

Beach Party Days: Chapter 7

Tuesday morning September 3, 1957...

After an early Labor Day weekend, another school year was beginning. Bo, Earle, and Rafe had already been attending early football practice since mid-August. All three were assured of making the varsity squad as juniors. Pre-season workouts consisted of no pads, just a lot of calisthenics to lose the summer lethargy and get into condition, along with running through basic plays in the playbook. Then a loosely organized touch football game that occasionally got a little out of hand when someone got “touched” a bit too hard.

Rafe got off the school bus along with Jack Pauley, Cathy Wood, and the rest of the students bussed from the further reaches of the North Kingsboro district. Cathy was her usual effervescent self, but Rafe noticed a greater degree of maturity about her this year. She had filled out with more of an hour glass figure and had a more confident air about her. She still had that bright smile, but it was more self-assured, as if she knew more than one would expect for a sixteen year old girl in the late 1950’s.

Rafe, Jack and Cathy walked up the concrete steps to the side door of the school. On the big red double doors was posted the homeroom assignments for each of the four years. Rafe got there first to open the door and quickly scanned the list for the Junior Class. Homerooms were assigned by alphabetic groups, so Rafe was in room 201 for anyone who’s last name began with the letters A through F. “Jack, you are in room 203, and Cathy you are in room 204”, Rafe announced to Jack and Cathy.

They proceeded through the door and up the stairwell to the second floor. As they entered through the doors on the second floor they practically bumped into Earle, James and Bo, who were standing just inside the doorway laughing about something. “What’s so funny?” Cathy asked with a hint of a smile to cover her obvious curiosity.

“Oh, nothing much, just a joke that Hein told -- not something you’d be interested in”, Earle said as politely as he could, while trying not to burst out laughing again.

Cathy seemed to surmise that it was something off-color and not something she’d likely find funny. “Boys!” she thought to herself with a bit of annoyance. “Well I’m off to homeroom. Bo, what room are you in?” Cathy inquired.

“Room 203”, he answered, “but I’ll walk you down the hall and catch up on what your summer was like.”

As Bo and Cathy walked away, Jack looked at James and Earle and practically demanded, “OK, now share the joke with Rafe and me, so we can get a laugh before school starts.”

James then repeated the joke and Rafe and Jack roared, which only made Earle laugh again. “Hot Damn, Hein that was a good one!” Rafe managed through his guffaws. Then the bell

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rang signaling time to get to their respective homerooms. Earle and Rafe sauntered into room 201, while James and Jack went to rooms 202 and 203 respectively. In each of the classrooms, the homeroom teacher handed out the classroom assignments to each student and the 1957-1958 school year was officially underway.

Monday morning October 7, 1957...

Last Friday, on October 4, a new show debuted on TV, called “Leave it to Beaver”. It would have a long run and ultimately become a symbolic cliché for the Fifties, particularly for those who look back on that time as the last “age of innocence”, when, for example you would never see a married couple in the same bed together.

But there was something diametrically opposed to this perspective that also occurred on October 4, 1957. This was the day that the USSR, Russia, launched Sputnik I, the first artificial Earth satellite. In the ensuing years the race to space was to become a major undertaking of both the USA and the USSR.

On this Monday however, the boys and girls at QHS had more uncomplicated things on their minds, and a couple of the boys had concocted a plot with a bit of mischief intended.

It was just before the start of third period in shop class and Earle and Whizzie Grant had just finished whispering to each other. They were among the first students in the classroom. Holding back a chuckle, Earle went to the door to act as lookout. Whizzie was carefully placing some clear tacks, point side up, on the shop teacher’s chair. Just as he finished, Earle whistled, the signal that Mr. Willey was coming down the hall. Other students were pouring into the shop and Earle and Whizzie quickly took their seats at their workbench.

Mr. Willey entered the room quickly and went to his desk. He turned around and announced, “OK, today we are going to continue working on the wooden serving trays we started yesterday. If there are no questions, then you know where the tool cabinet is, so get busy. I want to see some good work today. I’ll come around and inspect your work. Oh, but first let me take the roll. Answer ‘Here!’ when I call your name.”

With that he took his white shop coat off the back of the chair and put it on. The roll book was on his desk. Earle and Whizzie were anxiously awaiting him to sit down. Finally, Mr. Willey sat down on the chair. “Ouch! What the...?” yelled the shop teacher. Earle and Whizzie nearly burst a gut trying to not laugh. They did not dare look at one another for fear of losing it.

Mealy mouthed Freddie Malcolm inquired, “Oooh, Mr. Willey, what is the maaatter? Are you hurrtrt?”

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Looking down on his chair and simultaneously feeling his butt with his right hand, Mr. Willey exclaimed loudly, “Ok, who’s the wise guy who put tacks on my chair?” When no one confessed, he said, “I want to know now!” Still no response, some of the boys were trying to hold back a laugh, and some had a look of surprise on their faces. “Ok, if that’s the way it is, and no one is man enough to own up to this nasty prank, then every last one of you are getting detention after school today. Well? Is that it, or does someone want to admit they were the culprit, so that the rest of the class is not punished for the real prankster?”

Again, no one came forward. “Well that’s it then -- detention for all of you! Now, get busy on those projects,” the shop teacher declared, as he continued to rub his butt.

Thursday morning October 27, 1957...

*Oh, Baby Doll
When bells ring out the summer free
Oh, baby doll
Will it end for you and me
We'll sing our old Alma Mater
And think of things that used to be ...*

The Chuck Berry song, “Oh, Baby Doll”, had just ended. “This is it! There he is! There’s Dick Clark! Come on, now’s our chance to do what we came for!” Val Schultz was overly excited and when he got that way he typically ran his words together like a runaway freight train, with bits of spit exploding from his generous mouth. He was dragging Jan Lively by the hand and with the other hand waving frantically for the other QHS students to catch up with him.

This was American Bandstand, the hottest show on national TV for teens across the nation. The show had originated as a local dance show on a Philadelphia station, but had premiered nationwide on Oct. 7. Two carloads of QHS students had played hooky on this school day to drive to Philadelphia and get on the daily one hour afternoon show which aired at 4:00 PM. In just a few short weeks, the regular teens on the show had already become “stars” and nearly every teen who rushed home from school to watch the show could tell you the names of the regulars. The show featured couples dancing to Rock and Roll songs, some fast and some slow Doo Wop tunes. Each day Dick Clark would have a segment featuring a guest recording artist or vocal group with whom Dick would talk about their latest new release on a 45 record, and then the artist or group would mouth the words to the song as it played and the teens on the show would watch. And on occasion he would allow some teens who were not regulars, but who had traveled to central Philly just to get on the show, to come on camera and tell the audience something about where they came from.

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On this day one carload of QHS junior and senior year students consisted of Marnie Booker, Ben Scully, Carol Miller and Roger Vaccaro, in addition to Val and Jan. They were rushing to get to Dick Clark at the appointed time. They had already been cleared by the stage manager for what they wanted to present to Dick.

As they approached Dick Clark, he smiled and waived them on to center stage and the six students assembled three on each side of Dick, as they had been instructed by the stage manager. Dick looked into the camera and announced to the TV audience, “Here with us today are six students from Quaytown High School, who have come all the way to Philadelphia from east central New Jersey.” After getting their names, he looked at first one side then the other and queried, “I understand you have something you want to present today; what might that be?”

Ben Scully, who was positioned next to Dick’s right shoulder, took the object he was holding behind his back and handed it to Dick. With a nervous smile and flushed cheeks, Scully cleared his throat and said, “Mr. Clark, we would like to present you with a one of our varsity sports letters.” At that he handed Dick a red letter Q, bordered in white with a white football on a field of blue in the center of the Q.

“Why, thank you. Thank you very, much. What a fab present. This is the first gift of this type we’ve received on Bandstand.”

With that the six QHS students filed off camera to watch earnestly as their schoolmates who drove down in the other car made their way up to Dick. Bo was in this group, along with Ronnie McCloud and Seniors Rory LaClasse and Bill Foster. Rory carried a trumpet, Bill had a tenor saxophone and Ronnie had one of those school band drums that are strapped over the shoulders.

“And now we have four more students from Quaytown in New Jersey”, Dick announced to the TV audience as the three boys sidled up to him. After obtaining their names, he asked “What is it you young men want to present?”

“We are going to play one of the Quaytown fight songs for you and the audience”, Rory announced somewhat stiffly.

Dick looked at Bo and asked, “And what about you, Bo, I see you don’t have an instrument. Are you going to sing for us?”

Bo laughed, “That would clear the studio pretty darn quick! No, while the other guys play the QHS fight song, I’m going to model these new Flag Flyer sneakers”.

“Well, that’s a new one!” Dick chuckled. “OK, boys, let’s hear the Quaytown fight song and maybe the camera can get a close up of those new Flag Flyers that Bo is wearing.”

When the boys finished they received a polite round of applause from the regulars on the team and a few loud whistles and cheers from the first group of QHS students. All too soon the

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show ended, but not before the QHS students had a chance to share the dance floor with the Bandstand regulars and other visitor teenagers. Bo walked up to a group of three girls who were non-regulars and asked if any of them would like to dance. It was a fast Elvis song. One girl shook her head “No”, but one of the remaining two nearly pushed him out toward the danced floor. When the song ended, Bo got her name and phone number, and told her he would call. But he knew he wouldn’t, once he learned that she lived in Blue Bell, PA and there was no way he would drive that four hour distance.

The ride home for the QHS students in both cars was euphoric. They had been on national TV on the hottest teenager show ever!

The next day when they arrived at school, they were treated as celebrities by the other students. Bo felt like he was walking on air as he walked into his homeroom. That is until Mr. Fielder walked up to him and in a low voice said, “Mr. Orechio, I’ve been instructed to tell you that you are wanted immediately in the Principal’s Office. Mr. Hunt wants to see you.”

Bo got up hesitantly and started walking toward the Principal’s Office at the front of the school. On the way to the office Bo was trying to figure out what this was about. He was still shaking his head as he entered the door into Mr. Hunt’s secretary’s office, through which you had to traverse in order to get to the door to the Principal’s office, or the Vice Principal’s office off to the right side. It was literally the buffer zone. Once inside the door, Bo stopped short as he saw the others sitting and standing there. All nine of the other students who had gone to Philadelphia yesterday were gathered there. “Oh, Oh!” thought Bo. “I think we’ve been had.”

“Ok, you can all go in now. Mr. Hunt is ready for you,” intoned Mrs. Sheppard, the secretary, with a mischievous glint in her eye, as if she were trying to hide an “I know what trouble you all are in” smile.

Once they had all filed into Mr. Hunt’s office, Mr. Hunt fixed a serious looking gaze on each of the students in turn before he spoke. “Yesterday, my daughter was watching television – a new show called Bandstand, er American Bandstand, that I am led to believe is a teenage dance show televised from Philadelphia. Well, you can imagine my shock when she told me that there were ten students on the show from Quaytown High School. She didn’t remember all of your names, but she remembered enough of you and after a little investigation with the help of Mr. Brown, our truant officer, and my daughter’s perusal of last year’s yearbook, we were able to identify all of you”.

Bo smiled and when Mr. Hunt noticed it, he raised his voice and pointed his finger at Bo, “This is nothing to smirk about, young man!” Then to all of them, “You all played hooky from school and you could have been involved in an automobile accident or worse. When you are supposed to be in school your parents expect the school to be responsible for you. Which reminds me, at this moment, a phone call is being made to each of your homes to report this incident to your parents. In addition each of you will be punished with two days detention after school. You are lucky that we haven’t taken the more serious step of suspending you for several

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days, but until now you have all been good students, and as leaders in your respective classes you should be more aware of the example you set for the rest of the students. Now, what do you have to say for yourselves?"

Two of the girls had tears forming in their eyes, and the boys all hung their heads. Ben Scully said solemnly, "I'm sorry. I think we're all sorry; it won't happen again".

"It had better not. And just so you know, the truant officer, Mr. Brown, has a list of your names and the next time you do not show up in school, your houses will be the first to be visited by him". Once again Mr. Hunt looked intently at each of the students and then said firmly, "Now get out of here and go to your first period classes."

Friday evening November 8, 1957...

The Sadie Hawkins dance was underway in the QHS gym. A local band from a nearby town was playing on the stage, called the Viscounts. They were all very good musicians and a few years later they would record a full album of instrumental songs. This night they played what would become their most remembered hits, both of which charted briefly on the top 100 in Billboard; "Harlem Nocturne" and "Night Train".

The Viscounts featured Larry Vecchio on the organ, Harry Haller on sax, and Bobby Spievak on guitar. They had just finished playing "When the Saints Go Marching In", and the guys and gals had danced a jitterbug to the music.

As the legend goes, a Sadie Hawkins dance is one where the girls ask the boys for a date and to accompany them to the dance. On this night, Bo had been asked by Martha Luchese, Earle had been asked by a newly arrived junior, named Penny Warlock, James had been asked by Sue Barlow, and Rafe had been asked by Lucy Millstone. All had accepted. Jack Pauley had been asked by Sarah Stevens, but declined. Jack was not into dancing.

Bo and James had once again double dated with Martha and Sue, with Bo borrowing his father's 1954 Ford. Earle still did not have his license, so he double dated with Tommy Slade who had accepted a date with Sarah Stevens, after she had been turned down by Jack. Rafe had his driving permit, but it was against the law to drive at night and without an adult of twenty-one or over, so he and Lucy were driven by her older sister, Susan. The Millstones lived a few blocks from Rafe.

The night turned out to be a fun night for all of them. Bo, James, Earle, Tommy and their dates went to Stosh's diner in downtown Quaytown after the dance. Rafe and Lucy were invited to join the others, but had to turn it down to be driven home by Susan Millstone.

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At the diner, inevitably the conversation turned to football, as the big Thanksgiving Day game against arch rival Mason was looming as the season was drawing to a close. The girls were listening politely to the banter, even though some of it was incomprehensible to them.

Bo was kidding Earle, “Burn, in tomorrow’s game I hope you don’t get any more of those fifteen yard penalties called on you for unnecessary roughness. It almost cost us the last game against Wall Township.”

“Weren’t my fault, Bo”, responded Earle. “Coach “Ruffy” grabbed me on the sideline just before Wall kicked off to us and told me flat out to go out there and hit someone. So I did. I just didn’t know that he meant block someone. Almost broke my hand on the face guard of that fella’s helmet!”

James, Tommy and Bo broke into a roaring laugh, with Tommy almost choking on the sip of coca cola he was drinking. Some of the girls thought it was a rather dumb thing to laugh about, but they hid their reactions. After all why spoil what had been thus far a nice date night.

Thursday morning November 28, 1957...

Thus far the junior year for Bo, James, Earle, and Rafe had seemed to be zooming by. Bo, Earle and Rafe had been starters on the varsity football team, while James had concentrated on keeping up his grades, working at the Deli after school and on weekends to save for college and for spending money and dates.

It was 10:30 AM on Thanksgiving Day, almost time for the big turkey day game with Quaytown High’s arch rival Mason High. Game time was 11:00 AM. Both teams were on the field going through pre-game warm-ups, Mason on the North side of the fifty yard line and the Quaytown Bisons on the south side closest to the home and visitor teams field houses. Bo had just finished running the Quaytown offense through some plays, handing off to the backs and throwing passes to the ends. Earle was at right end, but Bo was disappointed that Rafe was missing. “Damn”, he thought, “we could have really used him today. We have a good shot at beating Mason and that would be two years in a row, which probably has never happened.”

Just then a car was being waved through the gate. It slowly made its way around the cinder running track that encircled the football field. The car finally stopped behind the Quaytown bench in front of the hometown stands that was filled with students, parents and alumni, and the band. The driver got out of the car to assist the passenger. Hobbling out of the passenger side on crutches was Rafe, who made his way to the Quaytown bench. Bo then realized that it was Rafe’s uncle driving the car, and he was glad that Rafe would be able to sit on the bench and root for the team.

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Earle sidled up to Bo and said, “Good to see Rafe will be here today for moral support. Too bad; sure could have used him on offense and defense against Mason”.

“Yeah! I feel the same”, Bo replied. But it was time to bring the team into the field house for the pre-game pep talk. Bo and Earle waved toward Rafe, but he didn’t see them, as all the cheerleaders were surrounding him and asking him how he was.

In the field house waiting for the pep talk, Bo was sitting on a bench with the worst case of butterflies in his stomach he’d ever experienced. “God, I hope I don’t have to up chuck!” he thought. He tried to think of something else and then he remembered the pep rally last night. It was exciting to be around the bonfire with his teammates, the cheerleaders and all the students who came out to wish the team well.

Bo was brought out of his reverie by the sound of Coach Costello. Despite the fact that he was one of two assistant football coaches, Coach Zino the other, it was Coach Costello who always made the pep talks to try and get the team fired up. Head football coach Ruffy Cook was always too nervous on game days. Invariably he would pace around the field house and when he did try to talk it came out in rapid fire bursts of several words accompanied by stuttering, squeaks and malapropisms.

So, it was always Coach Costello’s job to give the pep talk. Coach Costello was also the varsity basketball coach, and pep talks came natural to him. For football games he, too, got overly excited and it was not unusual that he would get into one of the boy’s face and work at getting the boy’s adrenalin flowing as high as a kite. Unfortunately, when he did this, he would get himself so worked up that he would start spitting as the words of encouragement poured out. This made some boys back away and made Coach Costello raise his voice even louder. But today he was in Earle’s face and Earle was not one to back off. “I’m ready to kick some Mason butt!” Earle exclaimed in reaction to the coach’s challenge.

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, there was the expected knock on the door and the referee peeked in and said, “It’s time, Coach. Coin toss in five minutes!”

“Are you ready? Are you ready to go out there and win for Quaytown?” Coach Costello yelled.

A huge roar came from the boys as they all stood up in unison and strapped on their helmets. “Then get going!” yelled Coach Costello. And the boys left their field house running down the ramp onto the field through a path made of two lines by the band, majorettes, and cheerleaders. They ran to the home team sideline on the East side of the field. Behind them the Mason team ran to the visitors sideline on the west side of the field.

Five minutes later the game began with Quaytown kicking off to Mason. Rafe watched from the bench and wished he could be playing. But the surgery he’d had on his leg made that impossible. He looked down at his left leg and recalled the night that the injury occurred...

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It was Thursday night, November 14, two days prior to the final season game before the big Thanksgiving Day game. The Quaytown varsity was practicing with light pads which meant shoulder pads and helmets, but no hip or thigh pads. It was a chilly night so the boys all wore sweat pants and practice jerseys. The boys playing backfield and end positions were running through some simulated blocking drills. Rafe was squaring off against one of the backs. As they charged each other to simulate a block the smaller back came in lower than Rafe and his helmet rammed into Rafe's left thigh. Rafe felt a sudden sharp pain! He crumbled to the ground holding his thigh.

Rafe got up off the ground and continued to run through the drills as best he could until practice ended. But the pain did not diminish; it kept getting worse. Rafe had been wearing added padding on the left thigh for the past five games, ever since he suffered an initial bruise at the top of the thigh. The bruise originally happened and began to spread down the thigh by continuing to throw cross-body blocks against the bigger defensive tackles on off-tackle running plays. Since the beginning it had ached and his left pants leg in the chinos he wore seemed tighter. But tonight was different. This was real pain!

Rafe was limping a bit as he walked from the football field toward the shower room in the school. Earle and Bo sidled up to Rafe and asked why he was limping. It was now dark so they couldn't see the pain etched on his face.

"My thigh is really hurting. I hope it's just a charley horse", Bo responded through his pain.

"Well, shake it off, Rafe", Earle said. "We need you to catch a couple touchdown passes on Saturday".

"Yeah, and the turkey day game against Mason is next, so I hope it's just a charley horse. I know you've had that bruise and been wearing extra padding", Bo added.

After they reached the locker room, Rafe stripped off his practice togs and moved slowly toward the shower room. Near the entrance, Rory LaClasse was threatening to snap his towel at Tommy Slade. LaClasse was a broad shouldered six foot, 185 pound senior who played fullback. His family was one of the upper crust of Quaytown and he let everyone know it. Frankly he was a bit obnoxious and liked to throw his weight around. It was typical of him to pick on an underclassman.

Just as Rafe approached the entrance LaClasse snapped his towel and caught Tommy right on his dick. Tommy let out a yelp and grabbed himself in self-defense. LaClasse just laughed. Earle was standing next to Tommy and quickly stepped around between Tommy and Rory. Trying hard to suppress his anger Earle said, "Why the hell did you do that! You could hurt someone badly!"

"Oh, he's not hurt bad. He'll get over it. What are you, his mother?" laughed Rory.

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By now a small group of guys had ambled over to see what was going on. Tommy grabbed Earle's arm and said, "Let it go, Burn. I'm OK. He'll get his someday"

Earle glared at Rory and said, "Don't do that again." Rory just laughed and made a mock look of fear. He then walked off with one of his senior buddies toward the locker room to get dressed. The rest of the guys shrugged their shoulders and moved on to what they were doing before the incident.

Rafe finished a hot shower, got dressed and went out intending to hitchhike home as was his custom after football practice. But he got as far as the stairs heading up to the main level and had to sit down as the pain was now so bad that tears were welling in his eyes. As he sat there holding his leg and rocking back and forth, coach Ruffy saw him and asked how he was, but it was evident that Rafe was in real pain. "Come on, I'm going to take you to see Dr. Runyon and have him look at that leg."

Dr. Runyon's office was in his home in downtown Quaytown. He looked over Rafe's leg, misdiagnosed it as a deep bruise and applied a diathermy treatment. After the treatment, Rafe did not feel any improvement, but he didn't want to seem like a wimp, so he thanked the doctor. Coach Ruffy then drove Rafe the five miles to his home. Rafe's parents had a long commute and were not yet home from work when coach dropped him off.

By the time Rafe's parents arrived, the pain had become so bad that he could no longer keep the tears from falling. His parents then drove Rafe to the emergency room at the closest hospital that specialized in orthopedic injuries. The following day Rafe was operated on by a specialist. His bruised thigh had become so bruised it separated from the bone and broke the main vein. The diathermy treatment had only served to increase the internal bleeding.

Score! Rafe's focus was brought back to the game as he heard the roar from the crowd on the visitor side of the field. He had been watching despite his recollection of the injury. Mason had just scored a touchdown on a running play around left end. "Damn", he thought, "If I had been out there at defensive halfback, I might have stopped that run". He wasn't knocking his replacement; it was just that the boy was a sophomore and had less experience at tackling than did Rafe.

The first half ended with the score Mason 6 and Quaytown 0. Mason missed the extra point. In the second half, Quaytown had one chance to tie the game and win if they converted the extra point. The Bisons had moved the ball down to the Mason five yard line. A pass play was called with Rory LaClasse lined up as a slot back on the right. Rory ran into the end zone and did a button-hook. Bo faked a handoff to the right halfback, then stood up and fired a pass to Rory. Touchdown! "Oh, fuck! Rory dropped the pass! He dropped the friggin pass!" Rafe yelled his reaction.

The game ended; Mason 6, Quaytown 0. The crowd filed out. James was among them and like most of the QHS fans he was disappointed. He made his way over to where Rafe was

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waiting on the bench for his uncle to bring the car over. “How’s it going buddy? Too bad about your injury, you would have caught that pass.” offered James.

“Thanks, Hein, but there was a lot of pressure on Rory and anybody could have dropped the ball”, Rafe replied. “My uncle will be here in a minute. Hey, there’s Sue Barlow over there. Why not see if you can console her; she looks like she can use it.”

James turned around to see Sue in her color guard outfit, with the flag hanging down on the ground and looking sad. “Aha! Guess I will mosey over and put my arm around her”, he said with a chuckle. “Have a Happy Thanksgiving, Rafe. See Ya!”

“You too Hein”, Rafe replied as he started to walk with the crutches toward his uncle’s car.

There was a lot to be thankful for in Quaytown that day, but there would have been a lot more to be thankful for with a win by the QHS Bisons.

Wednesday evening, January 5, 1958...

December flashed by for Bo, Earle, James and Rafe. On December 1, Sam Cooke and Buddy Holly and the Crickets debuted on the Ed Sullivan Show. Holly and the Crickets performed their smash hit “That’ll Be the Day”. On December 2, in Shippingport, PA the first US full-scale atomic electric power plant came on line. On December 12, Jerry Lee Lewis married his 13 year old cousin, Myra Gale Brown. He was still married at the time to his first wife. In the social fabric of the time this was something that just wasn’t done. He was ostracized both in America and Great Britain and his career nosedived as fast as it had risen. It was many years before he could again perform in America. On December 20, Elvis received his draft notice to join the U.S. Army. And on December 29, singers Steve Lawrence and Edie Gormé were wed in Las Vegas.

But now it was January. Christmas and New Years were past. 1958 ushered in another eventful year. The U.S. Explorer I space craft successfully orbited the earth. For the first time in twenty-six years the cost of a first class postage stamp was raised from three cents to four cents. Visa and Master credit cards were introduced. The first domestic jet-airline passenger service was begun by National Airlines between New York City and Miami. Sweet n' Low was introduced as an artificial Sweetener, using saccharin instead of sugar. Meanwhile, Cocoa Puffs was introduced; containing forty-three percent sugar. The Brooklyn Dodgers became the Los Angeles Dodgers and played their first season at the L.A. Coliseum.

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Basketball season was underway and the QHS varsity team had lost a lot of starters from the prior year's senior class. It was going to be an uphill battle this year. There was no game tonight, so the team had practiced after school. The team was in the locker room with the boys taking turns to shower up and get dressed.

In front of his locker Earle had finished stripping off the sweaty practice uniform, socks and sneakers and walked naked toward the shower. Rory LaClasse had just finished showering and as Earle approached, Rory smiled malevolently, pulled his towel from around his shoulders and snapped it toward Earle. But Earle was too quick and side-stepped before the end of the towel reached him.

As the end of the towel fell impotently to the floor, Earle took two rapid steps until he was within one foot of Rory. "I warned you before about doing that, the last time you did it to Tommy! Maybe you didn't understand me", Earle spoke with a hard edge to his voice.

Rory's grin turned to a sneer as he responded, "Who the hell do you think you're talking to? No southern hillbilly is going to tell me what I can or can't do!" And with that he pushed Earle.

That was his mistake, because Earle did not back off and pushed Rory back. Now Rory had a weight advantage on Earle and at six foot he was broader and more muscular. But Earle had a couple of inches on Rory and longer arms. Rory took a swing at Earle with a right haymaker, but Earle moved to his left and the blow glanced off Earle's right shoulder.

Several boys had moved closer to see the ensuing fight. One rooted for Rory, and two others rooted for Earle. Earle lowered his head and moved into Rory and hit him in the ribs with a left hook. Just then there was a shout! Coach Costello had come into the locker room in time to see Rory throw the first punch and he yelled at the top of his lungs, "Stop the fighting! Stop it right now!"

Then, although Coach Costello was all of five foot five inches, he ran between Rory and Earle and pushed them apart. "Okay", what started this?" He queried. "I want an answer now!"

"I was just playing around with him and he got all huffy about it", Rory offered, trying to act innocent.

"Bull! He's been snapping his towel at the underclassmen since football season. He almost hurt Tommy Slade badly by snapping it into his dick, and tonight he tried to hit me there", explained Earle, still somewhat angry.

"OK, you're teammates; you should try to get along!" Coach said firmly. "I saw most of what happened here. I will let you both know what action I'll take by tomorrow. We have a game on Friday. Now, get dressed and go home." He looked around the room, "All of you!"

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The following day Rory was off the team. It took a bit of courage on Coach Costello's part. Rory's family was among the town's most influential and it had been recently announced that Rory was being considered for an appointment to the Naval Academy, after he graduated in June.

Thursday afternoon, March 27, 1958...

The QHS Basketball team had a so-so year and the season was finally over. Rafe was fully recovered from his leg injury and looking forward to the start of Baseball. On this day in the QHS gym after school he and Jack Pauley were playing a game of half-court two on two with Bo and Earle. James had left for the Quaytown Deli to work. There was an older boy down at the other basket shooting baskets. From what Rafe could see when he chanced to look after a basket was scored, the guy was not that well-coordinated, in fact when the fellow took shots at the basket, he shot the ball like a girl, although he had a well-developed masculine body.

Bo and Earle, having been on the varsity basketball team, were too much for Jack and Rafe. It was no contest and the game mercifully ended. As they were standing around taking a breather and chatting about nothing of consequence, the guy from the other end of the court walked over and introduced himself. As he approached, they realized that he was a Negro and a bit older than they were. He was about five foot nine inches with a round face, very short hair on a fair sized head, small ears tight to the sides of his face, a wide nose, large mouth with thick lips that showed near perfect white teeth when he smiled. He spoke with a deep, resonant voice.

"Hi, I'm Nathan, Nathan Leeson. I know most of your names, you're Bo Orechio", pointing to Bo. "And you're Earle Burnell, and you're Rafe Cerny," pointing to Earle and Rafe in turn. "But I'm afraid I can't remember this other fellow's name", nodding his head at Jack.

"I'm Jack Pauley", Jack responded with a quizzical look.

"I recognize your face, because you played on the jayvee basketball squad last year with Rafe. I just couldn't remember your name. I attend just about all of the QHS jayvee and varsity basketball games. I graduated from QHS in 1955."

"Well, its nice meeting you Nathan", Rafe said, and shook his hand.

"Me, too, and I've seen you around Quaytown", Bo stepped forward to shake his hand.

Earle and Jack responded in kind. Then Nathan said, "You boys like Rock and Roll?"

They all nodded their assent. "Well, do you know that Alan Freed is bringing a big show to the Brooklyn Paramount Theater tomorrow and Saturday? If you're interested in going

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Saturday, we can get there by bus and the New York subway. I've been there and know the way."

"How much are the tickets and won't they be sold out?" asked Rafe.

Nathan answered, "Balcony tickets are still available for just \$7.50 and they have a batch of them at the record shop in downtown Quaytown. Let me know if you want to go on Saturday. I'll be here again tomorrow afternoon". With that he said so long and walked away.

"What do you guys think?" Rafe asked the boys.

"I'm game", said Jack

"Me, too", said Bo.

Earle hesitated and then said somewhat unenthusiastically, "I'm not sure. I don't know this guy and besides my parents probably won't allow want me goin' off to no Rock and Roll show in Brooklyn of all places."

"Well, Rafe and Jack, why don't we walk downtown to the record shop and get the tickets now?" Bo suggested.

"We've already missed the school bus back to North Kingsboro, and have to go downtown anyway to get the Red and Tan bus", Rafe mused.

"Well, while you guys are makin' plans, this rebel is going to walk home. See ya'll tomorrow – last school day until after Spring Break", Earle said as he walked toward the ramp and waved so long.

The other three boys waved and said so long to Earle. Then Jack said somewhat sheepishly, "I don't have the \$7.50; just enough to pay for the bus."

"Not to worry, I'll cover you and you can pay me back tomorrow", Rafe offered. "Let's get going. If we hurry, maybe we can catch up with Nathan."

"We'd better walk down West Atlantis Street. Nathan probably lives down there in the Negro section", Bo said as they headed quickly to exit the gym and the school.

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Saturday afternoon, March 29, 1958...

*You are my destiny, you share my reverie you're
more than life to me, that's what you are.
Heaven and heaven alone can take your love from me
But I'd be a fool to ever leave you dear,
And a fool I'd never be...*

The Brooklyn Paramount was packed with screaming teenagers, boys and girls of all stripes, white, black, brown, or yellow, they were all standing and cheering at the top of their lungs. The sound system was loud enough, however, so that the lyrics and the orchestra were not totally drowned out, as Paul Anka, the talented sixteen year old from Canada, sang his new hit song, "You Are My Destiny". Bo, Jack, and Rafe were all standing along with Nathan. The three younger boys were in awe at the scene. They had never quite witnessed such organized chaos. Even at QHS Thanksgiving Day football games, with hundreds of people surrounding the field cheering from the stands and sidelines, it was never as loud and frenetic as it was here in this theater.

Last Thursday they had caught up with Nathan on West Atlantis Street and made arrangements to meet him on Saturday morning in downtown Quaytown to get the bus to the Port Authority in New York City. After taking the subway from Manhattan to Brooklyn, they had stepped off and walked down the stairs of the El. They had walked about a block to get to the Paramount Theater and along the way Rafe noticed that Jack and Bo seemed somewhat apprehensive. There were groups of kids streaming along both sides of the street toward the theater, many of them obviously members of various gangs judging from the jackets they wore, and the way they pushed each other about boisterously and cursed fluently.

"First time in Brooklyn?" Rafe had asked. Both boys nodded their heads. "I have relatives in Brooklyn and I grew up in Newark and there were lots of gangs and fights and such. Just don't make eye contact for more than a split second with anyone, or they might think you are challenging them. Then it could get tricky. Just walk like you belong here and act confident and no one will likely bother us", Rafe had advised. They had reached the theater, handed their tickets to one of the ticket takers, who told them to take the right stairwell up to the balcony. Once upstairs, an usher had showed them to their seats. The show had begun on time with Alan Freed introducing Paul Anka.

The boys quickly got into the excitement of the show, with big name stars appearing, one after another. Chuck Berry, The Everly Brothers, Jackie Wilson, Frankie Lymon & the Teenagers, Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters, and headlined by Buddy Holly & the Crickets. Brooklyn was the first city of a six week tour for what was billed as "The Big Beat Show".

When the show ended, the boys followed Nathan out of the theater. Surprisingly with all the excitement, with kids literally dancing in the aisles, and with such a diverse mix of cultures

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and backgrounds among them, there was not one fight, at least none that was evident to the QHS students. Nathan proved to be an excellent guide and leader, as they all returned to Quaytown without an incident. On the way home they couldn't help but relive the show, recounting how they were so impressed by the whole affair and Bo, Jack, and Rafe each had their favorite entertainers that they regaled one another about. This was a first for the QHS schoolmates.

Wednesday afternoon, June 18, 1958...

The last day of school found Bo, Earle, James, and Rafe in the hallway by their lockers on the second floor. They had their yearbooks and were signing each other's books over their photos with expressions like, "Have a great summer. Get ready for our Senior Year - we are going to have a ball!"

The last few months had flown by in a blur for Rafe. He and Bo had played varsity baseball with Rafe alternating among first base, outfield and pitching, and Bo alternating at third base and catcher, where he shared the catching duties with a senior. Earle had turned in a good season on the Track Team, where he excelled at the Javelin, the shot put, the broad jump, and the high hurdles. James had continued to work at the Deli and Bo was set to work there during the summer.

James had continued to date Sue Barlow and Bo was still dating Martha Luchese. Earle had had a few dates with Penny Warlock, but he was still a bit shy and very much the southern gentleman when it came to girls. Penny was a bit of a live wire and was a good counterpoint to Earle, helping him to lose some of his shyness. She liked to tease him about his southern manners.

"So, Burn and Rafe, Hein and I are going to work at the Deli this summer. Come by and get a sandwich when you get into town. We can go to the drive-in, too. What are you two going to do this summer?" Bo asked.

"My dad has arranged for me to be a laborer at the construction company he works for", Earle replied. "That should toughen me up for football in September."

"Me? I'm just going to hang out at the pool in Kingsboro again. I'm hoping to spend time with that Rosemarie from the Bronx again", Rafe added. "Last summer, she told me she'd be back with her family. They rent a cottage a few blocks from the boardwalk and the pool."

As the boys continued talking about their plans, Cathy Wood and Martha Luchese walked over to say hello and ask what the boys were planning to do for the summer. It was obvious that Martha liked Bo very much, although she smiled and was friendly to all four of the boys. Cathy initially spent a few minutes talking with Rafe, and then he noticed something that seemed a bit

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odd. Cathy turned her biggest smile on Bo, and insinuated herself into a three person discussion with Bo and Martha. Rafe couldn't put his finger on anything specific, but the way Cathy was acting it just seemed curious, almost as if there was a bit of flirtatiousness about it. But as quickly as the impression came to him, Rafe let it go, and in his mind he was remembering what Rosemarie looked like last year, and wondering how she would look this summer.

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Friday morning July 25, 1958...

Bo dialed on the rotary phone, MI-7-3426 (this was before the push button phones and area codes). He sounded excited. "Rafe have you read any of the local newspapers?"

"No, what's up?" replied Rafe curiously.

"Do you have this week's Quaytown Weekly, or yesterday's Asbury Park Press?" Bo asked.

"I don't know, but I can look. What's so important?" Rafe answered, now with some concern because of the tone of Bo's voice.

Rafe could hear Bo exhale as if he'd taken a deep breath, "There was a really bad car accident on Thrill Hill Wednesday night. Keith Deacon's car took the jump at the top of the hill and literally flew into the railroad bridge. I just came from the hospital and he's in bad shape...head all bandaged, black eyes swollen shut and broken collar bone and ribs."

Rafe's mind quickly recalled an image of Keith, who had graduated from QHS just that past June. Rafe knew about Thrill Hill. He had once been in a car driven by Jack Wing, with Bo and James the other passengers. Thrill hill was located in Holmvale on a two lane road. Jack had raced up the hill at about forty miles an hour and when they hit the crest the drop off on the down side of the hill was such that the car left the road with all four wheels off the ground. The trick, according to Jack was to not go too fast, because two things could happen. Either the flight would take you into the railroad trestle, or if you landed before the railroad bridge, you could lose control and crash into the concrete wall on either side of the road. Of course, Jack advised, you also needed to know if another car was coming from the opposite direction. That's why you should always drive up from the east side first, and then turn around at the bottom and race up the west side, or better yet, post a look out at the top of the hill to wave when the coast was clear. No wonder he's called "Crazy" Jack Wing.

Rafe shook the memory off and quickly asked Bo "Was anyone else in the car with him?"

"Yeah, that's the really bad news. A sophomore girl, name of Jill Burkett, was in the passenger seat and was killed. The whole roof of the car was peeled off like the lid on a sardine can, the paper said. Really some sad shit!" Bo said with obvious emotion.

"Holy shit! God, what a horrible thing! The girl's parents and family must be devastated!" Rafe blurted out. "We've got to tell Hein and Burn; they both knew Keith."

"Already did", Bo answered. "I can't count the number of times I've been in cars that have gone over Thrill Hill. There were times when we left the ground and came down with our hearts up in our throat, fish-tailing under that railroad trestle until we could slow down to 25 mph. At least once I thought I'd piss my pants. But what a high! Never again, though. Never again! Anyway, the paper says that the mayor of Holmvale is calling on the County and State to

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do something about cutting down the steepness of the hill before some other teenager gets in a serious accident.”

Within a month the road was posted with lower speed signs and since Holmvale only had two full time police officers and squad cars, they hired the NJ State Police to patrol the road. Two months later the road would be closed and reopened after the hill was cut down. Thrill Hill was no more.

Saturday afternoon August 23, 1958...

*Please wait for me; for I shall return;
My love for you will forever burn
Though we must part;
There's no reason to cry
Just say so long;
Because lovers never say goodbye*

*I love you;
My darling more than life itself
I wouldn't try to hurt you;
For I'd only be hurting my self*

*Just kiss me dear;
And hold me tight;
For you know this is not our last night
Though we must part;
There's no reason to cry
Just say so long;
Because lovers never say goodbye...*

Rafe was at the swimming pool in Kingsboro, in the snack area dancing with Rosemarie.. The juke box was playing the latest romantic ballad by the Flamingos, “Lovers Never Say Goodbye”. Rosemarie would be leaving in two weeks to return to the Bronx. Her parents were already making plans for closing up the rented bungalow for the season. Rafe and Rosemarie had gone on a date to the drive-in last night; he had borrowed the '56 Ford Fairlane from his parents. Things got a little heady last night, but while she let Rafe touch her breasts, that's as far as she would go. Rafe didn't want to push it, because despite the fact that this was just a summer romance, he really liked her and didn't want to risk a break up before the end of the summer. He also held out hope of continuing the romance all next summer.

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As they danced slowly together, he knew that he was terribly infatuated with this exotic girl with the coal black eyes, tempting red lips and melodic voice with scarcely a hint of a Bronx accent – more like Manhattan, Rafe thought. They were both in their bathing suits, Rosemarie with a flimsy white wrap-around beach top, opened in the front, over her two piece, and Rafe in just his blue brief style bathing trunks. Dancing this close and moving sensuously together was getting Rafe excited, and he could tell from her hot breath against the bottom of his neck that she was feeling it, too.

When the song ended, Rafe led her over toward the vacant jukebox, pretending to look at the song selection, but more to hide the hard-on bulging out the front of his bathing suit. Rosemarie was aware of the situation, and a smile played at the corner of her lips, but she politely ignored it, so as not to embarrass Rafe any more than he already was.

Then she said, “Rafe, my mom would like you to come to dinner tonight. My aunt will be there of course and my father and brother are coming from the Bronx. They are taking the weekend off from the catering business. I know its short notice, but can you make it?”

The mere thought of having dinner with her family, especially the father and brother, whom he had only met briefly, was enough to deflate the erection. “Well, I think it will be OK. I just need to let my parents know.”

“Oh, goody! Get there about 6:00 PM. Now, I need to get home and help my mom. Can you walk me to the bungalow?”

“Sure. Let’s get our towels and your beach bag.” Rafe responded. Then they went to pick up their things from the upper deck of the pool, which was the top most of a three-tiered deck on the bay side.

As they walked together toward the bungalow, they talked about what each would be doing once school started. Rosemarie initiated the discussion, “I’ll be a senior this year and graduating in June. My parents want me to go to college at either NYU or Fordham, but I’m not crazy about the idea. I want to get my diploma and then I’d rather get a job and someday get my own apartment. What about you, Rafe?”

“I can’t wait for football to start. We have a very good team this year and I want to win the Seacoast Conference. I’m going to work really hard this year to do my part. Being a senior makes it seem so much more important, especially since I missed the big Thanksgiving Day game last year with that injury.” Rosemarie was aware of the eagerness in Rafe’s voice, as he continued, “If the team and I have a good season, I might be able to get a scholarship to a college. That would surely help, since my parents don’t have a lot of money.”

Later that night, after the dinner dishes were cleared, Rafe and Rosemarie were left alone on the screened porch of the bungalow. Rosemarie’s brother had left to go to the boardwalk. Her parents and aunt went inside to do the dishes and watch television, conveniently leaving the two teenagers alone. “Will I see you again next summer?” asked Rosemarie suddenly.

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“As far as I know, I expect to be at the pool again, but maybe just on weekends as I’ll probably need to get a job to help pay for college – that’s if I get accepted at a college that my parents can afford”, Rafe answered thoughtfully. “What about you, Rose, are you definitely going to be here next summer?”

“I’m pretty sure, as long as my parents decide to rent the bungalow again”, she replied. “But there is something I want you to have.” Then she reached inside her purse and handed Rafe a color photo of herself. It was a standing pose in which she was wearing a red, rayon short-sleeved, summer weight sweater over white short shorts that showed off her well-tanned legs. The sweater showed off her firm high breasts. On her feet was a pair of red slip-on flats. She was looking at the camera with that enticing smile with her ruby red lips slightly parted.

Rafe stared at the photo for a while before saying, “Thank you. This is great. I’ll put it in a frame and keep it on the dresser in my bedroom.” Then he kissed her and she kissed him back somewhat fiercely.

When he got home, Rafe put the photo in the top drawer of his dresser, fully intending to get a frame for it.

Thursday afternoon August 28, 1958...

In the news this August: the USS Nautilus became the first atomic sub to complete a trip under the North Pole; the U.S. and Great Britain continued performing nuclear tests, while the U.S.S.R. sent up a third Sputnik into space, this time with two dogs.

All sorts of sports events were in the news, but Bo, Earle and Rafe were more interested in getting ready for their senior year of QHS football. Pre-season practice sans pads had been under way since mid-August. Coach Ruffy had made an unannounced appearance last week (it was still against the scholastic athletic association policy for conference high school coaches to hold formal practices before Labor Day). He had quickly gathered the team to let them know that he had made Rafe and Bo the co-captains of the football team this year.

On this, one of the last days before formal practice with full gear, Earle was breathing a little heavily. He had just run a post pattern and caught a pass from Bo. He caught the pass on the dead run, then juiced the junior playing safety, and outran him into the end zone.

Rafe had run a short pattern and turned to watch Earle and thought, “Man, Burn has great speed once he gets those long legs going.” Then he got a signal from Bo and lay down on the ground.

Earle stopped, turned around expecting to get an atta-boy shout from his teammates, but instead they were all lying on the ground, except Bo. Earle didn’t know what was going on, until

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Bo yelled, “Hey, you finally held onto a pass! Look, everyone was so shocked they all fell down in disbelief.”

With that all the players on the ground sat up and pointed at Earle, laughing, with shouts of, “Way to go, Burn! Way to go!” At first Earle was a little ticked off thinking he was being the butt of a joke. But then he had to laugh, since to be honest with himself he had dropped a few passes in games last year. It wasn’t the sports glasses he wore (contacts were not readily available or affordable in 1958), but rather that he got so excited when the pass was coming to him and wanting to catch it and run with the ball, that he tended to take his eyes off the ball and it would just seem to slither through his hands or bounce off his shoulder pads.

As he trotted back to the huddle, he was laughing along with the others. “Fooled y’all, didn’t I. Bet y’all I’m going to catch a touchdown pass or two or three this year.”

After another few plays it was time for the guys on offense to switch over to defense and vice-versa. On the fourth play the junior quarterback handed off to a sophomore running back, Walt Kinney, who was not only a fast runner, but shifty when he got out into the open. The runner ran off tackle, then made a quick cut-back and outran Rafe, who was playing defensive halfback, and Bo who was playing safety. To be fair, since it was only two-hand touch and tackling was not permitted without full gear, both Rafe and Bo could have stopped him with a flying tackle, but the most they could manage was to get one hand on the runner before he got by them.

When the sophomore got into the end zone, he threw the ball up in the air and jumped up and down making a big show of the fact that he had scored. Rafe ran up to him and said firmly, “Don’t ever do that again! Show boating is not what this team is all about. It’s not about you or me...it’s about *us*. What you just did is poor sportsmanship. If you were to do that in a game or even in a formal scrimmage, you may well get your ass kicked after the game, by the opposing team. Nobody likes a show-off!”

“I’m sorry”, the boy said sincerely, “I guess I just got excited. I want to make the varsity and get in some games this year.”

Bo had arrived just after Rafe and heard the conversation. “Rafe’s right. But if you can run like that, you’ll get into a lot of varsity games this year. I bet you would be good at returning punts and kickoffs”, Bo said. Rafe nodded his agreement.

“Thanks. I’ll be sure to practice on those returns”, the boy replied.

On opening day, the boy would return a punt for a touchdown and during the season he would become a fixture at returning kickoffs and punts.

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Tuesday Noon September 9, 1958...

Senior Year! The first day of school at QHS was underway. Earle, Bo, James and Rafe had been looking forward to this day ever since school had ended last June. All summer they had talked about it whenever they got together. This was it; this was what it felt like to be the Senior Class, the big men on campus; king of the hill!

The four of them assembled for lunch across the street at the store and ordered sandwiches from the owners, Jim and Jane. They each took a bottle of coke from the big red coke cooler box with the flip top lid, and used the towel provided to dry off the water from the ice in which the bottles were lying. Then they inserted the bottles into the bottle opener attached to the side of the red cooler to remove the bottle caps. They sipped on their cokes as they awaited the baloney with mustard sandwiches they had ordered.

“So how was your summer, Hein?” asked Earle.

“Mostly worked at the Deli downtown, and still dating Sue Barlow”, James replied. “Joe, the owner likes Bo and me and gives us as many hours as we want.” Then he looked pointedly at Bo and said with some animation, “Bo, you missed it at the Deli yesterday. This babe came in and asked for Joe – good looking chick, must have been late-twenties or early thirties – with a nice rack. I told her that Joe was busy in the back room, but she ignored that and walked into the back room like she was the Queen of Sheba or something. It was kind of quiet back there, just some mumbling between her and Joe. Then about five minutes later she comes waltzing out and gave me this quick look like she was hiding some secret. I noticed her face was a bit flushed as if she was embarrassed. She looked away and quickly left the store.”

James paused for a few seconds, knowing that he had set the hook. The other boys were curious and waiting for him to finish re-telling what had happened. “OK, Hein, and then what?” Bo asked probingly.

James continued, “So, Joe comes out of the back room just as this babe leaves the store. I looked at him and said, ‘Hey, Joe, what was that all about? And who is that sexy babe?’ Joe looked at me and didn’t answer right away. So, I asked him again. Then he tells me that she comes in about once a month to buy rubbers. Joe went on to say that she didn’t know me and was embarrassed, because Joe suspects that she is having an affair and was afraid that I might say something to her husband if he came in with her and I waited on them.”

“Hot Damn!” Bo exclaimed. “I would have liked to have been there. Sure would like to get to know the woman, might be some action there for us.” He joked.

They all chuckled at the thought.

Then Bo looked at Earle and Rafe and added, “Hein and I were working one night and this woman comes in to the Deli. There were no other customers and Joe was in the back room – I think he might be running a bookie parlor back there or something – anyway, this woman is

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acting strange. Hein and I both asked if we could help her and she whispers something. Well, I didn't hear her, so I asked her to repeat what she said. But I look at Hein and he is turning away and holding back a laugh. Then the woman moves closer to the counter and points down at the lower shelf behind the counter and says shyly that she would like some Kotex. Well, I had a hard time trying to be nonchalant about it, but I managed to ring up the purchase and put it in a paper bag. Then after she left, Hein and I looked at each other, smiled, and just shook our heads."

Their sandwiches were ready. They ate and drank while continuing to talk about their expectations for the senior year. Several underclass girls came in to smoke cigarettes and play the jukebox. One was especially attractive, with a pretty face and a nice shape, accentuated by a really nice ass that curved out from her lower back. She was wearing a blue blouse with pointed collar, a tight skirt that reached below her knees and bobby sox with white and brown saddle shoes.

Earle asked, "Who is that fine lookin' gal over there? I could fall in love with that. Just look at that ass!"

"That's Carly Hershey; she's a sophomore from Quaytown; just moved here last year." Bo answered.

"Looks yummy!" offered James. "But I hate to ruin the fantasy, guys, early lunch period is just about over and we have to get back to classes." Because of the growth in population, with a lot of families moving into North Kingsboro and Holmvale, Quaytown High had a problem. The increase in students meant that Quaytown High had to go on split sessions. The juniors and seniors had early lunch and their school day started 90 minutes earlier and ended 90 minutes earlier. The sophomores and freshman started later and finished later, and were slotted for the second lunch period.

The four of them deposited their empty coke bottles in the wooden case on the floor at the side of the coke box and headed back across the street to school. On the way out they could hear the juke box playing a new song by Booby Darin...

*Splish, Splash, I was takin' a bath
Long about Saturday night;
Rub-a-dub, I was relaxin' in the tub
Thinking everything was alright...*

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Saturday evening October 29, 1958...

September had flashed by. On September 5, the first color video recording on magnetic tape was made, and Doctor Zhivago by Boris Pasternak was published in the U.S. On September 9, race riots broke out in the Notting Hill section of London. On September 15, a commuter train crashed through a drawbridge in Elizabethport, NJ, killing forty-eight people. On September 28, France adopted a constitution, forming the Fifth French Republic and over the ensuing weeks and months, Guinea, Mauritania, the Congo, and the Central Africa Republic become independent from France, ending much of what was left of French colonialism.

October was nearly over. On October 8, Dr. Ake Senning installed the first pacemaker in Stockholm. On October 9, the New York Yankees defeated the Milwaukee Braves 4 games to 3, to win their seventh in the last ten World Series. And just two days ago on October 26, Pan Am flew the first transatlantic jet trip from New York to Paris.

But none of this mattered a great deal to the boys and girls of QHS, especially tonight.

Where are you little star?
(Where are you?)

Whoah oh, oh, oh-uh-oh
Ratta ta ta too-oooh-oooh
Whoah oh, oh, oh-uh-oh
Ratta ta ta too-oooh-oooh

Twinkle twinkle little star
How I wonder where you are
Wish I may, wish I might
Make this wish come true tonight
Searched all over for a love
You're the one I'm thinkin' of...

Ronnie McCloud was singing the Elegant's song as he played the drums. His band, The Megatonnes had been hired for the QHS sock hop. This was the Megatonnes second appearance. They were a favorite, not just because Ronnie was a senior and on the Student Council, but mainly because they were good musicians and could play many of the Rock and Roll songs that were popular in 1957-1958.

James had just finished dancing with Sue Barlow. They walked over hand in hand to where Bo and Martha, Earle and Penny Warlock, and Rafe and Kim Whitestone were standing. Kim was a sophomore and Rafe had only recently been dating her. He had forgotten about Rosemarie; he assumed that she was dating someone in the Bronx by now.

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Earle and Penny had become an item around school, frequently seen walking down the hall holding hands. Penny was a cheerleader on the Jayvee squad. Penny was an attractive girl, who had the appearance of someone more mature than her age. She had short blond hair that she kept curled and waved with no part. Penny had fair skin and her face looked somewhat like the actress, Joanne Woodward, with high, but barely visible cheekbones. She was relatively tall at five foot, seven inches and guessing at her weight, it was perhaps 120 pounds, with a well-developed body that led some of the boys to form a betting pool going on who could come closest to her actual measurements. The winning statistics? 36-24-37, what really distinguished Penny, however, was that she was adroit at mixing a flirtatious manner with a bit of sarcasm and humor.

Rafe had begun dating Kim three weeks ago, after he accidentally bumped into her in the hall and her text books went flying down to the floor. Kim was one of the majorettes in the QHS band, so when he bumped into her he recognized her. Rafe apologized profusely, but Kim was all nervous smiles and seemed a bit shy; and she insisted that it was OK. Rafe picked up her books and handed them back to her. Looking at her, he realized how cute she was and out of the blue, spontaneously asked her if she would like to go out on a date. Kim had an oval, animate face that readily showed her emotions; she was sincere, open and unpretentious. Her mouth was a bit narrow, but with a smallish mouth, full, ripe lips, and a firm jaw, and her eyes were hazel, over which she had narrow, tweezed brown eyebrows. She had short, curly, dark brown hair cut halfway down her neck. Kim was petite, about five foot three inches with a rather nice body, small but firm looking breasts (as near as Rafe could tell from the sweaters she often wore), narrow waist, firm hips and ass and well defined legs with thin ankles and small feet.

As they all stood there talking about how much they liked the band, Cathy Wood and her date came by. He was obviously not from QHS. Cathy introduced him. "This is Barry Clark. He graduated from Ruby Creek Catholic last year. And he's in the Army now, but home on leave.

After all introductions were finished, the couples all went out on the floor to dance to a Cha-Cha number the band was playing with Ronnie singing the Everly Brother's song, "All I have to Do Is Dream". That was followed by the band's rendition of Chuck Berry's "Johnny, Be Good".

Rafe and Kim stayed out on the dance floor to dance to a slow number, but the rest of the couples took a breather. While they were standing around in front of the wall separating the auditorium from the gym floor, James began to relate an event that happened earlier that day in school. "It was in Mr. Sofwick's class today. I was sitting right behind Terry Marion. He had his History text book opened, standing it up on his desk, and inside the text book he was reading the paperback book, Peyton Place."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Martha; Sue followed with the same expression. Penny, on the other hand just said, "And then what?"

James continued, "Mr. Sofwick was walking up and down the aisles as he asked questions about today's lesson on the Puritans at the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts. So, he

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starts walking down the aisle where Terry and I are sitting. Terry is not paying attention – he’s engrossed in the book. And you know Mr. Sofwick, he’s so soft spoken with that monotonous monotone, and the pale face with the big lips. Well, he’s asking Terry a question about the Puritans and sees that Terry is ignoring him. He walks up beside Terry and finds him reading a book inside the text book. Terry is surprised when he looks up and sees Mr. Sofwick staring at him, so Terry tries to close the text book over Peyton Place, but when Mr. Sofwick holds out his hand, Terry hands him the book.”

“What happened then Hein?” asked Earle for the rest of the group.

“When Mr. Sofwick saw the title of the paperback book, I thought he was going to have a heart attack.” James then began to imitate the teacher’s reaction. “His face turned beat red and he started breathing heavy, and stammering. He didn’t know what to say -- he couldn’t find the words. Finally, trembling, he said in that deep low voice, ‘I’m taking you to the Vice Principal’s Office, young man!’ With that Terry got up and everyone in the class was curious as all get out about what the book was. When Mr. Sofwick and Terry left for the office, everyone was asking what it was. When I told them, most of the class laughed.”

“That’s funny! Hein, your imitation of Mr. Sofwick is great; I can just picture the look on Mr. Sofwick’s face”, laughed Bo. Earle and Penny started to laugh and Martha and Sue giggled.

When the dance was over, the group went to Stosh’s diner for ice cream and apple pie. James, Sue, Bo and Martha drove in Bo’s dad’s car. Earle and Penny went with Rafe and Kim, in Rafe’s parent’s car. Since there was a football game earlier that day, Bo, Earle, and Rafe were a bit tired and sore, so the boys got their dates home by 11:30 PM .

Thanksgiving, Thursday morning November 27, 1958...

It was almost game time -- the biggest game that Earle, Bo, and Rafe had ever played in. Quaytown vs. Mason – just those words carried a significance that weighed on their mind with a magnitude that was almost overwhelming. The QHS team was assembled in the field house awaiting the pre-game briefing and pep talk. You could cut the nervousness with a knife. One of the boys had just barfed in the rest room. To try and get his mind off the butterflies in his stomach, Earle was thinking back to last night.

It was the biggest bon fire he had ever seen. Bo, Rafe, Earle and the teammates, with the help of Jack Wing and his pickup truck, had rounded up so much cardboard and loose wood that the pile literally was about 20 feet high. One of the players almost got hurt attempting to climb up and get the pile higher. Several hundred students and a few alumni had turned out for the Pep Rally – not bad for a Division three school with a total enrollment of around seven hundred.

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Coach Ruffy had given a great talk using a PA system set up by the A-V department of the school and the cheerleaders really had their hearts into the cheers they led the crowd through. Coach Ruffy had said that the Thanksgiving games between Quaytown High and Mason High had taken on a legendary meaning similar to that in Professional football between teams like the Chicago Bears and the Green Bay Packers, or the New York Giants and the Baltimore Colts.

By the time the Pep Rally was over, all of the players felt pumped up. They were ready for the game and felt like they could not wait until game time tomorrow. As they were leaving the field, James came up to the Bo, Rafe and Earle to wish them good luck tomorrow. He then pulled them aside and said in a low voice, “Look back over at the home team bleachers. Do you see that car parked under the bleachers? I know it’s dark, but if you look hard you can barely see the car.”

“Oh, yeah, I see it”, Bo said. “What about it, Hein?”

“That’s Gerry Flower’s car and he and Robin are doing the back seat mambo”, James said with a smile in a hushed way.

“Well, that should relax Gerry for the game tomorrow; I just hope it makes him run those end runs faster”, said Rafe. And they all laughed.

Earle was brought back to the moment, as Coach Jim Dempsey started to give the pregame pep talk. Coach Dempsey was new this year – he had played football for QHS seven years earlier and had gone on to play for the University of Virginia. He was not as over the top as Coach Costello, but he had a greater sense of the game. Earle liked him, partly because Coach Dempsey had also played the offensive position of End and had been a big help to both Earle and Rafe this season.

QHS had had a winning season this year, but lost two key games to Remsen and Toms River by close margins that kept them from winning the Seacoast Conference. But a win today against Mason could make the season. QHS could lose every game and a win over Mason would salvage the entire season and give Quaytown residents bragging rights over Mason residents.

Coach Dempsey was speaking and pointing to defensive players as he addressed the positions they were to play, “Now on defense we are going to play a 6-3 on first and second downs, when Mason mostly runs the ball out of the Single Wing formation. You six defensive linemen have got to get penetration to stop the run. You defensive Ends have to be sure to keep their running backs from getting around your end. The middle linebacker and the two outside defensive backs need to be ready to stop the runners if they break through the front six; And you Safeties need to come up under control for any runners that break through the front nine, but you also need to be ready for a surprise pass – your key is on the Offensive Ends, if they release and on the Flankerback if he runs out into the flat.”

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After a brief pause to let his words sink in, Coach Dempsey continued, “Now on third downs and on obvious passing downs, we’ll play the 5-4 defense that we practiced all week. You should all know your roles there.”

Then the coach shifted his attention to the Offensive players. He reminded them of their roles on the various running and passing plays, and in particular the surprise play to be executed the first time they got the ball.

The door opened and the Referee poked his head in and announced. “Five minutes to game time, Quaytown!” Then he left and closed the door.

Then Coach Ruffy stepped into the center of the room and said with obvious emotion, “Okay, Bisons, are you guys all ready? This game is for each of you, and for the coaches, and for the school, and for the town. Let’s play hard, but clean football today, and leave the field winners. But even if we don’t come out on top today, let’s leave the field knowing that we gave it our all – that we gave it our very best! Play hard and hit like a hammer and tong! Let’s be agile, mobile, and virile. I’m proud of you all. Now let’s get out there and kick some Mason butt!”

The Quaytown boys stood up and yelled encouragement to each other, and then ran out of the field house behind their co-captains, Bo and Rafe. The QHS Bisons ran double-filed between the lines formed by the QHS Band, Majorettes, Twirlers, and Cheerleaders. The Mason team was already on the field getting warmed up and trying to settle the butterflies in their stomachs as well, Rafe assumed.

A few minutes later Gerry Flower and Rafe were standing at mid-field for the coin toss with the co-captains of Mason. “Gosh, they look big”, thought Rafe. Then the Ref said, “Quaytown, you’re the home team; you get the call for the coin toss, what do you call?”

“Heads!” Both Gerry and Rafe said in unison. The Ref flipped the coin up into the air and it turned end over end slowly as it arced upwards and then fell to the grass field.

The Ref picked up the coin and announced, “Heads it is!” and pointed to Gerry and Rafe. Then Mason was asked which goal they wanted to defend and their co-captains indicated the East end of the field. The Ref then aligned the four players and gave the sign that Mason would kick off to Quaytown. There were over a thousand fans in the stands and standing behind the red snow fence surrounding the field and the cheers went up, louder than any that Rafe and Gerry had ever heard. The QHS Band and Cheerleaders were leading the home crowd in singing The Bisons fight song.

*On Blue Bisons, On Blue Bisons, heroes strong, brave and true,
March on down the field and score a touchdown for the white and blue,
Go Bisons, Go! On to Victory! Go, Go, Go
Fight! Fight! Fight! ...*

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Game Time! The Bisons took the opening kickoff and ran it back to their forty yard line – very good field position. Both teams were very familiar with each other’s style of play, having had the same coaches for many years. QHS typically was known to execute running plays on the first two downs and a passing play generally on third downs. So, Mason was anticipating a running play on the Bisons first snap.

Bo took the snap from center, turned to his right, faked a handoff first to the right halfback running into the hole between the right guard and right tackle, and then faked a handoff to the fullback running off tackle. To Mason it looked like the same old cross-buck play that QHS always ran. But Bo continued to turn full circle and threw a forward pass to Rafe. From his left end position, Rafe had run five yards down field, took a step toward the center of the field as if he were going to block for a running play, then cut left toward the sideline. Bo’s pass was right on the money and the Mason defensive back on that side and the safety were caught off-guard. Rafe caught the ball in stride just over the fifty yard line and ran down the sideline as fast as he could, well past the halfback. The safety recovered and was chasing Rafe. Rafe knew that the Mason player was fast – he ran the 100 yard and the 220 yard dashes on Mason’s track team.

Rafe was urging his legs on, “Faster, faster, damn it! Don’t let him catch up!” Forty yard line, thirty yard line, twenty yard line, and then Bang! The Mason Safety had caught up and tackled Rafe. But the Bisons were on the Mason nineteen yard line with a good chance to score first in this all-important game.

But the Mason team quickly regrouped and held Quaytown for four downs, first a run around right end by Gerry Flowers lost four yards, then a run up the middle by the fullback, Lenny Dean, was stopped at the line of scrimmage. On third down, Bo went back to pass to Earle, who ran a down and out to the right sideline, but was under such a rush that he had to take a sack back on the thirty-five yard line. The Bison’s punted into the end zone and Mason started on its twenty yard line.

Mason’s single wing attack moved the ball down the field, but stalled when the Bison defense stiffened. After trading punts, Mason got the ball in good field position and on second down their speedy tailback ran around end, broke a tackle and raced into the end zone. The extra point was missed – score Mason 6, Quaytown 0. The first quarter ended and most of the second quarter was a defensive battle with neither team able to score.

But with two and a half minutes left in the first half, Mason had to punt to Quaytown. Walt Kinney took the punt at the forty-five yard line of Quaytown, started running straight up the center of the field, and then cut sharply to his right. He warded off a tackler, then got a block from Earle and another from Rafe, and was finally run out of bounds at the Mason 5 yard line.

The clock was stopped at just under two minutes to move the chains. Quaytown took a timeout to set up a play. On first down, Bo handed off to the right halfback on a quick hitter between the right guard and right tackle, which advanced the ball to the two yard line. One minute and thirty seconds left. The Bisons had called two plays at the timeout, and they hurried to get set up for the second down. The Mason players were taking their time getting into position,

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but Bo finally took the snap and handed off to the fullback, Lenny Dean off right tackle. The play was stopped after another grudging yard gain.

Thirty seconds left – Bo called for a timeout – the Bisons last of the first half. He went over to the sidelines to confer with the Coaches and came back into the huddle. “OK, guys this is it. We may only have time for one more play. You linemen have got to block! We’ve tried the right side twice, now we’re going to try the left side. If we score we can still go for the extra point and go in at halftime with the lead.”

Bo took the snap, turned, took one step to the left and handed the ball to Lenny Dean who ran between the left tackle and left guard. The Mason defense went low on the Bisons tackle and guard and held up their forward charge for a brief second. Rafe charged forward and got to the inside on the defensive end and was holding him off. Lenny ran into the back of the left tackle and was unable to move forward from there initially, but the left tackle and Lenny both kept their legs driving against the force of the Mason defense. Then Lenny slid off the back of the left tackle and found a slit between him and Rafe. The left tackle and Rafe fell forward into the end zone and Lenny fell in between them for the touchdown.

Score! The Bisons had tied the game! But what was that? The Line Judge was talking to the Referee and waving his hands, signaling no touchdown! What the Hell?

There was mass confusion on the field. The Quaytown players were jumping up and down with joy believing they had scored the touchdown. The Mason players were feeling dejected. But the Referee was signaling that the clock had run out on the first half and that Quaytown had not scored because Lenny’s forward motion was stopped. Coaches Ruffy and Dempsey ran onto the field to argue the call and get an explanation from the Referee. Rafe tried to tell the Referee that Lenny had not been touched by any of the Mason players, and that he fell into the end zone after sliding off the back of the Bison’s left tackle. But the coaches shooed Rafe away, fearing he might get ejected from the game – they still had another half to play.

The coaches informed the Referee that Quaytown would play the rest of the game under protest, and then they got the QHS team into the field house to get things settled down and prepare for the second half. Needless to say it took a while for things to settle down in the QHS field house. To a man, the team felt like they had been screwed.

The second half turned out to be anti-climactic. Neither team could score. The game ended Mason 6, Quaytown 0, but the Quaytown players and all the people in the school and town would long remember that this was a Thanksgiving Day game that Quaytown should have rightfully won.

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Friday evening December 5, 1958...

The Christmas Tree Inn was crowded. Bo, Earle, James, Rafe, Roger Vaccaro and Jimmy Barrone had gone to Staten Island for a night of adventure.

Jimmy Barrone had come to Quaytown in September, as a senior. He had tried out for the varsity football team and made the squad as the starting Center, despite the fact that he was not all that big in height or weight, but he was feisty and didn't back down from anyone. He also made the varsity basketball team as a guard. Jimmy was five foot, seven inches, 150 pounds, with gray eyes, black, short cropped hair parted on the left side and combed across to the left. For an Italian, he was fairly light skinned, and had a ruddy complexion when he was exerting himself in sports. He was also known to blush when a girl paid him a compliment and when he smiled dimples appeared in his cheeks. He had a short nose and a generous mouth with thin lips. The girls of QHS found him to be a cute guy. The guys enjoyed Jimmy's sense of humor and self-deprecating way.

Roger Vaccaro was one of the best looking guys in the senior class at QHS. The girls practically drooled over Roger. He played offensive tackle on the football team and threw the javelin for the track team. Roger was six foot, 175 pounds with broad shoulders, muscular chest, arms and legs and thin hips, which gave him a bit of a top half of an hour glass physique. With wavy golden brown hair combed back along the sides into a ducktail and a classic face that could have modeled for a bust of an ancient Roman Centurion, the girls at QHS practically fell all over one another to catch his attention. Yet he didn't much notice; Roger was a regular guy, not narcissistic or stuck up, which added to his being liked by the guys as well as the girls.

The drinking age may have been twenty-one in New Jersey, but in all five boroughs of New York, it was eighteen. It didn't matter that Bo and James were the only ones that were of age in New York. The Christmas Tree Inn and a couple other bars in Staten Island rarely checked for ID's, as long as a person looked eighteen and had the moxie to ask confidently for an alcoholic drink. This was why the Inn was popular with the kids from Quaytown and neighboring towns. The fact that it was a short trip across the Outerbridge Crossing from Perth Amboy on the Jersey side was added incentive.

The group had just ordered another round of Sloe Gin Fizzes (they were not exactly sophisticated drinkers at this stage). James had stopped at one drink, since he was the driver. It was well known that the Perth Amboy police held a checkpoint on the Jersey side of the bridge on weekend evenings to make sure that any teenagers coming back were not so intoxicated that they were likely to get into an accident. It didn't matter to the police if everyone in the car was puking, as long as the driver was sober. If they had even the slightest hint that the driver had been drinking, they would make him or her get out of the car and walk the walk and talk the talk. Any sign of inebriation would lead to a ride to the police station and a call to one or more parents to come and get their son or daughter.

The rest rooms were up on the second floor. Bo had had one too many Sloe Gin Fizzes and had gone upstairs to the men's' room. After taking a leak, he started down the stairs and

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suddenly something funny struck him that later he could not remember. But he started laughing and the next thing he knew his feet slipped out from under him and he landed on his ass on the next to top step. Now this struck him as even funnier than whatever had caused him to laugh initially, and he started giggling and laughing uncontrollably. At this point he sort of realized that he was drunk and figured that he was unable to stand up, lest he fall down the stairs.

Jimmy Barrone had to go to take a leak, and as he got to the bottom of the steps he saw Bo sitting near the top laughing. Bo spotted Jimmy and proceeded to bounce down the stairs on his ass. When Bo reached the bottom still laughing, Jimmy pulled him up by the hand and walked him to the table where the others were sitting. Bo shook his head to try and clear it and his laughing stopped, but now he had the hiccups. “I think Bo has had enough. Maybe we should get him a coffee. The rest of you don’t look too sober, either”, Jimmy said with a sarcastic chuckle. “Except for James”, he added. “But I still need to take a leak – I’ll be right back”. And he disappeared to go upstairs.

When Jimmy got to the men’s room, he found an open urinal. Next to him was a big guy who looked quite mean, like he could squash a smaller guy like Jimmy, and the guy was obviously a bit drunk and talking angrily to another guy, who was just leaving the men’s room. The mean looking guy finished just before Jimmy and went to wash his hands. As Jimmy shook his dick off and zipped up, he looked down and saw a wallet on the floor by the urinal that the big guy had just vacated. “Oh, Shit!” He thought. “If I point it out to that guy, he might think I tried to pick his pocket, and my ass will be grass.” So, Jimmy decided he would not say anything, but just get the hell out of there.

When Jimmy got downstairs the rest of the gang was ready to leave, and Bo was feeling a little better, although not exactly sober.

James drove home to Quaytown without any incident. Jimmy Barrone, Roger Vaccaro, and Rafe all lived in the same section of North Kingsboro, so Jimmy’s older brother, Tim, met them at Quaytown High School and drove the three of them home.

There would be many more trips to Staten Island before the boys reached the age of 21.

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January, 1959 rang in a special year for the seniors at QHS. They would be graduating in six months and about thirty-five percent would go on to college in September, a relatively high percentage at the end of the 1950's for the quiet Seacoast town of Quaytown. The boys and girls were less interested in what was going on outside of Quaytown than in what the next twelve months would mean in their individual lives.

On January 1, Castro led the Cuban rebels to victory, while dictator Batista fled to the Dominican Republic. On January 3, Alaska became the forty-ninth state. Also, in January "Rawhide" with Clint Eastwood debuted on CBS TV and "Bozo the Clown", a live children's TV show was first telecast.

In February, Swiss Males voted against giving voting rights to Swiss women, Texas Instruments requested a Patent for the Integrated Circuit, and the Barbie doll went on sale. But perhaps the event that most grabs the attention of the QHS students, along with teenagers across the nation, was the crash of a private airplane in Clear Lake, Iowa on February 3. Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and The Big Bopper died in the crash.

Wednesday evening January 14, 1959...

Takes a Rockin' Chair to Rock,

Response: (Satisfy)

Takes a Rubber Ball to Roll,

Response: (Satisfy)

Takes a Team Like Quaytown,

Response: (Satisfy)

To Satisfy My Soul

Response: (Satisfy My Soul)...

The basketball season was well under way. Rafe, James, and Jack Pauley were sitting with Nathan Leeson near the top row of the fold out stands on the stage area of the QHS gym. Nathan was leading the cheer by standing and yelling out the lines of the cheer, while the rest of the QHS fans followed with the response to each line.

The QHS varsity was drubbing the Bayshore Highlands team 45 to 25 late in the third quarter. Bo, at right Guard with 17 points, and Earle, at Left Forward with 11 points and over a dozen rebounds, were both having a great game. Whizzie Grant at Left Guard was leading the attack as the playmaker and point guard. Whizzie already had 14 assists and 7 points.

Whizzie and Bo were working a two man press against the BHS guards, picking them up around their own foul line as the basketball was in-bounded, and hounding them across the mid

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court. Whizzie's fast hands stole the ball away from the player he was guarding and he immediately passed the ball to Bo, who left his man when he saw Whizzie steal the ball.

It happened so fast that Bo was caught off guard; he hadn't expected it. As he caught the pass, he knew there was only a few seconds left in the third quarter and the buzzer would soon go off signaling time had expired. He overheard someone in the crowd yell, "shoot!" In a flash Bo turned and took his patented two hand set shot from about seventeen feet. Unfortunately it was at the wrong basket!

As the ball arced toward the BHS basket, he brought his hands back against either side of his face and stared in horror. "Oh, fuck!" He thought to himself, "What the hell did I just do?" With a blush of embarrassment rushing up his neck to his face he watched the ball as it descended toward the basket, almost as if it were in slow motion. After what seemed an eternity, the ball came down and bounced off the rim of the basket, falling harmlessly to the gym floor as the buzzer sounded. "Whew, thank you, God!" he whispered to himself and exhaled the breath he had been holding.

Just then there was commotion on the QHS bench, which was located on stage level off to the right next to the five steps leading down to the court surface. The reserve players were scrambling off the bench as if they were trying to avoid something. Everyone in the stands on the stage side stood up and leaned to the right to see what the matter was. The fans on the opposite side of the gym in the auditorium seats that elevated up to the second floor had a clearer view and you could hear some of them yell, "Oh, Yuck!" Coach Costello, who was sitting on one end of the bench, was initially oblivious to whatever was happening, as he had been concentrating on the players on the court and yelling out for the QHS team to guard their assigned players on the other team, just before the buzzer sounded.

As the QHS players cleared the bench one lonely player was there leaning away from Coach Costello and vomiting all over the bench and the edge of the stage. Jack Pauley had the best angle and informed the other boys, "Hey, Its Jimmy Barrone!"

"Oh, Shit!" James and Rafe said in unison.

"Poor fellow", said Nathan shuddering and scrunching up his face in distaste.

By now the Referees had noticed what was going on and called a referee timeout. Somebody on the auditorium side ran down the ramp to the boys' locker room and came running back with several bath towels. The custodian, who happened to be watching the game from the other ramp that led to the supply room, ran to get a mop and bucket.

Five minutes later everything was cleaned up and poor Jimmy, having thrown up his dinner, was in the shower room, feeling more embarrassed than sick. The game was continued without further incidents.

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Jimmy later explained that he had had ziti for dinner and got hit with a stomach bug. By the next day he was fully recovered, but his embarrassing incident became a well-remembered episode in the memories of those who witnessed it.

Friday evening February 27, 1959...

“Run your asses off!” Fred Ballantine was yelling. Jack Pauley, Joey Silvo, Rafe and Bo were trying to get to the car as fast as their legs would carry them. Joey and Rafe were on either side of Jack pulling him along. Bo and Rafe were laughing hysterically. Joey was nervous and a bit afraid. Jack was having trouble running, but seemed terribly amused by it all. Fred was running behind the others and verbally pushing them to get to the car parked up the street. They were all a bit drunk – some more than a bit drunk.

James was in the car, the 1954 Tan Ford 4-door sedan borrowed from his brother. He had the engine running and the lights off, parked there while anxiously waiting for the others. It had rained heavily earlier while they were inside and he had just turned off the wipers. Then in the rearview mirror he saw the group running up the sidewalk toward the car. As they neared the car, his hands unconsciously tightened on the steering wheel in anticipation of making a quick getaway. His right foot goosed the accelerator causing the engine to race, but he let up on it – “Not just yet”, he cautioned himself.

Suddenly both doors on the passenger side, and simultaneously the rear door on the driver’s side opened. Bo jumped into the rear on the driver’s side, and Joey jumped into the front on the passenger side and slid to the center on the bench seat. Rafe literally shoved Jack into the front next to Joey, slammed the door and jumped into the back next to Bo, then Fred jumped into the back on the Driver’s side; he had been last because he was pretending to pay the bill, but told the bartender that he had to get more money from one of the other guys. Bo and Rafe were still laughing while Fred’s sharp voice reverberated through the car, “God damn it, hurry it up!”.

“Everyone in?” James asked eagerly.

“Yes!” yelled Fred. “Now take off, Hein! Get us the fuck out of here!”

James already had the car in gear; he took his foot off the brake, stepped on the gas and the car jerked forward. He turned on the headlights, made the first right turn then the first left and checked to see if anyone was following. “No one behind us, and I didn’t see anyone running up the sidewalk behind you after you all got in the car”, announced James, his voice a little more under control than he felt.

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After a few minutes, as they headed toward the Outerbridge Crossing, they all relaxed a bit. James said, “I don’t believe I’m saying this, but that was a fun adventure. I wasn’t sure we’d get away with it – running out without paying the tab.” He was relaxed enough now to chuckle.

“Shit, yeah! We must have stiffed that place for over forty bucks with all those beers we drank!” Bo said, and started to laugh again. That started Rafe laughing again. He was feeling silly from too many beers.

Then for the first time Fred started to laugh. “That was a real blast!” He said as he slapped his leg. It was Fred’s idea to run out without paying the bill, but it was not at all premeditated – it was an extemporaneous idea.

James had volunteered to drive to Staten Island and stay sober, limiting himself to only a couple of beers and then switching to cokes. After the others had drunk round after round of beers, Fred whispered to James that they were going to leave without paying the bill. He told James to walk casually out and get the car and park up the street, ready for a fast getaway. Then Fred surreptitiously told Bo, Rafe, Jack and Joey about the plan. Jack was the drunkest and the plan did not sink in too well, so when the time came, Rafe and Bo nearly had to guide Jack out of the door of the bar. It was not quite the blind drunk leading the blind drunk.

Just before they reached the bridge back to New Jersey, Jack rolled down the window. Everyone figured he was trying to get some air on this cool February evening with the car’s heater cranked up. Then Jack stuck his head out the window, pointed up toward the sky and declared drunkenly, “I have reached my star!” With that he brought his head back into the car and barfed all over the front passenger side, some of it into Joey’s lap.

“Oh, Damn! Hell! Shit” James said as the bridge appeared just ahead of them.

“Oh, God, did Jack just upchuck?” asked Fred. “Oh, fuck if he didn’t!”

Jack then slumped over against Joey. “Is he OK, Joey?” Rafe asked with concern.

“Looks like he just passed out”, Bo said, as he had a better view than Rafe.

“Yeah! He’s breathing, but passed out,” Joey said somewhat annoyed at being a target of Jack’s vomit.

They were on the bridge now and up ahead was a police car, stopping the occasional car crossing over to Jersey. “Oh, great! Police ahead” James announced.

“Joey, put your arm around Jack and try to keep him still, so he doesn’t wake up.” Fred quickly ordered. “Everyone else, if we get stopped, keep your mouths shut and let James do all the talking.”

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There were two patrolmen standing in the traffic lanes. They signaled James to stop. James opened the window and went through the routine of handing over his driver's license and the car's registration.

“Step out of the car, young man!” one of the patrolmen order James.

James's window was still open and the front passenger window was still rolled down a couple of inches to help reduce the odor. The boys in the car could hear the Patrolman asking James about where they had been, where they were headed and what was wrong with the fellow in the front seat. “He's got the flu and he just got sick”, James said. Then the Patrolman made James walk along with him, checking for any sign of inebriation. While he was doing that, the other patrolman shined a flashlight into the car on each of the passengers in turn. Rafe, Bo and Fred had sobered enough to act like they were sober. Joey still had his arm around Jack. Finding that James was really sober, the policemen let them go and got back in their patrol car to await another car with Jersey plates.

The rest of the ride home was uneventful and the conversation was mostly subdued, with an occasional bout of light laughter at the night's adventure. Well, uneventful, except for the aftermath. Jack temporarily awoke from his stupor, and when it appeared that he would be sick again, Joey quickly rolled down the window and nudged Jack to stick his head out and throw up outside the car this time.

Then when James pulled up to Jack's house, Fred and Joey practically carried Jack up the front walk, while James, Bo and Rafe remained in the car. Fred and Joey opened the screen door on the front porch, and quickly deposited Jack on the porch swing. Just then Jack's mother turned on the light, opened the front door of the house and started yelling, “What have you done to my son?”

Fred said nervously, “He's OK, just had too much to drink.” Then he and Joey ran out of the porch, back down the front walk and jumped into the car. James then drove off.

It also happened that the rain earlier that night had hit more heavily in North Kingsboro than on Staten Island. At the start of the evening Joey had parked his father's car at Rafe's house, where James had picked them up. When James later dropped them off, Joey discovered that he had left a window open, having smoked a cigarette when he had parked. Unfortunately there were blueprints in the car and the rain had nearly ruined them.

The next morning Joey turned up at Rafe's house seeking asylum from his father, who was on the war path. Fortunately for Joey the blueprints were not permanently ruined, just a little blurred after drying out.

Then Rafe and Joey went to James's house where they met Bo. The three of them had agreed to meet there to help James clean up his brother's car, but when they arrived, James had

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the garden hose out rinsing off the outside of the car. He had already cleaned up the interior of the car.

“Hey, Hein, we came to help you clean up your brother’s car and you’ve already done it”, Rafe said.

“I figured I had better get up early before my brother, so he wouldn’t be pissed off when he got a whiff of that puke”, James said as he finished toweling off the passenger door. “Besides, the shape you all were in last night, I wasn’t sure you would get here early enough this morning.”

Then Bo said what Rafe and Joey were thinking, “Actually I’m not sure I could have handled the look and smell of that puke!”

March, 1959: Iran and the U.S. signed an economic/military pact, a pro-Egyptian coup failed in Iraq, Iraq and the U.S.S.R signed an economic/technical treaty, the first known radar contact is made with the planet Venus, “A Raisin in the Sun” the first play written by a black woman opened on Broadway, and President Eisenhower signed a bill making Hawaii the fiftieth state.

Wednesday afternoon March 11, 1959...

*Fe-fe, fi-fi, fo-fo, fum
I smell smoke in the auditorium*

*Charlie Brown, Charlie Brown
He's a clown, that Charlie Brown
He's gonna get caught
Just you wait and see
(Why's everybody always pickin' on me)*

*That's him on his knees
I know that's him
Yeah, from 7 come 11
Down in the boys' gym*

*Charlie Brown, Charlie Brown
He's a clown, that Charlie Brown
He's gonna get caught
Just you wait and see
(Why's everybody always pickin' on me)*

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*Who's always writing on the wall
Who's always goofing in the hall
Who's always throwing spit balls
Guess who (who, me) yeah, you...*

The charter buses pulled into the parking lot of the Cherry Blossom Inn in Washington, DC. Bo, Earle, James and Rafe were in the lead bus. Mrs. Purell was the chaperone for the girls on this bus and Mr. Fielder was the chaperone for the boys. Four other teachers were chaperones for the girls and boys on the second and third buses. One of the senior boys sitting in the rear of the lead bus had brought with him one of the new transistor radios, a pocket-sized Sony TR-63. The group in the rear, which included James, Bo, Earle and Rafe had been singing along with the latest hit by the Coasters.

As the students exited the buses and filed into the Inn, Bo caught up with Martha Luchese and whispered, "Do you think we can get some time alone tonight?"

Martha whispered back, "Uh, I don't know, Bo. That might be difficult, what with Mrs. Purell and all the other chaperones -- would it be so terrible, if we can't get together alone?"

Bo didn't know why he was disappointed by Martha's reply, maybe he expected her to be more willing to take a risk. He tried to hide his feelings saying, "Well, let's try. When we all meet for dinner, let me know your room number and I'll call your room about an hour after curfew."

"OK, but we'll need to be very careful", Martha said quietly as she followed the line of the girls, who were all assigned to rooms on the second floor. Bo and the other boys were all assigned rooms on the third floor.

Bo, Earle, James and Rafe were assigned to adjoining rooms, sharing a common bath with toilet, sink and shower between the two rooms. Both rooms had two twin beds. Bo and Earle were in one room together and Rafe and James shared the other.

Upon entering their respective rooms and dropping their suitcases, the four boys congregated in the room occupied by Bo and Earle. For some unknown reason Earle decided to imagine that Penny Warlock was lying on the bed next to the window. The other three boys were amused when Earle claimed, "Ah, there she is; there's that fine filly, Penny, just waiting for good ole 'Burn' to make love to her!" With that he took a running start and leaped onto the bed.

Crash! The wooden slats under the mattress gave way and the mattress with Earle on top fell through the bed frame to the floor. Bo, James and Rafe burst out in laughter, as if this were the funniest thing they had seen in years. After his initial surprise, Earle joined in the laughter.

Just then two of the chaperones came rushing into the room seeking to find out what the ruckus was. "What's going on here?" asked Mr. Fielder. When the two teachers spotted Earle on

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the collapsed bed, they were initially alarmed. “OK, how did that happen?” inquired the other teacher.

“The bed just collapsed when Burn laid down on it”, James said as innocently as he could muster, while quelling his laughing.

Bo and Rafe nodded and added their confirmation, “Yeah, that’s right. Burn just lay down and the mattress fell through.”

The two teachers then went over and helped Earle get up. Bo and Earle then lifted up the mattress. Luckily the wooden slats had just been dislodged and not broken. After re-inserting the slats across the bed frame and replacing the mattress, the bed was back to normal. Mr. Fielder then said authoritatively, “I’m reminding you that dinner is in one hour, and after dinner there is to be no fraternizing with the girls on the second floor. Now, get your suitcases unpacked and get cleaned up for dinner.” The two teachers then left the room with a shake of their heads, but a smile emerging on their mouths.

The boys then set about unpacking their suitcases, hanging up suits, shirts and ties in the closets and putting the rest in the dressers. The boys took turns in the bathroom, and then the four boys got dressed for dinner and congregated once again in the room of Bo and Earle. Earle then surreptitiously pulled out a pint bottle of Seagram’s Seven from his suitcase. “Hmm! I wonder how this got in there”, he said with a sly grin.

“Holy shit, Burn, how the hell did you get that?” asked Rafe with a sense of surprise.

“At the liquor store on Center Street in Holmvale”, Earle replied with a bit of pride.

Bo interjected, “Oh, you guys should see Burn in action. Even though he’s younger than all of us, he just walks into a liquor store, picks out some beer or booze, slaps down some money, and walks out with the stuff; no questions asked and no one asks him for proof of age.”

“Damn!” said James. “We’re all eighteen and Burn, you’re only seventeen, but you pass for twenty-one? How the hell do you do that?”

Earle shrugged his shoulders and smiled as if to say, “No sweat!”

“It’s probably Burn’s heavy beard, the deep voice with that Rebel accent and those overgrown big feet”, Bo jibed.

“Watch that shit about my feet”, Earle responded with mock admonition. And they all laughed. Then Earle opened the bottle, took a sip, licked his lips and passed the bottle to Bo. They all took a sip and passed the bottle back to Earle. “Now, we’ve got to find a place to hide this from the chaperones, or we’ll be in deep shit”, Earle said. Then he pulled a roll of string out of his suitcase, tied a knot around the neck of the bottle, opened the window, lowered the bottle

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on the string down the side of the building and tied the other end of the string to the cord on the window shade. Then the boys went downstairs to the dining hall.

Dinner was served cafeteria style, salad, meatloaf, mashed potatoes, and string beans -- not exactly royal faire. Bo was the first of the four boys through the food line. He found Martha and sat at a table with her and Cathy Wood. Earle corralled Penny Warlock, and James looked for and found Sue Barlow and the four of them found their way to Bo's table. There was one more chair at the table and they saved it for Rafe, who was the last of the four to get through the food line. Rafe parked himself next to Cathy and they all proceeded to talk about what was in store for them on this trip and what was scheduled for tomorrow. They were slated to visit the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials and then the Washington Monument. The girls were all genuinely excited. The boys feigned nonchalance, but in reality they, too, looked forward to seeing these famous sites.

After dinner, the chaperones reminded all of the students that they had thirty minutes before curfew. They were not to go out of the hotel and by curfew they must be in their assigned rooms; the chaperones would be performing a room check to be sure.

Later, following the Chaperones room check, Bo called the Inn's front desk and asked to be transferred to Martha's room. He had gotten the room number during dinner. Cathy answered the phone and gave it to Martha.

"Meet me down on the main floor by the gift shop", Bo urged Martha.

Martha replied, "Oh, Bo, I don't think it is wise. I mean, the chaperones are in the rooms at the end of the hall by the elevators and stairwell. I don't think I can do it without getting caught, and I don't want to get into trouble."

Bo tried again to coax Martha into meeting him, but again she raised objections. Bo said somewhat annoyed, "Fine! I guess I'll see you tomorrow", and he hung up on her.

In the morning at breakfast, Cathy pulled Bo aside to tell him how upset Martha was about last night.

"Bo, Martha was afraid she would get caught and that both of you would get into trouble. Then if her parents found out, they might forbid her to go out with you anymore. Can you understand that?"

Bo shrugged and reluctantly nodded. "But, I really like being with her and thought we could spend some time alone. I don't think it is all that risky."

"Martha is not the type of girl to disobey the rules. She doesn't like taking risks and is not adventuresome like some other girls." Cathy said with a hint of mischief in her eyes.

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“Are you suggesting that you are one of the adventuresome ones”, Bo asked with a teasing smile.

“Maybe.”, Cathy said, slightly tilting her head flirtatiously to one side with a twinkle in her bright blue eyes, “but you and Martha have been dating for some time and she and I are friends. I don’t want to get in the middle of that. But, Bo, I don’t want to seem forward, if things change between you and Martha...” then her voice trailed off and she turned and walked away, leaving Bo somewhat mystified.

A moment later he realized that Cathy was telling him that she was really interested and was open to starting a more personal relationship. “Hmm! I may just have to see where that might lead”, he thought to himself.

Later that day, after visiting the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the Washington Memorial, and a few other sites, the boys and girls were given some free time to do some shopping for souvenirs. The buses had parked on a street near a tourist shopping area. They were instructed to be back to the buses at 4:00 PM for the return drive to the Inn. It was now 2:30 in the afternoon. James, Rafe, Fred Ballantine, Ronnie McCloud, and a fifth boy named Cary Spacek decided to sneak off and check out the bars. Fred had told them that the drinking age in D.C. was eighteen. They found a place about seven blocks away from the buses. Over the entrance way there was a large neon sign with the shape of a nineteenth century ship and the words “The Schooner Bar and Grill” molded in script in the neon glass tubing.

The five boys entered the front door and walked down the single aisle. There was a long bar with bar stools along the left wall, and a row of tables along the right wall. The place had a number of customers, but was not overly busy. They picked out a large round table that had room for the five of them. A non-descript waitress came over to see what they wanted to order. “We’d like some draught beers”, Fred said as though this was just a typical outing.

“Seven ounce glass or schooners”, the waitress asked, one hand on hip, cracking the gum she was chewing, and a look of half-hearted interest on her pale, sallow face.

“What’s a schooner?” asked James.

The waitress pointed to a nearby table and said, “See that big sixteen ounce round glass that looks like a fish bowl on a pedestal? That’s a schooner.”

“Oh, yeah, I’ll have one of those!” Fred said. “In fact bring us five of those” he ordered, and the waitress turned and walked over to the bartender, who was busy behind the bar.

“We’ve got to keep an eye on the time”, reminded Ronnie.

Rafe responded, “I’ve got my watch. I’ll be the timekeeper.” The rest of the guys nodded their assent.

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After the second round, Cary said, “I like these schooner glasses – nice big opening to drink from. Hey! Why don’t we call ourselves the Five Schooners?”

“Good idea, I think we should do that when we get back. It will be our own little joke and no one will know what it means,” Ronnie said, a little high, not being an experienced beer drinker.

After the third round, it was time to head back to the buses. The boys all chipped in four dollars each, which was enough for the beers and a healthy tip. They made it back to the buses just in time and took up seats in the rear. They didn’t want take the chance that the chaperones might smell the beer, even though they were all chomping on chewing gum like a herd of cows.

The chaperones checked to see that everyone had returned to their buses and then the drivers started to drive the buses back toward the Inn, which was a half hour away. Five minutes into the drive, and the “Five Schooners” realized they had to take a wicked piss (they were having such a good time in the bar they had neglected to go to the bathroom before leaving).

The “Five Schooners” walked up the aisle in single file and quietly asked the bus driver if he could find a place to stop where they could use a restroom. They tried to ignore the looks on the chaperones’ faces, but at this point they didn’t give a damn. They really had to go.

The bus driver was very accommodating and pulled over at a café. The five boys hustled off the bus and went into the café, which fortunately was not very busy. The men’s room was empty, but there were only two urinals and one commode. Fred and Rafe held back to let the other three piss first. But Fred said he couldn’t hold it any longer, and proceeded to piss in the sink. For some reason, the other four thought that was funny, and started laughing. That started Fred laughing, too. “Hey, stop making me laugh, I’m having trouble keeping the piss from splashing back on me”, Fred said practically snorting.

“I think I’ll pass on washing my hands”, James said with a chuckle, after zipping up.

“Me, too”, said Rafe as he stepped up to the urinal vacated by James.

The other three boys all concurred and when they had all finished, they hustled back to the bus. On boarding the bus, the other students gave them a round of applause. “The Five Schooners” sat down with a smile, knowing they had fashioned one of those silly memories that would not soon be forgotten.

April: On April 7, Oklahoma ends prohibition after fifty-one years; on the 9th Bill Sharman of the Boston Celtics basketball team sets an NBA record by hitting his fifty-sixth

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straight foul shot without a miss; on the 15th Fidel Castro begins a good will tour of the U.S. and then later in the month Cuba invades Panama.

Friday evening April 10, 1959...

Rafe and Bo had had a baseball game earlier that day, the second game of the season. By the time they got back from the game with Wall Township, it was already almost 6:00 PM and the Open House was scheduled to start at 7:30 PM. Because he lived in Quaytown, Bo could walk home and after dinner, get dressed in his only suit and tie and drive his Mom and Dad to the High School for tonight's event.

Rafe had figured that he would not have time to hitch hike home the four miles after the game, so in the morning he brought his sport jacket, slacks and a tie with him on the school bus and stashed it in his sports locker in the lower hall outside the gym. Rafe would often hitch home after a game, as his parents both worked up in Newark and would not normally get home from their commute until after 6:30 PM. But they were to attend and then Rafe would go home with them after the event.

Rafe was in desperate need of a haircut, his full head of brown hair crawling over his ears, and curling up on the back of his thick neck. When Rafe got off the bus and walked into the school to take off the baseball uniform and shower up, coach Zino, the varsity baseball coach said to him, "Cerny, aren't you supposed to emcee the open house entertainment tonight?"

"Yes, coach", Rafe replied as he started to peel off the uniform.

"Well, you look like a ragamuffin, young man, with that hair. You could stand a haircut", the coach observed.

"I know, coach, but I don't have time to get home and besides the barber shop in North Kingsboro will be closed by the time I got there. And my parents don't get home until late, so I brought my change of clothes with me this morning," Rafe informed coach Zino.

Just then coach Ruffy, the varsity football coach came by. Coach Zino knew that coach Ruffy worked part time at the barber shop in downtown Quaytown, so he went up to him and explained the situation.

"Come on, Cerny! Let's go get you a haircut," coach Ruffy announced, as if he were calling out a football play.

"But, coach, I don't have enough money on me," Rafe responded, feeling a little embarrassed.

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“That’s OK, no problem”, coach Ruffy responded. “Come on, my car is outside.” About an hour later Rafe was back at the school getting dressed, even though he had another 30 minutes to kill.

Meanwhile Earle was getting dressed and having a little problem getting his tie knotted, until his Mom came into his room and helped him. “Thanks Mom. I guess I’m just a bit nervous about tonight, getting up on the stage in front of all those parents. But I’m glad you and Dad will be there so I can look out at you and maybe not be so nervous,” Earle said, his nervousness due to the fact that he will be up on the stage as a member of the King’s court.

“You’ll be fine!” Mrs. Burnham said confidently. “Your Dad and I are very proud of you. We love you and will always be in your corner.”

“I know. Thanks, Mom.” Earle answered as Mrs. Burnell turned and left him to finish his preparations. Earle went into the bathroom and poured a little Canoe into the palm of his hand, folded both hands together to evenly spread the cologne and patted it against both cheeks. “Hmm!” Earle thought to himself, “I hope I don’t smell like a French Whorehouse. But maybe I’ll get lucky tonight with Penny Warlock. She’s been dating that Freeney guy with the ’53 Merc, who graduated last year, but I think I’ve got her interested in me...at least she seems to be since she burned my hand with her cigarette on the Senior trip last month.” Then Earle began to sing to himself the lyrics he had made up and substituted in the song, “Tom Dooley”, by the Kingston Trio...

*Hang down your head, Todd Freeney,
hang down your head and cry
Penny is going to leave you
And you are bound to die...*

While continuing to hum the tune, Earle recalled that initially the finalists for King and Queen were selected by a vote from just the senior class, and that Rafe and Hein had missed being finalists by just a few votes. Then Earle thought back to earlier in the week at the Class Day assembly, when all of the candidates for King and Queen had to give a speech to the entire student body about why they should be elected King or Queen. Earle had said that he had mostly been involved in sports and when he mentioned that he specialized in track doing the broad jump, there was instant laughter from the boys in the audience.

The entire student body then voted on the finalists with the boy and girl receiving the most votes being selected as the King and Queen. Among the senior class Bo was the favored for King, with a near draw between Martha Luchese and Cathy Wood for Queen. When all of the votes were counted, the underclassmen voted a little more heavily for Val Schultz and he edged Bo out to be “anointed” as King. And Cathy edged out Martha for Queen.

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“I’d rather see Bo as King; and well at least Rafe will be the emcee tonight”, Earle mused as he made a final check in the bathroom mirror.

A buzz of noise wafted up in the auditorium and over the gym floor. The parents were arriving in largely scattered groups and taking up folding chairs on the gym floor facing the stage. The early arrivers had already filled the permanent seats in the elevated portion of the auditorium across from the stage. The excitement that permeated the atmosphere was due to the QHS Open House. Parents were not only going to get to visit with their teenagers’ teachers, but were first being treated to a kind of talent show in the auditorium culminating with the crowning of the Senior Class King and Queen.

As the crowd assembled, Rafe was looking over the program for the night’s affair. He was standing in front of the big red curtain just off to the side of one of the two microphone stands that were at the center of the stage. The King, Queen and their court were all sitting in the first row of chairs on the gym floor. Rafe stole a look and was impressed at how great they all looked -- the guys in their suits and ties, and the girls looked especially beautiful in their makeup, white flowing gowns cut just below knee level, shapely legs in nylon stockings evident below the gowns, and high heeled shoes adding the finishing touch that made them look so mature and grown up. As his eyes scanned the row of seats he observed in turn, Burn, Bo, Gerry Flowers, Ben Scully, Roger Vaccaro, Ronnie McCloud, and soon to be King, Val Schultz. To the right of Val were soon to be Queen Cathy Wood, Martha Luchese, Jan Lively, Robin Etting, Julie Green, Carol Miller, and Penny Warlock.

As if by some form of magnetic energy, Rafe’s eyes were quickly drawn back to Cathy. She had a nervous smile on her face as she talked quietly to Val on one side and Martha on the other. Rafe had to shake his head to bring himself back to reality. He had been blown away by her beauty and his mind was roaring back to revisit some fantasies that he had had through the four years he had known her since those days back in grammar school.

He was helped out of his reverie by Miss Remsen, the civics teacher who was the faculty advisor for tonight’s event. She emerged out of the center of the red curtain. “Do you have any questions, Rafe?” She asked. “Do you need any suggestions on what to say in introducing the speakers or the entertainment?”

“No, no thank you, Miss Remsen. I think I’ve got it”, Rafe said with somewhat more confidence than he felt. He observed to himself that Miss Remsen looked more nervous than he felt, as she walked back behind the curtain to get things set up on the stage.

The lights dimmed and the buzz in the crowd died down. Rafe cleared his throat and stepped up to one of the microphones. “Good evening ladies and gentlemen, parents, friends, students, and faculty. Welcome to this year’s Senior Open House...”

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Rafe went on with the welcome and then introduced in turn Principal Hunt, the QHS Choral Group, a small contingent of the QHS band, several members of the QHS drama club, and then asked the faculty members to stand up and be recognized.

Principal Hunt's remarks lasted no more than five minutes, welcoming the parents and then essentially describing the logistics for the parents' visits to the classrooms. The QHS Coral Group sang two songs in four part harmony, one ballad and one up tempo number. The band played the QHS Alma Mater and the QHS Fight Song with the Choral Group joining in with the lyrics. The Drama club gave a short scene from the play "On the Town". Each of the entertainment groups were followed by polite applause from the audience. Next it was time for short speeches by the senior class president, and the faculty advisors.

And then it was time for the presentation of the King and Queen and their Court. Rafe called on each of the guys and gals in turn until they were all standing and then asked them to proceed to the left stairway and up onto the stage. Rafe clapped his hands in applause and the audience followed suit. The two faculty advisors, Mr. Fielder and Miss Purell then appeared from behind the curtain each carrying a red pillow with a crown.

"This year's Queen is Cathy Wood", Rafe announced at one of the microphones and then he carefully placed the crown on Cathy's head. "God, you look beautiful", he wanted to say, but it just wouldn't come out.

"And this year's King is Val Schultz", Rafe announced and then somewhat less cautiously placed the crown on Val's head. "I should be doing this to Bo", he thought, trying not to show any disappointment. The audience was now instinctively applauding with a standing ovation. The King and Queen then led the others in their Court off the stage and back to their seats, while the applause continued.

Rafe then raised his hands for the applause to die down. "That ends the entertainment portion of tonight's Senior Open House. Parents and friends are now free to visit the classrooms that were assigned when you first arrived this evening. There are monitors in the halls to help you with directions. Thanks for coming! Good night!"

Rafe, James, and Jack Pauley had just returned from Jack's house, having raided Jack's parents' liquor cabinet. They sat in the car outside the North Kingsboro Fire Department sharing sips from the bottle of Seagram's Seven whiskey and talking about the Senior Open House earlier that evening. Inside the fire house in the large hall parents and senior students were enjoying the party that was sponsored by the volunteer firemen. There was lots of food, soda and a jukebox for music. Not all of the seniors and their parents came, some deciding that the four mile drive from Quaytown or Holmvale was a bit too far; nor did any of the QHS faculty show up, even though they were invited.

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Inside Bo was sitting and talking and dancing with Cathy and Earle was with Penny. Martha was not there. The parents of the four guys and gals had already left, politely recognizing that their kids wanted some time alone to savor this special night in their lives.

After the party Bo drove Cathy home and then took Penny and Earle home. James dropped Rafe off and then drove home. Jack just had to walk up the block a short ways.

Saturday evening April 25, 1959...

Spring had arrived a little early this year. The weather for the past week had been exceptionally beautiful, warm with temperatures in the mid-sixties and just a bit breezy. The flowers were blooming and trees were sporting new green leaves.

The QHS varsity baseball team was on its way to a successful season, having won its first six games without a loss. Bo and Rafe were team captains. Earle was leading the Track team again on the javelin, shot put, and high hurdles events. James continued earning money toward college in September, working at the Quaytown Deli, after school.

Meanwhile Spring was working its magic on the boys and girls of QHS, pumping up their teenage hormones. Bo had picked up Cathy Wood in his dad's 1954 Ford and they went on a solo date to the drive-in movie in North Kingsboro. They watched the cartoons and halfway through the first movie, Bo put his arm around Cathy and the next thing he knew they were in each other's arms, kissing hungrily. After coming up for air, Bo lit a cigarette and lit one for Cathy. They sat there smoking for a few minutes. The movie was playing, but neither of them was all that interested in it. Bo finished his cigarette, looked over at Cathy and said, "How about we get out of here and go someplace a little more private?"

"Yes, Bo, I think I'd like that", Cathy said huskily.

Bo started up the car and started to drive forward over the hump of earth that constituted the row in which they were parked. He had forgotten to remove the speaker that was hooked over the top of the driver's window to put it back on the speaker pole. Within seconds the wire attaching the speaker to the pole snapped off, leaving the speaker hanging sans wire inside the car window. "Oops! Another trophy", Bo said with a laugh as he glanced at Cathy, but his mind was already imagining another kind of trophy.

Sometime earlier, Rafe had driven his parent's Blue and White 1956 Ford Fairlane to Quaytown to pick up James, and then the two of them met Jack Wing downtown and went cruising with him in his Black 1957 Chevy with a three speed stick on the steering column and heavy duty clutch. At first they decided to go "scapping", looking to pick up some girls who might be looking for some "fun". The three of them were in the front on the bench seat.

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They drove the off-highway connector road from Quaytown through Ulster Beach and came upon a girl James recognized, who was walking a dog. They pulled over to the curb and called her over to the car. James and Rafe struck up a conversation with her, with Jack occasionally interjecting a comment here and there. Her name was Annie and her home was just a block up the street. According to James, rumor had it that Annie was “easy”. Eventually they talked her into bringing the dog home and coming back out.

Jack slowly drove the car along the street until they were well past Annie’s house and he turned right at the first intersection, parking near the corner. James who had been nearest the passenger side got out and went into the back seat. A few minutes later Annie came out of her house, walked up to the corner, and approached the car. Rafe got out of the front and opened the rear door on the passenger side. Annie got in and slid over toward James, and Rafe followed her into the back seat. Jack drove off to a dead end street with no houses about a half mile away.

While Jack drove, James started kissing her, while Rafe rubbed her right thigh. Then Rafe took turns with James and kissed her, rubbing her breasts through her sweater, while James rubbed her left thigh and her side. When they arrived at the end of the dead end street, Jack parked the car and turned off the lights. Rafe had unzipped her jeans, but it was James’s turn and he started to put his hand down the front of Annie’s jeans and inside her panties. But at that Annie took exception. She grabbed James’s hand and pushed him away, while elbowing Rafe to get his hand off her.

“What’s up? You can’t stop now! You’ve got us all hot and bothered!” James called out breathlessly.

“Yeah! We’re fired up and ready to explode”, Rafe said. “We thought you wanted to do it.”

“I’m sorry. I can’t. Not tonight! I’ve got my period.” Annie said almost apologetically.

Jack started laughing, which only made James and Rafe feel even more frustrated.

“I’m sorry”, Annie said again, a bit lamely, “Maybe another night.” Then she said to Jack, “Would you please take me home? But let me off at the corner, OK?”

“Yeah, Jack, let’s take her home”, Rafe said, resignedly.

“But there will be another night, right?” James said to Annie hopefully, rubbing his hands together.

Annie didn’t answer immediately, but as Jack pulled the car up to the corner near her house, she said as she exited the car, “I walk the dog almost every night. If you boys come around in a week or two, I’ll probably be somewhere near here.” The boys watched with a sense of lost opportunity as Annie quickly walked down the street toward her home.

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“We definitely have to come back next week!” Rafe exclaimed.

“Right!” James concurred. “How about it, Jack. Are you in?”

“Just let me know”, Jack replied. “So, what do you want to do now, It’s still early.”

“How about Magnetic Hill?” Rafe offered

“OK, magnetic hill it is”, and Jack threw the shift lever into first, stomped on the gas pedal and laid rubber for fifteen feet, as he headed toward Holmvale.

Twenty minutes later they were at the foot of Magnetic Hill. They had driven up and over the hill. “Are you ready?” Jack asked rhetorically. He put the shift in neutral and took his foot off the break. Like magic the car started to roll backwards up the hill, as if it were being pulled by an invisible magnetic force. No one was able to explain this happening, but teenagers from all of the surrounding towns would come to experience this weird phenomenon first hand.

On the radio, Murray the K was holding forth on WINS AM in New York with his all night show of rock & roll music. Over the airways came his signature preamble, “This session of the Swingin’ Soiree is now in session. Are you guys and dolls ready for the submarine race watching tonight? Then let’s get it on! Here’s a song from Johnny Mathis that’s perfect for submarine race watching...”

*It's not for me to say, you love me
It's not for me to say, you'll always care
Oh, but here for the moment
I can hold you fast
And press your lips to mine
And dream that love will last
As far as I can see, this is heaven
And speaking just for me, it's ours to share
Perhaps the glow of love will grow
With every passing day
Or we may never meet again
But then it's not for me to say...*

After the car had drifted backwards half way up the hill without using any power of its own, James said “It’s still only 9:30; too early to call it a night.” Taking a clue from Murray the K, he continued, “Why don’t we go to the Grapevine and do some submarine race watching on the cars in lover’s lane; then bushwhack one of them?”

“Couldn’t come up with a better idea, if I tried”, said Rafe. “How about it, Jack?”

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“We’re on our way”, Jack answered agreeably and took off like a bat out of hell, revving the Chevy up in first gear, double-clutching into second gear and getting from zero to 50 mph in a matter of seconds.

Twenty minutes later Jack slowed the Chevy as they approached the entrance to the Grapevine. He had driven south on the main highway leading to Ruby Creek and after reaching Middlebury turned off the highway onto a long, lonely country road through farm land. The Grapevine is an area surrounded and hidden by a large collection of tall trees that are so close together that the density hides what lies within its irregular shaped circumference. Inside the tree line is an overgrowth of abandoned grape and wild vines, and the vines surround a large open area with multiple pockets of land where cars can park with a good deal of privacy from other cars in the other pockets. On a busy night there could be as many as twenty cars in the Grapevine, all with one or two couples making out in the relative privacy of this lovers lane.

There is only one opening into the Grapevine that serves as the entrance and exit, with about 200 feet of dirt road leading into the clearing of hard packed sandy earth. As Jack steered the car onto the dirt road, he turned off the car’s lights and slowed to a crawl.

“If we find a car here that we recognize, that will be our target; agreed?” Jack said in a low conspiratorial voice.

“Yep!” Rafe concurred.

“Right! No need in bushwhacking someone we don’t know; you never know how they might react or if they might come out with a tire iron or baseball bat,” James responded.

Once into the clearing, Jack slowly steered the car in a clockwise direction around the irregular area, with all three of the boys looking for a car they recognized.

“Hey!” Jack said excitedly. “Isn’t that Bo’s car?”

“Sure looks like his dad’s ’54 Ford, but even in the moonlight, I can’t tell the color.” James nearly whispered. “Stop the car, Jack. I’ll get out and get a closer look. I think I’ll recognize the license plate number.” With that James got out, bent low and approached the pocket area where the car was parked. He came back in a hurry, quietly opened the door and slipped back in the car. “God Damn! It is Bo, but I didn’t see who he is with and didn’t want to get too close; don’t want to alert him before we do the nasty on him.”

“Damn! This is going to be fun. If we do it right and get away without Bo recognizing us, we’ll have a ball in school on Monday listening to him bitch about getting bushwhacked tonight.” Rafe said with a low chuckle.

Jack moved the Chevy around so that it was facing toward the entrance and about twenty feet away from Bo’s car and nearer the entrance, but he left the engine running, as the three of

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them got out and left the doors ajar. From under the front seat Jack extracted a flashlight. The three of them then bent low so as not to be seen in the rear view window. But as they approached the car, all they could see was the top of Bo's head in the back seat. "He must be on top of the girl, whoever she is. I doubt it is Martha", Jack whispered to the other two.

James split off and crawled on hands and knees toward the driver's side of the Ford, and Rafe did likewise toward the passenger side, while Jack approached from the rear with the flashlight. When all three were in position, Jack turned on the flashlight and shined it into the rear window. At that signal Rafe and James rocked the car back and forth several times. The girl inside the car screamed and they heard Bo say in a shocked voice, "What the fuck!"

James was the first to run, with Rafe hot on his heels. Jack ran backwards keeping the flashlight shining into the rear window, with the light bouncing up and down. Bo rose up and looked out the back window, but because of the light, he could not recognize who the culprits were. Just before Jack turned to run to the Chevy, he saw the image of a girl raise up and look out the rear window, pulling down a sweater.

Rafe and Jack were in the Chevy laughing like hell, when Jack jumped into the driver's seat. Jack put the Chevy in gear and tore out of the clearing and onto the dirt road. At the entrance just as he turned out onto the country road, he put on the headlights. All three were laughing now.

"I can't wait to see Bo's face on Monday", James managed to squeak out through his laughter.

"Me, too, but I sure can't wait to find out who the girl was", Rafe said as he tried to control his laughter.

As Jack headed the Chevy back toward Quaytown, Cathy Wood was adjusting her bra under the sweater and smoothing her skirt. "Bo, what was that all about? That's never happened to me before. And who were those people?" she asked, with a mixture of fright and anger. "Take me home, Bo. Let's get out of here!"

"It's called bushwhacking, and I don't know who they were, but if I find out I'll kick some ass!" Bo said angrily, thinking about how close he had come to possibly getting laid tonight. He zipped up his pants and buckled his belt. They both got out of the back seat and into the front seat. Then Bo drove Cathy home, and along the way they hardly talked. After dropping Cathy off, Bo drove home initially still angry, but by the time he reached home the anger diminished and he even chuckled about it.

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May, 1959: On May 4, the first Grammy Awards: Perry Como and Ella Fitzgerald won. On May 11, "Kookie, Kookie Lend Me Your Comb" by Edd Byrnes and Connie Stevens hit #4. On May 13, Kraft Music Hall with Milton Berle, last aired on NBC-TV. On May 20, Japanese-Americans regained their citizenship (it was removed during World War II). On May 21, "Gypsy" opened at Broadway Theater New York City for 702 performances. On May 23, the Presbyterian Church accepted women preachers. And on May 30, Iraq terminated the military assistance pact with the U.S. due to neutrality.

Tuesday morning May 19, 1959...

*Volare, oh, oh!
Cantare, oh, oh, oh, oh!
Nel blu, dipinto di blu
Felice di stare lassù
E volavo, volavo felice più in alto del sole ed ancora più su
Mentre il mondo pian piano spariva lontano laggiù
Una musica dolce suonava soltanto per me...*

As he walked to his fourth period class, Bo was humming the words to "Volare", a 1958 Italian song by Domenico Modugno. Just then from around the corner came the Vice Principal, Mr. Jonas, apparently in some state of distress. When he saw Bo he grabbed him by the arm and pointed at Bo's chest. "What is that on your shirt, young man?" he asked with alarm. "That's the fifth one of those I've seen this morning. I want you to report immediately to my office. Wait there with the other four young men that I found wearing that, *that*, thing on their shirts! I will be there as soon as I find the sixth person wearing that badge, and then we will get to the bottom of this, *this* business." Jonas turned left and continued down the longer second floor hall still obviously agitated.

As he turned and walked toward the main office that housed both Jonas and Principal Hunt, Bo was perplexed. Why was Jonas in such an uproar? The badge on his chest was no big deal. All that was written on the badge was "The Cheetah Club". The circular badge had been fashioned from construction paper with two pieces of paper strips stapled to it, hanging down to mimic ribbons. He was still shaking his head in wonder as he reached the outer door to the Principal and Vice-Principal Offices.

Upon entering the outer door of the offices, Bo said hello to the school secretary, Mrs. Sheppard. She looked up from what she was doing and gave Bo a look as if to say, "What did you boys do now?" As she gestured with her hand, Bo turned to the right and entered the Vice Principal's office. Waiting there were Rafe, Jimmy Barrone, Whizzie Grant, and Andy Paul, all wearing one of the paper badges with the words "The Cheetah Club". As Bo walked in he

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gestured with his hands and his eyes looking for an explanation; they all shrugged in response indicating they were as much in the dark as was Bo.

After a few minutes, Mr. Jonas returned with Johnny Amato in tow. Jonas closed the door and looked at each of the boys in turn before demanding, “OK, we know you stole the paper, glue and scissors from the library, and fashioned those badges from those supplies. And you’ve been parading those badges around the school all morning. Now I demand to know what this Cheetah Club is all about!” Once again Jonas looked around at each of the six young men, with piercing brown eyes and firm set jaw, as if he was attempting to intimidate one of them into confessing whatever it was that he suspected them of doing. The boys all looked at him with a combination of puzzlement and bemusement. All except Johnny Amato, whose face displayed his typical sly smirk that made him look as if he knew something about you that you would prefer he didn’t. It was not unlike the grin on cartoon character Alfred E. Neumann from Mad Magazine.

“I have a strong suspicion that it is some sort of Communist organization!” The accusation came from Jonas so unexpectedly that it caught the boys unprepared. After an instant of unbelief that this school official could actually believe that the little prank that they drummed up was a communist plot, the boys looked at one another and broke out in a laugh. They could not help it – it was just too incredulous!

Mr. Jonas reacted with anger. The boys could see the red flush creeping up his neck to his face. Jimmy Barrone, whose father is an educator, was the first to speak up in an attempt to defuse the situation. “Ah, Mr. Jonas, this is nothing more than a joke, a prank. It all started a week or so ago, when Johnny here started using the expression, ‘What a cheetah’. He initially said it in jest when a baseball player from one of the other schools tripped over his own feet running the bases. We all thought that was funny and we started to use the expression more and more. Then we got the idea of starting a Cheetah Club, as a joke. It was just a joke!”

Mr. Jonas stared at Jimmy a few seconds until the explanation finally sunk in. Trying to hide his embarrassment at his overreaction, Jonas said, “Well thank you, young man. But it still does not excuse the fact that you stole school supplies from the library for this, this prank, and then paraded these badges around the school, causing the teachers and me concern over this so called Cheetah Club. Now I want you to remove those badges and leave them here. In addition you are to go as a group and apologize to the librarian. You will also do one night of detention, tomorrow after school.”

“Uh, Mr. Jonas, we have a baseball game tomorrow after school. Is it alright if we do detention on Thursday?” Rafe asked deferentially.

“Well, OK, I guess that will be OK”, Jonas replied. “Now get yourselves back to class after you apologize to the librarian, and no more of these pranks! Do I make myself clear?”

The boys all nodded that they understood, and exited the office. As they started down the hall, Whizzie said, “What an ass!”

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Bo added, "Yeah, do you believe that guy? A Communist organization?" It was so absurd that they all began to chuckle.

June 1959: On June 3, the U.S. Air Force Academy graduated its first class and President Eisenhower sent Canadian Premier Diefenbaker a message that was bounced off the moon. On June 11, the Postmaster General banned the mailing of the sexually explicit D.H. Lawrence's book, Lady Chatterley's Lover. On June 26, Queen Elizabeth and President Eisenhower opened the St. Lawrence Seaway, and on June 27, the play "West Side Story" closed at the Winter Garden Theater in New York City after 734 performances.

Thursday Afternoon June 11, 1959...

It seemed like an eternity. Rafe was waiting for the ball to come down out of the blue sky with nary a cloud, just a few puffs of white floating many thousands of feet above. Rafe was camped under the high fly ball off the bat of the Toms River player, as it arced ever so slowly down towards his waiting Wilson baseball glove. "Come on, damn it!" he whispered to himself, urging the ball to come down faster than gravity was pulling on it. Thirty feet, twenty feet, ten feet and "pop" as the ball nestled into his glove. "All right!" he screamed aloud!

With the recording of that last out, the QHS baseball team had just become the Seacoast Conference Baseball Champions, something that had not been accomplished by QHS in over 15 years. Pulling the ball out of his glove and holding it aloft in his right hand, Rafe raced toward the pitching mound from his position as centerfielder. Bo as the catcher was the first to reach the mound where the pitcher, Lennie Willis, was jumping up and down with both arms extended up toward the heavens. The infielders and the players on the bench were next to reach the mound. By the time Rafe and the other outfielders arrived there was already a pile up on the mound, with everyone jumping on and Lennie nearly crushed at the bottom of the pile.

What a game! The final score was QHS 7 and Toms River 1. Lennie had been phenomenal, pitching a shutout after giving up one run in the first inning, keeping the Toms River batters off stride at crucial times when they had runners on base after an occasional walk or base hit.

Whizzie Grant had had a great year batting nearly .700, and scored and drove in several runs today, scoring the first run on a hit by Bo. Rafe had played well, too, with a single and a sacrifice in three at bats. In the third inning, Rafe walked, stole second and third, on an overthrow by the Toms River catcher, came all the way home. But his biggest contribution was on defense, chasing down fly balls and covering left and right centerfield like a demon, taking away at least four extra base hits from Toms River.

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The bus ride back to QHS was filled with laughter and carefree banter, with congratulations all around for every member of the team. It had been a great season with only one loss to a team outside of the conference. "I'm really glad that as a team we voted for playing today for the Seacoast Conference, instead of entering the Greater Newark Tournament", Rafe said to Bo, who was seated next to the window in the row with Rafe.

"Damn right!" Bo declared. "Who knows what would have happened if we went up there today. We might have won and made it all the way though the single eliminations and won the tournament, but we'd have to play at least four more games and anything could happen."

Jimmy Barrone was sitting in the seats directly behind Bo and Rafe and he leaned over the back of their seat to add to the conversation. "It would have been a challenge, but from what I read in the papers, we would have had a good shot against the teams that were entered."

Rafe replied, "Yeah, I agree that we would have stood a good chance and winning that Greater Newark Tournament would have given us greater exposure, especially in state-wide newspapers like the Newark Star Ledger. We know Mason entered and we beat them twice this year. But like Bo said, winning five games in a single elimination tournament is heavier odds than winning one game today. So, I'm more than satisfied, because if we entered that tournament and didn't go all the way, we wouldn't have all that much to show for it. This way we are the Seacoast Conference champs and no one can take that away from us -- that's good enough for me."

"Right!" responded Bo and Jimmy.

Friday Afternoon June 19, 1959...

Yearbooks! It was the final hour of the early split session school day and the seniors were milling around in the QHS gym, flagging down classmates they sought after to enter comments into their yearbooks. James, Bo, Earle, and Rafe found one another, wrote comments into one another's books over their photos and moved on to get as many of the boys and girls as they could, mostly girls of course, to add their comments and signatures.

For these seniors, final exams had been completed two days earlier and grades posted. All but three in their class made their grades and would be graduating next week. The three that didn't make their grades would have to attend summer school to make up the courses they failed.

When the hour was about up the seniors rushed from the gym to get their favorite underclassmen to sign the seniors' yearbooks, before most of them left to get their school buses or walk home.

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Rafe eventually made his way to the school bus to take the ride home. He met up with Cathy Wood and Cathy was as usual her spirited self. As they entered the bus and took seats across from each other, Cathy said, “Oh, Rafe, wasn’t that kind of sad there in the gym? To think that this may be the last time we may see some of our classmates and friends. Some of them will be going off to college in September like Bo -- and you of course, and some will be going into the Army, Navy, or Air Force. So many friends that we’ve had for these past four years; I wish we could all keep our friendships no matter what the future brings!”

“Yeah, I guess you have a point there, Cathy”, Rafe offered with less emotion than Cathy. “I’m pretty sure that Bo, James, Earle, Jack Pauley, Jimmy Barrone and I will stay in touch. Bo will be going to Queens College in Pennsylvania after he takes some prep courses at Newark Prep, Earle is going to LSC, James is going to the Citadel, and Jack and Jimmy are going to Glenboro. But we all agreed to keep in contact by writing letters to one another.”

“And you are going to Milton College in Ohio, I heard from Bo. How do you feel about going so far away from home, Rafe?” Cathy asked with some concern.

“Eh, no big deal; Ricky Briggs, who graduated last year is there and says I have a good chance to make the football team”, Bo answered. He actually was a little apprehensive, having never been that far away from home, but he disguised it as best he could.

“I’m so looking forward to the Prom tonight, Rafe. It should be a lot of fun at the Knobwood Inn in Mason, and after that a nightclub in New York City,” Cathy changed the subject. “Who are you taking to the Prom?”

Rafe already knew that Cathy was going to the Prom with Bo and that they were doubling with Roger Vaccaro and his date, Gladys Roderick, in Roger’s 1956 Mercury. He sensed that he was a bit jealous about Bo and Cathy, but he hid his feelings, as he responded to her question. “I’m taking Jill Brewler and double dating with Joey Silvo and his date. We’ll be going to New York City after the Prom, too. We have reservations at the Village Barn. Bo told me you are going to the city also.”

“Oh, yes! I can’t wait. I haven’t been to New York at night before. I’m not sure where we’ll be going, Bo has been keeping it a secret – a sort of surprise he said.” It was obvious that Cathy was excited in anticipation of the evening.

After a little more conversation, both of them fell quiet, thinking ahead to the things they needed to get done in preparation for the Prom.

Later the next morning after the Prom...

Mm dooby do, dahm dahm

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*Dahm do dahm ooby do
Dahm dahm, dahm do dahm, ooby do
Dahm dahm, dahm do dahm, ooby do
Dahm dahm, dahm ooh dahm
Mm dooby do*

*(Come softly, darling)
(Come softly, darling)
(Come softly, darling)
(Come softly, darling)
(Come softly, darling)
(Come to me, sta-ay)
(You're my ob-session)
(For ever and a da-ay)*

*I want, want you to kno-o-
ow I love, I love you so
Please hold, hold me so tight
All through, all through the night..*

*(Speak softly, darling)
(Hear what I sa-ay)
(I love you always)
(Always, always)*

*I've waited, waited so long
For your kisses and your love
Please come, come to me
From up, from up above*

*(Come softly, darling)
(Come softly, darling)
I need, need you so much
Wanna feel your wa-arm touch...*

It was 3:00 AM and the radio in the royal blue 1956 Mercury was playing “Come Softly To Me”, the recent romantic hit by the new group the Fleetwoods. Roger Vaccaro was driving home from New York City along the New Jersey Turnpike. After the Prom, they had gone to the Village Vanguard to see and listen to Art Tatum in Greenwich Village. His date Gladys was up against his side on the front bench seat, her left hand was caressing the top of his right thigh, while his right hand was stroking the inside of her left nylon covered thigh under the pale blue prom dress, not quite all the way up. Roger had the radio volume high enough that Gladys could not quite hear the moans and words coming from the back seat, but not so loud that she and Roger couldn't hear each other talk, even if they had to raise their voices somewhat.

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“Oh, Bo, I love it when you touch me like that”, moaned Cathy Wood hoarsely in the back seat. Bo had pulled the white strapless prom dress down to expose Cathy’s bra and had slipped her bra up off her swelling breasts, gently rubbing his thumbs around her erect nipples while kissing her lips, neck, and ears. Then he slipped his left hand under her dress and rubbed the triangle in the crotch between her legs, feeling the wetness through her panty girdle. Cathy unzipped Bo’s tux trousers and slipped out his manhood, applying a firm grip on his rock hard, throbbing penis. A moan escaped from Bo as Cathy began to move her hand up and down the shaft of his cock, slowly at first, then gradually increasing the up and down strokes until Bo gasped and the ejaculation sent sperm flying up toward the roof of the car.

Bo felt a huge sexual relief, but he knew that Cathy was still aroused and had not yet felt any release of the tension that existed in her lovely body. Bo wanted so much to help her reach some release, but when he tried to slip his hand under her panty girdle, Cathy gently but firmly pulled his hand away and stopped him. “You satisfied me, and I just want to try and satisfy you”, Bo whispered.

“That’s OK, Bo. I’m fine. It’s enough for me that you had a, a, some relief”. Cathy answered. “Besides I see we are getting near our exit and will be home soon”.

Bo removed his hands, zipped up his fly, while Cathy reset her bra and pulled the strapless top of her dress up over her milky white shoulders. Bo took his pack of Lucky Strikes out of his shirt pocket, put two in his mouth at the same time, lit them and handed one to Cathy. He had seen that in a movie – was it Clark Gable? Whatever, he thought it was cool when he saw it in the movie and he wanted to appear romantic to Cathy. Cathy took the cigarette, took a long pull and exhaled a steam of smoke that curled up in little circles formed by her soft, full lips. With both of them blowing smoke, and it being a bit hot in the back seat on this warm June night, especially after their erotic lovemaking, Bo rolled down the rear window on his side of the car to let the smoke out and the somewhat cooler air in.

Within minutes they had arrived at Cathy’s house, where Bo had left his father’s 1954 Ford. Bo and Cathy said good night to Roger and Gladys, who drove off leaving Bo and Cathy alone in the driveway of her house. Cathy reached up and put her arms around Bo’s neck, pulling him close to her. “I had a wonderful time tonight, Bo. Are you still going to pick me up in a few hours to go to the beach at Sea Bright?”

“Yes, I’ll pick you up about 5:30 AM. I need to shower and shave and put on a bathing suit. I’ll bring the blanket. It may be a bit cool at the ocean until the sun gets up above the horizon, so you should probably bring a sweat shirt and a pair of jeans.”

Cathy responded, “OK, Bo, but you had better call me before you leave. I’m not absolutely sure my mother and father will let me go out again without getting some sleep.”

“Right! I’ll call you about 5:00 AM”, answered Bo, and with a quick look at his watch under the street light, “and that’s a little more than an hour from now.”

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Cathy said softly with a glimmer of moisture in her eyes, “I want to see you as much as possible this summer, before you go off to Queens College and I start working as a secretary.”

Bo leaned down and kissed her hard on the lips, then pulled his head back slightly as he felt an erection. He could not help but push his hips and erection forward against Cathy. “I want to see you, too. How about we make every Friday night a date night?”

“Yes, that would be wonderful, Bo. Now it’s time I went in. Walk me to the back door”, Cathy said just above a whisper. As they walked toward the door, with her left arm around Bo’s thin waist Cathy reached her right hand around, unzipped Bo’s pants and pulled his dick out, holding it tightly until they reached the steps leading up to the rear door. The light over the back door was lit and while still holding onto Bo’s dick, Cathy reached up to kiss him good night, then let go, walked up the steps, opened the unlocked back door, went in and closed the door.

The back porch light went out. Bo stood there for a long minute, wanting more than anything to make love to her. Then almost self-consciously he put his dick back in, zipped up, turned and walked quickly to the Ford. He did not see Cathy watching him leave from the window above the back door, with a wistful smile and a long sigh.

That same morning following the Prom...

It was 5:00 AM and sunrise was in progress. Rafe was driving his parent’s ’56 Ford Fairlane with his date, Jill Brewler, Joey Silvo and his date, Tracy Hines. They had stopped at Rafe’s house before going on their way to Sea Bright, the Prom seeming like it was days ago instead of just the night before.

Jill Brewler was an Ulster Beach girl and had just completed her freshman year at QHS. She had a pretty wide face, high cheekbones with two cute dimples and a button nose. She was all of five foot, two inches and 105 pounds; thin, but not very and still maturing. She had thin but soft lips with a lovely smile that combined with the sparkle in her hazel eyes made her seem endearing, yet delicate.

Upon returning from New York City, they had already stopped at Jill’s house so that the girls could shower and change into their bathing suits and beach attire. Next they had stopped at Rafe’s house, where Joey and Rafe had quickly showered and changed into their bathing suits, shirts and khakis. Rafe and Joey had thrown a bunch of blankets in the trunk before going to the Prom. As they were leaving Rafe’s house, his Dad, who was a volunteer fireman, was coming back from fighting a fire. He saw Rafe, Joey and the girls and he pulled Rafe aside. “Are you OK? Not too much to drink?” inquired Mr. Cerny.

“No, Dad, I’m fine. The drinks we had were pretty much watered down and I only had a few and with all the dancing we did, I worked those off.” Rafe politely answered.

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“OK, then, but I expect you will be a gentleman. You understand?” Mr. Cerny asked as he looked Rafe in the eyes looking for the response that would tell him that Rafe understood.

“Yeah, Dad, I understand”, Rafe answered quietly, a bit annoyed and embarrassed that the girls might have overheard his father’s words. “We’ve got to get going, now. I’ll see you and Mom later.”

As the four teenagers got into the Ford, Rafe’s Mom appeared at the front door in her bathrobe and waved to the four. She remembered taking photos of the four outside the Cerny house last night before they had driven off to the Prom. How pretty the girls looked in their Prom dresses and how handsome Rafe and Joey looked in their tuxedos, she recalled. Mr. Cerny turned to her inside the front door and observed, “Millie, I am amazed. Rafe has been out all night without any sleep and yet he looks more rested than I do when I’ve had a full night’s sleep.”

“Well, Rick, there was a time when both of us could match that”, Mrs. Cerny said teasingly.

“Yeah, Millie, I guess you’re right. Seems like a long time ago”, Mr. Cerny responded, thinking back, shaking his head and smiling at the memories.

Twenty minutes later Rafe parked the Fairlane in the parking lot at the Sea Bright beach and he and Joey grabbed the blankets out of the trunk, two for each couple. The four of them walked onto the beach and laid out the blankets on the sand. Joey and his date moved off about thirty yards to the right, so that each of the couples might have a semblance of privacy. To their surprise there was not another soul on the beach. A cool morning breeze was blowing in off the ocean, so after removing their outer clothes to strip down to their bathing suits, it was necessary to get under the blankets to ward off a chill.

“I guess this is as good an excuse as any to cuddle up and keep each other warm”, Rafe teasingly said to Jill, as they laid down on one blanket and pulled the other over them.

They could faintly hear Joey and his date giggling under their blanket. Rafe turned Jill over so that her back was toward the other couple, just in case Joey and Tracy got too frisky. He needn’t have worried, as Jill pulled herself up so close to Rafe that he could feel the outline of her firm body against him. Immediately they wrapped arms around each other and started to kiss, at first softly, and then hungrily. Rafe pulled away just enough to move his arm and place his hand gently on Jill’s breast. Not very big, thought Rafe, and he recalled some older guy once saying that big tits were not all they were cracked up to be, as more than a mouthful would only go to waste. For some reason that struck him as funny and he had to quickly come back to the moment so as not to laugh and spoil things – Jill might think he was making fun at her expense and he didn’t want to hurt her feelings. He resumed gently rubbing her left breast and he felt her instantly respond by pushing her pelvis up against his already hard cock. He stopped kissing Jill on the lips and began kissing her neck and ear, and felt her hot breath on his face. They were both getting excited. Rafe worked his hand down until it was into the cleft between Jill’s legs and started to rub her there over the one piece bathing suit.

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“No, please don’t”, Jill whispered, breathing hard, and she took Rafe’s hand and moved it away. “We’d better stop now, Rafe, I don’t think we should go any further. I’m feeling tired and it’s been a long night. I really enjoyed it and want to see you again, and I don’t want you thinking I’m a loose girl”.

“OK”, Rafe said, realizing that he too was getting tired and the excitement of the physical contact had made it more evident. He was still a virgin and wasn’t sure how to proceed anyway. Plus he didn’t want Jill to think he was a bad guy. “I’m a little tired, too. Let’s just cuddle up and try to sleep a little.”

An hour later Rafe was shaken awake. He looked up and had to shield his eyes from the sun to see who had shaken him. Joey said, “Folks are starting to come onto the beach and Tracy wants to go home, Rafe – says she’s tired and wants to sleep in her bed. To be honest I’m tired, too. I don’t know how you’re still alert, after driving all night. Maybe I ought to become a Jock like you – nah, I think I’d rather stay a Lover.” Then Joey laughed in a silly way – he was obviously overtired. Rafe was feeling it, too, but not about to show it.

Jill was now awake, so Rafe said, “OK, let’s pack up and head home.” The four of them put their clothes on over the bathing suits. Joey and Rafe gathered the blankets and the four of them sort of stumbled through the sand until they reached the passage to the macadam parking lot. The trip home was subdued, as no one wanted to get into a prolonged conversation.

When Rafe finally got home after dropping off Tracy and Jill at their homes in Ulster beach and Joey at his home in North Kingsboro, he undressed and literally crashed onto his bed. Thank God, Mom did not pump me for a report on the entire night, he thought as he drifted off to sleep.

Also, that same morning following the Prom...

Earle and Donna Conklin were necking in the back seat. James was driving and Sue Barlow was up tight against him. James had his right arm around Sue and steered the ’54 Ford with his left hand. Sue had her right hand on James’s chest and rested her head against his right side under his shoulder. The AM radio was tuned to the Cousin Brucie show on WINS, New York. They were on their way back from Manhattan, having gone to the Village Barn after the Prom at the Knobwood Inn in Mason.

Donna pulled away from kissing with Earle. “What’s the matter Donna”, Earle asked, hoping that she wasn’t once again putting a stop to their making out.

“Just tired, Burn; it’s been a long night and I’m not used to being out so late. By the way, what time is it?” asked Donna quietly.

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Earle looked at his watch. “It’s 3:00 AM. I guess it is kinda late. I’m not used to being up this late either.” Earle was beginning to feel his cock start to soften and was trying to will it to stay hard. He leaned forward to draw Donna close to him and kissed her on the neck.

“Let’s just hold each other for a while, Burn. I really do feel sleepy.” Donna said as she yawned against Earle’s cheek.

“Shit! No hot lovin’ again, tonight” Earle thought, as he realized that once again he wasn’t going to get any further with Donna.

Meanwhile in the front seat, James was not having much better luck. Sue was practically asleep against his right side, her arms now folded across her own chest. It made it somewhat difficult for James to remove his arm from around her shoulder, without propping his elbow on top of her head. “Well, looks like another night with lack-of-nookie James thought to himself.

Not long after James pulled the car up at Donna’s house and waited while Earle walked her to the door. The stop awoke Sue and she sat up and inquired, “What time is it Hein? I’m sorry I fell asleep on you. I guess I haven’t been much of a lively date after we left New York.”

“3:20 AM”, James answered pleasantly, despite feeling some disappointment. “It has been a long night, Sue. You’ve a right to feel tired. I was just hoping we would have some time together alone before the night ended. You know what I mean?”

“I know we talked about maybe going to the beach in the morning, Hein, but I’m not sure I’d be very good company. I really need to get some sleep.”

“OK, Sue. I’ll take you home and then take Burn home”, James said as he withdrew a Lucky Strike, lit it with the car lighter, took a long draw, and exhaled, blowing smoke rings out the side window on the driver’s side.

“Thanks, Hein, you’ve been a real gentleman tonight and I enjoyed going to the Prom with you and to New York. I really like your real name, James, better. I think I’ll call you ‘James’ from now on.”

“OK by me”, James said as he looked over at Sue and smiled.

A few minutes later, James kissed Sue goodnight on her front porch. He jumped back in the car and drove toward Earle’s house. “Damn, I’m sorry I tried that Manhattan drink tonight. How can anyone drink that go awful crap”, Earle asked rhetorically. Then he added, “Well, Hein it looks like both of us will have to have a late night date with “Mary Hand””, Earle said to James.

“Mary Hand?” James asked a bit befuddled, as he looked over at Earle?

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Earle did not reply. He just moved his closed hand up and down. James understood the universal sign for male masturbation and laughed.

Tuesday morning, June 23...

Earle woke up with a hangover; no, it was more like something inside his head was trying to pound its way out...first by way of the temples, then the back of his head, then from behind his eyes, and continually making the rounds from one to the other. Graduation had been the night before, and after leaving his parents, Earle had gone to celebrate with a couple of classmates from Holmvale. They were two cousins who were Italian and the three of them finished off a jug of homemade Guinea red wine. Earle's head was telling him this morning that he had more than overdid it last night.

The door to his bedroom opened up and his dad peered in and said, "Time to get your butt up, son. After breakfast I need your help with the trailer, then we head on out to Long Island." Although his dad had spoken in his normal volume, it sounded to Earle like it was spoken through a megaphone.

Earle threw the covers off then tentatively moved one leg out and put one foot on the floor. So far, so good, he thought. He gently swung his other leg over and let the other foot touch the floor as he slowly sat up. Ouch! After a few deep breaths he next attempted to stand up, lost his balance and sat back on the bed. "Well, at least I don't feel like I have to up-chuck", he said to himself. On the second try he was able to stand up without falling back and one step after another made his way to the bathroom.

After a shower, hot, then cold, then hot again, Earle felt a little better. The smell of coffee and bacon and eggs filled his nostrils and made him realize he was hungry, despite the bit of sourness that crawled up into his esophagus from the rumbling in his stomach. A few sips of coffee, a bite of toast and a fork full of scrambled eggs went down without any adverse reaction. He purposely avoided his usual dashes of Tabasco sauce. After a little more food he started to feel like he just might survive.

Twenty-five minutes later Earle and his dad had unblocked the trailer and hooked it to the hitch on the big maroon Mercury four door sedan. Then Earle got into the back, while his mom got into the front passenger side of the bench seat and Mr. Burnell headed out of the trailer park; they were on their way to Riverside, Long Island where Mr. Burnell had a construction job waiting. He also arranged for Earle to work at the Nike Missile site there for the summer. They would all return to North Kingsboro at the end of the summer and Earle would use some of the money from his summer job and other savings to buy a good used car that he could drive to Louisiana State College in Louisiana. At least that was the plan.

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Minutes later the Burnells were on the Garden State Parkway heading north. Burn, still feeling a bit tired from his hangover, slumped down in the back seat and closed his eyes. He thought back to last night following graduation. He, Bo, James and Rafe had gathered outside of QHS while their parents talked among themselves, leaving the boys to say goodbye to Earle...

Earle remembers graduation night...

“Well, I guess this is it. We’ll be heading off to Long Island tomorrow for the summer”, Earle said somewhat somberly to the other three guys. He felt a little sad, since he had come to consider them as the best friends he had ever had. With all of the moving around the country that his family had done, the three years at QHS was one of the longest stays of all – one of the happiest, and it came at the time of his life when he knew that he was on the way to becoming a man. He realized that soon he would be off to college on his own, away from mom and dad for the first time that he could remember, and while it was exciting, there was just a touch of uneasiness with the uncertainty ahead.

“But you’ll be back at the end of the summer, before heading off to LSC, right Burn?” Bo countered. Earle nodded to answer Bo’s question.

“Yeah, let us know when you get back and we’ll all get together for one last trip to Staten Island”, James said, rubbing his hands together and laughing that deep, infectious laugh of his.

“Try and get back before mid-August, Burn. I’ll be leaving for Milton College on Sunday August, 23 for two weeks of football camp before classes start and it will be good to see you before you leave for Louisiana. Take care of yourself and don’t work too hard.” Rafe said as he offered his hand to shake with Earle’s.

After hand-shakes all around the guys rejoined their parents and everyone said goodbye.

Earle dozed off with the sound of “goodbyes” in his mind. He didn’t wake up until his mom shook him at the place they had stopped for lunch.