How to Leave Adolescence at 30

Heather Jopling

1. Fall in love.

When my husband first sees me, I'm doing this. (lights up - Wilhemena in red-nose doing the chicken dance) I'm doing a production of *Romeo & Juliet: The Comedy*... and he is the technical director of the theatre. And he sees me and falls madly in love. Well, okay that's a lie. He falls in love with a clown named Wilhemena. Okay that's a lie too, but I'm pretty sure that when he sees me he thinks that I'm cute.

So here's the deal. I meet my husband and the first time I see him - something clicks. I'm not saying it's love at first sight or that there is a big flashing neon sign saying **"THIS IS THE ONE!"**... That isn't what happens. What happens is, I look at this guy and there is this quiet calm voice deep down inside me saying: "I know you."

Bit of a side bar here. Where are my manners? Anybody want a sweet marie bar before we get down to business? (Improvise - They're kind of like rice krispie squares only better with peanut butter.) Where were we? Also in the company performing *Romeo and Juliet* is my ex-boyfriend who is making major moves towards getting back together. So here I am with my ex-boyfriend trying to rekindle the barbecue coals of love and I am totally focused on this guy I think

I know, but I know I don't. And I'm trying to think of any way I can to get to know this person better. And I get tongue-tied, because whenever I feel an attraction to someone I turn into a giggly teenager who uses come-hither looks and tries to sound like Kathleen Turner.

So the whole company is going out to dinner one night and the tech crew has been invited along and I, devious little vixen that I am, manage to have an open seat beside me, just in case this tech Director named David? decides to show up. My ex-boyfriend is seated on the other side of me with his hand upon my thigh. And I'm thinking to myself. "Nobody sit in that seat! Nobody sit in that seat! Nobody sit in that seat!" And then there he is! All my karmic energy is focused onto the seat beside me willing him to sit in it. "Please, oh please, oh please, I'll cut down on my chocolate, I'll make the bed more regularly, I'll floss… oh please oh please oh please oh PLEASE!" And he sits BESIDE ME. And he is close enough that we're breathing the same air, and he's quiet and shy and perfectly adorable. And I'm trying to work up to saying ANYTHING that will let this man know that I am brilliant and witty and humourous and sexy all at once in a concise sentence. So I say: "Have we met before?" And we have a 30 second nervous conversation about maybe possibly having been introduced to one another at some vague point in our lives. And that's it. That's the extent of our

big conversation. That's the beginning of our relationship. The first yellow brick in our road to Oz.

So the show ends. We pack up. We invite the techies to our closing night party. And as I'm driving away from the theatre, I KNOW that David won't show up at the party. I know it. And this weight hits my chest. I fight not to turn the car around and beg him on bended knee to acknowledge that there is something going on between us. That's what I imagine myself doing. All the way to the party. For the duration of the party. For the entire drive home the next day. Kicking myself all the way home because I'm the biggest wuss in the universe, too afraid to take a leap and I have blown my chance. I've missed my "What if…"

And then… I remember that I have his business card in my wallet. Seizing upon the rules that I learned from "The Celestine Prophecy," I remind myself that there is no such thing as coincidence and that you have to recognize the importance and inter-connectedness of all things in your life and I write him a thank-you note. To thank him. For all his help at the theatre. A thank you note where I mention that maybe in a previous life we were important to each other like perhaps a courtesan and the lusty baron who pays for her keeping in a huge chateau, or maybe a guy and his dog. And I write that the connection I feel with him is IMPORTANT, that I think that he should