

I dated a robot

The experts and futurists are saying it's inevitable that human beings will wind up having "relationships" with robots—dating, sex, love, the works. The idea is really catching on. I always listen to the experts, so I decided I ought to go on a date with a robot and see what it might lead to.

My first problem was, I don't have a robot and can't afford to buy one. Nor can I rent one at Home Depot. Still, when all is said and done, what is a robot but a piece of fancy machinery? All I had to do was to select a machine or gadget that I already had and let it serve as a robot.

I finally picked my toaster oven. My bicycle is too big to be wheeled comfortably into a movie theater, and I have hurled too many harsh words at my computer even to ask it to dinner and a movie. The air conditioner is much too heavy.

"Elsie," I said to my toaster oven—a date really ought to have a name—"what would you say to dinner and a movie tonight?" Silence meaning consent, I ran upstairs to trim my beard and change into a clean T-shirt.

We went to the movie first. There aren't many theaters around here and the selection of films is rather small, so we had to settle for something called "Galactic Superhero Jidrools," starring, I think, Harry Reid.

I didn't think I'd have to buy a separate ticket for Elsie, but the guy stopped me at the door. "Why are you bringing that into the theater?" he said. "You won't allowed to plug it in!"

"I'm not going to plug her in," I said. "It would be the height of bad manners. After all, she's my date. I brought her here to see the movie."

Would you believe it? They made me pay! Well, she was taking up a seat that they could've sold to somebody else, so perhaps it was only right that I should pay for it. I settled her into the seat, and after the commercials and the previews, etc., I put my arm around her. Unlike some other dates I've had, she didn't object.

After the movie we went to our favorite Chinese restaurant. Well, my favorite: Elsie hadn't been out before. As a toaster oven, of course, she has extensive experience with food. But we never put Chinese food from the restaurant into the toaster oven, so I reckoned it would make a nice change for her.

I got a lot of funny looks while they were seating me and Elsie, and then some college kid came over the wait on us.

"Uh, is that your toaster oven, man?" he wondered.

"It is my date, sir," I replied, a bit annoyed. "And this is not an 'it,' but a 'she.' Her name is Elsie, and she is all woman—or is it wimmyn? I can't keep track of all the new terms. But she is every bit as much a woman as I am." I stared him down, but I needn't have bothered. He said nothing about my beard.

"Whatever you say, sister. Do you wish to order now?"

"I think Elsie would like an appetizer. What will you have, sweetheart?"

I was getting into the spirit of this caper. By and by, when Elsie didn't answer, I got all huffy. "You've offended her!" I said. "I demand you apologize at once!"

"What? Apologize to a toa—"

"I'm warning you! Don't come any closer to misgendering my date and projecting microaggressions into my safe space."

He couldn't take that, practically curled up like a sowbug

when he bowed to Elsie and offered profuse apologies for his oafish and biggited behavior. "Elsie would like for us to share a pu-pu platter," I concluded.

To make a long story short, I had to eat all the food and I was feeling awfully shaky by the time we got up to go home. I almost fell over when I picked up Elsie and carried her up the driveway.

And my wife was waiting for me at the door.

"Where the dickens have you been with that toaster oven?" she inquired (which is not putting it strongly enough). "How many of your screws are loose? What have you been up to?"

I leave the rest of this awkward scene to the reader's imagination.

I have discussed these topics, and others, on my blog, <http://leeduigon.com>, throughout the week. Please stop by and read! All it takes is just one click to get you there.

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