

Chapter III

Balloons. So many balloons. Everywhere there were balloons in the Diamond District. The time had come. Chutney felt an urge she had never felt before. She badly wanted a child. She wanted the Farmer's child. She could feel her love growing for this man, even though he seemed so far away at times.

Chutney would drag the Farmer to look at the pretty diamonds in the windows in the Diamond District. The Farmer teased her, "nothing is too good for my baby".

"Look at my mits, darling," Chutney remarked. "A small stone on a thin band would make my hands look skinnier".

The Farmer asked, "What are you hinting at?"

"I would like to get married," Chutney stated explicitly.

"Who's the lucky fella?" the Farmer joked.

She punched the Farmer hard in the stomach. "You," she smiled.

"Me? What about your career? Will your coworkers approve of me? What about your landlord? What about the newspaper store on the corner? What will his Indian arse think?"

"Farmer, stop," Chutney admonished.

"Don't you think we should at least talk to your family?" asked the Farmer.

"What for?" exclaimed Chutney

"To get their blessing," said the Farmer obviously.

"It will never happen. You don't know rich people. And besides, Farmer, your parents are dead. You were on scholarship. Rich people only care about their Black American Express Cards. They look down on anyone who pays cash," said Chutney frankly.

"I have paid cash my whole life. I like the way it smells. And besides we have pretty money now. Blues. Yellows. Pinks. To go along with all that green. Chutney, don't worry. It happens every day in the cafeteria. I get it every day," stated the Farmer.

"What happens?" she asked.

"Farmer, when did you change your name? Farmer, you are well read. Farmer, is that your real name? Farmer, which book did you read to find that answer? Farmer, you had a scholarship? Parent couldn't pay, huh? It will never end," the Farmer stated.

"I know," she said.

"I want to get away from here. I want to have my own farm and my own land. Do you trust me?"

She licked her top lip and looked at the Farmer, "Of course, I do."

"We need to put a plan together. We need to look at our resources and see how we can manage? How much do we need for the wedding? How much do we need for the rings? Where are we going to live? How much money will we have?" Both of them asked themselves these questions on the train ride home.

The Farmer made plans. He decided he would leave after his annual bonus. Chutney would stay on until she could sell her apartment.

Chutney and the Farmer had lived for years on Golden Mountain. Both utilized Ran Rold Hybrid Seed Corps. 401K Plan. Chutney, not having the expenses of paying for dates and romance, bought shares in the discount stock purchase plan. They didn't have a whole lot of money, but enough to get married and to buy a small farm out in Mohave County.

The two decided on a budget for the wedding. They started with her gown. The Farmer already owned a tuxedo and shoes. Between themselves, they knew nothing about diamonds.

Off they went to H. Sterns. Claudia, the Brazilian saleswoman, was incredibly helpful. She told Chutney to find the best stone they could afford. She then showed them several stones in clear Lucite with their carat, cut and color grading on them. Chutney found a stone they liked. The Farmer went and paid the cashier.

Chutney advised him to pay a little less. Claudia told the Farmer they had settings and also advised that other jewelers offered much more intricate settings over in the Diamond District.

The Farmer and Chutney went to the Diamond District to look at settings. Then they sauntered over to Tiffany's. At Tiffany's, the Farmer and Chutney picked out gold wedding bands. Each band had Tiffany's jewelers mark on the inside.

Then they went down to The House of Kimono's. Noriko helped her look at various kimonos.

"A kimono?" asked the Farmer.

"Yes, Farmer."

Noriko spoke to Chutney and the Farmer in Japanese. Chutney responded in Japanese that she had picked up while studying abroad at Kobe University.

The Farmer looked at them both chatting away in Japanese. "OK, I got the hint," he said and he left.

Noriko told Chutney that she would have to try several on.

Chutney advised, "We are going to get married at City Hall".

"Cool," Noriko replied. She then advised Chutney against too many layers and too much handiwork. "You may not be able to get a cab to or from. The train goes directly there."

"Keep it simple. You are going to be tried in the evening. What's underneath is for his eyes only" Noriko said. "Make it easy for him to take it off".

"Good idea," remarked Noriko.

The Farmer waited at the French restaurant for Chutney. In front of him was a nice duck paté with poached apples sliced over it. Sliced goose berries and a sprinkling of crushed pine nuts adorned the dish. Delicate gravy coated the pieces of duck liver.

"Muscadet, s'il vous plaît," asked the Farmer.

"Oui, monsieur," said the waiter and rushed towards the bar.

The Farmer looked around and realized that he would not be able to afford meals like this anymore. He wondered who drank Muscadet in Mojave County. The waiter rushed out with a bottle of cold

Muscadet. The Farmer inspected the cork and tasted a sample. "Formidable," he stated.

"Bon appetit".

Chutney came in and was escorted to the back of the restaurant.

"I almost gave up, thought maybe you went home," the Farmer said.

"Noriko is very knowledgeable. Noriko knows all the colors. The right length. She showed me how to put it on. How to take it off. All these things she shared.

Chutney ordered lunch. Now she spoke French. "S'il vous plait," she called for the waiter.

"Oui, mademoiselle?" the waiter asked

"Crevettes, s'il vous plaît," she said. She looked at the menu again. "Petite salade verte, aussi."

"Merci, mademoiselle," the waiter said and walked over to the kitchen.

The Farmer looked and asked, "Why a kimono?"

"Easy to put on and take off. I do not have to starve to fit into it. Nor do I have to make expensive alterations. The accessories and jewelry can go with everything else I own," she stated matter of factly.

"Can I still wear a tuxedo?" the Farmer asked.

"Of course," she said. "She'll have someone drop it off after she steams it."

"When can I see it?" the Farmer asked.

"On our wedding day, silly," Chutney beamed.

"What now?" questioned the Farmer.

"Well, we have to talk to Mother."

"Yes," said the Farmer.

They drank their wine. They ate their meals slowly. Several hours later we find the future married couple at Chutney's parental abode. Her apartment overlooks the Ran Rold Museum of Antiquities, Holder of All That Was in Golden Mountain.

"Well, if it isn't the scholarship boy," sarcastically remarked the grand dame of Chutney's life.

"Yes, ma'am," said the Farmer. The Farmer made sure he acted dumb and ignorant in front of Chutney's mother. He realized early that the fact that his father drove a cab was never ever going to appeal to a woman who had a Liechtenstein bank account.

"What did your father do?" she asked for the millionth time.

"He drove a cab," he said again for the millionth and one time.

"And what did your mother do?" she asked for the two millionth time.

"She cleaned bed pans," the Farmer replied with enthusiasm. "May I take your drink?" the Farmer offered. At the offer of touching her octogenarian hands, Chutney's mother cringed.

"Oh, my. Well, well Chutney you really outdid yourself," she exclaimed. The same routine every time.

"Mother, please."

"Please what?"

"We came here for your blessing."

"Blessing? Look at him. You have to be kidding me. He is NOC," yelled Chutney's mother.

"Chutney, what does NOC mean?" asked the Farmer in a bewildered idiotic look.

"Incredulous. Were the prisons empty? What happened to the asylums? The bath houses must be all boarded up. Huh? You couldn't find a hermaphrodite who needed electrolysis badly."

"Chutney, do you have relatives who work in those places. Well, I have a friend who works as a bikini waxer too," the Farmer said sarcastically.

Chutney smiled at the Farmer. Seeing that pure, natural love between her daughter and the Farmer enveloped Chutney's mother with jealousy. "If your father knew you were going to marry the Farmer, he would be mortified."

"Mother, Father has been dead for over ten years," Chutney replied.

"I forbid it. I absolutely forbid it. Ran Rold loves you. Why would you choose the Farmer over Ran Rold, the Ran Rold, owner of all that Is on Golden Mountain? Over my dead body, you'll marry him!" she bellowed.

"Put the list together!" yelled Chutney.

"What list?" enquired Chutney's mother.

"The people who are coming to your wake".

Happy Valentine's Day!