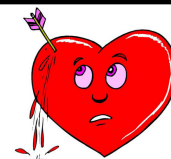




FEATURES



Life In The Matrix

By Dixie Normus and Alotta Vogyna

For those of you who thought that the 1999 Action Sci-Fi Thriller starring Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Ann Moss and Laurence Fishburne was a great concoction of the imagination of the Wachowski Brothers, think again. Despite that I don't consume tasteless gruel, live in fear of having my humble abode detected by scary octopus-like creatures, or did not enter this fallacy of a life by virtue of the red pill, my existence is very real to me. I came to live in this alternate universe simply by moving to Juneau. I am not familiar with many other members of the Matrix, but I am sure they are out there somewhere.

What are the dastardly details of this alternate universe, you ask? I suffer the daily torments of the emotional roller-coaster designed by the Juneau boys. Simply put, a lack of lovin' from the Juneau male population! Let me tell you something boys, the rusty old love manual that you cling to so dearly and interpret as gospel...throw it out! When a girl conveys interest, even goes as far as to give you the digits, CALL HER! Repeat after me, CALL HER. Not only are you being extremely rude, but you are passing up on the opportunity to connect with the potential future mother of your children. Now I've been told that Juneau boys are afraid of their own shadow, and that the girls, particularly myself, intimidate them. Yowza, at least give us the opportunity to reject you. Now I know this sounds harsh, but trust me. I have seen numerous boys (counting more than the fingers on one hand) who I would gladly give my number to if they ever asked for it. Of course he'd have to introduce himself first, but that's just the preliminaries. You have to start somewhere. Let me give you a little history on some of the lackluster responses that have been received.

I met a certain young man named Conrad at a house party. He came in sorta late and was one of the few who didn't look like his brain cells had been dissolved by his own bodily fluids. Immediately, the "hot stuff" radars went up and all I could think was, "Who is *that*?" Apparently, this was same question being asked by several of the boys about me. I was paying them no attention. I was focused on Conrad. As the night waned, people drifted off to more interesting events (Squire's!) but I was still at the house party. So was Conrad. Conversation dallied over numerous topics until about 1:45 a.m., when we (those remaining) decided that the Valley Restaurant was exactly what the doctor ordered. To make a long night short, Conrad got more attractive by the minute and though we did not exchange digits (apparently he's immune to telekinesis), I just knew that the Saga of Conrad was not over.

Some time later (there are no calendars or clocks in the Matrix, thus a second and a year are the same thing), I encountered Conrad at Squire's. Nothing had changed. I managed to blatantly squeeze into the conversation the phrase, "Do you see anything that you like?" without the statement being laced with that god-awful soap-opera-ish desperation, but to no avail. Conrad had been slacking off in telepathy class and I could not figure out what was going on behind those beautiful hazel eyes. While all of this intellectual banter was talking place, Serena Williams was involved in a very heated match in the Australian Tennis Open. I alerted Conrad's friend, Daniel, that I simply adore the sport and he, being a player himself, slapped Conrad on the arm and said, "We should get together sometime for a game!" Wonderful, I could impress Conrad with my Wimbledon worthy skills and we would run off into the

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Be Your Own Valentine

By Montgomery Mahaffey
Whalesong Staff



Valentine's Day is almost upon us. What a holiday! The one day out of the year that pressures couples to recover that lovin' feelin', while the unattached feel inadequate without a special sweetie to share a tender Hallmark moment. Everyone has felt this way on February 14th at least once in a lifetime. If you're madly in the throes – lucky you! Have fun, but this editorial isn't for you.

I declare this article to be the Anti-Valentine. My mind is agreeably engaged in the memory of the night *he* came crashing down from his pedestal. Falling in wuv is a heady feeling, like drugs, because there's no basis in reality. In other words, the object of your desire likes you the way some people like their best friend's dog. But like a fool, you hold onto those moments you're treated with common courtesy as a ray of hope that *someday* when you have achieved perfection that the two shall become as one. Thanks to perverse reverse egotism, the object of your desires has reached a pinnacle of evolution so far above you and that is the only reason you are not chosen.

I've been there, baby, and it's absurd. My wuver went by the name of Heath and of course, I met him in college. He was so beautiful, my jaw dropped the first time I saw him. Tall, slender, with long curly hair and chiseled features, Heath looked like a poet. He was also soft-spoken, well-mannered, and kind enough to look interested in what I was saying whenever I babbled incessantly, which happened a lot. Eventually, I grew comfortable enough to engage in a coherent exchange of ideas and we became *friends*.

Looking back, Heath must have liked the ego massage more than my company, but since he had the subtlety and the sense to leave my dignity alone, I never caught on. To me, he was the Grand Poobah of Liberal American Manhood, and he could do no wrong. He ate vegan, he traveled on a shoestring, he swung on vines buck-nekkid in the jungle before hugging endangered trees.

I was a smoker. Need I say more?

During those post-college years, I saw him every so often on visits to Colorado, and a couple of times, he looked me up in Seattle. On one of those visits, I told him how I felt while he nodded and said he always knew that. But he was so gracious in his delivery that it didn't occur to me to take offense. He kept dating his milk-toast honeys and I moved onto other boyfriends, but Heath always remained my ideal of masculine perfection. By the time I saw him clearly, he resided on a pedestal six miles above my head.

A few Halloweens ago, I was in Heath's neck of the woods, so of course I looked him up. He invited me and a mutual friend to a party he was throwing with some good people. He said to come as our biggest fear, for that was the theme of the party. The party would close with a pagan circle in honor of Halloween. Heath was in a phase of exploring his spiritual options.

Since we were late, we missed Heath's costume as "Peaceman" because he feared ignorance. The midnight ceremony was about to begin and we were welcome to join or observe. Heath was the high priest, of course.

I watched the circle of nature-loving pagans sway, chant, and moan as Heath and the high priestess circled the circle and opened the doors to North, South, East, and West with their hiking sticks. I tried to keep an open mind, but I

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