

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/3

A.G. Dumas
A New Vagina

It was so hot at the lawn-and-pool party for Tommy Tuttle's 40th birthday that the hired bartenders unsnapped their black bow ties and opened their starched collars. Finally, they cut bar towels into strips and used them for headbands to keep perspiration from dripping into the mixed drinks. Leslie O'Hern and her companion showed up after a while to some looks and whispers. There were enough people there to make their presence nothing more than a momentary distraction for most. Robert Alvino, however, monitored their every move from under a mimosa tree across the large yard.

They ordered vodkas with lime and tried to join in the mingling. Leslie smiled nervously as she introduced her friend to some of the old crowd. A few were coolish, as was to be expected. After all, she had dropped out of sight for more than a year without any explanation, had gained 20 pounds, and completely changed her looks. The natural blonde hair, once a curly mane, had been chopped into a Dutch boy. Gone, too, was the make-up: her blue eyes appeared more sunken and less noticeable, and without polish, her lips lacked definition and appeared thinner.

Some of nature's gifts were harder to neuter. The added bulk had succeeded in making her lovely breasts even fuller. The man's button-down shirt she was wearing clung to them in the heat and humidity. Her thighs (albeit rounder) were still quite shapely -- even under the baggy khaki shorts she was wearing. And her swimmer's legs were still firm and veinless.

Leslie's companion, a tall woman, was a few years older -- probably in her late 30s -- and plain without trying. She was much taller and considerably leaner than Leslie, with broad shoulders, small breasts and narrow hips. Her long legs were slightly bowed and extremely muscular in the calf. Her dark hair was short and in a nice bob. Her skin wasn't as smooth as Leslie's, but her face stood with its sharp, angular jaw. The rumor was that she played basketball in college and had a brief stint in a pro league in Europe. He heard she was a lawyer with some money, but still looked very much the jock. Somebody said that she knew Martina Navratilova.

Eyes finally met and waves were exchanged. The glance-and-quickly-turn-away game had continued until the women got so close that Robert could no longer pretend that he was so preoccupied that he didn't see them. He excused himself from the group under the mimosas and approached the women.

Robert and Leslie greeted each other with a hug and a single kiss to the lips. "Good to see you, Les," he said, smiling. "It's been a while, hasn't it? The hair looks good short. *You* look good!"

You lying bastard, she thought. Nonetheless, she was happy with the warm reception. "You look good, too," she said. "Fatherhood must agree with you. Where's Bonnie?"

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"We're separated," he replied. You *knew* that *you bitch*, he thought. The smile, however, never left his face. "Oh, I'm sorry to hear that," she said, feigning surprise. "How's the baby doing?"

"Fine, fine," he replied. "Getting real big. I see her every week. She's too young to understand, of course, so everything's pretty cool."

"Good, good," Leslie said. She turned to her companion. "I'm sorry, Patsy...but you remember *Robert*, don't you? *Robert Alvino, Patsy Snead.*"

"I think we met a year or so ago," Patsy said, keeping things chatty and light. They were never formally introduced; they had only seen each other from a distance in a restaurant when Robert and Leslie ran into each other.

Robert went along. "Nice to see you again," he said, taking her hand and squeezing it firmly. She had a strong grip. He was taller and broader than she remembered. He had a nice tan, and his eyes were more green than brown. They twinkled when he spoke. She liked his smile.

Robert was extremely pleasant and guided the conversation, so the meeting wasn't awkward in the least. They talked jobs and the like but, as he suspected, the hot button was sports. As they spoke, Patsy quietly admired him in his tank top and swimsuit. The few flecks of gray enhanced his good looks. She felt much better about being there now.

Leslie and Robert hadn't slept together in nearly three years, and had been out of touch during that time, aside from the chance restaurant encounter a year earlier. He was angry about the way she abruptly ended their affair, but being married at the time left him in no position to make a big stink. He quickly moved on to a female teaching assistant at the local college where he taught. Robert was always fucking somebody other than his wife.

Leslie never truly got over him, despite the fact that she knew in her heart it never would have been anything more than a fling to him. She had immersed herself in their intense lovemaking and had fallen deeply in love with a man for the first time in her life. She had had an abortion at his pleading because she believed him when he told her that the time wasn't right for them. When he left his wife it would be their time. He did eventually leave his wife, but for a young, college chippy. He was a lying bastard, she thought, but she still became excited when she thought about their lovemaking. She had never been with another man. "Do you ever go back to the old inn?" she asked, referring to the bar where they met. "Those were good times, weren't they?"

"I honestly can't remember the last time I was in there," he replied. "I heard you moved."

"Yeah, I have a nice condo down in Oceanside," Leslie said. She glanced at Patsy and then added, "We have a nice condo I should have said."

He had heard that they were living together and that this party was a sort of coming out for them, although he rationalized that it wasn't really unusual for single women -- or men, for that matter -- to live together. Still, he tried not thinking of them sleeping together.

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He continued to keep the conversation light and breezy. "This party was a great idea, wasn't it? Old Tommy was a party animal, so leave it to him to get the old crowd back together." In time, Robert held up his empty beer bottle. "I'm empty. Who needs drinks?"

"Vodka and soda with a lime, please," Patsy said. "Me, too," Leslie added. "But make mine a double."

As he strode off, they admired his square shoulders shifting alternately. Leslie remembered how she used to grab on to those shoulders and melt into oblivion when they made love.

"Hello out there!" Patsy said, breaking Leslie's stare. "You're still a little stuck on him, aren't you?"

"No fucking way!" Leslie exclaimed.

"He seems like a nice enough guy."

"He is. He is. He's big, sexy and charming, but he's still a bastard," Leslie said.

"He's taller than I remember," Patsy noted.

"You ready to start a fan club for him?" Leslie asked, slightly irritated.

"Oh, come on, kiddo. You all right?"

"I'm fine. I just didn't realize that you were still into guys. I mean, after all you've been through!" Leslie said, becoming upset.

"Oh, kiddo, please relax! I just happened to remark that he's bigger than I remember that time I saw him. That's all.

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry."

"So, you do all right?" Patsy asked.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. It's good to see him again. It helps."

"Maybe you should slow down a little," Patsy suggested. "It's hot and you're sucking those drinks down fast."

"Don't worry about me so much," Leslie said.

"Okay, but you're sure you're okay?"

"Yeah, I'm sure. So chill, will you?"

"All right. I just want to know that you're okay."

"I'm okay."

"Really?"

"Really."

Robert and Patsy discovered they had common friends through tennis. He taught history at the college, but was also the assistant tennis coach. Several acquaintances of hers had taken lessons from him. "I understand you played in California," she said. "That's right," he said. "At Stanford."

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"McEnroe went there, didn't he?" she asked.

"Yeah. He was there after I left. My claim to fame is that we had the same coach."

"Still, you must've been pretty good," she said.

"I can still hold my own."

"Why didn't you pursue it?" she asked.

"I wasn't prepared to devote my life to the game. You know, it's an all-or-nothing situation if you want to play sports on a professional level."

"Tell me about it," she replied. Leslie cut in. "Remember when you tried teaching me tennis?" she asked.

"Who could ever forget that!" Robert replied, laughing. "You hit about a dozen balls over the fence during the first lesson."

Patsy laughed.

"Yeah, that was pretty funny, wasn't it?" Leslie agreed, disheartened.

Later in the afternoon, when a water polo game is suggested by some people in the pool, Robert is chosen as one of the captains. He picked Patsy first, who in her candy-striped one-piece, cut a tall, lean figure. Leslie, too drunk to join in, watched from a lounge chair as Robert and Patsy dominated the match with their superior athleticism and teamwork. Afterward, as the team celebrated, Leslie forced a drunken smile as she listened. Inside, she was hurting more than ever.

"I was a convenient fuck, wasn't I?" she says to herself. "I wasn't above letting you rip off my underwear in parking lots at night and fucking me on the hood of your car, or letting you in at three in the morning after you'd been out drinking with the boys. And I was always good for a quickie before tennis matches on Sunday morning. I was on the way, wasn't I!?"

Leslie had been crazy about him, but hated keeping it secret. But she had been whipped. Nobody that handsome had ever paid attention to her. She wanted to be able to show him off, but she figured in time, if he left his wife, then maybe she'd get her chance.

She did her best to keep him interested. She grew her hair out and began wearing make-up for the first time. Her girlish looks became modestly stunning. She went through a brief period of guilt because she knew Robert's wife, Bonnie. But she had become obsessed with Robert.

The affair wore her down emotionally. After making love in her apartment, Robert would shower, dress, and exit. She would lie on her bed, praying for his return. When she heard his car start and drive off, she would cry herself into hysteria. One night, when she was particularly drunk and getting fed up with his hit-and-run routine, she went crazy on him and he left in a huff.

Leslie stayed in bed for two entire days when she found out

Robert's wife Bonnie was pregnant again. She began turning Robert

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away after that. The last time, he was drunk and woke her up at three in the morning. Her talked her out to the porch of her apartment house and coaxed her down into the shrubbery. She gave him oral sex to keep him quiet. After that, she had a girlfriend move in to keep him away. Through that friend, she met Patsy.

Robert was walking down the driveway at Tuttle's house when a voice came from behind: "Robert, is that you?" It was Patsy.

"I'm glad I caught you," she said, running down the drive behind him. "You're leaving without saying good-bye?" It was dark, but the party was still going on in the backyard.

"No, not at all," Robert lied. "I was just taking a break. Was thinking of heading to the store."

"Too bad about poor Les, huh?" she said.

"Yeah, how is she?" he asked. "She could never really hold her liquor."

"She's upstairs in the guest bedroom," Patsy added. "Nothing that a long sleep won't cure. I'd hate to be her in the morning, though."

"I hear you," he replied.

There was a silence, and then Patsy spoke up. "Do you mind if I come for a ride with you? I was going to head out and go back to the condo, but I might crash here tonight since Les and I came in one car."

"Sure," he said. "Let's take a ride." Robert discovered that his car was blocked in at the end of the driveway. "Shit, I can't get out."

"Not to worry," Patsy said. "I'm on the street." Her car, a black BMW coupe, glistened in the dimness of the street light.

"Nice car," he said. "Very nice."

"You drive," she said, tossing him the keys.

"They got in and he started it up. "Very, very nice," he continued. "Had it long?"

"I have a year left on the payments."

"Still humid as hell, isn't it," he said. "Do we want to put the air on?"

"Let's drive with the windows open."

"Okay."

They drove for several miles without saying much. "So you and Les have a condo together, huh?" he finally asked, breaking the lull.

"Yeah, it's my place, and she moved in about a year ago. I think she'll be getting her own place one of these days."

"Not working out?" he pried.

"Let's say we've got issues we've been dealing with, and we're coming down on different sides," Patsy replied.

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He wasn't quite sure what she meant, but added, "Well Leslie was always a sweet kid, but I knew she had some problems."

"I suppose, but don't we all have problems," Patsy said, quickly coming to her defense. "She still talks about the

problems that *you* created for her."

"Whoa!" he said, embarrassed that she brought it up. "We're way past the statute of limitations on that," he said, trying to come back.

Patsy laughed. "Hey, who's the lawyer here, anyway?"

That eased the momentary tension. She ended it by saying, "Okay, let's not talk about Les anymore. Let's talk about us."

"You're on!" he said, highly relieved. He pulled into a 7-Eleven and parked at the far end of the lot. "Nobody'll put a scratch on the door out here," he said. "I'm getting a pack of smokes. Want anything?"

"You smoke, huh?"

"Not *really*, but when I drink I like a couple."

"Get some gum, too, okay?"

Patsy wondered if this was her opportunity. Robert knew this was his opportunity: he bought a pack of condoms because his were in the glove compartment of his car back in the driveway.

When he returned, he tossed her the pack of gum. "Double-bubble, sugarless," he said.

He lit up, and they sat and talked.

"I'm really starting to feel it now," Patsy remarked.

"Sick?"

"No, just heady. But a good head."

"Good," he said

"Think we should get back?" she asked, coyly.

"Yeah, but there's no rush, is there?"

"Not at all."

She put her feet up on the dashboard. They were big as far as women's feet go, but were nicely formed and athletic-

looking. She was wearing short-shorts that revealed the full length of her legs right up to her crotch. She stretched her arms back over her head. Her small but ample breasts pushed through her tee-shirt. She pulled her long legs back to her seat and let them flop to the sides. Her left knee came to rest against his arm that was lying on the arm-rest.

"Oh, sorry," she said, coyly.

"Anytime," he said, moving closer and rubbing her leg in a friendly way. "Damn, lady, you have long legs!"

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She laughed. "God, I was so embarrassed of them in high school. They were like sticks!"

Robert squeezed the inside of her leg, a bit more friendlily now. Patsy spread her legs wider. "Feel like a smoke?" he asked.

"I'll share some of yours," she said, turning toward him.

He reached over and placed it between her lips. As she dragged in, his hand moved closer to her crotch. He worked it under the shorts. She was wearing no undies. He began fingering her vagina and clitoris.

Patsy tossed the cigarette out the window. She sat frozen for a moment as Robert continued getting into it and moving closer. She waited for him to say something. "Oooh, it's nice," he whispered in her ear.

She was elated. She melted into his embrace. It was her first time with a man since the operation, and it was sensitive and working just the way the doctors had assured the former Patrick Snead that it would.