Easy Come, Easy Go

Anonymous craved steamy, uncomplicated sex—until she actually had it.

September 1, 2005 By Anonymous Staff

Ever since my diagnosis in 1996, I've wanted to tell a guy I have HIV and have him shrug, smile—and rip my clothes off with his teeth. I've often fantasized about how uncomplicated and hot sex was before HIV—no conversations about retroviruses, pills, longevity, the odds of contagion. No latex, no hesitation, no weirdness, no fear.

Not long ago, after a heart wrencher of a breakup, I found myself in a club filled with swirling clouds of dry ice, cringing at being a positive, heterosexual white woman on the loose in the burbs of New Jersey—again. I was about to flee when I spied a cute guy in a ski hat, alone. He smiled at me, came over and introduced himself. He was gentle and polite—and insisted I take his number. Five days later, I called.

Over the next two weeks of dating, I reveled in the carefree joys of our new relationship—a guy and a girl, falling hard for each other. But when my new man alluded to where he'd take me on our honeymoon (camping—my dream!) and sweetly asked why I wouldn't have sex with him, I knew the time had come to disclose. I dreaded deflating his hopes, but my rule is the sooner, the better—it hurts everyone less.

We'd gotten as far as heavy petting, so I told him as we lay entwined on his bed. He looked stricken, jumped up, stuffed himself into his ski coat and hat and said he was going out for a smoke. I lay alone, strangely grateful for his absence and being spared the barrage of questions that usually follow the Big Revelation. But as I stood up to get dressed, he burst through the door, hugged me and threw me on the bed.

"I don't care," he announced.

I was stunned. What, exactly, did "I don't care" mean? Did it mean he didn't care about my having HIV? Or his getting it? There wasn't much time to think about it: He was ripping my clothes off with his teeth.

The long-dreamed-of unbridled lovemaking wasn't very good—it was clear that we were both feigning wild abandon. Afterward, we lay side by side, staring at the ceiling. Instead of the happiness I'd hoped would flood my heart, I felt as if something had been taken from me. Without

intending to,

I had given this guy an all-access pass simply because he said he didn't care I had HIV. Sex without the big HIV talk, I realized, seemed horribly shallow. I may hate all the anxious conversation after I disclose, but it gives me time to get to know a guy: Seeing how someone reacts can be very telling. I missed an opportunity to feel close to my lover, and now I felt distant from him. I even felt violated—but couldn't blame him. He'd given me exactly what I'd wished for, and in the heat of the moment, I was glad to take it.

Until I met this guy, I thought that anyone who would go to bed with me without major drama about my HIV would stick around forever. Of course, I'd been naive. My carefree lover called the next day, then two other times—before disappearing altogether. I think it was too much, too soon for both of us. But our encounter taught me a lesson. I'm dating someone new now, and we're tiptoeing through HIV's minefields together, hand in hand. We talk about HIV, share books about it, even make trips to the doctor. We've had sex—wonderful, intimate sex—only a few times. For my new guy's sake—and mine—we're taking it slow.

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