

ROD LIKELY SOLVES:
The Case of the Serbian Consulate
A Short Murder Mystery by Riese Meyers (c.2018)

The newly minted Private Investigator, ROD LIKELY, sits at his desk. He is muttering to himself. The scene is illuminated only by his cheap desk lamp and the slight glow of a neon sign through the shutters of ROD's window.

ROD LIKELY

It's in here somewhere, dammit! The answer's right under my nose somewhere...

There is a sudden and abrupt knock at the door. ROD turns around for a moment until he hears another knock. He stands up and walks to the door, opening it slightly while keeping the bolt latch on.

ROD LIKELY

Who's there? It's 2 in the morning!

BRIGID BELGRADE

Just me, Brigid! Please to be unlocking now the door, your neighbors have the stare of wolves.

ROD unlocks the door and BRIGID BELGRADE saunters in seductively. She is a massive woman, Standing at 6'1" to ROD's 5'9". She fills out a low-cut seamless dress with sequins and swims in a furry mink shawl. Her voice is low and husky, with a strong Serbian accent.

BRIGID BELGRADE

Have you solved the case, Mister Likely?

ROD LIKELY

I was getting to that before you dragged your huge ass in here.

BRIGID frowns. ROD glares at her, then softens his face with an apologetic expression.

ROD LIKELY

Sorry.

I was just going over the facts. The problem I'm having, Ms. Belgrade-

BRIGID BELGRADE

Mrs.

ROD LIKELY

Sorry. Mrs. Belgrade, the problem is that the lock on your door was never broken. I brought a locksmith to your place and he said that there had been no significant damage to the mechanism, only structural damage to the doorknob itself. So I ask you again, who had the keys?

BRIGID BELGRADE

I... I've told you this before, Mr. Likely! Only I was to be having the keys! And before you say a thing, I was not the one who murdered my husband!

ROD LIKELY

Oh, I know that. But it wasn't because you were at the PTA meeting like you said. I went to your son's school, and the lovely women of the PTA told me you had walked right by the classroom where they were meeting, to the principal's office. Seems you've been frequenting that office a lot lately.

BRIGID BELGRADE

I don't know what you're talking about.

ROD LIKELY

The principal, he... has a certain taste in women, does he not? Oh, no need to deny it, it's quite evident from the way he chooses to decorate his office. Those... posters... how the rest of the staff puts up with it, I wonder? Unless... perhaps they're scared of YOU.

BRIGID is shocked.

ROD LIKELY

The principal and you made quite a team. Hatching a plan to murder your husband to collect the insurance money and finally be together. But neither of you could get your hands dirty, too public, too obvious. No, Principal Chasefield got the dirtiest guy for this dirty work. The school janitor.

BRIGID steps up until she's nose-to-hair with ROD. She peers down at him through narrow eyes, testing him. Seeing if she can intimidate him.

BRIGID BELGRADE

You have no evidence!

ROD LIKELY

Even better, I have testimony. Your son's in fact. See, you leave your keys in the mailbox whenever you go for a rendez-vous with Chasefield. So that Viktor can get in. But when his janitor showed up, little Viktor was confused. The janitor told him he needed to clean your house, and Viktor, being 8, complied, providing the key. The rat poison the janitor used was a clever touch. It almost didn't leave a trace. But your son's school gets their poison from a local supplier. Should've went with the cheap generic stuff, I suppose.

There is a long pause as BRIGID stares ROD down. She sees nothing but grit and determination there, and backs down, switching tactics.

BRIGID BELGRADE

Please, Mr. Likely. You have no idea what my husband is like. Serbian men can be cruel. If you

had been stuck there all those years, a housewife who never even wanted kids, you would do mad things as well!

ROD LIKELY

Maybe.

But there is one final element here. One I hadn't been able to figure out until just now. Why Chasefield? You're an intelligent woman, I'm sure the poison was your idea. You could've hatched this plan by yourself. And I can't see that grubby little Principal being your soulmate. No, he was just another rung in your crooked ladder. His aunt is quite wealthy, I'm told. And dying. So you thought you'd marry the poor sap... and kill him, making you the wealthiest murderous heiress this side of Grand Avenue.

BRIGID BELGRADE turns to run, but runs right into a POLICEMAN her same size (but heavier)

ROD LIKELY

Sorry Brigid. The testimony you just gave was already enough to arrest you. And your diary, I believe, will condemn you to life once the boys get a professional on that lock.

POLICEMAN tips his cap. He handcuffs BRIGID and begins to pull her away.

BRIGID BELGRADE

Wait! Mr. Likely! You're right, I felt nothing but disgust for those men! But you! I love you! Please, don't do this!

ROD LIKELY

Sorry Brigid. You don't love me. You just think you love the first man who could match your wits. Now get out of my office.

BRIGID sulks as the POLICEMAN pulls her out the door. ROD walks back to his desk, sitting down and resting his legs on the table. He lights a cigarette in his mouth.

ROD LIKELY

Beautiful woman. But I'm afraid she might've turned me into a misogynist.

ROD pulls a picture in a frame out of his desk drawer and sets it down.

ROD LIKELY

...Nah.