

## **A Chance Meeting**

by S. Seiler © 2002 Prosanity World Cafe

Bill had always assumed, somewhere in the untapped depths of his mind, that he would hear bells, or whistles or music ... or something. That was the way that it had always happened in the movies. Boy meets girl, he hears the sounds of soft music echoing through his mind, the birds begin to sing gently in the trees, and suddenly he feels a growing thump-thump in his chest as he draws near to her.

He didn't know. And so, he had always expected some sort of romantic nonsense like that ... some sort of sign to let him know that he had finally found his one and only true heart.

Bill really didn't know.

But still, he knew enough to know that it shouldn't feel like a hunger pang. He figured that fate owed him a little bit more than that.

Nevertheless, that was all that it was.

A hunger pang.

His college career, after nine arduous years, had finally drawn to an unclimactic conclusion. Bill would now be forced to venture out into the world to forge his own destiny; to make his own mark. It wasn't exactly the sort of challenge for which Bill had prepared himself. Bill's idea of a challenge usually involved some sort of five-dollar-all-you-can-eat dinner buffet, and the idea of "making his own mark" usually involved too much beer and no available rest rooms.

To be perfectly honest, Bill suspected that his college degree was more or less honorary, anyway. Primarily because Bill had never really bothered to pass any of the courses for which he had registered. The administration probably felt that Bill, having dropped nearly all of his parent's retirement money on room and board, tuition, books, supplies and especially those little yellow vending machine snack cakes, was entitled to some sort of a degree.

However, what exactly was one expected to do with a bachelor's degree in the "Science and Evolution of Middle Management Study Techniques?" What sort of salary did it pay? Did it involve making side orders of French fries? Had he even registered for a business management course in the first place?

Most importantly, Bill wondered if he would have to discover all of the answers to these complex questions completely and utterly on his own.

And so Bill pondered these questions as he sat staring out of the window in the cafeteria, on what was to be his final day of college.

But then, as fate would have it, a young woman emerged from one of the lounge areas and strolled gently into line just in front of the snack bar. She was the most beautiful woman that Bill had ever seen, or was likely to see, in his entire sad, miserable, lonely life. The woman was about the same age as Bill (give or take), tall and slender, with shoulder length blonde hair and energetic blue eyes which could not help but turn the head of every red-blooded man in the room.

And for the moment, her attention was focused completely on Bill.

Unfortunately, all attempts at advancing were lost when it came to advancing on Bill. Although she was utterly captivating, Bill could not take his eyes from the little yellow snack cake that he was munching. Then, he noticed that she had one too ... and it was then that it hit him.

Out of the blue, a hunger pang. It had to be love.

The woman had felt it too. Obviously, there can be no accounting for personal taste.

Penny, for that was her name, hovered lightly in front of the snack bar for a fleeting moment, attempting to catch Bill's eye. Unable to distract him from his own little yellow snack cake, she decided that it would be better to take a more direct approach, and abruptly sat down at the table next to him.

Now it wasn't as though no one had ever taken an interest in her before: many had. But they were typically conceited and arrogant, and pretty much wanted an attractive girl on their arms that would complement their lofty social status, and who could be exaggerated about to friends. All that Penny had ever wanted -- ever really wanted -- was for somebody to take her seriously. Somebody who could spend a little bit of time with her -- actually talk with her, listen to her views and see her beliefs as being important, if to no one else but her. Unfortunately, Penny seemed to get tied up with every mindless jerk capable of breaking her heart without even the common decency of breaking stride.

This time, however, it might be different.

"Hi," she began hopefully, but so softly that Bill had almost missed it. She hoped that the stranger had not seen her blush. She was so nervous.

"Hi," Bill responded. She was cute. No doubt about it. She looked so beautiful to Bill: strong, and yet somehow fragile. Bill thought that she looked kind of small sitting there ... all alone ... a very strange quality which Bill had understood all too well.

He wanted to talk with her.

He needed to talk with her.

After what seemed an eternity, he finally spoke. "Are you going to eat that?" he said. As an added emphasis, he poked his pudgy index finger repeatedly toward the little yellow snack cake that she had purchased from the counter.

Bill felt terrible. Were these the only words that he could manage?

What was the use, anyway? She could easily choose anybody in the world with whom to share the afternoon. Anybody at all. Assuming that she was really interested in him (and he highly doubted that one), how could he possibly keep her for long? Sooner or later, she would become bored and move on. It was already fated, and the prudent course of action was obvious: Let it be.

It was always much better to let these types of thing go rather than to dwell on them. Bill had to face facts. Life had dealt him a very poor hand indeed, and there was nothing more about it that he could do.

The odd thing was that Penny had been thinking exactly the same thing.

And so, for the next few minutes Bill stared uncomfortably at the little yellow snack cake that she had given him. Penny stared forward at some imaginary target. And neither spoke until it was time to leave.

Outside, it was a fine morning, full of promise. It wasn't too hot, or too cold. Sometime in the early morning hours, it had rained slightly. But that was to be expected, and the weather had righted itself again by sunrise. The sky was now a crystal blue, and the sun was shining brighter than it had done in days.

It was the kind of day when you could look out of your window and see for miles and miles and miles ...

... but first, you needed to open your eyes.