



# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## First Meal with the Mother-in-Law

If I can offer one piece of advice to any young woman hoping to marry some day, it would be this. When you have your first meal cooked by your potential future mother-in-law, it is okay to tell a lie.

My first meeting of my husband's parents was in fact a meal at their home on the cattle ranch. All my future in-laws knew about me was that I was from Atlanta, Ga.

Meeting the parents of your boyfriend is stressful enough but add in eating a meal cooked by your boyfriend's mother doubles that stress, especially for a picky eater.

I didn't want to be a picky eater. Frankly, I blame my sweet mamma for my food ignorance. I was her fourth child with meat and potato older brothers.

My mamma had married at the super young age of 15. She didn't know how to cook anything. She recounted numerous times how the only thing she knew how to fix when she got married was a tomato sandwich. Indeed, that was the only meal my two older brothers remember eating when they were kids.

I have no childhood memories of my mamma cooking. The only meals I recall were breakfast prepared by my daddy and going to McDonalds. My mom used to giggle when she shared how grateful she was when McDonalds opened and she could feed her youngest two children a hamburger, French fries and a milkshake for dinner every day.

My boyfriend's mother wanted



Annette and her husband, John Bridges. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

to fix a meal for me she assumed would be familiar and loved by a southern girl. So of course this would surely include turnip greens and black-eyed peas.

I'll never forget the gleam in her eyes when she told me what was for dinner.

When I recall that moment

now, I remember her joyful expression waiting for my equally joyful reaction. I am sad to say that I totally disappointed her.

I wasn't rude and would never have wanted to hurt her feelings. I simply very honestly said, "Oh, I've never had that before. I'm excited to try them."

This poor dear woman had clearly spent much time wondering what she could fix for dinner that would delight her son's new girlfriend. She was certain she had come up with the perfect combination for a Georgia girl.

When she heard my first words you would have thought I had slapped her face, stabbed her in the gut, told her she was the ugliest thing I'd ever seen. You get the idea!

I wished I had simply said, "Oh, how yummy and thoughtful of you!" In other words, I should have lied. After all, it wasn't a lie that she was trying to be thoughtful.

My being stupidly and brutally honest hurt her feelings deeply and I'm certain she forever wondered how in the world her son could fall in love with a girl who didn't know anything about good food. Especially because her son loved to eat good food!

That first meal marked the beginning of many more uncomfortable meals for both of us with her over-scrutinizing every bite I took.

Thankfully in the years that followed I learned to both cook and eat good food from my mother-in-law, but I really don't think she ever got over her first disappointment of me.

So dear young ladies getting ready to have your first meal prepared by a possible future mother-in-law, please, please, please do both of you a favor and lie if you must to be sure she feels she has successfully fixed you the best meal of your life. ☺