

Sorry for the delay. I've been out of town.
See explanations and disclaimers at the beginning of Chapter One.
See Copyright notice at the end of the last chapter.

What Is True Love Anyway?

By Dan
Chapter Seven

Part I - Love begets love

About 9:00 the boys got off the couch and announced they were going to take their showers and get ready for bed.

"Since we don't have school tomorrow and don't have to get up early, can we sleep in the basement?" Sam asked.

"Sure," his mom answered. "You guys sleep as late as you want. Just holler up the stairs when you're ready for me to start breakfast."

Dan followed Sam to the bathroom, eager to see his boyfriend naked.

"How about taking a bath instead of a shower?" Sam asked.

"Sure, any special reason?"

"No, not really. I just thought it might be fun to lay in a tub of hot water together. I'm still cold from last night."

"Won't the folks wonder why we're in here so long?"

"Maybe, but if they want to know, they'll just come to the door and ask."

While they talked, Sam put the plug in the tub and started the water running, making sure it would be comfortably hot before standing and turning to face his boyfriend. Dan had been standing patiently behind him, waiting til they could undress together.

As they faced each other, they began unbuttoning each other's pajama shirt. Once their shirts were open, they slipped into an embrace, hands rubbing softly up and down the smooth skin of their backs, Dan's cheek resting on Sam's collarbone, Sam's chin resting on Dan's head. They stood like that for several minutes, just drawing warmth from one another, the sort of warmth that only comes from one's love for another.

After some minutes, Dan lifted his head and drew back to look into Sam's eyes. The love he saw there almost brought tears to his eyes, *again*.

"I love you so much, Samuel. I don't know if I really understood how much until I thought I was going to lose you. I was so scared. And when I thought I heard God talking to me, I *really* got scared."

"Oh, Danny, no one could love someone as much as I love you right now. Not because you saved my life, but because of who and what you are."

Then Sam lowered his lips onto Dan's in a tender kiss meant simply to convey his love. But whatever his intentions, their kiss soon became more passionate. Their breathing speeded up and became somewhat labored. Their arms grasped one another more tightly, and it soon became apparent to each of them that certain parts of their bodies were demanding attention. In fact, those parts had *come* to attention.

Breaking the kiss, finally, Sam noticed the tub was almost too full for the two of them, so he quickly turned off the water. Then they slipped off their pj bottoms, each watching the other's erection spring forth as the material slid down their thighs. Like two little kids walking hand in hand, they grabbed each other's penis and stepped into the tub.

"Since my legs are longer, I'll sit in the back and you sit between my legs. I'll wash you and then you can turn around and wash me," Sam said.

So they did just that. With the water coming just a few inches short of the top of the tub, and about level with their nipples, Sam couldn't really wash much. So he settled for washing Dan's hair first, rinsing it with the flexible shower hose, and then washed his shoulders and arms. Grabbing one wrist, he raised Dan's arm in the air and washed it with his free hand. When he got to the pit, he couldn't resist the urge to tickle. Thus began a tussle of thrashing arms and legs, water splashing over the sides of the tub.

Once both arms were washed, Sam pulled Dan back so he was leaning on his chest. Fortunately the tub was long enough for their legs to stretch out. Dan's feet rested on the end of the tub and kept him from slipping down any further. As he laid his head back, Sam tilted his just slightly forward so that they were cheek to cheek. This position gave Sam a wonderful view of *everything*.

He then took the bar of soap and rubbed it all over Dan's upper chest, the part that wasn't covered with water. From his nipples to his neck, Sam created a good lather and set the soap aside. Then he proceeded to rub his hands gently, slowly, lovingly all over his boyfriend's chest. Dan sighed and settled back against his boyfriend whose hands were now creating a sense of warmth and comfort he hadn't quite experienced before.

As Sam kept moving his hands, Dan's nipples began to get sensitive. They rose into little quarter inch rivets that tickled the palms of Sam's hands. But Sam's hands and fingers weren't tickling Dan's nipples. Now, perhaps for the first time, Dan noticed that his nipples were really sensitive. Sam was playing with his boobs and nipples the way Dan had always imagined a boy would play with a girl. He was surprised that a boy could get turned on the way he had heard girls did.

But he *was* getting turned on. His little hairless dick was soon rising to stick its head above water as though to look around or get a breath of air. Sam had closed his eyes and wasn't aware of what was happening to his friend until Dan moaned with pleasure. As he opened his eyes, they fell quite naturally on Dan's lap and the erection bouncing back and forth at the water's surface.

"Oh, I see the little guy wants some attention, huh?"

"Well, I suppose so. Maybe. If you don't have anything better to do that is."

The boys giggled as Sam slid his soapy hand down onto Dan's erection.

"Careful you don't get soap in the hole! That really stings."

Sam rinsed his hand in the water before grabbing his favorite toy and stroking it lightly. The way he treated it tonight, it was like he'd never seen it before. He didn't attack it as he normally might have. Instead, he just toyed with it gently. As he did so, new thoughts began filtering into his conscious mind. An idea he had been day dreaming about since their talk with his dad started to take hold as he realized that he really wanted it to become a reality and not just a dream. Dan could feel the head of his boyfriend's penis throbbing against his tale bone as Sam continued to toy with him.

"So you really sucked on my toes last night, huh?" Sam said softly in Dan's ear.

"Yeah. It wasn't so bad. They were too cold to have any taste. Either that or my taste buds were all frozen."

The boys giggled a little at that.

"I guess it was a good thing my pecker wasn't as cold as my feet, huh?"

Dan moved his head to the side so he could look into Sam's eyes.

"Yeah, I guess."

Then, before turning back to face the front, he added, "But I'd have sucked that too, if I thought it was in trouble."

Neither of them said anything after that. They just sort of laid there in a semi-reclining position and enjoyed each other's touch. Sam even stopped playing with Dan's boyhood.

Perhaps they should have kept talking, because it wasn't long before both of them had fallen asleep.

About 40 minutes after the boys had left to take their showers, Mr. Russell realized they hadn't returned.

"I better go see what the boys are doing," he said with some trepidation.

He knocked lightly on the door of the bathroom. When he got no answer, he tried the knob. It turned and he opened the door just enough to stick his head in. The sight before him caused him to pause and reflect again on how fortunate the boys were to know each other's love at this age. Sure he might have wished it were different, but love is love, and true love is something worth holding onto wherever it comes from.

Since the soapy water hid their private parts, he decided to invite Sam's mom and Dan's parents to come see this for themselves. One at a time, the others stuck their heads in and looked with parental love on these two special kids. In fact, Dan's dad was so moved he actually had to wipe tears from his eyes as he moved back down the hall. And Dan's dad prided himself on not showing his emotions.

When the others had returned to the TV room, dad Russell stepped into the bathroom and over to the tub. From this viewpoint, he could see Dan's equipment through the murky water, so he grabbed a wash cloth and laid it on the surface of the water and then shook the boys' shoulders.

"Don't you guys think you should get rinsed off and into bed? It would probably be a lot more comfortable," he said with a grin.

"Yeah, thanks dad," the boys responded.

As Mr. Russell left the room, Dan picked up the washcloth and turned to Sam with a questioning look on his face. Each knew they hadn't taken one into the tub; they never used them when they were washing each other. Sam just shrugged his shoulders and they each blushed at the realization that dad Russell must have put it where Dan found it.

When they had dried off and slipped back into their pj's, the boys grabbed a glass of soda and headed downstairs.

"Why did you want to sleep down here?" Dan asked.

"It's more private, and if we make any noise they won't be as likely to hear it."

"Make any noise? What kind of noise wouldn't you want them to hear?" Dan asked with a sly grin on his face.

"Well, I don't know..." Sam said, trying to appear embarrassed.

"*Certain* noises."

They set their sodas on the bedside table and began unbuttoning each other's shirt. Then they slid them off and wrapped their arms around one another, running their hands slowly up and down the other's back, sides and front. As they were doing this, Sam leaned his head forward and down so that their foreheads were touching. Their eyes closed, they each breathed in the other's essence, that just-washed, clean-boy fragrance that served as an aphrodisiac to them.

Soon enough the tents in their pants were pressing against each other, their hormones rapidly adding fuel to their fires. Trapping Dan's arms with his, Sam slid his hands into the waistband of Dan's pj's and pushed them down off his hips, down his legs and off his feet. Kneeling as he was at this point, his face was level with Dan's crotch. With Dan looking down at him, watching his every move, his erection bobbing straight out from his groin, Sam moved his hands slowly up Dan's legs, over the cheeks of his bubble butt and around to the front. With one hand, he cupped the little nutsac while he wrapped the other around the base of the slender shaft. Then he leaned forward and kissed the head of Dan's boyhood.

Before Dan had a chance to get Sam out of his pj's, Sam pushed him back onto the bed and laid down full-length on top of him, supporting his weight on his legs which were between Dan's, and his arms which were tucked in tightly to Dan's side. He slid his hands under Dan's shoulders to grab them from behind and above. As he ground his own erection against his boyfriend's and squeezed his shoulders, Sam began lavishing Dan's face with kisses. He slid up Dan's body until their armpits were even. Then as his fingers played lovingly with Dan's hair, ears and cheeks, he continued his kissing.

It was all Dan could do just to lay there and receive the love Sam was pouring out to him. At least his arms were free now, so he wrapped them around Sam's body and held on tight. Sam's lips started at his hairline near one temple, moved across his forehead, back across his eyes, stopping at each one to wet the lids with his tongue. Then they moved down his cheek, across his nose, down the other cheek and back to finally rest on his lover's lips. Were they lover's yet? Not really. But they would be soon.

As Sam's lips settled on his, Dan's hands started frantically pushing at the waistband of Sam's pj's.

"Take 'em off, Samuel!" Dan hissed urgently. "I want to feel you down there. I want us touching everywhere."

Without breaking their kiss, Sam used one hand at a time to move his pj's off his hips. Then Dan's feet took over as he raised his legs enough to hook his toes into the waistband and shove them down to Sam's feet. Sam kicked them off as they began to grind their erections against each other, Sam's sliding wetly against Dan's bald skin, the head of Dan's brushing against the soft furry bush that Sam had spreading out from the base of his boyhood.

But Sam had made up his mind about something, and as hot as they were getting just frenching each other, he knew he couldn't linger too long. So he moved on down Dan's neck, leaving a little wet trail where he paused to lick the skin. When he got to the left nipple, he stopped. Remembering how excited Dan had become in the bathtub when he had played with his nipples, Sam began to suck gently. The action seemed to come naturally to him, as though left over from his infancy.

The more he sucked, the more Dan squirmed, first from side to side and then up and down, raising his back off the bed as he thrust his chest into Sam's gentle caress. Sam's tongue was busy also, flicking back and forth across his boyfriend's little rivet. As Dan's breathing grew more rapid along with his heart beat, Sam moved over to the other nipple and continued his suckling. Then he moved

further down, across Dan's tender midriff to his belly button where he paused to lick some more.

By the time he got to his target area, Dan was whimpering and moaning. Sam checked once in awhile to see if Dan was watching his progress, but his eyes were always closed. He paused just for a few seconds to stare at Dan's flagpole. Sam still thought it was beautiful, about 4" long and a half inch thick. The first thing he noticed was the rather large drop of clear liquid resting between the lips. But he forced himself to ignore it for the time being.

Dan's nuts weren't very big to begin with, and the sac had drawn up so tight they were hardly visible. Sam blew gently all over Dan's genitals, watching his penis tremble and throb with each heartbeat. Then he leaned his head down and dusted the area with his hair, gently brushing all he could reach as with a feather duster. Dan's whimpers had turned to moans and his fists were gripping the sheet so tight his knuckles were white, but his eyes remained closed.

Being careful not to touch any of the surrounding area lest Dan be forewarned of what was to come, Sam opened his mouth wide and settled his lips around his lover's (yeah, I think they're close enough to it to call them lovers now) scrotum. Just as his lips touched the base, his tongue pressed firmly against the sac. Dan reacted with a sudden intake of breath and a gasping groan that both boys might have feared could be heard upstairs had either of them been able to think.

At the same time he gasped with shock, his eyes popped open in amazement. Subconsciously he may have been hoping this would happen, but consciously he wasn't expecting it. Seeing Sam's face buried in his groin and his lips surrounding his sac almost made the youngster swoon.

"Omigod, Samuel! That feels soooo goooood! Oh my G-o-d!" he gasped in a loud whisper, almost a groan.

Then he collapsed back on the bed to revel in this new and wonderful sensation. His boyfriend was actually making love to him with his mouth. He couldn't believe it. The emotional impact was every bit as marvelous as the physical. Unable to control himself, his moans began to increase in volume.

Sam lavished his affection and his spit on his lover's nutsac for several minutes before moving on to his real target. He had been thinking about this for more than a week and all it took to make him want to make it a reality was the love Dan had shown for him the night before.

He let Dan's nutsac fall gently from his mouth and moved to lick all around it, all over that mound of flesh that surrounds every young man's (every man's) penis. He licked, he kissed, he stroked, he murmured against it. Then he drew back and looked again at the beauty of his boyfriend's equipment. In fact, he looked so long that Dan opened his eyes to see what he was doing. Their eyes locked and stayed that way while Sam's tongue came out, his head lowered, and he licked the dribble of clear liquid that was seeping from the lips of that gorgeous mushroom head.

Then he closed his eyes and engulfed that part of Danny that he felt was most precious - because he was the only one besides Dan who ever got close to it. He slowly allowed it to run along the length of his tongue to the back of his mouth. Then he closed his mouth around it and just laid there, his

tongue moving from side to side along the bottom side and then around to the top.

He'd had no idea that this was going to be so absolutely wonderful. Danny's penis was so soft at the same time it was so hard. He could feel it throbbing against his tongue as he sucked on it gently, almost as a child would suck its thumb. His own erection was pressed tightly between his stomach and the sheet and was throbbing as strongly as Dan's was.

Dan was having trouble dealing with the feelings and emotions that were welling up inside. Of course, by this time tears were streaming down his face onto the pillow. Tears of love, joy, exultation, sexual thrill. Tears prompted by hormones out of control, by his love for Samuel and by the surprise with which Samuel had given him this gift.

"Oh God, Samuel," he sniffed. "What are you doing to me? I can hardly breath. Why have we waited so long to do this? Oh God I love you!"

At this point, Sam began moving his mouth up and down the shaft, rolling his tongue around and around on it, squeezing his lips as tightly as possible when he got to the head, then loosening them to go back down. His hands tenderly massaged Danny's nuts as he made love to his lover, his best friend, his *boyfriend*. As Dan's hips began to move up and down in counterpoint to Sam's head movements, Sam began moving faster and faster on his penis, sucking as hard as he thought he dared.

Even as Dan's hormones were raging out of control, so were Sam's. He'd always thought oral sex would be a one way street, that the one receiving it would get all or at least most of the enjoyment. But he was sure he could feel his own orgasm approaching to match Dan's.

After several minutes of speeding up and slowing down, bringing his lover to the brink and letting him calm down again, Sam grabbed the base of Dan's penis with one hand and squeezed it gently in rhythm with the motion of his mouth. At the same time, he toyed with his lover's nutsac, rolling those little balls around gently in the hairless container. When Dan's moans and gasps finally got loud enough to draw his attention away from what he was doing, Sam reached over and grabbed the pillow beside him and tossed it over Dan's face.

Dan pressed the pillow onto his face and bit down on it hard as his orgasm flew over him with more power than he had ever experienced. His face went numb and he saw stars and fireworks. His body felt like it was several degrees hotter than normal. He felt dizzy, even lying on his back. His legs stretched out with his feet bent downwards. His back arched up so much his little bubble-butt actually lifted off of the bed. Even with the pillow covering his face, his scream of ecstasy seemed awfully loud. And as his precious fluid flooded Sam's mouth in spurt after spurt, Sam's semen poured out onto the sheet. His own orgasm was more powerful than any he had experienced before, although probably not as powerful as Danny's. His own cries were dampened by the penis in his mouth and the mound of flesh pressed against his lips.

When at last Dan's body had relaxed and his semen had stopped flowing, Sam sucked gently on his penis, cleaning him thoroughly before letting it slip from between his lips. Looking up at Dan's face,

he saw that his lover had fainted, just as he had once before. He crawled up the bed and grabbed the towel to clean the fluid from his belly and crotch. Then he laid his head on the pillow next to Dan's and waited for his heartbeat to return to normal.

Dan's first reaction upon waking was to turn towards Sam, throw his arms around him, bury his head in the crook of his lover's neck and cry. Love expresses itself differently in different people. For Dan, it was in his tears. As they died down, Sam leaned back a little, and placing his hand under Dan's chin, raised his head up so they were looking at each other. With a sly grin on his face, he spoke.

"Soooo? Danny was it good for you?"

Dan giggled at the joke.

"I... dunno. Maybe if you did it again, so I have something to compare it to...."

Sam hugged him and laughed.

"Well, at least it was good for me. God! I never thought it would feel so good to do that to you. I can't begin to tell you what it was like for me. It was just the most awesome experience I've ever had."

"Oh, Samuel. It was *wonderful*! You can't imagine what it's like. It's so much better than when you use your hand. We might never beat off again! You gotta let me try it. Doesn't my stuff taste bad?"

Sam gave him a look that said everything Dan wanted to hear. Then he said, "Tastes like Christmas to me."

Dan tried to move, but Sam wouldn't let go. He held on tightly and began kissing his lover. Their tongues danced a slow dance of love and joy as they lay there breathing softly.

"Danny, I have to tell you, your turn will have to wait awhile."

"Why, Samuel?"

"Because I came when you did."

Dan jerked back with a look of amazement on his face.

"You did? Let me see!"

And he threw back the covers that Sam had drawn over them. Using his foot, Sam showed him the wet spot on the sheet. It was LARGE. He had spilled more seed than either of them had seen before.

"I'm gonna have to find a way to clean that up before mom sees it," he said.

"Oh, surely she won't mind just once."

"Maybe not, Danny, but do we want her wondering how I could have had an accident like that clear down there at the foot of the bed?"

"Oh. I see your point. I guess not."

Sam drew the covers back up, reached over and turned out the light, and then drew Danny onto his chest as he lay on his back. Dan's arm rested along Sam's side, his hand on his boyfriend's shoulder. Sam wrapped both of his arms firmly around his love and hugged him. Then he let them slide down to rest gently, one on Dan's back and the other on his arm.

After just a couple of minutes, he said, "You can do me some other time, Danny. I'm really sleepy right now."

But Dan didn't answer. He had already fallen asleep, his warm breath tickling the peach fuzz on Sam's chest.

About an hour later, the parents came downstairs, the Russell's to say good night and the Whittington's to say goodbye. Finding the boys in this position, mom Russell went and got her camera. They each wanted pictures as they marveled at how their sons could say *I love you* even in their sleep.

Later, they awoke and Dan made love to Sam, using his mouth in much the same way. When he was finished licking his lover clean, they went back to sleep in the same position as before, their love for each other cemented even more than before by their first experience of making love to one another.

As soon as Dan went home the following day, Sam went to his dad with his problem. He wasn't really that eager to discuss what he and Dan had done the night before, but he was even more apprehensive of his mother finding the cum stains on the sheet downstairs. So while his mom was in Nancy's room selecting clothes to be washed, he went to find his dad in the TV room.

He sat on the couch next to his dad and spoke softly so as not to be heard by his mom,

"Uh, Dad? We need to talk."

"Oh? What about?"

"Well, it's kind of embarrassing, but it's sort of urgent, too."

"So?"

"Well, ever since you had that talk with us, Danny and I have tried to be real careful not to make any messes."

"So?"

"Well, last night was different."

"Different how?"

"Well... uh..." Sam was starting to turn red by this time and was fidgeting something fierce.

"It's usually easiest just to spit it out, son," his dad said comfortingly.

"Well... uh... well, last night we made love for the first time!" he blurted out quickly.

Obviously his dad did not understand, for his response was immediate and angry.

"Sam! I thought we had an agreement. You guys weren't to do that until after high school. You're not even *in* high school yet!"

"Dad! Not back there! The *other* way! And keep your voice down, please?"

"Oh. You mean orally."

"Yeah."

"So? Why didn't you have a towel ready like I asked?"

"We did! But it wasn't where we needed it. It was up beside Dan."

Mr. Russell was not quite getting the picture.

"Why don't you tell me what happened. I'll try to keep my mouth shut, or at least not say anything, until you're finished."

Sam *really* turned red now. He decided he'd just say as little as possible as fast as possible and see what happened.

"Well I was doing it to Danny, and when he came I did too!"

The expression on his dad's face was priceless. Sam thought his dad didn't know whether to shit or go blind, laugh or faint dead away. When his dad could finally speak, his voice was filled with wonder. He spoke softly, almost reverently to his son.

"You mean you got so excited making love to him with your mouth that you had an orgasm? Can that happen? Geez, it's hard enough to imagine a guy wanting to do that in the first place, but to get so excited doing it that he has a climax is amazing! That really happened?"

"D-a-a-d! You're embarrassing me!" Sam said with a blushing grin. His father's reaction was not at all what he expected, and now he was much more comfortable talking about his experience. With a look of excitement on his face and a note of pride in his voice, he expounded on his experience.

"But, yeah. It happened. I mean I had no idea it would be like that. I just wanted to do something extra special to tell Danny how much I love him, and we'd never done that before, so I just sort of surprised him with it. By the time I put him in my mouth we were both really turned on. It was... well, I don't know how to describe it.... well, it was just fucking fantastic!"

"Sam!" his dad exclaimed, laughing at his son's sudden outburst, his obvious enchantment with this new experience he was trying to describe.

Realizing what he had just said and how excited he had become, Sam blushed crimson and turned away. But his dad grabbed him by the shoulders and pulled him into a fierce hug. Sam buried his face in his dad's chest and hugged back. The longer they sat that way, the more emotional Mr. Russell became. Soon tears of wonder and joy were trickling down his cheeks. When he had control again, he pushed his son back a little and looked at him tenderly.

"So, what's the problem? I know I asked you guys to keep a towel handy, but one accident isn't going to throw your mom into a tizzy."

"Dad! The stain's clear down at the foot of the bed. Isn't she going to wonder how it got down there? I don't wanna have to tell her what I just told you!"

"Oh. I guess I hadn't thought of what position you might have been in. Yeah, I guess we better change those sheets. Then I'll try to get your mom out of the house for a while so you can wash the dirty one."

As they were stripping the bed and putting on clean sheets, Sam's dad told him how to wash the sheet so the stain would come out. Every once in awhile he would just stop and look at his son in amazement, smile or even chuckle. Two or three times he voiced his surprise, saying things like, "that really happened?" or "I can't believe it." or "amazing!" Every time he did, Sam would grin and blush, but he still felt proud of what he had done and was happy with the way his dad was reacting to the news.

Part II - Notoriety comes in unexpected ways

Mr. Whittington's warning was indeed prophetic. Nurses, doctors, orderlies, even janitorial staff had all heard about the boys' ordeal before the shift change. And of course, they talked about it at home and on the bus and on the streets and just about anywhere else they could.

Perhaps somewhat unfortunately, at least for the boys, the Gospel reading the following Sunday was John 15:13. Pastor Thomas could hardly preach on that lesson without bringing Dan and Sam into it. Besides, the Whittington's and Russell's had already gotten so many phone calls they hadn't

thought to ask Pastor Thomas not to say anything.

As the pastor shared what details he knew and worked his sermon around their experience, Dan slid further and further down in his seat, turning several shades of red. Even Sam blushed profusely, although he wasn't so embarrassed that he wanted to slide out of sight as Dan did.

Not all of the notoriety was pleasant, however. Although even the unpleasant seemed to serve a purpose.

The boys' school had what was called in those days, General Assembly. This occurred every Friday afternoon and was a time to hand out awards from time to time, announce special events that were scheduled, present plays such as the Christmas performance, etc. The first General Assembly after school resumed was set aside to honor Dan for his heroic deed. He *had* been notified in advance, but that didn't make it any easier for him.

Both the morning and afternoon papers had carried stories about the boys, and reporters from both papers were there to cover the assembly. Sam had been asked to tell the story in as much detail as he could. He and Dan and the school principal were the only ones on stage. Dan's and Sam's parents were also in attendance to see the award presentation.

Principal Warner opened the assembly with a brief welcoming comment and then turned the microphone over to Sam. With Dan sitting on a straight back chair to the side of the podium (sure it was straight back, folding, grey, dented AND uncomfortable. Didn't you go to junior high school?), Sam proceeded to tell the story again. He had told it so many times already, the details just flowed from his lips. While he didn't embellish the story at all, it was evident to everyone present that he was tremendously proud of his friend. Proud AND grateful.

When he got to the part about Dan sucking his toes, some of the boys snickered and giggled and poked each other. Some of the girls made faces and mouthed the universal *oooooh! Yuck!* But when he shared Dan's answer to his own question about whether or not Dan had known he didn't have athlete's foot or some other fungus, the audience fell deadly silent. This was the only point at which Sam shed a tear and everyone saw him wipe his eyes.

Now it was at this point that the unpleasantness happened. One of the journalists sitting in the audience was known for his attacks on homosexuals, *queers* he called them in his many scathing articles. As Sam wiped his eyes and prepared to leave the podium, this journalist stood up and yelled a question.

"So from the sound of things and the way you're acting, I'd say you guys are queer for each other, right? Is that the way it is? You guys in looove with each other?"

What happened next really takes longer to tell than it took to happen. A deadly silence fell on the crowd as many of them stared at Dan and Sam on the stage. The blood drained from Dan's face so fast that his mother thought he was going to faint. Sam sat down so suddenly and so hard, the chair almost fell out from under him. The journalist just stood there, a defiant look on his face, waiting

for a reply.

The reply, however, came from a totally unexpected source. The first to react, perhaps no more than 30 seconds after the question was asked, was Randy, the bully of the eighth grade. The summer had been good to Randy. He had grown to about 5' 9" and weighed about 185. He leapt from his chair so fast it flew into the shins of the person behind him, his English teacher.

"Don't answer that!" he yelled.

Then he marched right up to the journalist and without any warning smacked him on the side of his face as hard as he could with his open hand. Shaking his hand in pain, he looked straight at the journalist and spoke in a tone of voice that carried throughout the hall.

"Now sit down and shut up! *I'm* going to answer that question!" Then he looked around until he saw Hank, the captain of the football team.

"Hank, you and the guys make sure Mr. Big mouth here doesn't go anywhere."

Several of the team members moved to stand in the aisle as Randy made his way to the stage, with every eye in the house except Dan's following him. Dan had buried his face in his hands and was crying. He was sure that his and Sam's lives were over. Now they would go from heroes to dog shit in one fell swoop.

When Randy walked on stage, he went straight to Dan and knelt down in front of him. Taking the boy by his elbows, he shook him gently until Dan looked up at him.

"Now Dan, I want you to tell me the truth. I'm not going to tell anybody what you say, regardless of your answer. And don't shake or nod your head, 'cause people can see you. Just blink your eyes once for yes and twice for no. OK?"

Dan blinked his eyes once.

"Is it true? Are you and Sam, you know...?"

Dan stared at him for a moment trying to decide if he could trust him. After just a few seconds, he blinked his eyes once, then hung his head and buried his face in his hands again. Sam sat beside him not knowing what to do. He so wanted to reach out and hug his boyfriend, but he just couldn't do that, not here, not now.

Randy moved over to the podium.

"I said I was going to answer that man's question and I am. But I have something to say, and I'm going to say it."

With that he turned to give the principal a look that practically demanded an affirmative response.

Then he continued.

"Last year I was known as the school bully. I picked on lots of kids smaller than me, especially Dan because it was so easy. He never fought back. I called him a queer once. I was making fun of him because he was crying. Called him a queer and knocked him down. His head hit the concrete step so hard lots of folks thought he was dead. He ended up in the hospital. Sam, here, hit me so hard I didn't know what happened for a minute. Then he stomped on me and told me to leave his friend alone. Actually threatened me, if you can believe that.

Several weeks later I fell into the deep end of the pool and almost drowned. I can't swim. In fact I'm afraid of water over my head. You want to know who saved my life, who jumped in and pulled me out? It was Dan. I almost drowned him in the process, and that's not a joke! Dan may be small, but his heart is bigger than anyone else's in this room. Then Sam gave me artificial respiration. And you know what? They've never bragged about it, never asked me for anything in return. Just went on about their business like saving somebody's life was just everyday stuff.

You asked if they're queer for each other. I'll give you an answer. I'll give you the same answer Dan gave Sam: *What difference does it make!?! As for me? I'd kiss him on the lips if he'd let me, and I'd sooner be loved by him and Sam than by some bigot like you!*"

By this time, Kathy, the girl who had kissed Dan on the lips at the Christmas play, had come up on stage. As Randy moved aside from the podium, she took his place.

"I just wanted to say that whether these guys are homosexuals or not isn't important to me, and it shouldn't be important to any of you. And I hope I'm speaking for the entire student body of Bemen Jr. High. If Dan and Sam *were* queer, they'd still be *our* queers. Dan's a hero, and I'm betting that he's the only person in this room, youth *or* adult who has risked his life for a friend. Are there any other reporters here?"

One fellow stood up in the back of the room.

"Well, I hope you'll write the truth of what happened here this afternoon. And I hope you'll tell everybody that Bemen Junior High took a stand against prejudice and bigotry, that we stood up for what's right. Can he print that you guys?"

The entire student body stood almost as one, yelling and clapping, affirming Kathy's comments. When quiet had been restored, she continued.

"I'd give you the same answer Randy just gave you. *What difference does it make?! As long as I live, I will always be proud to say that I went to the same Junior High School that these two guys went to.*"

As the audience stood to applaud, she turned and stepped over to Dan. Taking his hands, she had him stand up. Then she wrapped her arms around his neck and gave him a big kiss on the lips. When she released him, she whispered in his ear.

"I know you and Sam love each other. And I meant what I said, it doesn't make any difference."

Then she stepped over to Sam and did the same thing, said the same thing. After that, the award was a bit anti-climactic.

Chapter Eight

Part I - Life Sucks!

Eventually the notoriety of Dan's heroism died away. And not a day too soon, either, for Sam was getting about as tired of it as the rest of the kids in school. Nothing more was said about the boys' sexual orientation, either because of the things Randy and Kathy had said at the assembly or because Randy always seemed to be hovering about as though he were their guardian angel. Either way, the boys were thankful and continued to be careful about allowing their feelings for each other to show outside their homes.

Entering high school the following fall allowed even greater anonymity because four junior highs poured students into it. Tenth grade seemed to pull the boys further apart in many ways. Sam's singing group became rather popular and kept him busy with his other friends. It also exposed him to more girls when the group played their various gigs. Dan became more active at church and in the band but didn't develop many deep friendships. Dan also had to spend more time with his studies than Sam did, and that kept him from socializing very much.

They still spent as much time together as they could and took advantage of every opportunity they could find to share their new-found love of oral sex. But even those started to come less often. Sam continued to outpace Dan in physical development. His body toned up more, his pubic bush far exceeded Dan's, and his cock, when erect, became huge while Dan's was barely five inches long and still fairly slender. At times, Dan had trouble with oral sex, and he had already decided that anal sex was out of the question.

By the end of the second semester, Dan was beginning to feel that something was wrong with their relationship. He barely made it through finals and made the grades he did only because his dad literally sat in the same room with him at home and made him study. He began to fret about things that normally wouldn't have bothered him. He became short tempered and irritable at home, and his family was glad when July rolled around and it came time for him and Sam to go to summer camp. Dan was glad, too, because he hoped two weeks essentially by themselves would prove him wrong. He desperately hoped that there really *wasn't* anything wrong with his relationship with Sam.

Unfortunately camp didn't help matters. In fact it seemed to make them worse. It seemed to Dan that his boyfriend kept looking for ways to distance himself. Sam worked it so that he and Dan weren't on the same horseback overnight. He made friends with other guys right away and found things to do with them that didn't include his lover. And when they were in the lake swimming, he always made it a point not to get too close to Dan. In all the previous years, they had used the murky lake as a place to freely grope one another during free swim.

Finally, the straw that broke the camel's back - middle Saturday movie and dance with the girls' camp. Naturally, Dan wasn't expecting to spend any time with Sam, but he found himself constantly watching him. He couldn't help but notice that Sam was dancing a lot with Pam, a girl from their school. He couldn't help but notice that they were always unusually close during the slow dances. It all got to be too much eventually, and Dan slipped from the hall and went out by the lake by himself.

Sitting down on the little sandy beach, he stared out over the lake, watching the ripples from the wind gently ruffling the moon's reflection. Seeing Sam and Pam together started him thinking. This was what had been upsetting him for most of the second semester of school. Sam had been spending an awful lot of time with Pam, time that he *could have* been spending with Dan. He began to realize that some of Sam's excuses for not being available to do things had sounded kind of lame.

It wasn't long before tears were flowing freely from his eyes. Tears of fear, rejection, loss, frustration, dejection - you name it, he had 'em. From time to time he would rest his forehead on his knees and sob quietly. It was at one of these moments that Sam came and sat down beside him. "What's wrong, Dan? How come you're out here by yourself?"

"Why shouldn't I be? You've been avoiding me all night. In fact, you've been avoiding me all week."

"I'm not avoiding you," Sam answered defensively. "I just make friends more easily than you do and I've been spending time with them, that's all."

"No, that isn't all, Samuel," Dan said, tears starting to fall freely once again.

"Oh yeah? So what else is there, Dan?"

There was a lengthy pause as Dan worked to get his tears and his voice under control. Finally he tried to speak what was on his heart.

"Samuel, do you realize how long it's been since you called me Danny?"

"No, why?" was Sam's quick response, entirely *too* quick.

Dan jumped up, no longer able to contain his inner anguish or his tears. Hardly able to speak through the emotion that was threatening to choke him, he spoke in little more than a whisper. "If you have to ask, Samuel, there isn't any point in answering!"

With that, he took off as fast as he could for the boys' camp, stumbling blindly in the dark, the tears pouring from his eyes making it even more difficult to see the ruts and potholes in the dirt road. By the time he got to their cabin, his arms and legs were covered with cuts and bruises, especially his knees. He washed up as well as he could at the sink and collapsed into his bed where he cried himself to sleep. He knew Sam would tell the counselors where he had gone, but he didn't really care. Camp had certainly proven something, but it wasn't what Dan had hoped for.

The second week of camp was miserable - for both boys. There was no way they could ask to be put in separate cabins, and this forced them to wear a mask that felt foreign to them, like wearing somebody else's clothes. They were used to wearing a mask that hid their love for each other. Those masks were made easier by the love itself and the fact that they could always find some way to communicate their love privately.

But a mask that hid the depth of their sorrow was a different matter altogether, for there was nothing either of them could do which would allow them to remove it from time to time and be themselves. Almost every night of the second week of camp, Sam was awake and knew when Dan slipped from his bunk and left the cabin. He was certain in his heart that his friend was going off by himself to cry, but he found himself unable (or unwilling) to follow him and try to console him. And it wasn't like Sam didn't have his own problems. He, too, frequently cried himself to sleep. Life had become all too confusing.

For his part, Dan was desolate. He could feel Sam slipping away from him and could see no way to prevent it. In his heart, he was already convinced that Sam wasn't truly homosexual. Some sixth sense seemed to be telling him this, and Sam's behavior at the dance seemed to confirm his suspicions. His inner conflict was slowly tearing him apart. On the one hand, he was happy for Sam. Neither of them really *wanted* to be queer, so part of him was glad that his best friend wasn't.

At the same time, Dan didn't feel attracted to girls and was becoming convinced that he really was homosexual. This created sadness from two aspects - that he was different and would be all his life and would have to hide his difference from just about everyone he knew, and that his love for Samuel was no longer being returned in equal measure. It used to be that their love for each other fed each other's love. They gave and got back in return. Now his love was going into some bottomless pit. He had no way to express himself, and therefore had no outlet for his torment.

He couldn't be angry at Samuel, he *loved* him. It wasn't like Sam had cheated on him with another guy or even with a girl, for Dan was convinced that hadn't happened. He couldn't strike back at Sam either. How could he? Neither had chosen their sexual preference. How could he blame Sam for something he hadn't actually done?

So his remorse was endless and without expression. Every night he snuck out of the cabin and slipped into the woods nearby. He would watch the cabin for at least 10 minutes to insure that none of the other boys or the counselor had followed him, then he would go down to the lake where he would cry his heart out. But it did no good. He never felt that he could really let himself go, scream and shout and really let go. He couldn't afford to be heard. So he always had to exert a stifling control of his emotions.

Sam tried to talk about it their last night in camp. Walking at the back of the crowd on the way back from the final campfire, he had slipped his hand into Dan's and asked him in a whisper if they could go somewhere and talk. But Dan had refused. Just the touch of Sam's hand brought tears to his eyes. That touch was soft and gentle and filled with loving memories, and yet at the same time it was filled with such pain, the pain of unrequited love. It took every ounce of emotional strength for him to respond even briefly.

"I can't Samuel," he said in a choked whisper. "It hurts too much. We have to wait until we're at home. Just know that I love you."

With that he pulled his hand away and they walked silently to their cabin, falling further and further behind so that the other boys were already in bed and didn't see the tears and turmoil on their faces when they entered. Yes, Sam was crying too. He had loved Dan once, the same way Dan still loved him. He loved him still, but now he was confused by another love.

A week passed after they returned from camp before they finally had their private talk. Their parents knew something was wrong, but said nothing. Sam tried on several occasions to start a conversation with his dad about what was on his mind, but each time he faltered and changed his mind.

Finally, after dinner on the Saturday after their return from camp, the boys met at a secluded spot they had often visited together, a place they called their own. It wasn't so private that they could enjoy one another's bodies, but at least they could talk without being disturbed. And for once, the other's body wasn't at the front of either of their minds.

Dan arrived early so he could prepare himself. He knew in his heart that their life together was over, and as the time approached for Sam to arrive, he began to feel just as he had when he thought Sam was dying in the snow. His heart literally ached, as though God himself were wrenching it apart. He tried desperately not to cry. He was getting so tired of that bothersome trait. But he had little success in stemming the tide.

By the time Sam arrived, Dan's eyes clearly showed the turmoil he had been going through. Of course, this wasn't any easier for Sam. He could hardly have felt any worse if he had cheated on Dan with someone else. Their love for each other had been deep, and the changes he had felt coming over him in the past few months had created a jumbled mess of emotions in his heart. His pain was not as severe, perhaps. It didn't manifest itself in a physical way as Dan's did. But emotionally he was drained.

How many times had he tried to rehearse what he had to tell Dan this evening? So many they had gotten all jumbled up and left him less prepared than if he hadn't tried at all.

When he arrived at the spot where his lover was waiting, he walked softly to Dan's side and sat down almost touching him. Neither spoke nor looked at each other for several minutes. They just shared space, their thoughts seeming to mix ethereally, drawing them a little closer together. Finally, Dan dropped his hand from his knees and gently grasped Sam's where it lay between them.

Sam didn't reject Dan's touch. In fact he still enjoyed it. That was one of the things that made all this so damn difficult. He still loved his friend and enjoyed being with him, touching him as he had before. But he knew their love for each other would never be the same as it used to be, they would never live their lives together, not the way Dan wanted to.

Finally, Sam broke the silence and they talked, each in low tones filled with love and sorrow, stumbling at times for the right words to use to ease the other's pain. Their conversation was

punctuated with tears and sniffles, nose blowing, sobs, gasps for air, shudders, all those human reactions to moments of great stress, sorrow or loss.

"You know what's happened, don't you Dan?"

"No, Samuel, I *don't* know," Dan spat. "Why don't you explain it to me!"

"Oh, Danny, I didn't mean to hurt you. I still love you. It's just that I've fallen in love with Pam, too."

"How can that BE!?! How can you love two people at the same time? Especially a guy AND a girl? I don't understand!"

"I don't either, Danny. All I can say is I have the same feelings for Pam that I have for you. I know what love feels like. I've loved you long enough to know. You have to KNOW that!"

"Yeah, Samuel, I know you know what love is, what love feels like. I just don't know where I stand. Where WE stand. How do I compete with a GIRL?"

"Aw, shit, Danny, I don't know what to say or how to say it. I've thought about all this ever since I knew I was in love with Pam, as far back as the first of the year. I want to have kids, Danny. I never thought about it before, but I've realized in these past few months that I want a family. I want a son when I grow up, a son that I can relate to like I do with my dad. But I want you, too. I love you, and I love making love to you.

"How can you say you still love me and talk about making love to a girl at the same time? Are you queer or not?!"

There was a long pause in their conversation. Then Sam continued.

"Have you ever heard the word *bisexual*, Danny?"

"No. What's it mean?"

"It means a person who loves men and women equally. A person who can feel emotional as well as sexual attraction to both sexes. I think that's what I am. Like I said, I still love you and want to have sex with you, but I love Pam, too. And I'd like to have sex with her, too."

"You mean you haven't gone to bed with her yet?"

"No, we've petted some, and she almost brought me off with her hand once, but that's all." After another long pause, Sam continued once again.

"Why did this have to happen to us? We were so happy. Why can't I just be queer?"

"Oh, Samuel, I don't know the answer to that! What'm I supposed to say?!" Tears flooded Dan's eyes.

"But why does love have to hurt so much?" Sam asked, breaking into tears himself.

They sat in silence for several minutes, both needing to feel the consoling arms of the other and neither having the courage to risk initiating a hug. Finally, Sam dried his eyes and spoke again.

"Have you ever tried making it with a girl, Dan?"

"IT?! You mean *doing IT*?"

"No! I didn't mean IT. I meant making OUT?"

"Oh... No, I haven't. I mean, look at me Samuel. I'm little, and skinny, and wear braces on my teeth. My voice still squeaks and I don't even shave yet. What girl would be interested in me even if I were interested in girls?"

"Well, shit, Dan! *I'm* interested in you. None of those things stopped *me* from loving you the way a girl should. As a matter of fact, I know one girl who almost falls down every time she sees you." Dan's lack of interest in girls was evident by his response. Rather than being excited by Sam's revelation, he acted almost indifferent, certainly doubtful.

"Oh? Who?"

"Kathy."

"KATHY! You mean Kathy Bradley that kissed us on the stage right in front of the entire student body?"

"Yeah, that Kathy."

"But she knows I'm queer, Samuel! Why would she be interested!?" he practically shouted.

"Calm down, Dan. Maybe she hopes you aren't really homosexual. Maybe she likes you anyway. Maybe she's just a dreamer. Who knows? But I know she likes you 'cause she told me she did. And besides, I got eyes. I see how she looks at you."

"Oh. Well, she *is* pretty to look at. And she *is* really nice and easy to talk to. I mean I haven't ignored her any more than you have. I just didn't know she *liked* me."

"Maybe you ought to spend some time with her Dan. You know, study together at her house or something. She really cares about you."

"I'd rather study at *your* house."

"In a lot of ways I would, too, Dan. But it might not be such a good idea for a while. I mean I'm hurting here, too, ya know. Not as bad as you probably, but it still hurts. And being together like that

would create all sorts of problems. Pam doesn't know about us yet, and I'm not sure I'd want her finding out. But we could still do stuff later, after we've settled down some."

"Bullshit, Samuel. I'm not going to be the third wheel in a lover's triangle. And you shouldn't expect me to be, or Pam either," Dan said forcefully.

After several more minutes of silence, Sam looked at Dan with affection mixed with concern.

"Are you angry with me?"

Dan's reaction was quick and forceful.

"No, Samuel! I couldn't be angry with you. I *love* you. And by the time I stop loving you, it'll be too late to be angry."

Silence once again enveloped the boys as they sat beside each other, not touching but breathing in each other's aroma. Tears once again began to flow from both sets of eyes. Finally, they blew their noses and wiped their eyes, getting ready to go home.

"Samuel, I'm not angry. I'm disappointed. I'm frustrated. I'm losing someone I've loved more than life itself for over a year now. But I hope we can still be best friends. We'll have to avoid each other for awhile until we get used to not being a couple, and I won't be part of a triple (grin), but I don't want to lose you forever."

"Thanks, Danny. That's what I want, too."

They walked home in silence. As they parted in the alley to go to their own homes, Dan spoke once again, softly, his face turned away so Sam wouldn't see his tears.

"Samuel?"

"Yeah?"

"Don't call me Danny anymore."

.... to be continued

Author's note: I'm sorry this had to happen, but teen love doesn't always last forever. I want this story to be as realistic as a fiction can be. Please come back for the rest. It has a very happy ending.

Please send comments to me at micrometer69@hotmail.com Writers thrive on feedback. I hope this story helps someone (actually, a lot of someones).