

Love, Luck and Fate

Joseph Bosco looked down at the sidewalk, after hearing the bird whistle in the tree overhead. That's when he saw the worn, twenty-dollar bill caught in the stray roots breaking through the sidewalk. "Hmm. How about that?" and he put the bill in his pocket. Joe learned one important lesson growing up. He didn't believe in luck but whenever fortune passed his way, he would say 'it was God's will' and accept it. In fact, Joe attributed everything that happened to him to God's will, good or bad. "Much less stress" he used to say, "much less disappointment too."

Most everyone accepted Joe's philosophy of life. His friends liked the fact that he was so even tempered, never too high or too low. At holiday gatherings, he could be counted on to balance out the histrionics and emotional outbursts of his Sicilian family. At work, he would be the voice of reason when an argument ensued. His matter of fact personality worked just about everywhere, except when he was dating.

When Joe was a boy back in 1995, he had his first crush on Sorana Antonelli, a pretty eighth grader in his English class. They were sitting in the movie theater, sharing a box of popcorn. Sorana, like Joe, was from the poor side of town, but that doesn't matter.

"I like your dress Sorana."

"Thanks Joe." Sorana blushed. "I like your shirt."

Joe and Sorana's first date was everything it should have been. Their infatuation continued for two years, until Sorana's parents moved out of state. As it is with young love, both of them were heartbroken. They tried to keep in touch but high school pressures and other interests gradually pulled them apart. Later in life, he wished he had been more persistent and not just accepted their breakup.

"Thank Senator." George took the papers from him and filed them into the briefcase. "We have a vote coming up at 2:00pm, so I will pick you up after lunch."

"Get me something at the deli George. I'd like to do some reading. I'll be in my office."

"Corned beef on rye?"

"You know it George."

Senator Joseph Bosco sat in his office reading the paper and eating his lunch when his secretary interrupted him.

“Excuse me senator. You have a visitor.”

“Who is it, Hannah?”

“Her name is Sorana Antonelli. She says she’s an old friend.”

Joe stood up, smiled and gestured her to let Sorana in. He got up to greet her at the door. As Sorana entered, she saw Joe with open arms.

“Senator Bosco, do you remember me?”

“Sorana, you’re not allowed to call me senator. How are you?” He gave her a long hug, and then pushed her back while holding on to look at her. “I can’t believe it. What’s going on with you now?”

“My parents are retired down the shore. The Midwest winters were too much for them now. I came back to visit.”

“But they’re in good health?”

“Oh, they’re fine. Just spending their days walking on the boardwalk and nights watching TV.”

“Sit down please. Hannah, get us some snacks and soft drinks please.”

“Right away senator. Fruit and vegetable plate and iced tea?” Joe glanced at Sorana for approval, and then gave Hannah the thumbs up. They sat at the round table in the private room adjoining his office.

They each noticed the other’s ring finger, naked, providing an answer to one question. “The life of a senator; don’t you have anyone special in your life?”

“I was married for a few years, but she died from cancer in 2009.”

“I’m so sorry. I shouldn’t have asked.”

“No Sorana. I’m glad you did. It’s time I moved on.”

“So you didn’t have any children?”

“No, that was a mixed blessing. I wanted a family. What about you?”

“Well, I was engaged for two years, but he cheated on me so we called it off. At least I didn’t marry someone who would be unfaithful. But at our age, I’m wondering if I’ll ever find love.”

“Our age? You’re only 31 dear. I’m sure any man would be lucky to have a beautiful and intelligent woman like you.”

Sorana blushed. “Well, several have made offers, but after the engagement, I’m hesitant to trust.”

Joe took Sorana’s hand and looked at her with a gentle smile. “You could always trust me.” Sorana put her other hand on top of Joe’s, more than just flirting.

“Yes. You were my first and best love.”

Hannah noticed the intimate moment and knocked gently on the door. “May I bring this in now?” The senator took his hands away and gestured her in. “Thank you Hannah. That looks perfect.” Sorana agreed. Hannah closed the door behind her as she left. Joe and Sorana had an intimate and joyful lunch together.

George knocked on the door. “Senator, it’s time for that vote.” Joe looked at his watch.

“Thank you George. Is that the only vote this afternoon?”

“Yes senator. You have a rare afternoon off.”

“Perfect. Sorana. I have to be away for about an hour, then I’d love to spend the rest of the day with you. Are you free?”

Sorana made a tongue in cheek pretense of propriety. “Yes, senator Bosco. I would like that very much” and shook his hand. Joe rolled his eyes.

“It’s Joe, dear, remember? Hannah, would you please help Sorana for the next hour and I’ll meet her back here at 3:00.”

“Of course senator. Sorana, would you like to go to the Smithsonian for a bit. I can have the senator meet you there.”

“Oh, that sounds lovely. Is that OK?”

Joe gave Hannah thumbs up, and then said to Sorana. “Of course, much better. Now you know why I hired Hannah. Have my driver bring her to the museum and I’ll meet her there at 3:00.”

“Very good senator.” Hannah nodded to Joe, then whispered to Sorana. “Sometimes these votes go longer so don’t worry if he’s a little late.”

Joe and George hurried out to make the vote.

Sorana walked leisurely through the museum, admiring the marvels of flight, from daVinci’s flying machine to the space shuttle. She was every bit as lovely as Joe

had thought when they were kids, but now she was a striking, mature woman. Her pleated grey skirt over cranberry knee socks, L.L. Bean blouse and cardigan indicated her New England education. She had gone to Boston College, just a few miles from Harvard where Joe went to school. But they never ran into each other there.

Several men made extended glances at her while she walked; Sorana smiled back at them but didn't encourage any more. She was secretly glad that Joe was ready and able for a relationship and she still felt that initial chemistry they had as youngsters.

The senator found her at the museum. He came up behind her and gave her a friendly hug and kiss on the cheek; others noticed this public display of affection. "Isn't that senator Bosco?" said a man who was admiring Sorana.

"I'm afraid so, Bob" said his friend. "Women like that aren't available very long. Looks like the senator has a new love or a mistress."

"Oh, Joe. You made it on time."

Joe took her hand and walked her away from the others. "So, what would you like to do now?"

Sorana squeezed his hand, acknowledging his gesture. "I like the museum but maybe we could go somewhere a little quieter to talk."

As a senator in Washington, D.C., Joe knew all the best places for quiet conversation, whether it was for behind the scenes deal making or for greeting a constituent visiting from New Jersey. They went to one of his favorite cafés and found a table for a glass of wine. They sat in a corner booth, but not completely in private; several people noticed their body language but couldn't hear their conversation. He was not ashamed to be seen in public with a beautiful woman.

"I didn't think I would see you again. Thank you for coming to visit me."

"To be honest, I was hoping it would turn out this way. I have been so blessed except for having someone to share with. That's when I remembered how happy we were as kids. I guess that sounds a little desperate." She lowered her head.

Joe held her hand. "Sorana. You know what I always say. Everything happens for a reason. We were meant to meet again. You are not desperate; you need the right person in your life. So do I. Maybe that's why I haven't moved on."

Sorana felt relaxed and gave Joe a smile that let him know how happy she was. "Is it a problem if we spend time together? I wouldn't want to complicate your public image."

“My image will probably improve being seen with you. My colleagues are always trying to set me up with a lawyer clerking at the court or one of their staff interns. That’s not what I’m looking for.”

“Well, I’ll let you decide how much time you can give me. What hotel would you recommend here?” Her coy question suggested a lot more than a recommendation. Both of them knew where this was going.

“A hotel? Nonsense. You can stay at my townhouse in Georgetown. Where is your baggage?”

“At Union Station in a locker. I took the train from New Jersey.”

Joe confirmed his feelings with a hand on Sorana’s arm. “That’s fine. After our drink, I’ll call my driver and we can pick it up. Then we can go freshen up before dinner.”

They went to Union Station. Joe went inside while Sorana stayed in the limo. A bird whistled in a tree just outside the entrance. A homeless man sat near the lockers holding a sign that read ‘*can you spare some love?*’ Joe reached into his pocket and took out the twenty-dollar bill he had found that morning.

“Here you go friend.”

The circle was completed. It wasn’t luck, just the way it was supposed to be.