

## Dedication

*I would like to dedicate this book to my ridiculously beautiful wife, Kerri, who inspires me to outdo myself in the romance department each and every day.*

*Honey, please stop being so awesome.*

*This is getting exhausting.*



## Preface

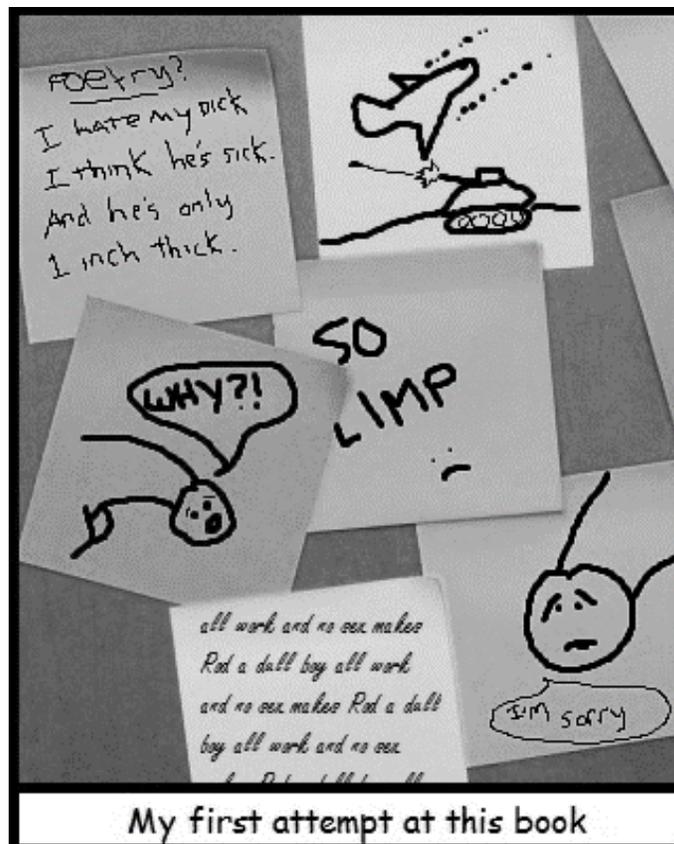
You, my friend, are about to read my third book.

After the success of my first two books, I was a bit stumped on what to approach as the subject matter. Turning to my publisher, I asked him what I should write next and he said, simply:

“Write what you know.”

With that advice in mind, I started writing a book about erectile dysfunction.

Unfortunately, it ended up just a small pile of sticky-notes with sad-faced penis drawings on them and the papers stained with my tears.



I then turned to the next thing I know how to do very well: parenting. Sadly, this project was also canned early because the children would not leave me the hell alone long enough to write a single page. Also, why can't children open yogurt themselves without repainting the kitchen walls in strawberry-banana? It boggles the mind.

My wife, Kerri, then suggested I write a book on “romance tips.”

I couldn't disagree with her on this one, mainly because she wins most arguments anyway. On her point, though, I have never once read any book on how to be romantic (mainly because I hate reading unless there are tons of pictures and it's on television instead), but have always had a natural instinct for the art of wooing. "The Art of Woo" sounds like a contemporary soft-rock band. The Art of Woo would release one single called "Shame Is Forever" and then fade into obscurity. They probably should have chosen a better name.

This book was originally written as a 'how to' type of book. It had projects and crafts that would have made Martha Stewart proud and, maybe, even a little fidgety in her panty area. After reading it she would, obviously, become obsessed with having me and then I'd hit it and she would call it "a good thing" and we would laugh and then she'd kill a pig with her bare hands so she could make me breakfast sausages.

If you've never read any of my stuff before, this is how the entire thing is going to go. Fair warning.

After reading the book in its original format, I realized that the layout and projects, although awesome and boner-inducing, didn't sound like they came from my voice. It was also pointed out to me that you can find pretty much everything I wrote for free on Pinterest so I totally watched my dream of a Martha Stewart amateur porn video go right out the window.

Sometimes, I really hate the Internet.

A complete overhaul ensued, and the book is what you now have sitting before you. My overall goal, however, is still to make *you* look better in the eyes of your partner, all while giving you a boatload of wincing and a ton of laughs. If you got some wincing and laughs out of the picture of the limp dicks up there, I'd call that a good start.

Enjoy.

### **Instructions Before Proceeding**

**MEN:** *Please proceed immediately to the next page. Do not follow the instructions for the ladies unless you are confused about your sexuality (or confident in it, whatever).*

**LADIES:** *Meet me at the very last page of this book for a special message before continuing. Wear something slinky.*

## Introduction

A small boy wanders out onto the stage in front of a shuffling, but somewhat quiet, audience. He stops dead center of the platform and looks blankly into a sea of people who are mostly still looking down into their laps because they're playing Candy Crush on their iPhones.

In their defense, it's pretty addicting even though Level 65 is a real bitch.

The boy stands, nonplussed, and pauses momentarily. Then he holds up a large poster board he has been holding in his hands. The sign simply says:

### ***The Quest.***

*\*trumpets blare from the orchestra\**

*\*43 of the audience members crap themselves and 5 of these people drop their phones. One guy cracks his screen and yells SONOFABITCH I WAS JUST ABOUT TO CLEAR LEVEL 65\**

**Candy Crush, Level 65:** *Ruining people's lives since 2012.*

Face it, we've all been there at one time or another: on the prowl for a special something for that special someone to show them that they're, well, special. I'm not talking *special* special but, *romantically* special. I'm not saying you can't have something *romantically* special with someone who is *special* special because I'm not a complete a-hole. Also, I've written it so many times now that the word 'special' looks really weird to me. Does it look weird to you? I forget where I was going with this. Ah, yes.

### ***The Quest for the Perfect Gift.***

*\*trumpets die out in a terrible fart-like sound because that paragraph went on far too long\**

As the curtain to this stage draws open we find our underdog – you - standing in the entrance of a Hallmark Store, hands jammed deep in pockets, mouth agape. Slowly your head turns from side to side, scanning...searching. Like the Terminator, thrust into an unknown world to hunt down Sarah Conner (the hot Sarah from the first one, before she got all spindly muscly and gross), a heads-up display appears.

SEEKING....SEEKING....SEEKING

**Clerk:** "Can I help you, sir?"

You turn to face the cheerful employee who is only asking because it is required and her manager is watching. Your HUD flashes:

*Subject: Store Employee*

*Query: Asking to help you.*

*Proper responses: "Yes please," "No thank you," "Maybe," "I'm not sure," "What year is it?" and "Kill me now this is torture."*

**You:** "I'm not sure."

**Clerk:** "Well, if you need any help let me know."

**You:** "Kill me now this is torture."

The clerk smiles and runs away, probably to call the police.

Realizing that you just lost the only friend who could possibly help you, you return to scanning the store from afar. The smell of Yankee Candles (What is that? Apple? Cinnamon? Death?), potpourri and Vera Bradley purses fills your nostrils. Cautiously you step over the carcasses of several men who came in here with their wives hours earlier – each wearing a death-mask stare that says, "Why?" Ignoring them, but heeding their fate for future visits, you desperately seek a flash of inspiration to leap out at you from the rear wall of the store that screams "HERE I AM! THIS IS EXACTLY THE GIFT YOU NEED!"

But nothing does.

No inspiration comes to you. You are alone in a sea of paisley wallets, weird-looking figurines with overly large eyeballs and heads that defy biological accuracies, and - of course - the whole counter of Alex and Ani bracelets.

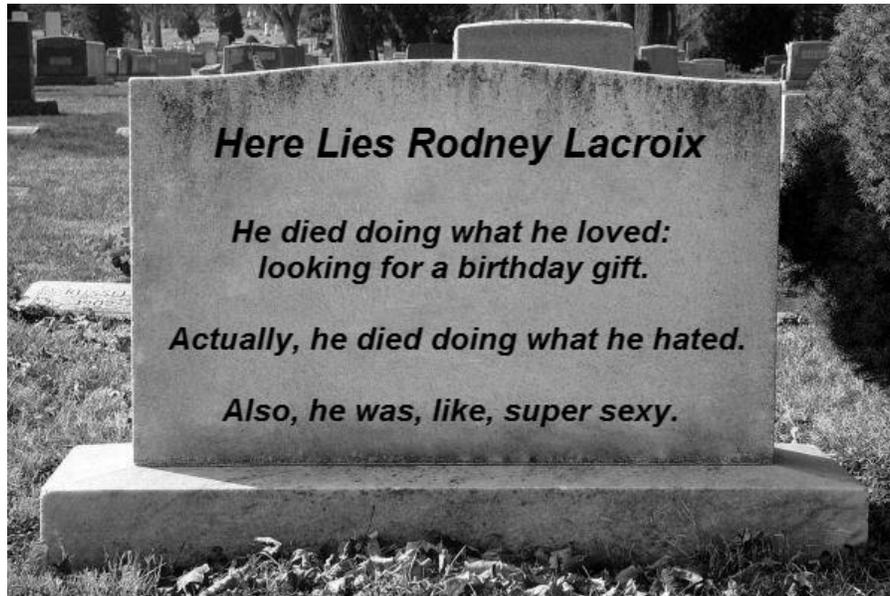
The feeling of "EUREKA I HAVE FOUND YOU!" eludes your senses.

Slowly, your body takes a slow turn to the left and you begin wandering aimlessly through the aisles. Each step is a deliberate motion and includes calculations that would make Albert Einstein quiver with fear.

- 1) Lift foot up
- 2) Move leg forward
- 3) Turn head left
- 4) Scan up
- 5) Scan down
- 6) Place foot down
- 7) Turn head right
- 8) Scan up
- 9) Scan down

10) Did you see an acceptable item? If *yes*, proceed to checkout. If *no*, repeat steps 1-9 using other leg.

Time seems to stand still as you wander through aisles of picture frames and hand-painted wine glasses and – for some reason - hand puppets. After spending 5 minutes making a hand puppet talk with a terrible Italian accent that sometimes deteriorates into a bad Dracula impression, you reluctantly decide to continue with your search because you can actually feel yourself aging at this point and you don't want to die in this store like those other poor bastards.



By the time the manager yells, "STORE CLOSING" you realize you have now been wandering around for 3 hours and have lost almost 2 pounds. Your FitBit is really proud of you but you still haven't..wait...

You look down. You're holding a card in your hand. You barely remember looking at cards, but at some point you must have stood in front of that giant wall of them deciding between funny or smoochy or 'For Her' or 'From Him' or 'Love' or 'Like' or 'Meh, You're Okay' or the ones that open and OHMYGOD WHY IS THIS ONE SINGING.

Cover: To the one I love

Inside: *Blah blah blah. I looked through 400 cards. This was better than nothing. Blah blah blah.*

That's not what it says but that's actually what it *should* say because finding the perfect card is a day trip in and of itself. If you get a card that is 60% of what you would actually say in a voice you'd actually say it in, that's the winner.

*“To my love, our love is like a summer..”* NOPE.

*“You are my everything. You are the wind ben-.”* AYFKM<sup>1</sup> who talks like that? No.

*“I love you. Thanks for not leaving me for someone better who has abs and doesn’t pressure you to do butt stuff.”*

Awesome. Card requirement? DONE.

But the store is closing so, in desperation, you grab one of those stupid Troll dolls because it’s right there at the checkout counter and it’s kind of cute, right? No, it’s terrible but you’re out of time. Maybe you’ll throw in a homemade “free backrub coupon” to even it all out. Stop talking now because you’re just making this all worse. You really are terrible at this.

But, hey, I have a secret: **I was once like you.**

That is why I’m here, and why I wanted to write this book. With a little perseverance and a lot of trial and error (and some errors that led to trials but my lawyer will not allow me to discuss these), I have done my best to right my ways.

So, with some innovative ideas and tragic stories in hand and a word processor at my fingertips, this book started to take shape. If sifting through a 400-page book that lists over 1000 supposedly romantic ideas sounds like hell to you, then you’ve picked up the right tome.

Take my hand. Walk with me.

I’m about to spin for you some tales of romantic woe, and several tips of romantic woo. Most everything should be self-explanatory, so take what you can from these stories and run with them. That is, unless you’re like me and hate doing any type of cardio. Then, maybe, walk briskly or drive away with them. What I’m saying is, don’t fall into the same traps and make the same mistakes I have. Take advantage of those few things that worked and of which I am noting herein.

**Worst case:** You laugh.

**Better case:** You laugh AND get some tips that help strengthen your stance in the dating community or in your own relationship.

**Best possible case ever:** You laugh AND get some tips that help strengthen your stance in the dating community or in your own relationship which, in turn, also makes

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<sup>1</sup> Acronym for “Are You F\*\*king Kidding Me” in case you didn’t know that because you’re either really old or really young. If you’re really young, please return this book to your mom or dad ASAP<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Acronym for “As Soon As Possible.” Okay, this is starting to get silly.

your significant other's friends think you're amazing, thus increasing the odds of a threesome.

Always, always, aim for the best possible case ever. I cannot emphasize this enough.

Um, by the way. You realize you forgot to get her something from the kids, right?

Go.

I'll be here when you get back.

*Act 1*

*The Dawn of Woo*

## "Evolution" Is Just an Anagram for "I Love U Ton"

As the curtain draws open for the first act, we see the stage set up as a barren wasteland. The backdrop reflects a burning sun and the arid, dry air of a scorching day. Obviously, they are reusing the scenery from *The Lion King* musical the third grade tried to put on last month. Oh my God, when the kid playing Rafiki forgot his line and threw the baby Simba stuffed animal off the cliff in frustration I thought I was going to die.

Stage right, a small gelatinous object being dragged by fish wire emerges from behind a sign that says "Primordial Ooze." I'm glad this sign is there because, after seeing the blob, I thought I had accidentally stumbled upon a taping of *The Jerry Springer Show*.

The glop of pink goo is pulled behind a cardboard tumbleweed, and a small child in an Ewok suit emerges from the other side. He crawls on all fours a few feet and disappears behind a bigger cardboard tumbleweed where a larger child dressed in a gorilla costume, walking upright, appears.

This makes me think of the time my son dressed up for Halloween as a banana and I laugh out loud and accidentally yell, "BANANA." Luckily, I'm just one of four people left in the audience so the only angry glance I get is from the gorilla kid, as he steps behind a giant cactus and a man wearing a loincloth with a fake mustache taped to his forehead ambles out.

AH. I get it. What we're seeing is the evolution of man, if the evolution of man involved really shitty costume choices. It's at this point I'm beginning to sense the production values of this play are virtually non-existent and am glad I didn't pay any money to see this crap.

The Neanderthal man points to stage left, where a female Neanderthal appears from backstage. He tilts his head and appears confused for just a moment. Then he stops and looks down at his crotch with surprise and wonderment.

Caveman boner.

The laws of attraction have taken over, and this early descendant of man feels drawn towards his female counterpart. As he nears her, she looks shyly away and shuffles her super-hairy feet together.

*Ah, I think to myself. This must take place in Europe.*

Slowly and warily, the caveman approaches the cave-chick. It is clear that he is unsure what to do here. How does he show this obviously Italian woman how he is feeling? He

can't send her a wink because Match.com is still decades away from being invented, so now what?

Thinking fast, he reaches down and grabs a giant wooden stick and bashes her over the skull. She falls, unconscious at his feet.

Thus, the very first roofie is invented.<sup>1</sup>

He bends over, picks her up and takes her to his place, where the next scene opens. His bachelor pad is pretty swag for 65,000 BC, with some sweet cave drawings and one of those rock-beds that folds out from the wall. He places her head on the softest piece of granite he can find, and begins preparations as he waits for her to wake up. Of course, he sneaks a couple of peeks at her undercarriage while she's out because even early man mostly thought with his cavedick.

She wakes soon after, only to find herself covered in a blanket of pine needles, a dead sloth and what appear to be feces. She looks up at the unbrowed man looking down upon her, and smiles.

Her heart beats. No one has ever done something like this for her before, primarily because she lives alone with her mom and doesn't get out much.

She swoons at his romantic gestures.

The earliest Valentine's Day is born, and the caveman's trinkets of flowers, teddy bears and chocolates become the romantic standby gifts for thousands of years to come. Luckily for us, chocolate replaced the traditional "smearing of the feces" around 1893 when Milton Hershey decided it was getting kind of gross.<sup>2</sup>

Sadly, these are also some of the most overused and cliché gifts on the planet, but at least now you know how it all began. So, ladies, when your man arrives at your doorstep with a stupid bear and a 26,000-calorie box of caramels, don't blame him.

He doesn't know any better.

Blame the caveman boner guy. He's the one who started it.

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<sup>1</sup> This might not be 100% historically accurate.

<sup>2</sup> Thank you, Milton. Thank you.

# In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Crap That Is a Terrible Idea

*"It's not your fault."* –Sean, *Good Will Hunting*

*"Don't blame me, I was born awesome."* – Me, just now

"Um. Thanks?"

She said this to me while staring at the present on the kitchen counter. No eye contact was made, unless you count the bewildered look she kept giving to the sparkling new Black & Decker coffee maker staring back at her.

Aw, crap.

That certainly wasn't the reaction I was shooting for. This was more the look of a guy realizing that he's actually enjoying a prostate exam but feeling a little conflicted about mentioning it during Catholic confession.

Man, if I had a nickel.

In hindsight, I'm not sure what I was hoping to get as far as a joyous facial expression after giving one of the worst birthday gifts in history. She needed a coffee maker and liked coffee, so this seemed like a no-brainer for me. I bought it after seeing it on sale and realized there was a setting where you could program it to make your java *before you even woke up*. Seriously? Did I transport into the future because this was some ridiculously powerful technology sitting at her fingertips.

Long gone would be the days of making coffee in the morning because this machine, obviously a precursor to the *Star Wars* droids, would have already done it for you. It was a miracle, really. A beautiful, birthday miracle that made you Breakfast Blend while you slept.

She did not think it so.

I was confused. Not nearly as confused as the prostate exam confession, but perplexed nonetheless.

Even the accompanying giant coffee mug that looked just like the ones from *Friends* didn't garner the "OH I LOVE IT" reaction I was expecting. The mug could have literally held 13 gallons of coffee. I've pooped three times just thinking about it.

But, what did I do wrong? My dad used to get my mom stuff like this all the ti-

*\*eyes go wide\**

I started to think back on every gift my mother received from my father for every single occasion:

*\*start television wavy flashback scene here\**

- Vacuum cleaners
- Blenders
- Flannel nightgowns fourteen times her actual width and twice her height
- A naughty nightie half her size and someone please kill me right now
- Cleaning supplies

Yes. Cleaning supplies.

My mom once received a car wash bucket with soap and sponges and a squeegee. Admittedly, the squeegee was really cool but my mom failed to see the awesomeness of it on their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I can tell you, though, that I used it myself to clean a beer spill off the hood of my car and it worked fabulously. Plus, "squeegee" is really fun to say.

Squeegee squeegee squeegee.

You know I'm not wrong about this, people.

I then glanced sideways at the thoughtful gifts / had given to women over the years:

- A memory-foam pillow
- A jar of cashews
- \$25 Gift Card with an extra \$20 in Kohl's Cash
- Homemade 'Love Coupon' booklets, in a pathetic attempt to get laid but make it look like a present
- This stupid goddamn coffee maker

As I sorted through my memory I realized a potentially horrifying truth:

**My father had genetically passed his God-awful gift-giving genes down to, me, his one and only son.**

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

I snatched the coffee maker from the counter top, grabbed my coat, jumped into my car and fled. I had to right this wrong.

I didn't look back. I didn't say a word.

Then 'Runaway' by *Bon Jovi* came on the radio so I sang that at, like, the top of my lungs. I frigging LOVE that song. You can't *not* sing it. The only way it could be better is if it had 'squeegee' in the lyrics.

Song over, I dashed into the department store where I bought that damn coffee maker, ran up to the counter and exchanged it for something else. I asked if the clerk could put the new item in a box for me and then realized she didn't understand English. After five minutes of yelling "Box. BOX. BAWWWWWXXX" over and over again in decreasing speeds while making cube shapes with my hands, she figured it out, handed me my container and I was on my way. As an aside, saying "box" really slowly isn't nearly as fun as it sounds.

I returned to the scene of the birthday coffee crime a scant ten minutes later.

**Voiceover guy:** "*NCIS: Maxwell House,*" new on CBS Thursday.

There's a reason I don't write television shows, probably.

"Where the Hell did you go?" she asked.

"Haglebop!" I blurted out, before collapsing in a heap on the floor because I'd been rushing around for a while now and I stress easily.

She took the box and opened it.

Lying in a puddle of my own drool, heart still racing, I glanced up in time to see that same, prostate-exam look on her face as she held out the giant flannel nightgown in front of her.

"Gee. Thanks. It's, like, fourteen sizes too big, though."

I knew I should have gone with the squeegee.

Damn you, dad. Damn you and your shitty gift DNA.

It was then, in that moment, I felt in my heart that I needed to change. No longer would I, Rodney Lacroix, be the bearer of gifts that would be opened only to be followed by the inevitable questions:

"Do you still have the receipt?" and "Why are you still on the floor? Are you okay?"

This process would take time. This process would take dedication. This process would require shedding years of learned behavior and rebuilding myself as the greatest romantic gift-giver known to man!

This process sounded exhausting. This process would require many naps.

I wonder if that chick still has the memory-foam pillow I gave her.

# Of Genetic Implants, Lingerie, Teddy Bears and Chocolates

*"It's true! I read that somewhere...I wrote it down and then I read it! I believe everything I read."* – Bob Saget

We can sit around all day making excuses for why we may tend to show little emotion towards, or give really crappy things to, the people who we supposedly care about. Do we do this instinctively, a function ingrained in us through thousands and thousands of years of evolution? Why the hell did early man think bonking a woman on the head would endear her to him? Did cavemen invent BDSM? Can we blame our parents for teaching us the wrong way to approach and sustain relationships? Does this thing look infected to you?

Sorry. I got carried away on the questioning.

Sure, maybe there's a bit of truth to all of those things. Maybe there isn't. I'm just here to throw all these possibilities out at you because I like giving my editors things to do. They get paid by the word so I'm really shooting myself in the foot at this point.

Sure there are a lot of environmental factors on how we form ideas of what is, and what is not, romantic. Most of this, unfortunately, comes from advertising and believing what we hear and see. If this hypothesis is true, and you've read this far, you now believe that Hershey chocolates were invented to replace feces-smearing during a holiday about love and cavemen invented Rohypnol. Also, you're an idiot.

Think, for just a moment, about what you would give (or get) as a *typical* "romantic" gift. The average woman here will say one or more of the following:

- 1) Jewelry
- 2) Flowers
- 3) A box of chocolates
- 4) Lingerie
- 5) A teddy bear

Subsequently, there are five staples to every man's notion of what constitutes a romantic gift:

- 1) Jewelry

- 2) Flowers
- 3) A box of chocolates
- 4) Lingerie
- 5) A teddy bear

Coincidence? Probably.

Men are a simple folk. We like stuff handed to us so we don't have to think about it too much. Thinking hurts, unless it's about Buffalo wings. We also will never directly ask a woman what she wants. Asking a woman what she wants is a relationship death wish because if you already don't know what she wants then you *obviously haven't been paying attention* or don't care about her. Stuff like this is why men drink.

That said, we don't think we actually even *need* to ask you. You see, much like how the pack mentality has been ingrained into your puggle's DNA (a result of thousands of years of evolution from wolves) these gift ideas are cemented into the flaccid brains of the average man. This single paragraph has taken me 15 minutes to write because I went off on a daydream of a pack of puggles running through the forest, attacking a deer and trying to kill it by gnawing at its ankles. Oh my God they're so cute.

Like I said: *the flaccid brains of men.*

Fortunes have been made by smarter people who have identified this weakness and subsequently started their own companies to take full advantage of it. The heart-shaped chocolates box, for instance, was invented by *Nirvana* front-man Kurt Cobain. The now-famous teddy bear was invented by Theodore Roosevelt during his siege on Troy, when his army jumped out of a giant replica of Teddy Ruxpin and successfully conquered Japan.

This is not a history book, people.

Be honest, the only reason men give lingerie to women is because they want to tear it off them. Men: women are well aware that this is your ulterior motive. If women thought lingerie made them sexy and was super comfortable then, guys, we'd be going to bed every single night with our ladies in naughty maid outfits. Instead, they are walking around at night wearing oversized purple sweatshirts with owls on them that say "WHO wants some a dis?"

And women get men ties and shirts because, well, they want the man to be successful. More success means more money. More money means they can buy more comfy owl shirts to sleep in.

It's a vicious cycle.

The closest a woman gets to giving lingerie to a guy is when she gives him underwear with a 'penis holder' feature (like elephant trunk/Pinocchio nose/thimble attached). Women get men penis-receptacle underwear because (a) they want to see if you can fill the thing out and (b) they are going to think it's hysterical when you try. Worst case, they get a very sad elephant and 15 minutes of cry-laughing out of it so this is a win-win for them.

Sometimes, when I type, the repressed memories come back. That was one of those times. Now I'm sad and so is my tiny Dumbo.

Where was I? Oh, yes. YOU.

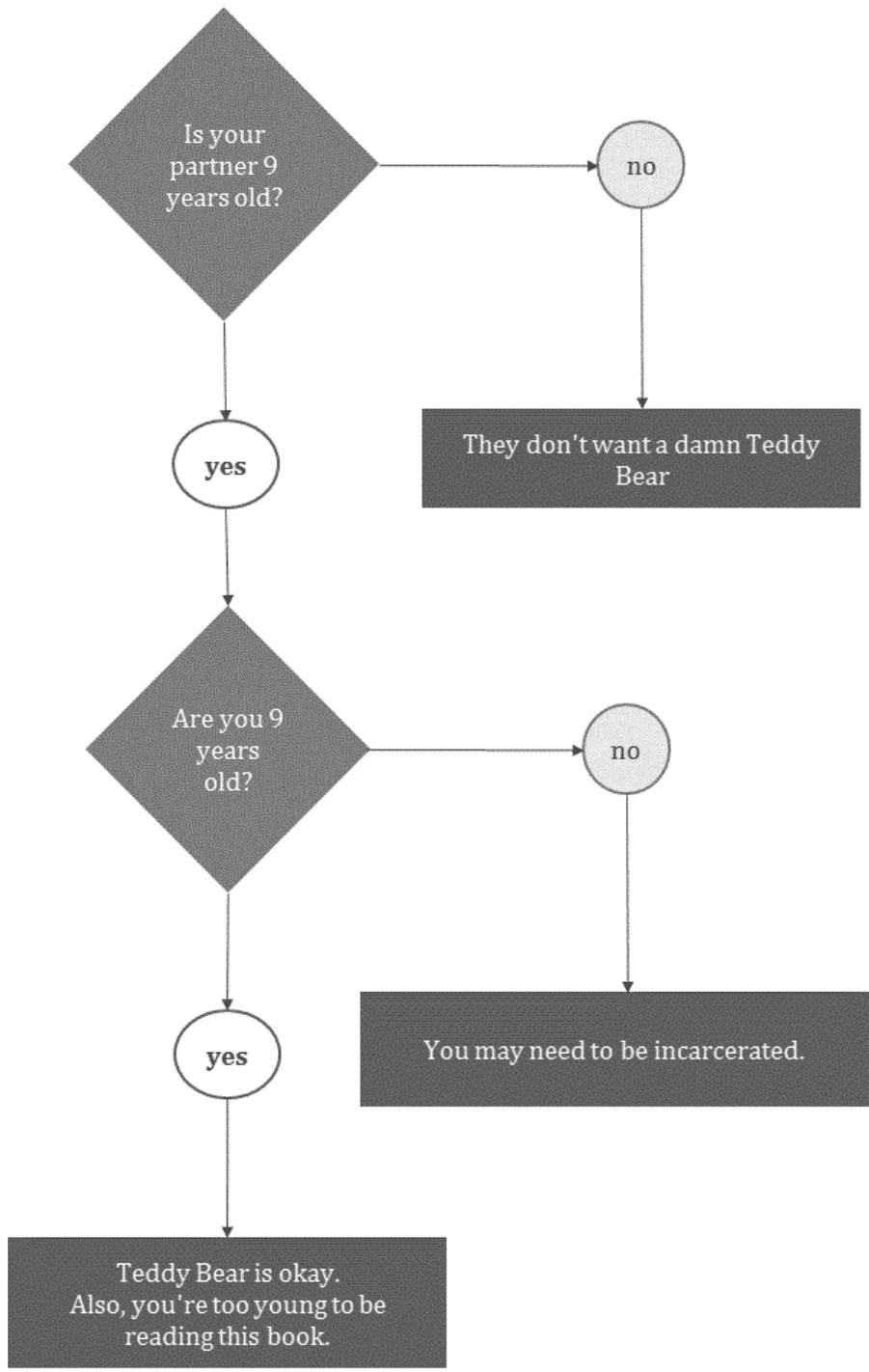
Your task, though, as you prepare to give your lover a gift, is to eschew the mundane and go for the extraordinary. Flowers are the exception to this, because flowers are pretty and chocolates make you obese and diabetic. No one wants diabetes, and there is not a single man on the planet who wants to answer the "Do these pants make my ass look huge" question so chocolates should be automatically disqualified from any gift consideration immediately.

Teddy bears, though, *seem* like a cute gift. That is, until you factor in that no one wants to receive one. Statistics show that the number one ingredient to the 'breakup bonfire' she will hold in your honor after you split is a stuffed bear.<sup>1</sup>

So here, before you pick up the phone and call that company that makes \$150 custom stuffed animals that will someday be sold at a yard sale for \$3, I've made this flowchart to help you decide if you should get her one:

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<sup>1</sup> I make up a lot of statistics in this book. This happens to be one of them.



Feel free to reference that every time you think of getting her that little stuffed animal, and then *don't do it*.

Remember what happened at Troy.

## Act 1 Progress Checklist

I'm adding these handy-dandy checklists at the end of each section so you can track your progress. They also serve as a reminder for the lessons learned while simultaneously making this book appear more substantial.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Household appliances make women swoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chocolates are not a gift but, instead, a precursor to a lifetime of insulin injections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teddy bears are assholes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## *Act 2*

# *Basic Straining*

## Well, That Was Embarrassing

The stage set appears now to be the bedroom of a teenage boy.

The wallpaper has a metallic sheen to it, reflecting the dark green carpeting on which a large waterbed sits. Above the bed, tacked to the wall, are two posters: The Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders and Christie Brinkley. Both posters look worn. We will not stop to consider why right now because the answer is probably extremely disturbing. A dresser with a large mirror sits against the opposite wall, adorned with a blue Tiffany lamp.

Clearly, this is one of the worst-designed rooms of all time and should probably be on some television home-design show that has the words “Disasters” or “Rescue” in the title.

The bedroom door swings open and a young man in a denim jacket appears. He stands in the doorway and grabs onto the chin-up bar above his head. We watch, silently, as he struggles to pull himself up approximately two inches before dropping to the floor in a puddle of sweat. In his defense, exercise is exhausting. As he drops, we see a sign that was behind him on the door:

*“Rodney’s Room”*

Ah. That explains everything.

The boy stands upright, brushes himself off, and heads over to the dresser. He pretends to smash the Tiffany lamp with his fist because he hates that stupid thing so much and wants it to explode in a quadbillion pieces. Yes that’s a made-up number but I cannot stress to you enough how much he wants that thing to disintegrate. You can’t really tell this from sitting in the audience because there’s no dialog yet but, trust me, he’s thinking it.

He leans into the mirror and straightens his eyebrows. He smiles at himself, checking out to see if there’s any trace of leftover Hot Pocket visible. Confident there are none, he smiles a wry little smile.

“Hey,” he says to himself.

“Heyyy,” again, but this time with a smoother dialect.

“Heyyyyyyy,” now he’s Fonzie, what the hell is going on.

He turns sideways, then turns his head to the mirror over his shoulder.

“Hey. How are you?” he asks himself, but now just a head nod.

The boy is obviously practicing someth-

At this point he has now closed his eyes and is wrapping his arms around some invisible someone in front of him. This is getting really weird and gross. I feel uncomfortable just watching this. What the sweet hell is this kid doing? OHMYGOD NOW HE IS OPENING HIS MOUTH AND DOING A MAKE-OUT FACE.

He turns around, back to the mirror and wraps his arms around himself. He glances over his shoulder to see what it’s going to look like when he’s kissing whoever and she’s holding him. The boy, obviously, has some serious issues.

“Hey Rod I wa–,” a woman stops dead in the doorway.

“Mooommmmmmmmmmmmm!”

“I don’t even want to know,” she says.

Neither do we, lady. Neither do we.

He shuts the door in her face. His practice abruptly canceled, he turns to face the mirror fully again, checks himself one more time, and then turns to the posters over his bed.

“Wish me luck,” he says to the Christie’s eerily wrinkled and stained – wait, stained?! – poster. “Date night.”

Practice now over, he exits the room. The lights dim, and everyone in the audience gets up to exit as well. They’re all going to wash up.

Seriously, that was disturbing to watch.

## The “Lookie For The Nookie” Tip

“She’s got the looks that kill” – Motley Crue

“She’s got Bette Davis eyes” – Kim Carnes

“If Bette Davis and Motley Crue had a baby I bet it would have laser vision.” - anonymous

When finally embarking on your romantic voyage and putting some of your ideas into practical use, you need to simply start off slowly. That’s why we’re going to push you off with some basics so you don’t strain yourself (the title for this act suddenly reveals itself in glorious splendor).

It’s like the old saying goes:

*“Before you learn to walk, you have to learn to crawl. Before you learn how to crawl, you have to figure out how to roll over because if you don’t roll over then your pee goes straight up into the air. No one will find you attractive if you can’t roll over and end up peeing straight up in the air because chances are it’s getting all over you.”*

I’m terrible at remembering quotes, although that not-peeing-in-the-air thing really seems like sound advice.

Statistics show that 70% of men and women regard the eyes as the feature they notice first in someone of the opposite sex.<sup>1</sup> This statistic drops to 10% in men if the woman they’re looking at has big boobs.<sup>2</sup>

Since the eyes are typically the number one thing people notice in a partner or potential partner, it just makes sense to figure out how to use them properly. You probably already know how to see, unless you’re blind and got this book on audiotape and now I feel bad for even mentioning it. For the rest of you, though, working on *how* you look at someone is just as important as *if* you do. Especially if you have a lazy or wonky eye. This may be a tough section for you, too.

Right now I can hear you all going, “*I can’t believe I paid for something that tells me to look at someone*” but, bear with me because we’re starting out easily and working our way up to a rapid pace. Also, by the time you’ve gotten to this point in the book I have

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from [www.medicaldaily.com](http://www.medicaldaily.com) and holy shit I just footnoted an actual fact. \*plays lottery\*

<sup>2</sup> Also valid if the woman has small boobs but is wearing a padded bra and/or stiff nips.

already received a royalty. To gyp<sup>1</sup> me out of any money you would have had to return it around Page 3. Keep this tip in mind for the next “50 Shades” book you get.

Back to ‘the look.’ One of the very first things that can endear someone to you is how you react to them when they walk into the room. This can be during your initial meeting, before you get intimate, when you walk into the bathroom and they’re brushing their teeth, or when you initially meet them in a bathroom and get intimate while they’re brushing their teeth. I’m not here to judge you. Also, you should probably disinfect the bathroom sink at some point. You people have no shame. It’s disgusting, really.

“The look” is very simple to execute, and even simpler if you don’t have to fake it.

- 1) Look at the person (In the eyes, people. Eyes.)
- 2) Smirk/smile
- 3) Let out a short breath (optional although, technically, you should be breathing, anyway)

Side note: One of my female editors told me to add “(4) Don’t look away” here as an added step. I did some searching and, sure enough, a prolonged gaze is actually listed as things people find alluring.

I didn’t put it in for the simple fact that gaping at someone can start to get eerie if it’s kept longer than 10 seconds. It can also be considered the start of a staring contest. If you or your partner is a sore loser, this won’t end well and you’ll probably get dry-eye. My editor also called a held stare her “kryptonite,” but the point here is to make someone feel sexy and not kill Superman so I don’t get it.

Nevertheless, it doesn’t take a lot to make someone feel like they’re *the one*. The simple method of actually making eye contact and smiling has been proven to increase romantic response in the recipients by releasing endorphins and chrysanthemums and small neurotoxins, most likely. I didn’t look that up anywhere, obviously, but it sounds good.

However, just so we’re clear, here are some “Dos” and “Don’ts” for the ladies and the men on how to achieve *the look*.

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<sup>1</sup> I mean no offense to gypsies here when I use this term. That is, unless it causes a national outrage and, subsequently, blanket media exposure that catapults me to Best Seller status. Then, sure, be offended and take your anger to a major news outlet. Thank you in advance.

## First, for the guys:

Guys, to get the right look you just have to be subtle and try to not look like you're a douche. This may be tough in certain areas of the country where guys may actually all be douches (guys in New Jersey with white sunglasses, for example) or if you find that looking at a woman in that way actually yields results (i.e., strip joints during the Sunday day shift).

Here are the right and wrong ways to look at a woman, and what each look implies:



On the 'Yes' side, the head-tilt says, 'I'm vulnerable to your charms.' The smirk says 'You are pleasing' or 'I have a small piece of apple peel stuck in my molar.'

On the 'No' side, I realize I actually look like I just ate bad cheese but I was going for the 'Heyyy...you look bootiful! DAMN.'

There's a reason I'm not a model.

Long story short, try the 'Yes' side.

**For the ladies:**

Girls, I can tell you from a man's standpoint that you could literally stare at him cross-eyed with cataracts and it wouldn't matter. If you look in our general direction, we think you're interested. If you look in a different direction, we think you're interested. There is really no way you win this battle unless the guy is visually impaired and you have a clear and quick exit.

However, if you ARE interested in the guy, I can tell you 100% that the 'seductively biting the lip' thing will work for us EVERY. SINGLE. TIME. Every time. There are almost zero exceptions to this except for below:



Bite the bottom lip. **THE BOTTOM LIP.**

I think why is self-explanatory.

Also, please note that I had to copy the hair from a picture I found on the Internet because I could not find my mullet wig and, trust me, I looked everywhere. I'm so sad.

Regardless, you looking at a man while biting your bottom lip will render us helpless. It's like happiness to The Hulk, lobbyists to congressmen, or bad analogies to my writing. We are powerless against the look and bitten-lip technique.

Try it. Take a look at him or her. A good look. And don't forget the smile. The smile on the LEFT.

There. Better.

## Digitally Remastered

You have now, hopefully, mastered 'The Look' and are laying to waste the hearts of members of the opposite sex everywhere. I'm not talking about wasting hearts in the Jeffrey Dahmer way, because he ate those people. I guess in a roundabout way your goal is roughly the same and I think I'll stop talking now.

The one thing I didn't mention, though, was that *looking* at a person is completely different than *noticing* them.

Whoa. That was deep.

That's what she said.

Never. She's never said that. Not to me, anyway.

*\*runs to compose self\**

Do you notice things about your partner's features that no one else does? I mean, like no one else notices unless they pay her \$20 for three minutes in the Champagne Room? Just because you look at her all the time doesn't mean you take it all in.

That's what sh-

You know. I'm not even gonna bother on that one.

I once dated a woman for about a year when, one night, I looked over at her and started rubbing her cheekbone with my thumb.

"What the hell are you doing?" she asked.

"You have a huge smudge of mascara or something right here," I said, rubbing the spot a little harder.

"Stop it."

"UGH," I started scraping. "WHY WON'T THIS COME OFF?!"

"You asshole. Those are freckles."

"Oh," I said, putting my hand down. I could feel her glaring at me from the corners of my eyes before I asked the inevitable question:

"Have you always had those?"

Turns out she did. Since, like, birth. I just never noticed them during 12 whole months of dating. Freckles apparently don't magically appear in giant clusters unless you have skin cancer, she said. She also called me more names. It was a fun evening.

But that wasn't the worst oversight I've had.

The year was 1985.

I was sitting at the "cool lunch table" as us cool people coolly do at lunch. I was minding my own cool business eating my cool sandwich and being cool in the general sense when I looked across and saw a really cute girl looking at me. She was actually giving me the aforementioned 'look' and really pulling it off with aplomb. I can use that fancy word here in this context because I had just gotten out of English class and had a vocab test.

I turned and looked behind me to see who she was actually looking at. Just because you're cool doesn't mean people find you attractive. Behind me was just a wall, which also indicates that being cool also doesn't mean you're very smart and forget your surroundings easily.

"Hey," I said to my friend Greg. "That chick is checking me out."

"That's Julia," he said. "Dude. You don't know? She wants to go out with you."

"How do you know?"

"She's told me before."

You see, this is why friends suck. Why Greg failed to inform me that this girl wanted to go out with me is something I question to this very day. Although, there was no 'Bro Code' back in the 80's, so I may forgive him this transgression, especially since 'bro' wasn't even a word back then.

I approached Julia after lunch and asked her out.

We went out on a few dates, and then a few more. Before I knew it, Rodney and Julia were a boyfriend/girlfriend couple who had been seeing each other for months.

And that's when Greg asked me the question at lunch one day.

"So, what's the deal with her finger?"

*Um. What?*

"What do you mean? I asked.

“Her finger. What’s the story with her finger?”

Oh. Thank you for asking me the exact same question again in the exact same way. It’s much clearer to me now, you jackass.

“I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU’RE TALKING ABOUT,” I replied.

“Dude,” he looked at me with a blank face. “She has no pinky.”

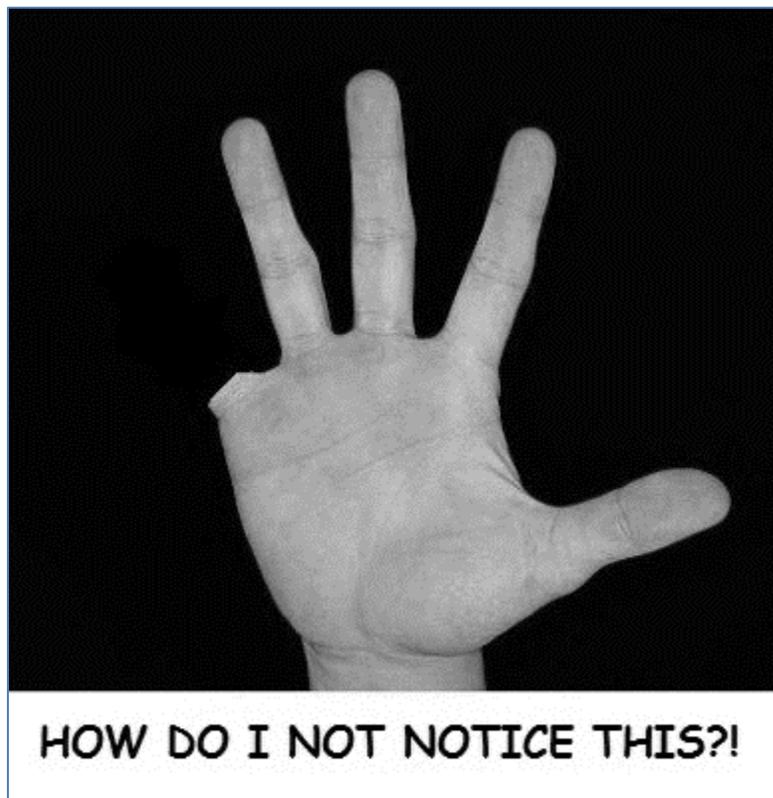
This is where, if you’re watching a movie and some bombshell has been dropped on a character or he has some startling realization, that the camera does that weird focus thing that makes his face bigger but the background smaller. Upon hearing this news, my head exploded and the school turned into a tiny Lego set.

“SHUT. UP”

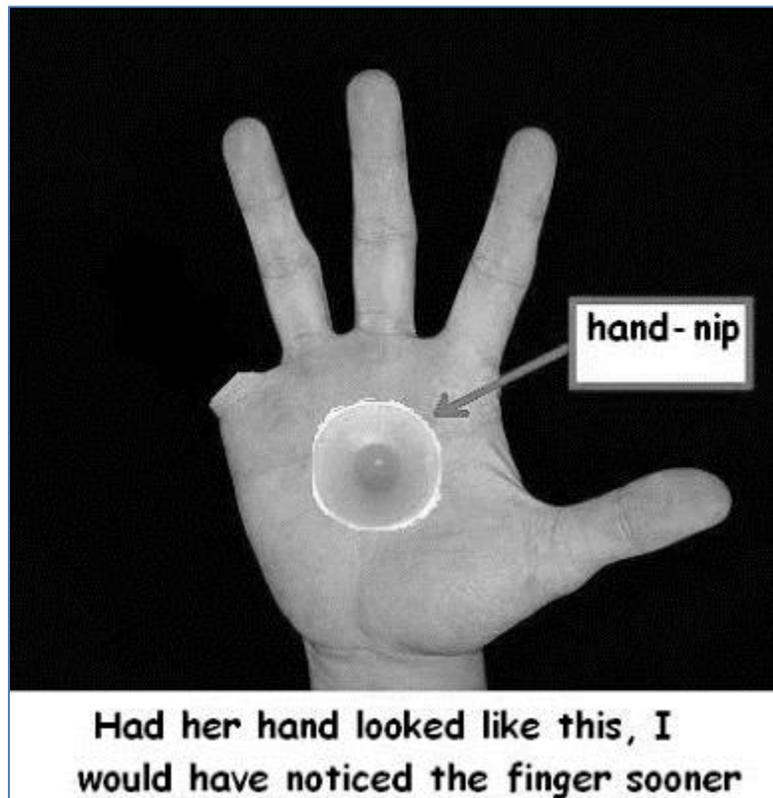
“Are you seriously telling me right now that you didn’t know?” he asked.

I didn’t know. I had no idea. My friends had no idea that I had no idea. I had no idea that my friends had no idea that I had no idea. This paragraph is rambling, but I think you get the...never mind.

She had no pinky? Seriously? We had been going out for months. MONTHS.



It is quickly occurring to me that I am the biggest asshole in the history of ever. How do you, at any point during a 4-month relationship, not notice that your girlfriend is missing an entire finger? This should tell you, ladies, how much more attention men pay to other things, such as your boobs and ass. I'm sure if she'd been missing a butt cheek I would have noticed immediately.



Then I thought, *Maybe my friends were just messing with me.* There's no way I am going to look past the fact that she has only nine fingers. I mean, she's given me handjobs and I would have felt that right?

"Hey. This feels weird. Like, are you missing a finger?"

Julia and I were scheduled to go out that Friday night. I tried to tell myself I wouldn't stare, that it was still the same girl I had been attracted to for months, but in my heart I knew I'd have to at least take a peek just to make sure my buddies weren't dicking around with me.

As we sat in the car on the way to the movie, I quickly glanced down at her hand.

**FIVE FINGERS.**

Ha! Suck it, guys. She has all her fin-

Wait. She has two hands. Thank goodness I remembered that from biology class. Hooray for the New Hampshire school system! We good learners!

Pretending to look both ways at a stop sign, I creatively shot a look at her other hand resting by her lap. There, in all its glory, was a hand sporting only four fingers. The pinky was nowhere to be found.

She turned to catch me as my gaze returned to looking out her window. She smiled, and gave me kiss on the cheek. I smiled back, but honestly felt a bit heavy in my heart. I really liked her but, in all the times I'd *looked* at her, I'd never once noticed this about her. When all is said and done, how do you not feel guilty about that?

I never gathered up the courage to ask her what happened. Did I not notice because it didn't matter to me, or did I not see it because I was concentrating on other things that were simply conducive to perpetuating my teenage libido? I guess I'll never know.

So, sure, folks, master 'the look,' but also make sure you take time to notice them, too. The small things, the big things, the missing things and, hell, even the extra things (for those of you reading this in India who have 17 toes and stuff). Take it all in.

I just wish it was my friends that were messing with me. I would have really liked to gone back to school and given them all the finger.

I apologize for the terrible pun.

I'm sorry I put it in there.

That's what she said.

## The "Chivalry Delivery" Tip

I was going to put a definition here of 'chivalry' until I discovered that it actually means 'horsemanship,' and I really didn't want to start this story off by insulting your woman. Feel free to insert any and all 'ride a cowboy,' 'she sure likes carrots' or 'ridden hard, put away wet' jokes here.

That reminds me: Jim McMannis, if you're reading this please come get your mom's spurs because she left them at my house on Friday. Also take her saddle with you and, FYI, I may or may not be your father.

When I think of chivalry, I think of medieval knights killing each other on a field, while busty maidens with their boobs hanging out try to sell me a jester's hat for \$39.99. This is exactly why I own 37 jester hats.

I think I've been to one too many a Renaissance Faire.

To close out this chapter, I'm just going to give you all some rough pointers on how to be chivalrous. If you don't have any horses, knights or busty maids selling overpriced knockoffs handy, this may be difficult for you but try your best.

We've all heard the phrase, "Chivalry is dead," but right here is where we change it to "Chivalry isn't dead, it's been revived by a strange virus and is now zombified and alive and well in our relationship!" Please note that none of my sayings are set in stone so feel free to change that to something that fits your situation, just in case you're not a fan of zombies. Loser.

Here's the scoop, men: women love when you do the stupid little things for them that make them feel like they have your entire focus. Acts of chivalry go into this category, while wearing fake "X-Ray Glasses" does not.

As an added benefit, being chivalrous also gives you the edge over other guys – mainly when your woman's friend looks at her own man and says, "Now why don't YOU do stuff like that for me?" Then the guy looks at you and telepathically calls you an asshole.

***Remember, making your girl feel good while making other men look bad is the KEY to romance.***

I'm adding simple acts here because these are things you can do every single day in many situations to just simply let her know that she has all of your attention.

- 1) Open the car door for her.

Cliché, I know. But opening the door for her when she gets into the car is a stupid simple thing that means something special to a woman. Now, you don't have to park the car and, like a valet, run over to her door so she can exit when you go to the mall.

If your woman actually expects you to open the door for her to get *out*, then you are no longer her man. At this point, you have become her bitch. Don't be her bitch.

2) Close the car door for her.

This just seemed like an obvious progression after #1, but first be sure that all of her extremities are inside the car. That's important. Learn from my mistakes.

Now that I'm thinking about it, I wonder if that's what happened to Julia's pinky finger.

3) Put your coat over a puddle so she can walk across it.

I'm just screwing with you. Don't do this. You'll ruin your coat and that just shows her you're an idiot.

4) Always let her order her meal first.

Don't order her meal for her unless you're ordering the 2-for-\$20 deal at Applebee's. This just makes her look powerless in the relationship. If she doesn't know what she wants, wait for her to decide unless she tells you to order first. Then order the 2-for-\$20 deal because you pretty much get an appetizer for free and you really can't beat that nowadays.

5) HOLD HER HAND

Walking through a mall. Entering the grocery store. Talking a walk through the city. Losing your balance and falling off a bridge.

Hold her hand. If you're falling off a bridge, make sure she goes with you. Dying alone would suck.

Holding the woman's hand shows her that you're not embarrassed to be seen with her. It shows her that you're proud of your relationship and – more importantly – it makes your woman feel like you're not trying to look single or in a friendzone so you can hook up with the hot chick walking towards you in the Target parking lot.

Ladies – this works when you initiate it as well. Reach for his hand or take it when he offers. There's nothing more romantic than seeing a couple holding hands for no reason other than they're together. That is, unless we're talking about really old people. Really old people are gross.

If you offer your hand, ladies, and he doesn't take it or tells you his hands are dirty, check to see if there is an attractive woman approaching you because he's totally thinking about nailing her and doesn't want to look like he's taken.

I can feel all the guys telepathically calling me 'asshole' right now.

## Act 2 Progress Checklist

Wow, it really looks like we've got the ball rolling right now and things are coming along nicely. Hopefully, the ladies out there have caught their breath after seeing those pictures of me giving the sexy looks. Guys, if your woman read this last chapter and then hopped all over you like pretentious people hop on Land Rover dealerships, you're welcome.

	Yes	No
Sexy looks, if done right, can be foreplay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would look good as a woman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A woman biting her lip = boner time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A woman biting <i>your</i> lip = bigger boner time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You should notice the little things about your partner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm a total dickhead for not realizing my girlfriend only had nine fingers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After your woman gets into the car, slam the door on her foot to show her it's real	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*Act 3*

*Finders Keepers*

## Gone Fishin'

It's an early morning setting, and we open the theater curtains to find our hero sitting, alone, on the very end of a dock. He is wearing a flannel shirt, a baseball cap and jean shorts because he's an idiot, obviously. Someone please tell this guy that jorts aren't in sty-

Wait. Forget it. It's just regular pants that are rolled up so they don't get wet. Carry on.

On the dock sits this book, the spine open and a bookmark resting on this very page. This is actually kind of freaky when I think about because I'm typing this page right now so it's almost like I'm changing his history.

*\*man jumps into water but can't swim and starts drowning\**

*\*giant eagle swoops down, clutches him from certain death and returns him to the dock\**

*\*Mila Kunis runs by topless, holding a sign that says "I love Rodney"\**

Okay. That was pretty cool. SUCH POWER I WIELD.

The man reaches down and grabs the fishing pole lying beside him. On his face is a slight look of dismay, probably because he realizes he's fishing and totally forgot to bring a six-pack. Luckily for him, I haven't finished writing this page so –

*\*16 Hooters girls show up and bring him a keg of beer\**

He pours himself a big cup, takes a long sip, wipes his upper lip and sets it down beside the book. Picking up the book, he thumbs back through the pages making sure he has everything he needs to proceed with Act 3.

"The Look," he says, giving that sly wink and dimpled nod toward the audience.

Several females and that one guy sitting alone in 15<sup>th</sup> row get flustered.

"Check," he says as he flips another page.

Turning back towards the audience he singles out a woman sitting with her friend.

"Hey," he says to her. "Weren't you in here last week? You sat two rows back and had on a purple outfit. Is your headache any better? I remember you rubbing your temples a bit."

"Why, yes," she replies, stunned. "I was and it's better, thank you."

She stands up and makes her way to the stage and hands him a piece of paper. It's a phone number and the words, "call me" scrawled across the top and underlined.

"Notice things about them," he says to himself. "Check."

He turns to put the paper down when he rights himself, suddenly. Leaping up and off the stage, he stumbles slightly as he rockets up the aisle and bear-tackles a man walking in.

"Johnny!" a woman screams.

A struggle ensues in the middle of the theater, there is some yelling and commotion. No punches are thrown, but there's a lot of wrestling and what appear to be tufts of cotton begin wafting around amidst the scuffle.

Our hero stands over the tackled man, a destroyed teddy bear in his hands. He looks at the woman who just screamed.

"I'm sorry, ma'am," he says, "But he was about to give you this teddy bear."

She looks up from her seat at our hero. She looks down at the man who was about to give her a ginormous 4-foot tall teddy bear.

"Thank you," she says. "You've saved me."

"Was nothing," he replies. "Any gentleman would do the same thing."

*\*A Pegasus appears and flies him back to the stage while The Scorpions appear in the orchestra and start playing "Rock You Like a Hurricane"\**

Okay, seriously, this is pretty frigging cool.

Satisfied that he is ready, the man sits back down on the dock. He pats the book lying beside him, grabs his fishing rod, and casts his line into the waters of Lake Relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Silently, patiently, he waits for a nibble.

*\*Bigfoot, wearing a leather bodysuit, waves 'hello' from behind a tree\**

I wish I'd been doing this forever.

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<sup>1</sup> I need to apologize for the fishing analogy here. I don't want you to think I'm calling the women out there 'fish' and, by doing so, referring to you as something men just wait to catch. I also don't want you to think I'm maybe talking about vaginas or something. You probably didn't even see last correlation until now, so maybe I shouldn't have even said it. Just know I'm only using this as a simple correlation to the relationship adventure. PHEW.

## The "F" Word

*"Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine for the soul." - Luther Burbank*

*"Mammals, a day of reckoning is coming. That's right, the same plants and flowers that saw you crawl from the primordial soup will reclaim the planet. And there will be no-one to protect you." – Poison Ivy*

Man, that Poison Ivy lady is a nutjob.

I titled this entry "The 'F' Word" but in this case the "F" word I'm talking about is "flowers." You people are twisted. I know what you were thinking (I was, too, but don't tell anyone).

Sending someone flowers is a little different than the chocolates or teddy bear no-no's mentioned previously. For example, flowers tend to make things brighter and prettier, while chocolate can kill a dog if they eat it. By the same token, flowers can reflect the beauty of the woman you love, while teddy bears eat the souls of children.

Your move, loverboy.

Ladies, this tip may work the very first time you send your man flowers because **WHAT MAN GETS FLOWERS?** None, really, so you have (a) the element of surprise on your hands, (b) he will be absolutely surprised at the gesture (and what man doesn't like to lose the upper hand in a relationship once in a while) and (c) the man will now feel obligated to get you something in return.

However, if your man actually enjoys getting flowers then you may have larger relationship issues going on. I'm just saying there's a reason why you've found him on more than one occasion looking in the mirror, wearing your new pumps and calling himself "Ms. Louise Titmacher".

Ah, flowers. I'm not talking "Valentine's Day" flowers or "Anniversary Bouquets," here. I'm talking about sending her flowers in the middle of the week just because.

The key here? **JUST BECAUSE.**

What says 'romance' like a dozen long-stem roses coming out of the blue besides, literally, saying the word 'romance?' Not much.

If your relationship is in the flower-giving stage (i.e., you both mutually like each other or have been married for 20+ years or your spouse just died and you need something to put on the casket) then flowers are a great way to say “I’m thinking of you for absolutely no other reason than I’m thinking about you.”

Tricks to this method:

- 1) The most effective way to get every ounce of romance from this gesture is to send it to the workplace *in the middle of the day*.

Sending flowers to the workplace will absolutely take her off guard. Additionally, you get the all-important “wow factor” from her coworkers and – even better – will make them jealous.

Jealous coworkers are awesome because when you show up to pick her up from work or drop by for lunch you will have their adoration. You also know that the other female workers went home and mentioned to their husbands or boyfriends that ‘so-and-so got flowers delivered today for no reason,’ thus making them look bad while simultaneously making you look better.

Sending her flowers at work also has the added benefit of marking your territory without you having to pee all over her place of business. Most employers seriously frown upon this. Take my word for it. Overall, it’s a win for everyone.

If you send flowers to her workplace, make sure you have the address of her workplace ready and that she is actually going to be there. I’ve sent flowers to my wife on a day when she was working at a different office branch and spent the next hour scrambling for addresses and rerouting the delivery truck. This is exhausting and flower delivery people don’t really have the great sense of humor that you’d think they’d have.

I don’t know why I think flower delivery guys have a sense of humor except that I can’t think about the word ‘bulb’ or ‘fiddlehead’ without giggling so florists must laugh constantly, I assume.

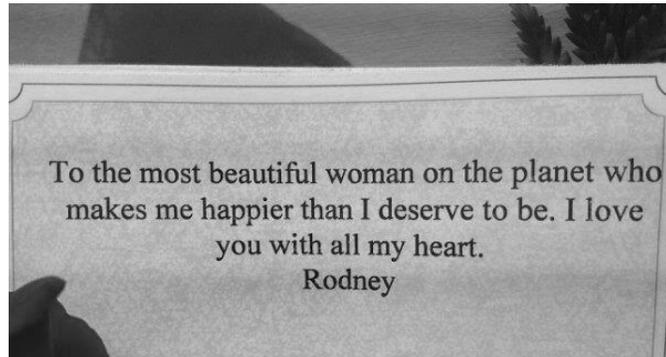
- 2) The message is the absolute most important part

Here’s the thing: The type of flower isn’t important in most cases.

Sure, roses are romantic and violets are fat gum-chewing kids that turn blue and roll around chocolate factories, but the words accompanying the flowers are what get the job done. A good note choice for the first dozen roses you send to someone is simply, “Just thinking about you.”

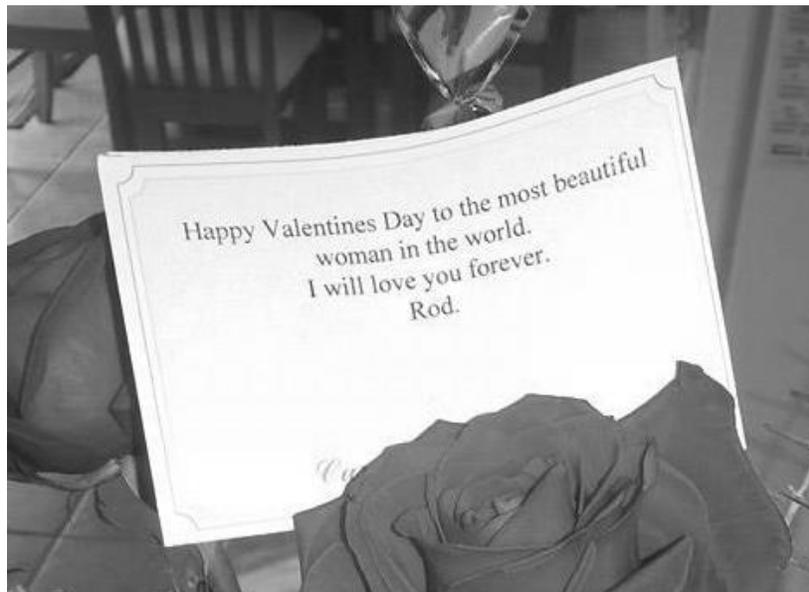
**WARNING:** Do not send flowers that say “Thinking about you” if the date went terribly or water was thrown during the course of the date because stalking is not caring.

Back to the note and what it should say. Take, for instance, these examples of flowers I've sent:



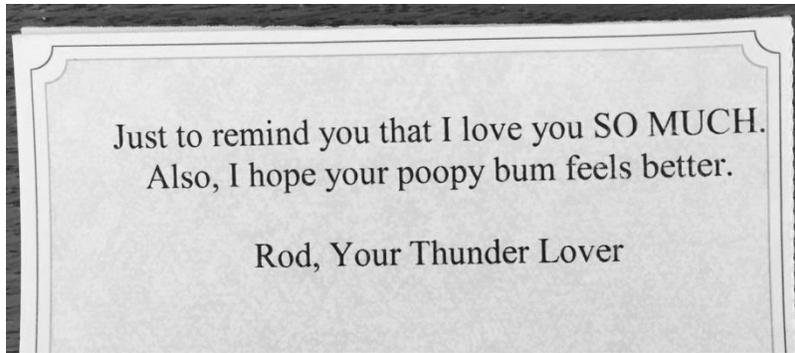
OH MY GOD I just got heart palpitations reading that card and I'm the one who sent it.

Here's another one:



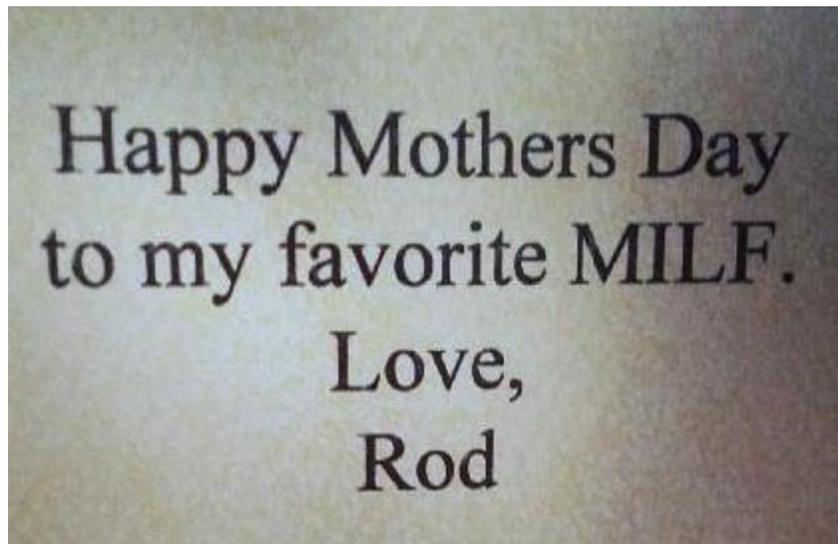
Please take note of the extensive use of the term 'beautiful' here in reference to the first chapter on compliments. See? *It all ties together*, which is what I think I'll title my book on advanced bondage techniques.

You can even turn explosive diarrhea into a charming, tender moment. Observe:



That one is really fun narrating to the lady taking the flower order, especially when you have to spell out “poopy” for her. Spelling is very important on a card accompanying a bouquet of roses, even if it’s about your woman having a bad case of the Hershey squirts<sup>1</sup>.

One more:



The genius of the latter is that it hits on several levels since it was, in fact, Mother’s Day and my wife certainly is a MILF. Actually, for me she is a MIDF but that’s beside the point, plus “MIDF” is really hard to say without sounding like you’re having a stroke.

“You’re my favorite MID..MIDduff..MIDFFF”

“SOMEONE CALL 9-1-1!”

Additionally, there is the key component of humor in the last card giving it not only the ‘awww’ factor but the ‘ha’ component as well. If you can work such dual-magic into the

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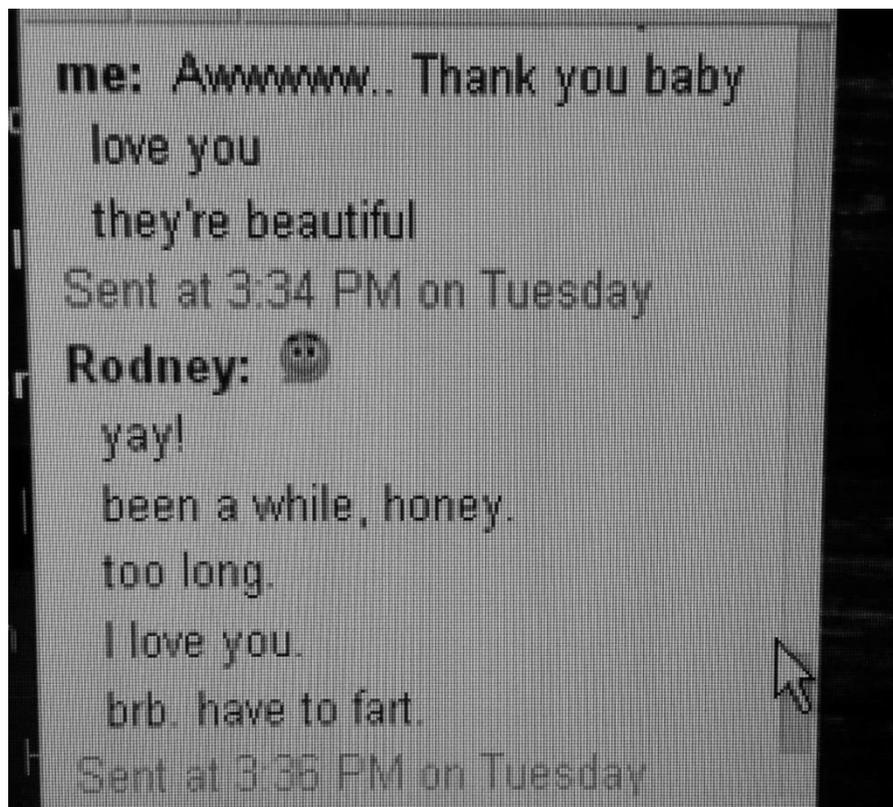
<sup>1</sup> TIP: Make sure your significant other has a great sense of humor before sending flowers to her workplace that mention her inability to produce solid stool and maybe the appearance of a hemorrhoid.

card while not being completely embarrassed as you dictate it to the person on the other side of the phone who is taking your flower order, you will hit this on all cylinders. Trust me.

Here's the thing about flower cards: They're short. You don't have to write an 8-page single-spaced soliloquy because the florist won't let you anyway. There is a card character limit imposed on you by the floral industry. You get to be a guy and not say much and she can't complain about your lack of elegant prose because of some federal florist card regulation, probably. It's completely out of your hands.

See? Brilliant.

If executed properly, you may get something like an instant message popping up on your computer, gushing about the gesture, like this:



You should probably leave out the part about farting. I'm a trained professional and this type of response takes years of practice.

### **FOR THE LADIES Prologue: This Rose Is Making Me Thorny**

I'm going to write this section almost verbatim as how I received it from my friend, Julie. I didn't think I could make it any better than how she wrote it, so here goes:

*“I sent a dozen roses to my boyfriend’s workplace with a note attached to the stem of each one. The notes consisted of complimenting on his oral game; thanking him for putting down the toilet seat after he pissed; and not complaining when one of my hairs ended up in the dinner I cooked. Of course, men being men, his co-workers read all the notes as well. They thought it was hilarious and my praise of his sexual prowess earned him major props.”*

That’s pretty awesome. If you’re going to send flowers to a man, ladies, this would be how you do it. I don’t suggest sending something like this if he works in the Human Resources Department, though. Home Depot? Sure. Go for it.

This would also work as a great idea if you want to send flowers to yourself just to get the attention of someone else.

*“Rodney, you are an amazing lover.”*

*“I can’t believe I had 38 orgasms last night.”*

Thanks for the tip, Julie!

Hm. Maybe ‘Thanks for the tip’ could be another thing you ladies could put on the card.

## Even a Blind Squirrel Finds a Nut Sometimes

I thought I'd title this story with one of the worst sayings known to man. I highly doubt there are a lot of blind squirrels out in the wilderness but even if that's so, my guess is that they would have been picked off very early in their lives.

**Squirrel #1:** JIMMY! LOOK OUT!

**Squirrel #2:** Who's there?

**Squirrel #1:** It's me, Sa! YOU NEED TO RUN!

**Squirrel #2:** Oh, hey Sa-

*\*hawk scoops up blind squirrel as a tiny cane and pair of sunglasses fall to the ground\**

Squirrel karma sucks.

My point in using that saying is that, sometimes, things just fall into your lap. Hopefully these things aren't heavy or pointy, because maybe you want children one day, I have no idea. If you are considering children, give me a call so I can help talk you out of it.

Just kidding (not really).

Armed with the knowledge gained earlier, you may begin your search for a new relationship with hope and resolve. This will go away shortly, when you realize that most people you approach have something seriously wrong with them. Usually, this is some type of clinical disorder that has yet to be categorized by modern medicine. Other times, they're New York Yankee fans. Whatever the reason, though, you may find that you're waiting a little longer for that love nibble<sup>1</sup> than you maybe thought you would.

Its then, with hopes dashed and your guard down, that someone special comes into your life. If your guard is down, it may also be when you are mugged on a street corner and left for dead, so always remember to stay alert and aware of your surroundings. Just because you're looking for love doesn't mean you shouldn't stay vigilant.

I consider "going off on a tangent" a large part of my cardio routine.

Back to the unexpected relationship:

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<sup>1</sup> "Love nibbles" are now officially the name of my signature sex move. You are not allowed to use it unless you're shouting at me, "Just do the love nibbles, already. I'm tired and have to get up early for a dentist appointment."

## The year was 1987.

I was almost 21 years old and spent the majority of my time wearing acid-washed jeans and hanging out at a nearby beach trying to score chicks with my friend, Jeff. Jeff was way better looking than I was so I really had to compensate for my stature and boyish looks. Hence, my spectacular mullet and why I went tanning three days a week.

Oh, laaaaaaddiiiiiiiiieees.

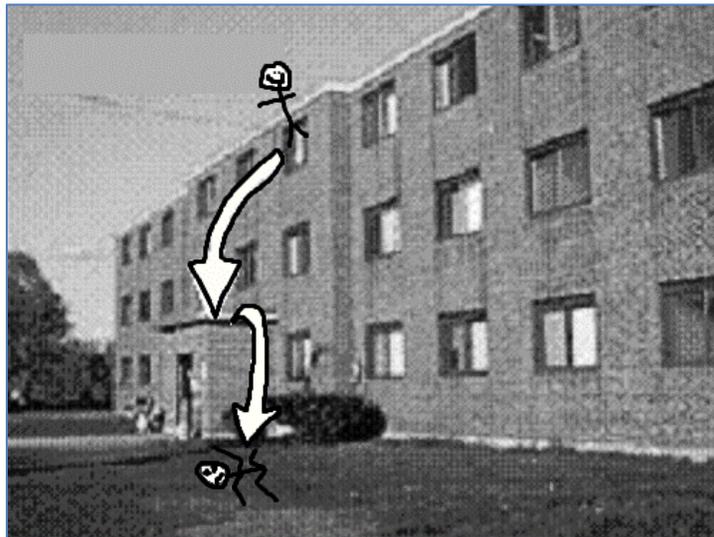
I was attending a local college at the time, and partying on a Thursday night. It was then, in a stupor of drunken fog, I decided that going from the third to second floor could be done much more efficiently if I just jumped out of a window to do it. In related news, my parents wasted a lot of money sending me to higher education.

*After leaping from the third floor, I thought, I would land onto the top roof of the dorm's entranceway. Then I would simply waltz in through the second floor window.*

I had, obviously, concocted a much better plan than simply walking down 12 steps. With my foolproof plan in place, I leaped.

*FYI, this would be a great place to stop and talk to your children about alcohol and its direct relationship to idiocy.*

I can still hear the snapping of both my ankles as I landed on top of the entranceway. If you have ever eaten a pretzel, think of taking a bite out of one that is roughly the size of Kansas and you've got the appropriate sound effect. Both ankles broken, I ricocheted off the little rooftop, landing sideways into the bushes below where, of course, I cracked a rib.



**Jack Daniels: 1**

**Rodney: 0**

Four weeks later, with two shin-high casts on both legs and hindsight continually laughing at me, I was becoming pretty despondent. To get me out of my funk, Jeff suggested we take a trip to the beach because what could be more fun than trying to walk a sand-covered strip with crutches, right? Right.

After hobbling around the strip for five minutes, I was getting exhausted. I usually don't even like walking to my car, so this extra exertion was killing me. We decided to take a break and sat on the seawall, facing the strip and making fun of people. We were young and that's what young people do because they are mostly unaware that they're complete assholes.

That's when the convertible stopped in front of us. It was a big, white convertible and inside were four girls yelling in our direction, obviously impressed by my impression of a very tan emergency room patient.

“C'mon! Get in!”

Jeff looked at me and motioned to get my ass off the wall. Not wanting to play a crippled-reptile version of *Frogger*, I shook my head “no.” That's when Jeff did what anyone else would do in this situation: leaped off the wall, into the car and drove away cackling and giggling with the carload of females.

I have some terrible friends.

Jeff never looked back as the car pulled away. I can still picture myself sitting on that wall alone, watching the convertible disappear, and wearing the same expression as a caged puppy in an ASPCA commercial. The main difference here is that in this version of the ad the puppy also has broken feet.



*\*runs off to adopt puppy immediately\**

I sat there alone for what seemed like forever, imagining Jeff returning with his clothes torn and body lipstick-smearred. He would sit with me and regale me with tales of orgies and fig leaves and grapes and people in clown masks, probably. I clearly don't know how group sex works.

That's when I heard it:

"That poor guy! He looks so sad and all alone. Let's go talk to him and cheer him up."

I looked up to see two women approaching me from across the street. They were doing a much better job with the traffic than I would have done, mainly because all their limbs weren't shattered. They stopped in front of me and started shooting me questions.

"What happened?"

"You look so sad."

"Why are you alone?"

Why am I alone? Good question. I hoped at that point that somewhere, out there, Jeff was being assaulted in the butt with fig leaves by people in clown masks.

I looked at the two women, so concerned with my well-being that they went out of their way to come talk to me. I sat upright, smiled a dimpled smile, adjusted my crutches against the wall and said the first thing that came to mind:

“So...which one of you wants my number?”

Surprisingly, one of them actually did. Sometimes, bad pickup lines are the ones that work best.

I'm still not sure if it was the sympathy vote, my fantastic mullet that curled a little when it got too long, or the fact that these women knew I couldn't chase after them, but I threw out a line and it worked. Stranger still, the relationship that resulted from this fiasco ended up being one of the longest I've ever had in my life.

*The moral of the story is:*

Even when you're not looking for love, good things can happen to you. It's that blind-squirrel-finding-a-nut analogy, but in this case, it was a squirrel who had too much to drink and ended up doing something really stupid and getting two busted ankles.

*The secondary moral of the story is:*

Abandon your crippled friend on a seawall at the beach so you can run off with a carload of girls in an attempt to get laid may result in you getting mononucleosis.

Squirrel karma might not be so bad, after all.

## The “Funny Truth” Tip

*“For me, the most attractive thing in a man is the ability to make me laugh.” - Mollie King*

*“It's always funny until someone gets hurt. Then it's just hilarious.” - Bill Hicks*

Here's the situation:

You are in a bar, at a wedding, at the bar at a wedding because weddings suck and people keep trying to make you dance, or even just doing one of the 37 people-searches you do every single hour on Match.com (*refresh – nope, refresh – nope, refresh – GAH, is that a Yeti?, refresh - nope...*). There, in front of you, is someone that you sense you can make a connection with someone.

TIP: If you're at a strip joint and sense this, flee immediately because you're about to lose \$700 in lap dances. Trust me on this.

Maybe it's how that person looks or something he said in his profile that made you smile unexpectedly. Maybe her online profile pic is just a shot of some amazing cleavage, or it's a guy who shaved his stomach hair to look like a six-pack (a clear indication that the man may, in fact, be a genius).

Now what? What do you do? How do you proceed?

You don't know how to juggle Chihuahuas, so how can you make that other person interested in you? More specifically, how can you make them interested in you without them immediately fleeing the scene, finding the bouncer, taking out a restraining order, canceling their home internet service and living out their remaining days alone in a mountain cave talking to a rock they've named Mr. Crunchington?

HINT: Attempting to juggle Chihuahuas will cause the latter reaction. Don't ask.

Now let's say you're already in a relationship. Luckily for you, that means you are already past the above stage and have managed to hook that special someone.<sup>1</sup> How

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note my crafty use of 'hooking someone' as it relates to the guy fishing in this chapter's opening dialog. Also please note that 'hooking someone' is different than 'hooking for someone' as my parole officer has told me multiple times.

you did it is unimportant for this chapter (*if it's Chihuahua juggling please contact me directly because I need to know your secret*). For argument's sake, let's assume it's like how most of my relationships started and you promised them a promotion in the company.

The main key here is that there is a connection, and that bond needs sustenance. Like a plant needing water or a Kardashian needing paparazzi, there has to be continued support for a relationship to flourish.

It's no secret that humans value a sense of humor above almost all other traits – including attractiveness – when choosing a mate. I would cite several examples that I Googled to support this fact, but I really hate sharing credit with others.

That being said, if you can make a prospective mate – or your current one – smile or laugh, then you've got your foot in the door. If you already had your foot in the door then now you have, like, up to your calf in the door or maybe mid-thigh or something I don't know.

As an example, the following is the true story of how my wife and I met:

I was recently divorced and decided to take my search for a relationship to the Internet. This process led me to several websites which mostly got me in a lot of trouble with the Human Resources Department at work and maxed out most of my credit cards. You'd be amazed at how quickly \$19.99/minute charges add up.

I decided to get a membership to one of the more popular dating sites and began the process of building the most perfect profile one could ever imagine (If you've read my first book, "Things Go Wrong for Me," you can see the profile in its entirety). Here are some simple excerpts from the profile:

**STOP!!! Looking for tall, dark and handsome?! Well...honestly...that's kind of a bummer.**

There, in my very opening profile section, is some honesty and humor. A lot of people online tend to embellish in regards to body type, height, weight, interests, allergies to pets, lack of felony convictions, etc. For Internet dating, this has the unwanted effect of the "WTF FACE" when you finally do meet someone because they're all, "*WTF you're not in 'average shape' and by the way you have a donut stuck to your cheek.*"

Meeting someone in person or online requires honesty. Remember that, at some point if this all works out, they're going to figure out if you're lying or not. If you're okay with that,

then I guess yay for you and enjoy crashing weddings as a career. But out of the gate here, prospective people know that I'm not tall, not dark, and more Carol Channing than Channing Tatum. If they're looking for a tall, tan Channing Tatum then they don't have to waste their time. This also probably explains why the guy with the profile name "Tall-Tan-Tatum" was so successful at online dating.

### About me and who I'm looking for

If you're looking for tall, dark and handsome, I think I can give you that as long as you can settle for short, white and "I've seen worse."

← the 'hook'

I live for my two kids, and pride myself in never wanting to let them down. I get along amazing with them because, honestly, we're roughly on the same maturity level.

← the 'awww'

If you're looking for a man who can have an in-depth, serious discussion about the Middle East and the economic impact of pork belly futures then keep moving..because this whole time that you've been talking, I've been thinking about last night's Family Guy.

← the 'funny'

My friends would call me funny, and I love being able to make people laugh. At 5'4" on a good day, I need every advantage I can get.

} Intermission

So, yes, I did get quite a lot of feedback on my profile and talked to<sup>1</sup> or met<sup>2</sup> a number of women. But chemistry is chemistry and we all can't be perfect chemists, like the guy who invented Flubber. Sometimes, when things don't work out, you have to keep throwing your line back into the water until you pull a decent fish with whom you want to spend the rest of your life. I realize now this is getting creepy because I'm talking about living romantically with a trout so let's get back to how my wife and I met.

Eventually I began custom searches for women because the same ones kept popping up in my results. Most of these recurring results did not seem interesting to me (see my 'Yeti' comment from earlier), so I began to expand my search field a bit. The big part of this was to increase the height criteria of the man *she* was looking for. My original

---

<sup>1</sup> Had coitus with

<sup>2</sup> Had extra coitus with

setting for *"She is seeking a man"* was set between 5'2" tall to 5'5" tall (which is where I and most of Snow White's dwarf friends fall into, unfortunately). I changed this to "5'5" tall to infinity" because it appeared that all women wanted a man who could see over a steering wheel without having to sit on couch cushions. This is such bullshit. Have you ever heard "good things come in small packages?" Maybe if it was "evil jerkwads come in tall packages" us short guys wouldn't get such a bad rap. If I seem bitter it's because I am. Bitter things come in small packages, too. There, tall people, add that to your hate mongering agenda.

So, yes, I changed the height requirement to something I did not fall into. This way I could at least maybe wear boots or inserts or some sexy spiked heels or something to make up the difference. Honestly I'm not sure what I was thinking.

After increasing this, I ran the search.

There, lo and behold, on the very first page of search results was this profile picture:



I died.

I died laughing for five minutes.

Because there, amidst all the ridiculous selfies and duck faces and glamour shots that had been posed and reposed and retouched and filtered was this hysterical picture of Susan Boyle.

I opened the profile and saw the woman's height requirements for men:

5'9" tall to 6'4" tall.

Sonofabitch.

I was literally 6 inches shorter than her minimum requirement. I stood up really really straight but that only got me to within 5-7/8" of her minimum. My heart sank as I looked

through her portfolio and OH SHE IS CUTE, but still, I'd be a tough sell at 5'3" tall for a woman looking for a 5'9" guy.

But I emailed her account with simply the following:

*Hi,*

*I saw your profile and damn near died laughing. I'm extremely way out of your height requirement at 5'3" but am willing to wear the heels in the relationship. Regardless, I just wanted to let you know that you made me laugh, so thank you.*

She replied back. We began talking on a regular basis, most of which can't be rewritten here unless I want this book to end up in the erotica section.

*\*gets idea for next book and also starts writing screenplay with Channing Tatum in line for the leading character, obviously\**

So that's how I met my wife.

Humor and honesty go a long way in creating and maintaining a relationship, even if you're well outside someone's ridiculous height requirements. Seriously, give the little guys a chance, ladies, because we can be pretty damn nimble.

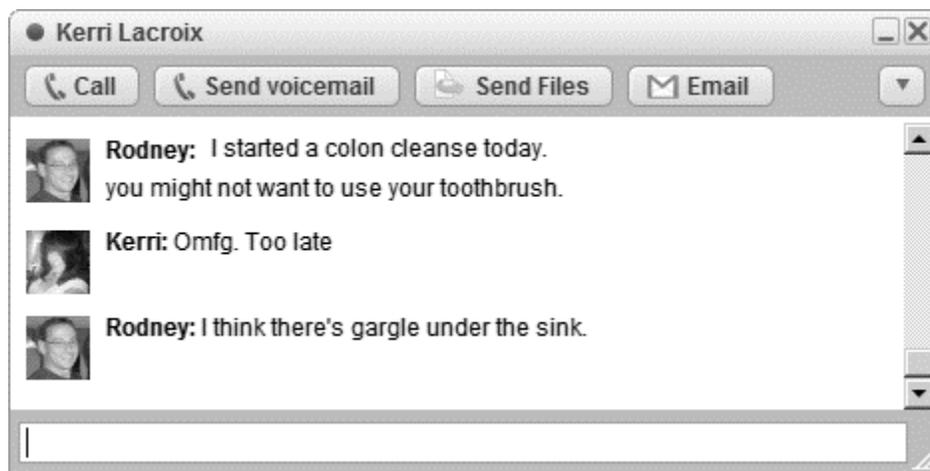
That said, I don't have to tell the guys out there to give tall or short women a chance because men will try to nail just about anything.

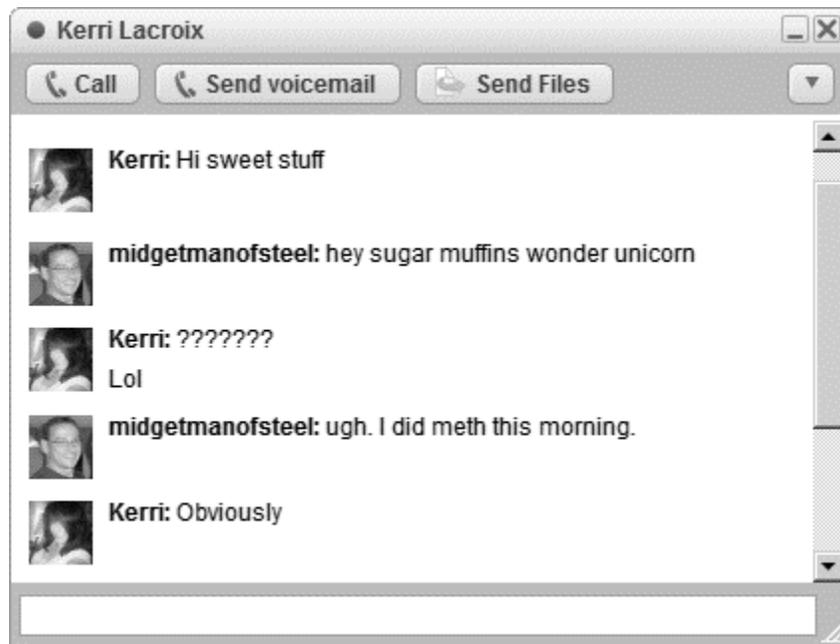
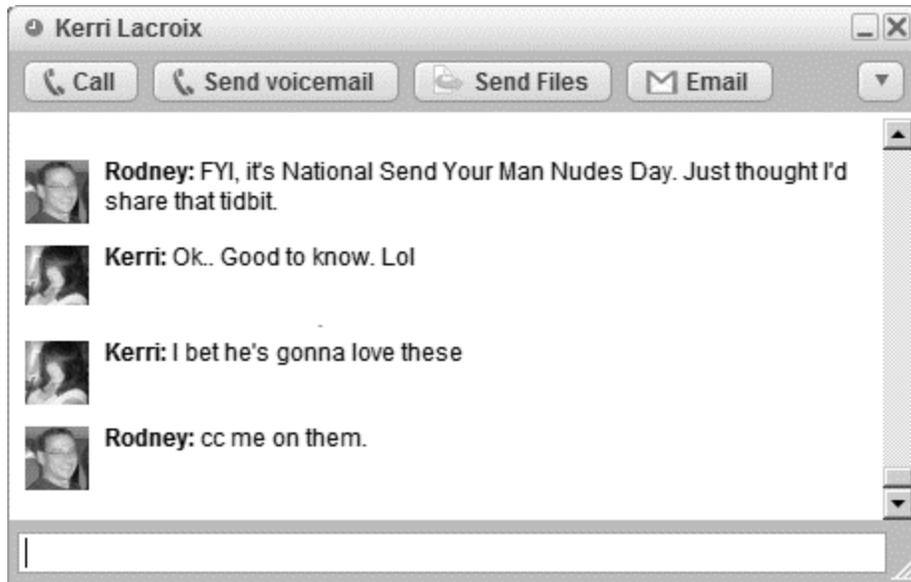
## Wall Flowers

If you've read my last book, you'll know that one of the greatest joys I have in life is masturbating.

Wait. Sorry. That's my first book.

In my second book, I dedicated an entire chapter to conversations I've had with Kerri over messaging and social media during the full course of our relationship. This book is no exception because (a) it shows what being truly compatible with someone looks like, even over an Internet connection and (b) it takes up space. To show you what that looks like, here are some of our better messaging sessions:





I think I found me a winner in that one.

But, no matter what level you are in your relationship (unless it's Level 3 and you've had to register with your town), here is a fast and easy tip to show someone you're thinking about them at any time of day and for any reason:

*Assault their Facebook Page with loving messages randomly.*

NOTE: Pretty sure this violates terms of restraining orders, so please proceed cautiously and/or maybe first consult your lawyer.

Who doesn't like to get notifications from Facebook that the person you're dating or married to has just posted on your wall? No one. That is, unless the notifications are that your wife just sent you 3 pigs in Farmville or something. Seriously. 3 pigs? I NEED CARROTS, WOMAN. It's like she doesn't even care about my harvest, sometimes. This marriage is a sham.

If you're sending your significant other lives in Candy Crush every 4 minutes, two things are likely going to happen:

- 1) You're going to be blocked, probably, because that's easier than trying to figure out how to shut game notifications off. Thanks, Mark Zuckerberg.
- 2) You will be asked to find a job and help contribute to the family unit. Seriously. Who has time to play this much Bubble Witch Saga at 10:30 in the morning? GO DO SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE BECAUSE WE HAVE BILLS.

Every once in a while, I'll go stalk my wife's Facebook page and see what she's up to. This is usually right after I send her 3 pigs in Farmville at 10:30 AM.

But while I'm on there, I like to remind her how I feel about her. As an example, I like to write on her wall with things like, "You're beautiful," or "I am crazy about you" or sometimes I'll post stuff like this:

Rodney Lacroix

To my beautiful, Kerri. I love you so much, honey, that I wrote you this song just now.

Rod  
~~Journey~~  
Oh ~~Sherry~~ lyrics  
Kerri

~~Send On the tv Kingston Cell~~

~~Steve Perz~~

You should've been gone **to work**  
Knowing how I made you feel  
And I should've been gone **to the gym**  
After all your words of steel  
Oh I must've been a dreamer  
And I must've been someone else  
And we should've been over **easy eggs.**

**Kerri**  
Oh ~~Sherry~~, our love  
Holds on, holds on  
Oh **Kerri**, our love  
Holds on, holds on

But I want to let go **of the riding crop**  
You'll go on hurtin' me **yay!**  
You'd be better off alone **with FACEBOOK**  
If I'm not who you thought I'd be

But you know that there's a fever  
Oh that you'll never find nowhere else  
Can't you feel it burnin' on and on 😊

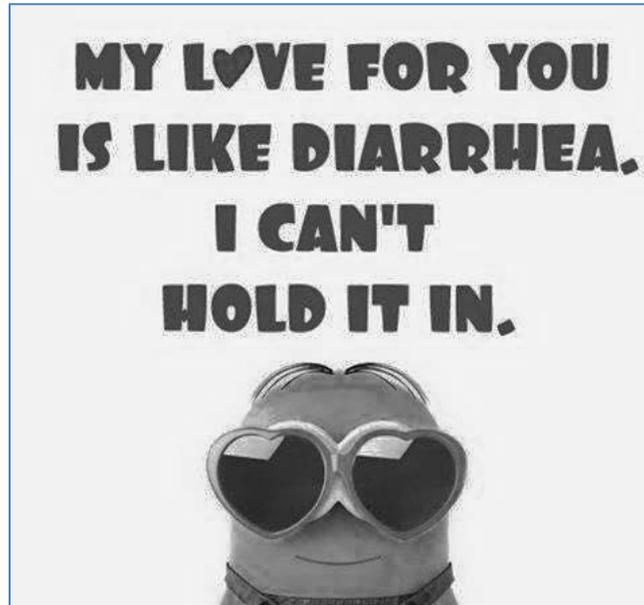
**Kerri**  
Oh ~~Sherry~~, our love  
Holds on, holds on  
Oh **Kerri**, our love  
Holds on, holds on

Go ahead. Try it. Just don't use this song, I have it copyrighted.

UPDATE:

It's Valentine's Day, 2015 as I type this particular page.

To go along with this section, I literally just received a notification that Kerri posted something to my Facebook wall. Here you go:



It's no song, but I think it gets the point across.

## Act 3 Progress Checklist

Now we're really cooking. Actually, we might be really cooking because I smell onions. Hold on, I just forgot to put on deodorant this morning so total false alarm on the cooking there, there. This is what you get when I free-type whatever I'm thinking instead of putting together any semblance of cohesive thought. You can only imagine what happens at work when we hold brainstorming sessions. I get called to Human Resources constantly.

	Yes	No
Flower delivery, if executed properly, can be the exception to the rule of mundane gifts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women love it when you reference their intestinal distress on flower cards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jumping out of a window is a brilliant idea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chicks dig guys with broken feet, a tan and a mullet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You should always be serious in a relationship, even if your partner farts in her sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You should only use social media for secretly trying to bang old classmates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Susan Boyle saved my life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## *Entr'acte #1*

*My fans list some romantic things that don't need to be treated with penicillin*

## The Fans Speak - Part 1

I have to preface this section by first stating that I had to look up “entr’acte” before using it as a title for this section. This is not an intermission but, instead, some anecdotes related to the theme of the book. All of these tidbits would have been homeless if the French had not invented this term which means, “Between the acts.”

Thank you, French people.

On most Saturday nights, my entr’acte usually involves having another drink, making sure the bedroom door is locked, adjusting my gimp mask and trying to catch my breath. So there’s some insight onto what goes on at my house on the weekends.

I have a couple of thousand Facebook friends (excluding my mother, for obvious reasons) and a few thousand Twitter followers (you can find me at @moooooog35 and if you want the story of THAT you’ll have to get my first book). Normally, having that number of followers is something to brag about. That is until you realize Wendy’s Baconator hamburger account has 36k Twitter followers and it’s a friggin hamburger, for Christ’s sake. A delicious, delicious hamburger.

I posed the question to my media pages:

*“What’s the most romantic thing you’ve done, or that someone has ever done for you?”*

Here are some of the answers I received:

*“I did something very romantic for my boyfriend. Before he moved in I gave him a photo album with a few pages made from the first few months of our relationship. Then, every week on Monday, I would print out my favorite picture from our weekend together and send it to him in the mail. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Let’s just say I’m expecting a karma tsunami eventually.” – Brandi B.*

*“When we were dating, I used to text message my now husband with words from songs I thought were romantic or appropriate for whatever was going on. Think, ‘You are my Sunshine’ first verse. He now will share songs he thinks are romantic with me from YouTube like “God Bless the Broken Road.” – Laura J.*

*"1) I let my wife shave my back. 2) I let my wife shave my front." – Del R.*

*"Months after our small wedding, I took the dress to a consignment shop to sell. There is no one less sentimental than I am. I just didn't see the point of keeping it knowing I'd never wear it again. (It wasn't a big expensive dress or anything.) He went and got it back from the shop and even now, going on 22 years later, that stupid dress is still taking up closet space on my side of the closet." – Linda D.*

*"Mowed my yard ....seriously." – Julie D.*

*"My husband bought a case of the shampoo and conditioner that was in our hotel bathroom after I mentioned that I liked them. He had to search online to find the manufacturer." – Laura S.*

*"I used to date a woman who would write and send me actual letters on a weekly basis. Hand written and mailed love letters telling me how much she loved me and all the things she appreciated about me that week. She also used to be terrible at picking out gifts for birthdays and holidays. So she'd make me bouquets out of fanned and folded money. I got to buy my own presents, she got to be the origami queen and make something that could be considered a crappy gift (why anyone would think cash is a bad gift, I have no idea.) I thought it was terribly romantic and thoughtful that she would spend days folding money into a bouquet of roses or lilies or something for me." – Karoline L.*

*"I randomly sext people in hopes of adding a little romance to their lives." – Robert D.*

**Author's Note:** If anyone gets randomly romantic sext messages, you guys can all thank Robert. The guy is a giver.

*Act 4*

*Courting With Disaster*

## Please Undo This Rendezvous

Everyone returns to their seats after the entr'acte, all a bit more knowledgeable in regards to the French language. Everyone is back, that is, except the guy who had the sausage sub from the vendor out on the sidewalk before the show started. He's still in the bathroom and, from all accounts of the other guys streaming out, it doesn't sound too good.

Been there, dude. I had Brussels sprouts three days ago and I'm stil-

We don't need to go there. I apologize.

*\*lights dim\**

Gunfire cackles loudly while flashes of explosions, not too far off in the distance, light up the dark night. Men can be heard screaming amidst the rat-tat-tat of the emptying clips of automatic weapons.

As the scenery pans out, we see anti-tank barriers strewn with barb wire scattered across the midnight battleground. Soldiers appear from foxholes dug into the dirt and fire ahead into the darkness.

“GO GO GO!” a soldier sporting sergeant stripes screams. “WE’VE GOT YOU COVERED!”

From further down in the trench, a man appears. He's wearing some nice khakis and a polo shirt and we get a whiff of what may be Old Spice Cologne. It is now clear to us that their weird, new commercials have sucked at least one poor bastard in.

As he climbs out, he turns, reaches down and pulls out an attractive young woman. The other men stop firing to see if they can see up the woman's skirt because even in the heat of battle men still think with their dicks.

“GO!” the sergeant yells again.

The man and woman bolt, hand in hand, as they make their way across the battlefield. Mortar explosions blast around them but the guy really went heavy on the cologne so it's providing them with an invisible shield. Pretty cool, actually.

Amidst the cover fire, they finally reach their destination. It's a movie theater. The man looks above him and reads from the marquee:

“Bridget Jones Diary?” he moans. “Really?”

“Yep,” she replies. “And afterwards we can go to that new vegan restaurant for dinner.”

Ah. Date night.

The man reaches for his wallet but, as he is about to hand a \$20 bill to the woman in the ticket window, he pauses for a moment.

*Two hours or Renee Zellweger followed by a lentil salad, he thinks.*

He turns around, dropping his wallet to the ground, and runs headlong into the friendly fire that was previously behind him. A few rounds ricochet off of the Old Spice bubble but eventually it is weakened and one slips through, hitting him in the chest. Another hits his shoulder and a third rips into his breast pocket sending bits of Trojan condom, ribbed for her pleasure, into the air.

“CEASE FI-“ a soldier begins to yell, but then realizes that this is what the man wants. He puts his signaling arm down, a loads another clip.

The man slumps to the ground, bullet-ridden and bloody. As his pupils begin to dilate, a smile appears on his face.

*That was close, he thinks. A little too close.*

“We did him a favor, boys,” says the sergeant. “Not every date can go swimmingly. Sometimes, you do what you can and hope for the best. Other times, you just want to be put out of your misery.”

The soldiers look at him.

“What?” he says. “‘Swimmingly’ is a word.”

The soldiers stand up from their foxholes to see the woman entering the theater. She’s carrying a big bucket of popcorn.

Vegans.

# The List

## (Not Schindler's, That Would Be a Downer)

**Preface:** This section will include some items that can either doom or enhance a relationship. That last sentence made me think of Dr. Doom, which made me think of the guy from *Nip/Tuck* who played him in the movies. This led to me thinking about sex scenes from the show and now I'm thinking I should seriously call my own doctor about getting some sort of prescription for my ADD. I wonder if my doctor can make protective shields like Dr. Doom can. Maybe Dr. Doom could only make protective shields because he put on too much Old Spice.

Yep. Totally asking for a script.

Alongside these items are stories of dating gone horribly awry, and should serve you as a "Don'ts" red-flag example. If you read some of the horror stories that follow and think "That wasn't that bad," then I have failed you.

Let's get started with the first of our items in this section:

### **The List:**

"But WHY do you love me?"

What? What the hell just happened?

It was late, and I had just finished almost satisfying my woman. I say "almost" because things tend to come to a screeching halt when you accidentally blurt out "OHMYGOD I LOVE YOU" or "Cliff Claven!" during climax. I really wish I could stop doing that, but I'm usually either too focused on the task at hand or too focused on trying not to finish faster than a bull rider. So, there we were:

**Me:** *\*stroking her hair\**

**Her:** *\*looks back at me longingly\**

**Me:** "God, I love you."

**Her:** "Yeah? Why?"

*Sonofabitch.*

If I had any flash grenades this would have been the perfect opportunity to point behind her, yell “LOOK!” and make my quick escape. Alas, I had used all my grenades to punctuate my guitar solo for “Careless Whisper” while practicing in the living room the night before.

It was spectacular.

She also happened to be blocking my exit, so I was now on the spot. A giant, burning light was upon me and I felt pressed to list all kinds of things about *why* I am in love. Of course I must come up with original things that don’t sound generic or lame or lamely generic like “I love your eyes” or “I love you because you’re funny” which is usually followed by her impression of Joe Pesci going “Oh yeah? Funny how? Like funny ha ha?” Typically it’s at this point I hope she breaks out a baseball bat and beats me to death with it. Death can be a sweet, sweet release in situations like this.

“Why?” I replied. “Why not?”

And that, my friends, is how not to respond.

Because I like you, I went out and did a little research <sup>1</sup>and came up with some suggestions on how to avoid the breakup when you realize you can’t answer this stupid question.

When faced with this inevitable question, I highly recommend completely avoiding the usual answers like:

- You have beautiful eyes
- You have an amazing smile
- You have ass dimples
- I am enamored by your ample melons
- You’re cheaper than most hookers

Chances are that your woman heard all of these 10,000 times from the guy wearing the Affliction t-shirt downing his fifth Red Bull when she was at the bar with her girlfriends just last Saturday night. There’s a reason she (probably) didn’t go home with the guy so let’s focus on some other things about her (or him, ladies – you can play, too) that show her you’re really paying attention (even if you aren’t). Of course the caveat to this is that you’ve actually been paying attention and, if you haven’t, shame on you.

That said, there is a way to simply avoid being taken completely off guard by this question when it’s asked at 11 PM and all you want to do is go back to sleep. Why women choose this time to discuss things that can’t be resolved without you completely

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<sup>1</sup> No research whatsoever

waking up and being unable to actually fall asleep until two minutes before the alarm goes off is a mystery. So, to try to cut your losses, here are some pointers to head this off at the pass.

*The “Things I Like/Love About You” message:*

Roughly eight weeks into dating Kerri, I wrote her an email.

Yes. Email.

The subject of the email was, simply “**A list**” and went something like this:

- 1) *Scarlett Johansson*
- 2) *Jennifer Lawrence*
- 3) *Mila Kunis*

Whoops. Sorry. That’s from “*A-List celebrities I’d bang.*” Different email conversation entirely. Here’s the actual “A list” email to her:

*Hi honey,*

*I was just sitting here thinking about you and things I love about you. Here they are, in no particular order.*

- *Your Betty Rubble laugh*
- *You don’t mind keeping your heels in the closet when we go out so I don’t look even shorter*
- *You laugh at my jokes even when they’re terrible*
- *You are an incredible mother*
- *The way you look at me with those amazing eyes*

YES. I realize I broke my own rule here by including her ‘eyes’ but in my defense my wife has incredibly beautiful eyes. If your significant other has a wonky eye or is cross-eyed or wears an eye patch, you may need to revise that line (i.e., “*The way you look at me with that amazing eye, I think. I’m not sure because it always looks to the right.*”)

The key here is that you point out the little things about them. It’s all in the details. The things that she does every single day that endear her to you – that maybe no one has ever told her before – are the things that show her she is special to you. The small birthmark behind their ear that looks like Mount Rushmore, perhaps, or the middle toe that’s longer than the other. It sounds weird, but tell her things she hasn’t heard before or maybe doesn’t even notice herself. Do this, and you will touch her heart. Just don’t try touching it by using that long gross toe of hers. She’s getting kind of self-conscious about it at this point.

**For parents:** There is nothing hotter than a mom or dad who give everything they have for their kids. I pay child support so I actually give everything I have plus an additional 33% that I can't even claim on taxes. Thanks, Uncle Sam. But if you're with a parent, make sure you let them know that you notice how awesome they are as a mom/dad - unless they actually suck as it. Then you should probably just stick with the "long toe" thing.

**Ladies:** As men, we are always worried we aren't doing things right. Tell us how safe we make you feel or the way you feel when we kiss you, and we'll keep doing it. Tread carefully, though, because if you tell us we make you melt when we kiss you when in reality it's like being attacked by a hairy plunger, you've become a victim of your lies and you're in for some heavy plunger attacks on the regular. Heed my warning.

My list created, I then sent it.

My wife received it at work and replied awestruck.

Relationship point scored and a future "Why do you love me" midnight ambush successfully averted.

So you know the question is coming at some point in the relationship. Take 10 minutes and think about the *WHY* of it all, and surprise them with the list.

Then throw out your Affliction t-shirt. Seriously, dude.

## Uptown Girl Makes Downtown Boy Look Like an Asshat

*"I would really love to see Billy Joel."* – My girlfriend, circa 1989

They say that music can soothe the savage beast, so it is simply logical to assume that it can also appease your lady when concert tickets are given as a gift. I apologize for referring to your mate as a 'beast.' I'm sure she's a very handsome woman.

*\*throws smoke bomb and runs away\**

I really enjoy going to concerts and have instilled this same love into my children. I have also instilled in them the love of 1980's hair bands and heavy metal so that I can buy tickets for concerts that I want to go to and just bring them along. They think it's a present for them when, obviously, they're just talkative baggage for the evening.

Raise your children in this fashion and you will never have to suffer through a One Direction or Justin Bieber concert. You're so very welcome.

Back in the 80's, I was dating a girl who happened to love Billy Joel. This wasn't an issue for me, because "Glass Houses" was one of my very first albums – yes, albums – so I grew up listening to "You May Be Right" and "I May Be Crazy" and "You May Be Right, I May Be Crazy." Honestly I can't remember any of his other songs on that album, plus this is padding my word count for this book.

As was my luck back then, Billy Joel decided to come around to Boston. You see that quote at the top of this page? That, my friends, is known as '*a hint*.' "I would love to go to X" also means "you should take me to X because if you don't take me to X I will hate you forever."

As a romantic surprise for her birthday, I of course scored Billy Joel tickets at the Boston Garden. The seats weren't great – floor level right in front of the control booth – but no boyfriend had ever bought her concert tickets before as a present and she thought this was really thoughtful of me. In her defense, it was really thoughtful of me<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This is one of those times where I hurt my arm trying to pat myself on the back, as noted in the beginning of the book. Additionally, my fingers were hurt here as well. Not from typing, though. I took a break during the writing of this chapter to practice my guitar and my fingers got a little ouchy so, I get it, Bryan Adams. I get it.

We arrived at the concert and took our seats. This was terrible because we were waaaaay in the back of the Garden and both of us were barely taller than 5'. It turns out that no one actually sits for concerts even if you have a perfectly nice seat RIGHT THERE KING KONG and the concert sounds exactly the same whether or not you're standing or sitting, you jerk. Also, why are you all 6 feet tall? I really hate being short because it sucks 99% of the time. The other 1% of the time it's okay because that's when my face is at boob-level with taller women.

We were having a decent time and laughing and singing and dancing which was made all the more perilous by the fact we were doing this while standing on our seats. At our height, it was really our only recourse but totally worth the risk because we could almost see Billy Joel a mile away, assuming he was the ugly guy at the piano.

My girlfriend was having a blast. I know this because she was giving me that look that says, "I'm having a blast" and may or may not have said "I'm having a blast" a few times. It was either that or "I have bad gas." I'm not sure, it was really loud and I'm terrible at reading lips. "Man," I thought, "I really scored on this one. I'm gonna get soo...soooooo...oohhhhhh.."

During my chair-dancing frenzy, I happened to turn around in my seat and glance over at the control booth just 10 feet behind us. The control booth is where guys control the lights and sound and – in the case of Iron Maiden concerts – giant mummy-zombie-skeleton-things emerging from the backdrop.

It was there, amidst the men pushing buttons and sliding bars and turning knobs and widgets and kerbubbles and other technical things that my gaze landed upon her:

### **Christie Brinkley.**

Did I forget to mention that, at the time, Billy Joel was married to Christie Brinkley? Well, if I did forget to tell you, please note this concert was shortly after Billy Joel married Christie Brinkley – thus cementing one of the weirdest couple mismatches in history. This includes the time I dated a really hot girl for 2 years who was 5'10" tall. It felt like being a little horny Jack and the Beanstalk.

But there, just a scant 10 feet away from me, was Christie.

Christie Friggin Brinkley (not her real middle name, probably). This was the same woman who appeared on several posters hung above my bed while I was growing up. She also appeared in several dreams I had but you seriously don't want to know the details and I'm not going to write them because my daughter told me she wants to read this book when I'm done, and she needs enough therapy just being my daughter as it is.

I remember it as though it was yesterday. Christie was wearing a white dress and swaying back and forth to whatever the ugly bug-guy at the piano was singing. I was transfixed. I couldn't move. I stood there on my seat, for what seemed an eternity, completely turned around just ogling my childhood dream girl..a vision in wh-

*\*poke\**

*\*poke poke\**

Something was poking me. Cupid? Was it cupid?! A tiny cherub launching love darts at my arm?!

I turned towards the direction of the poking only to see my girlfriend staring at me with a very non-cherub gaze and instead of her lobbing love darts at me it was straight daggers shooting from her flaming eye sockets. She was, of course, actually facing the stage and obviously a bit peeved that I was now ignoring the musical event going on and, instead, completely backwards in my chair while drooling. I may or may not have also had a bit of a chubby.

She stared at me. I looked back and could feel the stupid smile plastered on my face begin to transform into what can best be described as the "Yes, Dear" face of married men. Maintaining eye contact with me, she circled her finger in the air – pantomime for "TURN. AROUND. NOW."

I gave one last glance at Christie and maybe even blew her a kiss before succumbing to the will of the girl next to me. I turned, reluctantly, and suffered through another bald googly-eyed man piano song when I suddenly heard cheering behind me. I turned reflexively, only to see Christie Brinkley descending the control platform and making her way down the aisle towards the stage

WAIT. Towards the stage? Is she..OHMYGOD SHE IS GOING TO WALK RIGHT PAST ME HERE SHE COMES HERE SHE COMES!! I AM SO EXCIT-

It's at this point, with my head turned completely around like a barn owl, that my balance decided it was time to leave. My body, sexy yet twisted, heaved backwards, my knees buckling over the back of the overpriced chair I was standing on.

Frantically, I spun back around in an attempt to right myself but it was too late and I found myself doing some weird sort of backflip into the aisle behind me. If you've ever flipped a Slinky down a set of stairs you can successfully picture what my body was starting to do here. My reflexes took over and out of sheer desperation I instinctively reached out for some object to save me.

Sadly, this object turned out to be my girlfriend's hair.

Grasping a healthy chunk of hair from the side of my woman's skull, I continued my slow-motion descent to the cold, concrete Garden floor. If you're a fan of the movie, "Jaws," then you're also familiar with the part of Quint's speech where he talks about being attacked by a shark and all you hear is high-pitched screaming – like you're actually distanced from what's going on even though it's you doing the screaming. This was similar to that, except the screaming was being done by my girlfriend as her hair, clenched in my white-knuckled fist, dragged her over the back of the seats with me.

I hit the floor first, my wrist succumbing to the concrete and the weight of my tiny, yet somehow super-muscular body. Pain shot up my arm and I would have probably screamed if it wasn't for my girlfriend's body landing directly on my face immediately afterwards.

I grabbed my nose and pulled my hand away to see a handful of blood. The next day I would discover that my nose had been fractured, which can typically happen when a woman lands on your face from a 4-foot drop. Normally, I am quite fond of women landing on my face but this proved to be one of the rare exceptions. I looked at my bloody hand for what seemed like an eternity before the realization set in:

OH MY GOD CHRISTIE BRINKLEY IS STILL RIGHT BEHIND US.

I sat up, letting go of my girlfriend's hair as she lay sprawled out next to me and quickly looked around to see Christie sauntering past me. She had somehow missed the carnival of horrors that just happened right in front of her but now she was just three feet away from me.

THREE FEET AWAY.

It's at this point in the story where the term 'involuntary spasm' comes into play because, with God as my witness, I have no idea what came over me. As Christie Brinkley, my teenage dream girl, passed beside me, it happened.

"CHRIIIISSSTIIIEE!!"

I screamed it. I screamed it like I was falling off a cliff and Christie Brinkley was the only one who could save me. After she saved me she would put on that awesome blue one-piece bathing suit with the open side and her hair all windy and stuff and we would make sweet, sweet love on my waterbed as she fondled my mullet.

"CHRIIIISSSTIIIEE!!"

I screamed it as loud as I could, my ever-swelling wrist all flippity floppity while I sat crumpled on the floor with my girlfriend lying dead next to me, probably, I have no idea.

"CHRIIIISSSTIIIEE!!"

Christie jumped.

She put her hand to her heart, startled and scared to death. Then, she turned to see who the hell just gave her a coronary. I saw her look quickly to her left but obviously missing me because HELLO I'M DOWN HERE. If I didn't probably have brain damage I bet I would have said something like "Look, Christie. I've fallen for you" and then winked or something smooth like that. That's when she saw me out of her peripheral vision, looking like a guy who normally would have required a chalk outline on the floor. She looked at me. SHE LOOKED AT ME.

I waved. I waved with my good hand because my other one was badly sprained and hurt like a motherfucker.

She smiled that amazing smile of hers and waved back. AYFKM SHE SMILED AT ME?! WHOA, WAIT. SHE SMILED AT ME AND WAVED BACK?!

The smile on my face extended and wrapped the corners of my mouth all the way around to my spine. The top part of my skull flopped backwards and my upside-down gaze fell upon my girlfriend's not-so-amused face as she lay sprawled out on the Garden floor beside me.

"She waved at me," I said to my unimpressed girlfriend. I was drooling a little.

"Are you seriously fucking kidding me right now?" she replied.

I don't remember the rest of the concert, or the night, for that matter. I can tell you that all the "How was the concert?" questions ended in a story about how I scared the absolute shit out of Christie Brinkley and even though I almost died did I mention that she smiled and waved at me?

And that marked the first and last concert that I ever took my girlfriend to. I asked her to go to a few concerts after that, but we never went. In retrospect, you can't really blame her for not wanting to go. Near-death experiences have turned many a person off of contemporary rock.

Christie Brinkley smiled and waved at me. Even though I almost became cripple and took my girlfriend downtown to Handicap Town with me, I'm not sure anything is ever going to get better than that.

Actually, does anyone know if Cheryl Tiegs is married to a musician? If so, I just may have to get tickets.

## Make Sure the Men Who Died in Hallmark Didn't Die in Vain

If you've taken any of my advice or hints so far, then you're probably knee-deep in the adoration and devotion of your significant other. Either that, or your partner is really starting to feel smothered and you've just received the, "I think I need some space" talk. Now you're living in a YMCA telling a guy they call "Sketchy Jim" how this book has ruined your life. If you're in this latter category, I'm really sorry. I probably should have told you that all of these tips need to be spaced out over the course of several years and that there's a 98.7% chance that Sketchy Jim has head lice.

My bad.

This piece is dedicated to those guys mentioned in the very opening of this book. Those who wandered their way into a card store and eventually died of old age or sheer boredom. This is for you, my brethren. Sleep well, my sweet angels.

We all know that we could easily be one of those poor bastards. You know all those times you've been scouring the Hallmark Store looking for just the right card? Listen, we've all been there – staring at wall after wall of cardboard poetry:

- *For Her*
- *For Him*
- *For It (when you really can't tell)*
- *Love*
- *Husband*
- *Wife*
- *Wives (Utah only)*
- *Etc., etc.*

The card categories seem endless.

But the one category most men and women seem to neglect or pass is the "Just Because" section. Yes, there is a Just Because section and chances are you probably didn't even know that. If you did know that, then you're probably already aware of this quick and easy tidbit so you can skip ahead to the other parts in the book that require credit cards. That said, I am not to be held responsible for any laughs you may have passed over by not reading this. Laughter is supposed to decrease stress and slow the

aging process, so if you pass over this section and find yourself freaking out about how wrinkly and ugly you are, don't say I didn't warn you.

But, yes, there is a stationery area that simply contains cards for no defined occasions. This Just Because section is there, specifically, to help me put two more pages in this book, so thank you, card stores. Maybe it should be called "*Just Because Rodney Needed to Pad His Word Count*" but, then again, I'd probably be the only one buying cards there and then rewriting their contents into *Romantic as Hell – Volume 2: Romance Hard with a Vengeance*.

Under normal circumstances, people are expecting cards for most typical celebratory events. Anniversary, Birthday, Valentine's Day, Take Your Penis Out at Work Day, National Dress Your Dog Day (*every day at my house, FYI*) etc., etc. – pretty much everyone in a relationship is expecting to get a \$4.99 card that expresses how you feel written by a guy named Stan who sits around all day at a desk looking like this:



In Stan's defense, he's pretty attractive even when he's in deep thought.

But what he or she isn't expecting is to find an envelope in their underwear drawer that contains a card saying "*Just because I wanted to say I love you.*" I've opened my lunch bag in the middle of a really shitty day to find a card that says "*You mean everything to me.*"

The fact that I've written it myself is beside the point.

I've also opened my lunch bag to find a note that says "*Buy tampons*" because Kerri knows I'll see it and that's the best place to remind me to get stuff on the way home. I hate everything to do related to a woman's menstrual cycle so this always ruins

lunchtime for me. I'll usually find notes like this in my sandwich when I'm on a diet because she's thoughtful like that.

**NOTE:** Just Because moments are special because they are unexpected. If you give your lover a card every Thursday, it kind of defeats the surprise aspect of it and becomes a routine.

Remember, you can't spell 'routine' without 'r-u-t' and ruts can be an enemy of romance and cars with low suspensions. A man in a leotard doing interpretive dance during a viewing of *The Notebook* is another enemy of romance but that's a different book entirely and, in my defense, I didn't know putting a shot of vodka into a beer would have that effect on me.

A woman that I was involved in a long-distance relationship with used to send me random cards every couple of weeks.

*\*straps 14 pillows to body and curls up in a defensive turtle position as Kerri pounds away at my limp body incessantly upon reading this\**

When your contact with someone is relegated to phone calls and texts and Skype conversations, finding a card in the mail with a handwritten note inside is incredible. Even more spectacular is also finding naked pictures inside the card. The best, though, is when the card you receive, containing naked pictures, isn't from your distant uncle.

But you don't need to live hundreds or thousands of miles away to have "Just Because" moments. In fact, that probably makes it a lot harder to put the note in underwear drawers, now that I'm thinking about it. Also, I need to buy underwear. I also need to buy tampons. Sometimes I wish Kerri would stop putting these reminders in my lunch and just stick to the lovey-dovey ones. I seriously hate that aisle in the store. Gives me the heebies.

So put the book down, run to the store and buy a card for the simple reason that it will make her smile at a time when she's not expecting it.

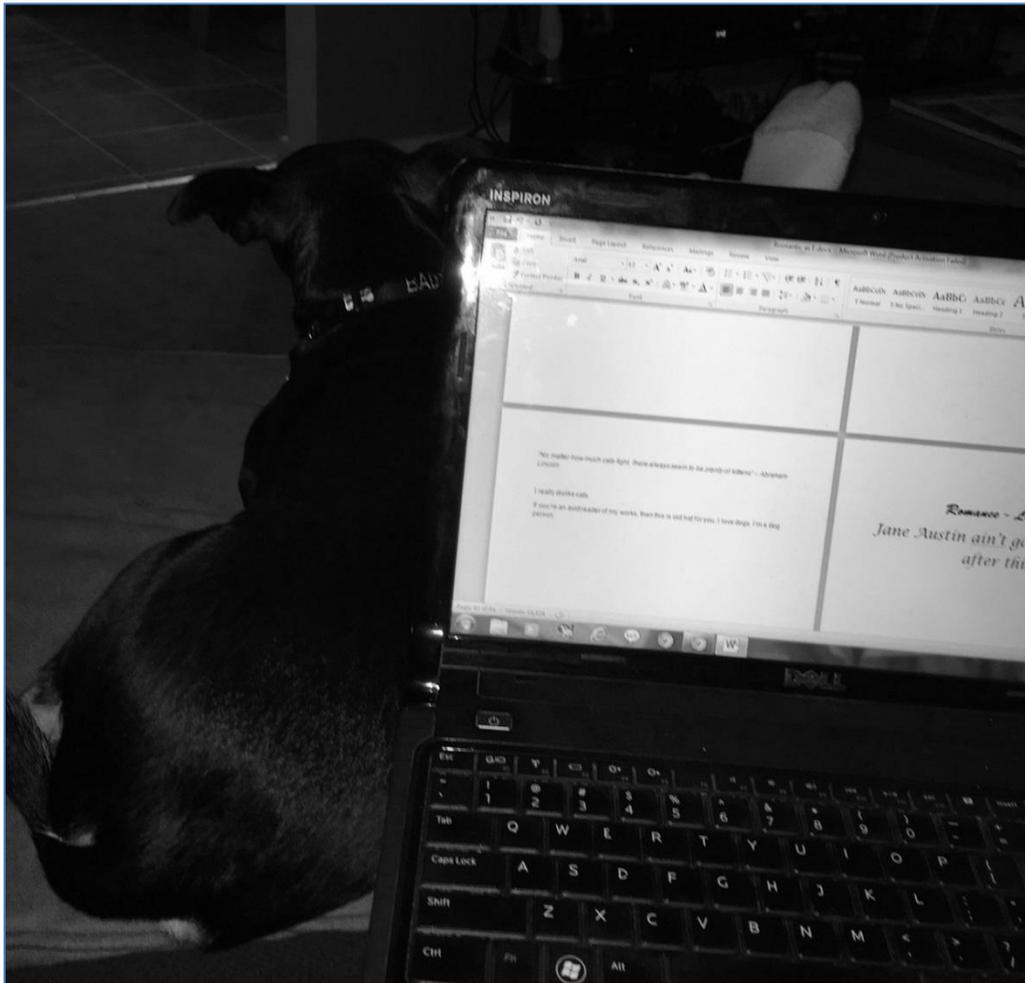
While you're at the store, can you pick up my wife some tampons? I'll pay you back, I promise. Thanks.

## Cats Were a Bad Idea

*“No matter how much cats fight, there always seem to be plenty of kittens”* – Abraham Lincoln

I really dislike cats.

If you're an avid reader of my works, then this is old hat for you. I love dogs. I'm a dog person. In fact, here is a photo of me writing this section at 5:30 PM on a Sunday afternoon with my faithful little mutt sitting next to me and not mauling me or shitting in a box in the house somewhere, like a cat would do:



He's so goddamn cute I can't stand it.

But not everyone is a dog person. There are those people out there who enjoy the company of cats more than dogs or – in most cases – other people. We call these people things like ‘evil,’ ‘hoarders’ or ‘prime suspects.’ As much as we dog people may dislike ‘cat people,’ they are a functional part of the caste system and provide the crochet and knitting supply industry with a steady stream of customers. In related news, Global Studies was always my worst subject.

After my first divorce (I say ‘first’ here because I have no idea if my current bride will take kindly to some of these stories that don’t involve her), I entered the dating scene. One of these dating scenes was directed by Martin Scorsese and starred Leonardo DiCaprio. It was a confusing time for me even though it was star-studded and received phenomenal reviews from the critics.

My mind drifts sometimes.

One woman I dated happened to live about 800 miles away. Normally this is enough to put the kibosh on most prospective dates, but when you’re a short, balding man in your 40’s any bite is a good bite. She was cute and funny and we got along great but..

..but..

She was a cat person.

*\*cue Psycho shower music\**

She wasn’t *just* a cat person. She was a ‘repost kitty videos’ and ‘send me cards with cats on them’ and ‘every phone conversation included cats’ type of cat person. Normally, ‘crazy cat lady’ is a deal-breaker for me but please refer to the ‘short, balding, man in 40’s’ description of myself above. Let’s just say *The Bachelor* wasn’t banging down my door to be in the starring role. I could deal with a ‘cat person,’ right?

Sure, let’s go with that.

The oddest part about dating this woman wasn’t her being a cat person, it was that she was a cat person *without cats*. This made her a cat-crazy cat person – someone who loved and desired a cat but was catless. Cat-free. This is a statistical anomaly in the cat-loving world and only occurs with one of every 3 million cat people and – behold – I had stumbled upon one of them in this long-distance relationship.

Yay me.

We dated for a very long time and with much success. I would visit her. She would visit me. I met her mother. She made me try sushi. So you could say it had its ups and downs with the down part mainly being me eating raw eel. So, so gross. It’s like ingesting sea boogers.

But, although tiring, the relationship seemed to be working out. It was with that in mind that, during one of her visits up north, I decided to make the grandest romantic gesture a man can make in this situation:

I drove her down to my local animal shelter to buy her a cat.

Hey, I know it's not a ring or anything but a Calico has, like, ringworm or something so it's close. I know almost nothing about cats except that I'm allergic to them.

Oh. Did I not mention that? Yes. I'm incredibly allergic to cats.

INCREDIBLY ALLERGIC.

You may realize, at this point, that a man who is very allergic to cats going to pick out and buy his girlfriend one probably doesn't make him the smartest person in the world. You would be right in this assumption. You would be, as they say, "righter than rain." I'm not sure where that saying comes from or why rain is right all the time, but let's just say that rain and I have at least that one thing in common.

As we pulled into the animal shelter, her eyes widened.

"Why are we here?"

"I think it's about time you had a cat."

Her eyes welled. Her face beamed. She hugged me, asking "ARE YOU SERIOUS" about 300 times and, yes, I was serious. And as I was about to find out, serious and very, very stupid.

"This is the most amazing thing anyone has ever done for me," she said.

BAM.

We walked into the shelter and asked where the cats were. I'm not sure why we asked, because from the front corner of the building you could hear what sounded like hundreds of babies being waterboarded echoing from the back of the shelter. This commotion was coming from the cat room, obviously. When Obi-Wan said that he heard millions of voices crying out in terror, I always imagine he heard the same sounds coming from that cat room. So annoying. I have no idea how you people with cats put up with that shit.

As we were about to enter the room, she looked at me.

"Um. Aren't you allergic?"

You know that scene in *Frosty the Snowman* where he is about to bring Karen into the greenhouse because she's freezing to death, and she looks at him and says, "But you'll melt," and he says..

"Only a little."

So Frosty goes in and ultimately sacrifices himself for the sake of Karen because the evil magician guy locks them in. This sends Karen, now warm and toasty, into a panic and she kills herself by ingesting poison. Then Santa revives Frosty who sees Karen dead and, in the midst of heartbreak, throws himself on a space heater. I haven't seen this in a while and may be confusing it with *Romeo and Juliet* or *Home Alone 2* but, honestly, I like this ending better.

I found myself feeling the same way as Frosty: willing to sacrifice myself to make this woman happy. In this scenario, the role of the evil magician is played by the shelter worker who let me into the room. There is no Santa to come rescue Frosty from the evil cats in this movie. Santa isn't real, kids. Evil cats, though, are very very real.

We entered the room and there, in front of me, were walls and walls of cats. Mewing and meowing and looking upon me in clear disdain were *hundreds* of cats. As we walked past each one, we glanced at the paperwork.

Nope. Too old.

Nope. Too fluffy.

This one just sucked out my soul so, you know, NOPE.

"I can't believe they give away cats with cancer," I said.

"That's a hairless. They're supposed to look like that."

"Really? It looks like a Chinese testicle."

Like I said, I'm a dog person. A dog person who was starting to get itchy and, hey, is it getting hard to breathe in here?

As we wandered the stacks of cats (I'm coining this as "CatStacks" and working on trademarking it), nothing jumped out at us, thank Christ. I could see in my girlfriend's face she was becoming very disappointed.

That's when we saw the 'Cat Playroom.'

There, out in the open, amidst beds and tubes and walkways and scratchy things and random things made out of carpet were about 50 free-range cats. It was like Planet of the Apes but instead of primates with guns it was tabbies and shorthairs and Persians.

The only way this room could've been any worse for me was if tarantulas were riding the cats like little cowboys. It looked like Hell.

“We should get out of he-“

She went in. Sonofabitch she went in.

I reluctantly followed and found myself amidst a sea of these creatures. Bouncing. Jumping. Sleeping. I felt like how Jane Goodall must have felt amongst a community of chimps, but in this scenario she is allergic to them and they all want to eat babies because they're direct descendants of Satan.

As my girlfriend looked at each cat and stopped to pat them, my gaze fell upon a fuzzy black cat just lying on his side in a bed. I don't know why, but he just appealed to me, so I approached his little cubby that the bed was in and reached out to tickle his belly.

Now, as a dog person, I had no idea cats don't like this. If you're a dog person and feel like tickling a cat's belly, a word of caution:

CATS DON'T LIKE BELLY TICKLES.

My fingertips grazed the cat's fuzzy belly and I gave two small little scratches and maybe even said 'coochie coo-'

That's when he clamped.

The cat's body closed upon my hand like a steel bear trap. His claws, hidden from view just a split second ago shot out like tiny little switchblade knives. His fuzzy little black face went from 'sleepy' to 'I KILL YOU.' His eyes rolled over black.

The claws dug in first, wrapping around my fleshy forearm and my hand, tearing into my skin and hitting bone. His mouth opened, and 6-inch mandibles of death – 6 INCH MANDIBLES OF DEATH, I SWEAR – pierced the meat of my hand. Then, as is the custom of most chupacabra, he let out a guttural ROOOORRRRWWWWRRRRRR.

“OHMYGOD OHMYGOD HE'S GOT ME ARRGGHHH”

I instinctively yanked my hand from the cubby hole with the beast still firmly grasped to the end of my arm like it was a giant, carnivorous, fuzzy lollipop. I shook my arm violently, trying to loosen its grip but it only dug in deeper.

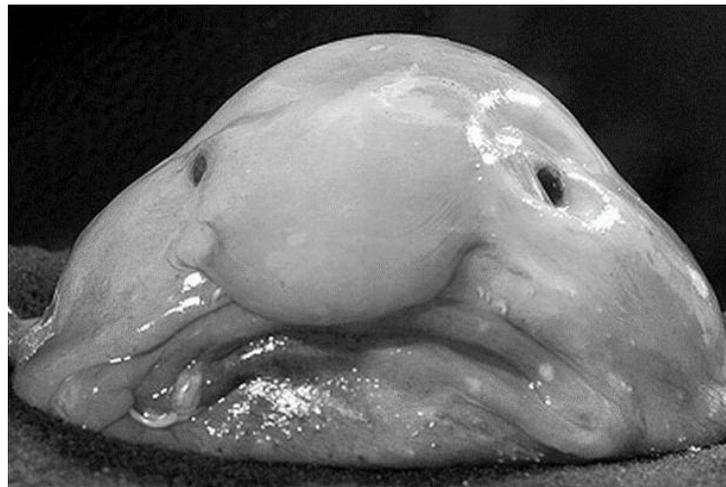
“MOTHER OF FUCK SHIT GOD FUCK OW SHIT”

At this point, there were 3 shelter workers trying to yank that damn thing off me as blood poured down my arm and began to puddle on the floor. My girlfriend stood there, in horror, watching me being devoured in front of her very eyes.

“WHY CAN’T YOU LIKE PUPPIES?!?” I screamed at her. “IT’S KILLING ME!”

Pain shot up my shoulder as he pierced a nerve in my arm so, you know, this was turning out swimmingly. Four shelter workers now were working on each of the cat’s limbs, trying to peel them from my body. I was quickly approaching blackout phase when, finally, he loosened his grip and was successfully removed from my body. If this was a movie, 48 hours later an alien would burst from my chest.

My girlfriend grabbed me and ushered me out of the room and the shelter. My wounds were deep and serious, so I did what most men would do and put some hydrogen peroxide on them and called it a day. Then I watched my body weight triple over the next 2 hours as my allergies kicked in full force and I began to resemble a body found floating in a river that had been there for 6 days. Here is a photo taken shortly after my allergic reaction hit 100%:



So hot. So, so hot.

The next day, wounds untreated, I flew down with her to her hometown and stayed there for the next two days before deciding to call my doctor because my arm had turned into something that could best be described as “wicked scary looking.” Hard, fat and red – like a horny Santa – the doctor told me that I should probably go to an emergency room to have my arm seen, like, NOW. I hung up the phone, then drove myself one-handed to the airport and headed home, convinced that I was slowly turning into a cat and would, within a few days, be able to fall, unharmed, from ridiculous heights.

I went to the emergency room as soon as I landed. The diagnosis? Acute cellulitis in my forearm and a severe infection. According to the doctor, I was not turning into a cat despite my newfound obsession for licking myself. The therapist he immediately referred me to said the same thing. I was on some pretty strong meds for the next two

weeks and my hatred for felines was increased tenfold, tempered only by the fact that I had a full bottle of Vicodin and my Tweets are ridiculous when I'm on painkillers. Every cloud has its silver lining, people – even if the cloud is near-dismemberment by a wirehair.

Shortly thereafter, my woman and I broke up. Long distances and life-threatening cat-attack arm infections can do that sort of thing to a relationship. As a word to the wise I strongly recommend never, ever ever trying to give a cat as a romantic gift.

It's like that saying goes:

*All things happen for a reason, and when the things that happen are bad, it's probably because of cats.*

## Act 4 Progress Checklist

Wow. That section completely disturbed me and I lived it.

Hopefully, your courtship goes a little smoother than the previous stories. Here are some things you can take away from this section without contracting cellulitis.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Cats suck so bad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give your partner a list of things that you like about them	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When you make the above list, add their flaws in alphabetical order or in ascending order of grossness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Buy cards for no reason other than saying "I'm thinking of you"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scaring celebrities is a great way to have sex with one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pay more attention to hot, famous people more than your date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cats are still really the worst and this point cannot be emphasized enough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## *Entr'acte #2*

*My fans list some UN-romantic  
things that don't need to be  
treated with penicillin*

## The Fans Speak - Part 2

Way back a bunch of pages I gave you some romantic responses from fans and friends when I posed this question on my social media accounts:

*“What’s the most romantic thing you’ve done, or that someone has ever done for you?”*

I can tell you, not all the answers were heart-thumpers.

Here are some of the answers I got that fall less into the ‘Awww’ category and more into the ‘Ewww’ or ‘OHMYGOD’ ones:

*“On our 1st date, my husband tried to impress me with a lakeside picnic and champagne. The cork broke so he tried to break the bottle top off on some rocks. Cut the hell out of his hand, but damn if I wasn't impressed.” – Lisa Marie W.*

*“Does holding my hair while I puke after a night at the bar count as romantic?” – Jenny D.*

*“While out strolling in the woods we came upon a small creek, not wanting for me to get my feet wet, he picked up a large rock (mmmuscle) to give me a stepping stone. As he dropped it in the water I got covered in mud!” – Tonya M.*

*“I had a bout of conjunctivitis during a romantic dinner. I sat there with tears streaming down my cheeks while the waitress glared daggers at my then-boyfriend assuming he was crushing my soul.” – An Cailen C.*

*“An ex-boyfriend brought me a giant bouquet of flowers at a football game, and 5 minutes later, one of our friends looked at me and said "He sure is trying to make up for cheating on you, huh? I didn't know.” – Megan N.*

*“My ex “wrote me a song” in which he mentioned my brown hair.... Not long after, I found another copy in a drawer of his bedside table. That copy was written for a blonde. In retrospect, I’m a friggin moron.” – Kerri L.*

*“I got a Brazilian wax for my hubs - it was a total fucking disaster.” – Alyson H.*

*“On one of our first dates, my husband made me sushi from scratch. With romantic music playing in the background, I gagged on the sushi, ran to the bathroom, and spit it in the toilet.” – Kathryn L.*

*“He asked if he could pee on me.” – Laura H.*

Laura H. for the win, here, folks. I don't know that it's going to get any worse than that although we're all curious:

DID YOU LET HIM?

*Act 5*  
*Leveling Up*

## *This One's A Wiggler*

We find our protagonist packing up his things on the dock. He places the book into his Abercrombie backpack and carefully folds up his fishing pole. He's finally rolled his pants back down and has slipped on some white Crocs. At this point we're not really sure who is in charge of the Wardrobe Department but they really need to be fired because we all just want to punch this guy right now.

Standing up, he reaches down to pick up his cooler. He grunts, indicating that it has some weight to it so, apparently, our man has hooked himself a catch. How this happened while wearing white Crocs is a mystery but, hey, good for him. There's someone for everyone, even if you have absolutely zero fashion sense in footwear.

As he walks a few steps, the cooler rattles. The forcefulness of it startles the man briefly, but he continues walking towards his SMART Car with the 'Coexist' bumper sticker on it ARE YOU KIDDING ME RIGHT NOW.

Harder shaking now coming from the cooler. It causes the man to pause and look down, strengthening his grip as the container's quaking becomes more violent. As he takes another step, the blue plastic basket erupts from his grasp with an even more devastating quake and crashes to the dock, lid flying open as it lands on its side.

A beautiful rainbow fish bursts out onto the wooden dock amidst a spill of water. Frantically, she senses the lake just out of reach, and begins a mad dash towards freedom. She realizes that she was enticed by the lures of the man but was starting to find it hard to breathe and a feeling of confinement. As she looks back and sees the man's white Crocs, she's becoming more confident in her decision to seriously get the fuck out of here.

The man sees this unfolding before him and realizes he is about to lose everything he had been working towards.

"Come back, to me!" he screams.

But it's a fish and fish don't understand English, especially the fish that ship from China or Russia. You know, the kind you get from mail-order catalogs and then leave you once they get their visa.

Single women in the audience stand up and start screaming, "FLOP LITTLE FISHY! FLOP TO YOUR FREEDOM!" while everyone else is, like, "Jesus, lady. Sit down." One guy throws some Whoppers candies at them and is escorted out by security. A few

people applaud because he had been talking on his phone through the first two acts, anyway.

The rainbow fish is getting closer to the sweet release of the lake.

*Is this really what I want, she thinks. I could go for a worm or a fly or something right now. I'm a little hungry.*

The man grabs at the fish but can't seem to hold on. If he grabs her too tightly, she shoots out his grasp. If he holds her too loosely, it feels like he doesn't even care if she leaves or not.

*\*In the distance, Bigfoot still waves from behind a tree\**

Sorry. I just wanted to see if that still worked. Also, this is turning out to be seriously one of the greatest analogies of all time.

"It's okay," he says. "I understand. You're beautiful and I don't deserve to have you. I spent so much time looking for other fish that I never really understood what was right next to me. If I could do it over again, I'd make sure you know how I feel, every single day. I want to be with you, forever."

The rainbow fish stops and looks back at him. She remembers the things he did to pull her in, how hard he worked for her, and the sacrifices he made (he got a little cut from the fishing wire).

She looks back at the water. She looks back at the man.

Water. Man. Water. Man. This goes on for, like, five minutes and the audience honestly starts to get a little fidgety hoping she figures her crap out pretty soon.

Finally, she hops back into the cooler, confident in her decision. He picks her up, smiles.

Then they go home and he eats her for, like, an hour.

You kind of knew it was ending this way, right?

## What's Happenin', Hot Stuff?

If you didn't get the gist from the opening scene, this particular section is about things you can do, should do, or shouldn't do to keep your relationship fresh and then, inevitably, kicking it up a notch. One way I've heard to keep a relationship fresh is to douche or give yourself an enema. I may be confusing 'keeping things fresh' with 'getting ready to make an adult film.'

Maybe I should have said these are things to keep your bond interesting. Now it sounds like I'm talking about glue. I should probably stop while I'm ahead.

*"Guys: If you haven't told your woman she's beautiful today, WTF ARE YOU WAITING FOR?!?" - Rodney Lacroix Tweet, December 2014*

Yes. Sometimes my favorite quotes are the ones I say myself. Conceit is my best quality and one that's probably better than yours, too.

That Tweet up there is part of my mantra. Very early on in my relationship with my wife I told her that not a single day would go by without me telling her how beautiful she is. In hindsight, this was probably a bad idea because she has a calendar where she specifically marks the days I don't say it and holds it against me at Christmas time.

She can be vicious.

However, there are a lot more unmarked boxes on that calendar than marked ones. In my defense, my wife is pretty hot so telling her how pretty she is comes easily to me. Having the forethought to add "tell wife she is beautiful" into my Outlook calendar as a daily recurring appointment (with reminder that pops up on my phone) also helps a lot because I'm old and forget things easily.

If you find it difficult to tell the object of your affection that he/she is attractive, you may have other issues or the person may, in fact, be ugly. A rule of thumb is that if the only picture they've ever given you of themselves is a Glamour Shot, even they think they're not very good looking. Right now some guy is reading this, picturing his desk at work with the 3 Glamour Shot fuzzy portraits of his wife and thinking, "OH MY GOD." My guess, though, is that if you're pursuing – or in – a relationship with someone, it's because YOU find them attractive and, really, that's all that matters.

There are several key areas you can compliment someone on that will not only endear you to them, but will also make them more confident in themselves and your relationship. If you're great at bullshitting people, this section should be easy for you.

### **For the guys:**

Guys, I know our first instinct is to go for easy flattery, but telling a woman 'nice rack' isn't what we're going for here. Unless you're married or in a committed relationship and heading out on the town and she's pushing those babies out with a \$200 Victoria's Secret bra, don't go for the breast compliment. This is especially true if their boobies actually look like ¼-filled water balloons or flapjacks with stretch-mark syrup because she'll know you're lying immediately and then, sir, you are so screwed and will have to go through 3 weeks of 'ARE YOU HAVING AN AFFAIR' interrogations.

Here is a short list of things women enjoy being complimented on:

- 1) Everything

Here is a short list of things women don't enjoy being complimented on:

- 1) Unusually large zits
- 2) Unibrow/Mustache/Stray hairs, in general
- 3) How veiny their boobs are
- 4) Grey or white hair

Tell her you get lost in her eyes.

"MY GOD! I'M LOST IN YOUR EYES! LET ME OUT! IT'S DARK AND SCARY IN HERE!"

"What?"

Not like that.

Tell her you love her face. Just remember, guys, make sure she knows she is beautiful to you in some way every single day and you won't have to worry about her nailing the UPS guy unless he bought this book before you did. If that's the case, then you may still have time because he's working his way through the neighborhood wives and he's only up to the Miller's house right now.

### **For the ladies:**

Yes.

Even men enjoy getting a compliment every so often because it helps our self-esteem. PLEASE TREAD CAREFULLY, though, ladies – because overdoing it may result in

your man being so confident in his looks/abilities that he'll start fishing for them regularly. I know this because once my wife told me I nailed an Eric Cartman impression and now I answer every one of her questions with "I'M JUST BIG BONED" trying to get that mojo back.

My wife cries sometimes.

Here is a list of things that you can freely tell your man to make him feel good and wanted, without him thinking you're lying or trying to get free jewelry.

- 1) You look good in (that shirt/those jeans/me).
- 2) I love your butt. (This is a favorite of mine because I like when my wife tells me I have a cute butt. In reality, I actually do have a cute butt so that helps and is super-believable).
- 3) I like how you drive a car.

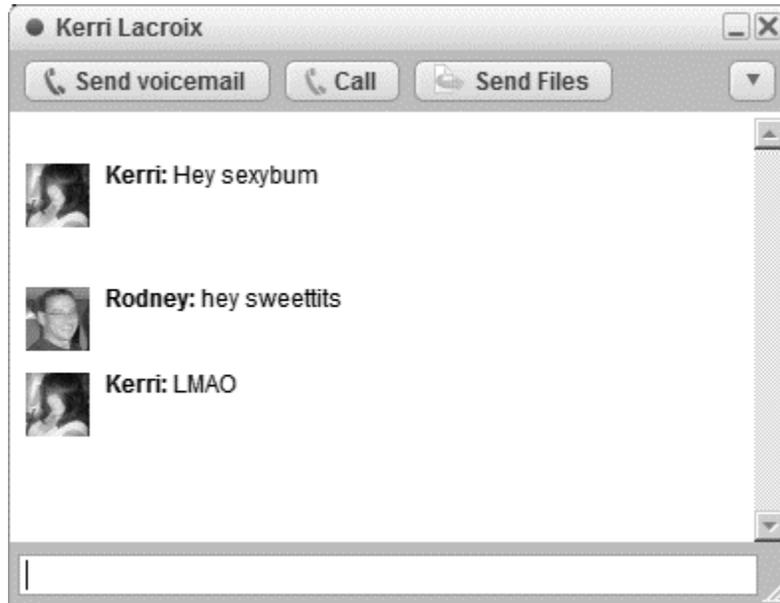
And now, a short list of things you shouldn't compliment men on:

- 1) How fast they finish, thus allowing you to get back to watching Grey's Anatomy.



Guys like to feel virile. “Virile” is a weird name for a stripper and we usually get thrown out of the place for trying, but whatever.

In fact, as a ridiculous coincidence, Kerri sent me this instant message as I was writing this very page:



See? She knows how to start a conversation.

I told you I had a cute butt, didn't I?

## Roses Are Red, and So Is Blood

Search the Internet for 'romantic ideas' and you will, undoubtedly, come across pictures like this:



No, those are not skin tags. Since this is a black-and-white picture I felt the need to clarify.

What you are seeing is the old “rose petals on the bed” chestnut.

I cannot stress enough how much you should NOT DO THIS.

You see, once upon a time I had the idea, prior to my woman’s arrival, of doing this very thing.

*I will line the floors and bed with rose petals and she will gasp and be all smitten and damn I’m good, I thought.*

*\*has drink in my own honor\**

So I went to my local flower shop and bought a bag of rose petals. The bag set me back \$60 and I really wish that was a typo because, seriously, \$60?! I may open my own flower shop that just sells flower petals and I will call it “Petal Pushers” and become instantly rich.

At the time, I was living in an apartment that had wall-to-wall carpeting and was directly over an old deaf guy who liked to watch porn. I’m not sure why I need to mention that, other than to inform you that listening to full-blast porn through your floor is not nearly as

awesome as it sounds. It also tends to keep you awake most nights. This book is like an encyclopedia of crap you really didn't need to know.

I entered my apartment and started strewing the rose petals along the floor, making a path to the bedroom (oh yeah, baby) where I scattered the petals all over my bedspread. Then I put out some candles, shaved my junk<sup>1</sup> and got ready for the visit and the ridiculous amount of loving that would surely ensue.

And ensue it did. The reaction I got was exactly what I was looking for. Her face was surprise and shock and adoration. It was amazing even though I mainly only saw the top of her head.

*\*holds hand up for high-five\**

The next day I woke up and started to clean up the scattered rose petals. As I picked each petal up off my tan bedspread, I noticed an exact replica of the petal was still sitting there. Somehow, in the middle of the night, I had perfected cloning.

I wish.

The replica of the rose petal was in the form of a big, red, stain.

Oh no.

There had to be 400 of those damn petals in that bag. I quickly brushed all of the petals from the bedspread and was faced with what appeared to be a mattress covered in severe acne. WHAT THE HELL. Thinking quickly, I spritzed some ProActiv on it but the rose zits stayed put. I ran to the kitchen for some cleaner but I was a bachelor at the time so the only thing under my sink was a wire scouring pad circa 1976.

I looked at the bag the petals came in. There were no "Hey idiot, these things make stains" warning or "Do not put on surfaces that are lighter than black in color" hints to suggest this would happen. I looked down at my beige carpet and, slowly, peeled a rose petal off the floor.

Zit.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.

Under every single rose petal was a stain. Every, single one. On my bed. On the floor. On the carpet. Even the one I peeled off my left ass cheek left a stain but that one was cute because it was a little heart-shaped one.

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<sup>1</sup> That is an embedded extra tip, right there: shave your junk if you're planning on a night of romance. Nothing ruins the mood like a guy continually picking something out of his front teeth or a woman trying to cough up a hairball for three minutes.

My attempts at cleaning both the bedspread and carpet were fruitless. In the end, I had a professional carpet cleaner come in and I bought new linens. Between the flowers and the damage they had caused, my total for a night of romance was in the ballpark of \$400.

I can tell you, men, no matter what she lets you do to her, \$400 is probably not worth it.

Sorry, \$600.

You see, I didn't get half of my security deposit back after moving out, from what management called "Cost to clean blood stains in bedroom carpeting." Apparently, in my mad dash to clear my bed of the stain-petals, a bunch flew under the bed where they went on to bleed into my carpet and subsequently drain my checking account.

It's like the song goes:

"Every Rose Has Its Thorn" but by "thorn" they mean "stuff that ruins bedspreads and carpet."

## Wanna Get Away? Not Really, No.

Every couple thinks of having a nice, quiet, romantic interlude alone. You look at planning a cruise or staying at a nice Bed and Breakfast. Maybe it's just for a week, a weekend or, in the case of parents, 20 minutes of peace and goddamn quiet without being asked to help open a juice box. I have two kids and two step children, which is why I spend so much time in my soundproofed bathroom pretending to shit.

If you have the time and wherewithal (OMG I can't believe I spelled that right on the first try) then I have some suggestions on where NOT to go, based on my very own experiences. I'm not saying you can't go there, I'm just saying that if you go to these locations, do the opposite of what I did.

### ***Getaway to Avoid #1: The Romantic Camping Trip***

First off, the words "romantic" and "camping trip" do not belong in the same sentence. There is absolutely nothing romantic about camping unless you're in a tent that you smuggled inside your luggage while staying at the Ritz Carlton.

My very first 'getaway' with a woman was a camping trip on a 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. I don't know whose idea this was but I'm going to assume it was hers because I hate the outdoors so, yes, let's blame her.

Within five minutes of our arrival at the site and attempting to put up the tent:

- 1) We were arguing
- 2) I was being punched
- 3) Somehow, she had taken off my shoes during my beating and was throwing them at my head

Nothing says 'romantic getaway' like being hit in the temple with a Nike traveling 25 miles per hour while you're trying to bang tent stakes into the ground using a can of beef stew.

That's just about the time when the rain started.

Of course, the rain brought mosquitos and since mosquitos bring malaria we opted for bug spray. I can sincerely tell you that – after dodging airborne sneakers - nothing quells the desire in a man's loins quite like the smell of bug spray and the bitter, yet slightly poisonous taste of DEET.

Sadly, I was a bit too late on the bug spray as a mosquito had managed to somehow sting my eyelid and now I looked like a shiny, smelly welterweight boxer.

“Should we just go home?” I asked.

She looked at me, still grasping one of my sneakers. “We’ve only been here 10 minutes.”

Of course, no camping trip is complete without a trip to the restrooms. A great test for men who think they’re in love would be to stand outside an outhouse shaped like a wooden rocket ship as their girlfriend is inside, near-puking while trying to take a dump into a hole, knowing that her turd is simply going to land on someone else’s turd.

I cannot stress enough how much I hate camping.

We decided to stick it out, and the rest of the weekend was pretty much downhill from there. On the bright side, I was able to cross “poop on top of someone else’s poop while sitting in a fake rocket ship” off of my bucket list.

In related news, my bucket list is terrible.

Suffice it to say our campsite neighbors had plenty of entertainment. I’m almost positive I could hear them laughing when my girlfriend threw my parachute pants in the fire after I told her to stop complaining about the noise our inflatable mattress was making.

That pitched tent inside the Ritz Carlton sounds so much better now, doesn’t it?

## The Shocker

I call this one 'the shocker' because (a) I'm nothing if not inappropriate and love creating innuendo and (b) see 'a.'

Actually, I call this one 'the shocker' because the trick to dropping a truly effective note of affection to someone is in the surprise of it all. If someone sees or knows something is coming (i.e., the 'flowers on Valentine's Day' or when you're making 'the face' during nookie) it simply becomes routine. *Routine is the antichrist of romance*. That is a terrible analogy but I'm sticking with it because I can't think of another one right now and I think that saying will sell well when put on a shirt.

Shock value is a major component of being perceived as a hopeless romantic. This does not mean that you tear open the shower curtain while your wife is in there and you're holding a running chainsaw with "I lurve yoo" written in fake blood on it – although OHMYGOD that is a great idea.

What I mean by the "element of surprise" is doing something thoughtful that takes very little effort and interrupts a normally monotonous moment of their day.

### **Example #1:**

I live in Southern New Hampshire where the summer temps range from hot to stifling and the winter temps can be anywhere between "Holy shit it's wicked cold" and "Jesus, it's wicked cold." This means that during the winter, our cars are typically covered in sheets of ice or snow, thus requiring them to be warmed up. My wife happens to leave for work before I do, so one morning I went out to warm up her car for her (which can, in and of itself, be considered one of the acts of chivalry noted in the previous chapter). As I went to start it, I noticed that all the windows had ice on them so I took it upon myself to write her a note, completely disregarding the pain and suffering it would cause me by scraping my finely manicured nails against, you know, bumpy cold stuff:



"I <3 U"

Now before you say, "I can't believe he took a picture of this" and "I bet he did this just for the book" I need to tell you that even though that is an amazing idea, I'm simply not that smart. My wife, leaving for work, walked down to the car and was greeted by this. I sincerely hope it made her hour-long commute a little easier, but she is the one who actually took a picture of this and then posted it on her Facebook wall with "*Awwww... I love you too baby.*"

Then she tagged me in the photo.

Of course I replied, "WHO WROTE THIS TO YOU? I WILL KILL HIM" because I'm a dick like that.

Her posting this means that both her friends *and* my friends saw this. This also means that all my guy friends hated me just a little bit more that morning because I'm really good at making them look like insensitive jerkfaces.

But this is the stuff I'm talking about. It took zero effort or time to do but made an impact on the woman I love. It also made an impact on my fingernails but if I gripe about them here I'll sound like a real pussy.

### **Ladies:**

Your version of this would be to use lipstick to write a message on the bathroom mirror if you happen to leave before him. Do not do this if your guy is a freak about cleaning the house, like I am. Even though you wrote, "*You're everything to me*" on the mirror, I'm thinking "*What the hell am I going to use to wipe this crap off without it streaking?*"

My mom instilled in me, as a child, a desire to keep things clean and orderly. It's been ruining my love of spontaneity ever since. Thanks a lot, mom. Also, call me after you read this because I need to know how to get this lipstick off the mirror.

### Example #2:

Both the wife and I brown-bag our lunches because between the two of us we have four kids and, unless you're Stephen King, being an author isn't all that lucrative. I hope this book changes all that. Make sure your friends buy their own copies instead of you loaning it to them. That should help with my money situation. Thanks in advance.

Regardless, I usually only make my own lunch but, for some reason one morning, my wife asked me to make hers. Of course this required me to ask 68 questions about how many slices of cheese and what condiments and how many pickles do you wa- what? No pickles? Great, I married an insane person. Who doesn't put pickles on their sandwich? OKAY FINE NO PICKLES. Jesus. But seriously, how do you eat a sandwich without pickles on it? That's so stupid. Stupid and sad. I'm getting angry just thinking about it.

As I crafted her pickle-less pitiful excuse for a "sandwich" and was starting to wrap it up in foil, I paused. The top slice of the sandwich bread stared at me, blankly. "Why no pickles?" it asked. As a single tear rolled down my cheek I had no answer for the question but, staring at the blank bread, I did have an idea.

Later, that day, I received yet another Facebook notification that I had been tagged in a photo on her wall:



Her description of the photo was simply, "Awwww."

This was followed by all her female friends commenting "You have a sweet husband" and "MY husband doesn't do this" and all the guys writing "OMG why is he is such an asshole?"

Yes, I'm an asshole, but I'm a romantic asshole. A romantic asshole who turned the mundane act of opening a sandwich into a wonderful surprise for my woman.

Sorry. "Sandwich" should be in quotes there. Having no pickles disqualifies it.

She's lucky I love her or this would be so over.

## 43 Shades of Aquamarine

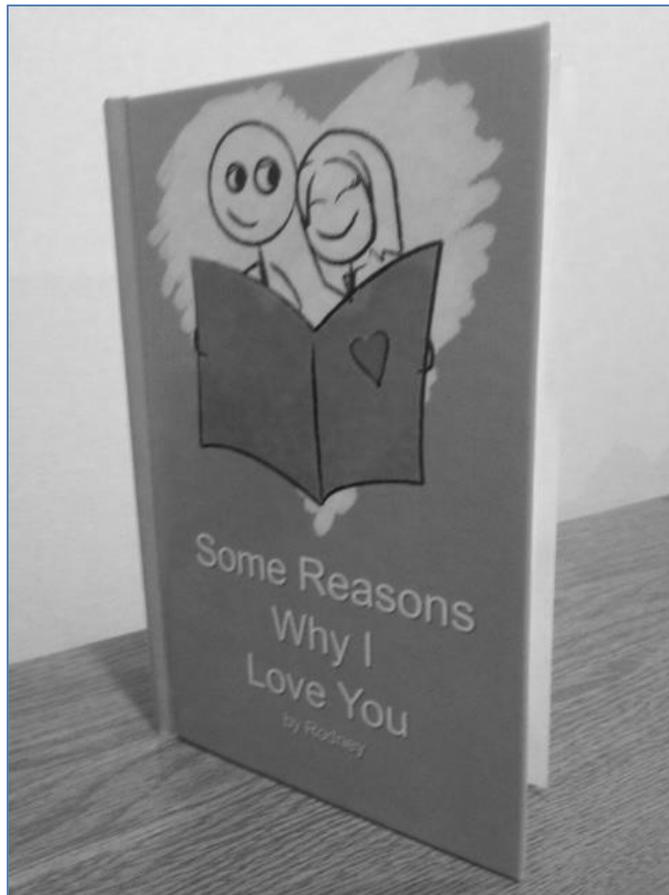
When it comes to romance, I'm always trying to outdo myself. I'm also always trying to do myself, which is why I'm at the orthopedist a lot and have double sessions with my therapist.

You may be surprised to know that injuries sustained while trying to stretch your wiggly to your bung are not covered by most insurances so check with your carrier.

*\*thumbs through list of maladies covered by Obamacare just to see\**

On the very first Christmas Kerri and I shared together as a couple, I gave her the best present last, as is my usual custom. Always giving someone the big ticket or thoughtful item last helps them to forget that you also got them deodorant and breath mints as stocking stuffers.

She opened the wrapping and stared down at the amazing gift I had given her.



“Cute,” she said.

Then she thumbed through it, said “cute” again and put it down.

I was dumbfounded.

This was her **big** gift. This book.

This was her thoughtful present. The gift that everything I had given her prior, including the Powder Fresh Secret and 4 packs of Mentos, had led up to. This was the crescendo of my Christmas gift concert and all I got was a “cute” and a few flipped pages and she put it down?

I was crushed. CRUSHED. This was the Sofia Vergara restraining order fiasco happening all over again.

That’s when she looked down at the cover and saw the words:

*“by Rodney”*

She picked the book up again and opened the pages.

She stopped. Her mouth dropped open and she looked at me.

“Wait. Did you make this yourself?” she asked.

“I did.”

*\*peacock tail opens wide behind my ass\**

And that’s when I saw the tear come to her eye as she turned a few more pages. The tear rolled down her cheek and she did that thing she always does when I happen to hit the home run and floor her with something unexpected:

“OH, HONEEEEY!”

Inside my head I was doing a gigantic happy dance while at the same time super relieved that she didn’t just totally blow off everything I had just worked on because, honestly, that would have sucked so many donkey balls.

Speaking of donkey balls, have you ever wondered how that all worked in *Shrek*? The donkey and the dragon have babies so they much have boinked, right? Someone needs to make an animation of that maybe ‘hidden camera footage’ style.

*\*checks NetFlix, still nothing\**

She began flipping through the book. After each page she'd give me this look and pouty lip and I knew, right then, that I was going to get banged so hard that night. Yay me.

Actually, what her response was telling me was that, yes, I was going to get railed pretty stiffly later but it also confirmed that this gift was pretty awesome. Feel free to look up the sites where you can make this on your own. I'm not going to mention them by name here because I have no royalty deal with them. Sucks so badly.

*\*flip\**

*\*laugh\**

*\*flip\**

*\*pouty stare\**

*\*boing\* (that one's me)*

Every picture flip gave me a different reaction. This one got me a laugh:



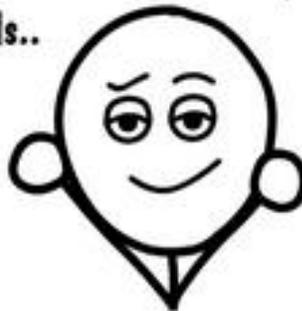
Because nothing says “Here’s how much I love you” like a picture of a couple about to pass out from alcohol poisoning. I think maybe we should consider going to support meetings because we both looked at each other and said, “SO TRUE!”

# About the Author

**Rodney Lacroix is typically a self-centered know-it-all with narcissistic tendencies. He thinks he's funny and thinks you should think he's funny, too (see narcissistic comment).**

**Rodney usually only thinks of himself, except when it comes to his kids..**

**..and his girlfriend, Kerri.**



Of course I started the whole book with an ‘About the Author’ page here because I’m nothing if not all about myself. This certainly wasn’t a surprise to Kerri, plus it made the book a little thicker and funnier and I’m all about thick and funny. I don’t remember I was going with that.

*\*flip\**

She reached the "About the Couple" page and gave me that sweet look again. As I'm looking at this page now, I realize that it actually looks like she's grabbing my lower spine, so maybe she's a chiropractor here? Predator about to rip out my entire skeletal system? The mysteries lying herein are turning this into a sort of really shitty *Da Vinci Code*.

*\*knocks on wood it makes 1/1000000<sup>th</sup> the profit of that\**

# About the Couple

**The story of Kerri and Rodney began with two memberships on Match.com, some amazing profile editing and - of course - the incomparable Susan Boyle.**

**Some instant messages and phone calls later the two worked their sexytime magic and thus helped create what some would later call "the hottest couple of all time outside Brangelina."**



In hindsight I probably should have put hair on Kerri's head but I did this at work and there's only so much time I can goof around before probably getting caught. I'm actually on my 7<sup>th</sup> year of slacking off at work so I think my days are numbered.

*\*flip\**

Kerri was one of the three people in the world who owned a BlackBerry phone at the time. She would CONSTANTLY text on the thing while she was driving. This was with me in the car, staring on in horror. Typically, she would be texting me, who was sitting two feet away in the passenger seat. This is because she knows what starting a conversation with me can lead to and she's had far too many of those that ended up in discussions about donkey-dragon sex.

## **I love that you use BlackBerry Messenger when you're driving**

**Even though it's illegal in the state  
of Massachusetts and you're probably  
going to kill someone. Like me.**



She also had an issue with her keyboard ttttyyppping characters like that which is why I mentioned it. She now uses an iPhone and has to deal with terrible autocorrect suggestions like when she wanted me to buy Triscuits at the store but typed 'True its' and, long story short, I was in that goddamn store for three hours. Screw you, Apple.

I got a lot of awesome feedback from this (read: sex for 20 minutes) so I thought I'd pass this little thing along to you as well. Fill the book with things that maybe only the two of you know about – like how you cannot read a single text message without having to correct 'you're' vs 'your' or that they fart in their sleep.

Sounds weird, I know, but you even pointing out that they fart in their sleep and wake themselves up can turn it into a romantic gesture. Trust me, I know on this one.

It's a page in the book.

## Wanna Try Getting Away Again?

Nope. Not Even A Little.

If you're still thinking about getting away for a weekend after reading that camping story, I hope you've at least decided to make better choices on where to go. With that segue, I present to you another romantic vacation story gone south. Enjoy.

### ***Getaway to Avoid #2: Rubbing Me the Wrong Way***

I knew there was going to be an issue as soon as it walked in.

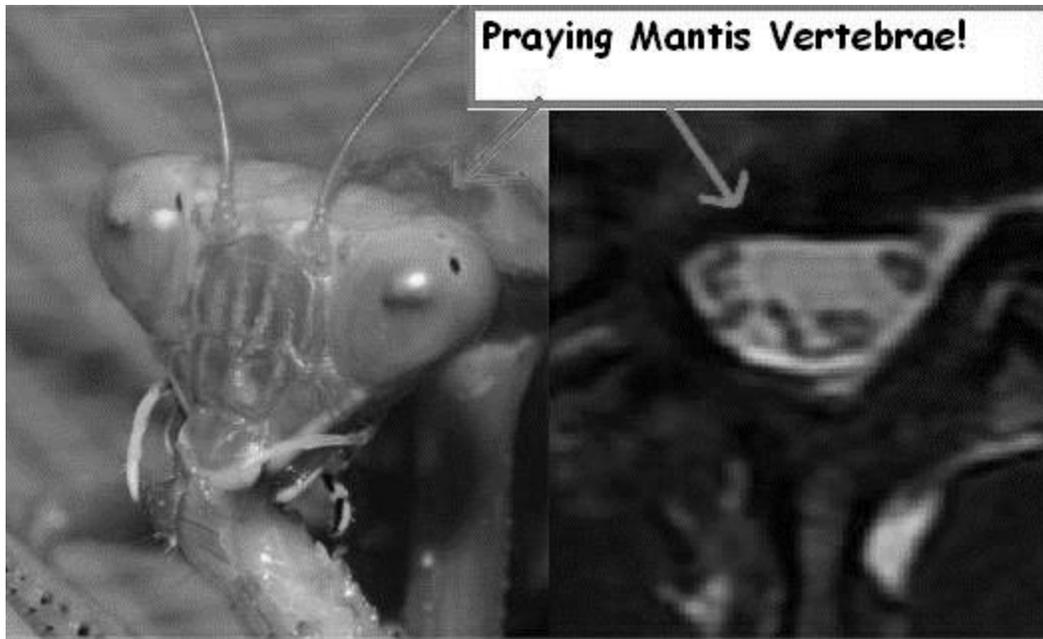
You see, we had booked a 'couples massage' at a spa while on a weekend getaway to the mountains of New Hampshire. The hotel we stayed at had the unfortunate amenity of an indoor water park.

Yes, an indoor water park sounds pretty awesome, especially if you're six years old. Sadly, we were not six years old so the allure of an indoor water park eluded us. The problem was that the rest of the hotel was filled with patrons who planned their vacation stay around this indoor water park, meaning that we were two adults surrounded by 36,000 screaming children in bathing suits.

As an added bonus, all of these children sounded like they were jumping on the floor directly above our room.

In an attempt to break free and have some romantic, non-screaming adult time, we booked a couples massage at the spa on the lower level. I had never had any type of massage unless you can count having a herniated disc operated on as a rubdown.

Correction: a herniated disc that looked like an insect when I saw the MRI:



Freaky, right? I KNOW.

So, no, I guess I had never had a real massage so I had no idea what to expect. We followed the instructions to strip down to whatever we felt comfortable in and wait in the room for the therapists to come in.

My woman and I lay six feet apart from each other, alone in the room together and naked except for a towel. And that's when it happened.

"Ummmm," I said.

"What?"

"Boing," I replied.

"Boing?" she questioned.

I wiggled my eyebrows at her.

"OH NO YOU DON'T HAVE BONER."

I did. I did have a boner. It was a very unfortunate boner because even though the table has a hole to put your face into, it does not have a hole to put your erection through. This seems like a serious design flaw.

Sadly, it was pointed down towards my feet and squished up against the table. I was about to adjust myself to make it a little more 'north-facing' when the door to the room opened and the two massage therapists came in.

The first therapist to walk in was beautiful. Black polo shirt, long brown hair, and a beautiful smile. She looked at me and said “Hi” before sidling up next to the other table.

Damn.

Then Helga walked in.

250 pounds of sheer muscle, she appeared to have the body of an Olympic powerlifter. Giant sausages hung from the hands at the ends of her thick arms.

“ARGLEBARGLE!” I think she said, in the tongue of her native mutant-land place or wherever it was that she came from.

I honestly don’t know what she was saying because I wasn’t paying attention. I was already watching the hot therapist oil up the back of-

Oh. Oh man. I’m really going to need to adjust this penis. This is starting to hurt and now that I’m watching that it’s getting worse.

I made a quick attempt at raising my ass off the bench, which would have automatically righted my stiffy. However, as I began to lift my butt, Helga’s meaty mitts pushed down on my lower lumbar, crunching my little Rodney head-first into the bench.

“UNGHH,” I moaned.

“I haven’t even started,” she said, as she reached into the nearby fishbowl and swallowed a frog whole.

To my right, I heard a stifled giggle. I looked over to see the rubdown continuing on the next table. Oil everywhere, hot therapist kneading and pressing and..

“OHMYGODSONOFABITCH” I yelled.

“Was that too hard?”

I’ll show you something too hard, I thought.

“A little, yeah,” I replied. It’s like being walked on by Stormtroopers, who the hell enjoys this?!

I could see, out of the corner of my eye, my therapist reaching back to her table to get more oil.

*This is my moment to right myself, I thought. I must be quick.*

I was not quick enough.

As I attempted the flick of my buttocks upward, she had already started to press down firmly again on my back.

*\*prrrrrrrppppppptttttttt\**

The fart came out quickly, loudly and with a tinge of sharpness to it. I don't know if you've ever had a sharp fart, but it feels like you toot out a rusty nail. It happened so quickly that I barely had time to clench my ass together to the very tail end of it had a really high note to it.

*\*prrrrrrrpppppppttttttttffffffffff\**

Oh. My. God.

This instantly solved the problem of my unfortunate boner because all the blood had now rushed to my face in embarrassment. I just farted away a boner in a room full of women, two of them very attractive.

I could see Helga stone-faced, ever the professional, behind me preparing to go in for another press.

"Happens all the time," she said. "Don't worry about it."

"I'm done," I replied.

"But I haven't even really sta--"

"DONE."

Helga said, "Okay," and stepped away from the table. I was a bit woozy because all the blood was still in my face, but I gathered myself as quickly as I could, walked past the hot therapist who was holding back her own laughter because the woman she was massaging was dying laughing.

As I exited, I turned and said, "If you need me, I'll be at the water park."

## hey, That's a Nice Box

"THIS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST GIFTS OF ALL TIME," she said.

Yes. She called it one of the greatest romantic gifts OF ALL TIME. I have to agree with this assessment, saying that as someone who got a whole lotta love after giving it. Thankfully I'm not talking about the Led Zeppelin kind, because they are a seriously overrated band.

So many middle-aged people who still smoke pot on the regular don't like me right now.

She unwrapped the present, peeling off the "It's a Boy!" paper with a quizzical look on her face. I will wrap gifts with anything I can find. I once wrapped a wedding present in black paper with a Grim Reaper caricature on it because it's all I had after getting my friend something for his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party.

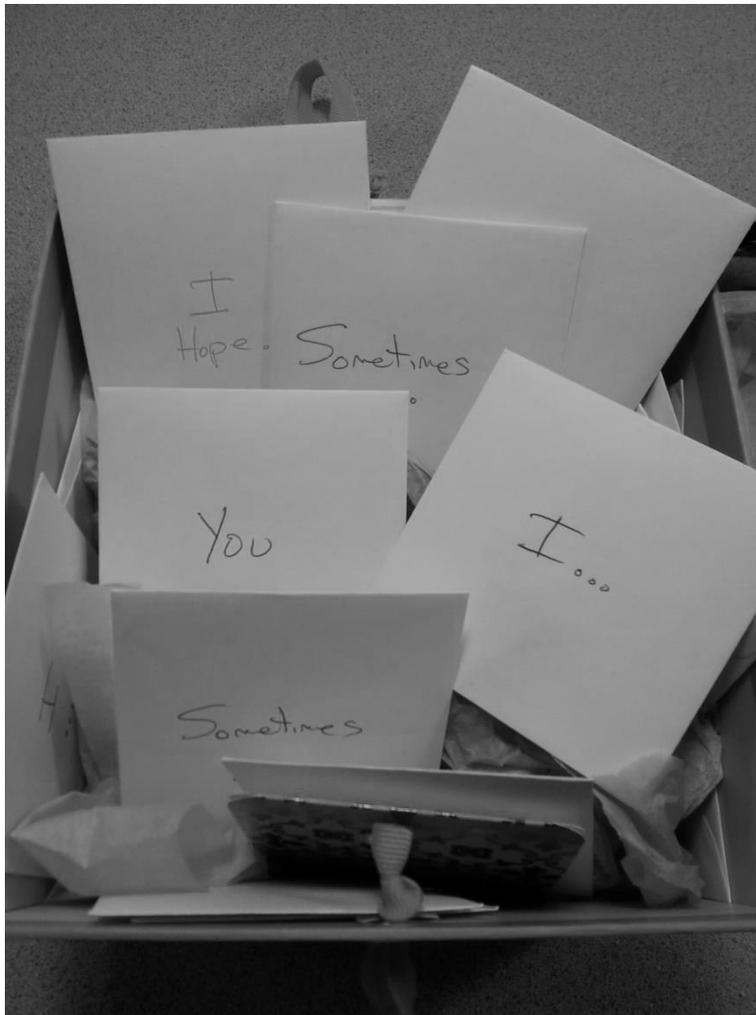
The bride of my friend was not amused.

Paper removed, she pulled out large, pink box. You have absolutely no idea how difficult it is for me to not write some sort of sexual joke right here. Actually, now that I've spelled it out, you probably do. I think this is called, 'innuendo.'

*\*adds 'English Scholar' to resume\**

The box was tied with a pink ribbon, which she deftly unraveled. She opened the lid and there, amidst a sea of black tissue paper (seriously, I think I way overbought for that 40<sup>th</sup> birthday gift), sat a bunch of tiny envelopes.

Each envelope had a word written on it, like so:



“You couldn’t find anything other than black tissue paper?” she asked.

Ugh. My wrapping choices always come back to haunt me somehow.

She pulled out one of the envelopes.

“What is it?”

“It’s an elephant,” I said, because I’m a jerk. “Just open one.”

She opened the envelope, mouthed what was written on the card inside, and started crying. TIP: If you can give someone something that makes them cry and it doesn’t involve twisting their nipple really really hard, then you have a winner for a gift.

The envelope contained a love note. Looking up, she realized that she now had a box full of them. Each note was different and painstakingly handcrafted by someone super attractive and so self-centered he has to include some remark about how awesome he is in almost every sentence. Case in point.

A few days earlier, I had been scrambling for something to do for her. I was really getting to the point where I was blowing my proverbial romantic load by upping the ante at every occasion, so it seemed like I was backing myself into my own gift-giving corner.

That's about when I walked into a Dollar Store and found these:



Perfect.

I grabbed 41 of the cards because this was her 41<sup>st</sup> birthday and that seemed like the right amount for what I was going to do. I needed a calculator to do this math.

Cards in hand, I grabbed some beef jerky because you can't beat \$1 for beef jerky. I love the Dollar Store. To make my visit even more fun at the Dollar Store I always ask the employees "HOW MUCH DIS?" in a fake European accent while holding the items high over my head.

I highly suggest trying this. Do this for each and every item you see and I guarantee you will kill at least 20 minutes of your time and have fun doing it while completely aggravating employees who say, "A dollar" over and over again in increasingly agitated tones.

If you decide to do this but can't find these cards at a Dollar Store, you can find them all at a typical Hallmark-type store. If you *do* go to one of those stores make sure you're

prepared to shell out a little more money or maybe walk out with an impulse-bought Precious Moments statuette that will sit in one of your house corners just collecting dust for decades. The more you know.

*\*rainbow star goes by\**

If you go to Hallmark, you'll find these in the stationery section of the store where they sell envelopes and gift bags and stuff like that. Remember to go straight past all the displays of cute wooden signs that say "I Love You More," "Because Nana Says So" and "It's Wine O'Clock" and go directly to the stationery section. Stay strong, my friend.

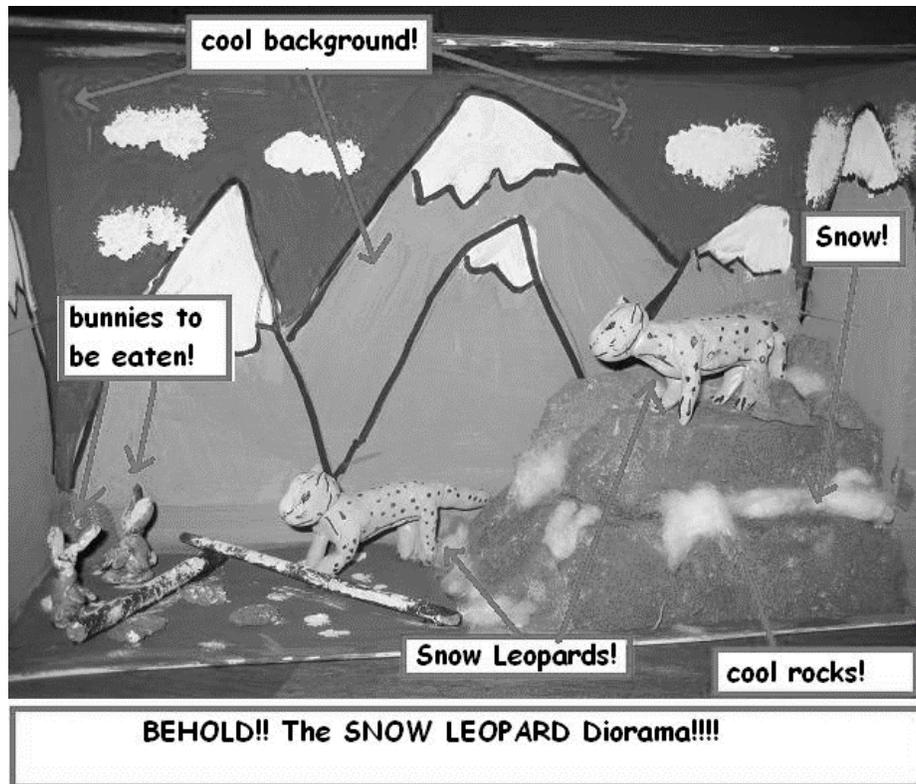
The original picture I inserted here is vibrantly colored but it costs extra to print in color which cuts into my profit margin so you'll just have to use your imagination. Imagine pinks and reds and purple cards and envelopes and maybe a nude celebrity of your choosing, I don't care. Whatever you do, don't get grey or dark grey cards like the picture shows. You're trying to be romantic, not show off your PhD in Accounting.

Cards in hand, I went on a hunt for a box to put the cards in. But, with this being a special event, I decided to forego my first knee-jerk reaction of getting a shoebox.

Whenever I need to put something in a box<sup>1</sup>, I immediately run to the basement where there is always a plethora of shoe boxes. I'm not sure why this is, exactly, but if you're a parent then you probably should have 50 or so laying around because at some point your kid is going to need to build a diorama for school. If the only shoeboxes you have in the house contain clay Snow Leopards, you may have to find another type of box.

---

<sup>1</sup> There are so many jokes just writing themselves in this story it's ridiculous



I felt the need to include a picture of my son's (my) diorama from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade that he (I) did and on which he (I) got an A+. Why teachers insist on having kids make dioramas is beyond me, but I think he does (I do) an amazing job on them and I like keeping stuff like this around to showcase his (my) talent.

Dear teachers: Stop giving kids projects like this. I graduated years ago just so I wouldn't have to do any more school work. Thank you in advance.

This concludes our sidebar. Now let's get back to the project and the cards.

I found the box you saw earlier and thought it was perfect. I've seen all kinds of boxes in my lifetime an-

Sorry. Too easy.

We're about to expand on the "Reasons Why I Love You" idea that was mentioned earlier, so make sure you haven't exhausted your resources. On that note, if you can't find 30 noteworthy things about your significant other, or your relationship in general, then you should probably use this box to pack up some of your things and move out. Depending on how much stuff you own, you may need a bigger box.

Cards in hand, I started to think of some categories for them.

For your information, the purpose of the cards is to give your love a short one-liner about something that you find special about him or her or even just the relationship. My categories included:

- a) "I.."
- b) "We.."
- c) "You Are..."
- d) "I Love.."
- e) "Sometimes..."

I purposely tried to avoid such categories like:

- a) "I really hate.."
- b) "You suck at.."
- c) "I'm so grossed out when.."
- d) "WTF is up with.."

Truth or not, those cards are just an argument waiting to happen.

I realized I bought too many cards so decided it was safer to use my neighbor's trash to throw them away. I didn't want her discovering evidence before I gave the gift to her. For added entertainment value, I wrote '*Thanks for last night*' on one of them, crumpled it slightly and placed it prominently in their garbage container. Then I made some popcorn to watch the fireworks when my neighbor's spouse would hopefully spy it in their recycling bin, take it out and read it.

I have, like, way too much time on my hands.

You can also buy additional cards if you run out but still have a ton of stuff to say. That last sentence is probably more accurate for women because men typically don't like to think and we're lazy, in general. Plus, we're already busy writing '*Thanks for last night*' on cards and putting them in random trash bins throughout the neighborhood because guys are also assholes and completely entertained by stuff like this.

I began writing my love notes on the cards. I decided it was best to write whatever came to the tip of my tongue. This is why 13 of the cards said "canker sore" and had to be tossed, causing even greater confusion at my neighbor's house.

A NOTE FOR YOU: A good rule of thumb here is to not do this project when she's kept you up all night snoring because you don't want her doing this on day #3:

*\*pulls "I.." card\**

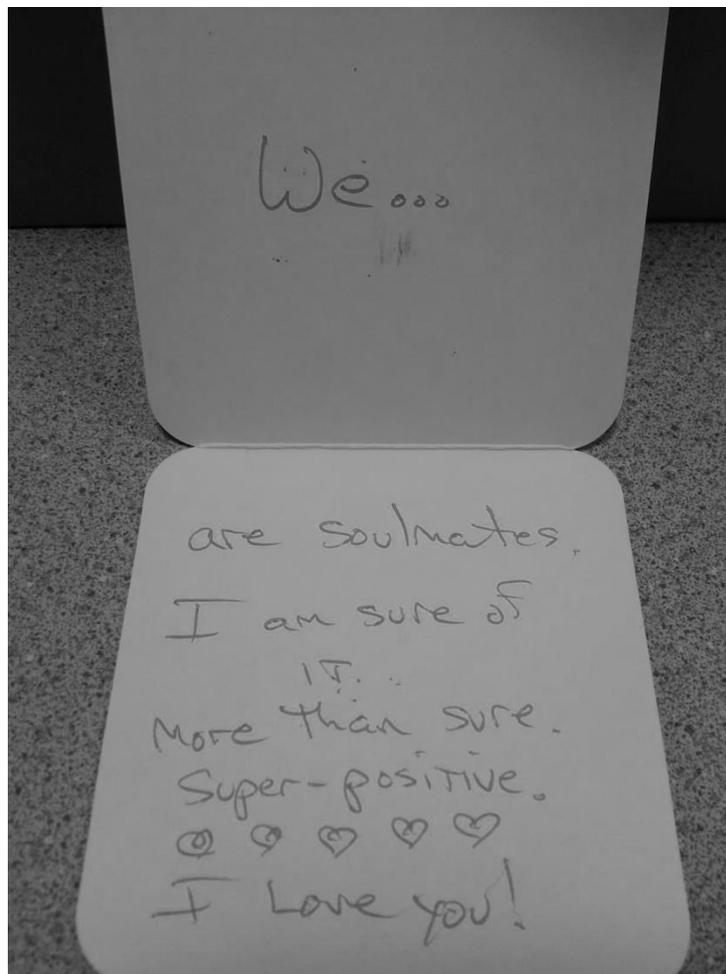
*\*opens card\**

*\*reads out loud: "I..hate your goddamn snoring because I haven't slept for more than 3 hours in the last 5 years"\**

*\*cries\**

This defeats the purpose of the project, so please don't do this. Make sure you're in a good mood and not drinking because if you're loaded I can guarantee you half of the cards will be misspelled or contain the word "boobies." I can't even count how many cards I've thrown into my neighbor's barrels because of this.

Here is an example of one of the cards for my wife:



I made an effort to write "I Love You!" at the end of every card just in case she forgot that I loved her, even though she was opening this amazing gift that people who dislike you won't normally go to the trouble of making. Better safe than sorry, though.

I numbered all the cards so she could open them chronologically, and placed them in the box. I considered skipping a number here and there so I could watch her empty the whole thing while swearing at me. If you get the chestnut to do this, make sure you evaluate your relationship really well before attempting something like it, because you may wind up a victim of paper-cut manslaughter.

So when she opened this, present, I got the exact reaction I was hoping for.

My intention was for her to open one card every week, which would have made this the gift that keeps on giving for almost a year. However, after she opened the first card she decided she didn't want to wait a week to open the next one. This kind of ruined my plans but she's a woman and that's what women do.

**Women:** *ruining the plans of men since the dawn of time.*

Since it was *her* gift, I let her do what she wanted. Letting women get away with things because they don't want to hear her complain is what *men* do. As such, she opened one envelope a day for the next 41 days, first thing in the morning, and I got that 'aww' look and a hearty smooch after each and every one. Sometimes I even got a bum rub after the smooch. It's the little things, people.

*\*licked fingertip placed on hip goes "psssshhh"\**

Opening one of these cards is akin to verbal foreplay. TIP: If you're into BDSM then this probably isn't the best foreplay idea because it will totally ruin the "I want to squish your things really hard with these pliers and then beat the crap out of you" vibe unless that's what it says inside one of the cards in the box.

Ha ha. Box.

### **Super non-funny sentimental epilogue to this:**

Inside this book you'll find some romantic stories and ideas from my fans. I asked people to give me tales of the most romantic things people have done for them. Most are not included in this book specifically because they included stories of vomiting and bowel movements. I don't know why that was, and I stopped asking after reading the 16<sup>th</sup> one. However, I received *this* non-bodily-function-related response from a longtime reader of my blog and fan of my books, Amanda:

*You asked for romantic experiences, so here's the best I have done: My boyfriend (at the time) was about to deploy to Iraq for a year. I bought (and made) 365 cards and notes for him, and gave them to him at the airport preparing to leave. I told him to open one each day.*

*I spent weeks preparing this for him, and although our relationship didn't end up working out in the long run, he really appreciated the thought, and said it made him feel closer to home every time he opened a new card or letter.*

Wow.

It didn't occur to me that this project could be used for almost anything, and Amanda's story really floored me. It's a great idea and use for this so some serious kudos to her for doing this and for OHMYGOD having the thoughtfulness, fortitude and stamina to make a year's worth of cards.

My wrist hurts just thinking about it.

## Act 5 Progress Checklist

Are you still awake? Yes, I know, that was a long section.

As an added tip while you read this book, keep saying “That’s what she said,” “That’s what he said,” or “Oh, I get it” after each sentence, like the last one in the above paragraph. If you say, “Oh, I get it” you can even add “That’s what she said” after that as well.

**Romantic As Hell:** *Providing endless hours of self-serve entertainment.*

Let’s see how you fare with this section.

	Yes	No
People love getting compliments on things like skin tags and excess mole hairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I have a cute butt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picture collages are great romantic gifts, but only if you include close-ups of skulls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surprise love notes are the balls	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People who don’t like pickles are perfectly normal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Farting while getting a massage is a fantastic way to express your love	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Making dioramas is fun and exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Books, head collages or a box of notes – whatever it is, speak from the heart	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Entr'acte #3*  
*Lady Chimes*

## Love Nuggets for the Ladies

Sometimes, I read my section titles and think, “That sounds gross.” This is one of those times.

Yes, this book is written by a man and, yes, this book has a lot of info that will help a guy be more romantic but I am in *no way* forgetting about you beautiful women out there. In fact, I’m thinking of several of you women at this very moment. In my thoughts, you are all together in a spa and several of you are having pillow fights while wearing only towels. How you got pillows into the sauna, I have no idea, but let’s pretend it involved hair-pulling and maybe a little light choking of the busty receptionist.

I’ve digressed.

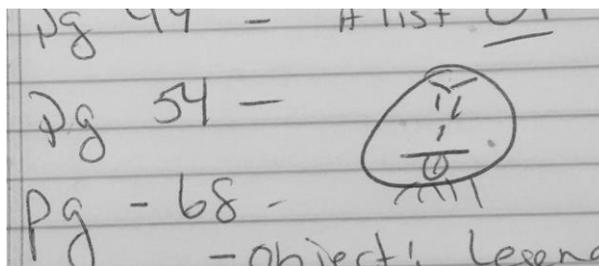
Listen, ladies, I know how hard it can be for you to try to do romantic things for a guy and have him (a) take it seriously and (b) not be an ass about it. My wife will be the first to tell you that she is terrible at thinking of romantic things to do, and I will be the second person to tell you the same thing. I really hope she skips this section.<sup>1</sup>

Here’s where I present to you fine women out there some ideas specifically geared towards romancing your man.

Please note that “romancing your man” is a misnomer because a man will typically never admit to wanting to be romanced. Men are typically too proud or too wrapped up in the weather-woman’s busty profile to worry about you wooing them. That’s not to say we don’t want to be romanced, it’s just that holy cow her boobs are literally covering the entire Eastern Seaboard.

---

<sup>1</sup> My wife, sadly, did not skip this section. Here is her actual comment for this page as she was giving me editorial suggestions. She obviously did not like me saying that she wasn’t romantic. That said, I need to ask her why this angry head has 5 legs. Is it a centipede? I have no idea. My wife is also terrible at drawing, obviously.



See what I mean? I'm writing you ladies tips and can't even concentrate while this woman is doing the weather. Seriously, I haven't heard an actual forecast since 1988 because now all I hear is 'boobs boobs chance of boobs snow boobs' when she's on.

I asked some of my lady friends about things they've done for their guy that they consider romantic. I received several responses like "I take my teeth out," "You ain't no cop, are you?" and "Are you gonna pay me, or what?" Then I got some responses from my lady friends who weren't hookers and they were a lot less intimidating and, honestly, quite a bit cheaper.

### **Mix Tapes Aren't Dead**

*"If you go to concerts, make playlists of the set lists for each show you've gone to over, say, the course of the year. Then burn each set list onto a CD and make the cover a picture of the two of you at the show."*

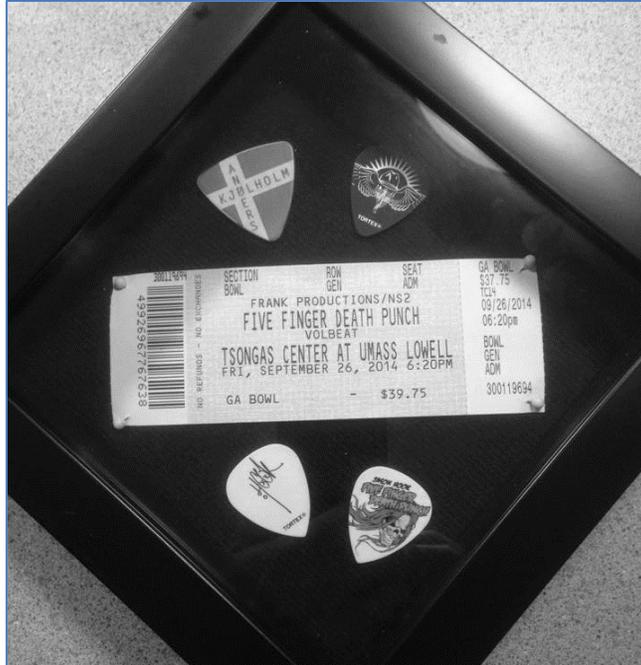
This is a great idea unless it's from a Coldplay concert. If that's the case, then he's already broken the CD into a billion jillion pieces or thrown it, I'm sorry to tell you.

### **I'm With the Band**

*"If the guy likes a particular band, make him a basket of collectible items from them. Shirts, drum sticks, guitar picks, etc. You can also get signed band photos if you can find or afford them."*

This is a great idea, because most guys are pretty passionate about their favorite bands in some way, shape or form. Hopefully this doesn't come in the way, shape or form of him dressing up like Gene Simmons because that's just weird and you should flee the relationship immediately. He has issues.

I did something similar like this for my daughter. Here it is, some signed guitar picks and a concert ticket that I had mounted into a display case as a gift for my daughter (who is a total metal-head like me). As a guy, getting something like this would give me a raging love gun.



Speaking of 'love gun,' I need to go get my boots on. The KISS concert starts in an hour.

### **Sure to Score**

I'm pretty proud of this project name because this one is about sports so 'score' has a double meaning here. I impress myself very easily as I'm sure you are well aware by now.

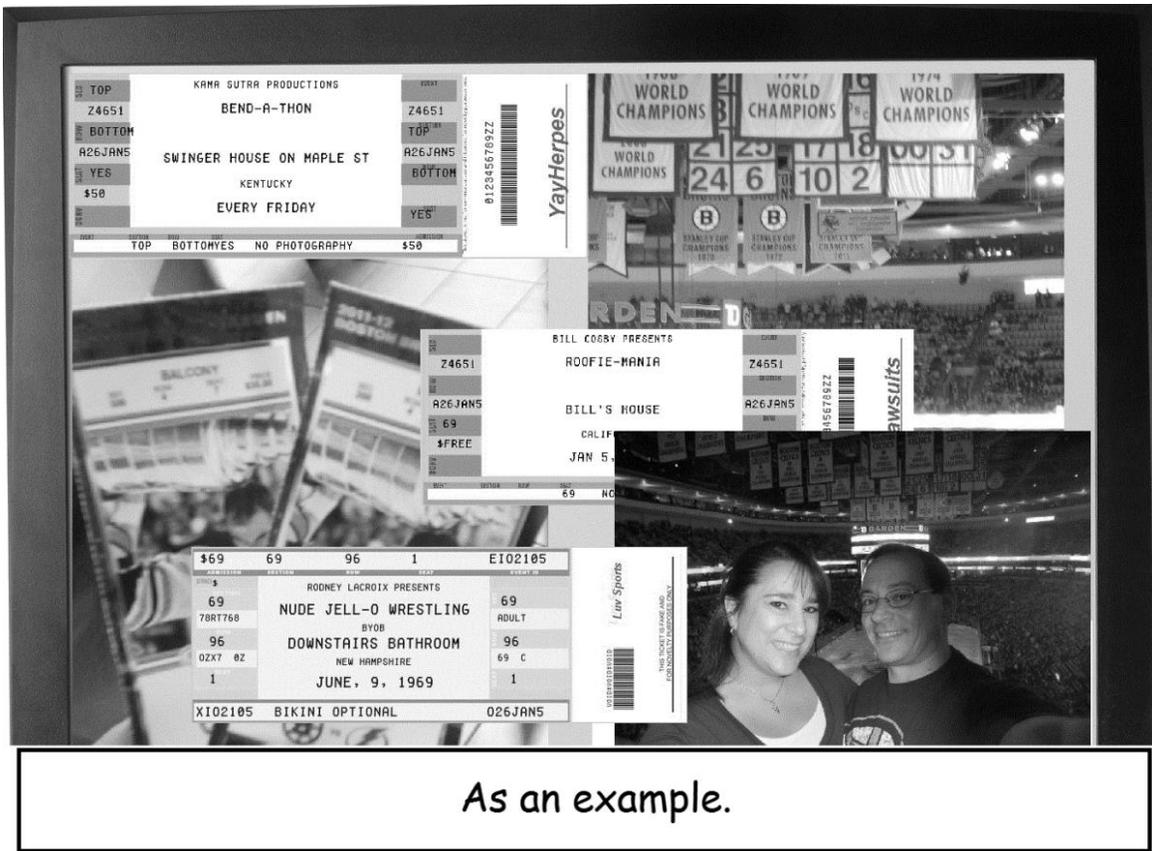
Statistics show that nine out of ten men are avid sports fan. The tenth guy is busy making up statistics about how many guys are avid sports fans. So, if he loves sports and you love them as well (or at least take in a game or 300 with him to appease his fanaticism), this project gets even better.

Here's the idea:

*"Make a collage of sports games you've attended together. Include the tickets, box scores and pictures of the two of you at the games."*

That's a pretty cool idea, and even better if you have pictures of cheerleaders or maybe the players' wives. Actually, scratch that. That will just be distracting, probably.

I made up a mock-up of one of these showing me and Kerri (the actual event names have been changed to protect the innocent):



I think it came out nice. I even left out the cheerleader pictures..

Maybe you could throw in some playoff tickets, though. Wouldn't hurt.

*Act 6*

*Do or Do Not*

*Or Maybe Just Run?*

## You Can't Have A "Lifelong Commitment" Without Including the Words, "Long Commitment"

I'm going to run off the beaten path here and not write this section as though you're watching part of a theater production. I figured you could use a break from it for a little while and, as someone with adult-onset ADD, I totally understand that because steak is my favorite and I miss the television show, *Cheers*.

We've been ramping up the chronology of this book to go through the basics and into the strong relationship process. Did you enjoy the last *Cheers* episode? I did. I thought it was poetic and-

ADD. I can't help it.

I figured I'd at least mention the institute of marriage here. It's called "Institute of Marriage" because if you've considered foregoing decades of sex with other people, you should probably be institutionalized. That said, I love you, Kerri.

*\*ducks\**

This book isn't how to dupe someone into marrying you, but if that's your thing then you can certainly use the information herein to give that a shot. If it's not your thing, then I guess I'll see you on Tinder and maybe we'll hook up sometime? Just saying it's a possibility and I bring my own lube.

Still love you, Kerri.

*\*dodges crossbow bolts\**

Venture forth, because here are a couple of words on taking the leap. Some people who have already taken the leap may be thinking of taking another one right now, probably off a cliff, I assume. Us married people are crazy.

Kerri, I really do lo-

*\*is rightfully and deservedly knocked unconscious\**

# Why Magic Tricks Should Be Left to David Copperfield

The wedding proposal.

We all think about doing something amazing and special for the person we love when it comes time to make the commitment that tops all other commitments. I, of course, am talking about sharing a data plan for your cell phones.

Wait. Wedding proposal. I was talking about a wedding proposal.

Women dream about when and how it's going to happen.

Men dream about a lifetime of paying off a ring and will she give it back if he dumps her? What if she dumps him? If I keep the receipt does that show her I lack sincerity and trust the bond of our relationship? Maybe I'll keep the receipt but just hide it way in the back of my sock drawer.

So many decisions to consider when proposing marriage. None of them really any good.

All that being said, I had made up my mind to ask my girlfriend to marry me. It seemed the logical next step in the relationship since we had already stopped enjoying spending time with each other.

With the proposal in mind, and zero dollars to afford taking my girlfriend to a Red Sox game and have the question popped on the centerfield screen where she could say 'no' in front of 35,000 people and then have hot dogs thrown at her, I began to think. Fancy dinner? Maybe. Hot air balloon ride? Screw that unless she didn't mind my vomit all over her new ring. Flash mobs hadn't been invented yet, so even that was out.

It was during my thought process that I saw something on television that gave me an idea: a show on magic.

MAGIC?!

YES. I would somehow work my marriage proposal into a magic trick!

What's funny is that even as I write this I can hear you all moaning with disapproval. I can see you reading this as though a train is coming down the track and I have my back to it and you're waving your hands "GET OUT OF THE WAY THERE IS A TRAIN COMING" but I'm all "What? OH MY GOD I'VE GOT THIS MAGIC TRI-"

*\*splat\**

Thank you for putting me out of my misery, train.

## **The Night**

With the diamond ring in hand – a tiny little number that, if you looked at it in just the right light, looked like a very sparkly piece of sand – I took her to our favorite restaurant. I honestly don't even remember the name of it, but I do recall that the floors were all knotty pine and the napkins were folded white linen. I remember this because...

I looked at my girlfriend during a moment of silence. We had been dating for, like, 7 years so our moments of silence went on for literally days on end. But in this moment I decided it was time.

“Hey,” I said, holding up one of the white linen napkins. “Want to see a magic trick?”

“No.”

Well. That wasn't the answer I was looking for.

I tried again.

“C'mon,” I pleaded, “I want to show you a magic trick.”

“I don't want to see a magic trick.”

Seriously.

“Watch. I'm going to turn this napkin into a vegetable.”

“I'm all set,” she replied, not even looking up from her menu. “No magic is necessary.”

Oh for fuck's sake. Really?

You see, in my head, this was how it would play out:

“Want to see a magic trick?”

“Oh yes! I would like nothing more than to see a magic trick, Rod! You look muscly,” she would say, while slightly squirming in her seat.

“I'm going to turn this napkin into a vegetable.”

“You are a God amongst men. Yes. Turn that napkin into a vegetable!”

It's at this point I slip the diamond into the napkin, and say “Alacazam! Open it!”

She opens it to find the diamond inside.

“See?” I say, matter-of-factly, “It has turned into a karat!”

Karat. Carrot. See what I did here?

And then I ask her to marry me and she yells, “*YES I WILL MARRY YOU, YOU AMAZING LOVE STALLION!*” and the restaurant erupts in applause and I am carried out on the shoulders of men while women stare at me, fondling their ample breasts and moaning ever so slightly.

Here’s how it actually went:

“OH COME ON. I’m showing you a magic trick.”

“FINE.”

I folded the napkin and held my hand over it.

“See? Normal napkin, right?”

“Mmmhm.”

I ran my hand over it a few times and, as I did, pushed the diamond ring up into it from beneath the table. Grasping the ring firmly with my hand over the napkin, I then rolled the napkin into a ball and held it out to her.

“Go ahead. Open it.” My eyes were wide with excitement for her response.

“No.”

“Open it. You’ll see it’s a vegetable!”

“No.”

“Please? Open it? Will you please open it?”

“You open it.”

“NO. You have to open it. That’s the key to the trick an-“

She interrupted me by angrily reaching for the napkin with one hand and said, “*FINE.*”

She grabbed the napkin and flicked it open all in one, fluid motion. The flicking motion sprung the napkin wide open and I watched, in slow motion horror, as the ring – once firmly nestled inside the ball of the napkin – launched 20 feet into the air.

Off it went, ass-over-teakettle, over the heads of the couple sitting behind my girlfriend. Then it went over the heads of the table behind them, and the one behind them. It just kept on flying like it took lessons from the Blue Angels. I tried to follow its trajectory but lost it because it seriously was a tiny little thing. I heard the 'tick' of it hitting a table somewhere further down the restaurant, and then listened to the faint, yet sickening, scuttle of it as it landed and rattled across the floor.

My girlfriend looked at me in stunned horror realizing that she had, in fact, just chucked an expensive piece of jewelry 30 feet across a restaurant. I probably would have reacted to her face with an "AYFKM" look, but mine was frozen in fear as I now frantically made my way down the aisle trying to find the goddamn thing.

I scanned the floors but saw nothing except crumbs and dropped food and dirt and realized this restaurant is pretty disgusting from this angle. People sitting at tables were pointing and saying things like "I think it went that way" but I still couldn't find it until I realized that most of the people were pointing to an area near the corner of the knotty pine floor boards.

The knotty pine.

I sheepishly glanced at the semi-attractive woman sitting at the table I would now have to climb under and OH SHE'S WEARING A DRESS maybe I can sneak a peek but NO RODNEY, STAY THE COURSE and look for the ring. I felt like Gollum at this point searching for that damn thing which is a bit of foreshadowing because now – 20 years later – I look a lot like him.

Time is cruel.

As I lifted the tablecloth of the woman's table, I saw it. Not the ring, mind you, but the knothole. The stupid, stupid knothole in the pine floor. I glanced into it, but it was too dark. Then I shot a look to the right of me to see if I could look up that lady's dress but it was too dark there, too. I was having absolute zero luck today with EVERYTHING.

I reached into the knot with a finger and felt the ring. Luckily, I have hands the size of a baby spider monkey so I was able to – after a bit of finagling – retrieve it. I held it up, blew off the dust of 1,000 mozzarella sticks that had kept it company inside that knothole, and returned to the table.

I sat down without saying a word, and reached for a piece of bread. My girlfriend sat across from me, and I could feel her stare as she waited for me to speak. I didn't.

"Was that what I think it was?" she asked, finally breaking the awkward silence.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

“I think I’d like to see that magic trick now,” she said to me.

*Are you kidding me*, I thought.

I looked up at her. Smiled a little, and then pulled the napkin off the table in front of me. I held it in my lap while I fumbled with it, and then put it on the table.

“Want to see a magic trick?” I asked.

“I do.”

“Open it,” I said, as I cleared the path in the center of the table and slid the folded napkin over to her.

She reached out and slowly opened the napkin: one fold, two folds, then a third. Bit by bit, she opened the napkin until it was completely spread out in a perfect square in front of her.

Empty.

“Tadaaa!” I said, doing slowly sarcastic jazz hands.

“I don’t get it,” she said, looking confused.

“You wanted to see magic,” I said. “Well there you go, you bitch. You just made an engagement completely disappear.”

She looked back at me, stunned.

“Should we get some mozzarella sticks?”

## Repeat and Shuffle

*"Most people, including myself, keep repeating the same mistakes."* - William Shatner

My proposal to Kerri went a lot smoother than the fiasco of my Criss Angel imitation attempt. Had I been able to actually emulate him during that one, I would have used my powers and levitated right the hell out of the restaurant saying, "Thee you later, thuckas!" because he has a terrible lisp. On that note, why can't he make *that* disappear?

I am not a serial husband. I've only proposed to women a few times and been accepted twice. Two times is fine with me, because I like keeping most of my money when it all eventually goes south. I actually considered writing up a prenuptial agreement with Kerri, but then realized she can only take half of my current worth, which is roughly four cups of instant oatmeal and a dish rag.

I showed up at Kerri's door with my daughter and a ring in hand. I knocked on the door, which she opened while wearing her oversized owl pajama shirt and a pair of sweats. She looked through the storm door glass to find me, on one knee, holding out the ring box.

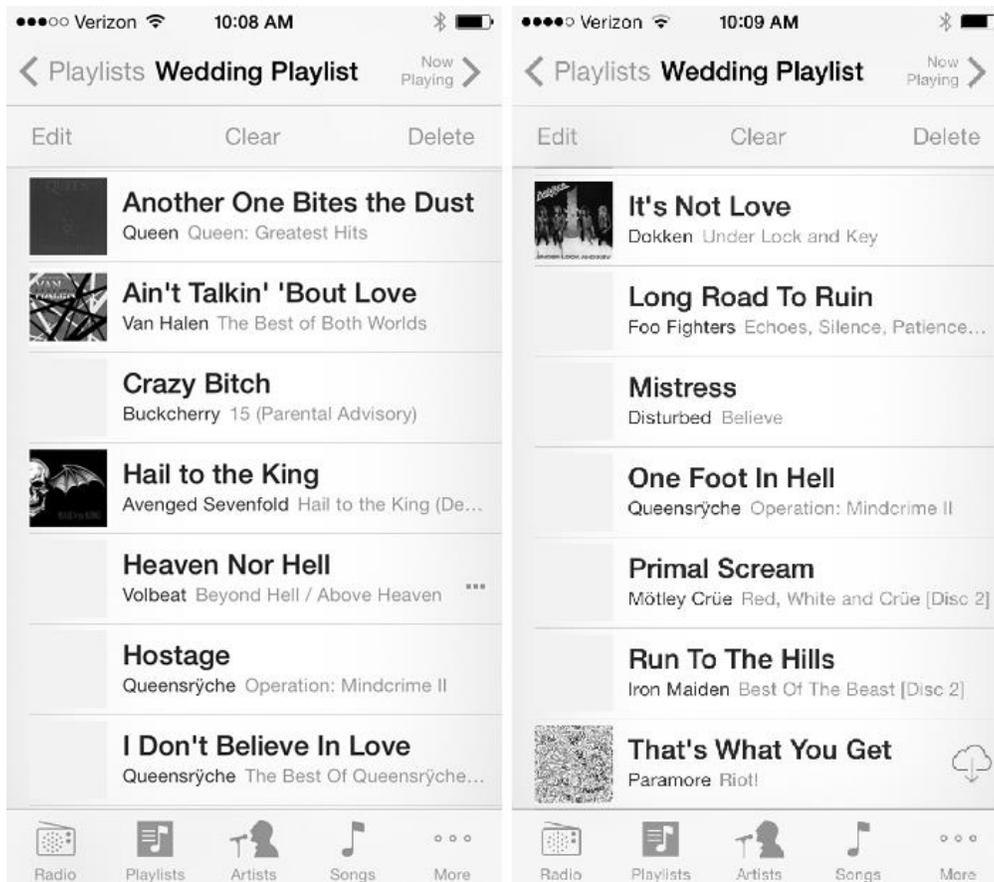
Suffice it to say, she said 'yes' to me because I'm fairly irresistible. Plus, my daughter was filming the entire thing and no one wants to look like an asshole on YouTube.

We planned a small wedding with 20 or so extremely close friends. We chose the wine cellar of a local restaurant for the nuptials and reception because the close proximity of the booze meant we were served faster. Priorities change when you're on a second, third or fourth marriage where you think less about the function and more about getting a decent buzz on and then making sure you're home in time to catch *The Walking Dead*.

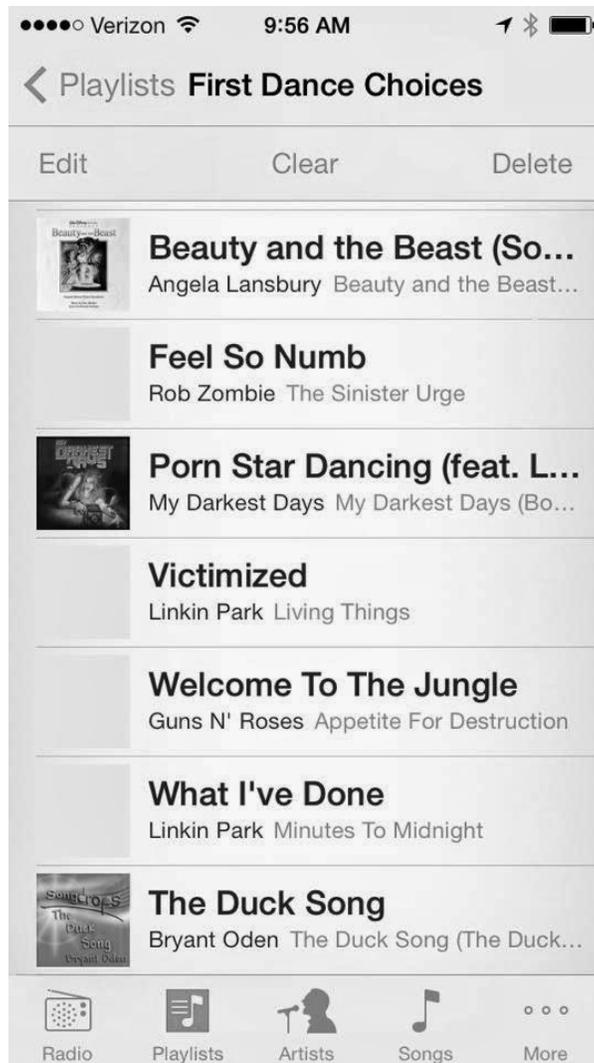
The wine cellar had the ability to hook our devices into the sound system, thus being able to play our own music. I told Kerri I'd take care of the music which she countered by telling me she wanted to approve the playlists.

FINE.

I sent her the first playlist for general reception tunes.

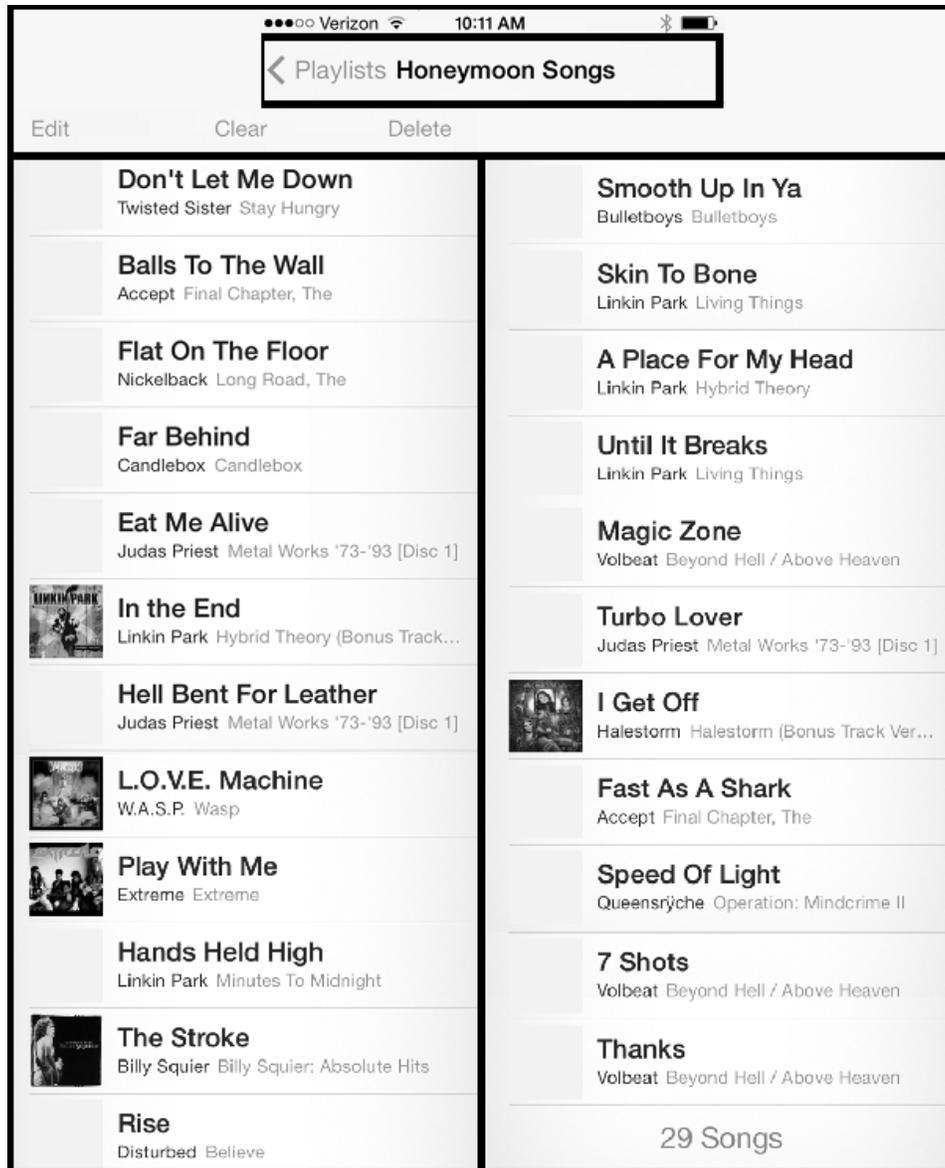


This was quickly axed, as was my playlist for songs for our first dance as a married couple:



“Yeah. No. I think I’ll take care of the playlists, thanks,” she said.

Right off the bat, the marriage was off on the wrong foot. However, she did approve my playlist choices to listen to on our honeymoon:



One out of three ain't bad.

In fact, as far as marriage stats go, I think that's pretty good.

## The Really Shitty Honeymoon

I originally had this section in the “Wanna Get Away” portion of the relationship stories, and then decided it was best served here, in the marriage section of the book. You may disagree after this, however, after reading it.

*\*shines flashlight under chin\**

The following is not for the faint of heart. You’ve been warned.

*\*maniacal laugh causes coughing fit\**

If you’re married, getting married, or already married, I present to you another one of the “Getaways to Avoid” here:

### ***Getaway to Avoid #3: Las Vegas***

I can already hear the audible ‘gasp’ coming from some of you right now, so let me clarify the title of this one:

### ***Getaway to Avoid #3: Las Vegas, if you drink***

There. Better.

My wife and I had been courting for nearly three years with only a single 2-day getaway to show for it. This is because each of us has kids and kids ruin everything. As a side note, please look for my next book called “I Love You, Now Go Away – A Book on Hands-Off Parenting” shortly.

After we were married in 2013, my mother bought us a wedding present. It was a 4-day, 3-night trip to Las Vegas to serve as our honeymoon. We were stunned and excited, mostly because (a) we were finally getting away from the children and (b) that’s pretty much the only reason. So we packed our bags (including the “Kids Ruin Everything” shirt I had custom made) and headed to Sin City.

Las Vegas is overwhelmingly massive and beautiful and you can drink booze outside. Being from New Hampshire, public intoxication without risk of arrest or being sexually assaulted by a moose was something new to us. As such, we started pounding back the alcohol on the first full day of our visit at roughly 11 AM. We didn’t really feel the effects of the libations because you walk around SO MUCH and thank God there are escalators because by 5 PM I had ingested enough alcohol to sterilize surgical

instruments just by peeing on them, so there was zero percent chance of me traversing stairs with any success.

Of course, my wife and I were drinking in tandem so it was on or around 8 or 9 PM that things got, well, really fuzzy. Here is what I remember from the rest of the night:

- 1) Taking a cab to a strip joint but then making the cabbie drive us to a different one because it didn't serve alcohol. We obviously needed a strip club that served booze because we had only been drinking for 10 hours straight.
- 2) My wife vomiting on a stripper.
- 3) Two strippers holding my wife's hair in the bathroom while I tried to take out money to buy more lap dances for myself because those are my priorities.
- 4) Getting kicked out of a cab on the ride back to the hotel.
- 5) Standing by my wife, slumped on the sidewalk of some seedy back road in Las Vegas screaming at her, "I DON'T WANT TO DIE HERE."
- 6) Me, waking up on the floor of our glass-walled shower in our hotel room, covered in feces.

In my defense, I'm not sure whose feces I was covered in. I have zero idea if I pooped myself or my wife pooped on me or if it was mutual or an accident but thank God it was in the shower because that made for easy rinsing. Also, we are never going to be allowed back to The Paris ever again as long as we live.

We spent the next two days in Vegas completely sick to our stomachs, confined to our hotel rooms and unable to eat anything without retching. I think the only place we managed to venture was Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum which, by the way, has its own bar.

God, it's like everything in Vegas wants you to poop on yourself.

## Act 6 Progress Checklist

Wow. Sure were a lot of feel-good moments in that chapter, eh? The bottom line here is that marriage isn't for everyone. For some people, it's actually for them multiple times. Whether or not you decide to tie the knot and, therefore, tie your genitals in knots, make the situation fun for the both of you and, for the love of all that's holy, stop drinking in Vegas by noon.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Chicks dig magic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Proposing to someone using a magic trick is an amazingly good idea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I probably should have juggled instead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brides love when grooms make up the wedding playlists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Iron Maiden is awesome	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vegas is more fun when you've been drinking for 12 hours straight but only weigh 140 pounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You probably could have done without the feces visual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Act 7*

*Parental Guidance*

## The Bucket List Tips Over

The curtain draws open and we see a living room setting and a lone woman on the stage. She is sitting on the sofa and facing the audience as she stares down at a box in her left hand. Her gaze switches from the box to an object she is holding in her other hand, and then back to the box again. We can't really see what the other object is right now, because the guy in front of us is wearing a cowboy hat. Seriously, Tex? You see, shit like this is why I hate people.

The door opens and a man walks in.

"All set!" he exclaims. "Got the tickets. We leave Saturday!"

The woman looks up and smiles at him.

"CANCUN, BABY!" he tries again.

The woman stays seated, smiles and looks back down at her hands again.

"Woo? Hello?"

Nothing. No response. He hangs his coat, walks over and sidles up beside her on the couch.

"What's wrong?" he asks.

She hands him the object she has been holding the entire time. It's a small white stick. He looks at the stick, puzzled, and then grabs the box from her other hand. His face changes from puzzled to shock and he leaps from the couch.

"ARE YOU PREGNANT?!"

She nods yes.

It's at this point in the story that we're not sure if he should be happy or sad. If you think they should be happy, let's go with that. If you think they're all "OH MY GOD NO" or drop down on their knees, look up at the sky and screaming, "Whyyyyyy" then go with that. I'm not here to judge you.

I'll just leave you with this as the conclusion:

The couple finishes their kissing/handshake/high-fiving/sobbing and the man takes out his cell phone. It's a flip-phone because he's cheap and has never known the hypnotic draw and frustration of Flappy Bird. The audience silently envies him.

He dials a number, and then waits a minute for the person on the other end to answer.

“Um, yes, hi,” he starts, “I was just in there picking up my tickets for Cancun.”

He pauses a second and then continues.

“I’m going to need to cancel that trip.”

He hangs up the phone, and walks over to the counter. He picks up a jar filled with hundreds of pieces of folded scraps of paper and walks over to a closet. We see that it says, “Our Bucket List” as he opens the closet door and puts it far back on a top shelf.

As he closes the door, he turns to find the woman putting another container on the counter.

“Our Family Bucket List,” it reads.

She writes something on a scrap of paper and folds it. He takes it from her and drops it inside.

Lights dim. Curtain closes.

Fin.

## Kid Stuff

A number of people suggested I write a section about how to keep romance alive when you have children. I happen to have two biological children and two step-children. They're called "step-children" because you can stand on them to help you reach things on high shelves at the grocery store with little to no harm done to your own kids.

I'm so losing custody after this book hits the shelves.

So here, on the next few pages are some ideas on how to keep romance alive if you have kids.

Enjoy.

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## Kid Stuff (continued)

Okay, just messing with you.

It's actually not that difficult to keep the romance alive when there are children pestering you constantly. There are still ways to keep the spark in your relationship, even if you have to help a four-year-old wipe poop off her bum at 3 AM are exhausted from screaming at your teenager to take off the damn headphones IF YOU CAN'T HEAR ME WHEN I'M YELLING THEN YOUR HEADPHONES ARE UP TOO LOUD.

There's a reason why I'm not a spokesman for In Vitro Fertilization companies.

In a rare and serious note, I've always believed that it's more important for a child to see their parent in a loving, nurturing relationship than to be involved in one where the parents show little to no regard for each other. The bottom line is, if you hear 'EW, GROSS' from your children a lot, then you're on the right track.

So, now I will give you some ideas and stories where you can actually include your kids in your romantic endeavors. This actually sounds gross and it was not my intent. Let me rephrase it by saying that it's easy to incorporate your children into gifts of love for your spouse or partner.

I'm really not making it any better by trying to explain it here. Let's just get to the stories and let them speak for themselves. I SAID LET THEM SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

Seriously, honey. Turn the headphones down.

## So Much Head

The content of this story isn't what you think it is. I'm saving that for my picture book of sex positions. It's like *The Kama Sutra* except all the positions illustrated in it are just me, alone, curled up in the fetal one.

There's a reason no literary agents have contacted me yet.

Let's continue.

"Ummm. Is it supposed to be really scary?"

That, my friends, is not the reaction I was shooting for as she opened the gift.

You see, Kerri and I had been together for a while now, so I wanted to do something special that reflected our relationship. It was Valentine's Day, I had already spent my personalized belly-dance card on Christmas, and getting her a teddy bear was totally out of the question after what I learned by following that flowchart.

With little time to spare, and the holiday coming close, I racked my brains for a gift idea.<sup>1</sup> I searched my memory for thoughtful gift ideas that I received myself, and figured I'd just do the 'pay it forward' thing and reuse the idea. After discarding the ideas of a tee-shirt with my face on it, a singing fish and a mug that says, "Coffee Makes Me Poop," I felt flustered.

That's when it dawned on me: I'll MAKE HER A PICTURE COLLAGE.<sup>2</sup>

*\*95% of male readers throw book into fireplace\**

I have a bunch of these, showing me and my children, which were presented as gifts to me in the past. I have a large collage of photos of just me with my daughter. I have another one of just me with my son. I have a third collage of me with both of my kids. Then I have this weird collage of me that I found in mom's attic where I'm posed with strange men in what appears to be a disco in the early 70's. I don't like that one.

I decided that two nice picture projects like this for Kerri, one from her children and one from me, would be great gift ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> This one sentence took my ten minutes to write because there are a lot of different opinions on whether the saying should be 'racked my brain' or 'wracked my brain.' Eventually, I decided it wasn't worth giving a shit and used the first one.

<sup>2</sup> A collage is a collection of images not unlike most ransom notes but with a lesser chance of a felony conviction.

Of course, Kerri and I had been to our share of places and parties and dark, underground sex dungeons so we had plenty of photos of us in various situations. If you're a close friend of ours, you may have received some of these situational photos in a random text at 2 AM on a Saturday morning. You're welcome.

I first decided I would make the picture from her kids. This would require me to go through her Facebook timeline and pull down a bunch of pictures of her and her children from birth up until the most recent. This was easy because I am always stalking her timeline anyway and, seriously, who is this "Buster" guy who keeps commenting on her posts and how does he know she likes ice cubes so much?

Sorry.

Idea in hand, I went to work.

*Download and print.*

*Download and print.*

*Download and print.*

*Pownload and drint.*

*Porn loads in dirt.*

So, basically, I got through three pictures before I got confused and distracted. Then I spent the next 20 minutes looking at Internet image search results for "porn loads and dirt."

And now so have you. Good luck explaining that browser history nugget to your spouse.

Pictures in hand, I started the critical process of cutting them up. I call this the 'critical' task because I forgot to buy more printer paper. I blame this on the porn-dirt tangent I went off on earlier. So, yes, I needed to get the cutting right the very first time.

I have a degree in Architecture (if you're glancing around the room questioning the stability of the building you're in right now, I wouldn't blame you) and there is a saying among our secret society that goes: 'Measure twice, cut once.' There is probably something pertinent in that saying relevant to my point here, but there's a reason I'm hocking crappy books and not building skyscrapers while taking bikini models to Ruth's Chris Steakhouse every night.

Great, now I'm sad I didn't pay more attention in Architecture School.

*\*takes bite out of Hot Pocket\**

I went to town downloading and cutting up the pictures of her and her children. I tried to avoid a lot of baby pictures because babies are gross. Old people are gross, too. The sweet spot for attractive people is from 20 to 45 so if you're going to do this project, then aim for photos in that age period.

Yes, I am fully aware that I also fall outside of that range but I've made my peace with it.

*\*a lonely hair drifts down and lands on keyboard\**

With all of the pictures cut out, I started to arrange them on the cardboard backing of the frame I bought. I tried to arrange all the pictures with straight edges along the sides because that just seemed to make sense to me. Maybe my parents' investment in college wasn't in vain, after all.

Then I took the other pictures that were cut irregularly or in heart shapes and filled in all the gaps. When it was done, I held the frame up and watched all the pictures fall out because I forgot to tape them on.

On second thought, I should probably start paying my parents back on those student loans.

I ran to the closet and grabbed a hot glue gun. I figured this would be better instead of tape after realizing all the tape was in the basement with the wrapping paper and it's scary down there. With glue gun in hand and heated up, I put a glob of it on the frame and stuck a picture to it.

The glue immediately went through the picture, fucking the whole thing up by oozing through and morphing the baby's face into *The Scream* by Edvard Munch. Great. Now I'm going to have to go get tape from the basement and probably die at the hands of a monster or something.

Just because I'm a black belt doesn't mean I'm not afraid of Freddy Krueger, people.

After 36 shoulder-rolls and yelling "I HAVE A GUN" six times I was able to successfully retrieve a roll of tape and bolt back up the cellar stairs at roughly 648 miles per hour. The lesson here is to use tape right off the bat and avoid being killed in your cellar. Also, if you use a glue gun you'll booger up the pictures.

*"Don't booger up the pictures."* – Rodney, 2014

Adhesive in hand, I deftly adorned the remainder of the photos to the backing, trying to remember where the crap I had them placed previously.

The end result was this:



Saweeet.

I then turned my attention to the collage gift that would be given from me. I planned on making something very similar, except with pictures of the both of us instead of having children in it and ruining everything. If you don't have kids, this sounds cruel. If you do have kids, you're all, like, "Yep," right now.

Off I went to find pictures of us that evoked good memories. Sure, we have a lot of photos of us together, but a lot of their stories end, "Do you remember how sick I got that night?" This left me with two decent pictures so I just decided to download all of them anyway.

I was out of paper so I just copied all the pictures to a thumb drive. FUN FACT: these things are called 'thumb drives' because the very first ones were made from human thumbs. I know this because I work in the computer industry and am in charge of software quality assurance. This also explains why your device froze 14 times in the last hour and had to be rebooted twice.

I took the USB drive down to the local pharmacy to have the pictures printed out. While I was in there, I had my Viagra prescription refilled because I was sooooo gonna get laid after giving these things. It's always good to be prepared for situations like this. Before

you refill that prescription, though, make sure that the project comes out looking really good. You don't want to pop a Viagra and then *not* get laid because you'll find yourself stuck trying to masturbate a four-hour erection away.

My right arm is massive.

I started cutting up the pictures. It was about a quarter of the way into this one that I realized I maybe should have bought a larger frame. I had way too many photos and bought a much smaller frame than the one I was giving from her children. This required me to cut the pictures a little closer so I could fit them all in, all while trying to make sure the whole thing didn't look like caca poopoo.

You never want to hand over caca poopoo to the one you love. This sounds like it should be a song:

*"You know you were meant for me,  
You and I fit like a glove.  
But I screwed up making this collage.  
And gave caca poopoo to the one I love."*

So I tried to do all kinds of scissor sorcery to pack as many photographic memories as I could into the smaller frame. While I'm on the subject of music, "Scissor Sorcery" sounds like a band name.

*"..and now here's Caca Poopoo Love Collage by Scissor Sorcery on America's Top 40..."*

I finished the picture, wrapped it up and then put it under the bed which is the default location for all presents hidden in my house. It is not uncommon to find my bed teeter-tottering atop a four-foot pile of presents at Christmas time.

On the morning of Valentine's Day, I gave her the gifts I had made.

I gave her the one from her children first. She tore open the paper, and her eyes teared up with emotion.

She cried. She cried a lot. Mainly because I slipped while handing this to her and stabbed her in the arm with the frame corner, but whatever.

But, as I thought she would, she loved the collage.

Then she opened mine. Once again, her face filled with emotion but this time it was more like this expression:



“Ummm. Is it supposed to be really scary?” she asked, holding the frame out in front of her.

Scary? Why is it scary? It’s romantic and thoughtful and sweet. Those are usually the opposite of scary unless you’re dating a Scientologist.

“You don’t like it?” I asked.

She looked up at me, with a quizzical look, wondering if I was asking her the question in all seriousness. Then, slowly, she turned the frame towards me as if I had no idea what I had given her, and she would be showing it to me for the first time.

There, with the picture facing me, I saw the horror in the gift that I had not seen when I was making it:



**GAH.**

**SO MANY HEADS.**

I didn't realize exactly how creepy this had actually turned out. I had crammed so many photos into the small 11"x14" frame that it looked like an aerial shot of a mannequin factory that just made the heads. I cannot overstate how disturbing this picture was as I looked at it - *really looked at it* - for the very first time.

"Oh my God," I said. "I'm so sorry. Happy Valentine's Day?"

The picture, thankfully, never made it to a wall and, to this day, rests on my side of the bed. There it sits on my nightstand, a stark reminder of how easily things can go from an awesome idea to terrifying nightmare.

Speaking of nightmares, good luck sleeping after seeing that.

I know I'm going to be up all night.

***One more word on this:***

I've done this particular project quite a bit, but I'm not talking about just making collages for girlfriends or wives. This idea can be, and was, used for any of the following:

- Christmas presents for grandparents
- Mother's Day (pictures of mom with the kids)
- Father's Day (pictures of dad with the kids)
- Stepmother's Day (pictures of step mom making the kids mop the floor)
- Stepfather's Day (picture of step father locked in a room, drinking straight from a whiskey bottle while sitting in a recliner with headphones on)

Just make sure you don't cut the pictures too close. No one deserves a present that scary.

# The Ten-Second Rule

## A Clip-N-Save Section

I thought I'd break rank for a bit and actually give some useful romance advice to parents, or to people who may be dating one. If you're dating a parent, just make sure it's not my mom because I will seriously kill you.

In this section are a bunch of stories and tips about how to get the kids involved in your expressions of love. There are times, though, when you want the kids to just go the hell away. Seriously, just give us, like, 30 seconds alone so I can say hi to your mom and-FINE. FINE. I'll get you a juice box. Jesus.

If you're like my family, you may find it difficult to get any time away from the kids at all. In my house, there can be four children running amok at any given time. FOUR. There is an 8-year age difference between the oldest and youngest, which equates to a lot of yelling and painful brain aneurysms. It's also the reason why I've had to reinforce the shelving of my liquor cabinet.

So, finding time alone as a couple in a situation like this can be rough. In blended families, this hardship can be compounded by things like custody agreements and shitty exes who keep bailing on their own children. Maybe you can't break free because of a distinct lack of sexy babysitters at your disposal or your own work schedules.

Whatever the reason, it sucks. So here are some things you can use as a couple to show each other you're still interested, even though the children are literally trying to kill you and make you mentally unstable.

The thing here is that all these things just take ten seconds or less. That's all the time you usually have, regardless, so this fits in perfectly.

### **Find time to dance:**

She's running around the kitchen, packing snacks and filling drinks.

Stop her, grab her, and dance with her. If she yells, "I can't now," reply "Give me just ten seconds" which you say to her every Saturday night, anyway. Then, just dance.

*Slow dance.* Don't do the Electric Slide. That's just weird. Also, if you know the Electric Slide you may have other issues, dude.

### **Grab a cheek**

Passing her by in the hallway? Grab a butt cheek.

She's bent over looking for something in the fridge? Grab a butt cheek.

Picking something up off the floor? Butt cheek.

She's complaining about the Mexican food she had last night? HOLD OFF RIGHT NOW.

Butt grabs are fun and, the best part, are fly-by-night so you don't have to worry about actually making time to do it.

### **Kiss a cheek**

She's bent over looking for someth-

Whoops. Wrong cheek.

Whatever she's doing, run over and give her a kiss on the cheek. She may not have time or, thanks to the hummus she had for lunch, the best breath in the world to accommodate a full make-out session, so this sends a quick and easy message.

### **Sit next to each other**

This is a really tough one at my house, because with six people there at any given time, seating space is at a premium in the living room. I've tried to institute 'Reserved Seating' but I usually can't afford it. If you can manage, though, make sure you get the prime seats next to each other during television time with the family. Holding hands here probably wouldn't hurt, either, because it will gross the kids out and maybe they'll want to go to bed early. Anything that has the potential for sending to the kids to bed early is well worth a shot.

### **Get a bedroom door lock**

I honestly shouldn't have even had to put that there.

### **Bottom line**

I've been through divorce, and every therapist will tell you that how a child sees their parents treating each other is the most influential thing on how they will someday treat their own romantic relationships. I don't get serious a lot in this book, but I'm serious here. Keep this in mind if you have kids in your house and you want them to have healthy relationships in the future. That is, if you don't kill them by then.

## Karaohhhhhke

*“I love music videos, I really do. I think it's kind of sad that it's a dying art form.” - Adam Levine*

*“I can never unsee this.” – my kids, after I showed them the video for my hit single, “I Got Bouncy Bouncy Moobs”*

**NOTE: Read this next section like a voice-over guy selling a CD compilation for best effect**

Music videos.

We've all seen them. Remember watching a hot and sexy Tawny Kitaen writhe around on the hood of a Jaguar while the old guy from the Six Flags Amusement Park commercials put on a wig and sang to her? You do? Jesus. How old are you? Christ. It's 4 PM, shouldn't you be eating dinner somewhere?

Remember watching Miley Cyrus ride that wrecking ball while she licked a hammer? Or remember trying really really hard to forget watching Miley Cyrus ride that wrecking ball while she licked a hammer?

If you can think of any music video, you can also recollect the feelings it gave you while you watched it. Like “horny” for Tawny Kitaen or “repulsed” for the Miley one. Seriously, I'd rather watch the Six Flags guy riding around on that damn ball.

Well, YOU TOO can instill those very same feelings for your lover by making – yes, making – your very own music video.

**End voice-over.**

*A word of caution before you execute this one:*

*You will either become the greatest romantic for years to come or the butt of jokes for all time. If done correctly, though, this fun project will fall somewhere in between the two.*

*What we are going to do here is extremely simple and fun. However, this assumes you have zero qualms about making a complete ass out of yourself or – if applicable – your children. In my case, making a fool out of myself is ingrained in my DNA so this was a walk in the park. If you are inherently shy or an introvert, or may have trouble standing*

*in front of a camera whilst belting out a Celine Dion tune, this may not be the project for you.*

All you need to do here is set up your video camera in a section of your living room, or wherever you want to do this, and fire everything up. I'm going to give you an example here of how to execute this properly.

Since this is in the 'romantic ideas inclusive to children,' I'm going to assume you have some. If you don't, then go buy or borrow someone else's to become your 'backup band' for the video because it's (a) hysterical and (b) hysterical. It's also (c) heartwarming and warming hearts is what this book is all about. It's also about me having a down payment on a Mercedes.

At the time I did this particular project, my kids were about 4 and 7 years old. Right now they are 11 and 14 and have evolved into beings that ignore direction and are half-human/half-earbud.

With the only inhabitants of my house being myself and my children, I quickly employed them to go find as much of their outrageous dress-up clothes as they could find. POOF – off they went to rummage through bins and buckets and cubby holes and maybe dumpsters I have no idea.

While they were gone, I found my wedding song on the karaoke channel of my cable provider. FANTASTIC. I played it through, realizing I knew absolutely none of the words because it wasn't sung by Iron Maiden. In retrospect, I would choose their song "Running Free" as an anthem if there was such a thing as divorce receptions and, yes, I would sing it flawlessly.

I turned the webcam of my computer on, and aimed it into my living room, where I could stand in the middle, still look at the webcam AND see the television out of the corner of my eye. I then thumbtacked a large blue blanket to the ceiling as the 'backdrop' so it didn't look like I was standing in the living room even though my dog kept running in and out of the frame and once stopped to lick herself SERIOUSLY I'M TRYING TO MAKE A VIDEO, DOG.

My children returned from their treasure hunt and there, in their tiny little hands, was a treasure trove of dress-up stuff:

- A feather boa
- Oversized sunglasses
- A wig
- Seriously, a wig. Why do my kids have wigs? Never mind. This is good.

I quickly pulled off my son's shirt and put the oversized sunglasses on him. My daughter got the feather boa, some sunglasses, and was in charge of the toy keyboard that I had set up. My son, of course, was playing the inflatable guitar. There he was: 30 inches tall, shirtless, wearing giant sunglasses and holding a balloon guitar. It looked as amazing as it sounds.

If you don't have kids you're thinking, "Why the Hell do they have an inflatable guitar?" but if you have children you're saying to yourself, "FINALLY A PURPOSE FOR THE INFLATABLE GUITAR." Trust me on this one. I have so much inflatable crap in my house I'm surprised the whole building hasn't floated away yet.

All gussied up, I posed them in front of the blanket, made sure the webcam had us all in the frame, and started rolling.

Just two takes later, it was done. I gave it a short introduction first before hitting 'PLAY' on the karaoke song on the television, and then the three of us let it rip. I sang my guts out, my son and daughter swayed to the music. It was nothing short of hysterical, horrifying and astonishing all at once. If I have one regret, it's that I let my son do the shirtless-sunglass-look instead of me.

The resulting video, copied onto DVD, provided both an incredible laugh, an amazing keepsake and helped cement my place in the lore of all things romantic as I handed it over as an anniversary gift.

Sadly, this is a one-and-done type of gift because it's hard to re-create the surprise and majesty of the first time you give someone a video of you and your children singing karaoke love songs. Making a video of you rolling around on the hood of a Jaguar or sitting on a giant exercise ball dressed like Miley Cyrus doesn't help, either. Don't ask me how I know this.

Go. Have fun. Let loose. Footloose.

Great. Now I have that song in my head.

The kids and I should make my wife a video.

## Wanna Get Away from the Bellhop?

A lot of parents have the luxury of close family living nearby. This means that they can usually rely on them when they need to get away as a couple for a weekend or week or month or forever.

God, that sounds nice.

Most times, though, a romantic getaway for parents means getting a sitter for two hours while you run out for a nice dinner. Unfortunately, there was an 90-minute wait at the restaurant, so now you're stuck eating a quick chimichanga at *TGI Friday's* because the sitter charges \$20 an hour and you don't want to take out a second mortgage.

When I was a child, my parents would put me in a closet with lots of pillows, a bowl of water and some kibble. The 70's were a much simpler time.

Attempting to go away on a romantic vacation as a couple is an even more daunting task. It's usually difficult to convince grandparents to watch your children for longer than four hours. Their job stops at filling in when only necessary for as little time as possible. Their secondary task as grandparents is to criticize your parenting skills from afar.

As such, you're typically stuck with dragging the kids along on your vacations. What was once a weekend trip to Hedonism is now a 3-day jaunt to Sesame Place. Once, the two of you traveled to the warmth of the Bahamas, but you now four of you enter the burning hell known as Disney.

It was during one of these needs for a getaway, with no one to watch the children, when I started looking at a road-trip vacation for the entire family. Of course, we'd hit the usual kid-friendly places but I wanted to end the trip in Toronto, where our beloved Boston Red Sox would be playing the Blue Jays during the last few days of our trip. The timing was perfect, so I started looking at hotels.

Finding a hotel when you're traveling with kids is tough. It's not like you have to worry about having sex in the same hotel room as them, because sex stopped as soon as the kids were born. It's more a comfort thing, because one parent (dad) always ends up sleeping on a sofa while the kids sleep in the cushy bed with the other parent (mom). The sofa is always terrible, so the couch-parent ends up hitting the bar at 2:30 AM and singing karaoke with Chinese businessmen.

As I researched prices for the Toronto hotel I wanted to stay in, I found that the cheapest rates I could get were coupled with a "Romance Package." This intrigued me,

because “Romance Package” is the pet name for my genitals. I looked a little further into this because it was, by far, a lot less expensive than a room without the offer.

### **Your Romance Package Includes:**

- Two splits of sparkling wine
- A sumptuous welcome treat at check-in
- Valet parking included
- Massage Oil and “Love Kit”

Shhhh - *\*presses finger to lips\** - You had me at ‘valet parking.’

I was sold. I had no idea what a split of wine was, because *TGI Friday’s* only sell’s wine by the plastic glass, unless by ‘split’ they’re talking about the seam running up the side of the goblet. I also had no idea what a “Love Kit” was but it sounded like something I’d have to put together so no thank you, hotel. But “sumptuous treat” usually means “free cookie” so...

*\*books room\**

We arrived at the hotel and checked in. They handed me the key to the room and the entire family ambled into the elevator with our 14 bags, three pillows (because kids can’t travel without their own pillow for some reason), 76 stuffed animals and the two cases of Ibuprofen and a bottle of Jack Daniels that I brought to deal with it all.

We walked into the room and settled in. When you have children, this means that they run around the entire suite for ten minutes while screaming. As I started to look around, I realized a few things:

- 1) We did not receive our “scrumptious treat” at check-in
- 2) There was no wine in the room
- 3) We were sans massage oil and “Love Kit”

I’ve been robbed of my trinkets!

I immediately called down to the front desk.

“Front desk, how may I help you?”

“Hi,” I said. “My room was supposed to come with the ‘Romance Package’ but I didn’t get my wine or sumptuous treat.”

“I’m sorry,” the receptionist said. “We’ll have someone bring that right up. Did you at least receive the ‘Love Kit?’”

“No,” I whispered into the phone because the kids were right behind me. “I didn’t get that, either.”

I whispered it because (a) I didn’t want my kids to start questioning what a “Love Kit” was when even I didn’t know and (b) I had answered enough questions on this trip that I didn’t want to, already. For example, I had no idea the word “Toronto” meant “City of Homelessness that Smells of Urine.” I wish I was kidding, but by the time we reached our hotel, I had probably said, “This is why you stay in school,” about 100 times.

I hung up the phone and looked at everyone already getting comfortable. It was getting late, after all, so I went back into the bedroom and put on my silk pajama shorts:



When you’re married and have kids, boxers like this are a great way to tell the world that you’ve given up.

That’s when the knock on the door came.

Shirtless and wearing only the sexy pajama-wear you see above, I answered the door.

It was a bellhop.

In his hands he held a bottle of wine, a heart-shaped box of bonbons and a rectangular, black box. On the box I could see several figures depicted in Japanese art, all in Kama Sutra-type positions.

In large, bold red letters on the box were the easily readable words:

**Your Sensual Kit Contains:**

***Edible body powder, Scented massage oil, Flavored Shower Gel  
and an Erotic Feather Tickler.***

Awesome.

As the bellhop stood there, he took a second to look me up and down. Then, slowly, a smirk crept over his face.

It was an, "I know what you're gonna do with all this," smirk. It was the cheeky smile of a man who realized the guy he was about to hand all of this over to was about to get his super freak on. It was the assumption of a man who knew that the guy he was looking at was about to take that erotic feather tickler an-

"Who's that, daddy?" my daughter yelled from the other room.

The man's smirk immediately faded. The transition of the man's face from "Ooooh yeah" to "OH GOD" was akin to the melting Nazis at the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

I looked up from the dirty box of sex he was holding and met his gaze and, immediately, knew what he was thinking.

*\*cricket\**

I grabbed the stuff out of his hand as quickly as I could. I blurted out, "Thank you" to the bellhop, still frozen in fear, and shut the door in his face just as my daughter appeared.

"Who was that?" she asked again.

"No one," I answered. "Who wants chocolates?"

## Throwing Paint

*“Painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks.” - Plutarch*

*“See? It looks like a lighthouse when I’m in the bathtub.” – me, age 7, explaining to my mom why I used her nail polish to paint my genitals white with red stripes*

I’m realizing, maybe a little too late, that all the titles in this ‘Kid Section’ are closer to sexual innuendo more than any other place in this book. I really hope this is coincidence and not an indication of deeper issues.

*\*knocks on wood\**

I originally came up with this idea after realizing the house I had just moved into had a pretty bare wall that needed some sort of artwork on it. Normally, I don’t care for artwork or understand it, as per this conversation with my son one day while walking past an art museum:

**Son:** “I don’t understand half the stuff they call ‘art.’ It all looks like a mess.”

**Me:** “That’s because art is subjective.”

**Son:** “What does ‘subjective’ mean?”

**Me:** “Stupid.”

That said, blank walls basically indicate that you don’t hold any college degrees, so I set out to create something myself. This not only gets the kids involved, but it is so amazingly fun and versatile that you can even do it as a gift for any of the following occasions:

- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Mother’s Day
- Father’s Day
- Grandparent’s Day
- Talk Like a Pirate Day
- National Cheesecake Day
- Now I’m Just Making Things Up Day

Honestly, I've even done this project for myself. Then myself and I had an amazing romantic dinner and watched *Silver Linings Playbook* before retiring to bed where we had a very intimate 23 seconds together. Sometimes I should just stop writing while I'm ahead.

I decided it would be fun to make my own painting for my wall. At the same time, I also realized that it would be an awesome gift idea for my kids' mom, my own mother, and pretty much everyone else because I bought way too much paint.



Thank goodness they write 'Tempera Paint' in three different languages on the bottles because this book may go International and I'd hate for Spanish people looking at this to go, 'El Whato?' which is how I assume Spanish people say 'what.'

I only went to college for the booze.

The great thing about this project is that it basically takes zero skill. This is great, because the only artistic talents I have are in PhotoShopping myself into pictures of Kate Upton and then pasting the photos onto paper along with cutout magazine letters and sending them to her in envelopes spritzed with Axe Body Spray (Phoenix). I also like to doodle on the restraining orders she has sent back.

I hung a huge drop-cloth in my basement, hung a couple of canvases in front of it, set up a table for the paints and then called all the kids down. As they walked down the stairs, I greeted them with ponchos and rubber gloves so the look of terror on their faces was probably well justified.

TIP: If you decided to follow suit and try this, get yourself a poncho and some rubber gloves. You may already have these if your tequila nights are anything like mine. Also

pick up some painting sponges and brushes while you're picking up the canvas at the art store. You can always use the sponges and brushes for sex night if you end up deciding not to do this project. Maybe run into the grocery store and pick up some chocolate syrup, too.

One again, I feel I've digressed.

First, I needed to decide on a theme for the paintings. This required me to ask myself a few questions as I stared at the blank canvases:

- What room will this go in?
- What occasion is this for?
- Who is it going to? Are they gothic? If so, do I have enough black paint?
- Why is my dog scratching at the carpet?

Sorry. My dog was just scratching at the carpet. I have no idea why and I usually end up typing whatever I'm thinking. Obviously.

I decided that the bigger canvas would be for myself, and would be hung in my family room. That room, in particular, has a dark red fireplace, beige walls, black leather furniture and ohmygod my dog is still scratching wtf. Sorry. It's very distracting.

I decided that the other painting was going to be for my wife as a Valentine's Day gift. Unfortunately the kids were down here with me so there went my idea of drawing a big dick and balls on it.

*I'll have to come down and add that in subliminal undertones later, I thought.*

Ponchos on, rubber gloves on, goggles on and paint in bowls, we started throwing paint.

Yes. We just started dipping our hands in the bowls of paint and chucking it at the canvases.

*Flick.*

*Whap.*

*Whapflick.*

*Flickwhap.*

*KAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHNNNNNNNN!*

Whenever I get excited I yell "KAHN!" and throw my clenched fists in the air. It's almost a reflex.

We were having a blast. When we got tired of using our fingers, we used a paintbrush. When we got tired of using a paintbrush, we used a sponge. Then my son stuck his butt in paint and made a butt print. Then we had to cover the butt print. No one wants a butt print painting. Then my daughter made a butt print. Screw it. Everyone gets a butt print on their painting. The king has spoken.

We made sure we stopped every once in a while to turn the canvas 90-degrees because things all started to go in one direction. Also, everything is better when it's rotating.

*\*wink\**

Of course, the kids made handprints, and drew hearts and smiley faces on the painting. On my wife's canvas, I wrote things like 'love' and 'mine' and '4eva' and drew hearts (*and tiny hidden penises, shhhh*).

When we were done, we had killed a ton of time and did something really fun. Parenting is all about killing time until the kids are old enough to move out, so this was a step in the right direction.

Here is the very Valentine's Day painting that we made for my wife:



I made the base coat pink and wrote a number of words during the making of the painting that you can pick out if you look for them. They are hard to see, but you can see handprints of the children on there as well, although they look more like Wilson in *CastAway*. There are also a lot of heart shapes and I may or may not have subliminally wrote in things like “I like to watch” in there. I’ll never tell.

That said, she loved it and hung it in the hallway of her house at the time. It is currently on the wall just outside of our bedroom so that she sees it every time she wakes up after a night of snoring like Godzilla. Seriously, it’s almost inhuman.

But the painting is the first thing she sees when she leaves the room in the morning, and I like that. I think she does, too. I don’t know, I haven’t asked her. I’m too tired because she keeps me up all night. It’s nuts.<sup>1</sup>

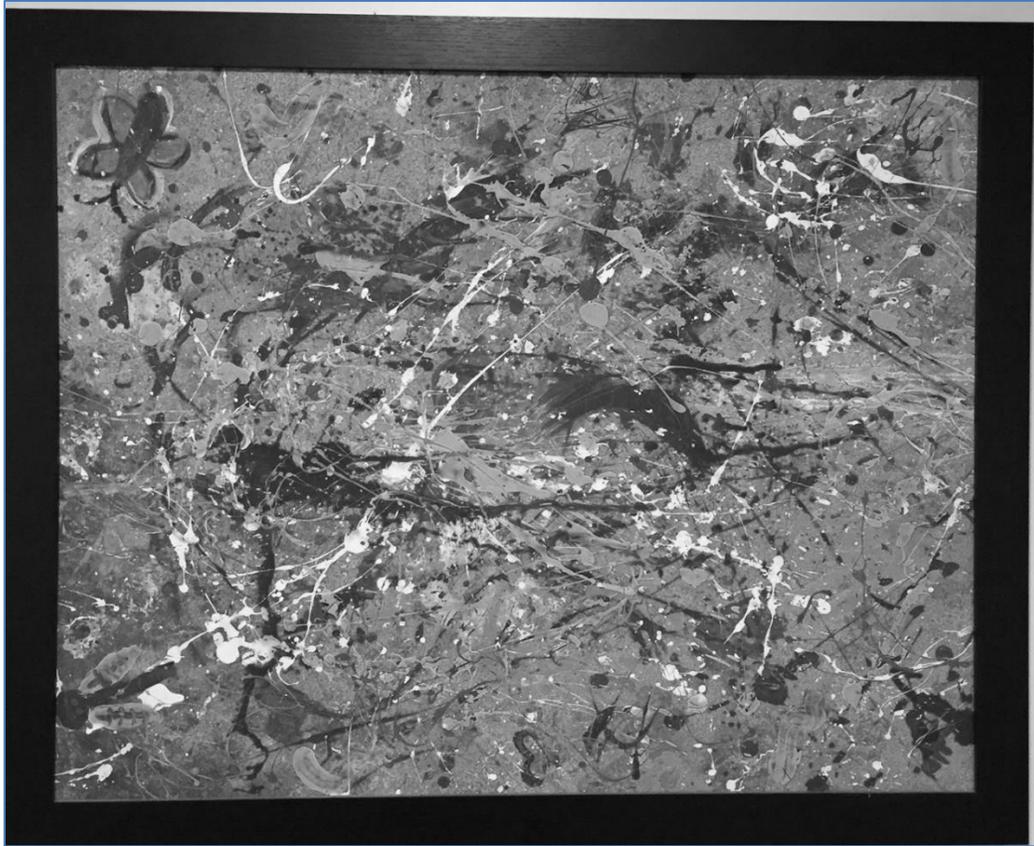
### **BONUS: My “BETTER THAN A CHIA PET” birthday idea**

When Kerri was about to turn 40 (sorry honey, cat’s out of the bag) a few years ago (I’m making it way worse now, aren’t I), I decided to throw a huge bash. She knew about the party, but didn’t know the hoops I was going through to make sure it was memorable. In some cases there were real hoops because I love gymnastics and am really good with those ribbon things, look phenomenal in a leotard and have great choreography.

One of the things I had planned to make this party something above and beyond, was to have each of the birthday guests go into my basement, one at a time (or in couples) and take turns making her gift:

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<sup>1</sup> I know what you’re thinking at this point. For a book on Romance Tips, I’m really digging into my wife here for the snoring thing. With that being said, it’s one of the few things I can actually complain about because she’s funny and thoughtful and beautiful, so I tend to take advantage of the opportunities. She also puts up with a lot of terrible things about me including, but not limited to: farting, burping and a really finicky penis (sometimes all three at the same time, depending on how liquored up I am). If she ever decides to write her own book, I’m so screwed.



Yes. I had each guest go downstairs and put on ponchos and goggles. I'll be honest in telling you that some people were hesitant to do this, given my "kill your own steak" party of 2011. They were relieved, though, when I had them just grab some paint and paintbrushes and go to town on that canvas.

In the end, she had a birthday gift that 40 of her closest friends had created *just for her*, and a gift that I was positive no other person in the world would have. You can see hearts and butterflies and swirls and handprints and splatters. Even though I didn't make this for her, specifically, she called it one of the most thoughtful things she had ever received. All the guests had a blast making it and we now had something else to adorn our walls.

Also remember, having her friends actually make this for her gave me those all-important and highly coveted "friend jealousy points" which go a long way to that threesome we mentioned very early in the book.

I'll keep you posted if that ever works out.

## Act 7 Progress Checklist

If I wrote that chapter well, then you have a whole bunch of ideas on how to try to keep romance in your relationship even with kids around. It may also be considered a success if people who don't want kids just booked vasectomies. *\*start book plug\** If you've done that, I highly recommend my first book, *Things Go Wrong for Me*, where I take you through the entire vasectomy experience that includes a picture of a nut with a smiley face. *\*end book plug\**

	Yes	No
More head is always better	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kids need to see that you're affectionate with your partner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Throwing paint is frigging awesome	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Always order the Romance Package when traveling with children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
French ticklers are actually from Belgium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You shouldn't hide tiny penis drawings in paintings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
It's hard coming up with questions for these checklists	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Act 8*

*Maintenance Mode*

## Lather, Rinse, Repeat

The stage lights up and we are presented with a living room on the set. There is a large television, coffee table and couch. If this was my house, there would be a chair with a slip cover falling off of it because none of the children know how to sit in my house if it doesn't involve leaping onto the furniture from three feet away at full speed. Drives me nuts.

Beside the couch there is a bouquet of roses perched on a side table, and you can barely read the card:

"To my favorite MILF"

Good job, buddy. Good job.

A man and a woman enter the living room and sit down next to each other. She sidles up next to him, rests her head on his shoulder and puts her hand on his chest. He reaches down, seductively, and grabs the remote before she can even think about. He wins this round that she didn't even know she was playing.

He looks over, satisfied in the fact that he is now controlling the television viewing experience, and gives her a kiss on the forehead. She smiles.

"Porn?" he asks, aiming the remote at the television.

Damn. Sorry. I keep forgetting this isn't my house.

"Whatever you want," she replies. "I'm just comfy."

The man smiles and raises his legs to put his feet up on the coffee table. Before he rests them, he uses the heel of his foot to move a hardcover book out of the way. The cover reads, "Just Us," and has an oversized picture of the both of them, taken when they sat in a photo booth together while on vacation.

"I'm comfy too," he replies, as he turns the TV to "Busty Maids."

Hey. Maybe this *is* my house.

## The Letter People

*"Why don't you take a picture, it'll last longer."* – Pee Wee Herman

When I was a kid, my family would go on vacations to Florida and California and, for some reason, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. I can tell you that, as the son of someone who loved history and the story of the Civil War, there is no place worse to take your kids on a family vacation than to the sites of massacres and battles where thousands waged war. Of course I'm talking about Disney Land. After you've stood in line for three hours just to sit in a boat that breaks down in the middle of the "It's a Small World" ride where you have to listen to that godforsaken song for an hour straight, Gettysburg is a welcome respite.

My parents always made it a point to go on vacations each year so I could one day look back and think, "I don't remember that at ALL." In hindsight, I probably should have eaten more fish as a child because I don't remember anything, really.

Luckily, I have a ton of photo albums to allow me to reminisce about the vacations that, unfortunately, I can barely recall. Looking at these pictures, they also remind me that I was a pretty obese child who wore inappropriately short shorts and *OHMYGOD IS THAT MY TESTICLE HANGING OUT?*

It was with pictures of my fat little nuts hanging out of a pair of red boxers in mind, that I came up with the idea of making my own photo memories as gifts. It's always nice to revisit history with someone, unless it was spent stuck in a boat inside a ride at Disney Land. Then you may want to destroy the evidence, like, immediately.

My God, I still have nightmares.

Sometimes when I'm thinking about doing something special for a gift I take a look back at all of the things I've done successfully before. It's at that moment I wish I had one of those devices that they have in *Men in Black* where I can wipe out her memory and just give her the same things over and over again.

Coming up with this crap is hard, yo. I didn't have a book like this to look at for inspiration when I was trying to think of things to do. I had to use my imagination and you have absolutely NO IDEA how scary that can be if you're me. There are so many angry leprechaun centaurs running amok and throwing flaming cabbages in there.

I'll bet you're getting some idea now, though. Congrats.

There are only so many things you can do with pictures of past events to turn them into unique and special gifts. By 'only so many' I mean 'two.' If you come up with a third one, please let me know because I'll add it to the "Special Edition" of this book in an attempt to rake in more money.

My kids need to go to college. Please spread the word. Thank you.

Kerri and I were walking through Faneuil Hall in Boston one afternoon. If you've never been to Faneuil Hall, I highly recommend it. It's an extremely large and historic marketplace full of street performers and artists and even a guy dressed like Benjamin Franklin. In fact, it was rated as the "Top Tourist Attraction that has a Guy Dressed like Benjamin Franklin" four out of the last five years.<sup>1</sup>

We stumbled upon a kiosk ("kiosk" is a Polish word meaning "Cart that sells key chains and sausages") and there, on the walls, were a large number of black and white pictures. The pictures were all random things but had one common theme:

Each of the pictures, as they were photographed, resembled a letter of the alphabet. A photo of the Eiffel Tower, for instance, looked like the letter 'A,' and the stanchion of the Brooklyn Bridge appeared to be an 'H.'

*AH*, I thought to myself.

I'll give you a moment with that one.



Above these photos were frames, each with several different photo cutouts in which the pictures were arranged to spell words.

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<sup>1</sup> The one year they lost was when the guy who dresses like Ben Franklin went to Scotland to visit family. That year, Loch Ness took the coveted "Top Tourist Attraction that has a Sea Monster" and "Top Tourist Location with a Guy Dressed like Ben Franklin" awards in a stunning double-whammy that shocked the world.

“Mommy”

“Erin”

“Yankees Suck”

“F\*ck Jeter”

Remember: This is Boston.

A genius and unique gift idea, I thought, until I realized that each frame was \$50 or higher and each individual photo was \$5 so writing “Nippletastic” would have cost me roughly \$100 – a hefty price to pay even though I think my dad would have gotten a kick out of it.

I decided that this would be a great gift idea where I could make myself shine. This would be above and beyond the other way I make myself shine by shaving my body extremely closely and then covering myself in baby oil. It really is quite a spectacle. A tiny, shimmering spectacle.

My first step was to figure what I wanted the picture to spell out, so I jotted down some good and some bad ideas:

**Good:**

- Her name (this may not work for your situation if her name is “Mephistopheles” because this is going to cost you a small fortune for the frame alone)
- “Love”
- “Mine”
- “4Ever”

**Bad:**

- Nippletastic
- This:



I decided to make this picture for my wife using the word “Love” because I’m cliché, but “Cliché” would have cost me more money for the frame. I’m also cheap. I’m not sure if you got that or not.

So with the word “Love” in mind, I set out to find things I could use to make the letters with. I wandered about the house looking for something to make a letter “L” out of. Several items immediately jumped out at me:

- Corner of the stove
- Two tampons juxtaposed in a drawer
- My stepson making an “L” with his fingers on his forehead every time I walk past him because he’s mean to me

Obviously none of these would fit the ‘romance’ theme of the project but then I happened to meander into my bedroom and there – lo and behold – was the hideous ‘frame of heads’ that I created from the previous craft, which had been rightly deemed too terrifying to display anywhere else in the house.



Quaking with fear, I approached the frame and focused in on the bottom left of the picture.

*\*click\**



The perfect "L."

What made this even better is that the letter also included our pictures without the absolute horror of the remaining million tiny floating decapitations. I can't believe I screwed the pooch so badly on that idea. So not like me.

One letter down, three to go.

The letter “O” for the picture was pretty easy for me. I simply took my wedding ring, and posed it on a clean surface (which may be difficult if you live in a house with four children, as we do; this process alone took me 3 weeks), and took the following photo:



Voila.

The clean surface I posed mine on was the bedroom nightstand belonging to my neighbor’s wife. She keeps a much cleaner house than ours. That’s my reasoning and I’m sticking with it.

I was pretty exhausted at this point, and considered just buying a frame with two photo cutouts and start calling Kerri “Lo” for the next month – saying it was my new pet name for her. Then I’d just give her the “Lo” picture instead so I could stop worrying about finding two more letters because this was getting tiring.

“Yo, Lo” I said.

“The hell?”

“I’m going to call you ‘Lo’ from now on because I like you on the down, Lo.”

“No,” she said. “No you won’t call me that at all.”

With my mind now made up for me, I decided to go all out and find a ‘V’ and ‘E’ to finish up the word. The ‘V’ was taken from the “Harley Davidson” graphic on my motorcycle because she loves riding with me, and finding something else in the shape of a ‘V’ was turning out to be impossible. The only other “V” I found was on a tube of vaginal cream and I didn’t really want to be reminded about feminine itch and odor every time I looked at this thing on my wall.

So, Harley Davidson “V” it was.



The “E” took some doing and finagling but let’s see if you can guess what it is:



To help you guess, I probably should have included pictures of the bite marks I got while attempting this. That is actually my dog’s tail and hind feet, forming an ‘E’ shape as he was lying down. I had to maneuver him around a little bit to get it just right which he, apparently, hated very much. If you plan on doing this, and your dog is more vicious than mine, I highly suggest finding something else to make an “E” out of. I do not recommend you use a cat (see previous story).

With all the photos taken, it was just a matter of arranging them inside the frame. I arranged the letters facing the glass and then turned it over.

### **“VOLE”**

Ah, shit.

This required me to pull the thing apart and then reorder them. I guess what I’m saying is, ‘pay close attention to the order you do these in because a woman getting a gift that insinuates that she is a small rodent may yield undesired results.’

My finished product:



Cool, right?

### **BONUS:**

This is also another one of those projects that you can use as gifts for Christmas, birthdays, Mother’s Day, etc. and can give to pretty much anyone. If you have kids, you can actually use the children to pose for the letters to make signs that say ‘Grandma’ or “Grammy” or “Mommy” or “Daddy” or “Guy who comes over to visit mommy every Saturday.”

I have scars from my childhood.

Using the kids as the letters is a great way to include them in gifts for your relatives. However, I can tell you that getting a 4-year-old to hold a backbend so you can make a letter ‘G’ is an exercise in patience, several emergency room visits and a possible spinal surgery.

You’ve been warned.

Other than that, have fun with the project. They'll vole it.

Love it, I mean. They'll love it.

See? I told you that the ordering of the letters is important.

## Giving Her the TP Treatment

DATE NIGHT.

Every couple needs one.

By the end of the work week, you're both spent. Your wife has just spent 60 hours on her feet working in a dental office. You just toiled away for a week in a cubicle, spending 40 hours sitting behind a desk and Tweeting or updating Facebook for 38 of them. The other two hours were revising final edits for a book, who knows.

*\*whistles\**

It was with this in mind that I decided to treat my wife to the old standby of date nights:

Dinner and a show.

When you both work and still have to take care of four kids, 'dinner and a show' means 'chicken nuggets and screaming at the kitchen table.' You're probably thinking, *How is screaming at the kitchen table considered a 'show'*, but that's because you've never seen my wife scream. It's really quite spectacular.

Unbeknownst to her, I booked a sitter for a Saturday and scored us tickets to *Blue Man Group*. She had never seen the show before and I thought she'd like it since they vomit Twinkies halfway through.

Who doesn't like seeing people vomiting up sponge cake? RIGHT. That's exactly what I thought, too, so I got us front row tickets, because if you're going to experience *Blue Man Group* I think you should probably get some Twinkie on you. I should work for their marketing department.

She was excited and surprised, of course. Spontaneity always helps with the relationship maintenance, unless you're spontaneously combusting. Then you just burn the other person and probably some good furniture, so don't do that.

The first indication that something was amiss was when we were handed ponchos as we entered the theater.

"What are these for?" she asked.

"We're in the poncho section!" I exclaimed.

She did not seem enthused. This was weird, because usually she got excited when I put on a poncho. In her defense, though, add in some goggles and I look pretty awesome naked in one.

Our sex nights are crazy.

She glanced at me sideways as we headed to our seats. I helped her slip the poncho on and she helped slip mine on and we sat down together and looked up at the stage.

“FRONT ROW,” I said.

“Ponchos,” she replied. “I’m ascaresd.”

“It’s going to be awesome,” I said. “Is it, like, really hot in here?”

You see, we were front row and center-stage, with spotlights and all kinds of laser things bearing down right upon us. The ponchos had begun to act like roasting bags for beef, and I’m pretty sure if I had some carrots and onions I could have made a nice dinner out of myself. Sweat rolled down my face and I looked at my wife, miserably sweating inside her own plastic cocoon.

“FRONT ROW,” I said.

She did not acknowledge me. This can’t be good.

Thankfully, the show started and the mood changed. Yes, we had each lost 15 pounds in the first half-hour of the show, but we were having fun. She was laughing and I was laughing and I was sweating and OHMYGOD I AM LAVA but, yes, we were laughing and having an amazing time.

That is, until, the finale.

You see, the end of the show involves toilet paper and audience participation. Why this is, I do not know. Somewhere, I’m sure, is a thesis about the significance of toilet paper as it relates to the conclusion of a Blue Man Show.

Rolls and rolls and miles and miles of toilet paper are uncoiled from the balcony and rained down upon everyone on the floor. As the toilet paper ocean begins to cover everyone at the rear of the auditorium, ushers tell everyone to push it forward towards the stage.

Push it forward.

Towards the stage.

The stage we are sitting right in front of.

We've all seen the terror of the tsunamis that have devastated entire islands and communities. Imagine now, that this overwhelming and dangerous tsunami is approaching you, but your back is against a wall and the wave is actually a four-foot high, 80-foot wide pile of Charmin.



I looked at my wife.

She looked at me.

And that's when it hit.

A barrage of toilet paper crashed upon us with the force of an avalanche. I found myself trying to hurl the paper up onto the stage, but I'm tiny and have little arms and this was tough. I tried to push back against the wave but it was of no use.

I gathered the strength to turn my head to look over at my wife.

**SHE WAS GONE.**

In the place where my wife was standing, not just two seconds ago, was a crashing wave of two-ply. It was filling in the gaps between the seats and the stage and there was no sign of her. I tried grabbing more paper to hoist it to the stage in a frantic effort to find her, but it was no use. She had been washed away. I suppose I would have to soldier on, find another woma-

"I'm..getting..sick.."

**SHE'S ALIVE!**

"I'M COMING FOR YOU, HONEY!"

I tried. I really made a valiant effort, but the sheer volume of toilet paper coming at us versus what I could actually move made it a losing battle. Eventually, I just succumbed to the idea of having to bury her and move on with my life. Every so often, though, I could hear signs of life:

“..throw up..”

“..Rodney is sexy..”

“..help..”

“..Twinkie..”

After what seemed like an eternity, the deluge slowly subsided. I was finally able to catch up and dredge my wife out of the bottomless abyss of bathroom tissue. She emerged from the rubble, a bit tattered and exhausted. The rest of the audience was giving a standing ovation at this point, so we fought the urge to sit back down and take a nap.

Ovation ended, we finally were able to make eye contact. I reached over to her, and pulled off her poncho. It was stuck to her matted hair and clothing.

“You’re a little sweaty,” I said.

“FRONT ROW,” she replied.

Point taken. Next time, we’ll take balcony.

## Say "Cheesy"

"I hope nothing ever happens to this computer."

"I know," I replied, "We've spent a lot on this porn collection."

"No," she said. "Well, that, plus we'll lose all our pictures."

*\*light bulb\**

A few years had passed and Kerri and I had amassed a lot of photos of each other. Most of these photos had to be deleted due to storage limitations on our phones and the fact that our kids kept guessing our lock passcodes. Because of this, sext pics are usually the first things to get tossed out.

The rest of the pictures were posted into albums and stuff on the computer. This practice, though, tends to get messy when you're looking for a particular photo and – whoop – there you are full-frontal from 1992 wearing a Mr. T Mohawk. I think I pulled off the look quite well, personally speaking.

But she had a point. I didn't want my laptop to crash or have my social media accounts locked (seriously, it was ONE TIME, Mr. President) or my cloud hacked or my cloud account crash-locked and cyber-bullied. I'm sorry to throw all those terms at you but it's tough not to when you're a techie like me.

I decided to take it upon myself to take some of those moments that we didn't want to lose during a Target security breach and save them for posterity somewhere else. My wife really likes to read (hence the term, "opposites attract"), but I had already given her a book so I couldn't reuse that idea. I had also given her that bizarre zombie-like mosaic of spooky disembodied heads of each other, too.

I concluded that the best course of action, given her pseudo-hint in the opening dialog, was to put these photos into a picture book. This would be a lot different than the last "picture book" I gave her, which was primarily a small notebook, and if you flipped the pages you could see the action of two stick figures having sex.

I have a lot of free time.

Luckily, finding the pictures I wanted to use for this book wasn't all that difficult. I downloaded most of the pictures we had, minus the pictures of things that resemble penises from a Facebook album titled, "Things that look like penises." My timeline has

been flagged for inappropriateness so many times I have a plaque at Facebook headquarters.

My goal was to make a graphic novel of our relationship, while also creating something that she could use as kindling if we ever broke up. Always give her a backup plan, guys. Seriously, this book is chock-full of things that will allow her to hold her own Burning Man event if you guys ever split.

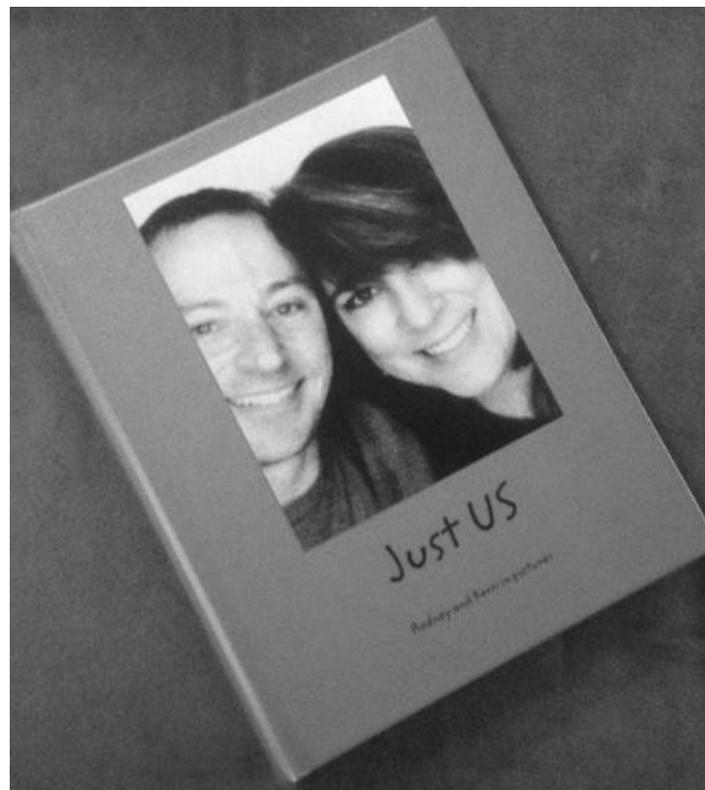
I pulled all the photos I wanted down and then uploaded them to a book-making site that did the rest for me after I added some captions. You'd think adding captions would be the easy part, but I swear so much that half the pages were Autocorrected to things like:

“This is where we fudged the shot out of each otter.”

Honestly, that sounds hysterical. I should have kept it that way.

The book is comprised of pictures from your earliest beginnings as a couple to where you are right now. Hopefully, where you are right now isn't in a steam bath with 12 strange old men. That would be a really weird way to end the book.

My results were so stunning and looked so professionally done that it is sitting on my coffee table as I write this. That's because I placed it there so I could take this picture of it:

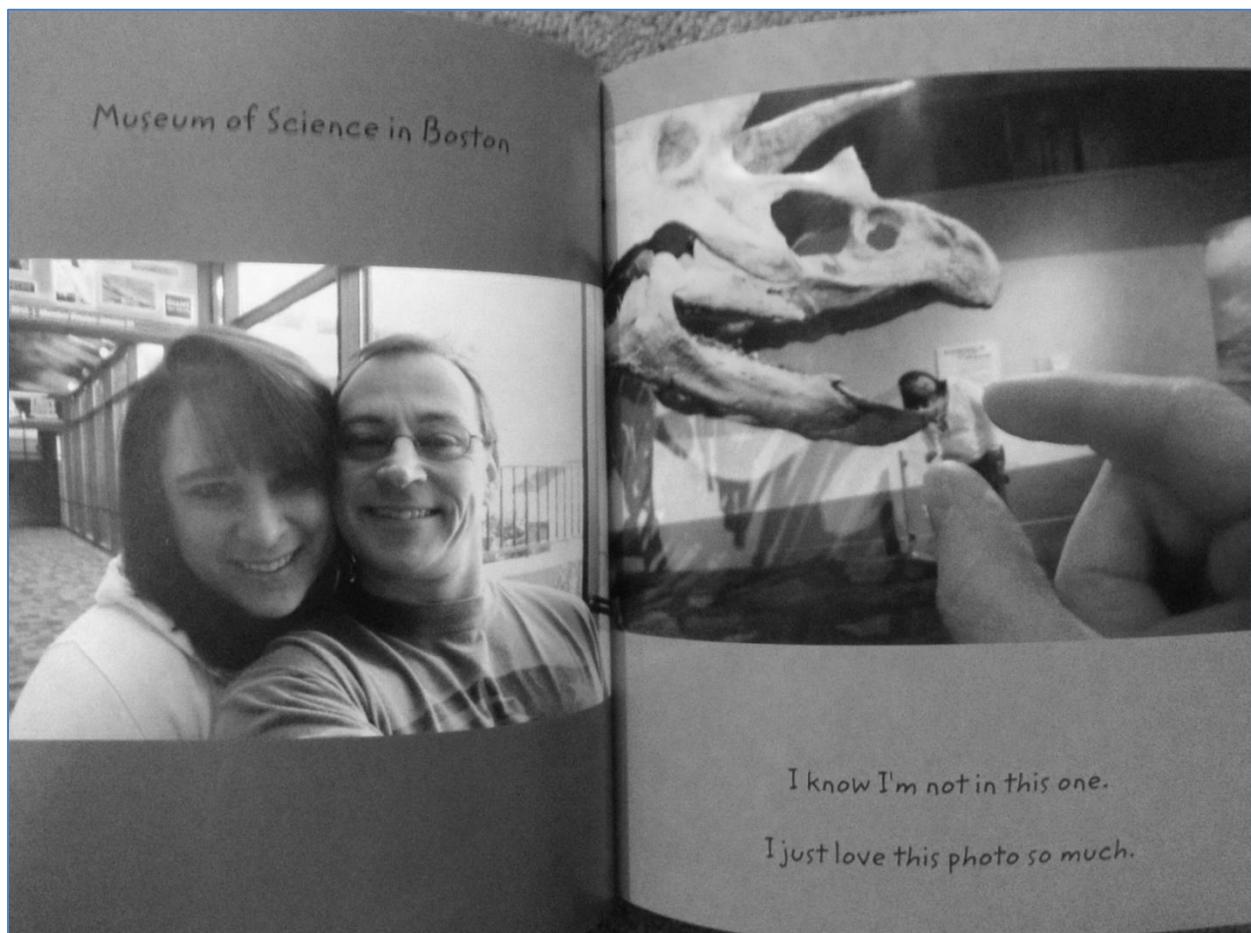


It's titled, "*Just Us – Rodney and Kerri in pictures.*"

The book itself is well put together, hard bound and stunning. The last sentence also describes me naked, minus the page numbers and pictures. You are welcome for that visual.

**PRO TIP:** If you're keeping this on the coffee table, make sure you have pants on in the pictures. You never know who the hell is gonna open that damn thing one day and *BOOM* now you've lost custody of the children. Another reason to avoid adding in pictures of your Mr. Wiggly is because pop-up books cost extra.

With the book finished and in-hand, I gave it to Kerri as a keepsake. Here are some actual pages from the book:



The picture on the right is absolutely one of my favorite pictures in the world of us, and it's just this stupid thing where I pretended to feed tiny Kerri to a triceratops. Your dinosaur feeding photos may vary but if you have one like this I highly recommend adding it to the book.

As with most things, this is flammable, ensuring that she can use it for the break-up party. She has found, during some arguments, that the hard corners are extra deadly. So if she holds the book like a ninja throwing star she can make me run really really fast in the opposite direction. This paragraph is begging for another disclaimer.

If you do this, you've just made something that shows her you haven't forgotten where you've been and – even if you have – the moments are literally sitting right there on your coffee table.

That is, unless you're not wearing pants. I can't stress enough how much you should probably put this book in a drawer somewhere if you're not wearing pants.

## Is It Hump Day?

“Do you know what today is?”

If you just had a heart attack reading that sentence, then there’s a damn good chance you’re a guy. If you’re not a guy and had a heart attack reading that, then you may be a woman with a very bad memory. If you had a heart attack for any other reason, well that’s just a weird coincidence.

“Do you know what today is?” she asks.

GAH.

Quickly, your mind scatters into a million pieces, like a hoard of cockroaches when someone turns on the light. Each little insect has his own unique job trying to hunt down the answer and report back to the center of your brain where you formulate a response.

**Cockroach #1:** Today is October 17<sup>th</sup>, sir!

**You:** Thank you, minion. That doesn’t ring a bell. Shit.

**Cockroach #2:** Her birthday is in June.

**You:** Okay. That’s not it. June? Really? June what?

**Cockroach #2:** I just got June, sir.

**You:** Shit. Okay. Remind me to look that up, later.

**Cockroach #3:** Your anniversary is November 23, sir!

**You:** Ah, yes. I remember because it was two days before Thanksgiving turkey. I like turkey.

You glance around at your memory minions, all frantically trying to search for the answer. No holidays match. No anniversaries. There are no surgeries scheduled. One cockroach is just sitting in the corner doing that ‘brrbrrbrrbrrbrrbrrb’ thing to his lips with a finger as he slowly goes crazy.

**Cockroach #4:** Sir, the closest we can find is that your dad’s birthday was four days ago.

**You:** Maybe that’s it. Maybe she just messed it up.

Much like the “WHY do you love me” horrible question from earlier, this particular query has sent many a person to insanity. That’s because, after remaining silent for the first 30-seconds after its asked, it is followed up with this one:

“You DO know what today is, right?”

You glance over at your ‘memory cockroaches.’ They all look at you blankly before shrugging their little cockroach shoulders.

**You:** My dad’s...birth....day....?

Her face looks stunned. *HOW DO YOU NOT KNOW WHAT DAY IT IS*, is the expression she wears. She turns, indignantly, as she throws an envelope onto your lap that says “Babe” with little hearts drawn on it.

“It’s the anniversary of when we met. Five years ago today,” she says. “And your father’s birthday was four days ago, by the way. Jerk.”

Oh.

Well. Okay. Now you don’t feel so bad that you got it wrong, because this was a needle-in-a-haystack question.

“Well how the hell was I supposed to know that?”

She stops, dead in her tracks. She slowly turns, shoulders hunched.

*This will not end well for me, you think.*

“I know it because it’s the day my life changed forever,” she says. “You should know it, too, for the same reason.”

And that, my friends, is why women are batshit crazy. Women remember every single detail of every single moment in your miserable history. There are very few exceptions to this rule but, for the most part, a woman’s mind is a steel trap when it comes to the specifics of things she holds dear.

The things a woman remembers do not even need to be important. I can tell you that if a woman knows the particular date that something happened on, she can also tell you – down to the very last fiber – what she wore for it. How a woman can remember minutiae such as this, but is still unable to keep up with the plot of the *Bourne Identity* and has to keep pausing it to ask you what the crap is going on is a mystery for the ages.

I, personally, have the memory of a potato and have to keep looking back to the last paragraph to see if I’ve already written this same sentence. As such, I’ve been burned

by this question so many times that I can't keep count. I can't keep count mainly because I have the memory of a potato.

*\*rim shot\**

The above scenario happened to me one fine October 17<sup>th</sup>. I had absolutely zero idea that was the anniversary of the day we met because, honestly, I didn't really care. I didn't think that was something anyone kept track of.

All I knew is that I was glad we did meet. The timing of it all was irrelevant to me.

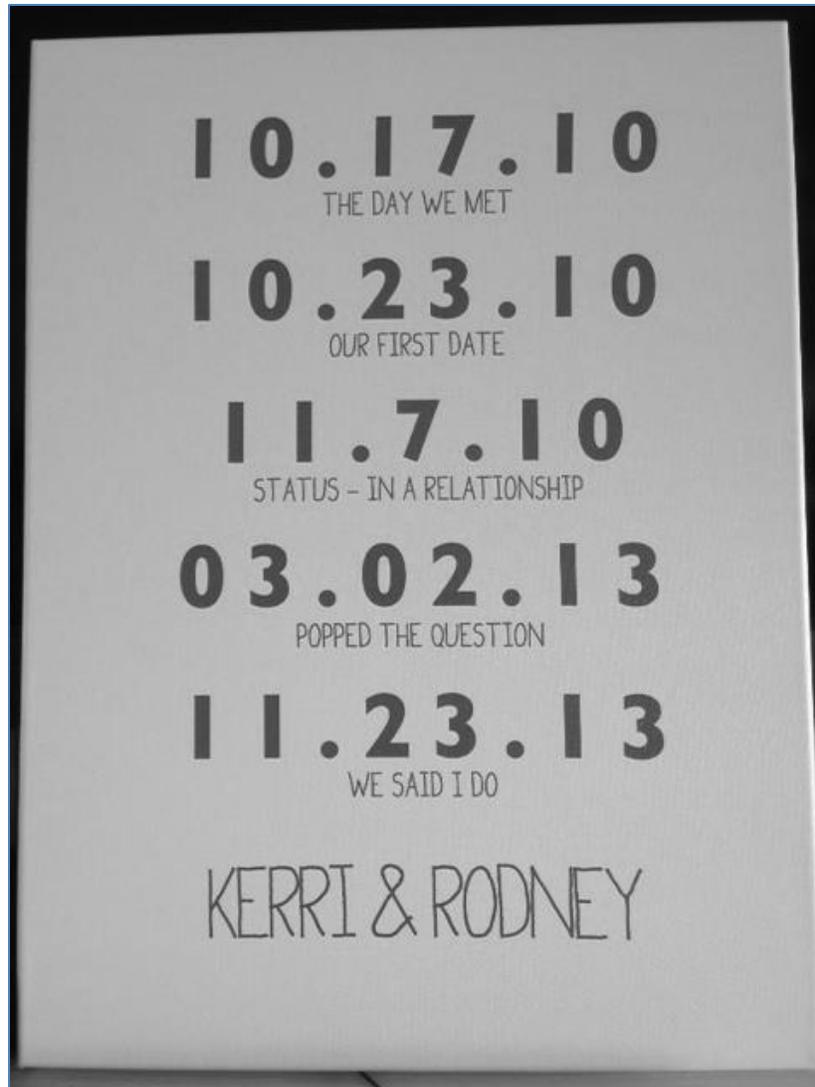
But it wasn't irrelevant to her. It was important to her.

There's a saying that goes, "If it's important to you, it's important to me." This is usually one-sided because football and hockey is important to me but she doesn't seem to care. On the flip side, wardrobe choices are important to women but most guys don't give a crap what they put on as long as we can get out of the house on time for once. I guess what I'm saying is, "Not all sayings are applicable for all situations."

Since this date was, obviously, important to her I decided to treat it as such. I ran through her entire Facebook timeline to find out when she changed her statuses and to what. I also dug around to see if she made any notes about milestones and, sure enough, there was an 'our first kiss' status.

I should honestly talk to her about her need to overshare.

Dates in hand, I had this made:



The best thing about this is that it is also a gift FOR ME. Now, I will never forget a date or be sucker-punched by that stupid question ever again. All I have to do is glance over to the wall and, voila, I have the answer.

I might even fire my memory cockroaches. Fire them, that is, once they get me the definitive date of her birthday. I forgot to put that on here.

## Rubbing Off On the Wife

Yeah, I wish it was that kind of book.

After four years of putting up with my homemade gifts and crafts and projects and presents, my wife decided to get into the spirit of it on our First Anniversary. Sadly, I was 46, half-blind and deaf by this point and kept forgetting who she was but her effort was admirable.

I am not aging gracefully AT ALL.

I'm not saying my wife doesn't give good gifts because I like having sex and don't feel like getting into an argument when she reads this. I'm just saying that – and she will be the first to admit this – it's just something she has never really tried to do.

So, on our first anniversary, I received a large, wrapped gift. I was expecting the usual presents of beef jerky or candy or candied beef jerky. What I got, though, was something completely and utterly amazing:

Beef jerky and candy.

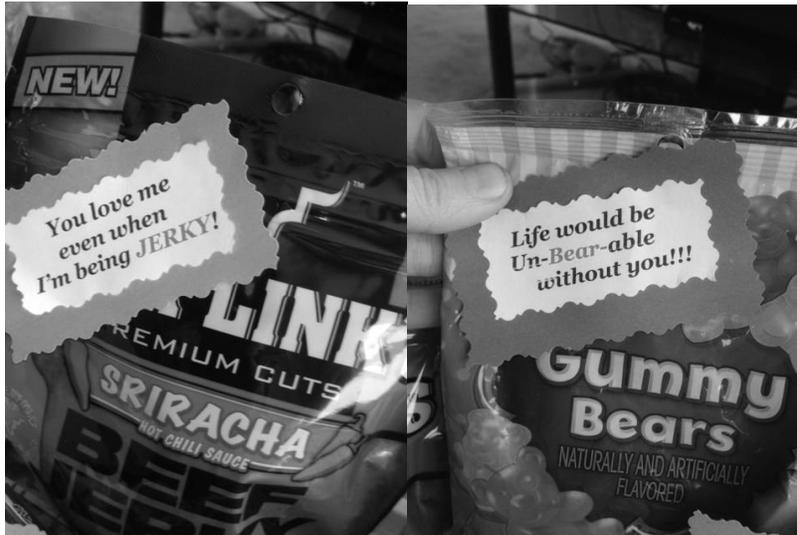
WAIT. It wasn't JUST beef jerky and candy. No! It was a basket of beef jerky and candy with a note written, printed, cut out with fancy scissors, pasted to construction paper and thoughtfully taped to each item. The outside of the basket also had a message taped to it, like so:



“What is this sorcery?” I thought. “Who are you and what have you done with my wife?”

But as I looked through the basket, I was floored.

The beef jerky (you thought I was joking) and gummy bears:



The Junior Mints and Reese's Pieces:



Even the Mixed Nuts and Symphony Bar:



And then, to top it all off, the Almond Joy (so gross, by the way):

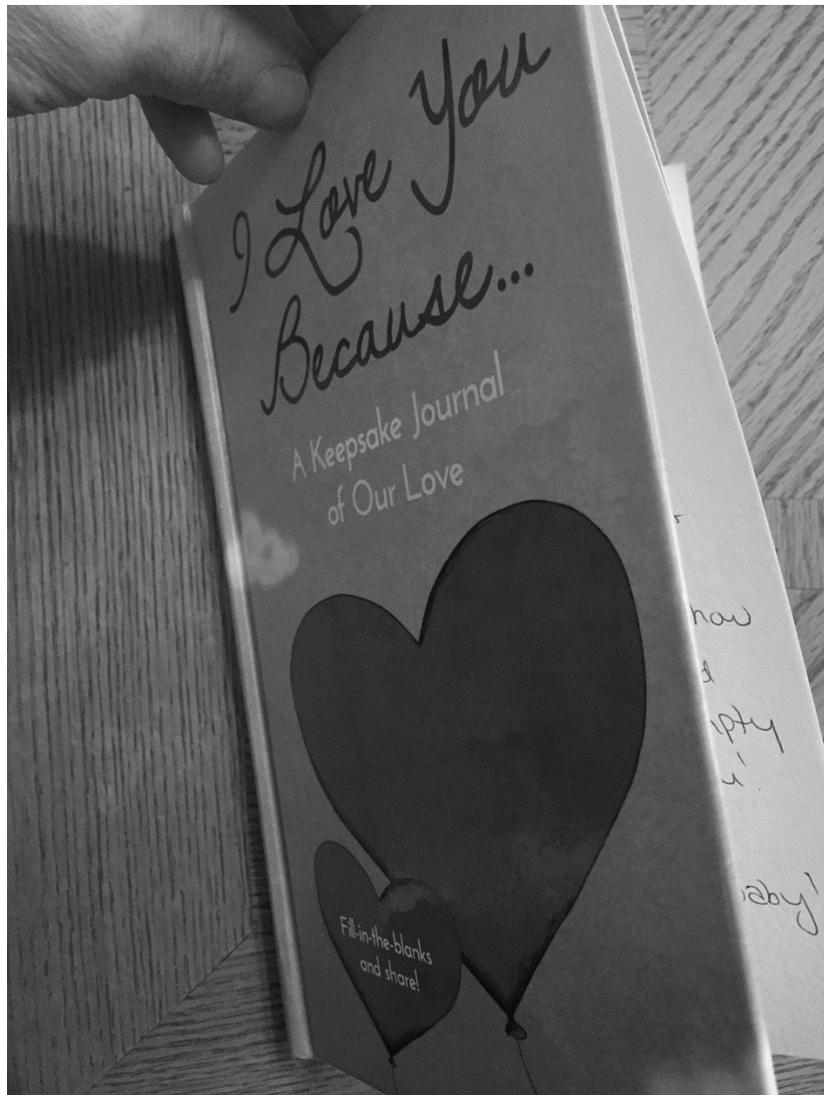


This? This was amazing. I was floored. I was hungry. I was hungry and floored.

But mostly I was speechless. This was pretty awesome.

Thinking this was going to be the end of her romantic gift-giving, I was completely taken aback when, on Valentine's Day 2015, I pulled out a small wrapped gift hidden below my other presents of chocolate-covered raisins and more gummy bears. I'm pretty sure my wife is trying to kill me via saturated fats disguised as trinkets.

What I opened, was this:



### **“I Love You Because... - A Keepsake Journal of Our Love”**

So cute. She totally stole my book idea and turned the tables on me. How origin-

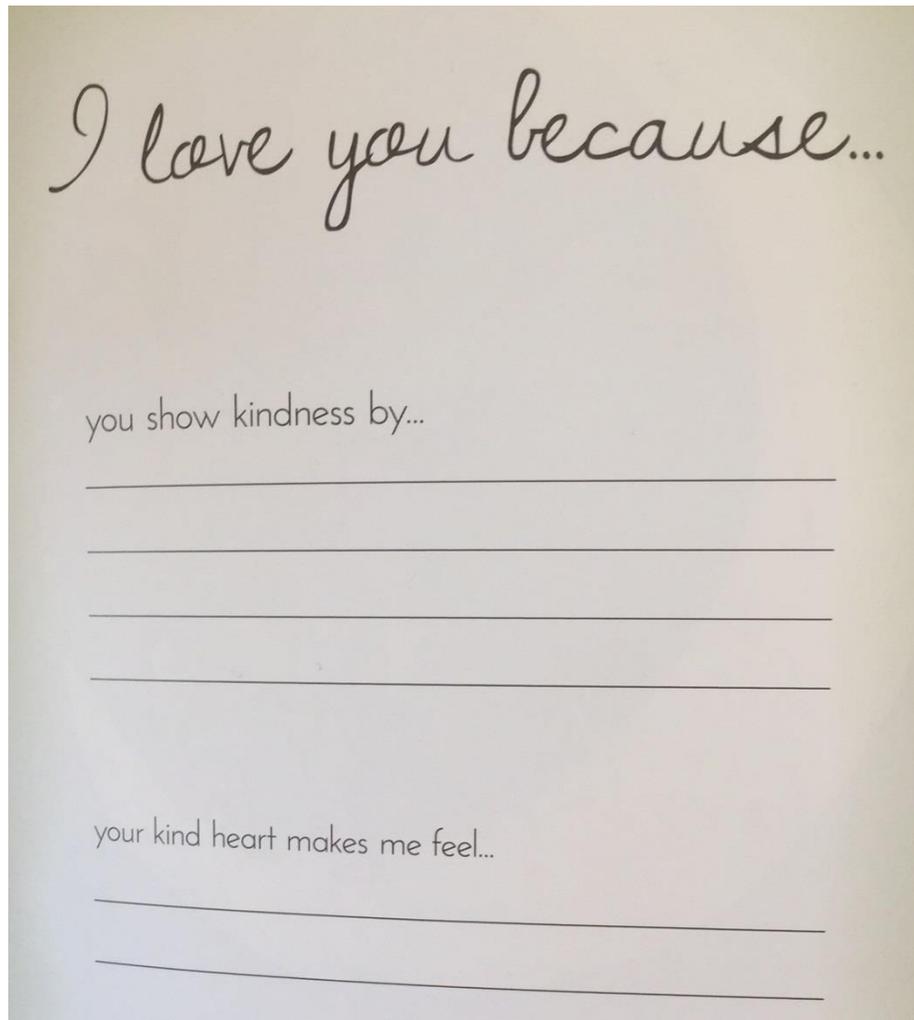
But then I opened the book. This was actually a notebook. In the book were her own notes, handwritten, over the next 50 pages or so. Each page had three or more prompts followed by blank lines to write answers on, like:

“You make me feel –“

“I love when you –“

This went on and on. Page after page I read, in her own words, about how she felt and things she loved about us. She spelled ‘cunnilingus’ with only one ‘n’ but I figured I’d let it slide because this was pretty awesome to read.

That is, until I got here (actual page from my book):



Great.

She told me that she didn't leave this blank on purpose, but the coincidence of it being this particular page that she skipped seems suspect.

Even with this page, it was pretty awesome to read about all the reasons why she's nuts about me. I'm nuts about her, too, but I'm still not eating that Almond Joy.

So gross.



## Act 8 Progress Checklist

Do you know where most companies make their money?

### MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS.

This is yet another fact I've completely made up, but a company that sells maintenance contracts has a massive profit margin with those product offerings. That means that maintenance, although routine, can also be one of the most important and have the greatest return on investment.

Holy shit. That actually sounded profound. Let's see what you've learned.

	Yes	No
I really like beef jerky	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feminine hygiene boxes are great for some romantic project ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You could go for some beef jerky, now that you're thinking about it	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are a billion things you can do with your photos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you buy beef jerky yet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Milestone relationship dates are unimportant to most women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If you do go get jerky, can you get me some, too? Thank you.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## *The Stunning Conclusion*

The actors line up on the stage and face the wildly clapping audience. Arm in arm, they take a group bow to the cheers from the auditorium:

*“BRAVO!”*

*“Encore!”*

*“There’s a white Honda Civic in the parking lot with its lights on!”*

*“Oh shit, my Viagra kicked in early. I think I’ll stay seated.”*

The major players all come out to center stage to accept their own applause. One by one, Chivalry, Love Note, Picture Book, Horrifying Floating-Head Collage, Romantic Bag of Beef Jerky, Just-Because Card and the Love-Explosion Painting greet the crowd. The people, now in a standing ovation, begin to throw roses that immediately stain the stage and the wardrobes of the players and now everyone is pissed off because no one has stain remover.

*\*curtain closes\**

I had no real title for this section, obviously, so I chose “The Stunning Conclusion.” Please note there is really nothing stunning about this conclusion other than a sincere lack of being stunning which is, probably, stunning in itself.

I did accidentally write ‘The Stunning Concussion’ because Autocorrect really sucks and this is why my editor gets the fee she does. Right now you’d probably be wondering why I’d have a concussion unless one of the gifts I wrote about didn’t go over very well. Obviously this would never happen because HAVE YOU READ THIS BOOK?

Exactly.

I hope I was able to give you some new and innovative ideas on how to make your relationship – no matter what stage it’s in – a little more, well, squishy in the heart parts. I can tell you from experience that squishy hearts lead to harder other things on the regular, so if that’s what you’re aiming for then I’d get started on some of these projects, like, stat.

At the very least, you’ll get some well-deserved attention and the adoration of others. If you’re a guy, you’ll also garner the hatred of any other guy who got wind of the amazingly romantic things you’ve done and now they look terrible in their own

relationship. For this scenario, I suggest taking karate. Maybe you and your lover can take karate together as a couple – there you go, one more romantic suggestion on the way out the door. “Love nunchucks,” we’ll call that one. And, who knows, maybe you’ll need that martial arts training to keep all your woman’s friends at bay after they fall for you, too. Or maybe just invite them in, right? The more the merrier, eh?

Eyes on the prize, boys.

Eyes on the prize.

## Acknowledgments

A lot of people helped me out with the creation of this book and its heavy editing. Trust me when I say this thing was *way worse*, originally. I can't really write for shit. In addition, a lot of people assisted me in reviewing and critiquing *all* of my works and, for the most part, have gone unmentioned except for blanket words of appreciation. I'm here to right those wrongs and if I have forgotten you in some way, please know that it was most likely intentional. Just kidding. Maybe.

Thanks to (in order of sexiness and/or the way they popped into my head):

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Most of all I'd like to thank you for buying this book and helping me get one step closer to quitting my job and writing this drivel full-time. I am truly grateful.

## About the Author



Rodney Lacroix lives in southern New Hampshire, is the proud father of two amazing children, husband to a gorgeous woman way out of his league, and – even with that - still trying to score boob pics from his female Twitter followers. He’s still a guy, after all. He has an awesome rescue dog named Jax who appeared on the family Christmas card, portraying every member in the Nativity Scene. Rodney also has too much time on his hands to do stuff like this but, seriously, it was hysterical.

He is a Black Belt in Kenpo Karate, has won multiple tournament awards and was given the title of Sensei at his dojo in 2014. Rodney is terrified of spiders because they’re scary and are not impressed at all that he knows karate. He also likes to put random facts about himself in the “About the Author” sections of his books.

Rodney’s previous two books, *Things Go Wrong for Me* and *Perhaps I’ve Said Too Much* have won him multiple humor awards and have appeared on international best-seller lists. He’s hoping this book gets him the trifecta and, by the time you read this, has allowed him to retire to a life of luxury where he can afford Dragon, Naturally Speaking so he doesn’t have to type anymore. Typing tires him out. Also, Rodney is lazy.

## THIS PAGE FOR LADIES ONLY

Psst. You.

Yes, you.

*\*opens trench coat\**

Sorry, sorry. That's just a force of habit when I have a woman's attention so let's start over.

Dear Ladies,

I know there's a good chance that many of you reading this are women. I happen to have a large female following which is a direct result of how I look in a bathrobe. I can't blame you, really.

The women who have purchased this book fall into one of four categories:

- 1) Those looking for a humorous male perspective on romantic tips
- 2) The ones looking for new ideas on romance for themselves and are sick of doing the same old bullshit
- 3) My mom (thanks, mom)
- 4) Women who have bought this book in the hopes their man will read it

It's that last point I want to address because, if that is your intent, it's a little weird that I'm complicit in helping you manipulate your man. I don't want to manipulate your man. I did a short overnight stint in protective custody once and that's as much man-manipulation that I ever want to do.

But, hey, let's do this. Here are some ideas on how to slip this book to him without getting him mad.

- 1) Tell him if he liked how you were after reading *Fifty Shades of Grey*, then him reading this will result in Round 2 of that craziness.
- 2) Write "*There's a (insert 'sexual favor that you're not ashamed to do' here) at the end of this book*" on the inside cover
- 3) Leave it as the only reading material in the bathroom

Be sure to rip this page out and don't mention my name, OK? I don't want to be tossed out of Mantown for breaking the Bro Code.

Good luck.