

## **THE THIRD ACOLYTE READER**

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*K.I. Bard will be remembered for his “Theban Patrol” in Panthology Two and “Ball Games” in The First Acolyte Reader. Here he continues to reflect upon his own experiences growing up in the American Midwest*

# Almost There

K.I. Bard

“Aw Harry, it will be better than you think.”

“I don't know ... “

“Come on. If you're along, maybe they'll behave themselves.”

I considered. Les, a year older than I, had been a decent enough friend, but that was mainly because he lived next door. We'd played hours of catch, killing time before or after meals in obedience to our parents.

“Those guys, Les - Snake, Bullwinkle and the twins...”

“I know. They're so immature it stinks.”

“You said it, I didn't.”

“They're OK in some ways. If you come with me I won't have to be the only oldest.”

He was almost begging, so of course, being me, I gave in.

In a few minutes we were off, a husky exfarmboy of fourteen and me, a gawky thirteen, lugging blankets under our arms as we walked downhill toward the poorer section of Buhl.

Our end, the high end, of town was where the Managers, the Staff and their families, lived. As you walked down the hill, the houses got smaller, the cars older, the yards junkier. This, too, seemed to be where all the little kids were, for the sidewalks were littered with toddlers' toys and tricycles. Poorer people, my parents said, were more inclined to reproduce than was Management, thus keeping the natural order of more workers in the world than bosses.

Snake and his friends already had the tent set up and complained that Les and I hadn't been there to help. We shrugged: age had its privileges. Snake's mother brought out a tray of snacks and Kool Aid.

Like the other three, Snake was one class blow me in school, and still on the child side of puberty. He made up for this by being loud and pushy. His best friend, Bullwinkle, looked like a big and gangly young moose - thus his nickname. He was also less than bright. What the

twins, Kenny and Denny, were best known for was their immense (but, to me, still unclear) appetite. Les had told me that several times they had “done it” with him present, showing, he said, no sense of modesty at all. Their fort in the woods was a favorite location, it seemed, as was any spot along the stream banks when they went fishing. I'd pretended to understand what Les meant by “doing it”, but all I really knew was that it had something to do with sex, which for me simply meant a boy getting a boner.

It grew dark. Snake had equipped the tent with a light on a cord strung from the house. We slipped inside, spreading our blankets around the tent floor. An argument broke out about how we would sleep.

“Let's not wear anything, like last time.”

“Not me.”

“Yeah, let's!”

Les, Bullwinkle and one of the twins wanted to keep their shorts on; Snake and the other twin thought everyone should strip down to his skin, and I joined them, proud of my small brush of hair and a comparatively substantial organ for the younger boys to envy.

“Gee, Horse Cock, you're going to bare-ass it like me and Kenny?” Snake said. “Boy, that's something.”

“Maybe he wants to be one of us for a change.”

“Hey, quit picking on him,” Les intervened. “I invited him and you said OK, so I don't want to hear anything about people from up the Hill.”

“Screw you, Les. You don't even live here anymore.” Les's family was upwardly mobile.

“I'll kick your ass.”

But as quickly as the subject of 'shorts versus skins' was abandoned for class rivalries, so that got swallowed up in a free-for-all, a general grabbing, grappling, poking among the younger boys which mostly skipped over me. I just lay back and watched, quietly content, squirming out of the way when two bodies were about to roll on me.

After a while things began to settle down. Kenny, naked and next to me, kicked his blanket away and fanned himself with his hands.

“I like having one of the twins this way,” I said, “so I can tell them apart. Kenny's the one with the dick.”

The others looked at me as though I wasn't real - except for Kenny who just looked puzzled.

"You like my dick out, eh?" he finally said. "Well, let's get yours out, too." And he pulled my blanket off and threw it to Les.

We scuffled long enough for me to get sweaty. Then, heart pounding, I rested beside Kenny, the only two naked and exposed boys in the tent, for even Snake had a blanket over his middle. Kenny wouldn't let Les give me mine back. I suspect, now, that I, or rather my bigger cock, was intimidating to the others - and Kenny simply didn't care. At any rate, the two of us lay there, on display, while the others watched, sometimes with obvious irritation.

"I'm not going to do anything this time. No way!"

"That's because you can't make anything happen, Winkle."

"I've got the working stuff to come out, but not with you guys messing around. Do what you want, but leave me out of it."

"Christ, it wasn't a big deal," said Kenny. "We were only teasing anyway, so don't go all serious on us."

I was enlightened, but not by much. I knew that something had happened between the four younger boys on some previous occasion. I could deduce it had to do with penises. They seemed embarrassed about it in front of me, an older boy, a newcomer from up the Hill.

Only Kenny was making an effort to include me: "Maybe you and I can show 'em how to do it, eh, Horse Dick?"

I shrugged. How could I agree to something I couldn't comprehend? I wished he would be more specific and lead the way.

"Think he'd spit?" Snake asked.

"Pow! Zappo!"

"Regular beast, huh?"

"Couldn'tmiss."

Their voices were shrill with choked-back laughter. There was apparently some code in all of this, known only to insiders.

I decided to wait, play it cool. Maybe they would initiate me.

But nothing like that happened. Kenny lay back and stirred his dick with one finger, working around the base, causing the plump shaft to swing in a circle like a bent nail hammered into a skin-colored board. Not knowing what else to do, I imitated Kenny. I'd never done

anything like this openly before.

Kenny said, "You pop one first and I'll race you, OK?"

I smiled back at him although I hadn't the faintest idea what he meant.

"Couple of perverts," Bullwinkle said. "I gotta go take a leak. Let's let these two play alone."

All the others left. Kenny and I continued to stir our individual organs with quiet pleasure side by side. I found myself thinking that Kenny *was* attractive, with his dazzling blond hair and lean, muscled chest and shoulders. I wondered if his penis felt as good as mine did.

"You going to do it?" Kenny finally asked. "Sure," I nodded. "You first." -

"No, you. You're the new guy. Want to before they come back? They don't know how to shoot, especially Snake, but Denny can."

"What if they come in?"

"So what?"

"Shouldn't we all do it?" I asked. Several boys might show me more than just one.

Kenny held his penis in his hand and squeezed it until it showed an inclination to rise. "Look! Coming up! I can make it bounce up and down, but I'm not going hard until you do, too."

I squeezed mine as he did his, but it wasn't responding. I was too excited. My heart was going whumpity whacckity, and so fast I felt more shaky than sexy. Yet there was a new kind of tingle in the tip of my penis.

Kenny watched at me closely. "You come off like that, soft?"

I must have looked startled. I certainly was puzzled by his question. Could I have done something without knowing it?

"What's that drip of stuff on the end of your dick?" Kenny asked. "You shot?"

"I don't know. There wasn't anything I could tell."

"Maybe love juice, huh, like older guys?"

"Could be." Now I was more confused than ever. Here was yet another secret something, called 'love juice', for me to understand.

“Let me feel. If it's slip...”

The other four came crashing back into the tent, pursued by Snake's older sister and her boy-friend intent on dragging a naked kid out into the yard. They snagged the other twin who, unfortunately for them, was the one with the shorts on.

“Let's strip the little prick,” the girl said.

Denny let out a holler, “Nooo!”, but a moment later Denny's undershorts came flying through the open tent flap, followed by Denny himself, cursing, “Damn them! Fucking son-of-a- bitches!”

The interruption, of course, did nothing to further Kenny's sex play with me. We'd both left off and were huddling under our blankets. Snake's sister and her guy threatened to haul out and debag each of us, one by one, until Snake scared them off by charging out, nude, and kicking mud at them.

Slowly things settled down within the tent again. Someone suggested we ought to get some sleep.

“Yeah, I think we should.”

“Good idea.”

“We going to get up early or not?” “What the hell for?”

“Just asking.”

Everyone rootled around in his blanket to find a comfortable position. Someone farted and someone giggled.

Kenny turned to me and said, “You want to go outside and take a leak before turning in?”

I nodded at his question, which seemed more like an invitation, and the two of us crawled from the tent.

“We piss over here,” Kenny whispered.

I followed him, feeling like a pale wraith. We reached the shadows behind Snake's house where a fence and shrubbery locked us in shadow.

“Try to pee on the tree,” Kenny said. “That's what I do.”

I realized, now, as together we splattered on the rough maple bark, that I really did have to piss: it seemed to come out forever. With the new ,weird feelings in my penis that night, I had hardly been able to tell one sensation from another.

“Nice out here, huh?” Kenny said, obviously happy to be away from the others for a moment. “You like this?”

“Yeah, fun.” My voice sounded, odd, excited, happy. It surprised me.

“Here, let me get a hold of yours before we go back.”

He took control of my organ, almost cuddled it in his hand.

“It’s a big one. Les has a big one, too, but he won’t play any more.” He tugged on my skin in a way that made me breathlessly and awesomely happy. “Yours *will* get a bone, won’t it?”

“Yeah, but maybe not tonight. I don’t know why. Usually it does it when you don’t want it to, I guess.”

Kenny chuckled. “Like in school if you have to stand in front of the class.”

“Yeah.”

Kenny gave me a gentle poke. “You can hold mine while I’m doing you, Stupe.”

“OK.”

I felt for his penis by touching his chest and working my hand down.

“Hey, don’t tickle!” I had my hand around it, now. It was rubbery, rising. “You sure got me to spring a hard in a hurry. Feels nice.”

“Unhuh.”

“You like it when I pump yours? I sure wish you’d get your bone, though.”

“Pump?” I ask, puzzled.

“What I’m doing, Stupe.”

“That. Yeah. Pretty nice.”

“I’d like it, too.” Getting no response from me, Kenny had to add, “I mean, pump mine like that, back and forth so the skin slides like a snake in the grass.”

Slowly I was getting the hang of it. When Kenny played with my balls I shuddered and started to go limp at the knees.

“You like that, huh? Maybe it’ll perk you up. You can do a little



faster on me, now.”

“Like that?”

“Yeah. It's good. Not too fast, though. God, this is neat. If Denny was here he'd blow your socks off.”

“Huh?” I didn't know what Kenny was talking about: he knew darned well I wasn't wearing any socks.

“He'd blow for you because he thinks you've got a hot dick, but Winkle got him all bothered about confirmation coming up and how we got to be good kids and not dishonor the Church.”

“I been confirmed already, when I was younger.”

“I like your dick. It's so damn big the way it is, I'm going nuts waiting for it to stiffen up. It must be a huge fucker when it's cocked and loaded, huh?”

“I guess so. Hard to tell when you're always alone. I don't have a brother to compare with.”

“At least you get your own room and people know which one you are.”

Shivers were going through me, now, like waves of surf.

“Why are you shaking?” Kenny wanted to know.

“Must be cold. Are you cold?”

“You kidding? With you pumping me I'm nothing but hot. Let me go, though. I can finish better by myself.”

Kenny pulled my hand off his erection and started to do something I could hear and sense but not see. There was a kind of vibration of his body. He let out little bursts of air and almost pitiful high sounds. Then everything slowed down, except he seemed out of breath. “I hit you with any of it?” He patted my leg. “Guess not, huh? Not that it matters much.”

Then he stepped behind me, close. I felt this warmth half up my body as he pressed his groin against one of my ass-cheeks. He leaned in close and whispered in my ear, “Hey, maybe we can do some more in the morning. The other guys will let us have the tent, or we can go to my house. I can probably talk Denny into going home with us if you want me to. He can really blow.”

“Yeah,” I said, hardly hearing him, but feeling wonderful. If Kenny would only stay behind me like that and press his body against

me I would get hard. I could tell it was ready now. That was what I was waiting for, the definite signal, contact with his whole body.

“Boy, you 're really shaking,”Kenny said. “We better go back and get some sleep. In the morning, though, huh? You'll be hot as a fire then, I'll bet.”

I did want to do more in the morning, when I could watch. I wanted to see what his brother looked like doing it, too. I wanted it all to happen, but I'd promised Father Stack I'd serve Mass. I was torn between duty and this new excitement.

I decided not to say anything to Kenny then about having to serve Mass in the morning.

Back in the tent, the others were nearly asleep. Snake made a snide comment. Les muttered. Denny was blunt: “My brother's a fucking whore. Drags guys in the bushes every chance he gets. I bet he gave your cock a blast off, hey Harry, or the two of you wouldn't have stayed out there so long. Couple of naked fairies crawling in here with their dicks down.”

Kenny leaned over his brother and whispered. Denny shrugged him off. Kenny returned to whisper more. Denny rolled over and looked my way. He blinked several times, as if he was thinking. Then he lay back down and pulled his blanket around his shoulders again.

Kenny patted the floor beside him. We faced one another, me still shaking. “Don't mind Denny,” he whispered. “He's just pissed it was me instead of him. You still cold?”

“A little.”

“Move closer, then we'll both be warm.”

I did, catching again the faint smell of something I'd noticed just after Kenny had touched my leg outside. It was a sharp odor, but not of sweat or feet. The smell was spicier and had an odd tang. It seemed to come from Kenny, and in my ignorance I thought of it as his smell, his alone. Despite the smell, or perhaps partly because of it, I wanted to hug him. I thought of how odd it was that we could pull on one another's dicks but didn't dare really snuggle to get warm and sleep. Kenny put his hand on my forearm and patted it lightly. His touch traveled all through my body; my penis tip rang with it, as if invisible nerves ran down from his fingers to my groin. I felt my penis jump a couple of times, almost painful in partial erection, but I was too exhausted and too happy to be able to deal with a boner which, in any

case, soon went away. Then I slipped into sleep, surrounded by that faint scent of damp earth, ferns and Clorox rising from Kenny.

When morning came I was the first awake. I was the only one, too. I could feel the warmth of the sun hitting the side of the tent.

Soon I noticed I had a boner, a real and absolute hard-on that felt like forged steel. I pulled my blanket down and looked at it. I remembered Kenny's hand on my penis the night before, tugging the loose skin, how that had made me tremble. But now it was too hard and jumpy to feel the way it did then. And there was a new thrill, too, in the lack of privacy inside our tent. At home, if I wanted to examine myself, I'd lock the bathroom door and be very careful, yet here I was toying with a ram-rod erection with five other boys lying close all around me.

After a while, I turned to Kenny. First I poked him, then I whispered in his ear, "It's morning." I did this several times, but nothing happened, until eventually he sat up and looked at me, bewildered, and collapsed back into sleep. I knew then it was hopeless. And I couldn't stand lying there any more, the only guy awake, with that impossible hard-on, thrill or no thrill.

Moving quietly, I found my clothes and stuffed the hardness inside my briefs, then inside my pants. I left my shirt-tails out, to hide the lump. Then I grabbed my blanket and started up the hill.

The erection was gone before I reached Church. Father Stack patted my shoulder many times, as usual, and asked if I'd been being a good Catholic. I gave my usual response of seeming agreement and polite evasion. I'd wanted very much *not* to be a good Catholic boy that morning, to know the secrets other boys knew, but I'd answered the Call of Duty. While I served Mass, inside my black cassock and long white surplice I could still feel Kenny's hand touching me, holding me, moving like a promise of revelations to come. It was alarming and exciting. But before Mass was over I'd decided God didn't want me to know those secrets. He was saving something even better, just for me.