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SAVAGE LOVE

PANNIES AND FORTIES
 BY DAN SAVAGE

I am an 18-year-old pansexual girl. I'm currently in a relationship with a guy. He is a bit younger, though mature for his age. We get along great, our friends like us together, yada yada yada. He wants to do the waiting until marriage thing for sex. I'm cool with that, less pressure in the relationship. He wants to do this for religious reasons, which I mostly agree with. We met in youth group, after all. Here is the real kink. I lost the big V about a year ago. He knows about that, isn't happy about it ('cause he hasn't), but is willing to date me anyway.

What hasn't really come up is the subject of porn and masturbation. Back to the religious reasons: He doesn't do either (or won't fess up to them) and doesn't approve. I, however, do both. Especially since my breakup (and thus no more sex) last year, I've come to rely on masturbating to take care of my sexual needs. The porn I am willing to forgo, but I don't want to give up pleasuring myself. This guy knows nothing. He has talked about how we ought to "keep ourselves pure." (My thoughts on purity: I've already screwed that up!) Is there any good way to communicate to him that I'm not going to give up masturbating without him going crazy? It took long enough just to show him I wasn't the spawn of Satan because I like girls as much as I like guys. Should I just go along with his standards and try giving up masturbation? Or should I not tell him anything about what I do in the privacy of my own bedroom?

Mismatched On Sex

The best way to communicate to this boy that you aren't gonna give up masturbation is to break the fuck up with him, MOS. Your boyfriend is essentially forcing you to pick between him or masturbation, and the choice is obvious: Masturbation is a pleasurable friend that doesn't judge you or shame you, and your boyfriend is an unpleasant, sex-negative, controlling, judgmental scold.

DTMFA.

Then after you've enjoyed a few dozen celebratory guilt-free orgasms, MOS, ask yourself why you wasted even two minutes of your precious pansexual time on a guy like him, i.e., someone with whom you're clearly not sexually compatible. You're pansexual! Somewhat sexually experienced! You masturbate! You enjoy porn! I could understand you dating a guy who was a virgin and wanted to remain sexually inactive for now—for religious reasons or otherwise—but dating someone you had to talk out of seeing you as the spawn of Satan? Dating someone you have to lie to about something as common and healthy as masturbation? Not worth it, MOS, not in the short run, not in the long run. You want to be with someone who likes you and wants to be with you, and this boy doesn't like you. Why on earth do you like him?

Finally: I hope that parenthetical in your second paragraph was meant sarcastically. But just in case: Being sexually active does not make you "impure." I think you know that, MOS, but I want you to get out of this relationship while you still believe it.

I'm a 24-year-old straight male and I'm unattractive. Physically I'm not bad (not hot, but not ugly), but sadly, I've suffered from extreme depression all my life. I've gotten help, and it's made me a little better, to the point where I'm functional. Now here's my issue: Low self-esteem and lethargy aren't exactly the best things for attracting the opposite sex. My sex life is poor, and my love life is nonexistent. I've never felt romantic chemistry with a woman ever, and I'm honestly losing any faith that it will ever happen. I've always tried to respect women, but my inability to attract them sometimes leaves me feeling resentful. I don't want to become a bitter men's rights activist, so I'm wondering if you have any advice.

Unattractive Guy Longingly Years

Did you see Louis C.K.'s most recent comedy special? He does this bit about schlumpy guys—guys like him—who don't have much luck with women when they're young. "I like getting older," he says, "because for me, the kind of guy I am, getting older makes my life better. My sex life? Way better at 45... I'd like to make one of those 'It Gets Better' ads for dumpy young guys. We could use a little help, a little encouragement." Louis C.K.'s advice for you: "Stay relatively employed and washed; you're going to be amazing in your 40s. You're going to be the branch that she can grab before she hits the ground. It's going to be so great. It just takes time for her circumstances to match your looks. When real shit matters, you're going to be the sexiest motherfucker in the world."

My advice for you: Keep working on your depression, throw yourself into nonsexual pursuits that you enjoy, find a job you like and build a career, locate and patronize (and overtly) an independent sex worker (which can help you learn to interact with women), and don't allow bitterness to ruin you for all those women you're gonna get with in your 40s.

What is the lesbian synonym for twink?

Can't Ask Lesbian Friends

I tossed your question to the wolves who follow me on Twitter, CALF, and got a few suggestions: twyke, dykelet, and Bieber. But the term of art is "baby dyke."

Love you, Dan, but I expected a little bit more from you in your response to ERR, a restaurant manager who was attempting to advise a "Mexican" employee who was having romantic problems. Unless the word Mexican was used to describe a hardworking, loyal, honest, eager worker, I'm not sure how it was in any way germane to the story. When reading your response, I was surprised you didn't address this with ERR. I'm not sure what being Mexican has to do with this issue at all. On some levels, ERR including it, or you not addressing it, seems to underlie, and subliminally support, some people's predisposed—okay, prejudicial—views. Here's a fun exercise. Replace the word Mexican with the word "black" in ERR's question. Now try Jew. Now try Russian... French... Italian... Thousand Islands? (Kidding, but this is a restaurant we're talking about.) See how the descriptor of the person can change the feel of the story, without it actually being in any way part of it? Care to comment? ¿Por favor?

Tim In Toronto

A lot of immigrants from Mexico—documented and undocumented—work in restaurants in the United States, TIT. Having worked in restaurants myself, and having worked with a lot of Mexican immigrants, I thought the detail was germane for this reason: New or relatively new residents are often baffled by our strange sexual mores, which can include married ladies sleeping with restaurant workers who aren't their husbands. (This never happens in Mexico, of course, because Mexican wives are loyal and honest and eager.) And during my years in the restaurant industry, TIT, I witnessed many decent and kind restaurant managers help their Mexican employees—some of whom were struggling not just with cultural barriers but also with language barriers—navigate the strange and unfamiliar social, political, and sexual mores, norms, and expectations they were encountering in the United States. So the detail struck me as both relevant and benign.

On the Lovecast, why divorce rates are so high among religious conservatives: savagelovecast.com.

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