

### When Mark Joined The Gym

When Mark joined the gym, all the lads took to him. When I say lads, I mean Jake, Simon and Phil, my best mates and the guys I enjoy my footie and rugby with. And the gym three times a week. And of course getting drunk and having a laugh.

Mark was different; calm, considered, dry witted and someone very unlike us; he had trained as doctor, got bored working in a large London hospital (his first job), quit, and then upped sticks and left England to travel around the world for five years, paying his way working as a doctor. Anyhow, he was different and I was surprised we guys all became mates with him.

It was raining after our joint session, so we all hurried to our local, The King's Head; I bought the beers - and of course a red wine for Mark - and took them to the corner alcove we had occupied. The next hour was spent chatting and laughing, but gradually the conversation shifted to Marks stories of his travels, which were always fascinating. He had flown from London to Cyprus and over five years gradually traveled overland (and sea) to Japan, not once returning to England. He had been to places none of us ever would and none of us had even heard off; he repeatedly had his life threatened and had experienced the greatest discomfort, and even during the most extreme cold and heat never had a single regret about his escape from 'civilisation'. His travels had made him calm he said, losing the neurotic edge of his youth. And it was typically Phil who asked the question: 'Say Mark, why are you circumcised?'

You could have cut the following silence with a knife! Phil can be such an idiot!

Mark just stared ahead, and then suddenly smiled: 'Do you really want to hear the whole story?'

'I didn't know there was a story'.

'Sure, what happened? Did you slip on soap whilst shaving, and cut off your foreskin instead?'

'Quiet guys. So, what's the story then'.

Mark took a sip of his wine; 'It's not that exciting really, just a bit unusual'.

'Hey quiet now. So what happened?'

\*Mark's story\* (which I later transcribed with his help) 'I had only been traveling for four months and decided to spend some time on the Red Sea coast in Egypt. This one time I stayed in a small hotel and got chatting to the only other Western guy staying there, who turned out to be this American guy called Greg on a personal scientific quest'.

'The nature of his quest? Learning about circumcision practices of lesser known tribes in the world. Well, it takes all sorts.'

'So, he had been travelling around Asia and Africa recording circumcision rites of obscure tribes, and learning about what he called the best ways of cleaning guys up. He spent hours talking on his favorite subject and eventually asked me:

"Are you cut?"

"No way, of course not"

"Ever thought about it?"

"Can't say I have"

"Well, if you want I could do you"

"You must be joking! I am happy the way it is"

"You don't know what you are missing"

"I suppose I can't have everything"

'His banter continued, but eventually he got bored, and we continued on the subject of our further travels along the coast. Turns out he was making his way south along the Red Sea, and as I didn't have a schedule I agreed to join him on the bus journey the next day'

'We got to the bus station, if you can call it that, and got on to the only bus -a ramshackle affair- heading south that day. At the back we spotted a blond haired head, so we pushed our way to the rear and said hi to the only other Western passenger, seating ourselves next to him. He was glad to see us; Bengt was from Sweden, had split up with his girlfriend a week into their three-month adventure from Cairo to Mombasa, and now was continuing on his own. During the hot and stuffy trip, he related us his misery at his girlfriend leaving him and his decision to carry on his journey without her.'

'Late in the evening we arrived at a tired and dusty little town; well it was more a large village. The only hotel, or for want of a better word, hostel had only three rooms; two stifflingly hot ones on the ground floor overlooking the courtyard and a third airy one on the roof with only two beds. We negotiated with the owner to have another bed brought up, which he did under the condition we took the room for at least four days, to which we agreed.'

'Early the next morning, Greg asked us to join him for a swim and snorkel in the Red Sea, at this point a couple of miles east of the settlement. We followed a dusty track (initially followed by some children who eventually turned back in the morning heat) carrying with us some bottles of water and some light bamboo poles and a large dust coloured sheet. Finally, we came to sea, calm and turquoise at the bottom of an embankment. We found a path down and discovered a narrow beach, hidden from the top by the steep rise behind us. Greg took the bamboo poles and stuck them into the ground, then fastened the sheet with some string to them and spread it backwards towards the sun, weighing the ends down with two heavy stones. This was doing to be our sun shelter. Then Greg stripped, got his snorkeling stuff and ran into the sea, followed by Bengt and me. It was great, the most amazing sea creatures swimming inches away from us, but when we suddenly spotted some jellyfish, we hurried back to land.'

We dried ourselves off, and retired to the sun shelter, sitting naked on our towels. I saw Bengt's eyes wandering to Greg's large cut penis, which he had deliberately exposed facing in our direction. Greg registered this, had a large drink from his water bottle, then looked at Bengt.'

"Never seen cut before?"

"No. Not so close anyhow"

"So do you like the way it looks?"

"It is unusual"

"I have cut some guys myself, so if you want..."

'This was new, and I asked Greg about it'

"Is that true?"

"Sure it is. This German guy in Thailand and two Italians in Tunisia"

"I don't believe it"

"I'll show you their foreskins"

"No! Really"

"Yep I have got them along"

"You are nuts"

"You'll see."

'Finally we set off back to our hostel, getting there just before noon, and retired to our room to spend the heat of the day out of the sun.'

"So show us those skins", 'I said' 'Greg picked out what looked like a book from his luggage, and opened the cover to reveal what looked like parchments attached to the spine'

"Well here they are."

'So it turned out, that he had taken the cut skins and in the heat of the day had stretched them between flynets and sundried them. "Wow" is all I could say.'

Bengt had gone for a shower, and now returned, casually removing his towel sat down on his bed and asked me -the trained doctor- to come and take a look at something. I went over, and he told me that he had a biting pain under his foreskin, which made sex unbearable and had contributed to the breakup with his girlfriend. I carefully pulled back the skin and saw the thin tear on his frenulum, which also seemed tight and to pull at the glans when the foreskin retracted.'

"Can you help?"

"Well..."

"Circumcise him!" 'said Greg'

"That is an option. What do you want Bengt?"

"What is the best thing to do?"

"Cut, cut, cut!"

"Stop it Greg. Bengt, give yourself time and then decide"

'Bengt looked at Greg, who had undressed to shower, and said "If I have it like his, the problem will go?'

"Most certainly"

"Do it then, please"

"Tomorrow?"

"No, now. Before I change my mind"

"Yippeeeee! Great choice, man. C'mon, let's do it"

'So we did it there and then; I laid out all my equipment, sterilised and anaesthetised Bengt's limp penis, whilst Greg assisted me sporting a semi-erection. I gave Bengt a cut, high up his shaft and the also excised his frenulum completely, and then bandaged it very firmly. Then Bengt got up and took off the small wall mirror, studying his bandaged penis from all sides.

After Greg and I had showers we all lay down and rested till the late afternoon, then organising some food which we had in our room.

'Greg also claimed the foreskin, taking out his framed wire mesh, stretched the skin out on it, fastening it with pins and then laid it out in the searing sun.'

During the night I heard Bengt moaning, probably during nocturnal erections.

I got up a couple of times to check, but he said he was alright.'

'The next morning Greg and I went for a swim alone, leaving Bengt resting reading my travel worn copy of Lord of the Rings. After our swim and snorkel, we took shelter from the sun again.'

"So, you did a great job yesterday."

"Thanks. Hope it doesn't get infected."

"I would like to circumcise you". Greg looked at me intently, glancing at my cock.

"I am happy the way I am. Thanks for the offer. Cheers."

Secretly I had found it hugely exciting circumcising Bengt the previous day. And for the first time considered losing my own skin too, as a preventative measure during my travels in hot countries.'

"Well, if you ever change your mind, I'd like to be the one to do it. Your skin would make an especially large page in my book."

'Well you had to give it to Greg; he didn't mince his words and knew how to pay compliments.'

Eventually we headed back home, finding Bengt reading my book and smiling: "At least it doesn't make me think of sex and get erections. Ha ha."

Greg and I both had quick showers, and when I got back I removed my towel.

Bengt gave me one look and said: "Well Mark? How about you?"

'I looked down at my cock and then looked back at Bengt; Greg had also turned over on his bed and was now looking.'

"Well what about me? Greg, are you game?"

"You for real? Are you kidding?"

"Let's do it."

"Great man. Let's do it!"

'So I sterilised my penis and also anaesthetised it myself. Then Greg took over, cutting of my foreskin with me advising him during the procedure and assisting him during the bandaging. Greg then took my skin out to be sundried, removing Bengt's, which was already stiff and quite dry'

'We stayed at the hostel nearly a week, Bengt and me recovering, Greg caring for us and enjoying himself thoroughly. In the end we split up; Greg and his new best friend set off for Eritrea and then Kenya, whilst I headed north to cross over to Jordan and Asia.'

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When Mark had finished his story, me and the lads were speechless. How it affected us is a different story I'll tell another time.

Nick