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# Seaweed

## *Georgie porgie*

I hung about the town centre that Sunday, watching Violet and her new friend messing about on their roller blades. You wouldn't believe it, they were jumping up on walls this time and off again, and down the town hall steps, bounce, leap, racing each other down. Neat! Maybe one day.

I took the shortcut through Lymington Road and the gang were sitting on the garden walls. Brendan called my name, Hey! Penny Seaward, Pongy Seaweed! I was going to ignore him but I stopped for a minute and then he grabbed my hand. He looked back and grinned at all his mates. I recognised Vince, older than the others, giving him the thumbs up and Gretel, the only girl.

'Come and say hello to my mum.'

We went into his house while the boys and Gretel stood there giggling, poking their fingers at the air. Brendan's mum was mostly friendly but she was not pleased to see me.

'Come to see us Penny?' She looked very hard at me.

'Penny's coming up to my room.'

'Are you sure, young lady?'

As soon as we got up there Brendan started snogging me. Blond fluff on his upper lip. I took off my glasses and tried to teach him the right way. He undid my blouse and stared at

my empty bra. He grinned, What do you call that? Aren't you weird? but he didn't care. Boys only care about one thing.

Not too fast Brendan, please! He kept pulling my trousers until they were hanging off one foot. He crawled on top of them to get at me. I looked helplessly down at my thin legs and new pubes. I started to leak and made a puddle. Act like this is normal, he doesn't know any different but perhaps they've been talking about me. He pulled down his trousers. Both knees shoving between my knees and he flopped down on me, grinning. Back a bit, into position, ready, steady, 'No!'

I took his chin in my hand and forced him to look in my eyes. For a moment he was scared of me.

'No (please!)' I reached down and started to handjob him. Keep him happy. It was difficult doing it with my hand caught between him and the floor. I knuckled and pinched him with my other hand.

'Move over!'

'All right, all right.'

He was grinning again but I stopped his mouth with more kisses. I love kissing. His mum's voice, high pitched and a bit panicky,

'Brendan?' She came straight into the room without knocking and looked down at us. I'd softened up unbelievably by then. He was squeezing a third fat finger in (please God, boys don't talk to each other about me!) He

looked at her over his shoulder and grinned, with his thumping great whanger in my hand.

'You'd better watch your step young lady!'

I let go quickly. I was tugging at his wrist with both hands, stop doing that, take your fingers out! She really lost her temper so, shook her fist and shouted at me,

'Flipping watch it!' The door slammed behind her with a crash that shook the house and Brendan started pumping again with his hand.

'Brendan?'

He grinned. 'You won't have any more trouble' pump, pump, 'with her. She's learnt her lesson now.'

I started crying. 'We ought to stop now oh mm.' I held on to his wrist, my arms flapping along with him. 'Brendan we mm.'

'I told you didn't I?' Pump pump pump. 'Say boo to her next time. She'll run away.'

Eyes bubbling, nose dripping and my legs flopped open helplessly. Pump oh mm! Pump pump oh mm! I let go of his wrist. I've tried to make him stop. This is not my fault. Pump gurgle pump oh mm slosh. I suppose I ought not to be so selfish. Where has it gone?

'You're a slag! They told me you were. Most girls hate doing this stuff don't they?'

Bubble, sniff, oh mm, oh mm, sniff. Pumping me like a boy pumping up a tyre but he wants me to burst. I will burst.

I found it and pumped him back. Oh me, oh my, oh mm and he's going to pant pip squip slurp sliver then it was all over. Spit, pulsing, blob, trickle. Ten minutes. He grinned again, getting small, smaller in my hand. I let it go and held my hand away from me, dripping. Wipe my hand, eyes, nose, his hand too and me, there. We're sopping, what can we wipe with? I helped him take his shirt off, that's messed up already. Little fat boy with tits. Then we both had a good wipe. I blew my nose on his shirt.

'Thanks Penny, you're a slag!'

I made him put on a clean shirt and walk downstairs with me, his mum! She was ironing in the kitchen. She didn't even look up. The boys and Gretel were still outside. They cheered us as we came out like a royal wedding.

### ***Tears at the fairground***

Back home my mum had laid the table for tea but I said, No thanks, I am not hungry. She looked disappointed.

'Are you sure Penny? I've made—'

'No thanks.'

I limped upstairs quickly. She's made a special effort. Mushrooms, I expect. I always used to love mushrooms. Upstairs I put on Shattered Lamb at full volume but I was uncomfortable. I wriggled out of my jeans and my knickers and wiped again. Then I lay down on the bed. After a few minutes I spread my legs wide apart. My wardrobe door was

still open and I could see myself in the mirror. I giggled. No wonder I drive Brendan wild.

That was brilliant just now!

All the other students in my art group are going out for a meal together tonight because it's Victoria's eighteenth birthday. She is very popular. There is a big party at her house tomorrow too.

After leaving the restaurant tonight they will pair off and make love. It will be hygienic, non sexist and politically correct because they are responsible young people.

I'm twenty one but not really. I'm just a kid. I missed nine, ten years of my life in and out of hospital, first chemotherapy, then the graft, then more chemo and I never grew up. I'm tiny. I hardly got bigger in all those years until at last it let up. Then I put on a little weight, not much. My periods started again on and off. I watched my breast start to develop but still only my right breast (maybe one day!) Hardly a bit of thigh or bum on that side either because of the nerve damage. All lopsided I tip my small weight to the right and my child size jeans are so baggy they flap in the wind. Still, I am alive again, going to college, the oldest in my class and the smallest. I sometimes think they are all kids but most of the time they are adults and I am a kid.

What am I going to do tonight? I can't stay in and watch Mum suffer. I stood up, rubbing my bad leg. I'll go out again. Something else will happen. I put on clean knickers and

spent an age in front of the mirror trying to make my hair right. Did it use to be like this, thin and flat? White freckled skin and thin orange hair and me so thin and short? but the light was in my eyes.

I went to the fairground on the quay. Mostly it was boring. I only met one boy I knew. Dan Mac William from the YMCA isn't any girl's young dream. You can always tell when Dan is near, cat food! I was willing to give him a chance again but all he did was stare at the ground and whisper Hallo Penny so I brushed past him. I want to have fun and that doesn't mean Dan!

There was this ride when you sit in a little harness on a wire and it swings you very fast round and round. The boy at the turnstile looked me over but he didn't say I'm not allowed on it. The harness felt so loose on me, legs dangling down. I'm so light, I won't stay on! No, there are children on here, it must be okay. It gathered speed and we swung round and round high up in the air. Everything was blurred and miles underneath me. It made me scream.

It stopped at last and I tried to get off but my leg had gone stiff. The boy helped me and put his arms around me for a moment so I was lost in him, that smell on him, fairground boys. Then he moved on to someone else.

Well, that's it then. I might as well go home but I hung about by the ride. After I had been there twenty minutes, the boy sauntered over.

'Do you want another go?'

'Oh! No thanks.'

'Are you sure? You can go free, since it's you.'

'No. It's okay, thanks.'

'All right.'

He stood there with his hands in his pockets, looking at me.

'What do you want then?'

'Nothing. Sorry. I'll go.'

'Hang about. I won't bite. Hey Greg?'

He was looking over my head at a sweaty man with very long hair.

'What's up?'

'I need a half hour.'

'I know your half hours! Go on then. Evening Miss.'

'Good evening.'

'Come on. I'll show you round.'

'Show me round?'

He must have taken his hands out of his pockets. He was touching me gently while we were talking. On the behind!

'Hey, hands off!'

My eyes gave me away. Yes please. Oh yes please!

'Come on. Do you want to go on the big wheel?'

'Not really.'

His face was so close that I was going cross eyed.

'What do you want then?'



I closed my eyes. It was the only way to answer him. One of his hands was on my shirt. All I have on that side is a kinky swollen nipple. He found it with his thumb and pushed it left and right, left and right. He was speaking very gently right against my face.

'What's your name again?'

'Pennlibibby' (his tongue and mine.)

'We can't do it here Penny.'

'Can't we?'

His fingers on my little shrunken tummy, my silly outy tummy button like another nipple. He pushed it gently.

'I know somewhere we can go.'

'Can't we stay here?'

I was having all the fun of the fair after all. It started to rain. We were still standing in the same place. He was stroking my wet hair and my face. In the rain he couldn't have known that I was crying.

'Don't you want to come with me now? It's not far.'

'No, really, I've got to go now. Really.'

'Do you? You're not offended? Did you mind me asking?'

'No. It's all right.'

'Sure? Well it's been nice getting to know you. What's your name again?'

'Penny.'

'Take care of yourself Penny.'

I called after him,

'Thanks. I'm sorry about—'

After that I was very tired. Sore too. I could hardly walk. I had to pay for a taxi home.

### ***Young adults***

That Monday at college I was thinking of Brendan and that boy. Why did I lose my nerve? Chicken! I looked at Amy, the boyish girl with short blond hair, a schoolboy side parting. I bet she had a good weekend! She was kneeling, bending over the graphite and charcoal on the floor. I looked at her shorts at the back and put my glasses on quickly.

I am an adult now but much more childish than before I grew up. I was thinking, Pretend I am a boy! I leaned over sideways and looked at the back of Amy's thighs.

The back of a girl's thighs, the front of a boy's, boys and girls, oh wicked! (Do you ever feel like this or am I the only one?)

None of the boys was looking at her, only me. What a waste! I held out my finger and nudged Patrick who was sitting next to me, 'Not bad eh? Are you up for it? She'll be dry but turn your finger carefully, press on up. She'll shout and slap you. She might even cry but really we girls love it.' I didn't really say that, I just thought it.

Pretend I am a boy! Kneeling behind Amy, hooking her pants out of the way, she looks round at me with shock on her face and I feel that change inside her, tight and dry then

suddenly soft and clingy.

Oh stop it, stop it, stop it!

Don't insult Amy. She's a nice girl, they all are! The boys too. If they knew what I was thinking! I started crying. I'm the only one, Penny Seaward, Pongy Seaweed. I was limping into the storeroom, bad little girl hiding from the young adults. Patrick came after me, concerned, Do you want me to call the nurse Penny? but of course I wasn't going to tell anyone what was wrong.

After the class I tagged along with a group of students going to the coffee bar. They smiled at me and so I smiled at them. We all smiled far too much. I had a problem keeping up with them. I kept on having to break into a clumsy run, so they looked at each other and nodded and then slowed down for me. I looked from face to face, keep on smiling, what do they really think of me? Oh I know, they think I'm sweet.

I giggled at their witty conversation and looked at the boys. Look at me, look at this, I'm female too! Martin smiled, not just because I'm sweet. His eyes went left and right and. Down! Bull's eye! I blushed and leaked. Pongy Seaweed! Then I was dreadfully embarrassed but I giggled more than ever and struggled to think of something to say to him if only he won't stop looking.

As we left the coffee bar Amy fell in beside me. She looked a bit sharp at some of the boys and they stood back away from us. She spoke to me very quietly.

'Penny, I don't want to, you don't mind me saying this? It's only, those boys, they don't really, I know you don't mean anything but everyone, well, the girls actually. They're calling you a, you know?'

I stared at her. She said,

'Please don't take this the wrong way.'

You poisonous little—! You fucking—! You CUNT! I gasped for breath and sobbed out more choking tears. I stumbled away, not able to say a word. When I reached the pre-fabs I risked looking back. Amy was staring at me, very put out. Amy's thinking to herself, What's her problem? but all I said was—! Martin was staring too. Martin's new girlfriend Helen, hah hah hah! He's going out with the prettiest girl in college and can't keep his eyes off a cripple's cunt. Still crying I laughed, I leaked again, I waved back at all of them. As I limped away I hitched up my jeans and patted the back of them, soggy wet, Pongy Seaweed.

### ***Family planning***

In the afternoon I had an hour's physio, Moira, Penny, Roy, Bhavisha, Girish, Graham, the six damaged kids sweating it out together on the machines. After that I caught Sandy, the college nurse, walking out to his bicycle at the end of his surgery hour. It was the only way I was getting to see him now. If I booked to see a nurse then they always booked me in with Julie not Sandy. Sandy was in his late

thirties, a bit overweight and balding. He was too easy going with us for his own good so the girls called him 'flower power.' I looked up at his eyes as I limped along beside him, wanting answers.

'You know my—? When I came out of hospital, my—? Breast? Breasts. And when I, I mean my—?'

He stopped and turned to face me.

'Yes?'

'Periods! Then Mr Sykes said when I had injections every morning, the twenty four hour your your,' urine! Urine! Once a month I still have to piss in a big cider jar, all day and night. I giggled helplessly.

'So how can I—? Is it all right to go on the pill now?'

He looked at me for a minute thoughtfully, taking me in.

'Do you think you are pregnant?'

I looked down at the ground still giggling.

'No.'

'Do you need a test, Penny?'

'No.'

He grinned at me and I grinned back. I love this man.

'You have to talk to Mr Sykes about the pill.'

With Mum there? 'NO!'

'Okay. Well, I could get you an appointment with Family Planning. Okay, but you see, but I think they would have to ring up Mr Sykes first.'

He kept talking to fill the silence.

'The pill won't protect you against disease.

I can give you some condoms Penny.

No?

Look Penny. There's diseases you must not catch. Least of all you! You know that.

You could be fitted with a cap. I could sort that out but it would take a couple of weeks. It won't protect you against— Penny! We have to talk about this. Do you want to talk to Julie? Better to talk to a woman?

Penny? Okay, look, I'll give you some sponges now. And some condoms too.' He reached for the surgery key and we started to walk back. 'You know about sponges?'

I kept giggling, I couldn't help it.

'Sponges? To soak it all up?'

When I left the college a few minutes later I had three packets of contraceptive sponges with instructions for use on the pack. I'll keep them afterwards as souvenirs. In a jam jar (sniff sniff!) I threw the condoms away.

### ***Coming back from the dead***

Later on I changed my clothes and I thought, Why not go to Victoria's party? We all had invitations, she can't throw me out. The party was at her parents' house but her parents weren't there. I giggled as I walked through the door. What are they all going to think when they see me?

Especially Amy. She was standing with Victoria when I

arrived. I had to go up to Victoria and give her a kiss, birthday girl. Amy looked the other way, then she looked down at the floor. She bit her lip.

'All right Penny?'

I mumbled back,

'All right. How are you?'

Then I thought Sod it and gave Amy a kiss too. Her sweet blushing face, only seventeen years old. I love kissing.

'Penny, I'm sorry.'

'Don't say sorry!'

I hugged her. I ought to quarrel with Amy more often.

Then they left me and I wondered what to do at this party. There was wine and cider even though most of them were under age but I don't go in for booze much. I went to the bathroom but Vincent Burgess was in there being sick. I threw him out and had to clean up the mess before I could use the toilet. On the way out I noticed a couple at it on Victoria's mum and dad's bed. I watched them until the girl saw me, then I went downstairs again.

Victoria was sitting on the stairs with Patrick, all cuddly, so he's going out with her again. I sat down next to them. I don't take up much space. Even Victoria is bigger than me. She was very friendly. She smiled and squeezed my arm.

'Are you enjoying the party Penny?'

'Doing my best.'

'It's all right about this afternoon?' She squeezed my arm

again. 'How about another glass of wine? I'm legal now.'

'No thanks. No. On second thoughts yes.'

She trotted downstairs. I turned to Patrick. He got up too.

'I won't be a minute.'

I followed him into the bathroom.

'Penny! Why are you following me?'

'Give us a kiss.'

He frowned but gave me an affectionate kiss on the cheek. Then I stood on tip toe and grabbed his shoulders. I gave him a kiss on the lips, just an affectionate kiss like the kisses I give Mum but he looked startled.

'Penny?'

'Yeah?'

'Look, I'm very fond of you. We both are.'

'Come on then.'

I kissed him again. Nuzzling up against him I started crying because this is so nice. It's the only thing I ever want.

'Shut the door!'

'Okay. Come on Patrick, I have got tits. I mean a tit. Over here.'

'I'm sorry. I feel bad about this.'

'Why? Just because it's Vicky's birthday?'

'It's bad enough any time.'

'Stop fussing. She won't notice you've gone so long as we're quick.' I undid my trousers so he could slide his hand in. 'You know me. It's straight in, straight out and straight



back to Victoria afterwards. I don't even ask you to recognise me in a public place, you selfish cunt!

'Yes, I'm sorry.'

His hand was bigger than my leg. I dried my eyes and opened his flies. I expected boxer shorts underneath but he had knickers like a girl. How do I get in here?

'Does Vicky do this?'

'I can't tell you that.'

Yes, he means yes. They all do it! Even Victoria so what use am I? 'Fuck Vicky!'

'Stop it! We ought to stop now really anyway.'

'I like this, don't you?'

'Yes. I love it. Don't cry.'

I shouldn't take advantage of you Penny.'

'You're an old mother hen, cluck cluck!'

'I'm trying to help you. Do you know what the others are saying about you?'

I kicked off my shoe so I could tug my bad leg out.

'What are they saying? No, don't tell me.' I rubbed the tears and snot off my face and grabbed his dick again. 'Just the girls anyway, not the boys?'

'No, the boys too.'

'Fuck all of you,' yank!

'Penny,'

'Why should I care what any of you think? I died and came back from the dead!'

'Shh, keep your voice down.'

His finger tickled and prodded, hooked under and up me. That soon shut me up. I couldn't think about being angry or crying or anything but his finger. I clung to him and gripped it like a clenched fist. Bending my knees and arching my back but then his finger slipped out. He tried to get back in and poked me too far back.

'Fuck you!'

'I'm sorry?'

I snarled at him, 'Rapist!' He tried to get away but I held on and followed him around the bathroom. 'Sorry! Sorry, I am just a slag!' I slapped my face with my free hand, 'Please!'

(Whisper) 'Christ Penny we've got to be quiet. Are you sure you want to do this?'

Yes I'm sure. Under your nose, sucks to you Vicky! We slid down on to the floor together except he had to hunch himself up because of the bath.

Then, it was all going fine but you see, I've had such a beating! His normal healthy boy's body on top of me, my little bones, I could snap! Hands scraping my poor flat chest. Hands around my back, up my hole, how many hands has he got? I was drowning in his mouth. I can't move. When he paused for breath I fluttered quickly away sideways like a lame bird but there's no room, oh help! He smiled and kissed me again so I champed down on his lip hard.

'Ow! Ow ow get off ow ow ow! What the fuck's got into you?'

I pulled myself up against the side of the bath. Struggling to get my leg back in my trousers. I knocked over a paper cup half full of flat cider. Hot trickling down the back of my thigh, I don't believe it. Why does this keep happening and I never enjoy it?

'I'm going home.'

'Why?' Blood on his face. Tears on mine.

'Fucking prick!'

### ***Screaming in the street***

I opened the bathroom door so I had room to move. Terrible screaming music from downstairs. Patrick gaped at me while I was getting dressed and a crowd of other people did too. Downstairs they had turned the music up again BOOM SCREAM and on my way home I heard screaming in the street. I stopped to listen. It might have been Victoria. It might have been some other girl from some other party. How ever could someone the size of Victoria make so much noise? SCREAM,

'YOU FUCKING FUCKED HER FUCK YOU! OHHHHHHHHH  
FUCKING FUCKING!'

Another girl was speaking quietly to her. I couldn't hear what she said but I heard the reply, a girl screaming a spray of tears over the street.

'But Dawn you don't know what he did, he fucking—' She must have swallowed a whole mouthful of tears. 'THAT WHORE!' (She means me.) 'OHHH FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK HIM HE FUCKING FUCKED HER OHHHHHHHHHHH FUCKING FUCKING!'

Then just whimpering and howling and music. 'What does anyone see in her?' BOOM BOOM SCREAM RATTA TWANG BOOM. 'She STINKS!' I didn't have much sympathy for Victoria. She'll soon find another boyfriend. Doesn't know when she's well off.

A chilly night and Patrick's sperm was steaming hot, trickling down my leg. I forgot all about putting in the sponge but never mind, it was fantastic! Now my jeans are sticking to me, Pongy Seaweed.

## **Hair**

Get hold of a piece of cloth and pull. She keeps taking my hand away. Kissing, all she wants to do is kiss (mind my sore lip!) I won't see anything if we never stop kissing. I may never get another chance, I've got to look. He wrenched himself away from a kiss. Quick before she hides but—

But she is a sweet girl, not that kind of girl. This can't be right!

She pulled her skirt down quickly but it was too late.  
More than Dee. HEAPS more than Penny. Oh poor  
Victoria. I shouldn't have looked but now I've got to make  
certain.

Here it is, it's real. Handfuls!  
'You bastard Patrick!'