

Praise for

Nonsense For Nothing

Nonsense
For Nothing

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Shane Lou

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Nonsense For Nothing

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I'm so proud of you.*

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Introduction

Congratulations on your download of my third book, *Nonsense For Nothing!* I anticipate that this book will provide you with laughter and enjoyment for many years to come.

You may be unfamiliar with my work, so let me tell you a little bit about myself. I'm an easygoing, quirky, smart, funny person who lives life to the fullest. Carpe diem! I love to travel, explore museums and new restaurants, and take strolls in the park. On a typical Friday night, you could find me either enjoying the company of friends, or ordering in and watching a fun romantic comedy. I'm looking for a partner who's sweet, honest, motivated, and a brunette.¹

I should mention that I love to laugh. I love to laugh so much, in fact, that in 2010 I created a blog, "I'm Having A Laugh," on which I've shared my thoughts on dating, pop culture, eyeglasses, hand sanitizers, my seventh-grade social studies notebook, and whatever else has come to mind. (The URL is imhavingalough.blogspot.com.) This book is a compilation of (in my opinion) the best essays I wrote for the blog through the summer of 2011. Aside from a few minor but necessary revisions, these blog entries are presented to you in their original state, in beautiful HD.

For good measure, I've also tossed in 30 or so pithy comments I've made on the blog and elsewhere. You'll find them spread throughout the book in sections titled "Tiny Bits Of Nonsense."

1. I copied this paragraph word for word from my online dating profile. Just in case my soul mate decides to download this book.²

2. This is the first and only footnote I've ever inserted into one of my books. I wanted to do it once, just to see what it feels like.

I've had fun writing these essays. I hope you have fun reading them. Sit back, relax, and have a laugh.

Sincerely your friend,
Shane

Nonsense
For Nothing

"I'm going to start my book with a quote." – Shane Lou

Wishing The Royal Couple All The Best
(Originally Published April 25, 2011)

Congratulations in advance to Prince William and Kate Middleton, whose royal wedding is scheduled for 6 a.m. Eastern time this Friday. I wish you all the best in your marriage. Really, I do. I'm telling you this now, four days before your big day, because there is absolutely no way I am waking up at 6 a.m. to watch you -- two lovely people, I'm sure, but also two complete strangers to me -- exchange vows.

There have been very few occasions in my life when I woke up at 6 a.m. for a reason other than school/work or insomnia. I remember *He-Man* cartoons aired in the early morning when I was a kid, and I would drag myself out of bed to watch them. Or maybe it was *She-Ra*. After all these years, I'm still not sure if *She-Ra* was meant to be watched by girls or boys. Her nickname was the "Princess of Power" -- I never went up to my friends and asked them, "Hey, did you see the 'Princess of Power' yesterday?" -- but on the other hand, she was He-Man's sister, and her nemesis was a male.

So that was one exception. Waking up at 6 a.m. to watch Etheria's "Princess of Power": acceptable. Waking up at 6 a.m. to watch England's "Future Princess": inconceivable.

I do feel sympathy for Prince William, who is under intense scrutiny, what with the wedding just a few days away and the whole world analyzing his every move. I've been there, my friend. I'm not married. I'm not even engaged. But my future wedding is widely anticipated by family members who repeatedly ask me, "When are you going to get married?" It's more of a greeting now than a question. There are no more "hellos" in my family. They see me, they hug me, and they demand to know when I will find a wife.

I look forward to my wedding day. You can be certain that my wedding will also be scheduled for 6 a.m. My family wants me to get married? Then I'll get married at the break of dawn, ruin their day. That'll show 'em.

Prince William won't mind if I don't watch his wedding. He'll be sharing his special day with plenty of other people. The royal wedding will have 1,900 guests. Nineteen hundred! A lot of celebrities among them, too. Elton John will be there. David and Victoria Beckham will be there. Guy Ritchie will be there. Mr. Bean will be there. Mr. Bean! He probably won't give a toast at the reception. What an unusual mix of celebrities. It just seems so random to me. The U.S. equivalent would be George Clooney marrying and inviting Billy Joel, Lamar Odom and Khloe Kardashian, and Pee-Wee Herman to the wedding.

Anyway, good luck to you both, Prince William and Kate Middleton. I mean no disrespect when I tell you I will be sleeping through your wedding. Or watching *She-Ra* on DVD.

When's The Right Time To Reveal Your Crush To A Celebrity? Never
(Originally Published March 4, 2011)

Charlie Sheen has joined Twitter. You already know this, because he's received a lot of attention this week. A lot more attention than when I launched my Twitter account. I'm not sure why.

It pays for Sheen to be on Twitter. It really pays. He reportedly will make up to one million dollars per year to tweet endorsements. He's far from the only celebrity to cash in on Twitter. A couple of the Kardashian sisters also earn money through endorsements on the site. Kourtney Kardashian reportedly was paid for sending a tweet about how exciting the trailer for *The Tourist* was. And as we all know, *The Tourist* went on to become a massive success because of that tweet.

I've read that another reason Sheen joined Twitter was to connect with his fans. I don't doubt that that's true. There are hundreds and hundreds of celebrities on Twitter who provide updates on their lives and careers to their followers. So in that sense, they do connect with fans.

Except there's sort of a disconnect between the fans and celebrities, too. You can type the Twitter handle of any celebrity into Twitter's search engine, and you'll find that he or she receives several tweets per minute. And he or she responds to virtually none of them.

At first, I thought this was rather rude of the celebrities. But then I started to actually read the comments that were being tweeted to them. And I realized that it's not worth their time to answer back.

I'd like to focus on one particular type of fan-to-celebrity tweet that's difficult to rationalize: telling a celebrity that you have a crush on him/her. It's not advisable to send that kind of tweet for a couple of reasons: 1) there's a 99.9% chance the celebrity will never read the tweet; 2) there's a 99.9% chance he/she is

romantically involved with someone way more famous and better looking than you; 3) it's kind of creepy, isn't it? You wouldn't go up to a complete stranger on the street and say, "Hey, I've been following you for years and I've decided that now's the time to tell you I have a huge crush on you," would you?

(Apropos of nothing, I enjoy having debates with friends regarding whether a particular celebrity is hot, because the arguments that come up are beyond idiotic. I was recently having a conversation with someone about Kate Winslet, and I pointed out that she's had two failed marriages. In retrospect, it was a dumb thing to say, because 1) that fact has no bearing on how attractive she is; 2) she's received six Oscar nominations, winning once; 3) she has no problem going naked in front of a camera; 4) she's KATE WINSLET, and if she looked in my direction, even by accident, I'd go into cardiac arrest.)

Really, most celebrities want to connect with their fans on Twitter, but only enough to plug their latest projects and share the random thoughts they wouldn't have told anyone otherwise. They don't want to hear your random thoughts.

What do you think? Am I right or wrong? Let's hear your feedback.

And if you happen to know Zooey Deschanel, please send this along to her. I'd love to hear her feedback especially. I've had a crush on her since *Elf*. Love you, Zooey!

A Letter From The Animals Of The World To Hollywood
(Originally Published April 8, 2011)

To all Hollywood studios:

It has come to our attention that some of you have been using our likenesses in movies without permission. According to our research, images of cats, dogs, birds, bees, geese, fish, donkeys, owls, chimps, chipmunks, wolves, foxes, frogs, turtles, tigers, lions, zebras, bears, lemurs, giraffes, lizards, penguins, rats, ants, dragons and countless other animals have been prominently featured in films over the last two decades.

We are deeply concerned over what we feel are inaccurate portrayals of the animal kingdom. Despite popular human belief, there is no such thing as a kung fu panda or a ninja turtle. Our stance on this issue cannot be more clear: We have not, nor ever will, engage in martial arts.

Quite frankly, we're astonished by your lack of knowledge regarding species other than your own. Do you not read the information plaques at the zoo?

We also believe that the poor critical response to some of these films will cause irreparable damage to our reputations. Had the wolf community known about *Alpha and Omega* prior to its release, it would have made every effort to protest the project. At the least, it would not have signed off on the tagline "A Pawsome 3D Adventure."

On behalf of all animals past and present (including the dinosaurs, mammoths and other creatures no longer with us), we demand that you cease and desist all further use of our likenesses until we reach a resolution. If you brazenly continue to disregard our rights, we will have no choice but to pursue legal action and unleash a rainstorm of bird droppings onto your cars.

Sincerely,

The Animal Kingdom

The Buzz On Oscar Buzz
(Originally Published December 27, 2010)

Gulliver's Travels is a surefire Oscar contender. The film contains Jack Black in his most personal role to date, and a breakout performance by Emily Blunt. It's also one of the top three films to have opened in the last week, to boot.

Oh, you didn't realize there was Oscar buzz surrounding *Gulliver's Travels*? I'm not surprised. The film didn't have any Oscar buzz until a few minutes ago, when I typed the previous paragraph. But being the generous guy that I am, I've decided to give it some buzz.

I hate that term, "Oscar buzz." You read it all the time: such-and-such movie has Oscar buzz. Says who? What constitutes "buzz," exactly? And who starts the buzz? Can I now assume that *Gulliver's Travels* is a likely Oscar nominee because I say it has buzz? (Full disclosure: I haven't seen *Gulliver's Travels*, nor do I have any desire to see it. I read the book in high school and was ambivalent. The satire was a little outdated, to say the least. Now, show me an issue of *MAD Magazine* from the 18th century, and perhaps I'll have a greater respect for satire from that era.)

It's not hard to predict which films will have Oscar buzz. *Gulliver's Travels* actually fits one of the criteria for Oscar buzz: It's based on a critically acclaimed book. A few of the best-picture nominees for 2010 were based on books: *Up in the Air*, *The Blind Side*, *Precious* (which, in case you were unaware, is based on the novel *Push* by Sapphire).

Film plot is the key to determining whether a movie will garner Oscar buzz.

Gulliver's Travels stars Jack Black as a New York City man transported to a land where the natives are much smaller than he is. Cute, but not Oscar-worthy.

Black Swan...now there's a movie that's Oscar-worthy. A ballerina who descends into madness and makes out with Mila Kunis? Yes! Give it Oscar buzz immediately!

The favorite to win the best-picture Oscar, in my view, is *The King's Speech*. You may not have heard of the movie prior to the Golden Globe nominations two weeks ago, when it received a leading seven nods. Heck, you may not have heard of *The King's Speech* until you started reading this paragraph.

But make no mistake, *The King's Speech* is absolutely worthy of Oscar consideration. For starters, it's a British film, and the Academy loves movies that contain English dialogue spoken in non-American accents. And the plot just screams Oscar buzz: a British king who tries to overcome a speech impediment with the help of a speech therapist. Seriously, how long have we been waiting for this story to be told on the big screen? [Editor's note: I wrote this entry before *The King's Speech* took off and won the best-picture Oscar. In other words, before it really had *buzz*.]

This is just my two cents; I'm not a film critic. There are many film critics and critics' societies that will tell you which movies have Oscar buzz. (How many critics does society need?) But I do think my opinion is worth something. I've been hearing that my blog has a lot of buzz.

It's An Honor Just To Be Nominated
(Originally Published September 27, 2010)

When I'm bored, I Google words at random. The other day, I Googled "Quiznos" and spent the next 20 minutes clicking on the results. Like I said, I was bored. And probably hungry, too.

In my research, I discovered an "award-winning Quiznos" in Anaheim, California. I'm not sure how awards are presented within the fast food industry, but I can only assume that an over-the-top ceremony was held in Hollywood at some point. How did I miss this on TV? Which award did Quiznos win? Best performance by a chicken in a leading sandwich?

Who hosted the ceremony? Who presented? Who walked the red carpet? Was there an "in memoriam" segment for the leftover vegetables that expired in the last year? Which fast food executives hooked up at the official after-party?

How did *Us Weekly* not cover this?

The Next Harry Potter
(Originally Published July 15, 2011)

Today marks the release of the eighth and final *Harry Potter* film, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*. And so ends one of the most successful movie franchises of all time.

It's a sad moment for a lot of fans, many of whom grew up watching the *Harry Potter* films since the first one debuted 10 years ago. I don't feel an emotional attachment to the series. I don't dislike *Harry Potter*. How could I? I've only seen one of the movies, and I've never read any of the books. I will concede that it bothers me that J.K. Rowling's books have encouraged a generation of children to read. When I was young, I would skip a book and watch the movie adaptation instead. It's just what you did back then. Nowadays, kids read a book and then watch the film it inspired. How sad.

Nevertheless, I feel it is important that this blog says farewell to perhaps the biggest pop culture phenomenon of my lifetime. Since I'm not capable of writing a fitting tribute to *Harry Potter*, I've invited a friend to sum up what the boy wizard means to him. I do believe you're familiar with his work. Ladies and gentlemen, Will Smith:

Yo, yo, yo! [Editor's note: Yes, I've never actually met Will Smith, but I've always assumed that if I were to have a conversation with him, he'd subconsciously slip into his *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* character. I'll let you know if there are any other *Fresh Prince* references.]

Will Smith here. Shane asked me if I could say a few words about the conclusion of the *Harry Potter* series, and I couldn't be more delighted. I love the movies, and so do my youngest kids, Jaden and Willow. You know them: Jaden was the star of the blockbuster film *The Karate Kid*, and Willow likes to whip her hair back and forth.

I read the *Harry Potter* books to them when they were smaller. We're such big fans, and we know how bittersweet it is that the new movie is out, knowing that it's the last one.

It was the last one, I should say, until I came up with a brilliant idea. I haven't told anyone this, but this seems like the perfect opportunity to announce that I will be producing a remake of the original *Harry Potter* film. Starring as Harry Potter: my son Jaden! He's only 13, so he is more than capable of carrying a new *Harry Potter* series for the next decade. He was featured in my film *The Pursuit of Happyness*, I will co-star with him in an upcoming M. Night Shyamalan movie, and I produced him in *The Karate Kid*, so I can tell you he has acting talent that is second to none for someone his age. He also appeared in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, so his track record with movie remakes speaks for itself.

Joining Jaden in the new *Harry Potter* movie will be...*I Am Legend* star Willow Smith! She'll play Hermione. It'll be the perfect way for her to follow up on her role in the proposed *Annie* reboot I'd produce that could feature music from Jay-Z. (Carlton will make a cameo, dancing to a song that samples Tom Jones' "It's Not Unusual"!) [Editor's note: This is a *Fresh Prince* reference.] So I may ask Jay-Z to do the music for *Harry Potter*, too. You know what I'm sayin'? Ya know? [Editor's note: Another *Fresh Prince* reference.]

We'll probably eliminate the role of Ron. It doesn't seem necessary. Jaden as Harry Potter and Willow as Hermione should be powerful enough.

Look for the first, new-and-improved *Harry Potter* movie to be released in 2014. After that, we'll begin work on the sequel, and maybe even a *Star Wars* remake that I've been thinking about doing. Jaden would be Luke Skywalker, Willow would be Princess Leia, and Uncle Phil would be Darth Vader. [Editor's note: Yet another *Fresh Prince* reference.]

So, *Harry Potter* fans, don't despair. There will be plenty more *Harry Potter* movies in the years to come. Ya feel me? (Will slaps another person's hand, whips his head back and says, "Psssshhh.") [Editor's note: Yep.]

[Tiny Bits Of Nonsense: Part I](#)

No one questions Marty McFly's mom removing his pants after he's hit by the car, as if that was a logical response to a man blacking out.

Whenever I see *Juno* on TV, I imagine Juno's father telling her, "Juno, you're pregnant? I don't care. Get me pictures of Spider-Man!"

Every movie theater has a concession stand that's always unlit and unstaffed. Yet it's well-stocked with candy and drinks, as a tease.

When you list 20 or 30 films in the "favorite movies" section of Facebook, you're really stretching the definition of "favorite."

I wish I'd listened to the career advice my parents gave me when I was a kid: "Be a doctor, lawyer, or creator of a social networking site."

When I wrote "keep in touch" in high school classmates' yearbooks in the '90s, I didn't know that one day there'd be a website called Facebook that would force me to keep in touch.

Can I borrow someone's baby and/or dog? I don't have either, and I need a new Facebook profile picture. Thanks.

Fact: When a woman posts a picture of herself on Facebook, the expectation is that at least 3 female friends will comment, "You look so pretty!"

According to the tabloids, there's a Hollywood baby "trend" right now. So does that mean celebrities will stop having babies at some point?

My friend's kid asked me if I wanted to play "house." I said yes. He then put on a lab coat, walked with a cane and berated me.

A Look At The Glasses Look
(Originally Published January 7, 2011)

Once upon a time, it was unfashionable for a person to wear glasses. It was for a kid, anyway. I speak from experience. I obtained my first pair of glasses when I was in the fourth grade. In those days (the late 1980s), you didn't wear glasses to make a fashion statement; you wore them because you couldn't see very well. And so there weren't a lot of stylish frames available. You had to wear those double-bridged frames with lenses that were half-square, half-oval...a squoval.

So I wore those frames, and they of course were mocked by my classmates. I heard the usual insults, especially the always-popular "Hey, four eyes!" I never understood what that meant. I wasn't wearing an extra set of eyes on my nose. I still had two eyes. I just happened to be wearing two small pieces of glass in front of them now, that's all. I wouldn't approach someone with braces and say, "Hey, 64 teeth!" But you know how kids are. They're uninformed jerks.

After I began wearing glasses, my classmates assumed that I was smarter than before. In their mind, glasses equaled intelligence. Their math was off, but then, we were still trying to wrap our heads around long division at the time. But it wasn't just the kids who made that mistake. I believe my teachers expected more of me after I started to wear glasses. If I got a "C" or a "D" on a test, the teacher would write a comment next to the grade, along the lines of, "You can do better." What the teacher was really thinking was, "You can do better for someone who wears glasses." I have no evidence to support my theory that I was treated unfairly, but you'll just have to take my word for it because I wear glasses and therefore must be smart.

A lot has changed since then. The stigma that comes with wearing glasses has faded away. It's trendy now to wear glasses. I like to think that I played a small part in starting that trend. Me and Tina Fey.

I'm not so sure how I feel about people who wear glasses without a prescription. I obtained my glasses after years of declining vision. I had to earn it. So it's a little unfair that others get to wear glasses under false pretenses. But they don't bother me as much as people who use contact lenses. I'm annoyed by them for two reasons: 1) they betrayed their glasses by refusing to wear them any longer, and 2) they have a habit of either inserting their contact lenses or using eyedrops in public by pulling down on their lower eyelids and opening their eyes real wide, in full view of others. I tend to close my eyes when they open their eyes. The sight of the red veins in their eyes is not a sight to behold.

Even Hollywood has jumped on the glasses bandwagon. Why do studios release so many 3D movies? Because they know how much people love to wear glasses. I personally dislike 3D films, mostly because it's really uncomfortable to wear 3D glasses on top of the glasses I already wear.

And because when I wear both sets of glasses at the same time, people in the theater call me "six eyes."

I'm Not Related to Everyone Who Wears Glasses

(Originally Published July 22, 2010)

I feel a special kinship with anyone who wears glasses. And has dark hair. And is below-average height.

Let me backtrack a little bit. I wear glasses. I have dark brown hair. And I'm around five-foot-six. Obviously, I'm not the only person who fits this description.

Yet whenever I'm standing next to someone who bears a passing resemblance to myself -- i.e., someone who wears glasses, has dark hair and is short -- a stranger will inevitably stare at us momentarily and wonder, "Are they brothers?" And he really wants to know, too, because more often than not, he'll approach me and ask. He actually wants to know if a) I have a brother, and b) if that brother happens to be the guy standing next to me.

If the answer is yes to both, an approving smile will cross over his face and he'll brag, "I knew it." Well, congratulations, Encyclopedia Brown, you cracked the case. But 95 percent of the time, the answer to the second question is no, and the stranger is disappointed that his instincts were incorrect. But really, his instincts failed him earlier, when they told him he should bother me with his ridiculous question.

Shredding My Old Tests And Notebooks
(Originally Published May 11, 2010)

I consider myself something of a history buff. I'm fascinated by U.S. history. I love to visit museums and study the artifacts and personal belongings of famous figures. No possession is too insignificant for a museum -- you'll often see notebooks, diaries and private letters on display. I have no idea if the historical figures would approve of this. I suppose their right to privacy expires after a few hundred years.

It's for this reason that I hope I never become famous. I don't want strangers reading my notebooks or letters. Imagine some tourist looking at my seventh-grade social studies notebook as a tour guide puts it in the proper historical context. "You'll notice a heart in the bottom right corner with the initials 'J.L.' While unconfirmed, these initials could refer to one of several female classmates on whom Shane had a crush -- Janet Lewis, perhaps. Along the margins are several versions of Shane's signature. He was fond of signing his name in his notebook to pass the time in class."

I also wouldn't want a lock of my hair on display, either. This seems to be a popular staple of history museums -- hair of prominent figures. Where do they obtain the hair, I wonder? Did the historical figures hold on to their trimmings? Did they collect the hair after a cut at the barbershop? "Don't sweep up that hair! What are you, crazy? If I become famous one day, museums will need my hair!"

[A Message From My Family](#)
(Originally Published June 28, 2011)

Hello. This is Shane's family. He's stepped away from his computer. We happened to be searching through his laptop when we accidentally logged onto his account for this blog. Since we're here, we will use this opportunity to alert you to some unfortunate news regarding Shane. He's been struggling with a personal issue that has caused us all great distress.

Shane is single. And 30.

We know you'd agree that this is simply unacceptable. For reasons that we cannot comprehend, Shane has resisted any attempt to find a wife. He says he has "plenty of time," that he will meet the right woman when he "least expects it." Of course, he's incorrect. He does not have plenty of time. He's 30. He's not getting any younger. We can't stress that point enough. Believe us, we've stressed that point to him over and over, but he refuses to listen.

We do not want to watch him grow into an old man without a partner. Since we're his family and we love him and only want the best for him, we've decided to launch a search for a wife, on his behalf. We've created a personality test that we invite all of Shane's female readers to fill out. We are hopeful that one of you could be his soul mate.

Don't be alarmed by the test -- it's just a few standard questions that you'd read on any dating website. And we won't ask for a subscription fee to match you with Shane, LOL. No, save your cash; Shane doesn't make a lot of money in his current job. Happy testing!

Personality Test for Shane's Future Wife

How old are you?

- 20-25
- 26-30
- 31-35

What is your ethnicity?

- White
- African-American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Indian
- Other (please specify)

What is your profession?

- Lawyer
- Doctor

What is your salary range?

- \$50,000-\$70,000
- \$70,000-\$90,000
- \$90,000-\$100,000
- \$100,000+
- Prefer not to answer

If you replied "Prefer not to answer" to the previous question, too bad. We have to know. What is your salary range?

- \$50,000-\$70,000
- \$70,000-\$90,000
- \$90,000-\$100,000
- \$100,000+

What would you consider to be your best skill?

- Cooking
- Supporting others financially
- Quoting *Seinfeld* episodes
- All of the above

Shane spends a lot of time exploring his creative side; for example, he has this blog. You don't waste your time with that kind of nonsense, do you?

- Yes
- No way, it wouldn't be a productive use of my time

What's the most important quality you're looking for in a partner?

- Height
- Wealth
- Stable job
- None of the above

What are the five things you can't live without?

- "S"
- "H"
- "A"
- "N"
- "E"
- All of the above

Are you looking for a short-term relationship, or are you ready to settle down in the near future?

- Looking for a short-term relationship
- Ready to settle down
- I'd marry Shane tomorrow if I could!

Where would you prefer to live?

- In the city
- In the suburbs
- As close to my future in-laws as possible

What would be your ideal honeymoon?

- A cruise to the Bahamas
- A tour of Europe
- A trip to Australia

Wow, all of those options sound fun. Can we come with you on your honeymoon?

- I'd prefer to spend my honeymoon alone with my husband
- Of course you can, you don't even need to ask!

WE WANT GRANDKIDS. Oh, pardon us, we meant, It would be nice if Shane fathered a child one day. Are you interested in having children?

- Yes
- Yes

-- No, but on second thought, yes

How many kids would you like to have?

-- 1-2

-- 3-4

-- As many as you want

Are there any reasons why you would not be good enough for our precious Shane?
If so, please elaborate in the space below:

Please submit your answers to this test, along with a picture of yourself. We will get back to you if we're interested.

Parks And Receptions
(Originally Published July 29, 2011)

Central Park is, without question, my favorite location in New York City. It's so peaceful, so serene, so scenic. It stands in such contrast to the rest of Manhattan. I'm reminded of this whenever I stroll through the park and see hundreds of people sunbathing on the grass. They are lying down, getting a tan in the middle of the biggest city in the country. I can spot an overweight man with his shirt off on the Great Lawn, walk 15 blocks and then see a well-groomed man in a tuxedo at Lincoln Center. No one else finds this unusual but me.

Not that I don't see men and women in formal wear in Central Park from time to time. It's a destination spot for brides and grooms who have their wedding photos taken in front of trees, or a fountain, or, I don't know what. I've never been married, so I'm not sure what these couples' intentions are. From what I gather, they're either newlyweds eager to snap their first "We're having such a great time being married!" photos, or they're engaged and attempting to fool their distant friends and relatives into believing they tied the knot in beautiful Central Park. Sham wedding photos are what they are.

(I always imagine one of the brides I see in the park having a lovely day snapping lovely pictures in her lovely dress, then returning home and realizing that it has a bird poop stain on it. Because, you know, there are birds in the park, and they tend to poop on the ground. Not a lot, but enough to soil a white dress. What a terrible problem that would be, since a woman tends to hold on to her wedding dress for life. Not unlike how I hold on to my old NBA jerseys. They hold great sentimental value. And you can't outgrow an NBA jersey, no matter how outdated it may be. For all I know, I may spend my later years as the male version of Miss Havisham, sitting in the dark wearing only my Vancouver Grizzlies jersey. So I'd be very disappointed if the jersey had a poop stain on it.)

I don't care for pictures that misrepresent the moments they're supposed to capture. I can't even bring myself to look at my elementary school yearbooks, because in my pictures there are all these colorful lasers crisscrossing behind my head. I was there when they took the pictures, and I assure you, no lasers were present at the time. If there had been, I'm pretty sure I would've freaked out.

The aspect of my future wedding I'm most looking forward to: the half-hour or so in between the ceremony and the reception. Why am I bringing this up? Because it's during that gap in time when a couple has their pictures taken after exchanging vows. It's also during that gap in time when the newly married couple can reasonably escape their annoying relatives. That kind of opportunity never presents itself again after the wedding.

Like I said, I'm not married, I have no photos of myself with a wife, so I can't say for sure what's appropriate and what's not. All I have are many, many pictures of my favorite baseball players, rock bands and movies hanging in my home and office. The decorations are very, very cool to males between the ages of 12-21. The decorations are very, very depressing for anyone older than 21.

That's enough marriage talk for one day. I need to clear my head. I think I'll take a walk in the park.

Tiny Bits Of Nonsense: Part II

Pls stop using the shorthand version of the word "please." Use the other three letters, too. Thx.

Why do people write certain words online in all caps to emphasize their point? It makes NO SENSE.

Hey, thanks for taking up all the good usernames on every website that requires a username, everybody. Really appreciate it.

In my day, we didn't fling birds at pigs. We swept mines.

I put up new wallpaper in my home. It's a pattern of Windows logos.

There is no Wikipedia page about me, meaning I'm less significant than the slap bracelet, Crystal Pepsi and Fudgie the Whale.

I just got an e-mail from myself about Viagra discounts. Could have been spam...or was it my future self warning me?

I will never forget the time in high school when I scored 7 touchdowns in one game. Yeah, I was pretty awesome at *Madden '95*.

How come it's always me who's selected to participate in an important survey? Why can't it be someone else's turn for a change?

Study: Women are more attracted to moody men than happy men. My feelings on this study: I don't know. Whatever.

Upset With LeBron James? Blame Zack Morris
(Originally Published June 13, 2011)

Congratulations. LeBron James didn't win an NBA championship. This was the outcome you were hoping for, wasn't it? You haven't viewed him in quite the same way since he took his talents to South Beach. You mocked him. You ridiculed him. Most of all, you wished he would fail. And sure enough, in the most important games of his career, LeBron failed.

(I'm assuming you rooted against LeBron. I base that assumption on my Twitter feed, which was overwhelmed with "Take that, LeBron!" jokes after he lost the sixth and final game on Sunday night. Twitter is always an accurate barometer of how America is feeling at any given moment.)

That a person such as LeBron could engender so much animosity is fascinating to me. He left his hometown team, the Cleveland Cavaliers, to play with his buddies in Miami. He did so in a very peculiar and ill-advised manner, to be sure. He didn't need to rub salt in Cleveland fans' wounds by making his announcement on TV. (Though I don't recall there being an uproar when Drew Carey chose to work elsewhere.) But is he a bad person, deserving of our scorn? No, probably not.

I've thought a lot in the last two weeks about what could've possibly caused LeBron to make one questionable PR move after another. He had endeared himself to fans with his easygoing personality, his apparent loyalty to his home state, and, of course, his talents. Why embarrass the Cavaliers? Why go through with *The Decision*? Why participate in a way-over-the-top pep rally? Why make fun of Dirk Nowitzki's illness while in the midst of a semi-collapse in the biggest series of your career? Why tell all of your detractors after the elimination game they need to "get back to the real world at some point"?

It would be easy to blame his handlers, who advised him at the least on *The Decision*, which will continue to sully LeBron's reputation until if/when he wins a

championship. No, I believe LeBron's blissful ignorance can be traced back to his childhood. I don't know LeBron personally, and I'm not a psychiatrist, but his behavior seems awfully familiar to me. I once knew another man who acted just as LeBron has. He was popular, self-assured, athletic. He had it all. But much like LeBron, he nearly derailed his own career with a series of unfortunate missteps.

His name: Zack Morris. And I believe his antics have shaped LeBron into the person he's become.

I have no proof that LeBron is a *Saved by the Bell* fan, but it stands to reason that he watched *Saved by the Bell* as a kid. He is 26 years old, meaning he was between the ages of 7 and 8 when the series ended. And it airs for two hours every day on TBS, so he's had ample opportunity to catch up on whichever episodes he missed. How could he not have watched *Saved by the Bell*? It was the sitcom that defined a generation. (Not quite true, but it has grown in popularity in the last 20 years. I really believe that. Why else would TNT give Mark-Paul Gosselaar a new legal drama every year?)

There are so many parallels that can be drawn between Zack's time in school and LeBron's NBA career to date. Need convincing? Here are the cold, hard facts:

-- LeBron left his home state, Ohio, for Florida and a chance to be surrounded by better teammates. Zack left his home state, Indiana, where he attended middle school, to be surrounded by a better cast in California. I say this with all due respect to Miss Bliss, Mikey and Nikki. But to be fair, in that trade, we, the fans, received Miss Simpson, Jessie and Kelly. It was the most lopsided swap of the late 1980s, ahead of the Herschel Walker trade.

-- LeBron announced his departure from the Cavaliers in a widely ridiculed TV special. Zack announced his departure from John F. Kennedy Junior High School in Indiana in a widely ridiculed TV special. OK, I made that up. But NBC really missed the boat here. I would've watched, as I watched anything on TNBC, no matter how

far-fetched the premise. TNBC actually had me convinced for a few years that California Dreams could've become the 1990s' answer to The Monkees and had a successful recording career. In any event, Zack did not have a *Decision*, though I would've really liked to have seen Jim Gray ask him whether he bites his nails.

-- LeBron took his talents to South Beach. Zack took his talents to Southern California. And he had many talents, more than LeBron has now. Zack was a star in multiple sports, a member of the glee club, a radio disc jockey, a member of a trivia team, an employee at a beach club, a finalist in a school song contest, a member of a teen line (twice) and a Good Samaritan to a pretty homeless girl.

-- LeBron is supremely confident, as confirmed by the fact that he's openly discussed his "talents." Zack is supremely confident, as confirmed by the fact that he inserted a subliminal message into an audio cassette in which he described himself as "great looking," "smart," "funny," "a 10," "perfect in every way," and a "blond Tom Cruise." I firmly believe that LeBron listened to a Bo Revere tape with his own subliminal messages on the day of *The Decision*.

-- Not long after *The Decision*, LeBron and his new teammates, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh, were met by thousands of fans in Miami at a pep rally. Zack and his new friends at Bayside were the focus of many, many unnecessary pep rallies at The Max.

-- Zack once dreamed that he was a singer and performed in front of a big crowd. LeBron once dreamed that he could pull off pretending to be a singer and performing in front of a big crowd when he took on Bobby Brown's "My Prerogative" at the 2007 ESPYs. Look it up on YouTube.

-- LeBron has a tendency to rub people the wrong way with his actions and his words. Zack, well, he was a jerk sometimes. This fact is lost in TV history, but Zack was not a very good person. How many times did he insult or let down students who he subconsciously felt were beneath him? He used Screech for his own

personal gain many times. He essentially dumped Kelly to hit on a school nurse he had no chance with. He tried to squirm his way out of a date with an obese girl because she was obese. But my personal favorite: As Zack developed a friendship, and perhaps something more, with a girl in a wheelchair named Melissa, he exclaimed, "Even though she's handicapped, she gave Cathy perfect advice." What an awful, awful thing to say. And yet somehow, Melissa eventually forgave him. Zack provides ample evidence for anyone who believes that girls are attracted to jerks.

-- LeBron came up short on the big stage, in the NBA Finals. Zack very nearly missed the big stage -- the graduation stage -- until a last-minute performance in a production of *Swan Lake* earned him the credits he needed to graduate. Which is to say, I expect LeBron to win a championship one of these years after he participates in a ballet.

-- And the most obvious point: LeBron is a basketball player. Zack was a basketball player until he accidentally bumped into Mr. Belding and required knee surgery. A sign of things to come for LeBron? Be extra cautious when walking behind Pat Riley, LeBron.

Do you see how LeBron's transformation into a not-so-fan-favorite could be the direct result of years of watching and idolizing Zack Morris? My, how times have changed; we gave a pass to Zack in the early '90s for his many social indiscretions, but refuse to do the same for LeBron now. Cut LeBron some slack. Blame Zack.

To Say This Blog Is Funny Is One Of The
Bigger Understatements Of The Year
(Originally Published October 2, 2010)

I often hear the phrase, "To say that [insert understatement here] is one of the bigger understatements of the year." I'll make up an example: "To say that *Avatar* is a successful movie is one of the bigger understatements of the year." Or, "To say that LeBron James might've made a mistake by announcing on national TV his decision to leave Cleveland for Miami is one of the bigger understatements of the year." Or, "To say that you'll be making a mistake if you do not purchase Shane's next book is one of the bigger understatements of the year."

So my question to you is this: What is *the* biggest understatement of the year? Will an announcement of some kind be made on December 31st? I hope so. To say that I want to know about the biggest understatement of the year is one of the bigger understatements of the year.

A Disconnect With The Kinect
(And Today's Video Games In General)
(Originally Published March 17, 2011)

When I was a kid, I played a lot of video games. It's what I did as soon as I arrived home from school. While my classmates were participating in team sports or other extracurricular activities, I was giving my thumbs a solid workout with a Nintendo controller.

It was awesome.

There are a couple of reasons why I played video games. They were fun, of course, but they also earned me serious cred with my friends. I would tell them, "I beat *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!* last night," and they would be amazed. They were so impressed. They didn't read the articles I wrote for the school newspaper, they didn't congratulate me when I got a 5 on my AP U.S. History exam, but I got a lot of pats on the back when I knocked out Mike Tyson.

(My biggest accomplishment in life is defeating *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!* without being knocked out once. I haven't had a very productive life. And for the record, I did not cheat by using the "007 373 9563" code to jump straight to the Tyson fight.)

Playing video games was also an easy way for me to relax. I would lie on the couch for hours, with a controller in one hand and a bag of potato chips in the other, playing *Super Mario Bros.*, *Double Dragon*, *Ninja Gaiden*, *Tecmo Super Bowl*. I have not come across another activity that requires so little effort and yet is so enjoyable.

Which is why I am so concerned by the latest wave of technology. Today's games are too interactive. You can't sit down to play these games. You have to stand up and move around and stuff. It's so annoying.

I blame this trend on *Dance Dance Revolution*, a game so frustrating they named it twice. It requires excellent balance and coordination, neither of which I have. I'd usually lose within the first 30 seconds. Not what I'm shooting for when I play a game.

It's weird how that game stuck with me in everyday life, though. I'd envision arrows on the sidewalk in front of me as I was walking. Ever try to walk straight and right at the same time? Not easy. Especially when you have Japanese techno-pop running through your head.

Nintendo's Wii upped the ante with its motion-sensor controller. Now, not only do I have to swing my arms if I want to bowl or play golf using my video game system, there's a chance I'll throw my controller through the TV if I don't hold on to the controller tightly. To be fair, there is a strap on the Wii controller to prevent such accidents. But you know which controller doesn't require a strap? The controller for the original Nintendo. C'mon, Nintendo, it was your own system! You're regressing.

The PlayStation 3 and the Xbox 360 have jumped on the interactive bandwagon. PlayStation has the Move controller. The name says it all: "Move." No. I don't want to move. I want to play video games. The whole reason I'm playing video games is so I don't have to move. I'm trying to be as inactive as possible. Don't ruin this for me.

The Xbox 360 introduced the Kinect, which doesn't have a controller at all. It only has a sensor. And the name of one of its most popular games? *Dance Central*. More dancing. Of course.

We have become so lazy as a society that we can't even be bothered to hold a controller while playing video games. It's a shame. I for one am not going to put up with this. I'll stick to my old-school games, thank you very much.

Anyone want to come over and see me beat *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!*?

WT.?!

(Originally Published March 24, 2011)

I had just finished reading a news article on the Internet the other day -- I don't remember the topic -- when I started to browse the comments section that followed it. This is a terrible habit that I have. I always read the comments section, knowing that it will bother me if it's negative in tone, which it usually is. My threshold for harsh and grammatically incorrect criticism is very low. So inevitably, I become annoyed after reading an article because other people are annoyed with the article.

One comment I often see is "WTF?" Three powerful letters that convey two messages: 1) I'm confused and angry, but 2) I'm going to be as nice about it as possible by not using the actual curse word. Because, as you know, using profanity on the Internet is a major no-no. The phrase is so widely used that it's listed on Dictionary.com, which says it's "used esp in emails, text messages, etc." I'm disappointed that a dictionary would abbreviate the word "especially" in a definition, as if it was using it in the form of a text message. To quote the Internet, "WTF?"

There is a cleaner version of the phrase: "WTH?" I've seen that phrase in comments sections, too. So at least I'm not the only one who wants progress in making the Internet a friendlier place to read news stories. But we can take it a step further.

This is my suggestion: Let's adopt the phrase "WT.?!". It's shorthand for "What the...?!" I was inspired to create the phrase after writing about old Nintendo games like *Ninja Gaiden* in my previous entry. In *Ninja Gaiden*, when the main character was caught off-guard, he'd exclaim, "What the...?!" I've always liked that statement, partly because I've never figured out how a person should say it out loud.

For now on, if you ever feel compelled to post a negative comment after a news article, don't use profanity. Use "WT.?!". But I wouldn't recommend reading the responses to your comment. They might be negative.

When A Facebook Friend Isn't Really A Friend After All
(Originally Published April 2, 2011)

121...125...123...125...128...125.

Six numbers. I don't know what to make of them. Those six numbers, in the order they are listed above, have consumed me over the last six weeks. I haven't been able to think about anything other than those six numbers. They represent the answer to a problem I cannot make sense of.

Those six numbers represent the total number of Facebook friends I've had since mid-February.

Confusing, I know. I had 121 friends. The total then increased by four. Then it dropped by two. And it has fluctuated ever since.

I know who's added me as a friend, because I receive an email from Facebook whenever someone either accepts my request or sends me a request. But who is dropping me? And why?

Regarding the first question: the quick answer is, I have no idea. And believe me, I've tried to get to the bottom of it. I've stared at my friends list for hours in a futile attempt to remember which names are missing. It's not easy -- and that's with only 120+ friends. I have no idea how someone with 1,000 friends can manage this. (According to Facebook, the average user has 130 friends, meaning I'm a slightly below-average friend to everyone else.)

You know the old expression, "You can never have too many friends"? It doesn't always ring true on Facebook. There are two schools of thought when it comes to adding friends on Facebook: You should either add everyone you've ever met in your life, or you should be really selective. There is no in between.

The people who fall into the latter category are not secretive about the fact that they have no room for distant Facebook friends in their lives. Even if they add you as a friend, it's on a probationary basis. They reserve the right to drop you at any moment. You'll know if it's coming, because they'll make an announcement in your News Feed: "Time to clean out my friends list!" It seems like an awfully cruel way to handle it. Whenever I see this sort of status update, I un-tag the person in all of my old pictures, refuse to wish them a happy birthday, that sort of thing. Hit 'em where it hurts. Let them know that I'm in charge, not them.

But sometimes I'm dropped without warning; I'll have missed the announcement. So I stare at my friends list. And I shed a tear or two. Because it hurts to lose a friend. It's painful to know that someone thinks you're not worthy to read their links to *New York Times* articles, watch their favorite YouTube videos, or look at the latest pictures of them in public.

My feeling: If you're going to drop me as a Facebook friend, do it in person. I know chances are good that we've barely spoken with each other or seen each other in 10 years, but still, do it in person. I deserve an explanation, face to face. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it would save me the trouble of having to stare at my friends list.

Lose A Phone, Lose A Friend
(Originally Published May 6, 2011)

What would you say is the most indispensable item you own? No, wait, don't answer. I know which item most of you will choose: your cellphone. Interesting. See, I would've said "toilet." Never take the toilet for granted.

I will concede that most of us use our phone more than we use our toilet. When we wake up in the morning? We use our phone. When we walk down the street? We use our phone. When we're sitting on the bus? We use our phone. When we are sitting on the toilet? We use our phone.

(C'mon, admit it. I know there have been a few times when you nearly checked in from your toilet on Foursquare. You are the mayor of your toilet, no question. Every mayor needs a throne of sorts, and the toilet is your throne. That's one reason why the toilet is indispensable.)

We can agree that the phone is at least somewhat indispensable. We value the phone. We're dependent on the phone. We need the phone. So why do we lose the phone so often?

Once a week, on average, I read the following status update in my Facebook News Feed: "Lost my phone!! Please message me all of your numbers so I can add it to my contact list!!" To that I say, Whoa, whoa, whoa, not so fast. I'm not sure any friend of mine can win back my phone number that easily.

I do not take the loss of a friend's cellphone lightly. A stranger could be in possession of the lost cellphone. Once he discovers my information on the phone, who knows what he'll do with it? Prank me? Text me spam? Embarrass me by Skyping me with a question as a contestant on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*, without my consent? While I'm on the toilet?

(Mark my words: If I'm ever a contestant on a game show, I will never, ever ask for help, not from a friend, and certainly not from the audience. The audience members are so smug, as if they know the answer to every question. To the *Family Feud* audience: Is it really necessary for you to shout out the survey responses that both teams did not guess at the end of each round? As if you were privy to every survey response in every round? You know what, it doesn't matter. The survey says: Shut up.)

I have another concern when it comes to friends who lose their cellphones. How do I know for sure that they weren't using their phones to call me in public? I don't want friends calling me in public. I know how they behave on the phone: They repeat the personal details I share with them very loudly, for everyone to hear. Or worse, they put their phone in speaker mode, allowing everyone within a 20-foot radius to listen in on our conversation. And even worse, I can envision the friend holding his or her phone horizontally to his or her mouth during the conversation. I can only assume that our chat leaves the friend so hungry that he or she is tempted to take a huge bite out of the phone as soon as I hang up.

To any friend who loses a cellphone from this point forward, I will not be giving you my phone number right away. You'll have to earn it. Prove to me you can hold on to your new phone for one year, and I will allow you to add my number to your contact list.

Until then, you'll have one less person to text on the toilet.

Tiny Bits Of Nonsense: Part III

There has to be a way to get someone to describe me as "lovely and talented" without being a guest on a late-night show.

I've never seen an infomercial that didn't double its offer for the same price, without me even asking it to.

I like to play NFL Films music before I go to the bathroom. It gets the adrenaline flowing and makes me feel as if I'm about to accomplish something historically significant.

Just had a 5-hour Energy shot. Now I have the energy to watch TV for another 5 hours. Awesome!

The first snowfall of the year must be so exciting for dogs. They have to think, "Finally, something new for me to pee on in public."

Back from the gym. Went there, saw people exercising, decided it wasn't for me and came home.

If I could go back in time, I'd tell the fourth-grade teacher who gave me a "C" in penmanship that handwriting won't matter in the 21st century.

I'm not one to drop names. But I would be if I knew anyone of importance.

It's a nice surprise when I buy dress shirts and I find pins in them. I love the feeling of being stabbed by pins when I put on a shirt.

I can't stand people who use their phone on the train. When I try to peak at their texts or emails, they cover their screen. So rude.

I'm 99.99 Percent Sure This Post Will Make You Smile

(Originally Published September 1, 2010)

I was shopping at my local drugstore yesterday when I noticed a bottle of hand sanitizer available for sale by the cash register. The label on the bottle claimed the sanitizer kills 99.99 percent of all germs. I'm not sure how the manufacturer came to this conclusion. I assume it developed some sort of mathematical formula that I'm not privy to. Whatever the case may be, it's very confident that its product can effectively combat virtually every germ on this planet, except for maybe one or two that shall remain nameless.

Most hand sanitizers I've seen in stores kill 99.99 percent of germs. Which is fantastic. I'm happy that I can buy any number of sanitizers that will keep my hands clean, for the most part. I'll tell you what I could really use, though. A hand sanitizer that kills 00.01 percent of germs. The percent that's not covered by the other sanitizers. I'm afraid of those germs. They have to be pretty strong if they're resistant to all of the sanitizers currently on the market. Those are the germs that I need the most protection from.

This Comedy Blog, Established In 2010
(Originally Published September 10, 2011)

The year was 1990. President Bush's father, President Bush, was in office. Macaulay Culkin starred in *Home Alone* but was still years away from dating Mila Kunis. Sinead O'Connor had the most popular song of the year with "Nothing Compares 2 U," and had not yet begun her transformation into a sexually frustrated blogger. (Google it.)

And, across the street from where I now live, a bar was established. It wasn't a memorable moment at the time; heck, I wasn't living in my current neighborhood back then, so I didn't even know the bar existed until I moved here. But fortunately, the bar has taught me its own little history lesson. There's a huge sign outside its entrance: "Established In 1990." Where were *you* when this bar was established?

From here on out, I will never forget the year the bar opened for business, because the bar won't let me forget it. The bar obviously feels it's important for customers to know that it's been around for over 20 years. I can't understate the significance of this. I can't even state the significance of this. I don't know what the significance is.

I have never stepped foot inside this bar. The simple fact that it was established in 1990 is not enough of a drawing card, as far as I'm concerned. Consider this: I was established (born) in 1980. I have 10 years on the bar across the street. It should be visiting *me*. It should send a waitress over to my apartment with a plate of mild wings and a soda. Only then will I enter the bar.

I don't mean to pick on this particular bar. There are plenty of other bars and restaurants with signs indicating when they opened for business. They all use words like "established" or "since." "Since 1925." Since 1925 what? Since 1925 you've been hanging a sign that reads "Since 1925"? I may not understand the reasoning

behind this line of advertising, but I will argue this: I believe it's pointless for a restaurant to hang that kind of sign if it opened in the 2000s. If your restaurant is younger than Central Perk, there's no need to call attention to that fact.

But hey, there are a lot of restaurants to choose from in any town. They need to distinguish themselves from the competition somehow. I suppose one way is to promote the year they were established. Another way is to come up with hyperbolic slogans for their dishes. This is especially the case with restaurants that specialize in hamburgers. I can't tell you how many burger joints I've been to over the years that claimed to have "the best burger in town." How they verified this, I have no idea. Each time, I had my doubts. It's a completely subjective debate that boils down to each individual's specific taste. Try convincing the Hamburglar that McDonald's does not have the best burger in town. If there was a better burger in town, he would rob that restaurant instead.

While some restaurants may have the "best burger in town," others may have the most "famous" burger in town. "Come try our famous hamburgers!" "Famous" is such a strong word. The word "famous" should be reserved for people or inanimate objects that have earned it, like the Slurpee or Snooki. A hamburger that's "famous" in a town of 20,000 people would be a C-list hamburger at best. It wouldn't even merit a brief mention in *Hamburger Life Weekly*.

You really want "famous"? Enter a restaurant and check for a wall of fame, with autographed pictures of celebrity customers. Believe me, if a person with an even remotely recognizable name walked through that door and enjoyed the food, there will be a framed photo of him/her hanging somewhere for everyone to see. It doesn't matter how famous he/she is/was; the important thing is that he/she was there and wishes the owner "all the best." Put it this way: If, say, a baseball player from the 1980s once had a plate of spaghetti at a restaurant, wouldn't that entice you to eat there, too?

The short answer: yes. Partly because you would know the restaurant was established during the 1980s, at the latest.

[The Power Of The Quarter](#) *(Originally Published December 16, 2010)*

The quarter is the most valuable coin issued by the U.S. Mint. More valuable than the penny, nickel and dime, certainly. More valuable than the half-dollar, which cannot be used on most vending machines or pay phones. (Though upon reflection, I haven't used a pay phone in seven or eight years, probably. I sure do miss sticking my finger in the coin slot in hopes that I'd find some change. Where else am I going to find a loose nickel?) More valuable than the dollar coin, which the subway vending machines like to dispense. I don't care for the dollar coin, because there are a lot of merchants who refuse to believe that a dollar coin exists. Oftentimes when I hand a dollar coin to a cashier, he or she stares at it and squeezes it, expecting chocolate to squirt out.

I first saw the value in the quarter when I was six or seven. I'd keep a collection of quarters that I'd spend on my two favorite hobbies: playing video games at the arcade (25 cents per play) and buying baseball cards (50 cents per pack). If you're under the age of 18, allow me to explain: an "arcade" was a place of business where kids could play video games displayed on TV screens inside cabinets; "baseball cards" were pictures printed on cardboard of Major League Baseball players. Whenever I had an extra quarter to spare, I'd use it at the mall on this electronic machine featuring the voice of a fortune teller who would say, "Give me a quarter, I'll tell you your fortune. Give me a quarter, I love quarters." So of course I gave her a quarter, knowing full well my fortune: I just wasted a quarter. And now it's part of her fortune.

Quarters are even more valuable to me now, because I rely on them to do laundry. I conserve them much like Elaine conserved the sponge. I feel a wave of excitement whenever I buy something and I know I'll receive quarters with my change. There's no greater thrill than buying a few items at the supermarket and finding out the tab is \$7.13. You get back three quarters, and you've basically hit the jackpot. Conversely, if the tab is, say, \$7.78, it's a letdown. Or, if you're

expecting quarters for change and instead receive dimes and nickels, well, that's just one big tease, isn't it?

If only I were a magician, this wouldn't be an issue. I'd have a never-ending supply of quarters. I'd just keep pulling them out of other people's ears.

I wonder how I'll use my quarters 20, 30, 40 years from now. All I know is that I hope I spend them all. I don't want to be showing my grandchildren my "quarter collection." Maybe the fortune teller at the mall will have a clue.

Acknowledgements

When I started my blog over a year ago, I had no expectations. All I wanted was to entertain whoever happened to stumble upon it. So I was thrilled when the blog received hits in countries ranging from the United States (obviously) to Hungary to New Zealand. If you were responsible for one or more of those hits, thank you.

Thank you to family and friends who offered their support and feedback on the blog as well as my two previous books. I am grateful and appreciative.

I served as my own editor on this project, so a tip of the hat to myself.

And thank you, the reader, for downloading this book. If you made it this far, that means you downloaded the entire book, and not just the sample. I hope it was worth it.

New York, NY

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About The Author

Shane Lou is a writer, author and 1990s TV enthusiast. He previously published two non-best-selling books: *Shaneanigans* and *Shane Presents Shane's Empty Thoughts: Based on the Empty Thoughts of Shane*. He lives in New York with no wife, kids or pets.

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