**And They Lived Distantly Ever After**

**By: Haley Bogan**

“Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” is a phrase originally made famous by Thomas Haynes Bayly in his 1844 ballad, “Isle of Beauty.” The phrase continues to hold a special place in the hearts of the 7 million American in a long distance relationship.

A Marie Claire article reported there being 7 million long distance relationships in America, meaning there are 14 million individuals in America that are trying to make the distance work.

Danielle Shellman, sophomore at Georgia College, and Ali Chouhdry, an officer in the military, represent one of these 7 million.

Danielle met her other half, Ali, during freshman year of high school. Ali was a senior, planning to go to West Point Military College in New York after graduation. The two didn’t spend much time together after Ali moved to New York, besides holidays. Despite the odds and 1,000 miles, they have made it work for three years now. But it’s not easy.

Danielle lays on her bed during a cold and rainy February afternoon and stares at a vase filled with a dozen red roses. Even though the sun has vanished and the day is dreary, Danielle is happy because Ali sent her a gift in the mail, something they both do often. It was a bouquet of roses and a box of jumbo chocolate-covered strawberries.

“We stay connected as best as we can. We also send each other things in the mail to keep things fun and interesting,” Danielle says devouring one of the decadent strawberries. “The last box I sent a few days ago was filled with candy and a letter.”

Keeping things fun and interesting plays a major part in long distance relationships. The person you love is miles away from you; you can’t conveniently walk or drive to them whenever you want. This presents a major problem for couples that are not only in a long distance relationship but also a sexual relationship. It’s hard to be physically with your significant other when you only see one another every few weeks.

Technology has expanded the opportunities for better means of communication. It has opened a wide range of opportunities for long distance couples to feel closer.

Aural Sex is the act of talking in a sexual manner to someone else while at the same time arousing yourself. Phone sex is the more traditional form of aural sex and has been around longer. However, the invention of the webcam and sites such as Skype and OoVoo allow couples to see each other in real time, from the privacy of their computer screen.

Glamour magazine even published an article entitled “If Oral Sex Isn't an Option, How About Aural Sex? (As in, Skype). The article talked about video chatting and how it can benefit a long distance relationship. Anna Breslaw reports that using vibrators and other sex toys is a good way to have Aural Sex. The only downside is having to rely on the technology; not everyone is computer savvy and technology can be glitchy.

In the article Anna Breslaw stated the benefits of Aural Sex. “And with Skype, there's a whole added dimension of satisfaction in watching your partner (and being watched), as well as a lessening of pressure to do any fancy ‘voice acting’ and just be yourself,”Breslaw reported in the article.

Danielle makes a face at the mention of sexting, phone sex and video chat sex, but she can understand why it’s intriguing to other couples.

“It is really challenging to not be close to the person you love. We actually calculated it and we have only been physically together 15 percent of our entire relationship,” Danielle says, giggling, “You just have to find what is right for you in order to keep the intimacy and closeness alive until you get to see each other again.”

The topic of sex also presents another topic: jealousy.

With long distance couples being so far apart and spending such small amounts of time together this creates an opening for other men and women to step in and cause problems.

For Danielle the biggest weapon against jealousy is trust.

“If you can’t learn to trust someone when you are in a long distance relationship you might as well break up. I’ve learned that trust is the foundation that keeps the relationship standing,” she says.

Lauren Lee has been dating her boyfriend, David, for four years now. Lauren attends GC while David is on a rugby scholarship at LSU. Like Danielle, Lauren too believes that trust plays an important role in having a strong and healthy long distance relationship.

“Jealousy is not an issue. We poke fun at each other about having friends of the opposite gender, and yes, sometimes we get a little jealous; however, it's not anything serious. We both know how much we mean to one another, so neither of us has anything to be worried about,” Lee says while twirling her necklace between her fingers; a gift from David for their third anniversary.

Danielle shared her final reasons for braving the jet lag:

“We know that we are going to get married one day, its just a matter of when. Since he is an officer in the military I have to get used to long separations. It’s really hard to be apart sometimes, but it will always be worth it for me. I don’t believe in finding “the one,” but I do believe I have found a nearly perfect match for me so there is no way in hell I’m letting him go just because of a little distance.”