

Title: Dating Your Misery

Synopsis:

This blog from The Snark dives into the curious species of human who's less in love with people and more in love with heartbreak itself. Instead of chasing happy endings, they're addicted to the drama of messy collapses and the sweet ache of sorrow. For fiction writers, this behavior is a goldmine: heartbreak junkies can be protagonists who self-sabotage, antagonists who thrive on emotional wreckage, or tone-setters who bring gothic melancholy wherever they go.

The Snark's Blog: [here](#)

Discussion Questions

Use these questions to spark conversation and reflection in the classroom:

- Why do some people seek heartbreak as proof that they've "truly loved"?
- How is being addicted to heartbreak different from being a hopeless romantic? Where do they overlap?
- Does our culture (music, movies, TikTok) glorify heartbreak in ways that encourage this behavior?
- What risks do writers face when portraying heartbreak addicts – how do you avoid melodrama?
- Can a character "grow out of" their addiction to misery, or is it too hardwired?
- What's more compelling in fiction: the character who wallows in heartbreak, or the one who weaponizes it against others?

Writer's Prompts

Creative exercises to help students apply the themes of the topic:

- **Prompt 1:** Write a scene where your character secretly hopes the breakup happens so they can finally write (or finish) that tragic novel/poem.
- **Prompt 2:** Create a love triangle where one person is only happy when things fall apart.
- **Prompt 3:** A protagonist swipes right, not because they like the person, but because the profile screams "catastrophic ending."
- **Prompt 4:** Imagine heartbreak as an actual drug – write a character who goes looking for their next "hit."
- **Prompt 5:** A couple fights constantly, but both admit they're addicted to the cycle of breaking up and making up.
- **Prompt 6:** Write a breakup scene where the character is happier after being dumped than they ever were in the relationship.

Class Activities

These activities will help expand on the themes of the topic:

- **Sad Playlist Swap:** Have students bring in or describe songs that feel like heartbreak anthems, then discuss how music fuels emotional storytelling.
- **Breakup Monologues:** Each student writes a one-minute monologue where a character revels in their own heartbreak. Perform in small groups for maximum drama.
- **Red Flag Bingo:** Create a bingo card of relationship red flags. In pairs, design characters who would eagerly swipe right on every single one.
- **Heartbreak Archetypes:** In small groups, identify and act out three types of misery-daters: (1) the Wailer, (2) the Poet, (3) the Drama Vampire

Closing note from the blog's writer, The Snark

Ah, heartbreak – humanity's cheapest and most overplayed narcotic. Some of us sip it like bad wine, others chug it like bargain tequila. Writers, your job is not to rescue these misery-daters, but to exploit them (ethically, of course) for the sake of story. After all, happy people don't sell novels; sad people do. So lean in. Write the tears, the mascara stains, the tragic playlists. And remember: if your protagonist is finally happy, you probably ended the book too soon.