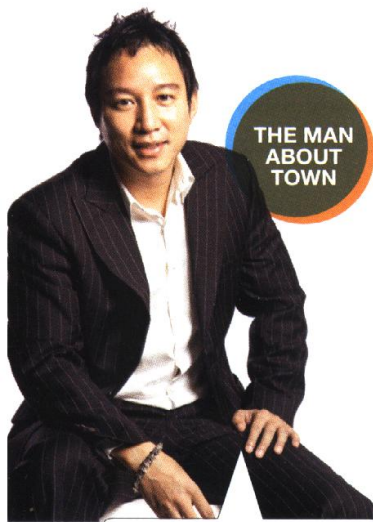


ask the manalysts



FINALLY – THE BIZARRE BEHAVIOUR OF MEN DECODED! OUR WORLDLY-WISE PANEL OF THREE GIVE THEIR OWN UNIQUE TAKE.

**Q:** My husband just can't seem to say no to his mum. I don't want to make him choose between his mother and me, but I'll go mad if I have to take another romantic stroll along the beach with her in tow. What should I do?



THE MAN ABOUT TOWN

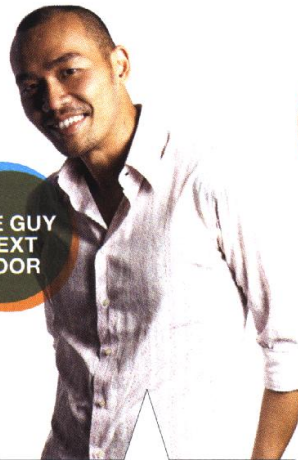
**JEF LIM, 34**

**Occupation:** Vice-president/executive producer, Mark Burnett Productions Asia.  
**Experience:** Has dated and been dumped by a number of beautiful women, most of whom still talk to him.

→ A man's relationship with his mother is a deep and complicated one. We spend a large portion of our youth trying to assert our manly independence, to get away from the dreaded "mummy's boy" label. We then feel quite bad about that as we get older, and spend the rest of our adult life trying to make up for it.

But this problem is something you will need to bring up with him at some point. You need to start carving out "us and her" time, starting with the "her" time. Initiate some activities that are specifically for his mother that you can all do together. It shows your husband that you care and he fulfils his filial obligations. You then have to gently remind him that you need "us" time as well. Once he gets used to the separation of the two, I think you'll find those walks on the beach much more romantic, and mother-free.

THE GUY NEXT DOOR



**CHAN TAU CHOU, 34**

**Occupation:** TV producer-reporter.  
**Experience:** Has met a few girls' mums, and is still trying to figure out why mothers always seem more impressed with him than their daughters are.

→ After explaining to him why it's important to have your own space as a married couple, he needs to talk to his mum – but don't ever get involved in this talk. It should be his responsibility to make it clear to her that he needs space. Let him pick the time and do it at his own pace. A good place for him to start would be, "Mum, I'd prefer to go on this trip with her alone because I'd like to give you a grandchild." Who knows, you may start getting more couple time immediately.

On your part, accept that it's natural for her to have trouble letting go. Help her build a social circle by signing her up for a class she's interested in with a friend or a relative. But be part of that circle so that when you do say no, it doesn't feel like a rejection. Be sincere but firm – you want to stay on good terms after all.

THE LOVE GURU



**NORMAN LI, 42**

**Occupation:** Singapore Management University lecturer and a "mating research specialist".  
**Experience:** His research has found that attractive women are more likely to cheat, but he married one anyway.

→ First, you'll need to accept that some interaction with her is unavoidable – after all, she's immediate family. Second, this may reflect your husband's kindness. Your mother-in-law may also be trying to ensure her son still values her. From her perspective, she is probably not as much lonely or bored as she is afraid of being unimportant to him.

The more you resist her (I suspect you have been doing this), the more she'll try to squeeze into your marriage. Instead, keep her in the loop, regularly ask her for advice, and invite her to join you.

After a while, she will feel at ease with you and will no longer be interested in following you everywhere.

Need help finding out what's going on with your guy? E-mail our Manalysts at [magherworld@sph.com.sg](mailto:magherworld@sph.com.sg).