

As time marches by, the ticking of an inner clock grows louder. But as **ROBELEN BAJAR** asks, what happens when the spirit is willing, but the body less so?

Fried? Poached? Scrambled? Sorry. Fertile is not on the breakfast menu.

My friend, Mary, is feeling clucky. So is my next door neighbour, the women at work, my high school friends, even the cat next door. In fact, most women I know are starting to feel, or rather hear, the unmistakable sound of their biological clocks ticking as loud as the deafening sound of Krakatoa. It seems the rest of Australia and the world's not-old-not-young Gen-Xers in high heels (and trainers) are popping out Gen-C left, right and centre. And the rest who aren't "popping" are clucky.

And, lining up on the IVF program.

You see, while eggs keep fresh in the fridge for a while, it seems Mary's

eggs had been fridged a little too long.

Mary's clucky predicament started five years ago. She had just turned 35.

I, on the other hand, was a spring chicken.

We were both single, sharing a CBD loft near the trendy bars we frequent in search of an alpha male: to fulfill an existential purpose; to remedy Mary's clucky predicament; spawn her progeny, before it's too late.

Though time was on my side, I was in search of a similar thing – minus the cluckiness: A strong man; preferably six feet tall; with good genes; handsome, of course; and with a modest to high IQ.

With a wish list like mine and a severe case of the clucks like Mary's, we may have had better luck at the sperm bank. It's as easy as ticking the box. Problem was, I wanted a beau, not a bambino. And Mary was a hopeless romantic.

So like two wayward heroines armed with killer heels, we braved the singles jungle.

We explored the depths of serial dating to mastery. We lived and ruled singletown wantonly. As the soles of our Jimmy Choos thinned traipsing through countless bars, exhausting our charms on heart-thieves,



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tricksters and disingenuous gentlemen, we oft but plodded home barefoot and depleted. Optimistic, nonetheless.

We learnt at least one enlightening fact. Today's postmodern courtship dance (usually) starts with an alcohol-induced dalliance that ends all too abruptly as soon as one settles into the beat of the drum.

But I wonder. Perhaps they hear the loud tick of Mary's biological clock. Or does the word "Commitment" slowly appear on my forehead on closer inspection?

Whatever. After much rumination, we came to a

realisation: if this be our lot, then our lot be full.

Faster than one can say please, the heavens opened. The universe listened. The world revealed its secret. Like sinners finding deliverance, Mary found an equally clucky prince. I found my six-foot-two Strong Man with good genes and a high IQ. Handsome, of course.

Our monomania cured. Almost.

Five years on and with clucky prince in tow, Mary's cluck has found no luck. And time is no friend to a woman clucking in her almost-40s. She has the prince alright – with an army of eager squirming warriors. But damn those eggs!

So Mary ditched me for her new best friends: Ivy F. Ob Gyn. Weird names. Weird people. They fuss over her eggs.

Personally, I like mine sunny side up.

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

DR BELLA



“How do we know who is right for us? From all the different types of love, how can we measure which best suits and is inspiring?”

Michael came over to my house last weekend. We sat in the backyard and drank wine. He had a situation on his hands.

I said, "Friend, tell me what's on your mind."

Everything was fine. More than fine. It was solid and warm and deep and loving. After looking for such a long time, Michael had found love. Someone he wanted to have children with. The smartest women he knew. And not only was she beautiful, but gentle and most importantly, spectacular in bed, er, kind.

And then out of the blue, in walks the unexpected from stage left. A complete surprise.

An actor he'd been an admirer of for many years. Someone he'd been infatuated with. Someone he never thought it possible to meet, let alone date.

With the entrance of Stage Left, Michael felt the rush of possibility. A euphoric leeway. Fate found form on his lips.

They communicated by email. Harmless, except the messages stayed with him into the night. Harmless, except for the sharp thrill they stirred within him.

Michael distanced himself from his girlfriend, not consciously of course. Her flaws became giant—too rigid, too conservative, too safe. And all the lovely things she was, and all the lovely things she did, began leaving him. Losing their power, their significance.

Stage Left and Michael met for dinner. And she was breathtaking and

clever and sweeter than he thought an actor as famed as she would be.

And now he finds himself, like that old saying, caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

But to cast aside such a wonderful partner for the glorious gamble of Stage Left? To enact fantasy over what he knew to be, in the real world, satisfying and good?

He knew he could not be disloyal to either woman. So he told his girlfriend that he'd met Stage Left and that he fancied her and needed some time to make a decision. And his girlfriend said: "The decision's not yours to be made. I will not be second choice. Sort your head out and if we're meant to be, we will be."

Meant to be?

Refilling his glass, Michael looked at me and said: "Bella, I don't know what I'll regret more ... not trying things out with the actor, or losing my girlfriend."

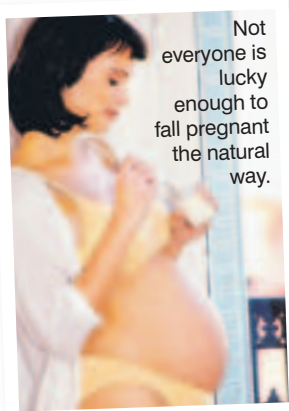
"I guess you want to have your fate and to eat it too," I replied.

Michael's story made me wonder. How do we know who is right for us? From all the different types of love, how can we measure which best suits and is inspiring? Why does fantasy, the grass being perceived as greener, hold such sway over what we already know to be verdant and rich? And how can we listen to our heart, when it's telling us to do two things at once?

A woman at the bar last night said that love is a decision. Michael needs to make his.

BTW

Questions, thoughts, sexual tips? Email me at dearbella@mxnet.com.au or check out www.drbella.com.au.



Not everyone is lucky enough to fall pregnant the natural way.