

She Says... **The**  
**Not-So-**  
**Single**  
**Life**



Now that she's officially waved goodbye to singledom forever, Aoife Stuart-Madge has decided it's time to weigh up the pros and cons of being permanently coupled-up

**W**hile there are obvious benefits of being one half of a newlywed couple (like having a human pillow to snuggle up to while watching telly and never having to change a lightbulb or deal with a creepy crawly ever again), as I adjust to a future of ticking the 'Mrs' box, I can't help but grieve certain elements of my former life as a 'Miss'.

Gone are the days when I could buy a stack of junk food and curl up for an uninterrupted E! channel marathon. Now, when I see Kendra body-popping to her cheesy theme song (you know the one, "She's hot, she's sexy, she's funny and wild...") I have to add an ironic eye-roll as I sing along, despite the fact that I'm secretly loving it, and even then it normally results in a remote-control wrestle that I inevitably lose. And forget about having just a bowl of cereal for dinner – my staple diet as a single girl – unless you want to listen to his incredulous cries of, "That's not a real meal!" or, my personal fave, "Where's the meat?" (There's a reason why married women are statistically fatter than their single counterparts – it seems men don't count anything that hasn't been skinned and slaughtered as a "real meal". Must be a hunter-gatherer thing.)

Then there's the little 'me time' rituals I've had to surrender. I've stopped watching my Cindy Crawford workout DVD in my pyjamas from the comfort of the sofa (I know that watching the uber-flexible super limber up in her leotard is mentally re-routing me away from dialling a takeaway, but I understand how, without me actually *doing* the exercises, this activity might appear futile, and slightly weird). And I no longer have any need to practice my flirting techniques in the mirror (after all, he's seen and succumbed to my entire repertoire of hair-flicking moves). And I can't help but be a *teensy* bit jealous of my single friends' permanently baby-soft hands and immaculate nails – the results of sleeping embalmed in moisturiser underneath a scratchy pair of manicure mittens. A super-effective beauty ritual, sure, but one that might also be deemed by a male bed buddy and new husband as slightly anti-social.

One of the most distinctive changes has been the degree to which football has

increasingly – through no fault of my own – crept into my life. It started innocently enough: a couple of foreign books on the shelves with names like *F.A Confidential* (which I once picked up thinking I'd chanced upon a juicy Hollywood exposé called *L.A Confidential*) and *The History of Spurs* (naturally, I've never touched that one). But now, through some freaky process of osmosis, phrases like "transfer window" and "on the bench" have somehow slipped into my vocab. I've subconsciously gone from being a girl who watched *The Beautiful Game* an average of once every four years – and only then if Ireland had qualified for the World Cup – to knowing that someone called Scott Parker has just signed for Tottenham.

## Revenge Of The Body Snatchers

And I'm not the only woman to experience this involuntary football nous: during a recent visit to a married friend's house, she cut in to our respective spouses' impassioned discussion about the performance of some of the lesser-known teams in the English Premier League, exclaiming excitedly "Hull are on fire!" before clapping her hand over her mouth like she was suffering from some kind of football fan Tourette's syndrome, and giving me a bemused shrug.

I was close to thinking that my friend and I had been body snatched in some kind of *Stepford Wives*-esque F.A conspiracy, until I noticed the phenomenon works both ways. When

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my husband was able to tell me Beyoncé's due date, and name every member of the Brangelina brood, I knew that his increased exposure to the E! channel, coupled with his close proximity to my piling stack of gossip mags was clearly having some kind of knock-on effect.

## Guilt-Free Chips

But while there's lots I miss about single life, there's also lots I don't miss. The oodles of ignored emails, unanswered texts and unreturned phone calls chasing down the 50 finalists for *Cosmopolitan's* Hottest Bachelor 2011 reminded me of how lame boys can be at communicating (though the results are well worth it, see page 63!). I couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief when I acknowledged that I'll never have to endure the hell of waiting for a guy to call, or the agony of dissecting his texts for a hidden sign that he "likes me really, despite what my friends say." I don't miss the angry looks of other customers in busy cafés, when you hog a table just for one, or not being able to get my DVD player to work on my own. And I don't miss having something really exciting happen to me and discovering I have no one to tell (if I can't get hold of my mum.)

There's a lot to be said for having someone to hog that table in a busy café with you, especially when he orders a jumbo portion of chips for you to pilfer (it doesn't count as breaking your diet if the chips are technically his); for having someone to join you on a double date, so you can talk shoes with your bestie, while he entertains her man with footie chat; and having someone on-hand to fix your electrical appliances.

Yes, you have to give up the dream that today might be the day that you're going to bump into a mystery stranger who whisks you away to Rome at a moment's notice, and you can no longer accept impromptu invitations on a whim ("Fancy dress party in two hours? I'd love to, but I've got to go to my husband's work do"). But compensation comes in the form of presents – and lots of them. Between anniversaries, birthdays and Christmas, I'm chalking up an average of three bonus gifts a year compared to my single days, and that's not even counting surprises. And as if that's not enough, now, when something exciting happens to me, I always have someone who can't wait to hear all about it. ■

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