

A Mercedes Benz pulled up in the car park of the church. The doors opened and out stepped Jezebel and her husband, Noah. I saw them twice a week, once at church and once at Bible studies. How I envied them! If only my husband would go to church with me...

Years ago, since my biological clock was ticking, I plunged into marriage with someone who did not share the same faith as I did. He seemed like a decent man and he was financially stable. Hence, I was afraid that if I did not settle for him, then I might not have another chance. Whenever I went to gatherings, people would bombard me with the same question, "When are you getting married?" Also, they would constantly remind me that I was not getting any younger. Even in present time, a married woman was still more socially accepted than a woman who had never been married. Single women were less respected and always badgered with questions.

I watched as Jezebel and Noah walked hand-in-hand toward the church. During the service, I could not take my eyes off them as they held hands and they put their arms around each other. Despite many years of marriage, they were still like a newly wedded couple on their honeymoon.

After the service, the loving couple hung around to chat with some of the other churchgoers. Jezebel proclaimed that their son had just passed his job probation, and that their daughter had just been promoted at work. She proudly added that both their children had found good relationship partners who shared the same faith. A stick of jealousy poked me as I thought about my children. My son did not get confirmed at his job, and my daughter was stuck in a dead end job. Also, my son was in an endless stream of failed relationships, and my daughter was in a long-term relationship with a man who had no intention of ever settling down. I presumed that since I married a man who did not follow the same religion as I did, this was the dire consequence that I had to face. I wished that I had found a Godly man like Jezebel's husband.

Some time later, at my Bible studies' group, my jaw dropped with horror. Jezebel was beyond recognition. She was as white as a ghost; her eyes were bloodshot; she looked as though she had been crying all day; her hair was in a mess; her clothes were unkempt; and her body odour was rancid. Through sobs and sniffing, she finally managed to utter what she needed to say.

"My husband has filed for divorce."

That sentence hit me with a blow. I could not believe my ears. For a moment, I was wondered whether I was dreaming. However, the harsh reality unfolded before me. The first thought that crossed my mind was, had her husband found someone else?

I was wrong. Jezebel launched into the story of it. Apparently, her



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husband had stopped loving her a long time ago, but he felt bad about leaving her, or he was too scared to leave her. Also, he had stayed on in the relationship for the sake of the children. Now that their kids were working adults with independent lives, he wanted out. She asked him why he wanted to leave her. However, he held his tongue.



"I don't want you to change for me."

After much persuasion, we managed to convince Noah to go for marriage counseling. During those sessions, it took a great deal of effort for him to open up. He was a man of few words, and he found it challenging to express himself to his wife, who seemed to be the domineering one in the relationship. From this, Jezebel learnt that she could improve on some of her personality traits.

In spite of that, Noah looked Jezebel in the eye and stated, "It's not going to work out." She burst into tears, threw herself onto the floor, grabbed his leg, and begged him not to leave. She tried to convince him that she had turned over a new leaf.

"I don't want you to change for me," he said.

At the lawyer's office, Noah signed the papers without a single moment of hesitation. He waited impatiently as Jezebel's shaking hand picked up the pen and signed the papers. The next moment, he strode out of the office without making eye contact with his ex-wife.

Jezebel started indulging in gluttony. She feasted on fast foods, cakes, pastries, potato chips, cheap chocolates, and milkshakes. Within the twinkling of an eye, she could no longer button up and zip up her clothing. Instead of admitting that she had put on weight, she insisted that her clothes had shrunk. She also turned to the bottle. Her home, which used to be spick and span, was now cluttered with bottles, cans, and glasses.

All this while, I thought that Jezebel and Noah were such an ideal couple; I thought that she was so fortunate to have such a wonderful husband. However, that was only what I saw on the surface. I did not know what lay beneath that façade.