

Khoke & Ida





about us:

We met by being introduced by a mutual friend. She set us up to write to each other. A thinly veiled matchmaking attempt that worked. So we began writing, we decided on snail mail letters and no email or social media to keep the communication more real. We wrote each other nice long letters for several months, visited each other a couple times and then began dating.

At that time we lived about 700 miles apart. Long distance relationships are no fun so Ida moved to Iowa to live nearby. We dated for a year and a half then before we got married in 2016. We have been married nearly 6 years now.

We have very different personalities but we have the same values and goals. Ida is very spontaneous and creative. She brings in new ideas, hosts social events, finds new projects to be involved in. Khoke is very methodical and thorough. He manages the farm and finances. He is very steady and only commits to what he can accomplish.

Both of us benefit from the others' strengths. Ida benefits from the structure Khoke brings and Khoke benefits from the creativity and innovation that Ida brings. We respect and rely on each other to bring these aspects into the relationship.

our lives:



As a couple we are pretty close. People see this by how we treat each other as a priority. We are seen as expressive and affectionate. Making mini dates, even if that is only doing our chores together, love notes in the lunch box, wildflower bouquets on the table. People would also describe us as a lively couple, we tease each other openly and are animated conversationalists.

In the summer we like to play volleyball with our friends from church. We also go down to the local river and have swimming parties. At social events we attend or host we like to use our hand cranked ice cream maker and crank ice cream. This is always a hit.

In the warm weather months we do a lot of outdoor activities, horseback riding, gardening, foraging wild fruit, hiking and sometimes canoeing. Khome likes to go hunting with his brothers. We go fishing together a number of times each summer. Ida like to piece quilts and hosts quilting bees with friends to quilt them in the spring.

why adoption:



We have always wanted to have a family, we have a lot of family oriented values. However shortly after we married, like within a few weeks, Khoke was diagnosed with cancer. He made a complete recovery but it is unlikely that we will be able to have biological children.

We believe that raising a family is a passage of life that helps fulfill one's life and we long to have a family of our own. We do lots of activities with Khoke's nieces and nephews but that is not the same as having our own family.

Khoke has an uncle who was adopted from birth and Ida has an aunt who was adopted at 1 ½ years old. For both of us, adoption has always been an option and is also very supported by our family.

We do not have children living in our home but we are involved in a number of activities with children. Khokes is close friends with a couple of his cousins who live nearby. Their children, ages 6-10, are at our house regularly. They go fishing and horseback riding with Khoke regularly. Ida gave them all swimming lessons a couple years ago and taught them to swim.

Ida works part time as a 3rd grade teacher's aid and does elementary tutoring. She is sought out by the children at both the school and church to either read aloud or tell stories as she is an animated reader and storyteller.

Khoke will humor the kids at church and have snowball fights with them on the lawn. He secured a rope swing in our barn for his nieces and nephews to swing on. This has been a source of hours of fun for them.



Our home:

We live on a farm in the rolling hills of southern Iowa. We have a diversified farm with livestock, and crop land. We have horses, cows, sheep and chickens. We love working close to home and being around the animals.

Our house is what is called a cob cottage. Cob is a European building style similar to the adobe of the southwest. The walls are 18 inches thick and made of a mixture of clay, sand and straw. Think giant pottery vessel with windows and a roof.

Our house is 8 sided and 2 stories tall and is built into the hillside. It is homey and snug. We have a small fireplace and our whole downstairs is open which gives it an inviting air.

Lamoni is the home of Graceland University. I like to use their library. Lamoni also has a public school. There is also a nearby homeschool cooperative where homeschooling families pool their time and resources to teach classes in groups.

Lamoni is a very small town whose activities often center around the university. There is a livestock and produce auction. The town does not have a lot to offer, but the area has some really nice parks. There is Nine Eagles state park, Slips Bluff state park and Little River Lake. The Grand river also runs through the county. We go to these to fish, canoe and hike.

We live about an hour from Khoke's parents and siblings and we see them regularly throughout the year. We have several families from church that we do a lot of activities with. We do activities at church, social get-togethers at each other's houses and see each other regularly. Four of these families live within a couple miles of our house.



our pets:

In our home we have 2 dogs and a cat. The dogs are Blue Heelers named Silas and Ruby. Our cat is white and tabby and her name is Emma. Emma can be both reserved and sweet. I love how she will jump up on our shoulder and lay there or ride around as we walk. The rest of the time she is fairly independent and not require a lot of attention. She loves to be petted, just not on her tummy.

Silas and Ruby are both very sweet sensitive dogs. Ruby has a funny habit of snorting like a pig when you are petting her and she is happy. She is totally bomb-proof, loves all people including children, especially if they pet her.

Silas is an amazing farm dog, he protects our livestock and crops from the wildlife and he helps Khoke round up the stock. One time Khoke had injured his back pretty badly and it took a few weeks to recover. During this time, one day the beef herd broke through the gate into the pasture with the dairy herd. Khoke's back was too injured to run, ride a horse or even throw a stick. Yet he was able to go out into the pasture with Silas and Silas put the dairy herd in the barn and then put over 100 beef cows back through the gate into their own pasture. It was amazing to watch that dog work simply following Khoke's instructions.



what Khoke wants you to know about Ida:



Ida is very industrious going from one thing to the next quickly. She has a single focus on what she is doing. She is very loving in her ability to take care of others. She easily engages people and can strike up a conversation with strangers. She makes a good host when family and friends come over. She is talkative and an excellent conversationalist.

My wife is a homemaker and is very skilled at it. She is an excellent cook and can make up her own recipes and they taste great. She is a basketmaker, she can spin wool into yarn and then knit or crochet it. She gardens and knows everything from how to grow the vegetables to how to preserve them. She is very good with kids, she works at a school three days a week and the kids love her. She also writes magazine articles in her free time that are published regularly.

Ida enjoys processing wool into yarn and knitting it. She likes to sew, garden, write letters, make baskets, stitch quilts and give them away. She is always doing some sort of crafting project or another.

Last year we went on a date canoeing on a local lake. I really enjoyed being on the water with just ourselves. We also took fishing poles and fished in a secluded nook. Ida had packed a picnic lunch for us. It was very relaxing and fun. It was a time to unwind and just be together. We saw many wildlife and went all over the lake. It was fun to get away from the normal grind and relax with each other. These types of dates are my favorite.

My wife is very good at setting boundaries and following through with them. She is very loving and can feel with others and connect with them there. She is totally capable of providing children with all the physical needs they have. She values family time and will see that we make time as a family to do things together.

My favorite thing about her is coming home to her. She is always excited to see me and I have that to greet me when I come home. She also gives of herself freely to do things for me and makes time to be with me even if it is only going with me to do my chores.



what Ida wants you to know about Khoke:

Most people's first impression of Khoke is that is very serious and frank, which he is but there is a lot more to him than that. Khoke can be very thorough, measured, he says what he means and means what he says. He can be very candid and honest. Once people get to know him they get to see more of his fun-loving side.

Khoke is very thorough at explaining things. He is very methodical and a careful book/record keeper. He is always early or on time. He will order the same dish at a restaurant every time he goes. He likes order and routine.

Khoke is very loyal and he values family very highly. He and his whole family are very respectful of each other even if they disagree about something major. Khoke is also very religious and is very secure in his relationship with God and is very involved at church.

My husband can be very considerate of others. I see this a lot in our marriage. When I can't think of what to cook for dinner or I am tired he'll suggest something super easy like fried eggs. Even if Khoke has a hard day at work he never comes home and takes it out on me.

We farm and have a lot of animals and crops. Khoke is a very hard worker and a good provider. He runs a large herd of beef cattle in partnership with his cousin. With both work and management Khoke is very thorough and diligent.

Khoke has many skills, he is an amazing carpenter and wood worker. He built all of our kitchen cabinets and counters. When he was 15 he built his first house, it was a 16 by16 cabin built near his parents house and done almost entirely by himself.

Khoke's hobbies include bird watching. He has gone on many bird watching trips as he was growing up and in his early adulthood. Even our honeymoon tour took us to Cape Hatteras, a migratory bird hotspot. Every fall finds Khoke hunting, he will fish most weekends in the summer. He also enjoys reading. When he comes home from working all day he likes to unwind by reading for a while.

Khoke is an amazing wood carver. He has made a wide assortment of carvings, everything from wall plaques, carved animals, wooden spoons of all kinds, picture frames and more.

On our first date, Khoke came down from Iowa to Tennessee to see me and meet my family. I took him and showed him a number of local caves. The first one we came to, we walked in the huge entrance, stepped through a crack in the cavern wall and followed the passage until we were crawling on our hands and knees. However there was water on the cave floor and we got covered in mud and dirt! We went back until we could go no farther. When we got out we had to go back to my folks place for a change of clothes. They looked at us real funny because we were streaked from head to foot with mud. Khoke enjoyed himself so much that when we did our honeymoon tour I took him to Mammoth Cave State Park.

Khoke would make a great parent. He is gentle but firm with children. They love him. He has very clear boundaries, he lets kids try new things but is very firm with the safety rules. He likes to do fun activities with them. He is patient when teaching new games. He lets himself lose to make it fun for them. He remembers the fun things adults did with him when he was a kid and tries to help others enjoy some of the same experiences he had loved.

There are many things I love about Khoke, it is hard to choose. There is one thing in particular that I can think of that I really value/love. My parents had a long bitter divorce when I was growing up and then I was raised by my dad and step-mom. I had many insecurities about being married.

Khoke had a very stable home and family life. His parents loved each other and were very committed to their family and marriage. Khoke is deeply committed to our marriage, he has eyes only and forever for me. No matter what struggles we face he is steady as a rock and his commitment is unshakeable. He expresses this with and without words. This has been a true tonic for me for I had no example of this in my background and I love this about him completely.



Fun Facts:

From Ida's upbringing she had the tradition of making homemade doughnuts on New Years eve. This is always a hit.

Around the winter solstice every year we have a party with our friends to celebrate the coming of winter. We roast turkeys over a spit, have a huge meal and everyone brings a part of it. People organize skits for entertainment and there is music.

We go to a 10 day church camp every fall. We enjoy 10 days of fellowship and activities such as volleyball, games with the kids, late night card games, campfire cooking and more.

When one of our friends' kids or a niece or nephew learn how to swim we have a party to celebrate it. They swim across our pond (with their mom or dad) and we crank lots of ice cream in the flavor of the kids' choice.

Ida's great-grandmother was a professional ice skater (in the Ice Capades in the 1940's), and it was important to her that every family member knew how to ice skate. Khome also grew up ice skating. So when our pond freezes over in the winter we often host ice skating parties. The guys will sometimes pull sleds on the ice with the very small children and the older children chase each other and the adults throwing snowballs. We all have fun.

We set aside a couple days every year at the spring Equinox to do our spring cleaning.

