

YOU CAN FIND LOVE NOW

By Ramona Ausubel

June 2, 2014

You are lonely, but you don't have to be. You have so many great qualities! Just think of all the single ladies out there who are waiting to hear from you. Whether you are looking for lasting love or just a little fun, this is the only guide to online dating you'll ever need. Within the hour, you'll be on your way to eternal happiness!

Let's get started. When creating your username keep in mind that it should be concise and easy to remember. Make it personal. If you're a dancer maybe try: *hipdancer21*.

Find me at *cyclops15*. Cyclops 1-14 were taken.

Now choose a tagline that will attract the woman you want. Secret: Do what no one else is doing.

I'm eight feet tall and I have one giant eye.

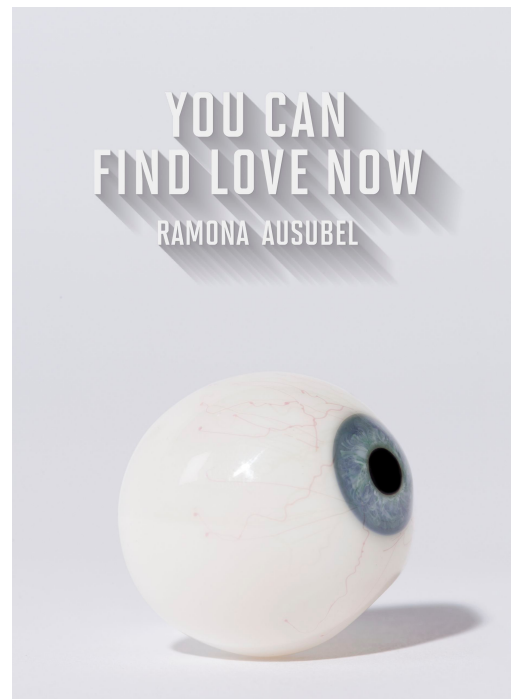
What are your interests? Be honest but enticing.

I handsew my own shoes using a needle made from the fang of a wolf. I sleep hot. I want nothing more than a sheet on my bed, even in winter, even in a cave.

Know who your target is. Where does she live? What does she look like? What hobbies does she have?

I like fat girls, old girls, tall girls, tired girls. Girls who lack adequate clothing, girls whose best idea for getting my attention is to send a photo of themselves holding suggestive Popsicles, their fists covered in red melt. Girls in wheelchairs, girls who work professionally at the Renaissance Faire.

You could choose other men: men who like to think about feet, men who have thick back hair, men whose greatest



Photograph by Michael Marcelle

pride is the time they flew to a nearby nation and tried to deplete its stores of alcohol and slept on the beach one night—wasn't that so fun?—and when they woke up everything had been stolen or lost and they had to walk back to the pastel-yellow hotel naked in the early heat of another day in paradise. Everyone has had good times. Everyone has a picture of himself in front of a pinkening sunset with a glass of white wine. Choose them, if you want to. Choose me if you want someone to hold you above his head in the moonlight, bite your wrist until the first rust comes out.

Tell the ladies a little more about yourself! What's your own unique story?

The first generation of Cyclops were forgers. The next generation, my generation, was a band of thuggish shepherds living in the grasslands of Sicily. We trapped so-called “heroes” in our caves, we bit into the warm butter of a human leg, but the only one who got famous for it was my brother. We still live under volcanoes, hacking at iron, trying to revive the old tradition. I left home—too hot, too old—and live in Washington State. I like the fog, I like the rain. My volcano is more famous than any of my brothers' volcanoes. I never hear from them. They're not on e-mail.

I teach online English classes, not to get paid but because I like to feel smarter than someone else. I teach all the classic books, except the Odyssey.

My photos are taken in profile. Maybe there's time to get braver, to embrace my own unique beauty. I subscribe to the magazines that tell me we are all beautiful, if only we can learn to tap into our potential; I am me and no one else is me, and that is a miracle. I am a miracle.

The downside: my mother has been dead for some hundreds of years, so you'll never meet her. The upside: my father is the god of the sea, so we can guarantee good weather on our honeymoon cruise. He's shitty at love, my dad. He smells like an overcleaned wound, and he won't quit working. Every day and every night somewhere in one of the world's oceans my father is striking the surface of the abyss with swords of fire.

Do you smoke? Do you drink? How often do you exercise? Do you support charities that help animals? With an unexpected bonus would you (a) donate to a cause you really believe in? (b) save half and spend the rest? (c) celebrate with your friends and margaritas?

If you want me to set a trap, I'll set a trap. A first date picking blueberries in the whitest, cleanest sunlight, tin pails. I'll bring sandwiches and chilled Chardonnay and tell you that we are already the good people we wanted to become. Maybe you'll be generous and keep up the conversation all afternoon. Prettykaren98 was generous. Prettykaren98 looked into my eye when we chatted online and laughed at my jokes. But she never answered my messages after our date even though her status was still marked Single.

Don't mention your previous relationship history! Leave your emotional baggage packed and in the closet. You are on the market because you are awesome!

Sorry. Let's try that again. My actual perfect day? Descending belowground early, full of milk and blood and meat, to forge iron. There is no such thing as day or night in the volcano, and any sense of time comes from watching the metal change shape. From ore to spear. From ore to trident. From ore to thunderbolt. If I am strong that day, the mountains

will shake with the strike of my hammer, the heat of my flame.

I can't ski. I should be better at basketball than I am. I don't eat vegetables. But my eye is blue, and it's pale and it's beautiful.

My vision is good, though not great, but understand this: I will never again visit an ophthalmologist or an optometrist or anyone else who claims to be an expert of my organ. I do not fit in the chair, and I wish I could forget lying on my back on the floor of that darkened room while a small man climbed onto my chest with that sharp point of light. I'm not sorry for what I did to him. Now he can see for himself what it's like to have one eye.

You have almost finished creating a magnetic online-dating profile that will attract more women than you ever thought possible! What else do you want the ladies to know? Remember: be yourself!

I do remember the old feeling sometimes. A maiden washes up on my island, tailed or otherwise. The cave is sweating and there are mineral stalks growing from the ceiling. I have no idea what time it is, ever. All my wrist and ankle shackles are homemade, struck from iron I myself dug from the earth. The maidens were not as beautiful as the stories tell you—their hair was salt-stringy and their faces were pruned. Too long in seawater can unmake any loveliness. Yet I meant to love them. I meant to tend to their wounds. When I pounded the shackles with my hammer, the person I imagined chaining was my father. I imagined slipping the disks around his watery arms. Not to hurt him, but to keep him. But my father never offered himself up on my rocky beach. I'd see his big hand out there sometimes, swilling the surface of the sea, but he never came close. Maybe he was the one who threw the maidens to me, his dear son, his wifeless boy, wanting an heir.

I will not shackle your slender wrists to the cold walls or gnaw your nails down to the quick with my remaining teeth. I will not leave you hungry while I eat a roast goat at your feet. I've dealt with those issues. Imagine the inverse: I have the softest mattress in the world, made of the combed fur of fawns; choose me and you'll be choosing warm oil on your hands and cold water in your glass, meat on your plate from a lamb that suckled on my pinkie when it was first born.

If I came to your house tonight, where would I find you? The living room? The kitchen? Waiting at the door? I'll call you Aphrodite and smell the sea in your hair and shuck oysters for you from the depths. I'll tell you that I've never seen a real goddess until now. Come with me and be adored, deep below the earth. While you sleep, I will strike a huge sheet of metal until the shape of your body comes into relief. You never have to take me to meet your friends; you never have to take me anywhere. You never even have to see me in the light.

Your grandmother will tell you that all the good men are gone, but then here I am, and I'm ready for you. ♦

Published in the print edition of the June 9 & 16, 2014, issue.