

Submitted ◦ virtual venus in furs

# Life as a Game

*Are you aware of your own darkest fantasies? Do you want to rule the world, or do you secretly dream of submitting to the will of a merciless lady? There are people enjoy those kind of games. They have fun with it; they love living their lives as a never ending movie show.*

By Johannes Studnik

Photos: Lorenzo Vecchia

◦ On his way into the boardroom, Guillaume receives a text message. It's his Barcelona based 'mistress', Basia. This morning, her computer has given up the ghost, Basia informs him without giving any further details. Meanwhile she lingers impatiently in her 'dungeon'. 'Dungeon' is how she playfully dubs her fantasy dome designed for her submissive's pleasure and pain, where she's the lady, a modern Venus in Furs, reigning lasciviously on a black leather throne.

Guillaume is one of Basia's voluntary "submissives", but he never had the painful pleasure to enter her dungeon, nor has he ever felt the urge to do so. Their relationship is purely long distance, and his condition as a virtual submissive is a very special one: he's a financial slave.

"My financial slaves" Basia explains in an interview with the **miniguide\***, "live quite a distance from here, in Switzerland, in Italy or the US. Men with a monthly net income of €6000 or more, for whom financial slavery is something like a game. Men who are married to tolerant, well educated women."

Guillaume, 39, white collar, tie, pin-stripe suit, successful manager, fits the description well. Meanwhile Guillaume, happily married with two

children - a board member of a Geneva-based pharmaceutical company - is waiting nervously to end his meeting. As soon as he's back alone in his executive office, the happy husband and successful manager knows that his most urgent task is to order a brand new laptop for his mistress - double core processor, latest generation technology, True Brite screen and an extra 2 GB memory, to be delivered in 24-hours straight to Basia's Barcelona dungeon.

Basia points with her forefinger to the brand new laptop and says, "What these people aim for is to get exploited by a woman as a human cash-machine, or, if it comes to personal contact, as a shopping-bag bearer, cash machine and visa card holder."

Sometimes, her financial slaves express quite peculiar preferences. "There are people who ask me to blackmail them", Basia reveals. Sound like a thriller, Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone as the main characters? In fact, this is very much real life. Maybe something like your life: a comedy, a drama, a splatter film. You're the main character, heroically suffering or, pathetically whining, whatever you desire.

"They pass me embarrassing photos of themselves or classified information", Basia continues. "Now, my part is to demand a monthly split of your wage - otherwise this embarrassing information goes straight to your wife, or to your boss." Basia loves that, "They would like to whimper, write me whiny emails and call me: Please, please, please don't do that to me. I could die laughing - it's a game."

A game where everything goes, no limits? "Usually I know the financial situation of my clients" she

replies, "and also their family situation. If they turn out to be compulsive players, addicts, serious *ludophiles*, I usually hang up." There have been people who have tried to give her an apartment as a gift. "I would never accept something like that. If you accept that, you get never again rid of them. And I love my freedom."

Far from being a borderline experience, financial slavery has become for Basia a everyday way of covering her most humble expenses. On her homepage, [www.planetbasia.com](http://www.planetbasia.com), prospective slaves find suggestions based on Basia's real-life expenses: €50 for her gym, €110 for cosmetics, but if that's not enough for you, you might also like to pay Basia's rent, or the food for her faithful dog, Frodo.

And what happens if financial slaves ask for more than emails, text messages, phone calls? What happens if they really want to know, to meet and touch her? "Some clients fall in love with me. People want me all to themselves. At some point, they insist on getting to meet me. No problem. I say: Book a flight for me. We'll go to London. For some people, that's the greatest moment of their lives. Then, I allow them to wash my underwear with their hands, and they're happy. They sleep on the floor under my bed, and they're happy, because they don't have to think or act on their own. They only have to do what I demand. At any point, I can say,

'Get up, the game is over'. And if they reply that I can't do that... then I repeat, 'Just get up! I didn't ask you to object.'"

Of course, most of Basia's clients are well-off types: entrepreneurs, lawyers, politicians, doctors, "people with lots of responsibility, people who put other people under pressure day in day out." But are these the kind of people who enjoy putting pressure on





others and exploiting their social power? "The higher in the social scale, the more decadent", Basia remarks. The Spanish haven't forgotten the bondage video circulated some time ago in order to harm the reputation of 'Pedrojota', the ultra-conservative director of the influential right-wing newspaper El Mundo, and the British will still remember the bizarre scandal surrounding Conservative MP Stephen Milligan, found dead in 1994, cross-dressed, self-bondaged and suffocated with an orange slice in his mouth.

However, these extremes of a decadent un-touchable high society are only one side of the coin, the other, and much more relevant side in this context, is the fact that most people involved in the BDSM\* scene are surprisingly normal and friendly. In fact, people like you and me, and maybe even that helpful neighbour that lives next door.

Take Basia's long-term 'domestic slave'

Julián: a 35 year-old electrician, who met Basia in a BDSM studio. What happened between them was something like a romantic relationship that had

very little to do with mass media clichés of the SM world. "There

are people who're looking for physical pain,

but what most men go for is humiliation, to be treated badly", he claims. "However, it's not enough that just anybody treats your badly. It must be someone special to you. Somebody you're attracted to, because she's handsome, and she's intelligent."

Julián was looking for a mistress to adore, to submit to, and he found Basia, who assigned him all kinds of everyday tasks like cleaning and putting up shelves. Another of Basia's clients she describes as the stereotypical "nice, friendly biology professor, who dedicates his free time to the arts. A good buddy, who likes to share a bottle of wine with you and have a nice chat. Such a friendly, nice guy... the last thing that you'd expect is that this guy wants to be tied up and kept for 23 hours in a black box."

These dark fantasies may remind you of scenes from 'Pulp Fiction'. But rather than fiction, this is real life. Montse Moreno, psychology professor at the University of Barcelona, describes the nature of these real-life fantasies like this: "They might be conscious or unconscious. Things you might have seen somewhere and you want to repeat them. The English word drive describes them best. Mental representations that might be connected to the past, desires not lived out. They can have an external motivation and be stimulated by the outside world or have their origins in something you've read, heard or smelt, a perfume or sensation. However, in the case of many fantasies the motivation comes from deep inside."

Claudia Varrin, a New York based dominatrix, and author of a book\*\* on the subject, describes some of her encounters with real-life fantasies:

*"a childhood experience perhaps with a babysitter or neighbourhood kids, a teacher who dangled her shoe when she sat on the desk, as well as those related to emotions, and societal mores and taboos. Regarding religious concepts, it is a form of confession and for a confession to be fulfilling it must be heard by another, atoned for, and forgiven. But the most interesting ones come from fear. It seems that what we most fear is what we most desire."*

The fantasies we most desire, but cannot live out in our daily lives, these patterns define our roles in the BDSM games. The key question is not so much how much pain can you take, but who's on top and who's on the bottom? Who holds the dominance, and who is the one to submit?

"Power is sexy", claims Varrin, addressing a mostly female audience who supposedly understand that this as a message with resonance reaching far beyond their sex lives. But she shouldn't be mistaken for a feminist revolutionary. "There is an old saying", Varrin explains to the **miniguide\***, "Behind every successful man there is a woman..." Read it carefully: This world's traditional power structures, according to Varrin, are already controlled by women, who, so to say, wag the dog. So what we have here is something like a conservative matriarchal world order – a statement Montse Moreno fully subscribes to. In spite of Spain's traditional machismo culture, according to the psychologist, "men submit to women". So, those politicians and media magnets who love to bark in public, seldom bite in private.

However, even if you were to accept the idea that women rule the world, the general truth in heterosexual relations is that not only do women tend to submit, they also expect men to dominate. Lesbian and homosexual relationships are also ruled by the top/bottom game where someone dominates, and the other submits. There are even people with the magnificent ability to switch playfully between dominant and submissive roles. But you yourself set the limits. You know how far you want to go and what you enjoy. Basia claims that she tests all the scary tools and toys she uses on her clients on herself first, "Electrodes, electric shock, batons, everything used for beatings...but it doesn't give me any kicks."

From the outside, these games might look bizarre and outlandish, but psychologists today don't categorically rule out that BDSM games, played in mutual consent, have a temporary stress-relieving effect. Psychologist Montse Moreno, however, stresses that there is a better solution. Psychoanalysis she says, has the power to sort out the mechanisms of the patient's darkest fantasies in order to "change the references" and "cure him". However, the point is, as Moreno confirms, these people tend not to regard their condition as a disease. And very seldom do they find their way onto the shrink's sofa. Instead, they prefer to fall on their knees in front of their adored mistress. There appears to be a division of labour between dominatrix and shrink, as Varrin points out: "Whereas a shrink might think that BDSM related fantasies and desires need to be 'cured', a dominatrix realizes that acting out

those fantasies in controlled environment can have a beneficial effect."

Paradoxically, Varrin, the NY based dominatrix, also claims that "part of being dominant means pleasing her submissive and in that sense, she is submissive to the will of the other." Does this mean that the dominants are something like the slaves' slaves? Don't despair, Varrin provides us with an easier way of thinking about it, "Without the submissive's permission to play BDSM games, the dominant wouldn't have anyone to play with." And, as her Barcelona-based colleague Basia confirms, that's what it's all about: "BDSM is a game, it's fun and everybody involved in the scene loves playing". Well, then, what's wrong with that? ■

\* The topic BDSM contains several kinds of sexual behaviour. BD (Bondage&Discipline), DS (Domination&Submission), the all too fashionable SM (Sado Masochism) is just a part of it.

\*\* **Claudia Varrin**  
**Dominación Sensual. Erotismo,**  
**'Poder y dominación femenina'. Edicions**  
**Bellaterra, Barcelona 2006.** The book was originally published under the title 'The Art of Sensual Female Dominance. A Guide for Women' by Citadell Press, NYC.



Basia is also performing in a new BDSM related feature film to be released on the 14th **International Erotic Film Festival** in L'Hospitalet, Oct. 4-8, more info [www.ficfeb.com](http://www.ficfeb.com)

**CREDITS: models:** Basia (as herself) and Troitinho **hair styling and makeup:** Carrera Peluqueros. Troitinho dressing Josep Abril from La Gauche Divine, Barcelona. **Location:** Caf   Noir, Barcelona.

