

Dear Sherry

Dear Sherry, I feel compelled to tell you why I wrote my story in March. First, journalistically, the issue of women (and men, for that matter) who feel wronged by the family courts is important and timely. In a highly competitive market, there is a reason that your mother's new book is causing such a stir among major media outlets. Many women identify with the subject, either from experience or from fear of the injustice that your mother writes about. The Kafkaesque experience is one that always stirs the imagination.

Although I had never met your mother before March, and knew nothing about her until her publisher contacted me about doing a story in advance of the book's debut, the fact that your mother's personal story involves the Jewish community made it especially meaningful to *The Jewish Voice* and, from the feedback I've received, to many of our readers. Your mother's story is that of a Jewish woman longing to see her only child whom she lost to the Brooklyn court system. It may well be an issue that Jewish publications throughout the country—and maybe even the world—will

latch onto.

I've done my story. Barring any changes, I don't see what more I have to write about, unless outlets such as "60 Minutes," which has expressed interest in the issue and your mother's book, or the Congressional investigation that I understand may be in the offing, finds something new.

The salient fact, it seems to me, is that your mother has never been allowed to see you since 1989—a fact sufficient to make any parent's blood run cold, a fact that makes the heart ache for you and her. Every woman needs her mother, needs a relationship of some sort with her mother, in order to be whole. We can make fun of our mothers, say they drive us nuts, and admit that sometimes no one can make us as angry, but the bottom line is, on some level, all women need their mothers, and you are no different. When a mother has been denied to a child through death or some other cause, the child usually invents a fantasy mother. In this case, you have a real one who, from all the evidence, is aching to reconcile with you.

I'm not suggesting that the two of you would ever be able to take over where you

left off almost 20 years ago. Your relationship, almost by definition, would be very different, but it could be no less wonderful.

Your Aunt Frima felt that way. I know she did because she and your uncle told me she ached to have a relationship with her mother. Frima wrote a letter to her mother, which was sent to me, which shows how much Frima wanted that relationship. Frima now says she made up the facts she practically weeps over in that letter. Frankly, I don't believe the letter is a fake.

I will be sending you that letter because I think you have a right to it. It's all about you.

I told your Aunt Frima that since she knows firsthand what it is like to go through adulthood without a relationship with her mother,

she (Frima), who says she loves you, should prove it by doing everything she can to bring you and your mother together. I don't know if she can or will, but she should. It would be a way for Frima to do something for the mother she says she loved and now can never see again.

But, Sherry, you are no longer a little girl in need of courts, grown-ups, or anyone else to tell you what to do. You are a beautiful, accomplished, ferociously bright young woman, forced to grow up without your mother.

The two of you lost your childhood. Don't lose your adulthood to pride or someone else's opinion.

For whatever it's worth, I care very much about you, and I would like only to help.

Susan L. Rosenbluth

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