

Love's Lumberings Remembered

A ten-minute Hallmark by
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CHARACTERS

TOM A simple fellow in his 20s.
MARY An attractive but tired woman in her early 30s.
BRYSON A well-dressed quiet man in his late 30s.

SET

A line in front of a bank.

TIME

Morning.

(TOM stands in front of MARY in a two-person line. He tries to make conversation.)

TOM

It's good to be early for this stuff.

MARY

Uh-huh.

TOM

It's not like there's a real rush when they open the doors, but, you know... it's still good... to be early.

MARY

Uh-huh.

(Long pause, he's out of ideas.)

TOM

Been banking here long?

MARY

Yeah.

TOM

(excited) Me, too! *(pause)* I've never seen you here before.

MARY

I normally use a different branch.

TOM

Oh. I like that they don't make you pay to use a teller here.

MARY

Uh-huh.

TOM

Those other banks charge you if you talk to a live human being, so that you'll use the ATM machine instead.

MARY

Heh, heh... the Automated-Teller Machine-machine?

TOM

Uh-huh.

MARY

Oh.

(She laughs as TOM watches, confused. She stops laughing when she sees BRYSON enter. He has his head down, not really noticing them. MARY stares at him, then looks away to avoid him. TOM beams at her. Remaining in between them, she tries to avoid being in either of their lines of sight. BRYSON lifts his head, not looking at her, and sniffs...)

BRYSON

Mary?

(They turn and look at each other.)

MARY

Hello, Bryson.

BRYSON

Oh my God.

TOM

Wild. You two know each other.

BRYSON

Oh, I'm sorry, you two are together.

MARY
(*simultaneous*) Hah... what?

TOM
(*simultaneous*) I'm Tom.

BRYSON
How long have you two been seeing each other?

MARY
Five minutes.

TOM
What?

BRYSON
What?

MARY
We just met.

TOM
Yeah.

BRYSON
Oh, my mistake.

MARY
One of many, I'm sure.

BRYSON
Yeah... what?

MARY
Like when you didn't call me. That was a mistake. That was your loss.

BRYSON
Uh...

MARY
So why'd you never call me? Really, as long as I've got you here, trapped in line, I want to know. Unless you're going to run away from the bank, too.

BRYSON
Hey, you never called me, either.

Yes I did! MARY

No. BRYSON

I left a message with your roommate. MARY

You... mmm. Ow. BRYSON

(The lights narrow around BRYSON and MARY, staring at each other. TOM is still visible, but in very dim light. They completely ignore his interjections from here on out.)

Four minutes until the bank opens. TOM

Men! “Oh, I just didn’t get your call.” MARY

Mary— BRYSON

Oh, I get it, you guys went out. TOM

“My damned roommate. Oh well. See you later.” MARY

Wait. BRYSON

And YOU dumped HER? TOM

Please listen to me. BRYSON

Go ahead, I’m dying to hear this. MARY

(pause) I was in love with you. BRYSON

MARY

Oh Jesus, just jump right in with a lie, that's what I'd do!

BRYSON

I was.

TOM

Ballsy, man, ballsy.

MARY

God! I know men get off on being cruel, but this is above and beyond the call. You can just say "I'm-sorry-I-got-busy-with-work," you know, and we never have to see each other again.

TOM

Oooh.

MARY

It's pathetic, the way you lie to save yourselves from... what, from honesty? Is it the actual act of telling the truth that hurts you, or is it just that you get pleasure from lying? Really, I want to know!

TOM

Body blow, body blow.

(BRYSON looks at her a good while. She looks back at him. Romantic music comes up [suggested: Mahler's Fifth Symphony, Movement 4, Adagietto].)

BRYSON

(softly) You know when you got me? It was when you and I were leaving the table, and we looked at the leftover piece and a half of pizza and both felt guilty that we weren't getting it to-go for the starving children in Africa, that we were leaving that many mushrooms and that much cheese. That's when you got me... at the bar, you brushed your knee up against mine and let it sit there. I could feel your pulse. Your energy. You touched me, and brought our faces close together, whispering words that were meant just for me. More than once. I mean... I've read that those are signs. Signals that you are sending me. I know this. Empirically, I know this. I just couldn't. Instead, I turned into Frankenstein's Romantic, lurching around and causing havoc. I know I remember getting us lost on the way there, but please tell me that smashing your glass into your teeth is just my memory embellishing things? Did I really spill whatever that lovely liqueur was all over you, accidentally grab your breast on the dance floor, karaoke Elvis Costello? Could I possibly be a bigger dork? No. I am the king. Of course I fell in love with you: We talked about believing in the paranormal without being embarrassed. Exchanged childhood stories, and war stories with knives and danger and ghost grandmothers hurling us from cars. Okay, that was just your

BRYSON cont.

story, but it was a pretty great story. And I couldn't pick up the phone, it weighed ten thousand pounds. *(pause)* And the weight I've been carrying for fourteen months has only gotten heavier by the day.

MARY

God, you were in love with me.

TOM

Yeah, he was.

BRYSON

Yes, I was. I owe you an apology.

MARY

All those disasters you're so ashamed of... a woman once told me, and I believed her, that screw-ups, gaffs... those are the memories, the events... the reality that you remember. I WAS friendly with you. I was flirtatious. I think you're very attractive.

TOM

(simultaneous) You do?

BRYSON

(simultaneous) You do?

MARY

Though I also now know YOU'RE COMPLETELY OUT OF YOUR MIND...

BRYSON

Yeah, that's true.

MARY

And dating you would probably raise my dental insurance rates.

BRYSON

Yeah, but you get those through work, right?

MARY

How could you have paid that much attention and not called me? I couldn't have sent you more signals! What were you waiting for, an e-mail saying "let's go?"

TOM

I think they're opening the doors.

BRYSON

I don't know.

MARY

You don't know? That's a cop-out.

TOM

Yep, they're opening them.

BRYSON

Um... okay. Well... look, I got scared, is that a crime?

MARY

Yes. Yes, it is. Don't be a repeat offender.

TOM

The bank's open, you guys.

BRYSON

(pause) What's your business here today?

MARY

Opening a savings account...

(They looks at each other for a long moment, then the lights come back up on the full stage. They keep looking at each other. TOM makes gestures that say "hey, let's all go inside." They keep looking at each other. TOM exits. They keep looking at each other. Lights fade. Music fades. End of play.)