

WALTZING with the WIDOWS

By Benjamin Harrison



The phone rang.

They wanted me to dance.

This wasn't going to be a regular Wednesday night.

The phone rang. I picked it up. “Benjamin? This is Sister Adams. I’m organizing an activity night for the widows in the ward and was wondering if you’d be willing to help out. The activity is dancing, but don’t worry, you don’t really need any experience. It’s just for fun.”

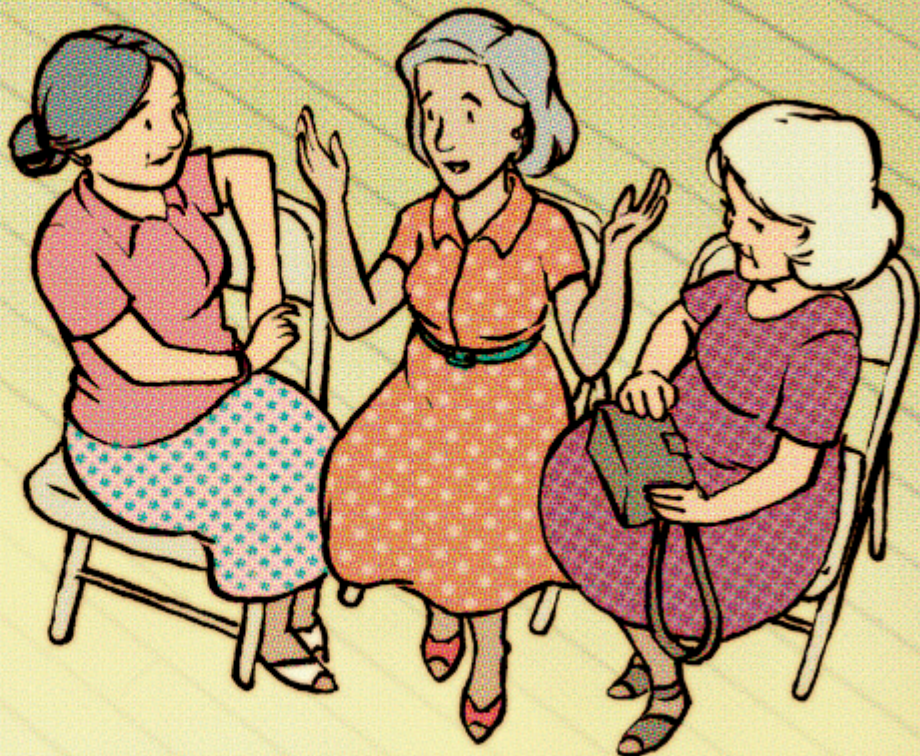
Fun? Silently wishing I’d never picked up the phone, I replied, “Well, Sister Adams, I don’t even know the basics—I mean, I can waltz, but that’s about it.”

“That will be perfect, Benjamin. I’m also calling some other priests, so you won’t be the only one. The activity starts at seven next Wednesday, OK?”

“OK, Sister Adams. I’ll be there.”

“Great,” I sarcastically muttered to myself as I hung up the phone.

During the week I almost forgot about my dancing engagement.



Almost. When Wednesday night rolled around, I didn't feel any particular desire to hurry as I prepared for the activity. I arrived late and went to the gym, where the dance was being held. As I opened the door, I saw rows upon rows of old women sitting in metal folding chairs. Then my attention turned to the dance floor, where one solitary priest was awkwardly moving to the triple-meter beat of the waltz, widow in hand.

"Kevin, where are the rest of the priests?" I asked, walking up to him as he finished his dance.

"They aren't here. We're the only ones."

"Great," I muttered as I moved toward the rows of widows. "Hello, ma'am. Would you like to dance?" I inquired of one of the widows.

"Oh, no thank you. My legs can't take the exertion. But I'm sure Harriett would like to. Harriet," she called to one of her companions, "come dance with this young man!"

All the widows urged Harriett forward.

"All right, all right," she said.

She took my hand, and I led her to the floor. "Now be careful," she said. "I have some lung problems, and my hips don't work very well."

"I'll be very careful," I assured her, smiling.

"You know, I met my husband on the dance floor," she said as we started to waltz slowly.

"Really? What dance?"

"The fox-trot," she said. "He was dashing. And what a dancer."

We finished our dance, and I took her back to her seat. "Thank you for the dance. You are a lovely dancer," she said.

"Thank you," I said, grateful for the somewhat ill-founded compliment.

I found that I enjoyed myself more than I thought possible. All the dances went the same way—most ladies making a witty remark about knee replacements or scoliosis, telling stories of their husbands and better days of youth, and giving me very sweet compliments as we finished.

I left the Church building, replaying the widows' stories in my head. I laughed out loud at their wit, and I was awed by their wisdom. I shook my head and chuckled. "What a charming group of women," I thought. "I would do it again in a heartbeat." **NE**

Benjamin Harrison lives in Utah, USA.



SHOW LOVE THROUGH SIMPLE ACTS OF KINDNESS

"The love the Savior described is an active love. It is not manifested through large and heroic deeds but rather through simple acts of kindness and service. . . . Great things are wrought through simple and small things. . . . Our small and simple acts of kindness and service will accumulate into a life filled with love for Heavenly Father, devotion to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sense of peace and joy each time we reach out to one another."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Finding Joy through Loving Service," *Ensign*, May 2011, 47, 49.