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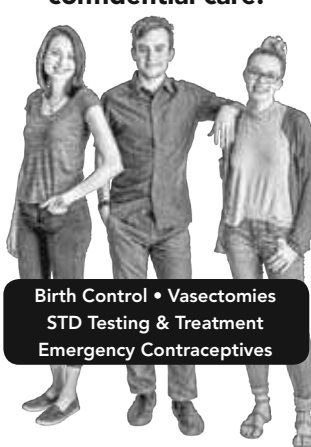
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SAVAGE LOVE **RESTLESS**
 BY DAN SAVAGE

I'm a 31-year-old gay male. I've been with my fiancé for three years, and we are getting married in the fall. I've got a question about initiating sex in my sleep—I read somewhere that "sexsomnia" is the "medical" term, but maybe the internet invented that? According to my fiancé, I have initiated or performed some kind of sex act in the middle of the night and then gone right back to sleep. The next day, I don't remember anything. This freaks me out for a couple of reasons: My body doing things without my mind being in control is concerning enough, but it feels kinda rapey, since I doubt I'm capable of hearing "no" in this state. My fiancé doesn't feel that way; he finds it sexy. The other thing—and maybe I shouldn't have read so much Freud and Jung in college—is that I'm worried my body is acting out desires that my conscious mind doesn't want to acknowledge. According to my fiancé, the last time I did stuff in my sleep, I rimmed him and told him how much I wanted to fuck him. Rimming isn't a typical part of our sex life (although I'd like it to be), and my fiancé has never bottomed for anyone (I've topped guys in prior relationships, but in our relationship I've only bottomed). Is my body doing things that my mind won't admit it wants to do? Is there a way to prevent it from happening?

Sexsomnia Hoping Eventually Eager Trusts Stop

Sexsomnia is a real and sometimes troubling phenomenon, SHEETS, and not something the internet made up like Pizzagate or Sean Spicer. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine says sexsomnia is real—a real clinical condition—but they prefer the fancier, more "medical" sounding name: sleep related abnormal sexual behaviors. Dr. Michel Cramer Bornemann, a lead researcher at Sleep Forensics Associates (sleepforensicmedicine.org), describes sexsomnia as "sleepwalking-like behaviors that have sexualized attributes." And sleep-rimming your delighted fiancé definitely counts.

"Sexsomnia may be expressed as loud, obscene vocalizations from sleep [that are typically uncharacteristic of the individual while awake], prolonged or violent masturbation, inappropriate touch upon the genitals, buttocks, and breast of a bed partner, and initiation of sexual intercourse," said Dr. Bornemann. "The vast majority of sleep disorders are not reflective of a significant underlying psychiatric condition."

So your unconscious, late-night gropings/initiations/rimmings don't mean you secretly desire to be an ass-eating top. And there's no need to drag poor Sigmund or Carl into this, SHEETS, since you're not doing anything in your sleep that you don't desire to do wide awake. You wanna rim your fiancé, you've topped other guys and would probably like to top this one too—so neither of the examples you cite qualify as desires your "conscious mind doesn't want to acknowledge." [Unless you wrote me in your sleep.] Like all sleep disorders, sexsomnia is just something that happens to a very small number of people, SHEETS, there's no need to endow it with deeper meaning. Take it away, Dr. Bornemann...

"The brain is made of approximately 100 billion neurons, or electrical connections that allow effective communication between brain subunits. As with all electrical systems, errors in transmission may occur—these are called 'switching errors.' In sleep, switching errors may activate previously quiescent areas of the brain while other areas remain off-line. In sleep-related behaviors, it is thought that deep-seated subunits near the sleep-wake generating center become triggered, which activate primal automatic behaviors. Simply stated, electrical switching errors in sleep may unleash the animal that actually lies within us all—sometimes to an extent that may have unintended criminal or forensics implications."

In most cases, sexsomnia will hump a pillow or jerk themselves off. The sexsomnia who tend to make the news—the ones we hear about—are the "unintended criminals" Dr. Bornemann alluded to, i.e., people who've sexually assaulted someone while asleep. Luckily for you, SHEETS, your fiancé is okay with your "primal automatic behaviors."

But you might wanna watch Sleepwalk with Me, an autobiographical film by Mike Birbiglia, a comedian with a sleep disorder. Birbiglia wasn't initiating sex in his sleep—he was jumping out of windows. A danger to himself and others, he sought treatment and is no longer jumping out of windows in his sleep. You're not a danger to yourself or others currently, SHEETS, but if you got a new partner or your current partner's feelings about surprise, middle-of-the-night rimjobs were to change, you could be a danger. So you should chat with a doctor now about drugs and/or other interventions.

"My catch-all advice is to read this book called The Promise of Sleep by Dr. William C. Dement," said Birbiglia in an e-mail after I shared your letter with him. "He's sort of the father of sleep medicine. He talks about sleep hygiene extensively, i.e., how to have the best night's sleep possible by avoiding TV, eating heavily, drinking, etc., a few hours before bed. I know this isn't exactly an answer to SHEET's specific question, but getting a better night's sleep could probably help him across the board in ways that he doesn't even realize."

My boyfriend wants to visit a private gay sex dungeon in Europe this summer but we want to play only with each other. Any tips on getting to play in an actual dungeon without having to put out for the guy whose dungeon it is?

Requests A Curious Kinkster

Put Berlin on your itinerary, RACK, google "SM Apartments" or "Hoist Basements," break out your credit card, splurge, and send pics.

I'm a straight married male. My wife has a very close male FRIEND who happens to be in a poly marriage. Recently, my wife said she would like us to be able to date others, have sex, romance, etc., but still remain a married couple. She specifically wants to date her friend. I am struggling. I am not closed off to having a conversation about nonmonogamy, but I struggle with the thought of her having a boyfriend. I want to be able to give this to her, but I feel like my mind and body are not letting me. Any advice is so much appreciated.

Help Understanding Spouse's Blunt And New Demand

"Introducing nonmonogamy into an existing monogamous relationship can be tough, especially when it wasn't your idea," said Cunning Minx, host of the Polyamory Weekly podcast, who has been providing poly news, advice, and insights to the masses since 2005 at polyweekly.com. "It's even more stressful when there is a potential partner waiting in the wings! Yikes!"

While Minx is a poly activist and advocate, HUSBAND, she thinks both parties need to be on the same page before going poly. And before you take that step—if you take that step—Minx thinks you need to ask yourself some questions. "HUSBAND should do a fear inventory," said Minx. "What is he afraid of? What would it mean to him if his wife had a boyfriend? What if she wanted to love a woman—does the penis make a difference? If so, why? Then he should sit with his wife and take stock of the health of their current relationship."

You can say no to opening up your marriage, HUSBAND, but your wife may decide she wants out of the marriage if no is the answer—basically, this is a circumstance where one of you is going to have to pay a pretty steep price of admission. Either you'll have to accept polyamory, or your wife will have to drop it. There isn't really a middle ground here—or is there?

"It's perfectly acceptable for HUSBAND to self-identify as monogamous while his wife practices polyamory," said Minx. "It's a difficult path, and will require a high level of internal security and self-awareness on his part, but ultimately your self-identity is your own decision."

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