

Synopsis for **Recipe of Love** by Kimmie Ferrell

Harlequin Kimani Romance

High school music teacher, Angela Peterson, is determined to find funding for her student's trip to Madrid and turns to her ex-boyfriend celebrity chef and restaurateur Daniel Knight, who wants to help Angela only if she agrees to marry him.

Angela receives a letter from the principal of the school where she teaches Music informing her that the trip she's been planning to Madrid for the International Youth and Adolescence Jazz Festival is canceled after fund-raising efforts fail. She decides to reach to Daniel Knight.

Daniel is unable to get Angela Peterson off his mind. Especially when he goes to his parents' house for dinner and his mother brings her up, after fifteen years. Suddenly, he's not only thinking about what they once had and could have had had she not disappeared without a word, but he's seeing her everywhere he goes.

Angela goes to a signing to get Daniel to agree to fund the trip for her students. But seeing the man who broke her heart is too much to bare, especially when Daniel isn't happy to see her or hear what she has to ask him.

Daniel, still reeling from his encounter with Angela, goes on national television and tells the world that he is involved in a relationship, shocking his manager, publicist, and mother—who invites him and the mystery woman over for dinner.

Daniel agrees to help Angela only if she agrees to marry him. He will pay for the trip she needs as well as take care of her financially. He gives her only a few hours to make her decision, instructing her to meet him at his condo later that evening.

Angela arrives to Daniel's condo, ready to get their meeting over and done with. She accepts the terms of his proposition, agreeing to marry him and attend the dinner at his parents' house, which would reintroduce her to his family.

Daniel's family is shocked to see that the woman Daniel is dating is none other than his childhood bestfriend, Angela. Daniel waits until everyone, his family and Angela's parents are together in one room and proposes to Angela. She accepts.

Angela meets with the principal to explain that funding for the trip has come through from an anonymous source, however, her news is not met with joy. The principal is extremely unhappy and threatened Angela's job. After meeting up with Daniel, the two bump into Daniel's ex-girlfriend, Janelle.

Unable to put her feelings for seeing Janelle aside, Angela finally tells Daniel that the reason she left fifteen years ago was because she saw him and Janelle kissing by his locker. Daniel explains that it was a misunderstanding.

The wedding is a few weeks away and Daniel admits to himself that he is truly in love with Angela. He sets out to make her fall in love with him, while dealing with mysterious circumstances at his restaurants.

Angela learns that brake lines on the truck were cut, leading her to believe that someone is trying to kill her. She overhears a conversation with Daniel, his brother and cousin, who also believes that someone is out to harm her.

Now married, Angela and Daniel arrive at their condo. Daniel instructs Angela to prepare for bed, but doesn't join her. Confused, she goes to him in an attempt to seduce him on their wedding night. Daniel discovers Angela is a virgin.

Vandalism happens at one of Daniel's restaurant. The windows are smashed in. It's one of the few things that has happened to his business, but he still believes they have nothing in common. His main focus is finding out who cut the brakes on Angela's truck, so he enlists the help of his cousin, a private investigator.

Unable to deny her feelings any longer, Angela admits to Daniel that she loves him. He finds out from his cousin that the GPS system in Angela's car was tampered with and the identity of the person who was causing issues at his restaurant.

Angela is called into the Principal's office where she is questioned about the donations the band's been receiving. She is placed on leave. At home, she receives a text message from an unknown number that contains pictures of Daniel carrying his ex-girlfriend into a hotel room. She packs her things and leaves.

After arriving home to an empty house, Daniel goes Angela's job with information about who cut the brakes. The principal admits to everything, stating that Daniel's ex is her biological daughter and they worked together to ruin Angela's life. She is placed under arrest. Daniel flies to Madrid and informs Angela of everything.

Editor's Critique:

The first paragraph of this synopsis is effective in that it provides basic information about the hooks—celebrity chef hero, marriage of convenience—right off the bat. I was definitely compelled to read more.

This synopsis does a good job of clearly listing the story's major plot points, but often the connection between these events isn't clear, and I didn't always understand the motivation behind the characters' actions. Why does Daniel feel he needs to coerce Angela into a marriage of convenience, rather than simply asking her out and pursuing their relationship in a more traditional way? Why does Angela agree? Although it would certainly be nice for her students to take a trip to Europe, it's not ringing true to me that a high school teacher would sign her life

away to a man in exchange for one class trip abroad. Much higher stakes are usually needed for a marriage of convenience plot to seem plausible to readers.

The emotional impact of certain events in the story wasn't always clear, either. For the love scene, we find out Angela is a virgin and that she tries to seduce Daniel, but the synopsis doesn't tell us what that moment means for either character, or whether they even end up sleeping together. In category romance, the characters' emotional journey to love is as crucial as the external events shaping the plot, so editors keep an eye out for well-developed (and well-articulated) character arcs when assessing the strength of a story.

While the danger and mystery elements added intrigue and excitement to the story, they seemed to take the focus away from the central romance. Instead of working to overcome the obstacles between them, Daniel and Angela are dealing with threats and another character's villainous intents. Suspense elements can spice up a story, but it's important not to let the romance fall into the background.

Focusing on the romance, digging deeper into the characters' emotions and motivations, and clarifying the cause-and-effect links between the major plot points would help strengthen this synopsis and give the editor a clearer picture of a book with intriguing hooks.