

Lunch Break Love

written by Mackenzie Krauter

Pulling the metal ball chain downward in one brisk motion, I clicked off the “Open” sign. After locking the door, I finished sweeping up the floors of the frozen yogurt shop. I looked forward to every Monday night I got to spend with him, even if we were working, it was nice to be together. We clocked out and switched back on the espresso machine to make one last latte. Espresso, steamed milk, and cinnamon for me, white chocolate for him. We sipped our warm beverages and sat on the counters catching up on the happenings of the week. We discussed our current college classes and anything else on our minds. “I got you something,” he said with a twinkle in his eye.” We had been dating for a few months and I still got butterflies whenever we made eye contact. Reaching down into the pocket of his jacket he pulled out paper glasses. They were bright orange with dark plastic lenses. He explained to me that in science class they had been studying light. Today, his professor distributed these 3D glasses to the class. Colten had stowed some away for us as the professor was collecting them. I put on the glasses and every light bulb around me transformed with a dazzling rainbow effect. He explained that when light passes through a prism, like these 3D glasses, the colors separate. The different lights refract and the true light is shown in interesting patterns around the light source. Slipping on our warm jackets, we locked up the shop and left our cars in the parking lot. We took a chilly evening stroll through downtown Issaquah, WA. With matching bright orange glasses we stared up in awe at every street light and store sign. The glasses revealed the secret reality of light, the truth that the naked eye can’t see. We were hunting for treasure, learning things that were not obvious.

Falling in love is similar to putting on prism glasses, you see what each other sees. You walk around in your own reality. Ordinary moments light up in brilliant colors when you are in love. Now that we are married and have children our romantic evenings together look different. After we put the kids to bed, we watch re-runs of “The Office” as we cozy up with a blanket and beverage. I never tire of watching Jim and Pam fall in love since it reminds me of how our relationship began. Jim and Pam’s relationship is special because of all the little ways he notices her. He knows that her favorite yogurt is triple berry. He involves her in all his mischief to drive Dwight mad. Eye contact across the room means that one knows exactly what the other is thinking. There is the script of the show, but then there is the alternate story, the one about Jim and Pam. They exist in the same world and they are on the same page too. That is one of the things that makes relationships extraordinary. One person in the world is on the same page and sees things the way you see them. I’m drawn into the essence of their love story because of it’s simplicity. Jim and Pam’s relationship is

not about grand gestures or fancy gifts. Their love is not a shiny expensive dinner date. It’s a lunch break kind of love. Since Colten and I met at work, the fond memories I have of that time in our lives are simple and sweet. For example, there was this one time when I chose to walk down the block to pick up some teriyaki. Colten noticed that it had started raining, so he sprinted in the rain to bring me an umbrella. While I was waiting for my food, I had gone to explore another shop across the street. Colten left the umbrella with the server at the restaurant and then he ran back to work. When I returned to pick up my food the server was trying to tell me something, but because of the language barrier, he just continued to gesture the umbrella towards me trying to get me to take it. I refused, insisting he had the wrong person and I was not the owner of the umbrella. The server and I were equally confused, so I shrugged and left without it. I walked back in the rain and when Colten asked me where the umbrella was, it all clicked. We both burst into laughter.

Sometimes on our lunch break we would stop at the neighboring grocery store to grab our favorite turkey havarti panini. Colten introduced me to this delightful sandwich. Sandwiches are another way that you can tell if you really know a person. There are so many ways to craft a sandwich. What bread should you choose? What kind of toppings and condiments? Should it be cold or grilled? If you know someone’s sandwich order, you know that person well. It’s not just about knowing what they like. It’s also about knowing what they don’t like and not giving them a hard time for it. Now we are in our thirties and we haven’t forgotten those turkey havarti’s. I love to make homemade sourdough bread. I’ve been thinking about that great sandwich that we hadn’t enjoyed in years. You should have seen Colten’s face when I delivered this sandwich to him on his lunch break. This version of the sandwich is more elevated than the grocery deli but it still has that same nostalgia of our young love. I take the time to craft each sandwich to suit our unique tastes. I laugh at how our panini preferences reflect our personalities. His taste is classic, savory, unpretentious, and balanced. My taste on the other hand is adventurous, complex, and eclectic, with a little bit of spice.

From young love to being married with 3 children, our relationship is stronger than it has ever been. We don’t get a lot of fancy nights out together during this season of our lives but that’s not the secret to relational success. We’ve learned that finding joy in the ordinary moments together and showing each other affection through the little details has kept our love growing stronger every day.

Learn more about the author at
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HIS VERSION

TURKEY HAVARTI PANINI

- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 thin slices of sourdough bread
- 2 thick slices of deli turkey
- ½ cup shredded havarti
- 2 slices of bacon
- 1 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 tsp yellow mustard

Instructions:

1. Add the mayonnaise and the mustard to both slices of bread.
2. Layer the sandwich in this order: bread, havarti, turkey, bacon and more havarti, bread
3. Butter the outer layers of bread.
4. Grill the sandwich on medium heat with a cast iron grill for about three minutes until the cheese is melty and the bread is golden brown, flip over the sandwich and grill for about another three minutes until both sides are golden and crisp.

HER VERSION

TURKEY HAVARTI PANINI

- 2 thin slices of sourdough bread
- 2 thick slices of deli turkey
- ½ cup shredded havarti
- 2 slices of bacon
- 1 tbsp mayonnaise
- Pinch cayenne
- Pickled red onions
- Avocado
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- 1 tbsp butter

Instructions:

1. Mix together the mayonnaise with the garlic powder and the cayenne.
2. Add the mayonnaise to both of the slices of bread.
3. Layer the sandwich in this order: bread, havarti, turkey, bacon, red onions, tomato, lettuce, avocado, bread
4. Butter the outer layers of bread
5. Grill the sandwich on medium heat with a cast iron grill for about three minutes until the cheese is melty and the bread is golden brown, flip over the sandwich and grill for about another three minutes until both sides are golden and crisp.