Chapter 17: Shirt As An Umbrella

If you've made it this far, I'm truly grateful you're enjoying the read. I'm starting to realize that if this becomes a hit, any future dates will have an actual book on my dating history. I've had exes read my journal in the past. That was with my terrible handwriting. I joked to myself that if someone is willing to read that, they must really care about me.

This chapter is for my future wife. If I decide to get married. Or my next serious relationship. I'm hoping that sixteen chapters in, you've gotten a pretty holistic view of who I am/was at the time of writing this. One of my inspirations for this book is *Modern Romance* by Aziz Ansari. I've always enjoyed his comedy, so when a friend recommended I read his book, I jumped at the opportunity to hear him narrate it. Any excuse to be lazy and avoid actual reading.

What I enjoyed about his book is that it described how men in my generation feel when it comes to dating. I highly recommend getting a copy. It also made me sad, because most of the content made me feel sad about the current state of things. I'd love for phone calls to become a thing again, just to humanize the person you're speaking with.

I've noticed a lot of the problems I've had growing a relationship slowly could have been solved with a phone call. It's much easier to establish a pattern of only using written words to communicate. While I think this is great, it sets a bad pattern. The other person also has the same autonomy to be unreachable. But when you're getting to know someone, it should be all-encompassing if possible: in person, FaceTime, phone calls, voice notes. The more data that isn't written, the more useful. This is doubly true for me.

One of my best friends once quoted that the best relationships are when both people are interdependent. I hope I'm remembering that right. Each has their own life outside of the other, but there's a healthy overlap of shared experiences.

What does the ideal partner look like for me? Very much a dating profile question. Let's see if all my years of filling these out were helpful. It's a seemingly difficult question, but for me I think it's simple. I only need healthy communication and empathy for each other. I think everything else can be improved. Here's what I refuse to treat as deal-breakers.

I strongly reject any of the superficial standards I've heard guys my age say. She must be young, fit, no kids, with a good-paying job. Sure, all that would be good. But time changes all. One day these things might not be true. Are you going to pull a Leonardo DiCaprio and drop them before they turn a certain age?

So, future wife, I actually don't like calling you that. Let's call you my muse. To my muse, this chapter is all about you. If you mention petty theft, or how your heart broke for me while you read certain parts, I already know you care more than most before even getting to truly know me. If you really want to steal my heart, you'll ask me about my date where I took off my shirt to use it as an umbrella. I really want to become the man who puts jackets over puddles.