

# Looking For Love? Consider Halloween Costume

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Halloween isn't traditionally thought of as a romantic holiday. Sure, some people use it as an excuse to wear skimpy outfits, but many others opt for costumes that are humorous, puzzling or utterly terrifying — sometimes a mix of all three. Most of these ensembles don't exactly scream "date me," but still, love can find a way.

Just ask Francie Gremillion, 23, who in October 2011 went to a Halloween party in Austin, Texas, dressed as a bottle of Huy Fong Sriracha sauce. Her costume included a red long-sleeve shirt adorned with a rooster and fake Chinese symbols painted in white, skinny jeans and black boots. On her head she wore a green foam cone to represent the bottle's cap. Gremillion's costume was a big hit with partygoers, but it made one person's heart nearly skip a beat.

"I put Sriracha on just about everything minus breakfast cereal, so obviously I was immediately attracted to her outfit," said Gusty Simpson, 24, of Austin. "Although I'm not exactly sure why she was attracted to me, because I had a bowl cut."

Simpson had lost a bet shortly before Halloween that year, and his payment was to get what is arguably the least attractive haircut known to man. He played along with his new hairdo, dressing as a youthful summer camp attendee. He wore a teal T-shirt, uncomfortably short shorts and a backpack. "I looked like a child with a 5 o'clock shadow," Simpson said.

Besides Gremillion's costume, one of his vivid memories of her from that night is how "nervy" she behaved, unafraid to "dance like an idiot, be a little loud and talk to people" — all traits Simpson said he likes.

April Masini, a relationship expert who writes at AskApril.com said costumes can act as "social lubricants" that empower people to step outside their comfort zone and thus improve their odds of connecting with others.

"Wearing a costume on Halloween eliminates all the relationship challenges that have to do with small talk, breaking the ice and approaching other singles," Masini said.

And you always have a reason to approach someone, since you can just compliment his or her costume.

It worked for Simpson. He and Gremillion hung out all that night, and never really stopped. They married in July. Simpson said he now believes Gremillion's costume was "definitely a sign I was going to be in love with her, just as I am with Sriracha, for the rest of my life."

Finding romance on Halloween can sometimes be tricky, because costumes can deceive. On a day when dressing in a ludicrous manner becomes the norm, plenty of people jump at the chance to, for one night, separate themselves from their everyday personas and play a character.

Sometimes that character might be just as alluring as someone's real self, even if that character is Borat.

In October 2006, Renee Dorian-Begley went out with a friend to a hole-in-the-wall karaoke bar in her home of Burbank, Calif. Her decision to go out was spur of the moment, so Dorian-Begley threw together some athletic wear and went as a softball player. She described it as "the worst costume ever," but that didn't matter, as she still caught the eye of a potential suitor that night. She and her friend were sitting at the bar when he approached.

"This guy walked up in a light gray suit with a mustache attached to his face and started talking to us," Dorian-Begley, now 29, recalled. "He was walking around the entire bar by himself, and I remember thinking, is that guy even with

someone?”

That guy, dressed as the fictitious Kazakh broadcaster Borat Sagdiyev, played by Sacha Baron Cohen, was Ben Begley. He was a regular at the bar, which probably gave him the chutzpah to walk up to strangers all night parroting Borat’s famous lines. Dorian-Begley remembers some of them.

“He came up to me and said, ‘You are very pretty girl. You are very nice,’” she said. “He would give us the thumbs-up and walk away.”

Begley didn’t break character the entire night, she said. He even took a stab at karaoke as Borat, singing Madonna’s “Like a Virgin,” although he made up many of his own lyrics, Dorian-Begley remembered.

The two didn’t exchange numbers that night. But about three months later, when Dorian-Begley and her friend went back to that bar, they crossed paths again. The two women were sitting, chatting, when Dorian-Begley made eye contact with a man across the bar. He walked over, sat down and within a few minutes of her talking to him, the light bulb went off. It was Borat.

Both Dorian-Begley and Begley, now 32, remembered each other from Halloween. They spent that entire night at the bar talking but this time exchanged numbers. They married in September. The couple said they still take Halloween very seriously every year.

Imagine going to a party dressed up as Tinker Bell and encountering Peter Pan, or as Hillary Clinton and meeting a Bill. You have to at least snap a photo with your other half ... but maybe there’s potential for something more. Or not.

About 20 years ago at a Halloween party in New York, Amie Hoff was dressed as Pebbles from “The Flintstones” when she spotted someone dressed as another member of the Stone Age family from Bedrock.

“He looked just like Fred Flintstone,” Hoff remembered. The man had black hair and a husky build and wore an orange top with black dots and black tights, she said.

The two thought it was a funny coincidence they were both dressed as Flintstones, so they decided to go on a date.

“Even though we were only two years apart, he very much reminded me of my father, and since I was dressed as Pebbles, it was a little odd,” Hoff said. “And there was really no chemistry.” Or a second date.

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