

Wilhelm Reich Unleashed

(10-minute Romantic Comedy Excerpt)

Submitted to Crystal Field for

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Summary: In 1955 **Dr. Reich** has a romantic breakup and reconciliation with his girlfriend **Annie**, which prompts two of his patients, **Dan** and **Nancy**, to have their own breakup and reconciliation.

Characters

Wilhelm Reich – The legendary psychiatrist, in love with Annie

Dr. Willem Bon – Reich's associate and head of the mental clinic

Annie – Reich's girlfriend

Dan – A patient, in love with Nancy

Nancy – A patient, in love with Dan

Dr. Theodore Wolfe – Reich's laboratory associate

Scene: Reich's laboratory in Rangeley, Maine.

Time: 1955

The lights come up on **Dr. Bon** stage left examining a microscope,
Dan center right, **Nancy** center left. The girl is holding a blanket.

Dan You know why I like you, Nancy?

Nancy You don't like me. If you liked me, you'd talk to me.

Dan I'm embarrassed to talk to you when other people are around.

Nancy If you're embarrassed to talk to me when other people are around, then you don't really like me.

Dan That's not true. It just means I get shy around other people.

Nancy Why do you get shy around other people?

Dan Don't you know? It's because of my condition.

Nancy Don't be so self-conscious. I have the same condition, and I don't let it bother me.

Dr. Bon Here comes Dr. Reich. Let him be the final judge of your condition.

Enter Reich and Annie.

Hello, Willie. I brought the patients for the experiment.

Reich Don't call them patients as if they were specimens.

Dr. Bon Heaven forbid. In this laboratory we romanticize everybody.

Dan (to **Reich**). Thank you, doctor.

Reich This is my fiancée, Annie Pink.

Annie Fiancée? Are we engaged in your mind? You never even proposed to me.

Reich I don't generally propose to girls. I assume we're in a committed relationship

once the feeling is mutual.

Nancy Don't let him talk to you like that!

Annie But you never asked me. You never went down on one knee. You never even went down on one foot.

Dan Don't let her talk to you like that!

Dr. Bon You stay out of this unless you plan to marry somebody.

Reich I told you that you were cured, and I assumed you understood what that implied.

Nancy Is that how he operates? As soon as he cures them, he starts a romance?

Dr. Bon Shush! This is not a public clinic.

Annie It's insulting that you didn't even ask me.

Reich Don't take offense, Annie. That's just my way.

Annie (*producing a letter*). And is it your way to have your assistant deliver a love letter that reads, "Dear Annie, Now that you are mine, I wish to enjoy you as soon as possible"? That's all you wrote. No complimentary close. No "Devotedly yours." No signature. Nothing but animal lust. And this is what I think of it. (*Tears the letter.*)

Reich (*producing a letter*). "I think I've fallen in love with you after that therapeutic session, and I feel that you must be the love of my life." That is what you wrote to me — and now I see it for the lie that it was. (*Tears it.*)

Dan Don't stop there. She's got plenty more lies.

Nancy (*hitting Dan*). Quiet, you nincompoop!

Reich (*producing another letter*). Here is another one you sent me from Berlin, and I'll tear up this lie as well.

Nancy Tell him off.

Annie (*tearing another letter*). Tear up all my notes, and I'll tear up all yours.

Dan Tell her you don't care.

Nancy Don't let him sweet-talk you after those insults.

Annie I thought I was in love with you — but I must have been temporarily deranged.

Dr. Bon That narrows it down very little in this building.

Reich You and me both.

Annie I'll say good-bye to you, then, and take my leave.

Reich Good-bye to you.

Annie Have a nice life, Willie.

Reich I intend to. I'm magnificent company.

Dan You made a clean break, doc.

Nancy You told him off good.

Dan I'll see her to the door for you.

Nancy (to **Annie**). What are you waiting for?

Dan Why are you looking at her like that?

Reich Come on, Annie. You know you're going to lose a great deal if you walk out on me.

Annie There are plenty of men who would treat me better than you've treated me.

Reich Better, perhaps. More passionately — impossible. Search every continent on earth — you'll never find a man more passionately devoted to you than I am.

Annie Devotion with you always sounds like a threat.

Reich That's because I feel deeply.

Annie No, that's because you speak like Napoleon dictating to a secretary.

Dr. Bon The resemblance has occurred to others.

Reich I admit I think highly of myself.

Annie Then try, as an experiment, thinking highly of me.

Reich (*more gently*). Annie . . . I do think highly of you. Very highly. Higher than anyone. Those letters were clumsy. My vanity was clumsy. But my love was not clumsy.

Annie (*weakening*). Don't talk like that . . . I'm only human.

Reich So am I. Regrettably. Won't you forgive me?

Annie (*taking her time in deciding, and in saying these lines*). Well . . . since you put it that way . . . yes, I forgive you.

Reich Good. Come with me. I want to show you the room I designed for you in the back of the observatory.

Annie You designed a room for me?

Reich Naturally. When I fall in love, I renovate.

Dr. Bon Romance, architecture, and psychiatry — all under one roof.

Reich takes Annie by the hand and happily leads her out.

Dan We should patch up our differences like they did. Why do you keep ignoring the situation we're in?

Nancy I'm not ignoring anything.

Dan Yes, you are. You're ignoring the fact that the two of us have been shut up in an asylum.

Nancy Why should I let that upset me? I don't like worrying about things I can't change.

Dan If you ignore the tyrannical rules they place on us, you'll get yourself into trouble.

Nancy The only trouble I have is you telling me to worry about things I don't want to think about.

Dan I can't believe you're saying that.

Nancy I can't believe you're bringing up the same old thing again.

Dan I'm only bringing it up because I want to help you.

Nancy If you wanted to help me, you'd let the matter drop.

Dan Let the matter drop? It sounds like you'd rather not even speak to me anymore.

Nancy (*hurt, but hiding it*). At the moment, I'd rather listen to a vacuum cleaner.

Dan (*pretending indifference*). Then I'm done with you.

Nancy And I'm done with you.

Dan Are we breaking up? Is that what you want?

Nancy (*still pretending indifference*). Whatever you want.

Dan Even after we've been together for a year in the asylum?

Nancy That means nothing to me.

Dan No, it means nothing to me, either.

Nancy If that's the way you want it.

Dan Fine. That's the way I want it.

During the following dialogue, they each produce the requested items and hand them over.

Nancy Now that we're no longer a couple, take back these tickets to the hockey game that you gave me this morning with so much fanfare.

Dan Take back this English muffin you made me for breakfast. I only took a couple of bites out of it, so it's practically new.

Nancy I no longer want this "World's Okayest Girlfriend" mug.

Dan (*taking off wristwatch*). Take back this Timex watch inscribed, "With love from your sugarcookie cupcake." I hate that I laughed when you gave it to me.

Nancy Take back this blanket you gave me with my celebrity crush Rock Hudson's face on it.

Dan I haven't got the love letters you wrote to me, but when I get back to my room in the asylum, I'm going to tear them all up.

Nancy And guess what I'm going to do with yours! Plus take back this "Property of Danny Parker" wristband you're always making me wear.

Dan I thought you liked that wristband.

Nancy I liked you. The wristband rode in on your coattails.

Dan You know I'll be miserable without you.

Nancy You'll find somebody new soon enough.

Dan Do you think so?

Nancy You always do.

Dan Like who, for instance?

Nancy What about . . . Mary Beth Carson.

Dan The psych ward receptionist?

Nancy Why not? She's got nice ankles.

Dan Nice ankles?

Nancy (*giggling*). I'm trying to be generous.

Dan (*giggling*). You have a wild imagination.

Nancy Do I really?

Dan I'll say you do.

Nancy You two would make a pretty pair.

Dan Stop making fun of me.

Nancy I can't help it. You're so easy to improve.

Dan Why don't we get back together? We have the same sense of humor.

Nancy Do you want to?

Dan Only every minute of the day.

Nancy That's a little better.

Dan All right, let's kiss and make up.

Nancy Let's not do anything like that in public . . . Dr. Bon is in the room.

Dr. Bon Thank you for noticing.

Dan Okay — but can I have my English muffin back?

Nancy (*giving back the muffin*). I can tell what's really important to you.

Enter Reich and Wolfe. Dan and Nancy continue acting flirtatious toward each other.

Reich Ah, Dr. Bon. Are you ready for the experiment we're going to perform on these two?

Dr. Bon (*to Dan and Nancy*). Behave yourselves, I said! (*To Reich.*) Forgive them. Love appears to have stirred up the controls.

Dr. Bon pushes Dan and Nancy apart, though they continue smiling and reaching toward each other.

Reich (*to Wolfe*). Set up the oscilloscope. Be careful with the test leads. That apparatus runs on high voltage. If the charge hasn't bled off, it can kill a man.

Dr. Bon (*dryly*). At last, an experiment with real teeth to it.

While Wolfe sets up the oscilloscope, Dan and Nancy repeatedly bump into him, and he swats them away like flies.

Wolfe (*handing wires to Dan and Nancy*). Hold this, and don't touch each other until you're told.

Reich The oscilloscope will measure the electric potential between them.

Nancy Am I going to get a shock?

Dr. Bon That would certainly enliven the findings.

Reich Not if the machine is adjusted correctly. Doctor Wolfe?

Wolfe The capacitor has discharged. We're ready for the test.

Reich Good. You two — go ahead and hold hands.

Dan and Nancy hold hands. A buzzer rings.

Dr. Bon What does that buzzer mean?

Wolfe (*smiling*). Congratulations, guys.

Reich It means they're in love.

Dan hugs Nancy and the buzzer rings again. Lights fade.

Curtain.

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