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## Adventures in Multitasking

**Text with image** | Monday, February 19th, 2007 | [Tennessee](#)

2000, Tennessee and Boston, Massachusetts

By Lockie Hunter

The musicians were practicing. The tuxedos were ready for pickup. My dress was fitted. Everything seemed to be in order for my wedding on June 10. There was only one small problem: I was still married to someone else.

My first husband lived in San Francisco and I live in Boston. We parted amicably, with no rush to dissolve the marriage. My first husband was a musician and we were still quibbling over the CD collection. The fate of The Pulp Fiction soundtrack had yet to be decided.

And there was the Shauna factor. Shauna was referred to by my fiancé as “that hippie-dippie lawyer.” I took offense to this. Not everyone living in San Francisco was addlepatated. I lived there for a decade and managed to maintain a real world view. But, admittedly, the pace of life is different there. Five days prior to my wedding, I still awaited word of the finality of my divorce.

“You’re kinda, sorta divorced,” Shauna told me the morning I packed for my trip.

We opted to have the wedding in my hometown of Tennessee. It was easier to fly our 20-something friends to Tennessee that it was to convince my 90-something grandmother that the airplane was not going to fall out of the sky. When I called the county clerk for my hometown to inquire about a marriage license, I was fretful.

“So, I’m getting married,” I began.

“Well congratulations!” said the bouncy voice at the other end of the line.

“And, what do I need to do to obtain a marriage license?”

“Sugar, that’s easy. All’s you need is proof of birth and \$12 cash money.”

“That’s all?” I said. “The Commonwealth of Massachusetts wanted a blood test.”

“Why we’re not the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, hon.”

“So just the birth certificate. No other paperwork?”

“And the \$12. Cash money.”

My tension softened despite my thoughts that they must have some sort of computer database that cross references these things.

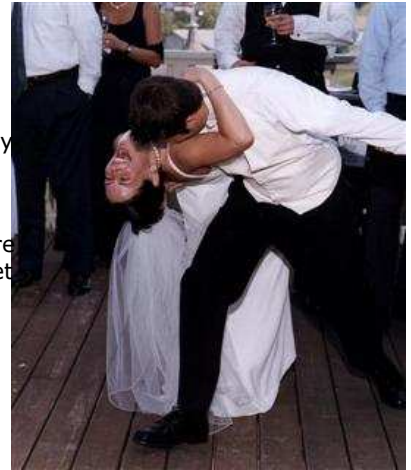
There were a dozen people in the licenses line at the clerk’s office.

“How many weddings do you suppose they have this weekend?” I asked my fiancé.

“Oh, you two probably the only ones waiting for a marriage,” a voice behind us said. “This here line is for all licenses. Hunting, fishing, what have you. There’s actually a special on that gets you two licenses for twenty.”

“That does sound appealing,” said my fiancé. “Fancy a little deer hunt before the rehearsal?”

The county clerk was running for re-election. To publicize his campaign there was a display of free red, white and blue



emery boards printed with a box checked next to the name of Doyle Cloyd. County Clerk.

"What is the latest from Shauna?" my fiancé asked.

"She told me this morning that we were kinda sorta divorced."

"Is that a legal term? Kinda sorta?" my fiancé said.

"She also said, 'You might as well be divorced.' Something about a judge's signature."

"Oh that's a relief," my fiancé said and grabbed an emery board. "I hope Mr. Doyle Cloyd understands."

We completed the application and were ushered to a back room where a woman with glasses piled on top of her hair seated us. She pulled a paper out of a desk drawer and fed it into a typewriter.

"Last name?" she asked.

"Montgomery," I supplied.

"Montgomery? Who's your mama?"

"Martha Montgomery."

"She a teacher?"

"She was. She's retired."

"Martha Montgomery? Lawsy mercy, hon, she taught my youngest in her second grade class over the Town Acres. Your mama's a real sweetheart. Well let's get this thing bubbling. I'm sure you have a gracious plenty to do."

As she typed I had visions of the completed form being fed into their giant database where the truth would be unmasked. This nice woman telling her friends, "why you won't believe who I ran into today. Martha Montgomery's daughter. Remember Martha? She used to teach over the Town Acres. And her daughter, why you know that chile is a bigamist? Such a shame."

"All set," she said instead and returned her glasses to her hair. "I hope ya'll have a wonderful day now."

I exhaled for the first time in a week.

The wedding was wondrous. As I nervously paced closer to my groom, hooked onto my daddy's arm for support, I felt a surge of sanctity that I did not register at my first wedding. This was it. True love with all the bells and whistles. It was as advertised. It was bliss. I could not remember being this happy in my adult life. But when we returned home from our honeymoon I saw the first storm clouds in my new husband's eyes.

"The divorce papers arrived," he said. "They are dated June 24."

We were married on June 10.

We called Shauna and told her of the problem and asked if I was technically a bigamist. Her response was, "No one really prosecutes for bigamy these days."

We decided not to worry about it. The paper, or even the idea of marriage, was not what was keeping us together.

Five years, two children, and one cat later, we are as happy today as on our honeymoon. But there are times — as in any relationship — when the boat is rocked. There are tussles, tears. Arguments over child rearing, finances and friendships. Perceived slights and midnight apologies.

Once the peace has been made, however, if the atmosphere is still tense, I will fling my arms around the man I love and whisper, "It's OK. I'm not really married to you anyway."

*Lockie Hunter attends Boston's Emerson College, where she is pursuing her MFA in creative writing. You can find more of her work at [www.lockiehunter.com](http://www.lockiehunter.com).*

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Posted by Elizabeth Armstrong Moore | [Email This Post](#)

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1. *Kerry* Says:

[February 19th, 2007 at 7:48 am](#)

What an interesting contrast of cultures between the San Fransisco lawyer and the Tennessee clerk. Great use of voice. So much fun, and such a sweet love story!

2. *Christina Jackson* Says:

[February 19th, 2007 at 9:15 am](#)

Bravo. I've always admired writers who can truly "place you" in the moment instead of telling you about it. Ms. Lockie, I'm not from the south, but I did live in Nashville for 3 years and your authentic voice and timing have left me grinning and reminiscing.


I hope to experience much more of your work - I truly enjoyed it!

Christina Jackson  
Minneapolis, MN


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