

## Amnon Syndrome

Dear Jil,

Distant relationships have their challenges. As much as your generation prides itself in digital embrace the sociological inadequacy of a Facebook romance is glaring. There's only so much you can say or do over Facebook when it comes to relationship. You can't go to the movies together on Facebook for instance. You can't have a drink together. Can't stroll together. Your case is doubly compounded because your boyfriend is not even in the country. You can't see over the weekend. Distance can wreak havoc on a relationship. A distant relationship requires fealty and commitment. Distance can make the heart grow fonder. Or it can make the heart go flounder. To maintain a long distance relationship you'll need to put in extra effort. Facetime has to be your bosom friend. There must be regimented discipline if you want to maintain a long distance relationship. In a long distance relationship it's wise to have fixed periods for calls. It defines expectations and schedules. And this apart from "I just feel like calling you" moments. Those are extra. The bigger danger though is what you're facing now: the emergence of an interloper. It's why commitment is so important in long distance relationships. Without commitment in a long distance relationship your heart may wonder and wander. And a credible interloper may easily snatch you away from your boyfriend. You're lonely as it is. Facebook can't give you the intimacy you need in a relationship. That's expecting too much from the platform.



But here's the thing though. You don't really know this new guy toasting you. You're just reacting to your circumstances. When present circumstances disappear by reason of marriage will you still be happy with this new guy? That's a question you have to ask yourself, lest you sacrifice your future happiness for an expediency. You don't commit to marriage because of an expediency. The expediency will expire. Then long-term consequences. Dating this guy will ameliorate your loneliness no doubt. But that's short-term. Marriage is far longer. You don't even know the character and values of this guy. You've just met him. You're excited about being wanted by another man. But that euphoric exhilaration however has a term limit. Even if you're inclined towards this new guy it's better to consider all things before you leap. You may be committing to a stranger who's only after the chase. After he's got you the narrative may change. By which time you would have created a big mess, having alienated your boyfriend and his family. There are going to be ripples – in your family, in his family, in society... Are you ready for those repercussions? And the wave of repercussions may be so strong that your new relationship buckles under and collapses. When you want to make monumental decisions you've got to really think through. If you commit to the new guy and find out you've made a mistake there's no going back to your old boyfriend. You'd have hurt him so much. You may not be able to get him to forgive you, much less resume your relationship. Think before you leap therefore. There are consequences for decisions we make. And this guy may just be trying to get you to sleep with him. And once you sleep with him his desire will peter. Guys have been known to lose complete interest in a woman after sexual congress. There was this crazy dude called Amnon – a prince from ancient times. (This is a true story). He was so crazy in love with a

particular babe he couldn't sleep. She was beautiful, a princess. With the aid of subterfuge he violated the princess, raped her. But once the deed was done his affection flipped. Having slept with her, he now hated her with the passionate intensity with which he had “loved” her. So we do know he didn't love her. He clearly didn't know the difference between love and lust. Now, you already suspect this guy is lusting after your body. Is he an Amnon? In other words, is this genuine affection or Amnon syndrome aka passionate lust? Amnon syndrome is confusion of passionate lust for genuine affection. It lacks understanding of what love is. Please don't rush to take this guy to your parents, however much he pressures you. That's a whole lot of commitment. That's a major step towards marriage. You don't know him yet.

Don't introduce a man you hardly know to your parents. You're over-committing them. Be sure of what you're doing before taking a man to your parents. You don't do introductory trial and error with parents. The more pressure he's applying for introduction to your parents the more you need to be sure of him. Do your homework. Who knows him? Who are his friends? What's his background? Why did his last relationship break? And why is he really interested in you? Are you a wager? (Some guys wager they'll get a babe!) If you introduce a guy prematurely to your parents you risk their scepticism when you bring another man. Now, if you commit to this new guy you'll of course lose your boyfriend. The new guy had better be worth it! If he's not worth it, you would have traded certainty and happiness for momentary pleasure and illusion. Every marriage at some point “settles down.” When the marriage settles will you guys still enjoy each other? When the *gizgiz* is over and your tachycardia



has subsided, will you still be happy you married the guy? Or will you come to the realization you made a huge mistake leaving your wonderful boyfriend? Before you throw what you have away for something new and shiny be sure it's a genuine article, not fake gold. I'm just saying the decision about who to date or marry is really up to you. I can only offer you a wisdom framework. But don't rush into marriage. Many who do rush out. There's a commonality between good and bad marriages. Both seem like eternity. A good marriage makes us desire eternity. A bad marriage makes us wonder about eternity.

Think on these things.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Lene Andersen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Your mentor, LA

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