

**Letter - February 17, 2003**

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My Lady,

17 Feb 2003

In many ways this feels like the calm before a storm. Not a feeling of doom - just a certain knowledge that things are about to get hectic. Waiting to see what George W. does next - what the bad guys do - Mardi Gras starts this week - Fran should have her baby this week - I'm starting a new project this week - and to top it off, I just plain miss you.

To catch you up a bit on family matters; Fran's baby is due anytime now, Joyce warned me not to tease George and Carol about being Grandparents, Bev has evidently gotten rid of Harry, Randy had an article published in the college paper, Karen got accepted into the high school down the road, Yvonne has a new job and seems happy about it, and Tanya is in Baton Rouge doing something with Stan's family. Joyce is getting ready for company, her sister Anne and some friends are coming next weekend, then Dawn and the twins the following weekend.

But I had rather talk about a movie. Andifer rented a tape of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" and invited me over for dinner Saturday night so I could watch it. She promised that it would be the funniest movie I'd seen all year - she was right. I highly recommend it, "ya gotta see" this thing. There is very little in it that couldn't have been filmed around our families - it is hysterical. I came home and put a bottle of Windex on my shopping list.

The rain this morning, my sense that a storm is approaching, and my thinking about you - all have combined to call up memories of the time we sailed Insteadofakid to Florida. That was one of my all time favorite times. That trip covered it all, a definition of adventure - good times, bad times, triumph, and reward. There is little I would change about it even if I could.

That calm night was perfect, eighty miles out, just you and me, a gentle breeze, and a billion stars. We grilled steaks, sipped wine, lay on the cockpit cushions watching for shooting stars, and listened to an old fashioned drama on the radio. Peaceful and comfortable - a good time.

Then of course there was the night that I hit the sandbar during the storm - and swallowed all that salt water getting us off. Remember that night? Bouncing at anchor behind that island all night? And how sick I got? The bright morning sun made everything all right again - but that was definitely a bad time. (It's only just recently that I can

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chuckle about it.)

However, that last day at sea was my personal favorite. We would make harbor in the afternoon, but the weather was horrible. We had the Gulf to ourselves that day, the wind howling over my shoulder, the rain pounding on my back, the sails half reefed, six foot swells rolling beneath us, and the boat charging through like a race horse. I glanced over to see you in the hatch watching me. "You are actually enjoying this" you announced. I would have had to answer "yes", but you disappeared back into the cabin, then reappeared, in your rain gear, with two steaming mugs of tea. Remember? There we sat, side by side, in the wind and rain, watching the compass, the sea, the sails - sipping our tea and talking about our Christmas Party. When we finished the tea, you grabbed the tiller and told me to make some more - I know that if I had asked you, at that moment you would have had to admit that you were enjoying it too. I was so proud of you, the Gulf was sending some real nasty stuff our way, and we were handling it in stride - we were sailors then, and have been ever since.

That trip even taught me that elegance is relative. Remember our little "5 star" motel? It really was a dump, being next to the harbor was it's only good point. But to a couple of sailors fresh in from a storm - a hot shower and a dry bed that did not move was the height of luxury. The Ritz couldn't have done any better.

Sometimes I feel sorry for people who don't sail. Perhaps a trip across the Gulf in a small boat would make a fine wedding gift - shared memories and pride of accomplishment are good things.

But this sailor now has to go on duty. I've got a busy week starting and right now I can't even remember all of the things I have to do - but that's just because you are occupying so much of my mind.

Love,  
Wayne