

It's A Funny Old World

'When men find themselves unexpectedly solo, tasty casseroles always seem to come to the rescue!'

Why can't men be on their own for five minutes? I'm sure you've noticed that a divorced, widowed or separated man often seems to jump into a new relationship at the speed of light! But women tend not to do that when they find themselves unexpectedly solo. (I once read that women do their grieving in their own individual way while men do it alongside their next partner).

I've come to the conclusion that casseroles are a contributory cause of this condition. When a man loses his woman, by death, divorce, dishonour or sheer carelessness, you can bet your bottom dollar he will find a rapidly growing queue of women ready to tempt him with their tasty casseroles... Le Creuset to the rescue! 'You poor darling!' is the deliciously scented message that wafts its seductive magic. 'You need feeding!'

But when a woman is abandoned by fair means or foul, there's not a casserole to be seen for love nor money. The unsavoury and unspoken message is that she can cope. She has to cope. And she doesn't need feeding because she probably wants to lose weight anyway!

Feast for the men, famine for the women, then. But in my opinion, the recipe for men needs to include essential ingredients like alone time, so he has a chance to experience his grief, learn from his loss, find nourishment within himself. Yet because of the casserole crush, he doesn't get time to really swallow any of that. Fast food is the dish of the day!

For all we know, though, he may have had one on the back burner already. Now I really shouldn't generalise because lots of men wouldn't think of doing any such thing, but I bet anyone reading this will know of a man who has. In fact, I have first-hand experience of it.



This week's columnist:
**Author and agony aunt
Caroline Buchanan**

When my parents' marriage broke up, there was someone waiting in the wings for my dad. My mum had got fed up with his philandering and had said enough was enough. Alone into the night? I think not. The casserole was ready - in fact, the other woman taught domestic science!

When my own marriage ended, I soon discovered my ex-husband had already set up a home to go to, furnished with a built-in woman. An instant ready-made relationship, albeit one he'd clearly prepared earlier. Looking back, my ex knew the writing was on the wall for us and couldn't bear the thought of being on his own.

But I should have known that long ago, considering he originally asked me out just 11 days after his previous partner had died of a terminal illness. 'It's too soon for you!' I gasped. 'I've done my grieving in advance,' he said. Foolishly I chose to believe him, though all I can say in my defence is that I was NOT wielding a casserole!

One of the main reasons for affairs, believe it or not, is opportunity. I guess the casserole syndrome gives both men and the women who provide them an opportunity for cooking up a relationship. But unless it has many genuinely wholesome and nourishing ingredients, it's not always going to be good for either of them.

Let it be just the onions that make us all cry...



Caroline's
taken up
yoga

My Funny Old Week

Where I've been... My first **yoga class** - I have just rejoined a gym.

What I've seen... A lot of **bendy bodies**, including my own!

Who I've met... A fab 18-year-old **hairdresser** called Courtenay.

What I've bought... **Angel earrings** - one for me, and another one for my daughter.

❖ **The 15 Minute Rule: How to Stop Procrastinating and Take Control of your Life by Caroline Buchanan (£7.24, Right Way) is available at amazon.co.uk**

NEXT WEEK
Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

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