

*The Seventh  
Acolyte Reader*



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# Bunjie's Story

by Daniel Mallery

Y'know that school what closed down? Well, mebbe you don't, but you should 'cos it was in all the papers. Ransome Hall it was, where they sent kids what was delinquents, an' I went there but I wasn't no delinquent. They sent me there 'cos *they* (I mean the social) said there was no place else where to send me. I was fostered out before that, I forgot how many times. It never worked 'cos they never liked me. No sweat. I didn't like them. They mostly had their own snooty kids with sky-high noses what got treated better than me, and they made me get blamed for things I didn't do, an' if I tried to get even, I'd get punished twice, an' that's not fair.

I don't have a dad, well, I mean I must have had a dad, only my ma, who dumped me quick, never got married. Makes me a little bastard, right?

I was glad Ransome got closed 'cos it was pretty horrible. They said it was because the guy what run it went broke through spending all the money he got for us kids. I reckon it must be true 'cos you should see the flash car he had. It was a Jag XJ6 with the school badge painted on both sides. And the food was lousy, all macaroni an' cabbage an' junk, an' we got no pocket money, and we never got enough to eat an' there was mice and beetles sometimes in the dorms and some big nob – a MP or sump'n like that – kep' on visiting 'cos sum'dy must have moaned to him about it, and he was standing up in parliment (I know it's spelt wrong, but my friend – I'll tell you about him later – said to leave it 'cos it's like this is me talkin') an' this MP guy – I don't know his name – he was writing to the papers and having rows with Mr Sanders, the headmaster, and the only good one in it, an' I was sorry he spent all the money. So the place got shut.

I didn't tell you my name yet. That's 'cos it's scumbagish, like my ma. It's Archibald Benjamin Lamb, an' I reckon she must have been pissed when I got born an' got it off a gravestone or sump'n. I don't mind getting called Benny, but even Benny's kinda pongy. I'm twelve. No, I'm not. I'm eleven an' a bit – but that's nearly twelve. Grown-ups keep

saying stuff like 'small for his age, isn't he?' So what? I still got growin' time, right?

So I got stuck in this kid's home for a coupla weeks till Miss Gasket (I think it was Gasket) found me a new school. I was listening outside the door one day when she telled sum'dy I was a bright little bugger and she was worried about my education sufferin', so when she told me about the new place she made it sound like somewhere really awesome. "Oh, what a lucky wee boy you are. Where do you think you're going?" (Figured it must be Disneyland, but I jus' looked dumb.) "We've managed to secure you a much coveted place at Thornridge." She talked like that. She didn't have no clue. Thornridge I'd heard was a place where snobby rich kids go an' I didn't want to go there. But I'm just a kid to get shoved around. Terrific I said, but didn't mean it.

You should see that massive crumbly old building what looks like it would fall to bits if the ivy which was crawling all over the place didn't hold it up. I was dead scared. I never like going to new places 'cos the kids what's already there always act like you're some creep what shoulda got flushed down the toilet. Anyway, I get stuck in a dorm with four other kids called Jeff an' Ivor an' Kelvin an' Mickey, who are all bigger than me, an' they're all older as well, an' I can't figure out what I'm doing in a room with jus' big kids. It don't seem right to me.

So here I am, all systems switched on, jus' going into the dorm for the first time. Shoved in by a prefect who tells 'em who I am, an' me shakin' like an earthquake, an' peein' in my pants nearly – but you gotta know this first: I can't remember *exactly* what they all said or what I said, so in my story I'll make it sound as near as I can to what happened.

"Jesus, guys, look what the cat dragged in," Jeff said, in a bossy way he had. He bashed my shoulder not hard enough for me to fall over, but like a nit I fell over anyway – on one of the beds.

"Hey you, scum-bag, off my bed," snarled piss-streak Ivor.

"Yeh, well, he pushed me," I said, tryin' not to sound wavery, but sounding kinda wavery just the same. I was dragged back to standing an' all four of 'em crowded me in like I was in a square box. Checkmate! An' it was like they was all six feet tall. An' then when they kep' on asking me questions I got bashed from one to another like a ping-pong ball.

"What did he say your name was?" Kelvin said to me. Bash!

"Benny," I mumbled.

"Don't burble, sludge-bucket," said Ivor. "Speak out. We wanna know what your full name is." Bash!

"Benjamin Lamb," I nearly whispered.

"We can't hear you," somebody said, and they made me keep on saying it over louder and louder – an' gettin' bashed every time.

They all hooted their stupid heads off and making sheep noises an' at the end they said my name from now on was gonna be Bunjie-Baa, and how'd I like it, an' I jus' shrugged my shoulders and said which was my bed. It was then that Jeff grabbed my bollocks and pulled me to my bed like that. I yelped 'cos if you're a boy you know what that's like. It hurts sump'n awful. I went red I think but tried not to let them see. "Why'nt yer pick on sum'dy your own size?" I said, sorta squealy.

"Sassy little prick, ain't he?" Jeff sneered. "You better watch that mouth, kid, or else feel the wrath. I bet he pisses the bed. D'yer piss the bed, little prick?"

"Course not. I ain't no baby."

"We think you're a cute little mama's boy, Bunjie-Baa," said Ivor. "You ain't gonna have no ma tuck you in tonight, turd."

"I never did have," I said, a bit more bold. I was backing away to the wall and they kep' on coming. "An' I can't be a mama's boy 'cos I ain't got no ma – see!" I wasn't about to tell them my ma's a hooker – an' I don't mean in football!

"What – d'yer mean you're a poor little orphan Annie? Is that what you're tryna tell us?"

"Suit yerself what yer think. I ain't sayin' no more."

This time I got shoved flat out on my own bed with Ivor jumpin' on top of me. My arms got pinned over my head an' he was sat on me squashing my belly and – guess what? Some of his snot fell off his nose and squished in my eye. Huh! Gross!

"Sorry," Ivor said, sniffing up, an' landing me a sore head butt. "I'm lyin', right."

"I know, yer lousy git," I said, screwing my eyes, tryna see. "An' geroff, will yer?"

"You won't be so prick-smart when we initiate you, turd. After lights out the bogie man's gonna get you."

I tried to move but couldn't, an' he wouldn't let me wipe the snot off, and all the others was standing round looking and laughing. It feels rotten when loads o' boys gang up and do that. I shouted another "geroff."

"No," Ivor said. "Anyway, what I always say is 'get lucky, share a disease with a friend'. Prime germs them is. What do you always say, turd? Don't tell me. You always say 'geroff'."

He said 'geroff' like baby talk, an' I wanted to bash his head in, but it was like my muscles was havin' a day off work or sump'n, 'cos I still couldn't budge. Instead I said, "It's you what's a turd. You all are. A load o' turds what picks on kids four to one. Tough." Such courage would get me in the shit for sure, but a bell sounded somewhere in the building, like it was the end of round one, an' that saved me, 'cos Ivor hauled off and made for the door with the others.

"What's the bell?" I asked, not expecting to get an answer, but Kelvin said, "It's nosebag time, kid. Tea. Better shift your butt if you wanna eat." I followed them to the dining hall, keeping my distance.

Oh, there's something I forgot to tell you about this place, so I'll do it now 'cos it's important to my story.

All new kids gets telled the boring history about the place, which used to be called a Stately Home, 'cos it's a lot over a hundred years old. Used to belong to some lord or some guy like that an' he had to sell it when he got broke. It's got the main bit in the middle where they have the dining hall and the classrooms and the headmaster's office and the secretary's office, the church and the swimmin' pool in the basement. Then in the west wing which pokes out west (I s'pose) is all the boys' dorms, but they was painting part of it up, like making new decorations an' stuff, so a few of the boys was put on the first floor of the east wing which had never been used, except to store old junk. It's got the ground floor and the first floor and the second floor. This dorm I'm in is in the east wing.

The thing is this: every time people say "east wing" they always make it sound sorta sinister like, y'know, like real creepy, an' I wondered why but nobody would tell me 'cos it wasn't creepy to me. But if you stand in the yard and look at it you see the rooms on the second floor have got real mucky windows making it look like nobody ever went there. Oh, and there's a square tower bang in the middle, over the church bit I think, with a flagpole on top. That's all I'm gonna tell you about that right now – okay?

Anyway, it come to night on my first day there and the rules say you have to be in your beds at nine o'clock an' you have to keep quiet or else it's lights out straight away. But if you keep quiet you get half an hour to read or write letters. I didn't have anything to read an' I had nub'dy to write letters to, so I jus' got in bed with my head propped on the pillow and watched the others. Kelvin was writing something and takin' no notice of anybody else. Mickey was sitting on Jeff's bed and they was both flipping the pages of a magazine which I got a squint at when I

passed by. It was full of naked birds all sprawled flat out with nothing on and their legs wide open flashing their hairy holes. They look like they was waiting for somebody to jump off a high diving board and squelsh right into 'em up to their ankles. Dunno what Mickey and Jeff was finding so good, but they kep' on sniggering and grunting and making rude signs with their fingers and their arms. Kelvin told 'em to zip their lips once. Ivor was sprawled on top of his blankets reading some kinda commando picture-strip book, with his skinny legs bent in positions that made him look like some humongous spider. He was biting his nails and spittin' bits out an' sometimes sniffing and wiping his snotty beak on his wrist. I hated Ivor most of all. I hated all of 'em that first night. And me, I felt like I didn't belong, 'cos I couldn't think of anything to say to get more friendly. It was like I was in Coventry, an outsider, stuff like that. I would have been homesick if I'd had a home to be sick for. I jus' felt like bustin' out crying again. But I didn't – not then.

I found out that Jeffs the leader of the dorm. He likes to think he is anyway, an' the others act like he is, so I guess he must be. He goes about grabbing people's balls, an' that time he grabbed mine, I reckon I would have hit the roof if'n I didn't think my bollocks would get ripped off if I did. Another thing they all do is say shit an' some other swearly words (me too, now) when there's no grown-ups around. I never thought posh kids did that. I'll let you in: I found out later that none o' them's posh really, not what I'd call posh.

The next one is Kelvin. I come to like him later, but I don't think he likes me much. I think he would like to like me but he's scared of what the others would say if he did. But I like him 'cos he's kind lookin' an' he's got nice really shiny hair what he says he's growed long to be like Van Halen, AC/DC an' all them other heavy metal guys. Blond is what I think they call the color.

Ivor's the worst one who mostly made me feel like some slug who's two inches high. He's a long streak o' piss what's got spots an' a cold an' sniffs all the time – like now. He's got some other rotten habits like he snores in bed, an' he wanks off and then gets spunk on his hands an' rubs it in, then he sneaks up behind people and sticks his hand over their nose and mouth an' makes 'em smell it. He did it to me once an' I nearly puked. He's dead sneery and sometimes I wish I had a bit more brains to give him smart answers when he calls me names. Only I never think of good things till it's too late.

The best one I saved till last, 'cept I didn't know he was gonna turn out to be the best one till later. He's called Mickey an' he's a bit more

quieter than the others and takes a lot of notice of Jeff, but not much. Does that sound stupid? What I mean is, he's a bit more by himself. Does his own thing – that's what I was tryna say. I could see right off what a smart looking guy he was, an' I found out he's got the biggest one I ever saw. You know what I mean. I didn't like him just 'cos o' that. He has a nice face and lots o' muscles an' he's in the football team and boxin' and athletics and swimmin' an' all that stuff. Also, he's jokey an' his hair is cut dead short what suits him, an' I wanna get my hair cut short like him, so mebbe I could be like him, and then mebbe he would like me more. All this is what I'm thinkin' while I'm flaked out on my bed watching them – but shiverin' a bit 'cos I don't know what they're gonna do to me.

The half-an-hour was nearly up when Mickey must have knowed I was looking at him 'cos, before I could look away, he said, "What d'yer fink you're staring at, Bunjie-Baa?" (That's the first time I made Mickey talk in this story so what you don't know is he makes 'th' words sound like T words, y'know, like forty farsand fevvers on a frush.)

"Nothing. Jus' wondered when you was gonna do that 'nidation thingy, that's all. Don't wanna push it," I said.

"Well, I'll tell yer. When we're good an' ready, that's when, nosy bastard. So you'd better get some kip, 'cos you're gonna need it."

"Sorry, Mickey."

"You will be."

I scimmaged deeper into my bed, an' I think I fell asleep even before lights out.

I came back to being awake when I heard the slimy voice of Jeff, far off, like in a dream. When I twigged it was no dream, my eyes popped open suddenly. And there he was, bending over me, close to my face, saying, "Wakey wakey, Bunjie-Baa. Rise and shine. It's time for your baptism, new kid."

"Why, what time is it?" I said, through a yawn.

"Three o'clock, an' all's well."

"Three o'clock – in the morning?"

"You got it. Time for your ordeal by moonlight – and there *is* a moon tonight which is all the better. C'mon, snap to it."

I hauled myself out of bed still sleep stupid, knowing I hadn't much choice 'cept to do like they said. Everybody 'cept Kelvin was dressed an' I got told to do the same.

"Aw no. Do I have ter?"

"Oh, you have ter," Jeff said, all oily. "Move it!"



"An' him too young to the, poor little sod. D'yer fink we'll get away wiv it, guys?" Mickey said.

"Course we will. Tit-face can't tell. He'll be dead," Ivor growled, really growled, dragging it up from deep down in his guts.

When I was ready, Jeff comes close to my face, and grabs me by my shirt front (made a change!) and loud-whispered, "Right, listen up, feller, an' listen good. One peep outa you, jus' one little peep is all it takes, an' you're a dead man, d'er hear me – a *dead* man!"

When I didn't answer him, he telled me to. "Yes, Jeff," I said, trembling in my socks. "But where are we going?"

"We'll ask the questions, baby-blue," said Mickey. "You jus' keep your bleeper battened afore I fill it full o' fist an' call yer dumb."

"Are we goin' outside?"

"What did I jus' get froo tellin' yer?"

"You said to keep quiet, Mickey."

"Do it!"

"Right, let's get this show on the road," said Jeff.

I was forced to tip-toe, like them, out of the dorm, along the corridors and down the main stairway. Everywhere was deadly silent. The whole building was sleeping. We went out through the front door. I was surprised it wasn't locked. Then into the bike shed.

Oh, sump'n I forgot: Kelvin stayed back to be a lookout. Jeff, Ivor and Mickey got their bikes out and I was ordered to sit on Jeff's saddle back of him who'd do the pedaling. And we swished away. Into the night. There was a narrow driveway what ran around the side of the building and off into some trees – like into a forest. There was a bright moon like Jeff said and there was me with my hands going up and down on his hips an' wobbling from side to side as he pumped on the pedals going fast so the moonlight got switched on and off by the trees, an' it wasn't cold but I was shaking like mad all the same. We didn't go all that far, mebbe ten minutes, and then stopped. They laid down their bikes and I got shoved into a space in the middle of some – rhodo bushes, I think they was.

I was breathing like it was me did all the work, an' I could see my breath what the night air was carrying off. There was a breeze rustling the leaves an' that's all the sound there was.

"Right," Jeff said. "Get all yer clothes off, trousers, shirt, pants – the lot. Then lie down."

D'yer wanna know sump'n? Not being able to figure out what was gonna happen was puttin' the shits up me like crazy. The thing is, I was

so full of fright I jus' did what they told me without thinking about it. There was one thing I specially didn't like. That's letting people see my privates. That's real scary to me, that is.

When I flopped down on my back, bits of twigs and leaves jagged me, but I still kept dumb, wondering what the hell they was gonna do to me.

My head was so full of wondering I didn't right off know that Jeff was talkin' again. "Gimme the ring an' the balloon, Mick. I'm gonna do this. You jus' hold the torch, right?" An' then all three of 'em took to kneeling down all around me.

I winced when Jeff took a pinch of the loose skin at the end of my cock, an' I was scared to hell when he started sliding a metal ring – like a wedding ring or sump'n – on to me, forcing it right down to the end near my balls. An' as he did it he sorta chanted, "With this ring, we – the Dragonfly Boys – start our historic initiation ritual, and may all who wear it be proud and steadfast and...."

"That's a load o' shite, Jeff. Stack it, okay?" said Mickey. "Sounds crackbrain." They laughed.

I put a hand over my eyes and couldn't help giving out with a soft moany sound, 'cos they all started stroking me and givin' my cock a yank, an' then I got a funny feelin' like a dog jumping through a hoop at the circus, 'cos that's what my cock did. It give a big thump an' all of it seemed like it jumped through the ring sorta. They let me feel it and it had got all big, bigger and harder than I ever saw it before. Real rock hard, an' I knew I wouldn't be able to get the ring off again if it stayed like that, 'cos it was like it was strangling my cock. Then the next thing Jeff did was to take this balloon he had, which was bigger than a normal balloon, but not blowed up, an' he rolled the neck of it on my cock so the big round bit dangled. Then he put a rubber band on it so's it wouldn't roll off again. It was like a big colored (I dunno what color) johnny bag.

I was terrified an' my heart was pumping like crazy, which was sump'n I never even noticed before, and my prick was beating an' all. Then they stood me up and tied my hands behind my back so I couldn't do anything to get it off, an' I jus' stood there feeling like I wanted to collapse or sump'n, 'cos I felt like such a big stupid fool. An' they was all sniggering and sneery and laughing and, aw geez, I wish I could describe to you how I was feeling, standing there all naked 'cept for this thing dangling from my plonker. Next, they walked me out the bushes, picked up my clothes and their bikes, looking like they was leaving.

"Aw, Jeff," I breathed, gettin' the wind up good and proper an'

sounding pathetic, "you ain't gonna ..."

"Now hear this, Bunjie-Baa," Jeff said, not listening to me and shoving a leg over his crossbar, "we're about a mile from the house. This is the grounds of our stately stinkin' mausoleum, so you ain't gonna get lost..."

"Aw no, you ain't gonna leave me here like...."

Ivor cut me off. "Jeff was talking to you, shit-britches, an' nobody interrupts Jeff when he's talking – right, Jeff?"

"Right. Like I was tryna say: You jus' follow the track. You have exactly half-an-hour from now..." He squinted at his luminous watch, "...that'll be a quarter to four, to get back into our dorm looking exactly like you do now – a right 'nana." He gimme a sick-makin' snigger. "If you make it, we might jus' let you stop in our dorm..." (Who wants to?) "You ain't likely to see anybody else, but if you do, an' if you tell, you're a dead man. Get it? What are you?"

"A dead man, Jeff. But please... yer can't leave me here like this. Please get this stuff off me. It hurts. Please, Jeff, Mickey." I made all that sound as pleading as I could but it didn't do no good. They stood on their pedals and took off, with Jeff saying, "Bye bye, Bunjie-Baa. Hope you dig yer march to glory."

An' that was it. They'd gone. I was all alone. "Aw, Christ, no," I said again, all withery soundin'. And because I was alone I started sobbing my guts up. Honest. I couldn't help it. My eyes got full of salty tears that was stingin' and blindin' me, an' I couldn't use my hands to wipe them off. Nobody ever tied me up before an' it was dead frightenin' not being able to do things.

At first I was jus' gonna sit down and wait till I got found, but then I figured if I did that I might not be able to get up again if I wanted, an' anyway, I'd be too ashamed to get found. Also, what Jeff said scared me, so I started walking on the gravelly track to start with, but that was too rough for my feet, so I went on the grass at the side which was just as bad, 'cos stones and jaggies and nettles got me, an' I had to bend down under trees and bushes.

And sometimes I could hear scuffly, scrabbly noises coming out of the forest, and that was scary too, 'cos I wondered what sort of animals they would be making noises like that. I only saw one animal and nearly trod on it. It was a balled up hedgehog! So there was me with my throbbing cock still hard as a tent pole, stuck straight out with that stupid dangly balloon, an' it was painin' sump'n awful, an' I still couldn't get my hands free. I bet you wouldn't like it. It was cold too, which is different

to what I said before. I was all goose-pimpily as I kep' on staggerin' and stumblin' an' tryna see out my flooded cryin' eyes with my chin doing a war dance. I never felt so bad in all my life. Worse than anything what happened to me at the other dump. This was a worse dump and them mad idiots was cruel bastards. Why, oh why did old Gasket have to send me here? "Oh what a lucky wee boy you are." Oh yeah? An' you're a crappy bitch!

When I got back to the school and walked up the steps to the front door I was wondering what I would do if it was tight shut. But it wasn't. The guys had left the catch off, so I just had to shove it with my shoulder and then – Christ! – stick my foot in it quick to stop it banging shut again.

The light was still on in my dorm; that made me screw my eyes up, but I could see my room-mates (Ha!) was all still up. I jus' stood there half turned away with my chin hangin' on my chest, looking at my bollocks sorta sheepish like. Ba – aa – aa! An' not darin' to look at any of the boys. Doing my best to control my shuddery freezin' cold bare body. What did they think of my tear-stained face (as I thought it) an' my lips stuck out half a mile, an' my eyebrows tryna creep into my eye sockets, an' my chin still doin' a jig?

"Bravo, Bunjie, yer jus' made it," said Mickey, and they all crowded round me again, an' Jeff said, "Okay, Bunjie, you did it. Let's get that stuff off yer."

Mickey was nearest. I couldn't talk an' I don't know where I got the guts to do it, but I let my head drop on Mickey's chest near his collarbone an' I wished like mad he would have put his arms around me, but he didn't. He just backed away. An' it was Kelvin who was on his knees takin' the balloon off.

"Jesus Christ!" he said. "Get a gander at Bunjie's purple plonker. D'yer ever see anything so beautiful in all your life?"

When I looked at it I nearly conked out. It was still pointing straight out like one o' them bowsprits yachts have and, sure, it had gone all purple with black veins sticking out, still dead hard, an' freezin' cold. A bloody icicle. I thought it was dead.

I tried to get the ring off myself, but it wouldn't budge an' it was diggin' in like crazy. I didn't know where to put myself. I wanted the ground to open up and swaller me whole.

"You're a load o' stinkin' pervert sadists, you are. All o' yer. Four big brave bastards pickin' on one little kid what done sod-all to you," I

blurted out. I was crying, couldn't hide my tears – an' not caring. "I can't get this thing off. What am I s'posed to do now? I'll have to go to hospital 'n' have it done, and I couldn't stand that. It'd be too embarrassin'. It's too embarrassin' now."

"Let's wank him off. Mebbe it'll go down after that," Mickey said. He sounded a bit worried an' all, and that made me even more panicky.

"You do it, big man," Kelvin said to Mickey. "I'm packin' in." Ivor had already bedded down. He couldn't care less.

"Sure, I'll do it," Mickey said. "Fink I'm chicken, do yer?"

"What yer gonna do?" I asked, as best as I could through lumps in my throat.

"Give yer a Mickey-type jerk-off, kid."

"What's that?" My question made 'em all look at each other an' grinnin' all over their ugly mugs.

"You know what wanking is, don't yer, Bunjie?"

"Course I do, 'an you ain't never gonna touch me again, any o' yer, right?"

"Do it yerself then."

"Do what?"

"Jesus, he hasn't a clue. Come on, kid, sit down. I'll show you." Mickey said that all kinda sensible sounding and he was handling me more gentle when he coaxed me to perching on the edge of my own bed, an' I reckoned he cared a bit, even if none o' the others did.

I decided to let him do what it was he wanted to do. I had some sort of an idea what it was, but not much really. Mickey got down on his knees between my spread-out thighs and took my cold cock between his fingers and started robbing it up and down, an' while he was doing it, Jeff said, "Did anybody see yer? Did you tell anybody?"

"No, nub'dy saw me – thank Christ. An' I didn't squeal if that's what you're thinkin'." I punched tears away with the back of my fist. I was darin' to be a bit angry – but not with Mickey.

"Good man. Whadyer think if we just call you Bunjie from now on? Without the 'baa' bit?"

"If you want. You do what you want anyway."

"Okay, you're in, feller. A Dragonfly Boy from now on."

"Who cares?"

"Coo, hark at 'im. He don't care. Well, you can suit yourself, pal, so I'll just leave you in the sex-starved hands of Mickey the maniac, and bid thee farewell."

"I'm warnin' yer, Jeff," Mickey said, without looking up.

"Yeah yeah. An' if that prick keeps gettin' bigger, you better issue a health warning so's we can clear out the way. I don't fancy gettin' my eyes poked out. G'night, guys."

Which left just Mickey, still working on me. I looked at his short haircut and rested my hand on it, just for a second, in case he started thinking things. His hair was like kitten fur. "What's s'posed to happen, Mickey?" I asked, shivering like an Eskimo. He stopped long enough to stick a blanket round my shoulders.

"Didn't yer never wank yourself off, kid?" he said, starting to rub me up som'ore.

"No, but I played with it once, but nothing much happened," I said, kinda shy.

"You didn't do it long enough then. Let's stick with it, okay?"

"Sure, Mickey." I said that with my voice all full of emotions. I decided to stop sounding slushy, and said next, "I bet I can't even piss through the flickin' thing, an' I'm bustin' to go – an' you still didn't tell me what's s'posed to happen."

"You just get a terrific feeling. I can't 'zactly describe what it's like 'cos there ain't no words for it. Well, there's orgasm, but that don't tell yer much."

"It's got no feelin' at all. It's dead, I tell yer. That ring strangled it."

"It's okay, Bunj. We'll just keep going a bit longer, yeh?"

The others was all in dead sleep by now. You could tell by the way they was breathing, with Ivor snortin' an' snorin', and I was wondering what would happen if the housemaster was to walk in right now an' see the light on an' me bein' wanked off. I still couldn't stop shivering, but the room was warm, so I figured it must be from bein' scared more than from bein' cold.

"Tell yer what," said Mickey, after a bit, "this ain't doing much, so how about me gettin' in your kip wiv yer?"

"Why?"

"We'll be in deep shit if we done you some grievous bodily, kid. An' anyhow, I'm a bit worried about yer."

Well, he ought to be, I thought.

"Mebbe, wif yer warm 'n all, it would go down then. D'yer mind?"

"No, Mickey, I don't mind, if you don't." And then, "Mickey..."

"Yeh."

"It don't matter."

"What was you gonna say?"

"It's nothing. Forget it."

"Okay then, get in."

I did. I got in bed and he slithered in beside me an' we cuddled up together with me keepin' my hand on my horrible hard-on to keep it warm. I was still starkers, yer see, an' he only had his pants on, an' I felt real good. Did I mind him bein' there in bed with me? he said. That's a laugh. There was nothing better I could think of just then. "But what if the other guys find out you're in my bed?" I asked him.

"They don't got nuffin' to say about it, so jus' quit worryin' an' relax, okay? Now tell me what you was gonna say."

"When?"

"Just then. Sounded like you was gonna say sump'n."

"It don't matter, honest. I'm too scared to tell you anyway."

"Oh balls! You can tell me. If you start to say sump'n, you gotta finish."

"One o' the gang rules, is it?" I mumbled.

"Yeah – if yer like. Listen – what if I promise I ain't never gonna take the piss out of yer ever again?"

"Yer gotta promise not to laugh an' all."

"Okay, I promise. Spill it."

It still came out stammery 'cos I really didn't wanna say it. It would make me sound like a baby. I took the plunge. "I was jus' gonna say – I was glad when you said to come in my bed 'cos, oh fuck, I can't say it."

"Say it, else I'll do yer in."

"Okay. It's – 'cos I – I like you, Mickey."

"Oh wow! No kid? Well, it ain't no surprise to me. I'm a very likeable young guy, I am."

"You're laughing."

"I'm not. I'm not. I swear. It's me. I'm laughing at me."

"Liar." That got me goin'. An' both of our bodies was jiggling around in bed with tryin' to keep the laughin' from coming out loud. Yer know what? I really *did* like Mickey an awful lot, and that was fantastic because it was my first day an' I got me a good pal which is sump'n that never happened at my other places. Sump'n else. I was never in kip with another guy before and that made me feel good also. But this feeling I had didn't do nuthin' for my stiff prick.

Mickey stuck his arm under and round my neck and pulled my head close to his chest.

"You ain't half bad yerself, Bunj," he said. "An' hell – I wish we hadn't put you froo that initiation shit. It must have made you feel a right asshole."

"You can say that again. I jus' felt more rotten 'cos you was all pickin' on me, but it's okay now." An' then I couldn't stop what came out next 'cos it was like carried out on a great big sigh an' a shudder which shook the bed. I jus' went "Oh, Mickey!"

"How's the barge pole, kid?" he said, squeezing my neck with his arm.

"The same. Mickey, did *you* have to do it when you first come here?"

"Naw, we just invented it – Dragonfly Boys and all – when we found out we was gonna have a new little kid in our room. But it'll backfire if you have to go to hospital. Maybe all your hard-on needs is for you to go to sleep. We only got a coupla hours left. I hope to flick it works!"

He took his arm back, an' I swear, it was like he dropped off straight away. I hunched myself up a bit being careful not to wake him, an' I fixed it so's my face was near his kitten fur he had for hair an' I started nosin' into it and smellin' it's shampoo smell. Also, I put one hand on his warm goin' up an' down belly, and this thought come into my head which is a bit shamin' and which mebbe I shouldn't say it, but I will. All of a sudden I wanted to feel what his bollocks was like, and ever so slowly, bit by bit (it took years) I moved down and got nearer an' nearer an' he didn't move so I felt safe and then (I didn't go inside his pants) I cupped his bollocks with my hand, my pal's whoppin' great bollocks, an' it was a terrific feeling I got, an' soon after I fell asleep still holding him. I think.

Next morning I woke up 'cos o' the sound of snottery Ivor's voice sayin', "Coo blimey, guys. Look what we got here. Mickey and piss-puss gettin' all lovey-dovey."

Mickey didn't care. He sprang out my bed an' he just said, "Jealous, I've?"

"Kiddin', ain't yer?"

"Well stack it, prick, else I'll smash yer face in for yer an' call yer ugly," which I thought was real smart. Then he turned to me and said, "Up yer get, kid. How's yer wee peter this morning?" Which was the first thing that had come into my mind.

My 'wee peter' was rigid again, but it must have gone down while I slept 'cos the ring had dropped off and was lost somewhere in the bed. It was stiff 'cos I was bustin' for the bog, so I covered myself up quick and ran out the room. Course, it still had a groove where the ring had cut in an' it didn't bleed, but I was sure glad it was off. I reckon it must have been bleedin' inside though, 'cos it had a few dark spots under the skin.

Hey, did you ever try to piss with a bonk on? You flippin' well have



to stand on yer head nearly. I came back in the room sighing happy.

I scooted around under the sheets, found the ring, gave it to Jeff an' said, "Here, save this. I wanna see you put it on some other poor sod sometime." And everybody laughed – 'ceptin' for zitsy Ivor.

I'll skip all the stuff about my first day in school. It was dead boring, but that wasn't why I fell asleep. I was just clapped-out from last night, so I got kep' in after class – for an hour an' a half!

When I got back to the dorm the others was just leaving, dressed for going out. They all have jeans and tee-shirts an' shell pants an' all sorts o' great gear, which is allowed after school. (To go into class you have to have their uniform which is green blazer with a gold school shield on it, and gray trousers and white shirt an' a green an' gold stripey tie. Pretty keen, eh?) But I didn't have no good stuff an' it made me feel bad.

"You been a bad boy, have yer?" Mickey said.

"Guess so. Got kept in. Where are you guys goin'?"

"Just you watch that nose, fart-features," said Ivor, who couldn't tell me things without givin' me a bash as well.

Everybody else took no notice of him and Mickey said, "The village. EetzaPizza. Ivor's idea. He's payin'."

"Yeh, but not for bog-'ead," Ivor grumbled.

"Be back in an hour or sump'n, kid. See yer," said Mickey.

I didn't wanna be all by myself so I dared to ask, "Can I come?"

"You got any lettuce?"

"Lettuce?"

"Money. Dumb fucker." Bash. Ivor again. Bet you guessed.

"No."

"You got your answer, Bunj," said Jeff, an' him and Ivor walked out the door.

"Aw geez," I mumbled, an' did my head hangin' act again with my toes doodling on the carpet. This was a trick I got when I was just a kid, about eight. I've got big eyes, see, kinda darkish, and I found out in a mirror if I make my eyes look sad an' with a droopy head lookin' up, it made me get my own way sometimes, an' sometimes stopped me gettin' punished for being bad. It must have worked, 'cos Mickey latched on.

"I'll stand yer the anchovies off my pizza," he said.

"What's anchovies?"

"How do I know? I get pepperoni."

"Thanks, Mickey, but I ain't got no flash gear like you guys."

Mickey and Kelvin glance at each other, shruggin' kinda. Mickey

said, "I got some Levi's I grewed out of."

"Can I get a lend?" said me, brightening up.

"You can have 'em, if they fit." He rummaged in his locker, found what he wanted, and flung 'em at me. They fitted me, tight but good. I yanked up them pants an' buttoned up the flies, with my eyes sparkin' 'cos I never had jeans before and because they was Mickey's that was even better. Gimme some sorta thrill, that did.

"Come on then, shift yer butt. The uvvers'll be there by now."

Oh wow, they was all excitin' washed out and frayed and, "The knees is ripped, Mickey."

"S'posed to be. Move out, kid."

Mickey looked dead smart. He had on a green satiny-type bomber jacket, Levi's like me, an' Doc Marten boots with yeller laces. And with his short hair he looked kinda punkish, but he wasn't no punk. Mickey was a good guy an' I liked walking with him. I wondered what he'd say if he knew I had all these great secret thoughts about him.

The pizza parlor was jam packed and they had to pull up an extra chair for me at their table. Also, it was noisy like as if everybody was talkin' at the same time, and loud music played.

Mickey (my best pal) paid for some grub an' a coke for me, and when we was all gettin' stuck in, Jeff said, "Whadyer get kept in for, new kid?"

"I fell a'kip in English an' got hauled out in front o' the whole class to say what for."

"So – what did you tell 'em?"

"Jus' said I couldn't sleep well 'cos it was my first night in a new place."

"You sure that's *all* you said, piss-pot?" Ivor said, with his lips curled up real nasty.

I'm gettin' pretty cheesed-off with all these names he keeps calling me, and because I was feelin' Mickey's strength right there beside me, I snapped back at him. "Quit calling me all them stinkin' names, *piss-pot*. I've had it up to here."

"Ooh, bold. So what yer gonna do about it, spunk-bubble?"

"Shut yer yap, Ive," said Mickey, cutting in.

"Oh sure, I forgot. You an' him's bed buddies."

Mickey shot his chair back ready for a fight, but Jeff grabbed his wrist and said, "Save it, Mick." And Mick did. And Jeff said next, posh greasy, "You know what they do to little boys who disgrace Thornridge

in public."

"Okay, Jeff, but keep him off my back. He bugs me."

Ivor again, all smarmy. "Oh waiter, bring me some jelly so's it'll show me how to shiver." An' he splodged so much sauce on his plate he nearly lost his grub.

"Belt up, Ive. I'm warnin' yer," said Jeff. Then Jeff said to me, "We're all proud of yer, Bunj. You took what we did last night in good part, didn't he, guys?"

"I cried," I said, with my head down.

"But you're okay now," Mickey said, "right?"

"Yeh. No hard feelings."

They all bust out laughing at that.

"What did I say?"

"You got hard feelings last night, right enough," Mickey said, through laughing, an' I felt silly to start with, but then I laughed as well.

When nobody's looking at me, I keep making glances at the bump in my jeans where my bollocks are, but the bump is more caused by the way I'm sittin' than being filled with bollocks, like Mickey's is. I feel real proud jus' the same, 'cos my pants is sexy. I dunno why I think that. I jus' do.

This big guy, mebbe sixteen or more, who is practickly squattin' in our laps 'cos the place is so crowded, must have been listening. He tips his chair back to be between Mickey and me an' says, "You guys from Thornridge then, are yer?"

"Yeah. So what?" said Jeff.

"How's life at the merry menagerie these days?"

"What's it to you?"

"Just interested. I'm an old boy."

"You said it, granddad." Jeff was doing all the talkin'. I could see he was tryna give the guy the heave-ho.

But he weren't fazed, this big guy, so next he says, "They're using the east wing, right?"

"How the fuck do you know?"

"Oh, I heard it through the grapevine."

"Okay, Marvin Gaye, fill us in. What's your beef?"

"No beef. Wondered if you'd heard anything recently."

"Like what, fr'instance?"

"Noises – at night – coming from the top floor – above where you are."

Jeff put down his fork and leaned forward across the table and said,

ever so slow, "Look, feller, do us a favor. Either come to the crunch fast, or get the hell out."

"The crunch is – the east wing's haunted."

"That stunnin' bit o' news hot off the press, is it?"

"What – you mean you know?"

"There ain't nuthin' to know. It's a load of old bunk."

"If that's what you think, mates, you ain't heard the truth."

"Well, we didn't wanna tell you, but Freddy Krueger visits every full moon like now, an' we all scarper up top and have a bit of a wing-ding. But we didn't know anybody else knew, an' we don't want it spread around. Our secret. Okay, chum?" That lump in Jeff's cheek was his tongue, not his pizza.

"Who's Freddy Krueger?" said the big guy.

"Elm Street, thickie," Jeff said.

"Yeh, okay, I get it. Forgot for a minute. Joke right? Well, sorry to disappoint you, mates, but the top floor of the east wing is haunted by the ghost of King Pemberton, not Freddy Krueger. It's for sure you didn't know that."

"An' we don't wanna know. Go get stuffed."

"No, let him tell it," said Ivor. "Could be good."

"Well, if yer sure you're man enough to take it...."

"Har har!"

The big guy was tryna catch the eye of a waitress. "An idea, okay?" he said. "What'll yer have after that? Piece o' pie? Ice cream? I'll get 'em in."

"Oh well, now you're talkin' our language," said Jeff. "Apple pie *and* ice cream for me, right?"

We all got what we wanted, then the big guy turned his chair around, and pulled up close, between me and Mickey, tellin' me to shove over which I didn't like. Also, I didn't like it even more when he looked down at me and said, "This wee sprat with you, is he?"

Mickey said to never mind, jus' get on with the story, so he started, but he kept looking at me as if he fancied me, and that made my backbone creep. He wasn't 'zactly the best looking guy in the world, an' I had just a little thought I'd seen him before someplace.

"Yeh, well, this King Pemberton was a sex maniac and torturer of the worst kind. You think Freddy Krueger's bad? This guy could beat him hands down. He wasn't really a king, y'understand. King was just his first name. He was the owner of Thornridge House way back over a century ago. Head o' the family, right? Used to have grand balls...."

"Castrated, yeh?" said Mickey.

"Funny. Naw, y'know what I mean. Dances like they did then. Ladies in ball gowns, poncy men with wigs. Them guys what King fancied he would get 'em all boozed up and invite them to stay the night in one o' the rooms on the top floor o' the east wing. In one of the rooms was all his torture things like, well, there was this one thing for ripping people's faces off. They'd get strapped to a chair with their heads in a clamp, and two hooks comes down from the top and goes in his nostrils, and two more hooks came from the sides and went in his mouth, then ever so slow, the nose hooks would pull upwards and the mouth hooks pull sideways and rip the skin off. Real gruesome. He had stuff for pulling arms an' legs off. And he had a bacon slicer type o' machine that would chop off your penis half-an-inch at a time."

"One chop in your case, right?" said Mickey.

"Hey, you're a barrel o' laughs, you are, but this is serious shit, man, right?" The big guy didn't think what Mickey said was funny. I guess he was a bit too much wrapped up in his stupid story, which nobody was believing – I think.

"Well anyway, all that kind o' stuff. But he never did this till after he'd bummed 'em something rotten. Gagged an' strapped over a barrel. An' done all other sorts o' things for sex excitement, like he would ram leather bags over people's heads letting practickly no air in, so's he could watch 'em squirm. An' he cut out their balls real slow while they watched. He made people eat worms and slugs an' drink acid an' piss. Depraved, like I said. Course he went completely nuts at the end and was taken away in a straitjacket screaming an' kicking an' shrieking murder and vengeance an' how he'd put a curse on the place and would haunt it forever."

"Load o' crud," said Jeff.

"Well, mates, you just please yerself what you think, but I reckon you should take what I said as a friendly warning. Pemberton's ghost is there alright. Not all the time, just sometimes when he gets restless, like when he's hungry for bums. Little kids bums, a special treat." He gave me a shove an' a wink. "Stay away, right?"

"We couldn't go if we wanted to. That floor's walled off."

"And why do you think they walled it off? Think about it."

"I suppose *you* saw the ghost an' got bummed. Didn't hurt much, right? I mean, a ghost with a beamer. Carm on – pull the other," Jeff said.

The big guy just glanced nasty at Mickey and answered Jeff. "No, I

never saw him, but I had a mate who did. *Had*, I said. Died. Nuts. Syphilis."

"You ain't playin' with a full deck, man," Mickey said. "I fink you better beat it quick, afore them men in white coats come an' get you."

He did beat it after that, but giving me another look that sent shivers. Know what he said? Have a nice day! I pulled my chair close up to Mickey again, and said "Weird," and got stuck into my ice cream which was nearly melted.

When we was walking back to the school, I kept lookin' at me in my Levi's reflected in some shop windows an' so they wouldn't notice I asked why we didn't have tea in the dining hall.

"Sometimes come here on Monday, kid," Mickey said. "Tea's not much cop on Monday."

"Why? What is it?"

"Soup with eyeballs floating in, then snake surprise, followed by chilled monkey brains," Kelvin said.

"With vomit sauce," added Ivor.

"Yeh, I know, Indiana Jones, right?" I laughed. I liked being with these big guys, but I was still a bit shy an' all.

The next four bits I'm gonna write are called incidents which I'll tell you before I do som'ore of my story:

Number one is that night. I smuggled my Levi's into bed with me and got into 'em when I figured nobody would notice. A crazy thing to do, but mebbe you know why I did it. Anyway, along around the middle o' the night sump'n woke me up and I saw Mickey and Kelvin with no clothes on, an' the moon shinin' bright through the window was like causing bluish lights and shadows what rippled over Mickey's muscles and making both their bare bodies shine like moving marble statues. They didn't say nuthin', but both of 'em got into Mickey's bed, and I jus' lay there trying to imagine what them two bodies was feeling like snugglin' up to each other. And oh hell, I was achin' all over wantin' to be in there with them two big guys. Mickey's jeans I had on and thinkin' about gettin' loved by them two big guys made me as homy as hell and I started stroking my bollocks through my jeans – and must 'ave fell asleep.

Number two is when about a whole week has passed. Every time Jeff an' me pass each other in the corridor changing classes, he sometimes shuggles my balls, but not sore like before, jus' more friendly. An' sometimes he would just swoop down with curled up grabbin' fingers and

only pretend to do it, an' he'd say "Hi, Bunj. How yer doin'?" I liked that.

Number three was when the whole school got called into assembly to find out if anybody knew why the chemical cabinet in the science room had been busted into. Nobody did. It was pretty serious 'cos some o' the chemicals was poisonous and some others explosive, but when they did a check they saw only some stuff called copper sulphate had went missing, so nobody seemed too bothered.

Number four was when me an' the guys was all goin' into class one day, an' I said "Geez, guys, I jus' wish I was in your class with you."

Kelvin said, "Why, Bunj? Is it because you love us jus' so bleedin' much, you can't stand being away too long?"

I was quiet, just for a second, 'cos I didn't know if he was takin' serious piss again, but then all of a sudden like I couldn't stop it, a big loud "Yeah!" came bustin' outa me like an explosion all filled with laughs, and that's some trick if you can do it. And they all laughed as well (except Ivor) and Kelvin gimme a punch in the guts, but not a hurtin' one, an' Mickey ruffled my hair an' stuck his arm round my neck and made me feel great. I dunno 'zactly why. Yes, I do. It was like I was a son and Mickey was my dad – who loved me. I was all warmed up inside. Isn't that corny? Crap. I must be a real goof-ball.

Now for the next frightening part of my story:

Mickey said he was gonna have a swim after football practice, an' when I said I'd like to come but I couldn't swim, he said he'd teach me, an' to meet him at the pool at seven o'clock. I've always been dead scared of water, and I still would be, but I wanted to go where Mickey went, sappy wee bastard that I am.

So I charged down to the basement, but there was a sign on the swing doors (like in cowboy movies) that said "No entry without Mr Slattery's permission". Mr Slattery was head of the sports department. I was just gonna turn around when I got a terrific shove on my back which shot me straight through the swing doors, an' I got a whiff of that swimming pool smell what always makes me feel suffocatin'. I knew Mickey wouldn't have shoved me hard like that, an' when I turned around – it was Ivor!

"Got you all to myself now, loverboy prat," he said. "I hate your stinkin' guts, d'yer know that?"

"I dunno what for. I ain't done nuthin' to you," I said. I had a dry throat 'cos he looked dead repulsive – like always.

"You're a little shit an' I don't like your face. How's that for starters?"

An' like the wee weirdo you are, you can't even swim yet, so I'm gonna be your teacher."

"I ain't goin' in there with you. Mickey'll be here soon."

"No he won't. They ain't off the field yet."

"Anyway, we're not s'posed to be in here till Mr Slattery comes."

"I don't give a fuck for Slats. Just get changed – sharpish!"

"No, I ain't gonna."

"Oh yes you are..." He grabbed my windpipe so hard I couldn't breathe, an' shoved me back against the wall, "...or else you're goin' in like that. Clear?" he said, all fierce.

"Okay," I said, nearly choked to death, and hoping by the time I changed Mickey would have come.

The swimming pool was bigger than I reckoned it would be, with seats for spectators up one o' the walls, and wooden cubicles for changing round the others. And the water was dead flat 'cos nobody was there 'cept me an' Ivor, an' we went into different cubicles.

When I was ready I jus' sat cowerin' on the little bench, an' Mickey still didn't come. Ivor crashed in and grabbed my wrist in a vice grip and dragged me out. I shrank away from the water's edge, an' I know there was fear written on my face. He started running with me along the side, and was sayin' "Deep end, shit-bag. Only twelve feet deep. Only way to learn – right?"

You know what that news did to me. I yelled and pleaded. My voice was all like echoes in the big place and sounding louder.

But he wasn't having any o' that, was he? I knew without telling he wouldn't have no mercy. As he ran, still hangin' on to my wrist, I tried pulling back all I could an' looking for sump'n to catch hold of an' sittin' on my bum, but I got yanked up again and scrapin' my feet, but he wouldn't stop.

I gave out with one god almighty shriek-filled "No!" as he jumped, with me, into the water. The impact was horrible, all fizzing and bubbling as my head went under – and he let go my wrist. The feeling I had was like I was gonna die. The horror! Oh my god! I couldn't feel anything under my feet and they seemed like they was painin' me 'cos they couldn't find anything solid to touch, and my hands was scrabblin' like mad tryna find something to hang on to, but there was nothing. Panic. Splashing. Tingling. My head came out an' I tried gasping in air and shouting out at the same time which caused spluttering and water went in me. "Huh! Huh! Huh!" I went, jus' before my head sank down again. My head was buzzin' an' little dancin' dots of light came in my



eyes, an' my arms an' legs was all over tryna get me up. An' then my hand bashed against something solid, but lost touch again when I broke surface splutterin' and chokin' like mad.

Then I felt a hand on my throat an' I thought it was Ivor tryna drown me an' I managed to yelp again only swallerin' som'ore water, but a voice close to my ear said, "Steady on, Bunj. It's me, Mickey."

An' I said "Mickey," but no sound came. An' I jus' kep' on thrashin' like crazy.

But it was kinda like he got a firm grip on me and was sayin', "Just relax, wee kid, an' leave it to me. You're okay now. I'll soon have you out." An' I got a bit of confidence then 'cos I wasn't sinkin' no more an' was getting pulled along by Mickey who had his head next to mine, holding it up. And soon I was getting pushed up some steps and was sitting on the side, coughing, and breathing real fast. Mickey sat down beside me an' we was both dangling our legs over the side. Whew!

He took hold of my chin and looked at me straight in the face. "You okay now, Bunj?"

"Yeh. That bastard tried to drown me, he did."

"That bastard's got a sore beak," Mickey said, thumbing at Ivor who was standing behind us. I hunched up closer to Mickey so's Ivor wouldn't push me in again. When I looked up at him I saw Ivor's nose was bleeding.

"I was only trying to help," Ivor whined. He was wiping blood onto the back of his hand. "Somebody told me once the best way to learn to swim is to get chucked in the deep end."

"Well somebody lied. Fuck off, and keep well away from Bunj from now on – or you're on report, *pal!*" And Ivor went.

When I could see better and was calmed down a bit, I looked at Mickey and saw he still had his football strip on – and his boots.

"Sure. When I saw you struggling I knew what had happened. I whapped him one and dived in. Feel better now?"

"Oh yeah," I breathed, with a big sigh and blowing out water which had went up my nose. "You're a pal. My hero." I was meaning it but made it sound joking so Mickey wouldn't think I'm stupid.

"D'yer still want a swimmin' lesson?"

"Okay, but promise you won't let me go."

"I wouldn't do that, Bunj. Not till you say so, okay?"

Mr Slattery and some other boys came in just as we was standing up again, and Mr Slattery said, "What are you two doing in here? My strict instructions are that no one...." and by this time Mickey had gone up

close to him and said something to him that made it okay.

So we went in the shallow end and I got my first lesson and it felt pretty horrible being tipped up to be flat on the water, but I wasn't scared, well, not much, but some.

Gettin' bopped on the beak by Mickey would have stopped me from messing with him ever again, but not brain-warp twits like Ivor.

So, one day when my class got back from a field study period – as they called it when you went out squinting at daisies an' stuff – he got me when I was changing in the boot room. Me and three other guys was last an' he told them to get lost, then shoved me in a corner. You'd think I wouldn't care no more with me being on Mickey's team, but I was. Y'see, he was one o' the original bad guys what had sump'n queer in him that scared the livin' daylights outa me and he had an ugly mug what went with it. I guess when he looks in a mirror he sees what an ugly puss he's got an' that makes him act ugly, him with his sticky-out bottom teeth which makes his lip come out like a kangaroo pouch, an' all these yeller spots. Always makes me wanna throw up.

Well anyway, here I am stuck in the corner, with him breathing his rotten breath all over me, an' he says, "Think you're some sorta tough guy with Mickey bat'n for yer, don't yer, spindle-prick? Well, nobody crosses me, right? An' you run squealin' to him again, I'm gonna fix it so's you'll have to carry your head about in a sling. Get me?" Slap!

"Why'nt yer leave me alone," I mumbled, tryna get out of the corner.

"Because you're chicken-shit, an' you're gonna pay for this..." He points to his beak which is still lookin' kinda biffy. "...if you don't do like I tell yer."

"Like what?"

"You're goin' up to the top deck of the east wing after everybody's a'kip tonight an' fill me in about what you see."

"How can I? It's bricked up. Jeff said so."

"There's another way in I know – from near the top o' the tower."

"How d'yer know that?"

"I got my sources, which are not for slime-bags like you to know. Only thing is, the key to the tower is in the pimp's office..." That's the secretary whose name is Mrs Primpley. "...an' you're gonna help me swipe it."

"No I ain't, 'cos I'm not gonna go up top, see. Not for you or anybody."

This time he slams me twice across the face so hard it made my ear buzz, so now I've got a sorta cryin' look, but with no tears.

"I'm warning yer, turd. You're gonna do exactly what I tell yer or you're dead meat."

My nerves was gettin' all jangly, 'cos the boot room doesn't have much light, an' there's nobody anywhere near I can get to help, that's even s'posin' I'd try. "Okay," sez me, a bit blubbery.

"Okay – what?"

"I'll do it. I'll get the key."

"*I'll* get the key. You'll do some acting. Ever do any acting? No? Well this is yer big chance. Might even get one o' them Oscar things," he said. "Everybody's changing right now, so there'll be nobody about. Here's what you do. You throw a fit or sump'n, right outside the pimp's door. I dive in, grab the key, and Bob's yer unc an' Sally's yer aunt. Get it?"

It all sounded kinda screwy to me, but it looked like I didn't have no choice.

So now we're outside Mrs Primpley's office an' I can hear the keys rattlin' on her computer an' I wanna rush in there an' tell her what Ivor's gonna do, but snitching is one thing you don't do in this place. Grown-ups never listen anyhow. If you got a beef about another kid you get telled to go to a prefect who's a big guy, who's pals with all the other big guys. The little kids never have a chance.

"Right, make with yer hysterics, puke-face," said Ivor.

I felt like a dork as I gave out with some kinda yell and crashed into the door, sliding down it an' ending up with my back to it. The key rattlin' stops, the door opens, and I fall flat out half in the office. Ivor jumps over, rushes past Mrs Primpley who's just rushed out. She raises me to sittin' as the door closes with us on the outside an' Ivor on the inside.

"What is it, son?" she says. "What happened?"

"I dunno 'zactly, miss," I sez. "I tripped and fell, I think. I bashed my head – ouch!"

"Just you come into my room and sit down a while," she said, helping me to stand up.

"I'll be okay," sez me as she opens the door an' spots Ivor who's somewhere near her desk. "What are you doing, Ivor Burke?" she says.

"I was gonna get matron on the intercom, miss, but I can't remember the number. I was a bit worried y'see, miss, 'cos Lamb's one o' my mates, in my room y'know. Can I take him with me?"

"Yes, well," she starts, giving me an idea she's a bit suspicious, "you be about your business, young man. *I'll* take Lamb."

"With mint sauce, miss?" he says, dead cheeky.

"What?"

"Never mind." And he's out the door, an' I'm stuck with pretending to Mrs Primpley. I felt rotten 'cos she's a nice lady, is Mrs Primpley. Kinda like a mother. She gave me a toffee. I talked her out of gettin' matron 'cos I reckoned she'd just stick me in the sick room, which could have been good, gettin' me away from Ivor. But I might get stuck in there forever an' then I wouldn't see Mickey, an' all I could think of just then was Mickey – and should I tell him about Ivor? Oh hell, what a jam. I didn't know what to do. One thing for sure – I wasn't going up top, an' if Ivor tried to force me, I'd just *have* to tell even though I didn't wanna.

Ivor waited for me to come out an' says, "What did you say to her?"

"Jus' that I tripped."

"What's that you're eating?"

"A toffee. She gave it to me."

"If you said anything more...."

"I didn't. I swear."

"Well okay. Mission accomplished. I got the key!" Ivor was doin' his best to smile with his ugly mug which ain't made for smilin' an' which might snap in bits an' drop off if he tried too hard. I wish he'd try too hard.

"Smart-ass," I mumbled under my breath.

Just as soon as everybody went to sleep that night, I couldn't help it, I just *had* to get close to Mickey. I hadn't seen him all evening, 'cos him an' Kelvin went somewhere 'only big boys go' and that's all they would tell me an' it was stuff like that got me thinkin' mebbe Mickey wasn't my pal like I thought he was an' mebbe he wouldn't be on my side if I squealed. I got out of bed without making any noise and got on my knees near his head an' jus' whispered his name. He let out a little groan and turned his head my way. "What is it? Whadyer want, Bunj?" he said, all hush.

"I wondered, Mickey. I jus' wondered if. I could. Come in your bed. With you." (I said the words all broke up like that.)

"This ain't no carcase park, kid. What's yer problem?"

"Sorry, Mickey, I got no right. Go back to sleep. I'm a stupid git for wakin' yer." I started to move away.

"Here, wait a minute, Bunj. I don't mind yer wakin' me. What's buggin' yer?"

"Nothing. I jus' wanted... to be close to yer. For a bit. Like Kelvin was."

"Like Kel—?" He partly sat up. "Well, of all the...! So you was spying, eh? You dirty rotten..."

He sounded a bit angry, but I don't think he was really. I broke in: "I wasn't spyin', Mickey. I was just awake, that's all. An' I only said it 'cos I thought you wouldn't mind. You didn't mind kippin' with me that first night."

"Okay, get in, yer wee bastard," he said. "I've a good mind to fuck you rotten."

Nobody else had heard any of that quiet talk, so I got in, sliding my cold body down beside his warm body. He only had his pants on 'cos he always went to bed like that, an' so did I, now. I felt good again, because I was safe and Ivor wouldn't be able to get me.

"There's sump'n on your mind, right? Besides wanting to be close to me, I mean," he said.

"No. It's just that – with you not tellin' me where you and Kely went tonight, I got to figurin' mebbe you didn't like me no more."

"You bleedin' idiot, course I like yer, Bunj. But it don't look good to the uvver guys if you an' me is always seen around togevvver. They'll get the idea you're my bum-boy or sump'n like that. No good for my rep, okay? Kely an' me went to the bowling alley, that's all."

"But we can still go swimmin', can't we?"

"If you want. But you didn't try very hard before, y'know."

"That's 'cos I was still a bit shook up from Ivor, an' I thought you'd let me go under."

"I wouldn't, and jus' stay away from that louse in future."

"It wasn't my fault. I didn't know he'd be there. I don't like him."

"You ain't alone, Bunj."

"But I thought you was all pals. Don't you like him neither?"

"No. None of us do. We nearly flaked out when he said he'd pay for the nosh the other night. His mates are still in the west wing."

He stuck his arm around my neck like he did last time an' if I could only tell you how good I was feeling after that, snuggling into his terrific muscly body and smellin' that Paco Rabanne stuff he uses even though he doesn't shave yet.

"With Kely comin' in your bed with yer, d'yer like him like you like me?" I said, then straight away wished I hadn't said it. Sometimes I get to wishin' what's in my head didn't come spewing out.

"None o' your biz, kid. You wanna know too much."

"Sorry, Mickey," I whispered. We both stayed quiet for a while, with him holding me real close an' me with an achin' hard-on and my arm wrapped all the way round his body. We was both breathing nice an' easy an' I thought he was going off to sleep again, so I said next, "Mickey, you know how you said you'd wank me off that one time, and you never did it 'cos the ring was stoppin' yer? Well, I wondered, would you do it to me now? Would yer? I mean if I promise to keep my trap shut?"

"What's this? Blackmail now?"

"I can't say things right can I? I didn't mean that. I didn't mean blackmail. I wouldn't ever tell anybody. I jus' meant..."

"I was only kidding. Sure I'll do yer – if that's what you really want."

I shouldn't be tellin' this 'cos it was a secret between Mickey an' me, and like he said, mebbe I should shut my yap else *my* rep get bust wide open, but I s'pose it's okay to write it.

He kept his arm round my neck. I was on my back an' he turned a bit, facing me, but with one of his knees stuck up to keep the sheet away from where he started rubbing me up just with his fingers 'cos my thingy's too titchy for him to wrap his hand right round – like I could to his, but I didn't know that 'cos I hadn't touched him yet.

I wanted to keep talkin' to him but I couldn't 'cos all my thinkin' was on where his hand was and where my head was an' it seemed like I was in some sorta magic dream place feelin' all warm and tickly near the top of my cock an' how I jus' loved Mickey all to pieces an' how I never had anything good like this happen to me ever before.

It wasn't long really, before my whole body went stiff like all of me got a hard-on, like I was working up to some excitin' bit you don't know about yet, like you get at the end of a movie, an' then I got all stiff and kinda jerky an' my cock was like it went crazy makin' pumping jumpy feelings, and then all of a sudden I got this weird sizzly juicy electric shock type thing at the end of my cock what made my legs jiggle, an' it was like doin' the first big drop on a rollercoaster, swoosh, when all yer guts get ripped out and a great laughing scream comes out an' you don't care if you live or the.

It nearly blew my brains out an' I like got blasted out the bed an' stuck to the ceiling. "Wow!" I whispered, with my lips keeping the shape of the 'w' for a long time, an' breathing through it. Then I came back from the ceiling and felt all heavy an' lovely in bed an' put some little kisses on the side of Mickey's chest, an' with my nose I'm kinda diggin' into his fantastic warm skin and thinkin' what a terrific big boy is Mickey

to do that to me, and oh, I dunno what else to say, 'cept that I guess I wasn't the first boy that ever had that done to him, an' anyway, mebbe if you're a boy, you'll know what I mean.

D'yer wanna know sump'n else? I was so much into thinkin' about me, it never came into my head that he could have wanted me to do it to him, an' I think I'd have been too scared to ask even if it did.

"Feel good, did it?" was all he said.

"Oh, yeah," I whispered, then, "Mickey, what was that sticky stuff what come out?"

"Just a wee little bit of love juice, kid."

I was gonna ask what he was meaning by that, but he said, "You gonna go back to your own kip now?" and took his arm back again.

"Can I jus' stay a bit longer, Mickey? I'll be quiet."

"Okay, but you'd better not drop off to sleep here, right?"

He turned his back to me an' I faced him with my head against his shoulder blade an' my arm wrapped round his belly and felt just a little not wanted again. He was a bit like a wonky shower runnin' hot an' cold, was Mickey, an' I sure didn't understand him much.

I was teasing his belly button with my big finger an' he said, "Quit that."

An' I said, "Sorry, Mickey."

An' he said, "An' quit bein' sorry all the time."

An' I nearly said it again but stopped just in time, an' I felt like sobbin' my guts up but didn't know whether it was from being happy or sad. And soon after, I went back to my own cold bed and thought more about that terrific dangler thing between my legs, an' what it did.

The next night I followed Mickey and Kelvin into the room where they have the telly 'cos Columbo was on an' I heard Mickey say he never missed it. I got told to scoot, but I wasn't gonna 'cos I like Columbo an' all, so I had to sit with a couple o' guys from my own class, but I kept lookin' over to where the big boys was sittin' an' I sure wished like hell they'd want me to sit with 'em, but they didn't.

I couldn't help thinkin' about that night I saw Kelv an' Mickey in one bed and how mebbe they did things to each other like Mickey did to me, an' because I like Kelvin an' all, I wished they'd both grab me and friendly fight with me and do nice things to me like that. I had a dream about me and them once. We was on a beach an' they was both draggin' me by my arms across the sand tryna get me to go into the sea, these two big tough guys was, with their tight swimmin' trunks on, an' their mind-

shatterin' muscles and brown bodies, and there was me yellin' my head off an' sayin' no, no, don't make me, I can't swim, an' tryna get my arms free so I could grab a hold of them both, an' love 'em and kiss 'em to make them stop, but all the time meaning yes, yes, keep bein' with me doin' good things to me. Dreams are sure crazy. It was like I wanted them to hurt me and didn't want them to hurt me all at the same time. I must be slightly bonkie, I reckon. Y'know, I dunno whether I'm right or not, but mebbe Mickey wanted me out of his bed quick so's Kelvin could come in, but I never found out, 'cos I was asleep. One thing about that telly evening was good. Ivor was nowhere in sight.

A funny (funny peculiar I mean, not funny haha) thing happened after lights out that night. There was a soft scuffly noise at our dorm door which was always shut. Everybody wasn't asleep yet, and Jeff reckoned it was old Sticky Willie on the prowl. (His name's Mr Pocock!) But then he said it couldn't be, 'cos he never came after lights out if everybody kept quiet, 'cos the least he has to do with us kids the better he likes it.

Jeff crept to the door, opened it slow, and peeped out. Nobody there. When he closed it again, he put the light on, an' his foot scuffed against sump'n on the deck. It was a piece of paper. We all got out of bed after that for a looksee.

"It's a note," Jeff said. "Sum'dy shoved a note under our door."

But when we looked close there was nothing on it. Jeff held it up to the light and looked at it this way and that, an' scratched his nut.

"The ghost wrote it," Ivor said.

"Wrote what?"

"The note."

"It's not a note, dick-head. There's no writing on it," Jeff said.

"Bet you any money there's writing on it, but we can't see it 'cos it was written by a ghost," Ivor goes on.

"Don't be a dick-head all yer life, Ive," said Jeff. "What's the point in slipping us a note we can't read? An' where'd you get the idea there's s'posed to be a ghost anyway?"

"You know where. EetzaPizza. That guy told us about it."

"An' you believed it? You're brain-dead, kiddo."

Jeff can get away with talkin' to Ivor like that. Wish I could.

We all got back in bed, an' that was the end of it.

But d'y'er know what? That same night turned into one where the worst thing that ever happened to me happened. It's some kinda miracle



I'm even still livin' to tell you about it, 'cos it was a nightmare, but here I am, still alive.

It was about the middle of the night when I got shock woken by a rubbery smellin' crinkly sort of hand shoved over my nose and mouth, so I couldn't squeal an' I could hardly breathe. An' at the same time I was dragged out of my bed by some other strong hands. I couldn't see who it was 'cos it was pitch black in the room. I was hauled out the room but with a blindfold on by now so I still couldn't see.

It was feeling like there was two people draggin' me along, but nobody said anything so I didn't know. Next, I hear a creakin' door close behind us and I know we're in some musty damp smellin' place which was all hollow sounding, like all the scufflin' noises was making echoes. Then sump'n like a piece of rag is shoved over my tongue and sump'n else wrapped round like a gag to keep it there. They're on both sides holding my arms and guiding me up some stone steps what seem to go round in circles with me beginning to feel hellishly dizzy and chokin' nearly 'cos the thing in my mouth is making it hard to swallow an' is soaking up all my saliva. I was scared to death.

I figured we must be in the tower. It's the only place I could think of where mebbe there'd be spiral steps. It seemed like we was climbing forever.

At last it's like we go through another door which gets closed behind us and then I'm bein' pulled – struggling like mad and tryna pull back – along a straight line what must be a long corridor. Then another door is opened and I'm shoved into what I guessed was a room, and with no hands holding me I feel lost in space, and blind an' dumb, and as if I'm gonna fall off some high place. I'm too scared to move my feet in case I do fall. An' with my hands I'm feelin' all around for sump'n that ain't there. I was sure I was a gonner. But then somebody grabs my arms again, pulls them straight up, and I'm being fastened by my wrists to some ropes above my head, and my ankles are tied to something on the floor, and they've got me tied up like I'm a big X-shape.

I try to make pleading noises through the gag but not much sound gets out. I feel horrible, even worse than when the guys took me out that first night, 'cos I didn't have a clue who was doin' this to me – and I didn't know why. I wish I could see. I wish I could breathe and swallow properly. I feel very bad and open to be attacked because all I've got on is my underpants an' it's not right for people to see me like this.

I get part of my wish come true when the blindfold is took off me and my eyes are kinda screwed up tryna see in the light. There's not

much light 'cos there's just one small bulb – and there's a barrel on its side! An' there was a bucket an' a pillow, I think. An' that's all there was in the room, 'cept for – oh my god, the first thing I think of is King thingummy's ghost, and I know I'm on the top floor in the east wing, an' I think of what that big guy in the pizza place was sayin' and I knew I was in for it now.

But there was two ghosts! They both looked exactly the same wearing what seemed like a one-piece suit thing that glowed kinda greenish, and their heads was pure gross, pure frightening, like old, old men with wrinkly skin, but with lit up eyes and with long skinny fingers. And it was like they glided about more than walked. I don't mean they took off. I jus' mean they kinda floated, and didn't say nuthin'. It was them keeping quiet what made them even more scary. Put the shits up me like hell, they did.

An' it was like they'd done something wrong 'cos they was makin' signs to each other, an' one was pointing at the barrel, an' before I knew it, I was untied again and flung face down over the barrel and my pants got took down, an' one of the ghosts was holding my arms an' I couldn't see what was going on behind me, but I soon knew.

I'm nearly shaking myself to bits with fright when the other one, the one I couldn't see, starts doing something to my bum what feels like grease being rubbed in and then I feel something hard poking around and then gettin' shoved inside me, an' it feels like it's too big for my bum which feels like it's gonna split wide open. It hurts like hell when he shoves more and harder and then starts pumping into me like somebody gone bonkers, and here I am gettin' fucked, an' I hate it an' I try to scream out again, but just end up choking. The pain is sump'n fierce. This guy must be mad – like King Pemberton. 'Cept I know there's no such things as ghosts, and I know by now these are two guys what's got themselves all dressed up like spooks, 'cos I can see the one holding me down has got rubber gloves on made to look like a monster's hands. I can't say any more about this 'cos it hurts me just to think about it. I was just glad the other guy didn't wanna stick me an' all. When it was all over I got tied up to an X-shape again, this time with my cock showing, naked, for all the world to see, an' I'm tryin' to cry my eyes out, but even doin' that hurts. I jus' wanna die.

Now sump'n else happens. One of the guys takes sump'n out of his pocket. It's one o' them old-fashioned cut-throat razors like I think men used to have. Anyway, he slowly opens it an' makes sure I'm watching when he strokes his wrinkly thumb across the sharp edge, making the

blade catch the light so it flashes in my eyes which are wide open with terror. What's he gonna do with it? Oh my god, I can't stand this.

He nips the end of my cock between his fingers and pulls it hard out. Then he sticks the blade up near the end of it, near my balls, an' I can feel the cold steel against my skin. Now the other guy gets behind me and grabs my hair and yanks my head back so I can't see, an' I wanna scream out loud but I can't do anything else but cry inside and moan and wriggle an' try to get my bollocks away from that blade. An' I break out in a cold sweat with my fingers and toes twitching like bodies do on telly when they the suddenly.

Then it happens. I feel a quick zip, a swipe across my cock an' it's off. I know it's off. He cut it off, the filthy rotten fucker, he sliced it off. I been savagely mutilated by mad guys. I go unconscious, but it can only have been for a minute or sump'n, 'cos I'm coming round again gettin' my face patted and thinkin' I'll never have it to play with again. They signal me to look an' I'm too scared to. A boy's body must look horrible with no cock. Then they shove my head forwards but I've closed my eyes. I'm hard slapped like I'm bein' forced to look. I slowly open my eyes again but I still can't see 'cos the way my arms is fixed I can't bend my head enough. I get bashed at the back of my head causing a crackin' sound which nearly breaks my neck, and now I can look. Christ! It's still there. I still got that wee pecker o' mine, an' I nearly faint again 'cos o' the relief that comes an' floods me. He must have just pretended and used the blunt edge of the blade.

But they haven't done with me yet. They get the bucket which has got two brushes in it like they use for wallpapering. They dip them in and both start plastering me with some kinda yellowish gunge, an' they do that all over me. My head, my hair, it goes in my eyes. They do my cock with the stuff and shove some up my stingin' bum, an' then my arms, my legs, everything. I get plastered from top to bottom, and then they get the pillow and feathers comes out which they fling at me and they get stuck to the goo. Then one of 'em turns away like he's unwrapping something he doesn't want me to see. Then they whip the gag off, and the thing in my mouth gets taken out an' sump'n else gets shoved in before I can make a sound. Then, to keep it in, they tie the gag on again. What's in my mouth is some kinda little block, salty as hell. Makes me feel sick. (I found out later it was a chicken stock cube.) They'd tarred and feathered me kinda, but I should say more like turned me into a chicken.

Then my hands gets untied, but the rope goes round my middle.

Then my feet is undone, and the next thing, I'm being pulled off the ground about four or five feet and I'm hanging from the screw thing in the ceiling with the rope round my ribs cutting into me and nipping like fuck. I get to thinkin' this nightmare is never gonna end. I try not to swallow the salt thing, but some of it goes down 'cos I can't help it. It's pure murder, that's what it is, a shriekin' nightmare.

Then one of 'em makes me read a sign he's holding what sez, "Now you're a real chicken and you can fly – flap away, chickie", and then I get a shove and a spin and I'm swinging and spinning at the same time and I feel like I'm gonna pass out again – for good. I jus' wished I could pass out. The light bulb was swinging as well, and they was dancing all around me, and I felt giddy, an' not bein' sure if the room was moving or who was moving and the floor was up on the roof and the walls was whizzing round crazy an' I shut my eyes but that made it feel worse still, an' it was like the guys was on their heads and I was goin' back and forth and up and down, shadow, light, shadow, light, swish, swish, and, oh, Jesus Christ, help me!

It was like I was swinging and spinning for years and beginning to feel sick when they stopped me and let me down. Then I got face slapped and made to read another sign what said "One word of this to anybody and next time you hang by the neck – but the balls go first!" Then another: "Do you understand?"

I nodded, yes.

Then they switched off the light and ran – jus' vanished. I hadn't a clue where they went 'cos I was too much thinkin' about me, crying like I never did before. I couldn't see a thing. Not till my eyes got a bit used to the dark again. I sat down on the dusty bare board floor with my back to a wall and the first thing I did was take off the gag and spit out what was left of the salty cube, and tryna wipe the salt off my tongue and spew up some what was going down and scrape off some of their stupid feathers.

Then when my mind got working again I started thinkin' who them guys was. I thought about Kelvin an' Mickey gangin' up on me like in the dream, but they wouldn't hurt me – I hoped. It must have been Ivor and one of his mates from the west wing. Would they really kill me if I split? I decided they would. Nobody would know. Nobody could stop them. Besides, they could easy get me again, in the night, when everybody was sleeping.

I was bustin' to tell Mickey. I felt all alone in the world again and reckoned the best thing for me to do was run away. Then I could tell the social why I did it. Nobody could get me then. But I didn't want to leave

Mickey, the best friend I ever had. My brains got in a horrible muddle so's I didn't know whether I was coming or going. Shit!

With nothing on, 'cept yeller paste and some still stickin' feathers, I was beginning to shiver. All I could do was find my way back down, get into the bath and hope nobody would see. I had been right about where I was. A room at the far end of the east wing. I left the room, fumbled my way along the corridor, down the cold stone spiral steps, through the creaky door, along my own corridor to the bathroom. I ran the hot tap hoping no one would hear. The yeller stuff came off fairly easy. It must have been flour paste or wallpaper paste or sump'n, with some color added to it. But it was grim, alright.

I managed to get back into my bed not disturbing anybody, and laid down and thought back about all that horrible nightmare. My middle was stingin' where the rope was and my bum was still hurting an' I was thinking about who's was that rotten cock that got stuck up me. I was still doin' a bit of sobbin', but quiet so nobody would hear. I wanted Mickey again, but I didn't dare go to him. He'd be angry with me, and I didn't like makin' him angry. But I was glad I still had my own cock an' after a bit I tried doin' to myself what Mickey had done, an' it worked, jus' like before, an' that made me feel a bit better, an' soon I went to sleep, pretty sure I was gonna do a bunk next day when I'd figured the best time to do it.

Next morning after we got washed and brushed our teeth, I saw Mickey lookin' at me a bit peculiar. "You look down in the mouth this morning, Bunj – an' what's that yeller stuff in your eye corners?"

That got me. I made up a lie sayin' I didn't know what it was, an' he didn't believe me, an' he was all friendly with me in the dorm, an' asked me again if I got sump'n on my mind.

Seein' as the others had gone off to breakfast, I decided I just had to tell him something, so I said, "I'm not s'posed to tell anybody, 'cos they'll kill me, Mickey, but sump'n really rotten happened to me in the middle o' the night, an' I'm jus' bustin' to tell you about it." I began crying again like some big baby, but I jus' couldn't help it, with my whole body juddering about sump'n awful.

"What happened? Who'll kill you? You must have been dreaming, sprite."

"No, it weren't no dream. It was... it was..."

"It's okay, Bunj. You're with me now. Pals, remember? It won't go any further if you don't want it to." He was sounding all full o'

sympathy, an' sittin' me on my bed with his arm across my shoulder. I jus' put my head on his chest and kep' on sobbin' me guts up an' couldn't talk 'cos o' that.

"Open up, wee sprite. We gotta go down for our grilled rashers o' pig and fried unborn chicken, like sharpish."

"It'll take too bloody long, Mickey. Can we just...?"

He stopped me talking an' said with a voice that sounded like a warning in it, "Look Bunjie, cut the crap an' tell me, uvverwise I ain't gonna tell you sump'n good what I've got in mind."

So, 'cos I was cuddlin' into him an' feelin' safe, I told him all what happened last night. When I finished, he was dead angry and surprised both at the same time, an' I thought he was gonna grab the key off Ivor an' charge up top right then, an' that made me say, "No, Mickey, please. They wasn't kiddin' when they said they'd do me in if I snitched."

"There ain't nub'dy gonna kill yer, so get that idea out your head – 'cept mebbe me if yer don't cool it. We'll talk about it again after school, right?" Then he grabbed a hankie and licked a corner of it and went to work to get the yeller stuff out my eyes, an' when he was done he said, "Come on, we better move it."

As we was skippin' down the stairs I asked him what was the sump'n good he was gonna tell me.

"If this hot weather goes on till Saturday, how about you gettin' a lend of Jeff or Kelvin's bike – 'cos they're goin' home for the weekend – and both of us going up to Comstock Woods for the day. It's about twelve miles. Great place."

"Jus' you and me?" I said, so flippin' chuffed I nearly slipped an' fell down the rest o' the steps.

"Yeh. If yer want," he said, grabbing my arm to stop me falling.

"Geez, sure Mickey, thanks!" I said – an' that idea I had about runnin' away, kinda – ran away!

Jeff got all excited after tea that evening. "What's bitten you, Jeff?" Kelvin asked him.

"The copper sulphate," was all he said, an' he was lookin' for something.

"What about it? You know where it is?"

"No."

"So?"

"So – where's that note we got las' night, with supposedly nothing on it?"

Ivor had it. Jeff grabbed it and we all went to Sticky Willie's room an' Kelvin said, "We'll get done if we're found in here."

"Jus' don't worry about it, he's still noshin'."

Jeff switched on the housemaster's electric fire and waved the paper over it. "It's an invisible note," he said. "Somebody made invisible ink with the copper sulphate. All we have to do is warm it..."

And Jeff was right. We all crowded close tryin' to see. There *was* writing it. In rough brown scrawly letters it said, "*Turn not back the pages of history, nor yet the hands of time, for madness and murder will surely follow.* – K.P."

"K.P.? Aw, nuts!" Kelvin said.

"Not nuts," Ivor said. "King Pemberton. See? I told yer."

"Told me what?"

"It was from the ghost."

"Jesus, he's off again," Jeff said. "Sum'dy weld a silencer on him."

"Don't say I didn't warn yer."

Mickey started lookin' at me after all this, an' with his eyes he was askin' me should he tell. He'd said he wouldn't an' I knew he didn't want to break his promise, but somehow, with Jeff an' Mickey an' Kelvin all together, it sorta made me less scared, an' so I nodded yes. He told them all what I'd told him. They was all flabbergasted.

"Okay," Jeff said, "that does it. Mickey says we go up top after lights out. Who's game?"

We all was, 'cept Ivor, who reckoned we shouldn't mess with things we know nothing about.

"You're goin' an' all, Ive, but I'll have the key," Jeff said.

"What key?"

"The key to the tower. Bunjie says you have it."

"Well I haven't. He's a liar. You don't wanna go round believin' everything that little shit-bag says."

Jeff was going out the door. "Where you off to?" Ivor says.

"To get Ma Primpley to give us a lend o' the key."

"Okay," said Ivor, giving in. "I got it – here." And he turned on me all fierce again. "You snitchin' little bastard." He had his fist ready to bust me, an' he would have if Mickey didn't get in between us.

"Back off, Ive," Mickey said, threatening.

It was Kelvin had a torch in his locker so we all followed him through the little door which led into the tower.

When we got to the top, Jeff said to keep it hush, 'cos whatever we found up there, if anything, was gonna be taken by surprise. When we

got in the long corridor we saw loads o' doors leading off both sides, an' Mickey whispered to me to tell him which was the room where I got shagged. Without saying anything, I took a hold of his arm and led him along towards the end.

"Where are you going?" Jeff loud-whispered.

"Jus' follow an' keep quiet," Mickey said.

It was the last door on the left where I was, and I took Mickey in. The others came up behind us. Ivor stopped outside the door. I switched the light on, and there was all the feathers and the barrel an' stuff an' that made it so they knew I wasn't lying.

"Right. Evidence. Let's look in some o' the other rooms."

We bumped into Ivor outside the door who said, scared soundin', "Let's get outa here, guys, right?"

"Wrong," Jeff said. "Let's look in here first." It was the door opposite mine.

"Don't go in there," Ivor said, wiping his beak on his sleeve.

"Why not? Afraid we might find something?" Jeff said, as if he already knew Ivor must know something.

Jeff opened the door an' we all got a surprise by who was sittin' in there. Mebbe you guessed already who it was – the big guy in the pizza parlor what told us about the ghost.

"What the...?" was all he said at first, with his gob flappin' open, an' jumpin' to his feet. He looked like he was gonna try an' make a run for it, but instead he turned on Ivor. "You bastard. You split."

"Weren't me. It was that little shit," he said, pointing at me. "I told yer we was askin' for trouble. You should just have kept quiet. Nub'dy would have found out you was here."

"So *you're* his mate, Ive. Well bloody well," Jeff said.

"It was all his idea," Ivor mumbled, and Jeff ignored him.

"Okay, you, King Pemberton, sit down and spill. What are you s'posed to be doin' here?" Jeff said, sounding aggressive.

"I'm leaving. Go fuck yourself," said the big guy.

"I said siddown," said Jeff, giving him a shove so he landed in the chair. And all of us gathered around him so he wouldn't have no chance to escape. Ivor stayed near the wall.

"Bollocks to you. Who the fuck d'yer think you are?"

"Rambo – that's who I am, an' you ain't leavin' till you talk, an' your story's gotta be better than the last one you told us." An' Jeff whapped him one on top of his head.

The big guy looked at me. "So you knew it was me all the time, did



yer?"

"No. Well, I think I saw you before someplace, but I dunno where."

"Ransome, that's where. I got put in the detention center when they shut that dump. I absconded. I'm hiding, see." He stopped soundin' angry and turned to soundin' pleading. "Look, fellers, I'm okay here. I can live here okay if you all keep quiet about me."

"No way," said Jeff, who seemed a much bigger boy to me now than I ever had him figured before, not one bit scared. He was sayin', "What was you in for, anyway?"

"I ain't sayin'."

Mickey said something next. "Let's string him up in the other room like he did to Bunj. He's got a razor someplace. We could chop his rotten cock off half inch at a time, to stop him stickin' it where it don't belong. His own idea, right?"

"Who said I did anything to – wotsisname?" mumbled the big guy.

"You landed yerself in the shit, bastard. *You* said it. You jus' said 'so you knew it was me' to Bunj, right, Bunj?"

"Yeh."

"No, I got a better idea. He's gonna answer to the principal – but gift-wrapped," Jeff said. "He threatened to kill our wee Bunj, an' we ain't having any. Kelv, go get some o' that rope out the other room. And where's them masks you got?"

"Screw you," said the big guy.

I keep calling him a big guy, but he's no bigger than the others, just older – an' I sure felt good having them all sticking up for me. Getting revenge was terrific.

"Try that drawer, Mickey," Jeff said.

Mickey found the old men masks and Jeff said, "Put 'em on. You an' all, I've."

"Why me? He made me do it."

Mickey had sump'n to say. "You're a big boy now. You could have refused but you didn't. You helped to terrorize my wee pal here, scarin' him out his wits, an' you ain't getting away with it. Put – that – on!" He handed him the other mask.

The big guy tried to get out the chair again and Jeff shoved him back, showing him a fist. "Go ahead, man. Make your move."

When they both had their masks on this time they didn't look scary to me, just funny. Jeff told Kelv and Mickey to tie the bad guys' hands behind their backs and then said, "Right, you two, march. Let's see if you can put the shits up the head man like you do to little kids. And you

can show him your invisible note *and* the signs you made Bunjie read."

A struggle broke out then, but the big guy wasn't big enough for the likes of Jeff, Kelvin an' Mickey, an' as we frogmarched them along the corridor it came out that he had given Ivor money to let him in to the east wing, comin' up the fire escape at the far end.

It still didn't make sense why Ivor wanted me to go up top for a looksee that time, if he knew already what was up there, that is, till we found out that the big guy was a child molester who'd been put away for bummin' wee boys and even gettin' into little girls. He wanted me, see, an' when I didn't go that night Ivor told me to was why they come an' got me the next night. If we hadn't stopped him, he could have got all the wee boys in the school, tryna scare 'em into bein' quiet with his ghost stories. If he wasn't a sex maniac, an' if he'd kept quiet, he prob'ly could have lived up there for as long as he wanted. It was jus' lucky for me I had Mickey to talk to about it.

About sex again. The way I see it, see, Mickey was a sexy big boy an' I turned into a sexy wee bastard, but there's a difference which only clever people know about. If it comes out of two people who like each other a lot it's okay, anyhow, that's what I think. But if sum'dy you don't like forces it on yer, then that's child molesting, an' yer can get done for that – and that's what happened to the big guy. He got put away some place he couldn't escape from. Also, we found out he'd got money from a wine merchant an' a joke shop an' some other shops he'd busted into.

Ivor got expelled, and the last I saw of him was when they was drivin' him away in this big car, him sittin' in back all alone and the two driver and guard guys in front and he was wiping his dribbly nose on the back of his sleeve.

It came to Saturday at last. It was a sunny day with no clouds at all when Mickey an' me got going, with me on Jeff's bike. I was a bit wobbly to begin with 'cos his bike was too big for me, but I soon got the hang, and we left the town behind and soon was in the country, goin' for miles an' miles. We took a single track road off the main road, and then went along a bumpy forestry road with huge Christmas trees on both sides of us, and where the air smelt sweet an' a bit tarry (pine resin, Mickey said). We stopped beside a river with a big waterfall where the river went underneath the road. Mickey said to plank the bikes in some bushes: he said it wasn't real important, 'cos hardly anybody ever came this way at weekends, but best to be safe.

Mickey put on his haversack and we climbed up the grass by the

waterfall and then began to follow the river upstream, with me feelin' happy an' proud, 'cos me an' my mate was by ourselves. I had on Mickey's 501s he'd given me. Also, one of his baggy tee-shirts and a shell suit top which was a bit floppy on me. The school had given me some new trainers, and I had them on, too.

He wore his silvery-gray an' red Liverpool shorts 'cos he said he knew it was gonna be a hot day. Also, a sweat shirt with stuff written all over it. He said if I got bored I could read him! I sure wasn't about to get bored.

We must have walked three or four miles over ground that was pretty bumpy, an' he was right about it bein' hot. I was jus' about shagged out by the time we got to this good place he found, right by the river which had clear, clean water, and some flat rocks which the river had made into smooth shapes when there was more water in it. And the trees was different, with some that had silver trunks. There was that kind of tufty grass that doesn't grow long, I dunno why, and near the trees lots of wild flowers which I didn't know the names of, 'cept for buttercups an' daisies. Mickey said it was his special place where nub'dy ever came; at least he'd never seen anybody.

Mickey knelt down and hauled stuff out of his bag; like there was a groundsheet which he spread out on the sloping grass, an' a couple of towels, an' some grub which we bought in town before we got prop'ly started.

"Okay, wee sprite," he said, "you wanted to swim, okay? This is the place."

"Oh wow, Mickey, I didn't bring trunks!"

"Me neither. We can still swim *in puris naturalibus*."

"What?"

"Latin, dum-dum. Means stark naked."

"Skinny-dipping, d'yer mean? Is it allowed?"

"Who's to see?"

"I'd be too scared, an' anyway, I ain't no dum-dum. How'm I s'posed to know Latin?"

"If I say you're a dum-dum, you're stuck with it, brat. Mickey's word is law. Got it?" An' he grabbed my ankle and pulled me down beside him, an' punched me in the ribs a bit an' made me feel happy and giggly. He soon stopped and took all his clothes off, an' I straight away went shy again, not knowing where to put my eyes. Even 'cos I knew he'd seen everything I got, which wasn't much, I still didn't like taking my trousers off in front of other boys. But when he was ready, he

knocked me flat out, unbuttoned my flies and dragged my trousers an' pants off, with me havin' a dry tongue. I rolled on my front so he wouldn't see, but he sat on my bum and forced my tee-shirt up over my head, then got me up on my feet and there we was with our bare bodies touching kinda exciting feelin', an' my head looking sideways from his chest, but thinking about the water.

"Do I have to go in, Mickey?" I said, gazing up at him with my special look.

"Yes, you do, an' get this: I'm wise to your little game, so you can turn off them big round meltin' eyes 'fore I kick yer head in."

"You wouldn't really kick my head in, would yer, Mickey?" I said, still flashin' my baby-blues (which was brown).

"Naw, it's too cute," he said, headlocking me and knuckling my scalp all over. "Swim then, okay sprite?"

The river wasn't very wide but the water looked deep, an' I watched it runnin' over the rocks below the deep pool with a bit of fear in me, but I was sweating as well, an' I reckoned I'd feel better if the water cooled me down.

"You're the boss – I s'pose," I mumbled, not loud.

I followed him on to the flat rocks, an' my big brave buddy didn't even test the water first to see if it was cold. He just dived in, disappeared under for half a minute or sump'n, then came up suddenly, splashin' an' spittin' water an' lookin' all fresh. "Come on in, Bunj, it's terrific," he shouted, startin' to swim back, or mebbe I should say he got carried back 'cos the current was fairly strong.

"Oh, I dunno, Mickey. It looks too deep for me," I said. I jumped back a bit when he came closer an' scooshed water at me, which made me yelp and jump back som'ore.

"It's over yer head in the middle, but you can climb down from there. It won't cover yer. Jus' watch out you don't get yer body bashed on submerged rocks."

I was still too scared, so he climbed up till the water came to his middle, an' then held out his hand for me. I got in, very slowly. It *was* kinda cold and snatched my breath away when it came up my body, but Mickey said once I got my head under it would be okay after that. Get my head under? Oh my god!

He walked out with me till only his head was showing and my feet didn't touch the bottom, an' he was holding me up with his hands under my armpits an' said, "I've got yer, kid. Stick yer head under. You'll be fine, okay."

I thought about it for a bit and at last took the plunge, comin' up splutterin' like I don't know what. He was making me bob around after that so I could feel how light I really was in the water, and it was true, I *did* feel like I was kinda floating.

Next he made me float on my back with his hand under my neck an' me tryna turn over an' grab him all the time, panicky, an' my legs kept sinking, but I got used to it after a bit, and even if I still didn't learn to swim, I had a good time, with him huggin' me sometimes, an' me with my legs wrapped round his body, an' he was bein' very encouraging, and with him an' the clean water, an' the sun an' the fresh air, which had a good summery smell of heat an' flowers an' trees – and that all put together made me feel fantastic.

My body was sorta tingly when we came into the warm sun again, dried off, and flaked out on the groundsheet, side by side.

"This is the life, eh, kid?" he said, taking deep breaths.

"It sure is, Mickey."

After a while, with all the birds twitterin' and wasps comin' close sometimes, he took hold of my wee peter (he called it), and started doin' that thing to me again, an' it was like we was both nature boys being in the middle of wild country with nobody else around and with us both still starkers, an' I don't know no other words to tell you how good it was.

I got shy again when he said I could do him if I liked, an' at first I said I was scared to, an' I cuddled into him with my head on his belly lookin' at his big boner an' wondering what it would be like to touch it 'cos it wasn't like mine. It had all hairs round it an' it didn't have that floppy bit of skin at the end like mine an' had the pink thing nearly all showing. My hand was gettin' itchy all the same and soon after my hand got like a spider crawling down towards it.

Like I said before, I could get my hand wrapped all round it and moved it like he did me, feelin' all that loose skin slidin' up and down over the hard piece. I stayed with my head on his chest while I did it, and his hand was on my face an' in my hair, an' stroking me like I was a dog he loved. He told me to move my curled up first finger and thumb up near the top of his cock an' then I got going proper. It was feelin' good to me, an' he said I did it good an' it was feelin' good to him an' all. When a few minutes had gone his body got all stiff jus' like mine, and his thing started like pulsing and soon some white stuff spurted out which he wiped an' which I didn't like. I guess I thought I'd hurt him or sump'n, an' I don't know why, but I started blubberin' again.

"Now, what's the matter?" he said, taking all of me in his arms.

I buried my face into his shoulder and said, "Nothing, Mickey."

"Will you stop being so soddin' secretive?" he said. "What's the tears for?"

I gripped him very tight, shakin' kinda, and said, "Did I do sump'n wrong? Did it hurt yer?"

"No. What makes you think that?"

I jus' did a shrug with my shoulders, an' let some time go before I started again. "Mickey, I wanna tell you sump'n, but it's such a stupid word to say, an' I can't think of any other word."

"What word, Bunj? Spill."

I made a little laugh with no sound come down my nose. "You're gonna think I'm a loony toon but, see, I love you, Mickey, to bits, an' I – an' I – wish you was my dad. There. I said it. Crazy, right?"

"Not crazy, but impossible. I'm only three years older than you."

"I don't care. I jus' wish it, that's all."

I told him all about me and my foster places and my other school an' havin' no dad an' a ma I didn't know, an' he called me a poor little sod, an' I could tell he was feelin' sorry for me. I was feelin' sorry for me an' all, 'cos of the soppo sad way I said it.

"I just love you, Mickey," I said, squeezing him tighter still, an' he squeezed me back.

He said, "Don't worry, I'll Bunj. I'll look after yer. In fact, I got an idea. See what you think of this. Next time I go home, if we can get permission from the school, how about I take you with me – to meet my folks?"

"You mean it? You'd really do that?"

"Course I mean it. I haven't got a kid brother. The job's yours, if you want it."

I didn't know what to say next. I jus' was feelin' my guts hoppin' round inside like jumping crackers, an' I got bolder still, and I finally flipped. I pulled my head back and looked him straight in his eyes, an' I jus' couldn't resist it, I kissed him on his lips, an' he didn't shove me off an' we stayed stuck together like that for a minute or sump'n. Rollin' about all excited.

He's got nice lips with a kind of ridge on the top one which makes him look good. Aw, geez, I wish I could show you a picture so you'd know what I mean. I had that lip between my two, and they was all warm and slidy and his face smelled so good.

"What are your mum and dad like, Mickey? What if they don't like me. Lots o' grown-ups never liked me."

"They'll like you. Jus' don't worry about it."

"Where d'yer live?"

"Swanage."

"Where's that?"

"Dorset. South coast. Couple of hundred miles from here. That's why I don't get home so much."

"But why d'yer have to go to school so far away?"

"Cos they reckon you get a good education here, but you might not have guessed it."

"I'd like it, Mickey. I'd like to go with yer. I'd like to have you for a big brother. Mickey – do you – oh wow – Mickey – do you – love me?"

"Well, I wouldn't call it love exactly, but you're a great little kid, Bunj."

"Oh sure, I'm cosmic," said me, jokey like.

My body stopped shivering after that an' the tears dried up. I'd done a lot o' cryin' since I come to this school, but I figured I wouldn't be doin' much cryin' ever again.

"Does Kelvin come here sometimes with you?" I said next, switching channels, and when Mickey nodded, I went on, "Would you bring me an' all next time? I like Kelvin – but not as much as you."

"If you say so – and yes – I'll tell you now. Me and Kelv are into mutual jerk-off, but that's something for just us three to know, right?"

"I wouldn't tell anybody, Mickey. I wouldn't, honest."

"How about Jeff? D'yer like him an' all?"

"He's okay," I said with not a whole lot of interest. "Does he...?"

"No. Not with us, anyhow. I dunno, do I? Am I s'posed to know everything?"

We got stuck into our bag o' crisps an' roast cow sandwiches – which is what Mickey calls 'em – and some bars of chocolate that was so hot an' melty you could nearly drink'em. Then we jus' laid back lazy in the heat an' soaked up the sun and talked a lot.

I was surprised how Mickey talked sometimes when we was alone. It was like he'd forget about the rough way and talked more posh, not much posh – better English I s'pose you'd say. He told me he had to "speak properly" when he was home. "No swearing in Swanage!"

Another thing. He was cleverer than I figured. He told me lots of interesting things like, first, all about sex, which was includin' what that white stuff was that came out of him. He said sex education was a load o' bollocks an' that you find out all about it best from other kids. He said people forgot they was still animals an' had to get trained how to do

everything, an' that sex between people should be their secret an' nobody else's business. He said he knew all about it even before he'd got told about it in school.

And he told me his dad an' him was into scuba-diving when he was home, an' I got told lots of his adventures. I said that's what I'd like to do – when I get swimming. I asked him if his real name was Michael, an' he said it wasn't. He'd been called Mickey when he was real little, after the mouse. He told me all about his house which was a big one where you could see the sea, and oh, all sorts o' good stuff like that.

He gimme a dig in the ribs, an' then I figured he was gonna start fightin' me but instead he grabbed a tight hold of me again, an' yer know what? My cock which had gone all floppy got stiff again an' was squashed up against his belly, an' his was against mine, an' the way we both started moving kinda up an' down like, made them terrific excitin' feelings come back again. Our skins rubbed together all slithery from being sweatin' an' from other slidy stuff. Like as if sum'dy had put oil all over us an' making what we was doing – oh – a whole lot more zingier.

We was both breathing kinda fast, now. My face was right close up to Mickey's an' I was sniffin' up my nose what was comin' down his, an' I guess it was like that kiss o' life thing they do to people dragged out of water, 'cos I was feelin' like I was sharing my pal's breath to live good. We got our lips glued together again – and wow! – did I ever feel good. After he come again and after I had that over the moon tickly cock thing, Mickey wrapped himself all around my body an' I snuggled into him and we stayed like that for a long time. All cuddly and lovely. And did I say before how this was the best time I ever had in my life? Well, this time was even better than that.

Soon after, Mickey got up and put just his shorts on, an' I figured I'd better cover up my bottom half as well. A wasp came which Mickey didn't see, an' it was gonna land on him so I took a swipe at it, but he thought I took a swipe at him, an' that started us fighting. Geez, I didn't stand much of a chance, I figured, 'cos he was so strong, but he let me win.

Then we was all sweaty. He laid flat out, an' so did I with my head on his tummy again. I liked the way his body, which he had got sun-tanned before today, came out of his shorts, an' how his legs did. I jus' gotta be a nutcase for likin' things like that. I liked his slippery shorts and with my nose I nuzzled into them, letting my face slide all over. Then he moved real quick and trapped my head between his legs an' said he wasn't never gonna let me go – an' I didn't care. It was nice there. It was



safe. When he let me go I jumped on his belly with my legs both sides of him an' shoved his hands over his head (he let me do it) and said he was gonna be sorry for trappin' my nut.

He pretended to be tired an' said, "Submit."

"What for? I haven't done anything yet. What will you do if I smash your face in?"

"Submit again, most prob'ly."

"Geez, but you're lot's o' fun, Mickey," I said, laughing, kinda like Mowgli said it to Baloo, y'know, 'You're lots o' fun, Baloo'.

He told me we'd get a tent sometime an' go camping. Jus' me an' him an' Kelvin. I couldn't wait for that to happen, but, well, it was gettin' late and we had to start thinkin' about walking down to our bikes.

Back at school, with Ivor got shot of and Jeff and Kelvin bein' home, we had the dorm to ourselves. I got to kip with Mickey, only it wasn't all sleeping, an' my body was burning up 'cos of too much sun.

And that's just about all of my story, 'cept for the happy ending which I'm gonna write down now.

One thing I found out was that being in the big boys' dorm was just a temp'ry thing. When the west wing dorm was finished decoratin', I went in with guys my age – but that didn't matter now, and you'll see why in a minute.

Mickey Mallery took me home with him like he promised, an' I liked his house, an' his mum, an' dad, an' they liked me. Mickey told his dad *some* of my story. His dad said why didn't I write it down in my own words (he helped a bit) which is how come you jus' read this. He was shocked sometimes, 'specially by the sexy bits with me and his son, but d'yer know what I figured out? I guess he was rememberin' what it was like when he was a boy an' how mebbe he did stuff sump'n like us. That's what Mickey thinks, too. Anyway, I'm invited back for the summer hols, and Christmas, and...

I have my best pal for a big brother. Oh, wow!