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Matching Minds on a Cheap Date

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I have finally finished my novel. It is my ultimate work, my masterpiece, Everest. The greatest sense of accomplishment I have ever experienced is surging through my body. I have sacrificed my marriage, my children, my home, everything for my novel. It is honestly a 900-page work of pure genius. I will soon begin to send copies of my manuscript to publishing houses, but first I am thrilled to hear my best friend Richard's thoughts on my piece. I am meeting him for coffee in fifteen minutes and I can't control my excitement.

Richard sits across from me, in silence, with the 900 pages in a neat stack on the table in front of him. I wait in anticipation.

He begins to pick up each page, one by one, slowly tearing them in half and discarding them in the Starbucks garbage bin. The grin leaves my face as I watch him do this, page by page. I feel hot tears form in my eyes by page 300. The very last page, in which my entire life's work comes skillfully together, he packs with marijuana and rolls into a joint. He leans back, taking a hit of my heart and soul, grins, and watches me as I fall into uncontrollable sobbing.
shaggy hair and her with her type-A outfit. He glanced at the clock. His shift would end soon.

The couple rushed up to the counter, shivering. "Tall skim vanilla latte, please," they said in unison and glanced at each other in surprise.

*The Best Man*

*Austin Dunn*

Honorable Mention in "Spark" Contest

He stood there in the blistering sunlight with the microphone in his hand. The precipitation on his forehead could be nervous bullets or the first signs of a heat stroke. Both were deadly. As he stared blankly over the heads and the eyes directed at him, a movement caught his attention. Across the field where the groom and his bride just said their vows was a vineyard; a small potbelly pig had found its way through the maze of grapes. He suddenly craved a large plate of sizzling bacon.

He snapped back to reality and once again realized he had to say something. The arbor surrounding him felt like it was going to collapse. It had to be heavy. He hoped if it did, it would kill him.

A case of Schlitz Malt Liquor was set on the ground near his feet, full. He should have had a couple of those. His mind was practically blank; he didn't know where to start.

It was all so much easier when there was only a mirror in front of him. Maybe the case of Schlitz would have made his speech flow with the essence of a ballroom dancer: flawless, smooth.

He began his speech. "I would like to begin by telling you all how much I appreciate the hockey stick..."

A woman in the audience wearing a single blue velvet glove looked at him as if he were crazy. Had he really just said Hockey Stick? His chin dreadfully met the top of his pink tie while he thought about making a run for the vineyard about a hundred yards in the distance. The rows went on forever and he imagined running for days and never seeing anything but rows and rows of grapes. The escape would be nice. But he knew he couldn't really survive in the wilderness. Not during bear season.

He lifted his head again to face the group of poachers. "Life is a single color," he said, not knowing what was going to come next. "Each one of us is a certain color, a solid color. And that's all we are. Nothing more. Nothing less." He still had no idea where this was going. His mouth was open and words were spilling out. "When two people meet and fall in love their colors mix.