

XQ-28

The Story of a Gene

Chapters 5&6

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Adrian Challis



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To all the friends and family who encouraged it, to all the great minds that inspired it. But mostly, to Adrian & Anthony, who lived it.

I still can't believe it. So long without a word, just that stare. So many months when I felt like someone at a zoo, looking at a rare and dangerous animal, unsure of who was the spectator and who the exhibit. Then this. This spilling out. It's like he's been sitting here, biding his time until he can formulate his story into huge drafts. Like an actor who's memorised his lines. Word perfect.

Now he sits, slumped and unaware of my thoughts turning, as my eyes scan his face for signs of holding back, of not telling the whole truth, a cue for me to do my job, do some digging. Not that it's easy. I tried to ask him about his parents, but he totally refused to take my question seriously.

-Oh you know, he said, the usual stuff. I graduated quite quickly from wanting to fuck my mother to wanting to be between my parents whilst they fucked. Y'know, fucking mum whilst dad fucked me. Such a touching image don't you think? The ultimate nuclear family...

At first I wanted to shout 'Eureka!', but the look he gave me shattered my euphoria.

He can be infuriatingly smart. There's times when I could swear he's mocking me, fabricating the whole story, giving me exactly what he thinks I'm looking for. His perversions know no bounds. He has absolutely no respect for Freud at all.

If I ask him to tell me more about a particular incident, he gives me a look of pure contempt, mingled with an air of amused incredulity, as if to say *you don't even know your own correct procedure*. Sometimes the whole ridiculous story seems to mock me, as if he has fabricated it all in light of the preconceptions he expects me to have. If I push him, he answers my questions with his own. I tried to get him to tell me more about the murder, to see if he was capable of moral judgment even now. Instead he asked me if I had ever noticed what a tellingly small difference there is between the words 'therapist' and 'the rapist'. I tried not to show it but it was obvious it had taken me off-guard. I asked him again, but he just mimed his thumb jerking down.

-One small *unconscious* tap on the space bar, he said.

I pressed him further, but he refused to go on, went back to his old self, what I call his Silent Stare Mode. After about an hour

of ignoring my questions, he told me I had to listen without interruptions, accused me of having no sense of narrative, and assured me that he would tell me all in his own good time.

Not that silence doesn't have its advantages. His honesty, at times, is hard to bear. The descriptions of sex are the worst. His eyes glaze over and it's quite obvious that he is... aroused. The smell alone could tell you that. There's some things I couldn't tell anyone. Like how at times, he almost seems to glow. I noticed it that very first night he started talking, but discounted it at first, putting it down to my tiredness. Now I realise that was not coincidental - he was waiting, biding his time until the conditions were to his advantage, finding the moment I was at my lowest, my most mechanical. Then he started. To begin with, I actually thought I was dreaming. His voice alone was quite a shock. Not what I expected at all. Completely devoid of anger or accent, not camp, but soft, almost... seductive. A slight shimmering seemed to precede his first sentence, the light in his eyes suddenly intensifying. As he told me of his dreams, the room around him seemed to darken, and after a while, I swear he was glowing. Like he wasn't just reflecting light, but, well... *making* it. And I totally lost myself, unconscious of time, lost in his voice and his twisted recollections. Of course, when I watched the RVM from our session afterwards, it didn't appear. But that didn't quite shake off the memory.

I try and retain a sense of professional distance, but sometimes, I must confess, he turns my stomach.

I must be careful not to give him too many opportunities for negative transference - he is unnervingly capable of telling me what I don't want to hear. Then he'll switch tack, drop something that seems almost deliberately designed to grab my attention, work it like a worm on a line, coaxing me to bite. I must admit I keep expecting him to stop, keep praying that his next sentence will not be his last. I try to retain an impassive expression, don't let my anxiety show, but I can feel it slipping.

I'm convinced he's enjoying it.

He's still a little variable in his articulation. It's not that he tires - he seems capable of hours of speech, sometimes barely breathing between sentences. But there's times when he just stops,

slumps in his chair like he's fallen out of his skin. Like tonight. Couldn't seem to break out of the trance he'd worked himself into.

Even now, no remorse. A seemingly limitless font of self-pity.

Chapter 5 On The Kerb

*Standing in the welfare lines,
Crying on the doorsteps of those armies of
salvation,
Wasting time in the unemployment lines...
Talkin 'bout revolution*

Someone at the dole office had a sick sense of humour. I stood in the queue letting the significance of the trite pop song about revolution wash over me, mulling over my options. I had returned to my flat in the early morning light, and found the walls bare as usual, the faces that had leered out at me the night before gone. I had paused at the top of the stairs leading down to the basement, expecting some unseen malevolent force to still be in residence, but as I picked my tentative way down, nothing of the previous night's exorcism remained.

I had grabbed a few clothes, the only ones that were clean, stuffing them into a small blue rucksack as I resolutely climbed the stairs, and through the lounge to the kitchen. My stomach growled at the sight of the refrigerator, and despite realising for the first time that day that I hadn't eaten, my only real interest in its contents was reserved for the ten rolls of Super 8 film, that shared a shelf with a dull grey eggbox and some margarine. I had little doubt that I would not be coming back. I grabbed the film

and placed it on top of the camera in my bag. I left the flat without looking back.

It was the first time I had ever signed on on time. I had stashed the rucksack in an alleyway behind the unemployment office, it not being very intelligent to announce to the world that this giro was getting me away from it all. As I stood in the line listening to the music that had been introduced by the management in an effort to relax the claimants - and, thanks to a cynical member of staff, only succeeded in winding them up even more - I stared into the faces of my peers. Features, like mine, sapped by a diet of subsistence rations, alcohol and powerlessness,. I thought of all the wasted potential that lay within them. The endless frustration of welfare had wearied everyone, including the ones who believed they were on the make. Even the building they had chosen for the purpose mockingly reflected the lost splendour of its visitors, with its crumbling stucco ceiling and dusty columns obscured by a thick layer of regulation bile green paint.

-Got your card?

The face on the other side of the two inch-thick bulletproof polycarbon window that ran from the top of the counter to the ceiling didn't even bother looking up at me, after the shuffles that conveyed a mixture of mild shame and righteousness had delivered me to the head of the queue. I remained silent, so that the woman had to raise her head and face me. She blinked resignedly as I shook my head. She sighed and lowered her eyes.

-Name?

I told her.

She began sifting through the folders until she found mine, removed it then placed a white plastic ruler in the space it had occupied.

-Date of birth?

I told her.

She sighed again. She seemed particularly disappointed that I knew it.

She pushed the piece of paper under the partition.

-It's nice to see someone who so obviously enjoys their job, I said, it gives one belief in the dignity of labour.

I could feel her eyes boring into the top of my head, and I

heard her drawing air through her teeth as a mark of how little she appreciated my comments.

-I tell you lad, I fuckin hate this place more than you do. You've only got to come 'ere once a fortnight, I'm 'ere every day and it does me 'ead in. So next time you feel like making some sarky comment, remember, we're all on benefits too. No one 'ere makes a decent wage from this shitheap, you've probably got more to spend on yourself than any of us 'ave.

I knew what she said was true. I also knew that it was the classic way of dealing with difficult customers, that it was almost certainly part of their training programme to make the person feel guilty for behaving like a person, and it sort of worked. I nodded and said thankyou and moved to the pay window queue which by now was serpentine around the outer wall of the office. Being a personal issue claimant had its advantages - I had often made jokes about being a dole aristocrat - and I had known this when I had made a false claim for a stolen giro cheque over a year before in order to get on its hallowed register. Little had I known that I would use its bonuses for my present purpose. The thought suddenly took me back to the events of two nights before - my God, was it only two nights ago? - and I stood in silent contemplation, my face fixed floorward and furtive. When my time came, I stepped forward, pushed the payment docket under the counter and took my cheque without comment.

As I left, the track changed to *Money Money Money* by Abba. It was definitely time to get out of this place.

Twenty minutes later I stood outside the dirty old man toilets, feeling righteous, one hundred pounds richer, waiting for a bus to take me to the motorway, and freedom. The kids begging outside the post office, as usual blatantly contravening the draconian Vagrancy and Nomad Act, had cheered when I gave them the spare change from my giro, minus the bus fare. There was something right about embarking on this journey with a ton in my pocket, leaving behind the few pounds surplus in the hands of the unfortunate reckless, to squander on solvents and beer.

It was my legacy to the city.

It struck me suddenly, as a crumpled dirty old man picked his doubled-up way past the corner of my eye, that the toilets behind

me were still functioning. I hadn't even thought about looking at them, like I had never thought of looking at them after the first time I ever went in. They smelled like death, of cigarette smoke, piss, dirty unwashed flaking skin and vapour rub.

The toilets were the place of dead lusts, where limp shrivelled cocks shook furtively behind John Colier gabardine, dripped insipid fluids onto porcelain much younger than themselves, almost lost in desperate recollection of once being hard-ons. I had gone into this antechamber of Homo-Hades and turned back round to go out when something, perhaps the hope of future karmic repayment, had made me stay. Big mistake. The old man who stood next to me at the urinal couldn't help himself from staring at me open mouthed, looking at me as if I was some page from a porn magazine come to life before his rheumy eyes. The breath catching in his throat, shaking his cock in sharp violent twists, his tongue lolling around his thin bottom lip. I thought he was going to die on the spot. Since then, I figured I've paid my debt to charity.

The thought of death in a public toilet sobered my step onto the bus, and I muttered a simple -One ninety to the driver who ripped a ticket from the machine, handed it to me and pocketed my fare without even blinking. I took my place amongst the shopping bags and grey faces on the left of the top deck, and slouched down low in the seat, my rucksack between my feet.

Staring out of the window as I waited for the bus to pull away, I noticed the net curtains of a first floor window above a derelict bookies twitch momentarily, and wondered why anyone would be in there, let alone be interested in the movements in the street below. I instinctively looked to my left to see where the window overlooked, and realised why the dirty old man toilets had remained untouched by the recent spate of demolition. I imagined I had my camera in my hand, and zoomed in through the net curtains, and saw the unmistakable features of cops peering through binoculars. So it wasn't a policy of allowing this kind of care in the community occupational therapy for the terminally old to continue. It was a trap to catch the murderer of that cop. A trap set for me.

Or for Martin.

As the bus pulled away, I wondered if they'd got him. My newly found pragmatism, combined with the lack of sleep which would normally have triggered a bout of paranoia, coalesced into straight-faced stoicism. There was nothing I could do to save him if they'd caught him. My calmness, tinged with exhausted determinism, chilled me, made me wonder what kind of monster I had become. Up until now, for the past two days that seemed like a new lifetime, Martin was the only person in the world I cared about. Now, the prospect of his arrest only strengthened my resolve to leave this nightmare behind, and step into the lonely unknown alone.

Derelict buildings passed before my eyes like somnambulant detritus, a fuzzy forest of insignificant decay. I could connect nothing with nothing. The slow jerks of the bus left no impression upon me, except to lull my cock, wizened after a night of sleepless fear, into a state of half-life. I could feel my trousers filling out, and it made me smile. I closed my eyes and let the sun play its abstract coloured lantern show on the inside of my eyelids, let my shallow breath deepen and my body relax. The bus pulled around a corner and my legs could steady my rucksack no longer. It flopped onto the floor, and I mirrored its movement and slumped against the window.

I hear a siren in the distance and its cry makes me snap my eyes open, conscious that my cock is standing fully erect, making my light grey chinos (which I always wear in mock respect for the Unemployment Bureau) stick out at the fly. The bus suddenly lights up with blue flashing light, the other people on the bus looking out of the window to see what's causing the commotion. Someone says -They're stopping the bus. I hear the screech of tyres on asphalt as the bus lurches to the left and stops. Everyone breaks out into murmurs. The pneumatic swish of the bus doors opening then heavy steps on the stairs. A police helmet appears above the handrail. I sit and watch as one cop after another piles onto the top deck. My consciousness switches to slow-motion as I realise they are coming for me. I try to reach into my bag for my camera - for what reason I can't tell, it is purely instinctive. I see the lead cop's hand reaching for his belt. It is then that I notice he has a gun. I raise my arms but he follows through with the

movement, slips the revolver from its holster and begins the slow, inevitable journey towards pointing it straight at me. The bus is suddenly silent, every face is turned in my direction. Suddenly a scream shatters the silence and time speeds up, the gun jerks into position and I'm staring down its barrel, the moustachioed face behind it spouting inanities from American cop shows. It is useless trying to resist - in the popular parlance, they've got me surrounded. I've still got a hard-on and for a second I consider jumping at the cop with the gun, knowing he will shoot but knowing also that the consequences of him not killing me are likely to be much worse. I realise too that the owner of the scream would be in direct firing line from his gun. It is hopeless. The cop behind the one with the gun steps forward and comes towards me. My face looks up at him, surprise still etched in every feature. He grabs me by the shoulders and shakes me, shouting -YOU FELL ASLEEP, WAKE UP, YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD NEVER FALL ASLEEP WHEN YOU'RE MAKING A GETAWAY...

-You fell asleep. Wake up mate, you fell asleep.

My eyes flashed open and stared into the gentle face of the driver. He was shaking me and repeating wake ups until I could properly see him.

-It's your stop mate. It's the only stop left. Are you alright?

-Ummm, I moaned, trying to suck the spit, that had dribbled down the side of my face, back into my mouth. -Yeah I'll be fine just let me get my bearings. I rubbed my eyes, stared down at my trousers to see a darker grey patch spreading over my crotch, and rearranged my clothes to cover my embarrassment. I sniffed, grabbed my rucksack and stood up, and, wobbling, followed the driver down the stairs.

The doors swished open and I stepped out onto the concrete lay-by. I turned to say thank you to the driver, and he waved as the brakes hissed off, saying -Watch out for the snides son, they don't like hitchers no more, the last word cut off as the doors closed and the bus moved off down the dual carriageway. I stood blinking for a few seconds, not entirely sure what I was meant to do there, suddenly aware of the cum that had begun to drip down my leg. I could barely believe it - I hadn't had a wet dream in at

least six years, and never one that involved a policeman pointing a gun at me. Busses always had a certain eroticising effect, but that was just the movement and vibration. Perhaps this was the key to my present predicament - it was all just a question of attitude. If I could change the way I was thinking about this whole situation, then all would be fine.

I pulled my jacket down further to obscure my crotch, and turned to face the traffic, and tried to see the advancing cars and lorries through desperado eyes, every passing driver an accomplice in my escape. I followed the cars as they passed me, trying to silently encourage the drivers to become my co-conspirator, but they all assiduously avoided my gaze. I realised, after my head stopped swimming and I was fully awake, that this was not necessarily the best policy to pursue, if you want a total stranger to invite you into their car and take you potentially hundreds of miles. But even though my face softened and my eyes became hopeful and engaging, trying to telegraph my willingness to listen to any kind of confession, regardless of how heaped in bullshit it may be, no-one seemed remotely interested in stopping.

After two hours I was beginning to think it was time to go back to the city and get a train, and followed the train of thought through, past the obvious obstacle of having no official travel papers, and into the deep country of stowing in the toilet of the down-bound express, before realising it was hopeless. I knew that it would only be possible if I bribed the ticket guard, which would take the cost of travel beyond my meagre means. No. This was the only horse in town, and if it was intent on bucking my affections, the least I could do was continue to try and ride.

By the time it was getting darker, the cars seemed to be even less willing to take me as a passenger - most drivers seemed to be deliberately speeding up when they saw me, some even crunching their gears in their urgency to drive past, as if at the slightest of hesitations, I would leap out at them and cling to their bonnets. Occasionally, someone would shrug an apology, or make an obscure hand gesture to denote that they were leaving the motorway too soon to be of assistance, but mostly they just tried very hard to ignore me. It struck me, after a few of these indiscriminate semaphore signals, that no-one could possibly

know where I was going, as I had no sign, and toyed with the idea of making one with an opened-out Super 8 box, but I realised I hadn't got the first idea of where I was going. Oddly, this didn't seem in the slightest bit strange - my destination was merely out-of-this-place. Anywhere was other enough for me.

Night came, and with it desperation, cold and hunger. I cursed my stupidity at not preparing for this journey beyond thinking of hitching in the first place. I sat on the kerb, my head between my knees, waiting for the hunger pangs to subside, so that I could cross the concrete footbridge to the other carriageway, and wait for a bus back to the city. The thought of returning to my flat at night horrified me, but it seemed that I had no alternative.

Just then a car drove past and slowed, and I looked up quickly to make sure it wasn't the pigs, picking me up for attempting illegal travel. It was a sports car, a Porsche no less, and it had pulled in to the lay-by about fifty meters away from me. I sat for a few seconds, not believing that it could possibly be stopping for me, but the horn beeped and before its echo died I was on my feet and running down the pavement towards freedom, my hunger suddenly gone, replaced by a wave of expectation. As I approached the rear of the car, the passenger door swung open, aided by a disembodied hand. I reached the car and bent down to see a face of coy smiles, and to hear a rich voice say

-Hey boy, you got a light?

It was Martin.

Chapter 6 Blue Moon

I have to admit I was a real mess. It wasn't until Martin threatened to leave me on the hard shoulder of the southbound carriageway at least ten miles from anywhere, that I could pull myself together enough to stop crying. Relief and astonishment had broken about two minutes after I lit the extremely long cigarette in Martin's mouth, slammed the door shut and felt the kick in my kidneys as Martin's foot hit the accelerator.

-Shut up, Ian! Look at me... I said fuckin look at me!

Martin was shouting to be heard over the sound of my wailing. I managed to hold a sob in long enough to look into his face, a face so composed that I instantly felt ashamed of myself and gained a precarious grip on my emotions.

-Let's get a few things straight from the beginning. I'm not carrying you. If you want to stick around - and I'm not sure yet whether I *want* you around - you have to realise that you're doing this on your own. If you get caught I have to be sure that you won't go totally soft on me and tell them everything.

The mere mention of getting caught threatened to bring about a reprise of tears, and I had to clasp my hand over my mouth to stop it from quivering too obviously.

-Up until now you knew nothing, and I liked it that way. From hereonin you are a definite liability if you are anything less

than one hundred percent super cool. Understand?

I understood what he meant. But how could I ever be 'super cool' by his standards? He had the gift.

-I said do you understand?

I nodded, swallowing the sobs as best I could.

-Jesus man you look terrible. How long have you been standing there?

I told him everything that had happened since the cornershop. The chance to concentrate on something other than the fear in my stomach settled me down, and by the time I got to the present I was feeling a lot better.

-And they've shut all the toilets?

-Demolished most of them. The one in the square is still there, I think just to jog people's memories.

-Yeah, that and forensics. You've been through a lot, huh? I can see why you're relieved to see me, but please Ian no more crying I fuckin hate it, alright?

I nodded.

-Here, he said placing the ridiculously long cigarette in his mouth (from which had been rising a cloud of evil smelling smoke, not enormously dissimilar to the smell of cat piss), drew on it a few times to get it going and passed it over to me, have some of this.

I shook my head.

-I don't smoke...

Martin laughed and took his eyes off the road to stare deep into mine, his face lit up by the lights of the oncoming traffic, bisected into light and shadow like the first time I saw him, that night in the square.

-You're fuckin priceless you are. Here, take it, it'll do you good, trust me...

I placed one end in my mouth and pulled on it, until the tip glowed red, then sucked in. The smoke caught in my throat, and my lungs exploded into paroxysms of coughing. Tears fell down my cheeks, but this time, instead of getting angry, Martin just laughed. I wiped my eyes, and laughed with him.

-Have some more, it gets easier.

I tried again as the first toke hit my head and started

swimming, blurring my vision and making me shut one eye. This time, I didn't cough as much, and managed to take the smoke deeper into my lungs.

-It doesn't taste as bad as it smells, I said, after a few more pulls. In fact, it was quite pleasant, almost perfumed.

-Welcome to the wonderful world of Mr Skunk, Martin said, taking the cigarette out of my wilting hand.

Ripples of relaxation caressed my body, starting in my stomach like a slight apprehension of impending doom, then spreading down into my legs and up my sides to my head, which was feeling extremely light. I felt like my forehead had had something warm and heavy placed against it, something that seemed to be turning up the voice in my head a little louder. My thoughts were somehow insulated by tingly wadding, and it occurred to me that they normally escaped out of the sides of my head. Internal technicians were installing cavity wall insulation in my cranium, forcing my thoughts back in on themselves, not even forcing coaxing more like shooing them back into the nursery hey there's tiny guys in overalls looking after my ideas and the idea made me laugh outloud

-...very few things worth doing that aren't worth doing stoned
Martin was saying

and I could feel there was a concept that went with what he was saying but the fellas in my head couldn't find it until they had finished stopping all the other ones from running out of my ears or my now wide open eyes and I was laughing again very loud in such a small space and the tears came back again and I wondered where they could be coming from obviously a secret store in my boots or my bladder or my stomach or maybe that was it all my ideas were turning into tears and pouring down my cheeks because my ears were now full of a kind of high pitched whine as if the sound was being turned the wrong way round reverberating around in a vacuum and then I realised where they were really coming from my mouth mate because it had gone so dry I could hardly pull my tongue away from my palette to laugh again and again and then all the time and the tears were flowing and I was so thirsty and then I realised what Martin had said and I stopped dead and sat bolt upright in the seat and looked at Martin and said

-You've given me drugs
but it wasn't what I meant to say fuck those little men in my head they gave me the wrong sentence and Martin looked at me and saw the look on my face - I actually saw him shoot his eyes around my whole face finishing with my lips and just burst with laughter

-You really are a fuckin scream!

but it only made me more indignant to say the right sentence

-I mean you shouldn't be driving if you're on drugs

and that sounded all wrong too and I couldn't even be sure whether it was right in the first place and I was totally frustrated by Martin laughing uproariously and couldn't see I was serious and why couldn't he see I was serious driving under the influence was really dangerous wasn't it and I meant it

-I mean it you know stop laughing at me

and he stopped, and looked at me, and laughed once more, and coughed, and said

-Okay. Look. I drive all the time when I'm stoned. That's because I'm very seldom *not* stoned. All the lessons I took I took stoned, I took my test stoned which I'd like to add I passed first time and I have never had an accident. If there is one thing you don't have to worry about it's my driving when I'm stoned. Now if I was sober, that might be a different story...

His voice was totally hypnotic, and it conjured up a world I knew nothing of, inhabited by rough boys smoking joints and racing each other down city streets, loud music and girls. I was calm, like the wind had suddenly gone out of my sails, and I stared out of the front window, and watched as the headlights of the cars on the other side of the central reservation shimmered and split into frazzled rainbows of glare, until the waves of relaxation spread warmly over my body, my lids closed, and I drifted into dreamless sleep.

When I awoke, we had stopped, and Martin's seat was empty. It was completely dark, wind the only sound, and I sat in the blue-black darkness, and felt the sweat on my skin like another skin, and tried to shake the leaden feeling from my head. I could see a band of dark sky before me, but a deeper darkness seemed to

carve a smooth curve into it, and blinking hard, I tried to work out where the hell I was.

I peered out of the side windows and through the darkness, to something, anything at all, but failed to find it, so fumbled for the door, pulled the smooth handle and pushed, and yellow light lit up the inside of the car and made me flinch, and quickly shut my eyes, and step out into the night blind.

-Martin, I shouted. Are you there?

Silence. The wind. Tentative panic.

-Martin? louder, more desperate. Martin, can you hear me?

-I'm over here.

I tried to pinpoint the direction from which his voice had come, it being too dark to see a thing. I looked up and to my right, and saw an indistinct outline silhouetted against the night sky that I thought could be him.

-Martin, is that you? I said, moving towards the black shape.

-Shut up and listen.

I stopped moving and did as he asked.

-I can't hear a thing, I said, moving off again in the direction of what I now knew was a hill.

-That's what I mean. How often do you really hear silence?

-I didn't think you could, I said, I thought that was what silence was.

Martin's face suddenly flashed above me, lit in an explosion of flame from his disposable lighter, eyes looking down, his hand cupped against the breeze, and disappeared. I staggered back slightly, the whole world written in a blur on the back of my eyes, all that was good about living captured in decaying phosphorescence.

Cones and rods rearranged in a spark of epiphany, then died.

-I mean the absence of noise, just the sky and the wind, without the whirr of the police helicopter cutting it to pieces, or the throb of traffic choking it to death. This is quality silence, this.

I was in front of him now, guided by the glowing tip of his cigarette, drawn to him like a moth born from a metal chrysalis.

-Do you want some of that, his voice said, as if from the back of a tiny transistor radio. It sounded as if he was holding his

breath and trying to speak at the same time.

-No, I don't think I've recovered from the last one yet, I want to make sure I'm going to be sober again first.

He laughed, and the orange glow suddenly shot off to the left of me, and before I realised that it was just the joint that had flown away, a hand grabbed me and a voice getting closer said - Come 'ere and I was suddenly on top of him, locked in a kiss.

Our first kiss.

His lips were soft, not much bigger than my own, but hardened as I moved upon him. There was a smell like smoked rosemary about his mouth that made me want to sink my teeth into it and not stop until I had drawn blood. I could feel his rising cock through his jeans, and mine grew to mirror it. Absolute darkness and hard breath.

My cock is so hard and it itches with solid anxiety to be free. He reads my mind and pushes his hands between our bodies and I raise myself up with my hands on the cold damp earth and his fingers move swiftly from me to himself as my cock sticks out through my open trousers and my head bobs into his perfect neck and he's free. I lower myself onto him our cocks one huge lump in our bellies as I rub myself up and down him kissing his face his mouth biting his shoulder he forces me over and we roll screaming out into emptiness as our passion turns us over grass earth and rocks we stop with me on top again and the dizziness just makes me want him even more and I slide down his jacket to his naked cock and lip its head which twitches harder I feel thick lubricant on my tongue and move it around and work him hard and gentle playing a modernist rhapsody on his whole length as his hand tries to grip my short hair and scratches my scalp and then shifts and lifts me up to him and kisses my mouth covered in him then rolls on top of me.

The feeling of his weight and the electric thrill in my stomach conspire to make me want him inside me there and then and I try to lift my legs to give him the go ahead but he pushes me back down saying -No there's plenty of time for that try this and a wet hand rubs between my legs and covers them with spit.

-Close your legs.

I do as he says and a thick lump of hot flesh oozes itself

between them and I grip it and it feels like nothing I have felt before as Martin pushes it hard into this newly made hole I stare up past his dark head and out into the sky and feel my own cock against his stomach and my balls between my legs and look out at the stars the same stars there's always been and feel alive more alive than ever before - a sheath fashioned from spare body parts fucking the sky fucked by a black shadow that's fucking the earth - and the clouds part above us like our thrusts have punctured them and the moon casts a huge light from its full orb and onto us like some immense spotlight and I feel Martin's climax is coming and I push myself harder against him to bring myself closer to the edge and we hit in the same instant of sparks and ozone and stars smash me full in the face like astral flecks of sperm and I white out and shake and Martin shakes on top of me and this is all I know for timeless moments of infinity

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Under black-blue sky, a fuck-blue sky, we wrestle with transient bliss. Spurred on by shadows, awestruck with moonlight; bathing in semen, we kiss.

Our lips meet and I loosen my grip on his now angry cock and roll his weight off me, and hold him close staring at his profile lit by the light of the full moon, absolute content beaming across my face. His eyes open lazily and he looks at my smile, and laughs silently, and I hug him until the world returns and the cold grips my bones and I wonder where the fuck we are.

-We're in Wales, Martin suddenly said, that's why there's still countryside.

-I didn't know you could read my mind, I said (the wrong side of Carry On).

-There's lots of things you don't know about me, Ian. That's the way I like it for now.

Then he kissed me.

-There's plenty of time. Come on, let's get in the car.

Martin stood up, and I dried myself on the grass as best I could, and pulled up my filthy trousers, doing up my belt as I walked to the car. I looked up as the clouds passed in front of the

moon, and the car disappeared as the whole hillside was cast into darkness once more. Martin came to my rescue by opening his door, providing a beacon to home in on below me. As I reached the passenger door, he'd fired the engine and turned on the headlights, and I could see the mountains, now distinct from the mound of trees in front of the car.

-Where did the road go? I asked as I got in.

-Relax, everything's under control. I know my way around here.

-Do you bring all your men up here then?

-Oh yeah, all five hundred of them. No. You're the only one.

We put on the expensive stereo, but for some reason, Martin only had classical music discs, which he seemed to hate. He lit another joint, I found some Wagner, and, to its ridiculous pomposity, we sped down winding country roads, shouting along to the bits we knew. Soon darkness gave way to the orange street lights of the empty motorway, which in turn were replaced by the cold blue light of dawn, and before long, we were back in the city.

**This PDF is the third part of the novel
XQ-28: The Story of a Gene.
Further chapters will become available weekly from
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