



# Labor of Love: The Invention of Dating

*Moira Weigel*

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## **Labor of Love: The Invention of Dating** Moira Weigel

“Does anyone date anymore?” Today, the authorities tell us that courtship is in crisis. But when Moira Weigel dives into the history of sex and romance in modern America, she discovers that authorities have always said this. Ever since young men and women started to go out together, older generations have scolded them: That’s not the way to find true love. The first women who made dates with strangers were often arrested for prostitution; long before “hookup culture,” there were “petting parties”; before parents worried about cell phone apps, they fretted about joyrides and “parking.” Dating is always dying. But this does not mean that love is dead. It simply changes with the economy. Dating is, and always has been, tied to work.

Lines like “I’ll pick you up at six” made sense at a time when people had jobs that started and ended at fixed hours. But in an age of contract work and flextime, many of us have become sexual freelancers, more likely to text a partner “u still up?” Weaving together over one hundred years of history with scenes from the contemporary landscape, *Labor of Love* offers a fresh feminist perspective on how we came to date the ways we do. This isn't a guide to “getting the guy.” There are no ridiculous “rules” to follow. Instead, Weigel helps us understand how looking for love shapes who we are?and hopefully leads us closer to the happy ending that dating promises.

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