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What a Guy's Place Says About Him

Take a good look around, advises Jake. His stuff reveals more than 10 dates could.

"Jake, are these your yellow socks?" It was a Wednesday night and Inez,* whom I'd been seeing for a few weeks, had come back to my apartment after a romantic dinner out. And she'd found Natalie's socks. (From our tennis date, for the record.) Inez was amazingly laid-back about it—we hadn't had any talks about exclusivity—but still: dumb, Jake! And then I wondered, what other clues are lying around here, or around most guys' places? I asked the experts to decode a few. Consider yourself warned.

If: His closet is hyperorganized...

Maybe he's just: A slightly anal guy who hates to hunt for his yellow tie in the morning.

But it could mean: He'll bail if things get messy.

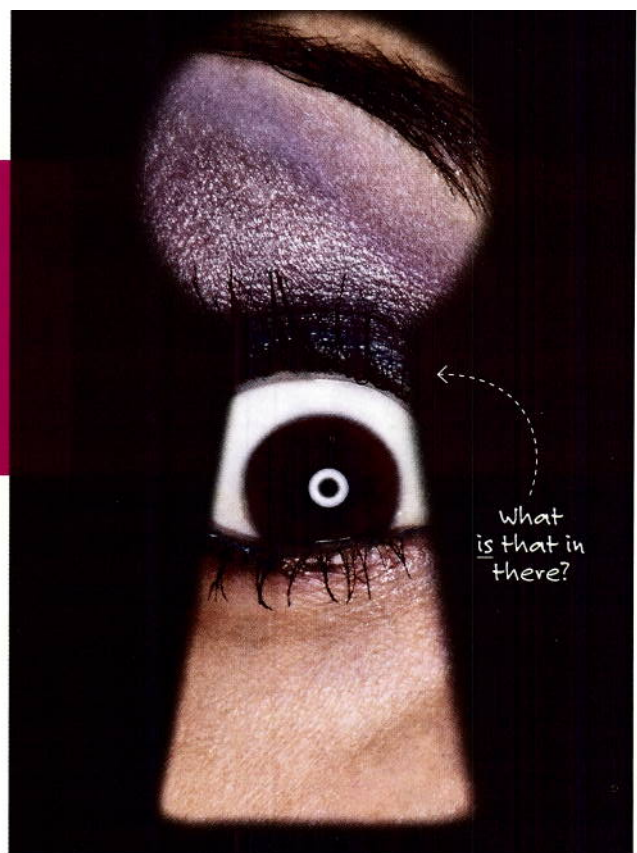
To know for sure which, you have to consider the degree. Are his shirts color-coded? Let it go. Are the condiments in his fridge arranged from savory to sweet? Heads up: Guys who are organized in the extreme often can't handle things outside their (small) comfort zone, says Seth Meyers, a relationship expert in Los Angeles. "If his stuff is always perfectly organized," Meyers notes, "he may be rigid, controlling, and afraid of disorder." Does he follow you around, tidying up? Is he short-tempered if you leave your coffee mug in the sink? Real relationships are messy, so if you're looking for one, be wary of Mr. Clean.

If: He's got a PS3 and an Xbox and a Wii...

Maybe he's just: A gamer who likes to relax after work with a beer and Halo 3.

But it could mean: He's not looking for anything real.

"Generally speaking," says Douglas Weiss, president of the American Association for Sex Addiction Therapy, "if a man spends disproportionate time on video games, he probably isn't a master of real relationships." How much is too much? Whatever amount makes you feel neglected, Weiss says. Try coaxing your guy away from his Madden NFL and propose other activities. Say, "In half an hour, can we go grab lunch?" If he says no, or can't tear himself away when the time is up, get your own sandwich, and possibly a new boyfriend.



If: His porn tastes are extreme and all over the map...

Maybe he's just: A guy who hasn't had sex in a while.

But it could mean: He's a sex addict.

I'm not suggesting you check his computer history, but, well, yes, I am. "A guy who's going from page to page of hard-core pornography," says Weiss, "may be a guy who can't be satiated." Most guys enjoy porn, but if he partakes obsessively, across many genres: Avoid. "When a guy's looking for diverse forms of stimulation, you can't compete," says Weiss. "You can only be one person: one size, one race—and into only so many things."

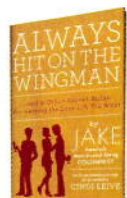
If: He has too many photos of himself...

Maybe he's just: An artist who does self-portraits.

But it could mean: He's a psychopath.

Kidding! Kind of. Too many solo photos, or an oil painting of himself, can indicate "an overblown sense of self-worth," says Jon Ronson, author of *The Psychopath Test*. Too much gold and other flashy objects suggest grandiosity and narcissism, adds Ronson. "Even if he's not an actual psychopath, I would avoid a narcissist because he'll be a pain in the ass," he says. "Instead, women should stick to nerdy intellectuals, like me!" And me! ■

Jake is a real single guy dating in New York City.



Get More Jake!

Grab his new book, *Always Hit On the Wingman...and 9 Other Secret Rules for Getting the Love Life You Want*, in stores now.