

Dildo Days

by James Badger

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There's no denying the value of Cambridge - it's a different and special University experience, where the staff treat you more as colleagues than pupils, you are part of an ancient tradition of learning, and punting along the 'Backs' on a summer day is blissful. But having said that, there were, at least back in the seventies, certain disadvantages as well. For a start, summer in eastern England is all too short, and winter weather is bitter, with horizontal rain sweeping in from the fens. It's a small town, so there's a lot of pressure on accommodation - unless you are in a college building, with a certain loss of freedom, you are likely to be in something which is both grotty and expensive. But the biggest disadvantage back then was that there were six boys to every girl in the student population. Oxford maybe had it a bit better - the climate was warmer and the city bigger, which meant more accommodation and at least some city girls to make up for the shortage of student ones. But I've heard just the same gripes from friends who went there, so maybe it wasn't really much different. You could sum it up as 'a great life, but there's something missing'. Nevertheless, having survived four years of this and emerged with first class honours from Cambridge, I must admit that I felt that the world was at my feet.

Of course Cambridge wanted me to stay on to do a PhD, and I was tempted, but for all the reasons mentioned above I had itchy feet. So an offer from Leeds was most attractive. The department had a world-wide reputation, the post was Royal Society funded so I got a useful amount more than a regular student grant, and the chance to supplement my income by helping with practical classes (which were huge at Leeds compared to Cambridge). Maybe the climate, up there in the industrial north, didn't offer much on Cambridge but at least you got snow rather than sleet in winter. Maggie Thatcher's bloodbath of British smokestack industry was already changing the character of the town, and it was no longer the smoky, polluted place it had been only five or six years before. The suburbs of Meanwood and Headingley, right next to the university, seemed to be just made for student accommodation. Everything seemed so much cheaper up there. But best of all, there were girls everywhere! And what a mix - Yorkshire lasses, girls from the south, Indian and West Indian girls, Chinese, Japanese - it was a complete ethnic mixing pot. In sober reality there were equal numbers of male and female students, but coming from male-dominated Cambridge, I just saw girls wherever I looked for the first few weeks.

Making friends was easy, too. In Cambridge there is such an air of elitism that everyone has something of a facade, and a certain hesitation in letting anyone see behind it. In Leeds nobody seemed to think they had anything to prove. And there's no doubt that people just are more friendly in the north of England than the south. I've always felt the need to play

some sport to keep myself physically and mentally healthy, and I joined the hockey club just as soon as I arrived. For the benefit of North American readers, I'm talking about a game that is played on grass or turf, not ice! It has long been my team sport of choice - it's fast, so you get a good workout, and non-contact, so there's less risk of injury. You stand a much better chance of getting into a team than in the 'star' sports - soccer, rugby and cricket - which the top athletes play. The clincher is that unlike soccer, rugby or cricket, hockey is equally popular as a women's game, so you get to meet girls as well.

Before long I was very pally with a couple of fellow postgrads in my hockey team - Andy, a Yorkshireman through and through, doing a PhD in Chemistry, and Peter, a lanky Australian in Textile Science. They shared a tiny nineteenth century 'back to back' workman's house in Meanwood. 'Back to backs' were terrace (row) houses which not only joined their neighbours at the side, but also at the back, so they only had windows at the front. They were regarded as slums until the early seventies when it was realised that their solid construction and individual front yards made them a far more attractive option than the apartment blocks being erected in their place. Many young academics had bought them cheaply, modernised them and then moved on as families arrived, renting them out to students.

I had decided my financial situation was good enough to go it alone, and had a flat in Headingley which seemed like paradise after Cambridge. It was one of four - a conversion of what had once been a largish house. A bedroom, a tiny bathroom all my own, and cooking facilities in the corner of the living room, all at a price which wouldn't have got even the most squalid bedsit in Cambridge.

And the girls - did I mention girls? You can guess what was on my mind after a few days of the new term and I went crazy. I'd ask another girl out each night - sometimes I got nowhere, sometimes we had a nice evening, sometimes I got laid. Some I would go out with 3 or 4 times but never longer - I wasn't looking at girls who wanted any long-term commitment, and they weren't looking to me for any such thing either. It was just what I needed - for a while. But then I met Claudia. Claudia had just graduated, as I had, but was working as a research assistant for a spell while she decided whether or where to do a PhD. If ever anyone exemplified the racial mix that was late-70s Leeds it was her, with a West Indian father and a Chinese mother. She was beautiful by any standards, but in very striking way. Shortish, almost petite, with classical Chinese features but very dark skin and black curly hair. And her temperament was just as much a confusing mix, with the traditional Caribbean openness and honesty about sex, combined with typical Asian modesty and refusal to go too far too fast.

The first date didn't get beyond a kiss - quite a kiss - but that didn't matter. Suddenly we were in love and there seemed a future before us Claudia was a virgin but she was no prude, and she made it clear that all I needed was patience and love - she would give herself fully when she felt the time was ripe. We went out hiking in the Yorkshire Dales, we went to movies, to restaurants when we could afford it, and she even got me into discos. And when we couldn't afford anything else we went for dinner in the little Indian cafe 'Chakwal' close to the University where you got better Indian food than at any of the flash restaurants in town. At first they seemed a little 'edgy' at what they thought was an Indian girl with a white man, but once she'd convinced them she wasn't Indian they were all over us and we got fantastic service. Somehow they just loved the idea of a girl who looked like a classical

Indian beauty but didn't have to fit in with Indian cultural rules. In the end it became quite a game with us to see what nationality people thought Claudia was - nobody ever got it right! Sri Lankan was a popular guess, with Timorese refugee (East Timor was in the news then) another common choice.

Need I say that my friends teased me mercilessly over my sudden transition from a different girl every night to being 'in lurv'? But the bug got to them too, in due course. Andy found himself spending more and more time with Teresa, a Northern Irish girl who had done her first degree at Queens University, Belfast and had come to Leeds to do a PhD in less troubled surroundings. She was nominally a Catholic - as was Andy - so naturally they got some ribbing from us about contraception and the Pope but they didn't take either us or the Pope too seriously. You wouldn't have called Teresa a classical beauty - she didn't turn heads the way Claudia did - but that combination of dark hair and violet-blue eyes, and that Irish charm, made everyone like her.

Now the tables were turned, and Andy and I started ribbing Peter about his single state. He, like many Australian men, was a bit shy around women, though mostly he did OK with them. But as so often with that type, the more he cared for a girl the shyer he got. Eventually he confided to us that he was really in love with an undergraduate, Danielle, but whenever he talked to her he never managed to get past polite chit-chat. We both knew Danielle, a second-year Arts student, since she played women's hockey and was often around in the clubhouse, and we thoroughly approved his choice. She was slim, even willowy and looked tall on her own, though not next to Peter's lanky frame. She had long, tawny hair and was always very elegantly dressed - much smarter and more fashionable than the average undergraduate - but she was a real tiger on the hockey pitch. If she was aware how stunning she looked in her hockey shorts she never showed it - she was out there for a hard game, not to pose.

Peter was a couple of years older than us so we naturally teased him about being a cradle-snatcher, which only added to his nervousness.

"I know, she's only an undergraduate, and she even lives in Charley-Mo, for crissake!"

(Charley-Mo - Charles Morris Hall - was an undergraduate hall of residence).

Andy roared with laughter. "It's not a school dorm, you know! They are allowed out at night - it's co-ed anyway. Come on, she's not too young for you and I'm sure a girl who looks and dresses like that isn't too naive or innocent."

"Peter," I said, "I'm not going pimping for you but - if you happen to see me talking to Danielle, just come up and say hello to both of us, OK?"

After hockey training that evening we showered quickly and changed, and Danielle was in the common room, still in her shorts. This was looking just a little contrived but I managed to keep a straight face as I walked up and got chatting.

"Hi, Danielle - how's it going? Got a game this weekend?"

“Hi Tim, yes, we’re playing Sheffield 2nd XI - on paper at least we should slaughter them. That is, if I stay in this team.”

“Why, are you quitting?”

“Not at all, they’re trying to persuade me to move up.”

“But isn’t that good? You’re good.”

“I’m not that good - besides it isn’t what I want. I play for fun, for the exercise.”

“Me too, but you are good, I’ve seen how you play”

“Sure, I play better than certain girls who put makeup on before the game and swan around the field looking pretty. But the only reason I look good is against them. I’m nowhere around career hockey girls. And I don’t want the pressure. ‘Why did you miss that goal shot’ - that sort of thing.”

“I know what you mean but still - it’s an honour - it’ll look good on your cv”

“I know, and also I don’t want to let them down if they really need me - but then again I don’t want to take a place from someone for whom it would really mean something”

“Hi Tim, Hi Danielle” - Peter walked up looking about as casual as a 15-year-old playing Hamlet.

“Hi Peter, how’s your team going?”

“Pretty good - I don’t think we’ll set the world on fire but we are improving. I’m not the team star like you, though ...”

“They’re trying to move Danielle up to the first XI ...”

“Wow, that would be amazing .. put you out of my league - you probably wouldn’t even deign to speak to me then!”

“I think I’d manage .. anyway, I really don’t think it’s what I want”

“God, take your chance if you can - you might not have the option again” suddenly he blushed “... anyway, I’d better move”

“OK Peter”, I said, “but are you going to have a quick dinner at the Oak with me and Andy in a little while?”

“Sure, sure, good idea ...” and he slipped away.

“Danielle, what are you going to do about him?”

“Tim, what can I do? It’s like this every time! I’m beginning to think I’ll have to ask him out myself - but then I’m afraid he’d run a mile if I did!”

“Come with us to the Oak. He can’t run away when we’re all sitting down to a meal, and a beer might just relax him enough to ask.”

“Hmmm - I haven’t signed out from Charley Mo, so I’m paying for dinner there anyway - oh heck, it’s worth it. You’ll wait while I have a shower?”

“Of course - and take your time. Don’t look too eager.”

Well, it worked. By the end of that quick pub dinner Peter and Danielle were sitting quite close together, and had a date for Saturday night. Claudia and I had plans for the weekend - although our relationship was still pretty chaste we spent as much time as possible together - so it was Monday before I saw Peter again.

“How did it go, Pete?”

“Oh, er, it was great. I mean we didn’t get very far but just to kiss her was enough. It’s happening, we’re going out again - I guess we’re a couple. Trouble is I still feel like a schoolboy on his first date! It’s crazy, I know - I mean I’m no virgin and I’m sure she isn’t either but that’s how we’re acting.”

“Don’t worry about it - let it take its time.”

“Of course I will, but I’ve got an idea. You know how much easier it was when you got Danielle to come to the pub with the three of us? How about we all six get together for a high-class meal at Jumbo on Saturday.”

Leeds, like anywhere else in England, has dozens of Chinese restaurants. But it also has Jumbo, where you get the real thing - genuine Cantonese cooking, dearer than your high street ‘Golden Lantern’ but not too dear for a student budget on a special day.

“OK by me - Claudia and I can afford it if you can. I’ll get Claudia to book - she’ll manage to get us in even if they’re full.”

“That’ll be another debt I owe you - I just don’t know how to thank you for setting that up last Wednesday, Tim”

“Did I set it up?” I asked, innocently.

“Of course you did - I saw you.”

“I suggested the pub meal, sure, but didn’t it ever occur to your little brain to wonder why Danielle might be still standing around outside in hockey kit when all the other girls were in the change room?”

“Oh Christ, you mean she was waiting for me? I must be blind. I never even thought about it.” Peter blushed, and shook his head. “But actually that makes it better really, doesn’t it?”

I couldn't help laughing at this "It looks to me like you've got it pretty good, Pete! Just make sure your budget will run to some good wine at Jumbo to wash away those inhibitions - and I think it's yours not hers I'm talking about!"

Claudia did indeed manage to get a table for six at the Jumbo. But Peter was obviously not waiting till then to see Danielle again, since when Claudia and I dropped in to the Chakwal on Wednesday evening, Peter and Danielle were already there at a corner table. We took the table next to them, and as always the owner came up and made a real fuss of Claudia. I introduced Claudia to Danielle, who was suitably impressed by the treatment we got. Claudia was calling herself the Chakwal's 'mascot' by now. Peter and Danielle seemed to have overcome first-date nerves and now looked like a couple, and we had a relaxed meal together.

Showering after the game on Saturday morning, Andy and I asked Peter how it was going.

"Look, it's fine. We're happy together, we love each other. But sexually it's hard work. It seems so bloody hard to get an English girl going!"

"She doesn't want anything sexual?" I asked.

"Not at all, she never objects it's just ... look, if I undo an Aussie girl's bra and start stroking her breast she's either going to say no, get out or she's going to be inside my fly pretty quick. But when I put my hand on Danielle's breast she obviously liked it - snuggled up closer etc - but that's it - she didn't do anything. So I put her hand on my crotch and she doesn't pull it away - she strokes me through my daks but doesn't touch my zip. And that's about as far as we've got."

Andy had turned to face the wall. "Just as well" he muttered drily "or you'd be embarrassing us all in public."

"Peter," I said "I've known English girls who'd be off like a rocket in that situation. But just remember how shy you were - she's probably scared of frightening you - wants you to take it at your own pace."

"I guess you're right. But an Aussie girl faced with a shy boy would reckon he needed a bit of help and I think I'd find that easier than the English way."

Andy added "At least you've got a good Protestant English girl - Tim's got the Asian 'good girls don't' thing to get past and Teresa and I have the whole Catholic guilt trip - on both of us!"

We all laughed at this and left the showers, to get dried and dressed.

Dinner at the Jumbo had a pretty crazy start. We arrived together, and the receptionist asked about the Chinese person who'd made the booking - and was even more surprised when Claudia replied in fluent Cantonese. The restaurant was crowded but we had a good table and promptly voted Claudia into ordering for all of us. She talked to the waitress briefly in Cantonese then turned back to us.

“OK, we’ve got some ideas.. Nobody here Jewish? OK, Tim, I know you look Jewish but don’t pretend ...”

I have fair hair and blue eyes but Peter and Andy had seen me in the showers often enough to get her meaning and started laughing. Teresa, who’d grown up where a person’s religion was no joking matter, looked puzzled.

“Tim doesn’t look Jewish - what do you mean?”

Claudia turned to her in with mock-seriousness and really exaggerating her Cantonese accent said accusingly: “How you know about that?”

Danielle worked it out then and collapsed in giggles, and after a few seconds puzzlement Teresa turned bright red and then started laughing herself. We were all helpless with laughter by this time and the waitress must surely have thought we were drunk before we even started, though none of us had touched a drop. Between giggles Claudia managed to order for us, promising a genuine Cantonese feast - including pork.

That opening sally really set the tone for the meal, we laughed a lot, talked a lot and there was a strong sexual undertone to everything. The food was fantastic and we got through three bottles of wine between the six of us so we were happy but not drunk as we left. The centre of Leeds is a pedestrian zone and we were holding each other close and kissing frequently as we walked through it.

Our shortest way back was through a small street and on it we encountered, to our great amusement, a sex shop, which was still open. After looking in the window for a bit the girls insisted on dragging us in. Peter and Andy looked faintly embarrassed as the girls examined with great glee such items as crutchless panties, luminous condoms and even an inflatable life-size doll (not inflated). The shopkeeper was an Indian and he was shooting poisonous glances at Claudia and eventually came to speak to me.

“This is not the right place to bring an Indian girl. This is very wrong.”

“But you are Indian - you run this shop - how can you say that?”

“It is not illegal what we sell. We sell nothing illegal. But it is against Indian culture to come in a place like this. My wife and children do not know I work here and I would never let them find out. But I need money to support them and English people do not want to work to this hour.”

I could not help feeling that the logic of his argument was a little shonky - I kept imagining a Methodist running a liquor store on the same basis, or a Muslim pork butcher. I could also picture the almost inevitable scene when eventually a family member found him there. But I was not about to engage in philosophical argument, so I just gently assured him that Claudia was not even a little bit Indian.

By this time the girls had found an enormous dildo, and were waving it about with great hilarity to the even greater embarrassment of Peter and Andy. In reality that dildo would

probably have caused serious injury to any woman who hadn't had at least 3 babies, but they were acting as if it was the answer to all their fantasies. The shopkeeper, realising that we were never going to buy anything, said it was closing time and shooed us out.

Needless to say the dildo dominated conversation the rest of the way home, Teresa and Danielle teasing Andy and Peter about how they might measure up to it. Claudia knew well enough the measure of my equipment - she had at least held it and stroked it - but she still kept stirring on the topic. By the time we got to Andy and Peter's 'back-to-back' - ostensibly for coffee - we were all feeling extremely randy, and collapsed in pairs on the available seating - Peter and Danielle on the sofa, the others on the two arm chairs.

I'd already unzipped Claudia's jeans and slipped my hand inside, when Danielle said "The one thing where all these dildos are totally hopeless is that they just don't have any loose surface skin, so they could never feel right."

With very well-feigned surprise Peter said "Loose surface skin? I don't understand what you're talking about?"

"You know, the movable skin on the outside - like a real penis."

"I've never heard of such a thing - my penis certainly doesn't have any movable skin"

We knew from the shower room that Peter had a very thorough circumcision, so the second part at least seemed believable. Danielle was the only one of the three girls wearing a skirt, and by this time Peter's hand was well up inside it. Danielle was clearly on a sexual high and not about to leave it at that. She looked quite disbelieving, though.

"OK, say what you like, I'll show you what I'm talking about!"

She undid his zip and released his rock-hard member, gasping in surprise at what she saw. She took hold of the shaft and tugged, unable to move anything in the slightest

"I've never seen one like that before! It's just wonderful!" and she stroked the knob and the shaft, entranced.

Claudia undid my zip, saying "I think anyway you've got some movable skin, Tim", releasing my penis "Oh! But not much!" as she moved the skin on my shaft the minimal amount that my erection allowed.

By this time we were all looking at Andy expectantly, and Teresa exposed his cock. We knew from the shower that he was uncircumcised but you wouldn't have guessed it now as the force of his erection left his head fully exposed. Teresa managed to pull his skin part-way up his head before letting it spring back down again.

"Is this the sort you are used to?" asked Andy.

"I wouldn't say I'm used to any sort," laughed Teresa, "but I have met one like this before."

Danielle was just holding and fondling Peter's cock, totally fascinated by it, while he continued his ministrations under her skirt. In a very short time she cried out and writhed as an orgasm took over her slim body.

"I'm going to do you first" Claudia muttered to me, taking hold of my penis and masturbating it with an expert, gentle stroke. It seemed to take very little time indeed before I was shooting and shooting into a handkerchief she somehow had ready in position. It really felt like I'd never properly climaxed before this moment. Then I undid the waistband of her jeans to give my hand better access and set to work on her, and in no time she was actually screaming with her own climax, pressing her lips on mine to muffle the sound.

Andy and Teresa must have had an agreement - unspoken or whispered - to come together and that's just what they managed, climaxing simultaneously in a passionate clinch and making no attempt to contain the mess, which soaked both of their shirts.

We all turned our attention to Danielle, who was still stroking and tugging at Peter's cock. By now it was becoming clear that she just couldn't manage to bring him off. Peter was obviously enjoying it and made no attempt to help or guide her.

After she had struggled for several more minutes I muttered "You could try .." only to get a dagger look from Peter and Claudia's hand firmly over my mouth.

Finally Danielle said "I think it's time to use the secret weapon" and put her mouth down on to Peter's cock. The effect was electric. His back arched, and in a few seconds he was ejaculating convulsively while she kept up her rhythmic motion. Eventually she sat up, hugging Peter and wiping her lips.

"Well, that's really blown my diet" she said "first that huge meal and now this!"

At that we all cracked up again.

Andy and Teresa went out to clean up, reappearing both wearing Andy's T-shirts, and then they made the long-awaited coffee. Danielle eventually decided that she'd better go back to Charley Mo, so Peter walked her back. Teresa elected to sleep on the sofa, and Claudia and I made our farewell.

"I'm coming back with you. But just to share your bed - you understand"

I understood, and said so. To have her naked brown body next to mine all night was a sufficiently ecstasy for now - waiting for full consummation didn't seem a problem. We both fell asleep, locked in a tight embrace, just about as soon as we got into bed.

Sunday morning I awoke late, stretched and then lay on my side looking at the perfection of her sleeping body. After a few minutes she stirred, and pulled me to her in a fierce embrace, then rolled over on top of me, thrusting her mount of Venus against my erect cock, and kissing me with an urgency that went beyond passion to desperation. I was beside myself, grabbing her even harder against me then stroking the delicate curve of her buttocks. After a minute or two she tore herself away, panting. She took hold of my penis, now in the grip of an erection so tight that it hurt.

“Tim, we’ve got to do something about this.”

I don’t think she meant my erection - more the obvious fact that if she’d kept doing what she was doing for another few seconds neither of us would have been able to resist the final act of union between our two bodies. She looked around on my bedside table and grabbed a small bottle of Body Shop massage oil that I kept there in case of need.

“Good roundhead boy I thought you’d have something handy. Now I’m going to use this on you ...” She poured some into her cupped hand and worked it over my penis - “and you’re going to use it on me.”

She handed me the bottle. She really had no need of any lubricant, but she squirmed as I applied some to her rock-hard clitoris, which had outgrown her foreskin and was just poking between her tightly-pressed outer lips.

“And now, Tim my love, we’re going to try and do what Teresa and Andy did and come together”

“OK, just take it easy on me till you’re close.”

Se started lightly sliding her hand over my member, and I parted those delicate little lips and slid two fingers around her clitoris.

“Careful, Claudia darling, you’re getting me close”

“Oh, oh you need to be close. Ohhhh Come, Tim! Come Tim! Come now!”

She gripped me with all her strength and slid her fist over my glans. With no more than two or three strokes a white jet was shooting over her firm breasts and belly while she writhed in orgasm. We collapsed limply together, and I licked some of the semen off her breasts.

Eventually we cleaned up with tissues, and snuggled close again but now without the tension.

“You really are pretty expert at handling a boy, aren’t you?” I said.

“Tim, you know me, and you know my family background. I don’t want to get pregnant, and I don’t want to catch anything, but it’s no fun for me going out with a boy who’s permanently feeling frustrated - and I don’t enjoy feeling frustrated either. So I decided long ago - when I was 16 - that if I was serious about a boy I’d go as far as hand jobs and no further. It’s safe, it’s fun - and ” (she giggled) “it’s quite educational.”

“You certainly learned your lessons well.”

“You’re pretty expert yourself. Believe me some boys have had as much trouble with me as Danielle had with Peter.”

“There’s no excuse for that - you’re not hard to handle. But Danielle obviously liked what she saw even though she couldn’t handle it. And you prefer a circumcised boy too, don’t you?”

“I didn’t know you were circumcised when I fell in love with you, did I? All I will say is I was glad when I found out. But Tim, hand jobs aren’t enough for us now. And we have to talk about it.”

“What can I say? I love you so much. It’s just bound to happen, but it would break me up if you felt bad about it afterwards. It has to be when you are ready”

“Ready - I’m not ready, I’m desperate! I have to feel you inside me. It’s never been like that before. But I’ve got no contraception, we need to work something out. Should I go on the Pill? I get so worried about it.”

“The Pill worries me too. If a girl chooses it, fine but I’d never suggest it. A diaphragm is simple, harmless and just as effective. Honestly, Claudia, I think that’s the best way.”

“Except that I can’t get one - I’m a virgin, remember”.

“I’ll just have to use a condom at first. It’s not so nice but it won’t be for long.”

“NO! I’m not going to lose my virginity to a piece of rubber. I might as well use a dildo!”

“If you used that dildo we saw last night you’d be going to the doctor for stitches, not a diaphragm fitting!”

That made us both laugh, and reduced the tension. Claudia thought for a bit.

“My period’s usually pretty punctual. Next weekend should be totally safe, since it’s due sometime Monday to Wednesday after that. We should be able to do what we like that weekend - and feel secure about it once my period arrives.” She paused for a moment and added, laughing again, “Anyhow, I reckon a condom would split.”

This seemed a sound plan to me - I didn’t say so, but I knew that there was also the option of simple doctor’s visit and pill if her period somehow didn’t come. She probably knew that too. And a condom probably would have split. So we agreed not to sleep together during the week - just in case - and meet up on Saturday after my hockey match - an away game, but not far away, in Bradford. Then, finally - around midday - we got up, bathed and had brunch.

In the showers after hockey training that Tuesday Andy said “OK, no talk about our girlfriends until we’ve at least got towels round us. Of course Peter’s probably so totally shagged out he’s not even capable of an erection but spare a thought for the rest of us.”

Peter replied “Maybe there’s a bit of wishful thinking there! Anyhow I may not be showering with you so often now - seems I’m getting elevated to the Firsts like Danielle.”

We duly congratulated him, and he added “Just one thing don’t understand - you’re a better player than me, Tim - why didn’t you get it? You didn’t by any chance ...”

“No, Peter, I didn’t stand down in your favour. As a matter of fact I was offered a place in the First XI as soon as I started, based on my Cambridge record, but I didn’t want it, and I want it even less now I’ve got Claudia. I lost enough Saturdays to hockey at Cambridge. This works out just fine for both of us - you get more time with Danielle and I get more with Claudia.”

The First XI was part of a grand inter-university competition, with zones, regions and eventually National finals. This meant many distant away games, wiping out the whole of Saturday to travel. But for the first two-thirds of the season, while playing in our own zone, the men’s and women’s games were generally in parallel, both played at the same place and travelling in the same bus - good for Peter and Danielle and several other couples in the same situation. The seconds just played in a local round-robin which never took us more than 30 miles from home, so you were always free by lunch-time. And the seconds meant one evening training, against the first’s two or three.

By now we were out of the shower and at last partially covered, so I demanded to know what I was missing out on.

Andy chuckled. “Well, Danielle spent Sunday night chez-nous, and she didn’t sleep on the sofa. And I doubt if she got to her lecture on Monday morning either!”

“You forget - she’s an Arts student. It’s a different world - she had nothing till 11 and she made that fine. But it was a wonderful night - it’s not only the sex - that’s great, of course, but just spending the night in bed beside the woman you love is well, Tim, you know what I mean.”

“But that was pretty quick after such a slow start”

“Yes, Saturday night sure planted the foot on the accelerator pedal! We arranged to meet on Sunday when I walked her home and we both knew that would be the real thing. But it was only on Monday morning before we got up that she confessed why she’d insisted on going back to Charley-Mo. Seems she’d got so convinced I was slow that she hadn’t even bothered to bring her diaphragm with her - and she wasn’t going to risk a night in bed with me without it!”

Andy shrugged. “Well, Teresa didn’t have one to forget. But we’ve made an appointment at the Family Planning clinic and she’ll have one soon. She doesn’t trust condoms and I don’t like them so we’ll wait till then. She’s only had one lover before and it sounds like sex with him was pretty awful for her. She knows it will be different with me - especially after Saturday - but we still need to take it gently.”

“Yes, “ I said, “we’re just sorting out contraception too - just because we’ve shared a bed doesn’t mean we’ve been all the way. But I must admit it came dangerously close - Teresa and Danielle were right to be cautious.” I didn’t mention that had Claudia not been a virgin there was no way we could possibly have held off, but they understood.

Claudia and I didn't stick to our resolution - Wednesday night saw us in bed together after our regular Chakwal dinner. But having made a plan and set a date made it much easier to be good, and we just hugged, cuddled and brought each other off, and slept dreaming of Saturday. And I tried to keep at bay my private nightmare that her period would come a few days early.

On Saturday I caught the minibus to Bradford with the rest of the team, while Claudia drove over a little later in my beloved Citroen 2CV Charleston to join the handful of spectators on a grey, drizzly December day. It was Peter's last game in the team and he and Andy were the attackers while I was centre forward. We'd always had a good partnership and this time we were inspired, perfect teamwork ensuring a 3-0 victory over the Bradford team. I guessed this weekend was likely to be as significant for Andy and Teresa as it was for Claudia and me, but our shower conversation kept away from such topics, a kind of unspoken accord that this wasn't the time. But we did hug together, naked, in a farewell embrace - attracting some ribald comments from other team members who in reality were in no doubt at all of our heterosexuality (not that we cared).

I left the others to return in the minibus (Peter very eager to find out how Danielle's first game in the first XI had gone), and joined Claudia in my car. She was over the moon about our performance (as were we) and we were all over each other. Eventually we decided that a mini car was really not the place to consummate our union and drove back to Headingley, picking up some smoked salmon sandwiches from our favourite sandwich shop.

We'd got through about half a cup of coffee each and had a few bites from our sandwiches when Claudia grabbed my hand and led me to the bedroom. I was nervous as hell, so heaven knows what she was feeling. I felt I should talk to her, warn her that it would hurt, warn her not to expect too much from the first time, but she put her finger on my lips.

"No talk, we jus' do it", her Cantonese accent really coming out under stress.

Delicately, slowly, she pulled off my clothes and I did the same for hers, stroking her firm brown breasts, her perfect buttocks, and her mount of Venus with its delicate tuft of hair. We lay together in the bed, just holding each other close, pressing our bodies together. My nervousness meant that I wasn't immediately erect, but the contact of her body soon started my member swelling to its full size. We pulled apart a little and I slipped my hand into her vulva, parting the tiny, tight lips and spreading her natural lubrication. I stroked her clitoris, feeling it swell under my touch, while my penis, which she was alternately squeezing and stroking was now hard to the point of pain. I knew that I needed to get her as aroused as possible to make it less painful for her, but the way she was handling me was getting me dangerously close to the brink and I moved her hands to my hips, whispering "Soon, my love, soon".

My fingers slipped down, playing briefly with her pee-hole, which sent her shuddering with anticipation, then slipped my ring finger into her vagina, moving it up and down gently. Normally my little finger fitted her easily and my ring finger was uncomfortable, but now I moved on to my index finger with no more than a sharp intake of breath from Claudia,. My middle finger produced a little yelp of pain but then she was bucking and squirming "Now please Timmy, now come in me please Timmy!" She dug her fingernails fiercely into me, making me wince with pain in my turn.

“Just one more little thing, my love”. I had put a little bottle of olive oil from the kitchenette beside the bed, feeling it was more body-cavity friendly than the scented massage oil, and I pulled up to a kneeling position and rubbed a generous palmful over my rock-hard cock.

“Wa’ that?” She grabbed the oil bottle and than began to laugh, while still panting and writhing in an agony of sexual excitement. “Extra virgin! - Come on Tim, I don’ want to be extra virgin any more!” The joke made us even more aroused but also did a bit to relax us.

I lowered myself on to her, my cock somehow automatically positioned at her introitus, and started trying to push it in. It was desperately light but suddenly it yielded a little and I felt my head slip inside. She cried out in pain, but grabbed my buttocks and pulled me hard towards her, digging in her fingernails in her eagerness to get me all the way inside. I had never experienced anything so tight, but I tried another sharp push and suddenly I was slipping further in. Claudia was crying now but she pulled me tightly and thrust up towards me and then I was in, all the way in, our pubes pressing hard together.

I had never experienced anything like this - something so soft, so slippery and yet holding my penis so incredibly tight. We forced our bodies tightly together and just held them there - I knew that any movement would soon take me past the point of no return.

“Oh Tim, oh Tim, you’re in me. It hurts but it’s so good, it’s wonderful, ohh ...”

I slipped my hand down to give her some stimulation without moving myself, but she pushed it away, then kissed me fiercely to show she understood. She started to press her hips against mine in a steady, slow rhythm, pressing her beautiful little clitoris against my pubis. I thrust back against her, and I was soon breathing sharply, knowing that the sensation building in my cock was soon going to engulf my whole body. There was still pain in Claudia’s eyes, but also a look of fierce determination on her face.

“It’s OK, Timmy, shoot inside me please!” she gasped, and as she thrust she wriggled her hips slightly, in an indescribable motion. Suddenly the sensation overwhelmed me and my entire body trembled as I came and came and came, pumping more and more semen with each thrust. Eventually the flood ceased, and I came back to my senses. Now I was willing my cock to keep enough hardness not to get forced out, tugging myself tightly against her. Our movements were no more than pulsations as our bodies were so tightly pressed together, but gradually, very slowly, she started gasping in pleasure and the tears faded from her eyes. I realised that now my penis had softened it was no longer giving her so much pain.

We held this position for a long time, pulsing in a steady rhythm, and Claudia’s gasps of pleasure became more and more frequent, and her movements faster. My penis gradually grew harder again, and I was able to match her movements with real thrusts. By now she was beyond feeling pain, and her back was arching at each stroke. Suddenly she bucked and leapt, screaming out loud as orgasm at last took over her body, and I clung to her, thrusting whenever I could, as we rolled about the bed. At each thrust she cried out again, and I did nothing to smother her shouts, knowing that this afternoon we had the building to ourselves.

At last she was still, and I gently withdrew, savouring the twinge of pain from the post-climax sensitivity of my knob as I did. Somehow to me that sensation epitomises the post-

coital tristesse which is man's lot in this world. A woman's body is immediately ready for another encounter, but a man's physiology forces him to pause. (Several weeks later, discussing this point, Peter and I were in complete agreement when Andy dropped the bombshell that uncircumcised men don't get this twinge of pain - their foreskin shields the glans as they withdraw. To him that was pretty much the only benefit of having a foreskin, but to us it seemed terrible to be deprived of a sensation that was such an integral part of being a man.)

I lay spread-eagled on my back and Claudia moved to put her head on my chest. For a while neither of us said anything, and eventually I lazily reached for a tissue and wiped my penis. There was a smear of blood on the tissue, but it wasn't seriously bloody. Claudia looked at it:

"Well, there's the proof, Tim. It's happened, I'm yours at last. Oh, I'm so happy, I love you so much, but I don't know whether to laugh or cry."

She rolled over, burying her head on my chest, and I stroked the delicate curve of her back.

"It's all right to cry if you need to, I understand. I love you Claudia, you're the most wonderful girl in the world."

Suddenly she rolled over and sat up, looking worried "Oh, I'm terribly wet - is it blood?" She grabbed some tissues - "No, it's not blood. It's you! How much did you put in there?"

We collapsed together, laughing.

"We always seem to end up laughing!" I said "But how are you feeling? Are you sore?"

"Let's say I know where you've been. But it's OK. It's definitely two-finger pees for the next few days."

We were both completely unabashed about peeing in the other's presence - I think that was just the sort of people we were. Maybe at first it had also provided a surrogate release of sexual tension, but we didn't change our ways after becoming lovers. 'Two finger pees' meant parting her lips so that she peed in a straight stream without getting herself wet. Since in those days neither showers or bidets featured in English domestic bathrooms, Claudia often did this even when she wasn't sore, just to keep herself clean and fresh.

We were together all that weekend, and made love again on Sunday evening, and since her period hadn't yet come, on Monday night as well. Each time got easier for her, and on Monday we actually climaxed together. Monday morning I had to throw the bed sheets into cold water, so we were facing the future in a very happy frame of mind. After her period we made love a couple of times with condoms - which helped make her ready for the diaphragm fitting but also confirmed our dislike of 'rubbers' - and then she got her diaphragm and cream.

Student budgets didn't run to high-class restaurants very often, but now that we were all couples we'd started to explore the possibilities of cooking, and we started up an irregular round of dinner parties for the 6 of us. The influence of that first get-together at Jumbo was

still strong, not least because Danielle had, bold as brass, gone down to the sex shop on the Monday afternoon and bought the dildo. She said it had introduced her to a greater understanding of male anatomy - we reckoned it was more that it had finally got their relationship going. Once the undergraduate term ended Danielle moved in with Peter, though she went back to her Charley-Mo room (paid for by her parents) when the spring term started.

The first dinner party took place just before we dispersed for a brief Christmas break. Teresa had already met Andy's parents, who lived just north of York, so it was agreed that Andy should go back with her to Belfast for Christmas itself. She had originally planned to travel by the rather horrendous train and ferry route, but Andy got his parents (who were overjoyed that he had got a good Catholic girlfriend) to cough up some extra cash so that they could both fly - an easy and convenient direct turbo-prop flight from the little Leeds-Bradford airport. They were going to be away a fortnight, so to give them a good send-off Peter and Danielle cooked a meal, and Claudia and I brought dessert.

This set something of a pattern for dinner parties at the 'back-to-back'. The dildo was always prominently on display, and after dinner the evenings usually turned into pretty sexual affairs. Since we were all now sleeping with our partners on a regular basis things didn't go as far as that legendary Saturday - more often, when the horseplay reached a certain pitch, Peter and Andy would wink and retire to their rooms with their partners, leaving Claudia and me the choice of going back to my place - or the sofa. That first dinner we said farewell and went back to my apartment, but occasionally, if the mood was right, we chose the sofa. That meant the evening wasn't quite over - the house, being both small and recently modernised, was well heated and none of us felt any need to get dressed after sex. Often, an hour after separating, the six of us were all together again downstairs, just lounging around - maybe having a coffee or a glass of water - happy be naked together without, for a while, the sexual overtone.

Peter had nowhere else to go, of course, so he spent a week over Christmas at Danielle's parents' place, a rather upmarket converted farmhouse outside Leamington Spa, in the rural part of the English Midlands. Apparently he created a favourable impression, though he told me he was a bit unsure about the implications of being given a separate bedroom. Danielle took him aside and explained that this was for appearances - no one minded them sleeping together. After Christmas Peter was quite amusing on the subject of the English upper middle classes! My parents, who are academics at the University of London, took no such attitude - they just asked if we wanted one room or two. I probably hardly need say that they were absolutely enchanted with Claudia. We only spent three days there - just the actual Christmas period - since Claudia's parents were also keen to see more of us. They lived in Shipley - not far from us - and we didn't actually stay with them, but we did make a point of spending several days there. Claudia was effectively living in my apartment by now, though she kept her tiny bedsit in Hunslet for form's sake. By this time I knew the family well enough to realise that it wasn't that they cared, more that they didn't want to further offend Claudia's mother's extensive Chinese family, already sufficiently scandalised by her unconventional marriage.

After Christmas, when we were all together again, it was a unanimous decision that the dinner parties should continue. The first was at our Headingley apartment. With fewer private spaces, we didn't have the option of retiring to separate rooms as we did in the 'back-

to-back', and generally on these evenings we tended just to make our farewells in a highly aroused state. After all, it really isn't far from Headingley to Meanwood. But that night in January we got to playing strip poker and eventually we were all naked and no-one wanted to leave. There was snow on the ground, and getting rugged up against the outside world was obviously going to be a passion killer.

For the first time this led to us all exploring each other's bodies which, in spite of our intimacy, we'd never done before. I suppose, especially for the girls, it took a certain level of confidence in our individual relationships before they could be comfortable with this. It was easier for Peter, Andy and me - we had all been at boys' schools, so handling other boy's cocks was not unfamiliar, but we still enjoyed having a refresher course! Peter had never got close to an uncircumcised one before, so Andy's was a new experience to him. I found Andy interesting too - the last one I'd handled with a foreskin had been on a boy of 12. The differences between the two types is pretty stark at that age and but they are really not so different in adulthood. Andy had plenty of experience of both sorts, but he still found our 'roundheads' fun, and he enjoyed the attention his member was getting.

The girls, though, had never ever touched other girls before, and they had a field day exploring their differences. This, of course, got the boys curious as well and we demanded the chance to play with them - which they were only too willing to grant. Teresa had no previous experience of circumcised boys so she was determined to give Peter and me a good going-over. While she played with me I found, to my surprise, how tiny her clitoris was, and how thoroughly covered by its foreskin - you could expose it but it never poked itself outside like Claudia's. Teresa also had barely more pubic hair than Claudia, while Danielle had quite a bush, though being fair it didn't stand out. Danielle was very intrigued by the way my circumcised penis, unlike Peter's, had a little free movement in the shaft skin - at one stage she had mine in her right hand and Peter's in her left for a close comparison. I was fascinated to find that she had much more in the way of inner lips than Claudia, who didn't really have any at all. Danielle's were not ugly things that protruded, but they were big enough to run your fingers down either side of them before you parted them to explore her private bits.

Eventually we were so turned on we just had to get release, and we returned to our regular partners - I guess we all feared the consequences if we didn't. Andy and Teresa had their act perfectly attuned, as ever, though this time they had no clothes to soil. Claudia and I were much amused to see that even with almost two months more experience, Danielle still couldn't get Peter off, and eventually had once again to use her 'secret weapon', to Peter's evident satisfaction.

I brought Claudia off first, and she then whispered to me "Do you want me to try the secret weapon on you?"

I rapidly said "No, please, please don't do that." to her obvious surprise and consternation.

She said nothing more, just brought me off with her usual skilful, tender strokes, but gave me a very questioning look afterwards - she'd obviously realised I was really serious about not wanting her mouth. I pulled her close and kissed her for a long time before whispering "It's all right - do it tomorrow night. You'll understand then."

After a general clean-up session and a late cup of coffee we finally got dressed and made our farewells.

It may seem surprising, but Claudia and I had never tried oral sex - I suppose it had taken so long to get as far as normal coitus, and that seemed enough for a while. But next evening Claudia took me by the hand and led me to bed as soon as dinner was over. We undressed each other slowly, and flopped into bed together. Claudia hadn't touched my member but it was already uncomfortably hard. She was still obviously perplexed, and a bit unsure, and I whispered "I do you first, OK?"

"OK if you want ... I don't know anything about"

She lay back, legs apart and I put my tongue to her delicate little pussy, savouring the sweet nutty flavour and giving that hard, bare clit a thorough going-over. It was obviously a new experience for her but it was soon more than obvious that she liked it, and in a little while I was having to hold on to her hips for dear life as she bucked and heaved and finally exploded in orgasm.

By now my member was crying out for attention and Claudia wasted no time on words but got straight down to it. Very soon I was panting in excitement as her thin lips and active tongue raised me to an incredible pitch of arousal - a pitch which I well knew I could only get past one way. Desperation made me almost brutal as I lifted her head away, rolled her over and forcefully plunged into her. She gasped in excitement as I thrust hard and deep into her and forced my way to a violent climax.

"Don' you slip out, roundhead boy, I'm not finished with you yet" she whispered, and gripping my hips firmly started thrusting her mount of Venus against me, driving herself to another ecstatic orgasm. Finally I let myself slip out, with that indescribable frisson of half pain, half pleasure, and we lay exhausted in one another's arms.

At last she spoke ... "So that's your secret - you have the same problem with a mouth as Peter has with a hand ..."

"I think I could get Peter off by hand - and I'm sure you could - but nobody has ever got me off by mouth."

"But you didn't need to be so worried - I could have finished you by hand ..."

"Not after that. There's only one thing that will work when I'm in that state - and if I can't get that I get pretty frustrated!"

"I think I'm going to have to work on this problem"

And she did, with some degree of success, but that's another story.

Our get-togethers continued, more or less every fortnight, and were as high - spirited as ever. But in early March things seemed to be getting a bit difficult between Andy and Teresa. Andy and I still met twice a week in the girl-free environment of the showers and changing

room, and he confided that Teresa was getting rather pressing about formalising their relationship with at least an engagement, and marriage in the near rather than distant future.

“The silly thing is,” he said “it’s not even Teresa that cares about this - it’s her parents. They seem to think that marriage is more important for her than a PhD. She doesn’t see it like that but she’s under pressure. And now she’s saying things like if I really loved her I’d agree just to take the pressure off.”

Eventually the inevitable happened and they split up, with plenty of tears on both sides. This tended to put a bit of a damper on our get-togethers, especially since we all knew that both of them really wanted to be together. Andy dated one or two other girls, and Teresa went out with another boy briefly, but their hearts weren’t in it. We all tried to get them together, but eventually decided that time was the only cure. Trouble was, we still wanted to have our evenings together, but it was impossible to get sexy with Andy sitting there alone with a long face.

So one spring evening in April, Claudia and I and Peter and Danielle decided to have dinner at a pub in Adel. Adel is not far out of Leeds but still preserves the atmosphere of a country village and the pub there did a very good dinner at an affordable price. Back then the breath-test limit was a bit higher than it is now (0.08 instead of 0.05) so we weren’t put off by having to drive - getting plastered was never part of our game plan anyway). We had a very enjoyable meal - giving scant thought to Andy and Teresa - then headed back to my Headingley flat in Peter’s old Cortina. It happened that Claudia and I had just bought a big, glossy book on erotic art through the ages, and while I made coffee the other three were perusing it with great glee. When I came back with the coffee it was clear that some of the pictures had got Claudia and Danielle pretty hot - with each other! They were getting all over each other, and soon started shedding clothes, while Peter and I watched with great amusement. Soon we were getting pretty aroused ourselves, but from what the girls were doing, not the book, and we undressed too and just stood together, an arm around each other, but not doing anything. Peter turned towards me so that my cock was touching his - my knob about half-way up his shaft. It was a bit like being 12-year-olds in the showers again.

Claudia herded us all into the bedroom. “Now just this once Danielle and I are going to play as girls, so you boys can look after each other, OK?”

I turned to Peter and laughed - “Like being back at school again!”

He laughed back and we all four found space to lie down on our double bed. The girls were so turned on to each other, and just watching them was making Peter and me incredibly horny.

“Never had a floor-show like this at school!”, Peter murmured , sotto voce.

I grabbed the bottle of massage oil, lubricated his tight cock and started fisting it with long, slow, gentle strokes. He did the same to me. We both wanted it to last a while, but we were so turned on that however slowly we took it we couldn’t hold out very long. I came first, but I could feel that Peter was close so I kept the stroke going while I shuddered and shot my load. I used my finger and thumb to put a little extra pressure on his slippery glans to take him over the top, maintaining the same slow, regular rhythm. It only took me a few more

strokes to get him squirming and shooting all over his chest and stomach, but as I did this I became aware that Danielle was sitting bolt upright and wide-eyed, watching what we'd been doing to each other.

She reached over and grabbed the bottle of oil. "So that's the secret! Claudia, did you know about this? And you never told me?"

"Well, you could have asked Peter"

"Girls are supposed to give each other help and support! Ohhh! That's it, you're getting no more help from my hand, you can just be frustrated for all I care" She took her hand away from Claudia's pussy and lay back, her arms at her side.

"See if I need it" whispered Claudia in a voice so sexy that Peter and I stopped cleaning up and sat up to look.

She straddled Danielle's leg, and started thrusting against it, and the same time making sure that her own leg was moving against Danielle's vulva. In spite of her pique Danielle couldn't resist this and soon was gripping Claudia's buttocks and thrusting her pelvis in the same rhythm. They were on an incredible high, and Peter and I just took hold of each other's semi-soft penis and held it. We didn't try to bring each other off again - but we just had to do something with such an erotic charge in the air.

"Danielle, Danielle, I'm close, I'm close"

"Oh! Oh! so am I, don't hold back, come Claudia, come!"

And they both moaned and writhed, thrashing around in the bed as orgasm took over both their bodies together.

A few minutes later, cleaned up but still naked, we were back in the living room with new mugs of coffee. We were couples again, Claudia sitting on my lap in the armchair and Peter and Danielle sprawled on the sofa.

"You've done that before, haven't you?" Danielle looked hard at Claudia, laughing.

"Oh yes - but it would be 10 years since I've done it with a girl. But more recently it's come in handy when boys couldn't get me off by hand."

"Ten years? But you're only 21!"

"Look, my mother is Chinese, and she has lots of relatives. When they visit us or we visit them it's the normal thing for little girls - up to age 11 or so - to share beds. That's just Chinese culture. Boys share with boys, too. My cousins were much more strictly brought up than me - they knew it was very naughty to touch yourself down there. But nobody said anything about pressing it against another girl's leg, so that's what we did. First with our pyjamas on, but soon we found it was nicer if we pulled off the pyjama pants. We knew that was a little bit naughty but nobody could know - we had our tops on so even if someone came in it looked innocent. We'd just keep still - no Chinese parent is going to worry about

two little girls cuddled up together - and move again when they were gone. Eventually we discovered orgasms and then family visits were really something to look forward to. But we had to make sure we kept quiet ..”

“You seem to have unlearnt that lesson pretty well!” interjected Danielle.

Claudia pouted “You do what you have to do. Who wants to be quiet at a moment like that? But I can if I need to.”

I laughed at this “Yes, and every time you need to keep yourself quiet I get toothmarks in my upper arm that last for days. It’s hard explaining them away in the showers ...”

This set us all laughing, and the party finally broke up. Danielle and Peter threw their clothes on and said goodbye, while we just threw ourselves into bed.

Inevitably, Andy and Teresa did get back together, and our gatherings turned back into dinner parties for six. The topic of marriage was dropped by mutual consent, and their relationship seemed unchanged. After the summer break, though, it seemed they were drifting apart, and when Andy got the chance to spend a term in France they decided to make the split, with tears but no rancour.

Much later, Andy said to me: “You know it wasn’t her, or me. As people we could have been happy together for a lifetime. It was the Catholic Church. We both wanted to get away from it - we even went to Anglican services at Leeds Parish Church - but as long as we were with each other we never could.”

And, indeed, in due course they both married Anglicans. Andy’s parents didn’t seem to mind him marrying outside their traditional church, but it took until the first child for Teresa’s parents to really come around - a grandchild was in the end more important than doctrine, even in Belfast. Their marriages are happy and the two families remain close friends, both still in Yorkshire.

At the end of my first year in Leeds, Claudia got an offer of a PhD at the University of Sussex, the most prestigious of the ‘new’ universities. After much agonising she finally decided she had to take it up, and I didn’t try to change her mind - it was too good a chance to pass up. So our romance became a long-distance relationship. My beloved ‘Deux Chevaux’ had to go - it was far too slow for such a journey and I got a slightly hot Escort instead. Hockey had to go too, so that I could spend at least a few weekends in the south. And of course we were together again when Claudia came to visit her parents. But eventually the tyranny of distance took its toll, and we drifted apart - something I still regret, as I’m sure she does too, though we don’t speak of it. We’re both happily married now, with children, but every time our families meet up our hugs are just a bit too close than they should be for old friends. My wife, and Claudia’s husband, just roll their eyes at each other and laugh - they know you can’t rewrite the past.

As for Peter and Danielle, their path was written in the stars, and none of us had the slightest doubt of it. Danielle’s graduation coincided with Peter finishing his PhD, and two years after their first date they got married. They moved back to Peter’s native Australia, where he got a postdoc - and eventually a lectureship - in Brisbane. Danielle is a journalist and editor in

'lifestyle' magazines. They write regularly but the funniest letter was just 10 years ago, when their youngest, a little girl of 3, found the dildo and paraded it around the house, proclaiming "Look Mummy, a model of Daddy's wee-wee!"
