

PLAYBOY

My Colonic Date

By Mélanie Berliet, April 3, 2009

I'm lying on a sterile exam table, curled into the fetal position. Suppressing the urge to hyperventilate, I stare at the wall. There, a diagram depicts human entrails. This raw image automatically heightens my awareness of the cold, lubricated colonic tool touching my ass. In the adjacent room, undergoing the same procedure, is the guy I've been dating – for barely a month.

"The tube is now inside your rectum, so the worst part's over," chimes the colonic specialist. "Your sphincter muscles will do the rest." But, committed as she may be in her plight to placate me with fancy-ass medical terms and seemingly benign phrases like "water irrigation," this woman can't soften the reality that the thing stuck three inches inside my butt will remain there for the next forty minutes. I am not at peace with the imminent hydraulic flushing that should prompt my bowels to relieve themselves "naturally" of buildup and bacteria.

My only happy thought at this point? That the circumference of the colonic instrument matches that of a pen, not a penis. If that thing were any bigger, and the experience of getting colon hydrotherapy were anything like that of my first and only experiment with anal sex, I might cry. I might question what the fuck I'm thinking, getting this done. It's fucking weird. My boo is new. Since when is a colonic date a stop along the path to seduction?

How again did I get myself here -- on elevated table, cold tubing in bum? That guy I'm dating. Right. I met my colon cleansing companion on one of those nights I hadn't planned to go out, at least not for long. Swayed by the celebratory spirit of it being a Tuesday (and by four to five glasses of wine), though, I decided to stay out. When I awoke for work the next day, I was certain of a few key things. I'd given my number to a guy named Chris. I'd given my number to a guy named Sean. I'd made out with someone named Chris, or Sean. And, once again, I proved myself to be a person whose judgment shouldn't be trusted much past midnight.

The text messages came around noon that day. Sean expressed that it was nice to meet me. Chris said, "Let's get drinks. I even forgive you for making out with my best friend." Fuck, I thought, with the revelation that I'd given out my number to best friends. Yet more disturbing? I actually had no clue who was who. Ultimately, it was Sean who Googled me and read my work. While Sean seemed to like me genuinely, Chris seemed to want to get in my pants—albeit, genuinely.



Cut to post-coital cuddling on the couch with Sean, four weeks later. Early relationship bliss. Either due to haze from temporary residence in the shameful Land of Girlhood, or due to brain my short circuiting. I mentioned my fascination with colonics. What better topic of conversation to take his attention away from the game on TV? Of course I'd do it! You want to make the appointment? Now?! Go ahead! No Problem. Two weeks? Cool. See you there.

In a way, I didn't mind our looming arrangement to get colonics together. When your coupledness is still new, it's reassuring to have future plans. How could he break it off, what with our impending colonic date? However absurd, this thought comforted me.

Come colon day, I awoke to meet Sean, drenched in sweat. Only then did it occur to me that there must be some formula for the number of inches you should allow anything shoved up your ass in the vicinity of a person, in proportion to how long you've been dating him. Call it the Temporal Ass Insertion equation. Certainly three inches on the "ass axis" and a month-and-a-half on the "time axis" would place me in violation of a critical mathematical principle. Moreover, I fretted that I was about to breach some sort of bylaw to another all-important element of the code of dating conduct: the Don't Crap in His Apartment At Least For the First Few Weeks statute.

How did these insights elude me at first? Utterly conflicted, I paced around my studio. Fuck me for trying to impress him by touting my don't-knock-it-til-you've-tried-it approach for life. Fuck me for being so annoyingly open and talkative that I corner myself into conversations about the sexual tendencies of bonobos, and bowel movements. Maybe Mom was right in that I should behave more like a lady- burp aloud less frequently, and refrain from going to the bathroom while talking on the phone. Why would I place myself in such an odd position around someone I wanted so badly to like me and to view me as sexy? After today, how will Sean even look at my naked ass?

Aside from risking sex appeal, research informed me that the procedure isn't without surrounding controversy. What if I were to respond abnormally? What if I were to lose control of my bowels, permanently? The mental image of my twenty-seven-year-old adult-diaper-sporting self truly terrified me. Obligation steered me forward.

"Our next victims!" the man behind the front desk at La Casa Day Spa declared upon our arrival. Sean and I laughed. Seated in the waiting room, surrounded by the peculiar knickknacks collected by the people dedicated to alternative healing techniques, clipboards in hand, we also laughed in mutually earnest embarrassment while answering questions on a form about the number of bowel movements we have per day, the exact nature of our waste, and the general purpose of our visit.

As I scribbled my responses, I sensed the uniqueness of our bonding experience — One from which many girls would shy away, but a significant one all the same. Arguably, we were crazy, but we were crazy together. That someone would step so far from ordinary with me felt reassuring. I liked that we could tack this onto the list of the strange circumstances surrounding our union. Thankfully, Sean was different from any guy I'd dated in the past—those too bashful, too fearful, or too normal to do this sort of thing.



It wasn't until an uncomfortable amount of water was squirted inside me, bloating me to the point that my bowels succumbed forcing the release of whatever buildup existed in my colon, that my giddiness subsided. In place of tranquility and certitude of the special connection I shared with Sean came chills, feverishness, and a series of contorted facial expressions in response to the mirror reflecting my colon's contents as they were discharged through the outgoing tube. Finally, the specialist concluded that I was empty, allowing me to unclench my fists. Then I followed her piercingly flippant instructions to hop off the table and onto the toilet immediately.

After our treatments, Sean and I went our separate ways before reuniting for dinner at Il Bagatto in the East Village. Upon greeting him, I was relieved to learn that he felt as weird as I did. We were both drained and fatigued. At the restaurant, we gorged on frisee salad, grilled calamari, tortellini and veal while reveling in wonderment over our shared inability to feel full. To be a bottomless pit was glorious. So was the sex that followed dinner, despite any reservation I harbored about having anything else inserted in me that day.

The next morning, Sean cooked cheeseburgers for us at 10:30 a.m. Reclining on his couch after devouring our food, I looked Sean in the eye, feeling grateful to have met him. Who else would have done this with me, without hesitation or concern? Rare is the person you meet around whom you're willing to shed all inhibitions. I considered us both brave pioneers of alternative dating. By way of colon cleansing, we'd without a doubt grown closer.

The worst was yet to come. Precisely seven days later, Sean broke things off over the phone. I haven't seen him since. Considering that I'm the same thumb-sucking, knee-high tube sock-wearing girl I was before colonics, minus a few pounds, I'm not quite sure how it all went away. Part of me suspects that, along with all the shit, they sucked out his feelings for me, too. Or maybe we just went too far, too soon. It's tough to digest that I overvalued couple's colonics, too troubling to admit to that kind of self-delusion. But as stupid or mistaken as I was about that day, I can chuckle at the irony of getting "dumped" post-colonic date.