



THREE REASONS

by: **RONALD S. CENA**

“What are the three reasons why you want to stay here?” Trisha uttered out of curiosity. To his surprise, Ronnie took some time to answer the random question. His heart began to throb twice the usual. His hands turned cold and sweaty. At that moment, everything in that cafeteria where they stayed became irrelevant to him. It was as if the time stood still. And he had to say something. “One, I love my students. I love teaching ever since,” he replied while trying to compose himself because of the thrill he felt, “Two, I, uh, believe teaching in a public school is financially rewarding...uhm... I need to save for my future, you know,” he added.

Ronnie, also known as Sir Ronnie, has been a senior high school teacher in a public school for 5 years. He just turned 32 in June and had never been in a romantic relationship. To him, teaching is a solace. An ideal partner that could keep him company.

“Hey, Sir Ronnie. What’s up?” one of his old friends blurted when he bumped into him on his way home. “I am good, my friend,” Ronnie smilingly replied. “When are you going to marry? I told you last time that when you enter the teaching profession as single, you would have a difficult time settling down,” Ronnie’s friend mockingly muttered.

That conversation struck him to his soul. “Is there something wrong with me?” he mused while pondering the very words of his old friend.

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INSTABRIGHT e-GAZETTE

ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VI, Issue I

August 2024

Available online at <https://www.instabrightgazette.com>



In the Philippines, many people have the idea that teachers are too preoccupied to the extent that they forget to care about their social life, let alone their love life. Even if baseless, many still believe that when you are single and in the teaching profession, there is a big possibility that you would end up a *soltero or soltera*.

Despite the pressure of the people around him, Sir Ronnie still managed to cope. He ignored whatever people may say about his chosen career. He chose teaching. So, he lived with it.

One night, before he went to bed, he prayed and ask the Lord, "My God, I know that you have wonderful plans for me. Please give me enlightenment as I make major decisions in life. You know better than I do," he implored fervently.

Ronnie, although very diligently dedicated to his work, still dreams that someday he could finally find a suitable partner to him. He wants a family of his own. He firmly believes that these desires of him will come to pass. As to the time, that he doesn't know.

On his fifth year in that school, everything went well with him. He got promoted and received a salary increase. He got to renovate his house and finished his graduate school. Truly, it was a fruitful year of the Lord so to speak. One time, when Christmas was around the corner, the school principal called for him to the office.

"Mr. Ronnie, I want you to orient our newly hired teacher. She is actually a Special Science teacher. An engineer by profession. Kindly assist her with everything she needs to learn about our school. Got it?" she expressed in an unusual excitement. "Yes, Ma'am. Noted!" he retorted.

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When Ronnie met the new teacher, he felt strange. The last time he felt it was 10 years ago.

When he liked a person so deeply for the first time. It was a feeling that he missed so much.

For the first time, after several years had passed, he fell in love again.

“If the first time did not work, will it be different this time around?” he hopefully told himself.

“Good morning, Sir. Would you know where Sir Ronnie is?” the new teacher asked.

The two looked at each other in excitement. Then the conversation went on until they became at ease with each other. After a month, the two were assigned to do an action research which would be the basis for an innovative project.

As they ate at the cafeteria to talk about the research, Ronnie was caught by surprise by a random question. “Ma’am Trisha, before I tell you the third reason for me to stay here, are you happy being a teacher here?” Ronnie mumbled. “Of course, I am.” she smilingly replied while looking at him.

While feeling the thrill and excitement, Ronnie confessed, “You are the third reason why I want to stay.”

So, the love story began.

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