

## My Always and Forever

I met Gordon on a blind date, arranged by my younger sister and her boyfriend. When they talked of wanting me to meet Gordon, I thought they were talking about a classmate of mine with that last name.

Since Tom had been my classmate since first grade, I was sure there was no romantic interest there.

No, no, they explained. The guy's *first* name was Gordon. Wouldn't I like to meet him?

After another disastrous blind date the preceding year, I wasn't too sure about this.

But the two persisted. I finally caved.

The double date was to be the following Friday night, a football game. Jim (my sister's boyfriend) and Gordon would pick me up.

Since she had to perform in the high school band that night, Randi would already be there.

*Football of all things. I'd had enough of football in my marching band days.*

At the time, I was working as a nurse's aide in Mason City, a town about thirty miles away from home.

That day, I finished my day of work, boarded a bus, and came home to prepare for my date.

I dressed in black and white houndstooth pants, a black top and boots with a gold head band.

Soon a car pulled up in front of the house Not Jim's. This was a burgundy Impala. Hmm.

Within minutes, I heard a knock on the door.

When I answered that knock, I invited a heavy-set, dark-haired guy in.

"I-I'm Gordon," he stammered.

Knowing his extreme shyness, Jim had sent him into a house of females, (my mom was long-ago widowed) without the benefit of an introduction.

Soon, the three of us were arriving at the game.

Gordon didn't have much to say. Maybe he was thinking of the soybeans he'd left in the field to come on this date.

Maybe he didn't like football all that much either.

But, when he could bring himself to look at me, I noticed he had the most beautiful hazel eyes and the longest eyelashes I'd ever seen.

I don't remember who won the game that night, but soon the four of us were headed out to do a little cruising.

Since our hometown didn't have much of a cruise route, we headed out into the country.

The further we drove, Gordon began to loosen up a little and we began bantering with Randi and Jim.

When it seemed we were out in the middle of nowhere, Jim urged Gordon, "Why don't you show Linda your farm?"

As we drove past the place Gordon claimed was his, I noticed there were lights on in the house of the place

If the place was his, why were people living in it?

What I didn't know was, Gordon had put earnest money down on the farm the preceding spring.

A mile after we had driven past the farm, we were coming upon a vacant farm place with a half-mile driveway.

The guys called it "The Ranch".

The place looked vaguely familiar.

Turns out, this was Gordon's mother's farm, as well as one of the farms I'd help clean up after a tornado had gone through the area the preceding spring.

We turned into the driveway leading to two wooden corn cribs. Gordon parked the car under a full harvest moon.

Randi and Jim knew what this stop was for. They were already engaged in a lip lock. Gordon put his arm around me. He smelled so good. It was there we shared our first kiss.

Since she had a curfew, we had to get Randi home. It was going to be an early night.

When the guys dropped us off that night, Gordon shyly asked me for another date.

I accepted.

A couple of months later, Gordon, acting really fidgety said he had something to ask me.

He'd start, then, hitting the steering wheel with the heel of his hand, say, "I can't!"

After a couple tries at this, I said, "Out with it. It can't be that bad."

"Will you marry me?"

"But we don't know each other that well," was my reply.

He did some serious convincing. Just short of six months after we met, we were married and moved here.

Storybook romance? Hardly.

Fifty-four years later, here we are. On the way to forever together.

Half-mile

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