



The Marriage Edition



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“This girl is too cool for me, there’s no chance in hell she’ll be interested,” Jonathan thought when he came across Natasha’s profile on OkCupid. He’d gone on too many lackluster dates – about four a week for six months – to know better than waste his time on a dead-end courtship. And yet, over the next month, Natasha kept checking out his profile, until Jonathan built up the courage to email her. “Is six feet tall enough, or do I have to be able to dunk?” he wrote, referencing Natasha’s requirement that her match be tall.

Natasha hadn’t just been eyeing his profile, she’d also been showing it to her mom and all her friends. “First of all, he’s gorgeous,” Natasha explained. “And his profile – it was as if I’d written it as the profile for my ideal mate. He hit all the points that were important to me,” she said. From their shared taste in indie music to their love of Wes Anderson and a similar sense of humor, everything matched. “I have very specific tastes, and having all of that in this gorgeous man was too good to be true.”

She wrote back that six feet was tall enough, and they spent the next month exchanging light-hearted, flirtatious emails. Natasha was so impressed that she agreed to a phone call, something she generally disliked. “I was horrified when he asked to talk on the phone, but I liked him, so I said ‘yes,’” she explained. Jonathan immediately put her at ease, and they talked for over two hours, reinforcing Natasha’s feeling that this man might be the one. They talked about their families and about being first-generation immigrants, and about the vocal competition Natasha had just attended. They goofed off and laughed so hard that Natasha’s cheeks hurt when they got off the phone. “It was great, it was incredible, it was like we’d known each other forever,” Jonathan said.

A few days later, in April 2010, they had their first date at Bar Jamon on East 17th Street. Natasha arrived first and got a window seat. When she saw him approaching, her heart skipped a beat. He looked like an adorable J Crew model, in his suit and glasses. The first date was as amazing as the first phone call. “I felt like I had manifested

this perfect mate for myself, and he was right there in front of me,” Natasha said. Jonathan told her about his day at work, and Natasha talked about transitioning away from her career in singing and acting and modeling. “The excitement of the ‘newness’ was there, but it also felt like we’d been dating for years,” Natasha said. After a few glasses of wine, Jonathan suggested they move to Death & Co., a bar in the East Village. They ordered food, and before it arrived, Jonathan said he wanted to kiss her. “So kiss me,” Natasha answered.

There were no games. He texted her the following day, and a few days later, when her best friend Nkechi came to visit, Natasha organized a group event so she could invite Jonathan along. “I was afraid he wouldn’t be as amazing, but he was,” she said. He also gained another tally in his already long points column, because he made such an effort to get to know her best friend. Yet he couldn’t wait for them to have a moment alone together so he could kiss her.

The following weekend they were finally together at Natasha’s apartment in Brooklyn. They watched *Top Gun*, and Jonathan charmed her with his impressions of Val Kilmer in aviator glasses. “It was such an amazing time,” Jonathan said. He already knew he wanted to marry her.

A few days later, Jonathan called to tell her about an interview he’d just had, for a new job in advertising. “It wasn’t discussed directly, but we both knew that we were talking about what the job would mean for us,” Jonathan said.

They saw each other for dinner almost every night, and spent weekends in Brooklyn, since Natasha was less keen on visiting him on the Upper East Side. Three months later they moved in together. Natasha continued to fall in love with his sense of humor, and to feel incredibly happy when they were together. “I imagine that’s what addiction feels like,” she said. “Everything feels just right, and there’s nothing to be anxious about.” She also started absorbing aspects of his style, trading in some of her artsy bohemian wardrobe for a slightly more preppy look. And she picked

up some of his business sense as well. “I’ve become more ambitious, and he helped me realize the potential in my practice and the influence I can have in the world,” she said. Early in 2011 she enrolled in a nutrition program, and went on to open her business as a holistic health and nutrition counselor. “I’d never been challenged like that before,” she said.

Jonathan feels more carefree since Natasha came into his life. “My dad says he’s never seen me smile so much,” he said. Jonathan also feels more empowered and stronger since he’s known her. “And I take myself a lot less seriously,” he said. “It’s easier for me to laugh, and to open up a bit more about myself.”

They hadn’t been dating long when Jonathan met her family in Minnesota, at her grandmother’s funeral. “I warned him that my entire crazy Russian family would be there,” Natasha said. Jonathan charmed everyone, and he fit right in. “Her mom treated me like a second son, and I drank bourbon with her dad as if I were an old friend. They brought me into their home with open arms,” he said.

Natasha was born in a suburb of Minneapolis in 1982. She was a little firecracker, always entertaining her parent’s guests. Their house was full of family, friends and good food, and Natasha grew up speaking only Russian until she entered preschool. Even as a little girl she dreamed about her wedding, and her imaginary friend, Geoff, was actually her husband. She went to Oberlin College and majored in modern media & culture and voice performance, and enjoyed her career in acting and opera for a while. But it became clear to her that she wanted to be rooted, and a career that required constant travel wouldn’t work for her. “Having a family was always part of my identity,” she said.

Natasha met Jonathan’s father and step-mother on a visit to Long Island, and she met his mom and her girlfriend when they visited New York in the summer of 2010. “His mom is a boisterous woman and we hit it off right away,” Natasha said. Jonathan remembers the first meeting going slightly less smoothly.



“My mom kept calling her Natalie,” he said as he chuckled.

Jonathan was born in Huntington Beach, in California, also in 1982. In his early years, his life consisted largely of going to the beach and playing outside in the dirt. Even though he was the youngest kid on the block, he was the group leader. Their house was always bustling with activity. “I was raised in a very old world, Austrian-German way of life,” he said. “We have so many pictures of us at the beach, naked, the European way.” Jonathan lived in California until he was nine, and then his mom and her second husband took the family to Texas. He didn’t have to use an outhouse or wear cowboy boots, as he’d feared, but he and his younger brother helped work on the land, build fences and gardens, and soccer practice was an hour away.

Always a good student, Jonathan attended one of the best high schools in Texas, and got perfect grades and excelled in music. He graduated a semester early and enrolled at the University of North Texas, majoring in Literature. After he graduated, when he had an opportunity to move to New York and earn an MBA, he jumped on it.

They’d been dating less than a year when they put a deposit down on their wedding venue. Yet on October 8, 2011, everything went wrong. Natasha woke up with a headache and didn’t feel like going apple picking. On the ride there, she complained that they were going too far away. When they arrived, the orchard was crowded and it was nearly 80 degrees, a far cry from the crisp autumn day Jonathan had hoped for.

When Jonathan kept repeating that the day was not going as planned, Natasha got suspicious. Eventually, he pulled her away from the crowd, into a nearby field. When Natasha saw the stunning ring, she screamed and tackled him and they fell over laughing. “The proposal wasn’t the way I had imagined, and it wasn’t his perfect crisp fall day,” she said. But everything else was perfect.

Natasha and Jonathan were married in Central Park under clear blue skies on June 15, 2013, surrounded by their family and best friends.



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