

Wonder Boy Wonder

by Oliver Hunt

Same plan as before, Ian just had to follow through this time. Not puss out. For weeks, since he'd had the idea, he'd stopped short in front of Sonia's door. The hesitation killed it. He'd return to his room where, amid the feeble drone of a crappy window unit, he'd hear the steady, even breathing of Leslie and the snoring of Todd, his two older brothers. He'd punch his pillow in frustration. He had to find out, he'd decided. The curiosity was just too great.

Ian and his siblings were all on summer break. Ian would start eighth grade in a few weeks. Leslie would be a high school senior, Sonia a junior, Todd a sophomore. Ian thought his adolescence would be different. For years Leslie and Todd had told him stories of prepubescent conquests and victories- the girl by the dumpsters behind the mall arcade, the dark haired cashier at Burger King, various babysitters, poolside in Hollywood, where Todd and Leslie both had their ways with Phoebe Cates, Diane Lane, and the cast of The Facts of Life (Todd took Natalie, for the team). Sonia didn't talk about sex, but Ian knew she was in demand. The boys at school, the ones smacking him in the back of the head and shoving him into lockers, would sometimes ask How did *you* end up related to *that*?

Sometime, between fifth and sixth grade, Ian imagined himself in his brothers' place. His hands shot down to scratch the nagging itch tickling his painful erection. He'd found the greatest feeling in the world, but he knew what it was and that he should be ashamed of it. Sometimes, while scratching that itch, Sonia popped into his head. He knew it was messed up and wrong, but sometimes she was the last thing he'd see before the dam burst. It made him feel both the best and the worst.

When Ian was really small, Sonia would hug him like one of her favorite dolls. When he was a toddler, Sonia would sometimes dress him up in her little girl dresses and put their mother's makeup on him. He wasn't really aware of it at the time, but when his brothers were feeling mean they'd show him pictures. They did it to humiliate

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him, but any memory Ian had of it hit a warm spot. Sonia would sometimes protect him from Todd and Leslie. They'd chase him through the house when roughhousing escalated into real fighting. She'd lay over him, absorbing Leslie and Todd's kicks and punches, saying Oh you guys are so tough beating on a little kid and a girl, aren't you? Lately, whether she snapped at him for getting on her nerves, apologized for snapping, or acted the supportive older sister, any touch-- any smack, belly-poke or backrub-- turned his spotty skin to a braille of goosebumps.

The girls at Ian's school were gangly and awkward, with zits, braces and sneers. The only ones with any tits were fat, with round, squishy faces. Sure, he'd settle for any of them if they'd settle for him, for just one thing one time. But Ian hadn't grown out of his baby fat yet, and blotchy dime-sized zits sprouted on his face, neck and back. Girls called him Fluffernutter and Volcano Face. They laughed and cheered when NoNeck Gary, Chad Vaughn or Tony Morano held him back and administered titty-twisters, pink bellies, and snuggies. Tony once punched him in his gut, knocking the wind out of him, saying I'd punch you in the face, but I don't want your faggot zit-jizz on my fist. Flat-chested Tina said Ha! and gave Tony a high five. Ian figured afterwards Tony went to Tina's house. She'd let him put his fingers up her panties or let him go even further. Tony would probably talk about it in gym class later. Everybody seemed to be having sex all the time, everyone except Ian.

When Ian thought of Sonia, he wanted to be her hero somehow, to rescue her from something- ninjas, terrorists, their brothers, rough middle-aged sexual predators. She'd express her gratitude saying God, I know this is wrong but I just can't help feeling this way, and he'd respond, I know. Me too.

Ian wanted to be prepared- with experience- for the coming school year. Sonia would understand, Ian thought, slowly turning her doorknob, or she'd come around eventually. The fantasy was one thing, but Ian had to know the reality. That's what big sisters are for.

