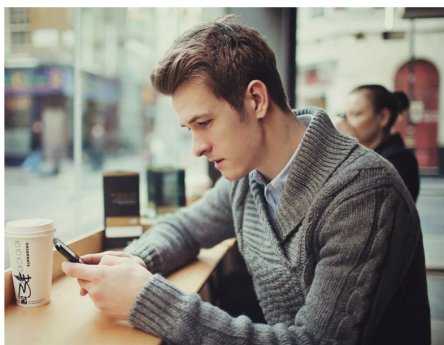


DATING
BOOMERANG

written by *Danielle Ma* | November 7, 2015



Over the course of this year – hell, over the course of 2 seasons, really – I’ve been boomeranged by 3 men. 3 ex-some-things that had been surgically removed from my life. The wounds were of varying degrees of severity but, true to form, they had all healed, leaving small, smooth, shiny little scars in their place. Evidence that the pain had happened. Evidence that I had recovered each time.

But then they came back. For one reason or another, they took out their little communication devices and decidedly remembered my existence. Through a call, a text, an email – all of a sudden 3 old flames became 3 new question marks. What in the world was going on?

The first boomerang came from a once-believed love-of-my-life. He was a force, a core-shaking force that had held me in a heartlock for longer than I’m willing to admit. When we broke up originally, it wasn’t about us or our compatibility. It was about the demons of his past, of his biology, of his innermost parts that I was never fully granted access to but spent a while observing & loving from a distance. The breakup left us blurry & residual & not fully over, like embers waiting to ignite once more. Or like a boomerang waiting to happen.

And happen it did. It wasn’t a shock when he came back around; it was a shock that it happened so soon. Late one night, I had just returned home from a Final Date with some guy. It was the date on which I decided to file him away into the ever growing pile of nice-people-who-aren’t-right-for-me. Lonely & longing, I was sitting in my little twin bed when the first boomerang re-entered my life. Less than a year had passed, but he “was in a very different place than when we broke up.” He missed me. He wanted to get back together. He told me he was ready.

He wasn’t. It was a second chance ruined. It was our forever, our happily ever after, taken away from us for chasing it too soon. I resented him for not knowing himself as well as I needed him to. For burning through our potential too quickly.

The second boomerang was a hookup buddy turned real life friend. In our time together, we were pleasant & easy & not at all dramatic. Our ending was similarly no-fuss. No formal breakup, no intense feelings. Just annoyance on my end due to flakiness on his. I was a consistently good friend to him, being the listener he couldn’t find elsewhere. Being the indulgent support system he was so badly seeking. But for all my efforts, I only received negativity in return. Cancellations, self-pity, and a refusal to accept help or advice. So with one unanswered phone call, we ended.

Months later, he boomeranged back. With apology texts & a box of chocolate covered cookies delivered to my doorstep, he tried to revive a friendship that I had completely forgotten about. A friendship that had always fed him infinitely more than it did me. I responded (for the record: I pretty much always respond unless it’s literal harassment), thanked him for the gift, and told him it was all in the past. Because it is. I then agreed to arbitrary dinner plans I knew I would never initiate.

The third boomerang was actually the most surprising of all. A boy I dated briefly but intensely, with an ending so infuriating that I never even bothered to change his name in the one piece I wrote about him. He had unceremoniously broken up with me via email, and while my heart handled it fine, my sense of judgement and faith in people wavered long after.

In many ways, his boomerang was a gift. Not a gift that erased the hurt and disrespect of the past, but they never do. More like a no-strings-attached effort to fix some of the aftermath, like cocoa butter for the scar. Back at the very bar in which we first met, sitting in the same exact seats, he apologized. Nervous and sweating and mildly rehearsed-sounding, he tried to make it better.

Regardless of whether the outrageous story of what had happened to him was true, embellished, or fictional entirely, it seemed important to him that I renew my faith in others, that I restore my good opinion of... well, myself & my ability to read people. We interacted amicably, a trace of longing in his eye contact and diction at times, just barely detectable. But he guessed correctly that I had a boyfriend. And so it stayed at trace levels, respectfully suppressed.

For a while now, I’d been wondering about boomerangs and why people do it, myself included. I’m just as guilty an offender as these men in my life. If we’re being completely honest, I had actually boomeranged two of the three at different ticks along our respective timelines.

My love life is very complicated.

But now that – that was the point, wasn’t it? Why do people boomerang? Because love just is that complicated. In fact, love is like entropy. Like chaos, like the unordered energy in this world, love is gradually, infinitely increasing. It may shift, change, evolve, retire even... but it doesn’t disappear. It sticks around in one form or another. No amount of cocoa butter will ever make our scars invisible.

So because the care and connections of our past don’t disintegrate into nothingness, of course the people attached to them are going to come back around. Not always. Sometimes fleetingly, sometimes meaninglessly. But inevitably. Blame the chaos that is love.

BOOMERANG DATE EX LOVE RELATIONSHIP

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Danielle is a passionate twenty-something living in New York City with too many interests and not enough time in the day. She works at a boutique ad agency next to her favorite building, the Flatiron, and spends a lot of time in parks with coffee. She frequents food festivals, listens to science podcasts, explores comedy clubs, and writes, a lot. She diaries the moments and conversations in her life, writing mostly about dating, love, and sex in the city on her blog, Here’s The Thing.

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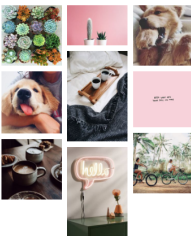
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