

In Providence: Ready

If you ask them who takes longer when they're getting ready to go out, you'll get two different answers.

"He takes longer, because he will try on every single piece of clothing that he owns, okay? He does all that. That takes an hour — which is because he doesn't own hardly any clothes. When I met him, Kevin, and this is true, he owned — you ready? One pair of jeans. One pair of dress pants that had holes in them. Five or six shirts — two were t-shirts. One pair of sneakers. That's it. Total. I don't know how he did it."

They met at Pride in 2013, and the first thing he thought was-

"I thought, '*This boy is cute, but I think he got robbed or something.*' That's how he looked. You know how people say, '*You're lucky you're cute?*' That's him. If he hadn't been cute, we wouldn't be talking about this today."

His partner remembers it differently.

"When I tell you, he came up to me the minute I went through where you go to pay the money so you can get into the block party. He walks right up to me and tells me his name and where am I from, and I was like, '*This guy is too much.*'"

That was his first Pride after coming out, and he was a little overwhelmed. He ended up sticking with the (allegedly) eager, well-dressed man who approached him at the beginning of the night, but they left separately.

"We just didn't vibe that first time we met. He was still dealing with being out and I don't know if he knew what he wanted. I had been out for years by that time. I knew what I was looking for, and I didn't think it was him, but he was fun. We had fun even that first night."

They proceeded to bump into each other all summer, but they didn't experience any chemistry until they both attended a party in Newport thrown by a mutual friend.

"I go to his house first, because I was going to drive. He has me come in. I find out it was all a set-up, because he wanted to dress me up, because this was going to be a nice party. This guy we knew had a nice house in Newport that he was renting for the week. He tells me, '*You're going to wear something of mine.*' He puts me in this suit. I don't think I ever wore a suit in my life before like that. I'm standing in the mirror in his bedroom, and he looks at me like '*Damn, he looks good.*' I did look good too."

That night at the party, the two of them found themselves out in the backyard, a little buzzed from the drinks they'd had, and a little cold on a surprisingly chilly June night.

"I remember, he put his arm around me to warm me up. That was it. I had just broken up with someone right before Pride, and I was going to have this crazy summer, getting myself into all kinds of trouble, but once he did that, it was all over. I didn't want to bother with anybody, but him. He couldn't dress, but he was a good guy. Still is."

Over the years, when they'd be getting ready to go out, they'd fall into the same routine. He would try

on everything from his closet, and then asks if he can “borrow” something. That’s the cue. Pretty soon, he’s being dressed up the same way he was the night they went to that party. To his credit, he doesn’t argue with any of the fashion choices selected for him.

“I know he knows better than me about that. That’s why I just let him pick.”

The night I spoke with them, they had a special reason for going out. After nearly eight years of make-overs, they recently got engaged.

“He was waiting for me to ask and I was waiting for him. Last week, he comes home, and I’m telling him about all the weddings we have to go to this summer. *‘Everybody we know is getting married.’* *‘Everybody except us.’* I say *‘You want to get married?’* Just like that. As soon as I said it, I was like, *S***, what if he says ‘No?’* I look over at him, and he’s got this big smile on his face. I say, *‘I guess we’re getting married.’* We’re going to take pictures tonight at the restaurant, because we haven’t told any of our friends, family, nobody. That’s why I have to make him look nice tonight, because this is going to be the big announcement. Don’t you go telling anybody, Kevin, you’re the first to know. I’ll come find you.”

The announcement popped up the next day on my Instagram. Two handsome men, both looking dapper, sitting together in a restaurant with brand new rings to show off. One of the comments said, *“I thought you two were already married,”* which I think is the best compliment you can pay to a couple who just got engaged. Sometimes you name something after it’s already clear what it is. You look at love, and you say you’re going to name it marriage. Because it’s fun to dress things up like that.

“He takes care of me with the clothes, and I take care of him with the house, because this man does not know how to clean a house or fix anything. He’s good with some things, but if anything breaks, it’s got to be me. That’s why I think we get along like we do, because I know all the things he doesn’t know, and that’s the same for him with me. That’s how you fit together. We have each other’s backs.”

If you were out last weekend, you might have seen a couple walking back to their car after a lovely night at a restaurant downtown. Both of them were impeccably dressed, but it’s possible that what you noticed first was that one had his arm around the other.