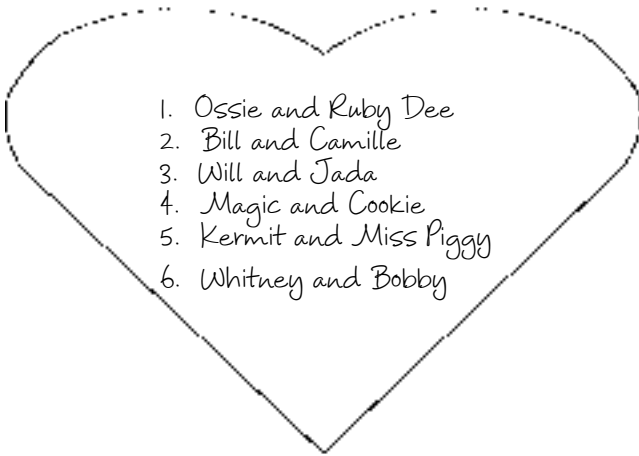


but he's black!

June 10

Dear Diary,

Some people are destined to be together.



Then there are those only meant to cross paths.
And then there are other people destined to remain

distant strangers for a lifetime. Why do people insist on ignoring fate? Why are they so quick to fix you up with a cute friend or a shy cousin or a wealthy neighbor? Do I look like I shouldn't be alone? And why do these people refuse to realize if they wouldn't date them, then chances are I probably wouldn't either, regardless of what we have in common. Do I look that desperate?

"I want to talk to you about something when you have a chance."

That's funny. Mindy had never really talked to me before today. Was she trying to suck up to me for a contribution to her gift?

"What's wrong?"

"Oh, nothing's wrong! I was just wondering, uh, if you're seeing anyone?" she asked.

Okay, I don't even get down like that.

"Why?"

"Normally, I don't do this, but I know this guy who would be perfect for you."

"Why do you think he would be perfect for me?" I asked.

"You guys just look like you belong together. He's smart, attractive, and has a good job."

"Then why is he single?"

"He's a little shy and he doesn't really go out. He just moved here like six months ago," she explained.

"How do you know him?"

"Oh, he's my neighbor. So you're single, right?"

"How do you know?"

"Because I was telling Lisa about you two and she

told me. Look, you should really meet him. You guys would be so cute together," she insisted.

"Uh, I don't know. What does he look like?"

"He is fine, girlfriend! And he has really smooth skin."

"Really?"

"Look, what if we do a drinks thing with a group, you know, very informal? If you don't like him then you're not forced to talk to him all night."

"Oh, alright. What do I have to lose, right?"

"Right. But I'm telling you, you're going to really like him."

I don't know why, but I agreed to do this love-connection thing. What did I have to lose, right? She said that he was fine and had great skin so he must be tolerable on the eyes. But why was she doing this? She barely spoke to me and when she did, it was just "hello." What did she have to gain? Was she getting something out of this matchmaking scheme?

A week had passed and Mindy was still overly excited about hooking me up with her friend. I have to admit, as I walked in the bar, I was a little nervous about meeting Mr. Right.

"He's not here yet," she said when I arrived.

"Okay, I'll just get a drink. I'll be back."

I was relieved because I hadn't seen anyone who caught my eye as I did a quick scan of the bar. So far, so good. I started to have a good feeling about this. Maybe she really knew fate. And maybe she had an idea of what I was and wasn't looking for in a guy. I began to wonder if maybe this was my year. I was going to find Mr. Right and get married and then have two kids, a boy and a girl. It was finally my time! I had a feeling. Maybe it was the

same feeling that she had gotten and that's why she was hooking us up in the first place. See, they're not all bad.

So, I spoke too soon again. I knew who he was as soon as his ugly butt disrupted the "I'm single and I like to mingle" vibe of the bar. At that point, we were the only two black people in the place. It wasn't rocket science. At first I was mad at him for looking like he had just stepped off a video shoot in the dirty south and was now on his way in his tight black leather pants to do a fashion shoot for Leather R Us. I bet he had a good job. The question was, Was it legal? Because of his nonstop, Chester-the-cat grin, his mouthful of platinum was shining brighter than the sun on a bright, sunny day. Maybe that was it. Maybe Mindy had never seen how he really looked because his teeth always blocked her view. But clearly she should have seen his unshaven face or his unkempt dreads or both of his tattooed arms. Had someone told him that the Tasmanian devil was cute? And that was just one of the many ridiculous pieces of art that he was wearing on his arms. Oh, and let's not talk about what he was wearing—or shall I say wasn't wearing. No socks. No lotion. No class. Do I even have to continue? I know you get the idea. Surely, we didn't even belong in same bar.

But then I got in touch with my anger and directed it to the real culprit. I know she didn't! Perfect couple my ass! What was she smokin'? Or by looking at him, what were they smokin'? Could she really see me with this guy? Could she really see him? Because if she had, then the answer to my first question most definitely would have been "no."

"So, what do you think?" she asked excitedly.

I was speechless. The only thing I could say was . . .

"What the hell? Uh, no."

"But can't you at least say hello," she begged.

"Uh, no. Look, I have to go."

"But you guys are so much alike."

So, that was it! I finally solved the puzzle. Everything started to make sense. We were alike. Well, clearly there was only one thing that was alike when it came to him and me.

What she meant to say was, "But he's black!"

They never make it hard for you to dissect their dysfunctional brains, do they? It's always so obvious to tell what they are thinking and why. So, she had met another black person and immediately a bell went off in her head. The only two black people I know are meant to be together!

"Would you date him?" I asked.

Suddenly, she had nothing to say.

"Tell me, would you date him?" I asked her again.

"I don't know. I've never really looked at him in that way."

What she meant to say was, "Hell no! My parents would kill me."

"Yeah, it doesn't look like you've looked at him at all."

"You can't tell me that he doesn't have a great body."

"Well, I can't tell with all of the tattoos covering it."

"He's an artist."

"I thought you said he had a good job."

"He does. He's a salesman but he's an artist on the side."

"What does he sell, platinum teeth?"

"No, actually he's into real estate. But you should see his art. It's so beautiful and inspiring. I've never seen anything like it."

"Yeah, I know what you mean. Look, this is not a good idea."

"What's wrong? He isn't your type?"

What she meant to say was, "But he's black!"

It was my time all right . . . it was my time to go. That's what my butt got for thinking too far ahead. Before I even passed him on my way out, I caught a whiff of the combination of his cheap cologne and dirty dreads. I suddenly became infuriated. How could she play me like that? And how could I not know that I was getting played? But why am I not surprised? Thinking back, how could she have possibly known that we would make a good couple? She didn't even know me. I had never even held a conversation with her until the day that she proposed that I meet the funky, tight-shirt-wearing artist. She didn't know my likes and dislikes. She didn't even know what I was looking for in a man. So, how could she call herself finding my Mr. Right when she didn't even know what my Mr. Wrong looked like? And they wonder why we don't trust them sometimes.