

LOVE HAS NO BOUNDARIES
DON'T READ IN THE CLOSET EVENT 2013



OIL & WATER

GOESTA STRUVE-DENCHER

OIL AND WATER

Something not quite fitting together, isn't that what they mean by, "like oil and water"?

Unkempt, chubby, severely myopic and frequently incomprehensible, Enzo Leone Ferrara is an unlikely gay heartthrob. Jericho, his hunky, surfing massage therapist with the magical hands, has every faith that the shy fledgling man has it in him to soar. If, that is, he can embrace the present moment, get over his painful past, and courageously learn to live his dream. A sexy, sentimental, heart-warming romance ensues—

—Did we mention everything's just a bit... off?

Nerdy Enzo has a massive crush on the towering beach god, but Jericho's only into waxed legs and boobies, preferably in multiple pairs. Both men are working together on some mysterious project in a hidden cave on the Mediterranean, but they've hit a snag and their boss is livid. Time-out in the cramped massage room with the door locked, doing something nice for the poor kid, seemed like a good plan to Jericho at the time. But the strange talents for which Enzo was hired are just starting to blossom. And there's nothing quite so volatile as a young man awakening to his own power. A young man in heat, no less. Mix in scented oils, bulging muscles and sweat, flickering tea candles and fine calf-skin, and who knows what could happen if little Enzo literally decides to embrace his present. One man's blissed-out daydream might turn into another's freakish nightmare.

Will any of them get out in one piece, trapped under a sudden superhuman eruption of Sicilian lust?

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Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

OIL AND WATER

By Goesta Struve-Dencher

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love Has No Boundaries* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a free gift to you.

What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love Has No Boundaries*.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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Oil and Water

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OIL AND WATER

By Goesta Struve-Dencher

Photo Description

A possibly naked young man, brown hair, close-cropped beard, sensual lips, handsome but presents as a geek. Intently staring, though with unfocussed, slightly crossed eyes. Adjusting his thick glasses. He is dripping wet with drops of water surrounding him as if floating in space—a frozen moment.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

Why the heck is this geek all wet? And why is he looking at me like that. Someone, please, tell him to stop or else...

Sincerely,

Andra

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Sub-genre: erotic romance with elements of paranormal fantasy.

Tags: paranormal, masseur, surfers, disabilities, illusionism, geeks/nerds, humorous, psychic ability

Content warnings: rampant gay sexuality, apparent non-consensual queer arousal of a straight person, profanity, blasphemy, pornographic use of electricity and concrete poetry, violating the laws of physics and human anatomy.

Word count: 21,122

Dedication

For Jimmy, who inspires my life

and

For Andra, who inspired this story.

OIL AND WATER

-A humouresque massage fantasy-

By Goesta Struve-Dencher

An “Originary Sonata” (Humoresque)

Composed by Goesta Struve-Dencher

Performed by Yehoshua Ben Khaddouri (Tenore di forza) and Enzo Leone
Ferrara (Spinto tenor)

Introduction

Einleitung

First Movement

Rondo

Second Movement

Largo

Third Movement

Scherzo

Trio

Scherzo

Fourth Movement

Presto

Ablösung

Kadenz

Schluss

*To be performed as hot droplets of scented, multi-coloured oils being poured into crystalline turquoise, tropical ocean, infinite horizons below blazing twin chocolate suns gazing down from a heavy pink sky, and of course in the spirit of **Merz**.*

Einleitung

Towering bare-chested and glorious before the naked, dripping young man, the Surfin' Messiah shook his long, trailing dreadlocks and heaved a way-too-sexy sigh. He gave the impression of a huge and sleek, barely containable stallion that, having been spooked by some passing spectre, couldn't decide whether to bite, mount or bolt. The young thing in its path probably should have fled any which way. An ungainly, wet, scruffy foal, it didn't stand a chance. But, from instinct or sloppy breeding, it passively stood scant feet from the thoroughbred beast and just wobbled a bit. Having perchance gleaned the formidable nature of the opponent, the lumpy, soft boy blinked several times through his densely dewed, tragically thick lenses, while steeling himself for the encounter. He bravely emphasized the one impressive part of his physique. He got generously—massively—hard.

This is going to be a teeny weenie bit complicated, thought the one who answered to Jericho. He gave the vague man-boy a once-over. **Ok, not teeny**, he revised. **He's not even seeing me, but he obviously knows I'm in the room, given away by the tall darkish handsome cloud taking up most of the space.**

The sculpted giant sighed. **There's nothing for it but to get to work.** Jericho was a peripatetic billboard of masculine virility, but he carried it with an easy, self-mocking arrogance that paradoxically reflected, to anyone who knew him, a deep humility among his many gifts. He was more at home lightly skimming across water than amongst his disciples on land. Rarely sighted in his sandals, and just having shed his (genuine, hand-made) Hawaiian shirt to protect it from grease stains, he was wearing only crisp orange cut-offs. But humble or not, he was obviously, once again, having his expected effect on people of various genders.

And so the very hour, three times a week, and now out of the blue, four, that the one man secretly dreaded and the other fantasized about incessantly, was at hand. Enzo's wellness hour.

Rondo

As soon as he clued into his state of arousal, Enzo blushed like a young Puggle—in the way only a carpet-wetting puppy manages to blush. This one was still blithely watering the expensive mauve pile, having just stepped over the threshold of the tiny built-in shower closet. With exceeding care, Enzo edged his currently useless glasses toward the narrow teak sideboard. His rare degenerative ocular defect had only recently and by chance been diagnosed, during the first rigorous medical examination of his life. Shortly before the appointment, Enzo had found himself, to his surprise, the newest and youngest member of this peculiar company and thus of its excellent health plan. It was far too late to effect any reversal of his eventual total loss of sight; all they could do for him was to delay the inevitable by a matter of months. Otherwise, he'd been found, apart from slight malnutrition and dormant asthma, to be in decent health if not shape.

This had been a relief to everyone, not just his employer. They had all been worrying themselves sleepless, knowing the profound dangers of the careless, desultory existence he'd been leading in the streets and cruising bars of Rome, from which their master had rescued him. The mysterious head of this operation had taken one look at the homeless-looking boy across a busy street and had emphatically stated he'd be the perfect candidate for the vacancy. Later that evening, without realizing it, Enzo had been put to a test and had passed with flying colours. The next morning, the team had left town, stronger by one most unusual young man.

As a happy by-effect of his vastly improved diet, newfound sense of purpose and concomitant heavy workload, Enzo's girth and wan, pimply complexion were in retreat and he was even glowing a little. Both Enzo's body and soul were finally being nourished as carefully and kindly as every person here knew how, because they had absolute faith in their boss. About someone like Enzo, he was unfailingly correct in his judgment. And because, truth be told, most of the team members working away on the current project while getting the new guy up to speed had been in a similar spot once. Usually around the time that a strange, dark large man had suddenly shown up from nowhere and

offered to take them away to a better place. So they all knew that Enzo was very, very special, though few quite knew why.

Jericho began preparing the items that were required for the upcoming exercise in futility, to wit, ministering to what really ailed Enzo apart from his headache—and from his damn eyes that, to Jericho’s dismay, had conclusively failed to respond to anything he had tried.

Enzo was towelling himself down. His backside was modestly exposed to his stunning ministrant, due to Enzo’s effort to hide, belatedly, his considerable excitement up front. In a couple of moments, Jericho would see all of him anyway, whether he wanted to or not. Meanwhile, the healer rubbed warm lubricating oil into his massive paws and idly perused the two large velutinous ovoids thus innocently presented for his consideration.

Enzo Leone, Jericho was convinced, was one of those rarest of creatures, a genuine, oblivious sweetheart. As well as an unlikely but potential gay heartthrob. Sure, he was ungainly and unkempt right now, with a nest-like, vaguely brownish mop and a struggling, unkempt beard. But to claim that Jericho was exceedingly good at making out what lay beneath people’s surfaces would have been an effrontery. It was his bred-in-the-bone *modus vivendi*, let alone his bread and butter. Jericho felt quite certain that, from deep within the stubborn neglect of Enzo’s own person, a handsome, brilliant and profoundly loving fledgling was aching to launch himself into the great blue sky. To achieve it, Enzo just needed to want to live a little. This was yet another subject in which Jericho prided himself on his expertise; he was nothing if not a born bon vivant. To his numerous disciples, he was *the* sex god. Sadly, much as he adored the new boy, Enzo was not the morsel for stimulating Jericho’s own prodigious, though blandly one-sided, appetites.

“*Prego,*” Enzo mumbled disconsolately in a corner of the miniature spa. This lovely setting really ought to have been much more conducive to his wellness, since he himself had helped redesign it not long ago. Through the softly lit space floated soothing, distant echoes of sea birds, a suggestion of

warm breezes, and the slow rhythms of waves lapping against the foot of a cliff far below. An extravagant dual ventilation system had been installed in the entire facility—mainly for the benefit of Enzo’s delicate lungs—and everyone was breathing easier and more pleasurably these days. It explained why one could actually smell the mixture of warm fields and cool brine being conjured by the soundscape. Not just the air but also the idyllic natural tones were being piped in from above the ground, the latter via sensitive all-weather microphones.

Subtle indirect lighting, dialled to a ludicrous erotic pink specifically requested by Enzo, was recessed above the cornice under the pillowed ceiling, and the cleansing, musky scents of various oils warming up in tiny cauldrons suspended above flickering tea candles permeated the fresh, warm air.

All this clever effort made the tiny space feel much airier, and at the same time even cosier, than it used to. Incongruously, its two almost cramped inhabitants were hidden far from the world’s eyes, locked away a hundred feet or so underground.

Under that bumbling puppy-dog guise, Enzo was rather *sly*. He’d meticulously conjured a pink, simmering love nest,

Wellness Chamber. *Jerk.*

just for the two of them, under the guise of “improving” on the previous stark functionality of the room. It was one among a series of such reinforced concrete-framed cubes along the narrow corridor; the others were replete with stacked bunk beds and survival gear. Perfect for, say, a handful of paranoiacs to outlast world war three, sooner or later, as efficiently as possible. The facility occupied a system of ancient natural caves in the limestone bowels of the island. The rocky outcrop that housed the whole complex fell off sharply towards the Mediterranean, little more than a stone’s throw away. They were thus in effect ensconced in a secret little paradise, a clever collaboration between human and natural genius.

In fairness to the boss, who was merely perpetually cautious (as if something even bigger and hungrier was going to step on his tail any second), they were

during non-working hours being coddled in huge, lovely accommodations on the surface. The spartan quarters next door were merely indicative of plan C.

Or F, as in fubar. Just in case.

Enzo had immediately descended upon the opportunity to exponentially upgrade the wellness area, using the latest ambient electronics. It was the first thing he'd worked on, secretly—only the boss had been in on it (**sneaky bastard, saving his own hide**), since he'd naturally been footing the bill—after Enzo's initiation into the inner circle. **Not quite all the way in**, as Jericho himself was hoping to stay today; only two men were that deeply *in* at the moment and two other individuals, complicit in their awareness thereof. But both Jericho and his employer suspected that, eventually, Enzo would have to be completely filled in. He was simply too talented not to figure out how to *perform*. He would soon trip, headlong, while sporting an innocent, delighted grin, into a huge, steaming vat of *truth*.

And paradise

Will crumble

To ashes

Jericho shook himself. **Fluff off, Messiah. Working here.**

The new-age healer had no real problem with Enzo's habitual, rampant hard-ons during these sessions. It wasn't as if he'd never seen one before.

Ol' Jay Kat's not so relaxed about it right now.

The kid couldn't help himself. His colleague was plainly the epitome and prime mould of a beach-bum demigod, from whom others were wretchedly imitated and badly cast. Jericho's skin was sublime bronze to others' plaster of Paris. The working drawings had been executed by a virtuoso hand in languidly rippling, seductively firm but pliant curves. In the dimensions of the finished masterpiece, these lines defined deeply carved, elegant speedways hugging a smooth undulating landscape, in contrast to lesser men's rutted, errant donkey tracks.

Given the chance to admire him at length, one desired to take one's almost—*almost*, if one were forced to consider a trade-in—equally sexy Jag E-Type OTS—incidentally, according to another Enzo F, “the most beautiful car ever made”—and just *drive*, for *days on end*, over those regal hills and along those abundant valleys. The ground would slide by like velvet under one's expensive custom rubber. Sooner or later one might encounter on one's journey one of four great forests planted upon this otherwise pristine land, or one or another long stretch of delightful underbrush: the first thrived among the undulant plains of his lusty abdomen, while the second was hidden deep within a narrow, fecund canyon.

Pervy classic-car nut.

Follow either generously marked path and it should guide you towards one of two thickly-rimmed, near-circular oases that emerge like tempting wells to refresh the travel-weary. One of these, sheer, bottomless, shall seem to desire to suck you down into its murky depths. The other shallower pool many will have played in already before you, and it will frequently be warmed by ardent, moist breezes. But that other, more mysterious funnel, alas, no man has ever spelunked, or ever will.

About time we got to that *pretty important* plot point. Jay doesn't cave. Claustrophobic. Well. Okay, I'm *in a cave now*, but, like, I'm not a cave for none. Wising up to the lay of the land here. Poor choice of words. You're the *wordy* guy. Meanwhile oil's getting hot and my client, hotter. I mean, he's *sweating* and *uncomfortable*. Hurry it along, would ya' for the Messiah's sake.

This is the story, in brief, of another lone wanderer, though this one was rarely alone. When he had been a child, Yehoshua Ben Khaddouri's dark skin and afroesque mane had caused many, among them his own father, secretly to wonder where he'd really breezed in from, into the large, *Haredi* family that had been settled for generations, proudly but precariously, deep inside the West Bank. Familial relations had become further strained when Yehoshua's ebulliently sensual nature, like his hair, could no longer be restricted to horsing

around in the *yeshiva*, and had detonated onto the larger community. Thereafter he'd rapidly matured into an irrepressible young man who seemed to be either blithely testing his considerable strength or else declaring himself utterly contrarian to his native environment.

Abruptly one day, Jay Kat (*nom de plume*) had found himself officially without a family and in irrevocable exile. He therefore, endowed only with natural enthusiasm, set out to find another one in the beckoning *out there*, far from the constrictions that prohibited further tolerance of “that *niddah* spawn.” Perhaps he had dimly sensed a need for his own separate peace, and was searching for *his* personal *kehuna*: some priesthood of like-minded souls who could show him that he belonged anywhere at all. But while gifted with boundless energy, spelling never was his forte, and neither was focus. So quite soon he became intensely distracted from his noble quest.

Wherever he alit for a short while, Yehoshua tended to seek out the company of beaches, always the ones with the largest swells. Nothing seemed to scare him; instead, he laughed all the time, as if born to celebrate life itself. Always the sun shone out from his comely person, which warmed not just the hearts of those around him. He should have realized, seeing the effect he had on men and women alike, lighting them up from within with his touch, that he was meant for more, though what he gave and received was much more already than most ever dared to desire for themselves. Slowly he discovered that he, himself, was *feeling* those who enjoyed hanging out with him, feeling *him* feeling them... It was uncanny, complicated and surely wondrous, but Jericho (as he'd started to call himself then), was not yet given to self-reflection. Except to rather modestly—but not very firmly—brush off all the attention, with a quip that he must be a “Surfin’ Messiah or somethin’.”

Indeed, he had soon learned to handle his boards most excellently. However, his cultural roots, itinerant existence and limited academic interests might excuse his somewhat eccentric take on the mysterious, complex lingo of his peers. Freely he gave of his other great talent as well, spreading affection (**Ahem.**); but making love, he only found rewarding in the company of women. (**Much appreciated.**) Clusters clung to him at a time, as grapes to the healthy vine. (**You're a bit of all right dude; sorry I snarked at you**)

earlier...) So gathering myriads of maenads required very little effort. Jericho was not given to exerting himself, except in his dual areas of expertise, surfing and fu—(**Point made. Moving on.**)... Without a cent to his name, he existed simply but comfortably on his beach. A need for constant company, one suspects, was the main reason for his athletic excesses. Left to himself, he'd have had to think; thinking, wonder; wondering, inquire; inquiring, elicit an answer. And he had no clue who to ask, or what, or even why bother.

One day, somewhere along the long crescent of his aurum, azure-fitted summer, a mysterious, lone man did come along.

(Peculiar, how this occurs so frequently in old tales about the quests of young, comely men, and how rarely it turns out to be instead a garrulous, diaphanous, leggy—)

I don't like your tone. I have long legs too, you know. The better to up and vamoose with. Man of the open air. Getting sticky in here.

It took one unique *man* to show Jericho where he belonged and what he really was. They encountered each other at Laniakea.

The glistening boy was roused from dozing on the hot sand by a sudden drop in temperature. A huge, squarish, raven silhouette had eclipsed all the sky, yet in descending upon him it glided with delicate grace. The figure seemed to hover while it examined Jericho. Then the bulky, elegant man of indeterminate age shed his bespoke, feather-light jacket of deep charcoal silk and...

How do you notice all those little details? My peepers were glued to four pairs of bodalicious...

...

Yeah, yeah back to work. You know I'm stalling, don't you. Of course you do.

...arranged himself among them. He nudged the leggy, pouting girls politely but adamantly and forever out of the story, ruined his beautiful suit, and *told* Jericho.

Thus it came to pass that a hedonistic, reckless, lazy young roamer, then on the cusp of twenty-one, learned that something in his beautiful sunshiny life

had been missing all along. He hadn't been able to put his finger on it until that instant he was drawn into the man's eyes, who had surely flown, in a blink, from impossibly far, so clearly arctic were the bright moons of his irises that had displaced Jericho's sun. Not even the heat on Oahu that day had melted them yet, or possibly ever would. The boy shivered. *Broken*. Jericho *saw* in those eyes that the golden clockwork toy without a watch, the perpetual Hermes, the laughing Don Juan, was damaged inside.

He discovered later that evening that he was meant to be a *kahuna haha*. One who can diagnose and heal much that ailed humanity, through the simple magic of his touch. One who would not be complete in his purpose until he learned to love well, not just plentifully. Much later he realized, by inference: It had taken one broken lover to know another. And it would take yet another to heal the first.

I misspelled one lousy letter. And I am, nominally, Jewish. Hena-huna, big deal.

In the decade that followed, Jericho started paying more attention to what was truly important in life.

Nowadays, of course, Jericho worked—nominally—for the (**Cussed boss-**) man, who was his closest friend and confidant. And because of those two profoundly binding commitments, it was part of his job to help fix up his colleagues, who came to him with their little, and larger, aches and pains. Working for the man was stressful and often dangerous, since it involved sharp objects, cramped spaces, split-second escapes and tricky power-tools. Pocketbooks bulging with frequent-flyer, red-eye member cards and back-crimping schedules. Months on end of spicy foods and exasperating hosts. The usual, as well as other, less usual perils that, at the time of this telling, were still to come.

Due to the peculiar brand of individual that the man seemed to adopt like strays, there were deeper pains as well. Not so recent, subcutaneous scars that you couldn't just smooth out with a gentle stroke of the tip of your thumb. Most of the time there was precious little that Jericho could do about those old injuries, because they were, in their tricky way, a vital part of the organism

they had invaded. He couldn't, knew he shouldn't, eradicate them, even if sometimes, such as in Enzo's case, he dearly wanted to. But he still had to touch the patient while he ministered to more superficial complaints. All the while the deep ones hurt both doctor and patient like hell.

We are up to speed on Jericho. How does one get to know Enzo Leone Ferrara? In the six or so months after he'd left home and before his current employment, nearly all who ran into him would first inquire whether it did in fact have eyes in its head. The vague greyish-brown blot on the landscape would immediately return copious rapid-fire, non-lethal apologies, using custom Sicilianu rounds. The precise answer to one's polite query, based on one's own functioning perception of enthusiastic nodding and verbal denial, seemed to be yes and no. One might abstractedly note that the neglected-looking individual had not fashion sense enough to save his life. If one threw caution to the wind and became more curious still, out of the kindness of one's heart or from burgeoning self-interest, one might extract from him: a workable name; that he was under twenty but over eighteen; and that, as a matter of fact, he liked men just fine. If one required verbal intercourse, felt however unsatisfied by impromptu sounds and signals and preferred mumbled English over jumbled Italian, the strange boy would impress upon one that a thriving fish was ruined upon the hearth by a silly sibling.

Excuse me... that he hailed from a six-house village, including barns, such as could be found all over Sicily. Thereafter one was caught in a more or less lengthy loop of scepticism and reiteration. One eventually unearthed, provided one had lasted this far, a final morsel of available information, about his envisioned future: one day he would be a fine electrician.

In this oft-practiced manner, people found their way permanently into the heart of a shy, dorky kid from nowhere, whether they chose to remain in his company or not. Physically, he'd apparently been assembled from various leftovers. Such as baby-fat, furuncles, thumbs and felt. Or, if one had penetrated that thick layer of other crud: sugar and strawberries, chocolate sprinkles and cream.

That Enzo Leone Ferrara was the incomprehensible, astonishingly brilliant, nineteen-and-a-half year-old new chief electrical engineer of a quirky operation that specialized in entertaining people by fooling them blind.

There were *two* souls, whom Fate had done her utmost to null and void, that haunted the subterranean compound this day, and one of them was shyly but impatiently waiting for an adventitious fourth run of the week on Jericho. The other? Well, almost since the second he'd clapped his feeble eyes on the Beast, his new master, Enzo had loved that other lone wolf with all of his vast palpitating heart. But, fully aware that they'd never, ever dance together, he'd since projected at least the physiological aspects of his veneration—in perfectly sharp focus—onto, of all people, the incorrigibly straight Jericho.

Somewhere beyond the idyll of two men gazing at each other across a massage bed, a real-life Big Bad Wolf, in an exceedingly rare but conclusive sighting, was dangerously on the prowl. This extraordinary animal behaviour was—barely—audible to Jericho. Which curdled his blood, in that he was able to make the faint noises out at all, let alone distinctly. He and Enzo were shut up tight in a chamber that had been expertly soundproofed for privacy and built to defy Armageddon. Still Jericho cringed. All a-growl and a-sowl the chimera was, out there somewhere, scouring inside the rock for a scent of the doomed goat to let scape for the quenching of its incredible wrath. The Wolf's quaking minions thanked their Fates, one by one, for being rumblingly deemed irreplaceable, though they knew they remained up to their nostrils in *merde*.

The team had been ramping up for the imminent Asian debut of “Morpheus Dawning”, but preparations had stalled while deadlines loomed. The chief engineer was tearing at her fiery red hair; the taciturn computer genius was volubly cursing in choice Unicode; the avuncular caterer scowled, safely barricaded behind his fortress of Mephistophelian baklava that everyone, normally, would bleed out for and inhale, fingerless, rather than fetch a Band-Aid from Jericho first. The boss Himself—who was as kind, queer and collected as Jericho was hot, empathic and straight...

...who was queerer, actually, than Jay was not, *were* one to compare the (**I can hear you just fine from in here.**)... a kind ruler whose habitual mien lay somewhere between that of a *Buddha* perched on his *zafu* and a scalpel immersed in liquid CO₂—*that* individual had spontaneously morphed into one enormous, black bristle intent on huffing and puffing the whole solid-bedrock place down.

Because *no* one, after all that time and money spent—burned to fuel the development of three minutes of mesmerizing fluff rather than, as the Wolf was volubly regretting, to feed a small starving country (*which nobody put it past him to be, albeit more quietly, doing anyway*)—not one of the card-carrying geniuses had been able to make this Cowering Ass Tension actually *work*. The voracious monstrosity would gather, from now till next season *if* they were lucky, additional bags of golden dust. When complete it would be, they knew in their bones, absolutely spectacular, but not this year, and not within the greater vicinity of Shanghai, Osaka and Seoul. So they would have to figure out a *rousing finale for the show* to replace The Tower of Ascension number and preferably by yesterday. As was his wont, the Wolf was not about to recycle any of the other spectacular offerings with which Storage was stuffed to its reinforced concrete rafters, because *that* wouldn't be fair to the paying public. And they all knew too well it would be easier to design something from scratch by Thursday than to point out to the Wolf that, since they'd never actually *been* to any of these places, his arguments didn't hold a drop.

Rhomboid of baklava, they'd too quickly agreed. However, in *this* single, shocking, unheard-of instance, everyone seemed to have run fresh out of ideas. Which is why two of the unfortunates responsible for the fucking fuck-up were roasting like *luau* piglets at the foot of a ruptured volcano, while piglet number three, having fortuitously developed a migraine immediately after the umpteenth and definitively last failed rehearsal, was about to be butter-balled by Jericho. Two of their principal performers were next on Jericho's suddenly full schedule, with sprains and bruises, a bloody nose and a twisted ankle. But they were still arguing with the boss for another shot at the act. In fairness to the Beast, who was at heart the fairest of them all, it was primarily ranting

about the potential fatality. The young, expert acrobat had, by a hair's actual breadth, avoided plummeting from three stories up. In the sweetest of ironies, he had been spared solely due to the eagle-eye vigilance of... Enzo, for which, Jericho had to warmly admit, he was most justly being rewarded with this unexpected treat. If only it didn't have to be at the hands of good ol' Surfer Claus.

Big picture, Jericho assessed, I'm not out *there*. I'd rather be snuggled up in a pinkly simmering little hole, with a sweet kid who has a mile-long hard-on for me that I can't really help him with. Anatomically, hell, sure, why not. I'm open. Well, most of me. Front door. Fire exit isn't unlocked for anybody. But guys aren't any ickier than gals. Proven fact. Just a lot less exciting.

Even emotionally, up to a point, he could engage with Enzo. He genuinely liked the boy. But Jericho had grown up since Oahu.

Not the way he needs me. Deserves. After the afterglow, he'd only hurt even more.

So it would be, as usual, just the works, no perks. But even a simple work-over meant **skinny-diving in his thick, horny funk** for a good forty minutes.

Totally cool. Piece of ass. *Cassy*. Cherry Pie. Cake. Piece of cake.

Jericho glanced around, making sure the scented oils, large singing bowls and little glass cups were at the ready. He did give good wellness. But Jericho wasn't done dithering, so he changed the order of the routine. Which, in hindsight, may not have been the best strategy, since it would mean that, a few minutes earlier than usual, Enzo would turn over to have his front done. Not a planner, our Jericho.

He spaced the three largest bell metal bronze bowls atop Enzo's prone form: upper back, lower back and thighs, and set them vibrating with a leather-muffled mallet. They sounded like the gongs of an Asian monastery, pitched to some mystical, harmonious chord. He let the vibrations fade out completely, in what felt like several minutes of blissful eternity, and paused for another

minute to allow Enzo's body to experience the resonant echoes within. One more time. Beautiful.

The final round was a bit trickier. He rebalanced the bowls to make as little skin contact as possible, while remaining centred above the relevant chakras. Then he glided a plain wooden mallet around the inside rims, making them vibrate more gently and musically. The softer touch produced a more piercing, eerie effect. (**Alien monks chanting. Trippy.**) Complex vibrations—layers within layers of overtones—now engaged, it felt like, every molecule in the room, and every cell of both their bodies deep into the bone. Enzo of course was the most profoundly affected. The three genuine, ancient Himalayan treasures were another reason for the near-perfect sound barrier. With the door open, their pregnant song could topple some precariously balanced object in the nearby workshop right off its high, dangerous perch.

Enzo didn't topple. Enzo simply melted as his pent-up tension drained out of him. That experience was something else. It took you far into and yet totally out of yourself.

Pure. Free. Elemental. Surfin' the cosmic wave. Peace. You'd think, that much vibration shooting through your *Atala*, you'd be spurting buckets, but it all just evaporates. Perfect.

Which had been the plan. Unfortunately, it was now time for the folks down under to participate in the cosmic daisy chain. Jericho tapped Enzo on the shoulder, who languidly mewled and shuffled himself around, stretching and yawning.

No flags fluttering. No pole for hoisting. Still good.

Largo

Enzo unfurled his heavy lids and demonstrated his second-best trick, a synchronized twin chocolate moonrise. Whatever wretched apprentice had slapped him together and then botched the paint job in a vague theme of muddy whites and dirty browns, he had mercifully left the eyes to his master, who had evidently been a more competent artisan. Same theme, but applied with a clean, fine brush and a trained and steady, generous hand. Enzo looked, as always, surprised and befuddled at what life had plunked right in front, or in this case, above, his nose. His teddy-bear arms, unbidden, reached into the sky and wrapped themselves tightly around Jericho's neck, before the blurry demigod from Enzo's vague dream could float back up and away into the deep pink heavens.

Enzo, barely there yet, instinctively grabbed and pulled, as *anyone* would have. More precisely, his *body* pulled at the heavenly hunk on top of him. His *brain*, at that exact moment configured to one-tenth consciousness and nine-tenths hormones, *pushed* with all it had.

In poor, innocent Enzo's sleep-addled vision, which was obviously fibbing, Jericho started to sparkle all over, inside and out, in myriad subtle hues of tropical sunset skies. There *was* no flesh and blood man topping him, there was only a huge, sexy apparition made up of zillions of tiny, flickering sparks, rushing and dancing back and forth with abandon until they hit some invisible barrier, that happened to be formed into an idealized love god. This hot glittery *figment* out of some Arabian tale was what Enzo held onto with all his puny might, and sloppily kissed. In his ongoing dream, their moist tongues crackled with an unexpected, massive static charge that however didn't stay static for long.

How was Enzo to know? He'd never *seen* anything like it. Okay, it not so vaguely resembled his electric machines, which he would *perceive* when they operated, in exactly this manner. But in them the currents were exponentially higher than within the body, and so, well above the threshold of Enzo's inner electric eye. The natural, slightly negative human charge was minuscule by comparison. Which is why this *had* to be a dream, his perfect dream of a

Jericho machine. And he knew intimately how to make any electrical device work exactly to his own specifications. So he might as well enjoy the fantasy while it lasted. *Anyone* would have kept dreaming for as long as possible, and Enzo intended to do just that.

A thoroughly rattled Jericho *sensed* everything Enzo was feeling, rushing into himself, and a good deal more besides. Pulled off-balance by Enzo's move, he'd slapped his big hands onto the ardent young man's skin, the left on his soft, scratchy chest—on *Anahata*—and the right on his lower belly—smack-dab in *Atala*.

It would turn this terse tale into ruminating rigmarole to explain the significance of Jericho's accidental closing, with Enzo, of a circuit that passed precisely through these two of Enzo's chakras, while Jericho's 'terminals' happened to be the very parts of him that *felt* empathically. It would complicate matters further and bore the reader, who we are confident would rather find out what happened next, to tears of despairing frustration if we further tried to theorize as to what exactly *performing* or *pushing* or, heavens, *truth*, may have been intended, most inadequately, to designate within those voluminous and hard to decipher, crazed esoteric scribblings (provided we could even find them) that had been secreted from prying eyes in yet another, *hidden* section of the hidden complex. Some essential pages from these ever-growing, haphazardly-bundled stacks, our Jericho, not a bibliophile at best, had, out of necessity, forced himself to become familiar with, since they applied to him as well. So in the interest of brevity, we shall leave these tedious and convoluted, blatant speculations for another time.

Something invisible stabbed right through the back of Jericho's left palm and deep into Enzo, who didn't seem to notice at all. Something hard, blunt and on fire, a rail spike used for a branding iron. Meanwhile a flash-fire took most of Jericho's right arm all the way into his shoulder, where it mercifully petered out, lapping greedily towards the space behind his eyes. The very tip of the dragon tongue proceeded to feel and taste its way around in there. To

put it mildly, and more literally, Jericho was, for a split-second, frozen by a profound electric shock, that had been precisely *aimed* into his brain matter; then he collapsed in a heap, his torso sprawled across Enzo's, his hands flattened between them—continuing to feel and *feel* and FEEL everything. As soon as he regained some muscular control he shifted position, but by then it was far too late to change anything; by then his face had been locked somehow to Enzo's greedy mouth.

Next thing Jericho knew, he was Enzo. All he saw in the world—and enthusiastically proceeded to do something about—was Jericho, up top, passionately kissing him. Except in this fantasy world, Jericho, no, *Enzo*, who had spent his entire life being chubby, peculiar, ineffectual and invisible... Little Enzo was Jericho's equal in irresistible strength and gorgeousness. Which caused Jericho, during the next half hour or so, whenever he would intermittently manage to re-inhabit his own space, a not inconsiderable series of further shocks.

This has become really confusing, dude.

Jericho was long used to the overwhelming muddle of frozen loneliness and scorching desire whenever his palms touched Enzo. Having to share this painful, perpetual state with him was the prime reason he dreaded these sessions, as well as why they were so necessary. After a few seconds of disorientation, he'd always get it under control, and while it remained an unpleasant sensation it was more or less bearable. Less so, whenever he could *sense* other, even greater but duller pain rising up from Enzo's past than the ache that defined his present. Still, it was a small price to pay for making his client feel a little better for a day or two. But *this*?

Jericho definitively wasn't, in *this* manner, clairvoyant. He couldn't *see* into people's heads. (**Thank Morpheus... curse that fucking show**).

What he was, what he did for others—his role in life—as well as the strange notions that would sometimes, out of the blue, haunt him—of course he had a joke about all that. He imagined he must be the lost love child of a lesbian

space-opera *ménage-à-trois*, among the unerring female doctor, the mushy empath and the... Whoopi. Spaced Dude, the next generation.

For the next few minutes, while he couldn't see, feel, hear, touch, or taste anything that made any sense (**nose, present and normal: wellness pad, candles and oils, Enzo aroused, Jericho sweating**), Jericho had to assume that his decade-long training had taken over, and that in reality he was busy giving Enzo his back rub (**Belly rub? Toe massage? Tongue bath? Where were we, what's next, get with the program**). Since *this*, obviously, he wasn't doing.

Because Jericho wasn't. *Enzo* was. Obviously. (**Hello-o? I'm Enzo, always have been, duh.**) And (**most dudacious!**), did it ever feel amazing to finally be allowed to suck Jericho's luscious cock.

The smoothly toned, attractive young man who was Enzo...

I've obviously started to work out a while back, finally sick I guess of always huffing along after the others; and been waxing and shaving, not such a mangy mutt anymore. Cool. 'Bout time I wised up to my potential.

...who was Enzo's fantasy Enzo, was by all accounts a gentle, retiring creature. Nevertheless, he now used his recently acquired upper body strength to his advantage, and, while the object of his unbridled affection was still startled out of his wits, he easily flipped them both over like stacked pancakes and slammed himself on top, flattening Jericho's backside against the warm, greasy frying pan of the massage pad. Now Enzo was *finally* on top, and the dread-locked, smokin' hot dude lay helplessly spread out beneath him. Enzo's lithe steely thighs had his victim's massive trunks locked in their vice grip, and Enzo's granite cock was poking into sweaty bronze flesh above the arched shelf of Jericho's abdomen. The underside of Enzo's sensitive bulb was being deliriously tickled by Jericho's treasure trail. His, that is, Jericho's, warm, gentle hands—so very soothing, strangely pulsing, firm and loving hands—cupped his temples as he

He-ey! Earth calling! Enzo's! Me, remember? Born in the vineyard, fuckwad dad, pious ineffectual mom, cool sister, wacky gran, cocksucker

soccer coach... Dude, ya gotta keep track! Or I'm gonna end up doing something weird to myself, Sheesh!

Jericho eagerly took another bottomless draught of the sweet, sexy boy...

No, wait! That's not what's happening here at all. Th-*that's* me. This is *him*. Meaning me of course. One of them us.

All his senses now desperately struggling to perceive more clearly, Jericho somehow managed partly to dispel the handsome, luminous apparition. Waves of force seemed to ripple through the dense, pretty-youth-shaped nebula, as if Jericho's sandwiched palms had been dropped into it like two pebbles. During the embrace he had managed to rearrange them somewhat more comfortably, which had turned out to be on Enzo's scraggly chest, right on his rock-hard nipples. Now, during the three or five second transformation back to Enzo, or at least to a glowing Enzocloudnebula, these were burning like two deployed Zippos into Jericho's palms.

Feeling was second nature even to this spaced-out surfer living their shared psychedelic wet dream. So he *sensed* the originating energy within Enzo that was desperately resisting Jericho's instinctive defensive move. It was not, as he might have expected, some potent blend of unconscious fear and need and aroused desire, designed to extract something from Jericho. Rather, it was a deep wanting to *give*. Enzo was not, at least not consciously, trying to seduce Jericho with this fiery vision, which to Enzo (if not necessarily Jericho) would have represented, surely, his incarnation as a male siren upon whose crag most gay men would wantonly shipwreck themselves.

Slowly the false image, and with it the resisting force, was collapsing back into a black pool of dejection before it would dispel; possibly the aware part of Enzo felt none of this happening to him, while the other acceded to Jericho's unspoken demand that it should vanish. Meanwhile, Jericho rapidly interpreted: Deep Enzo desired more than anything else to appear to him like this, because it was the only way it knew in which it might be able to make Jericho happy. It was trying to present Jericho with a gift of Enziness, and though it retreated, because that was what its Jericho wanted, it felt confused and disappointed that he had rejected it.

Even more confounding to Jericho at the moment, however, was that, though he knew the false image was gone and he had the old Enzo back, he continued to *perceive* Enzo that way, and knew deep within that from now on he always would. Because his empathic talent, wordlessly as usual but impossibly visually in this instance as well, had left no doubt in Jericho's otherwise addled mind that *this* was Enzo as he *truly* was. The real prince trapped in the accursed frog.

Jericho was flummoxed, breathing hard and hot against Enzo's throat. (**Damn, is the dude cute. Fuck me, I'm hard.**) Whatever insights he might have had in the preceding seconds, they evaporated as his suddenly awoken carnal instincts got busy and wiped his drives to install their own operating system for the time being.

And ribbit.

Reboot. There we are. Systems back up and running. Dangerously over-cooked. I mean, give a medal to Petal here: Gotta get my too-fucking-tight pants off right this second.

“*Loverboy, would you loosen those thunder thighs, there's a dear?*”

Enzo mumbled something that to Jericho had marinated in the blazing Mediterranean sun and complied. “*Thanks hotness. So much better. Hey, no fair, yours biggern mine. Uff!*”

Big effing deal. I'm obviously unconscious, so I didn't actually just say that to a guy. Help me with these, big boy, and I do mean

Someone wolf-whistled. Someone else peeled him out of his pants, hampered by both men's massive erections. They gazed into each other, lust-engorged, with their greenish-chocolate-blue eyes. They both sounded in their own minds, as they assessed unexpected developments, oddly like someone someone else knew him as Jericho. Then, thankfully, things came into lovely focus again for Enzo.

So *that's* Jericho's hyperactive cock. Not disappointing, big guy. No wonder the chicks dig it. Today, I'll be doing the digging, like no chick can dig ya', dig me, chick digga?

Dig me? Feeling punny are we? Whoa. Need to talk about that, dude. Ungh. I'm dripping. Huh. Wanna take a lick? Go ahead, I'd taste me too if I could. Weird dream, 'cause that scorchin' dude's not really... Enzo's sweet sexy face, flushed now like the rest of him while he was hard at work on Jericho, was all huge, limpid eyes, Sicilian brows and bulbous nose in a nest of scruffy underbrush.

Must be out cold, dude. I give you sweet and maybe limpid, but sexy? Dream on. Why not. See what develops. Probably I've turned the heat up too far.

Or worse, the air off by mistake. *Shit!*

Worry not. Enzo's scooted off to fetch help. Sure. Wouldn't just leave his buddy lying around, suffocating. We'll be just fine, sexy. Any second now Jericho's gonna come through that... Oh. *Enzo!* Slow down, dude, I'm serious!

Huh. It's been a while. No apparent change in the situation, at least I'm me for now: A hot and steamy thanksgiving spread for my secret wet, nutbutter (buttnutter?) fantasy lad... I'm gonna be spread, *fuck!* By a pretty wee monk-ee... hehe... who's fallen off his call-eye-oh-pee-pee. Wang-gone-ee.

Peachy-keen, keen poochy-boy. Doing good. Ooh! Wow man. Why? Whim? I like *women!*

Not on these tides, stranger, you don't, sorry 'bout that. Can't help y'out. Not a one around. Can't say I miss 'em much at the instance.

Gone off his *rocker*, you mean! *Both* of us!

Whatever. Peachy dream.

But he's really been gone quite a while now. Where are they? Last two brain cells dying here. Need oxygen, fool's locked the door behind him. Even in my *fucking coma* I'm hyperventilating. I mean, there's the evidence, right? Guy who assphyh... prick who assfucks, moron who *suffocates* himself, who is really, really *hung* like little big Enzo here fuck who straps himself up by his belt for some fun: portrait of Jay Kat, desist or deceased. They'll find him later, with a massive hard-on lying in his own splooge. Right? Fuck, I'm almost *there!!*

Slow down, I'm *so* there already! Yeah, gimme big puppy kiss, relax sweetie, we've got all day no one can hear us we're locked in tight, two smug buggers on drugs. Oooo babeeee, yeah! Fuuuuck meeee!... Yes right *now!*

FuckyoufuckingginormousteaseEnzosweetieeeeeeee. Pleeeeeese? Pretty pretty please my pretty dudarling?

Calfskin, you mooncalf. It's calfskin you guys are ruining in my headpad. Bossman's gonna be furious.

Hellooooo? Anybody? Passed out in here. Creamy dream, funky situation!

Pretty Dude-what's-Enzo-no-me-but-not-recently's been working his way inwards, meticulously spiralling like a Spidey—*Ow!* Hitting all the right spots, baby, but they're called lovebites not love *bites*. Almost, at last, can't hardly hold it anymore *fuck* is he good, arriving at the main course. Have to admit, he's got some self-control, look at the hunger in those Easter-egg eyes, kiddo surprise, is it Easter now? Holy cock. Cow. Christmas has wrapped, Joshie's unwrapped, right after he got zapped, by the pretty little lights in the peach tree, Tweedledee.

FUCK am I tweedleDUMB!

The lad's gone bonkers with unspent spunk and has somehow programmed me as his wildest fantasy, showing me exactly how to have

his way with him. With me. To... (*Fuck me!*) he's *performing* like U2 on acid and probably doesn't even know it. Gotta let the top-dude know, this could be serious. Wait. *I'm* the top dude. Sucking off Jericho. Who's gonna be bottoming today, inn't dat kee-ute?

YES. You're my bottom now, boy.

Huh? He could be blowing our shields right now. Big time. Everybody will find out what we are.

So what? Lovin' is God's gift to clay. Toys are for boys to play. I'm your bottom boy now your pleasure toy yessiree, *oy!* Watch it. I mean *us* not *us*.

Do dudes really talk like that when they're fucking? Why am I thinking it's kinda hot? Cause I'm about to fuck the hottest fucking bronze God on the fucking planet, that's why, boy oh boy!

Oh Boy-o-boy. *Focus!* Getting fucked over here by a moon-faced twink who's repossessed my... *Enzo's!* That's what you said: *my* brain. And he's got his too-firm grip on Jericho's dripping prock. *Too* weird, maybe we better not tell the boss... Cummere you hunk-a hunk-a-door is shut *too tight* baby! Gonna open soon, I promise! Open real wide. Let your big ol' teddy bear boss right on in real deep and all's gonna be peachy-skies from now on in.

The following were the last more or less sensible thoughts Jericho was to have that fine hour.

ashes to ashes

rust to rust

running over water

tears up oceans

frozen salt pillar

gush into rush

Dust, not, rust, moron. Go. Away. Incoming signal *no comprende*, as per usual. No time right now, we're rusting here. *Rutting*. Blazes to hell. Do I have to spell it out? I'm b-u-s-y riding my... his... *Dude's* big fat juicy fruit shiny red corvette, so *fuck off*.

Ooh yah... Running his tongue all over my balls, the fucking tease, slurping sucking soft wet lips popping them out over and over my cock throbbing hurts too hard fuck it actually hurts look it's all wet again no room for all that spunky water balloon gonna burst slow down dammit ungh that was close...

Take that monster all the way down my throat, yeah, how does he do that, all the way in and out in and out fuck till my lips get all scratched by Jericho's musky bush and my greedy gullet is sore from the pounding it's getting from my yummy dick...

So close so fucking close fuck but then I tease him (ha!) and pull it out and flip over on my belly and slather my ass with the oil (take that!) all shiny and tempting his ginormous prick whodaknown (I picked those lights for us you know so I can see you like this all tempting and shiny) and the candles flicker over his perfect skin like it's on fire. Then we just watch dripping hard don't even touch but hard not to, while he fingers himself and moans for me. I have to stop too far too fast never done it silently I plead with him to stop but I look at his pleading, faraway eyes and it just turns me on even more can't help it I'm sorry too late now am drowning in those crystal pools tropical waters Kauai no more surfing am under too deep drowning where is up where out in space feeling my spaced toy, blissed-out boy, limpid eyes heavy, pooling water dangerous deuterium oxide reactor miss physics going on about danger didn't pay attention never took physics not paying attention now on my own time no time! like the present it's a fine time baby relax we have all the time in the world no one will hear us way out in space.

Hesitantly at first then faster (needy I need you so bad inside) me he probes him testing the virgin isn't that funny! The Kat's a virgin for you anything even my ass territory no too scared too virge-end hot unfamiliar helpless virgency! First one tip, then two long thick fingers then three, stretching it wide I can feel it relax now sucking at my fingers tasting my skin, feeling the hardness of his boner underneath what a rush... wanting nothing else in the world than to have him have me fill my ass with his

sweaty hole. Other end up now of the universe coming in here like this not expecting me to come in you please isn't it different yes from your purple pussy palace at home but I'm home and... he's home! The bat's connected. Wow! What a crack! There he flies, into sky, eye on the prize, everyone sighs. Rousing cheers! Home run! Gotta run! Faster! Please, faster! The others! They're cheering us on don't you hear it. Relax you're at home plate main dish. No more running. But will they be happy for us do you think? Parents hate me mine too but we have each other now they can't hurt us any more we'll be so happy together will they be happy though? I'm sure they will, big boy, I'm sure they're laughing and shouting and screaming more... more encore no that's the audience fooled by a trick of the light they're clapping and screaming please harder... *harder baby* no that's me screaming for *help!*

Fuck I need *more* inside me, *all* of it! what's the boy *waiting* for, *hello?* A little assistance, RIGHT NOW screaming my lungs out here no I can't barely a whispered breath pounded out of me no air lungs empty don't bother screaming no one can hear you probably all dead by now. Doesn't matter. Too late if you don't hurry I'm gonna fuck me

HARDER! Can you take it take all of me sure you can? Course I can take it, I mean yes sir please NO! like you mean it bitch you sweet crazy boy watch your *oh!* langwich.

Jericho's balls snuggle his thighs big soft pink sack drooping below his crack onto slicked leather. They're guarding his rampaging cock like the Wolf in the cave didn't know the boss could be such a cock what a fuck-up all around wish I could see it ache every time I push into me oh! now I can feel it underneath my, fuck, foot-long tonguwich wedged tight muscle and calf-hide sticky with my—Shit we forgot the *lube?* didn't need it I guess *wow*—no not lube wish I had cuffs and a cock strap (*where did that come from fuck*) me Enzo you Jay *cap!* yeah gotta wear a *helmet* while I ride ya' shit clean forgot

“Dio mio, gli goldoni!”

what *he* said... what'd he say? Never mind checkup clear to launch *phew* both of us and a matching studded collar how cute diamonds he deserves you're such a *good* boy and on the leash too to make them sparkle like Jericho so pretty and I can feel my balls slapping against his bulge all sweaty and fat in the fuck strap cock is a *fuck?* train crossing *fuck!* bra for boy balls *fuck!* they're enormous *fuck!!* eyes gleaming from the grass *fuck!!!* is it Easter I told *fucking!* Hell's bells! Like, *already*.

Hop, funny bunny. *Hup!* Crossing tracks. *Hep!* Like this. *Hut!* You. I. Your. *Hut!* My! Agogo saviour. *Snap* my balls! At last. On *two*. You're just lovin' it, aren't you. Crossing the *line*. Now! My. Surfin' Sunshine?

I'm fucking *me*, not fucking *you!* But my ass is amazing gotta say never seen why some chicks get into—my *ass!* Cannonballs!—pump hot molten steel, into my juicy flesh—*Fucker!*

Aren't I just, great hunks of meat, getting pulverized here?

—quivering beefcake, switched, on as fuck! he's barrelling into—over, the barrel, me—*victim!* of desire, for the kid, so lonely, so long!

All those old geezers giving nothing in return for *fucks sake!!* my devotion fucking *cunts*. I've got Jericho, now Jericho forever *Geronimo!* The walls come down, towering walls of ass tension all melted away glistening bejewelled portcullis my jewel unlocked for me just for me *Ow!* *Enzo!* Poor little can't see for *fuck* what's he doing? Painful! I'm in *pain!* FEEL IT, yeah, ride it! Like that! No, please DON'T!! like *that!!!* Yeah, that's *much* better thanks I can FEEL you so DEEP I'm so deep inside cause you're so fucking beautiful all-the-way-in-fuck—

“I'm so beautiful inside you!”

“You're so beautiful inside me!”

Pure unending pleasure horizon blue peaceful eternal golden limits none only us now. Like surfing, no? No. Like *truth* in his papers *truth* he says should be *love* but it isn't not yet have to keep *searching* not fair don't *wanna* you're here *now* it's perfect fully me *us* full release full *stop* I'm gonna burst my *ass* no my *cock* fuck oh *fuck* me... *uh oh!*

“*Hoh*-shit.”

Coming copiously, while having someone absurdly massive inside you, was about to be an entirely new anatomical feat for Jericho. Though essentially a familiar biochemical procedure, only, well, to use that horrible neologism correctly for once, more *impactful*—Jericho, during the second or so that he could still briefly cogitate, accurately suspected it was going to be very high up indeed on the list of “*the* most intense, dude, ever” experiences, snuggled right up against that *other* great one-eyed monster.

He’d been way too young to know better, back in ’00, impetuously intent on celebrating the new millennium *his* way. It had done its considerable best to end him that day, “Cyclops” had, off the remote southern coastline of Australia. Jericho found himself—very briefly—transported back in time, reminiscing.

How apropos. Except that time I *avoided* getting pounded into hamburger by submerged rocks. Barely.

Be that as it may, the intro of J. B. Khaddouri’s unintentional tribute to concrete poetry—its imminence signalled by several terse jabs of the Maestro’s baton—went something like this:

[*Staccato*]

„Ou-w // wf-ff-ouff...

„ffu-ngh! // Uh! / -h- / uh / -Hh- / hUgh-q.

„*Qhuqk!* / *Ggh-g-ckK!* // *Qw-ww-W-* / *wOW!!!*

„... !?...

„*W-whoa-h / hH / h / Hh / h // u-huh!* / u-HUH!!“

At which point someone mercifully engaged a vacuum pump, or else got helplessly stuck all the way in, between the jammed portals of Jericho’s clenched sphincter. Enzo, either way, had felt the unmistakable shudder besetting Jericho’s drenched frame, and so he tightly wrapped himself around his lover and mercifully held still. His hot, close breath carried an abstract

murmur of incredibly sexy solace into Jericho's ear. Together as one, they hovered in the still eye of the storm

—? :... ! :—!—!!—?? ?!!!!

[*Cres. Fortissimo*]

„HHOUwaA!AahHAahaAaah—

„Hh. HAAaAaaaaa. ...“

[*Dim.*]

„... aohwGH haoh ouhow-w-w...“

„W - W. ... w! ...“

„w.“

„—“

[*Coda*]

„... o fuNGh-gh-k“

What the...

...fuck, I'm gonna come AGAIN, must have been *years* no yesterday? The brunette what's her name... I'm swimming in my own cum but hoh lordy I'm not done yet ENZO's! close I'm so fucking close I'm *here* you're right here, my NO! I'm not yours! Please trust me, you'll find him, don't you love me? I love you kid that's why I can't let you I'll just break your big ol' *cock* my cock *fuck* I'm gonna gonna deep into *you you* you have to get out of my fucking *fuck* have to get out of his *head* this is wrong *so wrong* please I'm sorry! *trust* me I love you my darling my.

Jesus!!!

Enzo's cock was still crazy-glued into Jericho, who thought he felt something upon his person rip as the fucking beast swelled up some more and started to twitch, then pulse, against the most sensitive lining of his anatomy. No doubt, had he had breath left, he might have reiterated his recent solo to get

his point across. As it turned out, he didn't have to, because he'd just crossed over again into

Enzo screaming,

[*Cantabile, sfz*]

„GESÙ-oo-oo! Io *godo! Michia!*

„Io *god-ohoh-Oh-oh-oh-oh -*

„oh... oh—oh—o—

„—o... o... •“

[*Reprise, var.*]

„... *Oh!—ho haw!?*

„*Haw-ww-ww fu-uUu-Ung!!*

„*HAAa-ow! w-WAWAAA!?!?*

„—*WaHaHAHWww-f-UHU? - HUH!*

„—*HUH!—HUH!—HUH!—Huh.*“

[*Dim.*]

„—*Uhownghngnhhnnhhnnnhhhnnhhhh!*“

[*Coda*]

„*Mannagia, siamo nella merda!*“

Huh.

Shit! NononoNO SHIT! What have I done you're not *done* must keep looking trust me you'll know when you find *love* is the *truth* is I DO love Enzo! Truly. I promise. I really! *really*... really?... Really *do*. Shit.

...

Yes. Me. Jay Kat Ben Khaddouri. Don't speak a word of Italian. Never did. Love him. Yes. Wow. No, now. Now he's Enzo Leone Ferrara. Again. For good. Sicilian. Yes. All sorted now? Seems so. Shit I'm gonna pass—

...

...

...

Through it now. Over. Huh. All out now. Out of what? Wet wipes? No, silly, clear... For my specs? Don't use 'em. I'm all... *clear*. Of what? Shit happen? Something drop on top of me? Clod knock me out? Don't remember. Out cold. Not a thi... No *wait*. Dreamt. Long one. Something, some... I was... *oh*.

Oh, yeah.

I was dreaming sweet little Enzo fucked the living daylights out of, with Big Ben here, and we just loved it. Second time I came in Italian. Weird, huh. Trippy. Waddyaknow lil' Enzo's a screamer. Creamboat. Total dream. in my.

Non più di erba per questo ragazzo, um, dude. Um... 'Sheesh?'

Got that right, Jay ole boy. Gotta lay off the spinelli for a while.

...

What's a spinelli?

...

Some kinda cross, crusty shag shay shone... *shrimps*, dude. Duh. Spicy too, shouldn't wonder. Make me *noxious*. Nightmares. Runs. Feel the burning in my ass already, *fuck*. So stupid. Stoned outta my tree again, why I didn't remember not to partake, sure. Blazing munchies!

What happened here? Just look at this junk! Wow, look at that dude's... Fuck, I'm *naked*. FUCK I'm at the *office*!

This dodo's in deepish doo-doo.

Naw, couldn'ta gone down *here*.

Could it?

[*Lento, pianissimo*]

While Enzo underwent his second ablutions for the day, flopping about like a chubby felt Gumby doll stripped of its supporting wires, an equally zoned-out Jericho cleaned up the spa bed pretending as usual nothing had happened. Sure, there were a bit more oil and a lot more cum than normal smeared all over the expensive leather, post Enzo. His rising, tearful whimper always announced the imminence of the habitual event.

I did hear him earlier, sure. Except it had sounded weirdly... like *me*, when I was just, like, waaaay back. When I'd just figured out you can actually... do *that* with that. Right after biology class, in the boy's room. People came running, worried I'd cut the damn thing off or something. Learned to be more quiet about it after.

Enzo usually ejaculated at the exact moment Jericho was expertly making mincemeat of his glutes. The poorly hidden event concluded with a brief exclamation point, scribbled in quivering flesh by pitched, swallowed moaning. Afterwards, both would pretend they hadn't noticed, both tacitly relieved that Enzo had got his kinks out, for now.

Although. Surely Enzo would have tried to rouse him if Jericho had fallen asleep on the job, or worse, had suddenly passed out.

And he *is* all spaceballs and rubber duckies, even more than usual. So I did do my job, must have given him a real workout. Except, I feel like someone minced *my* ass real good instead.

King Prawn, dude. It's the hot buttered prawn. Any minute now. Oh, right. Hope he gets outta there soon, in case I need to... *uh oh*, breathing shallow. Think he remembered to give me my injection?

Enzo knew Jericho was badly allergic.

How could I have given him that level of service? I wasn't even *present*. I was out cold, gasping for air. Fuck, the AirCon!

Also, that he was hypoglycemic, with a bad habit of skipping his first meal due to a bad habit of partying late before workdays.

Air's working fine. Ok, that was part of the dream. I just passed out because... of low sugar. That's it. Stop skipping breakfast from now on. Yeah. Grab a bagel and chow on the run. That'll do the trick.

Spreading wellness in my fucking sleep? What am I, the Prophet of Dozing? I'm not *that* lazy, people.

...

Unless.

Gotta be shitting me.

I'm *empathic* and he's... *electric*. But he's just a *receiver*. Isn't he? All the tests we've snuck by him. Conclusive. He couldn't have fucked... *faked*, fuck he wouldn't have, he's, he's *Enzo*, for Dude's sake. Walking bloody proof for the, you know, *Law, Guile can't Procreate in a Vacuum*.

Unless. It. Happened.

Fuck. Me. blind.

The jinxed mix of, of, of *both* of us—touching each other, hyper-activated, intensely focused. Spiced up with a... a potent eruption of his bottled-up need. Holy Cow. Enzo really did just *perform*. On me. Pulled his great big white rabbit out of the hat. Welded himself onto me, I don't know... his horny little electrons beaming on up and having a party in my neurotic... neuronal penthouse. Then he, true to form, he rabbits himself off to safety again. Or?

Up my enchanted bubble butt! I was *baked*, hot out the oven, just right for to gobble up hole. Whole. *Hole!* Hook, line and sink 'im. Enzo oh *Enzo sweet* Enzo on my brain. Didn't the kid even wonder what had suddenly hit me?

Damn. Remember now. After he kissed me. That bit. I seduced *him* into... me! Wheedled him over the fucking edge, lathering up all nice and ready to be fried. *There* you go, sweetheart, isn't this what you've always wanted? Well, get it on and come, come on in, 'cause,

"I'm so fucking hot for you right now, baby!"

Didn't say that out loud, did I? Dreamboat, you're gunning for me, have been all along, so come on then, take your best shot, Cap'n E. Valentino.

...

Fuuuuck me. The kid's *amazing*. Dangerous, but fucking amazing. I'd give him a great big hug right now, but. In context, might be... misrepresented.

She-ee-it. I... think... actually... I... don't wanna talk about this right now. To no one. Kat's feeling a might... diss-comb-ovulated. Not... not freaked out, or anything. *Nah*.

Over-elated? You think?

For Pete's sake, please don't think about myself in... in a person... other than number one. *That* is freaking me out right now.

Asses to ass

funk to funky

ASHES! Ground to action control: Let it *slide*. All the way up my big ripped open kazoo, plenty'a room in here for all of us... And I'm not a major ju—just toke up once in a blue... oh. You mean—getting addicted to...

You know what, don't talk to me anymore *period*. No more, "Oooh, have a look-see, the Spooky Messiah, he's shrieking big nothing again," okay? No more pre-mo-me-ni-notions, no more funny funk-ed-up headfunk.

the stars look

very different

today

Asshead! Is there nothing I can do to vaporize you?

...

Not taking no head-fucking ass fucking from nobody. Had it up to *here*.

...

“I *quit*! Do you *hear* me, people? Final warning!! On my way out, bye-bye Hellness pod, stepping through the door *right now*...

“Right *after* I throw something on!”

A lesser man than Jericho might have fled into prolonged therapy right then and there. He, however, had experienced some truly weird shit in his time, so he tried to be philosophical about the whole thing, as well as practical. He'd just have to make Enzo not do *that*, whatever it had been, *ever* again. Because this clearly wasn't Jericho's problem he was wrestling with, it was Enzo's.

Right?

That boy had some rather pressing privacy issues to overcome.

Just the Laws of Nature, dude, too bad really. Don't you think I'd rather be bilaterally endowed? Double the gum, man. *Sheesh*.

I mean. Get real. He can't just... just go around playing space invaders. Head commando. Right? This ain't no... no innocent little porno flick he's pirated, we're talking real people here. Granted, people have fucked him up and over all his life, but...

Still, gotta hand it to him. Way to get back at someone. Just glad he practiced on me first.

Are you grinning?

I mean so I can go knock some sense into him before he tears up some other bugger's buggery butt!... Oh hell. You tell me, Mister Know-it-all. All fuzzed-up at the present end. My ass is still smokin', I'll have you know.

Mhm! I can see that.

Scherzo

They were milling about, bleary and exhausted, not really sure *what* to do next. At least, that's how Jericho felt, who was employing his proven strategy of procrastinating for as long as possible when confronted with an awkward decision. Enzo was apparently off somewhere in his own head, ruminating. He'd been intently focused on *something*, because suddenly he started to jump up and down, buck-naked and flopping, and shouted,

“Find the LADY!”

Jericho glared at him. “Next time I will,” he grouched. “You can bet your... excessive endowment on it.”

I think I'm bleeding. He carefully wiggled his butt. **Attached, barely. Thank the Big Kahuna for Enzo's reformed monastic lifestyle. That boy, unlike this one, is all work and no play. Till oy vey today.**

“No, really, Shericcoh! Find. The. Lady!”

Jericho was so done playing stupid games. “What. Enzobaby. Saying.”

Enzo rolled his eyes and carefully enunciated, “With people, *ovviamente.*” Jericho was obviously just being stubbornly idiotic, as usual.

The latter pretended he finally got it that time, “Of course. *Ow.* Of course what?”

“We can play, *come si chiama? Sì!* The Full Monty!” Enzo was waving his arms around like a madman, everything else forgotten.

“Newsflash for ya. You. Me. Sans togs? Remember? I sure do.” He visually demonstrated, by way of his several tender spheres. He remembered it all now, down to the last detail. Which didn't do much to dispel his lingering confusion. If anything, he was beginning to feel weak in the knees again.

“No, silly, with *two* men, with big heart and big... *sì*, big *clubs*...”

Oh fuck I should have just said yes, sure, great, find the lady. Now he's going nuts again because I provoked him.

“Yeah, sure, ok, waddayasay we both go right now and find you a lady!”

“*Bello, I know you understand! No need go outside. I show you, yes, right now, in here, you are the lady, big nice queen, please, it is okay! Are you okay, Caro mio?*”

Jericho was about to faint, it appeared, for real.

Oh fuck. Not again. Is he trying to tell me it's ok to be gay? Gay. Before we skip hand in hand into the pink sunset? Hello world, guess what? We're getting hitched, like candy-cane superheroes, in bright spandex tuxes, on a hundred-story whipped white wedding cream pie, surrounded by five thousand Roman candles, only the best for these two supee sweethearts, Electronboy and his Jay-jelly-rainbow-beanie-baby.

Goodbye world. Or? Just bi! Not so bad. Did claim I would if I could, didn't I. Me and my mouth. Still do it with chicks. Right? If I want to? If he'll let me! I'm sure he'll let me. Out. Once a while. Sweetest guy in the world. *Haw-w-w*, and a real nice big white wedding, too!

Not the real issue right now, but sweet of him to reassure me, all the same.

“This *can't* be happening...” Jericho whispered, tears of frustration threatening to well.

“*Sì... sì, roba da non credere, ma...* Just dream of it with me for seconds, yes! After you try, *prendere o lasciare, va bene*. Yes or no, say. But please, first. Try it. So. I am the one, the first of them, yes? But the other man, he must be here... at you, next. *After* me. I come first.”

Sure babe, promise, I'll wait for ya' next time. I'm happy. Hope you're happy too.

“Here, I show you!” Enzo grabbed the large, heavy sack of wet putty that had once been Jericho and started heaving it around the limited, unusually slippery floor space.

Where does he get the energy? Is he hard again? Forget it! I don't even want to look. Frightening. Some point even he's gonna be knackered. Praying to Penis here. *Venus*.

“*Sì, va bene così... I know it is a little small, in your... questo spazio, but we say they go in. With the head, you must... believe, yes? It will be good... Così... ma no, così!... And now the first again, bend, ma no, lower, so nobody see, and the second, and he bend and move like so and then they go together, and out again, so easy! You see, then you, in, out, back, and on...*”

Jericho’s vision was blurring and he had turned quite pale as he flopped around, swaying crazily, doing Enzo’s bidding. **Maybe I’m turning into Enzo again, but this time with my whole body. Next stop, sexy fantasy twins.** Jericho’s future prime mould meanwhile went on erupting, oblivious and relentless.

“And now our *beautiful* new queen, of the, *come si dice*, the *diggings*, making bigger the *hole!*... *Tu. Cielo! Dai!* Big queen... *Ecco! Presente!*... *between* them. And the *poof* comes out, now the other *poof* goes there and... and... *Ma no, cavoli!*” Enzo shook his head in frustration as his friend abandoned his efforts, limply climbed onto the mattress and curled up into a possum.

The past minute, Jericho had felt like the final defensive piece in a very fast, losing game of *eksekseks*. The great white king, about to be toppled onto the bed. Chucked by his mate.

Excessive sex chess. Queen. Board. Checked, mate! You’re really losing it, aren’t you. Everyone’s gone insane, even the Author. Especially him. Sheesh.

He was drenched again in chess. (**Sweat.**) Thanks. As passive and helpless as Enzo had been, before his electric power had been short-circuited into action by his pooling desire; Jericho had now turned into a dripping, shy and dazed, meek little puppy.

(**Just. Not. Fair.**) Maybe Enzo *did* somehow deserve the chance to get back at all those who had cruelly rejected him in his young life. But, come on. *Jericho?* They were the best of (**Totally. Fucked. Over.**) buddies! Each in his way, *loved* the other with all his heart. (**I. Give. Up. Watch. It.**) And Jericho had always, *always* done *everything* he could to make Enzo feel special.

No. Not everything.

Hm?

Should have. See that now. Didn't then. Failed him too, in the end. This? Just my own. Come upon once. Twice. Tuppence. Comeuppance. Fair fuck. Fuck's fair. *Fuck!* Fair's fair. I'll be his goat for him, take all the blame. Go ahead. Nail me to his cocks. It's fine. I'm the Fucking Messiah. It's all God. No. I'm just as bad, I see that now. Clearly. It's all *good*. Oh, good GOD man! Get it in me and done over with.

How can I be feeling so meek all of a sudden. Fuck. Nothing, *meek!* Weak. Inherit the Ass. Earth. Bull. Cock crock Chinashop. Enzo. My head! Shopping for silk in Shanghai. Draped. Over his arms. Like Piety. Enzo, Christ in his lap? Dead. Can't move a muscle. All wrapped up. Just lying here.

Enzo unravels me. Nice. Christmas? So long already! No wonder I'm aching. Been waiting forever. Dreamboat coming into port now. Great. Big. Fucking. Greek. Yacht. Tiny port. Coast of Italy. Big clumsy Roman sailor's gonna wreck us both. Can't... wait wait wait *wait!*

***O Nononononooo!* Not with Jackie O you don't! *Fuck.* Jericho. Too many names. No real gender. Identity! Can't we keep one thing straight around here?**

FUCK!!! I'm a human being for fuck's sake not your pony fool, your puny wee, *piggy-on-male...* Eliza Dolightly!

Oh Jovey, why me?

Blackout.

[*Breve. n.b.: Pausa silenziosa.*]

[Cut to: Another place and time. A huge vague space, no visible walls, no up down or sideways. We remain in total darkness—and silence—for the entire Scene.]

'You seem to be upset.'

Damn straight.

‘Can you elaborate on that?’

Sick and tired of you screwing me around.

‘You’re not really talking about Me, are you.’

Him, him, screwing me loose. In my head. The screws. Are.

‘I’m not sure I understand you fully.’

Oh forget it.

...

‘There, there...’

S’okay.

‘I don’t... appear to have a Blessèd Kleenex on Me at the moment.’

So now you’re actually here, you can’t help, or won’t?

‘We shouldn’t even be talking.’

Why fucking not. Sorry, fudging. My situation is already impossible.

‘Things tend to get worse when I show up. And there is nothing wrong with Fucking if you mean it.’

Why don’t you toodle along then, we’re all kinda busy I’m sure, and leave us to fuck it up on our own, thank you very much.

‘When you ask the right Question, I shall always Answer. Those are the Rules. I’m big on Rules.’

Didn’t ask you anything. Never listen anyway. Don’t do rules.

‘Your Heart is always Asking. Listening depends on you.’

So how come I never heard you before.

‘You weren’t the excellent *listener* you have become. And your heart wasn’t asking a Question.’

No, seriously, dude, why am I hearing you now, not yesterday or, I don’t know, last week.

‘Seriously, your brain is totally fried at the moment.’

I knew it. Shit. What's my question, then, huh? Hell if I know. Sorry. Heck.

‘As you are doing right now, two shall be Asked at once. But I can answer only one. Rules, alas...

‘No swearing allowed isn't one. We're not in school here. Neither, come to think of it, is thou shalt not blaspheme. Quite meaningless concepts, in any case—naming Me, queuing Me up in order of priority. “Hell”, very droll—though I do regret that they have caused such infernal suffering in spite. Not My doing, I assure you.’

Nice to know for future reference. So two questions? But I get just one answer?

‘Yes. I can only answer the One. The other, the better one, I cannot.’

Cannot, or will not?

‘Because I *will* not, since you *will* yourself, so I *cannot*. Obviously.’

Making up your own mind must be even more confusing for you than me.

‘So. Would you like to Ask your Question or not. Since I seem, according to you, to be here at this moment, with you. In space.’

Oh, what the heck. Hell! Lemme think... Of course. Duh, dude: “Is it really love?”

Hm? That's the right question, right? Or, *nonono hang on!*... is it really *true*, right, *that's* what you're gonna clear up for me now. That's what I'm trying to, with this, interior, homolog, so silly queer—whatever, to figure out.

“Is all this really happening, or am I just dreaming?”

That's what I really want to know, right? Or? Is it the other... thing? What I'm *really* feeling? For... him. I mean, I'm really wondering whether I'm actually falling in... or just, you know... *lust*. Or?

‘It will work as the Question.’

But that's two... oh.... No, *no*. These seem to me to be clearly *two* totally separate issues I'm racking my aching brain over. So now I need to pick one, huh. So we can at least, in my head, get one lonely thing sorted. Right? That's what all this is about.

'What do *you* think?'

I think... shit. Think, think, *think* darnit! I think... that there's actually only *one* answer. That must be it. Yes. Or no. Both. Or neither. Makes sense. Two birds with one stone. The birds or the boy. Or *and*! Problem solved. So what's it to be then, huh? Big guy? Hmm?

WAAAAIT! Not sure if... Do I really want to *know*?

'There you go. I knew you would get to it. That's the other One. The important One. The One only you can answer. Not I.'

Oh. I see.

No, that doesn't make any *sense*! Aren't the other two facts a teensy bit more important to me right now? Whether I want to or not, I need to have those answers before I can even start to get out from under this mess, this, fucking mental quicksand. Where to go from here. With anything. Life. Totally stuck in limbo, otherwise. Both me and him. Totally unfair to Enzo. And, gotta admit, to me.

'Not true. Once you answer *your* Question, everything else shall become clear, including Mine. Or not. As you wish. So you see, clearly you don't need Me at all.'

I don't understand a word you're saying.

'That's always been an issue. Words do get tossed around so. Bent, twisted, broken. Generally over other people's heads. Until you don't recognize them anymore. The heads, or the words. Mine, especially.'

So some words are yours and some aren't. Naturally. And we're supposed to be able to tell the difference. Google *Are These His Words Or Someone Else's*? What, you... you plague-arise some other Big Dude? So I'm just a freaking photocopy?

‘No. You were truly inspired. I meant Mine, singular. I only have One, Word.’

I’m murdering my remaining brain cell over my one little question, that I still don’t know what it’s supposed to be, for your one single lousy one-word, *incomprehensible* answer. Peachy. Born in *the* Holy Land, I end up with a... some Japanese Dude. What is it, Zen? Your big mystery word?

‘It has many names.’

I don’t wanna ask it out on a date! I’m *taken*, it seems, remember? Words have names, now?

‘Mine does. You do. So why not. But not quite. Many words, some of the time, are employed as... names, yes, close enough, for My One Word.’

Can’t you just write it down then or something? *Tell* someone, *they* write it down, *we* study it, learn it by heart, and figure it all out, problem solved.

Again, the whole problem, *not* solved. I did try, you know. Several times. People have been spreading My Word for thousands of years, using far too many of their own. Creating more problems. I realized then that I... had screwed up regally. So I... whizzed on up. Is that how you would say it?

Close enough. Can you at least give me a hint?

‘Certainly. I can give you more than one. Listen closely:

‘LOVE.

‘TRUTH.’

Here we go, back to square one.

Or? Maybe not. Just a bit slow on the uptake; the Kat’s brain talking, innit... Hah!... So, *truth is love* after all? He’s still got it wrong, then? L—

‘I know who you mean. He’s more right than most already, and he is still working on it. He’ll get there soon, like everyone, when their Time comes. Very well, I will take that to be your Question, Yehoshua. This shall be My only Answer. Listen very carefully.

'TRUTH CAN MEAN LOVE, BUT IT NEED NOT IF IT WISHES NOT.

'LOVE, ONLY IF LOVE, IS ALWAYS TRUTH, BUT ONLY IF TRUE.'

I knew it! What was I thinking? Never gonna get a straight answer from... Him. Just words, words, and more words. Flying in circles like little yellow Tweetie Birds around my poor Kat skull.

...

'I see, most regretfully, though you are now in possession of your only possible, true Answer: You are still confused, and suffering even more greatly. I did warn you that this would happen. It usually does.'

Yeah yeah. Everyone's full of bloody excuses after they fuck around in Jericho. Hey, all come to Jericho: the holiday hotspot for impossible all-potent maniacs.

'That's not entirely fair. Very well, try this on:

'IF YOU KNOW WHAT THE TRUTH IS, YOU MAY FIND LOVE.

'HAVING ENCOUNTERED LOVE, YOU SHALL DISCOVER THE TRUTH.'

Just one enormous, bottomless fortune cookie, aren't we. Does anyone around here ever understand you?

'Yes. Someone new is just beginning to, very nearby.'

Who? Enzo?

'You tell Me.'

Why won't you ever just say: plain and simple, Yes! Or. No! Don't we deserve to know?

'Yes, you do. Very much so.'

Don't you love us enough, even, to tell us anything at all?

'I Love you too much. And I am Telling you all the Time.'

But you'll just sit back on your cloud nine and a half and do nothing about any of it, regardless.

‘I thought I made Myself quite Clear. I am *always*... Doing Things. You just don’t notice most of the time. You’re not supposed to. Those are the Rules. They exist only so you may thrive in *Truth*, and never merely, so that I might impose My *Will* on you whenever it would Please Me, which, commonly, it would.

‘Good luck finding your second Answer. The vital one. The one that shall change everything for the both of you.

‘Do you remember that Question? In your current state, you really ought to take notes. Here, I shall paraphrase:

‘DO I REALLY WANT TO KNOW?’

‘I *would* Pray that you answer it soon. But. That really wouldn’t accomplish a Hell of a lot, would it.

‘I *Know* you have it in you. You have My *Word* in that Matter of yours. And My *Word* is *Forever*. I shouldn’t be telling you this either, but since, after All is Said and Done, it is so very obvious. May it make you Feel a little better:

‘I LOVE YOU MY CHILD

‘INTO BEING FOREVER.

‘That is My job, and I Am, if I may say so Myself, rather Good at it.’

Instant Dimensional Tunnel Effect, we are drawn up towards the mysterious divine light...

[Rapid Dissolve through white—we’re heading across all of time and space now, from within a vast black nothing towards pure light, that might with a little imagination resemble the other end of a long tunnel—]

Trio

[—and come up right where we left off, on Scene minus two, once more:]

Even though it *felt* to Jericho, strangely and all of a sudden, like an eternity, no more than a few minutes could have passed since both of them, almost together, had come. And it was only the beginning. Enzo was dancing around him like some ecstatic voodoo priest, casting jumbled, incomprehensible incantations that appeared to involve plenty of exciting triple action in all imaginable configurations.

Will someone please finally wake up and come looking for us.

Jericho had somehow carelessly managed to climb down from his perch, and was leaning weakly against the shiny leather love slab. He was drugged to the gills with a heady concoction of post-coital exhaustion, hypoglycemia, Enzo's endless, hypnotic, crazed nattering and prodding, and the sticky, pungent male aroma of the close cell. Formerly Jericho's lovely little fruity Wellness Chamber. Now unwell Enzo's tiny chapel of perpetual freaky lovin'.

Maybe that's what he's doing, he's sending more spells into me with every poke, invoking his invisible familiars to possess me, gnaw away at my brain, snip off connections here and solder new ones there. Reconfigure me in his image to his own specifications.

***Hark!* Enzo's fatal mating call.**

That's that then, you're done for. Living proof of it. Soon, zombie proof. Yes, probably he is moulding me right now into his willing zombie slave toy... gotta...

Gotta... make some kinda... some kinda *spell*, yeah... Spell it. L-O shit no... M-O-V-E. Make a move, Fucking Messiah. All quiet now, huh? Catgut your tongue? Caught a cockatoo? Yessireebob. In a web. The little spider is coming. Over and over.

It's all one. Who cares. No, *two!* He is definitely talking about two jacks for our new queen. Two guys at the same time. Maybe not so bad. Or three? Something about twins now? No, later. For now, just training me. Still so new at all this. *Me!* Ha! Durnit with four, no, *five* whaddyacallem,

the others, before a life covered in pricks. Not at the same time, natch, and not, you know, the other way round. Never did chicks (that's the word) with dicks. Mighta prepared me better. No, the old Jericho didn't have so much cock power. But the new improved one will. Yessir. All the time. All over and inside too. Enzo's Big Pussycat.

Could take weeks to train my, *whaddoIneedtocallitfromnow*, whenever I beg him for more, please, *more*, oh yes, *pleasesir!* Stretch my. Thingy.

Boypussy. *Ick*. Need practice. Hungry for more. Already? No. Actually. I'm *hungry*.

Months of supplies down here, thanks boss. Spades of time. Queen of Spades. What's that supposed to mean?

There had been something, hadn't there, that Jericho should be understanding, that had recently passed across Enzo's luscious lips?

Too fuzzy, Peaches. Can't put my finger in it. Too tight. Like, drunk. Pretty peaches. Like his navel. Peach fuzz. God I need a drink. Should get hisself some pecs and lose those specs. Go running. Who? Me? No, gay guys. Would come running, fall over themselves for him, yeah, that's it.

Doesn't need 'em anymore. Cause he has me now? Yes. Piss off, boys. Enzo's all mine. No, the glasses. They don't help at all. We know. Pretend. Let him hope.

He prays and hopes and prays, and then one day whoops it actually works and I get appointed Saviour. Well, maybe that's fine by me. Sick of fucking around, feeling lonely. 'Specially of late. Didn't know I could feel so lonely. Maybe that's why this is happening now. He's saving me too.

It's gonna be okay. I'll get used to it all. Our new pals? Not so much. Don't care for them. Him though. The kid's okay.

Who knows how long I'll stay mesmerized like this? Rest of our lives? He's gorgeous and doesn't even know it. I was so ugly to him. Stupid, selfish prick. Yeah, I'm getting sweet on the kid. But what's up with the ménage kick? I mean, isn't it enough that *I* love him? Shouldn't we be

everything we need, just the *two* of us? Fuck! Gotta talk some truth to his hormones! Already getting insanely jealous, and the other guy's not even here yet. Or is he already bored with me? Oh shit. Oh *no*. I'm not sure I could... Fuck. Enzo? Sweetheart? *Please* tell me you still love me! *Only* me! Too weak to open my mouth. I gotta... have to... know... going crazy... Tell me it isn't so! Honeybuns?

Enzooooooooo!

How would he sneak the other guy past the system, anyway? Locked up airtight by now. Everybody else out, erased their code. Erase my code so I can't bolt. In my head. As if I'd ever want to. No trust, that kid. Even our hackerman wouldn't be able to get back in. Put my head together again. Not now. Wouldn't let ya touch it. We'd beat you off first. With really big sticks.

Ha! Probably wrecked the keypads on both ends. Gonna have to make do with me, genius! Better learn to enjoy me, all mo-no-game-us-ly! Got plenty left over for ya, ol' Jay has. Hasn't even gotten started. Sex-crazed, after being love-starved. You and me both kid. Two crazy kiddos.

Starving, all the while, starving while fucking. Six months maybe, for three.

Fuck, he installed it, piece of cake to fix it. It's going to be *him*, isn't it. Sure. Enzo's fantasy threesome. Together at last. The three freaky amigos. Even bigger hairy bugger. Enzo's cute and fuzzy. *He's* hirsute.

Ménage chez Wolfie. Stocked up on candles. Maybe I can teach them to wax.

We'll be fine, for a bit. Magic. Interlocking rings. Ancient trick. Easy. After that? Three star-crossed rainbows in heaven?

The End?

...

Maybe the power will go off. Release locks. Find electrician. He's in Jericho. Enzo's already put in a monster backup. Go on forever. Like that movie. Awful. With Jack

Blackout.

Jack maybe Jill.

Scherzo

[Five second fade up on: A hard, naked Enzo tightly hugging a limp, dazed Jericho.]

Oh no, not again.

I'm dead, sure, that's it. Stuck in Pure buggery-gatery.

Bill, that's it, Bill Murray. Stuck in Punks-a-tawny.

Such foresight, packing my eternal intended. No getting bored, having Precious here with me. But am definitely getting... whoopsy, look at *you* all shiny and

Oh no, not—

Astoundingly, yes. And no, not at all. Jericho really had fainted and fortuitously collapsed into the arms of his closely hovering friend, who had caught him before Jericho could do some more brain damage to himself. “*Caro! Carissimo! Sorbole!... Così. Va bene così. Va bene. Sì. Okay?*”

Jericho was finally coming to. (**Not dead, ha.**) He opened his eyes. (**My saviour.**) Enzo beamed back at him. Jericho desperately tried to speak. It was incredibly important.

I love you Enzo. I tried everything else but nothing went right. Ergo, quid, quo, this must be so.

“Yeah, okay,” barely a mumble, but he did manage a sliver of a smile. Through pure force of will, he moved the inch he needed to kiss Enzo, and fervently hoped he was about to prove, to both of them, that he truly loved the boy.

Enzo clapped and bounced.

I thought that was pretty good, all things considered. But wow.

“You see now, yes,” he grinned, “nobody know how we do, where we do, but we do, we do again and again, all three of them, you are amazing, I know it, but it *will* work more better even!”

Sure Enzo. Whatever you want. I'm happy, if you're happy too.

Gonna need a new name. New Josh puts paid to old Jericho, I guess. No more surfin' hot-waxed leggy boards. Is Josh an okay gay name? Waves of hot steaming cum on my legs instead. How about Rico? Forget it, no more waxing. I could pass for Latino. Of course we shouldn't. Hell, I used to pass for straight. We're real men. Massive gay dudes. Wouldn't have to catch the waves anymore. Nothing to prove. They'd be aimed right at me. Perfect. All play and no work. Coconut milk baths. Nice. And so convenient.

Jericho managed to whisper, "Cause I won't be able to move a muscle, kiddo. *Sheesh.*"

"But *yes, of course* you will!" Enzo chortled, shaking his head in amusement. "You are our *friend*, Shericcoh, big *strong* friend, you will make the... the *effort*, for *us*, for your team, *carissimo!*" Enzo was jumping up and down with glee.

So much innocence. So beautiful. He has no idea. So happy. My perfect sunshiny love. All because he figured out how to make me love him. Woulda figgered it myself, sooner or later. How couldn't I?

Sweetest kid in the whole world. Just for me. Don't deserve. But thanks, Big Guy.

...

Way too damn happy. Not over this. Threesome. Sugar-plum visions of enchanted fairies. Not sex slaves. Not Enzo. Wouldn't ever. We're his *friends*.

You great big dumb-ass worthless piece of arrogant wannabe prick shit, *Jesus!*

E.n.z.o. F.r.i.e.n.d. N.o.t. M.o.n.s.t.e.r.

Things were becoming much clearer. (Can spell too. Loads of hidden talents.) And horribly disconcerting for poor Jericho.

He's not really after me. I'm *not* the love of his life. Shit. What am I supposed to do now? All by my lonesome again? Fuck around like before? Fuck, no way man! Slit my wrists first.

Hold it. Wrong train of thought. Not helping. *Focus.* On Enzo. What's he really saying?

“A *lot* of *work*, I know, but together *we* can... *handle*... the three big, *coso*, the... tubes maybe, three *giant* tubes, yes. We finish by... three days, four most, and *after* you can... *relax* yourself again.”

Presto

[Scene: Exterior, vast ocean, bright day, POV Jericho, still underwater, struggling to reach the undulating surface from below—]

Dives up, up towards the bright light, desperately striving for Enzo, his blazing sun, warm loving energy drawing him up, towards Life. Far beneath Jericho, the deep, dark, cold Past. Fear. His heart's oblivion. But above him in the sky, Enzo is beckoning, guiding the prodigal soul back into their beautiful world. One final great thrust of his powerful legs, and Jericho breaks the surface. All becomes as clear as the crystal blue elements surrounding them. They are flying now, it looks like, as...

[Camera pulls up and circles them, going wide, centred on the two together, in each other's arms, splashing and paddling far below like happily grinning young boys on their endless summer vacation.]

The proof of their true love at hand—each other, united—*such* joy and relief, beneath hot pink skies and blazing chocolate sunshine.

[Cut to CU, head shot, Enzo POV.]

The delirious, drenched Surfin' Messiah, once capsized by the Big One, back in his element again, his sparkling turquoise eyes and effervescent grin responding to everything Enzo's been trying so hard to tell him, needing no words at all (except maybe One, that cannot be spoken):

I understand what you're saying now, all of it! Thank you! I love you, kiddo!

[End

Of Scene. Cut to:]

Ablösung

All at once it hit him, and Jericho puckered right back up. It wasn't as bad as he'd feared. Not at all. Of course Enzo loved him, and only him; he'd have known it, if he'd really listened to their hearts all along.

No, it was fucking worse.

He was going to have to *work really hard for three or four days*.

Enzo happily confirmed Jericho's ultimate nightmare vision of defenceless zombie slavery: "It *is* very hard, yes, for me too, so *new* here. No... nobody *trust* Enzo... but I *teach* and it will be *easy*... *come si dice?*... the smooth sailors, *sì? Chiaro*... *You* want the smooth sailors, so you can do the surfing with them after." He pouted. Devastatingly.

Jericho burst out laughing. Smooth sailors. Full Monty. The Queen of Spades not playing with a full deck. Enzo was just too much. They were both, in their mutual misapprehension, hysterical.

"THREE-CARD MONTE!" Jericho finally managed to wheeze, between fits, "With *people*, not *playing cards*," desperately gasping for air.

Enzo glared at him. "But that is what I *say* all the along, you big *dado*! We will make *everybody* so happy! We finish on time, the big finale, and they all cheer and clapping." Enzo bounded around, deliciously jiggling his butt at Jericho as he geared up to run out the door.

"I *must* tell everyone *now*, we have *no* time to... to *loosen ourself now!*"

Jericho *had* to control himself, signal somehow, try to shout, *anything*. It was *important*. *Really* important. He managed to stop giggling (**Giggling, for Pete's sake! Chortling maybe.**) like a schoolgirl listening to a potentially dirty joke; his huge, manly frame was quaking with the effort. He looked and sounded like a mountain of brass racked by an earthquake.

Screw it. Focus!

He swallowed, snorted, then threw an explosive coughing fit, that froze Enzo in his tracks in the nick of time, half-way into the short open passage towards the work area. “WAIT! *Caro mio!*”

Enzo slunk back inside and sheepishly shut the door behind him.

“Aren’t we forgetting something?”

“Um...”

“Yeah, *Um*. Woulda been my words exactly. Followed by: You’re like totally *nekk, kid*.”

Enzo blushed and frantically tried to find his clothes under the mess they’d left on the floor. “I understand. Yes. *Chiaro*. You must tell... tell *him* now, *sì, chiaramente*... what has happen,” he babbled, “with me. It was not the dreaming. *Dimostrato, è così*. To you, like—like what—what I do.” He threw on his pants and shirt, angrily forced his belt into the wrong, painfully tight hole, but he couldn’t fumble more than the top two buttons closed, and gave up. “So *so* sorry. *Invece mi dispiace*...”

Jericho just stared at the boy, whose gentle, open features were awash with the plain, all-consuming guilt over what he’d forced Jericho to do. His eyes searched for Jericho imploringly, but his former friend and ally for once completely ignored his terrible pain.

Jericho was fascinated by the spectacle of the pale furry, pumping spheroid that kept pushing past Enzo’s flapping shirttails. The little belly-balloon appeared absurdly exaggerated as a result of Enzo’s clumsy conquest of his pants. With its cute little tie-off right at the centre, pointed at Jericho like a dark, fuzzy eyeball, it seemed to be slyly winking every time it jutted forward at him, and then retreated back playfully, as soon as it had his attention, to hide behind the curtain again. *Catch me if you can*, it seemed to be winking. A one-eyed, bearded belly-head, it was bobbing on the sill of its window to another world, between grey curtains fluttering in the breeze. That strange wonderland from whence Jericho had so recently climbed back to return to this one, the normal one, his reality.

Whatever that means, now.

He'd been over there. Felt what it felt like. Profoundly inhaled its strange, breathable, musky air.

Dude, I've always enjoyed wiggly butts and soft, round bellies. More to fondle, more lovin' to handle.

Bit of furriness? Hey, that's what makes it special, this new guy thing. Exciting, to be honest. Teensy bit kinky. Kinda exotic. Deliriously ticklish. Totally unique. That's not my brain talking, try a bit lower down right about... now. *Ooof*. Could someone bolt the door again. We're a bit busy ogling our boyfriend.

Dude down there not really coming out swinging, but just has an Enzo thingy? That would be, let's face it, even weirder. Like, guess what dude, I'm going gay all over for ya, one-time special, me and you, right here, right now? Come off it. Totally McAbba. Stalky-creepy. No way, it's always in you or it isn't, just gotta find the right switch. No man, lemme try to explain: It's like, over there, droves of babes, like you said, cool, tons of fun; but now over here, we have on offer just the one Enzobabe. With special accessory.

Don't get me wrong, love the ample birthday suit, helps whet the appetite, sure, but once my Enzobaby gets going, believe you me, he's all-dude to the core. Creamy Sicilian delight with a bone-crunchy centre. Total fucking massive dude hotness. Fuck I'm moist again, just splaining the matter. Don't ever ask me to give a class in Enzology. Lesson's over. Can I go now? Pretty please? Urgently need to unwrap my present, look, it's getting impatient too.

Indeed, as he'd perceived through the magical combination of their shared gifts, inside this soft, delectable wrapping had been hidden just for him, all this time, *his* special treat, all Enzo, all powerful, all man, all love, all the time. An addictive confection indeed. A most heady drug.

To be handled with extra-special care. All this incredible treasure. You never knew who might get hurt in the end. When it would be time for the last withdrawal. Because it was clear, despite their amazing discoveries of the past hour, that neither of them was done looking for their own *truth* for a while yet.

Which didn't mean they couldn't share the magnificent, difficult journey together, teach, adore and protect each other along the way.

Enzo was breathing hard, a pathetic bundle of puppy nerves. His returning arousal remained, at this moment, anatomical, its own urgent signals blocked by his brainstem's rising hysteria.

"*Prego.*" Enzo managed to put on his glasses with two shaky hands. "Please, I am... I am to be okay. Ready... I hope *you* are... *please? Are you? Okay?* No. How can you... *Oo-oo-oo!* My beautiful most friend in the world." His soft, wide lips started to quiver.

"Tell you what." Jericho considered, growing serious, as the last of the tickly champagne evaporated.

The poor kid is absolutely shattered by what he thinks he did to me. Did. Did he? All by himself? Of course not. Dammit. It was just as much my doing. Randy Messiah. Surfin' Sex Fiend. Oh Enzo. Sweetheart. Can we pick up the pieces together? Please? I need you. To be okay. With me, us. I need us to be okay. Together. Couldn't live with my fucked-up self otherwise. Not by myself, darling Enzo all gone, over, destroyed. By me. Fuck.

Beyond the haze of the room, Jericho focused on his friend. He instinctively tried to reassure him with a devoted gaze that Enzo of course couldn't see.

Totally blind right now. Too much steam. Pink hot-pant steam. Fucking mood lights. Carefully, gently, talk him down. Or he'll bust a brain vein soon.

Hesitantly he offered, "I... think it's best, for now anyway... to... if we don't spill... Oh *hell, Enzo. You* know what just happened. It's all your fucking—"

"*My... yes... My fault. All. I know.*" Enzo was a portrait of wretched misery. "I know you do not *feel...* for me. This love. I know. You are my *friend, I know I know I know,*" he started to keel hysterically, "*colpa mia ma mio malgrado faro una colossale minchiata!!!*"

Enzo's pretty lips—

He does have pretty lips, too pretty for a manly man like him, really.

—were twitching all over the place. His eyes, lost and enormous behind his crazy specs, were starting to brim over.

Time to take some decisive action here, Jay Kat old chum. Won't have dudes crying in my wellness area. *Wellness* being the name on the plate. People get whole here, not shattered. Assholes, maybe, but not their owners.

He took the two steps that separated their current universes and carefully wrapped all of fragile Enzo deeply into his enormous arms. He murmured, “*Hell* no sweetheart! It's *not* all your fault because we're *both* fucking freaks, lovable freaks, and *yes*, I'm your *only* fucking *boyfriend* in this joint and by the way I love you so don't you *fucking dare*... Oh, just *fuck* me all the time why don't ya.”

My operation. My terms.

“Nonononono I *promise* I won't... *mai più gli stessi cazzo!*”

Jericho sighed. “*Power*, I meant. Taking over. It's all your power taking over, controlling... well, *confusing* me. Plus mine, all muddled together in there. We both needed it so bad. I get it, kid, at last I do. Me too, turns out, all that time, wanting to be, really *be* with... someone special. *Really* special. And there *you* are. Even though you're, you know, for, me, before, I mean, a, you know, just a *guy*. Now I *know*...

“I adore you! But you... we... we need to learn to control this. Okay? Take it *slow*. Easy. On *each other*. Do it only if... when... *if* it turns out... shit I hope so... *both* of us are, um, *into* it without, um, *assistance*. I'll help us both, promise. I know *a few* things about no *self-control*, when it comes to... splashing around in the *love pond*.”

Blazes to Becky, that sounded lame. How do you *flirt* with a guy? Without saying too much? Letting him take the reins. Decide for himself. I should be great at this. Lots of practice. With the ladies. Lotta good that's doing me now. Waste of time.

Shit. Is he feeling better yet? Somewhere in there, yeah. Can feel it rising. Getting lovely and warm. Little rays of sunshiny lovin' peering out through those bleak stormy clouds. That's my Enzo. Good boy. Not quite off the hook yet, is our Josh Rico. Shit that's lame too. Crunch time.

Enzo was totally still, unresisting, melted into Jericho.

Tatty Teddy with his sniffly nose gone all pink, not blue. No fight left. One huge puddle of vulnerability. Watch where you tread, Angel. Hey, that kinda works. Bit pretentious, but, dude, so was Jericho.

Whatever Jericho said next, he'd just take it, the Old Enzo. Who still thought he knew full well, deep down, that he *always* lost everything in the end, no matter how fervently he loved.

Jericho heaved a profound sigh, to gather his heart and soul. "I was gonna say it's... for now... Shit. *From now... it's all on the house.*" Slowly he exhaled. Would it work?

Please God make it work. I'm such shit at this still.

...

Enzo didn't react at all for a moment. Not one muscle twitched. His eyes were shut, a single huge tear creeping out from under his lashes. Then he seemed to get it. His weather rapidly turned from imminent flash flood to radiant skies.

"Grazie di cuore. Jericho! Ti voglio un mondo die bene!"

"Shhh! Um." **Kiddo. Italian, fuck.** *"Ragazzo."* **Ouch.** "It's no problem. Forget it. I... I sort of... *shit*... I sorta enjoyed it too okay happy now," Jericho mumbled at the incredibly interesting bare wall past Enzo's tousled mop, grateful the concrete didn't have its own set of Puggle eyes to gleam up at him adoringly.

Enzo sighed blissfully, *"Really?"* and tilted his head up and opened his eyes straight at Jericho.

Yup. There they are. Everything back to normal. Warm and wet like puppy dog tongues slobbering over your... did he spy a *different*, new

sparkle therein, and potentially a sly curl to a... just the *one*... corner of Enzo's lips?

Sparkle? Sly? Enzo? Uh oh. Who was in control here, after all? Just helping out, just a little?

Who cared?

Jericho let himself linger, revelling in the sensation of drowning in Enzo's huge, dark, glittering pools of loving mischief, while sabraging whole caseloads of fresh champagne.

Brimfire and Hellstones. The kid's got balls. Lovely, bursting, endless supplies of 'em.

Kadenz

Hi puppy. What big, beautiful chocolaty eyes you have. Can you see mine? They're brimming over with lovin' for you.

Enzo could indeed, and smiled an even bigger smile, just before they kissed deeply and for a long while. Just kissed. Lovingly. Ignoring, for a special moment, the clamouring below. It turned out Jericho had, after all, helped Enzo to see people again, though he wouldn't be told for a while.

Enzo wanted to enjoy his new secret. Since right after the singing bowls, he had been *seeing* Jericho, clearly and in radiant light. All of him, and right through him, too. But he wouldn't be seeing anyone else, other than his lover, for a while after. Then, very slowly, others would start appearing to him again, even while his eyesight was gasping its last. It would be a difficult experience to handle, nightmarish at first, because they would not appear like Jericho. At first they would hardly seem human at all. And the eyes would, in the long run, turn out to be the hardest to *see* again. To *perceive* his next pair of eyes, he still had a long, hard road to travel. But Jericho would be beside him now. So Enzo had a much, much better chance of making it through.

Enzo eventually broke their lip-lock and stirred, a little impatiently, in the huge, warm nest of Jericho's embrace. Rapidly he recited, like a naughty schoolboy pretending to have learned his lesson so he can skip detention, "Okay okay *okay*. My Big *Dado*. Can I go now? I *really* must go talk about the... doing the *Monty* with everyone now..."

Jericho grinned and released him. He ran his huge paw through the mad mochaccino tousle that was hovering anxiously around the tip of his nose.

Not vague at all. Nothing muddy about it. Precisely how I like my hot-cocoa-coffee-foamed-milk thingy, how Enzo always prepares it on that monstrosity. Just didn't bother to mention it, before, is all. Makes me happy, my very own first, secret... Enzoism. 'kay??

He gently did up the rest of the young man's buttons, and fixed his belt while tucking his shirt in. Then he twirled his boyfriend around for a final assessment.

(A few wrinkles here and there, but you're looking most excellent, if I do say so myself.)

Jericho patted Enzo affectionately on his swell glutes and commanded, “*Off* you scoot, puppy, our practice’s over for the day, well, couple of hours at least; show’ em how the trick’s done. Gonna be fabulous. Earn you a medal. Bring us some peace from the Beast.

“Hurry back though, okay, or do I need to let you touch-read the state I’m in?”

“*A dopo*, you big *dope*!”

“Love you too, baby, bye-bye!”

Curious. Really curious. The bubbles had risen much higher than last time, right up somewhere deep inside his chest.

Enzo in turn demonstrated his glittery, sly new Enzogrin and flounced off to spread the news of everyone’s problems instantly solved. Well, not everyone’s, not instantly. Jericho had a shitload of actual *labour* to cope with for the next few, backbreaking days. Though really a minor sacrifice, for all he had already been rewarded with today, when all is said and done.

Read you loud and clear, dude. Not so stupid as you enjoy making me out to. Being.

Schluss

Jericho was left behind in the Wellness Chamber, feeling unexpectedly well himself. The starkly muscular and gloriously naked buck perched his magnificent peaches onto his shiny calf-skin altar. He'd have to do the whole floor, alas, later. Or the next client was liable to slide the three feet across the greasy tarmac and tumble head over heels into the love slab. The candles had died, in apparent agony, long ago. There were sad, misshapen white clumps sticking everywhere: to the table, to the built-in shelving, atop the work hutch and across the floor; as if to unequivocally, emblematically commemorate the recent inauguration of the Wellness Chamber as an extended dual-use facility. Jericho paid no heed to the artfully arranged disaster area; he was lost in thought.

Some critical stuff has to be dealt with, and fast, or I'll go bonkers. Better make a list right now.

One. Decent togs. Morpheus knows he'll be able to afford them soon, working for the man.

Two. A trim above the neck. Swans could be having whole families in there, unnoticed.

Three. Thorough weeding and maintenance below said neck. No wax though. *Egads*. Not on his delicate, pale skin. Over my dead body. I mean, ouch, dude! No close shaves either, I've been told off for that before. Itches and scratches both affected parties on contact. Double ouch.

But Jericho would insist on an elegant trim. Take them to some real artist in the field, so to speak. Regularly. There were limits. Not as many as he'd imagined once, but.

Four, no more one-way mind-fuck. Right? At least, not until after I start my engines, I can do that just fine by myself, thank you. After we make contact? Just a little bit? For the... rush? Eensy-beensy fistful of Electronboy? For that... total connection? Already tingling, just thinking. Addictive as fuck. Unlike... anything. Not even...

...barrelling right off the lip at Teahupoo? HmMMM? 'Member, dude? Whoa.

Whoa. Switched-on Leone's even better than that. Gonna be some lucky dude snags the kid for himself one of these days. Not too soon, I hope. Give us some time, okay? Coupla years, or five? Hope that guy's gonna know it when he nicks the prize out from under, or off of top o' me.

Or I'll *break his fucking prick off.*

Would it hurt us in the end? Playing with that peculiar fire, willingly? It will me, a bit, I'm sure. Major junk funk, on top of, shit, my heartbreak. Get used to it, Angel though you may look to him now, you're just the rebound, if that. *Felt* it. Not a possible hope in hell. Easy lovin', best before, that's me. True too, whodathunk it. Lovin' hard and true now. With you, not so gentle. Not so easy to let go either, in the end. We'll figure it out. Together.

It's about loving each other every minute, innit, and ever after, no matter where the path leads or when it forks. Become part of each other's *truth*, celebrate that, now and always. And when, one day, far away future, we head for the next, unknowable adventure. Then we'll leave behind a few more sparkles than before. Do it any damn way you got talent. This vast shitty hole needs lovers real bad, of any stripe and current. Especially someone incredible, someone so utterly unique as Enzo Leone Ferrara, blind electrician to the brightest stars of magic and mystery, from Nowheresville, southern Italy.

And, may I add, the sweetest, most heady fruit ever ripened under that hot Sicilian sun, on that ancient, impoverished, soon to be most talked-about little vineyard on the planet.

There was a polite, melodious and almost synchronized, clearing of throats at the open door.

Uh oh. Forgot all about them. Better get 'em back in shape for what Enzo's got planned with those two.

“Sorry, guys! Gimme a, *erm*, sec to get dressed here. Then I’ll do whomever’s got the most pain first... ’kay, c’mon in, whichever you are. Right, you had the wings, so you’re the ankle.”

The present tale is all *true*. As will the future be, I promise. We’re almost there already.

The End

Of Oil & Water

just silly fun and games.

The Beginning

of

Rainfire.

Acknowledgments

To the large handful of lovely individuals who prodded me into writing, I thank you from the bottom of my soul. The whole sadistic lot of you: **Dev, Liz, Macky, Katharina, Lori** and **Danni**. If I forgot you, forgive me, the freely flowing drinks at our little garden party of unearthly delights have gone to my head and messed with my memory. If I mentioned anyone who did not tell me to write, or begged me not to, I apologize as well, but at least you know you are blameless.

To my gentle, incisive beta readers: **Lucas Lyons, Dev, Macky, Plainbrownwrapper,** and **Averin Noble**. If I managed not to embarrass myself completely, it is due only to you.

The world in which this rather odd-man-out story and its brethren take place is directly inspired by **Jordan Castillo Price**'s brilliant *Magic Mansion*, which made me hunger for more adventures in a place where real and pretend-magic overlap. I hope that I managed to treat her own ideas, transform them and expand upon them, in a manner that honours the age-old spirit of inspiration, adaptation and variation without which art in any form would be impossible, rather than the equally age-old but somewhat less honourable tradition of literary larceny. In all seriousness, I had no idea she had herself developed a series called *Channeling Morpheus*, until after I'd come up with the name of the show. Spooky.

I have gratefully and with permission been able to draw on **Deirdré Straughan**'s delightful research into Italian slang at **www.beginningwithi.com**. Any errors in usage, spelling or grammar are completely down to me.

I've done my best to be accurate and respectful about degenerative ocular disease, given the context of a narrative celebrating a fantasy of magical healing.

Big wet kisses to the instigators of the Internet and the gazillion contributors to **Wikipedia et. al.**, to the organisers and volunteers of "**Love Has No Boundaries**" (*Don't Read in the Closet 2013*), to **Jen McJ** for putting up with me, and especially to **Andra**, who posted the image that resulted in this labour

of, mostly, hot lovin'. Also to the editors who communicated with me through **JoAnn H** and to formidable formatter **SueM**.

I dedicate this work, and implicitly all that may follow it, to my partner in life and in dreams, without whom I wouldn't be here now, and probably wouldn't be anywhere at all. **To Jimmy**.

Berlin, 6 April 2013

Referenced Works, Characters, real-life Personages

- “**Ursonate**” (1923-1932) by Kurt Schwitters, the progenitor of
- **Merz**, which isn’t really a Dadaist movement, but is about finding beauty in the jumbled leftovers of existence.
- “**Space Oddity**” (1969) and “Ashes to Ashes” (1980) as performed by David Bowie, father of
- **Major Tom**, a star man.
- “**The Full Monty**” (1997) dir. by Peter Cattaneo, *not* to be confused with
- **Three-Card Monte** *aka.* Bola Bola *aka.* Ménage-à-Card *aka.* Find the Lady, origin unknown.
- “**Groundhog Day**” (1993), by Harold Ramis and Danny Ruben, and starring **Bill Murray**, stuck in Punxsutawney, not Purgatory.
- “**Dances with Wolves**” (1990) directed by and starring blue-eyed, nowadays salt & pepper Kevin Costner.
- “**Star Trek, the Next Generation**,” television series created by, among others, Gene Roddenberry, featuring: Gates McFadden as **Dr. Beverly Crusher**, Marina Sirtis as the empath **Deanna Troi**, and Whoopi Goldberg as the weird, wise **Guinan**.
- “**Three Little Pigs**,” and their Wolfie, via James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps.
- “**The Frog Prince**; or, Iron Henry,” who sadly only has one golden ball, via the Brothers Grimm.
- **Sylvester** and **Tweety**, Warner Brothers characters.
- **Fritz the Cat**, by Robert Crumb; or possibly Felix the Cat by Otto Messmer, or maybe Pat Sullivan; but most probably Krazy Kat, by George Herriman.
- **Enzo Ferrari**, famous car nut, who admired the
- **Jaguar XK-E** automobile in the

- *Classic Car Review* (1964) article by Sean Curtis.
- **Spider-Man**, as envisioned by Marvel Comics and Sam Raimi.
- **Tatty Teddy & my Blue Nose friends**, who are trademarked by Carte Blanche Greetings Ltd.
- **Pygmalion** (1912) by George Bernard Shaw, wherein appears Cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle.
- **ELIZA** (1964-66), a computer program written by Joseph Weizenbaum to satirically simulate a Rogerian psychotherapist.
- And another Star Being with many names, among them **YHWH**. Whose word, they say, flows through all of us, provided we want to know the answer to the most important question.

Author Bio

The author was born in Germany half a life-time ago (at least, or so he hopes), but spent more than half again of that—his growing years, coming out, education and first career—in Canada. Professionally the author has also wandered a bit; showing an early talent for drawing, he then planned to become a documentary film-maker, before stumbling into the burgeoning field of digital animation, which he dropped out of college to pursue. Years later, inspired by his now husband, another geographically and culturally errant soul, he re-entered academia to pursue a degree in scenography that turned into an MFA in directing for the stage. This he sporadically practises in of all places Berlin, which is plainly swarming with unemployed theatre artists.

By January of 2013 the devoted couple had saved up enough change for their second Mediterranean cruise. As a random side effect of buying his first eReader to avoid lugging along a stack of Francis, Pratchett, Colfer and Silva again, the then never in a million years future author discovered some writings intriguingly dubbed “m/m”. About a month later, the man who believed all his life he had absolutely no stories to tell was typing away for fourteen hours a day (still is).

This is his third and so far only completed work. The author is currently scribbling notes in the margins on part six of a series of novels while desperately trying to focus on volume one. Which is what he’d been quietly doing, minding his business, when one then still foetal, nerdy minor character piped up, “Bello, there’s that pic of me on Goodreads, so when will I finally get to be? And I want my own story, and, and a really cute, no, totally hot, smart-aleck boyfriend, like, um... scusami... I need someone, cazzo, right, fucking, NOW.”

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