

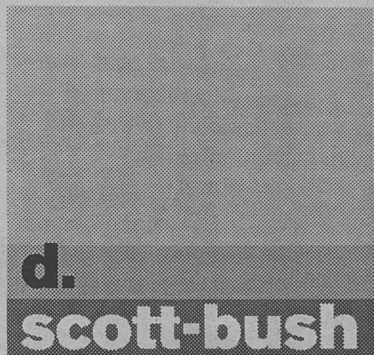
Naked Curiosity: Passed On Past

“I don’t want my past to be his future,” Lyle sighed.

Ruminations about his youngest brother left my acquaintance melancholy, after a holiday visit to his parents’ home. Lyle had never been close to his siblings, since he was already in high school when they were born. They had nothing in common and seeing them no more than once or twice a year didn’t help build a bond.

“My mom asked me to bunk in with Gary to see if I could find out what’s going on with him,” Lyle reported. “His grades have been in the toilet and he’s not hanging out with his regular friends. She’s worried that he’s on drugs or something.”

Turns out Lyle has more in common with his little brother than he thought. While snuggled in their respective twin beds, in the room that had originally been Lyle’s but was now Gary’s domain, Gary came out to his thoroughly surprised brother.



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kept questions about his age from surfacing. Other guys have just assumed that he was older than his seventeen – now, 18 – years.

Gary showed Lyle his secret stash of gay magazines. He keeps them in the same place that Lyle had kept his covert cache of porn and playthings, when it had been his room. Lyle had been singularly sleazy in his sexual escapades and from an earlier age than Gary. His youthful exploits could fill volumes of true-life stroke stories. He rarely bothered with boys his own age. Instead, he preferred to loiter outside leather bars and pick up guys

his nipples pierced!”

It was those tidbits of information that sent Lyle into his forlorn funk. He’d spend years putting himself in dangerous situations with people about whom he knew next to nothing. He’d been intimately acquainted with a phalanx of phalluses but never developed any kind of intimate romantic relationships. He flunked out of college because he was more interested in getting laid than getting good grades. He’d had venereal diseases – some more than once – and was taking a pharmaceutical cocktail to keep his HIV at bay.

“I don’t want my brother to go through what I did,” Lyle articulated. “He should go to college, get a good job, find a nice guy, settle down and be monogamous.”

Apparently, Gary didn’t warm to Lyle’s would-be words of wisdom. His warnings were as welcome as most suggestions of “do as I say and not like I did when I was young and wild.” Gary told him to shut up and stop being a “preachy old queen.”

Lyle seemed to believe that Gary following in his promiscuous path was inevitable. He asked me how many gay men I could name who hadn’t had a slut phase soon after coming out. Point taken but, still, that doesn’t mean that Gary will reprise all of Lyle’s self-described “mistakes of whore-ific proportions.”

Can we save our young gay brothers – blood relatives and otherwise – from some hard knocks by telling them there’s more to life than hard ons? Can we show them the way without making it seem like we’re telling them what or whom to do or not to do?

I had several really wonderful mentors but that didn’t keep me from getting involved with the occasional loser or putting myself in situations that, in hindsight, I realize were unwise and unsafe.

Lyle has a chance to be a positive influence in a young gay man’s life. Let’s hope he makes the most of this opportunity to offer love and guidance instead of warnings and predictions. Let’s hope we all do. ▼

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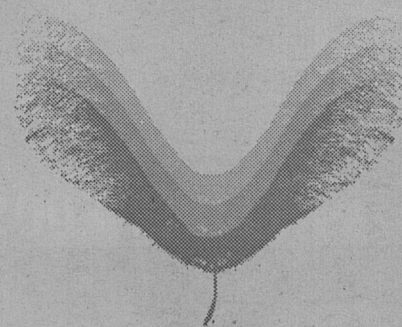
“Gary is the butchest of the bunch,” Lyle related. “He plays football and baseball and, up ‘til last year, he wrestled, too.”

Since December of his junior year, Lyle’s rough-and-tumble brother has been pursuing sweaty, man-to-man grappling of another kind. Gary confessed to Lyle that he’d gone into the city a few times in the past year to hook up with men for sex. His muscular build and mature-looking moustache and goatee have

whose activities were more adventurous.

For Gary, talking with someone in his family about being gay was liberating. Lyle, on the other other, found it hard to listen to his little brother describe the sexual fantasies that he planned to make a reality.

“He’s not very experienced, yet, but he definitely wants to be,” Lyle related. “And not in a vanilla way. He talked about water sports and fisting, for God’s sake, and he wants to get



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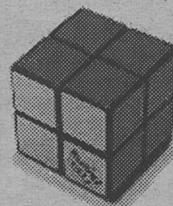
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