

BLIND DATES

By

Mary Davis

ONE

Mary gave a heavy sigh as she took the last “blind date” picture off her refrigerator. That’s what she called them. Since her twenty-ninth birthday, her family had been plying her with photos of eligible bachelors. They treated her like the last item on the clearance table. Who said turning thirty was a crime? She felt pressured to go out on at least one date with each prospective suitor. Family duty. She had tried to refuse, but her family insisted. So, she consented—but only for a one-year period and no candidates through Internet sites, they had to be personally known by people she knew. On her thirtieth birthday all matchmaking had to come to a halt.

She regretted that deal. Only four months in and she was ready to escape to some secluded corner of the world. Though her family always picked relatively handsome, relatively successful Christian men, none had interested her. What was so wrong with remaining single if that was God’s will for her? Naturally, she wanted someone she could come home to and spend quiet nights with. Someone to share her dreams and fears. Someone to love her. She just hadn’t found the right someone.

The phone’s ringing startled her out of her thoughts. She checked her Caller ID box before she picked up the receiver. “Hello, Phoebe.”

“Is this the day of the big family get-together?”

She sighed into the phone. “I wish I could throw up and get out of going. I just got rid of the last batch of photos.”

“Fear not, Phoebe is here.” Her friend’s chipper voice did nothing to alleviate her dread. “I have the perfect solution to your problem.”

“What’s that? Adopt me into a new family in the next hour?”

“Close. All you have to do is bring a *boyfriend* to your family soirée.”

It was hardly a soiree, but a pseudo-boyfriend might quell the photos for a day or two. “Right, and where in the next ten minutes am I supposed to find that boyfriend I haven’t been able to find for the last ten years?”

“Give him fifteen.”

“What?”

Phoebe hesitated. “Your date will be there in about fifteen minutes.”

She shook her head. “Please tell me you’re joking.”

“Do you hear me laughing?”

This couldn’t be happening. “Call him and tell him not to come.”

“Nope.”

“Phoebe! I thought you of all people understood my dilemma.”

“I do. That’s why Erik’s on his way over.”

“Erik? As in your brother?”

“The one and only.”

Mary pressed her free hand to her temple. She had never met Phoebe’s “boring” brother, as Phoebe described him.

“He has dark, curly hair and is really sweet. He’s a bit shy around women so be nice to him. He understands all about your dilemma and knows this is just a date for show. No strings.”

Great. A sympathy date. Could she just shrivel up and die?

“Oh, and don’t mention anything about computers. He’s a computer geek, but don’t hold that against him.”

“Call him off.”

“Can’t. He’s already on his way.”

Panic set in. “Then I’ll leave before he gets here.”

“No, you won’t. And leave him wondering what happened?”

The doorbell rang.

Phoebe piped up again. “He must be early.”

“Phoebe, I’m going to get you for this.”

“No need to thank me. Have fun.” *Click.*

She pressed the END button on her cordless phone and looked out her peephole. She blinked and looked again. The handsome man on her porch didn’t look like a geek. No pocket protector, no heavy, black-rimmed glasses with tape holding them together. He looked. . .normal. The peephole must be playing tricks on her.