

CHAPTER 61

Perhaps I was somewhat a fool, when I found myself seated at a bus stop across the street from Polytechnic High School; separated between a heavy flow of afternoon traffic, within a brisk ocean breeze that was most refreshing and cool

While pulling smoke through a Newport filtrate, feeling in a much better mental state; patiently waiting for the bell to ring, so that I could catch Keeba at the gate

I knew that I wasn't properly dressed to be there, but I had no other option in which to alternately wear; and to tell the truth I looked and felt like a street vagrant, with my incoming five o'clock shadow and matted down coursed hair

I just prayed that she wouldn't be embarrassed to see her paternal kin again; because in a short time, I could have been dead or locked away in some loony bin

.....I just didn't know!

When the bell had finally rung out several minutes later, with the loud war cry of a school yard emancipator; I watched teenagers steadily rush from out those gates- as if fleeing the oppression of some evil third world dictator

More troubling than a funnel cloud- I saw Tiger Boy dealers working the crowd; conducting secret transactions, while using the students as an obstructing shroud

I had curiously stood up from the bus stop bench when, I had begun to lose my sight upon the two tiger-striped men; though I had completely abandoned my surveillance, when I spotted Keeba walking from out the gate with her best friend Gwen

Gwen Greenspan- the white girl with freckles, who wore her ginger hair like Raggedy Ann; was my daughter's closest confidant, who held claim to being one-tenth African

....Though- I had my doubts

“KEEBAKEEBA!”, I began to loudly shout, while excitedly waiving both my hands in jumping jack motions- all about; **“DADDY’YYYYY!”**- she then shouted back to me, while publicly letting all of her suppressed emotions come joyfully streaming out

With a boost of adrenaline within my feet, I raced across The busy street; quickly embracing her within a tight hug, lat the spot where we both came to meet

“Dad I missed you so much- and I prayed every night for the day that you would return!”, she did cry- as I became misty eyed;

“I missed you even more than you could imagine Ke-KeAnd I promise this day forth- that I’ll never again leave your side!”

Even the security guard did an eye wipe motion, feeling the emotion; and not one of her peers laughed either, in fact- they cheered for our love and devotion

.....It was magical!

“KEEBAKEEBA!”, I began to loudly shout, while excitedly waiving both my hands in jumping jack motions- all about; yet- when we had finally made eye contact, I did not get the fantastical reaction that I did hope would come out

Her shocked eyelids did rise, as her face quickly twisted into a look of surprise; at which point- she dropped her head down low, and used both her hands to shield both of her eyes

With my heart strongly hammering an uptempo beat, I anxiously attempted to make my way across the busy street; when a Long Beach Transit bus quickly pulled up near to the street curb, damn near steam rolling over me and crushing both my poor feet

The bus stopped right in front of me, cutting off my full view of Keeba instantly; causing me to ‘SLAP’ it in anger, then race to its tail end- to once again see

When I had looked back across the street- the girls had vanished, as if they had been sentenced to be immediately banished; faster than the population of Meso-Americans, after coming in contact with the conquistador Spanish

I scanned the crowd like a searchlight, all the way from the far left- and back to the right; yet - I still couldn't locate them, for they had purposely disappeared from all sight

I was instantly heartbroken, and there was no comforting words or saying in the world that to me could have been spoken; I was ready to breakdown crying right on the spot, I could feel the sniffles rising- along with paroxysmal chokin'

But I didn't cry- because to my unexpected surprise, when I spun clockwise; I spotted my jerk stepping off the bus, which gave my spirit a much needed rise

Though there was definitely something seriously wrong with my ace, which I could tell from the zombified look of his face; as he strangely stepped past me upon the sidewalk, while staring straight ahead into some other time- and dimensional space

“GUTTA!”, I did yell- as he continued to walk past me at a foot dragging sail; mumbling gibberish to himself, while nervously gnawing at his fingernails

I quickly shuffled up behind him and gave him a light backhand *'SLAP'* across his upper left arm- bringing him no real harm; which instantly caused him to damn near leap up from out of his skin, while shouting out the word **“TA-TIGER'RRR!”** - with such great alarm

Stopping a few yards away from the bus, his fragile mind came back into focus; at which point he then spun to face me, with instant recognition- in that locus

“DAMN IT- ALLEYCAT!....”, he wailed- while taking a step back **“..... What in the HELL you tryin’ ta do- give me a GOT-DAMN heart attack!”**;

“Don’t tell me you really didn’t hear me callin’ youYou actin’ real paranoid right now jerkWhat- are you high off that crack?”

I handed him a Newport, at which point he quickly struck a match and lit it up; then tossed me back my own lifted matchbook, which I caught within a two-handed cup

“Boy did I need that!.....”, he crooned out- after the first exhale was complete **“.....Come on Alleycat- let’s go grab us a bite ta eat”**;

“But- I ain’t got one penny to my name jerk”

“Well don’t you worry about that BruthaThis one will be the Guttaman’s treat”

.....”Well then- let’s eat!”