road trip.

He sent one more email telling me to go casual, and wrote:

*You don’t need to impress ’cause you already did...*

Trying to be cute and flirty, I sent an email saying:

*Damn, I had this little black dress especially for tomorrow! ;) But casual it is.*

*Drive safely. Lauren*

**4:30 p.m.** Momentarily I went into a state of utter panic and declared a state of emergency.

*I don’t HAVE casual.*

*I don’t LIKE casual!*

*I don’t **DO** casual!*

But then I became somewhat optimistic while hoping against hope that maybe I *could* find something half-decent and casual to wear. I went through (in this order): my

whole closet, my laundry hamper, and the numerous piles of clothes that were scattered all over the apartment just to find what I knew I would – which was absolutely NOTHING. *The brown skirt and black top will have to do*, I decided, *that's casual enough, at least for me*. I tried not to be, but was a little upset that McNice thought I would try to make an impression. *I don't dress to impress; I dress to feel good about myself* (highly recommended, especially the feeling good about yourself part).

**4:45 p.m.** Then I completely freaked out.

*Was that email too much??* I mean, not everyone gets my quirky sense of humor (hope you do), but there was *NO* response to my email. *NONE*. I did hope McNice wasn't taken aback by my comment about the black dress...

**5:00 p.m.** I tried to forget about the McNice crisis and stressed about work instead. But since that made me feel guilt-stricken – not to mention depressed and overwhelmed since I had yet to get *ANY* work done that day – I found myself thinking about McNew York and our date tonight. I turned to the impossible task of getting my hair somewhat presentable and fixing it by using my best friend, my curling iron (if you would ever ask me what would be the *ONE* thing I *COULD NOT* live without, definitely would tell you my curling iron... well, and my lipstick... and foundation... and blush... and *HAVE TO* have TV... well maybe not the best question to ask me...).

**5:30 p.m.** After hair was all done and pretty, I realized it looked too made up and I messed it up a bit to give it the “natural look,” almost as though I wake up just like this each and every morning. Then, just in case I let someone of the other sex into my

apartment soon, I went through my living room to make sure all my Self-help/Relationship/How to trap a guy into marrying you in two dates/How to be a bitch/How to love/Why we love/How to make him love you/Why you love him/How to love him/Why I love a narcissist/Why men can't love/Healing with love/How guys think/Why men think/blah blah blah books were all securely hidden and out of the way. I found one book after another, and became a bit mortified when realizing how many books on relationships I had accumulated. As I hid each and every book under my bed, a thought crossed my mind that perhaps if I had only spent more time actually dating instead of: (choose one) buying/looking at/putting on shelves/discussing with girlfriends/reading these books \_\_\_\_\_, I would have had a *REAL* boyfriend by now and maybe time to devote to a decent relationship.

**6:15 p.m.** Just before I left my apartment, I got an email from McBiker from speed-dating the other night asking me for coffee in the Valley at 4 p.m. on Sunday. It took a while, but I finally found my daily planner and checked my schedule. As mentioned previously, a few days earlier I had already made lunch plans for Sunday (with McCult Member, AKA McCustomer, FYI, in case you forgot, and if you did, I don't blame you, 'cause even with my daily planner I can barely keep up with my own schedule), and then I had plans with Angel and her sister that night. Guys come and go (other than McBlue Eyes, and McStripper, of course, who *NEVER* go away), but your girlfriends will stay for forever. You *DON'T* want to ask me how to do your thing, but if you did, I'd tell you, always put yourself and your girlfriends *FIRST*.

**6:45 p.m.** Since I always stress about being late, I rushed to my date while making a mental note to reply to McBiker's email later and also get cash before I met up with McNew York, in case I needed it for parking.

**7:10 p.m.** After parking my car at a lot adjacent to the Grove Shopping Center, I headed towards a coffee shop there (I was meeting my date just outside the place). Moments later, I ran into McNew York who was also walking in that direction. He actually looked so much better than I remembered when I saw him, where we first met, while crossing the street. Tall with sandy blonde hair and a boyish look, McNew York had something very sweet and endearing about him.

We greeted each other with a hug, and as I got lost in his arms and warm embrace, I completely forgot all about my cash situation (in my defense, haven't been hugged like that in a while, and as mentioned earlier, McNew York is *REALLY* cute).

Since I wasn't allowed to talk about anything (see previous rules), while we walked towards a little Italian restaurant that McNew York suggested at the other end of The Grove, I tried to make small talk by asking him, "What's your sign?"

"Aquarius." He smiled.

"You're kidding!" I was surprised that we had that in common and felt instantaneously closer. "So am I..."

**7:50 p.m.** Soon we were sitting at a romantic, candle-lit corner table in the cozy Italian restaurant. The date was going fabulously over a delicious *Portobello e Mozzarella* salad for me (baby spinach, grilled Portobello, red onions, fresh mozzarella and cherry tomatoes with balsamic vinaigrette... all I could say is Mama Mia! 'cause it almost made

me feel like a normal and not deprived person on a diet), and a *Tagliata di Bue* for him (grilled New York steak sliced open face, topped with Tuscan herbs in an olive oil infusion. Served with rugola and radicchio salad. As a vegetarian, his entrée was not exactly my cup of tea, but so not judging, to each his own...). As our lovely evening progressed, not only was I staying on my diet, I also had not talked about anything off-limits while we both enjoyed two glasses of Chardonnay.

“Los Angeles has been so much tougher for me, and getting into Hollywood has been a struggle,” McNew York whispered, and not only could I relate, I also felt as though we had an instant bond.

We ordered our third glass of wine (or did he order it for me?), and McNew York shared all about his family...

“My brother saved my father from certain death, when years ago at a family dinner, my dad choked on an olive. Since then, I’ve been looking for someone to choke on an olive so I could save them,” McNew York admitted and pointed jokingly at my olives. “If you choke,” he continued, “I am completely prepared to save you, and it would not only be very memorable, but even romantic, and a great first date story.”

I laughed away, trying to look mysterious, and at the very same time concluded that Aquarians have a great sense of humor (or was it my third glass of wine???)

While finishing my salad, and still very much starving, I almost contemplated ordering another one (it was so good, but not nearly enough). At the same time, I tried to look interested as McNew York continued telling me all about the rivalry with his brother. However I got lost gazing into his blue eyes (kind of like the ocean, *really*),

while I wondered how soon was too soon to be falling in love with someone (or, again, could it be my third glass of wine, and the whole being in love with love thing???)

**11:00 p.m.** After our wonderful dinner, McNew York and I walked around the dark streets holding hands (*so romantic!*). Again I found myself getting way ahead of myself, putting the cart before the horse, imagining his last name as mine, naming our unborn children, and designing our blue with white flowered curtains (by now I was thinking, definitely it's the wine...). Note to you and self: *DO NOT* engage in drinking more than *ONE* glass of wine with a stranger... especially a charming, good-looking stranger and while on a *first date*.

**11:55 p.m.** Unfortunately just when I was ready to at least ask McNew York to move in with me (as opposed to marrying me so I could finally use my *damn* wedding dress), he suggested calling it a night.

More than disappointed, I reluctantly complied and McNew York walked me to my dirty car which I'd parked in a different lot than his. In horror, I remembered (in this order): all those onions in my salad, running out of mints, my dirty car, and also that I had no cash to get out of the parking lot. (Note to you and self: *Not recommended* to have onions on a first date, and *always, always* very recommended to have cash on you... and mints, and if you only could, a clean car).

I got lost in my head, but McNew York brought me back to a very pleasant present by leaning over and gently kissing me. His lips were soft and his kiss sweet, and then he kissed me again, and again, and there were a few more.

“I’ll call you,” he looked at me and whispered as I forgot all about the onions, the mints or lack thereof, the cash, the world and just about everything including my own name and the names of our unborn children.

“I didn’t ask.”

“You didn’t, but your eyes were,” he told me, and touched my face lightly with his hand (LOVED that, started re-remembering the names of our children).

That’s when I made *the biggest mistake!* “Can I drive you to your car?” I asked and our perfect evening took a turn for the worse.

McNew York accepted my offer and tried to remove the debris and the paper from the passenger-side seat. (Note to self: Perhaps instead of dating a million people, I should find the time to clean my car.) He laughed with me (or was it at me??) about my very messy car (some have referred to it as a “fire hazard” ’cause of all the maps and paper in the back, but then again, my car’s my second office, so it’s totally acceptable. At least by me).

Shortly thereafter, the inevitable happened and we arrived at the tollbooth.

With shaking hands, I gave the guy my parking ticket.

“Twenty dollars,” the parking guy barked at me (you’re probably thinking it’s the wine again and the Drama Queen talking, but I am *so* not exaggerating... he literally barked), and I thought I was going to have a heart attack (well, perhaps I’m being a lil’ dramatic, maybe it was more like a minor stroke).

“I’ll get it,” I said completely embarrassed, and pretended to look in my wallet for the cash I didn’t have (again, never underestimate those acting classes).

“Do you accept credit cards?” I asked (more like pleaded with) the guy.

“No credit card,” the guy yelled at me.

“Do you have any cash?” McNew York asked awkwardly.

“No,” I admitted shamefully and he gave me a twenty.

“See, you shouldn’t have let me drive you.” (I just about wanted to die.) “You will have to let me pay you back.”

**Midnight.** After dropping McNew York off, I drove home sadly, wondering if the \$20 incident would be the kiss of death to our short-lived, but very exciting and so far happy one-night relationship. Then a part of me considered drowning my worries and sorrows by getting dessert (so far – still on my diet, just thinking about it, thinking does not count!)...

**12:25 a.m.** As I walked into my apartment dreaming about my handsome, sweet, and funny fellow Aquarian, I remembered my leftover *Tiramisu* from my dreadful date the other night. As I reached for the fridge, I decided I had to finish it so I could *really, seriously, start my diet* all over again the next day (MUST eat away all leftover excuses).

**12:40 a.m.** And just like that, I went to sleep turning from being my man-magnet, confident (yes, you can say cocky) self to an insecure 16-year-old who likes a boy at school who does not like her back. I suppose I might have lost the guy, but learned a very important lesson tonight: to *always* have some cash and if at all possible a clean car (’cause first impressions do count). Also, on a positive note, didn’t even mention McBlue Eyes all night (or babies, nor my wedding dress), and there was always hope in the form

of a first date with McNice tomorrow (love that not putting all your eggs in one basket thingy).

**Today's Insight:** Your safety should *always* come first, and having cash, mints, a clean car and *your own* form of transportation is highly recommended. Also, it's always better to have a few eligible prospects going on at once, as to not get too desperate, nor attached, or thrown by the rejection factor.

In addition, falling in love, naming your unborn children, or drinking more than one drink on a very first date (or any date) is not highly recommended.