

Don't Put The

Cart

Before The

Unicorn

Gabriella & Frank

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Don't Put the Cart Before the Unicorn

Greetings

Dear Readers,

Thank you for choosing our tome. It's a light-hearted look at online dating with a serious purpose. We believe love exists, but can be difficult to find.

Some will say finding a healthy, loving relationship is as rare as a unicorn. We offer a different point of view. Love can be found, but it takes work. Maybe you can email someone and meet them at the Empire State Building and fall in love. Most of us have different stories to tell.

Gabriella and I have combined our past experiences, wisdom from others, and just a dash of humor to encourage readers to keep looking for love.

Guardian Angels is a fictitious dating service we use as the vehicle to tell our story. All the characters jumped out of our imagination. Any relation to actual people is just plain luck, sort of.

Enjoy the ride,

Gabriella and Frank

Chapter 1

FRANK:

“Thank you.” I told the Lyft driver. My phone pinged with the charge for the ride. I gave her 5 stars and a \$5 tip. Michelle climbed out of the stretch limo in front of me. She leaned back in to give her husband, Bruce a kiss. The limo pulled away as we met on the sidewalk. Limos and Lyft. In a nutshell that shows Michelle and I are partners from different economic parts of the world.

We walked up to the large Victorian house which served as our office, and my home. We crossed the big wrap-around porch and into the spacious foyer. We entered for a little more work before we called it a day.

We live and work in Dallas, Texas. I held the door for Michelle as we entered our office. We just returned from a wedding and we held mixed emotions, mostly positive.

Weddings are the beginning of new lives together. For us, it's death. The death of a client which is our goal. Well, not their death, but their need for our services.

Michelle said, “Give me a minute,” and headed to the bathroom to change.

We bought this house three years ago. We use the ground floor as our company office for Guardian Angels. The second floor holds the main kitchen along with the living room, TV room, my big man-cave and a couple of bathrooms. Bedrooms are on the third floor and the Widow's Walk on top of the house allows me to take in the Dallas skyline. It's a fantastic view.

One of the cool features of this house is the elevator. Come on, an elevator. It's hidden in the small Book Nook on the first floor. The door is hidden behind one of the shelves. It's slow, but it's an elevator.

The historical house sits in the Uptown area of Dallas. Michelle and Bruce live in a penthouse a few blocks over. Like I said: Lyft and Limos. Despite the economic standing difference, Michelle and I are fantastic partners.

Removing my cummerbund allowed me to breathe for the first time in about four hours. I took off my tux jacket and removed my cufflinks. I probably should change, too before I spill something on the tux I need to return. I'll be careful. Besides, I look pretty good in a tux. I might as well enjoy the moment.

The door opened, and the queen came out looking good even in sweats and a t-shirt.

"Bruce didn't want to come over and unwind with us?" I asked.

Michelle smiled. "He's closing some deal and the other side called for an emergency meeting, as if we don't know what they're doing."

"Doing?"

Michelle sat with a smirk on her face. "Some people skim-read a book and decide they know the secret to winning the deal. They knew Bruce and I were at the wedding. They could have waited until tomorrow, but they thought calling him now would put him at a disadvantage."

"Does it?" I asked.

Michelle laughed. "It's kind of like shooting Mongo. It just makes him mad."

I enjoy *Blazing Saddle* references. "You two make a great pair."

Michelle said. "We were lucky to find each other."

We moved to our partner's desk. The right side of the huge first floor serves as our office. The other side was empty. We would grow to fill it one day.

A couple of piles of profiles sat in front of me. Michelle's side of the desk was clean and neat. Mine, not so much. What to do? Which one to take next? I didn't really want to decide. It had been a good day, and I was winding down.

Of course, Michelle wanted to accomplish one more task. And she was giddy on champagne.

Michelle asked, "Why do you insist on printing out all our profiles?"

"I don't print them *all* out, just the clients who catch my attention, or the ones we have a better chance of helping."

Michelle smiled. “We still have our *No Haters* rule, right.”

“Exactly. We can help skeptical people. Cynics are a lost cause.”

Michelle nodded. “Still, you’re killing a bunch of trees with all the printouts. Get with the times.”

“I recycle so the trees come back to life. And this is easier.”

Michelle didn’t believe me. She lived on the bleeding edge of technology, but at times overlooked the pragmatic. It’s why we make such a great team. Coordinating talents doesn’t mean identical talents.

Take our desk. It’s a Chippendale Partner’s Desk built in 1765. The parts are all original and in excellent shape. I found it at an antique auction in Philadelphia. The huge desk built for two cost \$25,000 for this work-a-day piece of art. So, I didn’t really have a strong leg to stand on when Michelle suggested buying this house. We bit off more than we should have, but we’ll grow when the time is right. I do live upstairs which is a plus.

Maybe it was the wine. Maybe it was an irritation Michelle had to let out. She was still on my case. We sat on either side of the partner desk. This was my pride and joy. The antique mahogany desk was six feet long and 4 feet wide. It was built in 1812 in Philadelphia when the City of Brotherly Love was the center of the New World. Working together at the same desk helped our working relationship.

“It doesn’t make sense to print out the profiles. Help me understand.” Michelle gave me the “What were you thinking?” look. Maybe two separate desks isn’t such a bad idea.

I looked at my partner. She was miles ahead in her thinking in a lot of ways, other times she can’t see what works. “Okay, when I print and stack the profiles, I get a sense of where they are and can retrieve one faster than when I have to go look for it on the hard drive.”

Michelle smirked. “That makes no sense at all.”

I reached in my pocket and pulled out a \$10 bill. “Bet cha.”

It was our standard running gag in the office. We bet each other over serious and dumb issues all the time. It keeps life interesting. She slammed her ten-dollar bill on her side of the desk in no time.

“Okay, let’s say I want a male, in his 30s and a bit of a geek. Go.”

Michelle flashed to her keyboard. She typed and, in a few seconds, she called out in triumph, “Got it.”

The problem was I was already holding up a profile. I remembered about where it was and pulled it out within a half-a-second. “I won.”

I knew it wouldn’t be easy. Michelle shot back. “Oh, please. You planted that. You can’t call that a win.”

“Point taken. You call one,” I said.

Michelle acted like she was thinking but I could see she was moving her mouse. She was clearing the profile, so she had a head start on me. “Okay, a lady in her 50’s and starting fresh all over.” She immediately turned to focus on her keyboard and went after the profile with a vengeance.

Too late.

I held up in my other hand a profile that met her qualifications.

Michelle said, “Are you kidding me? How did you do that?” She paused. “I don’t care. I’m not printing out profiles.”

I grinned. “I don’t want you to. It helps me get an overview of the people we’re helping.”

Michelle shook her head. “The next thing I know, you’ll want us to work by candlelight.”

I performed a minor victory dance with my two profiles. I set them down, picked up her tenner, signed my name in blue marker and posted the bill on our winner’s board. There were more bills with Michelle’s name in purple marker than mine, but it was still a lot of fun.

“You know it’s not about the speed. We focus on the extra attention we give our clients. It’s going the second and third mile for them that sets us apart.”

I knew she was trying to make up for losing. “I concur. We’re here to serve.”

Michelle shared an evil grin. She had something up her sleeve.

She held up the two profiles I pulled from the deck. “New bet. We work to see who can help their client find a new relationship. Not one date, a relationship.”

I let my mouth get ahead of my brains. “You’re on. What’s next?”

Michelle snickered. “You can pull one from your pile and I get to pull one from my database.”

Oh, now who was playing who? Or is it whom? She probably had a sandbagger hidden. “Okay, with one provision. I pick yours and you pick mine.”

Michelle smirked. No problem. She ripped through the keys, and I heard my email ding. “There you go, big boy. Where’s mine?”

I looked through my stack and pulled up a profile of a young man whom I thought would be a challenge. I handed Michelle Jack’s profile and then read my email. Alice.

Michelle interrupted my reading. “One last thing: the winner is the first one who crosses the line?”

I looked up from my screen and gave her a puzzled look.

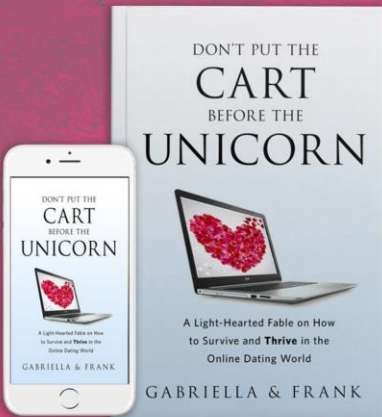
She smiled back at me. “Speed matters.”

As usual, we agree on over 90% of our decisions. Sometimes it takes us a while to get there. Jack and Alice were going to get primo treatment from us. They didn’t know how lucky they were. I didn’t know how much trouble they would cause.

That's the end of the free sample, but don't worry! You can get the rest on [Kindle](#) or in paperback on Frank's website: www.FrankMyer.com.

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