

My Almost Sister-In Law

In 2005 after I lost my husband, Lloyd, I was deeply despondent. My sister, Waverly, was concerned and invited me to Colorado Springs. In the meantime, David, my current husband, began to take me to dinners. It didn't take long for us to forge a loving relationship. I already had my trip to Colorado planned so early in January, 2006 I flew to Denver where Waverly and her late husband, Bud, met me and brought me to their home. Waverly and I took daily walks and I helped Bud with some fix-up work on a rental home. I remember a song from my childhood, "Saws and planes and hammers are more fun than toys; bing bang, bing, bang – such a jolly noise." I grabbed a hammer with which I pounded nails, a putty knife or trowel to apply spackle, sandpaper to smooth dried spackle and a paint brush to beautify the walls. I even learned how to apply rubber baseboard molding around the tub. Bud greatly appreciated my help and the work kept me busy in between calls from and to David. Watching my happy reaction to the calls, Waverly knew she didn't have to worry about me.

Towards the middle of January, David told me, "I plan to travel to Palm Desert where I will compete in the 2006 Senior Olympics in golf, table tennis and billiards; I'm going to stay with my sister, Helen, who is vacationing there. I'd love for you to see the games."

"Oh, that would be so much fun" I exclaimed.

Later that evening, I mentioned the conversation to Waverly, who commented, "Well, you know, there is such a thing as a side trip."

The next day, I called David and told him, "I'd like to take a side trip and come to watch you play."

David hesitated a bit; "I don't know what Helen would think. We would stay with her."

I immediately backed away, "That's ok, David' it was just a thought."

I was a bit sad, but understood David's reasoning.

But the very soon I received another call, "I just talked to Helen and she really wants to meet you; why don't you arrange your flight plans and I'll pay for your fare."

I was a little scared about meeting his sister, yet at the same time, I was excited.

When I arrived back home, David met me at the airport where I ran to his waiting arms. Then we traveled in his pretty blue Avalon car to Palm Desert. Helen lived in New York but had rented a lovely condo on the golf course in Palm Desert.

As we walked hand in hand to her front door, David observed that I looked uncertain and he assured me, “Helen will adore you. You know I told Helen about the musical shows we performed recently and she plans to have a musical with some friends of ours who are also vacationing there.”

When Helen answered the door, David introduced me and she graciously welcomed me. She had loaded the coffee table with delicious hors d’oeuvres. Soon the vacationing couples arrived. They greeted David warmly and then greeted me effusively. While we discussed dinner plans we feasted on the repast Helen had prepared.

When we all had our fill Helen announced, “Now we have a music treat for you.”

I removed my guitar from its case and we started. First David sang two songs and then I sang. We alternated for the next half hour for a very appreciative audience.

We took two cars to our dinner destination at a hotel where we had to transverse a moat to reach our restaurant; we all enjoyed sharing time together and a lovely dinner.

Back at the condo, I asked David “Can we take a walk?”

He agreed. The evening air was cool and delicious. Although it eventually felt a bit cold, it was exhilarating as we walked hand in hand.

In the morning, I went to the kitchen where the aroma of freshly made coffee filled the room. Helen was at the kitchen booth with a filled cup and asked, “What would you like for breakfast?”

“Do you have cereal and maybe some strawberries?”

Helen smiled warmly, “Indeed I do; help yourself.”

I poured some cereal for both David and me. I asked, “Do you want some?”

“No I’m good with my coffee.”

After I washed some berries and sliced some on top of David’s cereal, Helen suddenly commented, “You love my brother, don’t you.”

I bit my lip for a moment and then answered slowly, “Yes; I do.”

Helen arose from the table and walked towards me. As she passed me she gently caressed my shoulders and suggested, “Perhaps we’ll go shopping at the nearby bazaar this afternoon; David isn’t playing his sports until tomorrow, right?”

I responded, “That sounds nice.”

I enjoy costume jewelry and stopped in front of a counter with some attractive pieces. Helen was standing behind me, “You like those? David will buy them for you.”

In fact, he did.

That evening, while I was preparing for bed I overheard Helen ask David, “When are you going to marry that lovely girl?”

I didn’t hear David’s response, but I suspect he might have shrugged his shoulders, as we’d discussed the subject previously and he’d said, “Marriage is for raising children.”

Our stay with Helen was short but so pleasant. Afterwards, we corresponded and talked via phone. I looked forward to a time when we could visit her in New York. But that wasn’t to be. In fact, this one visit was the only time we had together. I suspect that if she hadn’t been stricken with a fatal case of cancer just shortly after I met her that David and I would have married long before August, 2008.

Although she never became my true sister-in-law she meant so much more to me. Only once did I get to spend time with this lovely woman; it was an unforgettable experience – one that I memorialized in several poems which I included below.

December, 2006: Just after our stay with Helen, David gave her a gift – a 2-month stay for February, 2007 at a similar condo in Palm Desert.

Helen called, “David, please cancel the condo; I’m not feeling well.”

February, 2007: Helen was diagnosed with cancer and had a cancerous growth surgically removed from her brain.

To Helen - February, 2007

**You’ve been in my thoughts every day
So to you, I want to convey
The magical role you play
In my life.**

**I watch David’s family connection
Almost daily he talks with affection
So important to me; upon reflection,
It is so lovely.**

**2002-5 my life had been devastated
But I recall fondly when I met you, with David
A bit nervous and scared, I waited --
And asked, “Will she like me?”**

**So together we enjoyed Palm Desert
You encouraged a musical concert
And I watched the gold medal expert
Such very good times!**

**Your loving support and acceptance
For me holds much significance.
You hugged me and asked me, for instance,
Do you love him?**

**And I do and I thank you and love you, too
And I want to spend much more time with you!!**

During March, David made plans to travel to New York to spend time with Helen as she wasn’t doing well. I wanted to go so badly. But David said she wasn’t up for visitors. He visited her in the hospital in April. We lost her in September.

To Helen - March 10, 2007

**Wishing so many good things for you
Like spraying oceans waves; Like lovely floral bouquets
Like a mother deer and her fawn; Like colorful rainbows
Like a bridge over a lovely waterfall
And Like a trunk full of jellybeans**

David and I took a trip to Laughlin, Nevada where he played in a golf tournament. I didn't play in this tournament; I had my keyboard and guitar with me so I worked on music and enjoyed walks beside the Colorado River. My thoughts were with Helen but I kept busy and happy with the music and the beauty that surrounded me.

Thoughts In Laughlin – March, 2007

**Finally arrived in Laughlin --
slow 2-laner adds frustration.
But view of mountains and the river
brings peace and satisfaction.**



**Today I used a voucher that
David earned while he played
7-card stud in the poker room --
so half of my breakfast is paid.**

**I watched the flowing river
from my perfect restaurant seat**

**Had the champagne brunch half-price --
was quite a lovely treat.**

**Not a terribly big eater;
I like champagne -- had more than one.
But my head is still quite clear
and I'm going to practice some.**

**Have my guitar and keyboard here
so I'll be very busy,
while at the golf course playing
are David and friends, with clubs, balls and tees.**

**I think so much of Helen,
David's sister dear.
She made me feel so welcomed --
that's she's loved is very clear.**



**David will visit her soon
I long to see her and be there, too.
David say she's too sick --**

Makes me sad and very blue.

**Life takes such unexpected turns;
I thank Helen for her acceptance.
I'll send David, with my love with
sweet Palm Desert remembrances.**

**I love to walk along the river;
I watch it ripple by.
It makes me think of happy things.
I'm glad David is "My Guy."**

**David and I went together to New York for her memorial where she
was honored with love and special memories. In my heart there will
always be a special loving place for my friend and almost sister-in-law**



H e l e n

