



# Dom-sub Lifestyle

**JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2002**

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## Life Under the Three Moons

### by Michael

Tal All,

This is, as promised, the continuation from the previous article.



Mika is bound into the 1930's medical chair. Her red and gold silks tied about her, definitely not for modesty, as the silks make her more naked than naked. Steve Haworth leans the chair back to better disorient her. Steve puts a new sterile tip into the cautery scalpel and prepares the wider tip for use later. Steve takes one last look at me and waits for me to say the words he knows are to begin the branding.

As I say "girl you will now be branded as slave", he presses the first time into Mika's flesh, her muscles tighten and her eyes close. Just as she thinks she can't stand it another moment, Steve changes the tip, it takes less time for his skilled hands to achieve the change than for Mika to draw a ragged breath. His

hands were swift, we barely noticed the change and then he was working again. The stench of human flesh being burned began to fill the room. Smoke rose from where Steve's hands were working on Mika's leg. Her flesh was literally being vaporized by the instrument and her jaws clenching. She tried hard to be brave, to not make a sound suddenly the room was filled

to stimulate yet another sense with an unreal scream. Mika's voice loud and filled with the pain of flesh being vaporized in one stroke. Mika begged, she pleaded, screaming for me to make him stop. Steve had been instructed earlier by me to make this as close to a single strike brand as described in the books as possible. He was not to stop, not for any reason that did not mean life or death of Mika. "Please Master, please," the words echoed in the room filled with the unbelievable pain Mika was experiencing. The words tugged at every one in the room but she was kajira, to be branded and marked slave. The books describe the brand as being completed on Gor in one single strike by a hot iron pressed into a slave's flesh for five ehn (approximately five or six seconds). What Mika felt that day was nearly a full minute of relentless vaporizing of her left thigh skin. Every muscle in her body strained against the ropes and bindings. Her screams doing all she could to beg and plead her plight, hoping it would fall on ears that would make it stop. It was only a minute, but if you were to ask her she would swear I made it last an hour.



Everything inside me wanted to leap upon this man that was in one respect damaging my slave while in another adding to her value. I had paid this 'metal worker' for his services, I knew he was the best, but the smell of vaporizing flesh, the sound of the girl's scream can certainly make one question their purchase. Mika's screams became terrifying, and I approached her and took her face in my hands. When I looked into her eyes, they were wild, terrified, defeated. As Steve continued to finish his work, I realized I was looking into those terrified eyes through my own watery eyes. Tears? No way, she was only kajira! Must have been the dust in that sterile room and the smoke from the girl's flesh irritating them. (When Steve was finished and I looked around, I realized that I am not the only one in that room who must be allergic to smoke and dust. Everyone's eyes were affected by it.) Mika's eyes were filled with something very foreign to me. I had never given her reason not to trust me, to fear me, or to feel terror by anything going on around her. Suddenly, her eyes spoke of things her mouth would never relay.

Steve stood. He was finished. Mika was trembling. The chair was shaking from the strength of the involuntary muscles contractions taking over mika's body, or was it simply the sobs and heaving of her chest?

The chair was righted and I began loosening the binds, the ropes and cuffs. Never completely removing my hand from Mika. My eyes moving up to hers every so often, only to find them closed tightly tears still spilling from beneath pinched lids. I allowed Mika to rest a few moments, speaking softly to her, words that came from my heart telling her how proud I was of her and how beautiful her brand was and how she never looked more beautiful to me than she did at that very moment. (Even with the red nose and swollen eyes and dry lips) Now was time for the proper collaring ceremony that would normally follow a girl's branding on Gor. I helped a weak and trembling Mika out of the chair and stripped the silks from her body.



### Ceremony

"Assume the posture of female submission," I ordered.

She knelt, leaning back on her heels, her arms extended, wrists crossed, her head between them, down.

"Repeat after me," I told her. "I, once (her name which is not important to this story) of (Earth)..."

She repeated this.

"..herewith submit myself, completely and totally, in all things..."

She repeats this.

"...to him who is known as (Michael) of (Queen Creek)..."

She repeats this.

"...his girl, his slave, an article of his property, his to do with as he pleases."

She repeats this.



I then produced the collar. It was engraved with "Property of Michael", I had her read it , making sure that she understood what it says and means. I placed it about her neck and snap it shut with a click.

"I am yours, Master," I said.

"I am yours, Master," she repeated.

At this point, Master Bleu congratulated me on my acquisition of my new slave and Angel kissed her, crying and congratulated her. When this was done, I asked the slave the following three questions:

"Who were you?" I asked.

She told me her former name.

"What are you?" I asked.

"I am your slave, Master," she says.

"What is your name?" I asked.

"Whatever Master wishes," she answered.

I then, because it pleased me to do so, bestowed upon the girl her new slave-name, which can be taken from her or changed at any time, according to my whim.

"You are (Mika)," I told her.

"Yes, Master. I am (Mika)," she said.

The ceremony is now over. Thus it is that a new slave is collared upon (Gor) and in the City of Phoenix. Steve's girl came into the room, her eyes must have taken offense to the smoke as well. Though she is not Gorean, she told us congratulations and expressed that it was beautiful. She had not experienced Gorean traditions before and had found them to be beautiful and not barbaric at all.

Mika was lifted to her feet and held closely to the chest of the man who owned her. She was permitted to cry once again and to look upon the mark on her thigh. This time the tears shone brightly on the eyes of a happy girl, even if she did put on the pout lips and say "Look what you did to me you beast!"



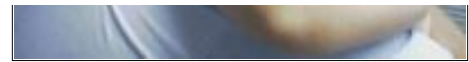
A year later, on our 24th anniversary, the mark was completed with the addition of a red **M**. Can you believe she said we would need to stop having year anniversaries?

*"I will have this woman... For her I would stand against all Ar, and all the world"*



~ Book 11 ~ Slave Girl of Gor.

Anyone having any questions or comments please contact me at [Michael@Desertvista.com](mailto:Michael@Desertvista.com). Be Well!



## Ask the Mistressse



**Or "that's My Advice and I'm stickin' to it"**

**by Lotus Song**

**What is a Domme? (In my humble opinion)**

She is the nurturing element of BDSM. She is the balance. She will not bullshit you. She will bring out your best and jam your fears in your face.

She is NOT a male in a female body. Do not expect her to be. She is a woman who will not surrender her birthright, her femininity or her soul.

She IS a teacher and a guide. She'll yell at you like a drill instructor to get to your core. She'll interrogate you so you can get to your truth. She will strip you naked and have you see yourself as you really are.

This scares people. Those that take feminine domination as simply a role or a job are missing a golden opportunity to experience a woman as she was meant to be.

Let her take control. Let her share with you her knowledge of the body and of the soul. She is not a flogger with feet. She is not a \$200 an hour e-ticket ride to your wallet. She has taken the time to study another person other than herself.

So why is she so misunderstood? Fear. Women have had to live under invisible veils and this is one female that refuses. When you see a woman actually BEING a woman, not in a mother, wife, or sister role, it's scary. She dares to show you just what she is capable of. You see the feminine strength without pretense.

Women birth, raise, guide, educate and doctor each generation. To trivialize this contribution is criminal.

Basically I see all women as dominant. Before you disagree, think. How many times have you heard submissive females say "Nothing is done to me without my consent"? I choose who I give my submission to"? Some even say that a dominant isn't a dominant until SHE says you are. Damn "uppity females"!

A word about "Bitch" Dommess:

I contend that Bitch Dommess are MADE and not born.

They are created in fantasy novels, such as the jaguar women of "Gor" and other dime novels by people who read them and try to manufacture them into reality.

Those with no sense of self to begin with will don the mantle if it gets them the attention they desire.

Males frequently use it as a control tool. As in "See my little subbie dear? You don't want to be one of THOSE!"

A Domme is in control of herself. The wise Domme simply knows her own strength with no need to prove it to anyone.

New Dommess (those exploring or trying to find their own identity) are bombarded with the "If you are a REAL domme you will dress and act like this or that" by unenlightened submissive males. Speaking from personal experience. The very first submissive male who solicited me to be his domme followed with.. "I can TEACH you to be a REAL BITCH GODDESS!" I thanked him kindly and told him to seek elsewhere. A Lady would do that.

If you ever pat yourself on the back and say you have "put her in her place", just know it's because she has allowed it. "You only have her right where SHE wants you".



# Transgressions

by Miss Ayme



## In Slavery There Is Freedom

God, I can't believe I just wrote that! It sounds like something Hitler or Stalin would roar in one of their thundering speeches, or a slogan emblazoned over the gates to a work camp. Making a statement like that these days is an open invitation for reprisals and recrimination. Perhaps some red neck Yahoo will use it to rally the good 'ol boys 'round the Confederacy again. My brothers and sisters of color would have every reason to take offense. And it's certainly a phrase that would raise the dander on most conservative vanilla folk.

But put within the context of the BDSM lifestyle, I know many "slaves" out there who would find nothing wrong with it, and in fact would wholeheartedly agree. Anyone not involved in some way with our Lifestyle would certainly wonder why this is. Slavery is a powerful word and conjures up horrible visions of shackles and squalor, neglect and abuse. To them, they cannot conceive the notion that anyone in their right mind would suffer to live in such a way, let alone willingly. It is appalling enough that traffic in human slavery for profit is all too real, involving millions of children for God's sake, and insidiously present to this very day - even here in the United States.

But you and I know that our concept of slavery is quite removed from such ghastly and disturbingly lurid imagery. For us, to be a slave is to be fully aware of the ramifications of surrender, and to offer acceptance without reservation or hesitation. It is an informed, consensual decision - a free choice entered into without coercion or deceit. And an admission to one's self of the inherent need to be dominated.

Yet to voluntarily surrender one's body and soul so whole-heartedly is a fearful thing. It takes courage and a lot of trust to want to grow and develop under an Owner's guidance, removing the blocks and hindrances to your full service to his or her will. Your Owner will plumb the depths of your own soul and make you face the monsters of fear, doubt, and insecurity lurking within. You will be stripped of all limits, excuses, inner restraint, superficiality, false modesty and phobias. You will come to rely on and trust the Owner to protect, care and cherish you as property, as a valuable enhancement to his or her assets.

## Ya Call This Freedom?

I'll admit it looks pretty one-sided at first glance. And everyone on the planet has their own concept of what freedom means to them. I mean, take a look around you right now. The slime oozing out from your television set is holding Freedom up to the masses the antithesis of Terrorism. It sucks you in and tells you Freedom can be found in buying Chevrolet SUV's with little American flags as standard, no extra charge. It's the travel industry grabbing Dubya's sound bytes to get you to fly again, while the Feds now have free reign to Profile America. It's being packaged as "Big Brother Knows Best - Trust Us With That Military Tribunal Thing," and "Ossama - Dead or Alive, I Don't Care." And there are the WTC victims and survivors and their numberless families and friends - where's Freedom for them? Freedom is everything - people are killing for it, and history shows us that we are willing to die for it.

So why do I think Freedom can be found in slavery, of all things? I suppose it begins, with me at least, during my transition from living as a man, to living as a woman. My freedom was to break away from the bondage and confinement of my expected and enforced masculinity. And when I finally did so, it meant everything to me. You can't imagine what a relief that was, as if a huge weight had been lifted from my shoulders. It's been a Magic Carpet Ride ever since.

But as an extension of that, now that I've journeyed and explored the realms of BDSM for some length of time (not that I'm anywhere finished mind you), I understand now what it means to find freedom in surrendering control to an Owner. In becoming their property, their slave, I am to be mindful of their needs, wants, desires, pleasures and whims. My Owner is my sole focus. Aside from my natural day-to-day life, I have no need to concern myself with anything else.

Consciously entering into a D/s agreement as someone's slave is more frightening than anything spewed forth by the media these days. Yet when you find that One special dominant man or woman, that One who will accept your offer of slavery - then that's the moment when the real challenge and adventure begins. That's when you have the freedom to really live your life, be the real you.

That level of nurtured and mutual trust allows so much to happen within you, without you, and between you.

And in the breakdown of barriers and confessions of honest feelings (no matter how hard it may be), it is there that I find my greatest freedom. I am exposed, naked, vulnerable, yet I am open and honest. I will be bound and disciplined, yet I am then free to focus, and comprehend the direction I am to go. I find letting go of responsibility, and surrendering all control and decision making, gives me an incredible sense of Freedom. Who wouldn't? But it's not the same as living your life irresponsibly.

The difference is what role your own sense of honor and commitment will play. Your sense of nobility and self-worth will determine what's meaningful to you. And therein lays your greatest freedom - to know you are worthy of your own life and to grow within it; to be free to give and receive love and trust and friendship. And share experiences unlike any other outside our Lifestyle. It's a sharing of our own humanity, an acceptance of all the flaws and faults and ugliness. It's about being honest and caring, and a desire to serve in the interests not only of your Owner, but also of your community, your neighborhood, your friends and family.

I thank God I live in a country where I can say what I want, and live how I like. Being an American is not only my birthright, but also a privilege. And for those who have given their lives to preserve my Freedom, I offer my undying gratitude. I pray that I am worthy of it. And in offering myself up to slavery, I give myself every opportunity to do so. I am suffused with a shiny, new life force that lay hidden within all the while - something clean, pure...simple. With my Owner as my Guide, all it took was a journey of self-discovery to find it and become spiritually attuned to it. And having found that peace in knowing where I fit within the greater scheme of things - well, what could be more liberating than that?



for those times when you're having troubles

by Celeste aka Bitatrouble

Dear Bitatrouble,

I am a submissive living for the last 3 1/2 years, 24/7 with my Master. Recently I have suspected that he has been seeking a new submissive so I have done something that I am not proud of. I hacked into his email and found evidence that proved my suspicions correct. I admitted what I have done to him and confronted him about the new submissive. Let me say upfront that it is not in our agreement that he would bring other submissives into our relationship without my knowledge and that I would always be allowed to voice my opinions and if I didn't feel comfortable with a person he would not bring them into a relationship with us. In this case though, he is claiming that he had no intention of bringing this person into our relationship and that, along with some other issues, is why he never told me about it.

I am now to be punished for breaking into his email and invading his privacy.

To be honest, I think I am more angry with myself than he is. I feel awful for what I did, but at the same time I am angry at him for breaking the spirit if not the letter of our agreement. I feel there were mistakes made on both sides and right now I don't think there is anything he can do to me that will make me feel worse than I already do. I don't want my Master to engage in activities outside of our relationship and yet I don't want to prevent him from doing things that he needs to do to be happy. I am clueless as to what, if anything, I can do or should do. We have communicated and the results are less than satisfactory for, I believe, both of us. He has agreed to drop communication with the other submissive and now I feel as if I am in the way of something he needs to do for himself and would if I were not in the picture.

Please help.

Contribute and questioning my own submission

Dear contribute,

What you did is prove that you are as untrustworthy as you believed your Master to be so don't expect absolution from this quarter. However, I think I understand why you did what you did. Personally, I do believe that you not only deserve punishment, but should expect it. Believe it or not, that may help you in the long run. Punishment in BDSM is not like other punishments. It is not just used for behavior modification. It is also an act of the Dominant to forgive their submissive for transgressions and once it is over, the transgression is then considered in the past and hopefully a lesson is learned so that the same error will not be repeated. If you do not know what topping from the bottom is, this is a perfect example. You now want to take the situation and force your Dominant to do something that he does not, now, wish to do. If he has told you that he wants to stop communication, accept that and go on from here. My strongest advice to you is, if you truly respect your Dominant, then respect his privacy as sacred. There is a reason



Tribled Times

he did not share the information with you and you took it upon yourself to take control of a situation which you had no right to do. That's what happens when we tread upon sleeping dragons. Sometimes they wake up and then regret we went there in the first place.

Good luck,

Bitá

~~~~~

How does it feel to know you are going to hell, sinner?

Theresa Randolf

Well, good morning, Theresa,

I went ahead and used the name you signed with since it doesn't seem to bother you to let people know that you were surfing a BDSM website at 2:00 AM on a Sunday morning. I can only surmise that you had nothing better to do. Welcome to the dark side.

First of all, you have made an assumption that I believe in hell. Second, you have assumed the God role in that you know that I'm going there. My recollection of the bible is that it is not for mere mortals to make the determinations of the after life. All I can say is that whatever is planned for my immortal soul, at least I am honest with who and what I am and do not judge the actions of others as some do.

Perhaps we will see each other in the hot place. If you get there first, save me a seat.

Bitá

~~~~~

Dear Bitá,

What are your opinions on Pro-Dommes?

Curious George

Dear George,

I think they are great for those that want to pay to play. However, in my world, BDSM is not just about play and if the only experience a person has is what they pay for, they are missing out on a whole lot of what BDSM has to offer.

Cheeks up and happy tails to those that want it, though. I hear Pro-Dommes make a pretty good living.

Bitá

## What's a slave for?



from a male submissive's point of view  
by semanticus

### PROTOCOL, PRO AND CON

I have on two occasions, that I know of, unintentionally broken protocol as I define it below with anger, rage, and what I thought at the time to be insults and abuse heaped on me, and what is worse, upon my Mistress. Since I am submissive only to my Mistress, and very aggressive otherwise, my instinct was to strike back verbally, but I tried to react rationally along the lines of "I meant no disrespect, but also do not feel honor or socially bound to treat you in any special way beyond the normal vanilla bounds of courtesy, decency and respect." If you, the reader, do not feel bound by such a protocol, you know this is a recipe for disaster if you have violated a protocol. There must be a better way than all my attempts at discussion which are much like discussions of religion.

I would like to look at the group, however defined, and its rules from a sociological viewpoint, because, "...S&M is most realistically viewed as a social behavior." (Weinberg, 1994) This is naturally so, because all activities of D/s, which I use interchangeably with S&M for this article, are always done with at least one other person, and often in a group setting with two or more participating in a scene (or at a munch, etc.) with or without one or more spectators.

Generally by protocol is meant fairly rigid rules of behavior between individuals in a given group, and/or fairly rigid rules of behavior between classes of individuals in that group, and/or fairly rigid rules of behavior between individuals on one class of the group to another class of individuals in the group. I refer to slave to Mistress, Mistress to slave and also all slaves to all Mistresses or all Mistresses to all slaves. The situation is not so difficult to the knowledgeable visitor who subscribes to the necessity of a protocol, but to a novice or an unsympathetic but experienced visitor, one to whom the protocol is not important, protocol can be a minefield of social danger.

In reading the book referenced below, I think at last I understand the insistence on protocol and my lack of understanding of that protocol, and most of all, the purposes that protocols probably serve and served. Of course, for groups that rely on protocols, I am referring in general to the so called "Old Guard" Lifestylers, who I am led to believe were brought up in the image of the original gay Leathersex phenomenon that started as far as I can tell in the 1970's.

Now here is the (rough) history as I have culled it from much reading. If I err, please write and tell me. The 1970's coincided with the beginnings of the Gay Pride movement where homosexual men were coming out and being more public. Gay bars and other organizations and publications, both social and political were forming and openly so. I'm not sure I buy this next part, but the book below indicates more than once that some of the gay men in seeking either super-masculine images or super-masculine lovers as a reaction to the public image of male homosexuals as unvaryingly effeminate, kind of invented (?? some gay guys, help me here!) or at least came to the ultra-masculine "Leatherman" identity of black leather, heavy boots, caps, heavy chrome key and other chains, snaps, and studs, knives, etc. and invented (or adopted??) S&M play/fantasy/role playing/lifestyles in this quest. As time went by, a few Leathersex bars and clubs opened to fit the need of places for these men to associate and to meet each other and to hook up for scenes, relationships or maybe just for sex.

We all know how dangerous it can be to play with someone we do not know, and when we do not know his or her style, preferences, limits, judgement, passions, etc. Well, the story goes, the original Leathersex protocol evolved as a solution in addressing this serious problem. The protocol proscribed not only the behaviors I noted above about current interactions, but the education and training necessary for a new man to learn the ropes, both the etiquette and what we today call Safe, Sane, and Consensual.

As an interesting aside, this learning period was presented in the book as a major reason many or most men started out as subs then "matured" in experience to be tops.

Finally, when the pioneers of us less daring heterosexuals started seeking out others to interact and play with, the Leathersex model was adopted. But from our prospective of recent times with much more openness the protocols are not always adopted. The openness is in the media, S&M magazines, contact magazines and newsprint publications, even major metropolitan newspaper "Lonely Hearts" ad sections, and of course, the Internet with pay and free sites, clubs, groups, and e-zines such as this one, all of which have served to promote our present fluid lifestyle with generally many places and venues to meet in. With such mobility as we have today, featuring many places to go and many people at each place, it is much easier to check out potential partners and to form a personal opinion of him or her from watching him or her in action, and asking around for opinions about the prospect from many trusted friends. So to some of us a rigid protocol for training and protection is not so necessary, and many of us do without it and fail to understand those who do have a protocol either because they are honestly oldtimers or because they "broke in" and

What's a slave for?

trained in those traditions.

If you are like me, in a committed monogamous relationship with your Mistress, a protocol can look specious. But if you are alone, and dependent on occasionally or often playing with strangers, you had better have a reservoir of people with knowledge and opinions about your proposed partner, or a rigid protocol with the severe power to ostracise offenders. And that power of excommunication, possible only with a rigid set of traditions, was another good reason for a rigid, no nonsense protocol.

And besides, on the fun side, a set of extremely detailed and precise rules certainly affords many opportunities for great fantasy, role playing, mystery, discipline, suspense, the thrill of fear, control, helplessness, vulnerability, humiliation, and above all of the symbolism of the exchange of power.

So, I for one am going to try to be more understanding whenever I find such a protocol, and try to "cool it" at least so I don't make waves. After all, "When in Rome..." It is better to understand, than to be understood.

semanticus,  
beloved slave of Mistress Cherie  
and so very lucky to be so

Reference: Studies in Dominance & Submission, ed. Thomas S Weinberg, Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 1995

January/February 2002

## Black Leather Jackets

by Chris M

*Myth is a great teacher. We are a storytelling people, and the ghosts of the past haunt the present, guiding us, warning us, always informing our actions. Churchill once said that because he had read further back, he could see further ahead. We need myths and fables to sustain us, to tell us where we come from, what other realities have existed before our time and why they have passed away. In the world of kink, the past plays a mighty role. The infantile fantasies of childhood, the fixations, therapists assure us, originate in long forgotten trauma and the reenactment of humanities great failings - slavery, imprisonment, torture chambers, rape - all echo in the fantasy play of SM practitioners. People invent fictive personal histories, and pad their resumes to add years (and it is assumed self assurance skill and wisdom) to the image people have of them. And many of us, myself included, root endlessly through world and art history looking for kinky ancestors to supplant the paucity of mentors in the present era.*

*The following letter was part of a correspondence between Shiloh and a novice dominant he was mentoring some years ago. But be warned. As knowledgeable as he is, Shiloh has been known to tell a whopper or two. He also, for whatever reason, invents characters like Biker Nick (his alter ego) and attributes his adventures to them. Caveat Emptor. And now Shiloh speaks.*

(Be prepared.. this is long!)

I'm writing from my hotel room at the Black Rose festival in suburban Washington DC, what the organizers assure me is the largest SM conference in the country. Two thousand conventioners in stilettos, jackboots, or padding about barefoot at the end of a leash. The elevators are crammed with smiling kinksters of all ages and persuasions clutching bags of brand new "toys" freshly purchased from the gargantuan vendor floor. In my day, an unfinished basement, fifty feet of rope and a whole lot of imagination was all you needed to create a little dollop of heaven on earth. But, the times have changed.

These conventions have been happening for about ten years, and this one is typical, if larger. That is typical too, every year they grow like KS lesions and there are more of them. This one is the third or fourth hosted by Black Rose. Two hotels! A vendor floor the size of Macys overflowing with more toys than Santa's workshop! Workshops beginning every hour! Awards ceremonies. Inspirational speeches. A dungeon the size of a small aircraft hanger patrolled by baby-faced "dungeon monitors" making sure that nothing too hairy takes place. The attendees all looked like mad max - even the girls.

So why am I cowering in my room trying in vain to find a decent country station on the radio with that bacchanal raging below? Because I feel old. Not chronologically mind you. Easily half of the kinksters reveling downstairs are in their late forties or higher. Many of them are as silver haired and ancient as I am. It's soul weariness, my young friend, brought on by ...well you've heard my rant on this theme before. SM is so different today from how it used to be. For decades it was the most intimate, scary, beautiful thing you could share with another human being! And now? A freak show, with all the subtlety of a Mardi Gras float. They have taken what was once intimate, forbidden and holy and turned it into a garish theme park.

The play area downstairs (Play. Man do I hate that word) really does resemble a Sadomasochistic Epcot. Picture this: A white walled medical area stocked with dentists chairs, rubber gloves and needles for piercing play, scalpels, speculums and urethral sounds. Ten feet away are suspension rigs for giving your lover a lift. Then, a fleet of waxing tables, a forest of crosses for standup floggings, a fake bordello for the sissy maids catering to the whimsy of cruel, lounging dominatrixes. There's a Roman amphitheater with bleachers on both sides for world class voyeurs and exhibitionists. An oversized nursery with oversized cribs, inhabited by two hundred-pound toddlers in human scale diapers and bonnets. And a pony paddock for human ponies and their equestrian riders. These creature really are thrilling to behold, some of them, wearing unbelievable gear: Reins, bits, blinders, six inch hoofs right out of Equus, headgear you might see on Clydesdales in beer commercials, and very authentic tails, often attached by ergonomically designed plugs.

I could go on but what's the point? It's huge. It's loud. It's very right now. And more than anything else it makes me miss the leather scene I knew when I was young. Shortly after I agreed to teach you the art and intrigue that is SM, I promised I would explain its twisty history here in America. Perhaps this is the right time Last time we spoke, you asked about the leather jacket, did I think you were ready for one, etc. I told you that it was a tricky question and that I wanted to get back to you. Sometimes a jacket's just a jacket, and for that you don't need my permission or advice. But if you want it to mean something, as many people do, you need perspective, something most of you youngsters today sorely lack. They are magnificent aren't they? Like soft warm armor. And black is a profound color. Renoir called it the queen of colors. Black is a color of ritual, the preferred hue for the robes of priests, nuns and judges. It is the color of mourning, bohemia, the Amish, the Hassidim and the Gestapo. To wear one is to forge a link with the past, a past departing at ever more rapid speed. And since I have previously refuted the preposterous wives tale that we originated from thousand year old druidic spanking clans, I feel impelled to explain where we did come from. Perhaps then you'll be able to decide whether its time for you to own a jacket like mine.

AFTER THE APOCALYPSE (1940's-1953)

It... we... emerged from that American explosion of culture following the war against Hitler: Bebop, the birth of modern jazz, abstract expressionist painting, the beat poets, and the first generation of American SM. All this beauty, modern art, modern music,

and modern sex has, as its common backdrop, the death camps, the blue eyed swastika youth of Hitler's Germany, the H-bomb, and the modern industrial state devoted to the liquidation of the different. Each of these art forms was pioneered by angry, rebellious young people unwelcome or unwilling to join in Ozzie and Harriet's bland suburban America. You will note that I am assuming some cultural literacy on your part. Unless you can hold an interesting discussion about the works of Charlie Parker, Bill Burroughs, Jackson Pollock, Allen Ginsberg, Ralph Ellison, Louie Armstrong, or Chuck Arnett, then you need to start taking some breadth courses evenings or weekends. No I am not kidding. A person oblivious to culture has no business bossing other people around.

Let's return to the jacket. I received mine used, from my old friend Biker Nick in 1986 when we were working together in an AIDS clinic. It was, I believe, his fifth and I'm proud to wear it to this day. Nick is a true force of nature. Indeed I can't think of anyone with as rich a zest for living as he had. And as I sit here thinking about it I am surprised I haven't mentioned him to until now. You remember of course the first afternoon I worked with you on your ruinous flogging technique? How pissed off you were that I made you waste the day doing figure eights. Oh you were fuming! And the next day the same? I'm having a good laugh now, my first in ages. And that night when I put that young thing in front of you, do you remember how smooth, how controlled, how utterly present and in command you were. I don't know who looked more surprised you or the boy you were flogging. And that was after only two days of serious focus. You will recall I gave you a copy of "Zen in the Art of Archery" and told you to read it and do two hours of air flogging a day. Guess who once gave that same task to me.

Nick was - well actually, is - one of the most spectacular SM artists I have ever known, really more a legend than a man, and he acquired that skill the old fashioned way: through thousands of hours of devoted work, a love for what he did and the desire to improve. He is also something of a bullshit artist, a brilliant storyteller though I would stop short of saying they can all be uniformly believed. But I cant tell you about that jacket without telling his tale also, or at least the tales he shared with me, since I wasn't even born when his career in the lifestyle had begun. He was born in 1930 in Lubbock, Texas. He grew up in a respectable, rotten, abusive, God-fearing suburban home, like mine and so many others. He was beaten regularly and routinely treated to the spectacle of Dad brutalizing mom. He was a poor student, lousy at sports, friendless. But he read endlessly, and often escaped to the movies alone. He claims to have seen Wizard of Oz forty times by the time he ran away from home at seventeen. Biker Nick is not alone in finding it pretty mythic. The business in the poppy field? That was from the Odyssey. And it became a touchstone for Biker Nick as it did for many generations, especially of gay people. Was it the theme of fantasy and longing for escape to an undiscovered home? Or because strange adventures with eccentric new companions coming together form comfort as families? Or because of the horrific predators always lurking in ambush? Or perhaps it's the characters, all sure they are defective, short of heart, brains, brawn, and how they gradually learn, through adventure, that they are whole. "Are you a friend of Dorothy?" It became the first covert gay come-on line recognized by queers throughout the USA.

I know. I'm digressing. Nick's boyhood reading materials were tightly controlled. Mostly the Bible, National Geographic and an old encyclopedia. But Nick learned early to make lemonade from lemons. In the Bible, he found lurid tales unmentioned in Sunday school, even darker and more terrible than his home life. In the National Geographic, and Encyclopedia Britannica a whole universe of wild tribal acts of violent bodily ordeal revealed themselves. Later editions would be tidied up by censors, but those early ones really rocked. George Catline's jaw-dropping paintings of Indian braves hanging by flesh hooks, crazy photos of native practices from New Guinea, Africa, the plains Indians, elaborate tattoos, body piercings, stringent corseting, violent, cool rites of passage. Well? Wasn't it inevitable a red blooded American boy would get sick of just reading and give it a try? So when his parents were out, he would trot down to the basement workshop, where he constructed his own personal home torture chamber: ropes, weights, a screaming hot iron, Exacto knives, broom handles, axle grease. He explored for thousands of hours the art of getting high on the natural opiates of the body.

One day his increasingly suspicious dad popped in mid-session and that was the end. So while Eisenhower's America celebrated its new prosperity, bought homes on the GI Bill, held barbeques and worked on their basement atom bomb shelters, Biker Nick, stiff and bruised from head to toe, rode off for Oz with a biker gang he met at a hot dog stand. Most of whom were young veterans returning from the war. Half of them had served in a unit that had liberated Treblinka. They had left their small towns kids idealistic and eager to fight for their country. They returned as grizzled old men, changed forever by years of combat, the bottomless horror of the death camps, and the apocalyptic storms of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some, not all, had discovered sex through their shared experience of man to man foxhole love. Some were able to adjust, donning the gray flannel suit and beginning their ascent "up the organization." But for Biker Nick and his fellow survivors no such assimilation was possible. So they saddled up and took to the highways, futuristic cowboys searching for new frontiers. First as mascot, later as full member, Nick grew to manhood among those new frontiersmen, learning their outlaw sensibilities, paramilitary rigor, and rock and roll sexuality.

Despite today's hoopla about the old guard, there were no standardized rites of training and protocol, no more than you would expect from a bunch of rowdy leathernecks. All that came later. Nonetheless, training was far more rigorous than attending a string of Tuesday night seminars at the Hyatt, with printed handouts, a donut tray and a coffeepot. More like joining a frat with a hell week lasting years. If you wanted to join a club and you were accepted as a pledge, the drill was simple: You belonged to a man; he did what he wanted to you. That's basically it. Over the months, you learned what he could do (as well as his club brothers) and you learned all scenes from the receiving end. If lucky, you belonged to a skilled craftsman and committed teacher. If unlucky, you belonged to a brute, who administered rapes and beatdowns and you taught yourself to be tough. From what Nick tells me, SM has never been sweeter than it is today with our charming rubrics of "safe sane and consensual", and "bottom sets the limits" It had not yet become the weekend hobby of bored suburbanites. Bottoms spent a lot of time with bones, muscles, orifices, and hides in various shades of black and blue. Those not man enough to take it were out of the program. Small wonder tops outnumbered bottoms ten to one in those early days.

Maybe because of his home schooling Biker Nick took it all in stride, becoming a famously mouthy bottom who shouldered an

insane load of punishment and earned the nickname "Toughie." Nick's first mentor was Mandrake, a nationalized German, older than the rest of the pack, who had fled Berlin in 1935 just as the Nazi book burnings began. After escaping to America he had returned in the uniform of a tank commander to pummel the regime that had raped his country. Mandrake used to regale his biker brothers with tales of Berlin in the 20's, a sexual Mecca where everything was allowed. He used to go on and on about this sadoerotic bohemian paradise where nudism, cross-dressing, SM bars and countless other earthly delights were openly condoned. There was even some kind of sex university where Mandrake professed to be a researcher of some dubious sort. All was swept away by Hitler and his puritanical horde. This is a lesson Mandrake pounded into Nick's head: Never take freedom for granted, for no matter how permissive and wild the times, it can all end in an instant.

For Biker Nick, those were good times. The community was small and friendships were close. The brotherhood forged by war, shared persecution and willing banishment from the mainstream laid the foundation for lifetime friendships. In the old day it meant something to say you were in a club, like the Spartans. It meant you had admitted you wanted in, that you had endured a pledge period, wondered if you'd make it, if you'd be accepted. It meant you'd been accepted as a brother, a craftsman, become a better man. It meant you had raised this thing we do to the highest priority in life, even if you worked for a living in a straight job. It was a time of craft. The gear was all hand made. There were no books, no videos, no magazines, no personal ads. Even the idea of a leather bar would have seemed like science fiction to us then. There was none of today's moony yearning for acceptance or understanding from the outside world. It was a dirty, nasty, secret thing, and hotter for it. Busts and hassles from the police were a fact of life. Like the early Christians we lived with secrets that we knew could cost us our lives. But like them we had access to a forbidden holiness, unknown, unobtainable to outsiders. We were a tribe and it felt that way. The tribal language was different too. We used tools not "toys," held runs not "parties," engaged in work not "play." And by "work" I do not mean burdensome toil, but artistry and craft, the activity of adults done for a purpose, even if that purpose is the creation of pure bliss. That level of monastic focus forged responsibility in a way the casual mixed groups of today never can. Saying "I'm with Black Rose" means the check cleared, nothing more.

That generation of cowboy/warriors became the genesis of the American leather movement, as well as the earliest of the biker clubs still riding the highways today. Their dress code was pure function; biker from the waist down (jeans, chaps, heavy belt, boots), airman from the waist up (Bomber jacket with epaulettes, peaked cap, military insignia). With the men of this generation only is it appropriate to invoke the phrase "Old Guard".

Leather was not fashion wear in those days, and the decision to wear it, particularly for gay men, was a defiant proclamation of identity. Remember that before the war, to be queer was the very image of sexual submission: Tight sweaters, pinched shoes, eyeliner and rouge, French perfume, feminine deportment... the same bullshit stereotypes imposed on women. And we bought it! We all wanted to be Judy Garland: nelly, wide eyed, and dependant. We wanted to surrender to strong masculine men (read "straight acting"). We didn't dream we could be that way ourselves.

Leather changed that. Just as rock and roll would soon explode across the radio dial, Leather blew away the dainty, feminized "queen" image. For gay men, motorcycle gear, a greaser cut, scruff, and a "fuck you" attitude said, "I'm a faggot AND a man". No apologies offered, no quarter allowed. That's why SM was part of it - for bottoms it demonstrated toughness and grit. For Tops it demonstrated power and the willingness to use it. It was not delicate or ladylike. Try to imagine Nick's disgust when the hets came and stole it all. When Marlon Brando in the "Wild One" hit the screens our sacred leather vestments became a national fad. Who cared if you owned a bike or not? It was 1953 and mainstreaming of leather had already begun.

## FIFTIES FUTURISTIC

By this time Nick's biker days had already come to an end. Some preposterous motorcycle stunt landed him a lengthy convalescence in New York City where he roomed with a friend from the war, the now legendary fetish artist John Willie, publisher of "Bizarre" magazine. As Nick mended he became acquainted with the embryonic het scene forming in the readership of the semiannual "Bizarre". Published sporadically between '46 and '59, "Bizarre" explored the dark side of American sexual life hidden behind the white picket fences and aluminum siding of the cold war puritanical America. Sadists and masochists of both genders, cross-dressers, fetishists of every imaginable stripe subscribed and wrote to Willie about their tastes and proclivities. The letters section forms an extraordinary archive of human desire and a blueprint for the fetish BBS systems still forty years in the future. Before long Rick was helping Willie on the magazine. The sadoerotic porn trade was a Chandleresque cloak and dagger existence. Willie and his staff were always dodging the cops and censorious postal laws, getting busted, having their artwork, photography and writings impounded or destroyed, hammered with crushing fines, legal fees and interruption of the always meager cash flow. But Willie saw "Bizarre" and his war against censorship as a continuation of his fight against Hitler, a battle for human peculiarity, individuality and freedom.

Biker Nick had been too young to fight the Germans, but this was a battle he had been born to wage. Perhaps it was the devastating beauty of Willie's fetish drawings and lush watercolors, which have never been matched, let alone surpassed, in the history of erotic art. Clearly inspired by the anything goes decadence of Weimar Berlin (Nick recounts spending hours weaving yarns for Willie and his staff, retelling and embellishing on the stories Mandrake had told him), Willie's pen and watercolor brush breathed life into those yarns constructing an entire SM universe: Fantastical bondage devices, unreal dungeons imprisoning gorgeous submissive women at the mercy of equally beautiful dominant ones (the men are hacked in as virtual afterthoughts). And just as the biker archetype can still be seen today in leather bars around the world, the imagery disseminated in "Bizarre" all but created the exotic fetish fashions of the present day, especially for women: Gleaming body suits of the new polymer materials which had not yet been introduced into real world attire; Leather and chain as fashion wear; impossibly tight wasp waists; micro short skirts, high boots, long gloves; and skyscraper heels. There was even - seven years before Playboy - a sexy gal dressed up like a bunny. Even fifty years after the fact, Willie's illustrations are startlingly contemporary, both vintage and futuristic.



Despite the opulent fantasy world created by "Bizarre," they were dirt poor. Both Willie and Nick were rotten businessmen but for the first time since childhood, Nick had a fixed abode, and something like a real job. And with perks like these who needed a hefty cashflow? Nick worked by day in Willie's office on Church street, binding and photographing beautiful women, dabbling in writing, doing page layout, and watching Willie create his exquisite works of art. Afterwards they went drinking at Chumly's, where Willie played a banjo they kept for him behind the bar and Biker Nick sang in a gorgeous tenor voice.

The social world of heterosexual kink in the fifties was an entirely different beast from the leathery men's biker clubs. It was an intensely secretive, person to person enterprise, constructed through years of interpersonal networking and study of thinly veiled personal ads using keywords like "strict", "domineering" and "compliant". In terms of visibility, being editors of the nations premier fetish mag didn't hurt. Many of the letters that jammed Willie's mailbox were better than porn; not for nothing did he publish three different correspondence issues. Readers of Bizarre, were constantly spilling their guts about their own bizarre fantasies, predilections, and yearnings to meet like minded folks. And there were parties, even back then. They were secretive, almost sacred affairs. Many of the attendees were married to spouses with no patience; no interest sometimes no knowledge of their partner's interests in kink. When lucky, the parties were held in the home of a couple who were both into it, and had tons of friends. More often they took place when a vanilla spouse was away. Sometimes everyone left home in the morning like it was just another workday and met at a rented hotel suite and played together all day til five o'clock, when they would all head home feigning a hard days work..

Being a true sexual omnivore, Nick had no trouble acclimating to kink involving women and accompanied Willie on his recruitment runs to pick up models. They would enter a nice hotel, ever vigilant of the roving hotel detective, lay out a spread of his kinky publications and wait. When a woman noticed them, tarried, and began reading, Willie would sidle up and introduce himself. Biker Nick did some of these runs on his own, even succeeded in seducing a yet undiscovered Bettie Page on one lucky tour. From Willie, Nick learned "the ancient secrets of oriental bondage." (Even then there was a great bugaboo over things oriental). From Nick, Willy learned belt beatings, erotic knifeplay and hard leather attitude. Nick was surprised that Willie didn't know that SM was practiced between men, or in the biker community, but it wouldn't be the last time he saw that even experienced sadists proved oblivious to their own history and heritage.

#### HEADING WEST '60-'67

One night Biker Nick was quietly enjoying a milk shake in a Jersey diner, clad head to toe in gleaming black leather, when a small, bespectacled gentleman approached him. "Pardon me" he began in a self assured tone " But aren't you a friend of Dorothy?" He invited Nick to his table for dinner. The diminutive stranger gave him a matchbook from a bar, The "Why Not" in San Francisco, one of the earliest American leatherbars, a phone number and a challenge to head west for a drink. Willie had decided to hang up the gloves on "Bizarre," and Nick was beginning to pine for the open road. So he headed west, having many adventures along the way, including about a month cavorting in Chuck Renslow's legendary Gold Coast bar, Chicago's temple to masculine men. By the time he arrived in Frisco, the "Why Not" had already shuttered its doors, but leathermen and SM cruising grounds were starting to take form in the neighborhood "South of Market" with Folsom Street as its dingy main drag. South of Market, or SOMA was an unfashionable industrial neighborhood of warehouses, alleys, and low rent housing. The cheap real estate attracted fringe dwellers and permitted the opening of bars and bathhouses catering to exotic tastes. The paint was still wet on Chuck Arnett's legendary mural inside "The Toolbox," the first of many leatherbars in SOMA and the only one in business at the time. Arnett's painting covered an entire wall, a larger than lifesize monolith of powerful, brooding leather men (and two leather dykes!) as somber and imposing as the heads on Easter Island. For Biker Nick, the bar and its clientele were as close to heaven as he'd come. Levis leather, scruff, and white T's were the club uniform. Sneakers, sweaters, makeup or cologne were banned by posted decree. It was also about this time in leatherbar culture of the early sixties that the ritualized, protocol intensive forms of SM began to emerge, although even at that early date they were attributed to the mythical past of biker/knights as a chivalric code. Who knows perhaps it had been for some. But Nicks experience was that the ritualized monastic trappings emerged in Bar culture, and developed overtime into the elaborate, even fey mysticism described in Bill Carney's deliciously Nasty SM fiction "The Real Thing". Soon Folsom and surrounding SOMA were attracting a lot of local attention from men who enjoyed a walk on the wild side. It was a hip, intimate, underground scene. That is until "Life Magazine"

In 1964, "Life" became the first major magazine to publish a voyeuristic peek into the lives of "real homosexuals." And did they feature tax paying, church going gay couples? No, silly. Naturally, they chose to focus on San Francisco SM bar culture. On June 26, gay men all around the world were treated to a grainy black and white two page spread of Biker Nick and his butch Californian brothers, with the faces of Arnett's mural looming above them and staring into the eyes of straight America. Nick and his friends bought about a hundred copies, to hand out at the club. Happily, "Life's" homophobic little gambit blew up in their face. When "Life" had referred to San Fran as "the Gay Capitol of America," they meant it as a slam. But, for the secretly gay men and women across the country, really around the world, that article served as the heroic call to action. Soon small town boys and small town girls across the nation started pulling up their stakes and migrating west for a different sort of gold rush. Biker Nick, seated at the Toolbox bar was thirty-four, silver threads already appearing in his moustache. But his days as a leather daddy were just getting started.

Nicks flair for coincidence didn't end with the "Life" magazine shoot. On a run back to New York City to visit Mandrake in 1969, they were just leaving a viewing of the "Wizard of Oz" in full leather dress and were heading over to Keller's for a drink, when they heard on the street about the death of Judy Garland. The two of them ducked into a nearby gay bar, what Biker Nick later called "a vile little snake pit," called the Stonewall Inn to sit down and gather their wits. It was a terrible moment and people were weeping into their Mai Tai's. They had just been served two watered down brews when the cops broke in for what would prove to be the world's most famous raid. It might have been just another bust, but for some reason - maybe it was Garland's death - something just

snapped. Mandrake and Nick, veterans at being arrested, were already going quietly when a cop shoved the drag queen directly in front of them. She turned slowly and knocked him out cold. It was the bitchslap heard round the world. The crowd went wild. The cops ran for their lives. Gay pride was born that night. Ten thousand people marched up Broadway for the first-year anniversary.

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF LEATHER

After Stonewall the leather universe really expanded. Censorship laws were knocked aside making photos of split beavers and hard cocks legal. Imagery that would have gotten John Willie jailed became standard newsstand fodder. The "Story of O", long available only in French, became a bestseller in English, and began its infiltration into the minds and libidos of millions. Snappy colored hankies started appearing crammed into left and right jean pockets flagging your kink du jour. Larry Townsend's "Leatherman's Handbook," the first ever how-to-do-SM book, hit the stands in 1972. Larry was roundly dissed by his fellow tops (who still outnumbered bottoms seven to one) for having revealed the trade secrets to the outside world . . . dissed until the deluge of bottoms began, each clutching a copy of Larry's book. There was a "leather guy" in the Village People. Even the hets started pulling it together. Biker Nick was in New York, noshing on a bagel and looking for someone to do in the grimy personals of the December 1971 edition of "Screw Magazine" when he came across this slightly garbled ad.

**MASOCHIST? HAPPY? Does Psychiatry Help? Is a satisfactory life style possible? There's women's lib, black lib., etc. Isn't it time we put something together? Write PO Box 2783, Grand Central Station, NY, NY 10017.**

On a lark, Biker Nick fired off a letter, one of the six the ad received. Only three people showed for the scheduled meeting. Together, they founded The Til Eulenspiegel Society, now the oldest mixed group in the country. They actually had to change a bylaw to allow the first Tops to join (this after realizing that a bunch of lonely masochists might have more fun with a few sadists around). Within months they leapt from obscurity to the headlines when the "Village Voice," that grand bastion of free speech, refused to run their ad. It was Nick, playing wise old man, who suggested they picket with signs. So they did. The tabloid press had a field day. Nick even made the nightly news. Utterly humiliated, the "Voice" was forced to relent and the rest is SM history.

Back home in San Fran, Biker Nick became a proud and visible figure in the rapidly growing frontier town of SOMA, with Folsom Street as the Main Street of kink. By day he worked bike repair, by night he immersed himself in the Folsom nightlife, as the sexual outlaws continued their exodus to the city by the bay. If leather bars had once seemed like a dream come true, Folsom at the turn of the seventies was something yet undreamed of: An entire leather metropolis, almost a mile of bars, baths, homemade dungeons, and dark industrial alleys. Hordes of Butch leatherclad partiers. Pulsating music everywhere. A Mardi Gras of impromptu backalley orgies and kinky encounters in empty lots, parking garages, or parked cars. Baths and bars on every block. The air was alive with the smell of leather, dope, amyl nitrate and hot sweaty sex, and pre-Bee Gees disco providing a common heartbeat to the leather nation. "All the Young Dudes" Bowie's anthem to London leathermen, became a huge hit for Mott the Hoople. Green eye shadowed, leather clad Lou Reed crooned "Walk on the wild side" from every jukebox. Gays of the more nelly variety settled into the nearby Castro, but even they came to SOMA to party. Even today you have to squint to imagine it. It was decadent dazzling Weimar Berlin all over again.

And the bars? Every one different but always intimate, intense, dark, and crowded. There was the Ritch Street baths frequented by bodybuilders and models which had dark orgy rooms in the back. At The Caldron, patrons were required to go naked except for their boots. Bathtubs under spotlights served as both urinals and play stations for communal watersports. The bartender kept a riding crop handy for slashing his way through the crowd. The Hothouse with its goofy fantasy rooms was a sort of downrent version of the Madonna Inn., and had a huge play floor downstairs. The Slot was big for fisting and SM activities, featuring SM equipment in almost every room. You could break your neck from all the Crisco on the floor The Club Baths were a single enormous cavern, which could hold seven hundred nude and seminude revelers in its belly. Young tough biker types frequented Off-the-Levee on Bryant. The Ambush on Harrison sported a matchbook designed by Chuck Arnett and even sold its own line of poppers. The Stud had the temerity to have itself ordained a chapel of the Universal Life Church to make things harder for party crashing cops. You could order joints at the bar if you were known. FEBE'S on Folsom attracted a more experienced older crowd, and a pretty happening men's head. At Boot camp it was always roasting hot, the bartenders occasionally dressed like San Fran's finest. The Arena, on 9th Street held Slave auctions to kick off the Saturday night parties. The Red Star Saloon, was about psychedelic drugs and opened into the legendary Folsom Barracks, the Taj Mahal of kink. Four stories of play rooms dark, windy hallways, secluded alcoves, dank stairwells, always jammed, always happening.

The more modest scaled Covered Wagon on 11th street (before it earned the nickname Breeders alley) featured an open air pool as part of the play area and even had some decent country on the juke until disco kicked everything else out of memory. Hamburger Mary's was a regular stop as well before it got hetrified, gentrified and raised its prices to ten bucks a burger. Also on Folsom was the Black and Blue, the No-Name, The Bolt, The Brig, and the Ramrod which showed filthy movies on the wall. The Roundup drew Cowboys and outdoorsy types. The Sutro Baths were one of the only bisexual cruising spots on the strip, and even held occasional women's nights. Off the beaten path, The Trench was all about uniforms, and had uncut nights. If you were uncut (and the bartender always checked, even if you were a regular) you got a free Schnaps.

That my dear was the golden age of leather. The fruition of the sexual revolution. Biker Nick knew everybody, and everybody knew him. He hung out with Bill Tellman and Arnett. He partied with Rex and Tom of Finland both of whom did his portrait. He enjoyed the debatable pleasure of discovering a lovestruck exgirlfriend had immortalized their not quite ten week affair as a steamy bestseller transforming the gregarious Nick into a brooding, tennis playing, business drone, with a spartan New York apartment and a penchant for women's cologne. Such were the times. Good times. A photo from the time shows Nick with a trim silver beard, kingly bearing, surrounded by friends, sought out in the court of the early seventies leather.

## KIT

But it wasn't all sunshine and lube. Biker Nick was starting to feel lonely and out of step. The scene was larger than ever and teaming with mustached, shade wearing macho men, clones of the leathermen of his youth. Today the scene is so vast that we are used to being surrounded by strangers, but for Nick the experience was new and unsettling. Even women were starting to appear, wearing leather jackets, boots and jeans. Nick was already aware of the passing of an age. He had already been surprised and disappointed to find that none of his new friends had even heard of John Willie or his beautiful art. Biker Nick missed the camaraderie of his pals from the forties and wanted someone who loved him best of all. He started imagining meeting someone mature, cultured, dignified, refined. Instead he met Kit.

Kit was a rough trade beauty who materialized on Biker Nick's private stool at an exclusive men's club. No one knew who he was or how he had gotten in. He was shaggy and wild looking, and wore a leather jacket. Words were passed and before anyone could blink, Nick and the stranger were brawling. They practically trashed the bar. But once they had exhausted every ounce of strength they had, they were inseparable from then on. Kit was an unschooled biker from the great north woods who had only been in town a few weeks. Some claimed that he had been raised by wolves. He had been crashing at the apartment of a smooth talking Canadian Airlines flight attendant, but after their first night Kit moved into Biker Nick's lair. Those were the happiest years of Biker Nick's life. Biker Nick taught his lover about the customs and history and heritage of leather. They went everywhere together. Kit proved as sharp and challenging a pupil as Biker Nick had been to Mandrake. They became regulars at the Catacombs, an opulent SM and fisting club that opened in '75. They even looked alike, once the scruff was cleaned away from Kit's face. They went on runs together and had many adventures. Somehow they even went through lion country safari on their bikes, and are said to have engaged in South of the Border bullfights on their hogs.

But their story was not to end well. After one of their long cross-country bike trips, Kit picked up a mysterious cough. Instead of clearing up, it grew worse. Biker Nick finally brought his lover to the hospital and watched in horror as Kit wasted away to nothing - from pneumonia of all things. He never left the bedside during Kit's decline. His death was horrible; he cursed the day he came to SF, the truck driver he hitched a ride from, the day he was born. But he stayed loyal and loving to his beloved friend Nick to the very end. When Kit died, Biker Nick stayed at his bedside for three whole days refusing to leave the body or let it to be removed.

## SAINTHOOD

Nick wandered, wailing like a banshee through Market, through SOMA, through North Beach, Castro and Mission. He began to see and speak of terrible visions, Old Testament plagues, and apocalyptic doom. And soon the people did start getting sick, and wasting away. The fisters, tops first among them, were the first to go. It would be years before they figured out that the virus entered the bloodstream through tiny nicks in the hands spread through the communal Crisco buckets supplied at every club. As AIDS spread, panic seized the public mind, and City Hall in knee jerk response came down hard on the baths, the bars and all night bookstores of Folsom. Within years the former Mecca of masochismo would be reduced to a skeleton of its former glory.

Perhaps it was the strain of losing Kit, of watching his community thrive and then collapse, but Biker Nick embarked on a period of almost cosmic mourning. He sold the bike shop, moved out of his house, and gave all the money away to charity. His massive art collection, photos from the fifties and forties, bondage photos and images by Willie, even his Tom of Finland portraits were are lost in the shuffle. Friends were sure Biker Nick had gone around the bend, and urged him to stay with them, but he was inconsolable and refused all offers of help. He tested clean, and that only made it worse. Why had he been spared? For the first time Nick let his trimmed beard and hair go native. Before long he resembled an older version of Kid - wild hair, unkempt appearance, erratic behavior. He wandered the streets of Haight Ashbury as a vagrant, avoiding his old neighborhood, and looking for all the world like an apocalyptic prophet. He collected alms, spent the money on drugs and used books. He got high and read aloud from the Inferno, the Iliad, St John of the Cross, St Theresa of Avilla, Rumi, the Orestia... sometimes for hours on end while a street urchin passed the hat. He performed hair-raising feats like carving Petraglyphs in his chest with broken glass, crawling for miles on bloodied hands and knees, and dragging a large wooden cross through the Embarcadero. He scourged his back into a mass of welts, spun like a draydle for hours on end, rested on improvised beds of nails. Anyone who asked was told he was looking for a man good enough to beat him until he said "Sir". There were even a few takers, but no one ever succeeded. Until Bryce.

## BRYCE, SAMOIS, AND THE WOMEN OF THE CATACOMBS: MIDSEVENTIES

Bryce was a 26 year old professional dominatrix carrying her groceries home in sweats and running shoes when she passed Biker Nick and spied his dog-eared copy of the Epic of Gilgamesh. She took him back to her penthouse, got him bathed, fed him breakfast and then beat him within an inch of his life, extracting the magic word after barely three hours of ministrations. Bryce, who was putting herself through nursing school by administering enemas, and beatdowns to bankers and corporate lawyers, got Biker Nick all patched up afterwards.

He remained in Bryce's household for the next ten years, as a platonic housemate She worked on her degree, and did sessions. He took care of the house and Bryce's five year old boy Davon. Slowly he got his weight back up. "Like Lennon" he boasted softly of his new vocation as a family man. Through Bryce, Biker Nick got to see an entirely different side of SM. At the end of her day, after school, homework, a few sessions in her dungeon, and putting her son to bed, she would relax, and while Nick folded laundry, Bryce would tell stories about a history Biker Nick knew little about.

Women, like everybody else, had been fantasizing about lusty, erotic dominance and submission since forever, as often as not from the dominant perspective. And just as men had found, in leather role models, a hard masculine identity, tough dyke women had found similar power in the "butch" persona: Choptop, jeans, boots, no feminine anything. But there were no leatherbars for women,

and for women curious about SM, South of Market offered nothing. To Bryce's eyes, the night life of Folsom that had been a paradise to Nick, was as segregated as Johannesburg.

Through her volunteer work on the San Francisco Sex Information Switchboard, Bryce had already met some of the women who would soon become pioneers of women's SM. There was Cynthia Slater who had started the fledgling SM discussion group "Janus," a few years earlier. Pat Califia, a writer/agitator with a straight razor wit who would go on to be the strongest SM writer of her time. Acclaimed novelist Dorothy Allison, and burgeoning scholar Gayle Rubin who would go on to pen "Valley of Kings," a lovingly detailed history of the leather movement. And of course there were scores of others my feeble old mind can no longer recall. Some had discovered SM through the Van Dykes, a wild group of lesberados who went marauding around in vans, terrorized women's music festivals, and hosted mini play & pot parties in their vans. And there's this one whose name I can't remember who had been a member of "Women Against Violence in Pornography and the Media (WAVPM)" before coming out as a very happy shit hot sadist. Young, impassioned and appalled at the thought of women submitting to erotic torture, she was introduced to SM imagery through WAVPM's hate literature and their over the top slide show, and the more she looked at it, the more it turned her on. Though dykes became the leaders, it was mostly bi girls at first, like Bryce. Why bi? Who knows? Perhaps because like dykes, they had an affinity to gay men but slightly greater access to their dark sanctuaries? Perhaps as a minority within the minority of gay women a few extra steps into the fringe didn't cost them much. Hard to say. But initially they were just young horny women, looking for action, and facing long odds. Biker Nick had noticed them now and then trying to blend in at men's leather bars in town. With no leather bars, and with vanilla dykes unnerved by leatherfolk and SM imagery, being a woman into SM meant a lot of skulking around the peripheries of women's bookstores, Janus Meetings, and the men's leatherbars of SOMA.

#### HATE AND ORANGE JUICE: THE QUEER PURGES 1977 -1978

Bryce was also passionately aware of the large socioeconomic picture in a way Nick never had been, and took it upon herself to tutor him in the importance of current events like the political juggernaut gathering steam behind former Miss America and orange juice pitchman, Anita Bryant. Remember Anita Bryant? In 1977, in Dade County Florida (where Jim Morrison was arrested for obscenity, and CDs by Two Live Crews were declared illegal) Miss Bryant unveiled "Save the Children." It was a publicity campaign which combined Fundamentalist Christianity and two hundred proof gay hatred. Sick of the healthy cheer of the Village People and the joyous lifestyle they represented, Mistress Anita and some of her more reactionary friends decided to purify America of ... all liberal excesses frankly... but like Hitler and his brood they chose to start with sexual deviants. So Anita began by beating her drum about porn, weakening moral fiber, and the gay plan to emasculate and deflower all American youth. Her goal was linking closet church going queers with pedophilia, transsexualism, Sadism, those who enjoy their sex al fresco, and porn, especially the jailbait variety. America was feeling beat up over inflation, Vietnam, Watergate, and the energy crises and was ripe for a witch hunt. Anita had called for a Gay one. And it worked. Media ghouls ate it up like Velveeta. Write-in campaigns were initiated to put the heat on politicians. Right wingers who had always linked liberalism with faggotry, sadomasochism, and pederasty, had been pinning for the red-bashing days of Joe McCarthy and felt like this was their big moment. And it was. Anti-queer legislation was rammed through massively funded voter initiatives in Dade County Florida, and now anti-gay legislation was headed for the ballot box in the bellwether state of California. No one remembers it today but it was a turning point in US culture. The Briggs Amendment, if passed, would mandate the firing of any gay or lesbian teachers in California schools, or ANY teacher who mentioned homosexuality in school. A win in California would assure look alike legislation to be introduced in all fifty states.

This climate of crackdown had not passed unnoticed in Queersville USA. Vanilla gays were no more naturally comfortable with SM than vanilla hets. "Straight acting" gays of Castro (who had forgotten by now that bitchy drag queens punching out cops were the founding fathers of gay liberation) had always been embarrassed by the bare chests and bare cheeks of the nearby Folsom crowd. The brilliant writer John Rechy who practiced and wrote about edgesex practices like orgies, anonymous encounters, and sex in parks, alleys and all night theaters, was a fanatical SM phobe, and sprinkled caustic jabs at SM and its sicko practitioners throughout his otherwise brilliant prose. The pressure of Anita's Jihad drove fissures between diverse segments of American gays, hets and bi's. Leatherfolk in particular found themselves in the spotlight, along with drag queens and anonymous sex buffs who Anita and her minions were painting with the same slimy brush as serial killers, pederasts and pornographers. It was "Life does Folsom" all over again. Even Hollywood stuck its oar in the cesspool with "Cruisin'", starring a decidedly queasy Al Pacino playing an undercover cop pretending to be queer while hunting a serial killer through the New York SM club scene. Fear prowled the Castro as mainstream gays turned an increasingly angry gaze at their more extravagant brothers and sisters to straighten up their act.

#### LESBIAN SEX WARS 1977-1981

And as if St. Anita and her crusade weren't enough of a headache, explained Bryce as she paid bills (Nick painting the hallway nodding attentively), the women of SAMOIS faced another foe in the form of Radical feminism. No, not the feminism of equal pay and equal rights, but a authoritarian, puritanical, strain no longer as prevalent as it was then. In some ways it was an extension of the hard line soviet collectivism demanding high individual sacrifice for the good of the movement. Largely the product of feminist theoreticians like Katherine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin (Bryce held up a book in her free hand), the tenants of radical feminism went way beyond the traditional battlegrounds of the Suffragettes, Rosie the Riveter, and the working women of today. Among other things, radical feminists had an obsessive fixation on porn, the imagery of violence, and an astonishing indifference to the concept of sexual privacy. It's as close as the far left ever came to adopting the positions of the far right.

Now, there are a lot of valid questions one can ask about porn. Take "Breaking the silence: Lesbian nuns speak out" for example. When it was published in hardback by a small feminist press, few regarded it as pornographic. When the rights were sold to a mainstream publisher for a paperback edition with worldwide distribution, there was grumbling among the nuns who felt less comfortable with the wide exposure. When the distributor sold the rights to "Penthouse Variations" the emphasis had clearly moved far afield from what the letters had originally been intended to convey.

But no such subtlety of observation was pursued by Dworkin and McKinnon, leftist hatchetwomen for the antiporn crusade. This was their creed: porn equals violence against women. It celebrates degradation, male supremacy, and turns men into rutting jackrabbits and women into objects and victims, and people who kinda liked it were sick, even if they seemed healthy in every other measurable way. Its purest most naked expression was what they called "Violent Porn" SM and bondage porn, which they cannily suggested were nonconsensual. Now for those who don't remember how awesomely bad SM porn was in those days, these were hardly mementos from the Hannibal Lecter scrapbook. A typical shoot featured a surgically enhanced porn star in cheapo bondage cuffs pouting at the camera being menaced, as often as not, by another big bosomed bimbo wielding a wimpy deerskin flogger. Not even a swing like Navritolova's could have pinked up an ass with toys like those. Male fantasy true. Tacky to be sure. Disrespectful indeed. But crime scene photographs? The SM savvy eye could see this wasn't torture. This wasn't even real SM. But that was the story they stuck to. SM was sexist, and romanticized female degradation. It was foreplay for snuff shoots, murder and rape, and bad voting. It promulgated a host of societal ills. And because it induces insanity in its practitioners, even when SM participants believe it's consensual, it's not. Who cared if it was consensual or not? How domestic violence, male chauvinism, genital mutilation, date rape, or the glass ceiling was affected by the sex lives of San Francisco leatherdykes was left unexplained. Never mind that most het men into SM were bottoms and most women tops. Never mind the fact that most SAMOIS women didn't play with men at all. Never mind that leathermen had been "brutalizing", "degrading," and "oppressing" each other in precisely the same manner for decades in their homes, clubs, and the hard rocking back streets of Folsom without even the decency to let curious women watch. Never mind the fact that scapegoating porn and consensual sex diverted effort away from real problems and developing real solutions. Personally, mused Bryce (as Nick folded clothes), I think it just freaked them out. SM is not for everybody after all. And it's okay to be freaked out. When they saw Dildoes, strap-ons, and soft bondage cuffs, they saw weapons and torture devices. And if THAT was bad, what to make of floggers, hunting knives., and suspension slings. Play Piercings? Scarification? Sticking a fist up where?? Radical feminist doctrine said only MEN did horrible stuff like this. They wanted a very seventies utopian image of the future. A world purified of patrimony and anything that smacked of it. Butches, femmes, sadomasochists kinksters, FTMs all forcibly transformed into hairy legged cuddle bunnies gathering not for sex or spankings, but for consciousness raising and holding hands round the campfire for another rousing chorus of Kumbaya. They found the idea of SM as disgusting as pedophilia and they found the presence of SAMOIS and its members intolerable. Yes, they knew of SAMOIS through their literature and their leathery presence at women's conferences, music festivals and feminist networks. Yes, literature. Not only did those anarchistic gals basically write the SM handbook for women, they had the audacity to get it published. "What color is your handkerchief?" contained the first writings by and for women involved with SM. The establishment was not amused. Somewhere in the midst of all this, The National Organization for Women decided to help the situation by adopting anti-SM language into their charter. For all the good they do in other areas, NOW had hardly been friendly to sexual minorities in the past. Before they were all hacked off about the "leather menace" they were all a flutter about the "lavender menace": dykes infiltrating the women's movement (they don't like to be reminded of this now). So when a lesbian led contingent of Anti-SM, anti porn crusaders cannily demanded that NOW repudiate the sexual rights of SM practicing women, NOW caved in to atone for their past bigotry. This was the backdrop facing the first generation of organized leatherwomen: lukewarm welcome from leathermen, frantic opposition from the women's community, fire and brimstone from the Christian right, and growing resentment from the nonleather gay community. The pressure was enormous to stay out of sight, with the drag queens, butch dykes and anyone else who might stand out or who looked like they didn't fit in. It was the closet door swinging open to let us creep back in.

## THE DAWN OF ACTIVISM (80's)

Write this down somewhere: Never forget your pleasure. Bill Tellman's Law. Ancient wisdom but so easy to forget when its raining shit by the bucket load. Somehow the women of SAMOIS had clamped down on it like a junkyard dog on a bone. Even with the hostility of the women's community, the leeriness of mainstream gay culture, and the approaching goose stepping of the Christian right approaching in the form of the Briggs amendment, they still managed to fit partying in. Either as couples in bedrooms, or in SM house parties in private homes, in the backs of large anonymous-looking vans, or when a bath house could be persuaded to hold the occasional women's night, the women of SAMOIS made the time to indulge in good old fashioned SM. Things really took off when SAMOIS persuaded Steve, owner of the Catacombs, to rent them his dungeon to host women's parties on Friday nights. This was a huge break. For the next three years, women had a night a week in the finest dungeon space in the world and were really able to learn and grow. On one occasion only, Biker Nick co-hosted a Friday night women's party with Steve (who attended all parties as music God, bouncer and safety monitor). Biker Nick was in awe at their technical inventiveness and intensity. Anal AND vaginal fisting. Strap-ons, knives. And blood! Controlled cutting and piercing, virtually unknown among gays, was basic in women's SM. Remember that for most men, blood means injury. Some guys keel over at the sight of it. . And for gay men, blood was an agent of contagion. But for women, blood is a natural part of the life flow and it wasn't uncommon in women's play. Bryce, with her access to medical supplies, provided all sorts of medical pervertables: hypodermic needles, scalpels, first aid, hemostats, even a tens unit and urinal sounds, basically inventing what we call medical play today. Biker Nick couldn't keep the grin off his face. It reminded him of the men's community in the beginning, a smaller tighter community when everything was still new.

But outside the hostilities increased. When SAMOIS demanded to march in the annual gay pride parade of 1979, they were not received warmly. The organizers connived to keep them out and treated them rudely. The crowd booed them. Because of the leather, some thought they were lesbian Nazis. Because Punk was happening at exactly the same time, some thought they were punk rockers. I was there and I'll never forget the screaming faces swollen with rage.

"Fascists go home!" a voice screamed.

"Chauvinists!"

"Perverts! . . . Faggots!"

In the weeks leading up to the election, the polls showed the Briggs initiative passing by a two to one margin. Gay teachers who had been teaching for years were bitterly assembling resumes. We worked night and day to defeat it, door to door campaigning, writing the media, our state senators, cold calling. Nick, who had basically gone missing after Kit passed away, reestablished friendship with his leather bar brothers and could be seen all over town with his butch new activist recruits handing out fact sheets warning about the consequences of Briggs. You've probably been wondering where I met Biker Nick. Well this is where. He would entertain all of us with these stories. I can't even remember half of them, and those I can are weakly told compared to the brio he could give a tale.

And as the clock ticked down to voting day, we all prepared ourselves for life in a harsh new America where sexual identity mattered more than character or job performance. Biker Nick told me that his old friend Mandrake had begun appearing in his dreams. It was always the same: Nick was partying in a crowded unfamiliar city that was part Folsom, part the Weimar Berlin Mandrake used to talk about, part Oz. Thousands of kink clad revelers filled the nighttime streets, and all his friends were there. Kit was there, holding Nicks hand and chatting with John Willie and Chuck Arnett about Art. The guys from his old bike club were guzzling beer with Bryce and her sisters. Only Mandrake hung back from the festivities, watching Nicks face the whole time. The dream always ended with Mandrake touching Nicks shoulder fixing him with his burning blue eyes and whispering "Remember" as the drumbeat rose in the background and huge robotic storm troopers goose stepped into view, a black, high kicking wall. And as the drumbeat grew louder, and louder, they swept everything before them away.

And maybe this is a dream too, but I swear I remember being in Sacramento, in the final days before the vote, when who should walk by but governor Ronald Reagan, flanked by a security detail of suits and sunglasses, when out of nowhere Biker Nick materialized in front of him blocking his way. It was the first time I'd seen him in full leather dress since the old days. He looked like a black leather knight, jacket and boots polished so they gleamed like armor, thrusting his paw into the hand of the future president. Nick has never divulged what he discussed with the great communicator over those three heart-stopping minutes, but it ended with both of them roaring with laughter. Later that night Ronald Reagan, hardly a friend to the deviant and downtrodden, was prompted to say something positive about Briggs, and he silenced the crowd with this immortal line. "I don't know what this homosexuality is, but I'm sure its not something you catch like the measles."

No one was prepared for the news that the Briggs initiative had failed. We were weeping with joy in the streets, hugging total strangers. Nick hadn't been so elated since before Kit took ill. It was a crystalline moment; we felt like we'd changed history. But the euphoria didn't last. Dan White, upstanding citizen, former fireman, devout Christian, quit his post on the San Francisco board of supervisors in protest over Briggs. On November 27, he returned to City Hall, walked into the office of Mayor George Moscone, pointed a revolver at his former boss and executed him at his desk. He then marched down the hall to the office of fellow supervisor Harvey Milk, the city's first openly gay official, and shot him dead too. For the premeditated murder of two public officials, White was convicted of voluntary manslaughter and received seven years, thanks to the now infamous "Twinky defense." It's been speculated since, that had White only killed the mayor, he would have gotten life.

But a tide had turned. Briggs had been defeated, the reactionary right humiliated, and their momentum thrown for a loop, a blow they've really never recovered from. Good ole fashioned Anita has since divorced her dear hubby. The televangelist/politicos of the eighties met international humiliation when a host of scandals revealed them as randy, thieving, or mad as march hares. The reactionary right with their zeal for digging into the grubby secrets of President Clinton, got their heads collectively caved in by Larry Flynt of all people, who found many of the conservative hoard to have indulged in all kinds of Clintonesque, extramarital friskiness. Ken Stars name has joined those of Joe MCarthy, Quissling and Benadict Arnold, as embodiments of institutionalized evil. But people who hate us will never be denied. They merely refocused on more attainable goals. Like attacking porn. Within twelve months of the Briggs debacle, America would be treated to the surreal spectacle of radical feminist anti porn crusader Catherine McKinnon and medieval troglodyte Pat Robertson arm in arm on a lecture tour, looking for all the world like a happy old married couple. This jihad was very carefully presented as a defense of all things clean and decent and good in American life.

In the states, we were able to hold back the tide; in Canada where there is no 1st amendment, their anti porn message succeeded beautifully. Legal precedents were established making SM toys count as porn, and thus illegal. Anti porn crusades passed in Canada, supported by gays and lesbians of more conservative bent, and drove many gay and lesbian bookstores out of business and into bankruptcy. I met a man just last year who owned a gay bookstore in a large Canadian city, who had refused to stock SM lit, only to be driven out of business when McKinnon's anti porn laws went into effect. Even Andrea Dworkin's own anti pornography screeds got banned due to her frequent attempts to shock her readers into revulsion (Later the same thing happened to Jerry Fallwell, whose compulsive on the air obsession with Bill Clintons sex life got his radio show cancelled at the request of his own listeners). It's a battle that continues to this day.

And it was here that Biker Nick's yellow brick road must come to an end. Oh there's more I could tell you, believe me. About Nick's heroic bravery during the mysterious fire that tore through SOMA in July '81, the most violent since the quake of 1906. About the imbecilic coverage that predicted charred bodies chained to beds would be found in the rubble, and his impassioned letter published in the chronicle that began his career as a sometime writer. I could tell about Nick's AND Bryce's behind the scenes mentorships of the people who began the fledgling groups and organizations now thriving today. Or how his lifetime of practice in radical sex got him tapped early on to help craft the safe sex guidelines of the early eighties. I could tell of the chagrin of his straight medical colleagues as he demanded that fisting, rimming, and piss and blood play be documented in print in Safe Sex literature. And I would be remiss not to mention his work over the past twenty years working in AIDS clinics, where he practices the nursing skills he was taught by Bryce. Like Walt Whitman (whom Nick has come to resemble with his Santa size girth and his great white beard) ministering to the civil war wounded, Biker Nick spends most of his time tending to those afflicted by the plague: reading aloud, talking, listening, doing portraits in his scrapbook of doodlings and great leather inspired art. He's watched a lot of



leathermen go. We all have. He's moved back to Folsom, but within walking distance of his family of Bryce, her partner Ashley, and their now grown up son Davon, who lives with his girlfriend and works with computers. Nick has reassembled an exquisite collection of erotic art and banned books ("My desert island library for when Hitler returns," he chuckles). In fact just recently the Tom of Finland portrait that vanished after he took to the streets turned up, framed and cherished, in the home of a new friend who had bought it in a gallery show years before. Nick didn't want it back; he was just glad to know that it had survived. I already know what your thinking, When will you get to meet Biker Nick? Well that's not an easy question to answer. Nick is a tough guy to nail down to dates and places, but he has a tendency to pop up where and when you least expect him. I wouldn't be at all surprised if you stumble across him in a coffeeshop someday reading some scandalous magazines and giving you a wink when he sees you know who he is.

And after many years of solitude he has regained love in his life: a charming retired professor he met volunteering in the clinic, who rides and loves adventure as much as Nick. From '85 on they've been inseparable, terrorizing the highways, working with the needy, seeing friends, tending to the delicate rainbow colored fabric of our many communities. And they have many adventures.

#### THE AGE OF ACCESS (The Nineties and Afterwards)

Which brings us back to the present era of expansion, access and commerce represented perfectly by the black leather circus in the hotel below. It's the same story everywhere. Groups growing bigger and more numerous each year, with bylaws, boards of directors, and electioneering politics. Magazines, toy vendors, booksellers, fetish clothiers, thousands of newbies and the all ubiquitous web. Gone is the vocabulary of the artisan ... "tools", "work" supplanted by the preschool vernacular of "toys", "parties", and "play". You have thirty year olds calling themselves "old guard" and wearing leather not as an testament to their humanity, but because everyone else is doing it. We have fledgling national associations, like the Leather Archives, Leather Leadership, and the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom issuing edicts of rules and regulations and dreaming of a day when we will see SM treated with fairness and compassion on prime time TV sitcoms. Today the Folsom Street Fair, formerly a humble kinky craft show, is visited by 300,000 annually, California's largest annual event after the Rose Bowl and San Francisco Pride. We have bumper stickers, keychains, and other assorted chochkis emblazoned with the red white black and blue of the "leather flag" . We have D&S, B&D, C&P, tops and bottoms, masters and slaves...One whole lotta lingo if you ask me. And then there's this online thing - Cyber slaves, Ascii Masters, keyboard doms and typing tops. It's certainly fascinating, but clearly the beginning of an entirely new tradition (interactive porn perhaps?) and not with what we've been calling SM for the last forty years. We have national conferences like this one in big dumb hotels. I still can't believe that part... Conferences and workshops? And "munches"?? At the IHOP???

Different, yes. But better? What have we gained? Easy access to be sure. Gone is yesterdays gauntlet testing the resolve of hungry leather pilgrim seeking admittance to the kink universe. As recently as ten years ago you still had to brave grimy adult bookstores, peeling hermetic wrappers from sleazy, overpriced magazines, hunting through the in-your-face personal ads, before finding a gateway into SM's shadow world. It was a hard, narrow road, and it often hurt. But was SM ever intended to be easy and pleasant?

Today, any imbecile with a search engine can find gobs of writings, imagery, and contact information from the comfy privacy of their home workstation. The SM meetings of today are held in respectable hotels and restaurants. They sit in rows of folding chairs as though in church, listening to sermons on bondage knots, dom/sub relationships, and the proper handling of hot wax. Entrance is granted to all with the five dollar door fee. Membership is open to all who pay the modest annual dues. A whole literature has developed, books supplementing our art form with the words of skilled and articulate practitioners. There are scores of them, some of them perfectly fine, hundreds of magazines, thousands of videotapes, websites ad nauseum catering to every conceivable taste. We have dungeon monitors, safety guides, and handy maxims like "safe sane and consensual." We have greater interaction between SM's various, formerly estranged camps. Thanks to SAMOIS and all they inspired, the leather universe is at last open to women, Thanks to professional dominants like Bryce we have beautiful places for SM types to meet, greet, and beat. They've also given leather a distinctly female voice, one both feared and envied by the radical feminist left. Even the transgendered have won their place on the dungeon floor, with publications, support groups, and spokespersons. Pat Califia is now Patrick. And because of all these resources, the learning curve is faster than it was. Though it pains me to say it, there are more technically gifted people today than ever before.

We have met surprising acceptance by the outside world. Mall bookstores routinely stock Mapplethorpe's photography, and Tom of Finland calendars, and without even having the decency to sequester them behind a swinging door marked "MATURE ONLY". The black leather bandwagon includes doms, dykes, daddies, drag queens, boys, bitches, femmes, fetishists and fashion plates who don't even engage in SM. Today, as often as not, SM means Stand and Model. There is even, ironically, greater access to the past than before. In 1995 the entire eleven year edition of "Bizarre," out of print for decades, was published as an inexpensive two volume set. Even personal narratives like the one you are reading didn't exist in print ten years ago. It's all so nice and easy, I could just puke. Leather has become convenient. But something crucial has been left behind as well.

We've lost people, for one thing. Hundreds of Thousands of them. Leaders, elders, mentors, rebels scamps, and cads who lived it, fought for it, went to jail because of it, brought it into being, kept it alive. Had the plague not taken them our family would be stronger. Their absence has severed the link to the past, leaving today's young players uprooted and unmoored in a way even they can't comprehend. You have young people who've never heard of Willie, Arnett, the Toolbox or SAMOIS boasting of being "old school." You have manhating leatherdykes whose dress and deportment owes everything to the fallen leather warriors of days gone by. You have horny playboys, who don't know BDSM from BBQ, bluffing their way into people's jeans using the leather flag for a fig leaf.

Yesterdays standards of excellence have been swept away as well. All of these innovations that make today's community accessible (websites, chat rooms, open admittance clubs, local munches, massive national conferences attended by thousands,

and cultural mainstreaming), have also reduced the challenge and commitment required of those who seek to join our ranks. By opening the gate to all, we are overrun by dabblers, phonies, tourists, lookie-lews, wannabee pseudodoms who couldn't dominate a can opener, and self proclaimed experts who may or may not have been "trained in Japan." We've lost the sense of being outside it all, the time we spent together not just as sex partners but as friends. We've lost the modest sense of pride, the pride in handmade tools, even crude ones.

The rookie invasion has lowered the standards of SM to where wild ass, shit hot play, even when its consensual, is widely viewed as a community threat. And "Play" (See? They've even got me using that damn word!) has been watered down as it transitioned from an outlaw lifestyle of urban fringe dwellers to a weekend pastime practiced by het, white suburbanites, folk who ARE mainstream America in every other way. And as SM has crept from raunchy underground clubs into pristine suburban dungeons, the preposterous ABC laws against mixing sex and alcohol have tagged along, contributing little beyond a feeling of prissy over regulation. I recently had dinner with longtime friends before accompanying them to their first SM party in a private home. One couple were swingers who had been to about a thousand sex parties. The other couple were about to attend their first. At coffee later on they all had the same question: "Where was the damn sex?" Today you rarely find booze OR people getting it on, at a scene party. To say nothing of a doob. And as middle class mores replace those of edge dwellers, even SM performed in private has been tidied up and sanitized, rendering much of the old hankie code obsolete in het-dominated spaces. We've also picked up an obsession with dogma undreamt of in the old days, elevating catch phrases like "safe sane and consensual" to the level of Biblical law. But for those self righteous greenhorns who proclaim "no responsible SM without SSC" consider this: The entire old guard era, the duration of the SAMOIS collective, the first 16 years of TES, and the first 7 year years of GMSMA all happened before SSC became the buzzword it is today. The Leatherman's Handbook our first "how to text", both version one and two, makes no mention of SSC. The much ballyhooed chant that there is no safe SM without SSC is clearly laughable once you know the historical record.

You know what its really like? Country music. Even the time tables match. In the forties, fifties, even the sixties it was edgy, passionate, from the heart. Its practitioners were raw, unschooled visionaries. Today the music is soulless, and generic.. This blonde pinup-with-a-Stetson, Faith Hill, will never sing about shooting a man in Reno just to watch him die. Its bland, boring and numbingly alike. Only the boots and cowboy hats remain.

And in this new pansexual world there is a spirit which is simply absent among these newcomers. For all the numeric weight of hets, bi's and dykes, even after the ravages of the plague, gay leathermen still out organize, outbusiness, out toy drive and out party the rest of the leather nation combined. What's missing from this new generation? An absence of brotherhood? Of conviction?? Is it because gay men and women into leather have already been through the transformative process of "coming out" before discovering leather, thus gaining perspective and maturity hets never attain? Is it because sexual identity doesn't require hets to make the real world sacrifices required by gay men and women? It probably stings to hear this but no matter what they're into, het couples who are kinky can still bring their mate to the company picnic. Or could it be that the submissive female and dominant het male are the only sexual kink with the seal of approval of mainstream values, the media, the political machine and most world religions. For het male dominants the great leap to selfhood is tiny, practically nonexistent compared to the voyage made by submissive males, crossdressers, female dominants or the transgendered. Don't get me wrong, there are wonderful soulful het male doms. But their path is easier, and the hardships that once burnished character neither ravage their esteem nor produce the growth such ravages ultimately produce.

## DAYS OF LAZURUS

Is it possible for it to mean what it once did? Without the purifying years of loneliness and need, before finding it? Without the challenge and gauntlet of hunting for and winning the acceptance of the like minded. Without the crucible of adversity that breeds strength, resilience and compassion? I just don't know. I was going to close this letter with a warning to stay away from events like these. But something extraordinary just occurred and I have to write it down.

I was taking a break from this letter, trudging despondently through the freak show downstairs, and stopped to watch some pale old guy getting flogged. He was lashed to a cross wearing a frock, a fright wig and spiky heels, and was getting singletailed by some young thing in a miniskirt, gogo boots and a well coifed fro.. I could almost hear my old biker buddies -most of them dead now - laughing in my ears, at this vaudevillian spoof of what we once held sacred. I was already turning to walk away in disgust when I caught a glimpse of his face.

He was old. Older even than me. And as I searched his eyes, I noticed his concentration; his deep labored breathing the intensity of expression, the emotions chasing each other around his face. When she hit him, he smiled, the big stupid grin look of a dog having its belly rubbed by its master, and whispered "oh yes jesus...oh Yes Jesus." I noticed the girl and how exquisitely focused she was, on her target, on her pleasure on his movements. And suddenly I felt overwhelmed with love for this man, this old freaky, lucky, happy man. How many years had he played dress up in his attic, feeling like a freak totally alone. Driving to work berating himself for the millionth time, for being sick, being weak, being such a freak. I saw him shopping for frillies, far from his usual haunts with a pounding heart, smuggling them home, donning them in isolated locked rooms, feeling his pleasure, only to burn them later, his eyes stinging with tears of shame. How many times had he repeated that lonely merry go round? How many decades had he lived like that in solitude? How many castigating sermons, exhorbant counseling sessions, black lonely nights, had their been before he sounded his barbaric "Fuck this guilt!!" and started his journey out of the closet. Peeping, creeping, finally high stepping, "out of the dark and into the light" of his true life's calling.

And after that epiphany I couldn't take my eyes off the scene. There was so much beauty right there I had a lump in my throat. That plump faced girl, still practically a baby, wailing the living tar out of him, her eyes gleaming with hot, feral joy, as he squawked, and

moaned and prayed. Where else in the world do young and old meet with that degree of genuine connection? Where else in the world!! The times have changed. I know they have. But when haven't they been changing. And when has jumping into a time machine and zooming off to another epoch been the answer? Hasn't SM has always been about "right now! ...right here! ...uhmmmm...up a bit..."?

After that scene ended I shook both their hands, then wandered through the dungeon for another two hours, marveling at all the rainbow flavors of bliss. Promises made good, dreams come true, simply because someone had dared to dream them. And before long I realized that I was really glad I'd come down from of out my room.

I even ran into my friend Andrew from New York who was looking about ten years younger than the last time I saw him. We talked about the new treatments that have breathed life into a whole generation of men infected by the plague. Tens of thousands of men like Andrew are being raised, like Lazarus, from their deathbeds by these new drugs which work miracles on the symptoms of HIV. Around the world they are returning them to health, strength, and the capability of making a contribution. Is this time of rebirth the reason people today are discussing SM in spiritual terms? I went to bed feeling better than I have in years.

A long digression kicked started by your question of about the jacket. No I haven't forgotten that this was where we started. Today everyone wears it, men and women, straight and queer, leather and vanilla. James Dean wore it. The early Beatles wore it. Madonna wears it, so do thousands of lesser imitators. And in any leather bar today you will see it, harkening back to my youth and your ancestors, the pins from our runs, symposiums and leather associations worn where military insignia used to be. Do you need one? Course not. But if you feel pull towards it... well perhaps its right for you. A used one is best ... already has someone's major on it And for god's sake don't do it just because others do. Sometimes a jackets just a jacket. When it's a pose, or a costume it can be even less than that. But if your asking if a leather jacket mean something important? Well, it can. And the secret is easy. Just live your life like you believe it does. Be responsible, and kind, and strong, and never forget your pleasure. If Nick were here, I believe that's what he'd say.

Which brings us, at last, to the package. A small token of my pride in how much you've learned so far. Please don't think me extravagant. I hope you like it and I think it ought to fit you fine. It belonged to Cliff, a beautiful young man who until recently was a patient under my care. He was a leatherman from Austin, and that jacket kept him warm on many a desert night. During the last months of his life I told him some of Biker Nicks stories to raise his spirits, and we had a lot of good laughs. We also talked a good bit about you and much you've been learning. If you check the pocket over the heart you'll find his three foot singletail and a note he wrote to you himself. Congratulations, dear child. You've earned it and we are very proud of you.

About Cliff... He was thirty five, had a crazy crooked smile, and hair the color of sunlight. He loved ZZ Top, Lyle Loved, Nancy Griffith, dirty books, old movies, and a hard beating every blue moon. When I see you in March I'll tell you all about him so when people complement your new duds you can tell a few of his stories. You will in fact have become part of them, as we are all interconnecting parts of each others stories from the future back to the ever receding past. It won't be long until you too, are the magician, til its your turn to be the man behind the curtain. And when the time comes when no other voice but yours remains, it will fall to you to tell of bygone days, making sure that Cliff, Nick, Mandrake and Bryce are be rescued from time's quicksand and the oblivion of fading memory. May they all, through your life, loves and deeds, live on.

In Leather Pride,

Shiloh

January/February 2002

## Choosing or Creating A Club

by Master Timelius Sean

The term "leather community" sometimes baffles me, because there are so many sects and sub-cultures within that block term.

There are many benefits and shortcomings to becoming involved in a leather club. One of the main focuses of choosing a club, when desired, is to do some background research regarding purpose, rules, initiations, principles, and goals. First, it is important to understand the purpose of a leather club.

One of the fundamental aspects to a club is actually what type of business entity is it. Not only is it important to you for choosing, it is also important to the government. In any case, one reason of the importance of the legal entity is it also determines the intent of the club. Clubs are usually broken into three sections; For-profit, not-for-profit, and Non-business entity.

A for-profit club usually has a retail service at its core. Dungeon spaces, leather shops or goods making, and leather training facilities. Some allow ownership shares when becoming a member, while others allow use of facilities at a discount. Typically there is a quasi-social environment while there is an internal business administration that governs the business itself.

There are several various forms of exempt entities (not-for-profit). The two primaries are charitable and political. Thirdly, there is also a few fraternity style organizations. The most common of the three is the charitable (501(c)3). They will have emphasis on either or both education and/or fundraising. Though there maybe some dungeon interaction, usually due to legal reasons these events are maintained as "unofficial" gatherings. Many of today's clubs fall under this type and raise monies for AIDS, Hepatitis C, public awareness, and domestic violence. Others focus on specific educational trainings.

Usually each State has at least one politically motivated club that places itself in front of media and political spotlight in order to educate and protect the rights of those who live within the leather community.

The third type is a fraternity/lodge organization. This organization is ran by a panel of senior members and have benefits such as life or death insurance. These clubs are extremely protective of their members and carefully screen applicants to meet strict requirements. However, membership into this type of club usually exists for a persons entire lifetime and there is a sense of protection to the members.

The final type is a non-business entity that usually consists of several individuals of like mind that gather to play, socialize, or for sexual purposes. This includes house parties, some leather clubs that are sexually motivated, and house communities. These are just as essential as the more structurally forms of clubs and in some instances more rewarding. If the club is a legal entity of some sorts, there must be by-laws, Charter requirements, and mission. Almost all clubs have some form of membership requirements and obligations. Many times the requirements and purpose of the club dictates whether it is wise to be considered a legal entity. Carefully examine requirements before initiating membership. I once attempted to join a club where the initiation was that I could not refuse any sexual advance from other members regardless of whether they were Dominant or submissive. I was unwilling to accept that risk and declined any further attempts at membership.

Membership profiling means what types of individuals are members. Most commonly the membership is pansexual, though there are some that are either gay oriented or heterosexual oriented. I find that regardless of requirements, if there are more then 20 members they are to some extent pansexual. However the level of comfort for play scenes may be compromised if the club is oriented specifically one way or the other.

There are also a number of non-business fetish clubs. Fisting is an example of such a trend. Fisting clubs have usually the sole purpose of gathering for fisting parties. Watching Real Sex® will give you a sense of all the various fetish oriented gatherings.

Some clubs are geared towards traditions or other commonly shared beliefs or things. Old Guard, Gor(ean), Motorcycles, and spiritual are all examples of some specific reason for a club. These clubs tend to be smaller clubs with specific guidelines of conduct and rules.

Basically the purpose of a club is usually outlined based on its legal entity. If it is a charitable organization, fundraising is a must and usually there is a requirement for how many functions a potential member must adhere to. Many larger organizations such as the National Leather Association, and other predominately large leather clubs have several various components to participate, which usually includes education, fundraising, social, and unofficial/official SM events.

One of the most notable aspects to clubs are colors. Based from the motorcycle club concept, colors are usually a patch or pin that represents participation in a club. Colors usually have guidelines as to where they can be placed, when they can be worn, and most importantly when they can not be worn. Typically if the club participates in "pinning" someone (giving head while having the pin placed near the crotch area), colors must be removed to maintain respect to the colors.

Choosing a club is not just simply deciding one day to become a part of it. It is important to identify with the purpose of the club and

## Choosing or Creating A Club

determine if you fit in. Joining a club simply to change its purpose is pointless and usually only creates internal conflicts and creates an environment whereby everyone loses.

You may decide to join a National organization or local chapter. Another possibility to create a local chapter based on another club elsewhere. Remember to get permission however, because many colors and club chapters are protected by Trademark or a Registered organization and can easily lead to a civil lawsuit if inappropriately created.

January/February 2002

## Clarity.. Or, How Can I Make Him (or her) Understand!

by Screamer

Well, it's happened. The honeymoon is over. Something has come up that has your stomach in knots and your throat feels choked.

Your dominant has done something that's upset you. Could it be that he said "no" when you wanted (needed) to play? Could it be that he's talking about polyamory or playing with other submissives? Maybe he forgot your birthday, or made a comment about your appearance.

Now, as you're sitting there, lost in the pieces of nirvana that are falling down around you, don't crumble with it.

Stop.

Think.

And please. Breathe.

Don't go running to your friends. Don't start writing nasty email you'll regret later. Don't start packing your bags. Don't scream or yell or curse or threaten. You'll find in life that these things, when at the height of emotion, are counter-productive and almost always end up doing more harm than good in the long run. You know from vanilla relationships that any kind of intimacy is work. D/s is no different. And maybe - just maybe - it's easier to be honest in a D/s setting than a vanilla one!

Are you breathing? Good. Then let's try to come up with a plan of action.

First of all, if you're in the heat of the moment, ask for some time to think. Most rational adults, be they submissive, dominant or vanilla will recognize that asking for time is usually a good sign, and will allow it. Even if your dominant doesn't know why you're upset, most likely, he'll recognize a respectful request for time to hash things out in your head.

Go somewhere quiet. The bedroom. The garage. The kid's tree house. The front seat of your car (don't take the keys!)

It's time to get some perspective.

It might seem a little contrary, for a submissive to be up in arms about something a dominant wants to do, or is doing, but in reality (and you know Auntie Screamer thrives on dealing in reality!) D/s relationships are just like any other relationship; they must be fed from both sides, or one side will end up in starvation mode and end up scarfing up anything they can find! As a submissive, you have as much right to your feelings as any other human being (unless you have negotiated otherwise up front) and you have a right to feel them and express them...

R E S P E C T F U L L Y .

Clarity is of the utmost importance, when you are dealing with the complexities of D/s. Knowing where you stand is paramount to being able to fulfill your role to the best of your abilities. To be able to express yourself clearly to him, and let him know why you're upset, you need to get to the root of it - on your own - before you take it to him.

The old saying about catching more flies with honey than vinegar rings very true. Remember that.

Sit.

Think.

What is it about the incident/discussion/event that has you upset? Did he really do something horrible? Or, is it something that scares you? Or, is it somehow related to your security in the relationship? Are you dealing with dishonesty? Changes in negotiated relationship rules? A blow to your inner child or your self-esteem?

What's the ROOT of it?

You have to find that root. You have to dig out all the dirt around it, and wash it clean. Examine it. It could be, that when you set the emotional anguish aside for just a moment, that you see what really may be lurking underneath.

And it's that root that you have to be prepared to deal with, so that you can show it to him, and he can understand it.

We'll use the polyamory example here, because it seems to be one that comes up quite often for folks in the D/s community.

He's come to you and said that he wants to explore having another submissive.



Clarity...

What is your root worry? That you're not enough for him? That he wants to change a rule that you two had from the beginning? That it's unfair for him to get another submissive and you don't get another dominant? That he'll love her more than you and you'll lose him? Are you thinking that maybe he's already found one, and that he's been cheating on you?

Whatever the root cause is, get it out - at least initially to yourself. Find it. Clean it off. And sit with it for awhile. Cry, carry on, rant to yourself. Let it all come rushing out, and then find that \*one piece that is the basis for your anguish.

Chances are, once you have that piece of clarity in your fist, you'll feel better already. You'll begin to calm down. You may not like what you came up with, but you'll like that you did it rationally, and without screaming his ears off.

Now that you have it, look at it for awhile.

Is it valid? Have you spent enough time with this person to know who he really \*is? Do you trust him? Is it meaningful? Have you had this issue with him before? Is this a recurring theme in your relationship? Is it more about you than it is about him?

We're almost ready to go back and talk to him - but not quite. Don't rush this. It's too important.

Now take that root in your hand, and decide if this is a D/s issue or a relationship issue. I realize that sometimes, the two are hard to separate, but I have faith in you. You can do it.

If it's a relationship issue, you need to present it in that way. Sit down at the table with him and discuss it like two grown adults. Explain to him that his doing or saying "A" made you feel "B".

If it's a D/s issue, you'll need to find a way to express it to him respectfully, which may not be all that easy, but will end up making your point more clearly and will let him know that you respect him as your dominant and that you are trusting him to bring the issue to him in that way.

In either case, once you have calmed completely down, it's time to take this new bout of clarity to your dominant, and share it with him. Start off by telling him how you feel about him. Tell him that you're trusting him to understand, and that if he doesn't understand, you want him to ask questions.

If this is about \*you, tell him that. If this is about \*him, tell him that, too. But do it so that unless you intend to walk away from the relationship, you don't undermine his dominance.

There's a very fine balance there. Don't fall off.

Make your words comprehensible and lucid. Try to keep emotions off to the side for the time being, and just let the words come out naturally and reasonably.

Clarity. See? He can't be clear about what you're feeling, if your words and expressions aren't unmistakable. To have clarity, be clear.

And then give him his turn to speak. Listen, don't judge. Nod, but don't interrupt.

Regardless of whether or not there is a resolution to the issue then and there, chances are good that you'll feel better, having expressed yourself, and he'll feel better understanding your feelings.

January/February 2002

## How To Donate to Your Local Kinked Lending-Learning Center

by Kat Tact

I can freely admit it. I had a moment.

I just recently moved to the Tidewater Area of Virginia from North Carolina. And having my priorities completely straight, I attended a munch in my new hometown the day after I moved. Well, after a month of attending the local functions in my area, I decided that this was not the group for me. So, missing my friends and missing my kink, I began traipsing back and forth across the NC/VA border twice a month. I'd get out of work on Friday, hop in the car and drive the four hours to my friend's house and a weekend of kink would commence. Usually with me ending up in my car on Monday or Tuesday at 5 in the morning to make it back to VA in time for work.

Well, after about four months of this, it does take its toll. And I would realize just how tired I really was as soon as I would hit 85 north. That two-hour stretch would kill me. Nothing fun to look at and you can only play the license plate game with yourself so many times even if you are a masochist. So yesterday I gave in. I bought a book on tape.

I enjoy reading. But I felt like listening to a book on tape would take away the pleasure I got when I was curled up leafing through my latest mystery or classic. I enjoy the pages that you are ever so careful not to rip as you turn them one by one as it unfolds the story to you. I like that. And there I was in Border's, on my knees in the books on tape section.

I thought about Shakespeare, but couldn't bring myself to let anyone read out loud to me the words I cherished so much. I contemplated a self-help book, but then I remembered I was trying to stay away, not go to sleep. I looked at Tolstoy, American Classics, Mysteries, and Horrors and then it happened. I saw it. At the exact same time my friend did. We both looked at each other and laughed, as she knows my taste in books almost as well as I know hers.

The Beauty Series by Anne Rice on tape. I have never even been able to bring myself to read the Beauty the series. It took me two days to get through "Story of O", as I was laughing so hard. And I am still convinced it is one of the best comedies of the 20th Century. Now, don't get me wrong, we all need a little idealized romance and fantasy in our lives. But I tend to enjoy mine best through role-play.

When it comes to my kinks and the way I live my life, I like the reality. I like pain that leaves bruises. I'm okay with service without love. I don't need to be captured and taken away to a secret underground world of Masters and Mistresses. I don't need to learn to make my pain equal my pleasure; it already works that way for me. And this is coming from someone who in general likes erotic fiction. But for some reason every time I read BD, SM, or DS romanticized erotic fiction it irks me.

I sometimes wonder if the reason there are so many people running around in the public scene hooked on fantasies of love, lace hand cuffs and feathers of torture are because of books like the Beauty Series. But it doesn't just stop there. I am a child of the information age. My parents bought me my first computer at 13. I know my way around the web. And I've seen them all. I've seen the sites of submissives and Dominants using their few bits of space allotted to them by AOL or Yahoo on their soap boxes preaching about the one true way of love and limits BDSM. Or the bigger sites like Castlerealm where if you don't do it their way, you must not be doing it right at all.

I guess it is all beyond me. I don't care one way or another. Just because you don't do or like the things I do, or because you don't agree with every statement that comes out of my mouth doesn't mean you aren't doing it the one "true way." I remember my father saying to me about monotheistic religions, "They are all going about it different ways, but they are all heading towards the same goal. Everyone just does it differently, and there is nothing wrong with that, Kat."

And isn't that goal quality of life? We do these things out of need and want, but we also do them out of fun and freedom. And then you turn around and sitting beside you at the local pizzeria munch of SM group #8693-B is that person who insists upon the fact that Roissey does it exist? That they've talked to people who have been there?

I suppose I am just too rational, overtly so at least, to enjoy SM fiction. And maybe I am just too opened minded for my own good to believe that there is any one "true way" for anything. To be sure, there are just some things you can not learn from books. And life is definitely one of them.

So, I suppose all in all, that is why SM fiction bothers me so much. Not that it makes much difference one way or the other. I still bought the first book of the Beauty Series on tape on a whim. I'm thinking of donating it to my local kinked learning-lending center.

Sincerely,  
Kat Tact  
[KathrynTact@yahoo.com](mailto:KathrynTact@yahoo.com)



January/February 2002

## Professional Domination (A.K.A. So Ya wanna get paid to do what it is we do?)

by Caliann

First off, let me start with letting you now that I am in no way encouraging anyone to become professional. This article will not go into the professional versus non-professional, nor will I write prose on rates, advertising or other such mundane topics. This article is about HOW to be a professional. It is written with the female professional in mind, because that is what I know.

If you are reading this because you want men to fall at your feet and shower you with money, for little or no effort on your part, you need to read elsewhere. To use an old saying: "There is no such thing as a free lunch". If you want to learn the steps it takes to be a respected, reputable professional in the lifestyle, read on. If you want to be a kept woman with a whip, find a rich man with a submissive fetish who is looking for a sex toy.

Now that the disclaimers are over, let us begin.

I would suggest that before you even start on this path, you check the laws regarding professional domination in your state. In some states, professional domination falls under "Adult Entertainment" and is perfectly legal as long as you have a license for it. In other states, it is considered prostitution (even if there is no sexual contact!) and is a criminal offense. If you live in a state where it is illegal, stop right here. I do not advocate breaking the law. If you still wish to be a professional dominant, move to a state where it is legal first. If you live in a state where it is legal, go and get your license then continue reading.

First off, you need to LEARN. Oh yes, you do. To be a professional does NOT mean you have a lot of free time on your hands and no job. To be a professional means you have got to be BETTER than average at what it is that we do. Would you take your brand new car to a shade tree mechanic? No, you would take it to someone who has the knowledge and education to know the machine you have paid hard cash for. Would you go to back alley patch man to get your tonsils taken out? No, you would go to a doctor, someone who has spent the time to learn how to do the procedure properly. Why should a submissive trust their mind and body to anything less?

So you learn. Get used to reading and make yourself enjoy it, because you will be doing a lot of it before you ever touch a body. I would suggest getting a copy of Gray's Anatomy and pouring over it. You need to KNOW the human body, because you will be abusing it. A class or two in human anatomy and biology at the local Community College will also serve you well in the future. How can you know what areas are safe to bludgeon if you don't know anything about the body?

Have I scared you off the idea yet? Don't worry, there is more.

Now that you have immersed your intellect in anatomy and biology, taken a few classes and have insured yourself that you know the creature you will be hurting, it is time to learn some more. You need to know about the human psyche. Oh yes, it's time to get some basic books on psychology and take a couple of courses in that too. The human mind is a wondrous, adaptable thing, but it CAN be broken. Broken toys seldom come back for a second session.

The submissive mind is a very tender thing. A submissive will believe their Dominant over anyone or anything else. A good 85% (or more) of BDSM is psychologically based. You need to KNOW the mind you are screwing. Therefore, basic psych 101 and 201 are close to being a necessity, with Human Sexuality being a terrific bonus to add.

Didn't know that college was on the list for becoming a professional whip wielder, did you? Have you known any other professional group that did NOT take college or trade school courses? Even Fast Food Managers go to management courses.

Well, that is the end of your college for now, at least until someone opens a Professional Dominants Training Academy. Oh no, you don't get to the juicy stuff yet. Now that you have learned the body and mind of the species you wish to consensually abuse, you need to learn HOW to abuse them...and with what.

Now is the time to get in touch with your local BDSM organization and find some others in the lifestyle. This is the research portion of your education. This will be fun. Now is the time when you learn all about floggers, canes, clamps and cuffs and that can only be done in real life.

Wait! Did I hear someone in the back say "Floggers? But don't I need high heeled boots, a corset and some cool leather clothes first?" Whoever you are, get out. Now. This is NOT a fashion show. There WILL come a time when you have a choice between buying a new leather head-hood and a new leather bustier...and the head-hood will win. When it comes to a scene, quality equipment is MUCH more important than the clothes you are wearing every single time.

(I have been known to conduct a scene wearing a pair of faded bell-bottom jeans, a halter top and barefoot)

Now, where was I? Oh, yes, equipment. Now is when you wish to go to any and all classes, seminars, demonstrations, etc. etc. that any BDSM organization within traveling distance from you offers. Someone is doing a talk on canes? Go. Is there a seminar on interrogation? Go. Is there a demonstration being held on water sports. Go. Even if it isn't your kink and it grosses you out, you

need to KNOW about it even if you don't USE it.

You will also need to buy books. LOTS of books. Every BDSM book you can get your hands on to start with. Then you need to read them. Over and over again. Why all this education? Well, because you need to be better educated and more skilled than 80% of the people around, that is why. You need to KNOW. You need to know that criss-crossing cane strikes can cause excess damage to the skin. You need to know that using a paddle on a body that is being held at a 90 degree angle can concuss the internal organs and cause internal bleeding that COULD lead to death.

Now you have a little hint about WHY you need to know all of this. Unless, of course, you are REALLY good at explaining dead bodies to the police.

Okay, now you have taken the college courses, taken the organization classes, been to seminars, watched demonstrations and listened to speakers. You are ready to go, right? Nope, not yet.

Now you will wish to have equipment. Now you must open your wallet or checkbook and spend obscene amounts of money on equipment. Someone who is doing BDSM for personal pleasure can gather implements and toys as needed. However, you are setting up shop as a professional, therefore you need a complete compliment of equipment BEFORE you ever have your first client. You cannot be an effective mechanic without an auto shop. You cannot be an effective doctor without an office or access to a hospital. You also cannot be an effective Professional Dominant without equipment.

I hope you were very nice to the people that you met at those seminars and demonstrations, because they will be your contacts for local leather workers and toy makers. Find a reputable local toy maker and start spending money. Quality equipment costs LOTS of money.

Buy mainly things that are portable first. Floggers, canes, crops, quirts, clamps and cuffs are good starts. Realize that a well-made, quality whip of almost any sort is going to cost you \$150.00 or more, JUST FOR ONE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT. Before you are finished, your toy bag will be worth approximately \$2000.00, if not more. This does NOT include Dungeon Furnishings or Dungeon Space, if you wish to go that route; only portable toys that you can easily fit into your trunk.

Okay, so far you have gotten the college education, went to lots of seminars, talks, demonstrations and meetings; and bought a full complement of equipment. You are ready for business, right? Oh, you ought to know the answer by now!

Now you get to learn your toys. You will be spending LOTS of time with your toys. Each and every one of those toys you will have to be able to use with PRECISE aim. You will need to know EXACTLY how hard they strike with the amount of force that you are using. If you think you only need to practice until you can hit an area semi-regularly, think again. A single miss-strike that was aiming for a client's nipple can easily take out an eye. Not only will you feel really bad about it, the medical bills will break you. There are not many states where insurance will cover single-tail accidents.

So first you will be learning to tap into your masochistic side, whether or not you have one. You get to try out your toys on yourself. The inner thighs are a great place to test out crops, canes, taws, clamps, etc. Find out what each one feels like at a light, medium and heavy swing. Floggers can often be tested on the outer thighs and calves, carefully. Do they thud or sting? Get out your feather pillows and draw a nice bulls-eye on a few of them. You should be able to hit the center of the bulls-eye, leaving an indentation that deepens depending upon the force, EVERY SINGLE TIME. Until you are completely confident that you can strike EXACTLY where you are aiming, every time, with the force that you intended to use, every time, you have no business aiming at a human body.

Now that you have achieved confidence and ability with your implements of pleasure and torture, it's time to go back to those clubs and organizations. You need to find some submissives that are willing to let you practice on them. DO be honest and let them know up-front that you ARE a novice. Don't worry, there will still be many of them quite willing to volunteer as target practice, but they should know up front that you ARE inexperienced so that they CAN consent. Whether or not you believe in SSC or RACK, SSC is going to have to become your living mantra. As a professional, you will be more in the limelight of the vanilla world than almost anyone else in the lifestyle. Any slip from SSC on your part will, at the least, ruin your reputation and your business and, at the worst, land you in jail.

So, find yourself several willing submissives to be target practice and WATCH them. Observe how they react to different stimuli and different situations. This is the point where you are not only gaining more education, but you are also integrating all of the college, the practice and your own abilities into a cohesive whole. This is where you gain your own style. This is also where you will learn what your clientele is going to WANT.

So now you have taken the college courses, gone to the seminars and such, bought the toys, learned how to use them, practiced on real, live submissives and have gained the confidence, poise, knowledge and experience you will need. You are ready to open shop.

Well, almost. There is one last little expenditure that may surprise you. It's time to go out and buy..... office supplies. Yes, you read right, office supplies. You will need a filing cabinet, folders, paper, etc., etc. Well, you know this IS a business don't you? You will need to keep files on your clients. No, not their real names or anything, but copies of their BDSM checklists, interviews you have had with them, scene reports of them, what you have tried with them, what worked, what didn't work and why, ideas of future scenes, etc., etc. Hopefully, you will have several clients that return on a regular basis. You will wish to keep record of things you have already done with them and things they still want to have done with them.

Okay, NOW you are ready to open up shop. I suggest getting in touch with other professionals in your area and getting advice on advertising and such. Most importantly, you will want to share information with them on difficult and problem clients, so that you will be forewarned if a known one comes your way. Besides, even Professional Dominants take vacations sometimes, where do you think they send their clients during those times? That is correct, they send them to trusted colleagues. Those trusted colleagues will also send you their clients when they wish to take vacations.

I wish you luck and joy on this journey; you will need it. Professional Domination is one of the most headache inducing, creativity draining, demanding, exhausting professions that I know of and that's just the interviews with the prospective clients.

My last bit of advice: be picky when choosing your clients, NEVER allow yourself to go past a limit, either theirs or yours, for ANY reason and be true to yourself and your word.





masochism and that, like homosexuality, it needs to be removed from the rubric of "psychopathology" and be seen for what it is: a sexual lifestyle choice. It is the intention of this paper to suggest ways of understanding masochism without invoking theories of mental illness.

The questions, however, remained. I puzzled as to why so many men, raised in a culture that valued masculine initiative, assertiveness, and dominance, want to be relieved of these qualities and surrender their will to a strong, dominant woman who might torture, control and humiliate them. What was the basis of this compelling urge to surrender and serve, to relinquish control, to accept physical pain and emotional humiliation?

As I listened to my patients over the years, I began to see masochism less as a sexual aberration and more as a metaphor through which psyche speaks of its suffering and passion. There was a definite connection between suffering and pleasure the intrigued me. Clients spoke of the rapturous delight in submission, the worship, in wild abandon and the deliverance from the confining bondage of "normalcy".

Ritualized suffering seemed to be a way of giving meaning and value to human infirmities. After all, there is no paucity of suffering in human life. None of us need go looking for pain. The suffering of helplessness, disappointment, loss, powerlessness and limitation, is a part of the human condition. It is my hunch that there is something like a universal need, wish or longing for surrender completely to certain aspects of human life and that it assumes many forms. This passionate longing to surrender comes into play in at least some instances of masochism. Submission, losing oneself to the power of the other, becoming enslaved to the master is the ever-available lookalike to surrender.

Submissives speak of a quality of liberation, freedom and expansion of the self in a scene as a situation similar to the letting down of defensive barriers. They speak of the experience of complete vulnerability. I believe that buried or frozen, is a longing for something in the environment to make possible surrender, a sense of yielding of the false self. The false self is an idea developed by a famous psychoanalyst who posited that most parents need their children to behave in circumscribed ways in order for the child to receive their love. For a child, parental love is a matter of survival, and so the child forges a "self" that they think will ensure parental love and approval. The false self is usually a "caretaker" self. A Scene sometimes allows for years of defensive barriers that support the false self to be broken through. It carries with it a longing for the birth of the true self. Deep down we long to give up, to "come clean", as part of a general longing to be known or recognized. The prospect of surrender may be accompanied by a feeling of dread and or relief or even ecstasy. It is an experience of being "in the moment", totally in the present. Its ultimate direction is the discovery of one's identity, one's sense of self, of one's sense of wholeness, even one's sense of unity with other living beings. Joyous in spirit, it transcends the pain that evokes it. One's exquisite pain is sometimes akin to mystical ecstasy. Within the context of that surrender, a self-negating submissive experience occurs in which the person is enthralled by the dominant partner. The intensity of the masochism is a living testimonial of the urgency with which some buried part of the personality is screaming to be released. The surrender is nothing less than a controlled dissolution of self-boundaries.

The deeper yearning is the longing to be reached, known and accepted in a safe environment which narcissistic, dysfunctional or preoccupied parents were unable to provide the child at a young age.

Fantasies of being raped, which are very common, can have all manners of meanings. Among them, one will almost always find, sometimes deeply buried, a yearning for deep surrender. The submissive longs for and wishes to be found, recognized, penetrated to the core, so as to become real, or, as one analyst says it "to come into being."

In addition to the longing to surrender into a truer sense of self, masochistic behaviors have another meaning. People need and take delight in fantasy production. Ask the Disneyland folk who cater to adults as much as to children. Scenes have tremendous potential for potentiating fantasy. Costumes, rituals, scenarios, an endless variety of sex props, and elaborate sets reveal of the richness the creative inner life and speak to the very real human need for fantasy play. The fantasies are the carriers of a full spectrum of human feelings: to control, to be controlled, to tease, to be teased, to play, to please, and to achieve solace from the confines of the mundaneness of ordinary life. They represent the suspension of normal reality that is an occasional necessity for all healthy people.

Probably the last thing masochism appears aimed at is balance. In keeping with its paradoxical nature, masochism provides not so much a state of weakness, but a sense of surrender, receptivity and sensitivity. Masochism is the condition of submitting fully to an experience, which counters lives that, in our Western society, are ego-centered, constrained, rational, and competitive. Strength can be a terrible burden. It is a constraint, which can be relieved in moments of abandonment, of letting down and letting go. So it is hardly surprising that the pull of masochistic experiences should be so strong in a culture the overvalues ego strength at the expense of a fuller experience of all dimensions of psychic life.

In conclusion, I believe that therapists need to radically alter their approach to doing psychotherapy with masochistic patients. My colleagues complain that masochists are difficult to "cure". Perhaps because the paradigm from which these therapists operate are faulty. The recognition of value and meaning in the desire to suffer humiliation runs counter to the prevailing attitude in psychology. The main thrust of modern theory and practice has been toward ego psychology. The values of psychotherapy have been aimed, for the most part, at building strong, coping, rational problem-solving egos. Ego-values are certainly worthy ones, yet it costs something to gain strength, to cope, to be rational and to solve problems. This may account for the dissatisfaction many people feel after years of psychotherapy. Building a strong ego is only one side of the story; it neglects other, crucial parts of the human psyche. Modern psychology has been in large measure dominated by helping people develop independence, strength, achievement decisive action, coping and planning. What's missing is attention to the more subtle dimensions of soul.

The psychoanalyst most in tuned with the missing element in psychotherapeutic work with masochism is Carl Jung. Masochism may be imagined as cultivation of what Jung called the "shadow" - the darker, mostly unconscious part of the psyche which he regarded not as a sickness, but as an essential part of the human psyche. The shadow is the tunnel, channel, or connector through which one reaches the deepest, most elemental layers of psyche. Going through the tunnel, or breaking the ego defenses down, one feels reduced and degraded. Usually, we try to bring the shadow under the ego's domination. Embracing the shadow, on the other hand, provides a fuller sense of self-knowledge, self-acceptance and a fuller sense of being alive. Jung's idea of the shadow involves force and passivity, horror and beauty, power and impotence, straightness and perversion, infantilism, wisdom and foolishness. The experience of the shadow is humiliating and occasionally frightening, but it is a reduction to life to essential life, which includes suffering, pain, powerlessness and humiliation. Submission to masochistic pain, loss of control and humiliation serves to embrace our shadow rather than deny it. The result is the achievement of an inner life that accepts and embraces all aspects of our selves and allows us to live with a deeper sense of our true selves.

In conclusion, the psychotherapeutic community needs to re-examine masochistic submissions to see it not as a pathology but as a healthy vehicle for surrendering fixed defense mechanisms, for relinquishing control to something or someone greater than themselves, for achieving freedom from the pervasive and relentless need to cultivate, promote and assert the self, for gaining some relief from having to make innumerable choices and decisions, for engaging in healthy fantasy enactments, and for the exploration, acknowledge and acceptance the "darker" or "shadow" side of their personalities. In addition, many patients speak of achieving a loss of self-awareness that they describe as ecstasy or bliss in which the individual transcends his normal limits and ceases to be aware of self in ordinary terms.

A travesty of our profession is that we continue to try to "cure" a systems of beliefs and behaviors that enrich and enlivens the lives of so many people. The continuing pathologizing of masochism by keeping it in the DSMIV as a psychopathology and by most therapists' efforts to "cure" masochists is in part responsible for the continued , shame, isolation and low self-esteem of these creative, spontaneous and courage people who want to be afforded the dignity of choosing their own form of non-exploitative sexuality.

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## Some Thoughts as a Teacher

by Snake-eyes

Growing up the way I have, I have learned various things, ideas, and concepts people take their entire lives to figure out. Or perhaps, as my mentor put it, "Son, they simply got a later start on it." But nonetheless, some get it and some don't.

I am currently training a group of four submissives and two dominants. I oversee the scenes and play that my students partake in as well as their discussions and various other 'lifestyle' activities. In my group of submissives, the youngest is 18 years old (do some thinking back to remember the 'attitude' and 'ego' you might have had at that age). The oldest of my submissive pupils is 42 years of age. My two dominants are the ages of 28 and 33 years. As for the author's age, it's been guessed from 30 years of age to 50 years of age. As you can see, there is a plethora of ideas as well as temperaments. What my 18-year-old pupil might think about submission and how far he should submit to whom ever he chooses to submit to, is entirely different from my middle-aged students; their ideas are completely different from my older students.

When I first took on these pupils, I gathered them all together for what became our 'weekly session.' This included both dominants as well as all four submissive and I asked them one of the very first questions I was asked at the age of 16, when I began to 'seriously' learn about BDSM.

"What is dominance? What is submission?"

I instructed them to write down their thoughts, opinions, etc without the use of a dictionary. (I encourage my students to use the 'gray matter' between their ears. The more they use their brain for their own thoughts, the safer and stronger they'll be in the end and on their own.) After writing on the questions at hand, their instructions included reading their responses to the rest of the group. I have them an hour to write. While this amount of time may not seem like enough time to write on these questions to some of the readers, or to a person who has been 'involved' in the lifestyle for some time, to a person who is 'new' or knows very little about the BDSM lifestyle, it can seem like an eternity.

Finally, after an hour of watching the concentrating masks and scribbling pens, the timer bell ran. Each one then, read their answers to the rest of the group. There were various reactions to each response read, from the 'understanding nod' to the 'what the hell' or 'why the hell' looks. But each student listened and each read, uninterrupted.

It was time from my 18 year old to read and he read his one and only sentence response to the question. (He had spent the rest of the time drawing on his paper.)

His response was: "Dominance is control. Submission is giving."

I heard various sighs and I could 'feel' the eyes roll from the other of the group when they heard his answer. He quietly let his head drop as well as his paper, and he let out the infamous sight we all give when we think or feel we've disappointed someone else. Quickly, I had him pick up his paper, as well as the rest of the students. I told them to write down the following letters upon the top of their papers: R-E-S-P-E-C-T. I proceeded to teach them and tell them the following rule that I have learned while being involved in the lifestyle. It's a rule my own submissives follow and it's a rule I've been following since the age of 15.

"Respect every one and every person you encounter, no matter age, sex, race, etc. Always respect them, for you haven't worn their shoes. Various things can happen when I person walks into a relationship with respect towards another person. And, always use terms of respect while speaking or listening to them."

"Yes, Madam." No, Ma'am. Mistress. M'Lady. M'Lord. Sir. Master. Brother. Sister."

I've had to, since that first session, have various lessons on simple 'oral' and 'physical' manners towards others. I'm not as strict on my students as my mentor was with me. Of course, they have a lot more 'common courtesy' than I did while learning. More often than not though, my students learn by repetitiveness and observation of my manners. How is it that various people make pre-conceived notions about people who are within their own lifestyle? How is it that people look down upon, what some call 'childish' questions within this lifestyle? How is it, that we are so quick to welcome 'newcomers' to the BDSM lifestyle, yet we look down upon ideas of younger adults and/or older adults in the lifestyle, new or old to BDSM? How can we look down upon ideas and opinions of the open-minded people or the ideas that we don't agree with? How can we be so critical of one another in this alternative life?

So many various and similar questions with one simple connecting answer. The lack of respect that is taught or in some cases, not taught. (Ironic isn't it? Everybody wants that respect, but how many are willing to give it?)

Why is it not taught? Or why is it only taught to a certain level in some cases?

Because a dominant only wants his or her submissive to respect them and their ways, wants and/or pleasures? ('Beware of the 'ignorant possessive' dominants, for they will only lead a submissive to heartache, pain and confusion.') "The stronger the respect shown for others, the stronger the respect grows in any relationship at hand."

"Respect can only grow stronger and broader. If respect is lost, it was never truly given to begin with."

If a poll was taken to find out the number one characteristic of successful BDSM relationships of any sort (friendship, involvement, etc.) most would probably say one of the two big 'C' words: Communication or Consent of a mutual interest. While these two things are imperative for any relationship, how can these two things exist without respect on both ends of the dominant's end of the rope as well as the submissive's end of the rope?

How can anybody in this lifestyle think that they know everything there is to know about this lifestyle? To think you are a level above the next dominant or submissive simply because you practice it daily, monthly, weekly, yearly shows a lack of respect for the other brothers and sisters in this lifestyle. Sure, there will be disagreements among us, but to agree to disagree shows a simple kind of respect that is often overlooked.

The lifestyle that we all find ourselves taking part in is a lifestyle most people don't understand or will never understand. What separates this lifestyle from the 'vanilla' life, there is that chance that life will become stagnant and mundane. This isn't a bad thing, but where is the chance to grow?

That is, essentially, the basic root and base of the BDSM lifestyle; growth. There is always room for growth, in fact that is what dominant and submissives should strive for. Don't get the author wrong; the physical sense of submission and domination is always a good thing. Without respect in general though, how would we grow and how would we learn to take part in and enjoy the physical sensations of the lifestyle? How would we teach each other and how would we learn from each other?

Respect. Growth. These are infamous words from this lifestyle (or any other lifestyle that we choose to follow) that we often overlook. Basic words for the basics of BDSM. How can a person learn to add without first learning the numbers? The author will leave the reader with these words to think upon in any spare moment they wish to use upon thinking of the lifestyle.

"The best way to learn to get into the pool, for a beginner, is to get into the water, one step at a time before jumping head/feet first into the water."

## Understanding Punishment

by FineArt

Few terms have more widely varying meanings in BDSM and D/s than the term PUNISHMENT. The term is applied to everything ranging from intense physical or psychological play to the need to eliminate or correct extremes in undesirable behavior. When administering punishments, no matter what the meaning or intent, the Dominant or Top and the submissive or bottom must have a clear and mutual understanding of what is to be achieved!

### **Punishment as a form of Play:**

Punishment is often used to indicate a wide variety of what are actually play related activities, intended only for the mutual pleasures of the parties involved. Specific activities can range from humiliation or bondage to a wide range of physical tortures. Indeed, one of the definitions of punishment is to inflict pain, to hurt or treat severely! We often see a submissive or bottom speak of the need for "punishment" accompanied by laughs or giggles. In these situations they are normally talking about a desire to play, not to engage in activities to correct or change behavior. In this context, "punishment" can be great fun!!!

### **Punishment to change or eliminate undesired behavior:**

In this context, the meaning and methods of punishment are quite different! "Punishment" here is intended to eliminate undesired behaviors. It is different from discipline, which is intended to help the submissive in learning new behaviors or to exercise a greater level of self-control in some area.

To be effective, punishment for this purpose should meet a number of criteria:

- Both the Dominant and the submissive should recognize the "offending behavior" as having broken some agreement or rule. This only makes sense when the goal is to change or eliminate the behavior! It's hard to stop or change doing something if one does not know what they have done wrong to begin with.
- The "consequence" (punishment) must be something that the submissive does not enjoy or want. This can take a widely varied range of things, from strong expressions of disappointment, withholding of something the submissive does want and enjoy, having the submissive engage in some unpleasant activity (i.e.: standing in a corner), or even some intense physical punishment (perhaps a whipping).
- The activities of punishment should be separate and distinct from activities intended for pleasure. Ultimately, punishment is effective because of its emotional/psychological components. Since the goal is to change or eliminate undesired behavior, it is much less likely to be effective if the same activity (i.e.: a spanking) is sometimes used for punishment, other times for pleasure. In addition, implements of punishment... a specific belt, crop or whip, a chair in a designated corner or similar things... should be used and therefore psychologically associated only with punishment!
- Punishments should be administered ONLY when the submissive knows, or reasonably should have known, that she was breaking a rule or otherwise engaging in an unacceptable behavior. Punishing for things the submissive does not understand is wrong or unacceptable may well eliminate the specific behavior... but it is even more likely to make the submissive tentative, afraid to do things. The goal should be growth of the submissive and the relationship... not breaking the submissive's will!
- Punishments should not involve things that are simply something the submissive does not LIKE to do, but that are otherwise good for them! (A parallel would be punishing a child by making them eat their veggies... the result would be as much a lasting hatred of veggies as a change in behavior!)
- Punishments should be proportional to the offense. Just like we do not imprison people for a single parking violation, severe punishments should not be administered for minor rules violations (unless done quite intentionally or repeatedly after the situation has been discussed).

In a serious and solid relationship, punishment in this context should seldom and perhaps never need to be used! In most cases, discussion or further training should be sufficient to achieve the goals... assuming that the expectations are well set and the submissive truly seeks to please the Master! If a situation should arise where punishment is appropriate, the means should be carefully selected and the purpose clearly communicated!

One thing is certain... if the submissive SEEKS punishment in this context, either the means is not effective or there is a fundamental problem in the relationship!!!

### **Punishment as a Cleansing**

There are times when physical punishment serves as a cleansing mechanism for the submissive. When it is accompanied by a clear understanding of situations that brought punishment about, the physical punishment can allow the submissive to feel "this is over, I have been forgiven".

### **An Eye For an Eye!**

Finally, there are, occasionally, Dominants who simply seek their "pound of flesh" through punishment. They may feel that they are righting some wrong, or, in some cases, simply feel they are "demonstrating their dominance" by punishing without concern for any change in the submissive's behavior. Their only goal is to demonstrate their "strength or status" by being firm. More often than not, the result will be uncertainty or even fear on the part of the submissive IF this is not a part of the couple's play.

Dominants who rely on fear should seriously reassess both their methods... and their true status of Dominant instead of abuser!

And submissives who find themselves in such situations should strongly consider whether this is one to whom they should grant their gift!

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## Usefulness Of Fantasies; Part One

by Raven Shadowborne

Many people first become aware of BDSM through their own sexual fantasies. Others become aware of it through books, magazines, or web sites. Usually contained within erotic fiction, pictures or factual retelling of scenes within those books, movies or web sites. There are other ways to become aware of bdsm and how one becomes aware of it affects how they view the lifestyle to a certain extent. What can be read or viewed as erotica often does not depict reality, or depicts more advanced methods of rope bondage and pain play than a beginner should be attempting. Instead of reality many erotic books depicts the author's personal fantasies, a fantasy created by the author that may not be at all related to their personal fantasies, or just one aspect of the relationship; that being play. Books such as *The Story Of O*, Anne Rice's *Beauty Series*, and *9 ½ Weeks* can be highly arousing and enjoyable to read. They allow the readers to place themselves in the character's position and imagine what it would be like to be that character. Fantasizing in this manner is a good thing in that many of bdsm's activities are enactments of the participant's fantasies and desires. Such erotica can easily lend itself to new ideas for the readers to try out. Trying new things, pushing limits and enjoying bdsm play activities are a major part of bdsm. So fantasizing often is part of the play aspect of bdsm and thus important. This can apply to viewing pictures or films as well as reading books or articles.

If fantasizing is beneficial to bdsm, then why do so many people go to great lengths to discount fantasy by focusing on and strongly advocating only reality? The answer can vary from person to person but usually boils down to this; trying to educate new people so as to help them avoid some common pitfalls. One of the most common pitfalls a new person can fall into; is believing that a bdsm power exchange relationship will be exactly like what they have read or viewed and expecting that from any partners. It is a mistake, which is most often done by new people, but can also be done by those with experience. I do not see this pitfall as a newcomer only possibility.

People's fantasies can be quite intense. This intensity can affect the actions a person takes and in some areas fantasy is not the best reasoning upon which to base a decision or action. *The Story Of O* (for example) presents a wonderful fantasy; that of a totally submissive woman at the complete disposal of her masters. Her behavior is rigidly controlled through such rules as keep lips and legs parted at all times to not being allowed to look into the eyes of any male unless directly ordered to do so. For many people, this is an extremely arousing and exciting fantasy. If that excitement and arousal is used as the basis for entering into such a relationship (or situation) as this one, without seriously considering the full impact of such a relationship, it can and will cause problems. It is easy to mistake the arousal and excitement a fantasy causes for a true desire to live that fantasy setting and everything it entails. This is often an underlying reason behind a new person's decision to enter into a relationship that does not fit their personality, needs, wants and/or limits. Such structured tpe relationships, that are entered into because a story of forced slavery was arousing, often end painfully. The breakup can cause participants to seriously doubt their self worth because they could not maintain a relationship that they fantasized about.

Safety is another reason for the advocacy of reality only when it comes to bdsm. Books, articles, pictures and movies can often show kinds of play, which a beginner should not be attempting without further experience. It is not often made clear that the viewer should gain more experience before trying those things at home. Also they can contain situations that are just not feasible for the viewer's or readers real life. In *The Story Of O*, O is taken to Roissy, without any warning, by her boyfriend where she spends some time (at least a couple of weeks) being trained as a slave. Most people in real life can't just up and disappear for a couple of weeks to be trained. Also in *The Story Of O*, O is to submit to any man who wears the mark of Roissy and she has sexual intercourse with more than one person. This kind of action requires safety precautions to prevent the receipt of or transference of sexually transmitted diseases. In fictional books or movies, sexually transmitted diseases are not a concern. Because of these, and other safety issues, focusing on the reality of bdsm is quite simple; it is just one part of a person's whole life. BdsM is not immune to the same things that affect every other kind of relationship out there. Being involved in bdsm does not make someone immune to stress, his or her own needs/desires, mistakes, mood changes, or anything else that affects a person in their day to day life. Those same things that affect a person now, will continue to affect them once they are involved in a bdsm relationship. BdsM is an addition to a person's life (in varying degrees or manners), on top of or alongside of many other things. It is a part of one's personality, but not the whole of it.

Due to length and other aspects of this topic I wish to cover, I will continue in *Usefulness Of Fantasies; Part Two*.



January/February 2002

## The Toy Store

by FineArt

Gregory and Catherine had had a great day enjoying the scenic fall. They had driven along one of the nation's great rivers, stopping frequently to enjoy the colorful leaves, or some of the waterfalls that fed the river from the cliffs. The day had been chilly, breezy.

Gregory had Catherine dress in a long blue denim dress before they left that morning. It buttoned along the entire front... something Gregory enjoyed very much. Of course, she wore nothing under the dress... something Gregory enjoyed even more!

As he drove along the river hugging roadway, he had her tilt the passenger seat back a couple of notches, unbuttoned portions of the dress and played with her with his right hand while steering with his left. Catherine enjoyed the ride, even if she missed most of the scenery! She had not even noticed the broad smiles and thumbs up from a group of farm workers riding on hay bales in the back of a pick-up. Gregory had passed them rather slowly on a four-lane section of the road, his hand very busy in the exposed vee of Catherine's legs. Catherine had her eyes closed and was moaning rather loudly, her body writhing in her pleasure! It was a fun day.

It was early evening as they drove back toward home. Catherine was leaning across the console, her head in Gregory's lap, attending to him in a way he relished, when she felt the car slow and turn into a parking lot. Reluctantly, she sat up and pulled her unbuttoned dress closed as Gregory put the car in park. Immediately in front of the car, through the huge windows, Catherine could see clothing hanging in the brightly lit store. She could see all sorts of vivid colors, much of it with lace or feathers. She could also see a rack of leather corsets and another of what appeared to be latex outfits.

Gregory chuckled when he turned to her, starring wide-eyed into the shop. He reached over, pushing the right side of her dress top aside as he cupped and squeezed her bare breast. He pulled the dress back over her and began, awkwardly, buttoning her dress from the top as he said, "Ready for some shopping Cat?" Gregory only called her this when he was in an extremely playful mood. "uuummmm." Catherine was leaning forward to read the name of the store through the top of the windshield... in gaudy neon. "If you want." Her voice was a combination of curiosity and nervous laughter. Catherine had never been to a shop like this one. She was making it difficult for Gregory to button her dress... he stopped two buttons below her navel, just barely enough so she would not be exposed as she walked.

Gregory laughed and climbed out of his door, circling behind the car to open hers. Catherine was not allowed to even touch a car door handle when they were together. She wanted to button the dress more, but knew better about that, too.

Gregory held the shop's door open so Catherine could step in first. To the left, the moderately sized shop was filled with clothing. Clearly, this was not a place she would clothes shop with her mother! To the right were racks and racks of things Catherine had only heard about... what she knew were called "adult toys." In the middle of the room was a octagonal shaped counter where the clerk on duty looked up at them, seemingly more interested in the magazine he was reading. He was thin faced, with long, greasy black hair speckled with gray. His full black beard was tangled and had not been combed or attended to for a long time, it seemed. His dark eyes were sunken. He wore a black sleeveless T-shirt with some type of colorful design. His arms and what could be seen of his chest and shoulders were completely covered with tattoos. Catherine shuddered as she looked at him. He smiled as he leered at her, his eyes moving carefully up and down her body, darting down when a gust through the open door billowed her dress, exposing her shapely legs to her upper thighs.

Gregory slipped in behind Catherine, his eyes surveying the store. Taking her by the hand, he led her over to the racks of toys, heading for a wall display of leather masks and cuffs. As they walked past the counter, the clerk moved his wheeled chair to follow them, watching Catherine closely. Catherine blushed when she saw what he was reading, a tabloid style magazine of a huge breasted woman, smiling to the camera... with one huge cock planted in her pussy, another buried deep in her ass.

Gregory spent several minutes sorting through the leather goods, occasionally taking something down and placing it against Catherine's wrist or making explicit comments. Catherine kept moving so that her back was to the clerk, feeling his eyes boring into her, feeling the flush of embarrassment at his knowing these accessories were to be used, if purchased, on her!

After a bit, Gregory moved to a pegboard display that jutted out from the wall. Catherine followed, relieved that she would be hidden from the clerk's view by a rotating six-foot tall display. Catherine turned redder than a vine ripe summer tomato when Gregory took a pair of nipple clamps down from the rack and turned to hold them up to her breasts, the chain swaying as his eyes twinkled. She had felt the bite of clothespins, and was intrigued by the clamps, but was not particularly interested in any public modeling. She was very relieved not only by being hidden by the rack, but also that Gregory had not opened the top of her dress to give the clamps a live trial!

Gregory selected a set of packaged tweezers style clamps that he handed to Catherine, chuckling as he did so. She had not uttered a word since entering the store.

Next to the clamps were a display of braided leather whips, a variety of floggers and several riding crops. Gregory chuckled as he took down a short tailed leather flogger and snapped it across his forearm, immediately turning it a bright red. Holding the arm out for Catherine to see, he asked, "What do you think little one?"

"Interesting, master." Catherine was trying to remain invisible to and unheard by the clerk! Gregory took down one of the crops, again using it on his forearm. The snap of the leather on his arm echoed through the store and bright red welts raised immediately on his arm. "Wouldn't this look fantastic on your lovely cheeks, little one?"

The clerk chuckled as he rustled the paper, watching them.

Catherine had followed Gregory as he was exploring. She looked up to see the clerk's stained toothed grin as she said, "Yes master, if that would please you." She stepped back into the display rack and had to turn quickly to keep it from falling over. She could not believe she was gripping a huge device labeled "butt plug" in one hand and a "double dong" in the other! Catherine felt she could die of humiliation as she first steadied the rack, then had to bend down on the other side to pick up and replace the things that had fallen from the rack to the floor. The clerk openly leered as her unbuttoned dress slid off her legs, nearly leaving her exposed. And he laughed openly as Gregory described each item and its use as she picked it up off the floor. There were three different sized dildos, several butt plugs, a couple of large, colorful vibrators and something that looked like a large hair clip with beads attached to the closed end. It was labeled "clit clamp."

Catherine glanced up at Gregory in exasperation as his banter played to the clerk. He was having a ball; She was ready to leave!

When everything was restored, Gregory selected a clit clamp and a small flogger to go with the nipple clamps, handing each to his Catherine to hold. When he was finally ready to go, he led Catherine toward the checkout, commenting just loud enough for the clerk to hear, "Don't you just love new jewelry and blushers, little one?" His laugh was wicked.

"Yes master." Her voice was strained, and she could not look at the clerk. Catherine was further embarrassed when she had to hand each item to the clerk, whose eyes went to the very place they would be used on her as he rung them up. Gregory paid for them and left the bag containing the items on the counter for Catherine to pick up. The clerk was actually licking his lips before he said to Gregory "She otta be great with that stuff. She's one hot babe, man!"

Catherine looked for a postage stamp she could hide under.

"Can't wait for her to model them!" Gregory replied as he was turning to leave... and stepped right into a woman who had silently entered from the back room. Gregory almost knocked her over, reaching to steady her by grabbing both her arms.

The woman, who was likely in her late teens or early twenties, looked like she had weathered many more years. Dressed in a very worn, completely transparent teddie, she had once been very attractive. Her long, dark hair had not been cared for, and she was extremely thin, wasted away. Her drawn face and sunken eyes said volumes about how she was abusing herself with drugs and poor diet and who knew what else! In a steady stream, she burst out "I gotta great show for ya two in da back if youse want. Lots of close up pussy and tits." Lifting hers as she said this. "It's cheap! And for a couple a more bucks I'll do myself while youse watch. Youse ain't cops are ya? If not, for \$5 either of you can touch me anyway ya wanna." Her eyes were begging, moving from Gregory to Catherine and back.

Gregory quickly released her and stepped back, reaching for Catherine's hand, anxious to move on now! "No thanks, I'll have everything I need when I get home!" He quickly led his Catherine from the store and into the car.

The rest of the way home, Gregory and Catherine talked about what they had together and how fortunate they were to share their lives with one another.

It was not until they got home that Gregory had his Catherine model her new accessories. He loved the look and reactions of the chained clamps accentuating her full breasts. The clamp below left her extremely ready for his more intense personal attention, and the flogger brought a rosy glow to her bottom, thighs and, later, breasts that Gregory always enjoyed. Their first "real" adult toys brought them years of pleasure, but they never forgot the comparison of what they shared with how others had fallen.

They knew what they shared was unique... and very special.

January/February 2002

## Retribution - Part Two

by dark whisper

"Lick me."

I knelt between my wife's thighs, her pussy open and gleaming just inches beyond the tip of my nose. I could smell her arousal, heavy and thick. She lay there panting. She was like some wild animal whose lust had overtaken all it's senses, and had succumbed to it's need for conquest. She was gorgeous. My tongue snaked out and stroked up the edge of a swollen lip, making her jerk slightly. Her newly shaved pussy was red and puffy. She'd used it well in three weeks. Since her crazy idea of punishment, we'd spent countless hours engaged in all sorts of sexual play-usually ending with me pleasuring her before she allowed me to release.

My cock rose as I thought again about that first day, the day she'd made me put on my collar for the first time. She was so commanding, every inch the boss. I loved seeing her that way, and she'd taken to the role like she was born to it.

"Damn it Dave, I said LICK me. Don't fucking play with my pussy that way." Her voice was husky with desire, but the edge of power was unmistakable. The sharp sting of her riding crop stung my shoulders as she made her demand. My tongue slipped between her lips and she sighed with pleasure.

Long, deep strokes with my tongue, keeping clear of her aching clit. I knew she wanted me to stimulate it, but I wouldn't. Not until she forced me. This was our game, and I'd learned the rules well. My fingers spread her labia wide, and I saw the way her clit peeked from it's little hood. She must have felt my gaze, and I watched, fascinated, as she pulled it back. My cock leapt forward. I sunk my tongue deep into her pink opening, swirling and thrusting like a rapier's lance.

"Oh yeah, my little pet. That's right, fuck me with your tongue. Are you hot? Is your little cock straining for its pleasure?"

My cock was so hard it hurt.

"Yes, Mistress." My voice was just a whisper against her cunt.

"Do you want to touch yourself? Do you feel the way your cock strains against your panties? You like wearing my panties, don't you, you nasty little boy?" Her voice was quivering with excitement. "Tell me."

My tongue was stabbing at her hole, thrusting deep. The fingers of my right hand were holding her lips wide as she pushed her hips at me. I felt the blood pounding in my groin as she taunted me.

"I'm so fucking hot, baby." I whispered.

Each week had brought a new sensation, a new humiliation. I always wore a collar - sometimes around my neck, and other times around my right thigh. Carrie insisted I never be without it.

Today, she'd forced me to wear her panties, and the elastic cut into the skin on either side of my balls. I wasn't sure I liked the new experience, but watching the pleasure in her eyes when I did what she told me seemed to be enough to keep my cock hard and throbbing for hours on end. I'd never been so horny for so long in my life-not even when I was a teenager and ONLY thought about sex.

I heard her moans coming one on top of each other, and she ground her clit against my mouth. Her hands were buried in my hair and she yanked savagely on the roots. I knew she was going to come, and I thrust my tongue deep, holding it stationary as she bucked and groaned. God, when Carrie comes, she gushes, and my mouth sucked it all in greedily.

Her hips rotated and lunged, smearing her juice over my face. I held her securely in my grasp as the last of her orgasm slowly faded. I stroked the tip of my tongue up her slit and brushed the head of her clit. She gasped. Now...now I could concentrate on the tiny, oh-so-sensitive erection.

My lips closed around her clit and pulled gently. Carrie jerked. The tip of my tongue made little butterfly flicks over the underside as I slid two fingers into her sopping wet cunt and twisted them back and forth. Carrie was whimpering with urgency as I took my own sweet time. I drew the wet fingers down and circled the dark star of her asshole. Gently, I pushed the tip of one finger against the tight muscle, then pushed deeper still. The flesh resisted, but only for a moment. Her ass spread for my touch.

"Oh yes," she panted, "fuck my ass. Give me more, I want more." This last was delivered with a growl, and a quick swipe with the crop across my shoulders.

My cock was dripping steadily and was painfully hard. I couldn't help it, I started to hump the air like a horny dog.

"Yes Mistress," I gasped in pleasure.

As soon my second finger joined the first, Carrie exploded. My ears started ringing as she howled in ecstasy.

"What's the matter with you?! Fuck me. Put your little cock in my ass and fuck me like the dog you are!" Carrie was gasping and groaning as I yanked her too-tight panties off, spread lubricant over the head of my cock, and pushed hard into her squirming ass. I felt her open up and accept me like I belonged there. God, she was so tight.

I buried myself inside my wife. Carrie's face was turned toward me, and I could see the satisfaction in her eyes as I did her bidding. I almost hated her right at that moment, but my body seemed to have a mind of its own. My hips pulled back, then thrust deep once more. Her ass-cheeks were grinding against the flat of my abdomen as she tried to take the whole of my throbbing cock.

I saw her riding crop hit the floor as I lunged into her time and time again. I picked it up, and shoved the thick handle deep inside her dripping cunt. She screamed and her whole body started jerking with pleasure. I felt the buildup of semen in my balls.

"Carrie," I was sweating, concentrating on not coming until she gave me permission, "can I...please...come?"

"Fuck! Yes. Come in my asshole."

I let loose. I felt thick jets of come erupt from the tip of my cock as I grabbed her hips and yanked her onto me. Stars flashed across my eyes as my body was finally granted release. My yells joined hers as we both rocked and rode out the crashing waves of orgasm.

I pulled the soaked handle of the riding crop out of her pussy, and slipped it into my mouth, sucking it greedily. My cock was still deep inside of my demanding wife as she watched me tasting her juice on the slippery leather.

I felt the tug of her hand on my leash as she pulled me close and kissed me deeply. Her upper lip was beaded with sweat and her breath was hot on my cheek as her lips pulled and sucked on the tip of my tongue. The tight muscles of her anus flexed, and I felt my softening cock slide out of her hole. A gush of my come dribbled down her damp skin as she released my shaft.

She pushed my head down until my eyes were level with her now gaping asshole.

"Lick me."