

One Magical Night

It was the winter of 2004. December 19, to be exact. I was 18, just graduated high school the year before, and was still smitten with my high school sweetheart. Between being in love and Christmas right around the corner, I was probably bouncing off the walls with excitement like a crazy lady! Seriously, I loved my man and boy do I love Christmastime! Little did I know what was about to happen.

It was a Sunday. Usually Sunday nights, we stayed in. Mom made our

Sunday tradition of nachos and cheese. Melted sharp cheese on nachos. We

didn't play around. We would all pile in the living room and watch AFV.

Chris, my boyfriend, usually joined us. He never passed up a pile of

cheese on a tower of salty nachos. I'm pretty sure they sealed the deal

on our relationship. *Insert cheesy smile here* (See what I did there?)

But, that Sunday was different. My mom was acting different, too.

What's the word I'm looking for here – um, I guess I could say, giddy?

Chris asked if I would go out to dinner that night to the Olive Garden.

It was kind of weird for us to go out on a Sunday night, but I will

never say no to the OG! He was picking me up around five, and I was told

to dress warmly.

As I was in my room getting ready, I heard his car downshifting,

pulling in our driveway. He had this sexy little Subaru Impreza that I just loved. I think that was the deal-breaker for me, just like the nachos were for him. Haha. I ran down the steps to my mom and dad meeting me. Mom said, "Now have a good time, honey! You gonna be warm enough?" She had on such a smile as she said it. I gave Mom and Dad each hug and kiss, dad told us to drive safely, and on our way we went.

At the Olive Garden, we sat in a booth, and both ordered our favorite, Chicken Alfredo. When our supper came, Chris wasn't eating much. This was odd. He never "not ate." OK, this is getting strange. Mom giddy and boyfriend not eating? That didn't stop me from tearing into that delicious plate of goodness. After dinner, he said, "Why don't we go over to Southside and check out the Christmas lights?" Like whoa. Him volunteering to drive me around and looking at what is my most favorite thing at Christmas! The lights! That didn't happen much unless we were going from point A to B. "Uhhh, you don't have to tell me twice! Let's do it!" He made a pit stop to the Dunkin Donuts drive-thru for hot chocolate because he thought it would be a nice touch to looking at the lights. Man, was he thinking of everything! We drove up and down almost every street until we ended up on Summer Street. Now, if y'all

aren't
familiar with Summer Street, we need to have a little chat.
It's only
the best street on the face of the earth at Christmas! My
happy place.
Candy Cane Lane! The road I could drive up and down 467 times
a night
and never want to stop. I LOVE it!!

Now, let me just put this out there, it was a measly 7 degrees
out.

Like, I am talking bitterly cold. He pulls the car over at the
bottom of

Summer Street, looks at me and says, "Would you like to walk
up Candy

Cane Lane?" I think I just looked at him with this dumb look
on my face.

My mind saying, "Do you know how cold it is out there? Are you
crazy?"

"I mean, yeah, I guess! You never want to walk up when it's 50
degrees. But yea, let's do this on a bitterly cold night and
freeze our

faces off," I said. I guess this is why he told me to dress
nice and

warm. Even though it was cold, it was still picture perfect!
The hot

chocolate kept our one hand warm, as our other hands were
holding each

other. We got about halfway up, and he started acting not
himself. Like

he had ants in his pants or something. We continued up to the
top where

Minnie, Mickey, Goofy, Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the Live Manger
Scene were

all there to greet us!

"I didn't know they would all be here tonight?! I thought they

only

did this Friday and Saturday nights?" Chris said. I was excited! This was the greatest even though he didn't seem thrilled.

Candy Cane Lane was double-sided traffic and not a bare spot to be seen on the road.

Once we reached the top, we started heading back down, and we got right across from my favorite house. Second from the top on the right, all in white lights. He said, "Wait a minute."

I turned to him, and he asked me to hold his cup. All of the sudden, he got down on one knee and asked me to marry him. I couldn't believe it! My hot stud muffin was asking me to marry him at my happy place! Of course, I said, "YES!" and all of the sudden, everyone cheered, including Minnie, Mickey, & Goofy! Cars were beeping, and people were yelling out of their car windows "Congratulations!!" I couldn't believe it! I had to get to the car to see that bad boy! Christmas lights just didn't give me enough light to see that ring! The dome light went on, and I gasped. What a gorgeous ring! What a magical night! I had to go over to show my Grammy Perry, who lived right on Riverside Drive immediately. I was so excited I couldn't contain myself. I don't even remember it being 7 degrees anymore! The night was so perfect.

I will never forget this night as long as I live. My parents knew.

His parents knew. He did it on a Sunday so all the extra people wouldn't

be there, but little did he know they would all become part of our

story. Every year after that, on December 19, we go out to eat at the

Olive Garden, go to Dunkin Donuts to get hot chocolate and walk up Candy

Cane Lane just as we did on that magical night. Now, we have a five-year-old little girl and a ten-year-old boy who look forward to

this every single year. It's a tradition we will never give up. This

year will be 15 years we have done it. It's still just as magical. I

love that we get to relive that night every year. So this Thursday

night, you know where we will be! I am so happy to be able to share this

with you all.

If you haven't ever walked up Candy Cane Lane, you should. It's

amazing taking it all in. Thanks to all of you on Summer Street, who

make December so magical and unique for many of us.

And for giving us the perfect setting on a night, we will never forget.