



In December - eight months ago, give or take a week – I went to a wedding. All weddings are celebrations, but this one was a little something more.

It's hard to capture in words, but you've seen it: A couple that is so taken with one another that their connection seems aspirational to "regular" folks. Like they were – genuinely – meant to be together. Like the kind of magnetic energy that moves artists – in all media... from song to statue – to work. The man looks at the woman with amazement, like she sparkles, like her visage makes the rest of the room seem fuzzy or altogether disappear. Their meeting is, effectively, fate dealing a rare royal flush.

Five minutes ago, I walked into my carriage house office. I haven't yet loosened my tie. In front of me glows the screen where the words you're reading first appeared. To the left of my keyboard, my cellphone, in case someone needs me. To the right, the program (?) from the December-groom's funeral, which ended with "Amazing Grace" less than a half hour ago.

His name was Waverly Phillip Jones. He was 76. I didn't know him well, but every time we crossed paths, he was conspicuously both a gentleman and a gentle man. He filled my friend Diana's world with kindness and light.

The wedding and the funeral were in the same

church, with many of the same guests in attendance for both. The suddenness with which one followed the other is jarring, if not an outright shock.

People who find each other later in life have the benefit of experience to put to work building their relationships. Every mistake they made earlier, in another life, transforms itself from an amalgam of guilt and regret into a spark of inspiration, a needle on a compass pointing them back to a path long lost. They can take what has worked and reuse it, while vigilantly avoiding the stuff that failed them along the way. The thing they don't have, tragically, is time. Or, at least, not enough of it. Which seems unfair.

But what is fair? Better yet – which is preferable? A couple of years of perma-smile-incredible or the whitespace where it never happened at all? My vote: The incredible. It's precious and it's fleeting. Embrace it, without fear.

Scott A. Lauriat

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