

Gary Hoopfer

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The Luckiest and Happiest Man in the World – Chapter II

As I mentioned last week, though my first date with my wife was at best a version of Dante's Seventh Level of Hell, I was intrigued and I must admit, smitten with Heddy Marie Kimpo, the Charge Nurse of 4th Floor. After the overall agony of our first encounter, I, since we both worked in the same hospital, I constantly saw her almost every day. She dated other men and I dated other girls but I always kept my interest in Heddy from afar. Like I stated previously, I arranged the birthday date for her and her then boyfriend, Rick. She began dating one of my friends, a pharmacist at the hospital and she, he, her roommate, and I, spent a long weekend skiing in Mammoth. She couldn't ski a lick and I was extremely happy that she took out her frustration on the other guy...a bit of a temper. Heddy and her roommate lived on Reno Street in Los Angeles. They were neighbors of Nacho!

Several months later, Duke, the Pharmacist, who was dating Heddy, asked me if I would help him install headers on his new van. What the hell was a header? I asked him, "Where are we going to do this?" And he answered, "Over at Heddy's new house in Alhambra." And I answered, "What time do you want me there?" Since I don't know anything about cars, vans, trucks, motors, headers, tires, or carburetors, I spent most of my time for three weekends in the kitchen, drinking beer, and talking to Heddy while Duke was playing around with these pipe things. I finally asked her if she was serious about Duke. She said no. And I asked if she would give me a second chance and go out to have a drink with me. We did and I asked her out to dinner for the following Friday and she said yes. That Friday evening, I knocked on the door and her roommate answered and said, "Oh, its you." I never really liked that girl.

(An aside,) I had been engaged twice before and I think the cause of these two breakups was that the girls' families always got along, unlike my family history of divorce, abuse, and arguments which were the norm where a gathering of the family was a reason for internecine warfare. The Irish never forget and never, ever forgive. I got involved with two families who really enjoyed each other. There was joy and laughter. I thought that they must be from Mars. Heddy Marie's family is that kind of family

I dated Heddy for two or three months and one day she invited me over for dinner. I of course said yes and I asked what was for dinner, and she stated stuffed bell peppers. I love stuffed bell peppers. I arrived and she showed me the recipe and it said bake for 55 minutes at 350 degrees. Twenty-five minutes later, Heddy says, "Dinner is ready." Hmm...I know how to read a recipe and I have been cooking since I was fifteen, 55 minutes means 55 minutes. But I'm in love. I sit down and the meal is bell pepper tartar. Its raw and not even warm. Heddy says that we'll have it tomorrow; burgers fries tonight. The following evening, I arrive and Heddy said that she had baked the peppers for 55 minutes. I took a mouthful and looked at the love of my life, and she said it tasted awful. I said the peppers taste tainted and asked where she stored them. She answered that she left them in the oven. Burgers and fries tonight!

Before you this morning, stands an old man who has survived war and my wife's cooking for forty-five years. I may be immortal.