



IT WAS THREE YEARS SINCE BOB RUEST HAD LOST HIS WIFE, and he had to get out of the house. “The reason why I went to line dancing is because you don’t need a partner,” he says, smelling of Old Spice as he gets ready for his date. “The line dancing worked out good until I met Lena. . .

“Hi — it’s me,” he says into the telephone in the kitchen of his mobile home, which he bought after he’d had enough of the big house, full of memories. “Are you ready?”

Bob drives to the other side of North Attleboro and slows down in front of a brick apartment complex, where Lena Watters is standing, waiting, with her jacket hung over one arm. She gets in and they take the back roads to the Venus de Milo.

Since Bob and Lena were reintroduced (he knew her years ago when he cut her late husband’s hair) they’ve been dancing almost seven days a week, sometimes twice a day. Bob’s had to learn all the steps, but Lena’s a good teacher. “She’s a fabulous dancer,” he says.

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PHOTO AND TEXT BY
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After a chicken dinner with some fellow seniors, Lena gets up to go to the ladies’ room and the band starts playing “Kansas City” — “Oh, where’s my partner?” says Bob, twisting in his chair. “I just started to learn how to jitterbug.”

Lena comes back, hair fluffier than before, and taps him on the shoulder. They hurry onto the floor and Lena’s face spreads into a glowing smile, which accompanies her through every dance.

On her way off the floor from doing the hustle (Bob hasn’t learned that one yet), Lena pulls a handkerchief out of her jacket pocket — a linen square with tating at the edges. It’s just some of the needlework she did while her husband was in the hospital. “I used to do a lot of that,” she says to Bob, who’s now gearing up for the next dance.

“How come you don’t do it anymore?” asks this new dance partner, smiling.

“I haven’t got the time.”