

It's Time for You to Fly

As I walk past the lone patron sitting at the bistro style table on the back patio of the coffeehouse, I notice her group tag says she is away and busy. Finding a table nearby, I right click to sit on the adjacent chair. While I settle in, the woman suddenly jumps to her feet and walks past me toward the interior. She passes in silence, moving toward the front door, stopping and starting several times. "Probably lag" I think to myself. I watch her for several seconds and she soon fades from my screen.

I turn my attention to the note from Cassie that I'd opened from inventory, reading it again, as I've done every day since she'd sent it. Thirty days had passed quickly, much faster than seemed possible. I was still numb and uncomfortably so. I glanced at the time, she'd promised to meet me at four. I had logged in early, hoping she would do the same. She hadn't. I scanned the mini-map and saw that I was alone. My thoughts soon drifted back to when we'd first met.

One full week in Second Life and I finally left the orientation area for the first time, after having heard several people speak of the nightlife in SL. Without too much difficulty, I'd done a search and found a club touting music I thought interesting and teleported over. As I arrived, multiple chat lines appeared in the lower left corner of the screen and scrolled quickly up and off the window. What I assumed to be the dance floor of the club was the last thing to come into view, several couples swirling around on it. Seeing how their avatars were dressed, I realized how underdressed I was, which made me uncomfortable. The dancing couples were formally attired, the ladies in gowns or cocktail dresses and the men in tuxedos, while I wore Linden jeans and a tee shirt. Hoping to sneak away before any one saw me, I was very near to hitting the quit button when she called out to me:

"Hello Jeffrey, welcome to the Jazz N Blues Review" Cassandra Dawn said smiling. A few others pitched in with their greetings. I replied simply with, "Hello all." Not sure what else to say, I went silent, wanting to leave but couldn't as I was drawn in by the chat that continued unabated. Seemingly, they knew each other well enough as there were several teasing comments being made by the ladies, directed at Cassandra and her dance companion. She replied, giving as good ,if not better, than she got. This seemed an opportune time for me to slip away, while they were so engaged. I remembered how to go back to my home position and was just about to click on it when an instant message arrived:

[18:20] Cassandra Dawn: Jeffrey... Are you okay sweetie?

[18:21] Jeffrey Goff: I'm fine thanks. I'm just listening. Your friends appear to be giving you a hard time.

[18:21] Cassandra Dawn laughs. "They are, aren't they? It's because I'm here dancing with my brother."

[18:22] Jeffrey Goff: Your brother?

[18:22] Cassandra Dawn: LOL... my SL brother.... He's really a good friend... Oh God... You didn't think he was a RL brother?

[18:23] Jeffrey Goff: I'm sorry Cassandra, what does RL mean?

[18:23] Jeffrey Goff: and, yes, I did think he was your brother.

[18:24] Cassandra Dawn: You can call me Cassie, everyone does.

[18:24] Cassandra Dawn: RL is that place we go when we leave here, real life ... LOL

[18:24] Jeffrey Goff: Oh!

The chat went on, the ladies discussing what they liked about this club, something called "low lag" apparently being very important. I watched as they danced, amazed by the movement on my screen. I thought Cassie, in a blue dress and with blonde hair, the best looking. Hoping that I'd been forgotten, I found a landmark for the place I called home and was about to go.

[18:36] Cassandra Dawn: Jeffrey, how are you enjoying SL so far?

[18:37] Jeffrey Goff: It's been okay. I'm sort of new and still feeling my way around.

{18:37 Cassandra Dawn: LOL. I've been here seemingly forever and I'm still feeling my way around.

I was about to tell her I was leaving, when a blue box appeared in the upper right corner of my screen, she was offering me friendship. Smiling at the image of her on the screen, I clicked on it to accept. The first person outside of the few new people I'd met to offer me friendship.

[18:39] Cassandra Dawn: We were all new once Jeffrey. If you have any questions about things in SL, feel free to IM me any time sweetie.

[18:39] Cassandra Dawn: I have to leave in a few minutes Jeffrey, would you like to dance with me before I do?

[18:40] Jeffrey Goff: I'd love to Cassie. But I don't know how.

[18:40] Cassandra Dawn: *smiles* I'll show you. Stay there sweetie and don't move. I'll come over to the dance balls near where you are. OK?

[18:41] Jeffrey Goff: Okay.

Unsure of what she was talking about, I watched as she stopped dancing, then turned and walked in my direction. I could see her more clearly as she neared, centered on my screen. Her face was beautiful, her light blonde hair coiled in an up-do. The blue dress she wore was low cut but not too revealing. Her arms and shoulders were bare, a simple blue ribbon strap around her neck held up the top. The full skirt extended down, just below her knees. Her jewelry was simple, a gold chain necklace with a pendant of some sort and, I assumed, matching earrings. She stood next to me now and I realized we were very near the same height.

[18:45] Cassandra Dawn: Can you see the pink and blue dance balls to your right?

[18:45] Jeffrey Goff: Yes. What do I do?

[18:46] Cassandra Dawn: Watch me.

Her left arm came up slightly and she seemingly jumped the few meters to the pink colored ball and became stationary, her arms raised as if holding an invisible partner.

[18:46] Cassandra Dawn: Move your mouse pointer to the blue ball. Then left click and select dance from the pie menu.

I complied as she directed and jumped the short gap between us, my arms raised to match hers, our hands clasped. We began to move slowly side to side. Then her arms came up over my shoulder and she clasped them around my neck, as mine reached together behind her and moved slowly down to the small of her back. She buried her head into my shoulder and I did the same in hers as we moved gently, swaying in an obviously romantic dance.

[18:48] Cassandra Dawn: Is this the first time you've danced in SL?

[18:48] Jeffrey Goff: Yes

[18:48] Cassandra Dawn smiles softly ... "How do you like it?"

[18:49] Jeffrey Goff: I like it. How does it work?

[18:50] Cassandra Dawn: Men! ... LOL

[18:50] Cassandra Dawn: Why can't you guys just enjoy something without wondering how it works ... LOL

A blue box suddenly appeared in the upper right corner of my screen. "Cassandra Dawn is offering you inventory", I clicked on "accept" and a window opened on my screen. Slowly, it rezzed, a photo of us dancing.

{18:51] Cassandra Dawn: A remembrance of your first dance in SL *smiles*

[18:51] Jeffrey Goff: Thanks Cassie

[18:53] Cassandra Dawn: I'm going to leave in a few minutes sweetie. RL is calling *smiles*. I'll be off line for a few days, but when I get back IM me. We so need to do some shopping for you.

[18:54] Cassandra Dawn: Do you see the little box on the bottom of your screen that says 'Stand up'? Point your mouse on it and left click. You'll stop dancing.

Again, I did as she directed and she obviously did as well, we were soon standing next to each other again. "Bye-bye everyone," she called out. Multiple chat lines appeared from her friends, bidding her goodbye, all affectionately. "She is obviously well-liked," I thought while reading through them. Not sure of what else I should do, I also typed out a goodnight to everyone and then found the right landmark, opened it and teleported home. As the scene came into view, I was alone. I opened the window with the picture of us dancing and stared, marveling at her appearance.

[19:00] Cassandra Dawn: Nite Nite Jeffrey...sweet dreams. Remember, IM me when you see me online next, okay.

[19:00] Jeffrey Goff: I will Cassie. Good night.

[19:00] Cassandra Dawn: *hugz*