



## Gemini Courtship

by Harry Knopf

"Hang on, honey. I'm almost in the door," Kay said as she stuck the key in the front door, juggled the bags of groceries and tried to keep the cell phone clamped between her ear and her shoulder.

But Jocelyn couldn't wait. "Mom, I quit my job. I'm coming home."

"Damn it!"

"Mom?" Jocelyn held the phone out and peered at it as if she could see her mom's reaction through the screen. "Are you there?"

"I'm here. I think I broke my toe when I dropped a couple of cans of tomato sauce on my foot. For a second there, I thought you said you quit your job. That you're coming home."

"I did say that. I gave my notice today and I already told my landlord."

Kay sat down on the front porch swing and rubbed her toe. Getting in the door could wait and at that moment she couldn't care less if the ice cream melted. "But I thought you loved San Francisco: You have that nice apartment in South City with a view of the Golden Gate Bridge..."

"Aren't you glad I'm coming home?" Jocelyn's voice was shaky. It had taken a lot of guts to tell her boss she was quitting right after she'd gotten a raise. She'd tried to tell him some things were more important than money, but he wasn't buying that. No surprise there. The man would have worked more than 24/7 if the physics of time had allowed it.

"Of course I am, but you've worked so hard, accomplished so much. Why are you quitting? Did something happen? Something at work?"

"No, No, I just want more," Jocelyn sighed. "Don't get me wrong, San Francisco is great! I love my friends. But I'm working 'round the clock and my love life stinks. Mom, I realize now that I want what you and Dad have, not a working career. I just want to come home and take a few months to figure out what comes next. You haven't rented my room out, have you? Or sold my doll collection?"

"Silly, of course not. Everything is just the way you left it. Do you want to tell Dad or can I?" Kay stood up. She was getting excited now. She had secretly dreamed about having Jo back home in St. Louis, about helping her finding "Mr. Right" and settling down, about having grandkids to spoil right around the corner, but she had always tiptoed around the subject. Kay and Harvey had always vowed that they would not interfere: Kids needed to figure out their own paths. But now that her daughter's path was leading her back home, she was thrilled.

"Honey, you should tell your Dad. I want him to hear it from you."

"Yeah, I'll call him."

"Oh, Jo! He'll be so excited. But you better call him now or I won't be able to hold it in. I can't keep a secret like this."

"You did keep the dolls!" Jocelyn exclaimed as she kicked the door to her old room open. "I remember each of them and the places they came from: Here's the little Dutch girl you brought from Amsterdam when Daddy gave one of his lectures there. And this one: my favorite!" She picked up a beautifully costumed doll from Spain. "I attended a lot of balls with her, and we danced the night away with rich, handsome men."

"So what do you want to do while you "think" about things?" asked Kay.

Jocelyn shot Kay a glance. "I *think* I'd like to get a graduate degree and work here for a while." said Jocelyn. "After that, I guess we'll have to wait and see."

Kay picked up the signal immediately. It had been small clashes that had driven Jocelyn away in the first place and Kay didn't want the first day home to get started on the wrong foot. "OK. Sounds like a great plan. I'm just so happy that you are home, I can't tell you!"

"Do you remember the summer that I was home and dated a boy named Dave?"

Kay paused for a moment. "Dave, Dave. I'm sure I should remember him, but I don't."

"Remember... Mary fixed me up. Maybe Mary could fix me up again. If Dave's not still available, maybe she can find me another guy – like Dave."

Kay happily helped Jocelyn unpack and re-establish herself in her old room. "Dad and I have to go to a meeting tonight. Sometimes we run into Mary there. So, if she's there, do you want us to ask Mary about Dave? Sometimes we see her at these get-togethers."

"Sure. I've been out of the loop so long; I need someone to help me find out who is here in St. Louis."

That evening Kay and Harvey attended their meeting. All during the speeches Kay busily gawked at every corner of the room. "Who are you looking for?" quizzed Harvey. "I am looking for our young friend, Mary. I'm on a mission." Harvey sat quietly. He usually knew better than to interrupt his wife when she was occupied with what seemed to be an important task. But he was curious and decided to ask her: "How come?" he said. "It's about Jo," said Kay. "I'll fill you in later."

At the end of the meeting, Kay's shoulders slumped. Mary was nowhere in sight. Just as they were about to leave, Christine, another one of Jocelyn's old friends, intercepted them at the door.

"Is Jocelyn back in town? I thought I saw her with you today."

"You are right on the mark. That was Jocelyn. She's back in town to stay for a while. Work was a drag, and she's come back home to St. Louis to sort things out. She might end up going to grad school."

Christine beamed. "I'm so excited. I can't wait for Jo to meet my brother-in-law, Dan. Dave was so taken with Jo when they dated, but he's married now. I'm sure Dan and Jo will hit it off."

"Wait." said Kay. "You know Dave? The same Dave that Jocelyn mentioned to me this afternoon?"

"I guess it's the same Dave, the one she went out with before she moved to California. He's my brother-in-law, too. Dave and Dan are twins. That's the reason I think Jocelyn will like Dan – and vice-versa." Christine continued: "Right now, Dan is in Chicago. He is dating a woman that he says is not 'the one,' and he hopes to come back to St. Louis. Just the other day, he asked me if I knew anybody interesting and available here. Oh, this is going to be great." I can't wait to tell him!"

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Kay could hardly wait to get home. "Hurry, Harvey. I'm just bursting to tell Jocelyn about Dan."

“But you don’t even know this young man. How can you be so sure this will all work?”

“I just know,” said Kay as she squeezed Harvey’s arm and giggled like a little girl.

“Jocelyn!” exclaimed Kay as she opened the door.

“Hey. How was your meeting?”

“Fine, fine. Do you remember how you said you wanted to meet someone like Dave? Well, we have someone JUST LIKE Dave for you! Mary wasn’t there, but Christine saw us and...” She unfolded the story of the night with much enthusiasm.

“Well. I guess it sounds OK. What have I got to lose? Sure, why not?”

Within a few weeks, Dan and Jocelyn had gotten together a few times. Jocelyn had started her classes at the local university and was settling into a routine until one day when she appeared at the house looking very glum.

“What’s wrong?” asked Kay. “You look like death warmed over?”

“When Dan was thinking about moving back to town, he paid for a dating service and now he doesn’t want to waste the money. He’s going to ask them if there is anyone ELSE who is compatible with him. What do I do now?”

Kay, always at her best in a crisis, didn’t miss a beat. “Why you apply to that service, of course. After all, what’s sauce for the goose ...”

And so Jocelyn put her name in the system.

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“Phone for you, honey,” called Kay from the kitchen.

“Hello. Yes, this is she. Wait, I just put my name in yesterday... No! I know who that is, and he’ll think this is rigged. I don’t think it is a good idea.” Jocelyn waited for a reply.

“What?” Kay hovered.

Jocelyn put her hand over the receiver. “I think they’ve already matched me with Dan, but they say they’re not allowed to divulge the name of the man until there is a match.”

“Ask them if they’ll give you a yes or no answer if you guess,” Kay suggested.

Jocelyn nodded. “Will you tell me if I guess?”

Kay waited.

“It’s Dan Lester,” Jocelyn said.

Jocelyn rolled her eyes as she listened to the woman from the agency, then she hung up the phone. “UGH!! Dan will never believe that this is not a set-up!”

“It’s kismet, honey.”

“No, it’s a mess. He’ll never believe it!”

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“Harvey, can you come down to Niemen Marcus right now?” It was Kay.

“I think I can get away,” he answered. “What’s up?”

“Jo is vacillating between two dresses, and she wants your help for the final choice. I have been here all day, and I am dressed-out.”

Although initially Dan had been skeptical that the dating agency match wasn’t a set-up, he and Jocelyn went on their arranged date and, and, as Kay predicted, it was kismet. Within weeks, all skepticism had evaporated, the engagement was announced, and wedding plans were made.

Shortly, Harvey arrived for the fashion show. “I like the fancy one.” he said. “After all, this is a formal affair, and the other dress is so plain.”

“But Daddy, this one is really expensive.” said Jocelyn.

Harvey smiled. "Just don't show me the bills."

"Oh, by the way," said Jocelyn, "I know how much you like to sing at family occasions, so I'm asking you ahead of time to—"

"I know, not sing." interrupted Harvey.

"No, no! SING. I want you to sing!"

"Really?" Harvey fought back tears.

"Yes, really!" Jocelyn gave her father a hug and went back into the dressing room.

It seemed like only a minute before it was wedding day. Harvey stood at the front door ready to drive Jocelyn and Kay to the church.

"I'm ready." Jocelyn started down the stairs.

"Oh, honey, I can't believe it! Is that you?"

"Of course, who did you think I would be?"

"Well, you are the spitting image of your mother on her wedding day! I just don't believe my eyes. All grown up! And I was right about that dress – you look gorgeous." This time, he didn't even try to fight back the tears. "O.K., honey," his voice gruff with emotion, "It's show time!"

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The ceremony went off without a hitch; even Harvey's song was appreciated. During the reception, Dan stood and clinked his fork against his glass. "Some of you may know that Jocelyn dated my twin brother, Dave, before she met me. For me, she was a blind date. For her I was not. But tonight, I have to admit, when she walked down that aisle, I was, truly, blinded by her beauty. And I hope that the old saying is wrong. I hope that loves is not blind, because I want to spend every day for the rest of my life looking at my beautiful Jocelyn."

Kay fished a handkerchief out of her purse and handed it to Harvey. He was really crying now.