STYLE

# Sifting through the New Haven thrift scene

// BY BEATRICE BARILLA

Is there any good New Haven thrifting? Depends on what you're used to. For me, a native of the South Carolina strip malls, Goodwill was the gold standard. In comparison, I'd say yes, thrifting here is pretty sweet. But if you're part of Yale's New York City population, well … I'll give a taste of my experiences and leave it up to you to decide the answer to that question.

**2nd STREET**

Ah, yes. The newbie New Haven thrifter would perhaps think of 2nd STREET first — not second, if you catch my drift. This was my position some months ago, when I had not yet gone thrifting here and needed some retail therapy to cure my homesickness. It was an appealing site: close-by, two-tiered, big selection. I found some items that I did love (and did buy) but was a little put off by the downstairs section, where items sported hefty price tags.

The only real offense was a chunky, flower-embroidered sweater that I loved but that had a nice big hole in its side. And they would not give me a discount. Twenty bucks for a sweater I basically have to knit myself is not the steal I wanted.

To me, this reflects one of the bigger problems in the secondhand clothing world — isn't the point to encourage reusing clothes and making clothing more affordable? Why, then, has thrifting become an expensive hobby? Why are we unwilling to bargain so that the clothing isn't wasted? Lately, a thrifted item feels like a status symbol rather than a way to navigate an overpriced and oversaturated clothing market. That being said, 2nd STREET isn't bad; it's just not somewhere I've been compelled to revisit.

Audubon Street pop-up thrift market

Towards the beginning of the semester, Audubon Street became a thrift market. Like many, I dug through piles of clothes heaped on the ground, scoured countless racks and lost my friends in the overstimulating crowd. My finds: a silky dress, a tulle skirt and a pair of jeans.

Unfortunately, while many items caught my eye, so did their prices. Yet again, it was evident that thrifting has become a hobby for the elite. Sure, the piles might have something promising for not too much, but I still felt like the whole ethos of thrifting was lost in the sea of students hungry for the best find. In order to find something affordable, I literally had to scavenge on the ground.

**MINIPNG**

I found this little gem on one of my walks out to the Coffee Pedaler. It's a bit out of the way, but I didn't mind the walk after sitting through class all morning.

The one-room shop definitely had more of its own character than some of the bigger stores, and I found one sheer layering top that I fell in love with. It was pricey, yes, but at least I understood why. Small businesses often have to charge more to stay afloat in a corporate market, so I can have some empathy for the comparatively higher prices. Rent is expensive.

If you're looking for a more curated collection, rather than the cheapest deal, it's one of the more unique spots I've happened upon. I can't say I'd have the money to go often, but I would prefer spending 20 dollars there than on a sweater with a hole in it.

**Student pop-ups**

Here it is, the single best thrift in the city: student sellers. I'll wait while you roll your eyes. The best deal, best items, best interactions I've had are with students selling their own clothes. Let me explain.

A couple weeks back, I found my friend's sister selling her clothes on the path between Jonathan Edwards and Branford. This was a refreshing thrifting experience. I think the essence of thrifting — finding something that feels both personally new and affordable outside of a corporate system — comes back into focus through a more personal interaction with the seller. Looking at someone else's clothes and being able to silently — or loudly — communicate, "OK, we're both broke," and then make a deal that suits everyone cuts down on anxiety. There is also an assurance of directly helping someone by buying their clothes.

So, student pop-ups win in every category. As long as there are students, there will be good thrifting in New Haven.

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ILLUSTRATION BY MAIA WILSON

PERSONAL ESSAY

# Playing with fate

*Don't make a mockery of the Marriage Pact.*

// BY INEZ CHUIDIAN

How many kids do you want? Are you bisexual? On a scale of 1-10, how important is sex in your relationship? Do you mind if your partner does hard drugs?

The Yale Marriage Pact presents itself as a series of intrusive questions that many of us have failed to consider. It's an interrogation of preferences we didn't know we had and a questioning of our upbringing. To some, it's a stupid survey we tried once our freshman year, but to others, it's a wholesome way to meet faces we might have never crossed paths with in our time at Yale. If anything, it's an undeniable meet-cute that no couple would object to: "How'd we meet? We were each other's marriage pacts."

Whatever this algorithm may mean to us, it must mean enough — because time and time again we find ourselves sitting at the back of the classroom, clicking through a blunt questionnaire, fantasizing romantically about the future as we debate: "Question #27: Would I marry a conservative?"

The form lands in our inboxes like clockwork. And without fail, every fall, we troll our answers and exaggerate our preferences. We roll our eyes, then broadcast our match's initials like breaking news, scouring Yale Facebook for their major. Though no student would ever admit it, behind the black and neon interface of this survey lies a small thrill in the idea of finding a perfect stranger across campus — someone whose perception of you remains completely untainted.

Maybe that's why we keep filling it out. I think that we as students have more faith in serendipity than we think. Amidst the impossibility that we all seem to perceive in Yale's dating scene, there is certainly a portion of us who hope for this pact to mean more than the myth of the Yusband — for this matchup to be a reconciliation with the fact that our circles here are fluid and there will always be someone we are yet to meet. After all, the Marriage Pact is just one of many games we play with fate. From sorority blind dates to AI dating sites on Fizz, we toy with the idea of a perfect match more often than we'd like to admit.

To come to college in search of a partner while your peers author novels, win national championships and found startups feels almost like an insult to ambition. Why bother? Because, I'd argue, the Marriage Pact deserves more than a laugh and a Fizz post. As someone who didn't fill it out, I'd go as far as to say this algorithm and violation of personal information represents the spontaneity we lack in our day to day.

Yale students are stubborn. We have a life plan, we've made friends and we're on track for our degrees. Rarely do we stray from our Google Calendars to share a meal with someone out of routine — and our mockery of traditions like the Marriage Pact reveals that. We're risk takers, but only in theory.

So go on a date. Make a friend. Get a coffee. The Marriage Pact has passed, but let this be a reminder of the serendipity and spontaneity it evokes within us. Too much of our lives are fixed into gridlock — so why not leave a few parts of it up to fate? And who knows? Worst case, you'll leave with a story and maybe, just maybe, an answer to question #27.

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ILLUSTRATION BY JANE CALLANAN

WEEKEND RECOMMENDS:

**WATCHING YOUR FAVORITE ACTORS' EARLY ROLES**