



Dalya Tamir
Dates in the City

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Contento De Semrik

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Sliding Doors

I waited outside my home on the date I scheduled with Avi. He had said that he would be there exactly at 6:00 p.m., in a black, American car. At 6:01 p.m., a black, American car stopped next to me.

“Avi?” I asked.

The man replied, “Yes, good evening. Please come in.”

The surprise that waited for me in the car was well equipped. Wow, what a hunk, I told myself. My enthusiasm was obvious, and Avi, noticing, hurried to calm me down, laughing and singing.

“Where do you want us to go?” Avi asked, and

immediately added, "There's that new place that recently opened in Jaffa, called 'Sliding Doors'."

If I were brave I would have said that I would follow him anywhere, but instead I only said, "Okay, to Jaffa."

A second later there was a phone call. On the speaker we heard Avi's daughter asking for her father's advice. She wasn't feeling well and wanted him to tell her which physician to see. For 10 minutes he explained, calmed her down, and gave her advice until we reached the place. When we left the car he was still calming his daughter. Out of confusion we entered one narrow cell, in the swinging doors of the restaurant's entrance.

Avi hung up, sat down, and apologized. "I'm sorry, I had no choice," he said, and tightened his lips. "It was a really important call."

"It's okay," I said. "I understand."

"Well," Avi started our conversation after managing to quickly recover. "Tell me something about yourself."

"I don't like to begin like that," I said gently, "I'd rather get to know each other during the conversation; otherwise, it'll feel like I'm in a job interview."

Avi laughed.

A second later my phone rang. "It's my turn to apologize," I said and answered.

"Dalit?"

"Yes, who is it?"

"What do you mean 'who is it?' It's Avi. I've been waiting for you in our spot for more than 20 minutes!"

"What do you mean by 'waiting'? I'm sitting now with Avi in a restaurant in Jaffa!"

"But I told you to wait at 6:00 p.m. in a certain spot. I told you that I'd get there in a black, American car."

"Well, that's what I did," I replied, confused. "A black, American car arrived, and stopped next to me. I asked if it was Avi, he said 'yes', so I got in."

"Are you insane? I've been waiting for you over here for more than 30 minutes now. Where are you?"

"Hold on," I said to the on-the-line Avi, "let me clear it up. I'll call you in a minute." I hung up and turned to the man who was sitting, amused, in

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front of me. "It's not fair! Why didn't you tell me that it wasn't you?"

"I didn't know it wasn't me," said the guy and kept on laughing. "Just like you, I was supposed to meet someone. In the same place and time, and my name is Avi, as well."

For a minute I started to laugh with him.

"Who knows?" he added and said, "Maybe instead of you I would have gotten a better one!"

"That was way too far," I said, "I'm asking you to apologize."

"Oh really?" said the man while standing up. "You want me to apologize? I'll maximum buy you a large schnitzel, but to apologize I'd need to be in front of the other Dalit." He took his car keys together with his pretty face, and off he went.

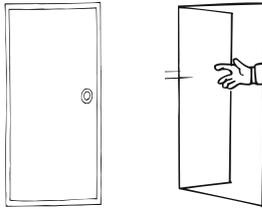
"That's not the way a true gentleman would act..." I said to his back.

"Ask your Avi to pick you up and apologize," said the hunk without even turning around, and left.

I called the other Avi immediately, but he didn't answer.



*For every opening door,
a new one is closing.*



The Groom's Family

“Hi, Dalit, my name is Gil. I heard your voice in the recorded message and was enchanted. I’m dying to meet you and to hear more of your lovely voice. I’m waiting for your call and promise that you won’t regret it. Bye, Gil.”

The cheery atmosphere that accompanied his words convinced me to return his call immediately after listening to his message. I was in a bad mood and needed some cheering up, and Gil sounded like a cool man. Gil didn't hide his happiness when he heard my voice.

“Hi, Dalit, it's good to hear from you.” He amused me, and cheered me up when I told him about the bad day I had had. I told him that since that morning all the electric equipment had stopped

working: the hair drier, the washing machine, the fan, and finally the car.

Gil said that it looked like I needed to go out, and offered to come and pick me up from my house. I did need the time off, so I accepted his invitation. We met the same day. We sat in “Shachor” cafe, talked, laughed, and slowly I felt that my mood become much better. My rolling laugh enchanted Gil, who flattered me when he asked, “I don't understand why you're divorced. How come your husband let you go?” I explained that my husband became newly religious, and that I – as natural born secular – had a hard time following the life-style that he demanded from me and the kids.

Gil kept on asking questions, but I felt that it was time to finish the successful date, and said, “Tomorrow is a work day. It's enough for the first time.” Gil quit questioning. Instead, he called the waiter.

On our way back, Gil asked my permission to stop for a moment at his parents' house on the way to mine. He explained that he had to sign a contract for an apartment and that he wouldn't be long.

“Is there any possibility that you do that tomorrow?” I asked.

“No,” he said, “I have to file it today. It's the last day.”

“Okay,” I agreed, feeling that I had no other choice and Gil parked the car in front of his parents' house.

“I'll wait in the car,” I said.

“I'm going up for a minute and will be right back,” he promised. After 15 minutes he called and explained that it take some time, since there's a small misunderstanding with the contract, and maybe I should come up so I won't have to wait alone in the car.

The night was dark and it was a strange neighborhood, so I decided that there was no other option and I should go up.

As soon as the door opened, his parents jumped all over me, hugging and kissing. His mother asked, “Should I make some tea?” and without waiting for my answer, she vanished into the kitchen.

His father led me to the sofa in the living room, offered me a seat and sat in front of me. I asked him, “Where's Gil?” and he calmed me down, saying that his son was in the study, going through some paper work and would finish it and join us in few moments.

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“Gil told us a lot about you,” said his father and smiled.

“Really?” I asked. “But we've just met today.”

“There's no need to rush,” said his father, and then clapped his hand on mine and said “Well, tell me, what do you do for a living?”

“I'm a numerologist and an international psychic,” I answered.

“Oh, that's interesting,” said the surprised father, and yelled at his wife who was still in the kitchen if she heard that I'm a psychic.

“Yes, I heard,” the woman yelled from the kitchen.

“International,” added the man with enthusiasm. “And where do you live?”

“Not far,” I answered with coolness, to ease his enthusiasm that got bigger with every moment.

“And you make a living out of the numerology?”

“I'm doing well,” I answered shortly and scanned the place, trying to understand where the hell Gil was.

“And how much do you earn?”

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I wanted to tell him that wasn't his business, but he was an elderly man, so I answered politely. "I'm doing well and have no complaints. You see, I don't feel like going into it."

"And what do your parents do?"

"Retired," I answered with no patience, while starting to move my leg nervously on the floor.

"And tell me, why did you get divorced?"

That's it, I told myself, and decided to shut up without giving him any answers.

"Why you're not answering?" the father asked.

"I'm sorry," I said angrily, "I don't feel like discussing my personal life with you."

"Well, as you wish," he said, got up from his chair and started to walk around the room, like a lion in a cage.

At that exact moment, Gil showed up in the living room. "Well, I see that you've already met my parents."

I tried to smile and told him that I did and signaled that I wanted to leave immediately.

Without looking at his father, I stood up next to

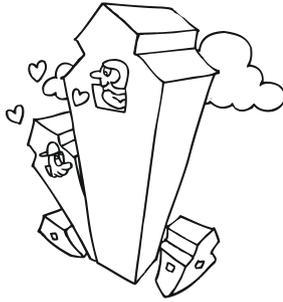
Gil. And then his mother came across to us from the kitchen. She was holding a tray with a bottle of hot tea and cookies, swinging it above our heads, singing.

“Simcha, hush!” the father hushed his wife, vanishing her happiness.

“We have to go,” Gil apologized to his mother. “It's enough for the first time. Dalit has to wake up early tomorrow morning, she's got work to do.”



*In the land of the floating towers
They started to build my home
From the top floor*



Deception

“Hi Dalit, it's Ahaz from Los Angeles. I'll be glad if you'll contact me despite the distance. I'm sure that if we'll fall in love, we be able to build a bridge. I'm waiting to hear from you soon. Bye.”

I was too curious. I had to find out how Ahaz from Los Angeles got into my dating voice mail, so I contacted him. Ahaz told me that he decided to try it out after Sam, his good friend from San Francisco, told him that he met his Israeli date that way.

“After all,” he said, “Israeli women are the most beautiful in the world.”

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“Of course,” I agreed and asked, “What are you doing in Los Angeles?”

Ahaz told me that he was 42 years old, working in the real estate business in L.A., 6.1 feet tall, thin, and “– undoubtedly, a handsome man.”

“And still single?” I asked.

“What can I tell you? It's my only problem, I'm very picky.”

“Of course you are,” I said with empathy.

“Look, Dalit, in 10 days I'll be in Israel, maybe we can take this opportunity and meet?”

“I'd love to meet you when you arrive,” I said, “but maybe, meanwhile, you'll send me a picture of yourself? What do you think?”

“No problem,” he said. “I'll love to get a picture of you as well, so I won't have a bad surprise.”

“I'd love to,” I replied.

I gave him my Facebook address, he gave me his, and we said goodbye. After an hour he called me, excited, and said, “Wow, you're so pretty and photogenic, a real model. It's a nice surprise.”

“Thanks,” I said, and told him that I had a nice surprise as well when I saw his picture.

At the end of the short conversation we agreed to meet in 10 days, when he arrived in Israel, and Ahaz said with a smile, “Well, after seeing each other, it won't be a blind date.”

Ten days later, Ahaz called as promised and announced that he was in Israel, and that if it was okay with me, we could meet the next day, after Shabbat. “Of course,” I answered. “I've been waiting for 10 days.”

We agreed to meet the next day, at 10:00 p.m., at “Karov” cafe, near my home. “How will I recognize you?” I asked before saying goodbye.

“I'll hold a colorful magazine,” he said and finished the conversation with, “See you tomorrow.”

Excited about the visit of my L.A. suitor, I started to work on my looks all day, so I'd be at my best on Shabbat. Wearing peach overalls, which flattered my body lines, I left home at 10:00 p.m. and rushed excitedly to the street. Pretty and all dressed, I walked like a model, shaking my hips, until I got to the café. From the entrance I noticed the only man with a colorful magazine. I came close and asked, “Ahaz?”

Ahaz lowered the magazine that was like a curtain between us, and I saw a crumpled man, in his 60s, who was nothing like the man I saw in the picture. “How dare you!” I said angrily, “to lie about 20 years?”

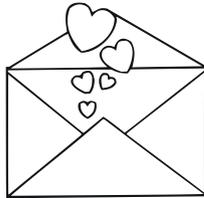
“It's an old picture of me, from my 40s,” he tried to explain.

“Even confusion has its limits,” I said to the elder with the hawkish nose, which held such thick lenses that his eyes disappeared behind them.

Wearing my flattering peach overalls, I turned around and left the café by myself. The hip swaying was matched by my head, nodding from side to side, from misunderstanding to misbelieving. How could this man reduce 20 years, shamelessly, and expect that I'd bridge the gap between the man that he was and the man that he is?



*A stamped letter without an address
will never reach its destination*



Stuffed Vegetables

One day, during a shopping spree, I accidentally got to an old furniture store named, “The Stall.” Enchanted by the goods in the window, I entered and flattered the owner: “You have great taste and beautiful furniture.”

The owner seemed to be bored. He grabbed an ancient Victorian chair with carved wooden handles, and here I was, sitting in front of him for a conversation. The man introduced himself as Izzy, and told me that he liked only the best of furniture, women, and even cooking. In his free time, he added, he liked to cook unique stuff.

“What kind of stuff?” I asked, surprised about the intriguing subject.

“I can cook special delicacies,” said Izzy with excitement. “For example, I make stuffed vegetables. I make them with every available vegetable, in all the colors of the rainbow. I just like to see pretty things.”

“Wow...,” I said. “That sounds interesting. A man that makes stuffed vegetables with all the colors of the rainbow. Do you have the patience to stand like that and fill all these vegetables? That's a lot of work.”

“Without any problem,” Izzy answered, laying back on his lavish chair.

“Even cabbage and cauliflower... you say that you stuff every vegetable? As well as cucumbers and onions?”

“Yes. Like I told you before, every vegetable.”

“Fantastic, I've never heard of that. It's really amazing. When do you find time for that, if you're always at the store?”

“I have employees, and I have a partner who covers for me, and if I meet someone as interesting as you are, I'm definitely willing to prepare all kinds of stuffed vegetables in her honor. When will you come over for dinner?”

“When can you?” I asked.

“Can I invite you to dinner this week?”

“Okay,” I said. “I’d love too. It’s really intriguing, a man who makes stuffed vegetables out of all the vegetables available in the market, in a wide, big pan. It sounds like a really funny story.”

“Why?” Izzy asked and waited offended, until I had explained myself.

“Because it’s usually more typical of elderly women, sitting with squashes and stuffing them slowly, but you’re a respected trader. Why do you do that?”

“I enjoy it,” he replied. “And besides, if I had a girlfriend as charming as you, it would be a double challenge.”

“Thanks, I’m flattered,” I said, and we exchanged our numbers before I left.

Izzy called after few days and asked when he could invite me to dinner. I told him that it might work towards the weekend. Izzy suggested that I come toward his house that Friday evening. I told him that I was usually with my family on Fridays, with my parents and kids, and I couldn’t leave them and go eat in a different place.

“I see,” said Izzy, “so what do you think about inviting me over for Friday?”

“That's too soon,” I answered.

“Why is it too soon?” he questioned, “I invite you to my home for dinner and you're not willing to invite me over?”

“Look,” I said when I heard that he got offended, “if we'll go out for a while, and we feel good with each other, you'll be the guest of honor.”

But Izzy wasn't satisfied. “I want to be more than the guest of honor. I want to be your partner.”

“Hello?” I said, “you're going too far, take it easy Izzy, you can't build a building in one day. Please understand, since my divorce, no one has come to my house. The honor of my family and kids is really important to me. If my kids see man at dinner, they'll know that this is the man of my life. I can't bring home every date I have.”

“I'm like 'every date'?” asked Izzy, boiled as a pot with no cover. “I'm a respectful man and many women want to date me. Please don't degrade me. I want you to know that you have offended me. I'm willing to work for hours to stuff for you all

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the in-season vegetables, and when I offer to be a guest at your home, you refuse.”

The conversation ended with a slam; the colorful vegetables were saved from their destination, and the lonely cover asked for a new pot.



Every pot has its cover



Nakuv

The ring cut my launchtime nap at once.

“Hi Dalit, this is Effi, your good friend from the club. Do you remember me?”

“Sure,” I answered. “What happened that you're calling after I haven't heard from you for such a long time?”

“Listen, Dalit, a man at his 50s stepped in today, a very handsome man. I know that you're picky, but I believe that you'll have nothing bad to say about him. I have a strong feeling that this one will be your man.”

“Oh, you've gone that far?!” I smiled. “Thanks for thinking of me. I appreciate it.”

Effi asked me if he could give my number to his friend, and I said yes.

“By the way,” Effi said, “his name is Nakuv.”

“Thanks,” I said, and went back to sleep. A few days later Nakuv called. We talked for an hour on the phone. He sounded excited and the conversation was fascinating. By the end, we decided to meet up, and agreed to meet on that day, halfway between us, and to decide then where to go.

I was full with enthusiasm and new hope. I started to get ready for my date. I told myself that I really hoped that it would be my last date ever. We came to the meeting point, in the middle of the road, with their car. Nakuv called and said that he saw my Jeep in front of him and asked me to stop. He came out of his car with great excitement, came to my window, and asked if he could get in. I said yes.

First came his big smile, and then the rest of his face. His face was decorated with piercings that covered every inch of his skin, from lips to eyebrows. I looked at him with my mouth open, without being able to say a word. Nakuv gave me the same look, and when he opened his mouth, I could see the piercings in his tongue.

“That's it,” I told myself, “this probably really is my last date ever.”



*The first impression
can be the last*



Super Glue

As time passed, I enhanced my sorting skills, and filtered the men who tried to meet me. In case the man's presence was far from making me want to be around him, I prepared a short message, in clear wording, in which I repeated what I had told him in a previous phone call.

“We agreed to meet in the middle of the road and then would see. You know what? Let's talk on the phone, because I'm a bit shy and I have difficulties expressing myself face-to-face. I'll be happy if you'll call me back.”

Since the men knew that they'd have to reach the window of my white Jeep, I could easily retreat, without being forced to leave my car.

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Dubi was one of those who went easily through the first conversation barrier, and was about to meet me in person. I waited in my car, at 6:00 p.m. as we agreed, but Dubi was late. I was nervous, so I opened the door and stepped out to look around.

Exactly then Dubi showed up from the behind, and put his hand on my shoulder. I was so surprised that I jumped out of fear and turned around. “Nice to meet you, Dubi,” he said, shook my hand, and didn't let go.

I politely tried to free my hand from his grip, and when I couldn't, I signaled with a look toward my bounded hand and said, “I don't understand what's going on here.”

“Nothing is going on,” Dubi replied calmly, and put his second hand on mine. “I just put my hand in yours.”

“And now the second hand?” I was shocked.

“What?” asked Dubi with an innocent face, “you don't like my touch?”

Embarrassed and confused because of the mixed up escape plan, and still being held, I told him, “but we agreed to meet up at 6:00 p.m. and then

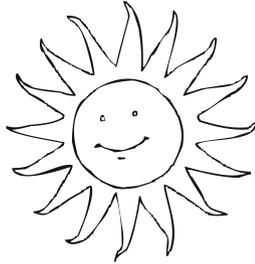
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decide. I'm a bit shy, so let go of my hand. I will immediately call you back.”

“Okay,” said Dubi, “If my touch isn't pleasant, I'll never touch you again.” And then he set my hand free.



*Slowly, said the drop of dew
to the sun that burned below*



Mickey Mouse

Sunday, 8:30 a.m.

“Good morning. Dalit?”

“Yes.”

“This is Ayelet.”

“Good morning Ayelet, I haven't heard from you for a while!”

“Yes, I know. I'm a bit busy those days. I met someone new.”

“Great, congratulations.”

“Thanks, thanks, I hope for the same news from you.”

“G-d willing.”

“And also if Ami’s willing.”

“Who's Ami?”

“My boyfriend! Ami says that he wants to introduce you to his friend. What do you think? We can have a double date.”

“Do you know that friend of his?”

“No, but Ami says that he's a really nice guy.”

“Oh well, give him my number than. He'll call and we'll see.”

“Great dear, goodbye for now. I have a very strong feeling about you two. I hope that we can all meet together soon.”

Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

“Dalit?”

“Yes!”

“Hey, it's Mickey.”

“Mickey who?”

“Friend of Ami's.”

“Who's Ami?”

“Ayelet's boyfriend.”

“Oh, yes. Ayelet told me that you'd call. I heard that you're a very nice guy.”

“Yes, thanks. Tell me, can we meet today at 7:00 p.m.?”

“Can you come to the middle of the road?”

“That's a date. Tonight at 7:00 p.m., in the middle of the road.”

Sunday, 6:59 p.m.

“Dalit?”

“Mickey?”

“Well, what are you saying?”

“What am I saying?!”

“G-d forbid! What a rolling laugh you have there. What is that? I've never heard such a laugh.”

“Well, okay. Listen, Mickey, we agreed to meet in the middle of the road and decide then. You know what? Let's talk on the phone, because I'm a bit

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shy and have trouble expressing myself face-to-face. I'll call you in a minute."

"Okay, fine, but don't forget to call."

Sunday, 7:05 p.m.

"Hello?"

"Good evening, Ayelet."

"Dalit, hi babe, so, tell me, did you meet him?"

"Yes, just now."

"Well, how's Mickey?"

"You mean Mickey Mouse?"

"What does that mean?"

"It means that your friend's friend looks like Mickey Mouse. He has a long neck, a nose like a walking stick that reaches his mouth, small eyes, no lips, and long hair, gathered to the sides in two ponytails. Scary! Just like a caricature."

"You're not saying! Ami said that he's really nice."

"Tell me, Ayelet, does Ami also look like a caricature?"

"What do you think?!"

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“So please ask him what was he thinking when he offered me to date his friend.”

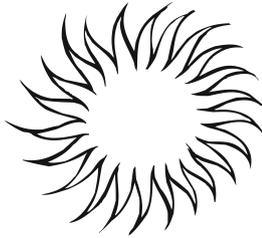
“I understand that we won't have a double-date soon.”

“Not at all!”

“That's too bad; I really wanted the four of us to hang out. There's a great deal this month for a holiday in Turkey, the second couple gets in for half price.”



*The sun will always rise
And will never compromise*



Neighbor or Enemy

“My name is Yariv, I’ve been divorced for three years now. I’m looking for the one who’ll open her heart to me.”

Finally, that was the message that waited for me in my inbox. Yariv had a foreign accent. I called, and he was happy to hear from me. I asked, what do you do for a living? Why are you alone? Where do you live?

“I’m from the central area,” Yariv said and didn't add much.

I told him that I'm from the same area, and that I'd love to know where he lives.

“I’ll tell you, but not now,” he said.

“What I don't know, I decide for myself,” I said, and explained to him what I had in mind. “Maybe you're cheating and afraid to get caught? Maybe you're a nasty guy? Maybe you're poor? Why can't you tell me where you live?”

“Nothing like that,” said Yariv and tried to calm me down. “You have nothing to be afraid of. Believe me, I'm a positive and honest man. The reason is that unless you'll be the one, I'd rather be discreet, that's all.”

At the end of the conversation we agreed to meet in “Apropó.” Yariv looked fine considering his age. We sat at the café and I found out that he was fair and honest, just like he told me. “And even so,” I asked, “Why are you hiding it? What do you have to hide? If you like me, it's important for me to know where you live.”

“I live in the Ramat Aviv area,” said Yariv and asked the waitress to put some more milk in his coffee.

“Where in Ramat Aviv?” I asked, “I live in Ramat Aviv as well.”

“On Sagi Nahor street,” said Yariv, and added the milk to his coffee.

"I can't believe it!" I yelled. "How come I haven't met you yet? I live on Sagi Nahor as well."

"In which building?" Yariv asked, almost choking from the coffee.

"Number five. And you?"

"You're kidding me! I live in number five as well."

After a short discussion, we found out that we had lived in the same building for over a year, Yariv on the third floor and me on the ninth. "Amazing..." said Yariv with a smile full of teeth, as if this coincidence was the winning lottery combination, "you came to me from heaven."

"And you came from earth," I replied and smashed the lottery card in front of his eyes. "If it isn't great between us, we'll still see each other soon enough. I don't think it'll be comfortable."

"Why does it bother you that we live in the same building?" Yariv asked, as if he were a speeding driver, trying to cancel his already written ticket. "It can be so much fun. We won't have to travel just for a meeting. I can go down to your place, and you can go up to mine."

"You know that the chances that it'll work between

us are 50 percent, and what am I supposed to do with the other 50? I'm not planning to move any time soon," I said and sighed in the corner.

Yariv was quiet, absorbing, and I added softly, "I'm not so sure that I want to have a neighbor as my boyfriend."

"I don't get you. You need to be far away in order to get close? So what do you want? You want me to move?"

"I'll think about it," I promised. Since that meeting, I have not been in touch with Yariv.

One day, when I was on my way back from my evening walk, I met Yariv at the entrance to the elevator.

"Hello neighbor."

"Hello Yariv."

"So, we meet again."

"Apparently," I answered and went into the elevator, Yariv behind me and my eyes looking toward the door.

When the door opened on the third floor, Yariv stepped out, stopped the door with his hand and asked, "Do you want to come over for coffee?"

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“No thanks,” I said politely, “I already drank two cups today.”

“What about wine?”

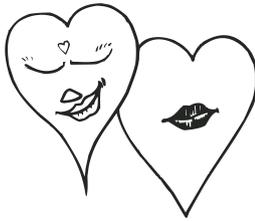
“I don't drink wine, thanks.”

“I can see that you're trying to get out of it,” he said with acceptance, and let go of the door. “I respect your wish. Let's keep it that way.”

The elevator's door slammed. I went up all alone to my home at the ninth floor. I put a kettle on the stove and prepared myself a third cup of coffee.



*You better have a distant lover
than a neighbor in love*



Ramai (Hebrew for “cheater”)

Ramai was a man who contacted me because of my advertisement. He told me that he and his wife lived apart and that they has a date for the divorce in three months. He also said that everything was already settled between them, that they decided to share the property and that there was no problem at all. And I could call him 24 hours a day.

One evening I called at midnight. On the other side of the line a woman answered angrily. “Hello, who are you?”

“Can I talk to Ramai?” I said.

“Ramai is a married man. Do you know that? Who are you?”

Dates In The City

I said, "Sorry, I didn't know. Ramai said that he has a date for the divorce, that he lives alone, and that I can call 24 hours a day."

"The bastard is sleeping now; I'll show him," said the woman with rage, left the phone open, and ran screaming to wake her husband. You piece of shit... are you cheating? Do you have a girlfriend? You won't sleep, and you won't live, and you won't eat, and you'll leave this house. Can you hear me? We're done!"

When she finished yelling, she hung up the phone, and I deleted Ramai from my list.



*If you'll act like a pig
someone will eventually kick your ass*



Tasting

I met Eliyahu in “Uga Uga Café.” When we sat at a table for two, in the far corner of the café, the waitress came toward us, put two menus in front of us, and asked, “What do you want to order?”

I said that I wanted a cup of coffee and a glass of water.

Eliyahu's eyes were widening. “What? Water? Will it be enough?”

“In order to talk and get to know you, water and coffee will be just fine.”

“When I'm dating a woman,” he said in front of the waitress, I want her to feel good.”

“What's 'good' in your eyes?” I asked.

“Order whatever you want. Try a little bit from every cake, I don't mind. I'm not the one to calculate our date.”

The waitress looked at him and smiled.

“Okay, I'll order one cake,” I said in order to stop my embarrassment.

“Which cake do you want?” the waitress asked.

“Do you have a whipped cheese cake?” I asked.

The waitress nodded and wrote it down. Eliyahu smiled at me and then approached the waitress and said “I want you to prepare us a tray with all of your best cakes. I'm not cheap.”

“If so,” said the waitress, “why don't you come with me and pick your favorites?”

Eliyahu stood up, went with the waitress to the show-window, and pointed. “Please give me a piece of this cake, and one from that, and another one from that. To make it short, put one from every color and taste. And please put it on a big and decorated tray, with flowers and chocolate.”

He returned to the table and sat in front of me, smiling the sweetest smile.

“Can you take just one bite from every cake?” he asked, while we waited for the waitress to return.

A few minutes later the waitress returned with a wide tray, decorated with marzipan flowers and a little fireworks. The tray was put in front of me. On it were lines of cakes, ordered like soldiers in front of their commander. I looked at the tray, which was as big as the entire table, and he asked with shock: “Isn't that pretty?”

“You see...,” said Eliyahu, showing me how easily a chocolate piece can vanish, “If you try just one teaspoon from every cake, it's like you ate just one. Don't you worry; start to have fun for once so you'll feel that you had a good time with the man you date. I'm not like other men, who ask you after you have drunk the coffee if you want anything more.” Eliyahu concluded and gave me a teaspoon.

“Well, that's a first,” I said, and just like him, moved from one cake to another.

“You're like a butterfly, moving from one flower to another,” he said when he noticed that I was serious about my mission of getting familiar with all the flavors. Between one teaspoon and another I stopped and praised the cakes. They were not only different, but extremely tasty.

“Please allow me to go to an important place,” Eliyahu said, took another teaspoon full of cheese-cake, cleaned his mouth with a napkin, and left the table.

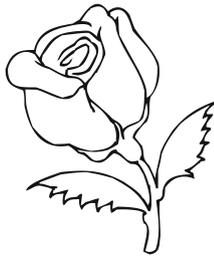
After 10 minutes, when he didn't return, I started to worry. Maybe he had a stomach ache after all the cakes that he ate?

After 20 minutes I thought that there was probably a long line to the toilet.

After an hour, I understood. He wasn't coming back. I paid the full price at the end of the long bill that the waitress brought and left the place with a bitter taste.



*Among the thorns
the roses are rising*



Parking Strike

I met Lazer through an online dating website. He cooperated in my pre-meeting investigation and told me that he held an administrative position with the police traffic department. Desperate from my last disappointment, I left my home in order to meet him. Lazer was a handsome man and I decided to park and sit with him in a close-by cafe.

During the entire meeting, Lazer couldn't stop complimenting me. "You are so beautiful, you are so special, what a gaze that you have. I'm under the spell of your gaze. I haven't felt like this for years, I haven't felt this click with a woman since I was 16."

I asked him to stop, so I could stop blushing. But

Dates In The City

Lazer didn't stop, and kept on measuring me and my looks. I felt that he was not right for me. I didn't know how to leave, so I made up a lie claiming that I was just finishing a previous relationship and I was not ready for a new one.

Lazer didn't give up and said that he had a lot of patience, and if I was after a relationship, he would be willing to wait. After that meeting, he didn't stop calling me, even though I asked him to. One day, while I was taking my usual evening walk, I saw his car parked outside my home.

I came up to him and said "Hi, who are you waiting for?"

"For you, I'm waiting to see your pretty face. I knew that you'd leave the house eventually. I've been waiting since 6:00 p.m."

I was flattered on one hand, but felt like someone was chasing me on the other. "Sorry, but I don't want to" I said, and walked away.

When I returned from my walk, Lazer's car was still parked in front of my home.

"Ho, what a joy, I have another opportunity to see you today."

"Okay, let's talk on the phone," I said.

“I don't understand. What's your problem?” asked Lazer without waiting for me to answer. “Don't you know what you're doing to me? Very strong heartbeats.”

“Have a good night,” I wished him and went up to my home. I took a shower and hoped that this Lazer fiasco was now over.

Just to be sure, I looked through the window at the parking lot, and found that Lazer was still there. His presence made me nervous and I went to the window every other minute, at 1:00 he started his car and left.

The next day, Lazer called and told me what I already knew about his long wait outside of my home.

I said, “Listen, this relationship is very stressful for me. I'm not into it. You're waiting to see when I come and when I go. I'm sorry, but it's not for me!”

Lazer had a calm tone, as he was very precise about me, and he answered, “I want to be your suitor.”

“What do you want?” I asked with a broken voice, as if I were a wounded animal. “I'm not interested, don't you understand?”

Dates In The City

“Let me do it my way,” he said, as if he were a hunter waiting for his prey.

I was desperate from all the begging and hiding, so I told him with anger, “Okay, take all the time that you need.”

The next day, his car was parked under my window again. Unlike other days, I stayed at home and didn't go for my evening walk.

His car was parked in front of my home until very late at night. He listened to the radio loudly, and the music from his car managed to reach me even through the closed window.

At 3:20 a.m., when the music stopped, I looked outside and saw that my suitor was asleep in his car. I woke up early in the morning, as usual, and left home on my way to work.

“Good morning,” Lazer greeted me from his car.

“Good morning,” I said. I'm in a hurry.”

When I came back, at 5:00 p.m., I saw him waiting in his car.

“Tell me, do I see right?” I said. “You didn't go to work today?”

“I can't work anymore; I'm a man in love. I decided to strike and stay in the car until you date me. I saw you and that's it. I have a lot of patience for you, and I'll give you all the time that you need.”

When I realized that I couldn't beat the guy and make him go, I asked for my family members to help. If he can't understand hints, I said to myself, he will understand the shells.

On that day Lazer got a call from my brothers, who explained him firmly the things that he refused to understand.

“Listen. Mr. Lazer, our sister, doesn't want to be with you. You can't force her to, she's not interested.”

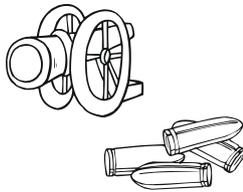
“But I don't understand,” he chanted, “She was interested at the beginning. She had a good time and all, so what's going on now? She's suddenly changing her mind? We drank coffee and talked about things...”

“That was the beginning, and this is the end, dear Mr. Lazer, our sister is asking that you leave her alone.”

On that very day Lazer ended the parking strike, moved his car, and left me alone.



*He who can't understand clues
ill understand the shells*



By the Back

Monday, 1:00 a.m.

“Hi Dalit, it's Moti again.”

“Moti?”

“I won't give up today. After we've talked, I want to meet you.”

Monday, middle of the road, 6:00 p.m.

“Hello, Dalit.”

“Hello, hello.”

“Do I look so bad, that you're looking at me with such amazement?”

“You look just fine.”

Dates In The City

“I would love to have coffee with you; I know a great cafe by the sea. The problem is that my back hurts terribly. I didn't want to cancel the date because I gave you my word, so I came anyhow.”

“That's okay, nothing happened.”

“I suggest that we go to my place now, you give me a massage, and if I feel better, we'll go have some fun.”

“Excuse me, but I'm not a massager. If you want to, I have this friend, she's a professional, and she'll be glad to massage you for the appropriate price.”

“Really? Do you have her number with you?”

“Yes, sure.”

“Can you please call and ask her if she can come to my house tonight?”

Monday, 6:05 p.m.

“Orly, hi, it's Dalit. I have met a guy who says that he suffers from a terrible back-ache.”

“Give me the phone... give me... I'll explain to her... Orly... Hi... Tell me, can you come today at 10:00 to 3 Aba Hushi street? I live on the top floor. It's the lower back... yes...”

Dalya Tamir

“...Yes... Aba Hushi... No, the lower back, the last floor. Yes. Okay, I'm waiting.”

“Here, thanks dear, I got to go, I have a massage soon.”

“Bye dear, I hope you'll feel good.”

Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

“Good morning, Moti, it's Dalit.”

“Ho, hi Dalit,”

“Well, are you better?”

“Don't even ask. You don't understand. It couldn't be better; the pain is almost gone.”

“Good, I'm glad I could help.”

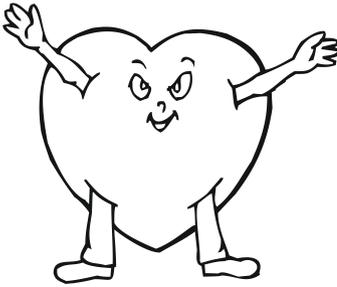
“You did. And let me tell you, your friend is amazing woman. I fell for her three times, and I felt it's mutual.”

“I'm so happy for you. I wish you all the best.”

“Thanks babe, thanks, I'll let her know, she's here next to me.”



Love's ways are mysterious



Chained to His Daughter

The difference between a divorced man who tries to meet a woman, and a widower with the same desire, is that the divorce usually wants to forget the ex, while the widower can't. Two years after his wife died, Kavul (Hebrew for “chained”) decided to call me: “Hello, I'm Kavul. I've been a widower for two years. I live alone with an 11-year-old girl and am deeply looking for a serious relationship.”

We met. Kavul was way ahead of his peers. I couldn't find anything negative about him. But the problem was that he had an 11-year-old girl, who highly objected to the idea of a new wife for her father.

Kavul told me during our meeting that he talked to his daughter many times and explained to her that

Dates In The City

he had been alone for 2 years and now he wanted to meet a woman who would be his companion.

After four promising dates he asked for my permission to introduce me to his daughter.

“I promise that she'll change her mind after she meets you.” He also told the same to his daughter, “I promise you that you'll change your mind after you meet her.” And indeed, we met one afternoon.

As soon as his daughter noticed me she started to make nasty faces. I told him, “Listen, there's a problem here. You're a great man, you look good, you're successful, and you own a chain of fish restaurants. There's no doubt that you're a good man, full of heart and soul...”

“...And you really want me, and you talk out loud about marriage on our third date,” Kavul added with the same tone that I used.

“What?” I asked with shock.

“I suggest that we send Li to a boarding school; that will solve the problem. With time, she'll understand that her father wants to rebuild his life.”

He said that while he was away from his daughter and crossed his hands.

I was amazed by his firmness; I said that I didn't want to take responsibility over his decisions, and added firmly, "if you want my opinion, I don't suggest that you put her in boarding school."

"But I want you. I don't want to be alone in my big villa. I'll do anything for it to happen. The woman that will be with me won't be stressed. She won't need to work, she won't need to clean, and she'll live like a lady. She'll feel that the entire world belongs to her. That's how I am."

One evening Kavul and I returned late from our date. When we entered his home we peeked into his daughter's room. Li was resting peacefully, just like he promised when he told me that he left her to sleep, all alone in their big home. He led me to his bedroom, both of us stepping on our toes. We had dated a few times during that month and I felt that he was truly in love with me.

When we entered the room, Kavul filled it with a romantic atmosphere, hugged me and held me tight. The things that he whispered in my ear made the lights turn off. We climbed on the double bed, lying down, without knowing that his daughter had waken, snuck into his room, and crawled under the bed.

“I love you very much, Dalit. You are the most important person to me. I'll never leave you.”

“But what about Li? Don't you see how she treats me?”

“I'll sign her into a boarding school within a week, or she won't let me live with a woman in this house,” he said and stroked me.

“Yes!” suddenly we heard shouting inside the room, “and what about me! You promised that you'd never leave me!”

“Ho,” I screamed and pushed Kavul away. He turned on the light and we saw his 11-year-old daughter standing in front of us.

“I lay under the bed and heard everything that you said about me and the boarding school,” she said and crossed her hands.

As a result of that day I understood that Kavul wouldn't be able to fulfill his plans with me, and I cooled it down. Until one day he showed up to our meeting glowing with happiness. “That's it. I did it. I sent her to the boarding school. Everything is going to be okay now, I promise you.”

Indeed, everything was okay. We lived in his house

for 2 months, and his daughter was in the boarding school. Until one day we got a phone call from the manager of the boarding school. The kid had escaped.

“What? I'm in shock!” Kavul said. “What do you mean by that? Don't you have a fence? Guards?”

I calmed him down after that conversation. “We'll report it to the police and find out what happened to her,” I said. And so we did. We called the police, and the police officers started to look for her.

Three days passed by, and the news about Li's disappearance reached TV. Her picture was published on every news broadcast, and Kavul sunk into the screen, realizing that he was far from the peace and quiet that he wanted, as far as the boarding school was from Eilat's beaches, where Li was found after 4 days. Apparently, she had escaped from school and hitchhiked her way to Eilat.

Kavul ended the conversation with the police and drove to meet his daughter.

“What do you want, Li?” he asked as soon as he met her.

“I want you to be alone. I don't want you to have a wife. You sent me to the boarding school for a

woman. I don't want to be there. All the kids there are stupid. What have you done to me?"

"Okay, all right. I'm with you now my Li. I will never leave you again."

After Kavul's conversation with the boarding school's manager and the local psychologist, Li was returned to the school, this time under supervision. After a day the psychologist called Kavul and told him that the kid threatened to commit suicide and that if he cared about his daughter, he'd better wait with the second wife, at least until his daughter turned 18.

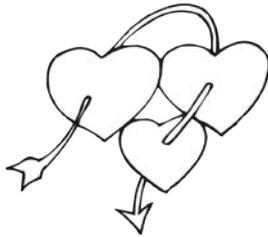
"What are you saying?" asked Kavul, helpless, "I'm willing to go with you to the end."

"Toward my end I'm willing to go with you," I answered, "but toward the kid's end? No way. I'm a mother; I know what it's like. You'll wait until she's 18, until then, let's keep in touch."

That day I talked to Kavul few times on the phone and slowly cut myself out of that relationship.



*Here are no borders to love
and if you truly love,
you love with no borders*



All the Week Belongs to You

I met Chaim after he contacted me and promised that he'd be everything I wanted. We met for a coffee and cake. He was a man with presence, strong with wide shoulders.

"You've definitely lived up to my expectations," he said.

"So have you," I replied.

"I want to be with you all week..."

"Hey, that's too fast for me," I said.

"Yes," he answered, "but on Thursdays I need my freedom. That's when I meet my friends. On Thursdays, I'm giving you time off, you're free... every Thursday. Can you ask for more?"

“Why are you bragging? I'm not looking for freedom, I'm looking for partnership. I wouldn't like my partner to go every Thursday to party until morning.”

“What's the problem?” he asked with a perplexed look.

“What don't you understand? What news are you giving to me? It's not good for me to know that my partner is parting with his boyfriends and girlfriends, free to do whatever he likes.”

“So what are you suggesting?”

“That we'll go out together on Thursdays? I promise to give you all the freedom to do with me whatever you like. What do you think? Why do you have to break from me in order to feel free?”

“I don't understand. Why are you fighting with me? What did I ask? One fucking day for myself.”

“You know what? Why have just one day? You can have the entire week.”

“I see,” said Chaim, and signaled the waitress.



*Said the bride: Jealousy is the tongue
in the language of love*

*Answered the groom: If I forget you
my love, I'll be struck dumb*



Wolf, Wolf

My loved one has a big, deep voice. I knew that this is how I'd recognize him when we meet. When I heard Wolf's message, it wasn't with that particular tone in it, but he sounded princely and I liked it.

I contacted him. Something in his voice and the words he said led me to offer to meet that evening. Wolf asked me if I wanted to meet him in a café he knows and I agreed.

"If so," he said, "I'll come with my chariot and will pick you up from your home."

I said, "There's no need. I'd rather come with my own car and meet you in the middle of the road."

Dates In The City

We agreed to meet and then decide if we wanted to meet for coffee.

A moment before we hung up, I quickly asked, “wait a minute, what car do you have?”

Wolf answered with the same question, “and you?”

“I have a white Jeep, and you?”

“If so, it’ll be okay,” he said, “I’ll recognize you when I see you.”

“Can you at least tell me what to wear, so I can dress appropriately?”

“I’ll come with light and Tarzan like clothing. This way we’ll be able to go smoothly through the city’s jungle.”

I wore jeans and a white button shirt. Under the shirt I had a black lace singlet. I opened the top button in my shirt, and went to meet the man who was the master of the spoken word.

Enchanted I came across our meeting point. A young man, with silver hair, came to my window. He had a noble, handsome face. I said to myself that this is a man I’d like.

Dalya Tamir

“Nice to meet you, I'm Wolf. Will you join me in my chariot?”

“Chariot?” I said, “Why don't you get into the Jeep so we can get to know each other.”

“Here, in the middle of the road?” asked Wolf and signed with his finger on the heavy traffic. “You'd better park and then we'll talk.”

I parked the car. Wolf approached and opened the door. “I'm a gentleman,” he said, “I'd rather drive my date. I never heard about a princess who drives herself.”

“Okay,” I said and followed him.

Wolf stopped next to his car, in a dark one-way ally. He bowed down, opened the chariot door, and signaled me to get in with a large gesture. I entered the car and sat down. Dust came up from the seat into the interior, and I sneezed and closed the door behind me. The handle that I pulled was left in my hand.

“Oops, sorry!” I said, and put the handle in Wolf's hand.

“That's okay,” Wolf said and started the chariot.

After a few expectorations, the chariot was willing to start the ride.

Dates In The City

“I need to change the gas type,” he said. At that very minute, the chariot started to choke.

“I hope that it won't discharge now,” said Wolf worryingly.

I felt like the chariot was about to break apart any moment. “You can use a car treatment. It's very scary to drive this way.”

Wolf smiled. I tried to relax, and let my body sit comfortably in the seat. I stretched my legs, and a giant dog came up from under my seat and suddenly was comfortable between my legs.

“What's that?” I screamed. “It's like being in a movie!”

“Why are you scared? Why are you afraid?” Wolf was scared by my scream.

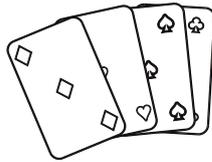
“I'm not scared,” I said, “but you should have told me that you have a dog in your car.”

“You better be scared of people, not of dogs. He can't hurt you; he doesn't hurt people, especially not friends of mine, especially not my partner.”

“But I'm not your partner yet,” I said, “I don't know if I'll ever be.”



*The price of the deck
showed his heart
when he found out that there's no
princess in the deck*



Ham's Peanut

I met Ham through my friend Doman. After the first talk that we had, we agreed to meet in the middle of the road. I liked him from first glance. I thought that I would like to get to know him better, and asked him if he wanted us to have coffee.

“It's too noisy,” said Ham when we got to 'Tom Cafe'.” “We won't be able to hear one another.”

“Okay,” I said, “If so, I'll let you lead. Let's see where you'd like to hang out.”

I let him lead and joined his car as he suggested.

“You won't regret it,” he said. “You're going to have a big surprise today. I'm not an ordinary guy.”

We drove, and drove, and drove for hours on dark

and unfamiliar roads. I didn't ask a thing, I didn't make any comment, I just laid back and felt safe on my seat, on my way to the adventure orchestrated by Ham, the friend of my good friend Doman.

After an hour Ham stopped the car in a deserted spot in front of Ahziv beach. He turned off the motor, turned on a little light, and said, "This is the only way to get to know each other better, without all the waitresses around us."

Ham bent toward me, put his arms around my neck, pulled me from my neck and tried to hug me tightly.

"What's that?" I asked, "I'm not ready for that."

"You better be ready for that, because I want to show you something pretty."

Without allowing me to defend myself, Ham put his hand into his pants, and took out his penis that was smaller than a peanut.

Then he asked, "Well, is it pretty?"

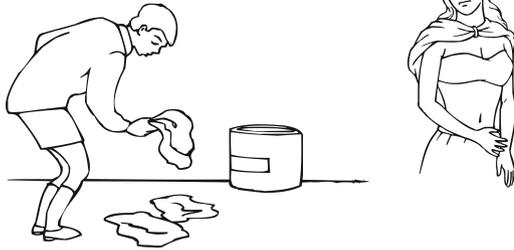
"Tell me," I said, "you dragged all the way down here to show me that thing? You should be ashamed. Couldn't you do it in the middle of the road, and spare me the entire ride?"

Dates In The City

Humiliated by the disappointment that waited for me at the end of the long road, I asked Ham to return me immediately to my car. He put his peanut back in to his pants and started the car. We kept silent on the way back. When we finally reached my car, Ham gave me a cold goodbye and disappeared.



*Take a dustpan and bunch of twigs
and brush up your home
after all, it's not nice to invite
a princess
to a dirty kingdom*



Ben Shemesh is Turning Red

Ben Shemesh and I agreed on the phone that we'd meet just to see each other and then we'd decide. It was summer and the days were hot. Ben Shemesh came toward me, all sweaty and excited. When he saw me he said immediately, "Well, finally a lady that I fancy. I would love to sit with you in a romantic spot."

I saw him sweating, water all over his body, and I was disgusted. "But we agreed that we'd just meet, I'm not promising that we'll sit," I said.

He heard that and immediately turned mad and red. "But I came especially from Beit Shemesh! Now you're saying no? Do you realize what a ride I have had? How many traffic jams I had to suffer? An hour and a half, in a massive hit."

I tried to cool him down and warmly suggested that he buy air-conditioning for his car. But not only didn't it cool him down, my suggestion just made him made him angry.

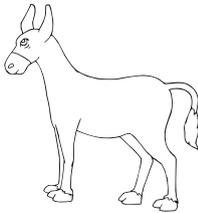
“Am I that ugly that you don't want to have coffee with me? G-d forbid!” he said, raising his hands up in the air, “I can't believe it.”

The strong smell of sweat came to my nose straight from the armpits of the man, who stood in front of me, submissive as a prisoner of war.

I automatically turned my head aside, and then told him in a gesture of good will, “Please, for your sake, and for the sake of all the people that you'll meet on your way, use deodorant, or you'll never spread your wings above someone.”



*The thirsty donkey had no choice
but to return to the same broken
water trough*



In the Hand of Faith

When I got home, I found a message waiting for me in my inbox. It was a man with an impressive, deep and confident voice.

“Hi, my name is Goral (Hebrew for Faith), I'm divorced with two kids. If you call, I promise that you won't be disappointed.” He sounded like a real catch and I rushed to fulfill the opportunity.

The man with the voice answered the phone. I asked about him and his doings. He said that he was the owner and manager of a big knife sharpening company. He told me that he accidentally saw my dating advertisement that very morning, and immediately felt that it's a fate, and that we should meet.

I asked what he looked like and Goral promised that I wouldn't get disappointed.

"So far," he added, "no one was disappointed."

"If that's so," I said, "let's not postpone our meeting."

I was intrigued by the man with the deep voice, and decided to be the initiator, while suggesting a meeting that same evening.

"I like your spontaneity," he answered. "It's 8:30 p.m., let me organize quickly and leave for your direction, so we'll be able to meet in an hour."

We decided to meet at the "Hope" cafe. Goral said that he'd wait for me there in a silver Mercedes.

I had one hour to get organized. I showered quickly and dried my hair. I stood in front of the closet. I pulled over a black cocktail dress and measured myself in front of the mirror. The dress fell softly on my body, and fitted me well, modest at the back and revealing from the front. I turned over the shoulder straps and went out to an evening that is all about me and my black dress.

The man's voice was echoing in my ears when I powdered my nose in front of the car's mirror,

while waiting for him. what would he look like?
Will his looks match his impressive voice?

Indeed, I wasn't disappointed by his looks. He was all-male and impressive. He had a stiff body and wide shoulders, just what I like. He suggested that we go away from there and meet further on that road, at a nice restaurant.

“If that’s so,” I said, “why go in two different cars? Let me join you and we’ll go together.”

I parked my car and entered his. Immediately after we drove off I was bothered by his driving. He drove with one hand on the wheel and another in his pocket. It was weird and I wondered why does he drove like that? Maybe he got personal satisfaction out of it? Maybe that was his way to show his masculinity?

“I'm sorry for the comment,” I said and broke the silence, “you're driving with one hand on the highway. Don't you think that you'd better keep both hands on the wheel?”

He didn't answer.

I took a deep breath and added, “It is the highway, after all.”

“I always drive that way, it’s okay,” he said and kept on driving in his manner.

But my death is important to me just like my life, and I knew that I didn't want to end my life on the first date, next to a stranger. When I saw my destiny with Goral, I twisted all my body toward him and begged him from deep inside, "please..."

"What?" he roared, when he understood that I was not pleased with his explanation. "Don't you trust me?"

After a moment of silence he added softly, "Why don't you let me choose my way of driving? Don't you see that there's no danger?"

"If not for you," I said, "Do it for me. Please, drive with both hands. After all," I concluded with a smile, "I don't want to challenge destiny that put us together."

"Okay," he surrendered, "as you wish."

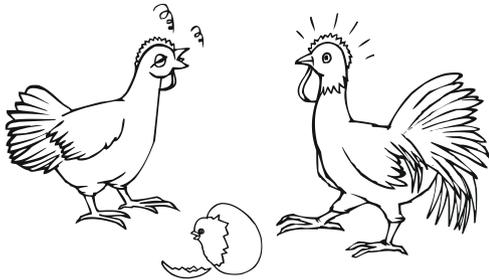
He took his hand out of his pocket and put it on the wheel. A strange noise made me look directly at the wheel. Then I saw that his right hand was made out of plastic.

"A replacement," he said, and named his truth.

"Now," I said, "that's okay. With both hands on the wheel, I can choose my way as well."



*The rooster sang for all day long
to his beloved one, and didn't give up
She witnessed all his strength
and gave him an egg*



Over and Tam

My name is Tamim. But you can use the nickname Tam.

Because I am like that, not just for fun.

If you like these rhymes, maybe you'll like the person who wrote them down.

Tamim was a witty man overflowing with confidence, a gifted wooer and a master rhymist. After an introductory conversation we decided to meet at "Petty Bar," a tavern where Tam felt good among friends.

Tam lit a cigarette for me.

I clung to my water glass and he to the glass of whisky he ordered.

We had a good time together, and I admit I was curious to see how the relationship would evolve later on.

Since that time we have gone out a couple of times more.

Tam knew how to flatter me in his own unique way, by rhyming. But more than anything, he managed to give me the confidence I desperately needed at that time.

On our third encounter, Tam came to my home to pick me up for a dinner at “Cauldron,” a new meat restaurant that had opened at the harbor.

“I have something important to tell you tonight” announced Tam when we started to drive.

“What?” I asked curiously

“Since I've met you, Dalit, I made a decision...”

Tam paused for a moment, took a deep breath and when he finally returned to the sentence that was cut off he said, “The knowledge finally descended on me. A clear understanding I did not have till now. It's you, honestly. I don't want to meet anyone else.”

I wanted to believe him, more than I could. It of

Dates In The City

course did not prevent the heat wave that came up and spread upon my face. I decided to surprise him as well and said

“I have something to tell you too...”

“Just a second” Tam interrupted me when the song “My only love” burst from one of the many phones sets in his car. On the line, connected to a speaker, was a girl who introduced herself as Ayala.

“Hi Ayala, what's up?”

“Ok, where are you?”

“I'm on my way home. I'll call you the moment I get there.”

I took out a cigarette from the bag, and when I couldn't find the lighter that hid at the bottom, I moved closer to Tam and asked “What's going on? We're going out on a date, some girl calls, and you're in a rush to finish our conversation?” I wasn't even done talking when another phone rang, another device this one, playing “I haven't loved enough.”

“Hi Tam, it's Nechama. I reached you through chat. I called you yesterday but there was no answer. You didn't call back so I'm calling to see what's going on.”

“Hi Nechama, I'll get back to you,” replied Tam shortly, and began disconnecting all the phones that were turned on, while mumbling quietly something to himself.

“What's that?” I asked, then without waiting for a reply, said “Didn't you tell me just a moment ago you made a decision? That you don't want to meet anyone else anymore?”

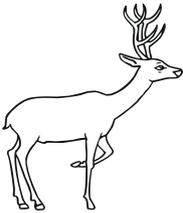
A third phone rang suddenly, playing “It's over, it's done...”

“Where the hell is it coming from?” asked Tam angrily and started looking for the ringing phone.

“This time it's mine,” I said.



*The hind is the hunter's
only comfort*



Johnny Walker

I met Johnny through my friend Nathan. Nathan called and told me about a friend who recently ended a relationship with someone who was no good for him.

“I think you'll like him. I'm sure you won't be disappointed from the package, and I'm counting on you as for the contents.”

Johnny was a content manager in a computer firm. After the introduction we decided to meet at “Compromise.” I liked Johnny a lot, and since that meeting we have gone out a couple of times. From time to time I realized that Johnny was not only a pretty package, he was an intriguing man and an easy talker, and I was attracted to his views and his

looks as if they were both a high mountain touching its shadow in the lake.

For our second date, I came dressed in a fancy pink suit I purchased that morning especially for our date. Under the suit I wore a black shirt with a low neckline, from which my heart was pounding strongly, and high heel shoes that added more to my size. Johnny wiped his lips when he saw me and I admitted I made an effort for him because I think he was worth the trouble.

We sat at "Second Chance," a romantic fish restaurant overlooking the sea. We ordered fish, salads, and wine. The atmosphere was special, the music was pleasant, and the weather was great. After dinner, while waiting for desert, we stood together on the restaurant's balcony and watched the sea.

Johnny said, "look what a special day. The sun is kissing the sea and the sea blushes. What a lovely painting. I really feel like going in for a dip with you in the water colors. But you, with the entire ensemble, the blow-dry and the suit, you probably won't want to go in. What am I talking about?" he laughed to himself.

"Listen," I said "there are surprises in life. I could take off the suit and stay in my bra and panties,

which are exactly like a bikini, so there's no problem.”

“Yes, but what about your make up, and the high heel shoes. You're kidding me, you want to tell me that you can take it all off and go in the water?”

“So you probably don't know me yet,” I said. “I'm very spontaneous.”

“But the make up will smear and the hair will mess up and get wet.”

“If you will it is no fairy tale,” I said. I leaned on the balcony's rail and took the shoes off my feet. Johnny looked at me in shock.

I took his hand in mine and pulled him after me to the sea shore.

“I don't believe it...” said Johnny as we strode in the sand, “with looks like yours, with beauty like yours, with glory and elegance like yours. You look now like a model out of a magazine. How? How will you go in the water?”

“If you feel like it,” I said, “with pleasure. Your pleasure is my pleasure. I don't do anything to please. I also like special things.”

Dates In The City

I took off the shirt, the suit's pants, the nylon stockings and remained with panties and a bra.

Johnny stood amazed, seeing but not believing.

“Come on,” I said.

“Come on what?”

“Let's go in the water already.”

“Then give me your hand,” said Johnny, and we both ran hand in hand into the stormy water, like in a romantic movie.

Shivering from cold we hugged long minutes in the water, until we left, dripping wet.

“I'm shocked at what happened to me today with you. I'm speechless. I wasn't expecting it, this was a big surprise. Even if I dreamt about it at night I wouldn't believe this could happen.”

When we reached the parking at my home I said, “It was great, it's been fun. Thanks for this entire evening. I will now go up to take a shower and rest. We'll talk tomorrow.”

“Why tomorrow?” Johnny corrected me, still excited, “We'll talk even tonight. This was an unusual experience, I'm not sure I'll be able to fall asleep tonight.”

With a smile and makeup smeared on my face I went up to my home at the end of that special and festive day. Even the sand grains falling off my clothes on the floor of my shiny house could not spoil the happiness.

Johnny didn't call that night, nor the following day. So I decided to call him myself. From the other side of the line the voicemail answered. I told myself, "He must be busy, maybe he's tired, it happens."

I tried reaching him again after a couple of days, and again the voice mail answered in his voice:

"Hi, you've reached Johnny, I can't answer, try later, and please don't leave me messages."

Why can't he answer? I asked myself. And why does he keep tormenting me?

My question remained unanswered through that whole week, but I did not give up and kept trying. I had to figure out what had happened. As I could not reach him I called Nathan, my friend who introduced us.

Nathan said, "I'm sorry to tell you, but Johnny returned to his previous lover and was uncomfortable telling you this."

Dates In The City

I said, “Ow, how grim. After so many dates, finally someone I liked, that I was willing to invest in, to go into the sea with, at night, with no clothes, with all my makeup running down my face. I did all for this relationship. I wanted him madly, otherwise I wouldn't have gone in the water with him, otherwise I wouldn't have gone with him at all. I surrender then, I give up.”

I took out a “Johnny Walker” bottle out of my bar along with a single glass, and I too returned to my previous lover for one day.



*The frog jumped in the pond -
and got wet*



Talks about the Previous Philharmonic

I dated Micha a couple of times. Micha was a handsome man, well kept and restrained. After a few coffee meetings, Micha, who had a subscription to the Cameri Theatre, invited me to the show “Best Friends” – a witty comedy about three adolescent girls and their adventures.

After the show we sat at “Cafe Nostalgia.” I told him about my adolescent adventures, and Micha replied with his. We both agreed we enjoyed the show, and Micha suggested he'd ask me to another show, this time to “Caviar and Lentils” – a light comedy about a harsh economic situation. After the show we sat again at Cafe Nostalgia. Micha told me about his ex wife, and how she hurt him

financially and mentally, how she abused him, and how she turned the children against him, and how although she was an independent woman she got everything he had and didn't have, and he was left broke and disappointed.

From that moment on, one could not talk with Micha about anything except his ex and her involvement in his feelings. He protested against his rebellious children, and told me about his numerous difficulties with them. He spoke about his wife's bossiness and his wish today for the opposite woman: obedient, good, submissive, and one who would value her man.

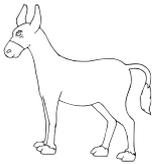
When I found myself ironing Micha's clothes and shining his shoes I asked, "Can we please change the subject?"

Micha burst like a punctured dam and said, "What do you want me to talk to you about? About the Philharmonic?! About recipes for spicy fish?! This is what I've been through in life!"

"I'm sorry," I said, "First of all, I'm not interested in the Philharmonic. Nor do I think I will ever be. Besides, it seems to me you are still hurt and agitated. I suggest I give you time. Who knows? Maybe someday we will meet to talk about the Philharmonic and not about your ex."



*The stubborn donkey wished
to follow the jennet
The donkey marked time,
and off the jennet went*



Hello, Shalom

“Hello Dalit, my name is Shalom. I'm currently living on my own. I would be happy to meet you, hoping we'll...”

The click made by the toaster popping the toast I loaded for breakfast interrupted me from hearing the end of the message, but I knew, Shalom sounded like a nice quiet person, and later that day I would contact him.

A year after my divorce I went on my date with Shalom Hello at cafe “Déjà Vu.”

Those were hot summer days. Dressed in a short sleeve shirt and riding breeches, I arrived at the correct time.

Dates In The City

As soon as I arrived, Shalom appeared at my white jeep window, and I knew. He wasn't my type.

We sat and talked over coffee. Shalom, or Shalom Hello in full, was a skinny long person.

"How much do you weigh?" I asked him.

"Fifty seven kilos," replied Shalom.

"Oh, you're quite thin," I said, "I'm not attracted to thin men. I want a sturdy man, broad-shouldered. Even if you were fat I wouldn't mind, but you are long and thin."

Shalom was an interesting conversationalist, so I decided I'd stay and talk to him.

After our short introduction, I summed it up with thanks, "It was really nice to meet you."

"You too," agreed Shalom, and added of his own, "even though we did not click."

I said Shalom Hello, and we went our separate ways.

My quest for my man continues, I told myself.

Ten years later, I ran into a simple personal ad on the internet:

Dalya Tamir

“A divorced and very handsome man, looking for a girl for a serious relationship. Shlomi.”

Despaired of my hopes and bitter experience, I called Shlomi and we talked. Shlomi suggested we meet to get to know each other in Cafe “Déjà Vu.” I already knew the place so I confirmed and we agreed to meet there that evening.

Those were hot summer days. Dressed in a short sleeve shirt and riding breeches, I walked toward Shlomi at the correct time.

When I arrived Shlomi appeared at my white Jeep window, and I knew. It was Shalom Hello whom I had met 10 years ago in similar circumstances and at the same cafe. We laughed.

“How come you did not recognize me on the phone?” I asked him.

“How come you did not recognize me?” asked Shalom back.

“Since we've met I moved to a new apartment and made a career change, maybe that's the reason.”

“Yeah, I've gone through some serious changes myself,” said Shalom, who did not seem different other than his dyed hair.

Dates In The City

“You look exactly as I remembered, long and thin.”

“Well, never mind...” said Shalom smiling, “we can still have coffee together.”

But as I was in a hurry to meet my future husband, I told him gently, “That won't be necessary, we already had one coffee together,” and left him with “Shalom goodbye.”



*Said the butterfly: I will spread
my wings,
widen my circle, fly up high –
for I do not wish to meet
the same pupa butterfly*



Manoah

I got the first impression of the men I'm dating from their voice. If it was pleasant to my ears, I replied and call them. That was the case with Woody, after he left me a message in his voice in my personal ads box:

“Hi Dalit, my name is Manoah. I'm a widower with three grown children. Looking for a woman for chapter 2. I'd love to talk to you and hear your voice.”

Manoah had the voice I liked. I asked myself, does he have what to say as well, and called.

The conversation flowed, Manoah asked and answered. When I was out of investigation leads, I gave a turn to Manoah.

Manoah asked, "What's your sign?"

I answered "Cancer, and yours?"

"I'm Capricorn" he replied.

"Oh," I said happily, "Capricorns are very soft people. Not stressing, flowing. And you sound to me like such a man. I hope your looks are as impressive as your voice!"

"I believe so," said Manoah.

"Oo, so confident. Would you say you're a 10 out of 10?"

"Yes, why not?!"

"Why not has a no in it." I said, "So maybe no?"

"No one was ever been disappointed with me," said Manoah, with a pinch of fear in his voice, lest he will remain another pretty voice and longing for company.

We decided to meet that evening at cafe "He."

Manoah walked toward me and looked 10 out of 10 as he claimed to. But as he came closer he began to decline. By the time he reached me he was a 7. I smiled at him. Manoah smiled back at me, and dropped to 6.

Dates In The City

While we sat at the cafe “He,” Manoah told me about his his widowhood. And after he cried into his coffee mug about all he had been through, he went on padding on his own shoulder and praised himself.

Me, and me, and how much I am, and how much my kids are, and how much my wife, may she rest in peace. What a woman she was. And what successful kids she brought up. And after an hour of talking about himself and about his deceased wife with no end, and without giving me a chance to utter one word, I got up and left him as well.



*He whose eyes are on his behind
is sure to walk backwards*



Savior Dan

At the end of the conversation with Dan we agreed to meet halfway.

Dan was a basketball coach in a minor league. A handsome strong man who shot for my taste. I suggested we sit somewhere, to get to know each other and asked, “Where do we go from here?”

Dan answered, “My place or yours?”

I asked, “why not in a coffee shop?”

Dan explained he was dating a lot of girls, and if he bought a coffee for every girl he went out with, and then a piece of cake, and then some bottled water, he'd go broke.

“After all, I live on a small salary, and I can't afford dates with cakes and ice creams.”

“What's your problem?” I asked, disappointed, “I'll buy you the coffee. You feel like a cake? I'll be generous and buy you a cake too. Bottled water is on me, no problem.”

“Sure,” said Dan, as if he were offended by my offer, “men ask you all the time so you can afford it.”

I said, “How do you know who buys me? That's so rude of you.”

“I'm a man,” said Dan, trying to get away with my attack, “I won't have a woman buying me coffee. It will make me feel smaller next to you, is this is what you want?”

“Either way,” I said, “I'm not coming to your place.”

“I don't understand. Don't you think we'll be able to get to know each other at my place than at a coffee shop? I've got coffee at home, and a cake I bought, and I don't miss anything. Why should I spend money at home and at the coffee shop? Whoever want me should be willing to sit with me on a bench in a public garden.”

Dates In The City

I said, "If the only option is my place or yours, I choose to go..."

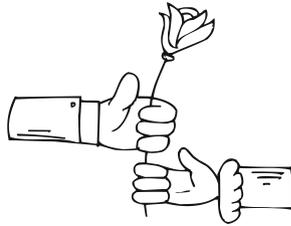
When I didn't finish the sentence Dan thought I was contemplating where to go, so he threw the ball back in my court and asked, "Yes?"

"Yes." I confirmed, "That's what I choose, to go."

"I understand," said Dan, "So let's leave now and save my time as well." Said, and done.



*He who gives generously –
Feels comfortable asking*



La Grande Finale

Nakash was one of those men whose personality and status were obvious right from our first conversation. Nushi, as I fondly called him, was a divorced man, in his fifties, a senior engineer in a big pharmaceutical company. During the three months that followed our first conversation, we met and got close. One morning Nakash called and asked,

“Would you like to go with me on a vacation to Paris?”

“Of course! I replied joyfully.

Nushi booked flight tickets and a luxurious hotel in the heart of Paris. A week later I sat next to my man, in El-Al Business Class, feeling exalted.

We landed at noon. After inspections, and stamps, and confirmations, we finally boarded a direct taxi to the hotel. Nakash told the cabby, “La Grande Finale,” and the cabby nodded and squeezed the pedal. I felt tired and laid my head on Nakash's shoulder. At that time the city of lights had a power surge.

When we arrived at the hotel entrance, the light shone at my eyes from the hotel's golden walls. As we exited the elevator on the third floor, a royal suite emerged before us, along with a bottle of champagne, an exotic fruit basket and aromatic soaps. But I could not see anything but the made bed and yawned.

“Darling, I'm really tired, my head is pounding from the flight, and with your permission I'd like to rest a little.”

“Yes,” Nakash replied, “I came here to rest from my problems as well.”

“What problem?” I asked surprised.

“I...” said Nakash and sighed, “was in love with a girl. My first love. But today she is with my best friend, and it is not easy for me.”

“And are you still in love with her?” I asked, wondering at the timing and location chosen.

“Yes,” replied Nakash, “That's why I have come with you to Paris, I like you, and I thought you could help me forget her.”

“First of all,” I said, “I'm very mad at you. Why didn't you tell me that before we came? If I had known, maybe I wouldn't have flown with you. You claim your love for her is very strong. That you haven't forgotten her yet. So I don't think it's right we go to bed together.”

“Dalit, it's not fair, I tell you openheartedly about something I'm hurt about, and you get mad. What do you want me to do? Ah...”

“As far as I'm concerned you can look for a woman who will help you forget me too, because I am no longer here,” I said angrily, and left the room.

“I'm so fortunate to have taken my credit card with me,” I told myself, and went to the hotel's reception desk to book a separate room for myself.

The next morning I met Nakash in the dining room. Nakash said something, and I ignored him.

I realized I had to get away from him if I didn't

Dalya Tamir

want to run into him again, so I decided to go on tour run by the hotel.

During that week I found myself spending time in Monte Carlo and St. Tropez, along with 20 people I didn't know. One evening, as I returned to my room from the tour, I heard knocks on the door. I opened and Nakash was standing outside the room. I asked him gently to leave me alone.

The next morning he knocked again. I went to the hotel manager and asked him to ask the gentleman to stop bothering me. Nakash got the warning, and I haven't heard from him since.



Alike and alike – will heal



Men on Scale

“Hi Dalit, this is Moshik. I heard your message at the personals voice box, and you are the only one I decided to call. Your voice did it for me, of course. You have a feminine sexy voice, and your description touched my heart. I have a good feeling about you.

“Let me tell you a little bit about myself: I’m 45, my height is 1.86 and I weigh 125, a bit on the fat side (that is my only disadvantage, I hope you won’t mind). I will tell you about my profession: I have a chain of fashion stores, a villa in Herzlia – I’m a well off man. A Libra, divorced + 2 grown ups (not in my custody) – and whoever will win me will be the happiest of all. I promise you will not be disappointed if you call. Have a nice day. Bye, Moshik.”



*It is not enough for rains to drop –
in order for the land to grow crops*



An Extraordinary Guy

Spot is a man of quality and an interesting conversation partner. I told him openheartedly on the phone how disappointed I was in all the dates I had had. That I was exhausted, and that I would easily forgo another glorious failure, unless he was an extra-ordinary guy.

Spot caved in immediately and admitted he was indeed an extraordinary guy. I asked to learn a little about his looks and character, and said, “If so, let's talk some more, and if I feel during our conversation that you really are an extraordinary guy, we'll meet.”

“Okay,” said Spot, “What would you like to know?”

“First of all, why did you break with your last partner?”

Spot told how for many years he lived as an ordinary guy with a steady girlfriend and wedding plans. Until one day he felt that instead of passing life, life was passing him. From that moment on Spot decided to change his life course and become extraordinary. And indeed, at the age of 40, unlike the most, he didn't get married, and didn't have children, and didn't find a proper job, and left his steady girlfriend and slowly began to feel extraordinary.

Until one day he met an anonymous guy, who, like himself, was extraordinary. To Spot's surprise, Anonymous told him of many other extraordinary guys he knew, and Spot realized that he was not extraordinary at all, just a different kind of ordinary.

Shortly after, Spot met an extraordinary girl that he liked, and the two got married, and had three children. All of whom were, of course, extraordinary.

Until one day, while the wife stood in the kitchen and washed the pots she used to prepare the family's lunch, she realized she wasn't extraordinary

anymore. What did she do? She became furious, took her children and left the house.

“Sounds familiar,” I said, “What is so extraordinary about it?!”

“What a story, isn't it?” He said and asked at the same time.

“Okay...” I said, when I realized that so and so's face was not put before me, “so what do you look like?”

“Well, how can a man who went through such a saddening experience look? I lost my appetite, I was depressed, I let my hair grow and vowed I would never cut it.”

“So you're hairy?” I asked in order to start assembling the mugs hot.

“Not anymore,” replied Spot.

I drew my hand back at once from the hair catalogue and asked, “and what's next?”

Spot told me that after his sudden breakup he decided to leave the country with his friend Anonymous, who was also kicked from his home, and the two moved to grow their hair overseas.

“Well,” I rushed into Spot, “and there you came to your senses, nourished yourself, made a career, and now you are available to meet a woman for chapter 2?”

“No!” answered Spot sharply and kept on telling.

Overseas, away from his three children, Spot's life passed on in sorrow. Out of his sorrow his hair grew long – until it reached over the sea, to his homeland. And all through that time his friend Anonymous was next to him, sharing his sorrow and growing his hair.

One day, when his longing for his homeland grew strong, Spot decided to meet a girl that who would make him go back to his country. And that is how he got to Jdate.

“And here our story begins?” I asked.

“Not yet,” replied Spot, and continued telling.

After some time, he met someone he liked online, who asked to meet him, but was penniless and couldn't come to him as he asked. Spot did not give up, and since he was also penniless at the time, he decided to break his vow, cut his hair and braid it into a passage for his loved one, on which she could walk and reach the other side of the ocean.

“Well, did she arrive?” I asked impatiently, discovering the additional heroine in the story.

“Did she ever...” said Spot, and continued telling how they both fell in love with each other, and decided to get married on the spot. After their meeting, the girl asked to return to her family and prepare them for her fiancé's arrival. But to her surprise, when she wanted to go back she found out that there was a big storm on the sea, and the braided passage her lover made for her was completely destroyed. It upset her very much, and this began to crumble their love, until it was also completely destroyed. To Spot's great dismay, his lover left him to find comfort in the arms of his friend Anonymous.

The two fell head over heels in love, until one day Anonymous agreed to her request and cut his hair so she could return to her family, and tell them about her lover overseas. The girl returned and never came back, and never called, and the two, Spot and Anonymous lost boldly.

“So you are bald?” I asked, desperate.

“No,” said Spot, “a lot of water flew under the bridge, and my hair returned to me as well.”

“Well, what are you looking for nowadays?” I asked.

“To meet with you!” said Spot desperately.

“I think we should talk some more over the phone.”

“It sure takes you time,” said Spot. “Wasn't the last half an hour of conversation enough for you? How long do you need to talk before you agree to meet me?”

“A month, maybe two...” I said, and laughed.

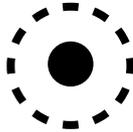
“Ow...” said Spot with a smile in his voice, “You have uproarious laughter! This feels good. If I didn't hear that uproarious laughter, I'd say I'd had enough. But your laughter is full of joy and promise. I'm willing to talk to you for as long as you like.”

After two months of conversations, Spot asked to meet. I said that I was in no rush. And he, “Come on, don't push it, we've been talking endlessly, what's the worst that can happen, I'm just an ordinary guy.”

“What?” I asked amazed, “What do you mean ordinary? You said you were an extraordinary guy and suddenly, after two months you become ordinary?”



*The spot went away –
around the beauty*



Solo

Many times I've asked myself, Dalit, what come of with your lack of openness? So what if your loved one does not look like what you've painted? Maybe you should shed away the expectations, otherwise you'll be talking to yourself for a long time. And indeed, on that day happened something unusual, which made me cross the lines and call Solo.

I searched my inbox for the message Solo left me the previous week, till I found it.

“Hi Dalit, I'm Solo, a flute teacher, 54 –year-old-man, separated, thin, handsome, looking for a woman for a serious and committed relationship.”

We met at Cafe Yale as we decided.

Already at the beginning of our encounter I sensed that same openness I asked myself for, and did not let the man's appearance guide me from that moment on.

Solo did not hide his thinking about the way I looked, and flattered my beautiful eyes. I thanked him politely without returning the favor.

Solo interpreted my reaction sensitively, and lowered his look to the coffee cup. As destined to put his head under the guillotine, and without looking at me, his voice cracked when he said, "So I gather that this was our first and last date."

"And you see this in your coffee cup?" I asked.

Solo raised his eyes to me and replied, "To see this in my coffee, I require at least one more cup with you."

I smiled at him, and suggested we have the next coffee together. And indeed, in our second date Solo arrived more upright and confident, wearing his spiffy suit, even his shoulders had broadened a bit. He courteously took the overcoat I took over my pink Lycra shirt that clung to my chest like a promise and he said, "I have a vision..."

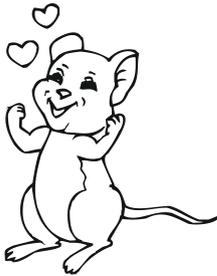
"Even before you ordered coffee?" I asked.

“I actually envisioned it at home,” said Solo and smiled. “I dreamt last night that you and I lived in a great penthouse together, with lots of rooms, and I got lost in the house until you found me. It didn't take me long to decide, Dalit, we are going out for a second time, and you are my kind of woman in every respect. I have a subscription to the Philharmonic and I would like to ask you next week to a special concert of “The Philharmonic in Jeans.”

From that moment on Solo could not stop talking enthusiastically about the Philharmonic, and the great concerts he had heard, and I started losing my patience, until I left Solo far behind, to play his flute on top of the imaginary penthouse he had envisioned.



*The faithful is faithful first and
foremost to herself*



Sing-along

I met Song in a depressive mood. We first talked on the phone and then met at cafe “Chant.” After a short while at the cafe Song suggested we go to the sea. From the moment I went in his car, Song could not stop singing and chanting. First he sang along with the songs that played on his car radio, and then he turned it off and started singing all his favorite Israeli songs. I tried to talk to him, but he sang. And every single word of mine reminded him of another song.

“What's it going to be?” I asked. “We can't talk like that!”

And Song replied, singing “What's it going to be, I find and lose, walk the road and stumble, and inside myself I fear...”

“I fear this is not going to end well!” I said, smiling.

And Song with his own “Benny, bad boy Benny, I love him so terribly. Benny, bad boy Benny, I love bad boy Benny...”

When Song saw that I had regained my good mood, he stopped the car, pulled an accordion from the back seat, stood in the middle of a hustling public garden, and began playing and singing.

“I’m sorry,” I said loudly, to overcome his loud singing, “I don’t like this whole idea. I want you to take me back to my car. I need to wake up early tomorrow.”

And Song half listening half absorbed in his chants, pulled and pushed the accordion bellows, and sang, “Wake up tomorrow morning with a new song in my heart, sing it with power, sing it with pain, hear the flutes in the blowing wind, and start all over again...”

“Well,” I cried impatiently, “Why do you ignore what I’m saying?”

And he, “You said, you said, we won’t break your word. What was said is what was said...”

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Even during our ride back, Song kept singing continuously, accompanying his singing with conductor's hand gestures.

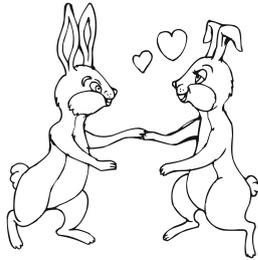
And I “Hey! Where are your hands?! Watch how you're driving!”

When I reached my car I parted with him and said goodbye.

And Song was still going on: “You say goodbye, but I say hello.”



*When there's no solid reason for joy –
the air is a good enough reason*



An Eye for an Eye

“Hi Dalit...”

“Hello hello.”

“My name is Al'al, I heard your message and I liked your voice. I'm a divorced man plus two grownups. I got divorced following my wife's religious conversion. I'm an astrologist. I left you a photo in Facebook, and will be happy if you call me back.”

The cynicism with which I listened to the series of messages left for me in the box was replaced with wonder when I finished listening to the message Al'al left. What a rare coincidence, I told myself. I too am divorced with two grown up children. I too got divorced after my husband became religious. And I too deal with astrology.

I went to the computer and found in my inbox the

link to his picture. Wow, quite the movie actor, I'm almost sure I saw him in some movie. Impossible, I said in shock, I must meet him to make sure the picture is not borrowed from someone else. Excited and suspicious I called Al'al.

His voice was calm and pleasing.

"I have a very strong intuition about you," said Al'al. "I suggest we meet."

"Okay," I said. "If all the data you gave me is correct, and the picture is updated and yours, I definitely think it's going to be interesting to meet."

"I have a brilliant idea," said Al'al, "I suggest we meet at cafe 'Baguette'."

"Where the hell is that?" I asked him.

"At the Rabbinate building," replied Al'al.

"What? At the Rabbinate cafe?" I asked in wonder. "I think the last time I was there during my divorce was enough."

"Why do you mind?" smiled Al'al, "You know, you don't only get divorced at the Rabbinate. What do you say? I have a very good feeling about us."

"Al'al," I said, "One step at a time. On the other hand, a cafe is a cafe, so wherever."

“What? What?” asked Al'al, confused.

“Never mind,” I said. “We'll meet at the Rabbinate.”

The following day, at 10 a.m., we met at cafe “Baguette” at the Rabbinate, as we agreed. I approached, excited, the man who stood up in front of me. Everything was perfect: the voice, the looks, the communication, the personality. Only one thing bothered me. Throughout our meeting Al'al sat with his sun glasses on. I asked, “Can I finally look into your eyes?”

Al'al took off the glasses from his eyes and my world turned black. The man had such severe crossed-eyes, that I couldn't tell into which of his eyes I should look.

“Oy, what's that?” I asked, struck with disappointment.

Al'al explained that his eyes got crossed a long time ago, as a result of shell shock.

“That's terrible!” I said, “dreadful!”

I took a long sip from the water in the glass in front of me (so that I too could get over the shock), and I bid Al'al farewell.



*We came through the same door -
and through the same door
we shall leave*



Theresa's Spirit

Out of all the craftsmen I met, Vincent was the only one whose work genuinely intrigued me. Vincent was an artist who made his living by painting and sculpting. When we talked on the phone I showed interest in his works, and said I would be happy to see his artwork. Vincent was instantly pleased and asked me to his home to view his artwork.

Vincent was a widower who lived alone for 7 years, with no children or relatives in the country. His wife, Theresa, who was also a gifted painter, was killed in a working accident, when a large canvas roll that was standing in their basement fell on her and broke her neck.

Vincent seemed like a solid man, and I felt safe to meet him at his home, and so we did.

When I arrived, I immediately noticed all the artwork scattered on his house walls. Vincent gave me a tour of his house and patiently explained about the different pieces, introducing them by name, and pointing out which were his and which were his wife's.

When we reached the garden, Vincent showed me a woman's bust, which he sculpted in the image of his late wife, in her memory.

We continued our tour. "Here," said Vincent when we reached a corridor on our way to the bedroom, "right where you are standing, underneath this rug, is the entrance to the basement where my wife was killed."

"Oops, sorry," I said as if I stepped accidentally on his fingers, and moved away from the rug.

When we got to the bedroom, a large picture standing above his double bed of a woman figure in a pink robe and a brush dipped in red paint in her hand, caught my eye. Vincent explained that this was a picture of Theresa, his wife. He painted it shortly after her death. I asked him, "Doesn't it bother you to have so many paintings and sculptures of your late wife in your house? That this is what you see in front of your eyes all the time?"

When Vincent heard my words he clenched his fists, broadened his nostrils, and asked to rip the ears from his head. “I can't believe you said that! What do you mean, this is what I see.”

“She was the most important woman in my life, and she will be the most important woman in my life till the day I die. What kind of a question is that?”

“I'm sorry if I offended you,” I said, “but if she is the most important woman in your life, what kind of relationship are you looking for exactly?”

“I want a wife!” said Vincent angrily.

“And you want the wife to live with you, and everywhere she'll go in your house your late wife will gaze at her?”

“If this is the problem, I can live at your place, and work here,” said Vincent in the same angry tone.

“Oh,” I said, “You've gone too far. We hardly know each other and already you've moved in with me?!”

Shivers spread down my spine suddenly. I wished to get out of his house as soon as possible, so I briefly thanked him for the short visit, and hastily left the

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bedroom. I went through the narrow corridor like the wind, not noticing to step on the rug again, which slipped and I slipped along.

“Are you all right?” asked Vincent when he saw me on the floor.

“No!” I replied and without looking back, I got up, and ran to the exit door.



Birds don't nest on a dead tree



Red Markings

One day, after a long recess from dating, the phone rang at my home. “Hi, this is Mickey... Who is this, Dalit... We haven't been in touch for a long time... I hope you are still available... I met a new friend, and I think he will definitely be good for you. I have no doubt you'll communicate well... Listen, he is good looking, 1.85 in height, broad shoulders, athletic, very handsome. And most important, he too is outstanding. I know this is important for you.”

“Well, you know me,” I said to my friend.

“So, with your permission, I will give him your phone number and I ask you not to reject him, because he is a very sensitive man.”

“Thank you for thinking about me,” I said to Mickey fondly.

“Just so you know,” said Mickey “His name is Kushkush, but you can call him Kushi. As long as you don't mix him with someone else.”

“Kushi?” I asked reluctantly, “I still don't know him well enough to call him by his nickname.”

“Ok,” said Mickey, “So call him Kushkush. And most important, take matters into your own hands, and go with it.”

Kushkush called an hour later, “Good evening... Dalit... I got your phone from Mickey. I heard you are a pretty and attractive girl.”

Kushkush told me about himself, and the conversation flowed. We decided to meet the following day at “Digressia” – a pastoral European style pasta restaurant.

When we met I was pleasantly surprised with Kushkush's looks. He was wearing a spiffy suit, in solid colors, just to my liking. We sat down and the feelings were mutual. Finally, I told myself, a man after my own heart. After so many dates, and so many disappointments.

The background music was good and loud. Kushkush asked if he could sit next to me, so he would be able to hear me better. I smiled approvingly. The waitress offered us the restaurant's delicatessens, and Kushkush asked me what I would like to order. I told him I was on a diet, but I would have a good salad.

Kushkush said, "I understand," and asked the waitress to bring us a large platter of all the delicatessens they have. "It's enough if you taste a little of everything. This way I won't feel like I'm eating alone."

Along with the food we got, to my surprise, a bottle of cold champagne. We clicked our glasses and blushed. Kushkush crossed his left foot over his right, and I saw to my surprise a shiny red leotard, that peeped under his tailored pants.

I asked him in shock, "What? You like red?"

Kushkush pulled down his pant leg and answered embarrassed "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't think it will peep like that. That's embarrassing. I feel uncomfortable."

"Well, it doesn't go with your ensemble," I laughed.

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Kushkush said that I was serious till then, and he was glad something made me laugh.

Yes, I told myself, the irony. Another joke at my expense. Who knows? Maybe in the future, when I tell of my bizarre dates, the date with Kushkush will also be of value.



*The blackbird puffed in pride
his chest –
and a white feather dropped
from his crest*



Desert

I met Phil at “The Princess of the Nile,” a fancy fish restaurant on Rothschild Street. Prior to our meeting we spoke following a message he left on my voice mail. At the end of our conversation Phil asked me to dinner.

The good wine, the restaurant's fine cuisine and the background music all made me feel like I was abroad. Away from my home and my daily routine, I was interested in Phil and he was interested in me.

The second time we met, Phil asked me to “Catfish,” a fancy restaurant on Rockefeller Street. The third time was at “Salmon,” a fancy fish restaurant on Remez Street. After that time, I decided to surprise and invite him for dinner at my place.

“When I invite a guest over, I throw a dinner for him with a menu that can compete with any fancy restaurant,” I told Phil at the end of the meal.

“What does your restaurant offer?” asked Phil.

“If you fancy fish, for example, you can choose from a variety of dishes: there is spicy fish, baked fish, deep fried fish, salt water fish, fresh water fish, fish with raisins, cutlets of fish. In short, the entire variety is at your choice. When you come over, you can order whatever you like.”

“Aw, I don't believe it,” said Phil in wonder, “Are there such women in the world?”

In preparation for his arrival, I made a bound elegant menu, in which I wrote in black and red markers the choice of entrees, main courses and desserts. I dressed as if I was going out, even though I had no intention of leaving, and opened the door to Phil.

Phil presented me with a bottle of wine, took off his coat, and sat at the table. I put in his hand the menu I prepared and said, “Please sir, I thought you deserve it, after treating me to the fancy restaurants.”

“Nothing like that ever happened to me, and I

have never read of anything like that,” said Phil and looked carefully at the rich menu. When he finished, he folded the menu and said, “I never thought it was possible, not in my life, and not in fairy tales. How can you keep such a tidy nice house, and still have the time to prepare such a rich menu? When do you get it all done?”

“I wake up at 6:00 a.m. and prepare,” I said indifferently.

Phil ordered a baked salt water fish.

While the fish was baking, I served the appetizer.

Phil opened the bottle of wine he brought, and poured the glasses.

After sipping and tasting, accompanied with his compliments, the two baked salt water fish were placed in the middle of the table, on one silver platter.

Phil enjoyed the taste of the fish and slowly skinned it, until he reached the bones.

When he finished eating, Phil wiped his mouth with the cloth napkin I folded next to his plate and said, “Now, I will be happy to stretch out my bones as well. Will you give me a tour of your home?”

“Please,” I said, and led Phil after me. “This is the kitchen. This is my den. That's the shower. These are the double bathrooms, and this is the bedroom.”

“You are an amazing woman, you know, Dalit?” said Phil in amazement. “How can you keep such a tidy sleek home, and cook such tasty dishes at the same time?”

Phil hugged me, swung me in the air and cried: “Wow, I have so much fun with you.” And while I was hanging in the air he leaned forward and lay over me and my bed.

I said, “That's it!” shook him from over me and stood up.

“If this is what you meant when you asked me to give you a tour, I don't feel like it.”

“What? Don't you fancy me?”

“That's not the issue. We've just finished eating, and already you try to get me in bed. I'm sorry! But this doesn't work for me.”

“I'm sorry, I apologize,” said Phil, “but you know I want you, I desire you. You do understand I want you, seriously.”

Dates In The City

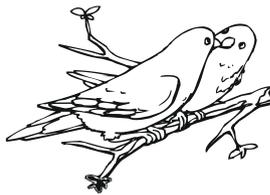
“If you wanted me seriously, you wouldn't have acted so. That's not the way to act with anyone you have serious intentions with.” I said angrily.

“What was I suppose to do?” asked Phil in fake frustration.

“That's not the question now,” I answered, “The question now is what you should do. And for this I have to show you another part of the house.” I summed up, and led him to the door.



*The birds (unlike the fish)
are not seduced anymore by the
breadcrumbs
that the man spreads for them –
they know his steps from above*



The 101st Kilometer

One bright morning the phone rang. On the other side of the line I heard a low deep voice.

“Hi Dalit, it's Gadi.”

“Gadi who?” I asked, trying to go over my head, unsuccessfully, over the names of all my acquaintances and those who wished to become my acquaintances.

“Gadi, don't you remember?! We spoke on the phone and you asked me to send you a picture of myself on Facebook.”

“Just a second...” I said, and went to the computer. In front of my eyes appeared the picture of Gadi. I quickly returned to the man holding on the line, and my voice tone changed at once, “Hi, Gadi.”

“Hi,” replied Gadi in the same tone.

“Amazing,” I told him when I went over his personal details in the computer. “All your data matches mine perfectly. You are also divorced with three children the same age as my children, and more importantly, your looks and voice match the man I was asking for.”

“I think we should meet,” said Gadi, and I agreed. Three hours before our date I began to get ready. My heart was pounding strongly. I took deep breaths to calm down. My body filled with air that overflowed my organs, as if my lungs never had a limit. I was optimistic like never before. I closed my eyes and spread my hands to the sides, and as though they grew wings they made me lighter, until I felt like I was walking on air.

All hundred dates I had had during the 18 years since I was separated from my husband, who became religious, passed in front of my eyes, like a multi-car train passing through and getting away without stopping for me at the station.

I was surprised when we met halfway.

Gadi matched each and every one of my expectations until I started believing he was created especially for me.

I told him I was excited and Gadi said, "It's mutual."

I smiled and asked, "Where are we going?"

and Gadi replied "Surprise."

After a few minutes' drive we reached a coffee shop I didn't know. It was called "The Station" and was surrounded with blooming plants, with an open courtyard, and outside tables wrapped with red tablecloths, with lit candles in the middle.

The atmosphere was pastoral, the music playing in the background was like a soundtrack composed especially for us.

The communication between us flowed, as well as the drinks and the good food served at our table.

Gadi and I sat for 3 hours, talking and laughing. We both had a feeling that the connection between us was strong and meaningful. With each moment's passing my gut feeling grew strong that Gadi would be my husband.

For 7 months since we first met at "The Station," we kept on seeing each other and never interest or excitement about each other.

When my birthday arrived, Gadi invited me to a

Dalya Tamir

dinner in “The 101st Kilometer.” As we sat at the table, Gadi took my hand and asked, “Dalit, will you be my wife?”

Like a dreamer having trouble waking up, I looked at him and asked “What?”

“Will you marry me, Dalit?” Gadi repeated.

I jumped at my man, diamonds sparkling in my eyes. “Wow,” I said crying, “I can't believe it, a hundred dates I've had, and you are the hundred and first. And I love you very much Gadi, and I will be happy to be your wife and share my life with you. My Gadi.”



*All birds have wings –
but not all birds can fly*



Epilogue

If women would want like men – shops would go out of business. Streets would be washed in lust. Men would not have to woo women.

If women would want like men, men would not have to fall in love to have sex.

The only thing a hungry man wants to know is where, “my place or yours?”

A woman says no to the man, and the man is intrigued, he wants her, he woos her, he spoils her, buys her a present. But if women would want like men – shops would go out of business.

If women would want like men, there would be no resistance. There would be no tension, there would be no attraction.

Dates In The City

“I need my time. I need to fall in love with you.”

A truly serious man says to the woman, “Take your time.”

A woman is like prey. She needs to know that to defend herself.

Even if I'm attracted to you, I can hold myself. Most men can hold until the second or third date, max. They are impatient. They are always ready.

The man's strength is not in the nature he conquers.

They want in the morning, they want at noon, they want in the evening. They want at the wedding day, even during mourning they want.

It's so good that women don't want like men, otherwise the shops would go out of business, and otherwise there would be no love in the world.

"...Dan leaned over, put his arms around my neck, pulled me back towards him and tried to embrace me tightly. "Oh ... what is it?" I was amazed, "I'm not ready." "So you'll be ready for it, because I want to show you something beautiful, something you've never seen before..."

Dates in the City

A Must-Read for Women Seeking Men and Men Who Want to Know What Women Really Think

By Dalya Tamir

In an honest collection of short stories, author Dalya Tamir presents an honest portrayal of the world of online dating following divorce, and the search for a second chance at love. Each story, explores an aspect of dating from the author's true-life experiences including the lies – both big and small, the games and the coded language that reveals what dozens of men really want when they hunt online for true love. The result is a fascinating book that is, both funny and poignant.

The book gives the reader a glimpse into the world of men, down to their most basic instincts, hopes and desires.

Following her divorce, Dalya Tamir went on nearly 100 dates over a period of almost 15 years. Her experiences with men proved to be at times funny, moving, surprising, disappointing, and often astonishing.

Dalya has gathered these stories in a unique collection that enable a thought-provoking exposé of the world of dating, single life, and the fascinating, yet exhausting, search for Mister Right.

Dates in the City is a must-read for anyone trying to survive the endless treadmill of dating, or those starting again following a, break-up or divorce.



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