

P R A C T I C E M A K E S . . .

(A STUDY IN RATIONAL SEX)

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FADE IN:

1. INT. CHEMISTRY LAB - DAY

The cold, efficient blue flame of a Bunsen burner BURNS and RIPPLES.

KEITH (19) stares ahead in shock. He stares for a long time in silence before he can speak. He is well dressed for a college student but not terribly handsome.

KEITH
You're kidding, right?

ANNIE MCKAY (20) looks up from her note taking and shakes her head. She is entirely nonchalant and reasonable. She is not unattractive but has made no effort to look "pretty." She wears glasses, no make-up, and baggy clothes.

Various groups of students, done with their assignment, clean up their lab equipment and head out the door.

KEITH
God, Annie. You have to be joking. I mean, I was just kidding.

ANNIE
Yeah, I know you were. But you were right. "Why not?" And why not us?

KEITH
Annie-

ANNIE
Keith, you were right. You might not have been serious, but you were right. I don't like being a virgin any more than you do.

She turns off the Bunsen burner & throws her well kept three ring binder (labelled "Chem Lab") into her ratty bag. Keith follows suit.

KEITH
Christ. How do I get into these conversations?

2. LAB HALLWAY - DAY

Annie walks down a well-lit corridor, filled with science posters and papers. Keith follows, lugging his briefcase.

ANNIE

I mean, I'm a Sophomore in college for God's sake and I'm still a virgin. My friends in high school lost it at 15.

KEITH

Still-

They weave through the traffic of students getting out of class. There are numerous couples holding hands.

ANNIE

And the first time I have sex, I know I'm going to feel so self-conscious and stupid and nervous about the whole ordeal that I won't enjoy it. I've heard the stories-

KEITH

It's even worse for guys. If I date someone my own age, she'll probably have had three or four boyfriends by now. I'll always have to wonder if they did things better 'cause they've had more practice.

ANNIE

Right, so why not? A class on sex. We have classes about everything else, right? So why not sex? We can teach each other. And we won't feel stupid and afraid 'cause we're both in the same boat.

KEITH

I didn't mean... You are pulling my leg, aren't you? Some prank on the stupid Freshman. Right? You can't be serious about this-

ANNIE

Keith, look at me. Completely serious. Let's do this.

Keith stares at Annie, desperately searching for a trace of mirth in her eyes. There is none. She's serious.

A warm fall day. Keith and Annie stroll down a path framed by well kept lawns and ornate classical buildings.

Some pretty girls pass wearing fairly revealing clothes. Keith can't help but look.

KEITH

Well... I'm... Well, I'm sorry to say it but I'm not really... attracted to you. Y'know?

ANNIE

But it's not like you're gay, right? I mean, that high school girl you told me about-

KEITH

Lucy.

ANNIE

Yeah, the one that dumped you.

KEITH

I wouldn't say dumped-

ANNIE

Yeah, but you dated her for what? Two years? So you are attracted to women.

Two attractive girls cross their path. Keith notices.

Annie notices Keith noticing.

KEITH

In general, yes.

ANNIE

And what am I? I'm OK looking, aren't I? I mean, I'm not ugly. Right?

Keith blushes and shakes his head, shyly.

ANNIE

So you could fuck me, right?

KEITH

Annie!

ANNIE

Or "make love" if you like that better. Geez, you're squeamish.

Annie leads Keith into a subway station.

4. INT. SUBWAY CAR

Annie and Keith ride a Red Line Subway Train. Noise stifles any conversation. They both stare straight ahead.

A YOUNG COUPLE sits across from Keith & Annie. They blissfully kiss and display affection with obvious enjoyment.

Annie & Keith watch and study the young couple with interest and also envy, disgust, and curiosity.

5. EXT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - DUSK

A small, ratty apartment building. One that is affordable on a student's meager budget.

Annie & Keith stand on the front steps.

KEITH

Alright. So what's the proposal?

ANNIE

You'd spend the night here. Once or twice a week, whatever fits in your schedule. That's it.

KEITH

I'd come over here?

ANNIE

I'm not staying in your dorm. With two roommates? No way.

KEITH

So I'd sleep here... with you?

ANNIE

Unless you'd want to go home after doing it. That's up to you.

Pause.

KEITH

I could do that. What else?

ANNIE

No strings, no commitments. If Mr. Whatever enters my life, or Miss Whatever enters yours, the deal's off. But while it lasts, a mutual commitment to thoroughly explore the general topics of interest within the boundaries of our agreement.

Keith stares at Annie blankly. He shakes his head.

KEITH

My head's exploding. I can't even comprehend... This is scary. We don't know the first thing-

ANNIE

And don't you hate that feeling? Don't you? Watching other couples... wondering... wishing... I mean... It's just another thing to know, right?

Keith shrugs.

ANNIE

And I like you... enough.

KEITH

Thanks.

ANNIE

Who knows when another chance like this will come? We have so much to learn... And we don't have to be judged. We don't have to be scared.

Keith searches for something to say. He doesn't find it.

ANNIE

It's only logical. Or... What's that word you economists use?

KEITH

Rational?

ANNIE

Yeah. Rational.

KEITH

Rational sex?

ANNIE

Sure. We can even give each other grades... report cards... Homework.

KEITH

You are severely twisted Miss Annie.

ANNIE

Well? What do you think?

KEITH

All right. I give up. I'll give it a shot if you will.

He sticks out his hand.

ANNIE

Deal.

They shake.

They don't release their grip for a while.

Keith looks up at Annie, expectantly. Annie looks up at Keith, uncomfortably.

She breaks free and takes her keys out, unlocks the door.

KEITH

Wait, Wait! This means I get to kiss you? Right?

ANNIE

Yes. Of course. But, not now. We've got our Chem Lab to do.

Annie goes inside. Keith remains outside, staring numbly.

6. INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Annie enters her apartment, which is orderly and well kept. She takes out her schedule book and looks at her calendar.

ANNIE

Now, what night are you not busy?

KEITH

What? What about now?

ANNIE

We have a lab report to write.

KEITH

Do you honestly think I can concentrate on the lab, now?

ANNIE

You'd better. You're not getting anything until midterms.

KEITH

What?

ANNIE

Look, Keith. Let's get our priorities straight.

Annie takes out a Chemistry textbook from her bag.

ANNIE

This is work. This is me getting into Med School. This is what's important. Now that-

She points to her bedroom.

ANNIE

-is going to be an extracurricular activity. Like gym. In no way are we dating, alright? It's an experiment. No strings either way. It's not happening if we're not both straight on this.

KEITH

Understood. Um... Friday?

She checks her schedule book and marks the day down.

ANNIE

Sounds good. Now, to work.

Keith shakes his head once more.

KEITH

OK.

7. INT. KEITH'S ROOM.

A calendar on the wall has "Friday" circled in marker. The days up until Friday have been crossed off.

Keith sits on his bed in his messy dorm room and stares at the calendar intently. Nearby is a single picture of a young woman with curly brown hair.

Keith's section of the room is markedly less messy than the other two thirds of the room, which are decorated liberally with beer cans (but only prestigious microbrews and imported brands) and philosophy books.

In the background, Keith's roommates, WENDELL (19) and DAVIS (19), sit and argue.

WENDELL

...So just think about it. It's not just a passing similarity. It's... deep. It really is. First off, they both have violent lyrics. I mean, the body count- Someone dies every couple of lines. Tell me that it wouldn't carry a "Parental Advisory" warning today.

DAVIS

You are so stretching it.

WENDELL

Alright, but what else? Rampant materialism. War trophies were like the gold chains and beepers of yesterday. It's all status. They were the players of antiquity.

DAVIS

God, Wendell-

WENDELL

Let me finish. Rhyming verse, half sung, half spoken. Indisputable! Plus, a celebration of manhood. Macho culture and rituals. That's what it was. It's a bunch of guys sitting around bragging about the guys they played in battle, gathering wealth, glory and women. Sound familiar?

DAVIS

Bullshit.

WENDELL

Homer was a gangsta rapper.

DAVIS

BULL SHIT. A walnut might resemble a brain but that doesn't mean-

WENDELL

He's the O.G. - The Original Gangsta. *The Iliad* could have been the crips and the bloods fighting over some ho. Instead of glocks they have spears. Instead of jeeps they have horses. Do you want more?

DAVIS

Whatever. Do you believe this shit, Keith?

Keith doesn't respond.

WENDELL

Hello, Keith? Ground control to Major Keith?

DAVIS

Dude. Our roommate's, like trippin'.

Keith just keeps staring at the calendar.

8. EXT. CAMPUS LAWN - DAY

A blazing sun shines on the campus. Students play volleyball and frisbee on the lush, green lawn.

Annie jogs, laboring to keep pace with her best friend, CARLA LeCLAIR (20), an athletic and friendly-faced young woman. Carla runs effortlessly while Annie grimaces.

ANNIE

E- E- Enough?

CARLA

One more time around, OK?

Carla takes off. Grimly, Annie sets off after her.

AT A NEARBY BASKETBALL HOOP

Carla practices an endless succession of free throws. Annie sprawls out on the ground, taps the ball to Carla after each made foul shot.

Behind Annie, a bunch of jocks play volleyball.

ANNIE

I don't know why I have to jog with you. I never get in the games.

CARLA

So that when I hit that winning shot in the final seconds that sends us to the NCAA tournament, part of the glory will be yours.

ANNIE

Carla LeClair?

CARLA

Annie McKay.

ANNIE

Carla Leclair?

CARLA

What?

ANNIE

I'm bored.

CARLA

So do something else.

ANNIE

I'm also exhausted.

Carla sinks a shot.

ANNIE

How can you do that over and over again?

CARLA

The same way you memorize biology terms or chemistry tables.

ANNIE

I forgot. You're a history major. Nothing will bore you.

CARLA

Very cute.

ANNIE

I thought so.

CARLA

A Japanese painter will spend half his life drawing circles, perfect circles, again and again. You practice the basic strokes so much, you can do them blindfolded. So when it's time to paint your masterpiece you don't have to think about what you're doing. Trained instinct.

A volleyball BOUNCES softly into Annie, surprising her. KENNY (22), one of the volleyball players, comes halfway to them. He is handsome with a friendly demeanor.

KENNY

Yo! A little help!

ANNIE

Hey, pinhead! You could at least have said, "watch out!"

She FIRES the ball back at him. He gives a polite nod and heads back to the game.

ANNIE

Prick.

CARLA

Cute buns, though.

ANNIE

Don't even. They remind me of high school. Jockoid, imbecilic, monosyllabic football team assholes with five cheerleaders hanging off each of them. God, who let them into Harvard?

CARLA

Will you relax? You've been so uptight these past few days. What is up with you?

ANNIE

Just... something I have to do tonight.

CARLA

What, on a Friday? What is it, Professor Griffiths' class?

ANNIE

No, not school.

CARLA

What then? You wanna talk about it?

Pause.

ANNIE

Not really. Not just yet. It's just... something.

CARLA

You know I love and adore you, Annie Mac, but it's not healthy to keep it all inside. Someday it's gonna catch up with you-

KENNY (VO)

Look out!

Annie turns and a volleyball ROCKETS into her, knocking her glasses off. Kenny rushes over.

KENNY

Oh, God. I'm sorry, are you alright? Here. Here are your glasses.

Kenny hands Annie her glasses. Kenny gives a smile. Annie squints up at him.

ANNIE

What's your name?

KENNY

I'm Kenny. I didn't hit that ball, though. That was-

ANNIE

Kenny. Were you the one that yelled "Look out?"

KENNY

Uh- Yeah.

ANNIE

Thank you for that much.

She hands him the ball. Kenny nods awkwardly and turns back to the game.

CARLA

I'm done. You wanna go?

ANNIE

Yeah. I think so.

They begin to gather their things Carla suddenly turns to Annie. She grabs Annie and looks at her intently.

Annie stares back, perplexed.

ANNIE

What? What? Carla? What are you-

Carla smiles and starts cackling. Annie is even more puzzled.

CARLA

So. This "something" you have to do.
What's his name?

Annie's jaw drops. She punches Carla in the arm.

ANNIE

How did you know? How the fuck did
you know?

9. INT. ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

A knock at the door. Annie opens the door, dressed in her usual haphazard manner.

Keith stands outside, holding a paper bag and a flower. He waves, waits to be invited in. Annie points at the flower.

ANNIE

What is that?

KEITH

It's a flower.

Annie glares at Keith.

KEITH

What?

ANNIE

I'm not your girlfriend, remember?
Don't bring me flowers.

KEITH

Fine.

Keith tosses the flower away.

ANNIE
Besides, I like violets.

KEITH
You just can't be normal, can you?

Annie smiles.

ANNIE
Wanna come in?

KEITH
Sure.

He takes off his jacket and they go to the bedroom.

10. INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM

They sit on the bed. Brutal silence.

ANNIE
Have you got everything?

Keith checks his paper bag.

KEITH
I think so. Let's see... Rubber thingies, foam, lubricant, home pregnancy tester. Y'know, I never knew sex was this expensive. It never is in the movies.

ANNIE
It's either that or a baby, I guess. Or AIDS. Or whatever.

Keith looks very confused.

KEITH
We're both virgins.

ANNIE
Yes?

KEITH
How would we get AIDS?

ANNIE

Whatever.

They sit on the bed, nervously staring ahead.

KEITH

Do you want to start... or wait?

ANNIE

Whatever you like.

Pause. Keith decides to make small talk. He motions to her bookcase, which holds neatly titled three ring binders from all of her classes - from middle school to college.

KEITH

You keep all your notes?

ANNIE

From middle school onward.

KEITH

Middle school! You'll never need that shit again.

ANNIE

You never now. I like to hold onto things I've learned.

Pause. Keith tries again.

KEITH

Music?

ANNIE

Sure, whatever.

KEITH

Let's see what you've got...

Keith digs through Annie's music collection.

KEITH

God... All this classical shit...

ANNIE

Modern stuff is in the other box.

KEITH

Hmm... Hendrix?

ANNIE

Hendrix? You want to make love for
the first time to Jimi Hendrix?

KEITH

Why not?

ANNIE

It's not... Oh, I shouldn't even have
to explain it.

KEITH

Alright, then. You choose one.

Annie looks through her music collection. Keith picks up the
box of condoms.

ANNIE

Stevie Nicks, maybe. Or Tracy
Chapman. No, I got it.

Annie puts in a tape. R.E.M.'s "Losing My Religion" plays.

KEITH

It has spermicide in it. Or on it.

ANNIE

What?

KEITH

The condoms. They have the spermicide
thingy already on it. You think we
need foam too?

ANNIE

I guess. Better off being safe I
guess.

She reads the instructions to the foam to herself. He
searches the room for something, anything, to look at. She
gets up suddenly to the bathroom.

KEITH

Where are you going?

ANNIE

To put the foam in.

KEITH

Can't you do that here?

ANNIE

Gross! I can't have you looking.

KEITH

What's the difference? We're about to get naked anyway.

ANNIE

Keith. I'll be right back. You can put on your thing.

KEITH

Fine.

She leaves. He takes off all his clothes except for his boxer shorts, and tosses them on a heap on the floor. He gets under the covers. Annie returns, wearing an oversized T-Shirt. He stares quite noticeably at her, wide eyed with anticipation. She eyes him critically.

KEITH

Ready?

ANNIE

Keith?

KEITH

Yeah?

ANNIE

Do you have to toss your shit all over the floor?

KEITH

Excuse me?

She gathers up his clothes and stacks them on a chair. He enjoys the view of her bending over.

ANNIE

Look. If it's your place, then I suppose you can do what you like. But this is my apartment and you will be neat while you're a guest here. Yes you will. I don't care if we are fucking.

KEITH

Annie?

ANNIE

Yeah?

KEITH

Are you as nervous as I am?

She turns to him. She can barely look at him but retains her composure.

ANNIE

I have never been this nervous in my entire life. I can't even look at you.

KEITH

You don't show it. Annie? It's OK.

He takes her hand.

KEITH

We don't have to-

ANNIE

No. No, I want to. But thanks.

Annie takes a deep breath.

ANNIE

OK. I suppose we should start with kissing and stuff.

KEITH

I guess.

Annie gets under the covers and starts to lean into Keith. Keith pulls back.

KEITH

Wait. Aren't you going to take off your T-shirt?

ANNIE

It's cold.

KEITH

But we're under the covers. Together. I mean we'll keep each other warm.

ANNIE

Keith...

KEITH
 Fine. But can I still... you know.
 Feel you up and stuff?

ANNIE
 I suppose you have to.

KEITH
 Are you ready?

Annie takes off her glasses, puts them on the night table.

ANNIE
 Yes.

Slowly, they kiss. Hesitantly, Keith reaches under Annie's shirt and tentatively feels her breasts.

ANNIE
 They're fairly mediocre.

KEITH
 They're all right.

ANNIE
 I have never understood men's
 fascination with breasts. I mean,
 they're just globs of fat.

KEITH
 They're OK. Better'n mine, anyway.

They smile. Pause.

They resume kissing. They get more into it when the first song ends and the next one plays: Alannis Morrisette's "Hand in My Pocket." Keith pulls himself away.

KEITH
 No, no, no. Not Alannis Morrisette.

ANNIE
 It's a mix tape.

KEITH
 Can I turn it off? I can't possibly
 concentrate with that whiny neo-
 feminist blaring in the background.

ANNIE
 Keith-