

Excerpt – Variables of Love by MK Schiller

“It is kind of cool...the mating for life thing. There are so few species that mate for life.”

I turned and stared at him, feeling my heart flutter by his very close presence. His hand twitched a bit, like it wanted to grab mine. Was he feeling the same charge of electricity I was? I wanted to be honest with him. After I told him, he would probably rather hang out with a swan.

“That’s why I love them. They are just like me.”

He didn’t seem frazzled by what I’d said. He was quiet, soaking in my words. Rachael told me statements like this were the fastest way to get a guy to leave you alone, but Ethan didn’t even seem surprised. “You mate for life, Meena?”

“My people do”

“Economists?” he asked with an amused grin.

“Very funny.”

“Are you saying there are no Indian divorces?” His question sounded genuine.

“There are exceptions to every rule, but we do have the lowest divorce rate in the world.”

“Why do you think that is?”

“It’s culturally discouraged.”

He nodded. “Maybe, it should be here too. But is that really the only reason? It makes it sound like it’s very difficult to get yourself out of a bad situation.”

“It’s difficult, but usually not impossible. That’s not the only reason. I think the marriages, in general, are stronger and more stable.”

“What makes them stronger? Religion? Culture?” I was quiet for a moment, contemplating my response. “Come on, the answer to the Western woes of wedlock could be solved by this very conversation. Surely, you have a theory.”

“Two words—arranged marriage.”

His eyebrows shot up. I had finally surprised him, but he didn't hesitate with his next question. “People still do that?”

“It's not as common as it was, but it's not uncommon either. Most Hindu marriages are the result of an arrangement.”

“I don't know anyone who would want to get married like that.”

I sucked in a deep breath, but didn't let my eyes waver from his. “Yes, you do.”