

From the Matchmakers

(A restaurant. STANLEY, 40ish approaches his blind date GAIL, 40ish.)

STANLEY

Gail?

GAIL

Hi! Well sit down I'm not going to attack you.

STANLEY

Sometimes it's best to be on the defensive.

GAIL

You are funny. Bree didn't tell me you were funny.

STANLEY

It's one of my best kept secrets.

(GAIL laughs uproariously.)

GAIL

That is rich. That is rich.

(STANLEY sits tentatively.)

Are you nervous? You look nervous.

STANLEY

This is the first date I've been on in twenty-five years.

GAIL

No pressure or anything. Ha!

STANLEY

Yeah. No pressure.

GAIL

Me, I don't really care for fancy restaurants, I'm just as happy at a Wendy's. I mean, they bring ya the food at one of these places and it's like, 'where's the rest of it? Super-size this next time!'

(GAIL laughs uproariously again.)

STANLEY

Yeah.

GAIL

Okay what is on the menu?

STANLEY

I've heard the duck here is great.

GAIL

Frankly, I don't see how anyone can eat birds. They're flying around, they're eating garbage off the streets, and then you put that in your mouth? Not for me. If you want the duck, go ahead and get it.

STANLEY

I'm not really in the mood for duck.

GAIL

Good. I'd have to barf if you tried to kiss me. Is that too forward?

STANLEY

What?

GAIL

The kissing thing?

STANLEY

What kissing thing?

GAIL

Me saying that if we kissed I'd barf. I'm not saying that we're gonna kiss, okay? I don't want to lead you on. Mostly I'm just here for the free food.

(short pause)

I'm joking! Geez! Lighten up. So what do you do for fun, Stanley?

STANLEY

I am a Renaissance enthusiast.

GAIL

You're a what?

STANLEY

I practice swordplay and um... various medieval crafts, I can make my own armor and brew my own mead. I enjoy reading sonnets, painting miniatures, that sort of thing.

(GAIL laughs uproariously again.)

GAIL

You're kidding.

STANLEY

No that's what I do.

GAIL

I think that's outstanding. I think that's just outstanding.

STANLEY

You do?

GAIL

Absolutely. You're a warrior. Come here and sit next to me.

STANLEY

I'm fine over here actually.

GAIL

Oh I see. You wanna keep your distance. You're like a wolf. Stanley the warrior wolf. Rarr.

STANLEY

I don't follow.

GAIL

Wolves hunt from a distance.

STANLEY

I thought wolves hunted in packs.

GAIL

They hunt in packs from a distance. What are you, crazy?

STANLEY

If a wolf was actually going to kill something wouldn't it have to come in physical contact with it?

GAIL

Okay, yeah, at the moment of the kill, the wolf is close, okay? Fine. At all other times the wolf and his friends keep a distance. Way to wreck my metaphor.

STANLEY

Sorry.

GAIL

Hey listen. A real man doesn't ever apologize for anything. Remember that. That's my first piece of advice to you. Like, say you're the president and you totally wreck the economy and destroy the country or whatever, never say you're sorry.

STANLEY

So um... tell me about yourself.

GAIL

No. Ha! I'm just kidding. Geez.

(GAIL starts playing with her silverware.)

Can I get your honest opinion on something?

STANLEY

Sure.

GAIL

Let's say you take a certain drug, I'm not gonna name any names. Prescription drug, don't get any ideas, mister. I can tell by looking at you you've got a past.

STANLEY

I really don't.

GAIL

Whatever. You take prescription drugs to keep yourself from... what's the word I'm looking for – going crazy. You know, hearing voices, no impulse control, that sort of thing, like if you see a knife

(she picks up her knife)

And you think knife – knives are for killing, right? So what's to stop you from just flinging that knife at the waiter for being slow?

(she's about to throw the knife)

That kind of thing.

(she gestures wildly with her knife)

So you're off your medication. As a little experiment. Just to see what will happen. Do you think that would make you more or less attractive to the opposite gender?

STANLEY

Less.

GAIL

Less attractive, huh?

STANLEY

Definitely.

GAIL

Huh. Well that just bites. So what's your story?

STANLEY

My story?

GAIL

Yeah. Tell me in twenty words or less. Go.

STANLEY

I'm recently divorced, father of a teenage girl, um...

GAIL

Good. Got it. So you're lonely.

STANLEY

I don't know that I'm lonely.

GAIL

You're a lonely man cub and you come looking for Gail.

STANLEY

I'm just testing out the waters. You know, the dating pool.

GAIL

So you come to Gail. Nice. Testing out the waters.

STANLEY

I don't know where our waiter is.

GAIL

Who cares? Can I tell you something? It might just be the lack of pills talking, but I'm very attracted to you.

STANLEY

Oh.

GAIL (*articulating each word with a stab of the knife*)

Very. Attracted. To. You. Mister. Warrior. Man.

STANLEY

That's flattering.

GAIL

That's all you're gonna say?

STANLEY

Um... I'm... I don't... can you put the knife down please?

GAIL

Does it unnerve you?

STANLEY

A little bit.

GAIL

We don't want that now, do we?

(GAIL puts down the knife and moves her chair right next to STANLEY.)

You're like a barbarian king, you know that? I want just to run my hands through your bearskin cape and plunder the British coastline with you.

STANLEY

Uh...

GAIL

That's okay, you don't have to speak. We can communicate in other ways.

STANLEY

I need to go home.

GAIL

Awesome.

STANLEY

Alone.

GAIL

What's wrong?

STANLEY

You're just a little too... uh...

GAIL

A little too what?

STANLEY

You're just very forward, that's all.

GAIL

Stanley I am forty-three years old. If I don't go out there and grab love by the scruff of the neck and shake it like a rag doll I'm going end up alone in a nursing home watching Wheel of Fortune for the rest of my sad, pathetic life. So I'm seizing it, got it? And right now I'm gonna seize you. So here's the deal my sweet, sweet warrior prince. I'm laying my cards on the table. Are you gonna love me or not?

STANLEY

No. Please God no.

GAIL

(STANLEY escapes. GAIL motions to the waiter.)

I'll have the duck.

(to read the rest of the play, please contact me at donzolidis@yahoo.com)