



LOBSTERS, BISQUES & BERRIES

Olivia Gaines

ABSTRACT

Melody Willis' trophy case displays thirty years of being in the music business and performances all over the world. Yet, she goes to bed alone. Tired of fighting in the rat race she takes a chance. Dressed down, she heads to the offices of the Perfect Match and sits in front of the screen. It didn't take her long to find the one thing she wanted. Through the screen his heart called to her as well.

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Chapter One- Typecast

The back seat of the ride for hire seemed to close in around Lakota as he took a breather with his armload of goodies. A black leather overnight bag filled with extra socks, undies, and a change of clothing rested on the seat beside him. He found himself questioning the rationale behind this trip over and over again for even thinking this would work out, but he was in the middle of it all and hell bent on seeing it through. Again, he found himself back in New York.

Three years ago, he'd traveled to New York in search of the matchmaker that his friend Elijah Herring had hired to find himself a pretty young bride. Lorelei Herring was a looker, and she, along with other things, understood Elijah. Lakota had been friends with the man for most of his life and could barely understand what made the man tick or how he managed to put on matching socks each day, but Lorelei loved the crotchety, wiry, hairy-faced bastard. In Lakota's estimation, if there was a woman on this planet for Elijah, there had to be one for him as well. This, along with season after season of loneliness in the cold wilderness of Maine, made him want to try.

This was his fourth attempt. The first three possible ideal matches were not to his liking at all and sure as hell weren't perfect by any standard. Months of correspondence with each led him to not taking the leap of faith, but opting instead to meeting them in person first and then going on an actual date. Once the date went well, he offered to fly each one to Maine to see his home and business. He was grateful that he'd had the foresight to do such a small thing since it had worked out in his favor.

The first prospect, Mary Ellen, a tight-lipped woman with luxurious red hair and sparkling green eyes, captivated his attention. However, she was buttoned up so tight that he was afraid that if she farted, her eyeballs would pop out. The conversation was also stilted even after she came for a visit to his home and was unable to see the beauty in the landscaped and appreciate the deafening of the silence of nature. That one, he told Coraline Newair the matchmaker, was a definitive hard no for his desires in a life partner.

A second attempt with a math teacher, Anna something or other, was also a bust. She was an anxious woman who could not hide her fascination with him being a Native American, and she rushed to his home, disappointed that he didn't reside on a reservation or have a wigwam in his back yard to smoke a peace-pipe filled with a mind-altering weed. An ignorant woman with large breasts that he hated would never know the feel of his hands, had led him to this day and meeting in person number four. Oftentimes he skipped over number three, since he had trouble remembering her name, but she too was nothing outside of the norm. Stereotypes

irritated him to no end and he was sorry that Anna was also a typecast of a big-boobed woman with a rambling mouth.

He sat in the backseat, questioning many of his life choices, which also led him to this moment.

“What are you doing?” he chastised himself. His long legs were folded in the tiny backseat of the economy vehicle driven by a man whose name he couldn’t pronounce phonetically due to the sheer volume of vowels in his first name, who grinned at him through the rear-view mirror.

“I am taking you to the destination you entered in Brooklyn,” the driver answered.

“Sorry, I’m talking to myself,” Lakota replied, shifting his six-foot, one inch frame in the back seat.

“There is water in the side door if you are thirsty, my friend,” the driver replied.

“Thanks,” Lakota responded, looking at the number of homeless people pushing buggies and pulling carts down unfriendly sidewalks. In his estimation, this was not living. Whatever these people were doing consisted of merely existing in a world that no longer had a use for fallible people. Sad people. Broken people. Unwanted people who found themselves unable to generate enough kinetic energy to matter in the grand cosmos of the universe. Instead, these broken souls had been left behind, groveling on sidewalks for their next meals. Block after block passed by, each holding a different scent from a separate nationality cooking and simmering meats in spices from their respective cultures. The smells, while making him hungry, also turned his stomach.

“I wonder if she can cook,” Lakota remarked, looking at the gifts he’d brought for her mother, father, and sister. He also had a bouquet of flowers for the woman as well, should she consent to be his bride.

Six months of correspondence and phone calls each week had changed his mind about giving it another try after the folly with the third woman. Elise...Elisa...Eliza, one of the three, he didn’t remember, but he did recall her hands, which were all over him. Sex, a necessary component in a relationship, wasn’t the wax which held a man and woman together. The aggressiveness of Elise’s, yes that was her name, antagonistic sexual actions didn’t turn him on. In fact, she elicited a reaction which was quite the opposite. His soldier refused to stand up and salute.

However, the latest candidate’s voice made him, his soldier, and the three random hairs on his chest, all want to enlist for any job, role, or rank the lady needed him to take. Tonight, he was taking a major risk by having dinner with the new interest and the lady’s parents. Lakota checked his pocket for the ring he’d purchased in order to propose and make it official. In his heart, he knew she was the right one; he just hoped her parents agreed that he’d make a good match for their daughter.

In less than five minutes, he would find out. Lakota checked his phone to ensure that the driver wasn't taking the long way around when he turned down Fiske Place in front of a row of brownstones. He'd arrived.

"Thanks," he told the driver, handing him a twenty in cash as a tip. Inhaling deeply, he collected the flowers, the small box, and the overnight bag. As a backup, he had booked a hotel down on Nevins Street in case the nice parents objected to him being in their home, with their daughter, or to him in general. Either way, he was prepared for whatever the night would bring.

He walked up the well-maintained stairwell, taking note of the plastic summer flowers in cement planters, remarking how freely annuals grew on the side of his mountain without the constraints of cement holders to stunt their growth. If the lady on the other side of the door consented to becoming his wife, he had no doubts she would fare the same. A steady finger pressed the doorbell, waiting for the live version of the woman attached to the lovely voice.

"Behave yourself, soldier," he commanded his crotch as he looked up to find her standing in the doorway with a smile opened as wide as her mouth. He found his words as he spoke to her, "Hi Melody."

"Wow, double wow, and hey now," she said, opening the front door to allow him entrance. "You're much taller than I imagined."

"Yes, I'm six feet one," he said, passing a bouquet of flowers to her. In the background, he could hear the sound of anxious feet making a beeline towards the sound of his voice.

"You're a solid, what a hundred and seventy-five pounds?" Melody asked, taking him all in from the bronze, reddish skin to the jet-black hair which hung down his back and five o'clock shadow she was surprised to see him possess.

"Is that a problem?" he asked, giving her a smile, which curled the toes inside of her Jimmy Choos'.

"None whatsoever," she offered, turning to address her parents who entered the room with arched eyebrows at the tall Native American man who appeared to take over the space of the living room.

Lakota turned to take a good look at the people Melody called family. An older, conservatively dressed father, with greyed temples in his hair and thick, porn star mustache, watched him suspiciously. A mother, elegant and wearing pearls and a fashionable shoe with low heels raked him over with scrutiny. The younger sister squinted her eyes at him, acting suspicious of his presence and viewing him as a threat.

"Honey, is this your surprise or our dinner guest?" Lucinda Willis, Melody's mother asked.

“Both,” Melody replied with pride. “This is Lakota Simjak, the man I’m going to marry.”

Boring eyes scoured over every inch of his sinewy frame and he attempted to ease the uncomfortable moment by handing her father a bottle of slow aged Canadian whiskey, followed by a small box of wild blueberries for her mother and a pair of tourmaline earrings made by his own mother for the sister.

“I brought gifts,” Lakota said, feeling more awkward by the moment.

Her sister Symphony accepted the earrings, mumbling, “Well, Daddy, at least he’s not a rapper or a want-to-be actor.”