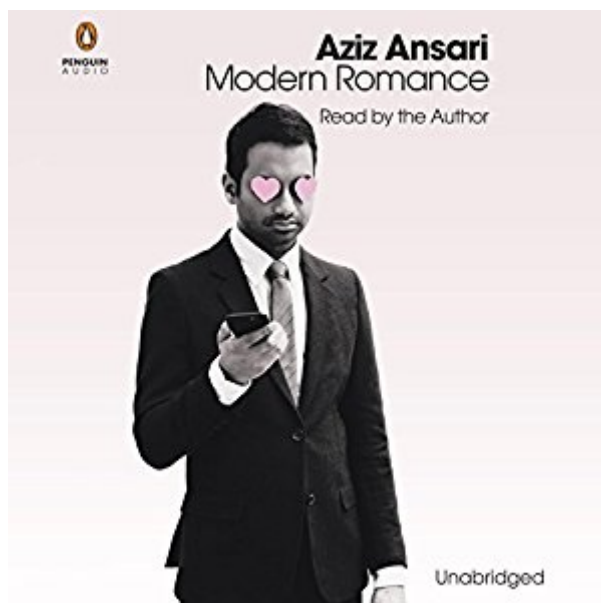


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Modern Romance: An Investigation



Synopsis

A hilarious, thoughtful, and in-depth exploration of the pleasures and perils of modern romance from one of this generation's most popular and sharpest comedic voices. At some point every one of us embarks on a journey to find love. We meet people, date, get into and out of relationships, all with the hope of finding someone with whom we share a deep connection. This seems standard now, but it's wildly different from what people did even just decades ago. Single people today have more romantic options than at any point in human history. With technology, our abilities to connect with and sort through these options are staggering. So why are so many people frustrated? Some of our problems are unique to our time. "Why did this guy just text me an emoji of a pizza?" "Should I go out with this girl even though she listed Combos as one of her favorite snack foods? Combos?!" "My girlfriend just got a message from some dude named Nathan. Who's Nathan? Did he just send her a photo of his penis? Should I check just to be sure?" But the transformation of our romantic lives can't be explained by technology alone. In a short period of time, the whole culture of finding love has changed dramatically. A few decades ago, people would find a decent person who lived in their neighborhood. Their families would meet, and, after deciding neither party seemed like a murderer, they would get married and soon have a kid, all by the time they were 24. Today people marry later than ever and spend years of their lives on a quest to find the perfect person, a soul mate. For years Aziz Ansari has been aiming his comic insight at modern romance, but for *Modern Romance*, the audiobook, he decided he needed to take things to another level. He teamed up with NYU sociologist Eric Klinenberg and designed a massive research project, including hundreds of interviews and focus groups conducted everywhere from Tokyo to Buenos Aires to Wichita.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a Belgian I am totally unfamiliar with Aziz Ansari as a celebrity/stand-up comedian. I ordered this book after I mentioned being SUPER frustrated by texting with flaky or pervy guys to a friend. She send me an article about the "Straight White Boys Texting" blog that also mentioned Aziz's upcoming book. Drawn by the strong sociological research focus I decided to give it a go. First off, I was SUPER relieved to find out my frustrations and anxieties seemed to be universal. VERY universal. I had no idea. It feels comforting to know we're all in this together, as Aziz tells us many times. Secondly, the research presented in this book is impressive, while still so clearly written and spiced with humor and clever remarks that I highlighted (I guess I would like the guys' shows) In fact, the book is besides informative also super entertaining. A challenging combination but Aziz nailed it brilliantly. And thirdly, thanks for the advice :) I am sure guilty of a few dating faux pas myself and will take his advice to heart. Especially the part where he tells us about first changing his lifestyle to fit that of his dream girl, in order to finally meet his dream girl (which - surprise! - was NOT at 3am in a dark drunk night club). His advice based on the research or on his own experience can sometimes be shockingly obvious/evident, yet it seems that both Aziz and me really needed to see it in graphs or focus groups to become conscious of it and improve our strategies! Basically, I would highly recommend this book to any 25-40 year old being confused about love, (online) dating, choice, texting/sexting, settling and commitment. I guess that's a pretty big market right there :)

When I read that Aziz had a book coming out, I decided I needed to treat myself. To start, I think anybody contemplating buying the Kindle version should really just spend the extra bucks for the hardcopy, as the book is filled with cool colored pictures and graphs that I think really add to the overall experience. It just wouldn't be as fun reading on a black and white Kindle. That being said, when I first started the book I was expecting another biography similar to that of Mindy Kaling's or Amy Poehler's. Just another comedian writing a book about their lives in a humorous way while occasionally doing some name dropping of other famous people. I'm glad that ended up not being the case at all. This book was actually written based on numerous research and study group experiments. Aziz teamed up with a renowned sociologist who is an expert in this field to learn as much as he can about modern dating. All of that made up for a very informing read backed by lots of data and interviews with real people. Of course, all this data is presented in an Aziz way - full of humor in the best way possible.

Not once did I feel bored about all the numbers that were on the pages, and I found myself laughing out loud a lot every so often from the ridiculous stories Aziz came up with. Most of the book is focused around online dating and how the current generation is navigating themselves through this new world. Why is it so hard to feel satisfied when there are so many options at our fingertips? How did people even find anybody before with their limited options? What happens after we finally settle on one person? Will we be more satisfied with our choices 20 years in the future? This book tries to answer a lot of those questions by looking at older generations before us and how it eventually evolved to where we are now. Aziz even went to places like Japan, Paris and India to compare the dating cultures there. All of this combined created a very interesting perspective at how different dating can be. There were a couple times in the book where I felt like things started to drag on from too much repetition. But never did I feel like the book was a drag to read, and I quickly finished this book within a couple hours of reading time. All said and done, definitely take the moment to just treat yourself and read this book. If you don't know much about modern dating, you'll learn about it, and if you think you already know a lot about modern dating, you'll learn how to be better at it and then some.

On my birthday which is the same as the publication date of this book -- my sister called to tell me that she'd bought me Aziz Ansari's new book. "Great!", I thought. Aziz is one funny dude, so it should not be much of a chore to humor my sister's generosity by reading it. It wasn't until the next day, when I read Aziz & Eric's New York Times article on online dating, that I realized that this book was going to hit the sweet spot of my brain like a Tomahawk missile, for reasons that are about to become abundantly obvious. I finished "Modern Romance" the same night I received it, thereby ignoring actual romance with an actual woman. What you have to realize is that "Modern Romance", although plenty funny at approximately one guffaw per 7 minutes, is not merely a book of humor. It's co-written with an actual university sociology professor (Eric Klinenberg of NYU, who for some reason doesn't get credited on the cover, hmm), and contains much legwork and original research. These guys have created focus groups, polled theater audiences, spoken to experts in the field, and most important, delved into thousands of real text message chats from real people. It contains data, my friends the kind of data that you and I do not have access to, unless you happen to regularly snoop on your buddies' phones. And the data is often revelatory. For example, did you

know that a third of marriages today originated online? That 52% of people over 30 call for a first date, vs. 23% for those under 30? That a woman finds a man who's attracted to her more attractive than a guy who already digs her? Much crazy stuff like that in there. Why did I find this book so compelling? Well, if the definition of brilliant is "someone who thinks just like me", then Aziz and Eric must be geniuses. But besides corroborating a lot of the thoughts I've had about dating and romance over the past 10 years, here's what else I really like about this book:-- They put the highlights of the teachings of top experts on dating, love, relationships and happiness all in one spot. So, unlike me, now you don't have to go read all of the books by Helen Fisher, Esther Perel, Barry Schwartz, Sheena Iyengar, Sherry Turkle, Dan Savage, Stephanie Coontz, Jonathan Haidt, and Christian Rudder, you lucky duck.-- They do a very balanced, lucid treatment of online dating opportunities and pitfalls. Hey look, you now have so much choice! Choice is good! And that overabundance of choice via Match and Tinder and OKCupid and FarmersOnly can also be debilitating and lead to long-term misery and loneliness, for reasons they explain very well.-- They make a lot of sensible recommendations. For example, on a first date, it's not necessary to feel a thousand butterflies exploding in your stomach as a signal that you two are a good match. Go on more second and third dates. Give stuff a chance to develop and stuff. One of my favorite parts of the book are the stories of what modern dating is like in other parts of the world. Just in case you think you've got it bad:--In Qatar, there is no dating. A woman's only escape ticket from her parent's home is marriage. But that just means getting stuck with a husband (i.e. a total stranger, because remember, there's no dating) who's even more controlling and possessive than her parents. Modern solution: using smartphones to arrange clandestine hotel parties, where young people can actually meet and flirt with one another.-- Japan is seriously whacked out. As of 2013, 45% of young women and 25% of men "were not interested or despised sexual contact." The government is so worried about population decline that it actually sponsors massive, roving group dates called "machikon", just so singles can meet one another.-- I was not aware that Buenos Aires was just one big sex-drenched flirtathon, with hyperaggressive males ceaselessly catcalling women and "telos" (hourly love hotels) on every corner that oversubscribe at peak hours (3-4am).-- In France, apparently it's perfectly normal for a woman to receive a text asking "Fancy a shag?" from a guy she's met at a bar, and perfectly normal for her

to answer "oui" or "non" depending on her mood. Also, they just kinda assume infidelity happens and get less worked up about it than all other nationalities. Although this is primarily a descriptive book, not a prescriptive one, Aziz and Eric do give some concrete pointers for navigating the landscape of love in the digital world. For example, I like their empirically-derived guidelines for effective texting: issue a firm and specific invitation; make reference to your prior conversation; inject humor. And this is what I found to be their most salient bit of advice: "Treat potential partners like actual people, not bubbles on a screen." In other words, treat people like people, people! This encapsulates the sane, generous and wise spirit of a book about an aspect of life that has a lot of potential to turn irrational, mean and short-sighted -- especially with all the gadgets at our disposal. As such, all of you single folks would do well set aside your smartphone for a sec to get some tips, much wisdom and many guffaws from "Modern Romance" -- Ali Binazir, M.D., M.Phil., author of "The Tao of Dating: The Smart Woman's Guide to Being Absolutely Irresistible, the #1-rated dating book on for 4+ years

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