

# **SO CLOSE, YET SO FAR AWAY**

When Fate Made A Wrong Turn... or Did It?

Caution yellow was the stream of school buses with the R-8 number painted on their sides. We were loading and waiting to leave back to our hometown for an escorted celebration.

I was sitting, looking out the window on the team bus. Amazed at the mass of people that made the 30-mile drive to Springfield Mo. Thousands came to watch our Semi-final State AA Football Championship game.

My eyes! WOW! She stood out as alone in a spotlight in the middle of a stage. Perhaps, it was the sun shining on her strawberry blond hair or the smile that lit up a heart whenever exposed. There she was staring at me through the bus window, waving her arms, yelling, "Congratulations #85!" Throwing kisses toward the window that put a blush on my face the color of ripe cherries. I didn't have the courage to ask her on a date, I turned to Jell-O every time she came close. Her long reddish hair, slim figure, and a smile that brightened the world, and still, I was a big ole chicken.

Life never made sense. After sacrificing my body on a much larger player; I was fearful, yes; knee shaking, leg wobbling, afraid to approach her for a simple conversation, scared stiff. Anxiety, nothing but unadulterated fear kept us apart.

**So close and yet so far away**

**No tackling in the school hallways**

The town, excited with the way our small, quick, fast and intelligent team beat the larger private, Pem Country Day school. People were still talking about that game and the one to come.

I must have been in a focused point about the next challenge or in oblivion from the last victory. My focus was such that; I didn't notice that gorgeous strawberry blonde walking out of her classroom from across the hall. How could I have missed her... or did I?

No, we collided, knocking her into the lockers and scattering her books everywhere. Once I realized who it was, my heart skipped a few beats. I felt lifeless. After I made sure she was ok, I melted to my knees in embarrassment. Afraid we'd never speak again; I camouflaged my blushing cheeks by pretending to pick up her books and papers.

Gee, what a dufus, the one girl you want to notice you and I throw a full-blown body block on her. It wasn't the approach I had in mind for our get together.

As I kneeled, picking up her papers and textbooks, she put her hand on my shoulders and my heart stopped. I froze in position. Holding her essays, she assured me she was ok and added, "I'm fine, I bounce superb, was that a first and ten or a touchdown"? "If, you wanted to borrow my notes just ask, no need to knock them out of my hands".

I wasn't sure what she replied, I was star struck by the sparkle in her eyes. I was trying to decide if her tears were genuine from our contact; maybe, excited that we ran into each other. That déjà vu feeling returned when I was around her.

I will never forget those bright green eyes and that broad smile when I handed her books back to her.

She disappeared one day, and she was no longer in school. I didn't understand where she was, or if she moved.

43 years later while performing a farming game on the computer, someone messaged me and asked if they could be my friend playing the same game. To my surprise, it was the girl I had dreamed of in High School. We emailed for weeks, then we caught up with morning phone calls, that lasted into the night. Remembering our 4-H days, bonfires and snuggling under a blanket next to a fire on Halloween.

She flew 2000 miles to visit me. It was then I realized that she was planning on divorcing her abusive husband of many years.

Being together fate had given us a second chance or did it? After a week of bliss, she promised, to be back by summers end.

Summer came, but she didn't. I gave her 5 steps from my counseling profession to apply before she filed for divorce. They followed them and now live, reunited as one under God's leadership and purpose. Their gain my loss.

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