



JULY # 1—Canada Day Celebrations

Visuals: photographs of Granville Island celebrations, Canada Day cake, flag, barbecue food

Mary had told me that Canada Day is one of the most important social events of the year for her apartment—a time when the residents all get together to enjoy each other’s company—and food! But for me it was even more special because it included contact with Sandy—even if that was not perfectly satisfactory.

A couple of minutes after midnight last night, July 1st, Mary and I started to prepare. With living room windows open to the warm dark air, Mary leaned out of one to hang her huge Canadian Flag. For fear of her falling out, I helped with this including tying the ends of the rope to the radiator below the windowsills. When we decided it was secure enough, we went downstairs to the parking strip at the back of the building to admire our work. It was quiet in the lane. We looked up at the flag. Even from there it looks big and the red maple leaf on white background almost glows in the dark.

Back upstairs in the kitchen, Mary started marinating the chicken and preparing food to share—salad and cake. I washed the salad makings, including fruit, while Mary made the whipped cream and prepared the strawberries and brought out her previously made flag decoration to go on top of the cake.

In the morning, under a mostly blue sky, we trekked off toward Granville Island crossing False Creek on the little ferry. It was free for people wearing red and white—Canada’s official colours. Mary had lent me a sweater of Daphne’s that is white with red trim.

It was very crowded near the public market. Many people were walking around among slow-moving cars that take second place to the pedestrians on the Island. After watching some street entertainers, Mary and I climbed a large mound where people sit to watch performances in the bandstand—in this case to listen to some jazz musicians. The saxophone player actually reminded me of Sandy. Not sure why, besides his blondie-brown hair and being about the same size. Anyway there was enough similarity to have me watch him more than the other members of the band. Interesting—because again no attraction. Just testing!

At the end of a set, we left the stage area and went and stood in a line at a table where a huge Canada Day cake was being cut and served by Mary's Member of Parliament. Not surprisingly, she was dressed in red and white.



It was apparent, however, that Mary was looking forward to getting back to the apartment for the barbecue, and I too wanted to be there the moment Sandy arrived.

When we returned, a row of hibachis and a large barbecue were being tended at the side of the building by two of Mary's neighbours, Doug and Josh. Others were rounding up chairs, setting up tables (with red table cloths), and contributing food and wine. As small as this space is, it becomes a pleasant social area by the time all residents bring out contributions for the shared meal.

With more carrying of plates, glasses, and cutlery, at about 3:00 pm most people were outside snacking, sipping a variety of wines (good thing I really don't drink) and socializing. Children darted back and forth with small Canadian flags and lifted their faces to receive on their foreheads and cheeks the stick-on flags that one neighbour offered. Another resident shared her collection of at least 20 Canada lapel pins and helped us put them on the children and ourselves.

"When can we light the sparklers?" one child asked repeatedly.

“Not until after dark and we light the cake.”

The increasing aroma of simmering steaks, chicken, salmon and large hot dogs for the children made me hungry. It’s amazing that this wonderful spread of shared food appeared without someone actually planning it. This is called a “pot luck dinner.”

It is by “luck” that the variety of food appears. Besides the individual portions of meat and fish, there were salads of many types, several kinds of chips and dips, a vegetable plate, buns, and cheeses. And the desserts were delicious—sweets I’ve never had before plus large slices of watermelon, bowls of strawberries and fruit salad, and pies.



From the beginning of the barbecue, Leah and Larry had been coming and going as they loaded the van. When Sandy arrived, he too started carrying equipment. He greeted me but didn’t get into a full conversation. After going to his house and meeting his parents, sitting by the fireplace, and hearing him promise to teach me more about lettering and Western architectural history.... Well, I found his restrained approach rather perplexing.

I remembered the rose bud on the open book incident and our hasty departure. Had I actually offended Sandy in some inexplicable way?

I couldn’t help but (secretly?) watch Sandy and again appreciate his Okanogan tan and slightly blonder hair (on his head and on his calves!). He, Leah, and Larry went up and down the stairs in walking toward the back of the building carrying guitars, amplifiers, microphones, and large containers labeled “T-shirts” and “CDs.” Leah and Larry joked with fellow residents and sampled some of the food offered to them on a fork as they walked past, but they declined the offered tastes of wine.

“Wish you weren’t rushing off.”

“Us too, but do need to make a living,” Larry said.

"But we'll have a few minutes to eat once we know all our equipment is packed," Leah reassured us.

"So where's the concert?"

"Arts Centre in Surrey."

"Oh. Surrey."

"So you've got a fairly long drive."

"And we need set up time."

"Of course."

Sandy was apparently first to be finished doing his part of loading the vehicles. Smiling, but not saying much to me, he came and stood next to me. Was it just because there was an available barbecue there? Or does Sandy not know Leah and Larry's neighbours very well even though he attends some band practices in the building?

After a few minutes I was thinking, will I always feel as if Sandy and I have to start over every time we find ourselves together? Anyway, he was as quiet as ever. (Is he actually shy? Can a performing musician be shy?)

Some people who had moved from the apartment several years ago dropped in, as apparently is their yearly tradition. Also Daphne and Cynthia, Mary's Toronto sister, who has been staying with her Vancouver daughter, arrived then. They had no trouble being included in the general socializing, as they know the neighbours from previous occasions, in fact, Daphne grew up in the building.

A friend of a resident who had worked in Japan as an ESL teacher a couple of years engaged me in a conversation. At least that conversation made me feel as if I weren't relying on Sandy for conversation (despite wishing I could talk only, and at length, with him).

Sandy seemed to be unduly preoccupied with slicing his potato paper thin, adding butter herb sauce, laying the slices flat in a foil package (for speed of cooking?) and basting his salmon with marinade while I tended Mary's and my chicken on the barbecue.

I liked standing with Sandy, cooking together in the presence of at least 20 neighbours. It seemed domestic and intimate with a taking-for-grantedness that I liked but couldn't define. I just wished it were real.

I did manage to ask Sandy if they were taking his car as well as the van.

"On the tour, we'll take both. But tonight we'll go together in the van. We just packed my car now because we will be getting back late tonight and, to catch the first ferry, we'll need to be on our way early in the morning. We don't want to be packing then."

I described to Sandy the band Mary and I had seen on Granville Island. I was glad that I had remembered its name.

"Jazz band... saxophone, trumpet, red-haired drummer, vocalist, heavy-set pianist?"

"Yes."

"Then they must have changed their name recently."

"Is that likely?"

"Sure. And the saxophone player, about my age, is brother to the drummer?"

"Yes, the announcer did mention two being brothers."

"Then I know the group. The saxophone player and I were in a school band together."

"Really. He did remind me of you."

"Oh, yeah? I guess that's feasible. About the same build...."

"But not as cute." (Please, no! Did I really say that? How can I recover from saying that?)

Sandy blushed.

Unfortunately at that moment it turned quiet as the most talkative people settled into some serious eating. All I could do was turn and tell Mary that our chicken looked almost done.

Mary's sister Cynthia, the interior decorator, was discussing something with Doug. About an architectural award he had recently won.

I recognized the name of the award and commented, "Sandy, isn't that an award that your dad won?"

"Yes."

"Your dad?" Doug asked, as he moved closer to sample another kind of wine.

"Yes, for a modern post-and-beam house he designed for his parents. In the 1960s."

"Really. Where is it?"

"British Properties."

"Classic West Coast style?"

"Yes."

"Lots of glass, deck the length of the front?"

"Yes, that's it...."

"So your dad's Darren Gibson?"

"Yes."

"Oh.... For a long time I've admired that house in publications featuring West Coast architecture."

Sandy responded by saying something about Doug's winning design that he'd recently read about, and seen pictures of, without knowing who Doug was. Throughout this conversation, Sandy seemed so well informed on architecture. I was thinking, "Is this the member of the band I know?"

It became apparent to Doug that, like himself, Sandy had been in the architecture program at UBC.

"Which instructors have you had?"

The conversation carried on from there. Doug asked Sandy about taking the year off to perform and mentioned that he must be highly regarded by the architecture faculty if they had agreed to let him take a year's leave of absence.

In listening to Sandy I was feeling inexplicably proud of him. But why those feelings when I have no claim on him? Sandy's speaking with Doug meant he wasn't with talking me.

I was aware that Sandy, Larry, and Leah would be leaving shortly for the gig. And, with their vehicles packed for the concert and the tour, I knew they could leave on short notice. So when Sandy, Leah, and Larry finished eating and began packing up their barbecue equipment, I felt frustrated that Sandy could leave without talking personally with me. I didn't know what to do about this.

He made a few additional trips walking back and forth between Leah and Larry's apartment and the vehicles. That included carrying his backpack toward the vehicles, but another time he was empty-handed when he headed there. Had he forgotten something?

After a few minutes, Leah emerged wearing a stunning, long red dress of simple but flattering lines.

"Ou, la la!" one of the guys cheered; another, whistled.

"Quiet, guys," said Leah (her turn to blush?).

Larry appeared wearing a red T-shirt and white cut-offs and Sandy, a white T-shirt and red cut-offs.

"Hey, do I detect a Canada Day theme here?" Josh yelled.

"We're trying," Larry laughed. "Despite still being on tour for our latest CD, we've modified tonight's program to do some Canadian folk songs with a pop rock beat."

"Bud the Spud does Bryan Adams?"

"Something like that."

After that I didn't know all the Canadian references. In Japan I knew of Bryan Adams, but Bud the Spud I'd only heard of recently when Mary's relatives played the song to reveal why the singer is an important Canadian icon.

Finally the three Alums said goodbye to the group. Sandy didn't treat me any differently than the other neighbours. I was thinking, won't he acknowledge me any more personally than this? He was following Larry and Leah heading for the back parking strip. As he reached the top of the cement stairs and was about to disappear around the corner, I sprinted (right verb?) after him. As I got to the corner, I simply said, "Sandy...."

He turned to face me. I stepped toward him and quickly reached out and hugged him around his chest. This was totally unexpected for both of us. I released him before he really knew what was happening. I didn't want him to have to respond. As I turned to walk away, I looked back at them and simply said, "Get back safely. All of you."

Leah and Larry smiled. So did Sandy.

As it got dark, the Canada Day cake appeared. Actually, two Canada Day cakes—Mary's with whipping cream, strawberries and large red paper maple leaf on top and another one covered with hundreds of tiny Canadian Flags.

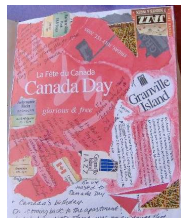
"I thought you would be too busy to make a cake this year," Mary told Sheila, who made the other one. Laughing, Sheila responded with the same words, "I thought you would be too busy to make one this year!"

Everyone had at least a thin slice of each before gathering up their dinner equipment and going inside.

Well, I have spent several hours sleepless, or at least coming in and out of sleep, thinking about the fact that Sandy hasn't made any arrangements to see me again. It's about 4:00 a.m. I've left my bed to look out the window. Seeing the van and Sandy's car parked side-by-side makes me realize that Sandy is probably sleeping at Larry and Leah's apartment to be ready to go out early in the morning. Imagine Sandy sleeping a floor directly below me! Maybe even in the equivalent bedroom! How I regret not having been alert to their return from the concert. Yet what could I have done anyway to try to run into them? Pretend to be going downstairs to do laundry at 2:00 a.m.?

But why, why hadn't Sandy finished asking about the dates my group will be in Victoria. I don't know if our times overlap. Maybe they don't, but at least he could have asked.

As far as I am concerned, I have revealed my interest to Sandy. I don't want to act the way Nicole does toward guys, embarrassing them with obvious, unwelcome advances. Sandy must take the next step. So does that mean I might never hear from him again? And if he doesn't contact me, how will I be able to stop thinking about him?





[Morning]

Sandy just phoned! I was still awake, or awake again, so I ran to answer it to avoid disturbing Mary. He apologized for calling so early. He said he hoped I didn't mind that he got my number from Leah and Larry last night on the way to the Surrey performance. Mind! Can he not read all the signals I have been sending out to him?

On the *way to* the Surrey performance. Could they have been talking about me in the van? My hug might have given Leah something to comment on. Start a conversation about?

Sandy asked when I plan to be in Victoria with my classmates. And yes, our times there do overlap!

"Then could we plan to see each other after the gig on the Saturday night, maybe for a late supper?"

"Yes, I'd love to."

"I'm glad."

"So how was the gig last night?"

"Uplifting. Performing on Canada Day is always inspiring, but this was particularly so. Everyone was over-the-top happy and optimistic, some were dancing in the aisles even, maybe because they realize what opportunities are here."

"You all looked so good. Making that special effort. So, Sandy, how will we meet?"

"Meet?"

"In Victoria."

"Oh, right."

He told me where the band would be playing: in a hotel near Victoria's inner harbour. He provided directions and proposed that I come into the ballroom as soon as the audience disperses.

"Okay. I look forward to seeing you."

"Yeah. I want to see you too."

"Goodbye."

"Yes, bye."

Now I really am excited!

Do I dare admit that I went to the living room window and looked down (no van), waited a minute, saw Sandy emerge, unlock his car, get in, and drive away?



JULY # 2—Barbecue at Mary's Parents' House

Visuals: photos of barbecue food, trail through bush, flower garden on way to beach

Because Mary's extended family had participated in separate activities for Canada Day, they got together today to have a barbecue at Mary's parents' house. With surrounding tall trees maintaining relative cool despite the heat of the day, their backyard is a perfect place for barbecues.

Mary, Daphne, and I arrived while Mary's brother, Howard, was attending to the coals on the barbecue. It was almost ready to receive the salmon and chicken. I was trying not to notice the sound of the crabs still moving around in a cardboard box that Howard had carried in from his truck. Mary set aside her three-bean salad and a fruit salad. Cynthia was putting together her potato salad. Others in the kitchen were taking their food offerings out of bags or boxes and doing some last minute adjustments. Howard's wife Ella was putting out cutlery, plates, serviettes, etc. On the lawn, some children were hitting around badminton birds without a net.

Because it was going to be a while before eating, Howard suggested that Mary, Daphne, and I walk through the bush trail to the closest beach.

We headed off through the undergrowth beneath large evergreens. We stopped at a bush with berries on it. Huckleberries. Not something I have eaten before. And certainly not something I have ever eaten directly from the bush. We nibbled for a few minutes. Very good. Apparently this is something that Mary and her siblings did routinely in their childhood. At that moment Tokyo seemed very far away.



After going down into a small, dry ravine and up the other side, we arrived at a wider, proper path that was still in deep forest. This we followed until we emerged on a road leading past a rather wild garden with a wonderful display of colourful poppies.

Soon we arrived at a beach. Daphne explained that when she and her cousins were young, they used to swim there despite a cold current. Daphne, Mary, and I sat down on a bench on the seawall near a stairway with steps made of large stones just up from the water. We were comfortable there in the sunshine, the seagulls screaming overhead and Canada geese floating around in clusters a little way off shore. We watched a couple of boys, probably about eleven or twelve years old, driving aimlessly around in a small motorboat.

We could have remained there for a long time as it was so peaceful, but we thought we should be getting back to the barbecue. We returned through the bush.

By the time we arrived, more adult grandchildren (some with partners) were there. They were taking the wrappings off their salads and desserts and setting them out on plates. Some helped Cynthia as she worked busily putting other things together or setting the food and drinks out on the tables.

Remember Patrick? Mary's nephew, the guy I talked with briefly on the Bowen Island trip? He is the singer/guitarist and chef of the restaurant that I went to with my classmates after our day of kayaking. Well, I challenged myself to have a more extended conversation with him than I did previously. So, as he unpacked his gourmet "appies" (appetizers), I told him about visiting his restaurant with my class, even though that seemed so long ago.

"We all thought the food and service were excellent."

"Oh good. What did you have?"

I described what I ate and tried to remember what some of the others had. He was pleased and totally kind to me. In hearing us talk about the restaurant, Howard asked about the music nights he and his brother-in-law, the co-owner, plan for the restaurant.

"We're too busy to do that now. We'll start those during the slow times in the winter."

"If you ever have any slow times!" Howard responded in good humour.

I asked Patrick about his music and he admitted that he has made three CDs, but just on his own. I told him about knowing Larry's band. He said he had heard the group this week on CBC radio (Canada's national radio).

"Really. I wish I had known about that."

"It was part of a Canada Day program featuring segments of live performances of Canadian bands across Canada."

Why didn't Sandy tell me about this?

"It was part of a tour they are on."

"Yes, they have been touring for a few months now."

After a pause, Patrick asked me exactly what part of Japan I am from. He said he had visited Japan a few years ago when he went travelling with a friend. We discussed some places he visited, but I found myself wanting to go back to talking about the kind of music Patrick plays and writes.

Again I was mentally comparing him with Sandy for having some of the same interests and capabilities. Again I was admitting to myself that Patrick is probably as pleasant looking as Sandy, although in a different way of course. Again I was wondering about what makes for physical attraction. What I felt immediately felt for Sandy I just haven't felt for anyone else.

How is it that our bodies attract us to one person and not to another, encourage us to choose one person over another? To determine who we want to be with, and for some people, spend life with?

A few minutes later, conversation between the siblings and cousins had me realize that it is just as well that I am not feeling attracted to Patrick. It seems he has had his eye on some woman for a while but has not managed to let her know of his interest.

"You mean you haven't even phoned her after all that excellent advice we gave you last time," commented one sister.

The other sister said, "I'm absolutely convinced she's interested in you, Patrick. Every time I see her in the video store she asks about you and goes out of her way to mention her last singing gig just to remind me (and you?) that she doesn't just

rent out videos. She's letting us know that she is developing her singing career."

"Hey, maybe you should contact her to see if she would like to audition to sing with your group."

"We already have an enough singers."

"True. Well, then at least invite her to one of your gigs and give her a front row seat."

"It's not that easy."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Because I'm shy."

"Shy? Oh, come on. You're not shy."

"In these matters I am."

"You can at least do this."

"We'll see."

I was wishing that someone would have the same conversation with Sandy. But just a minute.... Leah and Larry have always been kind to me, maybe they *have* given Sandy that same advice—yes, maybe even in the van on the way to Surrey after seeing me hug Sandy? Why else would he finally, so early the next morning, have gotten around to asking me to meet him in Victoria?





JULY # 3—Lantern Parade at Trout Lake

Visuals: photographs of Graeme's marlin, lanterns of fish, animals, Ogopogo in lake, costumed participants, the candle-lit labyrinth

Well, the parade tonight at Trout Lake in East Vancouver was inspiring and moving. But I also witnessed more of Barry and Se-Eun's unfolding relationship so I'm feeling somewhat like a voyeur.

For the parade part of the event, people were carrying through the dark a variety of interesting "homemade" lanterns. At school, during lunch hour, we made lanterns under the guidance an ESL teacher who happens to also be an art teacher. As a demonstration, Graeme made his lantern in the shape of a marlin swordfish. Extremely creative and effective and this received many compliments. The rest of us made much more simple shapes based on large cans or papier-mâché balloons.

Our group had arranged to meet at the public beach end of the lake just before sunset. We gathered there (Daniel, Song, Fernando, Nicole, Bae, Sumi, Barry, Se-Eun, Noboru, Juliana, Marina, and me) and then dispersed to look around before the actual parade was to move. There was so much to see. Many people were in fascinating costumes.

The most memorable lanterns were in the lake itself—the life-size teepee; a mermaid; an Ogopogo (a BC legendary water creature); fish and whales—all illuminated by candlelight from within. Other artisans had staked out small plots of grass to exhibit their folk art lanterns—how artistic! These included oversize flowers creating a garden to walk through and, most dramatic, a farmyard complete with illuminated pigs, chickens, rooster, cow, pony, etc.

There were also fire jugglers, stilt dancers, bands, and face painters providing fascinating entertainment.

In small stalls, artisans showed off their wares. These included hand-made shawls, pottery, wooden toys, and jewelry, etc. Once Juliana discovered the jewelry, we couldn't draw her away. Convinced of the beauty, uniqueness, and reasonable prices of the necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, she decided she would buy a piece of jewelry for each of the relatives and colleagues she wanted to have a gift for on her return to Brazil. This seems a good idea since jewelry weighs a lot less than bottles of maple syrup, which Mary has said many students choose as gifts despite being so heavy to take in luggage on a plane.



The most moving spectacle of the night for me was the hillside labyrinth marked out by brown sand-filled paper bags with candles standing up inside them. People moved through this upward path with its warm glow in the dark.

Due to the difficulty of finding each other in the crowd, our complete group had never reassembled. So we had not seen Se-Eun and Barry since first arriving in the park. Several of us wanted to walk through the labyrinth, but it was only just wide enough for a couple to walk together. Having "lost" Juliana to the jewelry stalls, by default (not my intention) I walked through the maze with Noboru.

The sloped ground was uneven with large tufts of grass and small sandy hollows making it difficult to proceed confidently along the dark path only partially lit by flickering candles. I was thinking this was one circumstance in which I would have been glad to hold Noboru's hand. But how would he feel it if I just reached out and clutched it?

I was remembering what Claudia had said about Noboru feeling for me the way I feel about Sandy. I was thinking that if this is true, our holding hands could be confusing for Noboru. I didn't want to start anything. I was wondering for instance how I would feel if Sandy, in some circumstance, just offered me his hand in a strictly practical way without meaning to suggest any affection. Just a minute... that could be like when he saved me from being hit by the cyclist. Remember how that gesture had melted into something

that felt loving even if only momentarily? I didn't want to risk any such complicating emotions between Noboru and me now.

Perhaps Noboru was thinking similar thoughts, wondering if it would be feasible to offer me his hand. As a result of being unsure of my footing, I was noticeably slower than I might have been. We walked a few minutes in silence. But finally, after I almost tripped in the dark, Noboru extended his open hand toward me. In doing so, he quietly said, "Could I help you? I wouldn't want you to stumble."

I accepted his hand and responded, "Thanks. Here I could use some assistance."

Again I was aware of the feeling of my hand in his, the sensation, like when he held my hand in crossing busy Burrard Street on the way to the movie. How did this feel to him?

Ahead of us I saw a man walking with his arm around a woman. This had me wishing I were with Sandy. It seemed such a romantic thing to do. It took me a couple of moments in the glow of the dark to recognize the couple as Se-Eun and Barry! I indicated to Noboru to slow down so that we wouldn't catch up with them. I didn't want to have to acknowledge them as looking definitely closer than just teacher and student.

I was glad when we emerged from the labyrinth and, without any comment, dropped hands. We were fairly subdued as we waited for the others in our group to catch up with us. We fell in with the quiet parade that was making its way around the park in the dark to the glow of individual lanterns. Many people's heads looked disembodied floating above the halo of their lamp.

I was impressed by this lantern parade because so many people had created some form of artwork, behaved in an orderly fashion in going through the various attractions, and walked safely with their lit lanterns. Fire could have broken out in the dry grass, but it didn't. In heading toward the exit of the grounds, I noticed two fire trucks standing guard along with an ambulance—all unused.

As the crowd dispersed through a narrow gate on the way to catch buses, Noboru was pressed against my shoulder. Again I wondered if that felt in any way special to him, as it would have for me if that had been Sandy. Thankfully Noboru didn't take advantage of this situation, by taking my hand for instance. I was glad of that.





JULY # 4—Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Visuals: photographs of main stage with performers, views of the beach; sunset from the seating area

I have just come home from the most sublime evening concert at Jericho Beach in the orange pink glow of sunset, marred only by realistic (but unwanted) advice from Claudia.

This being Sunday night, it was the last concert of the Vancouver Folk Music Festival for this year. Not only was there wonderful music by folk musicians from all over the world, including Canada, there was also an incredible sense of community among the audience.

Many of the participants had been there all weekend starting with the Friday night opening concert and including the all-day Saturday and Sunday main stage and auxiliary concerts.

So the people seated around us seemed to know each other and were talking comfortably and comparing music sets with ones they had seen earlier in the weekend.

Claudia's homestay mother, Helen, and homestay sister, Carly, received free tickets because they live adjacent to the park. Free tickets are to make up for the inconvenience of putting up with the concert's traffic congestion, associated noise, and crowds that take over the park for the entire weekend. The three of them shared tickets with Juliana, Mary, and me.

We sat on the grass in front of the main stage with the beach behind us showing a beautiful sunset taking shape. As we waited for the second band to set up, Juliana mentioned how surprised she was at there being so little difference between the audience (ticket holders) inside the fence and the spectators (non-ticket holders) watching and listening from the beach behind the thin fence that aimed to keep out those who had not paid.

The outsiders appeared to be simply those who had chosen not to buy tickets this year. It was apparent that some of them had been enjoying a day of picnicking on the beach while experiencing the music. There was also a folk festival bazaar that was available to both ticket holders and non-ticket holders.

Juliana said simple fencing would never keep out non-ticket holders in São Paulo and outsiders could be threatening at such an event. Mary said that she hopes that Canada never becomes so extreme socially between the “haves” and “have-nots” to have such an associated threat.



As I looked around the audience I had to smile and think of Daniel because so many people were wearing Birkenstocks. These sandals seem to be the most popular footwear worn by Canadians interested in folk music.

I heard someone mention that every morning approximately 500 people line up at the entrance gate at the folk festival before the park officially opens. They are ready to sprint inside to get their blanket spread out to ensure them the best main-stage, concert-viewing spot on the grass. Since so many of these participants wear Birkenstocks, organizers have apparently labeled that dash to get that best “seat” as the “Birkenstock 500.” Would seeing this convince Daniel that it is okay to wear his Birkenstocks in public? Then again, he probably wouldn’t want to be mistaken for a folk music fan.

One of the bands performing had two guitar players. When I squinted my eyes, I could almost imagine the fairer one of them being Sandy. How would I feel sitting watching Sandy play? Would I feel jealous of others admiring him, and would I feel possessive of him when I have no cause to feel that?

I hope to see him perform with an audience sometime. I wish I could attend the Victoria concert, not just meet Sandy after it is over. But then, I would be turning my back on my classmates, which he made me promise not to do.



During a break, Claudia and I went off to a concession stand to get some snacks for our group. There we were tempted by an incredible selection of international foods.

While waiting to be served, Claudia admitted she had been accepted into MBA programs at both UBC and an American satellite business college in Richmond.

I was surprised and said, "I thought you assumed you wouldn't find out from UBC in time to start this September."

"Well, this was unexpected because I had applied after the deadline. Perhaps they simply needed to make up their quota of international students."

"Sounds to me like you are being modest. Perhaps they wanted to make room for you because you are such a good candidate for them."

"Well, it hardly matters."

"So have you decided which school to choose?"

"No, not yet. I am going to go home soon to meet with my uncles and try to get a sense of perspective."

"Will your choice of UBC or the business college make much difference as to when you come back?"

"No, not much. I will start in September in either case."

"Wow, this is all so sudden. You will be leaving so soon."

"In about a month."

"I hope you can stay in touch with us when you get back and are doing your MBA program."

"Yes, of course I will want to do this. But I expect the demands on me will increase. With the MBA program it may be more difficult to have much of a social life. We 've been able to have that and keep up with the assigned work in our language program."

"I know. I also don't look forward to dropping all social contact when I go home and start the architecture program."

"And I hope you'll remember this if Sandy goes back into architecture. Then he'll have different demands on him too. Also he'll be in a different social group then. Those changes could significantly affect how the two of you relate."

"I haven't really thought about this since the band has had such a claim on him anyway, and at this point I don't know that he is planning to go back to UBC."

"Well, what I am trying to say is that even after his last involvement with the band, things won't necessarily open up for the two of you. He could just replace his current commitments with new ones."

"Claudia, I wish you weren't such a realist."

"Just don't get hurt by having unrealistic expectations."

"I'll try. And how are things going with your boyfriend?"

"Well, you've noticed the classes and other events I have missed lately. I have been traveling with him quite a lot. And I've met with his family a couple of times recently."

"Ah. And how has that been?"

"Not improved. Maybe it's good that I will be doing the MBA, as I will be preoccupied with my studies for a couple of years. Marriage will be out of the question while I'm doing that. By the time I complete the program, maybe his family will be more accepting of me."

This conversation with Claudia left me alert to how my relationship with Sandy could change, for the worse, if he decides to go back into architecture and is surrounded by a different set of classmates and friends.



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