

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Is this just plain greed or a good idea?

MIRANDA and her niece Christi sat on the patio of Coupa Cafe on Ramona Street in Palo Alto, discussing whether Christi should marry a somewhat autistic tech billionaire, even if she didn't love him.



CHRISTI

"It's a once in a lifetime opportunity, Aunt Miranda," Christi argued. "I can't let it pass." She wanted her aunt's support for her upcoming marriage.

"Look, Aunt Miranda," Christi continued, "You know that women have a short shelf life in which to make a good marriage. I won't have another opportunity like this. I should grab it, don't you think?"

"If you don't love him," said Miranda, "Then it's a mistake."

This is part 7 of a 24-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant with illustrations by Steve Curl. To read previous chapters, go to www.johnangell-grant.com.

"I can learn to love him," said Christi. "Someone with billions, how can you not love him? I mean, I know, realistically, that may not happen. He is a little odd. He's so self-absorbed. He's happiest sitting in front of a computer screen. But with that much money at stake, I'd be a fool not to marry him."

"Did he ask you to marry him, or did you ask him?" inquired Miranda, only partially joking.

"Come on," said Christi. "He

asked me to marry him, so I said yes."

"Even though you don't love him," said Miranda.

"Even though I don't love him," said Christi.

"Aunt Miranda," she continued, "I've always had great respect for you. You are the only one in our family I really admire. I appreciate the fact that you are a feminist. You have been a huge influence on my life. That's why I wanted to run this by you, before fully committing."

"I really want your support for this plan of mine. But now I have decided, either way, whether you support me or not; I am going to marry Jared," Christi said.

She continued, "He's clueless with women, I know that. It's sort of like

shooting a fish in a barrel. Sometimes I just pinch myself. How did this happen to me? Every woman dreams of marrying a billionaire. But how often does the opportunity come along? I would be a fool to let it pass by."

Miranda looked around the coffee shop at all the young people focused on their devices — texting, tweeting, emailing, web searching.



MIRANDA

She wondered if Christi's decision to marry was a symptom of this autism epidemic sweeping Palo Alto; or the fact that Christi had grown up in a broken home, and was looking for security. Or was it just plain greed? Or was she herself wrong, and was it, as Christi claimed, a good idea?

More tomorrow.