



A Perfect Match

A Peaceful Pilgrim Novel

Excerpt

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Chapter 1

Why-oh-why must I be the bearer of...news? Good news, but, seriously, why did I agree to this?

Lena Young knew exactly why she'd agreed. She'd been so thrilled when her best friend Brayla Sullivan had finally gotten her head out of the videogames that ruled her life to the point where she was oblivious to all else. On New Year's about a month ago, Brayla and Shaun Levi--Lena's and Brayla's neighbor all their lives--had done the unthinkable and slept together.

Long story short, Brayla had freaked out, not wanting to end up married to the first guy she'd ever been with, pregnant, like her own mother, who'd bailed on her life when Brayla was just a little girl. Brayla had started using the same online dating service her aunt used and met someone from a remote island in Alaska that was cut off from the mainland at this time of year. She'd flown off to meet him, constructing some fantasy in her head about

a happily-ever-after Lena had never even been sure she wanted.

Being the hero Lena had always believed him to be, Shaun had gone after her, afraid she'd get lost or worse on her own. Given that Brayla had never been anywhere further than Minnesota in her life and she didn't really know how to take care of herself at home, let alone at the butt-end of the world, that was far from an unthinkable concept.

Two wrongs had made a right. Brayla realized at the last minute that Shaun had been her Prince Charming all along. They were on their way back to Peaceful now. When they'd last called, Brayla had asked Lena to tell her aunt they were moving into his house together once they got home and Carolan could continue living in Brayla's house as she had been for the last several years.

And here I am, having more contact with this woman than I've ever cared to. In many ways, Lena felt a strong motherly instinct toward Brayla. She'd had an upbringing of extremes from outright abuse at her mother's hands to uncaring neglect at her father's. With her aunt, Brayla had gotten naggingly-reluctant and rude caretaking. Maybe it was better than what she'd received previously, but Lena didn't care for the way Carolan treated her niece. Since Brayla's dad died, her aunt had slowly taken possession of nearly everything Brayla had been willed, including the money from his life insurance policy. Brayla had only just realized the thievery and demanded as much back as she could get, also insisting that, if her aunt wanted to continue living in her house, she needed to contribute and pay her own way.

As a favor to Brayla, Lena had helped Carolan get a job at the truck stop diner she worked on weekends. *I didn't do Harry any favors when he agreed to hire her because I asked him to.* Carolan wasn't an ideal waitress. The opposite, in fact. Lena spent most of her shifts making up for the middle-aged woman's deficiencies as a server.

Carrying her lunch back to the table set aside in the diner for servers on break, Lena sat across from Carolan, who'd taken her lunch break early--again--and was now reading the *La Crosse Tribune* without bothering to look up once. As usual, the long hours on her feet, constantly on the move, made Lena ravenously hungry. She ate with gusto, trying to think of the best way of telling Carolan this abruptly awkward news that Brayla herself should have been bestowing. *Avoiding uncomfortable situations has been the story of her life thus far. What can I expect? People don't change overnight.*

Finally, Lena managed, "So...Brayla met that guy she went to Alaska to hook up with."

Carolan glanced up. "Did she? Was he a creep? Didn't look anything like the picture he posted of himself?"

Lena's cheeks warmed. "Something like that."

"Well, I don't suppose he was too thrilled with her in person either."

"Brayla is very attractive...especially since she had the makeover," Lena remarked defensively, trying to hide annoyance she felt too tired to submit to fully.

Carolan grunted, shifting her focus back at her paper. "How long will that last?"

Lena took a deep breath, experiencing the exhausted irritation and awkwardness all over again. "Did you know Shaun planned her whole trip to Alaska?"

"I guess so," Carolan muttered, sounding like she was bored and wanted Lena to shut up so she could read in peace.

"He did that because he was worried she'd get confused, lost. End up in Timbuctoo."

This made the older woman snort. "She would've, too."

Lena swallowed with difficulty. *Why me? "They're...together." Please understand what I*

mean so I don't have to explain this.

"So she did get lost?" Carolan asked without interest.

"No, I mean...they're *together*." Lena laid an obscene amount of stress on the last word, trying to convey with her expression the situation.

"They're coming back together? I suppose that means everything'll go back to the way it was. She is never gonna get married or have anything in life but those silly videogames--"

Lena knew in Carolan's world, getting married was the sole purpose of life. She'd been married to some rich guy years ago, but he'd dumped her for a younger woman. But that hadn't stopped her from dating--using online services--like she was trying to win a record.

Lena sighed, her entire body tensing. "No... I mean, well, yes, they *are* coming back together, but I mean Brayla and Shaun are also *together...together*."

Carolan glanced up, for the first time hearing the emphasis. When Lena nodded, her eyes all but bugged out and she dropped the newspaper. "You don't mean *together together*?"

As if she hadn't been exhausted before. "Yes, that's exactly what I mean, Carolan. They're moving into his house together."

"Brayla?" her aunt confirmed.

"Yes, Brayla. And Shaun. Together."

"He actually likes *her* like that?"

The question made the idea sound like sheer lunacy. "Why is that unthinkable? They grew up together. They've been friends all their lives. He's always been there for her."

Carolan gave a shake of the head that expressed how unfathomable this development was to her. "Why wouldn't he choose you over her? You're at least pretty..."

Flames filled Lena's cheeks at the unexpected compliment that warred with her defensiveness of her best friend.

But Carolan quickly snatched her compliment away when she said after a moment's speculation, "Well, you're *kind of* pretty. Not exactly a beauty queen, but next to my niece--"

Lena clenched her teeth together. "Shaun is the perfect man for Brayla, and he thinks she's beautiful."

Carolan grunted her strange approval, saying, "I guess it's a good thing. He's not exactly Stud of the Year himself, but...for *her*-- Best someone like her is ever gonna do."

Lena steeled herself, wanting to do something uncharacteristic, like smack the other woman for her cruelty. Instead, she forced herself to give the message she'd promised to the last time she'd spoken with the new couple. "Brayla's moving into Shaun's house, and she said you could continue living in her dad's house."

Carolan gaped mutely. A moment later, her eyes narrowed suspiciously. "Is she gonna charge me rent? Is that what this is about? Why are you playing messenger?"

"Brayla asked me to. And, no, she said you didn't have to pay any rent."

"I don't believe it."

"Well, you can ask her when they get back. But she says you can live there for free since the house is already paid for."

Lena lived across the street from Brayla and her aunt, while Shaun lived at the end of the street "behind" their homes.

Carolan didn't seem to know what to say, and Lena was grateful when she picked up the paper again. Finally, she could finish her lunch while reading over the material she'd brought with her. She needed to get signed up for the online course to get her Masters

soon. Her regular job as Associate Director at the Peaceful Public Library would soon become the lead position there at the end of the current year. Marian, the long-time Director, had reminded her just after the New Year that she needed to get the ball rolling. Marian intended to retire at the end of the year, and Lena was next in line for promotion.

Disquiet filled Lena at the prospect as she remembered too vividly what it'd been like getting her bachelor's degree when she was in her early 20s. She'd had to juggle college, commuting to the closest city of La Crosse, while holding down a full-time job and taking care of her then-toddler-aged niece--the daughter of her older brother Rick. *I don't know if I can do that again. Waiting for Rick to screw up the precarious balancing act I constructed every single day to keep Neve safe--*

"What about you?"

Lena looked up in shock at the sound of Carolan's husky smoker's voice. She'd been in her own world until Carolan's aunt intruded. "Excuse me?"

As if they'd never finished their earlier conversation, Carolan muttered, "Let's face it, if there was a competition between you and Brayla, you'd win hands-down."

Feeling like she'd entered the middle of a conversation that had no preface (*how did we start talking about me?*), Lena asked with deliberate denseness, "What do you mean?" *Can we please drop this?*

"You're 30 years old. Why are you *still* alone? Do you even date? You're here every weekend. How could you find time to date? And you work at the library all week, don't you? You're attractive...in the right light, at the right angle..."

Lena's cheeks filled with hot color again at the insult-compliment. *That's Carolan-- blunt as a dull knife inserted at the optimal angle for maximum pain.* "My life is too busy--" she started dismissively.

"That's not an excuse, especially at your age. You're not getting any younger or any prettier. Besides, being in love is what makes life worth living. If you don't start looking for your Mr. Right now, you're gonna be an old spinster sooner rather than later."

For one self-scolding moment, Lena considered asking, "Like you?" But she'd never been able to be cruel, even when someone deserved it.

Still, Carolan was the very last person she would ever confide in. *That I'm lonely. That my whole life has been about paying Rick back for sacrificing his bright, successful future to take care of me after our parents were killed in the factory explosion.* He'd gotten a full ride. Football had been his life throughout high school. When their parents died, she'd been eight, he'd just graduated high school, was an adult about to go off on his own for the first time. If he hadn't decided to take care of her, she might have gone into the system as an orphan, since they had no other family to take her.

Sometimes I wish he had just let me go. Maybe I wouldn't have my friends...and I wouldn't have been here now to take care of Neve--

No, it was better this way. There's nothing I wouldn't do for her. She's my daughter. My own child. Rick has never felt anything for her but disgust and disdain. I have to protect her. I have to be there for her at all times, especially when he's around.

Rick had eventually taken a job as a truck driver to support them, and eventually he'd started doing long hauls since Shaun's family agreed to take care of her while he was gone. She lived for the times he was gone on a run. *But I also liked it when he was home because that meant Dante would come around. And even a glimpse of Dante Robinson felt worth everything...anything.*

Even now, the memory of her crush on Rick's best friend growing up made her shaky and breathless, the way she'd felt whenever he was close enough to make her aware of him, of herself, of details like the intoxicating scent of his cologne, the way his full lips curved with the well-groomed beard and moustache surrounding them, emphasizing his masculinity. He'd been so strong and muscular. *He paid attention to me...sometimes--*

She remembered not for the first or simply the hundredth time that Dante hadn't been around for years...not since Rick divorced Neve's mother in the most violent manner possible. Her brother had fought for custody, painting his wife with a black brush that was justified, and yet he was the worst father alive. He didn't even believe Neve was his daughter, with good reason. Destiny had never been faithful to him, not when they first got together, not when she got pregnant and he married her, not while he was gone on long hauls and Destiny invited different men to their house every night, neglecting her daughter in her own selfish need for pleasure. Even then, Lena had loved Neve like a mother, protected and cared for her--in addition to handling the household, maintaining her 4.0 GPA, and working a part-time job at the library.

Dear Lord, do I not need to start the cycle of juggling so many things at the same time again. But I have to. The only way I can take over for Marian is if I have my Masters, my certification. The program is online, so that's better than commuting. But it'll be expensive. I'll have to apply for all the grants and scholarships I can find so I can afford it and Rick will never feel the financial struggle. Neve is 16, but that doesn't make her any safer from Rick. Grace will help me again, like she did last time. And Grace's daughter is Neve's best friend, so she'll be safe with them when I have to be away from her--

"You can't tell me you don't want to be in love," Carolan said with such a vengeance, Lena jumped, worried those around them had heard her all but shout the words.

There wasn't time for love, a private life, a romantic relationship. And Rick... Lena felt her chest tighten at the thought of how he'd react to her having a boyfriend. *He won't like it. He'll make trouble, make it impossible, just like he almost did when he found out I work here at the truck stop he comes to sometimes when he gets home from a long haul.* She'd told him she quit working here, and Harry and the rest of the employees covered for her when Rick's rig pulled in. She was allowed to leave immediately so he'd never know she had another paycheck that he couldn't blow on booze and whatever else kept him saturated.

"I know what you're thinking," Carolan continued. "That there are no eligible, decent guys in this town. You'd probably be right about that."

Except Dante Robinson. He still lives in Peaceful, though I haven't seen him in so long. 16 years.

"Have you considered online dating?" Carolan asked in the same way an employee in the service might advertise.

Lena groaned inwardly. "Carolan...no. Brayla's experience..." *And your own, lying about your appearance and everything else about yourself, meeting guys who lie about theirs and everything else, too.* "There's no way."

Carolan shoved the newspaper over to her with the ads in the back showing. She pointed to an advertisement with a pair of doves facing each other. It read, "Perfect Match Online Dating Service: Get the girl. Meet Mr. Right. Find your Perfect Match. What are you waiting for?" There was a price that wasn't outrageous and a website listed.

Lena shook her head firmly and pushed the paper back to her. Carolan gave her the stink eye, grumbling that she'd already signed up and was carrying on a dialogue with

several interesting men.

"We need to get back to work," Lena insisted and got another glare from the older woman for her trouble.

Carolán all over--leaving everyone around her feeling bad.

The loneliness that usually only overwhelmed Lena in the deep of the night filled her with a longing she didn't want to feel since she didn't have time to even consider a relationship, certainly not the romantic kind.

Rick's not home; he won't be home for a few days. These are the best days of the month, and I don't want to spend them feeling miserable or wanting what I can't have anyway. Not without paying a price that's always been too high.



Dante Robinson stepped inside his house just outside Peaceful with a bag of groceries, thinking of one thing--sitting in his massage lounger, watching the game, and falling asleep. Not surprisingly, the phone rang almost instantly in time with him stepping through the front door, and he knew exactly who it was. His old man's nightly prompt to let the competition begin.

It's the last day of the weekend. I didn't go out to the club even once, didn't pick up a one-night-stand, wanted nothing more than to take it easy before I go back to work tomorrow. Hell, am I 39 or 79?

Some days, he felt more than twice his age. As an auto body technician for a popular repair shop in La Crosse, Holt's Auto Repair, he could usually count on unceasing aches and pains. He suffered backaches most of the time after so many years on the job, bent or stooped over, twisted into a pretzel. But last week, he'd gotten what should have been an easily preventable burn that wasn't major but still made him favor his forearm whenever he forgot about it and brushed it against something.

Another reason not to use the hot tub. While the hot water and jets would help the lower back pain he'd suffered all weekend, he hadn't used the thing since his last girlfriend. He'd gone out with Tammie three times when she'd announced out of nowhere--as if it meant nothing--that she'd dated his dad just before him. Dante's old man didn't "date". He slept with...usually once but occasionally a whole weekend up at his deluxe cabin in Ladysmith if he needed to get a woman out of his system.

Dante carried the groceries into the kitchen, trying not to listen to the message Landon was leaving on his answering machine. But he heard "My Son the Dud" whether he wanted to or not. His entire body reacted to the slur his old man had delivered for the first time a handful of weekends ago when he found out Dante hadn't hooked up with anyone. Before this, he'd referred to Dante as "My Son the Stud".

Dante felt the abject failure like a blow to his masculinity in the competition he'd been in with his dad since he first started dating. His parents had officially divorced when he wasn't quite a teenager.

When Dante found out a month ago that he'd been dating a woman Landon had slept with first, he'd felt such disgust--for himself, for the woman who saw no big deal in swapping the father for the son--that he wanted nothing to do with the whole scene. He still wasn't quite sure what it meant. But since then, he'd made a show of leaving a club with a woman his old man would assume he was bedding. Each time, he'd told the woman he'd meet her at her apartment straightaway. Instead, he'd gone home to bed alone. He'd forced himself through the usual slew of STD tests, found out he was clean, and he was officially solo until he could figure out what all this meant.

He couldn't say why the whole thing bothered him so much. Landon was 64 but he had the appeal of Sam Elliot or Tom Selleck on women with his good looks and husky voiced charm. Dante's mom got tired of his cheating when Dante was 12, his older sister Gemma 13, and Landon had been a free agent since. Gemma had gone to live with their mother in California when the divorce finally came. Not knowing what to do, Dante had chosen to stay with his dad, and the competition had started not long afterward. Who made more money, who was better at the job (they were both mechanics but worked at difference shops), eventually who was dating the hotter girl, who got laid more.

That used to appeal to me. But I can't stand it when Mom tells me I'm just like the old man. And Gemma basically handed me the same thing recently, said she hoped I wasn't being a bad influence on her son. I didn't like that. Didn't like it at all.

Gemma had gotten married as soon as she graduated college and her son Shea came shortly afterward. A daughter followed a few years after that. Dante had bonded with both kids right from the womb, and he'd been thrilled when Gemma's son, Shea, applied to college in La Crosse and asked if he could live with Dante while he was in college. Since his deluxe garage had an apartment above it that Shea loved, the arrangement had benefited both of them. His nephew got independence but also the boundaries Gemma had asked Dante to provide. If it worked out and Dante proved his responsibility, his sister had agreed Maddy could do the same when the time came for her to go to college. His niece had already decided that was exactly what she wanted to do after she graduated.

Not that Shea needed anything to keep him in line. The kid was just as good as his mom. He loved computers and, despite the good looks that ran in their family, he wasn't a womanizer and seemed to have no interest in anything but "friendship" dating.

What is the point of this competition with the old man that does nothing but add notches--and potential diseases--to my record? Why do I even feel this drive to compete with Landon? If that's what he needs to do...God only knows why...hell, it's got nothing to do with me.

That didn't explain why Dante felt so emasculated whenever his old man ribbed him for going solo. He couldn't explain why it mattered to him.

A little gnawing niggles itched at his brain again. *Because a part of me that feels rusted from disuse wonders why other things don't matter to me--important things. Like starting a family like Gemma's got.* The thought of settling down, getting married and having kids of his own made him pale and feel insufficient to handle the task. Yet what he was doing with his life left him feeling worthless.

There was another connection he wasn't sure how fit into the unsettled discomfort he'd been experiencing for the last month. A few years ago, he'd forced himself to complete the training to get his Masters--a nightmare for a guy who wasn't "book smart". Dante had done it because he'd believed his boss Holt was going to hand management of the shop

over to him when he retired. Instead, his best friend Avery Worchester had suddenly decided he wanted to go to work for his dad Holt. Avery wasn't the best mechanic and he certainly didn't have his Masters, yet his old man had made him manager only a year after Avery started working there. That affected their friendship. A lot. They hadn't been more than civil to each other in all the time since. Sure, Avery made a point of giving Dante all the choice jobs, but that'd felt more like an insult than high praise. They were friends again, but it wasn't the same as before.

Guess I'm not any better at friendships than I am at anything else. Dante had had two best friends in his life. The first--Rick Young--had threatened that, if Dante ever set foot near his house again, he'd kill him. And Avery had pretended to feel bad about taking away the job his dad had specifically told Dante was his when he retired, but Dante still smarted about it to this day, held the grudge that kept things off-kilter between him and the best friend that'd taken a long time to find after things hit the skids with Rick.

During the last month, Dante had asked himself at least a million times about what he wanted out of life, what would make him feel like he had purpose. Like he had happiness. He didn't know. Couldn't figure out this puzzle. The idea of falling in love and spending the rest of life with one woman had never appealed to him before. And, other than his sister, everyone he knew who'd tried their hands at marriage had sucked at it. His old man. Even his mom's new marriage seemed to come about more for the financial stability he gave her. When Dante commented that she'd married the guy for money and did that mean, if their old man had cared more about raking in the dough during their years together, she would have stayed married to him, Gemma had said he was being unfair to their mom...but she hadn't disputed his assessment. Dante's friend Avery had been married three times. Divorced three times. Had kids with each of the ex-wives, and Avery was little more than an awkward dad who didn't have a clue what to do during the times the kids were with him.

Dante remembered Rick Young's wife. Destiny had been too beautiful, too young, too slutty, unwilling to change her ways even though she got pregnant while she and Rick were together in a volatile relationship that led to an even more tumultuous marriage. That "wedded bliss" had ended in near murder when Rick went after the guy he'd caught his wife in bed with in his own house. Then he'd gunned for Destiny--

The memory still brought the paralyzing realization that his best friend was--had to be--psychotic. Maybe Dante had always known that. Destiny hadn't been Rick's first serious, mercurial relationship. Gemma had gone out with him once when they were teenagers, and she'd said he had serious issues. She didn't believe any woman was safe with him. Dante had laughed her off, yet when he'd seen the level of commitment on Rick's part to destroying Destiny and her lover-- *Yeah, seriously disturbed. Did I just not wanna see that? 'Cause I knew that day that it'd always been there, lurking beneath the surface.* Their friendship had ended pretty much at the same time as the marriage. Dante had barely given it a thought in years.

After he put away all the groceries, hurting his burned forearm because he'd forgotten about the injury again, he decided he didn't want to cook tonight after all. He'd gotten groceries to avoid Landon's jeers, to not be here when they came in, but it wasn't as if he was much of a cook anyway. Thinking Shea would appreciate it, he ordered in two pizzas, then headed out to the garage and up the stairs to his nephew's apartment. His lower back pain made him wince every steep step up. *39, not 79...*

They'd arranged that Shea would put a handkerchief on the doorknob if he was with a

girl when the kid first moved in, but he'd never actually done it. When Dante entered the "nerd lab", Shea was there with his friend Malcolm. Malcom's geeky girlfriend--who was kind of cute in her nerdiness--wasn't there for once. The two guys were laughing, and Dante walked up to wall of computers Shea was sitting behind.

"What're you two up to?" he asked suspiciously.

Malcolm handed him the La Crosse newspaper and pointed to an advertisement, hooting, "This is the jackpot!"

Dante lifted the paper, annoyed that he had to bring it so close to his face to read it. He didn't like the idea of getting old man glasses or even conceding he might need them. He read out loud, "'Perfect Match Online Dating Service: Get the girl. Meet Mr. Right. Find your Perfect Match. What are you waiting for?'" When he lowered the paper, he asked, "What is this? You've never had any trouble getting dates, kid."

Shea grinned. "We started a business, and the money is rolling in. We can actually afford to do advertising, and that sweet little ad has brought in even more revenue."

"You started a dating service?" Dante asked. Something about the endeavor sounded entirely too romantic for two college students.

"It's brilliant. We've got a twist nobody else has ever thought of. We hack into a wide variety of media streaming services to pair up our clients who are perfect for each other."

"Media streaming services? What like...?" He named some off the top of his head, and both dudes nodded eagerly, spouting off a bunch more.

Dante immediately cut in, "What a minute. Is that even legal?"

"It's fine," Shea assured him. "We're good. Nobody's gonna figure it out. It's too genius for the commoners to figure it out."

"Yeah, that's what that guy who hacked into the United States defense firewall said just before the FBI hauled his ass to prison. Your mom'll kill *me* if anybody finds out. Shut it down, Shea. Now."

"Come on," his nephew protested. "Seriously, it's not a big deal. We covered all our tracks. You think I'm a hack hacker?"

Malcolm howled merrily at the pun.

"Besides, maybe you wanna get in on this," Shea suggested. "I noticed you've been staying home every weekend instead of hitting the clubs with Granddad."

Dante instantly stiffened at the insinuation that he needed dating help. He could almost hear Landon's ribbing.

Malcom continued, "The porn media streaming services are the best ones for finding the right matches. We even know some of the people who live in Peaceful who've signed up and use porn streaming services. Makes it very easy to match up two like souls."

"Shea, what the hell are you saying? You find men and women who watch porn...the same movies? And what? They hook up? How does that work?"

"Everybody fills out a profile. The clients read each other's profiles and choose ones that are interesting to them. And we also look at their movie-watching interests to see if they have anything in common. So our success rate is through the roof."

Malcom grinned at him. "Come on, Dante, haven't you ever wanted to meet a certain kind of woman? A tart teacher? A not-so-laced-up lawyer? A naughty librarian? We know you like librarians. You've watched *Booked by Lona the Naughty Librarian* often enough in the last month."

Unexpected heat filled Dante's neck, creeping up into his face. He hadn't wanted to

hook up this past month, but he wasn't a monk. He damn-straight didn't like being called out for what he'd thought was private.

"Wouldn't you like your own naughty librarian, Uncle? We can hook you up. No charge. All you have to do is upload your profile. Your choice if you wanna include your real name, just your first name or both first and last names, a photograph of yourself or someone else?"

"Someone else? Who else? Wouldn't she realize it wasn't me when she met me?"

He realized after he said it that he was actually considering it. He's always had a secret fantasy about librarians who never took their noses out of their books...until they met just the stud to hand their virginity over to.

At Shea and Malcom's mutual silence, Dante said, "*My picture. My full name. Be honest in the profile. I don't have anything to hide.*" All his life, Landon had told him not to try to be someone he wasn't. And his dad thought too much of himself to trying to pass himself off as anything but the lady's man he considered himself.

Maybe it wouldn't be the worst thing to meet a different kind of woman than the ones he met up with in bars. Maybe that was what he needed. And it was unlikely this one would have met Landon, let alone slept with him.

Shea was already typing faster than lightning, filling out his profile. A bad feeling settled in Dante's gut. He should shut this thing down, before the FBI got here to arrest the kid and his friend. *Worse, Gemma's gonna gun for me if her kid gets caught.*

Against his better judgment, he let his nephew take a picture of him that he loaded into his profile. "How does this work?" he asked uncomfortably.

"You'll get a ping if anyone downloads your profile and wants to 'meet' you. I'll look for any librarians already in the database or any new ones that sign up and automatically send her your profile. Trust me, any woman you're interested in will wanna make a connection with you."

"Well, you handle it all. I don't wanna go on that website. Just let me know if something happens."

"I'll take care of everything. You'll be satisfied. Guaranteed."

The wolfish looks on the college students' faces didn't bring an ounce of comfort to Dante.