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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/562/2021_2022__E6_9C_80_E6_96_B0_E6_8A_A5_E9_c96_562454.htm THE HOTTEST RECESSIONARY ACTIVITY IN TOWN Over the past month, I have picked up 247 men. Fast work in just four weeks but I ' ve been putting my back into it. During my sabbatical from the Financial Times, I have obsessively e-mailed strangers on an adultery website, thereby taking part in what I find is the hottest recessionary activity in town. Among my new boyfriends are a formerly powerful hedge fund manager, scores of newly idle bankers, a few entrepreneurs, various company directors, a well-known musician, some corporate lawyers, a couple of barristers and a rather dishy builder. I doubt if this was what the FT had in mind when it decided that journalists should be given a four-week break every four years for self-development. Neither, come to that, was it what I had had in mind when I embarked on my sabbatical: my intention was to write a novel. So when I first joined Illicit Encounters, the most upmarket of extra-marital websites, it was for research on internet adultery for my book. But, within the first half an hour of posting my details on the site (under the pseudonym of Sophie Scribe), I had acquired 20 boyfriends and, within an hour, I was hooked. Four weeks later, I have emerged, feeling slightly soiled and more than slightly cross at the way that real life is so much more exciting than the novel I ' m writing. Illicit Encounters is a Turkish bath of a place in which 230,000 mainly professional, married people leer at each other

through virtual steam searching for anyone who might be a suitable lover. While I was on the site, I noticed business seemed particularly brisk among those citing financial services as their occupation. Over and over again, I was approached by men using names such as “ Alpha123 ” , or “ Civilised1 ” or “ CityGent ” , each telling the same story: I ’ m a successful banker, now with time on my hands, looking for excitement/love/romance/casual sex, etc. Curiosity aroused, I contacted the site ’ s owners to find out what was going on. They told me that, since September, the number of London-based males in the financial sector registering had risen by nearly 300 per cent. It seems the colder the market for jobs, the hotter the market for adultery. If the sheer numbers surprised me, the men themselves surprised me even more. The ones I talked to weren ’ t lotharios, and didn ’ t seem sleazy either. They were often adulterers for the first time and more the balding-banker-next-door type than anything more alluring. For those readers who don ’ t already know from personal experience, I should perhaps explain a little about how the site works. To maintain secrecy, everyone uses false names and members release their pictures only to other members they like the sound of. This presented a ticklish problem for me, given the high density of FT readers who turn out to be online. At the briefest glimpse of my picture, various of them fled in fright, saying: “ Oh God, are you Lucy Kellaway? ” As well as meeting people who read the FT, I even came across one who used to write for it. This took me into a whole new area of office etiquette: what is the correct way to behave when you stumble on someone you know on an adultery

website? I daresay it happens more and more. Indeed, one result of my four-week infiltration into the lives of adulterers is that I now suspect every man of living a double life on Illicit Encounters. Last week, I had lunch with John Quelch, professor of marketing at Harvard Business School, and asked what he thought it all meant. Why is it that so many senior business people are responding to recession with adultery? He said that, in a recession, people wanted hugs. This struck me as a pretty feeble explanation. Surely there are easier ways of getting hugs than putting one's marriage on the line? Hugging one's children or if one is desperate even one's spouse might seem easier and safer. He said that this was just the point: that the risk was the lure. That bankers are suffering from a risk deficit: their working lives have been derisked compulsorily and this could be a way of compensating by adding risk to their private lives. If this is true, one wonders what the macro upshot will be. If there has been a mass shift from taking risks in financial markets to taking risks in the domestic market, will it mean mass domestic instability with surging divorce rates and so on? The founders of the website like to argue that, by providing a well-behaved marketplace for adultery, they are actually creating domestic stability. Seventy per cent of Illicit Encounters' clients claim to be attracted to adultery as an alternative to divorce, not as a precursor to it. This may not be altogether laughable but it seems a little early to draw any conclusion one way or another. However, it's not too early to draw three other conclusions from my month on the site. The first is that people who are still in work seem to have an inordinate amount of spare time

from nine to five. Second is that everyone lies: they understate their ages and overstate their attractiveness, gym attendance, good humour and so on. The last lesson is one we knew already: more men are interested in adultery than women. The website tries to correct this by differential pricing, charging men £.119 a month while women go free. Yet even so, the imbalance persists, and I now find my 247 suitors may not have been entirely due to my own charms. I told a female friend about the site and she signed up. Her boyfriend tally after just one week: 295. 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com