

“Glory Roads”
By: Brian Kumpf

Mark Salvino had grown up about a two-mile walk from the high school which he attended. There were a few things that he liked about that: he got to sleep in later than everyone else each day, he never had to think too hard about what to wear, and his best friend—Daniel, happened to live down the block and was able to walk to school with him everyday.

The worst, however, was having gym class in the morning— despite having Daniel there to suffer this fate. An even greater tragedy hung above that in the form of a zealous teacher who “cared” about participation. Was Mark’s ball handling going to be something he received a letter grade? He couldn’t tell with this teacher, but at least he was easy on the eyes—for Mark at least. Daniel seemed to think Mr. Pederson was just a roided’ up failed athlete.

It was a crisp, autumn Tuesday morning as Mark and Daniel filed out with the rest of the class for soccer drills. Everyone circled around Mr. Pederson as he began another diatribe about the best way to hit a ball so it maintained a curve—he soon faded to the background of Mark and Daniel’s conversation.

“What about him? He’s kinda cute, right, I think?” Daniel motioned to the blonde haired boy adamantly nodding at Pederson’s verbose instruction. He was tall, lanky, even a bit gawky in his facial features. A cute, pronounced nose and full lips though; not Mark’s type though. Mark had been trying to figure out what his type even was, unsuccessfully.

“Um, I don’t know. Probably not. I just—” Daniel’s eyes batted to the young man whose jet-black hair had was done in a, Prince Valiant-style. The young man’s tanned skin popped against his bright, white shirt in the early morning sun. Mark felt his face begin to heat up in the nippy air and gave Daniel a playful shove.

“Hey man, come on—” Daniel shot back a coy smile that showed the dimples on his chubby cheeks.

“You’ve been talking about messing around since sophomore year. I’m not letting you get to prom without practicing a little bit. You’ll be a fuckin’ dud, man.”

“Oh yea, well why don’t you offer to practice with me?” Mark smiled back at Daniel as he nonchalantly brushed off his comment.

“You don’t kiss or fuck your figurative brother, man. Gotta draw the line somewhere. Now... what about... him?” Daniel pointed to Jim Soon, the captain of the lacrosse team and all-around superhuman—by most accounts. He was tall, broad, and carried sharp facial features to go with his boyish good looks. Mark had noticed that Jim’s slanted eyes always carried a dark undertone to them, maybe mascara?

“I don’t know man. I just haven’t thought about actually... talking to anyone you know? It’s a small school man, I’ve never even, like... hooked up with a dude. It’s all in my head still, I don’t—”

“Well that’s what I’m saying man! You’ve been having these feelings for a while now. You’ve told your best friend about it, and now I’m telling you, we’ve got to give you a chance to actually... do something about it, ya know?” Mark came close to putting his face in hands out of embarrassment, but knew it would give Daniel too much pleasure.

“I think you can find another guy who’s just as horny as you.” Daniel cracked himself up and suddenly noticed Pederson’s stone gaze locked onto him.

“Care to demonstrate an inside of the foot pass for us, Mr. McCarron?” Mark ended up giggling to himself as Daniel was dragged in front of the class for his athletic demonstration. As Daniel floundered in front of everyone, Mark took a glance at some of the young couples that held hands around him. Picture-esque images floated through his imagination, everyone dolled up for prom. Would anyone want to hold his hand? More importantly, would the person whose hand he wanted to hold even want to hold his?

Throughout the day Mark had been in a lackadaisical haze, seemingly floating through each class. In every seat he took, his mind immediately began to wander to thoughts of the future, what it held for him; the loneliness it could bring. Each time he glided through the hall, he would peep another virile couple kissing, playing, or groping each other. His heart sank as his heart continually raced. He pictured himself holding someone, maybe a handsome young man, deep eyes, with a lean frame—someone to match his own. Or, did he see himself in the arms of another man? Someone strong, broad, barrel-chested, maybe someone like Daniel; who made him feel comfortable and taken care of. His mind drifted to prom, even if he found an incredible guy to meet, he’d never seen a gay couple at school—would he just sneak off with him after he ditched his beard? Before he knew it, the afternoon bell had rung and he was among the hundreds of horny students flooding out to “have a little free time”.

Mark’s free time was usually spent in his room or outside at the park where he drew and wrote out comic book ideas. They weren’t always poignant, nor were they always very good. Sometimes he could barely muster the skill to draw silly cats making crude jokes, other times though, Mark felt as though he was drawing the human heart. He had seen many people stroll past the park, some from dinners, some walking away from the usual dramatics of suburban home-life, but he always looked to capture the emotion in their eyes.

Mark found himself throwing away more than he was keeping, when he noticed the streetlights flickering on, one-by-one. An exacerbated groan escaped him as he stood up, rummaging through his pockets for another cigarette. He held the empty pack of smokes and felt his face sink as he tossed it away with the rest of his failed art.

Lambent streaks of light beamed down on his watch that indicated it was time to get home. Mark’s family gave him a lot of freedom, even he was aware of that, but they only asked that he be home to eat dinner with the family. Before Mark realized it, he was back in front of his house as soon as his father pulled into the driveway donning his usual gym attire.

They walked in the house together and stood in the walkway chatting for a moment when Mark caught their reflection in the wall mirror mounted beside them. Jack, Mark’s father, was considered quite handsome—a genuine silver-fox. All of Mark’s female friends loved having a reason to pick up Mark at his house, especially if his father made sure to give them the “usual talk” of being home at a decent hour. Jack was an avid cyclist with a lean physique that he had honed years before Mark was even thought of, his parents had fondly told them of their fortunate meeting at a marathon all those years ago. Wavy, salt-and-pepper colored hair flowed through Jack’s hands as he examined himself in the mirror.

“Hey Karen! Honey, we’re home!” Karen stepped in from the kitchen and greeted them with a jovial grin. Mark’s mother was considered attractive by most of his male friends—especially Daniel. She had dazzling and fiery red hair that flowed, quite

beautifully (even to Mark), all the way down to her back. Karen was a self-proclaimed “hippie” back in the day. Everything about his parents just made sense to Mark. Handsome businessman-cyclist and a flower-child social worker shacking up? What’s not to like about that pairing?

“Just in time, I was wondering where my boys were.” Jack immediately broke gaze from the mirror and Mark noticed him fixate on his mother. Jack scooped her up and playfully kissed her neck, Mark felt himself shrug a little as he attempted to move past them. Karen playfully giggled as she gave weak slaps to Jack’s side.

“Oh put me down, Jack! You’re all sweaty, and you’re embarrassing Mark! He doesn’t want to see his parents acting worse than the kids at school.” Mark had already moved past them, the food looked better than anything in the hallway.

As much as Mark would have liked to complain about the food—he couldn’t. Before his mother worked as a social worker, she was a line-cook for an upscale seafood restaurant (another one of her favorite odysseys to regale his friends with). Every meal she actually put effort into, was always devoured by the men in the house. Mark was gathering plates as he caught his father pinching his mother’s side edging his way up to her body. Eyes rolled at them as he proceeded to make his way around the table. He stacked the plates and was about to take them to the kitchen when his father ushered him back to the table.

“Hey, did you make anything today? I haven’t seen any of your work since you showed me that sci-fi concept you were working on.” Mark felt his face turn flush, he sat down and felt his tongue unravel.

“Oh yeah! That was such an exciting piece. I didn’t realize you could do such beautiful and intense work in space, and honestly, I didn’t even know you liked sci-fi!” Karen exclaimed with glee.

“I love watching old Star Trek’s with your dad, you could watch with us if you wanted.” Karen didn’t notice both men’s eyes roll at the subject. Mark fidgeted in his seat before talking, his parents calmly listened.

“Well... no, sadly I haven’t been making any progress on that comic. Honestly, I’ve been having trouble putting together this new concept I’ve had for a monster in one of the issues.” Mark gulped down the last bit of juice and glanced at the tiny knick in the table’s wood.

“It’s... just, I don’t—” Jack chimed in.

“I’m not an artist like you Mark, but creativity and ideas don’t always come overnight. It’s about mastering your routine, and pushing forward, even through the days where there doesn’t seem to be anything in the tank.” Mark smiled through a forlorn sigh. It was very typical, “Dad” advice from Jack, but he did appreciate that his parents supported his art. They never questioned his style of clothing, lack of going out, or anything really—it was always about his comfort. He had a feeling that when he would eventually come out, that it wouldn’t be a big deal; but he wasn’t ready to even think about that conversation yet.

“You know, this will be your last summer before we really get started with the college push. Maybe you’ll finally consider letting us send you to that young artist’s retreat in California. I keep telling you, it’s only a week or so and you’ll—” Mark stood up and flashed his smile one more time at his dad before grabbing the plates.

“Dad, I appreciate you offering. But I’m still not sure I’m even good enough to show my work to the people there.” Jack was about to open his mouth again when Mark noticed his mother pinch her husband’s leg.

“No problem honey, offer’s on the table—that’s all. We don’t know how you’ll feel in a few months, big things could happen by then. You could make the strides you’re looking for, or whatever you’re thinking about.” Mark quickly took the dishes away as he heard his mother giggling back in the dining room.

Mark’s room was pitch-black, it was eleven the last time he looked at a clock. He never looked after he lay down— one of the rare pieces of advice he listened to. The thoughts of crumpled up paper and failed ideas danced around his head to a dirge of self-pity. Why couldn’t he finish an idea lately? His heart sank at the thought of failing at the one thing in life he felt good doing. He glanced down between his legs and thought about what life would be like if he just didn’t have a dick at all. Maybe then he could just focus on drawing, on creating something that was bigger than orgasms and lust. He turned over and felt himself suddenly grow stiff, he gave a familiar exasperated sigh and rolled over to gaze outside his room.

Mark loved watching the silver moon shine along backyard of the houses surrounding him. It was a scenic, starry view that could sometimes give him butterflies if the mood was right. Drooping eyes began to slide shut when Mark was taken aback by breathing faintly coming from outside. He crept out of bed to examine, an animal maybe? He walked closer to his window and suddenly the breathing became labored and intense; followed by the sound of loud thumping. There were faint moans coming from above him, and immediately—Mark felt his blood boil. His face scrunched and brow furrowed with sweat. He slammed his window shut and on his hurried walk back to his bed, he knocked his foot against the dresser. Sleep seemed to escape Mark that evening.

The bright morning sun was harsh on Mark’s puffy, red eyes. Daniel and Mark filed behind the rest of the class, as they usually did, and this time managed to keep their voices down a little better when they began chatting.

“Do anything fun last night? Anything fun to show me today, new hero ideas?” Mark sucked his teeth and sighed,

“Nah, it was a pretty low-key evening. I haven’t... really been doing anything great lately. I can’t seem to wrap my mind around this—”

“Dude! I was talking with my cousin last night, he’s a queer like you too, and he was saying—” Mark felt his skin jump as Daniel rambled, he looked side-to-side in case anyone had heard him.

“... and he told me that he goes to a glory hole at Holland Park, like 15 minutes from here!” Mark felt his fluster and contort into rageful disdain.

“Dude, I go to that park all the time— what the fuck!?” His fists balled up and he felt ready to throw one at Daniel.

“Hear me out man, I’ll shut up if you want me to. But, like, think about it. You have these feelings, you don’t even know what’s going on, if you even really like guys or whatever—” Mark began to bite his lip.

“So... like why not go, and see if you like it? You don’t have to meet the guy and you’re only getting... you know, your dick-licked. If anything, this could be unequivocal evidence that you like guys. You don’t see whose blowing you, you just know it’s a dude, and if you like it... well, I mean.” Daniel scratched the back of his head, it was apparent that Mark’s face said everything he was going to.

“You know... you don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do. Just trying to help out, you’re my buddy and I want you to be happy and actually... have some fun, you know?” Mark felt his hands relax and his face detangle.

"I don't want to talk about it anymore man, just... let it go okay?" Daniel gave Mark a pat on the back,

"Look man, I'm sorry. I'm a jackass, forget I even talked about it. Do you want to hang out tonight? I just got a new game that I think you'd totally dig, it's based in space with a great story—" Mr. Pederson's stoic stare found its way to Daniel, Mark carefully shuffled away from him.

"Mr. McCarron, lovely to see you taking such an interest in the fine sport of soccer today. Care to show us how you've been practicing? Come on up here and demonstrate proper passing mechanics for the students who weren't here yesterday." Daniel, once again, dragged himself in front of the class to attempt a bit of athleticism—it wasn't ending well. Despite the awkward display in front of him, Mark's mind kept drifting to Daniel's comments. "A queer like him," what did that even mean? During the failed display of soccer, Mark ended up sneaking back into the locker room. He didn't much feel like talking with Daniel after class.

Mark skipped the park that night and made his way home, to his surprise, he saw his father's car parked in driveway. As he walked in, he heard a loud thump which vibrated along the mirror in the entranceway.

"I just don't...fucking...get it! I don't, none of what you're saying makes any sense right now. Where did it go, where did you go?!" Karen's incensed voice reverberated throughout the house. Mark found himself piqued by the violent outburst, they were few and far between. Hurried, thudding steps made their way toward the door and Mark found himself looking around like a lost puppy. The disgruntled expression of his dapperly-dressed father came into view as he proceeded to breeze past Mark with a simple, "Hey son." Suddenly, Jack was out the door and speeding off in his car, he noticed his mother slowly pacing in the kitchen as he walked over.

"Hey..."

"Mark, you're home—" Karen turned her head to the stove timer and gasped at the time.

"I didn't even notice it was that late already. I've got to go... I've got an appointment."

"Um, okay. Is everything—" She quickly grabbed her purse from the chair and reached in for a crisp twenty dollar bill, consolation prize for catching the end of the fight maybe?

"I don't think I'll be home tonight, I'm sure you know where to get some decent delivery right? I'll be back tonight." She dropped the bill on the table and briskly breezed past him, heels clicking on the floor as she departed. The fervent clicks faded when the door shut and Mark was suddenly left alone, no one seemed to be home at the right time.

It was later in the evening when he heard both of his parents come home, he was already in bed staring at the pale moonlight dancing on the outside furniture when he heard the door slam shut. He let out a deep sigh and brushed off their inconsideration as he continued to hear Daniel's words echo through his head.

"Queer like you—" His face felt flush as he rolled over and surveyed his tiny room. The thought of feeling someone's touch, all he wanted to know is if it felt as great as it looked. Not everything does, and maybe he'd just hate all genders—asexual like his dweeb cousin who stayed in her room coding all day. Maybe he'd be a better artist if he just got rid of his cock—too far, too much to think about. As he drifted off, thoughts of how to avoid Daniel in the morning became more prevalent than any other thoughts of castration.

The next few days were a bit of a blur for Mark. He had been leaving a few minutes earlier for school each day to avoid Daniel, made quick excuses to go to the library for gym class, and even began bringing his sketchbook outside for lunch; doodles were better than conversation he thought. He was walking via the back-path out of the when he suddenly saw the burly figure of Daniel, he carried his gym bag and a forlorn expression. Mark stopped in the path and noticed the three girls walking behind him suddenly speed up past him and Daniel.

Daniel's eyes looked into Mark's and he suddenly felt them well-up a bit. Daniel ran his hand through his ruffled and disheveled hair, his voice a bit meek.

"So, been busy huh? Pederson said you weren't feeling good enough to participate in gym."

"Um, yeah. It's been a bit of a bug, came on suddenly."

"Mmm." Daniel walked closer to Mark and brought him in for a tight embrace. Daniel gave a tight squeeze as Mark's wet cheeks wiped against his shirt.

"I'm sorry man. I didn't mean to make you feel any type of way, I thought I was... helping or something. I'm stupid man, really fucking stupid. I just thought," Mark squeezed him back and felt his lips part into a smile.

"Thanks man," They stood for a moment in the embrace when they suddenly heard two boys dressed in dark clothing and pale makeup snicker behind them.

"Heh, excuse us....*ladies*." They brushed past them and Mark let go of Daniel and tapped him on the shoulder once more. They made their way down the path, passing the small park where Mark drew most days. Mark slowed his stride as he noticed a tall, strapping man with long, wavy auburn hair that complimented his fitted, tan suit. He took off his aviator sunglasses and ran his hand through those long, fair locks before stepping into the very bathroom Daniel spoke of. Sun shined along his chiseled jawline and looked razor sharp with the five o'clock shadow growing around it. Mark felt his hungry gazy broken as Daniel waved to him from the end of the street as Mark broke gaze from the handsome stranger.

Dinner had been quiet that night, his parents chatted about politics and thought news of some new tax policy would factor into their retirement; would Mark prattle on one day about this shit too? He cleared the plates off, the happy couple played with each other—was all well again? Was anyone going to even want to argue with him in the future—much less even makeup with him?

Days had passed, the thoughts however, had not passed. Mark found himself throwing away another failed piece, when he looked over across the park and saw the bathroom where he had seen that handsome stranger days ago. He put down the book and he rubbed his neck. His mind began to wander, his heart began to beat faster, the "what-ifs" of a dapper man pleasing him began to titillate and tease his passing thoughts. Mark began to carefully saunter over to the bathroom as the lights along the park began to flicker on.

He walked around the path to the bathroom a few times, each time he lapped the building his mouth seemed to dry up a bit more. He bit his lip as his pace hastened, his eyes never broke from the green, paint-chipped door. Finally, his stride halted in front of the shoddy and rickety entrance. He casually pushed it open—the creek shot through his ear canal, like a bullet from a gun. He sighed, the door closed—he was certainly alone. He had never been in this bathroom before, he hated using public bathrooms anyway, he could never do his business there—but this wasn't business; an experiment maybe?

Mark stepped into the stall and began to canvas the wall for any hole-like openings. It didn't take long for him to find a sizeable hole carved out next to the ivory throne itself. There was a brief moment where Mark found himself merely staring at the shoddy and crude hole that was made. Mark felt sweat pool around his neck and forehead, he used his white undershirt to clean himself; then sucked his teeth at the gross perspiration that had come from him; it was time to man-up, kiddo—wasn't it? A lump formed in his throat and he felt his skin grow warm to the touch—the door suddenly opened.

Mark felt his skin leap and his mouth about to yelp before his damp hand covered it. He only saw a fine pair of shined leather shoes from the stall—big, large feet to be precise. The man seemed to be one of considerable size. His steps were calculated yet slow; he stopped in front of the sink and ran the faucet for a minute or so—a moist slap to the face. Mark's heart rate continued to rise, and the prospect of that handsome gentleman kept sifting through his mind. He heard the man crack his knuckles and run the water once more, his hands were now amply dry as well. Mark began to feel, oddly aroused by the whole thing. Was he going in the stall? Was he just washing his hands?

The man turned and his feet pointed directly to Mark; another moment passed by. He gave an exaggerated cough and quietly made his way into the next stall. Mark's pants got tight and his forehead scrunched; this had a chance of happening. Mark noticed the man crouch down by the hole. His tan slacks were the only visible part that Mark could make out, he found himself enthralled by this prospect, maybe it was another handsome stranger?

Mark tasted the sweat from his palms and felt perspiration creep down his forehead. Another loud cough, this one quite obvious and loud. Mark quickly unzipped his pants and held himself, everything began to run through his mind: anticipation, worry, surprise, and of course—primal desire. There was a moment where he looked at the hole and noticed the figure on the other side. He sighed and felt his heart race; anticipating the man giving another awkward cough. He thrust himself through the hole and without warning he was soon engulfed by the warm essence on the other side. It was a sensation he had never felt before. Mark's eyes originally were glued to the flimsy green stall, but he soon pictured the handsome stranger in aviators. He inhaled and smelt an intoxicating, manly musk, he was enthralled by it all, and sooner than later his experience came to fruition—he was left breathless.

Mark tried to catch his breath as the stranger on the other side gave another cough; far less obvious and loud. Mark sat on the toilet seat, just waiting, what happened next? The stranger soon left the stall, stood at the faucet for a short time, then left. Not a word was said, not a sentiment spoken, it was merely, "a piece of you, for a piece of me."

Mark waited about five minutes after the stranger left. He couldn't wipe the smirk off of his face, he was a new man. The park was dark, but Mark felt as though he had some new light shined on himself. He really did enjoy it, and in all fairness he knew whom he really wanted to be on the other side of that stall. When Mark stepped out of the bathroom and felt the cool wind dance against his warm skin, he felt like a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. A human touch that he loved, and he wanted more of it.

The walk home was quicker than usual and he was surprised to find his father sitting down watching TV alone in the living room, winding down in his gym clothes of course.

“Hey there, kid.”

“Hey, Dad.” Mark wondered if the “just got blown” glow had left his smirk yet, his father didn’t seem to notice; or even care for that matter. Mark was just about to walk up to his room when he heard a call,

“Hey, come sit next to your old man for a few. I want to talk to you about something.” Mark felt his jaw clench and goosebumps pock all over his body. He let out a deep sigh and turned around to see a concerned face looking up at him.

“Sure, sure thing—” He left his bag on the stairs and sat across from his father on the adjacent couch. Father and son looked at each other for a moment before Mark let out a confused sigh and began to look around.

“Look, I want to talk to you about—”

“About what?” Jack looked perplexed by Mark’s sudden retort.

“Um, well, I wanted to talk you about that Young Artist’s Camp—” Mark sighed and immediately sunk into the couch.

“I think that this could be a real opportunity for you to get a step ahead of other artists your age. You’re not just “good” kid, you’re damn good when you string together some ideas. A few comic book artists from NYC have gone to these camps and teach there. I just think that you’ve got a lot of talent.” Mark bit his lip and looked into his father’s surprisingly morose gaze had he been drinking?

“I just... didn’t have your type of talent when I was your age, you know? I think that you’ve got two parents who really... care about your art, your work. Your mother and I always wanted to do something creative, and maybe you have a chance to do something really special.” Jack’s voice started to crack a little.

“I think about my family, how they treated me, what they did—” Mark felt his face go flush again, he knew that his father never brought up his childhood. His mother had told him once, that it was bad enough to not ask, not to pry, no matter how curious one was.

“You’re better than me, better than that. I hope you think about it and decide to go.”

“You know what Dad, I was going to talk to you about it over the weekend, but I think I’m ready to give it a shot. I went to the park today and did some great work, I feel like I could share my work with these people.” He watched his father’s expression change on a dime, his smile was radiant next to the dim-glow of the television set.

“That’s fantastic Mark, I hope you’re doing it for you, not just because I’ve asked you.” Mark smiled and began to make his way to the stairwell.

“No, this choice is my own me, Dad.” He reflected back the same smile his father shined at him. Mark felt as though they both genuinely meant it.

A few weeks had passed, Mark’s art had been flowing like never before. Inspiration seemed to sprout from everywhere. Mark had also gone back a few more times to visit “old glory.” He loved the exhilarating feeling of having such a release, then creating from that sensual and tender level. Even Daniel was enamored by Mark’s newfound creative streak.

“Wow man, I was going over those comic ideas you gave me. Really great work man, I’m just blown back by your talent sometimes.” Mark felt his chest puff a little as he fidgeted with his tennis racket.

“Well, at least it’s better than your tennis game eh? You can’t be bad at both soccer and tennis man, what are girls gonna like about you?” Daniel smiled at Mark’s

playful ribbing, their friendship had certainly gotten over the “queer” bump they faced. Mark, however, had yet to tell Daniel that he had been frequenting a familiar location they had spoke of.

“Take me to California with you man, I’m so jealous that you’ve got your summer vacation already, we haven’t even hit winter yet.” Mr. Pederson walked by them and gave Daniel a smug look.

“Glad that you’re so interested in tennis that you’ll go all the way out west for training, Daniel.” Daniel rolled his eyes and tightened his shoelaces. Maybe after summer Mark would tell Daniel a little more, was there any point in proving him right, right now? He smiled as Pederson began to make a few remarks about Daniel’s form.

Mark had been running late all day: first he missed the lunch rush and was left with a vending machine lunch, then he had to stay late after school because he was in such a rush that he left his assignment at home and had to make it up. By the time he left school it was close to sundown, but he wanted to make a pitstop.

He found himself in front of the park and noticed that it was dead, minus a few joggers and bikers. He had yet to see that handsome gentleman that he had that quick glance at all those weeks ago, he was still hoping for an “accidental” meeting of sorts. He took a lackadaisical stroll around the bathroom, there was no one going in or out, it started to feel familiar when the best time to go in was.

The door creaked open and light peered in from the ajar door before it slammed shut. Mark cracked his neck and noticed a pair of shoes underneath the same stall where he had his first encounter. Mark made his way to the sink where he ran the faucet and splashed his face down, the man in the stall coughed back; seemingly in response to Mark. A coy grin crept across his damp lips as he began to wonder what it would be like to please another person. The man in the stall behind him gave another slight cough, Mark turned around and noticed that the man’s shoes were pointing straight at him. They were new, sporty, and fun gym shoes. Mark loved the sharp, sleek design that they had; black and silver. He could see the man’s ankles and presumed that he was most likely wearing shorts judging from the faint, muscular calf he could see. Mark began to wonder what the other man looked like, was it his handsome stranger?

He soon found himself in the stall next to the stranger. Mark looked pensively at the hole and got to his knees; there was a first time for everything—no more mental gymnastics. Another cough escaped Mark’s mouth and he soon saw the man’s shorts slink down to his black and silver shoes. When Mark looked back up, he was greeted by the very eager presence of the stranger’s throbbing, girthy member. He brushed the sweat from his forehead and thought of the handsome stranger once more. The thought of bringing him ecstasy, the thought of seeing him so aroused by what Mark could do for him, it inspired Mark’s desire to pleasure the stranger in front of him. There was a familiar and wonderful scent that radiated from the stranger. Mark could almost see his whimsical crush when he inhaled that intoxicating, erotic fragrance which emanated from his gloryhole companion. There was a gasp, and soon a release; Mark sat down in a fevered sweat—he felt wonderful once again.

He watched the man tidy up his pants, and heard him step out to run the faucet. Mark had normally noticed it was customary to wait a few minutes after a stranger would leave before he would, but this time was different. He just had to see the man who made him feel this wonderful; the man who showed him how to give. Mark sat on the dusty floor wondering what to do next, did he just step out? What if the man was mortified to

learn that he was blown by a teenager, what if he lashed out? Before Mark could worry any longer, the bathroom door opened, the stranger was leaving. Mark heard the door slam and scurried to his feet and found himself quietly leaving the bathroom to find the stranger.

It was dark when Mark's eyes perused outside of the bathroom, his eyes shot back and forth looking for the stranger from the stall. He heard footsteps that were trailing to his left, but he wasn't sure if it was the drizzle that had started to patter along the path. He followed his instinct and darted to the sound, he caught a sharp and slim figure taking a left out of the gate of the park. He couldn't get a good view, but he could see, the man was quite fit from faraway. Mark began to breathe a bit heavy as he grew closer to where he last saw the man, he finally reached the gate and quickly stopped himself when he looked left. Mark felt his stomach drop as he sunk back behind the gate. Was he seeing things? Was that, who he really thought it was? Mark peered his head over the gate once more to see a familiar figure unlocking his bike in front of the streetlight. In a pair of snug, form fitting shorts and a sweat-resistant shirt was the figure of his father; donning a pair of beautiful black and silver sneakers. Mark gasped and felt his stomach turn, he began to gag instantly as his mouth seemed to foam.

He heard the bike chain click in the distance and the sound of wheels turning as Jack departed on his bike. Mark began to gag louder, and instantly hurled up whatever lunch he had during the day. Water streamed down his face and his throat burned as he continued to vomit up, what seemed like, his entire digestive track. What had he done? What had he done, what was going on? He stumbled to his feet, but held the gate as he continued to heave-up more bile. Would he ever be able to stop? He stood in front of the gate and staggered over to the streetlight where his father had parked that stupid-sporty bike. Mark began to kick, punch, and flail with all of his might at the lamppost. He howled, and howled until he began to gag on his own saliva once more. His stomach began to turn and Mark slowly moved out onto the middle of the street; falling to his knees. His cries turned to uncontrollable sobbing, only the streetlight offered its warm glow in the chilly rain. His heaving sighs grew heavier as the rain began to plummet evermore. He heard honking in the distance, tires treading through the soggy streets. What had he done? The thought sank deep into him as lambent lights burned into the back of his eyes. What, had, he, done?

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