

Golden Gerald - Freddie Baker

Gerald Tremlett was a 53-year-old virgin, with a long vulture-like nose. What Gerald needed was a soul mate, but after two years looking on online dating services, and 17 romantic dates, Gerald still couldn't find his perfect lady.

Gerald needed to find his soul mate because he was a lonely man. He would spend his days clipping the vines on his fence with his miniature hedge-clippers, cleaning out his toe-jams with a sponge every day at 5 pm, and collecting the daily residue from inside his ear canals every night before bed, placing it so placidly into a small container - something he had been intrigued by ever since his Year 10 science project. Despite such peculiar habits, Gerald lived life in the fast lane, and his friends used to say that the only reason he couldn't find his soul mate was because no-one could keep up with him. Others just thought it was because none of the girls he dated spoke English.

Gerald was also a millionaire. Retired since the age of 44, Gerald's bank account contained 3 million dollars. But this account, Account 3664, had not been touched for nine years.

Happiness always seemed just out of reach for Gerald, just as it was for a dog trying to jump for food hanging just a little bit too high on a tree.

So when off the plane walked Xing-xing, date number 18, she not only brought with her two suitcases and a pet chiuwawa, she also brought with her the key to Gerald Tremlett's happiness.

Love at first sight was something Gerald had never believed in before, but on this day, he couldn't have believed anything more. When Gerald made jokes, Xing-xing would laugh. In fact sometimes she even started laughing before Gerald had delivered the punchline, something that mystified Gerald.

Gerald no longer picked his ear wax, no longer sponged his toe-jams, in fact he even let the vines go wild for a short while. Life

with Xing-xing was bliss: the dog could now reach that food in the tree, and it couldn't have tasted any better.

Gerald was in a new and exciting world. Some days he would go on picnics and eat sushi made by Xing-xing, some days he would ride through the countryside on his Harley, Xing-xing clinging tightly to his back, the wind blowing through her flowing hair.

The following week after Xing-xing's arrival in the country, it seemed to Gerald that he'd waited long enough, and within days, Mrs Xing-xing Tremlett was wed to the ecstatic Gerald. Of course it also must be said that no longer was Gerald a virgin.

However, all does not end well in the world of Mr Tremlett. Some would find it perfectly normal that a man 34 years his wife's senior would probably not remain married for long. And so when Xing-xing returned to Thailand 3 days after the wedding, she took not only the baggage she had brought over and the key to Gerald's happiness. She took with her something else. Xing-xing Tremlett took with her a file for a divorce from Gerald Tremlett, and a Samsonite suitcase containing the contents of Account 3664.

Image 1

Amelie loved the sand and she would run along it right up until bed time. She saw the beach as a great big line of brown sugar, and her feet were two great big tablespoons for eating. She lived in poverty; her mother could provide her only a small meal a day, and she had not seen her father in her short life. Amelie's arms were as skinny as the Spaghetti Bolognaise she craved and her bones as brittle as the Crunchie Bars she could only dream of.

Image 2

Her face closed like a cupboard.

Musings

You don't just say that you love someone when you think you might. In fact you shouldn't ever say it consciously. You mean it when you say it without even thinking. You don't mean it if the three words don't feel right together when you say them. You mean it when it all seems like one word, when it's the only thing you can think of to say that verbalises what you're thinking.

I don't think there is love at first sight. Indeed, there is lust, and there is like, and perhaps even an inkling that something more than like could develop with time, but you cannot love someone for the way they appear to you. You love someone for the way they are, for the little things they do, for the way they might smile, the way they might walk, or even for something so small as the way they brush their hair off their face.

Occurrence ...

Romulus perched on the edge of the cold stone bench, a goblet of warm English tea in one hand, a great move formulating in the other hand. In front of him on a small stone block lay a chess board, a game half completed. Directly opposite Romulus sat Artemis Ernst, leaning nearer and nearer, eagerly awaiting Romulus' next move. Artemis Ernst was a unique man by appearance. His half-moon spectacles did their best to distract from his immensely bushy eyebrows and moustache, which in turn did their best to distract from the long, arrogant sneer Artemis presented whenever analysing an opponent. It was difficult to tell whether the smell of dead possum emanated from within Artemis's moustache, from behind his eyebrows, or from the 400-year-old chess table.

Romulus was deep in thought when it happened. Perhaps it was a deliberate ploy by Artemis to distract Romulus from the brilliant counter-attack move he was no doubt plotting. Perhaps it was an emaciated cow on its last legs, trying to escape from inside Artemis's body. Either way, one thing it most certainly was, was the most indescribably grotesque burp Romulus had ever heard. Romulus's nostrils trembled out of fear of what was soon to enter them. His eyes widened out of fascination for something so inhuman. The smallest little stone pawn on the board even wiggled on its spot as the minor hurricane burp passed through it.

It was like watching a Tsunami sweep over a village. If only the little pawns could have come to life after 400 years frozen, they could have saved themselves from the foul concoctions of Artemis. But the poor little pawns could not move. Nor could they run for cover. They couldn't clamber underground into their bunkers to gain shelter.