From Across the Crowd... to in His Bed.

A hot hookup with Mr. Man left me feel nothing but respect...and tingles.

October 22, 2018 By JMV

Life on Fire Island becomes routine, a cycle. There's not much to do out there when you work on the island, so you just get used to a more laid-back lifestyle where you have to create your own fun. I lost my job in Manhattan, so after getting offered a job on the island, I went for it. I didn't know where I would fit in quite yet. I was newly sober so not a party boy, but young so not ready to stay at home. I was just trying to find my place. It's funny that sometimes the universe throws things our way, pointing us in the right direction.

There were certain nights that my friend Greg and I would do cocktail drag shows together at Cherry's on the Bay. We would prance and work the floor like it was a runway. We'd pull out our fans and crack them and serve the drinks with style and sass. We would reconvene at the drink service station at the bar and gossip and point out guys we were into. We had a blast together, taking breaks for cigarettes and applying extra layers of bug spray to keep the mosquitoes away and then returning for some more banter at our spot at the bar.

One night, the entertainment was none other than the incomparable Hedda Lettuce, a legendary New York City drag queen known for her comedy and wit. She always drew a crowd. It was wonderful to my wallet. I loved that she brought in super hot guys, too. That was wonderful for something else—or at least it was about to be.

When I saw a beautiful man with piercing eyes, I thought I'd best get to work. "Can I get you something to drink?" He said he was good and thanked me with a smile and it cut right through me. I tingled just from his smile and went back to the bar and told Greg that I called dibs on the man standing between the picnic table and pole across the seated audience.

Some time passed and I did laps around the bar to catch his eye, and I saw it was working so I stopped back again a little while later and asked if I could get him something. He ordered a Diet Coke and I looked at him and said, "You too? Me too!" So we talked a little after I delivered his soda, and the chemistry was there, it burned hot. We decided to meet after I was done and all showered up. And so we sat at that bar lost in conversation despite the loud drag show, drinking our diet sodas.

I felt excited, and he touched my leg and the blood flowed in my loins. I felt the desire to kiss him, and I could feel that he wanted to kiss me. He leaned in, and I felt like everything disappeared for a second and the music even stopped, and when he pulled away and asked me to go home with

him, I stood up and was ready. I guess he could've done without the extra diet soda.

We walked along the boardwalk to his Fire Island share. Flirting, holding hands, ready to feel him, ready to feel him deep in me, when suddenly I stepped in a pile of dog poop masked in the shadows of the trees. It was gross, but that didn't stop us from turning the corner and taking a garden hose to my feet and then heading upstairs.

He stood in front of me, strong and firm. He kissed me and closed the door behind me and we started to strip off our clothes, and we fell onto his bed in heat and rubbed against each other, pleasuring each other in every way we possibly could before actual penetration. He was on top of me, my legs open and we were kissing, and before we knew it, he slipped inside and it felt so good and so primal, but I stopped him. We needed to talk. "What's your status?"

"I'm negative," he said.

"I'm undetectable. Are you on PrEP?" PrEP was still fairly new at the time, being prescribed to HIV-negative men who have sex with men to prevent HIV transmission. He wasn't on it, so I suggested he put on a condom, and he agreed. The sex was still incredible, and we looked at each other with respect afterward.

It was a moment I'll never forget. He looked at me like no one ever has up until that point in summer of 2014. It was full of integrity. I was sober, he was sober, and neither one of us was trying to escape. We were both present. I left that night and was excited, walking with a little pep in my step and I already had a nickname for him: Mr. Man.

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