

Valentine's Day!

A Valentine love story

By Karee Edwards and Kurt Westley

"You are not going to find a husband in that ugly Forest Service uniform," my daughter said.

I had just taken a job as camp host at Suttle Lake. The tan shirt, hat and pants were a little "blah" and not at all flattering, but I had been alone for years and was content in my singleness. My four daughters worried about me living in my 25-foot motor home and traveling around the states by myself. I, on the other hand, felt confident with my Siberian husky Kenjie and my .38 pistol by my side.

One day I was emptying the fee box at Blue Bay Campground when I saw the number of guest campers listed as "2-1/2 Men." I went to check the campsite to see what a 1/2 man looked like to find a grandfather, son and a 7-year-old grandson; half a man! We chuckled at the listing because the TV series "Two And A Half Men" was very popular at the time.

I noticed the "Grandfather," Kurt, had kind but sad sky-blue eyes. He asked me to join them for a hamburger but I refused, stating, "I don't like to fraternize with camp guests."

The next morning Kurt stood in my walking path along the shores of Suttle Lake with coffee and sweets in hand. He must have waited on that path for hours. He, again, insisted I drop by the campsite for a hamburger that evening.

"My grandson thinks you're pretty," he said with a twinkle in those blue eyes.

That evening I did join him and he asked if we could hike around Suttle Lake and maybe do some fishing and share our life stories and sad divorces — him 36 years; me 21 years — and how we were living with a bad decision someone else had made for us. He asked to come from his home in Astoria the next month and take me to dinner. I agreed and four years later we married in a beautiful barefoot beach service on the Oregon Coast.

My four sons-in-law were *happy* to give me away!

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