

Anthony and Mitch loved each other like any old Rich would love his girl. Boys from Kansas, they were.

Mitch loved his cars, loved the feeling of motor oil on his skin, and the feeling of a leather baseball mitt on his hand. He was boyish, a jock, brooding.

Anthony was a boy from a family of academics, he loved his books and his chess games. Complete opposite of Mitch, nothing about them the same, and yet, they loved each other.

Mitch always came to Anthony's chess tournaments, and Anthony always cheered the loudest during Mitch's baseball games. They were inseparable, those two.

Nobody but me knew about what they did up in Mitch's room, I was his sister, after all.

They always took the opportunity to give each other a quick peck whenever it was safe to. Mitch usually pecked first, but sometimes Anthony was brave enough to plant the slightest of kisses on Mitch's jawline, where there was always a bruise from a ball hitting his dumb face.

They were close. Closer than any boys should've been. They knew what would happen if they ever let themselves be caught, they knew that what they had was dangerous.

It was dangerous, so dangerous, but it was beautiful.

Anthony always seemed to know what Mitch wanted— a friend, a lover, a comforting presence— and he conformed to whatever role Mitch needed. Mitch knew how much Anthony needed someone stable, someone to always lean on when he was crying, which was a lot. Anthony was parentless, living with his awful grandmama and her beast of a husband. He needed someone with understanding hands to hold him up. And Mitch was that.

I had the pleasure of witnessing some of their more soft moments, because they knew I wouldn't utter a word about them to anyone. I had a little friend of my own, though I have learned now to be ashamed of it.

I was complicit in what they were, in their dangerous situation, and yet.. I do not regret keeping quiet for so long. I don't understand it, maybe it is the leftover sin in me.

They were always attached at the hip, holding hands whenever possible, leaning on each other on the bus, way in the back, where they sat with Old Joe and her gender-confused companion. I never understood Old Joe, she was manly, a brutish girl that insisted she was a man. Maybe she was, and I was just too blind to see him.

Mitch's baseball team loved him, not like Anthony did, but in the same way a brother would. They were all brothers, in a way. Mitch was the star of the team, and won many trophies. His team was proud of him, as was I.

Anthony and Mitch lasted three years. Until they were 18. They wanted to elope, and had made a plan.

I remember, one night, I heard them talking about it. I thought that this was too far. I couldn't watch my.. brother be taken away by.. sin.

I told Papa that night, and he was furious, seething with rage. I'd realized what I'd done when I watched him walk up those stairs.

Papa was never too fond of queers, he would rather kill his own son than accept that he had a sinner in his home.

Kill his own son, and the freckled boy who made his son a faggot.

I was standing in the doorway as Papa screamed at Mitch and Anthony, holding his hunting rifle, full of ammunition and ready to shoot. Mitch was on his knees, pleading, praying, to a god who hated him.

"Don't kill Anthony, I beg you. Kill me, Pop, but let Anthony live."

It was worthless, Papa was cruel, and he shot Mitch right between his eyes. Blood soaked into his reddish blond hair, his tan skin blown apart. Blood was everywhere, and Anthony was frozen in place, unable to scream, unable to move at all.

I couldn't move either, and when Anthony's terrified blue eyes flicked to me, it really sunk in how much of an idiot I was.

Papa spat on Mitch's poor corpse, and pointed his rifle at Anthony. He wouldn't even honor his faggot son's last wish.

"Please, sir, please! Shoot!" Anthony pleaded, his voice broken and wobbly, "I can't live without him! Please!"

And Papa, he gave Anthony the same treatment as he did Mitch. Shot right in the forehead, his head completely unrecognizable. I still couldn't move. I was frozen in the doorway.

Papa turned to me, and pat me on the head, rubbing blood in my hair.

"Good girl." Is all he said to me, before walking out of the house, and to the station to turn himself in.

I can't forget that night, it's burned into my mind, it was my greatest mistake.

Anthony Washington and Mitch Roberts, loved each other like any old Rich would love his girl. They were from Wichita, Kansas, both born 1959, on August 16th and 17th respectively. Mitch loved his Anthony, and Anthony loved his Mitch.

And I, am a fool.