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Synopsis of Bare Ben – Book One

Provincial England, early 1990s.

Ben hates his circumcision. He lost his long, perfect foreskin just days before his 18th birthday when Roger, his stepfather, set things up so that a “routine” medical check-up included an unnecessary circumcision. Ben does his best to hide his hated new state, but word gets round and, on his last day at school, he over-hears his new nickname – “Bare Ben.”

A few months later, now at university, Ben struggles to establish rapport with his public-school room-mate Christopher. Things start to thaw between them when Ben discovers that Christopher is also circumcised, and they somehow bond when Ben opens up about his distress over the loss of his foreskin. Christopher, to Ben’s massive relief, tells him about lube.

Soon after, Ben runs into Mike, the nurse who assisted at his circumcision. During their chat it becomes apparent how the unwanted circumcision had been engineered. With the truth discovered, although they know nothing can be done as he was quite within his rights to ask for Ben to be circumcised, the police call on Roger at work, only to discover that he has vanished, taking a large amount of his company’s and wife’s money with him.

Ben spends a weekend with his natural father who, despite Ben’s efforts to hide the shame of his circumcision, finds out about it. He re-assures Ben that it looks good and tells him of his past history with Roger, his ex-best friend, and how it was possible that Roger’s action was taken in revenge for a past wrong.

Two years later, Christopher and Ben are on holiday when they happen to come across Roger. With Roger finally in jail for embezzlement, Mike, who is now working as a prison nurse, manages to give Roger a “revenge” circumcision.

As part one ends, Ben and his new wife discover that they are to have a baby boy. To Ben’s enormous distress, he discovers that non-religious Bekky is intent on having the boy circumcised to honour her Jewish heritage.

Bare Ben – Book One Bonus

These events occur midway through the narrative in Book One, starting just as Ben and Christopher's first year at university comes towards its end.

Chapter One: The Gite

"They said they'd cover our fares and our keep, and give us a bit of spending money too. What do you reckon?"

Christopher's was just off the phone from his parents. They'd just exchanged contacts on the gite in Normandy that they'd had their eye on for a while and, as the place had been unoccupied for some time and had become rather neglected, they'd asked Christopher if he'd like to take "that new friend" with him for a couple of weeks to get the place in order before they went there themselves. With the thought of three months at home with his mum with the pall of Roger's misdeeds still very much hanging over them, Ben had been dreading his first summer vacation so, with a slightly guilty feeling about leaving Carol on her own, he'd leapt at the offer.

Three weeks later, they were there. Ben loved the place as soon as they arrived. It was just idyllic. Apart from the swimming pool that the previous owners had installed just before going bankrupt, everything else was decidedly run down, but somehow this just added to the charm. The young men spent their first day hacking at the overgrown garden before opening a tin of cassoulet for an easy, al-fresco dinner by the pool. Later, with the landline not yet re-connected and no mobile signal anywhere for miles around, Christopher cycled down to the phone box in the village to ring Molly. She'd been his girlfriend for a couple of months by then, and the plan was that she would join them at the gite for a few days en route to her summer school in Nice. Christopher was a long time gone and, when he finally re-appeared, Ben could see from his face that something was badly wrong.

"She's not coming. In fact, she's dumped me," he said, bluntly.

At first, Christopher was very quiet and evasive about why she had wanted to end things, and Ben had the good sense just to sit with him over a glass of wine and wait for him to talk in his own time. They were well into the second bottle before Christopher finally dropped the bomb shell. After a long silence, he just blurted it out:

"She thinks I'm gay. She said we'd be better off just as friends."

Ben laughed out loud.

"Gay?! For God's sake, that's crazy."

Ben was genuinely amazed by Christopher's reply.

"Actually, I think she might be right."

They talked late into the night. Bit by bit, more emerged. To Ben's surprise, as Christopher had often hinted to the contrary, it turned out that he and Mollie had never done anything remotely physical.

“I just couldn’t,” said Christopher. “I really like her and she’s so pretty and lovely, but... well, when it came to it, I just couldn’t, even though I knew she wanted it. Nothing more than just a peck on the cheek.”

That night in bed, Ben kept going over Christopher’s revelation, trying to make sense of his feelings. At first, it had seemed a ridiculous idea that his best mate might be gay. Thinking about it more, though, Ben found he wasn’t totally surprised without really knowing why. He knew the revelation wouldn’t end their friendship - Christopher was far too dear a friend for that - but would it change things and make it awkward for them to stay as close as they had become over the previous months? He thought back over events since he had first met Christopher, pondering them now in the evening’s new light – wondering if that new light that might, possibly, put a new and perhaps disquieting interpretation on them. He thought most about the evening when he had told Christopher that he was circumcised. Christopher had laughed heartily but not unkindly when Ben expressed his concern about never being able to wank again before giving him a tube of his lube and leaving him alone with it. When he’d returned to an embarrassed but much relieved Ben, Christopher had seemed to be more concerned to show off the espresso machine that his parents had just given him rather than asking about how Ben had got on. Going over the conversation again, Ben confirmed to himself that there hadn’t been any attempt by Christopher to “help” any further at a moment when it would have been all too easy to edge things in a sexual direction, and there was relief for Ben in realising that it really had simply been a case of one man just helping another out. In the months after that, their friendship had developed and deepened - perhaps helped by finding they were able to share and talk about something so intimate - and they had discussed circumcision many times. Although Christopher was unwavering in his view that being circumcised was the best way to be, he genuinely understood Ben’s distress at what had been done to him and empathised about the way it had come about. Over time though, Christopher had come to accept that others might think differently about the circumcised state than he did, and he always just listened with compassion to Ben’s grief and fury over his un-wanted and unnecessary modification, with never any attempt to make any kind of sexual move. Underneath all his old-fogey image, Christopher was a kind soul, and Ben realised that him being gay didn’t change that. He knew this was bound to be a difficult time for him and Ben realised that it was his turn to return kindness and understanding and help him through it.

Chapter Two: Patrice

The days passed quickly, and both young men found it satisfying to see the place start to come back to life. Days were spent working in the house and garden interspersed with dips in the pool and walks to the village, and the nights passed talking about everything and nothing in the warm evening air. Christopher's sexuality was, of course, a regular subject of conversation. It seemed to Ben that Christopher's feelings about it wavered from night to night and that there was a lot of unease there, not least about how his parents would react when, or even if, he told them. Ben had only met them a couple of times, but that was enough for him to realise that the Hilton-Smiths were not exactly the type of family with whom it would be easy to share that kind of news.

After a few days, Monsieur Dupont appeared - the villagers' builder of choice. The old outhouse close to the main building, quickly christened "the cow shed" by Christopher, was to be converted as the Hilton-Smiths wanted the downstairs barn made into a games room and the roof space converted into two bedrooms with a bathroom between them. Dupont was a determined worker who kept himself to himself, and the only impact he had on the two young men's routine was that it now meant that trunks were needed for cooling off in the swimming pool when he was around. Ben had been surprised at how easily he had been converted to skinny dipping. Christopher, perhaps because of his boarding school background, had never had any issue with being naked, and Ben had in fact come to suspect during their time sharing a room at university that he actually rather enjoyed it. Although young Ben had inherited his father's similar ease with nudity, all that had changed with his circumcision. The loss of his foreskin meant that his most private part - the part that most men have to take positive steps to reveal in intimate moments - was exposed and vulnerable and on view to anyone who saw him naked, and that extra bit of nudity was too much for him and gave an overwhelming feeling of shame about his circumcised state being seen. He felt his penis now looked rude and immodest - brazenly sexual, even in its totally flaccid state, especially as his sizeable penis meant that it would always be noticed, circumcised or not. He had become a cubicle user in public toilets, no longer an uninhibited urinator like his dad, no longer totally confident in the liberating feeling of flopping his long penis out in the knowledge that it was one to be proud of. He had all but given up on team sports too - negotiating the locker room without letting his status being seen and the questions that might result was just too much trouble, and now it was easiest just avoid the situation. Somehow though, being nude with Christopher was strangely unproblematic. Christopher's lack of concern in nakedness, obviously not bothered about it being seen that his penis had been modified, had helped Ben realise that, for some people at least, it was no big deal to be circumcised and something that needed neither explanation or justification.

Becoming relaxed about being naked in front of each other had made the practicalities of sharing a room in the halls of residence much simpler for the two men, and they both maintained that feeling of ease at the gite too. As well as not having the bother of dressing to go to bathroom, it meant that it was easy just to strip off and jump into the pool for a minute or two's respite when the intense heat got too much. Even so, Ben was always quick to put his shorts back on afterwards, whereas Christopher never rushed to dress again. To Ben's slight discomfort, Christopher had even spent some days working with just his trainers on, claiming that it saved a lot of messed up clothes when it came to emulsifying the walls. When he could, Ben had surreptitiously looked more closely at Christopher. He had seen almost no other circumcised males and somehow needed to know more about their state and learn the worst of it. He was curious that Christopher's outcome looked so different to his own, even allowing for the considerable size difference between them. Christopher's looked far less sleek than Ben's and it was a small comfort to him that, actually, he thought Christopher's circumcision was even worse than his own - his scar line was wide and uneven, the course of it round his shaft far from regular unlike Ben's neat result. It did look, though, as if his cutter had treated Christopher less radically when it came to the amount of foreskin that they had been removed. There seemed to be

some slack left on Christopher's shaft whereas Ben had none at all, and he often wondered if he would have preferred that. Even though Christopher looked even more marred and mutilated, Ben hated the drastic feel of his own circumcision, especially the way that he could feel everything on his penis start to feel tight and stretched as soon as he began to erect. It was even worse that nothing at all moved under his hand when he masturbated, and he badly missed the feel of his foreskin working loosely over his glans. Most of all, he hated that his glans was always totally exposed and unprotected however soft he was. If he'd had a circumcision like Christopher, with the helmet sometimes partly covered when soft, would he have hated it quite as much? He'd never seen Christopher with an erection, nor did he want to, but he could imagine that there would at least be a little give there when he was hard. Ben envied him that, even though he knew it would probably just be a tormenting reminder of the long, pleasurable strokes he used to be able to enjoy when he pulled his skin right forward until it bunched in front of his glans, then seeing the head of his penis appear as he moved his fist back towards his body, his foreskin finally flat and sleek on his shaft like it now was all the time.

Mr. Dupont made good headway in the cow shed, but he told them at the end of the week that he would have to take the following Monday off as he had to drive his wife to a medical appointment in Rouen. So that work didn't get behind, he said, his son Patrice would come in instead to get on with some of the simpler tasks. Mr. Dupont was no beauty, so Patrice was rather a surprise, and even Ben could tell that he was very good looking. Ben caught Christopher's eye as Patrice emerged from his father's van, and got a knowing wink in return. Patrice's attitude to work was, however, as different from his father's as his looks, and he was more eager to chat than to get on. Although Ben could only make out the gist of the French, he learnt that he was a final year student in Paris and had a girlfriend there, and that he considered building work well beneath him but needed to earn some money over the summer: "Que pouvez-vous faire?" After a while, Chris tactfully suggested that they had better get to work before it got too hot, and Patrice headed off to the barn with no obvious enthusiasm.

As usual, Christopher and Ben left their work at midday for lunch, and Christopher crossed to the barn to see if Patrice wanted anything to eat too. Unsurprisingly, he did and stopped work immediately. As Christopher started making bacon sandwiches, Ben noticed how he was gazing frequently out of the kitchen window to where Patrice lay, sprawled on the grass with his shirt off. Ben wondered idly if Patrice would think something as basic as a bacon sandwich as far beneath him as he did building work, but he ate eagerly and with no complaint. Ben's thoughts wandered as Christopher and Patrice chatted, moving backwards and forwards between broken English and limited French, but something Christopher said made him suddenly come to:

"We always have a swim to cool off after lunch and you'd be very welcome to join us if you like."

Patrice said it sounded good, but that he didn't have any trunks.

"Well, neither do we!" said Christopher, with a laugh.

Christopher and Patrice had their shorts off and were in the pool in seconds, leaving Ben feeling very uncomfortable and cursing Christopher for his suggestion. Ben couldn't help take in that Patrice's body was as Adonis-like as his face - fit and tanned, and with the start of a six pack, his penis was by no means as big as his own, but still sizeable. With a pang, Ben took in the snug, tapering foreskin that neatly covered his modesty. Ben was more than slightly reluctant to join them, but the embarrassment of not doing so was considerable, especially when he heard Christopher say "Come on in, dear boy. The water's lovely."

Ben, ill at ease, but with the thought of some relief from the heat very welcome nevertheless, turned his back on them as before he dropped his shorts, trying not to appear a total prude. With his hand, so he hoped, looking casually held in front of his genitals, he jumped quickly into the water.

Patrice and Christopher were loud and, to Ben's mind, rather childlike in the pool, splashing each other on purpose and generally messing around whilst Ben kept to swimming lengths as best he could. After a while, Christopher and Patrice got out and lay lazily by the side of the pool, both confident in their nudity and chatting idly. Ben, tired though he was, made a point of doing some more serious swimming while he considered the embarrassment of the "dress or don't dress" dilemma that would be involved in getting out and joining them. As he swam, he could hear Patrice ask Christopher "You are brothers, yes?"

"No," said Christopher, "just friends."

Ben wondered why he asked. After all, they looked nothing like each other at all - complete opposites in fact.

"OK," Patrice replied. Then, after a while, "I'm surprised you eating sandwiches of pig. You are Jewish, yes?"

Christopher laughed. "No, funny question!"

Ben, suddenly uncomfortable, realised where this particular line of questioning might be leading and that it would be good to put a stop to it. Thinking quickly, he stuck his head over the side of the pool to say that he was making coffee and asked if they would like some too. He was pleased when they did, giving him the opportunity to make a quick grab for his shorts at the far end of the pool and head indoors, hoping that the conversation he had left behind would have changed direction after his interruption.

Safely indoors with only his naked rear view having been seen, Ben put the kettle on the stove. He went to the cupboard for coffee, but the tin was nearly empty. It was quite a long search through the cupboards to find where Christopher, who was still quick to assert that he was by far the better coffee maker of the two of them and always insisted on making it, had stowed the new packet. As he eventually found it and returned to the stove, Ben glanced out of the kitchen window. To his amazement, Christopher and Patrice were in a tight clench by the side of the pool, tongues intently connected in a deep and very intense kiss. Ben stood transfixed for a moment - amazed, but unable, against his better judgement, to stop looking. His attention was broken by the whistle of the kettle and, in the time it took to fill the cafetiere, they were gone. Ben, not at all sure how he felt and very conflicted about what he should do in the suddenly new and strange world in which he found himself, poured out just one cup and went to his room with his book.

It was hard to concentrate in view of what may or may not have been going on downstairs, and Ben realised he had been dozing when the sound of the running shower suddenly woke him, quickly followed by the engine of builder's van as it disappeared down the drive. Moments later, Christopher put his head round the door, smirking.

"Well, you old dark horse, you!" said Ben. "Are you OK?"

“Very much so, my dear friend,” said Christopher. “And thank you for your thoughtful non-intervention - I hope you weren’t too shocked. I think that might have proved that good old Molly was right!”

Surprisingly, Christopher was very open about his exploits. Ben, of course, had been very curious about what had happened but probably wouldn’t have asked too much had Christopher not seemed so eager to share. He was just pleased that Christopher seemed to be in good spirits after whatever had gone on, and it was a relief for him to find him in such good shape, both mentally and physically.

“Well, we were just lying there in the sun as you know. Then I couldn’t believe it! I thought it was an insect crawling over my bottom, but when I reached round to swat it, I realised that it was his hand. He was stroking me - so gently. Then before I knew it, he was kissing me. I’m not really sure how it all happened, but he was suddenly all over me. I asked him later how he “knew.” It was a bit tricky understanding as it’s not the kind of discussion that A-level French prepares you for, but he said he just “knew”, and that he was horny as he was missing his girlfriend and needed some relief and, well – he said that he thought I was quite sexy!”

Ben could tell how delighted Christopher was by the description and pondered the idea. He hadn’t ever really considered that possibility before and it did seem slightly unlikely, but how would he know?

“And,” continued Christopher, “just in case you are worried, he said that he just “knew” that you wouldn’t be interested, but he did say you are very cute, and that he loved your handsome appendage.”

Ben cringed at the knowledge that his cock had been seen and noted, despite the intended compliment.

“He asked if we are Jewish – imagine that!” laughed Christopher. “Then when I said we weren’t, he asked if we are American.”

“Why would he think that?” asked Ben.

“Dear boy – didn’t you know? All yanks are roundheads.”

Ben guessed the meaning of a term that he had never heard before and didn’t much relish. The knowledge that all Americans were circumcised was new to him too, and somehow disquieting.

“Then he suggested we went up to my room. I wasn’t sure. It was all so unexpected and – well - so soon after Molly and so on, but.... ‘in for a penny, old boy’ I thought. I knew you’d be around if things got out of hand and I had to call for you to rescue me from a fate worse than death, but luckily I didn’t need to!”

“Wow,” said Ben, rather at a loss to find any other word.

“Yes, we had a bit of good old tonsil exploring, which I must say was rather pleasant. Then his hands started wandering again.”

“Yours too?” asked Ben.

“Well, it seemed rather rude not too!” said Christopher, with a huge grin.

He knew it would sound an odd question, but Ben couldn’t stop himself asking it anyway.

“And what did you make of his.....foreskin?”

Somehow, he had to know.

“Well, it waswhat’s the word? Intriguing, perhaps.” said Christopher. “Yes, intriguing. I must say it felt rather different than I had expected - holding it and feeling how strange it is. Rather squishy perhaps? Lots of moving around, like something soggy in a plastic bag? I don’t know how to describe it really. And the way the head covers and uncovers – it was all much easier to do than I’d thought. Yes, intriguing it is. And, of course, spotlessly clean. I know we’d just been swimming, but even so – it was fine really, not like I’d always imagined. I was bracing myself to have it proved to me that being “sans prepuce” stops a lot of nastiness, but when I pulled him back it was all fine.”

“What is it with you cut guys and foreskins!” said Ben. “You all seem to think they are nasty, smelly dirty things, and they just aren’t!”

Ben was aware that he had both used a term that he had hated since it had applied to him and that, in the same sentence, habit had still made him speak as if he didn’t actually share that “cut” status himself.

“Well,” said Christopher, “he was spotless. So, it was just like a penis really - just one with some extra fittings!”

Ben laughed that Christopher, so used to not having one, could take a foreskin as being an “extra” rather than a default. He himself had always assumed that circumcised men were always viewed as having something missing.

“I did make him wince a bit at times,” said Christopher,” but I realised that I was probably going at it a bit hard. Especially his helmet – he jumped when I touched it. That was pretty incredible. How does a man put up with having a bell end that you can’t actually touch!?”

“It’s fine,” said Ben, “but I know that I’ve toughened up a lot since... I was...”

Ben, as usual, hesitated to say “circumcised.”

“Mine’s way less sensitive now,” Ben went on.” It’s got harder and tougher and it sometimes feels about as sensitive as a leather satchel since it’s been bare the whole time. When you’ve got a foreskin, the business end is always covered so you don’t get grief from it and, well, I suppose it’s the combo of head and skin working together that feels so good when you are on the job.”

It hit Ben all over again just how good that special combination did feel. A sensation in the pit of his stomach told him how much he hated the idea of never experiencing it again.

“Intriguing again,” said Christopher. “I must say it hadn’t dawned on me how the two go together like that. I suppose I’d always thought of the hood being just a cover and that you’d want it out of the way as soon as the fun started rather than it actually being any use. I hadn’t realised that you toughen up without one either, but mine still feels exquisite when I touch it.”

“Did you notice the colour?” said Ben “How pink the helmets look compared to ours?”

Ben was surprised at himself, realising he had somehow subtly identified with being a circumcised man - something that, had the thought about it, he would still have found very hard to do. In his mind, he was still an uncut man who just happened to have no foreskin.

“Yes, very smooth and shiny.”

“And did he – well - did he have a go on yours too?”

“Have a go!” What term! Well, he did have a try but, to be honest, I think it puzzled him a bit. He said he’d never seen one like ours for real.”

The “ours” stung Ben. Was he now one of such a rare breed that a man like Patrice had never come across a circumcised penis before?

“He had a bit of a tug,” said Christopher, “but I think he was a bit perplexed by it. To be quite honest, I don’t think he wasn’t anything much more than curious, so he soon lost interest and the hands started wandering again. I think both of us found that the first time experiencing the opposite version to your own is a bit of a learning curve.”

Ben smiled. He could only agree with that, even when the “opposite version” was, as he had found, actually part of your own body.

“And then...?”

“Well, I couldn’t believe it when his finger started exploring up inside the old nether regions. I was about to tell him to stop, but...”

“Have you never tried that before?” said Ben, rather taken aback that this might have been a new experience for Christopher.

“Well, yes, but let’s say that in retrospect my explorations in that department turn out to have been rather less daring than I’d thought,” laughed Christopher. “I’d always thought going as far as the first knuckle was being rather reckless! I must say that’s always been enough for me – but little did I know! He was right in deep in seconds – in a flash, before I could say anything. But, well, as you like to put it – “wow!”

Ben was trying to get his head round the idea of that that intense, edgy and somehow taboo feeling of having your anus penetrated by a finger might be under the control of someone else, and he didn’t like the thought of it too much.

“After a while I must say I was rather enjoying it, and I found I’d become rather more – well - might the word be “receptive”? Then the penny dropped! I remembered the old bachelors’ friend and realised it would be a good move to deploy some in a new way. So, I gave him a good old dollop of it on his finger, and “wow” all over again!”

“Wow,” echoed Ben, rather taken aback at just how far things had gone. He was amazed enough at Christopher’s reactions, openness and acceptance, let alone his palpable pleasure. Ben had assumed that it was just going to have been a snog and a bit of a grope, nothing as serious, intense and actively “gay” as this. He had thought that it would be a very long time before Christopher would be ready for anything like it but, equally hard for Ben to accept, was that the very straight-looking and acting Patrice had been the instigator.

“Then it wasn’t long until he clearly wanted to bring in the heavy artillery – well, at least a one-gun salute! That was certainly going up a level, I can tell you! I was glad that he isn’t quite such a lucky lad as you in the endowment department as I’m not sure I could have coped with one your size but...well, let’s just say that the condoms I brought along for Molly and I weren’t wasted after all! Ironic really.”

Ben chose to ignore Christopher’s compliment on his size. In a way, it was flattering to hear, but although Ben had of course compared himself with others and realised that his penis was

considerably bigger than most, it was still slightly disconcerting to hear someone else openly admit that they noticed that kind of thing too, even someone he was on such close terms with as Christopher. Was it “being gay” to talk about it? Ben didn’t know, and certainly wasn’t sure if he minded Chris doing so or not. For Ben, it had become a case of registering if another man was circumcised or uncut that had concerned him of late when he had chanced to see another penis, not how big it was. There had been alarmingly few times when he had seen another circumcised man anyway, especially another “normal”, British, Christian man like him rather than one who, through religion or background, had an “excuse” for being bare-headed and exposed. Ben chose to put those thoughts aside and focus back on Chris.

“So, how was it, then?” he asked, “taking him?”

This was the first time he’d heard any details of gay sex other than the usual ill-informed and salacious chat that had sometimes gone on at school. He’d never experienced anything of the kind himself - in fact his sexual experiences had been zero - but caught up in Christopher’s heady thrill in his new territory, he couldn’t help but be curious. This was Chris they were talking about! Sensible, conservative, Christopher – his closest friend, not some random gay guy in online porn.

“Well, when he started, I thought ‘Oh my God, no, stop’! It was awful – agony in fact. I thought I’d be maimed for life, but he said to relax and he’d go slow - and he did, to give him his credit. Then, suddenly, he was right in where the sun don’t shine! It was still agony, but ecstasy too, if you can believe that. Then there was more of the ecstasy part, but I still so wanted it to stop, but then when he did, I wanted him to start again! It was like - well you know how when you have your first olive and it is utterly vile, but then after a while you start to like it? Well, it was rather like that I suppose.”

Out of the corner of his eye, Ben was suddenly alarmingly aware that Christopher might be starting to harden as he re-lived the events. Something told him not to look to check, as doing that had, just possibly, the potential for a new and awkward situation between them. Neither of them had seen the other with an erection, and Ben really didn’t want that to change as it might just alter things between them in a way he didn’t want to have to deal with. He knew that sex with another man would never be right for him. There had only ever been one time when there was any kind of sexual tension between him and another male when, not long after his circumcision, his friend David had told him about his tight foreskin problems and shown him just how bad his phimosis was. Ben, to his amazement then and now, had taken out his own cock and let it hang, totally soft, inches from Dave’s face. Moments later, it was over and Ben had zipped up and moved the conversation on, only in the smallest amount of doubt that he had done the right thing. Nevertheless, talking to Christopher about his first sexual experience had him interested. He couldn’t help it. He wasn’t finding it erotic – his cock was flaccid, but suddenly he realised that he was intensely aware of the bareness of his glans inside his shorts - much more than he had for a very long time. Had he, he wondered, been gradually adjusting physically to his circumcision without noticing it was happening? For the first months, his freshly circumcised state had driven him mad, the constant stimulation and irritation on his bared helmet a torment. He hadn’t, he suddenly realised, noticed that since he had been at the gite. There was some strange dilemma there - part of him welcomed the idea that his new status wouldn’t be both a lifelong physical torture and a source of resentment but, on the other hand, reaching that state would mean that he had given up feeling a connection to his old, uncircumcised state. That possibility would, somehow, mean that circumcision - and Roger too of course - had won, and he knew with all his soul that being uncircumcised was better. Ben, lost in thought for a second, became aware that Christopher was still talking.

“So, I think we can say that the old cherry has been most definitely popped, dear boy. And who would have thought it would happen - and in that way too - when we were sitting on the ferry last week!”

“Indeed,” said Ben, focusing his attention back on Chris. “Amazing. And, well - you seem happy Christopher. Really happy!”

“Yes, dear boy. I must say I am, So, here’s to onwards and upwards. “I think that we should propose a vote of thanks to good old Molly, bless her. I always said she was a good ‘un!”

Chapter Three: St Pol sur Mer

Patrice made no more appearances. Ben could tell that Christopher was disappointed but realised slightly selfishly, that he was glad that their cosy routine wasn't going to be interrupted by any further exploits and that he wasn't going to have to share his friend with a new person in his life. After a couple more day's hard work clearing the overgrown orchard behind the "cow shed", Christopher told Ben that he thought they deserved a proper day off. There was, he said, a market-day bus from the village to St Pol sur Mer, and how did Ben fancy a day on the beach?

Ben was slightly put out that Christopher left it until they were off bus and walking towards the sea before telling him that most of the beach at St Pol was "clothing optional". It felt that it was bit of a set-up. It was clear to which part of the beach Chris wanted to go to, and he'd left it very late in the day before mentioning it. To his credit, Christopher did go on to say that he realised Ben might not be too comfortable with the nude bit, so he suggested that they sat in the grey area between the normal and naked sections and Ben, although still not exactly at ease, felt he couldn't really object.

When they got there, Christopher wasted no time in stripping off completely. Again, Ben was amazed that anyone circumcised could be quite so blasé about looking that way in public view, but there was somehow some admiration there, perhaps even envy, for Christopher's lack of concern. With gentle encouragement from Christopher to at least give it a go, Ben reluctantly slipped off his shorts too, but made sure that last week's Mail on Sunday, the only English paper they had managed to find in town, was deployed to keep his genitals out of view. He felt exposed and vulnerable about being nude in public but was determined to stick with it for a while at least. After a while with nothing terrible happening, he had to admit that it was pleasant to feel the warm breeze on his body, and that nobody there seemed to care one way or the other.

Ben, once he relaxed further into the strange situation, couldn't help but be rather intrigued by it all. The beach was quiet and most of the others there were much older than the two young men. There were a few younger and very attractive women around, all seemingly as unconcerned by their nakedness as Christopher but, with the direction of his gaze hidden by his sun glasses, Ben was actually just as interested in the male bodies, although for a very different reason than his friend. For Ben, it was a chance to see just how many of them were like him - that little bit more naked than most. To his dismay, he only saw two others with no foreskins. One of them, rather incongruously, had a skull cap on as his only piece of clothing, so it was clear why his other head was so obviously bare. The other was middle-aged and European, clearly half of a gay couple. That man's cut was much more like Christopher's than Ben's, a clear bunch of remaining foreskin sitting snugly behind his glans. The man walked past them a couple of times and Ben wondered idly if he and Christopher were being "checked out", either as the youngest other men there or else as, Ben thought with a smile as he shared his thought with Christopher, as another gay couple. The third time that man came past, two ice creams in his hand, Ben had a shock. This time his helmet was fully covered by foreskin.

"Did you see him? said Ben once the man was out of earshot.

"You been checking out the talent too, then?" said Christopher, "You could do much better than that if you want to give it a go- he's ancient!"

"Well I've been waiting for the moment to tell you - I've actually got a bit of thing for older men," replied Ben, jokingly. "No, seriously, I was sure he was circumcised when I saw him the first time. Did you see him before?"

"Well I think he made sure I did!" said Christopher.

Ben wondered idly if Christopher was starting to relax into his new found gay identity and somehow sending out new signals.

“No,” Christopher continued, “he’d just skinned it back before. Lots of nudists seem to do that.”

“Do they? Why’s that?” asked Ben, intrigued.

“Well I suppose they must just like it – the look of it, or the way it feels, or just because it gives them a cheap thrill,” said Christopher.

“I wonder how they manage it,” said Ben, “let alone why they’d even want to do it.”

It was an alarming thought for him - realising that choosing to reveal your glans could somehow be a sexual statement was bad enough, but that it could be something erotic was even worse.

“Couldn’t you get yours to stay back then?” asked Christopher.

“No. Well, actually I never tried. Only to wash. I never left it back on purpose. I don’t think it would have stayed put, and it would have felt really uncomfortable and weird if it had. Is it just a gay thing to do that, do you think?” said Ben.

He had never dreamt that there might be any connection between having an exposed glans and sexual orientation, and this was a disturbing new worry to add to his existing concerns. For Ben, there was definitely something about a foreskin that made it like an on/off switch – for him, the glans was a man’s most intimate part and only to be revealed by choice in sexualised moments. Losing the “off” setting, leaving his no choice over displaying his most private part and feeling immodest and vulgar in having to do so was one of the things that he hated most about his circumcision.

“Don’t think so,” said Christopher, “but don’t forget I’m a new recruit here. Perhaps it is. Don’t you think it looks sexy with the head out then?”

“No!” said Ben, firmly. “It just looks, well,rude.”

Christopher was silent, and Ben worried that he might have offended him.

“I fancy stretching my legs” said Christopher after a while, no sign of offence being taken. “Do you mind guarding our worldly goods while I head off for a bit? I’ll bring us back ice creams.”

Christopher was gone a very long time, leaving Ben to his thoughts. By the time he came back, no ice creams in hand, Ben’s pressing concern was that he was truly desperate to pee. He’d tried doing in lying on his front in the sand, then turned to the side under cover of his newspaper, but he just couldn’t manage it. He had long had his shorts back on for a quick dash up into the dunes once Christopher returned.

“What took you so long, you bugger?” said Ben. “I’m dying for a leak. And when I come back, I actually WILL bring us ice creams!”

“Well make sure you wash your hands first, dear boy. I don’t want your mucky fingers all over my 99,” said Christopher.

“Ooh, matron!” said Ben as he walked quickly inland.

Ben, increasingly anxious to empty his bladder, reached the dunes and was alarmed to find that there was actually no real privacy there after all. He noticed a clump of trees a little further inland and headed for them as his best bet. Reaching them, he pushed through the branches, going deep into the trees before he found a place where he could comfortably undo his zip and release. When he’d finished, he turned to take a more direct route back to the beach café for ice creams. As he fought through some dense undergrowth and emerged into a small clearing, he suddenly froze. A young couple lay in the space between the trees, both naked, and Ben had clearly walked in their love making. They were kissing intently, the man’s fingers inside the girl’s pussy as she moaned quietly, his other hand gently stroking her large, firm breasts. Her hand was round one of the largest penises that Ben had ever seen, working a generous foreskin up and down the long shaft.

Ben just stood, locked. Suddenly, the couple looked up and noticed him. Ben was expecting a quick injunction from them to push off and mind his own business but, to his surprise, they both just smiled. He noticed suddenly how good-looking a couple they were, their olive skin tanned all over and showing no sign that they ever wore swimming gear for their sunbathing. With amazement, Ben took in too that both their bodies were completely hairless – both crotches as bald and smooth as if they had been children. He had never seen anything like it and, it shocked him as much as it intrigued him.

“Bon jour,” said the woman. “Comment ca va?”

The accent wasn’t French.

“Pardonez moi,” said Ben, turning to leave. “Sorry, I had no idea....”

“Don’t go!” said the man, but Ben was already gone.

Ben headed along the boardwalk to the café, his hands in the pockets of his shorts to try and hide the erection that would otherwise have shown so clearly. It was some distance to the café, but luckily he passed no one. He had managed to get himself under control by the time he got there, but was worried about the damp patch that he saw had formed on the front of his shorts, cursing that he no longer had a foreskin to contain at least some of his unwelcome spontaneous emissions. He hoped that it would have dried before Christopher noticed, and briefly wondered if he might “accidentally” get some ice cream on there as camouflage.

When, rapidly melting ice creams in hand, Ben turned off the boardwalk and back towards where they had been sitting, he saw that Christopher had company. As he neared, he saw with alarm who it was - the couple he had encountered in the bushes. It was too late to avoid them as Christopher noticed him and waved, and there was no choice other than to keep going. When he reached them, Christopher made to introduce him to the couple who, slightly incongruously, stood up to shake hands. Ben noticed how the man’s hefty penis swung as he did so, his long foreskin clearly in evidence with its couple of centimetres of tapered, overhanging flesh. His balls were similarly impressive, with the skin on his low-hanging sack as smooth as the rest of his tight body. Ben tried not to stare at the woman, but it was obvious that she was very attractive.

Christopher introduced them as Fernando and Anna and, to Ben’s horror, invited them to have some of the wine they had brought with them. Christopher impressed Ben with the easy way he was

able to speak with them in their native Spanish, even though it left him feeling even more awkward in what he found to be a very uncomfortable situation - he had no idea what they were saying, and was hoping against hope that they weren't having a joke at his expense about having walked in on them earlier. It was even worse when, minutes later, he heard his name mentioned and gathered that they must be talking about him. Ben wished that Christopher would have the sensitivity to at least translate some of their conversation. Finally, he turned to Ben.

"Don't look so glum, dear boy, and I'm very sorry for talking about you behind your back, as it were. Anyway, the gist of all that is that is that they are here for a couple of days and staying at the nudist resort just off the beach, that they think you are very cute indeed - me too actually - and they were sorry you did a runner on them earlier and, to cut to the chase, they've invited both of us to come back to their chalet to - as Fernando put it so quaintly - "make sex" with them."

The couple smiled, obviously understanding at least the gist of what Christopher had relayed. Ben was lost for words, and the woman took him totally by surprise when she reached out and brazenly grasped his penis through his shorts. Ben's first thought in his panic surprised him - that the last time someone else had held his penis they had had a scalpel in the other hand to cut off his foreskin. The man, suddenly as erect as he had been earlier, was now wantonly kissing Christopher, their tongues deep. Ben was horrified, scared to the depths of his soul that someone would see them behaving so blatantly in public and he looked around anxiously to see if anyone was nearby. He just wanted it to stop, yet he was very aroused in a way he never had been before. He had never had a sex life, his circumcision having made him reluctant even to look for anything of the sort, and their open and unembarrassed invitation was something way beyond his experience. The woman's face was close to his, her lips apart, her tongue licking them. Ben froze at first, but suddenly found that he was kissing her, aware of his clumsiness and hoping that she wouldn't make any comment, but she didn't. Ben heard laughter nearby, a passing couple on the boardwalk, mercifully too far away to see what was going on.

When it came to it, Ben just went along with it. It was just the easiest thing to do, although a huge part of him was very reluctant, and Christopher was clearly keen and Ben didn't want to spoil things for him. Apart from that, he had to admit that a part of him was very aroused by the idea, even though another part thought it was all both very wrong and deeply scary. He had never thought that his first sexual encounter might be like this, always imagining falling in love and a natural progression to intimacy when the time was right, not having sex clinically offered on a plate as a mere recreational activity.

As they all walked across the dunes to the couple's cabin on the resort, Christopher was, to Ben's mind, rather alarmingly blasé about the whole situation. Ben was more than anxious about what might be going to happen and worried about handling a situation he felt ill equipped to deal with. As they walked, Christopher explained that Ana and Fernando were both post-grad students who had just got married. They wanted to make it an open relationship but only to play together, and that Fernando was bi-sexual. Ben was amazed that conservative, even prudish, Christopher was relaying all this as if it was just information about their jobs and hobbies, let alone clearly relishing the opportunity for some near-anonymous, love-less sex. Even so, Ben knew he couldn't help but let himself be carried along with it - at least until he felt too uncomfortable and, however embarrassing it might be to do so, made his excuses and left them to it. He had a vision of himself sitting outside in the sun waiting for Christopher to emerge, probably smirking like he had after his encounter with Patrice, and looking forward to relaying every detail of what had happened. Even worse was the thought of their amused conversation about him behind his back if he ended up feeling he had to make his excuses and leave them to it.

The cabins at the resort turned out to be tiny – just one small room. As Ana opened the door, the heat from within hit them. She turned on the fan and went to the fridge for beers, casually taking off her top as she did so. Ben couldn't help but admire her breasts again, amazed at the way she was so unconcerned by being topless in front of the three men who sat, shirtless, on kitchen chairs. Saying something in rapid Spanish to Fernando, she went to the sofa that took up one wall of the cabin and undid the catches to flatten it down into a bed. Ben felt incredibly ill at ease, wondering how the next stage of the situation would unfold and aware that his cock felt as if it had shrivelled away to nothing. Ana sat in the middle of the bed and Fernando went across to join her, obviously very erect inside his shorts. Before he sat next to her, he pulled them off and his long, thick cock sprang out brazenly. His foreskin, Ben noticed, still more than covered his head, even in total erection. The couple were instantly in a tight embrace and kissing passionately. Ben looked across at Christopher and saw he was transfixed, his hand working his penis through his shorts. Fernando said something in Spanish to Christopher, who looked across at Ben and winked.

"We are formally invited to join them, dear boy, and don't look so worried – I very much doubt that they bite. Come on, in for a penny, eh? As they used to say, just think of England!"

Ben waited for Christopher to move, needing a lead to follow. It was a squash on the bed as Christopher sat next to Fernando and Ana motioned to Ben to sit by her. To Ben's relief, she took the lead. She stroked his hair, smiled, and whispered to him.

"You relax. You are a beautiful man - very sexy. I wanted that you stayed before, but we will have a nice time now, and do not worry."

Her hands stroked Ben's nipples as her lips brushed his. There seemed nothing for it but to give in. He responded - gingerly at first but soon, to his surprise, with urgency and lust. After a moment, Ben glanced across at Christopher and saw, his shorts discarded on the floor, that he and Fernando were kissing eagerly too. It was a relief for Ben that it looked as if it was going to be a case of two pairs rather than a foursome, and he hoped that it would stay that way as even that was complicated enough for him to deal with.

"You have a beautiful body," said Ana as her hands wandered down Ben's chest and found his nipples. "You like my body too?"

"You are... you're so beautiful," said Ben, wondering what else he could say that wouldn't sound even more lame.

She moved Ben's hands to her breasts. Instinctively, he stroked her nipples and felt them harden as she moaned softly.

"I want you to make love with me, Ben"

Her hands moved to Ben's groin and felt for his cock. Surprisingly, Ben made no move to stop her. Somehow, he couldn't.

"Mmmm, you are so big. I like very much. Fernando is big too. I like him inside – it feels good for me. You like to be inside me soon?"

Luckily, she didn't wait for a reply as Ben wouldn't have known what to say. She started kissing him again as she directed his hand to her pussy. Ben was very aroused as he felt her with astonishment and lust, feeling her respond to his touch as he explored for the first time the complexity of a woman's

private parts. She breathed in sharply as Ben found her clitoris, and he was amazed at its hood and how much like a foreskin it felt. It made him think again of the way his own skin had felt and how well it had done its job in pleasuring his penis compared to the stark, basic, stripped-back set-up he had had since it had been taken from him. He was more conscious than ever, as erect as he had ever been, of how tight his circumcision felt. There was an alarm bell ringing in his head too that she would soon find out that his penis wasn't a complete one and that her shock over the discovery would spoil the moment. This was a situation that, in his most gloomy moments, he had played out so many times in his head, and it was about to become real. Despite his arousal, he dreaded it. Ana had undone the button on his shorts and was feeling for the zip. It was about to happen. Her hand was inside in seconds, feeling urgently and wantonly for his manhood. He tensed as her hands closed round it, but her reaction amazed him.

“Oh, you are so big. And no skin. That I love.”

Within seconds, Ana had her lips closed round Ben's penis. He gasped with the pleasure of their touch. She sucked urgently, one hand playing with herself between her legs and the other stroking his balls. Ben looked across at Christopher and Fernando - the two couples were mirrored, Fernando had Christopher's cock deep in his mouth, his other hand working the foreskin urgently on his own. Ben was pleased somehow that Christopher was revelling in the attention and the pleasure he was getting but with his eyes closed so that he didn't, in this special moment, have to make eye contact with him.

Minutes later, it was as if both couples had decided to come up for air at the same time. As they all relaxed for a moment, Christopher caught Ben's eye, and they exchanged smiles.

“You see, dear boy. I knew they were a find. Having fun?”

“What do you think!” said Ben. It was he who was smirking this time.

Ana said something to Christopher in Spanish as she reached across and held his penis. Somehow, there was interest more than lust in her actions as she ran a finger across the head and then tried moving the skin in a gentle wanking action. Ben registered with surprise that she was able to more or less cover Christopher's glans when she pulled forward. She let his penis drop, now holding Ben's cock in one hand and Fernando's in the other as if comparing three very different variations of the same theme. She started to work Fernando's foreskin intently, pulling it right forward so that a long overhang formed over the end. Ben was both amazed and alarmed when Christopher lent forward and started to gently nibble on the bud of it, relived when it seemed to be to Fernando's very obvious delight. Ana's hand slid gently up and down Ben's taunt shaft, making him shudder with a sensation that was on the border of pain and pleasure. She spoke again, and Christopher translated.

“She says to tell you that she thinks you are really sexy and she loves your cock. She says - and I'm just reporting word for word here - that it's so long and feels so tight, and that it's a real treat for her to see not just one but TWO bare headed ones on nice English boys like us.”

Ben winced inside, partly as this was the first comment on his circumcised state and partly from seeing how Ana was working Fernando's skin in the way he used to love doing himself. Pleasurable as it was in the moment, the feelings Ben was getting from her touch were so different from those of the past for which he longed, and seeing Fernando's obvious enjoyment made the contrast all the more poignant. Ana had obviously followed what Christopher was relaying.

“It so different. It feels so sexy that way,” she said. “I want Fernando to get.... “

She couldn't find the word. Instead, she held up her hand and made the action of a pair of scissors with two fingers.

"No! He mustn't!" said Ben, rather too loudly, surprising even himself with his sudden vehemence. He was truly horrified. How could she even contemplate him losing something that could give that much pleasure, let alone encourage it?

There was an awkward silence for a moment until Fernando broke it with a laugh.

"But I like," he said. "It looks very nice like that."

Fernando took his hard cock in his hand and slowly retracted the skin. It seemed to take a very long time for his glans to emerge from its thick cover - shiny, purple and very wet. He kept retracting, pulling the skin so that it lay completely flat along his shaft. He held it there and looked, seeming to admire what he saw.

"Now I look like Ben," he said.

With the skin pulled back tight, his penis did indeed look a lot like Ben's. The contrast between his wide band of inner skin and the rest of his shaft was just as clear to see, although the clear, neat scar line that Ben had delineating the two was missing as, on Fernando, the two parts just merged imperceptibly.

"I like. It looks nice, yes? Very sexy," said Ana.

With the skin still held back taught, Ana's lips were quickly around Fernando's erection. He turned his head to Christopher, who took the invitation to start another round of kissing. Ben, his member lying now soft between his legs, suddenly felt rather like an unwelcome guest at a party. He looked down at his circumcised penis and all the old emotions came flooding back. Damn Roger. Damn circumcision.

The moment passed quickly. With Fernando intent with Christopher again, Ana released his penis from her hold and turned back to Ben. She licked her hand and fisted Ben's penis, working it urgently and quickly back to full erection. The way her fingers expertly slid over his tight shaft, nothing moving under her grasp, felt so powerful that Ben soon became caught up in the moment of intense pleasure. Foreskin or not, it just felt good. She rolled onto her back and held her breasts a little apart, and it was a moment before Ben realised that she wanted him to put his penis between them. The sight of it held there aroused him and, with some instinct in him awakened, he started bucking. Thrusting his penis between the breasts that she held tight around his manhood, he felt a sense of sexual urgency that he had never experienced before.

Minutes later, as if by tacet agreement, it was as if all four of them knew they were on the last lap. Ana and Fernando were flat on their backs on the bed, and Christopher looked across at Ben, slight anxiety on his face. Ben returned the gaze, expressionless. It was clear they both knew what they were about to do for the first time. Ana was massaging her pussy and Fernando had reached for a tube of lube. Christopher whispered something which Ben didn't quite catch. It might just have been "Geronimo!"

Ben was aware that his life was about to change as he prepared to slide his penis inside Ana. He didn't want to look to be sure, but he sensed that Christopher was about to share the same moment with Fernando. When it came, for both young men their fucking was both tender and frantic.

Both were aware that they might have much to learn, but also that all four of them were finding it deeply satisfying. Ana was kissing Fernando and muttering to him in breathless bursts whilst Ben thrust hard inside her. Ben soon had the sense that orgasm was building in him as his balls started to pull up tight to his body. Some instinct told him that Christopher was feeling the same. Suddenly and un-spoken, they found they were thrusting in unison. When Ben felt Christopher's arm close around him and hold him tight, he suddenly found he couldn't hold back any longer from an orgasm that was both long and intense. As he finished pumping, his heart still beating fast, he looked across at Christopher and returned his smile as his penis, still deep inside Ana, started to soften.

"Tally ho!" said Christopher.

"Tally ho, indeed!" replied Ben.

Chapter Four: The Christmas Turkey

"You daft wazzock - what have you done?!" Ben's panic subsided when he realised that Christopher hadn't seriously hurt himself. After a late return from the beach the previous day, he had slept late but was suddenly wide awake when he heard Christopher' howl from the bathroom and had run, naked, to see what on earth was wrong. Apart from a wad of toilet paper held tight across his privates, Christopher was naked too - bouncing up and down on his heels and, very uncharacteristically, swearing profusely.

"I cut myself and it just wouldn't stop bleeding, so I found some Dettol stuff in the cabinet and thought that might stop it, but it stings like absolute bloody buggery."

Ben kept the thought to himself that Christopher, since last week, actually did know how much buggery might sting.

"It's much harder to do that it looks, I can tell you", said Christopher." I was seriously worried that I might end up accidentally circumcising myself all over again. It just looked so good on Fernando last night that I thought, well, I thought I'd give it a go too, but look..."

Christopher cautiously removed the wad of blood-specked toilet paper from his pubes and inspected the damage, relived to see that there was no serious harm done and that the antiseptic had done its work in stopping the bleeding. Seeing the look on Christopher's face and taking in his partly shaved pubes, Ben finally gave in and just howled with laughter.

"God, what do you look like! Blimey, I hope it's going to grow back! What a fuss though - you've only nicked yourself a bit - I thought you were going to need a blood transfusion from the way you were carrying on."

"I know, I know," said Christopher, but its SOO hard to get the right angle when you're working 'down there' from up here. God knows how Fernando and Ana manage it and look so amazing - it looked so good on them."

Ben thought that, indeed, they couple had look stunning, their sleek, toned and tanned bodies completely smooth and hairless. In a way, he admired Christopher' hope over expectation that his rather less than olive skin might end up looking as good as theirs with its rather copious covering of thick, dark hair removed.

"Well you can't stay like that, can you," said Ben - "I mean, your bush is all lopsided and well, I haven't seen anything look like bits you've shaved since the last time my mum got a fresh turkey for Christmas! Apart from that, well - it looks so weird with one hairy bollock and the other one, well, I hesitate to say "smooth" exactly!

"I know," said Christopher. "What a mess!"

"Look, come here - sit on the side of the bath," said Ben. He took the razor from Christopher and reaching for the tube of shaving gel.

"Ben, you are indeed the best of friend that any man, let alone a newly-recruited homosexual could ever have, in fact, just the best of friends, full stop," said Christopher.

Ben felt his cock harden slightly.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course I am,” said Ben. He laughed the words off, but hearing what Christopher had said so explicitly had somehow touched him very deeply, although the physical response to the words surprised and alarmed him. Even though they were obviously very close friends, nothing so overt had ever been voiced before. Somehow, Ben knew that Christopher really meant it, and not just saying it because he was about to rescue him from his self-induced situation and shave his pubes for him - possibly one of the most intimate things one man could do for another, and one that perhaps demonstrated the total trust between them.

“Let’s do the easy bit first then,” said Ben.

Christopher held his cock down, cupping it protectively and out of the way so Ben could take off the remaining left side of Chris’ pubic hair. Ben really couldn’t believe what he was doing, worried about hurting Christopher as much as all the other implications. He couldn’t help wondering too if a nick to the glans would be worse than one on a foreskin. It was hard going, as Christopher’ dark hair was thick and strong, but finally Ben stood back to take stock. He passed Christopher the shaving mirror so he too could see the result.

“Not bad – better than before, anyway,” said Ben, rather pleased with his work and relieved not to have inflicted any more cuts on Christopher in the process.

“Good work there, Ben,” said Christopher as he took in his new look, “Hardly in the Fernando league, but that’s a little more like it at least!”

Ben wondered, slightly perplexed, if Christopher’ cock might be a little less flaccid than normal, but dismissed the thought.

“Right”, said Ben, “now for the harder bit.” Ben braced himself as he knew he was about to handle another man’s genitals for the first time. Although Ben’s balls were probably bigger, Christopher’s scrotum always hung lower and looser than Ben’s, even more so in the French heat. As he gingerly took hold of one side of Christopher’s sack, Ben was amazed at the way the testicles moved around so freely inside their container, much more so than his own did inside his rather less generous and snug-fitting scrotum. Ben wondered how to approach the task and decided that the easiest way was probably to stretch the skin out taut before trying to shave it. He was dumfounded as much by the amount of give there was in Christopher’s bag as by how it looked when he pulled the skin tight. He wondered what it must feel like to have such a different configuration, as well as what it must be like having balls that didn’t more or less fill the skin that held them.

“Fernando’s balls did look good, didn’t they,” said Christopher, “they were just so silky smooth when I sucked them.”

“Oooh, too much information!” said Ben. Inwardly though, he was surprised that anyone might actually want to do that, or indeed let anyone do it to them. He wondered what it must feel like though, rather intrigued that it might possibly be pleasurable. He’d always thought of his balls as something that needed protecting from considerable potential pain and not things that might actually give pleasure.

“But yes, I agree - they did look good. He was a good-looking guy. And an amazing body all-round, even I could tell that.”

Ben was aware of his need to stress that he could see Fernando was attractive without saying that he found him so himself.

“A couple of the boys at school used to shave down below – just their nuts though,” said Ben. “I thought they were weird at the time – wanting to look like first formers - but perhaps I can understand it more now. They certainly they didn’t look as good smooth as Fernando. But enough about his balls - what did you make of his foreskin then?” Ben couldn’t help himself asking.

“Ah, I was wondering how long it would take you to get around to that particular topic – you so can be so predictable sometimes!”

“Oh, you are getting to know me too well,” said Ben, glad, despite Christopher’s teasing, that he had someone with whom he could voice his concern on the matter without being thought weird.

“Well, that was quite a piece of engineering there, wasn’t it. A real rosebud of a thing – and when she started stretching it right out and working it so hard, I was sure she was going to hurt him, but it seems as if they are more robust things than I’d thought.”

“Have I taught you nothing?!” laughed Ben. “You still don’t believe me, do you?”

“Give me time, dear boy, give me time! If you’d asked me – well you did ask me actually – six months ago what I’d thought about having something like that hanging off the end of one’s most important part, well then I’d have said it all seemed a rather unnecessary complication of form and function, and that a man was obviously better off with things kept neat and simple.”

“Yes?” said Ben, intrigued. “Go on.”

“Well, it was bit of a revelation when he pulled it all right back so flat – Patrice’s just wouldn’t do that. Well, when he did that then it looked, well, just like a penis! Nothing in the way of the important bit. Do most of them do that? asked Christopher. “I’d always thought they’d just get in the way and detract from the business in hand. It was so easy to move it up and down, and it did seem like he rather enjoyed it being played with.”

“And nibbled too, I saw!”

“Well, who’s the sharp-eyed boy then! Yes, I must say that was quite amusing. I thought he’d jump when I tried it, but clearly he liked it. So I have to admit that perhaps being the way nature intended isn’t quite such a bad thing. I mean, I’m very happy the way I am and wouldn’t want to be any other way, but...”

“Blimey!” said Ben, genuinely surprised. “That’s a bit of a turn up!”

“Well perhaps ask me again when it’s all a bit less new to me,” said Christopher. “I’m still on something of a steep learning curve here, remember.”

“Oh, I will,” said Ben. “I was appalled though when....” Ben mimicked Ana’s scissor movement with her fingers.

“Yes, I can tell you were alarmed, poor boy. Just goes to show, the grass is always greener.”

Perhaps, thought Ben, the idea of another man needlessly losing his foreskin wasn’t such a horrific idea for Christopher as it was for him, despite his recent change of heart. In any case, Christopher didn’t seem interesting in exploring that thought any further.

“That Ana!” Christopher went on, “What an amazing body! I thought she was hot. In fact, to be honest, I’d have quite liked to have changed places with you for a while - I don’t think I’m THAT gay! I can appreciate a woman like her too – just amazing.”

The thought of having had to have swapped partners with Christopher alarmed Ben. The whole situation had been such an intense one for him that the thought of any more implications troubled him - if Christopher had sex with Ana then perhaps he might have been expected to do the same with Fernando, and that possibility was too much to take in. As he thought about Ana, Ben was uncomfortably aware that his cock might be starting to come to life. He tried hard to stop it in its tracks and concentrated hard on finishing the work of shaving. He hoped that Christopher would shut up about her, but at the same time hoped that he wouldn’t. With the finally job done, Ben put down the razor and tried to change the subject by passing Christopher the mirror again, but it didn’t work.

“And when – well - when she finally accepted your rather generous portion so easily...”

Ben was a bit alarmed to realise that Christopher has been looking so closely at what had been going on between him and Ana. The power of that amazing moment of penetration hit him again as he remembered the sensation of feeling his cock slide deep into a woman for the first time, and just how willingly and easily it was accepted.

“I didn’t realise you were looking,” said Ben. The idea had unsettled him. He had, he realised, rather naively assumed that Christopher would have been too taken up in his own fun with Fernando to have seen his erect penis. “It was,” he said, “just incredible. Better than I’ve ever imagined”

There was no point in trying to ignore it now. Both men were fully erect, the first time either of them had seen each other anything other than flaccid. Ben couldn’t help but take in Christopher’s cock. He saw that, unlike his own, it twitched a little with every heartbeat. It was shorter than his, but thick. It looked very different now from the way Ben was used to seeing it - the bunch of remaining foreskin that normally sat in a wrinkle behind his head was now flattened right out, the slightly uneven scar line now clearly obvious only half an inch or so behind the head. Ben looked down at his own penis, fully erect and very obviously longer than most men’s. He could feel his shaft skin pulled taught, the neat, thin scar line way higher up the shaft than Christopher’s and the colour change either side of it very noticeable in the hard morning light. Amazingly, he was letting someone else see it in its most circumcised-looking state for the second time in two days - see his mutilation, see the change someone had cruelly inflicted on his perfect cock. He thought of the way Ana had caressed it in her hand, then between her breasts, then in her mouth, and how good it had felt - how she had moaned quietly and admired it in a language he couldn’t understand. He realised too that, at that intense and overwhelmingly powerful moment with Ana, that he hadn’t thought about being circumcised - that it hadn’t spoiled the moment. It had just never been in his mind. It was his cock, and it could bring him pleasure, and others could like it for what it was. Amazingly, in that moment it hadn’t mattered to him that someone was seeing the terrible harm that had been inflicted on him. Even more amazing, he didn’t care either that Christopher was seeing him now, totally erect and as circumcised as it is possible to be. Ben’s amazement deepened when he heard himself speak:

“Oh, for God’s sake, look at the state of us! We’re never going to be able to concentrate on any work unless we sort ourselves out.”

Ben went on and, doing something he very rarely did, teased his friend by mimicking his plummy accent.

“So, dear boy, in lieu of the bachelors’ friend, I fear this will just have to do instead.”

Ben reached again for the shaving gel and, before Christopher had a chance to react, let a dollop of it fall onto his friend's penis before smearing more onto his own.

"And, dear boy," Ben continued, "when we are done, then I'll make you the best cup of tea this side of the English Channel before we get back to work."

Had he not been in such need to sate the arousal that re-living the previous day's events had caused, Ben might have been amused to see the look on amazement on Christopher's face as he saw this new, sexual side to him. Ben worked his lubricated penis with concentrated urge, his eyes closed in silent recollection. Christopher was doing the same within seconds. It only took a few strokes for Ben to climax, and he came heavily and forcefully. When his eyes opened, he saw that Christopher seemed to be struggling somehow. He was wanking furiously, but orgasm seemed to be eluding him. Christopher reached across and held Ben's hand tight, muttering quietly in words he couldn't make out. Ben amazed himself yet again. He reached for the shower gel and squeezed some onto his finger. Christopher moaned loudly as Ben pushed it without resistance up inside his sphincter. He found the prostate and pushed hard, feeling the orgasm starting as Christopher's muscles tightened and released on his finger several times before the explosion finally came.

They sat silently for a minute or two. Christopher, for once, seemed lost for words. It was Ben who spoke first, smiling at the worried look on his friend's face.

"Right, now that's out of the way," he said, "it's true confessions time. What I want to know is - had you sampled the goods earlier in the day?"

"I was wondering if you'd realised that," said Christopher, looking slightly shamed-face but clearly pleased with himself. This was, Ben realised, a time of real change for them both as they found they were honestly able to share their move into being sexually active.

"Well, not exactly 'sampled'," said Christopher, "but they did give me something of a preview of what was on offer. I came across them earlier like you had - quite a shock, I can tell you! I was just wandering around to see - well - if some lone gentlemen might be looking for not very innocent amusement in the dunes, and I just came across them like you did. They were sitting there, her hand on his cock and him fingering her pussy. I was amazed when they didn't stop when they saw me - they just smiled and carried on as if it were the most normal thing in the world."

"And?" said Ben, smiling.

"Well, he looked amazing as you know, and so smooth. And the way her parts looked - so sleek and exposed. Ben wondered if Christopher had any idea that his parts might now be considered exposed too, and in more than one respect, although "sleek" was a word that would probably never be applied to his circumcision result.

"I'd never seen a naked woman for real before and, well, I hadn't realised what a beautiful and complicated work of art the whole set up down below is. And then when she was getting excited and started to, well, to open up and didn't mind me seeing...And then she and Fernando put on a bit of show, shall we say. It was when they were kind enough to ask me if I'd care to join them that, well, I said I had a companion with me and that perhaps he might like to join us too."

"How very thoughtful," said Ben, smiling. "Actually, you know what - I'm glad you did." He stood up. "Right, I'll put the kettle on then."

“Just make sure you wash your hands first, dear boy,” said Christopher, “and I think this might call for breaking opening our last packet of chocolate digestives, don’t you?”

* * * * *

Bonus Scene

The Journey to the Gite

The trip hadn't started well. Their ferry had been delayed enough for them to miss the afternoon bus to the village so, instead of waiting the 4 hours for the next one, they had decided to try and thumb a lift. It hadn't been long before a car pulled in – a scruffy British Escort with a "Cymru" sticker, clearly just off a ferry too. There were three men in it, all in their early twenties. Ben looked through the grimy back window at man with a shaven head and inexpert tattoos who was eyeing him with un-hidden suspicion. The driver lent out of the window and, in an accent so strongly Welsh that Ben thought at first that he must be putting it on, asked where they were heading. After they'd established that passing the gite would just mean taking the old road for a few miles between two junctions on the autoroute, the driver said they were welcome to a ride if they could squeeze in.

It was a squash. The car was full of camping gear and smelt strongly of beer, cigarette smoke and too much deodorant. The man with the shaven head said nothing, but belched loud and long as they set off, before continuing to neck a bottle of Tennants from the case beside him that had clearly been bought on the ferry. Sullen though he seemed, the other two seemed sociable, but both Ben and Chris had the same thought, hoping that the driver had been a bit more moderate in the bar on the boat than his friends clearly had. Rhys, the passenger in the front, explained with relish that they were on their way to a beach resort where, they had been assured, there were more fit girls eager for the attentions of British blokes than they could possibly manage to get through in a week. Ben was amused by their naïve optimism, wondering idly if he and Christopher had been picked up from the road-side just to provide an audience to whom the lads could show-off. At first, it was hard not to enjoy their banter, but then shaven-head spoke for the first time.

"The place is full of fuckin foreign cock-mad whores. And they all wanting fucking," he said with the authority of a drunk man in a tone that was somehow unsettling. "Fucking slags, the lot of 'em. And if they like it rough, they're fucking well going to get it as rough as they like from me. I'll fuckin' teach them."

Rhys didn't say anything, but Ben sensed that he was a bit uneasy too, and he quickly changed the subject by asking what he and Christopher did. In one way, getting on to the lads' views on the complete waste of time of going to university was a relief from what had come before, but Ben was very aware that even Chris, with his public-school ability to talk confidently to anyone, was struggling a bit to find things to say in reply.

"Universities are full of fuckin arse bandits," was shaven-head's only contribution but, luckily, they were already a few junctions down the Autoroute du Cote and it was the moment for Christopher to tell Gareth, the driver, that he needed to take the next exit. The slip road turned sharply then led unexpectedly steeply up the side of the valley. Rounding the near-blind bend, Gareth had to brake hard to stop in time behind a line of cars halted behind a large re-surfacing truck that was manoeuvring very slowly backwards and forwards on the sharp incline.

"Bugger," said Gareth, "This is going to be a pain. The old handbrake isn't the best."

It suddenly felt very still and hot. The sun felt even more powerful without the breeze from the fast drive, and it was soon tiresome just to be inching forward.

Suddenly, Rhys called out "Hey, Gareth, watch out - you're rolling back!"

The driver in the car behind tooted as Gareth pulled up hard on the handbrake, only just in time to avoid running back into him.

For a second or two, there was a tension in the air, then Gareth broke it when he suddenly laughed aloud.

"I just had a thought," he said. "Nye would be perfect for driving up this soddin' hill. Rolling back is one thing he'll never have to worry about again, poor bastard!"

Neither Ben nor Christopher could see why, but the other three laughed heartily. Rhys, noticing their bemusement, explained.

"It's our mate Nye, see. He was supposed to be coming too but he couldn't come in the end - no pun intended."

"The stupid fuckin' wanker," said shaven-head. His tone was somehow nasty, but Rhys chose to ignore him and carried on with his story.

"We was in the pub with him last week for a few bevvies when this girl Glynis comes in. She's a bit of an old dog really, but she's got huge tits and old Nye has had his eye on her for ages. So he says "right lads, tonight's the night I make my move, but I'd better have a piss first so I don't have to break off mid-seduction." So off he goes to the gents, and he's gone ages. We was sitting there getting a bit worried about him and wondering what was up, then our mate Ryan says "I bet he's knocking one out in the cubicle so he doesn't get a stiffy when he talks to her." Then finally Nye comes out, looking white as a sheet. And the funny thing was he'd taken his sweater off, see, and was holding it in front of him - right across him, like. And then he just walks right past the lovely Glynis - she smiles at him and sticks out her chest, but he just cuts her dead. You should have seen her face - she must have known he was hot for her but he just ignores her - really strange, like. So he comes back over and we asks him if he's OK, and he says no he's not, and that we need to ring for a taxi to take him up the hospital. So we says "What's wrong mate?" Then he lifts up the sweater and shows us. Well, we all just burst out laughing, though we shouldn't have. There was this white thing sticking out of his fly. I thought at first he'd got his shirt tail stuck in there and wondered what the fuss was, but then I realised - he'd been in such a rush to get back to chat Glynis up that he'd caught his fuckin' foreskin in his zip. Really jammed in it was, and he'd been ages in the bogs trying to free it up."

"We'd always wondered why his school mates used to call him "Nye the Nozzle," said Gareth, "but then we saw why - fuckin' masses of it there was stuck in there, looking a right old mess."

"Anyway," said Rhys, clearly eager to re-claim the narrative, "so we gets him to A&E sharpish and the docs have a good go at sorting it, but after a while they say they done their best but it's no good and they'll have to take a knife to it. Well, we was all laughing like bloody drains, but the poor sod - imagine! Then they says to him that they could either take just the end off to free him up like, or else do the job proper. Give him the full Monty and skin him proper - circumcise him, like. You should have seen the look on his face - well, you can just imagine, can't you."

Ben had been trying to keep looking straight ahead but suddenly caught Christopher's sidelong glance. He couldn't read the expression on his face.

Gareth took back the narrative.

"It was some fuckin Arab doctor, not that there ever seems to be any other kind these days. He said that he'd recommend they do the full works 'cos what Nye would have left if they just took the end off wouldn't look too pretty - all lopsided with a bit left on one side of his todger and bugger all

on the other. Then this fuckin doctor comes out with some crap about it not being a problem as it was "just redundant skin." I mean – what bollocks: "redundant skin." What do they know, fuckin' Arabs. They should get some proper doctors back up that fuckin hospital, not a load of bloody tea-towel heads."

Although he didn't actually know what he was going to say, Ben drew breath to speak but stopped when he suddenly felt Christopher's knee push sharply into his. Luckily, the temporary traffic light that they had finally reached turned green and Chris started giving more detailed directions to Gareth than were really necessary in a vain attempt to keep the conversation bland. Gareth, though, wasn't easily stopped.

"Yeah, 'redundant' - as if! What a pile of fuckin' bollocks," he said. "I certainly find a use for mine when I'm watching porn, or when I just can't be arsed to find some slag to fuck."

"Yeah," said Rhys. "Fuck, can you imagine! No way to knock one out. And having the end of your dick rubbing the whole time – it would drive you bloody mental. Remember that bloody Jewboy at school? Who'd want that, but what do you expect from some soddin' foreign doctor – they should piss off back where they belong, coming here and telling us what's good for us."

Christopher's knee was pressing again, harder this time. Ben read the signal and managed to say nothing.

"Anyway," said Rhys, "old Nye hums and haws a bit and finally says that he supposed they'd better take the whole lot off, the daft sod. I'd much rather have some than none, me, but I suppose once you've got it inside some slag then it doesn't matter what it looks like. So we waits for him, and a while later he comes out, looking like a bloody bomb had hit him. The first thing he says is that they told him that it would mean not even a wank for a month, and that he'd have to go very easy even then, and no proper shagging for three months minimum. Fuck, I'd be bloody insane after that time! So, bottom line is he decided he couldn't face coming with and sitting there with blue balls and surrounded by loads of lovelies with their twats dripping and the three of us shagging our brains out morning noon and night while he's in the tent, not even able to knock one out. So, mates, his loss was your good fortune in getting a ride!"

Christopher, very aware of how tense Ben was next to him, hoped that that would conclude the narrative. Unfortunately, Gareth hadn't done with the subject.

"Fuck, imagine getting down to it with some hot bit of stuff who's gagging for a shagging and then having to let her see a thing like that come out of your pants, looking like some mangey fucking pitbull's had a good chew on it. I mean....it would put the fear of God up her, wouldn't it? She'd gather up her knickers and do a runner if she had any sense. Only some sad queer or a desperate nympho slag would be glad to get one like that up 'em."

"Actually," said Ben, very calmly. "I'm circumcised."

Christopher's knee reached a new level of pressure.

"And I bet you're a fuckin poofter too, you stuck-up twat," said shaven-head. "I said we shouldn't stop for a pair of bum boys like you. I bet posh boy here's arse is all you can get to stick it in with a fucked-up one like that."

"Actually, we're not homosexual," said Christopher.

"Ooooooh we're not homosexual," repeated shaven-head, poorly aping Christopher's accent. "Yeah, like fuck you're not. So you're a fuckin' Jewboy then?" he said, looking at Ben.

"No, I'm not, not that there is anything wrong with being either gay or Jewish. And most men don't have any say in whether they are circumcised," said Ben, more calmly than he believed possible.

"Don't you get fuckin' arsey with me, mate," said shaven-head. "Fuckin poofers should all be castrated, or best of all just put up against a wall and shot."

"Go easy, eh mate" said Rhys. They can't help themselves being benders, but I can't say that Hitler had it wrong though."

Ben, red in the face, had his mouth open but Christopher interrupted.

"This is the turning here – just drop us at the corner."

They sat on their rucksacks by the road for a moment or two in silent disbelief. Ben was red-faced with fury, Christopher just as mad but feeling for Ben over the way that the trip had started with a venture into what must have been particularly unwelcome territory for him. There was so much that might have been said about it all, but nothing was. Christopher finally broke the silence.

"And just when you really thought that the day couldn't get any worse," he said, "I'm afraid I've got some news for you."

"Go on," said Ben, with a sinking feeling. "Tell me the worst."

"Well, I didn't much like the idea of those thugs knowing where we were staying and coming back to pay us a visit one night. The gite's actually just outside the village we passed through a couple of miles back."