

A NEW YORK CHRISTMAS

It's nearly a week before Christmas, and New York is magical with holiday lights hanging over the avenues like strings of shimmering diamond necklaces. Storefront windows along Fifth Avenue are dressed with oversized ornaments and mannequins dressed as Santa's helpers. People are loaded down with shopping bags and rushing about waiting for the dazzling light show projected against the walls at Saks.

I'm on a first date and we just finished dinner at a cute French bistro in the mid-fifties and decide to walk a bit. We nudge our way past the rushing masses and find a spot at the southwest corner of Rockefeller Center to admire the magnificent 75-foot Norway spruce Christmas tree. With its thousands of twinkling lights, it is more magnificent in person than any NBC-TV special can ever show. He reaches for my hand and the orchestra swells in my head. It is a movie moment. The smoky aroma of chestnuts roasting on the coals of the nearby street carts wafts past us as we share our first kiss.

It's been 35 years since that day and every year I drag my husband into the city to stand in that very spot where our magic began. He begrudgingly indulges my flare for the romantic, never admitting that he enjoys our annual ritual just as much as I do. As if on cue, the snow starts to lightly fall from the sky as he takes my hand and pulls me close. The sound system from the ice skating rink below is playing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." As we cuddle and watch the skaters, it is in that moment I realize that there's no better place to be at Christmas time than my beloved New York City. Happy Holidays!