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TABOO SEX

HOW SHE LEARNED TO ADORE HER OTHER SIDE—AND THE MAN WHO TOOK HER THERE

His was first. In my ass.

I don't know the exact length, but it's definitely too big—just right. Of medium width, neither too slender nor too thick. Beautiful. My ass, tiny, tight and tightly wound. Twenty-five years of winding as a ballet dancer. Since the age of four, the age I first declared war on my daddy. Turning out the legs from the hips winds up the pelvic floor like a corkscrew. I worked my gut all my life standing at that ballet barre. Now it is being unworked.

His cock, my ass, unwinding. Divine.

This is the backstory of a love story. A backstory that is the whole story. A second-hole story, to be exact. Colette declared that you couldn't write about love while in its heady hold, as if only lost love resonates. No hindsight for me in this great love but rather behind-sight. This is a story in which the front matter is brief and the end matter is all. When you've been sodomized as much as I have, things get both very philosophical and very silly very quickly. My brain has been rocked along with my guts.

As he enters me I let go, millimeter by millimeter, of the tensing, pulling, tightening, gripping. I am addicted to extreme physical endurance, the marathon of uncoiling intensity. I release my muscles, my tendons, my flesh, my anger, my ego, my rules, my censors, my parents, my cells, my life. At the same time, I draw him inward. Releasing out and pulling in, one thing.

Bliss, I learned from being sodomized, is experiencing eternity in a moment of real time. It is the ultimate sexual act of trust. You could really

By **TONI BENTLEY**



get hurt—if you resist. But push past that fear, literally pass through it, and ah, the joy that lies on the other side of convention. The peace that is past the pain. Once absorbed, it is neutralized and allows for transformation. Pleasure alone is mere temporary indulgence, a subtle distraction, an anesthetization while on the path to something higher, deeper, lower. Eternity lies far beyond pleasure. And beyond pain. The edge of my ass is the sexual event horizon, the boundary beyond which there is no escape.

Anal sex is about cooperation. Cooperation in an endeavor of aristocratic politics involving rigid hierarchies, feudal positions and monarchist attitudes. One is in charge, the other obedient. There is no democratic, affirmative-action safety net swinging below ass fuckers. You can't half-ass butt fuck. It's a high-wire act—there are no understudies, no backups for anal Cirque du Soleil.

The truth always shows itself with the ass. It doesn't know how to lie. It can't: It hurts physically if you lie. The pussy, on the other hand, can and does all the time. Pussies are designed to fool men with their slippery slopes and ready opening. My pussy proposes the question; my ass answers. Sodomy is the event in which Rainer Maria Rilke's hallowed dictum to "live the question" is finally answered. Anal penetration resolves the dilemma of duality that is introduced and magnified by vaginal penetration. It transcends all opposites, all conflicts—positive and negative, good and bad, shallow and deep, pleasure and pain, love and death—and unifies them, renders all one. This, for me, is therefore the Act. Butt fucking offers spiritual resolution. Who knew?

I am an atheist by inheritance. I came to know God experientially, from being fucked in the ass—over and over and over again. I am a slow learner and a gluttonous hedonist. And I was even more surprised than you are now by this curiously rude awakening to a mystic state. There it was: God's big surprise, his subtle humor and potent presence, manifested in my ass. Well, it sure is one way to convert a skeptic.

If I were asked to choose only one place of penetration for the rest of my life, I would choose my ass. My pussy has been too wounded by false expectations and uninvited entries, by movements too selfish, too shallow, too fast or too unconscious. My ass, knowing only him, knows only bliss. The penetration is deeper, more profound; it rides the edge of sanity. The direct path through my bowels to God has become clear.

Norman Mailer sees the sexual routes

in reverse: "So that was how I finally made love to her, a minute for one, a minute for the other, a raid on the devil and a trip back to the Lord." But Mailer is a man, a penetrator, not a recipient, not a submissive. He hasn't been, I assume, in my compromising position.

My yearning is so cavernous, so deep, so old yet so young, that only a big cock buried deep in my ass has ever filled it. He is that cock. The one that saved me. He is my answer to every man who came before him. My revenge.

I see his cock as a therapeutic instrument. Perhaps the wound is not psychological but truly the space inside that yearns for God. Perhaps it is merely the yearning of a woman who thinks she cannot have him. A woman whose daddy told her long ago that there is no God.

But I want God.

Having a cock in her ass really gives a woman focus. Receptivity becomes activity, not passivity. His cock pierces my yang—my desire to know, control, understand and analyze—and forces

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my yin—my openness, my vulnerability—to the surface. I cannot do this alone, voluntarily. I must be forced.

He fucks me into my femininity. Being a liberated woman, I believe it is the only way I can go there and retain my dignity. Turned over, ass in the air, I have little choice but to succumb and lose my head. This is how I can enjoy an experience my intellect would never allow, a betrayal to Olive Schreiner, Margaret Sanger and Betty Friedan and an affront, from the rear, to many modern feminists. But having been to the other side, I know there is no going back to control, to being on top, to men more feminine than I am. This is simply how my liberation manifested itself. Emancipation through the back door would never be, for any rational woman, a choice. It can happen only as a gift. A surprise.

Humiliation is my greatest devil, but when the eye of my terror is entered I experience my fear as unfounded. It is through this physical surrender, this forbidden pathway, that I have found

my self, my voice, my spirit, my courage. This is no feminist treatise about equality; this is the truth about the beauty and power of submission. I have happened upon the great cosmic joke, God's supreme irony. Enter the exit. Paradise waits.

I am, you see, a woman who has been in search of surrender my whole life—to find something, someone, to whom I could subsume my ego, my will, my miserable mortality. I tried various religions and various men. I even tried a religious man. And then he found me, the agnostic who demanded my submission.

"Bend over," he'd say, gently, firmly. I can hear it now—echoing in the bowels of my being.

You just don't know when he's going to show up. The one who is going to change everything forever, the one who's going to rock your world. He may even be someone you already know.

Three years prior to my awakening, a Pre-Raphaelite beauty at the gym started flirting with me. I'd never been with a girl, though I'd thought about it plenty. She was also interested in a Young Man who frequented the gym. That New Year's Eve she invited us both to her house and initiated a magical three-way. So magical, in fact, that we all reconnected throughout the year and again the following New Year's Eve. But soon afterward, the Young Man moved for a job and, though the Pre-Raphaelite and I met again, I missed the Young Man. Sweet sisters without a cock between us.

The decision to see the Young Man when he called after a two-year absence was surprisingly easy. Earlier that day my current boyfriend had juiced up my anger by pontificating about "our" relationship—as far as I was concerned, he was in "our" relationship alone. But we had one rule that legislated hope: We weren't monogamous. And so it was arranged. It was three o'clock now, and the Young Man would be over at four. Love in the afternoon, like Gary Cooper and Audrey Hepburn.

I bathed, shaved my legs, powdered my body with honey dust, set up the music, closed the curtains, fed the cat, lit the incense and candles and then—very excitedly, very apprehensively—put myself into a black thong, black bra and long black velvet gown.

The doorbell rang, late. I opened the door and he stepped inside, folded me into his big arms—no words—and pressed me close. I was his from that moment forth. I allowed it, and for the next three hours I melted into him in a way I never had with any man before.

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As with dancing, I knew I had to work with my discomfort, embrace it, to get to the next level.

As his cock entered me to the full, the pressure made me flinch. He looked down at me and said gently, "I won't hurt you." And although it did hurt physically, somehow I understood intuitively that it wasn't about the pain; it was about something else. As with dancing, I knew I had to work with my discomfort, embrace it, to get to the next level.

Then he fucked me in the ass. Is this what he learned while he was out of town? It was my first time. Ever. My God, he was good. I mean bad. What nerve he had. So graceful. It was slow, very careful, very connected and painful. It was here, in there, that I first moved through pain and fear to that plateau on the other side called bliss. Bliss is not a pain-free zone but rather a postpain zone. Big difference.

That virgin voyage was an emotional and anatomical miracle: If I had walked on water, I couldn't have been more amazed. This was my first act of sacrifice that was not mired in the vicious circle of narcissism, the first that delivered me to an entirely new place instead of a new angle on the old one. I have been changed ever since. And it began physically with the act that proposed the mystery, and psychically with my decision to allow it—the best one I ever made. I simply wanted to let this particular man into me. I wanted who he was deep inside of who I was.

Of course, it also took balls to want and try and dare to fuck me in my tight little ass. I'll respect him forever for that. Finally, a man who was not afraid. The Young Man, Three-Way Man, was transfigured before my eyes. A-Man was born.

And so it began, in naive complicity, once a week, twice a week, three times a week. Mostly late afternoons. He was an expert, and I was willing.

Once initiated I couldn't help thinking about anal everything. Including the mechanics. The digestive system is a one-way pipe through which peristaltic contractions urge food from mouth to anus. Ass fucking comprises the bold and contrary attempt to travel the route in reverse.

Fucking a pussy is entering a cave with only one pinprick exit—the hole in the cervix that enters the womb, the "exit" to parenthood. A-Man and I exist beyond the intercourse that breeds babies. That's good too; don't get me wrong. But we live in the world beyond, behind. In the place where depth and love seem infinite, ever growing. The physical depth somehow leads into emotional

depth as if my soul slept in my bowels and is now awakened.

If you want to procreate, enter the front door. But if you really want to become part of a woman's internal workings, to penetrate her being most deeply, the back door is your portal. Anxiety, that ever-present agony, exists because of the inescapable knowledge that all must end. Enter an ass and you enter an endless passage. It is the exit to infinity. The back door to liberty.

A pussy, genetically, wants impregnation, the juice; an asshole wants the ride of its life. Both holes, I would postulate, address the problem of mortality as caverns for creation: vaginas for babies, asses for art. But pussies have been through too much. Give them a rest. They are old news—tired, betrayed, overused, reused—and have been overly publicized, politicized and redeemed. They are no longer naughty, no longer the place for defiance, rebellion or rebirth. Pussies are now too politically correct. The ass is where it's at: the playground for anarchists, iconoclasts, artists, explorers, horny men and women desperate to relinquish, even temporarily, the power that has been so hard-won by the feminist movement. Ass fucking realigns the balance for a woman with too much power—and a man with too little.

Inside my bowels, A-Man hits new walls, new angles, and that self-preserving voice of "Too much" echoes through my brain as I feel a resistance. But I have never said "Too much." I breathe through, adjust the angle and stay where he pushes until I open and receive him further. I expand into him and the pain subsides, transforms, into a profound sensation of freedom. Every point he probes pierces my armor of self-protection, and my two fears—love and death—momentarily lose their grip as I experience a moment of immortality.

More mechanics: The inner anal sphincter is not within conscious control. It is reflexively regulated by the brain in the gut, opening on demand. The external sphincter, however, is connected to and regulated by the conscious brain—witness the ability to grip and hold when necessary, when angry, scared or stressed. Unconscious internal sphincter, conscious external sphincter, only centimeters apart. Where else is one's unconscious and conscious mind so intimately connected, so readily regulated, so easily probed? It is a psychological

playground of the most intriguing potential. Put an ass on the couch and much is revealed.

All this is to say that when I get fucked in the ass I have learned to play with and even reverse that inherent consciousness about gripping my ass, clenching it, showing it to no one. After all, Freud observed that shit is one's first creative production.

You hear "anal sex" and you see nothing but shit—shit everywhere—but it just isn't like that. Hardly a trace, ever. All you have to do is include a nice little finger-in-the-ass bath prior to anal visitation. Anal sex is not about shit. It's about not being afraid of it, going past it—to find the shit that matters.

Despite its new legal status, sodomy remains the last taboo, sexually and socially. Oprah Winfrey talks about everything—rape, child molestation, incest, adultery, murder, drugs, homosexuality, bisexuality, even threesomes—but never about sodomy, except in the guise of abuse and criminal behavior. Always a scandal, never an advertisement. "Odd how 19th century literature is sealed off at both ends by an anal scandal," theater critic Kenneth Tynan astutely observed. "Wilde up Bosie's bum, Byron up Annabella's." Even the spell-checker on my computer, which recognizes more than 135,000 words, doesn't recognize *sodomize*.

There is, however, plenty of advertisement, albeit vaginal, in Eve Ensler's popular play *The Vagina Monologues*. But why is it that in all those interviews, all those questions, all those monologues, there is not a single mention of a woman's asshole? All that "liberated" pussy talk and yet so avoidant about what lies behind their sacred place: the hole of no return. It would be treason, I suppose, to advocate surrender at the rear for those who are finally claiming victory at the front. Victory from behind, however, seems so much more...how can I put it...honorable. I can't help wondering if my play, *The Anal Dialogues*, could find a venue even off, off, off Broadway. Perhaps in some dark performance space down some little-traveled back alley?

Clearly, yelling from rooftops—or on national radio waves—about butt fucking is expensive. In April 2004 the FCC fined Clear Channel Communications, the nation's largest radio broadcaster, \$495,000 for a 20-minute segment of *The Howard Stern Show* in which Stern discussed what he refers to as "anal." (It probably didn't help that the conversation was frequently punctuated by fart noises.)

Despite this sodomitic censorship, ass fucking has made several auspicious appearances recently on screens both big and small. The subject came up regularly in the popular TV series *Sex and the City*, whose heroines discuss not only men's growing interest in the ass but

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