Coffee Spoons by david schleich

















Toward the middle of June each year Doc Fennon-Parker would fill up his swimming pool. Toward the middle of June each year the Bwana Boys of Edmision Heights subdivision (Johnny A., Johnny N., Johnny S., and Johnny W.) would gather to scheme their invasion of that pool. The idea was to have the first swim before the owner. Doc Fennon-Parker had been deprived of being first in his own pool for three years so far. Doc Fennon-Parker, pediatrician, against whom at least two of our group had a personal vendetta stemming from the first early whacks of breath that jolted them into middle - classdom.

Fennon-Parker's pool was carefully protected by a tall Frost fence. It was small as subdivision backyard pools go. However, the challenge rested in its inaccessibility. Doc Fennon-Parker would guard his silver-grey waters with the devotion of a new parent for a baby. Some certain claim to regional fame accured to us Bwana Boys as each year we beat the grampus-doc, whose electuaries and embrocations had gurgled in our throats for years, to the first splash in his own pool. On this fourth occasion of our annual poolside invasion we expected no less difficulties from that local contumelious baby-whacker. Our tradition would stand unaltered.

Doc Fennon-Parker had come to expect our assault on his cool blue waters and had tried to fill up his pool in mid-week and during our final examinations at school. This year it seemed he knew of our efficient intelligence systems. He seemed to concede that no matter how ingenious his timing we could spot a half-full pool a mile away. Johnny W. reported the filling - in - process on a Monday afternoon.

--He's early this year, I commented.

-- Figures he'll beat us to it, said Johnny A., frowning with a forensic

We knew that it took at least a dozen hours to fill up.

--Mid-nite? asked Johnny N.

-Mid-nite, we all agreed, consolidating our plans with a four-sided handshake.

As dark a night in June I cannot recall. Huddled against the wire fence the Bwana Boys glared at the grey water. Little tinkles of light from the outdoor bulb on the back of Doc's house skipped across the sheer surface

--Looks lumpy, I whispered.

"Figure he's been in yet? asked Johnny A.

-Not a chance. Look, it was only half-full at four this 'saft, chimed

Silently and gracefully we stripped naked depositing our clothes in four hurried heaps, shoes on top, outside the fence, at the head of our escape routes. Less silently and less gracefully we negotiated among ourselves about who was to be first in. Johnny A. (our resident her o and dare-devil) insisted, as usual, on being first to crash into the virgin

Johnny N. protested.

-But you were first in last year.

Johnny W. agreed.

--Yeah. You were first in last year and come to think of it you were first in the year before that too!

Yeah, returned Johnny A., but you guys got to put old man

I listened impatiently. The first annoying goose-bumps were tickling

Brown's outhouse on his front porch and I didn't.

Johnny A was mumbling in a querulous whisper. Johnny N. and Johnny W. giggled uncontrollably as they recalled the grim outhouse plumped on Farmer Mancer J. Brown's front porch, door facing door. I had watched as they had executed the caper, I watched again. They joked among themselves about the awful offal umps of stuff that led from that outhouse's true foundation to its new location on Brown's front porch.

--Wasn't that a blast? laughed Johnny N.

--Real scream! What a blast! Hey, figure he's found it yet? roared Johnny W.

--Geez, youse guys, keep it down! I growled aware that my obstreperous buddies were only a laugh away from blowing this year's number one caper, the virgin splash in Fennon-Parker's pool.

We sidled farther down the fence away from Fennon-Parker's house. Johnny A. soon demonstrated his Bwana Boy munificence by allowing Johnny N. first crack at the pool.

Johnny W. complained mutedly, his raucous, thick-necked voice grumbling and growling in the dark. Johnny N, gleamed at the prospect of presiding as resident hero of Edmison Heights the next day when the news would certainly have circulated that the Fennon-Parker pool had once again been violated by the exclusive Bwana-Boys blockbusters of Edmision Heights.

Johnny N. led the way over the fence stealthily. We followed, muffling groans or whimpers as toes jammed in fence wire or barbed wire scratched tender, exposed flanks.

Johnny N. waited until we were all crouched with that malevolent pride which is attendant on all such escapades. He glanced back and forth between us and the Fennon-Parker house. He expected the old Doc to come roaring out of the night, broom in hand, raging.

--What if he comes out? Johnny N. stammered, gritting his teeth.

I had already worked out the logistics of our position the year before. It took at least twenty seconds for the old Doc to get from the back door to the gate of his pool. Another ten seconds to unlock the gate and enter. Half a minute in all, Enough time for us to effect a sure escape.

-- Don't sweat it, Nort, I snapped.

-- Comeon' snapped Johnny A., impulsively.

--Let's go, Nort, growled Johnny W.

Johnny N. frowned. He was unhappy. He tensed his leg muscles as if about to sprint wildly along the narrow concrete apron and then to leap explosively into the virgin water. He relaxed. He tensed. He relaxed.

-Geez, cried Johnny A. Comeon' Nort, he's not gonna get us.

--Shhh!! I cautioned.

I shook my head timidly, Johnny A, breathed deeply, unable to contain the energy that was amassing in his legs. He had been mesmerized by this inactivity. Suddenly he leaped forward screaming like a matinee Tarzan. Now it was up to Doc Fennon-Parker to stop him from unlawful and wet knowledge of that still steek pool. Johnny A. leaped headlong into the dark. His winter-white skin was a quick flash. In that instant Johnny N. sprang to life, Johnny W. followed, I was leaning into a leap when the first ineffable roar issued from the water. First, a flopping splash. Then some preternatural shriek cut through the darkness like a gun shot. Two more whomping splashes and two more primeval howls. My own body was in mid-flight by this time, spuired on by the Bwana Boy imperative. My open hands hit the water first. A dull and engaging blump sound followed the contact my shoulder made with a solid block of something. Something that sank as I hit it. Something very, very cold.

When I surfaced I struck another. Treading water I became aware of a crescendo of bells in my ears. I heard the mad splash-crash of Johnnies A., W. and N. tearing out of the water, arms and legs flying, voices howling.

--ICE! HE'S GOT BLOCKS OF ICE IN HERE! GODDAM!

As their winter-white buttocks, shivering and bruised, disappeared over the fence I detected another voice, a laughing voice, near the house. A low, laughing voice getting closer. Snortings and gaspings interspersed with the most hysterical laughter. I turned about, the frigid water gripping me, the blocks of ice nudging against me. Doc Fennon-Parker, arms akimbo, head undulating up and down, mouth wide-open and happy, his white hair dancing under the outdoor bulb.

As I smacked and whacked my way through the ice and water I had no time to consider the demise of our important Bwana Boy tradition ruined by this clever pediatrician, this spanker of new-born boys. Rather, I was considering the extent of frost-bite damage Fennon-Parker's virgin pool had inflicted on my tender teenage skin.

Emerson, Lake, and Palmer. Mussorgsky

Pictures at an Exhibition Mussorgsky/Emerson, Lake and Palmer (British Copy)

With this, Emerson, Lake, and Palmer's third release, they have come up with the best live LP since the Who's Live at Leeds. ELP, being one of the more visually exciting bands around, really whip the Newcastle crowd into a frenzy, You are never unaware of the audience due to various hoots, cheers, howls, screams, and

yelling present throughout the recording.

The success of the album is due to the correction of previous mistakes. Emerson is not much as far as composing is concerned (downfall of Tarkus) but as far as arranging is concerned, he is second to none. Lake is a fine lyricist and has never written a bad song. With Emerson arranging Pictures and Lake providing the words, the result is a fine LP. Pictures is more or less a skeletal base from which our boys work from. Emerson is involved in various moog and

organ solos, Palmer does his thing, and Lake has a very quiet and subtle acoustic piece very reminiscient of Court of the Crimson King (the song, not the LP). Since Greg Lake is one of rock's better vocalists, the more rewarding things on this LP are whenever he opens his mouth. A fine example is the crescendo the band obtains at the end of the concerto.

The one drawback of this album is the rock and roll ditty at the end entitled Nutrocker. Emerson, Lake, and Palmer are capable of much better things

than this and shouldn't have bothered with it. Maybe it was added because the Mussorgsky piece isn't that long (35 minutes) but Nutrocker achieves nothing more than destroying any mood Pictures at an Exhibition might have conveyed.

by Lawrence Wilkie