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SAVAGE LOVE

THE INTERN
BY DAN SAVAGE

I'm having an issue with my boyfriend, and I don't know if I am the crazy, paranoid, controlling party here. We have been together for more than a year and a half. We had troubles early on because he has a low sex drive. It made me very insecure, and I think that's why, at the time, I became extremely jealous of his friendship with his very attractive intern. I fully owned up to my irrational jealousy and decided on my own that it was my responsibility to overcome that. She eventually stopped working with him, and they haven't been in contact for over six months. Fast-forward to the present. On Monday night, I asked my boyfriend what his plans were on Tuesday. (I am studying for law school exams, so I knew I wouldn't have time to spend with him.) Around 8:30 on Tuesday, he texted me and asked how studying was going, and I asked him again what his plans were. He told me he was going to meet an "old coworker" at a bar for birthday drinks. I didn't think twice about it. Then, around 11:30 when I got in bed to relax, I saw on my Instagram feed that his old intern posted a photo of her birthday party at the bar. I became extremely upset, because instead of being up front and saying he was meeting HER for her birthday, he was intentionally ambiguous. I confronted him when he got home, and he admitted to being ambiguous to avoid a "freak-out." I told him that if he'd been up front with me, I would have been jealous but I would have also been mindful of my toxic feelings and not projected them onto him. I told him that as a result of how he handled it, I feel worse, I feel lied to, and I feel insecure. He acted like I was being ridiculous. He insisted it was a last-minute invite and he didn't want to cause any drama. We went to sleep, and I woke up feeling pretty much over it. But when he got into the shower, I looked at his phone and saw that she had actually invited him on Monday afternoon. So he lied to me when I asked him what his plans were on Tuesday, and he lied to me again when he said it was a last-minute invite. I am not upset with him for getting drinks with her—most of his friends are female and I NEVER feel jealous about them. I have a weird tic about this girl, though, and I've owned up to it. I don't want to control him, but I feel like I can't trust him now. Up until now, I've never once suspected him of being dishonest.

Am I Crazy?

Sex months? Interesting typo.

There's another way to read your boyfriend's ambiguity/obfuscation/dishonesty about Tuesday night: equal parts considerate and self-serving. Your boyfriend knew you had to study, he knew his ex-intern is a sore subject/weird tic, and by opting for ambiguity he allowed you to focus on your studies. So that was maybe kind of considerate of him. And since one person's "mindful of my toxic feelings" and "handling it" is another person's "freak-out" and "invasion of privacy," AIC, your boyfriend opted for ambiguousness/deceit-by-omission to avoid drama. And perhaps that was self-serving of him.

Want to prove to your boyfriend that he didn't need to lie to you about spending time with his ex-intern? Retroactively bestow your blessing on Tuesday night's birthday drinks and stop raking him over the coals for his thoroughly explicable actions. (They're so explicable, I just explicated the shit out of them.) Yes, he lied to you. But unless you're made of marshmallow fluff and unicorn farts, AIC, you've lied to him once or twice over the last year and a half. Even the "most honest" people on earth tell the odd harmless, self-serving white lie once in a while. If you want your relationship to last, AIC, you roll your eyes at the odd HSSW lie and move on. If you want your relationship to end, you do exactly what you're doing.

If your boyfriend hasn't given you some other reason(s) to believe he's cheating with his ex-intern or anyone else, AIC, drop the Tuesday night/birthday drinks subject. I would also advise you to apologize to your boyfriend for having "looked at his phone" while he was in the shower, which is both an asshole move and, yes, a sign that you might be the crazy, paranoid, and controlling one in this relationship. And for the sake of your relationship—for the sake of fuck—stop following the ex-intern on Instagram.

Finally, AIC, you mention mismatched sex drives. As several commenters pointed out on my blog, where your letter appeared as the Savage Love Letter of the Day, mismatched sex drives are usually a bad sign. You talk about the libido issue in the past tense, so perhaps it's not a problem anymore. But if the problem was resolved in a way that left you feeling neglected, insecure, and frustrated, it wasn't resolved and it constitutes a much bigger threat to your relationship than that ex-intern.

I'm a 35-year-old man in a serious relationship—the best I've ever been in—with a girl I'll likely marry. I'm happy with monogamy, aside from one aspect: I have a foot fetish that's getting stronger with age and I can't bear the thought of never sucking another girl's toes again. I should note that my girlfriend is more than happy to shove her feet in my mouth, but I fantasize almost constantly about other women's feet. I'm tempted to find paid foot-girls, something I've done in the past but never while in a relationship. But that would be cheating, right? I don't think I can bring myself to ask for my girlfriend's blessing, and I'd be shocked if she offered it. What do I do?
Fear Of Missing Out On Feet

You bring yourself to ask, FOM00F, even if you have to drag your ass there. If your girlfriend is sex-positive—if she's not just shoving her feet in your mouth to shut you up—initiate conversations about your kinks (and hers), your sexual history (and hers), and sexual adventures you might want to have with her in the future (and ones she might want to have with you). If she's curious and interested and upbeat during these convos and about your kinks, suggest going to a foot fetish party together—one where you can suck other women's toes and other men can suck hers.

I'm a man who is sexually attracted to trans women. I've been told that if I'm attracted to women, it shouldn't matter what genitals they have. I've also been told that if I like penis, it shouldn't matter if the owner presents as male or female. Am I unfairly fetishizing trans women?
Gain Understanding Into Loving Trans

You're attracted to women, GUILT, some women have penises, and you find penis-having women particularly attractive. If you're not attracted to men with penises and you're not attracted to men like Buck Angel, i.e., trans men with vaginas, then you're not attracted to men generally, cock or no cock. So long as you can state your preferences in a way that doesn't dehumanize the people you are attracted to or denigrate the people you aren't attracted to, GUILT, you have nothing to feel self-conscious or guilty about.

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