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"We met in a bar by happenstance": Master narratives in couples stories

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"We Met at a Bar by Happenstance": Master Narratives in Couples Stories

by

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Thesis

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Linguistics

Thesis Committee:

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Abstract

The focus of this study is on uncovering the underlying cultural assumptions, or Master Narratives, across four couples narratives that I elicited. I use Deborah Tannen's work and definitions to frame my analysis (2008). She identifies three narrative types: small-n narrative, the accounts of specific events or interactions that speakers said had occurred with one another; big-N Narrative, the themes speakers develop in telling about one another and in support of which they told the small-n narratives; and Master Narrative, the culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives.

Specifically, I identify two Master Narratives that underscore couples narratives in a broad sense: (1) relationships occur by happenstance and (2) adversity enhances the coupling bond. These assumptions are identified in locating the big-N Narratives and small-n narratives across four couples stories. Like Tannen, I aim to show how these three narrative types operate on different levels of abstraction and how couples conceptualize and talk about their relationships with one another.

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1 Introduction

HARRY

The first time we met we hated each other.

SALLY

You didn't hate me, I hated you. The second time we met he didn't even remember me.

HARRY

I did too. I remembered you. The third time we met we became friends.

SALLY

We were friends for a long time.

HARRY

And then we weren't.

SALLY

And then we fell in love.

HARRY

Two months later we got married.

SALLY

It was a beautiful wedding.

HARRY

Yeah. We had this incredible coconut cake—

SALLY

With a very rich chocolate sauce *on the side*—

HARRY

Yeah, you know, because everybody doesn't like sauce right on top of their cake.

When Harry Met Sally

Pair bonding between humans, or coupling, dates back many thousands of years (Isaac). It is a process that most human cultures experience and encourage, and one that many have legislated. The effects of coupling have been studied in many scientific fields of inquiry, especially in psychology, sociology, physiology, and neuroscience. In the field of linguistics, studies on couples have been relatively few and far between. Holmberg et al. note that the focus on stories of human relationships is a recent one: "Since the late 1980s, social scientists have

begun collecting and interpreting the stories individuals tell about their lives and relationships" (4). As one narrows in on the stories that couples tell about their relationships, the research becomes increasingly sparse.

For the central goal of this study, I wanted to investigate commonalities among four couples narratives in terms of how each couple constructs a story, especially one relevant to the shared experience of coupling (i.e., the story of how they met and became a couple). I wanted to examine this story in three different telling events, namely, each partner's separate telling and the pair's co-told telling, or shared telling, in order to compare and contrast each partner's telling event. My goal was to elucidate aspects of the coupling experience and story that were until now unknown or uncatalogued in the literature.

The inspiration for this study comes from the film *When Harry Met Sally*. Throughout the film various cutaway shots appear in which couples share the story of how they met. Most are only a few minutes in length, but I was intrigued by the idea of interviewing couples in this manner for the purpose of a narrative analysis. The final scene in the film focuses on the two main characters, Harry and Sally, sharing their story, which the audience has just witnessed unfold. The couples narratives that I collected in this project each feature their own storylines, evaluations, and dramatic elements.

1.1 Aim of This Study

The focus of this study is on uncovering the underlying cultural assumptions, or Master Narratives, across the four couples narratives that I elicited. I use Tannen's work and definitions to frame my analysis ("All Relationships are Stories"). In her work, Tannen identifies three narrative types: small-n narrative, the accounts of specific events or interactions that speakers

said had occurred with one another; big-N Narrative, the themes speakers develop in telling about one another, and in support of which they told the small-n narratives; and Master Narrative, the culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives and that form "a canopy over the discourse" (210).

Specifically, I identify two Master Narratives that underscore couples narratives in a broad sense: (1) relationships occur by happenstance and (2) adversity enhances the coupling bond. These assumptions can be identified by locating the big-N Narratives, or themes, across the four couples stories I have elicited. Furthermore, the involvement strategies that speakers use to create scenes give life to the big-N Narratives. Like Tannen, I aim to show how these narrative types operate on different levels of abstraction and how the couples I talked to conceptualize their relationships with one another.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Narrative Studies

There has been a shift in narrative studies over the course of the past few decades stemming from early critiques to Labov's model of narrative analysis (Labov; Labov and Waletzky), which challenged text-centered approaches in the field until the late 1980s. Labov situated his analysis on narratives of personal experience and defined narrative itself as "one verbal technique for recapitulating past experience, in particular a technique of constructing narrative units which match the temporal sequence of that experience" (Labov and Waletzky 13). This model emphasizes the structural characteristics of narratives because Labov's focus was on well-formed stories that reflect a well-defined message of the narrator and reconstruct a significant past experience.

The classic definition of narrative, at least from the linguist's perspective, has been attributed to Labov. His model identifies the following structural elements: (1) an abstract: the initial clause in a narrative that reports the entire sequence of events of the narrative; (2) an orientation: the clause that gives information on the time, place of the events of a narrative, the identities of the participants, and their initial behavior; (3) a clause of complicating action: the sequential clause that reports a next event in response to a potential question, "And then what happened?"; and (4) a coda: the final clause which returns the narrative to the time of speaking (Labov and Waletzky).

Some of the critiques made against Labov's model (Edwards; Goodwin; Ochs and Capps; Schegloff) focus on its inability to deal with narratives that are not monologic (i.e., narratives with more than one speaker), its ambiguity in relation to his categories of analysis which mix

structural and functional criteria, and its treatment of the narrative as decontextualized (i.e., the deletion of contextual information as to how narratives are initiated and how they emerge in specific circumstances). These critics of Labov's model also note his reliance on text-centered approaches and the methodological implications such as privileging narratives told in interview; the focus on one narrative genre, the canonical story (as opposed to hypothetical, habitual narratives, and uneventful conversational stories); and the lack of attention on the social functions of narratives besides the "encoding of personal experience."

In the past few decades, interest in narrative research has also shifted from texts to contexts, i.e., from the content of narrative to the conditions and circumstances surrounding a narrative event. In this paper I draw on both schools of thought in order to elucidate a broader picture of the text of couples narratives and the larger context of couples narrative tellings. Holmberg et al. acknowledge the recent shift toward more contextual narrative research in stating, "This narrative approach, in which scholars investigate participants' stories told in their own words, has become an important part of the social sciences" (4). This study is an effort to continue that narrative approach.

Building from that trend, Tannen has identified three interrelated levels of narrative: (1) small-n narratives, accounts of specific events or interactions speakers said had occurred with each other; (2) big-N Narratives, themes speakers develop in telling about the other and in support of which they tell the small-n narratives; and (3) Master Narratives, culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives ("All Relationships are Stories"). She posits a framework for identifying the unstated Master Narratives by describing how the big-N Narratives are organized and how small-n narratives anchor the telling through scenes that are

created and supported by the involvement strategies of dialogue, details, and repetition. I use this framework to analyze my data and demonstrate how couples conceptualize and create scenes in telling stories about their relationships.

2.2 Couples Narratives

Linguistic analyses of couples' narratives are relatively sparse, but several scholars have addressed how speakers tell stories of shared experiences, retold tales, and co-told narratives. Falk's "conversational duet" remains the seminal work on co-told stories of romantically involved participants ("The conversational duet"). She explains that a duet is a joint production (in between speaking and listening) in which "two speakers carry out a communicative task to a third in such a way that a written version of their resultant in-sequence text would be indistinguishable from that of a single speaker" (507). Falk later states that a duet occurs when the following six criteria are met: (1) "partners have mutual knowledge of the topic at hand," (2) "equivalent authority to express that knowledge," (3) "a sense of camaraderie between them," (4) "a like communicative goal," (5) "a mutual audience," (6) and "each of their contributions counts on both their behalfs" (507). Using Tannen's framework, this study expands (and reorients) some of Falk's claims while highlighting the underlying assumptions, or Master Narratives, that influence couples stories about their relationships.

Norrick touches on collaborative narration of stories that are familiar to participants and describes the group dynamics of the speakers telling these tales and the functions of retelling ("Twice-told tales"). He claims that joint production of a story aligns participants together and fosters a high level of involvement, a claim substantiated in my study. Norrick also illustrates how shared experiences and values can be expressed by co-tellers. I use Tannen's framework to

identify involvement strategies in each couple's individual and co-told telling events and showcase how each couple's shared experiences are expanded from the individually told events to the co-telling event.

Norrick addresses twice-told tales in spontaneous conversation, and Falk examines conversational "duets." Both of the aforementioned scholars have posited that speakers who co-tell a story generally build off one another's narration, express shared values, and exhibit a high level of involvement with one another. Tannen's work expands on those ideas and shows how involvement strategies reinforce shared cultural assumptions (i.e., Master Narratives). I use her framework to explain the cultural assumptions underlying couples narratives and identify how involvement strategies like dialogue, details, and repetition are put to use to create scenes and, in effect, to dramatize couples stories.

There are multiple approaches one could take in analyzing narratives to uncover cultural assumptions. Maines touches on three ways in which one can analyze the content of any narrative: through the events, the sequence, and the plot ("Narrative's moment") . Holmberg et al. narrow in on one of these methods in stating that the plot "best conveys and represents meaning through narration (*Thrice-Told Tales*). The plot connects the beliefs, emotions, and behaviors together. A plot gives structure or coherence to possibly random events" (11). Holmberg et al. also examine the "affects" that emerge while a couple tells their story, e.g., feelings, emotions, wants, and needs, and how to find meaning expressed in couples narratives: "by examining their overall plots, the more specific themes or issues that may emerge in relating these plots , and the affects described or catalogued in the process of exploring these themes" (11).

Recent research has also highlighted a more interpretative approach to narrative research, in that the very definition of narrative varies from one scholar to the next. To establish the forthcoming research in the realm of narrative research, I will define the understanding of narrative that has guided this project.

2.3 Definition of Narrative

At a base level, narratives involve "a recounting of things spatiotemporally distant: here's the present teller, seemingly close to the addressee (reader or listener), and there at a distance is the tale and its topic" (Toolan 1). This broad definition has been widely accepted in recent literature because it encapsulates the human relationship at the very nature of narrative: narrative is a human activity whereby we develop a story and that story's meaning.

I focus this research on individually told stories elicited in an interview setting as well as co-told stories elicited the same way. As such, I use the word "narrative" in this research to mean "storylike constructions told to other people, in which individuals try to summarize, explain, and make sense of stressful, complex, or emotion-laden events in their lives" (Holmberg et al. 11). The "emotion-laden events" of the narratives that I elicited include the circumstances and results of each couple meeting and becoming romantically involved. The couples whose stories are featured in this study address not only the chronological events of their meeting and coupling, but also the emotional and physical circumstances at the time of their meeting and through their early courtship.

When narrative is defined as a story attempting to make sense of events, it is easy to see the potential in conducting research on these sorts of narratives. The research can focus on the events themselves (i.e., the linear plot), the making sense of those events (the interpretation of

the data), and how others make sense of (or seek meaning in) those narratives (the answer to the question "What can we learn in studying these stories?"). To complicate such research, narratives can also serve distinct functions and can help develop and maintain various identities (Holmberg et al. 10). It is the function of knowledge gleaned in studying narrative that I aim to address in this study.

2.3.1 Tannen's narrative types. The work of Tannen frames my analysis and inspires my understanding of narrative and how it relates to culture. She defines three narrative types that operate on different levels of abstraction: (1) small-n narratives, accounts of specific events or interactions that speakers said had occurred with one another also referred to as Labovian narrative; (2) big-N Narratives, the themes speakers develop in telling stories about one another, and in support of which they told the small-n narratives; and (3) Master Narratives, the culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives (214-216).

2.3.1.1 *Small-n narrative.* In exploring the interrelationship among these three narrative types, Tannen examines the small-n narratives told by women who share with her stories about their relationships with their sisters, with particular attention to the ways that the involvement strategies of repetition, dialogue, and details work together to create scenes. Tannen states that

scenes are the context in which meaning is conveyed and understood in interaction...the scene is the heart of a small-n narrative in conversation much as it is in a play. Speakers create scenes in order to support the point of their discourse—what they are telling me about their sisters. By presenting themselves and their sisters engaged in activities that are culturally recognizable and interpretable, speakers dramatize their sense of their sisters; of themselves in

relation to their sisters; and consequently of their sisters' and their own characters (208).

Scenes anchor the small-n narratives, helping them support the big-N Narratives, which are motivated in turn by the culturally-driven Master Narrative. I apply Tannen's approach to discern where the speakers in my interviews use repetition, dialogue, and details to create scenes and convey meaning.

2.3.1.2 Big-N Narrative. Tannen posits that big-N Narratives represent the theory of causation or the plausible explanation of telling a story. Referring to her own research, she says "...a large part of understanding sister discourse lies in discerning patterns in big-N Narratives across multiple speakers" (214), e.g., whether, how, and why sisters are close to their sisters or not, and whether, how, and why they and their sisters are similar or different, two themes Tannen identified in nearly every one of the interviews she conducted with women who had a sister.

Tannen shares examples of these two themes in the big-N Narratives she discovered across speakers: younger sibling idolizing the elder (closeness), older sibling being bossy (distance), family trauma (drove apart or brought together), and living on a farm (made us close). These examples demonstrate how speakers characterize their relationships with one another. I identify similar themes in my speakers' narratives, such as whether, how, and why each couple met by happenstance.

2.3.1.3 Master Narrative. Tannen identifies Master Narratives as the culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives that form "a canopy over the discourse" (210). Specifically, she pinpoints the apparent assumption that sisters are expected to be close and similar. This assumption explains why almost every woman Tannen spoke to told her early on in

the interview that she and her sister(s) were close or not close, similar to or—more often—different from each other, or similar in some ways and different in others.

The ubiquity of this Master Narrative in sister discourse leads Tannen to revisit and interrogate the dynamics of closeness/distance and sameness/difference as interrelated continua along which speakers array their relationships. In my study, I identify two underlying assumptions that couples share: Relationships occur by happenstance and adversity enhances the coupling bond. Like Tannen, I aim to show how these narrative types operate on different levels of abstraction and help illuminate how the couples I interviewed conceptualize and talk about their relationships with one another.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of personal acquaintances. I describe the specific group demographics in sections 3.1.1 through 3.1.4 below to give the reader a sense of where the speakers grew up and what sorts of cultural assumptions they might share. The youngest participant was 22 at the time of the study, and the oldest was 32. The median age for participants was 26 years old. All members of the groups are Caucasian and speak American English. Each group is a romantically involved couple that has been in a committed romantic relationship for at least three years (the maximum being eight years). All couples lived in Washtenaw County, Michigan, at the time of the interview. They were interviewed in their residences. Each speaker's education level in sections 3.1.1 through 3.1.4. Income information was not collected from participants.

As the interviewer in each group, some of my own speech is present in all six narratives as that of Speaker B. I attempted to limit my contribution to each narrative, but I have found that I did participate in giving backchannel signals and providing a few instances of evaluation and involvement. However, I did not find this involvement to significantly influence the course of any of the narratives I collected. For the most part, the narratives were remarkably self-driving and needed no coaxing on my part. All the couples let me know after the interviews that they very much enjoyed sharing their stories with me and looked forward to reading the transcripts of their speech.

3.1.1 Group 1 information. Group 1 consisted of Speaker K, a 29-year-old female, and Speaker J, a 30-year-old male. Both had earned bachelor's degrees at the time of their interviews,

and Speaker K was enrolled in a graduate program. They had been a couple for approximately eight years. Both narrators are speakers of American English as it is spoken in Southern California.

3.1.2 Group 2 information. Group 2 consisted of Speaker S, a 22-year-old female, and Speaker M, a 26-year-old male. Speaker M had earned a bachelor's degree while Speaker S was enrolled in a graduate program. They had been a couple for about four years. Both narrators in Group 2 originate from the Great Lakes region and are speakers of Midland American English.

3.1.3 Group 3 information. Group 3 consisted of Speaker E, a 30-year-old female, and Speaker P, a 32-year-old male. Both speakers had earned bachelor's degrees. At the time of the elicitation, the group had been a couple for six years. Speaker P originates from Southern California and Speaker E originates from the Great Lakes region.

3.1.4 Group 4 information. Group 4 consisted of Speaker R, a 22-year-old female, and Speaker D, a 22-year-old male. Both speakers were enrolled in graduate programs at the time of their interviews. At the time of the elicitation, the group had been a couple for three years. Both speakers originate from the Pacific Northwest.

3.2 Data Collection

I asked each couple to tell a story in interview format because it adds pressure to tell a coherent story: The stakes are higher, rather than in casual conversation where stories can be pushed under the rug to avoid face-threatening acts, and the obligation to tell a coherent narrative is not present. I gathered the narratives using Riessman's and Holmberg et al.'s method for interviewing narrators. Riessman says to provide as little structure as possible in constructing interview questions and prompts "in the interest of giving greater control to respondents" (55).

To elicit the interviews, I asked one broad question ("How did you meet and become a couple?") and was prepared to use probing questions (like "Can you tell me more about that?") if the need arose. I chose to use this interviewing method, rather than trying to foster spontaneous conversation, to elicit as many details as possible from the couples concerning all aspects of the early stages of their relationships.

I decided to collect three narratives from each group: one narrative collected from each individual speaker plus one narrative collected from both speakers co-narrating (or co-telling) the story of how they met and became a couple. I did this because I wanted to investigate how each person's story differed from the other's and how the individual narratives varied from the co-told narrative.

The narratives were collected within the apartments of each group. An internal microphone on my personal MacBook laptop was used to record all speech. I recorded individual narratives before I recorded co-told narratives to prevent the narrators from influencing one another's individual stories during the co-telling event. I collected each couple's individual narratives on the same day, but I made sure the partner I was eliciting from was completely out of earshot of the other partner. After at least 24 hours, I collected the co-told narratives from each couple. The transcription conventions used in the appendix transcripts are those of Deborah Tannen, but they have been adapted for use with Google Docs (see section 3.4 for a description of transcription conventions).

3.3 Quantity of Data

I collected two hours and 41 minutes of recorded speech. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the length of each transcription:

Table 1: Quantity of Recorded Speech

Group	Time (minutes:seconds)
Group 1 (K, J) Co-Told	29:03
K	24:47
J	4:09
Group 2 (S, M) Co-Told	10:09
S	5:49
M	3:42
Group 3 (E, P) Co-Told	19:15
E	7:59
P	5:56
Group 4 (R, D) Co-Told	24:11
R	8:34
D	17:28

3.4 Transcription Conventions

Transcription conventions are used as follows in Table 2 (based on and modified from Tannen 1984):

Table 2: Transcription Conventions

Symbol	Meaning
..	noticeable pause
CAPITALS	emphatic stress
=	second speaker's talk is latched onto first speaker's without a noticeable pause
[[]]	indicates overlapping speech
:	lengthened sound
()	author notes

Each line of transcribed speech ends when the speaker takes an audible breath.

3.5 Narrative Content

The content of each speaker's narrative differs slightly from the speaker's partner's individual narrative and from the couple's combined narrative, even though all narratives concern the same experience. Each speaker's individual narrative contains most (but not all) of the same topics as the speaker's partner's narrative, and the combined narratives contain all of the topics in each individual narrative plus elaboration, correction, and sorting out of details, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Topics in All Groups' Narratives

Speaker K's Narrative	Speaker J's Narrative	Co-told Narrative
High school	High school	High school (including Mortal Kombat and Austin Powers stories)
Falling out	Falling out	Falling out
Invitation	Invitation	Invitation
Party	Party	Party (with more details)
Car accident	--	Car accident (and Speaker K's resolve)
Moving in together	Moving in together	Moving in together (and apartment shopping)
		Natalie and her boyfriend
		Speaker J's living situation

Speaker S	Speaker M	Co-told narrative
Calc class	Calc class	Calc class
Bad professor	--	Bad professor
<i>Pirates of the Caribbean</i>	--	<i>Pirates of the Caribbean</i>
Olive Garden	--	Olive Garden (and what was ordered, how they joked with the waitress)
	Bad student	Bad student (and more information about specific difficulties)
	Bombed test/first words	Bombed test/first words
	Asking for help	Asking for help (and the location where Speaker M asked Speaker S for help)
		Speaker M's roommates

Table 3: (continued)

Speaker E	Speaker P	Co-told narrative
Los Angeles/single life/hooks up	--	Los Angeles/single life/hooks up
Bar	Bar	Bar
--	--	Hard times
--	Dates	Dates
Speaker P's qualities	--	Speaker P's qualities

Speaker R	Speaker D	Co-told narrative
Laundry	Laundry	Laundry
Campus	Campus	Campus
Halloween	Halloween	Halloween
--	Foreign films	Foreign films
Roommate	Roommate	Roommate
	Christmas break	Christmas break
	Marriage	Marriage
		Cold walks/nowhere to go if you're a couple
		Proposal

Group 1 (Speakers K and J) met in high school through mutual friends. After a falling out she experienced with those friends, Speaker K did not interact with Speaker J again until three years after graduating high school. Speaker J talked to Natalie—one of the couple's mutual friends in high school—through an instant messenger service on the Internet and invited her to a party he was throwing at his apartment. Natalie asked if she could bring Speaker K to the party,

and Speaker J agreed. Speakers K and J "hit it off" at the party, started interacting more, became a couple shortly after a car accident, and moved in together.

Group 2 (Speakers S and M) met in a college calculus class taught by a professor neither speaker thought was very good at teaching the material. Speaker M did not do well in the class and asked Speaker S for help with assignments and studying. A short while after becoming acquainted in class, the speakers had their first date at Olive Garden and soon after became a couple.

Group 3 (Speakers R and D) met while attending college. They lived in dorms that shared a laundry room and spoke to one another for the first time while washing their clothes. Speaker R's roommate was interested in pursuing Speaker D, so Speaker R hesitated at first, and Speaker D was unsure if he could pursue Speaker R because she was dating someone else at the time. They began hanging out in the same social circle and within a year were engaged to be married.

Group 4 (Speakers E and P) met "at a bar by happenstance" in California. Neither speaker was expecting the relationship to become serious, but they both became quickly involved with one another and deepened the relationship in the course of facing hardships together.

4 Analysis: Master Narratives

This study uncovered two underlying cultural assumptions, or Master Narratives, using Tannen's framework: relationships occur by happenstance and adversity enhances the coupling bond. To identify these Master Narratives, it is necessary to first identify the other two narrative types as defined by Tannen: small-n narrative, the accounts of specific events or interactions that speakers said had occurred with one another, and big-N Narrative, the themes speakers develop in telling about one another and in support of which they told the small-n narratives (210).

4.1. Relationships Occur by Happenstance

One Master Narrative that came to light in this research was that couples are brought together by happenstance. The idea of there being a soulmate for every person dates as far back as Plato (*Symposium* circa 385-370 BCE) and heavily influences modern American media and culture in television shows like *The Bachelor*. All of the couples that I interviewed touched on how they met by happenstance, randomness, or by coincidence, seemingly shirking the idea that they met because it was fated to be that way, contrary to established cultural conventions. The way that couples address happenstance bringing them together is reminiscent of how Tannen's sisters addressed in one way or another the assumption that they were close/distant from their siblings of their own volition, without Tannen ever specifically asking during the course of her interviews.

In attributing happenstance as a cause of their becoming a couple, the speakers give it meaning. It becomes the answer to the question "*Why* did you meet?" whereas the big-N Narratives and small-n narratives describe the *how*.

Throughout their individual and jointly told stories, Speakers E and P strongly attributed the success of their meeting and becoming a couple to coincidence. This big-N Narrative, that of E and P meeting by happenstance in a bar through mutual friends, is supported by the details and repetition in their stories and in turn supports the Master Narrative that couples are brought together by happenstance.

Speakers E and P use a variety of terminology to illustrate how coincidence played a role in their courtship. For example, the word "happenstance" is used three times in their jointly told story:

(line 2516) P we met through mutual friends in a bar by **happenstance**

...

(line 2531) E It was magical **happenstance**

...

(line 2789) P which is another sort of fortuitous **happenstance**

These small-n narratives establish how Speakers E and P view the role of happenstance in bringing them together. The very first use of "happenstance" in their jointly told story occurs in the second line of their story. Speaker P goes on to repeat this idea in various ways by using the words "random" and "coincidence" during his telling of their coupling story:

(line 2526) P we met through mutual friends

u.m..just by **random coincidence**

...

(line 2550) P I just kind of decided at **random** to go back in

...

(line 2790) P not just **randomly** deciding to be there, and her **randomly** being there and all that other physical **randomness**

The influence and existence of Master Narratives about coupling becomes especially evident in the following example in which Speaker E shares some of the wisdom her father passed on to her about the role timing has on relationships:

(line 2794) E my dad has always said that a successful relationship is like ten percent love and ninety percent **timing** and..yeah I wholeheartedly believe that and I think that (Speaker P) and I just had perfect **timing** when we came into each other's lives

And you know then when you're going through a relationship you do cycle through periods where your **timing** isn't lining up that well

The scene that Speaker E creates above shows that the Master Narrative of couples being brought together by happenstance is also shared generationally, from parent to child. Repetition of the words "coincidence," "happenstance," and "timing" reinforces the impact of these small-n narratives in the creation of scenes through which "speakers convey and listeners glean meaning" (Tannen 31). These small-n narratives support Speaker E and P's big-N Narrative that they met in a bar by happenstance. The point of their narratives is highlighted by repetition and ultimately serves the culture-wide Master Narrative that couples are brought together through happenstance.

Speakers K and J also attribute randomness to their becoming a couple and use repetition and emotional description to dramatize scenes. The word "randomly" occurs twice in Speaker

K's small-n narrative about how she and Speaker J reconnected. Speaker K was invited to Speaker J's party by her friend Natalie:

(line 481) K when I was talking to Natalie online **randomly**

...

(line 499) K we ended up **randomly** talking just online

Speaker K and Natalie drive together to Speaker J's apartment complex, which Speaker K describes as very complicated to navigate. Speaker K and Natalie were on the verge of leaving the apartment complex when Speaker J ran into them on his way to get more beer for the party:

(line 681) K the basis of our relay- the relationship **hinges on a minute**

...

(line 685) K **I just don't think it would have, I dunno, it may not have been the same if we had already left**

If we hadn't decided to actually wait or if they hadn't went to go get beer

The urgency Speaker K shares helps create the scene and describes the impact that the confusing nature of the apartment complex could have had on her and Speaker J's relationship. This small-n narrative scene supports the Big-N Narrative of Speakers K and J meeting at a party and reconnecting after years apart. These narratives, in turn, support the Master Narrative of becoming a couple through happenstance.

Speakers S and M also employ a small-n narrative to support their big-N Narrative of meeting in a college course. Speaker M implies coincidence in his scene about doing poorly on a math test:

(line 1050) M So..**it had just so happened that**..(Speaker S) had turned in her test..fifteen, twenty seconds before I did mine, I'm sitting there looking at this stuff I'm like

"I have no idea what this is"

They're like "Do this, and this- this" and I'm like "I have no idea what those words mean..let alone how to do these functions"

So I'm like "Um..here's a little bit on this one," I'm- I'm..paging through trying, you know, maybe something a later problem will help

Nothing

So I- she goes and turns her's in and I've..got nothing and went and turned mine in and

that's when I made the decision to, it's like "Hell

that just kicked my ass, so I might as well just..you know, approach her and see what happened, I've got nothing to lose at this point it's not like my ego is going to get shot down any worse than it already has"

So I- ah

the first words I ever said to her..was "Well, that was kind of rough now, wasn't it"

Speaker M's description of seeing Speaker S turn in her test and his use of dialogue to illustrate his thought processes in sharing how he did not know the material dramatizes his inner conflict and motivations in approaching Speaker S for the first time. The Master Narrative that happenstance drives coupling shapes the scene: "it had just so happened that" Speaker S turns

her test in early, causing S and M to be near each other and that, coupled with the description of Speaker M's inner struggle, accounts for their first exchange of words. The scene supports the big-N Narrative of Speakers S and M meeting in a college math course, which is shaped by the Master Narrative of meeting by happenstance.

Speakers R and D touch on happenstance in describing how often they bumped into one another on campus after initially meeting:

(line 1762) D it was only like a week later

That **we saw each other** on campus

And then do you remember we saw each other on the quad area?

...

(line 1844) R **We ran into each other** on campus

or I would see you on campus anyway

...

(line 1872) D like from that point on **we would see each other** like..really

consistently

Repetition of the phrase "we + saw/ran into/would see + each other" reinforces the impact of their narrative of meeting in a dormitory laundry room, a circumstantially random event according to Speaker D's narrative:

(line 1404) and..I was using the laundry at like the- **some random time of the**

day

[Speaker R] **happened to be doing laundry** at the same time

u:m..and I was reading in the laundry room and I remember..that

she commented that she liked my glasses

a.nd..I thought that was pretty awesome

The repetition of "we + saw/ran into/would see + each other" sets up a parallelism by which the middle verb (saw/ran into/would see) can be altered, and where "we" is understood to be the first word and "each other" is understood to be the last word of the phrase. This repetition supports the point of the big-N Narrative of Speakers R and D meeting in a laundry room by chance and serves the culture-wide Master Narrative that couples meet by happenstance.

4.2 Adversity Enhances the Coupling Bond

A second Master Narrative that I discovered in this study was that adversity enhances the coupling bond. All couples that I interviewed mention a conflict or hardship that brought them closer together or that influenced them in a way to ready them for being in a relationship. Each big-N Narrative about these hardships is explained as enhancing the coupling bond. These big-N Narratives contain small-n narratives that employ involvement strategies to create scenes. The scenes, in turn, support each couple's theory of causation present in the big-N Narratives.

In their co-told narrative, Speakers E and P discuss the hardships they faced early on in their courtship, including the big-N Narrative of E's parents' divorce, the death of a close friend, E's brother being diagnosed with Type I diabetes, the death of P's grandfather, and the death of E's horse. Immediately after this big-N Narrative is a scene in which E and P evaluate how these events influenced their courtship:

(line 2825) P **It was very dramatic**

E **[[It was really dramatic**

P **[[in our personal]] lives**

E U:m..and..it's interesting 'cause I've actually talked a little bit with my
 EX-boyfriend about
 his kind of path of relationships since he and I broke up and for HIM
 it's been very hard for him to be close to anybody and he's led this very kind
 of
 simple fortunate existence, he has hobbies, he has a really good high-paying
 job,
 and he just doesn't know how to be close to anybody
 And so I feel like something that went really right for (Speaker P) and I
 was all the personal drama
 because **it forces you..to open up**
and depend on somebody and ask for help more than a lot of people are
comfortable doing
 and so..you can..much more quickly
 u:m learn about that tougher stuff=

P =Sure=

E =underneath

P **It's hard to be pretentious when life humbles you**

These evaluations ("It was very dramatic" and "it forces you..to open up") help emphasize the point of Speaker E and P sharing the big-N Narrative of their hardships: showing whether, how, and why they faced adversity, in their words, to "open up" with one another and "depend on

somebody to ask for help." These evaluations serve to support the Master Narrative that adversity enhances the coupling bond.

Speakers K and J's big-N Narrative about adversity involves a car accident. Speaker K gives a thorough description of the event in her individually told narrative:

(line 186) K and **we got in a really bad car accident**

B (gasp)

K and **we- we- we could've died, it was really bad** 'cause it was in

Topanga Canyon in- in- up in the hills and right above Santa Monica and

Malibu and

those roads are really dangerous and it's really high up and we kind of- we

like

corner to corner, not exactly head on but corner to cornered with another car

coming around a corner and we-

we were like right on the line and he was just a little over and we both just hit

and spun and **we could have**

flown off the- the [[road

B [[You stay-]] you stayed on the road?

K We did=

B =Okay=

K =but we- we turned like this

down, like, and the canyon was right there and **we could have**

easily have died

could have easily died

It was really bad, (Speaker J) like

had burns on his face from [[the impact of the-

B [[Oh my God

K of- of the- um- the airbags

Um I like-

it seems silly

I jammed my hand really bad and for a while I couldn't move my thumb

um I had HUGE bruises

and **we were both like super shaken, super shaken**

and

So..being- being that distraught and that, like, freaked out about the fact that

we- we could have died

we went home and..uh..got super super drunk

(laughter)

Yeah it was- we sat with our friend Gus and we were like double shotting

tequila

for most of the night and then at the end of the night we were super drunk and

we were sitting outside on the couch they had on the patio and

we- we kind of just were like "**Oh my God if I would have lost you I can't-**

I can't even think about what that would have been like and I- I love you

and I just need you to know this

we could have died and..I don't want to lose you and that- that's really scary"

The car accident is also addressed in Speaker K and J's co-told narrative:

(line 884) J and we moved in together

K Pretty much

[[in January

J [[So that's how it started]] pretty much

K Well..minus the whole **we almost died in a car accident** but yeah

J Yeah..but that was- that was definitely

I wouldn't say it brought us together but **it made us like**

kind of talk about it more I think right off the bat

K **I think we finally just realized how important we were to each other at the time=**

J =Yeah=

K =or at least that's how I feel

J Yeah no I agree with that

Like it was very much like..like I-

First of all I was kind of impressed with how well you dealt with it

and how well- like I had never been in kind of a nasty situation like that with someone that I was, you know, in a relationship with before

So..like putting all that together it was like

Oh..like..this works, like I like this

As with Speaker E and P's big-N Narrative about the hardships they faced during their courtship, Speaker K and J's treatment of this story about their car accident addresses how they faced adversity and the effect of realizing how much they meant to one another. The descriptions they offer concerning their emotions and understanding of the event work together to create an intense scene for the listener. This scene dramatizes and provides an interpretation of the big-N Narrative about the car accident and in turn supports the Master Narrative that adversity enhances the coupling bond.

Speakers S and M's narrative addresses the adversity they faced in a college math course. The big-N Narrative about a particularly difficult test provides an explanation of Speaker M's motivation to approach Speaker S for the first time:

(line 1041) M Um..after a particular quiz..or test or something that I just

bombed=

B =Yeah=

M =hardcore, just kicked my butt

I had no idea what I was doing

And..no re- no idea why or how I got into Calc two but

that's an entirely different story

Um..I'm like "You know what? **This test just kicked my ass**

I- I might as well get shot down..while I'm already down"

Speaker M shares that his perceived failure caused him to approach Speaker S in the first place.

The "bombed" test is also referred to in Speaker S and M's co-told narrative:

(line 1147) M my first [[words to you]]

S [[I was- yeah

M "Well, that kind of sucked now, didn't it?" it was after a test..or a [[quiz

S [[There

were a lot]] of shitty tests in that class

they all kind of merged together

I wouldn't remember which one I hated

Speaker S shares that she also believed the tests to be difficult. The heightened language ("kicked my ass" "shitty tests") adds excitement to the scene about test taking, much like foul language does in a particularly dramatic scene in a movie. These descriptions support the big-N Narrative of the couple facing a challenging math test which is, in turn, shaped by the Master Narrative that adversity enhances the coupling bond.

Speaker R and D share a big-N Narrative about the adverse effects of the uncertainty each of them faced prior to their coupling. Speaker R's narrative shares how her roommate at the time was interested in courting Speaker D:

(line 1353) R u:m..**plus my roommate really really liked (Speaker D)**

u:m..and she- sh- she was kind of like more shy

or more selective about her friends anyway

she- she didn't do well

with acquaintances you know just talking here and there

u:m..and so **she was like pretty into (Speaker D)**

and they listened to the same music

I didn't know anything about music

u:m..and so **she was like "Oh yeah, like, he's so perfect for me"**

I was like "Oh, like..no problem" like I didn't have a problem with that

u:m..there were other guys

u:m..so:..yeah that's how it was for a couple months where like

my roommate was really really into him

Her evaluations are characterized by the repetition of "really" and the quoted speech from her roommate "he's so perfect for me." These descriptions support the big-N Narrative that is characterized by uncertainty: Speaker R was unsure if she should pursue Speaker D due to her roommate's interest.

Speaker D faces a similar big-N Narrative of adversity. He was unsure if Speaker R was committed to another man, which he admits influenced his behavior in courting Speaker R:

(line 1880) D She like hinted that like (Speaker R) was dating someone

And like **I got the impression that like she was like in a serious like relationship**

with this

dude

R Yeah

D Um..who was like a family friend and like back in Washington and everything and I was like "Oh now, that's awful"

it would have been good for you if that were the case but whatever

um but so like when we were hanging out

I was- I was also so like

adversity in dealing with the information they lack, and this deficit influences their early courtship behavior.

5 Conclusions and Future Research

The analysis presented here on couples narratives adds to Tannen's framework in showcasing two new Master Narratives not yet explored in the literature. It shows that the relationships between small-n, big-N, and Master Narratives can be used to uncover the underlying assumptions that influence how we shape and tell stories. Two of the Master Narratives that couples in this study touched on were (1) relationships occur by happenstance and (2) adversity enhances the coupling bond. The involvement strategies of details, dialogue, and repetition present in each couple's small-n narratives work to create dramatic scenes that support the big-N Narratives and, in turn, reinforce the Master Narratives. The Master Narratives identified in this study also shape the big-N Narratives in each couple's story. I have aimed to show in this project how these narrative types operate on different levels of abstraction and how the couples that I interviewed conceptualize and talk about their relationships with one another.

The research presented here shows that Tannen's framework elucidates Master Narratives in story types other than sister stories, such as couples' stories of how they met and became a couple. Beyond what we know to be common to romantic relationships in our society, this study aimed to explore that which we may *not know* to be common. For example, the cultural assumption that relationships occur *by happenstance* was uncovered in this study, which runs counter to the idea that couples are *fated* to meet, an idea that is seemingly pervasive in our society.

In seeking to uncover the Master Narratives mentioned in this work, other potential Master Narratives presented themselves, including the age-old adage "opposites attract." Speaker E, in her individually told narrative and in portions of her co-told narrative, touches on how different she and Speaker E are at the time of their meeting, but how well they meshed together despite these differences. I expect that with further study on Master Narratives in couples stories, other Master Narratives can be discovered and described using Tannen's approach (2008). I also expect that Master Narratives vary according to the speakers' cultural origin, native language, and age, much like the structure of narratives themselves.

Another avenue of research worth exploring would be uncovering how the Master Narratives in individually told versus co-told stories compare. Specifically, are Master Narratives about coupling the same across all individuals or do they differ between those who have been in romantic relationships versus those who have not, i.e., are Master Narratives internalized through experience? This analysis makes a case for further comparative research on couples and other types of storytellers.

There is also much to be learned about how speakers in general construct and reconstruct their stories and how these speakers share the floor with someone else who is familiar with the story. Tannen interviewed sisters, I interviewed couples, but what about other human relationships? Do brothers elicit similar Master Narratives as sisters do?

Another direction of interest would be to examine how males and females cooperate with others to build narratives and how they manage their evaluations in these settings. Speaker J provides a different (in content) and smaller set of evaluations in his individual narrative than he

gives in the co-told narrative with his significant other. It may be fruitful to examine the contexts in which speakers are more comfortable or more vocal with their evaluations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Speaker K & J's Narratives

Speaker K's Narrative

- K We actually met..originally
 We- we have our own terminology for our relationship
 We met originally in high school=
- 5 B =Okay=
 K =And um..I'd been friends with my
 sort of best friend
 she's not really my best friend anymore, Natalie
 and we'd been friends since junior high
 and..when we got into high school we kind of like got into this big group of
 10 friends and we kind of all smashed together
 and you know I don't even know whose friend (Speaker J) was anymore but
 he just got kind of smashed into the group
 and we had this huge group of friends and we- like I think there was like ten
 or fifteen of us and
 15 we hung out at all the breaks and at lunch and recesses and all that stuff and
 in classes we had together
 and..like, for pretty much the first two years of high school
 we were pretty much together all the time
 and then at the end of our sophomore year our friend Sarah
 20 um..had a- well, we- we know now she had a
 uh the beginnings of..schizophrenia
 B Oh dear=
 K =so she had a psychotic episode
 and uh..it kind of tore our friendship group apart
 25 and it was- at the time we didn't know that's what it was, but it was kind of
 at the time
 you were either on her side or on Natalie's side and they're both really good
 friends and I didn't want to pick so I didn't
- B Yeah
 30 K And then..eventually..just- things came to a head between me and Sarah and
 I was done having friends
 and by that time most of us had already..split off the group and there weren't
 many of us anymore and (Speaker J) had split off and
 went and found other friends and other stuff to do and
 35 I pretty much stepped away from the group at that time and..for the last two
 years of high school
 I spent all my time..with my science teacher..at every break and lunch
 I would sit in his office- sit in his classroom and eat my lunch by myself
 and do my homework
 40 for the whole last two
 years..and Natalie knew where I was so like if somebody really needed to
 come talk to me or really come- needed to come and find me everybody
 knew where I was and that's where I could be found and I didn't leave

45 if I didn't have to
 So pretty much um I hated high school
 So pretty much when it was over I just wanted out
 So..I really don't..even think
 I think I saw (Speaker J) one more time before the end of school and like
 signed yearbooks and=
 50 B =Yeah=
 K ="Oh nice to see you and nuh nuh okay see
 you later..have a nice life
 going this way now"
 Um..so like once high school was done Natalie was pretty much the only
 55 person I
 talked to
 and then she got a boyfriend
 and he- it- she kind of did her own thing with him for a while so I didn't
 really talk to her for three years
 60 which wasn't any big- wasn't a big to me it was like "whatever, whatever
 you wanna do, it's fine," you know, "I know you're busy"
 So..I just did stuff on my own most of the time, I had a job, I was-
 had work and school, and you know I was busy anyways so it was no big
 deal
 65 Well one night like, I dunno, three or four years
 after high school
 I got on- just got online just doing my normal thing and then she popped up-
 and she popped up in my IM messages and was like
 "(Speaker K)!" and uh-
 70 She was like "I'm so sorry I haven't talked to you" and like- it was like "No
 big!" and we kinda
 hit off our friendship all over again and it was like nothing had ever
 happened so we- we spent a lot of time together and
 she was like "Well
 75 the only reason I talked to you is 'cause I was talking to (Speaker J) and
 telling him I" like, she had just broken up with her boyfriend
 and she had- was talking to (Speaker J) and he was like "Well just talk to
 (Speaker K), she'll-
 she'll be okay, she- she'll- she's- she's pretty relaxed, she's not gonna care"
 80 and I didn't so we- we were friends again and it was like yay and we're all
 happy and she was like
 "Oh I've been talking to (Speaker J)" and
 she was like "He's having a party and he wants me to come so you gotta
 come with me"
 85 'cause it was in Santa Monica and she doesn't like to drive- she doesn't like
 to drive far by herself=
 B =Yeah=
 K so basically it was "I wanna go to the party, I want you to come too, but I
 want you to drive and take me there"

- 90 and I was like "Okay"
 and I was like "Okay, it sounds like fun"
 'cause I- we were both- we- I had- had-
 it was..the year I turned twenty-one and my birthday's in April and that was-
 the party was in September
- 95 So..Natalie and I drove up there and we- (Speaker J) lived in this
 inSANE apartment complex in Santa Monica, it was HUGE
 it was HUGE
 it was like at least a city block long
 up a hill, so part of it was like
 100 down here and part of it was up here
 so like- there's like, four stories up here and like, eight stories if you're
 down here
- B Mhm
 K and..it's not well-marked where you can park and
 105 it's- the- not- one starts up here and so it continues
 so all these ones that are below it are all letters
 So when somebody tells you their apartment number they're like "Oh
 my apartment's like, you know, one-oh-four," you're like "Oh, one"
 "No, you're wrong"
- 110 B (laughter)
 K So Natalie and I spent FIFTEEN MINUTES walking around this apartment
 complex trying to call and no answer
 So finally we just went to the front of the building and were like "Okay,
 we're gonna sit here for ten minutes
 115 and SEE if somebody comes"
 and like..TWO MINUTES before we were sup- we were about to go back to
 the car
 (Speaker J) and a group of his friends like came walking around the corner,
 we're like "What the HELL?"
- 120 (laughter)
 "We've been trying to find you for like HALF an hour" and he was like "Oh
 I'm sorry"
 And like- so we ended up- he ended up uh walking us back to the apartment
 and they all went and got booze and
 125 stuff like that and- 'cause it was like a- it was a college party
- B Oh
 K So
 we all got- we all got really drunk and
 it was kind of- it was kind of funny like
 130 it was a funny feeling
 as we saw each other and I know for me it was kind of like
 "I don't remember (Speaker J) being this..HOT in high school"
 he was DEFinitely not the same person I knew in high school, this is-
 this is kinda interesting
- 135 B [[(laughter) Oh hey

- K [[So like-]] but I had just gotten out of like a four-year-long relationship so
like
for me it was more like "Let's see where this goes but that guy's also cute
so we'll see where that goes"
- 140 B (laughter)
K "We'll just see what happens" but I end- we ended up really hitting it off
and I- we spent most of the- the time we were there together
and actually
it- we got really drunk and we ended up
145 spending the night and both of our moms were like freaking out 'cause they
hadn't heard from us it was like five in the morning before we had
any
forethought to call somebody and let them know we weren't coming [[home
150 B [[Yeah
K and we were just- we spent like-
we were- we had a lot of fun like reminiscing about high school and
(Speaker J)
tied my shoelaces together, duct-taped my feet together
'cause he thought it was funny
155 and then I tried to get up and walk
B (laughter)
K It was pretty funny
and then
we all fell as- we- I wa- (Speaker J) was in the- the middle and I was on one
160 side and Natalie was on the other and we all fell asleep like
wa- like..just watching random TV, and then we watched a- we woke up all
and it was the end of some ridiculous movie
and the news- the news came on and they- it was the- it was the news about
Suddam Hussein being killed
- 165 B Oh wow
K Yeah that- that makes it- that gives it a date, [[dudn't it?
B [[Yeah
K So um..and pretty much from then on (Speaker J) and I- we talked back and
forth for a few months
170 after that so we consider like that was our re-meeting date
and then like we spent like the next three months kind of like talking and
I- every weekend I progressively stayed longer and longer at his house
B Aw
K Until I was going there like Friday right after work at three at- for my old
175 job
and I would stay till like Sunday at like nine or ten o'clock and then drive all
the way back home which
I lived like over an hour away so=
B =Yeah=
180 K =it was long
But we just-

we slowly decid- realized like how much we like got along and really liked
each other and then
um..he came and stayed with me for Christmas
185 and we were driving back home
and we got in a really bad car accident
B (gasp)
K and we- we- we could've died, it was really bad 'cause it was in
Topanga Canyon in- in- up in the hills and right above Santa Monica and
190 Malibu and
those roads are really dangerous and it's really high up and we kind of- we
like
corner to corner, not exactly head on but corner to cornered with another car
coming around a corner and we-
195 we were like right on the line and he was just a little over and we both just
hit and spun and we could have
flown off the- the [[road
B [[You stay-]] you stayed on the road?
K We did=
200 B =Okay=
K =but we- we turned like this
down, like, and the canyon was right there and we could have
easily have died
could have easily died
205 It was really bad, (Speaker J) like
had burns on his face from [[the impact of the-
B [[Oh my God
K of- of the- um- the airbags
Um I like-
210 it seems silly
I jammed my hand really bad and for a while I couldn't move my thumb
um I had HUGE bruises
and we were both like super shaken, super shaken
and
215 So..being- being that distraught and that, like, freaked out about the fact that
we- we could have died
we went home and..uh..got super super drunk
(laughter)
Yeah it was- we sat with our friend Gus and we were like double shotting
220 tequila
for most of the night and then at the end of the night we were super drunk
and
we were sitting outside on the couch they had on the patio and
we- we kind of just were like "Oh my God if I would have lost you I can't- I
225 can't even think about what that would have been like and I- I love
you and I just need you to know this
we could have died and..I don't want to lose you and that- that's really

- scary"
 And I was- pretty much- from that- then on we pretty much, that was
 230 Christmas Eve, er, day after Christmas
 and we pretty much just, that was our- that was when we started dating and
 then actually
 probably like
 three or four weeks later we moved in together
 235 B Wow
 K And we pretty much have been together ever since
 like, it was like eight years ago now, over eight years ago
 B I want eight years
 K It's a lot of years

Speaker J's Narrative

- 240 J Well, we originally met in high school
 um..but..we..it was like freshman and sophomore year kind of we knew
 each other and then we kind of
 like split up, we went to different groups=
 B =Yeah
 245 J we were just friends, we had the same friends
 and we really didn't see each other for
 a couple years, probably till like, two-thousand-three? I think, somewhere
 around there
 and uh I..was talking to our mutual friend Natalie, who's her best friend
 250 online..and uh Natalie was having some hard times with social stuff for
 whatever
 and so I asked her to come down..to LA where I was currently living..uh
 from Ventura where she was living
 and uh just come to a party that me and my friends were having
 255 and..so she did
 and she- I told her to bring (Speaker K)
 'cause she was like "yeah you haven't talked to (Speaker K) in years, you
 should talk to (Speaker K) and bring her along"
 and she did and (Speaker K) said yes and
 260 they came down
 and uh..apparently..they..couldn't get a hold of me when they got to the
 apartment complex
 the complex is really com- complex
 so uh
 265 (laughter)
 it's really hard to find our apartment
 and you couldn't get in anyway
 so they were kind of screwed and then they walked around for a while and
 they
 270 basically sat down on the curb in- in LA
 out in front of the complex and said "We're waiting for ten minutes and

if nobody shows up we're leaving"
 (laughter)
 and we happened to walk outside shortly thereafter apparently
 275 and caught them on the curb and said "Hey! What the hell are you guys
 doing here?" and
 said hi and everything and
 So that's- that's how we re-met
 280 [[I guess
 B [[Re-met?]] And then it was just kind of..from there it was just like
 J Yeah we- she came down a couple more times over the next couple weeks
 and we hung out more and more
 and then we just got closer and then eventually
 285 uh we made the decision to move in together
 and I moved up to Ventura with her
 B Oh
 (laughter)
 J Yeah it was pretty quick
 like it was- I mean it was over a couple months like uh
 290 just..a little while after Christmas and I think we first met like in October

Speakers K and J's Co-Told Narrative

K Do you want to start or would you like me to start?
 J Uh start where you want to
 K So we first met when we were in high school
 Um..I don't..know if- were you friends with Natalie..first?
 295 J Uh..yes
 I was friends..with John?
 K Okay
 J Yeah, random, actually I was friends with a friend of John's
 and then I met John and then I saw John at the Circle
 300 and so I started talking to him, and he was friends with Natalie so that's /?/
 K Okay
 J It was kind of long and like drawn out and it only happened over the course
 of like two days
 so it's not like=
 395 K =It was like right in the beginning of freshman year
 and I had been friends with Natalie since, like- oh well- since three- two
 years' previous
 'cause I was- knew her in junior high
 J Yeah
 400 K and so we all kind of hang out and knew each other from then
 Um..and then about..we- we used to hang out like occasionally during high
 school, like
 we always hung out during class, like during school time
 but there were like- we went and saw..Mortal Combat together at the
 405 movies=

- J =Yes!
 Yeah, as a group it was like=
 K =Yeah=
 J =it was always me and (Speaker K) and
 410 Natalie and Sarah that one time=
 K =Yeah=
 J =and like
 like maybe one or two other people other times like that
 it wasn't very [[often
 415 K [[We didn't do-]] yeah we didn't do a lot of. [[group activities
 J [[which is part
 of the like-]] yeah, when we could
 we were. [[sixteen or whatever so we didn't really have cars or anything
 K [[Do-.do you remember Natalie's..]] birthday party when it was
 420 Austin Powers [[themed?
 J [[Yes..I remember that..very]] [[well
 K [[For]] Natalie's sixteenth
 birthday she had an Austin Powers themed party
 B Oh baby
 425 K (laughter) It was-=
 J =Yeah..[[it was like that
 K [[It was-
 I didn't stay very long
 It wasn't anything personal I just
 430 I had never been a big party person and I didn't-
 I was even worse when I was in school
 B Aw
 K Um..so basically that- there was like- after two years
 um..one of our friends, Sarah, kind of had like a
 435 feud with Natalie, so it was either be friends with Natalie or be friends with
 Sarah
 and I didn't want to choose
 J And-
 K who I was gonna be friends with
 440 J Yeah and I had already pretty- pretty much left the group at that point
 K [[Yeah
 J [[Like I had]] gone and like made friends with a bunch of video and- and
 uh- drama people
 So I spent most of my time=
 445 K =Yeah=
 J =away from where you guys were
 hanging out
 K Yeah, he kind of like, left when all the stuff was starting and like
 found his own thing and I-
 450 I actually don't even think I saw him again=
 B =Wow=

- 455 K =until like the end of se-
the end of senior year when I had him like sign my yearbook
and at the same time I was kind of like "Oh, I remember you..will you sign
this?
Everybody else is signing it, do you wanna sign it [[too?"
- J [[Right yeah
(laughter)
- 460 K It was like a weird like "Okay see you later" [[kind of thing
B [[Aw
(laughter)
- 465 K And then like- I dunno I- I..really hated high school anyways so I just didn't
really
want to pay attention or hang out with anybody anymore anyway, I pretty
much
still was friends with Natalie and talked to her occasionally
but then she got a boyfriend and she was- I pretty much didn't talk to
anybody from
high school for like three years afterwards
Just kind of did my own thing
- 470 J But they were all still my friends to some extent
I moved..uh..back to the boat, I mean after high school and then I moved to
San Diego in preparation for going to school in LA
- 475 K [/?/
J [[but it was]] like still a couple months before school started=
K =Yeah=
J =so I
went and lived with my mom in San Diego
and then..uh moved to LA, went to school for a while and then when I was
there
uh..that's when Natalie- when I was talking to Natalie online randomly
it was a couple years later, I think it was like two-thousand-two, right?
Something like that, maybe three
- 485 K Two-thousand-three
J Yeah
And uh I was talking to her and uh she had broken up with her long-time
boyfriend
- 490 K That you also knew
J Yes that's Mike Zats=
K =Yeah=
J =he wa- he was actually one of my best
friends
So..like I had seen Natalie in the intervening time because I had gone to my
friend's house and stuff like that
- 495 B Yeah
J But like I didn't go to hang out with Natalie, I went to go hang out with my
friend Mike and all of our other friends who all hang out together

to do like haunted houses and random shit and- and..whatever
 And uh- and so..like..I dunno, we ended up randomly talking just online
 500 because I was bored and she was bored and we were talking and
 then yeah I was like "Well, I mean, you're having a really hard time like
 getting socialized, you feel really lonely because there's-
 you don't know anybody anymore because the only people you knew where
 505 Mike's friends" because
 that's the kind of person Natalie is and then
 it was like "Well, I mean, we're still friends, like why don't you come down
 to LA"
 and it took a lot of convincing because she doesn't like to drive on the
 freeway
 510 She has a deathly fear of semi trucks=
 K She has a- one of her aunts was in a really bad car accident on the freeway
 with a semi
 where her top half of her car got chopped off
 B Ah
 515 K so Natalie's like deathly afraid of driving on the freeway especially when
 there are semis like
 J Well she was
 K She [[was
 J [[She's gotten]] over [[it
 520 K [[It's- it's-]] it's not as bad now
 but there were- would be- basically if I was driving
 and she was in the car with me I would have to like full- pedal to the metal
 to get past the semi or else she would be freaked out the whole time we
 were [[behind it
 525 B [[Right
 J And uh so anyway I- I said "Yeah come down"
 I got her to come down and
 she didn't want to come down on her own and so I said "Well, do you still
 have (Speaker K)'s number, can you talk to her?" like
 530 because I had asked her like "You don't have any friends?"
 she's like "(Speaker K)'s like the only person I still know" (laughter) pretty
 much
 K And we hadn't talked in like three years
 J Yeah, exactly, she's like "She was kind of my best friend" and I was like
 535 "Aw whatever I'm sure she'll be glad to hear from you, say 'What's
 up?'"
 And so she did and then (Speaker K) said "Yeah, sure, I guess" essentially
 K Yeah she basically- she like IMed me and she was like "I was"-
 she's like- I popped- I popped on the Internet and she pa-
 540 emailed or messaged me on the- the instant messenger and was like
 "(Speaker K)?" and I was like "Yeah?"
 and we kind of like reconnected and then like
 she was like "Well, (Speaker J) said I should talk to you"

- 545 'cause he said you wouldn't be mad at me" and I was like
 "Why would I be mad at you? I'm not mad at you"
 and she's like "Oh I know I haven't seen you in forever, I'm a bad friend"
 and I was just like "No it's-
 it's cool. You got stuff to do" and then she told me about the whole breakup
 and their
 550 whole relationship and I had met the guy that she was dating like
 when they first started dating and was totally annoyed by him
 so that's pretty much why I never-
 He like- we went out to this restaurant, this like really nice like fish
 restaurant, like
 555 seafood restaurant
 and..he was like..playing with his french fries and like making them dance
 and like
 covering himself in ketchup and then like
 he got underneath the table and [[he was like
 560 B [[What?
 K acting like a child and like yelling for Natalie like a little kid
 and I was like- I was done, I was like "Okay, I'm- I'm gonna go home now, I
 can't handle this
 I'm not..mentally"=
 565 B =It's just gross, [[it's just gross, like "What are you doing?"
 K [[It was- it was really gross
 And then like we were driving and I was like
 afraid for my life 'cause he was-
 half the time he was playing with his little alien doll while he was driving
 570 or like turning around to like ask me questions or like talk to me
 and I was like "We're going like fifty and you're not even looking straight
 ahead and you're not even paying attention at all, are you?
 You're just playing with your stupid little alien toy"
 So I was like "Okay, I don't really-"
 575 I- I- the- uh- for me it was like
 I wasn't mad at Natalie=
 B =Right=
 K =and it was like I didn't ever wanted to see
 her again but it was like
 580 I don't really need to be included if like he's going to be there=
 J =Right
 K I don't really- I don't really care=
 J =Right
 K So when she messaged me I was totally fine and she was-
 585 then she was like-
 a couple of..weeks later when the party actually was=
 B =Mhm=
 K =she was like
 "Come with me 'cause I don't want to go by myself" and then I was like

590 "That sounds like fun" she's like "(Speaker J)! You remember (Speaker J)!"
and I was like
"Sure..whatever (laughter)..let's go to a party, whatever that's fine"
So we drove down to- to Santa Monica and..Malibu, and
(Speaker J) lived in this really intense crazy..apartment complex

595 J Yeah [[it was huge
K [[It was huge
J Yeah it was just- it was really really big
um..and it was complicated by the fact that it was on a hill
and so like the entrance is at the top of the hill
600 but it runs like down the side of the hill
so the entrance floor is the ground floor
and everything else is like basement levels
except for at the bottom you can be like two stories over the street
but you're in basement level three
605 or something like [[that
B [[Oh
J [[Yeah
K [[Floor A
J Yeah yeah yeah exactly
610 And yeah I think it was, it was like one, two, three up and it was A, B, C
down
So..yeah..so I'd be like "Oh we're in uh B-two-zero-zero-two"
"Okay, cool" and you get in
and if you in at the elevator at the ground floor
615 it doesn't go down
because it doesn't actually go underground
you have to like just go down the hill essentially
B Oh
J So you get in the elevator and it's like one, two, three, four, five, (laughter)
620 or whatever
and "What?"
So..it led to a lot of confusion and uh
and so you guys couldn't even get in, I don't think, right?

625 K [[No we
J [[There's no guest parking]] or something or
K You gave us..John that lived with you's phone number
J [[/?/
K [[and we kept-]] we kept calling and calling and nobody was answering
'cause there was a- a raging college party
630 so no one's answering the phone
So Natalie and I are like standing there
we were out at like- we didn't know, we were parked in the bottom
basement level on probably the opposite end of the complex from
where they actually lived=
635 J =Yeah

- K and we were parked down there and we go up a floor
um..and it's like a regular lobby except for like you have to have like a pass
to get in the elevator
and like the- it doesn't have a map, it just has a bunch of letters and numbers
640 on it and we're both like
"I think he said like (laughter)..seventeen something? Or eleven something?
I don't know"
the like- the map doesn't tell you where anything is and we're just kind of
like
645 So we like walked around like out front a little bit
and we- we're starting to get tired 'cause we'd already been like walking
around and trying to figure it out for like
twenty minutes
- B Yeah
650 K And then we were like "Okay, we're just gonna sit here
if we don't see anybody we know in like ten minutes..we're leaving"
And she was like "Okay" and I was like "We'll just tell him we're sorry" and
we'll
go find somewhere to have dinner and go home
655 and she was like "Okay, we tried"
it wasn't like we could do anything else=
J =Right
K No- it wasn't- we were- I got tired of calling and it was like whatever
So we thought- we sit- we're sitting
660 at this like- in front of the sign for the apartments=
B =Mhm=
K =and like just about
ready to go
and like this group of guys comes out of the-
665 out of the parking structure and like starts walking towards us and we notice
(Speaker J)
'cause (Speaker J)'s way taller than anybody else (laughter) and he always
had been
So we're like "Oh, there we go" so I'm like "We're just getting ready to
670 leave, where the heck have you been? (laughter)
We couldn't figure out how to get to where you live
It's really confusing here and nobody was answering their phone"
And then uh (Speaker J)'s like "Oh, yay, come- come, I'll show- show you"
and so (Speaker J) broke off with us and
675 walked us like the ten miles to the apartment (laughter)
and the other guys-
the other guys all went and got more beer
or whatever they [[were doing
J [[Yeah that's why we]] left is to go
680 for a beer run down to- to Seven Eleven or whatever it was down the street
K So all the- the basis of our relay- the relationship hinges on a minute

B Oh
 K Where if- 'cause [[I mean if
 J [[A beer run]] yeah
 685 K I just don't think it would have, I dunno, it may not have been the same if
 we had already left
 if we hadn't decided to actually wait or if they hadn't went to go get beer
 J It could have been /?/
 K Yep, then we
 690 B God bless the alcohol
 K Pretty much, we all- we had-
 We had like- we hit it off like part way through the night and we just kind
 of
 695 hung out together and laughed and talked and drank and
 reminisced about high school with Natalie and
 'cause Natalie and I didn't know anybody else so we pretty much just
 talked to (Speaker J) for most of the night
 J Yeah, I was just trying to like do the normal party thing and just introduce
 everybody to everyone else
 700 But that still never works like
 Do you know what I mean?
 Like if you dee- everybody's like "Yeah, cool, you're (Speaker J)'s friends,
 I'm gonna go talk to mine"
 705 They pretty much switch and so- and then, you know, maybe they're like a
 little friendly or whatever
 Most of the people were pretty friendly, especially after a couple drinks
 But it was still like- yeah, still uncomfortable if you're the only people that-
 the only person you know is me or Natalie
 and you haven't talked to me in three years
 710 So, yeah
 But yeah- so then we did that and then we hit it off and then after that, came
 down like a couple weeks later or something like [[that
 K [[Yeah]]
 J [[Like we talked online]] a couple of times [[and
 715 K [[A couple weekends later
 K Yeah
 J she came down and then
 she started cooking for me
 because I was super broke and didn't have any food like at all
 720 so she would cook food and bring it down on the weekends
 and then hang out all weekend and then go back
 K I pretty much won over the entire fl- apartment, everybody they knew
 All the boys, 'cause they were all boys /?/
 I never really met a girl that hung out
 725 J No we didn't do that
 K Yeah so like once they knew I cooked
 J We were all nerds

K it was like
 J All my- okay, so I went to an art institute school which means that
 730 I was going for film and everyone else I know pretty much- knew pretty
 much
 I think there was like one other video person but everybody else was all
 game design
 K And animation
 735 J And animation
 Oh and there was one culinary
 K Yeah
 J but that was it
 Like every- like one random culinary dude
 740 Because they don't- the way they work there is really dumb
 but they- the way they put the apar- apartments together
 they just throw people in
 I don't know if it's like a lottery
 745 or they're just like ever- "You wanted a two-bedroom apartment blah" and
 you get in with these random people
 rather than trying to like match people or do anything like that
 they don't do that shit
 So they just- they- so yeah it'd be like
 just because game design and animation was one of the most im- like
 750 biggest fields
 you get a lot of those dudes in the apartment complexes
 and then culinary was the second biggest
 so like it was like random culinary people
 pretty much every- every apartment had at least one
 755 which I don't know if they intended to do that or not but like those people
 are not like-
 they're not gonna be like "I'm gonna cook for the whole house"
 they're like "I'm gonna cook and take my assignment to school, and fuck
 you guys"
 780 K ["Don't touch it"
 J ["Don't eat this"], you bastards"
 K Yeah so like every weekend I'd come down and like
 I'd bring (Speaker J) something and then after a while they were all like
 they look- they gave me their sad puppy face
 785 J Yeah
 K "We're hungry"
 J Yeah so initially it would be like- like little stuff and then after the, I think it
 was the second or third week, I was like "Just bring a whole tray of
 enchiladas"
 790 K Yeah I'd make like
 J Just bring as much food as you can
 K a giant pot of soup, just for (Speaker J) or like
 trays of enchiladas [[and then

840 K So- so we- so basically it went on like that for like three months
 So we- we- I would go down there like..pretty regularly, like
 after like- probably after like the first month I probably went down there
 every weekend
 and it would progressively get longer
 845 to the point where I would like
 leave straight from work on Fridays and I wouldn't come home until like
 ten to twel- ten to midnight on Sunday
 and then..just go back to work and do it all again the next weekend

J
 850 Yeah
 Yep..pretty much
 And then..it came down to..I was gonna have to move out
 of my apartment because I lost funding for school
 and..like..pretty much there was no way I was gonna be able to stay
 I couldn't find a job or anything
 855 and (Speaker K) was pretty anxious to leave her house at the time
 just 'cause she wanted to move out

K
 My mom was..not happy with me being gone
 J
 A lot
 But yeah, and then it was- it was kind of like "I don't know if this is too
 860 soon, but like
 this seems like it could work out and it-
 I mean, I feel right about it, I don't know how you feel"
 and then she was like "Yeah, I kinda like that idea" so we kinda worked it
 out and
 865 over the course of like two, three weeks
 we put it all together
 like she would rush down like in the middle of the week sometimes
 and like bring me paperwork to sign
 for like apartment contracts and like leases
 870 and like- or lease applications and- and uh
 'cause they just had to have my name on it
 and then she brought it back up, get it done
 And there was like one that was like
 "Yeah, we're- come down sign- you gotta sign the paperwork and then run it
 875 back up, then we're gonna be done"
 And while we were like in Barnes and Noble and I was signing it we get a
 phone call
 and they're like "No we gave it to someone else"
 like "Fuck you"

880 So then..yeah, I mean we eventually got an apartment and then it was "Okay
 cool"
 so I threw everything I owned in the back of her Suzuki and then moved to
 Ventura with her
 and we moved in together

885 K Pretty much

- J [[in January
 J [[So that's how it started]] pretty much
 K Well..minus the whole we almost died in a car accident but yeah
 J Yeah..but that was- that was definitely
 890 I wouldn't say it brought us together but it made us like
 kind of talk about it more I think right off the bat
 K I think we finally just realized how important we were to each other at the
 time=
 J =Yeah=
 895 K =or at least that's how I feel
 J Yeah no I agree with that
 Like it was very much like..like I-
 First of all I was kind of impressed with how well you dealt with it
 and how well- like I had never been in kind of a nasty situation like that
 900 with someone that I was, you know, in a relationship with before
 So..like putting all that together it was like
 Oh..like..this works, like I like this
 So..and then we started talking about it
 and it was pretty much like-
 905 that didn't solidify- we weren't like "Okay we should move in together right
 now"
 K No
 J But it was-
 K That was [[like
 910 J [[it was]] very much like "Oh okay so this is kind of serious"
 and then a couple of weeks later=
 K =Right=
 J =it was like
 okay the hammer has dropped on my life
 915 so..I need somewhere to go, you want to leave your house so
 why don't we get cracking on that real quick and like
 put it together
 and like..(Speaker K) as usual performed miracles and managed to get some
 shit done
 920 K It was- it was actually pretty disappointing like
 all the apartment searching and always finding either too expensive, crappy
 There was one I went to where it was like
 a house that they had turned into three separate studio apartments
 and they turned a kitchen pantry into a bathroom
 925 And like I was like it- it was one of the place- one of the two places I could
 afford- and that we could afford
 and I was like looking- I was thinking about it and like-
 I was like "Man, if we don't get anything else this is gonna have to be it"
 but I really don't think that
 930 (Speaker J) would have been able to have like ever taken a shower there
 standing up

- and like- because of- the door was only slightly taller than me
 and like this- this- it was like- it was like- like a- like a little closet
 like that little closet
 935 like where- like you basically walk in a door that's about the same size as
 you
 'cause it's a pantry, not a- not a door door
- B Yeah
 K So it's like, you know, two, maybe three feet across, maybe
 940 Nah, it's probably more like- like this, like two, two feet open- two feet
 wide
 and maybe like, maybe five and a half, maybe six feet
 maybe..tall
- B Oh my God
 K And then you walk in the door which is hard to open
 945 and then once you open it, you like block off half the bathroom
 so like you- you have to walk in all the way to the back of the bathroom
 turn around, close the door
 and then you can use the sink
 950 and then..you can go- then you have to kind of like
 turn yourself again and walk back down
 and then turn again and there's the toilet
 'cause it's not- it's literally like this wide
 so then you have to turn around and use the toilet
 955 and then- but once you use the toilet you have to get up and turn around
 again
 to get back in the shower
 'cause it's right across from the toilet
 but it's like literally, like- like=
- B =Like my bathroom
 K It's- it's- it was like your bathroom if there was like a hallway
 B [[Yeah
 K [[in-]] like in there
 965 Like it was that tiny, it was really a-
 and it had very low ceilings too
 And I kept thinking "If we get this apartment, (Speaker J)'s probably gonna
 hate it
 He's probably gonna hate life
 for a- for a long time"
 970 or we're both gonna have to get like- we're gonna have to both lose weight
 and get like
 shortening surgery or something
 (laughter)
 But yeah
 975 And we finally found a really nice studio and like
 the only reason=
 J =In Ventura=

K =One of the main reasons I think we got it was
because
980 the lady was super nice and when I was telling her it was me and my
boyfriend's first apartment she was like
"Oh I remember when I-
when I moved in with my first boyfriend and we had a studio apartment too
and
985 you seem like a responsible person and"
We had like a- a really cool-
it was a pretty big studio
it was nice
K [[It was]] pretty much
990 J [[Yeah
It was pretty much the size of this room
K Now it's
J and the kitchen
K eight years [[later
995 J [[just about
K and we're still together
J Yep
B It's almost a decade
J Shut your mouth (laughter)

Appendix B: Speaker S & M's Narratives

Speaker S's Narrative

- 1000 S Um I don't remember the exact instance when we met because it was in
Calc class of my freshman year at Toledo
and..I wasn't dating anybody at the time but I was kind of looking for a
boyfriend just..to have one, kind of a thing
so I was dressing up pretty and stuff and
- 1005 was in the front row, I remember, and the professor was such as asshole
he was..um..Japanese or something and it was his first semester, first like
month in the US, right
So he didn't know anything, would do like these huge equations on the
board and would- would say "Okay, got it?" and then erase it right
- 1010 So..I remember leaving class pissed off all the time and
he would ask me like "Oh that class really sucked" and
it just kind of went from there and
I remember one day in particular we were outside the classroom just waiting
to get in and
- 1015 I was watching Pirates of the Caribbean on my Zune..thing
and..he remember- I remember him asking me about it and
found out that he liked it and
I mean if you like Pirates of the Caribbean you got to be pretty cool, right?
You know?
- 1020 So..and then we dated, I remember our first date was at the Olive Garden
He got there first..and then..I came
but I wasn't really sure if I should go back
(laughter)
You know? 'Cause I didn't know if he was already there or if I should look
- 1025 or if I should just wait, you know?
So I ended up waiting out there for like five to ten minutes
before I actually went out there to..talk with him and stuff, so
It went well, we've been together pretty much ever since

1030 Speaker M's Narrative

- M It was uh
Shit had to have been- had to have been fall semester..at Toledo
Um..would have been my..second year there?
It was her first
- 1035 B Okay
M Um..calc two..and she was the pretty redhead
the girl with the pretty red hair, who sat in front of me..two chairs and over
one
and..at the time she had no idea who the hell I was
- 1040 just..some guy in the class who didn't know what he was doing
Um..after a particular quiz
or test or something that I just bombed=

B =Yeah=
M =hardcore, just kicked my butt

1045 I had no idea what I was doing
And..no re- no idea why or how I got into Calc two but
that's an entirely different story
Um..I'm like "You know what? This test just kicked my ass
I- I might as well get shot down..while I'm already down"
1050 So..it had just so happened that..(Speaker S) had turned in her test..fifteen,
twenty seconds before I did mine, I'm sitting there looking at this
stuff I'm like
"I have no idea what this is"
They're like "Do this, and this- this" and I'm like "I have no idea what those
1055 words mean..let alone how to do these functions"
So I'm like "Um..here's a little bit on this one," I'm- I'm..paging through
trying, you know, maybe something a later problem will help
Nothing
So I- she goes and turns hers in and I've..got nothing and went and turned
1060 mine in and
that's when I made the decision to, it's like "Hell
that just kicked my ass, so I might as well just..you know, approach her and
see what happened, I've got nothing to lose at this point it's not like my ego
is going to get shot down any worse than it already has"
1065 So I- ah
the first words I ever said to her..was "Well, that was kind of rough now,
wasn't it"
for the end of the test, of course and
she's like "Well, I think I did okay"
1070 And..this was at
I don't remember the building
Anyways, on one end of the campus and she had always parked on the other
end of campus
So we're just sitting there walking and bullshitting and
1075 she got to..how she was..looking at some place in the French Quarter, about
moving and
talking about absolutely nothing that had to do anything with anything
So I'm like.."So you kind of understand this stuff"
she's like "Yeah I really did well in Calc in high school" and I'm like
1080 "Can you uh..wanna help me because I have no idea what's going on"
So she gave me her number and..that was..that was that

Speaker S and M's Co-Told Narrative

M Toledo
Uh..Calc two
S Yeah..crazy Chinese..[[professor
1085 M [[Oh my God]], oh my God
Was he in fact Chinese or is he just

S He- I remember it was his first couple months in the states or something
 So he had never been here
 He was the worst, he made me hate math
 1090 M I- I had already hated it before that
 S Then why'd you take it?
 M I had to, it was a requirement
 S So was Astro two or whatever, or Optics
 M I understood- well, the optics part I didn't understand because it was all
 1095 math-based
 Theo- theoretical physics, no problem
 The theory of why things work and how things work and
 stuff like that, the theory side..no problem
 The practical math application of..so this particle could in fact be in six
 1100 different places at the same time NO IT CAN'T
 particles are in one spot
 We have this potential, well and
 NO..no no no
 Give me the theory- the theory part
 1105 [[The theory part, I did fine
 S [[But math is all theory
 M Theoretical is an ex- math is an exact science, it's not theoretical
 That- that had nothing to do with how we met, dear
 or our relationship other than that
 1110 S So we met in Calc class, in Calc two
 I remember I was in the front row..[[and
 M [[Second
 S Yeah..and, you were
 M 'Cause you had your feet on the chair in front of you sometime- most of the
 1115 time
 S Yeah and I still do that..in class unless someone takes the seat next to me
 um..and you were behind me
 oh there was that crazy girl that always got
 S [[the curve
 1120 M [[I was two]] rows over from you
 S Yeah she always blew the curve
 Everybody..by everybody I mean everybody but her
 failed the test
 she would get hundreds on it so he wouldn't do a curve
 1125 M Yeah
 S Yeah
 B Glad I wasn't in this class
 M Uh..anyway..[[fall semester?
 S [[Ss-]] Yeah it would have been, 'cause it would have been my
 1130 first semester there
 my- one of my first classes
 M I remember that

S So it was our first semester there, well, my first semester you're..ss- I'd have
to do the math, third?

1135 M Three- third third
S Talk with your mouth not full
M Third semester, second year
S Kay
M So first semester of my second year

1140 S Yeah..so we met in that class, I don't remember exactly when we met, but I
do remember like
being outside and I was..watching Pirates of the Caribbean on my Zune
and you had commented on how you liked it
and I was always [[watching it]] before class

1145 M [[It was before that
Yeah you were watching that before class
my first [[words to you]]
S [[I was- yeah
M "Well, that kind of sucked now, didn't it?" it was after a test..or a [[quiz
S [[There
were a lot]] of shitty tests in that class
they all kind of merged together
I wouldn't remember which one I hated

1155 M No we stopped in- in- we started in front of..hell's the name of that
building?
S Scott's building?
M Yes..it's not the Ritter, that was the one next to it
S Yeah
M It's not the Stranahan

1160 S No it's the one right in between those two
M Mhm
S McMaster
M Yes
S McMaster
1165 M McMaster
Not that has any bearing on anything=
B =Totally=
M =but
S No yeah so McMaster
1170 and [[then
M [[Started talking to you]] right at- right..outside McMaster, and we
stopped in front of
the Strana-, outs- in front of Stranahan
S Which one was Stranahan?
1175 M Stranahan was
if you're at the mall
near the mall
you had the com- the student union

the- the
 1180 S Am I looking at the field house or away from the field house?
 M If you're looking at the field house it's the building right behind you
 S Kay
 I don't remember stopping there
 I remember walking there
 1185 M We stopped there, and we chatted for a while about how
 you were looking at a place, trying to move out of your mom's house and
 you were looking in
 French- French Quarter and
 you had found a couple of apartments there that you liked..and you were
 1190 talking about
 doing draperies and
 S I still got my drapery
 M Was it like this though?
 Anyway
 1195 And..I asked you to tutor me, or at least help me
 S I remember trying to tutor you and you couldn't figure out your=
 M =I=
 S =sine,
 cosine, tangent
 1200 M Yeah=
 S =at all=
 M =Again
 S Not that complicated
 M Well
 1205 S I still remember those
 M I was never really taught those that well though
 S There're tutors
 M That doesn't help me now
 B Wasn't that- wasn't that your job, (Speaker S)?
 1210 S No, it was Calc two, you learn that stuff before Calc two
 M Yes, you learn that in Trig
 S Yeah
 M Which I didn't do very well in
 I'm okay with numbers
 1215 I'm okay with numbers and letters
 It's when you start throwing Greek letters into math equations that I have
 problems
 Alpha, sigma
 S They're not [[that hard
 1220 M [[Theta
 Anyway
 S Pi is Greek and you like pi
 M The type you eat
 S Pi is only a number, it's just put into a symbol, it's not that complicated

1225 B It's only infinite, you know
 S Yeah, yeah, it's only about three point
 M One four one five
 [[one two
 B [[Nine]] two six
 1230 S Nine two seven
 one point one four, nine two seven
 M Anyway
 S So we met there, I remember going on a date, though, at the Olive Garden
 and you were already in the Olive Garden
 1235 and I remember being outside in the lobby, not sure if I should go in and
 look for you
 or if I should call and text you and I think I ended up calling you
 and I don't remember what we ate but you probably ate
 M [[Garlic herb chick-
 1240 S [[The garlic fray-
 M Garlic herb chicken [[con broccoli
 S [[con broccoli
 M That was before they took it off the menu
 'cause [[nobody ever ordered it
 1245 S [[He still tries to order it
 M [[I do still try to order it
 B [[I've never heard of that, wow
 S It's all he ever gets at Olive Garden
 M It's so good
 1250 S and the salad and the breadsticks
 I at least change it up, I know how to try variety
 M Not really
 Is that the first time you've been introduced to uh
 S [[Brandon
 1255 M [[Smoked]]..smoked
 Oh..oh God
 "Can I get a diet water?"
 S We went to Olive Garden [[with him for a date one night
 M [[Or a salad without lettuce?"
 1260 S We were screwing with the waitress
 and we asked for a diet water
 and then a salad without lettuce
 Was Beth there too?
 M Mhm
 1265 S That was so funny
 M And Dan
 S [[Oh
 M [[and
 S I had purp- I had purposefully forgotten him
 1270 M Sorry..and Justin..and Nick

S I miss Nick
M My roommates were..an [[interesting collection
S [[His dorm- when he lived]] in the dorm, his
roommates were
1275 M An interesting collection /?/
S different, my first experience living with guys
M You didn't even live there
S On and off
M You slept over sometimes
1280 S Aw Jack
(laughter)
So..there's that
M That's really the story of how we met
B Yeah
1285 S Yeah for the most part
Basically just Calc class
all of it

Appendix C: Speaker R and D's Narratives

Speaker R's Narrative

- R K..well..um..I came to BYU right after I graduated high school
 So I was 18
 1290 A:nd..moved into Riviera Apartments
 A:nd..it was like..the first or second week so
 pretty..like at- right at the beginning
 U:m I was dating a guy from-
 kind of from home
 1295 he was like a family friend that I had known for a long time
 U:m..and then all of a sudden we're like
 Wow we're adults and like this- yeah
 Let's like be a couple
 Um but we had only been dating a couple weeks
 1300 um but we were like 'Yeah long distance we can totally do this'
 (laughter)
 and- and it- that was my first boyfriend so
 I don't know if you remember like your first boyfriend or girlfriend but
 where you're like
 1305 this will be forever=
 B =Yeah
 R and so like that was kind of where I was
 um..so pretty into that relationship but also
 pretty overwhelmed at all the opportunities I guess
 1310 like so many new different people
 um so I was also kind of..considering that
 um..and..so I come down..to do laundry
 and (Speaker D)'s there like on his laptop
 he has these cool glasses
 1315 B (laughter)
 R and he's- he's kind of like just a cool looking guy
 and so- and he has a really nice laugh
 and he would like laugh at whatever I said
 and so I was like "Oh he's like a really good conversationalist that's cool"
 1320 um..and I- I open up conversation with "I like your glasses"
 and by that I mean "You look like someone I'd like to talk to"
 you know "have a conversation with"
 um..and he was down there like
 on his laptop watching, you know, his laundry
 1325 I just like, you know, put it in there and walked back up to my apartment
 um I was like "Oh maybe I could stay and talk"
 um..and..we had-
 I think it- we were talking about being vegetarian
 u:m..so that was a big point
 1330 and I had just like made some homemade granola

and I was like "Oh I should bring some down for him"
 but then I was like "No that's way too weird"
 (laughter)
 bu:t- so that was our very first encounter
 1335 and then- I just like..see him..like..more than I see other people
 like..campus is a huge huge place
 but I would just like..run into him..like more than you would out of random
 chance
 someone else it seemed like to me
 1340 um and maybe because I was kind of like thinking about him I would like
 see him
 u:m..bu:t..yeah so it was actually a couple months
 so that was like..late August
 and then we didn't hang out until..Halloween party
 1345 so: it was a couple months
 and in those couple months like
 I..dumped my boyfrie:nd..from ho:me and started dating another guy
 u:m..and the:n..broke up with him
 I think we were still dating whe:n (Speaker D) and I hung out on Halloween
 1350 though
 u:m..and so I still wasn't like totally looking for a new boyfriend
 plus- I'm so curious what (Speaker D) told you
 u:m..plus my roommate really really liked (Speaker D)
 u:m..and she- sh- she was kind of like more shy
 1355 or more selective about her friends anyway
 she- she didn't do well
 with acquaintances you know just talking here and there
 u:m..and so she was like pretty into (Speaker D)
 and they listened to the same music
 1360 I didn't know anything about music
 u:m..and so she was like "Oh yeah, like, he's so perfect for me"
 I was like "Oh, like..no problem" like I didn't have a problem with that
 u:m..there were other guys
 u:m..so:..yeah that's how it was for a couple months where like
 1365 my roommate was really really into him
 and we always hung out- it was like us three
 so like two girls and (Speaker D)
 or maybe one of his other roommates or something but it was like usually a
 group that first semester
 1370 and the:n..yea:h..and the:n..winter break came
 a:nd spending time with my family
 and I had to like get approval like "Well what would you think like if I
 dated (Speaker D)"
 u:m 'cause my little sister is like my best friend so
 1375 she always knows what's good for me
 u:m and she's like "Yeah, sure, I- I could see that"

and so it was after uh Christmas break um..that we finally started dating
 u:m so we come back in January and like the first week we're like
 "Oh it's so good to see you"
 1380 a:nd..we start taking these like long walks at night
 which..was fine..but it was so cold..like so cold
 because we didn't want to make it like official like
 "Hey we should go somewhere alone together to like talk or"
 1385 so we were just- we would just like wander..for like hours and hours..in the
 winter
 u:m..and so yeah that was like for a whole week
 and then like January 15th or 16th..we started dating
 (Speaker D) got it wrong once
 and now I can't remember which day was wrong and which one was right
 1390 u:m..so yeah so January 15th or 16th
 a:nd..yeah and we were on a really long walk a:nd..he held my hand
 a:nd..kissed me goodnight at the door
 a:nd..we were dating
 (laughter)
 1395 So yeah that's how we met initially
 u:m..a couple times I like wanted to not date anymore because like drama
 with my roommate
 u:m..my roommate's like my best friend now though still so
 it's- it's like all good
 1400 that's really all I have to say about our meeting story

Speaker D's Narrative

D Uh..so..(Speaker R) and I met..uh..while we were both..uh..in undergrad at-
 in Utah
 a:nd..we were living in the same apartment complex
 and..I was using the laundry at like the- some random time of the day
 1405 (Speaker R) happened to be doing laundry at the same time
 u:m..and I was reading in the laundry room and I remember..that
 she commented that she liked my glasses
 a:nd..I thought that was pretty awesome
 a:nd..so yeah like..I re- we talked really briefly and I just remembered
 1410 just thinking like "Aw she was really cute a:nd that was cool"
 u:m and then I remember seeing her on campus like that very week
 and I'm like "Aw it's the girl who liked my glasses"
 and I couldn't remember her name
 a:nd (Speaker R)'s rel- like if she meets you once
 1415 then she remembers your name
 and so she was like "Hey (Speaker D) how's it going"
 I was so- I felt awful
 so I tried to do the whole "Hi you"..kind of thing
 and she totally saw through that
 1420 which is a bummer

but we didn't really talk..after that until..u:m a Halloween party that we
were both at
a:nd..we just became really..good friends really quickly
so we like hung out all that night
1425 and the:n..u:m
oh goodness
I think our first like..hang out session after that we went and saw u:m
there's like a foreign film series
uh..at our old school
1430 and we went and saw a movie
that was kind of like our thing
we would always go see foreign films on campus
but yeah so like we were just good friends at first
um and uh she and her roommate were really close
1435 so we always hung out uh all three of us
and sometimes some of my roommates together
and it was really weird because um
I thought both (Speaker R) and her roommate were really cute
and so I was like "oh this is nice, like hanging out with pretty people..that's
1440 cool"
but it got really awkward because..um..her roommate also had a pretty big
crush on me
and..so that led to all sorts of drama drama
um..probably much more for (Speaker R) than for me
1445 because I didn't have to live in the constant sphere of drama
but
(laughter)
so yeah like we
that- that was kind of weird and our- our hanging out was kind of strained
1450 for a while
because of all of that that was going on
mostly outside of my knowledge
but yeah
and I remember like I went- we went- we went back to our- our respective
1455 homes for
winter break
and (Speaker R) was in Mexico with her dad
um and we were just like emailing each other all the time
and- and just like facebooking each other
1460 and it was like oh man I really miss her
like- but she probably doesn't really like me
and um..there were tons of other guys who were interested in her
so I was like "well it's probably not going to work out
but I really like her and we're talking all the time"
1465 and so I was telling this to all my friends at home that I met this really cute
girl

and that we were like..I dunno
and we were- like I was hoping it would go somewhere but it probably wont
so i resigned myself to that
1470 and we went- we came back um..and..I think it was like two weeks later that
we..decided
that we were a couple
(laughter)
which worked out wonderfully for- for me at least
1475 (laughter)
but that apparently led to even more drama drama with the roommate that
she was still
with
and that's not good
1480 but she'll probably have more to say about that 'cause I don't really know the
whole side
of the story
(laughter)
I dunno it was like really fun being with (Speaker R) because we- we like
1485 started off just like
friends
and we would go to concerts and like we went dancing once
and it was just really fun and it wasn't like- there wasn't any expectations
really
1490 u:m..and so i thought that was like really cool
that it was just kind of like- we were just like friends
then it was just like "Now we're just like friends that kiss"
so yeah i dunno it was really fun
I think we dated..for
1495 goodness
'cause we started dating in January and we dated..for..almost a year and a
half I guess
um..before we..got married
and it was pretty fun
1500 like we would just
I dunno like our whole dating story was- was pretty normal I guess
I really like to- to cook
so like (Speaker R) would come over to my place and I would cook food
which was..I dunno
1505 I thought that was really fun cause
I didn't really know this when we first started hanging out
but (Speaker R) didn't really ever cook for herself
and..that was not OK..with- with me
u:h so we- so I- I usually cooked and then we would either like
1510 go see foreign films on campus
or we would go to concerts
and that was something that was really fun

that we would just always go to concerts together
 so I thought it was really fun that like
 1515 we both seemed to enjoy the same things and that was really important to
 me
 and it was really fun
 so I don't know
 it's uh- it's kind of weird to like-
 1520 I remember when we were moving away from Utah to move out to
 Michigan
 like we would sort of just like drive around
 um..and see places that might have been to together
 'cause we loved eating out all the time which is why we're poor
 1525 it was really fun to like
 have this sort of space where we just had these sort of memories and things
 I don't know
 it was- yeah like in a way like our courtship and like the majority of our
 marriage is like really
 1530 tied to- to Utah
 I guess
 and- or also her dad's place in Washington
 I remember
 the first time I met her dad
 1535 like she warned me
 that
 the only thing she told me was like "My dad's kind of intense"
 and I'm just like "well what does that mean?"
 that's like a really ambiguous..ambiguous statement
 1540 and that's kind of weird for like-
 it's sort of troubling for like the guy who gonna go meet his girlfriend's dad
 that he's just intense
 so that- that was the only image I had
 as I'm driving up from Oregon to come visit him in Washington
 1545 but like her dad was super cool
 and it was- that was another like really fun aspect of- of dating
 and even now that we're married
 like we spend a lot of time in Washington
 up in her dad's cabin
 1550 so that place is also really important
 as far as our- our story as well
 I dunno
 that's kind of fun
 I guess I hadn't really thought about that before
 1555 weird
 but yeah so let's see
 and I can go as=
 B =whatever you want=

D =long and as far as and talk about whatever?
 1560 B whatever you wanna do
 D cool
 so I remember I- I hadn't like..thought much about like..getting married
 um..and it was like- we- we both come from like a religious background
 where it's-
 1565 where it's pretty much normal that people get married early
 and..like- but I like tried to put that out of my head as much as possible
 because it was sort of just weird to me
 and I remember
 before I met (Speaker R)
 1570 um I was really bad at dating
 like I- I would- I was just like such a terrible boyfriend
 like all the time whenever I would date someone
 'cause liked we'd be- we'd date for like three weeks
 "oh this is the worst"
 1575 and like I could never get past three weeks
 without being like "Oh this is terrible"
 um and I remember like when we hit three weeks I was like "Oh no like it's
 time again for
 everything to- to be ruined"
 1580 and that's terrible..but we- we went past three weeks and that was a new for
 me
 and then like we- we were dating for like..a few months
 I was like "oh man this is crazy"
 but then it was also like
 1585 "oh no all these kind of expectations"
 then it's like "you guys have been dating for more than like than four
 months and
 you don't hate each other
 So..you know..when are you gonna get hitched"
 1590 and that was kind of weird to think about so I tried not to as much as
 possible
 but..um..I remember we were actually in- we were visiting my parents
 um it's the first time (Speaker R) had ever like..come to my place in Oregon
 and met my parents
 1595 I remember I was just kind of like thinking about I don't know every-
 everything we had
 been through up until that point
 and how natural it was to be with her
 and um the fact that she still inexplicably liked me after a few months of
 1600 dating
 and so I-that was when I kind of started really thinking I could see myself
 with this
 person for the rest of my life
 and that was kind of cool

1605 and so I guess we kind of started talking about it a little
um..but it took us like another year before we actually got married
and we just
I don't know
so I guess after that point in time we were just always talking about- about
1610 getting
married
and trying to figure out when that would work
and when that would be best to happen
and actually that- that was probably the only thing that was like stressful
1615 that was like THE only thing that invited stress into our relationship up until
that point
which was really ironic
that marriage- or the conversation of marriage is what does that
but whatever
1620 that's okay
so yeah like
but
I don't know- I think the thing I love the most about our relationship then
and our
1625 relationship now is that like
um..(Speaker R) is really patient and puts up with all of my crap really well
like
better than- than she should probably
um..I don't know, it was just like really cool like whenever I was being
1630 weird about like
wedding plans
like she was..really I don't know
always like the steady person there
so I don't know it was- it was really cool like when we were like planning
1635 the wedding
and everything
we just kind of were doing that together
even though (Speaker R) did like most of everything
and so yeah like we got married in Portland which is
1640 so like I'm from like southern Oregon and most of (Speaker R)'s family is
from northern
washington
so Portland's like right in the middle of everything
and that was just really fun to have everyone's family there
1645 um.. and that was where I kind of like for the first time understood that like
when you-
when you marry someone you're kind of like marrying their family
uh and that was interesting because (Speaker R)'s family is awesome
but like our family backgrounds are really different
1650 uh so that was-

that was and has been interesting to- to sort of
 figure out my place in her family where I could fit in um..and not like mess
 everything up
 um- um so yeah that was-
 1655 that's another fun thing that's been ongoing
 and I'm sure it will be for uh the rest of ever
 but yeah so I don't know
 like it's um it's been like really fun since we've been married
 because we spent every waking moment together anyway when we were
 1660 dating
 um and it was just nice because now we didn't have to pay two different
 rents
 'cause we could live together it was awesome
 um..and so I dunno like it's- it's just fun to see how the things that we liked
 1665 to do when
 we were dating
 just kind of continued and now it's like
 those are things that we still do
 uh except (Speaker R) turns out to be an amazing chef and makes delicious
 1670 vegan baked goods
 now
 and yeah so I don't know how to bake and that makes me sad
 (laughter)
 uh so I don't know
 1675 it's- it's fun
 we still cook together
 and we still watch movies together and we- we go out and do fun things
 around town
 it's weird 'cause a lot of people have told me that when you get married
 1680 there's like- this
 sort of like change like that happens in your relationship
 and this- this sort of inexplicable thing that just happens and no one knows
 why
 I don't know like
 1685 it's just kind of fun living with you know my best friend and just being
 about to do the
 things we've kind of always done
 it hasn't been too- too different

Speaker R and Speaker D's Co-Told Narrative

1690 R You can start 'cause you were there first..so:
 D (laughter) What?
 R I decided to go do my laundry
 D Oh OK cool
 We'll go chronologically
 R Yeah

- 1695 D U:m so=
R =Unless you have a better..idea
"It all started..I always knew I wanted to marry someone with-
with glasses and curly hair"
- 1700 D I'm down with linear narratives
So it was a dark and stormy night=
R =Yeah=
D =in San Francisco when I was born
in 1987
and then it was 2006- er- 2008 nevermind
- 1705 R 2006? I was like seventeen..sixteen
D U:h so yes
U:h..I..had to read..this long boring chapter for my..like pre-modern
Japanese
history class
- 1710 and I was like "U:h..that sucks"
And so I decided to semi-procrastinate or..do other things at the same time
and do
laundry
[[a:nd
- 1715 R [[He's not very good at doing two things at once
D I'm not..this is true
So basically-
But no when you came in I was reading=
R =yeah you were=
D =I was- I was being
a good
person
While waiting for my pants to dry
I..u:h..was sitting and reading
- 1725 and (Speaker R) came in and she was doing her thing
and then..u:h..she noticed me..and [[my
R [[You-]] you were up by the..machines
D Was I?
R Yeah..'cause=
D =OK
(laughing)
R 'Cause I remember
D [[Was I reading?
R [[looking over]] and noticing
- 1735 R I [[remember
D [[Cause I was at the]] desk thing right?
R Yeah! Yeah!
D OK right
R But then I remember looking over and noticing your glasses
- 1740 and thinking like "Should I say something?"

- And then..I remembe:r..tha:t..my mom told me that I should never NOT say
a
compliment if I have one in my mind
- 1745 D Good for your mom=
R =So:
D Good- good- [[good advice
B [[That is like]] fantastic advice
R I know right?
B tell your mom I'm gonna try to like
1750 R How many things good things do you think of and don't even tell people
about it?
So I said "Hey"- not "Hey, (Speaker D)"
"Hey, I like your [[glasses"
D [["Hey person"
1755 R "I like your glasses"
and then I like..went right back..up to my room, I think, cause--
D We had like a very brief exchange
and you gave me your name and I told you my name
a:nd..then I promptly forgot your name
1760 R Oh yeah
D and then, so like
it was only like a week later
that we like saw each other on campus
and then do you remember we saw each other on the quad area?
1765 and then you called out and you said like "Hey (Speaker D)" and I was like
"Hi:..person"
R Yeah
Usually I know people have forgotten my name if they like greet you with
just like
1770 "Oh hi!"=
D ="Hey what's up?"
R which it's fine
the first couple weeks of school
D It's not fine when you directly address me by my first name though
1775 It's like "Oh hi pretty girl that I met in-
doing laundry the last week who complimented me"
R But I- so did I come-?
I must have come back down though
I remember
1780 We only had a small conversation
u:m..and then like I went up and I came down
and you were reading at the table
and then I come down and like sit by you to talk
and (Speaker D) does this thing, he did it earlier, where when he laughs he
1785 like
claps?

and li- I was like "Oh like that's like so cute
 He really thinks I'm funny"
 and

1790 D Sorry I do it for everyone, (Speaker R)
 R Yeah, didn't find that out until later
 D But I'm sure whatever you said I found it genuinely enjoyable
 R Yeah so..
 D or I was just trying to be really easy going
 1795 because pretty girls don't talk to me
 R Whatever..um..
 D So yeah
 R And I like thought about our encounter a lot
 [[I remember
 1800 D [[Did you really?
 R Well I mean not like a lot but you know how when..[[you
 D [[Stalker
 R Yeah
 like when you like meet someone and you kind of go over the situation and
 1805 you
 like
 "oh it would have been awesome if I said or did this"
 so just like regular
 and we were talking I think..like I was making granola
 1810 and we were talking about it or something
 and I remember thinking like
 "Oh I should have like brought some down to him or something"
 and then I was like
 "ew no:" but..[[so yeah you kind of were
 1815 D [[If you would have brought me]] food, (Speaker R)
 oh my goodness
 R if then=
 D =I just would have=
 R =what..you would have married me..or
 1820 something?
 D Yeah
 R Yeah
 (laughing)
 u:m..so yeah
 1825 that was the first couple weeks
 when we met on campus (Speaker D)
 kind of indirectly invited me to like
 oh=
 D =yeah=
 1830 R ='cause he was on his way to a film class
 and BYU has this cool international cinema
 like where it plays..uh..free films like from other countries

- or older films in English
and he was like
- 1835 "Oh like..we should go sometime"
but not in like a datey way
it was just more of like a
just putting that out there it's a cool place, maybe we could all hang out
and then..we only saw each other like a few-ish times
- 1840 D Yeah like I don't even remember seeing you until=
R =[until halloween=
D =Halloween
R Yeah
- I- W- We ran into each other on campus
or I would see you on campus anyway
- 1845 D These are all things that I'm learning for the first time now
goodness
Well=
R =So=
1850 D =I'm glad I made a good impression
my glasses are all to be thanked for our relationship
u:h..so yeah like
but then like Halloween, we were like
we met at this party
- 1855 and so just we basically hung out all night
so it was (Speaker R) and her roommate=
R =yeah=
D =and then me and my
roommate
- 1860 Was Greg there too or just Brady?
R I don't think so
He was all..dating Lindsay and so
D Dating his future wife
R Yeah
- 1865 D and all that that entails.
U:h so yeah like we just started hanging out and I think that night
we like seriously hung out..[[until like..forever
R [[Yeah we stood outside
D So we just like stood outside and then=
1870 R =And talked=
D =we basically
like from that point on we would see each other like..really consistently
like almost every day
but I knew that you were still-
- 1875 I- so I found out from her- from her
not- not Rachel but Ashley
R So roommate that I wasn't super close with
but I mean you all know each other's business

- 1880 D So yeah she like
She like hinted that like (Speaker R) was dating someone
And like I got the impression that like she was like in a serious like
relationship
with this
dude
- 1885 R Yeah
D Um..who was like a family friend and like back in Washington and
everything
and I was like "Oh now, thats awful"
it would have been good for you if that were the case but whatever
- 1890 um but so like when we were hanging out
I was- I was also so like
"thats right
she APPEARS to be not taken when in fact there's some guy a few states
away
- 1895 who
is [[occupying her mind"
R [[Did that affect your behavior?
D It did 'cause like I didn't=
R =Really?=
D =Yeah
- 1900 'cause like if you would have been dating someone like in Utah
and I would have like seen you with them
it would have been like
oh well then ok
- 1905 OK I can't obviously even do anything
but then since like it was just this spectre
R mhm
D that didn't even really exist I found out..u:h..later
R yeah
- 1910 D It was- I like- I didn't know what to do because I thought you were super
cute
but like..I didn't know if you were actually dating anyone
and then LATER
I don't remember when I found out that you had like broken up with this
- 1915 person
and it
was actually like
the second guy you were dating, Taylor
- 1920 R and not the family friend
D and not the family
so I was like WAIT A MINUTE
I found out that all my information was just totally wrong
R Yeah
D you just can't trust..roommates for anything

1925 R No, never
D So..
but yeah like
we just basically hung out and went to movies at the international cinema

1930 R [[a lot
D [[yeah
and then=
R =um
And then- most- and then Christmas Break happened
and uh

1935 D [[we
R [[we
D Facebooked each other all the time
R Oh yeah we facebooked
and we texted a few times

1940 but that's kind of expensive
'cause I was in Mexico with my dad
D And I didn't know that so why were you texting me?
R How didn't you know that?
D I don't know

1945 R You don't listen to anything I say, (Speaker D)
D I'm sorry
(laughter)
R so yeah um and then
D And was it before or after Christmas that I met your-?

1950 It was- it was before Christmas that I met your family?
'Cause like what were we going and doing?
that I went and picked you up at your mom's place?
R Oh I don't remember that
D I don't remember either but like

1955 R I knew you'd met Rachel and Timmy
D Yeah the first time I was over
I like- I picked you up at your mom's place or something
R Maybe
D I think you were like making granola with Rachel

1960 R Yeah yeah we were going to a concert yeah
it was- it was my Christmas present
you just make some granola put it in a baggie and give it- give it to your
friends

B I see a theme developing

1965 R yeah
love granola
D it would- it would prove to be an important part of our- our courtship
R yeah
D So like

1970 R well actually part of the reason I dumped the guy I dated right before I dated

- (Speaker D)
 was because I made him a huge bag of granola
 it was like my- I love granola
 I think it's delicious
 1975 and we go over to his house like
 two weeks after I had made it for him
 and it was like sitting unopened on his bed
 and I was like "o:h"
- B Dealbreaker
 1980 R Pretty much
 D He didn't know what he was missing
 R Pretty much
 Um so yeah we get back..from Christmas break
 and I had talked to my sister and she had like given the approval
 1985 and the:n..um
 I was really excited
 like the first thing I was dropped off..um like
 a family friend picked us up- picked my siblings and I up from the airport
 and like dropped me off uh at my apartment
 1990 and like (Speaker D) was there to meet me
 I think we just like- right?
 D Yeah no=
 R =we met and hugged and went for a long cold walk
 D 'Cause I remember we=
 1995 R =the first of many that week
 D She- she like came back a few days after the semester had started
 R oh yeah
 D and so..like I knew you were getting back late
 but like I was just like
 2000 like anxiously looking forward to you coming back
 I and think you came back like three or four days late
 and so..on the night you were coming back
 I was just like- I just remember being really excited
 that- which is funny because we weren't dating
 2005 I wish we were but
 R Soon enough
 (laughter)
 D But like I- you know
 So..I thought that was just funny
 2010 because I was really anxious for you to comeback
 and when I finally did see you
 you were like walking down..the like- the sidewalk
 and I remember thinking just "yeah"
- R Yeah
 2015 (laughter)
 D Woo-hoo

R I remember being like "Wow, (Speaker D) bought like three coats over
 Christmas
 Break"
 2020 (laughter)
 which you did
 I- I like the way you dress though so it was good
 D You're so kind
 R Yeah
 2025 Um..so yeah then we went on lots of walks that week
 right?
 D Correct
 R Do you remember that?
 D Yes
 2030 we went on a lot of walks
 and..I..tried..to get up the courage to like..make something that resembled a
 move
 and..I didn't
 and [[so we just
 2035 R [[Eventually
 D No!
 because remember like we would just go on these like FRIGID walks
 R yeah
 D At BYU
 2040 like your- like your housing is all gender segregated
 and like you- you're not supposed to be
 in an opposite gender's dorm or like apartment
 past midnight
 B Ok
 2045 D and so I was like
 R or 1 o'clock on weekends
 D Yeah [[or 1 or 2 on weekends
 R [[Special privileges
 D I remember
 2050 it's absurd
 R Yeah there's like nowhere to go if you're a couple
 D There's nothing you can go
 and like Provo is like a small town
 well there is the..uh..like nasty like taco dive that you can go to
 2055 which is delicious but (Speaker R) would NEVER come with me to there
 for some
 reason
 R It's pretty gross
 D or nothing else
 2060 so basically if we wanted to keep hanging out after midnight
 we would just go out and take walks
 R Yeah

D in January
 in Utah
 2065 R which is less committal than actually going somewhere anyway
 'Cause it's like "we'll just walk oh! and if we just happen to keep walking for
 lots of
 hours
 then there you go"
 2070 instead of being like "Hey we should go to..that taco place that you hate"
 or something like that
 D So I remember it was the week- it was the night before
 I was going to go up and visit my brother in Idaho
 over was it- what- was it Martin Luther King day or something?
 2075 R uh huh
 D we had the day off it was awesome
 and we were walking
 and I was like
 "I'm going to be home over the weekend
 2080 and like
 I- I should like..confess my feelings or something" I don't know what
 like what- I don't know what normal people do to like..become a couple
 but I- but I'm not sure
 R yeah
 2085 D so like
 I- I wanted to do something
 some gesture
 and I..didn't
 and so as we were finally deciding that like
 2090 our feet are numb and we should go home before we get frostbite
 I remember we were like about to cross the street
 and (Speaker R) like put her hand in my coat pocket
 a:nd I was like "Oh! ok that is- that's nice"
 and so we held hands all the way back and I was like shh
 2095 R in your coat pocket?
 D in my coat pocket
 R I kinda remember that yeah
 D Do you remember that?
 R I think so- I couldn't remember
 2100 who held whose hand though
 D That was you
 well I suppose
 I was the the who interdigitated
 or who initiated the interdigitation
 2105 R yeah
 D but you put your hand in my coat pocket
 and so thank you (Speaker R) for being the only one with bravery in our
 relationship

2110 R It was just getting painful
it was like
D really it was cold
(laughter)
R yeah
2115 D So there we go like we held hands
and like we kissed that night
and then we were like "shoot yes we're a couple!"
and then I went away for like four days for the weekend
and then came back and she still liked me
and yeah
2120 and that was the start of our..life as a couple
and what- after that do you remember or is it just a blur of JOY?
R Yeah
all joy
all of it
2125 you know how relationships are
all good all the time
(laughter)
D Exactly!
I never did anything remotely annoying to upset you
2130 or- or anything
R Nope
B I mean they don't- they don't work in "for better or poorer" for
R Yeah they don't do that
D It's all bliss after
2135 R No that's- I think that's pretty much it
the story of how we became a couple
D Yeah
and I dunno like
just to like
2140 with hit
like really we just like hung out for two years
or like a year and a half I guess before we got married
and it was just kind of fun 'cause it didn't seem any different
and I remember I was so worried about our three week mark
2145 R Oh yeah yeah
D 'cause I had a terrible=
R =That's a big one
D IT WAS!
like I had like a terrible track record
2150 with like people I like dated before
and it seemed like after like three weeks I like
"man this is so boring" and like "I totally don't like this"
which makes me a really shallow jerk probably
but so I remember when three weeks were- were coming up

2155 "No I really like her I don't want this to- to be it"
 and I still liked you and you still liked me and it was super awesome
 so I dunno
 and then like after three months like
 when you came back with me to- to like Oregon to meet my family and

2160 everything
 I was like "oh..I could get used to this"
 R Yeah I think that was when too we had first brought up like getting
 married=
 D =yeah

2165 R we'd be dating for four or five months
 and it just kind of like came up
 "oh oh yeah that's kind of cool"
 and like it just- it didn't seem like super scary or weird

D yeah

2170 R um
 D So I don't know like I- we finally got engaged=
 R =yeah=
 D =for reals

2175 um..oh gosh it was-
 oh what- what was the day we got engaged
 I don't even remember
 R it was the week of my birthday
 D Oh was it really? [[That's nice
 R [[yeah you wanted to like propose on my birthday

2180 but I don't remember what happened
 probably it was just really really cold
 he wanted to do it all.. [[romantically
 D [[I had this really grand idea like idea
 so like um..we listened to

2185 we went to a lot of concerts
 and listened to music a lot together
 and I remember this one time
 this was way before we were dating it was like
 it was right before Christmas break

2190 our first Christmas break that we knew each other
 R finals
 D finals
 and we were both walking to the library like at like..eight in the morning
 to like study and like have an awful day of finals

2195 but we were walking together and I remember
 we were like sharing my headphones
 and we were listening to this song by Sigur Ros
 and it's like this really pretty song
 and we were walking and it's snowing and it's gorgeous in Utah at this time

2200 and so like we were walking and listening to this like beautiful music

I'm like "oh this is- this is really nice"
 and so I wanted
 my ideal was that..I would wait until it had snowed
 [[and that
 2205 R [[oh yeah that's right!
 D and so I told my=
 R =but instead of snowing it just kept getting colder and
 colder
 D yeah so it was just frigid
 2210 that was all
 and it wouldn't snow
 a:nd I remember I had told my grandma
 'cause I had bought like a ring like over Christmas break and everything
 R over like the summer
 2215 D yeah it was over the summer
 and I had kept this ring
 in my dorm [[room
 R [[like it in your underwear drawer
 (laughter)
 2220 D just like the entire semester waiting for the first snow
 so we could go on a walk and listen to that song
 and then like at this like really gorgeous moment where like the music
 swells and
 everything
 2225 like then I would get down on one knee and I would like propose to you
 and instead of snowing it just got frigid
 so eventually
 my entire plans were ruined
 and..(Speaker R) knew I wanted to propose to her
 2230 R Yeah
 D I could never find the right time to do it
 so instead we had gotten into my car
 R because he asked me if I wanted to go for a walk and I'm like
 "really? like obviously he wants to propose"
 2235 D it was like five degrees outside
 R yeah
 D so (Speaker R) said no she didn't want to go for a walk
 R yeah throw a little curveball
 see if he could think on his feet
 2240 D there's no place to go in Utah
 to like or like at least the place where we lived in Utah
 there's no place to do anything inside after like ten P.M
 R Yeah
 D so it was just like
 2245 ok we can either- like I can propose to you in your living room
 with like your roommate [[eating cereal

Appendix D: Speaker E and P's Narratives

Speaker E's Narrative

E Um...well I was in Southern California
 and I had actually just moved back
 2290 to the Los Angeles area and moved back in with um an old trainer of my
 and I was living in her barn
 This was after a really big breakup with the guy whom I had moved out to
 California for and we'd
 started in LA, gone up to San Francisco together, broken up in San
 2295 Francisco
 I came back down to the last like point of security I had
 And..the woman that kind of took me in, who was my mentor and my boss
 and everything,
 she.. kind of put herself in charge of my..relationship recovery
 2300 u:m..and she told me that i had to like date a hundred guys and not actually
 have a really serious boyfriend for a really long time and I had to figure out
 what I wanted
 So I was dating and it was great and it was really exciting
 I uh- I had a lot of guys and they were really cute, and I made out with guys
 2305 a lot, and ran around and did irresponsible things on the weekends
 u:m..and it was FUN..but
 it wasn't really me..and dating was never really me, I had always liked to be
 in relationships
 And I was..in Pasadena
 2310 with another horse person and I was teaching her and her fiance how to
 dance as a present to them for their wedding
 and she was close to me and..all the other horse people we were involved
 with and she knew I was dating and she said "Oh you know after our
 dance lesson we should
 2315 go out tonight, we're gonna go out, they have like a drinking club that they
 go to
 and you should come with us, I know you don't drink"
 And I was like "well, are there going to be any single guys there? Is
 anybody cute gonna be there? that's all I care about right now"
 2320 she's like "well there is this one guy that sometimes comes,
 and he is single..and he's cute and he'd probably be really fun to fool around
 with
 not really boyfriend material"
 And I was like "ok, all right, sounds promising
 2325 I'm not looking for a boyfriend anyway"
 So we went out and uh..nobody showed up even though it was a drinking
 club
 that they all had, there was only like one other girl that showed up
 U:m..so we sat around and it was weird and I didn't drink
 2330 and then (Speaker P)..did come

an hour, hour and a half into it, and apparently he hadn't been coming to this
club for like
six months
and he just decided on a whim to go out to the bar and see if any of the
2335 drinking club people were meeting there
So he sauntered in
and
(laughter)
his LA persona was very very confident and very..devil may care
2340 (laughter)
And right away he's like
"I'm gonna buy shots, who wants to do whiskey with me?"
and I was like "I'll drink some whiskey!"
even though I didn't- like you don't understand I didn't drink
2345 So I drank some whiskey with him
and we just talked
and it was just- it was so...weird
'cause I felt for the first time out of ANYbody I had EVER met on the west
coast
2350 I felt like I was talking with somebody I had grown up with
that just came from the same place as me had gone to the same school as me
and none of this is true
but he just felt like such a similarly raised creature
U:m..and that was just extremely comforting and I just- I couldn't believe
2355 how much i wanted to talk with him
And- and so I don't remember anything else that night except..talking with
(Speaker P)
And everybody else kind of got to the midnight..twelve-thirty mark and
started to drift out
2360 and I was like "I'm not..done hanging out, who wants to still go out?"
(Speaker P) was like "I'll stay out with you!"
And so we went to an all-night diner and we stayed out til like four
just talking and be- I can't even remember anything we talked about
It was so fun though
2365 And then..he had to drive me back to this girl's house
at like four in the morning
and uh..it was really cute
he drove me in his little truck
and I was really attracted to him once I saw his truck because it was this
2370 little Toyota piece of shit and I drive a Toyota piece of shit
(laughter)
and it was a stick shift and I was really excited about that so I- I liked
everything about him that I could gather from his upbringing and his
values
2375 and it- it was just very homey and very great
U:m..and..he parked and I got out of the truck and I started to walk away

and turned and like ran back to the truck and asked
 "Are you gonna ask for my number?"
 like, we had just talked for like six hours
 2380 and he- he was like "Oh! Oh right, okay,
 yeah what's your number?"
 U:m..and then you know I still- he had such a different lifestyle from me I
 didn't really think there was any way I was going to develop a
 relationship with him
 2385 'cause he drank and he smoked and I was sure he smoked pot
 I was SUPER straight edge and came from- he was WAY too intimidating
 for me
 like I- I was open to hanging out with him but I-
 I didn't think that I could trust him basically
 2390 because he was a little too much of a bad boy
 U:m..but you know what we went- we went out on a couple of dates
 and we- we slept together pretty early on (laughter) in the dating
 and I just- I couldn't believe just how much I could trust him
 and he- he's just always been somebody that I've just been so...drawn to
 2395 and I mean..I had a lot kind of- a lot was stacked against him because
 you know if I could have given you a checklist of what I was looking for in
 a guy (Speaker P) would have..had almost none of these check
 marks, you know?
 U:m..but it still felt so right despite it not being right on paper necessarily
 2400 So I did a lot back and forth and a lot of of calling my dad and my best
 friend and trying to figure out like "Am I crazy..or does this have
 potential?"
 and then once I kind of let go and embraced the whole thing
 I mean I have wanted to marry him since like the first month we were dating
 2405 you know as soon as we said "I love you"
 U:m..I've just felt like he's the person I want to be with my whole life
 He always- he has always made me feel ok with who I am
 and he's not a particularly ambitious fellow
 U:m..you know I think a lot of people would that say he doesn't necessarily
 2410 have a lot going on
 but..he teaches me a lot about u:h quality of life and style of life, you know
 I'm just a very..driven..tough person and I'm very hard on myself
 and he..is really nice to me and accepting of me,
 he's never hard on me..ever
 2415 And when I find that when I'm in a relationship with an ambitious person
 all we do is make each other work harder and harder and harder and harder
 and it like explodes
 so I can find- I can find a lot of peace, peace with him
 Yeah
 2420 And he's- he's always been a very good lover
 which is very important to me
 very- very sweet, very generous, very- very loving guy

That's our story!

Speaker P's Narrative

P U:m..we met..by..coincidence, I guess?
 2425 U:m..there was kind of a social group that I had been a part of for a while
 U:h..that I went out with every week
 for years, and the:n
 one of the other people was u:h
 2430 this guy named Chris who was engaged to a different Erin
 and the two Erins knew each other
 So..she was teaching Chris and Erin their wedding dance
 and they wanted her to come out with them one night
 um 'cause Wednesday nights was the night the-
 2435 the group met and also the night she was giving them lessons
 I decided after having not been there for like quite a while
 I thought I would just like pop in
 and see who was there and say hi or whatever
 U:m and she decided to come in and that's how we met
 and no one else showed up
 2440 except for Chris and Erin
 who brought (Speaker E)..and then myself
 U:m..and Chris and Erin brought some other girl..that I don't remember
 I don't remember her name at all
 U:h (laughter)
 2445 So yeah I just showed up at the bar and it was like the four of them there
 and I sat down and I talked
 And I was sitting- I was seated
 like everyone was in a booth
 and (Speaker E) was in a table like right next to us
 2450 and I started talking to her 'cause the other girl seemed kind of angry
 U:h..and then..it was like- the bar was closing all of a sudden
 u:m..and I just like talked my head off
 which is really unusual
 U:m..and then Chris and Erin went home and took the other girl home
 2455 and I agreed to give (Speaker E) a ride
 not really..realizing how far away she was staying
 U:h..and then we found a twenty-four-hour diner
 and we had coffee and ..dinner or breakfast I guess, whatever
 and talked some more
 2460 Then finally I got her home by..god it was like three or four in the morning
 u:m
 and the:n..(laughter)
 I had been planning on asking for her number the whole drive home
 U:h..and when we started getting close to where I was gonna drop her off
 2465 it was a really unfamiliar area and like I didn't have a smart phone or
 anything

so I was like..really trying not to get lost 'cause that's super embarrassing
U:h..so finally I get there, I'm like "Oh thank god I made it..."
like "You can go home now, everything's ok"
2470 then she asked me if I was going to ask for her number
I was like "Dammit..I knew I was forgetting something"
Um..so that's how I got her number
we talked a few times
she lived far away at the time
2475 like two-hour drive away
and so..we spoke on the phone a number of times and then kind of set up
like
weekly kind of date nights
Um and that progressed into seeing each other on a daily basis
2480 She actually did a lot of driving
uh out to see me 'cause I was living and working in Los Angeles at the time
U:m..that went on for
oh man..six months or so
and then we moved in together and then we moved out here
2485 So that is a..logical progression of the timeline
U:m..which is interesting
I- I'm- I don't really consider myself a very good storyteller
so I kind of default to the narrative
but..um..it was definitely a very strong, very powerful, and a very sudden
2490 feeling
and I remember..at one point, and we'd only been dating for like
I don't know, we'd been on maybe four dates
uh..and I like- I literally accidentally told her that I loved her
by texting "rawr"
2495 which I had seen like something on the internet that was like a picture of a
dinosaur
and it was like "Rawr means 'I love you' in dinosaur"
"What does that mean?"
like "I love you in dinosaur"
2500 "Oh crap! That just happened"
Fortunately she was like really happy about it
and was like "Oh I love you too blah blah blah blah blah"
so..that worked out really well
I totally kind of blew my cover
2505 on accident which is funny
I had never really been like-
I'm usually a very reserved person
so it was funny to like totally screw up in little ways
which I often did
2510 like betray my emotions and kind of give myself away when I was around
her
I couldn't help myself, which was strange

U:m
I think that's pretty much it

Speaker E and P's Co-Told Narrative

2515 E A:h you go first
P (laughter) U:h we met through mutual friends in a bar by happenstance?
E Mh:m
P I don't know how this- am I supposed to tell the whole story and then you tell the whole story
2520 or are we going to go [[back and forth
E [[No we'll tell it together]] but I'm..going to cue off
[[of you
P [[Just going to let me]] dangle for a bit before you hop in there
2525 All right u:m
U:h yeah so we met through mutual friends
u:m..just by random coincidence
U:h
This is so- [[this is suddenly so difficult!
2530 E [[You're terrible at this!
It was magical happenstance
U:h I had never been to the bar
He hadn't been to the bar in six months even though it was a drinking club he used to go out to every single night
2535 He was closely associated with this club
u:h through his..girlfriend at the time who had then become his ex
So he had been making himself a little more scarce, right? And hadn't felt..[[super comfortable there
P [[Yeah no I mean it was]] once a week it wasn't
2540 every night
E Did I say every night? I'm sorry I meant
P I wasn't going out getting wasted every night
E I meant once a week
P That'd be pretty intense
2545 U:h yeah it was like Wednesday nights I think was the agreed-upon night
um
The girl who was my ex at the time hadn't been going in a long time
Totally forgot about her
I had moved on and she had moved on as well
2550 But uh yeah I just kind of decided at random to go back in..one time to see how many
old friends were there and see how many new people were there
'Cause it was kind of an open..revolving door or whatever
E Mhm
2555 And I was going out with the sole purpose of meeting a guy
and hopefully hooking up with somebody

'cause I was on the u:h dating warpath
 P YEAH you were
 E And uh..I- I think I told you in my version of the story that I was like the
 2560 only one there
 but there was one other single girl..there
 u:m that had met us so
 myself and this couple..friend
 u:h took me out and then they met their friend, I don't even remember her
 2565 name, Sarah, I think it was?
 She was kind of a..curvy redhead
 P She- I thought she was Mexican?
 E No! She just had a lot of makeup on
 P Really?
 2570 E Yeah
 P I totally remember her being dark-skinned
 Well yeah but you say "redhead" like she was like dyed though
 E Yes no she wasn't a natural red head
 P She wasn't like- she wasn't a GINGER
 2575 E This is so awkward
 ANYWAY
 P Moving on
 E I- I liked that (Speaker P) actually..noticed me and talked to me instead of
 the other..more dramatic looking girl..and
 2580 P She was super bitchy
 I'm sure she was very nice but she looked like she was into guys with
 money and
 not a lot of common sense
 E And so
 2585 P If I'm just gonna judge people at a glance
 E (laughter) And u:h..and you bought me a shot of whisky
 P Yeah..
 E [[And we drank
 P [[I didn't know you didn't drink
 2590 E Yeah..I wasn't going to tell you I didn't drink
 P Really
 E And we drank slowly and we just talked A LOT
 and I- I think the whole- like we didn't talk to ANYbody else
 [[for like three hours
 2595 P [[Yeah I remember getting a sideways glance]] from
 other Erin=
 E =Yea:h=
 P =That was like "You should probably participate in the
 group
 2600 At some point"
 That's right
 E But we were just totally- I- I had not been that comfortable talking to

anybody in a REALLY long time and it was just-
 It felt like catching up with a best friend
 2605 an OLD best friend
 U:m
 And he was kind of very- very confident at that point in his life
 He- he was in a good spot
 And he had uh just come back from your martial arts class and
 2610 he felt strong and full of vigor,
 right?
 P U:h..sort of
 I certainly enjoyed it
 I was pretty beat actually
 2615 That was- that was like a tough class
 And that was like
 Part of the reason why I even stopped in was like “Jesus I need a beer”
 like “I just got my ass kicked”
 E And I [[kept him out until four in the morning
 2620 P [[But that’s good I enjoyed
 that kind of thing so
 E [[Yeah]]
 P [[Yeah]]..SUPER late
 I- when did you get home?
 2625 I mean when did you get to Erin’s place?
 That was like
 E [[Yeah you dropped me off at like four-thirty
 P [[four-thirty or five like it was fucking]] morning
 E U:m..well..let’s back up just a little bit
 2670 ‘cause we got done at the first bar and then I think it was about midnight
 and we all went out and I remember
 we stood on the street corner and my friend Erin
 was obviously like
 “So..aren’t you coming home with us?
 2675 We drove you out here and it’s time- time to go home and go to bed?”
 I was like “I’m going to stay out
 I- I want something to eat
 Who wants to go eat with me?”
 I- I feel like I gave you a very meaningful look and you were like “YEAH!”
 2680 “Yeah! I wanna- I wanna go out to eat!”
 P Yeah I mean you kind of directed the whole evening..[[more or less
 E Yeah I was]] super aggressive
 P We got to that diner and that whisky started catching up with you
 Phew
 2685 My little face was burning
 E I was- I was pretending to be a lot more affected by the alcohol than I was
 I was definitely=
 P =Heh! =

- 2690 E =Taking- having never been a drinker at all a:h I feel
like
having one shot of whisky gave me license to be as forward as I wanted to
be
And- and forward in a- in a forthcoming kind of way not a..slutty kind of
way
- 2695 Thanks though for the implication
- P HM
- E U:m..so yeah we just talked more and more and more
and..do you remember anything we talked about?
- P I mean we covered..you know everything
2700 It was like four hours of conversation
I mean all of our childhood, our history, our interests
our thoughts and feelings, our hopes and dreams
- E Yeah pretty much
- P Our parents, our political views, our religious views
- 2705 E I don't think we talked about like..any of our exes
or any of our friends or other relationships
We just talked about
growing up and going to school and who we were and where we wanted to
go
- 2710 It was very- very interesting
- P There was a lot of ss- u:m
like unexpected similarities
- E Mhm [[mhm
- P [[‘Cause I remember]] being more and more surprised the more I
2715 learned about how kind of alien you were
being from Michigan and like
ha- you know growing up in circumstances that were very different from my
own and
you know and going to university
- 2720 and basically leading like a- almost completely different life from me
but still ss- turning out to be someone who's very like simpatico
- E Mhm
- P So that was..really u:h..attractive and interesting
- E Yeah I mean (Speaker P) and I are two EXTREMELY different people
2725 like we've- we've come from very different places in our lives but I've
always felt that
if my person had been born a boy in (Speaker P)'s circumstances
that I would have turned out just like (Speaker P)
And I feel the same way about (Speaker P) being born..in my shoes
- 2730 So there's something, you know, in our cores that we- we really- really deep
down are very very very similar
even though we express ourselves very differently and nobody would ever
say we were similar at anything
(laughter)

- 2735 It's kind of something that just WE know
 U:m..so:..yeah..and I- I was very forward that night and I- I wasn't thinking-
 I wasn't thinking long-term at all
 I wasn't supposed to be dating any- I mean I wasn't supposed to be
 u:m..monogamous with anybody I was just playing the field at the
- 2740 time in my life because I had had kind of disastrous long-term relationships
 So..u:h I was actually already dating two guys when I met- THREE guys
 when I met (Speaker P)
- P JESUS
 E (laughter) And u:h..we went out
- 2745 and I was still dating those guys and by (Speaker P)-
 and by our second date I had pretty much made the decision to just stick
 with you
- P That's right
 U:h..so that's the story!
- 2750 E Do you have anything else you'd like to [[contribute
 P [[U:h
 I dunno, it was interesting, I wasn't looking for anyone
 I think a lot of the uh- you know, it's funny how it works
 because I think a lot of what made ME so attractive was the fact that I pretty
- 2755 much was not concerned with
 dating, like at all
 'Cause usually when you're really trying to find..a partner in someone
 I don't know, there's an air of desperation there
 I guess
- 2760 E Well I think there's also a tendency to..want to make yourself into what
 someone else is looking for
- P Yeah very true
 There's a lot less freedom to like be whoever you want
 when you're trying to appeal to what someone you don't really know may
- 2765 or may
 not like
- E Mhm=
 P =I guess would be a way of putting it=
 E =Mhm
- 2770 P U:m..which had been most of my life I actually had- had the whole breakup
 with
 that other girl was a very like drawn out affair
 U:m..and I had been maybe- I dunno, maybe three or four months
 of just like being on my own..and like not really caring at all
- 2775 about..pursuing
 relationships or anything like that
 U:h..and it was awesome
- E Mhm
 P And it was a source of a lot of uh..not just confidence but..stress relief?
- 2780 You know?

- So I didn't have just a bunch of shit
 'Cause I mean when you're in a bad relationship like you're just carrying
 around a
 pile of problems all the time
 2785 So..it was very fortunate that I met her when I did
 because I was..lucky enough to be the best person that I could be in that
 moment
- E Mhm
 P U:h..which is another sort of fortuitous happenstance
 2790 that..not just randomly deciding to be there, and her randomly being there
 and all
 that other physical randomness but
 I also happened to be in like one of the best places in my life at the time
 E Yeah my dad has always said that a successful relationship is like
 2795 ten percent love and ninety percent timing
 and..yeah I wholeheartedly believe that
 and I think that (Speaker P) and I just had perfect timing when we came into
 each
 other's lives
 2800 And you know then when you're going through a relationship you do cycle
 through
 periods where your timing isn't lining up that well
 And things can feel a little bit strange
 But um..I feel like..for the most part, he and I have been a lot on the same
 2805 path
 Which is nice
 And we've been through so much
 U:m..within a couple of months of us starting to seriously date
 U:h..my parents went through a divorce
 2810 and I had a very very close friend of mine die
 u:m from cancer
 and=
 P =Your brother got diabetes
 E My brother got diagnosed with Type I diabetes
 2815 Pretty much within the first six to seven months of our relationship=
 P =Yeah
 E I had a horse that I was competing on regularly when I was a horse trainer
 that horse DIED
 and that was enormously game-changing for me
 2820 (Speaker P) had..u:h..his grandfather pass away
 and=
 P =That's right=
 E =YEAH it was- it was intense
 You know we really
 2825 P It was very dramatic
 E [[It was really dramatic

- P [[in our personal]] lives
 E U:m..and..it's interesting 'cause I've actually talked a little bit with my
 EX-boyfriend about
 2830 his kind of path of relationships since he and I broke up and for HIM
 it's been very hard for him to be close to anybody and he's led this very kind
 of
 simple fortunate existence, he has hobbies, he has a really good high-paying
 job
 2835 and he just doesn't know how to be close to anybody
 And so I feel like something that went really right for (Speaker P) and I
 was all the personal drama
 because it forces you..to open up
 and depend on somebody and ask for help more than a lot of people are
 2840 comfortable doing
 and so..you can..much more quickly
 u:m learn about that tougher stuff=
 P =Sure=
 E =underneath
 2845 P It's hard to be pretentious when life humbles you
 E And- and I think that's why people feel so much more strongly about their
 first
 couple of relationships 'cause you're such a more volatile person when
 you're
 2850 younger
 and you tend to just put all your shit out on the table and then the older you
 get the
 better you get about
 (laughter)
 2855 glossing over that and presenting a more normal package
 U:m..so I think- I think (Speaker P) and I were just VERY
 deconstructed..for our
 first- for our first eight months together
 We got broken down a lot
 2860 And we had some tough times and..u:h..
 I just- I learned to feel that I could really
 I found a lot of peace..with you
 P You worked very hard for it too=
 E =Mhm=
 2865 P =driving from Corona
 E Yeah I was living an hour away from where (Speaker P) lived
 and..u:m..I would work at the barn five days a week and then I got a job in
 LA at a
 rock climbing gym to
 2870 give my horse training boss an excuse..to go to LA
 that wasn't just "My boyfriend's there"
 So I had to get- so I was like "My part-time job's in LA I HAVE to go out

to LA”
 So I was working..more than a full-time job at the barn and then a part-time
 2875 job in
 LA and I was commuting out to LA like probably four days a week?
 And I'd spend the night at- [[I'd go to my- I'd go to my job
 P [[Yeah all the time
 E I'd spend the night at (Speaker P)'s and at five in the morning I would drive
 2880 back to
 the barn
 It was- it BROKE me, it completely..broke my body physically to drive that
 much
 and to..have that kind of a life and
 2885 that was part of the..catalyst for us actually leaving Los Angeles and
 we didn't necessarily know that we were going to end up in Michigan
 together but
 we knew that LA was not a healthy place for me anymore
 I was just- I had too much bullshit going on with all the horse training
 2890 circles
 that I was trying to..uh..[[pay my dues to
 P [[Well
 E and..
 P [[sort of
 2895 E [[my life was moving in a]] two different directions
 P Your boss kind of totally shafted you
 E Yeah my boss went CRAZY
 P Pissed me off
 As soon as I came into her life her boss basically decided that she wasn't
 2900 serious
 about her job anymore
 E Yeah it was- yeah it was this insane self-fulfilling prophecy where I like
 found this guy, fell in love with him
 and it was- and I had only been with him for a month
 2905 and Suzie was just like “Oh well
 this always happens to me my-
 my good girl workers they fall in love and suddenly that's the most
 important thing
 and you can't depend on anybody anymore” and I'd be like "No I really
 2910 want to be
 here I'm still invested" she'd be like "You'll see, you're not invested
 anymore"
 and so she just built this house that I didn't want to be in anymore, you
 know?
 2915 She completely fabricated a world that was unbearable, and I was like
 “You're right!
 Now..this isn't my priority anymore, getting away from you is now my
 priority"

2920 P It was very
 E [[highly unprofessional
 E [[it was INSANE]]..it was bad
 Now we're getting into our whole relationship as opposed to how we met
 P Right
 E but
 2925 P I mean..AFTER we met for the first time it was pretty normal
 like we just dated
 E Our first REAL date after that night was actually REALLY..funny
 'cause we kind of spent a weekend together as our first..thing
 [[that we jumped into
 2930 P [[Man was that?
 E And we went out to the u:h..the mus- the Getty? Right?
 [[That was like our first..real
 P [[We went to the Getty
 we went to the Pacific dining car
 2935 and we went to the..
 E O:h oh oh oh
 P The ferris- the..pier
 E Those were our first couple dates
 So the weekend that we spent together it started with this mus- it was in
 2940 Well the weekend that we spent together
 I drove to his house and we kind of- I kind of spent the night with him..u:m..
 we didn't sleep together
 we just spent the night
 And then the next day we were walking around like the gardens at the Getty
 2945 and he tells me this STORY
 about how if I had slept with him he would have not respected me
 and I was like
 P Well it was like the second time I had ever seen her
 like we had one night we had hit it off and it was great
 2950 and then..a couple of text messages and phone calls over the week
 and then the next time I see her she's like staying the night
 E Yeah but the irony of this is the night before he had been asking to sleep
 with me
 and I had turned him down and the next day he's like "Oh if you had gone
 2955 through with it
 I wouldn't have thought so highly of you"
 So..I gave him an earful for that
 and I think that that actually-
 that was like the beginning of us being on very very..equal ground
 2960 (laughter)
 the no- no playing games ground
 and then we didn't sleep together that night
 P Yeah
 E it was awesome

- 2965 P I definitely made it a point to um..not- not necessarily to change my
behavior
but to not..uh withhold information I guess=
E =Mhm=
P =Or try to manipulate
- 2970 the situation through leaving things out
or play games [[like I would just
E [[(Speaker P)'s incapable]] of manipulation
like he..yeah..u:h yeah
I know
- 2975 we should probably wrap this up soon
but my- my favorite thing about (Speaker P) is that
he...doesn't LIE to me
I mean to the point where I cannot believe the things he will be honest about
like if I was in his situation..I would not fess up to what he's fessed up to
- 2980 and it's always been like
and he's had some stuff that he's had to fess up to me
when I've asked him directly
and to me that's been..this thing that completely saves him every time
like I have to respect if I ask him a direct question
- 2985 he answers me correctly and honestly=
P =for better or for worse=
E =yeah for better
or for worse
he absolutely does
- 2990 P Well you gotta be all in
E Yeah yeah
and I mean he's made some stupid mistakes
and he's owned up to them
and I:
- 2995 and he's never tried to [[not own up to them
P [[That's mean
E You've- ex- you've made some stupid mistakes
And to me that's worthy of a lot of respect
You know? beyond making the mistakes
- 3000 and that really helped lead me in the relationship too
because I-
I had a past of u:m..a lot of infidelity
and I was very much of a sneaker and a manipulator and a
make the relationship work according to my own fabricated world, you
- 3005 know?
And..I always feel that (Speaker P) and I have been very grounded in
honesty and reality
and..that is
That's our success story!
- 3010 Yeah!

P Off into the sunset
E I love you
P I love you too