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## Dating 911: How to survive any first-date nightmare

# FIRST DATE DRAMA

Posted on Jan 25, 2011 12:31 AM by Jamie Beckman [Leave a Comment](#)

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First dates are nerve-wracking enough as is, but there's always the possibility of something going wrong — very wrong. Like, debating-leaving-the-restaurant-through-the-bathroom-window wrong. But a dating faux pas (either his or yours) doesn't have to kill the mood or your chances with the hot Orlando Bloom lookalike across the dinner table. Here's how to sidestep every dating landmine thrown your way with the street savvy of a secret-ops agent and the grace of Jackie O.



### SCENARIO 1

#### You spill wine all over the table, on yourself...or on him

Before your face even has a chance to turn beet-red, laugh it off. This is your big chance to show him the sexy, cool girl you know you are, so use the incident to your advantage by making a joke: "If you like him, it's an easy way to ask him out to your second date at the dry cleaners," says matchmaker Maria "The Date Coach" Avgitidis. "Tell him you're footing the bill on that one."

### SCENARIO 2

#### You accidentally bring up your ex

Stop in your tracks, then pull a 180. "If he looks uncomfortable, you have about two seconds to change the subject," says Avgitidis. "Excuse your subject matter with a simple apology and move on to something really random. It may throw him off a bit, but at least he'll no longer think you're spiteful over your last relationship."

Of course, the way he reacts to the mention of an ex could be a red flag, says dating expert Tracey Cox, author of *Hot Relationships*. "If you just mentioned him in passing and your date looks annoyed, take it as a warning sign that they're ultrapossessive," Cox says. "He's also got a past. We'd all love our new lovers to arrive fresh and wrapped in plastic, ready for us to peel off and enjoy them, new but real life isn't like that." Verdict? If he gets too upset, keep your eyes and ears open for other bad behavior.

### SCENARIO 3

#### You're running late — way late

There's nothing worse than waiting...and waiting...and waiting. Be respectful of his time. "Even if you think you'll be five minutes late, send a quick text message or ring him and let him know in your 'smiley voice' that you're running late but you'll be there as soon as possible," says Avgitidis. "Give him a realistic time frame of when you believe you will arrive. Don't forget to be a bit cheery, though. If you sound stressed over being late, it'll stress them out over having to wait for you."

### SCENARIO 4

#### He gets blindingly drunk

Most of us have been known to knock a drink back to calm jangling nerves, but treating a first date like a frat party is never sexy (well, unless your date is at an Irish pub and you're schooling him at beer pong). If he gets sloppy, take the reins and steer the date back on course: "Say 'Shall we order some coffee?'" Cox says. "And if he doesn't take the hint, say lightheartedly, 'You're a bit tipsy! Sadly I'm not, and it's making it hard to get to know you. Shall we call it a night and meet up another time?' Then order a cab and leave."

It's your call if you want to see him again. If he apologizes profusely the next day, he might be worth another shot. If not, you may have a guy with a drinking problem on his hands. Proceed with caution...or, better yet, not at all.

Giving it a second chance? [Find great date ideas here>>](#)

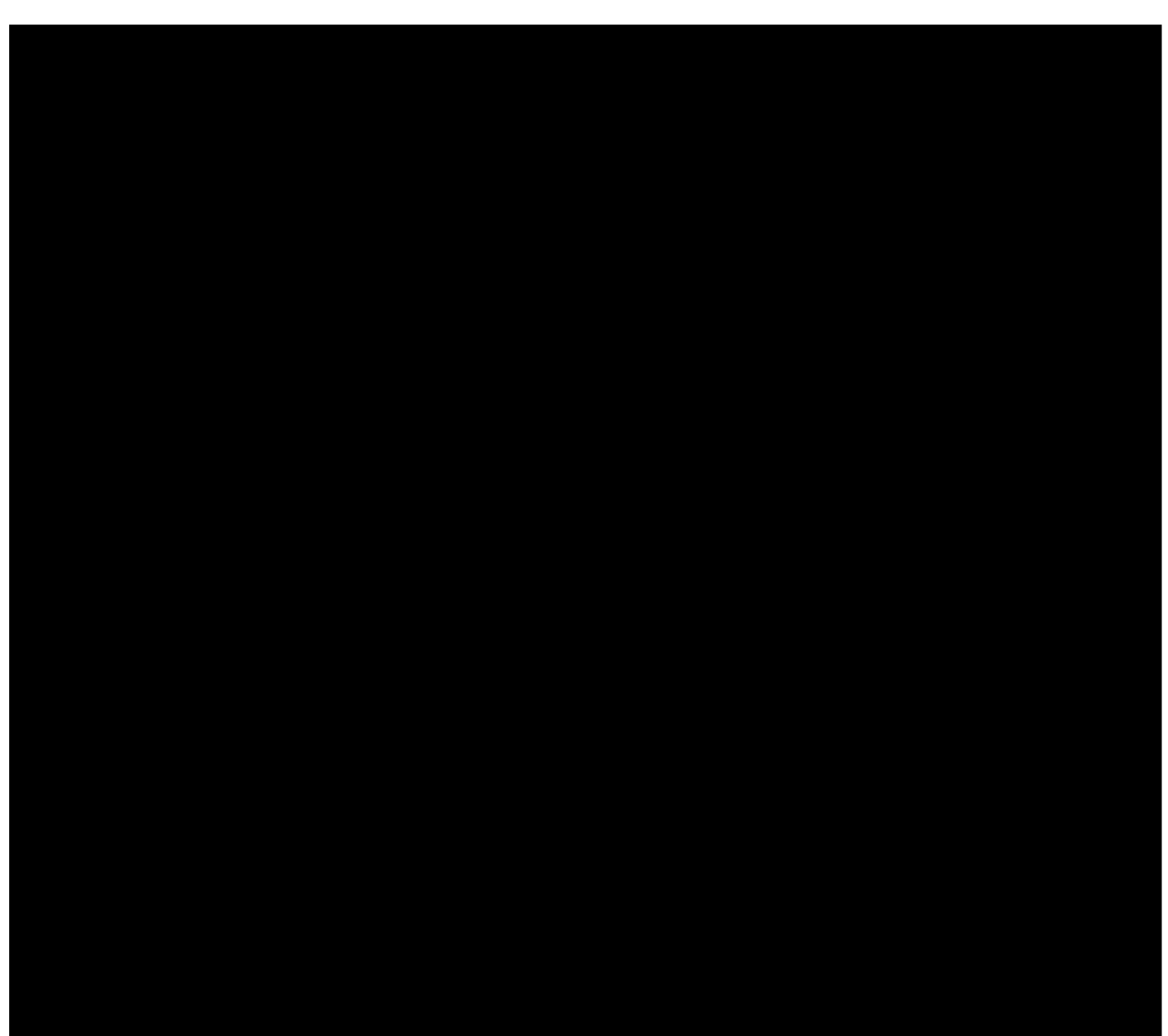
### SCENARIO 5

#### There's an extremely long, uncomfortable silence

Pack an arsenal of conversation-starters to fill in any silences. Cox suggests having the following on hand: a funny story about something that happened to you earlier that day, and a few fail-safe questions about how many siblings he has, where his parents live, whether he gets along with his family, where he works, and whether his job is his real passion in life. But if trying to drag commentary out of him makes plugging a spewing underwater oil well look easy, you might want to cut your losses: "If you can't salvage the awkward silence, maybe there is no chemistry to be had on this date," Avgitidis says. "No one is asking for talk-show chatter, but if the silence is too long, it's time to end the date because clearly it has lost its heartbeat."

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Tags: bad dates, dating, dating advice, first date, first date tips, relationship

**Jamie Beckman**  
Jamie Beckman is a New York writer and editor who has braved the dating scene for 10-plus years and experienced firsthand all of the hope, elation, and heartbreak that goes along with it. (And she wouldn't change a thing!) Jamie graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia and has written about relationships, health, and lifestyle trends for publications including Men's Journal, Men's Health, Best Life, First for Women, and Better Homes and Gardens. She has also written for Publishers Weekly, CNN.com, CMJ.com, Knot Magazine, and Two Drink Minimum magazine, and judged the 2008 and 2009 Amazon Breakthrough Novel awards.

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