

The Personals

By Marilyn Reeves

When she first retired, Charla tried to keep busy with a number of activities. But as the years went by she found herself feeling increasingly lonely and bored, so when her daughter Laura encouraged her to move to Colorado after little Billy was born, she jumped at the chance.

She put the old house up for sale and moved into a small apartment in Denver. But for the next few years she spent the majority of her time at her daughter's house, helping to care for her grandson. But once Billy started Kindergarten, Charla was no longer needed to care for him so often, and again found herself feeling lonely and bored.

One Sunday morning, as she was thumbing through the paper, she happened upon the Personals section of the Classified ads. There was even a small space dedicated to senior citizens, and one ad in particular caught her eye:

"Lonely senior seeking female companion. Like classical music, good literature, and old movies." That was all it said, except for a P.O. box that one could write to.

So, on a whim, Charla dashed off a note to the address, saying, "Saw your ad. I like the same things. Please write back and tell me more about yourself."

A few days later, a letter came in the mail, along with a picture of a rather handsome middle-aged man standing beside a young boy who was holding up a very large rainbow trout. He must be his son, she decided. Both were dressed in fishing gear and grinning ear to ear. "Looks a bit young," Charla thought. "But maybe it's the best he could come up with." In the letter the man said that he didn't get out much, between his curriculum and helping to care for an elderly relative. He suggested they meet in person for lunch at the Denny's on South Broadway a week from Saturday. He signed his name Bob Wright.

"Hmm. Must be a teacher," Charla mused. "Well, two can play the same game." So she dug out an old picture of her and her daughter and included it in the letter she wrote back, agreeing to his plan. She told him she'd be wearing a hat with a big, floppy red feather in its band.

The following Saturday morning Charla fixed herself up, donning a red silk blouse that matched the feather in her hat, and drove over to Denny's. She waited and waited, but no older gentleman ever showed up. There was only a teenage boy standing awkwardly by the register who kept glancing her way. Then, to her surprise, the boy walked up to the booth where she was sitting and said, "Excuse me, ma'am. Are you Charla?"

"Why, yes I am. And who might you be, young man?"

"I'm Bob Wright. I'm a senior at Thomas Jefferson High School. I think maybe we've made a mistake," he said, his face bright red.

Then she realized he was the boy from the picture, standing next to his father, and holding up that big trout.

Resisting the urge to laugh out loud, Charla invited Bob Wright to sit down and have lunch with her, regardless. She even offered to pick up the tab.