

Saw You at Sinai

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It was mid-May, 2021 and I had been unattached for several months after a long-term relationship had imploded. I was camping out in my grandson’s bedroom in Newton, MA, displacing him so that he had to share a room with his brother (“I rather have you here, Saba, than have my bedroom!”); although my daughter and son-in-law were fabulous hosts and spoiled me constantly, I was depressed and lonely.

My brother had seen a personals ad in the *New York Review of Books* that read “Financially secure modern orthodox Jewish bicoastal widow with grown children and a zest for life is seeking outgoing companion 65–75 for late-life adventures.” There was an email address. My adult daughters encouraged me to write to her, so I did. After several exchanges of email, we decided to talk on Zoom. We Zoomed at length a few times, but ultimately decided there wasn’t really any interest on either side.

Still lonely; somebody suggested I join “Saw You at Sinai,” a Jewish dating service. With nothing to lose, I signed up (they require payment only if and when they match you, you accept the match, and you want contact information). They sent me two potential matches—you get a photo and some limited biographical details: an attractive widow posing with her grandchildren, and a second woman R whose picture I recognized! I immediately wrote to R, a widow who lived just a few blocks from me. I knew her vaguely, and my deceased wife had known and admired her. R was traveling, but said she was open to meeting when she got back. We met briefly for coffee, had a lunch date a week later, and decided that there was no point in going further.

Now I wanted to contact the woman who had posed with her grandchildren, but to do so meant really enrolling on Saw You at Sinai, which I did, so I could get her contact information. I formally enrolled on Saw You at Sinai and got the contact information. It was ridiculous: she lived in New York City and I saw little future in pursuing a long distance relationship. I called Shifra, the matchmaker on Saw You at Sinai and told her it was impractical. She gave me a stern lecture about how if I wasn’t open minded things would never work out. “Okay, okay, I’ll call,” I told Shifra.

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It was now mid-June. I called. Her name was Carol; she was friendly on the phone, but traveling by car so we had just a short conversation, agreeing to speak at length when she got home. A few days later we had a very long Zoom call, leaving me entranced and wanting to meet face-to-face. I offered to come to New York, but it turned out that she too had children and grandchildren in the Boston area whom she was planning to visit—so I said I'd come to Boston to meet her.

I wanted to do something nice in preparation for meeting Carol. I thought about sending her a dozen roses, but that seemed excessive. I thought about sending a single rose, but that seemed overly romantic for somebody I had never met. Aha! I found a pair a rose motif socks which I sent to her with a note saying that I hoped she wouldn't get cold feet.

She was coming to Boston on Sunday, so I asked her to dinner there, choosing a sushi place across the "Smoot" Bridge from MIT. But then her plans changed and she said she would come on Thursday to spend more time with her son, daughter-in-law, grandson, and granddaughter. Impatient to meet her, I said, "How about meeting for brunch Friday morning?" We met at Pure Cold Press, had a lovely (from my point of view) breakfast/lunch that lasted for hours. Dinner Sunday couldn't come soon enough.

Getting ready Sunday afternoon, my son-in-law told me not to show up empty handed, but to bring something to Carol's grandchildren when I picked her up. What to bring? Rosenfeld's Bagels in Newton was/is a favorite of mine, but bagels would be a bit strange; they have, however, wonderful chocolate chip cookies and I figured that the way to a woman's heart is through her grandchildren's stomachs, so I bought a dozen cookies. Alas, Carol's children were not wild about sweets for their kids (I found out much later), but they graciously accepted the cookies.

Carol and I had a lovely sushi dinner, then walked around the area and talked. It was a wonderful evening from my point of view—apparently from Carol's too because she readily agreed to go out with me again (and again and again. . .).

We're now approaching our first wedding anniversary, in love and enjoying a wonderful late-in-life second marriage. Thank you, Shifra!