

ETHOS

Amor et intellectus



**Christmas
Memories**

First Snow

**The Island
that Nearly
Sank**

**Interview with
Bounty**

When Your YF Misbehaves

ETHOS

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ETHOS STAFF

Owner
Zoomzoom4

Director
Lil Monster

Chief Editor
False Alias

Art Director
Emerys

Editors
Hikari
Sweet

News Correspondents
Jonny399

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Ethos

notations



When I was a boy, Christmas was always my favorite time of year.

It would start by giving thanks, then exchanging gifts to show appreciation for others while celebrating one year ending and a new one beginning. This year, I've taken on something that I believe has improved my outlook on life. I began taking written notes daily of things I am grateful for. Even as my hectic schedule kept me from writing down as many as I should have, I stayed focused day after day. This new approach lets me keep a record of the good things in my life.

Now that Christmas is here, I've begun to really focus on what I'm thankful for, especially in the BL world – the people and moments that make me proud to be a part of this wonderful community.

I am extremely thankful for all of you, the readers of Ethos Magazine. You are what keeps us going. You inspire us to continue doing what we love, which is providing a platform for boylovers to express themselves. Thank you for supporting us, and for supporting your fellow boylovers. We hope you will continue to enjoy our magazine and celebrate BL with us.

So enjoy the season with your friends, family, and maybe even a special boy in your life. And make sure to reflect on all the things which are positive, and that you are grateful for. Show someone how much they mean by giving a gift, a token of your love and friendship. And as the New Year dawns, look forward to new challenges and new experiences.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, from all of us at Ethos Magazine!

- Zoomzoom4

Owner, Ethos Magazine

Boys' Christmas Gift Band Travel Guide

by Zoomzoom4

Christmas is here!

The Holiday Season is a magical time of year, especially for young boys. School is out, leaving days open for winter fun with family and friends.

Is there a boy you'll be spending time with during the holidays? Here is a gift and travel guide for that special boy in your life.

Little Boys Love Toys

Whether your little one is high energy or the more laid-back type, he surely loves to play. The key is finding the gift most suited to his style.

Toys can be a lot of things. Fun, entertaining, educational. But to little boys, they are simply awesome. Each of us have our own memories of our favorite childhood toys. Now, it's time to create new memories for someone else.

Here are some of the best toys, the most recent ones plus a twist on a classic, that your beloved little boy is sure to adore.

Balloon Bot Battle

In this robot boxing game, two players go head-to-head trying to pop the other player's balloon first, by moving the levers back and forth to create a barrage of punches and jabs. Once one of the balloon bots has succumbed, the boys declare a winner, award points, and set up the next round. The game is good for boys at this age because it has little to no rules built-in, allowing them to determine both the number of rounds they play, and the point system that's used to keep track of who's winning.



Teen-age Mutant Ninja Turtles Blimp

Most boys know the Teen-age Mutant Ninja Turtles very well. They have been a mainstay of boyhood culture for decades now. The show is well-written and fun, and the toys are better than ever. Now the TMNT rule the sky with their own blimp, patrolling the city from the sky above, and can rappel down to surprise their unsuspecting foes. This is a simple toy that introduces little ones to acting out crime-busting scenarios while remaining cartoonish and silly.

Anki Overdrive Starter Kit

Play this game once with a boy and you know: the future of racing is here. Yes, robot race cars are as cool as they sound, and this is like a video game come to life.

The starter kit comes with the track pieces, which are easy enough to set up, and a couple of cars. What takes this a step beyond traditional racing is that the tracks aren't electrified; rather, it's the cars themselves. You use an app to drive the cars, turning your phone or tablet into the dashboard. Four cars can be raced on the track at once, each player using their mobile device.

If your boy is alone and has no other players, he can control one car while the other three are AI opponents. This is perfect for boys, because it combines physical play with digital wizardry, while putting a focus on something boys love: race cars.



Tween Boys Stretch Out

Nearly all of us who have ever had a YF know this: Finding the perfect gift for a tween boy can be difficult, to say the least. They are no longer little kids, and they're very particular (and vocal) about their likes and dislikes.

The trick here is finding things that are definitely not "babyish" but still not quite on full "teen" level.

This is the age where you would be more tempted to give him a gift card. And it's true that he will likely be happy to accept it. But showing him (and especially at this age) that he is special to you, means finding something more personal.

Plox Death Star Speaker

Many 9 - 12-year-old boys are fans of Star Wars, and fans of sci-fi (young and old) love futuristic-looking technology. This is sure to please any boy, Star Wars fan, or tech enthusiast in general. It is a spherical audio speaker that, yes, is the Death Star, and literally floats above a magnetic base, and connect using Bluetooth to a phone, tablet, or computer, to play the music.

Aerodrums Air Drumming Percussion Instrument

At this age, boys are becoming more interested in music and creative expression. A great way to encourage an interest is with one of the most innovative toys of the year.

Before, giving a boy a drum kit to play meant loud noise

and lots of space required. Now, air drumming has come to life. Using a specially-designed pair of sticks, two foot pedals, with a sensor light and camera, working together with the software on the computer, your boy can practice with a virtual drum kit in the air. Some say this is the future of drumming, and judging by how enthusiastically boys take to it, we'll just see.



One Night Werewolf

Who says board games are dead? This is one of the most popular games of the year, and it's easy to see why.

Each player takes on a special role, randomly (and secretly) given, such as werewolf, seer, or troublemaker, all of which have their own special abilities. Every "night" when everyone "goes to sleep" the werewolves wake up and find a victim. The werewolves are trying to kill off a certain number of victims, while the "villagers" (others) are trying to rid their town of werewolves. The more players, the more fun the game is, and an expansion pack is available that takes the game to a whole other level.



Teens want to Travel

Yes, teens still love the video games and toys. But as they experience more of life, they want to see and do more.

Anyone who has ever travelled with a 14-year-old boy knows that a teen can make or break the vacation for everyone else. If he is happy, everybody is happy. And vice versa.

One of the best things about travelling with a teen boy is seeing his enthusiasm. Travel opens up the world, expanding his understanding of other places and cultures.

It also strengthens his organizational skills and gives him a chance to take on more responsibility, by being sure to include him in the planning. Rather than setting the itinerary for both of you, use this as a bonding opportunity by making it a we-plan-together activity. If there are certain places or things that you know he might enjoy, such as a sports stadium if he likes sports, let him discover those in the planning. That way he feels like he has found these things, rather than being told about them.

A sense of independence is often seen when travelling with a teen boy. You are responsible for him, and his safety, but there may be times when it's okay to let him wander a little without you. This, of course, depends on the situation, his age, and maturity level.

On the trip, try not to be so rigid with timing, either. If an activity or event has to be missed because he's still asleep, or if he takes too long in the store browsing, or eats too fast, remember that is part of travelling with a teen-age boy.

Finally, something that often gets overlooked. Don't make everything educational. By its very nature, travel is mind-expanding, so there's no need to turn each moment into a "learning opportunity" (and he would probably notice if you did). Many teen boys already have busy school schedules and are under academic pressure. So if you want to see a historical site but he'd rather go to a football game, remember the trip is about him.

Whether that special boy in your life is a little one, a tween, or older, the Christmas season is one of the best times to build a history of shared experiences which you will both remember forever.



Christmas Memories

by Blues, Elvin, Hikari,
Sweet, Zoomzoom4

I loved Christmas growing up. Every year we gathered at my aunt and uncle's house to exchange gifts and we had a Santa Claus handing out gifts. After we opened the gifts we would go play and eat loads of food. Then we'd go home and my mom, my sister and I would hand out more gifts under the tree that was full of gifts. The next day my mom would toss the tree away.

Every Christmas, my grandparents would buy one big gift each for me and my sister and not any of the other grandchildren.

My grandmother was funny. She would open her gifts and then put them in her closet and never open the boxes again. It was fun for me to play in the closet. I used to pretend I was in a department store.

- **Blues**

For Christmas one year I received a large collection of Grimms' fairy tales. It was a nice book; the page edges were painted with a lovely golden color so it appeared to be gold when one had the book closed on its side. I enjoyed reading and recording myself narrating the stories on one of those big tape recorders from back in the day.

My two favorite stories were the Golden Bird and Hansel and Gretel. After I recorded the stories, I guess I thought Hansel was cute in the illustrations so I tore out the pictures of him in the book, and hid them under my pillow so I could look at them at night.

A few days later I was dancing madly, jumping up and down on my bed listening to David Bowie, when my parents angrily burst into my room with the torn book. I got an earful after that, and had to tape the pages back in. I no longer have the book in my possession, but I can still recall the tender brushstrokes with which the illustrator conjured up the image of a little boy and girl gorging themselves on a house made of candy.

- **Hikari**

When I was growing up, between ages five to eight, I often slept in my older brother's room.

Being four years older than me, he was like a friend who was a little bit older who could teach me some things. But many times I found myself being amused somewhat at what was intended to be cleverness and often turned out to be folly.

There was one Christmas when he really thought he could show how smart he was by even outsmarting our parents. For some reason his goal was to know what presents they put under the tree for us, before opening them on Christmas morning.

He came up with a technique to achieve this, and he thought it would be particularly impressive to me in the middle of the night, very shortly before Christmas morning, when he demonstrated his expertise.

So, with a skillfully assembled tool-kit including various types of scissors and Scotch tape and other things he would

patiently go to work, very very carefully unwrapping the presents. Or I should say, his presents.

He would look and see what they were and then very carefully re-wrap them exactly as they were wrapped. Precisely, so nobody who picked up the present afterwards could tell what he had done.

Christmas morning arrived, and he began opening his presents. Most boys, especially him typically, would be brimming with excitement to discover what was in the box. But he already knew, of course. Or did he?

When he opened his gifts, none of them were what they were before. Yes, same size and shape boxes, but each was a generic box such as a shoe box or box which an old CD player from several years before came in, all filled with material inside to weigh the same as what the actual gift he expected would have been.

He was shocked and horrified, in front of everyone. That's when my dad told him that they noticed, and wanted to teach him a lesson. I felt bad for him that day, but still couldn't deny that it was funny what they did.

- **Zoomzoom4**

Christmas was rather large event in my group home. We had eight girls in one house.

We'd all wake up early, around 6 AM, and have to line up by the backstairs. And the staff (there were four) wouldn't let us downstairs until every girl was silent.

And then a staff would open the door and we'd all go running downstairs into to the Family Room, a fancy living room (no TV) that was only used for Christmas and if a girl had a family who wanted to adopt her visiting.

We'd run into the Family Room, and the entire room would be covered in gifts. And I do mean covered. Wall-to-wall gifts.

The staff would direct each girl to her area of gifts, and we'd sit down in our area and just start ripping off wrapping paper.

You know, Toys-for-Tots drives and things like that? That's where all these gifts would come from. Gifts suitable for girls ages 5 - 6. Gifts suitable for girls ages 8 - 10. Etc.

And once all the gifts were opened, we all had to make trips upstairs, bringing up our gifts to our rooms, until the Family Room was empty and then we all had to stay in our rooms, playing with our new stuff, except for one girl who would be in the shower.

After we'd all showered and dressed, (usually around 10 AM) we would all pile into the van and drive the five miles to the Boy's House where they had, presumably, done the same thing.

But when we got there, there would be a huge breakfast laid out on their equally huge dining room table.

And eight girls and eight boys and eight staff would just eat for several hours. Talking and having a lot of fun, before the Girls' House staff would say it's time to leave and we'd all pack up in the van again and drive home.

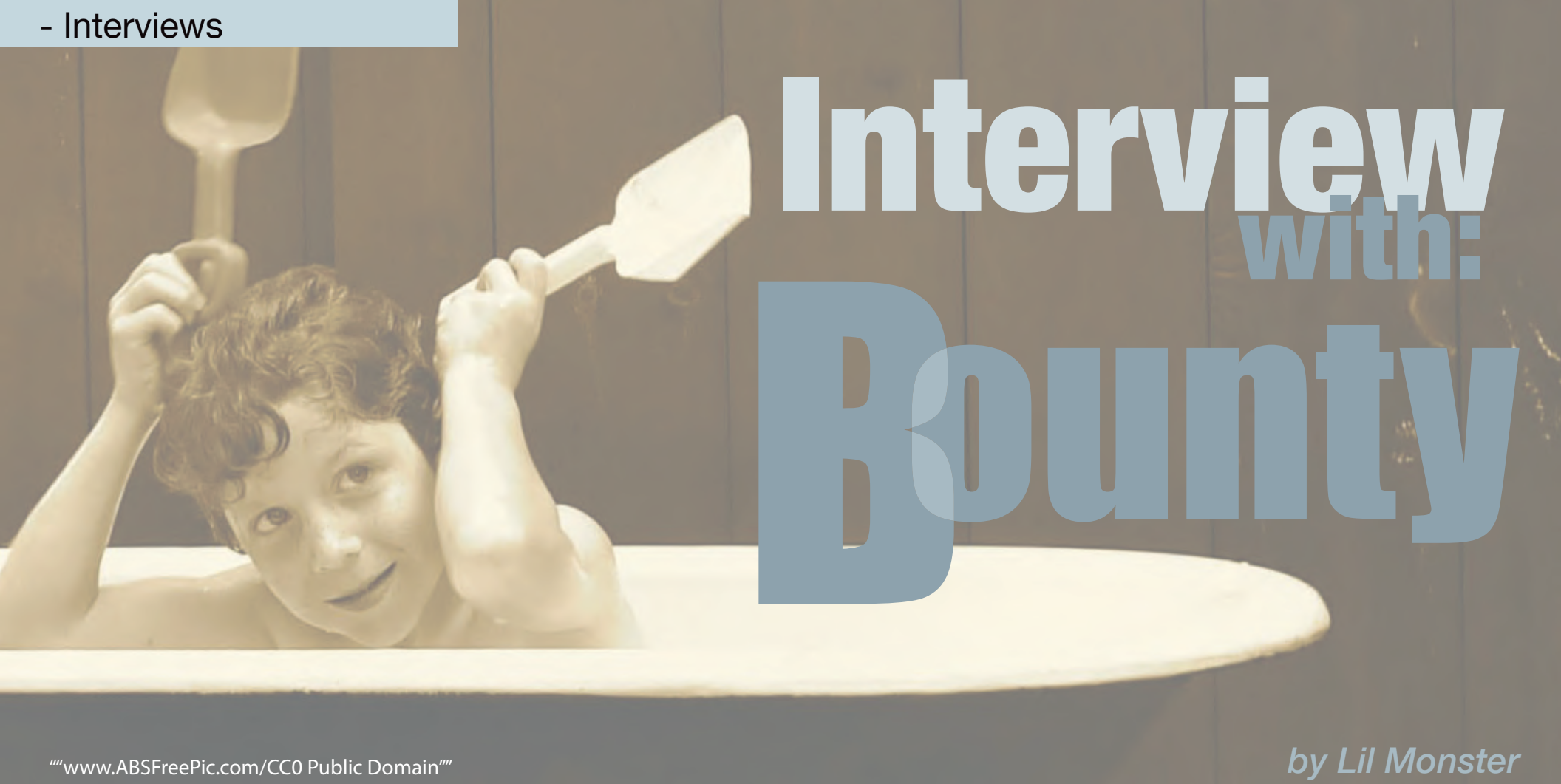
- **Sweet**

I had a good time then, as a boy during the holidays. We sung Christmas songs with my brother on the piano, and me playing violin, and my sister singing.

It was a peaceful and nostalgic time, and I liked to put ornaments on the Christmas tree.

We didn't receive presents at Christmas, but on the 6th of December we had another événement and there we received presents, on "Sinterklaas" time. Sinterklaas is not the same as Santa Claus. It is a typical Dutch and Belgium festival, and as children we loved it.

- **Elvin**



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by Lil Monster

Lil Monster: Hello.

Bounty: Hello.

LM: How are you?

Bounty: I'm quite well, thank you. Yourself?

LM: Not bad, I'm just eating a turkey sandwich.

Bounty: Did it fit on the bread? A country is a bit big...

LM: Lol it fits. So you like politics, what do you think of communism?

Bounty: I think that for humanity to progress we need communism. Communism tends to be misunderstood, and it has gotten a bad rep with the US fighting the USSR in a series of proxy wars during the period 1945-1990. With most media that is consumed being US-centered it tends to portray the USSR, and with it communism, in a very negative light.

People also generally bring up the USSR or North Korea as examples of how communism has failed. Ignoring for a moment that neither NK or the USSR post WWII were true to the original Marxist viewpoints, they ignore the successes of it. Cuba has raised literacy rates, and is currently the home of the best medical university in the world. Clearly a good example of how communism is not a failed experiment that 'works in theory, but can't work in practice'.

LM: So Cuba is a success story?

Bounty: Very much so.

LM: What do you think will happen if the world doesn't embrace communism?

Bounty: We're fast running out of resources in the world, gas, oil... We're destroying this planet. Meanwhile we have places that can produce so much energy using sustainable methods... Solar panels in parts of Africa, Windparks in the sea, hydroplants... We have these resources, but due to nationalism we refuse to share them with each other...

'From each according to their ability, to each according to his needs'. We have the ability to give the world sustainable energy, but we'd rather destroy the planet than to share. I think that if we don't embrace communism that eventually we will kill each other for every last scrap of fossil fuel, destroying this planet in the process.

Interview with: Bounty

LM: Mr. Trump doesn't believe in climate change at all.

Bounty: Mr. Trump is an idiot. Not believing in something that has been proven by science again and again doesn't make it any less true. Ostrich policies have no place in politics.

LM: What do you think of Al Gore?

Bounty: I have no real opinion on him. He used the fame he got running for President of the US to highlight a critical issue, but nothing he said was shocking or mind-blowing. Science already knew all of that. The world already knew all of that. When I was in primary school, I got taught every single thing that he has said in 'An inconvenient truth'.

It's just the US that refuses to acknowledge what science has told us. Too busy chasing down the bottom line and bonuses at the end of the year.

LM: I think I read in an article, though I can't say which, that some people believe Trump will refuse to leave the white house after his term. Suggesting that's how dictators are born.

Bounty: I'm not sure how the writers of said article envision him doing so. There is an army of Secret Service agents in the White House, Secret Service agents who are getting disgruntled because of his actions, I don't think Mr. Trump will be able to stay in the White House after his term is over if he wants to.

LM: He could get in a closet and wait for whoever is elected next to need a blowjob.

Bounty: The need of the blowjob vanishes if it's revealed Mr. Trump will be the one giving it.

LM: What do you think of Angela Myrkles (spelling) open door policy?

Bounty: What open door policy? There is no such thing.

LM: I saw it on the news that she defends her open door policy to asylum seekers, but she isn't happy that they are taking holidays to the country they claim to have been persecuted in. I'm paraphrasing of course.

Bounty: These are 2 different issues. The so called open door policy is referring to the asylum seekers from the Arab peninsula, mostly Syrian, fleeing the civil war and ISIS. A large amount of asylum seekers have come to Europe, yes, however Europe is big.

Jordan has taken in about 1.4 million refugees from Syria, and Jordan is not so big. So to say that we have an open door policy is just flat out wrong. We are doing less than our best to provide shelter to people fleeing from a place where their very lives are at risk. Risks made worse by the west in performing air strikes on cities, because they are occupied by a terrorist group...

Air strikes on civilian targets... The very actions of the US, of Russia, and of a number of other nations are against the Geneva convention, and are considered war crimes if performed by anyone else. The asylum seekers going back to the country they're fleeing from is more south, I personally know of people from Eritrea that have done so, and continue to do so. I know that in my country they are actively looking for these people, and their refugee status is withdrawn, and they are expelled back into Eritrea. I am unaware of people from other countries doing so though, but I don't rule it out outright.

LM: It's difficult to know for sure who is in the wrong with Russia one side and America the other it's not clear. And we are totally ignoring what's happened in Yemen. So when do you think the world is going to accept us MAPs?

Bounty: Never.

LM: Good answer.

Bounty: We have a chance to make it legal, if all MAPs in the world made a concentrated effort to all run for office, get elected with an absolute majority, and then pass laws abolishing the age of consent, decriminalising CP, and all that rot. But the chances of that happening are approaching 0. And even then, that's only the legal status, it still leaves us with societal views, though they might change over several generations.

LM: If the law changes perhaps more people would admit they are MAPs and it would become more acceptable over time. What do you think of the AoC changes in Spain and Netherlands?

Bounty: The Netherlands had an AoC change?

LM: Didn't it used to be 12 at some point?

Bounty: No. In fact, the Age of Consent in the Netherlands has been lowered from 21 for homosexual relations to 18, and then later 16. It was lowered from 18 to 16 for heterosexual relations at the same time.

LM: That's the same as what happened in the UK.

Bounty: At one point a political party formed in the Netherlands by Ad van den Berg and Martijn Uittenbooghaard called Partij voor Naastenliefde, Vrijheid en Diversiteit (PNVD), but that never got off the ground, being known as the paedo party, because the 2 founders were also key members of MARTIJN, the Dutch equivalent of NAMBLA. MARTIJN has since been banned.

LM: There was a group in the UK that was similar called pie. Paedophile Information Exchange.

Bounty: Interesting, I was unaware of that.

LM: So was I, just googled it.

Bounty: As for the situation in Spain, they bowed to international pressure to increase the Age of Consent in Spain from 13 to 16, supposedly to bring it in line with the rest of Europe. Which is interesting, because though with 13 it used to be the lowest in Europe, it was not in fact enormously

out of line.

11 countries in Europe currently have an AoC of 14, including Italy and Germany. And currently there's lobbying from youth advocacy organizations in Belgium to lower the Age of Consent from 16 to 14, with a desire from the same youth advocacy organizations to lower it to 12 even. Going back to the Netherlands for a moment, what has changed is the prosecutorial conduct regarding sex with minors. It used to be that sex with anyone over 12 was only prosecuted if the underage person filed a complaint. So while the age of consent was 16, it effectively was 12 for consensual relationships, even if they were intergenerational.

That has now changed, and it's perfectly acceptable for the justice department to actively prosecute those cases that were previously considered complaint only.

LM: That's really interesting perhaps that's a good model for a law change world-wide.

Bounty: Personally I disagree with an age of consent in the first place, but if there has to be one it should at the very least be drawn at the same age as that of criminal responsibility.

LM: What age is criminal responsibility?

Bounty: Unfortunately, it varies between countries

LM: I think it's 10 in the UK that some crimes can be prosecuted as adults. Murder for e.g.

Bounty: The US has the loosest sense, having none. So a child of any age is capable of being prosecuted for a crime. I don't mean prosecuted as adult, I mean prosecuted period. If a child is capable of being held responsible for a crime, then obviously a child is capable of making their own decision on whether or not to have sex.

LM: That's a very good point yes.

Bounty: No age in the US, 10 in the UK and a large part of the commonwealth, 12 in a number of EU countries.

LM: And of course this means that children can end up on registers of sex offenders.

Bounty: Yes.

LM: The very register that is meant to protect children we are led to believe.

Bounty: In-fact. in the US, the mode of the age of the people being put on the Sex Offenders Register is 14 at the time they are put on the list. So you get the situation where a 14yo is put on the register for having sex with another 14yo, this is put as 'having intercourse with a child under the age of 16'.

They neglect to mention that the person was under the age of 16 at the same time... And 20 years later you get a 34yo on the register with a note of 'having intercourse with a child under the age of 16', which is a significantly different thing. 14 + 14 vs 34 + 14.

LM: Who do you think would win in a fight between Silvio Berlusconi and Donald trump?

Bounty: Hm, I think Berlusconi might win, for absolutely no reason.

LM: Certainly seems like he gets more pussy. Though they both seem to value it. Do you have any religion?

Bounty: Not sure about value, but Trump certainly wants to grab it.

LM: Lol

Bounty: Yes, I am an active member of the Anglican

Church.

LM: You attend regular?

Bounty: I do.

LM: I have to admit I didn't see that coming. You didn't strike me as the religious type. Not sure why.

Bounty: And I am a lay clerk, and have taught Sunday school in the past.

LM: I enjoy getting layed.

Bounty: So do I, especially by some choristers.

LM: There are a lot of Christian BLs and at least there used to be Christian BL groups. Have you ever belonged to such a group?

Bounty: I have not. I wasn't even aware there were so many. I only know of 2 or 3 others.

LM: What sort of music do you listen to?

Bounty: At this very moment I'm listening to Song of Durin by Clamavi de Profundis

LM: Sounds classical

Bounty: It is actually an arrangement of a song Tolkien wrote, but yes, I listen to a lot of classical music. Partially because it's the genre of music I perform in myself, but also because I just enjoy listening to it.

LM: The same person who wrote The Lord of the Rings?

Bounty: The very same. The text of the song is actually from either Lord of the Rings or the Hobbit. At the very least something he wrote.

LM: I didn't even know he was a song writer.

Bounty: The people from Clamavi de Profundis just put it to music.

LM: I just googled it and it sounds very Lord of the Ring-sy. I'm into rock and metal myself, which I admit makes me seem like a geologist lol.

Bounty: I'm not just into classical music, I quite like metal myself.

LM: What bands? I love Nightwish.

Bounty: Nightwish, though preferably with Tarja Tuurunen, not Annette or whomever it is that is singing currently. Within Temptation, Sonata Arctica. Mostly symphonic metal.

LM: Have you heard much of Tarjas solo music?

Bounty: Too often with a female singer, whom I inevitably try to mimic, knowing I'll never reach those high notes... Not a lot, but some yes.

LM: Lol well a pair of pliers down below and you could get those notes.

Bounty: I'm afraid that my voice has long since broken. So that not even pliers will work.

LM: Lol. Do you like boy voices? Like Billy Gilman?

Bounty: Some voices, yes. Some boys have a nice voice and a nice face, that's great, sometimes a boy has just a nice voice and a not so great appearance, which is okay, I'll just listen. Other boys don't have such a great voice, but look good, then I'll just mute and watch xD.

LM: Lol. Have you any YFs?

Bounty: Currently I have no real YFs, there's one sort of, on the way there. I have had YFs in the past.

LM: What's your AoA?

Bounty: There is no real hard line, but generally between 4 and 14, but definitely more to the younger end than the higher end.

LM: Me too the younger the better. I know how pervy that sounds but whatever.

Bounty: Eh, definitely not the younger the better, babies are definitely not my thing.

LM: Yea out of diapers for sure. Do you believe in

reincarnation?

Bounty: Unless the diapers are for fun. Personally I don't believe in reincarnation, but I don't claim to know the absolute truth.

LM: Oh lol yea I have interviewed 2 people who like diapers so far. I find it fascinating though it's not my cup of tea.

Bounty: *shrug* don't know why, they're just kind of sexy. That said, I don't really want them used. I'm not really into watersports myself, rather ambivalent about that.

LM: Some adults love to wear them.

Bounty: I don't want adults to wear them, I don't want to wear them myself, I like to see them on boys. Not as much as I like to see briefs on them though.

LM: Yea briefs are the best. Do you have any fetishes?

Bounty: Boys in briefs is the biggest one.

LM: No point me asking you the old question boxers or briefs. What about circumcision?

Bounty: I find non-medical circumcision to be an atrocity. There is no benefit to circumcision whatsoever.

LM: I agree.

Bounty: In fact, it causes more harm than it does good. And we should at the very least rename the non-medical cases as MGM, not circumcision. Circumcision is a medical procedure. If there is no medical reason behind it, it's just mutilation.

LM: Who is the biggest prick, a hedgehog or a porcupine?

Bounty: Hedgehog of course.

LM: Do you have any final words of advice or wisdom you'd like to share with your fellow MAPs?

Bounty: The law is not morality. Morality is not law. Decide for yourself what your stance is on interaction with kids, be it sexual or not. Turn your attraction into your gift, channel it productively, don't wallow in it. Find a way to help children. Be a teacher, a scout leader, a sports trainer, a buddy...

The relationship comes first, before anything else, it's about the bond you have, if that bond expresses itself physically, so be it. If it doesn't, so be it.

LM: It's been great to interview you my friend. Thank you.

Bounty: Hopefully it's of use.

LM: I think it was a great one.



www.weirdradio.xyz



Half of Me

by Realme



“Happy Birthday!”

I open the door to the smiling faces of Reggie and Joan and feel a tug of disappointment. Old friends - Reggie a roommate from all the way back in college, Joan I've known for almost as long - but not the people I want to see.

“The big four-oh, buddy!” Reggie says, slapping me on the back as he comes in.

Joan gives me a peck on the cheek and raises a wrapped present significantly.

“Come on in, good to see you,” I lie.

No, that's not fair, it is good to see them, or it would be if everyone were here. Joan places the gift with the other packages on the coffee table and she and her husband start to mingle with my other friends. Bill, always the partier, grabs them and drags them off to the bar. He's commandeered a side table and stocked it with an array of bottles. Bill already distributed party hats and kazoos.

Yeah, kazoos. Between people talking and laughing and trying to play “For He's A Jolly Good Fellow” on the kazoos, it's getting pretty loud. I check my watch. I said 4, and it's already 4:30.

Where are they? Always late. Don't they know how much every minute means to me? Well, he does, sort of. She sure doesn't. That's a good thing.

“Hey, birthday boy!” Bill calls over to me. “You're dry! Grab your walker and hobble over here. I'm pouring you another martini.”

Bill knows I'm not much of a drinker, but it's my birthday so I can't really say no. I used to be a drinker, in fact a heavier one than Bill, until I found someone who made being sober far more fun.

Where the hell are they?

To please him, I do an old man walk across the room, prompting giggles and wry comments from my assembled friends. As I finally make it, rubbing my lower back and complaining in a warbling voice about imaginary pains, I feel the old, familiar, real pain deep in my gut. All these people. All these kind, decent people who love me. All these presents and good wishes and smiles. All truly felt. There are no false friends here. Only I am the false friend. Because these people don't know me. If they knew the kind of person I really am they'd look at me with disgust. Joan would throw that gift on the floor and stomp on it. Her husband would think protectively of their two small kids and never invite me over again. Bill would probably slug me. If they knew the half of me that I hide, they'd all hate me, even fear me.

So can I really call them my friends at all? Is friendship based on false pretences actually friendship? What do you do when you have to hide the true you? How can you make real relationships? For those of us who get married, is that

love real? As truly felt as it may be, it hinges on the assumption that we are what we project to the world.

Oh, I've tried to worm my way around it. Tried to explain to myself that we all hide a little from the world, that we all have secrets. I've tried to convince myself that if they knew what kind of man I truly am, they'd understand. They'd see the morals they'd been raised with were based on false assumptions. I've even, in my more foolish moments, almost managed to convince myself that my loved ones would support me in this.

But of course that's not true. One slip, one bit of bad timing or one undeleted search history, and the world would turn against me.

I look around at all those smiling faces, all assembled in my house to wish me a happy 40th birthday, and all I see is an illusion.

The old sadness returns, the old loneliness. For they love only half of me, which makes their love nothing at all.

“Whoa, easy there, buddy,” Bill says with a laugh.

I've already drained my martini. Oh no, better not have a third. I've been down that path before and it doesn't kill the pain. It doesn't even uphold the illusion much anymore.

Michelle is talking to me now. Good old Michelle from the office, recounting some funny anecdote about our fool of a boss. She's my only friend at work, although of course she doesn't know she's friends with a façade, she doesn't know she's not really friends with me at all. She hates the other half of me. She's said so, always recounting stories from the news. I think she's got a history, a reason to hate the kind of people she'd mistake me for if she knew more about my true nature. As she talks my loneliness grows.

“I really need to find you a nice woman to settle down with.” Michelle the matchmaker.

I give the time-worn reply. “I guess I've never found the right person.”

Oh yes I have, but he's not a woman. He's not even a man yet.

Michelle finally breaks off and grabs a snack. I circulate through the crowd, putting on my happy face. I have a convincing happy face. And really, shouldn't I be happy? I'm healthy, with a decent job, living in a First World country with lots of people who think they are my friends. It could be a lot worse.

4:45. Damn, where are they? The old despair washes over me, even stronger than before. The familiar loneliness. They're not coming. He had something better to do. He's forgotten me. It's really all in my head and I've been fooling myself all this time.

Don't do this, I tell myself. You know that's just your depression talking. Buck up, try and enjoy the party, and you'll see him soon. But the doubt gnaws at me, ruthless.

It's always been this way, with him and the others. If he doesn't reply to a text he puts me in agony. If he can't make it one weekend I'm lost. The precious times I get with him are like beacons in my lifelong night. I don't know how I exist between them. Maybe I really don't.

It's unfair to put all this on him, I know. He's blissfully unaware of the depths of my feeling. Oh, he knows the positive part, revels in it, but he doesn't know about the blank, black periods between our times together when I have nothing but my memories and doubts.

I could tell him, of course, and he'd reassure me in that delightful way he has, but I don't want to burden him. It would only make him worry and might sour the special thing we have.

We really have it, don't we? Don't we? Where the hell are they?

The doorbell rings. I run for it like I'm trying out for the Olympics.

All is forgiven.

"Happy Birthday!" Tommy says, leaping at me to give me one of his wonderful little bear hugs.

I lift him up, catch a breath of the perfume of his mussed hair, and plop him down on his feet. Then I remember myself and take half a step back, tousling it like any other adult. He's twelve. He glows with the radiance of youth,

squeeze. I look down at him. "Think you can help out an old man?"

"You're not old," he laughs. "You're too cool to be old!" Bliss.

"Mom has to do some stuff in town and says I can stay until 8," he says.

Carolyn puts on her motherly look, "Now we haven't asked him yet. Maybe he has plans."

"It's OK, he can stay over," I reply.

I'm helpful that way. Carolyn gives me a relieved look. Being a single mom isn't easy, and she's damn good at it. I admire her, even love her in a way. How couldn't I love the woman who gave the world Tommy? She cares about me, too, or at least half of me. She pulls a package out of her purse and adds it to the pile of gifts.

"Tommy paid for half of it with his allowance," she tells me.

"Awesome, buddy," I say, tousling his hair again. As we go into the kitchen, Carolyn getting stopped by Bill and the offer of a drink, Tommy and I exchange glances, alone for the moment.

"I have another present for you," he whispers.

"Thanks! What is it?"

A flush of red to his adorable face.

"Later," he whispers even softer than before.

"Maybe you can sleep over," I suggest.



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and every feature on his smooth, grinning face shows he adores me. How can I doubt? Now that he's in the room I can't even picture the despair I feel when he's not.

His mother, Carolyn, is talking. A happy birthday, a peck on the cheek and an apology for being late. Traffic or something. Who cares? They're here now. He's here now.

"You're just in time for cake," I say, leading them through the living room and several of my friends say hello. They all know about us and smile approvingly. I hear Bill explaining to his new girlfriend. "They're best of friends. And he's so good with her son. Like a father to him."

Not quite, Bill. Not quite.

None of them suspect. They think people like me are monsters, and how could my young friend be so happy with a monster? How could friendship with a monster have made him more confident, more buoyant, and better at school? The stereotypes in their head act as my camouflage.

I give the room the first genuine smile of the day.

"Tommy and I are going to put the candles on the cake," I announce. He puts his hand in mine and gives it a little

"I have school tomorrow," he gripes, then brightens. "I can ask mom about Friday!"

I squeeze his hand.

"I'd like that."

He gives me a sly look. "I'd like that, too."

Alone with him in the kitchen, I fetch two Cokes from the fridge, one for me and one for him. No more booze for me tonight. Then we start putting the candles on the cake, our sides pressed against each other.

Here's the only one who knows all of me. The only one who knows that hidden half and loves me because of it, not in spite of it. I'm complete. The other half of me can come out of hiding.



When Your YF Misbehaves

by Wolfrunner

Ricky is 10. He turned 10 last spring. He's in baseball, and his behavior has gotten worse since last summer (now it's November).

He is a delight, a real pleasure to be around. Always had good behavior. So we were at Walmart. We went to get a baseball kit, for practice. That day was he acting up at all? No. He's very impulsive little boy, but never this bad.

At Walmart there was a battery operated minibike which goes 10-15 mph. He saw the minibike, by Razor. They had it charged and on, so he got on and found out it had power and wanted to test it. I said no. "You're in the middle of the store, you can't be doing that."

He tried to anyway. I took him off the bike, and then we walked to a different aisle.

After that, we went back the other way and had to walk past the bike again. He got on it again, tried to start riding it, and I had to actually grab the handlebars to stop him.

Again, I had to physically remove him. We went to another aisle, looking for something. Ricky stopped, turned around and ran down the aisle back to the bike, jumped on it before I could get to him and took off. He knew he wasn't supposed to do that, I told him no, and removed him twice. He flat out disobeyed me.

As I walked after him, the store employee said, "Hey hey, he can't be riding the bike in the store."

I said, "I know that," while I approached bike as it was in motion. I grabbed the bike and told him to put it away.

On the way out, I was very angry. He asked me, "Is something wrong? Are you mad?" Then, "What are the plans for the rest of the day?" Like we were going to go out and do something, even after that.

I said, "For right now we're going home."

We got home I sent him to his room, which I normally don't do (maybe just for a couple of minutes but this time it was serious, for an hour). Told him don't come out, don't even peek out and ask if his hour is up, I will tell him. I am never that harsh with him, and his mom looked at me like what the hell is wrong and asked do I want to know. I told her "not right now you don't."

A few minutes later I told her what happened, and she

said, "He should be spanked."

I said, "That's fine, but I couldn't do it in the middle of Walmart." Because I had people's attention with him already. If I started spanking him, and he called out my name, that'd mean I'm not his dad, and I'd get 50 phones on me, next viral YT video of me spanking some kid in the middle of a store.

She said there's no cameras at the house. I told him why he didn't get spanked at Walmart, but he definitely deserved one. I had made a paddle a while ago, and I got it and went upstairs. I made it as a joke, but now it was about to be used. I told him to lay on his bed and he didn't argue. He knew better. I gave him five good whacks with it. He was in his room for about an hour and then we played cards and board games the rest of the night, didn't go anywhere.

I think it had somewhat of an effect, he knows I'm serious now, and that I can only be pushed so far. I was letting him get away with little things, and little things turn into bigger things. I had reached my patience limit when he directly disobeyed me, and I explained to him that I got mad because I'm responsible for him and his safety when he's out with me. I can't let him do foolish things like he was doing. ■

Boy Celebrity Scene in LA: My First Report

by Music Boy

Why do I call myself Music Boy? I didn't select this name lightly. Music has always been an important part of my life. I started learning the piano at age 7. I played in the school orchestra. Before graduating from high school, I performed the Grieg Piano Concerto at a school concert, and later I earned my diploma in piano teaching. Although I was grounded in classical music, my first piano teacher taught me to play rock and roll and blues. That helped me win several talent contests.

then Club Nokia in July 2013. I had been following this young YouTube phenomenon who by the young age of 10 had amassed over a million followers and over a billion views on his YouTube video channel. I not only became a big fan but also told all my friends about Matt. I took a young friend, his sister and his mom to see Matt's show at Club Nokia. It was electric! Matt had guest singers to open his show as well as accompany him on some of his songs. The most notable was Maddie Jane who he had just



After joining my first BL board, my eyes were opened to a whole new world of boy celebrities in the world of music and acting. Since I live in Los Angeles, I've discovered that boy celebs flock to this city to build their careers. There are so many boy celebs who have made LA their second home.

Among these is a select group of talented young actors and singers. One of the most famous is Carson Lueders. Others include Johnny Orlando and the Summerall brothers (most notably Hayden). Besides networking with producers, directors and executives in the entertainment industry, they also use their time here to make videos of popular covers and create new music.

One of the methods they use to connect with their fans is to give concerts – usually with other young artists at local venues. Artists who do not live here, like MattyB, also visit LA regularly to make videos and give concerts.

One of the benefits of living in the LA area is having accessibility to these aspiring young stars at their shows and events. I have enjoyed not only being entertained by these young artists but also making videos of their performances to share with their fans and meeting and greeting them too.

My adventure in this wonderful world of young talent all began when the young rapper Matthew Morris, better known as MattyBRaps, gave his first LA concert in what was



released a music video with. Sadly, we weren't able to meet Matt as my guest had to return home immediately after the show.

Matt returned to California at the end of December to give a show at The Grove Theatre in Anaheim. This time I made it a point to get to meet him. I did have an embarrassing moment that I want to share. When I entered the meet and greet room I saw Matt right in front of me, so I went up to him and said, "Hi, Matt."

This boy whispered to me, "I'm not Matt, I'm Josh, Matt's brother. Matt is over there!" I apologized and wished that a hole in the ground would have opened and swallowed me up! I am sure that at the age of 10 and 11, Matt and Josh could have been mistaken for twins! I joined the line and soon met Matt, greeted him, gave him a hug and got my picture taken with him. I had to pinch myself (to convince myself) that this actually was happening.

This was the first of many meetings with young celebs whom I have had the pleasure of seeing in concert as well as having selfies or photos taken with them. My next concert happened to be the third concert Matt gave in the LA area. It was at a theatre in North Hollywood. This was a landmark



event for several reasons. The new Simon Cowell pedigree boy band, Forever In Your Mind, was the opening act.

The up-and-coming girl singer and dancer Jordyn Jones, whom I admire very much, also made a cameo appearance on stage. The girl singer who accompanied Matt on various

songs was the talented singer, Jennifer Nava. In the crowd were other boy celebs like Carson Lueders, the Summerall brothers, and the up-and-coming boy singer from England, Mackenzie Sol, who were there to watch Matt perform. Before the show started, I wandered over to these young celebs, introduced myself, and asked if I could take pictures, which they all agreed to. Carson and Mackenzie even suggested taking a selfie with me. This was the first time I met these singers in person and that felt amazing.

Since that event, I have attended several concerts by these and other young artists, both boys and girls, and have been so impressed with their performances. Not only were they great singers and dancers, but also appeared so confident in front of the audience to the point of verbally communicating with the crowd. For example, Carson Lueders drank from his water bottle during a break in his singing and asked the girls at the front of the stage, "Who wants my water?!" You should have heard the shrieks as he waived the bottle over them and finally decided to hand it over to a girl who made the most noise rather than risk hurting someone by throwing it into the crowd. That was a very thoughtful gesture.

Although I have attended shows in several venues around the LA area such as in Anaheim, West Hollywood and North Hollywood as mentioned above, the Avalon Theatre at Hollywood and Vine is where I have been the most often and enjoyed the performances of many artists over a span of two years. The most recent (concert I attended) was in September 2017 at a Back to School concert. I shall be reporting on the Avalon Concerts in the next issue of Ethos Magazine.

So stay tuned! ■

First Snow

by Dragonlover

January 2nd, 1996

As my sister and I sift through my mother's belongings only three weeks after her passing away, we occasionally pause to reflect upon a certain item, what we remember about it, or remembering a photograph associated with a certain special occasion. I stop to get a breath of fresh air and step outside to the cool winter air. I look at the snow lying pure and white on the ground, and then up at the crystal blue sky. My sister comes up behind me and taps me on the shoulder.

"Hey, did you see this one? Remember that?" she asks. I look at the single photo. It's a family photo; me, Mom, Dad, Nanny, my brother, Jack, and my sister, Sherry. On the other side of it, written in my mother's formal script is...

Christmas Eve, 1978

"... as Philadelphia prepares for its first white Christmas in over 30 years. The city can expect up to four inches by midnight, with slightly more in the northern and western suburbs. And that is Action News at Noon on Channel 6, I'm Jim Gardener. And from all of us here at Channel 6, Merry Christmas."

I stood up quickly from the table, forgetting about my lunch. I found my mother sitting in her usual spot, with her tea, turning the TV off. Dad was in the other corner of the living room in his black leather recliner.

"Well Jack, looks like a white Christmas after all. Think everyone will make it tonight?" Mom asked.

"I think so. Mike and Sherry and the kids are coming from Quakertown, and Jack and Lynn and the boys are just coming from Mill Creek. Short trip for them. And Marilyn and Chick and their crew are 5 minutes away, and Peggy and Terry... well you know them. She likes to make an entrance," my dad said with a smirk.

I was 8 years old, and this would be my first white Christmas. It was already very cloudy and cold out, and, as my grandmother used to say, "I can feel the snow in my bones." Just then, there was a knock on the front door. I run to answer it.

"Hey! Wanna come out? Its gonna snow today, so maybe we can walk the trails before it comes."

Patrick was my best friend. We have been through everything together. Ever since we were 3 years old.

"Mom? Can I...?" I start, but Mom cut me off.

"OK go ahead. But just be back by 3:00. Our guests will be arriving shortly after that," she said.

"Thanks, Mom!" I said as I grabbed my coat from the rack. I quickly put it on and rushed out the door. Dark clouds loomed overhead as a gentle, chilly wind blew as Pat and I walked up the street.

"I heard old man Kitch is moving out of his house. Maybe after he goes, we could go in and look around. Like maybe

after he leaves for the last time," Pat said.

"Yeah! And maybe we could have a party in there or something! Invite all of the neighbourhood kids!" I answered, enthusiastically.

Old man Kitch was the neighbourhood tyrant. Hated kids. Hated life. His wife had died about 10 years prior, and his kids moved to other states. He was very bitter, and much feared by the kids living on the same street. It was about time the old bastard left us alone.

Pat and I kept on walking until we came to a dead end street. We made a left and came to a fence with a hole in it. We climbed through the hole, walked through a short section of woods, and came to a large area the local kids called "the trails". Years before, it had been the Langhorne Speedway, a real racetrack. It had been there for many years, but after a number of guys had been killed while racing their cars on the track, it closed down. The township came in and covered everything with dirt, and since then it had been overgrown with weeds and shrubs, and a circle was made around the perimeter from kids riding their bikes in the summer months.

"Cold out," Pat said.

"Yeah man. Gonna snow. Never seen snow at Christmas before. Always been just cold," I said in reply.

"So, what'd you ask for Christmas?" Pat asked.

"Oh my God, they have this new thing out. It looks like a little TV set. But it's not! It's a thing that lets you make designs with these plastic light things you push into certain holes. And it lights UP! Too cool!" I said.

"Sounds cool. I asked for a new bike. My mom said 'maybe', so I'll probably get it. I don't know, though. My brother Frankie wants this new tape player. It's pretty expensive. We'll see, I guess," Pat told me.

We walked around the trails for a good while, then headed back out to the street. As we walked back down towards my house, we could see old man Kitch heading to his car.

"Look. There's the old bastard now," Pat said, giggling.

"Dare me to call him?" I asked Pat with a smile.

"NO! Don't! He'll yell at us. Or kill us and eat us or something," Pat said.

"Yo! Hey Kitch! Dirty old goat!" I yelled.

"Dammit! What the hell?" Pat said.

Just then, the old man looked up and squinted at us.

"Hey! You kids! Stop that or I'll call your parents! I know who they are!" Kitch yelled.

We didn't hear the rest of what he said, because we were running and laughing so hard. Fun time over, Pat walked with me to my house. We said our goodbyes and I went inside. Mom was spraying pine scented air freshener everywhere.

"Jeez Mom! You have to spray that everywhere? People will be gagging up a lung," I said.

"I told her that already, but she insists. But I guess we'll let her have her fun. You know how she is this time of year," My dad said.

I headed upstairs to get a quick bath and get into my good suit. Family get togethers were a very formal affair, and everyone was to be dressed in their Sunday best. As it started to get dark outside, people started arriving. First, my sister, her husband and their kids. Soon after, my brother, his wife and their kids. And then Aunt Marilyn and Uncle Chick with their five kids. And of course the usual people that just drop in with Christmas greetings, then they go elsewhere. After greeting everyone, Mom put out the bowls of chips and dip. Along with some veggie stuff for my sister-in-law. And, since I was like a leader, the kids all went with me upstairs.

We talked about Christmas, what we thought we were getting, and other odds and ends. After about an hour, my dad came up.

"I don't know why you're all looking forward to Christmas.

Since you already know I have Santa tied up in the attic," Dad said with a grin. This was Dad's usual Christmas joke, saying that Santa was tied up in the attic to get a rise out of us. But, as we grew older, the rise grew less and less. The older kids knew there was no Santa, and the younger kids, after time, knew Santa wasn't in the attic, since they would get their gifts the following day, as usual.

"Jack! Get down here! Are you telling those kids that awful tale again?" My mother called up the steps. Dad looked behind him, then back at us.

"So much for fun," he said with a sigh. He looked at me and mouthed "Come here." So I went with him to the hallway.

"You taking care of things?" he asked.

"Sure am, Dad. Although Sarah still believes you have Santa in the attic," I told him with a smile.

"Well, you keep it up, OK? Dinner will be served shortly. Make sure the little kids wash up. Got it, Doc?" he asked. His pet name for me. Doc.

"Gotcha, Dad. Oh and uumm... is Santa still coming around on the fire truck tonight?" I asked. It was a Christmas Eve tradition ever since before anyone could remember that Santa ride through the neighbourhood on a fire truck, lights and sirens going.

"How can he? He's tied up in the attic!" Dad laughed and turned away.

"KIDS! Come on down here! Dinner is served! Come one, come all!" Dad yelled from the bottom of the steps a few minutes later. I herded the little kids to the bathroom and made sure they washed their hands, and we all went downstairs. Christmas Eve dinner was not the formal occasion that one might envision. It was actually paper plates and plastic ware. The food was laid out in Mom's logical way on the dining room table, and everyone walked around the table, serving themselves. Apple juice or ginger ale for the kids, red, white wine and beer for the adults. And then we would all eat in the living room, seated on folding chairs. The conversations were about everything. Christmas, thank God it's almost over, my dad's job, my brother's job, and how the kids are doing in school.

And, after dinner was over, the over 21/under 30 people sat in the kitchen chugging beer. Us kids retreated back upstairs to play games. By 7:30, everyone could hear the fire engine sirens far off in the distance. Santa was making his way to our street.

"When's he gonna get here?" my niece Sarah asked.

"Soon I guess," I told her. And right after I said that, my mother called us to come down.

"Come on, kids! Get your coats on! We all want to be ready when Santa comes down the street!" she yelled. And with that, we all came down, and I dressed each child in their coats, hats and mittens. And then we all went outside. The air was crisp, still. We could see our breath in the air.

"Hey! I felt a snowflake hit my face!" Sarah cried out. And with that, we all looked. As promised, a light snow was beginning to fall. It would be a white Christmas after all. By the time Santa was rolling down our street, the snow was falling at a pretty good clip. He rode by slowly, and we could just barely make out his "ho-ho-ho's" over the sirens. He was waving proudly, wishing everyone a Merry Christmas. And after that, he was gone. Gone around the next corner, heading to the next street. We all went back inside.

"Mike, Sarah, don't take your coats off, guys. We're going home in a few minutes," my sister said to her kids. Sarah came over and gave me a hug, and Mike looked like he wanted to do the same, but thought better of it, as it wasn't the "cool" thing to do. We just nodded to each other.

"OK Mom. Call me. We'll call when we get to the house. And you..." she said looking at me. "Come here. Give your big sis a hug." I went to her and we hugged. I shook my brother-in-law's hand, and then they left. My brother and his wife and kids went almost after them, and then everyone else. By that time, there was already a pretty decent coat of snow on the ground.

That left me, my parents and my grandmother, who lived with us. She stood up and held her arms out.

"Come kiss Nanny goodnight," she said to me. I went to her and hugged her tight, the way she liked it. Only three days before, she had been somewhat depressed, missing my grandfather who had passed away some 13 years before. "This'll probably be my last Christmas," she said, as she did every year. She was 71 years old, at that point. She lived to see the Christmas of 1997. She died peacefully that following January at the age of 92.

I was sent to bed soon after. As with most kids, it was hard for me to go to sleep, thinking about the gifts I would be getting the next morning. And with that, I fell into a deep sleep....

"Mom? Mother?"

It was Sarah. She was home from college on winter break.

"Hi baby," my sister said, and kissed her. She had pulled into the driveway unbeknownst to Sherry and I, as we were so busy remembering that Christmas. Sarah took the picture from my hand. "Oh wow! I think I remember this!" she said, flipping the picture over and seeing the date. "Yeah! 1978. God, I was 5 years old! Papa used to tell us he had Santa Claus tied up in the attic!" she said, dissolving into laughter.

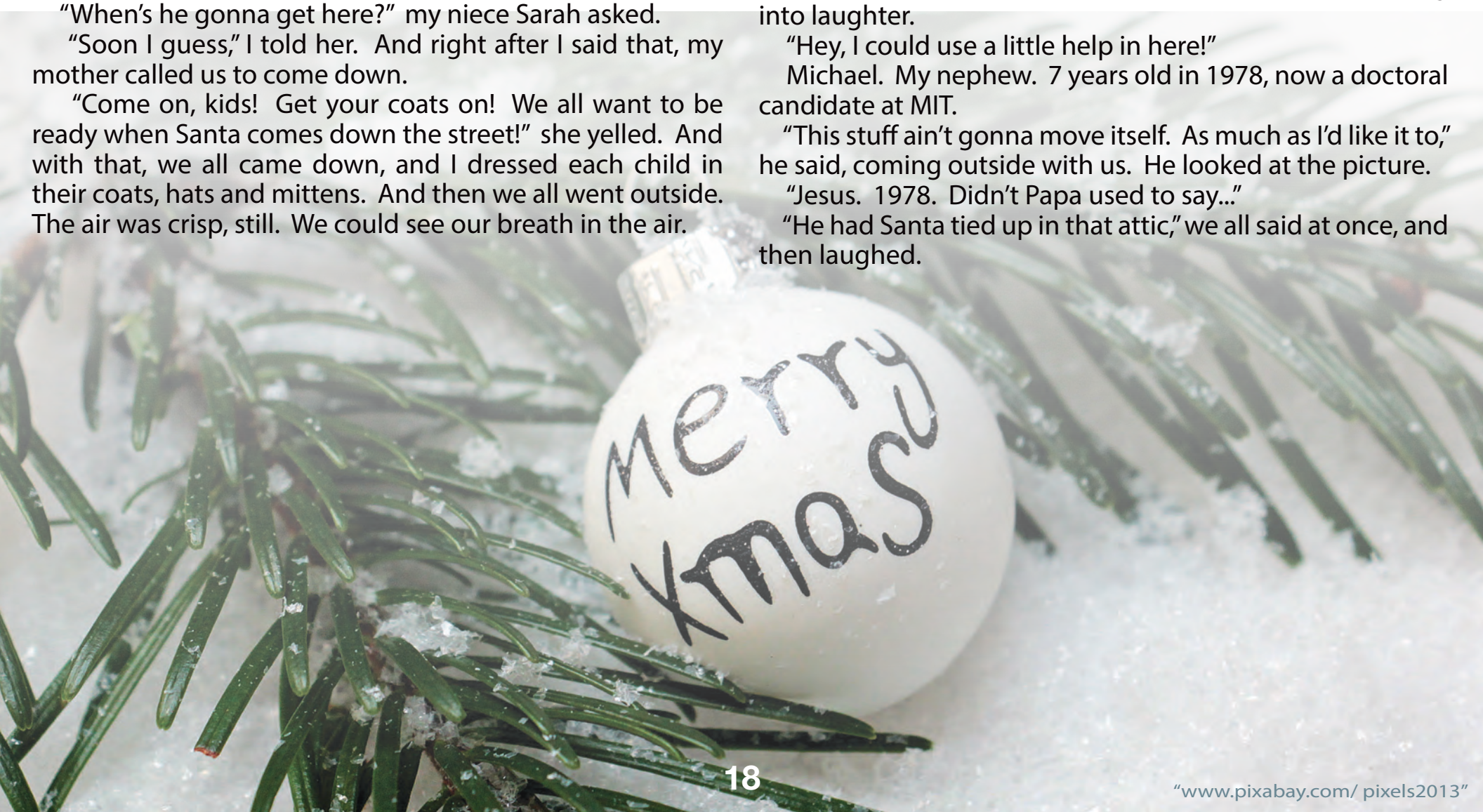
"Hey, I could use a little help in here!"

Michael. My nephew. 7 years old in 1978, now a doctoral candidate at MIT.

"This stuff ain't gonna move itself. As much as I'd like it to," he said, coming outside with us. He looked at the picture.

"Jesus. 1978. Didn't Papa used to say..."

"He had Santa tied up in that attic," we all said at once, and then laughed.



Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!
"Maybe Christmas," he thought, "doesn't come from a store."
"Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"

- Dr. Suess



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BL Christmas Celebration

by Hikari

I have loved baking cookies ever since I was little. If you want to know the truth, the very first cookies I ever baked were for a cute boy when I was 11 years old. Maybe that's part of what has inspired me to make BL cookies this Christmas season.

While I was making these cookies, I listened to Christmas pop music, like Ariana Grande and Britney Spears. Don't judge me. 😊

I also set aside some cookies for my young friend. I think baking cookies would be a fun thing to do with him in the future. So I made cookies for the many people that I care about: My friends and family, my YF, and all of my online BL friends.

I hope you and your family, friends and YFs have a good Christmas and happy holiday season.

GINGERBREAD COOKIES RECIPE

DRY INGREDIENTS

1/2 tsp allspice
2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp black pepper
1 tbsp cinnamon
1 tsp cloves
4 1/2 cup flour
1 tbsp powdered ginger
1/2 tsp salt

WET INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cup butter (unsalted)
2/3 cups brown sugar
1 cup molasses*
2 tsp vanilla
2/3 cups white sugar
3 egg yolks

OTHER

Parchment paper

NOTE: While the original recipe calls for dark, robust, or black strap molasses (which makes more a more classic gingerbread taste), many kids don't like the taste of it and prefer light molasses. Personally, I found that both types of molasses will taste fine in this recipe.

1. First mix the wet ingredients. Combine butter, sugar, and molasses in a bowl. Then mix in egg yolks and vanilla.
2. In a separate bowl, combine dry ingredients (allspice, baking soda, black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, flour, ginger, and salt).
3. Combine dry and wet ingredients until doughy and

well blended.

4. Cover ingredients in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

5. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Set aside a tray with parchment paper on it.

6. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface, until the dough is about 1/4 inch thick.

7. Cut out with cookie cutters, and place about 2 inches apart on tray.

8. Cook for about 10 minutes, or until edges are darkened but center is soft.

9. Let cool for about 3 minutes, then transfer to plate to eat or decorate with icing.



A Better Understanding

by BL in Black

How many times have you heard someone say, "All pedophiles are monsters, they must be punished," or something to that effect? What you're hearing there is a complete lack of will towards understanding someone's feelings, but gladly condemning them anyway.

I believe this is a common attitude in society. Wouldn't it help us all if we took the time to see that we are all humans? Boylovers are perhaps the world's least-understood minority. And worse, the media and society deliberately promotes a lack of understanding, encouraging that "jumping to the conclusion" that we are all evil.

Is any concern given to the idea that so many of us could be suffering immensely from growing up being persecuted? Is any seriousness given to the idea that we can truly give great love, support and affection to a boy? To offer him real friendship and affection on every level, and are happy to do so, with nothing expected from him in return?

Any credit given to our feelings or intentions are always kept away from the discussion table, while we are instead left having to defend ourselves against a mob. This pattern has repeated itself time and time again.

People have a tendency to fear what they do not understand, and blindly condemn it. From issues such as sexism, racism and homophobia, to boylove as well, it seems we have not learned from our past mistakes.

It is undeniable: Real damage is done to good people when we marginalize and condemn certain groups for who they are.

One force specifically which has been largely to blame for this, has been the media. I firmly believe many people would like to have a more intelligent discussion surrounding this issue – if given the opportunity.

Unfortunately, any progress in the past 30 years that could have been made towards a general understanding on the issue, gets quashed before it even begins. We need a brave person in the media to stand up for empathy and compassion when it comes to other human beings, especially those most in need of an advocate.

An old saying is, "The deepest scars are the ones we cannot see." This is especially true when it comes to boylove. The ones who are suffering in silence every day, and without any acknowledgement or compassion from society, are the ones suffering the most.

Boylovers are the ones for whom no help is available, the ones who are just ignored. It is a fact that not even the

slightest kind word or gesture of support exists for us.

We are all human beings, essentially the same in that we all seek better lives for ourselves and others. We need to get rid of this whole "monster" mentality, of dehumanizing others in order to justify our lack of understanding towards them.

Too often it seems society is lazy and condemns what it does not understand. But what if we all took some time to realize that we as human beings are not that different from each other?

We're all living our own lives, fighting our own battles. When other people do things – or want things – that we do not relate to, we should take time out to understand the reasons for this behavior in order to put our mind at ease. For our own sake, if not for anyone else's.

Mr. Policeman

by Realme

I see you, Mr. Policeman
Peeking through my window
Watching me and my young friend
Hoping to make a bust.

I ask you, Mr. Policeman
What we're doing wrong here
Man and boy close together
Feeling a little lust.

It is true, Mr. Policeman
That it's more than friendship
I am a guide and mentor
And he gives love and trust.

You're anxious, Mr. Policeman
His head on my lap now
My fingers stroking his hair
(It's always a bit mussed.)

I know him, Mr. Policeman
What he wants and doesn't
I give him what he asks for
And he is never rushed.

Nothing here, Mr. Policeman
No assault or victim
I know you're disappointed
That you can't use your cuffs.

He's smiling, Mr. Policeman
Small hand on my knee now
No tears or cry of terror
You need to readjust.

It is real, Mr. Policeman
What we have between us
A love that is quite common
Even if undiscussed.

Look closer, Mr. Policeman
You'll see jokes and laughter
And lots of hugs and kisses
A balm for life's sad rust

You are pale, Mr. Policeman
Pressed against the window
Tears and body trembling
Wishing you were with us.

Eisa:

Chapter Two

by False Alias

I'm afraid to say we haven't actually talked yet. He is ... delicate. And even after all this time, he is still afraid. For several weeks I gave him food in the mornings. His responses were still limited to, "Yours" and, "Thank you." He never responded to anything else, even the things which I said when I first gave him food.

His clothes never changed but periodically they'd become much cleaner, especially after heavy rain. I figured he was using the natural environment for everything he needed outside of what I gave him from Ceres every day.

In his situation the rain water must be used to wash both himself and his clothes. The dirt which collects on his face disappears at the same time his clothes get cleaner, but it quickly builds up again.

As the weeks passed, he did grow less afraid of me. But I see that whatever he fears still controls him. He was always showing fear more than anything else.

I have to commend him though, because despite all of that fear, he moves very quickly and very quietly. He has never ventured out of the alley, and I've never ventured more than a few yards in. When something spooks him he disappears before I have time to turn around and see what spooked him.

Today starts the same, really. By this point the chef has got used to me again, and to my seven varying orders. I order a different meal for Eisa each day, to give him some difference. The meals are the same but the meal arrangement changes each week.

I use fridge magnets and randomly shuffle them every week so I can give him something more than the same stuff every day. There is nothing good about eating the same thing day after day.

I'm happy to say that his size has increased, but not by much. He's still on the thin side, but not as thin as the first time I saw him. The change, despite its tiny scale, is encouraging of my efforts.

I am doing something good. More than SHS has done.

My first call to SHS was not the only call I made. I tried several other times, and each time was the same old story of, "We don't offer housing services to homeless people."

I suppose it's for the best. I watch him from a distance sometimes, and other people do try to approach ... but he backs away from them very quickly like he did with me. SHS wouldn't have gotten very far with him if they had even wanted to try. He doesn't trust anyone.

I guess in all the talk about Eisa, I didn't mention very much about the weather. But on this particular morning it happens to be raining a lot, and is rather surprisingly cold.

This sort of weather calls for a coat and an umbrella, although with the wind and intensity of the rain I doubt

either will do too much good. None of my clothes are waterproof, and the wind will just funnel the rain under the umbrella. But I'll survive.

The wind is not helpful to anything right now. I walk out the door of the café and the wind hits again, with the rain falling just as heavy.

Yet like always, I shield the food as best as I can and go to the alley. There is a natural wind shelter between the walls there, which is quite unusual. My experience is that any walls lined up together turn alleys into wind tunnels. Maybe there is no "other side," and it's just a dead end.

On dark days, and this is a dark day ... he never is visible at first, but he comes out of the shadows, quick enough after he notices it's me.

We begin the usual routine. Over time we've come to find "even ground," and things work much faster than they used to. Where it used to take a few minutes before, he can now be with the food in 15 seconds, such as is what almost happens today.

I can see in his movements the cold is slowing him. He could be faster. I've seen him faster, but the cold and wet isn't helping him at all. I worry, like I always do. Maybe I can help him with that a little.

"Have this!" I call out to him, showing him the umbrella I'm holding. Impulse control seems to have hit zero for me, but whatever. He needs it, I won't when I'm at work.

He turns back to face me and looks at it through the rain. He watches as the rain hits it and then falls down the sides, and how there's slightly less rain on me than the ground around me.

"You need it more," he eventually says, before turning and walking back into the obscurity to become invisible again in the heavy rain, darkness, and building shadows.

I would've told him to take it again, but he was gone too quickly. Leaving it here is the most I can do. My coat has a hood that I can use even if it isn't fully waterproof. I put my hood up, close the umbrella and leave it around the same place I leave the plates each day.

Arriving at work later, I was told that the weather makes crane operating dangerous and that as a result no one is going up there. Not a complete waste of a day, because I did manage to help with some of the other workers at the site.

By the end of the shift it was still raining. Heavily? Not anymore, more of a drizzle. The wind had almost stopped but it was still there like the background noise of Helmisteim in the workplace. Sometimes the rain would pick up for a few minutes before dropping back down.

The umbrella was still on my mind, despite several hours having passed. I decide to take a walk back home. Usually I don't, because I can catch a ride with one of the guys at work. He carools, and his route home drops me off a street away. His shift starts four hours earlier than mine so I can't get a ride to work with him, but all the shifts end at the same time so going home is much easier. Walking back was more of an impulse-driven decision.

Traffic is quiet here at night as it turns out. A few cabs pass by, and two buses. Cars are still the most common road vehicle. Everyone loved them once they made non-polluting versions. Cars with exhausts aren't allowed within the centre of the city, but residential areas are fine. That's why I never drive to work, or back. I could just buy a new car but I don't quite have the income. I can't sell this one either, who would want this polluting rust-bucket?

The café's still open, surprisingly. It is quite late, but still open. Instinctively, I check the alley. I've got used to checking every time I see Ceres so I don't even realise the time until I notice the street lamp further back in the alley illuminating it. It extends quite far back, and in this light it is interesting seeing how far back the alley actually goes and what's down there.

I finally see where Eisa comes from now. The street lamp is just far enough into the shaded part that I can see a turn which looks like it goes behind the café. I look around the alley entrance to check stuff, and see the umbrella isn't there anymore. I'm left to assume he took it, but maybe I'll find out later.

I notice him peek his head around the corner briefly, and then disappear back behind the corner. If that isn't where he hides out, I don't know where he lives at all.

Since I'm here I might as well get him something. In my weekly order rotation, today is order 4. But since I've already done that, I decide to order what I did yesterday, instead (order 6). Yes yes, I know it's late! So what? He's allowed food, you know, whatever the time is.

A few minutes later and the tray is in my hands, heading back into the alley to try give it to him. He hasn't appeared back around the corner. I hesitate on whether I should go to him, thinking he might get more scared and leave the place altogether, but I think his need for food is more important. So I venture further in than I have ever been before.

Slowly, yes, because if he does appear around the corner I don't want to appear to be moving too fast. That would be bad, for him more than me.

It takes a few minutes for me to arrive at the corner. Some of that time is spent making sure the food is covered. I hesitate again, but decide that turning the corner should be what happens next, for his own benefit. I poke my head around first and catch a glimpse of him under the overhanging shelter of a balcony, protected from the rain, before I bring my head back. At least there's a shelter for him.

Digging up a bit of strength from inside, I make the step to go around the corner. He's sat on a small wood crate with his back against the wall under the balcony. Next to him is a small vent screwed on to the wall, and under the vent is a small circular drain without its cover. Just in front of the crate and to the left of his feet are both of the plates from this morning, and on the other side of the crate is the umbrella, still closed up. At least he took it.

He notices the slight movement of me appearing around the corner in the semi-darkness of the weather, and very quickly moves away. I lose sight of him, but a few moments later my eyes adjust to the semi-darkness and I spot something slightly trembling by the rubbish bins behind Ceres. I didn't want to think it, but the thought has crossed my mind that this is how he has been feeding himself, digging through the bins. "Dumpster diving," as they call it over in Xanour. I suppose this is confirmation ...

"Hey," I call out. With the area being this secluded, I can enjoy the luxury of not having to be super quiet. Obviously I can't be too loud, but at least I can be louder than before. "I know it's wet, and dark, but I got you food."

He doesn't respond. I can see he's there, hiding behind the bin, trying to be still. I can't tell whether he's afraid or cold, but I'd safely bet it's probably both right now. No doubt I'm the scariest part of his day now.

"I know it's cold too, but I'm really not going to hurt you," I say. He moves a little, and then slowly pokes his head around. It's difficult to see him because of the lack of proper lighting, but I can see enough of him for now. "It's okay. I've got you some more food."

I can't read his face from this distance, but I'd guess he's trying to see what I'm holding. Since it's covered over and in the dark, it's difficult to see what it is. He stands up slowly and moves out from his hiding place into more direct sight, but still keeps his distance. He's afraid to come too close, even after this time. I understand though, I'm invading his space here. I'd be afraid too.

"I'm going to put them down, like I do out there, okay? Can I do that?" I suppose I'm really asking permission. This is his space. He tells me what to do here. This is his home, and I am the uninvited guest. I'll leave if he wants me to.

He seems to think about it for a moment. "Yes," he says, after a few seconds. "It is okay."

I lower the food gently onto the floor, making sure it stays covered even if that means I get a bit wet. If he can literally stay here all day with the rain and the cold, I can get a little bit wet. I lose nothing.

As I back away he advances towards it, like the routine always goes. This time though, since we're already here, he doesn't retreat back "home" with it but rather starts to eat it where it is. Watching him is painful, because even though he's afraid of me it's easy to see his desperation makes him weak and vulnerable. The desperation of his hunger shows itself in the rapid pace and careless nature of his eating, with little regard for common household manners and putting in his mouth what he can when there's space for it.

Watching him eat, I forget that time is a thing, and before I know it both of the plates are clear. When my focus does snap back to reality it's not because I've realised that he finished eating, but because of something else.

"Why?" he asks, quietly.

For a moment I remain silent. It takes me a few seconds



o process his unexpected question. I'm not sure how to respond. "Why what?" I ask him.

"Why do you give me food?" Eisa says, clarifying his question. He's staring at me with lessened but still ever-present fear. I am still on his turf, on his land. If he wants me out, I'll go.

"Because you need it," I reply, a moment later. "You're starving ... I can't just watch you starve every day."

He takes a few minutes to process my response to his question. I find myself forgetting that time is a thing again, and am only brought back to reality (again) by another question. "Why did you come here?"

This question is more difficult than the last one. "I don't know," I eventually say, looking around him. "I guess I just felt like you could do with a little more today. Is that okay?"

"Yes. It is okay." A few seconds of silence follow before he talks again. "Can you bring food here now?" he asks.

This question takes me by surprise. He's scared of me, yet is inviting me to come around this corner every time I want to give him food? Maybe these weeks have shown him I can be trusted, but fear is still the strongest emotion that I can see in him right now. He is taking a big step by asking this of me, stepping outside of what every instinct is likely telling him. Defying what his brain is telling him.

I take a moment. To really grasp the question, I have to imagine it properly. Me, buying the food like normal, but taking it around this alley corner and not meeting him in middle. Stepping into his territory. This is new.

"I can do that," I finally respond, after possibly 20 seconds of forever.

"Thank you," he says to me quietly.

A few seconds later he says something else but much louder. "Go, quickly. Before they come!" I don't need telling twice. I wave to him quickly, nod at him, and then I head back to the street as fast as the urgency in his voice implied.

Thankfully it's still as quiet out here as it was before, so I don't need to worry about being caught there, but I am worrying about why he told me to go so quickly -- and so suddenly. Did he hear something? I hope he's eating the food which I've given him. I admit I am not exactly pleased with the idea that he might be having to go hungry because of whoever "they" are. How many times have I given food only for whoever "they" are to be taking it from him? I know he ate this time, but has he always been able to eat before "they" arrive?

The thought of who "they" could be follows me all the way home, for the remainder of the walk. Let's forget that I'm wet and a little cold from my decision to walk home, who are "they"? I remember how he reacted the first time I had seen him. He ran, pretty quick. Maybe "they" are other people? Other people who are not as kind as me? Please do not let it be bad people, I think to myself. He needs love, not pain. Maybe it's other kids like him, in need of a home and of love.

Even up to the time for sleep, that thought follows me. Those thoughts, rather. All of them, until the moment I fall into the solace of sleep and escape from my thoughts. Maybe the night will give me rest and a clearer mind for the next day.

Waking up several hours later, I recall a vivid dream which I'm not sure what to think about. It's the alley, where I was less than a day ago, except in this dream we appear to have

had a conversation. My dream self tells him, "I'm going to make everything okay, Eisa, I promise." He smiles, and then he walks up and hugs me. It was at that point which I woke up.

Waking up suddenly like that, doesn't change the fact that this dream was the most powerful I've ever had. I've never felt a dream as strong as this. Not only could I see and hear, but I could feel it even from within the dream. I have never had a dream where I physically felt what was happening.

I could compare it to the visions some of the Xanouean people have had, except I have never been anywhere near Xanour or the Mionzi mountains. Maybe the special radiation from those mountains comes from more than one place. I don't know



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I can't deny that what I said in that dream is what I want to do. I want to make everything okay for him. I'd promise it to him that I'd make things okay. Eisa's smile in that dream, and then him hugging me ... those feelings, and their strength ... that's probably what woke me. Those two things are going to be on my mind for a while. I'll make things better for him.

The Island That Nearly Sank

by Boysrule, Dragonlover, Dutch, Zoomzoom4

ZOOMZOOM4: Okay so we know how this story begins. El went down. When was that?

DUTCH: It was before the holidays ... October, November. Must have been close to Thanksgiving then.

ZZ4: Right before Thanksgiving. Of 2016.

DUTCH: I remember thinking we would have it back by Christmas.

ZZ4: But let's rewind, first. To October 6th. Kermie's passing. After that, the board continued for about a month, generally.

DUTCH: About that.

ZZ4: What happened right after he passed? Who was paying the bills?

DUTCH: Johnny Lonewolf was paying at the time.

ZZ4: That's important because, when El was built it was Johnny and Kermie. They were the official twosome.

DUTCH: Yep.

ZZ4: And after Kermie passed, the ownership went to Johnny and CQ2. Those two had control after Kermie was gone.

DUTCH: Yeah.

ZZ4: Okay so now we fast forward a month after this – to November 2016 – and the board goes down. How did the board go down?

DUTCH: According to Johnny, it was a bad update that completely destroyed the code. Which didn't make sense to me.

ZZ4: Why?

DUTCH: He said many times that just one thing out of place and it would bring the whole board down. So ... if the code was completely destroyed, how did Johnny get the board back up for a few minutes afterward?

ZZ4: He got it back up for a few minutes after it went down?

DUTCH: Yes. And why wasn't a backup used before the update happened? Okay, when we first talked after El went down, me and Johnny ... I had asked Johnny why not use a backup.

ZZ4: What did he say?

DUTCH: I was told because old vBulletin was no longer supported. So it was agreed at the time to rebuild El using vBulletin version 4. But while I was rebuilding, several months later, I discovered that our web host company does automatic backups.

ZZ4: Meaning, whether vBulletin is supported has nothing to do with a backup. Okay. But you said you were rebuilding? Why wasn't he?

DUTCH: He was, at first. He said he was going to rebuild, and Michael D said that he (Johnny) did rebuild most of it, but got to a point and quit.

ZZ4: How did Michael D know how much had been rebuilt?

DUTCH: Michael D had access to the new board.

ZZ4: Okay. You said Johnny quit rebuilding it. Why?

DUTCH: He was going downhill.

ZZ4: You're referring to his cancer? He was very ill with cancer at the time. And it was getting worse, sadly.

DUTCH: Yes. We kept waiting for him to finish rebuilding the board, but with his condition we saw it wasn't going to happen. So I was already thinking about doing it myself. I didn't want to see Kermie's dream die, I was determined to keep it going.

ZZ4: You were thinking about it. What made you take action and start doing it?

DUTCH: It was around that time, when Dragonlover contacted me and asked about rebuilding. Well that was all I needed. I said let's do it.

ZZ4: So now you're ready to take the plunge. What is the first thing you focus on?

DUTCH: My first thought was to get vBulletin again. But after doing a good deal of research I was finding out a lot of bad stuff about it. Honestly, since they sold out, after the version we were using ... I'm just not real sure that company is going to survive.

ZZ4: So you weren't automatically going back to vBulletin.

DUTCH: No. Dragon and I spent about a month researching different forum software, and the choices pretty much came down to three.

ZZ4: Okay.

DUTCH: I was reading a lot of good things about Burning Board, and after reading how it was similar to vBulletin, I decided to go with it. My goal was to find something members would be familiar with.

ZZ4: Yes, but Burning Board is quite a bit different in style and format.

DUTCH: Well, at the time I didn't know there was going to be a good bit of difference between how vBulletin and Burning Board worked.

ZZ4: This is around the time Boysrule became a major part of the rebuilding. How did that come about?

DUTCH: Well, we started rebuilding with the new software, and somewhere about this time I asked Boysrule if he would like to check out the board. I remember he was reluctant to do anything at first because he was afraid he would mess something up.

ZZ4: I see.

DUTCH: But I encouraged him to go ahead, because at that point it wasn't a big deal to start over if we needed to.

ZZ4: Why did you ask him to check out the board? Why him?

DUTCH: He had started doing smilies, on the board before. He's done very well at those. Now, let me tell you, none of us knew how to build with Burning Board. We all had to learn.

ZZ4: Yes, just like all the members did afterward. Michael D wanted to be more involved in it, from what I understand.

DUTCH: And as time went by, I got Boysrule to do more and more. He was a surprise to me, and started doing very well, alongside while Dragon did his thing and I did mine.

ZZ4: That's when we started seeing progress. Now, Michael D wanted to be more involved in it, from what I understand.

DUTCH: Right, but he was in the process of moving, and without Internet at the time.

ZZ4: He wanted to help more with building it, but was unable to.

DUTCH: Right, and I guess we worked on it for about a month, and there always seemed like there was something else to do.

ZZ4: We all know how that is, with anything.

DUTCH: I think there will always be something, and that's been true from the beginning. But finally I said it's time we opened.

ZZ4: How did the opening go?

DUTCH: It could have been smoother. I asked Dragon, "You ready to make this thing fly?" and he thought I meant a test run. I told him no, not a dress rehearsal, opening day.

ZZ4: Was he caught off-guard a little bit?

DUTCH: Well, he had been waiting for his new computer.

After he got the laptop, he was able to construct the rooms. He might have been hurried through it.

ZZ4: That day was April 8th, from what I remember.

DUTCH: Yes, on a Saturday. We had to quickly get the link out to the other boards, send out invites, and Dragon was setting up his Saturday radio show at the same time. So we were all feeling the pressure.

ZZ4: It has been almost a year now.

DUTCH: Eight months. And it's been nice seeing that most of the members have returned, and new ones are joining all the time. We came together and stepped up our efforts, Boysrule and Dragon, and Michael D, as well as the managers and staff who returned to their jobs.

ZZ4: So it started as a crisis, the board facing extinction. Enchanted Island was gone. You guys rebuilt it, with an effort from Boysrule that helped a great deal and even surprised you. Dragon had his problems with his computer and then everything being so crazy on opening day, but in spite of it all, here you are.

DUTCH: Like I said, this board was Kermie's dream, and I didn't want to see it die. None of us did. ■



Unpublished banner for the reopening of Enchanted Island. Courtesy of the artist.

AUTHORS' NOTE: *The above is a recollection of how Enchanted Island was brought back to the Internet after going down. It is not an actual conversation or interview, but a fictional writing constructed to guide the reader through the events it portrays.*

Boys Beware: The RSO List

by BL in Black

Ever since the onset of society's increasingly punitive attitudes towards pedophilia and child sex, many have suffered as a result. They've often had their lives and reputations ruined, and have often ended up being charged and imprisoned for years if not decades, followed by long periods on the sex offender registry.

However, what is much less known, has been the fact that it's not only adults who have been caught up on this. There is also an atrocity on a massive scale that has been boiling below the surface all these years, which has destroyed the lives of many innocent victims.

I am referring to our children.

Right now, tens of thousands of children, some as young as 10 (or younger), are being made to register publicly as sex offenders. The registration often requires the child's personal details to be made public, as well as restrictions on areas the child can attend (including parks and schools). The kind of crimes they can be registered for can be anything from sexual experimentation with peers, to sexting. Sometimes minors have even been charged as adults for these "crimes."

During my time on the BL boards, I have spoken extensively about this subject. It's outrageous that we, as a society which claims to be civilized, continue to ruin children's lives for nothing more than natural sexual experimentation.

And the worst thing about it is that there is no acknowledgement. Where is the media outrage over this? Where is the concern and condemnation from the numerous human rights organizations worldwide, at this massive (and hidden) atrocity towards society's most vulnerable members? This surely calls into question the very core values we have learned to hold dear in our society, regarding children.

The first question is this: How can we possibly say that we're concerned about protecting children, when we do things like this?

It's a common belief that lawmakers have the best interests of children at heart, because of the laws protecting them against sexual abuse. Meaning, sexual contact with adults. Yet these same lawmakers have created policies which punish children for engaging in sexual acts with other children. They have this done quietly, deliberately, and without the need to explain.

The next question is if children are too young to be capable of consenting to sexual relationships with others, and are not old enough to understand the repercussions of sexual activity until a certain age, why would the law punish them – and ruin their lives – over such actions?

Regardless of your overall opinion on whether or not adults should be able to engage in sexual relations with

children, one cannot fail to recognize the hypocrisy in society's approach to this issue.

Policies such as these clearly show the dangers we, as a society, face in creating laws or policies based on knee-jerk emotional reactions rather than logic and reason.

At the root of this attitude is a callous and deliberate unwillingness to see the consequences of enacting these laws. Out of such enormous determination to "protect children," there has been a complete lack of will to understand the very concept – much less effect, in this case – of "collateral damage."

This is a hidden atrocity because, if more people in society knew what was going on here, they would be shocked. But most people don't know. That's the problem. And why is that?

Because for the most part, the media remains silent on the issue. When was the last time you turned on a major news station to hear them talking about, "The latest outrage, children having their lives ruined on public sex offender registers!"

If we seem to think it's just "nothing" to ruin the lives of so many children, in a misguided quest to "protect" them (from sex and sexuality overall), I think one has to draw society's most fundamental values into question.

For me, the bottom line is that you cannot trust society to tell the truth, when it says it is only trying to "protect children." Instead of blindly trusting the so-called values others have learned to accept, I believe we as minor-attracted persons (MAPs) need to create our own more sane and rational values, and think independently. Only then, I feel, can we develop a true sense of respect for children and our fellow human beings.

Michael and Carson's Family Reckoning

by Wolfrunner

Michael grabs Simon by the arm, looks at Carson and sees blood on his hand. He asks Carson if he's okay, and what happened.

"I'm fine, but Matthew has a cut on his arm. I wrapped it up in some clean rags that were in the barn. He's sitting on the porch now, I think he needs stitches."

Michael thinks for a minute. "Shit, I can't leave you guys here alone ... Go get your brothers, we need to go. It's only ten minutes down the road."

Michael and the boys get in the car. It's a silent ride to the doctor's house.

About twenty minutes later they all start to head home. It only took four stitches in Matthew's arm.

On the short ride home, Carson looks at Michael and says, "Umm ... dad?"

"Yes, son?"

"Well, before we left home you told me to go get my brothers."

"I did," says Michael.

Carson looks at Michael. "But none of them are my brother's yet."

Michael looks back at Carson. "Well kiddo, it was just a natural reaction because I'm trying to make that happen. In the hectic moment, it was the first thing that came to my mind."

Carson says, "Oh, okay. Not that I don't want that to happen ... it just took me by surprise, is all."

"Okay. Well, we are going to have a long talk when we get to the house."

Simon, at exactly the same time, says, "Oh good, here we go ..."

"Do you have anything to say?" Michael asks Simon, sharply.

"No," he replies.

Michael clears his throat and Simon says, "No. No sir."

When they get to the house there are two cars in the driveway. One is a police car, and the other is Mrs. Moore's.

Michael and the boys get out of the car, and Michael says hello to Mrs. Moore. She says hello as she shakes Michael's hand.

She asks Michael if they can talk, and Michael waves his hand toward the house. "We need to talk alone," she says, looking in the direction of the boys.

Michael tells the boys to stay outside and not to get into trouble, reminding them all that Matthew can't play hard because of his stitches.

Mrs. Moore says, "Stitches ... Oh my, what happened?"

"I'm not really clear on that yet," Michael says. "But I am going to find out."

Inside the house, Michael asks Mrs. Moore to sit in the chair in the living room. "Would you like a drink?"

"Yes, water please," she says. Michael gets her a glass of water and a beer for himself, then sits in the other chair.

"Michael," she says, looking directly at him, "I'm afraid that I have very bad news for Simon and Trent."

Michael asks, "What kind of bad news?"

Mrs. Moore pauses a moment, then responds, "It seems their parents were involved in a robbery and drug deal that went bad."

The room is silent. She continues, "Their father was killed, and their mother is in jail."

Michael doesn't speak. She continues further. "It seems the father killed the other man before he was killed, and now the mother is being charged with the murder."

Michael looks at her. "All I can say is oh God, that is terrible."

"Yes, it is," says Mrs. Moore, "But there is more. Their mother is going to go to prison, no matter what. So she has terminated all of her parental rights."

Michael says, "That means --"

"The boys are now orphans," she finishes. "Michael, I will need your help telling them."

Michael puts his head in his hands and shakes his head. Finally he looks up at Mrs. Moore. "What's going to happen to the boys?"

"Well," she says, "they are wards of the state. I will be taking them."

Michael holds his hands out and says no. "No, you can't do that. Not now, this is too soon... They are going to get a lot handed to them right now. We are starting to make some progress. You can't take them. Not now, please."

"Okay." Says Mrs. Moore. "Well, I will try to make some calls but I can't guarantee anything. Right now we need to go address the boys."

Michael says okay but they need to do it outside. Mrs. Moore looks puzzled and asks why outside. Michael says, "If I've learned anything about Simon, he acts out with his anger and I don't want anything in here broken. I have an idea, so let's go outside."

They both go outside. Michael calls the boys over and takes Carson to the side. He tells him to go get the 8 glass bottles that are in the barn for recycling and set them up on the wood fence right by the barn, then to get two sticks good for hitting something and some nice size rocks and to put them about 10ft away from the bottles.



They all go into the den and Michael tells the boys to sit. Simon looks at Trent, then they both look at Michael. Simon looks at Mrs. Moore and then back at Michael. He asks, "This is bad, isn't it?"

Michael looks at Simon and nods. "Yes. It is bad, but we will get through it together. Just remember I'm here for both of you."

Mrs. Moore starts to talk. "Boys, I have some news about your mom and dad... They were involved in a robbery, and your..." She pauses for a second, takes a deep breath, and continues. "Your father was killed." The boy's eyes go wide. Trent has tears streaming down his cheeks.

"What about mom?" Trent asks.

"Well it seems your dad killed a man before he was shot, and your mother is also being charged with the killing. She is in jail and will be for a long time... Because of that, she is giving up all parental rights to you both." Trent is now sobbing into Michael's chest.

Michael looks over at Simon who is now crying. Simon asks Mrs. Moore, "This was all over drugs, wasn't it?"

She replies. "Yes, it was." Michael can see Simon start to breathe heavy, and his face going red, so he quickly gets up and grabs Simon gently by the arm.

He takes him over to the rocks and stick that Carson placed there. He gives a rock to Simon says, "Here, take this and break the bottles over there. Get all your anger out. Take it out on the bottles."

Simon looks up at Michael and asks him if he is serious. Michael says yes. "You have the right to be mad, but I don't want you to break anything we need, so take your all your anger out on the bottles."

Simon looks at the rock in his hand then all of a sudden he winds up his arm and throws the rock as hard as he can, screaming, "You son of a bitch!" Then he picks up another rock and throws it, hitting the second bottle. It smashes into a hundred pieces. He picks up the stick, runs over and smashes another bottle. "You bitch!" CRASH! "Asshole!" SMASH! "Aaaaaaaahhhhhh!!!" CRASH!! When he hits the last bottle he screams at the top of his lungs, "I hate you both!"

He falls to his knees with his face buried in his hands. He's shaking, and now balling. Michael runs up to him and wraps his arms around him. Simon wraps his arms around Michael's neck. Michael picks him up, and Simon wraps his

legs around Michael's waist. Michael puts his hand under Simon's butt and carries him back to the house with Trent and Mrs. Moore following.

Michael puts Simon on the couch and sits next to his brother. Carson and Matthew come into the living room and asks what's wrong. Michael holds up his finger to signal to wait.

Simon speaks up eventually. "Hey wait... What's going to happen to me and Trent?"

Mrs. Moore looks at Michael then at Simon and asks, "Well what would you like to happen?"

Trent quickly says, "I want to stay here."

Just that moment, Mrs. Moore's phone rings. She answers it, and motions that she is going into the kitchen to take the call. Michael takes Carson and Matthew into the den to tell them what has happened to the boy's parents.

When they get back to the boys Matthew walks over to Trent and give him a hug and tell him he is sorry to hear about his parents.

Trent starts to cry again. Simon tries not to cry. "They sucked as parents. We are in foster care... They cared more about drugs than they did us."

Just then, Mrs. Moore comes back in the room. She looks at Simon and asks him, "What do you want to happen now?"

He shrugs his shoulders then Mrs. Moore asks if he would like to stay at the ranch. He looks at Michael and says, "He won't want me here. He thinks I hurt Matthew."

Michael quickly speaks up. "That is not true. I still don't know what happened, we will go over that later. But if you and Trent want to stay here, and if it is okay with Mrs. Moore, then you are more than welcome to stay."

Michael looks at Mrs. Moore for approval. She nods. "I will be here in the morning with all the paperwork for you to sign." Trent and Matthew high five and yell yes.

Michael sends the boys to their rooms. "Thank you so much Mrs. Moore, for not taking the boys. They need a stable place right now."

"Yes, I know," says Mrs. Moore. "But there are rules and I was lucky to talk to my boss and get it done this time."

When Mrs. Moore had left, Michael fixed himself a drink to relax some before he has to talk to the boys again. He sits in the den and thinks about what he is going to do for Simon and Trent. Michael sits there for about 20 minutes before he takes the last swallow of his drink and heads off to their

rooms.

He calls Trent and Simon. All four boys come in. Michael tells Carson and Matthew to wait in Carson's room.

Michael directs the other boys to sit on the bed and they do so. He starts to talk. "First off, I want to say that I'm very sorry to hear about your mom and your dad. There is not much I can do about that, but I want you both to know that if there is any time one or both of you need to talk to someone I will always be here for you. I might not have all the answers for your questions, and I might not tell you what you want to hear, but I won't lie to you. If at any time you don't want to stay at the ranch you let me know. I'm going to talk to Carson and Matthew and ask them to give you some space for a few days so you can sort things out with all that has happened. Don't think they are ignoring you, and if you want to be or need to be around them then just do so. Do either of you have any questions or anything you want to say?"

Simon stands up and looks at Michael. Tears start to form in his eyes as he speaks. "Sir?"

"Yes Simon?" Simon starts to sob and asks if he can have a hug. Michael opens his arms and Simon walks over to Michael. He's now sobbing uncontrollably. Trent is also not happy, but sitting alone. Michael motions to him to come over to him and he wraps both boys into a hug they stay that way for about 5 minutes.

After they separate, they all wipe the tears from their eyes. Simon looks at Michael and says he was sorry, and that he is going to try real hard to be good from now on. Trent kind of chuckles and goes, "Wow." Simon shoots him a dirty look, and Michael just kind of chuckles as well.

Michael tells Simon, "Thank you. I'm sure you will do just fine. Now both of you can go to the barn with Carson and Matthew."

After they go, Michael fixes himself another rum and coke. He sits in his chair and then realizes he never found out what happened in the barn that made Matthew get hurt. He also decides it's not that important right now, and that he can ask questions at breakfast in the morning. As Michael sits back in his chair with his rum and coke he gets lost in thought.

Not long ago he was lonely and it was just him who did a wonderful thing. He got the chance to give a boy the things he needed and some of the things he wanted, and now he

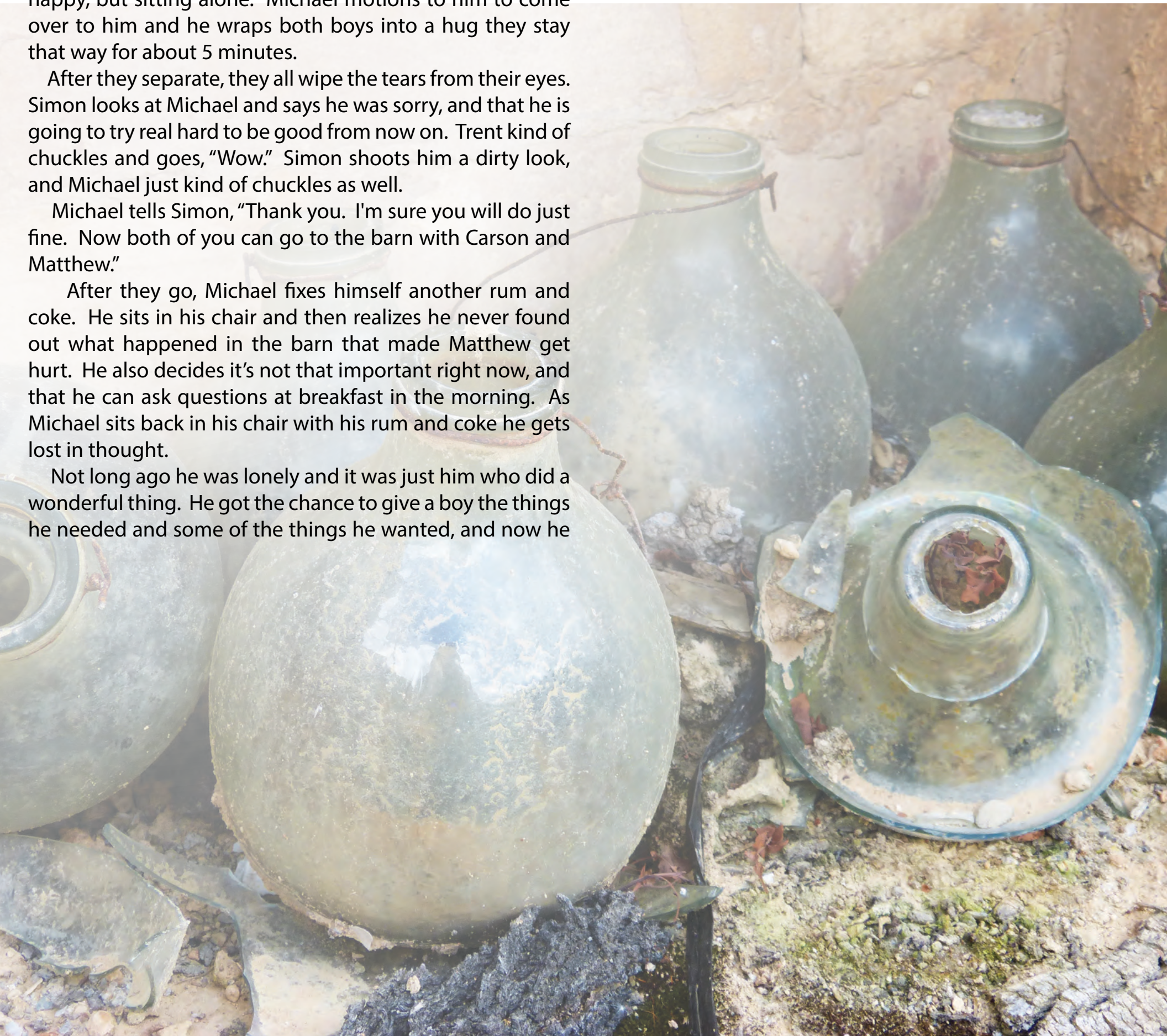
has the chance to give three more boys the same. He leans back and thinks about how it seemed like it took a long time for all of this to happen, but in reality it was a very short period. A lot has happened in that short amount of time.

Just then the back doors open. Four dirty boys were in the mud room laughing like little school girls. Michael took one look at them and just shook his head. "What in the world happened here?" He asks.

All the boys replied at once, and they sounded like there were 50 people in the room. Michael waved his hands in the air and slowly the boys began to quiet down.

Once it was quiet, Michael asks Carson what's going on. Carson explains that he was filling up a bucket with water when Simon and Trent walked into the barn. He got startled and turned, accidentally spraying them both with the hose, and then it was all over the boys. They attacked him and got the hose and it just went bad from there. They all start to giggle.

"Okay," Michael says. "Back outside, I will get some towels. I want you to spray each other clean. Come in to the mud-room and strip all your clothes down to your underwear, then one by one you will shower. Got it?" The boys all nod, still laughing.



Ethos Magazine is always looking for new content, so we invite all members of the community to submit material to us. It's very important for us to receive submissions, as this is what fills the pages. If you're interested in writing for Ethos, you can send us your submission in a number of ways.

- You can send it to us using our web form at <https://ethosonline.net/submit>
- You can email it to us at submissions@ethosonline.net
- You can send it in a private message to Zoomzoom4, Lil Monster, or FalseAlias, at any of the boards where you can find them.

If you don't know what to write, take a read through some of the previous issues of Ethos and Modern Boylover Magazine (MBM) for inspiration and look at the category list below.

- ***Boy moments and reflections***
- ***Boy stories real or fictional***
- ***Boylove outside of Western countries***
- ***Boys toys and technology***
- ***Boylove history***
- ***History of famous boys***
- ***Boy-movie reviews***
- ***Boy-related comedy and humour***
- ***Boylove board/forum memories and tributes***
- ***"Messages to your YF"***
- ***Boys and health***
- ***Boys and beauty***
- ***Creative works (poetry, etc.)***
- ***Boys fashion***
- ***Boy celebrities***

Note: We will not accept works which are of an intentionally arousing/sexual nature, or contain explicit scenes of an arousing or sexual nature.





Amor et intellectus