

Love [Lost], at the Writers Conference

“Mind if I sit with you?”

Evan looked up. The woman before him clutched papers to her chest. He motioned for her to proceed and noticed the hotel coffee shop was quite crowded.

“Hi, I’m Evan.” He stuck out his hand.

“Sandra.” She shook his hand.

Sandra asked again if he was busy. She didn’t want to impose. He said no. The conversation turned to writing, families and how they each decided on the conference. She fidgeted, nervous at first when he asked what she was working on. Anxiously, she told him of her current work. They discussed the details a bit further. He offered words of encouragement.

A glance at his watch indicated the time grew late. They split the check, shook hands and promised to meet up later. Slowly, each went off in different directions.

The late afternoon early evening schedule included the first conference get together. She sought him out in the crowd and sat next to him at the table while they listened to a round of speakers. Finally, the event finished. After a moment, Sandra mentioned she thought of getting a drink in the hotel bar, a long day. Would he like to join her. Evan nodded.

As they nursed the first drink, the conversation turned again to her novel. Evan suggested she attend one of the writers critique groups. But Sandra

promptly shook her head no. Said she could never be exposed to that kind of criticism and immediately ordered another drink.

Evan offered to read a few pages. Give her his opinion. Her smile widened. And ordered another drink for him. They made plans to meet early for breakfast and she would bring a few pages for him to review.

Both were in agreement the hour late and it had been a long day. They left the bar together. On the elevator they realized they were on the same floor and laughed at the coincidence.

“Would you mind reading a few pages now?” Sandra asked.

“Not at all.” Evan replied.

He took a minute to drop his things in his room.

Sandra waited outside her door. Waited for him to enter. She stepped into the room ahead of him straightening up as best she could.

Evan sat in the chair by the bed as she handed him the first chapter. While he read she continued to straighten up. Finally, he looked up and set the pages down. She waited impatiently for him to answer.

“Well, I liked it.” He said softly.

“Did you really?” She responded, wringing her hands as she spoke.

He nodded. They spoke for a bit longer before he got up to leave. She extended her hand to shake his, but then lurched forward to hug him. He wrapped his arms around her and lightly patted her back.

She whispered her thanks again. Without hesitation, she tilted her head and proceeded to kiss him. He reacted slowly at first, but when she leaned in a second time he met her and responded with a deep passionate kiss.

Her hands reached for the buttons of his shirt, pulled it free of his pants. He pulled her top off over her head. Hands worked each other's belts, clasps and buttons. The rest of their clothing disappeared as quickly. Their lovemaking became fierce. Awkward. Full of passion. Hot and hungry.

Afterward, they lay together, with her leg spread across his abdomen, her hand rubbed his chest. He held her tight caressing her shoulder.

"Could you stay the night?" She whispered in his ear.

The woman reciting the story took a breath as she turned the page.

"No way!" A hand slapped the table. "I mean, get real."

Everyone looked up at the man across the table from the woman reader.

"Excuse me!" The woman responded and dropped her pages on the table surprised. But quickly became annoyed.

The rest of the writers critique workshop perked up, interrupted from the smooth cadence of her story.

"I said no way. No way, would he stay. That's what I'm saying." The belligerent man bellowed again as he nodded his head and looked for support from the others at the table.

The woman reader looked at him, took a moment before she spoke.

"Since it's my story, I think I should be able."

"Listen lady, we've listened to your chick lit dribble fairy tale long enough. All I'm saying is after he scored."

"Scored? Why you insensitive jerk."

"Wait a minute. I don't think." The moderator raised his hands.

"Hey don't get all bent out of shape lady." The man bellowed. "I know you'd like to believe such dribble. But he's a guy. He scored. He's done. He'd go back to his room. Get over it."

"What? Why you?" She responded. But desperately tried to regain her composure. "Just because you are a loser."

"Look lady, I'm just telling you like it is. He scores. He leaves. Simple. It's a guy thing. C'mon?"

"Listen folks." The moderator interjected. "I don't think you get the spirit of what this critique group is all about. We're here to help each other."

"Look Bud, I am helping the lady." The belligerent man interrupted. "If she writes crap like that."

"Crap. Listen you piece of."

"Hold it!" The moderator raised his hands. "Maybe we should move on. Would anybody else like to interject a comment?"

The fellow next to the woman reader shook his head. The woman next to the belligerent man shook her head. The moderator sighed heavily as he asked.

"Perhaps you would like to finish reading your story?"

The woman reader sat back in her chair, arms folded tightly across her chest, staring daggers at the belligerent man. The pages of her story haphazardly sat in front of her on the table.

The belligerent man sat arms resting on the table as he drummed his fingers, oblivious to the tension he created.

The moderator cleared his throat.

“Okay then. Who’s next?”