

# Spirit of Desire

Personal Explorations of Sacred Kink

EDITED BY **LEE HARRINGTON**



**MYSTIC**  
PRODUCTIONS

## Service Topping as a Spiritual Practice



By Lady Elsa

*“Breathe,” I whisper in her ear as she whimpers quietly, almost silently. “We’re almost there. You can do this.” Her breasts bristle with two dozen clothespins, and I know they are throbbing – and that it’s not enough. I place my hand carefully on her breastbone, and press her back against the cross.*

*Smiling, I brush the damp wisps of hair away from her face. I see the flicker of doubt in her eyes. She fears that this may be the end, that I think she’s gone far enough. She isn’t sure she can trust me not to stop, not to take pity on her, not to be moved by her cries. Her eyes plead with me, a silent prayer I have prayed myself in her place. ‘Please don’t stop.’*

*“We’re not stopping,” I whisper to her. Her eyes widen with surprise that I heard her thoughts. “We won’t stop until we get there.” Staring deep into those eyes, my fingers find one of the clothespins and begin to twist it – slowly, the scraping of unpainted wood across skin a subtle counterpoint to the flashing blaze of the twisting pain. Her whimper turns into a full-throated woman’s wail, pushing out the pain as she throws her head back, the adrenaline hits the blood, and she finds her voice. As the clip pops off in my hand, my own adrenaline builds with hers, my voice soars with hers, singing out, “Yes, push it out, here we go. That was 24. Count them down with me, here comes 23...”*

Love and fear. That's all there is, in the end. Everything boils down to one or the other.

Love is God. God is the river that my bottoms and I navigate together, sometimes floating slow and lazy, but more often sailing breathless down the rapids, paddling like crazy. God is the journey down the river, and the boat we are riding in, and the water that envelops and drenches us both.

Fear is the Other. It is the obstacle, the barrier we move through, the rocks that batter and bruise us as we pass them on the way. Our fears are our signposts, our mile markers that help us measure who we are becoming along the way.

Tell me your concept of God, and I will tell you who you aspire to be. Tell me what frightens you, and I will tell you what prevents you from reaching that goal. Turn your love and your fear over to me for a while, and I will ride with you down your river. Together we'll avoid the rocks – or smash into them, hurt, and by doing so move past. Together we'll hammer at the barriers, making holes in them that let the water rush on through. For that short expanse, you won't be alone in the journey. I'll be with you. I am a service top.

My concept? God is *all of us*. So when I serve anyone, I serve God. (Jesus tried to tell us that, by the way.) And I, too, am God. Not in the largest sense of the word – an all-powerful being with a personality – but in the same way that a drop of water can call itself Water as legitimately as an ocean can.

The Old Testament God has always puzzled me. A jealous God. An angry God. A God that wants worship. A God who punishes and takes revenge. In people, all those things belie weakness and lack, so how could they be positive attributes in God? The God of my imaginings, the perfect God, needs nothing, cannot be harmed, cannot be offended, and because of that perfection, is constantly and completely available to “be” love. To shower everyone and everything with blessing after blessing, without expecting or demanding anything in return. To be endlessly and joyfully creative, always experimenting, always building, always growing. *That* God is the one to whom I willingly offer my life as a tool. Because serving that God enables me to be who I aspire to be.

Does my version of God really exist? I believe so. Does it *matter* if my God exists? Not really. The totem of my belief enables me to live my life in the way I consider “best.” That said, however, I have as much evidence for it as anyone else does for theirs. I have my internal compass, which is being run by some greater force, and which leads me more directly and more frequently to opportunities to serve as time goes by. That’s probably the strongest evidence there is.

Popular BDSM lore paints tops as hungry predator sadists who gleefully inflict pain on helpless bottoms for their own gratification. There are plenty of tops who genuinely feel that way – and God bless them, because there’s certainly a demand for their services. That’s not me, though. I could never relate to that image, probably because I didn’t relate to that jealous Old Testament God who needed to be worshipped. It’s just not my “home archetype.” What does compel and seduce me about topping is *creativity*, which to me is very God-like. Topping provides an opportunity for creative leadership. It feels like making art to me, taking the raw materials of the situation, the tools, and the people, and creating an outcome that takes our breath away.

When I was first learning the physical arts involved in topping, I loved the creativity for its own sake. I just wanted to make the art. While it was God-like in the sense of God being a creative force, I didn’t experience anything explicitly spiritual. It was more like a kid building a city with Legos. I’d pick my bottoms like a child would pick a toy to play with. Which one was an interesting canvas? Which one would give me a chance to try new things? Which one had good energy, or pretty curves, or an infectious laugh? The other half of it – the spiritual service part – didn’t come into my life until later.

The “service” aspect crept up on me slowly, popping suggestions into my head, tossing unlikely people into my path that needed my skills. The more I listened to those suggestions, the faster they began coming, and louder I began hearing them. As I obeyed those directives, I was led into experiences that I had no frame of reference for, but that gave me opportunities to use my topping skills to be of real benefit to people. Combining the creativity of topping with the spiritual high of serving God? I was hooked.

Here’s how it works. I show up, and try not to have any expectations. Sometimes I don’t get any instructions, and I go about my own business of

having fun. But more often than not anymore, I get “the nudge,” if I’m looking for it. Sometimes it’s someone asking me directly to scene with them. Sometimes it’s to sit in a certain place and wait, or just to be present. It’s not even always kink-related. Sometimes it’s just about being Person Elsa, rather than Lady Elsa.

*“Speed Tricking” was the workshop, and everyone, it seemed, was there to hook up. Kris and I were there to find a bottom to play with – a yummy, pain-slutty bottom boi we could share. I’m very specific in my tastes, when left to my own desires: I like butches. Butch tops, butch bottoms, butch switches... anything else is just not as tasty.*

*There weren’t many bois to begin with in the workshop, and luck of the draw said that we probably wouldn’t get a chance to talk to any of them. Five minute session after session, I chatted perfunctorily with one femme bottom after another. I began to get frustrated, and to wonder if it was even worth staying. Nobody was matching up with what I was hungry for.*

*Then I felt it. The poke in the ribs that reminded me that I’m in service. The gentle reproach that maybe this particular day is not ABOUT me. That maybe it’s about being present for the people I’m supposed to be serving. And that those people can come in any type of packaging. So I took a deep breath and let it out, said “Yes,” and waited for him or her to appear. It didn’t take long. It was actually Kris who found her and pointed her out to me. A middle-aged femme, naturally shy, but hunger was making her bold, like a deer in winter. Lovely wide open dark eyes that radiated kindness. “We can do her some good,” he said, and I knew he was right.*

I have always felt a strong pull toward service. Being a “good deed doer” gives me the opportunity to demonstrate my highest self, which for me is the ultimate form of spiritual practice. At first, though, I wasn’t sure how spiritual service was supposed to play itself out in my kink life.

My first significant BDSM relationship was with someone who self-identified as a master, with whom I shared some common values and spiritual beliefs. It was primarily a romantic relationship of equals, and I bristled at traditional definitions like “slave” or “submissive.” Yet I often felt strongly called to be of service to him, in my own rather dominant way. It didn’t feel like ownership to me. It felt like I was being “loaned out” to him, for a limited period of time,

by my *real* owner, whom I eventually identified as God. And in time, that loan period did expire, and the relationship ended, and I was left to figure out what it all meant, to be owned by God.

*Owned by God?* That sounded crazy, and grandiose, and just plain odd. Especially when nobody else around me had any idea what I meant by that. But over time, I began to encounter people who identified as masters, dominants, and tops but saw themselves primarily as servants to their deities. What a relief that was, to hear it articulated by others! Most of their deities are nothing like mine, but that's beside the point. The call we feel to serve is not for an earthly master, but for God as we understand him or her.

One of the recent lessons I've been given is that my call to serve as a top is not just about being of service to random people who come into my life. I'm also called to be a responsible keeper of others. In other words, I'm called not only to be a service top, but also a service dominant.

Dominance, like topping, is not usually about my own preferences. When I'm doing it right (that is, in alignment with who I want to be), "being the dom" often feels more like serving as a teacher, preacher, or wilderness guide. I may be in charge of the situation, but only in order to execute God's agenda: more love, less fear. (Oh, don't get me wrong; I enjoy having my shoulders massaged and luggage carried as much as anyone. The little perks of dominance are wonderful. *But they're not what it's ultimately about.*)

About a year ago, I was given the most awesome gift – my very own butch boi. I've wanted my own boi for so long, and waited patiently for years, putting it constantly out there in every prayer... and then suddenly, he was here, and was everything I had asked for and more. Each time we meet, he kneels and greets me with "I'm at your service, M'Lady." The sound of that always makes me smile. His service to me is a gift from God, a reward for services rendered, and a reminder of what's expected in the future.

*At my service.* I wonder if what God feels when I offer my service is anything like what I feel when I hear those words. Energized and excited at the possibilities. Full of love and eager to shower every blessing on him. I'm grateful that I've

been given that tiny glimpse of God's experience – or that God is perhaps experiencing it along with me, through me. Most of all, it makes me want to renew my own commitment to serve.

Boi Kris is also a gift in another way. He's a switch, in nearly every sense of the word. He can top; he can bottom. He can dominate; he can submit. His chameleon-like ability to adapt is in itself an amazing service, challenging and expanding my understanding of the roles we play, for one another and for others. When I'm weary and need a break, he steps up and takes over as the leader for a while so I can rest. Leading... following... it's all service to him, and all part of his service to me.

And I think that's the most important lesson I've learned so far. That ultimately it's not about working at being a service top... or a service bottom... or a service *anything*. It's about *being of service*. The roles don't matter to God. They're as incidental to him as whether our children play hopscotch or tag on a sunny day is to us. They're all part of the fabric of All That Is. We all serve someone or something, either directly or through another person's guidance. We all have that small voice, that nudge, which points us in the right direction, toward more love and less fear. It's all made out of God, and it is all service.

*The last hard stroke of the rubber flogger broke the dam inside him. I sat on the floor and held him as he sobbed great huge tears, all the pent-up sadness in him carried away in the rushing flood. 'Which was the real me?' I mused as we rocked back and forth together on the floor. 'The precise, dispassionate torturer who left the purple slashes across his back, or the gentle mother who holds him now? And which was the real him – the angry beast hurling invectives at me and struggling with his bonds a few minutes earlier, or the small child rocking and healing in my arms?' Maybe both, and maybe neither. It doesn't matter. In serving him, I served myself. In taking what I had to give, he found his release. Who's to say what aspects of God we embody when we do this work? It's enough that we leave the scene knowing that we have moved in the right direction, a little or a lot, toward love and away from fear.*