

### **Will The Real Mrs. Deisson, Please Stand Up?**

It was one of those magical, high desert spring nights. The warm evening breeze was gently caressing the valley and the campus lights seemed to twinkle in the quietness. The gray, blustery days of March seemed to have finally surrendered to the inevitable promise of the long, dry summer. Everyone had long grown weary of half of Arizona blowing by each afternoon and the family of Rio Grande University (along with the rest of Albuquerque!) seemed to feel just a touch more vibrant, alive, and positive when sparkling, clear days finally enveloped the campus.

It was a wonderful time at RGU. After a great season the Caballeros had reached the semi-finals of basketball for Division II schools. Their play had far exceeded any intercollegiate success the school had ever known. (Why, in the preseason they'd even given the University of New Mexico a run for their money down at "The Pit" on UNM's campus and the Lobos later lost by just a whisker to perennial powerhouse Kentucky in the second round of the NCAA's!) Keith Matson, the affable Caballero coach, was the toast of Albuquerque and his star player, Christopher Deisson, could have run for mayor.

On that early April evening LeAnne Alman sat on the steps of Grayson Hall soaking in the stars and the kiss of the evening breeze when suddenly she saw Carrie run up the sidewalk from the parking lot. Carrie was ecstatic, she saw her sister and squealed, "LeAnne, he did it!"

"Did what? Who?", LeAnne replied, trying to calm her twin sister down.

"Christopher," Carrie gasped, holding out her left hand under the chandelier of the porch, "he proposed!"

"You're kidding!", LeAnne giggled. She held her sister's hand and admired the ring. It was absolutely beautiful, very clean and simple and so very elegant. It was exactly the style that you would have expected from Christopher Deisson. "Quick, we've got to go call Mom and Dad. They won't believe it!"

The two sisters ran into the dorm but it took a few minutes for them to get to their room to call Durango because girls were pouring out of their rooms from all over the building to admire Carrie's ring and hug and laugh. It seemed such a fitting end for the perfect romance which had begun so very inauspiciously three years before.

Carrie had been a shy little freshman, completely new to the RGU campus, and all alone except for her twin sister. The two of them had left Durango for the first time for the big adventure of heading off to college. Registration was new and scary and exciting for the girls but they soon assimilated into life on campus. Carrie soon found herself immersed in the various general courses leading to her Elementary Ed major as LeAnne was often around the Apodaca Science Complex as she was taking RGU's Pre-Veterinary program.

The differences in their majors meant that the girls each soon developed a network of friends and acquaintances of their own but it never crossed their minds to room with anyone else. They were more than twins, they were the dearest of friends. They even knew how to fight in love. Early on they established a tradition of E-mailing their parents every night, even if they each only added a line or so. Friday night was the traditional call home, "Just because we want to hear your voices and make sure you're not out scooting around town and paying someone in the dorm to type the note!", their dad would jest.

It was early February of her freshman year that Carrie had first met Christopher. She was in the dorm lobby, scanning a note on the bulletin board about a change in the kitchenette policies when someone gently tapped her on the shoulder. She turned around to see the 6'4" of the handsomest frame she'd ever laid eyes on. It was Christopher Deisson, star shooting guard of the Caballeros and probably the most recognizable guy on campus. He was dressed in casual slacks and a reddish sweater that was paling in comparison to the blush that was rising on his face.

"Oh, heavens," he stammered. "I'm so sorry. I thought you were Lisa Sorenson... I'm supposed to meet her here because we're supposed to do some research together for Kinesiology." The bright young man laughed and concluded, "I'm so embarrassed!"

"Hey, no problem," Carrie answered. "I don't think I know Lisa and I hardly know what Kinesiology is so I don't think I can help you at all."

"My fault," Christopher continued, "I'm really sorry."

"Oh, please, don't be," Carrie assured him. "It's really no big deal at all."

"Well," he said and sort of lifted his eyebrows and gave a bit of a crooked smile, "I'm not at all in the habit of tapping strange ladies on the shoulder. I tell you what, perhaps I can make it up to you if you'd let me take you to the Valentine's Banquet next week... that is unless you have a date or other plans or something."

"Why, that would be uh... great!", she shrugged her shoulders and laughed. She couldn't believe he'd asked her but there wasn't an ounce of her that had any reservation about accepting his offer. He seemed like such a nice guy and there wasn't a girl on campus who wouldn't have been honored to have been seen on his arm.

"Great!", he laughed. "It's a date then."

"Uh, yeah!", she smiled, "Oh, by the way, my name's Carrie Alman."

Carrie was astounded when he tapped his forehead and replied shyly, "I think I knew that." The young man blushed again and said, "Oh, and my name's Christopher, Christopher Deisson."

Carrie couldn't believe this was happening. Christopher Deisson, the dream of every girl on campus, was introducing himself to her, a little freshman, as though she shouldn't know who he was. "How very unassuming and innocent he must be", she thought to her self as she quickly looked down at the floor, rolled her eyes, blinked, and said, "Uh, I knew that too..."

Is this the stuff of which romances are made? I think so.

And so it was that the three year relationship began by a chance meeting in the Grayson Hall lobby. From that first date at the banquet held in the restaurant at the top of the tram on Sandia Crest, Carrie found out that Christopher Deisson was a perfect gentleman. It was the first of many dates- library dates, long walks, concerts of every fashion. She never ceased to be amazed at the breadth of his interests.

Carrie would have assumed that a hot shot college jock would be quite singularly focused on sports 27 hours a day but she found that this was not at all true with Christopher. Together they attended concerts and theater events as diverse as international folk themes to light jazz to the classic masters. She reveled in joining him to experience many broadly talented artists such as Bobby McFerrin, James Galway, Michael Card, Loreena McKennitt, and even the dust raising "Corrales Cowtown" event that featured Emmylou Harris.

Fairly early on, Carrie recognized that Christopher really knew the way to a woman's heart. The only man that she'd ever known who seemed to have the same sense of timing and skill was her dad. Ed Alman had often told her brother, Victor, when they were growing up, "A man who really understands a woman's heart knows certain things. One of them is that you have to give her a lot of little gifts, but those little gifts never make up for the fact that you've got to give her a big one once in a while... The little ones mean as much to her as a big one but they never make up for it. If a man tries to get away with just a big one once in a while she'll resent you, but if you only try to give the little ones she'll wonder what she's worth to you."

It seemed that someone had taught Christopher the same lesson. She often found little surprise notes and cards and flowers and trinkets that he'd left for her to discover. She also, randomly, was absolutely caught off guard when he'd say, "Hey, Sunday afternoon we have plans- if it's o.k. with you." Then, out of the blue they'd get in the car, go down to the airport and meet with another couple to fly to Phoenix for a Diamondbacks game or to Tucson for the "Old Pueblo Art Festival". Other times it was a catered picnic at the desert dunes toward Roswell, the petroglyphs near Rio Rancho, or skiing at Taos.

Carrie never questioned why they didn't make those trips alone. She knew, instinctively, that Christopher had an exceedingly high regard for her reputation and for his. Whenever mutual friends would suggest anything that was even close to an area where Christopher would fear for her reputation he would immediately politely

decline. The thought of putting his love into an awkward position would never have crossed his mind. He was much too jealous of how people thought of her and the kind of gentleman he was determined to be.

It was nearly a year before Carrie found something out about Christopher that surprised her somewhat. He came from a fabulously wealthy home. His father was a man of great reputation and influence in Texas politics. She had no idea that at one time, during the Reagan and Bush administrations, that as a personal favor to President Reagan, Clark Deisson had stepped out of his family's corporate structure, at noticeable sacrifice, to serve as "Special Envoy for Asian Economic Development", a cabinet level position that he held with great notoriety for more than ten years.

Carrie didn't think that anyone on campus knew this about Christopher. Other than the fact that he was such a considerate gentleman, so very mature and noble, he just fit in. He could laugh with the best of them and enjoyed a clean, harmless practical joke as much as the next guy (and he was very good and creative in that department). Many times his teammates were the surprised targets of his creative genius and he'd laugh even twice as hard when they got him in return.

Over the next three years Carrie and LeAnne spent many happy evenings over at the Carlson Fieldhouse cheering on the Caballeros in victory or defeat. She truly grew to enjoy his games for he was such an excellent competitor. Both teammate and opponent alike were better for having played with Christopher Deisson.

Every once in a while Christopher would flash a move that would leave the opposition completely out of their Nikes but Christopher would quickly assure them, "Hey, don't worry about it. I won't get away with that twice." At times, when he'd make a move that would bring the crowd to its feet in thunderous applause and amazement, it was as though Christopher was as surprised as everyone else in the gym at what he'd done. His eyes would get big and he'd just shrug his shoulders and laugh. He was so innocent and uncomplicated.

Christopher Deisson was just a joy to be around.

All of this led up to the fateful Saturday night when he'd proposed. The two of them had gone to a wonderful Scottish Folk Festival at The Albuquerque Center for the Arts. When the concert was over Christopher suggested they go to an old mom and pop

malt cream shop near the campus on Menaul. "I'm in the mood for a milkshake," he proclaimed.

"Oh," Carrie protested gently, "I don't think I could drink much."

"That's o.k.," he said as he pulled into the little parking lot by the side of the building. When they stepped inside Henry and Ida were the only ones in the place, busy behind the counter. Christopher stepped up to the counter and said, "Mr. Alvarez, I'd like a large banana shake for me and a small chocolate mint one for the lovely lady," and he turned but then said back over his shoulder, "Oh, and would you put a cherry on top of each please?"

When the Alvarez' finished making the shakes they were both fighting to keep from smiling as Christopher paid them at the register. The two of them sat down and began to work on their shakes when suddenly Carrie noticed that there was a small string hanging from the center of the bottom of her maraschino cherry. She pulled the cherry up and found that there was a small plastic bag attached to the end of the string. Inside the plastic bag there was a hand written note in Christopher's very distinctive, symmetrical printing...

*I love you pretty lady.  
Will you let me love you forever?*

The string was connected to something inside the cherry and when gently Carrie bit it in half the most beautiful ring was revealed.

When she calmed down Ida Alvarez gave her a long hug and said, "Oh, Sweetheart, I'm so happy for you. You've got a fine man here, you know?"

"Oh yes, ma'm," Carrie sparkled.

"When do you think you'll have this happy occasion?", Mr. Alvarez asked as he dried his hands on his apron.

"Oh Henry," his wife teasingly hit him on the arm, "How can she know that? She just said 'yes' only a minute ago!"

"Well," he shrugged, "I don't know. I thought you women had this kind of thing all figured out from the time that you first set eyes on us. After all, you did when you proposed to me!"

"Oh!", Ida said as she hit him on the shoulder again, this time a bit harder.

"Actually," Christopher interjected, "I sort of hoped that we could be married on your parents' anniversary, October 22."

It was all too wonderful. Every part of the moment was absolutely perfect. As Carrie shared the whole story with clusters of girls all over the dorm, and then again to her parents on the phone, everyone sighed and thought how very considerate Christopher Deisson was and how blessed Carrie Alman was to be his love.

The next few months went in a whirlwind for there was so much planning and preparation to be done. LeAnne sat down to help chart the items that needed to be taken care of and when they needed to be done. By April the church needed to be reserved. In June the announcements needed to be at the printer. The dress needed to be finalized and started by August. With September the various trappings and decorations and other details needed to be finalized upon.

Late in May Rio Grande University matriculated a very promising class with Christopher Deisson as one of the most honored graduates. Carrie was so very proud of him and knew that she was the luckiest girl on earth to be wearing his ring and cherishing his promise.

Christopher had many offers for positions in business, not only because of his father's name and reputation, but also for because his work and ethic at RGU had proved him to be a cut above the average graduate. As the two young people considered their options Christopher made it clear that his highest priority was to stay in the area until Carrie had a chance to finish her schooling at RGU and then they, together, would consider what was best for them after that. As a result Christopher took a position as an intern in a situation that was decidedly less pay and somewhat less of a "career plum" than might have been expected, but he was more than happy to do it. Carrie was his priority in life and their relationship was always going to remain above his own personal interests.

Immediately after the ceremony Christopher moved out of Landry Hall into a wonderful little apartment in the foothills of Sandia Crest, a site that overlooked the sprawling city in the high desert valley. He worked hard to furnish the place in just the manner that he felt would please his new bride when late October rolled around.

Carrie, of course, saw the apartment but only when she was accompanied by LeAnne or a group of friends. Christopher was so very careful about her reputation that he was not going to allow anything to happen that might give people reason to question or gossip. That is the type of man he was.

I wish I could tell you that everything led to a wedding that was just as perfect as the courtship and romance, but it really didn't work that way. Carrie loved being loved. Carrie loved being in loved. Ms. Alman talked a lot about her planning and what she was going to do, but the truth is that she never quite got out of the planning mode. As the weeks leading up to the ceremony rushed by she still talked a lot about what she was going to do. Meanwhile, the deadline for ordering the cake and printing the announcements and reserving the church and all other details went by and nothing got done.

Sadly, when October 22 rolled around Carrie was still writing letters to friends and calling old school chums to talk about all the wonderful things she was going to do to get ready for the wedding. As a result, when 11:00 came there was no Carrie to be found. She was still at the florist considering what type of flowers would go best with the bridesmaids' dresses.

At 4:15 Carrie showed up at the church, her gray sweats askew, but the four people who still were at the facility all universally agreed that she did have some very pretty flowers.

**Is this the dumbest story you've ever heard? It might be. It could have gone like this...**

Springtime in the high desert can be wonderful. But one momentous Saturday night one young Rio Grande University co-ed, LeAnne Alman, had a terrible dilemma. On the one hand she wanted to stay forever in the arms of her beloved, Christopher Deisson, while on the other hand she couldn't wait to get back to Grayson Hall where she knew that her wonderful, goofy twin sister would be waiting. She had the most



special news to share- Christopher, star of the Caballeros basketball team, son of a former cabinet member, and the sweetest guy you have ever met had proposed to her!

So it was that on that warm, sparkling spring evening LeAnne Alman ran up the steps to her sister and said, "You won't believe it, Christopher proposed to me!"

"You're kidding!", Carrie squealed and giggled. She embraced her sister and admired the elegant ring on her hand. "Quick, we've got to go call Mom and Dad. They won't believe it!", and the two sisters ran into the dorm.

It took them a while to get to their room to call Durango because residents were pouring out of their rooms from all over the building to admire LeAnne's ring and hug and laugh. Each one wanted to hear how he'd proposed and every girl swooned when LeAnne revealed the story of how Christopher had arranged it all with the sweet little old couple who ran the malt shop near campus. It all seemed such a fitting end for the perfect romance which had begun so very inauspiciously three years before.

LeAnne and Carrie had come to RGU as shy little freshman three years before. Together they'd left Durango for the first time for the big adventure of heading off to college and adulthood. Everything at Rio Grande was new and exciting (and a little scary) for the girls but they soon assimilated into life on campus. LeAnne immersed herself in the various general courses in the pre-Veterinary program while Carrie took the track leading toward a degree in Elementary Education.

Each girl soon established her own circle of friends but they still remained as they had always been, incredibly close to each other and to their parents back in Colorado. Every evening they'd share the events of the day together and would never go to bed without reading the daily E-mail from Mom and Dad and responding in kind.

During early February of her Freshman year LeAnne had some incredible news to tell her sister and her parents. She'd been asked to the "Caballeros Valentine's Banquet" by one of the most admired and coveted young men on campus, Christopher Deisson. It had all been so very cute, for he'd mistaken her for another girl whom he had been assigned to work on a project with in Kinesiology.

After embarrassing himself a bit in the dorm lobby the young man decided the noble and honorable thing to do would be to ask the young lady out, and so he did. There

wasn't a fraction of a seconds hesitation in LeAnne's response. She was so easily drawn to him for he was handsome, a bit unassuming, and so very courteous. Who wouldn't want to go out with him? There wasn't an ounce of her that regretted that he'd mistaken her for Lisa Sorenson.

With that first chance meeting in the Grayson Hall lobby and the first date at the restaurant that overlooked Albuquerque from the top of Sandia Crest a relationship was born that became deeper and sweeter than LeAnne could have dreamed. Through their many library dates, long walks, concerts events LeAnne never ceased to be amazed at Christopher's breadth of interests and his impeccably considerate manner.

You might assume that a hot shot college jock would be singularly focused on sports 27 hours a day but this was not at all true with Christopher. They attended concerts and theater events from international folk themes to light jazz to the classic masters. LeAnne reveled in joining Christopher in enjoying the spectrum of such talented artists as Bobby McFerrin, James Galway, Michael Card, Loreena McKennitt, and even the dust raising "Corrales Cowtown" event featuring Emmylou Harris.

It was evident from the beginning that Christopher really knew the way to a woman's heart. He seemed to understand, instinctively, that a man has to give a woman a lot of little gifts, but, at the same time, little gifts never make up for a big one once in a while. Leanne often found little surprise notes and cards and flowers and trinkets that had been left for her to discover. Randomly she would be caught off guard when he'd say, "Hey, Sunday afternoon we have plans- if it's o.k. with you." Then, out of the blue they'd get in the car, go down to the airport and meet with another couple to fly to Phoenix for a Diamondbacks game or Tucson for the "Old Pueblo Art Festival". He always found ways to surprise her whether it was a catered picnic at the desert dunes in Roswell, the petroglyphs near Rio Rancho, or inner-tubing in the snow at Taos.

Even on little excursions Christopher had an exceedingly high regard for her reputation and for his. Whenever mutual friends would suggest anything that was even close to an area where Christopher would fear for LeAnne's reputation he would immediately politely decline. The thought of putting his love into an awkward position would never have crossed his mind. He was much too jealous of how people thought of her and the kind of gentleman he was determined to be.

At first LeAnne didn't even know that Christopher came from a fabulously wealthy home. His father, Clark Deisson, was a man of great reputation and influence in Texas Republican politics. For ten years, during the Reagan and Bush administrations, as a personal favor to President Reagan he's surrendered the corporate reins of his family empire and served as "Special Envoy for Asian Economic Development".

Very few people on RGU's campus knew this about Christopher. He was such a considerate gentleman, so very mature and noble, he just fit in. He could laugh with the best of them and enjoyed a clean, harmless practical joke as much as the next guy (and he was very good and creative in that department). Many times his Caballero teammates were the surprised targets of his creative genius but he'd also laugh twice as hard when they found a way to get him in return.

For three years LeAnne and Carrie spent many happy evenings over at the Carlson Fieldhouse cheering on the Caballeros in victory or defeat. Win or lose, Christopher was a gentleman and a joy to watch in competition. He was, without question, a crowd favorite, but more than that, he was also a wonderful competitor who made everyone around him better- teammate or opponent. In every facet of life Christopher Deisson was a joy to be around.

All of this wonderful, refreshing creativity and caring could be seen in the manner of his proposal. After a magical evening of Scottish folk music and dancing at The Albuquerque Center For The Arts found the young couple at a mom and pop malt shop that Henry and Ida Alvarez had run near the Rio Grande campus for as long as anyone could remember.

Anyone who knew Christopher would have known that he would have found a way to be wonderfully romantic as he prepared with the old couple to present LeAnne with a milkshake that contained a ring in a maraschino cherry and a sealed note that read...

*I love you pretty lady.  
Will you let me love you forever?*

Christopher was even prepared when the funny old gentleman asked, "And when can we expect to see this happy occasion?"

"I'd actually hoped that we could be married on her parents' anniversary, October 22," was the young man's response.

It was all much too wonderful. Every part of the moment was absolutely perfect. When LeAnne returned to Grayson Hall and retold the story with clusters of girls all over the dorm, and then again to her parents on the phone, everyone sighed and thought how very considerate Christopher Deisson was and how blessed LeAnne Alman was to be his love.

The whirlwind before the ceremony brought a great deal of planning and preparation. The sisters charted out the items that needed to be done and made a detailed checklist so that each could be accomplished in a timely fashion. On their calendar they figured that by April the church needed to be reserved. The announcements to be at the printer by mid-June. LeAnne's dress had to be started by mid-August and September would find just the last decorations and other details before the big event. LeAnne was determined not to let the planning and busy-ness of the preparation detract from the time that she would commit to growing with Christopher. Their relationship was so much more important than a one day event.

Oh, don't get me wrong, she knew that the event held great significance as a marking and passage in their relationship, but the ceremony was going to be secondary to the life that they were building together. It was only a very important moment of passage, not the end goal of her commitment to him.

Graduation in May came and went with Christopher receiving many honors and accolades for athletic and academic contributions that he'd made to the university in his four years. LeAnne was so very proud of him and knew that she was the luckiest girl on earth to be wearing his ring and cherishing his promise.

Though Christopher had many offers for positions in the work force but as the two young people considered their options Christopher made it clear that his highest priority was to stay in the area until Carrie had a chance to finish her pre-Vet courses and then they, together, would move to Colorado State, Iowa, or UC Davis- wherever it seemed best for LeAnne to fulfill her childhood dream. Because of that priority Christopher took a position as an intern in a situation that was decidedly less pay and somewhat less of a "career plum" than might have been expected, but he was more

than happy to do it. LeAnne was his priority in life so he put their relationship and her fulfillment above his own singular interests.

Soon after graduation Christopher moved out of Landry Hall into a little apartment in the foothills of Sandia Crest, a wonderful site that overlooked the sprawling city in the high desert valley. He furnished it in just the manner that he felt would please his new bride when late October rolled around.

LeAnne, of course, saw the apartment but only when she was accompanied by her sister or a group of friends. Her fiancé was so very careful about her reputation that he was not going to allow anything to happen that might give people reason to question or gossip. He regarded her much too highly for that.

And it happened exactly as they'd charted it. Both the bride and the groom invested themselves into the relationship and into the priorities of the other so that even with the expected glitches of life they came to October 22 ready to move into the next phase of their lives together.

When that magical day rolled around the church was filled with friends and relatives and well-wishers from all around. Every point of the ceremony was wonderfully refreshing and cared for down the smallest detail for LeAnne had balanced her priorities in life perfectly. She had prepared for this moment for months and all of her caring and hard work paid wonderful dividends on that most special day.

With her parents on the front row and her maid of honor, Carrie, leading the way LeAnne came down the aisle exactly at 11:00 a.m. and she was absolutely radiant. As she heard the music and soaked in the experience the lovely bride was so thankful that she'd invested the hours in preparation for that moment. She thought to herself, "It was a lot of work, but for the love of Christopher I wouldn't have done it any other way."

As LeAnne looked at her beloved smiling, ready to receive her she knew that all of the effort and hard work had been more than worth it. She could read in his eyes that he knew all she had put into the moment, but right at that instant she was overwhelmed with all that he'd done for her that her own efforts seemed trivial and inconsequential. In fact, looking back over the months of preparation she saw it all as a joy for she'd done it for him.

I can tell you that there wasn't a person in the audience that day who didn't think to themselves, "This is the way it should be when two people make a commitment to each other."

And do you know what? There wasn't a person in the room who whispered to their neighbor, "Look at all LeAnne's done! Isn't she a terrible legalist?"

*For this is the love of God,  
that we keep His commandments:  
and His commandments are not grievous.*

*- I John 5:3*