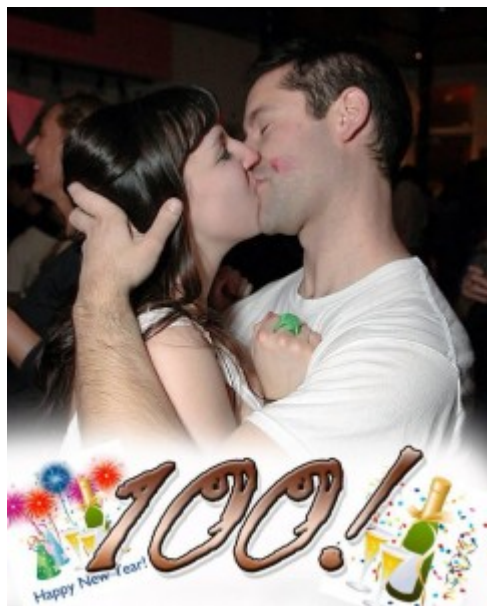


DareMe: Leaving My (Lipstick) Mark on 2013



There are two well-known traditions that come along with a new year, making a resolution and getting a midnight kiss. Resolutions have never really been my thing - I mean, they last maybe a week. The tradition of finding someone worth kissing when the clock strikes midnight is one I can get behind.

My mission this month was to give 100 kisses (on the cheek) and take a picture with each person before midnight. Everyone told me it would be an easy dare - probably easier for a single girl. My boyfriend was quite unhappy that I accepted this challenge. After much argument - I mean, conversation - we found ways to compromise and I was able to continue my mission drama-free. Keeping track of kisses seemed like it was going to be difficult, so I made 100 numbered tickets that I would pass out to each person I kissed. Now how to document? I contacted my friend and photographer Alan Sullivan who was gracious enough to sacrifice spending the eve with his family to document my shenanigans. For this stunt I wanted to be in a place that I would feel safe and not have to deal with surly drunks, so I chose AS220, one of my favorite places downtown. They were planning the Empire Revue New Year's edition there. It attracts a lot of regulars, and I attend this show every month. One hundred kisses? I figured I got this in the bag. Boy was I wrong.

With my red lipstick in tow, I arrived at AS220 at 7 pm. The show went from 9 to 11 pm, so those kissing hours would be lost. I needed to start early. It was kind of awkward at first, and people seemed confused. I'm sure no one understood why I was asking for a kiss when they were trying to enjoy their dinner. But as the night went on, my lipstick marks were everywhere and word was getting around that it was a dare. As news spread, people became more relaxed and had fun with it. I even had friends and family pop in for a lucky new year kiss from me. All was going according to plan.

By show time, I only managed 45 kisses. That meant that after the show I would have approximately one hour to give 55 kisses. I was starting to get anxious. The show was fantastic. I laughed till my sides split, but as soon as it ended, I was reapplying lipstick and scanning the crowd for my next victims. Lucky for me, the Empire Revues cast, The Sparkling Beatniks, gave me at least eight of my kisses.

I ran into a few bumps in the road. A woman told me she really wanted to participate, but her skin was super sensitive and she was afraid she'd have an allergic reaction to my lipstick. So I blew her a kiss, we hugged and I counted it. Because New Year's Eve is a holiday to spend with your significant other, I would ask men on dates if I could kiss them and they would reply, "You have to ask my wife." Good answer, guys! I got turned down a lot, but every once in a while I'd find a fun couple who both wanted kisses. This was good because time was running out and group shots made my life a lot easier.

It was two minutes to midnight and I still needed to give five kisses. I managed two. I was down to 30 seconds and needed to give three kisses. I was barely asking at this point and practically stealing kisses. The 10 second countdown began and I needed to find my 100th! In a frenzy, Alan and I searched for my boyfriend, screaming his name. When I finally saw him on the dance floor, I planted one on him just as the band erupted into "Auld Lang Syne." I did it! It wasn't easy, but totally worth it.

Providence, stop contemplating how to change you in 2014. Instead, make your resolution loving who you are. A new year is just like a new notebook with 365 blank pages. Make sure yours are worth reading.