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WONDERING ABOUT MR. WONDERFUL

By Becky Munsterer '01

I always have felt like an outsider for not liking coffee. At coffeehouses I always order hot chocolate. Hot chocolate is a wussie drink, though. It's definitely not cool to order hot chocolate as an adult.

At Colby there was "the guy" who was the perfect specimen of cool. I used to watch him drink his coffee black in Dana dining hall—with only a little sprinkle of sugar. Never Sweet 'N Low, never cream. Just black coffee with a half teaspoon of sugar. I still shiver at the thought of him swirling the Styrofoam cup to mix the sugar in it, instead of using a spoon. How cool.

I won't tell you his name, because of the embarrassment of ever thinking he might read this piece. I'll just call him Mr. Wonderful.

Mr. Wonderful was three years my senior at Colby, and about one thousand years more cool. Everything he did screamed, "I can pull this off, and you definitely can't." He wore cowboy boots while the other boys were wearing Nikes. He drove an old black Saab and made it appear fast, hot, and mysterious. When he entered a room, he smiled gently with a self-confidence that made him all the more alluring. He was attractive, exciting, and terribly intimidating.

And, like any other Mr. Wonderful, he had a series of girlfriends. They were all older than I was, beautiful, and classy, but, still, they were in the shadow of Mr. Wonderful. He probably knew it, so he never kept any one of them around for too long.

Being an awkward, brassy-haired freshman, I had about as much of a chance with Mr. Wonderful as I did with Dennis Quaid. But still, I feel like I had a relationship with him.

With Mr. Wonderful on campus, for me there was always excitement. He was much more mature and mysterious than the first-year boys in my hall at Foss, so I would keep an eye out for him, hoping our paths would cross from time to time. I would hope to pass him on the Quad or to stand next to him in the mailroom. He would catch my eye at Cotter Union dances, while I danced with Nike-clad boys. I never for a moment thought that he



would talk to me, and, in all honesty, I'm not sure I ever really wanted him to.

Mr. Wonderful never did say a word to me—not one—but my silent crush on him is one of my favorite Colby memories.

When Mr. Wonderful graduated, a sad comfort fell upon me. I missed my distant crush, yet I was oddly relieved that he would never fall short of the man I had built him up to be. He remained perfect in my perception of him, considering I never got close enough to him to see his flaws. I never had to learn that he had a sloppy dorm room, bad habits, or mood swings. I never had to share my own flaws with him. He never broke my heart.

The beauty of my whimsical crush was rooted in the very distance between us and in my own ability to imagine wonderful things about him. He never knew it, but Mr. Wonderful was my own perfect college man—and he still is.

Ten years later, I admit I do wonder what ever happened to Mr. Wonderful. Where does he live? Did he ever find himself a Miss Wonderful? Does he still drink black coffee? Did he trade in his old black Saab?

I'll probably never know. And a part of me doesn't want to. I'm fearful that whatever he is doing might not sound cool anymore. Instead I want Mr. Wonderful to remain just the way I remember him.

Silly? Perhaps.

Unusual? I doubt it. In fact, I have a theory that we are all Miss or Mr. Wonderful to someone. It may not be someone we know, or even someone we like, but I firmly believe that everyone is attractive at some point in their lives to a distant stranger.

I wonder if I was Miss Wonderful to anyone at Colby. Maybe a freshman guy living in Foss thought I was cool when I was a senior. Maybe he watched me drive my old Plymouth Acclaim and actually thought the old jalopy was totally hip. And the way I sipped my hot chocolate in microeconomics? From afar, watching me from across the classroom, he thought it was so sexy.

Highly unlikely, but, then, when it comes to secret admirers and unrequited crushes, everything is possible.

Becky Munsterer '01 is a freelance writer and an admission counselor at Dartmouth College.