

Couple's walk downtown becomes walk down the aisle

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For the Tennessean

The night Casey Kilmer and Carmen Primrose met must've been fate.

The Stahlman Building , where they live downtown, was holding its first mixer for residents, and neither Casey, 30, nor Carmen, 25, was planning to go. Friends twisted Casey's arm into making an appearance, though, and Carmen bumped into a building manager who reminded her of the occasion.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

"I took the elevator car down to two and the doors opened, and when they parted, I actually saw Carmen," remembers Casey, a product planning specialist for Nissan. "She was standing there talking to one of the girls who works in the building, and there were a few guys surrounding her.

"I laid my eyes on her, and I knew I wanted to meet her that night."

He cleverly engineered an introduction through a mutual acquaintance, and before he and Carmen said goodnight, they had walked to a park across the street and made plans to take another walk the next evening.

Their walk to Legislative Plaza the day after they met was the first of many for the urban couple.

"We would go on walks almost every night," says Carmen, an aesthetician in Franklin. "We would get home from work at 7:30 or 8 o'clock, sometimes, and we would always make dinner and go on walks. I think that was our biggest bonding."

At home late at night, Casey often whipped up a batch of pancakes and a round of milk martinis (milk, served in martini glasses) for Carmen.

A little more than six months after they were introduced, Casey came home late from work grinning like a schoolboy and asked Carmen to go for a walk. She was on the couch, enjoying a cliffhanger episode of Prison Break, and told him to wait 10 minutes.

"I threw on some scroty clothes, and we ended up walking down to Legislative Plaza," Carmen says. "We sat down on the bench where we sat down the first night we went on our walk, and then he got down on one knee and said that we took a lot of walks together and he wanted to know if I wanted to take the most important walk with him — down the

aisle."

She was completely surprised, and said yes.

"He later confessed that he had taken off work early and spent the whole day at the jewelry store," Carmen says.

Casey had also taken the afternoon to visit Carmen's parents and ask for their permission, and he called Carmen's brother in Los Angeles to ask for his blessing. That was the reason for his ear-to-ear smile, Carmen explains.

"The engagement was trying to pry her away from *Prison Break*," Casey says, laughing. "But it ended up being very romantic."

Taking bigger steps

The couple's engagement was relatively short, and they quickly decided on the roof of the Stahlman Building for their May 16 ceremony. The building manager wasn't so quick to give her permission, but a lot of convincing and an insurance policy later, planning was off the ground.

Casey and Carmen's father built an arbor to hold a giant spray of flowers as an overhang for the couple as they said their vows.

Carmen walked down the aisle on a black runner surrounded by candles. Everything was intentionally simple, so the city lights and buildings would stand out. A full moon beamed over the affair, which no one had even planned.

Casey and Carmen's brothers were the only attendants, standing beside their brother and sister through the ceremony.

"It was really special about our brothers being there: the most important people standing next to us," Casey says.

A lifelong friend, whose mother was Carmen's kindergarten teacher, read the e.e. cummings poem "i carry your heart with me."

"This sounds really crazy, but absolutely nothing went wrong," Carmen says. "If anything, it went actually better than we had planned."

Ceremony snapshot:

The locale: Casey and Carmen were married on the roof of the Stahlman Building. They had a small reception for the wedding guests in the Mezzanine, and the next night they had a more casual, bigger party at the home of Carmen's parents in Hendersonville.

The bride wore: Carmen's brother is a fashion designer in Los Angeles, and they worked together to come up with a design. They were going to have the dress made, but there wasn't time, so she bought a dress and had it altered to match the design. It came from The White Room in Lebanon. The 1950s-style tea length dress featured a full skirt, fitted bodice, cinched waist and a sweetheart neckline. The hem of the dress was longer in the back and featured some detail where the train was.

The flowers: Denise Arnold at The Potting Shed did the flowers. Carmen's bouquet was calla lilies with stephanotis, wrapped with a handkerchief for her "something old." The men wore varying combinations of lilies and stephanotis for boutonnières.

The menu: Casey and Carmen's guests enjoyed heavy hors d'oeuvres by Mary Lynn Helm. The spread included pork tenderloin on rolls with spicy mustard or raspberry vinaigrette, chicken salad tarts, Greek pasta salad, fruit and cheese, and crispy asparagus pastries with Asiago mushrooms stuffed with boursin cheese.

The cake: The cake had three small layers: a square layer on the bottom and two round layers on top. Each layer was trimmed with callas and black and gray ribbon. The cake was white with buttercream icing, and the top and bottom layers had a raspberry filling.

The honeymoon: Casey and Carmen went to Hilton Head, S.C., and had a long week of relaxing. They rode around on a tandem bike and ate a lot of seafood and just generally laid around.