

Scrappily ever after

A love story

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC by Marc Acito



Floyd and I have been together 15 years this week, which is like, what, 75 in gay years, right? Or maybe it just feels that long.

You see, for the past 15 years we've been engaged in one long, continuous argument. Never mind that neither of us remembers what it's about. All I'm saying is just as soon he admits he's wrong, I'm outta here.

We're like chimps, the two of us, constantly picking nits off each other. ("Slow down, you're gonna hit that curb." "You're not really going to wear that shirt tonight, are you?" "Is it so hard to close the door/turn off the light/put back the spices in alphabetical order?") I suppose nit-picking can be seen as a way of taking care of one another, but it's also a way of constantly reminding the other chimp that he's a flea-bitten slob.

It didn't start out that way. Floyd and I met in New York in 1986 when I took time off from school to intern in the Broadway producer's office where he worked.

He asked me out, to the Halloween Parade in Greenwich Village, just a couple of days after we met. About two days before

Halloween, he came to me looking embarrassed and said: "Uh, listen, I've got this friend who's a stage manager at Radio City Music Hall who can get me in to watch Liberace and the Rockettes from backstage. You're not interested, are you?"

Then...

Liberace? The Rockettes? Free? We made our second date right then, before we had even gone out on our first. Our fates were sealed.

Lest you think a mutual appreciation for Liberace and the Rockettes is a faulty basis for a relationship, I should tell you the very next day I had an epiphany. That's right, I piffed. And me without a tissue in my handbag to wipe it up.

The day before we went out on our two dates I walked into Floyd's office and saw him hunched over his typewriter (yes, children, that's how long ago it was), peering over his glasses, his sweater hanging on the back of the chair where he still puts it to this day (and then wanders around wondering where he left it), his bald spot gleaming at me like a beacon, and that's when I piffed. Right there in the office.

In one stunning moment of clarity I saw my entire future ahead of me. God's honest truth, at all of 20 years old I thought to myself: "Well, that's it. It's been decided. I can fight it, but there's really no point. This

is my destiny."

Now encountering your destiny is all well and good, but it's not always easy living with it, particularly when your destiny has just farted underneath the covers and hasn't had the courtesy to warn you. So we fight. Floyd carps at me because apparently I'm constitutionally incapable of loading the dishwasher properly; I nag at him while he dresses because as far as I'm concerned black and navy blue don't go together—never have, never will.

We fight about money. A lot. Since both of us would like to be rich, yet neither of us particularly likes working, our fights usually go like this:

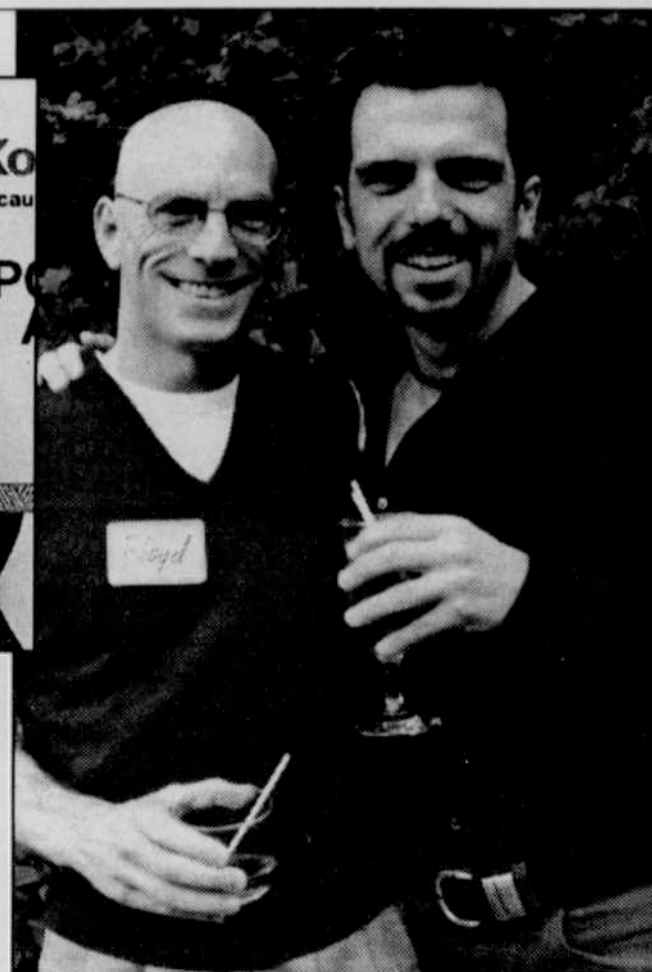
Floyd: Why aren't you rich?

Marc: Why aren't you rich?

Floyd: I asked you first.

And vice versa.

When we first moved in together I decided I would rather see our photos on the wall in col-



...and now

lages rather than shut away in albums. That way we could enjoy seeing our memories all the time.

What I didn't anticipate was that after 15 years those collages would also provide a daily reminder of how we're aging. We are not the same people we were. Yet, there we are, year after year, willing to do anything for a picture, no matter how ridiculous or, occasionally, dangerous.

I look at these pictures of us, Floyd getting progressively balder, the march of

time walking across his face, and me getting fatter, thinner, fatter, thinner, all the while making some really questionable fashion choices.

And I realize perhaps we haven't lasted 15 years in spite of our fighting, but because of it. We fight to stay together, to keep us together even as we change and grow. We stay together because we fight: for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part.

And that, my friends, is The Gospel According to Marc. **JM**

MARC ACITO and Floyd Sklover celebrated their 15th Anniversary by returning to the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade in New York. Congratulations can be e-mailed to marcacito@home.com.

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