

The Date That Never Ended...A Love Story

By Melodee Currier

The day we met *twenty-six years ago* is also the day we started living together – and we've been together ever since.

The year before we met, I visited two psychics who told me I would meet someone who lives in my neighborhood, and the other said he hoped I liked younger men because one was coming into my life.

Besides seeing psychics, I did something I hadn't done before. I carefully wrote down all the attributes I wanted in a partner. The list was long – it contained things such as intelligent, fun and funny, honest, has charisma, romantic. Next I read my list out loud to the Universe and ended with a prayer. I didn't give that ritual another thought until a year later when I met my love and he had nearly all the qualities on my list.

This journey began when I visited a local book shop. Alexandra Stoddard was having a book signing that morning so I grabbed her book, got in line and started talking with the woman behind me. We got along so well that we exchanged telephone numbers. In the next couple months, we met

for lunch a few times before she asked me if she could give my telephone number to a guy she worked with who had recently left the Marine Corps.

Doug called me the next day and we made a dinner date for that Saturday. When he arrived at my apartment, I thought he looked cute in a boyish sort of way and I adored the attention he gave me and my cat, Shibui. As our conversation flowed, there were no awkward moments and we didn't run out of things to say. I noticed he was fixated on my eyes, but not in an uncomfortable way.

Before dinner, we decided to browse around a local book shop known for its quirkiness. It seemed natural exploring the books and chachkas while interacting with Doug as we walked around the store. After staying a short time, we went to dinner at a Thai restaurant in my neighborhood. As soon as we were seated, I asked Doug if he wanted to change seats with me so he wasn't looking at the wall. He replied that he was looking at all he needed to see. PERFECT ANSWER!

Joan Didion described us when she said, "Life changes fast. Life changes in the instant. You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends."

After dinner, we went back to my apartment and I brought out some Jerry Von Amerongen cartoon books to show him because he mentioned he was interested in cartoons. We read them out loud and laughed until we cried.

Then he made his move to kiss me. When I realized it was 3:00 a.m., I asked him if he wanted to “sleep” at my apartment because it was so late and the weather was cold and snowy. And I really did mean sleep. But before I knew it, he was in my bed. Let’s fast forward to Sunday...

He didn’t want to go home the next day and I didn’t want him to either. He reluctantly went to his apartment that evening just to get his stuff and within the week he cancelled his apartment lease and officially moved in with Shibui and me. You can imagine that the mutual friend who fixed us up was shocked when she returned from a week’s vacation to learn that we were living together.

I discovered that Doug is eight years younger than me and his birthday is within a week of my two ex-husbands’ birthdays. Astrologically, I knew that was bad mojo. Like me, he had been married twice before, so we were on equal footing. Doug chose not to have any children and I have just one adult son which made our relationship less complicated than it might have been if we both had children. I tried not to think about the fact that he was just nine years old when I graduated from high school, but this did not seem to faze him.

My personal space has always been very important to me, but I enjoyed Doug’s company so much that he never invaded my space. Quite the opposite.

When I mentioned to him that I had been in a non-serious long distance relationship with a guy for the previous nine years – and mentioned his name -- Doug began mimicking his unique voice. I was completely freaked out! He said they were good friends in college, but hadn't been in touch. I wanted to let the other fellow know I was in a relationship with his college buddy, but as time went by strangely we never spoke again.

After living together for 1 ½ years, Dug and I got married on a picture perfect August day with friends and family in attendance in the back yard of his family home. Our minister wanted us to remember to "Keep spaces in your togetherness." This is challenging when you enjoy being together all the time.

This may seem a little weird -- and close friends don't know this -- but early in our relationship we started calling our home our "Bunny Hutch" evidenced by a Bunny Welcome Wreath in our foyer and a number of "bunny things" inside and outside our home. When we are alone, we refer to each other as "Big Bunny" and "Little Bunny" and that is how we sign greeting cards to each other. I also collect stuffed bunnies and have accumulated nearly one hundred. In case you're wondering, we don't eat hasenpfeffer.

Money was very tight for us the first several years because Doug had a difficult time transitioning from being an officer in the Marine Corps to being a civilian and despite his best efforts he was unable to find a job. My legal

secretary's salary kept us afloat during the lean years. During those trying times, to keep our morale up, Doug suggested we concentrate on the things we were grateful for and we observed that slowly those began to multiply. It wasn't until he got his Masters Degree in Business Administration and found his niche in the Information Technology field that turned our lives around dramatically.

Despite saying "our gratitudes," we still had challenges in our lives. When Doug had to have a quadruple bypass a few years ago, his doctor said his heart didn't start right back up and he had a problem getting it started. He was in the hospital eight days and recovery was slow and demanding. Two years later we were in a serious car accident where our car was totaled and we were taken by ambulance to the hospital's trauma unit. We were permitted to be in the ambulance and the hospital room together. The hospital said that was the first time they ever did that. They could tell we are inseparable.

Because Doug and I do nearly everything together, one of my friends jokingly sings this song about us:

"Wherever we go, whatever we do
We're gonna go through it together
We may not go far but sure as a star
Wherever we are it's together"

Even though we don't come in the packages we may have wanted – I would have liked a tall preppy type (Doug is 5' 8" and not preppy) and I'm sure he would have preferred someone thinner (I'm plus size), our love goes beyond that.

Constant communication, trust and a sense of humor have been the glue that binds our relationship. We can sit for hours listening to quiet background music and talking. We also share many of the same interests such as watching Agatha Christie movie mysteries, metaphysical studies, traveling, walking in a park, cooking and going out to eat, entertaining and our two Siamese cats who keep us laughing.

Doug is the most ethical, honest and generous man I know. His sense of humor is unparalleled – coming up with quips that will make you laugh until you wet your pants.

This year we will be celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary on a trip to London and a cruise around the British Isles. When we raise our champagne glasses to toast the occasion, just as Doug said on our first date, he and I will be looking at "all we needed to see."