

*The Eighth
Acolyte Reader*



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Warriors of the Dream

by Kevin Esser

Do you know how it happened? Do you know how it started? In retrospect, it all seems inevitable: no system can last forever, especially not one as corrupt and oppressive as the Federation. The revolution had to happen eventually; all we needed was a leader, someone to rally us, to give us hope, to help us rediscover our courage. Of course, no one ever expected it to be a boy.

We were at war with the Caliphate. That much is easy to remember, even though it's been nearly fifty years. Some people called them the Empire, or the Evil Empire, but the name didn't matter; they were our enemy, and that was enough; we pledged allegiance to the Federation, one nation under God, and we spent our lives fighting to make the world safe for Christian democracy. Fortunately, not everyone closed his eyes and submitted blindly to the crusade. Year by year, disillusionment set in more deeply, hopelessness festered, opposition flared. It probably started with the vags (yes, with the savage urban riff-raff of the Federation). Others have taken credit, which is natural, but I was there, I was part of it, and I can't imagine the revolution without the vags at the center of it.

He was a vag, of course. The boy. Today, school children read about him and remember him as Edward Michael Cameron, as the famous Red Beret guerrilla who fired the first shot and ignited the revolution. Those of us who knew him, and fought with him, simply called him Teddy. He was our friend. I was never as close to him as some others (I could lie about it, and few could challenge it, but I won't); I was just one of the boys in his gang, one of the homeless kids who joined him on the road after his victory at the Battle of Old Chicago. He was already becoming famous by then, what with his name and his face on every vid show and newspaper and magazine – a budding cult hero to a nation sickened by decades of pointless wars, pollution, cynical moralizing, repression. His victory over the Feds at Old Chicago had sparked a firestorm of sympathetic protest. At first, the Fed media dismissed it all as "rioting" and "urban unrest" and the like. But it was much more than that, and even a dumb kid like myself could see it. We knew that

something momentous had happened – like Lexington and Concord, like the storming of the Bastille – and we knew that there was no turning back.

I joined the gang somewhere in Nebraska. Teddy was resting on the ground when I first saw him. He and his friends were gnawing on ears of raw corn. It must have been summertime – maybe late July, maybe August – because the corn was ripe and yellow and sweet, ready for harvesting. He was a beautiful kid, Teddy was, beautiful in a wild, dashing sort of way, just like a young Visigoth prince, absolutely striking, with long tangles of yellow hair and bright green eyes. I fell in love with him as soon as I saw him. I suppose everyone did. All the boys were crazy about him. Nowadays, needless to say, such romantic notions sound perfectly ordinary; boys are free to enjoy one another sexually without interference from police or politicians or vice squads. Don't laugh. You've grown up in a society that accepts the natural love of boys and men for one another. The old Judeo-Christian system has been dismantled. We can go to any street-corner gymnasium now and watch nude boys wrestling together or playing basketball; we can go to the neighborhood arcade to enjoy the viddie porn and the dancing boys (the best shows are usually on Saturday night, as I'm sure you'll agree); we can go to any library and find books by Hakim Bey, by William Phillips-Sheldon, by Luis Miguel Fuentes – all the great boy-love prophets from before the revolution. We're very fortunate now, it's true, but we should never forget the dark times of the Federation, back when men (and boys) could still be sent to prison for loving one another. It seems impossible, doesn't it? My boyfriends always laugh at me when I tell them about it. They assume that I'm teasing them. And why not? You can't blame them for not comprehending the madness and the cruelty of it all.

It was Teddy who changed everything. He was charismatic and homosexual and fiercely proud of it – and he became the leader of his generation. He was there when the world found itself ready for a change; he revolutionized things by what he said, and by what he did, and by what he *was*. Centuries of repression went up in flames because of the anger he ignited. I'm not claiming that he did it all by himself. That would be reckless myth-mongering; my boyfriends would have a good laugh about that one. No, it wasn't just him. There were other people and other forces, including the movement that became known in history as the "Cult of the Vag". It started with graffiti and slogans such as "Vag Power" and "Vag Love" and ended up harnessing millions of the homeless, of the disenfranchised, of the alienated and the oppressed, harnessing them into a revolution that finally destroyed the Federation. But would that movement

have been successful without Teddy? I don't think so.

He was wearing his red beret when I first met him. Did I mention that he was eating corn? There were dozens of boys and young men with him by that time, but only three of them had been with him since the beginning, since Old Chicago: Hava and Cisco and Max. I remember all of them vividly. Max was the youngest and the smallest of the three, still only twelve years old, dressed in black corduroy pants and a raggedy green Boy Scout shirt, pale, skinny, like a little scarecrow with rusty straw hair. Then there was Hava, fourteen years old, in green camouflage pants and a pink T-shirt. He was a lovely Polynesian lad with shaggy yellow bangs almost hiding his brown Tartar eyes. Finally there was Cisco (Teddy's most faithful lover, as every school child knows). He had just turned sixteen, and he was as dark and handsome as a jungle panther. Like Teddy, he was wearing dirty blue jeans and a hooded gray sweatshirt, plus a tattered kamikaze bandanna around his bushy shock of brown hair. It was the same bandanna that Teddy had given him several months before, soon after their escape from the Falwell Home.

The four of them – along with their small army of comrades, including myself – were headed to the western concentration camps to find Teddy's mother. We were also searching for someone named Richard, the man who had been Teddy's friend in Sandburg. (Have you ever visited the museum there? You can see Teddy's beret, among other things.) Sad to say, we never found either of them. There were hundreds of camps out west, all of them teeming with political and sexual prisoners, and it quickly became obvious that our mission was a futile one. But Teddy didn't have much time to grieve. After blasting through one camp, then another, we found ourselves involved in a genuine war of liberation. Thousands of ex-prisoners became warriors at Teddy's side. It doesn't seem particularly odd now, but it seemed absolutely stunning at the time: a fourteen-year-old boy leading an army of guerrilla warriors, commanding them, commanding their respect, inspiring them to victory after victory over the demoralized Fed troops. You should have been there; it was supreme, absolute, as we used to say back then. No one could stop us. At first, just a single nuclear or plasma device could probably have wiped us out. But the Federation, as always, misjudged the situation; they underestimated the danger and treated us as a minor nuisance – until it was too late, until there were hordes of vags exploding from every city in the land, dozens of armies in all, hundreds of thousands of warriors, ferocious berserkers, an irresistible force that swept away the machinery of the Federation in two wild and bloody years of fighting.

Naturally, it took a while for any kind of order to be restored. There were several attempts by would-be dictators to grab control (and, in many old territories of the Federation, they were all too successful). But, out here in the Western States, we've done a pretty fair job of holding on to what we won – namely our freedom. Nobody tells us how to live, or how to love, and we keep our weapons close at hand in case anybody tries. Listen, nobody ever defeated fascism with benevolence and logic. You need to water that old tree of liberty with blood, my friend, whether you like it or not.

Teddy Cameron knew that better than anyone. He was a gentle kid by nature, but he had a wicked temper whenever someone treated him unfairly. "I just wish they'd leave us alone," he always said, speaking about the Feds. I don't think he ever completely understood how anyone could be so arrogant, so hateful, so downright mean-spirited. It didn't make sense to him, or to any of us, that kind of intolerance and injustice. Why had people submitted to it for so many years? Why had they allowed themselves to be brutalized by that gang of pompous, self-righteous bullies? We couldn't understand it. So we fought back. And we won.

But the price was high. We lost Hava during a battle in Utah; he was killed by a fragmentation grenade that cut his spinal cord. He was a wonderfully sweet boy, and we all felt dazed and injured by the loss of him. Teddy himself was wounded twice by bullets and shrapnel, but never seriously. The older warriors claimed that he was protected by the power of his green stone – the crystal pendant given to him in Old Chicago by a vag sorcerer-chieftain. It's tempting to scoff, but I've heard remarkable stories (from Teddy and Cisco themselves, among others) about sorcerers and assassins and their strange powers. Whether real or not, Teddy seemed to believe in the stone and its protective charm, and he never took it off. Not even when he bathed; not even when he had sex. How do I know? Well, you'd probably consider me a braggart if I told you. Thousands of folks, after all, have claimed to be Teddy's lovers. But I can tell you right now, Teddy was never promiscuous. He had his share of boyfriends over the years, it's true, just like the rest of us; but he was always happiest with one special lover; he was a monogamist at heart. Still, that didn't stop him, when he was a youngster, from playing around with other boys – especially during the Feeding Ceremonies, when sexual activity became even more frantic than usual.

Do you know about the Feeding Ceremonies? They were held every spring in the old days, back when vag customs and rituals were still predominant. The ceremony itself was a dance, an orgy, a giant

psychedelic sex party, all designed to celebrate pleasure and joy and friendship. Boys chose each other as partners, danced together, got high together, then finally sealed their bond of affection with an exchange of mushrooms and semen (peyote and semen was a common variation). Each boy *fed* the delicacy to the other, hence the name of the ceremony.

During my first year with them, Teddy and Cisco chose each other as partners, which was only fitting. They made a beautiful dancing couple – golden Teddy and swarthy Cisco – both of them obviously in love, obviously excited by all the attention focused on them. By the next year, Cisco had become briefly involved with a girl named Juanita (he always did dabble in cross-gender sex), and Hava had already been killed, so I ended up as Teddy's partner for the ceremony. I remember being exceptionally nervous. I was only thirteen at the time, two years younger than Teddy, and I had no prior experience with public nudity or sex. (I hadn't participated in the previous year's ceremony simply because I hadn't been mature enough to ejaculate. After all, you needed to produce your own semen in order to feed your partner.) Being chosen by Teddy was a stunning compliment. I must have been a fairly good-looking kid to attract his interest over all the other available boys. I had long brown hair back then and a sort of cute, round puppy-dog face, not much of a chin, big brown eyes. I was no great beauty, but I was all right.

What worried me most, as we stripped for the dance, was the size of my penis (especially as it compared to Cisco's big pecker from the year before). But Teddy put me quickly at ease. "It's nice, Rafael," he assured me. We were naked by this time, outside in the moonlit field where the ceremony was about to be held, and Teddy was fingering my penis and making it hard, making me forget my nervousness. He knew exactly what to do. He led us skilfully through the dancing, and then through the actual feeding itself, waiting patiently for me to ejaculate into the little bowl of mushrooms that he was holding, waiting for me to add my semen to the slimy mixture inside.

Afterwards, as was traditional, we went someplace private to share our drugged visions and to make love until dawn. It was a wonderful night. I can still remember the way Teddy felt, and the way he smelled; I can remember that he never took off his red beret or his green crystal pendant, which made his nakedness seem even more flamboyantly beautiful; I can remember the weight and the warmth of his body as he climbed on top of me and started rubbing himself against me. I grabbed him around the shoulders. We were getting crazy on each other, squirming together, sliding and rubbing our legs together, our dicks, our

bellies, doing everything possible to get ourselves closer, hotter, tighter. And then we started kissing. Teddy did most of it at first, but then I happily joined in, opening my mouth for Teddy's tongue, licking back, tasting Teddy's spit – like cinnamon and bruised apples – both of us tasting and licking inside each other's mouths, kissing like two lovers, like two real lovers. That was the truth of it: not just having sex now, but actually making love, and doing it cheerfully, eagerly, free of the Federation and its ugly taboos.

It seemed natural then, it seemed natural and sweet and fine when Teddy eased himself between my open legs and started pushing himself in. His leaky dick was already slippery with pre-cum, so it went up easily into the crack, into the hole. I brought my knees up to my chest to open myself wider, to get more of Teddy's boner up inside of me. I had his tongue in my mouth, and I had his dick in my ass, and it felt like the two things were swelling and filling every inch of me. This was my first time getting fucked, and I could hear myself groaning from the pleasure of it, or from the pain of it, there was no difference now, there was only the agonizing fullness in my stomach and in my balls.

Teddy started humping faster. He was trying to shove it in deeper, but he couldn't, he was already in all the way, probably seven inches, in as far as he could get with his snaky hard dick, each stroke of it making a soft squishing noise as it slid in and out of my ass. And then, I guess, he started coming, because he humped even faster and I could feel a new warmth and a new wetness up inside of me, up inside of my bowels.

He kept humping until he started to lose his erection, then collapsed on top of me. But I wasn't ready to stop. I kept kissing at Teddy's ear and cheek and neck. My hands were on his butt, all over his butt. I was spreading the cheeks and feeling between them, pawing down between them until I found the sweaty hole and got my finger into it, like sticking my finger into the core of a pulpy, slippery fruit. Teddy scooted himself forward and sat up across my crotch. "Go ahead," I remember him telling me, "put your thing in." He raised himself a few inches to give me a better angle. I didn't hesitate. I started pushing my cock up where my finger had been. It was the first time I had ever fucked another boy. And it was with Teddy. What more can I say?

We spent a few more nights together after that, but the sex was never quite as special or intense as the first time. Eventually, Cisco returned from his latest hetero fling and reclaimed his place at Teddy's side, leaving me without a boyfriend for the next several weeks. I finally worked up the courage to approach Max, who was fourteen by then and

surprisingly handsome; puberty had been kind to him, transforming the little scarecrow into a slim, sexy teenager with lovely pale skin and frosty blue eyes and a wild mane of coppery red hair. Like me, though, he spent most of his time alone, which made it especially gratifying when the two of us finally found each other.

I asked him, that first time, if he wanted to share a pipe of reefer with me. It was early June, somewhere in California or Nevada, and no Fed troops were in the vicinity. (We didn't know it then, but the final collapse of the Federation was only two months away.) Max accepted my invitation, and we ended up in his tent getting stoned and horny, not saying much, neither of us being very talkative by nature. I suggested, after a while, that we take off our clothes, that getting stoned would be more fun if we were both naked. Max agreed. I already had an erection; Max didn't, not all the way, but he got one in a hurry when he saw mine. His was bigger, and it looked very red sticking up from between his smooth white legs. We decided, at that point, to smoke another pipe of reefer, which would give us a chance to watch each other jerking off. Max, as I recall, used his left hand, rubbing only the knob of his boner, not the whole shaft of it, using short, vigorous strokes to do it. His thighs started trembling after only a few minutes, and I could see his balls getting tighter, actually pulling up in their sac. I asked him if he was going to cum. He nodded, but before he could say anything, his belly muscles tightened and he suddenly had a glistening mess of semen all over his fingers. He asked me if I wanted it, which I did, so I went ahead and licked it off his hand, getting every drop of it. Max grinned, apparently surprised by my eagerness. Without even being asked, he then crawled between my legs and started sucking me off. It didn't take long before he had me finishing in his mouth.

The two of us stayed together for several years after that, long after the war ended. Max became my best friend as well as my first real lover. Only death could have parted us, which finally it did, when my poor Max was killed in a hovercraft accident. He was only twenty-six. A hovercraft! It seems ridiculous, doesn't it, to die that way after surviving a war? But life seldom makes sense.

Teddy and Cisco, of course, moved back to Old Chicago to rejoin their vag friends after the war (Mikki and Topo are two names I seem to recall). I never saw either of them again. We're all old men now, separated by time and distance, relying too heavily on the comfort of our memories. It's important to keep the past alive, I always tell my young friends, but they just snicker and ignore me. They don't realize how

fragile their freedoms are. But I do; I realize. Just yesterday I heard about something called the Bible Alliance for Family Values. It's a group of young neo-conservatives who want to close down the arcades and the gymnasiums. They also want to establish sexual age-of-consent laws in order to protect "defenseless" children. It won't happen, of course. Not this year, or the next. But what about ten years from now? Or twenty? I know you think it's impossible, but you could wake up someday in a new Federation, in a state where sexual behavior is monitored and regulated, where certain types of sexual activity are actually criminal. Please, don't let it happen. Be careful, be vigilant. Don't forget Teddy and Cisco and all the others who fought for your freedom and for your dignity. It's your fight now.

It's your revolution.