TIMOTHY

Timothy was a happy young man when he enrolled at the University of Cape Town's Medical School in South Africa. Years before this, he would have been described as a gay young bachelor – but there was nothing gay about him! Girls surrounded him like bees to a honeypot. He made the most of his popularity rapidly dating girls one after another. Handsome and tall, he was searching for Miss Right and never seemed to find her during his student years. His parents, Professor and Mrs Albert Thorn had sold their house and bought a luxurious suite on a ship that sailed the world each time stopping at different countries where they were taken on tours to see the sights. Albert had been a Professor of English and during his tenure had become a bestselling author specializing in crime novels. Before they left, they bought Timothy a spacious apartment with lovely views up to the top of Table Mountain.

When he graduated and had served his internship, Timothy left a string of young ladies lamenting the fact that he had not chosen them. Timothy often acted impulsively – as he did when he met Ariadne Small at a friend's birthday party.

The party was in full swing when Ariadne entered. She was a very pretty: blonde, blue eyed and dressed in a sequinned short blue dress and matching shoes. She carried a small clutch bag which was embossed with 'CATCH ME'. Timothy went up to her. "You're caught!" he said. "Let's dance," she said raising her arms and putting them on his shoulders.

It was not long before they were dancing close and intimately. Timothy drove her home and kissed her goodnight. Both were experienced kissers...

Timothy was certain he had at last met Miss Right, and Ariadne was certain she had met Mr Right, and so when he proposed a few weeks later she exclaimed, "Darling! I'll marry you as soon as possible." The marriage took place in the Magistrate's Office, and afterwards they met their mutual friends for lunch at the Riverside Hotel. After an hilarious and delicious meal, Ariadne took Timothy to meet her parents. "Hello Dad and Mum," she said, "This is Timothy – we have just got married." The apple does not fall

far from the tree and her parents were not at all fazed by it. “Come in and have tea with us so we can get acquainted,” said her father.

Timothy and Ariadne were blissfully happy for six months, and then not so blissfully happy for three, and then decidedly unblissful for a week in which they quarrelled about everything. Timothy was not surprised to find a note when he returned from the hospital on his bed from Ariadne. ‘I can’t stand you any longer, I fancy Ralph whom I have just met and am off to file for divorce. Good luck with your girls, Ariadne.’ And that is exactly what Timothy did and started dating Jenny who was a physiotherapist in his department. Naturally, she was a good looker. Timothy had no time for plain or ugly girls. To him beauty was not skin deep. It was everything, and Jenny could have easily won any beauty competition. She was tall, long legged, had a perfect skin, large green eyes, and soft blonde hair cascading down her back. “Let's go to hear Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony tonight,” he said. “That will be great,” she answered, “I love Beethoven.” Unfortunately, she fell

asleep during the Andante section and snored through the rest. And that was the end of Jenny.

Timothy was stuck in a two-lane traffic jam. People were hooting in exasperation. Others simply left their cars because they had urgent engagements or flights to catch. Timothy looked at the young woman in the car alongside his. “What looker!” he exclaimed to himself. He waved at her and wound down his window and said, “Hello, I’m Timothy. Awful, isn’t it? I’m a surgeon. Just as well it is my day off. “Yes,” she replied “It’s awful. I’m Christina just as well I am self-employed. My firm is called SOLD. It’s an estate agency and I employ two sales ladies.” The traffic started to move, and they waved goodbye and parted.

Timothy could not get her pert and intelligent face, or her short blonde hair, large blue eyes and soft lips out of his mind. He Googled SOLD and drove there. “Hi, Christina, will you come and have lunch with me?” he asked. Picking up her bag, she said, “Let’s go.” Timothy drove to his

favourite restaurant where he had not taken any of his previous girlfriends and where he was well known. The waiter led him to his favourite table, pulled out the seat for Madame and handed them menus. “I can recommend their crayfish in lemon butter sauce and served with vegetables of your choice and potatoes au gratin.” “Sounds delicious,” Christina said, “I love shellfish.” Timothy placed their order and asked for a bottle of the finest champagne. After lunch they drove to his apartment and kissed and cuddled…

This went on for a few days until Sunday. “You must come to church with me, darling,” Christina said. “Let’s skip it this week” he replied. “I never go to church. I’m an atheist.” Christina was shocked. “I can’t marry you, my darling,” she sobbed. “I thought you were the husband that I have been praying for.” And she drove to church, sobbing all the way. Her mother found her sitting in the car, tear stained and staring vacantly across the car park. “What’s the matter?” she asked. “I have broken up with Timothy. I shall never ever, ever get married. He’s the one and only love of my life!” “Go home and relax in the garden until we get back. I’ll ask

for help and strength for you at healing time." said her mother kissing her.

Timothy was equally shocked, but he didn't sob. He drove to the lovely gardens of Evergreen Manor House, which was administered by the National Trust, and walked briskly for a couple of hours in the gardens. He hardly noticed the secluded gardens, or the fountains, the small patches of forest and the crowded paths. He drove back to his apartment, but it reminded him too much of Christina, and he walked to the King George Pub, where, after drinking too much, he staggered home.

The next morning, he woke with a bad hangover. "Why did I do that?" he asked himself. "Better take something for it." He made himself a strong cup of Colombian coffee and took it on to the balcony to drink. "Awful glare," he muttered and went back inside. "Things can't go on like this much longer! Is it so important to be an atheist? Those beautiful gardens I saw yesterday – I could easily believe in a Creator

if I ditched Atheism!" Being a man of action, he drove to Books in the centre of the city. It was huge with subsections clearly marked. He found the section marked CHRISTIANITY and went to the counter to ask for an assistant. "HowI can help you, Sir," said a young man, "My name is Timothy." "Well," said Timothy, "that's a good start, mine is too! I want a book that explains Christianity clearly and logically for an unbeliever." I have just the book for you," said Timothy, and handed him John Stott's BASIC CHRISTIANTY. "Thanks Timothy," he said handing him his credit card. He bought his favourite club sandwich for lunch and settled down in his study with his latest acquisition and started to read. He could not put it down. The following day, he read it again lingering over each chapter as he thought about it. And then, a most amazing, wonderful thing happened. "I believe! Jesus Christ died for me!" And he fell on his knees and prayed, "Lord Jesus forgive my unbelief!" And Christina sobbed no more.