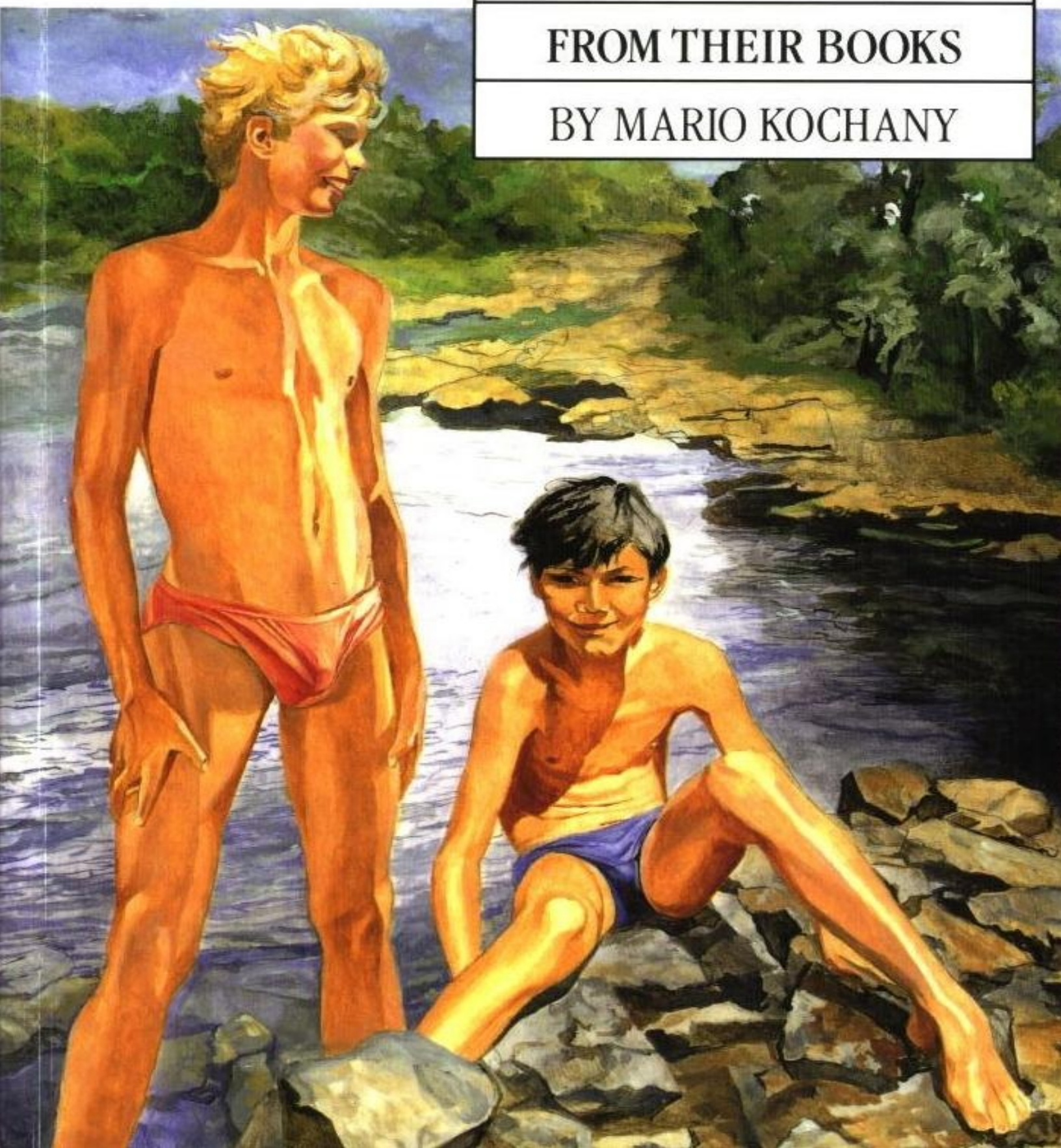


A **BL** CLASSIC

AS SCHOOLBOYS

FROM THEIR BOOKS

BY MARIO KOCHANY



# **AS SCHOOLBOYS FROM THEIR BOOKS**

by

**Mario Kochany**

A story of love in an  
English Boys' Prep. School

Love goes toward love,  
as schoolboys from their books  
—Romeo and Juliet (Balcony Scene)

This book is dedicated  
to the memory of  
**Little John**

A good friend who died at Christmastime, 1989  
but had done so much  
to encourage my writing  
O.T.

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## Glossary and Disclaimer

As I have just spent an amusing weekend explaining to the editor of this book the complexities of the English school system (where Public Schools are in fact *private*, fee-paying schools, and Prep. or Preparatory Schools cater for youngsters aged eight to thirteen), we decided it might be useful to add a short introductory glossary in order to explain the peculiarities of English schools for readers not brought up in the United Kingdom.

Mertons is a Prep. School. Although things have been changing in the last fifteen years or so, until the 1970s Prep. Schools were almost invariably single sex, catering for either boys *or* girls. Mertons is a boys' school, in which somewhat over half of the pupils are boarders. The fees are high, but on the other hand the educational standards are very high too; almost all of the boys manage to pass their vital Common Entrance examinations to go on to the Public School of their choice at the age of thirteen or fourteen. (Eton, Winchester, Harrow and Rugby are among the best-known English Public Schools, though I have no records of whether Mertons boys have ever gone on to any of these.)

The boys live a communal life. They eat in a large dining-room, have a school chapel, well-stocked library, arts and crafts centre, swimming-pool, gymnasium, and generally excellent sports facilities. Sport of all sorts plays an important part in their daily lives (and I need perhaps scarcely add that sport of a *particular* sort plays an important part in their nightly lives as well).

The boarders sleep in dormitories. These are large rooms containing between four and a dozen beds or bunks. Each dorm is presided over by a 'dorm prefect', a senior boy who has a certain responsibility for the well-being and behaviour of his younger charges. Mertons also has a small number of 'school prefects', boys who are accorded a very considerable amount of responsibility and importance for their mere thirteen years.

The school is divided into year-groups. The three senior years are called the Tops, the Removes and the Middles. The younger boys are not generally considered important enough to be even noticed; the bottom two years are commonly lumped together, both known contemptuously as Juniors or Squits. (So a Mertons Junior, my good American friends, is only eight or nine years old.)

English private schools tend to accumulate a vast amount of slang, and the people—both staff and pupils—often acquire nicknames. I am sure you will very soon discover why it would be advisable to visit the boggeries after squashins or chuckie (after all, we don't want to soil our jam-jars, do we?). K-M, Kiss-Me, Mousehole and Barchy are variant appellations for the same boy, whose name is officially recorded on the school lists as Karl-Mark Barchester.

I should like to pretend that all the characters mentioned in this book are fictitious, but anyone who has been involved in the world of English boarding Prep. Schools will have met many of the types for himself. The best I can do is to say that where I have knowingly borrowed some characteristic, tic or behaviour pattern from any real person, alive or dead, I have added so many other personal details as to make any perceived correspondence between my character and that individual unintentional, imaginary and coincidental. The same applies to Mertons, alas....

## 1.

Jean-Philippe perched uneasily on the high-backed chair in the study of Monsieur de Salles and nibbled the *petits fours* which Colette had produced.

‘...and you found them like that? Your mother dead on the floor, and your father gasping for air. It must have been awful....’ He got up and muzzed the boy’s short hair. ‘Well—what on earth are we going to do with you? You’ve no one else, you say? You must stay here of course, at least until we can arrange something more suitable. But I’m really too old to look after you; and Georges and Colette are not trained to deal with children—washing and ironing and mending; not to mention all the pranks that little boys get up to—or at least, used to... in my day.’ He went to the high window of his *cabinet* and looked out at the *bois de chênes* which stretched down into the valley. On the further hillside he could see the turrets and pinnacles of the de Filbert’s *château*.

Jean-Philippe looked at his sandal. It was scratched; what would his father say?—Papa expected him to look after his things carefully, not to scratch them and damage them. And then the awful truth dawned on him again: his father would say nothing, now.

‘You would probably prefer to return to England; you are English after all.’

Jean-Philippe tried to protest that he had lived in France all his life, but the words wouldn’t come out through his dry throat.

‘I’ve got some friends there. We must try to get you into a school. The English boarding-schools are very good; one of the best educations you can get in the world. And then you can—perhaps—come back here for the holidays.’ Monsieur de Salles said that word ‘perhaps’ with a frog in his throat. He loved the little boy; he was so shy and pathetic; and he looked so sweet in that tiny pair of grey *culotte*. But he was too old to start getting involved with boys again at his age. No, it would never work. Best to get the boy far away. He would pay for him, of course, and care for him and look after him. But best for him not to come and live around the house.

He rang the bell. A few moments later Georges answered it; he shuffled in with the silver tray he always carried, whether it might be needed or not.

‘Jean-Philippe will go to his room now. Make sure he’s got everything he wants.... Do come back and see me, *mon brave*, any time you want; or if there’s anything you need. We’ll take the motor back across to the *château* again tomorrow to see if we can pick up anything else that we can save. Meanwhile... *Que le Dieu bénisse!*’

That was at Easter. A month later he was on the plane. A taxi met him at Heathrow and drove him out into the Berkshire countryside. It was not unlike the Loire: busy, undulating and deeply wooded. The driver was a kindly man, and tried to make bright conversation but gave up against the palisade of Jean-Philippe’s monosyllabic answers. He was a shy boy, not much given to words.

Forty-five minutes from the airport, the car pulled in at some old gates. They had probably looked quite impressive once, but now they needed a good coat of paint, and the stone pedestals which held them were crumbling. They drove up a potholed drive flanked with rhododendrons; even the blooms of liturgical violet seemed to add a mournful air to the scene, despite the bright sunshine. The taxi pulled up outside the stone pillars which flanked the front door, and Jean-Philippe surveyed the huge flight of steps with deep foreboding. True, the castle had a flight of stairs no less impressive but Philippe very rarely used the front door except in the company of his father.

He sat, legs clamped tight together, in the back of the car while the driver got out and made towards



the door. The child suddenly had a desperate natural desire. He hardly felt he could hold it. He wanted to make a dash for it; to fly for the nearest rhododendrons to relieve the painful pressure, and then to run for his life—he knew nor cared not where.... But the front door was already opening.

A young woman came out, bright in a floral dress. Her hair was short and straight, and she had a kindly face. She came towards the car and Jean-Philippe got out; he picked up his travelling bag and his passport.

‘Ah, de Filbert. Welcome to Mertons. It’s “Philip”, isn’t it?’ She put a kindly hand to the back of his neck and his shoulder. ‘Jean-Philippe,’ he quietly corrected.

‘Have you got a trunk then?’ The Secretary ignored his precision, but slotted it into a mental notebook for future reference.

‘It’s in the boot, Ma’am.’ The driver unlocked the back of the car, opened it, and lifted out the suitcase. The rich leather alone must have added quite a few kilos to the ‘excess baggage’ M. de Salles had had to pay at the airport.

‘We’ll leave it here,’ said the Secretary; ‘at the bottom of the steps will do, and I’ll get some bigger boys to lend a hand in taking it upstairs later.’ She paid the driver and ushered Jean-Philippe inside. The front hall was dark and vast. She led him through to her office. ‘The rest of the boys have just started Prep. We’ve been back for ten days already. It’s not a very good time for you to start, I’m afraid. Two-thirds of the way through the year is bad enough; but so long into the term makes it even worse. Still, it can’t be helped. If you can settle in and make friends this term, then you’ll be all ready to make a real start in September.’ She gave him a big warm smile—the first real smile he had had since his mother died. ‘I tell you what: I’ll take you upstairs to Matron now; then, if we can get your case brought up, she can help you to unpack.’

The Matrons’ room was an untidy jumble of laundry, socks for repair, old newspapers, and unwashed tea-mugs. There was a telly chuntering away in the corner, though no one seemed to be watching it. Indeed there was no one in the room at all. Mrs. Ansell went to look for someone, leaving Jean-Philippe to stare with sightless eyes and deaf ears at the goggle-box. His mind went back to home. They had owned a television, of course; but no one ever watched it. He wasn’t watching this, although his eyes were riveted on it. It was as if he was looking right through it. There was just a big blank of nothingness beyond. That was rather like his life, really.

Hearing footsteps, he turned round. A large woman in a blue uniform and a white square cap filled the door. She wasn’t tall, but she was large. ‘Hello, de Filbert. Have you had a nice flight? If you’ll come along with me, we’ll get you sorted out.’

She led along a twisty corridor with bare floorboards which creaked. She turned into another room where his suitcase was already sitting on the table. ‘Now—I understand you haven’t got a full set of uniform yet.’ She was already unfastening the suitcase in a businesslike manner. ‘But we’ll soon get that put right.’ Having undone all the straps and buckles, she discovered that one of the locks had been done up. Jean-Philippe fumbled in his trouser pocket until he found the key. Then he stepped across to the table and undid the lock. He opened the suitcase and picked out from the top a crucifix, a picture of his parents in a leather case, and his writing-case. The Matron then moved in and started on his clothes.

She had a check-list in her hand—‘Three grey shirts; one white shirt for Sundays; two pairs blue games shorts; two pairs white gymn-shorts; two white P.E. vests; one white sweater, no games socks? ... Three pairs of underpants and three pairs of long grey stockings ... I presume you’ve got one pair of each on.’ She looked round to check. ‘Are you wearing a vest?’ Jean-Philippe shook his head. ‘No, there’s no need in this weather, so there should be a set of three in here somewhere.... Ah, here we are.’ She added them to the already large pile growing on the table.

‘Now—four bath-towels and two hand-towels; washing-kit. Have you got tooth-paste?’

Jean-Philippe gave a little nod: ‘Y—yes, M—er, M—M—Madame?’ He suddenly realised he didn’t know what to call her. Should it be ‘Misses’, ‘Miss’, ‘Matron’, or what? He decided he couldn’t go far wrong with ‘Madame’; she looked as if she might be married. She didn’t correct him, but just carried on with the checking.

‘Pyjamas; dressing-gown; swimming-trunks. These look very small. Can you still get into them?’

Jean-Philippe said he hoped so. They had in fact been a present from one of the leaders on the *colonie de vacances* last summer. His mother had forgotten to pack any swim-wear, and the leader, who was a very nice 17-year-old called Marcel, had taken him down to the shop and helped him to choose and buy. They had tried them on in the shop; Marcel had made a careful inspection and said how very becoming he looked in them. Red, he said, was the colour of passion; and the trunks were so thin and light-weight, and were as saucy and sweet as the boy himself; how most appropriate.

Jean-Philippe had such happy memories of that fortnight, and of Marcel in particular. He hoped the trunks would still fit, though they had been pretty small for him even last summer, they would hold happy remembrances for him of Marcel. (For Marcel, incidentally, when *he* looked into his photograph album, that little slip ‘held’—in a very literal sense—a handful of very happy memories too.)

‘...We’ll leave the footwear to check until later. It appears you’ve got everything you need except the stuff which is specifically in the school colours. I suppose that’s not surprising if you’ve been living abroad. Germany isn’t it? There aren’t many Mertons School outfitters over there. We’d better get you into a proper school uniform as quickly as possible now. The boys will soon be out of Prep and it will be time for chuckie.’ She went to a large cupboard and got out a pile of pullovers. ‘Your guardian has asked us if we can try to fit you out from the second hand shop for the moment; but if we can’t, we may have to call for the school outfitter.’ She held a pullover up against him. It was too small. She tried another one; the third one fitted. She found three pairs of games-socks—bright blue with yellow tops; and handed him two canary-yellow ties and a blue and yellow elastic belt.

‘Now, for some school shorts. Do you know your waist size?’ Jean-Philippe shook his head. Matron took a tape from her pocket and put it round him. ‘Twenty-six.’ She foraged through a wicker hamper. ‘How about these? They used to belong to Hadleigh so I think they should be about your size; he’s only a bit bigger than you now.’ She held them up against him. ‘Mmm. They may be a bit tight; but try them on.’

Jean-Philippe looked around the room. Where? There wasn’t anywhere to go. He looked at her enquiringly.

‘Don’t be shy. I’m quite used to seeing little boys without their clothes on. Come along; it’ll soon be chuckie, and you don’t want to miss that, do you.’

Jean-Philippe blushed to the root of his hair-line and began to unfasten his *culotte*. He turned his back and slipped them down. He hadn’t undressed in front of a woman since he was a little baby. He left his old shorts on the floor and stepped out of them. He looked round for the new ones. Matron was holding them; she was unpicking the old name-tape. He stood there, cross-legged, his hands clasped in desperate shyness in front of his underpants. What if someone came in? The door was wide open. It seemed an eternity before she had the name unpicked. At last she was finished. She held out the shorts to him. He tried to bend forward so that his shirt might do something more to hide him, and reached out one hand for them. With his other he carefully cupped his secrecies. Quickly turning his back he wriggled into the blue corduroy. It was quite tight—a snug fit, and nice and short; but he liked that. He hated floppy clothes.

‘There’s a mirror there if you want to look at yourself. And here’s your pullover, tie and belt. That’s the bell now for the end of Prep. It’s chuckie in five minutes.’ Jean-Philippe started to thread his belt into the loopholes, and to put on his tie and pullover. A body appeared round the door.

‘Ah, Matron. I’ve come for you to put on a new plaster; I didn’t manage after games-time; we were late.’ Without a glance at the new stranger, the boy pulled down his shorts, bent over, and slipped down

the back of his hipster underpants. There was a big plaster stuck on his buttock. Matron pulled it off, treated the wound with Savlon, and put on a new Elastoplast. She pushed it firmly on and then spanked the boy's bottom playfully.

‘There you are, Hadleigh. We'd better get the doctor to look at your bottom tomorrow; but I don't think it will need any more plasters. It's getting along fine. By the way, this is the new boy, de Filbert. Could you take him down to chuckie, and generally look after him for the evening...?’



## 2.

‘Why’s it called “chuckie”?’ asked de Filbert, standing in the queue for supper and feeling that everyone was staring at him—which they were.

‘Well, it used to be “tea”, which is sometimes called “char”; but the food’s usually pretty yucky, so the two words got rolled into one... which is “chuckie”,’ explained Hadleigh.

‘Oh! I thought it was because we always try to chuck the bread around when nobody’s looking,’ said the boy behind him. ‘How d’you know that, Hads?’

Hadleigh shrugged. ‘Dunno. Just heard it somewhere.’ A sudden surge thrust down the queue in the corridor as someone tried to barge in at the back. And as de Filbert was regaining his balance a bell tinkled somewhere and silence fell along the line. They filed into the dining-room in silence, filled up the various tables in turn, then grace was said. Even before the Lord had had a chance to ‘make them truly grateful’, like the eruption of a volcano, the boys pulled out their chairs, sat down, and all started talking at once.

The food was as yucky as Hadleigh had foreseen—lukewarm spaghetti rings on leathery toast; but the company wasn’t too bad. De Filbert got to know something of the seven boys at his table, and they, by a continual catechism, learnt a lot about him. They were highly impressed that he was able to speak French. They wanted to know about his *château*; but Jean-Philippe managed to get away almost without mentioning his parents.

After chuckie they went for a tour of inspection of the school—Hadleigh, Winters, Barchester and a few of the others; and then it was soon time for bed.

‘Which dorm are you?’

‘I don’t know.’

They looked at the screens to find out. ‘Oh, they’ve put you in G Dorm. That’s a nice small one, and Chanting’s in charge. You’ll like him; he’s okay. But—you’ve got Naseby.’

De Filbert didn’t ask them why, or how, but it sounded as though Naseby was bad news.

Things ran like clockwork at Mertons. At 7.45 precisely the boys of de Filbert’s age scrambled upstairs in a hurly-burly mob. Mr. Timbers was at the top which put a sudden damper on things. ‘...Geens, you’re in Detention tomorrow. Half an hour.’

‘B—but...’

‘Don’t answer back, or I’ll make it three-quarters.’ De Filbert was getting a very rapid introduction to the ways of Mertons School. Hadleigh took him along to G Dorm and introduced him to Miners—(‘Miners *minimus*’ in fact; he had three brothers: *max*, *ma*, *mi*, and *min*.) He was half undressed; but Naseby’s clothes were already spread in a higgledy-piggledy mess upon the floor, and the boy himself had left.

Matron had put Jean-Philippe’s things—the ones he would need, pyjamas, wash-kit, towel and dressing gown, along with his crucifix, photos, and other private things—on his bed or in his bedside locker.

‘Come on what-did-Hadleigh-say-your-name-was? De Filbert? Are you some sort of nut, or something?’ Miners stripped the last of his clothes off as he spoke. ‘It’s our bath-night, and Miss Arthur will kill us if we’re late.’

De Filbert sat on the edge of his bed and looked at him. He was standing there, stark naked, with his towel over his shoulder. He was taller than Philippe was; had fair hair and a gap between his two front

teeth; he was rather scrawny, and had a very long and thin pipe hanging between his legs. Philippe stared at it. The boy seemed not the least bit concerned. It had a slight swelling towards the middle where it bent sharply, and then pointed down towards the ground. There was an extended tip of dark pink skin at the end of it, which made it look even longer. Behind it, and underneath, was a round, scrumpled sack, far larger than Jean-Philippe's. Miners helicoptered his wash-bag round on his finger. 'Come on. Miss Arthur will be in an awful zizz. D'you know where the bathroom is? No? I s'pose I'd better wait for you.'

Jean-Philippe started to undress. He took off his pullover, tie and shirt and folded them neatly. He sat on the edge of his bed and unbuckled his sandals, then pulled off his socks. He stood up, his stomach feeling as if there was a punch-up going on in there. Miners was looking at him, and he had to undress. He turned his back and unbuckled his belt. He undid the button. He eased down the zip. A shy glance over his shoulder confirmed that Miners was still watching. There was nothing for it; he'd have to undress. He slipped down his shorts. With the weight of things in his pockets they fell to the floor with a crunch. He stepped out of them and picked them up with his toe. He started to fold them.

'Miners—get your dressing-gown on, you silly boy! We don't want to see you running up and down the corridors with nothing on.' It was Mr. Timbers. He turned and looked at de Filbert. Jean-Philippe clasped his hands in front of himself; fancy being caught in nothing but his underpants! He pulled his dressing-gown on, delighted to realise that this was not only allowed but encouraged.

But Mr. Timbers was still there. Watching him. 'You're a new boy, aren't you? Just arrived today, I believe? Are you finding your way around all right? Is Miners looking after you?' Jean-Philippe nodded. 'Do you know your way to the bathroom?' He shook his head slowly. 'Haven't you got a tongue in your mouth, boy? Don't just wag your head: say 'Yes, Sir!' or 'No, Sir!' when you are answering an adult—all right? Now, do you know where the bathroom is?'

'No, Sir,' mumbled Philippe, still shaking his head to reinforce it.

'Oh well, Miners will show you. Get your things off now, and take your towel and sponge-bag. You'd better hurry 'cos you're very late.' He stood and waited while Philippe, bursting with shame, slipped his pants down and wrapped his dressing-gown tightly around himself.

The bathroom, when they got there, was a buzz of noise, activity and steam. There were at least a dozen boys in there, and eight baths. Miss Arthur presided tonight. She was plump and youthful—straight from college. She wore a blue tunic, somewhat brighter than Matron's, and a Guinness apron. 'Come on, you two. Where have you been? Oh, you're the New Boy. De Findley?'

'De Filbert, Miss. Like the nut.' Miners pulled off his dressing-gown as he spoke.

The room was filled with bodies. Naked bodies for the most part. Jean-Philippe looked around him. There were fat boys and thin boys, tall boys and short boys; there were boys in the baths and boys out of the baths; there were boys with towels round their waists, boys with towels round their necks, boys with towels over their shoulders; boys with no towels to be seen—but plenty else to be seen instead. De Filbert felt totally confused and disorientated. He watched Miners throw his dressing-gown and towel onto a bench and plunge into a vacant bath as soon as another boy got out.

In the far corner of the room he caught sight of Winters sparring with someone else while Miss Arthur's back was turned. De Filbert caught his eye. Winters turned round and smiled. But... De Filbert couldn't believe what he saw: standing out from in front of the boy was a great long member, rigid and pointing skywards. Winters looked down at it, grinned, and grasped it. He gave it a slow and gentle rub. Flirtatiously; making eyes at de Filbert. Jean-Philippe tugged his own dressing-gown tighter around him.

'Winters!' said Miss Arthur, turning round suddenly. 'Stop that in here and go and get your pyjamas on! Have you washed behind your ears?' She went over to examine him. Winters made no attempt to hide his erection. Miss Arthur glanced down at it. 'Don't you go fighting with Grindley, now, or I'll tell Mr. Patting.'

‘But Grindley’s so cool!’

‘You’re just disgusting. Don’t you know I’ve got eyes in the back of my head?’

‘But what have you got at the front of your...?’ Winters looked down at the centre of her Guinness apron.

‘Winters, get out of here. And take that *thing* with you!’ She gave him a rap on his bare bottom, and turned away smiling. He gave her two fingers behind her back, gave his pole another few strokes, and slipped his dressing gown on. Without bothering to do it up he went out of the bathroom, like a blind man with a swaying stick feeling the way in front of him. Winters loved his cock and was extremely proud of it; it was about the longest in the middle school.

There were quite a few other people who loved it, too.

Jean-Philippe was now standing in front of five empty baths.

‘Come on, Philip, dressing-gown off and in you get. She stood by one in the middle and waited for him. With the bathroom emptying, she could give him her less divided attention. Jean-Philippe didn’t like that but there was nothing much he could do about it. He took his dressing-gown off and hung it up; then, with one hand in front of him, he squirmed shyly across to the bathtub. He got in. She stood and watched him.

‘Did you have a pleasant flight?’ She picked up a flannel and some soap. ‘Where did you come from? It’s France, isn’t it? Where did you take off? Paris?’ She soaped his shoulders and arms as he nodded assent. She washed under his armpits and then turned her attention to his back. ‘Lift yourself up a bit.’ She washed right down and under his bottom. Both cheeks, and firmly in between, most thoroughly and rather too intimately. ‘Now, lean back.’ Her no-nonsense approach brooked no refusal. Tucking his privacies tight between his legs, he leant back against the back of the bath. Miss Arthur soaped his chest, worked out to both ribs and down to his tummy. She washed the smooth belly, then thrust the soft flannel down between his legs and washed in there, gently but firmly: she wasn’t messing about.

‘Now, you can wash your own knees and toes. I haven’t got time to do everything for you.’ She passed the flannel on to him. The bathroom was already filling with another group of students.

‘Ooh Miss! Will you wash me like that?’ said one of the bigger boys. There was a general giggle of approval.

‘Shut up, Jackson—and get yourselves into the baths, all of you.’ Most of the tubs had been refilled since the Middles had left. The new boys took off their dressing-gowns, hung some of them up and left others lying on the bench or on the floor, and fought for their favourite places in the bathroom. Jean-Philippe got out. He was feeling just a little bit less embarrassed by now. Still he was more comfortable once he got into a corner with a towel wrapped round him again. He quickly dried himself off.

There were three boys by the door, waiting for a bath to become free, chatting, quite unconcerned at their nudity. Jean-Philippe observed them out of the corner of his eye. One had the most enormous gong. It wasn’t hard, but it was big, and it was chubby. A new coat of fur curled over its top. Jean-Philippe had never seen anything like it, not even on Winters. He glanced down at his own penis which seemed so tiny, thankful no one else could see it at the moment.

Jean-Philippe lay awake long after Lights Out. Miners and Naseby were talking, but he didn’t join in—he knew it was forbidden. In due course they fell asleep; but he didn’t. He lay awake, moving restlessly, thinking over all that had happened in the last month. It seemed an eternity since his parents had been killed, but it was only four and a half weeks. Blois might just as well have been on the other side of the earth, even if it had taken only an hour by plane and a couple of hours by car at each end.

He thought of his room at the *château*—of the glass-panelled windows with their myriad little rectangles, of the view over the oak-forest, of de Salles’ mansion beyond. He remembered his four weeks

with de Salles—their private walks down by the lake—drives in the hired car, when they would sit side-by-side in the back seat and the old man would fondle his hand—climbing trees with de Salles on the ground looking up at him—(fascinated, though Jean-Philippe didn't know it, at the sight of his lean, bare boy's legs, soft thighs, tight little *culotte*. The old man loved Philippe's company although he could never think of anything to say to the boy. But he grasped at any opportunity to be near him.)

Philippe remembered Colette's cooking. He loved to help her in the kitchen, darting around her big apron and motherly bosoms. She was nothing like his own mother—twice as old for a start—but she had treated him so kindly. Well, it would only be eleven weeks and he would be back there again. Eleven weeks—that was a life-time away! A big tear rolled down his cheek, followed quickly by another, and then more.

A dim light came in through the open door and lit the ochre paint of the far wall. Philippe could see it through the gap by the hinges, and through the fan-light above the door. There was someone coming down the corridor, he could hear the floorboards creaking, even though the step was light. A shadow passed across the doorway; someone entered the room. Philippe closed his eyes. Whoever had come in was now standing above his bed. It had to be Chanting. Philippe opened one eye. It was Chanting, in long trousers secured by a school belt and grey shirt. And Chanting was undressing! Philippe opened his other eye.

Chanting took his watch off and put it on the shelf above their beds. He unfastened his trousers, opened them, and pulled them down. He was less than two feet from de Filbert's head. Philippe watched as his white underwear came into view. There were wind-surfers printed all over them, and, round the waist, Philippe could just make out the words *-fers do it standi-*. He wondered what the rest of the message might say.

Chanting took off his tie and his shirt and threw them onto his bed, beside his cast-off trousers. Jean-Philippe could see the underpants even more clearly now, what there was of them. They were nicely rounded at the back, but cut away to a tiny triangle at the front. Suddenly he felt a curious sensation between his own legs. It was cosy and warm in bed; he felt so snug and comfy. He slipped a hand into the slit at the front of his trousers, and suddenly he remembered Winters—Winters in the bathroom—and that made him even more homy. He grasped his little penis with his hand. Ooh, that felt comfortable; warm and nice. He thought of the hyacinths which used to grow outside the *château* in the springtime; they were pink, and they used to stand up erect and swell out at the top. They were so delicate too.

Chanting was bending over now and taking off his shoes and socks. His tail was only inches away from Jean-Philippe's face, the thin material curiously dimpled between its cheeks. He could easily have reached out and touched it. Kissed it even. It looked nice enough to kiss! He moved his hand back and forth over his own cocklet. He hoped no one would see—the room was dark, and he was well tucked in.

Chanting put his socks on the bed and tucked his shoes under it. He put on his slippers. Now came the moment of truth. Turning his back to the door, he pulled down his pants. But, in turning his back to the door, he turned his body towards Jean-Philippe, and now a great long dangler burst into view. It was twice as long as the biggest one he had seen in the bathroom, and three times as hairy. And it was hanging only inches from Jean-Philippe's face. He wondered how a thing of that size could ever have been housed in such a tiny slip of material. He increased the stroke on his own little cock.

Chanting wrapped a short towel round his waist and went off for his bath.

When Chanting came back, Jean-Philippe was sobbing softly. He was thoroughly homesick. He wanted his *Maman*. He longed for the *château*, for Blois, for the kindness of M. de Salles, for the affection of Colette. They were all, all so far away.

'Hello, Filbert. Is your name Philip?' The prefect sat down on the side of his bed, and Jean-Philippe wriggled over to give him more room. 'I'm Chanting—Andy Chanting. Are you home-sick?' He took hold of the boy's hand with one hand and stroked his forehead with the other. His towel was far too short,

Philippe noticed; it hid nothing. ‘I used to get home-sick too when I first came here. It’s bloody awful, I know. And there’s eff-all anyone can do about it. Say, would you like to come and snuggle into my bed tonight? Would that help?’

Chanting took the pyjamas from under his pillow and flung them under the bed; he hung his little towel on the rail. Naked, he climbed into bed, and folded back the bedclothes to invite Jean-Philippe to join him. Jean-Philippe wriggled out of his own bed and moved across to the other. He felt himself being wrapped in Andy’s arms. He felt the big thing brushing against his seat. He felt the prefect nuzzling his face into his hair, and kissing the back of his neck. And then he fell asleep.

He did not feel, nor was he aware, when Chanting, five minutes later, stained the seat of his cotton ‘jam-jars’.

### 3.

Andy Chanting woke early, as he always did. The sun was already bright outside in the corridor, but the window of the dorm was hung with a heavy red curtain. He reached up for his watch from the shelf. It was not quite six o'clock. Time enough yet!

He reached one arm over the sleeping Jean-Philippe and felt for the front of the boy's jam-jars. He nibbled Jean-Philippe's short hair: how very French to have an *en brosse*. He was an attractive boy, if seemingly a little shy. He had noticed him right away the night before when Hadleigh, Barchester and the others were showing him around. Now *there* was a lovely little group, Andy had thought, if only he could get hold of them. But Hadleigh, the leader of the gang, too often played hard-to-get; he was not easily to be 'had'.

De Filbert, on the other hand, had been all too easy—at least to get him into his bed. He found the opening in the pyjama trouser-front, slipped two fingers into it, and grasped himself with his other hand. Oh, if only he could do this when the boy was awake too! He listened for Jean-Philippe's steady breathing. Slowly, gently, cautiously, he probed his two fingers further in to the front of the pyjamas. There seemed to be nothing there!

And then he touched flesh. His hand froze. With infinite care he explored. It must be the boy's belly. He moved downward.

Jean-Philippe stirred. But then relaxed again. Andy waited once more for his steady breathing. Then he proceeded again, millimetre by slow millimetre.

Now he struck gold. His heart froze. Yes, this was it! He tested with the tip of his finger. It was very small—very tiny indeed—but it was the real thing, warm, rubbery, circumcised, cased in the smoothest of smooth, loose skin.

Almost before he knew it he exploded, through sheer excitement at his own sweet discovery.

Once he got his breath back, and smeared the stuff out over the lower sheet in the forlorn hope that it might become less obvious, he fell asleep again, snuggling his face into the boy's short hair.

An hour later Jean-Philippe came to. He couldn't think where he was at first. The prefect's arms were around him; he was in a strange bed in a strange room in a strange place; but then he began to remember. He felt snugly comforted and reassured in the bigger boy's bed, and in his arms.

Chanting, too, was waking up. 'Hello, Philip.' He kissed the boy on the cheek as he blearily rolled over. 'How did you sleep?'

'Mm? *Bien, merci*; all right, thanks.' Jean-Philippe reached out his arms under the blankets to try to stretch and yawn, but found to his horror that his hand was touching the prefect's penis. 'Ooh! I'm sorry!'

'Don't mention it!' Chanting wriggled closer to the boy. 'I don't mind being touched! That felt nice!' He snuggled up tighter against Jean-Philippe, but in the same affectionate way that had made the younger boy feel so cared for and secure last night. 'But you ought to go back to your own bed now. It would never do for people to know you had slept with me. They might start talking. And they might tease you if they thought you'd been feeling homesick.'

Actually, it was most unlikely that the boys would tease a homesick new boy, at least in his first two weeks, but Andy Chanting realised it would be a good safeguard to keep Jean-Philippe from not talking. 'Bye-bye: pleasant dreams!' He kissed the boy again, helped him out of the bed and patted his nice little bottom.

Andy felt to see if his own dingus was too stiff to risk getting out of bed, decided it wasn't if he was careful, sat up and fished for his jim-jams from the back corner under his bed. Jean-Philippe watched; he



saw the whole of Chanting's bottom—the hole in it, as a matter of fact—as the prefect crawled half under the framework. In fact, he could almost see right up it. His excitement returned with a stab. Thank goodness Chanting couldn't see!

If Chanting couldn't see, he certainly was seen. Maybe he had followed de Filbert out of bed too quickly after all. The effect of the wonderful night they had spent together had by no means worn off: a crane of flesh stretched and swayed in front of him. Now he could see Jean-Philippe had noticed: he could see the boy was interested. He didn't hurry to get back into his pyjamas, but drew them on, slowly and deliberately—the top first, which he pulled over his shoulders and then buttoned up, one by one, with no hurry. Then he bent and pulled on his leggings. He stretched the front open and let the cock hang out of it as he fastened the two waist-buttons.

It was time to say something. 'Seen enough?' he whispered. Jean-Philippe seemed hypnotised by the size of his organ and its slow movement up and down. 'Or do you want to touch and check that it is real?'

Philippe slowly and anxiously reached out a hand. Could he? Dare he? He hesitated and held back.

'Go on: it won't bite you! This kind spits its poison—like a cobra; it doesn't bite.' He took a step nearer the bed and let his penis dangle over the child. With the most intense interest, Philippe reached up and touched it; grasped it; squeezed it.

'Oh, that's fine! I can see we're going to have lots of fun together, you and I!' Andy tore back the boy's bedding and threw himself down on top of him, thrusting his massive lever deep in the cleft between the young and tender upper thighs. He could feel the boy's tiny penis, up-pointing and very, very rigid, poking into his tummy. They rubbed their faces together, and then, for the third time that night, Andy's cock erupted and spread its young potency over the skin of his new boy-friend.

'You won't tell, will you?' Andy asked once he got his breath back again. 'It's our little secret, okay?' Philippe's silent eyes gave him the reassurance he needed.

Yet Jean-Philippe felt very confused over what had happened. He couldn't get last night, and particularly this morning, out of his mind—during breakfast, and while they were making their beds—yes, there was something there on the bottom sheet, and it was still damp. At Chapel he felt stained as he approached his Creator. And yet...

Chanting said nothing about it, not even when he was showing him how to make his bed after their two other roommates had gone. Miners and Naseby didn't know anything about it, of course. Philippe didn't even feel he could discuss it with Hadleigh. In any case, he had promised not to.

Once lessons started he had other things to occupy his mind. But in Break the memories returned again—especially when he saw Chanting trying to get close to Hadleigh in the playground. Was it wicked, or was it wonderful and God-given? After all, love was a gift of God, and that was something like what Philippe felt this was. He had never loved anyone before—except his mother. But these feelings of love, if that was what these emotions were, completely overpowered him. He wished he had a Father Confessor to discuss them with; but this was an Anglican Prep. School. They had a Chapel, but no Vicar.

He went off to the toilet and emptied out his insides. That made him feel better.

He heard Hadleigh's voice; the boy was having a pee. He wiped himself quickly, and went out to join him. Hadleigh was with Barchester.

'Hi! How did you find Chanting? How did you get on with him?'

Jean-Philippe blushed as red as a beetroot.

'He's nice, isn't he?' Hadleigh went on. 'He's all right... as prefects go. But you want to be careful—he can be a bit *too* nice sometimes.'

So they knew, did they? Why hadn't they warned him before?

The lesson-bell rang. The three of them were in the same class so they ran off together. It was French. No problem for Jean-Philippe de Filbert.

‘*Bonjour, ma classe.*’

‘*Bonjour Madame.*’

‘Oh, I see we’ve got a new boy. You haven’t been here before, have you? *Comment tu t’appelles?*’

‘*Jean-Philippe, Madame.*’

‘*Eh, bien, Jean-Philippe. Tu peux parler un peu de français?*’

‘*Oui, Madame.*’

‘*De-puis com-bien de temps est-ce-que tu as ap-pris la langue?*’ She pronounced each word clearly and precisely, speaking very slowly. ‘Do you understand what that means?’

‘*Oui Madame! Quoique je suis anglais—(et mon père aussi, mais pas ma mère)—je suis né en France, et j’y ai demeuré pendant toute ma vie. Je peux parler français mieux que je parle anglais.*’ A roar of laughter and applause went up at this mouthful of incomprehensibility.

‘Oh, so! I can see you and I are going to get on very well, Jean-Philippe. *Tu as des cahiers, et un livre français?*’

The next lesson was not likely to go so well: History. Jean-Philippe had never studied English History; and Mr. Timbers—five-foot-nothing with a bristly Hitler moustache—was nobody’s favourite teacher.

#### 4.

Jean-Philippe was fast asleep long before Andy Chanting came up to bed that evening. It had been a long and tiring day; but fun, and full of new experiences. So many new people to meet; so many new places to go; so many new things to learn. It would be like that for the first weeks of any new boy in any new school; but for Jean-Philippe the strains were compounded by a slight language difficulty, and the complete novelty of the English ethos and way of life... quite apart from the seething seaminess of school salacity. His modest nature and willingness to learn had got him off to a good start—with boys and teachers alike—(apart from Mr. Timbers who endeared himself to no one and would be endeared by none); but he dropped exhausted into bed, and fell deeply asleep almost the moment his head touched the pillow, well before the master on duty came round for Prayers and Lights Out.

Chanting crept into the dormitory, softly lit by the light from the corridor. He checked first that Miners and Naseby were asleep, and then went across to gaze at the French lad. How innocent and peaceful he looked, how pure and precious, like some exotic orchid. His dark brown hair was spread out on the pillow; his puckered lips looked ready to bestow a kiss. (*‘Embracer*, Chanting! Never use the word *“baiser”* in French; it can be very rude!’ He could hear Mme. Guillard repeating it even now.) The prefect sat on the boy’s bed and, listening to his rhythmic breathing, slowly undressed, down to his underslip, and then, at last, brought himself quickly off with one hand, while caressing the boy’s hair, neck and face with the other.

Jean-Philippe never stirred.

Sighing with lust temporarily sated, Andy Chanting climbed into his own bed and quickly dropped asleep.

There was a sour smell in the dormitory the next morning; Naseby had done it again. He well knew the routine: before breakfast bundle the wet sheets and pyjamas off to the scullery; and then after breakfast make up the bed with new clean sheets. However, even starting from scratch, he beat de Filbert, for Jean-Philippe had never had to do such menial tasks as bed-making, and was still having to work out how it went.

With the job finally done, Philippe went downstairs to get his books ready and himself organised before Assembly. Winters was having a snow-ball fight with Barchester and Hadleigh in the classroom—littering the floor with screwed up balls of paper.

English passed painlessly. They were doing a period on collective nouns—a ‘pride of lions’, ‘a gaggle of geese’, ‘a string of sausages’, ‘a swarm of bees’, ‘a suite of furniture’.... Having commented that one had a ‘litter’ of kittens or piglets and a ‘plague’ of locusts and insects, the teacher, Mr. Anglomead, commented that he was often disappointed that there was no regular collective noun for a bevy of boys. Boys were a ‘plague’, of that there was no doubt! But looking at the state of this classroom at this time of the morning he thought that perhaps ‘a litter of louts’ might be more appropriate for Form 3A. Hadleigh, Winters and Barchester looked duly embarrassed and were set to sweep it out during break-time.

Next lesson was Latin; and that Jean-Philippe had never met before—except occasionally in church.

The teacher was Mr. Thompson. He was a kindly man in his late thirties; and he made lessons fun—even Latin lessons. ‘Have you ever studied the language before, de Filbert?’

‘No, Sir.’

‘That’s a shame. We’ll have to give you some special coaching. I’ve done that before quite a few times. I find a boy can catch up quite a few months’ work fairly quickly, providing he’s intelligent. Are

you intelligent, de Filbert?’

‘I don’t know, Sir. I hope so.’

‘I reckon you are. I can usually judge a boy pretty quickly by his looks; and you look to me intelligent.’ He took a couple of paces over to Jean-Philippe’s desk, put his hand under the boy’s chin, gently raised his head, and looked into Jean-Philippe’s eyes. ‘Yes, definitely intelligent,’ said he with a warm smile. He mussed the boy’s short-cropped hair. ‘Have you got a “guardian”? Who’s looking after you at the moment?’

‘Hadleigh, Sir.’

‘Me, Sir,’ said the two of them simultaneously.

‘Well, Hadleigh, could you bring de Filbert to my room this evening and I’ll see what I can do with him?’

‘Mmm, Sir, what *time* this evening?’ said Barchester raising his right eyebrow, something he had just learned to do. A little titter of amusement ran round the classroom.

‘Don’t be disgusting, Barchester. You know precisely what I mean, and when.’

‘Yes, Sir.’ (‘I do indeed, Sir’ he added under his breath, while Hadleigh waved to him to shut up. Barchester was always in danger of going too far.)

‘You can bring him during prep time. I am sure he can afford to miss an hour of prep at this stage in his career. Now, open your “*Thermae*” at page five. We were talking about the Roman baths yesterday, weren’t we?’

‘Where they ran about naked, and did athletics with nothing on.’

‘And wrestled in the nude.’

‘And women wasn’t allowed in to any of the games in case the wrestlers got too excited like, and the women saw anything what they didn’t ought to.’

‘Winters, I am glad that you have taken yesterday’s lesson in so well—(I wish you always paid attention as well as that)—but would you mind expressing that sentence more grammatically?’ The teacher waited for a reply.

Winters looked tongue-tied and blushed modestly. But Mr. Thompson was determined to exact his pound of flesh—or at least three or four inches worth of firm, stiff gristle—from the boy. ‘Come on, lad; tell us exactly what you mean in grammatical words of one syllable.’

‘Sir, we’ve just *had* English.’

‘So you should be more able to express yourself with a greater degree of fluency in that language, then, shouldn’t you.’ Mr. Thompson sat waiting patiently for Winters to overcome his inhibitions. Inhibition was a problem from which Barnabas Winters didn’t normally suffer for long; a chirpy cockney streak ran richly in his blood, and he wasn’t often lost for words —except when called upon to express himself coherently.

‘Sir... the men used to fight in t\*he nude, Sir,’ he said with pink cheeks. ‘And sometimes, Sir, they used to get so excited, Sir, that it showed, Sir. And that was why women weren’t allowed in.... Sir.’

‘*What* showed, Winters? Tell us *what* showed.’

‘Sir. Oh, Sir!’

But ‘Sir’ was waiting for an answer. So was the whole class. Eagerly. With bated breath and baited pricklets.

‘Their... their...’ He swallowed hard. ‘Their *erections*, Sir!’

‘That is not a word of one syllable, Winters. But we’ll let that pass,’ said Mr. Thompson, as the class exploded in laughter. The tumult, perhaps fortunately, drowned Barchester’s *sotto voce* suggestion, remembering the recent lesson on collective nouns, that the phrase ‘their pride of stiff cocks’ was totally mono-syllabic.

‘Sir? Do you think that women should be allowed to see such things nowadays?’

It was Mr. Thompson's turn to look flustered this time. 'What on earth do you mean by that, Geens?'

'Nothing, Sir. It's just that, Sir...'

'Yes?'

'Miss Arthur was enjoying one in the baths last night, Sir. It was Snowy who was showing her... Winters, Sir.'

'Geens, I don't really want to know. If you are not careful I will put you in detention for half an hour this afternoon to write me an essay entitled *Erections I Have Known*.'

'Sir, I'm already in for Mr. Timbers. Otherwise I could certainly do it for you.'

'Do what for me?'

'Sir! Add to your catalogue of three-syllable "erections" my modest two-syllable "stiffy". Sir—it was right that Snowy used a three-syllable word just now; the wrestlers had such big ones they deserved three syllables.'

Jean-Philippe de Filbert was beginning to realise that the human body in all its shapes and sizes, in all its dress or undress, in all its excitement or otherwise, was a much more open subject of spectacle and conversation in an English boys' prep school than anywhere he would have imagined possible in the world. So much had his eyes and ears been opened in the past forty-eight hours.

After break it was P.E. 'You'll enjoy that,' said Hadleigh as the terrible trio, with de Filbert's help, finished cleaning out the form room.

'Have you met Mr. Holdsworth yet?' asked Winters. 'He's a good bloke.'

'He'll sum up how much a hole's worth in ten seconds flat.' 'And once he's got his hands on you, he'll hold on for all he's worth.'

'I love P.E. It's my favourite lesson,' put in Barchester, returning to the room after having emptied the wastepaper basket into the big bin.

'Oh, yes, we all know about you K-M. He's so good at it, he has to have special coaching—on his own!'

As soon as the bell rang, they rushed off to the changing-room. Jean-Philippe was becoming more accustomed to school-sanctioned nudity, although he did take the precaution of changing into his white shorts while he still had his reasonably long everyday shirt on to give him some sort of cover. Then he discovered at the last minute that he wasn't supposed to have kept his underpants on underneath; and that Mr. Holdsworth would 'murder him if he did'. He had to slip back to the now empty changing room to take them off. But while he was in there who should come by but Chanting himself.

'Hi, *mon petit*. *Comment ça va?*'

'*Il me faut déshabiller. Je porte encore mon caleçon, que je ne dois pas.*'

'And what's that lot s'posed to mean?'

'I've been sent back to take off *mon caleçon*... my underpants.'

'Oh! Very nice!' He looked at the boy in a pair of very short shorts. 'Don't let me stop you!' He smiled and hoped to see the *déshabement*, but de Filbert decided to slip off into the toilet to change. He wasn't ready to show himself—especially to anyone so well endowed as Chanting—yet.

At the end of the lesson they all rushed off; all except K-M.

'Why do you call Barchester K-M.?' asked Jean-Philippe.

'It's his initials. His parents called him Karl-Mark after some great Russian. They are Humanists, and he's not allowed to go to Chapel or Divinity, which we've got next. So he always stays for an extra long P.E. lesson on Wednesday mornings. He says he helps Mr. Holdsworth to sort things out, but we believe he helps to sort out the twisted Mr. Holdsworth!'

Mr. Holdsworth was just nineteen—straight from college at the beginning of the year. He was an agreeable young man, and played for the local rugby and cricket clubs when his school commitments would allow him to do so. But he also had a great sympathy and rapport with the boys. They loved him.

And he loved them—perhaps rather literally, as was the case with K-M.

This morning they were clearing out the P.E. store. They piled the mats, moved the vaulting horses, swept the floor, and put away the large crash-mat. K-M. threw himself on top of it. He rolled over and lay there with his legs wide open. He was wearing very loose shorts with precious little material between the legs, and everything showed. Mr. Holdsworth had seen it all before, of course, but it was always worth another look. He smiled down at the boy, and looked straight in between his legs. Karl spread them a little bit wider. ‘Are you going to do it again today, Sir?’

‘Do what?’

‘What you did at the end of last term. You promised last week!’

‘Last term was a big mistake. And I *never* promised last week. I wish I had never done it; and I’m never going to do it again. Ever, ever.’

‘Didn’t you enjoy it, Sir?’

‘That’s not the point.’

‘Show me the point, Sir.’ Karl reached up with his toe and poked at the front of the teacher’s track suit. ‘I spent a week with a feller last holidays—an old friend, and a school-mate of me dad’s. He’s been my favourite “baby-shitter” for years; he’s always a good laugh when he comes to stay, and I love it when he has to bath me and put me to bed. Ooh...!’ Karl rubbed his crotch with lust and happy memories.

‘But on the boat last hols—you won’t tell anyone this, will you, Sir...?’ Karl got out his stiffening cock from the leg of his shorts while the teacher squatted down on the edge of the crash-mat. ‘...on the boat last hols, Uncle Frank showed me well-and-truly why he likes being called a “baby-shitter”. He taught me the *proper* way to do it—what we done last term.’ Karl stroked his roundhead cock playfully and made it bob and bounce. ‘You’re s’posed to *loobicate* it. Use some cream or something. Then it doesn’t hurt so much when it goes in.... ’n’ it works.’ The boy rolled himself up into a tight little ball and fingered the spot which had been the well-used target of that Norfolk cruise. ‘He took me on his canal-boat for a week at Easter and we did it every day—and every night—for a week. And his thing were much bigger than yours.’

‘Karl, you’re disgusting, and I’m not doing it.’

‘Chicken! I’ll tell the whole of the third form that you’re a chicken!’

‘You wouldn’t dare.’

‘Want a bet?’

Peter Holdsworth lay down on the edge of the great crash-mat and took Karl-Mark Barchester by the hand. He certainly found the boy attractive. He squeezed the back of his thighs and gave them a kiss.

‘Shall I take my shorts off?’

‘No!’

‘Yes.’

‘Don’t you dare or I shall have to throw you out.’

‘What, throw me out without any shorts on? That would look good, wouldn’t it?’

‘Karl!’

‘Peter!’

‘Don’t you dare call me that.’

‘Don’t you like being called “Peter”, Peter? With a peter the size of yours I would have thought you would be proud of the name.’

‘How do you know what size it is?’

‘’Cos it hurt. Remember?’ The boy half unrolled and slipped off his shorts.

The temptation was too much for his teacher. He reached out and petted the little bum. It was so soft and tender. ‘You’re a wicked, wicked little boy,’ he said, ‘you know that?’

‘Mmm!’ Barchester was proud of the compliment.



‘And you’ve got a wicked, wicked little willie,’ said Peter Holdsworth, beginning to fondle it.

‘It’s tasty though. Fresh fizzy orangeade. D’you want a drop?’

‘Oh, Karl!’ The teacher kissed it. What if anyone found out? He knew his life, his career, was on a knife-edge, but he found this boy irresistible. He kissed the cocklet and he knew that if he stood up he wouldn’t be able to control the front of his track-suit.

‘I’ll piss in your mouth unless you’ll “piss” in my back!’

‘Crikey Karl. Don’t say things like that!’

‘It’s true. Are you going to, or shall I?’

‘Never!’ He closed his lips once again around the adorable little penis.

‘Right then!’

Peter Holdsworth suddenly found his mouth filling with warm liquid squirting out of that adorable cocklet. He couldn’t back off: the boy’s urine would have gone everywhere. He had to swallow it down. But it tasted delicious: far nicer than he would have expected. As strong as the beer he knocked back week by week with his Rugby chums, and easily as intoxicating.

‘You disgusting little boy!’ he said after he’d gulped down the last dribble, ‘I’ll get you for that!’

‘Go on then!’

Five minutes later, just before the bell rang, they were mopping up and wiping it all clean. Barchester went off to get dressed and changed, inwardly contented, and more satisfied than he had been since the Easter holidays. And Peter Holdsworth went off for a shower on his own.

At 5.25, just before prep, Hadleigh, Winters and Barchester escorted Jean-Philippe de Filbert up to Mr. Thompson’s study. It was a comfortable room, tastefully furnished, with a large sofa, and plenty of chairs, stools, scatter-cushions and bean-bags for boys to sit down on, plus a big furry rug on the floor. Hadleigh, Winters and Barchester knew they were likely to get a handful of sweeties for their pains.

They left Philippe with the teacher—and with a complete Mars bar apiece in their pockets. Winters got a detention for eating his during prep.

By the end of the hour de Filbert was already on *Stage 3*. He knew all about Roman families and Roman households; he had an immediate grasp of the rudiments of Latin (It wasn’t all that different from French, he decided) and he had a feeling of intense satisfaction, inspired by Mr. Thompson, that he was doing really very well. He found Mr. Thompson warm and approachable; but the teacher was discreet and, although he had a terrible reputation, he knew just how far it was permitted to go.

Unlike the headmaster...

## 5.

At the far end of the building Chanting was on the carpet. He had been caught hanging around the changing-room and the 'boggery' when he should have been at a 'cello lesson; but that was only a convenient excuse for getting him up to the Headmaster's study.

Andy hated the 'cello. He hated having that great big thing stuck between his legs while he learnt to finger it and to stroke it 'until you can bring forth something beautiful out of it' with a piece of cat-gut. He hated the woman who taught him, too; she was so prim and proper.

But Mr. Patting was not really too concerned with the rights or wrongs of Chanting's latest musical—or unmusical—escapade. He had been receiving other more serious allegations to put before him.

'It has come to my notice that you are becoming rather too friendly with Barchester and young Winters of late. They are mere third formers; you are a prefect.' Andy was only too well aware what all this would be leading up to; it was inevitable when you were on the carpet with Mr. Patting. He had had it all before; he just longed for Pat-a-Cake to get on with it and get it all over.

'I must take a most serious view of this. I have to trust my prefects and you have abused that trust. You have also, as I understand it, been abusing Barchester, at least—probably Winters too, I shouldn't be surprised, though I haven't had any actual complaints about that.'

'Has *Barchester* complained?'

'Not himself. But Matron has called my attention to the state his clothes have been getting into; and upon enquiries...'

'Sir, I caught them down in the woods—up the old oak; and as a prefect...'

'Did you have to go up the oak with them?'

'I didn't go up the oak with them, Sir. I went up it *after* them.'

'Yes, precisely, you have been going after them a bit too much recently. I ought to demote you from being a prefect, but I won't. This time. On the other hand, you must be punished. You realise that, don't you?'

'Yes, Sir,' Chanting said wearily, with resignation. There was a certain predictability to what would happen when a boy was summoned to Mr. Patting's study.

The headmaster went to his cupboard. He chose the short thick one. It was black and slightly knobbly; but at least it didn't sting so much as most of the thin ones. It didn't usually leave its marks on one's bottom so long afterwards either.

'Come over to the window.'

Chanting followed him. The headmaster perched down on the window seat and placed the boy in front of him. 'I intend you to remember this. I intend it to hurt. It will hurt your bottom. I hope it will hurt your pride as well. But I don't beat a boy of your age with a pair of thick grey trousers on.'

Mr. Patting leant forward and took hold of Chanting's waistband. He always enjoyed this bit, whenever he got the chance to do it. But he had to choose his victim carefully. With younger boys he didn't dare; he wouldn't run the risk of having them complain to their parents. But Chanting had been at Mertons five years and there had been no complaints. Chanting had been through it all before.

Mr. Patting undid the belt and the top button. Then he slid down the zip. Very slowly. He liked to spin things out—prolong the boy's agony with nervous anticipation. He pulled open the trouser-front. Now he caught sight of the underwear: a scattering of erect triangles. He looked at them carefully; they were surf-boards in full sail. His attention was caught by the text around the waist: *Wind-surfers do it st*——

'Turn round, boy. What does this say on the other side?'

Chanting turned round.

‘I thought so. I hardly think these pants appropriate for school wear. Have you got any other ones?’

‘But, Sir, when I’ve got them on, nobody sees them, Sir!’ ‘Except Barchester and Winters and anyone else whom you may undress to show yourself off to.’

Now it was starting, Chanting knew. Now was the time when he was supposed to become cheeky. ‘Like you, Sir?’

‘That is enough of that! Do you have any other underpants?’

‘I have regulation ones, Sir, but I don’t like wearing them.’

‘Why not?’

‘They are hot and sticky and make me sweat, Sir.’

‘They’ll only become sticky if you make them so. And as for the sweat—if they’re thick and absorbent they will mop up the sweat... unlike these little nylon fripperies.’

‘They’ll also mop up the stick, Sir.’

‘Chanting, I don’t think you are taking this seriously.’

‘Yes, Sir!... No, Sir!’ Chanting knew from much experience that if he could get the headmaster excited enough during this fore-play he was not likely to beat him so hard when the moment of truth actually came.

‘I intend to confiscate this little slip. You can go and see Matron after and get something else to wear.’

‘You will look after it, won’t you, Sir? Don’t do anything with it that I wouldn’t do.’

‘Chanting, it will have no more stains when I return it to you at the end of term than it has already.’

The headmaster took the boy’s trousers by the waist and pulled them right down and stood back to inspect.

Andy Chanting was growing into a very attractive looking young man, the headmaster thought. Look at those legs—the thick silk down all over them. He had never realised that Chanting was so sun-tanned. He unbuttoned the bottom buttons of the boy’s shirt. A fuzz of hair peeped out over the top of the wind-surfer slip. There was enough meat inside to more than fill it, too. ‘Now then, we’ll get you bent over.’

Mr. Patting got up from the window seat. He turned away from Chanting for a moment to adjust the front of his own trousers. Then he pulled over a chair from the side of the room. He was careful not to position it underneath the light; he had done that before—in his younger days, when he was less experienced. ‘You know the routine well enough: bend over and grasp the bottom rung.’

Chanting obeyed, with a quick prayer that he had managed to get Pat-a-Cake sufficiently randy.

The headmaster looked at the boy’s lean bottom, the back side of his long, lovable legs, his firm thighs. He rolled up Chanting’s shirt and draped it over the boy’s shoulders. What a long, straight spine he had, each vertebra to be clearly seen! He ran his fingers down the boy’s back, to the top of the deep cleft between the tensed buttocks.

Patting hesitated. This was the moment of truth. He squatted down behind the boy, and grasped his hips to steady himself. How delicious that firm bottom was in the scanty slip. Ripe as a peach... ripe as a *pair* of peaches. He grabbed the waistband and pulled it down; right down; right down to his ankles. The boy had to let go of his grip on the chair-rung to release it where it had got caught up in a stiffness at the front.

The headmaster got his face as close as he dared to that youthful bottom. He would love to be able to kiss it, but he couldn’t. He examined it instead, closely. The muscles were twitching in nervous anticipation. It was clammed tight.

‘Open your legs a bit, Andy.’

Pat-a-Cake slipped his hands between the boy’s thighs and eased them wider apart. ‘Now relax. I’m not going to hit you yet.’ He watched carefully. The boy did relax. The cheeks parted; the roseate portal came into view; the sphincter slightly opened. The boy arched his back and stuck his bottom out. Mr. Patting longed to stick his finger *in*, or his tongue.

Throbbing with excitement, he stood up. He ran his fingers over the soft bottom for the first and last time. Well, not the first time: the first time *today*. ‘Are you ready now?’

‘Sir.’

Mr. Patting picked up the rod. He put one hand gently on the boy’s shoulder to hold him down. The boy bent his knees; the headmaster noticed and told him not to. Then he struck him. Once. Twice. Three times.

Maybe his sauciness to the headmaster had paid off, or maybe he was getting more hardy as he grew into adolescence—more used to it. Perhaps it was Black Rod; it was a well-known fact that the thin canes like Mr. Whippy or Whip-o-Will stung far more painfully. Whatever the reason, Chanting found the whacks had hardly hurt.

The headmaster put the stick away in the cupboard. Chanting bent and pulled up his surf-board slip, adjusting it carefully into place—with no little effort. It wasn’t really big enough—or he was getting too big.

‘No, I want to have that off,’ said the headmaster, turning round and catching him.

‘Sir!’ He knew he had to continue playing the game. ‘You want to have it off? Can’t you at least wait until I’ve left the room, Sir?’

‘Chanting, you really do have the most disgusting mind!’ The head was smiling in spite of himself.

‘Sorry, Sir. But you’ve always said we get a very broad education at Mertons.’

‘Take it off.’

‘Sir, I don’t think that I ought to!’ Chanting looked down at the slip and turned so Pat-a-Cake could see. It was obvious what he meant.

‘Chanting, I have been teaching boys for over twenty-five years. I’ve seen it all before.’

‘I bet you have, Sir.’

‘You keep saying saying obscene things to give me cause.’ ‘Sorry, Sir. Do you want me to take these pants off then, Sir? Or would you prefer to do it yourself?’

The headmaster looked down at the nubile young body and was very tempted by the offer. Chanting took a step towards him.

‘Go on, Sir. I don’t mind, really.’ He stood there, legs astride, hands on hips, thrusting his loins well forward. The surf-boarders had caught the wind: their sails were bulging outwards; the scanty slip could scarcely cover all that was thrust inside it.

‘Andy Chanting, if you can hook the girls in the way that you can hook people like me, you’ll have them wrapped round your little finger when you grow up.’

‘I’d prefer to have them wrapped round somewhere else, Sir, on my anatomy. And you, too, Sir.’ He stroked the front of his little pouch with his right hand.

Getting Pat-a-Cake wound up never did any harm. The head always respected the boys he found most fun. That, Andy was sure, was why he hadn’t been demoted from prefect for getting it on with Barchester, although he wasn’t certain if Patting actually knew just how far they had gone up that oak-tree. Chanting doubted that K-M had squealed. He was pretty certain the kid had loved it as much as he had. And willie-wiggling Winters was unlikely to squeak; those two were as thick as thieves. Perhaps Matron had discovered that Kiss-Me had a pair of shitty panties. Or maybe they were spunk-stained: K-M wouldn’t be able to produce any of his own yet.

Such reflections were doing nothing for the state of his swollen under-slip.

‘Chanting, are you going to take that thing off, or am I?’

‘I don’t know, Sir. It was “Andy” just now!’

*Andy-Pandy, rich and randy,  
How does your garden grow?*

*With balls as bells, and a cock that swells,  
And pretty hairs all in a row!*

Sir, have you ever heard that version before, Sir?’

‘Never.’

‘Go on, Sir. Take it off. I’m too shy to undress in front of you.’ He lifted his shirt right up as high as it would go across his chest, and shuffled across to the headmaster, his trousers still around his ankles.

‘Andy, you really are a most talented tease!’ Pat-a-Cake knelt in front of the boy and got hold of the material.

‘Ooh, thank you, Sir. I’ll remember that compliment. Would you like to write it on my report, Sir? I’m leaving at the end of term.’

‘You’ll be leaving long before that if you’re not careful.’ The headmaster grasped hold of the material, and pulled it right down. His face brushed against the long rod as it sprang free and bounced upwards. Andy struggled to kick off his trousers over his shoes, and Pat-a-Cake tried to help him. But Pat-a-Cake’s face was far too close to the danger zone. Andy calmly and deliberately rubbed his rod up and down against it. The delightful, acrid aroma of adolescent penis filled his nostrils.

‘Andrew John Chanting,’ Pat-a-Cake said, both thrilled and shocked at the boy’s advances, ‘I have been a headmaster for eleven years, but no boy has ever dared do that to me.’

‘There’s a first time for everything, Sir,’ said Andy, pulling up his trousers over his bare bum. ‘My first time was almost a year ago—next week. I managed to get it up in the dorm after lights out. It felt...’ He searched for a word. ‘...exotic; but rather painful.’ He turned to leave the room. ‘Look after the pants though, won’t you, Sir? A friend gave them to me.’ He went out of the door, and then popped his head back around it. ‘Oh, and by the way, Sir, sorry about cutting the music lesson!’

The headmaster put the little panties to his face and sniffed their boy-stained fragrance. He then went and hid them underneath his pillow.

‘Sorry,’ whispered K-M to Andy just after chucky, finding him hidden away at the far end of the library for a bit of peace. ‘I never said anything. I promise you. It was Matron. She somehow found out.’

‘Dirty underpants?’

‘I guess so.’

‘They always check, those randy bitches. Never mind, Kiss-Me.’ He put one arm around him under the cover of the bookcases, and slipped his hand up under the leg of Karl-Mark’s shorts. ‘It was worth it.’ He put his finger slowly back into the scene-of-crime.

In the dormitory that night Jean-Philippe had made a point of staying awake. He had heard of the punishment meted out to Chanting, though not of the reasons for it. The whole school was talking about it. A prefect being flogged—and yet not demoted. Winters and Barchester kept their counsels to themselves, although they had more than an inkling of what the punishment had been for.

‘Philippe?’ Chanting whispered.

‘Yes.’

‘You still awake?’

‘Mmm.’

‘I’m glad.’

‘I stayed awake ’specially.’

‘Thanks.’

‘What was it like?’

‘Not too bad. I’ve had it before, loads of times.’

‘Oh. Does it hurt?’

‘A bit. At the time.’

‘Hey! Where are your underpants?’ Andy was already undressing. He hadn’t yet got a replacement from Matron. Actually he had two more pairs of scanties put away in his locker downstairs, and he was debating whether or not he dared to use them. He rather fancied the skateboarding one—*Skate-boarders roll around doing it*. That would be appropriate for Kiss-Me.

‘Pat-a-Cake “constipated” them. Thought they were a bit *risqué* for school wear.’

‘Oh.’

‘Can I come into your bed, so that you can comfort me like I did you Monday night?’ Chanting was already undressed.

‘Would you like me to take my pyjamas off?’

‘Do you want to?’

‘Close the door so that it’s more dark. I don’t want you to see.’

‘I promise I won’t look.’

Jean-Philippe’s jim-jams were soon back under his pillow where they belonged. Neatly folded of course. And the bed-springs were creaking and groaning under the weight of two.



## 6.

They woke early again the next morning—very early. Andy Chanting woke first, to the tickle of Philippe's hair up his nose. Schools are for education, and Chanting had given young de Filbert a pretty full education the previous evening—and had found him an eager and intelligent pupil. The boy had asked sensible and (if one may use the word without being misunderstood) penetrating questions, and had shown a keen interest in all he had been shown. He had been quick to perceive that a boy develops particularly rapidly between their two ages—('I saw some Removes in the bathroom the first night I arrived, and Winters has got one *vachement longue* which he was showing me after P.E. But yours is much bigger than any of them.') There is an old saying in education: 'if you hear something you will take in half of it; if you see something you will take in three-quarters of it; but if you do something you will take in the whole of it'. Jean-Philippe had been willing to try everything that Andy had suggested, and in doing so he took in the whole of it—even though it very nearly choked him.

But Andy had been more concerned to teach him about growth—how the body in general evolves over the two or three years of puberty; how specific parts of it grow and shrink tremendously from time to time—especially during the exciting years of puberty and adolescence; and how the male body provides for new growth, the procreation of the next generation. It was the first time that Jean-Philippe had seen, or even heard of, male milk, just as fifty-one hours before had been the first time he had seen or even heard of a boy with body hair. His education at Mertons School was being exceedingly rapid, and he was loving every moment of it. He hadn't even thought of home and Blois last evening, except while waiting for Chanting to come upstairs, when his rumbling tummy had reminded him of Colette and her big, round, juicy *pâtisseries*.

At a quarter to six in the morning, as the early sunlight fought its way in through the thick red curtain across the dormitory window, Andy snuggled up to the sleeping boy and felt him. Philippe last night had been very eager to see, but very shy about being seen. Andy now discovered why. He had had a job to find it, tucked away like a tadpole inside his jam-jars, the night before last, and now that he was wearing no jam-jars, he realised why. Chanting had it daintily but firmly held between finger and thumb—it was as much as one could hold it with—as the boy woke up.

'Mm-eearr. *Aie!* Andy, leave it alone.' He brushed the prefect's hand away with an urgent movement almost before he had woken up.

'Why, my Poppet?'

'It's mine.'

'I let you see and touch, and even nibble, mine last night.'

'That's different.'

'How so?'

'Yours is worth seeing and touching.'

'So is yours. It's really sweet.' Andy gently put his hand back to cover Philippe's hand which was protectively cupping the object under discussion.

'*Mais c'est tellement petite*; it is so small!'

'The best of things come in small packets. Your auntie's Chanel comes in a smaller bottle than her toilet water, a genuine diamond is smaller than a pebble; a glass of cointreau is far smaller than a pint of beer. Besides it will grow, as I was telling you last night. It's lovely small; far prettier than my big long hairy one. I wish I'd been with you after P.E., to admire Winters's. He's got a beauty, I know.'

'But it's far bigger than mine.'

‘He’s older, isn’t he?’

‘No. I’m a bit older than him—he... I think.’

‘His is a real little-boy cock, silky, sweet and hairless; but it is so long and curved; and it’s got a lovely great skinny tip.’ Chanting grasped and squeezed Philippe’s protective hand as he day-dreamed, and thrust his rising penis up against the boy’s soft tail.

‘But mine’s none of those things—’cept hairless.’

‘Let’s see! Go on, let me see.’ He kissed the boy on the cheek and then nibbled his ear, still cupping his hand. He knew better than to rush anyone. Easy does it, he thought. Patience is a virtue. Let the boy come round to it at his own speed—now that he knew he had something worth looking at.

‘Let me see yours again first.’

‘Supposing I said no?’

‘You won’t.’

‘Why not?’

‘Cos you’re my friend.’

‘You’re *my* friend. But you’re saying no at the moment.’ Philippe thought about this for a time.

Andy slowly started to fold back the bedclothes. ‘I’ll show, if you’ll show.’

‘You show first.’

‘Okay... providing you promise.’

Jean-Philippe looked so sweet and shy as he lay there coyly considering the bargain. At last he gave a tiny nod.

‘Promise?’

Jean-Philippe nodded again and looked away from Andrew’s penetrating eyes.

‘Scout’s honour and hope to die?’

Philippe’s face slowly burst into a blushing smile. He rolled onto his back and briefly took his hands away to give a quick flash.

‘That’s not “showing”!’ Andy leant over and kissed the boy on his button nose. ‘Show me properly.’ He licked the little nose. It tasted delicious; he infiltrated his tongue-tip up the two nostrils. Then he rolled over onto his back and let his really rampant erection stand up like the Eiffel Tower above the Champs de Mars of his belly. ‘There you are. There’s mine!’

Philippe looked at it; he grasped it, moist and warm; he sat up and kissed it; and then licked all round its huge purple dome with the tip of his tongue. ‘Goo-eey! It’s delicious! I love you, Andy. It’s funny—I would not dare do this with anyone else. I would be shocked if they even suggested it, but you’ve been so nice to me since I arrived. Something inside me tells me it is wrong and wicked and bad. Something tells me it is evil, and that *mon papa* would kill me if he knew. But something else inside me tells me it is fun—it is big, big fun—with you!’ He licked the big, big bit of fun, and sucked it gently.

‘Well, now,’ said Andy, ‘it’s my turn to adore you, and prove to you what fun it is. Lie down.’

Andy sat up. He pushed the boy gently onto his back and adjusted the pillow for him. He put his hand onto his chest and felt his heart pounding—thump, thump, thump.

‘You’re just a little scared, aren’t you?’ He looked into Jean-Philippe’s eyes and caressed his chest soothingly. ‘Don’t be a little rabbit, my darling wet-nose.’ He licked the nose again, savouring the delicate salty taste of Philippe’s nostrils.

‘I won’t hurt you—you know that.’ He smiled at the boy’s fearful eyes which were trying so hard to be brave; then he leant and kissed the two nipples; they were hard as pimples. Slowly he moved on downwards until at last he paused at the cool oasis of Jean-Philippe’s well-like navel. He sucked deep, but the well was dry, apart from a drop of sweat. He licked it round and round, enjoying the salty taste of stale sweat, until the well nearly overflowed.

‘Ready now?’ He sat half up and looked hopefully into Philippe’s face, and then down in the other

direction. Frigidly, anxiously, Philippe allowed Andy to lift away one hand. And then the other one. Andy gazed at it. Then glanced at Philippe's face with a sparkling smile, and then back down again. 'Oh, it's a lovely one,' he said at last, 'just like an ace of clubs.'

'Is it not *trop petite*... too small?!'

Andy gazed at it a moment longer. It was so delicate, a miniature, but no less a work of art. It was tiny and circumcised, with a thick roll of skin around its waist. And cocky. Stiff. 'It's dinky! Poetic! Really poetic! It reminds me of some lines I once had to learn—last year when I was in the Removes:

*Large streams from little fountains flow;  
Tall oaks from little acorns grow.*

It's just like an acorn. Look at the shape of it—a small round head in a little cup of skin. But one day soon that acorn will start to grow, and in years to come a mighty oak will spring from it.' He petted the young plant tenderly—oh, so tenderly!—with a flirtatious fingertip. 'And that mighty oak may last for centuries, you know.' He looked Philippe in the eyes, still fondling him, and went on: 'You'll get married one day. You'll find a woman who will love this thing as much as I do, and she'll give you a family which may go on growing for generations... all from this little acorn.'

Philippe grinned whimsically at the idea. To a boy just eleven and a few months it seemed so remote and unlikely; and yet it somehow might be true.

*'You'd scarce expect one of my age  
To speak in public on the stage.  
And if I chance to fall below  
Demosthenes or Cicero,  
Don't view me with a critic's eye,  
But pass my imperfections by.  
Large streams from little fountains flow;  
Tall oaks from little acorns grow.'*

Andy recited the lines meditatively, toying with the little acorn between his finger and thumb.

'And what a fountain it is too! I bet some large streams have flowed from this little tap in the past; and will again too, no doubt. It's delightful, delectable, delicious.' He kissed it on each word, and at the last wrapped his lips around it. 'Oh, Philippe, I wish I would still be around when you could produce milk from it. I'd love to taste you—just as you drank me last night.'

'I could do some fruit juice—orange squash.' Their eyes met in conspiratorial wickedness.

'Go on. I'll take it. But just a few drops, mind.' He put his lips back to the fountain and waited for it to flow. 'Large streams from little fountains flow; tall oaks from little acorns grow,' he recited to himself, over and over again.

Some minutes later Miners woke up suddenly. Unexpectedly. It was still only just gone six o'clock. Hearing whispered voices and creaking bedsprings he sat up in bed.

'Chanting! De Filbert! What are you two up to? That's disgusting. And you haven't even got your pyjamas on—either of you. I'm going to tell my brothers, and Mr. Patting, in the morning.' He turned over and stuck his head under the pillow in righteous indignation. He knew such things went on in school, sometimes. He had heard talk and rumours about it. But not in his dormitory. Not between people he knew.

The interruption had put the damper on Andy and Philippe's ardour—just when Andy was building

up to a climax. It didn't seem right to start all over again. They got dressed in their pyjamas and Andy went back to his bed. But Andy's bedsprings continued to creak for another ten minutes at least.

'Well, Miners, it's quite right that you should tell me. But don't be too hard on them. Boys will be boys, and it's all part of growing up. I expect you play with yourself sometimes, don't you—if not with other boys?'

'But my mummy says it's wrong, Sir. She says we shouldn't do wicked things like that, Sir.'

Mr. Patting gave a hitch to his trousers. 'Well, leave it with me, son. You'd better run along now. Get ready for lessons—and Chapel. It's nearly time.'

He was interested to learn that Chanting's whacking yesterday hadn't had much effect on him. But he didn't think it would be fair to lay into the boy again just yet. He always had found Andy an exciting boy to beat, ever since he was only nine and still in Form V. The lad had a ready wit, and was never afraid to answer back. And yet he was never rude: only saucy and slightly cheeky. Mr. Patting had a very soft spot for Andy Chanting. He had deliberately put the new French boy into his dormitory, knowing that he could be relied on to look after a new boy who had so recently been bereaved. He had never dreamt, however, that it would be with such loving affection.

Well, he would have a word with Jean-Philippe, and if the little boy wasn't worried—(and even from Miners *minimus*'s account, he seemed to have been pretty complicit in what was going on)—then let sleeping dogs lie. No, that wasn't a very appropriate metaphor: let sleepless puppies cock their little legs.

'Oh, run away, you wet willie weasel, and go and piss your panties somewhere else! Go on, Eric. Tell us, what did she do next?'

Miners *min.* came away from his next-bigger brother very downcast—hands in pocket, chin slumped on his chest, kicking a little pebble which never seemed to go the way he wanted it to. Why did no one ever take him seriously? Mummy had clearly said that doing things like that was naughty. He knew it was wrong. Yet Mr. Pat-a-Cake didn't seem to care, Eddie had told him to piss off, and he knew damned well it would be no use going to Brian. Brian was a prefect, too, and bound to take Chanting's side.

He went to the boggeries, but couldn't pass anything. He just sat there until he heard the Chapel bell.

*Mon cher Monsieur de Salles,*

I am sorry that I have not written for nearly three weeks. But life is so busy here, and I am enjoying every minuet of it.

I thought I would write in english to shew you how good at it I am become. We have a super english teacher and he is very nice. His name is Mr. Anglomeat. He has been very kind to me and taught me a lot. I am also doing very well in Latin and have nearly caught up with the rest of the class even though they have been learning since last septembre. Mr. Tomson gives me special lessons in his private room which is rather fun. He is *LOTS* of fun!!!!!! specially when we are alone just the two of us. I have caught up more than Winters I beat him in a test last week.

I have made many friends—Hadleigh Winters Barchester—and especially (I don't know how to spell that) Chanting. He is in my dorm and is super and very very nice. The other boys in my dorm are not though. Miners mine is a sneek and Naseby is a wet-bed. I wear Hadleigh's shorts and Mr. Patting we call him Patacake has confiscated Chantings underpants. They were very pretty ones I used to like looking at them. Especially when ever Andy took them off. He is a big boy and I mean BIG! You should see it. I like him a lot, we don't usually wear jamjars though Miners sneaked about that once. He says it's naughty to use the same bed but he doesn't so we still do.

I am leaning to play criquet which is silly. My tennis has improved a lot since last year. We do a lot of swimming, the school has its own pool which is cool. The water is beautifully warm. When Mr. Holesworth is in a good mood which is normally he sometimes lets us go skinny-dipping. Do you now what that means? If not I will whisper it to you next time I come home. Would you like to see me skinnydipping some day? In your lake when no one is looking.

I must stop now, it is nearly chucky. We didn't have much prep tonite so I have had time to write. I know I should of written sooner but I didn't have time. Isn't my english doing good?

*Meilleurs amitiés*

*Jean-Philippe de Filbert.*

P.S. Thank you for sending me here. We break up in about less than two months time so I'll see you then. Love and kisses XXXXX Philippe

PPS I got my first wacking from Patercake last week. It wasn't my fault. Who are Colette and Georges? I hope they are all right. Goodbye for now. Philippe

It took M. de Salles two or three readings through before he could understand parts of what Jean-Philippe was trying to tell him, and even then he wasn't sure he understood it all. But it was abundantly clear that the boy was enjoying himself and had settled in at Mertons very quickly and easily. This Chanting sounded *en-chanting*; Philippe was always writing about him.

M. de Salles sat on the window seat overlooking the old *château* and read through the letter yet once again. If 'skinny-dipping' meant what he thought it might mean, he would certainly like to see Jean-Philippe doing it some time. Yes, down by the lake when no one else was looking. He closed his eyes and tried to summon up a picture of the child—his close-cropped hair, his rounded limbs, his quiet smile, his sad eyes, his *petite culotte*, so tight-fitting round his rear. And then he tried undressing him.... Mentally.

After lunch de Filbert went to Mr. Thompson's room, as he always did on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. He was getting on so well; soon there would be no need for these little visits, which was sad. He

had nearly caught up the rest of the class. Both of them secretly regretted this aspect of his progress.

‘This new stage, which we are starting today, introduces a thing called the Dative, but you will find out what that means as we go along.’ The teacher opened the book and laid it on the table in front of him, and then made room for de Filbert to move into his usual place. The boy normally stood in front of him, between his outstretched legs. Sometimes he perched in his lap. Mr. Thompson put his arms round the boy to hold the book open.

‘Is this the book the others were working on when I first arrived? All about the baths and the way they used to wrestle in the nude.’

‘That’s right. Do you remember it?’

‘I remember my first Latin lesson. You made Barney Winters explain why women weren’t allowed in to the games and he got all shy about it.’

‘Hhh! Yes, I remember that.’ Mr. Thompson laughed at the memory. ‘But you wouldn’t be shy, would you?’

‘Sir?’

‘You could explain why women weren’t allowed in without going all red in the face, couldn’t you?’

Philippe shrugged.

‘Go on, try it.’ Mr. Thompson slipped his left arm closer round the boy’s waist.

‘Sir, in the baths nobody didn’t wear any clothes—like we don’t here. But the baths were a huge area, and Romans always took their daily exercise there—in a courtyard—often in the nude. So when they were in the—what was it called, Sir?’

‘*Palaestra*.’

‘When they were in the *palaestra*, running or throwing the discus or practising sword-fighting—when they was wrestling...’

‘Were wrestling.’

‘When they were wrestling, they sometimes used to hug each other so close—or perhaps got their faces into such rude or *intime* places—that they used to get all excited. Their...’ He looked round to check the teacher’s reaction to the word he was about to use: ‘...cockie would stand up stiff and hard. Like it does when you’re enjoying yourself. And that’s why women weren’t allowed in; because they might get all embarrassed.’

‘Well done.’ The teacher hugged the little boy close to him. Philippe didn’t realise it, but his words in his shy boyish treble had had the same effect on Mr. Thompson as the physical contact was alleged to have had on Roman wrestlers. Mr. Thompson pulled the charming little boy close into his lap and felt his chubby bare thigh pressing in against the front of his trousers; he urged himself forwards against the boy. ‘Said without the hint of a blush!’ He looked the boy in the face where a modest reddening was just beginning to spread.

‘Now—“*Quintus ad thermas venit...*” “*Thermae*” means the baths....’

At 3 o’clock some of the older Colts had a swim. Jean-Philippe de Filbert wriggled into his bright red swim slip in the changing room. If he had had a top piece he could almost have passed for a girl—his demure smile, the chubby cheeks of his tail thrusting out from the tight-stretched material, and, at the front, almost nothing to see. What little he had was tucked in between his legs.

How different he looked from Winters. Barnaby had a pair of ice-blue swimming shorts, very loose in every respect. They were old and worn, and the limp cottony material blew about in the breeze when they were dry. Once he got wet, however, it clung to his skin. Loose-fitting round the legs, the cozy would often ride up to reveal that he had no inner pouch or support inside. Loose-fitting round the waist, it would often slip down to reveal the same pretty thing. The elasticated waist-band had perished with age; the draw-string had long ago been pulled out in some changing-room tussle and thrown away. Whenever Barney dived in—which was frequently, for he loved showing off—his cozy would invariably



end up at least around his thighs, if not below his knees. Sometimes, if he managed to enter the water with his legs just the right distance apart, he could get it to slip off altogether.

Jean-Philippe was playing with Hadleigh—diving for a pebble. He was a good swimmer (better than Hadleigh, at any rate). He used an easy, if rather head-up, breast-stroke which his father had taught him one summer at St. Jean de Luz.

Barchy was flirting with Mr. Holdsworth.

When the swim was over, the four boys retired to their den. In the woods behind the school many of the younger boys had constructed such secret affairs which were often expanded or elaborated year after year until, by the time the gang was in the middle school, it was the proud possessor of what was generally considered a handsome palace.

Hadleigh's gang was certainly proud of theirs. It had a roof over a good part of it—rusty corrugated iron, covered over in turn with earth and branches in an effort to make it invisible to wanderers or enemies. The space inside, some six-foot by three, was high enough for the boys to be able to sit or even kneel in it, but not, of course, to stand up. That had taken some excavating over many years. It was carpeted with an old mattress, and had two or three worn tyres and a bucket as chairs. As dens went, it was a mansion.

It had two doors, too—the main front entrance through a narrow tunnel, and an emergency hatch from the other end, which disturbed the roof if you had to use it, but got you out the far side of a rhododendron bush if you had to escape an invader—or a prying member of staff like Mr. Timbers. The boys kept torches down there, although eyes soon got accustomed to the dark if torches weren't used. There was a strong-box buried underneath the mattress in which Barchester kept some photos Uncle Frank had taken of him. Only his gang were allowed to look at them, and all members were sworn to secrecy.

Outside the den itself was a ring of branches, old tree-trunks, crates, cracked boards and occasional lengths of barbed-wire to discourage invaders. The gateway was booby-trapped with an alarm system which rattled an old tin can indoors.

For many boys their dens were military bases for a constantly raging warfare against neighbouring camps. But Hadleigh's gang was a peace-loving tribe who kept themselves to themselves and eschewed pugilistic politics. Hadleigh was a serious boy and liked to read, or discuss affairs of state like the latest outrages of Mr. Patting or Mr. Timbers. Barney and Barchy had better things to do with their time—and their young, developing bodies—than to make war. They made love instead. And de Filbert, who had now been enrolled into full membership (although he didn't know about the photos yet), was quiet and reserved. He would certainly favour an *entente cordiale* rather than *les cris de guerre*, let alone *une crise de guerre*.

The gang retired to their base from the pool.

'You two are disgusting,' said Hadleigh as they squeezed through the tunnel in single file and settled down on the mattress, getting out the tin of sweets. Barney helped himself to a barley-sugar and handed the container to de Filbert.

'Why? What's wrong with it?' asked Barchy, knowing what Hadders was on about as usual. 'I's only chatting him up.'

'And trying to sit on his knee. And trying to get him to pull your pants down.'

K-M screwed up his face in contempt and protested, 'It's only a giggle.'

'Yer, but he's a "sir"; you can't go trying to have it off with one of *them*.'

'I'm not... well—not really.'

Barney looked at him with a big wink. He knew the truth of the matter; Hadleigh only suspected it. Barney pulled back the hem of his shorts and pulled out his long lankiness; still in games' clothes, it was dead easy to draw one's sword for a fight, or just to test its mettle. He stroked it playfully.

'And as for you... anyone would have thought you were born with nothing on.'

‘I was.’

‘You know what I mean. You’ll drop your pants at the slightest opportunity. They’re always coming off in the pool; and what did you do with Chanting the other week?’

‘That was Kiss-Me.’

‘You were there too.’

‘Envy don’t get yer nowhere. I bet you wishes you was there an’ all.’

‘You’re disgusting, the pair of you,’ Hadleigh repeated. ‘You’d best watch out, Filly. They’ll have you at it next.’

‘Not me!’ Jean-Philippe blushed at the very thought of what his two friends got up to. He was not shocked by it, nor disgusted. It was obviously fun for them, and they enjoyed it. They were doing nobody else any harm, so far as he could see. But it was just not for him; not his scene. He watched Barnaby manipulating his long bent spout and envied him the size of it. His was so little and unimportant. He tucked his fingers up under his shorts and gave it a squeeze.

‘Come on, de Fillibut; let’s go back to the classroom,’ said Hadleigh. ‘You can give me a hand with that French. *Il—me—faut—faire—mes—devoirs*. Is that right?’

‘*Absolument*—apart from a lousy accent.’

‘Listen to who’s talking: Aparrrt from a la-usy akson!’ Giggling happily, the pair of them went off.

When they were alone Barney and Barchy got down to the serious business of the afternoon. So dissimilar and yet so alike were these boys. Both Londoners, yet one from Chelsea, the other from Wandsworth. Mr. Barchester, the epitome of apparent respectability, was the director of a multi-national company based in Abingdon; Mr. Winters had built up, through his own labours, the little air-conditioning firm for which he was responsible. Mr. Barchester was a Public School boy who had gone on to University; Mr. Winters was a self-made man from the back-streets of Bermondsey. Darryl Barchester was an epicurean hedonist who loved to share his pleasures with others—especially the young; ‘Arry Winters was a workaholic. Father Barchester, who had learnt what ‘love’ meant at his own boarding school, regularly loved his son; Mr. and Mrs. Winters could rarely find time for theirs, and were only too thankful when the day came when they could pack him off to school. Karl-Mark Barchester was alert, intelligent and fun-loving; Barnaby Winters was, quite frankly, a bit thick. Barchester, from Chelsea, had a rich, plummy accent; Winters was a real cockney. But one thing they had in common: a zest for life, and for life’s little pleasures. Barney had the longest cock in the Middles, by a good two centimetres; Barchy boasted the biggest and most comfortable bum-hole in Berkshire. Sex was the be-all and end-all of their lives.

On the departure of Hadleigh and Filbert, these two had soon discarded their shorts, had a bit of a rough-and-tumble to get themselves nicely excited and worked up, fished out from the safe-box the secret tube which Uncle Frank had given them, and were putting it to good use on Kiss-Me’s rear and Bamey’s front. It wouldn’t last long at the present rate of consumption, but perhaps Uncle Frank might be persuaded some time to buy them another—if they asked him nicely and demonstrated to him that they had learnt how to use it. They wondered what the letters ‘K.Y.’ stood for.

‘Which way up shall we do it today?’ asked K-M.

‘Hadders—is it naughty... to do what they do?’

‘They’d get shot if they got caught. Especially by old Timbers.’

‘Yes, but is it wicked? What do you think?’

Nigel Hadleigh considered the question. There was no doubt that boys were boys, and that many boys enjoyed a bit of fun whenever they got horny. But Barchester and Winters... they were at it all the time. It was as if they couldn’t think of anything else to do. ‘I don’t know. To have a little giggle’s not too bad, long as you don’t make such a big thing of it. I feel sure Barchester is up to something with Mr.

Holdsworth. And you know about his Uncle Frank, do you?’

Jean-Philippe had heard odd comments. ‘I am sure my papa would murder me if I did anything like that. But then... he is not able: someone has murdered him first.’ The whole dreadful scene of the room in the *château* flashed before his eyes. He had done his best to forget it, although every now and again it came back. But now M. de Salles was standing beside him; comforting him; letting him bury his tearful face in his round fat tummy; muzzing his short-cut hair. He felt so grateful for M. de Salles, for the sympathy and kindness of Mr. Thompson, for the affection of Andy Chanting, for the friendship of their little gang. Blois was so far away. He must live for the present now, he knew. And for the future.

‘*Qu’est-ce-que tu dois faire?* What do you need help with?’ They turned their attention to the French homework.

James Brazier swung back on his chair in the middle of prep, and nearly toppled over. He was a short boy, for his age, with a mop of fair curly hair. Stocky and athletic. He had captained the school rugby team from the fly-half position, played in the hockey goal, and this term was the opening batsman for Mertons’ cricket team. He was a strict prefect, but always fair, and, like Andy Chanting, very good with the younger boys... not in the sexual sense—that didn’t interest him—but in caring for their well-being and seeing they were not ill-treated. He was a pleasant boy, but not particularly bright. Of all the candidates taking Common Entrance from Mertons this term, he was probably the one who had most cause to worry about his chances. Still, he was having extra tuition—especially in Geography.

‘I’ve got a tute tonight after chuckie. Hey, Bri, what does ‘*Hannibale socios caesuros iri negante*’ mean?’

The prefects were allowed to do prep in the library, and they could talk, too—quietly. The library was a soaring hall with oak-panelling and timber barrel-vaulted ceiling. It was divided into smaller work units by cases of books, and the prefects always favoured the furthest corner where they were out of sight from the windows and least likely to be caught if anyone, like the sneaky Mr. Timbers, should creep in. They usually took the precaution, especially when he was on duty, of putting some sort of booby trap on the door to alert them if ever it should get opened.

‘Haven’t a clue. Something to do with Hannibal turning down his allies, I think. You seeing Katey?’

‘Hope so.’

‘I envy yer!’ Brian Miners doodled the letters ‘K.S.’ and ‘J.B.’, interlinked, on the back of an old envelope.

Jimmy unfastened his zip and slipped his hand inside. How was a fellow supposed to concentrate on elephantine Hannibal when he had a sweet little nymphet lined up for after supper?

‘Hey, careful Jimmy—you spill the beans now and you’ll have nothing to give her later.’

Jimmy Brazier heeded his friend’s warning and put it away sadly. It wasn’t that he feared coming off, but he knew he must do his best with Hannibal for Thompo. He forced his flies shut over the swollen ridge. Finally he gave up his Latin in despair and checked through his Geography project for Mr. Saddleworth’s tutorial.

‘Golly, I like you!’ said Andy tenderly to Jean-Philippe, kissing away the sleep from his eyes at six o’clock the next morning. It was just as well that Naseby and Miners were such good sleepers. Chanting and de Filbert shared beds regularly now, alternating between one bed and the other as fancy moved them. Their jim-jams were washed regularly once a week, even though they were scarcely ever worn. Their sheets were changed only fortnightly—but needed it more often.

Andy thrust his rampant erection against the boy’s soft tummy. ‘I don’t know what I’d do without you. I don’t think I’d be able to sleep now... without my little hot water bottle.’ He grasped the child affectionately and gave him a big hug. ‘You’re part of my life.’

‘And you of mine. Hey Andy, is it wrong?’

‘Is what wrong, my sweet?’

‘What we do? Sleeping together.’

‘Do you like it?’

Philippe’s eyes gleamed and sparkled. ‘*Naturellement!*’

‘Well, it’s not wrong then, is it?’

De Filbert tried to work out the logic of this, but gave up. ‘*Mais*—what if we were caught?’

‘There would be a bit of a fuss. But it would soon blow over. Depends who caught us, really. I’m more scared of Miners, in fact, than anyone else.’ He nodded across to the other bed. ‘He’s a real sneak; his brothers can’t stand him. He’d probably go and tell old Patting, and I’d be in for another bumming. But who cares? You’re worth it.’ He squeezed the boy tight and thrust his erection slowly and deliciously back and forth against the little boy’s tight tum.

‘He reported us to Monsieur Patting a couple of weeks ago. That’s what he claims. But the Head hasn’t done anything yet, has he?’ Jean-Philippe sounded nervous.

‘Nor is he likely to, I don’t reckon. If we’re discreet. Come on, quick. Let’s get it over with, now, before they wake up. I’m bursting for it this morning.’

He turned his lover over onto his tummy, mounted him from behind, and, lubricating his cock a bit with his sweet spit, inserted it between Jean-Philippe’s legs. ‘Now, make it tight. Ah... that’s right!’

‘Oh, Andy; it’s nice. *C’est magnifique! Ça me réchauffe le coeur!... et le cul!*’

## 8.

Uncle Frank steered his Mercedes down the Berkshire lanes. He was now feeling a bit uneasy about this sudden impulse, but... 'in for a penny, in for a pound'. Darryl and Doreen were away, and he knew that at least they would be delighted that he had been to visit their sick son on their behalf, even if the school authorities should have any misgivings about it. He wondered if he could creep into the school and out again without any of the staff there being aware of his presence; that would be wonderful if he could—although it would be unlikely, even though he knew his way around the premises reasonably well by now. But he didn't know where sick-bay was.

He dreamt of his beautiful 'Mousehole'. Karl-Mark was becoming a really exciting boy as he grew older. He had had a very liberal education, both at home and at school; he knew, and happily did, many things unexpected of most boys of his tender years. He was a pleasure to know. And Uncle Frank did know him—in the fullest sense of that word.

Mousehole at the same moment was sitting in bed thinking of Uncle Frank. He wondered if his letter had been received by now and if his uncle would manage to come to visit him. It was really boring being all on his own in sick-bay, even though he had just had another nice visit from Mr. Thompson:

'Well, Karl, how are you getting on today?' The boy's resident housemaster sat down on the edge of the bed.

'Right, thank you, Sir. I've just been doing a jig-saw.' He waved toward it on the table astride his bed. There were three pieces missing. Francis Thompson had seen it many times before; it was the patient he had come to see, not the occupational therapy.

'Back in school soon, I wonder?'

'Don't know, Sir. But it's dead boring in sick-bay. Even History would be better than being stuck here with an itchy kitchy. Or Latin,' he added with a wink.

'Have you heard from your mum and dad yet?'

'No. They're in Nairobi. Dad's work. Mum's gone too. Got a card, though, but they obviously don't know I'm sick in it.... Want to see it, Sir? It's got lions on.' Karl-Mark Barchester leaned out of bed, but the card had slipped off his chair and onto the floor. He had to lean right out to reach it. Because of the heat, and the nature of his ailment, young Barchester was not wearing jim-jams; a soft round bottom displayed itself, to Francis Thompson's joy, in all its beauty, curled over the edge of the bed. The housemaster had seen many bare young bottoms before in his years as schoolteacher, of course, but he was always happy to see more. Besides, it was not often that he got the chance to study one so attentively from quite such close quarters: he always had to be very discreet, and careful not to let his erotic interests become too well known among the boys.

Karl-Mark had a very beautiful young bottom, smooth and round and firm, soft and sensuous but by no means fat. It was nicely tanned, too, with a slightly paler triangle across the seat itself. The Barchesters had a sun-bed at home and Karl loved to use it whenever he was allowed—under the close supervision of his father. He had a healthy young body with a healthy all-over tan. And his dad always made sure he was well massaged with screening-oil whenever Mum was out and they could play on the bed together, or romp in their sauna.

Mr. Thompson looked at the round cheeks and longed to kiss them—or even have an excuse to spank them. And he got even more excited when Karl opened his legs to wriggle back onto the bed again and displayed the pink bloom of a wrinkled young rose-bud, slightly open and deliciously scented.

'Ooh, Sir, are you peeping?' said the boy, happily noticing the teacher's gaze and opening his legs

wide to give the adult an even better look. He had rolled over and was sitting on his bottom by now, but he straightened one leg out on the bed and raised the other into the air, leaning back on the pillows in a sensuously seductive pose. Young Barchester knew adults (well, many of them) liked looking at little boys and he was never ashamed of being looked at himself.

‘You seen my sore, Sir?’ The boy pointed it out, high up between his thighs. ‘Like to kiss it better for me, Sir?’ He giggled with delight at the thought of a teacher doing that for him, unlikely though he knew it was—at least with Mr. Thompson.

A red rash spread for a couple of inches at the very top of Karl-Mark’s left thigh, just where his newly developing scrotum would be rubbing against it in this hot, sweaty weather. Karl fingered it gently while the teacher looked on, entranced by the boy’s beauty and lack of *pudor*. The lad showed no shame at displaying the private bits of his body as he squatted there, legs spread wide apart.

‘Why is it that Matron always has to put the ointment on for me, Sir?’ he asked. ‘I am sure a master like you or Mr. Holdsworth would do it just as well. I don’t reckon a woman should fiddle with a little boy in such a personal place.’ He giggled. ‘Besides, neither Matron nor Miss Arthur are even married.’

‘Nor am I.’ admitted Mr. Thompson.

‘No, but at least you’ve got one of these down here, Sir.’ Quite unashamedly Barchester grasped the front of his teacher’s trousers and gave it a gentle squeeze. ‘What’d people think if you worked at a girls’ school and started putting ointment in between the little girls’ legs? Wouldn’t be right, would it, Sir?’ Karl smiled in delight at his argument. ‘So I don’t reckon Matron should fiddle with me. I want a man to do it, Sir: you, or Mr. Holdsworth, or...’

Francis Thompson looked in fascinated excitement at the little dome-headed water-fountain, the scrinkly, crinkly scrotum, the tightly sewn seam between the child’s legs, and the beginnings of a beautiful boyish bottom. He loved little boys, with all his heart, but the prospect of spreading cream between the legs of little girls did not please him at all. ‘I could ask Mr. Timbers to come and rub the ointment on for you,’ he joked.

‘Oh Sir!’ Karl-Mark shut his legs and snuggled back under his sheet.

‘It’s a woman’s job to tend the sick,’ said Mr. Thompson. ‘I am sure you would much rather your mother did it for you than your father.’

Karl-Mark looked at him in horror-struck amazement: ‘No sirree!’ The idea of his mother touching him between his legs with her horny hands filled him with horror. He just longed for Uncle Frank; and a few moments later, when Mr. Thompson left the room to go downstairs for his next lesson, Mousehole found himself literally longing for Uncle Frank: peeping under his sheet, he watched it growing longer and longer and longer.

Uncle Frank’s mouse was growing longer and longer, too, in anticipation of joys to come—although he wasn’t sure how much he would be able to do. Sick-bay could not be the safest of places. Besides, it would have to be determined to what extent the sore, of which Mousehole had written him a lurid description, would affect things.

He sped his well-polished Mercedes down the leafy lanes towards the school. ‘Only a couple of miles now,’ thought Uncle Frank, ‘and then...!’

He wasn’t a real uncle—a blood uncle—but K-M had known him for some four years. Frank had been a university student with his dad. The two undergrads had shared a common interest in little boys. They had run a boys’ club together in Bristol—used to take them off camping in the Mendips or to Butlins at Minehead. And then, a few years later, Darryl Barchester had gone off and got married while Frank Tompkins still remained single.

Darryl Barchester loved his son—and had ‘made love’ with him since the boy was about six. His wife never knew; she was so switched off she never even suspected. On his part, it had been a marriage

of convenience, undertaken to give a veneer of respectability to a life largely given over to paedophilic philandering. Darryl Barchester rarely made love to his wife now, and Doreen naïvely thought he had merely lost his physical urges and never questioned the boys' club he still helped to run, and the weekend camps he went off for so often in the summer.

The procreation of Karl-Mark had been quite an effort for Darryl. He had finally achieved orgasm and ejaculation by reminiscing over an old experience at a camp near Cheddar; his wife, for a moment, became a beautiful boy called George, commonly known thereafter as the Cheddar Gorgeous. Darryl and Frank had taken it in turns to fill his cheesy little Cheddar Gorge many times during the course of that summer, and still dreamed wetly about him three or four years later.

But what the relationship between man and wife lacked in passion was made up for in that between father and son. Karl-Mark loved it whenever his father could spare the time to bath him and put him to bed. They had such fun in the bathroom, especially on Monday and Friday nights when Mummy was out at her Floral Guild or Musick Consort.

And then Uncle Frank had come along. It was love at first sight—from both sides. Frank was invited to his eighth birthday party, Karl remembered, and stayed the weekend. They didn't have a spare-room in those days, when they lived in Newbury, so Frank dosed down in a sleeping-bag on 'The Nursery' floor. Well, that's what Mum thought; Dad was perfectly well aware that their guest spent the three nights comfortably in their son's bed, their son's arms, and perhaps even their son's tail.

Karl had gone to Mertons when he was nine, but he often saw Frank in the holidays or half-terms. Sometimes Uncle Frank came down to school with Mum and Dad—for school plays, matches and the like. Then, last summer, while Mum was away in Edinburgh staying with her sister, Dad and Frank went camping at Swanage with Karl and a well-endowed fifteen-year-old of Frank's called Marco (his dad ran an Italian restaurant near Covent Garden). It was a thoroughly wicked weekend, and all three cats regularly explored the Mousehole which was Karl-Mark's biggest asset, and his most available.

'What do you mean, you've never heard of James Watt? We've been doing the Industrial Revolution all term—ever since you started here—and you claim you've never even heard of Watt. He is one of the most important influences in the period.'

Jean-Philippe de Filbert looked blank. How was he supposed to know about English history?

'Winters, tell this French fool what Watt is famous for.'

'What?'

'Yes, Watt.'

'He made pottery, Sir.'

'That was Josiah Wedgewood, you drip.'

'That's who I meant, Sir.'

'Well, it's not who I asked. Hadleigh, tell them.'

'He invented steam, Sir.'

'Not steam—the steam *engine*. You can't "invent" steam!'

'Sir, what's an "influence"?''

'Don't be cheeky, Geens.'

'I'm not, Sir. But you said just now that Watt was one of the most important influences of the period, and I didn't understand.'

'You're in detention this afternoon—all three of you. You can write me an essay on "The influence of Watt's steam engine on the Nineteenth Century development of factories".'

Luckily the bell saved any further hassles.

Uncle Frank drove up the front drive and pulled in to the side car-park. He decided not to use the

front door, but to try slipping in through the boys' entrance. He soon found himself engulfed in a sea of short blue shorts and yellow aertex shirts. They were mainly hastening in one direction—a direction in which he needed to go in any case. The bell for the end of morning lessons had clearly just rung, and boys were washing their hands before lunch. Well, a few bothered to wash their hands; most just did so in the euphemistic sense.

Uncle Frank joined the queue in the foul-smelling boggeries. He was in no hurry and let many boys go ahead of him. Despite the stench, it was rather fun to stand there and watch the long file of little bottoms lined up opposite the glazed urinal. Some twitched, some thrust forward, some wiggled with bursting bladders. Some boys turned round before they had bothered to zip up, showing little peeps of pretty pantlets. Some gave Frank a merry smile, others a quizzical stare; whatever, he always smiled back.

When the crowd became less, he took his place among the weeing willies. There was a pretty little blond boy next to him whom he had been smiling at in the queue, and he boldly allowed Frank to study his piddling penis. Uncle Frank returned the compliment.

‘T’s big!’ said the little boy, standing on tip-toe to whisper. His eyes sparkled with glee as he stretched his own out to give Frank a better look. ‘Like big ones! My Uncle Niels has big one.’ Finn Larsen took a quick glance round to make sure they were not being watched, and then touched the man’s widdler, briefly.

‘*UNCLE FRANK!* What’s you doin’ ’ere? Come to visit yer mousehole?!’ Suddenly there was Barnaby Winters, Mousehole’s best friend, standing on the other side of him. Barnaby took out his lanky cock, aimed it generally in the right direction, and stood there, hands on hips, emptying his bladder and allowing Uncle Frank an unencumbered view. ‘Been up to see him yet? ’Ow is he?’

‘Not yet. So how’s Barney?’

‘I’m okay. Old Woodentop’s just put me in detention ’s afternoon, though.’

Uncle Frank shook out his last drops and put his cock away. Larsen had already disappeared. ‘You couldn’t tell me where sick-bay is, could you? I’d rather like to nip up to see Karl without clocking in at the office.’

‘You’s just timed it right then, ’cos Matron ’ll be downstairs ’avin’ lunch, too. Fact, they’ll be down here already ’v a bit o’ luck—checking the tiddlies into their dining-room. Come along an’ I’ll show yer.’

A few moments later Frank Tompkins was being rushed up narrow wooden stairs with no carpet, along windy corridors and into a bright room with six beds and two large windows through which the hot midday sun streamed in. Five beds were empty; the sixth was not. ‘Must dash now; be late for dinner. See yer, Barchy. ’Ave a nice time.’ Winters gave his friend an expressive gesture with the middle finger of his right hand, and scuttled off downstairs, blowing a kiss to Uncle Frank as he went.

Boy and uncle looked at each other in mutual delight. No words were needed between them, just smiles and telepathic signals of love. Slowly and seductively Karl stuck his toes out from under the top sheet. He uncovered his foot, then his calf, then his knee. Then the other leg—up to the knee. He grinned with mischief as he slowly bared more and more of his boyish body to the uncle’s gaze. Then he pulled the cotton sheet down to his waist and lay back against the pillow. Slowly he adjusted the top edge of the sheet to stretch out just below his navel. He inched it down, further and further, with a saucy grin, to reveal a soft, smooth spread of silk-silvered stomach. So sweet; so sexational. He smiled, and rippled his bare chest.

Karl-Mark Barchester loved to do a cabaret strip-tease on any occasion before his entranced uncle. They both knew how it would all end up, but the foreplay was delightful to them both—and at that Karl was an expert. He had been practising with Mr. Holdsworth for the last three months during his extra P.E. lessons, opening his legs and revealing the jewels inside his shorts.

Karl slowly revealed more and more of his stunning body. Inch by gradual inch he raised the edge of his sheet up his right thigh. And then the left. Half way. Two thirds. Three quarters. He tucked the cotton



material down between his legs. They were spread out wide. He gave his Uncle Frank a flirtatious smile. 'Getting hungry?' he asked.

'F'wotwra bowtra ceive, may the Lord make us truly grateful'—the traditional Grace of schoolboys—echoed around the dining-hall, followed immediately by the deafening crash of furniture and the explosion of vocal chords as a hundred-and-however-many boys all tried to sit down at once and started talking.

'Sir, how many is a "gross", Sir?'

'Twelve dozen.'

'How many does that work out to?'

'Hundred and fifty, you nuggins.'

'No it don't, Mathers. Twit. 'S a hundred and sixty.'

Mr. Anglomead smiled. 'What do you want to know for in any case?'

'I just heard the word, and wondered what it meant,' said Naseby.

'My mum says it's "gross" when you wet your bed,' put in Miners *minimus*, 'and when people do wicked things, like de Filbert and Chanting,' he added. 'Sir, did you know that...? Ow, Geens, you rat-bag!' Miners had been interrupted by a sharp hack on his shin under the table. 'Sir, Geens kicked me!'

'I am sure he didn't mean to. It was probably an accident.' Mr. Anglomead knew both Miners and Geens quite well enough to be sure that wasn't true. But Miners was a notorious sneak, and none of the boys—nor even the staff—could stand such breaches of schoolboy etiquette. Mr. Anglomead would probably have hacked Miners himself had he been thirty years younger. 'Anyway, Naseby, have you worked out what twelve dozen actually comes to by now?'

'Are you sure it's safe? The matrons won't be up?'

'Not the middle of lunchtime, no.'

'What about your sore? Won't it hurt that?' Uncle Frank fingered the infected area gently. It was deep red and looked very itchy, but Mousehole said it felt much cooler when Uncle Frank stroked it, and his little boyhood was sitting up and begging for attention now between his legs.

'Did you bring any stuff... K.Y?'

'Of course.'

'What are we waiting for then?'

'You seeing Kate this evening?'

'With a bit of luck, yep.'

'What are you going to do after C.E. when you won't be having any more Tutes?'

'Dunno, but we'll manage something,' said Jimmy Brazier confidently. 'I've got things really going with her by now, so I'm sure she'll find a way even if I can't.'

Uncle Frank put on his trousers again. That had been wonderful, even if a bit risky. Mousehole was a poppet and Uncle Frank's great pink mouse just fitted snugly into it. It had been a quick whip it in, whip it out, and wipe it because they had both been a bit scared all the time that the matrons might be up again at any moment. But at least they had each achieved 100% satisfaction. And 100% penetration too.

'Are you going now, Uncle Frank?' said Kiss-Me sadly as his uncle pulled up his zip and adjusted his tie in the mirror.

'I suppose I'd better. I don't want to be caught here now. Not after that.' He was still a bit out of breath.

'I got a better idea. Why don't you come back?'

‘What d’you mean?’

‘Go away; then drive up to the front door, see Mrs. Ansell in the office and get her to give Matron a buzz on the intercom so you can come on an *official* visit. Then we can have a nice long chat. Besides, if you came back you might have a chance to see more of Barney, too.’

## 9.

The matter was decided by the note on the car windscreen when Frank got out there—after another short visit to the boggeries just as the boys were coming out from lunch:

*Hop you had a nice time! I'm in DT now but shud be out by 2.15. Wood love to see you if you can stay. Do you no our DEN in the woods? 2.15. B.W. XXX*

No one came to take detention, so the three boys sat on their own. With any other teacher they would probably have cut it, but with Mr. Timbers it was not worth the risk. He was bound to remember he had set them the essay and he would expect it written. At least with no teacher in charge of DT they could discuss the problem, and talk while they wrote. Luckily, even if Geens did not know what an 'influence' was, he knew enough about the Industrial Revolution in general and the invention of Watt's steam engine in particular to be able to assist his friends. The three essays were soon completed, at least adequately, although it was anybody's guess whether they would satisfy Mr. Timbers—if he read them, probably not, but he had the habit, very often, of just tearing up detention essays the moment they were handed in.

Uncle Frank walked up to the big oak front door and rang the bell. After a short pause, Mrs. Ansell answered it. She had a sheaf of papers in her hand.

'Er—my name's Frank Tompkins. I'm the uncle of young Karl-Mark Barchester who I gather is in sick-bay at the moment. The boy's parents are away, so I thought I should come down to visit him on their behalf, if I might.'

'Oh. Certainly. Yes, yes. Do come in.' Mrs. Ansell ushered him into the dark front hall—one place of cool in this stifling summer heat. She led him through to her office, piled high with papers, typewriter, duplicators, photocopier and the other paraphernalia of school life. The phone was already ringing. She answered it; Frank Tompkins waited. 'Next Wednesday, yes. Yes, yes. That will be all right. Yes certainly.' The secretary was scribbling something down on her note-pad. 'Yes, all right; I'll tell him. Yes. Yes. Goodbye. Now then, where were we? Oh yes; Barchester....'

A head appeared around the office door before she could ring through to the matrons. 'Oh, Mr. Thompson, there's a call just come through for you. Could you manage a Latin meeting at Halfordberry next Wednesday evening? It's at 8.15, and I said you would ring back if you couldn't make it.'

Mr. Thompson nodded; 'That should be okay.'

'By the way, Francis, are you going upstairs? There's a Mr. Frank Tompkins here who is the uncle of Barchester. Do you think you could take him up to sick-bay to visit him?... It seems to be one of *those* days down here. The telephone never stops.' It was ringing again already.

Frank Tompkins and Francis Thompson shook hands. They had far more in common, did they but know it, than the similarity between their names. 'Pleased to meet you, Mr. Tompkins; may I call you Frank? I think I've seen you down here before, haven't I?' He led the visitor up the highly polished grand front staircase which the boys were allowed to use only on special occasions. 'I'm the resident housemaster. Karl seems to be getting on all right; I popped in to visit him this morning. He's got a sore in a rather tender place. Nothing to worry about; just brought on by this heat. But it gets very itchy when clothes rub against it. He's your nephew, you say?'

'Yes.' Frank Tompkins hoped the teacher would not probe too far on this particular matter.

'He's got a card from Nairobi. He was showing me this morning. But it appears that, when they wrote it, his parents were not aware of his illness. I don't know whether they are yet. I suppose they must be,

otherwise you would not be here. Had they rung you and asked you to call?’

Uncle Frank nodded vaguely. ‘Well, with them so far away, it was the least I could do.’

‘Very kind of you. He’s rather bored in sick-bay, all on his own for three days. He’s very much a man’s boy, isn’t he? Doesn’t like the matron’s fussing around him. Well, here we are.’ He led his visitor down a creaking corridor and into the little infirmary. It was empty. Karl was not there, although his bed was still all higgledy-piggledy. ‘Oh, I wonder where he’s got off to.’

The question was answered a few seconds later by light footsteps on the creaky boards and the arrival of the cherubic Cupid, stark naked and twice as handsome.

‘Barchester! Where on earth is your dressing-gown? I am sure your uncle does not want to see you paddling around the school naked like that. And nor do I.’

‘You wanted to this morning, Sir,’ Barchy teased, to the ever increasing embarrassment of his Latin teacher. ‘You had a jolly good look. And in any case, I wasn’t *paddling* round the school, Sir. I was *piddling* down the pee-pit. If a boy’s gotta go, a boy’s gotta go.’

‘But not stark naked! I’m very sorry, Sir,’ Mr. Thompson said to Uncle Frank apologetically. ‘The trouble is, because of the nature of his sore, he can’t wear jim-jams... “pyjamas”, rather. And lads get used to running around with nothing on in boarding-school life—communal baths and all that sort of thing, you know.’ He gave an embarrassed little laugh. ‘Did you ever go to boarding school yourself?’

‘I’ve certainly heard about the sorts of things that go on in one. Bare bottomed beatings by bachelor school-masters, and such like. By the way, are you married?’ he added to increase his escort’s confusion even more. ‘I hope I’m not embarrassing you by such remarks. I’m sure things like that don’t go on at Mertons...’ And then he added after an infinitesimal pause, as if the suspicion had suddenly, and only just, arisen in his head, ‘...do they?’

‘We try to develop a *mens sana in corpore sano*—a healthy mind in a healthy body,’ replied Mr. Thompson, dodging the question. ‘Well—Come on, Barchester, quickly into bed.—I’ll leave you with your nephew. I’ll have a word with Matron if I see her, to tell her you are here; but I am sure it will be all right.’ He left, furious with Barchester for showing up the school in such a bad light, and wondering what his uncle would have made of it.

Mousehole and Mouse, however, were having a good laugh at the whole pantomime. They had both been very well aware of the teacher’s obvious confusion.

‘You should have seen his face when he first saw me arriving with nowt on!’ squeaked Mousehole. ‘You were standing behind him; but he was absolutely livid.’

‘And when you jumped on the bed and blew me that kiss with one hand while holding onto your willie-widdler with the other....’

‘And when you asked him if he was married! “Bare bummed bummings by bachelor.” What was it you said?! ’S funny ’cos Thommo’s not a bummer, even though he likes to give us a good look over every now and again. You should have seen him this morning, just before you arrived. He came up to visit me and had a real good look between me legs—my sore, and all the other little bits.’ Kiss-Me got himself into the same position as earlier, reclining back on his pillow, legs stretched wide apart, to allow his uncle another equally thorough examination. ‘I was trying to get him to touch it, but he wouldn’t. Still, I reckon he had a jolly good bulge in the front of his trousers. Hey, Uncle Frank, tell us a story!’ Karl-Mark settled down comfortably on his bed, pulling the sheet lightly over him, and lay back, hand on cock in eager expectation. Uncle Frank had a fund of philophallic fantasies—thoroughly unsuitable as bedtime stories for most little boys.

‘Which one do you want?’

Barchy thought for a moment. ‘How about “Golden-locks and the Three Queers”? I always enjoy that!’

Uncle Frank smiled, and slipped his hand under the sheet and onto the boy’s smooth chest. ‘Once

upon a time there was a beautiful little boy called Golden-locks....’

‘What are you doing this afternoon?’ asked de Filbert as they were putting away their books a few minutes after the bell had gone.

‘I’s got An Appointment—2.15,’ said Winters with a note of pride in his voice—and of mystery too.

‘An appointment? Dentist? Where?’

Winters shook his head. ‘Nope. At the den.’

‘Can I come too?’

Barney didn’t much like the idea, but he couldn’t very well say no. It was *their* den now, after all. De Filbert was a fully enrolled member of The Gang.

A few moments later they arrived; it was just gone 2.15, and Winters hoped that Uncle Frank hadn’t come and left already. There weren’t many people about—only a few Squits from Form 6 at the far side of the clearing. The sun was not quite as hot as it had been over the last three weeks, but it was warm enough. Barney wished he had his games clothes on. They were cooler, besides the shorts were easier to slip off, or to pull aside, when Uncle Frank arrived.

He loved doing things with Uncle Frank. Barchy had introduced them last Christmas holidays, and Barney had seen him two or three times since then. The man was a laugh... and very much more than that. Barney curled his fingers round the hem of his shorts in hopeful anticipation.

‘Winters!’ said de Filbert, slightly shocked. He knew his friend was always playing with himself, as was Barchester, too, but he still couldn’t feel it was right. ‘Leave it alone!’

‘What’s up with you, Granny? Don’t you like it? Don’t you ever play with yourself?’ Barney eased his three-and-a-bit incher out from his supporting underpants, still soft. ‘I bet you enjoy a little fiddle sometimes. Go on. It won’t bite yer!’ Winters pulled up the leg of his shorts and waved his wondrous widdler in his friend’s direction.

De Filbert stared at it and blushed. Its size, length, and the right-angle bend in the middle still fascinated him nearly as much as that first night in the bathroom over a month ago.

‘All boys mess around. Unless... I knows what it is, you fly pair o’ frog’s legs! Havay vooze an wuzzoh?!’

‘*Quoi?!*’

‘It’s French, ain’t it? *Havay vooze an wuzzoh?* I bet you’ve got a bird?!’

‘*Un oiseau?* What sort of bird? A canary?’

‘Nah, you granny, you: a chick; a dolly-bird.’

‘*Ne comprends pas.*’ Jean-Philippe shook his head, mystified.

‘I bet you’ve got a nice little bit o’ French crumpet tucked away at home, an’ that’s why you get all so up tight when we have a bit of fun between ourselves.’ Winters pissed down a rabbit hole to show his contempt. ‘Gran-ny’s-got-a-crum-pet!’ he chanted teasingly.

‘Please don’t to call me Granny,’ rebuked Jean-Philippe mildly. ‘You know I doesn’t like it.’ He admitted only his closest friends used the name, and that as a term of affection; but still the expression hurt.

‘But you know I can’t pronounce it the proper way,’ protested Winters. ‘Wot is it? Gronwee?’

‘That’s better—*grenouille*. But it’s still not nice to call me a frog.’

‘Sorry, de Fil.’ He put his arm round his friend’s shoulder. ‘But you is a bit of a granny, you know. Look, I bet you wouldn’t dare do this.’ And before Jean-Philippe could say Jacques Robinson, Barney had dropped his shorts and his undies and was scrambling over a low over-hanging branch which they often used for races. And then...

‘*WINTERS!*’

Mr. Timbers’s voice echoed through the woods. ‘Come here! What the blazes do you think you’re

playing at, boy?’

De Filbert vanished into a rhododendron bush. He had already been in enough trouble for one day over his ignorance of the very existence of James Watt. He didn’t fancy another spell of detention—especially for something which wasn’t his fault. Winters dropped from his branch almost at the teacher’s feet.

‘What sort of game is this?’

‘N-n-nothing, Sir. It’s just that it’s so hot. I thought I would take my clothes off to try to keep cool.’

‘And then go running round the woods to try to get warm again? Have you done the detention I set you?’

‘Y-yes, Sir.’

‘Where is it?’

‘In my locker, Sir.’

‘Why haven’t you handed it in?’

‘I didn’t know where to, Sir.’

‘Who took detention then?’

‘Nobody, Sir.’

‘Who?’

‘Nobody turned up. Nobody took it, Sir.’

‘Hmmm!’ Mr. Timbers snorted with disbelief. ‘But you say you’ve done it, though?’

‘Yessir.’

‘Well, it can wait till later now....’

Winters was still standing there in nothing but a yellow aertex shirt which was too short at the waist to cover his lack of shorts or underpants, and in his shoes and short socks. Behind Mr. Timbers’s back he could see another figure approaching, still quite a distance away—a figure in a smart London suit, the sort of smart figure who might well own a Mercedes car.

‘For the moment we had better deal with your present misdemeanour,’ Timbers went on. ‘It’s too hot for you here, is it, boy—in clothes? Right then; we had better have them off and let you cool down. You will take off your shirt and give that, and your shorts and pants, to me to look after. And you will stand there, in the middle of that clearing, for the next half hour. You won’t move from that spot until I give you permission. Is that understood?’

Mr. Timbers directed the boy to stand facing the main school building, legs astride and with his hands on top of his head. ‘If you want to run around half-naked, naked you can be!’

Mr. Timbers turned to go, holding the little bundle of the boy’s clothes in front of him. He hadn’t gone more than twenty yards when a tall dark stranger in the smart suit seemed to appear from nowhere.

‘Ah, Mr. Timbers,’ said Frank Tompkins. ‘Are you on duty this afternoon? I am looking for a boy called Barnabas Winters. You haven’t seen him anywhere have you?’

‘Not around here,’ snapped the teacher nervously.

‘Oh, I was told that he was seen down here just a few minutes ago.’

‘Who told you?’

‘Just a group of boys. They seemed fairly certain. Do you mind if I look?’

‘No, yes. Yes, no! Who are you, Sir, in any case?’

‘A friend of his family’s. I called in at the office just now to check that it would be all right to see him. I know you have to be careful nowadays, and don’t like to have strangers wandering about the school. But... if you want to come with me until I find him...’

‘He’s not down here.’ Mr. Timbers shook his head vehemently.

‘But I was told he was. Surely you won’t mind if I take a look?’

Mr. Timbers had met his match. An immovable object trying to hold up an irresistible force. Frank

Tompkins stretched himself up to his full height and glowered down at the diminutive teacher before striding past him. Round a clump of bushes he went; there he saw—as if for the first time—the naked boy.

He had, of course, watched the whole scene, had heard Timbers castigating Master Winters, watched him make the lad undress, observed him as he took possession of the clothes and stationed the boy in the unsheltered glade.

‘I do believe that that is him,’ said Mr. Tompkins to Mr. Timbers in the same sarcastic voice which the teacher was wont to use. ‘Not being a school-teacher, I am none too accustomed to seeing little boys ready for their bath-nights. However I believe I can recognise young Barnaby Winters—by his facial features—even in that state of undress. And I thought you said he wasn’t down here. May I ask whose clothes those are which you are holding?’

‘You may ask.’

‘But will I get an answer?’

‘No.’

‘I don’t like to interfere in the disciplinary matters of the school, but I don’t think it is quite right that I should be expected to sit and talk to a boy whom I hardly know in such a state of *déshabille*. Nor can I imagine what his parents may make of this when I tell them. Is this a common and a proper punishment at this school? I am sure that my friends, Barnabas’s parents, will be bound to want to ask further questions about it; but meanwhile do you think you could give the lad his clothes back—at least so that I can respectably talk to him?’

Five minutes later they were in the den. De Filbert had disappeared. All the clothes which had been so recently put back on were once again being stripped off. Mr. Timbers meanwhile was sulking in the staff-room with a cigarette. He didn’t like being bested and shown up—especially in front of the boys.

‘Oh, Uncle Frank! That were great! You really made old Woodentop look a ninny, didn’t you? I bet he’s shittin’ ’imself now, worrying what you or my parents may say to Pat-a-Cake. Are you really going to tell them?’

‘‘Course not. I don’t want them to know I’ve been down here to see you, do I?’ He stroked the front of the boy’s slip prior to pulling it down.

## 10.

Iain Anglomead tapped, as a matter of formality, on the door of his old friend Francis, but didn't bother to wait for a reply. He walked straight in.

This could have been very embarrassing if it had been anyone else. But Brian Miners, having turned to see who it was, just bent over to pull up the trousers of his jam-jars, buttoned them up and wrapped his dressing-gown back round himself. He said 'Thank you' to 'Sir' and prepared to leave.

'It seems to be catching, Iain; Brian's got a sore place too,' explained Francis Thompson to his friend; 'only, he's ashamed to show Matron.'

'Oh... Aren't I allowed to see either?!' He looked disappointedly at the boy. Iain Anglomead too liked boys, and often envied his colleague's position as Resident Housemaster. So often it was to him that they turned with their little problems (and their bigger ones) as his room was on their landing and they were allowed to go there. Others of the resident staff—himself, Peter Holdsworth, and Angus McBride the Art teacher—had rooms on the top floor which were out of bounds to the boys.

'Sir, don't you believe I've got a sore? You don't suspect we've been getting up to something else, do you?'

'Well, one never knows, Brian—especially at this time of night,' teased the English teacher.

'I've suggested some cold-cream night and morning; and after showers or any other—physical activity.' Francis Thompson gave the boy a knowing wink; he well knew how much of the latter was needed by a healthy boy well into his fourteenth year. Brian Miners, born in August, was the oldest boy in the school. This was his seventh summer at Mertons—an unusual achievement in a school which most boys attended roughly from eight to thirteen. But his parents had sent him to begin—under the guardianship of his elder brother, Ambrose—in the Trinity Term when he was still only seven.

'I suppose you keep a pot of cream handy to put on lads who come to you in the middle of the night and have "sore" little places. Are you sure you don't want a second opinion, Brian?'

'If you think it would help.'

Boys starting at Mertons School soon came to realise that both Mr. Thompson and Mr. Anglomead were sympathetic teachers, and easily approachable; by the time they had been there as long as Brian Miners they were often aware of the driving force which lay behind that *simpatia*. Neither man would ever "touch" a boy—at least not in an unseemly way, but if either got the chance to cuddle and comfort a youngster in trouble, or show him affection, or make physical contact with him in the legal rounds of punishment or sport or execution of official duty—that was all right. That was what teaching was all about. That was what made the profession such fun.

To poke one's finger up a boy's bum—that was unthinkable; but to grasp hold of that same bottom and shove it more firmly into a rugby scrum—that came within the call of duty. That was allowed. To entice a boy to a private place and behold—let alone be held by—his beautiful body in all its boyish bareness, that was taboo; but to examine him in the showers and send him back because he still had a muddy bottom, to help wash the back of his thighs where he couldn't see or reach, to offer sympathetic treatment to an injury or sore, even a largely imaginary one, however rude the place—these things were in the necessary cause of hygiene and health. They showed responsibility and dedicated devotion to duty. They were not only 'right'; they were respectable. (Though whether to stand a boy naked in a woodland glade out of anger and sadistic delight and confiscate his clothing to 'help him cool off' would come within the bounds of reasonable decorum was very much more open to question.)

'Sir! Stop looking at me in that tone of voice!' the prefect joked. 'I am not a strip-tease artist or



anything!’

Iain Anglomead looked suitably abashed. He did fancy the idea of a boy strip-tease, but, unlike Cuthbert Timbers, he would never demand it of a boy.

‘Have you ever been to one of those night-clubs, Sir?’

‘What business is that of yours?’ He admired the boy’s impertinence.

‘Do they really go the whole way?’

‘I wouldn’t know.’

‘Never seen one, Sir? Honestly?’

‘Brian, stop asking cheeky questions and get yourself to bed.

It’s quarter to ten, long past your Lights Out.’

‘Have you ever seen a stripper, Sir?’ Brian turned his inquisition to the Latin teacher. ‘No girls here, only boys. Everybody’s got to make do with boys.’

‘Brian, get yourself to bed!’

‘I’m sure you don’t mean that, Sir. I thought Mr. Anglomead was going to inspect my sore place.’ Miners looked at the teacher, who in turn looked hopeful, smiled at him, and Brian slowly and flirtatiously undid his dressing-gown, opening it up and showing off his yellow jam-jars.

‘Bed-time, Brian!’

‘Not yet, Sir. I’m just beginning my act.’ He untied the waist-cord of his jim-jams.

*‘And this is Number One,  
And the fun has just begun.  
Roll me over, lay me down and do it again...!’*

‘Brian!...’

‘Yes, Sir?’ The boy pulled the front of his pyjama trousers open and let them slip down enough to reveal a trim little triangle of hair and a bare belly. Like many boys at Mertons, Brian Miners loved teasing the teachers, at least some of them—it was good sport. Coyly he turned his back to Mr. Anglomead and let his jim-jam bottoms fall to the floor. He kicked them off and wrapped his dressing-gown tightly round himself again.

‘Iain, I apologise for this performance. Brian Miners is an impossible, naughty little boy.’ Mr. Thompson didn’t sound angry about it.

‘I may only be five-foot-two, Sir, but you can’t really call me little. I’m a *big boy* now, Sir,’ he added in a silly tone of voice. ‘And Mr. Anglomead must have proof of it.’ Miners, with a quick glance at his own nether regions, slipped off his dressing-gown and threw it on a chair. His firm round bottom peeped out from below his pyjama jacket, pink and bare.

‘There you are, you see! I *have* got a sore.’

How different the four Minerses were. Miners *max.*, who had left last year, was just like his mother—straight-laced and puritanical—and no one was sad to see him go. And it appeared that little Anselm, Miners *min.*, was cast in the same mould. But the two middle brothers, Brian and Eddie, were more like their father—happy, easy-going, and full of a bit of mischief.

Mr. Thompson patted the bare bottom gently. ‘Your haunches look healthy enough, Brian, but I can’t actually see the sore yet.’ He gently grasped the boy’s left arm by the wrist. Brian allowed himself to be turned slowly around, smiling impishly into the teacher’s face the whole time and raising only the most playful of objections as first one hand and then the other was pulled away to reveal the full flamboyance of his adolescent appendages. Mr. Thompson gently touched the fiery red rash between the outstretched thighs. Brian was a well built and auburn-haired lad. Although he was only a short boy, he was a good fly-half and the Captain of Swimming; he was singularly well-endowed for his size, and the muscles on

his legs were strong and firm. Proud of his teacher's admiration, Brian silently undid his pyjama jacket and pulled that back, too, to show off his chest and firm belly. The rich triangle of fuzz pointed up towards his navel.

And a few inches below, it was already beginning to swell. But who cared? Most teachers had seen it all before. These two certainly had. He let it rise, standing hands on hips, grin on face. He was still a boy at heart, proud of his young, developing body; he enjoyed being admired. He threw back his head and stood there, legs astride, hips thrust forward, with a jaunty smile and a smart cocky salute. He felt gristly and grand. (And he would have felt just as gristly and grand if either of the teachers had dared to take a feel.) He bobbed it up and down, feeling proud as a peacock—and proud of his pee-cock, too.

After Miners had left—(no doubt to bring off his own satisfaction in his own private bed)—Iain settled himself into the second-most-comfortable chair while his friend poured out two large ports. A little boy would find himself enveloped in a chair like this, he thought—just like being back in the womb. He waited for Francis to sit down in his own chair before he commenced.

‘D’you know what? I’ve just been summoned for a long interview with the boss.’

‘Mmm. I hope he didn’t pull your pants down and get his kicks all over your bare bum.’

Iain laughed. Everybody, on the teaching staff at least, knew about the headmaster’s little vice. ‘No. He’s worried about the pool. There’ve been complaints. You know the new path through the woods—the short-cut from Milton? Some of the domestic staff use it going home in the afternoons, and, well, it passes close enough to the pool to be able to see what’s going on there when the boys are bathing. And Mrs. Bryant with the cross-eyes—I’m surprised she can see straight in any case—she’s complained about the boys swimming with nothing on.’

‘And what did the Old Man say?’

‘He’s slightly worried about the complaint. You know the way things are going at the moment with “child molestation” scandals right, left and centre; and yet he doesn’t see why the boys should be denied the chance to swim in the most natural state possible if they so desire. Mrs. Bryant’s a “silly old bag” and “a busy-body baggage”—anyway, that’s what he called her to me.’

‘What’s he going to do about it?’

‘Not a lot. Put bushes or something up to screen the pool from the pathway; or re-route the path. But he told her that boys and girls have swum in the nude since before history was invented and he’s not going to stop them now. He points out that the boys here are quite used to nudity—in the baths and the showers, and in communal dormitories and changing-rooms—and that youngsters should never be brought up to be ashamed of their own bodies which God has given them.’

‘Good for him.’

‘Yes, but Patsy thinks we all ought to keep a much lower profile just at the moment. He knows none of us are ever doing anything wrong. But let’s face it, we sometimes sail pretty close to the wind—smearing Savlon on sore scrotums, for example. He reckons we ought to be very much on our guard, just for the time being.’

‘It’s daft, isn’t it?’ said Francis, pouring out a new round of port. ‘We’re here to educate kids, and we’re here to be *in loco parentis*, offering them love, affection and security. And yet we have to go pussy-footing around as if we were Victorian governesses. Enough of our kids here at Mertons are from broken homes already. The thing they cry out for is love. And we’re not allowed to give it.’

‘Still, we sometimes do rather well. Look at that new French kid and how quickly he’s settled in after all he’s gone through. Finding his parents murdered. Losing his home. And then sent away to a boarding school in a foreign country.’

‘And why’s he settled in so well?’ Francis Thompson waited for a reply, but only got a shaken head. ‘Not because of us. Because of Andy Chanting. He pours love on that little boy. And Philippe pours it

back.'

'Andy? Love? I doubt it. Lust, more like. He's just reached that age when his body needs to gush out its self-expression. And if he can gush it over some other little boy's bum, so much the better.'

'Iain, I think you misjudge him. There's real affection between those two. Come and see.'

They tiptoed off to the dorm. Two naked bodies were wrapped around each other, closely entwined, their heads snuggled together, breathing each other's breaths, dreaming each other's dreams. 'They sleep together almost every night now. I often come to watch them, Achilles and Patroclus. You cannot say those two aren't in love, lying there like that.' Gently he eased down the covering sheet. The valley between Philippe's cheeks still glistened wet and sticky; his little hand, in sleep, grasped his lover's tail, the fingertips snuggling cosily into its warmth.

'They're sweet, aren't they!' said Anglomead, turning away moved.

'Hi! I dig your costume,' said Gerald Jackson, coming up behind de Filbert at the pool. 'You're a good swimmer too, aren't you.'

Gerald was in the Removes, but looked as though he might have been one of the Tops. He was a thick-set boy, with heavy chest muscles and strong arms and legs. He had high cheek-bones and big lips and an unkempt mop of hair which always added a finishing touch to his macho physique. He was wearing white shorts which served as swim-trunks and showed his virility through their damp, clinging contours. And there was plenty of virility to show, especially just at this moment. Jackson had noticed young de Filbert many times since he first arrived, but he had never got around to approaching him before. Now he found himself just behind him in the diving-board queue.

'They're poppetty pants, aren't they,' said Gerald, stroking the red nylon.

'Thanks,' said Philippe, flattered, but pulling away from the touch.

'Where did you get 'em?'

'In France. Last year.'

'I *thought* they looked too small for you. They're luscious. So are you.' Gerald looked the younger boy full in the face and made a deliberate grasp for the front of his tiny red *caleçon*.

De Filbert pushed the groping hand away and stepped out of the queue. He was deeply embarrassed at the touch.

'Hey, what's up? I'm not going to hurt you,' Jackson said.

Philippe shook his head shyly, but said nothing. He didn't know what to say or do. He had never been solicited in this way before. With Andy it was very different. That had just happened. Somehow; somewhen. He couldn't really remember now; it had been so long ago—when he first arrived. With Andy 'being naughty' seemed right, natural, proper. But he wasn't going to be touched by any other boys. He inched away from the sexcited Jackson, and was thankful when his turn came on the board. He did a lousy splop and hurried off down to the safety of the shallow end, while Jackson turned his amorous attentions, more successfully, to another youngster.

Young Larsen was a plucky diver, Gerald had occasionally noticed him before, even though he was only a very junior squirt. He wasn't a *good* diver, but he would try anything—somersaults, back-flips, pikes. He wore a scintillating slip of dark-blue nylon with a yellow streak down the front which seemed to draw attention to his hidden boyhood; and it appeared to have no drawcord, for that 'slip' lived up to its name whenever the boy dived in.

Spying an unused face-mask on the side of the pool, Jackson borrowed it and went hunting. Whenever Finn Larsen dived in, he ducked under and watched beneath the surface. Jackson was a regular huntsman. Maturing young, he had some very wild oats, and a great eagerness to sow them. He peered at the young Dane under water. There was wild, Viking blood in him, too. Oh, what a pretty little bottom! What rounded cheeks! What delightful legs! What a saucy tummy, bared by the loose briefs.

Quickly Larsen became aware of the older boy's interest. He missed his Uncle Niels at school; he felt proud to have an interested older friend again, and played up to him. Larsen was flirtatious by nature; he flirted outrageously now—wiggling his bum and posing provocatively. He did not feel in the least bit surprised (or insulted) when, after one particularly flamboyant dive, Jackson came up the steps behind him and nibbled his bum. 'Vov! Rovpuller!' he said with eager delight. He smiled and slid down the seat of his trunks, sticking out his bare bum.

'You're a good diver, aren't you.'

'Me? Thanks. My uncle taught me at Roskilde. We always go to Toppen when I stay with him. 'S a lovely pool.'

They joined the queue together. They chatted together. They dived in together—Larsen just ahead of Jackson. He knew his trunks had come down, but this time he didn't bother to pull them up; he swam towards the shallower water, closely followed by Gerald Jackson, where Jackson pawed the boy's tail. Larsen, still out of his depth, stopped and climbed onto him, putting his arms round Gerald's neck, and his legs round his waist as he used to do with Uncle Niels in the summer when they went to the beach. He clung there while Gerry supported his butt—his big, bare butt, his beautiful, bold butt. They smiled into each other's eyes while Gerald tickled at the tight little ring. 'I like you, kid! What's your name?...'

'*ENGLISH PREP. Write a description of an old man.*' That's what it said on the classroom board.

He lives in a large castle. The castle is near the Loire. He lives on his own, with only two old servants to help him. I think he is lonely. He has never had a wife. He has never had children. But he has had me.

I lived with him for one month in the dark old castle with its leaded windows. He was very kind to me. He used to take me for walks. We would climb trees together. I would climb, and he would watch. I think he liked to watch me. I liked to be with him too. I liked particklily when we hired the car, and I would snuggle upto him in the big back seat. He used to strock my leg. I liked that. He was very kind. He called me nice names, mon petit, mon brave, mon plus cher.

At night he would come to my room when I was in bed. He would sit on my bed. We would talk. He would tell me fantastick stories of when he was a young man. He had parties at the castle. Parties of boys. They would go camping in the woods. They would go swimming in the lake. He loved those times.

I think it is so sad when an old man is left with only his memries. His memries and me. I hope I can help to make him happy again when I go home for the holidies. He is a nice old man, and very kind.

The bell rang and Jean-Philippe closed his book. He was pleased with his essay. He had enjoyed writing it; it brought back such happy memories of Blois and *le bois de chênes*.

For Andy Chanting, one of the most difficult parts of the day was on those rare occasions when Naseby or Miners were late in dropping off to sleep. He would lie in bed, his erection almost killing him, while he and Jean-Philippe awaited the tell-tale sounds of deep and regular breathing from the two other beds.

Tonight it seemed to take forever. Miners had a cold and kept snuffling and couldn't get to sleep. There were other noises from Naseby who had just discovered, or perhaps been shown, how to wank. He wasn't very skilled at it yet and it took a long time. When he finally sighed through his end and relaxed, Miners had already gone quiet. A few minutes later Andy crawled into Jean-Philippe's bed.

How warm it was there, how delightfully scented! The little boy always smelled so sweet—of soap

and tooth-paste and hair and tender 11-year-old skin. And of little-boy sweat not yet gone stale. And of moist lips from which issued the sweetest breath in all of Mertons.

‘I thought he’d never get himself off!’ Andy whispered as he gathered Jean-Philippe into his arms.

‘I was afraid you’d go to sleep,’ Jean-Philippe said, ‘and I’d have to sleep with myself.’

‘No way!’ Andy began to lick the little boy’s face, penetrating his tongue into first one ear and then the other, working his lips over Jean-Philippe’s forehead as his nose ruffled through the little boy’s hair, then moving his lips down to suck on each closed eye, envelop the button nose and breathe into it his loving breath. They had learned to kiss in the last week—strangely enough, it had been Jean-Philippe who had been the boldest and most explorative. They lingered with their lips locked together, exchanging breath, tongues, warmth, saliva. When they broke apart, Andy said, ‘That’s brilliant! You’re incredible, my little Poppet.’

In the last days, Chanting found he needed the company and comfort of Jean-Philippe in bed more and more. In part this was due to the deepening of their relationship, but also the big exams, the Common Entrance, were only a couple of weeks away. He knew he should have no actual problem in passing. He was an intelligent boy and had worked hard for months—years, in fact. But... exams were always a pressure. He needed the nightly purge of ejaculation in embrace, and then the wonderful peace of going to sleep with his arms about Jean-Philippe and their legs entwined.

‘I love this,’ Jean-Philippe whispered. He had his hand around Chanting’s cock. ‘*Je l’adore!* It’s so slippery!’

‘That’s its tears.’

‘It’s been crying? *Pourquoi?*’

‘It’s been telling me it wants my little poppet’s *cul*. It didn’t understand about Miners and Naseby being awake.’

Jean-Philippe giggled. ‘It’s never been in my *cul*.’

‘Someday.’

‘Maybe. Oooo, that tickles....’

Andy had his tongue in the shallow well of Jean-Philippe’s navel. The sweet smells of the boy’s body were supplemented now by the stronger odours from down below. Andy pictured the little roseate pucker tucked between the pert buttocks clenching and unclenching as waves of pleasure washed through his body. Jean-Philippe was a very clean boy, but it had been several days since bath night and the more intimate areas of the young boy’s body had developed their own individual, delightful and enormously arousing, odours.

Andy wished he could work his tongue around and down, make a snail’s trail through the great valley of the buttocks and stop over the innocent anus, lave it with his tongue, lips, wash it with his saliva, penetrate it with tongue and finger and...

‘Andy, you can kiss it, please?’

The little French cocklet stood up against his cheek. Two inches, perhaps, but beautifully sculpted, warm and still very, very dry. He gave it a lick, another lick, moved his tongue down to the tight little scrotum with its intricate pattern of miniature waves and then up the front of the shaft, breathing upon it to make it cool, until his lips were wrapped around the end of it, kissing it. Then he sucked the whole sturdy little object into his mouth.

It was so different from most of the other penises he had pleased. They were bigger, slimed over with pre-come, and they squirted sperm, or something like sperm, at the end. Jean-Philippe’s was just as sensitive, but it was light and dry and fitted perfectly along the top of his tongue. And to think the little boy couldn’t wait until it grew!

For a moment Andy was a child again, perhaps even an infant. Jean-Philippe’s cocklet was the most beautiful, most precious object in the world, and he possessed it, had it in his body. It was his and nobody

else's. He moved his head back a bit, brought the penis out almost as far as it would go without his losing his grip on it (and smelled its sweet, wet skin), and then sucked it fully in again.

Time stopped. They were no longer in the little room at Mertons co-occupied by two other boys they didn't really like very much. They were alone in the universe, enjoying the finest pleasures two people can ever give one another.

Jean-Philippe shuddered. 'It's soon, now,' he whispered, tightening his fingers in Andy's hair. 'It's *maintenant...!*' Andy felt the little body under him shudder, as though run through by some benign electrical current, the penis click in his mouth, hard, repeatedly. He slowed the motion, and was careful to keep his tongue off the tip: Jean-Philippe's glans would be very sensitive to touch for the next half-minute, he knew.

Now it was his turn. Releasing the still-stiff cocklet, he turned the boy over, felt with the palms of his two hands the incredibly smooth twin mounds of the boy's buttocks, knelt astride them, angled downwards his cock, which was already soaked with its own anticipatory tear, and drove it ecstatically between the tight-clenched thighs. He let out a deep sigh of pleasure and collapsed onto Jean-Philippe's back.

He started the motion. He drew his cock a few inches up, until its tip was barely at the top of the crack between the boy's thighs, then drove it back down again into the warm, dark, lubricated cavern. He bit the lobe of Jean-Philippe's left ear, nuzzled into the short hair of the boy's lower neck. This was so pure, so perfect! How could anything be better—marriage, making it with a kept woman—than possessing the tender body of a submissive little boy?

The trouble was that it all went so quickly. Postponing the end, now, would be agonising and, perhaps, impossible. 'Get ready, my little poppet,' he whispered into the ear he had just released with his teeth. 'Keep it tight. Aaaahhh, that's *right!*'

As always with Jean-Philippe, the end came as a miracle: the blinding beauty of the climax, the sensation of his sperm gushing out of its tap and voiding itself in the gluteal cleft, splashing against the immature scrotum and dripping down onto the sheet beneath.

Five minutes later, having rearranged themselves in the little bed, they were fast asleep.

They thought no one knew. Mr. Thompson never disturbed them on his nightly rounds. Nor did the Head of English when he came down to collect a fresh image for his dreams later in bed.

## 11.

Wooden-top was in a foul temper. He had been planning to go out drinking with some friends, but he had completely forgotten that he had swapped duties with Francis Thompson who was out at some Latin teachers' conference. Mr. Timbers in a good mood was unpleasant enough; Mr. Timbers in a foul temper was not nice to know. He had put the whole of L Dorm on silence as soon as they came up, and he turned their Lights Out as soon as they had had their baths. Not even he could remember why. He had put five Middles in detention tomorrow to write essays on 'Earwigs'. And he had punished Jackson for dropping his towel over the banisters, and Geens for forgetting to take his toothpaste to the washroom.

Timbers had been thankful, and so had everyone else, when Iain Anglomead came on duty at eight o'clock to take over the later shift. The English teacher found the Middles were in no mood for saying their prayers when he arrived, and he had to try to soothe the angered Removes as well, while doing his best to remain loyal to his insensitive colleague.

'Sir, why does he always behave like that?' asked a very angry Jackson.

'Like what?'

'He's always in a nark.'

'Perhaps you lot make him narky.'

'But we don't nark you, nor Thommo; not even Och-Aye McBride gets in a zizz when we tease him about his Scottish accent. You lot just laugh it off. But never Timber-top. I've never even seen him smile in all the time he's been here.'

'Except when he's set someone a punishment,' put in Gibson. 'He smiles then.'

'Perhaps he was unhappy as a kid,' suggested the English teacher.

'How come?'

'Well, if you don't receive love and kindness as a kid, if you are badly treated or neglected, if nobody loves you, you won't have any love later on to give to anybody else.'

'I can't imagine anybody ever loving Mr. Timbers. I bet he was nasty even as a little brat.'

Iain Anglomead sympathised with the boys. It must have been horrible to be on the receiving end of one of Timbers' tantrums. But there was nothing much that anyone else could do about it—just try to shed a bit of love around the school so that the next generation would not grow up as bitter and twisted as this History teacher.

'There's another thing,' he suggested hopefully. 'He's a little man. Short people often have terrible inferiority complexes. They feel small, so they try to make themselves big.'

'Like Hitler, Sir?'

'I suppose so. And Napoleon too. There's lots of examples.'

'He's got the right moustache for it, hasn't he?' laughed Jackson, putting one finger to his upper lip and giving a Nazi salute. 'A right little Hitler!' The rest of the dorm joined in the mirth. They were at last in a happier mood for bed.

An hour later Miners *ma.* hung up his towel and his sponge-bag, and neatly folded back his bed-clothes in L Dorm. He had slipped his stale underpants back on after his bath, but it was too hot for anything more than a sheet in bed this June. He glanced round the dorm to check that all was well. It was full of Squits: eleven little boys of eight or just-nine years old. Miners envied Brazier. What he needed was a girl. Jimmy had been telling them all about it in the baths this evening. He had just been having a Tute, and had met Katey afterwards. They had gone to the potting shed. She happily let Jimmy take off her

blouse and bra nowadays, but that was as far as she would go. Jimmy, however, always brought out his boyhood and let her handle it. He was determined to get her panties off her before the end of term, but she was too scared. 'She's a laugh a minute but just won't let me get my hand high enough inside her skirt. Says it ain't safe—especially without any "precautions", as she calls 'em. So I'm going to get a packet of johnnies over Half-Term.'

Brian wanted a girl. He didn't even have a girl-friend at home. Perhaps he should make do with the next best thing, as boys in single-sex boarding schools had learnt to do for centuries. He took a walk up and down the ranks of sleeping squits. He didn't fancy any of them—really small boys were not his scene—although young Larsen might have potential in a few years' time. Blond, Scandinavian, with not a bad figure, he had a chirpy smile and a mischievous streak. He might well turn out to be quite a bundle of fun when he was a couple of years older. Brian went over to Finn Larsen's bed and looked down at him, as he quite often did these nights when he was feeling randy.

The little boy lay there in a pair of pale blue pyjamas—black collar, black stripes down the leggings of the trousers, and the jacket embroidered with Chinese dragons. His top sheet was thrown back, and over his little bottom the jim-jam pants had slipped down till Miners could see the start of the dainty cleft between his cheeks. Brian touched it, and it sent a sensuous thrill throughout his body. He tried to imagine the buttocks were boobies. He examined the cleavage.

Quickly he glanced round the dorm to make sure everyone was still asleep, and then slipped his finger further in, down that little valley. It was hot and sweaty. So was Brian's hand. Cautiously, without disturbing the child, he unbuttoned the waist of the boy's jim-jams and managed to ease the seat down over his tail. He thought of Jimmy undoing Katey's blouse and taking off her bra. He touched the soft flesh of the boy's bosom/bum. Enough light still came in through the curtained windows to let him see her pale-fleshed beauty. 'Oh that I were a hand upon that cheek,' the young Romeo sighed inwardly. He pulled the little trousers down still further. No nibblish nipples appeared to thrill him, but something else did instead. Ooh, if only it was a bit of pussy, curled up there, small and stuffable. He fingered it gingerly. 'I wonder if a girl's thing looks the same,' he asked himself. He had never actually seen one, except on marble statues.

Worked up, frustrated, Brian went back to his own bed and lay down on it. He closed his eyes and thought of Katey. But Jimmy kept turning him away: 'She's *my* girl. Find your own!' He remembered Jimmy's long cock in the bathroom, firm and fancy, excitedly reliving its adventures of an hour before. But thoughts of the bathroom made Brian remember Miss Arthur; she was possibly the best thing they'd got around the school, even if she was a bit chubby. She didn't supervise the prefects' baths, of course, but she had attended him in the bathroom for a couple of years when he was further down the school.

Brian slipped his hand inside his underpants and fondled himself. But then there was that tottie in the kitchens, Amanda—if only the boys ever had the chance to see her. Dreams of a cross between Amanda and Miss Arthur floated through his head as his rhythm increased. He had forgotten Larsen by now. Miss Arthur was in the baths, washing his back; washing his toes; working up his leg. Now she was getting undressed for a bath herself. Now she was at the pool, having a swim. Trees and branches overhung the pool; it was in a jungle clearing. Brian pulled down the front of his pants to get a better grip. The soft light of a late summer evening fell on his bare chest and legs. And on his pounding fist. His eyes were tight closed. Was he dreaming of Amanda, or was it Miss Arthur? No, it was Jane, and Tarzan was coming to her rescue—Tarzan with his brief loincloth and swollen thighs, Tarzan with his swollen chest and firm belly. Tarzan diving for Jane.

'Aaarh! Oohh! Oohhh!!!' Brian gasped and panted as a strong jet sprayed across his stomach, and then a second and a third. The sperm lay there sparkling as his chest heaved. He squeezed out the last drops. 'Aaah!'

'That looked fun!' said a voice right beside his ear.



Brian Miners desperately tried to cover himself but had nothing to use: he was lying on top of his upper sheet. He flicked the front of his underpants quickly back into place as he opened his eyes in terror. It was Mr. Holdsworth standing in the doorway above his bed.

‘Sorry to disturb you, Brian—especially when you were enjoying yourself so much—but I was wondering if you could give me a hand sorting out the swimming team for next week. It’s our only match this year, and we really ought to have the team pinned up by tomorrow morning. And, as you are Captain...’

Mr. Holdsworth was perched on the edge of the bed by now, talking softly, admiring the splodgy patterns on the spunk-stained belly. He had never watched a boy wanking off before, and he had thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Peter Holdsworth loved boys, especially sexy boys, though he always tried to keep his love tightly under control—(as Barchester had so often found out). But Brian’s ejaculation had really stirred him. That’s quite a fountain,’ he said.

‘Sorry, Sir,’ Brian stammered. ‘I didn’t know you were there.’

‘Nothing to be ashamed of. Really. But the team...’

A boy on the other side of the dorm stirred and turned over. ‘Shall we go somewhere else where we won’t wake up everybody? It shouldn’t take more than a few minutes. I’ve got some rough ideas already sketched out, but I didn’t want to publish the list without your approval.’ He looked at Brian in his tight little underpants. It was almost as if he was growing out of them.

‘There’s the little sick-room next door, Sir.’

‘Perfect.’

There were two beds, two chairs, and two large hospital tables which could be rolled on wheels across the beds. Brian lay down on one bed, while Peter Holdsworth perched on its side and spread his provisional list on the table. Brian was flattered to be taken into the teacher’s confidence. He hadn’t expected to be consulted on the team. He presumed it would just get published and that would be the first he would know of it—along with everybody else.

Brian had always admired Mr. Holdsworth. Their P.E. instructor was so eager and so hard-working, and at the same time so much fun. He had the warm approachableness of Anglopod or Thommo but was much nearer his own age.

‘Were you Captain of Swimming when you were here, Sir?’

‘What on earth do you mean?’ Holdsworth tried to sound innocent, but blushed at the root of his hair in spite of himself. Did this young boy know the diplomatic secret?

‘When you were at Mertons, Sir. Were you Captain of Swimming?’

‘How did you know?’

‘I was here then, Sir, but I can’t remember. I *do* remember you were Captain of Cricket.’

‘You were here?’

‘Yes, Sir. My first term, Sir. I am the oldest boy in school now. I was here the term before you left. Why do you keep it such a secret?’

‘Have you ever told anyone else?’

‘No, Sir. Why?’

‘I don’t know. It’s just...’ He looked at the adolescent body beside him—so strong, so vigorous, so well-formed—and his mind went back six years. ‘I just...’ He took hold of the boy’s hand and squeezed it. It had been a big secret, his former incarnation as a boy at Mertons; not even many of the staff knew about it—only Francis and Iain who had been here at that time.

Peter was strongly drawn to the prefect. He felt there was a kinship of like minds. Brian Miners was so very similar to himself at that age—sporty, responsible, conscientious, and... what else was there about him? He couldn’t put his finger on it. ‘Oh, Brian!’ was all he said. Without either of them realising it, they were still holding hands.

There was a long pause, broken at last by the prefect again. 'Were you ever in trouble when you were at Mertons, Sir?'

'What sort of trouble?'

'Any sort of trouble. Like being caught by a teacher wanking after Lights Out, I suppose.'

'You're not in trouble for that.'

'I would have been if you'd been Mr. Timbers. He'd have done his nut.'

'At you doing your nuts!' The P.E. teacher laughed and admired the boy's tightly-contoured underpants. He didn't usually use such rude slang in front of the boys, but Brian was a senior, a prefect. 'Yes, I was in trouble sometimes.'

'What sort of trouble, Sir?'

The teacher spread himself out on the bed beside the boy. He couldn't resist putting his arm across Brian's chest although he knew it was dangerous to do so. 'Brian, you promise you won't tell?'

'If you won't tell about catching me having it off. Okay?' Miners rubbed his nose against the teacher's cheek and snuggled up close to him. He found it eerie and yet exciting to be lying on the same bed with him. Sharing guilty secrets.

'I'd hate anyone else to know. Except you.' He leant over and gave the boy a light kiss on the cheek. 'But I was in trouble a lot when I was at Mertons. That's the main reason I'm quiet about being an Old Boy. It would be terrible if any of the boys got to know I'd been so mischievous—and here!'

'What sort of things did you do?'

'Well, nothing particular. But I always seemed to be in it. I can't remember a single thing that I ever did that was really wrong—scrumping, scrapping, sneaking out of bounds, I suppose—yet hardly a week ever passed, when I was in the Thirds and Removes, without my being called up to Patting's study for a pi-jaw and a beating.'

'Oh, you were one of those, were you?'

'One of what?'

'One of Pat-a-cake's little boys. Like Andy Chanting used to be when he was in the Removes. Always up in Patsy's study having his pants pulled down and his arse cocked up.'

Brian rolled over onto his side and allowed his arm to wander round Mr. Holdsworth's waist. He felt totally relaxed, despite the inherent dangers of the situation—a boy and a member of staff sharing a bed in a forbidden place. Mr. Holdsworth's bright yellow sweat-shirt had become untucked; Miners affectionately slipped his hand inside it and fondled the lean chest. Peter smiled; he was very ticklish.

They snuggled themselves closer together. Miners enjoyed the company of older men. With girls you always had to be thinking of sex; with boys you had to be talking about it; with men you could just relax. Brian Miners admired his father, although, unlike Barchy, he had certainly never had sex with him. He had enjoyed his evening teasing Mr. Anglomead and Mr. Thompson last week, and now he was enjoying his private chat with the Head of P.E. He found it, in some way he couldn't explain, even exciting.

Peter Holdsworth ran his hand down the prefect's back, counting the vertebrae, lingering at his waist. He longed to stroke further, but felt things were dangerous enough already... sharing a bed and a cuddle with a lad who was only wearing a pair of spunk-stained underpants.

'Do you disapprove of that?'

'Why should I? It's got Andy on well enough; he can do just what he likes with Pat-a-cake. If I disapproved it would only be because I was jealous. Is that how you got a job back here? Because you used to be one of his little boys?'

'I wouldn't like to put it that way; it sounds so sordid. But I suppose that's true, really.' He pulled the boy closer to him and slipped his hand down the back of Brian's slip. He could resist it no longer. Brian responded by clasping his arms round the teacher and cocking one leg across his. Even though just minutes earlier he had jetted sperm all across his chest, and some of it was still damp on his slip, he

found himself becoming excited again. He pressed his swelling cock against the thigh of the teacher's track-suit.

‘What about boys?’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Did you fancy other boys when you were a senior here? Or was it just with Pat-a-cake that you got your thrills?’

‘Brian, you don't ask questions like that!’

‘I do!’ He wrapped his leg tight around the teacher's and slipped his hand down the waistband of Peter Holdsworth's track suit.

Suddenly Brian knew what was exciting him, and it excited him even more because it was so wicked:

‘What about me, Sir? D'you fancy me?’

‘Brian!’ Peter pushed the boy away from him, alarmed.

‘Fuck it, Sir, you're only five years older than me. What's the harm if you do? I quite fancy you, you know. You're groovy!’ He snuggled closer again.

‘Yes, I fancy you!’ Peter said. There was a tone of despair in his voice, but excitement, too. He slipped his finger back down into the groove between Brian Miners's cheeks.

Five minutes later they were both undressed and locked into the secrecy of the sickbay. And there they slept. And an hour and a half later, and from time to time throughout the night, woke up to enjoy frantic, hectic love-making. They had gone too far now; there could be no looking back. The swimming team never got finalised till next morning. And both had bleary eyes, sore cocks and aching balls as they sat down to breakfast.

‘*Bonjour ma classe!*’

‘*Bonjour Madame!*’

‘*Qu’est-ce que vous allez faire pendant les petites vacances?*’ Mme. Guillard’s question was greeted by a sea of blank faces. ‘Come on, you know what *les petites vacances* are, surely? Mathers? Hadleigh? Geens? De Filbert, *qu’est-ce que tu vas faire pendant les petites vacances?*’

Jean-Philippe shrugged his shoulders. ‘*Je ne sais pas, Madame.*’ He understood the question well enough; but he had never realised that they had any *petites vacances* at Mertons; he certainly didn’t know what he was going to do during them. The very idea rather worried him.

‘What are *les petites vacances*, then? Winters?’

Barnaby shook his head and looked blank. French was a stupid language, even more stupid than Latin. Why couldn’t ‘grannies’ learn to speak English, like de Filbert had done, instead of them having to learn French? He looked out of the window as if to seek inspiration from the trees, but no inspiration came. He shook his head again: ‘I don’t know, Miss.’

‘Well at least answer in French: *Je ne sais pas, Madame.*’

‘*Dge ne say par, Medarm,*’ responded Winters dutifully. And even if he did *savoir*, he jolly well wasn’t saying! He hated trying to talk French.

‘Hadleigh, *tu es intelligent; que veut dire “les petites vacances”?*’

‘*Je ne sais pas, Madame.*’ He shook his head too, though, unlike his friend, he enjoyed learning French and wasn’t too bad at it. But he couldn’t remember ever having heard this expression before.

‘*Le congé de demi-trimestre*, then?’ She wrote both expressions on the board. ‘Surely you know what that means? *Demi—trimestre.*’

‘Oh, half-term, Miss,’ said Hadders in a flash of inspiration.

‘That’s right! Well done! And what do *les petites vacances* mean literally?’

‘The little holidays, Miss?’

‘That’s it. That’s what half-term is, isn’t it: a little holiday? Now then, what are you all planning to do during the little holidays. *Qu’est-ce que vous allez faire pendant les petites vacances?*’

Jean-Philippe was worried about it. Having had his squashin’s, he went into the Chapel during morning break, as he sometimes did when he needed to seek inspiration. It was a small chapel, wooden built, and very different from the gothic buildings full of rich stained glass which he had been used to at home. But he had been devoutly brought up, kept a crucifix beside his bed, and always crossed himself and genuflected when he came into this holy place. He knelt down in one of the pews and asked God what he was supposed to be doing during the half-term. All the other boys were going away—mostly to their own homes and families, though Barchy was off to Uncle Frank’s because his parents were still out in Kenya. But what was he supposed to be doing?

Philippe knelt in silence to try to listen for an answer. He knew *le bon Dieu* always answered prayers, even though the answer was sometimes no. But there must be a yes answer to this problem, surely.

He opened his eyes and peeped through his clasped fingers. There, above the altar, was the only stained glass in the windows: the Lord Jesus with his hands out in welcome: ‘Come unto me...’ Jean-Philippe couldn’t help smiling. *C’était fou, cela!* That was a fat lot of use. He couldn’t really come and camp-out in Chapel for a week. He remained in prayer. He could hear the voices of his fellows on the

playground outside, the thump-thump of tennis-balls being knocked up against a wall, the delighted screams of little squits pretending they were aeroplanes. He could hear a bee buzzing up against a window in this chapel, and the drone of a mowing-machine on the playing fields somewhere outside. He could hear footsteps too; someone else was coming into Chapel to pray.

Jean-Philippe buried his head in his arms. The person came in and stood at the back for a while. Philippe could tell by the footfall. Then the person came up the aisle, into his pew—Philippe could feel the seats sway—and sat down beside him. A hand took hold of his.

Philippe's curiosity could contain itself no longer. He looked up. 'André!'

'I knew you were in here. I saw you slip in. And when you didn't come out for so long I got worried. I was afraid there might be something the matter. What's up?'

Philippe scrambled up from his knees and sat down beside his friend. Close beside him. They held hands. 'I don't know what I am doing for half-term.'

'Oh... Yes... I see... You're not going back to France, then?'

'Not that I know. And it is too late to try arrange it now. M. de Salles knows not about there be the little *vacances*; and Mme. Guillard say that they be next weekend, so it is too late to go write now. I do not know what I must do, and the Lord Jesus just say "Come to me".' He pointed to the picture with a little smile.

Andy looked at the simple picture. He knew it so well: the Lord in a white robe surrounded by sheep on the hills of Galilee, holding out his hands, already scarred by the stigmata and saying those immortal words of welcome. The colours were pastel shades and the morning sun still streamed in from that direction above the altar.

'You could always come to me, I suppose. I don't know what my parents would say about it, but I could ask them. We have a very small flat and you would have to share my room—have to share my bed. You wouldn't mind that, of course, and neither would I, but I'm not sure how my parents would take to the idea—especially my dad; he's very straight-laced. I don't think he would approve at all of me hopping into bed with a little boy nearly three years younger than me—but I can ask.'

'What else am I to do? I do not not want to stay at the school all the week!' He squeezed Andy's hand and already felt better. Andy always made him feel strong. They left the chapel hand in hand. In the privacy of the porch they kissed goodbye. Slowly. Lingeringly. Lips to lips. Andy felt very aroused. He pressed against Philippe in a little corner. Cor! He wondered if his parents would approve.

'You'll never guess,' said Andy that evening in the privacy of the book-store, to which the prefects had an illicit key and which they sometimes used as a secret hideaway. 'I've got my little Jean-Philippe coming for half-term. Or at least I think I have, hope I have, if I can persuade my parents to agree. He certainly wants to come!'

'I bet he does,' mocked Brazier. 'But he's too young yet. I don't reckon he'll be doing it for at least another three years.'

'What about Katey? She'll never cum at all, however long you wait.'

'But I produce enough for the both of us,' Jimmy countered proudly. 'Besides, girls have orgasms too, but in a different way.'

'How do you know? You've never got that far with Katey; you've admitted it yourself.'

'All in good time. I will. I will.'

'Just cos she wanks your willie for you doesn't mean you're an expert in all gynaecological problems, you know!'

'Shaddup, Prince Charming! You know I don't like long words like that. What does it mean, in any case?'

'The problems of women,' replied Chanting.

‘The problem with women is that you haven’t got one. You need to get yourself a bird, Andy. Then you’d know what it’s like instead of just bugging about with dear-Feel-my-butt.’

‘He’s great though! It’s Brian here who needs someone to love. How are you doing, Brian, me old feller?’ Miners had kept remarkably silent during most of the conversation so far.

‘Got yerself a lover yet?’

Brian blushed crimson.

‘He has! Look at his face! Who is it, you old bastard? Did you finally make it with little Larsen last night? Or Miss Arthur?’

‘Wouldn’t you be surprised?’

‘Come on, tell us. We’ve always said no secrets. You have got someone, haven’t you?’

‘I might have.’ Brian tried to sound non-committal but only succeeded in arousing their interests even more.

‘Who is it?’

‘I’m not saying. I’ve only done it once.’

‘Male or female?’

‘No comment!’

‘Did you enjoy it?’

Brian fluttered his eyebrows excitedly. He obviously did.

‘Did they enjoy it?’

‘I think so.’

‘When are you seeing them again?’

‘Dunno.’

‘Tonight?’

‘Doubt it. Though I see them practically every day.’

‘Someone in the school then?’

‘Maybe.’

‘It’s got to be, if you see them every day,’ concluded Jimmy. ‘A boy?’

‘It might be. On the other hand it might not. Don’t worry, I’m not saying—not even to you two. I promised him I wouldn’t.’

‘It is a boy then, if you promised *him*.’

‘Not necessarily!’ Brian groaned; how long was this catechism going to last? He wasn’t very good at deception and saying the right thing.

‘“Not necessarily”?’ That must mean... a man! You’re not having it away with old Thompo are you? I thought you said your balls-rot was better this week and you were no longer going to him.’

‘My lips are sealed.’

Jimmy Brazier looked at him with friendly contempt as the start-of-Prep bell rang. ‘Cock-sucker! Sealed? I bet they’re not really!’ He put his forefinger in his mouth and made a wet slurping sound.

### 13.

‘Andy, *j’ai reçu une lettre*—I’ve received a letter. M. de Salles does know about half-term; the school to him has written about it, and I fly there Saturday morning. Is good, *hein?*’

‘*Très bon*. You’re pleased?’

‘Mmm!’ His eyes sparkled at the thought of seeing M. de Salles again, and of Colette’s good cooking.

‘I’d hoped...although I’m pretty certain my parents wouldn’t have...’

‘Hey, Winters!’ De Filbert was so excited about his letter he couldn’t wait for Chanting to finish. ‘I have received a letter. From *mon tuteur* in France....’

Andy watched the two young bottoms disappear down the passageway together, then turned and went on his way. His way happened to lead him past the P.E. store, an area normally out of bounds to boys without permission, so he was surprised to discover Barchester surreptitiously creeping out of the door. He was about to question him, which he was entitled to do as a prefect, when Mr. Holdsworth came out as well, looking distinctly dishevelled and breathless.

‘Oh. It’s all right, Chanting. I’ve just had him in—to help me with something.’

As soon as they were both out of earshot, Andy said softly but scathingly to no one in particular, ‘Ooh, Sir, can I have your permission to *have* him in there—to help me, too?’

Andy thought about it all day. He knew how willing Karl-Mark Barchester would be if opportunity presented itself, ever since his own little episode with him up the oak-tree six weeks before. Had the kid now managed to seduce the P.E. teacher too? Would Patting spank Mr. Holdsworth if he ever found out? The idea was too ridiculous for words, but the thought of a teacher being bent over and having his pants pulled down by Pat-a-Cake appealed to Chanting’s sense of the ridiculous. He said nothing to anyone about the incident. He could not really imagine the gentle and well-disciplined Mr. Holdsworth having sex with one of the boys. And besides, too many horrid rumours started in just such an innocent way.

Some torrid rumour might equally well have started about Miss Katherine Saddleworth’s visit to the book-store that evening—and in this case there would have been more substance to it. Luckily she was not observed.

Jimmy Brazier had had a Tute. He had done his best to be attentive to what Mr. Saddleworth was telling him, but yet another study of U-shaped glaciated valleys and V-shaped river-cut gorges paled beside his anticipation of exploring far warmer valleys and fissures once the session was over.

Katey was standing in the utility room when he came out of her father’s study. She gave a discrete little wave to show that she had noted his departure, waited for almost a minute, and then slipped out by the other door. They met in the orchard.

‘When are you going to take me to meet the others, Jimmy? You keep promising.’

‘What do you want to meet them for?’

‘The more the merrier!’

Katey was sixteen—an intriguing two years older than the Tops. She prided herself that she had had a clandestine boyfriend among the older boys each of the past three years.

Katey went to a Convent school, a forcing-ground for young gentlewomen which kept men and boys firmly outside of the school gates. Katey resented this. She rebelled. Although she was very cautious never to go too far, she loved the danger of her clandestine meetings with the boys of the school where her father taught, and she always found the youngsters themselves eager accomplices.

‘Jimmy, I want to meet Andy and Brian tonight—before you all go off on half-term.’ She undid the top

button of her blouse which she knew nearly always could be called upon to bring out a Yes response.

‘Okay, come with me, then.’

Keeping a weather eye open for Mr. Timbers, they set off back to the school, hand in hand. It was only a couple of hundred yards, and the path was deserted.

Gerald Jackson was sweating. It had been so unfair. Typical of bloody Timbers. And Larsen had started it, after all. Snide, sex-starved Timbers in his sneaky sneakers. What right had he to be prowling round the boggeries? Timbers was a bloody great queer. He got his kicks by being cruel to little boys. He was a sadist., a swine, and a sex-starved sycophant, pandering to Pat-a-Cake by bringing him a constant supply of little bum-boys to beat. Jackson knew he was in for it. He looked at his watch yet again. Two minutes till bath-time; he might as well start going up now. He packed his books into his locker.

‘You’d best not come in with me. Just pretend you’re going to the Library for something—you know where it is. Give me two or three minutes to get in first. We’ll be waiting for yer. Should be pretty safe: all the Middles and Squits will be in bed already; the Removes’ll just be going up, so there’s only the Tops. See yer.’ He mouthed a kiss in Katey’s direction and gave her hand a quick squeeze before disappearing through the side entrance.

Three minutes later Katey emerged from the rhododendrons. She had decided on the excuse that she needed a book on tea clippers for a school project in Home Economics. It sounded plausible enough.

But the library was deserted. There was no sign of Jim, nor of the others. She made for the reference shelves. It was all so exciting—the sweet flavour of forbidden fruit. She knew she might get caught—but so what? That was part of the excitement of it. But the main thing was to seduce two more Mertons boys and add two more notches to the golden candle she kept in her bedside drawer. And she had her tape-measure in the tiny pocket in her skirt.

‘Psst! Kate!’ It was a whisper. She did not look round at first. To her surprise it came from over her right shoulder, from the far end of the library. There had been no one in there a few seconds before.

After a quick glance at the main oak door—which was firmly shut—she turned towards the voice. Three faces looked out from a small doorway she had never noticed before between the cases of books. The room behind them was dark. Jimmy beckoned with his finger.

‘No one’ll catch us in here,’ Jimmy said, ‘specially if we lock the door.’ He led her in, grabbed her in a great hug and kissed her hard on the mouth. ‘It’s a darned sight safer here than in your dad’s potting shed.’ He started to undo his trousers with one hand. ‘By the way—this is Brian ... and Andy.’

‘Hi, lads. Pleased to meet you. I’m Katherine... or Katey.’

The newly-introduced shook hands—very shyly on the boys’ part. Kate shook her head to get her long tresses neatly draped over her shoulders. She put her hands on Andy’s shoulders—she was an inch taller than even him—and gave him a kiss on his cheek; and then another full on his lips. ‘You like kissing?’

With wet lips slopped by her saliva, Andy wasn’t sure that he did; he tried to look eager while at the same time wiping his moist mouth clean on the back of his hand. He was, however, becoming a little excited, and he slipped his hand into his trouser pocket.

‘Now then, hands off!’ Katey joked as soon as she noticed. ‘What do you think *I’m* here for?’ She cupped the front of his trousers in her left hand and gave him another kiss, this one on the nose.

‘And you’re Brian, and you’ve got three brothers, and you’ve never had a girl-friend. That right? Will I do?’ She wiggled her chest. She put her arms around him, pressed her breasts against him and fondled his tail. ‘You going to give me a kiss?’ She leant back slightly and looked into his eyes. He reminded her somewhat of a frightened rabbit. She loved boys like this. She loved breaking in green-horns, although, in her experience at Mertons School, their little horns were never as green as the boys themselves. ‘You want to undo my blouse?’ She obligingly untucked it from her skirt to encourage him, and kept hold of his



tail with both hands so that he could not run away. 'Go on—I won't eat you!'

She waited patiently while Brian summoned up the courage to open up the first button, stroking the seat of his trousers the whole time and thrusting her loins against his.

Brian was all fingers and thumbs. He had dreamt for so long of a chance like this, but now that the opportunity offered itself he could hardly bring himself to take advantage of it. He was, in short, scared stiff. He didn't know why, but it all seemed so wicked, so cold and so clinical—especially with the other two looking on. He had dreamt of clandestine amours with Miss Arthur or Amanda, but they had only been wet dreams. He had enjoyed himself beating off with Andy and Jim and other friends over the years, but that had been a mechanical easing of mutual adolescent tensions. The only time he had ever felt any passion about love-making was that night with Mr. Holdsworth, but he had been trying to forget it ever since: one could not possibly be 'in love' with a man—a teacher.

'Come on, Brian, stop pussy-footing around! Oohh, I need it tonight!'

Jimmy was already half-stripped. He stood there in his shirt-tails and underpants. His trousers were draped over the corner of a shelf. 'Go on, Kate,' he said, 'do what you usually do!' He slipped his right hand down inside the front of his pants and felt the oozing tip of his 14-year-old tool. He had a peep to check that it was firm and ready. Then he sneaked up behind Kate, sandwiching her between himself and Miners *ma*. and undid the rest of her blouse. He cupped her two little breastlets in each hand. 'We gotta go to bed soon, so let's get on with it. You don't mind the others seeing, do you?'

'Not as long as I can see them,' said Katey. She felt the front of Andy's trousers again and gave him a sex-hungry wink.

'Me first, though. Them after.' Jimmy jumped on the table and pulled back his shirt. The state of his rampant penis was clear for all to see, thrusting out the front of his pants. 'Gimme a blow job tonight!' He looked pleadingly into her eyes as she approached the table. 'I'm not ashamed—Brian and Andy have seen it even more often than you.'

Katey pulled down his pants and released the boy's coil-taut penis, which sprang out from confinement into the free air and vibrated for a moment like a Jew's harp. She took it gently in her hand.

Mr. Anglomead put his head round the bathroom door. 'Ah, Jackson, here you are. When you have finished your bath, Mr. Patting wants to see you in his study. Quick as you can, please.'

The inevitable had happened.

'Uh, oh, Jacko. What you been up to?'

'Where you bin this time?!'

'Hurts after a bath, I can tell you. The skin's all soft and tender. It fair stings.'

Jacko scrambled out and started to dry himself.

'Ooh, what a pretty little bum!' said the boy in the nearest bath, flicking it with a wet flannel. 'Bet Patsy will dig that!'

'Dig *into* it, more like. You want to take a cork, Jacko—keep him out.'

Despite Miss Arthur's mild disapproval, the Removes were full of ribald ribbing, although they felt sorry for poor Jacko on the carpet. Over a quarter of them knew from personal experience what it was like to receive a summons to The Study, and those who had never writhed under the whacks themselves knew well enough what was involved from lurid stories the victims told afterwards. Even Miss Arthur had heard it all before.

'Good luck, Jacko—have a nice smacko!' they exhorted him as he put on his dressing-gown, draped his towel over his shoulder and went off in the direction of the Headmaster's.

'Fuck Timbers!' thought Jackson.

'Who's next, then?' asked Katey, massaging the little white pools and splashes of Jimmy's sperm into

his chest and tummy. He had been very quick tonight—he'd spurted almost before she had got started. She had hardly even put her lips to it before he gasped out the message that it was on its way. Being done in front of his friends had been a special turn-on.

But his friends were less forthcoming. It was a first time for them: a first time with Katey, a first time with any girl, a first time in public (wanking off didn't count). Brian and Andy looked at each other nervously, each willing the other to go first.

'Come on, Brian, I fancy you.' He looked the greener of the two—shorter by two inches, and still with his white-rabbit look of sheer panic. She ogled him and massaged her breasts: they were firm and round, well developed. She was three years the boys' senior. 'Show me what you're made of.'

She knelt at Brian's feet, grasping his buttocks again. She sniffed the front of his trousers, then kissed it, then nuzzled it. She could feel that he was turned on; she rubbed the firm ridge lovingly with her chin and with her nose. 'That nice?'

Brian did not answer. He glanced quickly around at his spectators. Jimmy was sitting on the edge of the table, gently wanking again as he watched the progress of Katey's live-show. Andy stood half-hidden in a corner dreading his turn. It had all been so exciting in anticipation. But now....

Before Brian could say or do a thing, he felt his trousers being undone. He froze. It wasn't that he was shy: Andy and Jim had seen it often enough before, and obviously Kate wasn't going to be shocked. It was just that... he didn't really know why he felt as he did. Perhaps it was the thought of how his mum would react. Now his trousers were sagging around his knees. Katey was rubbing the front of his underpants. Katey was kissing them. Katey was pulling them down. Teasingly. Tantalisingly. Inch by sexy inch. No professional in Soho could be more adept than Kate in bringing on inexperienced new-boys—she found them a thrilling challenge.

She released Brian's penis from the white cotton undies. 'Why, it's lovely!' She kissed its pink tip. 'Come on, Andy—get your pants off, too.'

Nervously, Andy stepped forward and allowed his trousers to be undone, his weapon taken out. Kate's hands were soft and gentle and obviously quite used to handling delicate objects—quite used to measuring them too, which she was doing now with her pocket tape-measure, to record in her book. Length and girth. Andy allowed himself to be measured up, proud to be informed that his was the longest Katey had ever yet seen. She then started measuring the boys—chest, waist, thighs, inside leg, hips. Brian was short and muscular, Andy tall and lean. It was all a big game, and Kate allowed each of the boys to measure her boobs... and her inside leg, though she wouldn't allow them to remove her skirt or anything more.

Suddenly they were no longer ashamed of playing half-naked in front of her; their boyish bowsprits swayed in front of them wherever they went. They almost lost track of time, until the deep, mellow chime of the library clock next door brought them back to reality.

'S okay,' said Brazier helpfully. 'Anglopod's on duty tonight. He won't notice if we're a bit late. Just time to let Katey bring you off before we go up.'

The two boys allowed themselves to be laid side by side on the table while Katey wanked them, one in each hand, and Jimmy got dressed and made encouraging noises. The boys tried to relax; tried to believe it was all natural; tried to pretend it was fun. It was fun; but it was so unreal. So clinical; so mechanical. Not really what making love was all about.

In a couple of minutes Andy fired, shooting his sperm over his stomach, and Brian's stomach, too. But despite Katey's best endeavours—her hands, her lips, her tongue—Brian was quite unable to climax. He just dried up. Bitterly ashamed of his failure, the boy finally had to admit defeat. It was nearly ten minutes past their bedtime; even Anglopod was likely to become suspicious soon.

'But Mr. Timbers tells me he found the two of you in the same cubicle. What were you doing?'

Jackson did not answer.

‘Do you normally go into the same toilet cubicle as another boy—especially one who is four years younger than yourself?’

Jackson remained dumb.

‘Do you admit that you even *were* in the same cubicle, or do you deny it?’

Jacko continued his silence.

‘Take off your dressing-gown.’ The moment of truth had come; the inevitable moment which Jacko knew would be upon him once again, sooner or later. He draped his wet towel and sponge-bag over the back of a chair and took off his bath-robe. Since he had come straight from the baths, he wore nothing else but his slippers. He stood there, nude, in front of the Headmaster, examining the same old carpet he had seen so many times before. He knew every inch of its pattern.

‘I’m going to have to beat you; you realise that, don’t you? We cannot have boys sharing the same lavatory cubicle. Have you nothing to say for yourself?’ The old man looked the young boy up and down—and then up again, to where he most liked to look. Gerald Jackson was already turning into a very attractive young man: well-developed muscles, a fine bush of pubic hair—just the headmaster’s type. Patting longed to bend him over and thrash him once more, but he had one problem.

‘Have you just come from a bath?’

‘Sir.’

‘I’m prepared to put some surgical spirit on first if you like.’

Jackson still refused to answer. He knew perfectly well the headmaster’s real motive for wanting to anoint his arse, but that didn’t worry him. If Pat-a-Cake liked to get his kicks by petting a boy’s buns, that was *his* problem. Jacko couldn’t care less either way, although certainly anything which assuaged the immediate sting of Whip-o-Will was worth accepting. He just felt bitter that he should be here in any case; after all, they had done nothing except examine each other. Timbertops had come in and caught them before they’d really even started.

‘Bend over, then!’

Jackson obeyed.

‘Legs open a bit more.’ Jackson smelt the surgical spirit first as the headmaster opened the bottle, and then felt its sharp icy-cold on his tail. The headmaster did a slow and thorough job with his bare hand, constantly going back to the bottle for another little splash. The headmaster wasn’t content with just the cheeks for very long. Soon Pat-a-Cake’s trembling hands were rubbing right up and down between his legs where the cane would never reach; then the boy felt fingers pulling apart the cleft between his cheeks and feeling in there. As the headmaster gained in confidence and found the boy did not protest, the manual massage became even more intimate, until at last it started probing the very well-head itself.

‘Sir,’ Jacko said, ‘I don’t think the cane is going to sting me in there, is it?’ But he didn’t try to stop him. Rather, he bent over further still.

‘Sorry, I wasn’t thinking.’ Pat-a-Cake took out his finger. ‘Now, I will ask you one more time what you were doing in the toilet with young Larsen.’

‘Nothing, Sir. Mr. Timbers just imagined it.’ It was a desperate last-minute hope, but it was worth a try.

‘Is that true? Can you stand there and say that to me looking me straight in the eyes?’

Jackson repeated his lie—that was easy enough. But he made almost no eye contact, for the headmaster by now was far more interested in the swelling effect which the intimate massage had had on the boy’s figure-head than in the truth of the tale. He watched the swaying phallus bob and curtsy its way through the repeated falsehood. ‘We never did a thing, Sir. Mr. Timbers made it all up, Sir....’ Yes, old Pat-a-Cake was distracted. Patting had seen it before; other members of staff had seen it before; many of the boys had seen it all before; even Matron and Miss Arthur had each seen it up before. What was in a

stiff cock to be ashamed of? He continued his desperate excuse: 'You can ask Larsen if you like, Sir. See what he says....'

'I have. Gerald, I have. And it puts me into a very difficult position. Earlier this evening I had him here in this study, and he told me exactly the same story as you do. But somehow I feel I have to accept the word of my members of staff rather than the prevarications made up by two grubby-minded little boys who want to avoid a beating. Are you sure that Mr. Timbers was mistaken?'

Gerald Jackson swallowed hard. Amazed. 'Sir,' was all he could say.

'Then in that case, I must believe you. Or at least give you the benefit of the doubt. Case dismissed. I won't beat you this evening after all. But next time it may be twice as hard, so don't get caught with young Larsen again.' The Headmaster picked up the boy's dressing-gown and held it out for him to get into. But he also managed to slip his hand inside and give the lad's tail a last little touch. 'It would have been a shame to have marked a beautiful bottom like this one just before half-term, wouldn't it?' he said with a half smile.

'Sir, I can't help it,' said Jacko, with a feeling of infinite relief, and suddenly swept with a desire to tease, 'When you stroke my bum like that, it makes my cock go all hard—see?' He opened his dressing-gown to allow a final look. He knew it never did any harm to keep on the right side of the Head. He made his penis jerk up and down to wave goodbye. How long, he wondered, would it be before he was called back for another sexy spanking session? Some time soon after half-term, no doubt. He closed the study door behind him and went back to his dorm, full of great relief.

Katey kissed her parents good-night, got undressed and snuggled into bed. She got out her secret candle from the bedside drawer, and a nail-file, and scored two new notches into the wax. She entered the vital statistics, with initials, into her private diary.

Brazier threw back his blankets and draped himself in a single sheet. He opened his pyjamas and drew out his fiery wick. Oh what a girl Katey was! Oh, how she did it! He spun out his pleasure lovingly and lingeringly, staining his jim-jams twice more before he was in a fit state to go to sleep.

Brian Miners tossed and turned... well, *tossed*, at any rate. He was so ashamed of disgracing himself. What had happened? Things had never gone like that before. And he had been looking forward to this chance, with Jimmy's promises, for so long—for weeks, if not for months. He kept pumping now in sheer frustration. Pumping till it hurt.

Andy stripped off his clothes and folded them neatly onto his bedside chair. He was late, and Philippe was fast asleep. He looked at the little boy lying there under the thin sheet. What would Katey look like, he wondered, covered only in a sheet? He remembered her long, silky hair, her soft fingers, her pointed nails, her ticklesome touch. It had been great fun—but... But what? He looked at Jean-Philippe's clipped hair and button nose and felt suddenly excited. The sheet wrapped his bottom tightly and contoured his boyishness. Andrew pulled the covering back and climbed in beside him. He snuggled tight against Jean-Philippe's radiant warmth. Katey had been fun, but there was nothing quite like this.

Suddenly he was intensely aroused. Urgently aroused. He thrust himself between Philippe's soft legs. The boy never stirred. Nightly love-making was part of their life by now; Jean-Philippe could even sleep serenely though it, and then, even when Andrew anointed his lover's young thighs with the milk of human kindness, the boy never twitched a muscle. Andy sighed, deeply moved, and kissed the boy's hair. What a difference there was between Jean-Philippe, warm and sweet, curled against him in total sleeping trust, and the mechanical, imperious hands of Katherine; how lucky he was, at the early age of fourteen, to learn the difference between a lover and a whore!

Brian's tool was still standing high and dry... especially dry. He had tried to imagine Katey but that had done no good at all. He tried with Miss Arthur, and Amanda, but tonight that was no better. He tried to share in Jimmy's satisfaction by reliving their play, but that was not the thing for him. He thought of Finn

Larsen with negative results, turned his attention to Andy and Jean-Philippe, but envy got him nowhere. He was still quite unstirred—pump how hard or how gently he might. He began to panic. Was there something wrong with him? It had never taken him this long before.

And what if Mr. Holdsworth came in and caught him wanking again? That was so embarrassing, even if it did lead to... Now he was determined to succeed. He got up and headed next door, to the sick-bay; there he would not be disturbed.

He locked the door behind him and lay down on top of the bed. Images of last week floated before his eyes: the swimming coach sitting beside the bed; the swimming coach holding his hand. He couldn't get Mr. Holdsworth out of his mind. He remembered the teacher's hard stump, the curly hair around it; the memory was dangerously exciting. He remembered how Peter Holdsworth had stroked his back, stroked his thigh, touched his cock. It was as though the teacher was touching it now, although that was absurd. His grasp was strong and firm—so different from Katey's soft, white hands. Holdsworth had a man's hands, a man's touch, strong and commanding.

Suddenly, before he had realised it, Brian had soaked the sick-bay counterpane. And Peter Holdsworth was mopping it all up for him, wiping him clean on the pouch of his own jock-strap. Brian opened his eyes, but, of course, he was alone. Alone on a spunk-spattered coverlet. Peter Holdsworth was only his dream.

Brian slipped back to his bed in the L dorm and was soon asleep.

## 14.

Swimming was a sport in which Mertons did not really excel; for the boys on the team the meet at Halfordberry was a fun event, and they didn't expect to win many races. Halfordberry took it all so seriously. Halfordberry took *everything* so seriously. They had a beautiful pool in beautiful grounds not far from London airport. They were thoroughly organised, with stewards and marshals and time-keepers—and even a video crew to record the event. And rows of boys, sitting on the turf in neat ranks, turned up to support their team.

Mr. Holdsworth would have liked a copy of the video—for the sake of the opposition. Halfordberry were all kitted out in team togs—wispy, white nylon, sheer Speedos, freaky and figure-hugging. Once they were wet, one could see at a glance who was hairy and who was not; it showed through quite clearly. And with a little bit of attention and imagination one could see far more than that. A few of the shyer boys looked almost embarrassed to wear their team trunks: they were nearly as revealing as the Emperor's new clothes.

Mr. Holdsworth volunteered to supervise the changing-rooms afterwards while the host staff finalised the scores and the results sheets and organised the clearing-up. It was quite crowded with two teams in one small dressing-room, but he managed to wriggle his way through the dripping bodies to the far end and chat up three or four of the Halfordberry swimmers. There was a nice boy who had raced against Barney Winters; his parents owned an apartment in the naturist enclave at Cap d'Agde; his hair was bleached by the sun, and he had a deep all-over tan which he happily showed off to the visiting coach. Peter Holdsworth had never seen such a brown bottom before. Yes, he would have loved a video—especially if it had been taken in the changing-room.

Barney was the centre of attention at the far end. He had won his Junior Medley (against the boy from Cap d'Agde), one of the few events in which Mertons really did well. Barney was the hero of the match, along with Jacko who had snatched a win in the Senior Butterfly. Jackson had high hopes of being Captain next year.

Mertons were in celebratory mood—what little they had to celebrate. They stripped their two victors out of their trunks and bundled them bare into the bogs. They wouldn't let them out again either until the two heroes had given each other a cock-kiss, which neither of them was in the least bit loath to do. They stood at the urinal, tingling their tips together, surrounded by the Mertons team, while Eddie Miners kept guard and the two prefects pretended not to notice.

Barney was furious. This had been his moment of glory, and neither of his parents had turned up to watch. Not that he had really expected them to; he had written to them three times about the match, and telephoned them too. That night after chuckie he got permission to ring his mum up to share his triumph, but she had never even listened.

'Wotcha kid! Took Gloria rahnd Aunt Mary's s'a'ernoon. We 'ad a wonderful toime. Aunt Mary and Uncle Jack's just got got back from Gowzo; met Janine vere. Yer remember Janine?'

'No, Mum. Mum—this afternoon...'

'Dad's offtuh Manchester termorra, and 'Uddersfield la'er. We tell yer 'e was out 'n place called Boardoaks last week?

'Somewhere 'n France, near the coast.'

'Yes, Mum. Mum, we 'ad our... Mum!!'

But she was already off again—about Gloria's new push-chair. His money ran out while she was still

talking. But then why should she be worried that her only son had been the *victor ludorum* of today's match? She had much more important things on her mind, like the patchwork she was making for the Wandsworth Women's sale of work. A counterpane for the old folk.

Nobody loved him. Nobody cared tuppence about him. Then he bumped into Jackson. 'Hiya, handsome! You comin' down to the pool?' Mr. Holdsworth had declared a Team Swim in honour of their efforts that afternoon. Jacko already had his towel over his shoulder and his trunks on his head like a crown. 'I'll wait for you,' said the older boy as Winters scuttled off to the changing-rooms to collect his.

The boys were soon splashing around in the water. De Filbert was there, and Winters, two Minerses, Chanting and Jackson and nine other boys who made up the full team. Somehow Barchester had managed to slip in, too, without anyone objecting. Barney and Jean-Philippe were delighted to see him: Mr. Holdsworth could be relied upon to turn a blind eye to fairly naughty behaviour, and some of the seniors, Chanting and Jackson among them, knew that Barchy was always good for a laugh and so were quite happy to allow him to join in their fun. A game of tig-and-chase soon developed around the pool side: a sort of strip tig-and-chase in which some of the younger boys were already losing their cozzies.

Brian Miners, Captain of Swimming, was sitting on a bench with the team coach. He wasn't really feeling like a swim this evening, although he had changed ready for it. He wrapped his towel around his shoulders and sat talking to the teacher. 'Why don't you stop them?'

'They're not doing any harm, are they?'

'No, but...' Winters dashed by, closely pursued by Jackson. Winters was already trunkless; Jacko was using the younger boy's cozzie like a whip on his bare bum; at least someone was showing an interest in Barney, even if his mum didn't. The two boys dived into the water and fought together. Barchy joined in to try to 'rescue' his friend, and Chanting joined the attack—while Brian Miners tut-tutted disapprovingly. There was a splash of his mother's blood in him somewhere.

The teacher smiled at the prefect's sudden priggishness. 'Everybody knows boys like to be boys, B., and nobody cares much—providing it doesn't get out of hand.'

'Yes, but...'

'It's rather like speeding. The law says maximum of seventy miles per hour on a motorway, 'cause it has to draw the line somewhere. But how many people really obey that? Not many do; and even the police don't pay much notice, providing you don't go too far above the seventy. Most people stick roughly within the law.'

Jean-Philippe de Filbert strode past with his trunks firmly tied in place. 'Spoil-sport!' shouted Jacko after him from the shallow end. 'I only wanted a bit of fun!' He turned his attention back to Winters.

There was a gigglesome scream as three youngsters scrambled out of the water to avoid the excited pursuit of a determined Andy Chanting. Then Holdsworth and Miners got splashed as a squeaking, squealing Karl-Mark dashed by, holding out a stumpy stiff cock in his right hand.

'Sorry, Brian; you don't mind, do you?' said Andy, grabbing the captain's younger brother and deftly removing his trunks. 'Here, grab these!' He chunked the wet swim suit into Brian's lap as both boys dived quickly back into the water.

'Coo, my brother's getting a big kid now, isn't he?' said Brian. 'I haven't seen him with a hard-on for ages. I hadn't realised how he is growing. Well, he is nearly thirteen.'

'Still not as chunky as you,' said the teacher, glancing down momentarily at the front of the prefect's swimwear. He was delighted to find that Brian was nearly as cocky as everyone else. A really good time was being had by all—not least by Andy who currently had Barchy bent over the edge of the pool and his finger feeling up the Mousehole. Jacko was chasing de Filbert and Winters again, and a load of others.

And then it suddenly happened....

It was no-one's fault in particular. Just one of those things. A hurly-burly of mainly younger

swimmers dashed across the deep end of the pool, chased by seniors. Suddenly de Filbert slipped and fell hard against the end of the diving-board. He gashed his face on a bolt retaining the board and stumbled headlong over it, catching his leg and nearly breaking it. Eddie Miners fell on top of him. There soon seemed to be blood everywhere.

Andy pulled his finger out of Barchy and was out of the water like a shot. He ran to the deep end and carried his bleeding beloved to the pump-room where Mr. Holdsworth kept his first-aid kit. The P.E. instructor sent everyone off to get changed—suddenly in a much more subdued mood. Brian stood by trying to help.

‘I don’t think it’s half as bad as it looked at first,’ said Mr. Holdsworth, dabbing at Jean-Philippe’s face with some cotton-wool and TCP. ‘That’s the trouble with a pool accident: the water makes the blood spread further, and everything appears much more dramatic than it really is. Besides, a face wound always tends to bleed a lot.’

Soon only a little blood was trickling from de Filbert’s upper cheek, just below his eye. ‘You had better sit here for a moment,’ said Peter Holdsworth, ‘and get over the immediate shock. Then we’ll get you back up to Matron’s and let her have a look at it. Andy, can you go next door and make sure the others are changing properly and behaving themselves?’ He draped a large dry towel over Jean-Philippe’s shoulders and then watched Miners combing his hair. What a fine firm belly the youth had—how nicely his muscles were shaping up!

By the time Andy got through to the changing-room, half the boys had already gone and most of the rest were nearly changed. They feared there might be trouble about the incident and wanted to get away as quickly as possible. But the main ring-leaders were the least concerned of all. Andy was surprised to find three or four more sets of clothes still hanging on the hooks beside his own. A noise from the bogs soon told him why. Andy went to investigate.

In the pump-room, Mr. Holdsworth asked, ‘Fancy a cup of tea, anyone? Probably do you good, Philippe. You want one too, B.?’ The teacher plugged in the kettle.

‘Thank you, Sir.’ They waited for it to boil.

Chanting, meanwhile, sneaked into the boggery.

‘...I bet you daren’t get it in!’ Barchester was bending over, almost touching his toes. Jacko was standing close behind him, trunks round his thighs. Winters was posted look-out, but not very effectively because he was quite unaware of Chanting’s arrival until the prefect was already standing beside him. Chanting gulped. As a prefect he ought to stop it. But he had been chasing Kiss-Me for half the evening. His finger still smelt of the mousetrap cheese.

‘Hiya, Chanting. Just having a bit o’ fun,’ said Jacko, quite unperturbed at the interruption. He pressed home his assault. ‘Your turn after me, okay? Oough! That feels good!’

‘Jacko, you’ll get shot!’ said Andy. ‘Sir’s only just next door.’

‘Stuff him—I’ll fuck him next if he wants. Any case, it’s Barchy ’ere wot’s gonna get “shot”, ain’t yer kiddo?’ He eased himself around inside the younger boy, getting themselves comfortable.

Chanting looked at Winters. His stretched out boyhood swayed in front of him like a fishing-rod—long, curved and graceful. Barney grinned impishly and flashed his dimple. ‘Wannit, Chanting? Go on. Do wiv me wot yer does wiv Filbert.’ He stroked his cock invitingly.

‘What do you mean?’ Chanting said, trying to sound as innocent as possible.

‘Come orf it. You knows. What yer was tryin’ ter do wiv me in the pool just now ’n any case. We knows what yer does wiv Fillibum!’ Barney reached out and pulled at the waistband of Andy’s trunks.

‘I’ve never done anything!’ But Chanting couldn’t help blushing. He was sure his little lover had never let anything slip.

‘Don’t give me that. Or... *do!* If you’ve never ’ad it off with Granny’s tadpole, yer can at least play



wiv mine. Yer wants ter, don't yer?' He grabbed the front of the prefect's trunks. 'I don't care; I loves it, even if Granny's a closed hole and a soft-cock and won't play.'

A few moments later Barney had Chanting stretched out on a towel on the floor, enjoying a sixty-niner. How could Andy pass up such an opportunity—especially when Jacko and Kiss-Me were already thrashing about and grunting and groaning in an up and cumming consummation. Andy, flat on the floor, had his hand grasping Barchy's short-cut, and his mouth tasting Barney's dollipop.

And that was how Philippe caught them, when his cut had finished bleeding.

'Philippe, I've said I'm sorry. And I'll say it a hundred times more if it will do any good.' The boy had a very black black-eye this morning, and a little nick on his cheek held together with one of Matron's butterfly plasters. He wouldn't speak, and had refused to allow Andy near his bed either last night or this morning.

'I love you, Pip, more than ever with your poor eye. You know that, surely?' He took the boy gently by the hand. It was the first touch which Jean-Philippe had allowed him since yesterday evening. 'Please, can we talk?'

*'Il n'y a rien à dire.'*

'Eh?'

Philippe didn't elaborate. He shook off the prefect's hand and looked down at his scuffed sandals. He did not know what to say or think or do. He loved Andy still; there was no doubt of that. But Andy had let him down. Let him down badly. Andy had betrayed his trust, and his love. Philippe had caught him making love with both his best friends. That was unforgivable. Andy was Philippe's *enamouré*. He should not go messing around with anybody else, and to do so with those two, of all people... that was quite inexcusable. Confused, Jean-Philippe turned to walk away.

'My pet. My poppet...' Andy put his hands round him. It was rather a public passageway but he had to take any opportunity that offered itself. He bent forward and kissed the boy's hair. Philippe didn't react.

'Chanting! De Filbert!' Why did Timbers always have to be in the wrong place at the wrong time? 'What are you doing skulking around in here during break? Go outside and get some fresh air.... No. De Filbert, make yourself useful first for a change. Take these books to the staff-room for me.'

The two boys went off in opposite directions.

15.

It was Friday evening before Jean-Philippe relented. They had passed three unhappy and lonely nights, each in his own bed, and now half-term was already upon them and they wouldn't see one another again for over a week.

But if Jean-Philippe de Filbert had known of Andy Chanting's behaviour just before bedtime that very night, he might not have forgiven him even then.

There had been no Prep and Katey had sneaked over to the library again, just as the removes were going up to bed. Brian Miners was nowhere to be found, but James and Andy had entertained their guest in his absence. The little trio had spent a happy half hour. Andy had examined inch by inch the contours of a female *poitrine*, done so with the same delicacy of touch that he would use to explore the tasty texture and tenderness of his little Frog's legs. Katey meanwhile had taken his cock between her teeth, before handily and handsomely extracting a milk-shake from it.

Miners all this time was down at the pump-room, helping to get the pool sorted out before half-term. With Peter Holdsworth he had tidied the room and cleaned the filters; they had mopped the floors with smelly disinfectant. He had been persuaded to dive in and collect some loose pebbles and a Deutsche Mark from the bottom of the pool, and now they were sharing a brew of coffee.

'Brian, I'm going to miss you when you leave.'

'Sir, I've got to pass Common Entrance first.'

'You will, I'm sure. What are you doing over Half-Term? Revising?'

'Probably. You doing anything special, Sir?' Brian put down his cup, unhitched his towel from round his waist, and started to dry his hair. He was wearing no trunks; it hadn't been worth it, just for a few pebbles and a coin.

'I'm helping a friend run a swimming course. Up in Leicester.' The teacher took hold of the towel and helped to massage the boy's hair.

'That sounds fun.'

'He's planning to start with a six-o'clock dip every morning, to wake them up.'

'All boys, Sir?'

'Naturally...' The teacher started to massage the swimmer's chest and back.

'Wish I could come.'

Peter Holdsworth stopped what he was doing and pursued in his mind an exciting new possibility. 'Would you like to?' he asked. 'We could use an extra pair of hands. They are all rather younger boys—Eddie and Anselm's ages—so you could give demonstrations when we're teaching technique.'

'Uh... I don't know. Where is it?'

'At a sort of holiday-camp place near Leicester. An old house with dormitory accommodation, a communal dining-room, a pool, and goodness knows what else....'

Brian stretched out on an old lilo on the floor, he was getting interested. He didn't really much fancy the idea of a full week of half-term at home—with his mum, being expected to swot for C.E., with pi-jaw Ambrose preaching down his throat the whole time, and with Eddie and awful Anselm.

He draped his towel across his groin and lay there listening to his teacher talk about the course. How great it was to be treated as a friend, almost as an equal! They talked and talked, about last Tuesday's match, about Common Entrance, about Brian's brothers. Nothing about sex. His concern about their one night of love-making seemed so unimportant now.

To Peter, too, it was just so comfortable—Brian lolling on the lilo with nothing on, his hair-fringed

fourteen-year-old cock with its loose skinny tip lying there limp and luscious below his loins. Teacher and boy had adjusted to each other's level. Peter Holdsworth had perched on the edge of the inflated mattress. The towel slipped right away; Brian just lay there in the nude, in the snug warmth of the pump-room on a summer's evening. They were friends, secretly, privately, on their own. Peter Holdsworth lay down beside the boy; Brian willingly made room. They chatted till it was time to go to bed.

Without really thinking about what he was doing, Brian kissed the teacher good-night before he left. It just felt right.

Andy returned to the dorm, thankful he had at least had Katey to get it off with. It had been better this time, but still not as lively and exciting as with a boy—with Winters or Barchester, let alone with darling Jean-Philippe. Girls were a giggle, Andy had decided, but not half as much fun as a really nice little boy.

Philippe appeared to be fast asleep. Andy looked at the lad sadly as he undressed. How he wished they could make it up; how he regretted upsetting the boy—and so thoughtlessly, too. It would be a miserable half-term, being still estranged. He went off for his bath. He and Jimmy had so much to tell Brian Miners; but Brian was being very reticent over where he had been all evening. He would not say a word.

When he returned to their room he could hardly believe his eyes. There was someone in his bed. Someone very wide awake. Someone wrapped around in nothing but his sheet. Someone with an impish grin on his face and tears leaking out of the corners of his eyes. 'Oh, Andy,' cried Jean-Philippe, 'it has been horrible this week!'

Andy hung up his towel, kicked off his slippers and was into bed like a shot. Their bodies pressed together, clutched together, clasped together. They hugged and kissed and nuzzled. They fondled and felt. 'How is your eye getting on, my black-eyed beauty?' Andy kissed the bruised cheek.

'It's not bad; but my thigh is still *vachement tendre*—very tender.... *Merde alors! Précisément là!*'

'Philippe... I am sorry about Tuesday.'

'I know. So am I. But for why you did it?'

'I never dreamt you would mind—so much.'

'But you love *me*, don't you?'

'Of course I do, my pet.' Andy licked inside the boy's nostrils in his old affectionate way.

'But why you make love with Barney and Karl-Mark, too, then?'

'It was only a bit of fun.'

'Am I not fun?'

'No, my poppet.'

What!?'

'You're... well, much more than that.'

'*Bon!*'

'So... can't I have *fun* with other people?'

'No!' Jean-Philippe said hotly, 'You is in love with me, no? You make your love with me. I am not render my body to other people for love; only with you. Why you make love with other people, not me?'

Andy could not follow this Gallic logic, and he decided not to try. Now was the opportunity for making up. He pulled back the sheet, eased himself into the middle of the bed and lay on his back. He picked the boy up and turned him around. And he started to suck the smooth, sweet-scented, soft and silky seat; to kiss the cool cheeks; to explore that sunken valley; to probe the cave mouth with his tongue. His hands fondled the exquisite *cuisses de grenouille*, as Barney Winters might have called them if he'd been more awake in French class. He found all this so much more exciting than exploring Katey's handsome hillocks, round and firm though they were.

Philippe's lips were now where Katey's had been an hour before, and this time he went the whole

way. He took the loving spurt, the concentrated boy-cream full in his mouth. And swallowed it down.

Andy kissed the little acorn good night and they locked their naked bodies tight together to fall asleep. Around midnight Francis Thompson, making his nightly rounds, was delighted to note the reconciliation.

Andy Chanting went home to the small flat in Campden Hill Road for half-term.

Karl-Mark, the Mousehole, had to stay with Uncle Frank (poor thing!); his parents were still away—down in Mombasa, now.

Barney went home to Mum and Gloria, and hated it. Dad was still up at Huddersfield, and Barney detested being dragged round the shops, or for their afternoon walk in the Park. On Tuesday morning, while Mum was out and he was baby-minding, he explored the telephone directory. There was a whole column of Thompkinses in the book, but far fewer with the initial F, and fewer still in West London. On his third call he got through to a shrill voice he recognised immediately.

‘Barchy?’

‘Hi!’

‘Didn’t take you long to answer the phone; it had hardly started to ring.’

‘But Uncle Frank’s got one right beside the bed.’

‘Are you in bed?! What’s up? It’s nearly eleven o’clock.’

‘Nothing’s up. Well, not at the moment. We’re resting at the moment. But we were rather late getting to sleep last night, so we’re making up for it this morning.’

‘Oh. I’s wond’rin’ if I could come rahnd sometime.’

‘Course. I’m sure.... Uncle Frank, could Bamaby Winters come round and visit us one day?... Yes. He says “Welcome”. Any time you like. Whenever your mum will let you.’

The Minerses got a visit on Sunday from Mr. Holdsworth who immediately set about persuading them that sport and relaxation were far more important at this stage than last minute cramming. With success. That afternoon Brian packed his bags and in the evening the two of them took the train up to Leicester.

‘I haven’t got to sleep in a dorm with all the kids, have I?’

‘Why, where else?’

‘Where are you? I am coming as a sort of Assistant Instructor, after all.’

It turned out that there was a spare bed in Peter’s room, so things were very quickly rearranged on their arrival. After the second night Brian decided the springs of his bed were far too creaky and kept him awake, so he moved in with Peter. At first there was just a bit of playful petting but slowly it became more and more serious, and more and more erotic. On Wednesday they locked the bedroom door, and by Thursday night they were making no further pretence at decorum. Things had just slowly worked out between them; it had all seemed so natural. Friday night they were contorted together in what could only be called a passionate embrace, and before the dormitory boys had finished their own midnight sexual feasting, the friendship between Brian and Peter Holdsworth had once again been consummated in an outpouring of love and *latte d’amore*.

‘Brian, you swear you won’t say anything at school, don’t you!’

‘It’ll be bloody hard not to let on to Jim and Andy; we share all our secrets. But I’ll do my best.’

They mopped up with a towel and went to sleep.

The hired car pulled up on the *château* terrace, and M. de Salles was waiting for him—sitting and reading in the sun. ‘Ah, mon brave! Mon ami! Mon bien aimé!’ He hugged the boy warmly. ‘My, how you’ve grown! And your hair too. *Qui t’a poché l’oeil?* How did you get the black eye?’ He paid the taxi and led the boy inside to an *assortiment de pâtisseries* and to the embraces and welcome of the delighted Colette and Georges.

‘*Et tes amis? Tes copains?—Sharnting, Vinters, Barshetaire. Comment vont-ils?*’

‘*Rare!...*’

‘Now tell me about *l’oeil poché*. Vot ’append?’

Jean-Philippe explained briefly about the accident, and then added, ‘*J’ai une grande ecchymose sur ma cuisse aussi.*’ He pulled up the leg of his shorts to show the livid blue bruise; ‘and Matron has given me *de l’onguent* to put on it four times a day. Should we use some now?’ He went to his shoulder-bag and brought out a brown glass bottle. ‘Sometimes she use a cloth; sometimes her bare hand.’

Faced with the choice, Georges de Salle quickly opted for his bare hand and set to work immediately, delighted to have the child back with him.

Bathtime that night was fun. Jean-Philippe had left the door open and answered with a happy ‘*Entrez!*’ when M. de Salles knocked to ask whether the boy wanted his wounds treated again before he went to bed. ‘*Entrez, entrez, Monsieur! Veuillez entrer!*’ said the boy, lying back in the foam-filled bath. ‘*Venez bavarder!*’

Georges de Salles accepted the offer and went in for a chat. Jean-Philippe had become so relaxed and easy to get on with. At Eastertime the bathroom door had always been firmly locked; the boy was as shy and nervous as a baby lamb. But now... English school life had obviously suited him well; he was full of the joys of Spring. Full of laughter and smiles. M. de Salles admired his pretty little chest, his dimpled cheek, his impish grin; and from time to time he was able to admire his dainty feet or delicate legs as the boy lifted one or other above the layer of bubbles. After ten minutes’ chat—about Chapel, Latin, English, Mr. Timbers, their den, and skinny-dipping in the pool—he washed and dried the boy’s hair for him, loving the feel of the soft shampoo in the lad’s locks. He tried to peep down into the sudsy water, but it was too deep and too soapy to see anything interesting. He had to allow his imagination to portray *le bouchon bouffant, les beaux bonbons imbaisables—ces bijoux du baigneur*. Finally, with a kiss, he left the room to allow the boy to rinse himself off and to get out and dry. ‘*Je retournerai à cinq minutes à te traiter de l’onguent*; I’ll be back in five minutes to rub in your ointment.’

When he returned, the boy was in his bedroom, scenting himself and brushing his hair. He had a bath-robe on. The bed was already stripped back. M. de Salles treated his cut cheek and black eye first.

‘And now your leg?’

‘*Merci, Monsieur.* You are too kind. And though you have rough hands, your touch is so much more gentle than Matron’s.’ He gave the man a kiss. ‘I like school; but I is so happy to be back here again, too!’ Philippe bounced excitedly onto the bed and stretched himself out on it. With a delighted grin, he unwrapped his bath-robe. He wore nothing underneath. His sore blue thigh shone out like a blistered melon; and right beside it clustered his other little bunch of fruits. He gave the man a dimpled smile: ‘You have the bottle, Monsieur?’

M. de Salles swallowed hard. Was the boy really going to let him touch him like that? Yes, clearly he was. Jean-Philippe never moved, except to stretch wide his legs. M. de Salles poured some unguent onto his fingers. ‘All right?’ he checked. Philippe smiled. De Salles touched his thigh, massaged it, rubbed it with gentle fingers. With throbbing heart he slowly worked higher and higher, nearer and nearer to those forbidden fruits. And the boy never stirred—he just smiled with utter pleasure and spread open his legs.

‘Andy Chanting calls this “my little acorn”,’ he said, pointing it out, ‘because it is so small.’

In the days that followed they went skinny-dipping in the lake—or Jean-Philippe skinny-dipped and M. de Salles watched. They went for drives in the hired car. They took Philippe for a haircut. Jean-Philippe loved climbing trees. Afterwards he would go to the lake to wash himself clean, then he would lie in the sun to dry. They always forgot to take towel or trunks with them for these trips. The bruises were improving greatly by mid-week, but they still got treated a full four times a day—both man and boy

always made sure of that. And the love grew between them. They never *made* love. Neither ever thought of that. Georges de Salles knew he was far too old even to dream of such a thing, and Philippe kept himself for Andy alone.

Until Friday.

Friday was so warm. They had gone tree-climbing; and then swimming; and then drying in the sun. Philippe had caught the sun a bit the day before, so M. de Salles had taken the precaution of having some cream with him today. And an old rug to lie on. After the swim, he had massaged Philippe's back first, right up and down, rubbing in the cream as he lay on his stomach. The boy had spread his legs wide, and had had them creamed next. Finally Georges de Salles had even massaged the twin orbs of his bottom, and the boy had loved it. '*Merci, Monsieur. C'est vachement agréable!*'

They spoke of Mr. Thompson and Mr. Holdsworth. Jean-Philippe was allowed to do more of the talking by now; he had so much to tell about school life. The teachers at Mertons were obviously kind and sympathetic—except for Mr. Timbers. Then, after half an hour, he rolled over. '*Veillez vous oindre ma poitrine maintenant, Monsieur?*' Jean-Philippe said, unscrewing the bottle. M. de Salles obeyed; but didn't do only his chest—he rubbed the ointment on his legs, his tummy, and then.... The lad was obviously enjoying it, and it showed. Jean-Philippe did nothing to hide the physical manifestation of his enjoyment. He just smiled in warm delight, his cheek demurely dimpled. 'Mr. Thompson tells us this used to happen in the arena at Rome; that's why women weren't allowed to watch the games,' was all he said. And he raised absolutely no objection when the old man briefly anointed that little part of him in Nivea cream as well. '*Merci, Monsieur!*' He lay back, closed his eyes, and enjoyed the heat of the sun.

M. de Salles watched until it slowly went limp. They never did more than that.

It was straight into the foaming 'white water' as soon as the Tops got back from half-term; no further time to worry, sweat or revise. They returned in time for chuckie on Sunday evening, and the Common Entrance examinations started on Monday morning. Andy sucked strength from his little Philippe that evening. He could not wait; he had remained in abstinence all over half-term, and was not surprised to find Philippe had too. 'Monsieur de Salles has oiled my back for the sunburn and put *l'onguent* on my bruise leg, but we have never nothing other done.'

Andy could not even wait for bedtime; he introduced Philippe to the secret sanctum of the book-store, and they made wild, passionate love in there. And then again at bedtime. They slept together that night, delighted to be back in each others' arms. In the morning Andy decided not to sap his strength, so they made do with a little cuddle and a kiss. They certainly knew they were back at school: Naseby had wet his bed again, and it stank.

There was morning Chapel before Common Entrance; the boys filed in at 8.45, as they did five mornings a week, and Mr. Patting, in academic gown, lead them in prayers for a calm and sensible showing of the knowledge which they had acquired in the classroom over the past few years. But he couldn't leave it at that; he had then to go on and exhort them for strength against 'the sins of the world, the flesh and the devil' which seemed to more than one of his disciplinary favourites decidedly hypocritical. Mr. Timbers added a loud Amen.

The reading that morning was of the Good Samaritan, and Philippe could not help thinking of M. de Salles, his kindly fingers up under the leg of his shorts, 'bandaging his wounds, bathing them with oil and wine'. Little did anyone know that this story would come up in the first exam—Scripture. It seemed a good omen to the boys as they sweated over their papers in the dry, airless room.

'I did "David and Goliath", too,' said Brazier later.

'Oh—that's not really your scene, is it?' teased Chanting. 'I didn't think you were into *doing* little boys... or grown men!' He gave Miners *ma*. a wink. 'What would Katey think?'

The meaning was lost on Brazier, who was not of the greatest intelligence, but Miners worried about that wink. Did Andy know something he was not supposed to know? Did Andy know what had been going on at Leicester during half-term? Was Andy aware that he had been having it off with a 'Sir', a grown-up? Brian felt he really must prove himself with Katey now. He couldn't face the thought that perhaps he was becoming 'queer'.

Maths followed. Then English. After lunch it was glaciated valleys that came up, but since the main questions—the ones which carried most marks—both used the word 'moraine' which Brazier had never come across before, Jimmy knew he had not done very well. After Cricket and chuckie, he went over to the Saddleworths, with Brian and Andy, to discuss the paper, or at least that is what they said.

Katey took them deep into the woods—the potting shed was too small, and too close to the house, for the four of them. Jimmy was first, of course; he hadn't seen Katey since before half-term; he needed it now. And she got it—all over her brown skirt.

Andy was ready next. He kissed Katey's breasts, lying on top of her on the stony earth. It wasn't very comfortable, but who cared. He sucked at the broad brown nipples. How soft and tender her skin was, how smooth and supple, how gracefully formed! But he couldn't help thinking of his little Jean-Philippe: he would probably just be having his bath—lowering his lovely bottom into the warm water, getting it all ready for tonight. Andy closed his eyes and mouthed Katey's breasts, thinking of Philippe. That boy meant more to him than anything else in the world. My, how he had missed him last week!

Katey's voice brought him back to reality. 'You ready soon?'

'Yup!' He wriggled round so that he could stroke her long hair while she pumped him off. It was fun, it was different, but it was all so perfunctory. He stroked Katey's flowing tresses and thought of Philippe's new-cut bob. His knob was tingling in Katey's clutch. He raised his hips from the earth. The fire was gathering inside him. She sensed it and pumped harder.

And suddenly he was there. 'Watch out!' he warned. He slipped his hand under Katey's skirt and grasped her thigh. He thought of Philippe's thigh with its big bruise. 'I'm coming!'

Katey pumped, and slipped her free hand between his legs. 'Cum for Auntie Katey!'

He did. But it was not really for Katey. It was for a little boy who might not be as beautiful, as attractively built or as long-haired as a girl, but was certainly far more affectionate and satisfying to know. He gave Katey a portion of his love-juice, but there would be lots more left for later.

Brian took off his trousers and pants as the others had done, and rolled up his shirt around his chest, nervous, determined. Of all the exams that day, this would be the most difficult. He lay down with Katey, gave her a kiss and fondled her breasts. He had never given Peter a kiss—not a proper lover's kiss—and he wasn't very good at it. He felt Katey's breath; she was perfumed; he much preferred Old Spice. He hugged his arms around her as he sometimes hugged Peter. He tried touching her lightly and playfully all over. But she only fondled him in one place.

Katey still had a lot to learn. Her experience had taught her one thing only, really: that men, (or rather, adolescent boys), needed release and relief. She rarely caressed their chests, their waists, their legs, their bottoms. Like a well oiled machine, she had an expert pump action, but that was all.

Brian was a rugby player, a footballer; he liked masculine games. Both he and Peter were sportsmen; their love-feasts involved a lot of play—quite rough play: petting and prying and poking. Brian loved to touch and to be touched, especially with a firm, manly grip. He could do nothing with Katey except gasp and pant, until finally the other boys, growing impatient, grasped him, rolled him over onto his back, stripped him stark naked—shoes and socks as well—and pinned him to the ground while Katey squatted between his legs and brought forth five drops of his male juice. It was a moot point whether her experienced hands, or their rough ones had done the trick.

'How the exams have they went?' Philippe was waiting for Andy when he came up, already snuggled into the prefect's bed.

'Not too bad so far. Budge over.' They wrapped themselves together and embraced, silently, for a good five minutes. There was no need for words: their fingers and their throbbing hearts said it all. It was so wonderful to be back together again.

'We have French tomorrow,' said Andy at last. 'You have taught me so much. I think you'll bring me luck.'

'I have taught you so much? I have taught you nothing!'

'You've taught me that French is a subject I love; and I so much want to learn your language. You've taught me to understand the accent. You've often used words which I didn't know. I love it when you say things to me in French.'

'*Mon bien-aimé*—You know what that means?'

'I think I can guess—my well-beloved?'

'*Mon brave. Mon cher. Mon pépé.*'

'*Mon petit mignon.* I know what that means.'

'*Ma tapette crevée.*'

'What's that?'

Philippe giggled. 'I can't not translate to English. *C'est une grossièreté. Une tapette*, one uses that to beat a carpet; to make it clean; but also...' Philippe grasped the carpet-beater between Andy's legs; it



was firm and ready for action. ‘And crevé—*un pneu crevé?*—a punctured tyre, or worn out. You’ve got a worn-out broomstick!’

‘Not yet, it isn’t. Let’s prove it.’ He rolled the boy over.

‘*Maquereau! Pédale! Empapaouteur! Couillon! Putain!*’ The boy giggled and wriggled as he was mounted by his older friend. He opened his legs obligingly to take the carpet-beater between his thighs, and then closed them again to lock it in place.

‘Shhh! You’ll wake up the others. Someone will hear us!’ Jean-Philippe buried his face in the pillow to smother his giggles as Andy started to use and abuse him. The sheet had slipped off and Andy’s arse rose and fell in rhythmic rapture. Oh how he loved this boy! He gave his whole body to Cupid’s ball-game. By comparison, Katey was just a masturbation machine. She might suit Jimmy Brazier, but she was not enough for Andrew Chanting. ‘Philippe, I love you! *Mon bien aimé. Mon petit mignon...*’

‘*André, j’ai soif. Donnez-moi une boisson ce soir.*’

‘Two months ago, when you first arrived, I wouldn’t have understood that, but now I do. You want it in your mouth, do you?’

‘Please. Then I really feel part of it. You are not just making love to me; I am making love with you!’

They turned over and changed positions. Philippe lay with his head towards the foot of the bed, while Andy knelt astride him. He grasped Andy’s larger cheeks and clutched at them eagerly. ‘*Oh, quel cul tu as! Qu’un tendre trou!*’ he said, tickling the tight tail, while Andy leant forward and took the firm little acorn between his lips.

Neither of them heard the footsteps in the corridor. The visitor was an hour early on his rounds tonight, but he was quite used to treading softly so as never to disturb his sleeping charges.

‘*Ça va? C’est agréable?*’

‘*Bien sur.*’

‘*Tu l’aime?*’

‘*Toujours. Avec toi.*’

‘Wouldn’t it be awful if Thompo or someone came and caught us.’

‘Mmm. You think he might?’

‘I doubt it, my pet. Ooh, get on with it now. I must get my beauty sleep before the exams tomorrow.’

‘*Mais nous pratiquons français!*’

‘*C’est vrai!*’

‘*Les français, nous sommes une nation amoureuse.*’

‘*C’est vrai aussi. Et toi, tu es très amoureuse!*’

‘*Amour-EUX.*’

‘*Amour-euse... ma petite fillette!*’

Mr. Thompson realised at once that he hadn’t been heard. From outside the door he watched and listened in amazed fascination. He had seen most things during his seven years at Mertons School, but never this. He had never witnessed two boys actually in the act of making love before. He froze in the doorway, trying to understand the French. He was staggered at the fluency with which Chanting was now speaking the language.

But Andy and Philippe didn’t freeze. On a hot summer evening they were nice and warm. Andy’s thin, sun-tanned bottom was going up and down like a power-pump—the piston pulsating into the gulping cylinder of Philippe’s lips. The housemaster watched them for a while and tried to imagine how young Philippe might be feeling. It worried him in part; and yet the boy seemed to be happy enough—blissfully happy, in fact, enjoying every moment of it. He came, after all, from *une nation amoureuse*. Mr. Thompson decided not to disturb them but made a mental note to check on Philippe’s feelings, to make sure that the boy was happy and not feeling abused.

In the English essay exam Chanting chose the title *Falling Out*, and told of a tiff with a girlfriend because a lover had been found in someone else's arms. Half way through he began to realise he should have chosen one of the other offered titles —his story had somehow become a bit too personal.

French went well, though not for Jimmy Brazier who thought '*Mon séjour en France*' meant my sea journey to France; nor perhaps for Miners who got a bit carried away when asked to write a letter to an imaginary French pen-friend about the teachers at his school. '*Le professeur de gymnastique est très agreable. Nous faisons la natation, et le semaine dernier j'ai allé sur un course avec lui. Nous dormions dans la même salle de couché, mais mon lit faizait toujours un bruit quand je le rockais. En fin it me faudrait dormir dans le même lit que monsieur, et nous passeons des nuits très amusant.*' Brian suddenly thought better of it and crossed out the last sentence in case questions should get asked.

History and Science were horrible. None of the things they had revised came up.

After chuckie, de Filbert was summoned to Mr. Thompson's study. He wondered why and couldn't help worrying.

'Ah, Philippe, come in. Nice to see you. Take a seat.' He Pointed to the big arm-chair, but Philippe preferred a *pouffe*. 'How are you liking Mertons School? Are you properly settled in?'

'Thank you, Sir. I have been here two months now. I think I am.'

'You had a good half-term?'

'Lovely. But it is nice to be back here again, too. I told *mon tuteur* so many things about school; I think he knows I am very happy.'

'Good. But how do the boys treat you? They don't laugh at you because you are foreign?'

'They sometimes laugh at my accent. But I don't mind that; I know they don't mean it. And Winters, he calls me "Granny" because I am *une grenouille*—a frog. But he does not mean it either; it is just that he does not speak French very well. No. All are very kind.'

'Good. I thought you might say that. I hoped so, at any rate. You always seem to be very popular.'

'Thank you, Sir.'

'But popularity can sometimes be a little dangerous. How do the bigger boys treat you?'

'Sir?'

'Do any of the older boys ever cause you any trouble?'

'No, Sir. In what way, Sir?'

'Well sometimes... Jean-Philippe, you are a very good-looking young boy; and sometimes at boarding-schools... Well... Well, sometimes little boys are picked on in boarding-school in a special way. Sort of... Well, older boys want to do naughty things with them. You haven't had any tops or removes who've wanted to do naughty things with you? Have caused you trouble or embarrassment?'

Jean-Philippe could feel himself blushing. 'No, Sir.'

'No one who's said or done anything you haven't wanted?' Philippe's face got brighter and brighter. He didn't answer but just looked at his scuffed sandals. What would his father say if he could see him now? Was he letting down the family? He had never complained about it; never said anything. In fact he had almost forgotten the incident, although it had upset him at the time. He wondered how Mr. Thompson had found out.

'Did you know, Sir?'

'Well, maybe; maybe not. Tell me about it.'

'I don't want to be a sneak, Sir.'

'It's not sneaking if you're worried about it. That's what I'm here for. To stop you having to worry.'

'Sir... Sir...' Jean-Philippe sat and thought very deeply. How could he say it without getting him into trouble? He didn't want to hurt him. He did not like hurting anybody. 'It began in the pool, Sir, the evening after our swimming match; the night I had my accident, Sir. But he was only just talking to me.'

Mr. Thompson's brows knotted. It had been going on much longer than this; he knew that. Was Philippe just trying to protect his Andrew? He had seen them in bed together regularly for at least a month before half-term—though never, until last night, actually in the process of making love.

Philippe sat on the *pouffe*, his legs spread wide apart. Mr. Thompson admired the shortness of his shorts, the length of his legs and the petite panties peeping out, as young Philippe knotted his fingers behind his back in embarrassment before continuing. He trusted Mr. Thompson, and yet he didn't want to let anyone down. He swallowed and took a deep breath: 'I wouldn't let him do anything, Sir. I just told him to go away.'

'And did he?'

Tor a while. But then he comes back. He wanted to pull down my trunks, but they were tied up. He tried to finger me a bit, but I said No.'

'What did he do then?'

Philippe blushed 'He pulled up the leg of his own trunks and showed me his.'

'And you touched it?'

'No, Sir!'

'But he touched yours?'

'I would not let him. I do not like to do that. Only if you are in love you do that.'

'So what happened next?'

'That would be sneaking, Sir.' Philippe crossed his legs and his arms. He did not like giving away other people's secrets.

'No, you can tell me.'

Philippe paused before speaking, but he could see Mr. Thompson was expecting an answer. 'He went to play with Winters instead. Barney, he does not mind; he enjoys it. But he hasn't done anything to me since then, Sir.'

'Who is this?'

'I don't want to say, Sir.'

'And this is the only boy—the only senior—who has been a nuisance to you?'

'Yes, Sir.' Jean-Philippe's face looked brighter now. 'I didn't want to go with him because I've got a special friend, and I never want to let him down. But, Sir, Sir... it's not fair because my special friend, he lets *me* down. That evening he went with other boys, even though I keep myself for him.'

The penny was suddenly dropping for Mr. Thompson. The friendship with Chanting was so special that de Filbert didn't even think it necessary to report it. But who was this other boy? It must be——

'Can I put some names to you? Then you won't be sneaking, if I've got them right already, will you? Might the boy be...' Francis Thompson picked on the second most randy boy in the swimming team, after Andrew Chanting: '...Jackson?' De Filbert blushed again. 'And your special friend is—Chanting.'

'Sir, I never told you!'

'No, you never told me. But how does Chanting let you down?'

'He plays around, Sir.'

'With you?'

'With other boys, Sir. I think if you're in love you should only have one friend.'

'And you call it "love", you and Chanting?'

Philippe shrugged. '*L'amour*—that's love in English, isn't it?'

'Mmm.' Mr. Thompson thought deeply; he was used to counselling boys but he had never come across a situation quite like this before. 'You know—when boys are young they often have lots and lots of friendships. You've got other friends too—Hadleigh, Geens, Barchester, Winters....'

'But not like Andy, Sir.'

'But I think you are too young—and so is Chanting—to be thinking of one love. Andy, as you call

him, is experiencing life, is ringing the changes, is trying his luck. That is perfectly right. You are one special part of that. But don't be too possessive. You're not his boy: or you shouldn't be. And he's not yours. I'm glad to hear that you're so fond of him, and that he's fond of you, too. But don't let it get too far. You shouldn't be talking of love... yet... at your age. Now what about Jackson?'

‘What about him, Sir?’

‘Do you want me to warn him off? Tell him to leave you alone? Or are you...?’

Philippe bit his lip and thought. ‘No, thank you, Sir. It's okay. I can manage.’

‘Come and see me, then, if he worries you again. And remember—be friends with Andy but don't fall in love.’

Francis poured himself a large sherry as soon as the door had closed. But they *were* in love, he thought. Even he could see that.

‘Right, take this down in your notebooks: “In the overcrowded cities of the Industrial Revolution...” Capital I and capital R, Mathers! Why haven’t you got your books ready, Winters? I’m not waiting for you; leave a space and catch up later. “...law and order was almost non-existent. There was no regular police force even in London until 1829. Each parish had its magistrates...” Look it up in the dictionary then you’ll learn, won’t you, stupid boy!”...but they weren’t paid. Their job was to question suspects and mete out justice.” T-H-E-I-R, Geens, not T-H-E-R-E. My good de Filbert, that is not how one spells “mete” in this sense. When are you going to learn some basic English, you stupid tadpole?’

‘How is it spelt, Sir? I’ve never come across the word either, and I’m English.’

‘Hadleigh, I thought you had more sense. “Punishments for offenders were severe—when they were caught. In 1757 a woman had her hand branded...” That means burnt, probably with a red-hot poker—no, you don’t need to copy that down. I’m just explaining it to you because you’re a load of thick-heads. “...for stealing. As late as 1831 a nine-year-old boy was hanged on a public gibbet...” G-I-double-B-E-T “...for arson, and ten years later children were still being transported to the colonies, especially Australia, for crimes which they may or may not have committed. Life was harsh, semicolon, punishments severe, full-stop.” Barchester, what’s a gibbet?’

‘The insides of a chicken, Sir.’

‘Don’t be ridiculous. Hadleigh, you are the only person with a grain of common sense in this class; what is a gibbet?’

‘A place where you hang people, Sir.’

‘I do not hang people. I wish I could. If we had a little bit of old-fashioned discipline round here we might get on a damned sight faster. “In the early nineteenth century people could be hanged for murder, treason or piracy, and even for cutting down trees, shooting a rabbit, or stealing something worth no more than 25p.” ’

‘Could you be hanged for being cruel to frogs, Sir?’

‘What is that supposed to mean, Geens?!’

‘Nothing, Sir. Like if you got frogs out of a river and forced them to do something nasty—like having leap-frog races or something.’

‘Detention this afternoon; and write me an essay on playing leap-frog. Yes, Hadleigh? You had your hand up just now.’

‘Oh, nothing, Sir.’

‘Oh yes, something, Sir. What were you going to ask?’

‘Just... what was “arson”, Sir, which the boy was hung for?’

‘He wasn’t “hung”: he was “hanged”. He wasn’t a picture or a raincoat; he had a noose put round his neck. But arson means setting fire to something—like a house.’

‘Thank you, Sir. It’s just that Barchester was getting worried that he might be hanged for arsin’!’ A muffled titter ran round the classroom, but nobody dared laugh out loud in one of Mr. Timbers’s lessons.

‘If I had my way, I would tar and feather, hang, draw and quarter the whole lot of you. Those were the days—when they really knew how to punish! Every teacher would have had his cane, and there would be no lily-livered, namby-pamby sort of castigation like detention. Now, get out your text-books....’

The tops, meanwhile, were sweating over their Latin exam. ‘*Iuvenis et puella constituerunt clam ad silvam ire ubi nox erat.*—A young man and his girl decided to go secretly into the forest while it was

night.' Brazier, who could not understand much of the story, just dreamt of his Katey under a similar predicament.

During his extra P.E., when Kiss-Me had volunteered to help Mr. Holdsworth store away some broken hurdles in the roof-loft of the pavilion, he had plenty to discuss.

'Sir, what does "arson" mean?'

'Setting things on fire.'

'Does it set you on fire when you're arsin' me?' He stripped off his shorts in the dusty attic. K-M got his own way, and his anal satisfaction, most weeks nowadays; and it was almost the end of term after all. But later that evening Peter Holdsworth found himself once again in the small sick-room with the boy he really cared about.

'I've got all the swimming team papers left by Mr. Theobalds from last year, Brian. I thought we'd just do more or less the same. Three age groups—Seniors, Medians and Juniors; all four events for the Seniors—Crawl, Breast, Back and 'Fly—but no butterflies for the middlies and piddlies. And Relays—Freestyle and Medley in two sets: for Seniors, and the rest. What do you think?'

'How about an Individual Medley? I'd love to be able to show up Jacko Jackson.... But I don't know why you needed to consult me... except...' Brian Miners was standing between Peter's legs, combing out his wet hair. Now he ran his comb through his teacher's hair, then hung his dressing-gown and towel on a peg behind the door. He folded back the blankets from the bed, hitched his underpants around his waist and kicked his slippers under a chair. 'You know, I think my brother Eddie's got a pretty shrewd idea what we were getting up to at Leicester last week, but thank goodness Anselm doesn't.'

Peter Holdsworth began to unbutton his shirt. He was delighted that the boy had taken the initiative in jumping into bed in here rather than going back to his own dorm once their formal business had been completed. He kicked off his shoes as Brian moved well over to make enough room for two. 'Oh, why do we have to pretend?' said Brian. 'Wouldn't it be lovely to make love and then to be able to tell everyone about it? I adore having it off with you, Peter. Come on. Quick!'

It flew in through the window and flapped around the dorm, crashing against first one window and then another. It perched for a moment on Dyson's bed, giving a loud and melancholy hoot, before speeding off again. Nixon was the first awake, then Arnold and Gladstone, and soon the whole dorm was alive and rushing round trying to capture the poor, terrified bird. They had switched on the light.

'What the hell's that?' Luckily the sick-bay was right next door, and the two of them were wide awake in an instant. Brian snatched up his dressing-gown and slippers and dashed along the passage. 'What is going on in here?' he roared, with as much authority and volume as he could manage.

'It's an owl. An owl in the dorm. It woke us up.'

'You'll wake the whole damned school up. Get back to your beds. All of you. Immediately.'

Suitably cowed, the boys went back to their bunks.

'Just because I had to go to the bog, there's no need for a noise like that!' He started opening every window as wide as possible to let the bird escape. 'Now, turn over and get back to sleep. I'll put the lights out again in just a moment. Nixon... shuddup!'

Peter Holdsworth scrambled into his clothes. He entered the room. 'What's this pandemonium? I heard it from right downstairs.'

Brian explained. 'If we turn the lights out, I hope it will find its own way out, Sir, I've opened all the windows.' He switched the lights off and squeezed the teacher's hand silently in the darkness before clambering into his rightful bed.

But there were other footsteps now. 'Hello, Peter. What on earth was all that about?' asked Mr. Patting.

'Oh, nothing much. An owl in the dormitory; but the prefect has dealt with it. I was down in the Staff-

room trying to sort out the Swimming Sports when I heard the fuss.’ He went off down the corridor to his own room. But Mr. Patting did not.

Jean-Philippe received a post-card at breakfast the next morning. He got very little mail, so he was delighted. It was written in French, but said—‘Spending some days at Nice. Having a lovely time, but I miss you! Boys here don’t skinny-dip, and don’t want their backs oiling. Pity. See you again in three weeks’ time. Yours, G de S.’

Philippe selotaped it to the inside of his locker.

‘I’ve called you both together,’ began the headmaster after breakfast, having escorted Peter Holdsworth and Brian Miners into his room and settled himself into the big chair behind his desk, ‘to find out a bit more about what was happening in L Dorm last night. There was a bird in there, you say?’

‘Yes, Sir. An owl, Sir.’

‘How come things got so out-of-hand? There was almost a riot going on, as far as I could hear.’

‘I had an—you know, Sir.’ Miners rubbed his stomach. ‘I had to go off to the toilet in the middle of the night.’

‘And you’ve reported to Matron this morning?’

‘It’s better now, Sir. I think it was something we had for chuckie.’

‘Mmm... And you, Peter, you were sorting out things for Swimming Sports? Where did you say you were?’

‘Down in the staff-room. I heard the noise from there.’

‘And you went straight up? You must have gone pretty fast if you arrived there before me.’

‘Yes. I ran up the stairs half-a-dozen at a time. I thought there might have been a fire or something.’

‘So you left all your papers in the staff-room?’

‘Yes... Well, er...’ Holdsworth was beginning to suspect that the Headmaster might have smelt a rat.

‘That’s curious, because when I checked in the staff-room I couldn’t find any papers.’

‘I was in there to tidy things up—early, before breakfast.’

‘Oh, that’s why you were late coming into breakfast, was it? I’m sorry. I thought it was because you had overslept. Still, it’s curious that you could have cleared them away before breakfast because last night, when I checked the staff-room after the midnight escapade, I saw no swimming papers there. You wouldn’t like to produce them for me, would you? Just to prove that they were genuine... that you had actually been sitting up somewhere working on Swimming Sports until nearly one o’clock?’

Peter Holdsworth looked at his shoes. They gave him as little inspiration as they had ever done five years ago or more.

‘I am sorry to cross-question a member of staff in front of a boy—albeit a senior boy, a prefect. I know it’s not etiquette; but I notice you haven’t objected. I believe, you see, that the boy in question is in cahoots with you in a little matter of deception. Miners, you say you were taken ill; you had some tummy trouble or something?’

‘Yes, Sir.’

‘And you went straight to the toilet?’

‘Sir.’

‘And straight back.’

‘Yes Sir, when I’d... “finished”.’

‘You didn’t go via the little sick-bay and leave the door open?’

‘No, Sir?’ By putting an interrogative inflexion into his voice Brian tried to sound as innocent as possible.

‘Brian, where are the underpants you were wearing yesterday, may I ask?’

‘In the wash, Sir. We had clean “bundles” this morning—shirts, pants, socks, the lot.’

‘I see. You put them (the underpants I’m referring to) in the wash yourself? Or rather, in Matron’s basket.’

‘Sir.’

‘So these are not they?’ Mr. Patting carefully spread out a pair of smalls on the top of his desk, and left half a minute’s silence for the three of them to consider them.

‘I found these, Miners, tucked in the bottom of the sick-bay bed, a bed which showed every sign of having been slept in last night. The under-sheet also showed signs of an activity which is not necessarily associated with sleep, though I must admit it could be. These are your underpants, I believe? They have your name in them.’ The headmaster checked again to see, but Brian made no answer; he was beginning to feel he might need another clean pair of underpants very soon.

‘Do you have a diary, Mr. Holdsworth?’

The teacher’s hand went to his pocket. Oh, No!

‘Would this be it?’ Pat-a-Cake produced one from the drawer of his desk. ‘Need I tell you where I found it? I can only presume it fell out of your trousers pocket when they were draped over the sick-room chair. Do you have anything you want to say—either of you—in your defence at this stage? If not, I suggest you go away for the moment to give us all time to think over your futures. I suggest it would be in your own interests not to mention this little incident to anybody.’

‘That sounds like the Chapel bell ringing to call us to prayer. Perhaps Chapel would be the most appropriate place for you two to be. Make up for your apparent uncleanness with a bit of godliness. Goodbye to you. I will call for you again later in the day, when I have decided what to do.’ He opened the door and showed them out, before gathering up his prayer books, putting on his gown, tucking his mortar-board under his arm, and preparing himself to lead the daily worship of the school in orisons against ‘the sins of the world, the flesh and the devil’.



18.

Brian Miners didn't sleep well that night. Mr. Patting was obviously making them sweat it out. It had been a long Friday as they awaited their own crucifixion; surely Pat-a-Cake had said he would call for them 'later in the day'; but lunchtime had come, and games, and chuckie, and now bed-time, and still no call. Perhaps he was intending to summon the prefect up from bed in his pyjamas; it would be just like the Old Man to do that. But the summons never came.

Miners dozed fitfully, but could never really get to sleep. Besides, he was disturbed in the middle of the night by little Dyson who had a genuine case of the runs. Four times he paddled off to the toilet and back, keeping Miners awake.

Brian tossed and turned. He knew one way of getting back to sleep, but he felt too inhibited to use it. Patting might check the sheets again. He merely stroked it gently instead.

Barchy was surprised at Mr. Holdsworth's attitude and behaviour the next afternoon. They had been doing Athletics—the high jump—which gave him plenty of opportunity to lie on the mat and open his legs. Normally the teacher would be ogling him constantly, but today he seemed to be in another world. They had had such a grand time up in that loft last Wednesday. What had suddenly gone wrong?

After Athletics that afternoon Jean-Philippe settled down to write a letter. He felt guilty that he had not yet written to M. De Salles to thank him for half-term, and now he had already received that post-card: 'I miss you! Boys here don't skinny-dip, and don't want their backs oiling. Pity.' He filled with warm and happy memories of the old man.

*Mon cher Monsieur de Salles,*

*Je vous remercie pour mes petites vacances à Blois. C'était un séjour si amusant et si agréable, et je vous adore.*

*J'ai tant à vous raconter*—I've got so much to tell you I don't know where to start. Excuse me if I write in English. I am ashamed to say I find it easier than French nowadays. I know you understand.

My friends Barney and Barchy tell me they have a wicked half-term. ('Wicked' is English slang for *fantastique*, although it was rather *malfaisant* as well! They spent sum days on a boat *sur la Tamise* with there uncle Frank. (I'll write it the French way becoss I don't know how to spell Tems in English.) They made *beaucoup de grivoiserie avec lui*. There is only one bunk (*couchette*) in Oncle Franks boat for the three of them so they had much fun! Barney and Barchy is both like that, so is uncle Frank.

Chanting say he missed me *vachement pendant* the holidays. But we made up for it the first night we was back. He is wait now the results of his Comon Entrence but we hope he will reuse (I dont think thats right in English—*réussir* but I dont know the word).

It is only two weeks now before I come home for the holidays. Do you think we could invite Andy over for part of the holiday? He is so nice I think you like him two. I would love to invite some of my other freinds as well like Barchester, Winters and Hadleigh. We could camp *à la grange*. Chanting and Hadleigh both no how to cook so it would not be so much work for Colette.

I remember half-term with *tant de joie*. You was so kind. I like when we swim and climbed

trees. I am sorry the boys of Nice do not like to have oiled but I am glad you oil only me! *C'était délicieux!* If they come in the summer I think Barchester and Winters like also be oil... all over!!! (And under!) Barchester has a very good tan already, he has a sunlamp at home. But I think he like you oil him still! Specially his bottom. Winters you oil in the front, he like that. He's got a b-i-g one, very long, not like my acorn.

Give my love to Georges and Colette, and specially lots and lots of love and goodnight kisses to you.

— Jean-Philippe.

P.S. I've told Barchester, Hadleigh and the others that we can all go swim in the lake, so they all really want to come. Will you come and keep an eye on us to make sure we don't drown?

P.P.S. I hope you licked Nice. Thanks for the card it's in my locker. I look at it every day.

Brian Miners searched everywhere for Peter Holdsworth. He had been away on the last cricket match of the season. It had been an exciting game in which Merton's beat Longgrove by three runs during the last over of the match. But Miners had just received a summons to visit The Study immediately after lunch, and he wanted to have a word with Peter, to consult on policy and to finalise their story, before he went. He didn't know it, but Peter was already standing upon The Carpet.

The headmaster had escorted his young P.E. teacher solemnly into the study, and then had left him there, still standing, to sweat things out a little longer.

Miles Patting had simply slipped away to have a celebratory drink—a mouthwash of Amontillado. He had Peter Holdsworth just where he wanted him—over a barrel. Six years ago he would have loved to have done that literally. Young Peter at ten to thirteen had had a delectable little bottom. Miles Patting had lusted for each excuse he could find to bend him over and examine it. And even now, at nineteen, Peter Holdsworth was still able to excite more than a modicum of lecherous lust in the old man. That was one reason Headmaster Patting had been so happy to give him the post of P.E. teacher. He couldn't really pull Peter's pants down now, but he could tease him and make him sweat. He peeped through a crack in the door and watched the young man shifting his weight uneasily from one foot to the other as he stood staring at his fingernails and wondering where the Head had disappeared to. Then, knocking back the last half glass, he went in, strode to his desk, sat down, sorted through some papers as if seeking for something, and then looked up to peer at his victim.

'Ah, Holdsworth.' He set his elbows on the desk, put his fingertips together, and stared at the boy/young-man silently.

'A bad business. A very bad business, I'm afraid. A business we cannot allow to go on. You realise that, don't you? That you have let down the good name of the school? That you have let down its honour and reputation? That you have behaved in a way that no teacher can be allowed to behave?'

The thought flashed through Peter Holdsworth's head that he had truly lived up to the good name of the school, that he had indeed kept up its long established reputation, but he merely murmured 'Sir' with his head bowed low. He wondered how long he would be allowed for packing his bags and saying his farewells. Would he get the chance to kiss Barchester, and especially Brian Miners, goodbye, or would he be banned from all further contact with the boys? His career was in ruins before it started. He was never likely to get another teaching post again.

'Sir... I...' He tried to put in a plea in mitigation but the words wouldn't come. He knew Patsy Patting was being hypocritical; the headmaster was not without somewhat similar sin himself. There were experts who would argue that the bumming Patting had given Peter as a boy, the hot-house atmosphere of

Mertons School itself, had turned the young man into the person that he was now, but he knew that argument was no use with the old man, and, besides, he didn't believe it himself.

'Sir,' he said again, and counted the diamonds on the carpet.

At last Patting spoke: 'Holdsworth, I suppose I ought to say I'm surprised at you, but I'm not. I suppose I ought to be saying I'm thoroughly shocked, but I'm not that either. I am... disappointed. Disappointed that you have broken my strictest trust and been unable to resist the temptations which are set in front of you. You know how a teacher is supposed to behave towards his charges, and you have abused that trust. You have also, it appears, abused Miners *major* in a most disgraceful and shameful way.' He peered silently at the young student teacher again.

'I only hope that Miners *major* is the only boy you have been abusing. He, I suppose, is old enough to take it; and indeed he gives me every indication that he was complicit in your amatory assignations. How long have you been going with him?'

'Sir! What is that supposed to mean?'

'Exactly what it says. How long have you been carrying on an improper amorous association with him?'

'Sir! Have I been found guilty?'

'Do you plead innocent?'

The look on Peter Holdsworth face answered that one. 'Well, there you are. Look, Peter, this is not a court of law. We are not pleading innocent or guilty. I am dealing with this matter myself, and I have no intention of handing you over to the police—well though I might—for what you have done. I do not wish to make things any more difficult for you than I have to, unless you want to stir up legal claims of harassment or unfair dismissal or anything else—which I am sure would not be in your own best interests. Let us keep this as an internal school matter of discipline. But I want the truth. How long has your affair with Brian Miners been going on?'

'Sir! Thursday night was the first time.' The bright scarlet flush which spread all over the teacher's face gave the lie to that, but Mr. Patting did not comment.

'And have there been any other boys you have got into trouble?'

'Sir! No Sir!' Holdsworth hoped Patting might know nothing about Barchester, although he was confident the Headmaster would have been doing his homework, prying and keeping his ears open.

'Miners is the only one?'

'Y's Sir.'

'And how long have you been going with him? Let's have the truthful answer this time.'

'Sir. He is Captain of Swimming, and we have occasionally discussed swimming teams and things like that.'

'And got along swimmingly! A bit of breaststroke—a few butterfly kisses—crawl into his bed—get him on his back—and then dive in? Is that the idea?'

'Something like that, Sir.' Peter Holdsworth breathed a sigh of hope. When the Headmaster was being flippant and sarcastic it usually meant he was approaching a benevolent mood; he was teasing; he was playing cat and mouse. And if the mouse joined in, there was always hope. The not-so-very-Old Boy took a deep breath. 'But it's not been entirely one-sided, Sir. He's come to me for a bit of coaching; he's a pretty fast kid and wanted to improve his Freestyle. And as for diving, he's been trying to learn how to perform a neat and fancy Reverse Tuck, if you don't mind me saying so.'

'And you've given him special coaching in it all.'

'I've tried.'

'And succeeded—according to the evidence on the sickroom sheet.'

'We've both succeeded, Sir. He's old enough to do it too now, you know. And we've taken it in equal turns to do the sucking and the seeding.' Peter Holdsworth's voice was taking on a slight ring of

confidence. He knew he had little to lose; if he was going to be thrown out, he was going to be thrown out in any case; nothing he said now would change that. On the other hand the Headmaster could occasionally be won around by a bit of salacious talk or outrageously cheeky behaviour.

Miles Patting looked at the young man with the bronze tan and the high cheek-bones. Peter had been out jogging since the afternoon Athletics and was wearing red satin shorts and a sleeveless vest. His powerful young muscles showed through it, and his firm thighs glistened with a silvery down. His buttocks kept twitching nervously inside his tight shorts and his young nostrils flared as if he could breath fire. Attraction, a crush on a schoolboy doesn't die easily, even when that boy is transformed into a young, a very young, man. Mr. Patting would have loved to have pulled those red shorts down, stripped off the cock-strap which he guessed Peter must be wearing, spread his legs wide, and pounded into that palpable posterior. It was six years since he had seen Holdsworth with no clothes on, and he was mentally undressing him now, envying young Miners *major* his luck.

‘Does Miners fancy you?’

‘I don't know, Sir.’

‘But you fancy him?’

‘He's a nice kid.’

‘Does he ask you to get undressed, to show off your body?’

‘No, he just wanted to get into bed.’

‘Do the boys think you're good looking?’

‘Do you, Sir?’

It was Mr. Patting's turn to look red and embarrassed now. ‘Let's stick to the boys, shall we? To young Miners: where have you had him off? Down at the pool?’

‘No, Sir.’

‘In your private room?’

‘No, Sir. I've never taken any boy there.’

‘Where do you go to seduce him?’ Peter noticed that this was sounding less and less like a criminal investigation, that Mr. Patting was in fact turning on to the prospect of coming into possession of more and more intimate details.

‘Nowhere, Sir; just the once in the sick-bay. I had been to Brian's dorm to discuss sports, and we adjourned next door so that our voices would not disturb the sleeping Juniors.’

‘And then, talking after Lights Out, you decided to go for a skinny dip—a skinny dip between his legs.’

Peter Holdsworth took another deep breath and decided to risk all. ‘Sir, don't you sometimes long for a midnight swim with a boy? Looking back on my time as a lad here, Sir, I remember how often you summoned me up for the whacks; and then yourself undressed me in this room as if getting me ready for a bath. But the only wash I ever got was in a shower of my own sweat. You used to love whacking me, Sir, stark naked except for my shoes and socks, and making me sweat. And I wasn't the only boy—then or now. Look at Andy Chanting; you've looked at him enough times over the years, bent across your chair. Perhaps if I fancy Brian Miners now, Sir, it is only because of the way you fancied me as a kid.’

The Headmaster got up from his chair and strolled over to the window. He watched a quartet in the nets. He felt cornered and couldn't look Peter Holdsworth face to face.

‘Isn't it true, Sir?’ Peter Holdsworth went on, taking the bit in his teeth. ‘You fancied me once as much as I fancy Brian now. The only difference is you never took me off to bed. But you still lusted after my body, and longed for each excuse to get your hands on it.’

Miles Patting turned around, his hands deep in his pockets, and shook his head. ‘And still do, Peter. I still do.’ He walked slowly up to the young man, still standing on the carpet, and raised his eyes to meet Peter's. The moment of truth, for both of them, had arrived. ‘I still fancy you. That's why I'm not going to

sack you... why I'm going to keep you here, if you want to stay. You're too good a P.E. teacher to lose.'

They were interrupted by a knock at the door. Miles Patting went to the door and opened it with a dramatic flourish. 'Ah, Miners. At last. We have been waiting for you. Mr. Holdsworth is here already. Come in, boy.'

He closed the door and sat down imposingly at the armchair behind his desk. He was Headmaster once more. The veil of intimacy was drawn closed again. Boy and teacher stood side by side opposite him. Peter Holdsworth just had time to flash Brian a look of hope as the old man sat down, and to grasp his hand for an instant's physical contact.

'I need not beat around the bush. You both know what you are here for. I view it as a matter of the severest gravity; a matter which I am not prepared to condone or allow within the confines of Mertons School. A teacher and a pupil *in flagrante delecto* is unthinkable. I really ought to expel you both, to cast out what are quite clearly rotten apples from our barrel. But I do not wish to ruin either of your careers. You are both young men; the world is all ahead of you. To expel you now would put a blight on both your futures. I am prepared to give you each a second chance....' (Both breathed deep sighs of relief and touched hands again.) '...but...!'

The Headmaster got up and walked over to the window once more as if seeking for inspiration, although he had the whole thing planned already. He had been arranging it for nearly thirty-six hours, honing it, polishing it, planning out every little detail. It would be a wonderful sight, a beautiful spectacle, one he could dream about for weeks. Right through the summer holidays.

'I cannot allow you to go unpunished,' he continued dramatically. 'You must see that, I am sure, both of you. You have been caught committing disgusting behaviour of the utmost gravity. You must pay the price.'

'As you know, I run this school with what is sometimes known as "a rod of iron", although it would be more accurately described as half-a-dozen sticks of cane. One of those will be used this evening to avenge the penalties of your misdeeds.' He went over and opened the door of his cane cupboard. 'Holdsworth, you have bent over my chair often enough before—though not for the last six years. And Miners, the chair is not unknown to you either. When you infringe against our rules you must expect to pay the price. And remember the price today is on special sale offer: it ought to be instant dismissal and disgrace.' The Headmaster pulled out Mr. Whippy and felt its elasticity; it was almost three foot long, narrow, and of varnished cane. He laid it on the desk.

'And Miners, you need not think you are going to get away with wearing those cricket flannels—come here, boy; we'll have them off.' He knelt on the floor and started to unfasten the prefect's cream trousers, opening up the flies, peeping inside, and pulling them gently down. 'Let's have the shirt off too, on a warm summer evening.' He took off the boy's belt, unbuttoned the boy's shirt, and slipped it from his shoulders. He looked at Brian standing there, the stocky and muscular body of a sportsman, wearing only white Y-fronts. The pouch was hanging open, stretched out of shape earlier by the cricketer's 'box', and Mr. Patting could almost see inside.

'Now, four strokes each, I think,' said Patting, arching Mr. Whippy between his hands like a bow.

'Four!' The two young men couldn't believe their ears. They had been resigned to expulsion. If this were ever to be commuted to the whacks, they were expecting the full six apiece. But four! The old man had obviously seen the delicate side of their affection.

Mind you, Mr. Whippy could cut. Four strokes of that could do as much harm as six of the Black Rod he had used on Chanting—as Karl Mark Barchester had found out a few weeks before.

'Four strokes each—but...' Pat-a-Cake brandished the cane menacingly between his fists. 'I do not feel your offences are of equal seriousness. Despite his protestations that you were the first one to leap into bed, my good Miners, I consider it inexcusable for a teacher to take advantage of a boy in this way. I believe he has led you astray; he has got you into trouble; it is his lack of self-control which has brought

you into the mess that you find yourself in at this moment. You will be beaten presently; but first you must exact revenge. Come, you know the drill for a whacking well enough; you have stood on this carpet enough times before now. And so—(I will let you into a secret just between the three of us, which I trust your honesty never to reveal to any of the other boys)—so has Mr. Holdsworth in his younger days. I hand over to you my authority and my cane. You may bend him over, and you may beat him, and you may treat him in whatever way seems appropriate for the way he has molested you. I have never allowed a boy this privilege before, but I can sense there is a bond of closeness between you two, and I shall be interested to see how it reveals itself in these circumstances. Come... beat your own teacher!’

‘Sir, I can’t...’

‘Sir, you must. Sir, you shall.’ Patsy handed him the cane.

‘Bend him over. Pull his shorts down if you wish. I will give you absolute immunity. And I am sure he will not hold it against you... not after what he has already “held against you” in the sick-room bed the other night. Here is the chair.’

Brian looked at Peter. How could he go through with this? But Peter just smiled and nodded: ‘You had best do what the headmaster says.’ He went to the chair.

‘Bend over—Sir.’ Peter did so. ‘Grasp hold of this bottom rung.’ Brian felt a surge of power, the same surge of power which, among other feelings, Pat-a-Cake always felt at this moment. He did not want to hurt the teacher, any more than Patsy ever really wanted to hurt the little bums which were bent over so deliciously in front of him month by month or week by week, but, well, Brian had never had a teacher in this position before and the thrill he experienced was almost electric. He picked up the cane and raised it to his shoulder.

‘Wait!’ said the Headmaster, sitting in the window seat, his hand sunk deep in his trouser pocket. He knew he was in no fit condition to stand up at the moment. ‘Remember, you can pull down his shorts if you want to. You really should. It stings far more on a bare bum.’

‘But I don’t *want* to hurt him, Sir.’

‘Hasn’t he hurt you? Hasn’t he been teaching you the “reverse tuck”? Surely that must have hurt your tail the first time?’

‘The what, Sir?’ Miners was surprised: they had never actually done *that*!

‘Get his shorts down, boy. Do as I say.’ Mr. Pat-a-Cake suddenly had an urgent desire to see his P.E. teacher in the raw. And Brian Miners was magnificent, dancing around in his underpants. ‘Pull them down and don’t be ashamed. You must have seen him bare before.’

Brian grabbed hold of the red athletic pants by the waist. Peter Holdsworth didn’t stir, he didn’t stir as Brian Miners pulled them down, as he touched the bare cheeks with a warm hand, as he rolled up the slender white vest to the shoulders, and as he yanked down the athletic-support as well. Peter Holdsworth stood there, arched across the chair, almost naked.

‘Open your legs a bit more.’ Brian slid his hands between the warm thighs. His teacher obeyed. ‘A bit more still.’ Brian reached through and touched the dangling dagger, just for an instant. How he had got to know that bit of marvellous flesh over the half-term. He was not ashamed to touch it now. ‘Now—knees straight, and try to relax.’ He repeated the patter he had heard half-a-dozen times before—and which Peter Holdsworth had heard more like twenty. Brian brushed his hand across the naked tail, touching briefly the warm crack.

He picked up the cane. Thwack. Thwack. It wasn’t as easy as he thought. Nor as much fun. He saw the red stripes blush up across the cheeks. It was not fun; but it gave a certain excitement. Pat-a-Cake noticed only too quickly; he was watching out for it. A slight stiffness swelled out the front of the cotton Y-fronts. But on P. Holdsworth Esquire the effect was dramatic. A long dangling crane was rapidly swelling below his belly. Thwack again. It shot up another inch. And thwack for the fourth and last time.

‘You may stand up now.’

Peter was standing already. Ramrod rigid. But what did he care? That was what old man Patting had brought him here for, wasn't it? That was why he had arranged this whole pantomime; to see him aroused and excited. And young Brian had seen it all before—had had it in his mouth, and between his legs. Peter stood up and faced his headmaster: 'Happy, Sir?' He leant back to let his young erection, with its golden curls, bob and bow even more majestically. 'Or do you want a closer look?'

Pat-a-Cake ignored him, although he kept taking surreptitious and furtive glances.

'Now Brian; your turn, I'm afraid.' Mr. Patting had managed to tuck things into reasonable respectability inside his trousers. 'You have been gentle and not too hard on Mr. Holdsworth; I noticed that; so I will not be too hard on you. Over the chair!'

Brian bent over. 'Pants down, I think.' Pat-a-Cake pulled them down. Released from the confines, and excited by the sight of his teacher, Brian's bounty began to swell still more. Patting picked up the cane and lashed him once.

'No, Sir, No! I cannot stand here and see him being hurt! Give them to me.'

Peter Holdsworth leapt forward and bent himself over, protecting Brian. His arse was uppermost, and his naked body thrust down against that of the boy. His virility shot between Brian's thighs. 'I'll take it for him, please Sir!' He thrust his arms round the boy and clasped him close. And then he allowed one hand to explore down, to grasp the gyrating *gambetto*. The pain was intense as three more strikes showered down. But the pangs of this martyrdom were well worth it, to protect the boy he loved and to excite the erotic fantasies of a man he so paradoxically admired.

## 19.

Having worshipped the Almighty on Sunday morning, the boys were free to go out to play.

‘Hey, kiddo, what’s happened to you?’

‘Dyson twipped me.’

‘Dyson tripped you? What were you doing?’

‘Playing tig. I went over a twee-stump.’

‘That looks sore. Does it hurt?’

‘Bit.’

‘Have you seen Matron?’

‘Don’t want to. She’ll put me off swimming—just before the waces.’

‘You’re swimming on Saturday, are you? So am I.’ Gerald Jackson took the blood-spattered Danish boy to the tap beside the main field, soaked his own handkerchief and began to bathe the wound. It wasn’t too serious: more mess than anything. He quickly had it cleaned up and the blood stanching. He joked with the boy, played with him, tickled him. Tried to get him laughing again.

But there’s tickling and tickling, and soon the two were giggling and gurgling and making their way secretly into a quieter place—a path which boys never normally went along, with bushes on each side which made good hiding places. It was officially out-of-bounds unless visiting the Saddleworths’ house. But that was the farthest thing from their minds: their blood was boiling with happiness and mutual lust. Finn Larsen had an uncle in Denmark who always used to play with him, and he missed him here at boarding-school. Jackson was the only person who ever gave him half as much fun. Jackson was nearly as naughty as Uncle Niels.

They were soon wriggling side by side on a mossy bank. A little bayonet stood, fixed and rigid, below Larsen’s chubby turn. Jacko grabbed it; Jacko tickled it; Jacko tried to peel the skinny tip back; Jacko ran his finger over the dry crown, causing the boy to squirm with delight. Oh what a boy he was! Jackson wondered if he could possibly arrange to be the right dorm prefect next year. Wouldn’t that be twelve months of wet dreams? He licked lovingly at the boy’s spout, feeling the kid examining his own much greater extension with fascinated admiration.

‘*Cave!*’ The two froze. They could hear voices. People coming along the path. Quickly they zipped up their shorts and tidied their clothes, keeping as still and as silent as they could. The voices passed; it was the three prefects on their way down to Saddleworths’. They breathed a sigh of relief. But their moment of passion had passed; it was too dangerous here. They decided to make their way back to school.

‘It’s all right. I’ve got a secret signal,’ said Jimmy, leading them through the garden and round to the back of the potting-shed. He pulled on a string and blew down a piece of pipe. ‘If she’s at home she’ll hear one of those.’

A couple of minutes later Katey appeared. She was in a bikini. Wow-wee! Jimmy suddenly realised he had never really seen her legs before. Nor her—(wow-wee-er)—bottom. ‘Coo! You as warm this morning as you look?’ he said grasping her in his arms and giving her a slow, passionate kiss. ‘I dig the cozzzy!’

‘You’re not “digging” it too deep!’ said the girl coyly, giving the other two a welcoming smile and a wink. But Jimmy had already unbuckled her bikini top. ‘Say! The Armstrongs next door are away for the weekend. Let’s go and use their pool. They won’t mind, and *I* was going to in any case. It would be much



safer there than here, with the four of us.'

Brian didn't really fancy the idea of swimming today—especially with that welt on his bum. He was in enough trouble already, but he also didn't dare to play chicken. He tiptoed along the *pavé* path with his pals, following the slender naiad.

The Armstrongs' pool was discreetly fenced off from the lawn and flowerbeds. The boys were reaping the advantages of it today; they dived into the pool in their underpants, though these were so ungainly when wet that they soon came off. One by one they took it in turns to escort Katey to the summerhouse.

Without spectators, Brian found it a little easier to produce what was expected of him. Andy and Jim were busy fighting in the pool. He was thankful that he had received only one whack last night. And the evidence of that hardly showed, the others told him. He lay back on the sun-lounger in the summerhouse and remembered last night—giving Peter the whacks, admiring his friend's stiff cock, feeling it between his legs as the teacher took his punishment for him. Katey polished Aladdin's lamp until the genie gushed out, and anointed Brian's belly in seminal spray.

'Jim,' said Katey, after she had serviced all three of them in turn, and they were splashing in the pool together. 'When are you going to introduce me to a new boy for next year when you'll all be gone? Someone in the—what is it—the 'Removes'?—that you call it?'

'Who do you want to meet?'

'The sexiest boy in the Removes!'

'Jackson!' pronounced Andrew without a moment's hesitation. 'Sex mad, Gerald Jackson!'

Meanwhile Gerald Jackson was nearly in trouble. Luckily Larsen had already slipped off, having noticed some friends on the sports field, but Jacko was making his way back to school for a wee-wee, and thinking of the holidays which were coming up in twelve days' time.

He wished he could be seeing his dad, but he knew that would be impossible nowadays. He would love to see his mum again, but she had been dead for—was it five years now? He had to make do with his Gran and Grandad. But there was one consolation: he was going to a summer camp for three weeks shortly, and he was hoping there might be some nice boys there—and girls, too, maybe. There was to be pony-trekking, and that usually attracted the totsies. And there was abseiling, swimming, sailing, canoeing and climbing, all of which appealed to him. There was a rather nice kid from the swimming club at home who was going, too; ten years old, and terribly ticklish. Gerald liked Trevor a lot: they had various interests in common, including... Gerald recalled the incident last Christmas when they had been in the showers together.

'What the Hell do you think you are doing, boy? Don't you know this path is out of bounds?'

'Sir.'

'Where've you been?'

'Nowhere, Sir.'

'This path doesn't lead nowhere!'

Jacko shrugged.

Luckily Timbers was in a hurry. 'Get straight back into school grounds. And don't ever come wandering down this way again.'

Fortunately he could not be bothered to spare the time to set a punishment. He was off to a party in London this afternoon. He hurried on his way.

That night, Sunday, the prefects were invited to strawberries-and-cream with Mr. Thompson and Mr. Anglomead in the resident housemaster's room just before bed. They had already washed and got ready.

'Well, with a bit of luck your results will be through tomorrow. Confident?'

The boys shrugged. Brazier certainly didn't feel it, though the other two stood a reasonably good chance of success. Brazier luckily was trying for a lesser-grade school where the standard at least would not be so high. They were all heading in different directions for the next stage in their careers.

'You going to miss Mertons?'

'Everyone asks us that, Sir. Mr. Holdsworth did the other night.'

'Oh, "Peter" was asking you that, was he, Brian?' said the omniscient housemaster pointedly. 'Did you two have a nice half-term?'

Miners looked at him sharply. What was Mr. Thompson getting at? Did he know things which he shouldn't? Certainly their secret had at least partially come out since the incident of the owl in L dorm three nights before. Brian had discussed matters briefly with Andy. But how much did Thommo really know? More than Mr. Patting, apparently.

'And how's Katey?' asked the teacher equally suddenly, turning his attention to Brazier. 'Have you seen her today?'

'Sir!'

'It's all right. As long as boys are discreet in their explorations, and they do not cause anyone any trouble, we are inclined to overlook them. Andy, I hope Jean-Philippe is not expecting you yet. Is he? You look lovely tucked up in bed together every night, you know.'

'Sir—if you knew all these things, why haven't you tried to stop us?'

'Why should I, Brian? I like to keep my finger on the pulse. But providing the body is not sick, I don't interfere. School is for education, and boys will be boys. There are certain things which one can't teach openly at school but which it is important for boys to learn about. Their bodies, their relationships, their attitudes to life. But there is one question I'd like to ask: are all of you seeing Katey Saddleworth now?'

The three boys blushed and looked at each other in near total confusion.

'I see you are. Graham Saddleworth doesn't know, of course. Or at least I don't think he does. He is not the sort of person to approve if he did. By the way, can you let me have your illicit key to the book-store before you leave? We don't want those circulating too freely. No doubt the new prefects will get their own key cut somehow—they usually manage to do so every year. Now then, more strawberries anyone?'

There was a pause while the housemaster served out the goodies and Mr. Anglomead followed behind with the sugar and cream. It was a rather embarrassed pause because the boys did not know what to make of the teachers' apparent kindness while dangling all their sins and misdemeanours in front of them. What were they getting at? There must be some reason for this invitation.

'I'm sorry if I've shocked you,' said Francis Thompson, tucking into his own bowl of fruit, 'but I called you in here for a man-to-man talk and I wanted to put some cards down on the table before we started. You see, I know pretty well what is going on in this place. And so does Iain Anglomead here too.'

'You are an interesting set, you three. Possibly the most interesting and varied trio we have had for some years. You're all such good friends and yet you're so different.' The boys, in their chairs or bean-bags, glowed at the present compliments. 'I don't just mean that Jimmy's less brainy and Andy rather less sporty. I mean mainly your attitudes to the subject I have already touched upon. Jim, d'you know the story

of Ganymede?’

Brazier shook his head. He did not even know whether Ganymede was a person, a place or a thing.

‘Andy, you look as if you know. Can you tell him?’

‘Wasn’t he the rather... “sch-nazzy”... shepherd-boy in ancient Greece whom Zeus pounced upon and carried away?’

‘That’s right. Zeus, or rather Jupiter because it’s mainly a Latin story, changed himself into an eagle and flew off to Phrygia to abduct him. And why? Andy?’

‘Well, he was rather a good-looking kid, and Zeus... just—fancied him?’

‘Just fancy that.’ Thommo smiled and gave Anglopod a wink. ‘Jimmy, if you were Zeus, would you have fancied a little shepherd boy?’

‘I dunno, Sir.’ Brazier looked surprised at the question. ‘I s’pose I might have done.’

‘But if you were you instead? Let’s put it this way: if there were two people guarding the sheep in that field—a rather ‘schnazzy’ (as Chanting puts it) shepherd boy, and an equally snazzy shepherd girl—which would you go for?’

‘Is this a catch-question, Sir?’

‘Not really, because I think I know the answer already.’

‘The girl, Sir. Of course.’

‘Why of course? Andy, which would you go for? Be honest now.’

‘Jimmy’s already pinched the girl, so the boy’s the only one left for me, isn’t he?’

‘Cleverly answered. But if Jimmy-Jupiter hadn’t got there first, you’d still agree with the king of the gods and go for the boy, wouldn’t you? A handsome little boy in a tiny tight loin-cloth—like Barchester or Winters or Jean-Philippe?’

Andy reddened slightly and looked coy. ‘Then, what about you, Sir?’ Attack was the best form of defence, Andy decided. He smiled, satisfied at his gambit. It was always fun to play games like this with the teachers when they were in a good mood.

‘I’m Jupiter?’ Thommo was not in the least bit nonplussed. ‘I’d swoop down and pick up...’ He rose from his chair, dive-bombed onto one of the bean-bags on which reclined Brian Miners, and carried him back to his desk... ‘a boy.’ He draped the eldest but shortest of the three prefects across his lap and pulled back his dressing-gown playfully. Unfortunately Brian was wearing underpants as usual. ‘I’d go for a handsome, snazzy, willing little boy any time. And I know some boys are only too happy to go with older men.’ Thommo allowed his hand softly to stroke the strength of Brian’s thigh. And Miners allowed it.

‘You don’t mind, do you, Brian?’ He tickled the boy’s tummy from the navel downwards, and gently teased, tugging at the elasticated waist-band of his pants. ‘I remember that delicious night earlier this term when you came to get me to look at your sore goolies, and then you did a thoroughly flirtatious strip-tease for Iain here, ending up with a most mammoth hard-on because you knew you were exciting us. You quite fancy being admired by older men, don’t you?’ Francis Thompson laid his hand openly on the front of the boy’s pants and pressed at the gentlenesses inside.

‘But you’d be shocked if I did this to you, Jimmy, wouldn’t you? It would make you, at best, extremely uncomfortable.’ Thommo quite unashamedly played with the front of Brian’s underwear, ticklingly. ‘You would be horrified and wouldn’t like it at all. You’d only allow Katey to stroke you down here. Eh?’

‘Sir!’

Thommo winked at Chanting next. Andy was lounging on a bean-bag, legs apart, quite clearly revealing that he, too, wasn’t wearing what a Scotsman proverbially doesn’t wear under a kilt. His long pinky-brown bits hung lollingly between his outspread thighs. ‘Andy probably wouldn’t mind a bit o’ this for a laugh, would you? But... Steady on, Brian, don’t get too excited about it.’ He could feel the fourteen-year-old already responding to his playful touch. He cradled him warmly in his arms. ‘How do you react

to Katey's treatment? As quickly as you do to mine?' Through the cotton-wear he squeezed the growing arousal gently between finger and thumb. 'Have you ever had the chance to try to score with Kate?'

'Maybe.'

'And have you made it?'

'Perhaps. Sometimes.'

'But not every time?'

Brian blushed scarlet. He suddenly felt he was being cornered—shown up for what he was—a queer who could not make it with girls and only fancied grown men. He sat up and wrapped his dressing-gown around himself.

'Yes, you'd better go back to your bean-bag before I get carried away and go too far. There are limits, you know. But, ooh, I enjoyed that, didn't you?' Oblivious of the boy's whacking the day before, he gave Miners a soft pat on the bottom as the boy left the chair and went back to the big sack. 'You look shocked, Jimmy.'

'I am.'

'Don't you think I ought to be shocked when I know a thirteen-year-old schoolboy admits to having sex with the daughter of one of my colleagues?'

Jimmy looked caught out.

'Andy, try asking your boy-friend what the expression "*chaqu'un à son gout*" means. Anyone know?'

The boys shook their heads.

'Each person to his own taste. I said earlier, you are an interesting lot, the most interesting and varied lot of prefects we've had for some years. And the reason is, you're all so different. Jimmy here loves girls; Andy loves little boys; and Brian goes for older men.

'Until I shocked Jimmy this evening, you've just accepted that, haven't you? As a natural and normal fact of life. You've each more or less known each other's preferences, and yet you've accepted them. You fancy your own thing but condone other people's.'

'I never realised Brian was a proper queer until tonight,' protested Brazier.

Thommo looked at him sadly. 'Don't say that. You'll make his life even harder than it is already. Just because you're the lucky one, you'll go through life as one of the respectable crowd. You'll marry, have kids, have an affair with another woman probably, and everyone will call you "normal". But how dull! Myself, I reckon Andy's the lucky one. He gets the best of all worlds. He likes girls, so he'll be able to marry and put up a respectable front. No one will bother to think anything untoward about him. But he's adventurous, so he'd have a try with grown men if ever the opportunity arose. However really and secretly he's attracted to little boys. He is a "ped". He will do wonderful work as a Scout leader, or running a youth club or a boys' club, or he may even become a school-teacher. Whichever he does, he will be a success, because he really loves the children—even more probably than his wife.

'But poor Brian here: he is fated to go through life as the outcast of society. He knows already which way his inclinations lie, and he will have to face up to them because, although he may be able through a force of will to bring himself into line with what society expects, and to conform to the heterosexual norm, he'll always have these yearnings and hankerings. Far better to face up to them here and now, and know which way the Almighty has orientated his life.' Francis Thompson got up and started to collect the strawberry bowls. 'But enough of my sermonising. It's very late, and far past your sleeping-time. Poor Jean-Philippe will be well away in the Land of Nod by now. Sorry, Andy.'

He showed the boys to the door, and then poured out two glasses of port for himself and Iain Anglomead. He was grateful that the Head of English had come along to help and witness this private little discussion, even if he had not taken much part. It might prove useful later, if any questions were ever raised about the propriety of his behaviour with these young men.

This was one of the few occasions when the boys were not frightened to be summoned to the headmaster's study. Anxious maybe, but not frightened. Three of them were beckoned to the head of the queue—Titmarsh, Osterling and Graeham. They each came out looking very sorry for themselves. But then Patting emerged and announced, 'The rest of you have all passed', and a great cheer went up before he added, 'but if you wait, I will give each of you your individual marks.'

Jean-Philippe was still making his bed when Andy slipped up to the dorm to find him; he had even yet not fully mastered the art of bed-making and always took ages over it. 'Come to the boggeries, pet—or down in your den. I've got to celebrate.' He helped the boy with his bed, and then they slipped off to the woods for the fifteen minutes left before Chapel.

Brian couldn't find Peter, so he went to the Resident Housemaster instead. 'Sir we've all passed, all except three, that is.'

'I know. There was a confidential notice on the staff-room board before breakfast. Bet Jimmy must be pleased. ' Thommo looked at the handsome young prefect shyly. He was most grateful that the boy had chosen to come to see him this morning. 'Brian, I hope I didn't worry you or upset you by what I said or did last evening.'

'No, Sir. And you were right, except I'm not sure it will be all that bad—being, what is it, "gay"? I did enjoy it when you were pretending to pull my pants down, but Jimmy wouldn't have liked that at all.'

'What about Andy?'

'I don't think he'd have cared. As you say, he's game for almost anything.'

'Yes, that's what makes him such fun. But what makes you fun...' The teacher reached out for the boy's trousers.

'Oh, Sir!' Brian looked coy, but made no protest when the teacher stroked them up and down.

'You deserve it, after all. To celebrate your success in C.E.' The master stood the boy between his legs and started to fiddle with his belt, the waist-hook, and the zip. The fact that Brian would be leaving in eleven days' time made it all so much easier. He knew the boy was longing for it. Brian stood there, hands on hips, thoroughly enjoying the naughtiness. 'What on earth would Ambrose or your mother say if they caught us now?' He slid Brian's trousers down to his thighs and patted the front of his pants with the back of his knuckles. 'Gosh, Peter Holdsworth's got good taste! You're a really "schnazzy" boy, aren't you?' He lifted the shirt to have a look at the tummy and chest. Athletic. Strong. 'What about your bum? D'you need it creamed?'

Brian slipped down his pants and bent over. 'Sir, I dare you! I promise I won't tell.'

But they were interrupted by a knock at the door. Brian scrambled back into his clothing while Francis Thompson shouted, 'Just a moment!' So had the hurly-burly of school life such an infuriating way of intruding itself at sensitive moments.

## 21.

‘Coo, you’re a beaut, ain’t you?’ said Jacko coming up from behind de Filbert in the pool on Wednesday afternoon. Thommo was running the swim, so Jacko knew it would be fairly safe; Mr. Thompson had pretty liberal attitudes. Jacko had always lusted after Jean-Philippe, but the little tadpole was so hard to catch. ‘I really dig you in those swimmies,’ he said. ‘They’re so tight and tiny!’

‘Go ’way!’

‘Don’t be like that. You’re cute. You know what, shypot? You’re so shy, I ain’t never seen you with no trunks on. I don’t reckon you’ve got nothing inside here.’ He grasped Jean-Philippe gently to show where he meant. ‘Know what I think? You’re a little girl really, wiv nothing to show... but a very pretty little girl, though!’ He did his best to give the little boy a kiss, but Philippe pushed him away.

‘Andy! Andy!’ Andy was playing with Barnaby Winters on the opposite side of the pool. Philippe swam across to him. ‘Andy, *protège moi!* Jackson’s being nasty again.’

‘What’s he doing, my pet?’

‘He’s trying to do what you do.’

‘And that’s “being nasty”?’

‘When he does it, yes.’

‘Oh, you’re sweet!’ With a quick glance round to check that Thommo wasn’t watching, he gave the boy a quick peck. ‘But you should be flattered. And delighted. What’s going to happen to you next year? I’m leaving, you know, in a week’s time. Aren’t you going to miss me? Who’s going to make love to you next year?’ He gave the boy another peck on the cheek. ‘Take the chance while it’s offered: you couldn’t have a nicer boyfriend than Jacko Jackson.’

‘Jacko,’ said the prefect in the changing-room some time later, at the end of the swim. He and Barney had slowly managed to talk Philippe round, at least in part. ‘Jacko, de Filbert wants to apologise for giving you the brush-off just now... don’t you, Phil?’ Philippe blushed. ‘He’s going to miss me next year. You probably knew we’ve been having a thing all term, didn’t you?’

Jackson didn’t, actually. He could hardly imagine this shy little French boy having ‘a thing’ with anyone—especially anybody as randy as Chanting. Among the boys, it was one of the best kept secrets in the school. Even Barney and Barchy, although they had strong suspicions, didn’t know exactly what was going on—unlike Thommo. ‘He’s going to miss me; and he’s quite happy to become your friend instead.’

‘I don’t know if I want him.’

‘What?!’

‘Well, what’s ’e got on offer—’longside Winters ’ere?’ He stroked Barney’s proud piss-pipe which the younger boy was parading round the changing-room in his usual way. ‘’E don’t look to ’ave much, though I’ve never seen. Besides, I like a kid who’s got a bit of fun in him.’

‘Like Larsen. You’ve set your sights on him, haven’t you?’

‘Maybe.’

‘And Katey.’

‘Shhh.’

‘You’ll find Philippe’s a real good ’un, if you ever try. One of the best—and I should know.’

‘Eh! Let’s go dahn our den an’ let ’im prove it,’ suggested Winters. He didn’t care whom he ended up with. A bit of sex with Philippe, with Chanting, with Jacko; any of them would have been fair game for him.

‘Ere, bunk off. We wants a bit of a laugh.’

‘Who are you telling to bunk off?’

‘You.’

‘I’ll remind you I’m the boss around here. It’s my gang, my den.’

‘Your gang. Our den. An’ we want it this afternoon. We’re entertaining some visitors and you’re just too much of a stick-in-the-mud. You never enjoy a bit of fun.’

‘Nor does Filly either... not what *you* call fun.’

‘Oh, bunk off, Hadders, please. Give us a chance.’

‘What about Barchy here?’

‘E can stay.’

‘If he stays, so do I.’

‘Okay, on your own head be it. But don’t go sneaking then, that’s all.... Okay, fellers, come in.’

It was horribly crowded with six of them in the cramped space. But they felt a great sense of togetherness. ‘What we gonna do, then?’ asked Jacko, not quite sure where to start.

‘Ball Hadders first. Show him what life’s all about.’ suggested the prefect. ‘I’ve never had him yet, but I’ve goolied the rest of you.’

No sooner said than done. Five of them set upon the hapless Hadleigh and soon had him stripped naked, bare of sandals and socks as well. He tried to resist at first but soon found it was no use and gave in. It was also, he found, a bit of a giggle. They bound his wrists and ankles with handkerchiefs and tied his hands to the top end of the den. He had a limp cock and a chubby belly. A fine silk pelt at the base of his shaft showed where darker hairs might be appearing in a few months’ time. He was nearly twelve, old for his years, and just beginning to mature. He had a dumpy thick dick, with a short tip. Jacko tried to peel it back to find the pink dome inside.

‘Let Phil give him a mouthful now,’ said Chanting. ‘Go on, Philipop—don’t be ashamed.’ Then he added, for the benefit of the company, ‘It may be small but it tastes delicious, I can tell you.’ Chanting pulled off his boy-friend’s white shorts in the dark den. ‘Go on, pet; pop it in his mouth. See how he reacts.’

‘But it’s not stiff yet.’

‘Doesn’t matter.’

Philippe wriggled over and knelt astride the leader of his gang. He took his little acorn in his right hand, leant forward, and brushed it against Hadders’s closed lips. ‘Andy, would you say No if I did this with *mon tuteur*?’

‘Course not, my pet.’

‘I will not do it at half-term because I was your boy. But I think he shall like it.’ Philippe was certainly liking it, especially the thought of giving himself to M. de Salles; and Nigel had summoned up the courage now to taste it gingerly. It had no specific flavour, he found, but a rather lovely texture. Smooth and silky, like a tiny nectarine. Jean-Philippe had never dreamt of anyone else but Andy, and possibly his *tuteur*, sucking his willie, but now he found it was fun. At least with all of these very good friends of his, whom he trusted and liked and who liked him. Three months earlier, when he first came to Mertons School, he was terrified even to take his shorts off in the matrons’ sitting-room. Now he was in the centre of an admiring ring, half-naked, having his acorn sucked by a friend who had never tasted willie-wee before. And it was getting stiff.

Jacko and Winters were fighting to strip each other. They only had games clothes on, so it did not take long—a white vest and a pair of loose shorts. Chanting put his face between Hadleigh’s legs. For once the boy did not object. The prefect kissed the little boy’s thighs and his belly before turning his attention to the delicious dainties in between.

‘Oh Chanting, don’t be disgusting,’ said the gang leader, thoroughly enjoying the new experience but feeling he shouldn’t admit it. ‘I’ll piss on you if you do that!’

‘Go on—see if I care.’

‘I mean it. I need one.’

‘You wouldn’t be the first. I’ve tasted other lads before.’

‘You’re foul! Right!’ And Hadders let fire just as Philippe found himself coming to an early orgasmic climax in his mouth.

‘Oi, Hadders!’ shouted Jacko, suddenly noticing. ‘I’m s’posed to be having Filbert, not you!’

‘Tough!’

‘Don’t you tough me! Turn over and I’ll screw you instead,’ he said, rolling Hadleigh (who was doing his best to stop piddling round the den) onto his tummy. He mounted him and thrust his already hard cock between his legs. Then, stretching forward, he started to mouth de Filbert’s tail, which he found tasty, round and ripe, with a soft little crack and a tight little ring. Jean-Philippe squirmed with delight—but was thankful that Andy was there to protect him if things somehow started to go too far.

‘Oooh, Chanting does that sometimes. It’s lovely. Andy, you sure you don’t mind? I’m letting you down.’

Andy Chanting didn’t mind at all. He was too busy slowly stripping Barchy, while Winters undressed him. Barchester was in his full school uniform—corduroy shorts, airtex shirt, long socks, sandals and underwear—so Chanting could really enjoy himself, taking off each garment, one by one. Now he had him down to his underkeks. ‘Are they clean or dirty?’

‘I’ve been wearing them since Sunday, I’m afraid.’

‘Never mind.’ Andy plunged his face into the brief cloth, lightly stained front and back, and with the greatest pleasure breathed in its musky, intimate odours. Chuckie never tasted as good as these sweaty, little-boy panties!

‘Ooh, Andy, Jacko does this nearly as nice as you,’ sighed Jean-Philippe. ‘Hey, Jacko—right in. Deeper.’

‘Ouch!’ squealed Hadleigh as Jacko jerked more and more excitedly.

‘Cor, Chanting. It’s massive, ain’t it?’ squeaked Barney. ‘So’ll yours be by the time you’re thirteen. Barchy, you reckon you can take it?’

‘If I can take my dad and Uncle Frank, I can take you. ’Sides, I’ve got a tube of what-d’you-m’-call-it under the bed here.’

‘*Merde! Zut alors!*’ squealed de Filbert as Jacko suddenly thrust in a dry finger instead of his tongue.

‘Philipop, shush,’ whispered Chanting. ‘We’ll be heard.’

‘*YOU HAVE BEEN!* Chanting, come out here!’

A sudden silence descended on the den. A deathly silence.

‘Did you hear me? Come out. I know you’re in there.’

‘Sir...’ They recognised the voice of Mr. Anglomead. The prefect scrambled into his shorts and tried to make himself look respectable. Luckily he was the least undressed of the sextet, but in white cotton shorts with no underwear it was hard to hide the massiveness of his masturbatable. He scrambled out through the tunnel, while the others rapidly tried to arrange their clothing, just in case.

‘So what’s going on in there?’

‘Nothing, Sir. Nothing much at any rate. It’s just that—well, Hadleigh’s gang invited us in for a farewell party. A sort of end-of-term do.’

‘And who’s “us”?’ inquired Mr. Anglomead, looking at an inch of rather-too-stiff pink flesh hanging beneath the hem of Chanting’s sports shorts. ‘You and Jackson?’

‘Yes, Sir.’

‘And this end-of-term “do”: what are you “doing”?’



‘Well... you know, Sir....’

‘Yes. I know. But—are you all happy in there? Are you all enjoying yourselves?’ He raised his voice to be heard within the den.

‘Yes, Sir... Certainly, Sir... Absolutely, Sir,’ came the several voices from inside. What a relief it turned out to be Anglopod! He might possibly even understand.

‘Look lads: I don’t want to spoil any fun just at the end of term. But keep your voices down. We don’t want any of the little ones hearing what you are getting up to, as I’ve just done. I’m on duty this afternoon, and I’ll try not to be back this way for another half-an-hour or so if you’re *sure* you’re enjoying yourselves. But don’t, for goodness’s sake, say I’ve given you permission! Okay?’

‘Sir!’

‘Is Hadleigh in there?’

‘Yes, Sir.’

‘And de Filbert?’

‘Sir.’

‘Are you both quite happy at whatever’s going on?’

‘Yes, Sir... *Oui, monsieur.*’

‘I needn’t ask Barchester or Winters, I don’t suppose. Nor Jackson. All I say is, keep your voices down and keep quiet about it. Now, I’ll be off.’

Andy crawled back into the fox-hole and was soon satisfying his lust—and Barchy’s too—by playing cat-and-Mousehole. Jackson was eating acorns and preparing a milkshake for Winters, while Hadders was enjoying the new experience of being smeared all over with K-Y by K-M. After all, Barchy knew he could get Uncle Frank to give him a new tube for next term.

The acorn had grown quite a lot in these three months; it was becoming quite a respectable little twig. Twelve months’ time and the sap in it might really be rising.

‘Andy, I’s not happy about this afternoon. It was wrong.’

‘Why, my darling? Didn’t you like it?’ Andy pulled the sheet over them and snuggled up close behind the little boy.

‘I like it... but.... You is my lover. We should not with any other.’

‘Philippe, my poppet...’ He kissed the boy’s dark hair. ‘...when are you going to realise that I leave in two days’ time? We may never meet again. You must find yourself another lover. So must I.’

‘It is wrong.’

‘Do you really think so? Did Mr. Anglopod think it was wrong? He knew darned well we were having a gang-bang in there.’

‘*Un quoi?*’

‘A gang-bang. A sex party. Did he mind?’

‘No...’

‘There you are, then. When you get married, that’s another thing. One man, one woman—I suppose. But until then... We’ve got to gain experience, learn by our mistakes. Practice makes perfect. We’re too young really to fall in love. Besides, although you’ve very beautiful and I adore you, you’re not a woman.’

‘That’s what Mr. Thompson said to me last week: that you and I is too young to fall in love. Did I tell you that?’

‘No, my pet. But if he said it...’

‘It must be true.’

‘Exactly.’

Philippe kicked off the sheet, rolled onto his back and got into one of his favourite positions. Andy’s fuzz tickled his acorn, the yard-arm throbbed between his little *cuissees de grenouille*, and they kissed,

breathing each others' balmy breath. They were quite oblivious to the two shadows in the doorway.

'Andy, Philippe, that was beautiful. You should sell tickets next time,' whispered Thommo a few minutes later, as the two boys started to get their breath back. He knelt beside their bed— Andy's bed—and started mopping up some mess from the lower sheet between their legs into his pocket-handkerchief. Anglopod remained in the doorway.

Philippe, shocked at first, soon realised the teachers were not angry. Proud of his philophallic prowess (he had really excelled himself tonight, pouring out his passion between their tight-pressed loins, and showering Philippe's amatory acorn with his own young fertiliser) Andy rolled off the little boy and revealed their loins and limbs flowing with wondrous whiteness.

'Come and help,' invited Francis, beckoning his friend over from the door. With a handkerchief each, they set to work mopping up after the recent eruption. Iain dried the domed cupola of *Les Invalides* and the Seine of semen which surrounded it, while Francis polished the whole of the mighty *Tour Eiffel* and the bush-girt *Champs de Mars* beneath.

'What's happening? What's up?' moaned Anselm Miners, half-waking from the excitement and then turning over to fall asleep again. The teachers laughed nervously and voiced the boys' very thoughts:

'Coo, that was close!' They got up to leave, first tucking the two lovers snugly into a single bed.

'Night-night—sleep tight,' whispered Anglopod, knowing how very tight together these two young lovers usually slept. He folded his soiled handkerchief carefully into his pocket. He wondered if he might frame it as a souvenir.

The Swimming the following Saturday went well. Mr. Holdsworth had it all organised—the competitors sitting on one side of the pool, the parents and spectators on the other—but inevitably the two soon got mixed up as boys, having finished their race, went over to be congratulated, or parents, caught up in the general excitement, crossed over to urge on their sons.

Some boys, of course, came from broken homes, or had parents abroad, or, like Barney Winters, had parents who simply packed their offspring off at the beginning of term and forgot about them till next holidays. These boys had nobody from home to cheer them on, and such a waif was Gerald Jackson.

Jacko's parents had been divorced when he was still quite small, and then his mum, whom Gerry doted upon, was killed in a car accident when he was only seven. He had then gone to live with his father, whom he hadn't seen for four years. That had proved wonderful... while it lasted. There were always other kids around the house for him to play with—slightly older kids who made quite a fuss of him, twelve- and thirteen-year-olds mainly.

Gerald had quickly come to love his father, but... well, his father had 'loved' him too—as well as many of the other boys who visited the house so regularly—so now the disgraced man was incarcerated at Channing's Wood in Devon as a guest of Her Majesty under Rule 43 and Gerald was cared for by his grandparents who didn't drive and had no car.

Gerry knew his father would love to be there; his father had so often taken him with the other boys to the baths and taught them to swim. But Jacko was not even allowed letters from his dad, which made him most angry. Still, perhaps next year. According to Gran, Dad was due for parole at about Christmas; perhaps he would come to see his son captain the team next year.

Jacko won the opening race—the Individual Medley; he even beat Brian Miners, fifteen months his senior and Captain of Swimming. That should clinch his own captaincy for next term. He climbed out feeling really great, as Miners protested that he had merely been saving his strength for later. Among those congratulating him was a complete stranger.

'You iz a gud svimmer. A rightly gud svimmer. Can you like svimming?'

Gerry looked at the man in surprise. 'Yes, Sir. It is my favourite sport.' He rubbed his hair with his towel.

'My... how you say? "Niece"? No, "never... nevy"?'

'Nephew, Sir?'

'Ja, namely. My nephew, he say me you are rightly good to svim. And he say me also you are much friendly to him. You know my nephew? F——'

'Finn Larsen, Sir? It must be.'

'Ja, rightly.'

'He's a nice kid.'

'Please?'

'He's a charming boy.'

'*Charmerende?* Ja, und so is you.' Larsen's uncle looked him over critically and approvingly: the pouchless white nylon clung to the boy's loins and showed the pink flesh inside and the tufts of dark curls. 'You be most *charmerende*, and you looks well out.'

'I beg your pardon, Sir?!' Gerry looked down at himself anxiously.

'Forgive me. I can not so good English. You look *pretty* out.'

'Oh! You had me worried for a moment it was *hanging* out!' Images flashed through young Gerald

Jackson's mind of all that Finn Larsen had told him about his Uncle Niels. This must be the man. 'Would you like to see, Sir?' he asked with a big grin. He looked quickly around and discovered all eyes were on another race. He pulled the waistband of his shorts away from his tummy and allowed Uncle Niels to peep inside. 'Larsen's told me lots about you, what fun you are. You take him swimming and camping, don't you? And cycling in the woods? And you look after him in the holidays. He says you have a lot of fun—in the forest or on the dunes. You like boys, do you, Sir?'

'I can like naughty boys, and Finn, he say me you are sometimes naughty. Is true?' The man slipped his hand down the back of Jacko's white nylon shorts and had a grope. Well, he was getting on far better than he had ever dared to hope. What was all this about the cold-blooded nature of English boys? Finn had obviously picked a really nice one to be a friend.

'Is true. But, Sir, it's dangerous here. Too many people around. Besides, I've got to swim.' The whistle blew. 'This is the Junior Breast. Isn't your nephew swimming in that?'

Finn came second. And Jackson had to get ready for his Butterfly. But they agreed to meet later.

The Barchesters were finally back from Kenya. And Uncle Frank had come too. He didn't have much chance to go Mouseholing because Mummie had monopolised the boy—telling him about their safari, the lions and crocodiles and half-eaten wildebeest, and about the curious train journey down to Mombasa, and their time on the coast. K-M was not swimming until the Relays, so he had to stay politely listening to it all. He was very cheesed to see Barney disappearing off into the changing-rooms with Uncle Frank in between each of his races. Dad went too, once.

The Chantings had come down for Andy's last event at Mertons School. Leonard Chanting took the opportunity to try out his French on Jean-Philippe: '*J'espurr que vous aime être à l'école en anglaise,*' he managed to get out.

'*Bien sur, Monsieur. C'est tres agréable. Et André est si gentil.*'

'Yes, well,' replied Mr. Chanting, flabbergasted by such a mouthful. '*Vous nagez-vous aujourd'hui?*'

'*Oui, Monsieur. Je nage la bresse, et je participe aussi aux courses de relais.*' Jean-Philippe felt very flattered to be called 'vous'; that had rarely happened before—except when Georges spoke to him in front of M. de Salles—though he quickly realised it was only because of Mr. Chanting's poor command of the French language. 'You are speaking French far better than *ton père*,' he whispered to Andy as his friend stripped off his track-suit for his next race.

The entire Miners tribe was there. The four brothers, Ambrose included; plus Mum and Dad. Mrs. Brazier had come, too, and was talking to Mrs. Saddleworth, while James chatted to her daughter. 'Who's this Jackson you're going to introduce me to? Is he here this morning?' she whispered.

Jimmy took her across to where Jacko was deep in conversation with the two Danes, young and old, and presented her to her next year's conquest. Kate was impressed: 'Gosh, he's handsome. And those swimming-shorts! I could see right through them. He's well-hung, isn't he?'

'He had a hard-on, I reckon. That is his little boy-friend, Larsen, so you've got some competition there, I'm afraid!'

'Have you not your elders here?' Uncle Niels was saying. Jacko shook his head. 'I have a meal-pack with. It is big enough for three, think I. Will you to come and eat it with us? Then perhaps can we drive a tour this afternoon. Is that not good?'

'Sir, I wonder what are you driving *at!*'

'Please?'

'Don't worry. Thanks, I'd be delighted to *cum* with you.'

When the races ended, Jacko led Uncle Niels and little Finn slowly back to the already emptying changing-room and slipped off his trunks. 'Are you over from Denmark for long?'

'The longer the better, but these is long enough for me.' Uncle Niels took hold of the nine centimetres.

‘Can you like this?’

‘You bet!’

That evening Katey met Jacko again, by chance. She was entranced by his curly mop of hair with its natural blond streaks, and by his big lips.

‘You looked superb this morning. I dig those see-through shorts. I’m glad Jimmy introduced us. You going to be in the Tops next year?’ Jacko nodded. ‘I always like to get to know some of the best looking of the senior boys. You fancy a bit of fun next year?’ She undid two buttons of her blouse suggestively.

‘Sorry. What did Brazier say your name was?’

‘Katherine; Katherine Saddleworth, daughter of Graham. But you can call me Kate... Gerald.’ They were outside, and she led him behind a large clump of rhododendrons and clasped him in a warm embrace, clapping her lips against his. ‘Like that?’ she said breathlessly after thirty seconds or so. ‘There’s more where that came from, if you want. See you again sometime... in those sexy swimmys.’ She blew him a detached kiss and went on her way, adding over her shoulder, ‘...or out of them!’

Jacko thought over the day. Larsen, Uncle Niels, Kate. He could love them all. And *make* love to them all. He went off to the boggeries and pulled out his cock. Mmm!

## 23.

On Monday morning at Break Jimmy found a note in his book-locker:

*Jimmy Brazier and Co.: I get back from school about 3.45.  
Come over to see me. Urgent. K.*

She was waiting for them, and came dashing out as soon as they appeared along the far end of the path. 'Hey, look at this! Jim, Andy, Brian! It's disgusting. Horrible!'

'What is it?'

She held out to them a small box, printed all over. 'I found it yesterday lunchtime. Mum had sent me up to clean Barry Timbers's room while he was away. I noticed there was a video in the machine. I decided to turn it on....'

'What's it about?'

'What is it?'

'Come and see.'

'Where? How on earth can we?'

Her parents were away for the afternoon. They made their way to the house. 'If I keep guard to make sure pervy Timbertops doesn't come along, you can watch it on our video in the lounge.'

The video began as a mass of snow and bad pictures. Very bad pictures. A boy was in a bedroom. He was being grasped by a man wearing a black mask. The bedding was black. The curtains were black. The walls were bare brick. The boy was being tied down, spread-eagled on the crown-size bed, his wrists and ankles anchored to each bedpost. He appeared to be about thirteen: dark-haired, tall, thin, dressed in torn jeans and red checked shirt.

The man was heavily built, bare chested, with rippling muscles and firm torso. He wore black track-suit leggings, a thick leather belt—and the mask. He took off his belt. He struck the boy with it. The boy winced. He was struck again. And again, and again. After a while he threw aside the belt and got out a long, slender dagger. He sharpened it on a strop.

Now the man lay on the boy, picked up his head by the hair and threatened his throat with the knife. Then, kneeling up, he began to tear off the boy's clothing. He ripped up the shirt with the aid of the knife. He yanked off his boots and socks. He began on the jeans, starting at the ankles and working up, cutting the outside of the legs apart to reveal the bare flesh. With a pair of decorator's shears he turned the jeans into shorts. Very short shorts.

The man began to spank the boy's buttocks with his bare hands. 'Cor,' said Andy, watching the rippling cheeks, 'the kid's not half bad. I wouldn't mind patting that little bum. Wonder where he comes from.'

'I don't reckon he's English. They can't make films like this over here!'

'American?'

'German, more like,' said Jim.

Now the man was reaching under the boy to unfasten his shorts. Then he was pulling them down. One could see the white underpants. The boy's bottom twitched in nervous anticipation.

The man kissed the seat, suddenly gentle. He pulled the shorts down as far as they would go. He pulled up the vest. He caressed the little panties. The camera moved in close on the brief nylon slip and the man's hands. The man took off his track-suit. Underneath he wore a leather loin-cloth, short as

Tarzan's.

Brian found himself admiring the man's strong thighs, his hairy chest, his muscular stomach. The man plucked a frayed rope from the floor and struck the boy with it a few times—not hard, Andy noticed. The boy squirmed; he seemed to be laughing, having fun, enjoying the torture charade. Now the man was cutting off the boy's vest with the knife and untying the knots which bound him to the bed. Carefully removing the boy's shorts, he nuzzled them against his face, inhaling their smelly scent of stale boy sweat, boy spunk, boy stains. The lad rolled over on the bed, smiling, not attempting to escape. He just lay there, hands clasped inside his slender scanties.

The man slipped off his loincloth, climbed onto the bed and stood astride the kid, muscles bracing and twitching, to Brian's fascination. Suddenly the boy was being flooded by a single fountain, yellowish cascade. It splashed across his chest, along his belly; it stained his white pants, soaking them and turning them to transparent gold. It sprayed up to his face, lashing down upon it. The boy tried to turn away from the relentless jet, but the man kept aiming his fire-hose in the right direction in response. There was no escape. In the end the boy gave up. Already soaked, he surrendered. He even opened his mouth and drank his fill.

'Yuk! It's bestial!' cried Kate.

The boys giggled. 'I've drunk piss before now,' admitted Andy, 'but not that much, I agree. It's warm when someone does it all over you, someone nice. Lovely—providing you can have a bath right afterwards, or a swim.'

'Yuk!' repeated Kate. 'It makes me want to vomit!'

The fountain had dried up. The man gently took the soaking boy by the hand and helped him up. He dried him with a towel, and they went through to another room, hand in hand, stopping to kiss in the doorway. The boy pressed his piddly lips against the man's, both locked in lust and lechery.

In the new room there were rings fastened to the wall. A red Nazi flag, complete with swastika, draped a bed. The camera picked up a Gothic-script sign beside the door: '*Knabenkammer. Eingang verboten*'. 'What does that say?' asked Jimmy.

'Search me,' said Brian.

'No thanks,' protested Jim.

'Something to do with boys, and no entry,' said Katey. 'But you can't enter boys, can you? You lot haven't got the right equipment in the right place.' She sounded smug—in her ignorance.

The torturer tied the boy's arms high above his head. He left the boy there, a prisoner. One could see that the kid's small pants, wet and almost transparent, were straining under an insistent erection. The camera, after showing how the they jutted forward, firmed by a rod of pink flesh, sloped upwards to the lad's smiling face. He seemed to be fully complicit in the fun.

A few moments later the man returned; he was carrying a jar labelled 'Chocolate spread'. And the chocolate *was* spread—from the boy's shoulders downwards to his waist, smeared over his chest, his arms, his ribs, massaged into his midriff. Then the boy's panties were pulled down.

'How revolting!' said Kate, glowering from the window as the boy's cock cocked up, springy and stiff. 'He's only a little boy. He's not even old enough to have hair yet.'

'But he's enjoying it, isn't he?' laughed Andy Chanting. 'You can see that.' He unzipped his trousers and pulled out his penis. 'I reckon it's cool. It's just a laugh. The bloke's not actually doing him any harm. The kid's loving it—just look at his face.'

'But it shows a warped mind,' argued Jimmy Brazier. 'Timbers has got a bent twist if he can get turned on by stuff like this.' Unlike his friends, he hadn't even the beginnings of a hard-on.

'Yer—and 'specially when he pretends to be so strict and starchy,' put in Brian, hand deep in his pocket and working away on his own tool.

'He's certainly a bloody hypocrite,' Andy admitted. 'I can imagine Thommo or Anglopod watching

something like this and thinking it was a right giggle—as I do. But with Timbers—it’s obviously a secret perversion of his, like giving out punishments to kids right-left-and-centre because he really yearns to torture them the way the bloke in this film is doing it. It certainly shows that he’s bent—right round the twist.’

They were on to the next stage of the film by now. Two teenagers were dressing up in leather, chains, too, and manacles, handcuffs, fetters. They put each other on torture blocks, pretending to torment each other—squeezing their goolies with iron tongs, encircling one’s cock neck in a thumb-screw and squeezing it till the head pulsed purple and white.

Afterwards the little group retired to the potting-shed to discuss the video and their next move. ‘What are we going to do with it?’ Chanting asked Katey. ‘Doesn’t Timbers know you’ve got it?’

‘He must have missed it by now. But he daren’t say anything, dare he? He can’t admit to having a film like that. And he doesn’t know *I’ve* got it. He might suspect my mum, or perhaps my dad.’

‘He must be shitting himself!’

‘Chanting, there’s a lady present!’ said Brazier prudishly. ‘Well, good,’ said Brian, let him have a couple of days of draining diarrhoea. He’s nothing but a load of crap in any case—he might waste away after a week of the runs.’

‘Where d’you think you’re going to, boy?’ raged Timbers to Jackson after chuckie that evening. Jacko was, in fact, going to see if he could find the way to Katey’s house. ‘I’ve seen you down here before, haven’t I? And told you off.’

‘No, Sir.’

‘What do you mean, No, Sir?’ Mr. Timbers fetched the boy a clout round the back of the head. ‘Yes, Sir. Only last weekend—skulking around higher up this very path. And you claimed you had just been for a walk.’ He struck Jacko again. ‘Wipe that insolent look off your face. And take your hands out of your pockets when you’re talking to me.’

‘You are not allowed to hit a boy like that, Sir,’ said Jackson, desperately trying to control his rage at being struck. ‘It’s against the law.’

‘Who’s telling me what I’m allowed to do and what I’m not? I’ll do what I bloody well think fit, and you’re not going to stop me! Yob! Nancy-boy! You’re an offence to humanity!’ He struck Jacko even more smartly around the ear, sending him reeling to the ground with stars in front of his eyes. ‘And stop play-acting to me! Get up off the ground. I hardly touched you.’

Suspicion ran like cyanide through Barry Timbers’s brain. What was the boy up to, coming down here? Where was he going? Surely this path lead nowhere but to the Saddleworth’s house—the cottage where he had his bed-sit. Had Jackson been on a raiding party over the weekend? Had this Nancy invaded his room? Stolen his video? He wouldn’t put it an inch beyond him. Gerald Jackson was a thoroughly dishonest brat. Hadn’t he lied about what he had been doing with Larsen in the boggeries just before half-term? Blind rage exploded in a sheet of flame in Timbers’s head.

‘You’re a great—lily-livered—namby-pamby—disgusting sod!’ Timbers punctuated each word with a kick from his heavy brogue shoe. ‘You’re not worth the amount of ground you lie on. Get on your feet and slink back to school!’ He aimed another hearty kick at his ribs. Jackson didn’t move. ‘All right, lie there and snivel. See if I care! Don’t you think I know what you got up to with Larsen in the boggeries?’ He booted him yet again and then went off down the path, feeling strangely elated.

Kate discovered Jacko a few moments later. She had gone for an evening walk to see if anyone might be “at home” in the book-store. He was still unconscious.



‘Eh, André, André, André! Je viens de recevoir une lettre.’ Philippe was so excited that he had slipped back, without realising it, into his native language. ‘*Lis çela!*’ He handed Andy the letter. ‘Can you understand it?’

It wasn’t so much the French which Andy found hard—he had managed the first couple of sentences—but he found the foreign handwriting so strange that he couldn’t really make out the words.

‘Give it to me. I’ll translate it to you. Oh Andy, it’s great! My dear Jean-Philippe, one has informed me that the school has bought the tickets for your return *pour les vacances*—for the holidays. You will come back by the plane from Heathrow at... Oh no, that’s all about my travel arrangements. That doesn’t matter.... Da...da...da... *Ah oui! Voici:* I thank you for your letter so amusing and so interesting which I have received ago a few days. I would be enchanted if you wish invite *ton copain* Andy... What the hell does *copain* mean? Buddy, mate?’

‘Lover?’ suggested Andy laughing. ‘No, it just means friend. I know that word.’

‘...I would be enchanted if you wish invite your friend Andy during a few days—or weeks—of the *vacances*, the holidays. Andy, he says you could come for weeks!’ He put his arms around the bigger boy and gave him a hug.

‘How does it go on?’

Jean-Philippe took up the letter again. ‘And I would be the more ravished if you were able to invite much of the others. The more the merrier, as one says in England, *plus on est de fous plus on rit*. Look, he’s put the English saying and then the French. Do invite Barchester, Winters and Hadleigh. And wish—you also invite Uncle Frank? He can me aid to guard you. Oh Andy, I can’t translate this right, but you know what it means, don’t you?—*Il peut m’aider à vous garder*.

‘As you have already said, there finds itself much of place in the old... *dans la vieille grange*. What’s a *grange* in English? I haven’t a clue. It’s a huge old farm shed, really spooky, we could have loads of fun in there. And there’s hay at one end to sleep on. *Mais il faudra*—but it—*falloir?*—musts that your friends bring of the bags of sleeping—sleeping-bags—and prepare their own meals. Colette is able to help if Andy comes, himself alone, but she is not able to service a little army!’

‘I should think not,’ laughed Andy. ‘D’you know what “to service” would mean there? You sometimes “service” me, you little poppet, when I’m feeling randy. Imagine old Colette “servicing” all of us!’ He made a pass at the front of Philippe’s corduroy shorts. ‘We wouldn’t know if we were coming or going!’

Philippe smiled—his shy little grin puckering his chubby cheeks. He knew he wasn’t making a very good job of translating M. de Salles’ letter, but this was all so exciting.

‘I am very happy if many of boys come. As you will remember, in the old days I often used to have big camps here. They were always of fun. I you of them have recounted, is it not? Oh, hell to a decent translation! I’m doing it literally, what he says. Why’s French so different to English? I had never realised it before. Naturally I you will guard when you swim-yourselves, especially if you want to swim *au naturel*—skinny dipping as you call it in your letters. I would be enchanted. I think the park is enough private. I will love to see Barchester and Winters in the water, and even more when they are out of the water and on the bank. *A bas les caleçons!* Down with the swimming trunks! *Vive la Liberté!* Long live Freedom! Oh, it sounds so much better in French.

‘I believe that,’ said Andy.

‘My most dear Jean-Philippe, I await with impatience your return the Friday afternoon, and I will

have the room of baths all ready for you. May I be Matron and *frotter*—scrub?—your back? *Ton dos, ton derrière, tes délices* is what it actually says, but I'm not going to translate that for you, so there!' He snatched the letter away and stuffed it into his pocket. 'Oh Andy, isn't it exciting?'

Miles Patting could hear it from outside the shed window that evening: 'Sir!... Ooh Sir!... It's the nicest birthday present I've ever had.... A little bit deeper, Sir.... Oohhh!!! I love you, Sir! That's lovely!... Hey, Sir, do you remember when you used to refuse at the beginning of term, said "Never again", said it was all a big mistake the first time—last term? Coo, it took me ages to persuade you. Remember? You really do it great now!' There was a pause. 'Hey, let's try another way for a change.'

There came a clutter and a kerfuffle from inside the pump-room. Miles Patting longed to be able to see in, but the windows were frosted, and too high up. He tried the key-hole but that was no good. He put his ear to the door.

'I love the drippy tip. It tastes all oozy. Ugh—but it tastes of my shit, too. I'm not sucking that again—not now. Poke it back in.... Oh, that's better.... Go the whole way now, Sir. It's chuckie in a few minutes. Everyone will suspect if I'm late. I think Miners may have noticed me on my way down here.'

'Which one?'

'Miners *ma*.'

'That's all right. He won't worry.'

'But he's a prefect.'

'I can deal with him.' Miles Patting recognised the voice of Peter Holdsworth, his sports teacher. 'Kiss-Me, shall I tell you a secret—since it's the end of term? I quite often do deal with him—like this!'

'Coo, Sir!' squealed the boy. 'Oooh Sir!' Another pause. 'You're coming, aren't you? I can always tell, you stop breathing.'

'Shut up! You put me off!'

'Sorry, Sir.'

Miles Patting could hear the gasps and pants from inside the shed. He was outraged. Peter Holdsworth had told him Brian Miners was the only one, but this had evidently been going on all year!

'Come on, Sir. Quick, Sir. That's the chuckie bell.'

'I'm coming, Karl.... Coming, coming, come! Ooohhh, does that feel nice for the end of term! And a very happy birthday to you too—I'm only sorry I couldn't find you anywhere on the day itself. Now, here's a towel. Wipe yourself clean and off you run to tea.'

Miles Patting hid quickly behind a bush. A quarter of a minute later Karl-Mark Barchester came dashing out, doing up his shorts and running his hands through his hair to straighten it out.

The headmaster waited for a full minute before making his next move. He walked in without knocking, as if quite oblivious of all that had just been going on in there. 'Ah, Peter, I hoped I might catch you down here. You've been very elusive over the weekend.' He looked at the handsome young man. Peter Holdsworth was glowing with sweat, in nothing but a tiny minislip which was nearly as short as Chanting's windsurfers. His tummy was rippling, his thighs were firm. Miles Patting would have loved to have seen him from the back, too, in that little—it was almost a G-string, and it was still pretty sharply strung just at the moment, although Patsy pretended not to notice. 'I just wanted to congratulate you on the efficiency with which the swimming went last Saturday. It's good to have such a reliable and well-organised member of staff on the team. I know I can always leave things of that nature in your capable hands.'

The Headmaster turned to go as suddenly as he had come. He pretended he hadn't noticed that the P.E. teacher was busy drying himself when he came in—and yet showed no appearances of having been in the pool.

'By the way, Peter, what was young Barchester doing down here just now? He looked very hot and

flustered when I met him on the path.'

Tuesday and Wednesday were days of great excitement. The end of term was getting closer and closer. It was the last Latin lesson, the last History, the last cricket game, 'the last time we'll have these bloody spaghetti rings for breakfast for a couple of months,' Barchy thought. He had his last Extra P.E.—down at the pool. The class had been given a swim for their gymn lesson, so Barney and Mr. Holdsworth had just stayed on down there. They had splashed around in the water for a while and played, swum between each other's legs and picked up pebbles, fondled between each other's legs, and dived on other little round and attractive objects till they made each other squeal and wince with the pain. Then they had retired to the pump-room. And locked the door.

School routine was going by the board, there were lessons in the morning only. The afternoons were given over to free-time or sport. There was no more Prep, very little more work.

Thursday was a day of chaos and packing. A day of excitement for many, and sadness for some. Though it may seem an adventure to move on to a bigger new world, it is always a wrench to leave old friends behind.

Once the packing was all over, the books handed in, the classrooms tidied and the majority of the litter cleared away, a final swim was organised—supervised, by time-honoured tradition, by the headmaster. 'There's no need to unpack your trunks. Swim as you are. You're all boys, so there's no need to be shy.' Miles Patting always enjoyed this annual opportunity to see all the boys in his charge openly on display. 'Leavers can borrow towels from the Matrons—the rest of you keep them at school in any case.'

Even though the boys were not wearing trunks, the presence of the Head did put a certain damper on the proceedings—for all except Mr. Patting himself. But how sad it always was that the Tops had to move on, just at that age when they were really becoming interesting. On the pretext of not overcrowding the dressing-room, Mr. Patting got the boys out by ages, youngest first, slowly whittling the crowd down till he was left with a handful of dripping, muscular, handsomenesses to whom he could give his undivided attention. He also deemed it appropriate to supervise them in the changing-room—a regimen of which, apparently, the younger ones had not been in need.

The headmaster could certainly see why Holdsworth found Brian Miners so attractive: he was a sporty boy and sported a fine set of young muscles. He gazed next at the tall, slender prefect with the long legs and lengthy lollipop. 'Chanting, if you would like to come to my study after chuckie, I'll give you back that disgusting undergarment of yours which I confiscated earlier this term.... Acton, if you don't instantly stop swinging on that beam I will bend you over it and give you one last beating.'

'Go on, Sir!' Acton teased. He flexed himself over it and bobbed his bare bottom. Beautiful!

At 6.00 p.m., half-an-hour before chuckie, the school assembled in Chapel. It was a moving service, led by the headmaster in his Sunday-best of full academics, in which they thanked God for 'development, growth, progress and experience' over the past year. What memorable developments and experiences had some of those present to be grateful to their Creator for—not least their mildly hypocritical headmaster!

By Thursday night any final vestiges of discipline and decorum had been safely packed away into trunks and suitcases along with clothing, toys, cricket-bats, cock-straps and all the other paraphernalia of boyhood. Licence prevailed: boys and staff felt they could get away with anything—well, almost anything.

Miners spent his last evening as Captain of Swimming down at the pump-room, helping Peter Holdsworth to tidy up again, although the two of them went on afterwards to spread quite a bit of mess between them as well.

Brazier went for a long walk through the out-of-bounds woods with Miss Saddleworth. They ended up at the craters. For the first and only time Jimmy was allowed to find, and feel with his fingers, those

other two craters (front and back) which had eluded him for so long. He tongued them too, as Katey lingeringly blew out his wick for the last time.

Jackson, still black-and-blue with bruises, managed to hi-jack Larsen on his return from the baths and take him to an empty attic where the trunks were usually stored. They tried a strange new position which Uncle Niels had taught them last Saturday. 'I had a word with Thommo this afternoon. I hope I'm going to be in charge of your dorm next year. Wouldn't that be fun?'

Barchester and Winters were in trouble. They were sharing the same bath, in a very compromising position, when Matron, forewarned by Anselm Miners, came in and caught them. A ring of spectators were standing around, watching the live-show and amazed that such a long thing as Barney's when it was in a bait could bury itself so completely inside Kiss-Me's Mousehole.

They were sent off to Mr. Thompson.

'You are lucky Mr. Patting is busy this evening. You know what he would do, don't you?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'So what should *I* do? What d'you think?'

'Beat us too, Sir, I s'pose,' said Barchester drearily. Then he brightened up. 'But I bet it'd be fun with you. Go on, Sir, give us the smacks!' He gave Barney a wink.

Barney nodded assent, 'Okay.'

'How does Mr. Patting do it?'

'First he strips us. Takes all our clothes off, himself, piece by piece....'

'But you've only got your dressing-gowns.'

'Well... they'll have to do.' The boys stood at mock attention while the teacher—pretending he did not know Mr. Patting's technique and seeking advice—slowly disrobed them.

'...next he gets a chair, puts it in the middle of the floor, makes us stand beside it, or bend over it....'

'...then he always goes over to his window-seat for a game of pocket billiards—I sometimes reckon he's got a hole in his trouser pocket, like a bloke I knows at home.'

'Then he beats you?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'D'you enjoy that?'

'Sir! It hurts! But if it didn't hurt it would be quite fun.'

'So you reckon it would be fun with me—if I didn't hurt you.'

'Then we could go and tell sneaky Anselm that we had had the whacks and everyone would be happy. He and Matron would think we had been punished, we would have had a right giggle, and you... What do you think of the idea, Sir?'

'Sounds fun to me.' He bent each of the complicit boys in turn over his desk chair, stark naked, and gave them six long, lingering, lascivious little smacks.

They loved it, and Winters had to say, before he stood up, 'Sir, d'you remember de Filbert's first Latin lesson? We often joke about it. You made me say what happened to people when they were wrestling in the Roman baths. It's not only wrestling that can turn you on, is it, Sir?' He stood up and proudly revealed how much he had enjoyed the spanking.

'Winters, you are a very rude boy! And so are you too, Barchy.' He gave the boy with the big bum a few more playful pats on the bare cheeks. 'Put that away now, before I am tempted to do something even worse with it, and off you go to bed, the pair of you.' He helped them into their dressing-gowns and gave Barney's handsome hard-on a farewell tweak.

Jean-Philippe was in bed. The only trouble was that Naseby and Miners *min* were so excited by the end of term that they would not go to sleep. It was not until Andy woke up at 2.00 a.m., all on his own, that he was able to move beds and snuggle in beside his beloved for the last time at school.

Even six years after leaving Mertons as a boy, Peter Holdsworth still got anxious whenever he was summoned to The Study. One never knew what the headmaster was playing at. Patting was so scheming and double-faced. When he was being horrible he so often turned out nice; it was when he was being nice that one really had to worry. And the Head was being far too nice just now.

‘Ah, Peter, I imagine you’ve heard the news?’

‘The news? I haven’t got a radio.’

‘No? I would have thought it would have filtered around the grapevine in double quick time.’

Peter looked puzzled. And anxious.

‘About Barry Timbers?’ No reaction. ‘I have had to ask for his resignation.’

‘That’s a bit hard, Sir.’

‘He had gone far beyond what I can allow from a teacher at this school.’

‘For hitting Jackson, Sir?’

‘You’ve obviously *not* heard. He had the most foul, perverted and disgusting video in his possession. It shows a vicious streak in him, cruelty which is quite inappropriate in one responsible for the care of children. Mrs. Saddleworth’s cleaner discovered it over the weekend and handed it in to me. And he did a lot more than simply *hit* Gerald Jackson. That boy’s had a very difficult home life, you know—Jackson—and I’ve grown rather fond of him. Mr. Timbers struck him not once but many times. He kicked him when he was down, and then he went away and left him, like the victim on the Jerusalem-Jericho road, “half dead”.’ Patting went on to relate how Katey Saddleworth had found him unconscious and escorted him back to Matron’s.

‘I never knew.’ Peter’s heart was pounding. Why did the headmaster choose to tell him all this in private? There must be something else on his mind.

‘I’ve been worried about Timbers all year. Perhaps it’s being a teacher of history; he looks upon education as war, them and us; they are the enemy that have to be subdued. He will creep up on them, catch them, punish them severely even for the most minor of infringements. I cannot have a member on my staff whom I cannot trust. And trust, Peter, that is the vital thing in a school. Without trust, all else fails. Now, about your own behaviour in your first year on the staff here. You arrived at the same time as Barry Timbers, didn’t you, in September last year?’

‘Sir.’

‘How do you see your attitude to boys?’

‘Sir?’

‘It is a serious question, Holdsworth, and I require a serious answer.’ With the sudden change to his surname, Peter’s heart sank. ‘Do you try to treat the boys with love, or with hate?’

‘Sir. Is that a catch question?’

‘No. Why?’

‘If I say hate, I go with Barry Timbers. But if I say love—a teacher cannot love a boy.’

‘Can’t he? It may interest you to know that I was aural witness to your love-making for five minutes last Monday evening. I heard every word of what was going on. “I love the drippy tip, it tastes all oozy. Ugh—but it tastes of my shit too. I’m not sucking that again. Poke it back in.” I think those were the Anglo-Saxon words which were being spoken. Would you care to comment?’

Peter Holdsworth felt he was about to faint. He grabbed hold of a chair to steady himself. He said nothing.

‘Peter, if a boy can say that in the tone of voice which Karl-Mark Barchester was using, it shows there is at least pleasure in what is transpiring. I cannot really condone it or approve of it. It is going far beyond what the law of this land allows. But it *is* love-making, perhaps even a kind of love, all the same. I admire you for many qualities. I admire your enthusiasm, your efficiency, your conscientiousness, your classroom discipline. I admire your skill and your teaching ability. Most of all, I admire the love and

respect in which the boys all hold you. But I feel I must warn you of one thing. You are sailing far too close to the wind. If your behaviour were to be found out, it would bring not only yourself but also the school a very bad name. Nay, even humiliation and disgrace. You must learn to be very much more discreet and careful next year.

‘Thank you for your work here this year, and—er—will you send that fellow Timbers up to see me again? I need another word with him.’

Miles Patting shook the astonished P.E. teacher warmly by the hand and escorted him to the door.

‘Ah, Timbers. About this video. I have been wondering what to do with it. I ought, of course, to hand it over to the police—along with you. It is unforgivable for a teacher to have a film like this. But I do not want to ruin your career completely by bringing the police in. I have decided to have it destroyed, and to let you witness the fact.’

In silence, holding the offending package in one hand as if it might explode at any moment, he led Barry Timbers down to the school incinerator. There he consigned the little packet to the fire. They watched it melt for a moment, and then burst into flames. Patsy Patting rubbed his hands together and went away without another word.

Then up to his own room strode the headmaster. He went directly to the back of his wardrobe. From there he drew out another video cassette. Its case was still sticky where he had peeled off its original porno labels in order to affix them to an old copy of Geography—The Derby Dales.

He dropped the cassette into his new VCR and turned it on. He could view only a bit of the tape now, but how many empty hours it would enrich over the coming summer holidays!

## L'Envoi.

'*Mon plus cher petit! Bienvenu! Bienvenu!* Welcome! Welcome! Have you had a nice term?'

'Yes, Monsieur, I...'

'My, you've grown again! You're looking well. How was the journey?'

'Fine, but...'

'How was the flight...?' The old man hugged and kissed the boy, never giving him the chance to answer. Georges and Colette hovered discreetly in the background, waiting for their turn to say hello. Georges still carried his silver salver.

'Come inside! Come inside! Oh, it's wonderful to see you. Really wonderful. You must tell me all about the last few weeks and what you've done. Have you got a good report?'

'In everything except...'

'How is your friend Andy? And all the others, too. Tell me all about them...'

When M. de Salles' excitement had abated a bit, he said, 'Do you know what? I've got it all specially ready for you. I knew precisely what time the car would be arriving. The bath has just been run—really piping hot. I ran it myself. Come and relax in there. You haven't begun to tell me about your term. Then you can come down to supper with just a towel round your waist. Oh, my boy, my beautiful boy, it is so marvellous to have you back!'

Monsieur de Salles, grey in the hair and arthritic in the joints, almost ran up the stairs. He led Jean-Philippe to his room. He watched him undress. He helped him into a bath-robe and wrapped it round his waist. Then he accompanied him to the bath.

He locked the door. Old Georges could not disturb them now. Jean-Philippe climbed into the bath and lay back in the warm water. 'Look, my little acorn is beginning to grow,' he said lifting his hips from the water to let the old man see. It's a *brindille* now, a twig!'

Miles Patting was watching his newly acquired video for the umpteenth time. It had become a nightly ritual, each evening before bed, to run it through in its entirety, to tingle with an excited revulsion as a close-up sequence spooled through where a nice, naughty 13-year-old, stark naked, with blond curls and dark, dark eyes, squatted over a wooden draining-board for a crap into his mother's cooking bowl, and then proceeded to prepare fried sausages on the kitchen stove. The luscious lad publicly poured himself a drink too, from a precociously long, curved water-spout.

That sequence was followed by one in a school gymn. A swarthy, black-clad teacher first lashed his teenaged charges to the wall-bars, and then proceeded slowly to cut off their clothes with a pair of nail-scissors. He cut their hair too—and finished the job off with an electric razor—before taking them, one by one, to the vaulting horse for a playful whipping. Finally he helped dress them again in leather thongs or loin-cloths. The cameraman, whoever he was, obviously loved to take larger-than-life close-ups: one furry five-inch phallus could completely fill the screen.

Iain Anglomead and Francis Thompson spent a pleasant fortnight together in *um apartamento* in the Algarve. Portuguese boys were so available and so photogenic.

Peter Holdsworth had been invited to spend a long weekend with the Minerses, much to the disgust of Anselm who didn't like any reminder of school during the holidays. But Peter got on so well with the others that he was allowed to book himself and Brian in on a week's swimming course at Blackpool at the end of August. Two hours' training a day left them plenty of time to themselves. They had a quiet little

guest-house room, in which they were forced to share a double bed, despite the profuse apologies of the embarrassed landlady. 'I'm so sorry,' she said, wringing her hands. 'I hadn't realised you weren't related. I do hope you won't mind.'

Katey missed Jimmy, and Jimmy her. But she had Jacko already lined up for next year (she often caught her breath remembering how she had found him crumpled on the path to their home, how she had helped him to sick-bay, his aching body pressed against hers). As for Jimmy Brazier, he had no difficulty in finding partners for very mixed games of doubles at the local tennis club.

Jacko liked his camp; some of the leaders were very "camp" indeed. But he didn't enjoy it half as much as the climax of his holidays. He was invited by Uncle Niels for an all-expenses-paid fortnight in Denmark. They went camping in Bornholm for a week (with Finn, of course) where there were miles of naturist beaches and secluded sand dunes, and where Niels made a luscious video film of the two boys and some other playful friends. For the second week they stayed in his flat in Roskilde. There was only one bedroom, only one bed. Finn came every day to play, but only Jacko and Niels played at night.

For weeks letters and telephone calls shuttled to and fro between England and France. At last it was the great day of departure. They could hardly squeeze everybody and everything in, even with the capacity of Mr. Tompkins's polished Mercedes—three boys, food and kit, plus Uncle Frank himself. Andy, Barney and Barchy were all there, laden down with bags and bits and bobs. 'What d'you want all that lot for?' asked Uncle Frank with one raised eyebrow. 'You're not going to wear anything over there, are you?'

On the overnight ferry from Portsmouth to le Havre they had a four-berth cabin, but they only used two, and no one slept. The sun shone down as they rushed through Rouen, Chartres and Orleans, but history and culture moved them not a bit—neither stained glass nor Joan of Arc. At last, passing through Blois, they drove through the *bois de chênes*, the forest of oaks, and up the drive to the old *château*. Monsieur de Salles was there to meet them, with Jean-Philippe in his arms.

'Ah, welcome, welcome, *mes amis*! Have you had a nice journey? Are you tired? Do you want a rest? Or some food? Or a swim to cool you off after your travels? You must be hot and sweaty.'

Barney and Barchy gasped at the very size of the *château*, while Andy held Philippe's hand and smiled into his eyes. Georges and Uncle Frank emptied the boot of luggage, which the boys threw into the barn. The butler then reappeared with a picnic basket of glasses, *cidre normand* and a bottle of *Nuits St. Georges*.

'*Eh bien, quel avez vous décidé?* What have you decided?'

'A swim! A swim!' all the boys cried.

'No need to unpack your slippers. I have some towels here. That is all you need, is it not?' He led the excited party over the meadow, along paths through the woods and down to his private lake. Settling themselves near the bank, he and Uncle Frank watched the giggling boys strip, anxious toes test the water, then all their naked bodies splashing in the stirred-up foam, and, later, bare bronzed boyhood romping and wrestling in the rich green grass. Oh, how erotically the *non-oculis-feminarum* joys of the Roman *palaestra* showed themselves. And how unselfconsciously, too. What a wonderful week they were going to have—Monsieur Tompkins and he, not to mention the boys.

With palpitating heart, Georges de Salles sat on an old log and watched the oldest of the boys skimming pebbles across the surface of the water. He owed Andy Chanting a lot, and he hoped that with this week he might have a chance to repay. That tall, slender, graceful boy with long legs and luscious loins had taught his young protégé how to behave. He had developed a fearful mouse into a self-assured youngster, had coaxed a shy shameface, who shivered at the thought of removing his shorts, into an amiable Ganymede who wished for no fig-leaf to conceal his acorn. And Andy was Antinous himself: Georges de Salles shivered with excitement to see the flexing in his naked tail as he stooped to skim his stones.



The Mouse and its Mousehole were nowhere to be seen. Barney and Philippe came splashing out of the water; Barney and Philippe tumbled Andy onto the ground; Barney and Philippe set about him, sitting on his face with their bare bottoms or grasping his semaphore flag to make it wave.

With trembling hands, George de Salles poured himself another glass of *Nuits St. Georges*. When he looked up again, Andy Chanting was in a firmly excited clinch with Bamaby Winters. *Ces faunes fatals*, stretched out upon the grass, were calling the old man over with two willowy waving wands and gleaming faces. But Philippe, still wet and shivering slightly, came and sat his bare bott on the old man's knee—Ganymede with a ripening acorn—or no, let us call it what its owner was starting to call it now: his *brindille*, his twig. Georges de Salles wrapped his fingers about it and stroked it tenderly.

*‘Et vous, Monsieur—est-ce-que vous ne vous déshabillerez point?’*

### **Le Cul**

[Dear reader, in case your French is not up to it, ‘*le cul*’ means ‘the end’, but in a very specific sense....]

# AS SCHOOLBOYS

## FROM THEIR BOOKS

### BY MARIO KOCHANY

An amusing, bawdy, generous account of the erotic goings-on in an English prep school as it never was and never could be.

11-year-old Jean-Philippe comes to the school half way through spring term. 14-year-old Andy Chanting, a 'Top', takes the new boy under his wing, and, very soon, into his bed. Brian Miners, another 'Top', falls in love with his P.E. instructor.

Swirling around these main stories is a storm of pubertal boys: Barney Winters the *nouveau riche* kid, "Kiss Me" Barchester, a most promiscuous sprig of the landed gentry, Jocko who tries to get it on with practically everybody...

If there are snakes in this Garden of Eden, they are the headmaster, whose hobby is physically disciplining the boys he fancies, and Timbers, the history teacher with a sadistic streak, whose greatest joy is trapping his young charges in some obscene or forbidden act...

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