

## **THE THIRD ACOLYTE READER**

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*Not everyone responds to the death of a good friend and companion in the same way ....*

# Llanitos

## Leonard Taft

Hey, Alex. You hear about Fabio?

No, what's that llanito up to now?

He dead, man.

What? How?

He overdose on heroin. Last weekend.

He did?

Right at the movies.

Right at the movies?

Right between the cartoon and the coming attractions.

No shit.

Hey, you want to come over my house? Got some good weed. I'll give you some if you want.

Then we can play around some?

That's all you ever want to do is play around with my cock.

Not true, either.

Not true?

Shut up, Willie.

You shut up.

Come on. Are we going?

I'm ready.

Your old lady home?

Naw, working.

Did they bury Fabio yet?

Bury him, why? I think so, sure. Three days after.

Wow.

He's in the ground, brother.

Wow.

Where you'll end up too, you don't stop screwing around.

Shut up. Hey listen though, Willie.

What?

You want to go see him?

See who?

Fabio. In the ground. Not dig him up, I don't mean, but see where he's laid.

Shit, man, I donno. That's pretty weird.

No, it ain't. That's what graveyards are for.

What?

For getting to look up the dead. You want to? You scared, Willie?

They'll kick us out, man.

No they won't. They all dead.

I mean the guards.

Ain't none, I bet. It's open air.

I thought we going to my house. I take my clothes off for you. Remember last time? The stuff we did in my bed?

We can. After. Let's go, huh? I'm going.

Wait up,..Alex. You one crazy fellow.

Come on, Willie.

Wait up.

Where's he at?

How should I know? Rodriguez, Vallesquez, Parmenter. How are we supposed to find one jocko boy in all this?

Look for new ones. Where the ground is still upset.

Yes, that's a good idea.

We'll split up.

In a graveyard? Not me.

You really are scared, aren't you?

Keep looking.

My grandmother says death and sex are man's two best friends.

She does?

Yes. In fact there's a family in her old barrio that, every time they have a funeral, everybody makes love immediately afterwards.

They do?

That's what she said.

Well, we'll never find Fabio this way. Let's go to my house,

Alex, I'm starting to feel sexy, aren't you? We could go in the tub or I could suck you off.

Wait.

I do anything you want, Alex. You know me. I'm the best for you.

There he is!

What? Where?

Over there. See where the earth is rough?

Wait up. Oh. Alex, you loco I swear.

Wow.

Wow.

*Our beloved son, Fabio, deceased May 29, 1988 at the age of seventeen. V'ya can Dios. Do you really think he was?*

What?

A beloved son.

That's just something they say.

Do you want to pray?

No. You?

No. He was okay, though, Fabio. He was a okay guy.

Yeah. He was only four years older than us.

Once, he gave me a whole packet of coke and showed me how to snort. I was real young.

Once he let me drag on his joint with some of the other guys around, only he offered it to *me*.

Me too, once. He was an okay guy.

Yeah.

Let's just stand here and remember him.

Yeah, he'd be like that. I mean it's only right.

Yeah.

He liked me too.

I know. He loved your little ass, brother.

He used to say, "Willie, you got a hot little body. I love your little brown bottom. Come over here and let me feel you up." He used to say that. So I go over there and we both half stoned and he puts his hands in the seat of my pants and rubs me around in there and then in under my shirt up my back and rubs my tummy and all and lifts my shirt up and yanks it off so that I'm standing there bare-chested in front of all these big kids

Yeah!

And they're all screaming and whistling. But Fabio, he won't let them, none of them, touch me. Which is good 'cause with a crowd that horny I coulda got gang raped in a second.

I know. So's what he do?

Fabio? He put his hand on my shoulders and lead me off behind the dump and kneel down to me. And he said, "Willie, you got the prettiest eyes of the whole barrio." And it was okay for him to talk like that, I mean it don't sound drippy coming out of him. It was okay. And he would pull my pants down.

And then?

Then? Well, then, man, what do you expect? He gobbled me up.

He did?

That was Fabio.

Wow.

And now he's dead.

I know.

Beloved son.

I know.

Can't do nothing for him now.

It's too late.

But there he is. Right down there.

Must be cold.

Wonder what he'd want. Wish I could do something for him.

He's dead.

Even so. What would make him happiest?

Probably you. If he could see you bare-assed again. He'd probably sit right up. Or part of him would.

You think so? Would I make him happy?

You could always ask him.

How?

My auntie can talk with the dead. All you do is get very close to the gravestones and it's like a lightning rod, your voice goes into the ground and if they're awake they can hear.

I doubt it.

Maybe they can see, too.

I doubt it.

But maybe.

Well, okay, maybe.

So you could try it.

Talk to Fabio?

You did it last week.

He wasn't dead then.

You could still try.

Loco probably.

You could.

Should I?

Go on. Just as he'd want it.

Fabio?

Go on.

Fabio. Well...

Go on.

Well. Fabio. Hey, man. Can you hear me? I'm getting down real close to your gravestone here. We were looking for you and here we are. You can't really hear me, can you? This is my friend Alex. He's 13, too. You'd probably like him. Are you down there, Fabio? You want me closer? Here. I lie down over you. You remember what it was like. You said you liked me. Remember when I used to lie on the top of you and rub off on you? Here. I was like this, with my pants down. Here, they're sliding off of me.

Willie, your bum is showing, what are you doing?

And here, I pull my shirt up for you too like you used to like.

Willie.

Here. My feet are tangled. Wait, Fabio.

Willie.

You too, Alex, come on. Get undressed for Fabio. He likes you too.

Out here?

Just the three of us. Come on. Then lie down next to me right on the grave. You see us, Fabio? I'm back, see? No clothes on and this is



Alex like I told you about. Here he comes. See, he's fatter than me but he's still got a nice behind. Lie down on him, Alex. Here put your arm around me too and let's rub. Right into the dirt. Find a soft place and water the ground. See Fabio? We're coming for you. See? Being dead is not so bad, is it? We're here for you, Fabio, just like always. Three bad llanitos, together again.

Are you up yet, Willie?

I'm up. Are you?

I'm up. Here I come too.

Yeah, look at you. Watch this, Fabio.

Here.

Look at that. Man, Alex, are you loaded!

I told you.

Look, it's sinking into the ground. Right towards Fabio. There it goes. You're something, Alex. You are.

You come, Willie.

Naw, not ready. Too cold. Look at my little pecker. All shriveled up here.

Let me touch it.

Here. See this, Fabio? My friend Alex dropped a load on you. But I just couldn't come, I guess. It would be different if you was here for real, Fabio. I mean so's I could feel you and you could feel me. But, hell, that's life, I suppose.

I'm cold now. You cold, Willie?

Yeah, I guess. We're pretty cold now, Fabio, sitting around bare like this. So, well, I guess we'll see you. You know?

Yeah, tell him we're coming back.

Yeah, we'll come back and see you sometime, Fabio. See how you're doing. Maybe even undress for you if nobody's around. Okay for you? Okay. Bye then.

Here's your pants.

Yeah, it *is* cold.

What you want to do now, Willie? Did you like that?

Yeah, it was okay. I mean, I guess. It make me think of him, you know? Like now I start to sort of miss him. It's not quite the same, somehow, as having him there to hold you.

Yeah, but rubbing off right on him. That was great, that was wild.

Yeah, just not quite the same...

Wait up, Willie. Wait up though .

... not the same.