

Waiting for Mr. Goodbar

*Spring has sprung,
The grass has riz,
I wonder where,
All the good men is.*

Waiting for Mr. Goodbar? I don't think so!

I think I read one too many fairy tales, and saw three, too many romantic movies in my lifetime. According to the media, and a lot of printed matter, we all grow up, we all get married, and we all live happily everafter. Right? Wrong! The fairy tales, romance books, and movies do not include the one key element to a sure cause of relationship failure, (ie. men).

Since I am female, and loyal to my sex. I have to assume that most of the problems in the relationship game are caused by the male of the species, but unlike alot of my '*sisters*' I don't compare men to pigs. I have a healthy respect for pigs.

Pigs don't promise to love you forever, and then tell you that the warranty on forever has an expiration date. They don't promise to love, honor, and cherish *til death do us part*, and then attend your wake, long before you received notice of your death. Men are not like pigs. Pigs wallow in the mud to cool off. Men make mud, and then drag everyone around them into it.

An acquaintaince of mine said he thought that the world had been made wrong. He contends that men should be with men, and women should be with women. His logic, typically male, is that only people from the same sex could truly understand, and satisfy each other. If he truly believes this, then why does he spend every waking moment of his life seeking out feminine companionship? Shouldn't he be seeking out other men?

His greatest goal is to find a woman who will fulfill all his wants, and needs? Of course those needs change regularly. This fact keeps him on a constant lookout for a new conquest. The love of his life has to be of benefit to his current lifestyle. When his mood changes, or the conquest is won, he begins his search anew. Alas, he is male, and therefore, has no idea that the word relationship comes from '*relating*' to someone, or something. I guess it's, (excuse the pun), all relative.

Women are searching for Knights, Princes, and Men of Nobel Stature. What they find are Swash Bucklers, Paupers, and Men of Questionable Character. In the movie My Fair Lady the question is asked, "Are there men of good character, where women are concerned?" This question should be drummed into the heads of females everywhere, and the rule should be: until a gal understands this question completely, she is not allowed to date.

The quest for a mate is a lifelong, disheartening journey where only the most determined souls survive. If "Men are from Mars, and women are from Venus", wouldn't we all be better off if we returned to our respective planets? At least then we could get on with our lives without the added burden of waiting for Mr. Goodbar.

Men are like Placemats.

They only show up when there's food on the table.

Men are like Mascara.

They usually run at the first sign of emotion.

Men are like Bike helmets.

Handy in an emergency, but otherwise they just look silly.

Men are like Government bonds.

They take so long to mature.

Men are like Copiers.

You need them for reproduction, but that's about it.

Men are like Lava lamps.

Fun to look at, but not all that bright.

Men are like Bank accounts.

Without a lot of money, they don't generate much interest.

Men are like High heels.

They're easy to walk on once you get used to them

Men are like Curling irons.

They're always hot, and they're always in your hair.

Good luck in your quest

Candalee Swayze March 1999

I Call It Assertive

When I got married, God was still a child. Well, it was a really long time ago anyway. Back then you got married because that's what women did. We got married, had kids, raised them, and then, went through empty nest syndrome, menopause, and death, not necessarily in that order.

Today, you can get married, or not, have kids, or not, and you don't even have to be married to have kids. I wonder if my mom knew about that? Times, and attitudes may have changed, but the world doesn't readily accept change in the individual.

I got married to get out of my Dad's house, and then spent the next 30 years wanting to get away from the man I married. I finally took the plunge into the divorce scene after almost 3 decades. I have come to the conclusion that I am a runner, maybe a very slow runner, but a runner all the same. When I left my marriage, everyone was so shocked. My leaving had been done at such a snail pace that no one had noticed I was moving at all. Of course, that was the problem; no one noticed anything I did.

In my continuing quest to find the real me I decided to stand up for myself as a woman, a human being, and as a person. Before this adjustment everyone knew where to wipe their feet because I had been a doormat for the majority of my life. Nowadays the new assertive me gets accused of being a bitch, but there aren't any muddy footprints on my back.

Maybe I have been a tad bit overbearing, and perhaps assertive was more like aggressive in most cases, but then change never does come easily, does it? I might want to think about toning the word no down a few notches to 'the I mean it no', rather than the 'if you ask again I am going to rip your face off no'. There's a chance that the response to "Where's my socks?", might be better communicated with a calm, collected I don't know instead of: "How the hell should I know? It's not my job to keep track of them, and while we're on the subject if you ask me about those stupid socks of yours one more time I swear I will find them, and stuff them down your worthless throat!"

There's a fine, but definite line between assertive, and raging lunatic.

Here's some come-back lines I ran across that may help solve the proper response dilemma. My mother would not approve of them, but then she lived during an age when women were born, got married, and then died. Everything in between was just one big doormat.

GREAT FEMALE COMEBACKS

Man: "Haven't we met before?"

Woman: "Yes, I'm the receptionist at the VD Clinic."

Man: "Haven't I seen you someplace before?"

Woman: "Yeah, that's why I don't go there anymore."

Man: "Is this seat empty?"

Woman: "Yes, and this one will be too if you sit down."

Man: "So, wanna go back to my place ?"

Woman: "Well, I don't know. Will two people fit under a rock?"

Man: "Your place or mine?"

Woman: "Both. You go to yours and I'll go to mine."

Man: "I'd like to call you. What's your number?"

Woman: "It's in the phone book."

Man: "But I don't know your name."

Woman: "That's in the phone book too."

Man: "So what do you do for a living?"

Woman: "I'm a female impersonator."

Man: "Hey, baby, what's your sign?"

Woman: "Do not Enter"

Man: "How do you like your eggs in the morning?"

Woman: "Unfertilized!"

Man: "Hey, come on, we're both here at this bar for the same reason"

Woman: "Yeah! Let's pick up some chicks!"

Man: "I know how to please a woman."

Woman: "Then please leave me alone."

Man: "I want to give myself to you."

Woman: "Sorry, I don't accept cheap gifts."

Man: "If I could see you naked, I'd die happy."

Woman: "Yeah, but if I saw you naked, I'd probably die laughing."

Man: "Your body is like a temple."

Woman: "Sorry, there are no services today."

Man: "I'd go through anything for you."

Woman: "Good! Let's start with your bank account."

Man: "I would go to the end of the world for you.

Woman: "Yes, but would you stay there?"

Good luck becoming more assertive

Candalee Swayze April 1999

Viva la difference

Men, and women are different. *Viva la difference* my Aunt Fanny.

I think the differences are why women get cranky. Crankiness isn't caused by hormones, or PMS, or anything to do with having a period. It's really caused by men! Being true females we will never admit to this because men would think they had done something clever. Men don't believe in PMS anyway. They just think that all women are bitches by nature. Everyone knows that a man's greatest victory is proving that the root of all his problems is some female.

We women have the right to change our minds. Men don't need to have the right, they do it no matter. Think about it, we get rights after years of struggle. Men come into this world with them already attached.

The only time a man will ever tell you you're smart is if he wants you to do some yucky, drudgery that he doesn't want to do. As soon as the job's done you go right back to being brainless again.

Have you ever noticed how much prettier you get if they happen to feel romantic? Of course, their idea of romance is a bottle of beer, and a slap on the behind. I won't even go into what they're like after they've had their way with you, but I will say this: A man's idea of the perfect romantic evening is downing a six pack, eating a meal that you prepared, watching tv while you cleanup after the meal, having a quick roll in the hay, and then immediately falling asleep. Men do have on constant though. If you remark on anything they do that bothers you, then you're a nag, and are never satisfied. That's probably why women took up knitting.

Has anyone besides me noticed that the victory of women in our right to say "NO" brought their ability to say no out into the forefront?

"Honey, will you take out the trash?"

"No".

"Will you please be nice to my mother?"

"No".

"I'd appreciate it if you'd be kinder, more considerate, and maybe throw me a compliment, now, and then".

"No, no, and no."

If we have the audacity to comment on their refusals, they come back with, "I have the right to say no, and do not have to explain my reasons to anyone."

I've heard it said that men think with their heads, and women think with their hearts. If that's the case then the medical profession has anatomy all wrong. You'd have to relocate a woman's brain to her chest cavity, and, well let's just say that when a man zips up his fly he'd be running the risk of snagging his brain in the zipper. Maybe that's why guys in tight pants are a little slow on the uptake. It sure explains why men are more attentive, and less like themselves when a pretty girl is around. It's the only time that brain they're so proud of wakes up.

The truth is, "Men think they can, and spend hours telling you about it".

"Women know they can, and then just go ahead, and do it".

Enjoy the differences while you're young, and still think love is the answer to every question, but during the interim hoard all the diamonds you can get your hands on.

Top 40 reasons it's great to be a guy:

1. A five day vacation requires only one suitcase.
2. Monday Night Football.
3. Your bathroom lines are 80% shorter.
4. You can open all your own jars.
5. When clicking through channels, you don't have to stop on every shot of someone crying.
6. A beer gut does not make you invisible to the opposite sex.
7. You can go to the bathroom with out a support group.
8. When your work is criticized, you don't have to panic that everyone secretly hates you.
9. You get extra credit for the slightest act of thoughtfulness.
10. You see the humor in Terms of Endearment.
11. Nobody secretly wonders if you swallow.
12. Sex means never worrying about your reputation.
13. Your underwear is \$10 for a three pack.
14. You don't have to shave below your neck.
15. If you're 34 and single, nobody notices.
16. You can get into a nontrivial pissing contest.
17. Everything on your face stays its original color.
18. Flowers fix everything.
19. You get to think about sex 90% of your waking hours.
20. You can wear a white shirt to a water park.
21. Michael Bolton doesn't live in your universe.
22. Nobody stops telling a good dirty joke when you walk into the room.
23. You don't have to clean your apartment if the meter reader is coming by.
24. Car mechanics tell you the truth.
25. The world is your urinal.
26. You never misconstrue innocuous statistical entries to mean your lover is about to leave you
27. Hot wax never comes near your pubic area.
28. One mood, all the time.
29. You never have to drive to another gas station because this one's just too skeevy.
30. Gray hair, and wrinkles add character.
31. Wedding dress: \$2,000. Tux rental: \$100.
32. You don't mooch off others' desserts.
33. If you retain water, it's in a canteen.
34. ESPN's SportsCenter.
35. You have a normal, and healthy relationship with your mother.
36. If you don't call your buddy when you say you will, he won't tell your friends you've changed.
37. Someday you'll be a dirty old man.
38. If another guy shows up at the party in the same outfit, you'll probably become lifelong buddies.
39. You think the idea of punting a small dog is funny.
40. If something mechanical doesn't work, you can bash it with a hammer and throw it across the room.

Top 40 reasons it's great to be a girl:

1. You won't starve without a can opener.
2. Your friends won't get drunk, and hit on your sister.
3. Jeweller's, and grocery stores won't rob you blind.

4. Short skirts cure unemployment.
5. Male Pattern Baldness.
6. You're 5 times less likely to kill yourself.
7. "Heavy Lifting" isn't a necessity on your resume.
8. You'll never get a draft card.
9. You can distract an entire roomful of men just by reapplying lipstick.
10. You smell better. No matter what.
11. When you fight, you fight to kill.
12. You can cook your own food.
13. You naturally speak in a language men don't comprehend.
14. You rule the bathroom.
15. No matter how long it takes to get ready, guys will always wait for you.
16. Sex means never having to finish the job if you don't want to.
17. It's ok for you to marry for money.
18. No one ever mistakes your chest for a bathmat.
19. You'll never have more hair in your nose than on your head.
20. You don't consider urination to be a competitive sport.
21. You don't consider tomato sauce to be a fashion statement.
22. You'll always get served first in a hardware store.
23. Men are optional.
24. The Three Stooges don't live in your universe.
25. Changing a lightbulb is an option.
26. You never feel compelled to scratch yourself in public.
27. You understand the real value of diamonds.
28. You can walk down the street without mentally undressing everyone around you.
29. Finding someone to pump gas for you is not difficult.
30. You can wear your sister's clothes without the neighbors talking.
31. Short girls are "petite, and perky". Short guys are "midgets".
32. Grooms all look the same. Everyone comes to see the Bride.
33. No matter how homely, you can always get layed.
34. No matter whose place you stay at, you'll always get the bed.
35. "You'll never brag about a "stagette"!"
36. Someday you'll be a rich widow.
37. No matter what you do, you'll always be "daddy's little girl" (men think this is a sexual statement).
38. You don't consider farting to be the epitome of humor.
39. You secretly admire Loreena Bobbitt.
40. Your idea of a good movie doesn't have "Debbie does anything " in the title.

Enjoy the differences

Candalee Swayze May 1999

A Support Group

I decided to start a support group. It's for women who are just flat tired of getting dumped on by men.

We have been deemed the weaker sex long enough. Men have ruled, and controlled everything for so long, they think it is because they were born to it. Not so. They are only in that position because while we were busy building nests, bearing young, and raising their offspring, men were out hanging around the water cooler making up the rules.

By the time the *little ones* are grown a whole other generation has fallen under the male dominion clause. The only thing I haven't figured out yet, is if we raise them, how do those sweet little boys turn into men. I have 4 of the most beautiful, endearing grandsons imaginable. They are charming, loving, and so thoughtful. What happens? None of them are showing any signs of the mental instability so prevalent in the male animal yet, but I am keeping a close eye on them.

Perhaps men go through the change of life at a much earlier age than we girls do. Those hot flashes are enough to send anyone over the edge, and the mood swings are unbelievable. Hey, maybe that's it. Perhaps men are just in perpetual menopause. That would sure explain things. Yeah, think about it. First, they want you, (to the point of distraction), then they want a Harley. You are the be all, and end all, until football season. They have absolutely no interest in your wardrobe, couldn't care less, make statements about how they know absolutely nothing, and don't want to know anything about women's clothing, and then give themselves whiplash when a girl in a tight mini-skirt walks by. When you comment about it, they say they were thinking about how you'd look in one. Give me a break!

Whatever the reasons are is irrelevant. We simply must band together, and support one another in this lifelong insanity. I thought about giving the significant male in my life primrose oil. It's supposed to be helpful during menopause, but hey, he'd probably use it to lube something on his car, slick back his hair, or think it was some kind of aphrodisiac.

Anyway, Sisters, check out the 12 steps, and see what you think. The other ones seem to work real well on alcoholics, and such.

The Twelve Steps Of Manaholics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over the male ego, and that around it our lives were completely unmanageable.
2. Came to believe in a power greater than ourselves, (Smith & Wesson) that could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn Will, Sam, and well all of them over to the care of that higher power.
4. Made a fearless, and searching moral inventory of our arsenal.
5. Admitted to anyone who would listen, the exact nature of the wrongs committed by men.
6. Were entirely willing to climb up on the roof of MacDonalds, loaded, and armed to bear.
7. Demanded they either "Shape up or ship out!"

8. Made a list of every man who had ever harmed us, and became willing to do justice to them all.
9. Got direct revenge on those guys whenever possible except when to do so would harm us, or another woman.
10. Continued to take male inventory, and when they were wrong promptly, and repeatedly told them about it.
11. Sought through the rifle range, and karate classes for a way to improve our relationships, asking only for information on vital targets.
12. Having had a complete physical, and mental makeover as a result of these steps, we tried to carry these new weapons into all of our affairs.

Happy Recovery
Candalee Swayze June 1999

Questions a woman asks that a man can't answer

Someone signed my guestbook awhile back, and left a little number behind called, "*Questions a woman asks that a man can't answer*". He went on to say that no matter how a guy answers these questions he is dead. I chuckled as I read through them because I knew he was right. Not because women are difficult, but because men are stupid.

I think it's totally appropriate to wake someone up at 3:00 am, and ask my fella, "if I died tomorrow would you remarry?"

What is wrong with that? If he says no, then I feel guilty because he will be sad, and lonely. On the other hand I feel exceedingly glad because I know that I am the only female in the world for him. Then the guilt overrides the joy, and I get angry because the stupid lout just made me feel guilty. What a rotten thing to do to me!

How about "Do you love me?" Now what is wrong with that question? So what if we usually ask it because we have just dented the car, or spent a tad bit too much money, or found the perfect carpet, furniture, and drapes for that drab, boring parlor. Sometimes we just want to know. Is it our fault that men don't know why we are asking? Their response of, "Why are you asking, or what did you do now?" is really very unromantic, and not at all flattering. If they were smart they'd respond with an unequivocal yes, and wait for us to add to the conversation.

Any idiot knows that when a woman asks if she looks fat in an outfit that the proper response is, "Of course not!" Well, there are those times when we just want to complain about being fat, and this just happens to be our opening to the subject. A man worth his salt would recognise that moment, and respond with, "It's just water retention, Honey, in a few days you'll feel, and look more like your usual self. You always look perfect to me". That response works about 3 out of 7 times. Men claim to be so much better at math than we are, you'd think they wouldn't screw up so often. Of course, the only real reason we ever complain about being fat is to be reassured that we are really the most gorgeous creature that they are ever likely to come into contact with, and are damned lucky that we notice them at all. I sure don't understand why a man would find answering such a question hard.

"Do you think 'so and so' is pretty?" is supposed to be a loaded question. The only reason a man would ever shy away from that answering is that secretly he thinks she is. If he says yes, then we know he's been window shopping, and not to be trusted. Then of course we ask, "prettier than me?" The real smooth ones reply with something like, "I only noticed because you pointed her out." The jerks respond with, "Well, if you didn't want to know, then why did you ask?" The ploy here is to toss the ball back into our park. What they don't seem to understand is that the ball they just tossed out was their only lifeline, and if it takes twenty years we will sever the cord and let them float around for eternity.

If he says that he doesn't think that so and so is pretty, then we worry about his vision, his honesty, and wonder if his testosterone level needs checking. The truth of the matter is if he spent half as much time paying us the compliments we need, and deserve, the question would rarely come up, and we'd only ask because we were bored.

Men only think these questions unfair because they can't con their way out of them. 'Do you like my mother', isn't difficult. We all secretly know that some day we are going to turn into her, and if he doesn't

like her, then the oaf doesn't like us either, and has been lying all these years. Of course if he likes her too much, it irritates the heck out of us because we remember when she insisted we lower our hemlines, wash the dishes, take the make-up off our faces, come home early, turn the music down, and why didn't she lock us in a steal vault when we said we were going to marry this guy in the first place?

I don't know why men have such a hard time with such simple everyday questions. It isn't like we are asking them to do anything monumental, like remembering to take out the trash. No, men hate these questions because they all live under the illusion that they are tricks, designed to trap them. Why on earth would we want to trap them. We already got them. That's bad enough.

Ask Away

Candalee Swayze July 1999

The Date From Hell

Dark, swirling masses of churning waters breaking onto the jagged rocks, waiting ominously below caught Canda's eye as she looked over the edge of the steep cliff she was perched upon.

The setting sun spewed rainbows of purple, and coral along the lava formations, a shadow here, dancing light there creating a halo of brilliant hues melding into the flowing silk caftan which shrouded her wistful form. Her bare feet glowed in the paling light of the dying day taunting the powers of nature to stay just awhile longer.

She looked toward the diminishing sun, contemplated it's remembered glory from a few fleeting seconds past, and then down into the watery grave topped with white, frothy pixies beckoning her to come and play. A deep longing filled her being. Too many lonely years, too many isolated setting suns, too many memories of watery graves had come and gone.

Tossing her head, and taking one last look at the cruel, cynical world she had nurtured so carefully over the past decades, she squared her shoulders, lifted one dainty size nine, and stepped off the stone alter of her life.

The wind hit her squarely in the face, sending her blonde tresses into unceremonious disarray, evolving into cascading wings flapping frantically behind her. A sphere of angel kisses grew up within her, built on imagination, and triumph, they filled her soul with accomplishment, and a deep sense of peace, and contentment.

Time moved ever so slowly to the point of non-existence. She was free at last. Her heart soared in this newfound, unshackled world. Flying high, and then dipping to the very depths of her existence, she looked down into the deep, rushing pools coming to claim her, and take her home. She could hear voices whispering her name, enticing her with all their promises.

At the last possible moment, as in all real-life adventures, reality set in as she suddenly realized what she had just thrown herself into. From the very depths of her soul an agonizing sound emitted, coming up from an empty, hollow, secret place inside her. The sound grew into an ear-splitting scream of strong words, expressing all the pain, gloom, and remorse of her life, "I'll never get that baked on macaroni out of the bottom of the pot!", she cried in utter despair.

And so the saga, and adventures of Canda continue.

Getting involved in another relationship would be like jumping off a cliff into a sink full of dirty dishes. Oh sure, someone gets to eat a hearty meal, but guess who's left to clean up the mess. I have determined the only way to evade this situation is to either eat alone, or starve.

I went out on a date a while back. I refer to it as THE DATE FROM HELL'. This guy had been pestering me for months to go out with him. I was new at the divorce business, and it had been nearly three decades since I had dated having been in the marriage scene for 29 years. He was a really nice guy, polite, and interesting. He told me I was one of the most beautiful women he had ever met, and of course I gave him points for having good taste, so I finally agreed to go out with him. We went to a beautiful restaurant, and dined in true British Columbia style with gourmet delicacies, excellent service,

and drop-dead gorgeous surroundings. After dinner he took me to one of those theaters with about a zillion movies housed under one roof. We went to see, "Message in a Bottle". The movie was great. This guy spent over a hundred and fifty bucks on our little date, which impressed me greatly since my marriage partner's idea of a good time was beer, pool, and burgers at a local tavern.

I met him at the local Denny's Restaurant so he wouldn't know where I lived. I left my car in the parking lot, and got into his car. The guy leaned over me to do up my seat belt, (a very gentlemanly act), so, when he straightened up, I thanked him by saying as sweet as you please, "You smell good."

He lunged across the seat at me like I was sitting there naked, and primed for a night of debauchery. What the heck does "you smell good" translate into: "Come and get it baby. I'm all yours. Do with me what you will"? GADS! I let out a scream, and pulled away, which in a compact car wearing a seat belt isn't very far, but it put an end to Romeo's ideas of good things happening on a first date in the parking lot at Dennys.

With a shrug, and look of total innocence he said, "Guess not ehhhh?"

I responded with an after-shock trembling voice, "No".

At the theater we found our seats, and I began to believe that all was going to be well, which turned out to be a short lived fantasy. First thing he did was grab my hand. What really rankles the shackles of this cynical, and somewhat sarcastic heart of mine is: The guy was a thumb rubber! "Oh, please God, save me from ever having to hold hands, and endure that again." Later, I figured it was some kind of penance for not having the backbone to say to the lunging Lothario, "You touch me again, and I'll make sure your grandchildren feel the reverberations."

After about 10 minutes, longer if you count mili-seconds, I finally had enough of dream man's consistent fascination with rubbing his thumb on the side of my hand, and I excused myself to go to the lady's room. Extreme nausea threatened to bring the gourmet goodies I had consumed earlier back into play. I calmed myself as best as I could while hiding in the restroom. I thought about calling a cab, and slithering out the door to safety, but I could hear my mother's voice in the back of my head reminding me that I was a lady, and needed to conduct myself accordingly. Man I hate guilt?

Anyway, after about three hundred turns at playing the soap-dispenser game, and an innumerable amount of times of turning the hand blow-dryer on, and pointing the nozzle in every possible direction, I figured I had to return.

I found my way back to the right theater, and Mr. Thumb Rubber. I sat down, and folded my arms with my hands safely tucked away. I sat there with pins and needles shooting up my arms because my hands fell asleep from their enclosed position for what seemed like an eternity watching Message in a Bottle, and telling myself that movies rarely run for more than two hours.

Towards the end of the movie, I raised my hand, (I forgot I was sitting next to the King of Romance), to wipe a tear from my eye, and a voice came over the loud speaker, "THE EAGLE HAS LANDED!".

He swooped down like a hawk on a field mouse. Man, for a fifty-something year old, non-athletic, type of guy he could move fast. He grabbed my hand like it was the last hand on earth, and in absolute male

triumph hung onto it for dear life. I knew the movie was coming to a close, so I endured the thumb rubbing one more time, vowing to become a nun, and promising to dedicate my life to the service of other divorced, thinking they have to date, women.

Me, and the guy sitting next to me, (not my date, but a total stranger), had bawled our eyes out like a couple of babies throughout the movie. I think Mr. Majestic had missed the entire show as he sat there plotting his next move, and waiting for an opportunity to once again regain control of my hand. That, or his emotional faculties died years ago, and no one had bothered to bury them. The other guy was wonderful! I didn't have to speak to him, smile at him, or anything, and not once did he grab my hand, or make any sudden moves. We just sat there and absorbed all the love, and excitement that the movie had to offer. I developed an emotional attachment to him sitting there in the theater. He kept his hands in his lap the whole time. His date never looked nauseas, not once, and she didn't have her arms folded. She may have been his sister, or cousin, but I don't think so. Of course, the fickle bastard left with her after the movie, and I never heard from him again. It was a real let-down, especially after those emotion-filled moments we shared, there in the dark, with the movie screen filling our senses. I must admit, however, I wouldn't recognize him if I ran over him, or, excuse me, into him again.

Anyway, back to the date.....

Time, and the Gods took pity on me, the movie ended, and the date was almost over. We went back to Dennys parking lot, and I got into my car. I'd like to tell you that I don't kiss on a first date, but in all honesty I can't claim that to be a fact as I hadn't been on a date since God was a child, and I may have changed over the years. Married dating is quite a bit different than single dating, so I was really dreading the good night scene.

The guy walked me to my car, and I had ever so gracefully dove in head first hoping he'd get the idea that it was over. Not him! He leaned in to get his kiss. I darned near shut his head in the door in my enthusiasm. He managed to brush his lips across my cheek, and ear before he moved to avoid decapitation. I waved a fond farewell, slammed the car into reverse, managed to control the desire to run over him, and got the hell out of Dodge.

I have recounted this tale to others. Everyone has tried to tell me that I just had a bad experience, and that I need to get out there, and keep trying. Why? What exactly is it I am out there trying to find? I don't remember losing anything, well, except for my memory, some of my hearing ability, and all those darn socks that go into the washing machine as a couple, and come out as a single which reminds me of divorce court.

Maybe thumb rubbing is an art that is appreciated by the masses, but I have yet to meet a woman who thinks so. I understand that it was a first date, not just with him, but for me, and perhaps I should cut him some slack. Nahhhhhhhhhh! Dating is a horrible experience only to be endured if you happen to believe that living alone is unacceptable. What's so bad about living alone? There's a heck of a lot less dirty dishes.

Happy Dating
Candalee Swayze August 1999

Lost In The Swamp

A dank mist rose up from the snake infested swamp that Canda had quite innocently wandered into. Pungent moss hung from the trees like widow's shrouds, swaying gently in the late afternoon breeze. Had it been stronger the breeze would have been a foreboding ill-wind but, just a stale movement of air caught her nostrils, and made her choke back waves of nausea.

"Damn, stupid car", she thought to herself.

"I should have taken a course on car repair. You sure can't find a good mechanic these days," she mumbled as she waded through the murky waters lapping at her thighs.

All she had intended was to take a little vacation to see what this part of the country had to offer. Who knew that she'd end up on a deserted road in the middle of *Slime City* with a broken what-cha-ma-call-it, and no sign of civilization anywhere. If she had been using that oh so clever brain of hers she would have returned from whence she came. "That's what I get for believing a stranger's directions", she huffed out loud to a dead branch that tried to snatch a piece of her golden mane.

The sun peered through the dense overhang adding heat to the steaming mass of sludge, and mire with its grasping tendrils of shrouded deadwood. "If I live to be a thousand years old, I'll never believe another word out of any man's mouth. They're all just alike! Hey, you look like Morticia Addams." she said as she passed by a rather svelte tree totally encased in the clinging moss.

In the distance she saw a light at the end of her swampy tunnel. Hope sprang into her watchful eyes, and she pushed herself harder to escape this perilous place she had so unceremoniously dumped herself into. "I'm way too trusting, but I'm a survivor. I may have fallen into a swamp, and I did listen to stupid advice, but I'll make it out okay, and live to tell about it." she thought to herself.

After what seemed like decades the light grew stronger. She could see trees with green leaves, a clear blue sky, and dry ground. In spite of the encumbering water she ran the last several yards, and collapsed on the soft green grass. She sent a silent prayer up to her maker, pouring out her gratitude for having helped her to survive yet another ordeal.

As she lay there panting, trying to catch her breath, she realized that her whole life had been spent in a swamp. She had definitely met a few snakes in her day, not to mention the occasional leach, and swamp rat.

But here she lay on the soft grass, alone and free of the obstacles from her past. Out of the corner of her eye she caught a glimpse of movement in the tall foliage surrounding her green sanctuary. "Oh, sure, of course, another snake", she yelled at the top of her lungs. "Well why not?", she added in disgust.

She reached into her oversized leather bag, and pulled out her trusty 38. With the sun glinting on the deep, blue steel of the pistol's barrel she aimed at the side-winding varmints head, cocked back the hammer, and with deadly calm pulled on the trigger. "You'll never scare another lady, you rotten bastard", she hissed as she blew the last remnants of gunpowder from her security partner, and placed it lovingly back into her bag.

Luxuriating back on the grass, she took a swig of Pepsi from her big gulp mug, (we all know that Candas never go anywhere without their Pepsi), unwrapped a well earned Hershey bar, (true survival gear for here in the swamps), and contemplated the decapitated snake with its writhing body searching endlessly for its used-to-be-head. The snakes actions reminded Canda of other snakes who had bit the dust, and she leaned back and smiled.

Hope you get out of the swamp real soon
Candalee Swayze August 1999

Spooks

Here where I am in the Northwestern United States, October represents harvest, finishing up the canning, colder weather, and Halloween. It's a time for making sure everything is ready for the upcoming winter, and saying a fond farewell to those warm summer days.

I, myself am a great lover of Halloween. I am not into the getting dressed up, and going door to door. I am into the chocolate the kids bring home in their bags, but that's another story, and a whole other topic.

Has anyone besides me noticed that men never seem to outgrow certain childhood traditions? Take baseball for instance. I think the reason it's so popular is because no matter what age you are, it is acceptable to be an avid player, or fan. I realize that women are as involved as much as men, but because this is not a woman bash column, I will just naturally focus on the male attitude.

Yes, men and women are equally interested in the sports world, more so as each day passes. The difference I have noticed is that on Saturdays when the television is filled with channels, and channels of sporting events women will sit down to watch a favorite sport, while men will surf the channels watching every sporting event out there, all at once, from racing cars, and horses, to fly fishing with Bob.

No man loves Christmas the way a woman does. Most women I have conversed with on the subject tell me how Christmas is their favorite holiday. I think it's because we are giving by nature, and men see it as just another way to spend money, and not on themselves, so, "to heck with it!" I think that's why they get so many pairs of socks, and really ugly ties. It's their Karma.

Halloween on the other hand involves going door to door collecting handouts, and potentially terrorizing the neighbors, 'all in good fun, of course', and thereby is right up a man's alley. He gets to dress up and be somebody he's not. Well, duh, like that's a big change. Men have been dressing up, and being somebody else forever, especially when it comes to meeting women. When Mr. Right takes off his *meeting women costume*, he invariably becomes Mr. Wrong.

If women are the epitome of Christmas, then men are the stuff that Halloween is made of. Take Frankenstein for instance. Now there's an average Joe for you. He walks around grunting out conversation, barging his way into unknown territory, and intimidating everyone with his big green scar, and those bolted nuts screwed tightly to the sides of his head. I've met several of his cousins. I just call them all Frank. The Franks of this world only have one thing on their minds, "I must get what I want, when I want it". They carry on meaningful conversations like, "Dinner?" Translated it means what's for dinner. They grunt out the word *honey* and it can mean anything from 'Where's my socks', to 'Do you want to fool around?' Franks are men of action, and few words. They stomp through your life, shaking the very foundation of your soul, and then throw you down the first available well.

Another kind are the spooks, ghosts, or ghouls. Now you see them, now you don't. Every woman knows at least one of these guys. You're doing dishes, mopping the floor, whatever, and he's right underfoot. Turn around and say, "Honey will you take out the trash?", and he's gone, vanished into thin air. The really good spooks can be there without being there at all. You are deep into some story you're telling, and you look over, and notice a blank, frozen stare etched upon his face. You wave your hand before his eyes, and nothing happens. They have transported themselves to another planet. They'll return though, and say some spooky thing like "What, I always hear every word you say."

Of course, the world is filled with monsters, and things that go bump in the night. Most of them are of male origin, and rightly so. If you say the word boogey man everyone looks to the shadows to see what lurks there. If you were to say boogey woman, everyone would be looking for their favorite CD dance music.

Halloween was invented to chase off evil spirits. How come after a night of 'casting out the dark spirits of the underworld', do we wake to find that men are still here walking among us, no worse for the wear? We must be doing something wrong.

Happy Halloween
Candalee Swayze October 1999

Safe Cyber

To cyber, or not to cyber, that is the question. Whether it is nobler in the mind of the internet junkie to get involved with his fellow surfers, or to merely pass by unnoticed into that good night....Sorry William, I couldn't resist.

Cyber sex, yes I said it out loud, is the latest craze to hit the unsuspecting world. This planet we all live on, still reeling from the 60's, and all the free love, closely followed by the aids epidemic, came up with the ultimate in safe sex. No condoms necessary here. No, worrying about what the morrow shall bring. No more coyote love,(you know where you chew your arm off rather than wake up your bed partner the next morning after one too many the night before, and you realize what you went home with).

In the cyber scene there are no puny 90 pound weaklings, and unnoticed wallflowers. Everyone is successful, in shape, beautiful, sexy, alluring, and desirable. No one is dysfunctional, (unless you are in support and recovery chat), and everyone everywhere is equal.

Awwwww the perfect world at last. All God's children have come to grips, and found the solution to their petty rivalries, and human differences. It's simple, all you have to do is lie! If you've ever driven a car, heck, if you've ever seen a picture of a car you can be an Indy 500 driver. If you can spell the word yacht, or a close cousin to it, you can have this conversation: "Yes, well, last summer, while relaxing on our little yacht, you know, the one we just knock around in, I had to turn people away from. 150 people is just enough to make an interesting event, anymore than that is just too much. Sometimes being this wealthy, and popular can be such a drag."

I love it. Like the weather, everyone complains about the pretensions that goes on, but nobody does a thing about it. The shyest of shy people suddenly becomes aggressive, and outspoken. The *butter wouldn't melt in her mouth debutante* can out wager the most professional of professional women. The heathen can be a Christian, and visa versa. The whole world could actually sit down at their respective computers and settle once and for all world peace. Everyone could be number one, successful, and have no internal, or external problems. If you need to invade another country, you can just go over to a gaming site, and kick hell out of whomever. Yes, the internet is the perfect solution to all our problems. Except.....

Late at night when you roll over, and wake up in a cold lonely bed, the temperature of that monitor is not conducive to feelings of security, and warmth, and no matter how many html colors they come up with, it just doesn't create the same feelings as do a hug, or a nuzzle behind the ear.

The Internet has come up with a solution for those who find chatting to not be enough. It's called Internet match makers. *FIND YOUR SOUL MATE, EXPLORE THE ENTIRE WORLD, AND FIND YOUR ONE TRUE LOVE.* Mama always said you had to break a lot of eggs to make an omelet. I think she should perhaps have killed the hen, and fried her up. There's nothing like a good fried chicken dinner.

I signed up for the online dating services, and have been having a ball. The only problem is,

these guys actually want to meet. "Wait a minute! My phone number? You want me to give you my phone number, so you can call me? Every time I visit a new site I end up on somebody's spam list, and you want me to give you my phone number? Why, so you can make unsolicited phone calls? Oh yeah, and what if I want to unsubscribe from your service, will you actually take me off your list, or will you sell my number to a thousand other Internet latharios?"

I have met some really nice guys on-line. I figure as long as they stay on-line they'll remain so. Do you know how beautiful, seductive, desirable, and wonderful I am because I have a picture up there for them to look at? Apparently it doesn't shatter their PC screens, or make them feel like a case of flu coming on, so I must be a knockout.

They immediately send me their picture. Now, I like a frame of reference, but how they look is quite irrelevant. Well, pretty much so. I draw the line at dating Cyclops. They are much too tall, and that one-eye-right-in-the-middle-of-the-forehead thing is kind of nerve-wracking. Other than that I don't have too many physical trait preferences on my list. I am more interested in the person behind the hair, teeth, and cheesy grin. Of course someone my height, or taller would be nice.

I did qualify an age preference, however. You can actually choose the category that allows anyone from ages 1 to 99 to write to you. I am 48. So I said okay, 35 to 55. That's a nice 20 year spread. It should give me a good range of individuals, right? Wrong! If you're 48 and you say 35 then you really mean 20. I now get letters from 3 year olds who want to date me, cause I am so interesting. Well, they might as well be 3, What the heck do I have in common with a 20 year old? Get out the diapers, I'm bringing a baby home! Yeah right.

I asked one 22 year old why he was writing to a woman who was old enough to be his mother. I said what the heck is wrong with you? He finally admitted that he wanted to cut his teeth on an older, mature woman of the world who could teach him a thing or two. Laughing out loud (LOL) I replied, "Honey, you probably had more experience in junior high, than I've had my whole life." Then I asked him for his mother's email addy. I think she should know what her son is up to. She probably wouldn't have time to reply though because she's too busy warding off the advances of all the young men who saw her listed somewhere.

As a woman the only requirement for being a cyber affair candidate is that you have a somewhat feminine name. Smarter Than You'll Ever Be Girl, Arsenal Woman, Femme de Arsenic, Black Widow Lady, She who can annihilate You With A Single Glance, Her Face Could Sink A Ship, Joe's Ugly Sister, whatever. Cyber hungry men see the feminine attachment, and immediately zero in on that. Candalee is a big draw, except for the illiterates who think it spells Canada Lee. They ask me if I am really a female, and what part of Canada I come from. "Yeah, like I want to date you! Did anyone in your family actually go to school?"

My greatest pet peeve is the dog gone letters: asl. I wrote back, "What exactly is it you're trying to spell?" He replied, "Age, sex, and location." I responded to his answer with, "Old enough to know better than to have sex with a creep like you in any location!"

Which only goes to prove that no matter where you put men, in the real world, or in cyberland, they are jerks. Have you ever been in chat and got the PM, "Hey baby, want to have a party?"

Yeah, where, your keyboard, or mine

**Chat's where it's at,
Candalee Swayze November 1999**

I've Been Scrooged!!!!

I found writing this month's article to be very challenging. With my usual sarcastic gusto well in hand, I found myself falling short of the target. I couldn't seem to get past the pain, and into seeing the humor.

I finally figured out that the reason for my lack of a good old Christmas man-bash was due to the fact that I had too many unresolved issues, and there was still too much pain surrounding the season. I found myself in quite a quandary, to say the least.

I finally decided to just sit down and write, and see what came out. This is it.

Christmas is my favorite time of the year. I love the season. I love the lights, the trees, the carols, the general spirit of good-will, and friendliness that seems to come with the time. I have come to realize that the reason this time of year is so important to me is because there have been those who have made it a not-so-happy time to remember.

The man I called Dad all my life hated Christmas. He would start bitching as soon as the first store put up any kind of display, and go on incessantly until the last ornament was packed neatly away. He said every year as far back as I can remember, "We are not having a damn tree this year!"

He'd wait until Christmas eve, go to the tree lot, and snag one of those picked over, bare, shedding, 'I used to be a pine tree, (in a prior life), and bring it home. He'd then begin the long ordeal of cutting the branches, drilling holes to fill in the bare spots with branches that had once been located on the thickly branched side, just a-cussing, and a-fuming all the while.

To keep us at a safe distance from the beast, Mama would have us children stringing popcorn, and cranberries. Everyone in the household was afraid of that guy. He took the sweet joy of peace on earth, and good will to men right out of the holidays.

Sitting on my chair dreaming of the new baby doll, or whatever was in my imaginative child's mind I could hear him in the background going off on "This blankity blank Christmas ain't nothing but a merchant's holiday, and besides that Jesus wasn't born in December, He was born in April. I HATE x0!&6F\$c9 CHRISTMAS!!!"

My mother carried the spirit of Christmas with her 365 days a year. She was a saint, in my opinion. She put up with that guy for almost 40 years, and never lost her faith. She baked, and made confections for weeks, making sure that everyone from the mailman, to the neighbors down the road, and everyone in between got a basket full of her homemade goodies.

I learned a love of the season, and what it truly represents from her. From him, I developed my basic fear, and distrust of men.

Wouldn't you just know it, when it came to marriage, I found a guy who didn't hate Christmas. I found one who didn't believe in it. I was married to him for 28 years before he bought me a gift.

That was 27 of the hardest days to get through in all the thousands of days that that marriage was made up of. The birthdays, and anniversaries, Mother's days, and Valentine days were bad enough, but gads how I hated not getting a card, or stick of gum, or even a Merry Christmas from him. What made it worse was listening to my friends, and sisters in law telling me what their beloved's had given them. To say the least my jaded heart grew harder, and more cold, (in that department) over the years. I focussed on my children, just like my mom had done all those years, and made Christmas a season of peace on earth, and good will toward mankind for us.

Like my mother I baked, and sewed, crafted, decorated, sang carols, went to all the Christmas shows, church parties, school events, etc. Unlike my mother, I went unescorted. My father, though he was one of the founding fathers of the brotherhood of scrooge kept up a good facade for the community. Heck, the man even played Santa for the school Christmas program. My husband just climbed into his bottle, and ignored the whole season. Of course, he climbed into his bottle, and ignored our whole marriage, come to think of it.

After 29 years, and some very odd months, I escaped. I filed for divorce, and ran away to Vancouver B.C. to await the judges decree. I ended up living there for a year. While there, I spent my first Christmas as a divorced woman. I was broke, a thousand miles from home, hardly knew anyone, and about as depressed as a girl can get.

As luck would have it, or the fates would allow. Oh heck, let's get honest, we always attract, and are attracted to the same thing. It has to be some kind of psychiatric thing, or is that psychic? Anyway, I managed to find for a roommate another scrooge. He doesn't get the idea of gift giving. If he isn't going to benefit from giving something then what good is it? Why spend all that money to make someone else happy? The money would be better spent on something that he wants for himself. Christmas is better spent home alone with your face stuck in a computer screen. Christmas dinner is whatever you happen to be eating that day, and family is just another word for 'headache'.

Anyway, last year Christmas was a bust for me. I survived it, just the way I've survived others. I have to tell you though about the final straw that broke this camel's back. We just got moved into our new house that we have been working so hard to get remodeled before the holidays hit. I was talking to our new neighbor. I was telling him that I was getting ready to string the lights around the house, and he said, " Bah Humbug!"

I don't know, do you think I have landed in Christmas hell, or what?

Happy Holidays,
Candalee Swayze December 1999