

# love stories

It was the spring of 1983 when I first met my future wife. At this time, we were not aware that we would be together in a few short months. What I did realize was easier to identify. I found her to be very attractive, with a strong personality, an infectious smile and a bit reserved in the setting. Most people would have said she was shy, but I noticed something else was holding her back, shyness had nothing to do with this. At that time, I wasn't sure what it was. I observed, that she was watching the group intently. I was intrigued and captivated, too bad she came with her boyfriend. ☐

About a week later, I met her for the second time. I realized at that point why she was reserved and observant. She had a hearing loss, and this helped her compensate for that loss. The second time we met, we both knew we would be good friends. Two weeks and two meetings and we felt some connection. Nothing yet to indicate that a different relationship was in our future.

A couple of weeks later, this wonderful lady brought another charming lady with her at the weekly gathering of our little group. She was not quite two years old. I'm not sure what this little girl was told before she got to my apartment, but I got the biggest leg hug ever. She sat with me most of the night, and I was smitten. (So yes, little draclet, I loved you before I fell in love with your mother.) She became a common addition to our weekly game night group. I knew at that point I would do almost anything for that little bundle of energy and spunk.

Weeks went by, and as my love for the daughter grew, the relationship with the mother grew too. I was there when a tearful lady needed someone to talk to after a break up. I was there when her first trial at seeing others went askew. At the end of May, I finally asked my future wife out. Somewhere in the many walks and long talks after that date, I fell in love

a second time. Whirlwind romance occurred and marriage followed the following January. In less than 1 year's time, I went from a single man, to a husband and father. The father part came first. My love of the daughter won me the heart of the mother. Without that initial caring, the second relationship may not have happened as quickly.

My lovely wife always told me I had 3 strong characteristics that pushed her toward me. I was dependable, stable and loving. For many years I thought it was how I treated my wife, but later I found out it was how I treated the daughter. Yes, my unconditional love of another woman gave me almost 20 years of love from a wonderful wife. Through the years, she loved her daughters more than she loved me. I can't say the same thing, but I loved them almost as much. And one of them I loved longer....

She taught me what love was, after I showed the ability to love.