



OTTAWA CITIZEN

Forever after has to start somewhere

The proposal that changed Rachel Eddey's life came out of the blue on a *Sex in the City* set.

By Rachel Eddey, Special to The Sun October 1, 2012



When her boyfriend popped the question, Rachel Eddey's first thought was, 'I'm so glad my makeup looks good.'

I was never in a particular rush to get married. The house, the kids, the soccer van— they all seemed attainable goals for the future. The distant future. At 26, I was focused on living in the now, concentrating on my writing career while simultaneously attending the loudest, darkest, smokiest parties New York City could throw. I had no idea John, my boyfriend of three years, was thinking about marriage until he proposed. With only a few seconds before awkward silence ruined the moment, I had to decide: Was that distant future now?

At the start of our relationship, I convinced myself marriage talk was off-limits to avoid the nagging gene so many of my girlfriends possessed, the one that dangled weekend brunches and skimpy lingerie as bait for commitment. I didn't want to rely on trickery to earn a husband; if he just wasn't that into me, I would move on to someone who was. Besides, with my demanding workload and new-found desire to watch every movie the day of its release, I didn't have time to learn how to cook.

The self-persuasion worked too well. As weeks sank into months, John and I settled into a routine of his place / his place / my place (calculated by a mathematical derivation based on number of roommates and

percentage of time they spent at home), regular Friday- and Saturday-night dates, and mid-week happy hours with a core group of friends. When we moved in together at the five-month mark, slapping my name on the mailbox like it was nobody's business, I forgot "till death do us part" was even an option.

There were, of course, the occasional reminders. His mother would hint at her desire for grandkids; my mother would purchase minuscule Puma jumpsuits "just in case" and lay them out on my childhood bed. His father would recall aloud how he had gotten married right out of college; my dad would slip into casual conversation that I was no longer a spring chicken. At moments like those, I would think, Why not John? Why not now? And do those Puma jumpsuits come in my size?, but the questions would fade by sunset.

Just before the three-year mark, John arranged for me to work as an extra on the first *Sex and the City* movie, which was shooting at the film studio he helps run. I was sitting in my assigned chair — professionally coiffed, dressed, and made up for the first time in my life — when John took the microphone, got down on one knee, and asked me to be his wife.

When this happens in the movies, women cry and shriek and stamp their feet. They know it's coming because they've read the script. When it happens on a movie set to someone who doesn't know her lines, the shock is instantaneous. John was asking me to decide my fate in front of 400 strangers, some of whom were TV stars. On a day, I might add, that I had called in sick to work.

My first thought: I'm so glad my makeup looks good. My second thought: Yes. I went with the latter.

I stood motionless as all the extras, leading ladies, and crew applauded us into a daze. Strangers squeezed our hands and patted our backs. One hugged me for a full ten seconds. Sarah Jessica Parker came over to look at the ring, her delicate hand holding my less-delicate hand as she gave her approval. Kim Cattrall reminded me to call my mother. I tried not to faint.

John had put all the energy he saved from the countless conversations we didn't have about marriage into executing a proposal tailored to the intricacies of our relationship. He wasn't offering me a ring to secure brunches and lingerie for a lifetime or because he thought it was the right move to make. The diamonds and platinum symbolized our unspoken feeling of togetherness.

I knew then without a conversation, without a breakdown of what-would-it-mean and what-would-it-entail, that John understood me. The time had come. That distant future was us. That distant future was now.

Oh, and those Puma jumpsuits? They totally come in my size.

Rachel Eddey is the author of *Running of the Bride: My Frenzied Quest to Tie the Knot, Tear Up the Dance Floor, and Figure Out Why My 15 Minutes of Fame Included Commercial Breaks*.
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