

In the Bank Lobby

I have never had a shortage of guy friends. All throughout high school and after, I always hung out with guys instead of girls. It may have been my Chevy Camaro, a beautiful yellow nineteen seventy-some Camaro, with its larger back tires for racing (hey, I may not remember the exact year of my baby, but I remember everything else about it). Whatever the reason, I liked guys, and guys liked me.

And then I worked at the bank. I remember walking in to ask if there were any open positions that I could apply for. I had worked at banks in the past as a teller, so I was fairly certain that I'd have a position at this bank without a problem. I knew everything there was to know about how to do general banking tasks. What I hadn't counted on was that this bank might be a little different than ones I had worked at before.

As I walked further into the lobby, I spotted him. The handsome man with long, black hair and a face that no woman could possibly resist made my decision easy. I was going to work at *this* bank.

I was hired as an assistant to a manager in one of the various departments at this bank, and one of my duties was to make deposits for him. These I did with absolute pleasure because *he* was a teller down in the front lobby.

I don't know how no one else caught on to me, but I always managed to sneak my way into his line. It was always casual at first. "Hi, how are you? Here's this deposit. Have a nice day!" It was nothing more than a basic transaction except that I would walk away, and my mushy heart would still be pounding at the counter. If there was another deposit to be made later in the day, then I would go back and retrieve the poor thing.

This went on for quite some time. Maybe my boss wondered why I was so happy to go down all those floors just to make a deposit, I don't know. What I do know is that seeing his face is what got me through the rest of the day.

One day, lightning struck. It wasn't a dangerous occurrence, but it was the type of thing that you can only stand back and marvel at. I went down to the main lobby to make the boss's regular deposit, and I (of course) went to the best teller in the bank. Nothing out of the ordinary made this interaction any different from other deposits that I had made. Maybe we cracked a joke. Maybe we talked about the weather. I don't really remember much about the small talk, but I do remember the most important detail.

He asked me if I wanted to go to lunch. Just like that – completely unexpected. Well, I'd fantasized about this a few times, but then there it was like nothing. I, who liked guys and whom guys liked, was speechless for a few seconds and blindsided by one question.

Yes. Yes. *Yes*. (As if I would dare myself to say anything else at such a moment!)

I could bore you with details about where we went and how I could be accused one hundred times over of the social faux pas known as staring, but I won't. Instead, I'll tell you about more exciting things like the stolen kisses at the bathroom that were soon in coming.

Somehow we managed to perfect the technique of one of us going into the restroom while the other one was walking out, and we would pass a sly kiss as we passed. Maybe that's how we went so long without being detected: we didn't exchange words or pause to talk even for a second, we just walked past each other and leaned our heads toward each other ever so slightly.

It wasn't long before we made a habit of going out every night. There was a nice little place on 4th and Lead called the Royal Fork that we visited because it was right next to work. We went dancing and enjoyed every sort of entertainment that people our age enjoyed. With

both of us in our twenties, there was much of Albuquerque to explore. We saw countless movies, went on endless drives, and ate at every place worth mentioning in the city.

During this time, he proved to be more than just a pretty face. He went back to school while we were together, so he lived out of town for a while. While he was at school, he and I made a ritual of meeting each other every weekend in Laguna, the city halfway between his town and Albuquerque. When we met each other, we would simply park in the rest stop off of the freeway and talk in the car for hours at a time.

One weekend, my roommate at the time was not at the apartment, and she had left her car parked behind mine, so I couldn't get out to meet him. By the time my roommate had come back to move her car, hours had gone by. Even though I knew that he wasn't going to be at our meeting place, I decided to make the trip anyway. I was pleasantly surprised to find that he had waited in our usual spot for the entire three hours until I was able to get there. Since I was madly in love with him already, this only strengthened my feelings for him.

But at the age of twenty-five, I was ready to start having a family. I had just gotten a divorce from my first and only husband, and I had no desire to repeat the same process of endless stacks of paperwork to be joined by law. I was with him, and he was with me, did we really need legal permission to go out at night and be close to each other? Nope.

One year after we started going out, we were confronted with the news that I was to have a baby. How we first took this news, I don't exactly remember, but I do remember that both of us eventually made the best of the situation. Endless partying set aside, he and I were now ready to raise and nurture our first born. He may not have helped much with the nitty-gritty tasks, but I remember him working on one of our daughter's fifth grade math problems for pages and pages.

I might have been done with kids after my first daughter was born, but she didn't see things that way. With a loving mother and father, my daughter saw no reason why she couldn't have a younger brother or sister that *every* other child had. Eight years after one question from the most handsome man in the bank lobby made the heavens open, we were blessed with our second and last child (even if it was more of our daughter's wish than ours).