

The Loving Fascination

Allie McClaskey | August 1st, 2019

The date is Monday, October 8th, 2018. The venue is The State Room, and the event is the Church's 30th Anniversary Tour for their cult classic album, *Starfish*. I adore *Starfish* and cannot wait to dance under the milky way that night. I have admittedly seen The Church twice before, once previously at The State Room. But tonight is different.

Tonight, I am seeing the show with someone special. Our romance has been a slow burn up to this point, fueled by knowing looks at our shared workplace, paragraphs-long emails alternately sprinkled with jokes and shy declarations of admiration or adoration, and the occasional date-that-might-not-be-a-date. We are still feeling each other out, gauging investment and interest, afraid to overstep any bounds. Our evening on The State Room's floor, however, changes things.

We stand shoulder to shoulder, still too cautious to do anything more than brush against each other. We sing along to all the songs we know, swaying to the music, all the while acutely aware of the other's presence. There is electricity in the air. It is almost palpable, yet neither of us is willing to risk disrupting our happy equilibrium with anything more forward than a shared evening at a concert. That night, at least: less than two weeks later, we declare our mutual interest, and seal it with a kiss.

Today, almost a year later, our love is strong. He makes me feel special, loved, and alive. We have spent many more nights on concert hall floors, now openly dancing and swaying with each other. The electricity we each felt separately that October night seeing The Church is more powerful than ever. But now, we get to experience it together.