

DOUBLE DATE

By Jourdan Strain

I hardly considered myself a dating machine, which is why I was stunned when I was asked out not once, but twice in the same week. I couldn't believe my luck. I scheduled

a date with one boy for Friday and the other for Saturday. I was feeling pretty smug about how popular with the young men I had become.

My Friday night date went as planned. We had a nice dinner and then went to meet a group of his friends to play a board game. We arrived at his friend's house and waited for the rest of the group to arrive. People trickled in every few minutes, but I didn't really notice. There wasn't going to be anyone I knew here.

Until I locked eyes with someone I recognized. I froze.

My Saturday night date was staring right back at me.

I could have died. I suddenly didn't feel so proud of myself for landing two dates that weekend. I tried to give

my Saturday night date some kind of facial signal that expressed my embarrassment over the situation, but to my surprise, he looked like he was trying to keep from bursting out laughing. He gave me a meaningful nod to indicate that this would be our little secret. We went about the rest of the evening without discussing the mishap so as to spare my current date, who had no idea his friend had asked me out for the following evening.

When he picked me up the next evening for our date, we were able to laugh about what happened the night before. I know how lucky I was that his feelings hadn't been hurt when he saw me on a date with his friend. The Church encourages dating different people when we're young, but I



became more aware of how my dating decisions could hurt others if I was not careful. Even though it was an accident, the experience taught me an important lesson about treating dates with the consideration and respect they deserve. **NE**

BETTER THAN BEAUTY

By Malinda Williams

My junior prom was a little less than a week away. All my friends and classmates were happily chatting about how they had the perfect date, dress, or shoes lined up for the occasion. It made me sick. I hadn't been asked yet, and the way things were looking, I wasn't going to be. Everyone seemed to have a date except me, and it hurt.

I told myself it didn't matter and tried not to take it personally. I even helped decorate for the dance with the rest of my class, but as prom approached, the hurt only worsened. I knew prom didn't matter in the eternal scheme of things, but I was convinced this was a tragedy.

One night while reading my scriptures, my eyes were staring at the words on the page, but my mind was elsewhere. I just couldn't get over myself. Maybe if I were more beautiful I would have had a date. I started thinking of things that would make me more beautiful in the world's eyes. Make-up, jewelry, more fashionable clothes; surely these would make me more attractive. I came to the conclusion that had I used them, I would have a date for prom.

Then I glanced down at my scriptures in an effort to remember what I had read. I was surprised when a verse in the middle of the page caught

THE LETTER

By Julia Woodbury

I wasn't expecting a letter from my dad. I was away at college, just trying to keep up with my studies, when it arrived. It wasn't my birthday or any other special occasion, so I thought the envelope just held some insurance information or some other document I had forgotten at home.

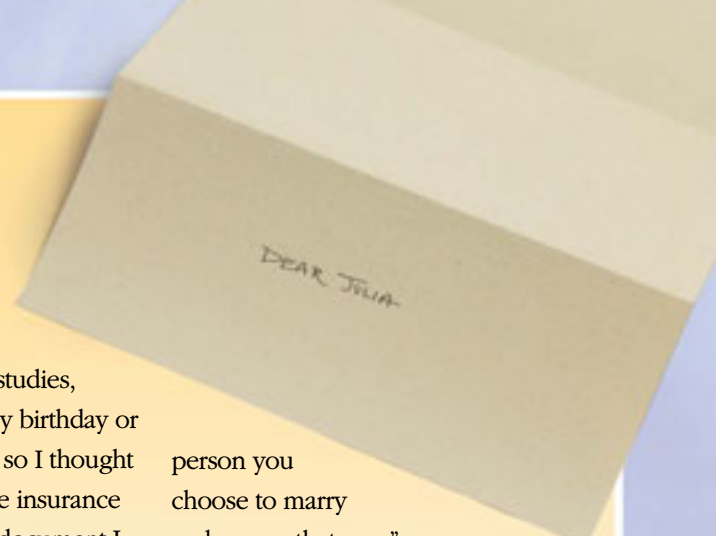
Instead, when I opened the letter, I found a short, three-paragraph note from my dad. He had written it during his free time on one of his business trips. It was his way of showing his love, but the words he shared also taught me a valuable truth I have never forgotten.

Dad told me a little about his trip. He also mentioned how he appreciated me. It made me feel so special that I had been on my father's mind during his busy days of travel and work.

Then, in the last few lines, he wrote these simple words: "I am really excited to be going home to be with your mother. I haven't seen her since Tuesday, and I miss her. She makes me better when I am around her. I hope the

my eye. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (1 Chronicles 16:29).

The phrase "beauty of holiness" hit me hard. I knew this was the Lord's way of telling me that I didn't need material things to be beautiful—I could be even more beautiful inside if I worked to be closer to Him. This little reminder gave me an overwhelming sense of His love, and I knew that no matter how things



person you choose to marry makes you that way."

My throat tightened and I got teary-eyed as I read this. I was so grateful for my dad's love and appreciation for my mom. Their marriage has been the best example I could have on dating and relationships. I also was glad for dad's subtle advice to me to associate with young men who help me to be a better person. It was a great reminder to me of what I really should be looking for and focusing on in my relationships.

There are people who really do care about who we date. Most importantly, Heavenly Father cares, because if we choose well, the people we are with will help us to be better and happier. And that is what Heavenly Father desires: for us to be filled with joy. **NE**

turned out, it would be all right.

I did manage to find a great guy to take me to the dance, and we had a fun time. But I know that even if I hadn't found anybody to go with, I would have been able to get through it with help from the Lord. I know that there is no better way to be and feel more beautiful than through a strong relationship with Him. I also know that He can help us through our difficult times, no matter what they may be, because we are His children and He loves us. **NE**