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Applause Attractions

421-1471 Ask for Kara or Martha



Lemming love instinct

Don't squeeze Charmin; marry her in Reno

just met three hours ago, who seemed ceremonies in four different languages, to be everything your mother warned complimentary child ring bearer. you against, who liked craps, blackjack and Budweiser. Try "will you marry me?'

"Yes, how fun."

Charles

weddings.

Lieurance

I proposed over \$2.99 Prime Rib in

We'd met standing outside the Circus Circus Big Top Lounge, where Andy Gibb was playing all week "and then going up for a weekend in Tahoe, just before a whole week at the Jackson, Mississippi Fair and Auto Expo."

She was drunk and I'd been on the road for 10 hours, suckling a twelve pack of Red, White and Blue beer I'd purchased at some gas/groceries/beer/ hardware place under the overpass in Ogallala for two bucks and some change. The lemming instinct had taken over and I'd heard a lot about Nevada

Just beyond the endless maze of neon, chrome and green felt tables that made up the citadel of casinos in the heart of Renowere small, white houses, turned chapels, bordered with charming little white picket fences. Here men and women shell-shocked by marathon sessions at the gambling tables, escaped into cursory decencies, wedded for company, leaped from the cliff of lonely addictions and combined their neuroses for a sketchy embrace with someone whose silhouette was charged with neon and trick mirrors on the night of their union before God and the state of Nevada (represented by some whorish civil servant).

Turned out both Charmin and I had purchased the 45 of Andy Gibb's big hit "Love is Thicker Than Water" when we were 14. You don't run into coincidences like that every day.

Not only that but we both preferred blackjack to roulette. Slot nachines were for Gray Line Bus Tours. After this discussion of our values and a few more drinks, we found ourselves in the midst of a row of very unassuming wedding chapels. Waist-high billboards advertised what you could get for \$45, for \$50, for \$100. One piece of music, two

What can you say about a girl you pieces of music, just a wedding march,

"A ring," I said aloud. "Got one."

"Oh," I said.

We decided on a ceremony in a Reno across from Harrah's casino. foreign language — Spanish because we both understood it. We wanted a little music besides the wedding march. Maybe a little "Lord's Prayer" or "Is now to be among us at the calling of our hearts" type stuff. Both of us wanted the cute kid ring bearer.

> This narrowed things down to two chapels. We dug up \$50, some more for the wedding tax (everything in Nevada has a tax or fee) and enough for the licensing fee. We chose the chapel with the baby blue neon around the door. "Lovers Lair" it was called. No apos-

> Inside, Charmin showed me her ring. It was beautiful. I never thought to ask her where she got it.

> "Don't lose this." She pushed the ring into my palm.

The whorish civil servant met us at the door. He took some money, went through the fast-motion version of the legalities. Some aged crone walked up and handed us a bouquet of flowers. We never saw her again.

We filled out a form. And we filled out another form.

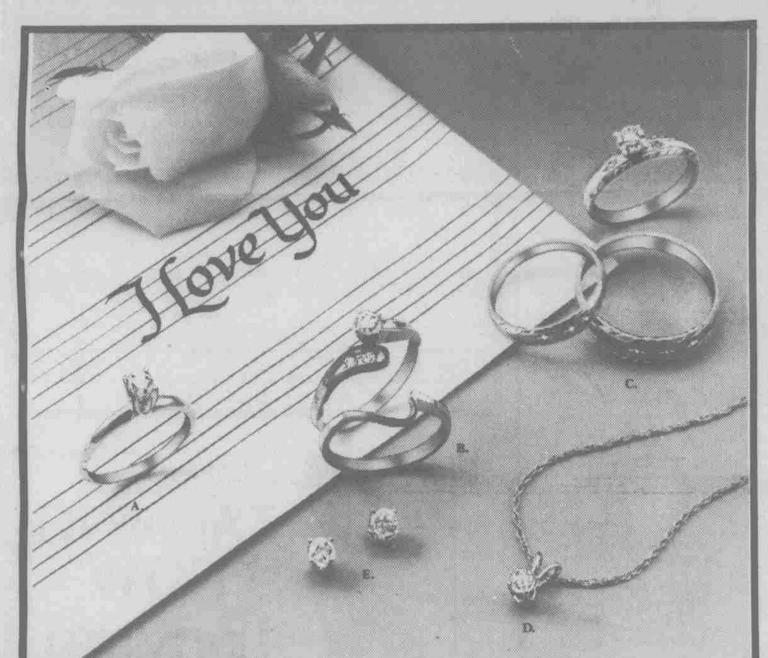
"Here's your choice of music, kids," the owner of "Lovers Lair" said, handing us a list of songs. He was a retired sea captain or something with some power vested in him by God and the State of Nevada. We chose Miss Peggy Lee's 'Fever" for the music. I tried to kiss Charmin but it felt ridiculous.

The sea captain went to wake up his granddaughter to be our ring bearer. Another couple with their excited friends came into the waiting room. They looked genuinely happy, as if they would have gotten married by their family minister in their hometown were it not for some glitch in circumstance or logistics.

The sea captain's granddaughter came out pounding her small coiled fists into her eye sockets to wake herself up.

"Angel, this is Charmin and this is Charles. They're the lucky couple." The

See RENO on 15



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