

Courtney Stages a Fake Wedding for Ben Flajnik on 'The Bachelor'



Courtney Robertson's fake wedding vows on *The Bachelor* may have been sweet music to Ben Flajnik's ears but it seemed to be a bit too familiar to *Sex and the City* aficionados.

Complete with a stand-in officiant, Robertson set up a mock wedding in a local park of her hometown of Scottsdale, Arizona during her hometown date. While wheedling Flajnik into writing original vows, the model repeated the same vows as the *Sex and the City* character Carrie Bradshaw, played by Sarah Jessica Parker. "I'm looking for love. Real, passionate, can't-live-without-each-other-love. When I look at you from across the room, I know that the key to your

happiness is the key to mine. Ben, I want to love you and treat you right. Every day and every night," Robertson told him. "I hope you know I'm 100% ready for marriage and so happy I found you. I want you to know that I'm in love with you."

Forget the mock ceremony, let's begin with whether or not a woman should propose to a man!

Cupid's Advice:

Beyonce may have said it best in *Single Ladies*: "If you like it then you should have put a ring on it..." But what happens if your partner doesn't put a ring on it when you feel the relationship is ready? Women are going after what they want nowadays- and love is no exception. While it's up to you to decide if you want to pop the question to your partner, Cupid has some advice to help you make the decision.

1. Go after what you want: Being an independent woman, isn't a task- it's a lifestyle. Instead of waiting for your Prince Charming to plan the perfect proposal, show him how you want it done by doing it yourself.

2. Be non-traditional: Sure, a man is *supposed* to ask for his woman's hand in marriage, but that doesn't have to be the case in every situation. Make your engagement story unique.

3. If you really love him: If you're ready for the next step in your relationship but your partner hasn't necessarily approached you about it, take the initiative to do so yourself. Talk to him about marriage and make sure you're both on the same page and plan from there.

Do you think a woman should propose to a man? Share your comments below.

Celebrity Lighting Designer, Bentley Meeker Offers Advice for the Perfect Date



By Whitney Baker and Krissy Dolor

You spent hours preparing tonight's meal. You carefully selected the background music. You even pulled out the "special occasion" dishes. With your date set to arrive at any moment, you quickly – and without any real thought – set the lighting: you turn off the overhead lights and ignite a beautiful scented candle in the center of your table. You step back to admire your efforts; everything's perfect,

right? Not quite. With help from lighting expert, Bentley Meeker, a little bit of tweaking can add just the right touch.

“If you’re going to use candles, use them sparingly and keep them out of the direct line of you and your partner’s vision,” advises Meeker, event lighting extraordinaire and president of Bentley Meeker Lighting & Staging, Inc. “I do recommend using candles because of the quality of light and how flattering they can be, [but] a little thought needs to be put into the placement.”

If you haven’t heard of Meeker, no doubt you’ve heard of the places and events that he’s touched. He’s staged designs for a multitude of soirées, ranging from Chelsea Clinton’s wedding, concerts for Kanye West and Elton John, runway shows for Victoria’s Secret, birthday parties for celebrities like P. Diddy to events and dinners at The Plaza, and The White House. This man is one of the top, if not *the top*, lighting designers in the country. His new book, *Light X Design: 20 Years of Lighting*, is a compilation of all his work, in which he shares his inspirations and motives for the wonderful illuminations he produces.

It’s no surprise, then, that he also knows just the right kind of effect to make your date a splendid success. “Lighting that is too bright and uncomfortable can kill the mood very easily and quickly. Even if it’s the street light shining in through the window,” he says.

If you’re having trouble setting the room just right for that special date, you’re not alone. It can take a little trial and error to figure out how to make things perfect. Meeker has had his own dating experiences where the lighting was just not right.

“I’ve been in situations where bad lighting kills the mood, and I’ve been in situations where great lighting just makes you feel so good that anything can happen.”

Fortunately, Meeker has some suggestions for couples who want those sparks to fly. He recommends Blue Hill and Erminia, both in New York City. In his own words, Blue Hill “nailed it!” and Erminia “is an amazing Italian restaurant [in which the] lighting is so conducive to the environment, it actually makes the whole place and the experience romantic.”

Lighting is more than just a switch flicked on and off. It’s about creativity; it’s about romance; and it’s about achieving the mood that you desire. “You’ll know when the lighting is right,” Meeker says. “It just feels unbelievable, and there’s a feeling of resonation that you can’t find anywhere else!”

His Website beckons visitors to enter with a simple thought in mind: “Light is the energy of truth.” Meeker’s work truly embodies this idea, with his past projects ranging from The Museum of Modern Art to the ravishing wedding of Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas. He is a creator of more than just romance, and his book will tell you so; he is a man of innovation.

To learn more about Meeker, you can check out his website at www.BentleyMeeker.com or purchase his illuminating book on Amazon.