

Silvery Soul Mates

Is it Ever too Late to Acknowledge your Soul Mate?

By: R. Renée Bembry

I realized she was my soul mate, but I could not run my fingers through her long, silvery hair.

Silvery grey was my own hair. The years had passed so slowly yet, somehow quickly. All at once it seemed the wrinkles had appeared on my newly freckled forehead the very afternoon I discovered her.

Strange how you can know a person for years and not know them for the same years. That's the way it was with Mrs. Silvery Hair. I cannot disclose her name, for like me, she has a life to complete... an adorable family with whom to complete it. And thus, it is her locks, wind swaying, glittering with sunlight, to which I must refer. Never before had I known grayness could be so alluring.

It was her eyes and her smile that caught me as she tickled her grandchild's toes at the annual neighborhood barbecue. Grandparent myself, I understood the smile embracing the two-year-old lying on the blanket beside her. It was when she looked up and transferred her smile to me, that I became lost... taken aback... disheveled.

High school kiddish I felt as our pupils embraced. Deliberation played no role. My eyes simply would not or could not let hers go. Nor would her eyes release mine. My brain, my consciousness warned me trouble lay in wait if I did not turn my head soon. But it wasn't until Wifey offered me a tumbler of punch that I became capable of prying my fixated marbles away.

Wifey was saying something about the new in-ground pool the neighbors had recently installed. I think she was suggesting we install one in our own backyard. But I couldn't be sure. Odd... I usually doted on every word that came from my better half's mouth.

Or, at least I thought I doted. Right now I find myself wondering if maybe I wasn't really doting after all. If maybe I'd taught myself to pay attention... to hear every word for the sake of matrimony, because as Wifey spoke to me, I could not help thinking about how I played Little Piggy with my grandchild's toes and tickled them, beaming all the while, just like Mrs. Silvery Hair had just done with her grandchild.

Glancing over Wifey's shoulders to rest my eyes on youthful grandmother's silvery locks once more; I noticed her dazzling grays were still encapsulating me even as she tipped her tumbler of punch... even as her long smooth neck, still lovingly smooth for a grandmother, engulfed the cool sweet liquid. ...and then... it dawned on me...

Mrs. Silvery Hair usually spent more time drinking punch than eating at these outings just like I did; which was why Wifey, who knew me well, had brought me the drink refill.

But that wasn't all; Mrs. Silvery Hair liked to watch old movies. She talked about them all the time. I liked old movies too. I talked about them mostly while conversing with her. Wifey didn't care for Fred and Ginger's dancing, Judy's singing, or Natalie almost bearing it all as Gypsy Rose Lee. In fact, Wifey wasn't really the romantic type. Comedy was her thing – especially current comedy. Give her a modern day comic and you are certain to get a rise out of her. Neither Jerry Lewis, Dick Van Dyke, nor the Three Stooges could give her the same belly busting chuckle.

I used to think most women liked older actors; black and white flicks; bring me flowers and pull out my chair; but Wifey set

me straight. She never went for any of that girly stuff. Not that she wasn't feminine... She was just different. Modern. At least, I used to think that was all there was to it.

Now...

In hindsight...

I'm thinking...

I may have been wrong all those many years ago.

And then...

It occurred to me that Mrs. Silvery Hair liked horseback riding competitions, and hotdogs on plain bread with a single stream of mustard, and tuna on dry bread with lettuce and tomato; just as I liked those things.

I supposed many people liked horseback riding and hotdogs with little mustard. But tuna on dry bread with lettuce and tomato... Somehow... perhaps in my imagination, but it didn't seem likely many people had a fetish for a sandwich made like that.

"I can check into it," my mouth muttered to Wifey.

Not all together certain what I was suppose to be checking into, I escaped into the house... my blue marbles enveloping Mrs. Silvery Hair's grey pearls as I strolled the short distance from the yard.

I wasn't inside two minutes when a voice whispered from behind me, "So you finally figured it out?"

Mrs. Silvery Hair's voice. Had she followed me inside? I could've continued to pile potato chips on my plastic plate until the bowl was empty and chips were falling from the dish to the floor. But that would've been rude. Still, somehow, rudeness verses facing her didn't sound all that bad right now.

What a life! Here I was sixtyish. Forty years had passed since my dad told me I was a man now. That I could do anything. But he never told me I could lose my heart after thirty years of marriage.

“Look at me,” her whispers commanded.

My marbles scanned the room as my wobbling legs obeyed and turned toward the whispers. As if by fate, all was clear, only she and I were in the room. So what was I worried about?

“You never knew. That’s why you married Wifey,” she stated as if she’d been appointed to annotate my past actions in the midst of my ignorance.

“Knew what?” I asked. Don’t know why. Stupid I guess. I knew exactly what she was talking about. The past appeared in front of me as if it were yesterday. All thirty years just yesterday ago. I recalled how Mrs. Silvery Hair, even long before her hair had turned, had openly doted on me.

But for my part, I resolved to done on Wifey.

“You have always been my Soul Mate,” she stated.

I tried to speak. But my mouth would not open. For what would I say? What could I say? ‘All at once, I’ve come to realize the eternal emptiness I’d spent decades of life hoping Wifey would fill... even thought for many years she had filled... and the loneliness I’d kept re-convincing myself would soon disappear, could only have been relieved by... you... Mrs. Silvery Hair...’

All my life, it seemed, I had sought her.

Even as...

All my life... she’d been right here... a mere three houses away... 60 footsteps... a soft yell... and yet... although she was my soul mate, I could never run my fingers through her long flowing

hair.