

The Red Rose

by

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CHARACTERS:

Karen
Tad
Kathy
William

SETTING:

A small coffeehouse.

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At Rise: Karen is seated at a table with a red rose.

Tad enters, also carrying a red rose.

TAD

Excuse me? You aren't by chance waiting for a blind date?

KAREN

From the web app matching thingy?

TAD

Yeah? I'm early.

KAREN

I'm usually early everywhere too. You brought a rose?

TAD

Oh, yeah, for you.

KAREN

Oh, I thought, never mind. I'm new to this. Not dating, but -

TAD

Dating by questionnaire?

KAREN

Yeah, by computer. How do you think they figure out which people to match up? Some algorithm, whatever that means, or something?

TAD

I guess. Advanced percentages, maybe.

KAREN

So.

(clears her throat)

How honest were you?

TAD

You mean did I answer as I am or as I wish I could be?

KAREN

Yeah, like who you would be if you really kept your New Year's resolutions.

TAD

Is that what you did?

KAREN

What? No. Not really.

TAD

Maybe ninety, or eighty-five percent honest. I guess.

KAREN

Right, like that many people are really into reading or going to museums.

TAD

Or playing outdoor sports. A few times a year, that counts, right?

KAREN

If watching movies based on books and buying the books with the intent of reading counts. I mean I really do intend to read them.

TAD

Ooooh, has someone been a bad girl?

KAREN

What?

TAD

Um, nothing, habit, its -

Tad starts coughing.

KAREN

Uh, so, I guess I'm just finally ready to settle. Down. Settle down. You know, I think I want someone I can spend the rest of my life with.

TAD

It would cut down the risk of carpal tunnel.

KAREN

Depends what you're doing. I mean -

TAD

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to -

KAREN

No, it's fine. It's just a lot of my friends are getting married or actually have gotten married and I'm not getting any younger and it just feels like, okay, enough playing around, time to grow up and get rid of all the rope and get serious.

TAD

Rope?

KAREN

What?

TAD
Are you into sailing?

KAREN
No.

TAD
Camping?

KAREN
Not really.

TAD
I know what you mean though, about growing up and getting serious.

KAREN
Yeah.

TAD
I've been thinking it's time to make my place more presentable. Buy some decorative throw pillows, clear out my porn collection. Reduce it, at least.

KAREN
What kind-?
(clears her throat)
Nothing.

TAD
It's not a big deal ... the porn, you know, a lot of guys ... it's just a few magazines ... dvds, comic books ... It also would free up a lot of memory on my laptop. I bet it would run faster.

KAREN
I'd have a lot more storage room under my bed. I guess I could buy more sweaters.

TAD
Yeah. Get an actual dog to go with the collars and leashes.

KAREN
Dinner by candlelight instead of ...

TAD
I love candlewax.

KAREN
Breaking off your skin from the friction.

TAD
Even better when she uses her nails to do it.

KAREN

Leaving scratch marks across his chest and all up and down his back.

TAD

Bite marks.

KAREN

You can tell a lot about someone from how they bite you.

TAD

What do you want to know about me?

KAREN

No. We can't do this. Not like this. I'm going to do it right this time. Wooden spoons are for cooking, not spanking.

TAD

I've had such dirty thoughts in the supermarket. I keep having to hold that little plastic basket in front of myself.

KAREN

Which aisle?

TAD

Aisles.

KAREN

Aisles?

TAD

So many aisles. Let's be bad, we could be so good at it together.

KAREN

I would love to go to the supermarket with you.

TAD

I feel so lucky I got matched up with you, Kathy.

KAREN

Karen.

TAD

Karen?

KAREN

My name's Karen. And you're William?

TAD

Tad. Who's William?

KAREN

We were supposed to meet? I was going to have a red rose on my table?

TAD

Shit. I'm supposed to be meeting a woman named Kathy.

KAREN

Oh. So we weren't meant to be each other's match?

TAD

No.

Pause. They exchange looks.

TAD (cont'd)

(nodding towards the door)

Do you wanna?

KAREN

Yes!

They exit together passing Kathy as she enters. Kathy is dressed in athletic clothing as though having just finished playing a game. Kathy takes a seat at the table where one of the roses has been left behind.

William enters carrying a book. He notices the rose at Kathy's table.

WILLIAM

Nice rose. I think I might be your date.

KAREN

Oh. Hi. I just finished reading that one.

End.