

Sociopathic Surgeon by Mitchell D. Miller

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I Marry A Sociopathic Surgeon

MY NEIGHBORS AT THE HOTEL 17 WERE FREAKY. BUT IT WAS convenient and cheap. An icy wind rushed me out the entrance that Friday morning, encouraging me to get to work on time.

Nobody smiled on the Uptown train, but the strangers weren't nasty like my ex-girlfriend who rode with me on the office elevator.

I slumped into my cubicle and stared at the empty inbox and blank calendar on my desk. The bank executives were away for the weekend.

I left a note on my supervisor's desk saying I didn't feel well, then headed to the liquor store at Grand Central Station for two half pints of Winslow whiskey.

A swig of whiskey on the downtown train soothed my hangover. The rest of the bottle helped my cafeteria breakfast go down easier.

One more sip from the second bottle prepared me for the weekend ahead. The frigid wind blew me toward Mickey's Bar on the corner of Warren and Greenwich Streets. It was the best cheap bar in lower Manhattan, with drinks only \$1.25.

Ace, the lone bartender on weekday mornings, welcomed me into the empty bar.

"Good morning, Sonny. Let's shoot some pool before the lunch crowd arrives," he said.

We were midway through our third game when a tall Caucasian woman interrupted us to order a drink. Her Harris Tweed jacket matched her long, dark brown hair. She sat at the far end of the bar and ordered a Scotch on the rocks.

I bought her a second round and introduced myself. Sara said she was meeting a guy she'd met earlier that week.

The bar stools filled with office workers, but Sara didn't talk to anyone.

I flashed my most charming smile. "Care to step outside for a joint?"

"Sure, I don't think my friend is coming anyway. But we can't smoke on the street. Let's sit in my car," she replied.

Her license plate read "MD." Why would a doctor drive to a bar? Then again, most Manhattanites, myself included, didn't even own a car.

We passed the joint in silence until Sara said, "Sometimes people think I am a nurse. I hate that."

"Is that so bad?" I asked.

Sara sucked in a deep breath before bellowing in the voice that once called cows home at her family's dairy farm.

"I graduated from medical school! I worked hard for that degree. I can't stand nurses. I love bossing them around."

She turned to face me. "I can't stand most so-called doctors either. The only real doctors are MDs. Why do podiatrists, chiropractors and optometrists get to be called doctor? They're useless on their own. When a patient gets sick in their office, they send them to me!"

Sara paused to catch her breath, then continued her rant. "PhDs are the worst! What did they do to become doctors? They read some books. That's it! Do you think reading books makes someone worthy of being called doctor like me?"

She shook her head in dismay before continuing. "Psychiatrists are real doctors at least. They understand medicine and know mental illness is a biological disease. You treat diseases with medication. A psychiatrist only asks about your family to look for genetic links, like schizophrenic parents. Right?"

Her voice rising, she jabbed her finger into my chest. "Who cares about your childhood or whether you were abused? Does anyone care if your daddy loved you?"

"It's none of your business," I replied curtly.

Sara grinned. "Fair enough. But psychiatrists cure the mentally ill every day with drugs. They train for years to recognize different illnesses and treat them. I wanted to be a psychiatrist. But it's a seven-year residency and patients don't improve quickly. In surgery, you're done with a patient in two hours. In psychiatry, it could take two years. I did a six-week psych rotation as an intern. I loved it. Don't you think I'd make a great psychiatrist?"

I was too stunned to respond, so I nodded.

"Psychiatrists are real doctors. They know mental illness is biological. You treat disease with medicine. When a psychiatrist asks about your family, it's to diagnose genetics. Childhood trauma doesn't matter. Who cares if your daddy loved you?"

Before I could react, she grabbed my neck and mashed her lips against mine in a sloppy kiss. I momentarily forgot my germophobia and slipped her some tongue.

Sara shoved me away and wiped her mouth with a tissue. I was still searching for a witty reply when she started the car. "Buckle up, I'm taking you home."

She made an illegal U-turn, then an illegal right onto West Street, under the condemned West Side Highway. Sara raced the taxis, my half-pint bottle bouncing against my chest. At a red light, I took a swig and offered it to her. She sipped and gave it back.

"Sorry if I scared you. I'm a pilot, so I like driving fast," she explained.

I finished the bottle picturing Sara, naked, turning off the plane's engines and gliding through space until she climaxed or we crashed.

My nightmare ended when Sara pulled over. "I'll get more liquor. Please toss that bottle - I don't keep empties in my car."

Seeing no trash can, I flung it 400 feet onto the abandoned highway. We listened for the shattering crash.

Sara patted my head and bellowed, "Good shot!"

She swerved around a homeless man and his shopping cart. How many people became vagrants after a psychologist's lousy treatment? I bought two quarts at the liquor store.

Inside her one-bedroom apartment, a spinet piano and fold-out couch dominated the living room. The open bedroom door revealed a bare mattress on the floor.

Sara kicked off her shoes. "Make us drinks and get over here."

I filled two glasses with whiskey and joined her on the couch.

"Take off your shoes. No shoes in my house," she ordered before sipping her drink.

I asked, "Don't you have a TV?"

"I don't need a TV. I have you," Sara replied.

That weekend we decided to get married and have two kids. On Sunday, we packed the contents of my hotel room into her car.

I grew accustomed to Sara's bellowing and bossiness. Six days after meeting, we married at the Municipal Building. Our first stop as newlyweds was Mickey's Bar, only to find it closed for a month-long renovation into a gay health club.

Sara and I were the last couple to meet at Mickey's. We belonged together.