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# THE PERFECT PAIRING

The Trouble with Mollie - Book Two

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.  
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## Chapter 1

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**K**athryn Ellis had focused non-stop on a project. She had worked with great energy with her friend, Mollie, to achieve results. They were setting down the last touches to a brand new dating app.

The system could select a 'top pick' amongst candidates based on matching criteria, giving it a score. The higher the score, the better a match. The features to match were many, such as core values, personality and character traits, interests, education and many more aspects of life, to predict a romantic desire and suggest people who could be kindred spirits for that purpose. They had driven this project for months since their return from France.

An old whim of theirs, they had put this off for a while, but now it absorbed all their spare time. Their hope was to achieve a notable success with the perfect pairing, by matching the right individuals for a loving relationship.

Following the perilous days in Antibes, they had wanted a task to absorb them, to forget the events that had almost shattered their lives. So the new app was the enterprise they needed to occupy themselves, to help them forgive and forget. They had

thrown themselves wholeheartedly into it, dividing their time actively between their studies and this project.

They had used core coding and programming languages to build the app, customized features and functionalities to make it user friendly. Mollie had devised the algorithms behind its matching capabilities, but with all the components of data feeds now loaded, they were on the finishing line.

She looked up from her laptop. "God, I'll be happy when this project is done!" Mollie hissed with a small grin.

They sat in a coffee shop, a stone's throw away from the university's halls where they attended their classes, and they kept on bashing diligently at their keyboards while sipping their cappuccinos.

"I think we've cracked it; it should work," Kathryn said. "All we need now is a constant flow of live data to bring it to life, actual people profiles for the testing stage. I have already listed over one hundred fifty profiles of men and women who are keen to take part. I've told them this is only the test stage, but they agreed. All of them are singles, one or two frisky ones, the usual culprits, but we must make sure the app performs well, that it works. This is key," she added, taking another swig of coffee.

"I've placed an ad in the university newspaper too, to gain more profiles. We should get hundreds of people to take part. With March mid-term-break coming up in two weeks, we can run the trial after the holidays, to aim for a launch in July. Three months of testing should do it," Mollie replied, readjusting her chair at the table, having another sip of her cappuccino.

It was early-March in Oxford, and the winter in England so far had been rather mild for that time of the year, so she took off her scarf. She was getting hot in the jam-packed coffee shop.

"People will be able to download the app and enroll themselves in it once it's live in July. And they'll get their match, their potential partner for life. Perhaps even their soulmate! The perfect pair! Great, ha?" Kathryn smiled. "They'll view the

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profile of the 'top pick' candidate and decide if they wish to proceed to date them," she went on, "though it would be wonderful to make some money out of this, too, if we can. I know you don't need it, Mollie, with a wealthy husband like Zac Sorensen, but I would welcome it. This town is so expensive." She trailed off, fantasizing great achievements, fame and fortune.

"It'll be a success. You just wait," Mollie replied, dismissing her friend's worries with a wave of her hand.

"Hey, I forgot to tell you. Even Marguerite wants to take part."

"Marguerite?"

"Yes. The French girl in the senior post-graduate admin office, the one around the corner from Corpus Christi. Surely, you know her. She is so efficient. When I have a bother with fees, papers, exams or whatever it is, she sorts everything out for me, before I even have time to speak. I like her; she is awesome."

"Oh, yes. They call her Margot, don't they? Of course. She is so pretty, but by God, sometimes she can be so serious. The poor girl hardly ever smiles. I don't think she has even accepted one date yet, so far. All the boys have tried to date her, with no success. I wonder why she has chosen our app, though. She always declines every man."

"Yes, I was surprised, too. Who knows? But she is so sweet when you get to know her," Kathryn said. "We'll see who comes up as her 'top pick,' then?"

"Guess what, Kat, and please don't get mad at me, but I have entered your profile, too, and you match up perfectly to Fin, to ninety percent, no less," Mollie said with a satisfied smile.

Her companion stared at her, astonished. "What? You did what?" Kathryn replied, flabbergasted when she recovered, while her head went back a touch and her eyes became wide with incredulity.

"Aha!"

"No!"

"Oh, yes."

"I can't believe it. Fin...to me?"

"Completely. The app says so."

"Wait a minute. Did he offer you his profile to enter?" she asked, narrowing her eyes on Mollie.

"Umm... no. But I know him well enough, and I discreetly questioned Zac about him, too."

"So, Fin didn't allow you to use his data, then."

"Well... no, not in so many words... I mean, not yet..."

"Oh, Mollie, you are impossible. You have no permission."

"Kat, stop fussing. We're only in the testing phase. I'll delete his information when we go live. Anyway, ninety percent, and you match! To Finley, no less! Forget the damn permission. What do you say to that? Compatible, you and him, brilliant. Ha!"

"It can't be! Finley, my 'top pick'? Are you sure? Oh, dear..."

"Oh, stop whining. He is your perfect pairing. I know we haven't tested the damn app yet, but, girl, you cannot get a score much higher than that."

"No. Impossible! And you had no right to do this."

"Oh, for God's sake, Kat! I tell you, yes, he is. Stop talking, and here, come and have a look."

They put their heads together, the brunette and the redhead, looking at the screen on Mollie's laptop. Kathryn's chestnut eyes became enormous as she read the results. She shook her head, not believing what she was seeing. She was shocked. Dismayed, she put a hand over her mouth. She was speechless!

"I don't think so," Kathryn muttered under her breath, as the shock subsided, with more vigorous shakes of her head as she read the conclusions on the app. "It can't be!" she inhaled. "No way!" She pursed her lips for a moment, thinking. "Then, for certain, we need to do more work on this app!" Kathryn continued with a grimace. "I doubt it's correct!" She sighed, frustrated, "You know, Fin and I have only had three dates since we came back from Antibes. That's all, in eight months! Can you

imagine that? Eight months... three dates! How do you explain that, then? So, I suspect the damn app is not right, after all this work. Oh, God! I don't even think Finley likes me. The man is frustrating," Kathryn summed up with a deep sigh.

"Fin likes you—a lot! And you know it, so stop fussing. I could predict this even without the damn app, I tell you. But he is always busy. My husband and Fin work hard. You must have realized that by now. And consider yourself lucky, at least, you and Finley are in the same town. Poor Clarissa saw Alex once in eight months. The man is always preparing something, or rather, involved in some major national case in the litigation courts," Mollie explained.

"Is he? Poor Clarissa."

"Yes, poor girl. She has given up on him. I mean, she lives in Babbacombe, in Devon, near Mother's, and Alex is in London, four hours' drive apart. Theirs is impossible. So I think Claris has thrown in the towel. At least, you see Fin every evening at my house. I told you these men are busy, workhorses, work phenomenon. I have not seen my husband for the last three days, he's been so busy, other than for a good morning kiss." Mollie's lips formed in a thin line, thinking how much she had missed Zac.

The problem was Mollie's husband, Zac Sorensen, and his friends were workaholics.

During the dreadful events in Antibes eight months ago, Peter had fired two bullets on him which had broken his collarbone and shattered his forearm. The wounds made him undergo several operations during the past months. It had not been easy for them.

He was healing, and when the cast finally came off his arm, Zac had thrown himself even harder back into his work to catch up for the lost time.

His security firm kept on growing, protecting the rich and famous, working with top sporting and music events, too. It was

a great success. So, her husband and his buddy were always busy.

Finley Harman, an ex-soldier in the army, was his best friend and partner in the company, and Kathryn liked him a lot. She had taken an instant liking to him all those months ago.

The partnership in the firm came in readiness for the time Zac would move full time to head his family business as its CEO, while Finley would take over the security company. As a result, they were two men who were hard to pin down, working long hours, always busy.

Mollie thought this could only get worse when her husband eventually succeeded his father on the board of their multi-billion family real estate and hotel enterprise. But she could not help that. Mollie would have to accept it, though she loved Zac dearly.

"Why don't you come home for dinner tonight. I'm sure Zac will turn up with Fin as usual. He is always at my house, so you can see him then," Mollie said to her friend.

"Oh, thank you, maybe. But you're right, if I'm not there with you, I don't see him at all," Kathryn sighed, but her companion snorted.

"Well, you and he spend so much time at my house, that's why he doesn't ask you out. He can meet you there whenever he wants. I think he is a cheapskate. Why invest money on a date with you when he can see you at my house for free?"

"Ooh, Mollie, that's not it at all, it's not fair, and you know it. Fin is generous. He always buys things for us. The problem is the man can't make up his mind about me. That's what! Oh, God! I wish he would decide whether he likes me or not. I am getting impatient with him. If he thinks I'll wait forever, he has another trick coming."

"Oh, come home, Kat. It'll be fun. But he loves you, I am certain. And the app is not wrong. He only has eyes for you; you



can't miss that. Surely, you know this by now. Go on; come for dinner."

"Fine. I will. I am entering Ethan's data too, in the app, I mean. He has agreed to take part."

"Oh? I am sure that boy gets taller by the minute, the tallest student in Physics. Hell, no, in the entire university. No, I tell a lie, in the entire city of Oxford! Bloody hell, the guy is tall." Mollie chuckled.

"Oh, stop it. It would be good to see if Ethan has any affinities to me," Kathryn said, launching a playful glance at her friend, "You know, Fin has not kissed me... not even once."

"I thought you had three dates with him?"

"Yes, but he has not kissed me yet, not once. I guess he doesn't like me that way. Let me tell you, our app is wrong. You are mistaken, Mollie. If he did, Fin would have done something about it after eight months, don't you agree? I mean, I know when we are in your house, we get on so well, we have fun, he's lovely. I can sense he likes me then, but he has never said a word to me. Maybe he just wants to be friends. He likes me as a friend, nothing more."

"Has Ethan said something to you? Is that it? Is this the reason you feel so doubtful about Finley tonight?"

"Well, no, I mean... um... Ethan asked me out for a drink tonight. That's all. But I said I'd think about it. Oh, Mollie, I can't wait forever for Fin to make a move on me, can I? As much as I adore him... What if he doesn't want me that way? What can I do?"

"Nonsense. Fin adores you," Mollie replied, but she narrowed her eyes and was pensive for a while. "Umm... I just had an idea," she went on, "say yes to Ethan; go out with him. We'll tell Fin you are dating, see if that moves his ass into gear. If it doesn't, then we have more work to do on the damn app. Though I suspect he'll move fast, once he knows you are dating. He is your perfect mate, your perfect pairing. It is in black and

white, ninety percent, girl! We can't be mistaken after all that hard work. Our app says so."

"You see, you are doubting it too now, aren't you?"

"Rubbish! Fin is your match, the 'top pic' for you. Yes, do it. Go on a date with Ethan. I'll ask Zac to bring his friend home for supper, and he'll get a hell of a surprise, too." Mollie laughed.

"Tonight? Oh, I'm not sure that's a good idea. What if Fin gets upset? Ha?"

"What the hell, he needs a push, so we will give the man a push, simple."

"Do you think it'll work?" Kathryn asked.

"Well, if it doesn't, at least you'll know for sure. Call Ethan; do it. Meet him for a drink."

"Ooh, I don't know. I am nervous about it. I don't wish to upset Fin, or Ethan, for that matter. What if it backfires on me?"

"Bloody hell, Kat, do you want to know if the man likes you or not? Then do it. Go out with Ethan. Fin will be jealous if he likes you, and I am sure he does. You'll see; trust me. We are only going to give him an extra push." Mollie giggled.

"Oh, God, what have I got to lose? It's just a drink," Kathryn said, inhaling and closing her eyes.

She dialed Ethan's number on her mobile with a timid grin. Anything to hurry Finley along was a brilliant idea to her. Kathryn adored the bear of a man, but he was always the perfect gentleman with her, to her great chagrin. She had fantasies of love about him. She even had a few sexy dreams about him, to her own dismay.

"Hi, Ethan, Kat here. Do you still want to take me out for that drink tonight?" She hesitated, waiting for the answer at the other end of the phone, blushing furiously, hoping the young lad hadn't change his mind. "Good, I'll see you at 9:30 pm," she went on with a small satisfied smirk. "Perfect, meet you there."

"I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's go home, and you stay for dinner until it's time to meet with Ethan, and then you say

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goodbye to us. And to Fin, of course! Fabulous. So he can see you leave for a date with a man, all dolled up. Brilliant! I'll transform you into a sexy siren for your amorous date tonight. Fin will be speechless and jealous when he sees you. You'll look divine. Wait until I am done with you." Mollie clapped her hands in excitement at her master plan.

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Kathryn Ellis was a student at Oxford University. She was doing a master's in physics, and she was not even twenty-two years old yet, a delightful and clever young girl.

Some people would say she was rather plain, including herself, but when you observed her, she was an enchanting girl. Lovable, a graceful brunette, with a sinuous, curvy, rather shapely fuller figure; incidentally, the type of figure Finley liked so much. Her bosom tended towards a large size, but she was proud of this feature, a little less on her hips, though.

Her huge, warm, almond-shaped eyes were extraordinary, the color of chestnuts, with long eyelashes framing them. Those eyes rendered her lovely. Her long, dark hair was luscious and complemented her features well, making her an attractive girl. Feminine was the word most men used for her.

Above all, she was enchanting, with a mellow and sunny personality, but with a streak of dogged determination which ran deep within her, showing itself off at the most unlikely of moments.

Her friends were devoted to her. Though, sometimes, she would say something embarrassing, putting her foot in her mouth. She was renowned for her blunders. But the world was her oyster. Mollie was her best friend and a fellow student.

Though Kathryn's love for Finley was the thorn in her side, he was the only man who mattered to her. She had first set eyes on him at Mollie's wedding. He had been Zac's best man. They

had enjoyed a few dances together and had a wonderful time, but it was not until she saw him again, a week later in Antibes, that she fell in love with him.

Following her revelations of Peter's treachery and his subsequent violence, which left her battered, with black and blue bruises and stitches, Finley had stayed at her bedside in the hospital all night, taking care of her. He had soothed her with affection after her ordeal, making her feel safe again.

Thus, she had fallen in love with Finley and pined for him ever since. But the fellow didn't seem to make up his mind. Since her return from Antibes eight months ago, they had seen each other almost every night in Mollie's house, but the man had shown no romantic interest towards her, despite three dates. Or was it, perhaps, because of them? She didn't know. Finley had not even kissed her on any of those dates.

She was at her wits' end.

But there were times he was so lovable and captivating with her that she couldn't understand why he would not take her out on a date or declare his love to her. So, she wasn't sure where she stood with him. If she wanted to see him, Mollie's house was the place.

He spent an awful lot of time working with Zac after office hours, too, at his home, and most days, he dined there too. So, Kathryn became even more than a habitu e at Mollie and Zac's, to stay close to Finley.