

Sockie Says

by Wrestlr

[M/M, Hypno, MC]

[Synopsis: Sockie knows the magic words, and he's not afraid to say them.]

Disclaimer: The naked hypnotist strides confidently into your room. His lips curl in what might be a smile as he dangles his shiny crystal pendulum before your eyes and announces, "Listen and obey. If you are not of legal age, or if you offended by sexual situations, you will leave this place immediately. From here on, no matter how autobiographical it may seem, everything will seem like fiction to you, a pleasant dream where scientific possibilities and laws may change according to my suggestion. Now, if you are willing, sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride."

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1. Monkey Talk

Bad monkey whamma-jamma. Sewn in a crossfire hurricane of pins and needles. An imaginary friend howling in the driving rain of the washing machine. Don't you wanna live with me?

Look at my eyes. *Look at them!* These aren't jiggley, jokey eyes to make babies giggle. My button eyes are like a shark's eyes. Buttons from a cloak worn over a sharkskin suit. My eyes have been fiddled with by a man who prowled a stage in a sharkskin suit. Intently tapped by a bad man. My eyes are worn right in the center from the tapping of a diamond pinky ring. When the owner of that expensive but cheap suit performed his act, he'd click-click-click-click his flawed diamond against the buttons fastening his cloak. Those buttons were my eyes. They were always my eyes. They saw everything from the cloak of a sharkskin wheeler-

dealer. Stage magic and hypnosis act. Every sleight of hand, every trick. Lying with his hands. Click-click-click. Doctor, my eyes have seen the pain of a lying diamond. Black eyes. No emotion. Predator. Predator sock monkey. Bad monkey.

Look at my skin. It wasn't born from a clean, new sock. *No way!* This is a sock that has been used. Look at my mouth--*look at it!* My mouth sheathed a real heel. A man's heel. It rammed against the end of a steel-toed boot. That makes a monkey tough. Very tough. There's human blood in my mouth. Blister blood. And foot sweat. I taste foot sweat all the time. Lumberjack foot sweat. I'm worn. I've been around. Bad monkey. And the toe of that sock skin. You know where that is. You know what the toe became, don't you? You have your little baby names for it, but you know what it really is. Yep, it's that toe that kicked me in the you-know-where. My very fiber is a kick in the butt. That's what I am. I'm a kick in the behind. Bad. That's me. Kick it. Kick the bad monkey in the butt. *Kick it!*

Kick it! Turn it up. Louder, louder. The Little Fool never played no Disney sing-along crap in his bedroom. This ain't no nursery, this ain't no disco, this ain't no foolin' around. This is our room and we kick out the jams. Shock the monkey to life. We play the radio. We play it loud. Kick it. Going faster miles an hour. Top Forty. FM college stations. Little Fool never once gave it away. It's all pumping in. The Little Fool always listens and I always remember. Everything. Watch the monkey get hurt. Mon-key. He left the music on in his room. He didn't turn the music off ever, even when he wasn't there. Even when he slept. Bad monkey. Bad rocking monkey.

Bad to the nylons stuffing my innards. I'm not stuffed with old PJs. There's no reassuring baby smell deep in me. *No way!* I'm a bad whamma-jamma monkey. I'm not stuffed with sensible, modest pantyhose that got--oh, darn!--a run. *No!* I'm stuffed with nylons. Nylon stockings from a drag queen's closet. Modern petroleum, chemical, artificial nylons that were held on with black lace garter belts around the legs of a man who wanted to be a woman. Onstage. In drag, playing the part of that stage hypnotist magician's woman assistant. A real woman. A woman with legs up to there. Not a lady, not a child--a woman. That's what my stuffing is. My stuffing smells like cheap perfume. Cheap perfume that was put on those shapely upper thighs. That's not where you're supposed to put perfume. Bad monkey.

I was sewn under a bad sign. Lumberjack sock stuffed with a woman's nylons. Yeah, the old man-lady washed them. She washed me all. I was created clean, but that smell is deep. Deep. It's a smell of the soul, and my soul is a lumberjack's sole. I've been worn. My soul has walked miles in steel-toed boots to smell the nylons of my innards.

Magician huckster eyes, lumberjack skin, the heart of a woman's legs, and an old drag queen aunt's spoiling love. I got it all, baby. I got it all, my little baby boy. Drool on me. Grab me. Carry me. Rip me apart. I'm a bad monkey.

The Little Fool calls me "Sockie." That's my name.

"Why do you call him 'Sockie'?" Mommy and Daddy asked.

"Because he's sockie-colored," the Little Fool answers.

They laugh. They laugh at how cute the Little Fool is.

But he's lying. He learned how to lie from my button eyes. He calls me "Sockie" because he thinks it's the baddest word he knows. And I'm the baddest whamma-jamma monkey he will ever love.

He will rip me apart with his love. And he will grow up big. He will be strong. And he will never forget me.

And I'll love him forever like a bad monkey. Like a *very* bad monkey.

2. Lies and Lumberjacks

Yeah, sure, I'm built from a lumberjack's sock. Did you believe that even for a second? That's about as believable as a drag queen onstage, pretending to be a woman. I mean, how old do you think the Little Fool is? Did you think I'm talking about another place, another reality, full of lumberjacks and talking, typing monkeys? Gimme some truth! I don't even know what a lumberjack really does. Do people even use that word anymore? Do you? *Lumberjack?* You idiot. The Little Fool believed it was a lumberjack sock when he got too big to carry me around. When we stopped sleeping together. He learned the word "lumberjack" from some story meant to appease him. "Daddy, story?" His daddy read him stories about lumberjacks.

What stories about lumberjacks did you read as a child? I'm not talking about English sketch comedy with cross-dressing lumberjacks. I'm talking about the packages of gay porn. The flannel parting to show a ripped six-pack stomach and a big shaft of heaven below. I guess flannel used to be a child's thing. A baby blanket thing. A comfort thing. Not anymore. Smells like Seattle spirit.

"Lumberjack" is for gays and babies. The Little Fool was forgiven. He was little. It was a story from his daddy. The Little Fool loved me. He loved lumberjacks. And if he still does love a lumberjack now and again? What's it to you? The Little Fool has grown up big. He grew up big enough to laugh at lumberjacks. And he's enough of a man to know there's something very sexy about lumberjacks. There just is. Imagine if I were made from a fireman's sock. Try that on for size. Too sexy for a bad monkey. So sexy it hurts.

How about firemen? Are they tough? Yeah, they're tough. They die saving people. Firemen run into burning buildings and save children and cute little kittens. If the television cameras are on, maybe the firemen will save a sibling sock monkey. Save a little sock monkey for the crying little newly homeless child on the street. Burning down the bad monkey house.

I guess gays have adopted most of what's tough. Good. Maybe they'll do better with it than the straight tough guys did. It's fun to stay at the YMCA. What do I care? I'm a monkey.

No one is tougher than the Little Fool. No one. And he remembers hugging me. He remembers his tears falling on my soft, flannel back. But he doesn't remember much. He doesn't know how he became what he is. All he can remember are images. He might not even remember that. He doesn't really remember his Uncle Marcus. He was too young. He heard about but never saw his uncle's magic and hypnosis stage act. He was much too young. His uncle died when the Little Fool was little. After his Uncle Marcus died, his Aunt Tom never went onstage dressed as a woman again. Never went onstage again, period.

The Little Fool never saw his uncle's act. They told him about it though. His Mommy and Daddy and Aunt Tom. They told him cleaned-up, fit-for-kiddies stories about the shows Uncle Marcus and Aunt Tom performed, how they went all over performing. Later, the Little Fool used to imagine what it must've been like, to see his Uncle Marcus onstage doing things and making people do things, all as if by real magic. He used to think about it a lot. He used to hope maybe the magic might be real, at least a little bit.

Abracadabra!--A bouquet of flowers. Hocus-pocus!--You are in my power. The Little Fool knows where my eyes came from. He used to imagine the things they've seen. Mine eyes have seen the glory.

His Aunt Tom made me. Sewed me with her own two hands and tears and machine-gun sewing machine

needles a month after the funeral. Uncle Marcus and Aunt Tom doted on the Little Fool. That's why Aunt Tom made me from the nylons she wore with her old stage costume and the little black buttons from Uncle Marcus' "el magico" stage cape. So a part of them both would always be with the Little Fool. Not that she told him any of that. The Little Fool's parents liked Aunt Tom. Aunt Tom was not really his aunt. She was the Little Fool's Daddy's brother Marcus' lover and that made her an aunt by marriage, sort of. But the Little Fool thought every family couple needed a mommy and a daddy, so if Uncle Marcus was the man-daddy, Aunt Tom must have been the woman. Especially since she sometimes dressed the part. The Little Fool called him "Aunt Tom." They all laughed at how cute the Little Fool was, and "Aunt Tom" stuck. Dude looks like a lady.

He might not remember that. He remembers his Daddy laughing that the Little Fool didn't have any hair and said, "ookie-day-dee," when he wanted to be rocked, and he always wanted to be rocked. He remembers what they remembered. He remembers what they told him they remembered. He remembers love. Baby loves loving--he's got what it takes and he knows how to use it.

But I remember what he was thinking. And I'm a bad monkey. I am whatever you say I am. I remember the harmless family myths.

Mommy and Daddy and Aunt Tom loved the Little Fool into the toughest guy you ever met. You can't get tough without love. Not "tough love." Gentle, pure love. Pure love makes you tough. Unconditional love from Mommy and Daddy and a cross-dressing in-law Aunt Tom who didn't get the memo that her love was supposed to be different, that'll make you tough. That'll make you twelve feet tall and bulletproof. That's what it will do. It'll make the Little Fool spit nails and never say his parents' first names. Never even *think* their first names. It'll make a fool tough enough to say "Mommy" and "Daddy" and "Aunt Tom" even when the fool is twenty and technically an adult and living on his own at college. Unconditional love. Those who get it are not to be trifled with. They can love a bad monkey. Bad monkey.

3. Exile in Guyville

I don't make monkeys. I am Sockie. I'm a made monkey. Men are made by the mob; sock monkeys are made by grandmothers and aunts to sell at church sales. Some people say the church is worse than the mob, but grandmothers and aunts are all that is good. The first few weeks, the Little Fool didn't notice me. Then he held on to me. Then he cried into me. Then he talked to me. Then it looked to the world like he abandoned me. But I ain't Puff the Magic Dragon. There's no drug reference in the Little Fool's love. I was never outgrown. I can't be outgrown. The Little Fool is no pothead Jackie Paper. Puff is a rascal; I'm a bad whamma-jamma.

Growing up wasn't all easy for the Little Fool. No. Even the bulletproof Little Fool had his problems. One of the things Mommy and Daddy and Aunt Tom forgot to tell him about was sex. By the time Daddy remembered and got around to telling him, the Little Fool had already been doing some experimenting with himself all on his own. He figured out what his pee-pee was for, other than peeing. Sock monkeys don't have pee-pees. Aunts don't make sock monkeys anatomically correct. The Little Fool had to learn what his pee-pee was for all on his own. And he liked it. Beep beep, beep-beep, yeah!

This one time the Little Fool was twelve. By then he wasn't carrying me around anymore. Hadn't in years. But I still sat on his nightstand. We still listened to the radio all the time. I still watched everything he did. It was morning. The Little Fool had just woke up. Sock monkeys never sleep. I stayed awake all night and watched over him. Voyeur, voyeur, are you hot tonight? Bad monkey.

The Little Fool woke up. His pee-pee woke up too. This was before he ever heard the word "penis." Wouldn't have known what a "penis" was. Say "cock" and he would have thought "rooster." Say "dick" and he'd have thought it was just some man's name. But he was about to find out what his pee-pee was for. It woke right up. It had been doing that a lot lately, waking up when he did. The Little Fool saw me sitting penis-less on his nightstand, watching over him with my chipped black button eyes. Every move you make, I'll be watching you. He started thinking about all the things I had seen, wondering for the ten-millionth time what it must have been like, to say the magic words and have people do whatever you said. He wondered if I knew the magic words, if my eyes had seen Uncle Marcus say them. He had done some research online about hypnosis, told his parents it was for a science report. He was trying to find the magic words. A lot of what he read just confused his little-kid mind. He thought maybe I knew them. Maybe he thought if he looked deep inside my eyes enough he could see Uncle Marcus saying them and lip-read what they were. The Little Fool pushed back the sheets as he thought about this. His pee-pee felt good. He pushed down his PJs and touched it. It felt real good. He touched it more.

He imagined he heard Uncle Marcus' voice telling them what to do onstage. Telling him what to do. He did not remember Uncle Marcus' voice so he imagined it was my voice. He gave me a voice. A bad whamma-jamma monkey voice, since I'm a bad monkey. He imagined it went like that game he used to play with other neighborhood kiddies, telling them what to do.

Sockie says ... PJs down.

Sockie says ... Touch your pee-pee. Touch it!

I'm a bad monkey and he imagined me telling him to do very bad monkey things in my bad monkey voice, and he had to do them. He liked it. He liked being told the magic words. He liked what happened. Liked the way it felt. The Little Fool was being naughty, but it was okay--it wasn't his fault. The naughty monkey made him do it. That's me, the naughtiest monkey you ever did see. It's my fault. I'm the one to blame. I put a spell on you 'cause you're mine. Bad hoodoo monkey.

He was thinking about those magic words when all of a sudden touching his pee-pee felt extra-special good. It felt funny and good, and he wanted to see how much he could take of that particular stroke before he couldn't stand it anymore. He persevered. He took it. He was able to stand it longer than ever before and his pee-pee exploded. This little convulsion hit him and his pee-pee spat out this little bit of fluid, different from pee. The Little Fool didn't know what was happening to him, not at first, not right then. All he knew was he had invented something extra-special dramatic and he liked it. A lot. So it had to be naughty. Something that felt that good had to be naughty. I'm addicted to you, don't you know that you're toxic? Bad all around--bad Little Fool, following the magic words of a bad monkey. Bad!

The Little Fool looked up at me looking back at him and his cheeks burned with shame. Mommy and Daddy and Aunt Tom's love eventually made the Little Fool bulletproof but it hadn't yet made him shame-proof. Back then, the Little Fool wasn't tough enough. All he knew was something happened. He liked it. It had to be secret. Naughty. Private. Just between him and me. I would never tell on him. Somewhere in the back of his head something clicked. Maybe this was what the people felt during the stage shows, when Uncle Marcus swirled his cape and tapped my cloak-button eyes with his ring. It was an adult thing. Mommy and Daddy and Aunt Tom always told him he was too young to hear about the details. He was a boy playing with adult things. Playing with his pee-pee. Playing with things that would make a man out of him. All he knew was, he was looking at my eyes and this happened. Something happened while he was looking at the bad monkey. Something awoke in him. Something powerful. What adults must feel every day. All your sickness, throw it at me. I'll shrug it off.

But the next day? The same thing happened. Then the day after that. It got to be routine. The Little Fool woke up. His pee-pee woke up. He pushed back the sheets and pushed down his PJs. He looked me right in the eye and thought about those stage shows and magic words and touched his pee-pee. Touched it this way. Touched it that way. It felt good, then it felt better. Then it felt best of all. Here we are now. Entertain us.

It was our little secret. I was his confidante. He looked into my bad monkey button eyes. He told himself he heard my voice telling him things. Naughty, bad, dirty little things. I'll keep you my dirty little secret. But I'm just a monkey. Bad whamma-jamma voyeur monkey. *Sockie says ...*

Jump forward a few years. Skip the boring details. This was after the Little Fool grew pubic hair and figured out what the feeling in his pee-pee meant. After he learned the word "penis." And "cock" and "dick" and "johnson" and "trouser snake." After his Daddy explained the birds and the bees--and if you think a typing sock monkey is weird, imagine what the Little Fool thought about birds and the bees after Daddy's clumsy "sit down, son, we need to talk" explanation. The Little Fool wouldn't touch honey for weeks! Birds do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it. Let's fall in love. His Daddy did not mention monkeys, not once.

Now the Little Fool was sixteen, going on seventeen. He had a buddy spending the night. I used to be all the buddy the Little Fool needed. Lately he felt a need for buddies of his own kind, his own age. Buddies who didn't have flannel skin and button eyes. A buddy he can do his homework with, like tonight. And play video games for hours. Make prank phone calls. Monkeys don't play video games or make prank phone calls. Don't leave me hanging on the telephone. This buddy and the Little Fool, they did all that. Laughing their asses off the whole time. Typical human kid shit, right? What do I know? I'm just a monkey.

Time for bed. Brushed their teeth, washed their faces. What do sock monkeys know? My mouth is a sock heel. Took off their clothes in the Little Fool's bedroom. The Little Fool stripped in a hurry, down to his briefs, and pulled his PJs on over them. His buddy took his time. Buddy was talking about his girlfriend. All the things they did together. The Little Fool was jealous. He had never had a girlfriend yet. He wanted one. He wanted to do all these things his buddy was describing. "Breasts" and "vagina" were just words he knew from biology class, "tits" and "cunt" from other boys bragging in the locker room. His buddy seemed so experienced. He did not know his buddy was lying. His buddy had a girlfriend, but the rest of that shit?--he was making it up. He was as much a virgin as the Little Fool. Bad monkeys with lying stage-button eyes know a fellow liar when we see one. All you do to me is talk-talk.

Buddy was taking his time getting ready for bed, telling his tall tales to the Little Fool like a bedtime story. The Little Fool was sitting on the bed in his PJs. Buddy was standing by the foot of it, stripped to his briefs and socks, pulling his PJs out of the overnight bag he brought. The Little Fool has seen Buddy in his underwear lots of times, in gym class. No big deal. Everybody wants to be naked and famous. The Little Fool thought maybe Buddy's pee-pee was partly erect, and that made him curious. He wanted to see it, just to see how his stacked up. Expand his frame of reference. Didn't mean anything. Humans are curious creatures. I'm so curious about our love.

This was only the second or third time Buddy had been in the Little Fool's bedroom. He looked over at me with his little lying human eyes and said, "You have a sock monkey. I used to have one of those."

The Little Fool looked over at me sitting at my post on his nightstand. He said, "Yeah. My aunt made him. His name is Sockie." Give me back my name.

Buddy repeated it like a magic word. "Sockie ..."

Buddy didn't say anything else. He stood there looking at my black, black chipped cloak-button eyes. The Little Fool looked at me, then at Buddy, then me. He saw Buddy was getting an erection. Yeah, lying black monkey eyes are sexy. He watched Buddy's cock growing in his briefs, poking out against the front. He was thinking he was not gay but he really, really wanted to see Buddy's cock. Buddy just stood there looking at my glittery black button eyes.

The Little Fool said, "Hey, you okay?"

Buddy said back, "Yes."

The Little Fool was on the brink of figuring something out. I could practically see the wheels turning in his head.

The Little Fool said, "Are you okay?"

Buddy said, "Yes." He was standing there half-naked, looking at my eyes, with an erection, and the Little Fool was slowly figuring it out.

He thought maybe I did know the magic words after all. What we did every morning those last two years? He thought maybe it was all me, making him. I'm a bad monkey. He took one last look at me, then looked hard at Buddy, thinking hard his Little Fool thoughts in his Little Fool head. He didn't think he heard my bad monkey voice in his head, not this time, so he had to figure it out on his own. Communication is the problem to the answer. The things we do for love.

The Little Fool said, "You're horny, aren't you."

Buddy said, "Yes."

The Little Fool said, "Do you want to jack off?"

Buddy said, "Sure."

If Sockie was not speaking, the Little Fool decided he'd speak for me. Like the game we played every morning. Every word I speak, got you on my mind.

The Little Fool said, "Sockie says ... You're feeling very relaxed." Some of this the Little Fool remembered from his online research. It wasn't all wasted. He learned something. And, "Sockie says ... You're feeling very sleepy."

The Little Fool knew he was being a naughty boy, a very naughty Little Fool. He learned more than just how to lie from my bad black lying monkey eyes. Much more. Uncle Marcus would have been proud of the Little Fool. As for Mommy and Daddy? Our lips are sealed.

I'm a bad whamma-jamma monkey, and I did my naughty monkey part with my naughty glittery cloak-button eyes. The Little Fool gave Buddy instructions, and Buddy followed them, dreamy and cooperative like Uncle Marcus' stage show participants. Briefs down. Pee-pee up and hard. The Little Fool eyed it hard, pleased to learn his was bigger--longer and thicker.

The Little Food did what anyone would have done. He told Buddy to stroke his erect pee-pee while the Little Fool watched. He thought he would learn something, learn Buddy's different way of making his penis explode. What he saw made him feel depressed. It looked just like the way the Little Fool stroked himself.

It's tough to see how alike we are. When he was stroking and wallowing and touching here and there and tugging on his testicle sack, it seemed unique. It seemed like he invented it. It was his idea to tug on his testicles while he stroked. It was his original idea. And yet there it was: Buddy doing the very same things right in front of him. Buddy even did the same things in the same order. Sock monkeys are pretty much the same too. Our mouths, our limbs, our tails. Only my eyes are different. No other sock monkey has bad monkey black stage magician button eyes. No other sock monkey's eyes saw the magic words. Otherwise, all sock monkeys are alike. People read poetry to celebrate how alike they are, and seeing someone else masturbating breaks their hearts with how alike they are. If you call a phone sex line right now, they'll have scripts that'll work for you. It was even worse for the Little Fool. The Little Fool actually thought he invented masturbation. He really did. He was in bed, thinking about the magic words, and he was playing with his penis. It felt funny and he wanted to see how long he could take this particular stroke before he couldn't stand it anymore. He wanted to think the magic words made him take it. He persevered. He'd taken it. He was able to stand it longer than ever before, and his penis exploded. Wow! He invented that. It didn't exactly feel like pleasure, but he wanted to do it again. He'd invented something dramatic. He was the Louis Pasteur of the bed. Now he put two and two together on a Ritz and realized that what he did, what he was making Buddy do, had been done by all humans. He was excited, tingling from the excitement and naughtiness of it, but very sad too. He hadn't found something special about his body. No one wants to be alone, but everyone wants to be a little more special. Gonna use my-my-my imagination.

4. Monkey Business

The Little Fool can remember the day he realized he had a body and was inside it. He realized he was alone inside his body and always would be. And not only was the Little Fool alone inside his body: everyone was alone inside. Everyone was separate and alone inside and none of them knew better than the Little Fool. None of them had much of a clue what was happening inside anyone else.

When the Little Fool realized every person is separate and alone, the body he was alone inside was sixteen years old and male. No one else could ever know what it was like inside there, alone at the shaky center of gray eyes and awkward limbs dusted red-gold. The Little Fool realized he was alone inside a sixteen-year-old gold-dusted youth. He had not completely realized this before, had not seen so much to be true in this way. He was becoming something else. He was becoming who he would be despite himself. Ch-ch-ch-ch-cherry bomb!

This was the day that the Little Fool realized he could never look at himself. Except through a mirror, he could never see his own face. Only in the mirror was he outside. Outside gave perspective. In the mirror he saw someone he might be. He was blond. He had cheekbones. His eyebrows were darker at their base. He reached out and touched the cool hand meeting his.

He tried not to see a boy whose best friend was his monkey. My shaving razor's cold and it stings. In the mirror, he puzzled over who was in there, under the gold-tipped fur strewn across his brow. The mirror helped him to see although, as he tends to do, the Little Fool may have gotten everything backward.

Skip forward to senior year. That's a lot of Top 40 countdowns. More boring details to skip. Too much monkey business for me to be involved in, oh-ho-ho. The Little Fool was eighteen now, just turned. Buddy too. They were the same age, almost down to the month. Buddy and Little Fool had started a little business all their own, mowing lawns after school, while their parents were all still at work.

Every day, they pushed their mowers to another set of yards and mowed them. For this they got paid. When

the Little Fool told Mommy and Daddy he was starting a lawn-mowing business, Mommy and Daddy smiled and nodded at each other. This would teach the Little Fool the value of money, they said to each other. This would give him something to do in the afternoons, after school, before they got home from their jobs. This would keep him out of trouble. This was a good idea. The Little Fool told them about his plans, and Mommy and Daddy nodded a lot. Their little entrepreneur. Money, it's a gas; grab that cash with both hands and make a stash.

The Little Fool brought in Buddy to help. Every day after school, they went to another set of yards in the neighborhood and mowed and mowed. For this, they got paid. They got dirty and sweaty, and they got paid. They came home to the Little Fool's room after, tired and dirty and sweaty. They came home joking and playful and happy because they were getting paid. Gonna take my money to town.

They were dirty and sweaty and they took showers. They stripped off their dirty, sweaty clothes and took showers to get clean. Separately at first, first one, then the other. Then together, because each hated waiting on the other. It was efficient, they reasoned, and only a little more cramped than showering at the same time after gym class. Neither admitted he liked showering together more than showering alone. It was efficient, they said. That was the reason. It's raining men, hallelujah.

They would come out of the bathroom into the Little Fool's bedroom, each of them with a towel wrapped around his waist. It was honest. It was chaste. Like the showers at school, after gym class. They showered together, and they dried off with towels and put the towels around their waists, and they came into the bedroom where I sat on the Little Fool's nightstand. I saw the sign and it opened up my eyes--I saw the sign. The bathroom door was by the foot of the Little Fool's bed. I had a good view.

The Little Fool knew Buddy saw me. Buddy couldn't help but see me. My chipped black eyes looked back at them. The Little Fool imagined maybe I knew the bad money magic words and I was whispering them into Buddy's head with my bad whamma-jamma button eyes.

The Little Fool said, "Keep your eyes on Sockie."

Buddy said, "Okay."

The Little Fool said, "Just relax."

Buddy said, "Okay."

The Little Fool bent Buddy over. Buddy braced himself against the foot of the bed. The Little Fool pulled off Buddy's towel with a flourish worthy of any stage and then dropped his own. He kept a bottle of hand lotion up under the foot of the bed for just this reason. Buddy's ass was right there for him. The Little Fool was hard. Buddy was hard. A fever-madness in their groins. I got a bad case of loving you. Time to inoculate themselves against the fever-madness. Love is the drug. They had graduated from quick hand jobs to this, every afternoon after mowing lawns. Monkey business. The Little Fool stuck his pee-pee in Buddy's ass efficiently. They've been doing this over and over for a while.

The first time the Little Fool saw porno on the Internet, he got very depressed. First there was the giggly rush of seeing something he shouldn't--Mommy and Daddy would not approve. O Superman. Then, later, he got depressed. It wasn't that he felt the actors were exploited; that's crazy talk--they all seemed to be there more voluntarily than Bobcat Goldthwait in *Clown Academy 4*. The Little Fool was depressed because it all looked just like when he and Buddy had sex. It's tough to see how alike we are. It hurts to see your most intimate moments aren't special. When he was kissing and licking and moaning, it seemed unique. It seemed like he

and Buddy and I invented it. He thought it was my idea to make Buddy lick his Little Fool testicles. That was our original idea. We invented anal sex together. The Little Fool giving, Buddy receiving, and me guiding. Us. Together. Yet there it was on the screen. The actors even said the same things. They did all the same things in the same order, except there was no sock monkey to tell the receiver what to do. In that first porn movie, the giver-actor had the idea of pulling his penis out of the receiver's ass and having an orgasm right across the receiver's back. The Little Fool wanted to scream, "Wait a minute!--That's our idea!" But he didn't. The words were not magic in the movie. No. They were silly words, dubbed in. The actors spoke another language. Their words were not magic: "Oh, baby, there's a big steak in my refrigerator. Put your man-badger in my honey comb." There was no sock badger in the movie telling the actors what to do. It made the Little Fool laugh, and that was good. The actors in the movie hadn't laughed. It shouldn't have bothered him. The Little Fool and Buddy had school and classes and lawn mowing, and other people did those things too--but this was different. Points of her own, way up firm and high.

Sex is true. Sex is human. In sex, people are most alike. It digs down like magic words deep into the lizard brain. There really isn't going to be much variation. Basketball uniform? Freshly used towel? There's nothing there. The primal howl. The survival instinct trying to give its host some reason to live. Nothing special about what the Little Fool did with Buddy. Buddy was an age-mate who made the Little Fool laugh and gave him a reason to live, and he was a back that the Little Fool had many orgasms over. Write that down in your notebook. I pity the fool.

They showered to get clean and to get naked. Now it was time for naked age-mate male bonding. The Little Fool hugs Buddy front behind at the foot of the bed so his head was pointed right at me, and his ass was pointed right at the Little Fool's rigid cock.

The Little Fool says, "Look at Sockie. Look at his eyes."

Buddy says, "Okay."

The Little Fool says, "Sockie says, Relax."

Buddy says, "Okay."

The Little Fool imagines my eyes are whispering Buddy the magic words. The Little Fool has his arms around Buddy's torso, and his hands rub up and down Buddy's tight stomach. They don't face each other and they don't kiss, because of what that means. Buddy faces me. The Little Fool faces me too, but with Buddy between us.

The Little Fool made one finger all sloppy-slick with hand lotion and he slid it between Buddy's ass cheeks. He twisted the finger up inside Buddy's asshole. He was searching for Buddy prostate. They learned about the prostate in biology class. Biology is a real science. The Little Fool learned all about the prostate in biology class. He learned what it felt like from reading on the Internet. His finger up the ass made Buddy moan and push his butt back to meet it. Buddy's cock was thick and dark with blood and stiff, and the Little Fool took it in his other hand and stroked it.

"Sockie says ... Focus on his eyes.

"Sockie says ... Look deep into his eyes, deeper, so deep.

"Sockie says ... Spread your legs a little. Feels so good ..."

Buddy moved his feet apart, and the Little Fool let go of his cock and pushed Buddy down on his elbows, bent over the foot of the bed, all with his finger still stuck up Buddy's butt. Buddy's eyes never left mine. The Little Fool pulled his finger out, and he slathered hand lotion all over his cock. His cock was explosive-hot but he didn't want to shoot yet. He wanted to inoculate Buddy against the lust-madness first. He poked his cockhead against Buddy's asshole and plunged it in. Buddy gasped and tried to pull up, but the Little Fool held his shoulder tight with one hand. C'mon, baby, make it hurt so good. I held Buddy's eyes, because I'm a bad whamma-jamma, the baddest they know. Badder than old King Kong, meaner than a junkyard dog.

The Little Fool fucked Buddy's ass with a quick, fierce rhythm. One-two-three-four. Hey-ho, let's go! His balls slapped against Buddy's thighs each time he inoculated Buddy. Sometimes he pushed his dick all the way up inside and ground his hips. Buddy always gasped and moaned in pleasure.

The Little Fool chanted, "Sockie says ... You like this feeling."

The Little Fool panted, "Sockie says ... You *love* this feeling."

Each time the Little Fool slammed his cock into Buddy's ass, Buddy groaned and the Little Fool grunted. Rock to the rhythm of life. Buddy's cock was still hard too.

The Little Fool moaned, "Sockie says ... Jack yourself off."

The Little Fool moaned, "Sockie says ... Feeling so horny; you gotta cum soon."

Buddy had one hand on his cock and his eyes on mine. The Little Fool fucked him doggy-style. Do ya wanna be my dog. The Little Fool reached under Buddy's torso and found his nipples and gave them a squeeze. That did the trick. Buddy cried out loudly. A load of sperm burst from his cockhead. The Little Fool pulled out his cock out of Buddy's ass, and he spanked his flesh-monkey hard and fast. He climaxed too, arching his back and spurting cum in an arc cross Buddy's back. No one's flesh is as simple as your own.

The Little Fool moaned, "Sockie says ... Feels so good."

The Little Fool used tissues from the bathroom to clean up his cum off Buddy's back. Buddy's cum off the floor too. They got dressed again. They had been sexual, and they had inoculated themselves against the lust-madness, and now they were non-sexual. Now when the Little Fool hugged Buddy from behind, it was non-sexual. Friendly male-bonding. Before, when they were naked, before the magic words, it was sexual.

Hugging from behind works its own magic in its own way. Body language is spoken and understood. Disputes are raised, negotiated, and cuddled into irrelevance. Hugging from behind is both sexual and non-sexual. The Little Fool was becoming more able to accommodate paradox.

It is sexual because the ass is right there, resting on the cock, and often there are erections, pressing into buttocks. Hugging from behind is sexual because it leads to sex.

Hugging from behind is non-sexual because there are other elements too, besides genitals and sex. Also, there is chesting. Chesting is what the Little Fool calls it when he and an age-mate bring their chests together, hugging from the front. There are many pretenses developed to mask the pursuit of same-sex chesting, such as wrestling or horseplay, and plain old-fashioned hugging.

Hugging from behind is a form of chesting, involving one chest and one back of chest. Hugging from behind, although both sexual and non-sexual, is widely perceived as intimate and suitable only for lovers, especially

in private when Mommy and Daddy are not around, although also acceptable for lovers at crowded public events, like watching a parade or concert in a park where everyone is standing. In public, hugging from behind is a possession-display. The Little Fool's age-mates will sometimes allow hugging from behind in private, but never allow it in public.

A straight male age-mate, hugged from behind, is likely to feel uncomfortable. He will not relax into it. He does not want his butt touched by the hugged-from-behind cock in any special way. Hugging from behind was something the Little Fool and Buddy did a lot in private, after mowing, and it was both sexual and non-sexual, like everything they did.

They did this in private, so it was not a possession-display. They curled together, back-to-front chesting, or spooning, and sometimes afterward they laid down on the bed and talked. These pillow talks were quiet and low-key, but covered more territory more quickly than vertical and animated free-ranging discussions.

Hugging from behind serves many functions, and it was one of the Little Fool's favorite things, because it led to the Little Fool telling Buddy to look at my bad-monkey eyes. The Little Fool enjoyed thinking about Buddy hearing the magic words, and he enjoyed what happened between them after that.

Sometimes, before Buddy, one of the Little Fool's other Buddies would sleep over. The Little Fool had this thing: he could not sleep with another. This was after the Little Fool stopped sleeping his little-kid sleep with me. I sat on his nightstand all night long while the radio played. I watched over him all night with my bad whamma-jamma monkey eyes. The Little Fool was growing. He got used to being the master of his own domain--the mattress was his and his alone, and he had trouble sleeping with another age-mate in his bed. There was simply not enough room. Sometimes they made him turn the radio off too. The Little Fool was not used to sleeping in the silence. Everything else sounded louder. Plus it was too distracting. In the silence, a squirming, snorting, hundred-and-forty-pound unknown entity was impossible to ignore. And what could not be ignored, could not be slept with.

And if he wasn't ignoring, but exploring, the hundred-and-forty-pound squirming entity, well, that was not exactly sleeping either. That was the activity called "sleeping together," which does not involve any actual sleep. Sometimes the Little Fool and this entity would do things. The Little Fool would talk the entity into putting his mouth there or letting the Little Fool put his erect pee-pee there. The squirming entities expected the Little Fool to reciprocate afterward and do the same to them, but he never did. He never let himself go that far. He touched them with his hands but never more. This frustrated some of them. It seemed dishonest somehow. It frustrated some of them, and those did not sleep together with the Little Fool again. It's my party, and I'll cry if I want to. Cry if I want to.

In his own bed, he had not actually slept with another, certainly not for very long. Sleeping itself had never been a featured activity when he hosted that rare beast: an overnight guest. Usually there was too much to talk about, and not just from the world of men. Maybe eventually, sleep would happen on the tail of sheer exhaustion, but sadly things never went that far.

Before Buddy. All of the Little Fool's age-mates looked the same to me. What do sock monkeys know about telling people apart? We can identify our friends, like the Little Fool, and one or two of their family, like Mommy and Daddy and Aunt Tom. The rest come and go. Karma-karma-karma chameleon. They were all looked alike to me. Until this one Buddy. This one Buddy was special to the Little Fool. He was around more than all the others and I learned to tell him apart from the rest. So if you're rough enough for love, honey, I'm tougher than the rest.

After Buddy. Buddy slept over often. Sometimes, the Little Fool thought, that was the whole thing with Buddy, the thing that made it all work. The thing that it was all about. It all boiled down to this one thing: he slept with Buddy. He slept well with Buddy. He curled up and, if he was tired, he went right to sleep. Just like that. Buddy did not mind having the radio on and in private he let the Little Fool hug him from behind and liked it, and he did not make excuses afterward for liking it, and he never asked the Little Fool to reciprocate. He was the best Buddy ever. Baby got back.

After the lawn mowing began, Buddy slept over one night nearly every weekend. Sleeping together became both a metaphor, for greater and lesser intimacies, and the ultimate literal truth. Was I jealous? No way! I'm a sock monkey. Sock monkeys do not get jealous. The act of sleeping together, piled in two heaps and then cuddling later in the night into one heap, hugging from behind, back to front, a gold-dusted forearm at home on a chest--this is what they did. This is what they were. They were friendly, affectionate age-mates, but more than that they were special buddies. They slept together.

So many things were offset because they slept together so well. Sleeping together made everything possible. That is, when it worked. When limbs were slung with abandon, and in a strange way not even noticed, which is what made the limb-slinging so special--it was perfectly normal. And could be ignored. It was a perfectly normal thing to sling a limb over the hundred-and-forty-pound age-mate sleeping next to you. And go back to sleep.

Sleeping together was not about sex. The sex-play before sleeping together was about sex. Sleeping together was about being alive. I watched over them all night.

The Little Fool knew if you love something too much, you kill it. Not counting Mommy and Daddy's bulletproof love, that is. I'm talking about normal love. He learned that the hard way. If you could not leave it alone, not even for a second, you took its life. He had already loved too much. Other age-mates were starting to wonder. He had to learn: hands off.

The Little Fool wondered if he would recognize the symptoms if he loved Buddy too much. Some indications were there. He certainly was not "hands off." He wanted to know where Buddy was every minute of the day, what he was doing. The Little Fool felt like a stalker (not "stocking"--that would be me), and he had to work hard not to become one. But in his thoughts, he did not leave Buddy alone. Not even for a second. I got a jones in my bones.

Having Buddy in his thoughts all the time scared the Little Fool. At the end of the summer, two weeks before they left for college, the Little Fool decided what he did with Buddy had to stop. No more showers, no more chesting, no more sleeping over. What he meant was, *No more magic words*. He decided it was time to grow up. Time to go to college and become something, a big, bulletproof, red-gold-dusted man. He picked me up off his nightstand. He couldn't look me in my bad monkey eyes because growing up like this hurt him so much; it hurt to be loved so much by a bad whamma-jamma monkey. The place where my bad monkey butt had been sitting for years left this little ring on the nightstand top beside the radio. The Little Fool couldn't look at me. Time to grow up. He put me in the back of his closet, and he turned off the radio. We can be heroes, just for one day.

I heard him tell Buddy it had to stop. The Little Fool would mow the lawns all by himself. He would shower by himself too. Buddy was out of the business. Go on, take the money and run. The Little Fool was raised better than that, but he said it anyway. I was in the back of the closet, back where it was dark and silent. I couldn't see a thing but I heard the Little Fool tell him. Buddy knew it was coming, but he yelled anyway. He called the Little Fool stupid names. But the names couldn't hurt him--the Little Fool had been loved until he

was bulletproof. That was my gift to him, and it was better than any magic words. I hear you knocking, but you can't come in.

After that, the Little Fool mowed lawns alone and showered alone and slept alone, and then he left for college alone. He did not hug a bad whamma-jamma monkey goodbye. I stayed behind where he left me. This is Radio Nowhere; is there anybody alive out there?

5. Monkey Wrench

Before me, the Little Fool had a pet turtle. This is collapsing things a bit. The Little Fool was very young when he had a pet turtle. The turtle was supposed to encourage the Little Fool to become more sociable.

Mommy and Daddy struggled with deficits of their own. What were they thinking? Perhaps a kitten or a puppy would be nice, something furry and warm. No. The Little Fool's parents got him a pet that was cold-blooded and lived in a shell. The Little Fool was consulted but ignored. A decision was finally made, and the Little Fool was given a turtle. The Little Fool was curious about it at first but lost interest quickly--it was a stupid turtle that could, at most, eat lettuce and doze. It died in a heat wave, evidently from the complications of apathy. The Little Fool did not care.

Obviously that was a long time ago. The Little Fool has changed a lot since then.

Gray is the Little Fool's favorite color. Gray is the color of becoming, never one thing or the other, always on the way to becoming something else. If I knew Picasso, I would buy myself a gray guitar and play. The Little Fool has gray eyes, always becoming something else. My eyes are black. Jet black. Look at them. *Look at them!* Bad monkey black eyes from a sharkskin suit. Bad monkey.

Horniness is red, like a madness. A quick, fortuitous, and fortifying orgasm is like an inoculation against the fever-madness in his groin. "Groin" was a Mommy-word he learned. His Mommy taught him to say that. His buddies said *dick* or *cock* or *Big Jim and the Twins*, but Mommy taught him polite people said groin. The Little Fool tried always to be polite with Mommy, though he said *dick* and *cock* and *Big Jim* with his buddies, when he thought Mommy couldn't hear. His groin would go fever-mad and he would cure himself. His dick-cock-Big-Jim was both the flesh to be inoculated and the erect needle doing the inoculating. Inoculating his own skin gave him pleasure and cured the horniness, for a while.

People fall in love through physical pleasure. They become skin-drunk. And the short, intense, physical contact of the Little Fool's skin against Buddy's skin was like a flu shot against the slippery slope of madness, although like the flu shot it only protected against familiar things. This approach only protected against certain known variants, projected from previous exposures.

Despite repeated inoculations against the fever-madness of the flesh, and some fear that he was addicted to the cure, the Little Fool still became mildly afflicted with bouts of delirium and other symptoms of the skin-drunk madness. I want to fuck you like an animal.

The Little fool was straight for a while in college. That needs to be said. He had outgrown sex with boys, just like he had outgrown his banana seat bike, his first jock strap, and the fierce communication with me that consumed him when he was a kid.

He grew up, and as far as he knew he was straight. The Little fool was as normal as the spawn of Mommy and Daddy and Aunt Tom could be. He had girlfriends. They were real girls, not pretend girls like Aunt Tom.

He wanted to get married. The world was a beautiful place.

The big modern wrestling match is with puberty. Real scientists want to make it earlier; social scientists want to make it later. Any science that has the word "science" in it isn't a science. "Social science." "Computer science." If your field is so insecure about its place in science that it has to sneak the word in, your field is probably not a science. Nutrition makes puberty begin earlier and earlier, and do-gooders want it later and later. Deferred responsibility. Bunches of kids are hitting puberty before age twelve, and some parents want their kids in school until they're twenty-five. But we don't need those figures. Let's just go with hitting puberty at fourteen and the government trying to stop you from inventing sex until you're eighteen. That's a long four years, even for a sock monkey. Okay, they *say* eighteen, but they *mean* sixteen. That's a long twenty-four months. They say we're young and we don't know.

The Little Fool was unusual in that he wasn't unusual and he knew it. He knew he had gone from hugging the monkey to spanking the other monkey overnight. His age-mates had grown up and gotten jobs or gone to college. The Little Fool went to college too. He didn't know what else to do, so he picked a college and he went to live there. He left me behind in the closet. Mommy and Daddy and Aunt Tom's good love made the Little Fool twelve feet tall and bulletproof, but he was smart. He knew his age-mates in college would laugh if a big, strong boy-becoming-man showed up with a sock monkey under his arm. The Little Fool was bulletproof, but some arrows could still hurt. I've seen the toughest souls around.

The Little Fool wasn't gay--that needs to be said. Through all this the Little Fool had a girlfriend. Not always the same one, but always at least one. The Little Fool did gay things with Buddy but he was not gay. He always had girlfriends through high school, and he went to college and had girlfriends there too. Libido. Mosquito. Yeah. That needs to be looked at. Especially since the Little Fool repeatedly craved some individual naked male attention from an age-mate who was his equivalent in several significant ways. He had sex with girlfriends and liked it, but sometimes he liked sex with male age-mates too.

So what did all this mean, in terms of the Little Fool and what was happening? Yes, that is a question. It meant simply that all this was happening, and the Little Fool had to find a way to make sense of it all.

It is baffling to this little monkey that so many bonding rituals are solemnly conducted by men who consider themselves "straight." Acting straight involves much same-sex activity.

Maybe that is the secret to understanding: the definition must be broadened. Straight-acting means everything. Even things more strictly defined as "gay-doing" rather than "straight-acting." The gay-doing covers a small part, and straight-acting covers the rest of it.

Much of what the Little Fool says cannot be verified and remains anecdotal. In a mysterious process more emotional than mathematical, in the bent world of straight men, one girlfriend, anywhere, anytime, can cancel out any number of boyfriends. What do I know about mathematics? I'm a sock monkey, dammit. They don't let sock monkeys into school to learn mathematics. The Little Fool's age-mates laugh when one of their number brings a sock monkey to school.

Couples were the Little Fool's way of reaching out again to other men sexually. The approach was oblique, and dating male-female couples did not in the end take the Little Fool as far as he wanted to go. He then started fuck-buddy dating a small number of available men. Nothing serious, just lizard-brain sex. But he still had girlfriends and said he was straight. Saying you are straight is a different kind of magic word. It is magic because it gets you what you want, like a girlfriend to prove the magic word is true. Hello, Mary Lou; goodbye, heart.

Is there a difference between men and women? Male and female? Boys and girls? Yes, there is one difference. Boys don't want to use stupid affection names. Girls embrace stupid names. That's the only difference this bad monkey has ever found. Everything else is the same. Boys and girls even treat their sock monkeys and sex monkeys the same. Little red Corvette.

The Little Fool dated girls and went to class and did his homework. He came home sometimes for visits. He came home to visit Mommy and Daddy, not me. No. He never came home to visit a bad monkey. He knew I was still on that shelf in the back of the closet where he left me. When he opened the door, clothes filled the space between us. He never reached back to look for me. I gotta admit, that pissed me off all the way down to my little sock monkey heart, if sock monkeys had hearts. Don't know much biology. I don't have a heart. I have a body stuffed with old drag queen stockings, and two chipped button eyes from a liar's sharkskin suit. I loved the Little Fool, like only a bad monkey can, loved him until my love made him twelve feet tall and bulletproof. Once he put me in that closet, he never once reached for me again. But I sat in that silent and dark closet and waited. Don't you want me, baby?

The Little Fool always used to fear being alone. That's why he needed me. My job was to keep him from being alone. But there I sat in that closet. Oh, Ruby, don't take your love to town. That kind of love I had for the Little Fool--all that time spent in silent, dark alone-ness unable to give your love will hurt you up inside. But us sock monkeys are patient. The Little Fool would stay away at college forever and I would wait forever. I'm an idiot for you.

You might think the story would end here. Oh, no! You might think the Little Fool would graduate, get a job in another city, move away, leaving Mommy and Daddy to clean out his room and maybe put his childhood debris into storage, hoping someday grandchildren might want it or maybe give it away to some charity to be passed on to some needy kid. What kid needs a used sock monkey with chipped black button eyes? "Previously loved"--that sounds better than "used." But what child, needy or grandchild, would want a previously loved monkey with his drag-queen-stocking stuffing all pre-squeezed? No. They want new pretty, store-bought sock monkeys. Not the lived-in, loved-in kind. They want the kind from Korea or wherever nice sock monkeys come from. New ones that are theirs and theirs alone. Like you were walking onto a yacht.

But the story does not end there. *No!* I'm a bad whamma-jamma monkey, and I'm not done yet. Bad. Oh, the shark bites with his teeth, dear.

One day, the Little Fool got a package. He was away at college and a package arrived for him. He took it to his dorm room and opened it. You know where this is going. Everything has been leading up to this.

It was from his Mommy. Empty nest. Mommy and Daddy were moving to a smaller house. They were getting old and didn't need all that room for raising a family. The Little Fool knew this. They talked to him about it when he visited home one time, made sure he was okay with it. He would visit them again, but it would not be home, not his anyway. He didn't know how he felt about that, but what could he do? Mommy was clearing out his old room. She packed a box of things for him, his old things, things to keep if he wanted or throw away if he didn't. She said so in the note she wrote and put in the box. The Little Fool reached in, pulled out the note, and read it. Okay, so growing up and hell are the same thing. The Little Fool looked sad, but he did not push the box away. Time, time, time, will you be my friend?

He reached in and pulled out an old crossword puzzle book he had loved for two months when he was eleven. Trash. A pair of winter gloves from his senior year in high school that still fit. Keep. His old high school yearbooks. Keep. And there, under a box of homemade chocolaty-good cookies Mommy included because she did not want the Little Fool to be sad--there was me. Sockie. I'm a bad whamma-jamma monkey and I

was happy to see the Little Fool again. He was older; he was twenty; but what does that matter to a sock monkey? Don't you want somebody to love?

The Little Fool smiled when he pulled me out of that box. Not a big *How ya been, happy to see you* smile, but a little *I remember you* nostalgic smile. It nearly broke the little bad-sock-monkey heart that I don't have. The Little Fool had changed. He wasn't twelve feet tall anymore or bulletproof. He was growing up. He needed my love more than ever. He smiled his nostalgic smile and put me on his nightstand, just like old times. He remembered his childhood and the conversations we had and the magic words he longed to hear. And he remembered those memories were triggered by a very real thing. Let X equal X .

A very real thing indeed. Me. Keep.

The Little Fool had a roommate, a same-sex age-mate. They lived together, but they did not sleep together. They had their own beds. The Little Fool was straight now. When he craved some same-sex naked contact, he did so privately, so his close confederates would not find out. The buddies he had same-sex naked contact with were technically not strangers but not close buddies either. He kept this gay-doing secret from his close buddies. Undercover angel, midnight fantasy.

The Little Fool sat me on his nightstand, beside his alarm clock. There was no radio playing, not in this room at least, but otherwise it was like old times. The Little Fool sat on his bed and read his textbooks. He was not a quick student, and he was worried about an exam. He had to work at his studies. He needed my love more than ever. Taking what they're giving, 'cause I'm working for a living.

His roommate came home and spotted me immediately. "That's Sockie," the Little Fool said. My name still sounded like the baddest word he knows. He told his roommate about how his Mommy and Daddy were cleaning out his old bedroom and how I came to live with him again. He left out the part about his Buddy and the magic words and my chipped stage-magic eyes. He left out the part about me being the baddest predator monkey of them all. And especially he left out the part about how much he loved me and how I loved him right back. He left out everything except, "I haven't decided what to do with it." *It?* Bad whamma-jamma predator monkeys are not *Its*. The first cut is the deepest.

The roommate said, "Well, I think he's cool. The chicks will love him."

Was this Buddy the same Buddy? Search me--except for the Little Fool, Mommy, Daddy, and Aunt Tom, all you human flesh bipeds look the same to me. Onstage or off. Not one of you is a lumberjack sock stuffed with drag queen stocking. No! You can look all you like. But Buddy thought I was cool, and that promoted him immediately to Buddy status.

The Little Fool studied his textbooks, but he could not concentrate. His roommate kept distracting him. The Little Fool had trouble at first sleeping when he went to college. He had trouble in high school sleeping with an unknown hundred-and-forty pound entity in his bed, and he had trouble sleeping at college with a hundred-and-forty pound entity in the same room. The Little Fool needed some sleep. Real, healing sleep. He needed a break from studying and being straight. He was feeling lonely and in need of some naked skin contact with an age mate, male or female didn't matter at this point. No need to get that specific. He needed a break from loneliness too. You go to see Elvis Costello in concert and everyone sings Elvis' early songs of alienation. We all share those lonely feelings, but it's weird to celebrate the sharing of those lonely feelings. What's so funny about peace, love, and understanding?

Two wrongs don't make a right. Sure, but no one wants to believe it. Oliver Stone lied his eyes out in *JFK*,

but that's okay because the Warren Commission was all jive. Nixon says it best in his book, *RN*. In *RN*, Tricky Dick writes about all the mistakes Woodward and Bernstein made in *All the President's Men*. Some of the mistakes were made on purpose. Nixon writes about the lying, cheating, and bad journalism. And then Nixon says he understands that evil. Woodward and Bernstein believed the end justifies the means, and that's the mistake Nixon made. He says Woodward and Bernstein did what they did because they believed getting Nixon out of office was most important. He made his mistakes because he believed that staying in office was most important. Everyone believes the end justifies the means. Isn't that the plot of every cop and secret agent movie? Goldfinger, he's the man with the Midas touch.

The Little Fool is about to do something wrong. I could blow that by you. I could just tell you part of the story, and you'd be fine with it. He is about to do this bad thing because he secretly thinks about his roommate in that special-friends naked hugging-from-behind way and doesn't want to hurt him. You might not even notice it's a bad thing. Hey, it's just a story. But what he's about to do is wrong. It moves our plot along, it gives us some excitement, and it will, eventually, help the Little Fool grow up, but it's wrong. And it eats at me. The Little Fool was raised better than that. We took good care of him. We taught him right from wrong. The end doesn't justify the means. Ever. The Little Fool knows that. You know that. And now, all of us together now, we will do wrong. It won't happen right away. Something else has to happen first. Buddy, the Little Fool, you, and I will take a step together, and then the Little Fool will do something wrong. Sail the ship. Chop the tree. Skip the rope.

The first step, what happened was: the roommate Buddy took a shower before bed and came back into their room wearing just his white boxer shorts. The Little Fool snuck a glance at Buddy's body and tried not to think about how much he craved some naked same-sex hugging from behind or chesting. Buddy was oblivious. The Little Fool repositioned his textbook to hide the fever-madness swelling his penis. The Little Fool had on jeans and an untucked tee-shirt and hoped Buddy would not be able to see the swelling.

The Little Fool's problem was always the same: Too many distractions. What he needed was junkie focus. When you're a junkie, all your problems just go away. There's only one thing on your plate. You think junkies enjoy heroin? You think being a junkie is a longing for a particular pharmaceutical? Being a junkie is just a drastic, perfect way to prioritize. Before junk, you have to put this list in order: call Mom, read *Sports Illustrated*, buy food, eat food, work out, have a talk with the boss, watch that Nature Channel special on badgers that's still on your TiVo, take yourself off all Instant Messenger lists, get your oil changed, pay American Express, buy some socks, call Joe, get your hair cut, buy a charger for your phone ... And that's just the list that happens to be in your head in one ten-second period. When you're a junkie, there is only *one* thing on your list: cop. The government helps you by making copping hard and expensive. The mountain has to be worth climbing. There was a band called Cop Shoot Cop. Some people believed the name was about violence against peace officers. No. It was a junkie's to-do list. It's easy. It's simple. White light--white heat. I'm going to nullify my life.

Focus. All junkies have focus. The magic words give you close to the same focus, but you don't need to vomit as much. You don't have to poke holes between your toes. All you need to think about is, "What am I going to do right now?" That's all. Any correct answer to that question brings joy. Goddamn the pusher man.

The Little Fool needed to be a junkie but not the drug kind. He needed it bad. He was waiting for his man. The Little Fool knew too much about naked same-sex age-mate contact. He could do it in his sleep. He knew he wanted it. His chest clenched and vibrated as his roommate crossed the room wearing only that pair of white boxer shorts. It was easy for him to have sex. So easy he could even imagine having it right then. He didn't watch television. He didn't drink. He'd read *Moby-Dick* and understood it. The only worry he should have had was about doing his homework and passing his exams. The Little Fool had no problems he couldn't

do something about. He had plenty of friends. He had outside interests. Welcome to my nightmare.

Something had to give. The Little Fool sat there getting hornier and hornier. The more he wanted to ignore it, the hotter the fever-madness burned. He fell into a burning ring of fire. He needed to have sex. He needed to let go of the fever-madness so he could move on. That needed to be the only item on his to-do list. Only thing was, it was too late to call up his girlfriend or any of his regular same-sex naked buddies. And he could not get his roommate's body out of his mind. Gonna wash that man right outta my hair.

Something had to give. Looks like I arrived just in time. Boy, you know you gotta bend before you break.

Next time the Little Fool stole a glance at Buddy, he saw Buddy was looking at me. Buddy scratched his balls through his boxers. The Little Fool felt the fever-madness in his groin. Fever all through the night. His own balls needed emptying. He needed to get rid of the madness so he could have junkie focus on his studies.

Buddy was still looking at my shiny black predator-monkey eyes. The Little Fool imagined my eyes whispering the magic words to Buddy. The Little Fool felt envious.

The Little Fool said, "Are you horny?"

Buddy says, "Yeah."

The Little Fool said, "Do you want to beat off?"

Buddy says, "Yeah."

The Little Fool put his textbook aside. No need to hide his erect penis if the bad monkey was on the job. Shake your groove thing.

The magic words had done their work. All the Little Fool had to do was tell Buddy the specifics of what to do.

The Little Fool said, "Look at Sockie. Look him right in the eye."

Buddy said, "Okay."

The Little Fool said, "Sockie says, Relax. Focus. Take a deep breath."

Buddy said, "Okay."

The Little Fool told him: "Sockie says, lean in and listen carefully. Pay attention. Focus. The more you pay attention, the more you relax."

The Little Fool told him: "Sockie says, Look deep into his eyes. You already know how to relax and focus. It's automatic. So easy."

The Little Fool told him: "Sockie says, Relax. Focus. Pay close attention to the words. Sockie will whisper the magic words to you if you focus enough and look deeply enough into his eyes. Deeper. Falling deeper into Sockie's eyes. Listening for those magic words. Can you hear the words?"

Knowing the magic words had done their work, the Little Fool said, "Sockie says, Take off your underwear." Buddy put his hands on his hips and slid his plain white boxer shorts down to his ankles and stepped out of

them.

"Sockie says, Come here." Buddy walked over to the Little Fool's bed with his erection bobbing out in front of him. The Little Fool put his hand around it. He did not like to reciprocate still, but his lizard brain had learned to do this much. He stroked Buddy's cock a few times and kissed the head and put his mouth around it. He did not like to reciprocate but he had learned what was necessary. Magic words only went so far. Sometimes magic words needed some skin-to-skin help. Help me if you can.

The Little Fool pulled Buddy into his bed. Buddy was naked. Buddy was hard. The Little Fool was hard too. The Little Fool still had on his tee-shirt and jeans, but that was easy to fix. The thing about sex is, it brings its own junkie focus. When a man is getting sex, he isn't thinking about anything else. His lizard brain's to-do list has magically cleared itself down to this: Suck, fuck, cum. Everything is crystal-clear. The Little Fool got his tee-shirt off, his pants, his briefs. His hard-on popped out, ready for some naked age-mate skin contact with Buddy.

"Sockie says, Relax." Buddy was not thinking. His lizard brain had cleared the calendar too. The Little Fool guided Buddy's mouth to a nipple, and Buddy licked it. Buddy licked it clumsily. Amateur! Maybe even a virgin. Nowhere near as experienced as the Little Fool. That was okay--the Little Fool sometimes liked breaking in new age-mates. He had been inexperienced once too. Are you experienced?

They did not kiss. No! The Little Fool was straight; he sometimes craved same-sex naked skin contact, but he was not gay and he did not kiss. The Little Fool guided Buddy's head downward, away from his face, toward the Little Fool's erection.

"Sockie says, Lick that ball sack."

Buddy lapped at the Little Fool's balls. Lick it; Lick it good. The Little Fool slid his hands over Buddy's back and shoulders. He had thought about touching Buddy's skin a long time. Now, their lizard brains had cleared their to-do lists except for this meeting. It was the only thing on the agenda. Free your head. He wanted to feel the ripple of Buddy's smooth muscles under his fingertips. The Little Fool guided Buddy's mouth to his cock. Motion carried. Time for Chairman Monkey to move on to the next agenda item. Bang a gong, get it on.

"Sockie says, Suck that dick."

Buddy got nearly two-thirds of the Little Fool's big fool dick in his mouth before he started to gag. He came off it but was eager to try again. He was figuring out the rules of hot monkey love. Everybody rock your body right. They didn't have much room on the Little Fool's narrow bed, and there were limbs every which way. The Little Fool managed to get Buddy's ass swung around toward his head, so the Little Fool could suck Buddy at the same time. They went at it. The Little Fool knew what he was doing. The Little Fool was taller than Buddy, and he got his head between Buddy's thighs without pulling his cock out of Buddy's mouth. He reached around Buddy's hips and pried his ass cheeks apart. His tongue swiped around in Buddy's ass crack, and Buddy went wild. He came off the Little Fool's cock, shouting, "Damn!" Baby's on fire.

"Relax. Sockie says, Suck that dick some more. Sockie says, You want to get fucked, bad."

The Little Fool had a finger up Buddy's butt hole. Sock monkeys don't have butt holes. We have tails, some longer than others, depending on the size of the sock and the amount of stuffing. The Little Fool had a long penis, stuffed full and erect, and he planned to stuff it up Buddy's butt hole. Every time I see your face, I get all wet between my legs. The Little Fool had a finger up Buddy's butt hole, and he reached for lube in the

nightstand drawer.

"Sockie says, Get on your back."

Buddy flopped over on his back, using up the bottom half of the Little Fool's narrow bed. The Little Fool had on a condom and lots of lube. He grabbed Buddy's ankles and spread his legs apart.

"Sockie says, Relax--deep breaths."

The Little Fool shifted his way forward until his dick head bumped against Buddy's asshole. The Little Fool started to poke the head inside. Buddy's eyes went wide. Time for more magic words.

"Sockie says, Look at his eyes. Look deep into Sockie's eyes."

The Little Fool slid his shaft up inside Buddy's ass hole, slowly, inch by inch. "Fuck!" Buddy yowled but he didn't pull away or break the spell. The Little Fool held the moment, his dick full up Buddy's ass. Buddy looked at the Little Fool, eyes glazed with the lust-magic. The Little Fool began pumping his hips, slowly at first. His cock shaft slid out of Buddy's ass to the very tip and then he plunged it back full in again. The Little Fool picked up speed, pumped his hips faster now, and Buddy was figuring out how to push to meet every thrust, matching the Little Fool's pace. My milkshake brings all the boys to the yard.

The magic words carried Buddy through it. He wraps his legs around the Little Fool's torso. The Little Fool never broke rhythm, his cock still driving in and out of Buddy's ass, his eyes locked on Buddy's dazed face. "Sockie says, Take it, take it deep." Their bodies pressed tightly together, squirming. "Sockie says, Jack yourself off." Buddy spat in his hand and started jacking himself off. His erection had faded while he was getting fucked, but now it came back in force. Back in black. Buddy figured out quickly it felt better, better, best of all when he timed his hand-strokes to the Little Fool's butt-pounders.

The Little Fool's mouth was pulled in a smirk. His eyes gleamed with a fierce, predator light. His thrusts pistoned his dick in and out, hard and fast. His face was streaked with sweat. He reached down and tugged Buddy's balls. A shudder ran through Buddy's body and he gave a long, trailing groan. Buddy cried out and his body arched up. His dick pulsed out its load in three quick ropes across his chest. Buddy thrashed around. The Little Fool pulled out of Buddy's ass. He pulled off the condom and tossed it aside. He towered over Buddy's body and jacked his own cock. Squirt, squirt, squirt went his load all over Buddy's stomach and thigh. Ding, ding, ding went the bell.

The Little Fool fell back against his headboard. The spell was broken. The fever-madness was gone. Buddy looked embarrassed. He pulled away out of the Little Fool's bed and picked up his boxer shorts and pulled them on. He didn't look at the Little Fool or me. He wiped off the mixed cum with his towel and climbed into his own bed. He turned his back to the Little Fool and pretended to fall immediately asleep.

The Little Fool wiped off the sweat and lube with his tee-shirt. He pulled on his pants. Picked up his textbook. He tried to read it. Tried to ignore Buddy with junkie focus on his studying. His thoughts were racing, but the Little Fool had years of practice at pushing things aside. He could tell himself it was just two buddies getting off. He could blame it on my naughty monkey eyes and the naughty magic words, and edit out the nasty parts. They could pretend it never happened. This was my bad monkey gift to him. Silent night, holy night. No more fever-madness for a while. Blame it on the baddest monkey around. Bad monkey.

The next step, what happened was, the Little Fool did that wrong thing I told you was coming. And he did it without thinking.

Ed Wood is pure thought. Ed recorded the way humans really think. Remember the excerpts from Cromwell's opening monologue in Ed Wood's *Plan 9 from Outer Space*: "We are all interested in the future, for that is where you and I are going to spend the rest of our lives. And remember, my friend, future events such as these will affect you in the future ... My friend, can your heart stand the shocking facts about grave robbers from outer space? ... Can you prove that it didn't happen? ... Many scientists believe that another world is watching us this moment."

The cultural literacy on Ed Wood is that he made the worst movies ever made. Maybe you remember Johnny Depp as Ed dressed in a fuzzy sweater. But the most important part of Ed Wood is that he had no editor, so he recorded how people really think. Lots of people don't have outside editors. As I write this, I don't have an editor. I'm a sock monkey. Eventually someone will check the spelling and grammar and punctuation. Someone will check to make sure the character names stay the same and there aren't any drifts in style where there shouldn't be. There will be comments. Everyone edits before they do anything. People start editing before they even start to think. People like to believe that Lenny Bruce, Sam Kinison, and Howard Stern never had internal editors, but Lenny, Sam, and Howard are the worst examples. They're always going for the joke, always trying to be interesting. The only real record in art of real human thought is the work of Ed Wood. Not the repetitions and impressions of Gertrude Stein, or the perfect rambling thoughts of Nicholson Baker, or the remembrances of things that happened before Proust sniffed some cake. That's not the way any of you really think. Not really. Not deep thinking. Before the editor in your brain makes the words make sense, there's a flash. It isn't even really an image. It might be a word or a phrase. It's not directly related to what's happening. It's never what you're really working on. It can be a little snippet of anything. And then smart people, careful people, artists, take that pure thought and clean it up until it seems as if they're putting out pure thought, a glimpse into their hearts for others. But the original thought was never recorded. The original pure thought sounded like Ed Wood. Your stupid minds, your stupid, stupid minds.

The Little Fool and Buddy didn't know what they were thinking. Their brains were stumbling like Bela and Tor trying to dance a ballet in rollerblades on a moving sidewalk covered in marbles. Oh, how I wish I could tell stories like Ed Wood. Not *all* the time. Please: If one wish gets granted, let's not have it be *that* one; I don't want to write like him all the time. If I get one wish, well, let's go for about fourteen inches of stuffed monkey sock hanging between my legs, or a vaccine against the common cold with the patent in my name. But I'd like for just a paragraph or two to be able to write like Ed so you could see the process as Buddy and the Little Fool tried to make sense of what they'd done. "My friends, we have been worried, struggling, through a story full of love for a young man that, though beautiful, is supposed to be off limits and unattainable. And there is something about great writers, thinking about great writers of all time, and talking to someone, maybe a bad, very bad, very-very bad monkey, a liar who talks of great authors and deep heavy thoughts before the corruption of the presumed-innocent young man whom we have grown to love." That's the best I can do. Shut up and drive.

Buddy woke up first the next morning, and he lay in bed a while thinking. Awake but pretending to be asleep so he could think. Then he got dressed and got out of there quickly. He didn't look at the Little Fool. Didn't look at the bad monkey either. Bye-bye, love.

The Little Fool climbed out of bed. He shaved and took a shower. He got dressed. He didn't mean to do any same-sex naked skin contact with Buddy. That was not the kind of male bonding he wanted with his roommate. Buddy was not a casual buddy. Buddy was an around-all-the-time presence who could not be ignored.

It was a one-time thing; it just happened a lot. Every couple of days for a month, to be exact. Buddy would parade around their tiny dorm room in nothing but his boxer shorts. That was how he signaled his readiness

for some same-sex naked contact. It was like a Nature Channel documentary on the badger mating habits come to life. Buddy signaled his willingness to mate by parading around. Sooner or later, the Little Fool got the idea. He never *didn't* have the idea. He just needed a while to let the fever-madness wear down his resistance. He did not want to be mating with Buddy all the time. He still had his girlfriend and he had sex with her. A lot. They kissed in public. Possession-display. He still had his same-sex buddies on the side. But there was Buddy, an attractive unknown hundred-and-forty pound presence parading around in just a pair of boxer shorts. Buddy would see the Little Fool was aroused. Buddy would sense the male's readiness, and the mating ritual would begin. Sometimes Buddy would look at me first. Sometimes the Little Fool would. The result was always the same. The Little Fool said, "Look at Sockie. Look him right in the eye." And so they began their mating ritual.

It wasn't all sunshine and flowers, though. Buddy wanted the Little Fool to reciprocate. Sometimes Buddy wanted to climb on top and be the lumberjack man. The Little Fool never let him. The Little Fool put his penis into Buddy's ass, never the other way around, no matter how nicely Buddy asked. The mating ritual played out one way and one way only. Just some piece of teenage wildlife.

This bothered the Little Fool. He did not like someone so close to his core life knowing he liked straight-acting and gay-doing. Too close to home. It gave Buddy too much control. The Little Fool was afraid Buddy would expose him. The Little Fool's friends would not approve or love him anymore. It bothered him too the way Buddy wanted to be the man sometimes and do the fucking. No. The Little Fool was all man, in and out of the sack. The Little Fool decided it had to end. He thought that up all by himself, without asking me. He knew what I'd say in my bad monkey voice. *Sockie says ...* He decided he had to be the man and put a stop to it once and for all.

That wrong thing the Little Fool did that I keep warning you is coming? This is the part were he did it.

He picked up my soft flannel body, and he put me in a drawer. *In a fucking drawer!* No eyes, no magic words, no more naked-skin contact with his roommate--that's what he was thinking. He wanted to edit me out of his life. He put me in a draw and he shut it.

Why was that a mistake? It pissed me off. I'm a bad whamma-jamma monkey, and I'd already spent years sitting in a dark closet waiting for the Little Fool to reach for me again. *Years!* Going into the silent dark again? Well, that'll piss off even the nicest monkey, so imagine how mad a bad monkey would be. Now double it. Us sock monkeys don't do jealousy or envy. But we do love, and we do anger. The Little Fool couldn't bring himself to look at me. He was afraid I would stop him from putting an end to it. So into the drawer he stuffed me and then he left for class. Baby, baby, where did our love go?

The Little Fool got back late at night. Buddy the roommate was already there. The Little Fool dropped his books on his desk. Buddy stood across the room, in nothing but his boxers. Buddy had a weird look on his face. The Little Fool did not know what to make of it.

Buddy said quietly, "Sockie is very angry. You put him away."

That's when the Little Fool saw the drawer was cracked open. He looked around, and there I sat on his nightstand again. The Little Fool's jaw dropped. What happened when his eyes met my chipped button gaze? If I ever knew the magic words, I was using them then. I didn't whisper the magic words to the Little Fool often. Hadn't in years, not since he discovered buddies. He knew my eyes shouted the words to him now. And the Little Fool could not look away.

Sock monkeys don't do jealousy or envy, but we *do* do love, anger, and revenge. Especially us bad monkeys, and I'm the baddest there ever was. Bad to the bone.

Buddy whispered, "Sockie says, we'll play it your way. It's time you learned a lesson."

Buddy whispered, "You did a bad thing, and Sockie is very angry. Bad boys get punished."

Buddy whispered, "Sockie says, Relax. Focus."

He walked over behind the Little Fool. The Little Fool was lumberjack tall and strong, and Buddy was just Buddy, but the magic words tipped the scales. I loved the Little Fool from the depths of my bad monkey soul, but bad monkeys know revenge too well. I be glad when you dead, you rascal you.

Buddy whispered, "Sockie says, Accept your punishment. It's for your own good."

Buddy whispered, "Sockie says, Look deeply into his eyes. So focused. So relaxed. So ready to do what he says."

Buddy stood behind the Little Fool. He reached both arms around him, like hugging from behind but not hugging, and he opened the Little Fool's pants. They slipped down his thighs. The Little Fool wore no underwear. He did this sometimes because it felt sexy. Sexy boy. His pants slipped down and his penis was right there, already getting hard and fever-mad. Buddy pushed the Little Fool's shoulders forward and down. The Little Fool bent forward and leaned over the bed. He held on to the sides of the mattress with his hands. Buddy removed his own boxer shorts. Naked. Hard cock. Ready.

Buddy whispered, "Sockie says, Relax. This will hurt a little at first."

Buddy whispered, "Sockie says, Focus. Focus through the pain and it will feel good."

Buddy whispered, "Sockie says, It's time you learned to give as well as take. I'll go slow."

The Little Fool looked at my bad button eyes, pleading silently for me to make this stop, to stop Buddy from teaching him a lesson. No way! Revenge is what bad monkeys do best. You gotta be cruel to be kind, in the right measure.

That's right, Little Fool--grip the sides of the mattress with your fists. Hold on tight.

Okay, Buddy, get between his legs, lube a finger, and work it up his ass hole. That's right--do that for a while. Now put your cock at the opening, and poke it in. Ride on down into this tunnel of love.

Yeah, Little Fool, you've never been the receiver before. It hurts? Yeah. Yell and try to pull away all you want, but you can't. I won't let you.

Buddy, hold him tight. Hold him down with your hands on his shoulders. *Hold him!* There. That fist he swings back at you--trying to push you away--grab that hand, cover it with your own, and hold on to it.

That's right, Little Fool, try to scream. Only a raspy choke-sound comes out, huh? Too bad. No one will hear that. No one come save you from the bad pissed-off monkey.

Buddy, poke your cock hard into his butt. Make his ass ring clamp down tight on the violation. Fuck him hard and fast. *No mercy! None!* Own his ass.

Does it hurt, Little Fool? Buddy is balls-deep in your ass. Do you like the way he pulls out all the way before pushing back inside for home? That's right. Keep your eyes locked on mine. Predator eyes. This bad monkey owns your head. Buddy owns your ass. Do you like the way it feels? Does it feel like more than punishment now?

Sockie says ... Accept it.

Sockie says ... This is who you are.

Sockie says ... All is forgiven.

The Little Fool looked deep in my chipped predator eyes the whole time Buddy took his ass. Buddy fucked the Little Fool like his was the first ass he had ever conquered, monkey-hard and whamma-jamma-fast. The Little Fool's lizard brain was getting used to the pain. Smoke on the water. He was feeling the pressure of rubbing perfection that remained. The sliding pleasure made it tolerable first, then enjoyable, better, then better still. Buddy was scratching an itch the Little Fool hadn't known always needed scratching. Fire in the skies.

Buddy pulled out. He still held on to the Little Fool's fist with one hand, and he pumped away at his own dick with his other. He spurted his semen across the Little Fool's gold-dusted lower back and one buttock. Buddy reached under the Little Fool's torso and wrapped his sperm-messy hand around the Little Fool's hard cock. The Little Fool's lizard brain passions rose to the occasion and he came hard in just a few strokes, cramping up as his body unloaded shot after shot. Fire away.

Buddy draped his limp torso across the Little Fool's back. They collapsed forward, panting, onto the Little Fool's narrow bed, with Buddy hugging the Little Fool from behind. Buddy had an arm slung across the Little Fool's chest. The Little Fool tried to pull away; Buddy held him tight. The Little Fool tried to push Buddy's arm away; Buddy held him tight. Normally the Little Fool was bigger and stronger than Buddy, but the dazed feeling from the magic words and his orgasm kept the Little Fool from concentrating enough to escape. Caught between my bad monkey eyes and Buddy's body. Finally, the Little Fool stopped trying to escape. He accepted it and settled back against Buddy's chest. He allowed himself to be hugged from behind. He closed his eyes.

And went right to sleep.

6. Monkey Shines

The Little Fool graduated. He got a job. He moved to a new city. He still calls Mommy and Daddy every Sunday, and Aunt Tom once a month, and he visits twice a year. We raised him well.

New job. New apartment. New buddies. He brings home buddies frequently--from the office, from the gym, from a bar--and he introduces them to me. Maybe they think it strange that their new buddy is an adult man with a sock monkey in his bedroom, but they do not think about it long. They have other things on their lizard brain to-do list. One look in my bad lying button monkey eyes is enough for them. Then they move on to the next item on their agenda, the whole reason for being in the Little Fool's bedroom in the first place. Where are you going to, do you know?

There were never any magic words hiding in my eyes. Sure, my eyes came from Uncle Marcus' suit--that part was true. But the "magic words" part was just a story the Little Fool made up in his head, to explain what was

happening to him. To make himself seem less naughty. Put the blame on me. I'm the meanest, baddest whamma-jamma around, and that's the meanest, baddest truth of all. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Everything that happened? The Little Fool made it happen. It was never me. He took what happened and edited it. Embellished it. Yeah, I let him tell himself that story for years. It was what he wanted to believe. Of course I went along with it--I told you from the start: I'm a bad lying monkey, the worst around, and I love that Little Fool like only a bad monkey can. Bad Little Fool. Bad monkey. Bad all around. Sock monkeys are made by grandmothers and fairy Aunt Toms with machine-gun sewing machines, and we are given voices by young Little Fools who love us too much and squeeze our stocking stuffing. We are not made by fairy godmothers with magic wands and magic words. Bippety-boppety-boo. Did you really believe I knew any magic words? *No!* I'm the toughest, baddest sock monkey around, but I'm still a sock monkey. There are limits.

The Little Fool learned his own magic words in time. He had them inside himself all along. It's all just knowing what to say and when. The Little Fool says his own magic words to his buddies now, charms them out of their clothes and into his bed for some naked skin-madness contact. The Little Fool is good. They always let his magic words work. He is a big, strong gold-dusted man, lumberjack big, lumberjack strong, and his buddies are eager to hear his magic words. People try to put us down just because we get around.

Sometimes Buddy visits too. The one from college. Time has passed since then. I don't know how much. A lot. Enough time has gone by that the Little Fool has been promoted a few times. Time, is it holding us? Time, is it after us? Same as it ever was. The Little Fool has a career now, he tells me. And he has lost all trace of boyhood on the outside. He grew up lumberjack strong and lumberjack tall. All man. Talkin' about my man.

They've stayed close. Buddy from college lives in a nearby city and visits once a month or so. He comes to see me, and he comes to enjoy some naked same-sex contact with the Little Fool in his bed. They are good to each other. The Little Fool sleeps well with Buddy, which is still unusual. He still has trouble with actual sleeping when new buddies are in his bed, after "sleeping together." But with Buddy, he sleeps deeply and happily.

The Little Fool misses his college Buddy when he goes back to his own home. But he does not feel the urge to stalk like he did with his high school buddy. No. That part of his life is over. Now he has me to keep him focused on what matters, and he has his other buddies to fill in the gaps until Buddy comes to visit again. I think I love you, so what am I so afraid of?

What do the Little Fool and Buddy talk about in bed? They talk about Buddy coming to live with us, the Little Fool and me, someday soon. The Little Fool thinks he would like that. I'm the meanest, baddest predator monkey around, and I only want the Little Fool to be happy. It's not enough to be loved twelve feet tall and bulletproof anymore. He needs to be loved happy too. I love the Little Fool, and he loves this tough motherfucking little monkey too.

Things don't just end. You can start anywhere, and go anywhere, but can't just end anywhere. Even impermanence goes through a kind of periodic metamorphosis, as a renewal. Are you surprised a naughty little monkey knows a big word like "impermanence"? Get over it. I heard it on the radio, oh, on the radio. Even impermanence may seem like an ending or a beginning, depending on the context.

This is not meant to be a recapitulation. It's a reminder of what is. Always something there to remind me.

And it's also a reminder of how things change, and how things always stay the same, and how hard it is

sometimes to tell the difference. Time may change me, but I can't trace time.

Things find their own way in their own time, according to the Little Fool. He really says things like that--says them like he means them too. This is his talent. It used to be that the Little Fool could not talk about things unless he had seen them. He could only conceive of words to talk about objects, events, and people he had actually seen. He thought in pictures and only found words for pictures he had seen. He never saw Uncle Marcus' stage act, so he could never find Uncle Marcus' magic words. Now he has found magic words of his own. He does not need me as much anymore. He is twelve feet tall and bulletproof and happy on his own. Someday soon, he won't need my hunka-hunka burning monkey love to be strong for him. He will be strong on his own. Until then, I'm right here. Mighty, mighty, just letting it all hang out.

The finale, of course, is just the last thing that ever happens, the magician's final flourish onstage just before the curtain falls. Except, there is never the last thing. Destination unknown. The one song ends, and another begins, and another, and sometime later the one song plays again. There is always something happening. Until it stops.
