

Our ~~1 IN A BILLION~~ Story

46

In the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris just a couple of years ago, something extraordinary happened. John, from the tiny town of Tupelo, Oklahoma—population less than 400—crossed paths with Sarah, a young woman from Rennes, France. Two lives, thousands of miles apart, intersected in a way that defies all logic and probability. To understand just how rare that moment was, it helps to look at the numbers.

The world population in 2023 was around 8 billion. Of those, about 330 million were American and roughly 68 million were French. Already, the chances of a random American meeting a random French person are slim. But then, consider that John was from Tupelo, a town so small it's statistically almost invisible. The odds of someone from there being in Paris on any given day are incredibly low—maybe 1 in 25,000 when you factor in how few Americans travel to France each year and then narrow it down to someone from his hometown being there on that specific day.

Meanwhile, Sarah, living just a couple of hours from Paris, might reasonably visit once or twice a year. Estimating the odds of her being in the Jardin des Tuileries on that particular day, we might put that at 1 in 365.

Now consider the setting: the Jardin des Tuileries receives about 10 million visitors annually, or roughly 27,000 people per day. The likelihood that two people would not only be there on the same day, but actually cross paths and talk—let alone connect in a meaningful way—is astronomically small. Estimating generously, we can call that 1 in 10,000. And then, even if two strangers from different countries meet in a park, what are the odds they actually fall in love? Out of all brief encounters, maybe one in 500 becomes something lasting. When you multiply it all—1 in 25,000 (John being there), 1 in 365 (Sarah being there), 1 in 10,000 (them meeting and talking), and 1 in 500 (falling in love)—you get odds of about 1 in 45.6 billion.

So while the world may say it was coincidence, the numbers say it was a miracle. This was not just chance. Our faith is in the Lord.