

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to your glory*

"May He grant you your heart's desire." Psalm 20:4a

Precious Pilgrim,

How do I capture so that I will always remember, never forget, and share with you the love I've experienced with my new husband, Duncan. This tender, sweet, gentle, thoughtful, kind man has loved on me so richly, so profoundly, so awesomely -- so right. He's increased my knowledge of love ten-fold.

It's like a well has been tapped and I am now connected to that deep eternal wellspring called love -- God's love -- agape love. Oh, of course, I've experienced moments, from that sweetest of well water before. I've received so much love from so many all my life -- but this experience with Duncan is different. I'm having deep draughts like a bubbling overflow of love. Oh, he does love on me so well. Compliments, kindness, kisses, hugs. Caring caresses. I am being loved awesomely by this man. May I never forget. May his love so stretch me that I can love more broadly.

What I can't capture, what I can't fathom, what I can't comprehend is the "how of it all." I want to get on my knees and cry and say "Lord, thank you for giving me such a man." There is no doubt whatever that this bringing together of Duncan and me was of the Lord. It just didn't happen, it couldn't have just happened. The coincidences are too many.

The likelihood of our two worlds crossing are too remote.

Last summer I rented a cottage for a month in Monteagle, Tennessee. During the first week, my youngest son, his wife, and their two year-old son and I were asked to a porch party. There I was introduced to Jo, a beautiful 28-year-old blond, blue-eyed English girl. We started talking and I asked if she'd ever heard of a little village called Freeland, England, which was my most favorite place in the whole wide world. It is where I've been on numerous retreats. She said, "Yes," in fact she only lived 1-1/4 miles from Freeland. I couldn't believe it!

Then the next day my group was having lunch at a little restaurant and in walked Jo and her daddy. She introduced us. His name was Duncan MacLeod. It was love at first sight -- or if that's too strong -- I'd have to say it was like a magnetic pull. I've never experienced anything like it. Thank goodness little Jud was acting totally like a typical two-year-old and gave me a good excuse to exit with him while his parents finished their lunch. I needed a little space. I didn't know what was going on.

Before leaving, we were asked by Jo and Duncan to a porch party they were having and we accepted. We went. It was fun and Duncan and I visited a little more. The attraction continued.

The rest of the month was gloriously fun with all the comings and goings of family and friends. I ran into Duncan

a few times. What was the big deal was his name -- "Duncan MacLeod." I love that name. It became like a battle cry of hope.

Every visitor knew about the name -- Duncan MacLeod. We'd giggle and laugh as if school chums. What is incredible, Pilgrim, is that I actually was dreaming again! A real healing was taking place on that mountain top. After the divorce, I had felt so devastated. Of course, there were wonderful friends and family and the Lord who shored me up - - but still, sometimes I felt so old and worn and dreamless...that is until by God's grace, the healing and the melting of the heart took place. Have you ever been in such a position, Pilgrim? Please, from this letter, I hope you take heart.

On the final day in Monteagle, I got up enough nerve to stop by Duncan's cottage to tell him, "Thank you," that his name had helped me dream again. I knew somehow he'd understand. I knew his beloved wife, Betty, had died 2-1/2 years ago earlier. Anytime his name was mentioned, people would say what a dear man he was and what a wonderful husband. I knew he'd understand loss and pain and survival. I needed to tell him, "thank you." I did and he understood.

As I was leaving, he said to please call him when I was visiting in England (he's a professor at Oxford), so that we could have dinner. He'd made that suggestion on two previous occasions. Pitifully, that old "Southern Belle" mentality fell

into place and I remarked, "My Mama said that nice girls don't do that!" Pitiful! I mean, really, I hadn't talked to a man like this since pre-marriage over 30 years ago. I didn't know what to say. Duncan kindly responded that my mother was dead wrong and to call. I smiled and left.

That night I spent the night with my Mother in Birmingham before driving to Montgomery and I told her about my stopping at Duncan's and she asked, "Why don't you send him all of your books?" "Mama." Hello? Is this the same lady who'd passed on a very strict Southern Belle Rule Book which I was trying to re-activate? She said, "What do you have to lose?" "Mama!"

A couple of weeks later, I had the nerve to write a postcard, which said, "Duncan MacLeod - might you write and tell me about yourself?" Horror or horrors, I mailed it, Pilgrim!

Duncan wrote back the most wonderful two-page typed letter. It was beautiful - thoughtful, revealing, tender, kind. He told me his story and asked for my phone number so we could have dinner.

I called and we arranged to have a dinner date in Atlanta. I took Mama's advice. I sent him all five of my books, which he read before our first date! The day arrived. I was a nervous wreck. I couldn't remember the details for the day and had just assumed Duncan would call and reconfirm the plans, so I hadn't written anything down. No phone call! Oh

dear! My first date in over 30 years and stood up! I checked in to the hotel and decided not to wash my hair or put on makeup or get all dressed up in case there truly was no place to go. That would have been too disappointing. I gave myself a pep talk -- "Lucy, the gift has already been given, you've received a wonderful letter and you have been asked on a date."

Then at 5:00 on the dot, the phone rang. It was Duncan. He was downstairs in the lobby. "Are you ready?" "What?" "Didn't you get my message?" "What?" "I left it on your mobile phone." "What? I don't know how to retrieve messages off my mobile phone." He laughed.

I asked if he could give me 30 minutes and then I'd be down. Thirty minutes, ladies and gentlemen, that is an all-time record - and I did it! I rode the elevator down, walked to the reception room. There was Duncan. He stood and those eyes pulled me toward him -.

Dinner. A week later we walked the Cumberland Plateau for two days. A week later we celebrated his birthday at a birthday dinner given by his two children in England. Four days later Duncan asked me to marry him. Five days later I flew to Montgomery. Ten days later Duncan flew over to meet all of my family and to take me back to England to be married. We were. Whee! On our honeymoon we celebrated the second anniversary of our first date. All of this happened, Pilgrim, in two months' time.

Precious Pilgrim, there are so many sweet details of how Duncan's and my world came together. They are too numerous to relate.

We both feel that our Lord brought us together. It is too much to comprehend.

I will never forget that early morning day when I walked up the hill from Freeland where I was on retreat and came to that corner with its sign -- Freeland to the left, Long Hanborough (where Duncan lived) to the right. I wanted to drop on my knees and say, "Thank you, Lord, for bringing these two worlds together." Alabama and England meet in Tennessee. For years our worlds had been only a mile and a quarter away.

"May He grant you your heart's desire." That's Psalm 20, v.4a. Then Psalm 21:2 says, "You have granted him his heart's desire." Yes, our Lord did. Thank you.

Pilgrim, I thought you needed to know this love story, which does continue, as all true love stories do. May it give you hope. Our Lord does care. Peace.

*Your sister in Christ who is married and
living in merry ole England with her
English Oxford University Professor!
Lucy*

God bless.