

Praise for *Age Is Just a Number*

"If there is one word to describe the musings of this delightful first-time author it would be "refreshing." D.S. White is refreshingly honest, refreshingly funny, and refreshingly human. I feel as if I've just discovered a long-lost friend or relative. Readers will relate to the absolutely real words and thoughts that decorate the pages of this "blook" (the first I've ever read, by the way), and will come away from their read with insight to their own hearts and lives."

~Kathi Macias, author of seventeen books, including the bestselling women's devotional *A Moment A Day*, the popular Matthews & Matthews detective series from Broadman & Holman (*Obsession*, *The Price*, and *The Ransom*), and her latest novel, *Emma Jean Reborn*.

"Let me say this ... After just having the opportunity to read a chapter of Ms. White's new book, *Age is Just a Number*, I can honestly say that I don't know who's more anxious to see it finally released, she or I.

Ms. White writes with a rich, smooth flowing style reminiscent of the truly great ones. The imagery alive and robust, she has truly brought back the art of storytelling. Write on, Ms. White!"

~ Bertrand E. Brown, author of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

Age
is just
a *Number*

Adventures in Online Dating
a Serial Memoir

D. S. White



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Age Is Just a Number: Adventures in Online Dating

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This book is dedicated to
my family
and to
all the Divines
out there



And we know that in all things
God works for the good of those
who love Him, who have been called
according to His purpose.
~Romans 8:28

Acknowledgments

To God the ultimate motivator in my life, who knew me before I even knew myself, I give thanks, honor and praise.

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To my niece Claire: thanks for all the encouragement. When I grow up I want to be just like you. Much love.

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To Rev. Canty, who didn't realize that her sermon on Sunday, May 2, 2004, would galvanize me to start living my dream and being the author that God intended me to be. Thanks for being used by God.

To my "dad" Arthur, who was there when I had pneumonia and at my high school graduation. Sorry that I had to wait till you were nearly blind to see your worth. Much love.

To my church family, who truly exemplify the scripture, "bear one another's burden."

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Foreword



THIS BOOK (or “blook” as it has recently been coined) is based heavily on my blog *Age Is Just a Number*, which was created to recount an extraordinary two-year span of my life. Due to my hectic work schedule and doubts about the feasibility of readership, project AIJAN ground to a halt after a mere two episodes.

First I tried listing it in the Memoirs section of the now defunct serial Website, keepitcoming.net. My story sat and sat and sat, with nary a purchaser. I could tell folks were clicking on the page, but there was no purchase in sight—not even during the buy-one-story-full-price, get-another-for-a-penny sale!

My brash confidence took a beating! My story had drama, betrayal, flashers, and more ... what more did they want?

I rallied. I tried pumping the story on my own Web sites and was again disappointed, if not befuddled. This

was great stuff! Had the whole world gone mad? Then one day, in an email from one of my writing groups, the word “blog” turned up. “I’ve just updated my blog!”

What, pray tell, is a blog? I asked myself. I then clicked my way to the neatest discovery since sliced bread—blogging! Once I dusted off my flailing confidence and began blogging, I realized that I’d found my niche! Some-thing about a blog and the word “publish” seems to get my creative juices flowing in a way that Microsoft Word does not.

A few weeks went by and I received a sporadic comment or two—nothing like the droves I’d envisioned. But just about the time my confidence again began to dwindle, I made another phenomenal discovery via another blogger’s post—BlogExplosion! A traffic exchange Web site, where for every two blogs you surf, you receive one visit, BlogExplosion meant a new beginning for me. It didn’t take me long to realize that extended surfing equaled visits, and visits equaled feedback—otherwise known as comments!

Due to copyright issues, this book is not an exact replica of the AIJAN blog. Certain posts found online are not in the book and vice versa.

I did try to maintain the conversational tone and overall feel of the blogging experience. I’ve also held onto comments that enhanced the original posts immediately followed by the link of the commenter.

In addition, I’ve retained the original dates so that you can have an idea of the time frame of the book. A glossary has also been provided for terms that might be unfamiliar.

Introduction



MEET DIVINE: *female, thirty-seven, slaphappy, young at heart, self-employed; an online newbie, living in New York. She is fresh out of a long-term relationship and has completed the two-year mandatory wound-licking I-hate-men mourning period. Unfor-unately for Divine, someone neglected to inform her that dating has been upgraded to new millennium level. But maybe she shouldn't worry ... hemlines aren't the only things that have gone up.*

Thirty-somethings are premium dating material now ... at least for the twenty-year-olds ... Divine's experiences are the basis for the serial memoir I call Age Is Just a Number, a lens through which to view the world of online dating.

Since the year 2003, I've logged much time online—chatting, emailing and IMing. In that time, I've probably

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spoken with over three hundred people, male and female, and I've realized something:

I've realized that there are many Divines in the world. They come in all shapes, sizes, ethnicities and financial brackets, drawn together by a commonality, a deep-seated loneliness or hunger for something—and by the generally accepted idea that the solution is in finding a mate.

This recounting, although entertaining, is intended to acknowledge that such a need exists, affirm the validity of that need, share the pain, caution the naïve, and pose the question that maybe ... just maybe ... the accepted solution ought to be an ongoing relationship with God.

This book is the first installment of the Serial Memoir: *Age is Just a Number: Adventures in Online Dating*.

Welcome to my world!

Peace,

Dee

Friday, June 21, 2005



PART I: THE SECRET LIFE OF DIVINE

Monday, August 16, 2004, 7:20 a.m.

I SCRIBBLE FURIOUSLY from the first row corner seat aboard Lantabus Metro. I'm anxious to capture the thoughts and words as they come, honestly, naturally. As I write, I wonder how I ever made it to this point.

A little over three years ago, I quit a well-paying, soul-des-troying job in title insurance. Around the same time, I discovered my fiancé's impending fatherhood, which he credited to my decision to reclaim my chastity until our wedding in six months. (I guess he took my urge not to merge harder than I thought.) On the spiritual side, since I'd been too busy coping with life to pick up the internal phone, God sent a messenger to tell me that my services were required as preacher, teacher, and mentor extraordi-naire.

Aside from a daily struggle with depression and a weight gain of thirty pounds, I thought I was pretty

much taking it all in stride. Then, due to unforeseen circumstances, my landlord gave me forty-five days' notice to vacate my apartment. Again, sudden changes ordinarily wouldn't faze me. I've been a long time subscriber to the "life happens" train of thought. But for the self-employed, apartment hunting is not a cakewalk. Add defunct child support payments, an elderly parent with special needs, a growing teenager, and my New York City location to the equation, and I'm sure you can understand my dilemma.

I "remained calm" even though my life was the equivalent of a five-alarm fire. I was on a forty-day fast at the time, so I knew God had my back. I was even bold enough to tell God, "This one's on You." Nevertheless, I was ripe for a distraction, a diversion, a denial facilitator: some kind of heavy-duty mode of escapism.

And wouldn't you know it—I found one!

My journal remembers...

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Saturday, March 15, 2003, 5:00 a.m.

I hit the jackpot last night! I'd just returned from choir rehearsal and was unwinding with a copy of Ebony Magazine when I came across an article about two couples. One couple is newlywed; the other is newly engaged. I know, I know ... what's so remarkable about that? Let me finish. Both couples met each other online through dating Web sites! Go figure. I didn't even know dating Web sites existed! I love technology!

According to the article, the couples "met" online and, despite the sad rap that the Internet has for unsuccessful connections, they managed to beat the odds. Residing in different states seemed not to pose a problem for them. As I processed the article's information,

my heart began to race and I experienced a certain sense of exhilaration. In my mind's eye I fast-forwarded straight to the culmination of a successful connection for myself.

Me, Divine, walking down (or is it up?) the aisle, wearing a beautiful buttercup-yellow, empire style gown, with a rip away skirt for dancing and showing off my jump-back-Tina-Turner legs. Of course, in this vision I am a size 10 again, and not the mismatched size 16/12 (top/bottom) that I am presently. My auburn tinted locks are braided in an intricate Nefertiti upsweep that just oozes royalty. My nails are unfortunately acrylic (an inveterate nail biter, I can only distort reality so far), and the groom—oh, the groom ... he is Morris Chestnut and Shemar Moore of "The Brothers" and Boris Kodjoe of "Soul Food" all rolled into one. It is so real I can feel the goose bumps, sweaty palms, and knocking knees—finished by a sense of relief as the Divine in my vision silently whispers, "Thank you Je-sus!"

I hastened to get to the computer in my home office, adjacent to my bedroom. The fate of the magazine went unnoticed as it hit the floor. I logged onto one of the Web sites referenced in the Ebony article, Blackplanet.com. I ran a search and sat mesmerized as I viewed with awe the works of God's hands in all their multicolored glory. They came in all shapes, heights, sizes, and sexual preferences. Occupations ranged from blue collar to executive level. Profile after profile, each one more tantalizing than the next.

I pulled an all-nighter, yes I did. I wouldn't bet money on it, but I might be willing to swear that I heard strains of "So Many Men, So Little Time ... How Can I Choo-oose" playing faintly in the background as I

set about launching a full-fledged assault on the men of Blackplanet.