

THE LONG-AWAITED SEQUEL TO
COMING TO POWER



THE SECOND COMING

A LEATHERDYKE READER

EDITED BY

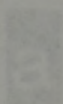
PAT CALIFIA & ROBIN SWEENEY



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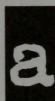


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AND ROBIN SWEENEY



ALYSON PUBLICATIONS
LOS ANGELES

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We dedicate this book to the iconoclasts, outlaws, and rebels who founded this community. Specifically, we want to thank Amber Rae and Kaye Buckley for their pioneering work in Cardea, San Francisco's first women-only S/M group. This book is also dedicated to any woman who is brave enough to look inside her own heart and cunt for the truth about her sexuality.

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COME SOON, COME IN, AND COME AS YOU ARE:

AN INTRODUCTION

PAT CALIFIA AND ROBIN SWEENEY

The first book by leatherdykes was *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M*, published in 1981 by Samois, a lesbian-feminist S/M support group in San Francisco, and reprinted in 1982 by Alyson Publications. This was a groundbreaking book for leatherdykes, just as Samois was a groundbreaking group in the lesbian S/M community. Since then, several excellent books about women who do S/M with other women—notably Laura Antoniou's *Some Women* and *Leatherwomen* anthologies—have been published (see the resource list at the end of the book). But none of those books has combined fiction, nonfiction, and graphics in quite the way that *Coming to Power* did, to create a sociological overview of the leatherdyke community and its culture, sexuality, and politics.

The first printing of *Coming to Power* sold out within a few months. The members of Samois were stunned by the intensity of the response the book received. Hundreds of letters poured in from women all over the world, asking for help in locating other S/M dykes in their area. Sadly, Samois's correspondence secretaries weren't able to do much for these often desperate and lonely women. At the time, Samois and New York's Lesbian Sex Mafia were the only above-ground groups with post office boxes and regular meetings. Other cities (such as Seattle and Los Angeles) had visible leatherdyke communities but no formal organizations that new women could contact.

The stress of publishing and distributing a book was one of the factors that contributed to the demise of Samois. The group also fell apart because of political and personal differences. The organization had always been full of strong women with big opinions. Because the founders of Samois were pioneers, they were expected to be all things to all people. Samois tried simultaneously to educate the lesbian and gay community about S/M, to create bridges to the gay men's and straight S/M communities, to nurture and socialize women in the process of coming out as leatherdykes, and to provide social and educational opportunities for women who had already come out. It was just too much for one group to do. There were never more than half a dozen

active officers to perform the chores that kept the group running; usually there were only three or four.

The social climate now as far as S/M goes is not exactly warm and fuzzy. But fifteen years ago it was much, much worse. It would be difficult to overestimate the level of hostility and stigma Samois members faced. Those who were visible about their membership lived in a fishbowl of hate. There was no safe place to stand outside Samois. When members had conflicts with one another, there was no place else to go. It's not surprising that eventually the pressure cooker exploded. Most groups devoted to social change have a half-life. Ironically, as they achieve some of their goals, the context and the political agenda change, and old groups have to die to make way for new, better focused organizations.

The difference between Samois and many of these other groups is that when Samois folded, it left behind a very important legacy that continues to do the group's outreach, education, and support work. That legacy is *Coming to Power*. Few other works in the modern lesbian literary canon have created such sweeping change. Among other things, *Coming to Power* permanently altered the discourse on lesbian desire and pornography and challenged deeply rooted assumptions about what it means to be a feminist, a lesbian, or a woman. The book went places a local support group never could have reached. Every copy of *Coming to Power* has changed at least one individual woman's life. The fact that it is still in print and selling briskly today speaks to the need that lesbian and bisexual women still have to get more information about the diversity of our passion.

In 1981, when the first edition of *Coming to Power* went out of print, no lesbian, feminist, or women's press in the country would touch it. Alyson Publications is to be commended for coming to the rescue and keeping *Coming to Power* in print after Samois folded. Its commercial and critical success and popularity made it clear that women wanted to read books about sexuality that did not advocate censorship or speak merely to victimhood. The success and popularity of *Coming to Power* also encouraged women's presses to consider pleasure as a topic and created a safer space for women (whether they were S/M dykes or not) to be open about their sexual practices and question the simplistic and repressive moral values of '70s-style radical feminism.

Since the early '80s, there has been tremendous change in the community of leatherdykes and the people we love. Almost every major city has a women's S/M support group. The Outer Limits in Seattle holds a biannual leatherdyke conference, Powersurge. The International Ms. Leather contest is another big gathering of our tribe. The National Leather Association hosts Living in Leather, an annual pansexual leather conference, and there is a large presence of leatherwomen at the International Mr. Leather contest. Several national magazines have been devoted to women who do S/M with other women. We're on the Internet and are invited to speak to college classes. Other segments of the leather-S/M-

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fetish community look to us for leadership (though probably not as often or as humbly as they should). None of this was imaginable fifteen years ago.

We even have enough history and experience as a community to have a generation gap. The women who came into the S/M community before the publication of *Coming to Power* or before there were women's S/M support groups in every part of the country are forebears, and, like all successful elders, they have progeny. The women who find the leather community today are fortunate to have the footprints of their forebears to walk in. But this doesn't mean that there are no conflicts between older and younger leatherdykes. The AIDS pandemic has created a new type of queer activist. It is sometimes difficult for women in their forties and fifties to share or pass on power to women in their twenties, even though many women in their twenties have more experience organizing conferences, dealing with the mass media, participating in civil disobedience, and publishing alternative literature than their elders. Some of those different styles are reflected in this book.

The S/M community of the 1990s has problems that are in part the result of our successful organizing efforts in the preceding decades. We are undoubtedly a larger, more visible, more politicized community. However, a tremendous amount of our energy as activists is still eaten up by simply maintaining the institutions that make it possible for kinky people to find one another and have a pervy social life. In most cities we still have problems finding safe places to hold classes, meetings, and parties. We still run into trouble with local media when we try to advertise our events, place personal ads, or display our artwork.

When people find the S/M community, it's often after years of ambivalence and shame. They want a chance to play out their fantasies, and they are often impatient with the slim social options that are available, reluctant to put energy into increasing them, and wary of activism, which requires some tedious intellectual effort to plan. It takes courage to be public about being a sadomasochist; it is genuinely risky to do so. People who want to engage in activism are understandably frustrated when it seems the only thing they can do is sponsor one more play party or teach one more workshop on Bondage 101. It's no surprise that we have a high incidence of burnout among our leadership.

Straight, gay male, bisexual, lesbian, and transgendered S/M people all give lip service to the idea of a larger "leather community" that includes us all. But it's not clear what the agenda of that putative community might be, and each of these groups of course wants to defend its own social space and traditions. So our community is still deeply divided along lines of gender and sexual orientation. There is very little conscious attempt among heterosexual perverts to work on their homophobia; the majority of gay men remain ignorant of feminism or frankly misogynist; lesbians don't see much advantage to be gained in working with groups that have historically shoved them aside or actively persecuted them; and everybody remains pretty suspicious

and unfriendly toward transgendered people and bisexuals.

The problem is that our enemies do not recognize these very real and valid distinctions. When we first showed up at gay pride marches, some attempts were made to keep us out by mainstream gays who thought we made them look bad and by followers of outmoded feminist theories that made no distinction between S/M and violence. Then for several years our presence was grudgingly accepted. But our right to participate in these events is being challenged once more. The New Christian Right loves to videotape people in leather and chains flogging one another, and they broadcast this footage when they try to pass laws denying gay citizens equal civil rights in Colorado, Oregon, Washington, and other states. The leather community's right to participate in gay pride events is being threatened by mainstream gay politicians who don't know how to talk to Mom and Pop about us and don't particularly care to learn.

Some leather activists have put forward the idea that we ought to tone down our public presentations and stop playing into the hands of bigots who will misuse our festive behavior. An equally vigorous segment of our community has labeled such ideas assimilationist thinking and adamantly refuses to leave the bullwhips at home. It has been pointed out that our enemies could always use material from S/M porn or how-to classes on S/M safety and technique at leather conferences. And, in fact, writers for the *Lambda Report*, a homophobic right-wing journal about "the gay agenda," infiltrated the leather conference at the 1993 march on Washington and published detailed reports about the contents of several workshops. A long-term strategy to keep harmful S/M imagery out of the hands of the New Right is doomed to fail. But if we don't want to censor ourselves, we still have to do something to confront these antigay bigots and to update the squeamish civil-rights gay activists who ought to be our allies. No individual or group in the leather community seems prepared to take on that intimidating task.

Fetish imagery has never been more common in music videos, haute couture, and mass media. S/M is a talk-show staple and a reliable component of crime shows. While it's nice to have people admire our clothes and to hear jokes about handcuffs during prime time, these media references too often include damaging and dangerous stereotypes about us. When latex, leather, and metallic accessories are taken out of context, we get ripped off so the viewers at home can be titillated. The message sent by these kinky sound-and-sight bites is, "This stuff is so far-out and weird, you will be exotic and thrilling when you wear it, but we couldn't possibly show you where it comes from because that's too horrifying and disgusting."

It isn't pleasant to be trivialized this way, but it's even worse to be demonized in episodes of *Law & Order* and other dramatic series that repeatedly use our community as the venue for murder or sexual assault. You've seen this one a million times: brave detectives go slumming in the sexual fringe to solve a heinous

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crime, principled district attorneys swallow their nausea and insist that justice be done even though the victim probably wanted (like all masochists) to be killed. And there is no S/M organization to call them on the carpet for defamation.

It would be very dangerous for our community to allow this to continue. Negative stereotypes of sadomasochism are translated into public policy. Government action against our community is always taken in the name of fighting violence; some even claim it is necessary for the cops to arrest us to protect us from our own sexuality. The ideological link between kinky sex and mental illness, rape, murder, and suicide has to be broken before we can successfully contest attempts to ban our literature, harass or arrest people at our public events, or outlaw even the private practice of bondage and S/M. Two cases in other countries should serve as powerful reminders that the state is quite capable of taking action against us.

In 1990, Scotland Yard (alerted by videotapes of a group of leathermen's private parties) arrested sixteen British leathermen and charged them with crimes for participating in consensual S/M activities. Some of the victims were convicted of conspiring in assaults against their own persons. Prison sentences of up to four and one half years were handed out. Since all of the defendants lost their jobs and many were thrown out of their homes, even the men who were not jailed were punished by being outed as perverts. This case, known as Operation Spanner, was one of the largest and most expensive police operations ever mounted in England. As a result of statements made by the judge during the trial, consensual S/M is, for all intents and purposes, criminalized in England. The convictions were upheld by the British appeals court and the House of Lords. As we go to press, the European Court of Justice is investigating the Operation Spanner decision to determine whether it violates the Court's code of human rights.

In Vancouver, Canada, a gay bookstore called Little Sister's has sued Canadian customs in an attempt to stop seizures of feminist, gay, and S/M books at the border. Canadian customs, like the customs agency in the United States, is allowed broad discretionary powers to decide what constitutes harmful matter that cannot be admitted. But Canadian seizures escalated sharply in the wake of *Regina v. Butler*, a 1992 Canadian Supreme Court decision that adopted a broad and vague "feminist" antiporn definition of obscenity. The first successful obscenity prosecution after *Butler* was of the lesbian S/M magazine *Bad Attitude*, for publication of Trish Thomas's story "Wunna My Fantasies." The Toronto gay bookstore Glad Day was found guilty and fined, and members of the Project P vice squad continue to visit the store and tell staff to remove various items from their shelves. Enforcement efforts have concentrated on S/M material on the grounds that it is "violent and degrading." Canadian citizens are not allowed to import works that describe acts that are perfectly legal to perform in that country. The Little Sister's case has dragged on for several years. A judge recently

found that customs had discriminated against gay bookstores. However, because he refused to limit the authority of customs agents, that decision will be appealed by Little Sister's.

The social climate in the United States is pro-censorship. Bondage and flagellation are routinely mentioned in new obscenity laws, and some municipalities are attempting to ban the sale of S/M paraphernalia. It's too late to go back underground. You can't cover an elephant with a tablecloth, even if it's a nice latigo one with lots of studwork and a chain-mail fringe. We can't afford to stop doing the kind of grassroots organizing that makes our community larger and stronger, but we also have to develop more political sophistication and start thinking about how we can defend ourselves in the public arena.

These sweeping changes (and a powerful worldwide need for new jack-off material) made it clear to us that it was time for a follow-up anthology to *Coming to Power*. (We should also be honest enough to admit that Pat had forgotten how much work it was to edit a book like this and that Robin had never compiled an anthology, so we suffered a sort of folie à deux that this project would be quick, easy, and nothing but fun.) This book is intended not as a sequel to *Coming to Power* but as a descendant. We hope it is in the spirit of the original—intelligent, sexy, and challenging.

The subtitle of this book is *A Leatherdyke Reader*, though many of our contributors and readers may or may not consider themselves leatherdykes. The boundaries of our community are being pushed back. Bisexual and transgendered women are demanding recognition and inclusion. It was difficult for us to figure out how to label this book—which is for women who focus a lot of their time, energy, resources, and kinkiness on other women—without acquiring a subtitle that would occupy the entire front cover, leaving no room at all for a sexy photograph. We are deliberately using the term *leatherdyke* to carve out an area for ourselves in the world of identity politics in which the leather community currently finds itself. This book is for and about women who care for and about other women. For a more detailed examination of these issues, see the section titled "Who Is My Sister? Challenging the Boundaries of the Leatherdyke Community."

A lot of other aspects of the community are reflected in these pages as well. "We Are Here Too: The Diversity of Perversity" gathers some of these voices into a powerful chorus. Within these pages we have contributions from every region of the country, and our contributors range in age from under twenty to well over fifty. Almost a third of the women in this book are women of color. We have writers in this book who never finished high school and writers who have Ph.D.s. We are everywhere, and we are Everywoman.

In "Dungeon Dialogues: How This Works in Real Life," you will find pieces that describe the rewards and stresses of integrating an S/M sexuality into the rest of one's life. This section raises many questions about how we handle our

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intimate relationships and how we create chosen families and communities. The articles in "Paradigms and Archetypes: S/M Theory" take a more academic approach and deconstruct some of the theoretical and philosophical issues we have to tackle both within and outside our community.

There are, undoubtedly, aspects of the community we have missed or overlooked. There could have been more about racism in the leatherdyke community, certainly. More information about the lives of leatherdykes with disabilities—hidden and not—would have been welcome. Although many of our contributors are in recovery, there is no essay discussing the impact of addiction or sobriety upon our community. Pieces about working in coalition with the heterosexual and gay male S/M community could have been included. Although the leatherdyke community is the only lesbian subculture that makes a conscious effort to teach women about safer sex and enforce it as a cultural norm, we did not receive any articles about HIV-positive women. *The Second Coming* has three strong fiction sections, two feisty "poetry slam" sections, and visual art by many talented women. But there could always be more hot stories, photos, and poetry. With luck, the community will continue to change so much that the next anthology like this will have articles we can't imagine today.

So there you have it. This book is like a party with all of your favorite leatherwomen. We've all shown up, as smart, sharp, and funny as we are, in our best gear, ready and willing to make a wild time happen. Like a lot of leatherdyke gatherings, we've got a bunch of different things happening. There's a bunch of people getting rowdy and flirting and playing in the corner—go on, check 'em out. If they won't do the dirty deed in front of you, they'll at least talk about it. A lot.

There's a bunch of the rest of us standing around arguing too, but in the way that means we're all part of one big conglomerate community. We're all women who do S/M with other women—that much we all agree on. But what do we mean by S/M? What sort of S/M, and how do we feel about it? We've even got people discussing the idea of what a woman is. This book has quieter moments too, where we're talking one-on-one with each other about how it feels to be us and how we make lives that work for us in a world that doesn't like us. We've got love letters and passionate moments and details about how we found ourselves and one another.

We are fighters, artists, and survivors, and we are all in this book. And you are welcome to join us. Come on in, and keep on coming.

San Francisco
August 23, 1995

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank our contributors for their patience. It has taken us three years to assemble this book, and they have been very gracious about waiting to see their work finally appear in print.

We would also like to thank the many S/M organizations that helped us to publicize this project. Because of their valuable assistance, we were able to include many women whose voices would otherwise not have been heard.

Professionally and personally, we both owe a big round of thanks to the staff and supporters of *Venus Infers* and to the Entire Basic Black Bunch. A tip of the cursor, particularly, to Kiki Carr, Macinatrix par excellence.

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We remain, of course, responsible for any errors that might appear herein.



Photograph by J. C. Collins

**GRAY HANKY FICTION
(LIGHT S/M AND BONDAGE)**

VIRGIN'S REQUEST

L. J. DREAMWALKER

Flowing white lace and cotton dress adorn her. Flowing auburn-brown waves and curls flow down her back. She sits in front of her mistress. She is faceless, because the room is dark. She kneels in front of her mistress's boots, simple black leather. She feels her mistress as she caresses her hair. As the young womyn strokes her mistress's velvet-covered thighs, massaging them deeply, slowly going downward, hands stretch out against her lover's leather boots, palms gliding over their smoothness. The young womyn begins to quiver, and tears quietly begin to roll down her face. And then, trying to conceal the tears, she begins to lower her head, pressing her face against her mistress's feet. But then, suddenly, she is grasped gently but firmly by her lover's hand to be embarrassed possibly by another kiss.

Her weeping is uncontrollable now; the tears can be concealed from her mistress no more. As the young womyn tries to hide her face in shame, her mistress asks her, "What's wrong?"

"I had a thought," the young womyn hesitatingly replies. "It was so intense, it was like a feeling..."

"What was it?" her lover asks.

"It's so silly, I feel almost ashamed to repeat it," the young womyn says, struggling to get the words out. She forces herself to utter the thought, her shame growing, gripping her with its fearful claws. But she talks, mumbling quietly at first. "I want to rub myself against your boots," she says.

Her mistress answers mockingly, "That's not something to be ashamed about."

"But I want you to force me to do it," the young womyn replies nervously. "I want you to make me undress, I want to look at you, I want..."

Then she stops because the tears are now blinding, drenching her face. She curls into a ball, trying once more to hide the tears from her mistress and her new love. She holds herself tightly, thinking to herself, *Maybe I'm not ready. Shit! I am really making a fool out of myself this time.*

Her lover interrupts her thought with a firm grip, pulling her closer. She

strokes her tear-covered face, kisses her ear, and says, "It's okay. When do you want to begin?"

The young womyn replies with a nod, "Yes, grab me hard by the hair and pull me up. Make me undress slowly for you. If you are too hard, I will tell you so. If I have had enough, I will say 'uncle.'" She breathes deeply, in then out, hiccuping a little from the tears, thinking her mistress is giving her a few moments to gather her composure.

When her mistress does not respond immediately enough, she stands up on her own and begins to unbutton her blouse, gazing at her lover's eyes, which look back in amazement and shock. Slowly unbuttoning, exposing a white satin brassiere, then garters, panties, stockings. She slowly slides her dress off and onto the floor, then begins unsnapping her garters. She begins to grow nervous again and shakes, looking once more into her lover's eyes for an indication of whether to continue. Her mistress replies harshly from her own excitement: "Do it! Come on, what are you waiting for?"

Then, gently but firmly grabbing her, pulling her closer, undoing her garters, her mistress presses her fingers against the young womyn's buttocks. She shudders and moans as her mistress's fingers slip underneath her panties, stroking her soft, wet mound, gently moving to her moistened, gem-shaped clitoris soaked by wetness from her oozing lips below. The young womyn asks hesitantly, "What if my wetness gets all over your boots?"

"You'll lick it off, every bit of it—or else!" her lover snaps.

"No, I couldn't. I might stain them."

"You will not—just do it!" her mistress retorts, growing more impatient. "Do you want to be smacked across the face?"

"Yes, and I want my hair pulled too," the young womyn replies mockingly. Then a hand yanks her roughly down toward the mistress's knees while the other grabs the young womyn's hair and forces her into a kneeling position.

"I said to take your panties off!" the mistress bellows. As she slaps her across the face, the young womyn begins weeping again.

"Please forgive me, mistress," she cries to her lover. "I am just so ashamed of being so wet."

"It's okay, just do what I ask," her lover and mistress replies, caressing her gently once more, pulling her close in a deep, passionate kiss. She glides up and down against her mistress's boot, slowly, then faster, juices oozing down the leather. Sweat begins to drip off their bodies. Her mistress kisses her deeper, bringing her body closer, her hands stroking gently. Then her nails start clawing, fingers unfastening the young maid's brassiere, moving for her nipples, pinching and pulling. And then, finally, wet kisses surround her nipples as her lover's body presses up against her on the floor, fingers entering. The young womyn begins moaning, crying as she tries to undress

VIRGIN'S REQUEST

her mistress, to touch a little more skin, to explore.

Then, in a childlike voice, the young womyn asks, "Mistress, what about cleaning the boots?"

Her mistress answers, half dazed from lust, "Fuck the boots, they'll be there later," and she is right.

SARA AND DAY
DENYA CASCIO

It was early in the evening. The bar was full enough not to be dismal, but no fuller than that. I stood on the deck, letting the cool wind of late August blow the hair away from my face.

Between the low tide and the heavy mist, there were only two or three women out on the deck, and they were minding their own business, which suited me just fine. I leaned my elbows on the rail, looking out over the water. The fog in the air gave all the lights along the bay a wide silky cast, and the damp chill felt soft against my skin.

I was grateful for the solitude, glad to be left alone, trying hard to shake a slight feeling of discomfort, defensiveness. On my walk through the bar I had drawn an unnecessary amount of attention: a few appreciative stares, a noticeable cold shoulder, and more than one out-and-out glare. I spared a thought for the image I presented and had to smile. In a town where an Izod shirt, blue jeans, and some kind of running shoe were the dress of choice, I was conspicuous, to say the least.

Sheer white harem pants billowed around my hips, closing in tight at the ankle. An island print top, too flimsy to be called a blouse, hung from narrow points at my shoulders, the long slope of the neckline falling low over my chest in that style that should be known as jewel. It was cut short enough to clear the top of my pants by a good two inches, revealing the flat swell of my belly, deeply tanned. The whole effect was as exotic as an island girl in a Gauguin painting.

And I was wearing my new slides, of course. I was inordinately proud of those shoes. I'd had them custom-made in New York; hand carved of a light wood, they had a suede pad under my foot and a single wide band of leather I'd picked out myself. They'd cost a pretty penny, and I'd felt a little foolish spending so much on what I'd worn in plastic for years at \$5.99 a pair. But they fitted every curve of my foot, and the heels were truly spike: pencil thin. And the truth was, I didn't really care how much they cost—I loved them.

A line from one of my favorite poems came to mind. "A feeling of being not quite right for the place." The allusion to Eve in the garden pleased me.

Like Eve, about to taste the apple, I was “wrong. Perhaps altogether wrong, a piece from another set.” I took another look around at my companions and revised my previous estimate. “Not quite right for the place” didn’t even begin to cover it. I felt as awkward as a Daughter of the American Revolution who has stumbled quite accidentally into a communist tea.

Some time went by. No one came or went. The sound of small waves slapping against the wood beneath me was soothing. Then the woman who had been wedged into the corner of the deck next to me got chilled and left, rubbing her arms briskly. Just the sight of her reminded me how cold it was, but I didn’t want to go inside and get my jacket. I concentrated on the sound of the water and let the chill pass.

A heavy tread on the creaky boards signaled the entrance of another patron onto the deck. I turned my head slightly. No one I knew, but she was headed straight for me. *Damn*, I thought.

She was a classic of a sort; more than a little overweight, with that generally uncared-for look that goes along with the belief that it’s constitutionally sinful to use a mirror for anything except to check that all your buttons have been done up. She was wearing a short-sleeved T-shirt that had once been brightly colored, with a logo on it I couldn’t quite make out. She stopped about two feet behind me and addressed my still-turned back.

“What are you doing here?” she demanded.

I was certain, on closer look, that I had never seen this woman before—no chance she was an old lover gone to seed—so there was nothing personal about the question. I turned to face her, lifting my drink off the railing as I did so, a quizzical look in my eye and what I hoped was one eyebrow lifted slightly in polite inquiry.

“What a very odd question,” I commented. “I’m having a drink, of course.”

Everything about her look suggested she was one of those who carry the party line, as it were, bringing the light of liberation to benighted masses. The wind off the water blew the pants back against my legs. I saw the long line of my thigh outlined through the sheer fabric and the dark triangle of my pubic hair. Her mouth pursed in a tight little moue of disgust.

“You’re in the wrong place,” she said. “Don’t you know you can’t come here dressed like that?”

I looked down over my clothes with an exaggerated gesture, letting my eyes linger lovingly on my shoes.

“Is something wrong with the way I’m dressed?” I asked, all mock innocence. “I thought I looked very nice when I left the house.”

She seemed to swell with self-importance, and I admit my tone of voice was provocative, if not incendiary. I have a condescending drawl I throw on for certain occasions like a cloak. It’s insulting as only a faggot can make it: I had been well taught.

She was trembling all over, though whether with indignation or excitement I couldn't say for sure. The ones who give you the hardest time—the ones who hiss as you go by and can't tear their eyes off you—are always the ones who harbor the secret fantasies. There's nothing stronger, or more corrupting, than fantasy denied.

"Don't you know this is a lesbian bar?" she accused.

I let myself go all the way, playing it for high camp. It was irresistible, believe me.

"And I, ma'am, am a lesbian." I made a little flourish downward with my hands as if to say "voilà."

She looked remarkably like an agitated sheep as she continued to quiver, obviously casting about in her diminutive imagination for the proper response to that one. I wondered if she would tell me I had no right to the name.

Instead, out of the depths of her frustration, she produced, "I don't believe you." It must have sounded lame even in her own ears.

I shrugged and started to turn away. And she lunged for me, though her hand didn't connect with my arm.

"Prove it," she said explosively.

With you, Sister? I thought. *Not on your life.*

I didn't say it, however. She looked strongly tempted to do something daring, and the thought of having to push her bodily away from me was more than a little unpleasant.

Instead, I thawed. I leaned in close to her as if I were about to tell her something very important.

"Look," I said, my voice a nice mixture of seduction and conspiracy. "There's a woman in the bar tonight: black hair pushed straight back off her forehead; fairly tall, fair skin, hazel eyes. She usually wears a leather jacket. Her name is Sara."

The woman didn't have the faintest idea what I was getting at, but my tone of voice held her. She was hanging on every word.

I straightened up, then leaned all the way back against the railing, letting both voice and manner become unpleasant.

"I rather like Sara," I said. "So you go find Sara and bring her out here, and I'll prove anything you want. Okay?" I let the final question rise and linger in the air in a nasty way, holding her off from me with my eyes.

She looked first stunned, then angry, then chagrined. Then she turned on her heel and stomped off.

I turned back to the water. I figured Sara was a safe bet. A quick glance on my way in had assured me she wasn't in the bar, and besides, I thought I could count on her to treat the bearer of my proposition—should she be so unwise as to repeat it—with sufficiently punishing disdain. And if, by any

stretch of the imagination, she succeeded in getting Sara out here—well, I did really like Sara, and I hadn't been making much headway on my own. If my frumpy feminist friend could pull off that introduction, I might even let her watch.

I don't know where I acquired this penchant for tall, mean-looking women with dark hair, but it's undeniable that I have it, and Sara fits the bill. Add to the previous description, which is quite accurate as far as it goes, an indefinable quality of menace, a challenge written into her stance, her walk, and she definitely had me interested. The black leather jacket didn't hurt.

I liked everything about Sara, actually, from the deep, smooth voice with a trace of an accent I couldn't quite place to the sudden sweet smile that was always a surprise. We'd even been introduced once. But beyond following me with her eyes whenever we were close enough and smiling when they accidentally caught mine across a crowded room, she didn't seem inclined to do much about it. With a sigh I let her image dissipate into the night air. *This is a world of woe*, I reminded myself, *and this is far from the worst that will happen*.

Not long after that my friends joined me on the deck. JoJo displaced me at the rail. We ordered another round of drinks, discussed where to go for dinner. The evening was under way.

JoJo, who knows all my secrets, was the first to alert me.

"You've got company, Day," he warned, his eyes fixing over my left shoulder.

"Oh?" I turned. My self-appointed dress guard was back. I felt a wave of irritation that quickly turned into something else when I realized Sara was standing right behind her.

"Day." Sara nodded once, cool but not chilly.

The rush of adrenaline had me on my toes in an instant. Nothing to do now but brazen it out.

"Sara." I gave back exactly what I got, no more and no less. My flat tone mimicked hers.

She came forward, neatly sidestepping the woman who had brought her.

"So," she began, "I'm told that you like me. Excuse me," she corrected herself, "rather like me." She drew out the *a* in *rather*, mimicking my New York drawl, making it sound pretentious.

"True enough," I returned evenly, wishing I still had the rail behind me to lean against. I glanced up at her, flirtatious through my eyelashes. "Haven't I made it obvious?"

"Very." Her tone was crushing. "Very obvious." She intended to embarrass me, and she succeeded. But I didn't let her know that. I laughed.

"Good," I said.

She was looking at me with just that edge I'd been hoping for all week: dangerous interest. I noticed the tension in her jaw, and found time to

admire its fine, strong line.

"And what exactly is it that you need my help to prove?"

I took another sip of my drink, deliberately casual, and sensed my friends behind me melt away into the crowd.

"Oh, that wasn't my idea."

She took a step closer, looking nearly straight down on me. The sheer physical awareness that she was a whole lot bigger than I am made me feel surprisingly vulnerable.

Her voice had been getting steadily darker, and when she spoke again it had dropped a full register and was a little husky and rich with innuendo.

"So what is it you *do* want from me?"

Now, that was a straight line if I'd ever heard one: an open invitation. I gathered my courage and looked up into her face with all the honest admiration I could muster.

"Whatever it is you want to give," I said, "and whatever you're willing to accept."

She looked startled at the blatancy of my approach. I could see her process the statement, the context; she needed to be sure that I meant what she thought I meant.

"Giving me a fairly wide range of operations, aren't you?"

"That's the idea," I answered.

I kept looking full into her eyes and saw her become certain: proposal accepted.

I was the first to break the contact. I looked down, letting her track the slow path of my eyes over her leather: the jacket, the heavy belt, the boots. I took my time with the survey before returning my gaze to hers.

"And what is it *you* have to prove?" I wondered softly.

A certain stiffness in her body told me she had risen to the bait. I saw her eyes smolder and light, then damp down just as suddenly, dangerous as a banked fire. There was a short electric pause.

"You're a provocative little thing, you know that?"

The promise in her voice went through me like a chill, but I shrugged.

"Stock in trade," I said. That got a laugh out of her.

I spared a glance to our unappealing companion. She was standing to one side, watching our interchange with a puzzled frown. I can only assume she understood the content, but the form was unfamiliar. Sara followed the path of my eyes.

"Should we bring her along?" she asked, only half serious.

I got stubborn and shrugged again. Then almost laughed out loud when she echoed my previous thought nearly word for word.

"Well, she did arrange this meeting," she said. "So I suppose we should."

I led the way to the gate. I wasn't sure either of them knew where it was,

and I was damned if I was going to vault the rail like Catwoman in four-inch heels. Equally damned if I was going to lean down and take them off in the crowd.

I started off ahead of them west down the shore, thinking over what would be the best place. We could use the beach in front of Johanna's—probably the porch too, she wouldn't mind. The boatyard on the left would be deserted this time of night, and the house on the right was out of earshot anyway, as long as I kept my voice down.

I had kicked off my shoes as soon as we hit the sand, slipping my first and second fingers through the bands of leather and swinging them in one hand. The illusion of carelessness pleased me, and the damp sand felt good between my toes. I looked back briefly. Sara and our companion were walking side by side, but they didn't appear to be talking. Sara made no effort to catch up with me, which was probably for the best. I had a sudden image of her doubling the belt off her jacket and stumbled at the very edge of the water.

By the time we got to Johanna's they were right behind me. "Here," I said, throwing down my shoes to mark the spot.

Sara took our voyeur off into the boatyard. She found her a good seat, a fallen piling not much lower than chair height, broad and smooth with a little hollow scooped out in the sand in front of it. The woman sat down as Sara directed, but the truth was, she looked damned uncomfortable: feet together, knees together, hands flat and even in her lap. Sara leaned down, speaking close to her ear. I couldn't hear what she was saying, but the woman nodded once, so I assumed she was telling her to stay put and keep out of the way. Then Sara straightened and came back toward me across the sand.

She was still a few feet away from me when she stopped moving. There was an odd awkward moment when we looked at each other, motionless in the moonlight in a strange tableau; then I felt impelled to break it. I started to step toward her.

"Freeze," she said.

I froze. The menace in her voice was unmistakable. The hint of threat that had pleased me on the deck was no longer a hint.

"That's right," she said, "like a statue."

She closed in on my left, and I didn't move, didn't even turn my head, though I wanted desperately to look at her. And I wondered if I would ever get used to this, the moment when I stopped flirting with danger because it had me by the throat.

She passed her hands over my body, the slow movement mimicking a frisk in its care and thoroughness. The skin on my belly twitched as her hands slipped easily under the short blouse, and I realized that my nipples were already hard, gathered tight against the cold air, in response to her touch. Her hands rose, and she gathered up my breasts like ripe fruit in her long fingers.

Her fingertips rested lightly over the hardened nipples, the slight hesitation deliberately cruel, before she snapped each sharply. I opened my mouth to let out a noise, but all sound had been removed.

She let her hand trail down my body, one deliberate finger tracking a path between my breasts, bisecting my belly, before hooking into the top of my pants. For a long moment we stayed like that. I looked out over the deserted boatyard, my whole attention on her, only inches away from me.

"Look at me," she said finally.

I was grateful for the tacit permission to ease the stiffness from my cramped muscles. I shifted to get a better look at her, and she hit me before I finished turning. The sound seemed to echo like a gunshot in the quiet night.

"Did I tell you to move?" she hissed.

My face was burning. I could feel the mark of her fingers hot on my cheek. I didn't say anything.

She took my hair and shook my head once, sharply. Her voice was disturbingly low and even.

"Talk to me, Angel," she threatened.

My mind was a perfect blank. Then I saw her hand go back, flat and open—and forgot about answering. She shifted her grip to cup my chin, and she hit me carefully and hard, twice. The beach around me took a dizzying turn. The place where the shore meets the water seemed to slip.

She pushed me down so hard I didn't have time to think about getting to my knees. They were deep in the sand before I knew what happened.

Then I felt her hand, nudging at my chin, urging me to look up at her. At first I could see nothing but a shimmering incandescence; then her face burned through. The light of the moon picked out the pale skin as a silver blur; the black of her hair and her jacket read as absolute shadow.

"Still feeling provocative?" she asked.

I shook my head no, sliding my chin back and forth in the palm of her hand. I didn't want to say anything. I knew my voice would give me away.

She let go of my chin and wound her hand in my hair again, wrapping her fingers so tight I could feel the skin stretching near my eyes. She moved my head very slowly back and forth; my upper body swayed with it like beach grass in a slow breeze.

"Speak to me, Angel," she repeated, and this time her voice was a lingering caress. Her other hand touched my lips, and she opened my mouth, pried apart my teeth, and slid her fingers briefly inside. "Tell me how sorry you are."

I tried to think of something clever and couldn't.

"I'm sorry, Sara." I was right. My voice was shaking.

She laughed at me then, a rich low sound on a series of rising notes, ripe with a genuine amusement and no less dangerous for that.

"It's about time you got frightened," she said.

She straddled my thighs, stepping in close and not letting go of my hair, so I went back automatically, my body bent over itself, folded, arched vulnerably over my heels. I could feel my ribs lift and fall as my chest filled and emptied with the dark air. Then her hand went to the buttons on her jeans, and I felt my breath catch and halt as all the desire I had ever known collected in me, still water in a deep pool.

I didn't think she could get them down—they were tight jeans, and she was standing with her legs so wide apart—but she managed. At least she scooted them far enough down her thighs to expose the soft hair of her sex. She was so close I could see her damp, dark curls, so close I could smell her fragrance over the salt and the sand. My mouth filled with fluid. My lips seemed to soften and swell, becoming incredibly wet and tender.

I was licking already at the roof of my mouth, at the back of my teeth, and I couldn't tear my eyes off her. But I let my tongue dart out, let it graze my lips where she could see it. And I heard the low murmur of her laugh, felt her fingers lace behind my head, supporting my neck as she pulled me up and into her.

I made it last. I wanted to. I pressed my closed mouth over her, feeling the thick swell of her flesh under my lips before opening her with the tip of my tongue, separating each fold slowly, drinking in the fluids I released.

I sucked her clitoris into my mouth, pursing my lips around it, pressing at it from all sides. My tongue made little darting forays beneath it, and I felt her go tense above me, heard the shadow of a moan. The sound made me crazy, and I dug into her, opened her over me, buried my nose and mouth in her. I lost myself in the smooth flesh, in the sweet taste of her, in that incredible sense, both terrifying and absolutely peaceful, of being drowned in someone's sexual essence.

I heard her sigh, heard her breath leave her long and soft and helpless, as I let my tongue find her rhythm, my whole body rocking sympathetically with it. Even our pulse seemed to beat in unison, in sync.

I sucked at her hard, feeling my teeth dig into her mound even through my lips, and heard her groan. Still holding her deep in my mouth, I caressed the little bud of a clitoris, my teeth almost scraping at her. I pushed the hood back with my lips, hooked the underside of it with the tip of my tongue. I caught her where the glans swells out from under the hood and, spinning rapidly over it, heard her sighs spiral upward into that high-pitched wail that simulates desperation.

She didn't let me feel her come. She pushed herself off me, breathing hard. My face was wet with her fluids, my mouth full of the taste of her. I rocked my hips lightly back and forth in the sand, openly begging.

She used one toe of her boot to nudge my knees apart and then laid it flat over my open sex.

"Do you know what I'm going to do to you now?" she asked.

"I don't care," I whispered. I wanted to kiss her, to touch her, to crawl through the sand and have the sweet feel of her flesh against my skin, but her foot between my open legs held me still.

"I don't care," I said again, more loudly, filled with a voluptuous despair.

She laughed, the same low riff as before, so deep this time it was almost out of the range of hearing. And she pulled her belt a little way off her jacket just to let me know what she meant.

The fear went through me like a cold wind, pressed my belly back into my spine. I closed my eyes against it, and when I opened them again Sara was looking speculatively at our whale, who sat exactly as Sara had left her, her eyes glowing with an unearthly light. I must have made some little noise of protest or dismay, because Sara looked back at me, a half-smile still on her lips.

"Will that embarrass you," she said, "to have her hold you down? Humiliate you? I hope so."

She helped me to my feet in one easy movement, then turned quickly and walked toward the boatyard, leaving me to follow. I felt alone suddenly, abandoned, like a kid in a skating rink whose papa has just let go of his arm and told him to skate on his own. I wished she had led me, created the illusion of force, allowed me the dignity of a token resistance—anything rather than trudging after her across the sand in this stark complicity.

By the time I joined them, Sara had obviously completed her invitation to our companion, who looked a trifle startled but unpleasantly willing to oblige. I took in the rumpled T-shirt, the poorly fitting blue jeans, the ridiculous strap sandals, and felt a blush stinging my cheeks. ("Oh, how low have they fallen who were once set high above you.") But when Sara pointed wordlessly to a spot at the woman's feet, I dropped to my knees without protest.

I was facing her—our now very much unwanted companion—and her knees filled my vision like the stone idol of an ancient king. I had a sudden image of laying offerings on those knees, offerings of food, of flowers, carefully arranged in plaited baskets, the sun beating down in tropical splendor, the sound of the Nile like a music in the background.

Sara was standing behind me, and she edged me closer until the woman's bent knees dug into my belly, then folded me forward from the waist. My head was buried in the woman's lap, her knees still digging into me, an accident of proportion and position making it possible for me to lay my upper body along her thighs while my knees still rested in the sand. I folded my arms under my head, tucked them securely into the crease of her hip, and the woman got a good grip on my shoulders.

A quick tug at my waist had the pants around my knees in a wide white pool, the cool night air making me acutely aware of my nakedness. The moonlight glittered evilly on the sand; stones and shells glinted at the

edge of the water. I felt absurdly vulnerable.

Sara went down on one knee next to me. Her hands whispered over my body, ran over it like cool silk. There was the same soft sound of cloth against cloth. I rocked under her touch, moaning softly, as she caressed my hair, my skin. One hand strayed between my legs, stroking upward along the inner thigh in tiny circles until her fingertips caught in my fleece. There she stopped, staying only long enough to tug teasingly at the damp curls. She pulled some of the thick moisture off the ends of the hair, rubbed it between two fingers, then ran her slick hand, rich with my smell, over my lips.

She lifted my head and kissed me once. Her mouth clung to mine, tender as a moth to a flame. Her lips hesitated, retreated, and were gone, though she hovered for a moment, searching deeply for something in my face. Our breath met and mingled in the cold air. And I wanted to say something, to tell her...but there were no words to describe what I felt. "Sara," I whispered helplessly. And I saw something snap in her eyes, some little moment of recognition.

"I'm going to love doing this," she said very sincerely, before climbing to her feet.

She didn't let me see her double the belt, but I heard it slide off her jacket. The image in my mind was more vivid than reality could have been. I waited, swallowing hard.

The first crack of the strap drove the cold out of me, my skin igniting under it instantly. Two more and I was moving helplessly, without volition. I didn't care anymore who was holding me down; I was glad to be held securely. I pressed my face into the legs under my arms, filled my mouth with denim and flesh to muffle my cries.

"Yes," her voice caressed me. "You like that. I can tell."

She was hard and thorough, trying to break me in the least possible time. There was no easy buildup, no respite to let me catch my breath. She wanted each blow to hurt, and it did: each flat solid impact of the belt made me twist and whimper.

And the sound was the worst, splitting the stillness of the night. The clear brittle air broke into pieces that fell around me like shattered glass. It was terrifying, devastating—and it went on and on until the sound and the pain became one: the searing heat of the belt as it landed melded with the fierce furious crack of the strap that crumbled my foundations inward, jarred my bones and my teeth.

Every once in a while I heard her laugh, a Bacchic laugh brimming over with a wild joy. She laughed as if her pleasure were too much to contain. And I imagined her head thrown back, laughing as the gods are said to laugh when they are drunk on ambrosia, the nectar of life.

I was hurting now, really hurting, and I was raising my whole body toward

her, my knees lifting from the sand. My body was being licked by the belt, sculpted, molded, formed into a perfect image, a living image of supplication. I was pleading with every limb, with every fiber of my physical being. My body shook with the effort to contain the sensation, and I cried through clenched teeth, a rising whine of desperation.

As the first real scream rose in my throat, I bit down on the leg I'd been mouthing, forgetting it was part of a person, forgetting everything but my need to bite down, to have something in my mouth.

The woman jumped, and her grip tightened. "Stop that," she said. It was a tentative command—her first taste of control—but it was enough to remind me of my place in this drama.

Sara seemed to know what was going on.

"Go ahead," she called, over the sound of the belt that never stopped. "Go ahead and scream. Just for a minute. I want to hear you."

I fought it for only a single heartbeat, and then I lifted my head and wailed, not caring if anyone heard me, if the lights came on in the houses. I let the pain ride through me and out my open mouth.

As I drew in air I felt my breathing shiver into sobs. I was in pieces, gasping, scrabbling for footing. I fought for one good deep breath, and when I screamed again, it was a clear continuous sound, perfect and true. I felt it running through me like light: pulled up from my bones, pulled through my belly, rising into my chest and right out the top of my head.

By the time I drew my next breath Sara's hand was in my hair, the belt in a puddle on the sand next to my knees.

She was kneeling, holding my head back, and for a long moment she just watched me cry. Then she reached out, lifting the tears from my face, stealing them from the point of my chin, from my cheek, catching them on long fingers as they gathered and fell. She held them up in the light of the moon as if they were something very precious, turning her hand so they glistened like jewels before she brought them to her mouth and licked the salt from her cupped fingers.

She pulled me up and back so my hot butt was pressed against my heels, then leaned me against the length of her leg. Her hands were everywhere, everywhere at once: at the side of my neck, in the hollow of my jaw, tender and full of admiration.

"You were beautiful, Angel," she said. "My beautiful angel. My good, good girl."

With a sigh I let the last bit of tension leave my body, let it go from me with my blessing. I slid down her leg, folding into the sand at her feet. I wrapped my arms around her ankles and rested my cheek against the smooth, cool leather of her boot.

There was more, but it didn't happen on the beach. I stayed folded in the

sand for a long time. It was the beginning of a lovely autumn; and the sound of the water, the hiss of the breakers over the shingle, and the creaking of the boats at peace in their moorings made a perfect accompaniment to the slow swelling in my heart.

AND I CALLED HER BOY SOSSITY OESSA CHIRICUZIO

The drive into the mountains was quiet, as it should be; the gray and white Arizona sky cushioned the air and swallowed noise. We parked beneath an ancient evergreen, and my boy unloaded the truck and buckled it all onto her back. We began our hike into the Otherworld.

I led the way, boy keeping a respectful distance, stepping exactly into my footprints, watching my body language intently in an attempt to anticipate my commands—all control shifting to my hands and will.

Now and again I would order her to stop and wait, count to three hundred, and then track me. Slyness and stealth were to be the goal, a test of how strong the desire to please me was in my boy. If she managed (or was allowed) to slip up behind me, she was permitted a single caress.

I was looking for a particular spot. I needed four trees, loosely grouped, with enough room to swing wide. That was where boy would be allowed to dump the heavy load she carried. I could see the sweat where it soaked through her thin cotton T-shirt, and her Levi's were dark around the waistband. The sun was high and bright, but she looked down to avoid my eyes. She knew she must be careful.

Just as her hands were beginning to tighten on the straps of her pack, I found a grove where the ritual we planned could commence. I set boy to hanging the padded chains for the sling in the center of the trees and the spreader bar on the edge of the circle. My tools lay in wait on a stump.

I reminded boy why it was that we were there and what it was that I wanted from/for her as I fastened her wrists to the bar with wide leather cuffs and staked her legs apart. I tied her black hankie around her eyes to reduce any distraction from the trip we were about to embark upon. Flicking open my switchblade, I cut the shirt from her back and consecrated the ground with the blood that flowed from my mark, that of the cougar, that I cut into her shoulder.

"I want you to scream," I told her. "Beg, plead, and promise me the world if only I'll... *oh, won't I please... oh, can't I just...* screaming won't stop me; only your word can." I felt my boy's body relax and become still as I ran my hands

AND I CALLED HER BOY

over her chest, along her arms, down her back and further, to cup her ass. I moved to embrace her from the front, pressing my breasts to hers, using my hips to caress her dick, which rode high and hard against her stomach.

I chose my soft flail to begin, approaching quietly and hitting breasts and back in random patterns. I swung lightly, not intent yet on pain but rather on bringing the blood to the surface. I had promised my boy lasting marks, and I intended just that.

My next tool was a long, narrow leather paddle, reinforced with a metal rod. The end was slit, causing the two pieces to slap against each other with each swing, adding noise and anticipation. I laid this in even strokes up and down her thighs, ass, and back. I moved around her body, swinging from many directions.

All of my movements had only one purpose: to force boy to focus on and through her body, to feel the motion of muscle, bone, and nerve. I was urging her spirit along a physical path and wringing every drop of experience from our sensory play.

We progressed onward, through the crop, the cane, the carriage whip, and finally came to the cat. My beauty—swift and savage—three long leather cords, knotted at their ends. Her sting set boy to dancing, ready to leap and soar through the rain I laid on. Her screaming had become a continual sound...a song to justify my sweat and strength. My boy was almost home.

I removed my shirt, wet it down with the canteen, and wiped down her trembling, fevered body. I had no fear that her excitement would lessen, and I wanted her full attention. As boy's eyes were uncovered and began to focus, the first thing they saw were my breasts—full and soft and bathed in sweat—and she strained against her bonds toward me.

I curled her hand into a fist with my fingers and whispered in her ear, "Are you strong enough?" Slipping my hand into her jeans, I dragged it through her wetness and up her shaft, asking, "Are you lusty enough?" I caught her nipples between my fingers and pinched, sharp: "Are you fierce enough?" Untying her, I led her over to the sling and crawled up into it; laying my ass on the edge, with my legs far apart, I called my boy to me.

"I expect you to use every inch of finger, tongue, and cock to fulfill me, to prove yourself worthy of this love." As I lay back, she began to remove my boots and jeans. Gently she lifted my foot and sucked my toes into her mouth, her anxious tongue sending shivers up my spine. Boy moved closer slowly, but with great determination. She swayed up against me; I wrapped my legs about her and pulled her to me, tight.

Her hands and mouth reveled in my breasts and belly, and she laid herself flat on me; the feel of flesh on flesh was sweet indeed. Slipping her hand down to my pussy, she began to touch me softly just as her mouth found mine. Her tongue and fingers mimicked each other, fucking my

mouth and cunt. Boy she might be, but well versed.

Her fist entered and bloomed inside me, caressing and pounding every inch of my pussy. As I arched my back to meet her, she slid the tip of her lubricated cock into my ass. My excitement was such that she met no resistance, and soon her hips and fist had established a rhythm that stole my soul.

I felt her riding her end of her cock, and I knew I could command her to come whenever I wanted. I opened my eyes and saw her face; she was lost in the feel of fucking me. My own orgasms built, crested, and merged as I swayed in the arms of my boy, and we found each other in the bliss that is the end and beginning of control.

SPoonFUL OF SUGAR

MINX KELLY

“Let’s play a game tonight.” Teena tries to sound casual, but I know that voice. It was not-so-subtly calling out to me: “Le-e-e-esa, Te-e-e-ena’s ho-o-o-orny-y-y.” She can’t just grab me, throw me down on the bed, and ravish me like most people. Teena is just too inhibited. Still, I like to play her games. She is oh so creative, and the fantasies just fall into place with her.

“Okay, Teena,” I say, pulling her into my arms. She spoons her body back into mine, her buttocks fitting neatly against the curve of my body. “What kind of game?”

“Oh, I don’t know—you think of something.” Ha! I know in her mind Teena has plotted out everything but how many orgasms we’ll have.

“Well, first tell me what I should wear.” This more than anything allows Teena to tell me who I am tonight. We have so many running games, and to Teena, the dressing-up part is half the fun. She bites her lower lip, and I know this is only to make me think she is still in thought. She’s actually hesitating so she can tell herself, *I am in control here, I am the top*.

“Ummm, Lisa? How ’bout you go naked, except for maybe those rubber gloves and your white garter and hose?” She smiles coyly, but I know that smile; I know her from the inside out.

“Shall I be Nurse Bobby?” I start to run my fingers up the curves of her waist. “I think I’d like to play nurse tonight, Teena. Will you be a good girl or a bad girl for me?”

She knows our language better than I: she conceived it, uses it to trick her body into doing what she wants most. I start fondling her tits, cupping my palms around the small curves, letting her tight tiny nipples slip between my fingers, where I squeeze them. I feel her melting into me, her cute little ass wiggling against my pelvis. I straighten just a bit, enough to give her access to my cunt. She grinds against me there, knowing soon I will be too hot to hear any of her words and will just take her.

“I think I need to be a good girl tonight, Lisa. *Aah!*” Her yelp of pain reminds her the scene has begun. “I’m sorry, Nurse Bobby,” she says, her

voice endearingly vulnerable. Of course, she doesn't mean that she will do as I tell her—quite the opposite. In her mind, warped as it was by the all-girls schools, only bad girls enjoy their sexuality. My good little girl will need to be coaxed and teased into doing just what she wants to do, to come and come and come. I press my hands to her pussy, opening her to my touch and finding her oh so wet.

"And how are we tonight? Are we feeling well?" I pull my fingers from her pussy, making her gasp from the sudden empty feeling in her cunt. I laugh as she moves to the edge of the bed, dangling her legs over the side like a schoolgirl. As I move to put on the garter belt and hose, she watches me eagerly. I talc my hands and stretch the thin latex over my fingers; I feel myself standing straighter. My smile changes from a friendly grin to a professional smirk. I pull the shiny black latex past my elbow, letting it snap tight, hugging the curve of my arm. Just as I feel myself *become* a mistress when I slide on leather gloves, so does the latex evoke my clinical but lecherous Nurse Bobby.

I stand in front of Teena, hands on my hips. I smile and wait until she looks up at me. "So, Teena. Back again so soon? I hear you have a tummy ache."

She shuffles her feet, nervously looks up at me. "No...Nurse Bobby. I just didn't want to go to work today."

I frown and reach out to take her wrist. "Hmm, let's just check you over, shall we?" I look up at the clock and silently take her pulse. Her breath is deep and even. I let one of my legs slip between her own, then press it just to the edge of the bed. It takes only a moment for Teena to wiggle closer to the edge. Her thighs hug my leg through the sheer stockings.

"Tsk ts! Sit still, Teena! Now I have to start over!" I let my leg start to rock gently against the juncture of her thighs, feeling her hot cunt even through my stocking. She grinds back against me, and I can feel her lips opening like a tender flower. I feel the moistness against my flesh. Her pulse is racing now, and as I release her wrist, I roughly push her back on the bed, her legs dangling over the edge.

"Relax, dear...I need to palpate your tummy." I lean over her on the bed, my knee wedged soundly between her legs. I let my hands wander across her stomach, let them rub at her rib cage, caress the swell of her abdomen. I look down at Teena, her eyes closed, her mouth open in a silent moan. Her need is a tangible thing now, and I stretch it out, feeding her frustration, watching her struggle inch by inch past her inhibitions.

I slap lightly at her breasts, small pert little things, the nipples already tight little berries of pleasure. I take one in each hand, rolling the nipples between my thumbs and first fingers. "Any soreness here, dear?" She moans softly, and I pinch. "I *said*, any soreness here? Answer Nurse Bobby!"

She yelps and opens her eyes to look at me, soulful frustration in her

baby blues. "No, Nurse Bobby, no soreness."

I smile. "Good, Teena. We wouldn't want any soreness." I grin again, tugging at her hard nips till she moans. I feel her cunt wiggling harder against me. I lift up her breasts by the nipples, pulling them out from her body, shaking her tits by the sensitive little buds. Her body is arching up to me, wanting even more. With a jerk, I release her tits, letting her body fall back to the bed. As I lean back, her legs lie open, and I can see the shiny dew on her cunt lips, barely hidden in a nest of light blond fuzz.

I step back and turn to the dresser, pulling out some K-Y and a rectal thermometer. "Roll over now, Teena," I say forcefully.

She sits up and looks petulant. "No-o-o. Please, not there."

I turn and grab Teena's wrists, holding them tightly together with one hand. I slap her tits hard and watch tears come to her eyes. "If you are going to be difficult, you know what will happen," I say matter-of-factly. I reach over to the dresser top and pick up the pale yellow leather restraints. She gives only a token struggle, wiggling in my tight grip, as I buckle her wrists together.

She whimpers, "Please, Nurse Bobby! I'll be good."

I reach for my crop, always handy, and her eyes widen in fear and eagerness. "Teena!" I say, my voice edged with steel now. "Sit still!" Of course she does as I want and immediately moves. She starts to roll over, trying to escape to the foot of the bed. Her bare ass is an irresistible target, and my crop whistles through the air. She knows that sound, and her whole body tenses as the crisp stroke lands neatly across her buns. She starts to move, and again my wrist brings the crop straight across her ass, laying a second stripe just below the first. She makes no attempt to wiggle away now but squirms in place, her arms hanging over the foot of the bed as I lay one strong arm across her waist to hold her down. I lay three more stripes across her ass; then she lies still, moaning softly into the bedcovers. I rub the crop between her cheeks, letting it press against her little bung hole. She groans and wiggles up into my caresses. I let the crop rest there as I rub and knead at her poor cheeks. The light welts are already fading, and so I refresh them with a hard slap from my gloved hand. She jumps, and I hold her down harder. My hand moves from one cheek to the other, working from the outer curve inward, all the way to the crack of her ass: again and again I smack her. I move with sure strokes, missing not an inch, until each cheek is bright red and her hips move with each of my slaps.

I bring my hand to my mouth and suck on my thumb, getting it wet and shiny, then move the crop out of the way and start to slide my thumb into her asshole. She wiggles and groans, and I press harder. Her rosebud parts, and my thumb is hugged by her tight sphincter. I start to wiggle into her and let my fingers wrap around to her cunt hole. An enthusiastic cry goads me further, and I let the smooth latex part her lips. She is hot and wet, a slurpy

little cunt that begs to be filled. I slide two fingers into her pussy and start fucking her slowly with them. I stop long enough to get her up on her knees, then reach for the K-Y. I kneel behind her spread legs, watching her cute little tush wiggling in anticipation. My own pussy aches, and I reach down to spread my lips, to slide cool latex fingers across the length of my slit. I allow myself only the briefest of stabs, a quick penetration to make my cunt hungry for more.

She is passive and relaxed now, her breath coming in short little gasps and pants as my fingers pump in a steady rhythm. I keep one hand busy entertaining her pussy while the other steadily greases up her ass. I stare intently as I plop thumbfuls of K-Y into the slowly stretching anal mouth. She moans and wiggles her hips, wanting more than just a thumb there. Her asshole is swollen and pink and ringed with shiny lube. She starts to plead with me. I can hear her words muffled through the sheets. "Ple-e-e-ease, Bobby! Fuck me!"

I start slowly, working in two slender fingers, letting the thick lube slurp and smack as my fingers stretch her asshole wider. One more finger joins the first two in Teena's asshole, and she lies on her stomach, writhing in anticipation. Her pussy starts to squeeze down on the fingers inside her, and I know she is ready for more. I add another finger to her ass and slowly work them in to the third knuckle. Slowly they slide in and out, twisting around like a smooth wet piston. Teena gasps, then relaxes and begs for the thumb too.

I gently work my thumb in, until just the widest part of my hand stops me from fisting her. "C'mon, slut...c'mon, my pet. Open up for Mama," I coax, and Teena responds. She cries out as I slide in, filling her ass to the fullest. Her words are a mumble of cries and pleas as my hand slowly rocks inside her. My other hand dances in her cunt, my fingers tapping a frantic pace on her clit. Her muscles squeeze down on me in urgent little spasms, and I feel her start to climax. I let two fingers pump deep in her wet pussy while my thumb grinds in little circles on her clit. She comes alive in ecstasy, dancing at my touch. Her release is frantic and frenzied, and it is all I can do to hold on. We move in synchronicity, my hands playing inside her, Teena almost screaming with the intensity of her orgasms. Each gasp, each cry calls out that she is mine, that we share this place, this secret spot where there is room for nothing but passion, raw sexuality.

I gently rock my hands back and forth, sliding one hand at a time first in deep, then almost out, moving my fingers inside Teena till I feel like a fucking machine...a thick piston, fucking my lover's ass and cunt in a smooth motion, in...out...in...out.... More and more of Teena's come oozes out around my fingers. I fill her to her limits, and her impending climax frightens her. It builds up, stronger, as strong as my fist inside her, as wide as the fingers that spread her flesh, filling her, stretching her. Teena cries out again and again. She comes again, hard, and I slide out almost simultaneously,

gently wiggling my fist out of her ass before she clamps down. Her cunt is so wet and so hungry, I let my four fingers fill her, I let them stab her and fuck her hard. She shrieks and moans, unable to let the climax fade as I hold her at that edge. I hold her there as long as I can, prolonging her passion, till I feel her muscles relax and she rolls over into a little ball.

"Not so fast, little slut," I say and roll her onto her back. She looks up at me. The double-headed dildo is conveniently close to my hand. It slides in her pussy with no trouble, and as I slide the other end into my own pussy, I pull Teena into my arms. I hug her tightly, feeling her uncertainty. "Sweet little girl," I say. "Mmm, so sweet, such a good girl!" She needs this softness, this tender cool-down, or she would hide even further behind her fears. We rock in each other's arms, and I let the cock fill me, let her fuck me as we fuck each other. She melts in my arms, her body seeming small and fragile in my tight grasp. Her breath comes in gasps again. She moans each time the knobby head moves inside her. I kiss her deeply, quieting her cries, letting them disappear into my mouth as my lips crush hers in a savage embrace.

I look at her flushed face, at the sweaty curls of her bangs, then I close my eyes and let my body rock against hers. My own climax is slow and sweet, my nipples burning where they scrape across her flesh, my hips grinding down against her, my legs tangled round hers as if to hold her captive. Slyly, she reaches down and presses her hand between us, so that her fingers move against both our clits. She presses hard, and I come, frantically sucking at her tongue, desperately taking possession of her lips, eagerly following her to our madhouse of passion. We dance there, caught in a climax, our bodies rocking together, tied together by her dancing, strumming fingers. The little wench, she does this well, until all we can do is come back to earth and smile at each other, sweaty, dazed, and spent.

SATURDAY NIGHT CARRYING-ON IN OLD HAVANA

MIRIAM LASKIN

As in most of the world, Saturday night is party night in Havana. Thirsty, tired out from dancing, Sara was lounging on the balcony finishing her third rum in the company of Lydia and Magda. This couple had known her lover, Teresa, for many years—since way before Sara had arrived in Havana from New York City. Teresa was inside, still full of energy, practicing some new dance steps with her roadie boy toy, Pablito. Sara knew Teresa was thinking of adding the new steps to her choreography the next time she and her band performed.

A young woman sauntered onto the breezy balcony and joined them, introducing herself to Sara as Maria del Carmen, a friend of Lydia and Magda. Her lithe brown body was seductive in tight jeans shorts and a very short tank top. Her dark eyes sparkled as they met Sara's. Sara couldn't help surreptitiously comparing Maria del Carmen to her lover. Teresa was about five foot six to Maria del Carmen's five foot two, her body more solid and muscular while Maria del Carmen's was softer, more rounded. She's wearing perfume, Sara noticed, liking it.

The woman made no pretense of formality when she spoke, calling Sara by the familiar Spanish *tú*. "I've seen you in Teresa's band, *mi guapa*," Maria del Carmen said with a smile. "Haven't I?" Sara agreed and told her she'd been playing the sax with Teresa for the past year, adding that they lived together. Maria del Carmen grinned at this warning and slid her warm hand down Sara's shoulder to her upper arm, resting her body lightly along Sara's for a few seconds. Sara was so surprised she almost dropped her drink off the balcony when she tried to put it down on the top of the ledge. It wobbled, ice cubes clinking together musically, but it didn't fall. Luck was still with her.

Maria del Carmen pushed her hip against Sara's, and one hand reached out and stroked down Sara's other side. Sara's skin tingled where Maria del Carmen's hand had just passed, and her heart started pounding. *Damn these Latina teases!* Sara felt a little dizzy, caught between sudden desire and wanting to get away as fast as possible, before she or Teresa could notice what was happening. Teresa was a beautiful but jealous lover, and Sara was crazy about

her. What she was feeling now must be a reaction to the three rums. But Maria del Carmen was certainly brazen and insistent!

"Well, *amiga mia*, do you ever get to do anything on your own, or does Teresa own you?" As she said this, she moved her body between Sara and the living room where Teresa and the others danced. Her thighs touched Sara's, and she grabbed one of Sara's wrists in each hand and stared at her with just a hint of a smile.

"Of course she doesn't own me! *Que locura*, Maria del Carmen." Sara stared back. "But that's not the point, exactly."

"What is the point?" Maria del Carmen smiled. She bent forward and brushed her lips along Sara's collarbone. A shiver sailed up Sara's spine, and her nipples stood up.

Sara pulled her head back and almost lost her balance. "The point is that Teresa and I are a couple. I'm not going to play games—"

"We're not playing games, Sara, *cariña*. Believe me," Maria del Carmen whispered, and began discreetly stroking Sara's hip with one hand. "Don't you like me? Don't you think I'm attractive?" she murmured in Sara's ear as she pinned her against the rail.

"Stop!" cried Sara, but softly, trying not to panic or even glance toward the dancers inside. Maria del Carmen pulled back momentarily, and the sudden release of her weight made Sara wobble against the balcony rail. Maria del Carmen reached out to steady her. She laughed and kissed Sara on the mouth. Unfortunately, it was at this very moment that Teresa suddenly materialized. She grabbed Maria del Carmen by the shoulder and half pulled, half threw her backward. Maria del Carmen stumbled, then caught herself and answered Teresa's glare with a stare of her own and a rather brave smile. Sara gasped.

"*Y que*, Teresa!" Maria del Carmen said. "Don't worry, I'm just fooling around, it's a joke." Teresa stared at her, and Sara knew she was struggling against an urge to punch Maria del Carmen in the face. Instead, she spat out, "*Que verguenza! Tienes una cara dura!*" at Maria del Carmen and grabbed Sara's wrist; she pulled her off the balcony and through the party to the front door.

Teresa dragged her out the door and down the stairs, past curious neighbors peering out at them through apartment doors open to entice the night-time breezes; past the old *abuela* who was on night duty, dozing on a chair outside the building entrance. Sara was too scared to say anything, but she figured it wouldn't hurt to leave her wrist in Teresa's grasp while she cooled down. But tears started to roll down her cheeks when Teresa still hadn't spoken a word to her by the time they turned onto their own block. The leaves on the many palm trees above them rattled softly and formed a dark canopy over their heads. She couldn't see Teresa's face, but her wrist was still tightly held. Turning off the street, Teresa pulled Sara down the little alley to their

apartment. Inside, she closed the door and shoved Sara roughly to the wall, pinning her there.

"You're *crying*!?"

"I didn't do anything, Teresa! It wasn't my fault. I had a few drinks and Maria del Carmen started taking advantage of me. *Ella tenia una cara dura*. Brazen drunk. Just like you told her! Oh, please, *mi amor*—"

"If you didn't do anything, why are you crying?"

"I...well, I'm scared."

"Oh? Of what?" Teresa's voice was tinged with sarcasm.

"You. I thought, uh, I thought you were going to hurt Maria del Carmen, or me, or at least cause a tremendous uproar, and then everyone would start talking."

"Oh, I think they're all talking away right now, love," Teresa whispered into Sara's ear as she put one hand on Sara's neck.

"Talking about what, Teresa?" Sara asked tremulously, putting her hand over the one on her throat.

"Talking about what a *puta* you are. Talking about what a fool and a mad-woman I am." Teresa pulled Sara a little off the wall and grabbed her T-shirt out of her pants, yanking it up and over Sara's head in the front and then down across her shoulders in back. She pulled the shirt down a few more inches so it became a restraint holding Sara's arms close to her body. Then she slid her fingers through Sara's hair on either side of her head and used the grip to push her back against the wall.

"You'll be punished for your sluttish behavior tonight," she said, her husky voice ominous.

"No! Please, don't punish me!" Sara was weak with a combination of rum, fear, and arousal.

"You need a lesson, girl," Teresa continued, bringing her face very close to Sara's. "A lesson in humility; a lesson in chastity," she added as she slid a hand into the front of Sara's jeans and forced it down until her palm was cupped under Sara's cunt. Sara moaned and tried to bring an arm up to put around Teresa, but she found she couldn't get it around her because of her T-shirt straitjacket.

"You're going to beg me, I can tell," Teresa said, pinning Sara's arm back to the wall again. Then she removed her hand from Sara's jeans and grabbed her neck again, applying a little pressure. Sara's body was singing, and her skin, especially around her naked nipples, felt sensitive. She tried to reach her hand between Teresa's legs.

"No you don't! Don't touch me!" Teresa slapped her hand away easily. "I don't give you permission to touch me. Who's the *macha* here?" Teresa began stroking Sara's naked stomach, sending chills up and down Sara's body, raising goose bumps. She cupped Sara's face with one hand and

leaned in and took her mouth, opening Sara's teeth with a thrust of her tongue. Sara moaned. "Stop, Teresita, slow down!" Sara pleaded, twisting her head to the side.

"Begging already? This is nothing yet! You won't get out of your punishment so easy." Teresa's eyes were intense, staring into Sara's. Then she jammed her knee between Sara's legs and pressed against her cunt, simultaneously nibbling at Sara's neck. One hand still clasped Sara's face, but the other moved from Sara's stomach to her breast and caught a nipple between its index finger and thumb. She tweaked the nipple, coaxing it in small circles; then her fingers grasped the erect tip and squeezed hard, shooting an electric bolt down Sara's body.

As a liquid beam of pain rolled down her spine to her cunt, Sara began to sink. She felt like she'd been shot with Demerol or something that made her muscles totally relax and her knees buckle. She would have slipped to the floor if Teresa's leg hadn't been there between hers, holding her up, and if Teresa hadn't taken her hand away from Sara's face and gripped her under one armpit.

Teresa now half lifted, half dragged Sara the few feet to their sturdy table and pushed her backwards over the top so her knees were hanging over the edge. "Stay," Teresa warned. She unzipped Sara's jeans and yanked them down, stooped and pulled her sneakers off, then grasped the jeans and drew them down and off entirely.

"Good girl." She bent over her lover. Supporting herself on her hands, she hovered, her own breasts touching Sara's. Sara tried to pull Teresa down, but Teresa resisted and pulled back; she grabbed Sara's arms and leaned on them, slowly lowering her body closer until their breasts, stomachs, and hips were touching very lightly. Sara began to squirm. Teresa laughed down into Sara's face.

"*Mi amor*, you look so funny! With your T-shirt wrapping you up and not another stitch of clothing on!"

"Okay, then fix it for me." Sara looked Teresa in the eyes, daring her. A short struggle ensued. When it was over, Sara's T-shirt was on the floor. Teresa's body was pressing down on Sara's from her waist to her thighs, and she was holding Sara by the wrists, one on each side of her head.

"Please, Teresa. Oh, please!" Sara pleaded. "Just let go of my wrists, just for a minute!" Instead, Teresa again raised her body over Sara's, dangling her long hair over her lover's face, neck, breasts. Each time Teresa shook her head, her hair brushed Sara's sensitive skin. She dipped her head down and took one of Sara's nipples into her mouth and sucked it hard, flicking her tongue along its plump, warm surfaces.

Picking her head up, Teresa asked, "Do you know what your nipples remind me of?"

"What?" Sara panted breathlessly.

"They remind me of coffee beans, ripened and just picked off the trees."

"How romantic of you to tell me this," Sara said, trying not to laugh. "I don't believe I've ever seen just-ripened coffee beans, myself! Although I could swear they're green!"

"Well, *chica*, let me tell you, I've picked many, many coffee beans, from a young age! And never mind the color of the beans, smart-ass, how would you know? I was thinking about the shape, anyway."

"You've never told me how many coffee beans—just-ripened—you picked before we met, lover. I think I'm jealous, and I swear I'll remember this confession later!"

"*Mira!*" Teresa gripped Sara's wrists tighter and jammed her knee up against Sara's cunt. "This is why I have to hear you beg for mercy. You're such a bad girl! You twist my words and throw them back at me!" She began to grind her knee into Sara's crotch. "I met most of my just-ripened coffee beans while they were still on the trees, when I had to pick them with my schoolmates every year out in the countryside. Not that you deserve to know."

She bent her head and kissed Sara hard, making her gasp. Her tongue explored, stroking the soft inner surfaces; then she was sucking Sara's tongue and finally sliding her own insistently down Sara's throat. After a while Sara couldn't stand it, and she took her lover's lower lip between her teeth and bit down. Teresa jerked her head back and slapped Sara across the face. It stung, and Sara's ears rang.

"You're asking for it now." Teresa grabbed both of Sara's wrists in one hand and moved the other downward, thrusting two fingers into Sara's cunt.

"Uh! Ooh! No! Teresita! No! Please! I—" Her cunt was melting now too, just as her lips had been a moment before.

"I can't understand you so good, *mi amor*, you're mumbling." Teresa grinned down into Sara's face as she thrust into her. "If you're asking me to fuck you, we'll fuck when I decide. You haven't received your punishment yet."

"What, what do you call this? I'm burning up! Please, come closer, Teresa, let me touch you!"

Teresa suddenly pulled her fingers out of Sara's cunt and slid off her. She yanked Sara off the table and threw her the few feet to the bed, where Sara landed on her stomach. Teresa walked to the dresser. She picked up a hairbrush from the top, took a box out of a drawer, and put them both on the night table by the bed. She shed her own T-shirt but left her jeans on, then threw her body onto Sara's.

"Mmm, feels good," Sara murmured, her voice muffled because she was face-down on the mattress. "Please, let's just stay here like this." Teresa laughed and ran her hands over every part of Sara's body that she could reach.

SATURDAY NIGHT CARRYING-ON IN OLD HAVANA

"Teresita, ow, don't. Get off, I can't breathe! Come here, baby, turn around, I want to—"

Teresa cut her off. "*Your desires! Your orders!* Oh, no. I see I must make sure you're quiet when you take your punishment," Teresa hissed as she slid off Sara's back, pointing a finger at her in an admonition not to move. She reached down, and when she straightened up again she had a couple of old bandannas in her hands. Teresa grabbed Sara's wrists and tied them together, wrapping one bandanna a few times around and tucking one end underneath and through the loops. Then, grabbing a handful of Sara's hair, she pulled her head up and wrapped the other bandanna twice around Sara's head and across her open mouth, and, after checking to make sure Sara could breathe freely, tied it in back of her head. Teresa then pulled Sara's tied wrists high over her head and shoved her head down again.

Sara turned her head to the side and grunted, starting to bring her hands toward her mouth, but Teresa intercepted them and slapped her, stingingly, on the ass. "Hey! *Déjalo, chica! Quédate en paz, brujita!*" she warned with a soft but wicked laugh. "You better lie quietly, my little witch! This gag will prevent our neighbors from pounding on our front door in a little while." She climbed again onto Sara's back, facing backwards.

Sara couldn't stop shivering: Teresa was stroking from the inside of her knees upward to her crotch, letting her fingers trail lightly up onto the rise of her buttocks. Her touch was soft, soothing but somehow burning too. Then Sara felt one hand rest briefly on her skin. Another hand pressed down suddenly on the small of her back, just above her tailbone, and the first hand lifted, then fell suddenly with a sharp slap on one ass cheek.

"Ooh!" Sara's breath came out just as sharply, but muffled by the cloth gag. "Heh—" she tried to say something, but then more slaps came, knocking her breath out of her lungs each time, so she was too busy breathing to try to speak. Teresa's hand landed mostly on the top of her ass, but once in a while it fell lower, on the underneath part just above her thighs. Several times Teresa's long fingers slapped against her cunt, or just over or under it. Whenever this occurred, Sara's ass rose, her back arching. It wasn't a clear gesture, and Teresa could interpret it as an attempt either to bring the hand closer or to shift Teresa off balance.

Minutes later, Sara felt her body beginning to melt, sweat slick along her thighs, between her shoulder blades, and on her forehead.

Teresa stopped and turned herself around but didn't get off Sara. "Let me see your face, *brujita*," she whispered, her mouth at Sara's ear. "You crying yet, my little *puta*?" She peered down, scrutinizing her. Sara looked back up at Teresa as best she could. Her face was sweaty, and the gag was wet with her saliva, which dripped out of the corners of her mouth.

"That gag is damned wet, but your eyes are dry like cotton, I see." Teresa

caressed them once with her thumbs. "I guess this is just a game to you, eh, *mi vida?*"

Sara quickly shook her head and started to moan. "Nuh! No-o-o...Puh—" Sara tried to talk through the gag, and her body shook even harder when Teresa suddenly reached under her chest and pinched her nipples hard. Sara bucked, and Teresa leaned her head down again, torturing Sara's earlobe with sharp nips. Her breath blew hot into Sara's ear. "You're asking for stronger, sterner measures, Sarita. You will cry and say how sorry you are for being such a slut tonight. I promise you." She grabbed the wooden hairbrush from the night table.

This time there were no sensuous, tingly caresses to precede it. The hairbrush hit with real force, and Sara wasn't ready. Teresa rained down smacks with the back of the brush, first on one cheek, then on the other, then on the underside of Sara's ass. A tremendous heat was rising, and Sara tried to speak, but she couldn't get out a sound that approached language. She squirmed more and more strenuously, and Teresa had a hard time keeping her balance. Tiring somewhat, she switched the brush from one hand to the other every four smacks or so.

"It's getting so red, *cariña!* You won't be able to sit soon." Sara felt a cool palm on her backside. "If I were you, I'd be begging. I'd be crying *muchas lágrimas*. Before it's too late." The palm lifted, and Sara suddenly started crying real tears, moaning, trying to get Teresa to notice. Teresa finally twisted around and reached a hand to Sara's face and felt her eyes and cheeks. They were very wet.

"*Mi jita!* My good little girl," she crooned. Teresa moved off Sara's back to sit at her side. She untied the gag and slipped it off but didn't allow Sara to turn over yet. Leaning over her lover, she stroked the sweaty hair off Sara's forehead and brushed her lips and hands over Sara's temple. "Tell me," she demanded.

"Teresa, please! I'm sorry for tonight! It will never happen again! I swear I'll never talk to Maria del Carmen again, I promise. Please, Teresita, stop now. O-o-oh!" This last sound was because Teresa had reached between Sara's thighs and cupped a hand over her cunt. Her middle finger slipped a little farther than the others into Sara's furrow and rested lightly between her now-drenched inner labia.

"Please, I'm suffering, really! I can't help...I'm so hot, my ass is on fire! It hurts too! Ay, Teresa..." Sara trailed off, trying not to hyperventilate. She could feel how her whole body was shaking, how the air was hitting her thighs, her back. Her sweaty body was suddenly cold—except her backside, which burned even more fiercely, burned with a dry heat, while the sweat poured off her back and tingled in her scalp.

"Okay, Sara, you apologized very nicely, and I'm pleased. Now you're going

to give it up to me. Everything I want, you're going to give to me." She flipped Sara over onto her back and was rewarded with a gasp as Sara's sore butt hit the mattress.

"Open your thighs." Sara opened them. "More." She opened them more. Teresa grasped Sara's ankles and, holding her feet firmly on the mattress, slid Sara's legs up until her knees were bent and her cunt was exposed. She then pushed down on Sara's thighs, exposing her cunt completely. Leaning in, Teresa pulled back Sara's cunt lips with her thumbs.

Sara groaned as she felt Teresa's breath on her clit. Her body vibrated with need and pain. Every time she breathed in, her body trembled. Her ass felt swollen and hot, raw from the beating, and her clit, like her nipples, was hard and erect. Inside, she felt huge, empty, hungry. "Teresa, please! Don't tease me like this anymore. Oh!" Teresa's pointed tongue touched the head of Sara's clit; she licked it only once before removing her tongue again.

"You just calm down, girl. I'm getting up, and you're going to stay just like this. Don't move a muscle." She reinforced her order with a couple of sharp slaps on the inside of each open thigh.

When Teresa returned she had a latex glove on one hand and a bottle of lube in the other.

"Take the bandanna off, Teresa," Sara begged. "I want my hands free."

"What? What did you ask me?"

"Please! I said please—take the cloth off my hands, Teresita!"

"Oh, no! We're playing this my way tonight. After your *jodeando* at the party with Maria del Carmen, I'm not in the mood to humor you! Now shut up, *voy a chingate bien, hija mia*."

Sara sighed, closed her eyes, and hid a smile at her lover's choice of *chingate*, raw Spanish raunch for "fuck." Then Teresa was kneeling between her legs, her face touching Sara's, her fingers twined tightly in Sara's hair. Teresa murmured into her ear, something about how hot Sara was, about what a *candela* she was—a candle burning bright and hot. Her tongue licked down Sara's cheek at imaginary flames, down her neck to the place where neck and shoulder meet, down, down between her breasts, picking up the salt of Sara's sweat on her tongue as she drifted over her. Funny, Sara noticed distractedly, these flames weren't extinguished by Teresa's cool tongue at all.

"Ooh, mmm, yes, hmm..." Sara's language skills deserted her as shivers arced the surface of her skin, tightening her nipples, puckering them, raising lines of goose bumps along her arms and shoulders while a contradictory flush began spreading over her chest and up her neck.

"Huhh!" Teresa's long, slim fingers were between her legs now; they were sliding along her inner lips, spreading juices from inside to outside. Teresa pushed first one, then two, and finally a third finger in.

"Ah, oh! Do it!"

"Don't move!" One of Teresa's hands was on Sara's shoulder now, pinning her to the mattress. "Don't move, or I'm leaving." Sara strained to keep still against the tremendous counterforce of her desire. "Tell me. Tell me what you want, baby." Teresa began a soft chant—"Say it, say it, say it"—until Sara heard herself joining in, "Yes, yes, yes."

"Yes what, baby, yes what? Tell me, or you can't have it." Teresa continued whispering insistently, but she also added a new sensation for Sara to contend with. It felt to Sara like Teresa was massaging her cervix with the tips of her three fingers. Or brushing them back and forth over it. This sensation always excited Sara to her limits: it was as if a piece of her were being picked up and moved to another place deeper up inside. Her heart surged and pounded with each stroke until Sara thought it might explode.

Teresa's fingers picked up tremors of an impending explosion. "Don't come! Don't you dare!" she hissed.

Sara fought it down, fought to relax her muscles inside, but the fight was desperate, and she felt an involuntary groan roll up and tear out of her lungs. "Aahh." Breathe. "Please, Teresita, put it all in. I want your fist. I want you to fuck me with your fist, please, please give it to me. Fuck me, Teresa, oh, please fuck me."

This was what Teresa wanted to hear, and she rewarded Sara, lowering her lips over Sara's and pushing her tongue down into her mouth, deep-kissing Sara and taking her breath away. Then Teresa raised her body in one swift motion, grabbed the lube, and squeezed it all over her gloved hand. "It's coming, baby, hold on. My hand's going to slide right in." Teresa explored Sara's cunt lips, then her clit, then everywhere else she could feel, smearing the delicate skin with lube. When she thrust her middle two fingers inside Sara's hole, the passage was slick enough that extra lube seemed superfluous, though they both knew it wasn't. For even though fisting was one of their favorite activities, Sara was always challenged by her lover's long fingers and by the width of her hand across the knuckles. But steady practice had provided a few tricks.

Teresa pumped with her two fingers for a while, pushing them deep so they touched Sara's cervix with each thrust. She waited with perfect concentration for Sara's body to give her the next signal. When Sara's pelvis began tilting, thrusting up, Teresa pulled out far enough to bring all five fingers together and point them in a neat, slippery little bundle and then push them in again. Once they were all inside the ring of muscle that guarded the entrance to Sara's cunt, she spread her fingertips out a little bit, expanding back against the muscle, creating a counterpressure. Sara groaned, almost a cry, then began breathing fast and shallow.

"Yes. Yes, you can. You can take me, I know you can, Sarita *mia*, yes. You know how." Teresa was leaning over Sara's body, still on her knees, stroking

Sara's hair, urging compliance. Her fingers continued their little circle dance, first spreading open to widen the entrance to Sara's cunt, then contracting again; but soon she knew it was time to add a new movement. As Sara lay on her back, eyes closed, knees spread, breathing in and out in shallow moans, Teresa pulled out her hand until just the tips of her fingers were inside and squeezed more lube on. Then, as she pushed back in, she began rotating her whole hand as if she were using a corkscrew to open a bottle of wine. Teresa knew that if she'd chosen the right moment, the ring of muscles would relax and widen and Sara's cunt would do the rest, just pull her hand right in, up to her wrist.

Teresa broke into a ferocious grin as her timing turned out perfect and she felt her hand melting into the warm walls of Sara's cunt. It felt like she'd shoved her fingers right into a glove. A tight one, rippling, squeezing, then loosening. Like breathing.

"Uh! Aah!" Sara, owner of the glove, felt Teresa's hand immerse, and she froze from the waist down and uttered an animal sound, half pleasure, half pleading.

"What? Sarita, what? Tell me," Teresa responded.

"Take, take it out a minute. Teresa, pull out, it's burning! Just for a second—"

"Okay, baby, okay, hold on," Teresa interrupted. "I know. Don't worry, I'll fix it. I'll fix it." It often happened this way, where the first entrance was too much of a shock for Sara. She poured more lube onto her hand, then leaned over Sara, bringing their faces together again, and cradled Sara's head in one arm as she kissed a few tears away from the corners of Sara's eyes. "I'm going into you again, *amor mia*, don't you worry. It's going to feel just right now. You'll see," Teresa said soothingly. Her other hand stayed busy, stroking Sara's cunt, exploring, touching her girl's clit, caressing it firmly. Sara's wrists were bound together, but she lowered her arms from over her head where Teresa had placed them and stroked Teresa's cheeks with both hands in gratitude.

"Mmm, mmm, oh, yeah, oh, yes! Ooh!" Sara groaned as her lover's sensitive fingertips began rolling her clit head. Her hips arched, reaching for more. She felt herself opening again, felt Teresa's fingers like a twisting, velvet bullet: solid, warm, penetrating. She opened wide, swallowed the hand again, felt it slide up and up. Teresa's hand curled into a fist, then went completely still, no movement at all. She was waiting for Sara to give her another signal. It didn't do to rush.

"Move it now." Sara's voice was so small that Teresa relied more on lipreading to understand her than aural analysis. She squeezed her fist tighter, and though it was a tiny movement, Sara reacted immediately and vocally. Teresa turned her hand a quarter rotation and then back, and Sara's moans grew, from deep in her chest. Teresa rotated her fist some more in the other direction; Sara gulped for air and filled the room with each exhalation. Then, her

eyes moving attentively over Sara's face as she worked, Teresa began slowly fucking her lover. Each time she pushed in, her fist went deeper, and each time she withdrew, she exquisitely stretched the entrance muscles of Sara's cunt.

Sara's eyes were squeezed shut, all energy turned inward as she let the feelings roll through her. Every time Teresa's fist reached one of the points at either end of her tunnel, Sara felt as if her uterus were being pulled inside out. The sensation battered her, forced the breath out of her lungs. Sara began to beg Teresa. "Please, please, oh, please put your hand over my mouth, I'm afraid of screaming too loud, *me voy loca*, Teresa, *me voy*—"

Teresa obliged, moving one of her hands from Sara's tit to cover her mouth. "Ssh, ssh, my love, *cállate*, *suave*, be quiet, *mi amor*. Don't you love it? *No te preocupes*, *chiquita*, don't worry, you're going to give it up to me, don't worry," Teresa was murmuring ceaselessly. Her body was slick with sweat; a few drops fell on Sara's neck.

For a while Teresa concentrated on fucking, gradually shortening the distance of her thrusts but pumping faster. This new intensity caused Sara to slide up the bed, her body almost floating away from Teresa, so that every so often Teresa had to grab her lover's shoulder and pull her body back to her.

"You can't get away from me, Sarita," Teresa teased, panting a little. "Can you feel my fist inside you, Sara; can you feel my fingers? What does it feel like? Is it hard? Can you feel it all the way up, even in your lungs?"

Sara loved it when Teresa talked to her like this. The words were like bee swarms penetrating her all over, buzzing inside her ears, tickling her neck. "Mmm, yes, *mi amor*, I feel you inside. It's...I want...please, Teresa, can I come? I want you to do me!"

Teresa grinned down. "*Do* you? *Mi jita*, I'm going to pick you now, my little ripened coffee bean, I'm going to pluck you off the tree." She began to slow down her thrusts and lengthen them again; she relaxed her hand inside, changing the feeling, and at the same time reached her free hand down to find Sara's clit. It was easy to find. She put two fingers on it and pressed.

"Come, straighten your legs. Quickly. Yes." And with those words, as Sara lowered her legs onto the mattress, Teresa bent her head and kissed her, sucking the air from Sara's lungs, sucking the cries into her own mouth. Her arm felt like it was inside a snake, a python, as Sara's muscles began to ripple into an enormous orgasm. Teresa's mouth opened, and she was gasping: the feeling never failed to awe her. Her hand thrust once, twice, three times, maybe four, all the way up, all the way into Sara. And stopped with a hard thrust. At the impact and the sudden absence of movement, Sara's orgasm rocketed through her body from deep inside, through her lungs, through her clit, through Teresa's fingers....

Sara lay panting, her body vibrating and heaving, wave after wave of intensity radiating outward. She moaned deep in her throat, while Teresa concen-

trated on removing her hand slowly until she was all the way out of Sara. After peeling off the glove, she gently untied the bandannas around Sara's wrists and massaged them to restore any lost circulation. Finally, she lowered her head over Sara's shoulder and wrapped her arms around her, cradling her.

"*Mi amor*—" Sara began. Teresa lifted her head and smiled and, holding on to Sara, rolled over; then they were lying on their sides, whispering together.

"See, your punishment wasn't so very hard to take, was it, Sara? Once you decided to take it like a good girl, it wasn't so bad." Her eyes smiled as they met Sara's.

"No," Sara agreed. "In fact, maybe we should go to another party next week—what do you say to that? You can give me another chance if we do." They both laughed and sighed and drifted into sleep, smiling at the thought of the next party.

ON THE ROCKS

LINDA BACON

It was a hot and sunny afternoon. Bonnie and I had ridden our motorcycles a few hours south from San Francisco and were just now stripping down for the hot springs. Bonnie had a tight and muscular body; I assumed she worked out with weights to maintain it. I watched her back muscles ripple as she pulled her shirt off, watched how tight her butt was as she slid out of her jeans. I wanted her. I imagined what it would be like to top a body like that, to see her helpless despite all her strength, to run my fingers over those muscles while she lay there restrained, to use her ass, to rub my cunt up against her tight ass until I came....

I didn't know Bonnie very well, and I wasn't sure I wanted to. But I had certainly lusted after her body. And when she invited me for a motorcycle ride, I figured it was the perfect setup to get what I wanted. We didn't have to make conversation when we were on the bikes, and I could get her to an isolated area easily enough.

The hot springs were an ideal place. Though they were public, at that time we were the only ones there. Large rock formations circumscribed the water, and there were plenty of alcoves for privacy. I glanced around and planned how I would use the space. By now Bonnie was naked; I was still working on getting my shoes off. She had her back to me as she folded her clothes. A little body shy, I noticed.

I moved quickly closer so that our bodies were just barely touching. "Don't move, don't turn around. I want to talk to you," I said. I put my hand lightly on the small of her back and felt her shiver under my touch. "You have a very fucking sexy body. I want you. Just for now, just for the day."

I took my switchblade out of my pocket and grazed the metal along her neck. "This knife could hurt you badly if you decide to pull away or struggle, so I just want you to stay still and follow my instructions." I traced the blade along the muscles of her back, enjoying watching her squirm, just slightly, as the cold of the metal teased her back.

"Are you scared?" I asked. She hesitated and then nodded her head uncertainly. I could feel her body shaking; she was clearly more scared

than she was willing to acknowledge.

"Good," I said, "as you should be." I loved it. Bonnie, who was usually so aggressive and controlling, was quiet and scared. I was accustomed to seeing her all cocky on the football field or looking oh so tough in her leather jacket on her motorcycle. She looked even sexier now that she was scared and unsure of herself.

"Now we're going to walk over to those rocks, slowly." I gripped her neck tightly with one hand, wedged my knee between her legs, and started pushing her over to the rocks. She moved with me willingly, too willingly for me to use the force I was craving to unleash. I pushed her up against a rock edge.

"Cross your hands behind your neck." She did so, and I snapped the handcuffs on her wrists roughly.

I pulled my body up tight against her back and let my hands roam her chest. Her pecs were especially well defined, making her small breasts stand out firm. I ran my fingers over her pecs and roughly brushed her tits with my arm. Her nipples were already hard. She shifted her weight suddenly, as if struggling to elude my touch. I quickly spread the fingers of my left hand around the front of her neck and squeezed until I could feel the sharp intake of breath. "I don't need my knife to hurt you, you know." She nodded, gasping for breath. "Besides, that wasn't really very convincing," I teased. "Are you sure you want to get away?" Silence. "Come on, Bonnie. Do you want me to fuck you? Is your cunt wet for me right now?"

I heard a whimper in response. She clearly wanted it but was not going to admit it.

With my left hand firm on her neck, I squeezed her nipple hard with my right hand, twisting and pulling on it roughly. She moaned softly and collapsed her weight onto me.

"Yeah, this is what you want. You want me to fuck you roughly; you just want to give yourself to me now." My thigh was wedged tightly between her legs. Holding her neck and her tit roughly, I forced her down on my leg harder, rocking her cunt back and forth against my thigh.

"Get down on your knees," I ordered. She slid her cunt down my thigh and was on her knees in no time. I walked around to her front and grabbed her hair, forcing her forehead against the buttons on my 501s. "Unbutton my Levi's," I commanded. Using her teeth, she quickly unbuttoned them.

I slid them down my hips and off and pulled off my T-shirt so that I also was naked.

Grabbing her hair from behind, I jerked her to a standing position again. I unlocked the handcuffs and quickly locked them again, this time with her hands in front of her body.

"On your knees again," I commanded, and she quickly responded. I knelt on my left knee in front of her and pulled her roughly so that she was bent

over my right knee. I slid my hand over her butt lightly; I could feel her shift to meet my touch. She had a really sweet ass, firm and round. I slapped it lightly, my left hand pulling hard on her nipple. I could feel her shudder. I kept up a staccato rhythm of slapping her ass, not too hard, just hard enough to feel her cunt pushing against my thigh, to watch her ass rise as if begging for it harder.

I gave it to her harder. I loved the sharp snapping sound each time my hand hit her ass; I loved her moans after a particularly hard slap; I loved the way she squirmed in anticipation, trying to draw my touch where she needed it most.

It was clear she had given herself to me by this time, clear that she wanted it. I increased the force of my blows dramatically. Before long her ass was completely marked and raw; welts were already beginning to form. Her whimpers had turned to screams of pain and protest.

My hard blows switched into comforting taps and light caresses. Again, her ass rose to meet my touch as if desperate for attention. Another whimper—my touch was clearly very soothing after the intensity of the spanking. I slid my knee out from under her and pushed her onto her hands and knees. This time I ran my tongue over her ass cheeks. I could feel her quivering, hear how fast and labored her breathing was. I blew hot air on her ass, just barely touching her, teasing her with my tongue and hands. She thrust her ass out to meet my touch.

Every time my hand slipped between her thighs, I could feel her shift her weight, drawing me into her cunt. I teased her mercilessly, circling around her cunt, dipping in occasionally to feel the wetness and sliding my fingers on through. Her breathing grew more labored; there was a desperate timbre to the occasional whimpers that escaped.

I slowed my attention to her cunt and ass and slid my hand up her back. With her muscles taut and flexed, she looked like a wild cat in heat. "Arch your back," I commanded. "I want your ass in the air." She hung her head but quickly complied. Damn, she looked hot. My fingerprints were clearly embedded in the red welts on her ass. I rubbed my cunt against her ass, knowing how raw her ass must feel, how much this must sting. My cunt was wet and throbbing; I knew I had to come at this point. Holding on to her roughly, one hand on her shoulder, one pulling on her nipple, I continued to rub my cunt hard against her ass, riding her. Her body was taut at this point, her breathing as jagged and labored as mine. I fucked her ass like that, hard, for quite some time, slowing just as I was about to come, teasing myself, then quickening my pace again. Finally, I could wait no longer. I came up against her, wave after wave of sensation rocking through my body. Exhausted, I collapsed my weight against her, and our breathing slowed together. We lay there silently for several minutes.

Eventually I got up. A little unsteady on my feet, I walked in front of her and stood over her. "Look at me," I said. She looked up but couldn't make eye contact.

"If you want something else from me, you're going to have to look me in the eyes and beg for it," I said. "I'm not going to hurt you; you can walk away right now if you want." I wanted her to look up; I wanted her to see the softness in my eyes right then, to see how the tone had changed.

I stood there silently for a few minutes; she didn't move. I noticed, however, that she kept her ass up in the air for me.

I started to walk away. "Wait," she pleaded. "Don't go."

I stood still and waited. This was obviously hard for her. "I...", she faltered, "I want you to fuck me."

"Come over here and tell me how much you want me to fuck you," I demanded, wondering if I was pushing her too hard.

Clearly not. After a brief hesitation, she crawled over on her hands and knees and looked up at me. "Please," she pleaded, "please fuck me now. I want to feel your fist inside me hard. Please," she pleaded.

I loved it. She looked so helpless and desperate at that moment. I couldn't help but smile. Or maybe it was a smirk.

I reached down and grabbed her hair, pulling her head back roughly. I kissed her then; her mouth was so eager and responsive, so passionate. We stayed locked in that kiss for quite some time. I was surprised at the depth of my need, of her need, of the passion we both felt so strongly. I don't remember ever kissing someone as hard as that, displaying so much want in a kiss. Finally, I broke away, pulling her hair and jerking her head back, leaving her mouth open and wanting. She looked so childlike at that moment, so completely in my power. All I wanted was to fuck her hard, to take control of her body the way we both so desperately wanted.

"Get down on your elbows, ass in the air," I demanded. She quickly complied. Damn, she looked sexy in that position. My cunt was again throbbing and desperate. I rubbed it against her ass cheek. She shuddered when she felt how swollen and wet I was.

I reached into her cunt with one finger. She was so wet and hot; it felt like she just pulled me inside her. Two fingers, then three fingers and four. I moved my hand in and out slowly. Her hips were moving wildly, just desperate for me.

"Fuck me, Kelly, fuck me hard," she pleaded. I liked the way that sounded, liked hearing my name, hearing how much she wanted me.

I curled my fingers and let her pull my whole fist inside her. I increased the tempo of my thrusts to match the movement of her hips.

"Oh, yes, Kelly, fuck me, just like this, fuck me hard," she begged, her voice husky with need.

Harder and harder I rammed my fist inside her. Her breath was jagged and deep; she was moaning loudly with each thrust. I could feel the tension building in her body; then suddenly I felt as if she were fucking my hand, controlling it, pulling it deep and hard inside her. She screamed suddenly as she came and stopped moving, then collapsed her weight on the ground, breathing heavily. I felt her muscles slowly contracting around my hand, massaging my hand. She lay there silently, exhausted, drained. I rested my weight on top of her, slowly opening and closing my fist inside of her. She moaned softly with each movement. I lay on top of her silently, matching my breathing to hers.

REGARDING WANDA B. MISTRESS J. R.

Somehow it is still amazing to me: the way she twists and turns in her chains; how she screams when the whip comes down; her look of terror as I pull out the devices I've planned to use on her that night; how the tears run down her beautiful face and she bites her quivering lip when she sees it's all just started, that it'll be a long session and that yes, it's real. She's so unlike so many bottoms I've known, the ones who attempt to endure *almost* silently, feeling it a loss of face to cry out. Not that they were not enjoyed immensely, but I love this one's whimpers and pleas and screams and begging, her soft appeals and shrieking no's, her offers to give me anything, to do anything, if only I'll stop. She cries and pulls away as far as the chains and restraints will allow. She gives me all her fear, her horrible fantasies, her vulnerability, and in so doing is free to face those fears and feel the release of giving up control; to feel the freedom that comes from being totally at my mercy, totally at my command. And it still amazes me, the wetness that builds between her legs, how her clit and cunt will swell until her wetness is impossible to ignore and I begin telling her what type of girl she is: one who loves the whip, the humiliation, who screams yet grows wet, who cries "stop!" but not our safety word.

So I release her and allow her to crawl. She kisses my boots and thanks me for what has occurred, and I catch her admiring her red raised welt marks in the mirror out of the corner of her eye. She sees me watching this and looks down as if ashamed. But she knows I know she is feeling proud now, and she smiles. She sees the bowl of water for her to lap from and the jar she can relieve herself into if need be. She drinks, her head lowered to the bowl, her ass raised, exposing her delicious sex. It is impossible not to want her. But she needs to service me first—to rise to her knees and ease this heat she's caused in me. Her chain, the one she wears continuously locked around her waist, rattles as she crawls to me, eyes downcast as she receives her instructions. I feel her collar between my thighs as she gives me her thanks and worships at the altar of her mistress—building then exploding then easing my heat until she drinks all my signs of approval. She is pleased with herself—and should be.

I praise her as I pet her and put her bit and bridle in place. She moans as I

lube her ass and show her the flogger she'll soon be wearing. She kisses it, and I lube the handle and slowly work it into her ass. She bites at the bit and moans—then crawls for me, bridle in place and the thongs of the flogger swaying behind her, the handle gripped by her ass as the strands touch her thighs and the back of her legs teasingly. She goes through her paces for me, from a slow crawl to her prances, and occasionally I let the whip accentuate her stride. And then, when she's showing off the most, I stop her, tell her to crawl slowly again, then demand she quit using her knees. She pulls herself along with her hands and drags herself around the room and back to me. She's crying again—crying yet proud—and she looks at me questioningly as she rises to her knees before me and straddles my right boot. She eases herself up to where her clit rubs the length of leather from my knee down. She asks silently for my okay and upon my nod begins humping herself on my boot—her wetness streaking my black boots and her scent rising to my nostrils and exciting me again. As she humps my leg, her hands holding my thigh, I call her a bitch in heat. I tell her that she is being excited by what decent women would be repelled at, by what most would call perversion, by what any woman but a cunt-sleaze-slut-bitch-tramp would shy from, would turn from. And here she is throbbing and begging, begging for forgiveness and begging for more as she humps and lubes my boots and leathers with her juices all the more. I watch her, ask her what she would not allow; she responds, "Nothing"—as long as she can release her passion—and begs for this release. I move my leg upward suddenly with enough force to tip her on her back. I demand she resume her all-fours position. Her wetness is incredible. She lifts her cunt to me as she lowers her head. I begin stroking her hard clit as I work my fingers into her swollen, ready cunt.

She's moaning again—moaning and crying and begging me not to stop. She knows I've no intention to slow my pace. I tell her of things to come, and I remind her of past scenes we've had—of the cutting, of showing her off and sharing her, of the piercing and the shaving. I feel her open as each finger, one at a time, slips in until that final lubed digit, my thumb, curls and strikes...gently, slowly, but with no hesitation. She screams around her bit as my fist disappears inside of her. I fuck her slowly, then with a firmness that makes her tell me she's feeling high. And then that girl comes—strong—her clit, and her cunt, and I see the handle of the flogger moving in and out by her own ass muscles grasping and releasing. I withdraw my fist, slowly, release her mouth from the bit. She's sobbing. She thanks me and renews her commitment of belonging to me. I hold her and comfort her. She lies at my feet, and I go get the cold cloth to ease her still-present welts and confess my love and pride for her. She crawls onto the couch beside me, curls up, and places her head in my lap. Tears and whimpers and coos of satisfaction...

Sometimes it still amazes me.

SAFE

LIZ GEWIRTZ

I chose her for our light S/M relationship partly because she was safe. She has a lover; she isn't my type. I long for black tie, chivalry, an aloof yet imposing stare. She wears green corduroy snap pants; an occasional flowered blouse interrupts her parade of regulation button-down shirts. One glance tells me: she's solid dyke stock. Just not my type.

Yet, two days after our last scene—one day since I cut my losses and left—the smells and tastes of her body accompany me.

I think of the taste of her cunt. It was quite strong, so the first—and last—time I went down on her, I kept my tongue mostly to her clit. The oozing depths of her vaginal juices made me feel slightly squeamish. Also, avoiding the fullness of her flow brought less fear of unsafe sex. Now my nose twitches at her smell, my mouth remembers the flip of my tongue against her clit, waters at the taste of her tangy juice.

I fantasize that as my love grows stronger, my tongue grows braver. First sliding lower to her labia, licking the soft flaps of skin, testing, tasting. Then as my whole face moves lower and I breathe in her damp air, my tongue first tastes her thick juice.

There are other visions of our intimacy that haunt me. I think of the area directly above her cunt: her sparsely haired pubic bone and her white, fully rounded stomach. Before I began to fall in love, her round stomach did not particularly attract me. Summoning my dyke consciousness, I managed to feel indifferent. But after our passion exploded, I took wicked delight in finding her stomach beautiful. I was drawn to her center. When I laid my head right above her pubic hair, the smell was a mixture of the rich scent of her cunt and the Irish, tangy smell of her skin. I woke this morning breathing in that scent.

I remember how she looked two days ago, during our final scene. I was tied to my bed, facedown, cheek and mouth buried in soft pillow. She was beating me very hard—not to please herself but because I would not submit. I refused to respond verbally to any of her questions. My rebelliousness was the foreshadowing of our breakup. She looked the quintessential dyke, wear-

ing only a shirt and underpants, her stomach hanging over her bikinis. In the heat of the scene, her image evoked only lust. The very portion of her body that had seemed mildly distasteful now seemed to exude her essence. Her center—her cunt, stomach, and thighs—seemed to encompass the part of her I needed most, the part I was desperate to connect with. I pushed and strained against my ties, aching to be closer to her. I provoked her into whipping me harder and harder, hoping it would dissolve the wall between us. If her hand happened to grace my lips while checking my bonds or stroking my sweaty forehead, I smothered her arm with kisses. I felt as if in making that connection, I would be assured of her protection and love, even as I frustrated and disobeyed her. I needed to feel possessed, yet couldn't surrender while I didn't wholly possess her. I felt that if I could crawl into her center, I might be satiated, safe.

I chose her because she was safe. She has a lover; she's not my type. I left her because she's no longer safe. She's not leaving her lover; everything about her has become my type.



Ashes and Attitude
Photograph by Rath Images

PART II

WHO IS MY SISTER?

CHALLENGING THE BOUNDARIES

OF THE

LEATHERDYKE COMMUNITY

DYKE WITH A DICK

TALA BRANDEIS

A lover straps on her dick so she can fuck me. She has a vagina, and would probably rather not. She'd rather fuck me with a flesh-and-blood prick that was hers. I savor the pressure of expansion from her cock as she asserts once again her desire, her need to have a "real" dick. I'm entranced by the lust and passion of her cock sliding in and out of my ass while I stare into her face in the mirror at the head of my bed. I say, "Come again, sweetie. Keep fucking me hard, woman." When I get fucked and come, I'm still aroused, still wanting to be fucked, again and again. That's how my body responds now. I'm a dyke, woman, female. I love women, other dykes. Some dykes love me.

But I'm a dyke without a vagina, sealed shut, fused in utero. My female morphology is incomplete. One lover called me a dyke with a dick. Unfortunately, I can't unstrap mine, it's attached. My body is female. (We all start out female!) It just had inappropriate hormones and aberrant primary and secondary sexual characteristics for my gender. I was an intensely androgynized version of female, a metamorph, a changeling. I was born a woman irrespective of some of my physical traits.

Some of you may disagree with my status as a woman, and some may be angry with my claiming a dyke identity. Most people have been invested in forcing me to be a member of a pedantic and smelly gender ever since I was small. Going along with them to some degree was necessary for my survival. But living as male was gravely painful for me, even prior to adolescence. My body was wrong, at odds with my epistemology. Casting aside what others told me over and over again, I continued my profound belief in being a girl.

I had some strange notion my physical being would sort itself out at puberty. Then my flesh and bones would change into a woman's physique. My tormentors would surely have to stop treating me in such a ridiculous fashion. What a rude awakening I had as hair began to grow on my chest, my face, as muscles enlarged, bones lengthened, breasts refused to grow, hips refused to widen, and never, ever any bleeding down there. Years into puberty, I still expected the horrid changes to reverse themselves and my form to congeal

into what it was supposed to be. Tragically, my body would not, could not, and did not do what I willed it to do. It was crazy-making to be that out of sync with my body; horrifying to be that in touch with male physiology.

In adolescent shock, crazed, I found salvation in alcohol and drugs—or maybe not salvation, but definitely escape. I had an extended love affair with marijuana and eventually found rapture in opium. After smoking opium, the constant flood of negative emotional energy from others toward me was blocked, my psychic defenses for the first time at rest. I felt comfortable, insulated from the concerns and articulations of others. I would remember this feeling, and when I got my hands on heroin I became an instant junkie.

Twelve years later, after the death of my mother, I finally placed heroin firmly in my past. For five years after wrestling that brass monkey to the floor and forcing her to leave forever, I radically changed my behavior. I ate wholesome food, gobbled vitamins, lifted weights, studied and practiced martial arts, boxed, ran three to seven miles a day, and was clean, sober, and crazy as a loon. But being sober brought my desire to come out as female to the fore. The anxiety this produced, coupled with suicidal urges, piqued an interest in cocaine. The result was a relapse into addiction. Two years later, the death of my father shook me out of cocaine use, and then I had to become an adult. All my immediate blood are dead and gone. Anything I do I must do for myself.

I had my first lesbian relationship in 1963 at age sixteen with a Triumph-riding butch dyke from a Catholic family of nine sisters and brothers. Rita's motorcycle battery never had much of a charge, and I'd wind up having to push her and the bike in order to get it started. We used to ride in to the San Francisco Tenderloin and hang out at the Coffee Caboose on Turk Street. On weekends, I'd free Rita's girlfriend from Mount Saint Joseph Convent, telling the nuns we were going to het parties. (I passed for male then.) The nuns never knew where she was really going. Those were unquestionably pre-Castro days, and San Francisco was still a working-class town. I remember the street queens asking if I was "bohemian"; rough trade claiming to be het but "protecting" the working girls who just happened to have pricks in their panties; a butch biker who'd never turn down a blow job from a cute young thing.

It was the Tenderloin of the sleazy and repressive early '60s: speed freaks and junkies, intense butches and super femme lovers, intermingling, claiming, sharing space. Everyone talking about dope, the man, the pigs, and who had been arrested recently, where they'd raided, what you had to wear to keep from being arrested for dressing in drag. One could be arrested for wearing the clothes of the "opposite" sex, and many were. Transsexuals were arrested at their straight gigs, at work in "drag." Male-to-female transsexuals were all identified as gay male by the establishment. I had pigs tell me if they'd really had a hard-on for me, they'd have beaten me up prior to arresting me. Queer consciousness, feminist consciousness, lesbian con-

sciousness, or gender consciousness had yet to be presented to the world.

High school had been hell. I knew I was a deviant, and I worked like crazy to repress and deny my perversion. When a coworker in the machine shop where I worked asked if I'd like to try some heroin, I was ready. I'd done my research. I knew heroin was derived from opium and was vastly more potent. Addiction was guaranteed. I ran in the streets, picked up a couple of crime partners, and began stealing to support my habit. I spent twenty-five thousand dollars on heroin in 1970. That's more than a quarter of a million dollars in today's money. I hustled. I did my share of burglaries but kept as much as I could to petty theft, stealing scrap metal and car radiators.

My partners made a mantra out of "Do not snitch." Of course, after our run of luck was over and we'd been arrested, it was my partner who turned state's evidence in order to get a ticket to Atascadero and the junkie snitch program there. I learned a lot about trust from my homeboys. If I ever decide to do anything illegal again, I'll do it alone. As a result of my foray into smack and thievery, I got a ticket to state prison.

When I was inside, I lifted weights, stayed off the main yard, stayed out of the television room (that's where most of the gang violence was played out), hung out in the library, read full-time, got two jobs that allowed me to stay away from the population, and worked my butt off. I witnessed two very brutal gang rapes. What do you do when ten to fifteen men are beating and sexually abusing someone else?

When I got out, I knew the state wanted to put me back inside prison. I chipped smack for the first two years after I got out anyway. I caught a jones once or twice and found it easy to kick. It's funny, but the physical discomfort of kicking a jones is much easier than the media makes out. Alcohol, barbiturates, or speed wreck your system much more than smack does. My parole officer wanted to place me with Delancy Street. I found a group of communists in Palo Alto and in 1973 entered Unity House, a drug-treatment home that was part of the Drug Collective that opened after mass action in the streets of that city in 1972.

As liberals and communists, the collective wanted addict participation in hiring new staff for Unity House. We interviewed fifty people for four positions and hired Aaron Manginello as director. Aaron was the former chairman of Venceremos and the former secretary of the Soul Brothers Motorcycle Gang. The Soul Brothers had been organized in 1967 as a multinational motorcycle gang inclusive of black, Latino, and white folks. (They didn't let women ride with the club.) I may have forgotten to mention that I'm a biker too. I'd owned two Harleys prior to my contact with the Soul Brothers.

Aaron and his partner, Sandra Peterson, probably saved my life. Without their support, I might never have gotten away from smack. We talked politics endlessly. They were good friends who put their convictions into reality by

trusting in my desire to be part of something more than my drug use. It sounds trite. However, they loaned me six hundred dollars to buy a 1951 EL with shaved 74 flywheels, straight pipes, and axed to the max (more commonly known as a chopper).

I had a couple of lovers in the next two years. I'd always been something other than monogamous, and Linda knew that when we started seeing each other. After I noticed how much it hurt her when I'd see other lovers, I stopped seeing them. We stayed together for five years before breaking up when I finally announced my need to come out female. It broke her heart. Linda was forty and pregnant when I told her. I'd charted her temperature for more than two and a half years to get to a point where we could conceive. We both knew when the egg was fertilized. The fetus had Down's syndrome, and we agreed to abort it.

I started ingesting estrogen and progesterone on January 1, 1980. Linda and I had separated. Estrogens started their work almost immediately. My hair became softer almost overnight. It's not supposed to, but it did. The wiriness of my hair changed too. My breasts started growing, and my whole body became much more sensitive. My nipples would become erect from breezes moving through the house, from the stare of a stranger across the room, from the thought of my lover's lips on them. This was definitely different from the intense genital focus of testosterone I experienced in my first pubertal experience.

Even though my hair was softer, it was still there. I had to go through seven years of electrolysis to get the hair off my face and chest. My voice is still deep. My bone structure has changed somewhat, but the length of the bone is still there even if the density has changed. My muscle structure is different. There is less muscle mass, and it's harder to gain mass.

To a great degree, female hormones made it possible for me to communicate with the world, especially with my sisters. The world at large knows not the absolute necessity of congruently having the smells of a woman, the chemical brain of a woman, the eyes and ears of a woman, the skin of a woman, the hair of a woman, the breasts of a woman, the hips, waist, legs of a woman, the sexual response cycle of a woman. Would that I had universally recognized female genitalia. If you make the leap and identify me as female, then, in fact, my genitalia are a woman's genitalia, however twisted and uncommonly formed, no matter my ovaries external, my lips closed/fused shut, my vagina/uterus imprisoned and atrophied, my urethra inside my unseemly clitoris. My genitalia may be classified female genitalia if I am female, no matter how unusual they may appear, how peculiar they are.

In 1982, I decided to have my breasts augmented. I'd spent some time in the Stanford medical library researching the different types of surgical procedures and the effects of the surgery over time. I failed to grill the surgeon

(who had a great reputation) about whether I would retain sensation in my breasts and nipples after the operation. I was afraid if I pushed him, he'd deny me access to the surgery. I foolishly assumed I would retain sensation.

So I went from having the most sensitive nipples on the planet to being unable to feel touch, let alone erotic sensation. I stopped having sex for the next two years. I was angry, depressed. I isolated myself and put all my energy into my business. That, at least, was successful. After two years I decided to find a way to reeroticize my genitals. I was tired of not having sex. Vibrators are fantastic. (Necessary, too.)

I'm lucky. Losing a certain amount of sensation in my nipples helped me to put my mad rush for genital surgery on hold. I'd had my doubts anyway. I'd seen friends rush off to surgery in states of high anxiety and return much crazier than when they'd left. They seemed to go through the same stages that people go through when they are mourning a death: denial, bargaining, rage, and (sometimes) a strange type of acceptance.

Most of the women I know who went and got their cocks cut off, or cored, or sliced and diced, or inverted, whatever, live in a constant state of denial. Transsexuals who change their genitals believe they will be accepted as women postsurgically. In fact, no one accepts transsexuals as female, pre- or postsurgically. If a transsexual is willing to be castrated, some people may be willing to refer to her as female in her presence. Virtually all my friends were sexual prior to surgery. When they came back from the surgeon and his knives, they stopped having sex. Most of them publicly proclaim their new-found ability to achieve orgasm at the drop of a hat. (Since most don't own hats, they rarely experience orgasm.) I decided to find a way to live with my genitals and keep my orgasmic capacity. Being sexual is necessary to function in the world as an adult.

Some transsexual women have privately confessed to me, "If there is a way for you to not have genital surgery, don't!" or "I had to go and get my cock cut off to find out I didn't have to get my cock cut off. I'm still the same woman I was before, only now, I can't come," or "I didn't take time to explore options, because I was so anxious and so worried that I wouldn't be allowed to have the surgery or I might not have the money later. If I had known there were lots of people, including lesbians, who were willing to love me, fuck me, accept me as a woman with a cock, I would have waited and maybe not have had the surgery." Clits and penises, inner lips and testicle sacs, ovaries and testicles are made out of homologous tissue. We all start out female. Men are the modified ones, and it takes a ton of testosterone. We are all born with Wolffian and Müllerian ducts. All adult males have undeveloped uteruses and vaginas, albeit microscopic.

I can never ever know what it's like to have grown up in any culture as a girl and to have become a woman from that perspective. Being able to expe-

rience the rewards as well as the threats and abuse of that particular consciousness is a gulf I will never cross. That makes me different from my peers, other dykes. I feel cheated as a woman, having been robbed of a huge portion of female experience. What's missing is an ability to relate to my sisters from a position of congruent experience. Given the oppression of women, many may question my need to be one. Many of my dyke, bisexual, or straight women friends would rather have had male training. I understand some of the benefits of that training while declining to honor it.

If we could have an ideal society, I'd rather have women treated at least as men's equals, even though I believe women to be far superior on the whole. I know with an exhausting certainty that women have significantly less political and economic power than men do at this time. I am bloody fucking well prejudiced against men, and I have adequate and necessary reason. Men are the ones who used to hunt me on my way home from school in order to grind me into the ground. Men are the ones who put their dicks in my hands and laughed. Men are the ones who wanted to fuck me and wanted me to suck their dicks. Men are the ones who laughed when I mentioned being different. Men are the ones who make derogatory comments about women, queers, and sissies. I was a feminist prior to my decision to come out female. I developed a feminist consciousness as a result of struggles alongside other women. Living female has given me the gestalt of feminism. Women don't have enough power in this world yet. Women need all the power we can get and exercise ethically.

Why not stay in the male gender role? Why not make the best of the situation? If you consider my constant desire for suicide, the male gender role failed me miserably. I need to communicate with other people as the female gender-identified being I am, including as a female sexual being. My identification as female with other dykes is in the interface, the interaction with them, and it's almost impossible in this culture to communicate as woman without a female form. Communication is not always easy for this woman with a penis. Not many dykes are willing to shed their feelings about men and view me as female—nor should they necessarily. I am sure some, or perhaps many, write me off as a man in drag or a man with better drag. Happily for me, not all dykes so narrowly restrict their perceptions. Without cunt, vagina, clit I have a differently, deviantly cultured range of sexual partners.

A transsexual lesbian acquaintance told me she once failed to come out to a lesbian prior to having sex with her. Upon hearing of my friend's former status as male, her partner was devastated, believing she had slept with a man, believing she had been cheated, lied to, abused. This demonstrates a need for metamorph dykes to come out to possible paramours before fucking and to give potential lovers the informed choice about whether they want to have sex with a particular type of woman. Most of the women I've told about my

penis could have cared less (about the penis, that is). Some dykes are intrigued. They may be disappointed at not being able to go down on me or fist me, but we usually find other things to do (including possibly going down on me or fisting me) that amuse us. Lovers are unable to penetrate my vagina. (It's near microscopic, never developed. Testosterone prevented that.)

I enjoy anal penetration, as do most of my lovers. I love vaginal fisting. My cock/clit nudges into our sex life if and when my lover and I want that discrete form of genital response. Orgasm may take me anywhere from fifteen minutes to several days to achieve. I have erections (as do most dykes I know—clits do engorge with blood). I'm rather addicted to a vibrator. It's been my favorite way to get off for more than ten years now. Several lovers have asked for penetration using my...clit? Well, we can and, on occasion, do. This organ now requires substantial stimulation in order to achieve orgasmic response. It will engorge easily if lovers play with my nipples, tie me up, beat me, pierce me, and fuck me.

I'm an intense sadist, and at times I really like being hurt. I like turning to a top just when she's feeling the work of caning my ass and calling her a bitch. It gets me what I want in a hurry—intense strokes with the cane and more of them; delightful, intense, singular pain. I adore the look of pure hatred on a bottom's face when I hit her again, right on top of the last four, five, six strokes.

I like dykes with male gender identities with strap-on dicks fucking me hard and long. I love a dyke with femme female gender identity with a strap-on dick fucking me harder and longer. I love sucking their dicks. I like being a sexual woman.

I know several people with female bodies, raised female, who have acknowledged their male gender identity while at the same time stating the desire to stay as far away from reassignment surgery as possible. Many express having more options, a greater range of behavior, as women and dykes in this culture than they would have as full-time men. Then there are those who want, need, and do move on to the physical and social change into men gladly, eagerly.

In 1988, one of my former lovers, a dyke, came out as male and has been injecting testosterone ever since. He hasn't had surgery yet, but he can build muscle almost by sitting at home as a couch potato. For some time after he came out, I wondered whether we had been heterosexual, since he was really male. Strange, the twists in identity one gets into when one steps out on the cutting edge of gender. Some, of course, may believe we were a heterosexual couple prior to his coming out because of my having what could be referred to as a penis. So, those of you who hold to this belief, how come he's attracted only to women, principally dykes?

There was a time when I railed against testosterone, believed it was the

delinquent and causal factor of patriarchy. It may still be, and I may never be sure of those causal factors. However, some friends and at least one former lover who went from female to male invariably have settled down and become real people, not nearly as violent and angry. Actually calmer. Go figure. In their cases, testosterone was clearly indicated. They do act like boys, and at times that can be very annoying. Most of them take on some of the worst characteristics of het men—for example, talking about the visual sexual components of their interaction with women like this: “Did you see her tits?” “Yeah, just the right size, and she really looked cute in that short skirt.”

If a vagina or a clitoris makes one a woman, what do we make of female-to-male transsexuals? Are they women? Do they consider themselves women or men? Is self-determination important? If gender has a location, it is situated somewhere other than in the genitalia. Where, I don’t know. It’ll probably be some time before I can have a conversation with a clitoris or a vagina independent of the woman, or man, it is a part of.

Transsexuals need education in human sexuality, something most transsexuals refuse to research. Transsexuals need insight into social interactions between women, into women’s history (er, women’s herstory), women’s patterns of thinking and feeling, women’s/dyke psychology, women’s/dyke concerns and visions. Where are they going to get it? From the mainstream media? I hope not—at least not until it’s been changed to reflect women’s reality.

A friend of mine, postsurgically strolling serenely at the West Coast Women’s Music Festival, nude, was feeling loved, accepted, belonging, blissfully unaware of snide remarks being circulated behind her back. “Did you see the man here who had his cock cut off?” Loving, accepting lesbian community. Sure... We’re apparently not much better than mainstream hets when it comes to sexual/gender anomalies such as transsexuals.

My lover at the time, a separatist butch dyke who would eventually come out as male, overheard several of these interesting tidbits of deprecating conversation. After some discussion, we decided to pass this decidedly uncomfortable information on to Veronica. Devastated, wounded, her naive beliefs—including her view and understanding of the accepting lesbian community—transformed rapidly and dramatically. Sobered, she still identified as lesbian, but her trust in women had been arrested. Not altogether a bad thing. Pollyanna attitudes about any class of people, including lesbians, are a sure-fire path to abuse.

Women-only space is important and necessary for women. Women need to have places free from men. In the early ’80s, I frequented the women’s drop-in rap groups at San Francisco’s now-defunct Bisexual Center. One lesbian made her desire for women-only space within the rap group abundantly clear. Even though I was hurt, I left. I believe it is of paramount importance for women to feel safe. At that time, if another woman was uncomfortable with

me in a women's support group because she identified me as male, I left. The woman who ousted me at least got to have some control over her own life by defining whom she was comfortable with and what she needed to feel safe. For some woman, the group I leave may be her sole support system. She may need the group much more than I do. I'm extremely lucky: I have a strong support system, including a largely S/M dyke tribal family and many S/M dyke friends.

Not all transsexual women have strong support systems, especially women-only support systems. There are many lesbian transsexuals for whom there are no support systems. As transsexual lesbians, they may have found the only group in hundreds of miles in which they feel a possibility of belonging. Each lesbian transsexual (or group of transsexuals) and each women's group will have to sort out how they want, and whether they want, to interact with one another. There are women-only organizations such as the Outcasts in San Francisco whose charters specifically include transsexual women, which have had the support (including volunteer time) of transsexual women since they were founded.

I welcome any chance for dialogue with women on issues of gender. Just bringing up the subject of transsexual dykes creates controversy, communication, reflection. I prefer polarization to indifference. Any group having to deal with a transsexual woman or the idea of a transsexual woman in its midst will have to struggle with issues, beliefs, and ideas of gender. It can't not happen. There will be women who want to include and women who desire to exclude transsexuals from women-only events. Any discussion of this issue must lead to raising consciousness about gender—what it is, how to define it. Personally, I believe it juices down to taste, smell, texture, social skills, intelligence, and behavior as a woman. But I'm biased.

This is not to say that all transsexual women should be accepted uncritically as peers by dykes who were born with female morphology. I have difficulty with many lesbian transsexuals. Some seem to have retained or extended male attitudes and behavior. (So do some dykes, but I like some male attitudes in women. Is it the estrogen that modifies the attitudes enough to make them sexy rather than oppressive?) Many transsexual lesbians speak only in regard to transsexual problems and patently ignore women's issues. This is politically naive if not foolish. A few individuals and groups of transsexuals are now identifying as something other than women or as a third sex. I believe this stems from their failure to be accepted as women. It is also a victory for the culture that socialized them as men and requires them to maintain a certain arrested development in the exercise of their privileges as men.

Male gender role is a privileged role, a franchised lie, a chartered life. The expectations and rewards of that role are awesome and devastating. The power is intense, pervasive. The physical body is scary—so much physical

strength. Far too many of the transsexuals I know refuse to consider what a head start they had as men. They are too busy trying to convince the rest of the world what special women they are. I'd like to limit access to women-only space by those who still have testosterone-ravaged male bodies. A male-bodied, female gender-identified individual needs to have been on hormones and lived, behaved, and been accepted by her peers as a woman for some time before she has enough changes in behavior and attitude to have a marginal understanding of female ethos. Transsexual women raised as male in Western society have an infinite amount to learn about female behavior, female consciousness.

All too many transsexual women of my acquaintance bring a peculiarly male attribute into their lives as women, the know-it-all attitude. Now, by no means is this exclusively male behavior. However, most men seem to have been programmed to model the world in this depressing fashion, never questioning their beliefs about the nature of women and men, acting as if and probably believing they already know what men and women are really like.

If a transsexual is to be accepted by her social peers as female, she must learn how to interact, how to communicate with the world as a functioning member of the class of women. The phallacious assumption that one can emerge from a lifetime of living in the male gender role, however short or long it may have been, and immediately be a woman is ludicrous at best and fraught with false and arrogant presuppositions. The concept that one may have been assigned the male gender role and been little affected by that assignment is preposterous. Being a woman is more than an announcement to the world concurrent with a bit of cosmetic surgery and a few hormones.

When a transsexual is accepted within her culture and recognized as a woman, then she has a different status from someone who never eats or injects hormones or has cosmetic surgery. At that point her class has changed. This is a profound difference. I am sad to say it's a difference that escapes the sometimes limited feminist consciousness of some (if not most) of the male-to-female transsexuals I know well enough to form a judgment of their politics.

No matter what our gender identity, our physical characteristics, we live in cultures. Our cultures give us accepted ways of behaving as women. Choose the culture or subculture you want to live in as female. To be accepted in that culture, you must conform to it in some degree. We all have the option of working to change our respective cultures. That seems to be what my life is about: working to generate change and create new and empowering beliefs and models. Specifically, I want to challenge the lie that anatomy is destiny. Our culture lies to us. Every deviant who has been denied privilege knows this with a certainty. We've been programmed to view different, deviant, as sick, weird, or perverted. We've been taught to view the "sickness" of difference as needing intervention by mental-health, medical, and law-enforcement

professionals. This seems insane to me. Without perverts, there is no creativity, no difference, no ability to see, feel, or hear anything new. Anyone different is by necessity perverted and deviant. Therefore, any thinking people must be deviants, perverts.

If we as deviants have been taught to hate ourselves, to hide our differences, how can we know ourselves, be different, and still be comfortable? Our culture has not allowed us to talk about those things the culture fears most, the potential for radical social change and even revolution that springs from our deviance.

I want a people-oriented, cooperative model of sexual community, a change from the pejorative medical model that talks about us only in terms of dysfunction, deviance, abnormality, or perversion. Those of us they've labeled as crazy have more information, different abilities for looking at and understanding the world and universe. Our respective macrocultures need our knowledge, our "other" sensitivities. Our macrocultures currently colonize our minority communities and steal our creativity and our work without compensation or recognition of our gifts and accomplishments.

I want conscious comprehension of the unconscious ways we are molded by our culture, for it is a necessary prerequisite to understanding and developing new, sentient methods of transformation for ourselves and others. I want to validate our differences and provide deviants as a people with choices, manifold ways of relating, interacting. I want a change from the model of psychic diseases to models of variance—whole, alive, strong, competent, and contributing to cultural growth. Then we can more easily move toward healthy, generative change.

The last strap slips from the buckle. Our eyes lock, tracking in unison. Lifting her leg, I pull the condom-encased cock and black leather harness up from her warm, wet cunt. Unclamping my jaws from the base of her cock, I let her dick slide slowly out of my throat, my mouth, and fall jingling to the bed. Removing the eight rings from my right hand, the watch from my right wrist, I find the latex glove. Snapping the cool latex on my wrist, I wiggle five fingers down into her opening. Her eyes are sharp bright light reflected on naked steel pools. Wide open. Her legs invite me. Her scent on my tongue, my lips, the glove as my third finger slips in up to the webbing of my hand. Compressing springy coils with my cheek, wiry hair in my teeth, my tongue pushes against her rising sex, teasing under her hood. There is cold, wet lube and the faint smell of cherry pooling in the palm of my hand. Slipping down into her imploring cunt, I hesitate a moment to contemplate the full, deep plunge of my fist.

BOUNDARIES: GENDER AND TRANSGENDERISM

MICHAEL M. HERNANDEZ

Gender play has become the rage of the '90s. Instead of dying out like the typical fads that breeze through our community, only to be replaced by the next passing fad, it shows no signs of becoming passé. At least not yet.

Even before gender play became fashionable, many dykes had fantasies of having facial hair. Not all of them were butch. Most certainly, not all of them wished to change their gender. Then one day, wearing fake facial hair to play parties became the rave.

The prevalence of these occurrences led to greater acceptance for diverse gender expression, and we were off and running. The women's S/M community became a safe space for us to explore our fantasies and perceptions of masculinity and male personas. Now butch and femme alike could act out their fantasies of being gay men, cruising each other, and having hot, sleazy sex in some back room with a stranger.

In a sense, gender play and other forms of expression allow us to break away from certain expectations, just as lesbianism allows us to break away from societal expectations of how women should behave. Now, almost everyone is engaged in daddy-boy, daddy-girl "relationships" or other gender-specific play.

For some it is just that, play: a fun and sometimes erotic exploration of power exchange. For others, explorations of our deep-seated and previously repressed emotions about gender identity and expression have led us to the discovery that gender is more than just a hot sexual fantasy. It is the core of our lives and of our beings. Some of us have cut through our own veil of denial and started taking male hormones. We run the gamut of human existence, coming from all walks of life, races, sexual orientations, and spiritualities. Some prefer to be called FTM, while others prefer the term *transgendered*. We call ourselves queer, lesbian, gay, pansexual, bisexual, heterosexual, or any other phrase that more adequately describes us. In some cases we are asexual by force or choice. Some require strict adherence to the "proper" gender pronouns. Others could care less. Some believe that they are strictly male

and there is no room for anything else within them. Others believe that they are all of both or neither of either—a third gender, so to speak, pioneers in their own fashion who must navigate the waters of a turbulent bipolar society in which one is forced to choose the gender box one will reside in. Some FTMs have left our community and not looked back. Others staunchly believe that this community is our home and that despite a change in the welcome wagon, this is where we belong.

Long ago there were dykes who, after discovering that they were transgendered and undergoing transition, were ousted by both the women's and the leatherwomen's communities. Not more than four years ago, gender play was frowned upon. It was unheard-of, considered stereotypical male behavior, for a dyke to emulate a straight or gay male in public. But the allure was like that of any other taboo, and we could not help but practice it in private, out of the way of prying eyes and ears. There was a time when we were shunned for engaging in daddy-boy and daddy-girl play or for butch-but and femme-femme relationships. These types of expression have now become socially acceptable within the S/M community.

With more and more dykes taking male hormones, the issues of inclusion and exclusion have once again reached the forefront. It's all about boundaries. Where should the line be drawn, and who gets to draw it? Questions such as Who gets to come to the party? and Why? are loaded issues. Various camps exist, both pro and con. The "get out and stay out" policy has been replaced by women willing to tackle, discuss, and address the emotional issue of who belongs in our community. Yet there appears to be no viable solution that is acceptable to all. No matter what choice is made, someone always cries foul and the event is boycotted by some faction of the community.

Fortunately, the thoughts, opinions, and beliefs of individuals change with time and experience. In turn these changes result in shifts of acceptance within our community. I believe that this is due in part to a change in the way we perceive gender play and in part to a desire not to lose members of our community just because their gender expression is becoming more noticeable. We have come a long way baby, but we have a hell of a long way to go.

We live in a bipolar society in which people are identified as either male or female. No other options remain open at the present time. I do not want to perpetuate the bipolarity of this society by the use of certain language, but the topic of gender is confusing enough without trying to maintain a voice of neutrality. Because of the nature of our language and the bipolarization of our society, a truly gender-neutral discussion cannot be had.

This bipolarity seeps into the discussion of who gets to come.

The identification of gender becomes remarkably difficult in the context of women-only space. There is no consensus about who is considered male

and who is considered female. Biology may no longer be an accurate indicator. To make matters worse, our language is not adept at dealing with the vast differences in expression. For example, the term *FTM* is sometimes used to define total transition from female to male and at other times to define gender-fluid individuals.

We have been taught to believe that gender and sex are one and the same. That is just not the case. Sex refers to physiological genitalia (male or female), while gender is an expression and perception. Gender identity is how we perceive ourselves, irrespective of what the biological gender is. For instance, Suzie, a physiological female, may be large-breasted, yet her gender identity may be male. For those of you who scoff at this statement, some of the biggest, baddest butches I have ever met are large-breasted. If breast size does not preclude a butch identity, why would it preclude a male gender identity?

Gender expression is how we express or portray ourselves to others and the world at large. Gender identity and gender expression are different from sexual preference. Sexual preference is whom we prefer to have sexual relations with (male, female, etc.). Sexual orientation is how we identify as sexual beings based on our preferences (lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc.). Sexual orientation does not indicate gender identity. One can be a lesbian and femme (thank the Goddess).

The confusion in identifying gender stems from what others perceive us to be. The perception of others regarding our biological gender, sexual identification, sexual preference, gender identity, or gender expression is called labeling. Confused yet?

Let's explore further the example of Suzie, the biological female. She is a butch who is clear that she is a woman. Her sexual preference is women. When having sex with femmes, she identifies as a lesbian, but when having sex with other butches, she identifies as a faggot. Irrespective of whether she sleeps with butches or femmes, her friends perceive her as a lesbian. In this hypothetical situation, Suzie's gender expression is masculine. Her sexual preference is women. Suzie's gender identity changes from lesbian to gay depending on whether her partner is butch or femme. Despite how she feels or perceives herself, her friends perceive her as a dyke and thus use the label *lesbian* to set the boundaries for their interactions with Suzie.

Labeling has been a way for us to find a common thread with which to bring us together. At the same time it has created expectations of what constitutes appropriate behavior. We have, in a sense, created our own boxes and our own limitations.

If these various concepts and terms do not complicate and confuse matters enough, we have the people who are gender-fluid. Gender-fluid means that their gender identity and/or expression encompass both masculine and fem-

inine. Gender fluidity is becoming commonly known as transgenderism: the ability to transcend gender, whether biological, emotional, political, or otherwise; truly mixing male and female.

The term *transition* also varies from person to person. Some people use the term to delineate their move from one polarity to the opposite, such as from female to male. Others are in a constant state of flux, shape-shifting along the gender continuum, so to speak. There is a whole gamut of other identities that are political and social in nature, but they are too numerous to discuss and too confusing for this short trek into the gender jungle. Enough with the semantics.

I believe that we learn from our interactions with other people. In that regard, people who have diverse opinions, expressions, and experiences potentially provide us with the greatest opportunity for growth. By the same token, I also acknowledge and believe that we all need to spend time and energy with like-minded people. In this sense, I have come to accept the fact that there is a need for S/M women-only space. My reluctance to reach this conclusion stems from the fact that labeling (i.e., someone else getting to identify what I am) is often the criterion for inclusion in this space.

Labeling tends to result in transgendered and transsexual individuals being excluded from both women-only and men-only space and ending up with no space at all. Some people say, Let transgendered people make their own space. This, however, is not a viable alternative for several reasons. A majority of transsexuals are heterosexually inclined. They remain a part of the transsexual community until they deem their transition to be complete and go on to live "normal" lives. Few transsexuals identify as homosexual, and fewer are involved in S/M, and even fewer wish to remain part of the women's community. Look around the next time you are in a play party and count the number of ex-lovers in the room and realize how small the community really is. The transgendered community runs in even smaller circles. So basically, on the West Coast, we are talking about approximately half a dozen people. Sort of wreaks havoc with the dating pool.

If physiology is the criterion, then I meet the criterion for women-only space and would be allowed to attend, but an MTF who has done everything except the last surgery to remove her penis would not. If outward appearance or hormone levels are the criteria, then I would not be allowed to attend but many MTFs would. Handling matters on a case-by-case basis, depending on who desires to attend, gives the appearance of favoritism. Complicating these discussions further is the intense emotional response that the issue of exclusion raises.

Without a doubt there are differences in the way that our society treats men and women. There remain disadvantages for women such as lower wages, discrimination, and the higher cost and lesser durability of clothing

and accessories. Women also fear for our personal safety. While the struggle for equal rights is being fought slowly and painstakingly, there is no forward motion to terminate the wage disparity that exists between the sexes. It's no wonder that some women get pissed off at the inclusion of FTMs at women-only events. We who wish to remain become convenient targets for the crimes of the patriarchy. Cries of "traitor" and "male privilege" ring throughout the coliseum, and the battle begins.

Some women use the terms *testosterone poisoned* and *traitors to the matriarchy* to refer to FTMs. While some of us are testosterone poisoned, I am tired of taking the rap for the number of bridges burned by someone else who happens to be on male hormones and wants nothing to do with the women's community. Or for the vendetta by a disenfranchised femme who has lost her true love to a transgendered person. And since when have all biological females been automatically included in the matriarchy? In my experience, the women who complain the loudest about "traitors to the community" do not regard heterosexual or bisexual females as part of the matriarchy.

So why is the FTM who seeks total and complete transition and leaves the community considered a traitor? The obvious answer is that the woman screaming "traitor" labeled the FTM a lesbian and a female in gender identity. The FTM perceived himself as having a male gender identity and gender expression. He seeks a variety of surgeries to alter the female biology to appear as a male (or as biologically correct a male as surgical techniques will allow). So in this situation, how can this FTM be a traitor, if he never identified as a female in the first instance? And why should FTMs who consider themselves gender-fluid be held to the same standard? Just as there are varying degrees of expression among butches, there are varying degrees of expression and beliefs within the FTM community. The gender-fluid FTM seeks neither total biological transition nor to remain chemically female.

Finances are at the heart of the exclusion melee. In some people's eyes being male automatically means more money. While this may be true in the world at large, it is not true for FTMs. People seem to forget that anyone applying for a job is required to disclose a work history. Transgendered applicants are faced with a dilemma. They either fail to disclose certain work experience (in essence lying), practically assuring that they will not be hired or will be hired, found out, and fired under a convenient pretext, or they truthfully disclose all information and guarantee that someone else will be hired for the job. Imagine if you will the blatant discrimination that lesbians are subjected to within the workplace. Some cities—a minority—are enlightened enough to have protection based on sexual orientation. There is no protection whatsoever afforded to transsexuals, although the city and county of San Francisco in 1994 passed a human-rights ordinance that includes gender identity as a protected class.

How can anyone believe that being transsexual or transgendered is the easy way out? It is not a cop-out by any stretch of the imagination. The peace of mind that you gain from finally being comfortable with yourself is traded for other discomforts, such as exclusion from certain events, loss of a lover, rejection, and the fear of being unable to find another lover.

Another argument raised is that the presence of FTMs either invalidates butch identity or promotes the taking of hormones among the "baby dykes." There have always been varying degrees of butchness within our community. No one manner of expression is better than another. Gender-fluid FTMs just happen to be at one extreme and androgynous butches at the other. Facial hair does not define the butch, and this belief, if it does exist, should not prevail. The presence of the FTM should not be blamed for the personal decisions of women coming to terms with their transsexuality or transgenderism. Just as lesbians do not choose whether they are lesbians, transsexuals and transgendered individuals also have no choice. Just as there is relief, peace, and freedom in coming to terms with one's sexual preference, so is there relief, peace, and freedom in coming to terms with being transgendered. Asking a transgendered person to forgo his or her gender identity or expression is tantamount to asking a butch dyke to wear a skirt and act like a femme. With a few rare exceptions, it can't be done.

If the objection to an FTM's presence is "male energy," then what about all the butches who have a masculine gender expression? Is that not also an exhibition of male energy? I know of no one who has been able to draw a clear line between the behaviors and experiences of butches and those of FTMs (with the obvious exception of the fact that FTMs take hormones).

We have been taught to think in a linear fashion, but life does not necessarily evolve in such a way: all things are in a constant state of change or flux. Therefore, self-identification appears to be the fairest criterion for inclusion, as it allows the individuals and not the organizers to make the decision of whether they will attend.

Self-identification was the criterion used at the first Powersurge conference in September 1992. When I first heard about it, I was worried that I would not be allowed to attend. When I found out that a meeting had been held by the conference organizers and that I was not only welcome but invited to comoderate the gender panel, I felt honored, relieved, and excited. As the date approached, I became more and more worried about the type of reception I would receive. Would it be cool? Would there be overt hostility or animosity? Would I, because of the actions of biological males (whose conduct I do not sanction or have any control over), be automatically treated with contempt?

I was pleasantly surprised when my presence did not result in stoning by

BOUNDARIES: GENDER AND TRANSGENDERISM

an angry mob. I perceived the response to our presence as favorable, though somewhat tentative at first. Some woman must have been visibly disturbed by our presence at the conference, for there was one comment on the rumor-control board. But she did not make her feelings known in person, so I have no clue what her discomfort was about, other than my obvious outward appearance.* It is also possible that she was referring to the MTFs who were present. All of this is speculation on my part, since I do not know who she is, nor did I have the opportunity to meet her.

The gender panel at Powersurge was tactfully held on the Sunday afternoon near the conclusion of the conference. I had been a part of other gender panels that dealt with the how-tos of passing, packing, and gender play. This one was devoted to how people felt, their thoughts and opinions. It had the potential for being explosive, for name-calling and hurt feelings. There was none of that, though it was very emotional and difficult at times.

There was a lot of support from the conference attendees, and a variety of topics were discussed, such as male privilege and the feeling that some biological women were making the choice to go from female to male because it was a fad in San Francisco. We could have spent an entire week talking about these things and still not have had enough time to cover everything. The panel functioned as a springboard for future discussion.

At the second Powersurge, which took place in September 1994, the criteria were slightly different but still involved a level of self-identification. In order to be allowed into the conference, the attendee needed a valid driver's license or identification card stating her gender as female. Because of another panel I was on, I was unable to attend the gender panel. I understand that it included two gender-fluid individuals (this is my perception of them) who started out as butch and femme. The butch transformed into femme and the femme into butch as the discussion took place.

On other side of the boundary discussion is the fact that organizing an event takes more work than people in their right minds can imagine. Since the organizers are doing all of the work, do they not then have the right to decide who may come and who may not? And what about the other women at the conference? If they have certain expectations about what the space will be like and who will be there, what will their level of comfort be in the presence of full beards and hairy chests? As previously stated, no one answer will be acceptable to all.

The most we can do at this stage is talk to one another and discuss how we really feel, as opposed to screaming political dogmas at one another. Only

* The hairy gene runs in my family, so the testosterone has resulted in hirsuteness. I have been able to grow a beard and was sporting a rather bushy one at the conference.

in a context of honesty and openness can we truly come to terms with the changes that our community is undergoing and that our community will continue to undergo despite our reluctance to disturb "tradition."

I have been fortunate enough to be surrounded by a group of women who have been kind, considerate, and thoughtful about my feelings and opinions; who have expected and received the same in return; and who have embraced me with open arms. Others have not been so fortunate.

In deciding emotionally charged policies, we must keep in mind that our way is not always right for someone else and that for every opinion we have, someone else has a contrary one. Instead of getting angry, invalidating the opinions or beliefs of others, and inflaming passions on both sides, we need to take a deep breath and hear each other out.

I did not have the privilege of knowing the late Sashie Hyatt, but I understand from a reliable source that she used to say, "There are many paths leading to the same place. No one path is better than the other. So we should not criticize someone who has taken a path different from our own."

Isn't our time better spent trying to change how society perceives and treats women than in excluding individuals who happen to express themselves differently than society and our community expect women to?

BISEXUAL PERVERTS AMONG THE LEATHER LESBIANS:
SOME THOUGHTS ON BORDER-CROSSING
CAROL QUEEN

It was such a liberating pleasure to cross the line of compulsory heterosexuality and come out as a lesbian that I forgot to stop there. All too soon I was unnerving my girlfriends and shocking the softball dykes with kinky fantasies, and I discovered that what Joanne Loulan would later call the "lesbian missionary position" did not include over-the-knee spanking. In 1980 I dragged my two girlfriends across a picket line of our friends to watch *Story of O*. (Yes, nonmonogamy was another liberatory line I found and crossed, albeit with much drama...*dyke* drama.) And among the naughty fantasies I pursued were ones clad in lipstick and high heels, which were not part of the '70s lesbian dress code. To develop my erotic desires, to emerge as femme and nurture the nascent and culturally unsupported butchness of my lovers, I had to defy both the posthippie heterosupremacist norms of the town I lived in and the androgynous imperative of my dyke community. I had to listen to what made my pussy wet, not what was said in Mary Daly study groups.

Among the heretical discoveries I made during this period, when I was solidly lesbian-identified and politically active in the dyke and gay-rights communities, was that I far preferred gay male to lesbian porn. Pierced Tom of Finland daddies and butt fucking did it for me; *A Woman's Touch* did not (even though that unsung early work of dyke erotica featured the kinkiest story I've ever come across, about a ten-year-old girl and her lover, a chicken). For years I refused to look at a dick on a straight man, but a fag's penis was a different appendage altogether.

I never *could* resist crossing lines. Once you've done it a few times, I guess, you get a taste for it. A couple of not-so-straight men later, I was a bad little dyke indeed—in fact, I had to admit to myself that I was acting, even feeling, downright bisexual.

I could hear the whispers starting. It was time to leave town.

Is the real heresy what we do, what we desire, or whether we talk about it? In my small lesbian community I had found partners who would spank and

blindfold me, lovers who, however reluctantly, let me rub my wet pussy up against their butchness, even women who fucked the occasional man. None of these women, though, identified themselves according to any of this. At that place and time, I felt like the only one whose journeys away from monogamous vanilla girlsex threatened a kind of ostracism with which the others weren't flirting. This happened partly because I couldn't keep my mouth shut about all those ostracizable behaviors I practiced—or wanted to practice. At bottom, what made me a heretic is what I *admitted* to doing, or desiring.

Trying to reconstitute my identity as a bisexual lesbian in that small community was difficult and painful. So I chose to do it elsewhere—in San Francisco (where else?), where so many queers have gone to leave small-town opprobrium behind.

It's interesting that I could keep my S/M sex quieter than I kept my bisexuality. It had to do, I think, with my lovers' real fears of being S/M identified along with me; I was hesitant, and afraid, to breach that silence. In coming out as bisexual I had only to acknowledge my partners' genders, not the specific types of sex in which we engaged.

Also, I still had very little access to S/M-supportive material. The women's bookstore carried *Against Sadoomasochism*, of course, but I didn't want to read it. There was as yet no outpouring of bi-supportive material, either, but I had come out a decade earlier and still remembered the first flush of polymorphous-perverse pride in the years after Stonewall, years when even radical fags and dykes said that in a perfect world everyone would be bisexual. I would just have to construct my new world in San Francisco to be as perfect as I could get it and hope for the best.

That wasn't easy. I still didn't think much of straight men; I was afraid of men and resented them. What woman who'd grown up in dyke feminism didn't? By now I'd had enough adventures with women, though, that I sort of feared and resented them too. (To put it another way, I no longer had a starry-eyed baby dyke's assurance that with women, everything would be wonderful.) This seemed an equitable enough place to start, and a year or so of celibacy gave me time to internalize the changes.

I came out the other side a "lesbian-identified bisexual," and I stayed that way until my growing connections with the bisexual community gave me enough support to say "bisexual" without any modifiers. I had, after all, spent the past ten years looking askance at people whose sexual behavior didn't match their professed orientations; I'd had a couple of girlfriends who insisted they were heterosexual even as they stuck their fingers in my cunt, and I was very familiar with the family-man status of lots of the men my gay buddies sucked off in the rest room at the municipal park. I finally got it that my refusal to simply own the label *bisexual* had more to do with my fear of ostracism and biphobia than it did with honoring lesbianism. I figured that

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lesbianism really didn't need that kind of support—after all, it was already reeling from the onslaught of those “political lesbians” who really didn't want to stick their fingers *anywhere*. Besides, hardly any of my lesbian friends seemed much reassured that I still identified with them as I set out to explore the mysterious penis and, occasionally, the male to whom it was attached. Clearly the words *lesbian-identified* would not, as far as they were concerned, protect me from cooties.

Reconciling bisexuality with S/M proved harder, at least at first. I played, and identified, as a bottom. My desires to be taken, to be owned, to serve and worship were bad enough in the lesbian world, where about the only pro-S/M sentiment I ever heard was reserved for swashbuckling tops who dazzled everyone with their disdainful flouting of the female role. Their boots and their Harleys were met with approval even if their nasty ways in bed were not. But in the waning years of the '70s I never heard a kind word uttered about women who wanted to put on high heels and grovel.

Sure, ten years later, in the brave new world of San Francisco S/M, I noticed that some very dykey dykes occasionally played with men. This was somewhat reassuring. But it still seemed a very wide chasm from those tough women with burly flogging arms to me and my desires. As far as I could tell, it did not cross their minds to call themselves bisexual. As far as I could tell, their scenes with boys did not end up the way I wanted mine to: in deep, hard-fucking ruts (in other words, the same way I liked my scenes with girls). No, these seemed to be women who knew when to keep their pants on.

So I declared that, while I was open to sex and connection with men, S/M sex represented a level of intimacy and vulnerability I reserved for women. With the politics that until then had organized my beliefs about sex and gender, I couldn't reconcile the idea of bottoming to a man. But bottoming was all I really wanted to do.

The Tom of Finland daddies still swam before my eyes when I masturbated, but now they were doing wonderful, terrible things to me. I would pretend I was a fag-boy, for how else could I explain these fantasies? Those daddies didn't go for real girls in girlie clothes.

Looking back, I see that this dilemma of identity and desire was worst before I knew there were other women like me, before I met other S/M women who were bisexual. I also suffered because the men I desired weren't likely to want me back: they were fags, and I was a girl. I had yet to meet a hetero- or bisexual leatherman to whom I could relate queerly. (In fact, almost all the heterosexual men I met who were into S/M identified, like me, as bottoms.)

Then I met Cynthia Slater and David Lourea. Cynthia had founded Society of Janus, a mixed-orientation S/M support organization, and David had co-founded the Bisexual Center. They were both proud, out, bisexual leather-

folk. Cynthia made a profound impression on me, but nothing about her affected me more strongly than seeing a picture of her in a collar and long, femme dress. I learned more about my own potential dignity and sources of pleasure from that image than I can say. More than anything, I think, I learned that what I wanted was possible.

David taught me, among very many other important things, that there would be some queer men I wanted who would want me back.

Cynthia and David are both dead now, of AIDS, as are many of the gay men with whom I practiced the frightening openheartedness that, as it unfolded into desire, let me see that I was lying to myself when I claimed to love only women. The ways that AIDS played into the evolution of my sexual orientation are too complex to develop in this essay—though I know plenty of other dykes who didn't begin to take men seriously until the Plague, and I suspect even this highly personal part of my story would resonate with some women who read this.

For, of course, in the years since I came out as bisexual, I have met lots of other women who couldn't quite stay put within lesbianism. Some are bisexually identified now, some call themselves bi-dykes, some "lesbians who sleep with men," and some are careful not to call themselves anything, to not even talk about it except sometimes in whispers. To one degree or another we all share fear of rejection by the lesbian community we claimed as our home; many of us also share *actual* rejection, hurtful experiences of name-calling and shunning.

The community of leatherwomen has been a haven for those of us who can find and fit within it; leatherdykes, too, know how rejection from the lesbian community feels. After the Birkenstock years, I reveled in the diversity I saw in the women's leather world: women of all perversions, femmes and butches, sex workers, transgendered women of various stripes, fag-identified women, and, yes, bisexual and even the occasional heterosexual woman.

This openness relative to the dyke world I knew—where "women's" was almost always a code word for "lesbian"—comes not only from the more inclusive politics of the leather community but also, I think, from our more inclusive understanding of what it can mean to be sexual. In the realm of S/M and fetish, genital sex is just one flavor of eroticism. We know we can unleash the energy of orgasm in a hundred ways, that our bodies' response does not depend solely on our engorgeable bits of flesh—and the response of our minds and spirits have fewer limits, even, than that.

In such a world, though, how are we to define *bisexual*?

No wonder so many of us just say "queer."

Still I have the nagging suspicion that some of us say "queer" precisely to avoid a slippery grapple with the question of bisexuality. Calling ourselves

leatherwomen or leatherdykes skirts that question altogether. Even when our behavior meets the criterion for bisexual—when we engage in erotic behavior with both women and men—we often continue to avoid that label, which after all has suffered such bad press in the vanilla gay and lesbian communities. (Of course, many of us engage erotically with people who are not exactly women *or* men; many of us fit that description ourselves; and here the available language threatens to fail us altogether.)

I support our right to name ourselves; I honor that, for many pansexual people, “bisexual” does not cast a wide *enough* net of erotic possibility. For others, the term only acknowledges that gender is an oppressive binary construct that needs to be better destroyed before we can all come to our potential. I agree with both of these criticisms; but in the short run, I think, we must recognize that plenty of us are still simply *afraid* to embrace a bisexual identity because we think our sexual orientation-based communities, our families of choice, will reject us.

By now I’ve come to figure that when many people hesitate, out of fear, to embrace an identity, it becomes extra important for me to do so; a few outspoken variants can carve out a space for many more. And I believe leatherwomen (and all leatherfolk) must grapple with our community’s leftover opprobrium about bisexuals not just because it’s the right thing to do but because the leather community’s role in our queer sexual culture has been to explore forbidden forms of eroticism. It sends the wrong message to every one of us—*whatever* we desire—when the leatherwomen’s community does not quite welcome bisexual women.

This absolutely still happens. One of my friends met a woman at a women’s play party with whom she really—ahem—hit it off. They exchanged phone numbers after they played, and parted at the end of the evening sure they would get together again. But when my friend called her new play partner the next week, she got some bad news: “I heard you’re bi, and I don’t play with bisexual women.” “But you played with me already!” my friend protested. “I know, but I wouldn’t have played with you if you’d told me ahead of time.”

This sounds to me an awful lot like the “I don’t play with HIV-positive people” rule that passes for a safe-sex strategy among some people. In fact, many bisexual women have heard from lesbians that they’re play partners *non grata* because they might pass AIDS into the lesbian community. Before HIV, it was herpes or gonorrhea. Whatever the cootie, the bisexual woman has ’em by definition, while nobody even bothers to ask about things we have no phobias about—like blood transfusions.

What’s a girl to do? Self-disclose she’s bisexual first and let her dyke-identified potential partner accept or reject her on that basis? Go on every date armed with plastic wrap and gloves and steer the discussion toward safer-sex strategies, not her sexual orientation? In the wild and wacky world

of lesbian dating, today a gal who “doesn’t play with bisexual women” might reject me or one of my friends who have nothing but safe sex with men—even one of my bi friends who hasn’t had sex with a man in ten or fifteen years—and then tomorrow have unprotected sex with a woman who came out two months ago but who *is* lesbian-identified. It’s a common scenario in the vanilla women’s community—and it still happens among leatherdykes.

No wonder so many women equip themselves with a bag of clothespins, some well-fitting latex gloves, and the label *queer*.

I’m not sure whether this is true of men, or of other women, but it has been true for me: the courage to accept and identify myself according to the mandates of my cunt and my clit has been slow-growing and hard-won. A wet cunt, though, is much less slippery than politics; it is what it is. A wet cunt is pretty easy to interpret. Once I began to believe in my desires, no matter how little role-modeling and acceptance I saw for them, I no longer had to wonder where I should put my allegiance: the wet cunt, the urge to transgress and discover, has my vote.

Sexual identity politics have developed for many reasons, some of which have my allegiance too: support, connection, access to partners, strength as we struggle against oppression. But I believe many of us embrace identity politics as a fence against sexual chaos. Ironically, from that polymorphous soup of desire comes each of our erotic identities, from pure vanilla to so-kinky-it’s-byzantine. At the instant of orgasm, or on the high, transcendent endorphin roller coaster some of us love just as well, not much separates us.

Not much separates us. And as we explore—and explode—via leathersex the many ways our culture tries to mold and deaden us, we have an opportunity that in other sexual identity-based communities is far more rare. Our drive to play with power and sensation cuts all the way through the Kinsey scale; our sophisticated understanding of fluid gender and erotic roles lets us blur the hard Self-versus-Other boundary that is fundamental to every version of xenophobia. We have more acknowledged erotic diversity in our community than I have seen anywhere: we are a tribe of line-crossers, heretics. Honor this, and we honor each other’s sexual explorations too; we honor *each other*.

MY LIFE AS A DOM
LIZ HIGHLEYMAN,
A.K.A. MISTRESS VERONIKA FROST

Professional dominants occupy a unique position in both the world of S/M and the world of the sex industry. For many people in the S/M community, the image of the professional dominatrix was their first exposure to S/M; for many in the mainstream, it is their only exposure. Thus the professional dominant may be said to have a special responsibility within the S/M community. Within the sex industry, professional dominants tend to receive more respect than other types of sex workers, often along with greater financial stability, a less precarious legal standing, and relatively less societal censure. For these reasons, the professional dominant may also have a special responsibility for solidarity with the sex work community.

The Birth of a Dom

Professional dominants tend to enter the profession by one of two routes, either through an interest and involvement in S/M or via other areas of the sex industry. My path was somewhat mixed. In the latter half of the 1980s I ended a seven-year relationship, came out as bisexual, became active in the anarchist political scene, and began to explore my long-standing but latent interest in S/M. About the same time, I became more aware of the sex industry through my involvement in anticensorship, worker empowerment, and AIDS activism. I attended a workshop on sex work at an anarchist gathering in 1988 that was my first exposure to a group of feminist, queer, politically radical, well-educated sex-working women—an exposure that has shaped my feelings and politics about sex work ever since. Soon thereafter I got involved with a girlfriend who did various types of sex work, and I began to meet pro dominants at S/M social functions. When I attended events dressed in my typical femme fetish attire, I was occasionally asked by submissive men if I was a professional dominant. At some point it occurred to me that I might as well get paid to do something I enjoyed anyway, and I began to sporadically do professional sessions, as

well as working as a phone dominant on the Whip Line.

I may be an anomaly among sex workers (though perhaps not among pro dominants) in that I did not enter the field because I needed money or lacked alternatives. A large part of my motivation was that I thought professional dominance would be a daring, in-your-face, antiestablishment kind of thing to do, and hopefully interesting, educational, lucrative, and fun to boot. I glamorized the image of the dominatrix and admired the professional doms I knew, and I aspired to be one myself. When I moved to the San Francisco Bay area, my hope was to work as an apprentice or assistant to an established dominant; I had a fear of jumping right in and wanted someone to show me the ropes. Events took a different course when I answered an ad in a weekly newspaper from a B&D house seeking women to do professional sessions. I was hired and began working immediately.

The Pros Among Us

The professional dominant occupies a unique position within S/M communities. On the one hand, pro doms are often heavily involved and instrumental in building and sustaining communities, organizations, and institutions, and they have been throughout the history of various S/M communities (lesbian, heterosexual, and pansexual). A woman whose primary profession is dominance may be able to be more out about S/M than someone who fears exposure to a straight boss or friends.¹ Some of the most well-known professional dominants are respected S/M community leaders, educators, and proprietors of community businesses.

On the other hand, within some S/M communities professional dominants suffer a certain stigma. The stigma can vary depending on whether the community is primarily queer, heterosexual, or pansexual;² old leather or new leather; etc. Many organizations, events, and venues do not welcome and even explicitly forbid professionals. Typically such restrictions are intended to prevent monetary transactions on site and the legal difficulties that might ensue, but they often fail to distinguish between professionals who are seeking a place to recruit clients and those who are genuinely involved in the community.

There is a certain strain of contempt toward those who must or who choose to pay for S/M, and by extension toward those who provide that service. There is a sense that "we" (the "real" players) do not want to associate with "them" (the clients and "outsiders" who are implicitly "fake"). Especially within some queer-oriented and new-leather communities, S/M is seen in a spiritual light, and there is an objection to its commodification—S/M is regarded as too sacred to be bought and sold. In actuality, professional dominants are as "real" as it gets, since we live and breathe S/M on a day-to-day basis in a way that few others are able to.

The professional dominant may be frowned upon because she embodies a stereotypical image of S/M, one that many S/M rights activists want to dispel. Popular depictions in pornography and the mainstream media portray the dominatrix as cold, cruel, and definitely not "safe, sane, and consensual." Heterosexual women may feel they cannot compete with the dominatrix's glamour image. Heterosexual men may resent that the laws of supply and demand in the S/M marketplace are not in their favor. Lesbian and gay leatherfolk may resist the popularization of a stereotype that does not reflect their reality (although many pro doms are indeed lesbians or bisexual women). Just as some assimilationist gay men and lesbians wish leatherpeople, drag queens, boy lovers, and the like would stay in the closet and out of the parade so as not to reinforce mainstream stereotypes about homosexuals, some leatherfolk wish professional dominants (and uppity topwomen in general), clients, and edge players would be less visible so as not to reinforce mainstream stereotypes about those who do S/M.

The professional dominant is almost always femme (at least when she's in work drag) and is in a sense the quintessential embodiment of the combination of power and femininity. Powerful women are scorned by mainstream society: where a man is assertive, a woman is aggressive; where a man is an effective leader, a woman is a nag; where a man speaks his mind, a woman is bitchy. Similar negative attitudes also exist in the women's S/M community. Many women expect strong, domineering behavior from butches who have divested themselves of the trappings of femininity (after all, boys will be boys!) but are taken aback when such behavior comes from femmes. There is a tendency among some tops, both heterosexual men and butch dykes, to feel the need to "take down" or "flip" a professional dominant. Perhaps her status is seen as a threat, or she is viewed as a challenge that is impossible to resist. Perhaps they are affronted by the idea that someone who appears stereotypically feminine can be as powerful and dominant as they are (or more so). Gay men are sometimes hostile to femme doms. Many gay leathermen claim that part of the beauty and power of S/M play for them is in its reflection of the beauty and power of masculinity. While butch leatherwomen can be seen as aspiring to take on those admired qualities of masculinity, the femme leatherwoman who dominates men throws this conceptualization into disarray. Perhaps queers are as fearful as the mainstream of power and femininity coexisting within the same body. The dominatrix presents a strong challenge to traditional gender roles, as strong as that presented by the dyke daddy or the boychick.

Whether revered or reviled, the professional dominant is quite visible within S/M communities. The same is not true for the professional submissive, even though many pro doms have done switch or submissive work at some time in their careers. (B&D houses prefer women who are flexible in

their roles, and pro doms often serve in a submissive or “middle” role as part of their training.) One reason for this invisibility is a general contempt for bottoms; anyone can get his or her ass whipped, the thinking goes—it’s not seen as much of a professional skill. Professional submission may bring up strong negative stereotypes about sex work. The idea of a woman allowing herself to be tied up and beaten for money seems to reinforce everything the antiporn, antiprotection feminists have told us. People tend to forget that the professional submissive is a worker doing a job. It is disturbing how many clients think they can get a real “sex slave” for a couple hundred dollars, rather than a professional who has agreed to act out a prenegotiated fantasy for a set period of time in exchange for a specific amount of money.

The fact that an individual or a community has challenged societal prescriptions about sex and sexuality in some areas unfortunately does not prevent them from swallowing these prescriptions hook, line, and sinker in others. It surprises and frustrates me how many perverts oppose sex work on principle. A common slur against professional dominants is, “But that’s almost like prostitution!” My response is, “Yes, and so what?” It is understandable that S/M players, who are socially marginalized and skirting the edges of legal tolerance, have the urge to distance themselves from other people and practices that are also socially stigmatized and legally suspect. However, given that S/M practitioners and sex workers face so many similar challenges, I believe leatherpeople and sex workers would be better off making alliances instead of trying to gain an illusory sense of respectability by distancing themselves from one another.

Pro Doms in the Sex-Work Milieu

Just as parts of the S/M community distance themselves from professional dominants, some pro doms distance themselves from sex workers. Most pro doms do not want to be associated with the stereotype of the desperate, drug-addicted street prostitute. Yet I have no doubt that professional dominance is indeed part of the broader sex industry. While most pro doms do not have what they consider to be sex with their clients, there is no denying that most clients see their professional sessions as an erotic experience. All sex workers, including pro doms, are in some sense in service to the male orgasm. There is little point, and much danger, in maintaining a false wall of separation between professional dominants and other sex workers, given that we are in similarly precarious positions vis-à-vis mainstream society.

Sex work has been a point of contention within feminism from the social purity debates early in the century to the sex wars that erupted in the 1970s. If there has appeared to be a monolithic anti-sex-work line among feminists, it is only because the voices of many women, including sex workers them-

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selves, have been excluded from the discourse. It is not surprising that professional dominance is generally not included in feminist discussion of sex work, since it is difficult to make the case that pro doms are exploited victims with no control over their lives. Dominatrixes have even been regarded by some cultural feminists as "imitation men," since all expressions of power and dominance are branded as inherently "male."

Sex workers symbolize the sexual power of women over men, and professional dominants are perhaps its ultimate expression. Some girls and women learn early in life to use this power for their own gain. Both sex workers and women with straight jobs may envy the dominatrix. Even women who cannot imagine how anyone could work as a prostitute or a stripper sometimes express delight at the idea of making a living tying up and spanking men. Yet professional dominance is not about hating or being cruel to men. Some pro doms clearly do despise their clients, but I suspect they do not last long in the business. Somewhat to my surprise, I have found that I can find some likable or attractive element in almost every client. If I hated the majority of my clients, I would quickly succumb to burnout. My work has shown me how enslaved men can be to their desires, spending large sums of money and facing shame, guilt, and the risk of societal condemnation to satisfy them. It is tragic that our society does not allow people to communicate openly about their sexual desires and negotiate for what they want. Yet I know that it is society's erotophobia that keeps me and other sex workers in business.

There are certainly valid criticisms of the sex industry. Through my work doing AIDS prevention outreach and needle exchange, I have come to know many sex workers (or those engaged in "survival sex") who are badly exploited, hate their work, and have few or no alternatives. I am especially open to critiques of sex work that come from an anti-slave-wages or worker-empowerment standpoint. I would argue, though, that *no one* should be forced to do any type of work he or she detests or finds degrading in order to keep food on the table. It is only antisex puritanism that makes such a strong distinction between sex work and other types of work (especially manual or service labor). Those engaged in the sex-work debate must listen to sex workers and take us seriously when we say that we are competent adults making a rational choice among the available alternatives. The goal of those who are concerned about the lives of sex workers should be to empower these women (and men) and improve the conditions of their work—for example, in the areas of decriminalization and increased safety—and not to eliminate their livelihood.

The Pros and Cons of Being a Pro

For me, the most interesting and valuable aspect of working as a professional dominant is the insight it gives me into human nature, into how people

think and behave and what makes them tick. Professional dominance (and sex work in general) is a sexual anthropologist's dream job. I have the opportunity to observe and participate in a vast array of sexual fantasies and behaviors. I have learned secrets and been entrusted with confidences about men and male sexuality that most women (perhaps especially heterosexual women) never discover. As someone with a fascination with the trappings of sexual fetishism, I enjoy working in an atmosphere in which eroticism is a constant feature, where I can dress and see others dressed in leather, latex, and high heels on a daily basis, and where sex, gender bending, relationships, and sexuality are topics of everyday conversation.

Professional dominance is a portable career that allows one to travel and move around at will (although there are legal restrictions that impede the movement of sex workers as a class). Professional dominance is one of the few areas of the sex industry (and perhaps in any type of work) in which older women may be valued as highly as younger women—or more. Older professional dominants are respected for their experience and are in demand for fantasy roles such as teacher, governess, and mommy, and also as trainers of women entering the profession. A good pro dom can continue her career well into her later years if she develops the skills and specialties to take her beyond the youth-and-beauty market. (Women in their thirties may be at a disadvantage because they can no longer rely on youthful beauty but do not yet have the authority and stature of advanced age and long experience.)

If the life of a professional dominant is so great, then why don't all women who are into S/M (or at least all femme tops and those who can pass) work in the field? Professional dominance is hard work, and it is highly financially lucrative for only a few. While the Bay Area's unique cultural climate—with its out, politically active, largely queer community of sex workers and its large and diverse network of S/M-oriented groups and businesses—makes working here as a pro dom quite appealing, the drawback is that the favorable conditions encourage a glut of professionals. The competition can be fierce and can hinder the development of solidarity and supportive networks. One must always be wary of legal harassment. Even though professional dominance is strictly not illegal under most prostitution laws, these statutes are often vaguely written (for example, there are laws against “lewd and lascivious conduct”) and therefore open to widely varying interpretation. The work is commonly paid under the table, has little real job security, and has no regular benefits such as health care and pensions. Dealing with difficult clients, walkouts, and no-shows can engender feelings of rejection and a lack of confidence about one's appearance and skills, leading to a high rate of burnout. Yet I suspect that for most women the major barrier is the culture's mental block against the exchange of erotic or sexualized activity for money. Sex work is the ultimate “bad

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girl” activity. Even women who do not themselves regard sex work as bad cannot help but be aware of the negative social stigma that surrounds it, and many are unwilling to face the censure and condemnation.

I’d be remiss to discuss professional dominance without discussing money. There is a stereotype that pro doms are wealthy, and in a way, we must uphold that stereotype in order to maintain a dominant image: we can never let on that sometimes we want the session as much as he does! Yet the truth is, a dominant mistress can still be a “wage slave.” Most pro dominants outside the best-paid upper echelons would probably be more selective about clients, hours, and specific activities if finances were not a consideration. At the very least, like most workers, sometimes we’d rather stay home in bed than get dressed up, made up, and psyched up for a session. I advise novices not to rely on professional dominance as their sole source of income until they have established themselves and developed a steady clientele, a process that can take a considerable amount of time in a competitive market. Otherwise, it may be too tempting to do something you really don’t want to do (and will kick yourself for later) because you have bills hanging over your head. While professional dominance can provide an excellent source of supplementary income, business can be extremely variable (seemingly unconnected to any predictable factors such as season, day of the week, weather, or phase of the moon), and the rate of no-show clients can be frustratingly high.

Developing as a Dom

My work spans a range of S/M and fantasy scenarios, from light spanking and bondage to heavy whipping and genital torture to sessions that rely solely on role play. I may be requested to play the role of teacher, slave trainer, pet owner, or captor. Some clients seek intense sensation without much dominant/submissive role play. Personally, I am primarily a sadist—one who enjoys manipulating the body to produce intense sensations—and I’m generally happy to forgo the “yes, Mistress, no, Mistress” interchange in favor of a good, hard flogging. I like to have fun with my clients, and it’s not unusual for my sessions to include laughter and casual banter. Often a client does not eroticize either dominance or pain, but instead seeks to satisfy a specific fetish. Many clients come to worship feet and legs, be they booted, stockinged, or bare. I also see cross-dressers, some who wish to be forcefully feminized and treated as a slut, others who wish to learn the art of applying feminine clothing and makeup, and still others who are desperately seeking to attain the feeling of being a real woman. Many clients have homosexual or bisexual fantasies—considerably more than the ostensible ten percent of the population. It is common for these men to have fantasies about

anal penetration, which bring all the cultural baggage about being used and being treated like a woman that such behavior is associated with. It is also common for clients to have fantasies and fetishes about lesbians and bisexual women; sometimes they want to hear stories about woman-woman interactions, and sometimes they hire more than one woman for a "show." I have mixed feelings about exploiting my bisexuality for money, but I do enjoy doing sessions with other women.

I had expected to encounter clients who were mostly wealthy white businessmen in their forties and fifties and have been surprised at the diversity of nationalities, races, ages, classes, and professions. Some clients lack the social wherewithal to find nonpaid partners, while others are remarkably young, charming, and good-looking. Some clients want to connect with an S/M community and come to a pro dom (often the only S/M-related resource they are able to find) for guidance. Others are married to women who they believe would be shocked and horrified to learn of their interest in S/M, so they do not dare to ask. Being an accomplice in the deception of other women is one of the things I like least about my work, and it's the only thing I feel guilty about. Some clients wrestle with feelings of guilt, self-hatred, and shame about their sexual desires, and professional dominants are often called upon to take on the role of counselor or therapist. Many clients seek specialized skills and experience that girlfriends and casual dates cannot offer, and pro doms sometimes do training sessions for individuals or couples. Clients—who may well be the ultimate "do me" queens—often deem it worth a considerable amount of money to avoid the social protocol and hassles of relationship building and to have their fantasies fulfilled in a straightforward transaction.

Professional dominance is often a balancing act between exercising control over a client and providing a service to him. Certainly, if a client is pleasant, you want him to come back to see you again—and give you more money. Professional dominants develop different styles of managing this balance. Some are relatively accommodating, while others practice denial and train their clients to get their pleasure from pleasing the mistress. In general, if a client makes a respectful request that is within his role and my limits (such as a request to worship my boots), I see no reason to turn him down, although I may make him earn it. Few clients annoy me more than those who express no preferences but become petulant and cranky when their unstated needs are not met.

Working as a professional dominant has provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about the technical and psychological aspects of S/M, lessons that are useful both within and outside of S/M contexts. While I probably will want to work independently or as part of a small partnership in the future, a B&D sessions house is a good atmosphere in which to learn the

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finer points of the profession. In a house, clients often see whoever is available, so it's important for everyone on the staff to be versatile and able to master a variety of roles and styles. I have explored roles and activities that I might not otherwise have explored, either because they did not occur to me or because I did not think I'd find them appealing (for example, the naughty schoolgirl). An established dominant can specialize to a greater extent, and I will probably want to do so some day, but at this time I relish the opportunity to develop new skills and expand my repertoire. I am confident of my mastery of many of the physical skills of professional dominance, but have more to learn about playing different roles, dealing with difficult clients, timing sessions properly, and screening clients on the phone (which many prodoms claim is the worst aspect of the job). I feel safer working in a semipublic space with other people present, and I enjoy interacting with the other women on the staff.

My Life as a Sub

When I started working professionally, I swore I would never do switch or submissive sessions, but after observing the business firsthand I began to relent. Men who seek sessions with submissive women typically request light-to-medium spanking and bondage and are generally respectful, though we do get our share of wackos and unusual requests. Switch sessions are also quite common. For obvious reasons, few women are willing to do heavy professional submissive sessions with strange men. There is a real skill to making a client think he's getting what he wants when he's really not. Some professional women do not do submissive sessions because they do not submit to men or submit only to their private partner(s). Others, especially those who are heavy submissives in "real life," may be afraid they will go into a real state of submission and lose control of the session. In this respect, professional submissive sessions may be easier for dominant women, who may have fewer worries about maintaining boundaries and less ego involvement regarding fears of being seen as a "bad" submissive if they enforce their limits. I maintain a sense of myself as a dominant on the job even when playing a submissive role. Doing professional dominance is generally easier for me because it is in accord with my natural personality; when I do submissive work, I am constantly aware that I am playing a role.

While I don't mind taking some whacks, I find it difficult to maintain a submissive attitude—sometimes I can't resist a laugh or offering a piece of advice or a sarcastic remark. Fortunately for me, some clients find smart-ass submissives appealing. I especially like switch sessions in which the tables are turned on an erstwhile tormentor. There are times (and they become more frequent the longer I am in the business) when I welcome the chance to take

a break from my dominant role and let someone else do the difficult creative work of running a session. It is worth noting that many service industry jobs require more or less continuous servility toward bosses or customers, and a typical waitress or secretary must play a submissive role for an entire full-time workweek to make what a professional submissive can earn in a few hours. It often seems like a reasonable trade to exchange an hour of submissive role-playing and a sore butt for the money to finance a weekend trip or a new pair of boots, but I'm glad I'm in an economic position that lets me take it or leave it and not have to rely on submissive work to pay the rent.

Identity Issues: How Being a Pro Affects How I See Myself

I find that the longer I work in the profession, the more I take on an identity as a professional dominant. While I did office work for many years, I always resisted thinking of myself as a secretary. In contrast, I am proud to call myself a professional dominant, and I see it as a career that has the potential to carry me through life. I am still working out how my identity as a pro dom affects how I interact within various S/M communities. Do I present myself as an interested player, on-line S/M aficionado, and writer and editor for a local S/M community newspaper or as Mistress Veronika, Professional Domatrix? While the latter role can be a lot of fun and reflects a real aspect of myself, it's often too one-dimensional for daily wear.

Working as a professional dominant has affected several areas of my life. Like all sex workers, pro doms may have difficulty separating their professional and personal lives, and their work may negatively impact their romantic and sexual relationships. I feel I appreciate my primary relationship more after so many semianonymous professional encounters. My partner is not jealous of my work but is sensitive about being associated with the social stigma that surrounds it. It is not unusual for a pro dom to face the situation of a favored regular client who comes to see the professional relationship in romantic terms or even falls in love with the dominant; in such cases it may become necessary to terminate the relationship. I do not accept dates with clients, nor do I have houseboys who trade work for attention; I prefer to keep all my interactions with clients on a strictly financial basis.

People often ask whether working as a pro dom has affected my desire to do S/M play in my nonworking hours. In some ways it has. Since my appetite for doing S/M play with men is pretty well sated at work, I have developed a distinct preference for playing with women in my private life. I increasingly relish the erotic charge and intimacy of other types of interactions within an S/M context besides top/bottom, including the dominant/apprentice relationship and cotopping with other dominants. Since my fetish-oriented desires are largely satisfied on the job, I am less inclined to dress up in

leather, corsets, and heels for parties and other nonwork events. Since I have begun to explore my submissive side in a safe professional context, I am more inclined to play as a submissive privately (which I consider more threatening, since it seems to more deeply involve the “real me” if I’m not doing it for money). I go back and forth about whether I identify primarily as a top or as a switch.

I am very careful to maintain sexual boundaries. Sex is something I do with lovers, not with clients (though I am aware that some of the things I consider “not sex” would be considered “sex” by some people). For me, sex and S/M have always been separable. When I started working as a pro dom, I was able to put clients on one side of a preexisting mental barrier. Many clients try to cross the sexual barrier under the guise of body worship, “sensual touching,” “smothering,” or cock-and-ball bondage. Whether I allow certain activities depends largely on whether I perceive the client’s interest to be sexual in nature. Sometimes I do find my professional sessions erotically arousing. The exercise of power, especially in activities such as cock-and-ball torture and dildo penetration, can certainly be a turn-on. Yet for me the arousal more often comes from being paid to dress in fetishwear and act out a dominant or submissive role. Seeing myself this way is a powerful form of autoeroticism in which the client is almost incidental.

Working as a pro dom has had a powerful effect on my gender identity. Throughout much of my life I have felt that I did not have much of an internal gender identity. I know that my body reflects what our culture labels as woman, but I don’t possess the sense that some transsexuals describe of “just knowing” what body one belongs in. I have long thought that if woke up one day in a male body, I would be equally happy and would still be just as much “me.” Since I’ve begun to identify as a professional dominant, I’ve also started to identify more as a woman and more as a femme (no doubt in part because being femme and either a woman or a convincing MTF cross-dresser is an essential component of the dominatrix stereotype). In retrospect, I think I resisted identifying as a woman as long as being a woman was associated in my mind with powerlessness and victimhood. As a pro dom, I can combine femininity and power in a seamless whole.

My self-image has been affected both positively and negatively by my pro dom work. B&D houses tend to serve a youth-and-beauty-oriented clientele, with most women being in their early to mid twenties, thin, and conventionally attractive. On a bad day I feel old, fat, and ugly in comparison. Such feelings can make nonpersonal occurrences (such as no-shows, walkouts, and clients who prefer someone else’s style or specialty) seem like personal rejections. As I approach my mid thirties, I am increasingly interested in moving into a market that places less value on youth, shapeliness, and beauty and more on education, skill, and experience. In other ways, working as a pro

dom has done wonders for my body image. Clients often effusively compliment my appearance and beg to be allowed to worship my body. The form that I see as pudgy and out of shape in everyday clothes becomes voluptuous and pleasing when arrayed in the right fetishwear. I still get a sense of "Wow! Who's she?!" when I catch an unexpected glimpse of myself in the dungeon room mirror.

My work as a professional dominant has affected my perceptions of men and women, though more than anything it has reinforced my belief that it is not very useful to generalize about any group on the basis of identity characteristics. But I do perhaps feel more contempt for men as a group—though I also feel more sympathy, seeing the extremes to which they can be driven by their sexual desires. On the whole, these shifts in attitude have not carried over to the men I have close personal relationships with, whom I tend not to see as examples of the class of "men" (though I don't doubt there is some latent spillover). Although many people wonder how lesbians could possibly stand to interact erotically or sexually with men on a professional basis, I suspect sex work may in some respects be easier for exclusive lesbians, who can look at men as potential clients and not potential lovers and do not have to make the tricky intercategory distinctions required of heterosexual and bisexual women. On the other hand, lesbians may find it more difficult to perceive the attractive or pleasant characteristics of male clients that can make the job more bearable.

Working as a pro dom has also given me a higher regard for women. Like many leatherwomen, I have had unpleasant experiences with antiporn, antisex, antiprostitution feminists that have given rise to some negative attitudes about feminism and even about women in general. I have never quite grasped the sense of victimization and powerlessness that seems common to so many women. The women's S/M, sex-worker, and pro dom communities were my first exposure to all-women or mostly women milieus in which the majority are powerful, self-confident, unabashedly pro-sex, and non-victim-identified.

After several years as a bisexual activist, I'm increasingly coming to regard myself as pansexual or omnisexual. I find the term *bisexual* ever more limiting and far too binary as I explore the fluidity of gender and orientation—a process that is in large part due to my involvement with S/M. My identity as a queer-but-not-lesbian femme dominant makes me feel somewhat out of place in the leatherdyke community, though the people I meet (including my many lesbian coworkers) and the connections I make through my work have led me to become increasingly integrated into this community. I am often assumed to be a lesbian—though I make no attempt to "pass"—because many people persist in their belief that if one is not heterosexual, then one must be homosexual. Even dykes who have made amazing leaps in breaking down traditional categories and stereotypes of sex and gender may be still quite

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attached to traditionally defined categories and stereotypes about sexual orientation and identity. I am generally happy to call myself queer, though I find the current standard definition—roughly, gay, lesbian, (sometimes) bisexual, and (maybe) transgendered—too limiting as well.

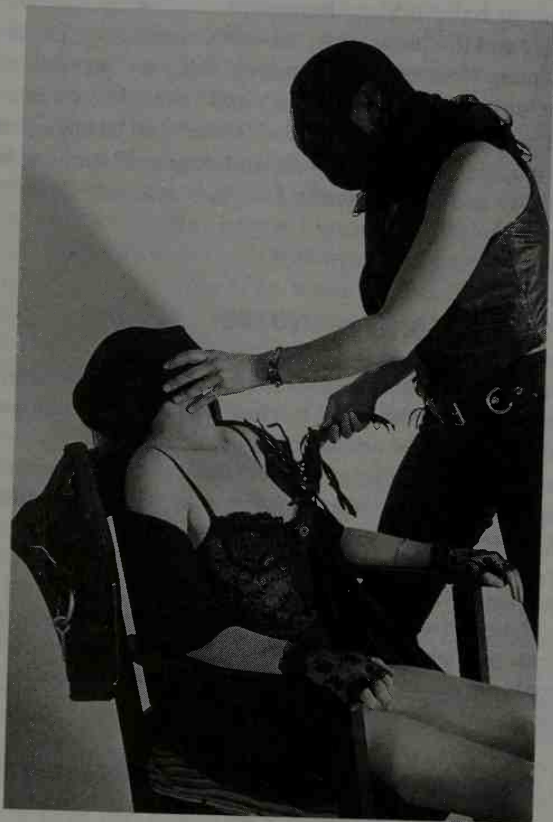
I seek a word—and, more importantly, a community—that encompasses all sexual and gender minorities, sex radicals of all stripes, and everyone who is active in support of erotic liberation. The professional dominant is in a unique position to build bridges between two sex-radical communities, the S/M community and the progressive sex-work community. Pro doms are well aware of how many “normal,” “upstanding” folks are perverts at heart. Our challenge may be to convince our clients and others like them to regard the community of perverts as “us” instead of “them” and to engage these people in the larger struggle for sexual, erotic, and gender liberation. We as a society have only fear and intolerance to lose, and so much pleasure and erotic satisfaction to gain.

NOTES

1. I use *straight* here in the sex-worker sense, meaning mainstream, especially referring to those not involved in the sex industry (e.g., “working a straight job”). When I talk about the sexual orientation, I use *heterosexual*.

2. *Queer* is a term in flux; the most common usage, and the one I’m adopting here, is as an umbrella term to refer to gay men, lesbians, (sometimes) bisexuals, and (maybe) transgendered people. It can certainly be argued, though, that all leatherpeople and sex workers are queer in the sense that they are sexual minorities and are seen as deviant by the mainstream, even if their sexual orientation is heterosexual. *Pansexual* is another confusing term. Some people use it to refer to groups or events that admit all genders and sexual orientations. Others use it to designate people or groups that specifically prefer or encourage multigender, multiorientation, “mixed energy” spaces and play.

Special thanks to Diana, Kiki, Drew, Gayle, and Damion.



Photograph by Janet Ryan

POETRY SLAM, ROUND ONE

POETRY SLAM, ROUND ONE

HANDCUFFS

LORI SELKE

Handcuffs are female-identified because they are circular. (The key is phallic, so purchase the type with safety releases. Don't buy into the imagery of the male being needed to unlock the female potential.) Handcuffs are egalitarian; they bind each partner equally. They are more obvious than a ring as a sign of commitment. A wrist, slender as a flower stem or meaty as a drumstick; handcuffs do not discriminate. They give your hands a chance to meet each other again, to flirt like long-lost friends, flutter like birds mating behind your back.

SEX DOES NOT EQUAL DEATH

KITTY TSUI

sex does not equal death.
death equals choice.

i am pro-choice.
i stand up
not only for
the right of a woman
to have an abortion,
but for
the right of a woman
to have sex.

the right of a woman
to have sex
with whomever she pleases,
to have sex
however she pleases,
to have sex
as often as she pleases.
to have sex
with passion,
with pleasure,
with power.

i stand up for
the right of a woman
to choose another woman,
the right of a man
to choose another man.
the right to choose
a kiss, a condom, a glove,

a finger, four fingers, a fist,
a gentle touch,
a rough ride,
a caress, a cry,
a whip, a riding crop,
a cold hand, a hot tongue.

i stand up for
the right of a woman
to have sex.

the right of a woman
to have sex
with whomever she pleases,
to have sex
however she pleases,
to have sex
as often as she pleases.
to have sex
with passion,
with pleasure,
with power.

sex does not equal death.
sex equals choice.

**TO MY MISTRESS KATE
IN LOVE AND DEDICATION
SLAVE FALCON**

So solid
so grounded
Black, polished leather
Brass and lacing
so menacing, enticing
and erotic...
My mistress. Gives me
her slave
the privilege of having
an intimate relationship
with her boots
If I was on my knees
I would unmistakably
know my mistress' boots
from any others
I see the shadow of her
on the wall, in the candlelite,
her majesty, her strength—
and I melt under
the weight of her boot
as she presses
boot on my back
Claiming me,
demanding my submission
and I burn, I beg.
If I were blindfolded
I would sense, feel,
touch, taste
and know my mistress' boots—
Such honor I am given

SLAVE FALGON

to kneel before her
and slowly unlace her boots
to feel her energy
to feel her close
And sometimes she allows
me to curl up
and lie between her feet
feeling safe, secure, protected
on fire
mastered over
And if anyone were to ask me,
What does your
mistress do for you,
How does she care for you?
I would turn and say
with pride, honor, and humility
My mistress gives me
the privilege of
taking off her boots
and caring for them.

TAKEN
JOI WOLFWOMYN

It starts slowly. one finger brushing its back against your cunt, just the outside. from the bottom up. very light over the lips and pushing so gently into the mons. stroking the outer labia with one finger slightly pulling back, tracing the inside of the lips, touching like petting butterflies. long figure 8's, short strokes glancing on the inner labia. a hint of more pressure with each finger, like electricity rolling, currents of fingers suddenly turning into waves of hand. insistent pressure, pushing the heel of her hand over your clit, and pulling her hand back down ever so lightly, nails on lips, nails opening flick up underneath the clit down and slowly separate, turn and, oh, so softly outlining in an inward-reaching figure eight fingers tracing infinity. noticing the heat rising from the depth of your cunt. holding you open. running the tip of one finger along the sides of your clit. pulling up your own wet heat to slide under your hood holding her fingertip there lube drizzling down cold melting taking your heat. the snap of a latex glove. two fingers now feeling infinity again sliding in and in slowly sweeping back up and around the clit. sound of more lube, on her hand. two fingertips reaching just inside, fluttering ever so slowly, outlining the curve of the top of your cunt. beckoning more of you, your wetness, your voice moaning. another finger joins, reaching deeper, circling the edges of your cervix. her thumb on your clit, pushing, teasing. her last finger almost reaching your asshole every time she pushes further into you. your cunt starts rocking up to meet her hand, trying to take more of her. she pulls her hand almost out, you can hear the smile spread across her face, the words pour through your mind *more, baby? you want more? so soon?* but you know she never opened her mouth. her fingers hook back into you, skating across the back of your clit, dancing inside you, insisting you follow. four fingers in you, now, pushing in rhythm, cadence, fucking you, now her thumb, you feel your self spread open to her hand, she's fucking you, pushing, reaching, stretching, claiming you. her eyes lock with yours, pinning you, claiming you as much as her hand. you're panting now, rocking again, trying to

dance down her arm, trying to take her in, body pleading, *faster, please, please, now, please...* and her fist slams all the way into you, up to your heart, the heel of her other hand slams into your clit, and you explode into stillness as her voice slams into your soul, taking you with one word: "mine"!

YOU MUST BE THIS TALL TO RIDE
PENELOPE PIERCE

I think about her at night now, sometimes,
and when I see her, when I look at her, I know that I want us
to go away together.

pay as you go
flexible itinerary
mixed terrain
high altitudes
please fasten your

chapsstrapsringshookscampsthat'srightbuckle'emuplace'em-
tightsnap'emhard

because when the leather cracks, teases, strokes, and soothes
the pulse quickens and the blood runs hotter, hotter.

When I press it sleek soft cool smooth against her face
she breathes deeply, inhaling its heady sweetness

when I trace her curves with sheathed fingers
she quivers under my touch and begs for more

when she takes her place at my feet
she caresses my boots and bathes them with her tongue

and when she kneels before me
I feel the beginnings of warm trickling sexjuice and I let her see
how ready I am

but tonight she must earn the price of admission, the price of entry.

Y'ALL COME BACK NOW, YA HEAR?
PENELOPE PIERCE

We newcomers, voyeurs par excellence,
with our flashing, surveying eyes,
alert to anything which signals sweet commencement

How patient we are as we talk among ourselves, casually shifting
weight and adjusting poses

How effortlessly we maintain our eager, watchful stances
while we wait for the first
glimpse, the first blow, the first act, the first exchange

Then the commotion, the sudden flurry of movement, is behind us,
and as we turn, expectantly, we hear her body hit the table,
and though we are inexplicably surprised we are not disappointed

Rather, we are mesmerized
by the smooth flanks, the glint of steel, the firm grips and
half-smiles of the four
who challenge and encourage her surrender

We are riveted as she is tempted, berated, seduced,
as she makes public these private acts, this ultimate vulnerability

And when we leave we are wet and grateful but hungry for more,
hungry for the explosion of myth and taboo, for the seizing of
privilege.

HOLD ME DOWN SO I CAN FLY SCARLET WOMAN

Your smile serenely permits my confusion.
In ritual pace you buckle the cuffs,
 each wrist, each ankle,
Carefully. Your confidence allows my nervousness...
I giggle. You slap my face:
Face me down, my face down,
Wrist to ankle, ass in the air,
On a moonpath at midnight I am bound for liberation.

You enforce sensuality with kid gloves
 All over my skin.
Lingering over the tender places, you pinch.
Hard.
You have my attention.
Your fingers explore, now leather, now latex,
The insides of thighs and further inside:
You paint grease on my cunt meticulously, slicking every fold:
Your patience allows my hesitation.

You hold me safe so I can struggle.
I pull and yank and freak myself out—
 You help me out,
Pull me in with the blindfold and the gag:
Breathing slow in the darkness,
I relax. You have my senses.

A cool feeling invades my ass
Stretches me more open than I can.
I reach
 I work
 I strive

SCARLET WOMAN

I fail:
You relent.
Give me time, give me clit—
A melting warmth, another inch
I CAN'T
You hit my ass hard with the heel of your hand
This plug's too big and
I CAN'T
Push it out—
You have my ass.

You tell me I'm all right and
Stroke my back till the shuddering subsides.

I am conquered, and still you encourage
My resistance with your cane.

Rapid little raintaps everywhere
Wake up, skin!
Raps on my cunt, taps on the plug
Without my will my ass is rocking
like the sea at full moon.

In a mountainous silence
I hear the cane
Slice the air
Brilliant pain
Rolls up my body
like a wave
breaking
on a rock.

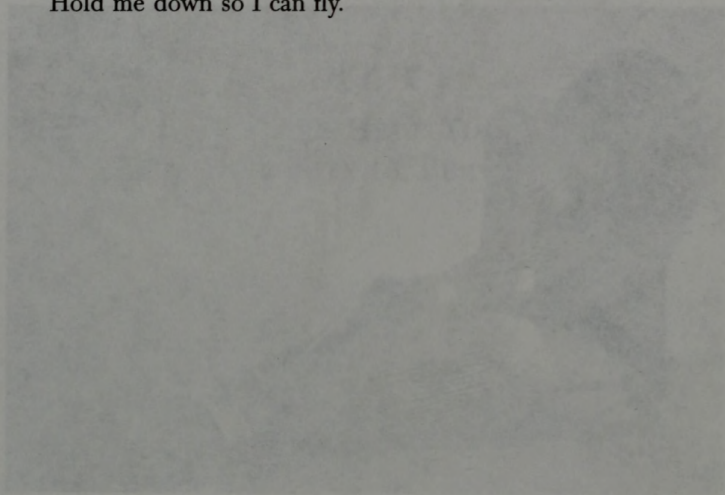
Your hardness allows my dissolving.

One wave breaks on another
Moonstruck like a rising tide:
Each time I think
I CAN'T!
I twist
I writhe
I sob

HOLD ME DOWN SO I CAN FLY

I fight
I scream:

You have me,
Soaring like an eagle on a string.
Oh, yes,
Please,
Hold me down so I can fly.



Photograph by H&M Not Images



Photograph by Bête Noir Images

PART IV

WE ARE HERE TOO:

THE DIVERSITY OF PERVERSITY

A LATINA COMBAT FEMME, HER SHOES,
& ENSUING CULTURAL IDENTITY
TATIANA DE LA TIERRA

My big feet have always pleased me. By big I mean the size of cruise ships. By pleased I mean that they are like a fun brain. Each brightly painted toe senses and writhes in its universe. I prefer my feet bare.

When I came out as a lesbian among gringas, a foot-related problem I had cleared up. I could never find "normal" women's shoes to fit my cruise ships. Besides, they're too wide at the front, too narrow at the heel, and one foot is bigger than the other. I dealt with my limited alternatives in a stigmatized way. Then I noticed the North American dyke foot style. They didn't wear "normal" women's shoes!

I emulated northern Florida lesbian footgear and bought dignity in the process. I got Birkenstocks, athletic shoes, and combatlike boots. Adding my own flair, I dressed up with men's low-cut soft black leather boots zippered on the side and wore them with wide flowered Colombian ranch-style skirts. My shoes reinforced my butchness and conflicted with the plastic flowers in my long hair and the painted pink on my lips. It was a contradiction my feet and I could live with.

Things got complicated footwise when I moved back to Miami and reintegrated with Latin culture. My identification as a combat femme within a Latina lesbian context didn't cut it, especially since the focus became the femme. Birkenstocks were horrid, sneakers were juvenile, and combat boots were *una exageración*. I became lovers with a macha Cubana who loves my lipstick and detests my footwear. We go to social events where "normal" women's shoes are the norm.

High heels, lipstick lesbians, and traditional butches play hardball here. Although there are a few androgynes, many Latinas deck out in accentuating roles. I found myself in a league where a gringa adaptation no longer fit. Daily furtive foot glances from my lover became a measure of my own disgust with the state of my cruise ships. I combed the Yellow Pages and interviewed big-

footed women who crossed my path, begging for the knowledge that would properly place me under femme control.

I found out about a store that had big shoes for women. It was an hour away, and my lover and I talked for weeks about going together as if we were planning a long trip. I was afraid that I wouldn't find any shoes even there because they only went up to a size thirteen. Or that they would be fuddy-duddy like the typical polyester clothes available to fat women. Or that I would be ripped off and humiliated and left to ponder a role reversal. If I couldn't find femme shoes, I would have to find a femme and kiss the butch who swooned me good-bye. Or I could go back to playing with gringas and drop this whole concern. Neither option was a preference. I wanted to play hardball like the combat femme that I am.

One afternoon we headed to the big shoe boutique in the sky. It was full of "normal" women's shoes. They were more expensive than usual, but then it's unusual to have a selection. I was stunned to discover that my cruise ships, enlarged by my mind's eye, weren't even a size twelve. I found out that, because of a lifetime of never wearing women's shoes, my spread-out foot couldn't house many of them. Still, I had a few choices. I strutted for my lover, seeking approval accentuated with "*mi amor*." She liked the clear vinyl black-tipped heels that smooshed my toes. We settled on black sequined low pumps, dressy golden open-toed sandals, and casual white woven flats. At the last minute I couldn't resist a pair of pointed red-heeled Zodiac boots with fringes on the side. I walked out of there like a cruise ship that stumbled and became a forty-foot yacht.

In a way this gringa/Latina/foot connection seems ridiculous. But my fine-tuned cultural gauge clicks on as I embark on an unheralded liberation. Shoes are no longer a determining factor in my sexual, cultural, or gender identification. And I still prefer my feet bare.

YOU'VE BEEN NAUGHTY, YOU NASTY GIRLS ALIEN NATION

This isn't some sleazy sex story, it's about disability. Disability and my experiences as a disabled wommin in the S/M community. I'm gonna be using generalities, so be prepared for it. I want to make one thing real clear right from the start: crips (a name that disabled wimmin call ourselves; it's okay to use if you are one, but not if you aren't!) have sex, and some of us are even into S/M! You probably don't know that, unless you happen to be partners or friends or fuck buddies with one of us, because we are invisible in S/M communities...or at least in the communities I've been part of (or not been part of, as the case may be). Why???

In the greater lesbian community, disabled wimmin have gotten fed up with being excluded and patronized and have been demanding the community start making events, places, and publications accessible to us. Accessible means setting it up so a disabled wommin can attend if she wants to. More and more events are held in wheelchair-accessible places, with interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing, without smoke or scents for wimmin with environmental sensitivity, with publicity and information available on tape or Braille. It's become familiar for the lesbian community to at least attempt to be accessible.

But not the S/M community. I've been involved in the S/M community for six-plus years, during which time I've become more disabled. Most of my disabilities are nonvisible, which means you wouldn't necessarily know about them unless I told you. In many ways I feel like an undercover spy for disabled wimmin in my involvement with the S/M community! My involvement has ranged from organized play parties at the big festivals like Michigan to sex clubs in San Francisco, from private parties to publications. Over and over I've been hurt and disappointed at the repeated exclusion of disabled wimmin in these events.

This exclusion has happened in lots of ways and for lots of reasons. I think the main one is that there is this mainstream belief that disabled people aren't sexual. The dykes and pervert dykes have swallowed this lie hook, line, and sinker. It's time to wake up, girls...not only do us crips get

YOU'VE BEEN NAUGHTY, YOU NASTY GIRLS

wet, some of us are into the sleazy shit too (literally!).

In my undercover spy work I've been able to get a firsthand experience of this exclusion. Before I go on, I know some of you are muttering about the fact that my disabilities are not visible, so how could my S/M sisters know? In every instance I'm going to share, there were at least two other wimmin who were taking part who knew details of my disabilities, yet my needs were not met.

At festivals, unless the entire festival grounds and buildings are wheelchair-accessible, the places wimmin gather for public play almost always aren't. The issue of accessibility is almost never brought up. When it is brought up, only the most obvious accessibility needs are addressed: wheelchair. Which is great if your disability happens to involve using a wheelchair. But for those of us whose disability doesn't, well, screw you—or rather, you don't get to screw. For example, have you ever been to a festival play scene where there was an interpreter? Or how about a variety of seating reserved for wimmin with back or bone disabilities? Or what about smoke- and scent-free space for those of us with allergies or chemical sensitivities?

At one smaller festival I went to, the S/M wimmin decided to leave the dungeon play space in a building that was totally nonaccessible for wimmin using wheelchairs in spite of the fact that a wommin had written ahead of her arrival and specifically requested that her needs for a wheelchair-accessible S/M play space be acknowledged and honored. I thought it took a lot of guts for her to write a bunch of strangers and ask for her S/M accessibility needs to be met. It must have felt like a nonconsensual slap in the face when her needs were ignored. And then to have the S/M wimmin apologize to her because it was too difficult for them to figure out how to meet her accessibility needs....

Even at events where accessibility is a reality, S/M wimmin still have managed to drop the ball. Take the National Lesbian Conference '91. It was the most accessible event I've ever attended. Many disabled wimmin with many differing accessibility needs were able to attend most of the workshops and activities, with the glaring exception of the erotic-S/M entertainment. These activities were not considered "official" NLC activities, even though most of the attendees were NLC participants and these activities were organized to take place during the NLC specifically so conference participants would attend. Once again, only the most obvious access need, wheelchair access, was met, even though there were tons of information about different accessibility needs in all the conference material. Why? Because it was too much trouble. After all, the conference planners had done a bunch of hard work making sure all those crips got to come to the conference, and jeez, what more do they want? To be able to go to the evening's sex activities too???

It was especially difficult for me to be in the hotel room amid all the

evening preparations as my able-bodied lover and my friends dressed up to go out to these events. I can't remember even one time when these wimmin brought up the issue of accessibility, and all of these wimmin knew I could not attend these events because of my disabilities. They might have asked if I was going, but didn't question why not. I think somewhere inside they knew why not. Perhaps it would have been too awkward and uncomfortable for them to bring it out into the open. I wonder if they stayed silent because they would have felt guilty openly celebrating their sexuality while excluding me. Their silence may have protected their fun, and maybe they thought it protected our friendships, but it didn't. At the time I felt abandoned and very alone. I questioned my relationships with these wimmin...and still do. It's hard to be left out, but it hurts even deeper to be ignored and made invisible. And it's heartbreaking to be treated this way by wimmin who love me. I spent the evenings hanging out with the other crips who'd been left behind. Again, I want to say that these were not official NLC events. I do not hold the NLC planners responsible for the lack of accessibility of these events. However, I do hold the planners of the S/M-erotic events and the lesbian S/M community as a whole responsible for such blatant oppression.

In the past six months, I have visited San Francisco twice and have been to various lesbian sex clubs. Each time I have been appalled. The earlier visit was with two of my disabled friends. We had to climb a double set of stairs, then spend the evening in smoked-filled rooms. It was really hard for my friend with mobility problems to even get into the building, and both I and my other friend were sick for several days afterward from the smoke. The later visit was no better. Smoke and burning incense in each room made some of us very sick. The inadequate seating kept me from staying as long as I would have if I'd been able to sit and rest. The too-loud music, which fucks it all up for wimmin with hearing aids or speech difficulties, made communication impossible.

At several parties I've had to repeat my accessibility needs over and over to the same group of wimmin. They "forget" I can't be around smoke and incense, or that my back isn't strong like theirs so I need special seating, or... Instead of being able to enjoy the fun, I have to spend my time and energy fighting to get my basic safety needs met. It ain't fun to be treated this way. It sure doesn't help create an atmosphere of safety and trust when wimmin I'm trying to play with keep forgetting such basic and important things about me.

Publications...suck. Maybe I've missed it, but I haven't noticed the pages filled with images and stories of disabled wimmin getting in on the action. I don't even know of one lesbian sex rag that's available on tape or in Braille. If there is one available, I'd sure appreciate knowing about it. One exception to this exclusion is that Pat Califia included a chapter about disability in her book *Sapphisty* and has included some stuff on disabili-

YOU'VE BEEN NAUGHTY, YOU NASTY GIRLS

ty in her column in *The Advocate*. Yay, Pat!

You may wonder why I and other disabled wimmin keep going to these kinds of S/M things if they are so bad for us. The answer is simple: isolation. I want and need the support and affirmation of the S/M part of my identity that is available only from other S/M wimmin. When the pain of isolation becomes more important to me than my physical health, I go to some S/M event. Even if it's unsafe for me, it's better than nothing. I do feel angry and hurt that the lesbian S/M community forces me to sacrifice my physical health in order to get the support and affirmation that able-bodied wimmin get without making such a drastic sacrifice.

The lesbian S/M community is always bitching about how shitty the vanilla girls treat us perverts, yet the same thing is happening in the lesbian S/M community to disabled dykes. Check it out for yourself if you don't believe me. The next time you are involved in the planning of a play thing, be aware if disability and accessibility needs are even brought up. If not, do it. Educate yourself. Find out what the accessibility needs are of the wimmin who might wanna "come." Read books, ask questions, pay close attention to the answers, then ask more questions. Asking once is not enough. Make accessibility a regular part of your planning, whether it's for a big crowd or a twosome.

It's time to get real, girls. Us crips ain't gonna go away. We wanna fuck like the rest of the gang. It's taken years of hard work for S/M to gain the acceptance that it has in the lesbian community. Don't shut us out now.

UNITED IN ABLEISM'S WEB

MARY FRANCES PLATT

Reading Alien's piece on exclusion of lesbians with disabilities within S/M circles ("You've Been Naughty, You Nasty Girls," which appears immediately before this article) has prompted me to put on paper what I've been saying to S/M girls for years now.

For the most part, the lesbian S/M community excludes, discriminates against, and oppresses lesbians with disabilities. Of course there are exceptions (and I've even been tied up by a few of them) but, in general, ableism is alive, well, and succeeding in keeping many of us untied, unsatisfied, and segregated from our nondisabled sister perverts as well as our crip cohorts.

Notice I haven't used the "*a* word" yet (access). *Accessible* is a euphemism for "we don't discriminate against people with disabilities." Try substituting "we actively discriminate against people with mobility-related disabilities" for "not wheelchair-accessible," or "no blind people need apply or attend, literature only available to the sighted" for "printed materials only." We could market different signs for the different types of disabled folks people want to discriminate against. Since dykes with Environmental Illness (E.I.) or asthma can't seem to get women to put those red signs of a cigarette in a circle with a line through it at S/M play parties, perhaps nondisabled S/M lesbians could get big red circles with a slashed wheelchair to put up instead.

Images of S/M dykes with visible disabilities? Where? Stories of women with disabilities getting it on with nondisabled lesbians? I know of two. Nondisabled S/M lesbians that date or play or are in relationships with crips? There are a few. Lesbian sex publications that are accessible to blind and print-disabled dykes by being on tape, in Braille, and in large print? Unheard of. So why is all this stuff a reality in our community? Ableism. The systematic oppression of and discrimination against people with disabilities. It's so systemic most of you won't even admit that you're ableist. The majority of us grow up surrounded by a dominant culture that abhors, pities, and is disgusted by people with disabilities.

I tell people often in my anti-ableism workshops that I know I am their worst fantasy—a fat, wheelchair-using lesbian with a chronic illness. Why is

being disabled one of the worst things someone can become? Why is walking the only valid way to move through the world? Ableism is also about fear. Anyone can join this oppressed group in an instant. Injury, accident, and illness are all part of the human experience. Why do we keep trying to make it a nonhuman thing? The reality that "it can happen to anybody" often makes us push people with disabilities even further from our view. Successful segregation then takes over. Successful segregation is the conscious intent and actions involved in keeping people with, and people without, disabilities away from each other. It has occurred throughout post-European-invasion U.S. history. For example, a lot of us get slowly killed in institutions where you don't have to watch us, and although home-based, consumer-directed assistance would circumvent this genocide, nondisabled folks would then have to actually be in the same communities as disabled ones.

Ableism allows us to believe "those people" are better off in nursing homes, and when that life gets too hard to bear, they can petition the court for the right to assisted suicide, which more often than not will be granted. In terms of growing up around folks with disabilities and being exposed to the concept of disability as part of the human experience, how many of us went to school with kids with visible disabilities? How many of our walking children ride school buses with or enter the same door as our wheeling children?

It's fairly simple to identify successful segregation at work in the lesbian S/M community. A lot of our culture is built around not being harassed, privacy, and confidentiality. This usually means play parties, support groups, and other gatherings happen in our homes, which are often not welcoming of people with various types of disabilities. This is not an accident. Architectural design plays a big part in ensuring that successful segregation thrives. I used to get invited to a good number of parties when I was still a walkie. Now that I'm a wheelie, women just don't invite me, or they say, "I'm having this party, but my house is not accessible, so...." These segregational tactics are effective and personally painful, humiliating, and infuriating. Very seldom do dykes acknowledge the ableism in this kind of exclusion.

I share Alien's pain about the inaccessible-to-lots-of-dykes play party that happened at the National Lesbian Conference. What made it even harder for me is that the hostess was a woman I had dated. She had considered making her home wheelchair-accessible with funds from a dyke-occupied, wheelchair-accessible housing project I had initiated with financial support from Concrete Change (a local disability rights activist group) and the NLC. She decided not to and never told me about the party—which of course I heard about for months afterward.

I am torn too about the sleazy girl show that Alien couldn't attend. As Access and Needs Coordinator for Lesbians With Disabilities for the NLC,

I had been approached by the non-NLC-sponsored group that put on the show. They had a commitment to making the space wheelchair-accessible and wanted guidance regarding architectural access, which I gladly gave them. As a wheelie I was thrilled that for less than twenty-five dollars we funkily ramped the space being used and made the bathroom wheelchair-accessible. As a writer and performer, I was able, for the first time, to perform my sleazy girl show on a stage. I was one of four dyke wheelies there, and although it was a first for many of us, we were painfully aware that the presence of cigarette smoke and alcohol excluded women with E.I. and alcoholism.

While I'm owning up to things, I confess to being the woman who wrote and distributed the letter requesting dungeon wheelchair access at an Ozark women's festival, and yes, it was yet another nonconsensual slap in the face to have women just carry on anyway in a step-steeped dungeon. Since we're talking about festivals, Michigan is another sore point. After all the anti-S/M brouhaha that happened two years ago, S/M camping and activities happened in the Twilight Zone last year. Not only was getting there by chair practically impossible (even with the cutest security galguide to be found), but once you were there, S/M activity organizers made it even more impossible by organizing play spaces even further in the woods. Nondisabled S/M girls may be able to take their perversion into the woods, as the festival wishes, but a lot of disabled girls can't. Michigan used to be the one place I could go and be with and hang out with S/M dykes in play and support.

In September the Northeast Women's Musical Retreat (NEWMR) had non-wheelchair-accessible S/M camping space and wheelchair-accessible play space. The organizers have planned for NEWMR 2 to be at a camp whose architecture and layout promotes segregation of crips and does not allow for independence for wheelchair users. Where will I get my S/M festival needs met this coming (not for me) season? Most likely I won't. Which means the chance of finding S/M lovers and friends is pretty low—but crippled girls aren't sexual anyway, and if by chance they have sex once in a blue moon, it must be vanilla, right? So I must be an aberration, not a lusty lesbian with disabilities that anyone would find hot, desirable, and doable. Interesting thing is, those S/M girls whom I have dated, played with, or been in relationships with often describe me as one of their hottest lovers while fondly reminiscing on what "wheelchair bound" really means.

So, dear S/M women, it's time to wake up, get educated, get over yourselves, and start smelling crip cunts. It all comes down to discrimination. Do you really want to make the choice to discriminate against some dyke because she is disabled? Do you really want to keep playing out the ableist beliefs and practices that the white European fathers have taught us since the invasion of

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the Americas? Being ableist is not your fault. Working toward antiableism is your responsibility. Stop fearing us and start fucking us.

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UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY

LAMAR VAN DYKE

Considering the political diversity that exists within the leather community, with many conflicting opinions and ideas, it is amazing that we gather our forces around the word *unity*.

Unity is the buzzword that flies around at contests. In order to win one of our hundreds of leather titles, you have to verbalize your commitment to unity. If you were to indicate otherwise in your prejudging interview, chances are good that you would get no further than that. If you are someone who has reservations about this unity, you are quickly labeled a "separatist" with the same venom that is reserved for "racist." Personally, I think that reservations are wise. I've always had them. I'm sure that some of you reading this article have them.

Unity is a political position. It is a concept that is based on agreement. Agreement is not possible without discussion, and as a community we have skipped that discussion and jumped ahead into glorious unity. What is that unity based on?

There are various organizations that have formed over the years. Leather organizations for lesbians, gay men, pansexuals, bisexuals, extraterrestrials...you name it, we have a group for it. These organizations have taken the time to clarify their basis of unity. They can articulate their basis of unity, and new people can then clearly decide if they want to participate in that group or not.

Our "community" is more loosely structured, and these discussions have not taken place. We are unclear about our foundation, we are unclear about our direction, we are unclear about our structure, and consequently we are unclear about our unity.

I have a problem with this. I like to know what it is that I am part of. I like to know that when I am defiantly marching down the street with a group of people, we have more in common than our leather jackets and our proclivities for kinky sex.

We have created and are creating this community. We are experiencing the power inherent in that creation. We are dealing with the repercussions of our

presentation. Whenever a group of people collect a noticeable pocket of power, there are forces that want to stop them and there are other forces that want to join them. It's the nature of power. Power is never ignored. It is always responded to in some fashion.

As leatherdykes, we are a group of people who are aware of power. We play with power, we talk about power, we trade power. We have fun with power. We manifest this in our sexuality and urge each other on to new heights. It is this play with power that keeps us interested. It is also this playing with power that has the conservative right-wing element in America on the run. They feel threatened enough to spend millions of dollars attempting to reinforce their defunct definition of family and life in America. They have fallen into that old trap of the dead-end power trip: my dick is bigger than your dick; my ideas are more correct than yours; our numbers are larger than yours; we're right, you're wrong. They are threatened enough to participate in a power struggle of the lowest order, lying, manipulating, and misrepresenting our ideas and desires.

This is something to unite around. They have given us a focal point, and as we collect ourselves together to deal with them, their lies become obvious. Their support dwindles, and we get stronger.

In this leather community that we are in the process of building, we have assumed a number of political positions. The obvious ones are the ones that pertain to our oppression as perverts and the always looming specter of the concentration camp. Now, in 1966 we were talking about the always looming specter of the concentration camp. But at that point, the group I most identified with was the antiwar movement. The threat of intense repression is what keeps us in the streets, screaming and fighting and putting our lives on the line. It's a good threat. It works to keep us unified.

I think it's this sense of urgency that has provided an excuse for us to avoid the discussions that go along with unity. In many senses, those discussions are more important to us than the external facade of unity. Those discussions are what keep us clear and focused.

The apparent lack of interest on the part of the government about the Plague is also something to unite around. I think the entire community can come to agreement about this issue, but you never know. There may be people out there who consider themselves part of the community who disagree. We don't know. We've never really taken the time to ask. We assume a lot.

Then there's the issue of our sexuality. It is my opinion that female and male sexuality are very different. Even though we share a tendency for kinky sex, our perceptions, our play, and our expectations are very different.

Women's sexuality is something that has been repressed and denied for centuries. We have been quite deliberately cut off from this incredible

source of power. We have been denied information about our bodies. In some cultures, female babies still have their bodies mutilated to keep them from that knowledge.

As lesbians, we are on a quest for information about ourselves. We state that we are willing to venture into relatively uncharted areas in search of elusive parts of ourselves.

As S/M dykes, we push on that boundary even more. We become pioneers in the arena of women's sexuality. Our sexuality is so immensely powerful that the patriarchy has gone to great lengths to keep us separated from it. We are now approaching a better understanding of our sexuality. We are developing a vocabulary that enables us to discuss it with each other. We are slowly accumulating power as we accumulate knowledge. We are breaking through the barriers that keep us from knowing ourselves and keep us from feeling the scope of our power. This is very threatening to the status quo, which is dependent on us staying uninformed and powerless.

As we eliminate the illusion of the lavender cloud of lesbian sexuality (you know, where sex between women just magically happens, where no one is responsible), we begin to talk about sex. We begin to clarify for ourselves what it is that we like and what it is that we don't like. We learn to identify our physical needs as well as our emotional needs, and we learn how to talk to each other about these forbidden things. This has been a major breakthrough for lesbians.

This has also, in my opinion, been the major stumbling block in the larger lesbian community. I think that the larger lesbian community, more than being freaked out at our kinks, is freaked out by the frankness with which we discuss our sexuality. Our openness forces them to confront their inability to discern or discuss their own needs regarding sex. Rather than experience a personal breakthrough, some of them have chosen to attempt to stop us from exploring our new frontier. They mistakenly think they can stop us by accusing us of psychological illness and disassociating themselves from us. This is their fear, not ours. It belongs to them. It does not belong to us.

I think that sex between lesbians is more intense than sex between men or hetero sex. I think that we have a cellular memory and that we are programmed on that level to receive absolutely everything we need from a female. Now, I don't want to place even more blame on the mothers, because I think they receive enough as it is, but at one point, we were all absolutely dependent on a female for our survival. We listened to her heartbeat, we shared her bloodstream, we experienced her hormonal changes, we experienced her breathing, her digestion. We are programmed to expect a certain closeness with a woman; we are programmed to be able to merge with her being.

At the same time, we are also aware of our life's journey of gaining independence on this planet and of separating ourselves from our mothers and

our mothers' expectations. I think this dynamic puts lesbian relationships in a more intimate category than cross-gender relationships or gay male relationships. We have, or we feel we have, the possibility of more intensity, and that intensity seems important to us. We crave it, we fight for it, we're hurt if it's not available. We want it.

I have, along with quite a few friends, explored the area of casual sex. We saw gay men having casual sex; we wanted that freedom. It looked like fun, so we dived in. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. Some of us could do it, and some of us had trouble with it. Some of us did it and didn't particularly like it. We made a distinction between sex and S/M. It appeared to be easier to do casual S/M than casual sex. Lesbians just don't seem to be very casual about sex. And if it's casual, then it's kind of boring. We like that intensity. Our sexuality has more to do with intensity than with getting off.

Being sexual with each other takes us into a new arena of intimacy, whether we consciously choose to go there or not. Therefore, sex with women is, without even trying, an intimate thing. We can make rules about it, we can fight about it, we can struggle with it, we can hope that it's different, we can force ourselves to keep our emotional difference; but the expectation is there—the cellular expectation that this connection, by its very existence, is intimate.

Men relating to each other do not have this expectation. They seem more able to take things at face value and roll with them. Their sexuality reflects this disconnection. Their sexuality seems to be of a more physical nature. This is completely understandable, seeing as their main sex organ seems to have a mind of its own and will turn on when least expected. Men are more concerned with their penises and the satisfaction of this organ than women are with their vaginas or their clits.

This is a vast difference. This difference manifests itself in the scenarios we enact, in the things that turn us on, and in our expectations of each other. Lesbian sexuality is a process of discovery. Of pushing boundaries or moving outside of what is acceptable. Once we have crossed that line, if we let ourselves continue to move forward, we will—with any luck—find ourselves in new and uncharted territories. In order to achieve this, we need to establish trust with our sex partners. S/M also requires trust, enormous amounts of trust, on both sides.

This basic difference in male and female sexuality, in dyke and faggot sexuality, is something that is relatively ignored when we are creating our unified communities, yet this difference is fundamental when it comes to unity. This difference affects how we see things and how we relate to each other.

Recognition of this primary disparity between the sexes has come to be known erroneously as separatism. If someone points out some of the problems surrounding this difference, then he or she seems to be quickly labeled a sep-

aratist, as if that is the ultimate insult and as if that discredits the observation.

I have been a separatist. A real separatist. It was very involved and very rigid. It was also very much fun to exclude men totally from my existence, to hang only with women, to shave our heads and be rowdy, to point out the obvious position of women in our society and remove ourselves as much as we could from that negativity. We created our own world. It required a lot of soul-searching, discussion, and fortitude. It connected me to my primary source of power and made me strong.

At some point, it became no longer necessary for me to be that rigid. I had accumulated my power and found myself able to maintain that power and use it in the world at large. For this I thank my separatist past.

Now it's twenty years later, and people are throwing the word around as if it were an insult. These people have no idea of the content or the purpose of that movement. It was a political movement that had great momentum and stimulated incredible change. It is part of why things are the way they are today in the lesbian community and in the leather community. The survivors of that hard-edged separatism are and have been the leaders in the formation of many aspects of our current community.

Because of our differences in sexuality and our differences in other areas, I support separate spaces for the sexes at certain times. I support separate play space—that's basic. I also support mixed play spaces for people who want to do that.

I support men having their own spaces to do whatever it is that they do in those spaces. I'm not prepared to go to war with them because they didn't invite me to their dungeon party. I'm not inviting them to mine.

I fully expect respect from women when I want to create whatever kind of space I choose. I can do that. It doesn't mean that I am a separatist, or a bad person, or a threat to the larger community. I can invite whomever I want into my space. It is my prerogative. If it is a large gathering, it is still my prerogative to set guidelines for the guest list. The entire community does not have to be invited to every event in order for us to be politically correct.

Dykes make progress politically, spiritually, and personally when we form groups and bond with like-minded dykes. When we take away the inequality that faces us each and every day and allow ourselves to relax and open up with each other—when we stop competing with each other for that top-dog position—we allow ourselves to merge and grow and listen to our inner voices.

In this respect, as well as in many other respects, S/M is a liberating experience. We negotiate those top-dog positions. We allow ourselves to take that power. We allow ourselves to give that power up in order to connect with a larger power source. We get to make conscious choices and participate willingly for whatever period of time we want to. We free ourselves from unconsciously participating in our own oppression on a daily basis. Instead of taking

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care of other people, we make the decision to pay attention to our own needs. Normally, we put ourselves and our needs last on our list of priorities. Women take care of men, women take care of children, women take care of the wounds of society, while women ourselves are left in the dust. Women's issues are left with a lack of funds, a lack of energy, and a lack of support. Women are left with a lack of respect, a lack of financial possibilities, a lack of self-esteem, a lack of freedom, and a lack of true equality. In the hasty and crisis-oriented creation of our community, we have neglected to have the conversations necessary for us to change this dynamic, leaving ourselves open to absorbing the subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle misogyny that surrounds us.

For example, if you are infected with HIV, you have many services, support groups, and much information at your disposal. Many of these agencies have been set up and are run by women. If you are a woman with cancer, your options are extremely limited, and you end up depending entirely on your friends and family for the support you need.

We have avoided these discussions. We, as a community, have simply responded to the crises as they have presented themselves. We need some clarity, and we need to respect each other regarding the decisions we make to participate or not participate.

There are people in the leather community who belong to the Republican Party. Yes, it's strange but true. There are people in the community who are pedophiles and there are people in the community who were victims of pedophiles when they were children. Where is the unity? What is the point of commonality that these particular components can orbit around?

Yes, it's the '90s, and judgment is outdated. We all strive to avoid making judgments, because we don't want judgments made about us. We put a lot of energy into not making judgments, when in fact we all have judgments in our heads we don't allow out of our mouths.

What are we thinking when we march in the streets and scream about legal rights for our inclinations? We are thinking about freedom to be and do whatever we want to. It's the unity that makes us look scarier and bigger than we are.

I might agree with the majority of you about the need for unity regarding AIDS and about the lack of interest on the part of the government. I might agree with you about the need to pass gay rights legislation. I might disagree with you about bisexuality and the amount of energy that women are still putting into men.

I might march with you in the streets to make a point, but I also might not want you at my play party. I feel like those things are separate things. My sexuality and my politics are actually separate things. I think making my sexuality political is probably the most boring thing to do to something that is fun. This is the plan of the far right, to make sexuality political. To divert our energies into their channels. They think that all sexuality is political and would

like to pretend that it doesn't exist as a joyful expression of ourselves. (I wonder how they got here!) They would like to keep those energies under wraps because the energy of sexuality is one that can actually change the world.

So we bond together out of fear. We are unified when it comes to the fear of losing our ability to express ourselves in our entirety. It would be interesting to survey our various socioeconomic backgrounds and current lifestyles. There are, of course, enormous gaps between the men and the women in our community in this area. What else is new?

If I march with a group of leatherpeople in Washington, D.C., what is it that unifies us? Is it the fact that we all have leather jackets? Is it the fact that it's fun to take to the streets? Is it our common desire to be free? Is it our common desire to be exhibitionists and shock people? What is it? Why don't we discuss it?

There are an awful lot of assumptions made about this unity. I, for one, would like those discussions to begin. Because through discussing our agreements and disagreements, we will come to a real place of unity, instead of the facade we now have.

Because we are not used to getting what we want, we fight harder. It's just how we are. Of course, with the state of the world being what it is, and life being so fragile, the movement for freedom and creativity needs as many warriors as we can accumulate.

I am there for that.

There are leatherfolk who belong to the Republican Party.

I am not there for that.

There are leatherfolk who are racist.

I am not there for that.

There are leatherfolk who support corporations that are systematically and quite deliberately killing the planet.

I'm not there for that.

There are leatherfolk who think it's cool to go to other countries and kill innocent people to increase the profits of multinational corporations.

I'm not there for that.

There are leatherfolk who insist on being part of the Catholic Church, which is one of the richest and most oppressive-to-women institutions in the world.

I'm not there for that.

I'll be there if we are supporting more funding for AIDS research and AIDS-related services. I'll be there if we are supporting more funding for women's health issues. I'll be there if we are showing the political right that there are way more of us than they think.

But I'll be with the lesbians when I do sex, kink, or erotica. It's just how I am. I'm a lesbian because I love women, so, of course I prefer to be around women. It's my preference. It makes me strong. It's where I "come" from.

**SEX, LIES, AND HETEROPATRIARCHY:
THE S/M DEBATES AT THE
MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL
REBECCA DAWN KAPLAN**

I was sitting in a tent, surrounded by about seventy women clad in various forms of attire, from naked to totally wrapped in leather to ripped-up 501s and T-shirts to dresses. Women were clustered in twos and threes and fours and mores, doing all kinds of interesting things, some of which I'd seen and done before, some of which were totally new to me. I was intrigued and disconcerted and aroused. There was fucking and sucking and whipping and dancing. Then it all stopped. Guards came in and announced that our behavior was not allowed, we must stop, we must leave. Some left, some argued with the guards, some felt ashamed or scared, others felt indignant. Many of us gathered in a circle, singing, "This body's nobody's body but mine" and talking about the importance of women's freedom to make our own choices.

The year was 1989; the place was the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (henceforth, Michigyn). The "guards" were not men, not Jesse Helms's forces: they were a bunch of dykes who were not so different from the women whose play party they were breaking up. This event was one in a series of confrontations, both at Michigyn and, more broadly, within lesbian circles, between advocates and practitioners of S/M and those who oppose it.

Opposition to S/M was most strongly asserted by a group calling themselves the Seps. The Seps are a group of lesbian separatists from all over North America (and other countries as well) who are prominent at music festivals. Although Sep philosophy covers many topics, the most vocal (or perhaps the most reported) Sep activities in recent years have been opposition to S/M, to transsexual women, and to the performance of the dyke punk group Tribe 8 at Michigyn.

The group of women who practice or advocate dominance and submission and other forms of eroticized power play are commonly referred to as the S/M women. This group includes women from many locales who annually

form a temporary community at the festival. Both groups tend to have prominent members who are present every year, but also many new people who attend workshops, socialize, and loosely identify with the group. Neither group has official leaders, and actions taken by individuals are not necessarily reflective of any group consensus.

In 1990, several prominent S/M women were told by festival organizers that they could not attend. In response, some of these women hired an airplane to drop leaflets on the festival grounds protesting their exclusion. Many of the leaflets missed the festival grounds and landed on a neighboring farm. Because most attendees never saw the flyers, they remained uneasy at the sight of an unknown plane flying low overhead. The S/M women who remained felt increasingly excluded, and some mentioned being urged to camp on the outskirts of the land.

Most of the outspoken S/M women chose to avoid the rest of the festival, not attending the large main events and spending time on the outskirts, where clusters of S/M campers were more tolerated.

Festival policy states that setting up separate space for special-interest groups is not allowed. Nonetheless, a space in a central part of the land is marked off every year with banners reading, THIS IS LESBIAN SEPARATIST SPACE.

The combination of these forces resulted in minimal dialogue, allowing the politics to become polarized. The reduced contact allowed each group to believe lies about the other.

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival is an annual weeklong gathering of more than seven thousand mostly lesbian or bisexual women. It is a celebration of lesbian culture, music, and art and a celebration of the power of women working together. It is also one of the places where lesbian politics are discussed, debated, and evaluated; a source of new consensuses and new fights. The festival used to be run as a collective, and its decisions and discussions were seen by many attendees as the model for building a women's utopia. Some decisions reflected these utopian leanings, such as sharing the work among all attendees, the sliding scale for admissions, the vegetarian food, and more. It is important to respect and honor this utopian urge, this desire to come up with group ideals and attempt to live them. However, it is unlikely that seven thousand women share all ideals, and methods of dispute resolution have never been established at Michigyn. Thus, as the ever-changing group strove to decide contentious issues, it was not clear whose opinions counted or how they would be assessed. Over the years, the festival has become more of a business and less of a collective, reducing the number of voices involved in decision-making. Although these changes were made in response to economic difficulties, it is important to examine their impact and meaning, especially in light of current disputes regarding sexuality at Michigyn.

It is not surprising that many of the "old-timers" complain that Michigyn

is not what it used to be. What is surprising is that the blame is attributed to S/M women (and sometimes to bisexual or transsexual women) who are not the real cause of the broader changes. The sliding scale is now almost a joke. It starts at such a high price and has such a narrow range that it does not really provide economic access. Decisions are made by a small group of people determined largely by ownership and other hierarchies. Many women skip their work shifts and fail to acknowledge the importance of contributing to the community. Every year, the cars in the parking lot are newer and more expensive and have fewer political bumper stickers. Discussions of socialism, utopia-building, and ending misogyny in the world are far less commonplace. Workshops are more about personal growth and less about politics and fighting oppression. Many of the Seps who have been attending Michigyn for years are upset at the changes in tone and attitude of attendees and are trying to keep more of the oppressive elements of heteropatriarchy from entering the festival.

The word *heteropatriarchal* is used often in S/M debates. This term, meaning that one is behaving in a way that is both misogynist and heterosexist, is perhaps the worst insult to a lesbian. In the context of dyke S/M debates, *heteropatriarchal* is being used the same way young boys often use the word *faggot*: it's thrown back and forth as a synonym for *bad*. Thus, debates consist of some woman insisting, "You are oppressive, heteropatriarchal, and trying to control other women's bodies and restrict women's sexual freedom," while others respond, "No, you are heteropatriarchal and brainwashed, imitating male patterns of violence." And somehow, in the course of these debates, the real heteropatriarchy gets forgotten and is no longer a target for resistance—a resistance that is vitally necessary.

Seps have accused S/M-ers of being oppressive and apolitical. Unfortunately, some power players have responded by asserting that politics are unimportant and that oppression does not matter. Power players have accused Seps of being antisex. Some Seps have fallen into agreeing that sex is dangerous, scary, and not something to be valued. In order to avoid feeling pain at being rejected by other women and to strengthen in-group identity, we have built walls around us, determined to reject every feature that we associate with the other group.

I believe that there are flaws within the arguments of both the S/M-ers and the Seps, as there are in most polarized arguments. Although there are many different possible views regarding the S/M debate, the animosity has encouraged division into two sides. I will explore the approaches taken by "each side" and possible room for movement in each.

Many Seps do not understand what S/M is and don't try to, or intentionally misrepresent S/M behavior. During workshops at Michigyn, Seps have made statements such as "S/M-ers do something called fisting, which is when

you put your fist into a woman's rectum and pound away until she's bleeding and has to go to the hospital" (Sep workshop, Michigyn, 1994).

Although the line between play and reality is not always easy to see, real-world differences do exist. Playing Monopoly is not the same thing as actually trying to bankrupt everyone and take over the world. An S/M scene is not the same thing as assault. Of course, one can have political analyses of "play"—it would be reasonable to debate whether playing Monopoly might promote problematic values. But that debate is not going to be very useful or interesting if the anti-Monopoly camp begins by asserting that people who play Monopoly are no different from Bill Gates or Coca-Cola.

Ultimately, I think the S/M debate is so touchy because it calls into question the basis of Sep philosophy, which assumes that heteropatriarchy is the only (or most important) oppression and that a lesbian-only community should be perfect. Once that assumption is in place, then the presence of any lesbians who engage in behavior that one finds objectionable can be explained only by dismissing them as "brainwashed" and not yet free of heteropatriarchal influence or as not "real" lesbians or women. The idea that "real," evolved lesbians can disagree with each other virulently is a threat to Sep ideology, but this disagreement clearly exists. Ignoring it forces the debate away from the realm of disagreement and into the realm of identity: who gets to be a "real lesbian." And, more concretely, who gets to exclude whom from specific lesbian spaces and events. Once one person decides that her views are the "real" lesbian feminism, openness to new ideas shuts down.

In 1994 another S/M fight erupted at Michigyn, this time focused on the performance of the dyke punk group Tribe 8, whose performance includes some S/M imagery. A group of Seps protested the performance and called for a "girlcott" of the group. A twenty-something woman came up to the protesters to ask them why they were attempting to silence other women and to urge them to reconsider. One forty-something protester responded, "I've been a lesbian for twenty-five years; you can't teach me anything."

Opponents of S/M also make claims about S/M-ers that are designed to horrify rather than inform. One accusation that is repeated in almost every anti-S/M tract is the claim that S/M-ers revel in Nazi imagery and use Nazi imagery to incite fear and horror in the service of their erotic pleasure. I have never witnessed a Nazi scene, nor heard or read of one taking place, nor heard of anyone who has ever witnessed one (though the possibility that such things are done is really not the point). It seems that it is in fact the Seps who are using the word *Nazi* and the images it conveys to incite fear and horror (of S/M-ers) in the service of their political goals. This accusation is hurled so often as to become desensitizing, and it is intended to shut off debate by producing a reaction of revulsion, rather than opening debate about what oppression is and how to fight it.

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Many attendees insist that Michigyn should be a "safe" space. Being safe used to mean freedom from being assaulted. Now being safe seems to mean freedom from being disagreed with, freedom from ever feeling uncomfortable with someone else's actions.

The desire for safe space is not an unreasonable one. The world outside of Michigyn is full of misogyny, homophobia, and other evils. Michigyn is a women-only space, and no group of attendees is seriously arguing that this policy be changed. So at least some consensus exists that some forms of exclusion are reasonable and that wanting to spend one week out of the year in a space devoted to women and celebrating lesbians is a good thing. Thus, it is important for S/M women to admit that not all efforts to create safe space are wrong. But the Sep arguments often fail to distinguish among different forms of safety. Of course, women must have the right to choose not to participate in S/M. But Sep arguments about banning S/M fail to distinguish among the possible traumas of three very different things: being coerced into doing S/M, unintentionally witnessing S/M, and knowing that others are engaging in S/M.

S/M advocates put great effort into ensuring that both the first and the second do not occur. Play parties have been held in secluded locations, with people posted on the path to warn others what is going on. In fact, festival efforts to ban S/M use of the remote workshop tents at night have served to make it harder to protect against the second problem. Festival organizers eventually decided to eliminate the tents from the far end of the workshop area, and some people believe that this was done specifically to prevent S/M play parties from taking place in them.

When opposition to S/M is voiced, it is often difficult to tell what exactly is being opposed. Within S/M circles, festival organizers' claims that "certain activities" are forbidden have become an ongoing joke, since the "certain activities" are never defined. The inability to define what activities constitute S/M should point out that there is no clear line: power play is not something that resides in a separate box, distinct from other forms of sexual expression. Power play is not something obscure that only a few weirdos can enjoy. Many people of various identities explore many activities that fall on a continuum of power play and combine fear and pleasure. Riding on roller coasters, enjoying sex as an act of release during times of stress, and visiting haunted houses are experiences that many people understand.

There are many things that take place at Michigyn that some find objectionable or oppressive. Among the many practices at the festival that some attendees oppose, few are strongly condemned or banned. The fact that credit cards are welcomed while personal checks are not has not resulted in widespread objection to this classist practice, nor has there been much outcry regarding the shrinking sliding scale. Although many attendees are vegetari-

ans, people are free to bring their own meat onto the land. And although numerous attendees are themselves in recovery from various chemical addictions, such as to alcohol or cigarettes, others are free to bring their own "chem" to the festival. In fact, festival response to different needs with regard to chem has been remarkably reasonable and seemingly noncontentious. The fact that some people may have negative physical or psychological reactions to exposure to some substances is accommodated by providing clearly labeled chem-free space. At the same time, those who are not chem-free are not reviled or expelled or generally even asked to refrain. And yet no one denies that many women at the festival have a traumatic history associated with chem use or for some reason feel a strong need not to be around it. Nonetheless, the discussions regarding chem have been pretty respectful and have not regressed into a battle over identity or people's right to be a part of a women's community. This should teach everyone that even emotionally charged issues can be resolved in a way that respects everyone.

One of the first things I would question about pro-S/M arguments is the rush to embrace the words *sadism* and *masochism*. I think of the range of activities as better described by terms such as *power play*.

People who are undecided about how they feel about power play are not likely to be able to support something called sadomasochism. Sadism comes from the marquis de Sade, a powerful, misogynist man who raped and abused women against their will for his pleasure. His nonconsensual legacy is not something I want to reclaim. *Masochism* is a word often used by sexist psychologists, almost always to describe women. This term is sometimes used to explain why women in abusive relationships do not leave, attributing their behavior to "female masochism" rather than lack of economic power or other life constraints. Given the historical meaning of these words and the psychoanalytic tradition of attributing male nonconsensual violence to "female masochism," it is not surprising that many lesbian feminists will not accept something called sadomasochism. Because of their historical (and current) meanings and because the phrase does not accurately describe the range of activities that currently fall under its domain, we should consider alternatives to *sadomasochism* to describe power play. All of the queer and women's power-play communities that I have encountered highly stress the importance of safe, consensual play. Dyke S/M communities often see power play as liberating, as part of a feminist agenda that values women's right to make choices about our sex lives and values our right to sexual pleasure and liberation. We should consider words that represent this belief system.

Some power players have gotten caught up in the anti-PC backlash, arguing that we should fuck whomever/however we want without regard to its impact. Some have responded to the claim that their sexual preference is oppressive by adopting the attitude that oppression does not matter. But our

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sexuality is political, whether we want it to be or not. We have been taught certain norms by the dominant culture, including sexual ones, and some of those norms are oppressive. Rather than argue that power play is okay because I don't care about politics, I want to argue that women's right to sexual pleasure, exploration, and self-determination is political, is feminist, and is a positive act. Instead of buying into the idea that power play means there are no ethics, we can point out that the ethics of power play highlight the importance of safety and consent and encourage open, honest negotiation.

It is also important not to deny that there can be dysfunction within power play. People can use anything for good, bad, or neutral reasons. The existence of alcohol abuse by some people is certainly not evidence that all alcohol consumption is problematic. Admitting that there might be some dysfunction within power play is not a statement about power play in general. Refusing to admit it is likely to perpetuate it.

S/M-ers also tend to misrepresent or overstate Sep beliefs, implying that Seps want to have S/M-ers locked up or that all Seps feel great hatred for all S/M-ers or fear all eroticism, none of which is true. It is important to understand the fears and motivations of Seps. They are trying to create a positive space for women, free of the negative forces that women have to deal with all the time in the "real world." The festival is not a public space, and claiming that something should be disallowed at the festival is not the same as saying that it should be generally banned.

Ultimately, I suspect that one of the reasons we attack each other with such virulence is that we can. Other dykes are safer targets than those with more power.

In 1990 Annie and I met and began dating. We have a friendly, comfortable, fun, loving relationship. We talk about just about everything, enjoying learning from each other. After we'd been dating for several months, we were talking one day about the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and I realized that in 1989, while I was at the S/M workshop, Annie was at the Sep anti-S/M workshop. And yet we did not think of each other as enemies, as members of a different species. And because we had already built up trust with each other, we were able to talk about what each "side" wanted and feared while maintaining mutual respect.

Once one travels a mere mile from "the land," as the festival grounds are called, all dykes seem to become instant allies. Stopping at gas stations in rural Michigan state, another car with a feminist bumper sticker or rainbow flag becomes cause for celebration and camaraderie. I do not mean this to be a we-are-all-united-in-lesbian-sisterhood claim. Differences among queer women are real, and ignoring those differences is often impossible or serves to perpetuate the invisibility of dykes who are minoritized in other ways. There is no particular reason that shared lesbianism should require agree-

ment; certainly we don't expect all heterosexual men, regardless of race, philosophy, class, ability, and life experience to agree with one another. Nonetheless, the shared experience of outlaw status within a society that oppresses lesbian and bisexual women (dare I say, within a heteropatriarchy) can be a starting point for dialogue. It is only within the dyke-dominant space of the festivals that the differences between us become so important.

This fact should be cause for hope. It is also a reminder about reality. No matter how nasty the lesbian infighting gets, we can all remember that dyke S/M-ers are not the source of violence in the world and that anti-S/M Seps are not the reason that sexual repression exists. While we tear at each other, those who would be happy to see all "outlaws" eliminated are continuing their work unimpeded.



Photographs by Bête Noir Images







PART V

BLACK HANKY FICTION (THE HEAVY STUFF)

BITCH

NICOLA GINZLER

So you lock yourself out of your apartment on the way to do a strip show at the local dyke sex club. You've been so distracted lately. The only other person with a set of your keys (natch) is your ex, Susan, whom you don't particularly want to ask for help. But you told her about the strip show in the hopes that she'd show up and you could see whether she's been missing you. So maybe she'll be there.

The club will get raided and closed down by the police, though, tonight—it's an election year, after all. The cops won't search anyone—fortunately, because you have a knife on you, a really nice folding one that's illegal to carry concealed. It's for the performance mostly, but cops can't be expected to understand that. You don't know any of this yet, of course. But on the way to the club you find yourself thinking that you're not really into doing this show—Corey, your latest butch lust object, can't make it. Her girlfriend—oh, sorry, *wife*—Trish, doesn't feel like going, and Corey's not allowed out by herself.

Corey's what you want, though, married woman or not. And married woman or not, she wants you too. She doesn't want to—doesn't want to want you, doesn't want to flirt with you covertly, one eye on Trish's slow vicious temper, doesn't want to have to stop herself from touching you, doesn't want to be having an affair with you, the way she is, the way she does. It started in the bathroom of another dark sleazy dyke club, Trish waiting unknowing for the two of you back at the table. You pulled Corey into the stall with you, took her hands, put yourself between them. She jerked away from you as though the touch of you burned her skin. Breathing hard. Slid her hands back to you, tense, shaking, slid them up under your skirt, along your thighs, whispered, "Bitch. What do you want. Bitch." You put your fingers lightly in the hollow of her throat, felt the blood hammering there. "I want to take you home," you said, sliding your hands to the back of your neck, "and then I want you to fuck me—Daddy."

That was three months ago, and you've been her little girl since then. You'll call her at work, "Hi," you'll say, and listen to the sharp intake of her breath. "I have some time tonight, how does eight o'clock sound?" She may show up at eight, or it may be seven, or nine, or (once) eleven—it depends on if and when

and how she can get away from Trish. Most times you'll be there when she arrives, but sometimes you'll get tired of waiting and will go out for the evening. You must be worth it though, she always comes back, materializes guilty and defiant at your door with a small tight smile and a long bulge down her left thigh. You let her in, unzip her jacket, and hang it up carefully. Then you walk back to her and stand close, take her hands and put them around you. It seems like you always have to make the first move—she's not really cheating on her wife, you suppose, if you always make the first move.

That over with, she doesn't waste any time. She ties your hands behind you and pushes you down on your knees so she can shove that long cock down your throat. One of her hands is locked in your hair, the other cradles your face. She looks down at you and lets you take her dick into your mouth, lets you play with the head for a little while with your lips and tongue. But soon she gets impatient and takes back control, pulls you deep onto her piece, almost all the way off it, back on, faster and more brutal with each stroke. She's hitting the back of your throat, you're struggling frantically to keep your gag reflex down, tears leak out of the corners of your eyes. When she finally pulls out your pulse is singing in your ears and your cunt lips are swollen and wet. She looks down at you again, her smile relaxed now, possessive.

Later she'll fuck you, then maybe she'll fist you, hard, punch-fucking you until there's blood on her gloved hand. You'll strain to meet the thrusts of her arm, your head thrown back, wanting just to take it, to be taken. Listening for that particular groaning gasp that means she's gone over into animal, to where she can't help it, to where she can't stop it, to where she couldn't stop, wouldn't, even if Trish walked into the room just then. If you've been really good she might let you touch her after that, but sometimes you don't wait for her order, you just slide your hand around her cock and harness to where it's wet and slippery and soft, and laugh when she snarls at you. You know she's not going to make you move your hand away anytime soon no matter what she says. And sometimes when you've got her like this you'll make her say out loud how bad she wants you, bad enough to risk her marriage and her home and probably her whole life in this city.

But no, you won't get to see Corey in the strip-show audience tonight. You amuse yourself the rest of the way to the club thinking about her, about how she would've looked when you got onstage, displayed yourself for all those women. She'd be with Trish of course, near the front but not too close, eyes riveted on you, fists clenched at her sides but face carefully blank. Yeah, that would have been worth seeing.

You get to the club, finally, and Susan's waiting for you when you walk in. You have a fight, she's telling you every time she talks to you you're so *negative* and she's tired of hearing it, she wants to be friends but not if she's just a wailing wall for you. Getting attacked by those three guys was weeks ago, why

are you still so upset about it? You got away, didn't you? And you never want to hear about *her* life, about how she's doing, what *do* you want anyway? You ignore the first part and just answer the last: "I want to stop being so desperate that I'd go to *you* for comfort." She glares at you. "If I thought you meant that, I'd leave right now," she says. Which is kind of a drag because you don't want her to leave, you're not done talking, but you couldn't have been more serious. And if you didn't mean it, she goes on, "Well, that was beautiful, that was so creative, that was perfect." After a while of this you close down, just shut down, and watch her mouth move and the words come out. You look at her, considering, then at a break in the flow you ask, "So—do you want to see me strip?" She meets your eyes for a split second, frozen, mouth open, then sighs and looks at the ground. "Of course," she says. "Always." You smile.

So you're changing into your strip clothes—the sequined dress, the long gloves, the black lace bra and G-string and garter belt—and that's when the police arrive. The deejay is arguing with one of them, who is trying to confiscate the sound system. The boys in blue cast speculative glances at the crowd—you wonder whether they had a lottery or something at the station for which officers got this duty. As you turn to leave, Susan in tow, you can feel the cops' eyes crawling up the seams in your stockings, over the curve of your ass.

You go to Susan's because you're still locked out, remember? Her lover Stephen is in her bed when you get there, he wakes up when you come in. Susan's been seeing him for a while now, since before you broke up with her. She says almost unwillingly that you can spend the night if you want, it's too late for you to go home. You're not sure you want to stay, but it is late. And anyway you're still mad you didn't get to do your show, even if the audience you really wanted wasn't there. You're already in your strip outfit too, and that decides you. So you ignore Stephen and ask Susan again if she wants to see you strip. "Yes," she says, almost inaudible. You know you could've just told her you were going to do it, without asking, but you wanted to hear her admit she wanted it—some things never change, you suppose.

You put the music on, low because it's almost four in the morning now, slide the knife out of your stocking, flash it, put it back. The gloves come off first, they fall in delicate shivering piles on the hardwood floor. There are unpacked cardboard boxes everywhere and you have to watch your step. Stephen must have moved in with her, you realize. You try not to think about that as you pick your way through the maze, stopping to touch knife to tongue, to throat, to breasts, belly, thighs.

The dress is next, but you don't cut it off you as you'd planned for the club show—she's not worth replacing the whole front—you just unzip it down the back and tell her what she's missing. Then the dress is a discarded heap of pale shimmers next to the gloves. Your hand is inside your G-string, and you're circling your clit with a wet, slippery finger. You're thinking about Corey again,

about the feel of her eyes on you, the way her fingers would be tightening on the arms of her chair, how you could see her trying not to change position, if it were her in front of you. You watch Susan's eyes flicker over you as you shift your weight slowly, deliberately, let your hands drift over your body.

You do use the knife on the cheap elastic of the bra and G-string, watch her jump as you slice through, snapping the blade shut afterward with a decisive *click*. You flip it out again, work the handle back and forth between your legs, feeling it slip easily between the slick folds of your cunt. You hold the knife by the back of the blade, and then you're fucking yourself with the handle, slowly—much more slowly than you know Susan wants you to—feeling the texture of the handle against your wet lips. The last song is almost over—abruptly you let the knife slide out of you.

As the music ends, you've brought the knife to your mouth, you're sucking your juices off the handle. Then you're on your knees, licking along the length of it like it's a cock, like it's your daddy's cock and you're between her legs and she's got you by the hair. Your daddy isn't here, though—she's asleep next to Trish in the conjugal bed, no doubt. But Susan's right in front of you, looking like a rabbit caught in the headlights of a car. You smile to yourself, wondering what she'd do if you told her that.

"You're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen." She says it without inflection, not a compliment but a statement of fact.

Stephen chimes in, "Yeah, that was the sexiest strip ever." You'd forgotten about him. You swivel your head around to look at him and realize he's the only man, the only straight man anyway, you'd have stripped in front of. You're not sure what that means about him. Or about you, you suppose. Susan shakes herself all over like a dog then, remarks, "Dunno if you'd win Miss Congeniality, though," and it catches you off guard, you don't know what to do except laugh along with the two of them just like you're all still friends.

But later, when they're curled around each other under the covers next to you, you're staring at the ceiling in the dim light. Is that what it's about, congeniality? Funny how you never figured that one out. And what is it about love, or sex anyway, that makes it so different from what you used to think it was? Is that all you do, is that all anyone does, use it like a weapon? You don't know, you're certain you don't want any new insights about yourself—"Self-knowledge is almost always bad news," the woman who's beside you in the bed used to say with a smile. You turn over and listen to her breathing, deep and even, and try to sleep.

"Bitch" was first performed by the author as part of Death on Heels: Femme Dykes of the '90s, a collaborative show, in late 1993.

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LYDIA STEPTOE

I nterstate 35 stretched through Texas like an asphalt rubber band, from the Mexican-American border at Nuevo Laredo to the Red River just north of Gainesville. On summer days under a white, heat-blistered dome, the road boiled black in temperatures as hot as a madman's frenzy, lethal heat that scars your brain and corrupts the skin of the uninitiated like sin. On those days, the sane stayed indoors. Interstate 35 ran through Austin like a line of cocaine: thin, bitter, electric, exhausting, and final. West of that line were the nice apartments, businesses in rehabbed warehouses, fern bars, the campus, the capitol. Farther west, the land graduated upward in soft, plush hills that sheltered the upwardly mobile in equally soft plush houses. East of the highway lived the other half, the disenfranchised, the underclasses, and sundry marginal populations: straight hookers, queer hookers, some the cops called he-shes, people of color some called spic or nigger. The out queers gathered there too, where sirens screamed ragged through the night with familiar voices. Streets needed fixing; alleys held nightwalkers who needed fixing. It was hotter on the east side of town—all the way around.

She sat on a bar stool in the Burning Bridges Saloon and Dance Hall, a place sunk so deep into east Austin that in general no one hassled the women who went there to dance and drink with other women. She could just sit there, adrift in a haze of cigarette smoke, and look simply damn fine. The smoke swirled about, veiling her face in a tangy perfume of enigma and allure. Her black hair was short, but on that woman, it didn't look like dyke haircut number six. No, it fit her like the rest of everything about her: the creamy silk shell, the black linen slacks, the shiny black pumps. She wore no jewelry; her nails were short, unpainted, manicured.

You could watch her eye the women in the large room, her glance sweeping over them as she sipped a martini—onion, no olive. She'd bring the glass to her lips, swallow some of the clear, burning liquid, and pick someone to check out over the rim. Unconsciously, her tongue would circle the lip of the wide-mouthed glass, stab at the translucent skin of the tiny onion. Though her gaze was directed outward, there was no invitation in it. If anything, she shifted her position at times to stay clear of another woman's line of vision.

Then she'd set the glass back on the bar slowly, contemplative and searching.

Not too many new faces in the Burning Bridges that night, though. With so few truly bent people in the world, it's like living in a small town—everybody knew everybody, what you did, with whom you did it, and if you came home last night. People ran away sometimes, like they do in small towns, looking for some bigger place, but the only place to run to is the straight world. And so you all walked that crooked mile and kept falling out of line and off the straight and narrow. And you came back, easing into the bar where everyone knew you and you knew that they knew you'd be back.

But this time there was someone nobody seemed to know. She had come in early, way before the usual crowd. She stood in the doorway a moment, adjusting her eyes to the dark after being outside in the sunlight. The dust disturbed by her movements shimmied around her ankles, framing her in the haze of a superheated Texas afternoon. She moved confidently enough toward the bar, but somewhere about her was a faint air of uncertainty that blurred her edges just enough that you couldn't quite make her out. She was wearing a white lace top that hugged her slender torso to just below her ribs, and a pale lavender skirt with buttons up the front that went down to her calves. (Depending on if you're a pessimist or an optimist, you could consider the skirt buttoned or unbuttoned. The buttons were undone enough so that when she sat down, the skirt spilled open over her legs. You could only hope she'd been raised in a barn and didn't know enough to sit with her legs together.)

Her shady red hair came down below her shoulders. She wore glasses, no makeup, and no jewelry. You could guess she didn't wear any underwear either. She ordered red wine in a voice that was soft but surprisingly low and sat down in one of the overstuffed chairs on the west wall. The sunlight slanted in, diffused through a dusty window, and she pulled out a book to read.

Well, Mattie, the bartender, was stunned. She thought about telling her that the library was over on Lavaca Boulevard but decided to wait and see what happened.

The newcomer only occasionally looked up, sometimes shifting her weight or curling her legs up under her. She was focused, reading with concentration and attention. When the technicians from the Lower Colorado River Authority came in, laughing and telling stories about the day, she glanced up and smiled. As the place filled up, the decibel level approached critical mass. Mattie never got any complaints, though, because there were two other bars, a stop-and-rob, and a liquor store all within two blocks that generated a tolerable amount of noise themselves. But the Burning Bridges never did resemble a library, and the noise must have finally gotten to the lacy one, because she picked up her book and made to leave.

The martini drinker was at her side quieter than a belt sliding out of the loops and quicker than a switchblade snicking open. She escorted the reader

back to the bar for another round. They exchanged names. Everyone knew Danni's name (it was really Dierdre), and the newcomer called herself Joanna McAdams. Danni ordered another red wine, priding herself a little on having made the observation. But Joanna spoke for herself and had a vodka, neat. They leaned in close to hear each other above the din.

Mattie stuffed a dishcloth down the inside of a beer mug and watched. She had surfed in the wake of Danni's perfume every Friday and Saturday night for the past couple of years. Danni, though, had a well-deserved reputation for chewing lovers up and spitting them out, and Mattie had learned over the years the vastly important difference between the eroticism of consensual masochism and the everyday, unconscious black-hole pain that came from bad choices propelled by a hunger of the heart. Still, she wished she could take Danni down a notch or two and then live with her happily ever after.

Danni had drawn a bead on Joanna from the get-go, but before she could even start to pour on the charm, Regina (a.k.a. Ginny, a.k.a. Gin) broke off from the LCRA group hanging out by the pool table. Now, messing with Danni's *femme de jour* was a mistake not too many people made. But Gin was buzzed on the liquor that gave her her nickname, which meant she was looking to start a fight or get laid—preferably both—in that order. She hunkered down in front of Joanna's knees, rubbed the hem of the lavender skirt between her thumb and forefinger, and asked did she know how to shoot pool. Joanna grinned a slow, deep grin and just nodded. Gin tipped an imaginary cap to Danni and said, "Scuse me." She made off with Joanna like a defensive back with a fumble, eyes on the end zone and dreaming of a chance to score.

With elaborate courtesy, Gin let Joanna break, sure she would get her shot and impress the new girl. Joanna's stroke was not powerful. It was deliberate. The velocity of the cue ball spread through the fifteen balls on the table, propelling them in a fingered pattern, like a fist uncurling. The five ball rolled lazily toward the corner pocket and loped in. The two ball hovered on the lip of the side pocket, looking like a puff of air would tip it in. Wagging the end of the cue stick, Joanna deftly indicated it for her next shot. Gin picked up the chalk. Joanna's stick made a soft thunk against the bottom of the cue ball's curve. The ball rolled smartly toward the two. At impact, a sharp report signaled the complete transference of momentum. The two ball popped into the pocket like it had been stuck with a cattle prod, and the cue ball snapped to a stop, taking its place on the lip of the pocket. Joanna got that look of pure focused concentration, like she had when she was reading, like it was a small world—just her, a stick, and the rolling balls. She cleared the table.

The group around the pool table stared at the felt like it was the sight of the Second Coming. Even Gin was impressed, and Danni, for once, had nothing to say. Only when "God Bless Texas" roared out of the jukebox and the crowd got up to line dance did they startle out of their collective trance. It was

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one of those suspended moments when something has to give, only no one knows exactly what. People seem to move in slow motion, like they do when it's too hot to be quick. Joanna had racked her pool cue. Gin still held hers in both hands across her chest. Her mouth yawned open in a sneer to spew out some challenge to Danni's claim to Joanna. Danni rose up out of her chair to meet the challenge; her right hand curled into a fist at the same time. The two hometown girls squared off in some bizarre tableau of stereotypical Texas men grabbing their balls while saying things like, "The lady came in with me, and she'll leave with me," or worse, "That there's *my* filly." Joanna, though, was moving in real time, and she slipped in behind Danni. Danni's spine stiffened, and her eyes locked straight ahead. They left.

Out in the parking lot, Joanna had Danni plastered up against the side of a car. The metal warmed instantly under her skin, made hot with panic. The night breeze cooled the sweat at her temples. Noises erupted out of the shadows—crickets, tree frogs, a june bug's demented buzz. Danni felt pinned to the car as much or more by the force of Joanna's penetrating stare as by the small-caliber piece of persuasion that Joanna had used to get her out of the bar and that was now pressed into her ribs. Joanna had kicked her legs apart and was quietly giving her a Feminism 101 lecture.

"*Just* because a woman is small, *just* because she knows how to fix her hair, and *just* because she wears a skirt *doesn't* mean she can't drink, shoot pool, or carry a gun. And it *certainly* doesn't mean she'll go home with whoever lays claim to her. What do you think this is? A chapter out of a Louis L'Amour novel?" She emphasized her point with quick jabs into Danni's side until the woman was nodding in agreement.

Danni kept nodding even after Joanna fell silent. While Danni bobbed her head up and down in a sort of stupor, Joanna slid her right hand down inside Danni's blouse and under her bra. She scooped up her right breast, squeezing her nipple between her thumb and index finger. When Danni protested, Joanna pulled her hand out of Danni's blouse and shimmied her slender fingers down her pants. That's when Danni found her tongue and bleated out, "You'd never use that thing anyway. I'm going back inside." Joanna shot out the tire of the car Danni was leaning on and went back to work inside her pants. Danni's body sagged with the shifting weight of the car. Nobody came outside to see what was happening, mostly because the jukebox had been kicked into high gear, making Mattie worry one more time about her hearing. And what's another stray bullet in East Austin.

Danni's cunt was as dry as a Texas creek bed in August. Fear had sucked the moisture right out of her. She had never been this scared. She was alone in a parking lot east of I-35 with an armed, deranged femme. Time suspended itself again. The blast rang in her ears. She felt the kick from the gun as the vibrations traveled up Joanna's arm and traversed her body. The smell of gun-

powder mixed with perfume and cedar trees, and she thought she would vomit. The world became the muzzle of a gun in her ribs. The cicadas hummed a descant to her fear. She waited. Was still. Hoped someone would come outside.

Danni's fear acted on Joanna like an aphrodisiac. She knew exactly who Danni was, and she liked having the perpetual top in obedience mode. She needed to usher this episode back over the boundary of the consensual, but she also wanted to keep Danni under, not relinquish the upper hand the gun gave her.

When she topped, Joanna burrowed deep inside the other woman's brain and heart until her emotions turned inside out and her body betrayed her desire. She prowled around another woman's dreaded states—her fetishes about gender, rape, childhood, abandonment, knives, ropes, cursing—like a fiendish seamstress, hunting the thread that would bind fear to desire. Joanna wove her lover's own fears and wants into a desperate tension, and when the fabric of desire stretched thin and shiny, Joanna would tug on the threads. As she got closer to having her lover unravel, she felt a keen, piercing high, an electrified vision focused on the most intimate of emotions. That was when she felt most powerful, when her lover delivered herself. She wanted to lure a woman to the edge of whatever scared her the most and then get her off on it. That act was a thrill to her. And she was deft, had a touch, like she did with a pool cue. Right now, Danni had to want to stay where she was.

"Look at yourself," Joanna hissed in Danni's ear. Her warm breath, tinged with vodka, sent shivers through Danni's already over-amped brain. "You're so scared, you don't know whether to piss or throw up." In the debate over whether to piss or throw up, Danni realized that she had forgotten to breathe too. She gulped in some air, but before she could use it to give voice to her objections, Joanna pressed on. "You don't know what it's like on the bottom, do you?" No answer. "*Do* you? You're like a character out of *Macho Shuts*. Do you get books like that here in the outback?" Joanna didn't pause long enough for Danni to get indignant about Austin's being a queer cultural wasteland. "Chris in 'The Calyx of Isis' says she's such a chickenshit she has to be a top. That's you, right? *Right*?" Danni stewed, thinking that this bitch read too much.

"I'm no chickenshit," she croaked. "I can take anything you can dish out." Not very original, but fear acted like a filter on her wit.

"You willing to say that if I put this away?" Joanna drew the muzzle of the gun up Danni's side, trailed the metal sight across her breasts. She watched Danni's inner debate. "Do you agree to a scene?"

"I agree to negotiate one."

"Negotiate and follow through? Are you in for the duration?"

Silence lengthened, spilling out into the night like a shadow.

"Yes."

Joanna spun Danni around, circled her waist with her right arm, and forced

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a kiss down her throat. Teeth caught on flesh—pulled, sucked, tasted blood. She was gratified with a small upward spasm, an impulse from Danni's pelvis, and pressure back from her lips. Smells of sweat and sex blended in the hot night air charged with tension and electricity hanging blue between them, like right before a thunderstorm steps off a steep Texas ridge. The gun hung in her left hand by her side. Danni debated making a move for it, figuring she had fifteen pounds and three inches on Joanna. But she didn't, feeling more and more sure of herself as she kissed Joanna back. She had been caught off guard by the gun, but she was finding her top space again. When she put her hand in Joanna's hair and pulled, she distinctly heard a moan inside her mouth.

Joanna circled the figure strung up in the door frame, trailed a fingernail down the exposed flesh of Danni's back and breasts. She had wrapped Danni's eyes with a blindfold, taking away her ability to see. This is a vision-privileged world: if you can see it, you can know it. Joanna's own vision was so poor, she relied much more on touch, smell, and hearing, but she understood the importance of eye contact as a connection between two people and made sure Danni's own line of vision turned the only place it could go: inward. Joanna forced the watcher to become the watched, counting on the confusion and anxiety generated by that particular vulnerability to keep her edge.

She made minute adjustments to the blindfold and the gag, sensing Danni's impatience, hoping she was gnashing her teeth. Joanna was small physically. Though strong for her weight and height, she couldn't really force anyone to do much of anything. Having people "let her" top blunted the edge of sexual adventure; submissives had never appealed to her. All her life she had had to work to be taken seriously. Even other dykes thought she was merely cute; her anger at their condescension generally produced only more of the same. Topping for her meant the surgical removal of whatever lay deepest inside. With that information in her possession, she wielded a power that soaked her in satisfaction. She craved the challenge of reluctance just so she could overcome it. But it had to be actual reluctance, not the wayward waltz of the do-me queen. She wanted to open women like a safecracker, with skill, manual dexterity, and timing. And she had the tools: she could think, she could wait, and she could watch.

Danni had let her string her up in the doorway. She had been so fucking macho about how much physical punishment she could take, Joanna had finally stuffed a ball gag in her mouth. She wondered if that Louis L'Amour stuff was contagious, if once you crossed the border at the Red River or the Rio Grande or the Mississippi you started to swagger and bully about, even the women. Joanna had to shake her head to clear the image. Now was not the time to laugh. She turned her attention back to Danni, knowing precisely who she was. She was the type who—for whatever reason—could never really bot-

tom. If she did, she topped from the bottom: second-guessing the top, making decisions that weren't hers to make, sometimes using her safe word when she didn't really need it but thought her partner looked tired or worried, taking way too much responsibility for a scene once it got started. Topping from the bottom was a dodge, a way to avoid the careful regard of the skillful top, a way out of facing the level of exposure that can happen when you're full-out in a scene.

Joanna started with a flogger, nine heavy, flat strands sunk into a braided leather handle. She wore a racquetball glove to keep it centered in her palm and to prevent hand fatigue. She used the air fanned by the whip to telegraph her movements to Danni, watching her muscles bunch up in anticipation. The blows would hurt more that way, Joanna knew, bruising rather than stinging. She did Danni's backside to a turn, laying lashes across her shoulders, ass, thighs, even her calves. The blows drummed a cadence that became inevitable. By the time she stopped, Danni had been mesmerized by rhythm and endorphins.

Joanna moved around her again, creating a confusion in Danni's flesh. She picked up a carriage whip that had a cracker and approached Danni from the front, trailing the whip over her breasts. Danni's body began to fidget. With each stroke, even ever so light, a shudder racked Danni's whole body. Joanna had never seen a reaction quite so marked before, and she lingered there, swatting the hard pebbles of Danni's nipples just to see the spasm jolt through Danni's torso and down her legs. She roused herself and moved on to the sensitive skin of Danni's inner thighs, her belly. All of this was to let Danni's back rest. She returned to that site with a single-tailed whip. She had to stand several feet back, but her control was impeccable, her aim precise. She held the handle of the whip, forcing motion out of its tip with the same focused concentration that she had when she read or used a pool stick to force motion out of a cue ball. The physics of each act seemed discreet—shoulder to forearm to wrist to hand—but combined for tremendous power.

Once, Danni's body sagged under a lash instead of pulsing forward. That shift in the physical plane was Joanna's cue. Danni was vulnerable to suggestion. Joanna tossed the whip over by the bed and began to caress her, stroke her with her hands. She drank in the scent of Danni's sweat, licked her between the shoulder blades, nipping at the welts. Her handiwork excited her. She uncinched the leather straps and helped Danni to the bed. Quickly, she got Danni's wrists in leather cuffs behind her back and turned her on her side. Then she spooned her body next to Danni, who was still breathing hard.

"We're not through," she whispered as she took out the gag. "I'm not even tired yet. Are you giving up?" Danni managed to shake her head no. She had been surprised by both Joanna's skill and her stamina. She was going to have to rethink her attitude toward small women and femmes in

PERSISTENCE OF VISION

general. This one was mean.

"Here's the deal: as long as you do what I tell you, you can stay here. That was a warm-up for me; we'd be at it all night, you know." She hoped this would work, because she certainly wasn't up for an all-nighter. Danni nodded her head. Joanna pulled her close and gently stroked her. Danni's body went rigid. Joanna made another pass over her belly and stared hard as her body went so stiff she seemed in the early stages of rigor mortis. Joanna uncuffed her and spread her out on the bed, amazed at the anxious rigidity of the other woman's body as Danni looked at her, just looked at her. She even flinched, as if Joanna had raised her hand to her. Joanna began to make love to Danni. Vanilla sex from the '70s—no penetration, just womyn caressing womyn with gentleness and tenderness. She kissed her eyelids, her cheeks, ran her tongue over Danni's lips, urged a kiss on her, then moved on. The body under her remained hard, tensed.

Joanna slid her tongue along Danni's collarbone, clearly on her way to Danni's breasts. As her mouth began to close around Danni's right nipple, Danni kind of squeaked and drew her arms in. Joanna made *tsk, tsk* noises and picked up the whip. Trapped by her own bravado, Danni had to put her arms back where they had been, reexposing her body to Joanna's ministrations.

"You're not too sure about this, are you?" Joanna whispered. "You'll subject your body to all kinds of torture, but I'm not going to hurt you. I *am* going to look at you, though—everywhere, with my eyes, my tongue, my hands, my fingers. I will *see* all of your body." She dragged her hands along Danni's torso, pushing in on her rib cage, spreading her fingers across her breasts. She sat astride her and looked right at her.

Danni squirmed under a gaze that beat down on her as hard as any Texas sun she'd ever felt. She was blistered, seared, scared.

"Please stop looking at me."

Danni's voice was so weak, Joanna almost couldn't hear it. She plastered her body on top of Danni, holding her head still with her hands, fingers splayed in her hair.

"No."

Danni whimpered.

"Defy me and pay. I *will* look at you." She slipped up and down Danni's body on their mutual moisture, burying her face in Danni's belly, sinking her teeth into Danni's neck, raising herself up on her palms to gaze at Danni's face. Danni turned her head away, almost crying. Danni knew that Joanna had been right. She was such a chickenshit she did have to top. When you top, no one really looks at you. Submissives can be counted on to look down. And there's always blindfolds if they don't.

Danni struggled with old feelings dredged up by Joanna's insistence. She found herself looking backward from the here to the then, remembering

growing up in a large family, craving attention from both her parents, mostly from her father. But he was one of those crisis-intervention parents who focused on her only when she was in trouble—about grades, cutting school to ride horses, scamming money to pay for lessons. Even when she grew up, grew breasts and cut her hair, he hadn't noticed. If he commented on her physical appearance, it was to reprimand her for failing to behave like a lady. Her mother's comments generally centered on her need for makeup so boys would notice her. When they did, she shrank from their crude, sex-laced remarks and went home to wash her face. The moral was that no one looked at you except if you were in trouble and about to be scolded or humiliated. And if you could keep people from looking at you, you could stay out of trouble. She was having trouble right now staying put under Joanna's gaze.

That gaze was warming her too. She wanted it. She still wanted kind attention, praise, affection, compliments, but couldn't risk exposing herself enough to hear them. Joanna was breathing them into her ear, massaging them into her body. Danni felt as if Joanna had soul-custody of her body. She was giving in. Joanna moved across the terrain of her physical being with genuine fervor. She actually made growly noises in her throat as she licked, kissed, bit, and generally snarled her way over Danni's shoulders, hips, breasts, and thighs. Only when she stopped and raised herself again to look at Danni in the face did Danni remember the danger of being seen. She curled up on her side.

But Joanna could not be shaken off. She pushed Danni's left shoulder back down on the bed and kissed her lips, cutting off protests and an agreement to be whipped again. Danni would rather experience anything than feel herself being looked at. The other shoe had to drop. Where was the disapproval, the criticism?

There was none. Joanna's desire was real, palpable, driven with lust. Danni felt like her emotions had been kicked back and forth along that line of vision, from adulthood to adolescence and back again. She was frightened and wanting. She wanted this much attention, feared its consequences but didn't want it to stop. Joanna was in an animal frenzy, almost eating Danni alive. Her hands and mouth worked independently of each other. She finally landed on Danni's cunt with tremendous determination. While her tongue and teeth sent Danni into orbit, her hands were never still. They roamed wherever they could reach, constantly reminding Danni that her body was under scrutiny, visual or tactile. No part of her would go unknown.

Finally, when Danni was responding to her mouth and hands, Joanna reached for the dildo. She plunged the phallus deep inside Danni's cunt. Danni screamed and slammed her pelvis upward toward the shaft. The impact reverberated up Joanna's arm. She raised herself up to look right at Danni.

"Look at me," she commanded. "Watch me watch you. I'm going to watch you come. Play with your tits." Hesitation. Joanna stopped moving her arm and

slowly, achingly, began to pull the dildo out. Danni's cunt lips kissed the shaft in an exaggerated pout, seeming to hang on to the toy. Danni waited as long as she could, hoping that Joanna didn't really mean to stop, but she wasn't bluffing.

"No! Don't take it out!" Danni's hands wavered tentatively in the direction of her breasts. She began to massage them with her palms flat out over the nipples like she did when she was alone. She kept her eyes on Joanna, her face reddened.

"Mmm. That looks so nice. Put your fingers in your mouth. Suck them. Match the rhythm of the dildo. Good. Now find your clit. Rub it the way you do when you get yourself off."

Joanna knelt down between Danni's legs, shifting the dildo to her left hand, moving it in and out of Danni's swollen cunt. Moisture seeped, began to drip. She had a full view of Danni's body—its reactions, fluids, undulations, the way Danni unconsciously ran her tongue over her lips. That was very sexy. Joanna had to remind Danni to keep her eyes open, to watch being watched.

Slowly, Danni warmed to the gaze. While Joanna looked over Danni's body and returned to her face, Danni worked to hold her eyes. She began to move in ways designed to turn Joanna on: planting her feet and pushing up with her hips, letting her knees fall wider apart, rocking her pelvis. She let herself moan, feel the cock inside her, feel first her palm, then Joanna's fist on her clit. She was writhing under Joanna's look. With their eyes locked, Danni came in a convulsive orgasm that seemed to radiate out along her line of vision throughout her entire body. They lay together exhausted for a long, long time.

As the sun rose to launch another day's blasting heat at hapless Texans, Danni rolled over and looked at Joanna again, smiling, still embarrassed, but pleased. She spread her hand in Joanna's hair, remembering the moan she felt in her mouth the night before in the parking lot.

"Now you have to answer me some questions."

Joanna's eyebrows arched up.

"You don't carry a purse?"

"No."

"A backpack?"

"No."

"Pockets in that skirt?"

"No."

"In the shirt?"

Joanna laughed.

"So tell me. Just where *did* you hide that gun?"

DOUBLE TAKE

TAIGA RHYS

Terry lay quietly half-asleep on the bed with his old friend and fuck buddy, Jack. Down the hall, Kaitlyn, Tika, and Josi were showering and getting dressed, and probably a whole lot more. "Buddy," Terry said with a smile, "what say you and I get us a little tail before we go out tonight and maybe teach that uppity bitch a thing or two about paybacks?" Jack was pleased and excited at the prospect, just as Terry had expected. Jack was always up for a good hard fuck.

Earlier in the day, Kaitlyn had masterminded an evil, rotten, fabulous plot against the unsuspecting boys. Knowing that they would come through the door together shortly after noon from a morning's worth of errands, she'd laid a trap for them, with Tika and Josi as the bait. As they stepped through the entryway into the darkened hall, the vision of Kaitlyn, silhouetted in the light coming from the doorway of the living room behind her, greeted them. She was geared up in her sharpest bitch-femme leathers, accented by ornamental lengths of chain and just a touch of lace. She stood perfectly balanced on a pair of dangerously high heels, cold and unsmiling, pointing a shiny .38 revolver directly at them. "Good morning, boys," she said with a tone of complete victory. She looked as smug as a house cat with a mouse in its teeth, and why not? She was in total control of these sex-toy men, their lives, their very souls at that moment. Of course, she didn't need threats or weapons to get from them what she knew they would willingly give, but it made for an exciting beginning to their afternoon and got her wet besides. Before they had a chance to get their bearings, Kaitlyn ordered them in her best storm-trooper-cop alto, "Strip down and on your knees, fuckers!" What choice did they have? Not that they minded this turn of events. They'd certainly been humbled by this woman before, and though they had often found it challenging, it was always well worth the effort. In all the time they had been living with Kaitlyn and her slave-slut companions, they'd never been disappointed.

Once they were naked in front of her, she took a step closer, squared her stance, and spoke to them in a reptilian hiss of a whisper. "Josi missed you this morning. I whipped her raw while you were out, and we all know how

hungry she gets for cock after a whipping, don't we? She's so swollen and tender; so ready to be fucked. She's dripping wet, wanting, no, needing relief. And our sweet little Tika got some attention this morning too. I flushed her out good. That tight little hole is squeaky clean and ready to be laid open by some big driving dick. Sound tempting? A little snatch? Some firm young ass? Yes, I can see that it does. Well then, unless you want to pass up all that delicate girl meat and leave the poor sluts alone in their misery, not to mention risking a bullet up your ass, you had best do as I say." Their silence was their submission.

Kaitlyn took several steps back and ordered the pair into the living room. The fold-out bed was open, and all the other furniture except one end table standing beside the bed had been pushed against the walls. This left plenty of space to move around in. The venetian blinds were open, making the room bright and warm. The light was of little comfort to Terry and Jack as they moved quickly out of the darkened hallway with its hardwood floors and into the carpeted living room. Josi and Tika were nowhere to be seen. "I'm gonna put some color back in that pale ass of yours, Terry. And Jack, honey, you'd better not move, understand? You just be a good boy and wait patiently or Mama will blow your fucking head off."

As Kaitlyn's intentions were made clear, Terry seethed silently in his mind. He was pissed off at her blatant, and no doubt intentional, disregard for his recently healed bruises. The marks on his ass and the backs and fronts of his thighs still resembled pale yellow-green sunbursts from the beating she'd given him last weekend. Bloody fucking hell. But even as he cursed her in his mind, his body was beginning to respond to her words, anticipating the sweet torture he longed to suffer.

Terry could definitely be said to have a fondness for whips. He usually liked the feel of a cane as well, but Kaitlyn's favorite cane was another story altogether. It was made of white fiberglass, with a black handle and a black tip. Its flexibility made up for what it lacked in diameter, which couldn't have been more than a quarter of an inch at the most. It had a bite and a lingering sting in Kaitlyn's powerful hand and the maddening ability to irritate and inflame without quite satisfying the needs of a serious masochist like Terry.

Kaitlyn had learned his preferences and fears through experience, and so, delighting in her cruelty, she chose to begin his beating with this much-despised personal favorite. After quickly stashing the revolver in the holster below her left shoulder, she took the cane from where it hung on a Shaker pegboard on the wall. She circled round the two motionless figures before her, enjoying the moments of calm before the storm. Then she slowly, almost gently, began tending to the helpless figure at her feet. She loved caning Terry when he was on all fours. Somehow it seemed to fit his nature—submissive yet animal-wild. Kaitlyn stroked and tapped his naked thighs, his ass, his calves,

and the soles of his feet. She delivered short strokes to the broad shoulders she would cling to when he plowed into her with his ever-hard dick.

A red warmth spread over Terry's skin, and he began to move with the rhythm of the cane. Seeing his response, smelling it, hearing it in his low crooning moans caused Kaitlyn to pick up the pace and put more muscle into the beating. She was incited to greater heights of sadism by his obvious distress. The cane fell again and again, leaving row upon row of double-ridged vertical and horizontal stripes up and down the length of his body. He was shaking and crying out now as each stroke of the vicious little weapon propelled him forward, sideways, or nearly flat to the ground. He struggled to manage the pain-recoil and escape his torment. When the cane landed on his fading bruises, nightmares of shrill misery exploded just beneath his skin. Soon, though, as he crossed some invisible line, the character of the beating changed for Terry. The transition was quick and smooth. Physical pleasure of an almost razor-sharp sweetness flooded through his limbs and torso, and a gentle calm descended on his mind.

Endorphins in a masochist are an amazing thing. It wasn't that the beating stopped hurting, rather that the pain had ceased to be wholly unpleasant and was instead mixed with delight. Terry hadn't hated feeling pure pain, to be sure, but now the pain was taking him somewhere. It started to carry him both out of and further into his body at the same time. He was connecting, and it pushed him farther down into his bottom space. He needed and craved these body-mind feelings. He never stopped longing for this place of paradox, and it is a place. Being bottomed out was like being in another world, another time, another reality, and Terry didn't want to imagine life without it.

As Terry's mind took off for uncharted space, his body ran sweat and every pore oozed desire. He was shouting and cursing for release, which served to urge on his top in her quest for blood. Kaitlyn knew where he'd gone in his mind and body. She was informed by his sounds and movements, a noticeable relaxation in the way he held his body, the deepening of his breath, and the change in his energy. She decided to let him float along on his pain high for a while, preparing him to take what was to come, so she administered steady, even strokes to her happy boy-toy for another ten minutes or so. Then it was time to up the ante.

The beating stopped momentarily as Kaitlyn stepped back and watched Terry swaying slightly, head hanging, hair falling around his face. Jack was quiet and motionless, obeying her orders gracefully. Kaitlyn grabbed a heavy black butt plug off the end table and, without much ceremony (or much lube, save a token swipe at its tip with her tongue) shoved it full-tilt up Terry's resistant ass. She was rewarded with the sound of a sharp intake of breath and more cursing as the dry plug burrowed into Terry's hole. *I knew that would clear the fog out of his brain*, she thought with satisfaction. "Don't lose it, baby, or you're gonna

be one sorry motherfucker," Kaitlyn promised. This he already knew.

The cane was traded in for a black latex whip with twenty falls, lots of sting, and no mercy. She laid into his welted ass, back, and thighs, and wherever else she could reach. She pounded him hard, adding insult to his injury. Occasionally, she would stop to pull on his nipples, stroke him with her hand, or drag the long nails on her left hand roughly over his wounds, drawing tiny spots of blood where the flesh had been worn thin. She did everything she could think of to shock him, so as to bring him a bit up out of his bottom-space haze, only to drop him down further seconds later.

He was screaming in earnest now, begging her to "Stop, please, no, no, don't, please, more! Bitch! Oh, please let me fuck you Mama please God *damn* it! Oh, shit, shit, shit...yes, oh, fuck, man!" On and on it went, with Kaitlyn talking back to him in sarcastic singsong fashion, "That's right, baby. Tell Mama what you want. Uh-huh, that's it. How's it make you feel, fucker? Tell me all about it." Terry kept on pleading and cursing, moaning and screaming. Kaitlyn kept swinging and clawing and teasing. Both of them were getting more and more ready...more impatient and hungry.

At last the whipping stopped. Terry was panting and sweating, bruised on the outside by the woman standing over him, bruised on the inside by the butt plug stretching his ass. Kaitlyn herded him toward the wall and chained him there along with Jack. There were eyebolts strategically placed around the apartment, and she had prepared the cuffs, chains, and locks in advance. "Now, my sweet babies," she cooed, "don't go anywhere. Mama will be right back." After sinking her barb of sarcasm, she strode out of the room.

She returned a couple of minutes later with Tika and Josi—naked, sweet, and available as ripe plums just waiting to be picked. In the next moment they were on the bed. Kaitlyn's fingers searched out the desire and wetness that had been promised to Terry and Jack. Terry watched with mingled excitement, frustration, and indignation. The color rose in his face to match the red hues on his back and ass as his fury and his need grew. His breathing became rapid. He strained against his chains, and his pupils widened with passion and anger as the scene in front of him unfolded. Kaitlyn pile-driver fucked Josi with a thick leather cock, then tore it away only to sink it into Tika's clean and ready hole. Hips thrust wildly, damp girl scent filled the air, shaven cunt lips shone slick with juice. A vibrator was taken from the end table and slid up a waiting ass...there was the deep humming, and then the coming...and coming...till there was no more movement but the rise and fall of lungs clamoring for air.

Kaitlyn rose from the bed and went to where the boys waited, bound to the wall. She could see the anger she had provoked, as well as the desire. She was afforded complete power by the depth of their craving and their torment. They were begging for mercy, for even the lightest of caresses to ease their

suffering, to soothe their longing for the reward they'd been promised. Kaitlyn slowly and deliberately reached out to her needy slaves. She started steadily pumping the butt plug lodged in Terry's ass and grabbed a fistful of Jack meat with the other hand. She squeezed and stroked and teased the thick cock for a while before lowering her mouth and gradually taking him in. She kept fucking Terry's ass while she sucked and swallowed Jack, her lips and tongue working feverishly along his length from tip to base. Terry watched Kaitlyn's warm, painted mouth working on the big rod in front of him and felt the hard, insistent pounding in his ass. It was too much. He'd waited so long; he just couldn't wait any longer. His brain knew it was over first and sent tingling light racing through his body. His muscles strained and tightened, hips thrust forward, ass cheeks working furiously. The veins stood out on his neck as if they would burst, and his body shook with the force of his coming. A powerful growling sound forced its way past his clenched teeth as he shot his load of come, soaking his mistress. Jack never lost step with Terry as the mouth around his meat pulled him over the edge.

Kaitlyn stood up, a grin tugging at the corners of her mouth. "Are you satisfied, my loves?" she asked, already knowing the answer. "Maybe," Terry said wickedly, "but you promised us pussy and ass." Kaitlyn smiled sweetly at him, stroking his chest and belly as she looked into his eyes. "That's true," she admitted with a hint of a pout as she turned and headed for the bedroom. When she reached the door she turned and said simply, "But I lied." With this she laughed and disappeared into the bedroom with the girls.

Jack and Terry were eventually released after a seething barrage of good-hearted, half-feigned curses met by equally villainous feminine laughter. And so it happened that they were lying on the couch bed in the living room with the girls getting washed up down the hall. Terry was determined to have his revenge for the broken promise, and Jack was more than happy to go along with whatever plan Terry came up with. Jack was usually a submissive type, able and willing to do whatever was asked of him. He could, however, be very forceful in his own right when he was obliged to be.

But Terry and Jack never got a chance to exact their revenge. As they lay plotting the demise of Kaitlyn and her cohorts, the girls burst into the room and flung themselves on the boys. Terry knew this was inspired by Kaitlyn in an effort to get back into his and Jack's good graces. He steeled his will to their passion, at first. Even he was amazed, however, at how quickly his vindictive resolve melted away under the barrage of kisses and soft caresses. Soon the petting turned into soft biting and pinching, and the action got heavier and more intense. Finally Terry gave in altogether and began to meet their passion head-on, fueled still by vengeance. Terry watched with a mouthful of tit as Josi knelt over Jack and slid down on the rock-hard dick. Terry

fondled a puckered asshole and grabbed at soft hips and ass cheeks. With his mouth on hers, Terry flipped Kaitlyn onto her back and pressed her into the bed, shoving her knees up to her chest. There was a moment's pause as the lovers looked in each other's eyes. They held the look as Terry started working his finger in and out of her creamy cunt. He worked the soft spongy place that he knew would bring her to the edge of abandon (if he played it right) until he could feel the changes he was after. Inside she was opening and relaxing, tissues filling with blood and her tunnel running with the slippery soft come he loved to taste. He pushed down on the bottom of her hole, stretching her, testing the waters. He went right from two fingers to four (this was no holy virgin, after all) and quickly added his thumb. His whole hand was asking, working, demanding to be let in. They fell into step, moving one against the other as Terry pressed with his hand and coaxed her hole to open wider. Soon enough, Kaitlyn pushed and stretched, and with a matching push from Terry, his fist disappeared into the warm, tight embrace of her cunt.

Terry curled his fingers and lodged his thumb within them, holding still momentarily and taking the chance to catch his breath. Then he began to fuck her; short throbbing strokes, now longer and deeper, the woman under him twisting on his clenched fist. Kaitlyn let out a hoarse moan as Terry pressed his other hand down on her belly, working her from inside and out. "Tell me how much you want it, bitch. Ask me real nice and I might fuck you real hard and fast like you like it." Terry said this evenly and expectantly, very serious about his authority and passion.

Kaitlyn was breathless. Her head was thrown back, and she couldn't seem to get any words out. "I'm waiting," Terry coaxed. Finally Kaitlyn choked out a faint "please" between breaths. "I can't hear you, cunt!" he said, with a bit more venom. "Please, Terry"—a little louder this time.

Terry's face twisted into a scowl of half-honest rage. His left arm shot up and backhanded Kaitlyn in the face, hard enough to start her ears ringing. Kaitlyn whimpered and looked to be on the edge of tears. "When I tell you to do something," Terry commanded, "you had better fucking do it! Now, you start begging, or your greedy little snatch is gonna be empty and you're gonna wear some painful fucking bruises for a long time to come!"

Kaitlyn, shocked into awareness by his sharp words and her stinging face, pulled her concentration together. Still breathing hard, she managed to follow his orders with an anxious yet pleading tone. "Please, Terry, please give me your fist. Fuck me soft and slow or fast and rough, anything that pleases you, Papa. Please fuck your baby girl's cunt raw!"

A slow smile creased Terry's hard face, and he began to move his big fist slowly inside her. "That's what Papa likes to hear, baby girl. Makes Daddy's dick hard. Yeah."

"Yes, please, Daddy," she begged.

"Yeah. That's right, girl. You keep it up. I want to hear you asking me to pound you and split your tender young pussy open."

Kaitlyn writhed and moaned as his hand and arm moved faster, alternating between short jabs and long, stretched-out strokes, making her ache with pleasure and pain. Her head tossed from side to side on the bed and she kept up a steady stream of begging—"Please, oh, please, Papa, oh, yes, God I love how you fuck me, Daddy." Once she stopped talking for too long, in Terry's opinion, and his deep fisting stopped dead. He waited for Kaitlyn to figure out what had caused the action to stop, thoroughly amused and enjoying himself. Kaitlyn looked hurt and desperate, near tears again, with her eyebrows knitted together and displaying a childlike frown. "What are you supposed to be doing?" Terry asked. Frantic with relief, Kaitlyn renewed her grateful pleading, and she was rewarded by the hand inside resuming the motion—causing the tide to rise in her womb and cunt. Anytime her begging stopped for too long, so did the fucking. She quickly got the relationship fixed in her mind, and her words became a constant stream, feeding Terry's perverted lust, spurring him on.

Terry was really working her now, thrusting his big paw roughly in and out of his woman, hammering her relentlessly. Sweat rolled down the insides of his arms. It dripped off his forehead and onto her belly. It fell into his eyes with the burn of salt. The heat and smell of hard sex grew in the room. To Terry, the smell was pure heaven. His muscles ached and quivered with effort, and his breath came as fast as that of the woman under him. He saw the color start to rise in her face, neck, and chest—scarlet, almost purple—and felt her muscles tensing to the point of breaking.

"You better ask me if you can come, girl. You don't want to make Daddy angry," Terry reminded her with a threatening tone.

"Oh, please, Daddy, can I come for you?" she said, almost too far gone to hold it back. Intense strain was obvious in her voice.

"Will you make it pretty for me, baby girl?"

"Yes, Papa, please, I promise. Please!?" she said, afraid for her skin if he said no. She couldn't wait another second.

"Okay, baby—gimme your hot come, give it to me," he said through clenched teeth. He reached deep down for a final burst of energy and madly drove his fist into her as she peaked.

She came strong and beautiful, thanking him, come gushing out around his arm, washing away the creamy lube-come inside. He twisted his arm and opened and closed his fist deep in her belly as she shook and convulsed with pleasure. But he wasn't done with her yet. He went at it again, fucking her until she poured and shot come three more times, soaking the bed down to the mattress. With his fist still in her, he bent his tongue to her clit. She moaned loudly, almost in protest at first. But it didn't take long until the now-

gentle rocking inside her combined with the melodic stroking of her swollen-to-bursting clit erased all thought of protest as she rode quickly up to another kind of high. The inside of her cunt was sore and tightening, and the pain heightened her excitement. She wanted to hurt for her big muscled butch boy. She wanted to give her daddy the pain he craved from her, and she told him so by her need, by her coming.

"Now, Daddy? Now?" she quickly asked.

He nodded his assent with his face buried in her cunt lips, smeared from brow to chin with girl juice. She pushed down powerfully with her cunt and went stiff all over. Her breath caught in her lungs. Then she was shaking. Her back arched as she half moaned, half screamed. A forceful exhale of breath was followed by a flood of creamy-type come this time. Terry watched her intently from his privileged viewpoint and moved with her. It was a long come, the kind that left her emptied, gasping like a fish out of water. When it was over, she felt vulnerable. She needed some comforting to fill the emptiness left by her release and make her feel safe again. She reached down for her lover with both hands, pulling him up onto her to feel the reassurance of his weight pressing on her.

"It's okay, baby. Daddy's here. I love you," Terry said, all sweet and tender now. He wet one finger of his left hand with his spit and slipped it in next to his wrist, breaking the vacuum in Kaitlyn's cunt caused by the fist buried inside her. He maneuvered his hand down her pussy as gently as he could and then out her tightening hole. She tensed, drew her breath in sharply, and then relaxed at the motion. He slid up her body on the sheen of sweat between them.

They held each other, and he crooned soft comfort into her ear as she cried and held him close to her. "That's right, love. It's okay. There you go. I'm here, honey. Just you and me. I love you. Your big bad butch boy is all yours, sweet girl." The words fell softly around Kaitlyn and held her in their gentle embrace. She was secure and happy in the arms of her lover. She cried at the force of it all—the passion, the release, the joy. She was floating, drifting timelessly.

Too quickly for her taste, Kaitlyn came down off her sex high, only to become more aware of the body on top of her. With a playful smirk she thought to herself, *"Josi" has certainly had her fill with that big fist, and I don't think I could take "Tika" getting too much attention after that little sex-fest. I don't have the stamina. But I wonder how "Jack" is?* As if in answer to her question, Terry started to slowly grind into her with slow circular hip motions. "Jack's" head prodded into Kaitlyn's soft lower belly, sliding on the sweat beginning to dry there. Protruding from the harness around Terry's waist, Jack seemed alive, demanding. To Terry, Jack was alive—as much hers as if she'd been born with it. With Jack strapped on and standing out, waiting for action, Terry could swear that she could feel with it. The feelings were in her cunt and

deeper, too. She could feel it with her mind and her imagination. In Kaitlyn's mind, Jack was so animated that it was like having another lover.

Terry's cunt, and her cock, were talking to her as she pressed her pelvis into her lover. They were both saying, "*Tit fuck!*" Kaitlyn saw the look on Terry's face. "Would you like to fuck Mama's sweet titties, boy?" Terry smiled eagerly and nodded her head vigorously. Kaitlyn used both hands to push her breasts together to make a warm tit-flesh tunnel for Terry's dick. Terry straddled her chest, licked her own hand, and rubbed the spit on her rod with a deliberate stroking motion. Then, almost reverently, she slid Jack between the inviting mounds below her. Her clit rubbed on Kaitlyn's ribs as Jack slid in and out, poking out the other end of the tunnel near Kaitlyn's throat. Terry fucked hard while tightening and pushing down with the muscles inside her cunt, filling the tissues with fluid. Kaitlyn was as into the scene as her lover was, and she moved with it. She urged her on and stretched her fingertips over the tops of her breasts to lightly brush the cock's surface as it thrust back and forth. Terry pushed inside her cunt and tit-fucked for all she was worth, muscles straining and working.

Soon the combination of factors flipped a switch in her mind and body. The sight of her dick between Kaitlyn's tits, the swelling in her cunt, the memory of Butch Girl Daddy fisting his helpless little princess and Strict Mama whipping her baby boy lover, all conspired to put her over the edge.

"Can I come for you? Please, please?" she begged, pumping her meat into her mama.

"Yeah, give it to me!"

And the first flood of wet come splashed onto Kaitlyn's stomach and ribs and dripped down her sides and toward her throat. Terry kept riding her, fucking slowly, then in jerky, exaggerated movements, then holding still in taut, tense immobility as come streamed out of her cunt. She shot more and more come each time, then less and less, until she was empty at last.

Terry slid down onto her side next to her lover, with her cunt happy and her still-hard dick poking Kaitlyn in the thigh. Their breathing slowed and their heartbeats calmed. They were both completely worn out from their day of play.

"You've got a puddle of come in the hollow of your throat," Terry said, laughing lightly. She dipped her fingers into it and sucked her come off, then dipped them again, offering her juice to Kaitlyn this time, who licked and sucked softly at the musky liquid.

"And one in my belly button," Kaitlyn noted, looking down her body and smiling.

"I wonder how that happened?" Terry said, with feigned surprise and curiosity, smiling right back at Kaitlyn with a shine in her eyes.

Kaitlyn laughed and made an equally feigned look of exasperation as she

rolled over, spilling the come puddles on the sheets, and grabbed Terry's face in her hands and kissed her loudly.

"C'mon, you," Kaitlyn said, reaching for Terry's hand, "let's take a shower."

"Good idea." Terry stood up and unbuckled the harness around her hips and flung it, with Jack still attached, onto the bed. Jack would wait patiently for the next time. Jack was always up for a good hard fuck.

HOW I WANT TO SHOW MYSELF TO YOU

FELICE NEWMAN

I am handing myself to you as if I were a snapshot. Here are my small hands, my biker jacket and boots, my old black jeans, the standard Gap pocket tee I wear to work.

Now use your imagination: the cotton rips, the jacket is just something to grab onto, the pants come off. The hands disappear into tight places.

When I was a kid in a small town, I played with the only other Jewish girl in the neighborhood. I was Ken slipping the strap of Barbie's cocktail dress off her shoulder, pulling down the miniature fabric to reveal her hard plastic breasts, which at eight years old I found so tantalizing.

This is really what I look like: I am a lesbian with a cock in her brain, a leathergrrrl who reads too much, a horny rabbi, a bad boy. Something real on the street, as opposed to data in cyberland or an accident report: female Caucasian, 39 yrs, 5'3", 139 lbs. I'm a serious babe with very distinguished gray coming in, intense hazel eyes behind black specs, and very full red lips that like to be bitten...

I'm shedding that black tee for you. Pulling it up, inside out, and over my head. Honey, I don't shave, and I break into a sweat over you looking at me. When I am a good girl, I have a nicely muscled chest with fist-sized breasts and nipples like Hershey's kisses.

I neatly fold that T-shirt and place it on the floor beside me.

My belt—a medium leather strap decorated with little silver animals, totems for Women Who Run With the Wolves—flies through the hoops of my jeans with a very satisfying smack. I offer the belt to you, and I do not return to myself until it is in your hands. You may do with it what you like, now or later.

When I lower my zipper, my cunt melts, and I get a little confused about my cock, my inner cock, my cock within—now hard, now big, now filling my consciousness. My soul is a cock that wants to burst, a cunt that wants to be filled, an ocean of skin that wants to be used. I inhabit a gender I cannot name. All of this confuses me. I try to pretend I'm on top of everything—hoping that you'll see through me and take control of this problem.

I kick off my boots and peel down my jeans. I place my neatly folded

HOW I WANT TO SHOW MYSELF TO YOU

jeans on top of my T-shirt. I line up my boots to face you.

Now I am vulnerable, a woman not a boy, no cock in sight. Without leathers, without clothing to protect me, I am suddenly a woman with a woman's round belly, a line of dark hair traveling up from her very wet cunt. Every inch of me rebels against this, and so I strike a pose, giving you my attitude like a brat's tongue, taunting, inviting retaliation.

Still, I lower myself for you, slowly so that my quads ache all the way down. That pain is a promise of more pain. I am on my knees for you. I am begging for your shoes. I kiss them. I lick your insteps. I tongue your sharp heels. I fellate you, on my knees with my ass in the air and my thighs spread so that you can see how wet I am, how vulnerable, how terrible and wonderful my need for you, for those little silver animals—lizard, turtle, ox, snake...I am waiting for them to bite me. I am waiting for a transfusion of animal power.

The female has always been the source.

I have always wanted to be bitten.

My presentation has been in writing. I had been cruising the Internet for sex when I found you, and you drew out my desire with a viciousness I had never experienced before. We began conversing on-line and then exchanging E-mail.

You might say that I have been applying for a position of service to you. I am not getting very far. I don't know if you like me, but you like my stories, and you would manipulate this situation to have me write you a novel, here, on my knees. This isn't what I want.

Having so little, I imagine so much. The assignment is to continue on paper the fantasy I attempted to pursue on-line. My story is to begin with foot worship. I had been making a pest of myself in this regard, asking for permission to touch, now here, now there, your heel in one hand, your calf in the other, small kisses where leather meets skin, hesitating—not out of chastity but out of fear that you would pull away from me.

Write me a story, you said. Write down the rest of the fantasy.

I want to be obedient. So far, I have done everything you have asked. So I sit down to write. I close my eyes. I bathe myself in memories of our conversation. The images that had stirred my desire present themselves to me: *These daggers of femininity, these knife-sharp heels are sex itself, I write. I tongue your stiletto like a lover's tongue. My full lips, red as a cunt, open to you and suck you down. I take you deeply—you cannot fill enough of me—I draw you into my mouth over and over. When you are finished, I taste blood.*

I pause, leaning back in my chair. My mouth has filled with juices. I remember to swallow. Now what? I try to imagine my teeth wrapped around your ankle, my hands traveling up your thigh. I am trying to fantasize my fantasy. It doesn't work.

I am constructing a mental catalog of everything I know about foot worship. My favorite commentary on the subject is Michael Lowenthal's story about the night he licked John Preston's boots. Only John wasn't wearing boots and growled down at Michael, "Eat those Bass Weejuns, boy!"

Michael, seated at dinner on my left, produced this story after I'd asked Pat Califia, seated on my right, the proper method of boot worship. I had a date later that evening and desperately wanted to get on my knees for this woman who, it turned out, had other requirements in mind. The next morning, still a foot-fetish virgin, I tried to offer my services to Carol Queen, who found me merely amusing.

What was the next image? *The stiletto heel pointing to my throat*. Really, I was just thinking about seeing you. I imagined we had been drinking coffee in a café, and now we were walking up a residential street to my car. The ritual of indulging you with espresso and cake has given me immense pleasure. Now I reach around you, key poised at the lock, as you wait for me to open the door and deliver you into the passenger seat. We are a sandwich, femme goddess caught between her impulsive admirer and the unyielding, steel fact of the car door. You turn to see why I have not put the key in the lock. You give me a quizzical look. I am grinning; you are raising an eyebrow, your face a study in arrogance and cynicism. *Oh, no you don't*, your look says. And I do. I slip my knee between your thighs, hard, which lifts your skirt to your hips.

You are about to do something violent. I don't care; I just need to get you off, to get one of us off. If you aren't going to make this thing happen, then I will.

Isn't my submission to you a matter of consent? After all, I am two inches taller and twenty pounds heavier than you, my thigh pins you to the side of the car, and the key at your throat—isn't the key a weapon? Later you will find a bruise that looks like a puncture wound.

What I want is to find out how hard I can press my thigh into your cunt and how deep an impression that car door will make on your ass, which you have told me you find perhaps a bit generous in size. This fascinates me.

I want to know how your cunt will feel to my thigh as I push slowly into you, never leaning back too far, never letting you get away, then harder and faster as you heat up in spite of yourself and let out the steamy murmurs you don't want me to hear and the come you don't want me to find on my jeans.

I am holding you on a residential street—in the middle of the street, pinned to the door of a car, your skirt riding up around your hips, a key at your throat. And you are getting wetter and wetter, and I am fucking you so that the molecules of steel will mix with molecules of your flesh and create in you some kind of alchemy we could never imagine happening, a transformation so fundamental that you will never casually touch the side

HOW I WANT TO SHOW MYSELF TO YOU

of an automobile, and the body memory of this bruising will never leave you and will always ignite in you a severe desire.

When you come, you dig your fingers into my arms and your cunt clamps down on my thigh in a death grip. Now where's your resistance?

For three days I walk around with my hand in my cunt, waiting for your response. Finally, you write: *I liked your story, you write well, but I loathe having my feet licked, will hurt you (really) if you accost me in public after I have told you to stop. I allow only one woman to mark me. I don't drink coffee and am violently allergic to chocolate. On the other hand, I have to admit that I am curious as to Pat's instructions on boot worship, and as I said, I like your writing. You bring out the top bitch in me. Why? I don't know. So write me again.*

Now I have given myself a violent desire. And I am angry.

I am not by nature submissive—I could not have survived my life otherwise—so my desires run counter to my instincts.

Or you could say that my naturally submissive nature has been beaten out of me by this culture. In an odd Darwinian twist, the socialization that would have molded me into a darling little girl produced instead a raging dyke with too much attitude.

I can't even get this femme bitch to top me.

I just couldn't wait. Which is how I got into *this* predicament. I am alone, kneeling on a rough wood floor, my hands cuffed behind my back, a heavy leather hood covering my face.

"I will not permit you to lean back on your heels," you said, poking me between my shoulder blades. *"Five cane strokes on each of the soles of your feet if I catch your ass touching your heels."*

My posture is exactly as you instructed, spine straight, shoulders back, chest out, chin parallel to the floor, eyes forward. Waiting.

You are trying to teach me patience. Naturally, it was my impatience that drove me here—literally. One day after work, I got into my car and drove west into the sunset like a sex cowboy. I knew I could find you. You told me what kind of work you do, and in a city as whitebread as yours, there couldn't be too many establishments offering your services.

I felt like Nancy Drew when I pulled up to your shop.

I knew you would recognize me. It was just before closing, and you were waiting on a last customer. You were helping her select a brand of lube from the many plastic bottles behind the counter. This gave me a chance to look around, to walk among the displays of whips, harnesses, corsets. I found a selection of very hot brassieres, some leather, some lace, all black, some with holes where nipples would protrude. I wondered how you would look in one of those. By the time your customer left and you flipped the

sign on the door to CLOSED, I was feeling pretty cocky.

Your icy blue eyes locked onto mine as you approached the rack of lingerie I was browsing. If circumstances had been different, I could now go on about this delicate woman, her small frame, her lovely muscles moving under a soft layer of flesh. You were even more attractive than I had imagined, and even colder than I had feared. You walked right up to me, got right up to my face—and slapped me so hard I was stunned. I was going to cry and bit my lip. My face was surely redder with anger than with the blood you raised to my cheek. Before I could think of a response, you pulled on both my hands, stretching my arms over the display rack, and when I looked up, I was cuffed, chained to the rack. You held my face against the display, pulled a leather hood over my head, glasses and all. The hood was large, so the breathing holes did not quite line up with my nose or mouth. I was fogging myself up and sweating almost immediately.

Then you released the cuffs, dragged me into this room, told me to remove my boots, recuffed my hands, and planted my knees firmly on this rough floor. Your heels echoed your retreat.

I am waiting.

Your approach is quiet and slow.

Your cane is a razor on the soft bottoms of my feet. This is not supposed to be happening. I kneeled patiently for you, not even moving to scratch an itch. Why would I think you would obey your own rules?

Are you caning me five times on each foot, as you promised? No. I have lost count, there is no rhythm or pattern to this. First, you swipe the heel of my right foot and then the arch—which I swear is bleeding—then the left, the right, toes, heel, arch, callused pads, pain so hot and sharp I am gulping for breath to assimilate one stroke when the next has already fallen. Pain is climbing my body in hot waves, up my legs to my asshole, which has become a hateful ringing bell of pain, up through my tailbone, running up my spine into my back and chest and out through my nipples. *My preference is to wear out one arm and switch to the other*, you wrote. *Anything less is bullshit.*

You stop suddenly, and I don't know what to do with that sensation. I am shaking. I can't catch my breath. Sweat runs off my forehead, drops falling from my nose and chin. There is not enough air inside this hood. I don't think I can hold myself up, but leaning back on my heels is agony, and I don't want to find out what you will do if you catch me at it. I feel cold. I feel sick.

You remove the hood.

A bare room with whitewashed walls, not a stick of furniture, one dim bulb overhead, and I face you, through my watery lenses, my knees still firmly planted on this rough floor.

You are looking down at me. Your eyes are piercing. What are you think-

HOW I WANT TO SHOW MYSELF TO YOU

ing? What am I to you? You reach both hands to slip my glasses off my face and fold them carefully, tucking them into a pocket. This gesture is so tender, I start to cry in earnest. I feel like I am eleven years old, and I want you to put your arms around me.

No chance of that—you have grabbed the front of my hair, my handle, and you are ramming my mouth into your cunt. You are riding my face so hard I think you might break my nose. You want teeth, that's for sure, so I give you teeth. Bone hammers lips. You are punishing my mouth.

The heat that had traveled up my body in painful waves from feet to ass to spine and chest is now pulsing through my cunt. My pain has melted into sexual desire. I want to piss. I want to expel great pornographic quantities of come, and I can feel it running down my legs, which I have squeezed shut. I don't have permission for this. I know you'd better not notice.

But I can make your legs shake, I can make you grunt. Not quite my fantasy of fucking you in the street, but just the same, I know I can raise a feeling in you, and I work my tongue in sharp, fast strokes against this femme goddess erection. I want you to come.

So naturally, you push me away, hard, the way you do everything. Spread your lips apart with two fingers and send a thin stream of piss onto my chest. Now you give me your cunt again, but only to fill my mouth. I pull away—this is instinctual. I try to get away, but your fingers lock onto the base of my neck like a pair of pliers. Your hips rock into my face. You are actually growling, and when you come the death grip I had fantasized as so hot when I was controlling the scene nearly asphyxiates me.

This is not my fantasy. I had not imagined how your smell would fill my head and make me dizzy. Nor had I imagined the scalding heat of your cunt on my face, the bitterness of your piss or the sweetness of your come in my mouth. I had not expected to feel so satisfied by your pleasure.

You kick the insides of my knees to separate my legs. A little puddle of my come has formed underneath me. You laugh at this and squat down to press your tight fist against the mouth of my cunt. No one has ever attempted to enter me this way. This just is not done. Your knuckles are working me, and the pain, once again, climbs my body in hot waves, tearing through my cunt, up my spine into my back and chest, and now your teeth bite down on my breast, and my nipple throbs in rhythm with my cunt. I need your hand inside me, but not this way, no, not with such violence. I cannot manage this.

I do not know which is more: the wanting or the hurting.

You will split me open like a piece of fruit.

I don't know how I will end this story, I had told you before coming here. *How could I exceed the violence of what I have already imagined?* At the time I meant it as a dare—how I would fuck you, regardless of your will.

You ignored me.

Now I am no less vulnerable to you than you to me in my worst fantasy. I am kneeling before you in an empty room in a city where I know no one. Your fist threatens to rip through me. Your hand grips my face: I cannot pull away from this assault.

Your kiss is so much more unexpected than your cane, your piss, anything else you have done to me. Your teeth embrace my lips and my tongue.

My cunt opens like a heart.

You slide in, and I cradle your fist, holding on. I would have you inside me forever. But I cannot hold up my body anymore—every wounded nerve is singing. I cannot hold on. I lose it. I come immediately without voice, without thought, no permission, no will. You laugh. You know exactly where you have taken me. This is how I wanted to show myself to you, and when you press my wet face down to meet your shoes, I kiss you in relief, I kiss you eagerly, I kiss you as I have never kissed anyone, and my heart breaks.

FETCHING

HEIDI LISA SULZER

I walked up to her in my black corduroy shorts, my ripped black stockings, and my black lace tank top. I was tired and I didn't want to ask anyone else to play, but I knew this was part of the game. I said, "Are you a top or a bottom?" She yanked the silver choke chain that was dangling from the collar around my neck and said, "What do you think?" At that point I couldn't think, all I could do was smile and go through my spiel about playing the game fetch. She said she would play, and I felt an incredible sense of relief even though I still had to find two more tops to play with me. I wanted this woman to pull my chain again. I wanted this woman for more than fetch. It's funny: the women I become most attracted to I don't usually like when I first notice them. It wasn't until she grabbed my silver chain that I felt her power and wanted her. For one thing, she was tall—tall and big-boned—and I don't usually go for tall women. I usually go for shorter and smaller women. She was also dressed very simply and was not really noticeable upon first glance.

Lyn told me to get on my knees, and as I crouched down she put a black blindfold around my eyes. There were five women, including Lyn, all standing above me as I became a wild Bengal tiger unleashed to their training. I moved agile and triumphant at their feet, roaming and searching for comfort as I rubbed my eager face into the strangers' thighs. Right, then left, faster as I was smacked upon my buttocks. I could feel the energy building, but I kept going. I kept going back to that woman to my right. I could feel her power calling out to me. I wanted to stay kneeling before her with my face pressed close against her strong, soft thighs, but the other tops kept urging me to fetch the object of the game.

Then they stopped me for a moment, told me to kneel perfectly still with my face down toward the black floor. I felt the hot melting sensation of white wax on my back, and then something else, something hotter, melting the wax. "Don't move, be still," they said. I almost forgot to breathe as the heat came quicker and hands around me and women's energy engulfed me. Then the movement began again as I raced wildly to find the small rectangular object. I

grasped it between my teeth, and they all patted my head with praise. The blindfold came off, and I saw all these women smiling and telling me I was good, real good. I felt altered and in ways reborn. I searched out the silent stare of the tall one who had yanked my chain. She asked me, "Have you ever had temporary piercing?" I said no. She asked me if I wanted to, and when I said yes I had to hold back from grinning.

She took one small silver needle-type object, and after swirling alcohol on my upper arm she told me to take a breath and moved it through my flesh. It was good. I felt the blue-purple rush of a natural high as she pierced me again and again until I had a row of five needles in my arm. I leaned back in the chair, so relaxed. I felt so taken care of by a woman I didn't even know. I didn't know how much I wanted her then. I wanted her to pierce me, to keep on piercing me until I passed out, but it was my first time and my two friends I always played with were there, protecting me from myself.

She asked me about fire. "Have you ever had anyone do fire on you?" "No." She took me to the far corner of the play space. I tried to distance myself from the rest of the electric room. There were women everywhere whipping and arching, moaning and begging. I stood in only my black lace underwear, arms and legs outstretched next to the wooden X nestled in the corner. She started with my left arm, putting some kind of flammable liquid on it. I think it was alcohol, but I'm not sure. She then took her small black wand and dipped it into the votive candle flame, then *whoosh* onto my arm aflame, wiping it out as fast as it came. Each time she gasped and smiled, getting high off of the excitement of firing my sweet, pink skin. Then my back *whoosh* the heat came over and then her magic hands freeing me from the flames. Then my breasts *whoosh* and she let out a small scream of pleasure as she forgot the wand and brought the flame to me with her forefinger.

The fire faded, and she stood strong above me. With only my glazed blue eyes I begged her to come closer. She asked me what I wanted, and I couldn't say. I touched her...I held her. I couldn't tell her I wanted her to have me, so I touched her...I held her...and when I asked her to kiss me, she knew. Carefully I lowered myself back into the leather sling as her right hand found its way first inside the cream-colored glove, then inside my soft pink flesh. Surrounded by the loud sounds of the play space, I couldn't let go, and I started to laugh with discomfort and release. She moved her hand faster, harder, and I couldn't stop laughing. Frustrated, she told me to touch myself, so I moved my right hand slowly down my stomach to my trigger spot, and suddenly it was just her and me in motion, in black leather, swinging as she said, "Aha...mmhm." And her voice moved me and her hand moved me and she told me to tell her when I was coming. I said, "I'm coming." She said, "Louder, I want to hear you," with such authority in her voice that I would have said whatever she told me as loud as she wanted. I said,

FETCHING

"I'm coming, I'm coming." Oh, dear sweet stranger, I'm coming, and I thought I could fall in love with her if she didn't already have a lover and live a million miles away.

BLOODY
LYDIA SWARTZ

My sister is bathing. She is fifteen. Her breasts float white and round among round, white soap bubbles. The white tiles are slick with steam. Her robe and underwear are draped across the toilet. On top of the terry cloth robe and the pink pajamas and the yellowish-white lace bra is a sanitary napkin belt with an oval, bright-red stain, half the width of a dime, carelessly exposed.

The steam in the bathroom reeks of blood. I enter the bathroom on the pretext of asking my sister whether she let the dog out. I am eleven. I can't stay away from my sister.

The smell saturates me, chokes me. It smells holy and vulgar, and my panties tighten against my hairless crotch. My nipples itch. I want to touch my sister's breasts: will iridescent colors swirl on their surface at my touch, like bubbles when I carefully push them across the surface of the bath water? If I have to have breasts like hers, will I have to smile at sweaty boys in the front hall the same way my sister does? I shudder and back out before my sister can answer my question. She laughs and splashes a plump arm out of the water, fumbles for a towel. I hear the radio turned up.

How can she stand that music? How can she stand to smell like that?

My belly is tight. It feels like it's being pushed up by some ball that's inflating just underneath it.

She's got that angular look. Her every bone is a knife, her every word slices through skin. I am friable. I am mean to hide the trembling.

There's nothing wonderful about living together long enough to match cycles.

Just to feel meaner, I'm wearing a dildo under my leggings. My tunic is almost long enough to hide the bulge if I stand perfectly still and upright. I am drunk with my own smell—drunk enough to be sick. There is some urge in me that is desperate to get out of me and is trying to get out through every pore, orifice, follicle, and joint. It has no name, and I can't stop it. Nor can I help it get out.

She—she, Trudy, my lover, cunt, goddess, child, mistress, advocate, adver-

sary, boy, sister, courtesan, touchstone, pet, drudge—she is dressing for battle. Tight jersey over her swollen breasts. Or impervious thick leather. Or enormous sweats. Or, nearer the full moon, always white. Daring the visible stain. She slithers and hisses around my mean ankles. Stinking worse than I do. Smearing her smell on me, marking territory.

Something's going to happen. It always does.

We're at a function. Her work, where everybody is faux liberal. They stare at my bulging crotch and pretend not to. I shift my tunic, cock a hip, talk about the mayor. Trudy is across the room pretending to laugh at some joke. I know she doesn't have to look over here to see me. I can make her laugh by telepathy. It's almost the full moon. I hope she moves away from the boss's boss before she loses her job.

This is a hotel banquet room. Acres of nauseating gray carpet with red and yellow swirls. A food table: goat balls steamed in diarrhea, presented in surgical-looking silver trays on tablecloths the same color as the yellow swirls.

Trudy glances at me. Her eyes flash red, red eyes like a beast caught in the light. I hold her glance a second too long, and she is captured. Because I am mean, and because the dildo is pressing almost painfully against my labia (the leggings are too tight because I'm holding water), and because Trudy deserves it (or Trudy has earned it), I smile. It makes her furious to see me smile when I possess her.

I scrape off the dandruff who has been making conversation with me about the mayor. Like I would really have to be psychic to know he was wondering how he could contrive to brush against my basket.

I slip out the double doors. No need to look back. I know Trudy is following me with her eyes and will have to follow me herself soon.

"Who's on the rag?"

It's my boyfriend Tom talking. He keeps going out with me because I am completely nonresponsive sexually and I'm a challenge. Also because he has told his best friend Hank that I love to fuck, and Hank can't get me to admit either that I love to fuck or that I don't fuck, and it drives Hank crazy. That's one thing that Tom and I both like.

My boyfriend Tom is sitting in the driver's seat. He has a fast car, which doesn't mean he has any business fitting six of us into it besides him. It holds two comfortably. I'm crammed on the gearshift between him and Hank in the front. I don't like these people. They are all stupid as cows. But if I'm sitting in the car with them it might mean I am popular.

We've been sitting in this parking lot for a long time because some guy in the backseat, I didn't catch his name, is supposed to be off shoplifting cigarettes for the crew. I'm just happy that the window is open, because I feel sick.

"Smells like somebody's on the rag in here!" This time Tom gets the reac-

tion he wants. The boys are giggling now, finally.

The only other girl in the car asks for another beer. She is semi-passed out already. Somebody gives her the beer. She nods off, and her hand loosens. Beer pours on the floor in the backseat. The guy sitting next to her starts giving her a hickey.

Tom is happy. He lights up another cigarette, the last one in the pack, wads up the empty pack, and flings it out the window. The only thing I like about parking with Tom is the way his tongue tastes when he sticks it in my mouth when he's smoking. Tom doesn't know that I smoke. I keep it from him just because I can.

I feel a lot sicker. I shift my weight. One of the numb parts of my ass starts to tingle, then hurt. As it warms up it starts to feel like warm blood on my skin. I can't breathe. I feel like throwing up.

If I ask to get out, Tom and his crew will think I am on the rag. If I don't get out, I'll throw up.

Maybe I am on the rag. I'm sixteen and a slow developer and I haven't had a period yet, but maybe I'm on the rag. Maybe I just started. Maybe this is how it feels. Maybe this is how it smells. Maybe everybody can tell. Maybe I feel sick because I have a huge pool of blood trapped in my cunt and when I stand up it will sluice out of me and Tom won't let me get back in the car because I'll stain the upholstery in his car. Maybe I'll have to walk home even though I'm not sure where we are. Maybe some of the guys in the backseat go with some of the girls at my school and they'll tell the girls and the girls will tell everybody and everybody will know that I haven't had a period yet and that I didn't know I was having one.

Is this what it smells like to be on the rag?

I really will throw up if I don't get out soon.

Trudy has followed me out of the banquet room and into the pretentious lobby. Dark red carpet, a huge round room with a broad staircase in the middle. I wait for Trudy under the stairs where she can't see me until she walks past and I jump out next to her. She startles, then freezes, her arms out, her legs bent. Because she and I have our smells on each other, and because the moon is going full tonight, all I need to do is mouth her name and allow a little hiss of sound to escape between my lips. She doesn't turn around. She waits, steaming, breathing fast. I prowl around her, running my finger across her ass and around her hip to rest my hand, hot palm down, on her belly. She doesn't stir. Except her belly, which flutters beneath her fast breathing.

I look at Trudy's face. She hates me. She's wearing her good white business dress. I really don't give a damn. Fuck her business.

Trudy is also wearing a thin silver chain around her neck. I take off my ring, undo the clasp on her necklace, slide my ring onto the chain, then redo the clasp.

"Consider yourself collared, bitch."

The bitch hates me. And I can smell the heat rising off her. I pace off, not looking back, holding one hand behind me. Trudy doesn't have to read a manual: she knows that signifies a leash in my hand.

I open the door of each banquet room on the floor. There are six banquet rooms opening off this lobby, each protected by tall, heavy double doors. One after another is filled with business-suited people eating diarrhea goat balls out of silver serving dishes. In one room, a lot of white-haired people are dancing. I pause there. I feel Trudy pulling back on her invisible chain. *No, not in front of the old folks*, I hear her think. *Please*, she sends.

Okay. I want her hot. Fear is enough.

One of the ballrooms is empty. Tables and chairs are folded and stacked along the sides of the room. The rheostat for the chandeliers is turned low. They hum and give out wrinkled grayish-yellow half-light. I yank Trudy's invisible chain and pull her in. She sprawls on the floor just inside the door, panting. In heat. Staring up at me with hate and lust.

Before the big door behind me has quite wheezed shut, I am on top of Trudy. I shove her knees together and straddle them. I place my hands on the floor on either side of her torso, rubbing my breasts on hers. I lean forward, I rest my weight on my cock on her thigh, and I hump. The dildo slides hard and wet from my juices between my labia. She can't move her hips but rests on her own hands behind her and thrusts her tits against me.

I come immediately and feel hot wet spurt all over the dildo.

I sit back (when I can), plunge my hand inside my underpants, and bring out bloody juice. I draw two lines on Trudy's face, a perpendicular line down each cheek. It will itch when it starts to dry. I forbid her to touch or scratch her face.

And I leave two pale wet pink spots on her white dress, one over each collarbone. My fingerprints. Now I own her, and her eyes have burned back deep into her soul before she could tell them not to. I salivate profusely. When I stand up, something warm runs down my legs. And my chin is wet with saliva. The smell of blood intoxicates us both.

Sometimes when I'm too hot or falling asleep or have my fists pressed into my eyeballs or hold my breath for a long, long time or look straight at the sun through my eyelids, I see patterns. Plaid and paisley and intricate cross-hatching. Lights in patterns. And I hear explosions, collisions. Crashes and breaking noises. A train hitting a car. Beer bottle dropped onto a sidewalk from the third-floor window. A lab explosion. Bomb. Champagne cork. A little girl screaming over a dead dog. Crockery smashing against Sheetrock. Disaster, musical disaster after disaster in succession.

That's what it's like to wake up after the surgery. Explosions and paisley,

and nurse shoes swishing. And other than the pain, which is articulate but bearable, it's how I can tell I'm not dead. Breathing feels unnatural. I want to clear my throat but it takes a long time to concentrate on how to do that. It makes the pain in my belly stab. I cough once just to make it stab again. The explosions get louder, and the paisley gets more colorful.

My belly feels like it's got a lump in its throat. It's insulted. Perplexed.

I've never been able to lie quite this still, even when I tried to see what being dead was like when I was a tiny child. I wish I didn't have to breathe. I want to see how much stiller I could lie.

"She's in here. You can go on in."

Somebody's speaking through a long tube. And then I feel fussiness to starboard. Fear and sticky need. If I could lie perfectly still and stop breathing, I wouldn't have to feel it. Or if I could get up and walk away, I wouldn't have to feel it. The woman who is my lover sees me pale and cut open and fed by lines and helpless. The woman who is my lover bleeds panic and fear all over my bleached white sheet. My haven is breached. I will never forgive this woman. This woman puts her hand on my shoulder tentatively, and I hate her for that too.

I hate this woman who is my lover because her blood will be the last I ever taste.

I hate this woman because the doctor waits until the woman is there before he will come in and tell us that the cancer is gone and that I still have an ovary but the other ovary and my uterus are gone. I hate the woman who is my lover because she will be the last person who ever tasted my blood.

I hate this woman because she doesn't know why I'm crying. I hate this woman because she doesn't understand when I tell her why I am crying. I hate her because she will taste blood and her new lovers will taste hers and they don't have the hunger. They don't have the longing. They don't cry over unspilled blood. I hate the woman who is my lover now. Now when I have gone from being a bleeding woman to being a not-bleeding woman. I hate this woman's guts, literally.

George is an asshole. He has red hair and girlish, soft hips, and he is an asshole. He comes to visit my boyfriend Daryl who lives with me. George tries to be abrasive to me so I will leave. He doesn't like me. I know that so I make sure to hang around when he comes to visit Daryl.

I know George is visiting today because Daryl has dope. Daryl always has lots of friends when he has dope. Daryl knows what I think of it when he allows his dope to be used up by those friends who only appear when he is holding. So Daryl is nervous, keeps hopping up and going out to the kitchen, out to the car, back to the kitchen, into the shed, sits down for a minute, gets up to take a leak, goes back out to the car. Daryl has obviously promised

George some dope. Daryl obviously doesn't want me to see him give it to George. George is supposed to have some special right to Daryl's dope because the two of them have committed crimes together to advance left-wing political causes.

I take a bath. We live in a very old house where the bathtub is in a separate room off the kitchen, and the toilet is on what used to be the back porch. I know Daryl has hidden the dope behind the water heater, and the only access to his hiding place is in the tub room. I take a very long bath. I sing. I am happy.

George is of course still there when I get out of the bath. I pretend to be surprised to see him still in the front room when I pad down the hall in my white robe, my long wet hair wrapped up turban-style in a white towel on my head. George, when he is angry, looks like an annoyed rodent. This is beginning to be one of the most fun times I have ever had. I sit on the couch across from George. I let my robe fall slightly open so George can see my pubic hair. I say nothing. I fold my hands on my lap. I smile at George.

George is made more nervous by sitting in a room alone with me and not talking, so he begins to talk about the minor poet he had a relationship with once. It's a very old story, the poet was very minor, the relationship was extremely brief, and the whole thing exceeded its maximum mileage a very long time ago. George and I quickly get into a fight over female poets in general. George says any work by a female is derivative of work by males. He calls up the names of Plato and Shakespeare and, though he really should know better, Charles Bukowski.

I quote women from Sappho to Virginia Woolf to Marguerite Duras to Alice Walker. I speculate upon George's penis-to-brain-size ratio as well as Shakespeare's. I point out a few of George's more obvious and embarrassing faults, including reminding him of the time he got arrested at the age of twenty-nine for getting under carrels at the local Catholic university and looking up the skirts of girl students. When I have finished with George, I stand up and pull the towel off my head, shake my hair back, and grandly stalk out of the room. More grandly because I have taken Daryl's dope out of its hiding place and have my hand on it in the pocket of my robe. Daryl will have discovered its absence by now.

When I take off my robe in the bedroom, the back of it is soaked with blood. There is a huge shiny stain the size and shape of my buttocks in dark red blood. There is a line of drops of blood that follows the path I took when I came in the door. For the first time in my life (I am twenty-three), I am rejoicing that a man has seen my menstrual blood and is at this very moment repulsed by it. I laugh out loud. I bury my face in the wet spot and taste some of the blood.

I put on a red sweatshirt and black tights without underpants. I don't

insert a tampon until after George leaves, looking frustrated and hunted. Daryl is so nervous he is making eeping noises and cracking his knuckles continuously, right one two three four five, left one two three four five, right one two... The smell of menstrual blood fills the room, the house. I smile. The odor is a halo. I am a goddess. Fertile and cruel.

Trudy is still lying on the floor looking up at me. She is burning. She hates me. Her legs are parted. Her smell is overpowering, almost too animal, almost poison. Her thighs are trembling slightly. I have been her mistress for long enough to know that if she were not controlling herself, her thighs would be shaking very hard.

"Take your pants off," I say in a normal tone of voice.

Her face crumples up, but she doesn't cry. She tries to say something that comes out as a whimper instead.

She slides her panties down. I pick them up off her toes when they get there and smell them. They are wet.

I kneel between her legs and push her dress up above her tits. I bite and suck her nipples. But I am too hungry. I lick a little on the way down but go after her cunt almost without preamble.

She pushes her hips up to meet my tongue and lips and mouth, even my teeth. I growl and devour her, stick my hand in her swollen cunt. She starts to spurt blood as soon as I open up her vagina with my first knuckles. The taste makes me into the same kind of animal she is.

It's wet earth in the morning under a canopy of trees.

It's sweetness gone bad.

More thyme than dill.

Impossibly rich kelp from her internal sea.

Red meat marbled with silvery moonlight.

Dregs of black wine.

I growl and feed on her. I smear her fluids all over her belly and breasts with my free hand. Her cunt spasms and clutches my fucking hand, pushes at it, pushes out more of the stuff of life. I am soaking floating drowning in breathing her nurturing blood. She finally pushes my face away from her, pulls away from my fucking hand, gone beyond the edge of satiety. I purr at her hips for a while, slowly withdrawing my hand, lapping at the copious blood on her belly and thighs. I slide up her body slowly, gliding on the fluid.

We croon and rub until we're back in the room. A room.

Her dress, I see when I pull away from her with a smack of cuntjuice-bloodsweat, is rumpled and bloody. I reek of her. She reeks of me. My face, she says, is stained red from forehead to clavicle.

I wipe a little of the blood off my face and neck on the inside of her hem. She dabs at some of the mess on the floor with the bottom of my tunic.

BLOODY

We will walk out through the lobby. The crowded lobby. Crowded with strangers who mostly don't see us because we are impossible. We will hold hands. We will be happy and proud. Her dress is badly wrinkled and stained with blood. I have blood in my hair and streaked on my face and neck. The strangers cannot see us because it is impossible for two women in love to walk together, joined, christened with blood given in love. God, we smell good. I love her.

Years later I will wish it was Trudy's blood I tasted last. Who last tasted my blood. But Trudy left me and moved to a hot, dry climate, then got cancer and died. She had the kind of cancer that kills you. I had the kind that just takes the blood away.

It is the plague time. It is possible to eroticize latex. It's the only responsible thing to do. Exchanging fluids is suicide.

Fuck latex. Fuck dry, safe sex.

I have eroticized latex. I have eroticized the sound of gloves snapping, the acrid smell of nonoxynol-laced lube. I have eroticized perfumey saran wrap stretched over pussy. I can suck a cock with a condom on it. I can. I have eroticized it all.

Fuck this. Fuck latex, lube, Saran wrap.

I miss the taste of menstrual blood. I miss menstrual blood on my cheeks and up my nose and under my fingernails and forever staining the mattress pad. Fuck latex. Fuck safety. I miss cupping my own menstrual blood into the ritual wine and drinking it down together; I miss that power, the power of the spell. I miss sex with blood. I miss Aphrodite sex, riding that sea whence I arose. I miss it in my mouth. I miss smelling like a cruel and hungry goddess.

Fuck latex.

She is menstruating. I have pulled the string from her vagina. (Not with my teeth. With my gloved hand. I have eroticized latex. I hate latex.) Her labia are swollen, red with blood and arousal. I have been rubbing her clit and sliding my gloved hand between her labia, teasing her and making her almost come, pressing my face as close to her cunt as I dare. To smell that smell, to see that holy fluid, that wonderful blood, to almost...

To almost taste it.

I can remember what it tastes like. I close my eyes and inhale it, let the bloodstream envelop me. Taste it. Almost.

Fuck latex.

I put my hand in her. Slowly at first. More and more, until I'm in up to my wrist. It's almost like real. With the lube inside the glove, with her coming and squeezing her hot wet cunt walls in around my gloved hand, it's almost like feeling her flesh and cunt and... *blood*.

On my hand. On my tongue. Yes, come for me, love. Yes, you know that makes me so hot. Just barely touch me whenever you're ready, when you can sit up, love, and I'll come for you, as many times as you like. Inhaling your hot blood smell. Vulgar and holy.

And she does it. She touches me with her tongue. (Through the Saran wrap. It's almost like real, I can feel how hot and eager her tongue is, how much she wants me to come. She can almost taste me, almost smell me. We have eroticized Saran wrap. Fucking Saran wrap.)

I grab her hair before I'm done coming. When I still have a lot left in me. She stares at me over my sweaty belly, between my sweaty thighs and tits. Her eyes are angry and pinpoint. Why? I don't know why until I tell her.

I show her.

I hand her the delicate knife and say, "I want to bleed."

I am jealous of her.

She holds the knife as though it were an alien instrument, one not made for hands such as hers. She rests her hand on my scar, the scar where they took my blood away, the long scar on my belly that took my blood away and the cancer so I could go on living but without blood. In the time of the plague.

But she still bleeds. She is a bleeding woman.

"Cut me," I say. "Please."

She thinks that if she stares at me long enough I will change my mind. That I won't want this. That I don't need more blood. That hers, through latex and Saran wrap, is enough. It has been up until now. Now I really need this.

"I really need this," I say. "Just a little cut, on the labia. I need to bleed."

She is crying, I realize.

"Just a little. It has been so long."

When I see her crying, I know she loves me. Not married-love-live-together-handfasting loves me, but loves me. This makes me hornier, makes me want her more, makes me need the blood all that much more.

"Cut me. It's okay."

She's no fool in the time of the plague. She gloves up carefully, tests her agility with the knife, adjusts the gloves. Licks me some more through the Saran wrap. Throws the Saran wrap aside. Settles herself between my legs. Good and secure. Steady.

She's never cut anyone before, I can tell that. But when she does it, she does it quickly and lightly. Thrills of pain shoot through me, only originating where she made the little incisions, first on one cunt lip, then the other, but gathering force as the pain shoots toward my periphery. It doesn't really feel like pain exactly until it slams into my fingertips and hair follicles and toenails and ricochets back to the source. She is crying more and smearing the blood into my pubic hair, lubricating my clit with it.

BLOODY

"I want to taste it," she says. We both know very goddamn well that she cannot.

"If you almost touch it with your face, it's almost like tasting it," I say.

Not really. Fuck latex.

I say that too as she puts her face up next to my pubic hair so I can feel her warm breath and tears on me.

"Fuck latex," I say, and then I am crying too.

The pain throbs. I feel blood and cunt juice pumping out of me. She puts the Saran wrap back on me and licks me gently. I come painfully hard. It makes me bleed more every time I come. I see paisley. Pinwheels. Plaid. Hear sirens, bombs, glass breaking.

I love her.

I love her.

I love the smell of blood, the taste of fertility. Whence I came. Aphrodite.

Blood.

Love.



Photographs by Janet Ryan





PART VI

DUNGEON DIALOGUES: HOW THIS WORKS IN REAL LIFE

SEX AND THE SINGLE SUBMISSIVE

DREW KELLY CAMPBELL

She's kneeling over me, one solid thigh between my legs. Two dozen tiny black clothespins are scattered across the bed, waiting. I've been waiting too—forever, it seems.

"Boy, tell me something. Why do you do this?" Her eyes are warm, and she raises an inquisitive eyebrow.

"Bottom?" I ask. "Or bottom for you?" I grin, knowing Daddy likes her boy a little cheeky.

"I meant the former, but answer both, if you will."

I opt for the simplest response, my hunger for those clips and her fist too great for a dissertation on submission.

"Because it feels good. And because you're good at this. Remarkable, in fact."

Yet I know it's not enough and tell her so, but she accepts it, knowing there will be another time to speak of cabbages and kings.

When I moved to San Francisco, I made the pleasant discovery that a masochist with a broad back and big paws can get what she needs without much ado. But it took me four months before one partner of mine would let me wash a single dish in her home. She could tie me to a Saint Andrew's cross and whip me bloody, fuck me until I screamed and soaked her sheets, but "dishes were not a scene." That was work, and what we did was play.

On one level, I understood. My background taught me that if you're like me—white, upper-middle class, and college educated—you don't clean someone's house unless you're married to the person. But I itched to serve her, to bring her coffee and her slippers and a book for me to read aloud from before bedtime. I craved the look of contentment on her face when I curled up at her feet, my head resting lightly on her thigh. No amount of flogging could replace that look. It took another year before a trick's lover sidled up to me at a party and said, "I hear you're interested in exploring submission. You should call me." Needless to say, she didn't give me her

number—evil, wicked top!—but I got it and called. She said she'd been wondering how long it would take. Finally.

There's no hanky code for submission, no obvious, accepted way to say to others, "Have it your way." (I've taken to sporting a boot or dishcloth in my right pocket; a friend wears a badge that reads HOUSEBOL.) So I've had to learn to flirt all over again and to read the responses to my come-ons. Straight folks don't notice at all, which is probably for the best. In the nonkinky dyke community, I quickly learned that I could hold the door for a femme, but goddess forbid I should do so for another butch. A femme top may grace me with a haughty smile and a brisk, "Why, thank you, young man." A butch top will ruffle my hair and melt my heart and my carefully constructed defenses against getting what I actually want.

Fetching drinks, polishing boots, pulling out chairs, saying "please" and "thank you" and "may I?": the trappings of my WASP upbringing have become a ritual of seduction. I pride myself (don't let anyone tell you real submissives aren't proud) on remembering how my dominants drink their coffee, fold their Jockey shorts, and like their necks rubbed. This is my art, my vocation.

Popular culture—books and films like *Nine ½ Weeks* or *Story of O*—tells us that all (female) bottoms are really submissives, a passive lot, groveling and scraping at the feet of cruel, booted mistresses and mysterious, wealthy gentlemen. Yet the submissive leatherdykes I know are without exception strong-willed and smarter than the average bear. As a submissive, I control my own responses to an even greater extent than I do in an S/M scene. Certain things—a collar, a wicked chuckle, a well-placed slap—may take me under, but for once, it really is all in my head. If someone is hitting you, it's a good bet that she'll eventually get tired and stop. But if you are convincing yourself that the person standing over you is your worst nightmare and your wildest dream, no one can make you stop believing that. Not even the top herself.

Submissives run the special risk of isolating themselves in their own fantasies. Playing as a dominant, I have watched partners refuse to return to waking reality, with its overdue bills and dirty cat boxes; and as a submissive, I know why. Submission is intoxicating, addicting. And yet small doses may be all that's needed. One dominant friend of mine says that "when a submissive's need to belong and to serve are fulfilled, the rest of their life assumes a more balanced and happy state." The collar that Daddy or Master or Mistress places around my neck reminds me that no matter how insane the world is, there is an island of acceptance and care for me, a place to come home to.

When I play as a masochist, all I need to do is show up, communicate with my top, and keep breathing. And that's no small thing, believe me. But the joy I get from service is as intellectual and emotional as it is physical. Caring

for another's person and possessions is a mark of intimacy, affection, and respect. I may be a fetishist, but I won't do just anyone's leathers. I may love to put my hands all over a big butch's aching back, massaging away the day's stresses and strains, but not everyone gets to call me "boy" while I do it. (I used to giggle over the personal ads in my hometown lesbian paper: no butches, no mind games. Gimme.) I love the subtle play of a dominant's smile as she burrows under my skin and into my heart to poke at what she finds there. I love her self-satisfied sigh as she settles into her easy chair with a book, her boots and dick just out of reach. Submission is the ache of my desire for another woman, as much for her attention and approval as for her hands and mouth.

As a submissive, I open myself up to another's will. By serving, I express both my respect and my desire for that person. As a house slave under contract, I allowed that respect and desire to be put into writing, signed and sealed. This is a radical act of trust. I'm a masochist; I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that I can take a lot of pain, and I have the scars to prove it. But part of me needs reminding, day in and day out, that I am, indeed, worthy of love and respect. I need help drowning out the clamor of hatred and self-deprecation that fills so many women's heads. "Good," "smart," "brave": these are the dominant's kiss, the marks I carry with me after a d/s scene. They are as vivid and as tender as the bruises on my thighs and ass, but they don't fade as fast.

Hours later, the clips are once again scattered across the bed. I am curled up, my head in the curve of her shoulder, her finger tracing the outline of my ear. "My good boy," she whispers, and I sigh. "Sir, that's why. That's why I do this."

SEX PARTY SAVOIR FAIRE

ROBIN SWEENEY

It's almost eleven o'clock on the night after the International Ms. Leather contest. Most of the two hundred women coming to the play party after the contest are here, and the doors are about to close. The two-story EROS Center for Safe Sex—a usually gay men's sex club that has graciously allowed me; my partner in sex crimes, Pat Califia; and several helpers to take it over for the leatherdyke community tonight—is packed. The sound system is playing quietly in the social area, and louder upstairs. The music that started off the evening—a friendly little hang-out and chat mix heavy on the Pretenders and Erasure—has segued to an industrial/house mix with an emphasis on music with a beat appropriate for whipping. It's a little loud, but a good sound buffer for people playing. Loud music, I've found, makes it possible for scenes to go on side by side without interruption.

Downstairs, the bartender is pouring sodas and putting out more snacks for folks who are taking a break between scenes. A naked woman is kneeling at the feet of two leather-clad women, waiting for their attentions. One woman is standing in the corner with a sign on her back put there by her perturbed top. It reads, BAD GIRL. FORGOT HER TOYS. NO SCENE TONIGHT. Girls are fucking in the back video room, and the sounds are echoing down the hall. Outside in the smoking area, a boy is begging her Daddy to give her a cigarette. So far Daddy has said no, although the boy continues to make all sorts of promises of good behavior in exchange for a smoke. In the locker room a butch woman is getting dressed in her once-a-year, very effective femme drag. People are making out on the stairs up to the play rooms.

Upstairs, in the back room, where quiet scenes are encouraged—the sign outside the door says PLEASE, NO LOUD SCREAMING—someone is tied to the spider web of rope. In one of the slings, someone is begging for permission to come. (The four hundred gloves I put out earlier in the day will be gone by the time the last scene is over at three in the morning.) In the corner, on one of the wide platforms perfect for two to play on, a Mistress puts play piercing needles in one of her slaves, while the other stands by to assist her.

In the front rooms, there are so many scenes and so many women it's dif-

ficult to see everything. Someone is lining up bottoms to do her birthday spankings on, and someone else is bellowing in response to her first cutting. There are half a dozen massage tables that are being used for a more severe sort of body work and several large pieces of wooden jungle-gym-type furniture that people are using to play, watch or have sex, or sometimes all three. Women are having a hot and sweaty time.

Me? I've lined up a date with a boy I've had my eye on for a number of months—who finally asked me to play tonight, bless her heart. She's tied to the bunk bed frame. I've peeled off my uniform shirt and have cut her T-shirt off her back. I've planned to beat on her as long and as hard as we can both stand, and if I can find a quiet place afterward, I'll take her and my handy-dandy bottle of Probe into a dark corner and let her earn her red hanky. Then she'll go back to tending the soda bar and I'll start as a dungeon monitor, when I'm done counting the receipts and checking in with the women working the front door.

Later, I'll watch someone get beaten with a single-tailed whip, help someone find a condom that's needed, quick, and hang out with friends I see only at big leather events. The last few people at the party will be corralled into helping take out the trash, and by four o'clock, everything will be wiped up and everyone headed home.

Not all play parties are this huge or well-equipped, but most have some of these elements. In San Francisco, it's unusual for more than fifty women to attend a play party, unless it's held during an event like International Ms. Leather or Gay Pride. Often, parties are held in smaller spaces that are either rented and equipped for the evening or borrowed from the group that usually plays there. In San Francisco, a woman-owned and -managed professional dungeon recently opened, and large parties are held there. I don't know of any other city where a woman owns a play space, besides a single room in a private home. Most all-women parties are held in space rented from gay men or heterosexuals in the scene.

Public play is an important part of leather community life. One of the attractions of going to major leather gatherings is the opportunity to play in huge and well-equipped public dungeons, and most cities with an organized leather community have some sort of public play events. There are many sorts of play parties. They can be as simple as a friend inviting over eight of her favorite perverts to celebrate a birthday or as complex as the huge dungeons that are usually available at events like the National Leather Association's Living in Leather. While the small, intimate kind of party is a good time, large, public play parties are a specific kind of event with lots of twists and turns.

I've gone to parties since 1989 and started throwing parties shortly after that. Some parties I've thrown have been small and personal, where all the attendees have known one another, while two parties I've organized have

been enormous orgies for women from all over the country. I've also talked to a number of people about play parties. I'd like to share some advice for making play parties more fun and enjoyable.

Before You Go

First of all, realize that public play can be different from private scenes. The presence of other people watching or playing themselves can change the way you want to play. Some folks play differently in public than they do in private, and that's okay. (Myself, I'm shy about doing genital play in public, and I always make that a different negotiation that happens at the party, once I've gotten a feel for the people there.) It's also often difficult to hear at a party, since there is usually music playing, and that makes communicating more challenging. However, the fact that there is usually a vast assortment of equipment, more room for maneuvering, and lots of horny people playing makes up for the noise and crowd factor.

There's usually some sort of preregistration for most parties. Be sure to get the information about the party for yourself. Sometimes parties are by invitation only, and just because your buddy tells you about it doesn't necessarily mean you can go. Lots of party givers have specific rules for preregistration and how guests of invited people can attend. Also, keep in mind that play parties are usually a separate charge from whatever other function you may be attending. Find out the information firsthand, and your life will be easier and cheerier.

Take cash to pay at the door, if that's how the party throwers are letting people pay. Most folks won't take a check at the door, and, please, don't be like me at my first party and try to give party throwers your traveler's checks. It's silly. Trust me.

Make a plan for the party. When are you going to get there? Are you planning to play? With whom? Are you just going to watch? Do you know when the doors close and what time the party ends? What are you going to say when someone sidles up to you and says, "So, are you available this evening?"

If it's your first party, I suggest that you go with a friend. I've been to parties all over the country and know lots of people in the the community, and I still hate going to a play party by myself. If you go with a friend, you can hang out together, compare notes on the scenes and people you see, and still have someone to go to breakfast with after the party. But be sure you have a clear agreement with your buddy about who goes home with whom and what happens if one of you meets someone you want to play with.

If you are going to the party with your lover or regular play friend, be aware of the dreaded preparty fight. Everyone who has ever gone to a play party has had a preparty fight, especially before the first party. Relax. It's just

jitters, and nothing to cancel a party over. Throw all that energy into polishing your boots or picking out your outfit, and don't let a tiff with your best girl and/or boy keep you away.

Figure out what you might be interested in doing at the party. Are you willing to spank someone or get spanked? Would you be interested in helping a top tie up a bottom? Could you polish someone's boots or get yours polished? Often the heavy stuff is most noticeable at a party, but there is tenderness and intimacy at parties too. Make up a list of what you would do, what you might do, and what you wouldn't do. That way, you'll have a good idea of what kind of scene you're looking for.

You're in This Den of Inequity; Now What?

Once you've decided to go to a play party, what can you expect?

Play parties usually have a set time that the doors are open. For instance, when I throw a party, the doors open at eight and close at ten-thirty. After that, you can't get in. This allows the party to get rolling at a definite hour, without the distractions of the doorbell ringing. It also means that whoever is available to play is there, and people have to start playing and stop waiting for Ms. Right or Ms. Right Now to walk in the dungeon door. By closing the doors, the people throwing the party get a chance to play too, which makes it much more likely that there will be future parties.

You'll probably be expected to read a waiver and a set of rules and to sign a form with your legal name saying you agree to all this. Most party givers have a list of rules for the party that you will have to follow. These include rules about safer sex, which most parties make mandatory. Bring your own lube, gloves, condoms, and trick towels to the party, even if safer-sex items are provided. It's much easier to just reach into your bag for your latex goodies than to have to scramble across the room to the party stack.

Find out about the various areas of the dungeon. Some public play spaces are just one room, while others are two-story buildings with lots of different areas. Usually there's a food and drink area, a social/hang-out/negotiate space, a sign-in area, and a place to store your gear in addition to the play space. Find out which is which when you sign in. Usually, if it's not too busy and you ask politely, the people doing the sign-in will take you on a quick tour.

To really make the party throwers' night, though, ask when you sign in if there is anything they need help with. As a party thrower, I promise you that three times out of three there will be something you can do to help out. It will gladden the heart of your host, it's a way to introduce yourself without appearing to be trying to get a scene, and it will give you a job, which makes everyone more comfortable at a social event.

When you go to a party, take your toys. Even if you don't plan to play, take

a little bag of your favorite playthings anyway. It is better to have dragged a bag along and not played than to suffer the slings and arrows of not getting to play because you didn't pack that duffel. And on that note, if you haven't been to the space or the event before, don't take anything that you would hate to lose. Sometimes parties have really secure coat checks or lockers, and sometimes they don't. Occasionally, things do get stolen at a party. More likely, though, someone just post-scene forgot which black bag full of black leather toys was hers and nabbed the wrong thing.

When you're at a play party, take off your clothes. A radical concept, I know, but it really is okay to take your clothes off at a play party. I'll tell you a little party throwers' secret: we turn up the heat so that naked girls will be comfy. Take off your clothes, show off your body, and stop sweating because you've still got three layers of clothes on.

Dungeon monitors—or DMs, as they are often called—are women who watch what goes on at a party and make sure people follow the rules. Dungeon monitors will interrupt a scene if it's unsafe and will ask people who are talking too loudly in the dungeon to quiet down. A friend of mine has a great definition of a DM: "a combination of a crossing guard in charge of traffic control, a referee calling fouls and making sure people play with all of their protective equipment, and a yenta."

Take all your medications with you. (Even though I have three sorts of over-the-counter pain medications with me when I throw a party, I realize that most people who throw a party are not as compulsive as I am. In case your party throwers have better boundaries than I do, take your own headache meds.) This includes any feminine hygiene items you may need. Women seem to get their periods at play parties. I would love to see the government study this at some point. I have often made myself the most popular person at a party because I have a box of tampons with me.

And speaking of medications, don't take any alcohol or not-prescribed-for-you drugs to a party. Most parties have clear rules about substances, and violating these rules is an easy way to get thrown out of a party. If a party space allows alcohol, then take your own if you must, but I think it's a bad idea to get fucked up before you play. I've never needed to throw anybody out of a party for being messed up, but when people who look a little intoxicated sign in, I carefully lean over and smell their breath. Then I say in my best Clint Eastwood tone, "Any misbehavior due to intoxication is grounds for never being invited back. Y'all understand that, right?" It's a buzz buster, but tipsy party attendees have a tendency to behave better after that. Some parties don't have clear rules about drugs and alcohol, and I think that's dangerous. Even if you drink or drug sometimes, a play party is a bad place to do it. As one longtime player told me, via E-mail, "The breakdown of inhibitions through chemical means is a violation of trust for either the top or the bot-

tom... Should I be drinking, I won't play, even if I have had just two drinks. As a top, I don't want to play with someone whose reactions to stimulus have been dulled or heightened by an effect I can't control. Should I encounter a bottom who would like to play but has been partaking of mind-altering substances, I will pass until another time. The safety of my partner (and myself) is too damned important to me to allow stupidity to rear its head."

To Play or Not to Play

Keep in mind that it's okay to not play at a play party. Some people just like to watch, and folks want to check out the energy of a group before they do this crazy stuff. However, it is a sex party, and sex will happen there. Don't get your hair in a twist if somebody propositions you. That's what a play party is for, remember? A polite "No, thank you, I'm not up for playing right now" is just fine.

It's also okay to ask people if they are interested in playing. Don't be surprised, though, if people have their scenes planned before the party starts. Occasionally people will be available for spontaneous play, but often they won't. This is why I always suggest that people have business cards made with their names and phone numbers—it's an easy way to pass your number to someone you want to talk to later. Watching people play at a party also gives you a good idea of what it could be like to play with them.

Practice the fine dungeon art of being visible without being in the way. People play in public because they like people to watch. However, most people don't want somebody crowding in and interfering with their scene. Stay a respectful distance away, keep out of the top's backswing, and don't comment on the scene that's in progress. Unless you are explicitly invited to join in the scene, don't. It's also tacky to chitchat in the dungeon. Keep your conversations about your day at work and the cat's hair ball for the social area, at the least, and preferably at home.

Even if you don't play at the party, part of your job as a party goer is to add to the atmosphere of danger, sex, and fun at a party. Watching can be part of the scene. Don't feel bad about standing around, but give back something of yourself to the scene, without being intrusive. Your appreciation, your lust, your hunger, your aesthetic appreciation are part of the party and the scene. Be part of what is going on, not just an unimpassioned observer, unaffected by what you see.

Parties of a Different Stripe

There are all sorts of play parties. Often at big events, there will be mixed-play spaces, and the energy of a mixed-play party is different from an all-

SEX PARTY SAVOIR FAIRE

women's party. Sometimes the mixed parties are queer men and women playing side by side, sometimes they're gay and straight all combined, and sometimes it's hard to tell. I know that there are some things I am comfortable doing at an all-women's party that I am not willing to do at a mixed party; keep that in mind when you make your plans. Find out who is able to attend the party before you make any hard-and-fast rules about what you're going to do at it. Also, be prepared to handle flirts, advances, and input from people you might not otherwise interact with sexually. It's not fair to get mad at a straight guy who introduces himself at a mixed party. If he's rude or pushy, tell him to leave you alone, but otherwise a simple "No, thanks, I'm not interested" should suffice.

Playing around people whom you usually wouldn't play with can be very fun and enlightening, however. Little Roo had a breakthrough at a mixed play party: "It was a pansexual party sponsored by the Chicago Hellfire Club. The party was very high energy and filled with people who loved to play long and hard. My top is heavy into ass beating—as am I—and we had set up for a long, hard beating. The scene was simple—no restraint, just bending over a bondage table, while she had at my ass for more than three hours. By the time we were finished, my ass was oozing lymph everywhere, welting, cut, and bleeding. I could barely stand up and definitely couldn't talk. My top pulled my legs up onto the table so I was lying on my belly. I slowly calmed down and returned to some level of reality. My top stroked my back and head reassuringly.

"We finally cleaned up and headed downstairs to the social area. Soon after, Guy Baldwin, John Hanson (of Hanson Percussion Instruments, whose tools we were using many of that night), and many full Hellfire Club members came over, one by one, and complimented our scene. It really blew me away, that people I looked up to were so encouraging and impressed by both my top's technique and my stamina and tolerance. We'd had compliments about our scenes before, but it just meant more to me that night. I felt much stronger as a bottom, and I felt like an even more intense bottom because these guys I love and respect were telling how much they like our scene. It was very validating."

The Party's Over

Protein is very important for the successful end of a party. If the party throwers don't have some sort of a spread—and shame on them if they don't provide some snacks—make sure to eat something substantial like meat or cheese toward the end of the night. It will keep your blood sugar stable and will prevent the horrible, end-of-the-party hysteria that has ruined many a good time.

Find out what time the party ends, and be sure to end your scene by that

hour. It is rude to keep the party throwers standing there, tapping their toes and ripping the towel out from under your butt.

Say thank you. Thank the dungeon monitor for spending her time at a party making sure nobody gets hurt in a bad way. Thank the party throwers for making such a fun time happen. Thank the person whose scene you spent an hour watching. Saying thank you is a great way to get a conversation going with someone and makes the tired party-thrower happy. I promise.

When you get home, congratulate yourself. Every time women go out in the world and make a place for sex and play to happen, it's a big and important deal. Play parties are special, and when you go to one, you've contributed to the community. People who live in cities where parties happen all the time can get pretty jaded about them, but parties are unique happenings we all need to celebrate.

One final note: this may sound silly, but change your sheets before you go to a play party. No, really. If you have a lousy time, you get to return to a comfy, clean set of welcoming flannels. If you have a great time, you have a soft place empty of cracker crumbs to lay your striped-up butt or worn-out whipping arm. And, if by some chance you are sharing your bed with someone you met at the party, you get to avoid that embarrassing dirty-sheets-in-front-of-a-trick moment.

Note: Thanks to the folks on gl-asb and AOL's Women of Leather board who helped with this article.

WHAT DO *YOU* BRING TO A PARTY?

- I always bring my Nerf Bat to parties.
- My deerskin flogger. It's without a doubt one of the most beautiful, sensual whips I have ever seen, felt, or played with. And I'm not just saying that because I made it.
- Usually a date! (Most parties I've gone to with specific play plans, and I've only recently begun to enjoy going without for optimum watching/cruising/bonding with friends/spontaneous fun.)
- As far as toys or equipment go, though, I'd have to say it's a tie between lube and keys. Nowadays, I almost always make sure to bring leash and at least a choke chain as well, which (along with lock) I keep attached to my play case.
- My imagination. Everything else is optional. Clothes, toys, attitude, partners could all be left behind, but if my muse forsakes me—forget it.
- THE TOY BAG. (The toy bag usually contains at least three different weights of flogger, one crop, and a “belter”; often there's more stuff in it.)

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- The usual toy bag includes basic restraints, locks, tons of paddles and whips, a hood, double-ended clips, clasps, clamps, latex gloves, lube, condoms, mitts, rope, some chain, a clean towel, spray bottles full of disinfectants—alcohol and bleach—some basic first aid items, etc.

- A sense of humor and my red feather boa. Everything else varies with my mood.

- Individual packs of water-based lube without Nonoxynol-9. Too many women are allergic to that poison, and chances are that party-supplied lube will be full of it. Yuck.

- My favorite two straps—a thin, smacky one and a thicker, thuddy one.

- A cane. I can have an entire evening with just one cane.

- My dick. What use is identifying as a boy if you can't take your dick with you?

- Clean underwear.

- Cab fare.

- Extra stockings.

- Nail clippers and an emery board.

- Boot polish.

- A bicycle bottle, so I can have water in a container that isn't open, since so many play spaces don't let you have liquid in any container that could spill.

- A hanky. Not just so that I can cruise and let people know what I am into, but also as a handy blindfold, collar, gag, and wrist cuff.

- My bottom's collar. We may go to the party and want to socialize, but as soon as that comes out, she knows it's time to focus on me.

BALL AND CHAIN

JEZI STRONG

She calls me sweet everything names. She is a bottom perv who needs to top sometimes. I am mostly a top, but once I go down as the femme slut, I love to bottom to sex pain; Sex Magic. Our scenes go from "baby girl wants Papa's big cock" to "suck Mistress's cunt, *now*, boy!" We are living and loving in a pornographic relationship, and it's fucking intense. She's my butch. I am her femme, no apologies—never again. I might wear a dick with my silk slip, and she definitely has a fine way of wearing a lace bra, but I am 100 percent femme fatale and she is 100 percent butch. We like our polarization. We feast on our differences.

I grew up poor. She is from the mansions and shopping malls—a "nice" upper-class family. My mom was on welfare. Her mom received an allowance. I got my first brand-new black leather high heels a while ago. I walk in them like I was born for the Ritz! It is expensive to buy the goods, all the tools and toys of fashion fetish fun. I love that my big, bad, rich boy-girl butch shared her toys with me and now they belong to both of us.

She is a Jew, and I am a breed. We bring our ethnic selves together in our ritual Sex Magic play. We cut each other, and the blood of our ancestors fills the room with the hot smell of pain.

When I was a baby, my dad or some other man shoved his penis in my tender mouth. My lover and I created a scene in which she became the perpetrator and I was "little me." She was harsh. I sucked her cock until I gagged; now I beg for her to spread me open and plunge into my throat. She gave me back my mouth.

I have a big mouth and like to say what I see. It has not been easy moving through the world of S/M as a poor-breed femme bitch top slut wife of an upper-class, Jewish butch bottom. I feel a lot of pressure. Maybe some of it comes from inside. I want to be accepted by my "tribe."

We have chosen monogamy and marriage to go deep and wide with each other—we ball with chains. I get off on how she can be all of my lovers at once. We pleasure each other with whips, canes, and clips, two dicks, sometimes more—one for every hole. My butch fucks me rough cuz I am so scarred

it takes some sweat to soften me up. She hurts me and then cradles me. She pumps the gas, she pumps me, and I fuckin' pump her too! Our scenes are where we play and work with the old wounds. We know who we are by how we play, and my wife and I play hard!

SPEAKING OF FAMILY:
SOME POLLYANNA WORDS ABOUT POLYFIDELITY
JOI WOLFWOMYN

I have a set of five rules for a relationship. These tend to be my starting point in negotiations. (1) Always be honest. (2) Always be safe. (3) Don't let tricks interfere with prearranged family or private time. (4) Don't bring tricks home without calling first or being willing to share (assuming they're willing also). (5) Never sleep with anyone who would disgust me.

Now that I have your attention, let's start with some definitions before I get any further on my soapbox. Polyfidelity is having a closed circle of lovers, with a shared commitment within that circle. Polyamory is having any number of lovers, often with a few who are considered primary. Monogamy is having one partner with whom there is a lifelong commitment. Then there is the concept of fluid monogamy/polyfidelity, wherein sex between partner(s) is unprotected, but any sexual activity outside the defined relationship is strictly safe. Further exploration also finds emotional monogamy, where there is an emotional commitment between two people who both have other sex partners. Emotional polyfidelity is basically the same thing with a multiple structure.

I have been a part of many of these structures all of my adult life, having run the gamut from hippie free-love communes to anarchist squat house-mommy to one attempt at a monogamous commitment. I have been part of a family where one person was not sexually involved with any of the other family members yet was the most committed to the relationship of any of us. In my current family, one of my partners and I switch frequently, sometimes confusing those around us. Our third partner is in full-time collar to us both, with a padlock that we both have keys for. She recently has expressed an interest in learning to top, which we are slowly integrating into our play dates. There can be any combination of people and dynamics, and sex need have very little to do with family and commitment.

Let me repeat that. Sex is a wonderful bond, great fun, and has very little to do with family and commitment. I would never want to live with everyone I wanted to fuck or fuck everyone I choose to live with.

Let me also provide my definition of *family*, a word much bandied about

in the current political climate. A family is a group of people who have chosen to live as a committed, interdependent, mutually supportive structure; emotionally, physically, and financially. Again, sex is a wonderful bonus but not necessary for commitment. Other optional features include variable age range and the collective raising of children. Cats are mandatory. I recommend at least one radical faerie for glamour, and any well-behaved straight boy should be kept in the oubliette for the occasional bit of grunt work that you just don't feel like doing.

All of the above-mentioned are valid working structures. I have heard so many people in alternative relationship communities be condescending toward people in monogamous relationships, referring to them as "un-evolved" or "unenlightened." This seems pretty specious to me coming from people who are demanding respect for their choice of relationship structure. Striking parallels of this exist in any number of communities, queer, leather, dyke, faggot, you name it. The pattern of isolating one's self and/or community under the guise of "we are bound together because we are somehow superior" is one of the most effective forms of cultural suicide that I know of. This is often accompanied by the societal perversion that different must somehow be better or worse, never equal. I believe it is this isolationist thought pattern, with the "different is better or worse" mind-set, that combines with the limits of dualism* to trap many of us into believing that we have a limited capacity for emotional commitment.

Monogamy is a structure that works quite well for some people yet is societally enforced as the "normal" style which all of us should strive for. Society as a whole tends to see things in a dualistic format, and this has fed the "monogamy as normal" thread through most of our enculturation. During the sexual revolution of the '60s and '70s, and since then, what has ended up happening is often a form of emotional monogamy. Or, for the most part, relationships that consist of one central figure and several others who are committed to that one person but not necessarily to each other. This is the harem syndrome, a form of polyamoury, and is the one I consider the least stable. In this situation, if the central figure leaves or has some sort of crisis, there is no stable structure for anyone else to fall back on.

Something I want to be very clear on is that what usually is considered an open relationship is what I have defined as emotional monogamy, and it is

* Dualism is the belief system in which there can be only two points of balance, as in male/female, dark/light, either/or, butch/femme. Across the world, many cultures' belief structures are based on this principle. The whole "couple" syndrome is entirely due to this. In basic geometry, however, the first noted point of balance and stability is three. Anything balanced on two points can easily be tipped over, while something balanced on three or more points is much more stable.

just that—a form of monogamy. One of the difficulties in talking about open relationships is that most people see them only in terms of sex. Many people in self-defined open relationships are fine with their partners having sex with any number of other play partners but draw a very clear line at any other emotional involvement. Mention the concept of loving and committing to more than one other person, with everyone living together, and blank looks abound.

What I see as the dysfunctional tendency in *enforced* monogamy is that it presupposes that all of anyone's emotional, physical, and psychic and psychological needs can be met by only one other person. Some people do indeed find one single person whose self-complexity is equitably balanced with their own and have a wonderful lifelong relationship. Many others who hold this as an ideal instead fall into the category of serial monogamy. These tend to be either repeated attempts to find the "right one" or a series of conscious time-specific commitments.

We all get trapped in this thing of "I have to find someone to spend the rest of my life with!" whether it's a stated goal, a scorned dream, or both. The serious flaw in this pattern is the pervading sense that many people carry that if their relationships weren't lifelong, the relationships—or they—somehow failed. It is only the enforced monogamy mind-set that defines a relationship as failed. The phrase "It just didn't work out" is really common when discussing a past relationship, but what is it that didn't work? Must all our interactions be judged on a pass-fail basis? Isn't the *experience* of these relationships the important part? To say that a relationship "didn't work" after having been together for any amount of time is to imply that nothing was learned from the experience and nobody ever had a good time.

I have had many wonderful relationships in which I learned a lot about life and myself. Most of these people are now good friends and occasional fuck buddies. Some of them I have no communication with by mutual consent, but that's due more to the pain of separation than to any sense of failure. I see all of these as valuable relationships in my development as a person and priest of the pagan ghodz. There is nothing inherently wrong in having a relationship for two months, nine months, seven years, or however long. Which is not to say that breakups are easy or simple, mind you. They could often, however, be more amicable if partners didn't carry this hidden sense of failure to compound all of the other huge emotional issues that go with any form of separation.

Polyamoury in the leatherdyke community is one of the most common lifestyles, yet it is rarely called that or even acknowledged as such. How many of us know people who live with their mistresses or daddies or owners, except for the one day a week that they stay with their own pets or little boy-chicks or whatever, or except for that woman they've spent "Living in Leather" with every year for the past four, and so on and so on. Now, having been too well therapy-trained, I am not going to contradict anyone's self-

definition, but a lot of these women define their relationships as emotionally monogamous. I don't see how it is possible to have any kind of *ongoing* S/M relationship without some form of committed emotional bond happening. The nature of who we are and how we fuck makes it impossible to be that detached from whoever is sharing that level of trust and intensity with us.

Levels and definitions of emotional monogamy vary, however. I am not trying to imply that women who define themselves as emotionally monogamous have absolutely no emotional bonds outside of their partners. We all have many levels of emotional bonds that run the gamut of friends, ex-lovers, kids, relatives, etc. There is a distinct difference, however, between an emotional bond and an emotionally supportive commitment. I have emotional bonds with a huge number of people. My commitment, however, is first to my family, then to my immediate clan, and then to the community of paganfolk who consider me their priest. They have my love, support, and allegiance.

Lest y'all think I'm trying to convince you that group relationships are easier, understand that all of the things that complicate any relationship are exponentially increased in a multiple relationship. If one person alone has a problem, then there is one problem. If two people have problems together, there are six problems: the problem each person has of his or her own, the problem each person has with the relationship, and the problem each person perceives the other person to be having with the relationship. Add more people, and you add the dynamic of each person being afraid that the others are somehow united against them. Stuff like jealousy, anger, and inability to communicate affect everyone in the family, which means that there are that many more emotional realities and perceptions to account for. There's no need for any relationship to end because of these feelings. Everyone involved, however, must be able to acknowledge the reality of other people's perceptions and be willing to talk about them in a group setting. Group resolution can't be achieved by a succession of one-on-one conversations. The more perspectives that are spoken and heard collectively, the more complete is the vision of the shared reality. It's kind of like cutting a gemstone. Only when all of the facets are in place can the fire of the stone be seen.

What actually make a multiple-person relationship work, let alone one with S/M dynamics involved, are clear communication and respect for the others' perspectives; honesty and self-awareness are key factors. As much as no one can ever really know what's in anyone else's head, no one else knows what you want if you haven't said anything. Especially with power and submission involved. Don't put yourself into a relationship as a submissive service bottom when what you really want is to be everybody else's pampered little girl. Conversely, don't negotiate for the house queen position unless you have the skill and strength to sustain it. Be up-front about what you want and how much you are willing to compromise and exchange for it.

One of the things that most complicates a multiple relationship is balancing the emotional needs and connections of all partners. From my experiences in the S/M community, relationships are based not necessarily on equal partnerships but on equitable ones, where everyone's needs are taken into account and negotiated. The whole purpose of a multiple relationship is the sharing of resources, tangible and otherwise, so that everyone's *needs* are met. Defining the difference, however, between needs and wants can be really tricky. One triad I was in was short-lived because one of the partners decided that she wanted both myself and our girlfriend to be as "in love" with her as the two of us were with each other. Personally, I can't feel exactly the same way about or toward more than one person, precisely *because* they are different people. This doesn't mean that living with two people who are newly in love isn't a pain in the ass, but it does go back to the "different must be better or worse" trap I mentioned earlier. Within any multiple relationship there are going to be different dynamics between sets of people. There are levels of love—"in love," best friends, compatriots, whatever—that are constantly evolving and changing as long as they are given room and time. All of the connections between different groupings within a relationship need to be as flexible as possible. There is no room for growth in a field of rigid absolutes. Emotional rigidity caused by fear and insecurity (and often manifested in ultimatums and drawn lines) disintegrates more connections between people than almost anything else.

The second most dangerous pitfall in group realities is qualitative judgment. Too many people unconsciously try to impose their judgments of what is "good enough" onto other's motives. This just does not work in any adult relationship. I actually had one partner who told me that although I was having dates with her according to our family schedule, I wasn't doing it for the right reasons, so it wasn't good enough. Everyone must be held accountable for his or her actions, but judging someone else's motivations is as ridiculous as judging someone else's fantasies.

There must also be allowances made for changes and evolution in any of the relationship dynamics. Many women go through changing phases of being only a top or a bottom. For those people in more role-based relationships, for example, daddy/boy games, there will come a time when your boy is grown up. These changes don't have to mean the end of the relationship but do necessitate a willingness to renegotiate and restructure the balance of the dynamic or to admit that you have learned all you can from each other and need to move into another cycle of growth and exchange—which may or may not involve all the same people. There is nothing wrong with any of these solutions.

Overlaying the dynamics of S/M and dominance/submission onto the structure of a group relationship is at once both incredibly tricky and much

easier than vanilla group relationships. This has a lot to do with the fact that perverts usually have better negotiating skills. I have found that it's much easier if everyone switches, but that's my personal preference. In my relationships I spend most of my time as matriarch but a fair amount being daddy's little girl or the house puppy. One relationship I was in was with an established group marriage that had been together for nine years. We were together for more than a year, until it became obvious that there was too much house queen competition for the relationship to be functional on a long-term basis. (Translation: I and one of the other partners fought over who got to be the queen far too often and seriously for everyone's comfort level, especially our kids.) Now, after having a period of little communication while they and I restructured our lives without each other, we are all friends who play and fuck on a semiregular basis.

Some structures that work really well in creating a sense of stability within group relationships are basic logistics. Creating a sleeping schedule, as in who sleeps with whom which nights and who gets to sleep alone, is crucial. Everyone needs his or her own room and bed to have as a safe space. Having one night a week set aside as "family night," a time to play, talk, or go to the movies together, helps family members feel they are a part of something larger than just themselves. One family that I know plays music and sings together two nights a week. Others do craftwork or worship together. Group fucks are always encouraged. Almost anything works, just as long as it's something everyone in the family can be an integral part of. Which activity to choose also depends on whether there are children in the family. The activity doesn't always have to be the same, but having a regular date is recommended.

Something that I have done in all my relationships, even with my daughter, is to sit down on our anniversary and discuss how we are doing and what, if anything, needs change. We look at the past year and talk about how things have been and who has gone through what changes. Then, if it's still what we want, we reaffirm our commitments. Finding the balance between stability and stagnation is always a challenge.

You would think that queers would get the concept of alternative family structures, wouldn't you? We who are so proud of our holy diversity. How many times have I had to explain that I have two, yes, *two* partners and we are looking for more? At least as many times as I have to explain it to myself and my two girlfriends. Let alone my daughter's school. Much of what I have read concerning polyamorous and polyfidelitous relationships is focused on hetero structures and dynamics. Which is not to say that a lot of the information couldn't be applied to a queer family. Of course, no one really expects queers and perverts to have families of our own. Including us. It all boils down to one single concept, which is that multiple committed relationships are a hell of a lot of work. Yeah, I know, like any relation-

ship is easy, whether it has two or ten people in it.

In times when the surrounding culture is trying its best to isolate all queers and perverts and tell us that we are not capable of having any form of stable family in our lives, we need to be able to see and explore all of our possibilities. Many of us have made a revolutionary career of tricking; and the ability to take pleasure for pleasure's sake without attachments and expectations is truly one of the great feminist achievements of our time, as well as one of the most ancient forms of spirituality known. Our families should be no less revolutionary. The ability to choose whom we love, live with, and take care of is something that needs no limits from anyone else's definitions or structures. Family is something we get to choose, create, and evolve however we wish.

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LAMAR VAN DYKE

Locking yourself into a contract with another person, whether it is for a day, a weekend, a month, or a year, is an event that needs to be taken very seriously. If you overlook something or neglect to address something, that very thing can turn out to be the difference between a terrific agreement and a nightmare.

I will attempt to give you information that has served me well over the years, and I will also attempt to give you the benefit of my personal experience with contracts.

I approach this technique from the perspective of a top. I decided to investigate this arena because I no longer trusted myself to not “accidentally” end up in a relationship that I hadn’t defined, with expectations that I had never agreed to. Up to this point, my career as a lesbian had been the usual story of serial monogamy with a constant conversation about nonmonogamy and various attempts at having other lovers in various capacities. We usually called it “opening our relationship,” and it invariably coincided with the beginning of the end.

After the collapse of my marriage, the thirteenth in the series, I really wanted to do that part of my life differently. I didn’t want to find myself with a girlfriend, and I didn’t want to have anyone else in my personal business. I wanted to have a clear space around me that would leave me alone with my thoughts and my process. One of the things that caused me the most grief about being married was having someone else assume that I wanted to know what she thought about how I looked, how I felt, how I dealt with people, and how I dealt with the situations that presented themselves in my life. I was tired of it. I wanted some space, and I also wanted to have some fun.

As you are probably well aware, marriage is a series of compromises. I was tired of compromise. It’s not my strong suit. I would rather deal with the disappointment of not getting what I want than get only part of what I want. So I became the founding mother and all-time president of the “Have What You Want When You Want It” club.

* * *

Romance

A contract is a clear way to discuss the details of your intended relationship without all the innuendo, subterfuge, and manipulation of the romantic approach. This is not to say that if you have a contract you can't have romance. You can have all the romance you want, but at the time of the actual contract negotiating, it is essential that both parties put aside their romantic notions and discuss the possibilities in a clear, honest, and businesslike fashion. This is simply for the duration of that particular discussion. Once you have negotiated the terms of your agreement, whether it be for a few hours, a few days, or longer, you can all proceed in whatever fashion you have agreed upon.

There are so many possibilities. The model of the nuclear family doesn't even work for the nuclear family. Why would it work for lesbians? Yet we try over and over again to fit ourselves into those restricting and confining roles. If we remove this notion from our minds and work with what we really have, we can create relationships of unlimited possibilities. If we communicate openly and honestly, really honestly, with each other, we can take what we have and work with it. We can take our realities and create new ones. We can be successful.

When we are striving for the unrealistic bliss and security of the monogamous nuclear family structure, we are, in some respects, setting ourselves up to fail. By internalizing that failure, we are programming ourselves to have negative expectations around relationships. We want that failure to be the other person's fault. We will go to great lengths to prove our innocence and place the blame where we think it belongs, on the other person.

In fact, our attempt to recreate a nonfunctional structure is what causes the demise of our relationships. In my opinion, the nuclear-family structure just doesn't work. It doesn't work for straight people, and it doesn't work for us. We can modify the structure, but that requires negotiation, honesty, and trust.

What I am proposing here is simply a way to communicate with each other about our needs, desires, and expectations; a way to build a firm foundation for whatever kind of relationship we create.

Step One: Make a Wish List

I made a decision to approach my new liaisons with clarity. I didn't want to run over the women I was dealing with. In order to approach this clarity I first made a list of what I wanted. I mean, really wanted. This list was for me. This list was not based on anyone else ever reading it or knowing about it. It was for me. If I was able to have 100 percent of what I wanted, what would that be?

I am including this list in the hopes that it will assist you in making your

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own list. You can be as daring and demanding as you like. This list is for you. No one will judge it, no one will score it. It is simply an exercise between you and yourself. It is useful whether you are about to engage in a contract situation or not. It is useful in illuminating your internal dialogue and simplifying your relationship with yourself. The more you know yourself and your current needs, the more possibility there is of having them met.

100 Percent of What I Want

1. I want someone who will be devoted and loyal to me and my happiness.
2. I want someone who will not discuss my private affairs with anyone other than me.
3. I want someone who will be responsible for maintaining the shine on my boots.
4. I want someone who will be responsible for keeping my clothes clean and in good repair.
5. I want someone who will keep my home in order without me having to constantly remind her.
6. I want someone who will maintain her personal finances and personal relationships independently. I do not want to be involved in her basic survival crises.
7. I want someone who can keep my comfort and happiness in the forefront of her mind.
8. I want someone who is determined to maintain harmony in my personal space.
9. I want someone who will not offer me her opinion of what I am doing. If I want her opinion I will ask for it.
10. I want someone who will not interfere in any way with my relationships with my friends.
11. I want someone who will maintain her own living space and be available to me when I want her.
12. I want someone who will tell me the details of her personal life only if I ask or if there is an emergency that interferes with my plans.
13. I want total and complete honesty.
14. I want someone who will be submissive only to me or to whomever I assign them.

I then had to deal with my new status as a single top. Women were approaching me, and I was suspicious and skeptical of them as well as of myself. I was tired of everything. I needed some way to set limits and to have fun at the same time. I was not inspired by requests to be beaten or various offerings of flesh that were presented to me. I wanted more in return. I had

just spent seven years with a woman who was a masochist but not submissive. I wanted submission and lots of it. I was willing to hurt girlz if they were willing to do something for me.

I felt like a business tycoon. I became the Boss Lady. I decided not to spend any time wining and dining prospective employees. I wanted to get right down to it. I composed a questionnaire that would assist me in getting the information I needed before I agreed to play with someone.

It had been my experience that women would tell me what they thought I wanted to hear, instead of telling me their own truth. They would state emphatically that they did not want a girlfriend when in fact that was exactly what they wanted. They seemed to think that somewhere along the line I would change my mind, focus on them, and they would get what they wanted.

Make No Assumptions

When I began to put things in writing, it seemed to help clarify exactly where I was at. When others found themselves engaging in a dialogue prior to signing a piece of paper, they took it more seriously. They had it in front of them in black and white. We could both refer to it when we needed to. There could be no mistaken intentions. Our agreement was clear.

When you are doing this, spend some time thinking about what you want to know about this person. Try to cover all of the things you are thinking about. You don't want to end up in a situation where people surprise you by telling you they are not available for something when you assumed they were. Make no assumptions. Keep it clear.

I wanted the applicants to be familiar with what I was looking for. I wanted them to be certain that there was no romantic possibility dangling in front of them. This was not a situation that they could get into and manipulate into something else. This would be a clearly defined arena. This would be an unequal power structure from beginning to end.

And there would be an end. An agreed-upon end. There could be renegotiation at the end of the contract, but the present agreement would end. I found this very important. The end of the contract needs to be recognized, appreciated, and then enforced. If, as a top, you just let it slide, then you find yourself in one of those undefined areas, with assumptions and nonconsensual expectations coming in your direction.

Here is a copy of the job description and questionnaire I developed. I'd like to stress that this is for your reference only. Please don't just copy it and use it. Take the time to create your own. Put your energy and thoughts into it. Keep in mind that at this point I was looking at the situation as if I were the president of a large corporation dealing with job applicants.

Job Description

Position available: slave to Lamar

Job description: applicant must be able to perform the following duties in a better than average manner:

- cooking
- cleaning
- ironing
- boot polishing
- motorcycle cleaning and polishing
- serving her employer's every need
- renting and returning videos on time
- laundry
- serving dinner to her employer and guests
- following directions
- be in charge of stuff: having everything together that her employer will need to do whatever it is she is about to do
- be available for her employer's periodic sexual and sadomasochistic whims

The contract will be for these duties at specific times agreed upon by both parties.

When no previous arrangement has been made and the slave and mistress run into each other in public, they are not required to fulfill these particular roles with each other.

The slave is the flesh offerer. The mistress is the high priestess.

The slave will be rewarded for excellent performance of her duties. These rewards will be varied and sadomasochistic in nature.

At this point I developed a questionnaire that would help me get more information about the person in question. When you are doing this, spend some time thinking about what you really want to know. Nothing is too weird if it is something you are concerned with. Put it out there. Ask the question.

This is all preliminary work that will help you learn if this is someone you would like to have in your life, in your home, and around your stuff.

Questionnaire

1. What did you like about your last job?
2. What did you dislike about your last job?
3. Name one thing that makes you feel qualified for this position.
4. What do you expect to receive as benefits?
5. Do you expect cash payment?
6. What do you consider to be rewards?

7. Are you willing to "serve" in public, at parties, or at social events?
8. Are you free to travel?
9. Will you expect/want/desire sexual favors?
10. Do you have any health or physical problems that may restrict you or prevent you from performing this job?
11. How are you with dogs and cats?
12. Do you have any experience in the following areas?
 - motorcycles
 - wardrobe care and maintenance
 - sewing
 - outdoor activities
 - typing
 - auto maintenance
13. What skills or experience do you have that you think will contribute to the success of this contract?
14. How do you think this experience will enhance your life?
15. When can you begin?

Trust

All of this can be like foreplay. As you move through this process with people, you learn a lot about them. You learn about their ability to follow directions and to follow through. You learn about their sense of humor, and you learn about their ability to be vulnerable and truthful. You learn what it's like to engage with them around something that is revealing.

You are also in the process of building trust. Trust is essential for this negotiation and contractual arrangement to work. If you are a top, you are presenting yourself as someone who wants to be in control. The bottom has an opportunity to assess whether you are capable of that or not. The top has an opportunity to see if the bottom actually follows through and is reliable. Can the bottom follow directions and get her paperwork in on time?

This process can be fun. When it's fun, you know you've found someone that you can truly play with. If the process turns out to be a fuck-time, then you can bet the contract will follow suit. If someone buckles under the pressure of paperwork and gets stressed out about right and wrong answers, then chances are good she will buckle under pressure around other things. You then have to decide if you are willing to deal with that or not.

For me, developing this process was a game. It got me thinking about myself, and it helped me find women who could also be creative in their approach to relationships and sexual encounters. It helped me get to know myself in a new way, and it was an easy way for me to be as dominating and

demanding as I could be. It was a relief to just put it out there and see who would play with it.

By now, if you have gone this far, you know quite a bit about each other. The power dynamic has been established. You have by now established the ambience of your scenario. Maybe your fantasy is to be not a business tycoon but the matriarch of a large and powerful family...or maybe you are royalty...play with it. Put it in your own context.

Get Real

I was now at a point that I had someone I wanted to play with. I wanted to do it in a contractual way. This negotiation needed to be done in a more equal way and not in the context of a scene. It is very, very important for the actual conversations about the contract to be conducted on equal footing. It is essential that the bottom negotiate honestly and clearly without any pressure from the top. Otherwise, the contract will be based on misinformation and fantasy. The contract needs to be based in reality.

For example, if you are the submissive and you know that you are not a very good cook, you need to say this, even if it is one of the things the top wants from you. It is imperative that in the negotiating stages you express this aspect of who you are. This will lead into a discussion of what you can both do around the issue. Do not lie. Lies become glaringly obvious once the contract is put into effect.

If you are a top who is not into blood sports and you are dealing with a bottom who is expecting to bleed, you need to put that out there immediately. Otherwise you will have someone on your hands who is not getting what she wants, and you will no doubt have a serious behavior problem.

In negotiating contracts you need to take total responsibility for who you are and what you want. You need to put yourself out there at the risk of being rejected. You need to take your chances and present yourself. Then you need to deal with the consequences of that presentation.

Responsibility Levels

There is a tremendous amount of responsibility for all parties entering into a contractual arrangement. This is not a situation to be taken lightly. This is a serious alternative to our old ways of relating.

On the surface it would appear that the top is being serviced and the bottom is doing all the work. This is *not* the case. Once the contract has been signed, the top is making all the decisions and has the responsibility of maintaining the terms of the agreement. *This is work.*

The bottom is doing obvious work. In the corporate world, it is work that's

on the bottom of the pay scale and is therefore defined as being less important. In our S/M world, we know this is not the case. For without the work of the bottom, the top would be playing dominance/submission with herself. The bottom has an opportunity to live in the safety zone where she doesn't need to make any decisions and is, in fact, taken care of emotionally by the terms of her contract. She is delightfully "under" and clearly knows the boundaries she participated in negotiating. If there is trust, she can relax into the scene. If there is lack of trust, then she needs to refrain from signing any agreement. If you do not feel trust, then do *not* enter into the arrangement. Take more time to explore and get to know each other.

A Bottom's Approach

As a bottom, you can certainly approach a top about a position as a submissive in her life. There are a number of ways to do this. The main thing to remember is to be respectful and be submissive. Do not throw yourself at her feet in a public place without warning. Do not invade her space. You are interested in a position as a submissive. Be submissive.

You can write a note of inquiry. You can invite her over for dinner and begin a conversation about that aspect of her life. You can write a résumé of all your attributes and submit it to her. If you choose to do this, be sure to include a list of things that you are willing to do that you think will enhance the quality of the top's life. I have received a number of résumés in which the bottoms went into great detail about all the physical and emotional things I could do to them and for them, and they forgot to mention what exactly it was they were going to do for me.

Get creative. Put your energy into it, think about it, work on it. If you're gonna do it, do it right. Here are a couple of examples of résumés that may help you start your own. These are only examples. I would encourage you to study these examples and then proceed along whatever avenue feels right to you.

This exercise will help you clarify for yourself what you're looking for and where you're at. Whether you give this résumé to anyone or not, you will know more about yourself when you're through.

Cover Letter

Dear Sir:

It has come to my attention that you have an opening in your superb dungeon facility. I would like to apply for this position.

I have been wanting to serve in your company for quite some time now. I believe I have qualities and skills that could add another dimension to your life. I would like an opportunity to fine-tune those skills with

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your guidance and expertise.

Enclosed please find a current photo as well as a comprehensive résumé of my skills and interests.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Résumé

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE NO.:

GOAL: To obtain a position as a slave, bottom, or submissive where I can use my skills and imagination for your entertainment and pleasure.

EDUCATION: I have attended numerous S/M workshops.

I have completed the S/M 101 mandatory reading list:

Coming to Power

Lesbian S/M Safety Manual

Macho Sluts

The "Beauty" books

John Preston's books, especially *Mr. Benson*

Venus Inferis

SKILLS:

- massage
- gourmet cooking
- great attention to details
- reading aloud
- nutritional knowledge
- very computer literate
- sexually submissive
- masochistic
- like to follow directions
- driving, both car and motorcycle
- some car maintenance skills

S/M HISTORY:

1988—Entered the scene as a novice bottom.

1989—First S/M relationship. Duration: eight months.

1990—A year of playing out many fantasies and basically slutting around.

1991—Went back to school and majored in SEX.

1992—House slave for a well-known top about town (references available).

Duration: one year.

EXPERIENCES:

- tit torture
- spanking
- paddling
- dildo worship

- anal fisting
- whipping
- role-playing
- serving at parties as a waitress, a centerpiece, a candelabrum, a footstool

POSSIBLE SCENES THAT INTEREST ME:

- confession of my sins to a priest, with penance enforced
- patient with physical problems, seeing a kinky doctor
- rape
- employee seeking employment
- pretty much anything we come up with

UNEXPLORED INTERESTS:

- complete shaving
- enemas
- sensory deprivation
- waxing
- humiliation
- cutting
- tattooing in a scene
- public scenes

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT:

- a closet full of lingerie
- butt plugs
- dildos
- vibrators
- restraints
- a flogger collection
- a cane collection
- a violet wand
- suction cups
- blindfold

From all of this information you have now received, you can begin to hash out what sort of agreements are available to both of you. It's vital that this is done not in scene, and that both of you participate equally in the process.

Here are some examples of agreements that have been useful to me and to some of my friends. You will notice that some of them are written in the form of a consensual contract and others are written in list form. Do what's easiest for you and what is most appropriate for the particular situation. These contracts and agreements are a result of information obtained from the earlier questionnaire, job application, and conversations. These contracts are particular to their participants and their needs at the time. Your contracts and agreements will, of course, be personalized to meet your needs.

Thirty-Day Consensual Slave Contract

- I, _____, do hereby willingly and consensually agree to serve as slave to _____ for a period of thirty days, beginning _____ and ending _____.
- I agree to refer to _____ from this point on as the Boss Lady, except when addressing her directly. I will then address her as "Ma'am."
- I agree to turn my body, mind, and spirit over to the Boss Lady to do with as she pleases.
- I agree to do my very best to enhance the quality of my Boss Lady's life.
- I will make no assumptions and have no expectations. When in doubt as to proper etiquette, I will respectfully ask.
- I agree to maintain the Boss Lady's home in a clean and orderly manner.
- I agree to maintain her clothes and personal effects. This means that her shirts will always be ironed and her boots will always be polished.
- I agree to run her errands and do her bidding at a moment's notice.

Bottom's Agreements

1. I agree to fulfill the terms of my job description:
 - a. I will polish and maintain my mistress's boots as often as I possibly can.
 - b. I will do all the cooking when we are together.
 - c. I will be responsible for the vacuuming and straightening up of whatever residence we are residing in at the time.
 - d. I will always make the bed.
 - e. I will clean and maintain the sex toys and put them away when we are finished with them.
 - f. I will consider my mistress's needs and take care of her immediate environmental considerations.
 - g. I will be available for spontaneous and periodic special assignments.
 - h. I will receive no permanent marks from anyone other than my mistress without her prior notification and/or permission.
 - i. If I want to play with the same person more than twice, I will have a conversation with my mistress about the situation.
 - j. My mistress always has priority in my life and can call it in at any time.
 - k. I will only do safe sex.
2. I will always wear my dog tags.
3. I agree to tell my mistress the truth whether it is solicited or not.
4. I will treat my newfound access to my mistress's private life with the utmost respect and confidentiality.
5. I will refer to my mistress as "Ma'am."

6. I will have "time-out" cards of two varieties. I can hand them in whenever I feel the need. They are:
 - a. Time out, I need to be alone.
 - b. Time out, I need to be with you as your friend.
7. I can walk at any time, providing I explain myself within forty-eight hours.
8. I agree to maintain an open channel of communication with my mistress.
9. I agree to not harbor hidden resentment and to deal with conflict openly and honestly.
10. When I am unclear, I will ask my mistress for clarity.
11. I will take care of my mistress's obvious and immediate needs.
12. I will maintain a calm and loving atmosphere around my mistress, and I will strive to maintain a certain harmony in her environment.
13. I will not contradict or question my mistress's motivation while we are "in role."
14. I will trust that my mistress has my best interest at heart, and I will try my hardest to give her what she wants.
15. My mistress's happiness will be one of my major concerns. If she is happy, then I am happy.
16. I will give my mistress an exclusive piece of my heart.
17. I will be monogamous with my mistress's feet.
18. I will do what my mistress wants me to when she wants me to do it.
19. I will not talk bad or disrespectfully about my mistress when she isn't there.
20. I will have no hidden agendas.
21. I will strive to enjoy every aspect of my position in my mistress's life.
22. I will pay my way in all the things we do.
23. I want us both to be happy and do whatever it is we are doing only for as long as it works. I have no interest in being a pain in the ass in my mistress's life.
24. I will gladly and proudly wear my mistress's ring in my tit.
25. I will be emotionally loyal to my mistress at all times.
26. I will never do dumb-ass shit to get my mistress's attention.
27. I will worship every inch of my mistress in whatever way will make her happy.

This contract is good until _____. At this time it can be renegotiated or declared null and void.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

And of course, seeing as this is the part of the process where you are approaching each other on an equal basis, there are agreements the top can make to ensure

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the security of the bottom. The following is a list of some top agreements that were negotiated at the same time the preceding list of bottom agreements was negotiated.

Top Agreements

1. I will take care of my slave within the context of our defined relationship.
2. I will explain things clearly and concisely.
3. I will tell my slave when she has done things right.
4. I will pierce her nipple with a ring that means she belongs to me.
5. I will allow her to leave in the event of a real-life emergency.
6. I agree to have a period of time that is "out of role" before we leave each other so that we can straighten out our heads.
7. I will not ask my slave to serve me in any way that prepares me or my home for dates with other women that I am playing with.
8. I will not set my slave up with expectations or goals that are impossible to achieve.
9. I will expect and encourage my slave to develop and tan her body to the point that she is in good physical condition and is proud to present herself to me.
10. I will not give my slave to anyone that I know she already thinks of as repulsive, repugnant, or unsafe.
11. I will give consideration to the fact that extended periods without cigarettes, or without coffee in the morning, make her feel fucked-up and make her function at less than her full potential.
12. I will not make my slave do femme drag.
13. I will not put my slave in a position where she has to decide between her loyalty to me and her safety in the larger world (e.g., bringing switchblades across the border).
14. I will make it clear to my slave when our roles are no longer in effect and when she can address me by my name.
15. I will have time-out cards to give my slave if my life becomes overwhelming.
16. I can stop any scene at any time by saying "freeze." The explanatory conversation will take place at our earliest convenience.
17. I agree to not use this contract for educational or promotional purposes in any way that will expose the private details of my slave's personal life.
18. I agree to deal with my slave in an atmosphere of respect and love.
19. This contract is valid until _____. At this time it can be renegotiated or declared null and void.

Fourteen-Day Consensual Slave Contract

THE SLAVE

I, _____, hereby agree to the following:

To serve the Mistress of the House (M.O.H.) as she needs.

To address the M.O.H. as "Ma'am."

To always be honest and obedient.

If I "safeword," I will do the following: If it is to relieve me of a task, I will explain at the time. If it is to relieve me of this contract, I will leave (with permission) and give a written explanation to the M.O.H. within three days.

I agree to have this position to enhance the M.O.H.'s life and will always do so in a pleasing manner.

I will not go into drawers, cupboards, or closets without permission.

I will spend the M.O.H.'s money in a considerate manner and will supply receipts for monies spent.

I agree to not give advice, make comments, or judge the way the M.O.H. runs her life.

I will always be discreet about my position.

I agree to renegotiate at the end of this contract.

THE MISTRESS

I, _____, hereby agree to the following:

To treat my slave with respect and honesty.

To never abuse my authority.

To provide a cash kitty for monies needed by the slave.

To give rewards chosen by me for a job well done. (These may be of a sado-masochistic nature.)

To not give or sell my slave to someone else.

To explain within three days if I "safeword" on this contract.

To renegotiate at the end of this contract.

Relationships are individual and vastly complex. If we free ourselves from our childhood indoctrination of the mystery of romance and the longing for a knight in shining armor to make everything all right; if we take responsibility for our relationships as well as our orgasms; then the sky is the limit. We can have everything we want if we are willing to take the risks necessary to achieve our goals.

In this case the risks are honesty and vulnerability. If we push ourselves to be honest about what we really want and are willing to not make judgments on ourselves, we open the door to an infinite number of possibilities.

If we acknowledge that change is the only constant in our lives, we are then able to set our relationships up in a way that will accommodate our

CONTRACTS AND CONTRACT NEGOTIATING

knowledge of the fact that everything is subject to change at any time.

Negotiating contracts with each other is simply a way to communicate our needs and desires and to have those needs and desires met for a specific period of time. It gives us a forum to periodically discuss how we have changed and what we have learned and how we need to arrange things to ensure everyone's complete understanding and satisfaction.

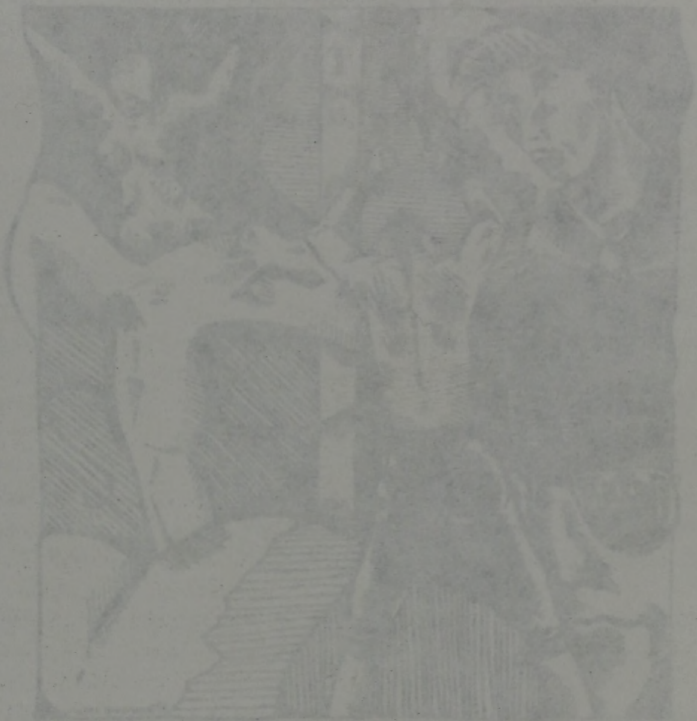


Illustration by Jerry Cobb



Woodcut by Terry Sapp

PART VII

POETRY SLAM, ROUND TWO

I'M AIMING FOR YOUR HEART

NICOLA GINZLER

when I hit you I said, that's why I have to hit you
so hard,
hit through the target, through your back
feel my cunt throb when I feel like I'm going to
get through you,
through the flesh, the blood and muscle and skin and bone
to the very center
to the beating part, the heart, when I'm beating you, I said.

Well I wish I'd said it anyway, I never did
just like I never said I loved her, then, that time—
love, that word. I love you
she used to say, I've got a thing for you.
I've got a thing for you too, I didn't say,
it's in my hand and it's made of leather it's in my hand and
it's made of hard steel
skin and bone, flesh, I've got a thing for you too.
I've got a thing for you she'd go on, I'm like a teenage
boy and it
won't let me alone, I love you, I've got a thing for you.

Watch her mouth below the blindfold
searching for me like a newborn searching for the teat
like an animal. Blind, starving. I love you.
I feed her my fingers, she
bites, she wants my flesh, she wants to eat me whole
or in pieces.

I'M AIMING FOR YOUR HEART

I pry her teeth apart, knock her backward, she starts to fall
I let her.

She's crawling after me, reaching, I kick her hands away
pull her upright
my fingers twined in the chest harness she wears for me
strips of studded leather converging to the sternum, breastbone.

Pull her close to me, lick the salt
from her throat and face and breasts.
Get down on my knees and hold her thighs, lick them apart
press my whole face against her cunt
kiss her there, lick her. Run my tongue up her belly, between
her breasts,
up to her face, face to face now, belly to belly,
cunt to cunt. Pressed hard against her.

All this time wanting in
wanting to be inside her, wanting all of me
enclosed by her, wanting to plunge my arms into her chest
pull out her beating heart to cradle grasp
maul, wet and red, between my hands.

I look at her, turn her,
her bare back gleaming sweat and blood
bloody knife-cuts bleeding oozing dripping blood.

I will ruin my best whip on her, hoping. Soak it
with her blood, hoping.
Hoping that when I strike her now
when I strike her this time
when I strike her
she will understand
she will hear me
she will know that when I strike her I am aiming I am
reaching, that when I strike her this time I am
aiming for her heart.

JUEGO
TATIANA DE LA TIERRA

I want you decorated.

Face paint, finger art, festive,
You choose the colors.

I want you *gordita*.

Big, soft, sumptuous, goddessy,
You be the form.

I want you in a skirt.

Ample, flowing, *florecente*,
You pick the lace.

I want you obscenely.

On your knees, on your bloods, from behind,
You make the sounds.

I want you as I want myself.

Jeweled, ripe, lusty, begging, *bonita*,
We play the power.

MÁS JUEGO

TATIANA DE LA TIERRA

Te busco anónima
Sin cara, cicatrices, sin historia.
Eso no importa.

Te busco como sea,
En sueños, alcantarillas, clasificados.
En cualquier momento.

Te busco es esencia,
Dominante, esclavizante, machota.
Por supuesto.

Te busco buscándome
Con aparatos, cueros, castigos.
Más bien encontrándome.

Te busco berraca:
Más hijueputa que yo.
Será difícil.

DRAGON BEAR

Standing figurehead motionless, in a sea of harried DMV patrons
No virgin with stars in her hair, this one
But facing me with steady blue-gray gaze from a lined face
From construction sun, maybe a trucker's wind
Flesh beginning the slide into life's autumn
Spotting her from the edge of vision
By instinct, turning a hard back and leaning easy
Showing off a pad of armor won from work, not mindless repetition
Settled, understanding that my role is the supplicant
Her thumb idly traces a circle, flexes into a fist
Her look says:

"I would take you home and turn you inside out
Learn you with my hands, make you mine,
Emblazon my name on that pink tongue, collar you
And pierce you, and take you.

I would attend your cunt until it flowed,
Baptize you in my sweat and come,
Give you my hard arms to come home to, hold you,
And love you, and protect you."

Shifting and turning, but swinging back like a compass homing north
Netted in such desire,
Knowing even then, I can never go to her
I am willing to become my prey for a senseless night
Ready to submit an unbent will where it has never been tamed
If only this had been another place
And I more ready to defy the restless hatred I hear drumming from
the bystanders as
they watch
My look says:

"I would give myself freely, call your name,
 Rend you with my passion, gift coveted scars
 Fold under your discipline, wear your yoke
 And your rings, and your fist

I would surrender my secrets to your hands
 Come to you and sleep under your eyes,
 But forgive me, love, this dance has been spoken for
 By a dragon whose fire I fear more than yours draws me."

LIAR'S DICE BEAR

Last night asking schoolchild-sized milk carton questions, What do I do? Where do I get?—only because you wanted more but couldn't ask yet, and questions hung fat like *Reader's Digest* Large Print versions, perversions kept behind your teeth in fear, behind eyes that could savor a reddened ass like chocolate cake, inviting, and clear, in ownership, I'm opened like a slashed milk jug spilling all over, talking 'bout did this on a subway half past one A.M. with Sue from the Village and a handful of carpet tacks, did that open parking lot broad daylight over a motorcycle, voice low when she moaned, never got any more facts. I know your cravings for soft peanut butter cups and cold, spicy gazpacho and lush pink virgins stretched across your bed, and peanut butter cups are fifty-five cents up the block, but virgins are harder, they seem low in stock, a good bottom would surely do if only you knew where to find one and what you do once you get her home to have some fun. You covet the secrets of pinning a body to the wall by nothing but your gaze, so it flutters and buzzes enticingly but never struggles, falling into the complicated maze in your expression, and why last week that perfect novice came to duck her head under my hand and clean my boots of grime and tar when we stood shoulder to shoulder, shadowed, in that dive bar, and promised more than she could deliver, as novices will, as hummingbirds buzzing loudly right outside the window and flying far at the first whisper of humanity. You need to hear what it is under someone's hands, hurting and heated inside and out, opened wide and waiting, begging for a hand, a mouth, some kiss of any kind more personal than the ones she gives with that belt, regular and measured as the tide but controlled by wilder forces, and how the world looks reflected in the toe of a boot you've just polished, blurry and inviting and pregnant with choices, like the one you've made to submit and then press that raw back against my salty chest, sweat from stripping away your will and repartee and wit. You beg to know what in my stride and grin betrays the secret of my hands and their black craft, and what other drug or sport will take you down the same tunneled road you walk when I bind you to the wall and hide your eyes and leave you wondering whether my next

touch will be a braided leather band, warm oil, noisy steel, my hand? You would give what there was to give plus more to have me take you, flowing with sweat and life and pain, blocking away the useless wordplay and pride leaving you still soft under my gloved hands, stretched to making promises you might be able to keep if only I let you feel this heat and you pant and hiss and cry, arch to me whimpering I won't you can't and beg me to stop when you know and I know all you need is me to play you, beat you, kiss you, take you and not stop until you scream my name.

And you will.

HOT BREEDS HOT RAMONA TIMMONS

A dying breed only
appreciates a feline
a gesture of steel,
grasps my hand,
sensations fill my whole
body.

Power alluding, fantasize
come inside with that grip,
fill me full,
shameless nights
take my pride.

On a lust journey
entangled in flesh
take control, feed me
hunger rules my intention

Down, down, corrupted
into submission
taken by your dominant
persuasion in a hot wet
world of madness.

Creeping slowly
into your veins
take my blood
ornament your walls
decorations of your prey
beast of darkened color
lavished in black cowhide

So cool, no one could guess
You'd die to own me.

DEVELOPING

LIZ HENRY

1.

My hand cracks against the flat
of your cheek cuts across
your smile like teeth
photographic instant
eyes perpetually startled

at my cruelty drilled into you
welts ridged with white
on the flowering red your
thighs and ass, fuck-
flush of your cunt
wetter as I hit you hit you
harder.

2.

I flick leather words at you, whip
of loving contradictions.
Reflection in your wide eyes
image of lines striping your back
intricate pattern firm as the corset
molded to the body.
I'm a chain of stinging nettles
to mark you as you grasp them
and choose to submit.

Slate black eyes glitter
considering your naked self
as a negative, a picture you took.
To extend the metaphor I'm your developer
printing over & over my image of your image,
the shading, a little
less light. But mostly it's

the look in your eyes at that moment

3.

I wish I could take it out of my pocket

Put it up and look at it like an altar,

this image of you on your knees.

When a picture's wet and slick

you can't touch it. Careful timing, chemicals,

handling it gently like I love to

lick the soft blue gray

shading your thighs, the red network

just under the skin.

Bruises come out slowly

and last for days.

We know these marks of your strength make me your slave.

TO MY BITCH
LIZ HENRY

relaxed
with safesex waterbased
liquid silk skin
lube & latex rated xxx
round my hot hand your cunt
raping your sleep

dark lashes
childish on your cheek
smile, breathe harder
when I call you whispering
my sweet fist fuck
loverboy dyke

left hand
cupping your soft
glove leathery hair
covered holding
right hand teasing your hole
then slides in perfect fit

whispering
again and again my fuckhole
mine mine asleep bitch fistfucker
clit jumping my together thighs
rhythm humping myself
all my pleasure leaps
quietly I thrash vibrant moaning
twisting in the sheets

body
helpless unconscious in sleep
holding me then you wake up
a little bit getting fucked
and say oh please sir

morning
getting light now but i know
you won't remember
when you get up to piss
and feel that probe-slip
between your legs.

Crawl back into bed,
tell me about your hot dream.
Then notice the spent glove
on your floor in a used wet heap.
Kneel to me and kiss my fist
my bitch for your sweet rape.

THIS IS PART OF A DELECTABLE CORPSE

GABRIEL

The car fled easily into the gorgeous California twilight. Spent sun lent an afterglow to the oaked hills of Atascadero. Nothing rattled in her brain. She pressed the pedal to the metal, rolled a cigarette, and looked further into the loping meadows.

Still she felt the grip upon her. Screaming eighty-five miles an hour didn't loosen it, only made sweat slip her hand on the wheel, maneuvering a two-lane drift in the direction of—

a bull galloping down the hillside pounding silent billows of dust,
tossing its head and tail as if trying to shake some invisible rider, as
if to loose itself from restraint.

Do the other cars even see it too?

The road doesn't care, the trees ignorant. San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria, Los Angeles, Santa Ana, San Diego—a road full of saints, angels. Do they feel the grip, the locked fist clenching their robe? Do they feel the caress, the seeming success of succumbing? The power of being taken, of giving in... This she thought much about. This she thought she was much about.

The roadside park hushed to a quiet, the rush of the highway echoed. Parking here for a moment was the best she could do. She killed the engine, got out, and lay back against the windshield stretched out on the hot length of the hood. The block gurgled and the radiator popped as she chilled to a blueing evening, counting early stars. But there was no rest, for with the darkening came an urge.

She swung off the warm steel recline and into the cab, cranked it over, and shot back onto the highway, driving into an expanding envelope of night. The rising moon pacing and trailing her. The last sixty miles she had her hands in her pants, masturbating as if possessed.

ASSAULT & BATTERY
GABRIEL

—What sort of tasks do you want me to perform

A full-lipped smile spread a tight line
across an angular plane of olive skin

—Nothing I'll be sorry for, she asked

On the big screen cast an image of a gunfighter
in stance, a hard brilliance blazes back light

—What a stupid moon, a worthless sky

The gunfighter draws and shoots

—Blamo! I'm a dreamer and you're a dream. Fuck off and die, she laughed.

The darting of her eyes told all. No slow glimmer
or dazed stare like a cloud obscuring the moon,
but thrown stars with razors edge twinge and shimmer
the aura closely shaved.

Image the fire now. Yet a still dark noise, a tiny
plume of smoke signals a crackle, then a bright burst.

—I'll do anything you ask of me, she said.

—Not so fast, shot the reply. Before entirely busying with the iridescent
viscous bubbling in the crystal bowl, the other sought to blindfold the
victim.

ASSAULT & BATTERY

—What's preyed upon are your tendencies, the other began. The mode you always slip into when confronted with life rather than amusement. Your fantasies have no boundaries now. Soon the interchange between them and reality will be nonapparent. I'll see to your assault better than you'd ever dreamed. I intend to fuse within you the very nature of primal challenge and soul survival. And what you may have thought before about your basic needs will soon be slaughtered on the temple steps of your heart.

Four times rang a chime. The victim succumbed to a faint beneath a barrier of smoke that would not leave the room, dancing in drafts curling phantoms. Demon veils reached for her. Something like a vision followed.

—Just because you think it's real doesn't mean you understand, see. The terrific part of beauty explains that.

—What if I am wrong, she asked.

—What if everything there ever was is an imagination, the answer.

—What if I am empty, stupid, worthless

The heave of lashing rained down on her a shower of metal.
The current then shifted, her wounds fluoresced.
The slip conclusive.
Everything sentient satiated.
The knot in the stomach eased.
The swollen tongue hydrated
By a licorice spit.
The crawl of flesh became a film of
Sweat Exploding.
The spine forgives convulsions merging the
Pulse of the heart and loins.

—Now you'll always remember this, the other's voice moved within her. You'll never feel whole again without returning. You're not the same anymore.

—And for me, she said, it's just beginning. Nond denial, commitment within what I pursue. I am awakened to a mystery endlessly sought. A dragon dwells

within me that needs be fed on cyclones of ancestral breath and stirrings of omnipotent force. A terror exquisite and illusive stalks me to discover the lairs of sheer beauty beyond the putrid posture of metaphor.

The bank of lasers wink shut.
The veils of the hologram and lay lines of images gone.
The whole supernatural hum of the environment only
An echo of recent cellular memory; sensations stirred
in an exotic logarithm.

On the big screen: At market two cobras are attended
By one Sikh. Inappropriately drugged, they escape from
their basket and edge in hasty release through a maze
of humanity, through the curtains of the merchants,
wreaking havoc in their wake, till they reach the reeds of the bush.

END/CUT



Photograph by J. C. Collins

PART VIII

PARADIGMS AND ARCHETYPES:

S/M THEORY

S/M SYMBOLS, FASCIST ICONS,
AND SYSTEMS OF EMPOWERMENT
LINDA WAYNE

Since the advent of second-wave feminist analysis in the late 1960s, the issue of censorship has often been accompanied by reference to its seeming antipode, sadomasochism or S/M. Within anti-S/M criticism, the term *S/M* signifies irresponsible and vulgar self-indulgence, sexual and psychological perversity, gratuitous aggression, and excessive cruelty. By contrast, censorship is seen as pristine, responsible even when carried out by the state, normal, cleansed of sordid associations, and thus cleansing of the social body. S/M has become the prototypical private behavior that censorship advocates seek to control and obliterate.

The relation between S/M and censorship becomes complicated where S/M is linked with lesbianism, since lesbianism is supposedly that realm where women love women outside of the male aggression that is linked to rape, war, and other "sadomasochistic" behaviors. Subsequently, in the case of S/M lesbians, the level of sexual and psychological perversity is said to increase substantially as we cast off our "naturally" nonviolent lesbian tendencies in favor of behaviors typical of the so-called patriarchal "sadomasochistic" rape culture.

However, this logic contains within it a strange contradiction, for anti-S/M critics and censors need never specify what S/M lesbians actually *do* that is violent and patriarchal and they need not discern what an increased level of perversity might mean, because the *mere visual signification* of S/M is accepted as proof of its depravity. Anti-S/M critics privilege the visual signifiers of S/M, which leads to facile assumptions such as, Who needs to, or even wants to, know what "these S/M people" do—just *look* at them!

The perverse enjoyment of cruelty is said to be displayed in the supposedly fascist and violent symbolism manifest in S/M participants' choice of clothing and other regalia. This critique assumes that wearing such clothes and symbols indicates or proves the S/M community's alignment with heteropatriarchal neoimperialist culture, and thus confirms a lack of accountability regarding racism and/or sexism.¹ Since I wear what I consider lesbian

S/M-identified gear, I feel fully implicated by these allegations.

I am concerned about the indictments leveled against the clothing, symbolism, and activities of the lesbian S/M community: immoral, perverse, male-identified, fascist, Nazi, violent, and otherwise menacing. Not only do the lesbian S/M participants I know reject these labels, but they are involved in activism against many of these things. This, however, is not to dismiss a critique of S/M signification as simply unsubstantiated. Such criticism is often grounded in people's emotional and conditioned response to S/M self-representation, and I believe that this response is not strictly a private one.

S/M self-signification in the form of clothing and other symbols produces a powerful, if not imposing, social impact. Moreover, some S/M participants *do* adopt actual or replica fascist insignia such as swastikas, while others employ dress codes that, on the visual level, are on a continuum with that of fascist or white supremacist-identified groups such as skinheads.² In light of this fact, I believe that an open discussion about the social accountability of lesbian S/M and other communities is timely, and that *any* allegation of racism, sexism, or other inequities deserves a response. I also believe that some antiracist, anti-sexist S/M participants have developed an analysis of these issues and that it is important that these responses be included in such a discussion.

The Problematic of S/M Signification

I will begin by stating that this call for accountability immediately exceeds the visual sphere from which anti-S/M criticism springs and within which discussions of S/M representation are often grounded. As participants widely claim, S/M activities, lifestyle, and clothing revolve around active negotiations of power and therefore are not reducible to mere fashion statements. Likewise, anti-S/M allegations and criticisms concerning the signification of power inequities are not sufficiently answered or explained by an appeal to personal preferences in fashions and accessories.

A call for S/M accountability is made from the perspective of one group, whose oppression is sustained by the social construction of race and/or gender, to another, whose oppression is based on the social construction of "normal" sexuality *on top of* race and/or gender. Instead of springing from material data about the way that hegemonic heteropatriarchal neoimperialist culture works to subordinate each group, these allegations and criticisms indicate gaps in communication and understanding *between* subordinated groups concerning our oppression, identity, responsibility, and empowerment. An analysis of how we are subordinated differently is lost, leaving only a notion of pure or essential differences that keep us divided and preoccupied at a micropolitical level. Since we are at a historical point when coalition-building is an increasingly necessary part of political struggle, the issue of how differently oppressed

groups and individuals use and interpret divergent forms of self-signification is clearly becoming both more complex and more important.

It is, and indeed always has been, crucial to look at how we, both as individuals and as self-identified communities, affiliate with hegemonic interests of the conservative political and economic elites who oppress us. Affiliations are forged when subordinated or "subgroup" symbols of identity are chosen from an array of already existent dominant imagery. Similarly, affiliations are cultivated when an analysis compatible with conservative hegemonic interests is employed to judge other subordinated communities. These often-unintentional affiliations work to maintain and advance oppressive heteropatriarchal and neoimperialist values, thereby weakening our potential for cross-community understanding, coalition, and empowerment.

Thus, there are three separate yet connected issues in play as I seek to unravel the problematic of S/M signification:

1. the issue of subordinate group self-signification that is taken directly from dominant imagery, such as an S/M participant's appropriation of a historical symbol (e.g., the swastika) from a formerly empowered fascist regime (e.g., the Nazis);
2. the issue of how self-created symbols of subgroup identity are stigmatized, appropriated, neutralized, or vilified within the popular imagery that serves the political and economic interests of the heteropatriarchal and neoimperialist corporate elite;
3. the issue of how self-created symbols of subgroup identity are stigmatized and vilified by other subgroups in a way that is consistent with the values and interests of the heteropatriarchal and neoimperialist corporate elite.

These three issues bring up a number of key questions, such as, How does the self-representation of subordinate communities work across a field of inequitable power relationships? More specifically, What is the relation of S/M symbolism to the conservative ideological and conditioning functions of dominant imagery, as well as to other more or less empowered subgroups?

I am going to approach the issue of subgroup symbolism within hegemonic power relations in two parts, with an emphasis on the way in which affiliations operate within this system. In the first part I clarify what I mean by *subgroup symbolism* and *dominant imagery* and briefly describe the operation of representation within the social field. In the second part I situate this analysis within relations of power through discussing the interconnections between subgroup symbolism and dominant imagery within a system that is organized around heteropatriarchal and neoimperialist corporate values and interests.

Subgroup Symbolism and Dominant Imagery

I want to clarify my use of the terms *social field*, *subgroup symbol*, and *dominant imagery*, since I am making this distinction only in order to explore the role of representation within inequitable power relations. By social field I mean not the public sphere but the space across which discourses are ordered, including the socioeconomic systems and institutions that make this ordering possible. Public mechanisms of control operate within the social field to disrupt the so-called private sphere of oppressed groups and individuals. These controlling mechanisms work harmoniously with the conservative hegemonic ideals that are given to us through dominant imagery and thus support the medical, social, psychological, political, and sexual policing of our very bodies.³

Within the social field, subordinated groups create and use symbols that help to retain and validate the significance of our historical life processes. By this I mean not just the history of my group's symbols but the historical development of the oppressive social, cultural, economic, and political conditions within which my group exists and creates its symbols. Wearing subgroup symbols thus marks both our identification as an oppressed group and our resistance to the conditions that oppress us.

Since subgroup symbolism is based on the material conditions of our practical life, the symbol itself takes on a specific and active function within the limits of group encoding. In other words, the symbol acquires political value and meaning within my community only through group agreement. For example, some living symbols recognized by the lesbian S/M community are leather caps, wrist and arm bands, colored handkerchiefs, body piercing, tattoos, biker-style leather jackets, and leather chaps. When I am outside of S/M-positive contexts and see another woman displaying these S/M symbols in a way that also signifies her lesbian identity, we may wordlessly assume a certain level of mutual affinity and support.

It is exactly this identification with an active community that is lacking in dominant images. These images do not operate to invoke holistically the social, economic, and political significance of the original time and place they emerged. Within dominant images, the historical narrative of lives and symbols is rendered static, ahistorical, or at best secondary to the image's appeal as entertainment.

Or, more precisely, the use of historical images provides "infotainment": supposedly real-life stories and information in the form of entertainment. Since infotainment only approximates history, the use of historical images and figures is actually highly subjective, partial, and thus open to carry current messages that agree ideologically with dominant interests. In short, the dominant image is reified as an absolutely *contemporary* figure that has

been modified to align with hegemonic heteropatriarchal neoimperialist corporate values.

At its core, the dominant image is a type of effigy, an empty effigy of the past operating in the present. The success of the dominant image depends on the way it evokes a history that audiences will both recognize and react to on an emotional and moral level. In this way, the empty effigy works to maximize dramatic impact while suspending critical political analysis. Thus, instead of mobilizing a sense of urgency about historically contingent current issues, the dominant image works to disengage and dispel it. Through its pure visual presence as an empty effigy, the image merely appeals to history so as to prey on the *sense* of horror or outrage that this history invokes.

For example, it is our sense of horror that is called up by dominant images produced within Hollywood cinema that recuperate elements of Nazism. Such characterizations of evil retain history only as a collection of dead facts or as an imagined history of imagined subjects. Subsequently, wearing a stylized German World War II helmet, high boots, and black Nazilike uniform, Darth Vader from the 1977 film *Star Wars* emanates evil itself as a central component of his very being. While such imagery appeals to the horror of the Nazi genocidal agenda, it does little to mobilize concern over the current genocidal destruction of the East Timor population⁴ or the recent proliferation of overt neo-Nazi groups in Canada, the United States, Germany, France, and England.

Group Signification Within Relations of Power

Dominant imagery and subgroup symbols operate simultaneously within what I have referred to as the social field. A particular group attains dominance within the social field by virtue of its economic affluence, but its domination is maintained through appealing to a so-called "commonsensical" reasoning that justifies sexist, racist, and classist social stratification.

Dominant groups, such as the federal governments of Canada and the United States, the Third Reich in Germany, or the corporate elite, are rarely overtly totalitarian, nor do they simply operate as a conspiracy. Individuals and groups compete with each other at the dominant level to increase their personal economic power and control. At the same time, they collaborate to limit access and create other restrictive procedures within this competition in order to protect the (affluent, geospecific, monoethnic, white, English, heterosexual, male) privilege that already exists. The North American Free Trade Agreement is the product of one such collaboration.

The most politically and economically ascendant groups maintain and promote their interests through the production and circulation of dominant imagery. This production of images works to construct a dominant natural-

ized identity position that is posited as normal in opposition to the "other" abnormal or perverse identities of subordinate groups. Since shifts in power relations and economic fluctuation ensure that the social field is never completely stabilized, affiliations between dominant and subordinate groups are crucial to the security and maintenance of any dominant position.

Empowerment of those in dominant positions is, in other words, sustained in part through the agreement of subordinate groups. This agreement often solidifies around the moral value of social ideals that are symbolically represented as good or evil within dominant imagery. Symbolic images of "good" stand in dialectical opposition to images of "evil" so as to unite moral values with dominant political positions, such as the fusion of justice and liberty with the American system of democracy and against the brutal totalitarianism of Nazism and other "un-American" political systems.

Another way to say this is that dominant images have a purely ideological function. Through appealing to each subordinate group via the fiction of a shared ideology, dominant groups garner supportive affiliation and social sanction for overt disciplinary controls such as policing those who are designated as "bad." In this way, dominant groups ensure their political control of the social field, which ultimately protects their ability to increase their social influence and capital growth.

For example, in the words of the CEO of Chase Manhattan Bank, corporations feel that "we must take our message directly into American homes...we need nothing less than a major and sustained effort in the marketplace of ideas" (Miliband 1991:148). Likewise, the United States Information Agency (USIA) currently receives more than one billion dollars in order to "tell the world about the meaning of freedom" and thereby "win the war of ideas" (Anderson 1991:40).

Clearly, the "marketplace" and battleground of ideas have merged in the imagery of *Star Wars*, where Luke Skywalker's defeat of Nazilike Darth Vader portrays the ideological fight between good and evil, democracy and totalitarianism, earning Twentieth Century Fox \$176 million in the first three years of domestic release (a rate of return two hundred times its original expenditure), with an additional \$500 million in toy sales (Cook 1981:636). Consequently, the moral values of subordinate groups are leashed to dominant investments through an appeal to the supposedly shared ideology symbolized in the dominant image. This is what I would refer to as nonconsensual bondage.

The Relation of S/M Symbols to Dominant Imagery

There is much more to say about the relation between representation and hegemonic power relations; however, I now want to focus more specifically

on the social and political implications of the production of Nazi images as they relate to lesbian S/M and other subgroups. As I have mentioned, since the dominant image operates through its pure presence as an effigy, or as a recognizable piece of the past that conveys latent ideological messages of the present, its *meaning* is given to us as visually self-evident. The signifying properties of the dominant image rely on a reductive logic of the visible that helps us delineate the "good guys and gals" from the "bad guys and gals" by showing us what evil looks like. For example, the killers in both *Blade Runner* (1982) and *The Terminator* (1984) wear Nazilike high black boots and caps, wrist bands, and leather jackets in a costume meant to signify their "sadistic" lack of human empathy.

Within such a reductive economy of visual self-evidence, it is assumed that, through proximity and resemblance, the dominant figuration of evil and subgroup symbol are actually the same thing. The leather cap worn by a lesbian S/M participant becomes interchangeable with an SA officer's hat, and any high leather boots become imagistic elements of Nazism, fascism, or patriarchal aggression.

However, it is crucial to reiterate that this is not merely a dominant assimilation of subgroup representation but a collapsing of *living* symbols of subgroup empowerment into a *dehistoricized* figuration of evil. Consequently, a subordinated group's activities are implicated and inscribed as simply evil or gratuitously violent through erasure of the group's particular historical life processes, including and most importantly the history of our oppression.

At this point, there is a recuperation of the symbols of subcultural identity to the system of hegemonic interests served by the dominant image.⁵ In other words, a system of dominant imagery gives us a "grammar" with which to "read" the meaning of subgroup symbols from communities that are not our own. In this way, subgroup resistance to our oppressive condition is not only neutralized but reinscribed within the ethical polarities that serve dominant interests.

Ultimately, dominant imagery operates to mask real relations of power, namely, the mechanisms that advance a near-totalitarian control of the social field and the shape of the far right-wing affiliations that result. As political economist Ralph Miliband notes, traditional elites, the military, police, surveillance agencies, and other dominant groups within the state have "a lurking sympathy for some of the main themes which form part of neo-fascist rhetoric," such as its attacks on the Left and the fascistic exaltation of nationalism. Hence, for Miliband, a basis is created for "understandings and alliances" between traditional elites and other dominant groups on the one hand and extreme right-wing interests on the other (1991:158).

This brings me back to my original question concerning the relation of S/M symbolism to, in the first place, the ideological and conditioning func-

tion of dominant images and, in the second place, differently empowered subgroups. Through an economy of visual self-evidence, particular subgroups such as the lesbian S/M community are implicated as the antidemocratic or fascistic enemy that the "democratic" dominant order must guard against. Such a visual economy works to suggest that those who lack the imagistic garb of totalitarianism operate within the bounds of purely altruistic ideals. For example, there is no room within dominant imagery to suggest that the New World Order engineered by the Bush administration might ultimately be more totalitarian in both intent and result than are the activities of lesbian S/M participants.

However, what of those individuals who either overtly identify as fascistic through the use of totalitarian symbols or deny fascistic affiliations yet use totalitarian symbols as accessories to their S/M gear? During the Third Reich, Nazi administrators engaged a dominant imagery that, stripped of its prior historical specificity, was used to advance the ideological interests of the German state.⁶ Current neo-Nazi and far right subgroups emulate these past ascendant interests through their use of a dominant image turned subgroup symbol, such as the swastika.

It is exactly the prior significance of a historically specific dominant order that makes the appropriation of these symbols powerful, as it is the goal of real neo-Nazi groups to reestablish precisely that dominant order today. Accordingly, practitioners of S/M or members of any other subgroup who choose to adopt a historically accurate symbol such as the swastika are representing themselves in a way that is continuous with the dominant imagery and state-level ideological interests of Third Reich Nazism. Even when individuals claim that they are merely playing with such symbols, they are responsible for choosing a "plaything" that has been recuperated within the living symbolism of current neo-Nazi subgroups.

The distance between the dehistoricized imagery of a dominant order and the living symbolism of a subordinated group such as S/M lesbians seems at times to be very narrow. At the same time, the socioeconomic and political gap between members of the dominant heteropatriarchal neoimperialist corporate elite and members of an oppressed group such as lesbian S/M practitioners is enormous. While it is crucial to identify an individual or subgroup's appropriation of any dominant image of fascism, it is equally dangerous to simply engage a logic of visual self-evidence that conflates the type of leather hat commonly worn by an S/M lesbian with a Nazi officer's peaked cap.

This type of elision helps to create a dehistoricized realm of the visible, where the leather-capped bad guys or gals are easily locatable while the carriers of leather briefcases, who may turn out to be truly threatening, pass without comment. Moreover, working solely within a dehistoricized realm of the visual increases the potential for communities and subgroups to create

latent affiliations with our own oppressors. In this way, without even being aware of it, subordinate groups ideologically support dominant aggression against other, though differently, oppressed groups.

It is both possible and necessary to read past the ideological encoding of values, as these values are formulated to support a hegemonic system that subjects *all* subordinate groups to heteropatriarchal and neoimperialist corporate agendas. Until subgroups strategize about the way power works as a system and how representations work within that system, we will continue to participate in our own self-imposed divisions and the subsequent disempowerment that such fragmentation accomplishes.

NOTES

1. Many individuals self-identify with both communities simultaneously. Thus allegations of racism also mark S/M participants from certain racial and ethnic backgrounds as axiomatically problematic. This is one of the many related areas of discussion that need to be analyzed from the perspective of lived relations of power, as opposed to the perspective of heteropatriarchal, imperialist-dominated regimes of representation.

2. This originally British antiracist group became visible in North America by the early 1980s. Now, however, most American skinheads embrace the brutal homophobic and fascist ideology of Anglo-Saxon racial sovereignty held by groups such as the Heritage Front, neo-Nazis, and Aryan Nation. Actively antiracist gay and lesbian skinheads also exist, but they are clearly in the minority. Skinhead group symbolism includes shaved heads, high red or black Doc Marten boots, red bootlaces, plaid work shirts, short khaki jackets, and straight-legged jeans rolled up to midcalf level.

3. The social field does not fold neatly into the public side of the binary public-private split. Moreover, the current growth of the corporate public sphere puts conventional notions of a public-private split in serious doubt. For example, a Madison Avenue plaza in New York City prominently displays a plaque reading, PUBLIC SPACE, OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY AT&T (Schiller 1989:102).

4. As of 1985, approximately one third of the Timorese population had been killed with the direct military and financial aid of the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, and France (Budiardjo 1991; George 1991:80–82).

5. Although I focus on S/M signification in this analysis, many oppressed groups are similarly implicated in this system. For example, returning to the case of *Star Wars*, it is difficult to miss the “racing” of evil in Darth Vader’s entirely black figure as opposed to the whiteness of Luke Skywalker.

6. For example, the term *swastika* comes from Sanskrit, and variations of the symbol are claimed to be more than twenty-five thousand years old, appearing everywhere from neolithic drawings to precolonialist American pottery

(Kantrowitz 1991:196). Yet I would argue that it is extremely problematic for white Western Euro-Americans to deny their cultural and material link to Western history and instead appropriate this original meaning.

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ELECTRA, ON THE ROCKS:
FOLLOWING THE PARADIGM TIDES
LAURA ANTONIOU

My first memories of fantasy were bound inextricably to suffering, humiliation, pain, and subjugation. I didn't know those words. I did know how to spell my name. I was a child. I did know, however, that these core thoughts were not meant to be shared with others, certainly not with adults. They became a hidden, buried part of me around which I constructed masks. These simple masks later became roles, all of which served to hide what I have always believed is my essential nature.

All through my life, the fantasies of pain and passion wove their way through me, infiltrating my dreams and nightmares, inserting themselves in my thoughts at odd times, surfacing in my writing even as a kid. There's no doubt in my mind that I was born programmed to receive them, born with a permanent cable decoder in my brain that descrambles all the messages of power and pain and dominance and submission and relays them directly into my emotional growth, my sensual awareness, my sexual awakening.

Now, after thirty years or so of receiving these messages, I'm seeing an underlying programming, something grown out of my experiences, something taken from a mixture of education and need. There are roles I've played all my life, some with more passion and truth than others, roles we all play because that's our way of coping. Dutiful child, diligent scholar, sardonic rebel, sarcastic undergraduate, sullen employee, enthusiastic volunteer, one part after another, and always with that edge of distance which made me doubt my sanity and reality. That was how I saw relationships: somewhere underneath the role, there was a person who was not fully relating to her circumstances, her family, her friends, the rest of life. A role gave me a context in which to interact, a plan to follow. It wasn't real.

I knew when I was real—it was when my body dripped sweat from fear and pain and anguish and indecision and determination and terror and the will to take one more, push harder, until something, someone broke.

I was real the first time a woman touched my face after she slapped me and then kissed me hard. It was the first time a tongue in my mouth

didn't feel like a nauseating violation.

I was real when I burned with the glowing après-beating pains that made me aware that my flawed body was really an amazing thing that made me feel alive and hot and desirable.

I was real the first time my hand pushed past that last ring of tight flesh and there was a human being leaning back and laughing, poised on my wrist, my hand pounding with the beating of her heart.

I was real the time I passed a blade along smooth, unmarked flesh, parting the skin and drawing up the blood, fighting the urge to bend and lick, to suck her life right from her until I could hear that heartbeat again, feel her pulsing in my body, and be with her utterly.

This reality, the sadomasochistic reality, kept me going. It was where I explored everything fascinating about human nature, conflict and resolution, passion and control, anger and conditional love. I ignored the nagging voice in me, which I still call the chastiser, that continually wondered why I was doing this, what I was seeking. In every physical experience, I found another piece of brick to structure my support tower. If I had enough play time, I was sure that I wouldn't need anything else. If I had one more ecstatic experience—or if I could just extend it—I would be real that much longer. I pushed myself, always looking for the heavier scene, the new kink. If it worked, I wanted it to last longer, for the whole night, for the weekend, for the extent of the relationship. I was real, and that was all that mattered.

I did whatever I had to do to keep this physical wall going up. If I lacked a woman, I would find a man. If I lacked a top, I would become one. Lacking the clothing to suit a lover, I would buy it, make it, fake it. Lacking the endurance for a particular act, I'd cut my body off with too many drinks or an interesting drug, or just through grinning wildly and turning it all off, until the thumps and stings were like echoes in a canyon, insubstantial except for faint reverberations, and I'd take an evil kind of pleasure in knowing that eventually the top du jour would give up and I would win. I shut off the chastiser that kept asking what on earth I was getting out of this except for bruises, cuts, aches, and those incredible moments of timelessness when there were no masks on me and I was alone in my pleasure and pain.

Reality, my reality. Physicality mingled with an intellectual distance, an almost scientific detachment. It was empty in a primal way, never leaving me feeling fully satisfied. I remember crying one night, sobbing and asking, over and over again, why it wasn't enough, these beatings and bondage, the rituals of submission and dominance, why I kept searching for more. I couldn't even begin to explain what exactly was missing. Maybe it was the stability of monogamy, I supposed. Maybe it was a strong, definite sense of a single, clear orientation that everyone else seemed to have. Perhaps it was the ultimate of relationships, that of mistress and slave, that would satisfy me—but even when

I sought that, it seemed hollow, meaningless. All I knew was that something was always missing—and I couldn't put a word to it. Not then.

Now I know—I lacked a context. I lacked the proper lens to bring my physical experiences into focus, to bind them to my emotional needs. I had a growing sense of an underlying hunger within me that I never named. My internal programming was cut off from the vital key that could make me feel complete, because I had been too busy using that key as a way to hide. What I lacked was a role. I'd used them all my life as a masking method, to cut myself off from people—but in an ironic twist, lacking one role made my sex life fairly shallow. Not to mention enormously frustrating.

The first time I heard about daddies was from a man who told me about gay men and daddies and boys. I remember sitting there astonished at the way my mind snapped to attention, my lingering aches and pains vanished, at the way my clit started to tingle. I was at once aroused, disgusted, and ashamed. "How romantic," I remember saying.

Let's keep this about gay men, I remember thinking.

I'm the last one to raise my bad childhood as a big issue. I'm very unsympathetic to victimization as an excuse for a thoroughly fucked-up life. And I've had enough therapists, amateur and professional, explain to me how my attraction to pain and power is but a result of abuse at the hands of—(please fill in the blank, I have no intention of going into details). But that last piece of baggage in me—that last piece of "isn't this all sick?"—was right there in my face. That moment in a Greek diner, everything froze for that second, the cheeseburger, the limp fries, the droplets of water on my glass, the tinny sound of Frank Sinatra coming from a booth across the room—my voice went on while my brain halted. I couldn't believe what was happening while I calmly discussed something that my rational mind told me should make me sick to my stomach.

It's just a role, I consoled myself. *It's about men and their fathers. It has nothing to do with me.*

But it had everything to do with me. From that moment on, it never left my mind. I turned it over and over, looking for the impulse in me that was turned on, self-analyzing until I realized that there was just no bottom line except that I responded to that image, that idea of a role, in a way I had never responded to anything dreamed up by lovers, tricks, or even my favorite erotic authors. I struggled against my attraction to it because of those lingering doubts and only occasionally wandered into territories where I could play with the powerful words and the dangerous concepts that were so scary. It was only a matter of time before I gave in.

Less than one year later, I saw one small, strong butch girl fisting another one, and all the while the room was shaking with the cries of a woman

ELECTRA, ON THE ROCKS

screaming for Daddy, begging, pleading, insisting that Daddy fuck her harder, faster, deeper. I sat on the floor unable to rise, to leave, to speak, even to reach down and touch myself and make sure that the seam on my jeans was really that hot and damp with this new passion, just utterly captivated by the enactment of the forbidden.

I hate getting fucked like a girl.

But oh, that night, in my mind, I threw away every piece of girl clothing I had in my closet, burned every pair of panty hose, every waist-cinching skirt, every black pump, and I bought myself boots and a vest and chaps, and as I did this little makeover, I bent over for Daddy, 'cause I wanted to get fucked faster, harder, deeper. And I wanted Daddy to hold me until I cried and beat me until I couldn't stand it and love me unconditionally, and I wanted to be the best boy ever.

Hello, paradigm shift.

After years of making myself fit the circumstance, I'd found something that resonated inside me. This was the click that made everything else make sense. It was the key to freeing me from the limitations of the physical, the role that felt natural, however odd it seemed externally. The physical nature of what I was doing took a slight turn away from things that I had no connection with and toward what made me stronger. I slowly learned to stop looking for the longer scene, the harder one, the stranger one, and began to follow rather than push. The long-standing confusion about erotic attention, punishment, and pain for pleasure's sake became untangled, sorted out and made sensible. I had a context to put it all in, a model to follow, to compare with, to alter to suit me.

Slowly, the change pushed me to recognize parts of myself that had previously come out only in writing or in late-night I've-had-a-few-too-many honesty sessions with friends who were too polite to mention it the next day.

For example, my drive to service was always strong, yet I had struggled with it for years because of a nagging sense that I didn't want to be just someone's cook or maid or whatever in exchange for a good beating every once in a while. With the shift to a daddy/boy relationship, there came a greater sense of availability for service. I no longer felt used—I felt like I was doing something useful.

The romantic and extreme notions about honor and loyalty that I'd kept hidden came out bit by bit as I found that expressing them to a partner who identified as a nurturer rather than an owner was cleaner, safer, easier to manage. The embarrassment I felt about them—awkward notions, uncomfortable in this modern world of easy alliances and casual betrayals—faded as I realized that I could accept such gifts—no, expect them!—from my dominant partner.

My fantasies about being owned and utterly mastered paled in comparison to the reality I found in a daddy/boy relationship. They were still there, but

they faded slowly over the years, until I realized that much of what I'd felt was that original drive for an experience that would just stretch out the purity of my S/M encounters. It was a fantasy construct from minute one, where I created a godlike partner who would somehow grant me fulfillment simply by declaring a particular relationship was in existence. I came to peace with my fantasies and wrote about them, worked them until I could stand free of them. But only by finding the proper role for me—one that gave me the tools I needed to put meaning to what I was doing—was I free to do that.

This context allowed me to explore fully my needs, desires, and fantasies. After the initial sense of vertigo, after I had come to terms with that last bit of self-judging doubt (about whether I could step away from the past and embrace what never was there for me as a child and make it into an erotic and emotional masterpiece of adult relationship management), my discovery of the boy inside me made me feel whole. It enabled me to toss out a lot of old baggage, a real brain sweeping that is still working to my favor. It also gave me a sense of stability that had been altogether lacking in every previous relationship I had ever had.

In retrospect, it doesn't seem like this was such a big deal. Roles are the most common part of S/M play. When we explain S/M behavior to the unknowing, we start by explaining tops and bottoms. We illustrate fantasies by exploring roles. But I had never realized how vital a proper role was for me. Only after I embraced that boy and accepted a daddy could I shake loose the vestiges of toxic parenting that were still steadily burning away at parts of me from the inside.

And it wasn't just the whole "father" thing I learned to deal with but aspects of gender and identity, bringing me in touch not only with my butch nature but with my tangled attractions to other butches and to femmes. It gave me somewhere to put my basic switchable nature, too—as a boy, I knew that one day I would be grown and take on a boy of my own. This appealed to the traditionalist inside me. One simple role—and it changed my life.

I've been thinking about that a lot over the past three years, as parts of my life, visions, fantasies, and realities come out bit by bit in the books I've been writing under the name Sara Adamson. I use literary license, of course, mixing truth with fantasy, exaggerating experiences and feelings for the sake of drama and neat endings. But when I reread the manuscripts, I can feel myself poking through, my feelings and dreams laid bare in ways that I tell myself only I can really see. And now I stand at the verge of yet another shift—only this time, I feel it happening.

There was a voice inside of me that came out in the story "The Triangle" (written under the pseudonym Lady Sara), the voice of the switchable butch boy, hungry for Daddy and cruising for girl-boys with big eyes. "I" am arro-

gant and posturing, too tough for my own good, stupid at times, stubborn and scared, but at the same time secure in the knowledge that there is a plan ahead of me. I remember what it was like, feeling that everything was all figured out. I had a daddy—one day I would be a daddy. As the bottom inside me grew and changed, the top inside me was soaking up knowledge, getting a feel for power, gaining experience and understanding. The role had been found, satisfaction answered, happiness achieved.

Now I'm realizing that this ain't necessarily so.

Fact is, right now I don't feel like much of a daddy. Oh, there's one lurking inside me, but it's not the urge I feel when I'm in charge. Something else triggers those feelings of passion that make me respond to a bottom. Part of it is my sheer sadism—but most of it is a drive to train and own another person.

Even writing that down makes me feel a tightening at my spine, brings heat to my palms.

Paradigm shift, revisited. Unexpected, at least by my rational brain. But like the boy who remained dormant until the right notes were struck in my experience, so the master has slumbered inside me, flowing out of my fingers at a keyboard while I denied its presence.

It's hard to nail down the differences in my mind, especially in those places where daddies and owners cross paths. It always seems to be an exercise in semantic time-wasting to sit down and illustrate the differences among tops, mistresses, daddies, masters, owners, caliphs, or whatever—and I don't think my personal definitions would be useful to anyone who isn't interested in me specifically. But I do know that in my mind there is a difference. It has to do with how much of someone I want to carry—it has to do with how much I want to use. It's selfish. It's sometimes cruel, always demanding.

Part of me wonders if I'm trying to recapture that old dream of a relationship deeply rooted in the cultural mythology of S/M. In my head, I hear the chastiser reminding me that I should not dare to take on what I have never given. I hear the growl of the more arrogant youth, who topped and found it to her liking, crying that she's paid her dues, give her the reward her patience has earned her. She's a hungry bitch, that one, and she's outstripped my old friend the chastiser over and over again, until my doubts have slipped from me and there's only the sense that I am becoming someone new. The youth has grown and wants to take the keys for a while—Daddy can wait. I'm pushing a new envelope, touching the borders of a role that will once again remake me and find me peace. At least, I hope that's where this will lead.

I do know this: it feels real.

And that's all I need for now.

**CONTEMPLATING PORN, THE LIBERATOR:
A PERSONAL MEMOIR/OUTLAW MANIFESTO
MIRIAM LASKIN**

Attention! This is a limited offer! I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to peek into the jungle of my mind: the mind of a queer sexual outlaw living in New York City in the late twentieth century. My stream of consciousness at any particular moment is as intricate—and raunchy—as Molly Bloom’s and perhaps even more difficult to untangle—which is to be expected, since my thoughts and actions, my passions and relationships, are influenced by everything in this society, if not the world, throughout history. Whoa! This is big! So I will narrow my lens a bit to focus on my sexuality and sexual identity. Now I can see a triad: reading, writing, and sex. They seem inextricably bound together (bondage? so soon?) in interesting and instructive ways.

First: Reading about sex led to my writing about it, and reading about outlaw sex—kinks, perversions, nasty games and habits—led to my writing about it, and writing about nasty, hot, perv sex led me to doing it! (Oh, dear! This can’t be a good thing to say in print if we want to overthrow the censorship laws, can it?) Doing it—and reading and writing it—led me to make new discoveries about myself (my past, my family, my world, my desires), to an erasing of boundaries (more about that further on), and, in brief, to a new me. The new me isn’t comfortable—I clearly haven’t finished this journey of self-discovery yet, and I suspect I may be wandering around for a long time, maybe even the rest of my life, in unmapped territory—but I have found an enthralling perspective from which to carry on my explorations. As it turns out, I would rather be enthralled than bored, obsessed than depressed, overwhelmed and disorganized than smug and ignorant. “Knowledge of self,” when it comes to sexuality and gender identity, no longer seems completely realizable. I’ll admit that’s upsetting at times. But come with me on this ride anyway, and see what you can stand to see.

Literature has always been a valid way for me to experience other, different realities. It has always been a means to expand my consciousness. Like a psychedelic drug, reading has been a stimulus for my own imagination and

creativity. Printed words feed me images, help me create new worlds, new feelings and perspectives. And I've always read porn. At first the stuff I got my hands on was all straight porn, written for het men. It was all I could find, and I had to steal it from bookstore shelves because I was too embarrassed to buy it.

Later, I would get my paws on gay porn, and for a while porn (gay and het male, that is) was all over late-night local cable TV programming. But from time to time, the world of sex writing would reveal from its secret folds some truly illuminating stuff for us women: *Story of O* and *Return to the Chateau*, for example, written by Pauline Réage (recently revealed to be the pseudonym of Dominique Aury) with elegance and clarity, and—something new and intriguing—S/M (though basically het, it certainly *wasn't* vanilla)! *The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty* and the rest of A. N. Roquelaure's (Anne Rice) "Beauty" trilogy brought the elegant perversion closer to our shores and opened doors onto the world of queer perv sex. How interesting, by the not-so-coincidental way: both authors are women!

But the most exciting yet scary doors were popped open by Samois's *Coming to Power* and Pat Califia's *Macho Shuts*. Those two challenges, thrown down by a women's, queer perv writers' vanguard, were the beginnings of a whole new thing: an extended plunge, an exploration that may never end, of who we are as individuals, as sexual beings. They showed us a way of looking at sexuality and being sexual that delineated the nexus of sex and power and combined it with an analysis of gender and sexual identity and human desire.

Let's get real now: *sex is sex and love is love*. The two are not synonymous and need not be actors in tandem. Sex with love is a definite possibility, hopefully a probability at least once in everyone's lifetime, but hey! at those times when we're not in love and having sex with a person, at those times before, after, and in between love relationships, what are we supposed to do with our hands—and cunts?

Okay, let's get into this: first, let's think about self-love. Why does the word *love* always seem to translate into "between two people"? Who says we should forget about ourselves? That would be defining one of our most important human emotions only in connection with another person. Of course, this is an important and maybe overwhelming connection we try to make, but it's also true that we are each ourselves, unique, and we can love ourselves too. No self-love means no self-respect. But love is love, and sex is sex. Our sexual energy is ignored or misunderstood or underutilized in the larger society. Social norms still try to convince us, particularly women, that sexual energy can be engaged only during partnered, heterosexual, vanilla sex.

Furthermore, in regard to women, self-love's physical manifestation, masturbation, is still struggling for validation, years after psychologists finally began reassuring the boys that wet dreams and jerking off—even more than

once a day—are all right, not damaging to body or mind. (Well, at least I think that's what they've been telling the male half of the population.) But for women, it's a more difficult validation process. If a woman is able to masturbate and have orgasms once a day, twice, three times a day and feels unsure about her discovery and asks someone to reassure her, I'll bet that reassurance is either hard to come by (no pun intended!) or fitted out with all sorts of strategies to redirect her sexual energy.

For women, claiming a sexual identity that includes one's own *hot* body and boundlessly imaginative, desire-filled mind is still pretty much forbidden. For a woman, writing porn is even more forbidden, and liberating, than for a man. Women, lesbian or otherwise, aren't supposed to be sleazy enough or "nasty" enough to place horniness as high in their concerns as, well, romance. Women, lesbian or otherwise, shouldn't try to imagine sex without love, sex for the love of sex; we shouldn't write about it or read it with one hand turning the pages and one hand wherever it takes to get off. Women shouldn't cuddle up in bed, alone or otherwise, pillows between or under our legs, VCR remote close by, and watch video sex being performed on our bedroom TV screens. No—though maybe it's okay for women to get all wet after we've found our One True Love (lesbian or otherwise), and it's fine to loll in our beds as long as we do so with the Beloved.

Porn still has the reputation of being a sleazy activity for a man to engage in, but on another level he (and it) is still (grudgingly) accepted by society. After all, in "their" lexicon, PORN = SLEAZE, because it's about sex. And PORN = SLEAZE = SEX: nasty and scary when the writing depicts explicit images that'll get you off and that celebrate the human impulse to get wet and lick and suck and fuck your brains out. At least writing or reading or viewing porn—if it's male, gay or straight—is "pardonable," since everyone "knows" men are just sexual animals and can't help jerking off and fucking and thinking about sex and looking at it, jerking off and reading it, and jerking off.

But now take PORN = SLEAZE = SEX WRITING and make the writer a *woman*, and we have a new problem! And if it's a woman writing about sex for other women? Well, if you find yourself in that position, you are on the road to a still-new place where you claim your freedom to inhabit your body, reveal yourself body and soul. It's also a place from which you can never really come back, because you've pushed yourself too far out of a formerly airtight closet.

Now then. As if women writing about sex for women weren't sleazy enough, some women porn writers are also writing about power exchanges, consensual, imaginative taking and giving up control, dominance and submission, fisting, bondage, pain, boys with pussies, chicks with dicks, and other *truly perverted* activities, all somehow connected to *sex*, *outlaw sex*. Boundaries this far out can get really trampled! We're in a place out here where boundaries may submerge and reappear somewhere else, or start twisting and turn-

ing, forsaking the straight and narrow of PC identity politics and losing themselves temporarily, or permanently. We're in this still-new place, we perverts; we're wanderers in a land not yet mapped and maybe never approachable by anyone except by an individual finding her or his own way.

Here in this new territory is where we start to think about our sexual identities: beginning to know, really know, that the blind belief that defines sexuality as hetero versus homo doesn't work anymore for every human being. It's inflexible, limiting; it can't describe for everyone what being a (sexual) human being means. Why have to pick either het or homo? And the term *bisexual* is no help either. *Bi*-sexual: does that mean a "bisexual" has only two sexual identities or orientations? Why only those two identities? Straight, gay. Speaking of straight, it seems to me that self-identifying as "straight" cancels out every other possibility for that person. Maybe it makes more sense to use *queer* for self-identifying straights! (This reminds me that for a few years now I have presumed that any woman who crosses paths with me is lesbian—at least part of the time. Yeah, I know this might sound crazy to some of you.)

What label or identity can describe you? You, who wake up one day and call yourself "girl"—and the next day when you wake you're "boy"? Labels can't describe how sexual identity can be so fluid for an individual that it changes depending on what you wear one day or who you find yourself standing next to on the subway fantasizing about. Here are some ways people describe themselves to themselves and/or to one another. None of these identities may actually fit all the time for some of us real weirdos. We're dyke, lesbian, bi, gay, queer, butch, boychick, tomboy, macho, femme, fag boy, queen, girlie girl, daddy, mommy, top, bottom, sadist, masochist, leather freak, wife, husband, brother, sister, master, mistress, slave.... What'd I forget?

I need to loop back a bit: the preceding reflections on shifting sexual identities and the prison of labels would probably never have come to me without reading porn and then reading and writing outlaw porn. Let me give you just a small taste of what goes on in my hot little brain when I'm thinking or acting out of my sexual energy.

Necessary Prelude: I wrote my very first sex scene out of intense, prolonged, lustful desperation. From some point in 1991 or 1992, I was supremely infatuated with someone who didn't feel the same way about me: to her we were just "best friends." My obsession was for her mind and her body equally. I couldn't let on or she'd move away from me like a shot. I had written very little fiction in my life, and I had never attempted to write about an explicitly sexual encounter. But the intensity of my need to find a release propelled me to my keyboard, and I challenged myself to write down, in as precise language and detail as possible, any sex act between myself and my secret love that I could come up with and make it as real, hot, sexy as I could. The funny thing, too, is that though my very first written sex scene was vanil-

la and quite romantic, my sex writing slipped almost immediately into the outlaw world of perv sex. Maybe this occurred because the original creative impulse for my writing had been wrung from the pain of that intense, frustrated passion. Maybe not. But I think my writing must be what they mean by “sublimation”—though I call it “writing sex” (a variation on “having sex”).

Writing sex channeled my madness and my lust into creative action; and although it was terrifying at first to try to write what I’d only read before, it really got me off! At some point I finally realized that although sex writing is about fantasies, those fantasies were based on someone’s realities! From that point it was not very difficult to skip lightly over the bridge between fantasy and reality. I sought out the players and got down. So although I still get off on my sex writing, these days my fantasies are being fulfilled on my own body by someone other than myself—thank you very much, o goddess!

I’ve gotten lots of my best stories in my development space—which is what I call my bed—before I fall asleep, when I love to fantasize. Sometimes a story takes shape very slowly. Every night, for weeks, I caressingly fine-tune the details of the scene in my mind. Developing, then writing down my fantasies and working on them some more turns me on, as I said. It gets me so wet that I have to chain myself (well, yeah, “chain” is a metaphor here) to my desk so I won’t go back to my bed and jerk off. This writing is sex: a controlled and wonderfully creative kind that is safe too! In writing sex, you gotta hold your sexual energy in and feed it to your fiction, otherwise the hotness can’t really drip off the page.

Some of my fantasies can easily be turned into corresponding reality: I’m such a bad boy—or girl—I like to pull my Bike jockstrap over (or under) my jeans before I go out to a party or over my garter belt and stockings if I’m in another mood...and I often (though not always) like to be fucked real hard so that the next day, when my urethra is irritated and it feels like I gotta pee and I walk around sore inside all day, still I’m happy. Because this irritation, the pain and soreness, all remind me of what a great time I had. A physical reminder of hot, nasty, all-out sex. Whether it’s a sore cunt or sore ass or sore back or sore nipples or all of the above, it’s a good thing for me. “Thrilling” is the word I used the first time I talked to the top who finally fulfilled my dreams. It was the thrill of reality finally corresponding to what I was feeling inside.

When my face is buried, held tight in the middle of her body and she has an arm around my naked waist or shoulders or thighs and I’m feeling a million feelings, many scary—like confusion, fear, anger, desire, shame; like wanting, needing, denial and disbelief, exuberance, aggression, more fear, lust—she can lean over, maybe even grasp my hair and pull my head up, whisper low and clear in my ear, “You know, you can’t get away from me. I’m stronger than you, and you’re not the one in control. So pay attention! You give me

what I want, and you must trust me to give you what you want. You know that, don't you?" And I say yes, and breathe a sigh of relief and give it up.

Sometimes, when I'm in the capable, knowing hands of my top, my body held in place or maybe moved to another spot in the room for more pain and pleasure, I feel just like a puppy being held carefully but firmly by the nape of the neck in her mother's jaws. The mother's teeth are very hard, very white, strong and pointed, but that puppy feels a thrill of fear, a shiver of anticipation under the tremendous joy and comfort of giving up control for her own good. Mother can be very, very gentle when she wants to be. The knowledge of the cutting edges of her teeth is the only discomfort in this moment, but it's clear enough that Master, Mother, Daddy, Mistress can do anything that's needed.

Can we write porn and *not* be celebrating ourselves? If it's hot and gets you off and gets other people off, no! Can we grow and change and discover things about ourselves and our needs, habits, friends, and world by reading and writing porn? Most definitely! Is it enough to accept the PORN = SLEAZE = SEX = PERVERSION and you're a bad, bad, bad boy formula anymore? I say, "Fuck off, all you tight-asses! Go find your *own* way into heaven! We're not waiting for you all to catch up with us—wouldn't that be a silly waste of our time?—but we'll keep throwing out our flares and life belts, and when you do catch up, we'll find a way to welcome you all, every last sleazy, perverted outlaw one of you."

**A HOUSE DIVIDED:
VIOLENCE IN THE LESBIAN S/M COMMUNITY
PAT CALIFIA**

It is time for S/M dykes to admit that we have a problem with violence in our community. This problem is of long standing. And nothing we have done, up to now, has adequately addressed it.

This is not just a lesbian issue. The gay men's leather community and straight S/M people have their own problems with violence, but I can't speak about their culture with any confidence. I believe, without being able to prove it, that assault and other forms of violence are even more of a problem among gay male and heterosexual sadomasochists. Dykes are more likely to be aware of this issue, and we have the beginning of a language to help us talk about it. Perhaps the circulation of this article will spur some discussion and action outside the women's community. But I need to limit the scope of this article to what's happening between leatherwomen, the ways we're hurting one another, and how we can make the violence stop.

These are some of the recent events that have made me feel that it is urgent to raise this difficult and painful subject now:

- One of the founders of the leather-S/M women's community in her city terminated a contract relationship about a year ago. Since then, the other party to this contract has broken in to her business, stolen her property, vandalized her car, threatened her in person and on the telephone, destroyed her garden, and dumped animal entrails by her vehicle. The local S/M women's support group does not allow the perpetrator to participate in its events, but this has not put a stop to this terrorist activity.

- A woman who attempted to end a two-year, live-in relationship with her top was threatened with a firearm. Her former top locked this woman out of their house and to date has refused to return any of her belongings, clothing, or furniture or make a settlement of their joint checking account and other money. After she left this relationship, someone called the bottom's place of employment to inform them that they have "a perverted dyke" working there.

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- The top in a five-year relationship keeps her bottom medicated with strong antidepressants and tranquilizers. She makes administration of this medication part of their S/M scenes. It is difficult to tell whether the bottom's masochistic achievements are the result of her innate ability to take pain or a reflection of the fact that she doesn't feel anything at all. The bottom is not in therapy, and it is unclear whether she receives the medical supervision someone on this kind of pharmaceutical regimen should get. Despite being on medication, the bottom manages to hold down a job. All of her money goes to her top. She is not allowed to own anything in her own name.

- Two women recently ended a long-term relationship. One of the issues that caused them to separate was battery. The femme bottom in this relationship repeatedly and severely beat her butch top. This perpetrator has assaulted her ex-lover's new lover with a large piece of broken glass, disfigured her face, cut major blood vessels and tendons in her hand and arm, and nearly killed her. The victim of this brutal attack has permanent nerve damage, and her mobility has been impaired. No one called the police. The perpetrator is planning to move to another city.

These stories are examples of events that are being repeated in every part of the country where S/M dykes have formed struggling networks or communities. Every reader probably knows of similar events. We have been afraid to name this violence. We have been afraid to confront it. This hiding, this cover-up, has to end.

There are many good reasons why the violence that some leatherdykes commit against each other has remained a dirty secret. We all expend a lot of energy trying to educate the outside world about S/M. We repeatedly have to confront the stereotype that lesbian S/M is the same thing as violence against women. We want to make a distinction between what we do and assault and battery. This can lead to denial that our community, like any besieged minority, has its own problems with violence. We have to stop holding up this facade and admit, at least to one another, that we are not perfect.

If we are honest, we will admit that we are also afraid of the women who are violent. I know we are supposed to be big, bad girls who kick snot out of anybody who looks at us cross-eyed. If you wear leather, you're supposed to be tough, a warrior, a hard case. But nobody in her right mind wants to look down the barrel of a gun, get beaten up, have her belongings trashed, or even be threatened.

And we don't know where to turn. We have not supported the victims of violence in our own community. How can we, when we are afraid to even admit it happens? And we certainly don't trust the institutions that deal with perpe-

trators and victims—the police, rape crisis lines, battered women's shelters.

This has made some battered leatherwomen feel that they must leave the community if they want to be safe. Some of these women have become outspoken enemies of lesbian S/M. In the long run, if we don't clean this mess up ourselves, it will be used and turned against us by people who don't really care if our lives are free from danger or not. Even worse than that, women we love will continue to suffer, perhaps even lose their lives.

Why does this violence happen? There are many reasons, and I can only begin to name a few of them. We are strong, proud women, but we face an enormous amount of shit. It is very hard for us to find lovers and friends, keep jobs, raise our children, get through the day. The pressure takes its toll. There is a lot of drug abuse and alcoholism in our community, and some domestic violence takes place because women's inhibitions against hurting each other are lowered when they get fucked up. But I also have to say that some of the battery I know about personally has been perpetrated by clean-and-sober dykes. S/M attracts some women who want to use it wrongfully. Some of these women are mentally ill, and they hope that S/M will serve as a substitute for therapy. Some of these women are violent, and they find S/M attractive because it is a way to rationalize and eroticize their abusive behavior. Some S/M dykes have little or no impulse control. They are so needy that they feel unable to halt manipulative or threatening behavior when they don't get what they want.

No one group within our community can be blamed for violence. Bottoms as well as tops can be perpetrators. Femmes as well as butches can strike out and injure other leatherdykes. This unspoken menace is injuring the trust that ought to exist between tops and bottoms who are looking for rewarding scenes and relationships.

Before we can come up with some viable solutions, it's important to look at the responses leatherdykes have tried already and see why they have not worked.

I've frequently heard that the S/M community polices itself. I used to say this myself. It might have been true once, when there were maybe twenty of us in any given city. But there are too many of us now for word of mouth (which was never that accurate anyway) to reach everyone who needs to be warned away from women who sometimes go out of control. What we have now is a vicious and unfair system of ordeal by gossip. You can guarantee that the heaviest top in any city will be demonized. Sometimes she is, in fact, not a safe player. More often, she has a bad reputation simply because the community is punishing her for being unusually intense and because so many of us find it titillating to trash other people and tell lies about them. I have yet to see this kind of gossip protect anybody from being assaulted.

Heavy bottoms are also stigmatized. Too many women seem to assume that

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if you're an intense masochist or submissive, there must be something wrong with you. You must be crazy, or you must hate yourself. So if you get hurt, well, what did you expect? This is exactly the same thing as telling a rape victim that she ought not to have gone out after dark wearing a sexy dress.

Then there's the idea that if somebody has fucked with you or somebody you love, you ought to retaliate in kind. Don't call the police—just get a bunch of your friends together and kick shit out of whoever was responsible. The problem with this strategy is that it easily becomes vigilantism. Lynch mobs do not mete out justice, they enforce the dictates of prejudice and hate. I have been the victim of an assault that was orchestrated by a top who believed I had done a nonconsensual scene with her lover. There was no prior warning, no attempt to talk, just an attack that might have resulted in my death. My attackers wound up having to plead guilty to assault charges. Even if you believe you are justified in seeking revenge, you run the risk of being arrested and prosecuted for the same crime you are trying to right. I do not want to see the friends and supporters of a victim of violence—or the victim herself—in trouble with the law.

The other thing we do is isolate the parties involved. We blame the victim, pretend we don't know what's going on, or find another excuse to ignore the violence. This is no different than a battered wife's neighbors closing their doors and their ears to her cries for help.

There are no easy solutions. Some of what I have to suggest will probably be controversial. I hope so. Because if you don't agree with me, at least you will talk to other leatherdykes about this, and out of those discussions some positive action has to come. We are an intelligent and caring group of women, and I trust us to eventually work this out.

Because we are a marginal community, some of us are involved in illegal activities. We sell drugs, work in the sex industry, etc. This has created an attitude that it's wrong to bring "the pigs" in when we have problems. But I believe that we have to stop protecting perpetrators by refusing to notify the authorities. This is a hard one. We know that the police are not our friends. Sometimes they can be as difficult for a victim to deal with as the assailant. That is why women's S/M support groups must become more involved with community projects to educate the police about domestic violence. In the few cities that hire lesbian and gay officers, we should start building liaisons with those officers. We must not punish women who try to protect themselves by calling the cops.

Of course, if a victim doesn't want to talk to the police, no one has the right to force her to do that. And I'm not saying we should call the police every time we get mad at somebody. I think they should be used as a last resort, when property has been damaged or someone has been injured. That's their job. If it's possible to get the cops to do their job, they can be very useful.

When the police stand between a batterer and a victim, consequences for the assailant become more severe. If someone can't control her own anger and the leather community's disapproval can't control her, it may be necessary to escalate and appeal to agencies or institutions that literally and legally have the power to stop or punish further violence.

We must become more involved with grassroots projects that provide services to victims of sexual assault. It is unconscionable that leatherdykes are afraid to call rape crisis lines or seek shelter in refuges for battered women. We must demand that representatives of these organizations meet with us and educate themselves about our needs. We shouldn't have to go into therapy to "cure" our sadomasochism in return for being given sanctuary. Shelters have problems dealing with dykes anyway. A disproportionate number of shelter volunteers are lesbians, but shelters (especially those that get government funding) go through periodic moral panics and purge the queers. Since a lot of dykes know where the battered women's shelter is located, it often doesn't provide an anonymous haven for an endangered lesbian. If we can't get shelters to help us, concerned individuals will have to provide shelter to those members of our community who need it.

Instead of sitting around talking tough and spinning out fantasies about retaliation, our community should begin to practice a nonviolent form of confrontation when someone has clearly been identified as violent. Alcoholics Anonymous has a format for running these sorts of encounters that we could adapt. For these confrontations to be successful, women who know from personal experience—not from hearsay—about violent behavior must speak out, either in person or on tape. Careful preparation is necessary to make sure nobody loses her temper and becomes physically aggressive.

If, after a confrontation, the perpetrator is not prepared to change her ways, her membership in support groups should be revoked. She should not be allowed to socialize with responsible leatherdykes. She should be ostracized. If she goes to a city where she is not already known, it is important for information about her to be passed on to women in that city so the cycle of violence does not begin again.

I say this with a great deal of trepidation, knowing how malicious and unfair some of us can be. This is not a weapon that should be used against someone because you are angry that she won't sleep with you, you're upset about breaking up, or you feel that the kind of S/M she does is wrong or her politics are flawed. I hope that no one will be able to muster consensus and support for such a radical action unless clear proof is presented that such treatment is deserved.

Wherever possible, we should encourage perpetrators to get therapy or do anything they can to change their behavior. Exiling women is a last resort. It doesn't solve the problem, just pushes it further away. Twelve-step groups might be a useful model for batterers who want to help each other to stop

hurting other women. While we want to support personal growth and change, I think we have to recognize that a lot of women who are violent enjoy losing control and are not going to change. We have a right to protect ourselves against these people.

If you are in a battering relationship and allow it to continue, you are aiding and abetting violence against that woman's next partner. It's humiliating and terrifying to be a victim of violence. It's especially damaging to your self-esteem if the violence comes from somebody you love. It can be very difficult to believe that anyone would help you or to imagine how you might get away. But nobody deserves to be raped or beaten. You can put a stop to it. Many, many women have. Some of them were in even more danger than you are. Analyze your situation, reach out to other women, and take whatever action—no matter how drastic—is necessary to make your life safe.

If you cannot control your urge to act out when you are angry or hurt and you do not admit it and get help, you are a criminal. You cannot justify your act by blaming it on someone else for making you feel bad, and you can't make up for it by having hot sex with the woman you attacked.

As a community of female sexual outlaws, we need to start paying more attention to our ethics and our honor. The good life does not consist merely of getting laid as often as possible. A lot of leatherwomen do not hesitate to treat each other badly if it will get them a scene. There is a sense of sexual scarcity and desperation in our community that makes some of us do crazy things. But this is part of why hot scenes are in short supply. Who wants to be sexually available as a top or a bottom if you're going to make yourself vulnerable to crazy expectations and off-the-wall behavior?

To further this discussion, I've included a checklist for women who need help assessing whether they are in a violent relationship and a draft of a code of honor for leatherdykes. I welcome any comments or criticisms these documents provoke.

Are You a Victim of Domestic Violence?

The following checklist is intended to help women sort out their feelings about relationships that may or may not be abusive. Obviously, saying "yes" to some of the questions on this list is not enough to justify calling your partner a batterer. You will need to weigh all of your answers together. However, if you read this checklist, answer yes to many of the questions, and still feel confused about whether your relationship is violent, I advise you to seek some professional help. Something's obviously wrong, and someone who is trained to deal with domestic violence can help you get your life back on track.

- Do you constantly monitor your behavior, censor your speech, and

do things you really don't want to do to placate your partner?

- Has she ever assaulted or claimed to have attacked anyone else?
- Does she threaten you—verbally or nonverbally—with bodily harm?
- Do you feel belittled, worthless, helpless, that nothing you do is good enough?
- When you are around your partner, do you feel as if your life is out of control?
- Have you ever wished someone would rescue you from this relationship?
- Are you afraid of what she might do if you told her you were ending the relationship?
- Has she told you that there are things you do or say that make her so angry she loses control? Does she expect you to stop doing or saying those things?
- Do you hide weapons when she is around?
- Does she have trouble accepting the connection between her actions and the consequences? For example, if she's habitually late for work, does it surprise her and make her angry if she gets fired? If she speeds and then gets a traffic ticket, is she outraged? Does she think it's unfair if the bank bounces her checks when she's overdrawn? When these things happen, do you feel as if you should have anticipated the situation and somehow prevented it from happening?
- Has she ever refused to let you leave the room?
- Has she ever hit you? Pushed you? Kicked you? Strangled you? Threatened you with a weapon or used one on you?
- Have you ever stayed home because you were hurt and didn't want other people to know?
- Have you refused to get medical help because you did not want to explain your injuries?
- Have you ever wanted to call the police during a fight? Have your neighbors ever called the police?
- Have you ever wanted to go home to your family?
- Do you try to avoid spending time with both your friends and your partner?
- Does your partner isolate you by interfering with your ties to other people?
- Are you too financially or emotionally dependent on this person? If she left you, would it throw your life into chaos?
- Are you afraid of her?
- Does loving her make you hate yourself?
- Are you confused about when a scene begins and when it ends?
- Do you feel as if the rules keep changing, so you never know what

you should do or say to keep yourself safe?

- Do you feel that she punishes you for what happens or doesn't happen in S/M scenes by becoming violent later?

- Has she ever threatened or harmed your pets, possessions, or friends?

- Has she ever forced you to have sex when you did not want to be sexual?

- Do you avoid sleeping with other people or making sexual demands because you're afraid it will enrage her?

- Does she tell you that you are stupid, incompetent, or unattractive? Does she make you feel that no one else would want you?

- Has she threatened to reveal your sexual identity to your boss, landlord, family members, or other people who don't know you are a leatherdyke?

A Code of Honor for Leatherdykes

I feel a little silly writing this down. It's very personal, and I'm not sure that putting my own ideals down on paper will be useful for anyone else. And I'd be a complete fool if I tried to tell anybody that these items are anything other than goals. On some days, achieving them seems very damned distant.

I only know that for me, leather is more than a way to get off. It can be a powerful bond between outspoken women who have the courage to be honest about their needs, strong women who have the guts to live outside society's fences. For me, these bonds have transcended any connection I've had with my family. There's an old saying, "Leather is thicker than blood." But if we're going to abandon the standards and institutions that keep most women domesticated, we need a code of our own to keep us from preying upon one another.

1. I will take care of myself financially. I will pay my own way. I will not manipulate or coerce other women into supporting me. If I have to borrow money, I will pay it back. If I borrow someone else's possessions, I will protect them and return them in the same condition that I received them.

2. I will take care of myself mentally, emotionally, and physically. If I need counseling or medical attention, I will get it. If I need support to seek professional assistance, I will ask for help. I will not lapse into self-destruction, I will not let my use of alcohol or other drugs get out of control, and I will not expose myself or other women to disease by having unsafe sex or sharing needles.

3. I will take care of myself sexually. I will not have sex

with someone I despise just because I am needy. I will not allow someone to abuse me because she provides me with sex. I will not trample on other women to make a sexual connection. I will not trade my basic rights and responsibilities for sex. I will not pretend I am a top because I want the prestige, and I will not pretend to be a bottom because I don't want to be grown-up or culpable.

4. I will take care of my relationships. I will be honest with my partner(s). I will resolve conflicts in a nonviolent manner. If I need to change or end a relationship, I will do it with care. I will not treat someone I once loved as if she were a stranger or an enemy. If someone ends a relationship with me, I will recognize that as her inalienable right, and I will not use it as an excuse to instigate a vendetta against her.

5. I will take care of my property. I will improve everything and everyone that I own. I will not exploit someone else's labor or affection because I'm too lazy to do for myself or too insecure to get down on my knees. I will not ruin my bottom's pleasure because I am jealous of her status. I will not sabotage the rest of her life to keep her under my sexual control.

6. I will take good care of my owner. I will not make contracts I do not intend to keep. I will not undermine her confidence. I will not change my mind about whether I consented to a scene once the scene is over. I will not get her into fights over me or make other masters think badly of her abilities because I am unkempt or rude.

7. To the limits of my ability, I will defend myself and other women from danger. I will not cause another woman bodily harm, and I will not allow myself to be injured without seeking redress.

8. I will keep my promises, and I will not make promises lightly.

9. I will not pretend to know things that I am ignorant about. I will not attempt S/M techniques that are beyond my skill or experience. I will honor my teachers and always give them credit for the knowledge they shared with me. I will not hoard that knowledge and skill but will pass it on to any woman who is genuinely curious and willing to learn.

10. I will not gossip. If I know something bad or good about another person, I will share that information when

it's necessary and constructive to do so, as long as I am not violating her confidentiality. I will not pass on stories that I can't personally verify, and I will not stir shit by spreading rumors or backstabbing. If I can't keep someone's secrets, I won't allow her to tell me any. If I have a problem with someone, I will confront her myself and not pass the problem on to somebody else by whining about it.

11. I will especially respect and honor people in the community who do things that I don't do, because they know something I don't know, and they have abilities I do not have. I will not cooperate with any effort to stigmatize or punish them for being different from me.

12. I will not brag. If I'm any good at all, other women will do my bragging for me. If I'm not, bragging is a form of lying. Dignity and a calm attitude are the mark of a player who can be trusted. A frenzied pursuit for the mob's good opinion will result in bad digestion and sexual frustration.

13. There are women who went before me. They have made my life easier. They are my elders, if not my betters, and I will be grateful for their achievements even if I do not like them personally.

14. S/M is a craft, and I am an apprentice for life. Other people may call me an authority, but I know there's always something about this game-that's-real that I don't know.

15. I will keep a sense of humor. Players who take themselves or the game too seriously get so rigid that they are in danger of shattering under stress.

16. Clean, constructive power comes from responsibility. I will not try to gain power in any other way—not by sleeping with somebody else who has some, not by buying it, not by stealing it from other women who have acquired power because they work hard and stick their necks out.

17. There is no welfare in this community. If I want it to flourish, I must contribute. If I sit on my hands, I am a parasite, and I should give my leather away to somebody who deserves to wear it.

18. My good opinion of another woman does not depend on whether she flatters me, gets me laid, or gets me high. When I am taking sides in a conflict, I will try to think about what's right before I think about what side my cunt is lubricated on.

19. My first loyalty is to other women. Women do not

have enough physical space, money, or freedom. I value women-only space and institutions and will not attack or weaken them. If I have men in my life, I will not give them priority over women or impose their company on women who choose to live apart from men.

20. I will treat novices, newcomers, and beginners gently. I will not keep them isolated from the community so I can monopolize their attentions, and I will not take advantage of their enthusiasm or ignorance. I will give them the kind of introduction to the scene that I wish someone had given me.

21. I will treat vanilla dykes with courtesy, even while I oppose the attempts some of them make to censor me or take away my rights. I will remember that a lot of women who get upset about S/M will be leatherdykes someday. I will not make coming out more difficult for others by antagonizing or alienating them unnecessarily. Nor will I kowtow to their prejudice or keep silent when they speak ill of my sisters in leather.

22. I will never ransom my intelligence to someone else's charisma. I will never take somebody else's word for the right or wrong of an issue. I will gather my own facts, weigh them in my own mind, and come to my own conclusions. My self-respect is more important to me than being popular or admired.



Photographs by Janet Ryan

From the first moment of my arrival, I felt
that I was in a new world, and that I was
about to enter a new life. I was in a new
world, and I was about to enter a new life.

I was in a new world, and I was about to enter a new life. I was in a new world, and I was about to enter a new life. I was in a new world, and I was about to enter a new life.



I was in a new world, and I was about to enter a new life.

PART IX

FICTION FLAGGING ORANGE (ANYTHING GOES)
AND A RAINBOW OF OTHER HANKIES

**The Adventures of Sumi and Amal:
An S/M Fairy Tale
Suo**

The foam of the sea kissed the pebbles on the shore. The mermaids sang their song of joy. High on a mountaintop one could see shadows of sheep fucking as they whirled like dervishes in their ecstasy.

Amal, the queen of the forest, stood strong and solid on the massive rocks and gazed into the ocean. Her black body sparkled and glistened in the early morning sun. Left hand on sword, right hand on cock, she searched the waves of time with ancient eyes for her lover, Sumi, the goddess of the sea. Gently she lifted her great black dildo high to the sight of airborne maidens floating above. A stream of golden piss strengthened the waters. From the depths of the sea, Sumi rose. Her hair was long green seaweed; her body small and delicate with skin as blue as the waters she lived in.

"Sumi, I have waited for you so long! Come to me at once!" the queen commanded.

"Amal-Amal," the goddess cried out as she swam ashore and fell on the sand, licking the queen's feet. "Cuff me! Fuck me!" she pleaded. "Let me taste your deep roots with my cool wet tongue. Keep me from the sea, Mistress. I am so weary of floating."

"Beg me, you water slut! You are bad—very bad. I am enraged that you have been away from me for so many moons."

"I have not been gone long, my queen. Only a day, maybe a century, perhaps an hour."

"Shut up and let me taste the sea salt on your cunt." Her long tongue lapped up the salt hungrily as Sumi screamed with passion, orgasming fifty times all over the queen's face.

Then the queen pulled out her sword and held it against the goddess's delicate neck. "You must suffer the consequences of your absence from me."

Sumi shuddered in fear against the cold sharp blade.

"For your punishment, you will be sacrificed to the old women of the forest."

"Oh, no." The goddess knew the meaning of this, for she had been bad many times before, had memories of a thousand hot fists, sweet and slippery,

entering her, of blood streaming into her mouth. Oh, blessed curse. Pain and joy swept over her lovely face as she and the queen prepared to leave the sandy beach for the forest.

"Bring me my whip, my cuffs, and my porcupine gel. We will travel light."

"Yes, Mistress. What route will we take, Mistress?"

"First, before we take one step, we must stop and listen to our breath. It will guide us. If we just think and keep moving without breathing, we will lose the flow and not find the correct road."

"Yes, Mistress. You are so wise, Mistress."

They closed their eyes and breathed very deeply.

The queen and the goddess traveled through winter, summer, and fall. Exhausted, they dropped and slept for five days by a cool stream in each other's arms like intertwined rainbows. Suddenly a woman appeared on the road. The thumping of her cane awakened them. She was old and dressed in black fur robes of sorrow. She chanted a strange refrain: "Drop dreams and illusions that youth holds forever...drop dreams and illusions that youth holds forever."

"Hush up, Old Woman, and pull up your skirts!" the queen ordered, a little annoyed that she had been awakened so abruptly. "Oh, your breasts are firm and full like a young girl's."

"May I suck them, Mistress?" Sumi pleaded. Amal ignored her request. "What are you carrying on your back, Old Woman?"

"I am an old lady that doesn't have none. In the rush of the hour, the jade of the sun, I make patchwork birdbaths by the light of the day. On my back I carry them with sprinkled-down hay."

"You are a strange old hag. Lay down your wares and let's have some fun. Suck her tits, Sumi, and do it fast!" the queen ordered.

"Oh, yes, my mistress."

"I will break your cheekbones with my breasts," cackled the old lady.

Sumi's teeth bit down hard on the hag's nipples. She screamed with joyous pain. Then Amal slapped the old woman hard on her ass and shoved her cock up her shriveled cunt. Sumi grabbed the long white hair and yanked it. The hag grunted. Amal pulled her cock out slowly and watched with glee the hot wet pussy. Hot! Hot! The goddess yanked her hair again. Amal took out her whip, lashing and stinging Sumi's legs and thighs. There were no safe words in this land. The blood from her wounds gushed into the old hag's mouth as she moved down to the goddess's pretty pussy.

"Oh, yes! Eat me! Eat me!" Sumi screamed with passion.

The hag's tongue tickled like a vibrator. She flicked it fast and furiously on Sumi's clit. The passion built. Amal pushed the goddess away and thrust her large black fist up the hag's wet hole. They all screamed with passion and came nine hundred times.

"Enough!" The queen stood. "We must go now, Old Woman, we are on a mission. I am pleased with you, Sumi. You have been so very good."

"Oh, Amal, my mistress, may she eat me again since I have been so good?"

"No! You whore!" Her face hardened. "We must go now!"

"It has been a great pleasure, my queen and my goddess. I will keep the memory, for I am lonely in these woods." The old woman laughed and then began to cry softly. "Together is never only a moment passed gently in time." Slowly she clothed herself in the dark fur robes of sorrow, placed the patchwork birdbaths on her back, and hobbled down the road. "Drop dreams and illusions that youth holds forever...drop dreams and illusions that youth holds forever." Sumi and Amal watched as her figure receded into the deep forest.

A strange melancholy swept over them. They were unable to move for several minutes. Memories of princesses and thrift-shop castles from centuries ago flooded their beings; visions of ribbons and many fine laces arose. A solo forever alone on a desert. The wind whispered softly, Let go...let go of the yesterday. A part of them died.

"I love you, Amal!"

"I love you too, Sumi."

Ten million stars shone down on them as they silently continued their long journey.

"Did you hear that shrill sound, Sumi?"

"Yes, it is coming from above, Mistress."

"From above, Sumi?"

"Yes, Mistress."

A woman jumped from a high tree and stood before them. She was twelve feet tall and clothed totally in leather except for her starched white shirt. Her face was handsome, vulnerable, and a little tough. She smoothed her 1950s DA haircut back and gave them a cocky smile.

"State your name and occupation," the queen ordered.

"Hi there, my name is Tony Butch. I am a leatherwoman from the high hills. I know the fine art of making belts, and making love." A wry smile played on her face.

"You are so handsome!" Sumi gushed.

"Thank you. I believe as a butch I have a responsibility to be dashing. I am in search of my lover, Fem Child. She disappeared in the great war between the tribes seven centuries ago."

"We are going to the Forest of Old Women." Sumi smiled flirtatiously.

"That is a great distance from here. Hop on my back, and I will jump the trees. It will be much faster. I know the way well, and I am honored to assist you. Oh, what fun! Hop on! Your Tony Butch is ready to travel."

Tony was swift like a young kangaroo. They jumped through the forest and

polka-dot skies, up and down branches and fireflies. They laughed and shouted as they whirled through space, the color of childhood back on their faces. "May we rest awhile, Mistress?" Sumi asked. She and Amal lay down by a shady tree and embraced. Tony fingered a black leather belt and dreamed of seeing Fem Child again. It was a long, lazy afternoon.

"Look at those people," Sumi exclaimed. Two women appeared in the road. They weighed at least two thousand pounds between them. One of them, the redheaded one, was wearing a large sign. On the front it said, FUSSIES SAD SONG OR THE NISHY PLAGUE. On the back it said, THE WALL.

The black-headed one had enema bags hanging all over her. The red-headed one stuttered and slobbered as she said, "Four weeks a warrior, I lay down my sword. You have won the battle, but you have lost the war."

"Shut up, you fool," Fussie said. "She is stupid and crazy, but she packs a good enema, and I love to torture her."

"You are such ugly hags," Sumi giggled.

"We mean no harm. What be your pleasure?" Fussabell laid her beloved enemas down and ordered the redheaded one to take off her sign.

"Four weeks a warrior—"

"Shut up, Patito!... Sometimes she thinks she's a rock star named David Bowie from many centuries ago. When she is very good, I call her David. We mean no harm. What be your pleasure, o great ones?"

Their laughter rang through the forest. It was such a relief to laugh after so much travel.

"Mistress, may they show us what they do with their enemas? Please, Mistress."

"Yes, that would be a delightful idea, Sumi."

Tony was laughing so much that her DA lost its slickness. When she realized this, she looked somber and slicked it back and smoothed her shirt.

"We would love to show you," they said in unison, hopping on one foot and then on the other.

"Lie down, Davida, like a good girl." Fussabell rammed the enema up Davida's ass.

"We don't need no education, we don't need no mind control."

"Shut up, Davida! She is so senile," Fussabell whispered. "Hold the water, Davida, like a good girl." Fussabell quickly grabbed another enema bag filled with piss and poured it into Davida's mouth.

"Four weeks—"

"Shut up, you stupid dickhead, and swallow the piss!"

"This is very amusing," the queen said pompously, "but we must continue our journey."

"Would you like me to ram a few enemas in you, Tony Butch, before we part?" Fussabell asked demurely.

"No, that's not my thing." Tony looked very serious. She would never want to insult a femme.

"Good-bye, funny ladies." Sumi waved.

"Good-bye, o great ones."

"Let's go!"

They hopped on Tony's back, and with three jumps they arrived at the Forest of the Old Women.

"We are here, Goddess Sumi and Queen Amal." Tony lowered herself to let them off.

"This is the Forest of Old Women?" The queen was puzzled. Looking around she saw nothing but different-size grapefruits.

"This is the Forest of Old Women who heal with grapefruits." Tony smiled warmly.

Sumi began to cry. Nothing looked hot or sexy. It looked sticky and sour, and only one woman was in sight.

"Ah," said Tony, "there is my love, Fem Child. Hi there, sweetheart. You're looking beautiful as ever."

"Hi, Tony Butch."

Fem Child had been rubbing her clit on a large grapefruit, and when she saw Tony, she instantly came.

"Where are all the old women, Fem Child?" Tony asked.

"Oh, they left to play softball days ago."

Sumi sobbed, her visions of pain and passion totally destroyed—nothing left but grapefruits.

"Stop it, Sumi!" Amal gently placed her hand over Sumi's mouth. "We will make the best of it." She took out her penknife and cut open a grapefruit. "Eat this, Sumi!" she commanded.

"Yes, Mistress. Oh, it's so ugly and sour."

"Shut up—let's watch Tony and Fem Child from behind the tree."

"Oh, yes, Mistress! That will be fun."

"I've missed you a lot, Tony."

"I've missed you too, lovey."

Fem Child ran her fingers through Tony Butch's DA and massaged her neck and shoulders.

"Oh, that feels good. It's been a long time."

"Tony, would you blindfold me and cuff me, please?"

Tony gently put the cuffs on her and tied the black satin blindfold over her eyes. Fem Child lay back on the soft grass as Tony tickled her legs with a long white feather.

Fem Child smiled in the darkness. An excitement began to grow in her. Not knowing what would happen next was thrilling. The chains felt cold on her stomach as Tony slowly pulled them across her body. A feeling of trust

and powerlessness came over her. Tony was a pro.

"Will you take the blindfolds off me now, Tony, please?"

"Yes," Tony whispered.

Fem Child buried her face deep in Tony's body, kissing and sucking her breasts and then her genitals. Noises like wild animals came from deep within their beings and then subsided. They lay back relaxed and happy, listening to the birds and crickets and watching a small grasshopper.

"Oh, Tony, will you be faithful to just me forever?"

"My darling Fem Child, you know the great responsibility that I have to the femmes of the world. There are so few good butches in this century, and monogamy is illegal."

"I understand, Tony." Fem Child's mouth quivered as she attempted a brave smile.

"Hi, Tony and Fem Child. It was fun watching you. Could we watch them again, Amal?"

"Another time, Sumi."

"O Queen, I must get back to the waters and my people."

"I will take you back to the beach in one hop. Making love always gives me great energy."

"Are you both ready?"

"Yes."

"Hop on."

"I'll see you again soon, baby."

"See you, Tony." Fem Child waved, and just as Tony said, in one jump they were on the beach again.

"Oh, that was fun! Thank you, Tony Butch!"

"It's been my pleasure." She bowed formally. "I must be off."

"Oh, you dashing thing, you." Sumi blushed.

Tony spotted a stunning-looking femme desperately in need of a butch. Her work began!

"Sumi, be a good girl, and do not stay away from me for so long!"

"Oh, my queen, I promise to return before the century is over." Amal gently took Sumi's hands and kissed them.

Slowly the goddess walked back into the sea and disappeared. A perfect day! There was a twinkle in the eye of the sun, and a gorgeous laughing sweetness in the feeling.

THE TABLES WILL TURN RAVEN'LIGHT

The sunlight snakes her way into my office on this laid-back Friday afternoon. All day has been overcast till just this second, when the sun has pierced through the muffled clouds to stroke her fingers on the cool white marble windowsill. The ledges warm slightly to my touch. I watch in awe as every shape in the room is clarified by this transformation: distinct edges of reality and contrasting shadows of fantasy. It seems as if this sharp light actually breathes life into the hungry, sturdy table positioned consciously in the center of the room. The universe in its entirety seems to revolve around this silent table, posed as an altar to some ancient goddess demanding her due.

As I watch the first rays strike the table, I am shaken from my reverie by the distinct feeling of a presence approaching my office door. I blink away my thoughts and focus on the brass knob twisting abruptly. The dark wooden door obediently yields to the slender fingers grasping its golden knob. I am mesmerized by those blood-colored nails releasing the brass ball tersely as the now-abandoned door seals my retreat with a weighty thud.

My breath catches. A stifled choking sound arises from my throat as I take in the scene before me...

She hurriedly enters the room, clutching her briefcase to her side, her face hardened by the clock. Her skirt sways precisely in time to the staccato clicking of her heels as they strike the hardwood floors, resounding the exacting rhythm of commerce. She hurls a slice of a smile past my face, cutting the space between us by a razor's tear while proceeding past me into the room with the table.

I release my breath with a shiver and follow her into the room, both of us now confronted by the silhouette of the table: alone, together. I close the door behind us.

She barely acknowledges my existence with a subtle curl of her red-stained lips before dropping her black leather briefcase into the accepting chair. The sharp sound of her heels against the oak floor mimics the pounding of my heart struggling against the restraints of my chest. I move toward

the solid marble windowsill for support, my eyes captivated by her manicured nails loosening a watch and the various expensive bracelets that surround her wrists. Along with a delicate gold chain and several angular earrings, her jewelry disappears into that dark briefcase.

"I don't have all day," she flatly states to no one in particular, the chair catching her tailored silk jacket. "I expect you'll still do your required work in the time allowed."

"Uh, yes, ma'am," I respond attentively, trying hard to emerge from my vulnerable enchantment. The singing sound of the zipper raises goose bumps up my arm while her skirt plummets to the floor, lifeless. Her heels stepping outside the black silk ring snap my body to attention, while those merciless nails advance on the buttons of her blouse.

I take a step forward, steadying myself against the solid table in the center of the room. This table, my only ally now. Even my own body threatens to betray me. Moisture permeates every pore of my flushed flesh. The apparent rise in humidity shortens my breath. She seems not to notice. Her efficient ritual continues.

My eyes become riveted to the chair being speared by one heeled foot after the other. Dagger-edged nails release black nylons gripped taut between garter clamps. Stockings roll professionally over her knees and down the curves of her calves, stopping only long enough for the removal of her heels before they too are flung thoughtlessly onto the motionless chair.

I gather all the self-control I can, breathe deeply, and muster an innocent smile.

"Ms. Rockherd, how are you today? Do you have any special needs? Tense areas? Limitations?" I ask in a deceptively calm voice, still consciously clutching the table.

"None. Let's proceed with your usual session at once," she commands. Her gaze is impersonal as she approaches the knowingly awaiting table. The table accepts her weight, eager to feel the jagged length of her body stretched atop its apparently yielding surface. She lies facedown, her eyes confined by the table's face cradle. I breathe a sigh of relief, recentering myself, readying my whole being for the demanding task at hand. I light a candle against the darkening afternoon light. The realization dawns that her eyes no longer pose any threat. She's restricted to staring at those hardwood floors, rectangular boards—hard, strong, polished, and precise in their unyielding support.

As she lies there, facedown on the table, waiting in her everyday rigidity, staring at those parquet floors, I approach the table: silently, softly, reverently, awed by this gift strewn atop my altar awaiting my ministrations. She who dwells in that concrete world calls to me each week with the cold metal of her purse, the price exacted for my fingers, my skill. I force her to see the depths of the curves in these hardwood floors. I anoint her gently, sliding my

fingers ever so slowly down her back: lightly at first, gradually increasing the pressure against her taut muscles. I spread the fragrant oils through her every pore, my fingers skilled at finding tension, hard spots, fortresses of resistance. My hands continue to glide over her back and down her buttocks to lubricate her well. The following stroke is slow and deep, pursuing her spine, aware of every vertebra, every resisting muscle. The slower I move, the less her tissues resist my pressure, the deeper she lets me in. My fingers walking that fine line—force melting resistance.

As my hand glides down her back and up toward her buttocks a third time, I am aware of tension held.

“Relax, please,” I whisper, gently shaking her thigh to assist in this process. On returning to the same area again, I realize the tightness is still present. I exhale slowly, knowing the course my work must take.

She releases a startled sigh as a sharp slap caresses one cheek, then the other. I resume my deep touch down her back and again meet resistance on her butt. I feel the blood start to flood my face. This cannot be tolerated and is matched with another strike of my hand. I breathe deeply and continue my work.

Moving to her arm, I slowly shake it to loosen up her shoulder. Gently but firmly, I place her hand around the small of her back, elbow bent. I place my fist under her armpit. Gradually, I ease my pointed fingers under her shoulder blade, melting her tissues in front of my strength.

She sighs and whispers through the face cradle, “Ah, yes, I’m beginning to warm up.”

I bend to brush her ear with my lips and sigh sweetly, “I’m gonna take you, bitch.”

I feel her shudder through my fingertips and then in my cunt. Slowly I release that arm and reach for the other. She starts to resist. I jerk her arm back.

“Who’s givin’ this massage, cunt?” I thrust her arm across her back roughly, clamping her wrist with one skilled hand while grabbing a fistful of hair with the other. I yank her head back, out of the face cradle, forcing her eyes to witness my controlled rage.

“That’s not nice, dear. Someone could get hurt.”

She relaxes. A wise move, considering her position. I release her hair and let my hand make a resounding thud arise from her ass, just to accent my displeasure.

“Oh, Goddess, you’re driving me crazy,” she moans. I’m aware of lusty wetness slipping between my thighs. All this resistance is beginning to agitate me. It’s distracting me from my work. I swiftly move to remedy this unfortunate situation. My hand firmly grasps a wrist and swings it to the ground, where two black leather cuffs chained to an I-bolt in those patterned floors await her resisting wrists. Her other wrist soon follows.

Oh, that ass. Again it catches my eye, glimmering in the sun’s fading light.

Yes, those two pale mounds. But I can hardly see her back door. Running my hands down them again, I realize why.

"Loosen up," I command, bowing warm air into that tight crack. Besides a slight body tremor, my instruction goes unheeded. I try to pry those cheeks apart with my fingers—to no avail. Her ass contracts. My blood is getting warmer. I reach for the dark-handled whip, brushing its soft strands down her back. She shudders.

"Relax your ass, sweetheart." Again her response is insufficient. A whistle of air ends on her trembling back, now strewn with hungry strands of leather. She moans. Her ass is still tight.

"Re-fucking-lax!" I boom as the leather repeatedly works those mounds to a blossoming pink. My cunt throbs with each stroke. Slender fingers of leather elicit sighs and whimpers from her equally tight throat.

I abruptly stop. Her labored breathing is the only sound I hear over the swift beating of my heart. Ever so lightly I pass a purple silk scarf down her back, over and between her tightly gripped hole. Her ass loosens a bit—just enough that I can lay the butt of my whip along her crack and knead it in deeper, rhythmically, one hair at a time.

"Oh, yes," she moans, pushing her butt toward the whip handle, trying to engulf more of it. The purple silk dances over her back, between her thighs, through her legs, and under her belly.

I pause. "You're a tight-ass bitch, but you're gonna relax or break, dear."

Her breathing is quite audible over the rocking of her butt and the sharp slaps applied with increasing force to her now-scarlet ass. I blow moist breath between her thighs while alternately licking and nibbling her sides. Moans lubricate my cunt, requiring me to remove the whip handle from her crack and recommence the thrashing. Sharp leather tongues now feed up her back and down the insides of her tender thighs, causing her body to buck with increasing intensity. As her writhing threatens to upset this scene, I firmly encircle her ankles with more restraints, again fastened securely in those precise floors. Better. Her movements are more strictly confined. Her ass must now content itself with bumping up and down, side to side, obediently grinding to the stroke of my will.

My tongue glides along her side, patiently awaiting a slice of tit to emerge from her rocking movements, and, as it does, I quickly plunge my teeth in for a bit of that nipple: pulling it, sucking it, planting my wet fangs in her soft flesh. Her throaty screams lure me in deeper. She screams. I bite. I nourish my state in this tasty torture. I drink in deeply her predicament.

"Please! Take me!" she demands.

"Take you? Why would I want to take an uptight bitch like you, huh?" I sneer, intermittently biting her back and shoulders while tweaking her nipples hard. "Look at you. Bucking up and down on this table like a common slut!"

"Please..."

"Beg me, bitch...convince me you really want it," I order.

Her back suddenly stiffens. Her breath catches with a slight choke. The silence in the room echoes a hard spot of tension. My skill is required. I adeptly slide my fingers down her side, under her pelvic girdle. She shudders silently. My other hand lingers near her crack.

I bend close and whisper, "Ah, there, don't want it too much, now, do you, boss lady. No, you see only hard straight lines, right, commerce cunt?" My fingers continue to circle, spiraling closer to her wet, pulsating abysses. "Look again, girl. Ain't nothin' hard or straight about this here ass in my hand now, is there?" I squeeze one cheek. Its release is followed by a stinging blow with the palm of my hand, then a long, wet tongue.

Her back softens some into the table. My hand kneads her ass, pulling the tender tissue farther from her crack. She moans.

"Can't hear you, bitch."

She mutters something.

"Louder!"

"Please?" A whisper. Her body's rhythm continues trying to capture my phantom fingers.

"Please what?"

"Please...take me." It's still a mere quiver.

"I said louder, office girl, and beg me!"

Her body jerks as the stirring sound of latex snaps around my wrist. I stroke her hair, pulling it from her scalp, prodding her gently. The lines are starting to curve, bending and twisting.

"Oh! Damn it! Fuckin' take me! I beg you!" she screams all at once. "Sweet Goddess, use me, please! Fuck me now!"

Her body rises and falls violently on the table. Sobs choke her voice. Tears splash on the polished grained floors.

"Better, girlfriend, I'm starting to believe you. Now, convince me."

She pleads: "Please, I want you. Fuck me! Fist me! Long...hard...fill my cunt, my ass...I want you to—"

"I don't care what you want," I interrupt sharply. "I'll do what I want, now, won't I? You're just my girl Friday, now, ain't you?"

"Please!" She bobs her ass higher, straining against the cuffs, stretching for my fingers, my touch. Her hair is disheveled, makeup streaking her face.

"Have you forgotten your manners, dear?" I inquire as I reach for the lit candle, still circling her tender orifice.

"No...I mean, yes...ma'am...Master... I'm sorry, Master. Oh, please, Master, I beg your pardon...I—"

"Yeah, you are sorry...a sorry lackey who deserves whatever punishment she gets." I tip the candle. Screams soak the room, splashing to its farthest corners.

She catches her breath. "No, Master. I beg of you, please," she whimpers, "please, beat me, fuck me, if you will, but not the candle!"

"Silence!" I command, grabbing a breast. I tip the candle along her side, scorching the tit still red from my teeth's ravenous attack. She sobs fitfully.

Her edges are melting. She continues to beseech me with her words, her sobs, her pleas, her gyrating body.

"What's the matter there, executyke, don't want your money's worth? Can't fulfill your contract? Well, sweetheart, the way I see it, you got *no* choice," I muse, while one safely gloved hand begins to inch its way under her belly to the rhythm of her increasingly frenzied body, slowly approaching her dripping cunt. The other hand winds its way down her body, weaving around the strands of leather resting satiated on her back, readying to explore the now-gaping crack of her ass. Slowly, and in unison, both meet their destinations. She must continue to rock to exact this touch. If she moves to one pleasure point, the other retracts. My fingers creep deeper into her cunt, her ass, syncopated, pulsing, alive.

She curses, still begging me on, deeper, harder. I fuck her with increasing force, demanding her bucking motion to continue with mounting effort in order to fill her openings alternately.

"Do you want it, bitch? Come and get it...come on now, honey...you come after it, hear?" Her back arches, her butt strains to rise for her hole to be caressed...only to find her cunt empty. She rocks back quickly, lowering her weight, cunt engulfing my hand, sadly only to result in a vacant butt.

"Come on, bitch!" I taunt. "What's the matter? Can't make up your mind? Too greedy? Yeah, girlfriend, I want you to know just how much you need this massage. It costs now, don't it?"

Her body heaves, her outstretched arms pull against their restraints. Long nails dig into her bloodied palms. Her head whips from side to side, neck arched, screams saturating the air, screams exacting my price. Tremors storm across her silken skin as I fill both her pleasure points at once. She comes—a continuous flow of screams. Pleads pour easily from her throat, cleansing the hardwood floors beneath her streaming eyes. The room is flooded with the waves of her pleasure crashing against those precise, polished boards. She sings one last soul-bright shriek before her body crumples on the table, still sobbing, in a senseless heap.

My fingers retain their required positions. My chest heaves rapidly. The juices oozing down the insides of my thighs search wildly for release. Her breathing is heavy, deep, full.

I pause, struggling to control my breath, blood pulsing in my ears while faint memories blink dimly into my awareness, recalling shades of our different realities. Sweat drips from my brow, heat wrapped tightly around my mind. I sigh, reflecting, regarding the table once more in its cruel illusion.

Slowly I withdraw my fingers from her wet shrines, sliding my now-ungloved hands up her back, her neck, tugging her damp hair. I release her head, aware of her satiated breathing...and my aching cunt. Bent, kneeling, I unfasten her leather-bound limbs before stepping shyly back, steadying myself against the cooling marble sill. The table glows in the glamour of twilight. My eyes strain for one last look at this awe-filled mystery. The light in the room is fading. Shadows threaten to dissolve all clarity. I sigh again, more deeply, as insight dawns. My eyes are downcast, wondering, at those hardwood floors. Lines reclarify. I remember painfully that my services have been rendered. The session's complete. Merely another satisfied customer.

INTERROGATION

J. D. BLADE

She awoke with a bright light shining in her eyes and a terrible headache. Despite the intense feeling of disorientation, her first instinct was to block out the light. She tried to move her hands but could not.

What a hangover, she thought, until she remembered that she had given up drinking last year, after waking up one too many times in bed with strange women. Really strange women. Really, really strange women...vanilla dykes. Goddess only knows what she did on those evenings. It was hard enough that she had amnesia, but even that paled in comparison to the awkwardness that she felt the morning after.

She slowly came to the realization that she was sitting in a chair and happened to be tied to it. Well, at least she wasn't with a vanilla dyke, although for the life of her she couldn't figure out what the hell she was doing tied to a chair. She tested the bonds. *Nice job*. There was no slack or play in the rope at all. Tight yet permitting circulation. The work of a pro.

"Nice of you to join us."

After the initial start, which caused her heart to beat a mile a minute, she moved her head in the direction of the voice. *Ouch, that hurt*. Her mouth felt as if seventy thousand punk baby dykes wearing spiked Doc Martens had marched across her tongue. As her vision cleared she was able to discern a dark silhouette. The light revealed a blond halo in the form of a flattop.

"Who are you, and what the fuck is going on!!?" *Slap, slap*, hit the caveman. Her face stung from the impact of the leather-clad hand.

"When I want you to speak, I will ask you a question."

She could discern a trace of an accent but couldn't place it. The voice did not seem familiar, but still, she couldn't be sure.

"Who the *f-u-c-k* appointed you god?"

Contrary to popular belief, lightning struck twice in the same place—the left side of her face. Stars appeared, and her eyes started to fill before she managed to stop them. The way the room was lit made it impossible to see who had slapped her. Were there others in the room? She glanced around in a fruitless attempt to discern this information.

Think, damn it. What did you do last night? What is this place, and how did you get here? And who is this Neanderthal? Silence prevailed. She waited for what seemed an eternity. Waiting was not her strong suit.

She tried to make out the face behind—or in front—of the halo. The light made her squint. Her head still rang from the impacts to her cheek and jaw.

"You do not know me, and after I am done, you will not remember this...how shall I say...session."

She started to say, "Yeah. Well, what the fuck do you want?" The stinging of her cheek reminded her that this impertinence could only escalate the situation. Her only hope of escape was to wait and see and hope for an opportunity to present itself. Silence prevailed. *Fuck, fuck, fuck.* This had the makings of a long evening. She shifted slightly to mask another testing of her bonds. *If I can only keep control of my temper, then...* an interruption.

"Who is she?"

"Who is who?"

Her head was jerked back roughly by the hair. "Don't get fucking cute with me," her tormentor snarled.

"I'm not being cute. I—" That was as far as she got before her head was pulled back another inch.

"Who is she?" The question was whispered in her ear, lips brushing slightly against her earlobe. Chills ran up and down her spine. Sweat started to bead on her forehead.

"I really don't know what you are talking about," she said in a sincere tone of voice. The hands released their grip on her hair. She breathed easier. The halo moved around and behind her, out of her line of vision. She tensed her shoulders. Her right biceps started twitching. No movement behind her. Not a sound. Only waiting, watching, and fear, a pervasive fear that reeked from every pore in her body. The fear stench tickled her nose. She could smell the arousal of her tormentor. A musky, sweet scent. *Wait a minute. That smells like me.*

As the figure came into view, she felt a powerful kick, which knocked the chair over on its side. Her body thudded as it connected with the floor.

"Please. No more."

"Yes, I love it when you beg."

"I don't know who the hell you are! How can you have heard me beg? I have shied away from the scene. I haven't been to a play party in years, really. Bottom in public? *Me!*? Boy, do you have the wrong person. That's what this is. A case of mistaken identity. Please let me go."

The chair was raised and righted as if she were a mere kitten. Smooth hands rubbed her head and gently pushed it upright. "We will try again...later"

She heard boots resounding across hardwood floors. The sound continued to grow weaker, then fell faint. She heard bars closing in the distance. The room was devoid of sound. She didn't think that anyone was watching but didn't want

to take the chance. Her mind wandered. She flashed to interrogation scenes that she had seen in the movies and those Cary had talked about. They *always* used heat. This room smelled musty and was cool. Actually, it was downright cold, but she was trying to convince herself that it was really just pleasant. Someone had done her homework. Heat was not as much a problem for her as cold.

She remembered having a date last night. She had met this woman in the elevator at work. She flirted with her for months before working up the courage to ask her out to dinner. After a brief discussion they agreed to meet at a bar. But the woman never made it. As a piece of the puzzle fell into its allotted spot, her thoughts were rudely interrupted. "Thing" had returned. She listened intently.

"Shall we try again?? Who is she?"

Obviously telling the truth didn't work, and she was certain that silence would bring impending pain. *Okay, punt.* She quickly developed a plan. It wasn't a good plan, but it was a plan. There was a 66.66 percent chance that she would be wrong. But this would last for only so long. If she gave the wrong answer, the interrogator would give her information that she could use to slowly piece together some plausible scenario. So despite some momentary discomfort or—well—extreme pain, she'd be able to get the upper hand. It was either that or continue to protest her innocence and get the crap beaten out of her.

"Uh, she—you mean the brunette?"

"Yes, the brunette. Who did you think I was talking about?"

Damn. Now she was in for it. *When in doubt, back to the truth—or was it, That's my story and I'm sticking to it? Either way, I lose. So here goes.*

"I made it up. I can't remember what happened last night, let alone who was with me." She felt a shuddering impact to her face and tasted blood. Her face started swelling immediately.

"Maybe you need some incentive." She saw a flash of light as a match was struck. She could see the ember starting at the end of the cigar and the smoke slightly refracting the light of the interrogation lamp. Despite the cold, she began to feel a little bit hot. She could see billows of smoke rise as each puff of the cigar was taken.

She felt before she saw the sharp point of a knife cut through the front of her T-shirt. Hands swiftly gripped the shirt and ripped it open. She could smell acrid sweat and the faint odor of good whiskey emanating from her interrogator. She gulped in a breath as she felt the heat approach her left nipple. She did not feel pain per se, but the heat intensified and was soon accompanied by the smell of burning hair. She exhaled and inhaled several more times as the cigar remained poised above her nipple. It retreated. She breathed in a sigh of relief.

"So. Now that we have established that you know exactly who I am

speaking about, what is her name?"

"Kelly. Her name was, I mean, is, Kelly."

"Kelly."

"Yes, Kelly."

Slap. "That was not a question. What was the purpose of your meeting?"

This was going to be harder than she thought. She lied and was caught. The cigar approached her nipple, and the cycle was repeated.

The questioning continued along these mundane lines. The purpose of the last meeting, the location and circumstances of their first acquaintance, how often they met. She was not given enough specific information to piece together a good enough story of what the truth might be. Her nipples quickly became sore and raw.

As long as they explored unknown territory, her chances of getting away with a guess would be fifty-fifty. The questioner moved from nipple to nipple, sometimes allowing time for her to recover between questions. There was no pattern to the questioning. No pattern to the breaks. Sometimes the cigar approached during a question. Sometimes after. Sometimes not at all.

Unexpectedly there was a break in the proceedings. The boots moved away, then returned. Pads covered with a cool gel were applied to various points of her body, including her nipples, clitoris, and perineum.

The boots moved away again. She tried to remember last night. *What happened?* Try as she might, she just could not remember anything more than the date. Time passed. The light continued to shine. Suddenly she felt the muscles on her left quadriceps tighten and release. They contracted once again, a little faster this time. The sensation moved to her biceps, then down to her calves. The contractions continued to change location. It was interesting to feel her clitoris contract. She was instantaneously wet, horny, and hot for action. Fortunately, this contraction repeated itself another seven times.

This continued throughout the night—or at least what she thought was night. By the time the boots returned again, she was exhausted and her muscles thoroughly fatigued. She was released from the chair, though her hands remained behind her back.

A metal plate was placed on the chair, dampened with saline, and she was resituated on the metal plate. The questioning continued. The pain increased. That damn plate conducted. The saline helped the conductivity. The fact that she was sweating profusely didn't help her any, either. The questions continued to border the mundane. Area was covered and re-covered to make certain that she was not providing misinformation.

There was another interlude of periodic electro-genito-torture. She was sobbing by the time that the boots returned a third time.

"Shall we start again?" Boots asked.

"No more, please, no more. I really don't know what you want. I really

don't know. I can't tell you about things that I have no knowledge of. Who are you? Why are you doing this to *me*?!!" she blubbered.

"I will let that one slide." Boots approached and began to remove the pads. She smelled rubbing alcohol and felt the areas where the pads had been being swabbed down. Quickly a succession of three needles pierced her flesh, one directly above the other. *"Not."*

"I have decided to be merciful."

Sure, like Attila the Hun.

She felt her sleeve being rolled up slowly and the sensation of breasts being rubbed up and down her arm. *What the hell could she be thinking of doing to me?*

"This won't hurt a bit, baby. It will just help you relax."

She felt the coolness of rubbing alcohol along the inside of her arm and shortly thereafter the pressure of a tourniquet. She tensed and broke the hundredth cold sweat of the night. Her T-shirt was totally drenched. The needle rested gently in the pit of her elbow. Sweat started to fall down the sides of her face. She felt increasing pressure. Sweat poured down her neck. The pressure continued as the needle was eased purposefully into her arm. Only after she was certain that the needle was in did she look down.

She saw a small reservoir of her own blood mixing in the syringe with whatever clear substance was contained within it. "You will tell me everything you know. This injection will virtually assure it."

She felt dizzy and euphoric all at the same time. Her interrogator continued to feed her information about how the drug would work and how it would feel. As soon as a description would stop, her body responded by feeling the described sensation.

She awoke, naked and fully drenched, in her bed. She sat up abruptly, feeling as if she'd been hit by a Mack truck. Her head was throbbing. *Goddess, it was just a dream.* She got out of bed and staggered to the bathroom to piss. She looked into the mirror. *I look like utter hell.* That was when she noticed the small puncture marks made by the play piercing needles. She looked down at her arm and sure enough, it had been no dream. It's no small wonder that she looked like hell.

She returned to bed and found the note:

Sweetness—

Hope you liked the interrogation scene. It is what you wanted? You did specifically ask for it in your letter. Didn't I tell you that I dyed my hair and got a crew cut? Oh, so sorry. By the bye, the injection was just glucose. Interesting what the power of the mind will do. See you at the bar tonight. Ta-ta for now."

You bet I'll meet you later. Sweet thoughts of revenge lulled her back to sleep.

POSSESSION SOREL HUSBANDS

My lover is not just my lover; she's my mistress. She possesses me, body and soul. I realized this more than ever this past weekend, when she made me hers by giving me to others.

We're getting ready to go out to this bar that we always go to on Saturdays, and I can see that she's in some kind of mood—I'm not sure exactly what she's thinking. We've been bickering today, just getting on each other's nerves. She's annoyed with me for flirting at a party in front of her; I'm annoyed with her for being annoyed—it was just harmless flirting, after all. Right now, we're both trying to get along with each other. I can see tension in her body as she dresses, tension that becomes power as she puts on leather. Power that I can see in her eyes when she glances at me.

And even though I've been annoyed with her all day, I am still affected by her—affected right between my legs. I can feel a rush of heat when my eyes catch hers. I'm surprised to find myself a little nervous; after all, we're just going to a bar, the same as we always do on Saturday nights.

I'm rifling through the closet, trying to decide what to wear, when she stops me.

"I'll dress you tonight," she says shortly.

"That's all right—I can find something myself."

"No, I'm going to dress you. I'm tired of disagreeing with you today. Either you do as I say, or you find something else to do tonight."

I had been right to be nervous. She doesn't usually threaten me like that. I'm tired of arguing too, so I decide to go along with what she is asking of me. I'm not sure what I will find if I cross her.

She looks purposefully through the closet until she finds clothing for me: very provocative and very skimpy clothing. A black tank top, cut off just (and I mean *just*) below my tits, a tight black short skirt, thigh-high fishnet stockings (the kind that stay up by themselves), and heels—high ones, of course. To complete the outfit, she pulls out a chain collar and locks it around my neck.

"Look at yourself in the mirror—tell me what you see."

I go over to the mirror and am startled to see myself. The ensemble makes

me look like a sex toy. I am balanced uncertainly in high heels, my breasts almost showing under the shirt, my bare thighs revealed above the stockings. The chain around my throat proclaims me property.

"I, um, I—" I stammer. I'm embarrassed to say how I look; I'm feeling self-conscious.

"What? Tell me."

"I look—like a slut," I whisper.

"I can't hear you."

"I—I—" I can't say it louder; I am too embarrassed.

"What's the problem? You tell me I shouldn't mind if you flirt a bit. So you shouldn't mind dressing the part. Tonight you look like the slut you are. And this," she says, pulling on the collar, "should remind you just whose slut you are."

Her words affect me profoundly. I feel ashamed to walk around so obviously dressed as a sex object; I feel proud to be so desired; I feel aroused by her show of strength—so aroused that I can already feel the wetness between my legs—and I feel frightened of appearing in public with a collar around my neck. What will people think?

As it turned out, what people would think of the collar would soon be the least of my worries....

"So, are you going to be a good girl and behave yourself tonight?"

"Yes." I bow my head, but she pulls my chin up so that I am looking her straight in the eye.

"Whose bitch are you?"

"Yours," I reply, a little bit resentfully.

"And whose pussy is this?" she asks as she grabs my cunt, penetrating me abruptly with her fingers.

"Yours," I reply, as I fight to maintain my composure. "All yours."

"I don't think you really believe that. I think you think it's still your own. We'll just see, won't we? You look hot, baby. Am I going to have to fight those bitches off?" She still has her fingers in my cunt, moving them and twisting them, rubbing her thumb against my clit. I can't speak, so I just shake my head no.

"Good. Let's get out of here." She removes her hand from my pussy, leaving me wet and horny.

Later on, we're at the bar and everything seems fairly ordinary. Our friends are there, and we're joking around, generally having a good time.

I've forgotten about the collar for the most part. I noticed one or two raised eyebrows, but that was all. In a way, it makes me feel sexier; it's a little like making out in public—just a bit risqué but nothing too wild. I'm

doing everything I can to be agreeable. I'm not sure where this mood she's in stops; she's capable of just about anything. She's been playing with me as we talk to our friends: squeezing my nipples, at times uncovering my entire breast to play with it, at other times slipping her hand under my skirt, then pulling her fingers out dripping wet and slipping them into my mouth to suck. I see people watching us, but I can't tell what they're thinking. I remain quiet and try to keep my body calm.

Eventually, she becomes engrossed in a conversation and stops paying attention to me. I'm still standing by her, but I let my mind wander as I check out everybody in the bar. I'm horny, so I'm looking at everyone sexually. The crowd isn't too bad tonight. I see several women that I wouldn't throw out of bed if I happened to find them there. There's one particularly attractive woman in the corner, standing alone. She appears to be watching us, and I catch her eye. And although I know my role tonight is to be meek and obedient, I find that I don't want her to know that. I summon up all my arrogance and give her an intense look, with a bit of a come-on. I am too proud to have this beautiful woman look down on me for being simply the possession of another. I want to be recognized as a powerful woman in my own right. The look we exchange is strong and burning, full of possibilities.

It feels good to make this sort of contact with a stranger. I am fascinated and have forgotten my lover for the moment, until suddenly I feel a pull at the collar around my neck, followed by the clink of metal against metal. I break the stare and look down to see that she has attached a heavy chain leash to the collar—a leash with a black leather handle that she is holding.

"I knew you weren't telling the truth before," my lover says harshly. "You still think you can flirt with whomever you please right in front of me. Do you want me to compete with these bitches?"

"No. No, of course not. I just—oh, never mind." I know that I will never explain my way out of this one.

"Because I won't. Either you're mine or you're not. So which is it?"

"I'm yours."

"Do you know what that really means? If you're mine, then I can do whatever I want with you, right?"

"Yes."

"Good. Then get down on your hands and knees like the bitch you are." Oh, God, I'm mortified. She wants me to crawl in front of all these people—including the beautiful woman I have just stared at so arrogantly. *I can't do this*, I think to myself, looking my lover in the eye. But her stare burns through me, and it is as though a hand is pushing me down to my knees—but it is only the strength of her will.

I'm on my knees, frozen. I can feel everyone's eyes upon me, and I know that I am blushing furiously.

"Hands and knees, bitch." I hesitate, and she pushes me down. I hang my head; I can't bear to see the expressions on the faces around the room.

I hear the scrape of a bar stool being moved and see her boots walking past me, then almost immediately feel a tug at my collar. Oh, God. She's pulling me, and I have to crawl behind her. I pull together every ounce of self-control as I hurry behind her. I'm not even thinking about why I am doing as she says; I'm just obeying blindly. Maybe this won't get worse.

She leads me into the darkened back room, and I begin to get anxious; this could very well get worse. Standing over me, she begins to speak slowly.

"So I was right. You are a slut. Don't shake your head at me like that. You are. Unfortunately, the collar didn't seem to remind you just whose slut you are. Maybe you don't want to be mine? Maybe we should find out. You want to fuck other people—I'm going to let everyone here fuck you if they want to. Then we'll see whose bitch you are."

I'm trembling at her feet, aware of how I must look to others. My shirt has ridden up, and my breasts are bare, but I don't dare fix it. And the skirt is so short that everyone can see my bare ass above the fishnets. I'm meekly hanging my head at my lover's feet.

I can hear footsteps as people gather in the room: curious women, looking for excitement in the back room. I'm realizing that I'm about to supply that excitement.

"Is anyone here bored enough to bother fucking this bitch?" my lover asks as she pulls me up to a kneeling position. I keep my head bowed; I can't bear to look anyone in the eye. She pulls me up farther and turns me until I am looking at a table.

"Lie back on this table, legs spread. I'm not going to tie you or bind you or even hold you; you're going to stay where I put you because you're mine. And you will do as I say. If you don't, you're not mine, and you can go."

I nod my head as I climb up. I know now that I am going to have to prove my devotion to her however she wants me to. I'm terrified; looking up from under my lashes, I see a lot of women in the room—and some of them look very tough. I don't know if I can stand to be taken by all of these women. I'm on the verge of bursting into tears and begging her forgiveness when she catches my eye. Her expression makes it clear that the worst thing I could do is protest; she wants to see me fucked by all these women.

"So, bitch, you wanted it—enjoy yourself. Just remember one little thing: don't even think about coming. That I'm keeping for myself. Now, lie back."

I do as I'm told, being careful to open my legs wide. My skirt slides all the way up to my hips, leaving my pussy bare, exposed to the women all around the room. She picks up the handle of the leash and holds it against my mouth. "Take this in your mouth. I don't want you to start to enjoy yourself and forget that you're just a bitch on a leash."

I bite down and taste the slightly sour taste of leather mixed with the salt of her sweat. I can picture myself as the others must see me, lying there, cunt open and waiting, meekly holding a leash in my mouth like a dog. I close my eyes tight in embarrassment, but my lover reprimands me. "Open your eyes. I want you to see what's coming. That way you can enjoy it all the more."

I open my eyes to see a severe-looking bleached blonde looking down at me. Her hair is cropped short—nearly shaved on the sides. Her eyes are dark as they look down at me, with dark lashes and brows. She has a silver ring through her nose and earrings all the way around one ear. The volume of the music seems to swell into a pounding bass beat, and I break into a sweat as she unbuttons her jeans and pulls out a large dildo. She reaches down with muscular arms and, grabbing my thighs, pulls me hard onto the rod. I gasp as I feel the sudden penetration. I look up and stare at the dim red lightbulb in the ceiling. The wood is rough beneath my ass as she slides me hard back and forth on the dildo. It feels good, but she's thrusting so hard. Every push is filling me, shaking me to my soul. I try to catch my lover's eye, but she has her cap pulled low, and I can't see them. She is watching, arms folded, leaning against the wall, just watching quietly as I gasp with every thrust.

I can feel my nipples are hard. They're exposed; the little tank top is no longer covering my breasts. It has pulled entirely away. I'm breathing hard, panting, but I'm trying not to show too much pleasure, because I know my lover is watching and I don't want her to think I enjoy these women more than I do her.

I'm so aware of everyone around watching. I feel aroused by this idea and at the same time degraded. I feel like a slut, but I want to be a slut. I want to pant and scream and be fucked here in front of these women until I explode. I also want to hide my face so they won't know who the slut on a leash is.

As I am thinking this, the blonde pulls out of me, leaving me gasping and panting and empty inside. A second woman walks up. She is also fierce-looking; small but strong. Dark hair slicked back, thin unsmiling lips; I can't see her eyes because she is wearing dark sunglasses. She makes me nervous as she stands over me, slipping on a rubber glove and slowly rubbing lubrication over it. She stands over me.

"So you like to be fucked, baby? Good." She pushes my legs back until my knees are against my shoulders, opening me wider. "Open up, slut, you're about to get really fucked." She leans her weight on one arm against my legs, pinning me in that position; with the other hand, the gloved one, she slides two fingers, then three, into my pussy. This fills me, and I think that she is now going to start rhythmically fucking me.

"No, we're not done yet. You're going to take a lot more than this..." This alarms me, because the only person who has ever fucked me with more than two fingers is my lover. No one else has ever tried. My cunt already feels so full

with just three fingers that I can't imagine how I can take more. I can feel her moving her fingers in my pussy; she starts to move in and out, working another finger and then her thumb into me. I'm pushing my hips toward her, and I must be opening up because I'm surprised to discover that I need more—more of her hand inside me.

Now I can feel the widest part of her hand pushing against me with every thrust. I'm starting to slam my hips into her hand. She is still holding my legs back, making it hard for me to move, but I can't help but respond to her hand fucking me so hard.

I can hear comments from the crowd. "Look at that slut move her hips." "I guess that bitch likes to get fucked." "Wait till I get my hands on her..." "That pussy is going to get awfully sloppy." Mostly I hear bits of phrases: "that cunt," "bitch," "harder," "slut," "a little of that hot pussy," "fuck her." I feel like meat, like somebody's fuck toy.

Anger rises up inside me, and I direct it toward the hand invading me; I will take that hand—control it—own it. I push hard against her fist and feel first a sharp burning sensation that makes me clamp my teeth down hard on the leather in my mouth, then the satisfying sensation of my pussy engulfing her entire hand. I begin to ride that fist; she is moving her fingers inside me, and I am riding along, thrusting my hips forward and back. Waves of pleasure radiate through my body with every thrust. I look up at this woman but see only dark sunglasses; no hint of a smile upon her lips. Just fucking me steadily. I feel the pleasure building up in me; I am riding that wave toward orgasm. The tension is vibrating in my belly; I can't control the motion of my hips.

"Stop," I hear my lover's voice command. My cunt is left gaping and empty as the fist is abruptly pulled out. "Who else wants to fuck this bitch?" Several women step forward.

"And you, slut," she says to me, taking the leash out of my mouth so I can answer, "what did I tell you?"

I'm gasping, but I manage to get the words out. "Not to come," I whisper.

"Are you going to obey me, or will you just come like a bitch in heat for anybody who comes along?"

"No. For you. Just for you," I gasp, trying to keep my hips still and regain my self-control. I look up at her, ashamed to be caught so obviously enjoying another woman.

"Okay. Just don't forget—don't fucking come." With that, she pushes the damp leather back into my mouth.

The next woman steps up, also lubricating a glove. She wastes no time in getting her entire hand inside me and is soon thrusting into me. She uses her other hand to play with my clit, bringing me still closer to the edge. I want to scream. I want so badly to come, but I hear my lover's words playing over and over again in my head: "Don't even think about coming, don't fucking come."

I feel myself coming closer and closer to orgasm and force myself to stop moving my hips. I try to think about anything else, anything at all. I'm biting nearly through the leather, trying to control my body. But this woman fucking me can feel me pull away and rubs my clit more, bringing me right back again. I'm fighting for control and breathe a deep sigh of relief when I hear my lover call for the next person. Maybe I'll get a second to relax while this one gets ready.

But no, she steps up and thrusts a dildo in me, not even waiting for a moment. I can feel her hips slamming into my thighs as she fucks me steadily with her dildo. Immediately, I'm riding the crest of orgasm, fighting constantly to keep my body calm, waiting for my lover to release me.

The women step up one after another. Faces begin to blur together. I feel violated; one after another, they put their fingers and their dildos and their fists inside me, each one riding me differently. Some of them play with my nipples, pulling on them as they thrust into me with dildos. Others rub my clit as they fuck me with fists. At least one fucks my pussy with her fist while sliding a finger or a dildo or something into my asshole. I can't tell anymore who is fucking me or with what. I just keep fighting a battle with myself not to reach orgasm. Everything is swirling together: the sound of the music; the red glow of the lightbulb above me; the voices calling me "slut" and "cunt" and "bitch"; the wet sour leather in my mouth; the faces leaning over me—tall, short, blond, dark, fat, thin; the hard wood against my bare back; the pulsing penetration in my cunt; the hands grabbing at my tits and rubbing my clit; the fingers and the dildos probing my asshole. I feel drugged; I'm in a sexual inferno. At some point I see the beautiful woman who had been standing alone in the corner; she's fucking me hard and smiling down at me. This time I can't look at her arrogantly; I just moan with the agony of frustration.

It feels like hours have passed. Every nerve in my body is on fire. I feel as though I could come from the touch of a feather if I let myself—if she let me. I am so far gone from reality that I don't even notice at first when my lover steps up to take her place in front of me. I look up to see her looking down at my open, dripping cunt and slowly slipping on a rubber glove.

"So, slut, had enough? Or do you want me to leave you to be fucked longer by these bitches?" She takes the leash out of my mouth and slips it over her ungloved wrist.

"No. Please. I want you. Only you." I'll do anything, God, if she'll just let me come. I know that it will be impossible to stop from coming when she touches me; she knows just how to fuck me.

"You're a mess, bitch. Maybe you've been fucked enough for one night..." She starts to remove the glove she had just put on.

"Please don't—just—oh, God," I sputter inarticulately. "Please, I want you so

much, and please—please, let me come. I'll do anything you want. I'll lick you and suck you until you come over and over again. Anything you want." I'm begging her, I'm so desperately frustrated. I don't know how to convince her, so I just keep babbling, asking her to fuck me, making promises, anything for release. She stops taking off the glove, but I don't stop begging.

Slowly, she leans over me and easily slips her fist into me. My pussy is wide open and wet and sloppy; I'm burning from the penetration by so many fists and dildos. Slowly she begins to move in and out of my cunt; as my hips begin to move we match our rhythms until it is one motion. We start to move faster and faster together, and I feel the pleasure and the pressure building; still I'm fighting for control when at last I hear her command softly, "Go ahead, come." I can't believe I've heard her correctly, but I look up and she's nodding her head and smiling. "Go ahead..." She thrusts into me harder; I tense my muscles, and everything explodes. A scream tears out of my throat, and my body convulses again and again. She takes me in her arms and rocks me as my body shudders. I feel her remove the leash and unlock the collar. She doesn't need them anymore; we both know I belong only to her.

Eventually, I collect myself and we walk out of the back room, back into the bar. I am now my own woman, free to flirt with whomever I choose, powerful enough to look any of these bitches in the eye and dare them to even think about touching me. I find freedom in belonging to my lover: freedom and strength. I feel relaxed and powerful—as though while these women were fucking me I took their strength from them and made it mine. They desired me; they did as my lover demanded of them; they fucked me hard. But they couldn't give me the pleasure that my lover did. I smile at the beautiful woman I had admired earlier, and she drops her eyes. My lover and I smile at each other and drink our beers.

That night I made love to my lover and my mistress—the woman who possesses my body and my soul—over and over again, until she too was screaming and crying as she came.

THE QUICK AND THE HUNGRY

LISA CARRUTHERS

I used to belong to someone. Sappho was her name. Though her parents, Bob and Edna, lived in Oregon and called her Sherry. Her mother called me Honey and liked to send recipes so Sappho could have ambrosia, apple pie, and coleslaw just like Mama used to make.

Sappho had hundreds of other slaves my age, but they only belonged to her 7 A.M. to 3 P.M., Monday through Friday. These girls were saving themselves for marriage. Their parents sent them to an isle of an institution so they could sit at Sappho's feet.

Learn poetry, drama, and the fifty-yard dash. It was easy to see why Sappho needed me. I was the one she came home to.

I never did much around the house. Sappho had a boy who did the cleaning and an ex-lover, Persephone, who tended the garden. I had other duties. I had to know my way around Sappho's massage table; I danced for her in black silk, strummed the lute, and sucked her pussy like a bad girl. She called me the golden one.

I was afraid to fuck her, afraid that I would black out and wake up slurping her armpits and pounding her cunt the way I liked it. Instead, I would pull back her hood and, with my tongue, reach for the highest apple. I had to be careful. She was a demigoddess. I was today's trade.

It is possible to love someone for what she has endured. How I loved to hear her tell of the old days: riots in Berkeley, riots in Watts, riots in the queer bars where girls like us could get beat up and arrested for failing to register as deviants. Cops were the heroes and pitted themselves against an army of lovers who had everything and nothing to lose. Sappho told of walking away from fights with the police because her teaching credential was at stake and her parents had worked hard so she could be the first ever to come home wearing the gown of a university.

Sappho remembered how Janis Joplin dripped sweat, remembered the bump and grind as she screamed that Southern Comfort praise. Sappho couldn't forget the pain of having to dance at the weddings of her first three lovers. Always the roommate, she was handmaiden to Aphrodite.

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Sappho was ashamed of me, of my refusal to wear the sandals, purple frocks, and flower garlands that the girls would make, attempting to win her favor. I preferred to adorn myself in black boots, Levi's, and tight T-shirts. Even still, she loved to show me off at the amphitheater, at potlucks and tennis tournaments.

Her friends would feel me up in the toilets of fancy restaurants where they gathered. Doctors, lawyers, the wives of merchants, they'd make vague yet predictable propositions as they slid their cool hands over my tight stomach, my ass, and my shoulders. They thought I was base, yet fuckable. I told them that I thought they were amusing and that I couldn't afford to lose this job.

I spent my nights pleasing Sappho. During the day I would go to the gymnasium, comb the marketplace for obscure pornography, or watch soap operas with Sappho's gardener, Persephone. She was a handsome Gemini, big and musky-smelling from having seduced so many ripe things. She had hooks in the walls, the ceiling, and her bed frame. Cold chains filled her freezer. I would finger the frosty links whenever she sent me to the kitchen to check on the zucchini bread that was always baking in her oven. We would take it hot from the tin, smother it with butter, and wash it down with sweet tea. I had to eat around her. She made me hungry.

It was hard to go so long without a beating and a good cry, but Sappho didn't believe in that. If only she had known how loyal I would have been if she had just taken me down to the underworld once in a while.

Sappho's daddy was a retired truck driver who collected guns and kept them loaded around the house. When it was time for him to die, Sappho and I went to Oregon to pay our respects and take our place at the deathwatch. The house was filled with a lifetime's worth of mementos. *National Geographics* and the *Reader's Digests* piled up on wagon-wheel furniture. In our honor, plates of honey cakes and sets of matching clean towels were laid out.

Sappho's daddy died in his La-Z-Boy, with a dish of peach ice cream cradled in his lap. For the first time ever, I saw Sappho fall apart. We fought over nothing. I struck her, and she backed me into a wall with her daddy's American Civil War rifle, which was displayed above the stone fireplace.

Later, in the sewing room, on the floor next to her mother's exercycle, we pretended to make up. Although I knew I would soon be history, I pulled Sappho's cheeks apart and stuck my tongue so far up her butt hole that she screamed. I wanted to shoot an arrow through her heart and leave a stain that even her mother couldn't get out.

CHOCOLATE CAKE

TATIANA DE LA TIERRA

She stroked an armpit, contemplating the next line in the letter she was writing. It was an official-sounding solicitation for funds. This heady type of lingo was not her style. Rosa wished the hairs on her armpits were bushier, wilder, blacker. But they were fine, light brown, and few.

She maneuvered her hand out of the blouse and onto the desk. Her fingers always wanted to be stroking something. She went on with her task, hunched over the desk in total comfort. This was her day to deal with bills, correspondence, and bullshit. The sea grape tree outside her window was moving its hand-size leaves ferociously in the afternoon wind. Rosa savored being alone and couldn't wait to play house after the letter was done. Straighten up, make a chocolate cake, play some Ana Gabriel. A not-so-modern girl's fantasy.

The jingle of keys and creaking of the front door jolted her from the moment. The only people with keys were her mother, her best friend, her lover, and her fantasy fuck. Rosa's mother was at Disney World, her best friend was in acting school, and her lover was at work.

Her fantasy fuck was—well, Rosa never knew where she was. She could only count on her in fantasies, which abounded. After their last encounter Rosa offered ownership to this unpredictable woman who didn't even have a name. She had charm, a vulgar mouth, no-nonsense hands, an aggressive style, and Rosa's house keys.

Rosa dared not get up, or flinch, or even swallow. She had only seconds to prepare herself. Her mind was far from her cunt. Should she obey or guard her cunt with resistance? What about the chocolate cake she envisioned, mixing frosting and savoring it in solitude? She didn't know how she would respond, but she did know the nature of the visit. Her fantasy fuck served only one purpose, always with a different approach, resulting in the best fuck imaginable.

She heard the muffled footsteps on the white shag carpet approaching her room and resisted the temptation to turn her head. Rosa closed her eyes as the woman walked in with even steps, breathy from the long stair climb.

CHOCOLATE CAKE

There were no words in the anticipation. Rosa felt warmth on her midback, heard keys rattle and thud into the thick rug. She dropped the red felt pen as hands grabbed her hair, pulling her up by the scalp. She gasped with thrill and fear. She craned her neck to ease the pain, and the hands pulled even harder.

"Who owns you, bitch?"

The question held its answer in its tone. Rosa's decision was made for her. She would submit. This game was one she'd agreed to, and she would play. "You own me." She was earnest. The woman laughed deeply, releasing Rosa's hair and soothing her throbbing head with slow, tentative strokes. Rosa smiled at the greeting, rolling her head softly, seeking the woman's confident fingers. The bush of hair on her head was like the one she wanted in her armpits.

"What are you doing?" The solid oak desk, as big as outstretched arms, was strewn with papers.

"Writing a letter."

Rosa faced her fantasy fuck and fingered a loop on the woman's black corduroys. She wore a white polo shirt and matching wing-tipped shoes. Her brown hair was freshly cut, as short as the nails on her ivory fingers. She smelled like soap. The last time Rosa had seen her had been at a Willy Chirino concert at a straight nightclub. There she wore a beige suit and, on her arm, a woman with a red satin dress. Rosa smelled her Oscar de la Renta cologne as they passed each other without making eye contact. Rosa knew that in order to have her fantasy fuck she had to be aloof until called upon. She had to be a very private whore.

The woman eyed the scenario coolly and commanded, "Turn around. I want you to continue writing that letter as if you were alone. You must do anything I say, and you cannot move from this spot. Not until I leave." Rosa nodded and turned back to her desk, picking up her pen again, wondering how she could write under these circumstances.

"Founded three years ago, our organization..." Something at her back—a hand, a knee—pushed her onto her desk. Her tits, as big as the sea grape leaves outside her window, rammed into the edge of the wood. Once again hands pulled her hair and pressed her cheek onto the papers. Once again she dropped her pen and gasped as a knee pressed on her back repeatedly, driving her breasts against the desk. Her right nipple hit directly and hardened, giving her a rush. She moaned. The pain brought her closer to her cunt.

"I told you to finish writing that letter."

She was hyperventilating. She wanted more. "Yes." Her "yes" was feminine, breathy, and drawn-out. Her writing was blurry. She continued: *"...has served an otherwise overlooked community."* An airplane buzzed overhead. Rosa heard fidgety noises behind her. She rolled her neck, trying to ease the tension, and

inhaled deeply. She heard a click. *"We have been the only visible..."* She felt a piercing tip through her pale pink blouse. *"...group of theatrical, political..."* Sliced at the neck, the top was ripped down in a straight line. The knife played lightly at her back, teasing like fingernails that graze before digging in. Hands eased toward the front of her body. The black-handled switchblade was between her breasts. She kept writing as the blade slashed her bra. *"...lesbians to perform in public venues."*

Her breasts hung free, anticipating. Bra straps slunk down her arm. She put her pen down while the woman gently removed her sliced clothing, moving her pubic bone on Rosa's left shoulder. Her fantasy fuck knew how to mix softness and pain, excitement and terror. Rosa was a boss-bitch at work and played *macha* at home. She cherished her fantasy fuck because it was the only chance she had to switch roles, to submit. Rosa wanted to stroke her cheeks against her fantasy fuck's arms. She wanted to beg. She wanted to be pushed to her limit. She wanted to be owned. The woman put the pen back in Rosa's hand. *"This year alone we participated in over a dozen presentations. For International Women's Day we..."* She froze. Her left nipple rested on the tip of the knife. With each exhalation the blade came closer to puncturing her peachy-pink swollen tit. *"...portrayed women's menstrual celebrations in different countries, from the onset of the blood cycle to menopause."*

Her nipple dulled to the threat of the blade until the movement of her breath made her nipple move suddenly. She screamed when the tip of it pierced her nipple and instinctively cupped her breast with one hand and her head with the other, resting on the desk. The woman resumed moving her pelvis rhythmically over Rosa's back, pulling and squeezing her right nipple as Rosa cried. Rosa whimpered with her injury and steadied her pulse with the woman's pelvic tapping. She held her breast in her hand, and with fingers sticky from her blood, she pleaded. "Please don't make me write anymore, please don't make me, please don't, please...." The woman pulled Rosa's chair around to face her, and Rosa fell into her arms without an invitation. She rolled her cheek on the textured polo shirt and her fingers on corduroy thighs, pressing her tits with urgency, scraping nipples on the rough white fabric, smudging her fresh blood. She searched for the woman's flesh with her tongue as she encircled her with legs and arms, totally ready.

"If you don't want to write, then what do you want?" It was another question that didn't need an answer, yet demanded one.

"I want you to fuck me, please." The "please" was integral. It made her submit further.

"Ah, you want me to fuck you." The woman spoke forcefully and went into a whisper, talking into the nape of her neck, chilling her. "Is your cunt ready for me? Can you take what I'm going to give you now?" Rosa wore black Dan-skin tights. The woman questioned her with fingers roaming around her bush.

Rosa moved it and breathed as if in a trance. She was hot and desperate.

"I can take anything you want to give me. Anything. But please let me go to the bathroom first. I have to pee, please." The tall glass of chilled mandarin juice she had devoured before sitting down at her desk and the excitement caused by her visitor pressured her bladder. But she didn't want to be fucked while she had to pee.

"I told you, you can't move from this spot until I leave. If you want to piss, you'll have to do it in my mouth." The woman pulled away, leaving Rosa little choice, and came back to face her with the switchblade between Rosa's legs. The tip snatched the crotch of the black tights, and the woman pulled hard and quick toward her, tearing the fabric. She dropped the knife on the floor as if it were a gum wrapper and with her hands ripped open the black stretchy material to expose Rosa's vulnerable pussy. Still in the desk chair, Rosa relaxed her legs as the woman gripped her thighs, roughly pushing them wide apart. Rosa could smell her own ripe cunt. Without touching she knew her clit was hard and as big as it ever got. She felt slippery inside. She was exposed and trembling and in a predicament that offered only one way out.

For the first time ever in Rosa's presence, the woman dropped to her knees. "Piss in my mouth, bitch. If you want me to fuck you, then piss in my mouth. I'll drink everything that comes out of your filthy cunt."

Rosa's mind went on a wild ride. She couldn't do this. She had to do it. She had to get fucked. She had to do anything her fantasy fuck said. She had to totally submit. She had to let herself go. She was a private whore, after all.

The woman lifted Rosa's legs onto her shoulders. She bit her inner thighs, hard, she licked where she bit. Each lick brought Rosa closer to the edge. She lingered without entering. She commanded, "Piss or you get nothing more." Rosa tried twice to let go and couldn't. She thought of how she shuddered each morning before blasting her bed-warm body with cold water in the shower. She thought of the grant she was applying for and how she must look in her office with her clothes ripped and sliced, with her tender nipple wounded. She imagined greeting her lover in a few hours as if nothing had happened. She astounded herself with the risk she took in giving this woman her house key. Rosa marveled at the way she revealed her cunt for this woman, whoever she was. She wanted to pleasure this woman. She wanted to come in her mouth.

The warm piss spouted and flowed like a small river toward her ass. The woman's tongue worked in every direction Rosa's pee went, sucking and swallowing Rosa's warm stream of surrender. She drank piss like she was eating watermelon.

Teasingly, the woman avoided lapping at her clit directly. Rosa rocked her pelvis without control. With each move her throat cried. With each move her cunt ached to be taken. The woman smeared Rosa's juices down to her ass-

hole, prodding a finger in and keeping it there, moving it slightly on occasion. With her other hand she dug deep inside. Rosa was dizzy from breathing. The woman fucked her hard with a full hand. They moved apart and met, with each plunge going deeper. Rosa grabbed the woman's short hair desperately, looking for the woman's mouth with her clit. She ground herself into this woman's face, and the woman ate her as she twisted her hand inside Rosa's cunt. Rosa came like the screaming dirty whore her fantasy fuck made her be. She wondered, but dared not ask, if she would stay for some fudgy, warm chocolate cake.

THE PIERCING

MADELINE DAVIS

The door of the car was opened, and Juno's hand reached in to take Maya's arm and help her onto the curb. It was dusk and the colors of the day had turned a soft purple, but Maya could not see them through the silk blindfold that had been tied securely over her eyes. She was guided gently across the sidewalk and through a doorway, down a short hall and into an already open elevator. It felt strange and otherworldly, like stepping into a space vehicle. All she could feel was a sense of weightlessness as the elevator lifted the two of them one floor after another to some programmed destination. The car stopped, and the gates slid open with a low, smooth growl. She was led into another hallway and to her left some twenty yards, then brought to a stop as a heavy metal door was opened from the inside. They stepped through.

A soft female voice whispered, "Hello. Oh, you must be Tinnika's appointment. She's just finishing a client. She'll be with you shortly. Take a seat anywhere." The smell of the room was spicy and warm. Maya was led across a large space with smooth wooden floors and came to a stop at what felt like the edge of the room. She had the sense of high metal ceilings and faraway echoes.

Her coat was removed, and she stood, still blindfolded, wearing an ankle-length black silk dress, a garter belt, black stockings, and plain high-heeled pumps. She had not been allowed to put on either panties or a bra before she left the house. Soft footfalls echoed around her; thin ribbons of music, cello and viola, seeped into the room, barely discernible in the expanse. Juno moved her back a few steps until her hip touched a high leather-covered seat. "Step up here and sit on the bench," Juno spoke softly in her ear. Maya felt a small step against her ankle and climbed up onto the seat and sat on the edge. Juno leaned heavily against her and wrapped her arms around Maya's full body, pressing her lips into the hollow at the side of Maya's neck and sucking gently. Maya sighed. Juno reached up and untied the blindfold.

It was a huge room, a refurbished loft painted muted coral with richly polished dark hardwood flooring. Murals were sprayed on the walls, and as her

eyes became accustomed to the dim lights, Maya could discern the shapes of hips and breasts, thighs and mounds, outlined discreetly in deep brick-red spray paint. With her lover's head leaning on her breast and her lover's arms wrapped tightly around her, she raised her head to gaze at the spacious room. From the ceiling to her far right hung four heavy chains. Suspended from the chains was an intricately woven leather sling held together by silver rivets. It was large enough to accommodate a good-size person and had leather wrist and ankle cuffs chained to each corner. It hung quietly in the air as if it were awaiting occupancy.

In a farther corner was an odd-looking contraption: two ten-foot lengths of wood, at least two by six inches, bolted together at the center like a huge x. At the bottom of each leg was a small platform, just wide enough for a foot, and above each platform was a chain bolted to the side of the wood, at the end of which was a leather cuff. Two more cuffs were chained and bolted to the upper arms of the x. The wooden cross was tilted back slightly so that a body could rest comfortably and be held very securely.

Other implements of restraint were set in various locations around the room: pairs of handcuffs on hooks against posts, lengths of rope and chain, a pair of ankle cuffs suspended from a mechanical pulley bolted to an ornate tin ceiling. Maya's eyes were wide with wonder and surprise. She had only read about rooms like this.

Her lover, Juno, had brought her here for her first piercing. They had been together only a short time when Maya saw Juno's labial ring and decided immediately that she had to have one. Only her ears had been pierced, and that had been so long ago she could barely remember feeling anything. Juno told her the procedure would hurt, albeit fleetingly, and questioned her at length about her intentions. Why would she want such a thing? Did she understand it was not to be taken lightly? What would it mean to her? Had she ever been interested in being pierced before? Why now? Why there?

Maya thought about it for a long time. Juno was pierced in three places. Her left nipple held a silver ring with a hematite bead closure. Her right hand was pierced between the thumb and forefinger with a steel bar that held a silver ball at each end, a piercing Maya thought was intensely erotic. One night she took Juno's hand in hers and, raising it to her lips, put the steel rod into her mouth. Juno groaned, and Maya could feel a thrill pass through her body from her tongue to a center point between her legs. The third piercing was a niobium ring through one of Juno's labia, its closure a shiny silver bead. That was the ring that finally drew her. She had knelt on the bed alongside Juno's strong, outstretched body and had peered intently between her legs at the soft mound. The blue and purple ring had been inserted through a quarter of an inch of Juno's left outer labium. Maya touched it gingerly and felt its small weight in her fingers. She was awe-

THE PIERCING

struck. It looked like an old tribal marking, a combined symbol of strength and bondage. The significance of having the ring on the left side meant that Juno was a top, a dominant. Maya had learned that very well.

The reasons for Juno's piercings were linked irrevocably to significant events in her life. Her left nipple was pierced when she established a link to other lesbians whose sexuality was tied to issues of power, balance, intensity, and the union of the physical, mental, and spiritual. Her labial piercing was done at a national conference of "members of the tribe" in California. A woman who was a ritual body piercer conferred it upon Juno after sharing a weekend of intense and stringent body play that was a test of imagination and endurance. The third Juno had given to herself. For years she had depended on her hands to obtain for her what she needed and to give immense pleasure to the partners in her life. This tiny bar of steel would both burden her hand with a humble reminder of vulnerability and enhance it with a vehicle for giving even more pleasure to her lovers.

For Maya, piercing became a commemoration. Whether or not she and Juno would share a common future, this symbol would always be a part of her. It would be a memorial to this time in her life, when she had given up control and had come to rest in the arms of someone who treasured her and gave her comfort. It was a gift to her lover, indicating commitment. It was a gift to herself, indicating release.

Maya and Juno, both in their forties, had met more than a decade and a half before, when Juno, a cultural anthropologist, had passed through Maya's city on her way to Isla Mujeres, a small island off the coast of the Yucatán Peninsula. They had met again often over the years, and each knew that the other held an irresistible fascination. But time, distance, and other involvements precluded the establishment of anything more than a respectful acquaintance, until the evening a few months before when Maya, a writer of some accomplishment, gave a reading in Juno's hometown. Juno sat alone in the front row, her arms folded, her green eyes focused intently on the familiar face of the woman at the podium. Maya caught sight of the look and the quiet smile that played at the corner of Juno's full, soft mouth. Maya's breath caught in her throat, and for a moment time and space ceased to exist for either of them. They felt themselves suspended in the lecture hall, and though two hundred women were present, they saw only each other. Within a month Juno had traveled to Maya's home and, with little more than a look and a touch of her hand, took Maya's heart away with her. They became lovers, and the heat of their old-new passion burned through telephone wires, miles of highway, and hours of rail between their cities. Tonight Maya was visiting Juno and had been brought to this place for a ritual piercing of her labia, a symbol of her commitment to this woman who had given her passion and love and entry into another world.

Maya held Juno's head against her breast and stroked her hair. It was thick and dark with silver sideburns that enhanced Juno's exotic good looks. Juno slipped her hands down Maya's back and cupped her buttocks. She pressed her fingertips hard into the pliant flesh and whispered, "Mine, this wonderful body is mine, and soon will be even more so." Maya felt a rush of desire surge through her. This woman who had pleased her so forcefully and thoroughly was to be honored, a dedication of the flesh.

Juno stood straight and placed her hands on Maya's knees. She slowly slipped the dress up Maya's calves and thighs until she gained access to the softness and heat between her legs. With the most delicate touch, she ran her fingertips along the insides of Maya's thighs above the black nylon, moving along the edge of the stockings, inserting her fingers under the smooth, silky encasement. Maya's breath quickened and became shallow for a moment until Juno's fingers receded and moved to Maya's knees again. Maya relaxed and closed her eyes momentarily, and suddenly Juno moved her hands in a quick gesture beneath the skirt and cupped Maya's pubic mound. Just as suddenly she inserted two fingers between the soft, hairy cunt lips and pushed up hard into the surprised woman. Maya gulped a breath and squealed at the sudden intrusion into the soft, wet orifice between her legs. "Oh my," Juno said, chuckling. "So wet already? How shall we ever contain you, my love? How shall we ever restrain you?" The laugh from the back of her throat was low and intimate, and Maya's face flushed hot.

Juno pulled her fingers back about an inch, then pushed hard into the tightening canal. Maya groaned and thrust her hips forward, wanting more. Juno pulled out slowly and moved her fingertips upward to the already swollen clitoris. She circled around and around the base and over the tip of the sensitive nodule. Maya was squirming, having realized that there were other people in the room, though they were paying no attention. Juno withdrew her fingers and brought them to Maya's lips. "Taste yourself. This is the taste I love. This is what makes me hungry for you." Maya's tongue reached out and licked her own salt and sweetness from her lover's fingers.

Suddenly, a door opened on the far left wall. Centered in a bright rectangle of light was a slim woman with short hair wearing a sleeveless white T-shirt, tight jeans, and high leather boots. Juno turned toward her. Tinnika called out, "Hi, Juno. I just have to scrub up. I'll be right with you."

Juno turned back to Maya and smiled at her. "Scared, honey?"

Maya nodded her head. "I know I'll be all right. But I'm a little afraid of the pain. It's not too bad, is it?" Her body was shaking.

"No, baby. It's not too bad. And it's very fast." Juno held her tight in her arms as Maya's breath slowed and began to relax.

Maya could see Tinnika in the bathroom next to her office, washing with antiseptic soap and gathering fresh towels in a small pile. The piercer finally

emerged and motioned for them to come. Juno helped Maya down from the leather bench, and they walked to the studio door and entered. It was a room of modest size, painted pristine white with small ornate Victorian mirrors and clean-lined antique chairs. Tinnika motioned for them to sit and proceeded to speak only to Juno, asking how her research was progressing. Maya felt for a short while as if she was not even in the room. But being left to her own racing thoughts heightened both her excited anticipation and her nervousness. She knew later that this was exactly the way Juno had planned it. The mounting tension was part of the plan.

Finally, Juno reached over and took Maya's hand, a clear signal for Tinnika to address her directly. Tinnika smiled. Her face was long and chiseled with pale, translucent skin and bright gray-blue eyes. She wore at least nine earrings in each ear, some steel hoops, others intricate silver wires. Both eyebrows were pierced, one with a single delicate ring and the other with two very tiny bars with silver beads. Her lower lip was also pierced at one corner, and when Maya looked down at the front of the spotless white T-shirt, she could see the outlines of nipple rings pressing against the thin cotton.

Tinnika was such a contrast to Juno, who was tall and Amazonian in proportion. Juno's eyes were so deep green they were almost unreal, and her skin was ruddy and tanned after years in the outdoors. Her shoulders and back were broad, and her arms were well muscled from heavy lifting. Only her hands were an anomaly. They were long and delicate, like those of a violinist or one who worked with tiny, fragile objects. Juno's hands fascinated Maya, and her fascination had been rewarded with the exquisite use of those hands for her gratification.

Maya felt overwhelmed by these women who were both tough and confident. Her own presence was so feminine and yielding by comparison. She was an ample-bodied woman with full breasts and soft curves; her dark wavy hair framed a sweet face with great liquid brown eyes and delicate, lightly freckled skin that blushed and marked easily.

Tinnika asked her, "Have you ever been pierced before, besides your ears?" Maya quietly answered, "No, I haven't. And I'm afraid I'm a bit nervous about it." Tinnika looked at Juno and smiled, then turned back to Maya. "Here's a sheet telling you how to care for it afterward. It will take about three months to heal completely, though you won't feel much after the first few weeks. You need to be careful about keeping it clean and not going into swimming pools or hot tubs. Other than that, Polysporin a couple of times a day and moving the jewelry around in the opening to keep it free are important. Do you have jewelry already?"

Juno reached into her back pocket and took out a small plastic envelope. In it was a slim bar of stainless steel bent into a *c* curve, with a tiny steel ball at each end. She handed it to Tinnika, who unwrapped it and turned it

over in her hand. "This is lovely. I think it will look very nice on you."

She held it out to Maya, who took it between two fingers. "Oh, it is beautiful, Juno. Thank you."

Juno also produced a second envelope. In it were two beads, one amethyst, one hematite. "These beads," she said, "are for closing the circle. While you are healing, the *c* will remain open. When you have healed, we'll insert one of these stones between the steel beads—amethyst for spiritual healing, or hematite for grounding. They will complete the circle and can be inserted or removed as you will." Maya smiled, then lowered her eyes. Such a wonderful gift. Equal to the one she was about to give.

Tinnika pointed to an oddly constructed black leather lounge chair that was curved and smooth but had no pillows. She instructed Maya to sit in the chair and relax against its back. Then Tinnika put a small stool at either side of the chair's seat and lifted Maya's legs onto the stools so they were spread apart. She told Maya to pull up her skirt and slid a white towel under Maya's buttocks. Maya had never been so vulnerable in front of more than one person. Her pubic mound was exposed to full view, and her vaginal opening, still glistening with moisture, was clearly visible to the two women who were bent over examining her. Tinnika held the piece of jewelry up against Maya's right labium. "Is this where you want it?" she asked Juno, not even considering asking Maya for her opinion. Maya smiled. Juno was taking full responsibility for making the decision about where and how. It was enough that Maya had asked for the piercing herself. From there on, she had given over the decision-making to her lover in whose honor this was being done.

Juno agreed this was the best place. Tinnika put the jewelry into a sterilizer and began to prepare her instruments.

Juno straightened up and pulled a tall stool next to Maya, then sat down and put her arms around the nervous woman's shoulders. She kissed Maya on the cheek. "I'm going to be very proud of you. I know it. You'll go through this beautifully." One of her hands slid down Maya's neck and into the dress opening. Juno cupped Maya's right breast in her hand and squeezed gently. She began toying with the nipple, causing it to become stiff and distended under her manipulations. Her left hand moved to the front of Maya's dress and began undoing the buttons, one by one, until the soft silk draped open and Maya's round white breasts with their deep pink nipples were fully exposed. Juno cupped the left breast in her other hand and flicked the nipple with her thumb. The sensations of having her breasts squeezed gently and the nipples pinched diverted her mind from the fact that Tinnika, hands encased in rubber gloves, had swabbed her vaginal lip with alcohol and had applied a forceps with which she was gently pulling and stretching the labia to get the right angle.

Juno leaned over Maya and kissed her full on the lips. Her tongue slid into

THE PIERCING

the reclining woman's open mouth, and Juno sucked Maya's tongue into her own mouth. Both were breathing heavily. Juno's arms encircled the exposed woman and held her tightly. "I love you. I love you very much," she whispered hoarsely. Maya's arms slid up around Juno's neck, and she held her close.

Suddenly it happened. Tinnika inserted the long piercing needle into the stretched labium. Maya shrieked. It was like fire. It was like knives. The pain was sharp and acute. She thought she was going to die. She couldn't take it. She knew it was too much. And just as suddenly, it was over. Maya's breath came in short, loud gasps. Her heart was beating furiously.

"Good, baby. Good girl. That's it. It's just about over now," Juno crooned in her ear, still holding her tightly. Tinnika attached the piece of jewelry to the end of the needle and pulled it through the newly opened shaft. It pinched, but it was tolerable compared to the first needle shock. "It's completed," Tinnika said. She smiled up at the half-naked, voluptuous woman in the chair. "It looks beautiful. You took it very well."

Maya leaned back in the chair and tried to control her respiration. Her heart started to quiet, but a thin buzzing had begun in her ears, and as she looked around, the room began to appear brighter and clearer than before.

Tinnika applied more alcohol to the new piercing, which stung for a moment, then took the two stools away so her client could lower her legs and stand upright. Juno had relaxed her hold on Maya, who smoothed her skirt and began to button the top of her dress. The piercing stung and burned, but not unbearably. What pervaded was the strange feeling in her head. Colors were becoming more vibrant, outlines were thin and black and clear, sound was louder, and each separate noise and note was easily discernible. Maya reached for the back of a chair to steady herself as she stood. Juno moved to her side and put her arm around Maya's waist so she wouldn't feel shaky.

"Thanks, Tinnika," Juno said. "You did a fine job." She pulled out her slim leather wallet and handed Tinnika a few bills.

Tinnika nodded. "It was a pleasure. I feel honored to have been chosen for this ritual." She turned to Maya. "You really did well. I'm very pleased to have pierced you."

Maya blushed and smiled. "Thank you, Tinnika. It was scary, but it was wonderful." She held out her hand to the piercer, who raised it to her lips and kissed it. Juno watched the scene with a warm glow in her eyes.

Juno retrieved Maya's coat, and they walked through the huge anteroom, nodding good-bye to a few people at the reception desk. They descended in the elevator and walked through the foyer and onto the street. Juno turned to light a cigarette. Maya continued walking as if in a daze. Suddenly Juno bolted forward and grabbed her arm. "Hold on there, lady. The light hasn't changed yet. You'd better not get away from me. I think you're stoned."

Clearly the released endorphins had flooded Maya's brain. She had never

experienced such euphoria before. Even drugs had not made her feel so clean and lifted, her senses more alive than they ever had been. Juno guided her to the car, opened the door, and made sure she was securely in the front seat before she closed and locked it and walked around to the driver's side.

They drove through traffic with Maya staring big-eyed at shops and people and other automobiles as if she were seeing them for the first time. The shiny, wet surfaces of melting snow glittered, and store lights glowed and flickered. The world was a mass of brilliant color and sound.

"How does it feel?" Juno questioned her.

"What—oh, my piercing or my head?" she asked.

"Both," Juno said, chuckling.

"My piercing pinches a little, not too bad. My head. You're right. I'm so high. I've never felt this way."

Juno reached over and squeezed her hand. "We'll be home soon. Then you can rest."

They parked outside the building and walked into the lobby. Even the colorfully painted walls were larger and brighter than Maya remembered. They took the elevator to the fourteenth floor, stepped out, and entered the apartment. It was dim and quiet here. The stereo was on; soft Latin music was playing, and Juno went into the kitchen to put on water for coffee and tea. "Would you like to lie down, honey?" she asked.

"Perhaps for a few minutes," Maya responded. "It was a lot to go through. I feel weird. Fine, but weird." She giggled a little, feeling silly and disoriented, then walked into the bedroom and settled back on the bed.

After a few minutes Juno entered the room, a cup of coffee in one hand and a cup of tea in the other. She set the cups down on the side table and reached for Maya, moving her own body up and over the supine woman. She kissed her softly and deeply. "I love what you did for me." Her mouth moved down Maya's neck to the base of her throat. "I want to see it." Her fingers went to the buttons at the top of the black silk dress and began undoing them one by one. As Maya's breasts were revealed, Juno kissed them tenderly, placing her lips over each nipple and drawing it in, moving her tongue across the hardening tips. Maya shivered and sighed with pleasure.

Juno pulled the dress off Maya's shoulders and slid it over her hips, leaving her wearing nothing but a black garter belt, black nylon stockings, and high heels. She made a desirable picture. "Open your legs," Juno commanded. "I want to see what is mine." Maya lifted her knees and spread them open so her mound and her soft vaginal lips were clearly visible. Juno moved down the bed and knelt to get a better look between the parted thighs. Juno's hand went to the slit between Maya's legs. She ran the tips of her fingers down each labium, carefully avoiding touching the new piercing. "I want you. Your pretty cunt is even more beautiful." Juno reached over to the

table and deftly slipped her hand into a thin surgical glove. She inserted one finger into the damp, soft opening at the base of the slit and slid it slowly deep into Maya's body. Maya moaned and thrust her hips forward slightly.

"Don't move. You don't get to do any of this...except come...if I let you." Juno's voice was decisive.

"Oh, please, please let me," Maya begged.

"Let you what, baby?" Juno questioned innocently. "What should I let you do? Tell me. Beg me."

"Please let me come. I want you so much. I want to come so much it hurts. Please, Master." She had said it. She had called Juno by her title of respect. Now, perhaps, Juno would satisfy her.

"What hurts, sweetheart?" Juno grinned, still moving the single finger slowly in and out of Maya's vagina.

"My...my...I can't," Maya cried out in frustration.

"What do you mean you can't? You have to tell me, or you won't get what you want." Their interplay was building tension. It was a familiar game. Maya blushed furiously, and her hips wriggled around the intruding finger that excited her but was not enough to bring her to climax.

"It hurts, my clit, it's so swollen. Please, touch it, please."

Juno pulled her finger out and slipped a glove on her other hand. She flipped open the nozzle on a bottle of lubricant. She drizzled some onto the fingers of both hands, put the bottle aside, and with a swift motion thrust three fingers of her right hand into the hot, pulsating hole of the woman on the bed.

Maya screamed, then moaned again in ecstasy. "Juno, Juno, I love you. Please. Do it hard. Fuck me. Please fuck me." And Juno did, with a rhythm that increased and decreased according to what the body of her lover demanded.

The heat grew, and the rhythm was pounding as Maya's cunt swelled and clenched around Juno's hand. In and out Juno pushed and retreated, sometimes slowing so much that Maya cried out in anguish for more, harder, deeper thrusts. The lubricant melted and blended with the hot secretions flooding Maya's cunt as Juno was able to insert a fourth finger, then her thumb into the orifice. Maya inhaled sharply with the additional pressure, then relaxed as Juno's hand closed inside her and began the steady rocking motion she knew well. No one had ever been able to achieve such total penetration of her body. But then, she had never been so desirous of and open to anyone before. As the rhythm increased, Juno rotated her closed hand slowly, feeling the muscled chamber contract. Maya was transported to another plane, another world. All of her sensations focused in the turgid cauldron between her legs.

Juno moved her left hand to the sore and swollen labia and gently parted

them, exposing the red and distended clitoris. She touched it gently as her right hand continued the steady, deep rhythm into Maya's cunt. Then her fingers began to circle the bulging clit, around and around, across the tip, pressing it back into its hood, then watching it emerge again, increasing in size and sensitivity. "Please," Maya cried, "I can't hold it. I'm so close. Please let me."

"Soon, baby. Just don't come until I tell you." Juno grinned at Maya's agony, knowing she would allow it to end momentarily.

"I can't. Please. I need to...o-o-oh..." Maya couldn't keep her hips still. Juno's hands worked her, inside and out, feeling the heat and wet pushing hard against her hand. She increased the internal rhythm, and her fingers rubbed back and forth on the swollen clit over and over again until it was about to burst. It was so hot. It was so sensitive and throbbing.

"All right, baby. Now. Come for me." Maya's body stiffened. Her vaginal muscles clenched and held for a long moment, and suddenly her entire body convulsed in wave after wave of wrenching spasms. Juno's hand pushed hard and harder into the convulsing orifice as the woman impaled on it writhed in paroxysms of release. Orgasm after orgasm built, peaked, and raced through Maya's body, tearing her apart again and again until she was too weak to build one more time. Suddenly, with her face turned in to the pillow, Maya began to weep. Long, hard sobs racked her spent body.

Juno pulled her hand gently out of her lover's satiated cunt, stripped off the gloves, and moved up to the top of the bed. She encircled Maya with her arms and kissed her wet face. "You're mine," she whispered. "I love you, and you're mine."

"Yes," came back the tired voice. "I am yours. Always. I am yours."



Photograph by J. C. Collins

PART X

WOMEN'S S/M SUPPORT GROUP HISTORIES

Some groups that have had a long history in our community did not respond to our questionnaire, so unfortunately there is no material here about them. We are especially sorry that there is no mention of the Los Angeles group Leanne and Laci, which recently disbanded after many years of providing social and educational opportunities for Southern California lesbians.

We regret that we did not have the space to include interviews with many of the women who are close to this community. This is the only way that we

include many dynamic individuals and diverse opinions.

Some of the group leaders in this section were interviewed by individuals who were participating in the formation of their organizations. Others were based on information submitted in reply to questionnaires that we mailed to all of the women's S/M support groups we could locate. These questionnaires were filled out by a club officer or in the case of Seattle's Outer Limits, we got multiple responses from several members. Instead of repeating the entire questionnaire, we have paraphrased the information in narrative form. These histories should not be taken as representative of the entire membership of any particular group. They are the perspectives of individuals, not authorities. The versions of past events or the last word on the significance of these events. It is difficult to summarize the history of a group, which by definition includes many dynamic individuals and diverse opinions.

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ABOUT THESE HISTORIES

Since *Coming to Power* included a personal history of Samois, we wanted to make sure that this book included some information about the history of the women's S/M community. But once we began to make a list of all the individuals who should be interviewed or asked for articles and all the organizations that have been important to leatherdykes, we realized that to cover this issue completely would take a whole book of its own.

We decided to focus on support groups because they are key institutions. Although a city or large town may have a leatherdyke subculture, it can be very difficult for novices to find these private social networks and connect with them. Once an area has an aboveground group that answers its mail, accepts new members, socializes them, and holds events, life becomes much richer and more positive for us.

Some of the group histories in this section were written by individuals who were instrumental in the formation of their organizations. Others are based on information submitted in reply to questionnaires that we mailed to all of the women's S/M support groups we could locate. These questionnaires were filled out by a club officer; or, in the case of Seattle's Outer Limits, we got multiple responses from several members. Instead of reprinting the entire questionnaire, we have paraphrased the information in narrative form. These histories should not be taken as representative of the entire membership of any particular group. They are the perspectives of individuals, not authoritative versions of past events or the last word on the significance of those events. It is difficult to summarize the history of a group, which by definition includes many dynamic individuals and diverse opinions.

Some groups that have had a long history in our community did not respond to our questionnaire, so unfortunately, there is no material here about them. We are especially sorry that there is no mention of the Los Angeles group Leather and Lace, which recently disbanded after many years of providing social and educational opportunities for Southern California leatherdykes.

We regret that we did not have the space to include interviews with many of the women who are elders of this community. This is the only way that we

can think of to track leatherdyke history in cities where leatherwomen had large social networks but no official groups for many years. Also, even when groups are formed, they do not meet the needs of everyone in the community, so much of our history remains outside the purview of women's S/M support groups. Any history of our community, to be complete, would have to include artists and writers who contributed to our culture and activists who worked as out leatherdykes with more mainstream political organizations.

By now, it has become obvious that we can't trust straight institutions or even some gay and lesbian archives to keep our history for us. We have to do this ourselves. We urge everyone who reads this to donate historically significant material (club records, personal correspondence and photographs, conference programs, oral histories, memorabilia like T-shirts and pins, artwork, poetry, and short stories) to archives that can be trusted to preserve this material, so the work we do now is not erased by the passage of time.

There are two archives that we can recommend for such donations: the Leather Archives and Museum, 5015 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60640, (312) 878-6360; and the Lesbian Herstory Archives/Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation, Inc., P. O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10116, (718) 768-3953. However, many cities house gay archives or academic library collections that have a commitment to preserve material from the leather and S/M community. *The Gayellow Pages* (in the resource list) is an excellent resource for locating the appropriate archive nearest you. We urge you to contact these organizations and find out what their policies are regarding our community's legacy.

BOUND BY DESIRE

Bound by Desire—an Austin, Tex., leather and S/M women's group—was founded in May 1991 by Johnnie (J. R.) Raines and Wanda Brown. J. R. was surprised and disappointed that in the Austin area there was no group for leather- and S/M women. There was a definite need in the community for women to find one another. She wanted to bring leatherwomen together for education, support, socializing, and fun. In November 1990, J. R. and Wanda sent out flyers and advertisements announcing the formation of Bound by Desire.

Bound by Desire had eighteen charter members, women who joined in the first three months. Attendance at Bound by Desire meetings ranges from thirteen (during a flood) to a high of thirty-five, with an average meeting regularly attracting nineteen to twenty-five women. Currently, Bound by Desire has forty-four full and thirteen associate members. Bound by Desire invites all women—gay, bisexual, heterosexual, or transsexual—who have a positive interest in S/M or curiosity regarding leather, S/M, b/d, fetish, or fantasy to join. Men can become associate members of Bound by Desire, but they cannot attend regular meetings unless they are participants in a demo or panel. Women who pose a threat to other women, particularly in the leather community, through acts of violence, nonconsensual play, or thievery or by breaking Bound by Desire group confidences or a member's anonymity are not allowed to become members and can be suspended or expelled from the group.

Bound by Desire is pretty informal at this point, depending on the good sense of its members to protect the group. Rule-breakers are approached by the group and usually given a chance to redeem themselves before they are suspended or expelled. Club colors, when warranted, will be stripped. The loss of face in such a tight-knit community would be the worst result of violating Bound by Desire standards.

Bound by Desire holds monthly meetings, social activities, and educational panels and discussions. It does not sponsor play parties because of legal issues but totally supports any individual who wants to throw one. Bound by Desire sponsors "The Hunt," which is a weekend-long event of role-playing, celebration, and partying.

BOUND BY DESIRE

Bound by Desire ran into conflict with Sapphire, the local lesbian group, when Sapphire refused to post Bound by Desire flyers on its bulletin board. That has changed, though, with a change in Sapphire's membership. Bound by Desire has taken part in Austin's Gay Pride march, and members have appeared on panels sponsored by Gay Pride Week. Bound by Desire is a member of TBO (Texas Conference of Clubs), which jointly owns land where events such as runs are held.

Bound by Desire is not a political group per se, though it does work with groups such as the Austin Lesbian Gay Political Organization if the membership agrees. Bound by Desire has also supported AIDS Services of Austin and Battered Women's Shelter of Austin. Bound by Desire stresses safer sex and sex education and holds meetings on solely those issues. Bound by Desire provides, via the AIDS Foundation, safer-sex kits to whoever needs them.

The atmosphere in Austin is so challenging for leatherwomen that some of the other issues pale in comparison. All sorts of women are welcomed in the group, which is a close-knit bunch of women who rely on one another for more than just social occasions. They encourage women to start groups in their own cities and to network and learn as much about other groups and S/M as possible.

BRIAR ROSE

Jan Hall started the group Briar Rose in 1985 to find social support for leatherwomen in a town where there was no existing community. The group has varied in both size—from fifteen to thirty women—and structure. Briar Rose was initially a much more formally structured organization with a newsletter and formal meetings but now is a close-knit and informal group with no structure other than a post-office box and someone to call members about events and news.

Briar Rose is open to gay, bisexual, and heterosexual women, though the members are predominantly gay and bisexual women. Briar Rose isn't a particularly lesbian group, but instead considers itself a women-identified, sex-positive group. Although male dates of straight and bisexual women are welcome at social functions, play parties are open only to women. Briar Rose also limits its gatherings to women over twenty-one, though members try to stay in touch with everyone who contacts them. Briar Rose has never had any difficulty advertising the group and meets either at private homes or "out on the town," so it has not had any trouble finding meeting space.

Members of Briar Rose are very active politically, particularly about issues of sexuality. They have had a table at the "Take Back the Night" march, regularly march at Gay Pride, and often speak at colleges and universities about S/M. Briar Rose is a National Leather Association affiliate, and several members are active in local and national NLA chapters.

Briar Rose sponsors play parties (with mandatory safer-sex rules) and often meets for dinner, movies, or to go to the bars. The bars and local leather shop are male-dominated but still very friendly to women. Members also attend gay men's events that they are invited to, and Briar Rose occasionally cosponsors an event with local men's leather clubs. However, there aren't a lot of leatherwomen in the area, and that has led to difficulty in finding partners.

Briar Rose has had no difficulties in the group involving issues of difference. Half the members are bisexual women, and there are two FTM members. The most difficult issue that has faced the group has been battering. One of the members of Briar Rose moved to another city and became involved in an abusive relationship with a partner she had met through the group. When Briar Rose members visited her in her new city, they didn't realize what was

happening. When they did know, they were too far away to help. Women in the support system where she lived tried to help, but as always it was difficult to know what to do, other than offer physical safety and "extrication" assistance. Briar Rose has taken on addressing the issue of domestic violence in S/M relationships and has been very public with NLA-funded educational efforts, so that other survivors can have the courage to tell their stories, and their friends will find the courage to listen. The group tried to help, and continues to relate to both the survivor and abuser. Briar Rose does not believe that ostracism is a way to solve the problem of domestic violence.

The group places a high priority on being close-knit and helping one another through sharing resources. They have access to nonjudgmental therapists and physicians, including a physician who has been particularly helpful to FTMs.

Briar Rose encourages women who want to start a group to work with the national organizations and with the local men's club.

CLEVELAND LEATHERWOMEN IN POWER AND TRUST

It can be difficult, scary, painful, challenging, and rewarding to be a leatherwoman in the Cleveland area, the CLIPT women say. Because there is so much uncharted territory in the area, they have both the challenge and the reward of developing new concepts for their group, and it can be lonely. As CLIPT's visibility has increased, new women have joined the group in a steady stream. CLIPT's outreach involves notices in the local queer paper, participation in some community events, and several very out leatherwomen who serve as contacts for other women in the community.

Able-bodyism, bisexuality, and racism have all been issues for CLIPT and have all been dealt with in group discussions, though the issues do resurface at times. Class issues have been addressed by CLIPT members being willing to share toys, attempting to keep event costs low, and having women who can afford to chip in more. Group members have no reason to suspect that they have been under surveillance, though they do have a standard release form for parties and the press is asked to leave events.

CLIPT offers peer counseling for women who have had run-ins with unsafe S/M, and several group members have more formal counseling training. They are a feminist group in an open-minded, progressive sense, and while they consider themselves a lesbian group they are certainly open to bisexual women, and several of the founding members are bisexual. CLIPT has some differences among group members concerning "old school" versus "new school" approaches to S/M and has had group discussions about it.

CLIPT's connections with the gay men's community are growing. The women in CLIPT have none with the straight community: they "don't know where they are, and the women who have come to us from them have not been interested in going back." Some gay men have been phobic about leatherwomen: one local group allows women to join for a twenty-thousand-dollar membership fee. And there was an ugly, tooth-and-nail battle in the press regarding a local men's leather bar's discriminatory admission policy. With the law and the community on CLIPT's side, the bar lost, but it is still not a comfortable place for leatherwomen. The bar's competition, however, has been most supportive of CLIPT and advertises itself as a leather/Levi's bar for men and women.

CLEVELAND LEATHERWOMEN IN POWER AND TRUST

Like leatherwomen in many parts of the country, CLIPT members have no resources for nonjudgmental, professional care for S/M women. Their attitude, though, is that their isolation encourages support and unity among the group and provides them freedom to grow.

CLIPT's advice to other women starting groups? Try, try, try again. It took five tries to get a group to thrive in Cleveland. And their wish? The women of CLIPT would love to have a more supportive community.

Female Trouble: The First Four Years

Ketti Neil, Founding Member and Premier Head Mistress 1990–1993

Female Trouble, the Philadelphia women's S/M and leather organization, was founded in September 1989 when a small group of women decided to start some trouble in Philadelphia. Since that time, the group has grown tremendously, and by our third anniversary celebration in September 1992, we boasted a membership of more than eighty women. This brief history of the group is based on personal recollection in consultation with the archives instituted as part of my annual report in 1991. A look at Female Trouble's first four years illustrates the struggles and challenges we faced, both internally and within the larger leather community, as more and more S/M women came out and banded together in groups.

For me, it all started back in spring of 1989, in the excitement over Philadelphia's first Women's Erotica Night, which drew more than four hundred women to the Center City YWCA. I recall guest author Pat Califia (sponsored by Giovanni's Room) making quite an impression. A number of Female Trouble's core founders met through organizing and participating in this event, including myself, Robin Sweeney, Ian, Lynn, Deb, and Isabelle. That was when Robin first spoke to me about starting a women's S/M group in Philadelphia.

Robin spent the summer of 1989 in San Francisco and returned excited, with information about the Outcasts. She called the first group meeting, which was attended by more than twenty women, in September. Seated around my living room, we introduced ourselves, then talked about the idea of forming a group. We all liked the name Female Trouble, proposed by Robin. At a subsequent meeting we created an interim board to function provisionally until bylaws were written. As I remember, the founding members who actively participated on this board included Robin (the chair), myself, Deb, EZ, and Lynn.

Female Trouble's first coming-out took place at GMSMC's Black and Blue Ball in October, at the invitation of GMSMC founder and president Jim Mitchell. The interim board put together a presentation that included intro-

FEMALE TROUBLE

ductions, short fantasy skits, and an erotic dance performed by Lynn with a knife and a candle. I remember seeing new women at the Black and Blue Ball but missed some of the original crowd from the first meeting—Female Trouble’s membership was still rather nebulous at that time.

Robin moved to San Francisco in December 1989 and entrusted the leadership of the new group to me. During our talks the previous fall, she had communicated to me the importance of having official bylaws. Acknowledging this primary task, I worked on the bylaws through the spring, drawing from the bylaws of the Outcasts as well as those of LSM. I remember Deb and Mary giving constructive input, but there was little interest then from anyone else. In May 1990 the bylaws were approved, and the following month we elected officers for one-year terms: Head Mistress, myself; Vice Mistress, Deb; Money Mistress, Slick; Orientation Mistresses, EZ and Mary; and Propaganda Mistresses, Pauline and Rachelle.

In the beginning, the executive board also included three elected Dungeon Mistresses, but we soon ran into problems defining the responsibilities of the position. Since Female Trouble does not as a group throw play parties, the position was seen as ineffectual and controversial. A year later, in June 1991, at a meeting attended by more than twenty members, we revised the bylaws and changed the executive board structure to five officers elected for two-year terms, with orientation and propaganda committees (two members each) elected for one-year terms.

As a nonprofit social and educational group, Female Trouble’s stated purpose is to sponsor activities and gatherings that provide a safe space for women to meet, have fun, and learn. In the beginning we relied mostly on the internal sharing of experience, with a few workshops presented by outside experts. Gradually our activities expanded to accommodate the diverse needs of our membership and our community. Here are highlights from the first years.

In early 1990, Female Trouble was still a fledgling group (remember, the bylaws were not approved until May 1990). In March we sponsored a public S/M safety workshop presented by Suzanne of LSM. In April the group was invited to GMSMC’s Leather Pride 1990, during which time guest titleholder Diane Suissa (Ms. Southeast Leather) presented a body-waxing and hair-removal demo to the group. In May the first issue of Female Trouble’s newsletter, “Hooked Up,” was designed and produced by Pauline. In July Deb organized Female Trouble’s first annual women’s S/M Fantasy Night in my apartment, which was decorated with plants, Christmas tree lights, and window fans. Attractions included erotic readings, dances, performances, and a photo exhibit by Isabelle. In August the group brought Raelyn Gallina to Philadelphia for the very first time, thanks to the valiant efforts of piercing clinic coordinator Rachelle. Raelyn did nineteen piercings and gave demos on

permanent and temporary piercing and on scarification. In September Female Trouble celebrated our first anniversary jointly with GSMSC's second anniversary at the Bike Stop. Also, for the first time the group had a cabin at Sisterspace Lesbian Feminist Weekend (LFW) in the Pocono Mountains. In October we held our first S/M safety workshop as a mandatory part of orientation procedures. Later that month Female Trouble gave a reception for Susie Bright ("Sexpert"), who was in Philadelphia for a book signing at Giovanni's Room. In November the group held our first women's S/M Video Night, which has since become a traditional social event that happens several times a year.

Nineteen ninety-one opened with a women's shaving demo in February, given by Theresa, Devioune, and Pauline. In March the group sponsored a public electricity demo given by Female Trouble honorary members John Paul Weir and Frank Theis. In April we again celebrated Leather Pride with GSMSC, and many of our members attended GSMSC's Dungeon Night. Also in April Suzy hosted a women-only Victorian High Tea with a plaster-casting demo by Devioune and Nora. The group also held our second women's S/M Fantasy Night at the Bike Stop. In May Female Trouble sponsored another piercing clinic with Raelyn, this time organized by Pauline, for a total of twenty-three piercings. In August Arleen invited the group to a "hot ice" play party. In September Female Trouble again had a cabin at Sisterspace LFW and celebrated our second anniversary with GSMSC at the Bike Stop.

January 1992 marked the long-awaited arrival of Colors. In February Female Trouble sponsored a Valentine's Day Social at the Bike Stop. In March the executive board sent out networking letters and increased the organizational mailing list for our newsletter to more than forty groups nationwide. We also became an NLA affiliate. In April we sponsored two contestants, Suo and Suzy, to the first Ms. Northeast Leather Contest in New York City. Also that month, Female Trouble became involved in organizing Philadelphia Leather Pride, which for the first time was not sponsored by GSMSC (the group was undergoing difficulties that would lead to its demise in July). I initiated and facilitated a committee made up of representatives from five area leather groups who worked together to present a unified Leather Pride celebration, including an Inaugural Ceremony, a Dungeon Night organized by GSMSC, and an annual Mr. Philadelphia Leather Contest sponsored by the Bike Stop. For the Inaugural Ceremony, Female Trouble enacted a humorous fantasy skit with a safe-sex message entitled "Little Miss Muff."

In late April Female Trouble sponsored another piercing clinic with Raelyn, featuring a scarification demo. I decided to take on the responsibility of coordinating Female Trouble's piercing clinics (for the next couple of years), with the goals of promoting Raelyn and body modification in Philadelphia and earning some goodwill and revenue for the group. Widespread publicity

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efforts resulted in an incredibly successful turnout, with a total of sixty-one piercings and three scarifications.

Female Trouble held another women's S/M Fantasy Night in May at the (now-defunct) Girlfriend's Bookstore, raising \$175 to benefit the first Powersurge Women's S/M Conference in Seattle. In June the group sponsored a public whipping demo given by honorary members John Paul Weir and Frank Theis at Climax Theater. The event was openly advertised and drew an audience of more than eighty people. In September we celebrated our third anniversary at the Bike Stop, for the first time without GMSMC. The evening was attended by more than 150 people and included a short program with introductions, raffle prizes, and an incredibly hot erotic dance by Emily and Mara. Also in September the group was represented at Powersurge and again at Sisterspace LFW. In October Female Trouble honorary members Vulture and Kymara invited the group to engage in a women's private performance and Star Trek S/M Contact Stations. In November Raelyn returned to Philadelphia for yet another Female Trouble piercing clinic, giving demos on branding, permanent and temporary piercings, and women-only ball dancing. Raelyn did another forty-nine piercings and six scarifications, bringing her total to 110 piercings and nine scarifications in Philadelphia during 1992.

Soon afterward, I started the ball rolling for Philadelphia Leather Pride 1993 (scheduled for late March), and Female Trouble formed a committee to plan the first-ever Ms. Philadelphia Leather Contest, cosponsored with the Bike Stop. Philadelphia Leather Pride 1993 expanded on the efforts of the previous year and was tremendously successful, with eight area leather groups participating in a unified celebration. The weekend included an inaugural ceremony and numerous socials, parties, and leather contests. The winner of the Ms. Philadelphia Leather Contest was Emily; first runner-up was Karen. For the inaugural ceremony, Female Trouble enacted a humorous fantasy skit with a message on S/M etiquette entitled "Goldilocks and the Three Tops."

In April 1993 the group was represented at the March on Washington by about twenty women rallying behind a banner displaying our handcuffs logo. Female Trouble sponsored another piercing clinic with Raelyn the following weekend, bringing in fifty-three piercings and three scarifications and offering a scarification demo and women-only ball dancing. In honor of Raelyn's visit, the group's annual women's S/M Fantasy Night, called "Soldiers of the Lord," was held on May 1 at a private warehouse. Also in May, elections were held for executive board and committee positions, for amendments regarding special committees and propaganda, and for Colors policy.

Female Trouble's bylaws and activities of the first few years provide a structural framework giving the group definition, scope, and continuity. Members have come to expect that certain events traditionally happen every year about the same time. General meetings have been held bimonthly, with

an extra month's break in August and December. The organizational newsletter, "Hooked Up," also has appeared bimonthly after general meetings. Orientation has taken place three times a year, generally in February, June, and October. And Female Trouble celebrates her anniversary each year in September, recognizing the initial contribution of the founding members.

Following the bylaws, Female Trouble has placed a strong emphasis on education, addressing the changing needs of the membership, and sharing resources where possible outside the group. In addition to presenting mandatory S/M safety workshops to new members, the orientation committee has produced public S/M safety workshops every year in December or January. Deb, Mary, and Alicia have also presented S/M safety workshops at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Delaware, and Sisterspace LFW. The comprehensiveness and accuracy of the workshops, as well as our other efforts in community education, have advanced the group's positive reputation and successful membership outreach.

I feel fortunate to have directed Female Trouble during the formative first years. Others have recognized my centralizing role as crucial for insuring the stability and early survival of the group. The inordinate amount of time and energy that I was able to devote to being Head Mistress, as well as my agenda of political solidarity within the leather community, has contributed to the present strength of our organization.

With a complete change in leadership, Female Trouble will naturally grow and change. Like a mother, I have nourished Female Trouble's existence since her birth; now I have stepped aside to witness her progress. Looking back, I remember her first steps and her first words. Looking forward, I can only trust and dream about her future.

Female Trouble will provide a copy of its bylaws and an outline of its S/M safety workshop on request to other S/M and leather organizations. Write to P. O. Box 2284, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Special thanks to Deb, EZ, Amelia, and Mary for giving constructive input for this article.

LESBIAN SEX MAFIA

LSM was founded in 1981 by Jo Arnone, Dorothy, and Nancy. In the New York City area at that time, there was a desperate need for S/M lesbians to get together, know other women like them, and find play partners who were part of the community and played safely. LSM began with an advertisement in a local S/M newspaper and a workshop at Amazon Autumn, a lesbian workshop weekend. At the start, there was a slight problem finding advertising and meeting space for the group, though that is no longer a problem.

In 1981, starting a lesbian S/M group—or any group dealing with alternative lesbian sexuality—was by its nature a political act. The women who started the group wanted it to be a political and educational forum in the lesbian community. Dorothy and Jo organized a speak-out early in the life of the group. This generated an enormous amount of negative attention from the rest of the lesbian community, which led to a backlash within the group. In the end LSM decided to be a “nonpolitical” group, though it does participate in limited political work in the S/M community. LSM does not consider itself a feminist group.

Beginning with five members, LSM now numbers more than two hundred, with between thirty and fifty women attending meetings regularly. The nature of LSM’s membership has gone through changes over the years, being dominated alternately by lesbians and by bisexual women. There have been times when meetings have been dominated and strongly influenced by the personalities of “stars.” The meetings vary between being serious and heavy (in both an S/M sense and a political sense) and being more light and playful. LSM welcomes all women who are judged to be safe.

LSM organizes play parties that are open to all women at local S/M clubs and sponsors “members and guests only” meetings at private houses and at a member’s dungeon. The group also sponsors monthly meetings, which often include “how-to” discussions of either a physical technique (such as whipping or fist-fucking) or an emotional issue (such as humiliation or bringing someone out of scene safely). Other times discussions will explore a topic such as gender-bending. LSM hasn’t had a safer-sex meeting since AIDS became a major community issue, though there has been renewed

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interest in safer sex as a group issue.

LSM is a very structured organization, with bylaws and elected officials. The very few times women have been ejected from the group, it has been done by consensus. LSM has tackled a number of difficult issues, including racism and anti-Semitism, mostly through the process of internal dialogue. LSM has always been inclusive of bisexual women. There was some conflict when a transsexual applied for membership, but she was allowed to join the group and there hasn't been any conflict since then. A transsexual woman does not need to inform the orientation committee that she is transsexual in order to join LSM.

LSM has close ties with the gay men's community, primarily with GMSMA (Gay Male S/M Activists). LSM and GMSMA have traditionally cosponsored Leather Pride, a fund-raising event for the Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade, and have occasionally cosponsored meetings. There have been times when GMSMA members have been invited to lead LSM meetings as well.

In New York City, there is not a great deal of difficulty in coming out as a leatherwoman. With the creation of ACT UP (leading to gay men and lesbians working closely together), the mainstreaming of S/M in the media, and the general pro-sex movement in the lesbian community in New York, there are quite a number of hangouts where it is fine to be an S/M dyke. Like the rest of the country, though, there are no hangouts exclusively for S/M women, and there is no regularly scheduled, women-only play space outside of LSM parties.

The women of LSM have the challenge of being part of a group that has been around for a long time. This gives them the reputation of being pioneers, and they are more structured than other groups. Their advice to other women starting groups is twofold. First, be mission-focused. Decide what your group should be focused on, and do that, whether it is play or politics. Second, call or write to other, older groups to get support. Female Trouble in Philadelphia did that with LSM, and it worked very well.

THE OUTCASTS: A SOCIAL HISTORY

GAYLE RUBIN

Outcasts was founded in San Francisco in 1984 as a social and educational organization for women who have a positive interest in S/M with other women. A major aim of the group is to establish a stable environment in which S/M women can meet one another, share information, and learn new ideas and techniques. Believing that play parties are best organized privately, Outcasts does not sponsor them. Educational programs comprise the primary activity of the organization, but the group also holds occasional social events. Since 1984, Outcasts has provided a gateway through which women in the Bay Area could find an S/M community, participate in its culture, and learn its patterns of behavior, modes of courtesy, and technologies of play.

From its origin, Outcasts has promoted the celebration of sexual diversity. The group has always supported the right of women to explore their sexuality as they choose, as long as they do so consensually and with an awareness of safety. Outcasts is predominantly lesbian, and its focus is on woman-to-woman sadomasochism. However, membership is not restricted to lesbian-identified women. Outcasts welcomes lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, and transsexual women who wish to contemplate or engage in consensual S/M with other women.

Outcasts grew out of the rubble of the local lesbian S/M community, which had been rent by discord and internal conflict. The previous San Francisco lesbian S/M group, Samois, had fallen apart in the spring of 1983 in an orgy of bickering, psychodrama, embezzlement, and assault. In many ways, Samois's greatest achievement was its undoing: the publication of *Coming to Power*. As a small volunteer organization, Samois was not equipped to deal with the ongoing business of publishing. The necessities of administering and distributing *Coming to Power* drained the group's energy and undermined its structural cohesion.

Despite its role in the demise of Samois, *Coming to Power* was instrumental in the immense impact Samois had on lesbian sexual culture and feminist politics. During its five-year existence, Samois challenged unitary notions of les-

bian identity and sexuality, opened up new possibilities of lesbian experience, and changed the face of lesbian politics and feminist theory. Samois articulated a very early "proto-queer" sexual politics by denouncing sexually based persecution and expressing solidarity with other oppressed sexual minorities. Above all, the organization helped establish a place for S/M women in lesbian communities locally, nationally, and even internationally.

Samois had been particularly successful in building a solid local community for S/M women in the San Francisco Bay Area. After its demise, this social base was intact but had no central institutional focus. Several small groups had splintered off from Samois. While many of these were still functioning, they were private or specialized. The need for another large and more accessible umbrella organization for communication and interaction was readily apparent.

One of the small private groups had grown out of the editorial committee for *Coming to Power*. In May 1984 women from this group placed an announcement calling for a meeting to establish a new lesbian S/M organization in the calendar of a local lesbian and gay newspaper called *Coming Up!* On May 18 about eighty women showed up at Valencia Rose, a gay performance space/café/meeting hall. When the time came to discuss a new lesbian S/M group in the San Francisco area, a familiar conflict surfaced. This was an issue that had haunted Samois: how to define *lesbian* and who could belong to a lesbian group.

Some separatists within Samois had fairly stringent criteria for who qualified as a proper lesbian. They periodically tried to purge bisexual women. They were loath to have men or heterosexual women present educational programs even in areas in which they might have special expertise. Others in Samois felt that lesbians came in many shapes and that bisexual women were an integral part of the local group of female S/M players, and they wanted to learn S/M technique and perspectives from the most qualified teachers, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Since the organized lesbian S/M community was small and new, most of the skilled local practitioners were heterosexually or bisexually defined women working as professional female dominants (many of whom also played with women) and gay men steeped in the venerable play traditions of the gay male leather community. A policy banning these individuals from presenting programs struck many as self-defeating and unfair. To require that only lesbians be allowed to demonstrate even those techniques acquired directly from local gay men or nongay women was at best silly and at worst a form of plagiarism. Such fundamental differences of approach had often sparked acrimonious disagreement within Samois.

At the Valencia Rose meeting, some separatists quickly stated that they wanted the new group to exclude bisexual and transsexual women: it would

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be lesbian-only and restricted to so-called "born" (presumably genetic) women. In addition, they wanted only those lesbians who had sex only with other lesbians who had sex only with other lesbians who had sex only with other lesbians, presumably unto the tenth generation of fuck partners. This last criterion was a novel one. Previously, a lesbian was a woman who had erotic, intimate, or sexual relationships with other women, even if her female partners were not themselves gay. Suddenly, a lesbian was required to have only lesbian sex partners. In 1984, separatist lesbianism was reaching for new levels of purism, perhaps in a vain attempt to seal the borders of the lesbian nation against the AIDS organism and to indulge a fantasy of preserving a pool of uninfected sex partners.

Apart from the daunting nightmare of enforcing such criteria of exclusion, many women at the meeting were simply not interested in joining a group based on such principles. This nonseparatist constituency felt connections with nonlesbian parts of the leather community and in addition considered the lesbian S/M community to be more diverse than the population that would result from the application of separatist criteria. These "nonsectarian" lesbians wanted a group that would welcome and reflect diversity and had no desire to engage in the old fights over what constituted an adequate and sufficient lesbian. The nonseparatist, more pervert-identified group wanted an organization in which men could present programs and be invited as guests and in which the officers and members would not be afflicted with the obligation to conduct surveillance on the sexual identities, living arrangements, genders, hormone levels, or chromosomal makeup of the membership's sex partners.

I stood up and invited all the faggot-identified dykes, bisexuals, transsexuals, and other weirdos and perverts who wanted a more inclusively defined organization to gather together. About a dozen assorted such weirdos and perverts duly assembled. This motley crew immediately identified itself as the lunatic fringe (which eventually became the name of the Outcasts newsletter) and decided to meet again to form a nonsectarian lesbian S/M group. This group became the Outcasts.

In June, these women met to get the group organized. Since no one was willing to endure the kinds of conflicts that had destroyed Samois, we immediately agreed that Outcasts would never ever publish a book. Someone volunteered to keep a mailing list and send out notices of meetings. The first Outcasts program meeting, a toy show-and-tell attended by about thirty women, took place on July 8, 1984. It was held at the apartment and professional dungeon space of one of those non-lesbian-identified women who would not have been admitted to the separatist organization. She happens to be a widely respected and much loved individual who plays with both women and men. She is a pillar of the local S/M community and over the years has

contributed a great deal to Outcasts and the local lesbian S/M population.

At first the group had very little structure. The organization consisted of a file folder and a mailing list, with two people doing most of the work and another half dozen or so contributing important energy and support. Soon Outcasts acquired a doorkeeper, a mailbox, and a bank account. The group lumbered slowly toward functional bureaucracy, and by 1986 it had bylaws, an organizational structure, a steering committee, officers, a logo, T-shirts, pins, printed letterhead, orientations, and a banner. Each of these achievements was the specific result of someone's hard work and commitment.

Outcasts celebrated its tenth anniversary in 1994. The group now numbers approximately 150 members. It has officers and steering committee meetings to run the organization. An executive committee consists of all the officers: it adjudicates any disputes regarding denials or revocations of membership or alleged violations of the basic rules of the organization. Such disputes have been mercifully rare. Steering committee meetings are open to any member and are the usual vehicle for assuming responsibilities or becoming an officer. Younger and newer members are not only welcomed but encouraged to attend and participate in decision-making. The more experienced members are aware that any volunteer organization is doomed if it is not fed with new blood, new energy, and generational succession. Despite the accessibility of leadership positions, the current crop of newcomers seems less than enthusiastic about assuming responsibility for Outcasts. The local San Francisco S/M community now has many niches and opportunities that were not available ten years ago, and the newer players seem drawn by other interests and activities. They can take and teach technique classes, publish 'zines, and cruise through a variety of more easily accessible events and institutions. It may be that general-purpose S/M organizations such as Outcasts have outlived their functions in a community as large as San Francisco and may not see another decade.

Outcasts is more inclusive, particularly with respect to issues of sexual identification and gender choice, than most lesbian groups. It has a very wide range of members. Some conflicts have been obviated by defining the group as inclusive; those who are uncomfortable with this level of sexual and gender diversity generally do not join. They know that the basic organizational principles are not up for debate or discussion. Outcasts has also tried to address issues of diversity by having specific programs to discuss them. Programs have focused on sex work and professional S/M, gender and transsexuality, women of color, S/M and disabilities, and differences between leather generations.

Although Outcasts is primarily social and educational, the organization has a strong tradition of political engagement. Outcasts was instrumental in overturning the policy that banned S/M groups from renting space in the San

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Francisco Women's Building. This policy was adopted in 1981 to prevent Samoïs from meeting at the building. At that time, the Women's Building was desperate for rental income and rented to virtually anyone and everyone else. (For an account of the original conflict, see Pat Califia's history of the San Francisco lesbian S/M community in *Coming to Power*.)

Early in 1989, after years of political education and a formal petition by Outcasts, this policy was officially revoked. According to the minutes of the February meeting of the steering committee, Outcasts decided to hold its orientation meetings at the Women's Building "as a testament to our triumph of persistence and as a political and diplomatic statement." The first such meeting was held in April 1989. Since then, the Women's Building has hosted many leather and S/M events, including the local S/M flea market and crafts fair, leather conferences, and several fund-raising extravaganzas. The most recent of these was a hugely successful celebration to raise money for the Spanner appeal. Although few people realize the role played by Outcasts to open this venue to leather use, there are now so many S/M events at the Women's Building that there are jokes about it being the local leather community center.

In many ways, Outcasts has continued to promote the "queer" and radical-pervert political agenda pioneered by Samoïs. Outcasts has always been involved with the other segments of the leather population. Many members of the group were very active in the move toward mobilizing a national leather constituency. Organizing at the national level gained new momentum when the National Leather Association (NLA) was established in 1986. Outcasts enthusiastically supported the efforts of NLA. It immediately became an early NLA affiliate organization. Many Outcasts have served as NLA officers, representatives, and committee members.

In addition to its own contingent in the local Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade, Outcasts cosponsored the first pansexual (mixed gender, mixed orientation) S/M community contingent in the 1986 San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade. Outcasts has had joint meetings with gay male S/M groups. It has a reciprocal arrangement with the Society of Janus (a mixed-gender, mixed-orientation, predominantly heterosexual S/M organization) whereby female members of Janus are admitted to Outcasts programs and Outcasts members can attend Janus functions. Outcasts also has reciprocal agreements with several women's S/M organizations from other cities. These allow traveling club members to attend each other's meetings.

Outcasts has sponsored many successful community events, including two Butch Fashion Shows, the first San Francisco Dyke Daddy contest, many women's leather dances (including a leather prom), and a highly successful flogathon to Beat Jesse Helms. Among its more whimsical events were a nude romp through the tactile dome at San Francisco's Exploratorium and a night

to "take the perverts bowling" at the local Rock and Bowl. Among its more serious activities, Outcasts has been active in promoting safer-sex practice among women. Outcasts organized its first program on AIDS and safe sex for women in 1985, and for many years has provided safer-sex supplies to members at cost. Printed guidelines for safe S/M play were compiled by Outcasts to give to all new members. These guidelines have been copied and distributed by many other S/M groups.

It has been almost eighteen years since the founding of Samois and twelve since Outcasts began. By now, San Francisco has one of the largest, most active, and most diverse populations of S/M women in the world. Because of organizations such as Samois and Outcasts, the publication of *Coming to Power*, and many other factors, San Francisco has a reputation as a place for S/M in general and S/M women in particular. As a result, many women have migrated here to find an S/M community, to construct a social life that includes S/M sexuality, and to participate in and build S/M institutions. As a result, it is probably easier to be a leatherdyke in San Francisco than anywhere else on the planet. From a small, embattled band trying to maintain a tenuous foothold in the lesbian community, the S/M population has burgeoned and differentiated.

That diversity is its strength. There are now many distinct networks, small groups, and dispersed centers of power for kinky queer women. While there have been few formal organizations apart from Outcasts, there have been several publications (some now, alas, defunct), many different party and social groups, and a whole set of networks that have coalesced via the institutions of the clean-and-sober leather populations. If someone has too many conflicts or disagreeable ex-lovers in one environment, chances are good that she can find some other comfortable place to hang out, find partners, and make friends.

Nonetheless, the community has several weaknesses. The most important springs from a perennial problem of lesbian social life, the lack of capital investment. There is no women's leather bar in San Francisco (at this time, there are virtually no lesbian bars), and the party spaces accessible to women have been generally unstable, undercapitalized, or available only at awkward times.

Outcasts has been an umbrella organization, filling some of the niche that would be better served by a women's leather bar or café. A leather bar or similar social space would be more effective in providing a central locus of interaction and communication. Individuals can come to Outcasts to make connections, promote their projects, and find out what else is happening, and can drop in or out as their social needs change. But Outcasts meets only once a month. It has no territory of its own and occupies a small and limited time slot. It is run entirely on volunteer energy, which is sometimes in short supply. By contrast, a leather bar or restaurant can be a profit-generating enter-

prise with an interested and involved ownership. A bar is a stable territorial outpost that is open every day. It provides continuous accessibility and faster information flow and is more readily available to the public. This community would greatly benefit from the kind of central focus that a women's leather bar could provide. But such an enterprise would require a substantial capital investment—a rare commodity in lesbian communities.

If San Francisco cannot currently support a lesbian bar, it is difficult to see how the smaller population of leatherwomen could support a more specialized but still capital-intensive institution. Nonetheless, the leather population is a dedicated, socially active one in need of greater institutional reach and expanded turf. The visionaries who opened the first gay male leather bars in the mid 1950s and early 1960s were able to tap a market hungry for those particular services. A dedicated women's leather bar, café, or performance space in San Francisco could be similarly successful.

There are some lessons to be drawn from the Outcasts experience. First, many women complain that their town or city does not have a lesbian S/M support group. But wishing and hoping and planning and dreaming are good only for passing the time in happy reverie. They do not generate organizations. Such groups do not grow on trees or occur by spontaneous combustion. Without a critical mass of interested participants, no effort is likely to take root. These groups finally come about because one or more individuals decide to take the responsibility to make them happen and do the work to keep them going. If someone plants the leather flag, puts up a flyer, runs an ad, or otherwise announces a gathering spot, chances are good other like-minded folks will come around. Once that occurs, the baby institution will wither and die unless someone provides it with reliable infusions of energy and attention.

Second, such groups are fragile and can be easily torn apart by excessive drama. S/M can be quite theatrical, and people who have been starved for an appreciative audience often welcome the chance to enact their kinkiness on the social stage provided by an organization. While much S/M takes place in private, there is often an additional punch and intensity that comes from social expression and public display, even when the "public" may be only a few friends at a meeting. This is part of the fun and excitement of having an S/M social life and of making even a small and contained S/M social world. However, too much drama can destroy a group in short order. Moreover, scene energy is not always appropriate in all shared social space. Sometimes, people have to be out of role to conduct business.

Common courtesy, good sense, and respect for others is necessary for any small volunteer group to survive. Gratuitous fighting, bickering over small details, irresponsible conduct, and using a group as a captive audience for personal psychodrama are all effective ways to destroy an organization. To maintain a group, the melodramas should stay at home, in the dungeon, or among

friends who agree to participate. They should be kept out of business meetings.

Third, the experience of Outcasts has shown the viability of inclusive rather than exclusive lesbian organizations. Many lesbian groups spend far too much time and waste far too much effort trying to decide who is a lesbian or who is a woman. Such debates may seem scholastic, but they are generally poisonous and divisive.

Outcasts made some unusual choices that have served the organization well. Many bisexual or heterosexually identified members have been skilled and dedicated players whose presence enhanced the organization. Since transsexual women have always been admitted, there has never been a need to investigate or purge someone who "passed." A recent wave of members who are going through female-to-male transitions has found Outcasts without a policy. But so far, the de facto practice has been to let FTMs decide when they do or do not belong. Outcasts has always tried to err on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion. This level of inclusiveness is unusual among lesbian organizations and is probably Outcasts' most distinguishing characteristic.

Outcasts is far from perfect and is hardly an organizational nirvana. Like most volunteer organizations, the spirit of the group ebbs and flows with the energy available to it. But since 1984, Outcasts has restored the peace of the San Francisco Bay Area lesbian S/M community, maintained a common meeting ground, disseminated reams of useful information and quality S/M education, and agitated for the betterment of kinky people. It has been a powerful and influential S/M women's organization. Whatever the future brings, the officers and members of Outcasts can take a great deal of satisfaction in more than a decade of proud and principled perversion.

I want to thank Sora Counts, Raven'Light, and Jay Marston for having read and commented on this article.

THE OUTER LIMITS

Outer Limits began in the summer of 1988, though several women had started meeting informally and hanging out a year or two before that. At the beginning, Outer Limits grew out of a need for the local lesbian S/M community, which was growing by leaps and bounds, to have a space that was just for S/M lesbians. They collected bylaws from other groups and began with two noncommittal facilitators. The group isn't very formal, and for the most part, when something needs to get done, someone does it. The very first meeting had fifty women in attendance, and Outer Limits' membership has stayed at roughly that size. Each member attends an orientation before joining the group.

In recent years, sponsoring Powersurge—the International Leatherdyke conference—has taken up a great deal of the group's focus. But Outer Limits has stayed a primarily social and support group, though there have been contingents in the Seattle Gay Pride Parade and other, more political events. "Our community has a strong need to have a blast and go home feeling validated," one member said, and that sentiment seems to prevail throughout the group.

Although the issues of bisexuality and transgenderism have been part of Outer Limits' discussions in recent months—and aren't nearly resolved—the group is open only to female-born lesbians. The women who filled out the group questionnaire felt that this policy has actually worked to strengthen the group by giving Seattle-area leather lesbians a space separate from other segments of the leather community.

The fun of being an S/M dyke was a big part of all the answers Outer Limits members gave. "We don't have a lot of reverence for the seriousness of it—we just want to do S/M, have fun, and make it artful and creative." The Seattle leatherdyke community seems to run as much on personal connections and friendships as on group membership.

Some of Outer Limits' and the Seattle-area leatherdykes' complaints seem like a great deal of the rest of the country's—a lack of space. Every member wished there were a women-only leather bar or club and more access to space to meet and hang out in. As difficult as running a group and an inter-

THE OUTER LIMITS

national conference can be, the Outer Limits' women encourage other women to start groups. "Just do it!" one member said. "There's a lot more women out there who are interested than you'd think!"



Photograph by Janet Ryan

SAFER-SEX GUIDELINES FOR LEATHERDYKES

PAT CALIFIA AND ROBIN SWEENEY

The fiction in this book is meant to enhance your fantasies. Some of the sexual acts described in the fiction in this book could be dangerous to your health (if not physically impossible to perform). So please use common sense when translating pornography into reality!

The guidelines below are intended to prevent or reduce the risk of passing sexually transmitted diseases between you and your partners. As we go to press, they are consistent with the current recommendations of lesbian and gay health educators. However, this information changes frequently. Please consult up-to-date resources and get the facts from the experts, so you can protect your health.

The good news is that the lesbian community has a relatively low rate of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) when compared to heterosexuals or gay men. This is partly because some STDs seem to have a difficult time being spread during woman-to-woman sex, and partly because many lesbians have fewer sexual partners than their gay male and straight counterparts.

But that doesn't mean you can't get sick! You can protect yourself by making sure you don't expose your bloodstream or mucous membranes to potentially infectious body fluids (vaginal lubrication, blood, urine, feces). In other words, by using condoms, gloves, and latex or plastic oral barriers.

Safer sex means being responsible about your sexual behavior. It does *not* mean avoiding people you think are at risk because they are sex workers, drug users, bisexual, or a different color or class from you. This is a form of discrimination. It's stupid and divisive, and it is a very risky strategy for protecting your health. Many sex workers, drug users, bisexual women, women of color, or other "suspect" women know more about safer sex and practice it more consistently than white, middle-class, vanilla dykes who assume they have nothing to worry about because their politics are pure.

You can't tell what a woman's risk factors for STDs are by looking at her (or listening to gossip about her). The most important part of doing safer sex with someone is to negotiate it. Just as needs, limits, and wants about S/M

need to be talked about before a date or a scene, safer sex does too. Does either of you have any STDs or reason to think you might have been exposed to one? Who's going to bring the gloves? What sort of lube does the hot number you're negotiating with like? If we, as a community, can talk about whips and chains and play piercing, surely we can accommodate a conversation about plastic wrap and lube too.

Just be wary of women who assure you that there's no need to practice safer sex with them. People lie to get sex, and women are no exception to that rule. Maybe she doesn't know how STDs are transmitted, maybe she's forgetful, maybe she doesn't trust you with potentially dangerous information. The only way to protect your health is to have safer sex every time, with every partner. So the primary question in any safer-sex negotiation is not "Should we have safer sex?" It's "How are we going to set this up so that it's safe to be spontaneous and intense with each other?"

Safer sex feels clumsy at first. It takes some practice to get used to it. But we all expect ourselves to have to practice before we achieve accuracy with a whip or know a dozen different knots. Safer sex is just one more erotic skill that we have to learn to be responsible perverts. If all STDs could be cured with a dose or two of antibiotics, we probably wouldn't be making such a big deal about this. But the fact is that some STDs (such as herpes) are incurable, and some of them (such as hepatitis or AIDS) are potentially fatal.

If you or your partner enjoys penetration, use protection. This means putting a condom on your dildo or vibrator. Change the condom and wash the toy before you use it again on a different person or before you change from anal sex to vaginal penetration. If you use your fingers or hand, protect yourself with a latex glove. Fucking with gloves feels nicer if you take the trouble to find a size that fits. Use water-based lubricant with all latex barriers, because grease eats holes in them. Commercial lubricants like Probe, ForPlay, Slippery Stuff, or K-Y are good to go with latex. Hand lotion, baby oil, massage oil, Crisco, Vaseline, coconut oil, and some other commercial lubricants (which are labeled "water soluble," *not* "water-based") are not okay to use. Oil-based lubricants can also cause vaginal infections.

Research has shown that nonoxynol-9, a spermicide and a mild detergent, kills HIV, the virus thought to cause AIDS, in a test tube, but is not very effective at preventing the transmission of HIV in the human body. A lot of women are allergic to nonoxynol-9. It can irritate your genitals and make you more susceptible to other infections. For this reason, we recommend that you *do not* use lubricants (including lubricated condoms) that contain nonoxynol-9.

Oral sex can spread herpes and has, on rare occasions, been proved to transmit HIV. Using your mouth on your partner's butt (rimming) can spread hepatitis, warts, amoebas, and other icks. It's a good idea to use a latex or plastic barrier during oral sex or rimming. You can use a dental dam for a bar-

rier, or you can cut up a glove or a condom. You can also use plastic food wrap, which is thinner, more transparent, and easier to cut to the ideal size. Using a barrier for oral stimulation feels better if you put some water-based lubricant on the side of the latex or plastic that will be touching your partner's body.

Discard all latex barriers after they have been used once. After handling a barrier that's been used, be sure to wash your hands. Don't get lube or body fluids in your mouth or eyes.

When you play with blood, there are two potential problems: the woman who has cut or broken skin is more vulnerable to infection because it is easy for disease-causing organisms to enter her body through the wound; and the woman who has drawn the blood may be exposed to any germs in the blood. Always wear latex gloves if you are going to draw blood. Keep blood out of your mouth, cunt, asshole, or eyes. Use presterilized, disposable implements, and discard them in a sharps container. Cover any broken skin and avoid contact with surfaces that may not be clean.

For maximum safety, do not use any implement that has gotten blood on it on more than one person. It is very difficult to completely remove blood from porous materials like unvarnished wood or leather. High-tech toys made out of plastic, rubber, or metal are easier to clean. Some people feel that leather whips can be cleaned with rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide, then reoiled. Other people recommend cleaning the whip this way and then setting it aside for several days to give any viruses that might be on the whip a chance to die. No research has been done that would tell us if these are effective. Get in touch with your local leather organization; they should have more current information.

Waste products like piss or shit are safe on unbroken skin. It is unsafe to let these waste products make contact with cut, burned, or abraded skin; or with mucous membranes like those lining the mouth, vagina, or anus.

Some of us have sex with men. Because this is taboo behavior for dykes, it can be hard for us to admit that this is something we do and take precautions. It is really important to be honest about your behavior and use condoms, gloves, and barriers for oral sex with male as well as female partners. Since it is much easier to catch STDs (including AIDS) from men than it is to catch them from women, it is super important to play smart here. Don't let shame or secrecy put you in danger!

Putting a condom on a cock is not the same as putting a condom on a dildo. Make sure you have a condom with a reservoir tip, to catch come. Without this empty space at the end of the rubber, the condom could break. Be careful you don't tear the condom as you take it out of the package. Fingernails can also tear condoms. A condom can only be applied to an erect cock. Squeeze the air out of the end of the condom as it is rolled on. If you're

fucking for a long time, change the condom or use two of them. He should pull out as soon as he comes, hanging on to the rubber at the base, to prevent come from getting spilled in your body.

Condoms should be used for oral sex as well as fucking. Oral sex is less risky than vaginal or anal intercourse, but it is still possible for disease-causing microorganisms to get passed during oral sex. So use a barrier!

The only way to protect yourself from STDs is to have safer sex every time with every single partner. It has become more popular recently for couples to compromise. One common approach is to get tested for antibodies to HIV, be monogamous for six months, get retested, and if both women are HIV-negative, they agree to have safer sex with outside partners and dispense with safer-sex precautions with each other. This compromise is better than ignoring the whole issue of STDs. But if you or your partner does not consistently obey the rule to have safer sex with outside partners, this puts everyone in jeopardy.

It's hard to think about all of this when you are in lust or in love and just want to relax and have a good time and feel close to the woman you are with. Sometimes it's so hard for us to find a compatible partner that we don't want to risk messing up a hot scene by demanding that the other person take precautions. If you make use of drugs or alcohol to loosen your inhibitions before playing, you might find it hard to make boundaries and stick with your own rules. And if you have recently slipped and had unsafe sex, it can be hard to go back to using barriers. Just going for an HIV-antibody test can be pretty stressful and upsetting. We all need to talk about these issues more and support each other for doing the right thing.

We have a right to get off any damned way we please, and we have a right to create relationships that include S/M, at whatever level feels exciting and safe to us. The outside world may not understand us; it can be tough to stand up to other people's negative stereotypes. But the fact is, we are strong, healthy, and loving women. None of us should have to die because of our sexuality. We can keep each other alive and strong by having safer sex, every time, with every partner.

RESOURCE LIST

Every attempt was made to check the accuracy of the items on this list. However, mistakes can be made. And as time passes, some of the information below will become outdated. Just in case your letter or telephone message goes astray, it's best to make your initial contact a discreet one. When you write to a group, address your letter to the acronym of the group rather than its full name. When contacting organizations for information, always enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Be patient; these groups run on volunteer energy. It may take more than one attempt to make contact. If you are ordering merchandise, please include a signed statement that you are over eighteen years of age and wish to receive sexually explicit material for your personal use. An asterisk (*) indicates a women-owned business.

Women's S/M Organizations

Bound by Desire
P. O. Box 26583
Austin, TX 78755

Briar Rose
P. O. Box 163143
Columbus, OH 43216-9710

CLIPT (Cleveland Leatherwomen in Power and Trust)
P. O. Box 18714
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

DAMES (Dykes Against Minority Erotic Suppression)
P. O. Box 1272
Milwaukee, WI 53201

RESOURCE LIST

Female Trouble
P. O. Box 2284
Philadelphia, PA 19103-0284

FIST
P. O. Box 41032
Baltimore, MD 21203-6032

*International Ms. Leather, Bare Images Production, Ltd., 4332 Browne St., Omaha, NB 68111-1829, (402) 451-7987 or FAX (402) 457-5350. You can send E-mail to ims1@dizznix.expansive.com. Women's event hot line: 1-800-NEW-IMSL. Annual leatherdyke contest and conference.

Knights of Leather
P. O. Box 582601
Minneapolis, MN 55458-2601

LSM (Lesbian Sex Mafia)
P. O. Box 993
Murray Hill Station
New York, NY 10156

Outcasts
P. O. Box 31266
San Francisco, CA 94131-0266

Outer Limits
P. O. Box 22805
Seattle, WA 98122

Pervert Scouts
3288 21st St., #19
San Francisco, CA 94110
E-mail: pervscouts@aol.com

Samazons
P. O. Box 53394
Washington, DC 20009

SLUTS (Society of Leatherwomen United Toward Sadomasochism)
Meets every Thursday evening at the Chicago Eagle starting at 8 P.M.
Newcomers always welcome.

RESOURCE LIST

T-Bears of Boston
72 Van Kleeck Road
Millis, MA 02054

Womanlink
2124 Kittredge, #257
Berkeley, CA 94704

Mixed S/M Organizations

APEX (Arizona Power Exchange)
5821 N. 67th Ave., #103-267
Glendale, AZ 85301

Black Rose
P. O. Box 11161
Arlington, VA 22210

Chicagoland Discussion Group
3023 N. Clark St., #806
Chicago, IL 60657-5205

The Eulenspiegel Society
P. O. Box 2783
New York, NY 10163-2783

Leather Archives and Museum
5015 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60640
(312) 878-6360

LINKS
P. O. Box 420989
San Francisco, CA 94142-0989
Events listing, \$20.

NLA (National Leather Association International)
584 Castro St., #444
San Francisco, CA 94114-2500
Annual Living in Leather conference. NLA has chapters in many cities.
Send a SASE to national headquarters for information about local chapters.

RESOURCE LIST

Shelix
P. O. Box 416
Florence Station
Northampton, MA 01060

SLA (Sacramento Leather Association)
P. O. Box 5789
Sacramento, CA 95817

Society of Janus
P. O. Box 426794
San Francisco, CA 94142-6794

TAPE (Triangle Area Power Exchange)
P. O. Box 98704
Raleigh, NC 27624

Threshold
2554 Lincoln Blvd., #381
Marina del Rey, CA 90291

ULC (United Leatherfolk of Connecticut)
P. O. Box 281172
East Hartford, CT 06128-1172

Gender Services

FTM International
5337 College Ave., #142
Oakland, CA 94618
E-mail: FTM News@aol.com

\$15 for four issues of a newsletter for female-to-male transsexuals and cross-dressers.

Information for the Female-to-Male Crossdresser and Transsexual, by Lou Sullivan, \$10 from Ingersoll Gender Center, 1812 E. Madison, Seattle, WA 98122-2843, (206) 329-6651.

Renaissance, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, PA 19406, (215) 630-1437. Publishes *Renaissance News*, a publication primarily for male-to-female transsexuals and cross-dressers.

RESOURCE LIST

American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), P. O. Box 33724, Decatur, CA 30033-0724, (404) 939-2128. \$36 for four issues of *Chrysalis: The Journal of Transgressive Gender Identities*. Mostly for male-to-female transsexuals and cross-dressers, though a special issue by and for FTMs was published in August 1995. Nonprofit organization that disseminates information for the gender community.

Periodicals

**Bad Attitude*, P. O. Box 390110, Cambridge, MA 02139, \$15 for three issues. Lesbian sex 'zine with a lot of S/M. Free personal ads.

**Cuir Underground*, 3288 21st St., #19, San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 487-7622. World Wide Web: <http://www.black-rose.com/cuiru.html>. E-mail: cuirpaper@aol.com.

**FatTGIRL*, 2215R Market St., #193, San Francisco, CA 94114, or E-mail: airborne@sirius.com. A 'zine for fat dykes and the women who want them. S/M content. \$20 for four issues.

Leather Journal, 7985 Santa Monica Blvd., #109-368, West Hollywood, CA 90046, (213) 656-5073. Call for prices. A complete list of leather-community organizations is published in each two consecutive issues.

**Taste of Latex*, \$10.95 for sample to DM International, P. O. Box 16188, Seattle, WA 98116-0188. Published three times a year. Pansexual magazine, glossy cover.

**Wicked Women*, P. O. Box 1349, Strawberry Hills, Sydney, Australia 2012. (02) 319 2034. Australian women's S/M magazine.

Directories

The Black Book, P. O. Box 31155, San Francisco, CA 94131-0155, (415) 824-8377. A directory to leather-community organizations, retail outlets, and more.

Damron, P. O. Box 422458, San Francisco, CA 94142, 1-800-462-6654, 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. PST, Monday-Friday. Several gay and lesbian guidebooks, including the *Women's Traveller*. Free catalog. Updated annually.

RESOURCE LIST

Gayellow Pages, Renaissance House, P. O. Box 533, Village Station, New York, NY 10014-0533, (212) 874-0120. One of the best general guides to the gay community. Includes listings of leather bars and S/M organizations. Updated annually.

Nonfiction

Antoniou, Laura, ed. *Some Women*. New York: Rhinoceros, 1995.

Baldwin, Guy. *Ties That Bind: The SM/Leather/Fetish Erotic Style*. Los Angeles: Daedalus Publishing Company, 1993. Baldwin is a well-known psychotherapist and longtime columnist in *Drummer* magazine. Commentary on the scene by one of our elder statesmen.

Bannon, Race. *Learning the Ropes: A Basic Guide to Safe and Fun S/M Lovemaking*. Los Angeles: Daedalus Publishing Company, 1992. Smart, approachable guide to the basics, with an especially good section on negotiation.

Califia, Pat, ed. *The Lesbian S/M Safety Manual*. Boston: Lace/Alyson Publications, 1988.

Califia, Pat. *Sensuous Magic: A Guide for Adventurous Couples*. New York: A Richard Kasak Book, 1993.

Easton, Dossie, and Catherine A. Liszt. *The Bottoming Book; or, How to Get Terrible Things Done to You by Wonderful People*. San Francisco: Lady Green, 1994.

Easton, Dossie, and Catherine A. Liszt. *The Topping Book; or, How to Get Good at Being Bad*. San Francisco: Greenery Press, 1995.

Herrman, Bert. *Trust: A Guide to the Sensual and Spiritual Art of Handballing*. \$12 plus \$2 shipping and handling to Alamo Square Press, P. O. Box 14543, San Francisco, CA 94114. The only decent book in print about anal fisting.

Jacques, Trevor, with Dr. Dale, Michael Hamilton, and Sniffer. *On the Safe Edge: A Manual for SM Play*. Toronto: WholeSM Publishing, 1993. A good overview of safe, sane, and consensual S/M, with an extremely detailed section on sexually transmitted diseases.

RESOURCE LIST

Mains, Geoff. *Urban Aborigines: A Celebration of Leathersexuality*. San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1984. An ethnography of the gay men's leather community. Mains finished this book just as the AIDS epidemic was cranking up. If you'd like to know what it was like way back then, this is a good place to start.

Morin, Jack. *Anal Pleasure and Health: A Guide for Men and Women*, 2d ed. Burlingame, Calif.: Yes Press, 1981. An indispensable work for anyone who is curious about anal sex but not sure how to go about making it a safe and pleasurable experience.

Queen, Carol. *Exhibitionism for the Shy: Show Off, Dress Up and Talk Hot*. San Francisco: Down There Press, 1995. Though not strictly about S/M, this book presents ways to begin exploring fantasies, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and alternate personas with your partner. Very sex-positive.

Samois, eds. *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M*. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1981.

Thompson, Mark, ed. *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice*. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1991. A wonderful collection of work by the leather literati, intelligentsia, and movers and shakers.

Fiction

Allison, Dorothy. *Trash*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Firebrand Books, 1988. Short stories by one of our most talented and provocative authors.

Antoniou, Laura, ed. *Leatherwomen*. New York: Masquerade Books, 1993. Short stories.

Antoniou, Laura, ed. *Leatherwomen II*. New York: Masquerade Books, 1995. Short stories.

Califia, Pat. *Doc and Fluff: The Dystopian Tale of a Girl and Her Biker*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1990, repr. 1996. A novel.

Califia, Pat, ed. *Doing It for Daddy: Short and Sexy Fiction About a Very Forbidden Fantasy*. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1994. A pansexual anthology of daddy fantasies.

Califia, Pat. *Macho Shuts*. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1988. Short stories.

RESOURCE LIST

Calafia, Pat. *Melting Point*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1993, repr. 1996. Short stories.

Oakgrove, Artemis. *The Raging Peace, Dreams of Vengeance, and Throne of Council*. Boston: Lace/Alyson Publications, 1984. A trilogy that interweaves a war among goddesses with the complex interactions among a group of leatherdykes. Also the author of *Nighthawk*, a novel that features a gang of black butches and some very rough treatment of a white slave girl.

Réage, Pauline [Dominique Aury]. *Story of O*. New York: Grove Press, 1965. This mostly heterosexual tale includes some sizzling lesbian scenes at Samois, the estate of a female dominatrix.

Roquelaure, A. N. [Anne Rice]. *The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty*. New York: Dutton, 1983. A kinky version of the classic fairy tale, completed in two additional volumes, *Beauty's Release* and *Beauty's Punishment*.

Retail Outlets

Adam and Gillian's Sensual Whips and Toys. Catalog \$3 to Utopian Network, P. O. Box 1146, New York, NY 10156, (516) 842-1711, Monday through Friday, 11 A.M. to 9 P.M. EST.

Alamo Square Press, P. O. Box 14543, San Francisco, CA 94114. Mail-order books about leather and S/M sex. Send SASE for listing.

*Dressing for Pleasure, P. O. Box 43079, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043, (201) 746-4200. Books, magazines, videos, toys. Catalog \$3 (make check out to Constance Enterprises, Ltd.). Also ask about their annual fetish ball.

Gauntlet, 1-800-RINGS2U, 2215R Market St., #801, San Francisco, CA 94114. Mail-order catalog \$5. The oldest professional piercing company in the world. Outlets in Los Angeles, (310) 657-6677; New York, (212) 229-0180; and San Francisco, (415) 431-3133.

*Good Vibrations, 1210 Valencia, San Francisco, CA 94110. Catalog \$4. Vibrators, dildos, lubes, safer-sex supplies, restraints, magazines, books, videos, light whips.

RESOURCE LIST

*Heartwood Whips of Passion, Janette Heartwood, 412 N. Coast Highway, #210, Laguna Beach, CA 92651, (714) 376-9558. Finely crafted whips.

Mark Chester, P. O. Box 422501, San Francisco, CA 94142, (415) 621-0420. Spandex hoods and body bags. Original ideas in physical restraint.

*QSM, P. O. Box 880154, San Francisco, CA 94188, 1-800-537-5815, Monday through Friday, 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. PST. FAX (415) 550-7717. Book and magazine catalog (free). They also run classified and display ads.

*Raelyn Gallina, P. O. Box 20034, Oakland, CA 94620, (510) 655-2855. A professional piercer with many years of experience. \$2 and long SASE for brochure of her custom jewelry.

*Sarah Lashes, 2336 Market St., #39, San Francisco, CA 94114, (415) 621-6048. Call for catalog. Finely balanced and beautifully braided floggers, cats, and other whips.

*Sorodz, P. O. Box 10692, Oakland, CA 94610, (510) 839-2588. High-tech flagellation implements made from easy-to-clean industrial materials. Unique and weirdly beautiful items that pack quite a wallop. \$2 for a catalog.

Silver Anchor Enterprises, P. O. Box 760, Crystal Springs, FL 33524-0760, (813) 788-0117 or 1-800-TIT-RING. FAX (813) 782-0180. Catalog \$4. Specializing in premium, custom-crafted surgical stainless steel piercing jewelry.

St. Michael's Emporium, 156 East 2nd St., #1, New York, NY 10009. Catalog \$3. Leather attire suitable for the Middle Ages through Armageddon.

*Stormy Leather, 1158 Howard St., San Francisco, CA 94103, 1-800-486-9650, (415) 626-1672, FAX (415) 626-4134. Leather and latex fetishwear and a great selection of toys.

RESOURCE LIST

Defense Funds

Little Sister's Defense Fund, 1221 Thurlow St., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6E 1X4, (604) 687-2919. They can take donations on your credit card over the phone.

Countdown on Spanner, c/o Central Station, 37 Wharfedale Road, London N1 9SE. They have cool badges, T-shirts, and literature as well.

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

Laura Antoniou is the editor of *Leatherwomen I and II, By Her Subdued, No Other Tribute*, and two nonfiction anthologies, *Looking for Mr. Preston* and *Some Women*. In 1995 she revealed that under the name Sara Adamson, she has written several novels, including *The Slave* and *The Trainer*. She's been doing this stuff for a long time and thinking about it much longer.

Bear is a wild-hearted gender-fucking butch girl and an example of what happens when one overeducates a delightfully filthy mind. She enjoys being full of seeming contradictions and would like to gratefully dedicate her contribution to this volume to a certain rather talented Cat.

Bête Noir Images is the brainchild of Lindsey, a self-taught artist from Denver who believes that it is no coincidence that artistic inspiration is allegorically portrayed as a woman. At the tender age of six Lindsey began tying up her Barbie dolls and was surprised when her parents objected. She continued to draw bondage images, but kept them strictly private. Recently, however, Lindsey joined a gallery and approached local fetish boutiques about showing her bondage art. In 1994 the artist mounted a successful solo show and was a finalist in <O> magazine's "Bettie" competition.

J. D. Blade is the figment of someone's very active imagination. The names in her stories have been changed to protect the guilty. Her work "Daddy Boy With a Twist" was published in *Taste of Latex* as a "Boy and His Dad." J. D.'s passions are mind fuck and cigars. She is currently working on a story, which she hopes to publish, about a butch who gets flipped by a femme. Thanks to J. C. Collins and Lamar Van Dyke, who provided constructive criticism that improved the original story.

Tala Brandeis has previously published work in *Venus Inferis*, *Brat Attack*, and *PFIQ*. She lives in San Francisco with her lover. She is a troublemaker, a photographer, and an S/M leatherdyke. Her hobbies are play piercing and single-tailed whips.

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

Pat Califia was one of the contributors to (but not an editor of) *Coming to Power* and a founder of Samois. Her numerous fiction and nonfiction books about S/M and other aspects of radical sex have been translated into Dutch, Spanish, German, and Japanese. She writes and works on her sobriety every single day. Her principal pleasures are quilting, gardening, petting her cats, talking trash, studying goddess mythology, and plying the cane and scalpel.

Drew Kelly Campbell is a kinky print ho. In his copious spare time, he works as an assistant editor of *Cuir Underground*, the Bay Area's leather-S/M-fetish news and events bimonthly. His work has appeared in *Venus Infers*, *Spectator*, *FaT GiRL*, and the *SandMutopia Guardian*. He is currently working on an anthology with Pat Califia entitled *Bitch Goddess: The Spiritual Path of the Dominant Woman* (forthcoming from Cleis Press). *Miss Abernathy's Concise Slave-Training Manual*, a pseudonymous work, is due in spring 1996 from Greenery Press.

Lisa Carruthers is a thirty-one-year-old bookworm who has lived her entire life in San Jose, Calif. She writes poetry, music, and fiction and has been sober for eight years.

Denya Cascio, a native New Yorker, is a poet, teacher, and pornographer. She is trying hard to work on a collection of her S/M erotica—which, if she doesn't stop giving her life away to the Lesbian Sex Mafia, will not be finished until the next millennium. For the moment, her work can also be found in *Leatherwomen I and II*.

Sossity Oessa Chiricuzio is a voice from the shadows, a leather lovin' hippie's child, femme dyke. She believes the Goddess gave her a passion for womyn and writing with the same purpose in mind—to celebrate beauty. She is twenty-four, but age is relative, as any womyn who lives behind enemy lines knows.... Her childhood ended at age six, and she's been fighting to maintain her flesh and spirit ever since. The single most healing energy she's found is in the rituals her leathersisters help her recreate.... Blessed be.

J. C. Collins is a Seattle-based photographer who documents the leatherdyke community. Her work has appeared in the *Leatherwomen* calendar, *SandMutopia Guardian*, *The Advocate*, and *Venus Infers*.

Madeline Davis is a library conservator and coauthor with Liz Kennedy of *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (Routledge, 1993) as well as numerous articles on lesbian history. She is a

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

contributor to *The Persistent Desire* (Alyson, 1993) and is included in a forthcoming anthology, *Fem(me): Constructing Femme Identity* (Crocker & Harris, eds.). Madeline has been a songwriter, singer, actress, and gay and lesbian activist for more than twenty-five years.

L. J. Dreamwalker is an artist, poet, and writer who has been involved with S/M for many years. "Virgin's Request" was first published in October 1991 in *Strangeway Almanac* #2, an underground 'zine published by Casey Androzany. Dreamwalker is currently working on self-publishing a collection of her writings.

slave falcon...slave to Mistress Kate four years and eternity. Chag-dacrone...
in-tent-ful...thyme-less...akin-to-the-sphinx...one-of-many... ..

Gabriel, primarily a performance poet, moonlights as a radio journalist, columnist, political activist, jeweler, and producer of queer performance art with the Bulkhead Gallery in Santa Cruz, Calif. Her work has been included in such publications as *Matrix*, *Lavender Reader*, *Inciting Desire*, and the European *Trash in the Streets*.

Liz Gewirtz is a sound recording major whose goal is to record Melissa Etheridge! She is also a long-term member of the Lesbian Sex Mafia and lives (of course) in Brooklyn, N.Y., with her wonderful lover and four cats.

Nicola Ginzler is a writer, artist, and performer. Her work has appeared in *Brat Attack*, *Frighten the Horses*, *Girlfriends*, *On Our Backs*, and *Venus Inferis* magazines. She has performed at 848 Divisadero, Build, LunaSea, Red Dora's, and New College in San Francisco, and at the Stonewall 25 celebration in New York City.

Liz Henry, a.k.a. Lizzard, has been writing poetry and essays and publishing 'zines since she was sixteen. She has been a secretary, a stripper, and sort of a technical writer. Turn-ons: "books, sarcasm, and people who like to massage me for hours." Lizzard's 'zine *Shut Utopia's* fourth issue has been delayed (excuses: bad health, no money, general flakiness), but it will come out someday! Currently she is working on a book of poems and essays called *The Evolution of Questions* and also on an approximately third-grade-level science-fiction novel tentatively titled *Space Cat Princess*.

Michael M. Hernandez, as you can tell, is very vocal and coauthored an article entitled "Packing, Passing, and Pissing," which appears in *Dagger*. Mike hopes to promote a greater level of tolerance and acceptance for transgen-

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dered individuals. Thanks to the Powersurge Committees and the Outer Limits in Seattle, who bit the bullet, followed their hearts, and put on two fantastic events (hopefully with a third to follow in September 1996).

Liz Highleyman, a.k.a. Mistress Veronika Frost, is a professional dominant, writer, and public health worker. She is on the editorial staff of a major AIDS treatment publication, is assistant editor of the monthly pansexual pervert newspaper *Cuir Underground*, and is associate editor of the anthology *Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries and Visions* (Haworth Press, 1995). She is a member of the sex workers' rights group COYOTE and does AIDS prevention education and outreach with people in the sex industry.

Sorel Husbands began writing fantasies about three years ago, only a few months after exploring the realities of consensual S/M for the first time. Before that time, she had never written fiction. She was inspired by the passions and the intensity and the discovery that a lifetime of fantasies and desires were exploding from within her. Shortly after writing her first two stories ("Possession" is the second), she began self-publishing a 'zine titled *Skin on Skin*, which was sold in leather shops and bookstores around the country. *Skin on Skin* is, unfortunately, now in hiatus (probably permanently). One of her stories, "Prisoner of Your Own Desire," was published in 1994 in Laura Antoniou's *Leatherwomen II*. She can also be found worldwide on the Internet—you might even find samples of her work out there. "Oh, and by the way, since I always get asked this, 'Possession' is pure fantasy; it is not a true story."

J. R. (Mistress J. R.) is an eclectic, powerful dyke always in search of an adventure. She is a founder of the "organized" leather community in Austin (including the women's group Bound by Desire) and enjoys all sides of writing, living, and sensuality. Her plans include an abundance of each. Anyone else care to inspire a story?

Rebecca Dawn Kaplan is an eternal student and activist whose activism sometimes takes written form. She is an associate editor of the anthology *Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries and Visions* (Haworth Press, 1995; Naomi Tucker, ed.), which includes her essay, "Your Fence Is Sitting on Me: The Hazards of Binary Thinking." Another essay of hers, "Words That Divide Us," was published in the October 22, 1994, issue of *off our backs* (that's right, "off"!). She has received pieces of paper from M.I.T. in psychology and Tufts in urban/social policy and is currently attending Stanford Law School to gain increased skills in, and formal recognition of, her vocal agitation for social justice.

Minx Kelly is a married bi Net surfer with a strange imagination and

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way too much time on her hands. She lurks at science-fiction cons and in the Net as minxkely@bbs.xnet.com.

Miriam Laskin lives in New York City, where she is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of English, a freelance journalist and fiction writer, a rock sax player, and a kinky-girl dyke. Under her pen name, Maria Santiago, she has published nasty (but somehow romantic!) sex stories in *Venus Infers* and *Bad Attitude* magazines; one of her stories is included in *Heatwave*, edited by Lucy Jane Bledsoe.

Alien Nation's mom once lovingly referred to her as "Slut Queen of America." Alien was shocked—she thought she'd been hiding the truth from her better than that! Alien tends to think of herself as a #2 (White-Trash-Punk-Lesbian-Feminist-Separatist) Fem. She lives in a lesbian community on Land Trust land and undermines the patriarchy for a career. She can't decide whether she's a top or a bottom...there seems to be some obscure pattern that relates to the moon, her menstrual cycle, and how much chocolate she has in her bloodstream. Wanna go help her figure it out?

Ketti Neil is an artist and scholar engaged in performance practice and theory. She writes, plays, and photographs under various guises.

Felice Newman is copublisher of Cleis Press, where she is privileged to edit and publish a powerfully transformative body of sex writing by women (and a few men) she admires.

Penelope Pierce has been writing erotica for several years. The appearance of her work in *The Second Coming* marks her publishing debut. Penelope lives in New York City and is fiercely committed to personal and spiritual freedom and exploration. She thanks the leather community at large and celebrates the courage of all those who dare (whenever, however, wherever).

Mary Frances Platt is a poor cultured big-mouthed big-breasted radical oxygenated wheelchair-using femme crip who still hasn't learned what *no* means. Anyone want to play teacher?

Carol Queen is bisexual and then some. Her book *Exhibitionism for the Shy* is available from Down There Press; she has a collection of essays and a couple of novels in the works. She is a coeditor of *Switch Hitters*, an anthology of erotic dyke stories by fags and erotic fag stories by dykes, with Lawrence Schimel. In her spare time she's getting a doctorate in sexology so she can say, "That's *Dr. Queen, Mr. Helms*."

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Rath Images is Robin Hemer and her life partner, Lori. Living in Denver, they are the mothers of a six-year-old daughter. Any time left is spent motor-cycling, traveling, and working on their house. For information on their images, E-mail RATHIMAGES@aol.com.

Raven'Light is a fashion whore and avid exhibitionist who gets wet combining politics and sexual pleasure. Since her diagnosis of breast cancer in 1991, photos of her brazen one-breasted body have appeared in sex books and magazines from here to Zaire. Her in-your-face attitude makes the reality of breast cancer visible, real, and pervertedly sexual.

Taiga Rhys is a proud mama's boy who is content to be kept on a short chain by her one true love—her mistress, wife, and queen. A strong believer in the ideal of freedom, she has learned that there's a price for being free, and she's willing to pay it.

Gayle Rubin was a cofounder of Samois and is the founding coordinator of the Outcasts. She lives in San Francisco with her lover, three cats, and a dozen filing cabinets. For almost two decades, she has been actively trying to make the world a better and safer place for kinky people.

Janet Ryan: "Catholic school, public school, art school... then what? Lesbian culture, punk culture, leather culture are where my camera leads me. Let me watch, let me photograph your stage fantasy or your private play. We'll all be smiling!"

Terry Sapp is a differently gendered uniform fetishist and reptile lover who currently produces the San Francisco-based *Suck-My-Duck* and *Baby Dyke* comics.

Lori Selke is a young butch bi dyke currently living in Chicago, somewhat to her dismay. She was an English major in college, and it shows. Her poetry has previously been published in *Bay Windows* and *Amazing Science Fiction*, and she is currently writing a health column for *Fat Girl*.

Lydia Steptoe is the pseudonym of a woman who came out as a pervert thanks in large part to *Coming to Power*. Without it, Lydia's voice might never have emerged. Lydia is thrilled to contribute a work that may influence emergent perverts, especially in Texas. Currently, Lydia is working on a collection of Texas stories. With faithful friends and much rope, she is out of town on a gender trip. There are no pictures of Lydia.

Jezi Strong is a proponent of free expression, wild *femme*-inism, and "first things first" living who believes in keeping her big mouth open. She longs

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for the day when pen names are obsolete—when we are no longer hated for how and whom we love.

Heidi Lisa Sulzer is a twenty-six-year-old lesbian poet from Cleveland, Ohio. She is a senior at Cleveland State University, where she is majoring in English with a minor in psychology. She also works part-time for a lesbian veterinarian, assisting with the animals. Sulzer says she's not really out as an S/M dyke, but she's not exactly in the closet either—just “somewhere in the middle, somewhere on the fringe, somewhere trying to just be.” She has been published in *Whiskey Island* and *Widener Review*.

Suo: Female Trouble, Philadelphia. The mentality of a crone and the bod of a goddess. Suo: old, hippy, single, leather, fem, flex, slut. “I paint, dance, write, play, perform, try not to get killed while walking in my neighborhood, and take enormous quantities of bubble baths daily.” Her philosophy: Always get whipped in a heated swimming pool, and glamour begins at fifty.

Lydia Swartz is a bisexual polyamorous switch who thinks the trouble with the world is that she can make a better living editing propaganda about software than she can doing phone sex and writing smut. She is a technical editrix, essayist, writer of smut, and recovering poet who has been published in *Ecce Queer*, *Libido*, *Northwest Gay and Lesbian Reader*, *Reflex*, *Women's Work*, *Herotica 2* and *3*, *The Poetry of Sex*, *The 100th Boyfriend*, *Good to Go*, *Lesbian Health Fair Journal*, *Women on Women 3*, and numerous community publications.

Robin Sweeney is a Bay Area-based faggy butch writer living with Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome, a number of housemates and/or sweeties, and a whole lot of cats. Even in the midst of her Great Nap, Robin has still managed to have work appear in several anthologies and periodicals. Like most writers, she is working on a novel.

tatiana de la tierra is a boss-bitch brat, an angry *hija de puta*, a public whore, a combat femme begging for a beating, a Colombian-born re-activist seriously dedicated to *la latina* lesbian nation. She's cofounder and editor of *conmoción*, an international Latina lesbian magazine and information network.

Ramona Timmons is a San Francisco-based poet and performance artist. Her work has appeared in this book and in *The Slave Quarters*. She is looking for a publisher for her book, *Stripper for the FBI*.

Kitty Tsui is the author of *The Words of a Woman Who Breathes Fire*. Her work appears in more than thirty anthologies, including *Lesbian Erotics*, *Pearls of*

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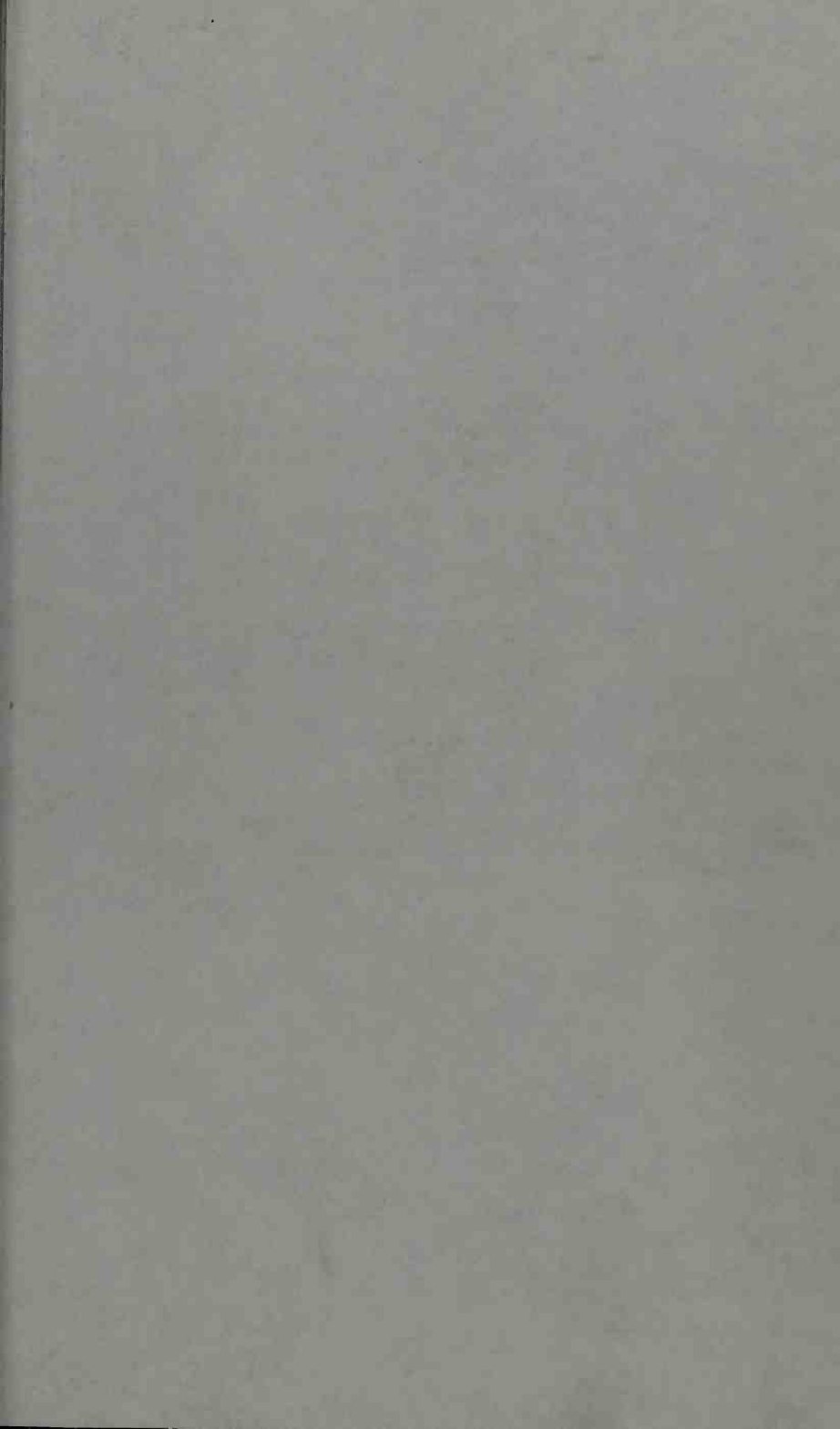
Passion, Chloe Plus Olivia, and *The Very Inside*. A bodybuilder, Tsui has one gold and bronze medals at Gay Games II and III. She has appeared on the covers of *On Our Backs* and *The Village Voice*. Tsui has just completed a historical novel, *Bai Sze, White Snake*.

Lamar Van Dyke has been leaving her mark on Seattle since 1983. Her tattoo-and-piercing shop has witnessed many meetings that have contributed to the birth and growth of the Seattle leatherdyke community. She instigates and agitates on a regular basis, creating shows, events, and conferences that create spaces where dykes can have more fun now.

Linda Wayne is an interdisciplinary theorist and out pro-consensual S/M dyke. She has worked with the homeless in Toronto, taught women's studies at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute in Montreal, and currently holds a graduate fellowship at Syracuse University.

joi wolfwomyn, a.k.a. wolfie, is a pagan priest living in Oakland, with dreams of opening a temple/dungeon in Oregon sometime in the next five years. She prefers to call her followers devotees rather than slaves, because they have to be seriously devoted to put up with her, especially during her bouts with fibromyalgia. Currently creating a family with two other women and her ten-year-old daughter, she dreams of a day when *polyamorous* and *polyfidelity* are everyday words and the day her daughter is done with puberty.

Scarlet Woman is the alternate identity of a San Francisco therapist who has been an active sex radical since 1961. She is a poet, feminist, mother, survivor of the politically correct era, leatherdyke, whipmaker killer femme slut. Her poetry has appeared in *Coming to Power* and *The Persistent Desire*, and she is a coauthor of *The Bottoming Book*.



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THE SECOND COMING

"The first crack of the strap drove the cold out of me instantly, my skin igniting under it. Two more and I was moving helplessly, without volition. I didn't care anymore who was holding me down. I was glad to be held securely. I pressed my face into the legs under my arms, filling my mouth with denim and flesh to muffle my cries."

—from "Sara and Day" by Denya Cascio

More than fifteen years have passed since the landmark book *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M* was first published. Much has changed since then: Female-on-female sado-masochism has emerged aboveground, the S/M community has become politicized, and a new generation of women has taken its place as the standard-bearer of leatherdyke-dom. These women remain on the radical cutting edge of raw lesbian sexuality. Here are their stories: wet, sizzling with both power and submission, and ultimately stimulating, entertaining, and even informative.

A passionate and articulate collection of short fiction, poems, essays, photographs, and drawings from over fifty writers and artists, *The Second Coming* crackles with the intensity and authority of an expertly used cat-o'-nine-tails. Sometimes dangerous, often erotic, always eye-opening, *The Second Coming* will grab you by the throat and won't let go.

Join editors Pat Califia and Robin Sweeney as they straddle the thin line between pleasure and pain in this intelligent, sexy, and provocative new book.

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