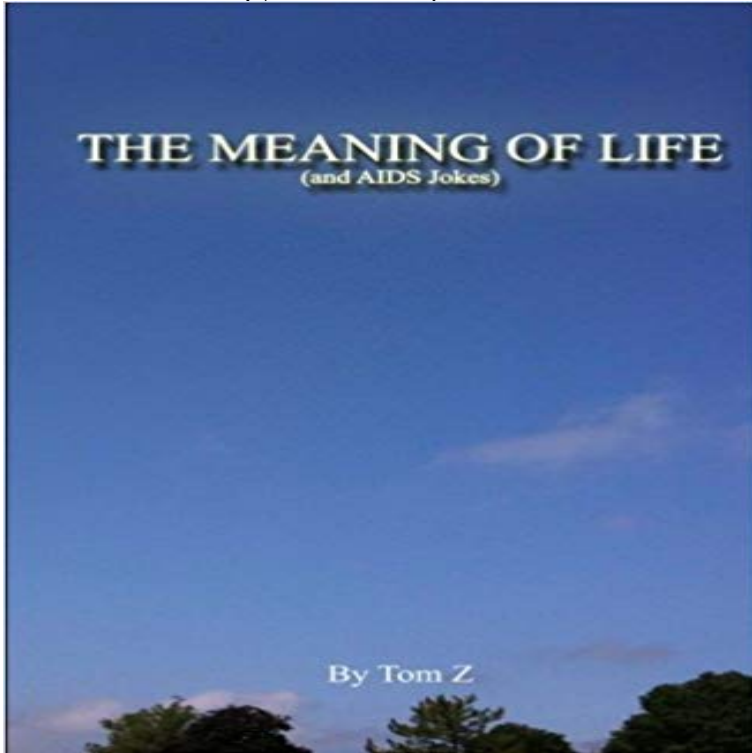


The Meaning of Life (and AIDS Jokes)



In 6th grade, I was part of my school's Enrichment Program. It was a group of roughly 15 intelligent students who administrators felt weren't being sufficiently challenged in the classroom. One period a day we would skip class and go to the Enrichment room, where we'd undertake an activity that better expanded our developing young minds. Most of the kids chose to read novels or complete extra-credit assignments. Some played board games or chess. My friend Dan and I didn't do any of that crap. Instead, we invented a game called Ruler Hockey. We sat at opposite ends of the room, each holding a ruler, and we tried to slap a checker across the room, past the other person. It was rude, it was disruptive, and most importantly, it didn't teach us a damn thing. This game continued for months, until one day I accidentally shanked a checker off the blackboard and hit our teacher in the face. She banned the game and insisted that we do something more productive with our time, at which point Dan and I began gambling on a bastardized version of Roulette that we created using a 20-sided die from the board game Risk. When parent-teacher conferences finally came around, the Enrichment teacher told my parents, and I quote, "Your son has infinite potential, but zero motivation. He could be anything he wants to be, but he probably won't amount to very much. I'll never forget that quote. In two sentences, she essentially told my parents that I was lazy, rude, useless, and a disgrace to the Enrichment Program. It was the most shocking and brazen thing I've ever heard from a teacher in my life. But you know something? That bitch was right. You see, this pattern continued for the remainder of my formative years. In high school, I studied a total of 20 minutes in four years. Instead, I used my TI-82 graphing calculator to cheat on tests and create video games that I played during class. My

college had a beautiful, newly renovated library. I went there once. I spent the rest of my college career inventing drinking games and building a bobsled out of a shopping cart that I later crashed into the student union building. I was never that interested in applying myself, at least not in the traditional sense. It was just more fun to make jokes and fuck around. Am I lazy? Maybe. Am I inappropriate? Definitely. But this is how I expand my mind. Not through studying or assignments, but through finding new and unique ways to entertain myself. I tell stories. I come up with crazy theories. I take important world issues and make jokes about them. This is what I do. Taking things seriously has never been my forte. This book is a collection of articles I wrote between 2005 and 2011. It covers a wide range of subjects, including pop culture, society, politics, rock n roll, life, crazy theories, and most importantly, inappropriate jokes. Im not an English Major or a professional wordsmith. Im just a guy who tried to entertain himself when he wasnt challenged by his day job. I wish I could tell you that that this book is a sociopolitical analysis or a dissertation in youth culture, or that it holds a mirror up to an ever-regressing American landscape. But really, its about one thing: Entertainment. These are the topics that occupied my mind when I was supposed to be doing something more important. I only hope that this book will entertain you. If it enriches your mind, thats great. Chances are youll walk away confused and disoriented, feeling like you were just hit in the head by a flying checker. -Tom Z

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