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Diane Dean-Epps

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We Met at a Bar...an American Love Story

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Thursday May 2, 2024

By Diane Dean-Epps

Nothing shows how far I've gone down the 'ole timeline than reflecting upon my experiences as a fresh-faced, light-hearted, pre-hyphenated version of myself, landing me firmly in the Decade of Decadence.

Ahhhhh, yes, the 80's—a time when my confidence was bolstered by youthful exuberance, sturdy shoulder pads, and Aqua Net-stabilized BIG hair.

My gal pals and I were out and about on a weeknight because we needed to cheer up my friend who was smarting from a fresh break-up. I wasn't too keen on the outing because not only was my stomach hurting from rapid-fire consumption of my beloved peanut M&M's, but I'd sworn off relationships. Again. I mean, why go to the pond if you don't even want to fish? However, I wanted to be supportive.

That's how I found myself cruising on into a bar named C Street North, which was neither on C Street nor was it situated in a northerly direction. What it was, was well-known for its kamikaze cocktails and its weekend warrior, locally grown, rock 'n' roll Hair Bands. (Not to be confused with hairbands, those strips of cloth or plastic worn in the hair that fit closely over the top of the head and behind the ears.)

Right when I entered the club, I locked eyes with him. The most stunning man I'd seen since I was a tween and now-80-year-old Bobby Sherman had graced multiple Tiger Beat magazine covers.

My excited hazel-hued peepers met his beautiful baby blues. Then he was gone. Poof! Paging one gorgeous hunk. Where'd ya go?

And I thought that was that.

About half an hour went by when the DJ played the most romantic of songs: "Do You Come From the Land Down Under?" by Men at Work. And there the gorgeous hunk was again, only now he was standing right next to me, asking me to dance. I nodded affirmatively.

Ironically enough, though I was minoring in Dance at the time, I remember my dance moves as being pretty lackluster. I was too busy staring at him and then acting as though I wasn't staring at him, trying desperately to figure out how to stay on the dance floor for multiple tracks. Time didn't stand still, but I wanted it to.

However, as songs are prone to do, this one ended, and off went my potential life partner. Truth be told, he ran off. Again. Vanished. Dematerialized. Disappeared. This was one magic man in so many ways.

It wasn't long after when my besties and I decided to call it a night. We were all feeling our own kind of miserable having to do with missed and unwanted connections.

As I exited, I took one last look around the room, flipped my hair, and walked out in what I thought was a rather fetching way. I needn't have bothered. Why? Because that fine-looking man wasn't there. How do I know? Because he was outside, leaning against the side of the building.

Did I mention it was a time of wild abandon when very little critical thinking was going on? My version of wanton behavior meant I sashayed on over to my mystery man, striking up a brief conversation that would fill in all the important blanks, specifically, name, school/work,

investment plans, religious beliefs, political leanings, and then we smooched.

Rewind.

We covered number one and two, smooched, and then I had to go.

My friends were more than a little concerned about my uncharacteristic “making out with a complete stranger” move which triggered our pre-determined code words for just these sorts of occasions. They yelled loudly and simultaneously, “Let’s go!”

I told the future father of my children we were headed to a popular late-night coffee shop, inviting him to meet us there, if he wanted to.

He wanted to.

My continued Bad Girl activities that night included playing footsies with him under the table, staring at him as though he was a flask of water available at the end of my desert hike, and then getting his phone number.

I wasn’t going to call him.

But I did.

We’ve been together ever since. (It’s year number 41 and counting.)

One night. One seemingly small decision. One BIG, surprise love story.

—Diane Dean-Epps

After a diverse and rewarding career in television broadcasting, Diane wended her way toward both a teaching credential, and a Master of Arts degree in English, earning several publishing credits in the process, including her master’s thesis highlighting the work of author, Langston Hughes entitled, *Changing the Exchange*. Diane lives and works in northern California, where she’s often found performing in both scheduled and unscheduled productions in front of mostly attentive audiences. Her “sit-down standup” style of writing is featured in *Just Because I’m Not Effin’ Famous, Doesn’t Mean I’m Not Effin’ Funny* (Humor), which is Diane’s fifth published book. Her other books include: *Maternal Meanderings* (Humor), *Last Call* (Humorous Mystery), *KILL-TV* (Humorous Mystery), and *I’ll Always Be There For You...Unless I’m Somewhere Else?!* (Humor). Other publishing credits include numerous essays that have appeared in *MORE* magazine, NPR’s *This I Believe*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Sacramento* magazine, *California CPA* magazine, *Bigger Law Firm* magazine, *Erma Bombeck University of Dayton* blog, *The Union*, and the *Sacramento Business Journal*. Diane’s sixth (non-fiction) book—*REMEMBER—A Father-Daughter WWII Stalag 17-B POW Story About Never Giving Up*—is available on Amazon.

