

Better

by Matt Potter

My eyes popped, I was so surprised at seeing him there.

"You're in the same year at school with Jeremy, aren't you, Braydon?" Mrs Brown said, crouched on the floor.

"Yeah," said Braydon, broad shoulders hunched, wanting to be anywhere but inside the spare room his mother used as her *Designs by Janelle* workroom. He put the scissors back against their painted outline on the wall.

Kneeling while my grandmother stood on a stool, Mrs Brown continued pinning the hem, talking through a mouth full of pins. "Would you turn a little to the right please, Vi?"

Gran shuffled to the right.

"Why don't you tag along with Braydon, Jeremy?" Mrs Brown said. "You don't want to hang around us with our women's talk."

Okay, I'm not the coolest at school. I'm kind of the class queer: all my friends are girls; I like opera; I can answer all the questions about male *and* female ejaculation — without stammering — in sex ed. classes.

And Braydon? In boardshorts, tall and tanned and naked from the waist up, not only weren't we in the same league, we weren't even in the same century.

"Shame you didn't bring your bathers, Jeremy," Mrs Brown said. "It's the perfect day for a swim."

Braydon looked out the window at the back yard, like his mother had asked him to eat shit or give birth to a watermelon.

"That's okay, Mrs Brown," I said. "I'm alright here."

"Don't be silly," she said. "Bray was just about to go for a swim. You can swim in your jocks." She smiled through the pins. "It'll be the most Braydon will be doing all day, seeing he's grounded and desperate to go to Nathan's party on the weekend."

She grinned, piercing the hem with a final pin.

Braydon said nothing.

I looked at Braydon, wondering which — and whose — cue to follow.

He indicated the door — *you coming or what?*

“Go on,” Gran nodded.

So I followed him out of the room. The door clicked behind me. We walked down the cool, darkened hallway. I watched his swagger, and his triangular shape — broad shoulders, tapered waist — and how he scuffed his bare feet, summered and tough, on the wooden floor.

He opened the back door. My eyes squinted with the light. He held the door open, but not enough, so just in time it banged in my face as I stepped outside.

“Thanks,” I said.

“You're welcome.”

I followed him to the pool gate and he reached over the rail to unlock it. Then he turned. His eyes were bright blue.

“You wanna beer?” he said

“Sure,” I said. I hate beer. “What kind do you have?”

“Beer.”

He opened the gate and this time I caught it in time. He walked over to an old fridge near a shed and pulling two cans out, handed me one as I sat down on the swinging settee.

His was beer.

And mine — so icy in my hand I dropped it — was cola. Holding it between my legs, my shorts insulation, I pulled the ring pull. The can sighed, and cola slurped out as Braydon sat on the other end of the settee and the settee bounced.

I sipped the cola. And he guzzled the beer, half the can, throwing his head back, Adam's apple ricocheting up and down with each long gulp.

He burped — for both our benefits — and said, “Are you really gay?”

I looked at my cola can. “Why do you want to know?”

Braydon stood up and burped again. Then stretching his arms and yawning, his boardshorts worked loose over his hips and the white

nylon drawstring of his speedos underneath poked out, gracing the hair stretching towards his navel.

Then he sucked his stomach in. The boardshorts slipped to the ground and he stepped out of them. His speedos — pale orange and perfect against his tanned skin — were curvy and tight at the back, looser and pouchy at the front.

I grew hard against the cola can.

He walked over to the shed. "Come on."

I followed his speedos.

"Close the door."

I did. And tried not to look at his face or his speedos. But the speedos glowed in the dark.

He loosened the drawstring and his penis sprang out. It had a hot funky, rubbing-inside-his-speedos smell — sweaty and close. I couldn't take my eyes off the slug growing before me. He smiled, stroking it like it was a family pet.

I stood, watching, barely breathing.

He grabbed the back of my head and forced me to my knees. Leaning forward, mouth open, I rolled my tongue around the knob, like I'd seen on internet porn. He pushed deep into my mouth.

I pulled away.

"Quick, suck it," he said, parting my lips again, forcing my mouth open. Three long thrusts and he groaned, legs shuddering, the sparse hair on his balls tickling my chin. And my mouth filled with a taste bitter and phlegmy and warm.

I gagged, but he gripped my head until the flow stopped. I had to swallow.

Pulling out, he wiped the leftovers on my cheek.

"Nice," he said. Or maybe he said, "Nice?"

I didn't know what to say. It was fun — but compared to what?

"Thanks," he said. "Almost as good as a girl."

And you've had how many? I wanted to ask.

"They taught me that at church," I said instead, wiping my mouth.

"That's fuckin' sick," he said, like I thought he would.

He pushed his penis back inside his speedos. And grabbing my hair, he added, "Tell anyone about this and I'll fuckin' kill you."

I looked up at him, still on my knees.

"We can do it again. Mum never comes out here." He let out a smile. "Want another drink?"

"Okay," I said, standing up, remembering how things always go so much better with cola.

