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The Marriage of True Minds
Stephen Evans
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Successful Minneapolis lawyer Elena Grant feels obligated to represent ex-husband/environmental lawyer Nick Ward when his latest antic—dumping more than a hundred live lobsters into the mayor's swimming pool—gets him bounced into the Golden Valley Psychiatric Unit.

She gets more than she bargained for, however, when it's she who ends up supervising him during his four-week community service stint at a local animal shelter after she tells the judge: "I'm all he has. There isn't anyone else. No local relatives. No human friends." This last is a dig at the scruffy black and white sheepdog puppet named Sancho, which Nick consistently carries with him—evidence that Lena feels demonstrates the increasing mental instability of her ex-spouse.

This is the debut novel by Evans, a playwright, performer, and director in theaters in the Baltimore and Washington D.C. areas, whose familiarity with the Minnesota landscape lends credence to his characters and locale.

While the story is theirs to tell, Lena and Nick aren't the only denizens allotted space. There's Sharon, Lena's wise-cracking assistant, "a refugee from the Midwest comedy-club circuit"; Oscar, comic book-quoting attendant and Nick's buddy at the Psych Ward; Preston Winter, assistant state's attorney, who may or may not be more than friends with Lena, but either way definitely wants Nick out of the picture; and Ralph and Alice, married co-managers of the local animal shelter, where Nick attempts to work off the aforementioned community service requirement.

Told mainly from Lena's perspective, the book briefly backtracks to her arrival in the city after graduating Princeton and how the couple met at law school. She "enrolled in a class in environmental law because she had heard that the instructor was funny." That instructor was Nick.

Evans writes throughout with a sense of refreshing humor, and the snappy repartee between the two leads is also very funny. But beneath this slim volume packed with a lot of

heart and humor lurks a very real question: Is Nick really delusional? As Nick himself blithely admits: “I don’t make plans. I have visions.”

Robin Farrell Edmunds