

# GRATER FRIENDS

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## MARRIAGE ON A DIVIDED HIGHWAY

By Reesy Floyd-Thompson

**D**enis Waitley said: “Happiness cannot be traveled to...” But, *I* beg to differ.

In the middle of the night, I start my journey across three states on a nine-hour road trip to visit my husband. And, my thoughts are as varied as the roads I travel. I think: *What will he look like? Will he like the outfit I’ve chosen? Will we get a good seat?* I create a mental itinerary of things I’d like to discuss because I’ve learned that conversation *can* get lost in the emotion of the moment when you’re face-to-face.

With every mile I travel, I move closer to my married life — my true self, my real world. And, with each minute that I move closer to my married life, my existence as a single woman becomes as distant as the miles I leave behind me.

As I cross the state line into Pennsylvania, even with four hours left before I see him, I can actually feel him. I can actually smell him. I accelerate... I think about how it will all converge in the one place that, for us, has been where we connect as a couple.

Yep, I’m pretty sure this is happiness — and it only took me eight and a half hours to get here.

“Visit for Thompson,” the guard shouts. I get up and walk to the door. I listen for the most beautiful sound that will open up my world: *Click*. The door unlocks. I open it and descend the corridor. I keep pace down the corridor leading to the visitation room where *he* will eventually appear. I’m careful to hold onto a bit of my dignity by not breaking into a full sprint — but just barely. I stroll to a rhythm causing the coins in the clear bag I’m allowed to bring in to jingle with every step I take.


I wonder if my husband clearly sees the price I pay to be with him. Then I smile not only because in a few short moments I will see my husband, but also because I know my love for him unlocks the door that keeps us divided. And, if home is where the heart is, then I’ve just entered *my* gated community.

Suddenly *he* appears.

We approach one another and as guards watch, we embrace. Our embrace reiterates our strong commitment to one another and communicates many things we can never say in words.

And although I’ve come with several mental notes of conversation, nothing goes as planned — it’s better. Our slow strolls to the vending machines are like lazy walks in the park. Oblivious to our surroundings, we laugh and tell stories while sharing a sandwich and a bag of chips.

We have always loved each other in a way that does not leave room for anything else. And, with all the hoops I have jumped through to keep our family running smoothly, the hoop around my left ring finger makes it all worthwhile.

When lunch is done, I look at him and the littered remains of our meal. He gets the point as if he can clearly hear me say: “I’ve done it for the last six years. This time, you take out the trash.” 

**R**eesy Floyd-Thompson is an advocate for women standing by their men and standing up for their marriages during times of incarceration. She understands the hardships imprisonment can have on relationships and urges women to be diligent in seeking and sharing the necessary resources to keep their families together.

Reesy is also a writer, marketing professional, and personal trainer.