



THE **DANGEROUS** WAY SOME GIRLS ARE PAYING FOR COLLEGE

You know how expensive tuition is—and that's *before* you factor in room and board, books, and going out. To cover costs, some girls are raking in hundreds a night as "sugar babies." How far is *too* far for extra cash? **BY ASHLEY MATEO**

No one wants to be the girl who can't afford concert tickets, let alone *college*. Sometimes the stress of seeing how fast bills add up for tuition, textbooks, and all the extras of college life is more than girls can handle—and that's when get-rich-quick ideas get very tempting. "My friend and I used to joke, 'Wouldn't it be nice to have some sugar daddy pay for everything?'" says Lauren*, 22, from Boston, Massachusetts. "But half of me thought, Yeah, it *would* be nice."

Girls are becoming "sugar babies," connecting with wealthy, older men who pay for dates on sites like *seekingarrangement.com* and *sugardaddie.com*. And they're not just greedy gold diggers. Many now use that money for college—44 percent of *seekingarrangement.com*'s users are students, and prestigious universities like Georgia State, Temple, and Columbia universities are among the fastest-growing schools on the site. "I heard about sugaring years ago, on MTV *True Life*," remembers Ava*, 20, from New York. "I have two other work study jobs, but I still couldn't afford classes," she says. "My parents don't have a lot of income. I didn't want to have to keep going to them for money. It sounded so easy on the show, so I signed up."

If you're frantic to make ends meet, big paydays offered by sugaring may sound great, but there is significant danger—girls

risk tremendous harm, from assault to rape. "Any guy who has to *pay* for dates is obviously a weirdo," says Katie*, 19, from San Francisco, California, who accepted a date for pay off Craigslist. "There are a lot of skeezy guys out there."

"It seemed so easy."

As an out-of-state student, Ava's tuition bills were too high for her family, even with financial aid and paychecks from her two on campus jobs. "I have siblings who need to go to school, too," Ava says. So without telling anyone, she signed up on *seekingarrangement.com* last year.

Ava began talking to guys who promised her more money for one date than she'd make in two *weeks* at her other jobs. But she knew meeting strangers could be dangerous, so "on my first date, I carried pepper spray and told a friend to raise the alarm if she didn't get a text from me within a half hour," she says. Ava's date, a retired man in his mid-fifties, "basically wanted someone to hang out with when he was bored." They set up movie and dinner dates and planned a trip to the zoo. In exchange, "He bought my textbooks and gave me up to \$400 per date," she

* Name has been changed.

says. “The cash went right to my bank account—I’m saving for vet school.”

Ava tells people the money comes from her part-time jobs. “I don’t feel guilty—I need to support myself,” she says. “But I don’t think other people would understand my decision to be a sugar baby, even though I don’t do anything sexual.” Since she doesn’t get physical, Ava says it’s harder to find sugar daddies who want to keep seeing her. “It’s a game: How long can I keep him interested without taking it to the next level?” she says. “I’m selling sex appeal, not sex.”

“I could finally stop worrying about money!”

For Lauren, stress from paying her own tuition and rent made it hard to enjoy college. Then she heard about sugaring. “When I first went on [the site], I thought, How am I actually going to go through with this? Like, What am I doing on here?” She was nervous about the older men, but eventually decided she’d be okay hooking up with someone if it meant she could stop scrimping. Over lunch with a man she met on seekingarrangement.com, Lauren asked how an “arrangement” would work. “He said he’d pay \$500 a week and asked how far I’d go, sexually,” she says. “I decided the terms, so I didn’t feel like I had to do anything I wouldn’t do with a boyfriend.” Lauren eventually ended things once she couldn’t fake an attraction to him anymore.

Lauren’s relationship was consensual, but that’s not always the case for other girls. A Florida man named Marcelo Alves faces life in prison after raping a woman he met on sugardaddyforme.com. Alves used a fake

profile picture, then assaulted his date at knife point when they met. Katie wasn’t looking for an “arrangement,” but was swayed by the promise of quick cash. “I saw an ad on Craigslist that said, ‘Generous guy seeking cute girl to spoil [for] \$500,’” she says. “How could I not click?” When she met her date at a hotel restaurant, he gave her \$150 right away, so she felt like she had to stay. Then the date got sketchy. “I barely sipped my drink, which annoyed him—he kept telling me to finish it. Then he put his hand on my leg and asked me to go upstairs for \$1,500—I knew what he expected,” Katie says. “I made an excuse and left. If we had been alone, I don’t think he would have taken no for an answer.”

I thought, “What am I doing on here?!”

Casey*, 22, from Houston, Texas, thought a few dates with men from sugardaddyforme.com could help her buy the car she needed to get to class. But most guys she met wanted a bigger commitment. “After dinner with this divorced guy, he wanted me to meet his 12-year-old daughter!” she says. An even older guy wanted her to *move in* with him. “He promised me \$10,000 a month! The money was tempting, but the expectations of a round-the-clock ‘arrangement’ were overwhelming. It was way too much.”

Casey started wondering if she was making an awful trade-off: money for her self respect. Around that time, she met her current boyfriend. When she told him about sugaring, “He gave me an ultimatum—him or that lifestyle.” Casey realized the money wasn’t worth everything she was giving up, and deleted her profile from the site. “In the end, I realized I felt better after I made the decision to leave the site. I think it all worked out the way it was supposed to.” **tr**

A READER SPEAKS OUT

NYU student Angela Almeida investigated what really happens when her classmates date for pay.



“Last year, I found out my school was number two on the list of fastest growing sugar baby

colleges on seekingarrangement.com. I interviewed girls from the site for three months, for a series in NYULocal, the university’s news blog. Most said they felt like **they had the upper hand in the relationship**—they pride themselves on establishing their own boundaries, especially in terms of their bodies. They also called the relationships “mutually beneficial,” but how can you have the upper hand when **you’re financially reliant on someone else?** All girls should want more than a bigger bank account—even if the money goes toward school. By putting a price on a relationship, dating to get paid hurts girls’ self-worth in the long run. Instead of selling sex appeal *or* sex, we should be focused on boosting our intelligence and inner confidence. Then someday, we’ll be able to buy *ourselves* that vacation and pay our rent.



BEAUTY AND BRAINS WITH A PACKAGE DEAL

Name: Ashlee
Age: 21
Height: 1.6 meters 5' 3"
Body: Athletic

Location: Tucson, Arizona, United States
Expect: Open - Amount Negotiable
Seeking: Sugar Daddy
Profile Created: June 22, 2012



LOOKING FOR FUN :)

Name: Nicole
Age: 22
Height: 1.63 meters 5' 4"
Body: Slim

Location: Christiana, Delaware, United States
Expect: US\$1,001 - US\$3,000 monthly
Seeking: Sugar Daddy
Profile Created: July 25, 2012



AMBITIOUS & FUN

Name: Lindsey
Age: 20
Height: 1.57 meters 5' 2"
Body: Athletic

Location: Clearwater, Florida, United States
Expect: Open - Amount Negotiable
Seeking: Sugar Daddy
Profile Created: August 12, 2012

risky business

“Not every guy out there wants to help you pay your bills,” says Ava. “There are a lot of predators on these sites.”