

Life from the Inside Out

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fairy-tale romance

BY KERRI POMAROLLI



EVERY LITTLE GIRL grows up believing in fairy tales. My princes were all from the movie screens of my adolescence, in the likes of the classic love stories of the “greatest generation.”

The 1980s: where men were men, where kids rode bikes without helmets and drank water from the tap. We roller-skated in our basements to Fisher-Price record players and dreamed of meeting our very own Jake Ryan (played by Michael Schoeffling, *Sixteen Candles*), or having Lloyd

Dobler (John Cusack, *Say Anything*) stand outside our window in a trench coat with his radio blasting Peter Gabriel. Why shouldn't life be like the movies, where everything is magically worked out in 120 minutes? Taking these “role models” to heart, I tried following this formula in my relationships.

My first kiss took place with Todd Crossly in a video arcade, while on vacation in Boston, and was shortly followed by his profession of undying love. He went on to tell me that I was the prettiest girl in the world and that we would never, ever break up. After all, he was 5 feet 5 inches tall and so strong at 14. It had to be forever, right? But sadly we parted, going back to our respective states. We were forced to relive our summer romance via 25-cents-a-minute phone calls and letters written in puffy paint.

I knew the meaning of the timeless Richard Marx lyrics, “Hold on to the night ... Hold on to the memories.” Ahh, the pain ... the drama—you gotta love teen anguish. But I knew our love would win in the end. He eventually gave up on our fantasy and married a professional cheerleader named Carrie. A cheerleader! You think God doesn't have a sense of humor?

So I was forced to continue my search in the dating jungle, taking tips from Jennifer Grey. I had hopes that one day some strong man in tight black pants would pull me out of a corner and sweep me onto the dance floor, à la Johnny Castle (Patrick Swayze, *Dirty Dancing*), proving that love conquers everything, including disapproving parents and cultural divides. Why shouldn't I get to do the lift and have the “time of my life” at my wedding?

The only problem is that most real guys I've come across don't “get” these John Cusack/Patrick Swayze moments, and I have found that forcing them to painfully sit through these DVDs doesn't exactly motivate them to take up the merengue or salsa.

So what is a girl to do? Continue these marathon chick-flick nights (with large amounts of carbohydrates and chocolate) as we slide into depression? Shun chick-flick nights altogether to avoid torture? (At least we'd be skinnier.) Do we continue to search for Mr. Right, or settle for Mr. Right-now because at least we'll get a free dinner?

I choose to keep searching, knowing that there is a God up there who knows exactly the kind of “prince” I need. He is a God of true happy endings, and if I really believe that He is real, then I have to believe that He has my best interests in mind.

“For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you” (Jeremiah 29:11, TNIV). It's all right there in black and white, in that book that sits on my bedside table just waiting to be opened—though most of the time, a Lifetime original movie wins out over a long devotional. It's sad, but I'm getting better.

So the choice is up to me, as a modern woman in a society filled with a plethora of choices, from men to hairstyles. Am I going to choose the path of least resistance and continue to settle for men who think sitting through a Star Trek marathon is romantic as long as they buy me popcorn? Or am I going to wait for my own type of prince, the perfect selection God has for me? And hey, He parted the Red Sea ... He can do a lot if we only let Him.

I still say that we strong Christian women continue watching Julia, Renée, and Meg fall in and out of love, in different cities, with different men. And we'll continue to eat loads of Ben & Jerry's. But when the credits roll, we can have confidence that the reality can far outweigh fantasy if we're willing to open our eyes to the bigger picture and actually give up some of our own control to Someone who knows a lot more about real happy endings than we do.

Sound impossible? I'm game ... are you?

KERRI POMAROLLI is a comedian and the author of *If I'm Waiting on God, Then What Am I Doing on the Christian Chatroom?: Confessions of a Do-It-Yourself Single* (Zonder van). www.kerripom.com