



this book

isn't like other books

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Our lives are [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] a

[REDACTED] kind [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] of

[REDACTED] magic [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

they might as well be married. They rarely do anything apart - they monopolize each other's weekends, drive each other's cars, and know each other's families almost as well as their own. As well, their physical relationship is fairly intense. In fact, it's in a precarious position. Even though they haven't had sex, they constantly struggle with going too far.

The old attitude says we can "play marriage" if we really love someone. But the new attitude views a claim on each other's past, time, affection, and future before marriage as unwarranted.

• Sarah and Philip realize they need to end their relationship as it now exists. By staking a claim on each other, they've stifled their individual growth and needlessly consumed energy that they should have directed toward love and preparation for the future. They've played their lives against each other when they don't really know that they'll get married someday. And in reality, if they are like most high school couples, each of them will probably marry someone else.

Even if Sarah and Philip had kept their physical relationship completely pure, they still would have made unwarranted claims on each other's spiritual and emotional life by continuing the relationship. If God wants them together in the future, their future relationship won't be in jeopardy. His plan is right, and they need to obey God and break up a relationship that is standing in the way of each other.

• Are you making unwarranted emotional, spiritual, or even physical claims on someone? Ask God to show you whether your relationship is standing in the way of each other.

...that would compromise the purity of my

...a good girl who is unfortunately very
...a virgin and has committed to saving

teacher scolds Peter for not concentrating. Peter fingers the silver ball and gives the thread a slight tug. Suddenly the teacher dismisses the class, and Peter is free to leave school. He is overjoyed! How easy his life will now be. From this moment, Peter begins to pull the thread a little every day.

But soon Peter begins to use the magic thread to rush through larger portions of life. Why waste time pulling the thread just a little every day when he can pull it hard and complete school altogether? He does so and finds himself out of school and apprenticed in a trade. Peter uses the same technique to rush through his engagement to his sweetheart. He cannot bear to wait months to marry her, so he uses the gold thread to hasten the arrival of his wedding day.

Peter continues this pattern throughout his life. When hard, trying times come, he escapes them with his magic thread. When the baby cries at night, when he faces financial struggles, when he wishes his own children to be launched in careers of their own, Peter pulls the magic thread and bypasses the discomfort of the moment.

But sadly, when he comes to the end of his life, Peter realizes the emptiness of such an existence. By allowing impatience and discontentment to rule him, Peter has robbed himself of life's richest moments and memories. With only the grave to look forward to, he deeply regrets ever having used the magic thread.

In introducing this story, Mr. Bennett insightfully comments, "Too often, people want what they want (or what they think they want, which is usually "happiness" in one form or another) *right now*. The irony of their impatience is that only by learning to wait, and by a willingness to accept the bad with the good, do we usually attain those things that are truly worthwhile."

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