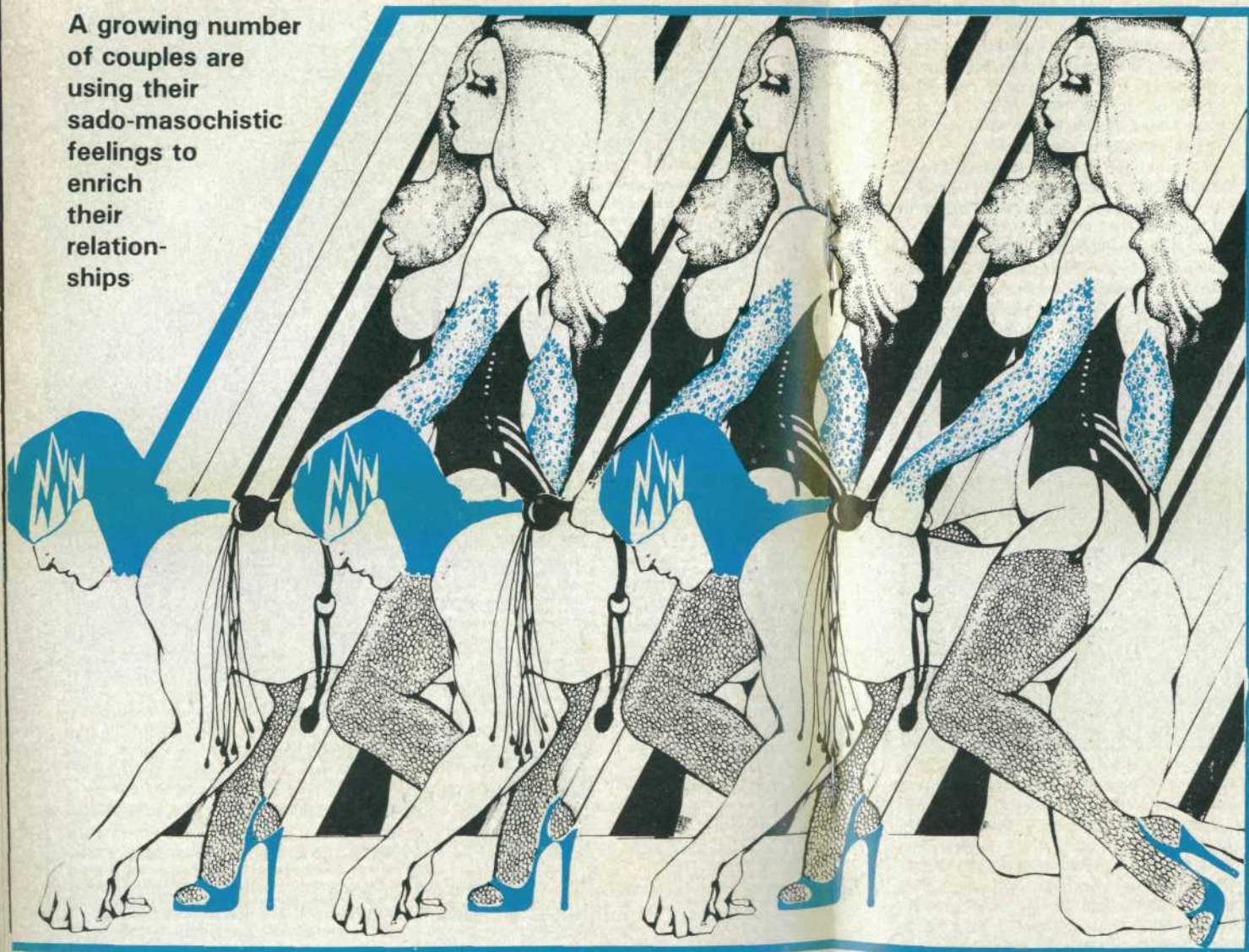


A growing number of couples are using their sado-masochistic feelings to enrich their relationships



by John Townley

It seems you can't open up a men's magazine these days without stumbling on a pictorial full of whips and chains or an article about how it's really all right to tie up and lash your partner if that's what turns you on. But it's just another far-out trip for couples who are too jaded to get off on normal, straight, loving sex, right? Wrong.

Not that there aren't a lot of people trying out S/M bedroom games just because it's a trendy new sex kick. There are. But a growing number of couples are opening themselves up to a way of using sado-masochistic feelings to develop and enrich their relationships.

It's called loving S/M.

Loving S/M?

It sounds like a contradiction at first. Can inflicting pain or humiliation on your partner be anything even resembling the love and tenderness most people would like to associate with sex?

It certainly can. In fact, it can develop into a whole loving lifestyle that can transform a failing marriage, and bring back the joy and intimacy that only true, sharing love can bring.

That's just what happened to James and Dianne Hartwell, and they've been crusading their own inner S/M tendencies and incorporating them into a loving sexual relationship that helped bring them up from the depths of alcoholism and despair into what they claim has been the happiest period ever in their 23-year marriage. It came about through their discovery of *loving S/M*.

The *loving* part is the key. But as with so many others with built-in S/M feelings, it didn't start out that way. James has been turned on by S/M since child-

'Loving' S/M - The New Life Style

hood, when he collected comic books that featured scantily-clad heroines tied up by ruthless villains. But it wasn't a feeling that he really understood, since like most people he associated S/M with cruelty and hostility. So, when he introduced Dianne to it after their marriage, the downward spiral began. In Dianne's own words:

"When we first got married, I wasn't that interested in S/M. Sometimes I found it pleasurable and sometimes I didn't, but I did it more to please my husband. Then, through the years with the ups and downs and children and hard times and good times, we found the

was in bondage that were so cruel and unbelievable that I thought she was just imagining it all. But as any alcoholic will understand, we were both in and out of blackouts all the time. We were truly crazy—literally crazy and suffering from a terminal loss of humanity."

Fortunately, the Hartwells found Alcoholics Anonymous, and dragged themselves back to reality by the bootstraps:

"AA showed us how to love again," as James puts it. "Thanks to the unsparing efforts of these people who give of themselves, we found ourselves again. It's just a beautiful, beautiful thing—we

Better, because the emphasis is on mutual caring and responding to each other's needs. Longer-lasting? James explains:

"Our sexual scenes, S/M plays you might call them, last upwards of eight to twelve hours. Rarely does one last less than two hours."

Does that mean a non-stop, twelve-hour orgasm?

"Not continual," Dianne relates, "but a build-up, and the climax is the most pleasing of all sex I've ever had. It brings out areas that have never really been explored at all by people who have just straight sex. Most women have

ty of this person who has put herself in your hands and you have to see that she gets something out of it, even looking at it just on a trade-off basis.

"Dianne will experience multiple orgasms, usually over long periods of time. Naturally, I'm enjoying myself immensely throughout, and a good bit of that pleasure is in seeing the effect that this has on her—bringing her up and getting her up higher and higher. It's really something else when you experience it."

There's more than just responsibility for pleasure involved in S/M; there can be real danger of pain or injury through



bottle, and I would say the last thirteen years of our lives were the worst. We were really at the depths of alcoholism. I thought James was some kind of a freak with his wants and would have nothing to do with him."

And for good reason, too. James' S/M sex desires, when bathed in enough booze, turned into something that was far from love:

"You must understand," James related, "that when a person is alcoholic, he is not sane. I did not have my head screwed on right. My wife would tell me things that I had done to her when she

"It is important
into sexual mastery
experience a great

to anyone who is
that the woman
deal of pleasure."

had the opportunity to fall in love again."

And as a part of drying out and lovingly recognizing and responding to each other's needs, the S/M factor in the Hartwells' relationship was transformed, also. Dianne discovered that she truly enjoyed sexual bondage, as long as it wasn't pushed to the point of cruelty. And James, sensitive to Dianne's needs again, learned just how far to go and how to derive much of his own pleasure from giving Dianne pleasure. S/M has now become a loving game they both play to give each other better and longer-lasting sexual pleasure than they have ever had.

60-second geniuses on their hands—you know, bing, bang, boom and it's all over with. They're very frustrated. This way, I find that I am far more satisfied."

To achieve this kind of marathon sexual pleasure, consideration for your partner is the name of the game. As James puts it, "It is really important to anyone who is into sexual mastery and submission that the woman experience a great deal of pleasure. It's absolutely vital, so if you're not doing well, you stop whatever you're doing and do something else. In this, you have a responsibility—you've taken on the responsibility



misuse of bondage or S/M equipment. But common sense should lead you through.

Dianne says, "Know your equipment. Every dominant should try the equipment out on him or herself before using it on a submissive. Have feelings for your submissive—watch for signs of reaction and if the submissive does not like it, definitely don't push, because you'll ruin it for yourself."

"You really have to be very sensitive to the person," James elaborates. "You can and you should take them further than they want to go. It's your duty in a



way. But you don't *beat* them there, you *lead* them there. You direct them. It's a question of sensitivity. The person can be saying 'don't, don't, don't,' but does the person really mean it or not? You have to be able to judge that, and if you don't judge it correctly, you can blow the whole thing."

Obviously, love and consideration of your partner is the key to creative and enjoyable S/M. But is it something that can work for everybody? Or is the capacity for loving S/M only present in some people and not others?

Probably the latter, say the Hartwells. There has been no clearly convincing argument about what causes or triggers S/M feelings, but those who have them usually have them from early childhood and are usually pretty well aware of it.

"It cuts across the spectrum of our society from very highly-placed judges right down to the person who sweeps the streets," explains James. "It's very much like alcoholism in that way—it's a universal thing. For those who have it, that is. And those who have it, know they've got it. It's not something you discover later on. Usually you've known it all your life that you were this way. This happens very early in life and I'm sure to some extent it's culturally inculcated, but just how much, I don't know."

If the Hartwells are to be believed, those who have it may be especially fortunate.

"It has a transcendental aspect," says James, "in which you get out yourself, get beyond yourself. You can have experiences that the average person would achieve very seldom in his lifetime. Winning a gold medal in the Olympics or something of that nature might give you that kind of a high. But we do it and get there ourselves routinely."

The Hartwells shy away from any comparison with the religious transcendental experience, mainly so as not to offend those who are oversensitive on the subject, but the comparison is decidedly there: the washing away of the individual

ego, the relinquishing of total control to another stronger power, bear striking similarities to the experiences of mystics of many religions from the tantric yogi to the Christian martyr, though perhaps on a more mundane level. Clearly, when handled in an enlightened and loving way, the S/M experience can be richly rewarding.

Unfortunately, too few are aware of this. For the last year and a half, the Hartwells have been publishing a newspaper called the *S/M Express*, in an attempt to shed light on the subject and bring people together to create a better understanding of S/M drives. Since the paper started, they have received literally thousands of letters from all over the U.S. and Canada from others with S/M leanings who had been buried in the closet for years, thinking they were sinful or perverted because of their feelings. Still others wrote of experiences similar to the Hartwells' early life where S/M experiences had turned into nightmares because of simple ignorance of the very special rules of loving S/M. The Hartwells' personal message to these, and to anyone of S/M persuasion, is:

"You are not alone. There are tens of thousands at least, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of us like you. It is a sexual need that is different from most others' sexual needs, but it's there. And how you handle that need is going to determine very much how happy or sad your life is going to be, because we have read and observed personally absolute horror shows that people have made of their lives because of sexual needs that they don't know to express or complete."

Those with problems relating to S/M or those simply wanting to better understand what it is truly all about, can write the Hartwells for information c/o Nubon, G.P.O. Box 2003, New York, N.Y. 10001. Along with the \$2 cover price, you'll have to send a signed statement that you are over 21 years old and are not a law officer trying to entrap them if you want a copy of *S/M Express*.

Outside of the Eulenspiegel Society's

Love and consideration
for your partner
is the key to
creative and
enjoyable S/M.

newsletter and magazine (that's the national S/M lib group), the Hartwells are the only legitimate information source going that isn't a commercial rip-off. Through them, readers of S/M orientation can learn more about themselves, where to contact others to meet and discuss S/M, how to avoid getting burned by expensive S/M equipment dealers, and how to make the S/M experience creative, safe and enjoyable. In short, how to practice *loving S/M*.

Approached with love and consideration, as the Hartwells have done it, loving S/M may indeed be well worthy of Dianne's unabashed, parting plug: "I think if you practice loving sexual mastery and submission, you'll end up with a wonderful, beautiful life. I certainly have." ●

John Townley is a personality counselor who has been writing on sexual issues for the past ten years.

sexology

Our Board of Distinguished Consultants

LeMON CLARK, M.D.

Gynecologist, and author of "Emotional Adjustment in Marriage," "Sex and You," and "101 Intimate Sexual Problems Answered." Ordained Universalist Minister.

ROBERT A. HARPER, PH.D.

Psychotherapist and marriage-family counselor. Past president of the American Academy of Psychotherapists, and former President of the American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors.

LESTER A. KIRKENDALL, PH.D.

Co-founder of SIECUS. Author of "Premarital Intercourse and Interpersonal Relations," co-editor of "The New Sexual Revolution."

JOHN MONEY, PH.D.

Professor of medical psychology and Associate Professor of pediatrics, Johns Hopkins University, and medical psychology research scientist.

WARDELL B. POMEROY, PH.D.

Psychotherapist and marriage counselor. Co-author with Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey, et. al., of "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male" and "Sexual Behavior in the Human Female."

LEAH C. SCHAEFER, ED.D.

Practicing psychotherapist and a member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors. Author of "Women and Sex."

EMILIO SERVADIO, LL.D.

President of the Psychoanalytic Center of Rome, Italy, and honorary professor of psychology.

PDC 56770-2

sexology

March 1979/\$1.25

ORAL SEX
—A MINORITY REPORT

THE LOVING
SIDE OF
S/M

ORGASM
—ONE WOMAN'S ROAD

HOMOSEXUALITIES
—A SEXOLOGY REVIEW

TEMPORARY IMPOTENCE
—HOW TO CURE IT

LETTERS
READERS SPEAK
SEX AROUND THE
WORLD AND MUCH,
MUCH MORE

