

A SISTERS COUNTRY

Valentine's Day

An answer to a prayer

By Jeanette

December 1999, I came to God in prayer, tears welled as I lay in my bed.

"God, if there is someone that needs to be loved as I want to love someone and they want to love me as I want to be loved by him, I think I am ready."

January 20, 2000: my co-worker dies. She has been suffering from cancer for years. I was asked to serve at her funeral. I totaled my car that week. I was to meet someone to look at a car at 5 p.m. It was raining cats and dogs. It was dark. I showed up to serve around 3 p.m. They were visiting ... visiting ... visiting. I never knew her family. I was a bump on a log. Finally, I told the girls I had to leave.

Her husband, who I only met briefly two times, sees me leaving and rushes out the door.

"Jeannette, thank you for helping." I answered, "You're welcome."

As he reached down to give me a gentle kiss on the cheek and put his arm around me, I heard the words in my ear, "He is going to ask you out." It was peaceful... in a still small voice.

I was weak in the knees. I called Marilyn.

"I guess I will be dating again."

"Are you kidding me?"

"God spoke to me in my ear," I replied calmly.

For the next few months I tried to work in my yard. I was so debilitated. I accomplished nothing. I didn't want to pursue it. This was God answering my prayer. I didn't want to blow it.

I was shopping in Fred Meyer and I saw him. I stared at him. He looked so old and he was trying to grow a beard that looked just like Brigham Young. I couldn't stomach it. Boy, I am glad I never told anyone but my sister. I stood in line at the grocery store; I had a little chat with God. "Are You really sure, God? Are You really sure?"

Four months later, there was the call. I immediately

got dry mouth and could hardly speak. He asked me to a concert. Dating was on the scene in April 2000. He was really good for me. I didn't know God as I do now. I do know when God puts you together it is the best thing next to Heaven itself.

We flew to Maine to see his birthplace. He proposed to me 30,000 feet in the air. It was so romantic in itself. Melvin was always making everything special. The trip was special. He wanted me to see where he grew up. We toured all around that part of the region in the time we had.

One of the highlights was seeing the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow abode. It was a very small house. He sat at the table in a very, very dim light. The window next to the table was very small. He had to only do his writing in the daylight. I was moved by the way that the people in those days had no conveniences. It made me humble. I really like Kennebunkport. Maine lobsters!

Melvin's friends had been on hold to travel to Alaska.

"Get married and quit your job and go with us," they urged.

Melvin didn't want to go without me.

He made me laugh. We would get to laughing we couldn't stop. He couldn't get his breath and he says, "what are we laughing about?" Well, we didn't have a clue why we were laughing.

Melvin was in the Coast Guard. He made a special arrangement to be married on a Coast Guard cutter in Astoria. They had a crossing of the swords. They blew the whistle that the dignitaries were on board (that was us). January 2, 2001, we tied the knot.

I had been asking God when it was time to quit work. My goal was to get out of there at 58. Things had changed at work. I had a new boss who was always on my case. Phone, dress, work, and anything else she could think of. The pressure of Mel's

friend wanting me to retire as they were leaving on June 9, 2001. I believe that the Lord changed my desire to be at work. I no longer wanted to go through year end in June. I no longer wanted to be there at 7:15 a.m.

I chose a date that would work for me ... of course, April 22, 2001, my birthday, a present for me. Personnel didn't like that. They had me backdate my resignation. They had another problem which my boss didn't like that either. I was calm. I kept that date and I was out of there.

I had to work my finances so that I could be gone for three months. Mel had every charge card there is to be had. I was concerned that the way out was to take out a loan on the house. I DIDN'T want to do that. Mel had it paid for. Between the two of us, we had a \$90,000 debt load. Time was crunching so we made the decision to do it. We took out a loan for \$100,000 and paid off our debt and took \$10,000 for the trip.

It was beautiful. The Rockies are magnificent. Every time you come around the corner, it is a new scene. Waterfalls, meadows, lakes, flowers just to name a few. So serene. Melvin and I laughed all the way to the Alaska border. Every time we had to stop for a rest or for gas, one of the guys would come over to our rig and say, "What are you two laughing at?" Melvin would just say something to appease him. Gosh, it was so funny. Four rigs were jeering at each other. By the time we got to the Alaska border, the tension was really high. Oh man, that was so bad. Our rigs had so much mud on them we couldn't see the paint job. We had to hose all the rigs.

We left June 9. It took two weeks to get just to the border. Most of the time, we never got a place to hose off. Everyone was tired and crazy at Beaver Creek. We all laughed at ourselves. We were crazy idiots.

A perfect treat for a special day

Whose Valentine wouldn't love hazelnuts and chocolate? Shop online for gift boxes loaded with roasted hazelnuts for eating or baking, hazelnut toffee or brittle, chocolate-covered hazelnuts, turtle candy and artisan chocolates. The two-pound Oregon Scenic Chocolate Bar is truly a one-of-a-kind gift. Thinking about making breakfast in bed to impress your sweetie? Hazelnut pancake and waffle mix with hazelnut butter will earn you extra kisses!

Artisan truffles are filled with homemade ganache with a perfect hazelnut in the center and a hand-painted tempered chocolate shell.

Hazelnut Hill has been growing and making hazelnut products on their Oregon farm for over 26 years, but new owners — Ryan, a fourth-generation farmer, and Rachel, a passionate chocolatier — are using the same recipes, plus some of their own, to take hazelnuts to a new level. Hazelnuts are a great source of magnesium and iron, and a good source of protein and healthy fats.

There's nothing more "Oregon" than hazelnuts; the state is the largest producer in the U.S.

Chocolate & Oregon Hazelnuts Are Divine!

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