

# Dating TV show

NOVEMBER 2022



I'm Alexandra, a British instagram influencer who fell in love with Manu, a man I met during a vacation in Oceania. I had recently split up with my ex, a selfish, gym-obsessed British guy and I needed a change. He seemed genuinely nice and I fell for that. The guy was chill, charming and slightly chubby. Or at least, so it seemed to me. Not that it bothered me. It seemed the standard body type in that region of the world, also. He liked me, but he seemed not at ease with dating a foreigner. His family would not approve it, he said. Also, he seemed to find my lithe body a bit too skinny. How dared he? My diet was carefully planned to give me all the nutrients I needed with the least amount of calories! The local beauty standards seemed to differ from Western ones, though.

I was about to give up on him when I recalled an American TV show where they made things work in couples where a partner was reluctant due to some reason. They helped them smooth their differences, maybe adjusting one of the two and things usually ended up well. At least, in the episodes I saw on TV.

A few weeks later I was already back in the UK and had almost forgotten about the whole thing when they contacted me, telling me that we had been chosen for the next episode of the dating show!

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I gladly accepted the invitation to the tv studios, which included a business flight to the States, when Manu told me he was on board.

When I explained our situation, the audience immediately liked us and began cheering for us. I was expecting Manu to mention cultural differences and my body type and I was ready for an intensive course in Polynesian language and culture - that would have been cool - and maybe a change in my diet. I liked my skinny body as it was but I was open to gain a few pounds to make it work. Not too much, though, just a tiny bit to fill my bra, I wasn't going to become chubby like him, of course. When it was his turn to talk, though, he mentioned a long list of things I had to change to be more desirable to him.

First of all, he mentioned my body type, of course. I was way too skinny for his culture, society would judge him for dating such a skinny girl. At a height of 1.70 m (5'7"), my weight of 53 kgs (117 lbs) put me at the edge of underweight. I would have to gain several kilos to gain the curves he wanted in a woman. Then he said I needed more colour. My pale skin and red hair made me look like a ghost to his people. A deep tan and jet black hair would give me a more welcoming appearance. My light eyes also had to go, he added. When he finished I realised he was asking me to change my entire body type and ethnicity and asked to opt out. Unfortunately for me, they explained me the papers I had signed forced me to undergo whatever procedure demanded by my future lover.

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Horrified by the perspective of the changes that were going to be performed on me, I followed the medical team to their facility.

I was force-fed calorie-rich food for weeks to quickly make me gain weight, but that wasn't enough. Unbeknownst to me, they treated me with a genetic engineering procedure aimed at replacing the genes determining my body type, so that no matter what my diet would be in the future, my body would always retain its fat. They also altered my genes determining hair and eye color, skin color and body odor to make them match Manu's preferences.

Before the genetic changes began to kick in and the results of the calorie-rich diet began to show, they decided to waste no time and to immediately alter my appearance. They dyed my red hair jet black, covered my blue irises in brown pigment forced me to undergo multiple tanning bed sessions. To my surprise, my skin responded quickly to them, gaining a deep tan instead of getting sunburned as always. Also, my freckles receded until they became invisible. Equally surprising was seeing how my hair showed no signs of red regrowth, even weeks after having it dyed. Little did I know that it would always grow black and silky from now on, due to my newly acquired genetic heritage, and my skin would never be as pale as it used to be, regardless of exposure to sunlight. It was weird seeing my reflection in the mirror, I looked like an exotic cousin of something like that.

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After a few weeks I had gained several pounds and the fat mass began to show on my body and face. To my horror, I was on my way to become an overweight woman. I told myself that as soon as I switched back to my healthy diet I'd quickly lose my weight but that would later turn out to be impossible.

My tanning sessions were over, yet my skin seemed to retain its brown hue, a fact I couldn't really explain. My hair continued to grow black and silky and my eyes became even darker, reaching a dark brown color that was almost undistinguishable from black. I began to suspect that I had been altered even more than what they made me believe but before I could ask for explanations, I was told I had to undergo a small surgical touch-up.

Before releasing me from the medical facilities, they performed a set of cosmetic surgeries on my face, giving me an oval face shape, thicker lips, an exotic, wide nose and a reversed blepharoplasty that gave my dark brown eyes an unmistakable Asian flavour, just like those of the Polynesian women Manu seemed to see as the ultimate beauty standards.

If until the final surgery I still looked like a darker, chubbier version of myself, like an exotic cousin, my new face carried no resemblance to my old one.

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When I was released not even my family would have recognised me. Instead of the skinny redhead I used to be, I was now a chubby brown girl with ethnically ambiguous features that resembled those of Pacific Islander women.

I touched my full cheeks, not recognising the oval shaped face I now had as my own. My body felt completely alien to me. My thigh gap was gone, my arms were thick and my body shape was definitely curvy now. I now weighted 73 kgs (160 lbs) and I felt it with every movement.

Manu, on the other hand, loved my new looks and told me that my sacrifice wouldn't have been in vain. He promised me eternal love and a happy life as his wife in his native island in the Pacific. I liked him despite everything and I didn't have much of a choice. My old life as a skinny instagram influencer was well over, unless I wanted to re-brand me as a plus-size model but the bare idea horrified me. Also, I had to delete all my social media accounts to avoid the online hate from those who witnessed my transformation on the tv show and judged me for that. I wish I could tell them I was forced to agree to that but the producers but the papers I signed prevented me from saying that publicly.

A few weeks after my transformation, I flew to my new home in Oceania with my boyfriend.

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My new home country was the small archipelago of Tonga, where I was destined to live my life as a housewife. Manu was body working at a local workshop, and I had plenty of free time and very little to do while Manu was busy, apart from sunbathing at the beach. I quickly found out that being brown was truly a blessing, as my new genes were a good match for the tropical sun that used to give me sunburns during my days as a tourist. Nowadays, it just made my skin a little bit darker every day I spent outdoors, without any itchy feeling.

I spend the rest of my free time learning Tongan, one of the oldest and hardest Polynesian languages to learn, as I figured out. It helps that locals assume I'm one of them, so they naturally talk to me in Tongan. Sometimes though they recognize me as the white girl who turned Tongan for love and they ask me to take a selfie for them. I guess I'll always be the "papalagi fefine", the white girl, even when I'll have mastered the local language like a native.

Anyway, my efforts weren't in vain, as I slowly gained proficiency in the language. Apparently, my new nose and lips made it easier to reproduce the challenging sounds of the Tongan language, and after a few months, I was speaking Tongan like a local, to the point that nobody would suspect I was anything else than a Tongan girl, born and raised in one of the many islands that constituted my new home country!

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I realised that my sedentary lifestyle wasn't doing much to help me lose weight as I had originally planned. If anything, I was gaining weight! I initially tried keeping an eye on my diet and exercising more, but it turned out to be useless as I was now cursed with the genetic markers typical of Polynesian women, which gave me a thick body type.

Manu smiled at my western obsession with skinny bodies, and did his best to make me understand that he didn't mind some meat on my body, quite the opposite! He always complimented on my full figure and encouraged me to embrace that kind of beauty, rather than fighting it. I slowly understood that and eventually stopped caring too much about my weight. Whenever I'm hungry I don't think too much about it and eat whatever I want. A few more pounds won't change my figure that much anyway!

Things were great between me and Manu, he loved everything about my new body and that helped me to accept it myself. I even smelled differently, he told me once. Apparently my hair now had the same exotic scent as Polynesian women.

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Manu and I are expecting a baby girl! At first I was wondering how she'd look like, maybe light eyes and brown hair, maybe freckles, who knew. Then Manu reluctantly told me about the genetic changes I had undergone.

At first I was mad. I didn't know that medical procedure had permanently turned my hair black, my eyes dark brown, my skin permanently tan and my body curvy but I had assumed that I was still able to genetically transmit my original complexion and body type to my offspring. Now it turned out that I had somehow lost that ability. I felt violated and castrated. I felt that way for a while but then I slowly changed my mind. I looked at myself in the mirror, I had gotten used to my reflection. My dark brown eyes couldn't lie. I was one of them now. I looked and sounded like a native Tongan woman, I liked living there and I'd never move back to cold and grey England, my life was here now. Did I really want to give birth to a mixed kid who would look suspicious with two Polynesian parents? Would I stand all the rumours about my infidelity that would inevitably arise among the haters? And how would they grow up, looking different from the other kids? So I realised it was for the best. My daughter will grow up to be a beautiful Tongan woman and I'm happy about that.