

# Confessions of a sugar daddy addict

After joining a website to date older men, journalist **Helen Croydon**, now 33, was showered with gifts. But which did she crave most – the men or the money?

**I**t took half a bottle of Chardonnay before I plucked up the courage to type: 'Older men, younger women, dating' into Google one night four years ago. It felt so naughty, like I was pursuing my secret fantasy. I've always had a thing for older guys – Richard Gere or Pierce Brosnan. Even my first boyfriend, when I was 18, was 32.

But aged 29 I was embarrassed that, while my friends were falling in love with boy-band wannabes, I was actually looking for a dating site that offered up grey-haired men in suits looking for no-strings fun.

I'd just split up with my boyfriend of three years – a guy my own age – because I felt stifled. I craved independence but, as I approached 30, my sex drive came to life over night. I'd never been promiscuous – in fact, at university I was quite the prude. But suddenly I could think of nothing else. Sex! Put simply, I was a horny, newly-single woman, thirsty to try out my new-found freedom.

I began to fantasise about

meeting a suited and booted executive in a hotel for cocktails and dinner, followed by uninhibited, frantic sex in his penthouse suite.

It would be all the fun without any of the obligations that go with a serious relationship.

So I joined Sugardaddie.com. I never intended it to be more than a few dates, but I became addicted. Somehow, sex in a plush bachelor pad or a luxury five-star hotel was empowering.

One guy took me for a champagne breakfast on our first

at Harvey Nichols, buy some lingerie and then have dinner, teasing each other with sexual fantasies before bed.

After a few months I became aware of a secret subculture on the website – where men offer allowances or gifts to girls in exchange for their company.

My dates told me that some girls openly said they were looking for 'help with rent or school fees', and I was propositioned directly, too. At

## 'Sex in a plush five-star hotel was empowering'

date. We drank Bollinger from 8am until noon, and then spent the afternoon making love in his junior suite.

Another took me on a luxury ski trip to Val d'Isère in France. With another – who was going through a messy divorce – we'd meet monthly

first I was shocked. I thought that was the thing of escort girls. So I deleted them. But one message, from a Frenchman, captured my imagination.

He said: 'Just dinner this first time. To assure you I am a genuine sugar daddy, I will give you £500.'

After agonising over the morals, I went. He was attractive, but clearly 10 years older than his photo. He handed me an envelope of cash on arrival.

Shocked, I stuffed it in my bag. All through dinner I was terrified he'd ask me up to his room. But he simply

called a taxi and I never saw him again.

Shortly after, a Canadian guy invited me to New York to accompany him on a business trip. International date offers like that used to be out of the question, but I was bolder now. I flew first class, sipping fine wine with my three-course meal.

On our first day he took me shopping in Prada. I felt awkward, not knowing how much I could accept. But he bought everything I liked. Glancing at the receipt, I saw it came to a five-figure sum.

There was no particular spark but we had sex because it felt appropriate. I suppose I felt I owed him because of the thousands he'd spent in Prada.

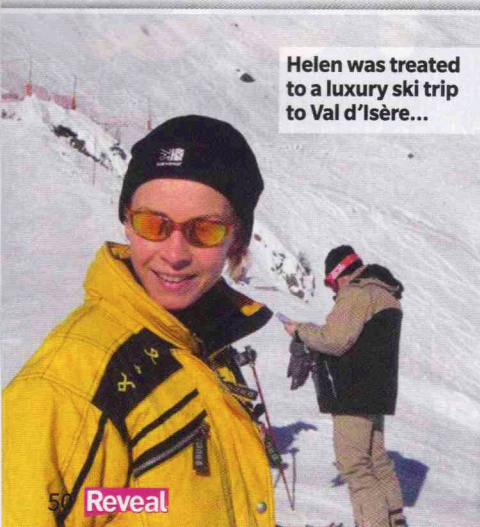
Gradually I came round to the idea of a 'compensated relationship'. Men were willing to pay for what I was offering for free. Feeling at ease with the idea of an allowance, I joined Seekingarrangement.com, where I met a lawyer who gave me a loaded Selfridges store card each month to 'keep me in hats and coats'.

Then there was the Chicago ad executive who wooed me with envelopes stuffed with \$100



Each sugar daddy bought Helen expensive gifts

Helen was treated to a luxury ski trip to Val d'Isère...



...and was flown around the world on dates



# ugar



bills. And then I met my Malaysian sugar daddy, who flew me to Kuala Lumpur and visited me in London.

We became so close that eventually we stopped our cash 'arrangement'. But without the payment, he wanted more from me. I had to end it.

Two years into my sugar daddy dating, I realised I wasn't so much interested in the men, or the sex – I was hooked on the money.

My final date, with an LA film producer, wowed me. We had such an amazing connection and I was left wondering what could have been, had we not made a cash agreement.

With a jolt I realised I wanted that thrill you get when you fancy someone like crazy.

The sugar daddies had been a safe way to stop anyone getting close to me and so, aged 32, I shut down my profiles for good. I don't regret what I did, but I'd never go back there. Cold, hard cash is no substitute for love. **R**

**Sugar Daddy Diaries: When A Fantasy Became An Obsession, Helen Croydon, (Mainstream), £7.99, out on 3 March**

Words Helen Croydon