

## **“HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS”**

**By Tom Smith**

*There are 7 pieces which may be cast individually. If doubled, you may cast one performer as (2014, 2016, 2018, 2020) and another as (2015, 2017, 2019, 2020). Please feel free to change NMSU to the name of your school and update any references you like.*

1: NMSU Confessions #2014. I’m pretty sure my girl is cheating on me.

2: NMSU Confessions #2015. Does anyone have any good dating tips? I apparently suck at dating.

1: NMSU Confessions #2016. My girlfriend seems nice to everyone else but alone she beats the crap out of me...

2: NMSU Confessions #2017. I know we should break up but I love my partner so much.

1: NMSU Confessions #2018. My friend Monica said she was sexually assaulted by another girl. Is that even possible?

2: NMSU Confessions #2019. Can you be stalked by your own boyfriend? Because I think I’m being stalked by mine.

1: NMSU Confessions #2014

I’m pretty sure my girl is cheating on me. I’ve got a really hot girlfriend named Christina, and we’ve been dating for a little over a year. She’s always had a ton of guy friends, which is cool. But lately I’ve started to suspect that she might be cheating on me with one of them.

When we first started dating, Christina was over at my house every night. We’d smoke a little or drink and then study, which was cool. Really cool. She’d spend the night four or five times a week. It was perfect.

Then Christina started asking if she could bring some friends over to study with us and hang out. Fine, whatever. I have a house so it made sense, you know. And I liked her friends.

She starts wanting to go out more, hang out with her friends at their apartment, and a lot of times I go but sometimes I don’t. But she still goes anyway.

Ok, fine, no big deal. She’s not trying to get away from me; we’re still together. She still stays over two or three times a week. But then, for her birthday, she gets a new phone and she starts Snapchatting people all the time, messaging them 24/7. And I’m like, “Who are you messaging all the time? What are you saying?” And she’s like, “Nobody. I’m just checking in with Riley to see where she’s at.” But I’m like, “no way is she checking in with Riley that much.” No one checks in with their sister, like, every five minutes.

So, fine, whatever, she’s excited she’s got this new phone and she’s on it all the time. I’m not going to get jealous of a phone. But then one day she’s supposed to meet me for dinner and she texts that she’s canceling because she’s got to meet her group for some project for her Theatre 101 class. So I text her back to see when she’ll be done and...nothing. She doesn’t reply. The girl who’s on her phone all the time. So ten minutes later, I text again. Nothing. I

send four more texts before she gets back to me, and then she's pissed because I was texting her so much. Plus, she's really pissed because in the last one I said I would come find her in the library if she didn't reply.

So a few days later, same thing happens: she blows me off again. We're supposed to meet up at my place; she doesn't show, no call, nothing. I text three times, but nothing. So I call Riley to see if she's with her, and she's not. I call her roommate and she said she saw her go out but didn't know where she was going or who she was going with. So I start calling around, and no one will tell me where she's at.

So now I'm pissed. And—look, I know I should have done this—but I'm pissed and I've been drinking so I go online and post something about her. That she's got herpes—which she doesn't—but I thought to myself that if anyone is thinking about screwing around with her then maybe they would see that and think twice. I mean, it's kind of like I'm protecting her, you know. I don't want anything to happen to her.

So, then things start to really change between us. She gets all weird and stops spending the night. And it's not because she found out about the online thing—I mean, even if she did she wouldn't know I was the one who posted it. She just started pulling away from me.

I mean, look, if you want to break up with me, just do it. But don't do this. Don't just start ignoring me. Fine, you want to go out with someone else or whatever, just say so. Be an adult about it. But this is just stupid.

Anyway, I drove by her place the last couple of days but her car is never there. Riley says she doesn't want to get involved, so I'm going to go over to Christina's tonight and just wait for her to get there. If she doesn't show up, then I'll know there's someone else.

I love her so much, you know. This just doesn't make any sense...

## 2: NMSU Confessions #2015

Does anyone have any good dating tips? I apparently suck at dating. I haven't been on a good one in a while. A long while. Anyone?

Reply: Here's a good dating tip: rely on your instincts. If the other person seems creepy, then they probably are. If they tell you they are rich then show up in a piece-of-crap car, then don't go out with them because they are probably a liar. If they say you are going out to a restaurant but then try to get you to their place instead, don't go: they just want a hook-up. If they look or act all molest-y, they probably are a molester. Take it from one who knows—about bad dates, I mean. Trust your instincts.

Reply #2: Go on double dates. Especially if you don't know the person very well, ask them to bring a friend and you bring one too. That way not only do you have someone to talk to if your date sucks, but you also have a friend to keep you safe. Also, you can learn a lot about a person from their friends. Plus, double dating can be way less stressful for a first date.

Reply #3: Meet your date first. I assume this is obvious and that you probably already know them from class or whatever. But if it's just someone who just saw you in class or someone that a friend of a friend has set you up with, then meet them somewhere in public first. Also, make sure you know their first and last name. That way you can Google-stalk them beforehand. The more you know about them beforehand, the better.

Reply #4: Tell your friends where you're going. Check in with them throughout your date. It won't be rude; especially because you can do it discreetly on your phone, like from the bathroom or walking from the parking lot or whatever. Especially if you're a woman, you'll want your friends to know where you're going, with whom, and when you expect to be back. I check in on my phone all the time if I don't know the guy very well. Better to be annoying than dead, you know?

Reply #5: Don't drink a lot. I mean it! You'll want to because you'll be nervous, but drinking too much not only makes you look sloppy, but you could end up getting assaulted. I mean it! And when you do drink, don't ever leave your drink unattended. Take it with you into the bathroom, or drink it all before you leave it. Otherwise he could slip something in it. This happened to a friend of mine. Also, don't accept any drinks from anyone other than a waiter; that way you'll know it came straight from the bar and is safe. Good luck!

Reply #6: Don't leave a club with someone you just met. If you do, insist on going back to your place, especially if you have roommates. Think about it—do you really want to be in some stranger's house you just met with no one knowing where you are?

Reply #7: Ask them a lot of questions. Tell them things about yourself. The more you know about each other, the better the date will be. And here's some good advice I got from my aunt of all people: if you just want a quick hook-up, don't do it with a stranger, do it with a friend. A hook-up with someone you know already is safer, and that friendship might just become something deeper. A one-night stand with a stranger just ends up with you feeling cheap. I followed this advice and now my current boyfriend is someone who was my friend for two years before we hooked up!

#### 1: NMSU Confessions #2016

My girlfriend seems nice to everyone else but alone she beats the crap out of me. It's really embarrassing, because she's half my size. But she'll grab anything, her shoe, the remote whatever, and she'll just go after me.

She doesn't come at me for no reason. It's only if she's drunk and had a bad day or if I've done something purposefully that's pissed her off. But still. She seems so nice to everyone else. No one would ever guess what she gets like.

She still holds it against me that I cheated on her six months ago. But I was drunk and, to be fair, I didn't start anything. I just didn't say no when things got going. So, yeah, I shouldn't have done that and I knew when I told her that she was going to freak out on me. I just thought that she'd only freak out on me only once and then get over it.

She tells me that I'm lucky to have someone like her—someone who would take me back after what I did. And she's right. I mean, I did screw up. After it happened, I told her I would do anything if she took me back. And I did. She wanted me to stop going out by myself, and I did. She wanted to read all my texts anytime she asked, so I let her. She has all my passwords to everything.

I've been working hard trying to gain back her trust. She deserves that.

Still, I don't know why she's always hitting me. I was fifteen minutes late coming home yesterday and didn't call her, and she just lost it. I've got this huge bruise on my face now.

What am I going to tell people? I'm twice her size...

## 2: NMSU Confessions #2017

I know we should break up but I love my partner so much. They came to this school because of me. So I don't know what to do. One moment we're fine, we're totally in love. And they're being sweet, and telling me how much they love me and even how they want to have a family with me one day. It's awesome!

Then something will happen. I'll forget to pay the electric bill, or take too long in the bathroom. And they'll start yelling at me, and then I'll start yelling back. And it all just sort of escalates from there. They'll be screaming at me and I'll end up locking myself in our room just to get away from them.

Or they'll start telling me what I can and can't do, which I cannot stand. They say they're going to set a timer every time I take a shower so I can't use up all the hot water, or I'm going to have to pay the entire electric bill next month since we were charged a late fee. And then I just go off and start yelling back and that's when they explode.

They've never hit me. I wouldn't allow that. They've never once hit me. But they'll intimidate me. They'll say they're going to kick me out, knowing I have nowhere to go and no money to live on my own. Or they'll break stuff. We got thrown out of our last place because they punched two holes in the wall.

There's nothing I can do when they get like that. I just have to ride it out. I just shut up and let them vent.

But then, the next day, they'll feel guilty about what they've done. They'll say they've had too much to drink, or not enough sleep. Their classes are stressing them out. Besides, we could use new stuff anyway. They'll even buy it himself. And I can see that they do feel really bad about what they've done.

I used to believe them. Now, not so much. Now, sometimes I'll threaten to leave them. But then they'll threaten to drop out of school. Or worse, to hurt themselves. And they'll kiss me and promise that it will never happen again. And they're so sweet when they're like that. So incredibly sweet.

Then they'll get romantic. Give me flowers. Make me dinner. Put up photos of us around the apartment. And things will be good for a while.

Until I do something wrong again.

So my question is this: how can I freeze them in time when he's like that, when they're so, so sweet to me? How can I make them stay the person they are when they love me so much? How can they always be the person I fell in love with?

## 1: NMSU Confessions #2018

My friend Monica said she was sexually assaulted by another girl. Is that even possible?

She was at a graffiti party, which is where you go dressed in white and everyone's got markers and you write all over each other. I hate them, it's just an excuse for people to grope each other, but at least it's something to do. Anyway, she went there with some friends, and it wasn't even writing on each other when things happened. It was afterwards.

Monica was outside on the patio when one of her friends, Sasha, came over and started talking to her. Sasha has a boyfriend Nick, who joined them, and the three of them started drinking shots. And then Sasha started making out with Nick, and then she started making out with Monica. And then Monica started making out with Nick, and then they left. I saw them go. I didn't say anything because Monica wasn't driving or anything.

The next morning, she told me that they all went back to Sasha and Nick's place and kept drinking. Then the three of them started fooling around. But Nick passed out before anything really serious happened. Monica told Sasha she didn't want to do anything with just her, and then asked if she could crash for the night since it was late and Sasha said yes.

I guess sometime in the middle of the night Monica woke up to Sasha doing stuff to her. She freaked out but just pretended to be asleep until it was all over. Now she feels like she was assaulted.

I'm supposed to drive her to this sexual assault place in 15 minutes. But, I mean, wasn't it sort of Monica's fault going away with Nick and Sasha in the first place? Didn't she sort of put herself in that position?

Is it wrong that I sort of feel this was mostly Monica's fault?

## 2: NMSU Confessions #2019

Can you be stalked by your own boyfriend? Because I think I'm being stalked by mine. His name is Josh and he is the best boyfriend I ever had. Was the best. It's just lately he's been totally creepy.

When we first started going out we were together all the time. And he was really good to me; always making me dinner and sending me funny texts. Checking in on me. He was awesome.

Then I started noticing that he sort of expected me to hang out with him every single day. He doesn't have a ton of friends and I get that—I didn't have a lot of friends until my sophomore year. So I think he was sort of really attached to me. But he was also cool about me having my friends come over sometimes, and we'd all order in food and study or watch tv. Everything was fine.

Things really started changing, though, when I stopped going over every day. He'd start calling me, first thing in the morning, and then check in a dozen times a day. At first it was sweet. But then it started to feel creepy. He seemed way more into me than I was with him. Like, my friends and I would joke that it totally wouldn't surprise me if he proposed. I started ignoring some of his texts but then he'd threaten to come find me. Once, he texted me six times over the course of an hour, even though he knew I was working in the library with my group for my Theatre class.

So I started hanging out with him less often, hoping he'd get the hint that I needed some space. But that just made him freak out more. He started calling my sister, Riley, and my friends, saying he was looking for me.

When we would hang out he kept asking me where I had been, who I was with. He'd check out my Instagram to see what I was posting. He'd send me texts like "I see you're at home, so I don't know why you haven't called me." He started trying to friend some of my friends online, even though he didn't know them.

Soon after that, it started to get really bad, and he'd text things like "If you want to break up, then just say so. Otherwise, stop being such a whore." Then two seconds later he'd send an apology. I got so freaked out that I didn't know what would happen if we broke up. I thought he might try to do something.

I finally told him it was over and I thought that would be the end of it, but I ended up having to block him from my phone and my accounts online. Riley said I should get a restraining order because she's seen him drive around my parking lot more than once. I've started staying with friends because he knows where I live.

What do I do? Can I talk to someone at school about this?

1/2: NMSU ModConfession.

1: I'm one of the moderators of NMSU Confessions.

2: And I'm one too. As you know, we keep our identities anonymous. So, really, I'm just any person at NMSU.

1: Me too.

2: We get a lot of confessions that don't need us to say anything about them.

1: "I touch my lips to the spout when I drink from the water fountain."

"I've pulled the fire alarm in Garcia every year since I was a freshman."

"I drank a six pack from a beer bong then went to class to give a speech about how alcohol is bad."

2: But lately, some of the ones we've gotten are more serious.

1: "My girlfriend beats the crap out of me."

"My friend Monica was sexually assaulted."

"Can you be stalked by your own boyfriend?"

2: Two things you need to know. First, Title Nine of the Education Amendments says anyone who has been subjected to sexual misconduct, including violence, harassment or retaliation, has the right to file a complaint. At NMSU, you can do this through the Office of Institutional Equity.

1: Secondly, there are campus groups, like WAVE, who can connect you to local agencies like La Casa, La Piñon, and NMSU's Counseling Center if you've already been subjected to any of this.

2: So my confession is this: I want every single person to be safe and use good judgment.

1: And I want you to have healthy relationships that you can look back on after you graduate. Not only do I want you to have a good partner, but I want you to be a good partner.

2: We hope you'll keep all this in mind. It's really important.

1: And we hope whoever keeps putting their lips on the water fountain will stop. That's disgusting...

*END OF PLAY*