

RISKY BEHAVIORS

by Tom Smith

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CHARACTERS

Laura	15'ish
Kyle	15'ish

Author's note: Please feel free to replace the character names with the actor's real names, if you like

TIME/PLACE

Today
Here

RISKY BEHAVIORS

A very straightforward lecture. LAURA and KYLE facing the audience.

LAURA

A girl can get pregnant the very first time she has sex.

KYLE

No method of birth control is 100 percent perfect.

LAURA

Even if his partner is a virgin, a boy can get a sexually transmitted infection.

KYLE

A girl can get pregnant, even if she has not had her first period. Furthermore, she can—

LAURA

Stop, stop, stop!

KYLE

What? Laura, why are you—

LAURA

This is so boring! Spitting out facts about sexual health. “No method of birth control is 100 percent perfect.” Who talks like that? I mean, who even cares?!?

KYLE

Well, you should. We all should.

(Back to the lecture.)

Not all sexually transmitted infections have visible symptoms.

LAURA

See, that's exactly what I'm talking about! Birth control, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections—ick! Look, I'm not saying that this information isn't important. But isn't there a less boring way to talk about this stuff?

KYLE

Like how?

LAURA

I don't know. I mean, can't we just watch a Tik Tok or stream something?

KYLE

So you think this presentation would be better if it was streamed?

LAURA

Well, yeah. I mean, it's a way better way of learning all this stuff.

KYLE

Ok, then, fine. Let's do it!

LAURA

What do you mean?

KYLE

What's your favorite classic tv show?

LAURA

Like black and white classic or twenty years ago classic?

KYLE

Your choice.

LAURA

Um, I don't know. "I Love Lucy" I guess.

KYLE

Well, then, here we go!

(HE pulls HER off as the theme to "I Love Lucy" —or something like it— plays. KYLE re-enters, suit-coat over his t-shirt, hair slicked back.)

Lucy! I'm home!

LAURA/LUCY

(Enters, a skirt ¾ around her waist with her jeans underneath, and a red wig.)

Risky! How was the club tonight, dear?

KYLE/RISKY

Oh, it was fine! How were things here?

(LUCY makes a face.)

Lucy, what kind of a mess have you gotten yourself into now? Do you have some 'splainin' to do?

LAURA/LUCY

Well, Risky, I was reading a book...

KYLE/RISKY

A book? There's nothing wrong with that!

LAURA/LUCY

It said that unprotected sexual intercourse, getting someone's blood on your cut, or sharing or reusing needles is risky behavior. It could lead to diseases, or even death.

KYLE/RISKY

That's right. But you already knew that, honey, didn't you?

LAURA/LUCY

But I didn't know that there were other behaviors that were also dangerous, but a little less so. Things like cleaning blood without wearing gloves or breastfeeding if you have HIV. And that got me thinking...

KYLE/RISKY

Now, Lucy, you know I don't like it when you do that!

LAURA/LUCY

It got me thinking how important it will be one day to tell all of that to our son!

KYLE/RISKY

What son?

(LUCY pats her belly.)

Lucy?!?

LAURA/LUCY

Say hello to little Risky.

KYLE/RISKY

Oh, Lucy!

LAURA/LUCY

Oh, Risky!

*(THEY smile, cheek-to-cheek as music plays.
LAURA removes her wig and skirt.)*

That was horrible, Kyle!

KYLE

What now?

LAURA

That wasn't anything like "I Love Lucy." They'd never talk about those things. Besides, people didn't even know what HIV was back then.

KYLE

Well, do you have a better idea?

LAURA

Of course I do! First, the show needs to be more contemporary. And it has to be more serious, like...a medical drama!

(Cheesy soap opera music plays as KYLE re-places Risky's suit coat with a doctor's coat.)

Dr. Merriwether? They said you wanted to see me.

KYLE/DR. MERRIWETHER

Yes, Faith. We got your test results back from the lab.

LAURA/FAITH

Well?

(DR. MERRIWETHER looks pained.)

It's all right, I can handle it. Is it an exotic African virus that only two other people in the entire history of medicine have ever contracted?

KYLE/DR. MERRIWETHER

No. It's not that.

LAURA/FAITH

Is it incurable insanity that will eat away at my brain until I slowly forget my friends, my family, my...self?

KYLE/DR. MERRIWETHER

No. It's something a little less—

LAURA/FAITH

Is it a rare form of tuberculosis that will cause my body to wither away, coughing and gasping for air until there's nothing left of me but a frail shadow of the woman I once was?

KYLE/DR. MERRIWETHER

It's gonorrhea.

LAURA/FAITH

Gonorrhea? Well, that's not so bad.

KYLE/DR. MERRIWETHER

Isn't it? It's a severe infection living in your reproductive organs. It can cause serious and permanent health problems, including pelvic inflammatory disease, damage to your fallopian tubes, and even infertility.

LAURA/FAITH

Infertility? You mean, I won't be able to get pregnant?

KYLE/DR. MERRIWETHER

It's a possibility.

LAURA/FAITH

But, I'm so young! How did this...? What could I have done to prevent this, Doctor?

KYLE/DR. MERRIWETHER

There's only one way to prevent gonorrhea or other sexually transmitted infection: abstinence. It's the only thing that's 100% effective.

LAURA/FAITH

But you can give me something to get rid of the gonorrhea, right, Doctor? A pill?

KYLE/DR. MERRIWETHER

I can give you medicine to stop the infection, but not to fix the damage it's already done. I'm afraid that part is...permanent.

(Musical sting plays. KYLE and LAURA break character as KYLE removes his costume.)

Well, was that better?

LAURA

I guess. But, gonorrhea is serious.

KYLE

All sexually transmitted infections are. Chlamydia can cause infertility, herpes lasts your entire lifetime, HIV can lead to AIDS, and that not only affects the quality of your life, but it can kill you.

LAURA

And even if there's no risk of an infection, there's always pregnancy. It seems like everything is risky.

KYLE

Not everything. Giving blood through the Red Cross, eating with someone, kissing, holding hands, hugging, fantasizing... There are a lot of behaviors that have no risk. You just need to educate yourself about them.

LAURA

I guess this stuff is more serious than I thought. I mean, knowing how to avoid risky behaviors can save your life.

KYLE

It's all about understanding that your body matures faster than your mind or your emotions. For me, it's better to wait to have sex until I'm older.

LAURA

So, what should we do in the meantime?

KYLE

I don't know. Wanna see what's new on Netflix?

(THEY start to exit.)

LAURA

Ok. But we're not watching any Marvel movies! I'm so over them!

KYLE

What are you talking about? Have you ever seen the first Spiderman? The Toby Maguire one?

LAURA

Tom Holland is, and will always be, the best Spiderman...

END OF PLAY