

Mom's Got a Date Tonight

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The next year another friend called. "You have to meet Ben. He's single, your age, no kids, and wants to meet someone who likes quiet evenings at home watching movies on TV. He doesn't go out much, but he's very good about fixing things around the house. You might like him."

Like him because he's a handyman? What sort of personality trait is that? I wondered if Mary decided to go out with Joseph because he was handy with wood. "Well, at least maybe this guy can fix my snow blower," I thought to myself. Ben came over early one Saturday afternoon. We talked for a couple of hours. I could tell right away he wasn't someone I wanted to spend any more time with. Rather than waste his time I explained that I had to run some errands. He said, "I'll come with you, and then we'll rent a movie to watch later on."

I sputtered a bit and then muttered something like, "Well, if that's what you really want to do."

I asked myself, *Why am I so wishy-washy? I can't even say "no" to someone I know isn't Mr. Right.*

Just as the movie began, my children started coming home: Julia from her baby-sitting job, Andrew from visiting some friends, and Michael from his job at a local pharmacy. So, there we were in the family room. Me, in my big green rocker next to the wood burner, Ben on the couch next to my chair, Andrew next to Ben, and Julie next to Andrew. Michael plopped down on the love seat. A few minutes later, Tony and John, Michael's friends, came over and they squeezed in on the couch and the loveseat.

Well, now wasn't this cozy? Mom, her date, 8-year-old Andrew, and four teenagers. Michael kept looking at me sort of funny, like, "Where did you find this one, Mom?" I felt like I was on trial. Ben stood up, rubbed his slicked-back hair, and went over to investigate the innards of the wood burner again. He liked that contraption obviously more than he liked being in a room full of jovial teens, a full-of-energy second grader, and a woman who yawned a lot.

I wondered what the children thought of him, and I secretly wished he'd go home so I could put on my lounging pajamas and get comfortable. I wanted to read the paper and write a letter to my folks. Instead, I had to sit there and entertain this humorless gentleman who was probably thinking to himself that he hadn't expected a crowd when he asked if he could come over to get acquainted.

I closed my eyes for a second and prayed, "Lord, I know my friends and I have been grumbling about my meeting a nice man for years. Here's one sitting in my family room, and I can hardly wait until he goes home. Why am I so fickle? Do I really need or want to find someone special and get married again?"

These thoughts kept flitting through my head the entire eight hours and 20 minutes Ben stayed at our house that Saturday. When he finally left at midnight, I had to admit that being with someone for the wrong reasons is a lot worse than not being with anyone at all.

When I crawled into bed that night I thought to myself, *All right. I know I'm not ready to settle down again. I have four kids to finish raising. I'm already settled. Besides, I like who I am. The man of my dreams, the one who's easy-going, sensitive, intelligent, interesting, has a great sense of humor and a deep faith, just hasn't come around yet. Maybe he never will. That's okay. I feel like there's a light burning inside me that's all mine. My light. The one that keeps reminding me who I really am.*

Being single made me feel radiant for years although I have to admit that for many years I still asked my friends to keep their eyes open for a good man, preferably a pilot who golfs. Why? Because I figured he'd be gone a lot and I'd still have time to let my own light shine through.