

WHY DO YOU LOVE ME?

written by  
Steve Meredith

BRIAN GREEN, a man of about 26, stirs spaghetti cooking in a pan while he waits for his wife to come home from work. He passively watches news as he cooks, taking interest in the occasional story.

ASHLEY GREEN, Brian's wife, walks in the front door of the couple's apartment. Tired and sore from carrying a heavy bag. She drops the bag near the front door and shuts the door after she is inside.

ASHLEY  
(calling to  
Brian)  
Something smells good.

BRIAN:  
(calling back)  
Spaghetti

Ashley walks into the kitchen.

ASHLEY:  
(smiling)  
My favorite.

Ashley kisses Brian, with the passion of a newly married couple.

BRIAN:  
You're home later than usual.  
Faculty meeting?

ASHLEY:  
No, just had help a couple of kids  
who are on the verge of failing.

BRIAN:  
Be glad you only have a couple. I  
have at least ten kids who are  
failing my Contemporary Lit class.

ASHLEY:  
Seniors?

BRIAN:  
No, that's the scary part. Seniors  
you expect because with as late as  
it is in the school year, they  
just don't care. It's a smattering  
of sophomores and juniors who I'm  
having trouble with.

ASHLEY:

Well, you gave them extra credit, right?

BRIAN:

I tell them about it at the beginning of the semester. No one ever takes me up on it though, at least not until it's too late. Then I grant them 24 hours to get it done and I'm stuck waiting for them to turn it in. Usually it doesn't help much because they all half-ass it.

ASHLEY:

Well, as long as more kids are passing than are failing, I think you should be okay.

BRIAN:

Well, yeah. I have 80 students in the four sections of the course that I teach. Most of the kids love this stuff. The kids that are passing have A's and B's.

ASHLEY:

Well I wouldn't worry about it, hon.

They kiss again.

ASHLEY: (CONT'D)

You know you're amazing for cooking this meal with as hot as it is outside.

BRIAN:

Eh, I love you. It's worth it.

ASHLEY:

Why?

BRIAN:

Why what? Why is it worth it?

ASHLEY:

No, why do you love me?

BRIAN:

(smiling a bit)

Well, you know why.

ASHLEY:  
I know, but I like hearing it.

Brian begins serving plates of spaghetti.

BRIAN:  
Well. You're sweet, kind, VERY attractive, and extremely supportive of me. We have similar interests, I mean, we basically have the same exact job in two different school districts. You take care of me, and I enjoy taking care of you. You know, all that stuff.

ASHLEY:  
Yeah? Anything else?

Brian and Ashley walk into the dining room and sit down to eat. Before Brian takes his first bite he says...

BRIAN:  
(smiling)  
Well, you're good in bed.

ASHLEY:  
(chuckles a bit)  
Speaking of which, my mom said we need to get to work on that, she's expecting a grandchild soon.

BRIAN:  
Well, I'll get right on that.

They both laugh. They take a few bites of food.

ASHLEY:  
Tell me more.

BRIAN:  
(smiling)  
What else is there to say babe? I love you.

ASHLEY:  
I don't know. I guess I'm asking how you knew?

BRIAN:  
How I knew what? That I loved you?

ASHLEY:

Yeah.

BRIAN:

You really want to know?

ASHLEY:

Of course! I love it when you tell me this stuff.

BRIAN:

Well, I don't know if you'll like the answer.

ASHLEY:

What do you mean?

BRIAN:

Well, I worry that you'll take it the wrong way.

ASHLEY:

Hon, we're married. Don't you know by now that I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt?

BRIAN:

Okay, well, here it goes.

Brian wipes his mouth.

BRIAN: (CONT'D)

You remember when we first met, how I told you that I hadn't been in a relationship for awhile. I think if I remember correctly, I'd been single for a couple of years.

ASHLEY:

Yeah.

BRIAN:

Well, part of the reason I was single for so long was because I was in love with this one girl I went to college with.

ASHLEY:

You mean the girlfriend before me? Chelsea?

BRIAN:

No, it was the girl before Chelsea. Her name was Jessica.

ASHLEY:

Oh okay, yeah, you'd mentioned her to me before, once or twice.

BRIAN:

Well, I thought that I was going to marry her. I was at my happiest when I was with her, and everything was just so easy when I was around her.

ASHLEY:

(matter of factly)

Okay.

BRIAN:

And then I met you.

Pause.

BRIAN: (CONT'D)

She was the most beautiful girl that I'd ever seen. And then I met you. And she couldn't hold a candle to you. And then we started talking, and after three dates, I knew I wanted to marry you.

Pause. There is now a tension in the room that wasn't there before.

ASHLEY:

So I'm just the one that replaced the girl you wanted to marry?

Brian knows he didn't get through to her.

BRIAN:

I knew you would take it the wrong way.

ASHLEY:

Well, how was I supposed to take it?

BRIAN:

Ashley, I just told you something heartfelt and beautiful. Something that honestly should be written in the next Nicholas Sparks novel, and instead of melting down with happy tears, you turn the quote on its head and give it a meaning that I never intended. So let me

(MORE)

BRIAN: (CONT'D)  
throw the question back at you.  
Why do you love me?

Pause. She takes a moment.

ASHLEY:  
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to put  
words in your mouth. It just hurt  
for a second.

BRIAN:  
I'm sorry for that. But you say  
you'll give me the benefit of the  
doubt, and then you don't.

ASHLEY:  
(ignoring  
Brian's last  
comment)  
I love you because you're kind.  
You're sweet. You're attractive.  
You take care of me.

Brian nods.

BRIAN:  
(with concern)  
Ashley, I hope you know that you  
changed my life. From the moment  
you walked in the door of the  
Chapel Hill Starbucks.

ASHLEY:  
Well Brian, you changed *mine*. More  
than you know.

BRIAN:  
How did I change your life?

Pause.

ASHLEY:  
You really want to know?

BRIAN:  
Yeah. Of course I do, hon.

ASHLEY:  
You promise you won't get mad?

BRIAN:  
Well, I can't see into the future.  
But I'll sure try not to get mad.

Pause. Ashley takes a deep breath.

ASHLEY:  
Before I met you, I think it's  
safe to say that I was a different  
person.

BRIAN:  
(making a joke)  
Uh oh, this isn't the part where  
you tell me you're a former axe  
murderer is it?

ASHLEY:  
(laughing)  
No. But before I met you, I...I  
had a lot of boyfriends. So many  
that I don't think I'd spent more  
than two weeks being  
single...tops. And a lot of those  
relationships...well...

She lets her thought trail off.

BRIAN:  
Hon, I knew you were in a lot of  
relationships before me. You told  
me that when we first started  
dating.

ASHLEY:  
I know I did, but what I didn't  
tell you was that a lot of those  
relationships overlapped.

BRIAN:  
(he gets it)  
Oh.

Brian is expressionless. His eyes say it all. He's hurt.

ASHLEY:  
To put it in plain terms, I used  
to bounce from guy to guy. And I  
cheated on a lot of my boyfriends,  
and I did so badly. Like, not just  
a little peck on the cheek.

BRIAN:  
(coldly)  
So I stopped you from being a  
whore.

Pause. Ashley is stunned at this. Her eyes begin to weld up  
with tears. She tucks her head down so that Brian will not  
see her tears.

ASHLEY:  
 (fighting as  
 hard as she can  
 for her voice  
 not to break)  
 You gave me the only reason I've  
 ever had to be completely faithful  
 to one human being. I didn't know  
 what love was until I met you.

They continue to eat in silence.

Fade out.

2 INT-BEDROOM-LATER THAT NIGHT

2

Brian is sitting in bed reading. Ashley walks in a few moments later and crawls in next to him. She turns away from him. They haven't spoken since dinner. Brian shuts his book and lays there quietly for a moment. Neither Ashley nor Brian shut off the light.

BRIAN:  
 Ashley, don't ever leave me.

Ashley turns towards him. She's been crying.

ASHLEY:  
 Why would I do that?

BRIAN:  
 Because I can be an asshole at  
 times. I'm sorry about earlier.

ASHLEY:  
 I am too.

BRIAN:  
 You asked me why I loved you. And  
 I suppose it's a good question to  
 ask every now and then, because  
 after awhile, you lose sight of  
 what life was like before the one  
 you married. And it's not just  
 that you forget what it was like,  
 it's as if the memory was never  
 made in the first place. Which is  
 also why I can't envision my life  
 without you. Because to me, the  
 memory of my life without you is  
 so far in the past, and so far  
 buried, that it quite literally  
 doesn't exist in my brain anymore.  
 A life without you would be so  
 nonsensical to me, that I wouldn't  
 (MORE)

BRIAN: (CONT'D)  
survive. It would be like bleeding  
to death in the middle of a  
foreign country with no knowledge  
of how to cry out for help.

ASHLEY:  
(smiling)  
You really need to write books in  
your spare time. That, my love, is  
an extraordinary quote.

BRIAN:  
I love you, Ashley.

ASHLEY:  
I love you too, Brian.

BRIAN:  
What do you say we get to work on  
that grandchild?

ASHLEY:  
(smiling)  
Okay.

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

THE END.