

I wasn't looking for love. Having a fling was fine, but nothing long-term for me, thanks. My "Forever" relationships had always ended in ugly scenes and late-night door slamming. Who would want that to last till the end of time?

**OUT LOUD**  
BY SALLY SHEKLOW

My real "Love Forever" came disguised as your run-of-the-mill, crotch-throbbing attraction. We'd known each other socially for years, but no sparks.

Exactly one month before our first night together, the future love of my life interviewed me about my trip to Gay Lobby Day on her radio show. I was nervous; she was cool, competent, a woman in charge.

I couldn't take my eyes off those chubby little fingers diddling the console knobs. During a break she took off her headphones. "You're shy aren't you?" Wonga-wonga!

Something about her seeing the tender inner self behind my out 'n' proud persona really got me. I drove away from the radio station vowing she'd be my next fling.

Only for the sex, of course.

I invited her to stuff envelopes at the non-profit where I volunteered. She had a meeting.

I asked her if she wanted to go to the Pride rally. She was fixing her sink.

A movie? She had a dentist appointment.

Finally, one night at a potluck she announced: "I've got a free pair of concert tickets. Anybody want to go?"

"I will!" I was too gaga to notice her trepidation.

I tried to make a good impression in my

vintage Hawaiian shirt, a poor choice for the chilly auditorium's metal seats. I scooted my chair toward her, hoping for some body heat. Was it my imagination, or did she scoot away?

I scooted again. So did she.

During the standing ovation I sidled closer. She stepped into the aisle.

It was pouring rain when the concert let out. We had to run across the parking lot to her truck.

I hoped she'd put her warm arm around me or at least lay one of those pudgy little paws on my thigh. I wanted to connect, win her over, get in her pants. When a huge RV passed us I said, "Ah, that's my fantasy—drive out to the boonies in a big camper and have loud sex."

Silence. She didn't say a word for the whole 45-minute drive home.

I made myself wait a week to call her up. "Hi, I just harvested my potatoes. Want to come over for dinner?"

"Sure, that sounds exciting."

Potatoes? Exciting? This from the chair scooter?

## Spud love

How to ignore rejection and win that valentine



Sally Sheklow wouldn't take no for an answer

Maybe she finally ran out of excuses. Maybe she had a thing for spuds.

We ate our baked potatoes. She was relaxed, warm, funny. Why hadn't I ever noticed those huge blue eyes?

"Another potato?" I asked.

After dinner, we took a walk, held hands, talked, laughed. We hugged goodnight at my gate. Full-body press.

The next night we went to a GALA dance.

We made out in the car and went home to my place.

We shared a whole year of sleepovers before I started using the word "Love." Even longer before "Forever" passed my lips.

On our first six-month-a-versary, she gave me a card asking,

"Wanna try for another six months?" I hit the roof. "Quit future tripping. Don't lay any expectations on me!"

The moment I changed is hard to pinpoint. Maybe it was when my old dog died and my sweetie stepped up to the No. 1 loyal companion spot. Maybe it was weathering tough times without turning on each other that let me relax into love. Or maybe it just kept being good, so I stayed.

After 14 years, even I will admit this isn't a fling. And the love

keeps unfolding—like one of those party-favor balls you unravel slowly so you don't miss any of the little prizes tucked between the layers. Who wouldn't want it to last forever? ☐

SALLY SHEKLOW is a member of the comedy troupe WYMPROV! and writes for Eugene Weekly and Houston's OutSmart magazine. E-mail her at [sally@rio.com](mailto:sally@rio.com).

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