

the raisinet factor
by riley lashea

Just how distracting can a chocolate-drenched dried-out grape really be? I'd conceivably find that question comical if the answer weren't wrapped around me like a seventeenth-century tourniquet.

Thirty minutes. That's how long I estimate that I have been unable to focus on this exceedingly lame movie that I didn't really want to see. It's been at least long enough for boy to meet girl, boy to lose girl, and boy to take part in some absurdly ridiculous stunts in an effort to win girl back.

This is all Mikey's fault, based solely on Mikey's bizarre attempts at logic, which are completely illogical and yet which I fall for every time, despite their obvious incongruities with reality. He's a total lunatic and yet, when he speaks, I listen. If Mikey were David Koresh, I would have been toasted in Texas. And if Mikey knew how, and when, to keep his mouth shut, at this very moment, I would feel no pain, anxiety, or absurd consternation.

But Mikey doesn't. His perpetual need to explicate is the sole reason that I cannot comprehend a moment of this overly straightforward plot or follow a word of its cheesy dialogue. It's why I am attuned, instead, to the sounds coming from beside me. Tip. Roll. Tip. Roll back. I am so aware, in fact, that I think I've actually started to recognize the difference in tone between when she pops three into her mouth and when she pops four. One less, and her hand lifts with slightly less exertion. Her chew sounds less vigorous.

What is it with Mikey? Who told him he was a fucking philosopher? I know it wasn't me, and I'd like to junk-punch the asshole responsible. I mean, does Mikey truly believe that his counsel has any foundation in any sort of reality any place in the universe? Does he really think anyone gives credence to his outlandish thought processes?

Tip. Roll. Tip. Roll back.

And, seriously, is she going to eat that entire box?

"How do I know if she likes me?"

That's where it all started. Mikey's thoughts are plentiful, but rarely unsolicited. Mikey simply makes the destination available. I'm the chump who hops the bus to Waco.

"It's the Raisinet factor," he answered with certainty, pulling out a pack of cigarettes and pounding one out against his palm.

"The what?" I returned in amused disbelief. "You're not going to smoke that in here."

"Don't lean toward laughter. I'm serious." He put the liberated cigarette between his lips, testing my will, but he didn't have the guts to fire it up. Though he did take out his lighter and begin flipping the top open and closed repeatedly with a metallic click.

"I know. That's why I'm leaning toward laughter," I responded, pinning him with my most intimidating "I dare you" look.

"She loves Raisinets," Mikey explained, showing no signs of being intimidated. "I'm sure you've seen her eating them."

"Yeah... like all the time. So?"

"So, she freakin' loves them." Flip. Click. Flip. Click. "She's like an addict. Raisinets are her crack."

"What do Raisinets have to do with me?"

"How can I explain this?" Mikey sighed. "You... you love..."

I watched his forehead crinkle as he struggled to remember any one of my many loves.

"Marshmallow eggs?" I suggested

"Yes, yes. You love marshmallow eggs." He motioned at me with an open palm as if I needed this point proven to me. "And you, you're not a stingy person. You're very giving."

"Thank you."

"If you'd let me smoke in your apartment, you'd almost be an angel."

"I'm not striving to ascend, Mikey."

"Fine," he grunted, finally closing his lighter for good and putting it back in his inside jacket pocket. "But I'm serious. Listen."

"To your crazed expounding?" I clarified. "You mean, as opposed to what I've been doing for the past five minutes?"

"So," Mikey went on in frustration. "It's not that you won't share marshmallow eggs when you have them. You just don't make it known that they are in your sock drawer under your slipper socks."

"Do you want a marshmallow egg?"

"You are missing the point here," Mikey groaned, his hand waving around like a loose lasso trying to capture my misinterpretation of his point. "... I like cigarettes."

"No!" I exclaimed.

Other than a low rumble, Mikey ignored my smartassery completely. "People see me smoking them all the time. They know I have them. If someone says, 'Hey, can I bum a cigarette,' I'll give it. It doesn't even bother me. But I don't go around handing them out. However, if I saw a hot girl standing at the bar, I'd probably offer."

“Right,” I said with a nod, hoping to bring his effort to enlighten me to a quick close.

“You see my point?”

“I really wish I didn’t.”

“Why?”

“Because every time I see your point, I feel as if I should be institutionalized. I’m going to be late.”

“I’m telling you. You want to know if she likes you, heed the Raisinet Gactor.”

“Raisinets Factor. Got it. See you later,” I said, and grabbed my jacket.

“Later,” he said, reaching for his pocket.

I left him there anyway, knowing full well the minute that I disappeared beyond the door, he’d be smoking up in my apartment.

“Hey,” she said when I made it to the theater just barely in time. “I already bought candy. I got you Sno-Caps.”

The Raisinets were next to them in her hand. Her Raisinets. She bought me Sno-Caps, because she had Raisinets that she didn’t want to share.

“That’s okay, right?” she asked in response to my non-response. “That’s what you got the last time.”

“Yeah, that’s okay,” I responded as brightly as I could.

It wasn’t.

Tip. Roll. Tip. Roll back.

And here we sit. She eating her way to a Raisinet high, and I’m too thwarted to chase a candy coma with the Sno-Caps she provided me. I would have shared my hidden store of marshmallow eggs with her, not bought her a big chocolate bunny to keep her occupied.

Fuckin’ girl. Fuckin’ Sno-Caps. Fuckin’ Mikey!

“Do you want one?” she whispers into my ear, holding the box out in offering.

My giddy smile probably matches some lunatic’s in an asylum somewhere. “Sure,” I say casually and cup my palm in the air.

She pours out a quarter of the box, most of them making my hand, but a few bouncing off and hitting the floor out our feet. She giggles too loudly and the guy ahead of us casts an aggravated look over his shoulder.

“Shhh,” she says to him, and he leaves us with a lingering scowl.

My hand is overloaded, but she doesn't take any back. She just reaches into my palm for a Raisinet and pops it into my mouth with a look that pledges she has other uses for my lips later.

The Raisinet Factor.

Mikey... you fucking genius.