# Sex: Love Among the Ruins

When hospitals become the next sexual playpen

December 1, 1994 By David Feinberg

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This is beginning to sound like a broken record. Once again, David B. Feinberg fails to have sex. Here I am at my local Enema Emporium and Colonoscopy Clinic, St. Vincent's Hospital. Think of St. Vincent's as an exotic island in the Caribbean off the coast of St. Thomas or somewhere in the Bermuda triangle. Alternately, you may view it as the spa in *The Road to Wellville*: A resort designed to reduce sexual desire.

One would expect rampant sexual activity at the hospital for several reasons. The linen service is constantly running out of "bottoms" -- whereas in the real world we have consistent problems finding "tops" (if you don't get the reference, just stop reading and go lie down) -- so young, attractive and sexily underweight gentlemen frequently stroll the corridor hooked up to IVs and infusion pumps, casually displaying their tiny posteriors through their hospital gowns. This can be extremely distracting. And I heard of a woman with TB who was caught turning tricks in the linen closet. (The gift shop newspaper-delivery service marks up items to such an outrageous extent that I understand why she needed to charge.) The woman, regrettably, was removed from the hospital following this incident.

Doctors can be a source of great sexual frustration. I was in love with my surgeon, Charles "Rusty" Scarpel, M.D. He implanted my Port-a-Cath in my chest. He was so beautiful that I heard he once played a surgeon on *General Hospital*. I was told to leave my glasses in my room because small items have a tendency to disappear during the medical procedures. Blind, I was rolled into the operating room as several ominous blurs hovered over me. Dr. Rusty shaved portions of my chest, inciting the blood to rush to my nether regions. In the recovery room I felt his warm hand grip me gently but firmly. I opened my eyes, squinted, and realized my paramour was only the automatic blood pressure machine.

In the hospital, you can always have sex with your roommate. I was fortunate to bounce into three different rooms in my most recent hospital stay. As I was wheeled into the first room (which, regretfully, had no toilet -- a most unfortunate situation for someone with chronic diarrhea -- and also no working phone), I waved hello to my two smug-looking roommates. No wonder, I thought, when in the middle of the night I heard the sensuous sound of my roomies moaning and groaning. When I awoke, the nurse emptied their bedpans.

In my second room (working phone, window bed, bathroom with shower and tub, a lovely view of the quiet side of the street), my roommate had a tendency to watch television continuously. I believe the only way I could have attracted his attention was by actually appearing on *Wheel of Fortune*. My third roommate was a creepy toothless man who, oddly enough, was exactly my age. Even if I felt some attraction toward him, I fear having successfully escaped preadolescence I was too old for him. In any event, I decided having sex with your roommate was equivalent to having sex with your live-in former lover. Extremely inadvisable.

And let's not forget that you could have sex with your visitors -- were it not for the fact that you've already done them all. Why else would they be there? Even so, you may occasionally find yourself attracted to a roommate's visitor. But even if the two of you are able to get away with this (say, by having a quickie while the roommate is in the john or just letting him perform an act of self-abuse as he eagerly looks on), the inevitable gossip will destroy you both.

There is a solution to this quandary -- have sex on another floor. I would personally suggest the AIDS ward, if you aren't already on it. Comb your hair, shave, wear your most revealing gown and go for a stroll. Imagine Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy before they took that swim in the pool. Oh, yes. You'll do just fine.

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