

Chapter One - 1993

“Passionate Kisses”

Artist: Mary Chapin Carpenter

Writer: Lucinda Williams

*“Is it too much to demand?
I want a full house and a rock-'n'-roll band,
Pens that won't run out of ink
And cool quiet and time to think.
Shouldn't I have this?”*

Nashville in the early nineties was a scene of guitar jangle and pre-millennial, wide-eyed anticipation. In the song “Passionate Kisses,” John Jorgenson’s twelve-string Rickenbacker moves like that stirring in your chest when you first meet someone you know you’ll never forget—descending from the initial spike of adrenaline and emotion, then back to the top and down again.

This is the soundscape where I first met Jennifer in the early summer of 1993. We were working in our respective roles at our city’s muggy congregation of country music fans from all patches of the globe flocking to meet favorite artists—the festival then known as Fan Fair. The order of events depends on who’s telling the story, but there were at least two encounters involved in our beginning. One was the kindness of a Country Music Association stranger (Jennifer) rescuing a rain-soaked publicist (me) with the gift of a dry shirt. The other: a CMA riverboat dinner for publicists where I was too nervous to ask Jennifer on a date. Thankfully, she was not.

The summer and early fall burned bright and fast. We were both in our twenties and certain the world was ours for the taking with the weapons of music, love, and perfect soundtrack moments. Little did we know the stumbling snare during the fadeout of “Passionate Kisses” foreshadowed the imminent break in our stride, the end of our first chapter, which would arrive just before our birthdays.

*“Do I want too much?
Am I going overboard to want that touch?
I shout it out to the night,
Give me what I deserve 'cause it's my right.
Shouldn't I have this?”*

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