



It's time  
to take time  
for you!

Feeling tired, blah  
or even a bit blue?

It's a sign: You need to  
restore and renew the  
inner you! Chances are  
you're long overdue  
for some downtime.

So go ahead and allow  
yourself a break  
and a treat or two.

Whatever makes you  
feel pampered, do it!  
You've earned it!



## Romantic Fiction

# Something old, something new

When Amy met Jesse, she knew  
she was ready to move on . . .

Jill pulled up in front of my house at eight a.m. When I got into the car, she said, "Ready to go?"

"Sure thing," I replied. Every September, Jill and I take a Saturday road trip, spending the day poking around antiques shops. Sometimes we find treasures, but mostly we just look and dream.

"I'm on a quest," I told Jill. "You know that empty space along my living room wall? I really need something there."

"We'll do our best! I might be just looking today. Jim reminded me that we don't have room for one more piece of furniture. You're lucky you don't have a husband to check with." Jill turned to me. "I'm sorry, Amy. That didn't come out right."

"It's okay, Jill," I said. "It's been

When Jill dropped me off, I scanned my living room. The bench would be perfect along that empty wall.

About an hour later, the doorbell rang. A good-looking guy with dark, curly hair stood on my porch.

"Hi, are you Amy?" he asked.

"Yes, I am."

"I'm Jesse Miller, Clive's son. I'm here to deliver your pew."

"Oh! Hi!" I looked past him and saw the truck at the curb. "I have the spot all ready."

"I see you like antiques," Jesse said, smiling.

"Oh, you can tell?" I laughed. "I've always preferred vintage over new."

"Same here." Jesse's gaze rested on the clock on my mantel. "I can't believe it!" he said. "I have that same clock."

"Really? It was my grandmother's. My grandfather gave it to her on their tenth anniversary."

"That's the great thing about antiques. Everything has a story." He smiled again, but there was a hint of sadness in his eyes. "Okay, let me get your bench." He started for the truck.

"I'll help you," I said, and together we carried in the pew and set it in its place. "What do you

think?" I asked Jesse.

"I think you picked the perfect spot for it," he said.

Suddenly, I was not ready for Jesse to leave. He seemed to feel the same way—and we ended up sitting on the pew. He looked at my clock again.

"So, Jesse, what's the story behind your clock?" I asked.

"Well, I gave it to my wife for her birthday three years ago, shortly before she died."

"I'm sorry about your wife," I said. "I know what it's like to be alone." I touched his hand.

"Thanks," he said. Then, "Amy, I'd really like to see you again."

"I'd like that, too, Jesse," I said, my heart pounding. We said goodbye. I returned to the pew, and ran my hand along the smooth wood. It was really nice to have something in that empty space.

—Krista Weidner



## Suddenly, I was not ready for Jesse to leave

two years since the divorce. And you're right—I can do whatever I want with the house." But it's not really much fun, I thought.

Hayloft Antiques was our first stop. We were checking out corner cupboards when we both spied it: a beautiful old church pew. Rich, golden pine, simple lines, just enough scratches to add character—and, best of all, the price was right.

"Okay, if you don't want this, I do," Jill said.

"Wait a minute," I laughed. "I thought you were just looking." "Did I say that?"

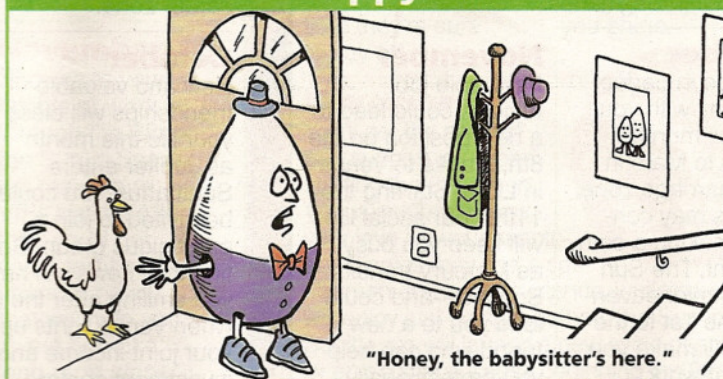
"You ladies like the church pew?" The shop owner, Clive Miller, approached us.

"It's beautiful," I said. "In fact, we're both interested in it. We may have to draw straws."

"No need," Clive said. "I salvaged four of them from the old Rock Hill church last month."

Jill and I loved things with local history. And Clive offered to deliver the benches that evening.

## Take a happy break!



Photos: Steve Ceasar; Christopher Drake/Getty Images.