

'Hey Jude' and all that jazz

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Wednesday, 27 November 2013 18:46 -



It wasn't Calgon that swept me away while soaking in the bathtub the other night.

Instead it was the melody and lyrics to "Hey Jude."

The old Beatles song transported me back to the cusp of my teenage years and a time when tackling boys or pushing them into poison ivy began to change.

All of sudden, they weren't quite the same playmates I'd shoved during football or tagged during a game of kick the can.

In fact the sight of one boy, who was once a preschool buddy, started to make my insides tingle.

And once I was allowed to attend dances, in the 4-H building, and churches and at school, the two of us would weave through other couples during slow numbers.

For me, "Hey Jude" was the most memorable slow ---song at the time and I would frantically search for "my boy" to dance with before someone else showed up. If he didn't make it across the floor in time and another young man requested my presence, I woodenly allowed myself to be steered around the floor as I pined away for my heart's desire.

Body position for the first slow dances of my teenage years meant clasping a pair of hands upward from the side of our bodies. I would then put my other hand on his shoulder while his rested on the small of my back.

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During one mixer, in the multipurpose room of the Presbyterian Church, one couple clamped their arms around each other in a new style called the "bear hug."

Adult sponsors were horrified and tried to pry them apart. But when the next few songs were played, everyone was doing it.

Later that spring, a girlfriend told me that my boy and his family planned to move to another town far away. I flung myself on her stairs and sobbed for a couple of minutes until we decided to play badminton in her backyard.

And that was that.

My first sweet crush, and even the awkwardness of those pubescent dances, reminds me of an uncomplicated and innocent time when my world seemed new and untarnished and I believed, without a shadow of a doubt, that he would always take my hand and lead me onto the dance floor for "Hey Jude."