Chapter 10: Love at First Sight

This cliché phrase is how young me always thought love worked. You see someone, you like them, and that's the end of the journey. Married, with the white picket fence. Boy, was I wrong.

Per usual, this phrase reminds me of a time I couldn't see the girl I asked out at all. Let me explain. While I was living in Atlanta, I was a big runner. I'd run at least a mile a day, if not more, but never any long distances over 10K.

One day I went for my run on the BeltLine, where most people in my Atlanta neighborhood would go to run. It's basically the orla in Rio, but without a beach. This day, I forget what happened; my memory is a little shaky on specific details. I think I decided to go for a run without my contact lenses. I couldn't be bothered to put them in. I knew where I was going, so it wouldn't be that big a deal.

For those who don't know, I'm extremely blind. I can only see clearly to about the fingertips of my outstretched arm. I'd never attempt a no-contacts run at night or somewhere new, because it could be extremely dangerous. When I run, I like music, and not just in my headphones.

I'd carry my UE Boom portable Bluetooth speaker. It had several useful benefits. I could sing while running, and the music would mostly drown out my terrible voice. It also warned people with their backs to me that I was approaching, and they'd often shift to let me pass. This day, it surprised me by helping me meet a woman, something I never imagined happening, since I was basically blind.

I had never met anyone in my countless hours running on the BeltLine. I was focused on the run, not on meeting someone. Plus, being super red-faced and sweaty probably isn't the best first impression. While I was running, I passed a woman, also running, who I imagine was attractive. I probably didn't even attempt eye contact. What's the point? I can't see her eyes anyway. I remember the color of her clothes and her hair.

We passed each other and I didn't think anything of it. Since I was running with music, people often look in my direction, so that wasn't any indication she was interested. It's hazy, but at some point we ended up running in the same direction at the same pace. I think I overtook her at some point. She was fast, so I remember it taking a lot of effort.

After passing her, I was a little tired and slowed my pace. I noticed she had also slowed down. If she had kept her pace, she would have passed me again quickly. I kept running, aware she was behind me, watching. I thought, mmmm, I have no idea what she looks like. I could only see well enough to make out fuzzy shapes.

Some time went by and she was still behind me. I'd recovered some energy from overtaking her, but I decided to walk so I could talk to her as she passed. This time when our paths crossed, I asked her if she liked the music I was playing. I was the DJ for our run. She smiled, I think. I couldn't see her face well. She said yes, we talked for a minute, and we exchanged numbers.

When we were about to part ways, I confessed that I was running blind (literally). She laughed and said, "Huh?" I explained the contacts and my terrible vision. I might have said, "See you later, beautiful," while gesturing to my eyes.