

# mxFlirt



Yes, the fairytale does exist, but you're more likely to win the lotto.



## HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

Dr Bella



### Mothers have a habit of putting others first. Your needs count too.

*Dear Bella,*

Failed relationships are a symptom – some of us are unlovable because we were unloved.

Being alone is not impossible, just difficult. But I've achieved a lot of happiness since I ditched the lazy monkeys.

Pity I had to raise the kids alone, and this is where it's impossible, especially for migrant families.

One cannot really hold down a job successfully; nor can one raise children well.

Give us some successful tips on managing alone but getting the best out of life.

– Maria

Maria, I hear you and I have some idea how hard it is to be a single mum because I saw my own mother endure this, the pressure of money, the lack of time.

Surround yourself with people who love and care for you. Acknowledge your limitations and know you can't be responsible for all the aspects of your children's lives.

Know that no matter how hard you work, you'll still be constrained by the social structure.

I think getting the best out of life stems from knowing ourselves, knowing what makes us happy and following through with our passions. It means delegating, so we have time to go dancing, to watch films or take walks among the singing lorikeets.

Mothers have a habit of putting others first.

Your needs count too.

Maria, we are all lovable; some of us just haven't seen our own beauty yet.

*Dear Bella,*

I'm a 35-year-old single woman. I was divorced five years ago and haven't had a relationship since, other than a "friend with benefits" arrangement

that ended in tears. Both these experiences left me with no faith in long-term relationships but I still have physical needs.

In short, I don't want a relationship, a one night stand or to have sex with a male friend again.

There's only one other option I can think of, and that's to pay for it.

I looked in the paper and saw an ad for a male escort who caters for women only. I called, but the guy sounded totally unappealing.

I'm not comfortable with a stranger coming over to my home, but I don't know if there are any establishments that cater for women. I certainly haven't been able to find any in the yellow pages.

Can you please help?

– Rachael

Rachael, For most of history, and indeed in many contemporary societies, women have been deemed sexually desireless.

If women wanted sex, well that was because what they were really after was love, or money, or babies or fulfilling wifely obligations.

With the feminist movement, the separation of religion from state and advance in contraceptive technology and accessibility, a novel idea arose... pleasure for pleasure's sake.

Prostitution is considered the oldest profession in the world. In many cultures, taking a young man to a prostitute for first-sex is considered a sexual baptism.

And here in Australia, for those who are intellectually-handicapped, a visit to the local brothel is almost institutionalised as therapeutic.

Men can take their pick: streetwalkers, brothels, live-sex shows, massage parlours, or sex tours to former Eastern bloc countries or Thailand. But for women? Rachael, I'm afraid you're on your own.

Women have fought for equality for as long as I can remember.

But while they've achieved it in most parts, it seems there is one area where men and women are not equal at all.

A survey of modern relationships reveals that while most men are happy to settle down with a woman who is "good enough," most women are still looking for Mr Right, a kind of man against whom every other suitor will be judged – and probably found wanting.

The result, of course, is that most blokes come up short and are dispatched to the scrapheap, while the woman continues her relentless – and usually unsuccessful – search for the perfect man.

So why are modern women so downright fussy in love?

The first reason is to do with money, and specifically this generation of women's ability to earn it like never before.

The second is the flipside of the female psyche from the one that forges a career – the part which, fuelled by romantic books and films, retains an ideal of a Mr Right that may simply not exist.

There was a time, of course, when a woman didn't have much opportunity to make a choice. Her father would scrutinise any prospective suitor, satisfy himself that the young man would have the means to keep her in the manner to which she was accustomed, and hand her over at the altar.

Their roles as husband and wife were pre-determined.

But now women are taught that they can be academic champions and worldbeaters, and rightly so.

Fuelled by movies, novels and a deluge of love songs on the radio, **JENNI MURRAY** asks is it any wonder women have a fantasy man in mind against whom every other suitor is ruthlessly judged?

The result is that women have more successful and diverse careers than ever before, and with that professional success comes financial independence.

In a single generation, women have cast off the reliance they've had on men for centuries.

Naturally, if you don't have to find a man just to provide for you, you are likely to be more choosy – about who you allow into your life and your bed.

That is the prerogative of every career woman.

The trouble is that if you are working hard and refusing to compromise, there is a real risk you will never find a man who can fulfil criteria.

Young men on the other hand, have, it would seem on the whole, begun to adjust their expectations and are now happy to settle down with a woman who does not necessarily look like Elle Macpherson.

More pertinently, they seem to have accepted that the balance of power in relationships has changed.

As one, Damian Queva, publisher of *Fathers' Quarterly*

magazine, said: "If we believe in the principle of equality, as men we have to be prepared to share the responsibility of earning money and caring for our children."

It's an encouraging thought, you'd assume, that so many men are expressing a

willingness to bring in the bread and bake it, and are considering seriously how they and the "good enough" women in their lives can juggle their work and their family lives.

It should come as a huge relief, in this age of stick-thin celebrity beauties

and Botox, that you can just be Mrs Average and still make a man happy without him forever looking for something better.

So why are women so fussy? The reason most of us are always looking for someone better is that we carry around a truly seductive notion, the idea of the romantic hero – and I suspect he enters the female psyche much more powerfully than most of us will acknowledge.

Who doesn't have a vivid memory of Mr Darcy emerging from the pond in that wet shirt? And isn't it universally acknowledged that



Like Bridget Jones, many women lust after a bad boy