

The Kiss

July 2006

Lisabeth Walsh and I had been friendly for a few months. Nothing more than casual friends, until a few weeks ago when the flurries overcame us both. We were consumed by romance ten days ago, and have been riding the Cyclone non-stop since. There is something unexpectedly fulfilling about being with Lisabeth. One evening she asked, "Why do you love me?"

Somewhat surprised by my own reply, I answered, "Because being with you quiets the voices in my head."

Last Wednesday evening I swung by the restaurant where Lisabeth works. Wednesday is never my favorite day of the week because it is "report day" for parole, my once-a-week of having to present myself in person for questioning, drug testing, and whatever else might be on the mind of my parole officer. Heading to see Lisabeth afterwards seemed just the thing to ease the sting from the continued burden of being on parole. Plus, I relished the free food, and an opportunity to simply be near her.

During the subway ride downtown on the 1 Train I thought it might be cute to wait across the street from the restaurant for a few minutes and watch her work. She is a hostess at The Cowgirl Hall of Fame, which has large floor to ceiling windows so I could spy her talking to customers and answering the phone. I just had this goofy romantic idea of watching her from afar while she did not know I was there; just wanting to enjoy her beauty.

Listening to my iPod during the subway, thoughts of her were warming, and washing away the lingering stench parole leaves on my soul. By the time I got above ground I was grooving to Nirvana. Having my player on shuffle it landed on the MTV Unplugged rendition of Kurt Cobain's "Numb" which I'd never heard before.

I was so totally into the Nirvana song that I bounced it back to the beginning to listen more as I approached the corner of Hudson and Tenth Street in the West Village. I could see her inside the restaurant talking to a customer. Lisabeth was dressed up in her mandated "cowgirl themed" attire: Her special red straw cowboy hat, with a red bandanna wrapped around her neck.

The moment I planted my feet in a reasonable not-blocking-the-sidewalk place to gaze at Lisabeth she looked up and saw me. A giant smile overcame her face as an equally giant smile overcame mine, and she bolted out of the restaurant to meet me. She skipped to the corner and I skipped to the opposite corner, but there were cars coming and neither of us could cross the street.

And so both of us stood alternating between smiling to each other and looking for a break in the traffic to cross the street. But the cars kept coming and I kept listening to Kurt Cobain crooning in my headphones.

As the traffic changed in our favor it was apparent that Lisabeth was not going to wait for me to cross over to the restaurant side of the street.

The instant traffic permitted we both made towards each other. Meeting in the middle of street we embracing in a passionate kiss, swirling around each other, oblivious to the street, or traffic, or anything else in the world around us. Even if only for just a brief moment my senses were filled with only two things: Lisabeth's energy traveling from our kiss throughout my body, and Nirvana grooving in my earphones.

But we had to get out of the street. As much as I never wanted to end being wrapped up in this moment, briefly forgetting about the world around me, it seemed we ought to get out of the street.

We broke our kiss and hand-in-hand skipped onto the sidewalk.

As we did, a passerby was overheard commenting, "That was sooooo sweet."