



(from Chapter 41)

(Harv narrates)

“I’m gonna go in an’ start workin’ on dinner,” says Sherm as he gets up off his chair. “If you see any lightning get everybody outta the pool immediately an’ get inside. We’re high enough up on the hill that we’re in the strike zone.”

I nod to him. Neal says, “I’ll come help.” She gets up out of her chair and follows Sherm back into the house. I keep a laser focus on her every movement as she walks toward the sliding glass door over near the hot tub. If it weren’t for having had sex at the river on the way up to the pass, in the car on the way down, twice, and then again in the pool after we got back, I might get my boy up again. But for now it’s just all in my mind. Neal looks back over at me watching her and gives me a sly grin, “You just lemme know, cowboy, when you’re ready to ride again.” She stops to bend forward and give me a rear view of her cunt, and then she’s gone into the house.

I look out over the pool, across the valley Aspen is in, to the mountains beyond. Rick and Alex partially obstruct my view over at the infinity edge. They’ve got their arms propped on the edge, next to each other, looking out across the valley. Every now and then their heads will turn toward each other. I can’t hear the substance from where I sit, but they’re having some sort of conversation. It seems like everybody’s maybe recharging a little bit from an active morning and early afternoon. Bob and Joy aren’t even anywhere to be seen. Instead of joining everybody else in the pool, they headed into Bob’s room, and they haven’t come out since.

This has been a totally excellent stop for us. I really wasn’t sure how it would work out, whether Sherm would take to the guys. I really wasn’t sure what he’d think of us having Alex along. I think he knows something’s up there, but he probably figures the less he actually knows the better. What concern is it of his if we’ve got some chick riding along with us? It’s not like he’s her daddy or something.

And I’ve just got to say it, Neal is the most amazing girl I’ve ever met. She’s just so . . . so . . . well, so confident. About everything. I mean, everything to do with sex, she doesn’t hesitate one second, and she nails it. And it’s not just the physical part, which she’s damn good at. I mean, I’ve never, and I mean never, felt a girl clamp down on my boy while he’s spurting the way she does. That is true talent. But the mental part really separates her. It’s not that she talks dirty, although I guess you could say some of her talk is technically dirty. It’s more like she knows what you’re thinking, before you even think it. That’s it, she anticipates what you need. No, it’s more than that. She anticipates what you don’t even yet know you want. But when she gets it set up, it just blows your mind. It’s like she tries to outthink you on the most mind-blowing thing she could do to you. And she usually does. Then when she does it, you’re so totally invested, physically and mentally, that you can’t help but have the best orgasms ever.

Then there’s her philosophy about life, about how important it is to care about the other person’s life and outlook. I’ve never heard a girl integrate her appreciation for a man so completely into every aspect of her interactions with him. The one thing I don’t understand is her ironclad insistence that she won’t ever marry, that she wants to be free to spend her time with many men, because she likes men so much. Don’t get me wrong, I’m nowhere near ready to get married, I’ve got way too many things to do, but I don’t see why she would totally write off marrying someday. She’s the first girl I’ve ever met who I think could someday fit the bill as someone I’d consider marrying. She’s just so . . . so exciting. Maybe that would fade, but I don’t think so. For one thing, she definitely wouldn’t mind if I screwed around. Hell, she’d probably join in with anybody I brought home. She obviously doesn’t have a problem with two guys. And I’m an open-minded guy. If she wanted some strange stuff every now and then, why

should I object? As long as she always comes back, as long as we always come back to each other, I'd be fine with that.

Maybe it's the whole kid thing. Maybe she just doesn't want kids, and the easiest way to avoid that is to never marry. Of course, it seems like a pretty dramatic decision to make before you've even gone to college. Maybe she changes her mind about a lot of things over the next few years. I guess that's always a possibility.

Of course, maybe I'm just thinking with my boy here. He's never been treated so well. And let's face it, a happy boy makes a happy man. There was a long drought before Alex. The trip's been pretty and all, and well worth the time and money, and it was great to get into Alex, but she's nothing like Neal. I mean, she's nice enough, and it feels good to fuck her and all, but she just doesn't have the same physical and mental chops as Neal. How to put this? Alex is like, well, she gets the job done. I'll go so far as to say she gets the job done well. She's maybe like the Beamer, say, quality brand, fun to drive, nice pickup and acceleration, comfy to be in, definitely worth the ride. It's not like I'm saying she's a Yugo or something, strictly utilitarian chicks—and there are a ton of them out there—who basically have a hard time figuring out how to make you cum. No, Alex is definitely a good fuck, and generally a pretty good sport. I was probably a little hard on her early on, when I thought only Rick was going to get to fuck her. It's just that Neal, well, she's in a whole other league. We're talking Bentley or Maserati. I mean she is built of the finest materials that test all of your senses and will push you to the limit. What you get out of her is strictly limited by what you're capable of putting in. Like right now, I still don't think I could put my boy in; he's still in recovery. And that's what I'm talking about, how she knew before going inside that I'm going to want her later. Then she just shows it off to me and says come get it whenever you want it. She's always working you mentally, even before you get to the physical part. And then when you finally get in her, she just blows you away physically, all the while keeping you on edge mentally, because you're never quite sure what to expect. Other than perfection.

I readjust my sitting position a little bit, scooting my butt forward a little and then bowing my legs out at the knee so I can air out the jewels a little. I fluff them up so that they lay out more comfortably on my chair. Then I use the tops of my fingernails on my right hand to stroke an itch from the base of my boy where he connects with my balls to about a third of the way up my shaft. I keep stroking him in one direction this way, and it feels better and better as the itch recedes. I work on it for a minute or two until it feels really good.

I look back on the whole trip, and it's been really good. We've seen lots of cool places, and Rick and Bob are actually pretty OK guys. I'm glad to have them as friends. Sure, we have our disagreements from time to time, but who doesn't? I'm surprised we haven't had more fights living in such close quarters for a little more than two months now. Of course, the shit outside Lander was . . . is . . . a real drag. I keep seeing the sequence over and over in my mind. He's pointing the gun at me. He turns his head to scream at the girl. I kick the gun from his hand. I drive a right into his face. We struggle on the ground for the gun. I keep his hands pointed at him—his hand holding the gun—and it goes off three times in rapid succession before he loses strength. Man, what a downer. Why couldn't he have lived? Then it would just be the two of us arguing about what happened in court. Now it'll just be me on trial: the drifter who turned an 18 year old local kid into a corpse. Will this haunt me for the rest of my life? I guess I'm lucky that I never remember my dreams. Would it turn out differently there sometimes? Would he shoot me? Would I die? I've got to believe I wouldn't die in my own dreams.

And then that brings us to Alex. Alex. What to do about Alex? On the one hand, it was pretty sweet having her up on the Flat Tops. As Rick pointed out to me, there's the one obvious thing above all that's great about having her around camp. But she's also just a pretty damn good camper, period. She knows her way around a campsite, and she's certainly taught us a trick or two. And she's not a bad kid. But that's just it, she's a 16 fucking year old kid. Will as much as said she's like an ongoing bad idea. That we're more or less nuts to let her keep riding along with us. But can I cut her loose when we leave

tomorrow? I don't think I can go cold turkey after leaving Neal, and we're not likely to find anybody else like Alex who wants to go along for the ride and fuck all our brains out. Even more important, can Rick cut her loose? I'm not sure what's going on with the two of them. Maybe it's just some natural pairing off that's occurred, but ever since last night the two of them have been almost inseparable. There's no question Joy is prettier and better built than Alex. She also seems to be more adventurous sexually. But Rick has just left her all to Bob, even though she seemed to warm up to Rick in the wine cellar yesterday. Alex is probably working on Rick again, anyway, trying to get him to let her keep riding with us. We're as close to Denver as we're probably going to get. From here Durango is pretty much the opposite direction from Denver. Anh, maybe I just need to talk to Bob and see what he thinks. At the end of the day, I don't know that I really care one way or the other. But we get stopped again and she goes for another one-on-one with the cop, we go straight to Denver and I don't care where we are.

"Hey, you look so serious." It's Neal. I didn't even notice her until she's sitting on the side of my chair, her feet on the ground. She's got her head turned toward me, so that she's looking at me over her right shoulder, with her back to the pool. She reaches her left hand up to my right forehead and strokes my hair back as she continues, "What's goin' on?"

"Oh, I was just thinkin' about how bummed I'll be when we leave," which is really kind of true if you think about it. "I've had a really good time here, an' it's been great to get to know you."

She scoots her butt up the chair a little more toward me and puts my hand in her lap, "I'm an open book, Morty, you get to know all about me." I start gently rubbing the tops of her thighs and let my hand wander down between her legs every now and then. She opens her stance to accommodate me. "So what about you? Why so sad?"

"Well, I don' know. It's just, well, it's just been so nice here, but I know we've gotta move on. You an' Sherm have stuff you've gotta do. We've got more places we've gotta go see. We have some mail we haftuh pick up in Durango at some point. So, much as this has all been great, I mean it's hard to believe it's only been a little more than twenty-four hours, it's kinduh like, I don' know, it'll sound stupid."

"Morty, if you think it, if you feel it, it isn't stupid." She twists even further to her right and leans across me, bringing her face right in front of mine, her lips no more than three inches from me, her eyes staring intently into mine. She starts massaging my boy as I continue rubbing her, now focusing more on the opening between her legs. In a low, soft, but imploring voice, she almost whispers, "Tell me, Morty. Tell me."

"Well, OK. It's just . . . it's just that . . . well, I feel like someone's makin' me leave Disneyland just when I start havin' a great time." God, that sounds so stupid when I say it out loud. "God, that sounds stupid."

She keeps rubbing my boy, and she lightly kisses me on the lips. Then she full-on French kisses me, for about 30 seconds. She pulls back to that three inches of separation, "No, Morty, that doesn't sound stupid. Disneyland is a metaphor. I know what you mean by it. I know you're not calling me an amusement park ride. You're plumbing your soul for one of the happiest memories you've ever had, and you're saying you feel like you're reliving that in today's terms. For how old you are an' the things you find interesting. And you're right, Morty, your time at Disneyland is running out. I don' think it's running out as fast as you think, but it is running out. But you know the best thing about Disneyland, Morty?" I shake my head no. She continues, "You can always just go back. Some a the rides might be closed, an' some that were closed might be open, but I bet you'll look forward to it an' have a pretty good time your next visit, too." She uses her left hand to stroke my hair while she keeps playing my boy with her right, "Whadduhya think?"

I nod my head up and down, heave a big sigh and say, “Yeah.” I pause for a few seconds, and then, “You’re kinduh scary sometimes, Neal. You know that? Sometimes I think you know me better than I do.”

She kisses me full on the lips again, and then she draws back. “You know what? Lemme talk to Sherm about it, but I know a place we all oughtta go tomorrow. If you like it here, I think you’ll love it there. Smile?” She draws back to about six inches and smiles at me.

I smile at her and say, “Yeah. That sounds great, Neal.” I put my arms around her and pull her up on top of me. She lifts her left leg up and across me as I pull, so that she’s straddling me, with our faces no more than an inch apart. And just as I’m about to close my eyes and start kissing her passionately, out of the corner of my right eye, down the valley well below Aspen, a flash of lightning. It’s like getting up to the front of the line and having the ride break down. “Lightning,” I say to her. She pulls back, nods and begins getting up off of me. “Hey, Rick, Alex,” I call over to them across the pool, “I just saw lightning down the valley. You guys need to get outta the pool an’ we all haftuh go inside.” Rick looks over at me and nods, and he and Alex start making their way to the steps at the far end of the pool. Neal has already climbed off of me, but she stands and waits for me as I get up. She puts her arm around my back and lets it rest on my hip, as I put mine around her shoulders, and we walk through the sliding glass door back into the house. We uncouple and she pulls the door to. The gray clouds march aggressively across the sky up the valley floor toward us as we look out the glass door, our arms back around each other. In two minutes we see the first drops of rain on the pane of glass in front of us. Her lips taste just as sweet here, the weather having driven us in, as they did outside.