

Down By The Berry Patch

"The First 50 Years: Chapter 1"

Rita Luks

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*"Judy's got a boyfriend! Judy's got a boyfriend!
Judy's got a — — —"*

"Tell them to stop teasing me!"

Andy, Bruce and I would keep it up until she tattled.

Daddy or Mother would tell us that some day we'd have a boyfriend or girlfriend and we wouldn't like it if we got teased.

"I don't care."

"Stop anyway." So we'd stop for the time being.

It wasn't as much fun, but it was safer, to sit on a branch in the big box elder tree between our house and Uncle John's, to tease big sister when she wasn't within earshot. So we'd chant at the top of our lungs



Judy and Lorain
Sitting in a tree
K-I-S-S-I-N-G
First comes love
Then comes marriage
Then comes Judy with a baby carriage!

If we wanted to be really wicked we'd chant

Julia and Foggie
Sitting in a tree
K-I-S-S-I-N-G

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Photo Caption: Lorain and Judy Berg renewed their wedding vows on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Julia and Foggie. That cracked us up.

We used that chant when we jumped rope, but tacked on, "How many kisses did she get?" or "How many babies did she get?" at the end, before shouting "Hot Peppers!" The twirlers speeded up the rope and it went from the rhythmic thump....thump.... thump... thump....to Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

Each completed jump counted as a kiss or a baby. 10, 12, or an occasional lucky 15 hot pepper jumps, without missing, was the record. 15 babies! They couldn't even get that many kids in the car to take them to church on Sunday. That would be worth getting caught teasing about, if only big sister were there to hear it.

We were too young to realize that there was more to marriage than kissing and babies. In fact, we strongly suspected that kissing is what made babies.

We certainly didn't understand that marriage had much more to do with growing and changing together, sharing dreams, joys, disappointments and triumphs, caring for and comforting each other and compromise, all bound together with ever changing love. The kind that grows for 50 years and doesn't stop there.

How could we, when I just dreamed of getting to be 13 and the boys were thinking you were old when you hit the first double-digit number?

We thought Judy's got a boyfriend meant they'd take us with them *every time* they went to a movie. We thought it wasn't fair when Lorain said we'd have to wait in the lobby 'til we got our popcorn before we found a seat, because he wasn't going up and down the aisles on the main floor or in the balcony, one more time, looking for us just so he could pass it out.

We just assumed going on a date meant Judy, Lorain, the three of us, and as many of our friends as we could pack into the car before it headed to the theater in Sebewaing.

It was frightening to us when Lorain threw a boot and broke off Judy's front tooth when they were at Senior play practice. She kept yelling that she hated Lorain Berg and she was never going to talk to him again.

"It was an accident, Judy. You can't mean what you are saying."

We didn't want her to break up with him. How would we get to the movies? But it wasn't the most important part. That was when we realized *all of us were truly in love with Lorain* and we didn't intend to break up with him over something as trivial as a broken tooth that Dr. Burke could just fix up.

Judy relented. All was well again.

One night they left us alone in the theater, gawking at the movie screen while munching our popcorn, and went (alone) to the jewelry store right next door and picked out an engagement ring. Relief. Judy

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Photo Caption: Lorain and Judy Berg renewed their wedding vows on their 50th wedding anniversary.

wasn't going to get mad at Lorain any more and spoil our lives. Movies were guaranteed for a long time and Lorain was ours forever.

We out grew our childish games but the prophecy we chanted came true.

First came love
Then came marriage
Then came Judy and Lorain
With a baby carriage

1— 2— — 3
Steven— Christopher— — Mike

MARRIAGE starring **JUDY and LORAIN** has been running for **50 years**.

It plays well in Michigan, Arizona and anywhere else in the world they decide to wander. Their story is rich enough to write a hundred chapters. The sequel is in the making and the second half-century promises to be even richer than the first.

Nothing plays better than a great love story.

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