

# An unusual Encounter

by Anonymous

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I remember the following incident very well and with good grace, because of the great and very positive impact it had on my later life. It was Saturday, a balmy late summer day, and I had decided to make some preparations for the very first lecture, which I had to hold as a newly appointed professor at the university of my home town, in the large public park, I knew so well from my childhood days.

The lecture was a beginners course, not particularly demanding. Actually, I ought to know the matter to be presented without any preparation. But it was my very first lecture, and I did not want to make a mistake. Determined to deliver a perfect talk, I had equipped myself with the reference book of my choice and engrossed myself into its contents on a park bench, barely aware of my surroundings.

“Hello, Sir,” said an unmistakably female voice – I had not recognize her approach, “would you eventually be so kind to take this jacket from my shoulders?” I looked up. In front of the bench stood a young woman, a woman so beautiful you won’t see very often in real life, maybe on television, but then it’s staged, not the real thing. However this woman was real.

Although this is something not many of my friends and acquaintances would put me past, I knew quite well to recognize class, and that was, what this woman had. Pitch-black hair framed a graceful full face, high cheekbones highlighted bright blue eyes, sparkling with bright intelligence and, let’s call it energy. What I want to say is, this was not a show woman, not an actress or a model, whose sole reason of existence is to look beautiful,

this was the kind of woman, who literally knocks a man out. I swear, I realized all this at first glance notwithstanding preconceptions against my profession.

The only thing, which slightly disturbed me, was the way she pushed her breasts out, allegedly to make them appear a little bit larger, although those were quite okay, just like painted women do in sleazy hotels. This did not match with the rest of her appearance, in particular she did not make a gesture, which could be interpreted as an attempt to seduce me. However, I should find out soon, that she did not have much choice in this matter.

“I need your help, Sir – desperately,” she said hauntingly, but without looking directly at me, almost as if no one should see, that she was speaking to me, a complete stranger. Her voice was pleasant and melodic, although some nervousness was clearly audible within. I looked at her quizzically with my mouth open wide. In this moment I admit, must have looked like an idiot. “Would you please, take my jacket off, Sir. Then you’ll understand,” she whispered, almost conspiratorially.

“No problem,” I replied friendly in a futile effort to appear relaxed and correct the first, unfortunate impression, I must have made on her. I laid the book, I had been reading in up to this moment, aside and raised myself to full height. In her fairly high heeled leather boots she was almost as tall as I, and I stand proud 6’4”.

“Talk is cheap from your point of view,” said the unknown woman, while I reached for her jacket. The top button

was closed, and she made no attempt to change that. It was only then, that I realized, that the sleeves were empty, so that the partially buttoned jacket actually just loosely covered her upper body.

Something was wrong. A suspicion began to flourish in me. I looked directly into her eyes. But there was no provocation, no exaggerated self-confidence, just a gentle and honest plea. Nevertheless I still hesitated. My education forbade me to touch a foreign woman just like that.

“Please,” she said, putting so much into that simple word with a look, which would have broken the heart of a stone-cold Foreign Legion’s veteran. I was no Foreign Legionnaire. So with a bad feeling in the pit of my stomach, I put aside my concerns, undid the only closed button and took the jacket off her shoulders. At that moment I honestly believed, that this was a joke, a test of courage, perhaps even the “candid camera”. Suspiciously I looked around, if someone was actually filming. But none of the walkers in my sight, paid any attention to us, and a vidcam was also not visible. Well, that did not mean that none was there. Most likely this was some perfidious student joke, and the camcorder was just well hidden.

There was nothing unusual about the thin black leather jacket. I took it off and wanted to handle it over to the beautiful lady, who had turned her quite adorable back on me, as I thought, in order to facilitate the requested removal of her jacket. Assuming, that the strange encounter would be over after that, I was

already about to reach for my book.

But then I realized, why she had kept her hands behind her back so stoically and also made no move to overtake her own jacket. She was simply not able to do so. Her wrists were not voluntarily crossed behind her back, but encased in a small, but very solid looking *steel cage*, which did not allow her to pull her hands out of it, in particular since the latter were small compared to my pranks, but nevertheless fairly strong for a woman.

She had been tied up this way all the time under her jacket without hope to escape, which also explained the strange stiff posture she had kept up until now. The way her hands were fixed, she could simply not help, but had to push her breasts out, like she did. I swallowed and hurried to put the jacket back over her shoulders. Then she turned back to me and gave me an investigative stare, which went right through me, judging me.

“Have you seen my ‘problem?’” she asked and I nodded, although I knew, it was not a question. I just could not find the right words in this moment. I was not shocked, I was a grown man after all, but this surprise had been a full success. I had expected anything, but not this.

“Can you do something about it?” She asked the crucial question, almost pleading, with a look capable to melt stone.

“I’ve no idea,” I replied truthfully. “What is THIS, and how did IT get there?” I almost bit at my tongue, when I asked this. Something more intelligent simply had not occurred to me so quickly.

“THIS is a *wrist cage*,” she explained to me, “a bondage toy – you know, what bondage is?” I nodded. “My friend has applied it to me. We wanted to go out. He insisted, that I’d to wear it under my jacket. Then he quitted with me right over there on that little bridge and took the key for this thing with him.” Those big blue eyes sparkled with anger, and yet at the same time they pleaded also for help. It was almost impossible to take another part than hers in this matter.

“This looks like a definite end for your relationship,” I managed to remark dryly.

“You bet,” she said. “Actually, it was him who wanted to atone for something. I believed him and I silly goose played my part in his game, and then...” She trailed off, leaving the rest to my imagination.

“... he has abandoned you and made a French farewell,” I completed her sentence deliberately, and she nodded.

“Something like that,” she confirmed my guess. “The trouble is, no matter how hard I try, I can’t pull my hands out of this thing. I’ve tried everything without success and, if I lose my cover...” She did not have to finish this sentence, too. I nodded. “I wanted to call a friend to pick me up, but with my hands stuck like this, I couldn’t even reach for my cellphone.”

Even as a layman I could see, that the latter was doubtlessly correct: This type of physical *restraint* was evidently very restrictive and made her completely helpless. She was quite obviously not succumbed by my irresistible charm, but in big trouble. It was more than evident,

that she was in need of help, and I had somehow created the impression, that I might be able to provide it and could easily be talked into becoming involved.

Nevertheless the whole situation was somehow too bizarre to be true. I still harbored a sneaking suspicion, that this had to be a student joke. I would not have been the first new professor, creative young people had played a prank on. In addition among students the members of my faculty had the reputation of being worldly innocent in a certain way and therefore also predestinated as easy preys for all kinds of stupid student pranks.

“Why me?” I asked suspiciously.

“What do you mean?” She looked at me blankly without any bad conscience.

“Why did you pick me?” I slightly reformulated my question deliberately.

“You looked like a nice guy,” she replied. “You’ve read for quite a while in this physics book – it’s a physics book?” I nodded. “I just thought, that...” She probably wanted to say something like “you looked like a friendly idiot” or something similar, but swallowed the last words.

“... that an unworldly scientists would not say ‘no’ to a lady in distress,” I finished her sentence in a for me sort of more advantageous way. She went red, which was clearly visible, and this spontaneous reaction immediately freed her from the subliminal suspicion to play a trick on me. Then she nodded almost shyly, without looking directly at me, pleading guilty in a subtle and likable way.

“Couldn’t you nevertheless please

help me, Sir?” There was despair in her voice and at the risk to repeat myself, those big blue eyes could soften a stone.

“I’d really like to help you,” I replied, “but I’m not a locksmith. However, I’ve a car and could drive you to a lock and key service or a mechanic or to, whoever can do it,” I offered. But this well-intentioned proposal was actually met with a rebuff.

“This is not a good idea,” she said evasively. Hopefully she added, “maybe you’ve a drill or something, with which the lock of this thing can be opened by brute force? I’m not a princess. It doesn’t matter, if this will hurt a little bit.”

“Well, yes,” I replied, “I’ve a small drilling machine. But actually I don’t want to cripple your hands accidentally. You’re not on the run?” Her subsequent stare was such a beautiful combination of incomprehension and indignation, that I involuntarily had to smile even before, she could bring the following words out.

“God, No! I... I’m policewoman,” she uttered forth, and there was a LOT of outrage in her voice, about how I could have attributed this implicit suspicion to her. “Actually I’m a detective in the local department. If you drive me to a locksmith, the latter would help me, but he also would have to file a report about it, and then the whole department will know, what has happened to me, and there ain’t any normal workshop, which is still open regularly, because today’s Saturday.” Now, I understood the harsh rejection. She was scared, that her unpleasant plight might have wide-spread impacts.

“The whole affair’s probably very uncomfortable for you?” I asked compassionately. She nodded. Then she looked deeply and investigatively into my eyes, as if she wanted to figure out, whether I actually met the requirements, which the current situation in her opinion demanded from a knight in shining armor.

“There’s to be a way, to get rid of this damn thing,” she said seriously, “which avoids, that the whole department will know about it.” In order to provide a further explanation she added, “my father, my brother and my uncle are all on the force. If this will be revealed in public, I’ll have to commit suicide.” She reared up a little under her jacket, as if she tried to tear her hands by force out of their common *steel* prison. However, there was not the slightest chance, that this could happen. I had noticed at first glance, that the small *steel cage* had been fitted much too tight around them, in order to allow this.

A single tear rolled over her cheek. It was the real thing, that was no acting, no elaborately staged art of female persuasion. She still did not create a particular fragile impression, and there was not a trace of make-up, which could be ruined.

This made the obviously unwanted tear, which she indeed had been unable to suppress, even more touching. I was now truly sorry for her and wanted to dig out my handkerchief, in order to wipe her tears away, but remembered just in time, before I would have committed the next fauxpas, that the latter was not clean.

“We’ll manage this,” I said instead os-

tentatiously without knowing, how we might achieve that. “Come on, let’s take this way a little bit upwards. Up there’s a hedge, which offers some protection from prying eyes, so that I can take a closer look at the thing. If the lock’s very primitive, we might even be able to open it with a paperclip or something similar.”

The latter well-sounding proposal was purely theoretical. I had read about it in detective novels and seen it on television, but I had neither the slightest idea, how to actually open a lock with a paper clip, nor, what properties a lock must have in order for this method to promise success. However in her current mood, my daring hypothesis fell on fertile ground.

“You actually think so?” A glimmer of hope flew over her pretty face, and my stomach clenched at the thought, what I had implicitly promised and very probably would not be able to keep up with.

“I’ve no idea,” I muffled therefore conscious of guilt in order to damp the very probably unjustified expectations, that my reckless remark might have aroused, if this was still possible. “I’ve to take a closer look at it first.” She nodded. Only then it occurred to me, that she had not mentioned her name, and so had I. Therefore I added in passing, “besides, my name’s Thomas, Tom for short.”

“Julie,” she said, “actually my real name’s Juliet, but everyone calls me Julie. Please excuse, that I haven’t introduced myself.” She gave me a friendly smile and did not miss to add politely: “It is very nice, that you promised to help me.”

“Up to now we haven’t achieved anything,” I reminded her. “I propose to proceed step by step.” But in contrast to my last words and my connate reticence, we started by calling each other by the first name. However, this woman was only three to four years younger than I, and I liked her. I liked her from the very first moment, I saw her. I might have a lot of natural talents, at least that was, what my teachers had always told me. But making a big impression on beautiful women was definitely not among these abilities.

“Agreed,” she said, probably just relieved, that she had found someone, who was willing to deal with her problem. I showed her the way and she followed my lead. Suddenly she stopped abruptly.

“My jacket is slipping down,” her eyes were widened from fear. The thought, that walkers, who were not numerous in this part of the park, might see her *steel-bound* hands, had caused a small panic. On one hand I immediately felt sorry for her, but on the other this enforced helplessness was also – I simply cannot think of a better word for it – pathetic.

“No problem,” I said for the second time on this day, and put my arm gently around her shoulders. This was an unexpected opportunity. I swear, that I did not arrange it in order to take advantage of her miserable situation, but I have to admit, that I also could not resist.

“Thanks,” she whispered. I could just have engaged the top button of her jacket again, so that she could not loose it. I had at least not consciously forgotten to do

this, when I had put the jacket back on her shoulders. But I also did not mind this unexpected occasion to casually wrap my arm around this beautiful woman.

We climbed the little hill this way, with me shamelessly exploiting her plight, until we reached the mentioned place, which according to reasonable discretion could not be peered by undesired pairs of eyes, at least not by human ones.

“I think we can remove your jacket now,” I said, after I had convinced myself personally once more about this fact.

“If you think so,” despite my insurance, she looked nervously around.

“There’s no one to see,” I assured her again before I took the jacket from her shoulders in order to investigate the unusual *fettering device*. At first glance and, as I should find out soon, also at the second there was no visible locking mechanism.

This small prison for her wrists consisted primarily out of four semi-circular, stainless steel rods, as strong as a male finger, which were affixed to a massive disk of the same material by sturdy hinges.

The rods were mounted on the latter along the perimeter at equal distances. When clapped together, as they were right now, these formed an almost spherical cage, whose opposite pole was capped by a similar disc, which kept everything together. The latter was made from brass.

Her crossed wrists were literally captured inside the cage, formed by these bars and held together by the top and bottom discs. All distances were either carefully measured or accidentally an almost

perfect fit, so that their confinement in their current position was fairly strict with not much room for movements.

I observed, that she almost unconsciously probed the strict imprisonment by twirling and twisting. On the long term that would do her wrists no good. To pull her hands out was definitely impossible, even if they were very small and delicate.

In Julie's case this was completely hopeless, even if she would lather them vigorously and make them as small as possible, it would be a pure waste of time and effort. The little cage held her wrists quite literally in a very tight, steely grip.

As I understood the design, the device was manufactured so, that someone had to have clasped every one of the four arcuate round bars, which were attached to the first plate, around her crossed wrists and put them then into suitable openings in the brass plate, where they had been latched and probably also locked or at least barred somehow. This must have been a cumbersome procedure.

Even to me as a bush leager in this matter, it was immediately clear, that she must have undergone this procedure voluntarily. This thing was not like a pair of *handcuffs*, designed to to restrain prisoners in necessary against their will. Just a little wriggling on part of the proposed prisoner would have created the greatest difficulties for the one, who had tried to fix this complicated thing on her.

However, what irritated me in the first place was the fact, that I could not find a keyhole or button or, whatever

might be suitable to open the device, at the second disk, the brass one, which according to my considerations had to contain the closure mechanism, which actually kept the little ball-cage together.

"This looks very solid altogether," I remarked carefully, "Do I suspect correctly, that it's mainly these two discs, which hold the whole thing together?" Julie confirmed my wary supposition.

"In one of them ought to be the lock," she replied, "just look for the keyhole."

"In which one?" I asked, "in the steel or in the brass disc?" I could not see any keyhole at all. But for obvious reasons, I did not want to tell her this bluntly, as long as I was not absolutely sure about it.

"What're you talking about?" She asked back and with utter conviction: "This cage is held together by two steel discs. That's all. There's no brass disc."

"I'm afraid there is," I objected, "one of the two discs is definitely made from brass – or a very similar looking alloy."

"WHAT?" She asked incredulously and twisted her arms as far as the unyielding *fetter* allowed. Although this was not enough to give her a direct view at the heart of the matter, since this disc was located beyond her crossed wrists, she must have seen something. She went pale.

"I'm pretty sure, that there were two steel discs, when I permitted him to fit this thing on me," she said finally, and from the tone of her voice was apparent, that she was well aware, that my discovery was nothing to cheer about.

"Did you REALLY see that?" I asked.

She wanted to affirm it with a nod, but then froze and shook her head.

“No, of course not. After all I had my hands crossed behind my back when he fumbled the whole thing together,” she admitted. “But when he showed me the device in advance, I know for sure, there were two *steel* discs. He gave it to me and I’ve tried it in front, where he locked and unlocked it directly before my eyes. The bastard said, ‘this thing is much more comfortable than your *handcuffs*’.”

“Well, what’s perhaps more important in this context than the question of the material,” I remarked, “there’s no keyhole or something similar in this brass disc.” Her eyes widened with fear.

“But there’s to be one,” she exclaimed, I think, against better knowledge. “How should he’ve locked the thing otherwise?”

“There’re also disposable locks,” I muttered to myself nevertheless loud enough, that she could not overhear it.

“What do you mean?” She asked.

“A kind of snap lock without a key hole,” I replied, although it was clear from her startled expression, that she already knew or had figured it out herself. “If such a lock’s snapped shut, you can’t open it anymore, only break it by force.”

“Oh no! This thing is made of hardened *steel*,” she said, “like real handcuffs. One can not simply break or cut it open, at least not without special tools. I’ll have to wear this thing for weeks – OH, NO.”

A single tear flowed down her cheek. It was not a prepared scene. I could not help otherwise, but simply take her in my

arms, regardless of, what she might think about this later. At this moment, I guess, she did not realize the embrace at all. I could feel, how she trembled. I swear, I did not want to take advantage of her. I just felt sorry and decided spontaneously without thinking about possible consequences, to support her with all disposable means, provided she would allow it.

“It’s not, as bad as it looks like,” I whispered, as she had calmed down a little bit. “Brass is a very soft metal, against which we can do something, believe me.”

“Really?” She bowed herself back against my embrace, which she probably had not been really aware of until now, in order to look into my eyes. There it was again, this occupational, investigative look by means of which she wanted to see, if I actually spoke the truth. “You didn’t say this just to calm me down?”

“No, I’ve some experience in metal working,” I overstated my abilities.

“That would be too good to be true,” she looked at me skeptically. Obviously she was not comfortable with the fact, that I held her in my arms, as if she were my dearest, which was indeed not appropriate. “Can you really open this thing?”

“I don’t want to promise something, I cannot hold,” I said cautiously, “but last year I sipped my mailbox key. I borrowed an industrial drill from my father – he own’s a small one man company – and drilled the lock open – it was also brass. This took no more than three minutes. I originally thought it would be more difficult.” She smiled again, but this time it



was a bitter smile. She was not quite convinced and did not really know how to judge me and my asserted skills.

“Do you think, you can achieve the same here?” She asked sceptically.

“Not exactly the same,” I replied pretending to be an expert, which was not exactly true. “After all I don’t want to drill into your wrists. But with a carbide cutter, which my father also possesses, I think this should be possible, provided I work with care and we cool the metal down occasionally e.g. with water.” I felt, that she drew hope from these words, probably she just clung to the straw, which I had just offered to her. However, since I still held her in my arms, I could feel, she relaxed and her breathing calmed down.

“You’re really a mechanic,” she said giving me a charming smile. But this was a skillful smile, the kind of smile women use, when they want to make a man, to do something, that he does not want to do. I quickly let her go. I was very uncomfortable, that even the thought might have arisen, that I might expect anything in return for this natural assistance.

“Actually, I’m not a craftsman, but more or less a kind of mathematician,” I replied truthfully, “but I’ve assisted my father very often since my childhood days, and thereby I might’ve learned one thing or another from him.” She acknowledged this honest statement with a nod. After I had dissolved the unseemly embrace, she had become serious as well.

“When can you start?” She asked directly fidgeting with the unyielding de-

vice, which denied her the proper use of her hands, e.g. like she wanted to now.

“Not immediately,” I had to admit. “If you really want to rely on me, I first have to get the tools. My parents live a little bit outside. Or do you want to join me on the drive and let my father do it? Hand on heart, I can assure you, that he’s an expert.” The latter would have been a delicate matter. Honestly, I had no idea, how to explain the situation. Fortunately, Julie had arrived at same conclusion on her own and shook her head vigorously.

“No, it’s absolutely sufficient, that you’ve seen me with this thing. I would appreciate very much, if no one else does,” she said, and for the first time she grinned mischievously. I love that sheepish expression on her face. But then it occurred to me, that I had been talking nonsense. It was simply not possible today.

“Well,” I replied, in the burgeoning confidence, that nothing was well. “There’s this still another problem: The day before yesterday my parents went to a short trip to the coast. They ought to be back tomorrow morning.” I had a key for the house, but not for my father’s workshop. He used to carry it together with his car key, and I did not consider to break into the rebuilt old barn, where he kept his machines. She said nothing, but the disappointment was written in her face, and I could not blame her for this.

“It’s my fault. I forgot about that,” I said apologetically. While this fact was true, it had once again thrown a bad light on me. “I could also drive you to anyone

else, who might be able to help you. I just do not know to whom. Today's Saturday..." She found her composure quickly.

"It's okay," she said. "Just take me home, please. It's only one night. That's no problem at all. I'll come to terms with this thing. I live alone and to wear this stupid *fetter* over the night, won't kill me. What really matters to me, is, that this thing has to be off somehow 'til Monday morning, when I've to resume service."

"If you don't mind, you can sleep at my place," I offered. "Although I've only a small single household, coffee will be available, and considering, how helpless you're right now, according to my humble opinion this may be the best solution.

"I'll come along quite well," she declined my offer without considering it.

"You cannot even eat or drink on your own," I argued sensibly, "unless you want to pour it into a food bowl and eat or drink without your hands, like a dog."

"That's not so bad," she hemmed and hawed. It was obvious, that she did not want to rely on a complete stranger.

"I promise to respect all the rules of the institution." Now Julie went red.

"That's not, what this is about," she assured hastily, faster than necessary.

"No," I replied, "that's something, which matters, and this is perfectly okay with me. However, I would be really glad, if you would spend the night with me under these terms. Of course I can as well take you to your parents, a friend or, whoever you prefer and trust. But you must not spend the night alone like this."

I had honestly no intention to lure her into my apartment. My concerns arose solely from the cognition and apprehension, that under the current circumstances, she would definitely not be able to do even the most basic things without assistance and would also be an easy prey to any kind of blackguard.

"Then I'll come with you," she reluctantly gave in, when she realized, that I would not back down from my reasonable position on this particular point. It was also evident, that she did not want anyone but me, who knew it already, to find out about her present embarrassment.

"Fine," I said relieved. The time was now advanced enough, that one could think about dinner. I therefore suggested, "I'm hungry and invite you to some fast-food or a pizza. It's up to you."

"I would rather prefer to starve," she gave back, "in fact I'm somewhat limited right now." In order to demonstrate this, she brought her forcibly crossed her wrists around her narrow waist, as far as the unyielding *steel shackle* allowed. Despite the fact, that she was (and still is) slim and flexible, this was not very far.

"No problem," I said for the third time, now with a teasing grin on my face. "I'll feed you. So I can always claim, that the most beautiful woman, I've ever met, has eaten out of my hands on our first date." I was not serious, but she frowned.

"This is not very pleasant," she replied, without specifying on whether she had commented on the awkward procedure or on my clumsy compliment.

However I appreciated it because of the self-deprecating tone of voice and the relaxed smile, which passed over her face, while she said so. Therefore I also interpreted her words deliberately as a tentative agreement to my proposal.

“Fast food or Pizza?” I asked. For explanation, I added: “I can also organize something different, but these are things, we can fetch and take home, so that I don’t have to feed you in public.”

“Fast food’s okay with me, but I insist to pay for it. My purse’s in my jacket.” The latter had not been my intention. First of all I could really afford it, and second I simply did not want to decree about her money, which in this case was unavoidable, since she would also refuse to accompany me into the restaurant independently, if her hands were covered or not.

“That you’ll have to eat out of my hand, is worth the money,” I therefore tried to change her mind with a poor joke.

“If you don’t allow me to pay for it, you can eat alone,” she replied resolutely, and there was no doubt, that she was serious. “I owe you too much already.”

“If you insist,” I had to give in, “but after that I don’t want to hear something about debts anymore.” I picked up her jacket, which I had laid down on the dry ground, before I undertook the investigation of her “wrist jewelry” and stroke off a few adhering crumbs. She allowed me to put it over her shoulders. This time I did not forget to close the top button.

After that she followed me to my car, which stood on a parking lot next by, but

did not say a word. I noticed, that she had no balance problems, despite her fairly high-heeled plateau boots. Obviously she was quite sporty in general. She also ignored my offer of assistance, when she entered my car. It remained for me to close her seat belt. After all I did not want to be stopped by one of her badged colleagues under the present circumstances.

When we arrived at the parking lot of the fast food restaurant – I evaded the drive in, where her condition might have been recognized – she insisted, that I should pay the expenses from her purse. So I took the latter with me, but paid from my wallet, which she could not see, because she had had to stay in the car.

“Everything okay?” I asked when I returned with a bag filled with hot, and fat-saturated content. She nodded, and I handed her her purse back, respectively put it into the pocket of her jacket, which was met with a formal “Thank you”.

“You’re welcome,” she was now very monosyllabic. While I drove us to my apartment, not a single word was exchanged. She said of course “thank you” when I opened her belt buckle, but in general she was very introverted, it was probably just the shame about, what had to be a very unpleasant situation for her. Who could actually blame her on this?

My little three and a half room apartment was on the third floor of a residence, and naturally it was not as clean as a whistle, since I had not been prepared to host a visitor, which Julie commented silently with a disapproving glaze.

I took off her jacket and hung it on the coatrack. The kitchen table offered enough space for two people, after it had been cleared off deliberately. So we could take our simple meal together. She was polite and accepted to be fed by me, but she did not develop real appetite. Somehow she looked very unhappy.

"You loved him very much," I asked, when I carefully wiped her mouth clean with a napkin after finishing our common meal. She nodded without looking at me.

"I was probably a stupid goose," she finally said instead of an answer.

"Because thou have been deceived by a lover? This can happen to anyone," I reproduced a conventional wisdom.

"I should have listened to my father. He did not like him. But unlike him, my father really loved me, and he always wanted the best for me." It did not escape me, that she spoke in past tense and that there was the bitter undertone of true regret in her voice. The latter disclosure had lasted heavily on her for quite a while.

"You had an argument with your father about him?" I asked and she nodded.

"It was entirely my fault. I've more or less broken off the contact," she revealed.

"Good parents forgive their children," I replied in order to cheer her up. "My father was also mad at me for some time, because I decided to study Physics and ceased to succeed him in the small company he built up – in parts also for me. But by now we tolerate each other again."

"With me it's much worse," she said sadly. "My father told me seriously, that

'this type' would not enter his house. I slammed the door, and since then we haven't exchanged a single word. It was months ago – now I'm sitting here with my hands tied behind my back and tell a complete stranger the story of my life."

"If it helps, I'd like to listen to you," I said, "and if you are interested, I can also tell you something about me. The TV is broken since yesterday, and 'till it's time to go to bed we'll have enough time."

"No," she objected, "these are my problems, I have to solve them on my own. If you just could open this damned *wrist cage* tomorrow, I would be VERY happy. This thing's horrible." She reared up a little, but the fairly solid *steel shackle* did of course not give in by an inch.

"He's gotta have prettily wrapped you around his finger," I said ignoring the latter statement, "that you did let him do that." In retrospect It may seem inappropriate to dwell on this topic any further, because I ought not to be concerned about it at all, but contrary to, what she had told me, I felt, that she wanted to talk and was in need of someone to listen.

"This was mostly my fault," she replied and went red. "I started it."

"But you've definitely not put on this thing yourself," I replied reasonably.

"No, but allowed him deliberately more than once, to *shackle* me with my own service *handcuffs*, not only because he had his fun to do so, but also because it turned me on," she confessed bashfully.

"You used to play bondage games with him?" I asked. She wanted indeed to talk

about her problems, and, that I had seen her tied up and knew the most embarrassing facts, qualified me probably as a suitable confessor to pour her heart to. Of course I could and probably should have rejected this rôle, but I took the bait.

“When I was a little girl, I must’ve been thirteen or fourteen, I discovered my father’s spare *handcuffs*, he kept along with other spare equipment in the broom closet.” She looked directly at me now, but her stare went straight through fixed on an imaginary point behind my back.

“First I’ve just looked at them and fantasized, then I’ve touched them and finally I’ve tried them out: They worked very well and did, what they’re supposed to do. Ratcheted down to the last notch I could by no means pull my hands out.”

“Did he catch you red-handed?”

“No, thanks God, never,” she replied, “the *handcuffs* were stored in a box behind the cleaning means of my mother. He’s probably not opened it for years. After a while I even dared to ‘borrow’ them along with the key, when I was alone at home. Once I fell asleep with the *handcuffs* on behind my back. and, when I awoke, it was just about the time my parents returned. Actually they were already at the door. But I managed to unlock and hide the *cuffs*, before they could take notice.”

“So you’ve played this kind of bondage games since your childhood days,” I stated the obvious politely just in order to keep the conversation going.

“I couldn’t explain it at first,” she continued, “but somehow I was literally ob-

essed with the feeling of being helpless. Subsequently I learned, that I share this obsession with many people and that it’s not really a perversion. But something like this,” she shook frustratedly her still bound hands, “has never happened to me ’till now. You’ve to believe me.”

“I do,” I replied without obligation.

“Until now, the worst, that has happened to me was, when I was seventeen and in my final school exams,” she told me. “Some day, when no one else was at home, I took Dad’s *handcuffs* out and applied them behind my back, as I was used to do in the meantime. However on that day I was tired and careless and didn’t pay attention, that the keyholes were facing upwards, that means to my body.”

“What’s so bad about that?” I asked cluelessly. I had seen *handcuffs* only on television and not paid attention to them.

“They were no simple *cuffs* with a *chain* between the *bracelets*, but so-called *hinged handcuffs*, where the two *bracelets* are connected by a rigid hinge. They cannot be twisted against each other, which means it almost impossible to access the locks if they are applied the wrong way.” I nodded friendly, as if I understood anything.

“Thank God I was slim and flexible, so that I could bring them over my butt forward – I can still do this. Only with this stupid *wrist cage* it doesn’t work. Nevertheless, it took me about twenty minutes to get the key into the lock and turn it around with my teeth, because I was so excited. Fortunately no one came back, before that time, who could have noticed

my self-induced predicament.”

“You seem to like challenges,” I commented, and she understood the inherent allusion to her current situation.

“A little thrill’s not bad sometimes,” she admitted, “but this,” she lifted her shoulders slightly, “was not planned, at least not by me. I met the bastard, who did it to me, at a training seminar. He’s an attorney, a criminal defense lawyer, or wants to become one. He’s still a clerk, and I’m a policewoman. I should have known, that this couldn’t work well.”

“As a prospective lawyer he should know, that, what he did, makes a criminal offense,” I replied soberly. “I think, it may be called ‘deprivation of liberty’.”

“He’ll argue, that I’ve let him put this thing on myself voluntarily,” she said, “and that’s true. Also I would rather die, than let this become publicly known.”

“It would be bad, but not that bad,” I said. “How did he actually persuade you? To walk through the park tied up even in someone’s company is either a very brave or a very crazy thing.” She blushed.

“Sorry,” I said, when I saw this. “I’ve no right to put my nose into that.”

“You know almost everything anyway,” she said. “One evening when, he came home lately – we were only fourteen days together, I’ve put my own police *handcuffs* on and given the key to him, just to see, how he would react. He said, that it was great, and from then on, I was always *handcuffed* overnight. The rest was not so special anymore. Actually, I was almost always somehow tied or *chained* up,

when we were alone together.”

“But why this strange *cage* thing?” I asked out of curiosity, “as a police officer you’ve your own *handcuffs* after all.”

“*Handcuffs*, at least normal police *handcuffs* are not particularly comfortable to wear on the long term,” she explained. “Also they allow to some extent movements you may not want to permit, if you put someone into bondage. For example I can easily bring my hands from the back to the front, when I’m fitted with *handcuffs*. This is not possible with this *wrist cage*, because there’s no way I can separate or uncross my wrists and therefore I can’t stretch my arms in the required way.”

“But somebody can unlock them,” I made my point, “at any time, provided he or she has a matching key, of course.”

“They’re all identical,” she explained to me, “at least for regular police *handcuffs*. So you can pass prisoners to colleagues without exchanging their *handcuffs*. If I’d only be *shackled* with one of those *cuffs*, I’d have been able to free myself very quickly. A matching key for them’s in my pocket even now and if not, it wouldn’t be a very big problem to obtain one.”

“And for this *cage* he arranged to be the only one to hold the keys,” I guessed.

“Not really,” she replied, “I’ve always insisted to have my own key, because once we had, let’s say, a bad experience.” I was of course quite aware, that it was not my business to know these details.

Nevertheless, I dared to ask, what was implicit in her words: “He did hit you?”

“After he had tied me up with my own

*handcuffs* one day, he suddenly wanted to try the pain thing, S&M with a whip, he had especially bought for this purpose, without my knowledge, of course. But this is not my concept of a relationship.”

“Was it very bad?” I asked sympathetically. To my surprise, she smiled broadly.

“Not for me,” she replied, “when he struck me the first and only time with his whip, I kicked him with all, I could, where it hurts a man the most and, before he could recover from this, I’d freed myself with the *handcuffs* key, which I always carry for safety reasons. After that, it crashed once again – I have enjoyed a very good combat training – and then I kicked him or, what was left of him, out of my apartment along with his whip, and the rest of his S&M odds and ends.”

“Thanks for the warning,” I replied in order to tease her a little bit, “maybe I should think twice, before I should actually try to free you from this device tomorrow.” She looked at me, as if I had struck her in the face, and I felt guilty. I was a stranger after all, and she sat here still helplessly *fettered* at my kitchen table.

“That was just a stupid joke,” I said quickly in order to repair the immaterial damage caused by my imprudent remark, “a very stupid joke. Please forgive me. Of course, you did the right thing. A man must not hit a woman and nobody, who’s helpless. That’s a coward and perverse behaviour, and I don’t approve it.” I caught her eyes with mine to convince her.

“Apology accepted,” she finally said.

“I don’t understand, however, how

you could get into the present situation,” I admitted concerns after we had spent a while in silence. “After you dumped that guy, the story should have ended there.”

“Well it has, in a sense,” she drawled.

“And what did really happen?” I know, that I was about to dwell on a topic, which should not concern me. The reason was, that I liked her, although at that time, I did not really know how much.

“He apologized a thousand times, sent me roses and so on,” she sighed. “Well actually I became weak. On the other hand it had not been me but him who suffered from a black eye. I finally thought, that I had maybe a little bit over-reacted.”

“I think, your response was entirely appropriate,” I replied. “You’ve been lucky, that you came away like this. I suppose he’s not a particularly strong guy?”

“He’s about your height,” she said with the mischievous grin, I love to see on her face. She wanted to tease me, and it was my turn and appropriate to grin back.

“If you think about to try the same with me someday,” I remarked with a twinkle, “I might disappoint you. I’ve been quite good in karate and, although I don’t whip women, I’m nevertheless capable to put a little girl over my knee, even if she’s a trained police officer.” This was the plain truth. I had no doubt, I could do so, hypothetically so to say. She peered at me, but did not answer.

So I continued: “But seriously, this was very dangerous and could easily have earned you more than a few bruises. People, who do things, like he did, are unpre-

dictable and vindictive, and in particular as a police officer you should know this.”

“I knew that,” she replied, “but it’s an entirely different thing, if you learn this in classroom or if you experience it yourself.” I indicated understanding and she continued: “The rest of the story is quickly told: After a reconciliation was consented, he gave me this thing as a supposed reconciliation gift.” She put the *wrist cage*, which held her hands still prisoner, around her hips as far, as she could with her hands crossed within the device.

“I believe now – no, I’m sure, that he planned this and bought it with no other intention than to suspend me somewhere with it. But I insisted to get a second key, which he finally gave to me, before I tried it on. I thought, he had stolen it, but, since he seems to have found a different solution, this one’s presumably still in my night table drawer. His main argument for me to give this thing a try was, that it should be more comfortable to wear than *handcuffs*. The appreciated side effect of this comfort is of course, that I can’t bring my hands to the front.”

“So you think, it’s because of the spare key, that he ordered someone to manufacture the brass disc, which, once locked, can’t be opened anymore,” I concluded, and she confirmed with a nod.

“His family’s rich and well-connected. It seem’s, that he’s spent quite a bit of money on his revenge. When that bastard left me on the bridge right in the park, he literally said, ‘it’s useless to look for the second key, you bitch’. That’s why, I as-

sumed, that he’d stolen it from my night desk. At that time it didn’t occur to me, that he might have spend the effort and replaced the entire breech disc by a custom made one without accessible lock.”

After that I had a pretty good picture of how we both had arrived in the current situation. Subsequently, I also told her a little bit about myself, my impressive career, my current work etc. She pretended not to be bored. I had offered her something to drink and, after she had agreed, had to reach her the glass each time she wanted to, because she could not do it herself due to her temporary disability.

For an hour or so Julie was very unhappy about constantly relying so heavily on me, but during the evening she began even to flirt with her enforced helplessness. I got the impression, that she became more and more comfortable with the not very homely environment and also with my companionship, and I swear, that alcohol was not involved.

When I fed her with a snack like potato chips close to their expiration date and with reasonably fresh pretzels, she kept them for a second or so tight with her teeth, her eyes fixed at mine. She played a little bit with me, and I let her do this. Something developed between us, what I in my unromantic way in lack of a better word like to call a resonance.

My small apartment was actually not well suited for hosting guests. Of course, I offered her, to sleep on the couch myself, although the latter was a good deal too short for me. She declined, however,



as she literally put it, “categorically to banish me from my own bed”. The latter was not a double bed, but a king-size one with extra width, the only luxury, I allowed myself then, because of my length.

On the other hand I also did not want to offer her the very hard and uncomfortable couch. The result of the ensuing debate was, that she proposed to share the bed, which was undeniably large enough for both of us. She was not able to undress completely anyway, and of course had no nightwear available. If we both would accept a little restriction the space was suitable to host both of us over the night.

The latter was in principle correct and a second blanket also available, so that each of us could wrap in one. This way it was finally done. It is therefore true, that we spent this night together, but it would not be correct, to say, we slept together, at least not in the common sense.

I do not know, what has happened during this the night, but of course I insist, that it was not my fault. Despite the cramped space I slept like a baby and Judy claims the same of herself. But when the following Sunday’s sun finally woke me up, I realized, that she literally lay in my arms and – I cannot deny it – I subconsciously held her fairly close to me.

Of course she woke up immediately, when I withdrew my arms. In my defense, let me say, that she also had cuddled herself into me by all rules of this art and, although her hands were still crossed behind her back, she had pressed herself firmly against me. Of course she denies

any active participation up to this day.

However, she did not make a scene afterwards. After all nothing had happened, and we were both of legal age and not bound otherwise. We did not talk about the incident until breakfast, but she refused e.g. to let me comb her hair. The atmosphere had changed. It deemed her better to maintain a certain distance from me, and I could not blame this on her.

Nevertheless I prepared breakfast. She was still not able to do things on her own and had to rely on me, but tried to avoid physical contact as far as possible. After I had put the first spoon with corn flakes into her mouth, she finally broke the silence: “There’s nothing, I should know, which happened last night?”

“Nothing of which we might be ashamed of or which could have any consequences,” I replied truthfully, and she nodded. But of course, this was only one half of the truth. We avoided to talk to each other until shortly before noon, when I had to leave to visit my parents in order to obtain the necessary tools.

I had prepared an excuse as to, why I needed those so urgently and did not have time to stay over lunch. My father, who is an intelligent man, did not believe in my cover story, but he lent me the requested tools without asking questions. It was more than a year later, when I finally confessed the whole truth to him.

With the machine case in one hand, I was eagerly expected back. With this equipment the cracking of the perfidious *fetter* was actually quite easy. A thin

slice of wood, which I had pushed under the brass plate, protected her wrists from burning and being touched by the router.

A bucket of cold water allowed her from time to time to cool down the metal, when we realized, that it might become too hot. The rapidly rotating carbide cutter, driven by a German manufactured high quality machine with an orange motor housing – my father had always estimated good tools – went quite fast through the relatively soft metal and thereby produced millimeter-sized chips.

If the disc had been from hardened steel like the original one, it might have taken a bit longer, with brass, although I worked slowly and extremely cautious, the whole procedure lasted just a quarter of an hour. I am sure, the originator of this well-planned and likely expensive act of revenge had never considered, that it could be achieved so easily and quickly to free her from this predicament.

When the disc's last resistance was finally defeated, so that the remains of the small cage could be opened, she pulled her freed arms immediately forward and stared at her hands, which she had not had at her disposal for so long. Then she turned to me, who had just shut off the machine and was about to put it aside.

I had the impression, that she wanted to fall around my neck, but did not dare to do so. Instead, she said, "thank you, thank you very much. I owe you one."

"You're welcome," I replied dutifully and added: "It was by no means a problem, it was a pleasure to serve you."

"You behaved like a gentleman," she said seriously. "You're one of the rare people one can really rely on." In my ears this sounded like farewell, and in fact shortly afterwards she spoke briefly on the desire to go home without having lunch together. I did not let her see it, but actually I was a little bit disappointed – no, that was a lie, I was very disappointed.

"The moor has done his duty,..." was what actually went through my head. Of course, I obliged to her wish and drove her home and so knew at least approximately, where she lived. The *wrist cage*, more accurately the more or less undamaged steel part of the construction, I considered useless at the time, I had given to her as a souvenir. The completely destroyed remnants of the brass disc had gone into the waste. However, I was determined not to let her her off the fictional hook, at least not so easily.

"Maybe we could go out together one more time," I dared to suggest, when she wanted to get out of my car, and, when she did not reply immediately, I added bravely: "Next Saturday I would've time." I had no illusion, that a sober scientist was not the dream of a class woman like her, but I also thought, that after all she owed me at least this one appointment.

"I would be very happy, to accompany you," she said, and to my great surprise she beamed with joy, when she said so. "I thought, you were glad to be finally rid of me," she added with a winning smile. Very likely my face did not show a very intelligent expression at that moment.

The absurd idea, that she might have thought, I had perceived the time with such a gorgeous girl as a burden, had never occurred to me. She gave me a kiss, not a great love kiss, it was more like a “thank you once again for everything”-kiss, and those were the words she actually chose. I thought for quite some time about that kiss and the radiant smile, with which she had responded to my invitation for the coming Saturday. Occasionally everyone is allowed to dream.

Almost one week later we had our first proper date. I must say, she looked ravishing. We had dinner in a good restaurant – at my expense, after all she had insisted to pay the first time – and a long and highly stimulating conversation.

Although the atmosphere here was completely different, I and, as I should learn later, also Julie, immediately developed the feeling, I had had one week before at my kitchen table, an unmeasurable, but tactile feedback, a kind of familiarity, which normally develops only after a long time of knowing each other.

After I had paid the bill, but before we left the restaurant, I had to go to the toilet. When I returned, she had her jacket, the same thin black leather jacket, she had worn one week earlier, laid over her shoulders with the top button closed. Her hands were not to be seen. Instead, there was a small safety key on the table.

“I found the small steel disc, which completes the *wrist cage* in my apartment, she explained. “This one is now probably the only key.” I do not know how she managed to put this thing on on her own. But I pocketed the key and did not release her from it until the next morning. It was this wonderful night, at which we “really” slept together for the first time,.

Half a year later, she actually became my wife. That was many years ago by now, and up to this day, this is a decision I never regretted. Quite contrary I still think, that she was the best thing, that could have happened to me. We still own the *wrist cage* with its marks from our first encounter and Julie meticulously pays attention to the fact, that our children do by no means come to know about it.

But she still wears it frequently, when we go to bed and every time she does so, she snuggles up to me in exactly the same way, she did on that particular Saturday, when I encountered her the first time under the aforementioned circumstances.

In contrast to then nowadays I am not embarrassed, when I wake up in the morning holding her in my arms, and when she wakes up – she still does it regularly, when I release the hug – I get a kiss. This is something, I do not want to give away, not for any treasure in the world.

THE END