

I met Bill when my 5-year-old son and I were visiting my older sister in Ottawa, Ontario. Julie and I were on our way to the Maritimes in her white car she called Bessy.

“Let’s stop in Gananoque for a while”, Julia said, “you can meet Frank.”

I didn’t have much choice in the matter, so we swung onto the Thousand Island Parkway. We stopped at Ivy Lea, a small hamlet with Ivy growing on the dark grey rock. The road was a switchback that took us to a cottage by the St. Lawrence River, just under the Thousand Island Bridge. This was an enchanting place with large oak trees and large granite rock exposed.

Later that evening, I met Frank’s older brother Bill at the Gananoque Inn. We were invited to a family party at a lovely cottage on Charleston Lake. I soon realized that Bill loved to clown around. At the party, he had live lobsters attached to his nose. I didn’t think this was a very safe idea. His toast at the meal was: “Here’s to you and here’s to me. May we never disagree. If we do the ‘h’ with you and here’s to me.” The words rang out clearly with laughter and fun in his voice.

Julie and Frank wanted to spend time together, so it seemed that my son and I were to be entertained by Bill. We spent a week touring the Thousand Islands on tour boats and private tours from Bill. Julie likely thought it was safe because Bill was 15 years older than I was.

“Aaron is a good lad,” Bill said one day. “Lad?” I thought ..mmm, that word was a little out of my generation and country for that matter. I thought that people from Scotland called each other Lad. or Laddy.

As I got to know Bill more that week, it became apparent that he was interested in me. I really didn’t know what to do. He was fun, but he was so different than me.

Aaron and I flew back home to Alberta after the vacation. We were living at my parent’s house on a farm near Lacombe.

I arrived for my shift on the Pediatric Unit of a local hospital when I saw a beautiful bouquet of roses sitting front and centre at the nursing station desk. The nurses teased me about a new boyfriend. I was shocked because I didn’t think I would hear from Bill again.

The phone rang at home a few days later. It was Bill.

“I am coming to Alberta. I have a job in the Swan Hills.” was the just of our conversation.

In about 4 days, Bill arrived at the farm. Mom and Dad were a little confused at his arrival.

Bill convinced me to go to Morinville, a town north of Edmonton with him. I was finishing my Bachelor of Nursing and driving 1 ½ hours to Edmonton several times a week for classes. He

knew this and thought it would be easier for me to live in Morinville, which was closer, to attend my classes.

I still to this day don't know what made me do it, as Bill would say "I threw caution to the wind" and moved with Aaron to Morinville. That September Aaron was beginning grade one and I continued my classes at the University of Alberta.

Bill was a bit of a manipulator and I was used to choosing my own path. I think maybe it was the age difference that made him take charge. Maybe he thought he knew what was best for me.

Bill liked to tell stories. He clasped his hands on his rather large belly and begin a saying like "That guy got a taste of his own medicine," then the story would follow.

After living in Morinville and finishing my year at U of A, I came back to the farm with Aaron.

When Bill visited me at the farm we decided to get married. I wanted to live there. so we purchased a mobile home. Bill had a good job in Red Deer, with National Supply as a machinist and millwright.

Bill sometimes helped Dad on the farm.

"Well you might better do it this way," he said to Dad occasionally.

Dad muttered under his breath in a sarcastic manner "Might better do it this way."

Dad had been a successful farmer for many years and did not welcome Bill's advice.