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After the Aisle

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If Dani Buckhiester '15 hadn't been late for the first day of her American government class, she and her husband, Jackson Holt '14, might have never met. After all, they were in the music department at Furman for two years (before both switched to a political science major) and never ran into each other. So perhaps it was kismet that there was only one seat left in the back right corner of the classroom when Dani blew in, and that seat was in front of Jackson.

His first encounter was with Dani's hair. "I had very long hair at the time," she recalls, "and I color-coded my notes, so every time I would lean over to get a different pen to change colors, I'd flip my hair around." "It was distracting," Jackson says. "I found myself thinking 'who does this girl think she is, putting her hair all over my desk?'"

One day, however, he asked her to study with him and another student from the class. The third student exited early, leaving Dani and Jackson together in the library. "We got so caught up in conversation that we never actually studied," Dani says. They had their first official date two months later, and that Christmas, Jackson, the youngest of four boys, took on-child Dani home to meet his family in Clearwater, Florida.



Dani and Jackson Holt

Back to Where It All Began

By M. Linda Lee

They dated for two-and-a-half years before Jackson popped the question. The proposal turned out to be a comedy of errors, with him trying to recreate their first kiss – which had been outside on campus at night during a meteor shower – on an early morning run and have a friend photograph it. Unwittingly, Dani sabotaged her future fiancé's plans at every turn, until he finally managed to pull off his proposal at sunset that evening.

Two years later, on July 15, 2017, they were married outside on her parents' property in Pickens, South Carolina, with her father, a minister, officiating. What Dani describes as "taking a big, glitzy ballroom celebration out into the middle of nowhere" was immortalized in Martha Stewart Weddings magazine.

The couple celebrated their first anniversary in July with all the bells and whistles. They had photographs done, recreated their wedding

meal at Larkins, and had local artisan baker Tessa Pinner make a smaller version of their wedding cake.

Dani has found her calling in the nonprofit sector and just wound up her third term of service in the national AmeriCorps VISTA program, helping to bridge socioeconomic gaps in the Greenville community. At the same time, she is working on her master's in nonprofit management through Northeastern University. Armed with an MBA, Jackson is a financial services manager at Synnex, where his passion for entrepreneurship dovetails with his love of technology.

Despite their busy careers, Dani and Jackson find plenty of time to do the things they love together. They are both avid and spontaneous travelers, who also enjoy playing music, cooking, and most recently, exercising their new Border Collie puppy, Draco (Dani is a self-proclaimed "Harry Potter fanatic").

The key to a happy marriage, this duo believes, is to be yourself and allow the other person the opportunity to be themselves. "Growing together has been fantastic," Jackson says. Dani's eyes sparkle as she adds: "I really feel that we are partners and equals in everything that we face and do." ●