

True Love Cafe

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First Draft

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

A cafe, SPRITE, with long brown hair a t-shirt supporting an environmental cause ripped jeans and flip-flops is sitting cross-legged on the bench-half of a half-booth. Across from her is DEREK, who is also wearing a t-shirt and jeans, but his shirt has a band logo. And his feet are in sneakers.

SPRITE

(holding up her hand)

So, it's like, we have fingerprints, and so do the trees, and their prints match ours, and until we find our tree we can't ever be complete. We can be in a couple, but we have to find our tree and our person. We have to be a threesome.

DEREK

(dubiously)

You want me to do a three-way, with a tree?

SPRITE

No, man. Not like... It's not like a sex-thing. It's like a spirit thing. Like... the human soul is divided, and we each only have a third of what we're supposed to be. One third, that's us...

DEREK

And second third is the one tree that matches your soul?

SPRITE

Yes! Yes, exactly. Like, for me, my tree, it might be a willow... or maybe an aspen. But for you, it might be a salt pine or maybe even a beech tree.

DEREK

Can it be a copper beech, like in that Sherlock Holmes story?

SPRITE

Copper? I don't know. Maybe. The thing is... you have to find your tree. And I have to find mine. And until you do, a relationship between us can't work.

DEREK

Wait... you're breaking up with me because you have to go find your tree?

SPRITE

Yeah... I have to find my tree. And you have to find yours.

SPRITE uncrosses her legs and leaves the bench. Pausing, she kisses DEREK on the cheek, leaving him alone. Then she leaves the cafe.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE TWO

The same cafe, a few years later. DEREK is a little more polished. He's on another date, and this time he's presenting the woman he's with with a potted plant.

DEREK

So, this is for you.

CHERYL

You're giving me a plant?

DEREK

Actually it's a tree. A bonsai tree.

CHERYL

Ohhh, right. Like from that movie! Wax on! Wax off!

DEREK

(chuckling)

Uh, yeah, I guess. But I'm not teaching you karate. Look, you know how you learn something from even the weirdest relationship?

CHERYL

Oh, definitely. I once had a guy leave me to form a kazoo band, but he taught me how to make the *best* Alfredo sauce before he bailed.

DEREK

Okay, this is something like that. Freshman year, I was dating this girl who decided that everyone had to find their special match in a tree because of fingerprints and tree rings looking the same or something. She left me to go have

(MORE)

DEREK (cont'd)

an affair with an aspen grove. I think. I've never been too clear on that. But I decided after she left that if I like a woman I'm giving her a tree. A little tree. Because that way she has one to start with while we see if we work out or not.

CHERYL

(touched)

That's really sweet! And I'm really glad your ex didn't decide everyone had a spirit tarantula.

DEREK

Oh, believe me, so am I.

CHERYL

So, when you're not handing out trees, what do you do?

DEREK

Actually, I'm planning to become a veterinarian.

CHERYL

Dogs and cats, or farm animals, too?

DEREK

Pretty much just pets... except... you know... tarantulas. What about you?

CHERYL

Graphic design. I um... I actually have an assignment to create a mock website for a local organization. I was thinking... would you want to visit the zoo with me on the weekend?

DEREK

Sounds like a match made in animal heaven.

CHERYL

Maybe we'll find a tree to have a picnic under. (beat) Or we could just bring our own.

DEREK

Definitely.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE THREE

The same cafe, several years later. DEREK and CHERYL are leaving as SPRITE is entering. DEREK pauses in the door.

DEREK

Excuse me, I didn't mean to barge into yo - *(recognizing her)* - Sprite? Are you Sprite?

SPRITE

(flustered)

Yes, yes I am, but... do I... wait... we used to date... didn't we? You're Derek.

DEREK

And you left me to go date an aspen tree.

SPRITE

(embarrassed)

I did, sort of... I mean... I had to find my tree. Well, really, I had to find myself.

DEREK

Did you?

SPRITE

Yeah. Yes. Yes, I did.

DEREK

Good, I'm glad.

CHERYL

(nudging DEREK)

Ahem. Who's your... friend?

DEREK

(to Cheryl)

Ohmygod, honey, I'm sorry. This is Sprite... the tree girl.

DEREK turns back to SPRITE, but
puts an arm around CHERYL.

DEREK

Sprite, this is Cheryl, my wife.

CHERYL

Good to meet you.

SPRITE

Oh, wow. Married. So you found your person. Did you find your tree?

CHERYL

Actually we found a giraffe who eats trees. Close enough, I guess.

SPRITE

I don't understand.

CHERYL

Derek's the giraffe keeper at the zoo.

SPRITE

Oh, oh, nice. Animals. Tall. Trees. Nice. Listen, I'm meeting someone, and I feel like I'm keeping you, but... be happy and nice to meet you.

CHERYL

Likewise.

DEREK

Yeah, Sprite... take care.

DEREK and CHERYL continue off-stage. SPRITE heads into the cafe proper.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE FOUR

*The cafe, minutes later.
SPRITE crosses the room and takes up the same position she had in the opening scene, but this time she's joined by another woman a few minutes later.*

SPRITE

(rising to exchange a kiss across the table)

Blossom, you made it! I was worried your GPS wasn't working.

BLOSSOM

My cell died but the GPS in the car worked fine. Sorry I'm late... your aura looks a little dim... you okay, honey?

SPRITE

Yeah. Yes. I mean. I ran into an ex.

BLOSSOM

Darla?

SPRITE

No.

Katie?
BLOSSOM

No.
SPRITE

Sofia?
BLOSSOM

No. Derek, actually. From freshman year.
SPRITE

Derek? Wow. Did I know about him?
BLOSSOM

Sort of? Remember I told you I once made up a story about everyone needing to find their perfect tree before they could find their perfect love?
SPRITE

You said it was so you could break up with someone you liked without hurting them too badly.
BLOSSOM

That was Derek.
SPRITE

Oh. *(realizing)* Ohhh. So, he doesn't know you're gay?
BLOSSOM

No. But then, until five minutes ago, I didn't know he was married.
SPRITE

Ah. *(beat)* Do you mind?
BLOSSOM

No. No, actually, in a way, he kind of did find his tree. I think Cheryl - that's her name - gives him strength and protection.
SPRITE
(after considering)

Just like you do for me, hon.
BLOSSOM
(smiling, flirting)

Yeah. And so do you, for me.
SPRITE

As it should be.
BLOSSOM

BLOSSOM and SPRITE reach across the table to twine their hands with each other.

As they do, the lights dim over their table and come up over another, where GUY sits, talking on his phone.

GUY

(on phone)

Look, I know it's last-minute, but I'd love for you to join me for a coffee on your way home. I'm in this great place... it smells like... well, you just have to come... it's kind of cheesy though. It's called TRUE LOVE CAFE.

BLACKOUT