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iBook - Sexy is as sexy. . .

Forrest Gump's take on life, vis-a-vis his mama's lighthearted simplifications, not only allowed Forrest to comprehend the more difficult aspects of the human condition, but the readers' as well. Since, in the film version, it was learned that Forrest was the owner of Apple stock, I wonder what ending his mama might have given my title above?

About a year ago, I started writing this monthly column for My Mac Magazine after Tim Robertson, My Mac's iCEO (i for Internet), read my email response to the then new iMac. I described the parallels between the first time I met my wife and the first time I saw an iMac. With the introduction of the iBook, the memories of that earlier article have triggered more thoughts that have, once again, flooded my overactive imagination.

Parallels II

I looked at my watch. She was late again. I was annoyed. For more than six months, at every major event, she either never showed up or was somehow delayed. Her excuse was that as a reporter for an Internet service, she was often asked to cover fast developing stories. Now, I am a patient man—at least I think so. I also think different(ly) from most, but my pet peeve about tardiness was beginning to affect our relationship. We talked it over, as we did everything, and we agreed to try once more. I was set to go to Macworld New York for the first time and she promised to be there, too. We would see.

Although this was the second recent New York Macworld, I had purposely not attended the first, but looked forward to this latest Mac love in. Personally, I loved visiting the big Apple at any time, but I felt a touch of disloyalty to my favourite

Macworld site, Boston. I missed that comfortable city, and my loyalty to it was the reason I had boycotted last year's Macworld. The one downside to Boston was the perennial disruption in the core for the new tunnel construction. In 1995 and 1996, it was intolerable; the chaos continued. Yet the rest of the city was a delight. I missed the Freedom Walk and reveled in the patriotic history it echoed. I would also miss the small restaurant in little Italy, not far from the Paul Revere house, where I became great friends with the owner, a warm and generous fellow, who served the tastiest linguine al mare this side of the Adriatic. I marveled at how the cradle of early America was now surrounded by an Italian ethic and how, in the future, it might again metamorphose into something different and yet the same.

Could New York compete? Obviously, Boston does not have a monopoly on downtown construction as Microsoft has in operating systems. New York could easily hold its lead in the construction sweepstakes. Another advantage would be its one stop shopping at the massive Javits Convention Center at 38th Street and Eleventh Avenue. It would also be numero uno in the expense category—in other words bring money, plenty of money and a couple of charge cards, too.

Boston's Macworld had a split personality in that it was held in two different buildings located about 2 miles apart as the crow flies, but a hefty 6 miles when the route included a circuitous detour around the tunnel construction. I found that a trifle disconcerting at first, but was impressed by the enormity of both the World Trade Center and then the Bayside Expo Center. The free shuttle bus between the two was a chance to rest your feet and relax from the milling throngs; the close up view of the tunnel construction was a bonus.

It was with mixed expectations that I flew into LaGuardia. I couldn't make it to the keynote address, so we had agreed to meet in front of the Apple exhibit. Would she be waiting at the appointed time? Would she be late? A no show? I was nervous, because, to be honest, I was already committed to her, show or no show. I couldn't help myself—she was that appealing. But I kept cautioning myself to take it slow and not go off the deep end. Deep end? I was mentally off the diving board and headed straight toward the pool drain. Is that commitment? You got it!

I took a cab from LaGuardia to the Convention Center. First mistake. The yappy cab driver chuckled when I told him my destination. "You an Apple freak?" he asked, in disbelief, "I thought Apple folded two years ago." And he didn't shut up for the entire trip, waxing about how great Microsoft was and how his no name PC was so terrific. I could have drowned him in the Hudson River, but my saner Mac self told me not to pollute the river more than it was. I let him know how 'terrific' I

thought the ride and his discourse had been by giving him a nickel tip and telling him why. I got away alive, nevertheless, and learned several new cuss words in the process. By the way, what's a "flegin tarp?"

I had preregistered before leaving home to shorten check-in time, and had slipped my pass and badge over my head so that it hung neatly while the cab driver continued to berate me and my mother. I ignored him and headed through the Crystal Palace into my fantasy world come true. The Convention Center was as impressive as it was massive. You could not miss the Apple exhibit, and why would you? This was, after all, the temporary Center of the Cupertino universe. In the excitement of packing and rushing to the airport and the general upheaval of travel, I heard nothing of the keynote from the day before. But, as the cavernous innards of the Convention Center opened up, I saw the huge hanging banners and, almost at the same time, I saw her. She had dropped something onto the floor and had bent over to pick it up. It was at that moment, in that awkward body position, that her tangerine red hair and deep blue sparkling eyes came into view. She retrieved what had fallen and looked my way, a welcoming smile on her face. I rushed up and kissed her in front of the Apple exhibit, in front of the crowd, and in front of Steve Jobs.

"Do you believe it? I just got a quick interview with Steve plus I got his autograph too," she laughed triumphantly. "And then I dropped it. I was petrified it would get lost or trampled." Her face was flushed from the exertion, the excitement and, I hoped, from my kiss, as well.

"You're here," was all I could utter. I repeated it several times, still in a state of stupefied awe.

"I wouldn't have missed it for the world," she winked. Still traumatized, I just stood there transfixed by the reality of finally being with her. Now I knew why I loved her. It was because of her inner strength, as well as her physical beauty. And, she was one smart woman.

"Isabella Book, you are as sexy as you are cool," I said, finally coming alive. "I had the most tedious ride from the airport. Have you been waiting long?"

"Not long. I just got off the AGP bus about a half hour ago, came in, saw Steve on a surprise visit to the floor and managed, I don't know how, to get close to him. Asked him a few questions and got his autograph. It was all a blur. I know about airports, though. They say they are fast but they have way too many strings attached. Personally, I prefer the no strings technology. Hey, how do you like this

button I picked up at the Lucent exhibit?” She proudly pointed to the rounded oval button just below her registration badge with her name, I. Book, in large black letters. “Lucent and Apple have brought the no strings technology to the iBook. Imagine wireless connecting to the Internet.”

“Very cool. Any chance we can get a closeup view of the new wireless wonder?”

“Stay close to me. If I got Steve to talk, we sure should be able to see the 4th piece of the Apple product line up close and beautiful.” I followed, grasping her waist with both hands and feeling the smooth, curvy lines of her torso. She was wearing an attractive, frosty white miniskirt with tangerine highlights that accentuated her hair colour. The muted background pattern was made up of rounded silver squares which reminded me of the keys on a full-sized keyboard.

“Nice dress,” I said, as we eased our way Macintosh-style through the throng.

“\$1,599.00,” she answered. “It cost me a month’s salary, but it’s worth it.”

“I guess it’s not expensive, if you get what you want, and it sure looks sleek and...”

“Yes, yes, I know, sexy.” Suddenly she stopped. “Darn! I lost the mike to my recorder. The wire must caught on something and fallen off. Another reason to be wireless,” she philosophized.

“You must be tired from your flight. Any problems or,” I grimaced, “gabby cabbies?”

“Not a one,” she answered. “All I need is a quick nap to recharge my batteries and then I’m ready for six hours of heavy duty work.”

We made our way over to one of the several displays showing off the iBook. Each display, however, had a thick crowd of Mac worshipers. Somehow Isabella maneuvered us to the front. A drowsy-eyed Apple employee hovered close by to answer questions and to make sure no one absconded with the show’s star attraction. It turned out that Jason was one of the iBook team of designers and, as he explained, he was in a state of nervous excitement and near collapse after the hours of overtime they had put in to meet this deadline. In spite of his weariness, he was most cooperative in answering questions from the crowd.

I asked Jason if I could pick up the iBook for a closer examination. From the top, the sweep of Blueberry colour was very attractive. The matching coloured Apple

logo complimented the overall design. Colour is a subjective matter, and the tangerine iBook which was at the displays on each side of us did it for me. From the edge, it looked thick and rounded, yet eminently touchable. In fact, that seemed to be the main desire of most people. The iBook's lines were indeed sexy and the curves and shape would have given Freud hours of analytical writing material. I noticed the hideaway carrying handle and the lack of a snap lock, but the spring closure worked smoothly and it shut easily and firmly.

"It's a beautiful book," I said, my fingers still lingering on the smooth rounded surface.

Isabella and I thanked Jason and made way for others to admire this cute new toy. Indeed, it was cute and, in many ways, looked like a toy. Since when does a computer have to be dull, beige, and square? After all, it isn't a PC. As the second fastest portable computer in the world after the Apple PowerBook G3 models, Apple need apologize to no one. The industrial design carried on the theme of the #1 selling computer, the iMac, and placed that concept into the ultimate consumer portable.

Isabella Book and I agreed—the iBook was another Apple hit. We couldn't wait to read the sour grapes (or tangerines and blueberries) from the PC press. I couldn't wait to surprise Isabella with one as gift.

She turned to me, a twinkle in her eyes. "I'm going to buy you one for being so patient with me. Now, which colour would you like?"

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