

# Shelter

Rick Geerling

After my setbacks with girls in high school and another series of crushing defeats early in college, I threw in the towel. I was done with this bullshit. It went the same way every time. I can even diagram it out for you:

Step One, Rick meets Girl.

Step Two, Rick becomes horribly infatuated with Girl. This may happen anywhere from ten to forty-five seconds after Step One.

Steps Three through Six, a series of humorously awkward instances where Rick tries to talk to Girl. Eventually he will either fail horribly or succeed a tiny bit, thereby propelling him forward into the next step.

Step Seven, Rick alters his way of life in order to become more 'attractive' to Girl. Examples: clothes, music, habits, posture, breakfast choices, etc. Rick will end this step only feeling like more of a jackass.

Step Eight, Rick finally gives up and acts like himself. Girl inexplicably becomes more interested. Rick then gets creative and finds some other way to screw things up. This may happen through sheer stupidity, saying the wrong things, stalking, or complete lack of anything resembling confidence. Alternately, Girl may have a boyfriend, be married, be a lesbian, have taken a vow of chastity, secured a restraining order, invested in a guard dog, moved to another state or country, faked her own death, dropped into the underground, or had sex with a homeless person on Rick's pillows. Any combination of the above, or the inclusion of all choices, is also valid.

Step Nine, Rick never sees or talks to Girl again. Rick gets drunk, becomes severely depressed, and passes out alone. Repeat for as many days as it takes Rick to meet another Girl.

And so I told myself I was going to stop falling in love. And I did.

Of course, we all knew it was a blatant lie. I didn't even make it half a year before I was back to the old way of doing things.

Sort of.

I'd learned a number of things during my stint of indifference. I found that maybe, just maybe, I didn't have to try as hard and be as pathetic. I also realized I would never be sure about love unless I gave it a shot now and again.

Hopeless romantics, you see, may suffer from trying too hard, but at least they're trying.