

Author's note

MarieAnne is the story of two early Boomers who find each other late in life. It is an examination of mature love. Love which still has the ardor and passion of discovery with the appreciation and perspective of experience. This is the story of soulmates and the life that ensues. Our couple will be joined by Bill and Maggie, Sylvia, Addy, Bob and Claire, Ricky and Anna, George, Nina, and two inanimate, but essential elements—Bella (a car) and Judy (a jukebox). Music will be an integral part of this story. I will use various songs of the 50s and 60s to augment and advance the story. The intent is to shine a favorable light on modern maturity, which still holds much hope and promise. MarieAnne is a story of Boomers living life to the fullest.

“Second Chances”—the first of six books—brings MarieAnne and Steve together. We’re introduced to Sylvia, and Bill and Maggie. We get to know them as they know each other. Along the way, we encounter fraud, theft, and great music.

Note: I have been unable to secure rights to the cited songs. I have left the disconnected links to facilitate reconnection should I be granted permission. I encourage you to go to YouTube for the videos. Could be a nice trip down memory lane. I want to thank Paul Barton who generously allowed me to use his rendition of Claire de Lune. If you like it, you might want to visit his website. It’ll be worth the effort.

Paul Barton's Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/PaulBartonPiano>

This is the [YouTube video of Claire de Lune](#)

Wednesday May 29

Plan A

I was near the end of my morning jog when I saw her. She stood in a glade about thirty yards ahead. Her blue and white tennis dress outlined a tall, trim figure. Right on cue, the sun sent a shaft of light through the branches to shroud her in a golden aura. I slowed to a walk to savor this magic moment. As I drew abreast and was about to push off, she stepped forward and smiled. “Good morning.”

Surprised, I sputtered, “Good morning.”

“I’d like to speak with you when you’ve finished your run.”

I stopped. “Have we met?” I asked, jogging in place.

She shook her head, red creeping into her cheeks. “No, not yet.”

“Oh, not yet, I like the sound of that. You’ve got my attention, what would you like to talk about?”

“It can wait.”

“We can speak now if you wish.”

She motioned to the small bench in the clearing. “Should I wait here, or is there a better place?”

I stopped jogging in place. “Really, it’s okay, we can talk now.”

“I’m fine. Please finish your run.”

“I’ll be about fifteen minutes.”

“It’s a beautiful morning. I’ll be fine.” She turned and walked to the small bench.

“Won’t be long.” I returned to my jog; I hurried.

She was waiting for me. She checked her watch, “That was quick.” She smiled, standing.

My goddess of the park was about 5’8”, maybe 125 pounds, tanned, trim, and radiant. A cross between Cheryl Ladd and Jane Fonda with lustrous silver hair. She greeted me with a beautiful smile, perfect teeth, perfect face, perfect everything, and the greenest most engaging eyes I’ve ever seen. “Not quick enough.”

She cocked her head, letting a shaft of light catch the silver of her hair. “Are you in a hurry?”

“Not anymore.”

Her smile broadened. “Good.” She dropped her eyes, but the smile remained.

“So, what would you like to talk about?”

Her color deepened. “This is embarrassing.” She looked away. Her profile revealed a small, short, slightly round nose and high cheeks. She turned back. “Do women often hide in the bushes waiting to accost you?”

“Not often.”

“Not often?”

I laughed. “Okay, never. You weren’t hiding in the bushes. Your approach was... was appropriate.”

She closed her eyes and shook her head. “Thank you. It felt brazen. I don’t do this, I don’t...”

“Oh? So, why now? Why me?”

She looked at her hands making the church steeple. “It’s part of my plan.”

I cocked my head. “Plan? Why would I be part of your plan, hell, any plan?”

She walked to me. “This isn’t easy.”

“For either of us.”

“I guess not.” She dropped her eyes and stopped two feet away. After a moment, she looked at me. “I had to see if you’re for real.”

“Real? I’m real enough.” I stepped back. “We’re not getting any closer to why.”

“I’m trying.” She took a deep breath. “May I ask you a few questions?”

“Shouldn’t we introduce ourselves first?” I closed the gap, extending my hand. “I’m Steve. Steve Foster. Nice to meet you...?”

She took my hand. “Nice to meet you, Steve.” She had a firm, businesswoman’s grip. She held on to my hand. “Is your OkCupid profile name ‘provo’?”

A reflexive withdrawal. “It is.” I squinted. “How did you know?”

“Good.” She dipped her head and gave a little fist pump. “I was right.”

“Right? Right about what?”

“This is difficult.” The red returned to her face. “Bear with me.” She walked back to the bench and sat.

I followed. “Relax. I’m not going anywhere.”

“You’re not worried? Our meeting doesn’t bother you?”

I looked around shaking my head. “No, you pose no threat – public park, daylight. If anything, I’m intrigued. Come on, you’re stalling.”

She looked at her hands. “Not stalling, so much as trying to figure this out. I’m not sure what to do next.”

“Figure what out?”

She shrugged.

“Would you like to continue this later over coffee or a drink?”

She shook her head. “No, please. I need to do this now while I have the courage.”

“Courage? We’re just two people meeting in the park. I have nothing to fear from you, you have nothing to fear from me.”

She shook her head. “If only it were that easy.”

“It can be, what can I do to help? Would it be better, just to tell me straight out?”

She looked up, smiling. "It might, I had it all worked out."

I laughed "Right, the plan. When all else fails, try honesty. Why were you waiting for me?"

She dropped her eyes. "I am being honest, but maybe you're right." She stood, walking to me, locking our eyes. "Do you believe in fate?"

"No... Should I?"

She sighed, shaking her head. "You should. It's what brought me here."

"Oh?"

"It did."

"Okay, fate brought us together." I may have rolled my eyes.

"It did," she stamped her foot, her eyes narrowed.

"Sorry, I'm not a believer in fate."

She nodded. "Not a big surprise. Indulge me?"

"If it will get us closer to the why, I'm all ears."

"Thank you. Okay, some of this won't believe, but here goes."

I nodded, bidding her to proceed.

She acknowledged with a nod. "It started with your profile." She grinned, revealing tiny creases at the corners of her eyes, which acted as little arrows pointing towards her amazing green eyes. "You write an engaging profile."

"Thank you." I nodded. "My profile brought you here?"

"It helped." She looked down the path. "It's pretty here—what a beautiful morning."

"You're changing the subject. Why?"

She faced me. "I'm embarrassed." Color crept back into her cheeks.

"Why? There's nothing to be embarrassed about."

"Oh, really? Here I'm about to spill my guts to a total stranger, and there's nothing to be embarrassed about?"

"You don't have to spill your guts, and I'm not a total stranger—my profile, remember."

"I'm about to share some embarrassing... embarrassing — Hell, I don't know what you call them: thoughts, dreams, wishes, desires... My innermost thoughts, and nothing to be embarrassed about?"

"Desires?"

"Yes, damnit desires. Things I would like to be, to have, to know."

"Sorry, this is important to you."

"It may be important to you, too."

"Oh."

"Yes, oh. May I proceed?"

I nodded.

Another deep sigh. “You have an uncanny resemblance to a boy from my past.”

“Really?”

“Really.” She frowned. “He was important to me.”

“And?”

“And, so I had to meet you.”

“I’m glad you did. Glad you’re here. Not so pleased it’s because of someone else. Obviously, I’m not that boy. I’m not your teenage fantasy.”

She glared. “You could be.”

“I’m not.”

She looked down, shaking her head. “It doesn’t matter.”

“It doesn’t? Why not? First it was important, now it’s not.”

“Not anymore.”

“Not anymore? What’s changed?” I asked.

She sighed, but said nothing.

I took a deep breath. “Would this be better at another time? Should we meet again?”

Her eyes widened. “You want to? I haven’t messed this up?”

I laughed. “No, you haven’t messed this up. Strange as this is, I’d like to see you again; maybe because it is so strange.”

“It’s not strange. Just unusual—unique.”

“Okay, it’s unique. So, should we try this again?”

“Please.”

“Fine. When and where?”

“I have a plan. Or had a plan. I had to meet you, have you meet me, and... and... Now, I’m not so sure anymore.”

“Well, we’ve met, and were about to meet again.” I held up my hand. “Wait... how did you know I’d be here? How did you know to wait for me here, at this time?”

She shrugged. “Fate, remember fate”

“Now I understand.” I rolled my eyes. “Fate? Fate and a plan?”

She nodded. “Yes, fate. Fate put us on the same street. I saw you walking.”

“Fate or a happy accident?”

She shook her head, closing her eyes. “Whatever.”

“When? What street? I never saw you.”

She smiled. “Were you looking for me?”

“Indirectly.”

“How do you look for somebody indirectly?”

“I was looking for somebody like you.”

She laughed, her smile broadened, crinkling her nose. “That’s nice.” She turned away. “Well, I was looking for you—directly, specifically. That gave me an advantage.”

“You saw me. Where, when, then what?”

“Yesterday. I saw you crossing the street in front of Target. I waited for you to come out, then I followed you.”

I frowned.

“Don’t look like that. Yes, I followed you. I walked a block behind you, so you wouldn’t see me, then lost you when you went into your apartment complex.”

“What would you have done, if you hadn’t lost me?”

She shrugged. “I honestly don’t know. I didn’t have a plan then, I didn’t expect to find you. It took me all night to figure out how get this far.”

I closed one eye. “So how did you find me again?”

“A lady walking her dog knew you. She said you ran in the park every morning about seven.”

“Hmmm... not that many people know my schedule. Guess we got lucky.”

“There was some luck, a few tears, but a lot of work.”

“Tears? Work?”

“I wanted this to happen. I worked to make it happen. The tears were what stopped the woman with the dog. She felt sorry for me.”

“Oh.”

She looked away. “I was so frustrated, disappointed I may never find you, I might have cried a little.”

“Cried?”

Narrowed eyes. “Yes, damnit, this was important to me, meeting you was important. I had to find you.”

I dropped my head. “Well, I’m glad you did, glad you found me.”

She shook her head. “Not yet, I’ve only talked to you, I still don’t know you. I don’t know if you are you.”

“Huh?”

“I don’t know how real you are.”

“I’m real enough.”

She smiled, then nodded. “Yes, you’re real enough, but are you who you’re supposed to be?”

“I am who I’m supposed to be. Not sure, I’m whom you want me to be.”

Another smile. “You’re close enough for me to have followed you. You’re close enough for me to want to know you better. You’re close enough...”

“Let’s leave it at that—close enough. I’d like to know you better, too.”

“Good, no more creeping down city streets.”

I laughed. “I don’t see you creeping down a street, or anywhere for that matter.”

She shook her head. “I wasn’t really creeping, just following at a discrete distance.”

“Yes, that’s a much better image.”

“Am I forgiven for waiting for you? That could be considered stalking.”

I shook my head. “I don’t think stalkers say good morning, or do they?”

She laughed, then shrugged. “I don’t know, it’s probably in the stalkers guidebook.”

“Probably, and you didn’t have time to buy one.”

She smiled. “So, none of this bothers you?”

“Intrigued, not bothered. You’re a beautiful woman, this is a beautiful day, and I have the promise of getting to know you better.”

“That’s it?”

“For the most part. The more I see you, talk to you, the more I’d like this to grow into something.”

“So would I.”

“Really? Do you have any idea how beautiful you are?”

She dropped her head.

“Trust me, you are beautiful. So, now I’m a little insecure. This shouldn’t be happening, not to me, not now.”

“Why not you, why not now?”

“We’ll let that go. Let’s just say this is new to me.”

“It’s new to me, too. I’m just as insecure. I’ve never done this, I never want to do it again.

I laughed. “Unique, I remember. So, what’s next?”

She shrugged. “I’m not sure.” She turned away.

“Might I suggest dinner, drinks, coffee? Any of those part of your plan?”

She stood and walked away from me, shaking her head. “No, none of those were part of the plan.”

“None, what else is there?”

“Well, dinner is part of the plan, but not a restaurant.” She turned to me. “The plan is I cook you dinner,”

“Whaaat?”

She smiled, nodding. “Yes, I’d like to cook you dinner.”

“Why?”

She grinned. “It was part of the plan.”

“It was?”

“I wanted to get to know you, it seemed better than a crowded restaurant or bar.”

“And dinner’s the way? There are quiet restaurants.”

She shrugged. “This is how I planned to do it.”

I tilted my head, narrowing my eyes. “Inviting a stranger into your home could be foolish—dangerous.”

“Trusting, somewhat. Foolish, no.” She stopped two feet away from me. “Well, would you like to have dinner with me?”

“Of course.”

“Of course?”

“Of course, you are a beautiful, interesting—no, make that intriguing woman. Of course, I’d like to have dinner with you.”

She beamed, cocking her head. “Good, which day do you prefer?”

“This Friday?”

She nodded. “That works. What time?”

“Seven?”

She smiled. “Seven-thirty.”

I laughed. “We have the date and time. Where?”

She reached into her pocket and handed me slip of paper. “Here.”

I examined the note. “There’s no address.”

“When you call me this afternoon, I’ll give you the address. Say, three o’clock?” She looked at her watch. “I should be home by then. Will that be convenient?”

“That’s convenient. You could tell me now and not worry about being home.”

She shook her head. “This is how I planned it.” She extended her hand.

“Fine.” We shook hands.

She held my hand a few seconds longer than necessary, then turned. “Call me this afternoon, okay?” she asked, walking away.

“I’ll call you at three.”

I watched her until she was out of sight. Her walk was fluid and graceful. It was a model’s walk.

I called at three after monitoring a sluggish clock every few minutes since two. She had written her name and number on the slip, but her phone number was for an unlisted cell phone. Reverse lookup was fruitless. She was cautious and thorough.

“Mary Ann,” she answered, after the third ring.

“I wasn’t sure how to pronounce your name. So, it’s Mary Ann?” There was no reply. I added, “This is Steve.”

“Steve?”

“The stranger in the park, the sweaty one.”

“Oh, that one, and right on time.”

“Am I interrupting something?”

“No. I was expecting your call. I’m a little distracted, my mind was on something else. Sorry.”

“Is there a problem?”

“Yes, but not something I want to burden you with. May I propose a small change?” she said, lowering her voice.

“How small a change?”

“Would you mind if we had dinner at your place?”

“That’s more than a small change.”

“Too much?”

“I’m not that good a cook, it might mean takeout.”

“Oh, you won’t have to cook, I’ll do that. Okay?”

“Well, sure. Tell me what you want to cook—I may not have the right pots or pans.”

“Not to worry, I’ll bring everything I need.”

“Everything?”

“Yes, everything, even the wine and dessert.”

“That’s pretty much everything. Anything I can do?”

She laughed. “No, just be home.”

“I can do that. Anything else?”

“Yes, tell me where you live.”

“You don’t know?”

Another laugh. “Generally, not specifically.”

I gave her my apartment number, the garage and gate codes. She thanked me, said goodbye, and hung up. For my part, I stared at the phone shaking my head, my eyes closed, with a broad smile.

