

*The Wicked Truth*  
*about Love*

The Tangles of Desire

Suzanne Ross  
Illustrated by Susan Drawbaugh

**LOVE QUIZ**  
**FREE MUSIC DOWNLOADS**

The Wicked Truth About Love: The Tangles of Desire  
Copyright ©2009 Suzanne Ross  
All rights reserved

Illustrated by Susan Drawbaugh

**Music:**

*Never Had To Ask*

Published 1994

John Batdorf, BatMac Music, BMI

Michael McLean, Shining Star Music, ASCAP

*I Never Wanted*

Published 2005

John Batdorf, BatMac Music, BMI

Michael McLean, Shining Star Music, ASCAP

*Love: All I Really Know About It*

Published, 2008

John Batdorf, BatMac Music, BMI

Michael McLean, Shining Star Music, ASCAP

Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, or in any manner whatsoever without the prior written permission of the copyright owner except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information address DOERS Publishing, 2624 Patriot Boulevard, Glenview, IL 60026.

The Wicked Truth About Love website:

<http://www.thewickedtruthaboutlove.com>

DOERS Publishing website:

<http://www.doerspublishing.com>

Book Design by Archer Graphics

ISBN 978-0-9818123-0-4

***For my husband Keith***

*In the sweetest dreams I've ever known  
I could barely glimpse a love like you have shown  
I'm not sure I'm every gonna see  
Why you've given all the love you have to me*

(Michael McLean, *Never Had To Ask*)



## Contents

<i>Introduction</i> . . . . .	<i>ix</i>
CHAPTER ONE	
<i>Finally, Someone is Going to Tell Me What Love Is</i> . . . . .	3
CHAPTER TWO	
<i>What Do You Mean, I'm Not a Billiard Ball??</i> . . . . .	19
CHAPTER THREE	
<i>The Tangles of Desire</i> . . . . .	43
CHAPTER FOUR	
<i>Best Friend Forever</i> . . . . .	61
CHAPTER FIVE	
<i>Celebrity Chef</i> . . . . .	71
CHAPTER SIX	
<i>Super Hero</i> . . . . .	83
CHAPTER SEVEN	
<i>Rock Star</i> . . . . .	91
CHAPTER EIGHT	
<i>Sidekick</i> . . . . .	101
CHAPTER NINE	
<i>Custodian</i> . . . . .	111
CHAPTER TEN	
<i>Love is an Eternal Mystery... and Gift</i> . . . . .	123



## *Music Download Instructions*

Long-time musical partners Michael McLean and John Batdorf have graciously made available tunes that musically illustrate the wicked truth about love. Their offering includes some of their classic songs plus original pieces written just for *The Wicked Truth About Love*. These loving, witty and wise tunes are available for free to readers of *The Wicked Truth About Love: The Tangles of Desire*. Just visit [www.thewickedtruthaboutlove.com/music](http://www.thewickedtruthaboutlove.com/music), download the music and enjoy.



# *The Wicked Truth About Love*

## *Introduction*

If you keep getting tripped up on the way to love, then this book is for you – which means it’s for everyone. (That’s for my publicist.) Let’s face it, “The course of true love never did run smooth,” as Shakespeare knew over 400 years ago. Why does it seem so hard to get love right? And why is it that no matter how many times we get our hearts ripped out of our chest and handed to us in a barely beating bloodless lump, we keep trying? Maybe we’re all masochists, or maybe love is just so wonderful that it’s worth the pain. But if you’ve been getting tangled up and trampled under by love’s obstacles, you’ll be pleased to know that this book is here to help.

I wouldn’t be at all surprised if you were wondering why you should trust anything you read in this book. You’ve probably read the magazine articles, taken the quizzes, and studied the books by noted psychologists, all to no avail. If that’s the case, then I have you right where I want you – fed up with all the self-help mumbo jumbo and plain tired of the search for answers. You’ve broken up so many times that you could write a how-to book about it. In other words, you are more than ready for the truth about how to find love. What I’m going to tell you is not going to sound like anything you’ve heard before. It will challenge your assumptions and change what you think you know about love.

I have been working with a group of researchers from psychology, anthropology, sociology, theology, brain physiology and philosophy who are exploring something about how human desire works. These are really smart men and women who write in the nearly indecipherable language of academia. Though I myself am no genius, I am just smart enough to figure out what

they are saying, which is what inspired the core insights of this book. The big idea they are working on is called *mimetic theory*, and the father of contemporary research into the theory is Dr. René Girard. His work is so important that in 2005 he was inducted into the French Academy, which consists of 40 members called “immortals.” (Past members include people like Louis Pasteur, the reason we “got milk” safely; René Descartes, of “I think therefore I am” fame; and Jules Verne, the guy who invented science fiction with books like *Journey to the Center of the Earth* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. See why they’re called “immortals”?) Anyway, Prof. Girard is an immortal now but he doesn’t let it go to his head. He is a very gentle and generous man who embodies a spirit of love with everyone, including non-academics like me whose lives have been transformed by his ideas.

As I said, I am no René Girard, but I do have talent and experience in writing, education and instructional design. What I do is take an idea and design a way to teach it. For schools I wrote curriculum; for business, it was training programs and policy and procedure manuals. I’ve taught preschoolers how to tie their shoelaces and sales pros how to track inventory using new software. What I do in this book is translate mimetic theory from “academeze” to plain speak, so you don’t have to go through what I went through: years of struggling to make sense of some really difficult, but important scholarship.

But I do one more thing, something the scholars don’t do. No matter what I’m teaching, I keep one question in mind that I want to be able to answer for my learners: **So what?** In other words, why should you bother to learn whatever it is I am trying to teach you? How will it make a difference in your life? Scholars believe that a really good idea is valuable in and of itself, and I agree with that. But the ultimate value of the idea, the true test of its worth, is whether it matters to how we live, love, and work together.

## Introduction

When it comes to mimetic theory and the search for true love, the answer to the “So what?” question is simple and profound. With mimetic theory you’ll have the key to getting yourself untangled from the things that trip you up on the way to an authentic, sustainable love. You will be able to identify your tangles and extricate yourself from them before they either ruin your chances with a good prospect or pull you in too deep with the totally wrong person. Once the obstacles are removed, your chances for true love will dramatically improve. I invite you to read this book, take the questionnaire, and learn about love from a radical, new perspective.

If you want to learn more about mimetic theory you can go to the Raven Foundation website, [www.ravenfoundation.org](http://www.ravenfoundation.org). My husband Keith and I began the foundation to spread awareness of mimetic theory. This book is part of that effort. Now’s the time when I can put into writing the gratitude I feel every day for the people I work with: Keith Ross, Adam Ericksen, Maura Junius and my daughter, Emily Martensen. They are joyful, enthusiastic, smart human beings who make work feel like a holiday. I’d also like to thank Laurie Ashcraft and her firm, Ashcraft Research, Inc. for their work designing the questionnaire; Susan Drawbaugh for her illustrations; Irene Archer for her cover and interior design work; and Cathy Sweitzer for her skill and wisdom during the editing process. The music for this project was provided by Michael McLean and John Batdorf, two men whose compositions about love reflect their own honesty and compassion. I am honored to have collaborated with them. I am also indebted to my friends and conversation partners on mimetic theory and love, James Alison and Andrew McKenna. In particular, I’d like to thank Mark R. Anspach for sharing his insights into the nature of love as gift. And my greatest thanks are always reserved for René Girard, scholar, mentor, immortal and friend.



*Love is a teacher, but a hard one to obtain.  
Learning to love is hard and we pay dearly for it.  
It takes hard work and a long apprenticeship,  
for it is not just for a moment that we must learn to love,  
but forever.*

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*



## *Chapter One*

### *Finally, Someone is Going to Tell Me What Love Is*

#### **First A Mind Dump**

**W**hen I was a little girl (and forgive me if I don't tell you how long ago that was), I couldn't wait to be a woman. I studied the women I knew, my mother and grandmothers, my little Italian aunts and my sturdy Slovakian ones. Then I made a list of things that they had in common, thinking that these were the things that would make me a woman. Because I was a child, the characteristics on my list weren't very profound. They were mostly outward signs, like being a good cook or using hair spray or shaving your legs. (My husband tells me that shaving also figured big in his race to acquire manhood.) So, in pursuit of my womanhood, one day I locked myself in the bathroom and shaved my legs, but about the only thing that happened was my mom said I was too young to be shaving and I got itchy skin. I also figured out that the scent I liked on my dad was called menthol, but nothing was different inside, and my parents still treated me like a little girl. I had to agree with them. I was just a little girl with itchy legs.

Maybe, I thought, it's the combination of shaved legs with stockings, so I tried that, and still nothing new inside me that I could point to and say, Aha, this is it. I've arrived at womanhood! Maybe it was shaved legs and stockings with high heels? No, that was definitely not it. Maybe it was having a boyfriend who would someday be your husband? But having a boyfriend was a project

in itself, so I made a different list for that one which included things like: shave your legs regularly, don't dress like your aunts, don't listen to Grandma's music, be nice, don't argue, wait on him hand and foot.... You can see how that wasn't going to lead to anything productive. But then one day, many years and failed romances later, I woke up and realized that I was a woman, and it had nothing to do with any of the things I thought it had to do with. I can't tell you exactly when it happened or point to a particular cause, but there I was, a woman who had left little girl concerns and ways of thinking behind, and how it happened was a mystery.

So if you're reading this book and were disciplined enough to begin at the beginning, you're no doubt wondering what these first paragraphs have to do with love. You're probably hoping this chapter is going to live up to its title and that really soon now I'm going to tell you what love is. If only I'd put it in bold and set it apart in its own indented paragraph. That would have been considerate of me. Maybe there's an index that will tell you which page it's on, and you could turn to it now because your sense of discipline, not to mention your patience, is wearing thin. All right, here it is; at least here's where we are going to start.

Do you have a list in your head of the things that will happen when you're in love for real like my list for being a woman, things that are the sure signs that you've found the right one and the search is over? Of course you do. We all do. If you want to know what love really is, first you have to download that list from the recesses of your brain and move it to trash. It is for sure a huge obstacle to true love – trust me on this. I'm going to start the list with some of my things and things my friends and family had on their list, and then I want you to add the ones that are in your head that I haven't got down here.

## Finally Someone is Going to Tell Me What Love is

- S/he will know my thoughts so well that I won't have to finish my sentences. (I've tried that one – not one of my better ideas.)
- S/he will know exactly what to do when I'm \_\_\_\_\_. (Fill in the blank with your emotion of choice: angry, sad, depressed, anxious, peeved, petty, moody...)
- I will think about him/her constantly, except when I'm \_\_\_\_\_. (Fill in your favorite activity: listening to my iPod™, out with friends, getting my nails done, drafting players for my fantasy football team...)
- S/he will complete me. (Whatever that means.)
- S/he will give me exactly what I need. (Again, whatever that means.)
- S/he will make me completely happy. (Wow, no pressure there.)
- S/he will be \_\_\_\_\_. (Fill in your requisite physical attribute: tall, short, thin, curvy, built, bald [you're welcome], pleasingly plump [you're welcome]...)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Did you add yours to the list? As you can see from my slightly sarcastic parenthetical remarks, I don't believe in this list at all. It's a lot like my becoming a woman list – it is trying to pin down something that is fairly mysterious by listing some outward signs as if acquiring them will produce the thing you're after. Be sure you've added all the things from the list in your head because here it goes: cursor on the mark, get set, drag to trash.

## The Greatest Thing

Before you read any further, I'd like to ask you one thing: Why are you reading this book? The page count isn't of the *War and Peace* variety, but still, reading is an investment of your time and energy, and so I'm wondering what's motivating you to read a book about love. You could be reading a book about how to make a million bucks, look younger, lose 10 pounds, improve your vocabulary, count cards at Black Jack, write a killer resume, cook with tofu – the list of self improvement books is endless. But you have chosen a book about love. Allow me to say that no matter your reason, I believe you have chosen wisely.

The lyrics for the song, *The Second Greatest Thing*,\* include the phrase, "Loving her's the greatest thing I've ever done." It was written by my friend, Michael McLean and here's how it goes:

### ***Second Greatest Thing***

If I wrote a pop song that topped the charts  
And everyone sang it  
With all their hearts  
And it rocked on for twenty years at #1  
I'd say it's the second greatest thing I've ever done.

If I wrote a sermon like the one on the Mount  
If I had millions  
In my account  
If I cured cancer and a Nobel Prize was one  
I'd say it's the second greatest thing I've ever done.



## Finally Someone is Going to Tell Me What Love is

### The Greatest Thing, continued

Cause I've loved her, I kept my promise  
I loved her no matter what  
And she'll always be the only one  
I am not a perfect husband but my heart was never shut  
Loving her's the greatest thing I've ever done

The song claims that “loving her” would be the greatest thing he'd done even if the guy had written a hit song, won a Nobel prize, ended hunger, or written the Sermon on the Mount. My friend Michael is saying that every other achievement in the world comes in second place to the achievement of loving another human being well. He's a dear friend of mine and so I know that he's not just saying that to see if he can write a hit song. He believes it and he lives it. Michael always puts his own needs second to those of his wife, his kids, his friends, his parents, even people he hardly knows. He's a giver because he knows something for absolutely, positively sure: the only thing that matters in your life is the love you share, the relationships you nurture, the people you treasure and the people who treasure you. Getting love right isn't just a hobby or a sideline. It's what a life well lived is all about. So congratulate yourself for knowing that and for devoting yourself to the task. Love isn't always easy, but it's always worth it; and no matter who you are or what you have already accomplished or have yet to accomplish, love is the greatest thing you'll ever do. ♡

\*Michael McLean, *The Second Greatest Thing*, 2006.

## The Mystery of Love

You're ready now for the definition of love you've been waiting for all your life and that you had to do that stupid exercise to get to. I know you're thinking, This better be good, and it is, really. The definition of love is this: Love is a mystery. Don't you love that? No? You think I've bailed, dodged the issue, led you on a wild goose chase for nothing? Most people think that when they first hear it. That's okay, just hang in there because by the end of this chapter (which is only three, maybe four more pages, I'm not sure because I haven't written it yet), you are going to be thrilled with it. (Wow! Now *I'm* feeling the pressure.)

I didn't come up with this definition of love randomly. I asked a lot of people I know who have had long relationships (okay, six people doesn't sound like a lot, but when you consider how hard it is to sustain long relationships, I think it's a pretty good sampling) just what love is, and all six of them shrugged their shoulders and just smiled – not at me, at their partner. Isn't that weird? It's as if love is something that they couldn't put into words, but could only express in a smile exchanged with someone who they've been with a long time. *Really* weird and not something that lends itself easily to being an item on a list. In fact, it's a little bit mysterious, don't you think?

So what I figured was that love was a mystery, but that that was a good thing. Most of us don't like mysteries. Well we do, if it's in a book or movie or a one-hour *Law and Order* episode, and we know that a solution, however lame, will be provided for us at the end. But an *eternal* mystery, something that has no solution? Few of us enjoy that. Few of us want to live like that. We want answers, darn it! (That's my harshest swear word – feel free to fill in your own if it makes you feel better.) We are Americans; we're problem solvers; no unknown is too unknowable for us to figure out. We went to the moon; we split the atom; we invented cheese

## Finally Someone is Going to Tell Me What Love is

in a can; we are masters of all we survey, right? So we tackle love with the same energy and determination, and the darn thing refuses to submit to our rational analysis.

But reducing love to a problem that can be solved like, How much methane gas does one cow emit in a day, and does it affect global warming? – well, that takes the mystery out of love, and mystery is what makes love so captivating. I mean, once you've solved a problem, you're done with it, and you move on to the next one. Think about it, we haven't gone back to the moon, have we? Do you really want love to be a problem you solve? Because if it is, you will toss it aside and move on to the next problem just like NASA did and just like you did in algebra class. (If you got as far as algebra – I think I did, but I don't remember much except that I couldn't wait to toss aside all those problems.)

### Unprovably Real

Love can't be expressed in a mathematical equation or as a scientific hypothesis. That's because math and science are really good at describing the world we can see, feel, hear, touch, and taste, but we don't encounter love through our senses in the same way. Love *affects* our senses, sure. Our heads spin, we hear bells and see shooting stars when we are in love, but it's hard to prove love exists the way we prove the existence of bacteria in pond scum.

The character, Palmer Joss, in the movie *Contact*<sup>1</sup> tries to make this point with Ellie, Jodie Foster's character. She's a young woman still grieving the death of her father that happened when she was a little girl. She's in charge of this huge field of giant antennas trying to pick up some signal from deep space that would prove the existence of extra-terrestrials, but what she's really looking for is some evidence that her dad isn't gone, that even though he's dead, there might be a way to contact him. (Get

<sup>1</sup> *Contact*, dir. Robert Zemeckis, perfs. Jodie Foster and Matthew McConaughey, DVD, Warner Bros Pictures, 1997.

it, *Contact?*) She won't admit this to herself, of course. She is a scientist who doesn't believe in anything she can't measure, not life after death, not love, not God.

Enter hunky theologian Palmer Joss, played by Matthew McConaughey, who is a walking billboard for how believing in God gives you cute dimples. Here's a snippet of dialogue in which Palmer tells Ellie that proving God's existence is as futile as trying to prove that love exists:

**Palmer Joss:** Did you love your father?

**Ellie Arroway:** What?

**Palmer Joss:** Your dad. Did you love him?

**Ellie Arroway:** Yes, very much.

**Palmer Joss:** Prove it.

The kind of proof Palmer is asking for is the kind of proof Ellie is used to providing: scientific proof. His point is that just because you can't prove something scientifically doesn't mean it doesn't exist. All it means is that the thing has a different reality, exists outside the physical world that science and math are designed to measure. Ellie has an experience at the end of the movie that convinces her that extra-terrestrials do exist; she just can't prove it scientifically. Here's how she explains it to a scientific panel demanding proof of her claim:

**Panel member:** Doctor Arroway, you come to us with no evidence, no record, no artifacts. Only a story that to put it mildly strains credibility. Over half a trillion dollars was spent, dozens of lives were lost. Are you really going to sit there and tell us we should just take this all... on faith?

*(pause, Ellie looks at Palmer)*

**Michael Kitz:** Please answer the question, doctor.

## Finally Someone is Going to Tell Me What Love is

**Ellie Arroway:** Is it possible that it didn't happen? Yes. As a scientist, I must concede that, I must volunteer that.

**Michael Kitz:** Wait a minute, let me get this straight. You admit that you have absolutely no physical evidence to back up your story.

**Ellie Arroway:** Yes.

**Michael Kitz:** You admit that you very well may have hallucinated this whole thing.

**Ellie Arroway:** Yes.

**Michael Kitz:** You admit that if you were in our position, you would respond with exactly the same degree of incredulity and skepticism!

**Ellie Arroway:** Yes!

**Michael Kitz:** (*standing, angrily*) Then why don't you simply withdraw your testimony, and concede that this "journey to the center of the galaxy," in fact, never took place!

**Ellie Arroway:** Because I can't. I... had an experience... I can't prove it, I can't even explain it, but everything that I know as a human being, everything that I am tells me that it was real! I was given something wonderful, something that changed me forever... A vision... of the universe, that tells us, undeniably, how tiny, and insignificant and how... rare, and precious we all are! A vision that tells us that we belong to something that is greater than ourselves, that we are not, that none of us are alone! I wish... I... could share that... I wish, that everyone, if only for one... moment, could feel... that awe, and humility, and hope. But... That continues to be my wish.

When Ellie says, “I was given something wonderful, something that changed me forever,” she could easily be describing what love is. What she discovers is that this experience that she can’t prove but can only give witness to is the thing that heals her grief over her father’s death and opens her heart so that she can accept the love offered to her by Palmer Joss. Maybe love is one heck of a hallucination that we should be responding to with “incredulity and skepticism,” but Ellie can’t do that anymore. Because of her unprovable but undeniable experience in space, love has become a mystery that she no longer needs to deny, as she did with the existence of God, but finally can just allow to be and to be mysterious.

Mystery itself may be the thing that pulses through the fabric of the universe giving it its very being. A mathematician named Kurt Gödel astounded his colleagues – one of whom was Albert Einstein – by using mathematics to prove that there are equations that are both true AND unprovable.<sup>2</sup> I wish I’d known about this in high school algebra because every time I couldn’t prove an equation I got graded with a big red zero. Gödel proved that being mathematically unprovable is not a disqualifier for truth. Sounds like what Ellie figured out about extra-terrestrials, God and love.

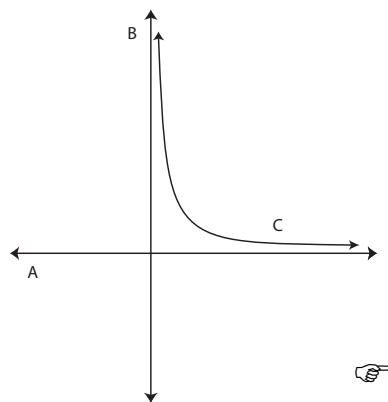
Scientists also think that over 95 percent of the universe is made up of matter and energy that can’t be seen or directly measured by any instruments we currently have, only inferred to be there by however scientists infer things about the universe. They call it “dark matter” and “dark energy” because they figure it must be dark or they could see it. That’s one great big honking mystery, and maybe someday scientists will figure out what’s going on in the “dark,” but I’d wager my snapshot of a UFO landing in my backyard that when they unravel that mystery, they’ll realize there is some other big mystery out there they never even knew they didn’t know about.

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Goldstein, *Incompleteness: The Proof and Paradox of Kurt Gödel*, (New York and London: 2005).

### I Didn't See THAT Coming!

Here's a classic love question: *Do opposites attract?* I always wondered if relationships were stronger the more you have in common or whether differences sustain you over the long haul by keeping things interesting. That question may sound like a good one, but it is a gigantic distraction. Like a slab of red meat tossed to a guard dog, it keeps you from seeing the obvious about all human relationships.

The wicked truth about love is that no matter how alike or different you and your lover might be, you are still two unique people who will never be fully known to one another. Life with another human being will always be full of surprises. In fact, the more alike you are, the more you might be lulled into thinking you are *completely* alike. You'll begin to expect that your beloved will think, feel, react and desire exactly as you do. But another human being is not you, no matter how much you love each other. There's even a mathematical formula that represents this – it has the mysteriously humorous name “asymptote.” Take a little trip to Wikipedia (my favorite source for trusted knowledge), and you'll find a graph that looks something like this:



I Didn't See THAT Coming!, continued

The curved line (C) goes on forever, getting closer and closer to the straight line (A and B), but they never quite touch. Boggles the mind, I know. What we have here is the mathematical formula for infinity ( $\infty$ ) and when you apply it to relationships, you realize that no matter how close you get to someone, you will never really close the gap between you completely.

So when your partner does something that has you smacking your head and muttering, "I didn't see that coming!" you may feel shocked, stupid, embarrassed or afraid that you've made a monumental mistake by getting involved with someone capable of whatever the crazy thing is s/he said or did. In those moments it's important to take a deep breath and realize that the whole shocked and surprised scenario has been artificially created by false expectations. When someone does something "unexpected," what they are doing is being themselves in all their mysterious unknowability. Instead of it triggering some sort of red alert, it is really a signal that something incredibly fascinating and wonderful is suddenly possible – you have been given an opportunity to delve deeper into the mystery of your beloved. Rather than freak out, start listening. Ask questions, wait for the answers, and be prepared for the thrill of discovery. ♡

## The Joy of Not Knowing

I'm pretty sure that no one is ever going to solve the mystery of love. It is an eternal mystery that will never be reduced to an equation or step-by-step analysis. There will never be a "if you do this thing you'll find true love" formula, no matter how many authors, theologians, psychiatrists, Dr. Phils and Dr. Lauras, best friends or moms tell you they have the answer. And there will never be an explanation for why two people are attracted to each other in the first place.

Remember the TV show, *Dharma and Greg*?<sup>3</sup> No formula could have predicted that they would find true love together. In fact, everything we think we know about what makes relationships work says, No way, those two will never make it. Here's how the couple is described on a website about the show:

There could hardly be an odder match, but love knows no reason. Assistant DA Greg Montgomery, the golden spoon son of successful businessman Edward Montgomery and his bossy spouse Kitty, the queen of socialite snobism, falls madly in love with the utterly unconventional free spirit Dharma Finkelstein, truly the daughter of hippie couple Larry Finkelstein and Abby O'Neil, who never fail to go against whatever even smells like convention.

The hippie and the Ivy League Republican – I suppose opposites do attract, but Dharma and Greg are more like the meeting of matter and anti-matter. The show's writers are exploring the mystery of love, asking what exactly is the secret ingredient that makes relationships work and love endure. Here's one answer from the show:

**Dharma:** You're gonna be a great dad!

**Greg:** How do you know? How am I gonna know what to do?

<sup>3</sup> *Dharma and Greg*, ABC, 1997-2002.

**Dharma:** Oh, you'll watch what I do. You'll totally disapprove and do the complete opposite.

That's just silly, of course. Disapproving of everything your lover does and then doing the opposite is not the secret formula for love. Or is it? It works for Dharma and Greg, but would it work for anyone else? All we can say for sure is that they have found their secret formula for love, and it's up to us to find ours. I'd suggest you keep notes as you conduct your search – you may not find love, but you might be generating some pretty good sitcom material.

There is one tip I can give you at this point before we look at the obstacles to love and reach some grand conclusion at the end of the book. If love is a mystery, then instead of tackling love like a to-do list or an equation to solve, why not develop your sense of mystery? Attune yourself to mystery. Learn to love it the way a dog loves liver snaps. You don't want your back end wagging so hard your feet slip out from under you, but a little waggle in the face of mystery wouldn't be a bad thing. How does one cultivate a love of mystery, you ask? It's simple, really. Here's what I do.

My husband and I have a home in a mountain valley, and in the summertime, I love to sit outside and look at the sky. It's usually chilly, because we live in a desert mountain valley, which means when the sun goes down the temperature drops from 90 to 65 degrees in about thirty minutes. So I put on a sweater, set my lawn chair in the driveway in the fully reclined position, and watch the stars. It's amazing! The Milky Way, our galaxy, is a double band across the sky so dense with stars that it's, well, milky. The air is so thin and the sky so crystal clear that you can actually see satellites moving across the dome of the sky. And every night, I mean *every* night, I see at least one shooting star. No kidding. I see Jupiter and Mars and billions and billions of

## Finally Someone is Going to Tell Me What Love is

stars, and it's vast and utterly beautiful. I realize that I am staring into eternity, into something that defies explanation, and I feel happy about it! It's truly amazing, and I am happy just being amazed without having to understand or explain it to myself or anyone else.

So here's your job before you read the next chapter. Find your version of my summer sky. It could be something simple, already right in front of you, like contemplating the beauty of a flower or the flight of a bird. It's probably something in nature, because nature is mysteriously beautiful. Maybe it's autumn, and the leaves are changing color, or it's summer, and there's a dynamite lightning storm over your house, or the snow is falling in winter, and you realize that it's never quieter than when it's snowing. Just contemplate anything that won't let you explain it away, and let the joy fill you up. Because the thing about mystery is, if you let yourself live with it, it leads to joy.

So, are you happy love is a mystery now? I thought so, because I figured if you're reading this book, you must be pretty smart and open to new ideas. That's really great. I'm feeling kind of bonded to you right now, and I've never met you, and you haven't even read this yet because I'm still writing it, but I'm imagining you reading it sometime in the future, and I find myself really liking you. Now that's mysterious!