



## **DIY Pervertables, Or, Can You Please Direct Me To The Aisle With Rope and Chains?**

by Sossity Chiricuzio, Harlot Magazine

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Do you get a tingling feeling in your tender parts when you're wandering through a home improvement store? If so, you're likely an experienced treasure hunter; a cobbler of disparate things into a very pleasing whole; a do it yourself pioneer on the refit of your sex life. Yes, I am talking about perversion and commerce under the bright lights of a warehouse. Whether you're flagging Lowe's blue or Home Depot orange, you can often find the means to suit your needs in those seemingly innocuous aisles of carefully labeled bins.

Perhaps you're wondering why someone would even be searching there, or worrying that the authorities might be called? I'm not suggesting you have an actual scene in the store (though I'd be lying if I said I hadn't written a story about just that,) but rather that you use your pleasure seeking lens on those pedestrian items. What else is a St. Andrews cross but sturdy 2 x 6 boards, bolted together with heavy duty screws? What else would you use a 1" wooden dowel for but to create a spreader bar? And seriously, what else could those large metal hitching rings be for?

I can't tell you how many times in my early twenties (at least a dozen) I could be found roaming the aisles with a length of chain coiled around my shoulders like the fiercest possible boa, in wide grinning company--clearly queer, and possibly a bit dangerous, and definitely not building a birdhouse. On one visit, the well meaning questions of our clerk petered out right around the sixth coil of ¼ inch nylon rope I had him cut (in various colors, but all the same length,) but he managed a slight smile when I

caught his attention and asked how to know which part of an exposed beam was best for placing ½ inch eyebolts. “Will they be weight bearing?” “Yes.” “Then make sure they are centered, and not near any pre-existing splits or knots in the wood.”

Despite his lingering edge of discomfort, he was intrigued as only a home project geek can be. “Those hitching rings can be bolted directly into cement or wood, but will pull out of plaster if you exert too much pressure on them.” He made no mention of the fact that the pressure might well be the thrashing of one (or more) of my companions, no knowing leer. His brow was furrowed, but he stayed friendly and present until we had every chain, eyebolt, and dowel on our list. This interaction was an exception, mind you. I was abandoned in the fastener aisle more than once by a clerk whose masculinity was too fragile for my combat boots, direct communication, and knowledge of lock washers.

Being as I’m white and cisgendered, I know I have a head start on being indulged (or not abused,) and I live in a country where it’s not (quite, yet) legal to lock me up simply because I’m honest about my desires, but if you’re willing to be less in your face than my early 90’s Queer Nation crowd was able to pull off, you can often fly right under the radar of most clerks. Don’t feel obliged to explain anything, regardless, other than the specifics of the item in question. If it still feels unsafe or intimidating, try ordering online, or go on a busy weekend when the demands for a shade that isn’t quite ecru and isn’t quite eggshell will keep the staff far too distracted to wonder why you need 15 paint stirring sticks but no paint.

Are you new to the practice of deviance as it applies to the fine line of nerve endings between pleasure and pain, and currently have another tab open, googling “spreader bar”? No shame, my friend, the leather scene can often feel overwhelming, or sometimes just overpriced. All those expanses of hide, cut into shapes both pleasing and practical, are a big investment, sometimes even more so if you want mammal free varieties. Or perhaps you simply don’t have a leather community where you live, or a specialized shop in your area, or one that feels safe. For a sense of comfort, and your budget, start at home.

Go to the kitchen and search for a wooden spoons. Not slotted ones, you don’t want to start there (open spaces in a hitting surface equals sharper pain,) just a simple wooden spoon. The convex and concave sides will each feel different on impact, while the handle will be the stingiest of all (less surface area equals a more focused impact.) Try it on yourself before anyone else--it’s important that you know how something feels before you ask someone else to allow and receive it. While we’re talking basic etiquette: always ask first, and then keep asking as needed. Pick a safe word, something unusual, that either of you can use if things get too intense or don’t feel good. Be sure you’ve eaten and hydrated recently, but stay sober, especially if you’re new to this, or to each other. Discuss everything first. Consent is not an upgrade in this project, it’s your foundation.

Once you start examining the world with deviance in mind, you’ll find pervertables everywhere, but not everything that seems like a good idea actually is (see also: playmate prospects.) Many of us have encountered a movie or book where stockings or ties are used to bind someone, and it surely seems like a sexy idea, but too much struggling in those silky bonds could cause them to tighten across

important nerve clusters and blood vessels, and that kind of material can make impossible knots. Trying to approach someone scared or hurting with scissors and not make them more freaked out is an iffy gambit at best, and no fun. Far better to engage your inner scout, learn a lot about knots, and invest in rope and medical scissors for emergencies. Sometimes it's better to use the tools that have already been perfected, and save the creativity for what you do with them.

Whatever explorations you make, be sure to take your time, do your research, and remember aftercare--that time to be comforted, cuddled or otherwise held safely while you process what you did, and what you learned. If you're exploring alone, plan ahead for self care and hold yourself kindly. Sometimes knocking down walls, while hugely therapeutic, can also be a shock. Sometimes you find it's a load bearing wall, and decide knocking it down isn't the way to go. Maybe just a small skylight, or a door that locks on the inside so only you can open it. It's your home, build it your way.

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