

## A Golem for Me

By Larry Lefkowitz

Why did I build a golem?

Because a good (human) man is hard to find. Harder when you reach thirty-five. Yes, a young lady of 35, if that constitutes a young lady. A point where worries turn to panic. I was fed up with all the flesh fetishers and nudnik nerds that had panoplied my life. I felt like I was in a movie written by Nora Ephron, though she never had to build a golem because she was married three times.

I started to research how to build a golem. I knew zilch about how to build a golem. Only how to meet them. A joke this. Incidentally, some of my swains rejected me because they claimed my sense of humor was too “superficial.” They preferred “Seinfeld” and “Friends” over Amy Schumer.

I boned up on golem historiography. The Golem of Prague was created in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Rabbi Loew who created a golem out of clay from the banks of the Vltava River. Others before him had tried to create golems. Two rabbis tried their hands but only managed to produce a very small calf, which they ate. I wouldn’t want to create a golem calf. I’m a veggie. Became a vegetarian cause I thought it would help me to meet the right guy in a veggie-support group. At meetings we ate organic seaweed. I couldn’t get the green off my teeth for two days afterward. Rabbi Shlomo ben Gabriol created a woman golem, apparently to do housework in the days before robot vacuum cleaners.

My golem would be without excessive body hair – my last loser was hirsute. I do not subscribe to the thesis that cavemen were the sexiest men in history. My hairy guy was not a problem in itself, but given his other personality attributes, I associate it with him. And my golem would not be bald. A balding loser in my past was obsessive about my hair – wanted it worn always long. He would move his chubby fingers in, thru, and under my hair, murmuring “Delilah.” In short, a long hair fetisher. Maybe because he wasn’t able to tie it in a Samurai-style knot, then the fashion among men approaching middle-

age. Another guy's hair was done up in dreadlocks, in his case well-named as I dreaded to see his locks after my first glimpse of them. He looked like somebody threw a plate of spaghetti over him. He failed to grasp my opening remark, "Where's the parmigiano?" I followed it up by mocking him as "My Medusa." He didn't have a clue. No, he wanted me to be his permanent dreadlocks braider. Said his last ditched him because of his hair. Now you understand why I preferred to create my own soul mate, assuming a golem has a soul. Hopefully, mine would.

In some versions of the legend, the golem was made of mud, not clay. In Cynthia Ozick's novel, a woman creates a female golem out of the dirt of her flowerpots. Because of my childhood trauma resulting from getting poison-ivy every summer, I avoided plants of any type. Clay was less messy to work with. Clay reminds me of Clay Epstein, a would-be suitor who lived up to his first name, and though he was, briefly, putty in my hands, he may have been the subconscious inspiration for my idea to build a golem.

Enough of golemic history. It was time for me to get to work on my baby. I took a Barbie male doll (one can hope) and a butter knife and Play-Doh and began to mold a clay imitation the size of a man. Ok, he didn't look like the Barbie doll, closer to the Golem of Prague but still an improvement on my dates. I repeated some incantations, variations of "Arise, Golem," and "Come to me, baby," and the protective incantation "You may be bigger, but I'm smarter."

To my amazement, the clay started to smoke (I stopped smoking, finally, two years ago) and to heat dull red (like my lipstick shade, "Indigo Rouge."), then a brighter red ("Blatant Cherry"), then cooling, turned an orange color ("Tangerine Joy"), and then dulled to something close to skin color. Clay had become flesh. The man then sprouted hair and a nose, eyes, lips.

I was proud of myself. Love at first sight? Not at my age, but it/he definitely had possibilities. I planted a kiss on its cool lips. The chest of the golem started to heave slowly. Not with desire, with life. His lips parted and a deep sigh issued from him. The eyes opened, at first unseeing, then seeing. Me. He stared at me blankly. I seized the opportunity and pirouetted to give him the benefit of my still lithe (relatively speaking) form.

As he was naked, I decided to test him further. I became naked. The golem did not react. Nu, I said, taking his hand and putting it on my breast. He removed it as if it had touched a flame. I gave him another kiss, more French than the first one. His face took on a frightened look.

Miffed, I told him that I wasn't proposing marriage.

His visage took on a puzzled expression.

I was patient with him, a quality I had developed over the years on countless blind dates. Slowly he came around and we reached a modus vivendi. But his face I hadn't sculpted very well. In my ceramics class face-mugs were my weakness. My teacher complained that I was hopeless. I think he said that because I resisted his efforts to mold me. My golem's face made me feel like the Bride of Frankenstein, like in the old movie. His personality turned out to be better than ninety percent of my dates, but I couldn't look at him over my breakfast frozen yogurt without feeling I was about to vomit. Reluctantly, I had to destroy him, or it, since "it" wasn't exactly a "he" yet. Actually, I didn't have to destroy him, he destroyed himself when I began to sing to him, "Killing Me Softly." I have a terrible singing voice, am persona non grata at karaoke groups. In the school choir I was forbidden to sing. I had to mouth everything; they simply needed bodies. Which brings me back to the golem. By the time I finished the first three lines of "Killing Me Softly", he was ashes to ashes.

My second golem was more promising. But he had an obsession. He wanted to teach me Yiddish. I am bad at languages. One of my "hopefuls" (the guy, not the golem) was a linguist. In the end, we didn't speak the same language. This second golem actually rejected me. He began to rain Yiddish curses on me when I refused to learn Yiddish. The *shayna maidel* ("pretty girl") stage was over. He had the chutzpah to call me a golem. That did it. I finished him off by singing, "Killing Me Softly," which caused him to collapse on the floor, writhing in torment briefly before he turned to ashes. As it was Winter, I thought about using him on the front steps to prevent me from slipping on the ice. But no, it seemed somehow irreverent. I poured him down the garbage disposal.

Third golem. Bingo! He looked like Brad Pitt on a bad day, but still better than my past dates on a good day. And he liked me from moment one. Called me “Esther” and began praising me with quotations from the Song of Songs. I knew he was the one. We were married. He amazed the rabbi with his knowledge of the wedding ceremony and even more with his breaking the glass with his foot into splinters. “Samson,” the rabbi beamed. He carried me over the threshold as if I was a feather, but when he wanted to honeymoon in Prague, I began to worry.