

Dear Mandy Moore,

First things first: I don't want to sleep with you, I don't idolize you, and, in all honesty, know very little about you (for instance, I don't know your birth city, age, natural hair color, pets' names, next filmic project, or your current romantic status). In fact, I'm not even sure I want to meet you. But I think we could be great friends.

Originally, I was going to assemble and send you a collage along the lines of US Weekly's section "Stars – They're Just Like Us!" Finding pictures of you and pasting myself in them. Photos of us both in a restaurant caught with our mouths full, bumping into a glass door upon exit, giggling in a convertible at a stoplight. Fun captions reading, "Mandy and Dominic love fries!", "They are clumsy, too!", and "Mandy loves Dominic's jokes!"

Then I thought I'd write a fan letter to you, praising your singer/actress dual and complementary talents, awed at your acclaimed girl-next-door-ness, and informing you of my free roundtrip vouchers with Southwest Airlines, my imminent arrival at the Burbank Airport, my desire to buy you cookies and a hotdog at Diddy Riese. All in all, a sweet and innocent meeting up that you, or whomever reads your fan mail, would disregard without a second thought.

And while the sentiments expressed above are not quite wholly dishonest, they make fun of myself and distort the sincerity I'm trying to achieve here. They skip past the initial stages of a natural friendship, moving from strangers to casual acquaintances to friends, built on the foundations of trust, loyalty, and laughter. Because I do believe that if we were to meet, on accident, by chance, somewhere in some city, we would become friends in just this way. And I don't believe this about any other celebrity.

The illusion is, of course, that we are both regular people, have common ground at our cores, share the same values, could actually kindle a friendship. That if our fates were somehow reversed and you're in line at Ralph's flipping through a magazine, buying a 12-pack of Miller High Life Lite and toothpaste, seeing me bloated and pixilated and stuffing sushi into my face, you'd say, "Oh, Dominic, it's amazing how alike we are."

The logical explanation for all this is the illogical belief in the illusion, the made-up, or at least as-yet unproven, connection we would share. It's not totally crazy. It's what we all want: to be singled out by someone, appreciated, respected, admired, thought of as a kindred spirit. This is just on a more exaggerated scale but no less emotionally true, more unrealistic but no less a simple human desire. And I don't care if you've read this letter a thousand times from a thousand other people because if you can recognize all that, find the honest part of yourself that agrees with me, then I think we are friends, even if we never meet.

Sincerely,



Dominic Bruno

Mandy Moore