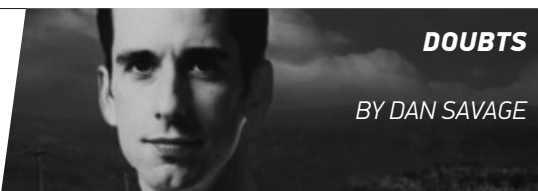


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SAVAGE LOVE



DOUBTS

BY DAN SAVAGE

I'm your average straight 42-year-old white guy. Married for a little less than a year (second marriage for both). We have an active sex life and are both GGG. My wife wants to be forcibly fucked — held down and raped. Normally I'd be all over this because I do love me some rough sex. My issue: She told me she was traumatically raped by a man she was dating prior to me. All I know is that it involved a hotel room and him not stopping when she said "no." So for now, I play along, but I know I'm not taking things as far as she'd like. I'm over here wondering if her previous trauma was a result of her encouraging forceful sex and regretting it later, and I worry the same thing could happen to me. Or is she trying to relive the experience? Should I fear her motivation and the potential consequences? Am I overthinking things?

Tremulous Husband Is Needing Knowledge

When it comes to rough sex — particularly when it involves role-playing forced-sex scenarios — overthinking is preferable to underthinking. But before we think through your specific issues, THINK, a few points of clarification.

A woman who's into rough sex, even forced-sex/rape-role-play scenarios, can still have been raped by a partner — and a rape can occur during what was supposed to be a consensual forced-sex/rape-role-play scene. If your wife withdrew her consent and her former partner continued, it was rape.

Also, THINK, lots of women fantasize about "rape," which I'm putting in quotes here because these fantasies typically involve a woman being "taken" by someone she's attracted to, and lots and lots of women are victims of rape. Obviously there's going to be overlap between these two groups. Your wife's forced-sex fantasies could have nothing to do with her rape — it could be a coincidence — or your wife may be one of those people [not all of them women] who have eroticized a past sexual trauma (not always rape), and playing with a partner she trusts provides her with feelings of control and catharsis, empowerment and pleasure. But what about you, THINK?

You worry "the same thing could happen to me." By that you don't mean, "I could be raped!" You mean, "I could be falsely accused of rape." That's a pretty big and disrespectful leap. What you're saying is, "I think my wife is lying when she says this other man raped her — and I don't want her to do the same to me." I'm not sure what to do with that. I mean, I don't think your wife is lying, THINK, and I don't know or love your wife. You presumably know and love your wife, and yet you're worried she may be setting you up for a false rape accusation. That's some dark shit — that's some *Gone Girl* shit, that's the plot of some horrible Kathleen Turner/Michael Douglas shit movie from the 1980s.

If you're really concerned about protecting your own butt, THINK, then have a nice long conversation with your wife about her fantasies over e-mail. I've given that advice to people negotiating edgy and/or forced-sex scenes with strangers or near-strangers. It feels odd to give that advice to someone negotiating a fantasy role-play scenario with his spouse. But here we are.

Don't tell your wife you wanna chat over e-mail because you're worried about needing an alibi. I would suggest that you believe your wife, first off, and that you have this conversation over e-mail — two anonymous accounts created just for this purpose — because it will allow you both to be more thoughtful and less inhibited [sometimes these things are hard to discuss face to face]. Tell her you don't want to accidentally traumatize or trigger her, first and foremost, but you also don't want to wind up traumatizing yourself. You would feel like a monster if you hurt her while attempting to fulfill her fantasies.

Finally, THINK, this isn't something your wife will wanna do just once. So take baby steps: Increase the intensity gradually, from scene to scene, check in afterward, google "sexual aftercare" and read the piece on *Curve* that pops up [it's a lesbian website, but the lessons/advice/insight are generally applicable], and keep having long conversations — via e-mail or face to face — about what's working for her and what isn't. Good luck.

I had given up on relationships after a failed marriage and another partner trying to kill me (no joke). Then, after five years single, abstinent, and lonely, I met a man who frustrated me, turned me on, and was understanding about my trust issues. I'm excited about a future with him — except for two things. First, he says he loves me but he's not sure yet if he wants to spend the rest of his life with me — he's not sure if I'm "The One." He also has needs I'm not able to fulfill. It may not seem like a big deal to most people, but swallowing is out for me, as I was orally raped when I was a teenager. I've worked my way up to enjoying giving head, but come in my mouth makes me cry. And I can't give head after anal. He says these are the things that make him come the hardest. I've asked him if my inability to provide these things are a "deal breaker" for him and he says no, but when we get into bed, he talks about me doing them the entire time we're having sex. I've asked him to stop, and he says he will, but it doesn't stop. He will also have sex only in the positions he likes, and if I ask for something different, he'll just stop having sex with me, leaving me frustrated. If letting him go so he can find the right person to fulfill his needs makes him happier, then I feel it's the right thing to do, as much as it would hurt.

Failing At Intimacy/Love

You need to let this guy go for your own happiness and sanity. I know you were alone for a long time — alone and lonely — and you know who else knows that? Your shitty boyfriend, FAIL, and he's leveraging your desire to be with *someone* against your right to sexual autonomy and your need for emotional safety. You have an absolute right to set your own limits, to rules things in and out, and to slap "not open for discussion" labels on some things. Ruling two things out — swallowing and ATM — particularly for the reasons you cite, is perfectly reasonable. If he can't accept that, if he's going to hammer away at those two things endlessly, that should be a "deal breaker" for you.

You see his inability to determine if you're "the one" as a separate issue, FAIL, but it's of a piece. He's refusing to make you the one — "the one" is an act of will, not an act of God — in hopes that you will submit to his sexual demands. I have a hunch that swallowing and ATM aren't really the things that make him come the hardest. If it was anal and cunnilingus you couldn't do, FAIL, then those would be his favorite things. Because the issue here isn't whether he's "sure" you're the one or the sex acts that make him come the hardest. This is about him controlling and degrading you. DTMFA.

Please ignore KISSES and write as much as you want! I read your column because I like what you write! Dan Should Go On At Length

I've obviously reverted to form already, DSGOAL, but thanks for your support!

Listen to the *Savage Lovecast* recorded live on Valentine's Day in Portland: savagelovecast.com.

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