

The mind boggles at the thought of 25,000 Goreans descending on Darlington to join with the 350 reportedly already living in the north east.

So, is it desirable and/or possible these days to live 24/7 in such a particular non-vanilla lifestyle?

Ancient habits die hard

Obviously, in the vanilla world we are brought up to believe in and follow ideals that are centuries old, dating from the times of the Knights Templar through to modern-day religions and societies such as the Freemasons.

And so we live a just life, marry and either provide for, or serve, our partner. The marital vows and the way they were enforced in the early days of the twentieth century would seem incredibly familiar to those in a BDSM relationship.

Goreans argue that their way of life is far more than simply a subset of BDSM practices. On the face of it, and as a cult based on an American novelist's vision, it can even bear some comparison with L Ron Hubbard's Dianetics and Church of Scientology. Neither is recognised by governments as a religious way of life – and some see them as (extreme) cults. Notably, both came from science-fiction writings. Each was started over thirty years ago (Scientology in 1950s, Gor in the 1970s), but still continue to show a growth in membership.

The Gorean theory

As with many beliefs, there are divides and chasms within the Gor lifestyle. Some would have it that, as I am currently 'without Master', I should also be without belief and knowledge and, as such, be incapable of writing this article. Others would state that as a 'freewoman', while still subservient to men, I should be able to plot and plan my own life. Some would go even further and suggest that it is my mindset that makes me 'kajira' or slave. Certainly I have to try to control certain aspects of my personality in this; I believe and yearn for a Master, to be given a 'kef' branding and slave flower or 'dina' mark.

Obviously it may be difficult and possibly embarrassing to walk around on the end of a lead, or to display overt signs of being owned. As previously stated, as a Gorean slave I would hope to receive my Master's 'brand'. Quite often this can take the form of a tattoo, but if you want a true 'brand', then

modern-day science enables the use of cauterising equipment to create a more intricate design.

Often one may desire a more discreet sign for use while at work or in public – especially when the relationship involves contact with the vanilla world. In this respect, I find it is the mindset of the submissive that allows him or her to remain true to a 24/7, non-vanilla existence.

The correct mental attitude

Without question, I would obey the commands of my Dom(me), be they of a sexual nature or purely to show the

exchange of power. I know that I would never be placed at risk. In this I have been reassured in the past by my contract, in which the hard and soft limits of my behaviour were clearly set out.

My last contract was quite typical and covered 206 types of behaviour, ranging from anal play, blindfolds/sensory deprivation, whip-and paddle-use (all of which are but a limited example of things that I enjoy), to bestiality, scat (brown showers) or anything underage (all ABSOLUTE hard limits, NEVER to be approached).

Each activity had to be rated from 1-5, where 1 meant that I did not want or like an activity – but as sub would do it if asked, and (5) meant that I found the activity totally arousing.

Of course, there were also some activities that I had never experienced before and some that I would only ever explore with my Dom(me), such as asphyxiation and hypnotism.

It was this contract that defined the rules of my on-going training, and was a major element in ensuring that I gave pleasure to my Dom(me), in the way that I spoke, acted – and even in the way I thought.

Departure from the 'norm'

I find it extremely difficult to enter into a 'vanilla' way of life. To me it really is bland and tasteless... but then possibly I have become jaded.

Certainly it is relatively easy for me to enjoy a lifestyle that is non-vanilla. As a transsexual, I am used to being regarded as 'different' and so my embarrassment threshold is now quite high. For others, however, it may be more difficult to obtain that balance.

Can a Dom(me) be accepted as a Boy Scout leader with all of the obvious personality attributes that he or she will bring to the role? Conversely, could he or she fit into a more menial sort of job, such as an office junior?

Given my upbringing – my years as a swinger and as an acolyte of BDSM – it is not surprising that a vanilla lifestyle would be without taste for me, while my chosen path might appear tasteless to others.

After greater, more diverse experiences, would you too find a vanilla lifestyle lacking in taste – bland and unexciting? I would humbly suggest that all that you can do is to 'suck it and see!' And if there happen to be any firm but caring Dom(me)s out there...

Tina King

(Information for this article has come from real-life experience and not Gorean tavern-talk. My thanks go to those respondents who wish to remain nameless – see below.)

QUESTIONNAIRE

To research this article, Tina sent the following questionnaire to friends in BdsM chatrooms, with the aim of getting a Dom(me)'s viewpoint.

Answers provided an insight into registering a slave / receiving a slave number and ID, and the Gorean world and its inhabitants.

1 Current lifestyle – short explanation of how you choose to show your adherence to a particular life style/fetish



2 Date when alternative lifestyle started



3 Presence of any contracts – if so, hard/soft limits or desires



4 Registration of either partner



5 Previous employment/vanilla lifestyle



6 Comparison with vanilla lifestyle – eg marriage etc



7 If not 24/7, percentage of time spent in lifestyle



8 Do family know/approve?



Understandably, a number of people felt this information too private to divulge, and declined to respond, the relationship between a Dom and his/her sub being a deeply personal one.

However, those replies received provided a flavour of diverse and unique relationships, and an insight into the complexities of living 24/7 in such a radically unconventional and non-vanilla lifestyle.