Dear Alice,

Recently I responded to a personal ad and met a woman who is in her 30s. (I am 20.) We had a few conversations over the phone and we planned to meet to "fulfill some fantasies." She said she likes men, and she only does this kind of stuff once a while. I am sexually inexperienced, but I want to explore something. Do you know what I should expect when we meet for the first time? Should I bring condoms along?

? Excited but worried

P.S. She is married, and she and her husband often look for some erotic good times through personals.

Answer

Dear Excited but worried,

It can be both fun and scary to venture into the unknown as you explore your sexuality. While you're looking forward to this encounter, it's unclear whether either of you has shared your specific desires and boundaries. Without talking through these issues beforehand, it's difficult to know what to expect of the experience.

To answer your other question regarding condoms ? yes, it's always a good idea to bring condoms along when you're expecting any sort of sexual contact. Check out the Related Q&As below for more information on condoms and condom shopping. You may also want to bring along other barrier supplies, like dental dams, if you think you may have oral sex.

To help you get a better grasp on what to expect, you might want to think more about what you want and what you don't want. Then, you can have a frank talk with the woman before you meet to figure out what she's thinking and to see if this jives with your own interests. You mentioned fulfillment of fantasies ? what type of fantasies? Did the woman tell you? Did you ask? Are any sexual fantasies off-limits or uncomfortable for you? What's her husband's role in this encounter, if any? Do you have preferences about this?

Based on your answers to these questions and more, you can set ground rules that will help define and guide the encounter on your terms. The woman that you're meeting probably has her own vision, too. Sharing these ideas with each other could make the experience more enjoyable for both of you.
One other thing to remember when dealing with personal ads is the possibility of deception and disappointment. You probably realize that people who write personal ads aren't always totally honest in their descriptions of themselves. For this reason, you would be wise to keep your guard up, especially before you actually meet this woman. And, when you decide to meet for the first time, the more public and familiar, the safer. You may also want to think about keeping personal information (e.g., your last name, address, profession, etc.) private until you're sure that there's no foul play involved.

By keeping your wits about you and spelling out your own curiosities and limits, you may feel better about talking through and agreeing on mutual expectations and boundaries with others. Thinking more about this should help prepare you for enjoyable escapades while protecting you from possible emotional angst and physical harm.

Alice!
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