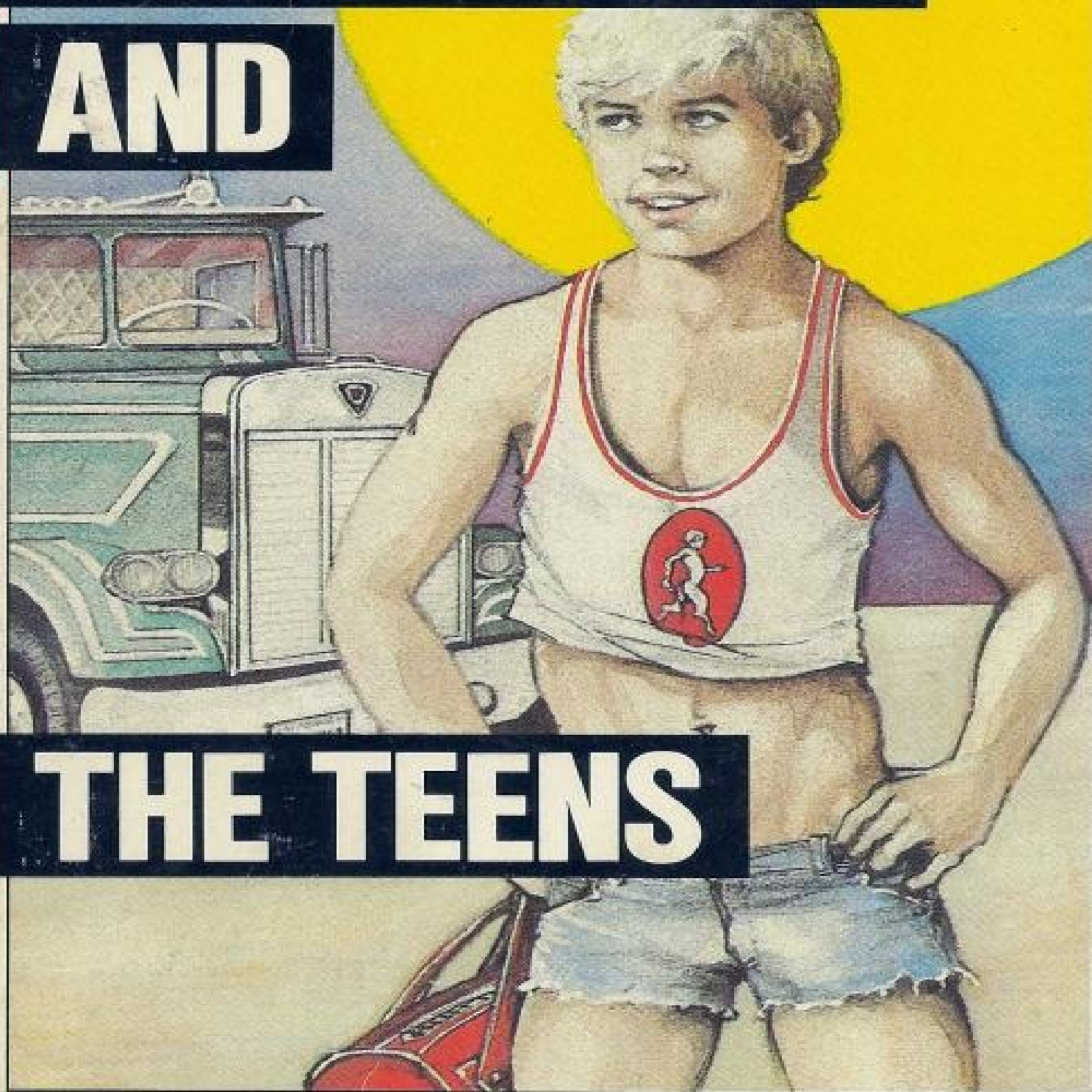


LOUIS A. COLANTUONO

# THE TRUCKER

# AND

# THE TEENS



VOLUME ① 1969 - 1975

*Louis A. Colantuono*

# **The Trucker and The Teens**



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*The Coltsfoot Press,*  
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# Introduction

The last thing Louis Colantuono expected to do was write books. On the surface of it, he would seem to be eminently unsuitable for such a task. Until just a few years ago he was an all but illiterate trucker and carpenter who had run away from home in his mid-teens, wandered up to Alaska, where he and some Aleut Indian youngsters operated a salmon fishing boat for a season, then started driving trucks on the American West Coast, with time off to hit the rodeo circuit and do some dirt track auto racing, until his career was interrupted by seven years of imprisonment for loving a boy. Out at last, he married, set up a small carpentry shop in the greater Los Angeles area for neighborhood street kids and simultaneously built a prosperous private trucking business until, once again, he was jailed for sexual contact with boys. He is still in prison.

With only the hostility of fellow inmates (inevitably egged on by prison guards) to spell his boredom, Colantuono decided this time to teach himself to write. Until then he could put down on paper little more than his own name. (He is severely dyslexic.) Now he covered all the keys of a typewriter with adhesive tape and learned the touch system. Soon he was typing short stories, then recording in massive detail all he remembered of his life in freedom.

His autobiography fills three volumes, *The Trucker and the Teens* being the last. Each runs to about 800 typescript pages. The manuscripts are peppered with “errors” – in spelling, punctuation, syntax – but one quickly realizes that this is an aural rendering of deeply felt experience for which the written word is just an awkward intermediary. In preparing this book we have made the obvious corrections but kept editing to a minimum. It is important that Colantuono's voice not come through filtered – or enhanced like a “new” Caruso recording. For a highly individual voice it is, one which owes nothing to letters or to religion or to psychology. For his life as well as his writing, as a poor, small, dyslexic, Jewish paedophile, he had no models; he had to create his own textbook.

What Colantuono has in abundance, and what many a trained writer can envy, is an inborn capacity to remember in astonishing detail incidents and especially conversations he had with the boys he loved. He is also disarmingly candid. There are times when he may appear to tell us too often about his own loving nature, (unforgivable in an Anglo-Saxon culture!); occasionally it seems the kids talk too much about their Louie, how wonderful they think he is and his volcanic sexual appetite. But Colantuono counters:

“I was not trying to praise myself. I was trying to show the boys in the actual way they thought of me and the actual way they talked about me behind my back with each other.... After all the hours, days and weeks in a truck a lot of conversation comes out. A boy is giggling on the front seat next to me telling me what another one of my friends has told him and stuff like that.... Most boys will not talk directly to you about their feelings unless it's a real emotional moment for them, and then their love for you overwhelms you like a giant tidal wave.”

This book covers roughly the first half of the time he spent in freedom between his two imprisonments. We will publish Volume Two within the year.

# 1. A New Beginning

I got out of prison on October 15, 1969. I was washing the sea salt out of my old rusty pickup truck in my driveway. We lived in a triangle of streets that faced a park next to the ocean.

I'd spent over seven years of my life in prison for fondling and "oral copulation" with a thirteen-year-old boy named Danny. I loved Danny. I was sent to Atascadero State Hospital where I was only supposed to do a short time because I had pleaded guilty so that the boy would not have to be hurt forever by taking the stand to testify against me.

"Do you really know what you did to that poor, young, innocent child?" they asked me at the hospital.

"Yes. I loved him in a way that was great for both of us," I told them.

"You're the man who damaged and hurt him for the rest of his life!" they told me. "Now can you see what kind of scum you really are?" They smiled as they strapped the bio-feedback device on my wrists. "We are here to cure you of your sickness that makes you think you loved this boy."

I was deeply hurt. How could I hurt a boy that I was really in love with? I didn't do anything wrong. I didn't hurt him. He was the one who was holding the back of my head as he thrust lightly with his hips, pushing himself all of the way in against the roll of my tongue. So how did I hurt him?

After years of prison and mind-boggling bullshit no one could tell me how I hurt him except in some sort of fantasy type situation – their fantasy, not mine. After they found I was incurable they sent me to the state prison, and there I stayed until October, '69.

After a whirlwind of dating fifteen women I'd found one who was tolerant and understanding. I moved in with her. My parole officer started telling her about my bust for "child molestation". Danny was already so much bigger than I am that I could not even wear his clothes. He was blond; he was beautiful; he was loving. I was 23 when I was arrested, and turned 31 two weeks before I was paroled.

So there I was washing my pickup not long after I moved in with my girl when this darling boy rode up on his bicycle. He just sat there on the sidewalk and looked at me for a while and then rode away. I rolled up the garden hose, took it into the garage which had also become my workshop – my first very own shop.

Late the following Friday afternoon I was struggling to get my camper up onto the bed of my freshly washed truck. The jacks were giving trouble. I was running back and forth around the truck to lower them evenly, one after the other, when this boy pulled up on his bicycle again.

"Mister, can I help you get the other jack?" he said.

I was sacred to death. My parole was only days from ending. My marriage was only weeks away, and here was this boy with his cute smile, his over-willingness to help me. What should I do? Could I say go away you little fucker, my whole life was ruined by your type of boy? Could I even utter a word that would chase him off? Should I just let him help me, give him a quarter for his help without becoming involved in his life, his needs, his wants? If I spoke one word to this boy it would seal our blossoming friendship, and then it would go farther like it always had in the years before my imprisonment.

"Louie," my soon-to-be said to me, "this little boy is talking to you. You do need help with that old camper jack, so let him help you."

"Oh, I'm sorry," I lied. "Yes, you can help – just crank that corner down slowly so I can follow your lead." (I would follow him any place.)

The big overhead camper that my father had given me settled heavily into the bed of the three-quarter ton. The boy followed me around to help me set the camper bolts, the turnbuckles, always accidentally getting his hands in the way of mine, until at last the camper was in place.

“My name's Randy. I'm twelve years old. I stop by here all the time to watch you working in your shop.”

“That's funny,” I lied, “I haven't noticed your watching me before. I'm Louie. I'm thirty-one.”

“What did you have to put your camper on your truck for? Are you going to move out again?”

“No. I just want to get away for the weekend and do some fishing. I haven't fished for over seven years.” I smiled at him. “I'm going to sleep over at the lake tonight so as to get up early and catch the big ones.”

“I'll bet you do catch the big ones. Is your wife coming with you?”

“No... I'm the only one who likes to fish.”

“I like to fish. You're going by yourself in that big camper to camp by the lake. Wow!”

“That's what *I* said,” I told him. He followed me into our house. He started begging me to come along.

“What's wrong with you, Louie,” my lady said to me. “I don't see any harm in you taking that boy fishing.” Before I could answer her Randy ran out of the house and was back without his bike but with a small bundle of clothes. These he put on the front seat of the truck.

“I'm ready to go when you are,” he said with a grin.

Up at the lake I made the dining area into a bed for him. I like to sleep in the penthouse – that nice, big comfortable bed over the cab. I was up there reading Mary Renault's *The Last of the Wine*, – where the man feels the hem of the boy's tunic touching a little more of the boy than the cloth – when the boy popped his head under the curtain and said, “Can I sleep up here with you? It's sort of scary down here by myself.”

“Sure, Randy. Come on up.”

He wasted no time climbing into the penthouse. He was taken back a little when he lifted the coverlet to slip under it. “Do you always sleep with nothing on?” he said looking at me with a big smile.

“All of the time. It's supposed to be healthy to sleep without body restrictions like unders and shirts.”

“Really?” He stopped peeking at me, sat up to pull the T- shirt over his head then slipped down under the covers to wiggle out of his shorts, leaving a funny little lump of a hard cock pushed up under the light coverlet.

“Hm... what's this?” I teased. I patted my hand over the blanket to smooth it out over the lump.

“I don't know what it is,” Randy said. “I think you'd better feel underneath and find out.”

By this time I'd surged hard myself. He rubbed his hand over the lump on *my* side of the blanket, then slipped his hand underneath to see what was making it. Without hardly an introduction we had our hands on each other's lumps.

I was solidly content to let it go only this far, deathly afraid to let it go farther than the casual hand I had put on this boy's hard, bare cock. But he made all of the first moves, like now when he squeezed his fingers around what his palm had been lying flat on before, his eyes on mine, his smile all for me, like a challenge, daring me to wrap my fingers around his thing, too.

“Can you shut off the lights?” he asked.

I did.

I followed Randy's lead. We cuddled together in the darkness, with him kissing and nipping on me. I couldn't believe my luck. Was this really happening to me – my first real boy sex since I'd been out of the slammer? My first same-sex sex was with a very nice elevator operator in my hotel room; he was

seventeen. Just a quickly-over thing so he could have his money to date with in the middle of the week. He sucked me, I did his bottom, and then he was upset because he shot off when I was on him. He had never shot off that way before! Now I was praying hard that this could go on forever.

“Randy, can I suck your front?”

“Sure.” Said with husky enthusiasm. “I like my front sucked real long.”

I slipped down until my feet touched the other camper wall.

My lips must have been lower than I thought they were; as they brushed past what had raised the lump in the coverlet they were met with an assent by the boy's hips.

Eight years of hungering, dreaming, wishing, hoping for the taste of a boy in my mouth. Eight years of not knowing if I would survive, live or ever love again with a boy. Eight years of a living death, a horror, a terror, a nightmare that didn't want to end, just for going almost as far as I was going with Randy now.

Randy pushed up as high as he could arch up, legs tense, his body, his pelvis stiff-ridged – and then he climaxed. He thrilled my entire being, vanishing all my fears with the taste of his orgasm. But Randy was just warming up. He pulled my head tightly against himself to make sure I would get the last drop out of him. Then he tugged and pulled on me to get me level with his mouth to kiss me. After our kiss he slipped his head under the coverlet.

“Going down...,” he called – I had told him about the elevator operator and he was teasing. “Third floor, everybody on...” And he sucked my hard on into his mouth.

Randy would not talk about sex after it was over, so I didn't find out if he really enjoyed what had happened between us or what he had in mind. I did all of the talking, there in the dark, with only an imagined smile coming from him in my mind's eye.

The alarm blasted off at five. We got up, dressed, got our poles ready, then went down to the lake's bank to fish. Randy got the first nibble.

“Let that fish tug again, son,” I told him when I saw he was going to jerk the pole. “Now just reel it in steady.” He did. He got a nice rainbow trout.

He was so excited. He danced all over the bank because this was his first fish. The first fish he had ever caught all by himself in his life. We lay under the shade of a tree when the sun got higher, still within tending distance of our poles. There were no other campers there, no fishermen, no boats. I pulled off my shirt as it warmed up. Randy did the same. He then climbed the tree I was leaning against, hanging down in front of me by his knees.

“Did you like what we did last night?” I asked my possum-playing friend.

“You know, I can hang upside-down like this for hours at a time. Do you like to hang upside-down, Louie?”

“No, I get dizzy hanging upside-down. I really like how you say 'Third floor'. Can't you just tell me a little of what you think about us?”

“No,” Randy said. “You're not supposed to talk about things like that. You just do them in the dark. Then you enjoy remembering what you've done, is all.” He dropped down to his feet from his branch, then went to see if he had to put more bait on his hook.

I watched him. His every move was a thrill to me. His hay-colored hair was unruly so it wouldn't stay out of his eyes one second after he'd combed it away. Randy was a pale boy with a wiry body. He wasn't pretty until he smiled; his body also picked up his smile and gave it, even with clothes on, a hint of excitement, mystery. After our loving I thought this stance was suggestive, even encouraging.

“What are you looking at, Lou?”

“At someone who made me very happy last night,” I told him truthfully. “I wish today could go on forever.”



“That would be a bummer. Then we couldn't have another night together.” Now he remembered he was not supposed to talk about it (sex), so he came over and lay down with his head in my lap and smiled up at me while I smiled down at him.

After lunch he continued to sit at the dinette. He would not lay up in the penthouse with me because sex was something people should only do in the dark of night. He told me a lot about his friends, their games, their ideas on morals. And this is why he was timid until dark, when he was transformed into a bundle of affection.

“Randy, you're a real Dr. Prude and Mr. Sexy,” I teased. “Heck, I can run out that door plain naked and even play naked under our tree down by the lake, as deserted as this place is now, in broad day daylight.”

“I dare you to,” he smiled. “What else can you do?”

“Hang you by your knees on that branch you were hanging upside-down from to suck you off while you're hanging there. What do you think of that?”

“I don't think you could do that for me,” he said in a dare sort of way. “Besides I'd get my legs all scratched up from the tree bark.”

“Not if I put a towel over the branch before I put you upside-down in the tree.” He wouldn't follow me out, even if I was naked, until just as it was getting dark. We ran the twenty yards to the tree. I placed the towel over the branch that was less than a foot higher off the ground than I stand. I could not talk him out of his underpants, because he had in mind to pull them up a little after he was hanging upside-down. With me being raw he had no problems where he wanted to put his own mouth.

When I helped him down Randy told me I was one of the strangest people he'd ever known. He also wanted to try anything else I could think of that could be a first for him. We did quite a few different things before he asked me to take his bottom, right there on the grass under our tree. I did. We ran to the camper naked, with Randy wearing his unders over his head looking out through the leg holes... the pants-masked streaker.

I spent two unforgettable days like this on the lake, three unforgettable nights with Randy, and an unforgettable morning before we pulled out to return home, because I got Randy to have sex with me in broad daylight to show him that sex can be even more exciting at times, was even more wonderful, when you could see the other's reaction as well as feel how much he liked what you were doing with him.

From then on Randy, to my delight, was over every day. He followed me around for three weeks, having sex in my shop with me when we could get away with it. Then one day he did not come to the shop as he said he would the night before. My wife told me that evening he'd come by to tell me his mother was getting married and they were moving that very same day to another city in another state. He was sorry but he could never see me again.

I rushed to the furnished apartment they'd rented and found it already deserted. I was stunned and hurt. I felt like I might have done something wrong to him. But I knew in my heart that we had only done what he wished to do. Randy wanted to grow, to learn to be the master of his fate, his education and his life.

## **2. Our New Move**

I worked my buns off in my little shop until I found that if we moved I could have a legal shop in a business area. I could rent or lease with an option to buy.

This was the burn-out of the free-love hippy culture years, the end of the area I was imprisoned through.

The end of the age of permissiveness and human freedom – which always means the beginning of a new moralism, new suppression.

What I saw when I looked around me that Sunday was an apartment complex, not the low income housing project it turned out to be. There was a field about the size of a half of a city block between my house and my shop. We moved there February First, 1970.

Ten is the age of manhood in all of the natural cultures. I personally feel that ten is the right age for the little people to know what they want in life. I call anyone who is over nine a teen. There are tenteens, eleventeens, twelveteens, etc. Quite a few tenteens, more eleventeens and almost all of the twelveteens are developed in their sexual awareness. They practice masturbation and spend a lot of time loving it up with their friends and even actively looking for adults to love with them.

Twelveteens are the most adventurous; it's the freest age. They play hard, work hard and they will fight to hurt one another for little or no reason if they are not already in love with a person forever. I like twelveteens because they are almost as tall as I am, or sometimes, to my delight, taller than I am.

I will take in any loving boy. Or, if he is trying to learn to be a loving boy – swell. Once loved, always loved is my motto. I will always try to be here when my boys need me.

Gabe and his gang and Fernando and his gang were the first boys I met while I was trying to move my stuff into my new shop. I found out my field was their battlefield. I cannot stand violence or useless mayhem on peers – or on anyone else for that matter. There is too much violence in this world and not enough love.

I had put my camper in the driveway at the new house. On my second trip hauling shop stuff with my pick-up truck I pulled in to the field to unload it into the back door of my shop when I saw 16 boys lined up to fight. Before I could stop them five were hurt.

I took those five into my shop, after confiscating the knives of the three smaller ones. When it comes to boys like this I can bad-ass my way through in conversation (I was raised in L.A.) but the truth is I cannot hold my own against an eight-year-old if it comes to a fight.

“You fucking punks just sit there,” I told them. “There is no fighting in this shop and no more fighting in my field.”

“What makes you think you own the fucking field?” one of the boys with a cut on his arm asked me.

“It belongs to me with the rest of the property. You can play there as long as you play peacefully. I will not tolerate gang wars.” I used peroxide on all the cuts, taped them up with butterflies. I wet glue rags and stuck them on the backs of the necks of the two whose noses I'd shoved cotton up because they were bleeding. They griped, bitched and cussed every minute I was trying to help them.

One eel-like boy screamed at a bigger kid, “Next time, Fernando, we will kill your fuckin' asses! You fuckers jumped us two to one.”

“We only outnumbered you by two, shit-head,” said Fernando. “You call us names when we are all there. You should of called the names when *you* were all there, too, you butt-fucked punk!”

The eel-like boy jumped up. I pushed him back onto his seat. “I told you to shut up and stay there.”

They all gave me wrong phone numbers to call when I tried to get someone to take them to a doctor. They laughed and cut up after the third try, so I pushed the two bigger boys out the front door and the three smaller ones out the back door. I just hoped they wouldn't meet each other right away.

Fernando saw his gang-member across the street where the rest of his gang was standing around waiting, then came back.

“Thanks for fixing my cheek,” he said. “Do you think it will leave a bad scar?”

I do not have to look for boys to love. They seem to always find me. They have many ways of doing this. Like now.

“It won't scar if you see a doctor.”

“It's a half a day at emergency to see a doctor in this town. Besides, we take care of each other.”

“I wouldn't say you do such a good job of taking care of each other. Just think if you were really taking care of each other – by trying to see that your friends were not hurt – how much nicer that would be for you all.”

“They called us names!”

“Just names? I heard you use some pretty choice names for them, too, Fernando. Are names reasons to use knives, chains or rocks slammed into heads to even things up?”

He thanked me for helping him and his gang-member again, then left to join his gang; they all walked him home. I saw a soft spot in Fernando's coming back to thank me.

Then I heard someone outside the other door.

“Hey mon,” this husky young Mexican boy said into the door, “I come for the knives you take from my boys.”

“You can't have them. They're illegal and dangerous.”

“Yeah, mon, to anyone who fucks with the Negra Mortas they are that! I almost cut the hearts out of those Lobos, huh?”

“You almost got killed by those Lobos. You were lucky I was here to stop the fight... the last fight in my field.” I smiled. “Right?”

“Where else we got to fight, mon?”

“At the boys' club or a gym, taking boxing lessons where you can use judgment to defend yourself instead of attacking others.”

“Shit, mon, this is the barrio. We have no moneys for clubs or gyms.” He glared at me. “We have to protect our turf. Those knives you steal cost fifteen dollars each and I want them back, you *puto*!”

“*Es tu el puto. Esta grochino nino tu.*”

He stepped back until he was against my pick-up's tailgate. He didn't expect me to understand Spanish which I do a little – the cuss words mostly.

“We see about my knives later, gringo.” He turned to walk away while I hollered after him his knives were mine because I took them away and that was the law of the barrio.

I was away making another trip with more stuff when Fernando came by again. He read the note I'd left on the door and waited for my return. He wanted me to retape his cheek for him. I was happy to do this. He wanted to know if I would sell him the switch blades I'd taken. “You know Gabe will get even with you for keeping his boys' knives,” he told me.

“Is Gabe the heavy-set boy who says 'hey mon'?”

“Oh, I guess he's already talked to you with his phoney Mexican accent. We have southers on our side, but we do not all run around talking like them.”

“I hope you will both try to remember that I just wish to be a friend to all of your boys. I do not like violence or see boys trying to hurt each other in my field and I hope you can understand that.”

He looked at me a long minute; then he sat on a clear bench and watched me carry in tools and other stuff I needed to set up my shop. An hour later he left, after mumbling a short *adios*.

A full week passed with no problems. I was still bringing in stuff to sort, cleaning and getting my shop ready, when I saw this boy standing against the sunlight in the doorway. I thought it was a gang boy until he talked.

“Do you have a part-time job I can do?” When he realized I couldn't see who he was he edged in slowly.

What I saw then was a very cute boy. He told me his name was Phillip, he was not a gang member, he

was just a loner and did his own thing. There was always a twinkle of humor or a continuous joke running through his mind.

“The only job I have is about two hours on Saturdays cleaning up this shop. It pays about four dollars.”

Phil told me, while he helped me put things away, how he had to fight the gangs in order to keep his individuality. He said they were always butt-fucking the little boys in the carports and garages and I saw he got hard just telling me about it.

Fernando came over with two of his boys. He'd come by to show me his cut was healed to a narrow, thin scab. He and his friends were friendly to Phil. They sat down and told me the latest rumor: Gabe was still going to get even with me.

After the boys left I was having a problem holding a board I was trying to nail because I didn't have any vises or a stop on the new workbench I was making. I called over an eight-year-old boy called Carlo who was quietly playing with his friend in the field by the shop. The other boy, who was seven, blond-haired and blue-eyed, followed him in. They knew from past experience that helping me was rewarded with a candy bar.

Sunday morning Phil showed. He sat down just to be there and started to put my books and shop magazines on the book case. He finally got interested in *Boys' Life* and other mags I had with pictures of Scouts doing things.

“Louie, how come you have books like this? Do you have teenaged kids or something?”

“I like certain boy events, so I get the mags so I can see about them.”

“What kind of boy events? Can you show me?” When I showed him what I liked in the mags he was really vocal about it. “You don't like those events, Louie. You like the boys!” He pointed out a little ride-up in one of the swimmers' suits, and a little bigger bulge in the front of another's swim suit. He leaned back to show me the pictures of the boys in the events I told him I liked, brushing his shoulder into my not-too-soft front when he did it.

“Yes,” I said, smiling fondly at one of my favorite pictures, “I have a special thing for liking boys.”

Phil started telling me again, with his shoulder still pressed against my hard spot how he walked by the garages. This time he was very descriptive about what he saw the gang boys doing to other boys and each other. His smile got bigger and bigger as I got harder and harder, until he said something I figured I wasn't hearing right. I asked him to repeat what he was saying.

“What, about my not minding if you fucked my butt?” He smiled. “But I sure would not let anyone fuck my butt if they was trying to fuck me by force like they do to that little blond kid there. He's seven. His name's Gil. He's a blond-haired, blue-eyed Mexican boy with white skin. He's a nice kid, but he's not liked by the whites or the Mexican kids because he's a white Mexican. So they all bone him.” He leaned his shoulder harder into my hard. He smiled up at me over his shoulder. “I will lock the front door if you lock the back door, Lou.”

He rushed to lock the front door, then went over to the couch and spread a furniture pad over it and was half-undressed before I got the back door closed.

“How do you want me, Lou? Face down, on my side or on my back? I like it best when I'm on my side, so when I pull off a man don't get so far in me it hurts.”

“You like men to do you, Phillip?”

“I sure do.” He smiled when I dropped my one-piece coverall to show him an all-bare me. “Gosh... I bet mine's bigger than yours, Lou. You better fuck me face-down to get all of that in me.” He pulled down his underpants to show me he was bigger.

“Size isn't everything; it's all in how the size is used. You can hurt a person with a small one as well as a big one, but let me do you on your side so *I* can pull you off.”

“Wow! If you do that you will be the first man who ever did that for me.”

When we were finished he slowly dressed. “You know, Lou...”

“Sure, I know Lou,” I teased. We laughed.

“You sure know a lot about boys. I didn't know boys could be sucked, too. I always thought that was a joke.”

“If it was a joke, Phillip, I would find that the joke was on me, huh?”

“Yes... such a wonderful-feeling joke, too.”

It was a wonderful hour I spent with this big boy, who had a dimpleless smile, all mouth, just showing a couple of his bottom teeth, his fine body-hair already looking like he was growing a fine fur coat – but he was very gentle and easy to get along with.

Gabe came to demand his knives again the following Saturday, with all of his gang giving me my final warning to return them or else. When Gabe saw Phil working for me he went into a rage. He took the stiletto he's been waving at me and ran over to my old pick-up truck and cut two of the fresh recapped tires.

“What are you going to do about this, you no-good fucking queer gringo bastard?” he yelled. “Now watch how good I cut the other two tires for you.”

I went right after the punkish ganger, right into the street. I took his knife away from him, got him by the ear and with a straight-clawed framing hammer kept the rest of them so convinced I was gong to use it they didn't try to rescue their leader. Then I took Gabe into the shop where he stood there spitting and cussing.

“Phil,” I said, “hold this fucker's other ear for me while I call the police to get rid of the neighborhood troublemaker.”

“Shit, just throw him back onto the street where Nando and his gang can get him without his knife,” Phillip said. “They'll kill the punk. That will stop him cutting your truck tires.”

I closed the doors. Gabe's gang threw rocks against the side of the shop. I told Phillip to let go of Gabe's ear.

“You patty cock-sucking bastard, you ever hold my ear again and I'll cut you deep,” he told Phillip. Phillip grabbed his ear again while I picked up the phone. “Are you calling the cops?”

“That's right,” Phillip told him. (Actually I was dialing the time.) “What do you expect him to do? This time you will stay in juvie a long time and become a real big bad ass there when they butt-fuck your sweet chubby little ass again like they did to you last time. Right, Gabe?”

I hung up after finding out it was one twenty-six and thirty-five seconds. Gabe was crying. I guess Phil's reminder was effective.

“Oh, look at how nice Gabe is crying for you, Louie,” Phillip teased, “to show you how sorry he is.”

“I know how sorry he is. I have never seen anyone as sorry as he is outside of the prison I was in,” I said, hoping to gain a little respect. “Gabe will work here in this shop until he pays back every dollar those tires cost me.”

“Alright,” Gabe said. “I will work in this shop if you give me back my knife.”

“I'll give you back your knife the day you have my tires paid for,” I told him. “You can work here for me or you can go find your own job. I don't care, just so I get paid.”

Gabe walked out of the shop when he agreed to pay for the tires. As soon as his foot hit the sidewalk he started yelling at me:

“Fuck you, *esta puta. Tu comida me vetiga grocina.* You can keep my fuckin' knife. That's payment enough for your fuckin' tires...” – He smiled at his gang boys; they closed protectively around him. –

“...mon!”

### 3. Disaster

Gabe's father was waiting for him in the field. His little brother saw what happened and went to get his father because he was afraid I was going to hurt him. Juan, the father, saw the slashed tires. He heard the abuse his son hurled at me. He'd also been standing outside the window listening to find out if his son was really getting hurt by me. Now he took charge of Gabe. A few minutes later the little brother came screaming out the door of their home that his father was killing his brother Gabe.

I jumped the back fence, leaving Phillip to stay with the shop.

A kid should not have to be beaten for destroying property. That's as stupid as killing a man to teach him it's wrong to kill. But I was too late to stop anything.

This was all appropriately paid back to me while I was home for the night eating dinner. Gabe and his gang broke into my shop. They were caught wrecking it and I was called to the shop by a policeman.

My tools were scattered all over the place: new tools, now absolutely useless. They'd cut all the cords off the power tools, threw other tools on the concrete floor, busting plastic and cast casings. I told the cop to take the children home and tell their parents what they had done. Then I sat in the middle of my shop and cried.

I was still crying when Fernando walked into the broken front door. He stood with his back to me, then asked if I wanted him to get Phil to help me clean up the mess.

I told him no. The shop was ruined and so I was I. By the time people got through suing me for their damaged antiques I wouldn't have to clean the shop at all.

Nando helped me all night trying to secure the ruined doors and the broken window shutters.

“Those punks deserve the worst,” Fernando said. “I know how good you are to the children around here. You give them candy bars for the asking, I even heard you found Julhito in the field crying with his sisters because they had no dinner and you fed all six of them in your home.” He smiled at me. His scar now gave him a strange grimace. “You are a kind helper of the people here in his barrio, Louie, and they do not deserve you.” I wanted to agree with him but I couldn't.

To me all people given a chance will be deserving of another person's help. I felt I was just too new in this neighborhood to gain their trust. It would take longer – if my business survived. The tears flowed down my face again when I tried to answer him. Again Fernando turned away from me, so he would not have to see a man cry. But he touched my hair with his fingertips.

“You're a strange man, Louie. You're not tough. Even when you were trying to be a tough person I could see the tears in you. I have only known you a short time but I liked your smile from the minute I saw you.”

“How old are you, Fernando?”

“Fifteen.” He hesitated. “I guess you can still say I'm fourteen shy of the half, but I tell everyone I'm fifteen anyway. I want to be older than I am faster.”

“Then you're fifteen to me, Fernie,” I said. “I don't see any harm in wanting to be older. I really liked your telling me you liked my smile. Here it is, right now, just for you.” I smiled a big smile for him.

“If you can tell me how to help you with these...” – He pointed around the shop, lacking words to describe the mess. “I'll help you, not for pay because it's friendship for us.”

I could not help hugging around the boy, because of his generous offer and because of his offered

friendship. He sort of pulled back, then he stepped closer so my hug turned into a real hug, not just a crude grab for him.

“You are also a kind helper of this people,” I told him. “We can start in any corner and work our way to the next wall.”

I did not know what else to do. Nail bins, screw bins, glue barrel, paint cans emptied over everything – solid walnut, ebony, teak – all ruined, unsalvageable, for it had been milled exactly to finish size. Customers' furniture I'd took in to repair was broken, sawed and gouged with chisels. They hadn't been in the shop long, but they were in sufficient number to ruin everything.

They'd scattered, stomped, stuffed, jammed candy bars into two-hundred dollar machine motors. They had poured lacquer thinner over everything and were caught as they were going to set it on fire.

“It would have been better for me if those little fuckers had burned the shop right down,” I said.

“Everything I touch is sticky with paint, glue or it slips out of my hands from this *stuff*.”

“That's linseed oil.” They'd poured fifty gallons of it over everything. “Well, Fernando, let's try to find the wood that belongs to the furniture I was fixing... What I can fix I will fix, what I can't I will try to buy outright from the owners.”

Phil showed up and pitched in to help find the furniture pieces. We wiped them off, then set them in a little clear corner to dry.

My wife finally came over. She was so upset from the damage she cried. She told me I'd made a big mistake to move here, let alone use this place for a business with thousands of dollars worth of tools and other people's valuable furniture.

Fernando had excused himself when she came into the shop. He returned when she left, bringing some of the boys from his gang to help.

“You and Phillip sit here to sort out the pieces of furniture,” Fernando told us. “Me and my boys will bring you every sliver of sawdust.”

It was sad to think that other people's prized furniture treasures were now nothing more than junk firewood, even sadder to think how my savings, my plans were all gone. Five months from prison with nothing, to something, to nothing again, was hard to take. My wife was right; this was a very bad and costly move for me.

That Sunday there were no children playing in the field. We did not see Gabe or any of his gangers all day. The neighborhood was quiet, like it held its breath to listen. The only activity was in my shop and in my house, where my wife made lunch, then dinner for all of us while we worked straight through to try to salvage what we could.

After dinner Fernando fell asleep on my couch. I was dead on my feet from being up all night and all day with Fernando and the boys. I went to pay Phil and the other boys for their twelve hours worth of work but they wouldn't take the money.

Edmondo had stayed behind to see about his leader. “Do you think I should wake Nando?” he asked.

“No, he's fine there for the night,” I said. “In the morning will you bring him some clean clothes from his house to wear to school?”

Fernando slept soundly. I slept fitfully, waking every hour to see if I was asleep yet. I finally had to rise to get the boy off to school, but he wouldn't wake up all the way.

“If you have to come alive with a shower, Fernie, you will have to take one with me or wait half a day for the water to heat back up.”

“I'll take one with you,” he yawned.

He really blushed when I washed him. He didn't know if he should stand still or jump out of the old

bath tub. I soaped myself than turned the water back on to rinse us with, but before we could finish rinsing the hot water ran out.

“Louie, you need a new water heater.”

“I know, Fernie. I was going to buy one this weekend but you saw what happened to my Sunday. Come on into the other room. Ed is supposed to bring you clean clothes.” I ran to answer the door.

“I hear what happen.” this man said. “I bring my son clothes. I happy my son help you fix your shop.”

Fernie dressed in the bathroom, then his father took him to school after thanking me for keeping him off the streets over the weekend.

When I went out the back door that morning I got another unpleasant surprise. My camper was knocked off the saw horses and the camper jacks were gone. The camper itself was not damaged, so I locked the back door and locked up my house, too, because my wife was sleeping. Then I went to my shop.

In the shop I just sat there all day, not even knowing what time it was until school let out, and then a man walked in the back door and demanded loudly, “Are you the owner of this shop?”

He pushed a boy in front of him.

“This is my son Alberto, who calls himself Cha-Cha. He will start to work this minute to help clean the mess.” The man looked around. “*Dios...* they really ruined this place!”

“Thanks, but I need a good electrician, and...”

“What about the others?” Alberto cried.

“The others do not concern me, Alberto,” His father shouted. “You are my concern. You will do what you are asked to do, even if it's picking up hot shit with your bare hands. You all know how to give shit; now you must learn how to take it, too.”

Phil came in while this was going on. When Fernie showed up and saw that Gabe's boys' parents were bringing the Mortas over as they returned from school the Lobos sat across the street to watch through the big open garage-type door to see what would happen.

Those *Negro Mortas* were too hard to handle when Gabe was around; I was glad when the boy didn't turn up, and then Gabe's father come to tell me his son had run away when the police brought him home and he was still hiding from the punishment he knew he'd get.

Ruben, Alberto's father, took charge of the boys as a sort of assistant overseer. At five o'clock he welcomed Franco, who dragged an eleven-year-old by the name of Gato into the shop with him.

“You help the others,” Franco said. “I have my own help to do.” He sat on the one last wobbly little work bench with his little tool case next to him to take apart my table saw's motor. He cleaned the motor, put a long new wire on it, then started it up. It ran perfect. He did the same with the band saw, the planer, the disc sander, the lathe. Then he looked at the hand power tools.

After I sent the boys home for their dinners Franco told me how sorry he was that his son was involved in part of this destruction. He took his son home and Ruben stayed to talk to me.

Fernando and Edmondo showed up. They started to clean where the others had left off. They said that the next day being Washington's birthday they could all come in and help get the shop in order.

“*No meho*, “Ruben told them. “Your help has been loved by this man, to help with my son's friends will only cause Louie more hardships. Work as late as the senior lets you work tonight.”

“All night, Louie?” Fernando asked.

“As late as you want without your getting tired. I'd like to do something to really let you boys know how much I appreciate what you're doing for me.”

“*Es por nada, Luis*, “Fernando said.

We worked until ten, when Ruben and Franco left telling us they would return the next day to finish up



on the repair of the tools that could be fixed.

“What are you getting for the fixing the tools?” Ruben asked Franco.

“Guilt. I'm getting rid of guilt for not being able to raise my son right.”

Ruben smiled. “That's what I'm getting, too.”

## 4. My First Couple

I shut the shop doors behind the two men, leaving me and Nando and Ed in the shop to work longer.

“Tell Ed how you washed me this morning, Louie,” Fernando said. “Like I was a *poco niño*.”

“There's nothing to tell. I just washed you.”

“Tell him how you shut the shower off after we got wet and you washclothed me. That felt so good – and Ed will not believe me. He will take off his clothes if you will show him how you washed me.”

Was this entrapment? Was he trying to get me to do something to Edmondo with himself as a witness?

Would he try to blackmail me or yell cop? I didn't figure these boys to yell cop, and they were too friendly to me to really make me think of being blackmailed. Fernando already had me for soaping him hard that morning: I'd skinned back his heavy-hooded foreskin and soaped up the back of the head thoroughly for him.

“I'm sorry, Louie. I did not mean to scare you. I know it must sound funny for a boy to ask something like this, but I hope that you can understand that me and Ed are very close friends.”

“Are you close enough to play overnight bed games?”

“Yes,” Ed said. “I told him it would be stupid to ask you to show me things.” He turned to go to the door.

“If you will show me what you usually do to each other I will give you both a sponge bath afterwards. Never think it's stupid to ask me anything, Ed. If I can answer I will; if not I will try to find out what you want to know.”

I spread a new furniture blanket on the floor, since my couch had been ruined and thrown out of the shop. I told the boys to pretend this was their bed while I shut off half of the shop lights so they wouldn't feel too self-conscious.

Each undressed himself. Ed fondled himself hard, then with spit did Fernando's bottom. Fernando did the same back. No kisses, no foreplay, nothing but fast, hard sex.

“That's what we do,” Fernando said, panting from his exertion.

I washed out a clean paint rag with warm water and soaped it. I got a rinse cloth and a towel to dry the boys with after the washing. As soon as I started to wash Fernando he stopped me.

“Will you take your clothes off, too?” he smiled. “Like when we were in the shower... *por favor*.”

I stripped naked, then I stood on the blanket with them to do the washing. The boy who watched the other boy being washed took the cloths back and forth to rinse them for me. Both boys stayed hard while I discussed the flaws of their love-making.

They shuffled their feet. They had never expected a man to tell them how to go all of the way, or even to volunteer to teach them how to be better lovers to each other. They blushed, looked at deeper shadows in the other corner of the shop. A few heated exchanges in Spanish, too fast for me to understand... The decision...

“Ed is scared you will do something with him and tell the others. But I know you won't do that.”

“Have you ever done things with other people?” Ed asked me gingerly.

“That's a fine question, after I told you the love a person shares is something private between the people who shared it, not something for others to know.” I smiled. “Fernie told you about the shower – not me.”

“Nando don't like being called Fernie,” Ed said. He lay down with me and Nando on the blanket. “I was just asking you to make sure you would not say anything.”

Nando started to fondle himself. I playfully patted his hands out of the way. I put his hand on me, mine on his, with my arm under him to tip him into me. My first kiss got no response.

“Don't you know how to kiss back?”

“I did kiss back. I kissed back like I kiss my mother.”

“I'm not your mother. I'm the girl you want to put the make on in school, the sweet thing you jack off thinking about...” I felt a hard twitch in my hand: I was getting through to him. “I am that special person you've dreamed about all of your life.” His kiss burned while Eddy giggled about what I was saying.

I always wash up between bouts, because I do not wish to get sexually transmitted problems nor do I wish to pass any on to my lover boys. I returned to the blanket where Ed was talking rapidly-hissed Spanish to Fernando.

“No,” Nando said in English. “You watched what happened to me. Now it's my turn to watch.” He smiled.

“You do not have to do anything with me,” I said.

“Tell me like you did Nando... but make me the girl who is the one you want,” Ed said. “Tonight was the first night in almost a year that Nando made me do something with him back.”

“Ed likes to be the date. He's been my date for a long time because neither of us likes girls to go out with.”

“Nothing wrong with that,” I told them. “I only went on one hand-holding date in my life when I was twelve years old and I never ball'd a girl until I was past twenty. You feel better with yourself if you do what you feel is comfortable. Like girls, don't go dating them until you will feel comfortable with them.”

“Tell me what kind of a girl I am, Luis. Tell me how long my hair is and how big my chi-chis.”

“Ed likes to see girl pictures with big chi-chis on them, Louie, so tell him he has big chi-chis.”

“That's no fair, Nando. I want to know what kind of girl mi Luis thinks I am to be for him.”

“Okay, boys, switch sides so I can love with Eddy. His puckered red lips... lips that are touched with red... they're pouty...” He pouted for me. “With a touch of pink on each cheek. Soft meaningful kisses with licked red lips. Your small cuddly body, your short curly blond curls are short and loose with your chi- chis... just right to fit in the palms of my hand.”

I got him so excited that by the time I'd finished describing my ideal boy he was all over me to please me. Afterwards Nando wanted to know by size how big were the chi-chis that could fit in the palm of my hand. I slightly cupped my hand to conform to a boy's chest... We roared with laughter.

“We don't want to go home,” said Ed. “Is there anyplace we can spend the night sleeping with you, Luis?”

“Yes, in my camper. We have to put down the front bars to keep it level, is all.”

We gathered our clothes and ran naked to where my camper stood in the driveway. “Here, Nando, you unlock the door while Ed and I put down the front bars.” There had been no food and water in the camper since I'd returned from my trip with Randy months earlier. The only thing left in there was bedding. And...

“Well, look who's hiding in here, Louie,” Nando said. “If you'd sold me one of his stilettos I could make the woman of him he is.”

The twelve-year-old sat up terrified. He'd accidentally locked himself in, and it had got so hot in the camper he'd stripped down to his underpants, then cried himself to sleep. Nando grabbed for him, getting his fingers in the only cloth the boy wore, ripping them by the time I got Nando to leave the smaller boy alone.

Gabe jumped off the bed and ran out the door holding his torn unders up, ran for home, forgetting the rest of his clothes. The white of his torn briefs was all we could see when he jumped the fence at midnight to burst into his own lighted back door.

"His father's getting him now," Edmondo said with a giggle. "You hear his father ask him where he's been? He is saying you kept him prisoner in your camper since last night for breaking into your shop. He says you were mean to him by not giving him any food or water and you tore off all of his clothes, Louie, to cut off his manhood." Ed smiled real big into my face. "His father don't believe him and he told him he has to go to bed without dinner."

We heard a sharp smack. "And he got the good-night kiss with his father's belt."

"Can you do that again?"

"What Nando? Rip off his clothes?" I asked.

"No... you're funny with me. I want you to tell me what kind of girl you think I am now." Nando smiled.

"You kids are outrageous," I told them both. "I never in my life considered boys as girls before."

"If you live around here long enough you will find that's how all of the sex around here goes down," Ed said. "When it's your turn to give the *culo*, you are the girl." So I told them again what kind of girl they were. This brought a full night of giggles and sex for me and them.

## 5. To Gabe's Rescue

Waking from an early-morning nap, I listened to Edmondo telling Nando that he did not know people could have hours and hours of sex like we had just had. The conversation came to a halt with a running slam of a back door on the other side of the fence. Carlo came running out in his underpants at six in the morning screaming that his father was killing his brother Gabe again.

We dressed. I was not going to try to stop Gabe's father or do anything about Gabe's beating until, stepping out the back door of the camper, I saw the boy fly out of the door backwards, still wearing the same torn underpants of the night before. I jumped my back fence to save him.

"After what he just tried to do to you, why should you care so much what I do to him?" Juan demanded of me. "A belt is all they understand at this age. It's what is learned with a beating that is remembered for life. My father did this to me... So it is what I must do for him."

Ruben came running out of his back door. He was wearing a long-tailed shirt, underpants and socks. He'd come to help me talk Juan into not hitting his son.

When I opened the shop after taking Ed and Nando out for breakfast everyone was there but Gabe. He sat on the curb, refusing to help in any way to clean the mess he was responsible for. I put all of the half-used lableless spray paint cans into the dumpster with some other full badly dented cans that I couldn't trust not to blow up if it got hot in the shop before they were used.

Ed and Nando would not come to the shop with me because the other gang kids were there. They borrowed two of my wheelbarrows and said they had things to do and would show up tonight when the

others left.

I sent Cha-Cha out to dump another barrel full of trash for me. He came back giggling, telling all of the other boys something. Then his father called me to look out the back door where my old rusty pick-up was parked in the field.

Gabe had taken the spray cans out of the dumpster. He was happily painting away on my truck. When he saw me he started to back away, holding the spray can in front of him as if to spray me if I tried to get him.

“Don't run away yet, Gabe,” I laughed. “You still have the other half of the truck to paint for me.” I went back into the shop to use the rest room like I'd been going to before I was called to the door.

## 6. Ruben's Discipline

The bathroom in that shop had two urinals, two partitioned and doored toilets and two sinks with towel dispensers next to them. There were feet under both doors: Gato's and Cha-Cha's feet.

“My dumb father said I even had to eat hot shit if that fuckin' gringo tells me to eat hot shit. That fuckin' gringo is the one who should be eating the hot shit right off my asshole.” They laughed. Gato 'flushed' the toilet and came out with a big smile. He saw me and stopped... stunned.

“How come you don't answer me, Gate?” Cha-Cha said.

“Because that man you said could eat hot shit right out of your asshole just walked in,” I told him, while I motioned for Gato to leave. I waited a long time for his answer that never came. “So let's see this prize asshole of yours, Alberto.”

He flushed the toilet. He took a long time to open the door. They'd really not gone in there to use the bathroom; it was simply a way to rest up from working, and smoke.

“Do I really have to pull down my pants to show you my asshole?” he asked, slowly opening the door.

“No,” I told him. “You boys are all asshole.”

When Gato had run into the shop he told Ruben that he was afraid I was going to do something awful to his son for what the boy had said about me.

“Yes,” Ruben said. He'd been standing behind the door; now he walked in. “You have to show Louie your prize asshole. This way he can see for himself what kind of asshole you are when I am at work. He can see what kind of asshole you are to your mother when you don't get your way.”

With tears in his eyes Alberto unbuckled his belt. He dropped his pants and shorts together and stood facing us with his head downcast but his eyes riveted on his father. Ruben directed him to turn around: no one was interested in seeing his hard front – bend in half, spread them open to show what kind of an asshole he was.

“I warned you, Alberto, that you had to respect this man.” Ruben talked gently now that Alberto was displaying himself. “I know that you get a little wild with your friends. You show off. You brag. But this man has proved himself over and over that he is your friend: when he stopped your bloody nose, when he stopped the fight you were losing, he's showed you friendship from that moment on.”

Ruben left with Alberto all bent over like that.

“How long you going to stay that way, Cha?”

“Until my father or you tells me I can pull my pants back up,” he told me in a sobbing voice.

“Well...” I said, taking another good look at his shiny and apparently freshly fucked hole, “pull your

pants back up.” He did that in one motion. He stood with his back to me. “You can go back to work, now.”

“No, I can't go to work. All of the other boys will find out what I just had to do.”

“What? That you had to obey your father?” I asked him. “Who's going to tell them?”

“You mean *you're not*?”

“Listen, son, if I caught you smoking that joint Gato flushed I would of pulled your ears for smoking it. But I would never tell anyone why I pulled your ears.”

“I was smoking a cigarette.”

“Tell that lie to someone who's as dumb as you look, not to someone who wasn't born yesterday. I know grass when I smell it. I saw you pass it under to Gato to take the last toke, too. I'm really a pretty cool dude if you give me half a chance. I want to be your friend.”

I went back to the shop where Gato ran in to me to tell me he was helping Gabe paint my truck windows. Gabe had sent Gato to tell me this in hopes it would get me so mad he wouldn't have to paint my truck any longer. “Great,” I told the little mousy boy. “When you're all out of paint you tell me so I can see how nice the job is that you and Gabe are doing.” He already looked like a rainbow.

I spray-painted over the cuss words, the obscene pictures, wiped the glass clean with thinner. When the others left Nando and Edmondo came back to help me. They brought two wheelbarrows full of tools back with them.

“We begged up all the extra tools in the area,” Nando said. “We got hammers, chisels, electric drills, two Sears routers from Juan (Gabe's father) – we got all kinds of tools...” They wheeled them into the shop. “Look how nice this is now. You even painted your truck and the whole inside of the shop.”

We put blankets out on the floor so the boys could help me sort the good tools from the bad from the fixable. When Edmondo spread the fourth blanket on the floor we played what kind of a girl they were until one in the morning, when I took them home. Nando and his boys were mellow. They enjoyed hearing about what I told Gabe when he thought he would make me mad by painting my truck.

“The only one who's really mean in that group is Gabe. He acts harshly because he is treated harshly,” I told them. “If you want mellow children you have to raise them with patience, understanding and reasoning they will understand. You have kids who are verbally abused, some caught in the game of how no-good they are, so they grow up no good. And there is even abuse of over-loving, but I don't know people who do things like that!” I smiled at the boys. “Do you?”

“So you're saying that because Gabe's father beats him he thinks it's alright to try and beat up everyone else?” Ed asked me. “That's really silly.”

“That's the way it is, boys. Gabe's the only real problem and I could help him if I can only find out how to get to know him.”

“To give him one of your showers would help,” Nando said with a laugh.

On Wednesday I put an ad in for a part-time helper who was an experienced cabinet-maker. Three men came to see me the next week. I was deciding which of the three was best when a man ten years older than I walked into the shop. He had a bounce in his step, a twinkle in his eye and the remnants of a Scottish brogue.

“Name's Scotty,” he said, looking over my shoulder at the cabinet I was trying to repair. “If you pull that whole end off and plane it a shave you'll save time.”

“Here... You show me,” I said, getting off my new little work bench. His eyes twinkled, he gave me this tight, stingy smile with his lips, then he showed me what he could do best. In three days as my full-time helper we finished the ruined cabinets, then put them on my truck for delivery.

“I’ll hold down the shop for you, boss. I’m not gonna ride in that work truck.”

I took Fernando and Ed with me. We collected for each delivery, then rushed to the bank to stop checks from bouncing and cover over-due bills. On my return Scotty was making cheap pine reproductions with Phillip helping him.

“What’s going on here?” I asked.

“The man from the furniture store was here. He ordered our minimum of five reproductions of this cabinet.”

“We don’t have any minimum order of five.”

“We do now,” Scotty said with his eyes twinkling at me and the boys. “Do you want to saw or mill?”

I took over the sawing when Cha-Cha showed up. Gato had already done his two weeks; now he was going to help out for two more weeks with Cha. All of these schedules were Ruben’s, with the full cooperation of most of the other boys’ parents. I also thanked Juan for the two new routers he gave the boys for the shop. The tool collection was his idea. Nando and Ed and Phil were busy with stuff in the shop so I sent Gato to help Scotty and kept Cha-Cha to help me.

I shut the shop at six-thirty, an hour after Scotty always left. (We did our milling when we had the boys to help, our assembly in the morning when there were just the two of us.) All of the boys had gone except Cha, who claimed he had more cleaning up to do.

“When you got to see my asshole, what did you think?”

“What are you trying to ask me, Cha? Whether I noticed the fresh smear of Vaseline around your hole?”

“So what did you think when you saw the Vaseline?”

“I was thinking how nice it would be to let my little mousie play your bongos. If that’s what you’re driving at, lock the doors and I will play your bongos.”

“Make that an order.”

“Why?”

“Because my dad said I have to do what your orders are for me to do.”

“I do not order sex, hon. Sex is something you do freely because you like the person in a special way so you do something special with that special person.”

“Can I tell you what to say back for me to do?”

I figured it was alright if we did it that way. He told me what to say until we were done. Gato came smiling out of the bathroom where he hid while Cha had me busy.

“You’ll never have to order me,” Gato said, shrugging out of his clothes. “Bone me good.”

First the phone rang to tell me dinner was ready, then Nando and Ed showed up to see what I was doing there so late. I promised Gato that he would be loved tomorrow and then I walked them home and had dinner with my wife.

## **7. The Growing of the Shop and Gabe**

My shop was not only refinishing and repair of furniture. Scotty helped me expand my ideas. We were big enough to take custom work along with repair work. Scotty helped me chose two more full-time men, making things a little tight in there when the kids showed to work off their damage debt.

The man who leased the rug store next to me came in to say he was moving. Since I owned this whole half of the block with my option he thought I should know. I phoned the landlord to tell him. He gave me

a firm price for the whole thing, I took the landlord a check for the down payment and put my cheaply-bought beach-front property up as collateral.

“Scotty, ask me what I just did.”

“What did you just do?” Scotty asked me.

“I just broke myself on a gamble if the dice don't roll my way,” I told him. “I have enough cash to run one month on...” I smiled. I'd put my lot in hock just as I was five payments from clear title. I'd bought this whole fuckin' mess and still didn't have a car to drive that was decent!

Scotty set our products out when the rug shop had its clearance sale. A few of the people came around to see what kind of a deal they could get, and we got some firm jobs from the lookers, making it all worthwhile.

“Here I am, mon,” Gabe said sullenly. He'd been loitering around the outside of the shop since he'd got in trouble and now it was his turn to work. “How come I can't work with one of my boys like my other boys did?”

“Gato didn't get to work with anyone for two weeks. You were told if you did not want to work off your debt here you could get your own job elsewhere, just so you pay your share of the damage.”

“I can't even get a job as a fuckin' newsboy. So I have to work here. Where do I start?”

“Just follow me, Gabe.”

Gabe talked me into loving with him his first night alone with me in the shop. He wanted to know if I would count the time we loved as time worked against his bill. When I told him I would do that just for him he was happy. He'd try to have more couch time, less work time.

It did not work out that way. I was getting sick with ulcers from nagging customers waving Sears catalogs in my face wanting custom cabinets for Sears prices, or less.

Gabe helped me set up the new place so I could open the large building for a production shop and use this one for safe storage.

“The way you always like to drive some place,” Scotty said, seeing me sick again in the bathroom, “you should think of driving a truck to get away from it all.”

“I feel this shop is my prison cell,” I told him.

“I can handle most things if you want to take a few weeks off, Louis,” he smiled. He'd found out about my boy-love when he came back hours later one day for his lunch pail and caught me with Gabe, Alberto and Gato. He patted bare boy-bottoms and left with his lunch box. “What I can't help you with is those sexy boys of yours. Now, if they was sexy little girls I might just be able to help you with two or three of them.”

My wife's daughter was to spend the summer with us. I had given her a nice birthday party on June 18<sup>th</sup>, and on June 20<sup>th</sup> I took the boys from both gangs for a two-week trip to the lake which I'd last seen with Randy. This was a bad time for me to get sick. We had no savings, everything that came in just covered everything going out, and I needed to buy more tools and hire more help.

“You will feel better with a vacation,” my wife said, “but those boys are not going to give you the kind of vacation you should take.”

We went fishing, hiking and camped out. I could not take all twenty-two boys in one pick-up truck, so a few of the boys' parents supplied rides up, plus food and camping gear. We used my camper to store things in, to cook in, but we all slept in a big army mess tent that Ruben was able to borrow and help me set up.

“I'm really sorry to leave you here without help,” Ruben told me before he and Juan pulled out late



Sunday afternoon. "With nine children I can't ever miss a day's work." He, Franco and Juan would return in two weeks on Saturday morning to help break camp and take the boys home Sunday afternoon. "I still think you're going to have trouble with nine Wolfs and thirteen Mortas."

"Don't forget Louis gave Gabe back his stiletto," Nando said.

"None of the boys have stilettos," Juan said. "They all have the same little camping knives, both groups. Be good to this man, here. Alright?"

"Tell that to your son Gabe," Nando said.

We had watermelon after dinner. It was too much to cut with little knives so I got out my machete. (I carefully locked it away after use, never letting it out of my hands for a second.)

"Aie! Look at that knife," Chollo said. "It's a sword."

I explained what it was used for, except I didn't tell them what a marvelous weapon it can be. We cut wild bamboo for line and hook poles. They are simple. They just take a bobber and a hook.

We cooked the fish we caught daily for a lunch or a dinner to help our pantry last the trip. Pancho, Gato and Edwardo did not like fish. After not being able to eat two lunches and one dinner they decided fish was not really bad for them. The reason they decided this was partly because they got left out of late night deserts if they did not eat their dinners all up. Up here the boys could eat three times as much as they ate at home.

I had a problem when it came to sleeping. I put my sleeping bag in the middle of the tent after the first problems and let the boys scatter themselves around me. Louie-lovers crowded in close, non-Louie-lovers next to them. In the middle of the week when it was time for bed Gabe wanted to show me a game called "It". Nando knew the game and told Gabe that "it" would have to be one member from each gang and everyone had to do that member's bottom. Not by gangs, by individuals. I said it was very unfair to a boy to get it twenty times in one night like that.

"Twenty-two times," Gabe said. "You get to do them first, then when it's all done they have to do each other."

"I'm it for our side," Gato said. My heart went into my throat because I'd seen how big some of the older boys were. Gato was only an eleventeen.

"I'm it for our side," Julio said – a big fourteen-year-old. "But I don't think Louie should fuck me." He looked at the other boys. "I'm scared of him."

"Well, Louie fucks me first," Gato said. "Then you can see how gentle he is and decide."

"That's fair enough," Julio said. "Where's the Crisco?" I gave them a tube of hand cream: that would be more comfortable. And then it started. The boys sat in a circle to watch me do Gato. Julio decided I was alright and he rolled over for me to do him after. As always, I made the boys wash off between changes, while I studied each bare body that I had never seen in action before.

Late at night one or two of the boys would move into my double-wide sleeping bag for a little extra T.L.C.

I expended a vast amount of energy to keep them busy doing things eighteen hours a day. This helped keep arguments down and everyone was very happy to help with camp chores.

"This is the first time I've ever been out of the barrio," Nando said snuggling up between me and Edmondo. We were watching some of the other boys dance naked around the campfire except for washcloths tied front and back, to the delight of three old ladies camped next to us. Gato lost his back washcloth, which made everyone laugh. "Well, I've been other places, really, but never up here in the mountains like this."

"It's my thanks for all of the help you, my helpers, have been. If this works without hassles I want to take you all up here again."



There was one small fight. I always got the boys to move back to their own sleeping bags early in the morning before the others woke up to sing “We know what you're doing!” at us. But one night when I was out taking a leak Gabe came over to crawl in my bed roll and found Nando already asleep in there. I ran in just as the first fist flew. I told Gabe I was going to sleep from now on in my camper because he was so mad at finding Nando in there.

Gabe stayed mad at me for a while after this, because what he'd done had showed all the other boys he'd wanted me to get it on with him. He felt guilty, and tried to deny it had happened. I'd soothed him to a passivity we all could live with by the time his father, Ruben and Franco arrived with fresh fruit and steaks for our last dinner.

## 8. Keha

I felt great on my return from our two-weeks campout, but ten days of working in the shop brought my ulcers back.

One of my workers told me his son-in-law was selling his truck. “He's almost in divorce court because my daughter wants him home nights. You can have his permits and all.”

“How much?”

“You can take over his payments if you give him a job here.” I gave Jesse the job. He sat with me for a few days while I pulled short hauls with a learner's permit. When I had the feel of the truck I got my license. The truck was two years old, in mint condition, with a good ten-year-old trailer. By the summer's end I was running coast to coast with different gang kids riding on my runs. One Negra Morta, one Lobo. Then they had to go back to school.

Trying to make it home for Halloween found me in a playful mood. I'm thrilled by Halloween, Easter, Christmas or anything else that shows love openly. I didn't have to rush back for my step-daughter·Di because she wasn't allowed to live with us until we got our house by the beach; until then she could only visit weekends from her foster home.

A brand new white Peterbuilt was trying to pass me but I wouldn't let him get by. We were teasing each other on the CB about our powerful engines, maximum speeds. I'd retaken my old handle of the Lonely Roamer from my trucking years before prison. It was the name on my old pervertible. A pervertible is a hard-top with a gay driver: the top won't go down but the driver will. I was holding my truck to the right of the road.

“Are you gonna back off, Roamer, or do I have ta blow the doors offa that fiberglass can you're driving?”

“Take it if you can make it, motor mouth,” I said, holding even with him. I gave him a great big smile out the window, then turned my eyes back to the road in front of me. The mike was still keyed; now I shouted, “Quick gimme room. There's someone walking the shoulder.”

Both our trucks moved left as if they'd steered themselves. I missed the walker, but the vacuum of our wind streams tumbled him head over heels on the shoulder of the road.

“Shit!” I cussed with the mike still keyed. “I'll stop to see if he's hurt.”

“Ya need my help, Lou?” Big Mike asked.

“Naw. You're late as it is. Besides, he's trying to stand up again.”

I had already put on the emergency flashers and was parked with the brakes and tires smoking from

having stopped the eighty-thousand pound rig so quickly. I was out the door, running back down the road as a car slowed down to stop, but when the driver saw it was an Indian boy who was struggling to his feet he took off with a squeal of his tires. That made me mad and I put more speed into my short legs, gulping more air into my smoke-saturated lungs to get to the boy faster before he fell down again. It's hard work running a third of a mile on a soft shoulder.

I stopped in shock when I reached him. No wonder the other man left: this Indian boy was dirty, smelly, with lice-infested braids that hung past his shoulders. But, bugs or no bugs, I couldn't leave him there. I picked him up and then carried him all of the way back to where I could sit him on the running board in the shade of my truck.

Then I stripped him, got a water jug and rags and started to wash him. The boy grabbed the water jug out of my hands and slopped water all over his face, his body, trying to get some of the cool liquid past his swollen-thick tongue.

"Here, son," I told him gently, "let me help you." I poured water into a paper cup for him to drink small sips from.

This boy was dehydrated, had blisters all over his bare feet, scratches all over his body from being tumbled by the combined truck winds that had hit him. He was so skinny he was just skin stretched over a skeleton; he couldn't of weighed eighty pounds. This boy was one of the sorriest looking runaways I'd seen in my whole life.

"Okay, son," I said, washing his face with a cool cloth. "Do you speak English?" He shook his head no. "Español?" Again no. "Try to understand me. Do you hurt anywhere?" The boy looked at me blankly. I carefully felt him all over to see if anything was broken. No ouches, no moans of pain. I washed his cuts with peroxide, then inspected the thick callouses on the boy's knees and the tops of his feet just above his toes.

I stood on a fuel tank to see if one of my sexy friends or one of the sexy hikers I'd picked up recently had left me anything of use to dress this boy in. I found a size-12 T-shirt, not dirty size-10 underpants, a blue bandana and a pair of mismatched socks. The unders belonged to Carlo, Gabe's brother, the shirt could have belonged to that brown boy I'd picked up near Dallas, but I knew the mismatched socks were from the two boys I'd picked up in Oregon the last week. They'd been caught in a rain storm, so they rode for hours naked in my truck with me so their clothes would dry under the heater's blower. I hadn't tried anything because I didn't get the chance to know them all that long.

I slipped the unders up the Indian boy's legs, then sat him on the next step out of the wash water puddling on the running board. There'd be a good shower at the truck stop in Gallup, but those live lice would contaminate both me and my truck before we got there. I had no choice but to cut the boy's hair with my belt knife. I made the boy bend over the shoulder of the road and tried to wash most of the lice out of his hair. I gave his head a good toweling, then left the towel on the sand where we stood.

"Alright, son," I told him as I pulled the T-shirt over his head, "this will have to do." I lifted him into the truck, buckled him in place with the seat belt and took off.

At the truck stop in Gallup I rented two towels at the desk, then marched the boy into the lounge where I made him sit on a bench. I ignored the stares of the other drivers as I bought medicated soap, shampoo, three T-shirts, three underpants, a pair of size-ten jeans and a pair of shower shoes that looked small enough to fit the boy. I took all of this back to the shower room with me.

I scrubbed his hair three times, washed him thoroughly before I dried and dressed him in all of this new gear. Then I showered off the creepy imagined feel of the lice while the boy stayed seated on the bench.

In the restaurant he gorged himself with food, then barfed it all back onto his plate. "Oh, God!" I groaned, my own weak stomach doing flip-flops, too.

Tears leaked down the boy's face while I gave the understanding waitress a ten-spot to clean up the mess and bring some broth to one of the other tables. The boy dozed when I tried to feed him, so I carried him to my truck and tucked him safely into the sleeper. In Kingman I took the boy to use the bathroom, fed him, then put him back to bed. I did the same in L.A., between loading and unloading my truck, then drove home. It was Halloween day, 1970.

When they heard my truck coming my gang kids ran into the narrow street. Gato and Hernando lay themselves playfully down in front of my wheels.

“Get your buns off the street,” I yelled, “or I'll drive this rig up your fuckin' asses!” I smiled at them. “Move, nines, or I won't take you for tricks or treats.” They ran to the sidewalk and stood where I could see them while I parked my truck. Then I carried the sick boy into the house and put him in my step-daughter's room.

Gabe hadn't been with the others when I'd arrived. Now he showed up and wanted to see the sleeping Indian. I showed him to the gang boy.

“What are you going to do with him?” Gabe demanded. He didn't like this boy. He was helping finish the new house and trying to get on the good side of me again after another falling out. One more boy in my life might crowd the others. He spat at the sleeping boy to get me angry and then ran home.

I was hurt. One minute Gabe was all love, the next all hate, until he needed my help again. I would have left the Indian boy at home if Gabe had given me the chance to talk to him about taking care of the kid. I couldn't leave him with my wife. My wife was a hypochondriac who wanted service and didn't render it easily. Now I would have to take the Indian boy along with me when I pulled out again.

All the boys went trick-or-treating with me in my shop pick- up. When they got their bags filled with goodies I took them home. Meanwhile the doctor had seen the Indian boy and said it was safe to keep him with me until I could find out where he lived. So I packed him up as he slept for my trip north.

Keha – I found out later that was his name – didn't know what to think of this man he hated so for cutting his hair. He'd been able to sit up and stay awake for a while after I took him to the bathroom, fed him bland soup or soda. He sat on his seat watching me drive. Going down the steep hill felt dangerously adventurous way up there above the cars. Half-way up the next hill the truck bogged down, bounced real hard as it pulled to the top of the incline. I was doing to Keha what his mother always warned him of when he was a child making too much noise.

“*Shh, wasican anieni kte Keha.* Be quiet or the white men will take you away.” They took him away when they came for his mother. They sent him to live with the ladies in black who made him spend hours on his knees per day because he was the son of a savage. They taught about their wooden god, they taught them how to pray for being dirty little savage children. The children found out they were without sin until they read a book of the wooden god's that gave them sin, to make them children of sin now that they knew what sin was.

They moved him from the green hills of his birth to the deserts of New Mexico, taking away from him his black hills of magic. There he had to sleep on a narrow cot with one thin blanket and his hands stiffly at his sides out from under the blanket so he would not sin. They did not have the freedom to run noisily around because this was something that disturbed the ladies in their prayers to their wooden god.

Up until two weeks ago the worst sin Keha had committed was the sin of not eating his mush, then he was caught in the most unforgivable sin of all. He was dragged away from bed, placed on his knees in the chapel for 24 hours without food, water or sleep to say his prayers for the sin against Hoka (Badger), who was also a Lakota they named Peter.

Hoka was a sickly boy of nine who was always cold. That night it was so cold even Keha could not

lay without his teeth chattering, so he took his blanket to Hoka's bed to cover both of them with two blankets, to sleep warm this way after the ladies in black checked on them to see that all of the boys were sleeping properly, because boys had the dirty habit of holding themselves at night. There was no sin. Hoka was cold and Keha held him under the covers to share body heat with the younger boy. After all, a boy of almost thirteen had to look after his smaller brothers like the ladies teach in their talks. A lady came in later and caught them. So now he was with a white man who was taking him all over the four corners of the universe. This man did not make him pray. He took him by the shore of the lakes-without-end, up mountain roads that made large lakes in valleys look like little ponds way below the road while the white man smiled at him, asking his name and telling him about the country they drove.

He wouldn't talk. He wouldn't answer the white man who fed him tasteless soup while he ate meat, potatoes and French fries with hamburgers. An answer was beneath the grandson of a chief of the great Lakotas.

"I'm going to stop here at the top of the hill, little Indian," I told him, disturbing his thoughts. "Do you think you can hold down some soup with crackers this morning?"

I pulled into the hilltop restaurant's lot. I didn't expect an answer, nor did I get one. We left the truck at the pumps before I took the boy in to eat. I ordered hotcakes, eggs and sausage. Two bites of each and they were calling on me to move the rig.

Keha stole the meal for himself as soon as I was gone. He gobbled down the hotcakes, eggs and sausage and pushed the mushy saltine-thickened soup over to where I'd been sitting, then leaned back with a smile of satisfaction on his face.

I came back to find my plates empty and the boy bent over with stomach cramps on the verge of throwing up again. I was moving him to the bathroom when the first wave started to come up. I clamped a hand over the boy's mouth and ran.

He was choking on barf, barf trying to come out of his nose.' He felt degraded – until I threw up, too. When I finally got the barf washed off both of us, Keha was smiling: he'd made me sick with his sickness.

"Listen here, you little Indian," I told him, "you will only eat what I give you to eat. Do you understand me? I mean it, son. Hell, if you could eat real food I would be happy to get you real food. Do you think I would deliberately feed you any less than I eat myself?"

I could see that Keha felt bad about making me sick after hearing me say that.

We drove to the Oregon border, unloaded, then down to San Francisco, where we took on a load for Philadelphia. When I got tired I took us in to use a bathroom, a shower, then get some food. At those times Keha had to hold his pants up, because he was so skinny. When he sat down his jeans slipped under him showing everyone who passed behind his new white bright underpants. The boy had been told this, too, was a sin.

Keha would not sleep when I slept. He sat on the passenger seat to watch me sleep since I only sleep a short time at a time.

He seemed to like sitting on the seat next to mine, unless I was trying to question him: "What kind of Indian are you? Would you feel better if I got you watered-down stew for lunch today? Did you just see a cowboy hitching a ride on that low ramp?"

"Yes... Saw boy. I'm Sioux and will feel better with meat in my soup," Keha said loudly.

I brought my truck to a skidding halt. I could not believe my ears. I sat there a full minute in shocked silence looking at the boy on the seat next to mine. When I'd gained my composure I pulled on the horn strap for the cowboy to know I'd stopped for him.

“Please answer one more question,” I said hopefully. “What's your name?”

“Keha. But the whites call me Charlie.”

“Then I will call you Keha when we're alone and Charlie when you eat something you're not supposed to.”

We laughed briefly together, then Keha slipped into the sleeper so the hitch-hiker who was running to the truck could sit on the passenger seat.

“Where ya goin', cowboy?” I asked as an older boy climbed up onto the seat.

“Sheridan,” the boy said with a lackadaisical drawl. “I live there. I was down in San Fran visitin' a couple weeks 'n my ride run out here.”

“Don't let a San Franciscan hear you call their golden city San Fran like that. They don't like it called less than its full name.”

The boy's Levis were thin, faded, tight. A tacky cowboy shirt, tooled boots worth over two hundred a pair and a nicely broken-in Stetson hat that lightly sat on his curls... loose big blond curls!

“Are you going right through Sheridan?”

“I sure am, and if I wasn't I'd make it a side trip just for you.” We smiled at each other.

Keha was sure he'd missed something in the by-play, sleepy as he was. He fell asleep. When he woke the truck was not moving. It was parked. He saw me sitting sideways on the seat with my back against the door so I faced the blond boy, who had his face pushed against the front of my pants. The boy cowboy moved his head down, up, then a slurping before his head moved down again. This boy was doing one of the sins the ladies in black accused Keha of doing! This was terrible. Exciting to watch. Worse than death to have to watch. Fun to watch. Compounding sin of sins now when I did it back to the curly-haired cowboy!

The boy cowboy and I watched each other strip off our clothes, then we crawled into the sleeper and I checked to see if Keha was asleep, which he pretended to be, lying with his back against the sleeper wall. But Keha was watching us all the time. He saw the boy lie face-down, me lean over his back and me move. The boy moaned from my movements and told me how great this felt to him.

Keha watched us in fascination and disgust for what seemed like hours. Keha got hard himself. He got scared of the sin he saw. He got jealous. He didn't dare move or touch himself. He knew about rubbing himself to feel good because all boys know that rubbing themselves feels good. Suddenly Keha came with one big gush – it didn't spurt in jerks as other times. He was angered that this sin happened to him from watching me and the teenaged cowboy. He grabbed the tire billy with two hands and started to bring it down on my head.

I saw the movement, heard a sob of fright. I jerked my hand up and caught the tire bar just in time, then wrenched it away from Keha.

“What's wrong, Charile?” I asked with tears of pain in my eyes. “Why do you want to hurt me?”

Keha threw himself face-down in the sleeper bed. He cried hard, and he didn't seem to know how to answer my question.

“He's jealous,” the other boy said, “jealous enough to kill you.” He checked to see how badly my hand was injured. “I can tape this for you until a doctor in Sheridan can look for damage.”

“My hand just stings,” I said. “It's my wrist that' hurts. I think it's broken.”

Dressed, with my hand wrapped in an Ace bandage, we got the truck back on the road. It hurt when I had to shift gears and hold the wheel with my left hand.

Keha cried to himself, trying to understand the strange feelings he had for me. He was still searching for an older brother who lived somewhere else in the world. If he'd only found his brother things would be different for him now. Things would be better. Or would they be better? Maybe things would be

better if he could stay with me, but he'd ruined that chance, for the blond boy was telling me I should have turned him over to the police or the Agency.

Keha wanted to tell me he was hitting sin, but he was not sure if sin was something that made two people happy like we were happy before he attacked us. He had to tell me that he was doing something that his black-dressed ladies had told him for five years to do by only having love for the glory of the wooden god, not love for the humans you love. But he knew his heart as he crawled between the seats, the other boy flinching away from him.

"I'm sorry," Keha said. "I did not mean to hurt you."

I put my taped hand on the wheel, my right hand into the ragged knife-cut thatch of his uneven hair to rub his head gently.

"I know, Keha. You woke up not understanding what was happening and you were scared."

"Please let me stay with you. I just can't go back to the school," Keha cried. "Please."

"You can stay with me, Keha. If you feel better tomorrow I will get you a haircut, shoes, a belt to hold up those loose pants, a jacket like this one of mine, and then I'm going to buy you a baseball cap just like mine to keep your bald head warm." I smiled at him, then sent him back to rest in the sleeper because he felt feverish to me again.

"Where did you find him?" the boy cowboy asked.

"Near Gallup on my last trip in. That was almost four days ago. He tires easily, he can barely eat solid food and he still has attacks of diarrhea. The doctor said he will be fine. I give him mega-vitamins, soup stock, Seven-up and all of the water he can drink."

"A tasty little morsel like him must be quite a temptation to you."

"Bullshit," I laughed, "he's too young for me. He's about ten years old, just the right size to be raised to love."

"Wow! I see you're a man full of ulterior motives."

"I must be," I said with a wink. "I picked up your pretty little dimpled ass, didn't I?"

In Sheridan the young cowboy stayed with Keha when I went to see the doctor about my hand. When I returned I took the boys into the truck stop for dinner. I gave the cowboy twenty dollars for watching Keha and the sex we'd had.

"Is your hand broken?" Keha asked when we were alone. "No, son. I have a sprained wrist. I hope you know how to write because I'm left handed." We laughed.

We slept at this truck stop. In the morning I got Keha the haircut and clothes I'd promised him. Keha took my old hat to wear, giving me his new hat to match the old truck. Keha could write. He learned fast to fill out the log book, check out the tires five times a day and how to sit on my lap to hold the wheel for me as he got stronger and more active.

It took three weeks to run this back-to-back coast-to-coast trip. A hundred and fifty miles from home I pulled over, too dangerously tired to make it in. I took off my clothes, then joined the sleeping boy in the sleeper for a nap. I slept like I was dead.

My watch dial was November 20, 1970 – his thirteenth birthday. He couldn't tell me it was his birthday – I'd done so much for him – nor did he have the money to get me a present to celebrate his birth with. Keha had been thinking a lot about the blond cowboy from Sheridan and what we'd done with each other. He thought about it every time his cock had filled with excitement – when I gave him a shower or when I slept nude in the sleeper with him, like now.

So he took the step. He sucked my hardness into his mouth. I'd been dreaming of being at home with one of my lover boys. I didn't really know where I was or who I was with, but I drifted half-awake with his mouth on me. Then he got hold of and used some of the lubricant he'd seen me use on the cowboy

weeks before, lay face down and sort of coaxed me onto his back.

At first the penetration was painful, then just uncomfortable. He got me to pump on him by wiggling around under me. All I knew was I was pressing down on a nice solid boy's body that felt like Gato's, giving me all of the physical response of a boy enjoying our love, and pretty quick I shot off. I was shocked when I opened my eyes to find that I was kissing the cheek of my little Indian boy.

I wasn't mad at him, but I was surprised enough to ask what had motivated his actions. When I found out it was the Indian way to give a present on your birthday I felt honored that the boy thought so much of me. I was so pleased I could hardly talk. I rolled on my back and lifted the boy to face me. I kissed him all over, then loved him thoroughly.

"You already have all your presents from me, Keha," I teased, kissing his nose tip. "The only other present I can think of is to give you me to be a father of you."

Keha cried. I teased him into a smile by saying, "Gee, I didn't think I was that bad of a present, son."

"You're not," Keha laughed. "I love you, daddy."

When I got home I found out my wife was already living in the house by the beach. Friends, relatives and my gang boys had moved her there while I'd been away on the trip.

## **9. Keha loves Donnie**

During Christmas vacation Keha pushed Petey, one of my trucking friends' sons, into the swimming pool because Petey hugged me too long. I had to keep Keha out of school until I got papers official looking enough not to arouse suspicion that Keha was an illegally kept runaway.

I left Keha, now officially called Chuck, home most of the summer. He went to Kempo school where he could learn gentleness until he had cause to defend himself, not just pick on boys who got too close to me when he was near.

Keha was growing from skinny sickly boy into a fully healthy boy almost faster than I could buy him clothes. I was hoping he could find friends in school and learn how to tolerate others.

After I'd dropped him off at school that first day I sat by the phone. I had a feeling things would not go right. I always say, if something can go wrong it will. At two-thirty I answered the phone to find out that Keha had been in a fight with Gabe. At school I found out that Keha didn't even know Gabe was one of the boys I see whenever I layover for my rests at home. I let it pass as a gang picking on a patty boy incident.

I was happier when I found out that Gabe was now trying to be friends with my Indian boy after the hostilities. Now Keha came to ask me if his best friend could spend the long weekend of the teachers' summit meeting with us.

"It's really nice to know you and Gabe have gotten so close, Son," I said with a big smile.

"Make the invitation out to Donnie Bleard. He's my best friend. Gabe's my second best friend."

Keha didn't dare tell me that even he would drool over twelve-year-old Donnie, who had the cutest bottom in the locker room.

I gave the invitation for the next night, because that night was my surprise birthday party. I was blindfolded and taken to the garage where the tarp was pulled off a brand new car that everyone had chipped in to get me. After the party, laying in bed with Keha, I suddenly rolled over, pinning my lover boy down with a kiss.

“Do you remember your birthday last year, Keha?”

“How can I forget? I gave you me as my present. Will you try to be home for my birthday next month, Daddy?”

“I will do better than that, you little love thief. I'll be home for our first anniversary if nothing goes wrong on my next two trips.”

“And if something prevents you from being home, Daddy, will you think of me at exactly two fifty-one? That's the time you found me, according to your old log book.”

“That's the time I will throw you a worldly kiss of love, hon,” I said, giving Keha enough kisses to last my long trip away from home.

*El Rancho de Vida Grande* – The Ranch of the Grand Life – was the name of the place Donnie's mother was driving him too. Donnie carefully read the directions to his mother before they came to the first turn-off.

“Do you have that, mom?”

“Yes, Donnie dear.” She smiled at her son. This was his first overnight that was not with a relative or within yelling distance of their house. “I'm surprised that a boy from this area goes to your school. Children who live here usually go to private schools, not east side schools.”

“They're not rich.”

“Donnie, all people who live in this area are rich. Look at that new pick-up truck, those two new cars and these big trucks. Donnie, hon, do not be upset if you find that you're just here to entertain their spoiled brat.”

The Blairds were not poor, for Donnie's mother was a high-school art teacher. His father had left after a big fight with his mom and had never come back, even to see his three children. She drove down the driveway, shut off the car and turned sideways on the seat to face her son whom she felt was growing into quite a man.

Donnie was five foot four and a half, twelve and a half years old. He was half man, half boy, with that light soft downy blond hair he'd had since birth. He was a little too thin, but the doctor assured her he was healthy. The flash of his blue eyes met hers. “Be sure you call if you need anything, Donnie.”

“I'll call home every night at nine,” Donnie said, trying to cut the conversation short. He was a sensitive boy and could relate to his mother's concern. He leaned over the seat and met his mother more than half-way with a kiss. Then he reached over the back of the front seat to get his bike bag that he pulled clumsily over the seat, got out to shut the door.

“Hello Donnie... Mrs. Bleard!” Keha had been watching from our door since they had parked. I'd told him not to rush right out because he might rush his friend's mother off before she got everything straight with her son. “Mrs. Bleard, my dad said you're welcome to stay for coffee – he said most parents like to see where their children are staying.”

“Your father's a wise man,” she answered with a smile that matched the boy's – warm, full of love. “I expected to see an Italian boy, not an Indian boy.” That was everyone's reaction when they first met him knowing my name.

“I'm adopted,” Keha told her. “Come right in here to meet my mother and father and this is my little sister – she only stays here weekends.”

I invited the lady to sit down, asked Donnie if he wanted lunch, then I excused the boys, noticing they wanted to be elsewhere. I winked at Keha, who took Donnie to our room.

“I have to pull out, now, Mrs. Bleard,” I said after a decent interval of entertaining. “Your son is in good hands with Chuck.” She agreed. I left.



The boys put Donnie's things in a drawer, then fell on the water bed to talk. They talked school, who they liked, who they did not like. It was not long until the loaded truck rattled the windows pulling out of the driveway.

"Do you want to swim, Donnie?" Keha asked.

"Sure," he smiled. "I love to swim." They shucked their clothes, pulled on swim suits, then slipped out the door. Donnie stopped short, expecting the ocean, not the heated swimming pool on the beach.

"That's my dad's truck in the distance. You can't miss the whine of the turbo between shifts."

"How come you didn't go with your dad? You're always telling me how much you miss not riding in that truck."

"My daddy said I have to learn how to have friends my own age over to talk and play. The first person I could think to invite is you." Keha giggled boyishly. "My dad thought I was going to invite Gabe."

"Gee, thanks for inviting *me* – and for the whole week."

"This is your week, Donnie," Keha said. They raced across the pool. Keha held back letting Donnie win by a hand grab for the pool gutter. After they swam they floated on pool rafts until that got old. Keha wheeled out two three-wheeled sand scooters to run on the beach until dinner time. The boys went into the house tired, exhilarated and hungry after their full afternoon.

Dinner passed in silence on the boys' part. Di and my wife made all the small talk. My wife noticed that Donnie was a lot like Chuck. Both boys were quiet, easy-going with little barely-suppressed twinkles of excitement in their eyes. She was glad I had gone on a trip, because now she wouldn't have to try to discourage this new boy from making love with me.

Donnie and Keha had hit it off from the first day of school. He helped him fight his way out of a serious situation about a month before when Gabe with the help of his gang tried to depants Donnie in the boys' bathroom. After school that day, though, six boys jumped Keha at the bike rack. Donnie went to help, only to get towed into the boys' V.P.'s office for punishment. I had to come down to school and get everyone out of trouble.

"Do you want to stay in the bedroom to watch T.V.," Keha asked, "or do you want to watch the one in the other room?"

"What's the difference, Chuck?"

"This one has got cable-X." They giggled, layed on the bed in damp swim suits. Every twitch of a muscle rocked the water bed with gentle lulling motions. The warm water pumped through the bed made covers unnecessary.

In the morning Keha woke first. He carefully sat up so as not to disturb Donnie. He looked lovingly at his friend's sleeping features. He thought his own features were similar, with the exception of his higher Indian cheekbones, his darker skin. Keha was twenty pounds heavier, an inch and a half taller and almost a year older than Donnie.

Donnie stirred. This gently rocked Keha from side to side. Donnie had to take a leak from all the sodas they'd consumed after dinner.

"Here, let me help you, Donnie," Keha said. "I have to use the bathroom, too." In the bathroom they playfully crossed streams, dueling with swords of liquid. They aimed up to the danger point on the opposite side of the bowl where the other stood, exchanged devilish grins, semi-embarrassed giggles, a laugh. Donnie ran out of ammunition first.

"Shame on you, Donnie – you lost."

"Uh-uh, Chuck, I beat you."

Keha had squeezed down on himself to piss slower. Now he stopped his stream, aimed up at his friend. "I won, 'cause I can still pee on you, Donnie."

"You should of said that in the first place."

Donnie strained for more, as he slowly backed away from Keha's threat. Keha backed him into the shower, then pissed full into Donnie's stretched-down bathing suit front. This was something Donnie had never experienced – or expected, for that matter.

"Let's shower," Keha said. "Then we'll exercise."

"You're sure taking a long shower." My step-daughter was standing just outside the shower door. She tried to open the door to peek in but Keha held the door from the inside latch. "Are we going to Karate today, Keha?"

"Yes, Di," Keha said gently. "Get ready. We'll be out in a few minutes."

"All right – but you hurry because I want breakfast," she told him in a scolding voice.

"She takes after her mother," Keha explained. "She gets to stay only weekends until her mother feels she is ready to take her. Di tries to find everything wrong here that she can to complain to her foster parents about." He dropped the subject of trying to explain the little girl, "Come on, let's dry off so we can practice in the patio."

"Me practice?" Donnie said, unsure of the invite.

"Why not?"

"You told me after the fight we were in that your dad hates violence. So why's he let you take Karate?"

"My father said for him violence is something he will try to live without doing, however he is not stupid; he's been a victim of violence and knows there is violence in this world. In other words, if I started that fight I would of found myself without a father real quick. He knows I will not hurt anyone first since I learned my lessons early after he took me in."

Keha gave Donnie something to think about. Keha playfully dried his friend all of the way down his back, across his bottom, down to his legs.

Donnie did the same to Keha, until he almost dried his friend's buns, then stopped, red-faced. Donnie flushed even redder when he'd gotten himself hard from the drying he'd done and the drying done to him.

"Are you all right, Donnie?" Keha asked with concern.

"You're all red-faced... oh." Keha had noticed the cause of embarrassment pointing straight out at him.

"That's nothing to be ashamed of. Just good old normal body reactions that mean you're having a good time, you're enjoying yourself"

"Who is your source of information, Chuck?" Sex education class did not tell people *why* they got bones.

"My dad. He tells me everything in natural Indian logic."

"Your dad's Italian."

"That's true. He's also called Cancazippi, because he's my blood brother, too." (Cancazippi is a Sioux word: *can* means wood and *zippi* means to fashion.)

"You're crazy, Chuck," Donnie laughed. He did not understand how a father could be a blood *brother* at the same time.

"Yes, I am crazy." Keha smiled openly. "I'm crazy in love with my dad."

Keha had special feelings for Donnie. He was willing to talk openly in front of him, honestly to him, but he was also trying to conceal the fact that he was madly in love with Donnie, too, knowing if he didn't it might accidentally break up their friendship instead of bonding it tighter with a show of affection. Keha knew Donnie was shy in gym class with other boys standing around for showers in jocks and less. With his locker and Donnie's side by side he'd watched Donnie pull the locker door around to hide himself

from the other boys' eyes that were always on the move from middle to middle, from bottom to bottom so as to comment negatively about everything they saw: like boys who had shriveled fronts were called 'girls' fronts, etc. But if you got a hard on in the shower room you were called queer, faggot and other very uncomplimentary names. Most boys in the locker room stroked themselves a time or two just to get their cocks to the point where they'd grow but not enough to stick out hard in front of them.

Donnie stared as Keha pulled up his underpants. He watched how "it" followed slowly up the elastic waistband until it was neatly hidden behind the white cotton before he slipped into his own shorts. Keha gave him a *gei* to wear. They slipped barefoot into the patio to practice.

Di bowed deeply to Keha, then to Donnie, throwing her long hair cascading around her shoulders. Keha had to get a ribbon to tie her long blond hair out of the way. She liked these weekends of practice with her soon-to-be foster-brother. She also loved how he made pancakes for them after practice.

Donnie said the bacon tasted funny. He was told it was pastrami left over from the birthday party. "We will have it in our sandwiches for lunch, too."

"That's because Keha makes lunch on weekends," Di said. "During the week the lady that cleans the house makes his food. She only cleans up to the hallway there, unless Keha tells her it's alright to clean that side of the house." She made the last five words sound sinister, wrong, dirty to live on *that side* of the house. "That's the boy's side."

"Keha?" Donnie asked. "I thought your name was Chuck."

"His real name's Keha," Di said with a giggle. "That means he's a turtle." She went into a fit of little girl giggles, looking secretly at the mysterious boys she would have to put up with this weekend. When the boys told her they were going to swim she rushed into her swim suit to swim with them. When they drove her dad's sand scooter she made Keha get hers out, too.

"Here comes your sister again, Chuck – I mean Keha." Donnie liked the secret name better. "She looks like she's having trouble."

"I see her," Keha said, turning his sand scooter. He thought his dad was correct when he said Di was a "six-year-old fag hag" because she was always trying to see what the boys were up to.

Recently I'd been letting Di see a little of what was going on. When Keha had complained about her following him everywhere, I'd told him, "I don't know a thing about girls, nor do I have the slightest idea of what they do. To me they seem like a separate and entirely different race. So see, Keha, I'm not much help to her unless I watch her, know her."

"This is stuck on fast," Di yelled when Keha pulled even with her. He reached over and shut off the sand scooter, picked her off it, then hugged her because she was scared. This was the way his dad did things.

I had also told him girls were often confused about how to live life because they were too often sheltered for virtue's sake, expected to go through life with blinders on until marriage – like that was one of the reasons for the high rate of divorce. I'd also confided in Keha that I was just as curious about Di as she was about me and what I did. This was why she had free rein to pop in on the boys' side of the house no matter what. Since she made Keha knock to go in her room, Keha was trying to get her to knock now because he'd got company over.

Keha sat the little girl on the fuel tank of my A.T.V., then rode her to the house for lunch where, true to his prediction, they had pastrami sandwiches and soda. The whole afternoon was spent fixing the girl's A.T.V., dinner was a roast, then the boys retired to the back bedroom to hide out from Di.

"I have twice your problem at home," Donnie said. "I have two sisters. They play and I have to tag along or be the one left out of everything." They laughed at themselves.

Donnie found the headboard a delight: built-in CB, short wave. When he slid the middle compartment

open a vibrator fell on the pillow.

“Get out of the headboard, nosy,” Keha said in a teasing way. “I use that vibrator on sleep-overs. Here's how it works.” Keha turned it on, then playfully ran it all over Donnie's face, neck, shoulders, down his spine, until he goosed Donnie with it. Keha laughed, then let Donnie run the vibrator himself.

“What's all of these radios for, Keha?”

“The C.B.'s for around here and this is my dad's long- distance telephone,” Keha told him, turning on the short wave set. “Calling the Lonely Roamer...over.”

I heard the call, turned up the volume, then told Keha he was supposed to use the call numbers first, name second, to comply with the rules of broadcast in case anyone else was listening to this frequency besides me.

“How you doing, Daddy?” Keha asked, ignoring my how-to-talk-on-the-radio epic.

“Just putting on miles... I'm just coming into Shamrock, Texas...over”

“Will you say hi to Donnie. We are having a great time and I want to know if we can use the boat to fish on tomorrow...over.”

“Yes, you can use the boat. Stay close in to shore with it and remember to pump the bilge first. Hello, Donnie...over.”

“Hi. How far can you talk on this radio?” Donnie asked me after Keha told him to press the button to talk, release it to listen.

“It depends on the weather, Donnie. We can usually talk everywhere I go on this range of broadcast with the power up...over.” I did not want to confuse the boy with liners, power output or technical jargon. While Donnie talked to me Keha ran to tell my wife he had me on the radio. She came to talk to me thirty hours away.

I sat in my truck doing almost eighty. I smiled fondly at that radio that let me talk to my loves out there in the middle of the night. I was happy for my lover-boy who told me how much fun he was having with his friend. I was going to pull off of the road up there myself to see a friend; that's why I was wide open.

“Daddy, it's Lou!” Petey yelled into the house when my truck pulled in front to wake them. He was standing in the doorway with his underpants on. He flashed the porch light so I would park. “Hi, Lou,” he said, running to the street side in his unders.

“Well,” I teased, “all undressed and waiting for me. That is a pleasant surprise.”

“You got any wild Indian boys hidden in the sleeper?”

“Nope. I left him home again this trip.”

“Dad and Thad just got back at night,” Petey said. “You got to sleep over if you want to see him.” He smiled.

“Well, freckles, you go tell your old man I'll spend the night. I'm losing a lot of power on my hills and it's not feeling right,” I told the boy, who was dark haired, freckled, fourteen and cute as a bug. I handed him my flight bag, then bounced his bottom lightly with my knee as he walked slowly back to the house in front of me. This is the same boy Keha pushed into a swimming pool for hugging me last Christmas.

“You will have to tell him all of that yourself.” Petey smiled over his shoulder at me. “My mom came in with her truck an hour ago and they're in the bedroom.” He smiled again. “I dare you to just walk in there like last time, sit on the bed and tell him about it.”

“Where'll you be if I do?”

“Peeking through the door,” Petey laughed.

So I walked in. Tapped twice on Lefty's bedroom door and walked in after waiting a minute. “Hi, Lou,” Mrs Black said to me, patting her side of the bed for me to sit on. She knows I do not like to see

Lefty without his artificial arm covered by a shirt. A tragic reminder of his hauling-explosives days.

“Did ya stop to see Petey or is yourn truck acting skittish, Lou?” Pete Black asked me.

“How about both reasons?” I teased.

“Shag your ass ta bed,” Lefty said. “You're ruinin my love life and the truck can wait until mornin,” he smiled. “My brother-in-law Mountain should be in afore I get your truck looked at, too.”

“So both of you big bastards is going to work me over in the morning,” I teased, while Petey laughed in the hall. “See you in the morning.”

“Our bed's ready,” Petey whispered to me. “Don't trip over the phone stand like last time or you'll wake the others and then we won't have time for nothin with the chatterboxes awake.

This time I managed not to trip over it. In his room his two brothers slept in their bunk bed. I would share his oversized twin with him.

“How come you're still up?” I asked, looking at his not-slept- in bed.

“I just came in with my mother. She went straight to bed but I had to eat first. That's what I was doing when I heard your rig. I thought it was Uncle Mountain first.”

He pulled off his unders, showing me his hard, then he helped me out of my clothes. We stood a while kissing, hugging, feeling each other, when the light suddenly came on. “Caught ya!” whispered his twelve-year-old brother. “I heard the truck come in, too.” He tugged out of his T-shirt and shorts to join us making a hugging circle out of our twosome. “You let me play or I'll wake your lover-boy Tommy.” I quietly snuck over to make sure the five-, no, the six-year-old tyrant was sleeping. He'd been five the last time I'd seen him and was soon to have his birthday. In fact, he'd cost me a remote-controlled truck for a present, too. We went to bed.

In the morning Thad, or Thaddeus, was pressed tightly between me and the wall with one leg trapped. Petey was pressed on my other side with one leg on the floor, too, because of the small bed. Tommy woke up. He pulled the covers off of us, then pulled on his brothers' naked skin.

“Lou... Lou... Lou!” His smile was beatific, his towhead and big blue eyes openly looking at me across his brother's naked bottom. “Are you take me for burritos?”

“No burritos this early in the morning, Tommy,” Petey said. “Come on, Thad, wake up. We got to shower.”

Tommy ran to his mother's room. He came back holding his Teddy bear by one ear with tears dripping down his face. I picked him up to find out what was wrong.

“What's wrong, baby?” I asked lovingly.

“My pantzies' is got failed down,” he sniffed. “I could not fixy them back good again.”

“Like this,” I said, snapping them.

“You only snapped two ob them.”

“That's to give you ventilation,” I teased.

“Uh uh,” Tommy said. “Last time you fixed my back door you liked ebeyone to see my bare butt in the cracks here.”

I snapped all of his snaps, then sent Petey and Thaddeus to the shower.

“Me, too, Uncle Lou,” Tommy said. I helped him out of his Dr. Dentons.

“I'll wash him if you dry him and dress him for us, Uncle Lou,” Thad said with a smile.

“Uh uh,” Tommy said. “I want Uncle Lou to shower up me. Will you, Uncle Lou?”

“Not with you pointing that cannon at me,” I told him, pushing down his hard cock.

I'd just got on clean underpants when the kids' bickering brought Lefty with his lady in to quell the riot. Tommy had woken his two sisters to tell them I was there. The fight was over the girls being in the boys' bedroom.

“You can't stop the riot lookin' like that, Pretty Mama Trucker,” I said when she bent to pull Tommy out of the riot he'd started.

“Oh!” She ran out of the room with Tommy in tow.

“You forgot to put panties on that kid, Hook,” I said as we laughed about Mama Trucker's departure. Tommy came back wrapped in a towel.

“My mama said for you to lick me dry, Uncle Lou,” he said, standing in front of me.

“That's his newest nonsense,” said Lefty (or Hook, or Captain Hook, or Blackie) sitting on the bed next to me. “The towel licks him dry, but he wants you to drive it over him.”

“First lick my hair am my face, den my brack am front too. Den my leggies, bof of dem. Den last you gots to lick my butt dry. Dis is so you don't put caca towels...” Lefty shut him up before he could go on with what to do with caca'd towels. “But Lou's got to dry my little footsie, too,” Tommie said, first holding up one foot, then the other. He gave me a big smile. I'm always refreshed by him, his naturalness and his wit. “I kissy you two times for licking me dry, Uncle Lou.” He kissed me.

“I kissy you two times back,” I said, rubbing my beard against his cheek.

“Lou, you stop talking baby-talk to Tommy. I think you're the reason why he won't talk right,” Lefty said.

“But, Hookie...” I laughed.

Sleeping, Keha put a protective arm over his friend Donnie. They woke relaxed with each other. They'd slept later than they'd meant to and woke up to a loud, insistant knocking on the door. The door flew open; Di was there.

“Be out in a few minutes,” Keha told her.

Again the routine of waking, the bathroom, a shower. Keha lost the battle of the bladders on purpose to make Donnie even. They laughed, pushed, teased, shoved. In work-out clothes they came out minutes later than they had meant to.

Keha was teaching them three pirouettes with a sidekick, how to bow with their eyes on the other person, ready to block anything their opponent did if he tried to take advantage of the bow. Keha waited until the little girl was off guard after her bow, then swept her feet, broom-like, from under her. She landed on the sand.

“Are you alright?” Keha asked, helping her to her feet. “Even after the bow you have to be ready.”

“Show me how you do that,” Di said. She practiced on Donnie for the rest of the hour.

Donnie thought it was great of his friend to instruct his little sister like that. He'd pity the boy who tried to pick on the little blond girl if she stayed with Keha as instructor.

With practice over, Donnie reflected on the morning's bathroom adventure. He felt guilty about peeing on Keha, even if that's what Keha had done the day before. Just the idea of going to do it had given him a bone-on at the last minute, so he'd pee'd high on his friend's chest. He felt the press of excitement again from thinking about it.

“What's on your mind, Donnie?” Keha asked.

“I was thinking how lame it was to pee on you.”

“Not lame, Donnie. I do it to my dad all the time. Then he pretends he's going to get me back, but he won't. My dad thinks it would be degrading for a boy to have a man piss on him, but then he expects it as part of children's natural nature to pee at him or at each other like we did.” Keha smiled at Donnie. He didn't know if he should tell Donnie about what Di did to her father. “When my dad first took Di for weekends she splashed him when he bathed her in the tub. Dad got so tired of being as wet as she was that the next weekend he undressed and took her into the shower with him. She was so mad at him that to

avenge herself she leaned over his leg and peed on him.”

They laughed, trying to visualize what had happened. Donnie told about how his own sisters bathed with him and how he lay back in the tub water to pee up through the water as he slowly pushed up his hips until he launched his sub-carried missile. He asked if I still bathed Di.

“Only when he's in a hurry to go some place, if they both have to go some place. Last week he took her under protest to shower her. Her protest was *this is the boys' bathroom*.” Keha smiled. “She's a sexist boys-cannot-see-girls-girls-can-see-everything type of person who calls Daddy a chauvinist. Daddy said that is not his fault because he had not known her before she was five. At five, Dad says, all sex patterns are ingrained into a child's mind on what is clean, what is dirty, what is or is not alright to see or do.”

Out in the pool they were laying on the same raft, enjoying each other's closeness, when Keha told Donnie he could take off his swim suit if he wanted to. Keha slipped his swim suit over his feet, then rolled over on his tummy. “I lay here like this all of the time.” Keha smiled at fond memories. “That's why my dad calls me a naked Indian. Then I pull his trunks off.”

“Here? Out here?!” Donnie asked, awed. “I've never seen my father less than fully dressed. I didn't even know what another boy looked like until I had to shower in the gym last month.”

“Where I came from before...” But Keha trailed off into silence. Bad memories. “Let's get to the boat.”

There was nothing that a couple of gallons of alcohol would not cure wrong with my truck. I'd gotten some bad fuel last time. This had never happened to me before; now I knew if it happened again I'd just have to add alcohol.

“Thanks for the breakfast and tune up, Pretty Mama Trucker, Lefty, kids,” I told them. “I will catch you on my next pass by.”

I kissed the lady and the five children, then shook Lefty's left hand, because I didn't want to be holding his artificial hand in my hand after a handshake looking dumb. He always did that to you and got a laugh out of it. He had about five spare hands for his hook, and he'd been known to be run out of the house with his wife throwing the hands at him because he put them in places she didn't expect to find them. She'd rather see the hook sticking out of his sleeve than see the plastic hand she knew he didn't have.

Mountain Man rolled in. He parked his truck in front of mine to keep me from pulling out. I had to go back in the house to have sodas and talk to him. He is Pretty Mama Trucker's brother.

They rode double on Keha's sand scooter to the marina where the old lobster boat is moored. They chained the scooter to the inside fence, then took the boat back even with the house in swimming distance to the shore, like I'd instructed. The boys talked boy talk. Catching fish, they only kept the biggest of the big.

“Have you ever slept on this boat?”

“Sure,” Keha smiled, remembering the last time he slept on the boat in my arms. “It sleeps six.”

“What about drifting lost, or whatever boats do?”

“No. It's safe from that. You want to sleep here tonight?”

Donnie did. That was what his conversation had been leading up to. They cleaned and filleted the fish they'd kept, then swam them in for dinner. Donnie phoned his mother to tell her he was going to spend the night fishing. Mrs Bleard was surprised but figured it was a charter boat from the marina.

That night the one anchor Keha had put out didn't hold in the out tide. They woke when an oil tanker blasted its horn at them. The boys scurried on deck, pulled anchor, then motored back to where they should have been. Keha put both anchors out this time.

They were lying again in the cabin, assuring each other that everything would be all right now, when it happened. A stray leg brushed against a hard spot on Donnie, who told Keha that if he moved his leg again that way it wouldn't embarrass him.

"I'll do it back to you," Donnie said shyly.

Keha smiled in the dark. He would do it again. He wouldn't tell his friend that he already knew these sensations – and others, many others he would be thrilled to instruct the younger boy in.

Up the next morning, they swam to the house. Keha made breakfast for the three of them. If he or Di looked at Donnie, Donnie flushed bright red like a new bride. The only thing they'd done was fondle and cuddle in the cool, dark boat's cabin. Donnie's cheeks bloomed in awareness as his big, blue eyes met the kindly gray eyes of the boy sitting across from him. Donnie felt they did more as his whole world of sexuality was opening up before him. It had budded in a small boat cabin. While the little girl cleared the dishes the boys talked about last night.

"Have you ever done things like that before, Keha?"

"Yes."

"With who?"

"Kids at my old school. It was a live-in school, ran dormitory fashion. If a boy had a spot on his sheet he had to pray for his sin. A fart was a sin there."

Keha and Donnie returned the boat to the marina. They felt guilty about leaving Di yesterday to play by herself. When they returned Keha flew her through the air, holding her by the waist straight-armed over his head as he walked her around like his father did. When he brought her down he hugged her against him. He told her the rest of the day was hers to share with them.

"What do you like to play?" Donnie asked. "I can play Barbies if you let me use a Ken doll."

"How did you learn to play Barbies?" Di asked.

"I have two younger sisters at home. You'd like them, they're nice girls. One's eight and the other's eleven."

"I hope they taught you how to play Barbies right," Di told him. "I have two Ken dolls. One for you and one for Keha to use. My daddy usually plays Barbies with me."

She led the way to her room with its white and gold furniture and its vaulted canopy bed. She let the boys choose their dolls from her whole doll collection. Keha showed Donnie two dolls put low on the shelf in her reach.

"These are called 'life-like dolls'," Keha explained, showing them to Donnie. "They're sexed just like people. I gave them to her on her sixth birthday." He replaced the dolls on the shelf.

"Does she know they're sexed?" Donnie giggled.

"Not yet. She will discover that some day if she ever plays with them."

Di knew the dolls were sexed. She thought them nasty because you could lay them into each other. They were made by a man because all men and boys were nasty. Little girls were sugar and spice and everything nice, boys and men were yuck. She was glad Keha stopped showing the girl doll, then Donnie giggled about the boy's hard front.

They played dolls, table games like Survival, Cando and Monopoly, with Di winning almost all the games.

"Do you play checkers?" Donnie asked.

"She plays chess, too. My dad beat her four games in a row and hasn't been able to win after she got the idea of the games. She clobbers me regularly. I have a great idea. If my mom lets her have someone over-night with her, we can invite your eight-year-old sister."



"She's too smart for my younger sister," Donnie said honestly. "I will ask my mom if Tanny can spend the night."

When Donnie phoned his mother he told her he thought they were treating the girl wrongly because she was left alone when they did boy things. The over-night was negotiated between mothers. The boys went to bed.

"When is Daddy coming home?" Di asked, barging in while they were undressing.

"Some time in the middle of next week. Why?"

"Because I don't want him stealing my new friend," Di said, walking out of the room when Keha pulled off his pants. She slammed the door behind her.

"What was all of that about?"

"If you ever get to know my father you'll understand. When her friends come to play they usually end up following him all over the house. They sit on his lap to drink his iced tea for him, they crowd him in his chair when he's watching TV or trying to do his bookwork. I wouldn't of invited you over for the week if my dad was going to stay home."

"Why?" Donnie asked, thinking Keha was putting him on. "Are you afraid I would follow him around the house drinking iced tea and crowding him out of his chair, too?"

"You're darned right! I would mind how uncomfortable my dad's lap would be with me trying to sit there first."

They laughed hard, got glasses of iced tea, then made up a new name called Louie's Lap. They played the game by sitting on each other's laps while trying to drink the other's iced tea. Stripped to their shorts, it was Keha's turn to hold Donnie again. Keha moved the angle-adjuster on the seat-back, forcing Donnie to have to lean back into him. He rubbed down Donnie's body until he slipped his hand into Donnie's unders. This was something I always did for him when I was busy and could not come to bed until later.

A sigh escaped Donnie. "Are we still playing like we're your daddy?"

"No," Keha started to lie. "We're just playin."

They switched places again so Donnie could do the same thing to Keha.

This was also the first night Donnie slept naked. Sleeping raw even felt right after they'd both creamed twice in their unders, shucked out of them, leaving them as little sticky, stepped-out-of shapes on the floor by the recliner.

I got talked into spending another night with Petey and Thaddeus. We worked on my truck for a half-day. Then I took Pretty Mama Trucker's sedan down to the park. This park was nice. It had a pony ride that required skill, all except the slow pony who walks around the center ring.

"How long have you known my dad?" Debbie asked me.

"Since about fifty-nine. We worked the same rodeos."

"Then he got blown up, huh?"

"I don't know when he got blown up. I think you were three when that happened," I told her. "He was whole when I went to prison and Francine, Petey, Thad and you were all he had. You were a very, tiny baby when I left the circuit."

"And me?" Petey said.

"You were a dark-headed Tommy," I teased.

"I know when you came back I jumped in bed with you," Petey said shyly. His sisters and Thad knew what he did with me last year just before I got Keha. "My dad said I always jumped in bed with you since I was three."

I let the kids ride the horses and play, just as if it were a holiday. The day was for them, since I

couldn't stop there often.

The giggle of girls outside woke them. Donnie's mother had dropped both of his sisters off. She would pick up the eight- year-old Arlene on her way home at four.

"Slip these on," Keha said, handing Donnie some flimsy white nylon bikinis he'd got out of the headboard.

Donnie didn't question his friend, even though they looked like girls' panties. He giggled when he looked in the mirror, for they barely fit, forget about cover the curve of his bottom.

When they stepped out onto the pool apron the girls were sitting on the steps.

"The water's warm enough to swim in," Keha said. "Arlene can't swim yet," Tanya told him.

"Put a swimming belt on her. Me and Don will stay close if you need us."

"Are those girls' underpants you're wearing, Donnie?" the eight-year-old asked with her eyes popping.

"These are the latest boys' and men's swimsuits," Keha told her. "They're called Sport Shorts." The two girls read the inside of their brother's label just to be sure. The boys dived over the girls into the pool.

It got a little cloudy and cool in the afternoon. Keha sent the girls into the house to play, then he took Donnie into the shower with him. Donnie washed Keha's back. Then it was Keha's turn to wash Donnie's. Keha soaped Donnie all over; he ran a lot of soap into Donnie's crack, then stepped close behind him. When Keha reached around Donnie to soap Donnie's front, his firmness slipped between Donnie's legs. Donnie stiffened with surprise, tension, bringing his legs tightly together, trapping Keha's hard between his thighs.

"What's wrong, Don?" Keha asked, getting harder from the sensation of the tightly clamped legs. Donnie didn't answer. He was waiting to see what Keha would do next. Keha pressed closer, wrapped his arms around Donnie until his hand closed around his friend's hard cock. He pressed his lips down to the curve of Donnie's neck, then waltzed him in place until Donnie felt the fatness pulse between his locked thighs.

Donnie looked down in time to see three white spurts of cum shoot out from between his legs, to land in little blobs on the tile floor just out of the shower's range.

Keha turned Donnie to face him. He smiled gently, then kissed Donnie on the lips. "It's your turn to wash me, Donnie," he whispered.

"What about that stuff on the floor?" Donnie pointed to the spots that glistened pearl-like on the tile. Keha's wet foot wiped across them, blending them into the shower water that gurgled down the drain.

"Wash me like I washed you. Then I'll teach you a new game."

"What you just played on me, Keha, is a new game."

"What can I say?" Keha smiled deeply at his friend.

Donnie tried to do everything back to Keha that Keha had done to him, with Keha's full cooperation. But Donnie couldn't get off on this clumsy waltz. Going soft, he lied that he had.

Keha turned all six shower heads on, then hopped a pattern from shower to shower to play shower-tag in a square instead of a line like they did at the boys' gym.

This is how Di, Arlene and Tanya caught them when they pulled the shower door open real fast without knocking. They'd come to tell Donnie that his mother was there.

"Mom wants to know if you need clean clothes that she can drop back with Arlene in the morning," Tanya said.

"You see how nasty boys are?" Di said to the girls, but all Tanya and Arlene could see was how much

fun the boys had been having jumping from shower to shower: it wouldn't have taken much of an invitation for *them* to join in.

Half dried, wearing the little white sport shorts, the boys hurried to the kitchen to see Mrs. Bleard.

"My God, Donnie, you're coming out of that thing," Mrs. Bleard said after a deep intake of breath. "Are those nylon underpants?" You could almost see through the material in the wet spots. She avoided looking at Keha altogether.

"They're swim suits," my wife told her. They're called Sport Shorts. Louie got ten cases of them just this past summer. Keha, you should have used colored ones. Louie only wears the white ones as liners under his tennis shorts when he bicycles.

"One size fits all," Keha smiled.

"Yes, Chuck." She smiled at the boy. "We know. We can read the labels from here."

After Donnie assured his mother he had everything he needed for the next two days, she gave him permission to run off and change for dinner.

By now both of them had a special feeling of love for this room they raced to. Giggling, talking about the look on Mrs. Bleard's face when they came in showing everything they owned through the wet nylon; this room with its master control panel to snoop on any other room, its well-stocked book cases with reading materials on all subjects; this room with its TV and video-cassette player.

"You're a lucky duck to have a room like this all to your own, Keha."

"This isn't my room. You have to go through those doors to get to my room. This is my dad's room, but I share it with him." Keha opened the double doors. "See, Donnie, this is my room."

It was like mine, with sliding panels and sliding glass doors onto the pool patio covered by heavy drapes. There was a double-wide water bed with what looked like drawers under it.

"Gosh, what an empty room," Donnie said, disappointed. "It looks like it's never been used."

"Twice. Both times my dad carried me in here with him to use it. When he tried to return to his room I followed him back." They laughed. "Shall we use it tonight?"

"Naw. I like the other one with its TV and stuff. This room's a bummer."

But Keha was standing at the paneled wall. He pushed here, pulled there, until Donnie's mouth dropped open with surprise at the remote-controlled model toys, balls, gloves, bats, things that are all boy's things.

"Oh, Keha, this is a boy's dream room!"

"I know. My daddy tried to spoil me to make me use this room, so I use it whenever I want to play with something like this." Keha reached under the bed to pull out a full railroad set behind the false drawers in a dust-proof case. "What do you want to play?"

"I want to play with everything."

Wednesday at four Donnie was packed and sad "to leave. Keha took him into his room, opened the closet of new stuff, then gave Donnie a long box. He gave it to Donnie with a kiss on the lips to go with it.

"I want you to have this because you're my best friend," Keha said with a smile. Donnie kissed Keha back.

Thursday they gymed, showered together with big smiles, then ran off to their classes together. They planned another over-night for a week from Friday.

I got home late the following Thursday night, four days early, and so messed up his coming over-night with his friend, although I didn't know this at the time. Keha had been having trouble sleeping. He heard the truck pull in close to the house. It's empty, he thought, or it would of rattled the windows. The sliding

door slid, the strong smell of fuel wafted in on the breeze as I slipped through the drapes carrying my boots so I wouldn't disturb the boy.

"It's alright, Daddy, I'm awake. I heard you pull in." Silent tears dripped down Keha's face. He would have to tell Donnie it was off. Their plans crushed by those three blind women they call fates who ruin the dreams of puny men's plans. In this case pretty boys' plans.

"Why is my turtle crying?" I asked when I bent over to kiss him hello.

"I'm not crying."

"Maybe not, but your eyes are crying about something." I gently smeared his tears across his cheeks with the back of my greasy hands to dry. I put finger-smudges on his nose, cheeks, chin and forehead.

"My poor Keha is turning into poka dots because he will not tell daddy what's wrong."

"It's Donnie. We were going to over-night again and each time we've had to change our plans."

"You don't have to cancel this time," I told him, holding both of his cheeks in my hands. "You have your own bedroom to over-night in." I kissed him.

"But what about you? I know how you bust your butt to get home from your work to be here with me, then you're as happy as I am when I'm with you." His love, his loyalty for me, he always put before his own personal happiness.

"I understand what your feelings are, Keha, but I feel at your age you have to have your peer friends, too. It's very important for you to know other boys and girls. To me you will always be my very own Hoksi Cala, but I can't hold you back in your own growth and development just for me. In fact I have to help you grow and help you develop your mind as well as your body. Tell me, did you find Donnie very sexy?"

"I knew you'd ask me that. Yes, he's sexy. He's just doing light-weight things, and I want to know how come you changed the subject."

"To make you smile, hon. I have a whole lot of shop work piled up so you boys will have to get along without me this weekend. This way you can have Donnie all to yourself. Come on, get up, you little blanket ass, I got to shower this grease off of you."

All of this time I had been playfully smearing Keha with more grease. I put it on his neck, on his flat, hard boy's tummy, culminating with a circle of grease all the way around my boy's hard cock.

"Did I ever tell you the story of the man who had a red ring around his hard cock, just like this one?"

"Yes, Daddy. It was lipstick."

Keha got up to empty the stuff out of my greasy clothes. He put them in a fire-proof metal can where they would stay until they were washed to prevent their starting a fire.

"Phew! You haven't showered in days."

"I showered, but I put on the same outer clothes." I smiled. "After all, I drove here all the way from Nova Scotia in three days with stops for food and fuel."

"That's not bad for an old man of thirty-three," he said, knowing if he didn't I would.

I threw Keha squealing over my shoulder to carry him into the shower. There I scrubbed the grease off of my lover-boy then let my lover scrub me with a loofah sponge.

"Will you play me a short game of shower tag?"

"Sure, hon. It's only two in the morning. Then you can put me to bed."

Keha smiled at me. Even sleep-starved as I was I took time to play tag. I hopped shower to shower after Keha, who out-hopped me in one of his tricky patterns. There was no way I could catch this boy of mine. Then he hopped right into my arms to kiss me while I tickled him through his towel. Keha scrunched down, playfully pulled my hand into his mouth and, while I was trying to dry his hair, sucked me dry. Keha let me carry him back to bed, where we slept curled in each other's arms.

Wake up, wake up, Chuck,” our cleaning lady said, averting her eyes. “You missed your bus. Now I’ll have to drive you to school.”

“I’ll take him,” I said, sleepily sitting up. Keha got the car keys, to make sure I would take the new car. He teased me all the way to school about my having to put more than 15 miles on it. Keha was not spoiled, but he played spoiled with me at times because sometimes he wanted me to baby him. Besides, I loved to baby my boys.

“Wow!” Clairice, a well-stacked eighth-grader said. “Hello, Chuck. I see you’ve come in your limo.”

“No, Clairice, I *arrived* in my limo,” Keha sex-teased her. “I do not cum in cars.” His wink almost sent her into a shivering, shuddering orgasm. Keha was a very desirable boy and for a girl to get more than a short “Hi” was a real thrill for her. “I love you, Daddy,” Keha whispered, then said in an authoritative voice, “Pick me up at three, James!”

## 10. Gabe's Return

“Easy, Chuck – I mean, Master Charles,” Gabe said walking up with his gang. “Your chauffeur thinks he’s the race driver today?” Pulling out, I had chirped the tires, making the older boys wish they had that engine for their hot rods.

“He sure does,” Keha said flippantly to the ganger. “If your family had a car like that it would be the classiest thing in Tijuana.” Gabe smiled at him. “My father told me to tell the boys who knew him from when he lived next to his shop that he is giving a party tomorrow afternoon.” Keha wasn’t sure he was getting the directions right. “Or is it all of the boys who went on the camping trip last year?”

“All of the camping trip boys,” Cha-Cha said. “Is the swimming pool done?”

“Yah, it’s been done,” Gabe said with certainty. “We’ll each get a new swim suit from Louie, right?”

“That’s right,” Keha said, wondering why these boys always seemed to know everything his father was going to do – sometimes even before *he did*. “When did you get back, Alberto?”

“Las night,” Cha-Cha interrupted with a smile. Cha’d been out of school the whole week. He’d left with another trucker on Friday night, met me in New York on Sunday night to go to Nova Scotia with me. He’d got in just that morning, a little tired but happy from the trip. “I was visiting in Mexico.”

Donnie’s bus pulled in. Keha caught Donnie by both arms and danced him around in a circle. “My dad came in last night,” Keha sang, “but it’s on for the weekend as planned anyway, but we have to use my room.” He was so happy that Donnie was instantly happy, too.

I went home to get my books, then drove to the shop, transformed from greasy trucker to clean-cut cabinetmaker. I walked into the clatter of my milling machine chewing some hardwood to proper thickness, the fresh smell of pine and the whine of table saws.

“Alberto told me you were back,” Scotty said. “How ya feelin, Lou?”

“So so. I want the shop cleared out again.” I had less than two months to make my improvements for the year or lose money to taxes. “Have Hernando move everything out except the stuff in the corner.”

“He’ll need help to clean your playroom, Lou.”

“He’ll have the help as soon as the boys get home from school.” I smiled because Keha would be busy with Donnie, and Keha was learning to love others. I was no longer jealously guarded as I was at the time of that incident with Petey. I went to the drafting room, which was my office, did the cutting orders,

made up a stock list. Pretty soon I heard boxes being moved below me. That would be Hernando. I watched him from the foot of the steps. I wished I could have gotten the boy full half-days off to work for me, but this was something not allowed in Junior High. They finally agreed to let Hernando miss home room, to let him out of school forty-five minutes earlier than the others.

Hernando was 16 at the end of his 9<sup>th</sup> grade. He was old enough to quit school but he could not legally work a half-day to help support his family. Some bureaucratic bullshit. That is why I let him work until six, paying him \$25 a day for three and a half hours work.

"Hoy, Hernando, I see you have your helper with you today." That was his grade-school brother. "You'll also have Gabe and some of the others when I pick them up." I chuckled the little brother's cheek, then went out to get my car and drove to Keha's school. I got a treat to my boy-loving eyes when the school bell rang and kids poured thickly out the buildings. I watched them all, trying to figure who was in his homo phase and who was in his het development.

Keha came out of his building, saw my car, yelled for Donnie who was walking from his last class with Gabe. They didn't rush to the car like Keha.

"*Como está, Patron*," Gabe said, giving me a mock-peon flourish of his invisible Mexican sombrero.

"Gracious, Gabriel," I said, happy to see my chubby friend. "How are you?"

"*Sta buen*. What you doing today?"

"I'm getting the side shop cleaned out again, that's if you boys are willing to help Hernando."

"Why not?" Gabe answered for the five boys who had walked over with him. "You burros keep your feet on the floor and your hands on your cocks, because I'll skin anyone who's disrespectful. "

"*Patron*, can I help too?" Gato asked shyly.

"Sure, Kitten," I teased the mousey boy. "With your help they might even be able to finish the job before dinner time."

I still called the boys by their street names. This let them keep their feeling of individuality. I could see the worry in Gabe's eyes as he looked at Keha. He was wondering if Keha was going to help clean out the wide room, or if he could sneak up to the drafting room to do something with me. Gabe was still a little angry at me because Alberto had met me in New York when it was his turn to ride with me again. I hadn't let Gabe go because his grades were low again.

I dropped the gang kids off at the shop, then drove to Donnie's house to get his clothes for the weekend.

Back in the car, Donnie asked Keha, "How come you invited all of those gangers over?" Donnie didn't know if he could call Keha Keha in front of me, because I used that sort of like a pet name.

"My dad invited them." Keha smiled over at me. "My dad's known Gabe and those boys for a long time. Like Gabe told Daddy, if he'd known I was his property they wouldn't of jumped me at the bike rack."

"You should of pinned a note to your underpants so after they pantsed you to gang-bang you..."

"Is Gabe still pulling that shit?" I cut in.

"I don't know. They have a new boy that they were doing things with in the gym locker room..." Donnie stopped talking when Keha gave him a be-quiet look.

"Tell me," I said, "what did you see them doing to this boy?"

"Nothing important," Donnie said, with Keha staring hard at him.

"It may not be important to you, Donnie," I said, "but it may be important for the boys they are abusing."

"He comes running when they call him and leaves when they playfully chase him away after he does what they want him to do. That's all."

"You mean they've made him their patty slave," I said sadly. I dropped the boys at the house, then returned to the shop. After a while I called Gabe to help me in the drafting room. He walked in all

smiles to find himself pulled face-down over my knee. “How many times do I have to tell you to leave smaller boys alone?” I told him angrily. “I'm tired of your picking on weaker boys for sex.”

“Honest, we ain't raped no boys for two years,” Gabe said. “We have a different way we do things not to make you mad at us.”

“What way is this?” I asked, letting the boy stand again. I wouldn't dare insult Gabe with a spanking for which he would resent me for the rest of his life.

“This Daryl is a real *puto*, honest. He likes it.”

Gabe would not lie to me. He knew it would be hard on him if or when I found out the truth. I took Gabe to the couch that converts into a bed, layed him back, then lightly layed over him to give him kisses. Gabe arched up hastily, undoing his pants to pull my hand into the front of his chorners.

“You're really a hot number today, Gabe.”

“That's from eating the chilli,” Gabe teased back.

“Are you ready for the Italian sausage?”

“When you're ready to eat the Mexican chilli. Then I get to eat the Italian sausage with my *culo* too,” Gabe said passively, rolling over for my love. “Will you be able to let me spend the whole night with you soon, Luis?” Gabe asked, smiling into the pillow as I used a gentle motion on his bottom that felt great for both of us.

“Yes. Chuck is not easily upset like he used to be, even when I'm talking to a strange boy, so it will be soon for you to spend a night with me again. I want to talk to your patty boy to make sure he's not being forced.”

“I'll have him over to the party tomorrow if you will do this for a long time for me, Luis.” I could see Gabe didn't think he was doing anything wrong to his patty boy Daryl; he wasn't worried about getting on my bad side again.

At home, Keha helped Donnie put clothes in drawers that still smelled like fresh new wood. He showed Donnie how to open the wall panels to display all of the delights of the room. While running the trains they playfully slapped each others' hands out of the way to gain control of the transformers. They interlocked legs to throw each other off balance, making themselves hard and horny in the process.

“Gabe's weird,” Donnie sputtered to cover his embarrassment about wanting Keha to touch him. “Even after we kicked his butt twice he still acts like he's bad.”

“Don't ever talk about Gabe in front of my dad like that, Donnie. Remember, Dad got us all out of trouble because he knows Gabe as well as a person gets to know Gabe.”

“Really?”

“Really. I just found out my dad took Gabe on a truck truck trip this past summer, and he just don't take people on truck trips unless they are special to him.”

“Maybe your father puts up with him to keep him out of trouble, like Alberto said.”

“I don't know, Donnie. It could be more than that.”

“Hmm,” Donnie said. “You may be right. Can we rub each other again like last time?”

“As long as you're going to rub me back.” They smiled at each other and rolled onto their backs, showing hard. They giggled and slipped down the fronts of their pants. “This is what you're going to have to do to me, Donnie.” Keha bent his head down and sucked Donnie's hard into his mouth. He smiled to himself watching Donnie flop flat back on the floor, pushing his hips up while sensation gripped him till climax.

“Oh, gosh, Chuck – Keha!” Donnie lay motionless after trying to take in what had happened to him. Finally he pushed Keha back onto the rug and did back to him all the things he'd gotten such a sensation

out of himself. When he tried to swallow Keha's load tears popped into his eyes. Keha patted his head and told him to spit it onto his shirt, but Donnie choked it down in spite of the taste and the amount that was over twice what he could shoot.

"Did that feel alright, Keha?"

"As my father always says for a job well done, I'll give that man a nickel raise. But I'll give you a dollar raise for that job, Don."

"Again tonight," Donnie said in a hushed whisper. "Can we do this again tonight?"

Coming down the steps of the drafting room Gabe asked if we could spend the night together at the beach house. I told him okay if it wouldn't upset Keha; if it did I would have to take him back home. Gabe squeezed my hand. I gave a friendly squeeze back. The whole shop was cleaned spotless, everything numbered, stacked neatly in place. Gabe told the boys to make sure Daryl came to the party tomorrow – and that I was dropping him at his girl's house. Then I paid the boys for their help: if they had money in their pockets they would go to the movies or the arcade, which would keep them out of trouble until tomorrow.

When I walked in the back door Donnie and Keha were there to meet me. They both stepped back in surprise when Gabe followed me into the house.

"Are you settled in, Donnie?" I asked.

"Yes he is, Dad," Keha said for him, then followed me into the hall to discuss Gabe's presence.

"Gabe's going to help with the beach party," I said matter-of-factly. "He can over-night with you and Donnie, or you can be a grown-up about this and let him sleep in my room with me."

"In your room?" Keha asked protectively.

"Yes, Keha, in my room."

Keha had always suspected that I fooled around with other boys. He now stood there looking at me with his gray eyes changing color with his thoughts.

How could he criticize me for bringing home a boy when he'd just been in the other room sucking cocks with Donnie? Who was he to deprive his father of somebody else when he was not trying to give himself to his father; he was trying to give himself to his Donnie?

Keha smiled, then kissed me gently. "I think it's wonderful that Gabe's here to over-night with you, Dad," he said, meaning it.

"I'm glad that my little turtle is growing up. Remember, love, the more love you give the more love you will have in you to give others." I kissed my lover-boy back for the kiss I'd got. "While we're on the subject of sleep-overs, I was asked by Doc to take an eleven-year-old hyperkinetic boy who is having problems at home. He's a wild one, and he still wets the bed. I told Doc I wouldn't even think of taking this boy until you will feel right about having him around. You see, Keha, you'd have to be his little father."

"Dad... will it be soon?"

"No, baby, not until you are fully willing to help me with him. He needs a lot of love and understanding from us. He's just not doing very well where he is now."

"Where is he kept now?" Keha asked quietly.

"He's at home with his parents. His father's sick, his mother has three more kids she's busy with."

"Well, Daddy, first let me get used to the idea that Gabriel is spending the night with you." I could not tell what Keha was thinking because his eyes kept shifting in color from gray happy to black angry in color.



Back in the Kitchen Gabe was standing by the door ready to go back if Keha was upset. But Keha walked up to him. He welcomed Gabe, then took him and Donnie to my bedroom where he gave Gabe the loan of a shower robe.

“Daddy,” Keha’s voice came from the bedroom, “are you showering before dinner, too?”

“Yes, hon,” I told him.

“We will shower when you’re ready to shower, Dad.” Then, “Have you ever been in this house before, Gabe?”

“When it was moved into. Before the patio or pool were built. I helped your dad panel this room.”

Gabe walked over and slid open the panels, then stood back to stare at the stuff behind them.

Donnie and Keha looked at each other. Gabe the loud-mouthed bully was very quiet, not yelling, not telling them what to do or how to do it. He sat on the floor in front of the train set and asked Keha if he could pull the train out to look at it.

I smiled, standing in the doorway. “I still have yours in my closet, Gabe,” I said. I’d come to tell them I was ready to shower.

“That’s *his* train set?” Keha blurted.

“Yes it is. Gabe can set it up after showers if he wants to run his against yours. Gabe helped make that water bed, then he set up the train station you see under it, too.”

The showers were nice. We could have run separate shower heads, but we decided to crowd under two of them. I washed Keha, then Gabe, but when I tried to get close enough to Donnie to wash him, Keha told me no. “If I have to learn now to handle a baby brother that wets,” Keha said, “then I better wash Donnie.” Really that was because he didn’t want me touching Donnie intimately, and Keha and Gabe both knew that, myopic as I was, I had to get close to see a body in detail. I dried, then got the train set for Gabe.

“Gosh, Gabe, this’s never been used,” Donnie said when we were all sitting around on the floor unpacking parts.

“I know,” Gabe said. “It’s never been out of the box. See this place right here on the board, Chuck?”

Keha nodded.

“That’s where this train should go.”

“You’re giving it to me?”

“Sure.” Gabe smiled. “Where am I ever going to use a fine set like this when I don’t even have room for its box in my closet. That’s why Luis keeps it here.”

“I will keep it safe for you, Gabe,” Keha told him. “You can come over any time to use it, too.”

I smiled at my little lovers. These were two unexpected things to happen.

“You been here a year,” Gabe said matter-of-factly.

“Yes, a full year. Louie found me in November, before my thirteenth birthday.”

“I found you October thirtieth. You looked like you were already out to scare people in your Halloween costume.”

“Luis say you were wild. That’s why he kept you out of school until this term.”

“Wild?” Donnie asked. He couldn’t believe his ears. Keha was a gentle boy, kind, decent; he stepped in to protect smaller kids from bullies like Gabe. How could he be wild?

“Yep, this is my wild little Indian,” I said, patting the top of Keha’s head.

“How come you did not say he broke your wrist?” Gabe asked me suddenly.

“He only sprained my wrist,” I defended Keha. “When you love a person you do not remember the hurt they have done you, you only remember the love you have for them.”

“What about you, Gabe?” Keha said in retaliation. “You tried to cut my dad’s throat, you ruined his

shop, you lied to him and tried to rob him when you broke into his house after he thought you were a changed boy.”

They both had tears dripping down their cheeks from opening each other's sore spots.

“Hold it, boys,” I said gently. They had all of the babblings from eavesdropping to battle each other verbally with. “All you're doing is hurting yourselves and each other by going on like this. I love you both, and it's about time you know it for fact, Keha, not a guess anymore. You give each other huggies so we can eat dinner.” I hugged around both boys when they hugged each other.

“Is that you, Gabe?” my wife asked when we came into the kitchen. She'd not seen Gabe since we'd moved. “I can't get over how much you've grown.” She put her hand to the boy's cheek. He was slimmer and taller.

“I'm fourteen,” Gabe said in answer to her.

Keha sat next to me, across from Donnie. Gabe sat next to Donnie, across from me. The two ladies sat on the ends of the table set for six. Dinner passed quietly. Then we went to sit indian-fashion on my waterbed to talk.

Donnie had been falling asleep but suddenly he was wide awake. Something he'd missed happened but he did not know how to make a question for it. I waited.

“I sure fucked myself out of living here,” Gabe said sadly. “Three times Luis said I could live with him if I tried to be a loving person after I moved in, then I'd fuck up again. Then Luis told me I would have to learn to be human. By the time I'd made up my mind he'd found you.”

“It's alright, Gabe. I know enough,” Keha said.

“You do, huh? Can you trust Donnie? Huh, Chuck?”

“Talk as openly as you want in front of him,” Keha said, “because me and Donnie were just sucking on each other before you came home with Dad.”

Donnie blushed red. He didn't say anything; he just looked at me sitting cross-legged in front of him and like he was I could see everything he owned. I guess Donnie could see everything I owned, too – and don't think we weren't looking!

“When I hear Luis is back I rush to the shop to see him. If you're not with him he takes me to the drafting room to love with him; when you were there I was turned away before I ever saw you. Luis always made time to love with me, yes, even in my own room at home.”

“Louie loves with you?” Donnie said. He was starting to understand the by-play he'd missed in the first round.

“Yes, I love with them. With their full consent.”

“With Chuck, too?”

“And a few more boys from the gangs,” Gabe said while Donnie sat open-mouthed, not with disgust but in something like self-awareness.

“I hit Daddy with a tire-billy because he picked up a sissy cowboy, then I pushed Petey into the pool because he hugged my dad over a minute long.” Tears were streaming down Keha's face again.

“Please, Chuck,” Gabe said with his own eyes filling, “I didn't mean to make you cry. Please stop crying.”

Donnie was looking at me to see what I was going to do about two crying boys. Gabe's eyes gushed forth a cataract of pent-up machismo. “Tell me what you think of my two baby boys,” I said gently to Donnie. I pulled one boy into each of my arms to baby them.

“I think Chuck's terrific,” Donnie said. “Gabe's alright, too.” Donnie smiled his friendliest smile at me, a smile that told me to expect to see a lot more of him.

“Is everyone ready for bed?” I asked, throwing Keha over my shoulder to take him to his room. I

tucked Keha and Donnie in. I kissed my lover-boy on the lips. I kissed my fingertip, then lightly brushed it across Donnie's lips.

When I lay down next to Gabe he passified himself by nosing under the hem of my robe.

“Keha, how does your dad cheer you up when you're sad?”

“Kisses me and hugs me like this. He does this to me if I don't get happy right away,” Keha said, tickling Donnie all over while he kissed him on his laughing lips, his heaving boy's chest, his jerking balls. When Donnie tried to roll over on the bed to get away from the tickles, Keha put hand lotion in his crack, then layed on the wiggling, giggling boy as his fingers continued to travel all over Donnie's body. He pressed in the crack, then slowly, gently he slipped in.

Once he was fully inside of Donnie, Keha lay motionless. “What are you doing to me, Keha?” Donnie asked. He felt stuffed inside. He could not move, with his friend's weight on his back, and he felt like he had to use the pot.

Keha held Donnie tight while he tried to flex his cock as big as it would go so Donnie would get used to having the pressure inside of him before he started working them to a climax.

“Keha, I have to use the bathroom,” Donnie insisted.

“This just feels like that the first few times, Don,” Keha said slowly. He started to work his hardon in and out. “Does this hurt you?”

“No, it just feel like I have to use the bathroom.” Keha let Donnie up to use the bathroom. Donnie couldn't do anything. He lounged in the bathroom doorway watching Louie love with Gabe until he was certain he didn't have to shit. Then he returned to Keha's room.

“Are you ready to do that to me?” Keha asked with an unsure smile.

“Of course I am,” Donnie said. “I was just watching your dad do the same thing to Gabe.” Donnie didn't last five minutes, forget the almost half-hour Keha had layed on him. By the time Donnie did climax he really did have to use the bathroom. He returned feeling empty inside.

“Keha, can you do that to me again?”

Keha tried but kept losing his hard. “Let's see if Gabe will do you,” he told Donnie.

“I would rather have your dad do me,” Donnie said.

Keha stiffened. He didn't like to hear that out of his friend Donnie; it was bad enough to have Gabe loving with his father. But then again, being that he and Donnie loved each other, Donnie might eventually end up in my bed with both of them. "Alright, let's ask."

They came in. "If Gabe can't," I said after some thought, "I will." Gabe tried but he couldn't get it up enough. He could not work his fat, softish cock into Donnie's tight bottom. I put Donnie on his side facing the boys, who sat up to watch.

Donnie was surprised to find he did not feel as full as he did when Keha did him. This gave him a pleasant feeling because I'd left him the freedom to move. Donnie relaxed, closed his eyes with his mind on the gentle rocking of the waterbed – and when he opened his eyes it was morning. He was surprised to find all of us still on my bed, Gabe lip to lip with him, Keha snuggled against my back. He tried to move, then discovered he was still hooked up with me. The same sensation that lulled him into dreamland the night before now worked to wake his sensuality and brought him to orgasm. Donnie blushed in new embarrassment: with Gabe pressed tightly to him, he could not tell if he was cumming or peeing.

That shivering orgasmic shudder of the boy held lightly in my arms woke me. Was it a moan or a gasp? "Are you cold, Donnie?" I asked, after checking to see who was in my arms. Sex with three boys can get complicated.

"No, I have to use the bathroom, if I can get off the bed," Donnie said softly.

"That's easy," I said, waking Keha. "Just follow me."

"You should of woke Gabe," Keha said. He smiled at me. "Look at him sleeping there with his mouth half open waiting for a French kiss. I'm not going to let him sleep in, Daddy."

Keha and Donnie ran to use the bathroom. They did their pee duel, then took showers with lots of mutual loving. Keha's return to bed was to jump next to the sleeping Gabe – to my disapproval.

"Damnit, Chuck, you scared me!" Gabe shouted angrily. "When I'm with your father I'm not used to waking like this."

Keha told Gabe he was sorry. "I should of let Dad kiss you awake, like he does me." Keha kissed Gabe like he figured I kissed Gabe awake when he snuck off on trips with me.

"Come on, you two," I said, teasing and separating them. "You can play lovin' later, my teenies."

"What's teenies?" Donnie laughed.

Keha explained about teenteens, eleventeens and so on.

"Lovies are hugs and kisses," Gabe told him. "Wait until he asks if he can play your bongos or asks to tune them with his mousey. Gabe patted Donnie's bottom with light rhythmic pats. "I just remembered last night," he said, then slipped over Don's prone form. With hardness revived, he slipped part way into Donnie's bongo.

Donnie jumped at the penetration, but that only helped Gabe drive in deeper. He looked up to see what our reactions would be to this. Since he didn't complain I didn't stop it.

Donnie was thankful Gabe could not go on too long. The fatness of the Mexican boy's cock hurt-sort-of-felt-good. Donnie really didn't like Gabe. He only tolerated him because of the way the ganger warmed up to him and Keha after the fight in school. Donnie had a different feeling after Gabe got off his back. He didn't feel from Gabe the tenderness or warmth he felt when Keha or I did him. Gabe was a coarse lover.

"Now you do him back," Keha said, then whispered in Donnie's ear, "After you bone Gabe, tell him what a great lay he is."

Gabe spread his legs willingly to accept all that Donnie could do to him. The gang leader who told his boys who was to be picked on, or who was to be beat up because he didn't like his looks, reached behind him to hold Donnie in him tightly, and he glowed with every stroke.

Scotty and Juan, Gabe's dad, picked up twenty dark-skinned boys and two white ones. The other white boy rode his motorbike over to "the Louie's" a few minutes before the others got there.

"They're right behind me," Phil said, walking into the house. He looked around to see if Keha was around. He didn't want to get socked trying to hug or kiss me.

Horns honking, doors slamming, voices yelling, racing to the back door, my horde came running to meet me. I gave each a towel and a swim suit, then sent them to Keha who waited in the den. There they changed and went right out the sliding door onto the beach where Phil was grilling the hamburger patties for me.

"Get your sodas, plates and help yourselves, fellows," Phil yelled. "But don't pig out on the first round because there's plenty for everyone."

Tom and his nephew George came by to help me with my horde. My wife brought out more olives, pickle's and chili for the boys, who took them by the handful.

"This is our patty-boy," Gabe said. He had been holding Daryl for last. "Are you going to talk to him now or later?"

"He can talk to me now in my bedroom while he puts on his swimsuit," I said, leading the way. I locked both doors after us. The boy watched me with narrowed, suspicious eyes. He was nervous, but so was I.

"Why are you doing that? Are you going to fuck me?"

"Not unless you want to be fucked," I said with a friendly smile. "We don't need twenty boys running in, do we? I guess that Gabe or one of the others told you that I have known them for almost two years. When I first met them they were raping smaller boys, white boys as a lesson to them for being white."

"So what?"

"So if you're not brown you're a patty-boy, a sex-vassal to be used or discarded at whim. Are you homosexual as they claim, or are you just in love with one of the boys in the gang?"

"Both. I'm in love with Cha-Cha." A smile of love radiated from his angelic face. "He calls me Darly."

"That's your street name, too." I smiled, trying to build the boy into confiding in me as his friend. "I've heard that Alberto calls you Darling Darly. There's nothing wrong in being in love with one boy or twenty boys who love you back, but when it comes to the Negra Mortas..."

"Were you ever in love with a boy?" Daryl cut in.

"I was and am in love with twenty-six boys. I fell in love with boys when I was five years old. There is nothing wrong with being in love; there is something wrong if you have to let eleven boys play with your pretty little dimpled ass just so you can be near the main man in your life." I handed Daryl a pretty bright red bikini to keep. I got out my own swimsies, then grinned as Daryl pulled off his pants: he wore no underclothes. He turned back to face me. "I love those cheery pink bongos you have, sport."

"Did you make up that word? Cha said he got it from the man he loves." He blushed girlishly, batted his long lashes flirtingly. "I really only like doing things with Gabe, Cha and Hernando. The rest are classless. They belly-flop on my back, grunt four times until they shoot, then run off zipping their pants without a thought for me or anyone else."

"The world's full of people like that, hon. They fuck you till you're ready to shit, then call you names because they fuck you. I know Gabe and Cha will take turns, but I always thought Hernando was pretty macho."

Daryl's smile told me I was wrong. Then he gave me all of the information about the boys he didn't like, like Gato. Daryl deliberately stood in front of me naked while I changed. "Do you have your own

parents, son?" I asked at last.

"No, I live with my aunt. Can you open this for me?"

I opened the bathing suit's cellophane package for him. "Do you own underclothes?"

"Two sets for school. Besides, why do you want to know what I have and what I don't have?"

"I was just asking," I said, touching the boy's cheek and gently tipping his head so his eyes would meet mine. "I want you to know that if you have problems or anything, Daryl, you can always bring them to me."

He gave me a funny look. "I need new gym shoes and a good pair of school pants. Can you help me with that? I want to join the others now that I've said everything."

He ran out the door pulling up his new swim suit. He ran over to get food, then eat where Cha and Gabe were. Gato walked up behind him and pulled down the back of the red bikinis exposing Daryl's cherry-red buns.

Chollo came into the room to talk to me. After he left my wife came in looking for me. "What are you doing in here, Louie?" she asked.

"Thinking about them."

"I hope they haven't given you a hard time today. You're not a very happy man without those boys in your life."

She was right as always. She didn't like most of the boys but she would not say anything to them unless she felt that I was loving one physically. Then she would try to discourage the boy. Platonic relationships were all she would tolerate between me and my boys.

She had married a man who had always teased her that he'd married her for her money. She knew I loved her dearly in my own way. She did not think my love for boys was criminal. She'd seen how they'd meet me, flock about me to bask or wallow in my real concern and affection for them. I'd never gone out to recruit boys. She knew this for a fact. They just seemed to find me.

She thought back to that first boy, Randy, how he'd smiled at me from the street, how he'd offered his help with the camper jack, then begged to go fishing with her man. She thought about the heartbreak of the shop's ruin, our constant struggle to build a better life for our family and the boys in my life. She couldn't forget they were a very important part of her man. She smiled, remembering how the whole house we'd had on the east side shook every time the refrigerator started.

She detested the gang children who'd broke in my shop, how I'd almost broke us by putting us deeper and deeper debt with more tools, more help and a new truck. She and I were both from the barrios of Los Angeles: she, like all girls, protected; me like no boy she'd ever known before. I was loving, protective, easy to get along with if you didn't try to argue with me. I'd taken her to gay bars when we were dating; my soft heart could not stay mad at anyone long. My main fault was that I couldn't get enough sex or love to control my hot-bloodedness. This was when she'd consented to let me have a lover provided she didn't know who it was or about anything I had going on. She envied my ability to chase down, control and supervise two dozen children, while she didn't have the energy to take care of one six-year-old.

The sliding door opened. It was a gang boy, and gang boys wouldn't talk in front of a woman because women were inferior. They bullied, badgered and brow-beat their own mothers.

"Don't leave," I told my wife as I looked up at the boy. "What can I do for you, Alberto?"

"Can we stay until late?"

"How late?"

"Until five o'clock."

"Sure, Cha-Cha. I will take you home at five."

Cha-Cha thanked me, then he acknowledged my lady's presence before he slipped as quietly out the

door as he'd entered.

"They haven't changed in the year we've been gone. Do you think they will ever really change, Louie?"

"Not without a lot of help. It would take a lot of people with a lot of money to make them all happy, until they learned that all people are the same. No one is the same to them. A person who lives a block away is not on their turf. On their turf they protect every blade of grass, every piece of broken concrete – everything they spray-paint as being in their turf."

"Like dogs who pee on trees and fire hydrants to mark their realm." She finished for me my usual speech on gangsters. She'd heard this same thing often.

The sad part is that they were not dumb. They were shrewd in doing the things they wanted to do in the ways they wanted to do them, or in getting them done.

"I'll see you later, hon," I said "I have to send T.C. Over to see about getting Darly some pants and shoes. Did you want to shop there yourself today?"

"Yes." She loved to shop. "I will be ready in twenty minutes." I gave T.C. the word, then sent Darly to dress to go to the store. He could spend fifty dollars for any school clothes he needed.

The bigger boys were playing on surf boards while Gato and most of the twelveteens rafted in the pool, swimming under water, pulling swim suits down, playing games. I took my trunks off before I dived in the water. Gil, who couldn't swim well, popped up next to me, then struggled to the edge where he hung on the gutter.

"You should be using your float toy, Gil," I told him.

Darly, T.C. and my wife returned at four. I took the boys home at five. Gabe rode with me for show. Again he told the boys I was dropping him off at his girl's house.

"Why not tell them the truth, Gabe?"

"They'll be jealous of all the refried beans they go home to eat. We all know rich people eat steak for the dinners. By the way, what are we having for dinner?"

"Left-overs from the party," I teased. We laughed about that (there were no left-overs) until I confessed we were having chicken.

Donnie and Keha knew I was bringing Gabe back. The party had been to initiate the new shop we were going to build.

"Gabe seems to be alright after all," Donnie said. "Too bad he's still an asshole with his boys." Donnie shrugged out of his shirt. "I'd love to work at the new shop if Gabe didn't think the whole east side's his."

"Not really. You take them two blocks off their turf and they all crowd around together scared: they're on someone else's turf and they can get jumped for it. School's neutral territory because the parents want something better for their sons."

"What about their daughters?"

"Their daughters only have to remain virgins. That's why so many of those girls let their boyfriends do their bottoms. The girls are raised for motherhood. They do not have to do good in school. They have to do good in housework and helping with their younger brothers and sisters."

"Your father told you all this?"

"Sure. He tells me everything they don't teach in school. It's good information, because I checked it out with Nando. He's the boy with the scar on his cheek."

"You mean the one who looked mean?"

Keha nodded yes.

Donnie would have to ingest this new information Keha layed on him. He'd tried to stay away from all

these things that were going on just a few blocks away from where he lived. Today he'd been able to get a glimpse of a whole new and different world. He would pay more attention to it in the school yard. He would try to get along with these different people instead of using Keha as a buffer against them.

## 11. The Toy Shop

"How come you boys are so quiet?" I asked, walking into my bedroom.

"We're not quiet. Me and Donnie want to work on the toy shop thing you were telling the others about."

"Sure," Gabe said. "We'll be happy to have you guys working with us. You'll get paid, too."

I'd told the boys I wanted to make a boys' workshop that would produce little wooden cars, trucks, blocks, boxes, doll houses and such out of what I usually burned in the fireplace. I told them I would still have scraps to burn: they would just be smaller scraps.

My phone rang. I answered on the extension, the three boys crowding around to hear who it was. Keha and Gabe looked at each other as I made plans for the trucker I was talking to to take my truck.

"Daddy's staying home!" Keha cheered. Donnie didn't know what was so special about that.

"For six weeks or so," I said casually. "Mom misses me gone so much."

"So do I," Keha and Gabe said at the same time. They looked at each other and laughed.

Four of us woke up in my bed Sunday morning, showered, dressed, then I took the boys to Denny's for breakfast. There was nobody on the streets that early, so Donnie was very surprised to find, when I pulled into the shop, all of the boys waiting for me.

"Eeee Gabe!" one of the boys teased when Gabe got out of the truck, "we know who is the girl-friends." I opened the shop. I didn't want the teasing to go on too long or they would have hurt feelings.

"Yes, Gabe is a perfect girl-friend," I said, kissing him. "I can mention a few more I have found to be very loving on their tummys."

Cha-Cha shut up; he was the main teaser.

"We can start in the middle of the shop as soon as I measure Gabe and Carlo."

Gabe, to get even with me for telling Cha-Cha that he was a perfect girlfriend, whipped himself out of his pants.

"Not that, dum-dum. I already know how big that is."

Gabe and Carlo are not the biggest or the smallest boys in the shop, but they each had physical characteristics which would help me make an average teen-size work table.

"Where's Gil?" I asked, wanting measure him, too, for the smaller end.

"Hiding behind that stack of wood," Carlo said. "He's scared you're mad at him for jacking off in the pool."

Gil was one of the cutest almost-nine-year-olds I knew. He was just right to sort of raise on the side, until he was old enough to love with me.

"Come in here Gilly, my silly Gilly," I said gently. "Anyone who has not eaten this morning is welcome to get stuff out of the office snack bar."

"Are that wood for here, Patron?" Chollo asked. It was and they brought it in.

"You guys saw wood," Carlo said. "Me and Gil can take care of the candy, sodas and the moneys."

"Like last time you took care of everything for me?" I said. "I couldn't even find a stick of gum or a dime left in my desk drawer." Gil and Carlo laughed at me, then made another trip into the office to stuff their pockets with candy.



The boys handed down panels to cut. The work went fast in the thirty-by-fifty-foot side room. Donnie, Keha, Carlo, Gil, Hernando did all of the milling after I explained what had to be done. I put Phil in charge of assembly. At lunch I let Nando take my shop truck to get buckets of Kentucky fried chicken. Again the dime level in my top drawer fell as boys got sodas and desserts from the vending machines.

“Has anyone seen Gilly?” I asked when we finished working for the day. It wasn't like him to disappear like that. “Here, silly Gilly,” I teased.

“He's under here sleeping,” Nando said. “He was supposed to be screwing the top on this work bench.”

I picked up the tired little boy and carried him home with a stack of candy on his stomach. Gil's mother opened and thanked me for keeping him busy all the time and out of trouble.

“What did Gil's mom say?” Carlo asked me when I returned.

“She said I give you boys too much candy when you help me and she told me I'm going to have to take you to the dentist because you don't brush your teeth before bed.” I lightly pulled Carlo's nose to tell him I was kidding about taking him to the dentist – but I was not kidding about brushing their teeth. I gave the boys a couple of dollars each for pocket money. I also got permission for Donnie to stay the night; with tomorrow being a school day, I would take him to school with Keha.

“Do you really think we can get things ready to sell for Christmas?” Donnie asked.

“Sure. Look at all of the work we've done today,” Keha told him. “We got the shop over half-finished.”

“How do I get here after school to help with the shop?”

“Do like Keha will, take the school bus with Gabe. When the shop closes you can ride home with Marco or Jim, or Juan will drop you off at your house if you're working too late to go home with the shop workers.”

“Are all of these boys in Gabe's gang?” Donnie wanted to know.

“No. the older boys are El Lobos and most of the younger boys are El Nigra Mortas. They're two gangs. You boys stay out of their politics. Stay neutral in their arguments: don't get in any of them, alright?”

At home I sent the boys in for dinner while I dispatched out my truck. The boys ate, went to Keha's room where they stripped down to shower. They soaped each other all over. Donnie was no longer hesitant about touching Keha anywhere he wanted. He soaped his friend's buns, went down his legs, then brought the soap bar between Keha's legs, popping it under Keha's scrotum into his other hand. He came up to wash Keha's front.

When I went in to shower the sawdust off me I found the boys playing their sexy games. They said they were waiting for me. They washed me, dried me, then dragged me to my bed. My wife came in with my dinner. The boys ran off in their unders to get seconds to eat in the bedroom with me. I was on the phone again, one call after another, phoning up call-backs and getting calls between hang-ups. My wife sat on my bed to find out how our day had gone.

Donnie liked her. She was considerate, interested in what I did. She knew about my work with the gang boys.

“So you think this is a good idea?” she asked, trying to draw me out on my plans. “Better than the camping trips, or when you keep those boys out of school to ride with you like you did with Alberto last week?”

Donnie and Keha looked blankly at each other: Cha had told them he had been visiting his grandmother in Mexico.

“Yes, I do,” I said. “The only real problem I expect is Gato's keeping his mouth shut when Gabe is not near him. You know how Gato is.” She did not know how Gato was. I called him kitten because he was all hiss and spit on the outside, lovable on the inside when he was taken completely alone with me. Gato was gay and couldn't be open in his neighborhood and survive, so he covered up with his mouth, acting super-macho.

The boys ran out in their unders again to help my wife with the dishes, then they played on the bed until midnight, when I separated them to watch TV until they fell asleep.

After school the boys took the school bus to the shop. The younger boys, and some of the older boys who'd got out of school a little earlier, were already there on their knees, putting doors on cabinets and drawer-guides in drawer holes. I'd done a lot of work in there that morning, getting everything done for them but the trim. Each boy had a snack set out with a dime for a soda, while I sat on my lathe-stool with pad in hand.

“You're just in time,” I said when the bulk of the boys arrived. “Eat up and you can help me shoot the machines into the floor with a stud gun. Be sure you all have these little cases with ear plugs in them, and, for god's sake, use the ear plugs when I pull the trigger.”

After work I took Donnie with Keha to Karate class. Donnie sat next to me watching Keha do his thing under the private instruction of a master of the art. “They have an introductory class of six lessons for ten dollars,” I said, handing Donnie a ten-dollar bill. “That's if you want to learn this stuff, too.”

“I thought you told me your father detests violence,” Donnie said to Keha in the locker room when the lesson was over.

“My dad don't fight because other people get hurt.”

“Besides, I'm no Chuckie Indian who can jump flat-footed from the floor with a *Yaaa* and kick my fuckin chandelier off the bedroom ceiling,” I said from the locker room door when I came in to see what was taking the boys so long. “Hurry up. We have to eat dinner.”

At the shop we had two-boy teams, with one boy from each gang so there would be no problems. Keha and Donnie worked together as partners. There was a little friendly production rivalry. I let it go on because it's a lot better than infighting. By the end of the first week we'd produced enough to try our products at the art fair. We sold out to the last splinter, with people giving firm orders and deposits for items that would match their decor.

Juan, Ruben and I drove the boys back to the shop Sunday afternoon. I gave each of the boys \$20 for their week's work, then the boys demanded that I leave the shop open so they could get a jump on making stuff to sell. They dug into my big pile of workbench magazines to see what they could up-date or modernize to sell and expand our line of products.

“I don't have storage for all you're planning, boys,” I told them. “If I did, you could make all the projects you want.”

“We have storage,” Nando said. “Our garages, our bedrooms, everywhere we live. Right, Gabe?”

“Sure,” Gabe agreed with the other gang leader.

The older boys that drove asked if they could cover swap-meets and art fairs all over the country. They would take orders and turn in honest figures. Boys who didn't go to sell the coming weekend wanted the shop open to work.

“If anyone is falling under a C in his school work,” I told them, “he will have to raise that grade if he wants to work weekends. Your schoolwork, health, your parents all got to come before this shop's needs. Be sure you remember that, boys.”

By the first week of December we were selling toy boxes, tool/fishing boxes, doll houses, children's free-standing and wall-mounted coat hooks, umbrella stands, jewel boxes, bathroom/kitchen utility items and toys – a lot of toys. Everyone got a raise to thirty dollars a week, with me holding back extra money from their sales in case of slack times after the holidays. My boys knew exactly how much their venture made, how much was spent on wages and how much I held back. They could vote on what to do with held-back money if they thought they needed something to help in their shop. They came to me with a tool catalog.

“We want one more variable-speed electric drill, a portable router and an electric form sander like you have in your shop,” Nando told me.

“We want two more power sanders with belts,” Gabe said. I took a vote, after making sure they would still have cushion money for after the holidays.

“Done,” I said.

## 12. Rick and Lar

For Christmas I had a party for the boys and their families. I bought all of the boys their own work aprons, with tape measures, utility knives, nail sets in two sizes and hammers. I also put mechanical pencils, lumber crayons and other little items in the aprons for them. I filled the nail pockets with Christmas candy and stocking stuffers, to the delight of my boys. On the beach, around the pool and into the house the party flowed with bathing suit-clad boys' bodies. This was an award occasion, too.

The highest sellers got little one-dollar plaques. I'd got two gold-plated hammers for the boys' team with the highest production, and each boy got a full set of everything we made to give his family. It was very costly for me, but it would payoff in the boys' self-esteem. I made sure everyone got an award. Gil I playfully awarded the sleepest – and I was voted the laziest person in the shop. *That* award was a little carved sleeping bag. The boys all smiled when I asked who carved it. “We can't tell you that, Dad,” Keha said. “Secret.” I knew Scotty's work when I saw it.

The reason I had this party was to build parental support for my boys' venture. I'd got cards printed for the boys to pass out. They were members of a cooperative venture, now.

Some of the boys didn't return to work after the party. They had made too much money and hadn't had time to spend it. Now they ran from arcade to arcade and movie to movie until they were broke again. A couple of them got into trouble. I found myself on my second trip that week to juvie to get a boy out to return to work.

“Hello,” Edmondo's probation officer said.

Ed had been victim of a theater disturbance and had fallen into a candy display case. I talked the owner into letting him pay for the damage because it was accidental. “When it's Mexicans it's not accidental,” the man had raged. “They're all trouble-makers.”

“Hello,” I said back to the probation officer.

“The reason I'm especially here to see you is because of what you've done for Ed. I have Rick here who is a good student but he seems to get in trouble in his spare time.” The officer pushed the boy forward.

“That's because there's no work for people my age,” Rick said belligerently. “The cops bust me just cause I'm Mexican.”

“There's the card where the shop is at, Rick,” I said. “Do you have a way there?”

"Yes, I have a way. Thanks for the chance you're giving me to work."

"I want to thank you, too," the probation officer said. "You're doing great things with the boys."

When I was taking Ed and his mother home I asked, "How did that jerk find out about the shop?"

"He lives in the apartments where the shop is," Ed's mother said. "He said he keeps better track of his boys by living among them."

Rick showed the next day at 12:15 with a friend. Both boys were almost seventeen, both in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, both second-year woodworking students. They had cars, licenses and both were streetwise.

"This is Lar," Rick said. "He wanted to see this shop. Do you mind if he stays to watch what is made here?"

"No, I don't mind," I said. Some of the boys took Rick and Lar out for snacks, then showed them where the soda dimes were kept.

"Don't you start work when you come in?" Lar asked.

"Naw, we get paid the same as the boys who come in at two," Ramon said. "Why work longer for the same?"

"Do you mind if I help today?" Lar asked me.

"I don't mind. If the boys don't mind you can work here all the time. You'll have to be voted in, of course – Ricky was an exception."

Lar put his head together with Ramon, Chatto and Rick. They layed out the work, then set the shop's blower working overtime to keep the air pure for when the others arrived.

Rick and Lar were good with the older boys – and great with the younger ones who looked up to them for advice. I'd tell them what had to be made; they assigned the two-boy teams to jobs, helped make the products, decide who worked how long where – and I'd lucked out to get them.

Two weeks after they'd started work, Rick walked into my office saying, "I want to talk to you, Louie."

I took him into my side shop. "What's on your mind?"

"I heard something about you, and I don't like what heard," he said sadly.

"Tell me what you've heard and I'll tell you if it's true or not."

"I heard you're angry at me – really me, Ed and Lar – because our probation officer comes here to see if we're working or not." Ricky narrowed his eyes; he was looking at me with almost searing hatred. "I heard you're a queer, a child molester, so you do not want cops hanging around."

"You've met my wife," I said evasively.

"Yes, I've met your wife. I've heard you don't even share her bed, that you make it with that Indian boy and his patty friend."

"What if I do," I hedged. "Is that too terrible?"

"Well, I want you to know first I really liked all that you've done for Lar and me. Carlo..."

"Carlo is always guessing," I cut in. "He doesn't know a thing about what I do or don't do, so let me tell you how it really is. First, I'm not mad at any of you for being on probation. I was scared when your officer asked me to take you. I didn't know, really, how to feel about that."

"Why?" Ricky cut in.

"I'll tell you if you let me finish talking. I was in prison for almost eight years. What would happen if someone investigated me? What would happen if they asked me to take in more boys like you? What if Carlo's been running his mouth about me in the streets when he knows this shop is very hush hush? Can we survive once they find out I'm a registered sex offender?"

"We can quit if that will take the heat off you."

"That may put the heat *on* me. They might wonder why, if this shop is such a good thing for you, why you've quit. They may think maybe things are not as good here as they thought they were, then poke

around until they find out what went wrong. I love boys. I feel like you're just as equal and important as everyone else is and, yes, maybe even a little more so. Are you scared to stand closer, Ricky?"

"No, I'm not." He moved in three steps close.

"Are you afraid of a pat on the head or a hug from a man – or a show of affection?"

"No, I'm not."

"Are you afraid of a kiss that has love or kindness, that has concern about you in it?"

"I don't think so," he said, looking into my eyes.

"That's what I'm guilty of. I'm guilty of putting my arms around people, like this." I put my arms around the boy's waist. "I'm guilty of hugging people." I put a warm squeeze into my arms. "Worse of all, I'm guilty of kissing boys on the lips."

I stole the kiss from the boy who was melting in my arms. Ricky was a thin boy, over five-six, with straight black hair and a green headband tied around his head to keep his long hair out of his eyes. He had acne. His brown eyes half-closed as his lips parted when he was kissed. The front of his pants pressed out hard from inside them as I held him pulled close to me.

"I'm guilty of touching here," I told him, running the back of my hand between our bodies. "I'm guilty of rubbing here," I said, snaking my hand over the boy's slender hip to rub down around the curve of his small bottom. "I'm guilty of this and more." I cuddled Ricky closer to me to steal another kiss.

Lar stood in the doorway, redfaced, watching. I figured he'd sent Rick in to talk to me, because he himself was so shy. Lar was quiet; Rick was forward. Lar blushed all the way to the central layout table, where he hurriedly turned his back to us to pick up working from where he'd left off the night before. A moment later I stood by his side,

"Can I give you a hug and a kiss, too, Lar?"

Lar stuttered. He stammered with deep embarrassment, then submitted to the hug and the kiss. When I turned to look back before going into my office I saw the boys' glazed looks at me, their mouths still half-open. I smiled a big smile. I knew they would accept me like I was.

The next morning I kissed my lover-boy Keha and my wife, then I roared off in my rig for a coast-to-coaster. My boys needed to run their shop, and I had to trust them to run it, no matter what.

I would take the southern route and turn north at the last minute to go north to Detroit. This would give me a stop at Lefty's to share a night with Petey and Thad – if they were not on the road with their folks.

"Where is your father today," Rick asked when Keha came into the shop after school.

"He left this morning with his semi. Didn't he tell you he was going on the road again?"

"Maybe he did," Ricky mumbled. He couldn't get over my warm touch the day before, the hug that made him hard and the kiss that had made him shoot off in his shorts. After talking to Lar about it he found that Lar had just about experienced the same thing, short of orgasm. He guessed this was because I'd hugged him longer and held him close for so long. Ricky determined to take a survey by talking to one boy at a time to see if he could find out how many of the boys were making it with me. He didn't have to ask "the Indian boy" or Donnie, because I'd as good as said I was.

I got to Texas. I parked in front of Lefty's and went up to the door, where Tommy jumped into my arms.

"They's all gone," Tommy said with a big smile.

"I'm here, Lou," Petey said, running down the steps to hug me. "Tommy's fibbing you. Mom and Dad are gone, Thad went with Mom, and both girls went with my Dad. So..." His smile was pure gold. He led me up to the room by the hand, shooing Tommy up the steps in front of us. "I was just going to put

Tommy in his sleepers.”

“I’ll do that for you, son,” I said with a big smile for my towhead. “How about you stirring up a little snack and a soda for a thirsty, hungry trucker?”

“It’s all stirred up,” Petey teased.

In the morning I took Tommy in the tractor so he could blow the air horn and get handed down from the truck. I dropped Petey off at his school, then aimed for Dallas.

## 13. Runaway Boy

Lefty called me to haul a load for him to Detroit if I got my truck to his state empty sometime in the next week. Well, I did. After play fighting with Petey, Tad and Tommy, I took off with my load and drove for twenty hours before I rested. I didn’t get all that far in those twenty hours, as I’d stopped twice to get tires fixed.

I wasn’t feeling all that well from the truck stop food I’d eaten, so I bought a few things to make meals along the road from, like I always do when I’m sick of truck stops and the weather is nice.

It was evening, but it wouldn’t be dark for another hour. I pulled into a rest place, and the first thing I saw was a black boy laying in some tall weeds next to a grove of trees. The boy could have been there resting in the shade, because it was a very warm day, and he moved, watching everything around him, so I figured he was alright – and he certainly looked big enough to know how to take care of himself.

There were no restrooms there, but there were tables and benches. I got out of the truck, did my tire check and peed on them in the privacy behind the truck. Then I took down the grocery bag and ice chest, got out the little wooden travel box that kept stuff like my Sterno stove, cooking kit and small eating items together in my truck for moments like this.

I pressed out some hamburgers onto waxed paper and put them on to grill. The smell of cooking made the boy sit up to watch me better. I put the first two cooked ones into hamburger buns and put the other two on to cook.

The boy moved closer. He was trying to stay unseen. I figured he was hungry, so I started to talk to him:

“I was wondering how long it would be before your nose would tell your tummy you’re hungry. Come over here and say what you want on your hamburger.”

He didn’t know if I was talking to him or someone in my truck.

“I have mayonnaise,” I continued, “mustard, relish and olives. They’re pitted olives, so you can chomp on them your way.”

This time I looked right at the boy with a big warm smile, while I turned the two new hamburger patties over to cook on the other side. The boy stayed back without talking.

“What’s wrong, son? Are you scared of me? I won’t hurt you. I figured since we’re the only two people here that you might like to join me for dinner. Come on, now that I’ve made more than I can possibly eat by myself.”

He walked out from where he thought he was hiding and up to the table where I was cooking. Without a word to scare him away, I pushed a hamburger over in the cooking lid, then I put two cans of strawberry soda on the table from my ice chest, one on the boy’s side of the table, the other on mine.

The boy was too hungry to bother to put anything on his hamburger. He wolfed it down fast, catching a piece of dry bread in his throat and choking on it until I reached across the table and poured soda in his

mouth. Then he wolfed down the second half of the hamburger just as fast as the first.

I finished making me a super-deluxe hamburger with everything on it. Now I pushed it across to the boy.

“You sure a hungry young man,” I said cheerfully. I got him another soda after he turned the first can up all the way to drain it. “If you eat slower you will fill full faster, son. By the way, my name's Lou.”

The boy still did not trust his voice to answer me. Was he really problemated? It didn't look like anyone had tried to hurt him or anything. He kept his red-rimmed eyes downcast. He could have been crying because of hunger, but he was not suffering from malnutrition like so many of the runaways I'd picked up in the past.

The boy started giving me funny looks, like I was pretty weird or something sitting here on the side of a roadway cooking dinner for a little black boy, an unknown boy like him. When he finished my hamburger I gave him one more, then settled down to eat the last myself.

I play with my food when I'm unsure of things, so I ate my hamburger slowly all around the outside first. The boy copied me. Then I popped the middle part into my mouth. We laughed when he popped his middle part in, too.

“Oh,” I said, now that he seemed to have some life in him, “did I tell you my name's Lou?”

“My name Sammy. Ah means Sam.” He had the heavy darky drawl of all the deep southern states, making it almost impossible for me to tell where he came from.

“I'm thirty-two,” I said lightly.

“I's 'leven, almost twelve mostly for sure.” He gave me a toothy grin.

“I'm from California. Now, you tell me where you're from, son.” I teased him with another warm smile.

“I's from a little town near Kingsville Texas is not more 'n a dirt clod in a berry patch 'n size.”

He was warming up now that he was full of hamburgers. It was a nice time of evening, a quiet time except for the motor running in my truck and the headlights shining on the table. The boy sat there across from me, our knees almost touching under the table as we smiled at each other.

“You're a long way from home, son,” I told him, after trying to remember where Kingsville Texas was.

“I'm just running up the road here to Detroit.”

“That's where I's gain'. All us poor niggers have ta go ta Detroit ta get us car jobs so we's can mail money home 'n be somebody.”

Then the boy burst like a dam of hurtful emotions as he told me his story, so I will tell it here like I heard it from him.

“I was standin' the side of the roadway for hours when a white man stopped ta pick me up. I's real happy, 'cause there's not many white people stop ta pick up no little nigger boys who is dirty from three days hikin' with no real place ta go or who is don't know where they's gain' 'cept ta get north.

“‘Is ya gain' far, kid?’ this man asked, leerin' at me.

“‘I's don't know,’ I tell him, ‘cause I's not know how far I gats ta go ta Detroit. ‘I's just a gain' down the road.’”

The boy's breath caught raggedly in his throat now, and he looked at me.

“Well, this white man did jus' that. He takes me just down this road here ta this rest place. Here he took hol' a my ears 'n forced me ta suck on him while he kept a twistin' my ears ta make me open my mouth ta scream while he shoved his self so far in may mouth I's threwed up the water I's just had up from each shove of him into my mouth.

“‘What is you cryin' 'bout, boy?’ the man say when he punched mah eye. ‘All a you niggers is little cock suckers.’”

“He threw me down there on the groun' where you saw me still bawlin' when ya pulled the truck here, while I was thinkin' what a sad day for me, 'cause every time I gets me a mouth a spit I got ta spit it up ta get that man's taste outa mah mouth. I's cryin' for I's scared ta move, afeard ta stay here 'cause that man would come back, 'n then you pulled into this grove.

“I was feelin' mighty poorly, mighty hungry when I's plum cried all o' my energy outa me. I never was told that they was dangers out here on the roadway like that.”

I was shocked at his story. I was bleeding inside, as he tried to stop a tear that would not stop running down his puffy ebony cheek.

“Don't put yourself down for the misfortune that man caused you, Sammy,” I told him gently. “You're somebody special right now. You're you. Another thing, Sammy, is I don't want to hear you call yourself a nigger again. Where I come from you're called black, and you're a very nice looking boy, too.”

“How's can I be nice lokin' when I's the darkest nigger in my family?” the boy asked, not understanding what I was telling him.

“You're a very good looking boy, Sammy – that's why that man picked you up. Do you have family in Detroit?” I asked, changing the subject. The less said now about his fresh hurt the better.

“None I recollect.”

“Then why not let me put you on a Greyhound bus and send you home? Would you like me to do that for you?”

“No. I's gotta go on ta prove I's worth somphin'. A person don't run off 'n come right back if he's gonna be worth somphin”, do he?”

“I guess you have made a good point there, Sammy. Why don't you help me clean up? Then we can be in Detroit in the morning.”

The boy expected to do all of the cleaning up; he was surprised when I helped him, and even more surprised when I dumped the trash in the roadside trash bin. When everything was in the truck but Sammy, I caught him by the back straps of his thread-bare overalls and hoisted him up to the top step of the cab. He jumped a foot on the airseat when I released the maxis and they hissed loose.

There wasn't much for the boy to see from up there. It was dark and he was tired and it wasn't long before he was sleeping. I stopped the truck and moved him from the seat to the sleeper. I tried to undress him down to his underwear so he would not be confined, but I had to leave him shirtless in his overalls, as he wore no underwear.

When the truck stopped a few hours later he woke up. “I have to wet down the tires, Sammy,” I told him. “Do you want to wet down a tire, too?”

He sure did. He came right out of the sleeper and got straight to the door, where I lifted him down to the ground.

He followed me around and copied how I pee'd on the rubber part of the tires and not on the shiny wheels in the middle.

“Where's we at?” Sammy asked. “Is we ta Detroit yet?”

“No. First we have to pass Dearborn, then we can follow the highway around.”

Sammy's stomach growled.

“Are you hungry again?”

“Yes I is,” Sammy said softly.

“Alright,” I told him, “by the time you get your shirt and shoes on we will stop to eat. Would you like to take a shower here, too?”

“Yasir, I sure 'nuff would.”

When we climbed down from the truck I went ahead of him carrying my blue flight bag. We got a lot of



funny looks that said Sammy didn't belong there. I stopped, reached behind me and pulled Sammy up even with me by his shirt tail, then took his hand in mine and walked him into the restaurant to eat. The boy was scared to be in there with me.

"Don't pay any attention to them, Sammy," I said, leaning across the table to him. "Just pretend you've known me for a hundred years and everything will be fine."

Sammy did not think everything was fine. He tried to smile at me and play it super cool, and when the food came we ate. I then took him into the trucker's lounge where the showers were. I put him in an empty cubicle, then took the one next to him where I could share soap and shampoo with him under the divider. He was scared to stay there alone, so he crawled under from his cubicle to mine to shower with me.

"Member, Lou, you's the one who say for me to acts like I knowed ya for a hundred years," he said with a smile when he crowded in the shower with me.

I helped him wash himself. His bottom was one of those bottoms that sort of flip up in back, and just washing down his back gave me a serious hardon. I would not let him put on his dirty clothes after our shower. I made him stay in the stall until I washed his overalls and his shirt. He didn't own socks or underwear.

Back in the truck we got on the road for the market in Detroit. We hit it in the early afternoon, and Sammy disappeared while I was seeing about a swamper to get my truck unloaded. Wandering around the market later, I saw Sammy talking to other blacks. I was still angry that he went off without a word.

"We don't need no little ignorant souther nigger boys here," he was being told by one of the transplanted black men on the dock. The others all laughed at him when I walked up and took his hand.

"Come on, Sammy," I said gently, "I've been looking all over this place for you. I'm glad you didn't get away." I made him give me his address so I could wire his mother he was safe. I wanted to phone her, but Sammy said they did not have a phone.

"I have to reload in Flint, Michigan," I told him, "for my run on to California. Then, Sammy, I will bring you back to your home in Texas a success. Would you like that?"

"Yasir, but how you gonna gets me back a success?" he asked, like he couldn't believe his ears.

"That's easy, Sammy. I'm going to pay you ten cents for every trucking hour that you can help me stay awake driving, besides your food and the clothes I have to buy for you."

He got very excited. He shouted to the air that at that rate he could earn a fortune of at least two dollars a day. He hugged me, causing a lot of whites to stop in their tracks and stare at us.

In Flint for the night we slept in the sleeper. Sammy had this cute little habit of copying everything I did, as he said if he did everything the way other people did it he could not get in trouble for doing something wrong.

"Louie, wake up," a dock man said, pounding on my sleeper door in the morning. I woke to find Sammy was awake and staring at my uncovered body there in the half-darkened sleeper.

"Thanks for the wake-up," I yelled, then proceeded to pull on my clothes.

Leaving Flint, we went around Lake Michigan, and we didn't stop again until we got to the Nebraska-Iowa border. Then I pulled off the road to eat and sleep again. Sammy had taken a nap "on accident", so he was having trouble getting to sleep. I cuddled him into my arms and he lay still.

I woke up very quietly a bit later. Sammy was giving me some tongue curls. I was careful to control my breathing and play at sleeping as he went on. The next time I woke I was getting a nice rubbing sensation on my tummy.

I went into the store to get Sammy some new clothes before we got on the road or ate breakfast. This way he would only have to dress once. He was sort of scared to wear new clothes when there was

nothing special to wear them for. I took Sammy in for a malt. He had never had a malt before. Back in the truck, dressed in his finery, Sammy leaned over and hugged me tightly.

"I's love you, Louie," he said softly. "I's really love you."

"I love you also, Sammy," I told him, returning his hug. "Just how much I love you you will never know."

The next time I had to sleep I found Sammy using his tongue on my body again. His misadventure and his hurt deterred me from returning my own love for this handsome, tall, dark ebony boy.

"I's know you're awake," Sammy said suddenly. "'Member when you told me how only when you loves someone you's special to, how you can love them by choice?" He smiled at me. "Does you like this somphin' special now?"

"I sure do," I said, giving him a hug. "It takes a special person to be special to people, too."

He felt big, now, worldly; he had a job that was paying him ten cents an hour; he got lots to eat and new clothes to wear. Besides, I'd found myself one of the greatest things that had ever happened to me in the middle of nowhere. I'd found another boy who loved me and thought the world of me, and my feeling was mutual.

After unloading in Oakland and loading up in Salinas, I took Sammy home to meet my lover boys. My wife just gave me a funny look when she saw Sammy. I specially phoned Ethen to come over and meet Sammy. Ethen told Sammy that all white men didn't think that all little black boys were bad boys. What really shocked me was when I overheard Ethen tell Sammy that he wished he also was special to me. So I took them both into the bathroom and proved to Ethen he was special, too.

In the yard I changed trailers with another driver who had a load practically to Sammy's front door. Every time I had to stop to rest Sammy wanted to do something "special" with me. As we covered country, I pointed out the sights to help educate the runaway boy and tell him where we were. I tried to make this the best ten days of his life.

Sammy's mother was happy to meet me. I gave her forty dollars and told her it was Sammy's wages for his help. When I tried to leave he ran over to me and hugged me and kissed me good-bye. I looked at his mother. She made it easier to hug and kiss him back by chasing off his other younger brothers and sisters.

His mother put her big heavy arms around Sammy and was weighing him down with love as I was getting ready to leave. She knew boys inner souls.

"Well, Sammy." I heard her say, "you ran away from our love here only ta find that someone else loved you enough to bring you back ta our love." She kissed him a welcome kiss home. "Don't cry, honey bun. That nice man will come back again ta take ya in his nice truck again. You'll see he will."

Her smile was the same warm, loving smile that Sammy smiles at me.

I sent Sammy a post card a week later, and he sent me a post card back. The heat of a Texas summer is very oppressive in some places. The dust on their road was thick enough to chalk my truck. Even as slow as I was going I could not see behind me because of the dust. As I came to the crossroad to turn down to drive to Sammy's house, I could see a little black boy running full speed towards me, so I blasted the air horn.

He was in the truck and all over me. "I's so glad you's here ta see me jus' like ya promised!"

"I'm so glad to be here to keep my promise for you," I said, hugging him to me.

## 14. Rape and Rape

Donnie, Gabe and Keha spent every weekend together with me in my bed until I went on my truck trip where I picked up Sammy. Donnie and Gabe got to spend the week before and the week after Christmas with Keha and me.

"I hate it, I hate it, I hate it when your Dad leaves," Gabe raged one day in the shop as they were cleaning up to go home. "Even Ricky's always asking me when your dad is expected to return." Gabe smiled boldly. "Humm, do you think Louie and Rickie...?"

"Suck my chilli, Gabe," Donnie said loudly, cutting the other boy off. "Rick and Lar have new stuff they want to get permission to sell." Donnie leaned close in to Gabe. "You always think Louie is doing every boy in the shop."

"I would not put it past him," Gabe laughed. "I know Louie loves us all in one way or another. The problem is, I really don't know anyone from the old gangs that will kick Louie out of bed if he went to bed with them."

"Lar and Rick would not go for it, Gabe: they date girls," Donnie said seriously.

"So do I," Gabe told them.

"Shit, you haven't even looked at a girl since you came to over-night with my dad."

Keha smiled at Gabe, who smiled back openly. Gabe had been brooding except for moments like this when he excitedly talked about me.

Even though Donnie was deeply in love with Keha, he missed me not being there, too. One of the nice things about weekendening with Keha was getting to talk to me on that short-wave set. Last weekend they'd even heard a boy laugh in the background.

Three teenies were playing loudly in the bedroom to celebrate Donnie's thirteenth birthday after the big party at his house. "We're going to bone you thirteen times," Gabe said with a smile. "That's why we didn't let anyone spank you at your party. We don't wanna bone no bruised bottom. Besides, bonings feel better than spankings."

"You can't bone no one thirteen times, Gabe," Donnie taunted. "If you shoot off twice your chilli's in need of a cast and a transfusion it's so fuckin dead."

"Chuck's good for four times in a row, Donnie. By that time I can be good for two more times, and Chuck will be ready to bone you again."

"How many times is your dad good for, Keha?" Donnie asked suddenly.

"That's hard to say," Keha answered slowly. "I know for a fact that he did me nine times one night when I was teasing him, then he did me three more times before he took me to school. Then I found out from Gabe and Alberto that he did them both at the shop the same day after school, and..."

"He did us a long time," Gabe confirmed. "Maybe an hour for each of us."

"Bull shit!" Donnie said, and they exploded in laughter.

I came in to find the boys playfully fighting on my bed naked, sweating, giggling, until my opening the sliding glass door let the sea-breeze blow over their naked bodies and made them look up.

"It's Louie!" They jumped me and carried me to the floor with their combined weights.

"Climb off me, damnit," I teased them. "You're getting grease all over the rug and yourselves." I was trying to fend them off without hurting them.

They made me rub grease all over their naked bodies, being sure to give them all a dark grease ring around their hard cocks before they let me up to shower.

“When you come home, Daddy, you make me feel like a sailor's wife,” Keha said, kissing me, “when her love's at sea for months at a time.”

“You're my sexy cabin boy,” I said, giving him a special kiss. “You'd never make a sailor's wife.”

They pulled me flat on my back on the shower floor, kicked my clothes out of the shower, then washed me where I layed. Keha sat on my chest playfully rubbing his hard on my lips until I pushed him back a little to get a closer look at my lover-boy's development.

“You sure grew more than a mouthful there, Chuckie-boy.”

“Yah, it just sort of happened over night. I was pulling my pants off in the locker room and it went *brongggg*, all the way past my locker into Donnie's bottom.”

“You better tell it to slow down before your hard gets to be like Joe Taylor's hard was,” I teased.

“They'll call you Chuck Taylor the Sailor. Ever hear of him?”

“No,” the boys said. “Tell us about him.”

They knew they were in for some of my nonsense jokes or one of the dumb songs I sing different words to, but they really do like them:

*“My name is Chick Taylor,  
My dicks is a whaler,  
My balls weight fourty-nine pounds.  
If you know some young ladies  
Who want somefine babies,  
You tell them Chuck Taylor the Sailor's in town.”*

“That's as bad as your Molly song,” Keha teased:

*“Molly, me darling,  
Molly, come quick  
To take a look at your Irishman's dick  
That's long as me arm,  
As thick as me wrist,  
With a head on the end  
That s as big as me fist.”*

“My little dory's got a long ways to grow to be whale- boat-sized, Daddy.”

“Don's is canoe-sized,” Gabe teased. “Long, slim and tip-proof.”

Donnie rhymed:

*“Long, thin and tipped red,  
Shoots three squirts of cum out its head.”*

“Oh, shit,” I teased, “we have a poet here.” I tried to goose Donnie, who adroitly moved at the last second.

The boys washed me. They loved me for all the loving we had missed in the last weeks, then they carried me, wet and naked, to my bed to love with me some more. I always got my share of loving when I came home, but I didn't expect anything quite like this reception.

The boys told me their plans to bone Donnie thirteen times for his birthday that day. They had each

done him one time already. Now they said it was my turn. "If you play his bongo this time it will help us space ourselves," Keha told me.

They wiggled and giggled all over the bed for three hours. When I was not busy with Donnie I was busy with my lover-boy who was waiting for nexts on Donnie, and I had to do Donnie one last time for a fourteenth to grow on. This wasn't bad sex for Donnie: he teased, kidded, dared us every stroke of the way, and we were gentle and sweet with him.

"Do you know Dad's sweet little boy song, Gabe?" Let's sing it for Donnie's birthday:

*"Sweet little Donnie, you know how much we love you,  
Your blue eyes and your peter, too.  
You walk a little funny  
But you're my little honey,  
And my little boy is swell.*

It was strange that Donnie was the first one recovered from our sex epic. It was almost five in the morning when Donnie jumped on Keha, as I was trying to get a jump on my bookkeeping.

"Did you ask Louie who was laughing in his truck that time we talked to him?" Donnie whispered, loud enough for me to hear. "You said you were going to throw him into the pool for that when he got home."

The boys got off the bed and stood behind me to see if I was almost done.

"Will you come swimming with us, Dad?"

"It's a little cold out there," I said, writing down the cost of my last fuel bill into the book. "You'll be fine in the water, but cold getting out of the pool."

"Then we won't get out. Please swim with us, Daddy."

They pushed me out and into the pool. They ran around to the steps to slowly enter the water to play Commandos on me in the dark. They moved with hardly a ripple, staying low in the water to keep warm and make it harder for me, the attackee, to see my attackers. That is how you play Commandos.

A low whine. Keha heard it. Again a sound like a hurt animal down on the beach.

"Daddy, there's something out there," Keha whispered.

"Get my flashlight," I whispered back, because sound carries a long ways over water. "I'll see what it is."

"Uh uh," Donnie said. He was scared; he'd watched all those monster movies. "Can't we all go to see what it is?"

Keha returned with four flashlights. We were very quiet going out the gate, down to the water's edge, then toward the nude beach where the sobs were getting louder.

"Over here," Keha said. "Here it is."

I made the boys stay back in case it was something gruesome, like last time it was a mutilated seal pup. What I bent over was a naked boy huddled on the sea-washed sand, sobbing.

"Don't hit me again," the boy begged. "Please... Don't hit me again!"

"Keha, Gabe," I said, "You look around the beach. Be sure you stay together. Donnie, you stay with me." I bent over the crying boy and said, "No one's going to hurt you, now, son." I gave Donnie my flashlight to hold for me. Then I picked up the boy. Donnie was supposed to aim the flashlight at the ground in front of us, but as I walked back he shined the bright flashlight up to see what I was holding.

"Oh, God!" Donnie screamed, dropping both flashlights. "It's Daryl! The monsters got him!"

Gabe and Keha ran back, hearing that name screamed out. They crowded around, aiming their

flashlights on the crying boy. "You're going to be fine, Daryl," Gabe said confidently. "Louie has you. He won't hurt you."

"Let's see if we can find his clothes," Keha said.

"Watch out for someone sneaking around out here," I warned. "You're alright now, son. It's just a little further to the house."

"He was nice to me until I started to take my clothes off for him," Daryl cried. "I was playing like I was a sexy girl for him. He was kissing me down when I was pulling my pants off for him, then he shoved me on my hands and knees and shoved himself in raw." Daryl cried harder. "I told him he was hurting me. He socked my face and told me I hadn't felt nothing yet. *He socked my face!*"

"Shush, shush, shush," I gentled. "Don't think about it yet, honey. We can talk about it later."

Donnie ran ahead to open the sliding glass door for me so I could carry the boy right into the bathroom. I held Daryl baby-fashion under the shower-head that Donnie turned to gentle stream for me.

"What should we do now, Daddy?" Keha asked, coming in with Gabe carrying Daryl's clothes. Gabe dropped the clothes on the floor. The pants were the only things not torn, and Daryl still had on his socks and one tennis shoe. The shirt was in tatters, his underpants ripped at the crotch and the top elastic was missing.

"When he was ripping your clothes off you, Darly," Gabe asked, "why didn't you try to run away?"

"He did not try to rip nothin until I had my pants off. By then I was on my hands and knees like he asked me to be, with my shorts pulled down on my legs, because it's cold out there. Then he shoved himself straight in raw."

With the sand, socks and shoes off the boy, I put him into the bathwater Donnie had run for me.

All of a sudden Daryl screamed out with rage and pain in his voice, "*He smashed my face with his fists!*"

"What do we do now, Dad?"

"We clean him up, then phone the police," I told him, not really wanting to get the police out here to come to the aid of a boy who had been raped and was in the house of a registered sexual psychopath, forget the presence of three other under-eighteen-year-old boys with me.

"No, no police. My mom will kill me if she ever learns I was out picking up men again. I got him at the movies. Just let me get dressed, then drop me at the corner by the movies where I can say I was jumped and robbed. That always happens there, anyways."

Keha was' taking things out of Daryl's pants pockets. I had sent Gabe to the kitchen to get some fresh-cut steak for Daryl's two black-and-blueing eyes.

"Look at that!" Daryl said. "The fucker rapes me, gives me two black eyes because I could not stay still when he shoved that big, fat thing into me without spit, then he pays me a hundred dollars. I'm going to kill that bastard!"

"Let me that care of that," said Gabe, coming in with the steak and hearing the last of what was said. "Tell me who it was, Darly. I know you never pick up strangers."

Daryl told us who it was. I was flabbergasted: the pride of our neighborhood, a man with four children of his own near these boys' ages.

"I'll shake that fucker down for money," Daryl said.

"That's too dangerous," I told him, while I put the sliced beef on his eyes. "Look what he did to you for having sex with him. Now think about what he could do to you if he really had something against you."

At seven in the morning I drove over to where the man lived. I saw Daryl's jacket lying on the floorboard of the man's car, right where Daryl said he'd left it when they went to walk on the beach. I'd taken Polaroids of Daryl's black eyes, possible broken nose, cut lips and pinch mark bruises that were all

over his body. He'd also been bleeding rectally from something that was too big to be crammed into him.

I went to the door. I told them man what had happened to a boy on the beach last night. "What would you do if something like that happened to one of your sons?"

"I'd kill the man that did it," he answered without any hesitation.

"That's what I thought you'd say. Give me his coat off the floor of your car. It's too good a coat for me to let you throw it away. When I get home I will call the sheriff because the boy said he could identify the rapist."

"He hustled me for money. I gave him a hundred dollar bill for the sex we had."

"Daryl don't hustle. He sexes for free because he's in love with sex," I told him. "Now, give me his coat."

I left there shaking with suppressed rage that such a giving child had been raped by this man and treated so cruelly.

"He won't have the balls to show here," Daryl said when I handed him his coat for identification.

The chimes rang. Keha and Gabe ran to answer the door. I was in the bathroom with my doctor neighbor-friend who was telling me to let Daryl soak longer. The boys brought in Daryl's attacker. After the doctor left he told us the old lie about a drinking jag, how he's been out for a stray piece, couldn't find a girl so he'd settled for the boy that had picked him up in the movies. He was very sorry because he didn't realize he'd hurt the child because he was drunk when he'd done it. He got scared when he pulled out and saw the blood flowing out of the boy's bottom, so he left him there. Etcetera, etcetera.

The man reached into his pocket, pulled out a roll of bills.

Daryl accepted the money but he wouldn't the apology. The man told me if Daryl needed further medical attention he would foot the bill. Then he made a big mistake. He said he knew he was too big for most of the boys he picked up, and Gabe hit him. Keha and I grabbed Gabe before he could hit the man again, when Donnie gave him a side kick that knocked him between the toilet and tub. Donnie was trying for another fancy kick when I managed to pull him away.

"You better get out of here, mister," Donnie said. "I bet I know two sixth-graders that you did this to last year. In fact I'm going to ask them if it was you who picked them up at the matinee. You beat their eyes, you pinched all over their bodies and you bloodied their bottoms, too, after you tore their clothes off in an alley. You're a child molester. A boy raper..."

Keha got the man safely out of the house after I told the man what doctor to see, otherwise I would not believe he'd sought therapy. Donnie fell into my arms, still shaking with rage.

"Do you know I had an uncle who was just like you, Louie? He was killed in prison. He was my mom's youngest brother. He was only nineteen and he was in love with a boy named Billy. Billy was almost ten. They sat on the couch once in front of me kissing and hugging and it was nice to see them so in love with each other." Donnie burst out with passionate venom: "That man is the real kind of child molester, not men like you or my uncle who really care about kids you love. I knew boys love boys and I knew there were boys like Billy who love men. The thing I didn't know was how to find a man to love without getting hurt like Daryl did."

Keha sat heavily down on the toilet seat, hardly able to believe his ears. Here he'd been worried about going too fast, about spoiling his friendship with Donnie, and now he finds out Donnie had been looking for someone to love him like his uncle had loved Billy.

Daryl caused a disruption. He'd finished counting the money and was waving it over his head. "If you had a thousand bucks, what would you buy with it, Gabe?"

"A motorbike like Phil's," Gabe said.

"That's a wonderful idea. We should all have motorbikes."

How about you, Chuckie?"

"I'd save it for a car."

"Donnie," Daryl asked, "what would you do with a thousand buck-a-roos?"

"I can't take your money, Daryl, but if I could I would give it to my mom to help pay our bills."

"I thought you would want a motorbile, too," Daryl said with a smile as he gave Donnie cash money.

"We can still get us all motorbikes."

"How about Louie?" Gabe asked. "What are you going to get for him?"

"Nothing. He gets the change of all of the money that's left over." His smile started the corner of his mouth to bleed again.

"Sit still, you little devil, and stop trying to be so cutesy with me," I told him. I sent the boys out of the room so I could stop the bleeding.

"Louie, my whole name is Daryl Hammond. Now you know why I trusted Kevin's father like I did. He's my next door neighbor. I didn't expect him to beat me up. Everyone who knows his sons knows he bones the two older ones. He likes them to wear girls' unders, too."

I understood everything. Darling Darly Hammond had been playing a game. He'd been out slumming, trying to be independent by staying with his aunt or his friends because his parents were in Europe visiting the other two sons' boarding school that Daryl hadn't been allowed in because of his improprieties. I could safely keep Daryl at home until he was more normal looking again. I lifted him out of the tub, laid him across my lap, put a drop of peroxide into his bottom and watched it foam where the skin was ripped slightly. Again, I had to carefully spread the boy's sore bottom slightly open to stick the suppository the doctor had left for pain into the puckered rectum. Then I had to help Daryl hold it there for fifteen minutes before he could use the toilet.

When Daryl's aunt heard he was going to spend a few days at my house, she was delighted. "You're making a whole new boy of him at the shop," she said pleasantly.

I learned that Daryl had been kicked out of three schools in a row. She was pleased with his progress in school the past three months.

Wearing sunglasses made Daryl look better. Then, for safers, I stuck a sanitary napkin into the back of the boy's unders.

"What's this for?" Donnie asked me after I'd sent him blushing, hemming and hawing to ask my wife for one.

"In case I let bloody farts," Daryl teased.

Two days later, with Daryl on the mend and everything else in usual hectic order, I got a call from my doctor friend. "The man is seeking hypnotherapy." Whatever good that would do!

## 15. Little Father Keha

Me, Daryl, Gabe and Donnie were lying on my bed watching the television's X-rated channel when Keha came in from waxing his surf board. He flopped heavily on me to show how tired he was.

"Daddy, I was just thinking, since you're going to be home for more than a week, that you should phone Doc back to ask about that little eleventeen-year-old boy."

"He's twelveteen now, hon. He's a birthday boy on Christmas."

"I was thinking, since Gabe is always here, and Darly will stay until his parents return and Donnie is here with us a lot, I figure now, today, is the day to get the boy."



“Remember, you will have to take him to special school when I'm not home. He's got to have his pills on time; you will have to take him to the park for baseball every Saturday morning and the most important thing of all is Tommy cannot be left anywhere alone, nor can he be left for my wife to look after, not even for five minutes. That's the whole deal.”

“Hey, guys, are you all willing to play baseball at the park?” Keha asked.

“What about when everybody goes to Karate class?” Daryl asked.

“We will take him with us. I will ride him on my motorbike with me,” Keha said.

“What about your shop work?” I asked. “I do not know how Tommy will act in the shop,”

“Don't worry about him, Dad. We will arrange everything, like you do, as we go along.”

I'd got to know Daryl very well in the past days. He was the only boy who did not take Karate and he came with us to get Tommy from the house where he lived. Daryl told me he was born to be queer and I told him he was a free spirit, not a queer. I noticed Daryl was a lot like me at his age, the only difference being that Daryl could love everyone and I'd always been in love with boys.

The boys waited in the car while I went into the house to get Tommy. Tommy was normal in his height. He was very slim with dark brown hair and hazel eyes. He could stand in one place and look like he was moving, he was so hyper. I came out of the house with a grip in one hand and Tommy clutching tightly to my other hand. Tommy stopped when he saw Keha. He'd been reading all about Indians in school. When I told him he would get to be friends with a real live Indian he got excited.

“Say what I told you to say, hon,” I whispered to Tommy again. “*Walakota Keha!*”

“Walcoa,” Tommy said, trying, “Kewa.”

“*Uugh*,” Keha said gently. “*Wasahtay Tommy.*”

“What did he say?” Tommy asked me in a whisper.

“He said he's glad that you're a friendly person,” I told him. “His name is Keha, or Chuckie. He's my son. This blond boy is Donnie; he is Keha's friend. That boy's name is Gabe and he's my friend.”

“I'm Daryl,” Daryl said, cutting into the intros. “I'll be your friend.”

I dropped Gabe off at his home. I had Tommy in the front seat with me where I had to strap him in with both seat belt and harness. After dinner I bathed Tommy and bedded him down on a little folding cot, giving Keha and Donnie the freedom to love undisturbed in Keha's room. Daryl was still not allowed to have anal sex, so he slept with me, where, two to four times a night, I'd find him sucking my hard.

Tommy would wake up very early every morning and was ready to go. I'd give him a pill, then another shower because he'd have wet the bed. Tommy would hyper himself around until he was chased down the beach for his noon pill and lunch, then he'd be left to his own devices until almost dinner time, another pill, a shower to get inches of sand off of him, then his dinner and to bed, where he'd sleep as if he'd died. That's why he wet the bed. Keha and I found it didn't do him any good to walk him to the bathroom every two hours because he'd still save enough back to wet the bed when we least expected him to wet. I tried the rubber pants his mother sent with him. All they did was choke the boy's middle and keep the rash that's caused by trapped urine from healing.

“Now what, Daddy? Diapers in place of his unders?”

“No. Let him sleep any way he's comfortable. I can buy some rubber sheets and washable bed pads to help keep him drier at night.”

We washed, powdered and oiled his bottom twice a day. In three days the rash cleared.

Keha was out running an errand for me. The boys who had been staying with me all got presents of new motorbikes from Daryl – and I got a motorcycle.

I put Tommy in the shower. I was called to the phone. I had to send my truck out again with my extra

driver. I went into the bathroom where I found Tommy hunched over under the shower pulling himself with a speed and ferocity I'd never before witnessed. I stopped him, scared he would hurt it; I turned the boy slowly, holding him from behind, and rubbed it gently, telling him this was the way it felt best.

Wonder of wonders, Tommy at times managed to stand absolutely still. He did now, while the gentle spray of the throbber shower-head beat lightly down on us.

Keha came in to shower, followed by Daryl, Donnie and Gabe. Keha stopped short, looked at Tommy. "Guess what, Daddy. Tommy's asleep."

"You was wan king him," Daryl boldly stated.

"Shit," Keha said, "Tommy wanks himself at super speed like this." He tried to demonstrate but failed.

"Shit," Daryl said, always ready to try anything once more if he likes it, "wake him so I can see how he wanks himself."

I walked Tommy to his bed where I dried him, powdered him, oiled his bottom, then rolled him into his bed snug.

"What about his dinner, Daddy? Don't you think we should wake him for his dinner and pill?" Keha asked.

"No, Keha. I guess the head of the shower and my massage were too much for him. I will try to give him his pill later."

Daryl sat on my lap. He felt babyish and asked me to dry him. He told me all about how he'd felt his bottom and it still felt puckered but he was able to use it without pain or discomfort. I watched the boys play games with Daryl, who likes to please two people while two please him. He could suck one, jack two off while he was getting sucked and fucked from behind, all at the same time, when there were enough boys around. This was what he'd got kicked out of his last boarding school for doing. Daryl was inventive if it was sexually stimulating.

"Your father came by while you were out," I told him. "He said tonight's your last night as my live-in."

"No shit," Daryl said. Seeing I was serious he started to cry. I babied him into a pout, then a scowl. "Shit, I won't be able to keep my motorbike."

"He told me I could keep your motorbike for you here until you learn how to use it safely. I had to tell him I bought them for your boys, so don't make a liar out of me."

"Well, you did have to buy them," Daryl said. "They would not of sold them to *us*."

"Your father also told me he wanted to see your work in the shop for himself. He came here from seeing your principal and wants to find out if you're really doing as great as your aunt said. If everything's like it appears he won't have to send you to that military school he's always telling you about."

"Great." Daryl cheered up. "I have a question. Is it normal for boys like Tommy to wank off?"

I smiled at Daryl's one-tracked single mindedness. "Yes, it's normal. Tommy's problem at home was his wanking himself. Most parents of normal children don't see what their children are doing because it's done hidden as something naughty, and because most parents do not understand the sexuality or sensuality in their children. They teach them and tell them it's sinful, it's wrong, it's nasty or dirty. Tommy's parents saw him pulling himself so they sought help for Tommy's further abnormal behavior because they can not understand he's doing something normal."

"At super hyper speed," Keha laughed.

"For some reason," I continued, ignoring the interruption. "Whenever a boy can cum he's got his hand there, even if he's only nine, ten or eleven, like Tommy was when he started. Then you have your late bloomers like Ricky, who didn't pull himself until he was fifteen."

"*I knew* you were doing something with Rick," Daryl shouted, "I just knew it!"

“Shush up, you little asshole,” I teased him.

“Yep, that's what I are. I got a much smaller asshole since it was ripped open by Mister Bigshot whose son Kevin's a sissy, too.”

“Yes, your father also told me Kevin came back with your brothers from boarding school today. Please, don't try to take revenge on him for what his father did to you.”

“I won't. I love Kevin. We used to do a lot of things together.”

“Go to sleep,” I told him, before he talked me into a hardon with his erotic adventures. “I want you to look good for school and rested for your father's visit to the shop tomorrow to watch you boys at work.”

I got off the bed, rolled Daryl under the sheet, then went to give Tommy his missed pill. Tommy choked on the water and spit up the pill. I didn't have the heart to go through it all again, forcing a pill into my hyper boy. I went back to bed. Daryl scooted between my legs to seek oral satisfaction – he complained that Gabe was already worn out from their floor exercise.

I pulled Daryl up even with me, then held him in a non-sexual way, trying to show him that sex was not the only thing in the world, that caring is what counts. I cared if my boys were getting the kind of attention they needed. Was Daryl begging for attention with his almost continuous need for sex, or was he trying to please everyone by catering to their needs?

“Darling Daryl,” I said with gentle feelings, “you don't have to always try to please other people, because once you're out of most people's sight you're out of their minds, too, unless they really love you. Then you do not have to strive to please them, because they will happily love you like you are.” I kissed his cheek. “You lay here. Let me, who cares about you, please you.”

Gabe smiled at me. He turned his head to watch and see how I was going to please Daryl. Gabe knew I was trying to read deeply into Daryl's soul.

As Gabe watched seriously, I hugged Daryl, relaxed him, lulled him to where he could only think with a happy smile, lying between me and Gabe, until in a matter of minutes he was asleep.

“I do not know how you do these things to us boys, Luis,” Gabe whispered. “Is it because I've never seen a boy you did not love or have a special feeling for?”

“I can show you a lot of boys that would never love me,” I said getting out of bed. I walked around to the other side so I could cradle Gabe's head in my arms, lull him to sleep, too.

I got up after I was certain Gabe was sleeping. I couldn't sleep, so I listened to the trucks on the highway, the bark-bark-bark of an ancient four-banger slowing against a jake-brake for the curve and the slight downhill. The whine of a super-charged Cummings going the other way, building speed to make the little hill. I listened to the splash of the upped surf from the storm to the south of us and the bark of a seal pup calling its mother.

I went over to cover Tommy because he'd kicked his covers off. As I bent over the sleeping boy his cock stirred, hardened into a long, slim missile as piss shot almost three feet high before I could react by putting my hand over his squirt to let it run over his body and seep into the special absorbent padding. I rolled Tommy onto his tummy when he started to snore loudly again. This was all I could do for him tonight; in the morning I would be up when he needed me.

Keha came staggering out of the room. He used the bathroom, then came to check on his baby brother. “Oh... You're already here, Daddy,” he said with a yawn. “I was just going to walk Tommy to the toilet.”

“He already wet his bed.”

“Well...” Yawn. “I'll clean him up in the morning.”

I followed Keha into his room. I covered my lover-boy, tucking him in with a kiss, and got a big kiss back, before he snuggled tightly to Donnie's back to fall asleep.

I made out the routes for the truck going out in two hours. After the truck pulled out I did the books and

wrote a few checks for bills piled up on my desk. I stretched, took out a cigarette, then saw movement out of the corner of my eye. It was Tommy, out of control from his missed pill. He looked around fast, his feet going very fast. I caught him as he tried to speed by. I took him to the bathroom, got a pill in him before he had the presence of mind to fight it.

Unmedicated, Tommy vibrated in place so fast it was like trying to hold onto three separate people at once. "Easy, Tommy, easy, son," I gentled. "Try to relax, be easy," I coo'd. "Everything's just fine."

I gently moved him into the shower. I couldn't let go of him because he could blindly run through a sliding glass door on that side of the house if he got away. I'd seen Tommy hyped before, so it wasn't scary for me. I turned the shower on, letting my back take the first gush of cold water. I shuddered. The boy felt it. He tried to respond, help, but he couldn't do anything but move fast, almost throwing both of us off our feet. I moved Tommy into the corner, pulling the shower-head around to wet the corner while I used the only way I knew to leave my hand free to wash the boy.

Hair washed, face washed, neck washed, Tommy got slippery and slipped right by me. A loud thump of me hitting the floor, the crash-bang of the shower door slamming open with enough force to break regular glass, brought Gabe, Keha and Donnie on the run. Tommy was still on his feet, dragging me out the shower door, because I did not want to trip him where he could get hurt falling on the tiled floor.

"I got him, Daddy," Keha said, catching Tommy in a towel so he wouldn't slip away again. Daryl ran in to find out what all the noise was.

"Gosh... Look how fast he is!" Daryl said. Tommy's hands were all over the place. It took all five of us to hold him down on the shower floor, where we rinsed off the soap with his body vibrating so fast it made all of us move.

"What's wrong with him, Daddy?"

"Hold him tight but don't hurt him. He spit up his pill last night. This is Tommy when he's normal. This is why it's very important to see he gets his pills on time. Let's wash him his little middle, then we can put him in his joggies and turn him loose on the beach.

The boys smiled at the baby talk I used to gentle Tommy with. All of us wet, we carried wiggling Tommy to my bed, where I zipped him into his coveralls without drying him or anything .:

"You forgot to powder him and get his unders on, Dad," Keha said, worried Tommy would chafe his tender bottom.

"No time to worry about that. You boys block the glass in case he slips away from me again. We can let him run now." I held tightly to Tommy until I got him safe on the beach, aimed in the direction I wanted him to run, before I let him go.

The boys rode naked on their motorbikes to keep up with Tommy, whom Keha rode back when he stopped running.

"I was asleep," Tommy said. "I woke up running." Tommy looked at us. "Why are you naked?"

When Tommy was hyped up he couldn't remember much. He was still moving faster than he should, but he was in control of himself, now.

"Tommy, will you come with me?" Daryl asked. He had Tommy stand behind him in the bathroom to wank on his wankie. Daryl came out with a flushed face, to everyone's surprise, because none of us had ever seen him embarrassed about anything before. "All I can tell you guys is you better never let Tommy wank you unless it's firmly attached, or you better have insurance on it in case he jerks it off you. Another thing is you have to make him hold you out on the end or he'll beat your balls into your asshole. I will say for fact that Tommy wanks you thoroughly."

Daryl smiled, turning crimson, then talked for a half hour about how fast Tommy's hands were, until he said, "Gee, if Tommy can do that with his hyper hands, I wonder how it would feel to get hyper head? I

bet he can give the fastest head in history.”

“If he's never given head before, Daryl,” I said, smiling, “it would not be historical. You boys dress and eat or you're going to be late for school.”

“You're historically hysterical, Daddy,” Keha said. “Come on, you guys. Daddy will check out Tommy's head action. We have to get to school.”

While the boys got dressed I warned them about not asking Tommy to do anything sexy with them, because he would do anything he was asked to do. I told them it would be alright if or whenever Tommy came to someone on his own. I hugged all of the boys, then sent them off to school.

At two o'clock I went to get Tommy at special school. I took him to the shop, where he was great at sanding things by hand. Mr. Hammond showed up before Daryl got there. He'd had good reports on his son from the school; now he was ready to see what he did in shop.

I let Tommy show Mr. Hammond around before the 2:30 gang arrived. Mr. Hammond was impressed.

“Why you turning Daryl's dad over to Tommy?” Rick asked me.

“Why not, Ricky? This way he can get a taste of Tommy, and then again Tommy loves to 'show people what he's doing,” Tommy was showing Mr. Hammond how fast he could sand and plane boards,

John Hammond enjoyed Tommy's demonstration. He could tell the boy was a hyperactive child; now he wondered what was wrong with the other boys who worked there. He watched his son walk in, get a snack and bring him a cup of coffee. Tommy shared half of his sandwich with him, then went to work with a skinny eel-like Mexican boy who was just as swishy as Daryl. John Hammond didn't mind Daryl's swishiness but he stayed in hope that he would outgrow it. Before the afternoon was over, John Hammon liked Daryl's friend Alberto, too.

“Do you see how we have to wear our safety glasses, our ear plugs and use safety when we work here, Dad?” Daryl asked, “We have to wear our crash helmets even when we ride as passengers on our motorbikes, so there's no reason why I can't ride my motorbike, is there?”

“I guess not, if you're careful with it,” John Hammond said.

I was back on the road, I'd had a nice three weeks with my kids, my wife, my step-daughter and fun at the shops, Di was finally allowed to move in with us for permanent residency.

Keha let Tommy have his room when I was away because Tommy had fallen love with the water bed and stayed in there for hours with the toys he left scattered around. Tommy would wake Keha in the morning to help him clean up after an accident, but Keha was glad that Tommy wasn't wetting every night anymore,

Donnie was not allowed to over-night as often as he wished to. He and Keha hoped I'd get home soon because I seemed to be able to smooth the way for such visits.

The boys found out a lot about Tommy, how they could give him his pill an hour later than scheduled to make him a little faster than his normal until the pill took effect, or they could give him a pill too early and he would drag down more than his normal for him. They got to try one of Tommy's pills under Doc's supervision when he stopped in one night to see how Tommy was doing. They got wired all night, and dragged around all day at school.

“No more of that shit for me,” Keha said, meaning it.

I was gone a month, My lover-boys called me on the short-wave set at nine at night, or any time they wanted to talk to me. I tried to call them a few minutes before I got home but, getting no answer on the short-wave or the CB, I pulled into the yard, parked by the shop, went to my bedroom through the drivers' room, and there got a big surprise. Tommy was on his knees in front of Donnie giving head so fast I could swear he was not moving. When Tommy saw me walk through the door he jumped up to run to me,

kissing me all over, yelling “Daddy!” He hugged, asking twenty different questions all at once. Keha rushed to get Tommy the pill he'd held back to get Tommy's speed up for the fast head job. I scooped up the skinny boy, who was so excited and happy to see me.

I gave back a tight hug and squeeze for every one I got, but selfishly kept the wet, hard kisses which covered me from nose to toes with the love so freely given.

“I missed you a lot,” Tommy said rapidly, wiggling around as he talked. I was aware of his hard middle pressed in my getting-fat paunch. “Next time you leave, can I go, too?”

“No, not next time, hon,” I said, kissing him tenderly on his cheek. “I'll take you with me when summer comes.”

Tommy squeezed my cheeks together real hard until he got the pucker out of me that suited him, then kissed me lip-crushingly hard.

“How's that response, Daddy?” Keha asked, giving Tommy his pill and water. “Climb down, Tommy; it's my turn to kiss my Daddy hello.”

Tommy was not about to climb down. He told Keha he had to give me more kisses first. This was the first time Tommy had ever sat on my lap. I was stunned by the shivering effect of his bottom on my horny spot.

“How do you like the way he feels like a vibro-massage chair when he sits like that?” Keha asked. “The only thing we have to teach him is how to kiss nicer. He almost broke my teeth yesterday.”

Keha leaned over so I could give him the lovin' he wanted from me.

“When did Tommie start playing games?” I asked Keha and Donnie, who were the only ones home because everyone else had gone shopping with Lar.

“A couple of nights ago he came in crying. I let him sleep with us, and he dived into what we were doing after we thought he was asleep.”

“I dived in,” Tommy said, proud of himself. He reached under himself to feel my hard. “Can I dive on you, Daddy?”

“What's this 'Daddy'?” I teased, tickling him.

“From Keha's always telling him Daddy this or Daddy that,” Donnie said. “He even calls Keha and me Daddy when he's not calling Keha Chuckie Indian.”

I told the boys I was disenchanted with them for not giving Tommy his pill on time to speed him up for the hyper head-jobs, but I did not say a word about having sex.

“What did you boys do when I was gone?”

“Not too much. We went to school, the shop, Karate class, baseball practice with Tom-boy here, who wants you to give him your sand bike.”

“Why do you want my sand bike, Tom-tom?”

“Cause it's brand new,” Tommy told me.

“Did you have a nice trip, Daddy? I was hoping you'd found some pleasant little goodie on the road, since no one's been absent from school this month.”

“One old wino, two cars stuck in the snow and an old woman with a flat tire. It's all in the log.”

“Are you sure you did not get any tasty tidbits after you dropped Zeke off at home?” Keha smiled.

“Now that you put it that way, son, I think I picked up a boy who thought I was a pretty tasty tidbit. Check under the twenty-fourth.”

## 16. A Truck Trip

Daryl and Alberto came over in the middle of the day. I was getting my truck ready to roll. They both looked pretty down in the mouth, since they had been suspended for playing grab-ass in the boys' locker room shower. "Hi, Boys," I greeted them.

"Where you going this time?" Cha asked.

"Portland. I'll be gone four days if you'd care to ride along, since you're both out of school until next week."

"Heck, yes, we want to ride along!" Daryl said.

I phoned their parents, then sent the boys home to get a change of clothes and signed permission slips with medical releases.

"What's wrong with your truck," Cha asked on the road. "It don't make that fast noise for going slow."

"That's because we're not loaded yet. Remember when it's empty how quietly it flies down the road, like now?"

"I forgot. We weren't unloaded most of the time last time."

"You boys want to see the prison I was in? We're gonna eat at the end of the road it's on."

The prison made a big impression on the boys when they saw it. They were quiet all through the meal. Not that it was any Alcatraz, but they could feel the pain of life being restricted that came from that place. Passing it again to get back on the highway, I slowed down for another long look at the place I'd spent hours, days, weeks, months, years of my life in, with no chance of a speedy parole.

"They're horrible!" Daryl said, looking at the second prison on this route I pointed out to him. The boys shuddered when I reminded them how easy it was to end up in a place like that if they didn't learn to work or how to become self-sufficient. They had to learn in school; no matter how fucked up the school was, its function was to teach them what society wanted them to know, but by logic and reasoning people can decide the truth for themselves. "Yes sir, school teaches you how to look at the world with myopic eyes and judge with a narrow mind after they supply you with the facts they want you to know. They do not tell you how many people are killed in the good name of religion or about the people they have enslaved from intolerance."

"There are no slaves," Daryl said. "They been freed for over a hundred years."

"Alright, then think about the places I showed you. Men still believe you have to kill men to teach men how not to kill."

The boys watched the loading of the truck. The stuff slid in on roller rails to where two men stacked the boxes five high. They rested in the sleeper while I locked the load bars in place, shut the trailer doors and got the bill of lading from the plant office.

On the road, with things too quiet in the sleeper, I checked under the modesty screen to find the boys grinning at me with their mouths full. A lot of noise later made me look in again.

Daryl was lying on top of Alberto, letting the road bounce from the sleeper-bed do all of his work for him. Cha was screaming with laughter, vibrating under Daryl from the truck's movement. They came out of the sleeper when they were done.

"Wow Cow, that's different! Have you done that before?"

"No, I've never had sex in a moving truck. 'Cept for head jobs."

"Chuck said he used to sit on your lap with no pants on, like this..." – Daryl sat his bare bottom on my lap – "...when you drove cross-country."

"I'm talking about the way you boys do it," I said, laughing.

"I don't know anyone liberal enough to drive this truck safely while I get it on with one of you chubby-bottomed boys in back."

They laughed at me.

We were crossing the Richmond-San Rafael bridge when the short wave burst into life.

“The Lonely Roamer base calling the Lonely Roamer with a ten thirty-four. Over.”

“You got me, baby,” I answered. “What's the emergency. Over.”

“Tommy threw a tantrum and Doc's here. Over.”

“You're a great boy, hon, and a great little father for both me and Tommy. Put Doc on. Over.”

“Thanks, Daddy. Here's Doc. Over.”

Keha was upset to come home and find I had taken Daryl and Alberto. He didn't think it was fair for two boys who had got suspended from school for playing grab-ass to have the fun of riding in the rig. Then when Tommy found out his daddy Lou had left again he'd thrown his tantrum. This was Keha's third try to reach me on the radio.

The doctor told me he'd sedated Tommy and the boy was sleeping quietly and fine, now.

Keha sat up late into the night with Tommy, and the next morning he sent Gabe and Donnie off to school but stayed home himself.

I pulled into the driveway at five in the morning, two and a half days from the day I'd left, to the disappointment of Alberto and Daryl. I sent my loaded trailer out with another tractor.

We accidentally woke the boys. “Gosh, Chuck,” Alberto said, “We only got to stop in San Francisco. The rest of the time your dad had the truck humming down the highway.”

“Louie didn't even stop to pee,” Daryl added. “He had to pee in a soda bottle and dump it out the side window.”

“Yah,” Keha smiled. He was happy to hear we'd covered the road so quick. “You get two big meals a day and all the junk food you can eat.”

“Is riding the truck always like that?” Daryl asked.

“Mostly. My dad drives when he's driving, plays when he's playing and does a hellacious job of lazing around when he lazes around, too.”

I took charge of hyper, sullen Tommy, giving Keha a chance to catch up on his school work, go with his friends and surf. On Saturday the boys who weren't selling that weekend came to the park on their scooters to watch Tommy play baseball with us.

“You should think twice, Tommy about having Daddy Lou play baseball with you,” Keha said, after his own offer was turned down. “Daddy is lousy in sports.”

“He's right, Tommy,” I said. “I never went in for anything that was not single-person sports, like bicycling, roller skating or racing, because I wore glasses when I was eight. But I was ate before I was six, too.”

“Tell him why you wear glasses,” Keha said.

“I got caught pulling my weenie when I was five. My father told me I would go blind from playing with myself. So I only played with myself until I needed glasses. Then I discovered you did not go blind if other people pull your weenie for you.”

“You're fibbing me,” Tommie said, hugging me tightly. He knew a joke when he heard one.

“Teasing jokes are not fibbing you, hon,” I told him lovingly. “I would never fib you.”

## 17. New Boys



After helping Tommy's team lose eleven to four we went to the shop. There were two new boys I'd never seen before. I told my boys to be quiet so I could play one of my games on the newcomers.

One of them was bent over his work displaying for the whole shop's view one of the best-formed bottoms in tight black levis I'd ever seen. "Hello, young man," I said, walking up to the center work table.

"Hi." The boy straightened up to look at me.

He was a medium-built boy, not small like Daryl or chubby like Gabe. He wasn't real tall or anything. He had light sandy-colored hair brushed evenly in all directions, giving him a no-ears, no-forehead look. He was no darling Daryl to look at, but he was no plain Jim either.

"How long have you been working here?" I asked.

"A couple of weeks."

The boys all smiled because they knew I was playing customer. Sometimes I'd play stranger, or teach-me-what-you're-doing. It was all played in fun.

"What are you making?" I asked.

"Models to sell for the art fair."

"They're very nice. Do you have any finished models that I may see to buy?"

"Yes," the boy said, opening the cabinet door. He set out several for me to choose from. "Here's is my best one."

"Say, this is really nice," I said, meaning it. "I guess adult model collectors buy these." I smiled at him. "Can you give me a special price?"

"You'll have to ask that boy over there. His name's Rick."

"What's your name?" He was turning out to be not so easy to get information out of.

"Kevin," he said, while Daryl ran out of the room.

I called Ricky and Keha over to talk to them about Kevin's work. Everything detailed, painted: exceptional.

"He's good," Rick said. "He's got orders for a hundred planes already."

"Is this your best plane, Kevin?" I asked.

"No. That's in your office on your desk. I figure you're Louie, the man who owns the shop. The boys were too friendly to you; they don't let strangers just walk around this section."

I laughed and messed up Kevin's hair, then went over to see who the little black boy was.

"His name's Ben," Tommy said. "He's from my school and he's my best friend. He can't talk." Tommy hugged Ben. Tell him it's alright for him to work here Saturdays with me, Daddy Lou."

"Of course Ben can work with you, hon," I said. Tommy pushed Ben into my arms for me to hug him and show him I liked him, too.

"He drank a bottle of lies when he was a baby. That's why he can't talk. Do you want to see the inside of his mouth, too? Yuck, it's barfy."

Ben smiled, nodded, then wrote a note: "Tommy is my funny friend."

"Ben's good company for Tommy," Keha said. "All the poor kid can do is smile and listen when Tom runs off at the mouth like now after his game when he's wound up."

"I'm glad that Tommy's your funny friend," I told Ben. I patted his kinky-tight curls. "How old are you?" I expected Ben to write me a note. Instead, I got a surprise.

"He's still eleven," Tommy said. I was finding out real fast that Tommy did all the talking for both of them. All the way from saying when they were hungry to when they had to use the bathroom, even if Ben did not or had just ate.

Ben was a sweet-looking little boy. Tommy dragged him back to the sanding pile, sanding three things to Ben's one and talking full-speed while he sanded.

“Did you really give Tommy his pill?” Ricky asked. “He's sure going strong with his mouth today.”

“He's trying to show how good working with Ben makes him feel. Just slip your ear plugs in, then nod your head now and then until he runs down.” They did.

I stood next to Kevin to make a plane model with him. It was not as good as Kevin's but it was a nice plane. Kevin said I was a good model maker.

Now that Tommy was running down from his talking jag I went to help Tommy and Ben. A little later, on the way to use the bathroom in the back of the shop where it was sort of dark, I found Kevin and Daryl trying to pull up their pants behind a lumber pile.

“Are you going to tell?” Kevin asked me.

“What am I supposed to tell?” I looked at their lubed, hard cocks. “Do you feel you've done something wrong?”

“No,” Daryl said, “We was just fuckin around.”

“Great,” I said and continued on my way.

“He don't tell nothin”, Daryl said to his scared friend. “If he'd caught you bonin' me or me bonin' you, all he would of done was pat our bottoms to make sure we're not hurting each other.”

“Weird,” Kevin said. “Dad would of shoved his cock clean through both of us if he'd caught us.”

We were sitting around with Rick, Ben, Tommy, Carlo, Kevin, Daryl, Chatto, Gato, Ed and Nando talking about dos and don'ts, when Donnie and Keha returned with corn chips to eat with our sodas.

“What are you gonna do Easter week, Luis?” Nando asked. “Me and my friends are thinking of having the biggest Easter egg hunt in history for you. Would you like that?” He was talking to Gabe and me.

“I'm taking off for Easter,” I said. “I'll help you with your Easter thing. We can have an Easter beach party. If you want, bring your families.”

“Good idea,” Carlo shouted. “Luis can buy all of the candy things like he did last year when we had the hunt in this field.”

“You little fuckers cost me two hundred dollars in chocolate rabbits alone. Then that silly Gilly bit all of the ears off all of my prize rabbits. By the way, where is that little ear-eater?”

“He's sick at home with red dots on his face.”

“In this neighborhood, Carlo,” Rick said, “red dots means everything from bedbug bites to flea bites.”

The boys all laughed, embarrassed, because it was true.

“I was also thinking of getting some kind of a sailboat next week to take half of our gang out one day and the other half the next day.”

“Why don't you ask my dad to let you use his, and you can take us all out,” Kevin said. “It's for sale again. He bought it, then tied it to a buoy in the cat harbor, where it's been untouched for three years, now.”

“What boat is it?” Ricky asked.

“The big white trimaran by the mouth of the harbor,” Kevin said. “It's thirty-four feet wide, so it won't fit a slip.”

“Luis sails us in boats,” Chatto said with a grin.

“Nothing like that,” I laughed. “The boat Kevin's talking about is over fifty feet long with twin masts – and it's *big*.”

I dropped the boys at their homes, my boys at my home, then went to the store to buy Gil a nice toy to play in bed with, then drove back to see him.

“He's got measles in his room,” Mrs. Garcia said, “if you're not scared to go there.”

I wasn't afraid. Poor Gil wasn't just red spots on his face: he was red spots all over. He was happy to

see me. I kissed him and sat on the side of his bed.

“How come you're here?” he asked.

“Don't I always visit my sick friends?” I put the toy on the bed for him.

“I don't know. This is the first time I'm sick.”

“You have the red spots good.”

“He has them bad,” Mrs. Garcia said, coming in with a bottle of lotion to rub on him. “Luis, he won't let me put medicine on him.” Maybe, she hinted, he would let me.

I tickled Gil out of his jammies, applied the lotion while his mother watched. “Give me a big kiss goodbye while I get these clean jammies on you.”

“Don't leave already,” Gil complained.

“He does nothing I tell him, Luis,” his mother said, bringing in a glass of cold juice to see if I could make him drink it. “He won't let me put medicine on him, he won't take medicine doctor give him, he won't eat.”

“Is that true, Gil?”

“So what?” Gil cried. “This stuff when she rubs on me is stiff on me. The medicine is yuck, and I throw up from the food. I want to die. I just want to die.”

“Oh, Gil,” I said, sitting him up to hug me to him. “It's not that bad, hon. If you want me to, I will come by twice a day to feed you and give you your medicine.”

“Can I come to your house?”

“No, hon, you might get one of the other boys sick with what you have.” Then I thought a little about what I was saying. Before I knew it I'd rolled him in his sheet and blanket, got his new toys, medicine, pulled the blanket over his eyes to carry him to my truck. “Don't uncover your eyes, Gil,” I said.

His mother followed us out the door to the pick-up. She told me she would bring clean clothes and jammies. She was thankful and relieved to be rid of the open defiance that Gil, like most Mexican boys, used to intimidate the women around them.

Once home, I carried him into the driver's room. This was like a utility room with bed, laundry sink and part filled with stored stuff from camping gear to truck parts.

“After I pull these drapes you can uncover your eyes, Gil,” I said, laying him on the bed. “Alright, peekaboo, I see you.”

“Am I really at your new house?”

“You sure are. Lay real quiet and you can listen to the waves.”

Gil listened. He smiled; he heard the waves.

“Tell me when you have to use the bathroom, Gil. I will always be real close. I'm going into the next room to get you sunglasses to wear.” I left my cranky little love listening to the surf breaking just a hundred odd yards from the house. When I returned with the sunglasses I tickled Gil out of the sheet and blanket I had him wrapped in, then stuck him into the freshly made bed.

“What did you carry in, Dad?” Keha asked.

“Just this ill Gil,” I said, showing him the boy. “He was giving his mother a bunch of shit like always, but he doesn't refuse to do what I ask. Can you get him a glass of iced tea, hon?”

When Daryl went home he took Kevin with him. He wanted to see if he could get his father to buy the boat for the group with the idea that they would pay him back for it.

They got together with all of the gang boys and raised over \$500. They kept it secret from Tommy and Keha. Finally the boat changed hands for \$14,000 cash.

“You take these papers to Louie,” Daryl's dad told his son. It was the bill of sale and other marine

documents.

“That will spoil our surprise,” Daryl said. “We want to buy the boat for him.”

“You guys just did,” John said. “Give me your five hundred dollars.”

The boys handed over the money. “Sold. Now take the papers to Louie.”

I was walking through the drivers' room when Gil woke from his fitful nap. “Luis, I have to go to the bathroom.”

“Up with your arms so the lift-up man can carry you there,” I said, lifting him on the run. “Weee, right through the air to the potty room.” Gil looked funny wearing the same shades Daryl wore when he had the black eyes. Done in the bathroom, Gil wanted to watch TV.

“No, baby. I will sit up with you in your room, and maybe some of the other boys will help us play cards.”

“Are you going to rub pink stuff on me again?”

“First I'm going to give you an alcohol rub, dinner, then a big kiss to get well on.”

“Then give me the kiss first.”

I gave Gil his kiss.

Kevin and Daryl showed. They were really talking up a storm about boats; I tried to follow the conversation through the open door. More boys showed while I gave Gil his alcohol rub, the pink medicine for his red spots, then tickled Gil into a night-shirt and covered him up. I was reading Gil a story when the boys came into the small room, all crowding closely.

“Louie, if you had a sailboat, what would you name it?” Daryl asked.

“Something friendly, like the first boat I was ever on.” I told them all about how my friend's father had taken us out on a boat they'd named *Buddy* when I was about twelve.

“How about naming this boat *Buddy*, then?”

“Naw,” Keha said with a grin, “we should call the boat *My Buddy*, like Dad and I are buddies.”

“What's all of this name-the-boat stuff?” I asked when an argument broke out over names.

“It's about the papers I have here,” Daryl said. “We bought you a boat.”

They all cheered and Gil grabbed me and kissed me.

“Yuck,” someone said. “I wouldn't kiss him; he got the measles.”

“Dads are different,” Kevin said. “It don't matter to them if a kid's sick or ugly; they kiss them anyway.”

“What's you talking about what budding means fur?” Gil asked, confused.

“Not budding – buddy, buddies,” I teased.

“That's a good name, Dad,” Keha said. “*Budding Buddies* is what you should name the boat. Your boat.”

“I kind a thought this boat was our boat, all of ours,” I said.

Gil's mother drove over at seven, wondering what all the noise was about. It had sounded like a party was going on. She knocked at the door and was led through the house, finding Gil in the middle of a crowd as happy as can be.

“Luis said I can go sailing with him next week, Mommy, if my measles is better,” Gil shouted. “Will you tell him I can go even if they're only half better?”

“Who said you get to go sailing?” I teased him. “You did. I didn't.” Gil had a fantastic sense of humor.

“I know you'll take me,” Gil said. His mother smiled. She knew Gil would get to go sailing, too, that I

couldn't refuse requests from children.

"We'll see how you are this weekend, Gil. Stand up so your mother can see how cute you look in this night-shirt."

## 18. Budding Buddies

Doc came by early to see how Tommy was doing. We were cutting down by milligrams on Tommy's pills. While he was there he also examined Gil. It was the last week of school before spring vacation. I'd sent T.C. over to inspect the *Budding Buddies* and get what we needed to go out on it the next day.

T.C. came in with a big smile for me. He'd put batteries in the boat, fresh fuel in the tank. He'd had to spend a couple of hours in the ocean cleaning the water pickups for the heat exchangers before he could start the motor and check it out. "Georgie's still working on the rigging for you," he added with a smile.

"I'm going to need you both to help me sail that thing. Can you pick up the boys at the shop who want to clean the boat, or would you rather stay here to baby-sit my silly Gilly?"

"I'll choose any of the others over that spoiled brat," T.C. teased. He chuckled under Gil's chin. "I still haven't figured out why you put up with this sexy little fart who's three or four years under the age you love." T.C. gave me a smile that meant Gil was just right for him.

"That's funny, because George told me the only reason he puts up with you is because he's your nephew," I teased. "He says if it wasn't for that fact alone he would have been over here to love with me a long time ago."

"You're one crazy fucker, Lou," T.C. laughed. "Georgie's so straight water puddles in the flat part of his head. Why don't you turn me on to that new boy that's been hanging around here?"

"I told you before, T.C. you have to turn yourself on. I find mine and you find yours. That reminds me to ask who have you been seeing lately."

"I'll never tell, T.C. smiled. He was living with a woman and her son on the boat next to his and Georgie's. T.C. was bi, so he loved them both.

I liked George, who was an easy-going hippie-type of boy in his just-twenties. He was a racing boat freak, went to college, and sometimes if there were no class races he would take a short run for me with a truck so T.C. wouldn't have to totally support him. T.C. said a lot of things about his nephew but he loved him dearly. In a bathing suit George got admiring looks from men as well as the women.

T.C. was the mechanic in the station that serviced my pick-up. He'd also done the rebuild on my Simca. He was a little older than I was and I liked the way he catered to the boys who came in with flat tires or loose chains. T.C. was lubing my pick-up one day when a boy coasted in with his pant-cuff caught in the chain. He did a little extra cuddling to get the boy loose. After that I got T.C. to do all my preventive maintenance. I wasn't T.C.'s only support, as he worked on other trucks in my yard, but my trucks always came first. T.C. also worked on hydraulic shop tools.

T.C. stood watch for Gabe, Kevin, Keha, Nando, Daryl, Alberto, Arnulfo and Gemmi who all stripped down to sport shorts to clean and check the underside of the boat. T.C. had Tommy with him because he was sacred to let such a hyperactive kid swim with the others.

T.C.'s eyes had a loving glaze to them from looking at all of the bare boy skin. His girl friend's son, whom he called Pokie, noted the bulge in his lover's pants; when T.C. started drooling over Kevin's sexy walk, Pokie gave the bulge a friendly squeeze and T.C. a wink and a big smile. Kevin had a sort of rolling gait that could be interpreted as overtly seductive; when he bent over to dive in after the other

boys, buns spread to show even more flesh outside of the bikini sport shorts, it sent shudders through the big mechanic's frame.

“Uncle Tom,” George yelled from the rigging while the boys were wiping clean the hull, “if you'd stop standing there with your mouth open and get me the sails we can put this right on old Louie's beach tonight. Under sail, too.”

An hour before dark Keha came running into my bedroom dripping wet. He put sunglasses on Gil, then carried him out, making me follow, to see the big sailboat get tacked around into the wind to pass the house in less than five foot of water.

“George wants to know if we can moor the boat out front,” Keha said. “It's got good anchors and we can work on it here easiest.”

I agreed and told him where I wanted it, then I took Gil and and laid him on my bed where he could watch the mooring going on.

“Oh, that's so pretty,” Gil said when I sat him against the headboard. “Look at all of the sails!”

“Yes, it's quite impressive.” I gave Gil a kiss. “Don't get off this bed, Gil: I want you well enough to go sailing with us.”

We watched them snap the covers over the rolled main and stay sails while Nando and Cha were trying to fold the number four jib.

I spent the rest of the week helping the boys clean the boat. We stocked it with food each time we had to raft out to it. We washed it, waxed it, polished it better than my own truck ever got polished. With the help of two urchin divers, Keha and the boys buried some drums filled with rock 75 yards off of the high tide line. I'd insisted the mooring cable have 50 spare feet of slack.

Sunday we sailed out for the first time, with T.C., George, Pokie, his mom, and eighteen boys. T.C. and George gave all of us sailing instructions. First we sailed running full with the wind, setting up five sails. After an hour we reefed in, changed jibs and took two and a half hours to tack back to our start.

“Let's anchor here tonight,” George said. “Then we can get an early start in the morning.”

“On, no,” I said looking at Daryl, Nando, Donnie, Alberto, Keha, Tommy, Gabe, Ed, Salvadore and Gato. “This is not going to work. Twelve of us cannot sleep in this cabin, forget on this bed. How about five and a half of you sleeping in the main cabin with the others? Tomorrow night the other five and a half of you can sleep with me in here.”

“Who's the half person?” Daryl wanted to know.

“Let's leave the half of Tommy that wets here with Daddy. The rest of us can put up with the other half,” Keha teased.

“No, my Keha,” I gently admonished, “Tommy will sleep in this room over there in his sleeping bag.

“We can do that, too,” Salvadore said. “I'll get a sleeping bag for me and Cha.”

“What about me?” Darly asked Cha.

“You get to sleep with Luis tonight,” Gato said. “I getting a big sleeping bag to sleep with Donnie.”

“If you're the girl,” Donnie said. Gato smiled.

## 19. Kevin's Confessions

I'd spent the last three hours hugging, kissing, loving with five boys and my mouth was dry as a sponge. I took my pocket pen-light to find my way over scattered boys and went into the galley to get something to

drink. Kevin was there in a sleeping bag on the floor away from everyone else, but he wasn't asleep: he was moaning and groaning so that at first I thought he was sick, until I bent close to see what was going on. The boy was lying on his back with his knees bent, pushing outwards on the sleeping bag's side edges as he rubbed himself slowly through the bikini, alternating hands. Each hand came up to rub and pinch lightly on a nipple, hard on his hairless boy chest. He was so far out of it, or into it, that I was able to hold open a bag edge to see the action in it.

He was wearing one of the other boys' swim suits they'd discarded after dinner so they could run around naked screaming and play fighting.

Suddenly with a squeek of delight, Kevin shot off into the bikini. His eyes fluttered open. He started when he blurrily saw the form of a man bending over him.

"You're not going to hurt me tonight, are you, Daddy?" Kevin asked calmly.

"No one's going to hurt you on this boat, Kevin," I gently told him. "You've done no wrong. Here, let me help you out of Donnie's swimsies so I can wash them out for Donnie to wear tomorrow."

I helped him out of the cum-filled bikini, wiped his lower body off with a washcloth.

"I hope you don't think I'm weird," Kevin said shyly.

"Why would I think that?"

"Catching me with Donnie's swimsuit on is weird because I was wishing they were well-worn 'n cum-stiff – that's being weird, isn't it?"

"Not if it's not harmful to you or anyone else. If you'd been wishing to hurt someone or be hurt by someone, then that can be weird, but just wishing you were having sex of sorts with someone is harmless wishing."

"My father says sex is dirty. He used to punish me by laying me face-down with my head by his toes with my bottom up where he could look in me while he worked his fingers into my hole until he almost got his whole hand in while I screamed. All of that time he was telling me since I got in trouble for doing sexy things I had to have my punishment hurt me in my sex places. This is sort of why I pinch myself, but not as hard as he pinched me when I was crying because he was hurting me. Do you know, it makes me harder to get hurt a little."

"Your father didn't do that to punish you," I told him, with tears streaming down my face. "That is your dad's turn-on for his own pleasure. Your father's a very distorted man to use cruelty and hate on the people he loves."

"You mean like when he raped Daryl?"

"Who told you about that?"

"He did. He always tells me what he does to boy-hustlers. I never dreamed that Daryl would hustle my dad for a hundred dollars, but I know my dad's been out to get sex with him for a long time because of the things I used to have to tell about what me and my friends did. Because it's sinful to seek sex."

"Daryl only seeks sex to give love. He's never hustled anyone for money or anything that I've ever heard of. Your father put a hundred-dollar bill in his pocket after he raped him and dumped him on my beach to make himself feel better, not because Daryl hustled him.

"Daryl's thirteen like I am." Kevin tried to smile a half-hearted smile. "We went to school together and did things. My father made me tell or I'd be punished. At first I was afraid of punishment, so I told him everything, only to get punished for my part in it. Now I tell him nothing and take my punishment in silence because he's going to punish me anyway, even if I didn't do anything wrong. Is it right for a boy to hate his father?"

"Sometimes. But do you love to hate him, or do you hate to love him? It's what you think about when you hate him that determines if it's right or not." I could feel the hurt, the bitterness, the anger in the boy.

His indecision.

"I think about how mean he is when he drinks. How he punches my mom, my sister, my brothers, me. Then the next day he acts like nothing happened, nothing's wrong. I would like to see him punched out, but then I would have to punch the puncher back. After all he is my father and fathers are always right."

"Not always right, son. Just because we're older does not mean we're wiser or smarter. Because we're stronger does not mean we're righter, either. I find my children teach me. They are young, they're natural; they remind me how to keep my own youthful outlook, my own naturalness and my own open mind. I learn from my boys. You see, Kevin, if weirdness is counted by what we think of ourselves when we do things, then most people will rate me at the top of their weird list."

"I know what you mean: you're so different, Louie. You're so funny, like when you played customer on me in the shop I knew you were Louie all along."

I tucked Kevin into his sleeping bag, then sat next to him, sharing my soda. Then I took Tommy to the head (just in time), and went back to bed with my boys.

Breakfast was cooked by T.C. and his lady. Later the cameras clicked to immortalize the sailing trip: pictures of boys pulling on ropes, lines, leaning over the rails to watch the sea, boys steering the boat, cleaning the boat, pictures of me helping boys and boys helping me. The first picture we took of Kevin and me was too suggestive for his father to see, so we took another with me standing in the background watching him steer the boat. Kevin spent the next two nights sleeping alone: this way he father wouldn't be able to make a case out of anything.

## 20. The Twelve Hundred Egg Hunt

With our trip over it was time to get ready for the Easter thing. Nando's gang was doing all of the Easter eggs, so Gabe got his boys together to get the sugar-coated marshmallow chicks and rabbits. They bought cream-filled and plain jellybeans for the poverty baskets and I supplied the costly chocolate Easter rabbits.

"Yes," I said, taking the phone from Gil, "How many more children?"

"We want to invite the ones from the Mexican day-care and the church pre-school," Nando told me.

"Can we do this?"

"That's a lot of bunny rabbits, Nando."

"Just buy those little fifty-cent ones," Nando said. "They are small children so small rabbits will look big to them."

"The more chocolate rabbits Louie gets, the more ears I get to chew off," Gil shouted gleefully.

"How many eggs have you boys made for the hunt?"

"Twelve hundred," Nando said. "Each of us are going to help the day-care little kids, then we will share out the eggs evenly after the hunt. Does that sound mature?"

"Very mature," I smiled at the phone. "The school is in your mother's care, isn't it?"

"Yes, and the pre-school is in Gabe's mother's care. That's why I thought we should have them both over. The other thing is we planned to hide the eggs, then hunt them on the other side where we didn't hide them. That's fair, huh?"

"Yes, that's fair," I said. "If you don't have a way to get your hundred cartons of eggs over, call me in the morning."

"We all have rides. So do the eggs." Nando hung up.



Donnie, his two sisters, Gil, Tommy, Keha and Di were all helping Mrs. Bleard boil and dye eggs in the kitchen. They had what Di called a small amount of ten cartons of eggs. Mrs. Bleard was helping the children create masterpieces while I went back to helping Carlo staple poverty baskets. These were just plain brown paper bags with sturdy handles stapled to their rolled- down tops.

“Did you get all of the prizes, Dad?” Di asked me. “For the best baskets, the most eggs, the cutest boy and the cutest girl, a loser's prize, and do you have the five-dollar black egg prize money?” She gave a poised pose; she would try to win all of the prizes herself. All but the cutest boy and the loser's prize, because she didn't like to lose...

“I have all the prizes, sweetheart. I even have Gil, the rabbit-ear king, helping me staple handles. His mother and sisters are coming over to help *us*. She said if he chews any ears off someone else's rabbit to take him home because he will not deserve to have any Easter.”

Gabe rode Gato over on his motorbike. They brought more bags and handle material for poverty baskets. “Do we get to trade for name eggs again?” Carlo asked.

“Of course, Carlo,” Di said with scorn. “Who wants to eat anything with *your* name on it?”

My wife told me when the candy store delivery truck came by. I had to put the candy where Gil couldn't get into it.

“How come your reefers are running?” Keha asked a half-hour later.

“It's got a load of perishables.”

“I just wanted to know if it's supposed to run at fifty degrees.”

“Yes, Keha, it's supposed to run for cool, not cold.” I smiled. “I thought you went to feed the horses, not hot-nose around my rig.” I'd moved my old horse onto the property when we'd got the beach house. Now we had a mare, a colt, and Di had her pony, too.

“I always hot-nose around your truck, Daddy. Come on, Donnie, let's ride Sheila.”

“Be careful of Prince when you open the gate, hon,” I yelled. “He's been very nervous.”

“That's cause you haven't ridden him,” Keha yelled back at me over his shoulder.

“Can I go, too?” Tommie asked. “Can I ride Di's?”

“If you ride him you brush him,” Di said.

Tommy ran after the boys. He was a little tall for a pony, but he was still very thin so he wouldn't be too much of a burden.

“I'd love to ride Prince,” Gabe said.

“You know Prince only lets my daddy ride him,” Di said. “He'd buck you so far you'd have to ride the Greyhound bus to get you back here.”

“Daddy Lou, Daddy Loy,” Tommy said, running into the house. “Chuckie Indian needs you, cause Prince won't let us get into the gate.”

“Gabe, Carlo,” I said. “Tommy, get my boots with the spurs on them and my black belt.”

“Are you going to spank your horse?” Carlo asked.

“No, I'm not going to spank my horse. We're going to ride him. Would you like that?” I took the rope off the gate post. Holding the rope in my hand, I called my horse, who would come right to me because I always had sugar lumps for him, or carrots. I bridled him, saddled him and used the martingale, for Prince was a head-tosser. The boys laughed when the stallion's cock dropped two feet to piss while we were getting the gear on the other animals. I boosted Gabe into the mare's saddle with a warning to just hang onto the horn.

Donnie was riding double with Keha way down the beach when Tommy jumped on the pony to try to catch up with them.

Prince side-stepped nervously as I pulled Carlo up to sit in front of me. Carlo immediately tried to

hold the reins, but I playfully spanked his hands off them and explained the Spanish bit and how he could give the horse a sore mouth, while I pulled him tight back against my lap and felt under the front of his pants to make sure his balls wouldn't get bounced on the saddle horn. Then I let him slip down when I knew he'd be OK.

Carlo nudged me. I looked at the kitchen where Gil was standing in the door-frame, crying. I rode the horse over to get him: this was what the other belt was for – a safety-belt for Gil.

“Can we catch up with Donnie and Chuck?” Gabe asked. “No, first we have to get that pony to come with us,” I laughed, because the pony was already going home. He'd got so barn-sour he wouldn't go a quarter of a mile from the gate where his food was. “*Haaaaa!*” I yelled. “Turn around, you lunk-head!”

The pony came to a stiff-legged halt, almost unseating Tommy.

The stallion was a good horse to do this with. He was from before my first prison term, when I'd worked stock shows and rodeos. The pony tried to run in a wide circle; I kneed Prince to cut him off. I caught one rein for Gabe to wrap around Sheba's saddle-horn so we could take him down the beach with us.

“I didn't know you were a real cowboy,” Carlo said excitedly. He liked how Prince did everything I wanted him to without pulling on the reins or even holding the reins that were lightly draped over the horse's neck.

“I'm not a cowboy, hon. The horse is the smart one, with all of the know-how.” We rode down the beach where Keha and Donnie were jumping from rock to rock at the point where they'd run out of sand. At first I was afraid they'd ground-tied the mare colt, but then I saw they'd weighted her reins with a rock.

After dinner I chased all the over-nighters to early bed. I shut down the TV, made sure everyone was sleeping, then went out to play Peter Cottontail. I brought in the five giant Easter baskets, the five three-pound chocolate fudge eggs that were decorated with my loves' names in frosting. I put Tommy's in his room, Di's in hers, mine and Keha's in my room and my wife's in her room. I bought seven other baskets for the others, including Mrs. Bleard who'd stayed over with her youngest daughter.

“Luis, Chuck, wake up. Hurry,” Carlo yelled. “I will wake Tommy. The Easter bunny left baskets on our beds.”

“How do you know they're from the Easter bunny?” Donnie asked, sitting up between me and Gabe.

“I can read, Dodo. The cards all say they're from Peter Rabbit.”

“Is Gil up yet?” I asked.

“Yes, he's already chewing...” Carlo panicked. “Oh, no, he'll eat my ears off, too!” He ran into the other room where he started to cry. Gil had eaten the ears off of all of their rabbits.

“Slap him hard,” Gabe said.

I would not let anyone slap Gil for eating ears. Instead Gil turned all tears when I gave Carlo two bigger solid chocolate bunnies to replace the two small ones Gil had de-eared.

The hunt went nicely. The kids were happy, and this made me happy. I got to kiss all of the winners when I presented them with their awards. Then I kissed the little loser, giving him a giant solid Easter rabbit to compensate his loss.

## 21. Injured

I pulled out the following afternoon. A week later I returned home with such a bad pain in my side I

could hardly sit up, let alone stand. I took myself to the hospital, where I was operated on in emergency for a bad appendix – but there was nothing wrong with the one they took out of me. Laying in bed at home with the company of my boys, the pain got steadily worse, until, after a whole series of X-rays, they found I had a cyst in my hip socket. So I got operation number two.

When they brought me home I was solid black-and-blue and horny. My wife wouldn't let me sleep in my room with Keha because he wrapped himself around me like a squid when he slept.

I was in her room with her. When she lay down next to me I did my best to turn her on. This was one of the few times I lucked out. To my wife's consternation I busted my stitches. She called up the doctor to find out what to do.

"I'll hold this closed if you tape me," I said.

"Gosh, Louie," she chided gently, "I told you we should not of done anything." We burst out laughing. "But you're so damn insistent. Now hold still so this tape won't pull off." She lined the bed with pillows between her and me so I couldn't start anything again.

"Louis, you stop that," she said, still in a good humor as I reached under, over or between the two pillows to attack her with my horny hand routine.

Tommy went home to stay with his parents, because he was improved and to give me a break from him while I was laid up, but he came by every day to talk to me. None of the other boys did, though, and I was hurt by this.

"Keha," I said one morning a few weeks later when I was feeling in top form, "I want you to help me out of bed before you go to school."

"Alright, Daddy," he said. He fluffed up the pillows so I could eat the breakfast he brought into my wife's room for me.

After Keha would leave for the day it got pretty boring for me. My wife would wake up around two in the afternoon when Di got back from school. Keha helped me so I could make it on my crutches around the house for a while before I went into my room to talk on the CB set and monitor the short wave radio conversations from around the world.

About 10:30 that morning I got tired of sitting around. I dressed, then maneuvered my clumsy crutches on the back porch steps – and tore the headliner of my car with them getting in. I drove to the shop to see if anyone needed my help.

"Hello," I said to Scotty as I came in, squeaking and creaking, "Do you do vinyl and leather repair here? I got my walking sticks caught in the headliner."

Scotty sent for the vinyl repairman, and around noon Richard, Lar and Hernando came in. They were on the four-four plan. They wheeled me and my chair into the side shop.

"Are you well now?" Hernando asked.

"No, son," I told him. "I stopped by to find out what happened to my boys, why I've not had any visits." I smiled. "But I will wait until we're all here before I discuss that."

When the boys passed the shop they saw my car. They called to each other and crowded in, giving the shop what it had rarely seen at one time: all twenty-three boys who worked there. They talked me into showing them my scar. They ooo'd and ahhh'd with sympathy for me because my privates were still black and blue.

"I bet that really messed up your game playing with your boys," Scotty said, crowding in to see, too.

I ducked that question by asking my boys why I hadn't seen them in weeks. "I can understand it if it was one or two of you, but with none of you coming over I feel like maybe I did something wrong."

"We wanted to come over to visit you, Louie," Daryl said, "but since Tommy's parents took him home

for a month we felt we better stay away a month, too.”

“Just how the hell do you expect me to get well faster if I can't chase your trouble-making little asses around for exercise,” I laughed, relieved it was all a misunderstanding.

The boys laughed. They knew I was on the road to recovery.

## 22. A Meeting of Chance

I was in my own room again, sleeping with my lover-boy Keha. Tommy was back, my radio was on day and night and I spent my time talking to tired drivers. Keha had put Tommy to bed for me, then joined me in bed when the Wild Indian called the Roamer base on his pass-by.

“Go ahead, driver,” Keha said. “You have the Little Indian on this base. My old man is monitoring with me.”

“Who did you say I have there?” the Wild Indian asked, not sure he'd heard right.

“The little Indian boy on the Roamer's base.”

“This be the Wild Indian back to you, Indian boy.”

“I think he's putting me on, Dad,” Keha said to me before he keyed the mike. “Why don't you get off the slab to let me see if you're a genuine Indian,” Keha laughed. “I'm a real blanket-ass myself.”

“Give me directions, Chief, so I can pull in to pow-wow with you,” the Wild Indian told my Indian boy. I took the mike to talk the man in.

“I'm off-a the boulevard, if-n ya got the coffee on.”

“Shit,” Keha giggled on me, “that driver's got one of the biggest Okie accents I've ever heard.”

“Get your chin out of my chest.” I snapped the elastic band on his unders. “Get some bottoms on. What can a strange driver say if you're running around naked.”

“Nothing,” Keha said, cutting me off. He ran into the other room. “If he's really a wild Indian he will not give my nudity a thought.”

A big man in his very early twenties was shown into my room. He was red-skinned, with braided brown-black hair and gray eyes the exact same color of Keha's. I immediately knew this is what Keha would look like when he grew up. He held a straight-brimmed hat in his had. He was dressed in Levi's, picture shirt, and wore hand-made moccasins on his feet.

“*Walakota*,” I greeted him in Sioux.

“*Kola!*” Wild Indian greeted me back after recovering from his surprise.

Keha came out of the other room and saw the other man was a real Indian. I said a full sentence in Sioux to send Keha to get some food and coffee for our visitor: “*Keha, wotuhan otuhan sepe mini-mini.*” The Indians both laughed at me, and then Keha rushed off in his unders.

“That's my foster son,” I said proudly. “He's really the sun in my life.”

“A fine looking boy. My name is Lone Elk, but just call me Wild Indian.”

Lone Elk yawned a lot. He was tired, ate lightly and then was grateful of my offer to bunk down for an hour, a day or a week. Keha showed him to the driver's room, then came back to crawl into bed with me.

Three hours later Keha was sleeping in my arms. I was listening to the night calls on the CB set. Lone Elk came into my room to tell me he was leaving. He stared down affectionately at the naked sleeper.

“That's some son you have there. I would sure like to visit here again with you both,” Lone Elk said. He took a couple of well-worn photos out of his chain-down wallet and put them on the night table next to me.

“Me and Keha will always be happy to see your smile, Wild Indian,” I told him. “Keha said he would like to talk more Sioux with you.” I picked up the pictures to look at them, then slowly, carefully told the older boy, “The first word I learned in Sioux was Wososo. Keha didn't talk much, but the first few months of riding with me he was desperately searching for someone. You should of seen this little fart when I found him. He was so small and helpless he made me feel like I was raising a baby.”

Wososo was the name of their old uncle. I gave Lone Elk the date of my finding the boy, its location and Keha's age. Both Lone Elk and I knew Keha and he were brothers; now all the moves were up to him. He had to have time to think what was best for his little brother now that he'd found him. He squeezed my free hand warmly and left.

Saturday was lovely, with all of the boys running in and out of my bedroom. Outside the deep rumble of a truck being pulled out, the whine of my own turbo-charged Pete pulling in later, even later a strange motor idling until the pyrometer was cooled enough to shut it off.

“Daddy, this Indian man wants to see you,” Tommy shouted, dragging Lone Elk in by the hand. “Is he Chuckie Indian's Indian uncle?”

“No, honey, he's a friend,” I said gently. “Will you call Keha for me?” Tommy ran out to get Keha while I sat up in my bed, wondering if Lone Elk had come to take my lover-boy away from me. I flipped the switch to order coffee for the trucker.

“I just stopped to visit a while,” Lone Elk said quietly. “I brought some more pictures for Keha.”

“Here's Chuckie Indian,” Tommy said, rushing in with Keha in tow. “Ben's here. Can I play now?”

“Sure, hon,” I said to Tommy. “Keha, you remember the Wild Indian from last week?”

“Sure,” Keha said, taking the pictures I handed him. “Gosh, we sure are a lot of ragged-assed kids in this picture.” He looked at Lone Elk. “Have you seen these boys recently?”

“Yes... I see those kids.”

“How's this boy they call Peter? His real name's Hoka, the Badger.”

“He died last year, Keha.” When Lone Elk said this Keha burst into tears, damning the school for denying the boy the warmth he needed to survive.

Lone Elk would not tell Keha he was his brother. He did not have the heart to ruin the boy's home of two years or hurt the man who loved his brother. He watched me kiss the tears off the boy's cheeks, then he asked permission to visit again.

“I'm getting nervous with all your father's sitting around here,” Scotty said to Keha. “I wish he would try to drive again and get out of my thinning hair.”

“Dennis is supposed to take a short run north,” Keha said. “Maybe I can talk my dad into going with Dennis this trip. Once he sees he's well enough to drive then he will take his own truck out again.”

The next morning I was laying in bed after a late-night session with Keha when Di rushed into the room. Since Keha had over-slept, she had, too.

“Wake up, wake up, Chuckie,” she said angrily. “You over-slept everything because you and Dad were probably gaying off.”

“Shush up or you'll wake Dad.”

I'd woke up from her first shrill word of accusation. My ears hurt. I pulled on my robe, slippers, got my I.D. and car keys to take my little girl to school. She stayed angry with me all the way because when I put my foot on the brake my robe gaped open, letting me almost expose myself.

“Remind me next time you're late to get up ten minutes early to put my suit and tie on for you, hon,” I told her nicely. “I sure don't know why you're nagging me about almost showing something you've seen

before.”

“You're nasty. You're always nasty. You even let other boys run around naked and nasty, too.” She slammed the car door when she got out at her school to run to the play ground twenty minutes early to play with her friends – all girls.

I waited until she was safely inside the playground, then drove home where my Keha waited for me to return.

“You're going out with Dennis.”

“I sure hope so, son,” I said, giving my lover-boy a bye-bye kiss. Tommy ran up for his kiss, too.

Two miles of riding shot gun in the old Mack was almost too much for me. Dennis told me it might go better if I sat on the air seat and drove. This was better. I was a little embarrassed at having to be boosted into the high cab, but I slipped down the trapeze looking good getting out of the truck. On my return my boys wouldn't let me drive alone.

Gabe went my first trip, Donnie the second, Gato and Nando the third and Hernando came with me the fourth trip. I'd always thought of Hernando as a very straight boy, even if Daryl said he wasn't. I only drove eight to twelve hour days, resting my sore hip often by laying in the sleeper. On the second night out Hernando copied me, then flopped face-down and told me to bone him good.

Gabe and Donnie stayed with Tommy for me to give Keha a chance to run on my first long haul since my surgery. For the first time Keha could drive. We returned a week before the start of summer, and then I took Tommy and Cha-Cha with me; we were happy Tommy didn't pee on us the nights we had to sleep in the truck.

## 23. The First Cruise of *Budding Buddies*

Time is a great healer. I was pretty well, at last. I had taken Tommy to the shop with me, because Keha was out with his friend Donnie doing things – what kind of things I never asked as long as they didn't get in trouble doing them.

At the shop, when I tried to help Benito with a job, Scotty sent Hernando over to take my place.

“Shame on you, Louie,” Scotty said. “One day without your cane and you're already trying to work. Why don't you take the boys camping, or a treat of a boat trip for all of the work they done, now you can limp around stoutly?”

“They did that work for themselves, Scotty, but you do have a great idea at that.

“Can we go to La Paz?” Tommy asked excitedly.

“La Paz? No, that's too far.”

“That place after Tijuana is nice,” Scotty said. “The place you told me is a fishing town.”

“Ensenada. Yes, we can go that far and have fun.” I took Tommy into the toy shop where boys were already showing up to go to work.

Tommy ran over to sand and shape his little race cars, and he wanted me to help him with them because he was a little high thinking about a trip to some place he'd never been before. I sat next to him on a stool and told the boys they had to boost production now, because we would spend the first two weeks of summer drifting south.

“Hoy, Luis,” Rubin said, coming into the shop to find out how I felt driving again. He and Gabe's father Juan were the main supports of this venture. They always helped on outings or weekend sales when we needed them. “What I hear you planning for *los niños*?”

I told him, then asked what he had on for the following weekends.

“Si, we are selling at the art fairs.”

Lar and Rick volunteered to stay back and sell and work, and so did some of the older boys who dated.

Donnie, Keha and Daryl came into the shop looking like the cat that had swallowed the canary: following them in was Kevin.

“What are you doing back from that fancy German school?” I asked, amazed – but guessing why he'd left.

“Heck with those places,” Kevin said. “I want to stay here near you and go to American schools.” He hugged me tightly, his eyes on the verge of tears, misty.

“My God,” I said, “you've grown a foot since I've seen you last.”

Kevin undid the top button of his pants and pulled them open to look down the front of his briefs.

“Nope... it's still the same size.” I helped him look at himself, to the hoots, hollers and jeers mingled with laughter of the other boys.

Rubin smiled tolerantly. He was used to the outrageous behavior of the teens who gathered in my shop.

“You're right,” I confirmed. “That's still the same size.”

“Them bongos sure filled out finer,” Cha said. “I want to play them to make sure they haven't gone out of tune.”

I took Tommy, Donnie, Gabe, Daryl and Kevin to the house. Kevin wanted to talk to me so when Keha came home on his motor scooter he entertained the other boys while I walked with Kevin on the beach.

“I don't know what to do, Louie,” Kevin said. “My father knows I am on my way home, but I don't want to go home just yet.”

“Do you want me to phone your dad and ask if you can stay the night?”

“That's no good. When I stayed with you on the boat he was angry at me when I got home. He accused me of fucking around with you and the other boys.” Kevin looked at me a full minute. “He knows you like boys. He said he didn't mind if I had sex with you as long as I told him about it while he was fucking me himself.”

“And?”

“I told him I would tell if we did, but that nothing happened and he was wrong in his surmises.”

“Do you know that your father's not had a drink in months? He did, however, do something else. He got a boyfriend.”

“Are you sure? How old is he? What's his name?”

“His name's David. He's fifteen from what I understand. Your father also told the doctor it was your business who you love or do things with as long as you're willing lovers. So, come on, Kevin, let me take you home. I know you will be pleasantly surprised.”

I took Kevin home. I sat in the living room talking to David while Kev talked to his dad in the other room. I found out a lot about David's affair, since he seemed to know so much about my affairs.

“Devon told me to be honest with you, because you know all about him. So I will tell you the first time Devon was pretty rough on me, because he's so big and as you know he could be pretty heavy handed. But he's changing every day for the better. Are you Kevin's boyfriend?”

“No, David, I'm not.”

“Too bad. Devon was hoping Kevin could be your special friend.” Then the boy's long, slender tongue licked his lips sensually, came out far enough to touch his own nose-tip. He watched my reaction out of the corner of his eye to see if he lit me up.

“You seem to be happy here, David,” I said, trying not to get excited. “What did your parents think of your wanting to live here?”

“Nothing. I don't have any parents, so Devon is my foster-father. Don't you think that's kinky?”

“Not in the least,” I smiled, thinking of my own little turtle and me. “As long as you're happy with yourself and what you're doing it's not kinky.” I noticed that Devon and Kevin were waiting for us.

Kevin ran to me, gave me a big hug and told me excitedly he had permission to go sailing with us.

I took Kevin home, and found myself in a storm of delight, with Donnie, Keha, Daryl, Gabe and Kevin all in bed with me.

“Louie, will you do me again?” Kevin asked, crawling over two of the boys to lay face down on me.

“I really like it when you shove your little self in me.”

“That's not his little self,” Keha said. “That's his mousie.”

He was hogging Donnie on the other side of the bed. “You have to ask my dad things right by asking him if he'll let his mousie play your bongo.” The other boys were happy they were there for Kevin's first bedding in my bed.

“Can your mousie practice up my bongo?” Kevin asked a little hesitantly, with a touch of embarrassment. “Again?”

“Do you see what your return has done to my poor old daddy?” Keha teased. “He's just not the man he was before his operation because he can't do any of us face down.”

I separated Keha from Donnie, rolled Keha on his tummy and did him from on top.

“Now, that's my daddy!” Keha said breathlessly. “He fucked a whole fistful of cum out of me.” He showed everyone his hand, playfully trying to get Donnie to lick up the little puddle in his palm, until I wiped his hand clean with his discarded T-shirt.

“Now, that's what I call kinky,” I teased, nipping on the end of my lover-boy's nose.

“Nose-nipping's kinkier.”

“Snot either,” I teased back. “This is kinkier.” And I licked the residue off my Indian boy's palm.

“Now, suck the cum out of my shirt,” Keha said, stuffing the damp spot in my mouth.

The bed couldn't stand up under our siege and sprang a leak.

We drained the bed, patched the leak, then slept on the floor the rest of the night.



Early in the morning Tommy ran in with his wet unders. He hadn't had an accident in a long time so he was very distraught and embarrassed. He dropped his unders on me.

“Tommy, why do you always put your choners in my face after you've peed them?”

“You lucked out not sleeping with him like you were going to,” Gabe said. “You'd of woke in a pee bath.”

The boys had to help me up. I was sore in the hip from sleeping on the floor. The sexy games hadn't helped my hip much, either. We showered in very hot water, hoping it would help.

The boys joked, poked and soaped each other when they washed me and Tommy. I noticed Tommy was very happy from all the attention. When I thought about it I realized it had been a long time since Tommy had been sullen or mean. Tommy asked the boys to hold me so I wouldn't fall down. With the throbber-shower beating on us, he dropped to his knees, and in time to the pulse of the beating water gave me one of the fastest head jobs in the world.

“I have wanted to do that to you for a long time,” Tommy said with a smile after he swallowed my load.

I helped him to his feet. I dried him, oiled him, powdered him, then took him into his bedroom where I helped him fix his wet bed. The other boys followed to see what I would do to Tommy. When I laid him flat back on his freshly made bed, to the others' gasps and Tommy's delight, I sucked him back while the five boys watched.

The last count was twenty-one people, counting me. The boys set up camp in our home to get the boat supplied and cleaned up for our trip.

“Two by two we enter the ark of love!” Daryl shouted to Cha-Cha. “This first week your bongos are mine.”

“Bull!” Cha said. “We change each night like las' time.” Nando and Ed sat on the edge of the boat laughing at the younger lovers. They had had something solid going between them for years, so they thought this was funny-cute, listening to the kids working out their differences. Ed was still the girl – except now and then when Nando still liked to know what kind of a girl Ed thought he was.

“What are you faggots laughing at?” Daryl shouted at them. “Everyone saw you two in the corner last night. We heard you talking, too: 'Oh, Ed, you big brute, what you think of my blond curls?'” – in a falsetto tease. “How about the way I bat my lashes at you, sweethips?”

“Es pretty cute,” Ed laughed. “Es big chi-chis, and he grunt when I rubbed them hard.”

“No, what's funny is when you told him how fine his *panocha* is,” Gabe said sarcastically. “So when you *putos* gonna suck my hot chili?”

A couple of years earlier this would have been gang-fighting words. Ed and Nando dove into the water, swam to shore and closed in on Gabe, who was making towards me for protection, but he had problems getting the raft he was on through the waves. Nando dived on Gabe's back. Ed walked around and forced Gabe's mouth down on his hard, strangling the Spanish cuss words that flowed so freely off the boy's tongue, as I moved down the beach to come to Gabe's rescue.

“No, don't stop us, Luis!” Ed said, holding Gabe's head tightly in his lap, while Nando already had humped himself down solid on Gabe's back. “We're having him turns.”

I made Ed let go of Gabe's head so he could answer for himself if he wanted them to stop or not. “Es fine, Luis,” Gabe said to me, then smiled up at Ed: “Push on my head. Force me.”

“No, gentler,” I said. But they were being gentle. “I don't like you boys playing too rough with each other.” If it had been real force I would have stopped them, but since they were being gentle and just talking a fantasy I let them continue, although I stayed close in case their fantasy came to life.

Dennis walked out the back door never expecting to see sex in broad daylight right out on the beach.

He turned to go back into the house.

"It's alright, Denny," I said to greet my youngest driver. I liked him a lot. He was tall, slim, muscular. "What's your need, son?"

"Wild Indian told me to tell you if you need a new driver for Hal's truck he would love to have the job," he said, handing me a note on a napkin.

Later I gave the note to T.C. to hire him.

On the sail south Tommy asked every half hour if we were going to get there now.

"Gabe, can you take Tommy below to play Monopoly or sexy or something with him?" Keha said after the fourth time. Tommy's interruptions bugged him because he was trying to learn the sails and navigation. It took us fourteen hours before we finally dropped anchor off Rosarito Beach. It was late. I ordered the crew to bed.

Wet, hot kisses from impatient lips woke me in the morning. I was the only one who'd slept in. Dress for the day was swimsuits, because the inside cabin temperature was already in the 80s.

We moved the boat closer to shore, out of danger from beaching or getting filled with the greedy little sand fleas that coated the shore like a second layer of living sand. The boys played tag on the beach, made friends with the other Americans who had come to vacation there. I stayed on or at least near the trimaran, of course.

"Let's split to where we can fish," Keha said, wading out to the boat with about half of the boys. "Alright, Daddy?"

"We'll spend the day here," I told them. "In the morning we can sail down to Ensenada. If you really want to fish, put the motor on the dory – and don't forget the life jackets."

They came back with enough fish to fry on the beach that night. Later we moved the boat away from shore, and the next morning started sailing south again.

We passed Ensenada, voting to stop there on the way back, time permitting. A little farther on we found a nice quiet place to moor, and there we spent a careless, hectic week. We swam naked, had luaus on the beach. Soon even blond, light Daryl was beginning to blend with the Mexican boys.

"Essay, mon," Kevin teased, coming up to hug me. "I'm a Mex. Look at me. I even have a tan wankie."

"A sunburned one like mine," Daryl said, holding himself and moaning with pretend pain: he'd been playing this game with me ever since I'd demanded the light-skinned boys use sun-screen on their privates.

Hearing Daryl in pain, the other boys rushed to his aid and dunked him. The fastest cure for every complaint was dunking. Everyone got dunked twice a day at least, including me. A lot of sex got started this way, or by one of my horny boys helping another with the sun tan stuff.

Right then Nano was putting lotion on Kevin's back. He spread it thickly on the boy's bottom, along the curve.

"Don't forget to butter his crack, Nando," Gabe teased. "I always butter Daryl good in there."

Nando globbed some lotion into Kevin's crack, smiled as he watched it run down, thick glue-like, then flopped face-down over Kevin to rub it in as deep as he could push himself, to the roar of laughter of all of us sitting on the foredeck.

Seven days after reaching our little paradise I got my crew into bathing suits, life jackets and safety lines for the trip north. We hoisted sail, cleaned ship as we worked slowly, leisurely homeward. Not too far from Ensenada I saw a boy and a girl out in a leaky little boat with a rag tied on a branch for a sail. The little girl bailed, the boy smiled and waved at us and fished. We pulled into the wind and dropped

sail to visit with them. Their little boat was old, unpainted, uncaulked. It didn't look safe out that far.

“Nando, ask if they have life jackets. Then if you boys are willing to part with your morning's catch, I think these children can use your fish more than we can.”

“Why can't we stop to fix their boat?” Carlo asked. “We have paint and that white crack stuff.”

We towed the old wooden dory to a smooth section of beach not too far from the harbor. We got everything ready to caulk the boat in the morning. I sent Gabe, Nando, Cha and Pablo with the children and our fish while the rest of us rinsed under the boat showers and the cooks for the day did their kitchen thing.

Early in the morning, after a hardy, shore-shaking pillow fight, some hurt feelings and a big breakfast, we were ready to work. We came on deck to find a whole line of smiling children had come to watch us.

“Cha-Cha,” I said, “you tell those kids if they charged their friends to watch us work I want my share of the money.”

Cha translated for me and the children laughed.

It didn't take too much work to get their boat in a lot better shape than it had been in. We made them a decent sail out of the parachute tarp I'd used to cover our dory when it was in the cradles on deck.

The little boy and his sister worked very hard helping us with their boat. They told my kids that sometimes sailing people stopped to buy fish, take pictures of them for a peso.

When we finished painting the last bare piece of wood the little boy offered me a handful of pesos. He told me he'd made this from selling the fish we'd given him the day before. We couldn't take the money, of course. I patted his cheek instead, kissed his sister's forehead, then told Pancho to tell the children we would stay over until the next day to help them get their boat in the water.

The little boy yelled at me. I turned with the wavelets lapping over my feet, and he rushed into my arms and hugged me tightly.

Hours later I was play-fighting nine boys in the lounge. A yell from shore broke up our fight and stopped our four cooks arguing about what we should have for dinner.

“Señor, señor!” was being shouted over and over again. Cha and Julio ran onto deck. They told me the children had returned with their mother and food for us. I stood on deck while Keha, Nando and Gabe took the dory through the three-foot surf to get them.

“Since you will not take their money their mother brought us food,” Julio told me with a big smile. “She said men and boys like food best, anyway.”

She did bring food, food in three baskets, enough for fifty people. Burritos, tamales, flour-and-corn tortillas, Mexican corn chips, salsa, carnitos and a tasty fish dish. It was a comfortable fiesta because most of the gang boys spoke fluent Spanish and the visitors tried to speak English back for translation to me and my five non-Spanish-speaking boys. The mother loved all of my children, but when she found Gil was a real live Spanish-speaking boy with blue eyes, blond hair and a fantastic golden-white tan, she wanted to keep him and raise him as her own.

After dinner my galley crew loaded the three baskets with American canned goods, flour and sodas. The boys that helped the children home with our fish two days before now went home with them with these baskets.

## 24. Our Return

In the morning I was up after a couple of hours sleep, and the reason was that my boys got real horny

after the fiesta with all the excitement, record-playing and good food. I woke the others. We went out to find the same crowd of children hanging around to see what us gringos were going to do with the dory today. The boys helped me right it, fix the makeshift mast, then put the little fisherpersons in it. I gave each a life-jacket and a kiss. My boys gave them presents of line, hooks, sinkers, spinners, and a pole with reel, too.

With our boat under full sail, a favorable breeze, most of the boys sitting on the windward side, me at the helm, Carlo came over with Gil. They leaned back against my knees to help me steer.

"Why aren't you sitting at the rail with the others getting your feet wet?" I asked them.

"We will stay here and talk with you," Carlo said. "Did you know I fucked that girl last night?"

Gil giggled.

"She's nine years old and she told us that she fucked boys if they came with their fathers because her mother's a whore."

"That's a surprise," I said, not surprised. "Now, if you'd told me you were trying to fuck her brother..."

"Naw," Carlo interrupted. "*Estupido* Gil let him fuck him while me and the girl laughed at them."

"I bet they laughed at you first when you fucked the girl."

"How'd you know that?" asked Gil.

"Because I know you and Carlo," I smiled.

When I'm with children I never let anything they do surprise me. Children have a habit of doing the funny and the cute. Most of the time they end up doing a combination of the funny and cute, and that can be an enriching experience to any man's soul.

Pulling even with San Diego, the Coast Guard stopped us as we were racing along at twelve knots. They boarded because they saw a lot of dark-skinned children on deck. I had all my boys' permission slips and papers ready in my brief case. In less than an hour we were flying along under full sail again.

I sent the younger boys to bed at last. Arnold, Gemmi, Salvatore and Pancho stayed up with me to help moor the boat when we got in. I was surprised, since Pancho was the type of fourteen-year-old that everyone thinks of when you say Mexican. He was a fat, happy, slow boy who would always put off until tomorrow what he should of done today, but now he came to spell me at the helm.

"Es too bad, Luis, you not better enough to sit on me," he said. "I am never have the chance for a trip with your truck on you." Pancho was a straight boy.

"Does it have to be my truck on me, or can I send you out with any truck to make you happy?"

"Any truck make me happy," Pancho said. He just wanted to make sure I knew he wanted a ride that summer.

When I got back T.C. told me Lone Elk was out with Hal's truck. Scotty didn't need me at the shop and there was nothing for me to do except get my truck on the road. Gabe volunteered to watch Tommy if I wanted to take Keha and Donnie with me.

"Oh, no." the other boys complained. "If you leave now you won't be back for the Fourth of July."

"Take me and Daryl," Cha said. "But only if you stop over in a motel for some of the nights. I did not like how fast you made our trip last time."

"Alright, loves," I said, looking over my schedule, "here's a three-day trip to Phoenix and Las Vegas."

"Vegas is fun," Daryl said. "Phoenix is too hot."

"Send me and Chollo," Gato said with a smile. "We don't mind how hot Phoenix gets."

"Es right," Chollo confirmed.

"I am wanting to know," Pancho said, "if I am able to take the Gil on the truck with me."

"Sure, Pancho, Brice is due to pull out today. He will take you and Gil, but you might miss the Fourth of July."

“Brice will get us back in time for the Fourth of July,” Gil said. “We’ll go.”

Daryl giggled, laughed, then fell on the floor in hysterics. He finally giggled out that I should send Salvadore with Brice. Sal was always mugging, behind his back, the gestures and walk of the tall, thin, sandy-haired, swishy truck driver who had just turned nineteen.

“You fucker,” Sal yelled, flopping face-down on Daryl’s back because Daryl was face-down kicking and pounding the floor, “this is how I’ll ride with Sean!”

For a straight boy, Sal took his time letting the zippered area of his pants press tightly against the thin Levi-covered buns that were wiggling provocatively with laughter.

“I had high hopes for you, Sal, or is it Sally? Aren’t you the boy who’s always telling me how everyone else is the *puto* ?” I playfully spanked him.

“So what?” Sal said. “We’re dressed.”

I pulled Sal up, turned him slowly around the room so everyone saw the fullness that was rapidly shrinking in the boy’s baggy, loose fatigue pants. We laughed, because now we knew the true cause of Sal’s homophobic outbursts.

Brice took Gil and Pancho, Sean took Sal for a two-day run to San Francisco, I took Daryl and Cha on the Phoenix-Las Vegas run with me. I returned July the second. Three hours later Lone Elk pulled in with a long blast of his air horns for the boys to get their scooters and self-pumping trollys out of his truck’s way.

“You boys move those motored horses,” Lone Elk said. “Mine’s a self-motored horse,” Gato shouted, picking up his dirt bike. “You see how I motor it with pedal-power?”

“Walakota Keha,” Lone Elk said to his little brother, “it’s summer vacation and I was wondering if you would like to make a trip with me.”

“You’ll have to talk that over with my dad. I’m Tom’s little father when Dad’s gone, so we would have to find someone to look after him if I went on a trip with you.”

Lone Elk followed Keha into the house, then in my bedroom where he gave me the log sheets and three certified checks for local C.O.Ds.

“How was your trip, Elk?” I asked the red-eyed driver. I’m glad to see you made it back early enough to rest up for the Fourth. You can bunk in the little room.”

“Thanks, Lou.” He asked if he could take Keha – and Tommy, too – on his next run.

“Tommy can prove too much for you in a truck. He starts the trip asking when we’re going to get there every ten minutes ten minutes after you pull out. But if you’re serious, I leave the fifth with a two-truck trip to New York, a pick-up in Jersey for Florida, and we have some in-state hauls there. If you want to be the second truck I’ll let you take Tommy and Keha, or if not I will get Phillip to take care of Tommy.”

“Who are you taking?” Nando asked. He was lying on the floor watching *The Price is Right*. “Can you take me and Ed?”

“I’ll take you and Kevin. I already promised Kevin this trip and if Tommy gets too much for Elk you will have to ride with Elk, because Kevin has to stay in my truck with me. That’s a condition his father put on him.”

“How long are we going to be gone for?” Kevin asked.

“I don’t know yet. Bring three sets of outer and under- clothes, socks, a jacket, extra pair of shoes and your grooming aids. Don’t forget your toothbrushes... Nando, did you hear me?”

“Yes, I heard toothbrush” – in a girl’s voice – “Is it alright if I bring my face cream, too?”

“Bring anything you want, sweetheart,” I laughed. “Anything that turns you on.”

The Fourth of July was always beautiful. I would always bring back fireworks in small quantities from the mid-west states where they were sold all year round. Pinwheels, bricks of sparklers, fountains, flaming cones. Then the most popular item with my boys were firecrackers that I rationed out to use right then, and not later.

The boys would bend the ends of the sparklers to make twirlers out of them. Daryl always had to have something in each hand, and now he was happily twirling away.

“Darling Darly,” Brice teased him, “when you're done with one of them, you can come here and twirl this.” Brice was a teaser, but he was at the same time totally infatuated with the boy and scared to let him get within shouting distance. Daryl flipped Brice the birdie.

The city fireworks were set off between our home and a long curve of the beach. With a clear night sky the bursting sky-rockets reflected off the water, doubling the color of that celestial spectacular and the ooos and ahhs from my boys.

“Woweeow!” – a hushed whisper at my elbow – “Four of them at a time!” He held his breath for the next burst of beauty. I looked down at the wide-eyed boy's upturned face. It was Gil, whose big blue eyes mirrored every detail of each event in miniature.

## 25. Long Hauls

The boys who were trucking out in the morning stayed up all night from the double excitement of the celebration and the 4:00 am departure. The drivers Brice, Elk, Ken and Dave, were all asleep by midnight.

Keha flopped heavily on the bed next to me. “Daddy, I haven't been able to get Tommy to sleep. He's been drinking iced tea with sugar and regular sodas all night and he's really hypering around, and I just know he's going to pee up the sleeper with me in it.”

“What time is it?” I asked.

“Three in the morning,” Keha said sullenly. “Now what are you going to do about Tommy?”

“Put his bath kit in my truck, honey. I'll take him the first leg of the journey.” I yawned, trying to bite my lover-boy's nose when I shut my mouth. I got Keha to pull me off the bed. I used the bathroom, then went in the kitchen for a cold drink and a candy bar. On the way back I was met by ten boys who ate up my candy bar, drank my soda, then shucked their jammies or unders to squeeze into the shower with me.

“What's going on here?” I said, backed into a corner by the press of boys.

“Nothing's on,” Chollo said. “We're all naked. This is your wake-up party.”

“So do blow-jobs,” giggled Daryl.

“If it's a person's horn,” Gemmi said loudly, “Darling Darly always knows exactly what to do.”

“Daryl, wake up Louie,” Nando said. “We'll watch.”

All of the trucks loaded at the same place. I put Tommy to bed in my sleeper before I pulled out of the loading dock. Kevin sat on the passenger's seat, determined to stay up as long as he could for his first truck trip.

In the other truck Keha sat Indian fashion on the dog house between Lone Elk and Nando, with the CB squelched back trying to keep it from blasting them out of the cab if I talked with my own powerful set so close.

“Why did you want me to ride with you?” Keha asked.

“Because you remind me of what my little brother... what he might be like now.” Lone Elk was talking very casually, trying to keep the excitement out of his voice, keep his hands from touching the youth he so badly wanted to take in his arms and cry over, hug.

When I passed the cab-over I blasted the horn, gave a trucker's hand signal to pick up the pace – I didn't want to advertise this over the radio for a smokey to pick us up in a speed trap down the road.

“Are you going to be able to stay up with my dad?” Keha laughed. “All the way cross country?”

“I will try my best, little brother. My name's Lone Elk, not Slow Elk.”

Nando laughed. “The last trip I made, Luis did a sixty mile hour average. He said he could of made it in fifty hours but he had to sleep and straighten out his log books.”

“Break for the Lonely Roamer,” Keha said.

“Go Little Indian.”

They could hear a lot of boy giggling in the background. “Naughty naughtys, Daddy,” Keha teased. “What are you doing to Kevin in your truck?”

“Nothing, hon,” I said, tickling the boy on my lap into another round of jubilant laughter. “He's learning how to steer.”

“Are you teaching him how to shift, too?”

“Negatory, morning glory. I do all of the shifting in this truck when my boy's steering, don't you know.” Kevin and I laughed. “Is that what you're trying to find out about, Little Indian Boy?”

The background giggling got louder; Keha and Nando burst out laughing. Lone Elk didn't know why, nor why they next started giggles of their own.

There's no harm in letting a child feel confident in himself even if the actions are seemingly beyond the child's years. In our age-structured society, where potential only comes with 'age', all potential is stifled out of the child before he can realistically work towards the goals that will further his human potential.

Parents, teachers and psychologists put children in classrooms where they teach them stuff that does not interest them for more hours a day than a child wants to be there.

When you ask a child what he wants to be when he grows up the child is lost in what is dramatic, romantic, heroic from the last TV show he watched. The right question should have been, “What can I help you to grow up to be?” That's the only way we can help children to fully grow to *their* potential, not ours, and not stifle them with things they will never care about no matter how many hours you send them to classes to teach them what you think they ought to know.

I'd said all this to Lone Elk the night before. He cleared his throat. He was inclined to agree with me. “Do one of your boys want to drive for a while like Kevin's driving, or are you sacking out soon?”

“We're going to sack out soon, leaving you to drive alone, Elk.” Another round of giggles.

“There's no peeking in this sleeper, Elk,” Nando teased. “I don't want you to see my Mexican chili.”

“I thought everyone was supposed to bring pajamas.”

“We did,” Keha said, “but we don't sleep in them. I always sleep naked.”

Lone Elk knew that from his very first day when he'd woke from a three-hour nap and come in and found me talking on the CB and a naked sleeping Keha with his limbs wrapped around me and his face buried in my shoulder. Later he'd seen some thirty boys come in and out and knew for a fact that no less than six made love with me.

For the next hour Keha and Nando talked to me on the CB and tried to get Lone Elk to pass my truck so they could see the shirted, pants-less Kevin on my lap where each bounce of the air seat worked my hard into the boy's bottom and, with my free hand, I shifted Kevin's shifter. Both of Lone Elk's riders had experienced miles of riding that way. But Lone Elk wouldn't pass.

Finally Nando stripped down to his unders. He moved off his seat so Keha could use it to undress

instead of trying to do it in the confined sleeper space.

“Now,” Keha said, standing nude, “we'll leave you alone, Elk.” Lone Elk didn't slap Nando's cotton-clad bottom but he did slap at Keha's bare buns.

“Rest well, little brother,” Elk said softly.

At about the same time I blasted hotly into the small, tight bottom that had been pressed down solidly on my lap for over an hour and got my fingers reciprocally sprayed with boy-lotion. Kevin checked to see what I'd extracted from his shifter. He licked it off my fingers.

“You really ought to be up there getting a nap,” I told him, “but first tell me how Tommy's doing in his rubber pants. See if you can get him to pee in this bottle for me, then you can sleep a couple of hours without worry.

“He's already wet himself,” Kevin reported, watching Tommy's rubber pants fill fuller. “He's floating in 'em now.”

I radioed Lone Elk to tell him I was stopping. We pulled the big rigs carefully to the side of the road, for the shoulders were soft, then I woke Tommy and helped him get carefully out the side door without his rubber pants leaking. I drained him on the running board while Kevin tore up the sleeping bed looking for wet spots which didn't exist. I washed, oiled, powdered and kneaded Tommy where the rubber pants had cut off his circulation, then slipped him into a pair of white cotton briefs and stuck him back into the sleeper.

“Alright, Lovie Boy,” I smiled. “You ready to nappy-nap with Kevin? I'll get you both up in two hours to have eaties with me.”

Kevin looked nervously at the white unders. “What if he pees again?”

“He won't,” I said hopefully. “You both kissy me nighties then tuck each other in for me.” I collected my kisses and watched the boys settle down.

“There's two more in my sleeper,” Lone Elk said, “that would like you to tuck them in, too.”

The two giggling boys were waiting for me. “Is it time to switch me for Tommy?” Nando asked.

“Not yet. I came back to tuck you in.”

I kissed both boys in two places. I had to give Keha an extra long kiss in the second place because a spurt of boy-lotion shot out when I dragged my tongue from his lips to his hips.

“What took you so long, Daddy Lou?” Tommy asked when I got in my truck. “You've been gone forever.”

Tommy talked Kevin to sleep, then he came out of the sleeper to talk to me and help me drive. He was disappointed when he found both boys in the other truck were asleep. He contented himself with talking to Wild Indian, getting more and more excited as I nipped on his ears and nuzzled his neck.

“Tom-tom heap good driver,” Elk said.

“Thanks,” Tommy replied. He didn't want to tell Elk I was doing the steering and he was only helping me, because he under- or over-steers the semi. “When I ride with you, do I get to help you drive, too?”

“Sure, Tom-tom,” Elk said. “As long as you want to drive it, it's yours.” I made a mental note to tell Elk not to trust Tommy with the wheel unaided.

We stopped to eat in Glendale, Nevada. We lost \$5 in the slots on the way in; on the way out Tommy stole a dime from the tip money I'd left the waitress for one more try on the one- armed bandit. He hit the \$5 jackpot. Tommy cried because I scooped the money out of the change-catcher and would not let him play again. At the truck I put the change in his pocket, then kissed his tears away. Nando and Kevin got in my truck, leaving Tommy to ride with Keha and Lone Elk.

“When do we stop again?” Lone Elk asked me.

“Just this side of Grand Platte. If you get tired, let Keha drive. He's good enough behind the wheel to



let you sack out in the sleeper.”

“You don't drive sitting on Louie's lap?” Elk asked.

“I started out that way, and sometimes I'll drive on his lap when I feel babyish or want my dad to baby me,” Keha smiled, pulling Tommy onto his lap. He held him sideways against himself. He kissed Tommy's cheek. “I like that a lot, but again this is my big baby, too.”

Tommy was undressing. “Are you going back to bed?” Elk asked.

“Not yet,” Tommy said. “I have to drive first.”

Keha wanted to say something about how Tommy drove but he didn't dare without giving away too much of my love with boys. He compromised: “He likes to drive sitting in his unders,” he said, and stopped Tommy from taking off his briefs. “You don't mind him driving in his unders, do you?”

“No,” Elk smiled. “Keha, I have slept in the driver's room long enough to know you boys love with Lou. I think a lot of him and owe him a great debt.”

“Did you borrow money from Daddy Lou?” Tommy asked.

“No, Tom-tom, it's a different kind of debt.

“If it's because he gave you this job, forget it,” Keha said. “My dad is not the type of person who considers what he does for other people as an obligation for them. All he expects them to do is their job.”

“This is a different kind of obligation, Keha.” Lone Elk was a *wicasa* (a human wild and natural) who tolerates, who tries to understand others' ways even if it's not his way. It was time to tell Keha who he was. “Little brother, does the name Hehaka mean anything to you?”

“Yes,” Keha said slowly, looking at Elk. “It means Elk. It's your name.”

“What do you remember about your brother Hehaka?” Lone Elk asked gently.

“Not too much, except he had a friend named Mato and they would not let me follow them, or play with them. My brother was twice my age or older.” Recognition hit Keha with a solid shock, reality. “It's you. It is really you? I found you.”

“Your father found us both,” Elk said solemnly. “Always remember that Louie found us both. You remember a lot, little brother for a boy who was so young when I left.”

“How come you left?” Keha cried. “How come you left me?”

“I was getting into drink, little brother. I was seventeen and was told I would not get into trouble if I joined the army. So I joined the army and went to Viet Nam. I was never told our mother died or that they took you away. I almost found you, Keha, but you ran away just a few days before I got there to take you home with me. I've been looking for you for two years. I figured the best chance I'd ever have of finding you was if I was driving trucks, so I switched around driving different parts of the country, and then got this job that put me right by here three times a week.”

“I'm so happy to find you, Hehaka, I'll have to tell my father.”

“He already knows. I think he knew it from the moment he saw me. What I want you to do is stay with him until you have paid his kindness and love back.”

“How do I do that when he's always giving more of it? I just found you and now you don't want me?”

“Of course I want you, little brother. I searched two years for you, then found you loved, cared for and protected in every way by a man who knows you as a friend, a son, a lover-helper, turning into the man who sits in this truck with me. A fine, strong man.” Lone Elk paused. “You will still have me near when I'm not on the road working. You are my only family, because I couldn't take a wife until I knew for certain what had happened to you.”

Lone Elk's voice trailed off. How could he tell his brother he'd almost given up his search, thinking Keha was dead.

When Tommy found out that Keha and Elk were real brothers, he had to be blood brothers with Elk just

as he was with Keha. He slipped out of Keha's arms, took off his unders, jumped on the engine-cover to slide across and squeezed onto Lone Elk's lap.

"You better unzip," Keha said quietly. "Tommy expects you to shove your hard into his bottom."

"Why?"

"Because that's how I told him us Indians do the blood brother ceremony.

Lone Elk did as he was told. When Elk stiffened and shot a whole untapped load into him, Tommy fell back and hit Elk's chin with the back of his head. Then his head pressed back into Elk's shoulder; he was moaning from the action, the fullness in him.

"I think Tommy's passed out," Keha said, and called me to stop on the side of the road.

I talked to Tommy and checked him over. "He's alright," I told them. "He may have had a mild seizure from the excitement of being blood brothers with you. What made him do that is what I'm trying to understand." I hugged and kissed my hyper lovie-boy.

"Hehaka told me I am his own real brother," Keha said slowly.

"I'd already figured that out, baby." And then I told how I'd sort of known the minute I'd seen them together and known for a fact when I'd looked at the school pictures. "That first night you came to my room to tell me you were leaving," I said to Elk, "you looked at my Keha like a lost brother, a father or a lover would look at a boy." I smiled. I hugged around the two Indians. Tommy pressed in to get hugged, too, for after all he was the Indian blood brother by ceremony to Hehaka and Keha.

Keha's elation came slowly as he realized that I'd taken Lone Elk into my home and heart from the very first, and was very much in favor of having Hehaka stay with us until, as Hehaka said, the Great Spirit directed them to other paths on which none would brush the tracks out so the others would always be able to follow.

With the trucks back on the road I was thinking I should have taken Tommy with me. I could usually drive and do anything for Tommy that Tommy needed to have done without having to stop.

"Nando and Kevin, you boys sack out, because you both look like you need sleep." They agreed, and slipped between the seats into the sleeper.

In the other truck, Tommy fell asleep sitting next to Keha. "Why don't you put him in back?" Lone Elk asked a while later.

"He's fine here," Keha said. He often sat like that with the hyper boy to relax him.

The boys all slept as the trucks roared through Salt Lake City, then woke at the weigh-through in Evanston, Wyoming, where I let them out of the trucks to stretch and look around.

It had been a long drive from where we'd stopped last in Nevada, so the boys were hungry again. I gave them bags of snacks. They ate their way to the bottom of the bags fast, then asked for more. "More?" I teased like the man denying Oliver Twist his second helping of gruel. "More, the lads want more!" I took more out of the tool-box storage bin. "Take some to the other truck for me. My Tom-tom and Chuckie have to stay plump, too. I don't let chicken bones shoved through their cages fool me."

"What about Lone Elk?" Nando asked.

"Yes, take some stuff for Lone Elk, too."

"You sure drive fast, Lou," Kevin said, watching the country flash by after we got back on the road. Nando was lying grieyed in the sleeper because he was too heavy to sit on my lap and drive.

"You can sit on the seat next to me, Nando," I said. "Just don't try to push me off."

On my right side he interfered with my shifter, but that was nothing more than what might be called a "minor" inconvenience, if that.

Lone Elk had his hands full with hyper Tommy but he was determined on principal alone to keep him because it had been his idea to bring both boys. “How do you shut Tom-tom off, little brother?” Lone Elk asked.

“Me and Daryl can usually wear him out, or Daddy can lull him into a passive state,” Keha said, pulling Tommy back onto his lap to try to control him.

Tommy was on a total high. He'd been jumping laps for hours. “When are we going to get there, Keha? Will we stay there for the night?” Tommy asked again.

“Soon, my hoksicala.”

Elk said, “If you want to take the wheel, Keha, I will try to relax him in the sleeper.”

Keha walked behind the seat, taking control of the wheel from the left side, leaving Hehaka all of the room on the right side to get onto the doghouse and out of his way. Lone Elk sat on the other seat, then took Tommy onto his lap to try to calm him down.

Keha wished this truck had a mirror like the Peterbuilt had, what I called a peekie mirror that showed me the sleeper-action. Keha wasn't yet good enough to watch over his shoulder into the sleeper while he watched the road, two outside mirrors and everything else you have to watch driving truck. On the third try to see what Lone Elk was doing with Tommy, the CB radio came to life.

“If you're tired, son, let the Little Indian drive.”

“I am driving,” Keha told me. “I was just testing to see how many times it took for you to notice me wobbling around back here.”

“Three times so far, Keha. I guess your partner's sacked out.”

“Ten four, Roamer. Are your partners sacked out, too?”

“Roger four. We're going to spend the night in Ohio.”

My own passengers had their modesty screen wide open, immodestly demonstrating their abilities in full view of my peekie mirror.

Lone Elk was getting a full work-out from Tommy. It's surprising how easy it is to get back into something you've done in youth, and even bring it into proper perspective. Reality made his love flow meaningfully for both of them – so much so, in fact, that it was a little frightening at first.

Tommy was in love again. He could not figure out who he loved more, his Daddy Lou, his Chuckie Indian or his Daryl or Lone Elk. All he knew was he loved them all. I'd told him love was too much of a wonderful thing to measure. In Elk's arms he blushed with excitement at the memory of how hard I'd hugged and squeezed him and told him how much I loved him even in his bed-wet-in spot.

“Can I steer on you, Keha?” Tommy asked, slipping out of the sleeper now that Elk was napping.

“I can't do that for you, Tom-tom,” Keha gently told him. “The reason is you're so tall I can't see over you or around you when you sit on my lap.”

Lone Elk woke from his nap an hour later. He took Tommy out of Keha's way, then sat on the passenger seat playing rock-paper-scissors with the boy until the trucks were brought to a halt in Ohio. Lone Elk jumped into the dog house to help his brother pull into the restaurant/motel parking lot that was really not made to handle these big rigs.

“Gee, I feel like I'm still riding in the truck,” Kevin reported with a thin dizzy smile as he tried to maintain his balance walking into the restaurant.

I put my arm around the staggering boy's waist until he could get over his vertigo. We walked to a big booth in the corner where Tommy was already waiting for us.

“Miss, we need five children's specials with bibs,” I said loudly to see if I could get some life into our little party. “You can bring me a super-duper trucker's energizer special with a side order of roaring

tiger's milk, or I won't have the energy to get dessert.”

“Let's see,” the waitress said with a friendly smile and wink at me, “I declare, you look more than twelve to me.”

“*I'm twelve,*” Tommy said proudly.

I ordered everyone the all-American boy's favorite fad food of double hamburgers, French fries and chocolate malts, except for Tommy: I ordered a child's plate for him. When the waitress came back, to everyone's delight she pinned a paper bib on me and served me the child's plate, giving Tommy the meal he wanted.

“I bet five bucks to a blow job Daddy's going right to bed after dinner,” Keha said just loud enough for us all to hear.

“How'd you know?” Kevin asked, ready to take the bet.

“He always eats light when he's got that in mind. If he didn't have to feed us he'd already be in a room snoring.”

We got two adjoining rooms. I gave the boys movie money then listened to Tommy tell me how he had got to take turns with Elk. I kissed the four boys, then joined Elk in his room.

I woke up to find Kevin in bed with me. Keha was in the other bed snuggled into his brother's back. When Kevin awoke he told me, “The manager let us in last night. We would of all slept here, except Tommy was pretty talky so Nando took him to the other room.”

It was a smooth trip the rest of the way to New York; the unloading and loading went well, and it was another smooth trip to Florida, where we rented two motel rooms for a week while Elk and I made local citrus runs.

“You can miss days riding with me to go to the beach or swim here,” I told the boys, “but whatever you do I don't want you bringing me any new lovie boys who want to ride in my truck unless they're real doll-babies.”

The boys jeered me and gave me a couple of Bronx cheers, too. They weren't going to hunt anyone because they had themselves and that was enough.

Three days later I returned from a short run to find Nando all smiles like the cat that had swallowed the canary.

“What's ya grinning about, Nando?” I asked. “I figured you four would get in trouble the minute I left you alone.”

“Did anyone report we did something wrong?”

“Not yet, but you're giving me your up-to-something grin,” I teased him. “Where's Keha?”

“He's on the beach with Kevin and Tommy.” Nando smiled boldly. “They're talking to a real doll-baby.”

“Well, I guess I'll have to take a stroll that way. How old's he?”

“Fourteen. You be careful, Luis. For you, to meet a doll-baby is the same as ride with you. Remember?”

“I'll take my chances,” I smiled. Nando followed me across the street and down the beach to where the three boys were sitting on motel towels talking to two girls and a boy. They were all doll-babys, and they were staying in our motel. They all had the same look, but it was hard to think of them as sisters and brother. “You must be the youngest,” I said to the smaller girl, who was bigger than Tommy.

“No, I'm the second born,” Della smiled. “Chip's the youngest, but we're all the same age. We're triplets.”

This was very hard for me to imagine because the oldest was blond as blond could be, the other girl's

hair was a perfect brown and Chip's hair was the blackest of black. Fran was a well-stacked girl who had captured all of Keha's attention. Della was slim, tomboyish to the point that she could even appeal to me. And Chip was just right, from the dimple in his chin to the aristocratic nose. Their bathing suits left nothing to anyone's imagination. I couldn't help but stare at them.

“That's the fad here, Daddy Lou,” Tommy said. “You wear last year's bathing suit to show how much you grow.”

“I thought this year's bathing suits were pretty thin,” I teased. “Look at all you show.” I noticed that all four of my boys showed every trace of what they had. I smiled to show them I was kidding because they all had bodies they could be proud of and should never be ashamed to show them off.

We talked about this and that, the weather, what a perfect day it was. Then I told my boys there was no rush but I would see them when they got back to the motel. I showered and put on my swimmys and rushed out to soak up some late afternoon sun into my tired bones.

For three days I hardly saw the boys, for the seven children had become close friends. At last Kevin said one night when he was fooling around on the bed with me, “That boy Chip is hot to trot with you. Wouldn't ya kinda like to trot with him?”

“Anyone wouldn't's got a problem,” I said. “He's a doll.”

“Yes, we know,” Kevin said with a laugh. “You missed seeing all seven of us in here today. And you should of seen Tommy's eyes when Fran offered him her front to fuck in.”

“Della only gives up-backs, and she won't let anyone rub her chest,” Keha said, “but Chip does everything.”

I didn't have a chance to see what Chip would or would not do, because they pulled out early Saturday, morning to see the other sights of Florida. The next morning we pulled out to load for home. We sacked in our sleepers until the dock crew came to work.

Lone Elk woke at four in the morning in a foul mood the cause of which was Tommy's warm piss splashing against his hip. Keha woke too, helped change the bedding, wash the rubber sheet and themselves. Then he put Tommy in rubber pants before going back to bed.

“Next time I tell you to pee before going to bed,” Elk said matter-of-factly, “don't tell me you did it already when you know damn well you did not go.”

Keha pulled the crying smaller boy next to him. “It's no biggie, Tommy,” he said. “You pee on *me* next time, not on my brother.” Keha kissed Tommy's cheek, then got him back to sleep until the fork-lift loading truck woke them.

## 26. Home

I walked into my home to be met by Gil's wide-armed rush into my arms.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

“Me 'n Donnie's been living in your bed until you came home,” Gil said with a big ear-to-ear smile.

“You've been living in my bed,” I laughed. “Alright, how long have you been living in my bed?”

“Since las' night.”

Donnie had heard the truck pull in. He'd listened to Gil excitedly greet me; now he watched down the hall where he saw me coming to his room with Gil on my shoulders.

“Where's the boys?” I asked as I dumped Gil on my bed. He thought they'd be right behind me, as always.

“Cleaning, washing and waxing the truck,” I told him. “You can help them if you want to.”

“Right after this next cartoon,” Donnie said.

Keha came in while I was getting out of my greasy clothes. He was happy to see Donny – and to find out he had permission to stay until pull-out Sunday night.

I chased the boys out of my room, pulled the black-out drapes so I could sleep and recover from the long drive and the morning of unloading. Gil didn't want to wash trucks so he only stayed out with the others for a little while, then came back to my room, undressed, slipped into one of the night shirts he'd wore when he'd had the measles here and hopped into bed with me.

Gil idolized me. He snuggled up comfy-cosy on the bed with me, then ran his fingers over my still cool, damp, naked body. He poked his fingertips into my thigh to see if it was true that I'd lost feeling there when I'd had surgery. After careful exploration of my naked body, Gil put his arm over me and cuddled close with the man who made the big boys stop picking on him.

The boys washed both of the trucks. They started their work with a wet sponge fight. Rinsing the trucks was always a perfect opportunity for a water fight to cool them off on a nice day before they settled down to the real work of polishing the cabs and chrome. Donnie worked with Keha, Gabe with Kevin, and Tommy did what he liked to do best, and that was sit on the little three-legged milking stool to polish the wheels shiny bright.

I didn't need much sleep. I woke from a slight movement of the bed next to me. I watched Gil thrash around two more times.

Gil loved sleeping in his night shirt. Every move of his body made it ride up like his sister's nightie did. He noticed his moving around woke me, and I sat up on my elbow and leaned over to look at him to try to tell if he was sleeping or not. He decided to pretend sleep longer to play a trick on me.

I was fooled. Thinking he was asleep, I carefully slipped his night shirt down to cover his hard uncut cock. Gill was sometimes modest about nudity. I remembered one day when he had been thrashing around in the pool naked with the other boys for over three hours, when all of a sudden he'd gotten shy. We'd even had to remove him from the pool water wrapped in a towel, with everyone's eyes closed, even mine. Now, I didn't want to guess what his reactions would be when he awoke.

“I wish Louie'd do something besides lie there,” Gil was thinking. “He loves the older boys: I know, I spied on them, so why won't he love with me? I'm pretty like Daryl, Kevin and Tommy. None of them have the power of my beauty, with my Snow White looks. Even when everybody'd burned tan and dark on the trip to Mexico, I only turned a light golden color to match my hair.”

His face was glowing as I looked at him with warm, tender, open looks, and now he was looking at me through the veil of his thick, long golden lashes.

Gil thrashed himself around again. Just in case I'd noticed he was not really sleeping he did a half-roll onto me letting his free arm fly limply over my waist, past my cock, where it paused for a second before falling limply between my legs. An eyelash brushed spider-like against my chest.

I felt another flutter of Gil's eyelash. This confirmed my suspicions that the hand that had rubbed me hard in passing wasn't the accidental motion it was supposed to be.

“Why is my Silly Gilly playing sleepies on me?” I asked quietly. “You know you can touch me any place without pretending you're trying to do something else, Gil.”

“How do you know I'm awake?” Gil asked, after a long pause in which he let his eyelash tickle me two more times.

“Your blinking's tickling me, you little fraud.”

“What's a fraud?”

“A fraud's a person who's playing tricky tricks, like when they pretend to be sleeping just to make a

thing hard when all of the time they're awake watching what they're making hard," I told him, taking his hand and boldly setting it on my hard cock "Is this where you wanted to touch me?"

"Yes." Said with shyness.

"Why?" Asked with the same shyness, so he would tell me what was on his mind.

"Because..." Gil stammered to a stop. He blushed under his golden tan, which gave him a slightly bronzed look.

"Come with me, you silly Gilly," I said, picking him up. "I want you to do your rain dance in the shower for me like you did when you stayed last time."

Gil giggled when the lift-him-up man threw him over his shoulder to carry him to the bathroom like he'd carry Keha. There I let him slide down my shoulder, slipping his night shirt off him in one motion as I stood him on his Tommy turtle turtle bench. There he did his turtle rain dance and I turned the showerhead on until it pulsed full down on us. I washed him, dried him, dressed him in sport shorts with a cute little robe I'd bought him when he'd lived with us with the measles.

"You put on your little beach shoes, Gil, then I want to give you a big hug and kiss for showing me your rain dance again."

The other boys came in to shower from working on the trucks, sweating and swearing from the late afternoon heat and found me hugging and kissing Gil.

The next day was Saturday, and it was an important day at our place because most of us would go to the bar mitzvah of one of our boys, Fred. The older boys left on their motor bikes to shop for presents for Fred and left me and Tommy and Gil playing remote-controlled crash-car on my bedroom floor.

Gil kept peeking under his arm at me. He was smiling about how he and Donnie had played dark night games the night before. Gil was glad that Donnie's cock was as fat as my cock, and he was happy that Donnie only wanted him to go trucking with me when he was along, too. Donnie had told him that since he was so hopeful of something sexy happening with me that maybe they could make it happen on this trip.

Keha and Donnie parked their scooters at the shopping mall. The boys were combining their money to get bigger, nicer presents for Fred's thirteenth birthday instead of a lot of little presents.

"Do you know what that funny little fucker Gil told me last night, Keha?" Donnie said quietly. "That boy's a real trip. He said he's gonna bone your dad."

"Why not, Donnie? My dad will let him do it. All he's got to do is ask my dad to lay on his tummy for him."

"Your dad will let Gil...?"

"Sure, but he won't do anything back to Gil because he's under eleven. My dad really only likes sex with boys twelve or over."

"I know that, but I didn't think your dad would let..."

"Why not? He's liberal. He takes turns if you want turns. He sucks you off all the time, don't he?"

"Yes, he does."

"Then why is it hard to believe he won't do other things, too?"

"I've never thought about it that way. I mean..."

"We've been easy on him since his surgery, but I will ask if he feels up to letting you and Gil play on him."

Keha saw just the right thing for Fred. Donnie agreed it was a "swift present", so they paid for it, wrapped it up and returned home.

Gabe stopped by our house on his motor scooter. He brought his brother Carlo, who was supposed to leave at midnight with Brice. Donnie and Tommy overheard Carlo talk Gil into going in the bathroom

with him to do something sexy.

“Only if it's turns,” Gil said. “I get my turn first, otherwise you always try to burn me.”

“You can have your fuckin' turn first, you baby,” Carlo said biting. “How come you always think I'm going to cheat you?”

“Because you do it every chance you get. You're not an honorable person. That's why Louie says he's enchanted with you.”

“He says disenchanted, not enchanted, dodo. You're the one he's enchanted by.” Carlo curled his lip into a face that made them both laugh. “Come on, let's go. I got this hot chili for your lips.”

Tommy rushed to get me as soon as the two youngest boys went into the bathroom. Gabe, Keha, Donnie and Tommy rushed over to move the hinged picture. Behind it was a two-way mirror with a contoured lens that helped you on the outside to see almost the entire bathroom.

Tommy said, “Turn on the sound, Daddy Lou.”

“It's on. Now what am I supposed to see?” I asked.

Carlo was undressing in a hurry. He'd forgot to pull off his shoes, so he had to sit on the little turtle bench after his shoes got stuck in his tight-fitting pant legs.

Gil left his robe on, tied closed. He wiggled his shorts down from the outside of his robe until Carlo laughed at him. Then suddenly he pulled his robe open inches from Carlo's face, exposing his bigger-than-Carlo's cock for Carlo to view. Gil waited until Carlo was undressed, lying face-down on the rug, before he shrugged out of his robe, leaving it on the floor with the sleeves turned inside out. Gil took a handful of cold cream and shoved his finger all the way into Carlo's bottom once, then he lay next to Carlo, then hugged around Carlo's buns tenderly, gently, sweetly, as he kissed each bun cheek.

“Damn, you're weird!” Carlo yelled. “You're not supposed to kiss people here like this. You're just supposed to play my bongo, then I'm going to play yours.”

“There's no rush. I locked the door. Please let me kiss you here again, longer.”

Carlo finally agreed, laughing from the sensation of how it felt, until Gil finished loving each bun. Gil gently got over Carlo, then worked in slowly, gently until he could not move one more gentle stroke. Pushed tightly into the older boy with his hard, his hands holding his weight, his lower body tensed stiff with his head thrown all of the way back like he was looking at me and the boys in the mirror, Gil came.

“Eeeee,” Carlo said when Gil did not move for a while.

“You better not be trying to pee in my bottom, Gil.”

“I'm not peeing in you, Carlo. Just lay still.”

Gil held his position until the sensation passed. “Gosh, your bongo's so great,” he said when it was all over. Then he gave a few more gentle pumps until sensations overwhelmed him again. Finally, fully relaxed, Gil relinquished the top position for the bottom.

Carlo was faster. He was not so gentle. He jumped on Gil, slapped down on his back so hard he moved both of them and the rug under them across the tiled floor as he pumped fourteen loud, slapping pumps into Gil to bring him into his own climax. When Carlo's body relaxed Gil started crying.

“You dumb fucker, you peed in me.”

Carlo came running out of the bathroom naked, laughing at Gil's discomfort. He left the bathroom door open so we could all hear Gil's bathroom noise as he sat on the pot.

“How come you did that?” Gabe asked, grabbing his brother by the hair. “He peed in you once by accident and now you pee in him every chance you get to play sexy with him.” I was happy Gabe was defending Gil's rights but unhappy to see Gil crying again. I went to the crying boy.

“What should I do to him for this?” I asked.

“I want you to pee in him in front of God and everyone.”



“Louie won't do that for you, Gil,” Gabe said before I could answer. “But Louie could spank him for you.”

“With his pants off, naked like he is now?”

“Naked like he is now,” Gabe assured him. “In front of God and everyone, just like you asked.”

I gave Carlo a few light pats on his bare bottom, for Gil, who just had to get one slap in for himself before he would feel better, now regretted getting Carlo spanked. He got on his knees, hugged gently around Carlo's buns, then kissed long, gently where he had slapped.

“Ahhhhh, look how cute my Gilly is,” I said, meaning every word. “He's such a nice lover-boy to kiss your bottom.”

“Shit ,” Carlo said, never one to learn a lesson, “I kiss his bottom with my red-hot chili.”

“You both get dressed,” Gabe said. “Louie don't like you two running around naked unless you're in the pool swimming here.”

This wasn't true, of course, because I got a thrill watching my boys run around naked. The older boys used that line to keep the under-twelves dressed so they couldn't get me excited enough to play sexy with them.

“Fred's on the phone, Dad,” Keha said just in time to save me from having to take a position on nudity.

I'd known Fred for two years. I had met him at the temple a few weeks after I'd got out of prison. When I was going into services he was changing classes with a quiet smile, or a shy “hi” for me when I could attend, then the year before he'd come over with Donnie one time after school. He was not a boy who loved boys or a boy who loved men. He was a mama's boy; he faithfully played the piano rather than sports; he was not allowed out of the house to have friends because friends were not good enough for him (according to his mother). Thus he was not going to have a party after his bar mitzvah this Saturday, and so I promised him a party at our home. This would be my present to the boy.

“Why did Freddy phone?” Donnie asked, concerned.

“He told me his sister was sick so his parents might not be able to stand up with him at his reading.”

So what are you going to do about it?” Keha asked.

“Me? Well, naturally I will stand up with him,” I said with a smile. “That's why he's got an Uncle Louie.”

The boys laughed. This was just what they expected to hear me say. Every time they needed me they teasingly told everyone that I was their Uncle Louie. This was behind my back mostly, but most things, even their 'secret' things, reached me eventually.

It took three cars on Saturday morning to transport everyone who was going to the service, even after some of the boys were told they couldn't go because it was against the Catholic law. But they decided to attend anyway because I attended all of their events, from christenings to weddings to communions in all of the faiths of my lover-boys and young friends.

Two of my boys' parents absolutely forbid them to attend. I set things up where they were at home to work as bus boys and table fillers so their parents let them over over to help out.

“You look funny,” Donnie said, walking in on me dressing. “I thought I looked pretty suave,” I teased.

“You do look good, but what I mean by funny is that I have never seen you dressed in more than a shirt and Levi's, but you look like you're all dressed for a date. And, Louie, I want to thank you for what you're doing for my friend Fred.”

“You mean *our* friend Fred,” I said with a smile.

Fred did wonderfully well with his reading and his talk on futures. He was hugged by everyone who knew him and by his family, and he was happy to have his schoolmates there.

“Louie,” Fred said after the last guest left, “I want to thank you for standing with me.”

"You're welcome, Son," I said, taking his offered hand in mine. "You're only thirteen once, and may only happiness, love and only the good things in life be yours."

Fred went home with his parents, who managed to make it in time for the guests' departure, but I was very disappointed with them. Fred was feeling like the man he had turned into that day; he was more than willing to share in family responsibility, to be of help as a man, but they were too narrow and self-centered to let him. When I watched Fred leave I wanted to reach out to him, to hug him, kiss him, tell him that his parents could only see him as a little boy who needed them when it suited them for him to need them, and they needed him and his sister to lead a sheltered life at home – and probably always would.

When I walked on the beach to try to get the hurt for the boy's life out of me, I found Gato all dressed in his little suit sitting in the surf, mad about something as usual.

"Gato, come here. You're getting your suit all wet."

"I don't give a fuck if the fuckin' suit's wet or dry! What do you think of that?" Gato shouted.

"Can you tell me what's bothering you?" I asked. I waited for a wave to go out, then ran down onto the foam-covered sand, snagged Gato under the arms and pulled him up onto the dry sand, where I sat next to him.

"I never get to do anything," Gato said.

"That's really news to me," I told him. "Every time I look around I see a boy named Gato in the middle of everything doing everything. I have now developed the opinion that you have a shitty outlook on everything and you don't give a damn about anyone but yourself."

"That's right. I have to look out for *numero uno*," Gato said testily. He burst into his usual feeling-sorry-for-himself tears. "That's me. I haven't been allowed to have a truck trip with anyone this summer and I thought Donnie was going to choose me but he choosed Gil instead."

"That's what happens to people who are *numero uno*. They get left behind when it means the most to them. Do you see how us little people you shit on the rest of the time can wait to get even with you? You have to learn how to care about people to have other people care about you, and even then you will find there are not too many people who will care for you when the chips are down. I can send you out with Sean."

"No. I have to ride in your truck with you," Gato said. "And that's because you could send your truck out with any asshole, then tell me I gotted to ride in your truck."

"Have you ever heard me do something that lame before?"

"No, but there's always the first time for everything, like you always say, like when we haded to eat the fish for the camping and boat trips."

Gato was getting ridiculous and he knew it. He was watching my reactions and knew he'd struck out when I sat there with a big grin on my face listening to the boy spin a web of fantasy with bold, outright lies about his being a suppressed being, nobody loved him and all of that, when before I'd tried to sit there looking serious, listening intently to every word the boy said.

"Gate, you're full of shit," I said, after a half hour of his ramblings of injustices done against him by me and the older boys. "I will tell you what I'm going to do for you, if it's alright with your father. I will take you and whoever you want on my last trip of summer – but don't you ever run your I-never-get-to-do-anything lie on me again. I have always made sure you and the others who come here all get to do everything without favor of one of you over the others, except for my two live-in lover- boys because they live with me."

"Then I want to live with you, too."

"You can't do that, hon. Your mother and father will not let you live with me. Besides, I think you have

a wonderful home and you should learn to live at home before you can learn to live anywhere else.” I dragged Gato to his feet. I held his hand to the patio, where I helped him out of his sandy, wet clothes. Then I held him over my head before I threw him, screaming, naked, into the center of the pool.

“Eeee. Louie's got Gato,” Alberto yelled. “We have to save him.”

I was unbuttoning my clothes real fast. My kids would not try to find out why I threw Gato in the pool. Wound up from the formality of the day, they flowed over me, pulled me down on the deck, undressed me... and then I was in the pool, too.

“You dum-dums forgot to pull my socks off,” I yelled from the middle of the pool. “And get me my duckie-duck.”

“I'll save you, Louie,” Gil yelled, pulling off his clothes to jump in, too.

“How are you going to save him,” Keha wanted to know, “when you can't swim four feet without his help?”

My wife was watching out the window. She wondered what I'd done this time to get myself pushed in the pool. Sixteen boys were throwing their clothes all over the place to join us in the water. She'd made a mental note of who had been wearing what so she could move and sort the boys' clothes when they were all in the pool playing. This way they wouldn't notice her moving discarded shirts and pants away from the splash zone. It seemed like all her life was spent picking up other childrens' clothes.

As she picked up a T-shirt, a glance revealed the white flash of a bare bottom as a boy dived deep under water. Then the boy-shark pulled his victim to the depths for a second. The victim-boy popped up doing a dead man's float for another second to show he'd been killed by the shark. She remembered how I used to be the shark, too, when I dived under water to bite boy bottom, and Di's bottom, too, but her daughter wouldn't come out to swim. Di was in her room sulking because all of the boys were over.

Di looked out her sliding glass door. She watched the boys undress: all nasty boys without the decency to wear swim suits so she could swim, too. She knew if she went out in her swim suit the rough-playing boys would pull her swim suit so they could see her bottom. Nasty boys! But still she stood there where she couldn't be seen so she could watch the boys play in the pool. I spotted her and tried to talk her into joining the fun, but failed to get anything more than an argument out of her, as usual.

Juan, Franco and Rubin came to take the boys home. “You a busy man, Luis,” Franco said, taking the hangers with Gate's wet clothes which had already been washed ready to be hung out to dry. “Did Gato tell you why he no have a truck trip this summer?”

“No. What did he do this time?”

“Everything, like always. He fight his mother, he slap his sister, so I tell him he not ask to go with you.”

“How about letting me take him the last trip?”

“We see how he's going to be a good boy until then,” Franco said, looking at the downcast eyes of his son. He took Gato home wrapped in a towel.

## 27. A Big Night

Mrs. Bleard brought her two daughters over to spend two nights with Di. The house was very quiet with five tired boys and three girls after the turmoil of the day. Tommy was asleep in his room and Donnie, Keha, Gil and I were on my bed. Gil and Keha were playing sexy and Donnie was taking turns with me, when all of a sudden the door opened and there was Donnie's sister Tanya, not giving us the

chance to recover.

“What do you think you're doing, just walking in?” Donnie asked. “This isn't home where we share the same room.”

“I figured... Well, I wanted to talk to you,” Tanny said. “It can wait until you've finished what you're doing.”

“She won't tell what she sees,” Donnie said and pushed his mouth all the way down on my hard. He moved his head slowly, rolled his tongue hard in his cheeks, then winked at his sister.

Tanny smiled broadly. “I hope I didn't scare you, Louie, but the girls fell asleep so I came in to see Donnie.”

I didn't feel right with Tanny watching Donnie draw my straw, and I almost had a fit when the girl shrugged out of her nightgown and saw there was nothing underneath it.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“I'm going to let you see what me and Donnie do at home. I came in to see if Donnie would do something with me.”

Donnie asked Keha to lock the bedroom door. He made Tanya wait until he finished sucking on me before he let her lie over his face. She pressed herself hard down over Donnie's mouth, settled herself comfortably, then drew Donnie's cock into her own mouth.

When it was all over she sat on the bed with her nightie back on trying to answer our questions about her feelings about what she did with her brother.

“What do you think when you suck him, Tanny?” Keha asked.

“Like when I used to suck my thumb. Sometimes he tastes a little yuck and sometimes he's a little tastier, but what we really like to play the most is Mommy and Daddy, with Donnie as the daddy. At first it hurt when Donnie pushed himself in me, and we both cried for a long time. Then we didn't do it for a long time, and then when we did Donnie licked me there first and it felt wonderful, and now it's just fun to play.”

“She has just as much fun licking Arly as Arly does licking her,” Donnie said matter-of-factly.

“Would you like to try me, Louie?” Tanny asked.

“No thanks. I'll pass,” I said quickly.

“I want to try,” Gil said. “But you have to let me lay over you acause you're so fat.”

“She's not fat,” Donnie told Gil. “She's bigger because she's older.”

“That's the same thing,” Gil said, getting ready. “Just roll up your dress so your chi-chis don't poke me.”

After Gil was through and had rolled off of her and she had back her breath she said, “Wowww! You're almost as good as Donnie.”

“Yes, I know,” Gil said, like he was just stating fact. “I've done things with my sisters, too. Now, hold your legs up acause I'm gonna bone you raw.” He pushed and pulled her legs around, but he couldn't get his good-sized cock into her. “Shit, my sister's got big holes.”

“Do her bongo, Gil,” Donnie said. “She likes it that way better.” Donnie didn't want to tell Gil he was the only one his sister ever let play straight fuck games in her. She willingly lay on her tummy for Gil, who almost sent her through the bed with his bottom-kissing ritual.

“Wow, Gil, why don't you teach Donnie how you do that so he can kiss my bottom every night,” Tanya said. She moaned loudly, then asked him to do his ritual again.

Donnie made funny faces. “It's bad enough chewing through the hair on your puss. Now you want me to kiss your bottom, too?”

“Them's not called a puss,” Gil said, gently shoving his hard into her bongo. “Them's called splits.”

He giggled. "When you bone 'em you get your banana in the split."

"What do *you* call them Dad?" Keha asked me.

"Don't try to involve me in this conversation, hon. I still have to figure out what's happened."

We were all laughing when the rattling of the door knob and a knock broke up the party. Everyone was decent by the time Keha unlocked the door to let my wife in.

"How come it was locked?" she asked. "Here you are, Tanny. I didn't know what had happened to you."

Tanny excused herself, then ran off to bed while my wife looked at me with a what-the-hell-are-you-trying-to-get-yourself-into look.

"Don't put me in a position like this again," I told my boys. "I have never done things with girls. I don't know how to do things with girls. The only thing I can honestly tell you about them is what I've learned from full-fledged women who I have only had three of and I was not in danger of despoiling, if you understand me."

"What do you mean by despoiling?" Donnie asked.

"I guess like when you told us you were stuck to your sister. How you both cried because your cock was too big for her small hole and her hole was too tight for your cock."

"My sister's got fronts this big," Gil cut in to show us with exaggerated hand signs the size of large grapefruits.

"That might be true, Gil," I said. "We all have different maturing ages. In the Old West children were raised to be grown-ups very young, like ten-year-old cowboys, and even girls were able to marry if they were ten and mature and boys did whatever they felt they were big enough to do."

"Like me," Gil said. "I'm big enough to do your bongos acause I'm going on ten." Gil jumped on my back. Then he slipped down me because he'd forgot to do his kissing ritual, then back up me where he tried to dry hump himself in me to show the others he knew what he was doing.

Keha reached between Gil's legs. He spread a little hand lotion around to let Gil slide in. Gil pumped until he arched his back like when he'd been in the bathroom with Carlo. He worked his way to nirvana. When his second and third sensations gripped him he climaxed.

"Quick, Louie, I want you to do my bongo," Gil panted. He threw himself face-down on my bed next to me. "Bone me good."

I passed him back to Keha, and Keha to Donnie. "I just wore my bone out," Donnie said playfully. "You take over now, Louie."

"I think Gil's had enough excitement for tonight," I said. I tucked him in between Donnie and Keha.

But after I was sound asleep the boys helped Gil get himself back onto my hard cock. A little squeeze from Gil's well-in-control bottom muscles, a little nudge as I moved in my sleep a hair now and again to keep my cock hard in the garage where he was parked.

I woke with the fragrant smell of boy's hair in my nostrils, and my first action in the semi-dark was to bone the bongo my cock was embedded in.

"Ha-ha, hee-hee!" Gil laughed, waking the others. "They said you would bone my bongo good when you woke up, and you're doing it, too."

"You sneaky little shit," I teased. "I can stop."

"No... Don't stop," Gil said, still giggling. "Now, roll up on top of me." Gil was thrilled to get it face-down, deep, slow, lasting the longest time he'd ever had one cock in him. He tried to flex, to give me the best-feeling asshole he could, like Darly or Cha could give front. Then he tried to oppose movements to make it move in longer and pull out farther, but he was being held too closely – lightly but closely – until I just about flooded him out inside.

“Don't tell anyone we helped Daddy fuck you,” Keha said.

“Carlo said Louie's boned him before,” Gil said.

“No, his brother Gabe bones him,” Keha said. “You know how Gabe can't keep his hot chili out of a bongo, unless he's playing girl for Daddy.”

Gil absently rubbed his bottom, remembering how Gabe had fucked him dry before he was six with his legs kicking, his arms flailing because he'd had to take the whole chili or get fucked by the rest of the gang – who'd lied to him and fucked him afterwards anyway, lying face-down in their field fort, pantless, helpless, crying until the hurt went away.

“What's wrong, Gil?” Donnie asked, seeing the sad look in the boy's eyes. “Did Louie hurt your bottom?”

“No. I want him to do my bottom again and know he won't do it even if I ask him.”

“Silly Gilly!” I hugged him to me. “I'll do it again.”

## 28. Cramps and Pirates

Gil behaved well for the trip to the East Coast with me and Donnie. In New York the muggy humidity made him drink too much soda and water and everything else, so he came down with the water shits, then refused to dress to get out of the truck. Instead he jumped down in his unders.

“I'm still small enough to wear only unders,” Gil screamed when I lifted him into the truck. “I'm only nine.”

“Yesterday when I was playing with you, you were almost ten. Now today you're only nine. Here's the reason you can't stand around in those underpants: when anyone looks at this darling face their eyes drop down to your middle and they stop in their tracks to stare at your mousey.”

“But I'm not hard there,” Gil said sweetly.

Donnie settled the problem by putting Gil into one of his own colored unders.

“How did your cock get so big, Gil?” Donnie asked.

“From always having big, fat, hot chilis stuck up your bottom all of the time. They push you out,” Gil said proudly as I finally got my fingers over his lips to make him lower his voice.

“Well, it's a proven fact,” I told them, “that every part of a person's body should be exercised to be healthy, strong and in shape. So why shouldn't that be true for your cock? Some people believe if it isn't worked when you're young it will always stay little and shriveled, so they teach their little boys what fun it is to use it.”

“Like you teach Gil.”

“No. I mean like Gil learned to use his long before he met me. Let's see if we can find a cool place to spend the night.”

It wasn't quite so hot and muggy when we got to Atlantic City, but Gil wouldn't get out of the truck until I rubbed him with ice – and then I had to help him get rid of his horn. He turned ten on the trip. We gave him his birthday party in a truck stop where we had coconut cream pies with candles for him, and other drivers gave him presents when he shared the pies with them.

I gave my present to Gil in the truck sleeper that night. I started with a bun-kissing ceremony, and then

we went on to complete mutual around the world action, while Donnie watched in awe.

"I thought you had to be eleven for that," Donnie said.

"If he wasn't so sexually worldly I'd have made him wait another year, you're right. But my Silly Gilly is sort of like me: he started at five."

Gil was sad that the trip was coming to an end. That pampered Gato would be going next time. But it was nice he and Donnie would be home in time to see George race his Hobie Cat. T.C. would be taking all the boys out on the trimaran to watch. Keha would be crewing for George.

The day of the race, with the house empty of boys and quiet, I phoned Gato's father to make sure Gato had been good. Gato told me he had chosen Evin to come with us on the next trip.

"I hardly know Evin," I said, "so you tell me why he's your choice."

"Because he's not getted to go on the truck trips." I could feel Gato's devilish smile coming through the phone as he talked. "Besides, Luis, I think you should know him, too."

I hung up thinking I'd better spend a few days at the shop to see who was getting tight with who.

My wife had been out with Mrs. Bleard and her two daughters; now I heard the car return.

"Louie," my wife yelled from the driveway, "Tanya has a sick headache. Give her some aspirin and let her lie down for a while."

"Sure," I yelled, then, to Tanny, "I'm working in my bedroom."

My wife drove off again. I gave Tanny two children's aspirin, then walked her to Di's room so she could rest without my disturbing her.

"I don't want to stay in here by myself," she said. "I'll just lay on *your* bed, if that's alright with you."

"Sure." I made her comfortable, then I got deeply into my work to the point where I forgot Tanny was even there, checking and double-checking my figures on the adding machine.

"Oh, God!" Tanny suddenly screamed, "I got cramps. My stomach hurts so bad..."

I swiveled my chair around to help the crying girl. I'd put her on the bed fully dressed but with her shoes off. Now she was lying there in a little top that stopped just short of loosely covering her chest, with matching bikini panties that didn't quite cover the top part of her pubic hair. She had her knees pulled up tightly, rubbing hard on her bare midriff..

"I hurt right here," Tanny cried. "Oh, I hurt!"

"Do you think you're having menstrual cramps? I can give you some Midol."

"No," Tanny said, with a touch of embarrassment. "I don't have monthlies yet. If you just rub me right here the cramps will go away. That's what my mother does."

I sat on the bed and started to rub her. "Does this help you feel better?"

She relaxed a little and started to loosen up from her pained position "Yes, thank you... Just keep rubbing me like this for a while longer until I'm sure the cramps have disappeared."

She could feel rubbing arousing her. She slowly moved her hand up her bare leg. She slowly let her fingers explore the fringed hem of the tennis shorts I was wearing, until her fingers not so accidentally explored the bottom band of my sport shorts. She had only pretended cramps, and for only one reason and that was to get me to do something with her without the boys knowing or, worse, sitting around and watching and making comments, like when they did things in front of me the last time. She'd liked how small my cock had been when she watched Donnie suck it: she wasn't very big yet so my front should be just the right size to fit in.

"Are you feeling okay again?" I'd disturbed her thoughts about what she was going to make me do with her. I'd said nothing about her hand in my shorts, or her fingers that were tickling my balls now, but my smile was a nice smile.

“Yes, I'm almost okay, but don't stop rubbing me or I'll cramp again.”

“Do you cramp often or is this something that just started to happen recently?” Maybe she was getting close to her time, I thought, and these were warm-up cramps to let her know she was on the doorstep of puberty.

“I always cramp often.” How could she get me to rub higher on her chest and lower on her tummy?

“Louie, how come girls grow hair so thick down here?” she asked, dragging my hand into the hair and uncovering it a little more. “I was this hairy here by the time I was nine. Can you feel how thick it is? Then, right here, Louie, I'm flat except where my nipples are just starting to push out.”

Now she put my hand on her nipples and wanted to know why they'd suddenly got hard as little marbles. She talked on and on, not giving me a chance to tell her anything, guiding my hand all over her body with a slow, light motion more to her liking; that would help (wink) make her cramps leave faster.

She knew what she was doing. She'd had a lot of three- to five-minute sex sessions with Donnie and her own boyfriends. She'd only let them buttfuck her, or, if she really liked the boy, she'd let him finger her to feel deeply so they'd know what a girl's vagina was like. She'd never had a real orgasm, because when it was just starting to feel great the boys would stop. She'd almost had it once when she was sucking with Donnie, but dumb Donnie'd got too much hair in his mouth and rolled her off of her just before she could get the ultimate sensation there. But now the way she'd taught me to stroke her was paying off: she felt her tummy jump and her insides go tingly.

“Please don't stop rubbing me, Louie,” she pleaded. Now there was a real gush or wetness inside of her from each jump-pump of her sensuality. “That's the cramps leaving,” she said, but her voice caught, her body hump-jumped again, and then she asked, “Louie, will you fuck on me?”

“No, hon. I can't do something like that.”

“Will you butt-do me like you do my brother?”

“Can't do that for you either.”

“If you don't I'll tell my mother what you and my brother were doing and how you layed on the bed here when I was sleeping and I woke up with you rubbing my bod.”

“You tell her,” I said, jumping off the bed.

“Boy, am I dumb, opening my foolish mouth!” Now she cried real tears. “I'm really sorry, Louie. Please don't stop rubbing on me. Donnie told me everything you and he did from the first day you did it, and he said you gave turns.”

I sat back down to rub her while she shuddered and her body jerked – and she undid my tennis shorts. Then I stroked her into what I think was her first squealing, shuddering body-contorting orgasm.

Tanny was hotter than she'd ever been in her life. Suddenly she shoved me back on the bed, pulled down the front of my shorts and straddled me the way she sometimes did Donnie when he was too tired to lay on her. But this time she took the cock in her hand and aimed it forward to literally virgin territory and, feeling her insides stretch to accommodate my hard, gave a little moan of satisfaction that it fit right and painless inside her.

When she was done on top of me I said, “Come with me, young lady. You're old enough to fuck so you're old enough to learn how to wash boys' sperm out of your pussywillow. When you start your first period come over to see me immediately so I can get you birth control pills. I would not want to see you having any little accidents.”

She giggled at me when I took her into the shower with me, but she paid close attention when I showed her how to wash the sperm out. I let her do it by herself a couple of times to be sure she got it right, then I put a shower cap over her long hair and gave her whole body a good wash. She couldn't believe Di didn't like me to shower her. She was feeling great, relaxed, refreshed, and now she played a trick Donnie had



told her about in secret. She leaned over my leg and peed.

“That's what you get for making me shower with you, you dirty, nasty man!” she teased.

I laughed, having heard this all before. But I played my part in the game. I grabbed my front and chased her around the shower, waving it and threatening to pee her back. I finally cornered her; I didn't pee on her, I peed down the drain while she playfully passed toes and foot into my stream.

I put Tanny in a fresh nightie, then tucked her in my bed, dressed and went back to work.

“I hope Tanny has not been a bother to you, Lou,” Mrs. Bleard said when she came back with Arlene an hour later.

“No. She's been a little doll afternoon.”

“Hon, the Bleards are staying for dinner,” my wife said. “Be a dear and put Arlene down for a nap with Tanya.”

Toward evening, with my bookwork finally done, I leaned back in my chair. I was thinking of napping beside the two girls, too, but the boat was over a half hour late returning from the race. I was just about to call them on the short wave when I heard the amplified voice of T.C. talking over the loud hailer:

“Drop the jib, you lubbers, roll the main 'n staysail! Hell's bells and buckets of blood if ya don't look sharp for final inspection! You call this shipshape?” My laughter woke Tanny, who immediately sat up on the bed. “Strike the colors: we attack here!”

Tanny and I rushed to the patio to watch as the boys maneuvered the the boat around to the buoy.

“Look, Lou,” Tanny squealed with delight, “they're putting up your pirate flag.”

We ran to the boys' bedroom to see if they had taken their pirate gear. They had. Tanny and I tied on purple bandanas, pirate-fashion, then went to the closet for a brick of lady-finger fire-crackers and my pretend pirate gear of leather-bound shields and pine swords to defend our fortress.

“Hurry, Tanny. This time you can't be the princess, you have to be a defender.”

She'd played the game before. The boys started it every chance they got when they brought the boat in with T.C. or Georgie or me.

“We only hit the swords on the boards, right, Lou?”

“That's right, hon. We don't really want to hurt anyone.” I ran out the sliding doors and threw the lit brick of lady-fingers over the fence onto the beach as the boys were dragging the first raft to shore.

“Daddy's ready for us,” Keha yelled at T.C. “I said not to use the loud hailer like that. Come on, boys, let's capture the fort.”

“I want to be on Daddy Lou's side,” Tommy yelled.

“Keep all the blood on the beach, me hardies,” T.C. commanded. “Spread out to attack.”

As they formed their battle line Tommy, Nando, Ed and Donnie came in to aid my own vastly outnumbered defenses.

The boys stopped in surprise when they saw Tanny rush out naked except for a boy's red nightshirt, a pinewood sword and a leather-bound plywood shield on her arm. She beat Gil and Carlo back with some fancy sword-work on their shields. The battle went on for two more bricks-worth of exploding lady-fingers and three minutes of everyone hitting their swords on shields before the pirates won their way in to dinner.

“How'd you learn to sword so good, Tanny?” Gil asked with his mouth full.

“When I was the princess the last time Louie and Keha played pirate, Tanny explained, “I watched how they sworded and won me away from you boys.” She smiled sweetly. “I like to play pirates with fast sword work, too.”

The next two days found me at the shop helping the boys with their work and looking out for new

pairings, as close affections change often as to who's whose best pal. When Rick showed up I told him he'd missed a great game of pirates after the races. He seemed down, so I invited him into my office to talk.

"What's your problem?" I asked when we were alone. "Give it to me."

"My chick... I kiss her, pet her, I do everything I can to get her to play, then I end up at home alone playing with myself, I'm so horny and hot from her teasing me all of the time." He swallowed. "She won't even give head or take it in the ass like most chicks around here do."

"Are you really fond of her?"

"Sure. Why do you think I've been trying to make her?" Rick smiled. "Isn't that what love is all about?"

I told him that was only the sexual part.

"I think Estelle only keeps me around for a spare date."

"Then don't go when she calls you anymore. When she sees you're not chasing her she may chase you."

I thought about Estelle. She'd almost raped Keha and then let her date Phillip do her afterwards. She'd offered herself to George, who had patted her bottom and told her she was too old for him. "Rick," I said, "she's too young mentally for you. She always wants older boys, but she's got to grow up to get them. Don't try to lower yourself by acting her age." I almost laughed out loud then, because I'm still twelve myself. "I'll let you love with me,"

"Only sucking," Rick said with a snigger. "You're right when you say she's a beautiful waste of my time."

After we played around the world for the second time Rick told me he was going to crawl back to Karen. I told him he'd be better off sticking with Karen. Even if he did think of the pretty little Mexican girl as an easy front lay, she was only that way for him.

"You know, you're the only person I ever did anything like this with in my life, don't you, Louie? That day you kissed me..." I put my fingers over his lips to stop his telling me more.

"I know, Rick. You're just a lovable guy. Look how happy you've made me. You finished your probation, you help my little loves and you will make a lady a fine husband one day because you're a hard-working boy."

"Keep talking, Louie," he smiled, "I'm putty in your hands."

Yes, Rick thought, I'm putty in Louie's hands and he's right about me and Karen, but why couldn't I see that she is the right girl for me all along?"

We were below eating lunch when Tommy ran in excited. "Daddy Lou, a boy wants to see you," he said, grabbing my hand. He pulled me off my stool, then dragged me at his speed to the front of the shop. "That's him."

He pointed to a tall, beautiful boy. There was something familiar about his face, but what it was escaped me. We stood in silence looking at each other for a long time, until finally the boy said, "Hello, Louie," in a low, easy voice. He smiled. "Do you still fish at the lake?"

## 29. Randy's Return

Light dawned. "Not often, but I haven't had any knee- hangers hanging around me since you left, Randy." Then, with more emotion than I should have shown after all this time: "Where have you been? And why didn't you write to me for two and a half years?" He didn't answer. "Are we just going to stand

here looking at each other, or are you going to come over here and hug me?"

"When you invite me fishing I'll hug you," Randy said with tears standing brightly in his eyes.

"Luis, is this the same Randy you tell me about?" Nando asked, walking out of the shop with the rest of my boys.

"Hi, Nando," Randy said. "You still hang with Ed?"

"*Si. Ed es mi corazon,*" Nando smiled. "So it is Luis who was the love of your life when you left here. I always figured that after I met him, too.

"Have I changed much, Louie?" Randy smiled beautifully.

"Yes, you've changed a lot," I stammered. "You're still..."

"Fannytastic?"

"And then some. Why didn't you tell me you were leaving when you left? I could of arranged something." Big tears poured out of my eyes and ran down my shirt.

"You couldn't of arranged anything. We had to run to Canada because my mom's boyfriend was a draft-dodger and they almost caught him again. We just got back this week and I heard you had your shop here. And here I am."

Randy tried a smile that failed in front of all of the shop kids. How do you tell a man in front of a hundred people that your whole life and your world collapsed when they took you away from him and you never loved anyone since, even though you had a thousand chances to love?

"Us guys have to get to work," Keha said, herding the others away. "Talk to Randy in your office, Dad."

I did. "I'm so happy to have you back, Randy," I told him. "But a lot of things have changed."

"I noticed. Do you love Nando and the others?"

"Yes. There's always room in my heart for boys and more boys, but there's this spot of great big empty place right here where you left it." I patted my chest. I did not want to hurt him by saying how much my heart had ached from his leaving me like he had. "That's if you still want it that way – or if not, then I want you to know I still love you and that place is still there for you."

"When my mom's boyfriend ran off with a younger girl, my mom packed us up and moved us back here where she said we were our happiest... where I was happiest with you, Louie. But you still haven't answered my question: I want to know when you're going to take me fishing with you."

"Right this minute!" We rushed into each other's arms. I hugged Randy tightly to me to kiss him, to hug him, to hold him. Laughing, with tears of joy running down our faces, we fell on the bed that I'd forgot to fold back into a couch after playing with Rick on it that morning. The legs slammed hard on the floor.

Below, all the boys in the toy shop looked at the ceiling and grinned. "*Eeeee chinga!*" Cha-Cha said, rubbing his front until he climaxed in his underpants. "I'd love to give that gringo boy the hot chilli." He rubbed the cum from the front of his shorts into his pubic hair to spread it out to dry faster.

"You can stop playing with yourself, Cha," Nando told him. "That boy won't do anything with anyone but Luis."

"How you know, mon?" Cha asked wistfully. "A big bad-assed Mexican fucker like me is all that pretty patty boy's can get."

"*Eee mi chula, Cha,*" Nando teased him. "You have to come to me for the hot Mexican chili."

"Fuck you, Nando," Cha said testily.

Alberto had not been getting the attention from Daryl he wanted for the last few weeks and suspected he was losing Daryl to Kevin. So he'd been happy when I'd taken Kevin on a month- long truck trip. For a while he and Daryl had been tighter again, until Daryl caught him messing around with a boy that was not part of their group.

Alberto could never understand the bond between Daryl and Kevin, how it was so tight from having grown up together, living next to each other while they were toddlers, going to the same school, starting their experiments in everything together. They'd been closer than brothers all their lives and, God willing, would always be close friends.

When Randy and I finally came down to the shop, the boys shut the machines off. They had to talk to me about where they stood in my plans now that the love of my life had returned looking even better than past narrations of my loving memories had painted him.

“*Dios*, but he's beautiful!” Ed said when he saw Randy again. “Randy, I'm happy to look at you now.”

“It's 'happy to see you again',” Nando whispered.

“Nooo, I say it right, because I am happy to look at him,” Ed said with a laugh. Randy had been from their turf before he'd gone away.

Alberto (Cha-Cha) was the only one who would not hear a word about Randy's acceptance unless, of course, he first got to 'bone' him 'deep'.

“What the fuck's bugging *you*, Cha?” I finally asked. “You're acting like a big asshole.”

Once I found out his problem I told him, “You cannot make one person love you forever, son. You have to give him room to grow like you're growing. You have to let them love others until you both realize how good you are for each other...”

He said he understood, but he really didn't. There aren't any families with perfectly written scripts that let each person tell others the right things to say at the right time. In real life there are no short cuts to people-knowledge, and we can only judge people one word at a time, until we can figure out the best way to help them, if, indeed, we can help. “Do we have any more problems?” I asked.

“God... I hope not,” Lar stage-whispered.

Keha quietly came over to sit next to me. He pulled Randy off my knee onto his own lap, then wrapped his arms snugly around Randy's waist. He carefully, quietly held him, making him feel funny with the others watching them.

“Is Randy coming to live with us?” Keha asked. “I don't think so,” I said gently.

Driving home I was thinking about how Randy was born out of wedlock from a high school romance that burned out with the pregnancy. The big football jock father left in search of other virtuous girls to pregnatize and before whom he could flaunt his virility. Randy's mom described him for me once as a few sips of brandy, three minutes of painful penetration and a son that came along with her report card.

“My daddy was right when he said you were a real darling boy,” Keha said to Randy after I'd left. “I guess he never expected to ever see you again, so he told us a little about you and him.”

“Did he tell you anything weird?”

“He told us how much he loved you – that's if you want to call loving a boy weird.”

“I would of called that weird all by myself,” Lar said. “But after knowing Louie I don't think it's weird.”

“Why, because Louie's loved with you, Lar?” Cha teased. Lar blushed bright red. “He only gave me a hug and a kiss once.”

“And Lar came in his shorts from that kiss,” Rick said. “Just like I did.”

“Louie took us to the lake the summer you left,” said Nando, changing the subject. “He nailed a little router-carved sign to a tree branch that said, 'For knee-hangers only' on it.” Nando smiled. “Louie wouldn't tell us what knee-hangers meant.”

At 8:30 Randy and his mother pulled into our driveway in the same old Buick they'd left in two and one half years before.

“Surprise, surprise,” Randy's mother said to me. “Your son,” – there was a question mark in her voice – “Chuck, said you sometimes rent your guest apartment to the right people on a temporary basis.”

“Yes, I do,” I said, waiting for Keha to tell me what was going on.

“They moved here this morning,” Keha said. “She had to work one place just to get a tank of gas to get to the next place. Then she got a real job here, but they haven't been able to save any money, living in the motel.”

“Why didn't you tell me this, Randy?” I asked.

“You know how independent my mom is. When I was helping the boys this afternoon they said they were going to move us here tonight. So here we are.”

“I'll get my pick-up,” I said.

“I stole the shop truck and we moved them in already,” Keha said with his slight smile of satisfaction.

“See ya later, Daddy.” He kissed me.

“Where you going now?”

“Keha and I'll sleep in the apartment tonight,” Tommy said. “This way you can have Randy alone.”

“My mom knows everything,” Randy said when everyone else had left. “So it's just you and me tonight.”

“I guess it is!” I put my arms around the beautiful boy's waist to let him into the house and on to my room.

“Too bad there isn't a knee-hanging tree here,” Randy said softly. When he saw the pool he asked if we would swim there when it got darker.

“Will you swim naked with me?” I asked.

“Sure. I'll do anything with you.”

With patio dark and only the two underwater lights at each end of the pool switched on, the water looked mysterious as we swam. We eventually settled for the shallow end of the pool to play our games in: diving down, groping, feeling, re-exploring – until, without warning, Randy up-ended to do an underwater handstand that put his hard front in my face. I sucked it into my mouth, then tightly wrapped my arms around his firm white buns and walked him out of the pool in a standing sixty-nine position.

“That was almost as good as our tree,” he said, once he was right-side up again. “Now, take me out here on this air mattress.”

Early morning, well before dawn, my boys sneaked around to the sliding glass door so they could stare into the moonlit patio, then ran around to the driver's room side.

“Keha, has Daddy Lou ever done anything like that to you?” Tommy whispered.

Keha shook his head. He gently opened the drapes so they could watch and see how long I was going to sleep with my arms around Randy, both of us in the raw and in the open air.

“That boy's got a wonderful bod,” Daryl said. He couldn't tear his eyes away from the window, even when he felt himself being deeply penetrated in his un-lubed bongo.

“Shush,” Keha said after a long time. “Dad's waking up.”

I came out of sleep with my usual hard, this time surrounded by a pleasurable pressure from Randy's warm anal sheath, and that started me pumping again into the tight moistness I'd enjoyed hours before for hours.

I gently massaged Randy awake. “Don't stop until you push all of the cum out of me again,” he mumbled.

Di watched from her bedroom window for a few minutes.

She could see her stepfather's arms wrapped around a boy in the patio, but her view was cut off further

down. Still, she knew we were doing something nasty, as always, with me kissing the back of the boy's neck and shoulders. She drew the curtains in disgust. She didn't want anyone to see her watching something nasty or sexy, because then someone might think she was nasty or sexy, too.

When I walked Randy into my bedroom we were greeted by ten boys pretending they'd seen nothing in the patio.

"Shall I tell Evin and Gato their trip is postponed?" Keha asked. "Or do you want me to take care of Randy for you until you get back?"

"Listen to you," I laughed.

"I always listen to myself," Keha said, with a bold smile. "I always hear everything I say."

"I slapped gently at his unclad bottom, missing it by a finger's brush when Keha jumped away. The boys were in no hurry to dress, shower or leave us alone. They felt that, since I'd had Randy alone all night to renew our love, they were entitled to stay with us now.

"Around here we do things together," Daryl explained. He slipped to his knees in front of Randy. "I'm going to suck you."

"Is that what you learned from me?" I said. "You're not going to give Randy no hugs, no love, no kisses?"

"I didn't want to kiss Randy with weenie on my breath," Daryl said, his own version of my own morning joke when I wake with cigarette on my breath.

"You still have to pardon Daryl," Keha said with a laugh. "But he's right that we're sort of used to doing things together. You don't mind doing things together, do you, Randy?"

"It depends," Randy said, unsure.

"You guys back off and give him a break," I told my horny little loves. "I still love you all and none of you have ever loved it up with everyone else."

"With the exception of me," Daryl said.

It was in the shower that Daryl finally got his mouth on Randy's choice piece of meat to eat. Cha dropped to the floor on his knees behind Daryl to get another hump into those fine buns he'd enjoyed so much that very morning as they'd laid on the floor watching me and Randy out the window.

"Daryl, what are you doing to Randy?" I teased.

"Couldn't you tell I was grading his meat?" Daryl said, swallowing Randy's load. "Triple A-Grade for sure. Now let me grade *your* meat."

I had only a double-A grade, Darly said.

The boys tried to end our shower with a towel-snapping fight that I ended on the first snap before someone could get hurt or hurt feelings.

At the shop everything stayed calm the rest of the day, except for one incident with Gato.

"No, I won't suck his!" Gato screamed. "He had it stuck in pussies las' night! If I was stuck in a pussie then I might suck his cock, too." Cha and Ed were trying to wind him up, which wasn't hard to do. "You're a turd-head! Assholes! Fuck you...!" Gato was getting his voice in great working order.

"Come with me, Gato!" I scooped up the mouthy, feisty, struggling little boy and rushed him out of the room. "If this is a prelude to what I'm going to have to listen to on the trip, I'd be better off leaving you home."

"That's a fuckeded excuse to take that pretty patty!"

"You be quiet or I'll wash your mouth out with soap again." Gato shut up. He knew I'd wash out his mouth, not for his cuss words but for starting fights with the rest of the boys.

"Those fuckers is all puss's," he said, calming down a little. "What about this little pussy here?" I

asked gently. "Before you call other people names, Gato, be sure your own moral qualifications are irrefutable."

"How comed all of the time you scold me, you use the big words like this?" Gato asked, teasing me as he always did. "One of these days, Luis, I will get the dictionary of words after you to show you I can talk teacher-talk, too."

"I'm not a teacher. I'm a trucker," I said, knowing this smart little guy was trying to play me. I really had to watch him because he was one mentally gifted minor.

"I wouldn't say that, Luis. After all, look at all you teached me."

"Then why haven't I been able to make you leaved your cute little E-Ds of some of your words, you loveable little wet-back?" I kissed him a big kiss.

I took Gato home with me. After dinner we went right to bed while all the other boys played volleyball on the beach. Evin was going to be over later.

"Lay still and go to sleep," I told Gato when he sat up to watch the volleyball game for the third time in ten minutes. "Turn over and lay on your tummy and I'll help you stay layed down."

Gato thought I was going to bone him so he rolled face down. I shoved my finger in his bongo.

"Don't pull your finger out, Luis, unless you put the *vetiga* for its place." He had a big smile for me.

"I told you we have to get up early, Gato. Alright, but this is only a short kissing session."

Gato held my hand tightly in his bottom when he turned to face me for his kisses. We slept that way. At midnight when I woke up and tried to pull my finger out of his bottom I couldn't move my hand. I propped myself on my elbow to see what the problem was and got a big surprise.

"*Ee ochie mi culo*," Gato hollered. "*El cabrons taped mi culo closeded*."

"No, they taped my hand to your culo!" Hearing our uproar, all the boys piled onto the bed and surrounded us with more confusion.

"All you have to do is soap the tape off," Cha-Cha, the perpetrator, said innocently. "Tape always comes off in warm water."

"*Most* tape will come off in warm water, smart-ass," I said, "but not this waterproof duct-tape. Hang onto your pillow, Gato: this will hurt a little." Two fast tugs took the hair on my hand off, along with a few patches of skin from the boy's bottom. Gato was a brave victim, and Cha-Cha apologized and even helped me band-aid a couple of bad spots on Gato's buns.

We left for the Imperial Valley first, to pick up a load of melons to take to the East Coast. Randy heard the big truck start outside his window. He watched me boost the boys into the cab. He would like to have gone on the trip but he wouldn't ask me to break a promise to the other kids. Besides, Keha had told him they'd call me on one of the radios.

"Are you up yet?" Keha said, tip-toeing into what we still called "Tommy's room".

"No, I'm not up – I'm awake, though."

"Daddy said I am supposed to take you with me and Tommy. Daddy said you have the honor of riding his motorcycle with us. How does that sound to you?"

They talked quietly as Randy got up and dressed. Keha loved what he saw when Randy pulled off his jamma bottoms and walked naked to the dresser. He put on clean unders, topping them with tight faded levis and a tie-dyed tank top. Then they were ready to go.

"Can I sit next to you, Louie?" Evin asked, after riding for hours beside Gato. "Gato said if I want to sit on his seat any longer I have to sit on his hardon."

I reached out my hand to steady the slim, shy, curly-haired, freckle-faced boy until he sat down beside

me. Every surge, curve, sway and bump moved Evin around in the inside of his 'girls' boy-cut polyester pants.

“Why didn't you wear levis with cotton shortsies on under them?” I finally asked.

“They're too rough on my bottom,” Evin said, blushing brightly. “Can you tell me how do you go to the bathroom when you're noplase, like we are now?”

“If you have to pee you get that bottle that just rolled by. If you have to do anything else I'll have to stop the truck and tell you how.”

Gato, being an experienced truck-rider, helped Evin get his pants and shorts down to his knees while I helped him keep his balance by holding him in a standing position.

It seemed to Evin it took forever to pee like that, because every time I hit a bump in the road it stopped his stream, forcing him to have to start all over again.

“You pee better to sit,” Gato told him when he was done with the bottle. “I show you.” Gato slipped his own shorts and pants below his knees, where the truck's vibration carried them to the floor for him. Scooting his bare bottom to the seat's front edge gave him room to pee in the bottle.

I was still holding Evin around the waist. He stood with his pants down watching Gato. I hit a big dip – two cab-jarring bumps in a row that jogged my arm down from the boy's waist to his middle hard place.

“We take off clothes for bed, now,” Gato said, giving Evin a side-look, rubbing his own cock hard. “I tired.”

“Are you sleeping naked?” Evin asked.

“*Semone* (Damn right),” Gato assured him. “It's hot for sleeping not naked.”

“Well, alright.” Evin stepped out of his own clothes. “But I'm warning you that you better not try to bone me unless you're into sucking me off and taking my bone in your ass first. Then maybe...”

“*Semone*,” Gato said, jumping into the sleeper. “You bone me deeped.”

A little while later Gato yelled, almost in my ear, “Yikie! Use more spitted.”

After a long, full minute: “Is that better now?”

“*Semone*, now boned me deeped.”

“Ha ha,” Evin laughed after a while. “I may wear girls' clothes, but you're the one who acts like a girl.”

“Jus shut up,” Gato said, getting nasty-tempered. All this time I'd been watching their action in my peekie mirror: small, sexy, eel-like Gato, all four-feet seven-inches of him, urgently hissing his instructions to Evin, then moaning and groaning with delight.

Gato hadn't grown one inch taller in all the time I'd known him. This had worried both Gato and me so much I'd taken him to my doctor. First Gato'd turned twelve, then thirteen; now he was on the road to his fourteenth birthday and still his body refused to develop or grow. His fuck meat (as these gang boys called their cocks) was the only thing that had changed in over two years: it had got slimmer and longer (from constant use?) but his balls stayed tiny, close to his body like in very small boys. Gabe always told his little gang-member he had to drink more sperm to give him body hair and growth. Gato, naked, still looked like a seven-year-old boy, with a shrill voice that screeched higher in angry ear-piercing tones when proclaiming his innocence (which was frequently).

“Eeee,” Gato said, mounting Evin when they switched. “You hold up the pillow, acause you're getting boned by a man.”

“Gato!” I said sternly. “Be gentle with Evin. You remember, I'm watching you.”

“I sorry, Luis,” Gato said with an ear-to-ear grin. He wiggled into position with his chin in the middle of Evin's back. A sharp arc of his tiny hips drove himself into Evin's bongo. Satisfied he was all the way in, he rolled his tiny brown buns around to make his 'worm' wiggle until he got the utmost in satisfaction.



I was never able to figure out whether Gato had staying power or laying power. After three minutes of wiggling around on whoever he was doing, he'd lay almost absolutely still on him for an hour, clamped tightly to his back, but he'd always pull out of his 'piece' with a stiff hard.

"I have to dress?" Gato asked, sliding first out of the sleeper. "No, you don't have to dress," I told him. They'd been sleeping all day while I'd loaded and drove on into a new night. "It's warm and it's night so you can stay any way you're comfortable. Did you have fun with Evin?"

"*Semone*," Gato said, sliding onto my lap. "I bone him raw."

"How did he like being boned raw?"

"He like it a lot, acause he bone me raw first." Gato smiled evilly in the green glow of the dash lights.

On hot nights like that I'd drive in a light loose summer shirt that I'd leave unbuttoned, and in my underpants and boots. Gato lifted himself to work my unders down. Accidentally leaning too far forward, he honked the city horn with his chin. Gato shrieked when a hard bump drove my cock all of the way into his sweaty bottom.

*Yikie, cabron!* I forgot the spits for *mi culo*"

"Are you hurt, hon?"

"I not hurt. I surprise is all." Again that big grin.

Evin had watched Gato slide out of the sleeper, wiggle his way onto my lap, honk the horn, then grinned at the Mexican cuss words when the bump had forced Gato to take the whole chili. Gato had made it good for him when he'd done Gato those two times, and he loved the way Gato screamed to be boned deeper and deeper as he drove his big-for-his-age cock from tip to base into the bongo of the older but smaller boy. Gato felt good to him, lying under him and making him feel like he was a man doing a boy who loves it. Evin quietly got out of the sleeper to sit on the passenger seat. He wondered why it was still night.

Gato was happy to be held in my seat-belt with me. My left arm was sort of around him, holding the wheel. He seemed to daydream as the truck hummed the miles under us.

"What time is it?" Evin asked me. "It seems funny it's still dark." He tried to peer into the desert blackness but couldn't see beyond the road. "When do we stop to get the melons?"

"We got them at eight this morning," I told him. "You boys fell asleep about four a.m. And have been out all day."

"You kidding me," Evin said in disbelief. "I'm not hungry and I don't even have to use the bathroom or nothing."

"I'm not kidding. It's the heat. It sometimes does this to me, too. I have stopped several times during the day to check the tires and drink a soda but I'm not hungry or anything either."

Gato woke in my lap with the bright sunlight of the new day shining through the windshield into his sleepy eyes. His insides felt funny, like when his mother gave him castor oil. Again, a short series of bumps drove my hard into him far enough to make clear stuff come out of his own hard's head, rolling down his worm of a shaft, tickling his almost non-existent ball-sack before it ran onto my legs.

"You should have slept another hour, Gato," Evin said. He was sitting sideways on the passenger seat with his back propped against the locked door looking at me and Gato. "You should see how cute you are when you're sleeping."

"As cute as a little piranha," I teased.

"No, Louie, he really does look cute sleeping. You have to see him from here like I see him," Evin said.

“Are we stop soon?” Gato asked. “I’m haf to use the toilet from all the comes you put all night in me.”

“Hang on, Gato,” I said, leaning back to get further into his bottom. “I’m shooting more in a second.”

“Don’t have an accident, Gato,” Evin warned. “It’ll stink up the truck.”

“I have no accident, do I Luis?” Gato asked. “Remember the camps? On the boat I take twenty comes. I no have accident.”

“We’ll see about that when you get off my lap. You’ve been leaking on me for the last hour.”

I pulled the truck in at the next truck stop where I could feed the boys and let them shower up. Evin handed me clean rags from under the seat to wipe Gato off with. I got pants on Gato and sent him running shirtless and barefoot into the truck stop. Me and Evin followed with the rest of his clothes and our own shower stuff.

“What shall we have to eat?” I asked the boys, after we’d messed around in the same shower stall for an hour.

“Everything,” Gato said.

“I want a short stack with eggs,” Evin said.

“Give us three big milks,” I told the waitress – and cancelled Gato’s order for coffee.

Evin sat directly across from me. Every time my eyes met his he gave me a grin. “What’s wrong, hon?” I asked. “Do I have egg on my beard?”

“No... You’re just cute in a funny sort of way.” Evin smiled again. “I like you a lot.”

“I think you’re cute and I like you, too,” I said gently.

“My dad said you fucked my brothers.”

“What did your brothers say?”

“That you did.” Evin smiled again. He cleared his throat, looked at Gato who was always interested in conversations about who’s fucking who, then he blushed girl-like, as he’d done in the shower when I’d washed him. “I want to know when are you going to take turns with me?”

“That’s hard to say exactly. Maybe tonight or in the morning tomorrow when I wake from my nap.”

“You can sit on mi Luis’ lap to drive for him,” Gato said helpfully. “Jus’ like I do.”

“When can that happen?” Evin asked, thrilling me. “I like how small your cock is. It’s boy-like sized.”

“As soon as it’s dark enough for the trucks I’m passing not to be able to see what we’re doing. You know how people don’t understand things like this, and even fewer people understand how sexy some boys are. I guess when they grow up they forget how they were all once just hard-ons with ears themselves.”

“Hard-ons with ears?” Evin doubted.

“Yep, they’d hear something suggestive and they were ready to run into the corner to beat their meat,” I said, putting the truck in gear, and then it wasn’t easy to talk again until we were on the freeway at road speed and could hear each other over the roar of the big diesel motor. The radio came to life.

“Go ahead, base,” I said, turning up the volume. “You have the Lonely Roamer... Over.”

“Lonely Roamer?” the young voice said, unsure of himself. “Yes, Randy, you have me... Over.”

“How do you know it’s me?” Randy asked.

“Well, my base is set on this one, so I figure you’re with Keha in my bedroom talking to me.”

“You’re wrong,” Randy teased. “Keha and me put this radio in the apartment today for me to talk to you on.”

“Oh, alright, that gives us close contact.”

“You got it, Dad,” Keha said from my base station, shaking the cab side windows. “What’s your mile marker? Over.”

“Coming into the Texas panhandle. This September weather is really hard on my tires. We're sitting here watching them melt... Over.”

“Really melting?” Randy asked.

“Not like candy or ice cream melts,” Keha said. “They sort of melt when you're speeding on hot roads. Right, Dad? Over.”

“Right, hon. Now tell me why you made this early-morning phone call. Did you want me to give you a radio check for Randy's radio or what? Over.”

“We want permission to use the boat... Over.

“Who's all using it, if I say yes? Your turn.”

“Me and my girl, Donnie and his girl. Tommy is dating Tanny, Ed wants to take Nando, Lar and Rick are wanting to bring their girls and the others... Over.”

“I didn't hear the name of one adult,” I said after a short pause to think about it. Unskilled or semi-skilled sailors had no business on a boat that size without someone who knew what he was doing in command – and for my boys someone who had a lot of tolerance. “You know you have to take any of the other boys who want to go, too?”

“George already told us that,” Keha said. “Over to George to talk to you.”

“I agreed to go as long as the boys don't cramp my style,” George said. “I also wanted to make sure you retold them the rules for the boat's use.”

“His girlfriend Marlee is coming,” Keha said. “She's an experienced sailor, too... Over.”

“Alright,” I said. “After all, it's your boat and I will never deprive you boys from its safe use.” And I reminded them of life-jackets, safety lines, man-overboard gear, etc.

“Louie, I'm as safety-conscious as you are,” George said. “I will see that they all have an hour's refresher course in safety practice and procedure.” I heard snickering in the background modulation.

“Alright.” I reminded them to take the CB and short-wave radios out of my pick-up for the boat. “You kids take care of yourselves. I love you. Over and out.”

“We love you, too,” my different loves said, taking turns. “Over and out.”

I felt this trip was was going to be alright. George was very trustworthy; I'd taught all the boys how to use condoms and reminded them to be gentle with the girls. I smiled, remembering Tommy trying to fuck Donnie with a condom on his skinny shaft, and how it had slipped off to get pushed deep into Don, who was amazed to find it in the toilet when he shit it out later.

“What's so funny, Louie?” Evin asked. Slipping out of the sleeper, he was covered with sweat from playing sexy with Gato. “Was it the way I came out of there?”

“Yes, that is cute to watch, too. I was just talking to the boys. They said give you both kisses. Get a wet washcloth out of the ice chest and wipe yourself down.”

Evin did, then he slipped under the wheel to sit naked on my lap. We were running slow, in the right-hand lane, in this super heat, trying to save our tires. No one was even trying to pass us, so it was safe for the naked boy to sit on my lap.

“*Dios!* Gato said, coming out of the sleeper onto the passenger seat. “How comed so hot here?” Before I could answer he rolled down his window. A hotter-than-hot gush of air hit him in the face.

“Thanks, Gato, for letting all of the eighty degree air out,” I said, “and letting some of that hundred and ten degree air in.” I wiped the sweat off my face on Evin's re-dipped damp cloth. While we wiped ourselves and each other we watched the heat waves ripple off the highway in front of us.

Gato liberated three sodas from the ice chest, tapped the top of each can three times before he opened it – this keeps them from spraying the inside of the truck – then finally settled himself back on the seat to stare at the oppressive, overwhelming heat that surrounded us in our island of comparative comfort in the

truck cab.

### 30. Girl Dates and Summer's End

All the boys and their dates who'd gathered at my home to talk on the short wave set looked at each other, blushing, wondering how many people had heard the list of pairing off's. They'd come for a beach party and the idea of a boat trip hit them all at almost the same time.

They felt bad about leaving Gil and Carlo behind, crying to go with them, but at the last party the two younger boys had run around bugging the girls by feeling bottoms and pinching boobs, because I hadn't been there to stop them and they knew if any of the older boys hit them they could tell me how they'd got abused.

With everyone finally together, gear properly stowed, safety practice and boat rules discussed, the boat pulled away from the buoy under power and swung clear, with the stereo playing loudly sound-track music from *Fun in Acapulco*. The teenies danced on the foredeck, in the cockpit, in the cabin – and George danced with Marlee while holding the boat on course. The shouted “Uuuhhs” from *You Can Do the Rumba in a Sports Car* attracted a lot of attention as well as vicarious merriment from other boaters. The trimaran seemed to dance over the tops of the wavelets, passing them.

“I wish your dad was in charge of this trip,” Tanny told Keha and Tommy. “Louie is always more fun than George, who's as bad as a mother hen.”

“We really wanted to take the boat out alone,” Keha said, “but Dad wouldn't let us.” He went to change the record to Fifty Hits. Keha danced his date Rosette near Donnie so he could tell him, “I think your sister Tanya has a thing for my dad.”

“No shit,” Donnie smiled – Tanny told him everything – “So what else is new?”

“Nothing. I was just wondering if Tanny told you if anything happened between them, is all.”

“When could something of happened without everyone knowing about it?” Donnie asked casually.

“Besides, Louie don't go for girls – young girls. Remember, he said he liked his women old enough to be called women and he liked his men young enough to be called boys.” The kids laughed.

They were on a short leg of 26 miles, out to Catalina Island, and would make a two-day lay-over on the other side. They had to return Friday so they'd have the weekend to get ready for the beginning of school.

Marlee was standing on the foredeck reminding the teens to use their safety gear, when one of the girls took off her top. She asked George what to do, because now all the rest of the crew girls was doing the same thing.

“That's fine,” George said. He reached behind her, unsnapped. “You may as well join the ranks of us topless people.”

So she smiled at George, and then there they were dancing bare-chested and bare-breasted out there in the Pacific all alone, away from the sick stares and evil minds of the morally perverse who would outwardly condemn them while inwardly having mental orgasm after orgasm from their own inner lust.

Anchored securely with a nice sandy beach yards away and no other boats in sight, they gave in to even more liberated celebration: a beach fire, roasted hot-dogs, marshmallows toasted to perfection on clothes-hangers that were straightened for the occasion, and dancing on the sand. As the sun slowly sank in the water they returned to the safety of the boat for the night.

“First motel we stop,” I told the boys. “It's just too fuckin' hot to go any further. My oil pressure will not stay up, and I know I have plenty of oil in the motor.”

At high noon I pulled into a motel parking lot. “Are we stay all night?” Gato asked hopefully.

“No, hon, we can pull out at sunset, then try to drive out of this desert before it gets too hot tomorrow.”

I kept Evin thrilled most of the afternoon in the motel room, then I thrilled Gato, who spent most of *his* time in the pool. A shower, six hours sleep, then another shower before we pulled out at ten pm. My boys were pretty happy they'd had all of the action their way.

Marlee didn't expect to see what she saw when she walked in on the youths in her care, in spite of the warning from her boy-friend to ignore almost anything. She saw three couples of boys sleeping with boys in double sleeping-bags – that was fine with her – but three steps further she found boys paired off with girls. She caught Tommy in action with Tanny because the sleeping bag had slipped down them. Then George came out, laughed, and dragged her, protesting, back to bed – all he had on his mind was doing a bit of heavy breathing himself, like the rest of the crew.

“I thought we were chaperones,” Marlee said in the cabin. “We are,” George told her. “I'm your chaperone and you're supposed to keep your eyes on me. Fights, arguments we stop. Otherwise, cooks and bottle washers is what we are. Louie likes his kids to be loving, and as long as they are, well, I'm one of his kids, too. So love me.”

She did.

Whenever a couple finished they meandered around in total curiosity to see what the others were up to. Sometimes they exchanged partners; in one case it became a four-way when Nando and Ed watched Clairisse in a top position over Pancho.

By the time Clairisse finished with the three boys she was tired, but she didn't worry about anything because years ago her mother had seen that she had the hots for men and put her on the pill. Most of the girls didn't have much to say to Clairisse, but they all talked about her because she was not a prim and proper virgin as the others claimed to be. That morning Clairisse lay longer than anyone else in her sleeping bag, watching other girls walk by to breakfast. She was looking for signs to tell her whether they'd just given up their assholes and given head like they normally did. She knew she wouldn't walk too well, after having had three holes filled by three hunky boys all night: it would be a long time before she would consent to sleep with three hot-blooded boys again!

Keha walked by Clairisse, giving her an affectionate smile. He had nothing hidden by his sport shorts; she felt a rush of lust from the warmth he radiated.

“Alright, crew,” Captain George yelled. “After you eat, group up for the treasure hunt.”

“I don't want to treasure hunt again,” Chollo said smugly. “Las' night I dig for gold and I find honeypots,”

Loris flushed brightly. She was sore because when Chollo, who was a very pretty boy, had asked her if she'd put out before she hadn't wanted to admit she was a virgin and she'd lied and said she had. So when Chollo had asked for fronts she'd given it to him. He'd been very gentle laying her, but he wasn't aware of her virginity. She couldn't say anything because it was really her fault. Now, in the early morning, everything that had happened last night felt alien to her and she burst into tears. Marlee took her into the cabin. She got the whole story out of Clairisse, and cheered her up with sisterly understanding.

Trucking through the warm night with both boys sleeping, I tried to make up the time and miles I'd lost. I drove eight hours straight without stopping, then pulled the truck over to the side of the road to take a piss and check the tires.

“What are we stopping for?” Evin asked, sticking his head from the sleeper crawl-through. I explained, then took both naked boys out the passenger door to pee on the tires, too. Standing naked on the side of the road was a new experience for Evin, an adventure, and it thrilled him.

“When we get back?” Gato asked.

“Monday night or Tuesday morning,” I told him.

A little later I stopped for a stranded motorist – a lady with five children. They'd broke a fan belt and her husband had waited until it got light and then set out walking and trying to get a lift to the nearest town.

“You boys put on unders,” I told my two loves when I got back to the truck, “because we're going to try to find him.”

“How corned you gave her our ice water?” Gato wanted to know.

“They had nothing to drink and everybody may be gone for a couple of hours. If we find him we'll bring him back and help him fix his car, if it's alright with you and Evin.”

“I think they must have a pretty boy,” Gato said.

“No pretty boy,” I told him. “It's very hot out there already, and I can't see women and children – or anyone else – stranded here, can you?”

“I kidding,” Gato said to Evin. “Mi Luis is nice to everything: your Gato, *to perio, tu hermania, tu hermano, tu madre, tu padre, tu theio...*”

“Gato!” I stopped him from naming everything I was nice to. “When you say everything it means everything, like your friends and relatives and your dogs and cats.”

“And all of everyone else's,” Evin added. “Besides, you forgot to say Louie is nice to birds, lizards...”

“Is it catching?” I interrupted. “If it is I'm in real trouble, because I catch everything that goes around.... That must be the man.”

“Oh!” both boys exclaimed as I eased the truck to a stop.

It was him, alright, walking wearily along the shoulder. I told him his wife and kids were fine, then handed him my other container of water as he wiped sweat from his face. “I'll return you with a new fan belt and help you get your car on the road.”

“Thanks... really a lot of thanks,” he said, with his face lighting up. He had almost given up hope of getting a ride. When he went to give me back the water jug, a dark little hand came out of the sleeper to take it. He turned half-sideways and looked curiously into the sleeper at two boys dressed in just underpants.

“I didn't stop for you only to get thanked,” I told him. “When I was a runaway boy years ago, my car broke down and a man in Idaho helped me with gas and money. He said the only way I could thank him was to stop when I had the chance to help five others and tell each of those five to help five more, and in a few years the five I helped would tell twenty-five who would tell a hundred and twenty-five, who would tell six hundred and twenty-five more, and in a few years people would understand what kindness is all about.”

“And you've been doing this for his favor ever since?”

“Yes, I've been doing this for twenty-five years. I figure the more people I help and tell about the five-plan the sooner this dream will come true. I also share the man's dream of peopleness.” I laughed. “I've always wondered if he ever got stuck some place and was helped out by anyone I'd helped before – that would be a completion of his dream, to hear someone else tell him to help five others.”

I tried to remember that man in Idaho, but it had been night. It was on a little narrow road. I was 16, the man in his late 20s. He was with a woman when he stopped for me. I live his dream, and know I always will.

The man leaned back in the passenger seat watching me drive. He told me I shifted so smoothly that he could not feel the shifts.

“I've never ridden in one of these before,” he said when I got up to road speed. “Are they hard to drive?”

“No, not hard,” Gato said. “I drive it, too.”

The man smiled at Gato and said he looked like a real truck driver to him, which made Gato very happy.

Clairisse was with Keha's hunting party. She was playing poor helpless girl so Keha would have to help her, even though she was perfectly able to do things herself.

The treasure hunt went fine for Tommy, Tanny, Ginny and Phil, who won everything.

With the fan belt replaced and the truck east-bound well into Oklahoma, in what I still call desert because of its oppressive heat and chiggers, I began to regret having lost the coolness of the morning the way I did. But the boys, still in unders, were having fun, between playing, sleeping and eating snacks. I radioed to the boat to let them talk to my other loves. That was a mistake, because Evin and Gato figured they weren't having as much fun as the boaters.

“You can only be one place at a time,” I told them. “That means you have to be happy going where we're going without wishing you were some place else.”

“I happy to be with Luis,” Gato said, meaning it.

“I guess I am, too,” Evin said, wiggling back on my lap. He was determined to drive all he could until he could drive as well as Gato.

The second night on the boat went smoother, because they were all pretty much settled down as to who they wanted to be with. Couples who'd switched the night before now lay in their sleeping bags side by side. Marlee had a supply of foam for girls who weren't on the pill to help further retard the danger of accidents. They would have to up-anchor in the morning to head back. Things were pretty well wound down then I called again to see how they were doing.

“Daddy sounds tired,” Keha told George. “I really should of went with him to help him drive.”

“Relax, have fun, stop worrying, Keha. He's made a lot of these trips without you kids, and you heard him say he would be home by Tuesday right on time.”

“I should of went,” Randy said. “Not that I can drive a truck like you can, Keha, but I could help repair something if he broke down.”

“Daddy don't fix anything but broken air lines or wires and adjust his brakes. He calls road service even to change an outside tire.”

“He's just tired and needs a nap,” George said. “He misses the sea breezes and wishes he was home with his lover-boys playing shark in the pool or something.”

Tommy was in the cabin, where he and Sonya were watching Donnie get it on with Tanny. They had each been playing threes with one boy and two girls and they were soon to switch to two boys and one girl...

In Pennsylvania my truck broke down with a bad water pump. While it was being fixed the boys and I spent all our time at a motel, loving, eating, sleeping and swimming. I was getting to know Evin very well.

“I just figured out something about you,” Evin said when we were kissing on the bed. “I think you love boys like Gato more than you love boys like me.”

“Why do you think that?” I asked, looking over at my sleeping Gato.

“Because he's a problem child,” Evin said. He'd been observing the older boy's behavior for the past days.



“I always thought I treated all my boys pretty much as equals,” I said. “But I love and respect problem boys like Gato, too.”

By the time the truck was ready to run again I found that Gato was burned out from riding in it. I lifted him up in a rebellious mood – but it changed instantly when he discovered the air-conditioning was cooling the cab down to freezing again. From there I drove just about straight through to San Francisco, where we unloaded, ate at Fisherman's Wharf and got home Wednesday night at two in the morning.

## 31. Get-Well Clown

When Keha got up to dress for school he accidentally woke up the two boys who had been in bed with him and me. He got them quietly out of the room, then woke Tommy.

"Louie hasn't slept once since we left Pennsylvania," Evin told him.

"Good," Keha said, "then he'll sleep until I'm back from school. Come on, I'll take you guys home."

"We sleep, we can go school," Gato told him.

I woke to wet, hot kisses. I tried to pucker to kiss back, but my mouth was too dry to form a kiss. I was not aware of the number of boys in the room until I sat up to reach for my glasses.

"What's everyone so solemn about?" I asked.

"You know how Gil is," Phillip said carefully. "He and Carlo are still the youngest boys who hang out here. Well, they didn't fit into our boat trip..."

"Tell him how you got Gil runned over by a car," Carlo cut in shouting, because he felt Phil wasn't getting to the point fast enough. "All because you wouldn't take us on the boat trip with you."

I looked at the older boys. Keha hadn't had the heart to tell me on the road that Gil had been hurt by a hit-and-run speeder when he'd chased a ball into the street after everyone had got back on Friday. Gil was still in a coma; he might have brain damage...

"It wasn't our fault," Gabe said. "It happened hours after we were home from our trip. I asked him to help us and he flipped us off, because he was mad at us, and he ran off to play."

"Right now Ed is baby-sistering for his mother who is at the hospital with Gil," Nado said softly.

I listened to everything the boys had to say while I dressed. I didn't ask questions. I didn't chew the boys out for disobeying me by not taking the two youngest. I knew Gil and Carlo were sometimes more than the boys could handle.

"Start my car," I said.

"Tommy's already wiped it off and it's running in the driveway," Keha said softly.

I'd had this strong attraction to Gil for years. Now, shortly after his tenth birthday, I had to listen to what had happened to a little boy I loved dearly, played and teased through his measles right in that same room, and now was laying in a hospital in a coma with the real possibility of having severe brain damage, all because of the irresponsibility of a hit-and-run driver who'd probably been on drugs or drink.

I was happy to find out the boys had been doing all they could to help out where they could, but I was deeply hurt to think noone had told me about this before. Damn ... why Gil?

"Don't blame yourselves, boys," I said. "I'll be back in a while."

They followed me out of the house to my car. I did a fancy racer's turnaround, with the car slammed from reverse to drive in one movement, sliding ninety degrees sideways, then screamed down the driveway, fishtailing, until I could get the feel of the the car after driving truck all week.

"Look at Daddy go!" Tommy said excitedly.

"That way he can make it to the hospital in ten minutes," Keha said.

The boys could hear the big motor held in passing gear or Drive-1 until the valves floated. T.C. came running from the shop to stand with the boys just in time to see the car skid around a corner to get to the freeway ramp. "Is that Lou that just burned the hell out of here?" T.C. asked.

"Yes," Keha said. "Here he comes now." The boys held their breaths waiting... The car popped onto the freeway like toast out of a toaster, seemed to hesitate, then chirped on the roadway.

“How fast do you think he was doing when he came up that ramp?” Keha asked.

“Shit, At least one hundred and ten. Don't you kids ever try something that stupid. Lou's an experienced trucker and still races.”

“He was a thrill driver and drives the drags,” Tommy said enthusiastically.

“That's not the point,” T.C. yelled at Tommy. “He knows exactly what he's doing. If one of you kids try that you'll hit the ice plants in the center divider or you'll hit another car. Either way you're going to turn your own damn car over. Do you all understand?”

“Yes, T.C.” the boys said, their elation somewhat dampened.

I held the car on the emergency strip until I was sure another car was not going to meet me at the top of the ramp, or I wasn't going to accidentally rear-end one in front of me going the legal sixty-five. I didn't have to drive this way or speed like this; after all, Gil had been in a coma six days already. It was just the hurt and anger in me that made me want to be there yesterday, the day before, or even Friday when it had happened. Or did I want to be there for my own feelings of guilt? I slowed the car down to seventy-five, now that my thinking had cleared up.

Mrs. Garcia didn't know what to say to me when I sat down next to her. I was jumpy, agitated, nervous, putting out one cigarette and lighting another. Did I think this accident to her son had been her fault for letting him play on the streets with the other boys? She knew I loved Gil deeply and I was always deeply concerned when any child was hurt. She knew I spent hours in emergency rooms with my shop children to get cuts stitched that were too deep for me to take care of. I would band-aid boo-boos, kiss hammered fingers, wipe scrapes and runny noses, dry tears, kiss cheeks of all colors of the boys I dealt with. She'd watched me many times.

“Hi,” I said, after half-way smoking the second cigarette. “Have you heard anything yet?”

“No, not yet. I sit, I wait.”

“Isn't there a doctor I can talk to or anything?”

“Just wait,” she said calmly.

She understood my need to act, to do something, anything, to aid her son. Men's normal reactions are to try to win over things, to save the day with valor, to try to rush things that cannot be rushed.

Two hours after my arrival a doctor came out of the room.

“Will you come in to talk to your son now?”

“You go, Louis. You go talk to him this time. He is still sleep.” She was told that sometimes pleading to a comatose patient wakes him up, gives him the fight to want to live, get well. She had already tried that for hours today, and the day before and the day before that, and she was tired but still willing to do whatever it took for as long as it took, even though she suspected that talking to her son was a thing the doctors did to make her keep her hopes up or keep her busy.

“Gil, this is Louie,” I said. “Wake up. This doctor just told me you're playing sleepies on me. You remember the last time you played sleepies in my room? Well, I just think you're doing that again.”

I talked long and lovingly to him for hours.

“Come, Luis,” Mrs. Garcia finally said, “we go now.”

“How's Gil?” Keha asked when I got home.

“He's still in a coma,” I told him. “He just lays there like a little lump...” I couldn't finish describing the boy in front of the others and burst into tears.

“Don't cry, Daddy,” Keha said. “He'll be fine.”

On Saturday I spent all day with him. The next day he moved his position a little sometimes but still didn't respond. Mrs. Garcia came in as I was talking, all dressed from church. “Luis,” she said, “this is how you spend your Sunday?”

“He's more awake than he was,” I told her. “Look how much more he moves around when I talk to him.” He moved against the straps again. “Come on, Gilly boy, wake up for me. How do you expect me to get my truck on the road if you're going to sleep in? We have miles to cover today and I need your help to drive.”

I would have talked heavier, more lovingly, if his mother, his doctor and two nurses hadn't been almost on top of me.

I wanted to tell Gil I missed him, Carlo missed him, that we loved him so much, but I did not have the nerve to say this after Gil's mother told the doctor I was Gil's friend, not a relative. Nevertheless I went on:

“If I kiss you will you open your eyes like sleeping beauty opened her eyes when she was kissed by the prince? I know you want to play with Carlo and that you want to go sailing and fishing with me. You want to do everything now while you're young, while people cannot criticize you being an adventurous boy doing what adventuresome boys do, like when you scatter your toys and dump your clothes on the floor leaving them for your mother and sisters to pick up.”

“He's responding,” the doctor said.

“Or like when you're all washed squeaky-clean except for the muddy little ring around your neck which you forgot.” I talked more insistently, then bent to kiss Gil's forehead swathed in bandages. I kissed his little nose with tubes in it, then his cheek ever so gently, and one of my hot tears dripped onto his just-kissed cheek from my own cheek.

“Come on, driver, it's check-out-of-this-motel-time. It's time to wake up and get that rig moving on the slab. How do you expect us to make New York if you're playing sleepies on me?”

“Can I drive the truck all day?” Gil asked, sounding very tiny and hoarse.

“*Dios!*” his mother said with joy. “*Mio.*”

“Yes, Gil,” I said over my shoulder as the nurse hurried me out of the room, “you can drive all week.”

They started giving him tests. His mother had to ask him questions to find out if the brain damage was severe or minimal. They made him use his brain, motor functions, senses.

“I want Louie,” Gil said, when he couldn't stand any more tests. “I want Louie.”

“Rest,” his mother told him. “I send Louie after you rest.”

“Do you promise?”

“Promised,” she said. She kissed him.

Gil didn't rest long. He woke up looking at a nurse who was bent over him changing a tube. He was confused, bewildered, scared. He'd just been running, playing, laughing a few minutes ago. Now where was he?

I came in with a new toy for my boy, just as I'd done the last time he was sick. “Do I get to stay with you until I'm well again like las' time?” Gil asked in a very slurry voice.

“The doctor seems to think with your injuries you will be better off at home with your mother,” I told him with a smile, a toy and a kiss.

“Does that mean I can't help you any more?”

“No, they will never stop you from helping me. You're too good of a helper for that to happen. What you are going to have to do is something that's very important for me. You will have to have your tests, do what your doctor tells you and you will have to go to physical therapy and things like that for me.”

“Is that like for shop work? For pay?” Gil asked.

“If you're doing it for me, just like they ask you to,” I said, feeding him his lunch, “then you'll get paid.”

I kissed Gil when he fell asleep on me.

Dreams of people talking to him, like his friend Louie, his mother, a doctor, nurses, faded in and out of his mind like clouds on an almost-clear day. He hurt all over, he had a tube in his front so he didn't have to pee, but it was uncomfortable. He looked at the needles in both of his arms, felt the tubes in his nose and tried to see the things he was hooked up to that blinked, flashed and beep-beeped behind him. He wanted to go home, he wanted to be in the field behind the shop where he could run free through the waist-high drying tall grass, playing, carefree and having fun...

I sent my truck out so I could visit Gil at the hospital two or three times a day. I ran my shop and helped my boys with their work, because the holidays were coming soon and their sales would be up again.

Happily, every day Gil was acting more like Gil. He had this funny little slur in his wording, he talked slower, but he had not been noticeably mentally affected by his ordeal. I hoped the slurring and slowness of speech was from the drugs they gave him. I was with Gil when he was moved from Intensive Care to a four-bed room on the childrens' floor.

"Member the get-well clown?" Gil asked one day.

"He's a birthday clown. Anyway, what about him?"

"Isn't there get-well clown, too?"

"There must be. What do you think get-well clowns do when they visit sick little boys like you?"

"He would bring balloons. He would tickle sad boys to make them happy. He would have a big round red nose with a white face a red spots here and here. With a..."

Gil couldn't keep a flow of conversation going for long.

"Does he have big shoes on his feet?" I asked.

"Uh huh." Gil smiled. "He don't fall or trip cause he's a get-well clown."

"You're right, Gil. The get-well clown has to teach sick little boys how to be happy so they get well sooner." I tickled him happy for a minute because he was so grim and told me he was sad.

"Will you come back to see me when the clown comes?"

"No, hon. If you have the get-well clown here then you don't need me here, too. I have other boys who need me and love me and want me to help them, too."

"I know that. Can my mommy be here when the clown's?"

"Yes. She will be here when the clown visits you. Do you think it would be cool for the clown to visit all of your little friends here when he comes to see you?"

"Nuh uh," Gil said, getting slurrer. He was fighting to stay awake. "Jus' for me."

"You go to sleep, hon. I will take a kiss from you to the clown store to see if they have a get-well clown."

Gil was barely able to kiss me a kiss, he was so tired. I sat with him until I was sure he was sleeping before I left.

I found a good clown suit with hearts on it at the costume shop; they had one that matched it in a boy's size. I got two sizes of putty noses, then went home where I carefully made up to look all-of-the-way happy.

"Gil's mother's ready to go when you are," Tommy said, hanging up the phone. "Can I go, too?"

"Not this time, Tom-tom," Keha said.

"Gil will need a lot of rest when he comes home," I reminded the boys. "He still has bad headaches and he hurts all over even though he's got most of his casts off."

Gil was waiting when the get-well clown rushed in and tied a big bunch of balloons to the foot of the

bed. The get-well clown then airplane-fed Gil his dinner. Gil's greatest pleasure was when the clown tickled him into eating, then helped him eat his dessert.

"Why's this kiss mark on your face?" Gil asked.

"Do you remember the kiss you gave Louie to take to the clown shop for you?" the clown said in a squeaky voice.

"Uh huh."

"Louie gave it to me to give back to you. It wasn't a very good kiss."

Gil's mother helped me get him into the little clown suit. I made his face up like mine, then his mother helped me put him in a wheelchair and followed us with more balloons, because Gil was magically turned into the get-well clown himself for all the other children on the floor.

I was tied up all day at the shop. When I came in at two, there were three telephone messages for me from Gil. I phoned back to find out from one of his roommates that Gil was sleeping. He had two roommates: one was getting his tonsils out, the other had just been moved in from recovery from an appendectomy.

I put some little matchbox cars in my jacket pocket before I left to feed Gil his dinner, like I'd promised, and like the get-well clown had done the week before. I gave the boy I'd talked to on the phone one of the little cars, and another to the child who was crying after he'd woke up from surgery.

"I saw," Gil said. "You still have another little car in your pocket. Who's it for?"

"This is for my spoiled little bratty brat... you."

"You have more cars?" Gil asked. He would not believe me until he got to feel in all my pockets to make sure. Gil grinned from ear to ear when his searching hand encountered my hard front. "This is what Tom-tom and Keha do" Gil slurred "when they put the friendly squeeze on you."

The doctor came in. "Well, little man, how would you like to go home tomorrow morning?"

"Why can't I go home tonight with Louie?"

"Well..." the doctor said uncertainly.

"I will get you early in the morning. Right after breakfast," I told him gently.

"Then I can visit the beach with you?" Gil asked.

"For a few minutes. We can drive you home the long way." I kissed my little lover-friend. "Take your nightie pill. I'll see you first thing in the morning."

## 32. Honeymooners

I hadn't ignored the rest of my boys while all of this had been happening. They had their own things they were doing and I loved them in any way they needed to be loved or wanted to be loved. A couple of boys talked to their close friends telling them too much about me, and these boys came over just to try the experience. The thing with this is you cannot turn them away, otherwise they'll feel you don't love with them because they aren't good looking enough or they have something wrong with them. One of those boys was a pretty little boy named Tony; the other one was Mario.

I'd been cleaning up inside my truck when Mario came by. "What's ya doing?" he asked.

"Getting ready to go on a trip. Now that Gil is home I have to get my own self back to work. I sure haven't seen your friend, ah..."

"Tony?"

“...Tony or you since that one time you came here. Did I do something wrong and scare you boys away?”

“No. We just don't know if it's alright to come over here, because you haven't been home very much. The boys at the shop are always so busy we couldn't ask Kevin if he'd bring us again.” Mario smiled. “I'll get Tony if, ah...”

“Sure. You and Tony can help me clean up the sleeper before I leave this afternoon.”

He got the drift – and hurried off and was soon back with Tony. Mario was eleven and a half and Tony was twelve. They were Evin's friends, and Kevin was the one who brought them over after Evin's tales had aroused their interest in me. Mario was big-boned and rough, with coarse but pleasant features. He was far from being a doll baby, but his long blond hair was nicely textured. Tony was a doll baby: short-cut curls of medium brown hair, freckles, three front teeth missing from an accident shortly after the permanents came in.

“Hi, Louie,” Tony shouted with his gap-toothed grin. “I bet we're better now, 'cause we've been practicing.”

Mario blushed and scrambled up the side of the truck to get into the sleeper first. They proved to me they had been practicing.

Later I stopped by to tell Gil I had to drive my truck again. A few days earlier, Gil had been able to attend my birthday party. He'd also been ring bearer in Lone Elk's wedding – just before Lone Elk and his new bride moved to Tulsa to try to set up his own trucking company.

“Keep the shiny side up,” Gil said in CB talk.

“I'll stay safe just for you, lover boy.” I gave him a big kiss.

“Is anyone riding with you?”

“Yes. Randy. He's been waiting a long time to go on a trip with me.”

Gil hugged me and cried on me until I reminded him that he could talk to me on the radio that Keha had installed in his bedroom.

In the truck, Randy closed the door and smiled at me. “At last I get my truck trip.” He settled himself on the passenger seat. “Mom was sort of bent out of shape when you asked to keep me out of school for a week, but she let me come anyway.”

We drove pretty much steadily, and pulled into New York with burned out front wheel bearings and two ruined front tires. We would have to layover for repairs.

“Wow,” Randy said happily. “Like I would of planned it if I had my way. Tell you what, Louie, you rest, then we'll eat and play honeymooners.”

“Play honeymooners?”

Like how they show on *Love American Style* where the honeymooners stay in bed for a week of solid suckin' and fuckin'!”

“Keep your voice down, hon. That's why we drove straight through with just those occasional little flirts with you.”

“You call those little flirts?” Randy blushed and couldn't finish what he'd started to say.

“An hour here, an hour there; yep, that's little flirts to me.”

I showered, slept, got up to use the bathroom and slept again. When I woke I found Randy was sitting up watching me.

“Are you hungry honey lover?” Randy asked. He was ready to start his game of honeymooners.

“For your love,” I said, playing shy. “Now, what can my big fifteen-year-old lover boy have for me?”

“The first course is Randy sausage,” he told me with an ear-to-ear grin. “Then...”

I put my finger tips over the boy's lips to keep him from giving the second course away. After all, I was a man who loved little surprises. And who wants to be stifled or limited because he has to do things in numerical order? I scooted down in bed to get Randy sausage for my first course. The rest was sexual bliss.

“Wow!” Randy said hours later. “I'm breathless and you're still hard in me.”

“We can stop for a while, hon.”

“No, Lou. I was just trying to be funny again.”

“I know. I try to be funny all of the time, too.”

When I did get off my lover-boy he was red in the face. He showed me the cause of his embarrassment.

“I thought I'd sucked all of that out of you.”

“You did hours ago. I filled back up again. I guess I got the fastest balls in the West.”

We embraced, talked pillow-talk, then kissed our way into a new session of around the world love, until Randy suddenly asked, “Louie, you ever seen anyone like me before?”

I shook my head. “Every boy is different, loves differently, so I love each of you for yourselves. Did you notice how different Tommy and Keha are? Tommy is a rusher; he rushes into everything, where Keha is a slow, careful thinker; he only rushes when it's demanded of him, otherwise he will take his time to decide the best way or action to take to do things. Gabe is the kind of boy who wants to be spoiled rotten and my silly Gilly is spoiled rotten because he's so beautiful. I used to take him into stores and old motherly women would load him down with anything he asked them for. And then there's my poor Gato, a boy who is a hundred percent gay, so small that his mouth gets him a lot of trouble, because he's ready to fight and knows he can't win, because everyone else is twice his size, but his culture, his upbringing demands him to be macho. There's Donnie, a hundred percent het boy who was dating girls and fucking his sister long before he fell in love with Keha.”

“And you,” Randy cut in.

“Now he's back to girls. The only two stable couples I know are Daryl and Kevin and Ed and Nando.”

“Did you know Ed and Nando played fours on the boat with another boy and his girl, and did you know that Daryl, Kevin and Cha-Cha are a threesome, not a couple? But we're getting away from the question I asked you, Louie. That is, have you ever loved two people who were identical, like twins?”

“I was in love with a set of twins once. They did everything exactly alike except for the slightly thinner one. He could do one thing his brother could not do: he could suck his own cock.”

“Wow. I've never heard of anyone who could suck themselves.” Randy laughed, then asked what position the twin had used, because he wanted to try it right then and there. I helped him into the position, but he fell short.

“Don't be disappointed, Randy – I've only met two boys in my entire life who could do that,” I said, hugging him from behind. “Are you ready for me to park in your garage again?”

“Nope. I'm ready to eat.”

“I thought you said honeymooners are supposed to stay in the room all week fucking and sucking and never go out.” Randy spun in my arms and stole a kiss. “Ummmm, what sweet kisses you give me.”

“Yes, Louie, these are bride kisses. The honeymoon's over, because I'm still a growing boy. Are you



ready to take me to lunch, dinner or breakfast or whatever? Because I can't remember when I ate last.”

“We ate last.”

“No, I went out to eat just before you woke up. I think that was yesterday.”

### 33. Changing Times

Gil was in his living room propped up in a chair looking blankly at a blank TV screen.

"Hello, knock knock knock. If there's anyone in there I come to visit with you."

"Hi, Louie," Gil said, drifting up out of some deep thoughts. "Am I glad to see you. Everything's different, so different at the shop since I've been gone."

"How did you get to the shop?" I asked.

"Keha's carried me there for an hour a day every day for sodas. My mommy asked him to, 'cause I was sad."

"Oh, my poor little Gilly was sad. Are you still sad?"

"Uh huh, acause you won't take me to see your horse."

Gil was still talking slurry. His mother had told me this was part of the damage from the accident and only time would tell whether it cleared up. He was off his pain pills but still had terrible headaches.

"You kissy me bye-bye," I said when it was time to go, but when I tried to straighten up from my kiss my huggy boy was hugged around me like a little clamp, so tightly that I had to pull him into my arms when I stood. "Ummm. Is this my huggy boy bear?"

"Yes. You have to take me to the shop with you."

Gil wanted me to walk him through the field. This was hard for him, because he still had vertigo and couldn't walk or stand without constant assistance. I helped him a little ways, then carried him to the shop.

"Hi, Gil, we glad to see you," Gabe said. "Are you ready to work here again today?"

"Yes," Gil said, "I'm ready to work."

We supplied him with a soda and a couple of candy bars to work on.

Gil was still a sharp-minded boy. He had observed how the housing projects were changing to more and more poor whites, and how blacks were coming in to radicalize the neighborhood. Nando, Ed, Pancho, Arnold, Gemmi, Salvadore, Phillip, Rick and couple of others were working now at a new electronics plant as assemblers.

"Who are the new boys?" I asked, more for Gil's information than mine.

"Most of them are new to the projects," Lar said. "You already know Rubin, one of Alberto's younger brothers. He forced his way into the shop on his eleventh birthday. That's David, Mark, Scott, and this is Tony."

Ruben was a miniature copy of Alberto, who had changed his name to The Fabulous Cha. When I said "Hi," he winked at me, then walked seductively over to take my hand in his. All his fingernails were badly chewed. He was a nervous boy.

Billy stayed turned away from us until the mention of his name. He was a sour boy. My presence in the shop disturbed him. He didn't like Gil because the others babied him. He didn't believe Gil wasn't OK because, with everyone helping him, he looked perfectly normal. Billy, however, was delightful to look at.

"If you're going to stay home for a while," Carlo said, "Gil and me would like to come over for a pool party."

"He means a beach party," Gabe said. Of the five new boys, only Tony had been to my house. Mario was not allowed to work in the shop because of the status of his parents, but Tony's parents were liberal.

David smiled at the idea of a beach party. He was a little taller than the other boys and had exceptional looks, with soft deer's eyes and light brown hair.

“That's my friend Scott,” Gil told me. “I bet you will like him a lot, too.”

“You're right, Gil. I will get to like Scott, too.”

I had my doubts then, for Scott was anti-everyone. He was loud, took verbal pot shots at those he was trying to humiliate. But, damn, he was a beautiful boy, very cherubic with blond hair that turned into a kind of halo around the edges in the shop lights.

Scotty (no relation to the anti-everyone newcomer) told me I had a phone call from one of his neighbors. It was a woman, and she asked me if it was alright if she brought her son James by at five to meet me. When I'd hung up I asked Scotty to tell me something about the boy, but he told me I'd better judge him for myself. Now, of course, I expected the worst.

Gil tired easily still, so I asked Lar to carry him home for me.

I'd had only three hours sleep in the last twenty-four; I really wasn't feeling up to par. Gil had taken a lot of time I should have used for a nap, and now I would have to stay over time.

Machines shut off in the shop. Cars started. Workers left. The boys decided to leave a little early, too. Scotty and I talked shop until an old battered Ford wagon pulled up outside.

Scotty introduced me to his neighbors. “Hello, James,” I said, giving his hand my warmest, friendliest handshake, “Do you like to be called 'Jim' or 'Jimmy'?”

“My name's James,” he said. “I do not like to be called anything but James.”

“Then James it is,” I said, looking up at the hulking boy, all six feet of him from his size-twelve shoes to his long sandy-colored hair. His mother told me he had just turned thirteen.

“Do you want me to pick him up in an hour?” his mom asked.

“No. I'll bring him home to you.”

Scotty and James' mother excused themselves, hurried out, leaving me alone with this giant of a boy.

“So...?” I began, unsure of myself as always. “It's rare that I get to take a boy who is from out of this area.” His mother had told me she would pay his wages, that Scotty had told her everything about me, including the fact that I was a boy-lover. Then she'd said James was a fatherless child who was almost too big for her to control – but that she would duke it out with him toe to toe whenever it came to that. And she felt it had come to that too often in these past few weeks. He'd apparently become the bully of his block.

I took James into the shop and showed him what had to be done. I talked to him about safety, how I forbid horseplay at all times and in all places in the shops. Not because the horseplayers themselves would get hurt so much as because they always managed to bump into some other boy who was serious about his work and get him injured.

“You look like you're a hard working boy to me. So if you want this job it's yours,” I told him.

“I thought I was going to work in that other shop with the other boys who make toys or something?”

“Nope. You're sort of special. You should have a job with more responsibility. If you want to see where the other boys work and what they do you can follow me.”

We went to the toy shop and I said he was welcome to stay the extra hour after the other shop closed to work with the boys when he wanted to.

James helped me shut up the place, after which he asked me a hundred questions about what we did there. We decided he would go home with Scotty unless he chose to work later, and then Lar, who lived in his area, would drop him off on his way home.

“Can I start tomorrow?” James asked me.

“Certainly.”

When I got home at last Keha met me at the door and Tommy was helping my wife in the kitchen getting the table set and dinner together. I walked into a bedroom full of boys. They all gave me “what

happened?" looks.

"He's just a big giant of a boy for his age," I said, "and he doesn't know what to do with himself because he's a child in a man's body."

"I hope you're taking a week or two off from trucking," Lar said, "to see if he's going to be a real problem. We were in the field and we saw him."

"Just till Sunday, then I pull out. Do you want a beach party tomorrow or what?"

"We got no 'ores. We ain't minors," Gabe teased.

"No 'ores here, acause we's queer," Daryl said.

"You jus' speak for yourself, faggot Daryl," Gato said.

"I dig prosties," Gemmi said. "So do some of the other boys, right Rick?"

"They're called pay-to-lays," T.C. teased. "There's pay-to-lay boys, too."

"How much they make?" Gabe asked.

"Why?" I asked him. "Are you thinking of going into business for yourself?" I got serious. "If you are, think about this for a while. You have to watch out for police, queer-bashers, haters and people who are capable of murder, who will abuse you and call that love. You have to watch out for the moralists that will beat you up and turn you in and have you arrested to teach you it's wrong to be sexy."

"It's fun to be sexy," Gabe said heatedly.

"Sure it is, when you're sexy with the right people."

"That's what you tell him and the others, just so you can have them your way," Gemmi said. "You're scared you will lose these boys if they love with someone else."

"You don't do things anymore, Gemmi, because you're all grown up. You're seventeen," I said. "If you want to see what happens to children who are looking for love, just read a newspaper to see how people zero to a hundred get into the hands of haters and hurters, who kill, rape, beat them, punish them, mistreat them, humiliate them, all because they sought love and friendship. Then you see rage, anger, tougher laws passed to get child murderers off the streets forever, but did you know if you told on me I would have to serve under those same laws as if I'd killed someone, not a reasonable law because I love him, help or try to keep you boys out of trouble like I do?"

Gemmi was smiling. He didn't know about the hateful people who called love a bad word. Gemmi had never been on a trucking trip with me; he'd never seen some of the youngsters I'd picked up who were in need of more than a ride. They needed a friend, or a doctor, help, tenderness and understanding right then. A few of those young people were too shy or embarrassed to say how they got hurt, but most opened up to tell me how they were taken advantage of because they were alone, scared, inexperienced and/or broke.

"How come you're acting so hostile again, Gemmi," Keha asked calmly. "You come here to laugh at us, but you're here. Now, tell me why are you here?"

"Because I like to be around Luis," Gemmi said.

Gemmi is a stiff, arrogant, aristocratic Argentine. It's true, he does like to be close to me. He'd played with other boys when he was younger, but I could never hug him, kiss him or love him, nor did I ever try to get past his delicate outer barricade that kept him *El Machismo Grande* and shielded the scared little loving boy in him from the rest of the world.

"I get so tired of hearing you run off at the mouth," Keha said to Gemmi, "about something you're afraid to do or understand. Or are you strictly a voyeur? Daddy will never tell you off because he loves you like he loves every other boy, but I don't have to love you."

I silenced Keha so I could tell the boys the other side of the conversation we had been having before Gemmi and Keha's outburst.

“But again there is the thrill of adventure, the daring of danger that is appealing to some people. These are the people who usually hustle. Others have to do it for survival, for money for food, or for money to support a sick relative. Others get hooked up with pimps who will 'keep them from getting hurt' and who usually hurt them if they feel they are holding out on him or not bringing enough money home.”

“You didn't tell us how old the hustlers are,” Gabe said.

“I guess they're all ages,” I said. “The youngest one I ever met was that ten-year-old in Florida, right Keha?”

“Yes. But his brother was there and he was nine.”

“How much they make,” Cha-Cha asked me.

“From a hamburger and a Coke all of the way up to twenty or twenty-five dollars,” I told them honestly.

“Some might make more – I really don't know.”

“How do you expect Luis to know,” Gemmi said laughing, “when he has you assholes for free?”

“Acause we love him,” Gato said. “You the *culo grande*, and shit on you, Gemmi, calling me the assholes. You are shit head, fucked head, you!” I grabbed Gato and pulled him close to me to get him quieted down before Gemmi hit him. “Las' year...” – that could have been a week or a month ago – “...I make a hundred dollar for *mi culo* one day. I was by the piers when a *puto* take me for his boat to lunch. Es lunch was *mi culo*. He chupada *mi culo* with es mouth, then he bone me, he bone me deeped.”

“You never had your asshole sucked,” Daryl yelled.

“Las' year I do, too,” Gato yelled. “You shit head...”

“Stop trying to argue with everyone, Gato,” I said gently before he could build up steam to scream again. “All you have to do to prove it to Daryl is to take him with you next time. You don't have to rant and rave to prove how right you are.”

“*Semone*,” Gato said, at half his piercing volume. “I take him tomorrow with me to see the man who chupadas.”

“Don't tell me you're going to hustle, Darly,” Gemmi said. “I thought you learned your lesson last time.”

“Fuck you, you closet queer!” Daryl said.

“I'll talk to you later,” Gemmi said, standing up, then sitting down again.

“I'll talk to you now,” I told him, getting off the bed. “Come walk on the beach with me, Gemmi.”

Gemmi had just turned judgmental recently. There was a time not too long ago when he was wrestling, playing and giggling with the other boys in my house. “Will you tell me what's wrong?” I asked him when we were alone beside the ocean.

“No. I want you to answer a hundred questions. I just can't seem to do anything right.”

I found he was caught in a half identity and half emotional crisis. He felt he was too old to come to our place, but that was where he felt free to be himself and he didn't want to stop coming over.

“So what you're trying to tell me is what I tell you and the other boys all the time,” I said. “You're bigger, older, changing and wanting to reach out for the new things in life, but you're scared to let go of the people you really love, your friends, and you're scared to let yourself trust them. That's why you're angry and why you're turning your love for people into hate, because you're hating yourself for not being able to reach out to us like you used to when you were younger.”

“Everything's out of reach,” he said sadly.

“Damnit, Gemmi, talk to me. When have I never listened to you boys? I've listened to your fights, your loves, your hates, your conquests and defeats. When you felt you could not fight the system, we both win or lose, don't we? I bought most of you your motor bikes, then I battled your parents to let you use them even before you were old enough to get driver's licenses.”

“But, Luis, it's hard to tell a girl you're picking her up on your motor bike when even Chuck with no license drives your pick-up all the time.”

“I taught him to drive when he was thirteen,” I said gently. “He's had his driver's license for over a year.”

“I have my license for over a year, too,” Gemmi said. “I use it once when Chuck let me drive your pick-up back when he bring your car home from being serviced.”

“Cars cost a lot of money, Gemmi. They are not a motor bike that costs nickles to run, with five dollar tires and two dollar tubes to replace. They cost dollars in insurance, gas, repair parts and service. Would you like to borrow my old station wagon for the weekend?”

The wagon was insured for young drivers. The boys used it for art fairs and swap meets. I gave Gemmi my spare ignition key and watched him drive off. Tommy ran into my room to give me hell about it.

“Right now I can only take care of problems when they come up, Tommy. I told you I'll help you get your car when it's time to get you a car.”

I looked lovingly at the rapidly-maturing youth. He had come so far since he'd lived with me. He was dating Tanya almost every weekend; he hadn't wet a bed since that night he'd peed on Lone Elk in the truck; he was rapidly outgrowing his hyperness. Even if he was faster than a normal boy, he was normal to himself, and that was the yardstick of individuality he was judged by.

He raced on to describe the kind of car he wanted. “I don't want something old and junky. I want a car that's late modeled, fast and racy.”

“You guys throw him in the pool for me,” I said.

“You can't do that – it's dinner time!” Tommy ran out the door.

That Saturday we had to put in a half day at the shop. I pulled into the parking lot right on Scotty's rear bumper. Lar and James got out: Lar's car was broke down again.

“Are you planning to stay for the party this afternoon?” I asked James. “If so I'll call your mother.”

“Ya dunna have ta call her,” Scotty said. “I told her you'd bring him home on Sunday.” He smiled. “You know how late your parties can go. And I think you need to take a little extra time with him.”

Scotty could be right, I thought. After all, he knew James better than I did.

More boys would show up later, with their dates, but right then we were a comfortable little gathering. James was a half foot taller than most of the Mexican boys, but Mose and Josh, two new black boys from the projects, were almost up to James' height.

I was in the far corner of the shop running a lathe when I heard a yell as a five-gallon can of thinner fell and burst on the floor.

I ran to help Josh. “Quick, get everything off! That means your underpants, too.” I said, tugging his pants down. “And your socks off. Everything.”

“Man, you's got me naked as a jail-bird,” Josh said. “I jus' spilled a little thinner on me.”

“I know. Go shower it off.”

“Eeee!” Gato said, laughing once the two black boys left the room. “*El miati's vertiga es grande!*”

“What fun you would have with that, Gato,” Cha said, goosing him. “He can shove that in your *culo* for rubbing your belly button on the inside.”

“If it was hard,” Carlo said not having the sense to keep out of it. “That miati's cock shoved in your ass would come out your throat.” He gave a pantomime demonstration to amuse us all.

“*Tu es stupido!*” Gato said angrily. “*Miati's vertiga's* is like they soft, they don't grow long hard.”

I told the Mexican boys to stop calling the black boys mudballs. At least they were using the Spanish

word – Scott did it in English. He couldn't accept the fact that they were like us except maybe they were a little more well done when they were cooked in God's heavenly bakery.

“How come you undressed Josh?” James asked me.

I told him if he'd stayed in his thinner-saturated clothes he would get skin burns. This way he would wash the thinner off his body and in a few minutes the thinner would evaporate out of his pants and unders so they'd be safe again.

The boys started arguing about the difference between white, Mexican and black as rare, medium and well-done people.

“What is Daryl?” Gato said in his best argumentative voice. “Rare?”

“Raw,” Cha said. “Darly is my raw meat.”

“You know what we say,” Scott shouted. “White is right, brown stick around, and if you're black, stay back.”

He laughed himself into a corner as the other boys started to close in on him. I had never had to contend with a 12-year-old racist in my shop, and it hit me a little too close to where I was raised. I had started out with three strikes against me: I'm small, Jewish and I'm a boy-lover.

“Let's save our energy, boy,” I said. “I need energetic boys to clean their boat and wash my trucks.”

“Bull shit!” Scott raged. “I thought you said we were going to go to a beach party with food.”

“Right after our boat and the trucks get washed,” Cha said.

“You don't have to help us with washing anything, Scott, but you will not ride in them when summer comes.”

“Fuck you spicks,” Scott said. “Shit, I'm going home. Summer's not till next year.”

The other boys laughed and called Scott some pretty choice names as he walked out crying about how unfair life was to him. Scott was a pig when it came to food. He would steal and lie – and lie so convincingly that you almost believed him and put the blame on the boy he wanted you to blame. He was also a schemer.

He was right when he said summer wasn't till next year – but he was wrong in when he could truck. If he'd had his grades up I could have taken him for a week's trip with me. There was also Christmas vacation, spring break, and we sailed every other weekend, weather permitting. Sometimes Ruben, Franco and Juan would help on outings to the mountains and lakes.

“There's only five of us left working here,” Carlo said, “not counting Gil, Tommy, Chuck or Randy if he counts.”

“No, Randy don't count, as he was before this shop,” I said. “Talking about Gil, I better get him and then we'd better go home.”

I carried Gil back on my shoulders and took most of the new boys with me. When we got to the house some of the boys were already there with their dates, helping do the regular beach party chores. I was surprised to see Di grooming her pony, then saw that she had two of her friends over to help her.

“Hello sweetheart,” I said to Di. “I'm glad to see you out here with your girl friends.”

“They're not my girl friends. They're my friends,” she told me angrily. “Just my friends.”

“Louie, can I talk to you privately in the bathroom?” Carlo asked. When, a half hour later, I had time to see him there, he toed the rug, cleared his throat, shrugged, then said nothing.

“Do you really want to talk to me, or...”

“I know what you did with Gil in his room. I was hiding in his closet when you sucked him off. After you left Gil told me how Donnie helped him.” He cleared his throat. “I'm ready.”

“Ready? Ready for what?”

“I'm ready for whatever you want to do to me.”

"I'm ready to put you to work washing my truck."

"Please... First do something with me."

"I don't work that way," I told him. "Gil did something to me first. That's the way it works."

He gave me a closed-mouth smile, dropped to his knees in front of me, unzipped my pants and sucked my hard into his hot mouth. Carlo was expert at this: after all, God only knows how old he was when he first had to eat the whole chili for his horny brother Gabe.

Gabe had grown up into girls, even though he still came over now and then to be babied by me. Or if he saw I had something interesting he would turn down his girl dates until the novelty wore off, when he'd be back to girls again.

"I'm shooting my cum, Carlo," I warned, so he could back off if he didn't want to have to take it in his mouth. But he just sucked harder, thrilling me – and he was working out of his clothes at the same time.

"Now *mi culo*," he said, flopping face down after swallowing my load. I got undressed, lay gently over him, and just got all the way in when the door opened.

James walked halfway into the bathroom before he saw us. At first he was just too stunned to say anything, but the rush of blood to his cock was immediately noticeable: as his face paled the zipper fold of his pants gave a hardy surge forward.

"James," I said, "you can come in or leave, but for God's sake, shut that door!"

"Wow!" James shut the door and locked it. "Can I bone him, too?"

"Only if you let Louie bone you for me to watch," Carlo said, half looking around his shoulder.

James shucked his clothes, telling us how he was sent to my room for a bathing suit. When he got to his unders and pulled them down he exposed a real whaler.

"Eeee," Carlo said in a tiny voice. "Sit in front of me here so I can play with it until Louie's done."

So Carlo sucked James while I played Carlo's bongo. I warned Carlo when I was ready to shoot again so he could be ready for a little more pressure on his buns. Then I got off Carlo's back and James flipped him around and lay back to take Carlo's cock in his own large, mobile mouth.

"Uh uh," Carlo said, struggling to get away. "You got braces."

"No biggie," James laughed. "I won't bite. I've had a lot of practice."

Even in this position Carlo couldn't get much of James' big hardon into his mouth.

I wasn't surprised to find James on the floor having a double sucking session on his first day with us. At home he was a problem because he was making it with unwilling victims, but here I had some very willing participants. Now in one lightning move James pinned Carlo under him, added some of his own spit to Carlo's spit already on his cock, took aim, dove in and drove deeper and deeper with each push.

Carlo was struggling and protesting: "Uhuh... I have to watch Louie... do you first."

"I'm too hot to stop," James said breathlessly. "I'll let Louie bone me in a second."

He pushed all of the way in tightly, the big cock making Carlo grab his sides and jerk and moan before it came. A few seconds later it retracted soft with a soft pop.

Now James lay on the floor next to Carlo and pulled his buns open, looked over his shoulder at me and flashed me this big grin. "Louie, yours don't need anything but a little spit."

So I entered him with spit. Carlo still lay where he was. I think he hardly knew the big boy's cock was out of him.

"I didn't hurt you, Carlo," James said gently. "Sit up and watch me get the bone like you asked."

Carlo stood to watch. He reached behind him several times to feel his backside and look at his hand.

When we were all three finished and standing in the shower Randy burst in. "Here you are, Louie," he said. "I heard you got me a used motor bike..." He stopped when he saw I wasn't alone.

"It's the scooter at the bottom of the apartment's steps if you want it, hon."



Randy was showing a hard under his swimtrunks. He threw his arms around my neck and hugged and kissed me, then slipped out of his trunks. James' cock instantly revived when he saw Randy's naked body, and he dry-humped to thrust his hard to show Randy he would like to do something with him.

"Why's Carlo in the shower with you?" Randy asked, totally ignoring James. "I thought he..."

"I got boned raw by that big thing," Carlo reported, cutting Randy off. "James fucked so far up my bongo that I thought his cock was going to pop out my throat. In fact I think he left half of it in me."

"Huh!" James said. "Carlo's all teeth when he sucks, but he wiggled around real nice after I got halfway in. It's only nine inches long and still growing. Are you game?"

"Randy," I said, "I think James is talking to you."

"I don't do things with boys," Randy said pleasantly. "I just shower with them long enough to give the whole gym class hards, then I split."

"Do me again," Carlo pleaded, "but this time use a lot of soap in my bongo."

Randy and I grinned at each other as we watched James soap Carlo. We'd used soap, spit, KY, Vaseline and everything else, almost including sand one late one night on the beach when I'd slipped out and tried to get it back in.

The soap foamed. It worked its way out between the boys' legs in a rich lather. When James pulled out, Randy told Carlo it looked like he had a rabid asshole.

Carlo had to spend some time on the toilet before he came out and joined us on the patio. Now he wasn't about to leave James alone. He hung on him, worked with him when I set James about some chore, followed him wherever he went.

*Chingar!* Gabe said, driving up with Loris. "*Mi Carlito's* got a lover now!"

"You should've seen what he got loved with," Randy said with a grin. "A foot-long hot dog."

When I went into the house to get another bag of charcoal, I found Gabe in my bedroom feeling what Carlo had got loved with. Randy and Loris helped me with the barbecue, and ten minutes later the three boys came out again. Carlo was rubbing his sides again, but what was so funny was Gabe strutting around like a rooster with a corn cob stuck in his ass.

The Mexican boys were talking and laughing it up in Spanish, the white boys in English, as they worked on the trucks or the boat. At four Tommy rode up on his scooter from the shop. He had spent most of the afternoon on a present for my wife. He was always making her special things, because she was a special kind of person to him. I think he loved her almost as much as I did. Her almost total non-sexuality made her no competition for my affections. My boys appreciated this: they could have me all to themselves.

Gato and Daryl pulled up on Daryl's scooter. Gato reported that Daryl had got his *culo chupado* by the *puto*.

"Luis," Gato asked, hugging me, "you ever do what that man do?"

"No, I never do what that man do. If I do I will chupado this little culo first," I said, pinching him lightly on his buns.

"Eeee," Gato said happily "*Tu es loco.*"

"*Si, mi poco loco, tu es loco por del sexo.*"

"*Mi Luis es mi atracciones,*" Gato giggled.

"Humm. You really think I have sex appeal, Gato?"

"*Si, atracciones grande, mi amore,*" he giggled again.

I took Gato with me to get something out of the car. I threw him over the back of the front seat, then jumped over the seat to join him. We were giggling, hugging, kissing, when all of a sudden...

"Dad!" Di pretended surprise. "What are you and Gato doing in the car?"

"Ah, Gato's seeing if he can find something that rolled under the front seat, hon."

“Then why don't you have the car doors open so the dome lights will help you see under the seat?”

“Because Gato means cat in Spanish,” I said. I had to stay on my toes because my daughter had a higher IQ. Than I did. “And he told me he can see better in the dark.”

“Sure he can! When you're done gaying off with Gato your dinners are waiting on the patio.” She ran off to cut around the house.

“She's got your number, and mine, too,” Gato said in perfect English. We hugged a minute longer, then cut through the house to get to the patio a moment after Di.

I wasn't worried that Di would ever tell on me. She got a thrill out of trying to catch me in the act, playing sexy with the boys, then would follow me around with this funny grin.

Randy came over to kiss me. He pointed out that James was watching every move Keha and Donnie made. “He's been looking at me that way too, ever since we had our shower.”

“How come he's not wearing a swim suit and running around on the beach with the rest of you sexy dears?” I wondered.

“Dunno, Why don't you ask him,” Randy said in his kiss-and-run style.

I called the boy over to me. “Yes, what do you want?”

“Are you having a good time?”

“Naw. It's not a very good party.” I realized he was shy, with all the bikini-clad girls around, because he felt awfully tall and out of proportion.

“What's wrong with the party, James?” I asked, watching his eyes drift over to the fronts of the hunky boys' swim suits. “You only get out of a party as much as you put into it. Come with me. I'm going to get you into a swim suit, and then you're going to swim with me and Gil.” I took him by his hand and led him to my room.

## 34. James

James finally did put some effort into enjoying himself. He helped me swim Gil and Carlo and made a nice sight sitting on the pool's edge, looking like a man and talking and laughing with the others. That night he slept in Tommy's room, with Gabe and Carlo, and we could hear the moans and groans coming through the open door, until finally, about eleven, they fell asleep.

He was having real fun all day the next day when we took the boat out for a short sail. "Are you happy that you had a full weekend?" I asked him.

"Yes."

When I drove him home in the evening he sat quietly beside me all the way to his house. "Thanks for a great time, Lou."

"You're welcome. You will have more times like this as long as you do good work for me."

His mother met me at the door. "Come in, Louie," she said. "I heard you're pulling out on a trip tonight."

"Yes, I am."

She handed me money out of her purse.

"What's this for?" I asked.

"To take James with you for a week or two." She smiled, conspiratorially. "Don't tell Scotty he isn't as bad as we said he was. He's still expelled from school for three more weeks."

I turned around to the hulking boy behind me. "I'll help you pack, James. We're going truckin'!"

While his mother filled in the necessary permission papers I helped James get his things together, because at this time of year there were snow flurries, blizzards, black ice and all kinds of surprises in a two-piece vehicle. Then we went back to my house.

At midnight I woke James and helped him to the truck's sleeper, where I put him to bed again. Carlo had just departed, leaving James pretty worn out. I loaded, then got the rig on the road. At six in the morning I pulled into a truck stop on I-15 this side of the Nevada line and turned in my seat to wake James.

The boy's features were so darling in sleep: his curved upper lip, mouth slightly open from his stuffed-up nose, his face freckled, with long, dark brown lashes lying on his cheek. Long, straight hair the color of his lashes, shoulder-length and mussed. A peek of white bun showed out of the un-zipped side of the sleeping bag; his foot was sticking out of the bag, too.

I touched his shoulder to rouse him. "James, wake up, son. "We can get some breakfast and hot chocolate here."

"I'm up." The boy tried to rise too fast and hit his head on the inside of the padded sleeper. Then he tried to sit on his knees, but the ceiling was too low.

"Here," I said, offering my hand, "let me help you out of there. You can dress on the passenger seat."

He had a piss hard he was proud to show me. "What if I get stuck with this trying to crawl through?"

"I'd have to turn you sideways, or we'd have to amputate whatever wouldn't fit."

He got out with ease, then sat on the seat as I handed him his clothes in order of what to put on first and he tugged them all on. As James was pulling tight his pants a metallic pounding started under the truck cab. I hit the kill switch for the engine, but the pounding continued, this time accompanied by the unmistakable yells of Carlo: "I'm under here, Luis."

I got out of the truck and opened the the side door to the under sleeper storage area. Carlo was wrapped cocoon-like in a sleeping bag with just his face peeking out at me. "Where are we, Luis?"

“Six hours from L. A. Explain yourself, Carlo. What are you doing hiding in the tool compartment?”

“I hid to stay with James,” Carlo said with a pout. “Are you going to make me go home now?”

“No, Carlo. I'll phone your father and tell him you're with me.”

“Are you going to say I was under your truck to hide?”

I shook my head. “We can make it sound like an accident.”

I helped him out of the sleeping bag and into the cab where he could warm up a little from the cold desert night, then I phoned Juan to tell him his son was with me. He had thought Carlo had stayed over with Gabe and it was fine to keep the boy on the trip with us.

After breakfast we drove to Las Vegas, where I let the boys run around the inside of Circus Circus for a couple of hours with a handful of quarters to play the games for kids. Lunch was foot-long hot dogs and sodas. After that we got on the road, the boys slowly working their way into the sleeper for a round of fun and games. They fell asleep before I reached Salt Lake City in a squall of snow.

As we climbed up through the Wasatch Mountains I woke the boys and made them ride up front.

“You both buckle into that safety belt and wait till I get the feel of this road before you dress.” Neither of them had a stitch of clothes on.

“Can I blow you?” James asked, after playing around on the seat for a while with Carlo.

“It's too dangerous,” I said. With the road so slippery I didn't dare go over twenty-five miles an hour.

“Later when it's not dangerous?”

“Sure.”

I tried to pick up the pace a little. “Why don't you tell me and Carlo a little about you, James? Me and Carlo won't tell anyone what you tell us. Carlo won't because he's madly in love with you, and I don't do things that way because it would be a breach of my trust in your future, and a breach of your trust of me.”

He told us how much he liked fudge, ice cream and all kinds of candy, while he reached for the pound bag of M & Ms on my side of the dashboard. Then he told us he'd liked sex for a long time, but there were no girls he could do things with and then when he found out he could do things with boys he did it with them until last year when he found himself getting in all kinds of trouble because the other kids were lying on him.

“We would suck each other, and then I'd let them fuck me first, then when it was my turn to fuck them they'd complain how much I was hurting them. But honest, Louie, I tried to stop when they said I was hurting them. It's just once I touch myself hard I can't stop!” He was near tears for shame.

I felt sorry for him and reached over to touch his shoulder, because I was a little that way in my youth although I have an undersized cock so I never really had a problem hurting anyone. But kids always swore they would do things back, like if I sucked them they would suck me, and if I let them fuck me they would let me fuck them, and after I serviced them they ran out the door laughing at me and I felt hurt because it was unfair. But that's the way straights lead gay boys on to humiliate us – because they cannot understand our love for them.

“I know my cock's big,” James was telling us. “But this just seemed to happen overnight, and I thought this is great, being so big, until I went to do something with it and they snitched on me. And here I am.”

“I'm glad you're here and Carlo's glad you're here, and you know, James, you're better off being here than in trouble for trying to share your love with those others, son. My boys will pretty much let you do what you will let them do back to you. Besides, you seem to have acquired your own little lover boy right there who will let you do anything you want to with him, right, Carlo?”

“*Semone*,” Carlo said. “James is a good sucker and he's fun to bone back, too.”

“God,” James said after a while, “I got a hard that just won't quit.” He was all hot and bothered from sitting under the same seat belt naked with Carlo. I'd told them they could dress over an hour before, but

they'd refused. After they tried about five positions for sex on the passenger seat, they begged me into letting them get back in the sleeper. When I saw the pain on Carlo's face as he sat all of the way down on Jamie's lap to take the full eight plus inches that was even fatter around than his brother Gabe's, I gave in.

Carlo lay on his tummy with James over him and smiled out of the sleeper into my peekie mirror at me. He was loving it this way, as they giggled and played it up for me. I should have been watching the road closer than I was my peekie mirror, but what they were doing had me worked up pretty good. Twice they begged me to join them, and then in the middle of a flat curve we slid off the road. I was very lucky not to have jack-knifed my rig!

"Are we wrecked?" Carlo asked. He always had to struggle to talk when James had his hard buried all of the way in him, as then, and giving him the long, slow strokes Carlo had taught him, like Gabe would use for seconds or thirds after his first frantic orgasm.

"No, we're not wrecked," I said calmly. "I just decided to stop and play sexy with you boys."

I took off my clothes and crawled into the sleeper.

"Do me while I'm doing Carlo," James said happily. "I'm strong enough to hold both of our weights off of him."

I did, and James was good at his word.

The trip was a hard go. After the accident I was a little ice shy, but I still was able to put on the miles. In the produce market in Philly I caught up with Lone Elk, who'd taken over the payments of my Peterbuilt cabover and was unloading. He told us to sack out and he would see to the unloading of my truck for me. Later I caught up on what was happening in his life since he'd moved to Tulsa.

"I'm pregnant," the big Indian said with a smile. "How you keepin', Lou?"

"Fucked but never pregnant," I told him, making the four of us laugh. "Are you staying over?"

"No, I have to load out this afternoon for the north woods."

"That's a rough go this time of year. You be sure to take it easy and stop by for a visit."

"I've been by to visit. I visited with little father Keha and his boys, but you weren't at home. I've stopped in about four times, only to find your truck on the road, as usual."

Lone Elk spent hours telling us how he was soon to be a father and how he would like Keha to stay with him for the summer and the two school vacations. I agreed to let him take Keha. After all, he was his brother and who was I to keep them apart?

Outside of Chicago we stopped to eat, and it was cold, freezing cold. James started to run to the restaurant, but I held him back because the walkway was slick. When we came to a little incline James skied down it with his size-12-triple-E shoes.

"What the hell," I laughed, "you even brought your own skis."

"I sure did," he said, shining his dazzling smile at Carlo and me. "They're sort of convertible feet. They're snowshoes, swim fins or skis with circumstances permitting. Mom wouldn't get the sports equipment I wanted so I had to grow my own."

I got laughing so hard at this I almost fell, but he skied over to me and Carlo and caught us and held us up.

Back in sunny California, James asked me again if he could blow me. Carlo wanted to blow me, too, so we stayed parked in a nice place for a couple of hours while we all pleased ourselves with each other. They made it so nice for me, and it was so nice in the sleeper, that I took a short nap afterwards, too.

In that new year of 1974 a newly appointed environmental coastal impact commission was screaming for no more growth in our area. Back home, I attended one of their meetings and found that my home, my shop and the whole neighborhood was in danger from their decisions and subject to their whims.

“If they pass that no more growth thing here,” Scotty said sadly, “all our shops will be out of business in six months.” He was pretty upset about this commission and their unfair decisions.

“They’re just talking to get press coverage to show the public how noble and worthy they are of their new-found political positions and power,” I told him optimistically. “You’ll see how this whole thing will die down in three months.”

“I hope you’re right, Lou,” Scotty said. “I hope you’re right.”

The first thing they did was to notify me that our boat was a hazard where it was moored. They wanted it kept in the cat harbor where it would be under the supervision of the harbor master’s watchful eye. Luckily Kevin’s father owned the original mooring we took it from, and we tied it legally and rent-free to his buoy. The next thing was the new ordinance against animals on the beaches.

“But we own our beaches,” I protested.

“All beaches are public,” they said.

I got help battling them from our prominent neighbors, who also owned horses, dogs and had their property posted, until we finally won a half-round. We could keep the horses but we could not ride them on the beaches, not even our own beaches. This was unfair, but it was like everything else in life: we had to learn to live with unfair rules and unfair laws, with only equal justice for the richest of the rich.

After a couple of months of this things started to look better, as the coastal commission was locked in the courts, so I took a couple of trips with my rig.

The CB buzzed with talk of fuel shortages and the prices at the pumps jumped from twenty cents a gallon for diesel fuel to thirty cents a gallon at the refinery. That was how I found myself working out of the Tennessee Mountain Man’s truck yard in the eastern corner of Tennessee.

“Thanks for comin’ to me, Lou,” Mountain said kindly. “Even if there’s a te-total fuel shut down we will make sure you and your rig get home least oncet a month.”

Lefty and his brother-in-law Mountain Man had put bigger tanks like my own on their trucks, and they had the foresight to put more tanks under the two truck yards they owned there in Tennessee and the yard in Texas. They figured they could keep thirty trucks running three years or longer if they had to.

Lefty pulled into the yard in Tennessee the day after I arrived there. He had Petey riding with him, and this gave me and Petey a little time together before they pulled out for Florida and I went to haul chicken feed with one hell of a big grin on my face after a full night of love.

## 35. Jimmy Lee

The cassette player was playing one of my favorite songs:

*Let me tell the story;  
I can tell it all.  
About the mountain boy  
Who ran illegal alcohol.  
His daddy made the moonshine;  
The son drove the load.  
When his engine roared  
They call the highway Thunder Road.  
Then it's thunder, thunder*

*Over Thunder Road,  
Thunder his engine,  
White lightning his load.*

Pulling up the back side of those Smokey Mountains of Tennessee, I was singing along and not doing a very great job of it.

*Moonshine, moonshine  
To quench the devil's thirst.  
The law, they never got him,  
'Cause the devil got him first.*

Talking about devils, that highway was hell. The hairpin curves of the Smokeys were so sharp in places and my trailer cheats so close to the cut granite mountainside that I could almost feel the scrape of aluminum in my teeth, with the long nose of my tractor across the double lines challenging oncoming traffic and making it swerve into the shoulder to get out of my way. As always in situations like this, I had my four-way flashers on, for safety's sake.

*“Son, “ his daddy told him,  
“Make this run your last.  
Your tanks are filled with hundred proof,  
Your car's tuned up and gassed.  
Now, don't take any chances, son  
If you can't get through.  
I'd rather have ya back again  
Than all the mountain dew.”*

A few more miles at this speed wouldn't hurt the heavy, boggy rig one bit. The music sped up for the chorus:

*Thunder, thunder,  
Over Thunder Road.  
Thunder his engine,  
White lightning his load.  
Moonshine, moonshine  
To quench the devil's thirst.  
The law, they never got to him  
'Cause the devil got him first.*

I geared back from third to second, to first. I only had compound low left but I wouldn't have to use it. My four hundred horsepower was holding its own, building speed again. Just when I got the rig around the last sharp curve on that grade I saw a boy hitch-hiking. It's nothing to stop going under five miles per hour. I tooted the air horn. He got in the right side.

“Where you going, pard?” I asked.

“Athens,” he answered briskly. “Are you driving that far?”

“Athens Greece?” I teased.

“Athens, Tennessee.” The boy laughed. “Who's that singing on the tape?”

*Reving up his mill,  
He shot the gap at Cumberland  
'N screamed through Maynardville.*

“I forgot who sings it, son. It's from the movie 'Thunder Road'.”

*With T-men on his taillights  
'N road blocks up ahead,  
The mountain boy took roads that even  
Angels/eared to tread.*

The boy settled back into the seat while the chorus started,

*Thunder, thunder,  
Over Thunder Road.  
Thunder his engine,  
White lightning his load.  
Moonshine, moonshine  
To quen...*

The tape got hung up on the roller. It broke. The boy helped me get yards of the brown stuff out of the cassette player.

“Aw, this is really too bad.” The boy spoke gently. “You can't even buy this tape any more. Can you?”

“It's not that bad, son. I have all the records and I recorded this at home. I'll have these tunes again on my next trip. My name's Louie. What's yours?”

“Jimmy Lee.” He smiled, “You can call me Jim.”

“Jimmy Lee it is. I think Jimmy Lee is a better name than just plain Jim. It makes you someone special. Don't you agree there are just too many Jims around?”

“Suit yourself, Louie.” He gave me a bold smile. “Are you going to turn at the big highway or are ya gonna stay on this road to Athens? It's fifty miles from here.”

“I'm going right into Athens to deliver my load of chicken feed.”

“That's exactly where I'm goin' is ta Athens.”

“Great to hear that, Jimmy Lee. Now I have a passenger all of the way to the dock. What brings you out on the road, son?”

“I'm gonna visit my cousins. My pap said I could of caught the bus in, but I don't wanna spend my money on the bus. I figure ta have money ta have fun on. Besides, I like hitch hiking better than buses.”

“So you hitch often,” I said, pleased with the look he gave me.

“Often enough ta know the score.” Jimmy Lee tried to sound worldly. “I know all about the men who like to collect little ends off boys 'n stuff like that. I know how to earn my rides when I need to, or when I need extra money ta have fun with, like now.”

He was saying everything right for a quick hustle. Where I was from in California a boy like Jimmy Lee could cost anywhere from a Coke and a hamburger up to a hundred dollars depending on how street



wise he was.

“How old are you, Jimmy Lee?”

“Fourteen.” He was looking at me to see if I thought he was too young or too old.

“Fourteen. How long have you been getting people to pick you up like this?”

“A long time. Since I was eleven. It's about the only way boys I know have of gettin' their own money.”

“How much do you charge?”

“That all depends on what I do or get done to me. Do you like ta collect ends?”

“I like everything. But I would really like to know what you like.”

“I like five dollars in money for a whole night of doin' whatever you want to do.” He smiled again at me.

This was a great price. I mulled it over in my mind while I carefully looked him over. Very clean, slightly muscled, slim, graceful, black curly hair, green eyes that glowed cat-like when we passed under a tree, suggestion of carefully cultivated mustache so sparse it only showed fullness with his profile to me. The upward curve of his lips, the lizard-like flicking out of his tongue to wet them before he talked again.

“If ya think five dollars is too much, I will spend the night for three.”

“When I check into my motel in Athens...”

“No. No motels,” he cut in. “We can sleep here in your sleeper. I'm well known in Athens and my father will be mad if I go into a motel, because that's where I live. I lied to you about going ta my cousin's. I'm comin' from my cousin's.”

By now I figured he was just riding back and forth on the highway hustling anyone he could. I told him what I thought. I got a big smile for answer, then, “Well, it's not your first time pickin' up boys to love.”

“Far from the first time. I love boys.”

“I love men.” He said this tenderly. “I got my face slapped when I was eleven just learnin' how to pick the people who didn't mind loving for money.”

“Have you ever been hurt by other men who picked you up, besides the one who slapped you for asking?”

“That guy that slapped me was a little end collector. He wasn't into paying for nothin'.” He cleared his throat of the bitterness that went with the memory. “I was hurt a couple o' times. They was both too big and wouldn't stop pushin' themselves in after I asked them ta stop 'cause they was hurtin' me real bad.

After they was done and I collected my money I figured it was alright after all, when my end stopped hurtin'.”

I wouldn't be unloading until the next day so I had a little time to spare. I pulled off the road by a little stream that cut deeply under a narrow bridge. It was a great spot for late lunch. Jimmy Lee said he liked it, too.

I made sandwiches, and when we'd ate them we walked down to the little stream to wash the spoons I'd messed up in the spread jars. Then Jimmy Lee pulled me by the hand into the shady bank under the bridge, and there we sat and talked and skipped rocks over the smooth surface of the slowly moving water.

“This is a nice place to love in,” Jimmy Lee finally said. He was leaning against my side and I had my arm over his shoulders while we sipped our sodas. “But it's not private like your truck 'ud be if we lock ourselves in.”

“Have you ever made love in a sleeper box before?”

“No. Some people that picked me up said they was truckers, but none of them had a truck like yours with a bed in it. I guess they was just farm trucks.”

Jimmy Lee unzipped my pants. He was a little disappointed by my size until he decided maybe a mouthful was better than a throat-stopper.

“I thought all truckers was big here.”

“Hard – not always big, Jimmy Lee.” I gently finger-stroked his hair as he leaned his head into my lap. When his lips touched me I teased, “I didn't agree on a price yet.”

“This is for the sandwich 'n Coke,” he mumbled.

After he'd tongued me for a while we went back up to the truck to love in the sleeper the way he wanted. We stayed in the same spot all afternoon, and for an early dinner I cooked mostly canned stuff, adding a little of this and that fresh from my ice chest. Another trip down to the stream to wash them, then back to love a little longer before I took him home.

When Jimmy Lee blasted my air horns, children flowed out of his house in sleepers, nighties, in all stages of undress. I was trying to give him a ten when his father, Ned, came up and opened the door, all smiles.

“I owe him a night with me, Pap,” Jimmy Lee said. “He insisted that he bring me home. He didn't want me running loose after dark.”

“Looks like ya already had a day, Jimmy Lee. Shut off the truck and come in, Mister.”

“I have to unload early in the morning,” I told him.

“What time ya want to clock for?” Ned asked. “We get up at cock's crow around here.”

“Cock's crow is good enough,” I told them.

“After ya unload are ya leavin' right out?” Ned asked.

“No, I have to weekend in town.”

“Great. Then you can come back 'n visit here. Ya can take Jimmy Lee and Bobby Ray ta help unload, if 'n ya a mind ta.”

“That's very kind of you,” I said, looking at the boy he'd called Bobby Ray, “to offer me help in unloading.” Bobby Ray came around to my side of the truck and climbed up on the second step to look in.

“Ya can share their bed with Jimmy Lee and Bobby Ray,” Ned said. “I'll run one of the girls in ta draw ya all a bath. There's no showers in these old houses.”

Ned helped Jimmy Lee down, rolled up the passenger window, then walked ahead with his son. Bobby Ray jumped down and held the door open for me.

“Lock it,” Bobby Ray said. I did. “Ya got any thin' ya want carted in – a grip or somethin'?”

“Right here.” I opened the sleeper door to give him my flight bag to carry. “How come your father invited me to stay so quick?”

“My pap, he knows what we do. He is plum took likin' the idea of you bringing my brother home.”

I was just a little worried that this might be a setup or a shake-down for a boy-love beef. It wasn't. It was plain old country folks that did a favor for a favor. At the door a little girl asked me if I wanted to bathe before or after the boys got their baths.

“What boys?” I asked.

“The ones you got to night with,” she told me. “My pap, he don't go for my brothers sleepin' dirty.”

“Sleepin' dirty?” I asked.

“Ya, unwarshed.” She smiled a warm, friendly smile.

The old-fashioned legged bathtub was one of those huge ones that can hold a four-child family all together so as to get all of the washing out of the way at once.

“I guess we can take our baths at the same time,” I told her.

Bobby Ray, who was a smaller version of his older brother, was already undressing.

“Don't mind them,” the girl told me. “Just shuck down. The door don't work.”

Jimmy Lee was in there using the toilet. He didn't say anything but he had this big smile on his face. Bobby Ray bent to pull his pants and shorts off together. Jimmy Lee made a pinching motion. The little girl in charge of filling the tub pinched Bobby Ray's bottom.

I counted noses and discovered there were seven children ranging in age from about six to fifteen, all crowded in this bathroom and the broke-down door doorway.

“How old are you, Bobby Ray?” I asked.

“I'm twelve.” He pointed around. “She's nine, he's seven...” – the one I'd thought six – “...he 's ten, she's sixteen...” Just then their father showed up to chase everyone but me and the two boys away from the bathroom and the hallways. “...and she's thirteen.”

“They all take a might o' gettin' used ta,” Ned apologized. “If'n they get in the way, run 'em out.”

He started back to the kitchen, then asked Jimmy Lee if he needed anything to eat. The boy told him I'd fed him two meals, and before he'd met me he'd got taken further south than he'd planned to go and had to stop over in Alcoa to visit because the man who'd picked him up took him that far before Jimmy Lee could talk him into doing things for money.

Then Jimmy Lee pulled some cash out of his pockets and gave it to the seven-year old who had come in to say he had to use the pot. The little boy took the money to his pap.

“I wonder how many bathroom users we'll have 'fore you finish your bath,” Jimmy Lee said, laughing. “Bubba's lined up for first.”

“All o' them 'cept Sue Lynn, I betcha,” Bobby Ray said. “Since she been sixteen she quit lookin'.”

“While the coast is clear,” I told them, “I'm getting my butt into the tub.”

“Watch out,” Bobby Ray said, “this water's oyster-burning hot. We'll wait till you're in before me and Jimmy fill in the spaces.”

Jimmy Lee yelled for Bubba to come in before I'd even got clear of my pants. Bubba appeared in his unders. He was done in two minutes. Then the next users came in, one after the other, until they'd all had their turns in the bathroom.

“You sure don't embarrass easy,” Bobby Ray laughed. “Heck, I thought you'd be shy some, like my cousins when they first spend a night visitin'.”

“You'd love my cousin Lonnie Jean, too,” Jimmy Lee said, pressing his hard front into my spine. “Lonnie does the same as we do. Reminds me, how did you make *out*, Bobby?”

“Ten people picked me up, but only three was worth askin'. I made 'leven dollars and gave pap ten, 'cause I got lunch out with a dollar.”

“You hustle too?” I said.

Bobby Ray didn't know what that meant until Jimmy Lee told him that what they did was called hustling.

“We gotta eat some way,” he told me over his shoulder.

“Pap got busted up pretty bad. Then Ma left us to do the best we can.”

“That's what we all do,” I said, “the best we can.”

Out of the tub, I got first use of the clean towel. Then I dried the boys off with the others watching down the hall. We gathered up our clothes and walked in the buff to the boys' room, where Sue Lynn was just finishing making the bed up fresh.

“What end can I sleep on?” I asked.

“You don't got a choice,” Bobby Ray said. “You take whatever room you need in the middle, 'n we roll down against ya.” They both laughed: those old feather beds with their old-fashioned bedsprings demand that you put the heaviest person in the middle; that keeps the lighter ones from falling off in the night.

“How do you like this bed?” Jimmy Lee asked after we got on it. “I guess it's a hundred years old. Ya see, that's a real brass frame, too.”

“I like it fine,” I told him. Before I could say any more I found I was talking against Bobby Ray's lips. “How much are you going to cost me?” I mumbled teased.

“Nothin'.” A smile. “I figured ta help warm ya some. Me 'n Jimmy Lee share everything we don't give Pap.”

“I guess that's fine with me,” I told them, pulling them both in a little closer to me.

In the morning I woke up with first cock's crow. I played with Jimmy Lee, then with Bobby Ray when we accidentally woke him on the wiggling bed. Ned came in to get us up at six for a country breakfast. Biscuits, eggs, sliced ham and gravy. They raised most all of their own food. They had chickens, a few fattening pigs, a calf, two milk cows and an old red horse. They called the horse Red.

“Ya must think pretty poorly of me letting my boys go out like they do ta earn money,” Ned said when everyone was eating and quiet. “They like what they do 'n they's goin' ta do it anyway behind the barn, so...”

“I don't think poorly of you,” I cut in. “I just wonder how safe they are out there doing what they're doing.”

“Pretty safe as long s they don't leave our road. When my son asked ya about the main highway, if ya was turnin' off there he woulda not asked ya. Now 'n then I hear o' somethin' bad happenin' ta a kid, but it's them crazy big city fellers that can't love without hurtin'. My boys never try ta ride with them.”

“I'm a big city fella,” I said.

“Not a' heart you ain't. Ya got country written all over your heart, otherwise ya would not a been able ta handle last night's bath.”

They all laughed for one uncontrolled minute before Ned's sternness stilled them, the younger ones first. Only adults talked at the table in this house. Sue Lynn and Jimmy Lee got to talk. Since Bobby Ray was bringing in money he got to talk at the table, too. He did not say much because he was too busy eating.

“I want to work my way back from town today after we unload,” Bobby Ray said after he had cleaned his plate. “I think I can make 'bout ten dollars.”

“You don't have to work today,” Jimmy Lee told him. I figured it would just be fun ta tag along with Lou.”

Bobby Ray decided he would, too.

“We have a good fishin' hole near here,” Jimmy Lee told me. “When we was parked at that stream I noticed you was lookin' at the minnows. Do you like to fish?”

“I love to fish. But I don't have a license to fish in the state of Tennessee.”

“You don't need one in our pond,” Ned said. “It's our say who fishes there 'n who don't.” He turned to one of the two smaller boys. “You fix this man up a willow for when he gets back from town. By the way, can I catch a ride in with ya?”

“Sure. My truck can hold us all.”

“Really?” It was Sue Lynn. “Pap, can we all go to town? We ain't been for a long spell from here.”

Jimmy Lee told me their pick-up was sick. Ned was holding on to most of the money they gave him for a used transmission that the wrecking yard was saving for them.

“How much are you short?” I asked.

“About fifty dollars,” Sue Lynn answered.

I always had just a little more money than brains. I reached into my wallet and handed a fifty across the table to Ned.

“I guess I just bought all of the boys for the weekend,” I teased. I then gave each of the smaller children

two dollars to spend in town and the older boys and oldest girl I gave each a five to get something special with. We all squeezed into the cab and the sleeper and set off for town.

Ned went to see the new tranny while Jimmy Lee stayed to count the unloading of the trailer at the feed store. Sue Lynn took the rest of the family with her. I went shopping on my own and put the bought stuff into the under-sleeper compartment Gato had ridden nearly to the Nevada line in. Ned left a message with Sue Lynn that we could pick him and the tranny up on the way out of town.

"Them friends 'o yours?" the man at the feed store asked. "They sure are. Ned needs a job he can do. Are there any jobs in town?"

"I got one come Monday if he comes in," he said. "I want you to cart these pullets over to them. Just say they're yours and all. Them's good people; they get a lot from me."

He put three boxes of week-olds in my trailer.

The kids were waiting where they were told to wait. We got back to the farm with Ned and the tranny at noon. I dropped my trailer in his field and Ned got right to work.

"Me 'n Jimmy figured up how much we owe ya," Bobby Ray said while he rolled down the landing gear for me. "We owe you ten nights, or five nights each."

"You don't owe me anything but that fishing trip you mentioned. So when are we going to fish?"

"We swim there, too." He smiled. "We got a tire swing that drops us in the middle of the pond."

"That sounds great to me. I'll go get my swim suit."

"Swimsuit?! No one's ever used a swim suit there!"

"We can't even lose hooks there," Bubba said, walking under the trailer. "If ya snag a hook ya got ta find it."

"If Lou snags his hook Bubba will find it. Did you put those chicks in a broodin' pen?"

"Me and Jeremy did," Bubba said. "Why would you find his hooks? Oh, for the two dollars he gave Pap 'n us."

Bubba smiled a big happy smile. All of the younger children got candy and toys. The older ones got little items of clothing, like socks, unders, handkerchiefs and stuff for them and their brothers and sisters after they pried the change away from the toy and candy kids.

## 36. Jeremy

A dirty blond boy came running up with my willow and a can of worms. He offered them to me with a smile. He didn't even look like he belonged in this family.

"What's your name?" I asked him, although I already knew.

"Jeremy." It was the first time we'd talked to each other. He'd always stayed out of my way as though he was scared of me.

Sue Lynn led me away from the others. "My pap said to ask you if there was something special you'd like ta try."

"What do you mean by something special?"

"Well, he thinks maybe you're shy and you might want to have me or even one of my sisters on your mind. Who knows, you might even want Bubba, and, believe me, he is more than willing to do anything you might want to do."

I still wouldn't answer her inquiry.

"Well, just remember my whole family fools around."

I changed the subject. "I talked to the man at the feed store today. He is willing to give your dad a job. Your dad has to see him on Monday."

"I will tell my father and he will look into it."

"I hope he does and it works out. I don't much care to see those boys running around on highways like they do. Don't you worry about them?"

"Yes, I do. I've raised them six years 'n feel like I'm their mam." Then she thanked me for the chicks, for helping get the tranny, and told me I was welcome back any time to stay as long as I liked. And added I could sleep in any bed in the house.

After Sue Lynn went into the house I took the four boys and two of the girls to the pond. They all skinny-dipped and set their willow poles. The pond had some nice fish in it. Anything the boys considered too small went back, and so did all the catfish whose job it was to clean the pond.

Jeremy came out of the water. He sidled up next to me, then sat on a blanket in the sun. He picked up Jimmy Lee's fishing pole and held it quietly. It was the first time I'd been with him when he wasn't lost in a puddle of kids.

"Hello, Jeremy," I said. "I'm sure glad that you came over to fish and talk to me."

"Fish," he answered. "I like fish."

"I'm sure glad you like to fish. I like to fish, too. The others are more interested in swimming than me." He didn't answer, just smiled at the water.

"Is Jeremy bothering ya?" Jimmy Lee asked from the pond.

"He's no bother, Jimmy Lee. We're sitting here fishing and becoming friends."

"He does get right friendly." Laughing and splashing, Jimmy Lee swam back to the bank, onto the tree swing, then out into the water again. I watched his lovely body arc through the air, closely followed by Bobby Ray who dived off a tree branch.

I found as I fished next to Jeremy that each of his wiggles moved him closer to me. He had his own way of warming up to strangers.

"A bite," Jeremy said.

"I have a bite," I agreed. I realized there was something wrong with this boy. Except for being sort of homely, he most of the time acted normal, squealing and splashing with the others. But he never said much. What he did say was a needed word after he thought about it.

"Big!" he said after he saw the fish.

"Yes, it's big," I agreed.

Jeremy sat with his knees pulled up under his chin. He kept his other hand around under himself. The kids in the water all looked at him when they passed by and grinned.

"Why all of the smiles, Bobby Ray?" I finally asked.

"Nothin' you can see from where you're sittin'." I leaned forward and looked into Jeremy's lap. He was playing with himself.

"No."

"You sure fish great," I told him when I saw my questions only made him move his hand faster. I was going to say something more to him, but Jimmy Lee swam up to tell Jeremy it was time to dress for home.

"I told you he gets right friendly," Jimmy Lee said, laughing, when Jeremy had wandered off to get his clothes. "He was showing you his friendliness."

"Really?" I said.

"Really. Jeremy is a retard, but my dad said to never call him that. Should I ask him what he was thinkin' of for you? I can get him ta talk when he won't tell no one else nothin'."

"I would love to hear what he has to say."

“He won't talk in front of strangers.”

“He was talking to me.”

“He won't talk more than his name.”

“I don't know about that. He told me how old he is, told me when I had a bite, told me he liked to fish.”

“Then maybe he'll talk in front of you.” Jimmy Lee ran off to get Jeremy and brought his brother back only half-dressed. While he helped Jeremy into his shirt he got him to play whispers.

Jeremy told him he liked me. He liked my truck, he liked how I let him fish with me, he liked the candy and toy car they got him with the two dollars and he wanted to bye-bye with me forever.

I figured I'd caught on to his method of communication and I could talk to the boy the way Jimmy Lee was doing.

“It won't work for you, Louie.”

“Why not? If he likes me enough to want to go bye-bye with me forever, then he should like me enough to talk to me, too.”

“Do,” Jeremy said. “Talk you.”

“See that, Jimmy Lee? He does talk to me.”

Jimmy Lee could hardly believe his ears. We walked back with all our stuff – poles, horse blanket, fish. I followed slower behind with Jeremy.

We got to the house just in time to see the pickup come off the jacks. A little linkage adjustment and the truck was as good as new.

“Good as new,” I said to Jeremy.

“Good as new,” Jeremy repeated.

“Pap, that trucker man has Jeremy talking up a storm,” one of the girls said. “I think he's talking more words than you know when.”

I was under my truck supervising Jimmy Lee with the grease-gun, while the other kids wiped off the dust and polished the chrome. I would whisper things in Jeremy's ear, and then Jeremy would tell Jimmy Lee what I'd said. Ned watched this for a moment, then said, “Louie, can I talk ta ya?”

“Sure, Ned,” I answered. “Jeremy, you help Jimmy while I'm gone.”

“I help,” Jeremy answered. Ned and I walked to the porch. “You sure got that boy talkin'. What did you do?”

“Nothing. Just fished next to him.”

“He was four when his ma left. He went crazy, hitting his head into everything 'n hurtin' hisself. The doc said he retarted hisself from his injuries. He's been like that ever since.”

“There's special schools.”

“Nothin' close ta here,” Ned said sadly. “I have six more ta think about, too. Besides, he only lets Jimmy Lee do for him.”

“I don't think he's that retarded. He's not used to talking, but he can learn how.”

“You sure got a special way with kids. I noticed that as soon as ya pulled in. That's why I asked ya to stay. I wish ya could make the time ta help Jeremy.”

“I can't stay past Monday morning. I will do my best with the boy until then.

“I'm sure beholdin' ta ya in all kinds a ways.”

When I went back to see how my rig was holding up under the kids, Jimmy Lee told me, “You sit in the shade. You're gonna have the shiniest truck in the world.”

Jeremy dropped his rag to run over and sit beside me. Again the chin on his knees with his hand busy under him. His cover-alls were worn so thin in the crotch you could see his hard poking through them.

“Jeremy, why are you rubbing yourself?” I asked.

"Feel good," he smiled.

"I feel good too, but I'm not rubbing myself."

"I stop." He stopped.

I pulled him all of the way over to me. I put my arms around his thin shoulders. He felt very small. I leaned him into me to play whispers in his ear.

"Now that you're all washed up from the swim, how would you feel all dressed up new?"

"Dressed up."

"Yes, dressed up."

"Dressed." He tugged on the straps of his overalls. "I clothes on."

"New clothes is what I'm talking about." I stood him up.

"How would you like to dress in new clothes?"

"Like." He smiled. "Dress up."

We got all of the bags out of the under-sleeper tool compartment. Jeremy helped me carry them to the house. I helped him out of his old and into his new size-tens. Sue Lynn rolled up the cuffs, then pinned them. She would sew them that night while he slept.

"There's dresses in there for you girls and shirts and cover-alls for the boys."

She was so surprised she didn't know what to say. She helped me lay all the new clothes out for the other children to get surprised when they were called for dinner.

Ned came in from trying out the truck on the road. He stopped still inside the door, looking at the clothes laid out on the couch.

"My land alive," Ned said. "I just don't know..."

"Don't know, Ned?" I said. "Just look out this window at the job they're doing on that truck. You know that they've earned whatever I do for them."

Ned gave me a quick nod, then went into the bathroom to get the grease off of himself. He came back and watched Jeremy in his new shirt and overalls cuddling with me.

"This is a very friendly boy you have here, Ned," I told him.

"Yep, he's always been that way, 'cept for what I told you about."

"I go bye-bye?" Jeremy asked again.

"Do you want to go bye-bye with Louie?" Ned asked.

"Yes. With Louie."

"I don't think so, Jeremy. Who will look out after ya if ya go bye-bye, 'n I sure the heck'll miss ya."

Jeremy was not sure if he would be missed. He wiggled in uncertainty. A tear made its way down his cheek, falling wetly onto my hand. I'm soft-hearted when it comes to kids wants and needs.

"You know, Ned, I will load up some place close, like a state or two away. Then I head out in one of four directions and come back this way. I don't know if I can get this close on my back trip, but if I took Jimmy Lee and Jeremy with me, would you trust them riding a bus back a state or two?" Jeremy smiled up at me. "Of course I'll make sure they get on the bus and have food money to get home on."

"I trust Jimmy Lee ta go anywhere," Ned said. "It's just that Jeremy's never been out of my hands before. But I been seein' your hands' is good as mine."

"My father is tryin' ta say that you can take them," Sue Lynn told me.

"I speak for myself, girl. You can take 'em."

Sue Lynn made all the kids wash before they tried on their new clothes. Bubba was the first back from the bathroom in his unders. His father put his new shirt on him, then dragged the overalls up his bare legs before he adjusted the straps. Bobby Ray and Jimmy Lee were next. When everyone was dressed I got Jimmy Lee to line them up for a photo in their finery.



“My, what a nice bunch of pretty people,” I said. “Now smile.”

After dinner I went straight to bed. I'd had a long day. Jimmy Lee and Bobby Ray came with me. About nine Sue Lynn brought Jeremy in.

“What's wrong, Jeremy?” Jimmy Lee asked. “Do you miss your bed?”

“Yes,” Jeremy said. “My bed.”

“Throw yourself up here,” Bobby Ray said.

Jeremy crawled like a dog all over the bed before Jimmy Lee could catch him and make him lie down.

“Sleep here,” Jeremy said. The boys told me Jeremy always slept in their bed. Bubba slept with the two girls and Sue Lynn shared the big bedroom with their pap.

I could feel Jeremy moving, poking Jimmy Lee's naked body. He finally sat up to tell him he wanted to sleep nude, too. Jimmy Lee undressed him, then layed him down.

“Now, lie still, Jeremy. This is where you always sleep.”

A warm, patting hand touched me on the stomach. I lay quietly. “Asleep?” Jeremy asked.

“Yes, Louie's asleep,” Jimmy Lee said. “Now *you* go ta sleep.”

Jeremy went right to sleep. The two older boys turned in to face me so we could love some more together.

“Won't the rocking bed wake him?” I asked. “No,” Bobby Ray said. “He wakes up first, early.”

In the morning I found Jeremy did wake first. He must have crawled under the covers, then between my legs until he rested his cheek on my tummy to lie quietly until we got up.

Ned took the children to church but let Jeremy stay behind with me. Jeremy wouldn't leave my side since I'd told him he could go bye-bye with me.

“Come on, Jeremy, let's see if we can make a phone call.”

I took him out to the truck, turned on the two-meter radio. I got another hammie; he got us one in L.A., and then it was just a matter of patching through to talk to my wife.

“Louie, you have to go to Charlotte, North Carolina.” She gave me the address. “That load's to go to Maine, then you get a load back there to Knoxville. Bob said you will stay in that area for a month.”

“Stay with you,” Jeremy said. “Stay with you.”

The hammie broke with the L. A. station, then he talked to Jeremy, who repeated over and over, “Hi, me Jeremy.”

With all of the information, Jeremy helped me figure on my map the closest way to get to Charlotte and the hours it would take to drive that far. The family returned from Church.

“Ned, I'll pull out at two in the morning. Me and Jeremy just made a phone call to California.”

“Where did you use a phone at?” Jimmy Lee asked.

“Phone call,” Jeremy said, pointing at the truck. “I phone call.”

I coaxed him into telling them what he said in his phone call. “Hi, me Jeremy,” he told them and smiled.

Everyone told him how great that was. “Bye-bye for month,” he said.

That last night we had a family picnic at the pond. The kids caught fresh fish and built a fire to cook them on, and we had side dishes brought from the house along with two twin packs of chips from my truck's food box.

“Can talk phone,” Jeremy said over and over.

“As soon as we leave, Jeremy, we can see who's on the phone for you to talk to them.”

“Are you really taking Jeremy with you?” Jimmy Lee asked.

“I sure am.”

“He'll love that!” Jimmy Lee was very happy I was taking his brother.

Jimmy, Bobby and I turned in at seven. Sue Lynn kept Jeremy out of the way until she figured we were done making love, then brought him in at ten to sleep with us. At one-thirty Ned woke me up. I carried Jeremy out to the truck while Ned walked Jimmy Lee out. Sue Lynn brought out the best clothes the two boys owned.

“Jimmy Lee won't know where he is,” Ned said. “I used ta walk him all over the house like this, then ask him if he could remember it.”

“See you in a week. I will have the boys send post cards.” Jeremy woke at five. He came out of the sleeper and didn't say anything, just watched the mile markers go by. I had the CB on, but there wasn't much out there. When at last it blared on with a voice, Jeremy jumped.

“Phone,” Jeremy yelled. “Talk.”

“Sure, you can talk,” I said, handing him the mike.

“Hi, me Jeremy.”

“You got the Lone Star Cowboy here,” the speaker answered. “Come back.”

Jeremy was so thrilled he couldn't answer. I over-rode him with the foot button.

“Hello, Cowboy. I got this rug rat here who's just learning to talk. What's your marker, son?”

He told me where he was – ahead of me.

“Hi, me Jeremy,” the boy told him again.

“Yes, I know it's you Jeremy. Talk to me boy. Just say anything your little heart pleases.”

“Say 'How you?'," I whispered in Jeremy's ear.

“How you?”

“Well, I'm just fine...”

They talked simple talk back and forth for a long time that way. When Jimmy Lee woke, Jeremy quit talking so he could say where we were, that he'd been talking on the phone all night, that he was hungry and had to pee.

“Why didn't you tell me all of that?” I asked him. “Can't I know what you're thinking, too?”

“He didn't wanta bother you.”

“Jeremy could never bother me. Don't ever be afraid to tell me anything, Jeremy.”

He dived onto Jimmy Lee's lap to play whispers until he was certain he could tell me anything. Then he played whispers with me to tell me what he told Jimmy Lee. Now I felt like I was getting some place with him.

I had to get both boys dressed before I could pull the rig into a nice restaurant. At breakfast Jimmy Lee and I talked Jeremy into ordering his own food. Jeremy got upset when the waitress got impatient with him.

“Jeremy, stop hiding your face in Jimmy Lee's sleeve. No one can watch you eat but me.”

“Are sure?”

“I'm sure. You don't mind watching me, do you?” He nodded his head to tell me he did mind.

“Well, I won't watch you eat.”

We pulled in to load in Charlotte at a quarter to eight. Jeremy helped me count boxes, while Jimmy Lee cleaned up the sleeper, checked the tires, water, fuel and oil for me.

“How many boxes we got now, Jeremy?” I asked.

“Ten five five.”

“That's fifty-five, Louie. He ain't too bad with numbers, once you figure 'em out his way.”

We had dinner just inside Pennsylvania, and there Jeremy made friends with a trucker by talking with

him for as long as we sat and ate. The trucker paid our tab; I left the tip. Then I sacked out in the sleeper with Jeremy for a few hours to try to get rid of a headache that had come on me, while his brother floated around the truck stop.

When I woke up I couldn't find Jimmy Lee. Jeremy and I walked around looking for him, and then Jeremy saw him and pointed to his brother slipping down the ladder of a cab-over. When he turned around he saw us.

“Are ya lookin' for me?”

“Yes,” Jeremy said. “Looked.”

“Well, I was...”

“Hustling,” I said. “That's not necessary when you're with me.”

“I made fifty dollars to send home.”

You're lucky you didn't meet one of these big hunky truckers that hate same-sex sex. They wouldn't care how young you were: they'd punch your mouth or eyes.” But I immediately forgave him. “Come on, let's send your money home. Just tell me where you're going to be next time, so I don't have to look for you.”

Jimmy Lee understood that I was not mad, just worried and concerned. He didn't know he could get so rich. He told me what had happened. He'd gone to use the bathroom. When he was standing peeing a trucker at the other urinal asked him if he would go for a little fun and games. When he said yes, the man took him to his rig, then sent him to another truck.

I had him mail a letter with his money order to explain to his father that he was doing things on his own.

“My dad don't care,” he told me when we were ,back on the road.

“But I care – I care a lot.” I kissed the back of his neck. “I know many drivers that are safe like me. As we meet them I'll let you spend some time with them and earn a little money.”

I explained to him about the police, truck stop prosties, just why it was not a good idea to hustle in truck stops.

As the boys slept through the night I got the miles covered. The next afternoon I stopped in front of this nice beach-side motel. The boys could use the truck for a marker while they played on the sand. I was just too tired for dinner, so I gave them money for something to eat while I took my first nap in the motel room.

“Wake me when you come back.”

The kids stayed gone four hours; it was eight at night before they woke me. Jeremy handed me his money.

“What's this, change from what I gave you?”

“Yes,” Jeremy said.

“Yes,” Jimmy Lee added. “I let Jeremy hold your money 'cause he's learn in' ta pay for things.”

“Jimmy got money,” Jeremy said. “Make money.”

“Now that you know that much,” Jimmy Lee said a little sheepishly, “I better tell you something I never knew before. Ten-year-olds are worth more than fourteen-year-olds, and twelve-year-olds are the most popular at this resort.”

“Resort? Where's the resort?”

“This whole town's a resort.”

I took the boys in to shower with me. They loved to have the shower running on them while they sat in the tub to wash up before they stood up to rinse off and get the shampoo I washed into their hair out.

Searching Jimmy Lee's coveralls I found he had made some great money. Really too much to carry safely. I was told to check Jeremy's overalls, and he had sixty dollars more than Jimmy Lee.

“Jeremy didn't hardly have to do anything or have to go with too many people like I did, and he still got

more money,” Jimmy Lee told me. “What really’s funny is that not one of them collected his end and I got mine collected each time.” .

He told me about how they’d met two other boys and how Jeremy got all excited because pretty boys took him with them.

“So what did you do to them, Jeremy?” He kissed me for his answer.

“Is that all?”

“I lay naked.”

“Louie, you should of asked him what they did to him.”

“Are you boys ready for dinner?”

“Yes, we are.”

I didn’t know the place I chose to eat was where they had been hanging out for four hours. I couldn’t understand why we were getting so many looks, until a few brave, or horny, men came over to ask if one or the other of the boys could go with them.

“Can we? Jeremy knows how to do everything anyway.”

I wouldn’t let them go.

“Then what do you want to do to Jeremy?”

“Teach him to talk. That’s the reason I brought him with me, isn’t it?”

When we got back to our room I made Jeremy go to sleep before I fooled around with Jimmy Lee. In the morning I woke up with Jeremy doing things to me like the men who’d taken him the night before had done. Jeremy’s smile was one of contentment. He lay passively between us.

“What’s this, Jeremy? Did you give out already?”

“No, I run out what do.”

“That’s a nice sentence you talked to us. Now talk to us more.”

“We go now!”

“We go now,” I repeated. “Let’s get on the road.”

We drove on to Portland, unloaded, loaded in Bangor, then turned back to Knoxville. When we stopped for an early dinner, Jimmy Lee was approached in the bathroom again. He came back and pointed out the man. I called him over.

“God, you’re beautiful,” the trucker said to Jimmy Lee. “I have friends here that would eat you alive.” He smiled at me. “A boy can always use a little money.”

Jeremy would not go to the bathroom alone. I took him after I figured the trucker was okay. I left Jimmy Lee there to save our table and eat Jeremy’s second untouched piece of pie. When we came back we found a few drivers sitting there laughing and talking with Jimmy. Jeremy got very excited. He wanted to laugh and talk with the drivers, too.

“Here he is now,” Jimmy Lee said. “Louie, can we spend the night in this town? Please, Louie – everything sounds great here.”

“Where is everyone staying?”

“In their sleeper trucks,” Jimmy Lee told me while Jeremy whispered in my ear that he wanted to stay, too.

The boys had a time of it, and I didn’t get more than a couple of glimpses of them until morning, when I woke up to start the truck. They weren’t hard to find in truck row, and Jimmy Lee knew where Jeremy was. They slept for most of the journey south.

I got into Knoxville a half day late. We unloaded and returned to Ned’s for the weekend. Bobby Ray was just about to leave to make money and was walking out to the main road. He got on the running board to ride back down to his house with us.

"You're back!" he yelled through the window. "How was the trip?"

"Longer than normal. They slowed me down a little bit."

"Does that mean you won't take them again?"

"No, that means I won't let them talk me out of making the miles I have to make every day." I smiled at Jeremy and Jimmy Lee. "I could of made the trip in four days, not five like it took."

"Hmm. You drive fast, then."

"Real fast," Jeremy blurted out. "Over seven tens." He smiled. "We got money."

"Money? You mean you guys worked?"

"Didn't you get my letter yet, Bobby Ray?"

"Not yet. Maybe it came in today's mail. We can ask Pap when he gets home from work."

When I stopped in front of the farm house I let Bobby Ray pull the cord for the air horn. The boys rushed into the house. Sue Lynn met me at the door.

"Come in. Pap's still at work but he'll be home any minute. He got the job."

## 37. Bobby Ray

The four boys were in the bedroom talking about the truck trip and reading the letter Jimmy Lee had sent with the money in it. The truckers had been very generous with the boys. They'd paid them well for the night. Now the boys were figuring what they should do with the little bit of the money they would keep back for themselves.

"How about gettin' Jeremy school clothes," Bubba was saying. "He's atalkin' now."

"He can't start school by being a ten-year-old in the first grade," Bobby Ray scolded.

"We got more money here than we ever seen in our lives," Jimmy Lee told them. "Maybe we got enough money to send him to a special school."

"He won't go no place without you," Bubba said. "He went with all them men. He goes with Louie."

"I go 'cause you, Louie, said okay." Jeremy threw some of his money up in the air to watch it flutter back onto the bed.

We didn't hear Ned come in. He stood behind me in the doorway listening for a long time before he said to the boys, "I wish I could send him to that special school. He would have ta be fed 'n found there, 'n I don't think I can send him alone."

"No go lone. Me need Jimmy," Jeremy screamed.

"I'm goin' out, Pap," Bobby Ray said. "I was just waitin' ta tell ya."

"You still owe me two nights," I said. "Right?"

"Heck, I forgot. Seein' all of that money they got made me want ta get out 'n make money, too."

"Money," Jeremy said. "Here." He gave both Bobby and Bubba some bills. Jimmy Lee took most of the money away from Bubba and only let Bobby keep a twenty.

"This is enough for the weekend. I want ta stay home, too." Jimmy Lee kissed him. "Alright?"

"Alright," Bobby Ray said sheepishly. "I hope we kin at least fish 'n have a picnic tomorrow."

"Better 'n that, you get ta go with Jeremy and Louie this next trip."

"Jeremy won't behave for me, Jimmy Lee."

"He'll behave for Louie. So I want you ta go."

"Maybe the trip after that," Ned said gently. "We can see by then."

I called my wife to find out where I was going next, the boys crowded around me in the cab. I let

Jeremy say hi on the phone.

“Where ya goin’?” they asked after I hung up.

“Florida, to that same town in Maine, and then back down here to Knoxville.”

“I get money,” Jeremy said.

“If’n ya want ta,” Ned said. “Ya don’t have ta.”

“When do ya have ta leave?” Bobby Ray asked.

“Sunday afternoon.”

The thing I liked best about this farm was that the children always did the same things when they stayed home. We fished, picnicked, swam, just like we did the weekend before. I sat on the bank watching their naked, glistening bodies fall through the air to land with big splashes in the pond before they swam back to the bank under the tree.

Jeremy came up at bedtime to ask if it was alright for him and Bubba to sleep in my truck for the night. I let them. Sunday afternoon I pulled out with Bobby Ray and Jeremy after a weekend of loving it up with Jimmy Lee and Bobby Ray.

We got into Pensacola late, napped for a few hours and loaded out early. By a little after noon on Monday we had passed through the whole state of Georgia and were into North Carolina. I figured if I drove straight through I could be in Maine by Tuesday and let the boys enjoy the nice beach there.

Jeremy talked non-stop on the CB Then he talked to his brother about money. I didn’t try to follow his conversation because I was trying to cover miles.

After I unloaded in Portland I drove to the same motel for my badly-needed sleep. I let the boys go out to explore. Six hours later I woke up and went to look for Bobby Ray and Jeremy, because it was getting dark. I found Jeremy in the same restaurant I’d taken him to the week before. He said Bobby Ray had told him to wait there. I figured he had found the same friends from the week before, because he got his excited smile when he saw me. Just as I was coming in a man tried to ask Jeremy to go with him. I didn’t like the way he’d been trying to pull Jeremy out of the booth by his hand. Jeremy yelled my name, all excited.

“What the hell are you, some kind of pervert?” I said to the man, hugging Jeremy. “I leave my kid alone one minute to go to the can and you’re over here pawing on him.”

“I have a report that he’s hustling,” the man said, and flashed a badge. “I’m just checking out the report.”

“He can’t hustle,” I said. “He’s severely retarded.”

I was glad Jeremy was afraid of this cop. He wouldn’t talk in front of him. “Will you say hello to this officer, Jeremy?”

He shook his head, no.

I saw Bobby Ray come through the door. A man warned him that a cop was talking to me, so he came up very innocently docile and sat down.

“Can we order now?” A smile. “I’m hungry.”

“Sure,” I said. “Would you like to join us for dinner or a cup of coffee, officer?”

The cop stayed for coffee and questioned Bobby Ray, who only said if the man would explain himself maybe he would understand what he was talking about. The cop gave up quickly when he saw Jeremy really did have trouble trying to talk, and finally left. Then about nine men came over to tell the boys what a great job they’d done stringing the policeman along.

“There will be no more of your going any place without me in this town,” I told the boys. “That was too close.”

“You’re not kidding there,” Bobby Ray agreed.

I put the boys in the sleeper before I got back on the road.

Later I joined them for the night and woke Bobby Ray up to fool around a bit before I slept.

"How come you don't fool around with Jeremy?" he wanted to know.

"He fools around with me, and I like fooling around with boys who are eleven or old enough to cum."

"He can do that already. He's been doing that for about a year now."

"Why didn't Jimmy Lee say anything?"

"Jimmy Lee wants ya to himself. He's in love with you."

"I know he is, but I'm in love with you."

"You're kidding!" He smiled. "Why would ya be in love with me when Jimmy Lee's so beautiful?"

"I think you're beautiful."

"You're kidding... aren't you?" He blushed.

"Not one bit. I loved you from the moment I saw you."

"You're kidding." A deeper blush. I hugged him to me, kissing him, hugging him, holding him like I hoped he'd never been held before. I turned him on.

"When we're through you tell me if I am kidding you or not."

"I like you. I can't say I love you." He looked down at his wiggling toes. "Jimmy Lee loves you."

He was not about to say anything that would cut in on his brother no matter what, or how much he wanted to. His brother had found me first, and that was that.

On the trip home I let them make some money with safe truckers. Back at the farm Bobby Ray wanted to spend time with his cousins. His father took him and the other children to visit while Jeremy and Jimmy Lee stayed with me.

"Jimmy Lee," Jeremy said, "Louie love Bobby."

"Who said?" Jimmy Lee asked him.

"I hear. Louie say loves Bobby. Why Bobby go."

"It could be." Jimmy Lee looked at me.

"Louie love you too. Likes how old Bobby's better." Jeremy smiled at me. "I love Louie."

"I know you do," Jimmy Lee said gently. "Louie, can we bring Bobby back?"

"Yes," I said. We dropped the trailer, then went to get Bobby Ray at their cousins'. When I blasted the air horn in front of the house the boy that had been pinned down on the front lawn jumped up to look at us. He had a 'What are they doing here?' expression.

"That's Lonnie Jean. Isn't he a pretty boy?"

"He sure is. He's just like you and your brother. Real heart breakers."

"He's thirteen. Can we take him home for the weekend, too?" A big smile to me.

"Are you trying to keep me in Tennessee forever, or what?"

"Or what," Jeremy repeated. "I keep you. For me."

We took Lonnie Jean and Bobby Ray back to the farm. There we skinny dipped, me and Lonnie Jean getting used to each other, while the family visited in the other town. We wrestled in the cool, green, lush grass that grew around the pond. We played for hours, until we heard the horn of the pickup bringing everyone back.

I was in paradise there. Watching the boys, playing in the pond with them, living like there were no long hauls out for tomorrow. Jimmy Lee took Bobby Ray aside to talk to him before we went back to the house for dinner. I didn't hear what Jimmy Lee told his brother, but Bobby stood still for me, now, when I was in kissing range of him, which he hadn't done ever since I'd told him I loved him.

I left in the morning for a load from Virginia to Houston. Bubba and Lonnie Jean got to go with me this time. Jimmy, Jeremy and Bobby told me they needed time to play at home. I can understand that, because

it's hard for a man to stay cooped up in a truck all the time – and for a boy it's a prison after the novelty wears off.

I did not get along with Lonnie Jean because he knew he was a hot looking kid and wouldn't let people forget it. With Bubba and Lonnie I only showered. The two boys fooled around a lot together, but I only watched and let them play-tease me.

## 38. Special School

My next trip was to load out of Georgia for California. I would be going home.

“Will you ever be back?” Jimmy Lee asked me.

“I hope so. I'm going to spend a week at home to catch up on things there.”

Once home I checked into the special school and what I needed to do to put Jeremy in it. Then I talked to my wife and my lover-boy Keha.

“I think you should, Daddy,” Keha said.

“Why ask me?” my wife said. “You're just going to do what you want to do anyway. But let me warn you, I will not be tied down to having to look after him.”

I told them I would have to bring his brother along to take care of him.

“Is he beautiful?” Keha asked. He saw the stars in my eyes and said, “He is! You dirty old man.” Then he kissed me.

I left with Keha for New York ten days after my return. If we got stopped while Keha was at the wheel I would get a ticket, because he was only sixteen. I drove four to six hours at a time, letting Chuck spell me for two or three where the traffic wasn't a worry to me.

“Why don't you sack out in the sleeper, Daddy?”

“In case you need me. I'll nap here on this seat.”

We drove out I-40 to Tennessee 64 and pulled up to the farm in the middle of the night. Ned and Sue Lynn met us at the door. Sue looked at Keha like he was from another world, because he was such a handsomely rugged looking boy. I made the introductions.

“Can ya spend the night?” Ned asked.

“Sure. I guess Chuck can sleep in the sleeper.”

“I couldn't hear of it. Chuck can bunk in my bed. You can bunk with the boys.” Ned could see Sue Lynn wanted a chance at my hunky adopted son. “Ya wouldn't mind bunkin' with Sue Lynn, would ya, Chuck?”

“No, he wouldn't mind,” I told Ned. “He's pretty tired, Sue Lynn, so let him rest a few minutes, hon.”

Ned moved Bubba to the couch, then bedded with his two other daughters. I carefully moved Jeremy over to get in bed between him and Jimmy Lee. That was after I'd discussed with Ned and Sue Lynn the special school and found out if Jimmy Lee could spend the remainder of the summer with Chuck and Jeremy until Jeremy got used to living at my house.

At cock's crow Jeremy woke up, and he wasted no time waking his brothers to show them who was in their bed.

“Who's this sleepin' in our bed?” they sang. “Who's this sleepin' in our bed?”

Ned came in to hush them. “Let Louie sleep. He got in two this mornin'.”

“It's alright, Ned. I'm awake.”

“How get here?” Jeremy asked.



“In his truck,” Jimmy Lee teased.

“That's right,” Ned told them. “He's got his son with him. They drove shifts to get here.” He sat on the bed and put Jeremy on his knee. “Now, hush up afore ya wake everyone.” Then he quietly talked to Jeremy about living in California.

Jeremy didn't like the idea at first, until he found out that Jimmy would go with him for a while until he got used to Chuck. Now he had to be taken in to see what Chuck looked like, even though he was sound asleep in Sue Lynn's arms.

I went with Ned and the boys to the kitchen to help with an early breakfast, because I had to get back on the road as soon as possible. Jeremy stood at the window looking out. “Where truck?” he asked.

“It's right there, Jeremy. That's my truck.”

“Where other truck?” he asked.

“Oh, the Peterbuilt. It's home. This cabover has more room for us.”

I sent him to get the keys out of Keha's pocket. He ran back with his mouth covered.

“What's wrong, Jeremy?” I thought maybe he'd got hurt.

“Sue Lynn top your boy. Naked.”

“He's got a horse-sized one,” Bobby Ray laughed.

“Shut up, you guys,” Jimmy Lee said, turning bright red. “We didn't 'spect they'd be sleepin' one minute 'n active the next.”

“They wouldn't let us in to get the keys,” Bubba said.

So I had to fetch them “It's only me, Chuck,” I said as I walked in. “I already charged admission.” They laughed, and I found the keys. “Next time maybe you'll give me my keys back first.”

We had to get all the legal papers required by Jeremy's special school witnessed and notarized in town. Then we threw Jeremy's and Jimmy Lee's things in the rig and set out for New York.

In the sleeper Keha was putting their clothes away and decided to throw out a lot of it.

“Daddy will buy you new,” he told Jeremy. “Mom wouldn't even wash stuff this worn out.”

The boys each had a few things that were special favorites. Keha saved these from the trash can. They liked the big Indian boy. In spite of his rugged, handsome looks, so appealing to women, his soft way of speech, his gentleness, his easy manner was what appealed to people like Jeremy and Jimmy Lee. Keha held Jeremy on his lap to tell him about the school he would go to and show him pictures of it. Jimmy Lee lay on the engine cover between us.

The two brothers were quiet. Living some place else is a big thing to absorb. Living with strangers, making new friends (even temporary friends), new rules to live by – all this is deep thoughts to think, so we drove on mostly in silence. Jeremy finally fell asleep.

“Dad, will this little boy wake up if I move him to the sleeper?”

“No,” Jimmy Lee said. “Jeremy hasn't slept good since Louie left, so he should stay asleep.”

Once back in his seat Keha got to sit with Jimmy Lee, who asked all kinds of questions about the place where we lived.

“You'll love it,” Keha said. “Dad has mopeds, we have a boat in front of the house with the whole Pacific Ocean at our front door. The noise of the surf to ease you to sleep, a nice breeze that keeps it from getting this hot in the summer like now or too cold in the winter. We ride on the sand, swim in the ocean, sail the boat when Dad's home. You will have lots of quick friends because of Dad's little friends who always come looking for him. Just a lot of nice things – you'll see. We have a nine-year-old sister who stays busy doing her own things so she is 'never in the way. Mom's hard to get used to, but you can stay out of her way – it's a big house.”

“Hard to get used to?” Jimmy Lee asked. “Is she mean?”

"No, not mean. Just hard to understand, is like what she is."

Jimmy Lee could understand: his Ma had been like that.

I changed places with Chuck. I let Jimmy sit on the seat while I lay on the motor cover with a pillow under my chest to prop me high enough to see the road clearly enough to correct Chuck's mistakes.

"Shift down half a gear."

"Are you going to back seat drive me already?"

"I sure am. I told you the tach is off. When it says nineteen hundred it's eighteen hundred. I want this engine's speed kept up."

"Can Chuck talk when he drives?" Jimmy asked.

"I sure can."

I whispered in Jimmy Lee's ear that he didn't drive well enough to talk.

"I know what you're telling Jim. You just want everyone quiet so you can back seat drive again."

"That's why I have a back seat driver's license. Now, just sit there and drive, Chuck."

"How did Chuck learn to drive?"

"By sitting on that round little man's lap," Keha said with a big smile for me. "For years, Jimmy. Then, as I got too big for his lap, he shared the seat, with me on the inside learning how to shift, use of the foot pedals and stuff."

"Can you teach me, Chuck?"

"No. You have to ask Dad to do that, Jimmy. I'm not good enough at driving yet to teach, but I can back this up better than Dad can."

"Can he really, Louie?"

"Yes, he sure can. He can teach you how to back up when we get home."

"I move the trucks around at home, Jimmy. I back up a lot, when Dad mostly drives forward. I move the trailers around so they all sit backed to the fence to be hooked up all of the time."

When Jeremy crawled out of the sleeper he lay down on the motor cover next to me. We shared the same pillow until I got back behind the wheel. Keha took my place next to Jeremy and Jeremy teased Keha by not letting him have half the pillow.

Keha lip-bit Jeremy, got him laughing, then stole the pillow away.

"My pillow," Jeremy said. "Give me."

"It's my pillow," Keha teased.

I reached over and spanked Keha. "Give him that pillow, you big horse."

"Will you settle for half a pillow?"

Jeremy nodded he would. When Keha tried to give Jeremy half to pillow, Jeremy stole it all with a Ha Ha.

"I'm going to bite this butt for that," Keha said.

"Be gentle with him, Chuck." I was never worried he would hurt the little boy. I just wanted Jeremy to know that I didn't want him hurt even while playing games like this.

I stayed over an extra day in New York to take the children to the Statue of Liberty, ride the ferrys, eat at the Automat and ride the subways. I would never ride the subways alone, without Chuck or Tommy with me, because the place is just too dangerous. They're more able to defend themselves, where I'm too passive to get violent. I get angry, but not enough to hurt somebody else.

We ended our stay in New York by visiting a sixteen-year-old boy-lover friend of mine who liked cuddly little ten-year-olds. Jeremy liked him and went with him without hesitation or embarrassment.

"I don't know how you do that," Jimmy Lee said. "No matter who you send Jeremy with he likes them."

"He goes with everyone *you* send him with, too," I said. "Isn't that the same thing?"

“No. He really likes the people you send him with. The people I send him with is for money. Jeremy don't have ta like people if he's paid. He's really very greedy.”

That would make a difference. I could not see Jeremy's greed, but I knew he got very excited when he was given money.

Ned had told me there were a lot of people around town, like the feed store owner and the man who'd helped him put the tranny in his truck, who paid to play with Jeremy (under Ned's supervision so Jeremy wouldn't be scared). Now these same men were interested in Bubba.

I didn't think too much of that, but who was I to judge a man who had to rent out his children to keep a good roof over their heads, clothe and feed them? I personally liked the man. He'd never mistreated his children, nor would he tolerate anyone else mistreated or abusing them.

We returned by the northern route to San Francisco, where I let Keha take the boys on the cable cars and give them a meal at Fisherman's Wharf while I slept in the sleeper.

I stayed home the next week while Keha, Jeremy and Jimmy Lee all got used to each other. Gil, Carlo, Gabe and others came to visit a day or two at a time with the two new boys. Tommy had returned home with the start of summer because his father had died and he was improved enough to be a help to his mother. He came over twice during the week to visit me on his motor bike and to make friends with the new boy who was worried about the special school. Tommy had been to that school, so he told Jeremy all about it.

“You expect love and kindness there, Jeremy,” he said. “Most of the teachers are just like Daddy Lou. You're the only thing they have to think about, so you will want to learn a lot.”

It was very cute when Jeremy kissed him for a thank you. Tommy went with Jeremy his first day at school to show him around and introduce him to the teachers and some of the older children who were still too different to attend a regular school like the one Tommy went to now.

When I saw that Jeremy would go with Keha or Tommy or Gabe just as readily as he would with me, I took out a few local hauls that would bring me back the same day, then a few overnights, giving Gil, Gabe, Carlo and a few of the other boys short rides with me.

“Louie,” Jimmy Lee said when I got home with Gil from a three-day run, “Chuck said you have to take this long haul east, because there is not another driver in that you can put this on this time.”

“I'll take it if you want to go with me, Jimmy Lee. I would like to bring Bobby Ray here to visit for a month, just like you did.”

“Ummmm, well, I guess that's only fair, but don't tell Jeremy you're taking me home.”

Jeremy was so excited about what they were doing in school that he didn't mind that his brother was leaving with me.

Jimmy Lee and I loved all of the way to Tennessee, where I got permission to take Bobby Ray for a month.

“When you was there, what did ya do?” Bobby Ray asked his brother.

“We sailed the boat this last weekend, then we swam every day in the ocean. And Louie is got some mighty strange friends that come over ta visit.”

“Old friends, like?”

“Naw, some are a little older 'n me, but most of them's around our ages.” Jimmy Lee smiled. “What I mean by strange is they phone by day 'n night lookin' for him or they just plain drop in ta spend the night 'n ya never know who's a goin' ta be in your bed when ya wake in the mornin'. There's this darlin' eleven-year-old named Gil. Heck, you'll see um, then we'll compare opinions.”

Since Keha's boat orgy a year before he'd been less interested in me than in his and Donnie's new girlfriends. This was just growing up, and whether he loved with me because he thought he ought to or because he really wanted to I hadn't figured out yet.

Daryl came by, took one look at Bobby Ray and fell in love. When I took Bobby Ray home a month later I listened to them compare notes about my boys. They both agreed Gil was a doll-boy, but Jimmy Lee didn't even know who Daryl was, since they'd never met.

In California Jeremy got along with everyone. On his special days off he got to go to the shop to be looked after, or he got to ride out with a local truck that would just be making deliveries in L.A.. He was not a bother or a trouble to anyone, and even my wife liked him.

I got to keep Jeremy until the start of summer the following year, when his teachers thought he was ready to go to regular grammar school. They found he wasn't retarded at all; he had picked up a lot but wouldn't use it after his mother died, or, as the kids said, left them.

Keha, Donnie and Gil helped load all of Jeremy's stuff into the front of my trailer, along with three used motor bikes I'd bought from my boys who were graduating to cars.

"But I wanted to live with you forever," Jeremy cried. I love you."

"I know you love me and I love you, too, Jeremy, but your family has a working farm now. They love you as much as I do."

I cried with him. "Your father and your teachers all seem to think you'll do better going to school where your family is from."

"Yes, I know," Jeremy said, leaning into me. He hugged me tightly. "Will I ever see you again?"

I pulled the soon-to-be-twelve-year-old on my lap. As Jeremy got older his homeliness was fading with his maturity. He was a real changeling. I playfully called him my ugly duckling, because by now he had above average looks.

"Who will ever call me his ugly duckling again?"

"I will, whenever I see you or talk to you on the phone. Remember that special radio Keha got you for a going away present? Whenever you want to talk to me, you just say, 'This is the Ugly Duckling looking for the Lonely Roamer' on it, and I will answer you, because it's fixed when you press that button to match the one in my truck."

"Yes, I know," Jeremy said, "but still..."

"So my little uggie duckie can call me free all of the time with it. Besides, it's still a long drive before you're out of these old arms of mine."

Jeremy tried to stay awake as long as I did. On the second day out he talked me into stopping at a motel to love with him for a full night, because he felt I was going too fast and he wanted more time with me alone.

Jimmy Lee ran out of the farm house as soon as we pulled in. Sue Lynn met us at the door. She had grown into a beautiful woman in the nine months since I'd last seen her. She'd been gone at Christmas when I'd dropped off presents from Jeremy for them all.

"Bobby Ray and Bubba's all down ta the pond," she said, "with the girls 'n Pap's ta be in at five."

The first thing Bobby Ray said to me from the middle of the pond was, "You broke your promise to me. You forgot about being here for my birthday." He dived under the water, then swam towards me.

"That's a hell of a hello," I told him when he got his ears cleared of the water in them. "At least you could come out of the water for me to bite your nose or to tell you I brought you a birthday present. You know it wasn't my fault, Bobby – I called you."

"I know you called," Bobby Ray said, walking out of the pond with a teasing smile. "I just wanted to make you feel bad, but I see ya already feel bad about somethin'."

He didn't know Jeremy was home to stay, as this was kept for a surprise for the kids by me and their father. He hugged wetly around me, pressing his relaxed front against me while I played with his nose.

The girls laughed when he stepped back with a hard front from his nose bite.

"You know, for a boy who's never ever told me he loves me once, you sure do make a lot of demands on my part," I told him. "Now what do you have to say about that?"

"I love with you," Bobby Ray said, looking into my eyes. "Isn't that enough?" He smiled at me. "Did ya really bring me a birthday present?"

"Yes, I did. Happy birthday, Bobby Ray, even if it's almost two weeks late. And here's your brother Jeremy home and well."

Jeremy didn't want anyone to know yet that he could talk. He reached into my pockets, taking everything out, then pulled my belt and boots off before he pushed me into the pond dressed. He'd learned this from Keha and my other loves, who did this to me whenever they thought I said something dumb. I swam with the kids until Sue Lynn and Ned came to get us.

Jeremy hadn't even talked to his father over the phone – he wanted to surprise him, too. Through all of the excitement of homecoming he stayed very quiet. When he had to talk he teased by doing it in his old way, waiting for the best moment to talk normal.

"Well, lookie here," Ned said, picking up my little pond duckie, "the year away didn't seem to harm ya. Jus' look at cha all growed up lookin'."

"I sure am all grown up, Dad. I'm going to be in the fifth grade, and my teachers said it won't be no time at all until I'm skipped up a grade to where I should be for my age."

Ned and the other children were just absolutely knocked off their feet.

I went over Jeremy's report cards with Ned while the other kids went to unload the stuff in the truck.

"Pap! Pap! Pap!" Bubba said, running into the house and sounding like one of the motor bikes running. "Pap, Pap, Pap, you gotta come 'n see all this!" He caught his breath. "They's motor bikes 'n toys 'n clothes..."

"Slow down," said Ned gently. "You're gain' too fast for me ta follow."

"Jeremy told me he was going to share his motor bike with you," I told Bubba.

"Do I get ta ride it by myself?"

"After we teach you how," I said.

That night, in bed with Jeremy, Jimmy Lee and Bobby Ray, Bubba came in to try to start something sexy with me, thinking this was the way to get a motor bike of his very own. Jimmy Lee took him out of the room. As Bubba had said, the two oldest boys had a yearn to return, to the house next to the ocean. But I felt they should all stay there to make this one of the best farms in the county: now they had a lot more animals, a tractor that worked, and even a used car so Sue Lynn could take care of family affairs.

I spent all the next morning helping Bubba learn to ride a motor bike. Then we had a picnic lunch, with an afternoon fishing derby. The following day I helped them set up the short wave with the special frequency for long distance talking and with a good antenna on the house roof. Then I kissed all the children and set off east.

Late that night the short wave loudly asked, "This is the Ugly Duckling – is the Lonely Roamer out there?"

"You got me uggie duckie."

"Wait a minute, Lou, 'cause Bobby Ray wants to say something to you."

"Alright, Jeremy, put Bobby Ray on."

"Hello, Louie," Bobby Ray said in a tight, controlled voice. "I forgot to tell you that I do love you."

"Thanks, Bobby Ray." I paused, for the lump that had come in my throat. "I love you, too."

“Do you love me, too, Daddy?” Keha said from home.

“You don't even have to ask, lover-boy. You know how much I love you.”

“Yes, Daddy, I know,” Keha said, as tenderly as he could ever get with an impersonal instrument like this. He paused. “Hey, Bobby Ray, Jeremy, Jimmy Lee, with that set-up you can talk to me here in California, too.”

For quite a while I listened to the conversation between them. “Yes,” I said, grabbing my mike during a lull, “I'm a very lucky man to have such boys to love.”

“We all love you, too,” the boys said one at a time over the radio to me.

It wasn't such a lonely trip home as I'd thought, with the radio working overtime from newness and a hiker for two states. And I was back to driving this country, talking to my lover-boys, picking up strangers, helping people who were stranded on the road, making new friends and new loves – because my traveling is my kind of work.

If you enjoyed this first volume of The Trucker and the Teens, you will want to read Volume Two, which covers the rest of Colantuono's years of freedom: Publication summer 1984.

*More about boy-love...*

*The Coltsfoot Press* publishes books and a magazine about the phenomenon of man/boy love, friendship and sex relations. Our books include novels like *Kit*, the tale of a boy cured of his “insanity” by a “child-molester”; *Crowstone*, a sword and sorcery boy-love epic; *The Boy and the Dagger*, a boys' adventure tale set in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Europe in which the implied sexuality in books of this genre is made explicit; *The Asbestos Diary and Vice Versa*, novels by America's classic boy-love writer, Casimir Dukahz; and three volumes of lighter, tastefully erotic stories about boy-love: *Panthology One, Two & Three*. On the scientific side, we have published an English-language edition of Dr. Theo Sandfort's ground-breaking study *The Sexual Aspect of Paedophile Relations* and have acquired all remaining unsold copies and publishing rights to Dr. Paul Wilson's *The Man They Called a Monster*. We also stock for resale to our customers many books by other publishers on this highly emotive but badly understood phenomenon.

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