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Father Aucoin. Daniel was the only person I ever saw who could correct my cousin at the piano and live to tell the tale. Marcel blames himself He blames himself for the boy and he blames himself for his wife's death. Those are the two stones Marcel wears in his shoes and he's been so busy polishing them all these years, he's never had time to remarry. He'll never admit this, but after Marie died, he decided if God wasn't going to put Marcel Boudreau into Purgatory right away, then he'd do the job for him. So there he was, a tall, strapping man with dark hair and a flashing smile, alone. He cooked his own meals. Went to church by himself I'd be a rich man today if I'd received a dollar for every time a woman said to me, "I'd like to meet Marcel Boudreau." Of course, it's natural to grieve. Who wouldn't? Marie was wise and beautiful. I loved her myself But people die before their time, it happens. If it didn't there would be no widows and who would need a matchmaker? I arranged three marriages for Peter Delaney before he was twenty-five. He was twenty when he married the first time. His first wife caught pneumonia and died six months after they were married. They barely had time to get acquainted. A year later, I fixed him up with a young woman from Chimney Corners. A Scottish girl. Just as Gaelic as the day is long. Her family lived way up in the hills. She scarcely had a word of French or English. She had seen Peter when he was driving the taxi from Chetivamp to Baddeck and taken a shine to him. I couldn't see how it was going to work out myself She spoke Gaelic and Peter spoke French, but it didn't seem to bother them at all. Peter liked her right off and they lived happily ever after. Except happily ever after turned out to be pretty short. She died with their first child. The baby died too. So there was Peter, all of twenty-three years, married twice and nothing to show for it. I lost track of him after that and I think for a time he lost track of himself Anyway, he surfaced a few years later and I fixed him up with Monique Poirier from Grand Etang. This time, it took. They had a dozen kids and Peter became what Father Aucoin used to call a pillar of the community. He worked so hard, I'm surprised he ever had time to make kids. But what do I remember? What does Philibert, the Matchmaker remember? Not Monique Poirier and her twelve, happy children, no, not a bit of it. I remember the second wife. She had freckles and reddish hair. She was what the Scots call 'a bonnie girl.' She was waiting for me at her father's house. All she had was a sailor's canvas bag. She kissed her parents goodbye as if she were walking around the corner instead of down the mountainside to meet her new husband. When I walked down the mountain with her to meet Peter, she would not stop chattering. She was as full of life as one can be. I only understood half of what she said, but that didn't stop her. She was sure my few words of Gaelic were the equal of a whole dictionary. I often think of that Scottish girl. Sometimes, I dream about her. I can see her clear as



clear. It's not sensible, I know, but I blame myself If I hadn't mentioned the Scottish girl to Peter Delaney, he would not have noticed her, and if he hadn't noticed her, they wouldn't have gotten married. You would think I would have learned, but I didn't. If the Pope could be infallible, so could Philibert the Matchmak? er. I'm sure I gave as much advice around the kitchen table as my cousin ever did in his confessional. The only difference was, instead of saying penance, you had to give me a few pennies; that was your penance; pennies for Philibert, Hail Marys for Father Aucoin. Bah! That was a long time ago. I don't give advice any longer. I've retired. If you want to collect stones in your shoes, then you can place them by yourself You don't need my help. I'm not like my cousin. May he rest in peace. I have no magic formula that's going to get anyone to heaven. Yes, a smart man, sure enough. There was no one who could play the organ like Father Aucoin, but I'm not sure he knew shit from shinola. Ah, don't get your knickers in a twist. He's my cousin and I'll say what I want about him. I did to his face so why shouldn't I now, now he's gone? CWOW VAIM f 00 Fully Licensed mirmmm Restaurant OPEN DAILY 11 A.M. to 1 A.M. FRI. and SAT. till 2 A.M. SUN. till MIDNIGHT Major Credit Cards Accepted Gift Certificates \* Ample Parking A Warm Welcome Oriental and Canadian Cuisine in a relaxed and elegant dining atmosphere Daily Luncheon Specials Banquet Facilities Available Take Out Orders Delivered Excellent Service and Fine Food 460 Grand Lake Rd., Sydney 562-0088 or 539-2825