

JASON STEEL

Jason had a crooked smile and he had a crooked way, called himself Pasqua because he thought his father was part Mexican. Proudly he had said, "I'm part Mexican, part Irish, part Chinese, part Spanish, part Indian, and part Negro." In what order and what proportions? That's what I had thought, looking at the long, skinny, shit-yellow boy of twenty that lay beside me grinning. We were in his vacationing sister's bed. Jason was as pleased with his sis as he was with his international heritage. She was part Jewish, I learned in time. He was trying to kiss me. I was pretending not to know how to French kiss. See, Jason's teeth were not only yellow. The ones left were decayed, too; little black ant-size specks sat on his front ones. He had a wide gap and true to the

old folks' saying he lied a lot. I didn't like lying on his sister's bed with him and I didn't like him. But I had to do whatever he wanted, I thought, because of my condition. I'd missed a period and at sixteen that usually does not indicate menopause. I was scared of not obeying him, his knowing I didn't like him. I closed my eyes as he pushed back Sis's white satin quilted comforter and sheet. I didn't want to see his great big thing ever again. Nor did I wish to look as he pulled my half-slip up and my drawers off. In the early fifties good girls didn't look. They surely didn't undress themselves for any boy. I bet you my mama never did.

"What a pretty body you have," he said as he eased my white cotton drawers down my legs and off my feet. I really don't know if Jason was lying or not, because I think I was twenty-five before I ever dared look at my body carefully enough to appraise it. I didn't look at my own asshole until I was thirty-three. I was hoping Jason wouldn't look at my big feet as he pulled my panties over them. I hated my toes; the first two were as long as my big one. I'd also developed corns by sixteen from trying to stuff size tens into size eight and a half. Jackie Kennedy did more for me in the sixties than anyone when they printed the size of her feet in the *Detroit Free Press* that time. Jason had

really small feet for a man six foot three. I'd say size ten, wide instep, short toes, and a nicely rounded heel. His spindly legs looked better covered, however; they were perfectly straight and hairless. He didn't look at my feet at all; he was too busy trying to get into me. The grease in his Quo Vadis haircut felt nasty on my belly as he kissed it, making smacking sounds as he traveled down my "pretty body."

I tried as best I could to hold my thighs together when he got to that part. I opened my eyes up just long enough to focus on Sis's gold ceiling. My, how I hoped he'd skip the fingering procedure. I hated his sticking his finger aimlessly in and out of my body. All it did was agitate me. I turned my face slowly into the pillow. I didn't want him to see the undiluted disgust in my eyes. "Are you ready?" he asked hoarsely as he slinked up my body. I tried to relax 'cause I knew that the moment he felt his thing on my thing he was going to ram me for all he was worth. Jason, like so many men I have known since, loved dramatic entrances. Maybe, I thought as he swiveled his hips into motion, if I help him hurt me, I'll lose the baby. I won't have to tell anyone.

"That's it, Lewis, give it to me. Whew! It feels so good. You like it, don't you? I can tell you do," he said breathlessly on a backswing. "You been acting like you didn't like it." He was slamming it now. Sweat was dripping

down my thighs, making squeaky sounds. In one fell swoop, he had my legs up and over his shoulders. He was really ready to dig into me now. I scooted unashamedly up on his narrow, hairless yellow chest, spreading my thighs as wide as I could. I tried to swallow him, I thought I felt the blood.

"I think I feel blood," I said. "I don't want to get any on your sister's pretty white sheets."

In the bathroom, I frantically unrolled some toilet tissue and wedged it between my legs. No blood, just that snot.

Holding one of his beloved sister's fluffy yellow monogrammed towels around my body, I returned to that room and crept back into that woman's bed beside him. He was lying there with the covers still thrown back, twirling a strand of his hair with his fingers, drinking a glass of Kool-Aid and watching an old Alan Ladd film. I waited until the commercial break before I broke the news. "I'm pregnant. About two months, I think," I said delicately, looking right at his face for the first time in a long time, it seemed.

He grinned slyly as he resumed watching that commercial. "Pregnant? Whose baby? Anyone I know?"

Jason and eight of his friends pulled a train on a girl one time. They belong to this elite club called the Quadrilles. Jason was the president and founder; twelve of the members participated in this project. I'm sure the only reason I wasn't invited was that Jason wasn't being seen with me because of my prenatal condition (we talked on the telephone when everyone else at our houses was asleep).

One of the girls smelled a rat when she saw nine-to-two odds at the party. She sneaked out the back door on her way from the toilet, I heard, without mentioning her move to the other girl. Jason and the boys got this one drunk on Sneaky Petes. Then he took her to Sis's room and showed her how much he loved her. I heard that

after he finished showing her they all came in and took turns showing her how loved she was by them.

That girl was secretly hospitalized by her mother the next day in a state of hysteria. She nor her mother ever told on Jason and his friends. They were too ashamed.

Jason,” I whispered into the phone late one night. “We don’t have to get married now. My mother took me to this abortionist a friend of hers told her about. She said it was almost too late but she’d try. Everything’s gonna be all right again,” I said, looking down at my swollen stomach. “She said it’ll probably happen tonight.”

“How’d she do it?” he asked.

“With a hanger,” I whispered back.