



One Woman Three Men

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Dear Diary

April 10th, 2010

I've been a nice, well-behaved girl for nearly half a lifetime now, believing that such behavior would create peace in Palesrael, equal wages to men and women and reduce poverty in Africa, while I waltzed into the sunset with my prince, till death do us part. None of this has happened. They're still insisting that war is the way to peace, equal wages are claimed to come by itself and support continues to flow to corrupt regimes with no intention of reducing poverty. And on a personal level my love life has been blown to pieces yet again, leaving me without a clue on how to move on.

Looking back, positive love experiences have been scarce in my life. I married Steen, a choleric man whom I was certain I could help – if only I gave him massive amounts of love, he would find calm and joy and love me back. We met at a concert in Berlin and I was crazy about him; drawn to his intensity both on and off-stage. He was so sensitive, and I was moved by the fact that beautiful music raised the hairs on his arms. When I was seven, I had seen the hairs rise on my father's arm while listening to an organ concert by Bach. I found that minor detail my dad and Steen had in common soothing, even if I chose Steen because he was so unlike my father. As a bass player in a band, he was an Artist with a capital A; decidedly unlike my research scientist father. I thought Steen was fantastic and I gave him and the band my full support, believing that they were on the verge of their big breakthrough – right up till I realized that most of their time in the studio was spent drinking beer and reminiscing about warming up for The Clash 27 years earlier!

After the divorce, my daughter Mille became my everything. Luckily I only had to do without her every other weekend, which was all that Steen could handle, and with time she got used to the arrangement. One morning she looked up at me and said, – Mum,

you look tired. She was eight years old. I looked in the mirror, and saw that she was right.

The next day I enrolled in a Goddess School. I wanted to get away from a "me" I no longer recognized. It took half a year of creating art with emotion, eating unknown foods with all of my senses, soothing my skin with wonderful fabrics from India and listening to other women's stories and sharing mine with them. Little by little I felt my dreams, wishes and needs rise to the surface again, like a plant that had been submerged in heavy rain I regained my pride in being a woman.

Shortly thereafter I met the millionaire Peter Nielsen, and a week later I had moved in with him in his knockout villa in Charlottenlund, where I stayed for almost two years. Those were the days; there was a giant sun room, a garden and a maid. Except for his daughter Thea who begrudged her father's new woman, me. She was jealous, both of Mille and of me, and she stole my makeup and my underwear. She completely lost control when we suggested that Mille take over her old room, which had been empty since she moved out. She got furious if Mille so much as looked at her old toys – but the girl was 24 years old! And the weekends Mille wasn't there, Thea insisted that Daddy take her out to dinner, to the theatre, to the movies ... and Peter didn't say no to his daughter. The day I realized that that was a stable pattern in our relationship, I moved out.

When I met Thomas, things were finally looking up. I had at last succeeded at love. He was so refreshing and metrosexual. He didn't feel threatened by my executive position, and we never fought about money or competed with each other. It was wonderful, right up until everything fell apart. And here I am, alone again, a failure at love... I hate failing!!

11th of April 2010

The Day Happiness Disappeared!

It happened right after New Year's ... we went for a walk on the beach. I was savoring the wind in my hair. Thomas had just come home from Barcelona. He's not usually one for taking walks as soon as his plane touches ground, but on the way home from the airport he parked at Amager Beach Park saying he needed to get some air. I remember that when we started walking I slipped my arm into the crook of his, and instead of pulling me closer to him like he usually did, he just kept walking, almost like he was walking away from me. I reckoned he was tired, and I was overwhelmed with love for him. He was really the best thing that had happened in my life for a long time. And I was certain that he was on the verge of his big artistic breakthrough. He only needed to paint a bit more, using the new oils I had ordered him from Milan; they would help him with the depth of nuances he'd been aiming for. And then everything would be perfect. I was certain of it. Mille loved Thomas too; she even called him Daddy – she had started doing that three weeks after meeting him. Walking on the beach with him, I was so grateful for him and our life and the fact that he was so sweet to my little girl, too.

Thomas walked quickly, and I had to make an effort to keep up with him. He led us toward the pier and turned right. I asked if he had had a goodtrip.

- We need to talk, he said, and he walked straight ahead. And kept walking. The thought crossed my mind again that I would have liked to have gone to Barcelona with him, but Thomas and Anton have been going there together every January for years, and I didn't want to break their tradition.

- Something happened in Barcelona, said Thomas. He kept walking. – It wasn't supposed to, it just happened, he continued. – I've never done anything like it before.

His words hit me like a baseball bat from behind. My arm fell from his and I slowed down. He kept walking, saying something I couldn't hear. I caught up with him and heard him repeating - It wasn't supposed to happen.

I walked as if in a trance, my throat tightening. Everything around me seemed to freeze in time and I was unable to do anything to stop it; I blinked in slow motion until I couldn't open my eyes anymore. The cold wind blew right through my body like a sieve. The only thing I could hear was its howl growing louder and louder.

Thomas stared straight ahead and strode into the wind as if he needed to get someplace. Rage welled up inside me; I seized his arm. He tore it away, but the force of my grip surprised us both. He stopped and turned away from me. I wanted to scream, but instead I just stood there, glaring at the back of his head.

- I was with a woman, he hissed. – It just happened.

- It just *happened*?!

- I met her in a café. We talked about art, and suddenly she took my hand and said: "Come with me".

This isn't real, I thought. Thomas needed to go home and paint. Now! And then he'd be ready for a show. Tears were streaming down my cheeks. Suddenly I was 12 years old again. It was early morning and the dim grey light my mother loved was filtering through the windowpanes. I was supposed to leave for school, but if I went I knew my mother would stay in bed all day and miss the grey light I knew made her so happy. Gently, I pulled her out of bed and helped her get dressed and brought her over to the studio. She slipped from my arms, landing on the floor with a thud. I lifted one of the finished canvasses that was leaning against the

wall, pointed to a deep cerulean blue and praised her. She stared at me blankly. I set the painting on her easel and suggested she use it for inspiration, and then I gave her an encouraging smile for the umpteenth time and left for school.

When I came home five hours later, I found her sprawled out on the studio floor, holding an almost empty bottle of vodka in one hand. The painting was torn to shreds, and she lay with her head resting on a bit of cerulean blue canvas. I raced over to her and felt her wrist. Her pulse was weak.

- We need to talk, Thomas said, bringing me back to the present.

Tears kept pouring. This wasn't the Thomas I knew. My Thomas loves me more than anything on earth, he's just about to make a breakthrough on the art scene, I know it. And that's what this is about. I've been supportive. I've done everything I could to help him see life's possibilities instead of obstacles. What the hell is he thinking, ruining everything like this? What happened in Barcelona to make him do something so stupid?

- Come Elizabeth, he said. We were standing next to the car, but I couldn't remember having got there. I turned around and started walking back to the beach.

He followed me and shouted - Come on, we're going home.

- Get out of here!! I hollered – you stupid shit!!!

He ran back to the car, got in and sped out of sight.

I was stunned. I collapsed on the ground where I stood; when thinking about it now, I remember feeling the coldness of the sand, but I didn't notice it that day. I sob-bed. Without intending to, my mind once again went back to my mother's studio, on the day I found her lying there. Gripped with shock, I wanted to bring her

back to bed before father got home, and I just barely succeeded. When he asked me where she was I told him that she'd gone to bed with a headache; he was furious and roared that these incessant complaints had to stop. I made coffee and whipped cream to serve with cake, and by the time he had eaten and drunk he had calmed down, somewhat. I put Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* on the record player and went to my room. I believed I was doing the right thing to keep everything from falling apart. Just like with Thomas. Support, console, encourage, praise and take care of the practicalities so he could make his true potential flourish.

It's been three months now since I saw Thomas. I still don't know why things always go wrong between me and the people I love. I'm not interested in a new relationship!

Sunday, 12. April 2010

The Man of My Dreams and Me

As a woman, I'm living in a golden age. There are so many possibilities, I can live exactly the way I wish to live – they say. What am I dreaming of? Or should I ask: what is my mind dreaming of? It seems we're not always in agreement. I've been stuffed to the gills with stereotypes and ideas about love and a woman's role in it, and should I forget the romantic ideals I can count on Hollywood to refresh my memory on a regular basis. Not because I believe those stories or find them of high quality or artistically impressive; but it's almost as if my mind does. Each and every time I meet a man, I expend quite a bit of energy on squeezing him into the romantic ideal-mould, and each and every time it leads to nothing but frustration, the rolling of eyes and long talks with girlfriends about how different women and men are. We display our respective muck, laugh at Bridget Jones and the absurd situations in which she draws attention to herself, because we recognize them. But immediately afterwards I'm vexed. What kind of idiot thinks that meeting a man will ensure her eternal happiness? That's just where the problems start – and it's the same whether she chooses Colin Firth or Hugh Grant.

A relationship with Colin would rapidly develop into an everyday routine of him working overtime and her begging for affection the minute he walked through the door. He's tired and can't quite understand what she's looking for. He wants some peace and quiet, and he's too tired to have sex. If instead she chooses to settle down with Hugh, things would start changing after the very intense first six months. He fails to arrive on time to meet her, and he can never give a very clear answer as to where he has been, and he's always doing things that don't involve her and then coming home reeking of cigarette smoke and perfume. And in bed he is predictable, almost boring.

Or am I just disillusioned?!? Whatever happened to Germaine Greer, Susanne Brøgger and their "femininities"? Why aren't they the ideals of my mind? Is my mind all wrong? What *is* love? Am I wrong? Should I just accept that men and women are fundamentally different and that they will never really succeed at loving each other? And the romantic ideals my mind fabricates as soon as a potential man enters within a mile's radius – should I just accept that they're hopelessly unrealistic? Or should I simply scrap romance and stick to a physical relationship with a handsome man?

I yearn for real men, but at the same time that yearning infuriates me. What's a real man, anyway?

A real man is a man who:

- is well-balanced
- knows himself
- loves sex
- has good social skills
- has money
- is good-looking
- is funny
- is able to think for himself
- is able to commit himself
- knows how to listen
- can say no and yes
- is romantic

I know this might seem slightly overwhelming, but I find it hard to make the list any shorter. Should he not have a sense of humor? or money? or is it not important that he can listen to others?

It's important that he wants to have sex with me and not just any woman. And he should be willing to build a life with me.

What can I offer a man? Hard to say. The popular models for women's roles don't do it for me. One model is the cultivated ideal female of the patriarchal society – a kind, pretty, service-minded woman who keeps house for her husband, raises well-mannered children, cooks delicious meals and basically runs a lovely, well-oiled household. The man wields the power and the woman yields to him, arranging herself and her private life according to what suits him. That means: sex when he wants it, and her spending evening after evening at home alone when his work or hobbies summon him; and it means maintenance of his social relationships to his parents, siblings and friends – so he can come and go as he pleases. He doesn't expect her to live out his sexual fantasies with him; either he hasn't got any or else he lives them out with women he meets here and there. I understand men who want that kind of woman in their life. It's the ideal solution for someone who wants to fulfill their dreams and keep playing.

On the other end of the spectrum is the Lady Macbeth model. The woman has arranged her life for herself and her husband, and she decides where their money goes, with whom they spend their time, what her husband does in his free time; and if possible, she tells him how to do his work. Sexually, she's wearing the panties – and I imagine she keeps them on most of the time. Her man accepts the allotment of energies and shuffles about on his own as much as he can. I don't envy either of them.

Almost everyone I know lives a variation of these two models, and one of them inevitably suffers in silent frustration. I can see why. I long for a love where my partner and I are equals, and for an intimate place for us to experiment with the shift of power back and forth between us.

My girlfriends say there's no such thing as an equal relationship where both parties have their say. One will always be dominant; sometimes it's the woman and sometimes it's the man. It's very possible that they're right, and relationships have been like that for

many years, but that's not how I want my life to be. I want a fair, equal relationship.

12:30 a.m.

I feel like an animal in a burrow that has strayed from all of the other animals. There is no one to nuzzle my fur or forage for food with me.

What must I do to be able to find a little love? What do other people do? How the hell do they know what to do??

Wednesday 14. April, 2010

A Woman Seeking Three Men

I took a bath this morning. As I rinsed myself in the shower I had an idea. I'll scrap the traditional boyfriend hunt and instead, I'll look for three men to meet my needs: one to talk with, one to have sex with and one to help me with practical things.

This way, I can improve my skills at dealing with men in three different areas and try to have my needs fulfilled by different men. And each of the men will have a need of their choice satisfied. As long as I'm open about what I'm looking for they'll know the conditions. Most of the time things go wrong because people's expectations of each other are far too high; With this model, everybody can deliver what they want to, and I'll be appreciative. It's a win-win situation, as they say in the business world.

Is this totally preposterous? Maybe. But what else can I do? And what do I have to lose? I can post a profile on a dating site and see what happens. How can I create such a profile that makes sense?

Seeking three men...

Some say that men only want sex. Maybe I should write that first to attract their attention?

I just spoke with Rebecca who claims that I'll never find anyone to do practical stuff. Men just don't feel like doing that kind of thing. She always has to ask her husband a minimum of seven times before he mows the lawn.

But then again, she could be wrong. I know quite a few men who like to do manual tasks, and with this solution they are exempt from all other expectations.

Then there's the conversationalist. Most men who like to talk actually just like talking about themselves. Maybe I should

specify: a man to talk with who also likes to listen. On the other hand, that might make me seem like someone who never stops talking, and that's not true. Or maybe it's just that men who are good conversationalists just talk a lot because they're hoping for sex? Then again, if that's how it goes there's really no reason why one man shouldn't be able to fulfill more than one of my needs. Yes, of course there is – anything longer than short-term or I'll be right back where I started, and that won't do at all.

Karen thinks it's a brilliant idea. She's got a colorful bouquet of love stories of her own, an assortment of either a lot or nothing at all. The first time she posted a profile online she got 250 messages within three days! She found it completely overwhelming. Basically she was looking for a man with a passion in life; someone to explore the world and share thoughts with. She ended up choosing one of them, a good-looking bloke who had written an original response. They made a date for a phone call, and on a Monday evening around 10 pm, after exchanging a few words, she asked him what his goal in life was. Needless to say, she was not satisfied with his response. I tried to tell her that you need to meet in the real world first to see how your chemistry is. If the chemistry is good, you need to meet again. Then *maybe* on the third date, when some mutual trust and interest have been established, you can ask about missions in life. It's not a test – said the specialist in broken relationships.

This three-man plan puts me in a great mood! It gives me a chance to approach this love thing more playfully, less seriously than I usually would. And it's interesting to be sitting in the driver's seat, showing that I'm the one in charge – kind of like the princess in Jack the Dullard, but in a nice way; if a man isn't good at one thing, he probably has talents within one of the other areas.

Seeking three men ...

I may be a romantic movie specialist, but frankly, I don't feel that romance provides a feasible model for relationships. It irks me that I keep coming back to these films, and that I keep watching them over and over with my daughter. It has to stop. So I've come up with a dogma of my own. It's called 1W3M – and I'm looking for three different men to meet each of the following needs:

1 A rational, philosophical man for conversation

I'm the executive director of a large house for entrepreneurs and their start up businesses, and I have a twelve year-old daughter who lives with me part-time.

I need a man to talk with about everyday life, politics, philosophy, my work, which I love, and life in general.

Advantage: We can be honest.

2 An attractive man for sex on a regular basis

That means about twice a week, or whatever we're up for.

He should be curious and ready to explore both his own and my passion, but most importantly, he's spontaneous and he enjoys sex with me.

Advantage: No long-term expectations.

3 A do-it-yourself guy to do it for me.

I live in an old townhouse and need help replacing washers, hanging lamps and mowing the lawn, or just hanging out on the sofa with a good film on a rainy Sunday. I'll serve cold, organic beer, warm meals, hot coffee and fresh cake.

Advantage: Mutual fulfillment of practical needs and the occasional cosy Sunday.

When I look in the mirror, I see a 42 year old, 5'7", almost natural blonde; well-built, womanly, educated, interested in politics. She's environmentally conscious and erotically intrepid, and she watches way too many romantic films.

The profile's online now. And luckily I'll attend a course for the next two days, so I won't be able to check for replies until Thursday.