

"BABY, I wouldn't Trade You for a Sow and Seven Pigs"

By Christy Boniol

"Ole King Kong was a little bitty monkey compared to my love for you."

This is my husband's attempt at *amore*. He thinks he's being quite the Romeo when he quotes this line from a song by country singer George Jones. I think he expects me to be swept off my feet at the comparison of a large primate and his feelings for me. When he's feeling exceptionally fond of me and appreciative of my presence in his life, he'll exclaim, "Baby, I wouldn't trade for you a sow and seven pigs."

As you can imagine, my heart melts.

A romantic "jumpstart"?

Often I see magazine covers boasting articles such as "25 Ways to Rev up the Romance in Your Marriage." This is a great concept--except that the lack of romance normally lies with the husband. Men don't typically read the women's magazines in which these types of articles are found. Now, if you could get the same article in the Bass Pro Shop fall catalog, there might be a chance, although slim, that he'd read it.

Nevertheless, I still find myself reading the articles for tips to jumpstart my romance. While in the grocery store checkout line several weeks ago, I picked up a magazine that had the secrets to romance, or so they claimed.

Nope, won't work.

First, the article suggested that you and your spouse start dating again on a regular basis. While a good theory, the experiments attempted by the Boniol and Boniol scientific team (that's me and my husband, in case you didn't follow) have found that this approach isn't always successful.

If you're fortunate to find a babysitter not already busy on a Saturday night, then you must agree on the date itself: dinner and a movie, perhaps. But Hubby wants to go to a place where you can throw peanut hulls on the floor. I'd like to dine in a place with subtle lighting and cloth napkins folded creatively in the water glass.

Whereas I'd like to see a romantic comedy or a poignant drama, he rates movies according to how many things get blown up, or how many people jump out of speeding trains, planes or automobiles. Almost everyone dies in the end and there's very little dialogue. That's because with all the noise from the guns and bombs, you could not understand it if you *were* included. So for us, date nights don't solve our romantic dilemma.

The next suggestion in the article was to participate in a hobby together. This one is completely out of the question. His hobbies always include animals. Some alive, some dead, most skinned and gutted before it's all over. I prefer attending the theater or visiting a bookstore or coffee shop.

I put down the article, a bit depressed. Would my husband and I never reach the romantic heights?

It's all relative

On my way home, I realized maybe I'd been looking at romance the wrong way. For instance, my husband and I attend church together every week. Sharing our faith does more to cement our marriage bond than hundreds of evenings at the movies. Knowing that our lives are connected by Someone so

much bigger and more powerful than we are gives us a sense of security and comfort. It goes beyond what we say or do.

I also realized my husband does little things that sometimes I overlook. For instance, several weeks ago, we were with some friends discussing pregnancy weight when he so sweetly interjected, "I just hate to see a skinny pregnant woman. I worry about the baby's nourishment. When Christy was pregnant, I knew our baby was getting good groceries." Was I supposed to say "thank you?"

He must have gotten tired of hearing me lament about our deficiency in the romance department, or there really was an amorous editorial in the Bass Pro Shop catalog. Who knows? At any rate, things certainly took an interesting turn.

Later that week, he called to tell me to come straight home after work, because he was taking our family out to eat. When I got home, I discovered he'd dropped of the kids at some friends' house for the night. Then he told me to pack my clothes; he had a special surprise for me. I was instructed not to talk about kids, bills, or work. "Romance" was the top priority.

He took me to a quaint, cozy Italian restaurant (no peanut hulls on the floor, thank you), and we began to laugh and talk like we did when we were dating. I once again discovered his dreams and goals, and he saw me not as a mother and clothes folder, but as Christy.

We had a wonderful time away!

Romantic *and* fun

But he's still somewhat confused about the romance issue. Saturday afternoon, on our way home, we stopped at a Bennigan's for lunch.

"Is this still romantic?" he asked.

"No, this is more fun than romantic."

"I'm confused," he said, "I thought yesterday was fun."

"It was, just different. The whole atmosphere is different."

"I don't get it. It's all the same to me."

Later, at home, I tried to show him the definition of romance to help him clarify. I went to the dictionary to find the actual meaning of the word. One definition said, "Something that lacks basis in fact." *Okay, we'll skip that one*, I thought. Finally, I found the right definition: "To try to influence or gain favor by lavishing personal attention, gifts, etc." *Fun* was defined as something that provides amusement and enjoyment.

In his endeavor to provide a romantic weekend, my husband accomplished both. We had fun and he gained favor with me by lavishing personal attention and gifts. So maybe he's onto something.

I learned something as well. Romance is relative. Not everyone needs date nights or mutual hobbies to create an amorous atmosphere. You have to look for what's special in your own relationship and build on that.

I guess King Kong doesn't have any competition with my husband. And as long as someone doesn't offer him a sow and *eight* pigs, our marriage and romance will be fine.

*Take from *Today's Christian*, March/April 2008