

The Yellow Rose

I leaned the box, containing a single yellow rose, up against her apartment door. Inside was an offer. One that I hoped she would accept.

We had met over a year before at a local Holiday Inn lounge. I was their doing PR for a local radio station. She was there after work with some friends. I asked her to dance a couple of times as I mustered the courage to ask her out – dinner, bowling, a walk in the park – it did not matter. I just wanted to be with her. There was something comforting about her glance and gentleness to her touch. I knew this was more than just an attraction. It was unlike anything I had known before.

When I wrenched up the nerve to ask her out, she simply replied, “I don't go out with men I meet in bars.” I surmised that was a good rule, but certainly she could make an exception. After all, I was harmless and a bit more than smitten with her soft eyes and gentle smile. Nevertheless, it was still “No.” As she was leaving, I gave her my business card and offered, “If you ever change your mind please call. We can do whatever you like, no strings attached.”

It was a year later before we would meet again. There was one time when we caught a glimpse of each other at an intersection. Other than that, I waited. She never called.

One evening, after an early night with my bowling buddies, I stopped by a local dance club to sneak in a dance or two before heading over to my local stomping

grounds. My life was extremely empty - mostly filled with nights of drinking and carousing. A few years back, God and I had made an agreement, if He let me alone, I would leave Him alone. Shallow relationships, drinking and dancing were ways to fill the void in my life.

When I walked into the club, it echoed with its own emptiness. However, I did spot one table of almost a dozen women. From the looks of things, a party was going on and I was determined to join in. Sauntering over to the table, I politely asked, "Would any of you ladies like to dance?" From the far side of the table I heard, "Sure Norm, I would." My eyes, though a bit blurry, could not believe what I was seeing. It was Alice. The woman I had met almost a year before.

We danced and talked for an hour or so then I asked, "Would you go out with me now?" She said, "Yes". Her rationale was simple; she had "known" me for a year, so the environment did not matter any more.

When it was time for the group to leave, I walked up and with a boldness that came from a place I know not where, I blurted out, "I want you all to know I am going to marry this woman on Valentines Day!" Since it was already January, the look in their eyes read like a neon sign, "How could someone be so bold?" They chuckled in disbelief, but I repeated my prediction. "Really, I am going to marry this woman on Valentines Day THIS YEAR!"

Our first date was to be that weekend. When we parted that night, I told her I would call to set a date and time. Little did I know, I had been a bit over indulgent that night and for the life of me, I could not remember her phone number. Now what would I do?

I vaguely remembered the car she was driving and was familiar with the apartment complex she lived in, so I drove over and cruised the parking lot looking for her car to no avail. I even called the apartment manager to see if he would give me her phone number, of course he was much smarter than that. In desperation, I got the phone book out and began looking at every name that started with the letters of her last name. As you might have guessed, I was a bit more tipsy than smitten that particular night. After looking over a hundred names, I was no better off than when I started. Time was running out!

Then, like a splash of cold water, I remembered one of the women with Alice that evening was the mother of a guy I worked with at the radio station. I barged in his office and pleaded with him to call his mother and get Alice's phone number. Within an hour, I had my number and was calling Alice.

On our first date and each one after that, I would open our conversation with, "Since we are getting married in a few weeks, we don't have a lot of time to waste..." Then I queried her on favorite colors, where she grew up, what she thought of this or that. We had plenty of knowing to get done if we were getting married in a few weeks.

One evening, over dinner, she told me she had received a job offer in another state. Originally, she had turned it down, but now the offer was too good to refuse. She

planned on accepting it. "What about MY plans," I thought. "Surely, she cannot forget MY plans. We are supposed to get married." I was panicked and confused by her decision but little did I know there were even bigger plans in the making.

Certainly, I could not compete with the lucrative offer she was about to accept. Then again, there was no way I was going to let this woman just leave. Somehow, someway, there was more to her than I understood - something deep and meaningful. That's when I decided to make my offer. I bought a single yellow rose, placed it in a box and enclosed a *job offer* for her to join the MacD Corporation for the rest of her life. Then I leaned the box up against her apartment door and left.

As it happened, we did not get married on Valentine's Day that year. It was actually May. We have been together twenty-five years now. The MacD Corporation is very much solvent and yields a substantial profit each year of love, laughter, and blessings.

She still has the box the yellow rose came in and the offer. As for me, I no longer live with the emptiness. Each day when I tell her "I love you," I think of how God brought this woman into my life, not once but twice. The impact of our relationship was God's way of showing His unconditional love, filling the emptiness in my life, giving me purpose and joy.

God's plan was far more substantial than mine could have ever been.

