

Larry

by Stephanie Silver

Chapter 2

Larry fastened his eyes intently on Belinda, giving her a long, soft smoldering look that any girl who has ever been there recognizes almost immediately. She was about to be kissed.

Belinda knew she was about to be kissed. She welcomed it, tilting her chin up ever so slightly and parting her pursed lips just the tiniest bit. She automatically closed her eyes and held her breath. When Larry's lips finally touched hers, she let the breath out in a very soft, low moan of pleasure. "Mmmm."

The slight parting of her lips was just enough of a signal to Larry to take the kiss a step further. In a moment, his tongue was pushing forward, lightly caressing her lips, and then continuing slowly past them. Belinda let the pressure of his movement force her lips apart. His tongue touched her teeth, lingered a moment as she teasingly stopped him, and then met her tongue when at last she opened.

He pulled his tongue back, eliciting a soft whimper from Belinda, and then pressed back in, the passion of his kiss mirroring the action further down. His hands found her breasts and squeezed softly, causing her to whimper again. Not from pain, but from desire for more.

Belinda changed her mind. It wasn't Larry's smile that she found most attractive. It was the way he kissed.

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Larry's first date, ever, was with Mary Ann Kearns to the high school homecoming dance. His second date was two years later, in college, with Susan Norse, who was a year younger than him and still in high school at the time, again to the high school homecoming dance. Another two years went by before he went on

his third date with Jean Marie Beck, who Larry described as, “so pretty with that long golden hair that I had to take a chance, even though I was scared to death and didn't have any idea what you say to a girl that beautiful.” Apparently, whatever he said, he didn't make much of an impression because when he called her again she literally asked him to leave her alone.

Ouch!

Okay, so you get the idea. Larry was awkward around women. What he wasn't awkward around was horses. Fortunately, Oklahoma had, has, lots of horses.

Except Larry was a business administration major who worked his way through four years at Cameron University by working part time at the bank there in Lawton, just a hop skip and a jump from the college, and only a stone's throw north of his home. When he graduated, the bank offered him a position as bank manager, and since that was the only job offer he got, that's where he stayed.

For the next sixteen years.

During that time he went on at least five more dates, with varying amounts of success. Okay, with varying amounts of non-success.

There was Kim Smith, who had a mustache. Larry meant to ask out her friend, Carrie Krebs, but somehow when he tried to ask Kim if she had Carrie's phone number, it came out as an invitation to go ice skating instead.

Then there was Doreen Tillman, who knew his mother from somewhere, and felt sorry for him. A sympathy date, if you will. Well, Larry felt sorry for her, too. “She needed to watch her weight a little more closely,” he said in that quiet way he has of understating things.

Then came Shauna Kulp, a friend of his sister, Jeannette, who he'd actually known for as long as he could remember. “Cute,” he said, “but kind of like dating your sister. You know?”. Plus, she just wasn't his type. He took her to a museum, where they saw an actual moon rock. “Look, Shauna, a moon rock!” he said “This

little thing actually came from the moon! That big shiny thing up there." Okay, those weren't Larry's actual words. He probably just said something like, "Look, it's a moon rock." No, he probably just read the display placard, and assumed Shauna read it too, and let it go at that. But let's go with my version, just 'cause it sounds better and you don't have to imagine so much. Shauna's response was a yawn followed by a request to take her home. No, not Larry's type at all.

Larry might have actually been able to have had something with Jill Leckhart if it hadn't been for the age difference. They started out with a bowling date one night, and then watched TV at her place two weeks later. There was just something about dating a 42-year-old woman when he was still a month away from his twenty-ninth birthday that made him uncomfortable.

Jill was actually the first girl that Larry ever kissed. It happened one night, after their second date. His second date with Jill was also his second to last date with Jill, and therefore was pretty much the zenith of that relationship. After a night of watching TV, and sitting close together on the couch, it came time for Larry to leave. Feeling bold, thanks to Jill's friendliness on the couch, Larry asked, "Can I kiss you good night?"

Jill allowed as that would be acceptable, and so Larry did his best to summon everything he knew about kissing from watching movies and put it to use. Awkward. That's pretty much all you can say about it. And so short, Larry still had no idea what kissing a girl was like. Well, maybe a small idea, but still just one kiss worth of experience to show for twenty-eight years of living.

Afterward things got even more awkward as Jill followed him to his car. "I just want you to know, I don't kiss like that," she said.

"Like what?" asked Larry.

"With tongues."

Larry was flabbergasted. Yes, seriously. Flabbergasted is the word that describes it. His face turned red, and he stammered for a response, but nothing came out. Flabbergasted. He hadn't even

thought of that. How could she think that he...? He hadn't... He didn't...

Like I say, it was the beginning of the end for his relationship with Jill.

Well, there was that age difference anyway. When the call came the morning after their third date, with Jill saying, "Larry, we need to talk," Larry didn't fret much over the loss.

And finally there was Tonya Pederson. Larry wanted to take her to a rock concert in Oklahoma City, but somehow they ended up going to a church sermon/movie sponsored by her church when bad weather canceled the concert and they had to reschedule. He still tried for the kiss, though. "I was thirty-two years old and had kissed a grand total of one girl in all my life," he said. "Not counting my mother and my sister. And that lone kiss hadn't turned out so well. So I had to try again."

Larry swears to this day that he didn't kiss her "that" way, but her response was indignation - of the righteous kind - and a statement that she didn't kiss "that" way and didn't appreciate him trying it with her.

"Uh, what way is that?" he asked.

"You know!" and it's only in Larry's imagination that he heard her add "you creep" followed by "with your tongue out" followed by a stinging slap on the face.

Well, needless to say, she didn't want a second date.

So that pretty much sums up Larry's love life up to the time I met him. Oh, no it doesn't. No, it doesn't sum it up at all. I left out the most important person in Larry's life to that point. His mom.

A story about Larry wouldn't be complete without his Mom. I know what you're saying, "Mom? What a buzz killer." Oh, just relax. I'll keep this brief. I still have that sex scene I need to get back to. But, you have to understand Larry's relationship with his mom.

Let's see... Larry lived with his mom all his life until she got sick and died a few months before we met on that cruise. She was sixty-five-years-old when she died. Larry was thirty-six.

Larry had a couple years to get ready for it. He knew it would be different without Mom, but he didn't know how different. He knew that living with his mother wasn't the healthiest thing for a young man. Even less healthy for a not-quite-so-young man. Mental health-wise, that is. It's hard to say if he lived with his mom and avoided having relationships with other women because of her, or if it was the other way around and women avoided him because he lived with his mom. A grown man who lives with his mom is kind of hard for some, maybe most, women to deal with. Somehow the two, living with his mom and his difficulties with women, were related, though, and it's hard to say which one was the cause and which one was the symptom.

The point is, Larry knew it wasn't a great way to live, and so it was something of a mixed blessing for him when she finally passed away. After thirty-six years, he was finally free to change his life and live the way he wanted. Hopefully it wasn't too late.

Larry's mom left him a small inheritance, a generous life insurance benefit, and the title to the house. At age thirty-six, with a stable career, he was financially comfortable. And, for the first time in thirty-six years, free.

The first thing he did after the late October funeral was the cruise. Larry saw it as a chance to relax and get comfortable with his new life. It didn't even bother him that he'd be going alone. He preferred it that way. It was symbolic of his new freedom.

Well, then I asked him to dance, and all those memories of his klutzy social life came back. And yet I treated him differently than all the other women in his life ever had. "I stepped on her toe, I know that," he said, speaking of that first dance. "She acted like it was no big deal, like it happened all the time. I don't know. She was just different from any other girl I'd ever met."

Yeah, a little different.

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To be continued....

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