

## Part 2: The Poker Club

This excerpt is a complete chapter, near the end of *The Poker Club*. It has been selected because it is a relatively compact and complete episode, and is representative. The characters are introduced earlier in the book. Warning: it contains one of the book's intimate male/male scenes, and is intended for adults only.

### 24 Jack and his basket

Jack was in a rather sad state today. Luckily, he had chosen basket weaving for a merit badge this summer. It was a fairly brainless activity... it didn't matter *that* much if he was preoccupied by other things... so much of it was a rote operation... once you started the pattern...

Robin, Robin, Robin... he couldn't get Robin out of his head. He couldn't sleep worth a darn last night because of Robin. Ever since the card game yesterday morning—no, that isn't right, either! Ever since they met on the platform the day before, even. He was attracted to Robin from the start.

Jack wasn't interested in Tom any more, even if it was his "turn" at bat in the poker club—I understand Geoff's fixation on him, natch. I like 'em big too, once in a *great* while... but it isn't that important. He laughed out loud briefly: the way Tom handled Brian was something... now *that* was interesting. He hadn't seen that side of Brian before. Brian enjoyed being *manhandled*! The rougher Tom got, the more Brian loved it. Once, after Brian was on his back, Tom grabbed him by the shoulders, pulled him close and lifted him clear off the blanket and flopped him down again, as if he was a huge gunnysack full of potatoes! Well, Tom is two inches taller; and he's a little bigger across the chest, as well as a lot bigger between the legs. It was the first time I ever saw Brian with another big stud; usually Brian had someone smaller, like me, good old party boy Jack. I wanted to stop and watch—it was so *wild*. But Nick moved around the other side and needed my attention; Nick may be Tom's regular, but he's obviously inexperienced. So, I lost track of what Tom was doing to Brian; the last thing I remember is the *whump* sound Brian made landing on his back the second time. I'll ask Brian about it first chance.

Jack didn't recognize himself today, frankly. He always prided himself in the ability to have 'em and then leave 'em smiling. He wasn't as accomplished as Geoff, but he had adopted the same attitude toward sex partners. For a year now, he had sought to widen his range of encounters; generally he avoided repeat encounters and involvements. Refining his techniques and seeing what new things there were to learn was his game. He was usually an observer as well as a participant. That helped him to show Robin a good time yesterday. He liked to think of himself as a party animal, mostly. Brian is a regular only when a poker game came along. Brian knows how to suck, that's for sure.

Jack wasn't exactly afraid of getting personally involved—it just never seemed important. He had friends who were always upset about this or that in a relationship—eventually it seemed to be a hassle for them all the time. Who needs that? But now, along comes Robin: upset my apple cart. He swept me out of my comfort zone entirely. Robin, Robin...

“May I ask a question, or are you unavailable at this time?”

The sudden sarcasm shook Jack out of his reverie. “Huh?”

“Are you trying an experiment here, or—dare I think it—have you got your mind on something other than this Cherokee Double Wall?”

Jack looked down at his hands. Cripes. His face turned red. He looked at Scoutmaster Fuller. “I guess my mind wandered some.” He was using the dyed oval reed where the bleached round reed is required.

“Ah. I wondered. Well, if you're careful, you can undo it without losing your tension.” He looked at Jack with some amusement. This was not typical. Well, everyone has one of those days. Jack could recover if he paid better attention tomorrow. “You have just enough time today to undo the mistake. You'll have to concentrate a little better tomorrow.” Fuller moved to the next weaver. There was no need to rub it in.

Man, Jack, what a *klutz*. He glanced over at Ryan, his nominal partner in basketry. He was busy tucking in a tied end join... too busy.

Ryan was being diplomatic, pretending to be oblivious. It was hard to keep a straight face. He hadn't been following Jack's work or he might have said something.

Hmm. Why didn't he say anything? Thanks a *lot*, Ryan... maybe I can return the favor some day. He looked at Ryan's Cherokee basket. It's perfect, naturally. Thanks again, *Rye-uhnn!*

Jack looked at the basket he had been working on for two days. I honestly can't remember doing any of this! He held it up close. Hmm. It's pretty good work, actually. Just the wrong material is all. I reached for the wrong coil of reed stock. Blast. Well, I'll do it over tomorrow. I have to get out of here pronto, too, the second I have this torn down. I want to see if I can Buddy with Robin for the afternoon swim. I have a plan in mind.



Robin was in a quandary: should I talk to Casey about things, like I usually do, or not? Now that Casey is a water polo player, I'm unattached in the mornings. Robin had a new goal in mind for those mornings. It isn't as if we're steadies, or anything, Casey and me. It's just that I'm so used to being with Casey and talking about everything. I almost feel obligated to mention it at least. But for some reason, he was reluctant... this is a new thing. I have never felt like this. My stomach feels up in the air or something. I'm not sick or anything—it's like when an elevator drops real fast and leaves your stomach behind on the floor above for a second. That's the way I felt most of the time today. I want to see Jack again. Jack will be able to get me back onto the ground.

"Brake a little more, we're coming in too fast..." Calvin was at the bow, ready to cushion their arrival at the dock.

Robin put more drag on the oars. I'm glad we've come in at last. I plan to position myself strategically by the fence. If Jack *is* coming to swim, I'll be able to see him instantly.

"Nicely done." Phil Jensen made a notation on his clipboard. These boys have this well in hand. The Simmons boy is as good as any I've ever seen.

"What do we work on next?" Robin shipped the oars.

"Distance, I believe." Calvin uncoiled the bow painter. "We start with a quarter mile, and get up to a full mile out and back by the end of the course."

Robin wasn't worried. I can row half a mile now, by myself. "Great." He climbed onto the dock while Calvin tied up to the mooring cleat. "Well, see you tomorrow, then." He headed for the Buddy Board to get his badge.

Calvin looked after Robin. Hmm. He seems a little distant today. Calvin knew they didn't have a problem, so it must be something else. I don't know Robin well enough to be nosy. Well. I'm off to buy some cartridges at the Trading Post. I have some major target practicing to do.

Robin didn't know what badge Jack was working on—but he has to come from the west trail, more than likely. I'm fairly sure Jack won't go to his camp first—it's way to the north. Unless Jack is in Archery or Marksmanship, or going back to his camp, I'm almost guaranteed to see him approach. He leaned on the fence just to the right of the boat Buddy Board. I'm still checked in... all I can do was wait. He took a deep breath. He had scoped out the shore this afternoon and had a place in mind. Surely Jack will be interested. What will I do if Jack doesn't show up? I'm not used to having doubts like this. Jack is so polished and cool about things. He makes me feel like an amateur. But I've learned to bluff fairly well... I'll rely on that for the time being.

A surge of energy unlike anything he remembered suddenly made him light and buoyant, as if he were in danger of floating away: Jack had just come into view, jogging down the trail. Excellent! Robin could feel his skin prickling in anticipation—his stomach just went up another floor. He *has* to be looking for me. He'd placed himself in the open, prominently, between the Boat Buddy Board and Leonard's table. *Jack, Jack... over here!* He stared with concentration... he sent out his best telepathic rays.

Jack worried that he might not get to the lake soon enough... *yeah!* There he is, standing at the fence. Perfect. Look at that! Just like I remembered. He slowed to a walk. He felt both relief and confirmation. It was as if he had grown taller, stronger. His eyes fixed on Robin's and locked.

"Hiya." Jack's artifice had flown. He wasn't playing... Robin is a keeper.

"Hey. I hoped you'd come here this afternoon." Robin couldn't keep the eye contact. It was too strong. It made him burn inside. He wanted to jump the fence and roll around on the ground and wrestle and kiss and grab ass and kiss more and you name it until sundown.

Jack saw at once they were on the same beam. His spirit soared. "Yeah. I hoped that's what you'd hope." Jack waited for Robin to look at him again.

Robin looked up. He saw himself reflected in Jack's eyes. It was intense. "I spotted a perfect place half an hour ago. Check in and put your badge over here on the rowboat board." He knew, somehow, that it would be inexcusably clumsy to frame that as a request. He saw how correct he was in the way Jack glowed. He put his badge back on the hook and walked slowly over to the rowboat he and Calvin had just moored. Man am I thrilled right now; why aren't I nervous?

"Good afternoon, Leonard." Jack flashed his badge. "I'm out for a little boat ride with Robin." Being cool about it is the hard part.

"Good plan. The pond is going to be very busy afternoons, now—water polo, you know." Leonard wasn't happy about water polo hogging all that space in the morning. Besides, team sport is an annoyance generally, land or lake.

Jack put his badge on the boat board next to Robin's. We have the first boat out today. Nice. He ran out on the dock and... there he is, oars in hand, ready to leave. "Well, well." He looked at Robin with intensified, fascinated interest. I'm not going to have any real work to do today: Robin is roaring to go! Jack held onto the gunwale and climbed into the boat; he sat on the stern bench. He watched Robin's eyes as he backed the boat away from the dock. This is exciting. I didn't expect to be taken for a joyride! Pun intended! Robin suddenly plied his oars deep. Wow. Jack grabbed the sides to steady himself... he realized suddenly that he was in very skilled and powerful hands. Rowing was one thing he had not studied.

Robin was a driven person—he had no time to waste. He set his feet on the stretcher and pulled hard. His arms and legs were not tired at all from the merit badge session just completed—if anything, he was warmed up and ready for this. He aimed the boat and they were off to the inlet he had discovered east of the dock.

Jack held on to the edge of the bench with a grin... Robin is a dynamo! I've never thought about the work involved in rowing. The view of his rippling shirt is sure a tease. I'll have trouble keeping my hands off him if this takes very long... An idea formed.

"How far to where we're going, Captain?"

Robin laughed. Maybe I'll let Jack row back afterward. "Not too far, maybe five minutes." Jack is so much nicer to look at than Calvin.

“In that case, I have a favor to ask. Stop rowing for a minute, if you don’t mind.” Playing with Geoff had given him an idea.

Robin stopped rowing and let the oars seat in the oarlocks. What could Jack want? We don’t have far to go.

“Thanks. Umm...” He looked back toward the dock. No one was in sight.

“So?” Robin liked what he was looking at, but he wanted to romp sooner than later. Presumably this won’t delay things too much. The momentum of our drift is in the right direction. Jack’s face... what’s he up to?

“It’s fun being in suspense and all, but watching the stresses on your shirt is too tantalizing.” Jack grinned slyly. “I was hoping I could talk you into taking it off. Studying your muscles at work would be a lot more rewarding. Five minutes of that is just about right, I think.”

Robin was delighted. “Just about right?”

“Yes. I’ll be in such a frenzy that you won’t be able to stop me from... well...”

Robin chuckled. “But is disrobing in the boat allowed?” he asked coyly.

“I hope not! That would spoil the fun part.” Jack wasn’t usually a rule breaker. But being around Geoff had lent him an appreciation of making a tweak here and there.

“I know... I’ll leave the kerchief on.” Robin pulled out his shirttails and began unbuttoning. “No music for this?”

Jack laughed. “We’ll imagine that part—my singing would ruin things, believe me. I can sour a whole choir.” He was tempted to take off his shirt too.

“I read your mind: leave it on.” Robin was inspired. “I can’t remain a serious operator of this craft if I have undressed and irresistible passengers. We’d take in water because of all the thrashing around... my frantic leaps and grabs at your body can only be allowed on land.” He removed his shirt and folded it carefully. He handed it to Jack. “Instead, you are charged to keep this safe and dry.” He looked at Jack hungrily. His presence is magnetic. I need to start rowing again, *now*.

Jack almost swooned. He had underestimated Robin entirely. I *am* being taken for a ride! What a wonderful surprise. Look at those biceps—and pecs! I had no idea my prank was such a *good* idea!

Robin looked around to check on how far they had to go.

Jack raised the folded shirt to his face. Mmm. He did that again. *Mmm!*

Robin worked the oars as hard as he could. I want to *be* there already. He was amazed at himself. He had never been this witty or clever! Ever! Jack seemed to prompt him—make him bloom. But I'm right about keeping my head—I don't want to spoil the afternoon by having to sort out a swamped boat. Man, I feel good today. I just realized something: my stomach feels fine—never better.

Jack watched Robin's pectoral muscles at work... as fine a set of chest muscles as he could imagine. Soon, I'll be pawing them mercilessly. Those delicate tufts springing from his armpits... oh boy...

Robin marveled... the request to take off my shirt! Flattering and comic; this is going to be great, that's all... we should be there by now. He looked over his right shoulder and scanned the shore... there!

The inlet a mile east of the dock was invisible from every angle except directly on. Robin had mastered the skill of steering, and turned precisely where it was required. "Tell me when we're about fifteen feet from the bank."

"We're close... now!" Jack was impressed by Robin's skill. It's hard to believe he's still working on his badge for this. Jack watched the bank loom close. The boat slowed perfectly and kissed the bank gently. "Beautiful."

"Thanks. I learned a bunch from my grandfather. This lake is a picnic compared to the river where he takes me fishing." Robin shipped the right oar. "I haven't been ashore here yet. But the woods hereabout are fairly open. I figure we can find a spot easy enough." Robin looked down—the bank dropped off without a beach for landing. He plied the left oar, bringing the boat parallel to the bank. He sculled the oar to achieve optimum contact with the bank. "Climb out carefully and help hold the boat side to the bank. We'll lift the bow out when I'm ashore."

Jack climbed out and put Robin's shirt on the grassy bank. He reached out and steadied the boat. He held the bow painter while Robin scooted across the thwart and climbed onto the bank.

"I don't see anything to tie to." Robin frowned. "They don't have anchors onboard yet, either. We'll have to beach her, I guess." He joined Jack at the bow, and they pulled the boat out of the water.

Jack felt like a Tenderfoot. "I suppose you're Daniel Boone, too?"

"Well, I've done my share of trail blazing, I suppose... but I'm willing to place the land side of the operation into your hands." Robin picked up his shirt.

That's nice... that made Jack feel better. "I was handy at mapmaking and compass reading in my First Class days." Jack would do his bit now. He moistened a finger and stuck it into the air, as if he were checking the wind direction. "This way should do." Jack headed inland.

The woods were heavy with undergrowth near the shore. Inland ten yards, the taller red oaks opened things up considerably. They came to an open area at the base of a ridge: room for an entire campsite.

"Here we are. Reserved for you and me today."

"Excellent. I knew you could get us here." Robin looked around. "You could hold a poker *tournament* here." There's room for half a dozen games, at least. "What do you call this wonderland?"

Jack improvised: "Whispering Pines." That sounded exotic.

"Oh!" Why not? That had a poetic ring to it. Robin looked around. Oop. No pine trees in sight. Lots of oak trees... a birch and a poplar. He squinted, peering between a distant pair of oaks. Is that a pine? Hmm. He bent down and picked up an acorn. He showed it to Jack.

"Okay, so it's Whispering Oaks then." He cupped his left ear and aimed it upward. "Hear that?" The breeze was audible, barely.

Robin smirked and cupped his ear. "Ah, yes." He could hear the leaves rustling above. He smiled wide. "A welcoming committee!"

Jack examined the ground. He wanted a place free of branches and lumps. Next to a wide patch of bluebells he tested an area by swinging a foot back and forth. No debris... a fine grained ground cover, lightly sprinkled with remnants of what had been shed from the oak and poplar trees last fall. "Here? You be the judge." He smiled at Robin.



Robin came over to Jack's side. He didn't even glance at the ground. He reached over and put his right hand on Jack's left bun. They both felt the jolt. The banter was at an end. Their eyes met. They embraced at once and kissed. It started gently, but grew intense. They lowered themselves to their knees. Their eyes remained open. They pawed at each other's shoulders, they combed each other's hair with their fingers. They had to stop kissing and catch their breath. They stared at each other briefly. This was a new place for them both. They entered eagerly.

Jack took Robin's kerchief ends into his left hand and removed the slide with his right. Robin did the same. Jack started to unbutton his shirt, and Robin pulled out the shirttail. He unfastened Jack's scout belt buckle, and waited while Jack took off his shirt. Jack unfastened Robin's belt. They pulled down each other's shorts and briefs by touch, each unable to look away from the other's eyes.

"Umm... how are we going to do this, anyway?" If Robin reached for Jack he would be unstoppable. Their pants were only down to their knees... he wanted them all the way off.

"In as many ways as we can, of course." Jack licked his chops. "We have almost an hour now, and then... well tomorrow, we start again at 10:30, don't we?"

Robin felt his face flush. He took a deep breath. "Man, you sure smell good!" He reached for Jack's cock with his right hand as he pulled Jack's head to his lips.

Jack responded in kind. They massaged each other's cocks gently, lovingly, as they kissed. He tugged at Robin to lie down... his knees were complaining.

They enjoyed each other's kisses so much they didn't want to stop. Brian had assigned them a sixty-nine at the card game, and as the second layer, they didn't have time for much else. They had an overwhelming farewell kiss—that's where they both wanted to start. They paused.

"Where did you learn..." they both asked at the same time. That broke them up.

"Okay," Jack propped up on his left elbow. "I can see that we need to figure this out here. We have to take turns, or something. We seem to be evenly matched."

“I was just thinking that!” Robin looked at Jack in wonder. He did not remember ever having anything go as perfectly as this.

“Well,” Jack sat up. “I was planning to wrestle you to the ground, pin you good and insist that you submit. I see now that that would be a lot of fun, but pretty silly.”

“I was thinking more along the lines of flipping a coin.” Robin sat up and ran his fingers up along Jack’s bicep. “But wrestling sounds very good, too. I’d get subjected to a lot more aromatic parts that way.”

“You’re big on smells, aren’t you?” Jack checked under his arm with a sniff. He didn’t detect anything offensive, at least.

“I’m very big on *your* smells!” It’s true. Jack’s body chemistry made him go crazy. Robin rolled onto his back and pulled off his shorts... that’s better! “Do you spray yourself all over with some kind of magic stuff, or what?”

“No. I just naturally stink, what can I say?” Jack was enormously flattered. He enjoyed Robin’s smell too, in fact. He felt like he had cheated a little by sniffing the shirt in the boat. He sat back and removed his shorts. He tossed them with a flourish—they landed directly on Robin’s. He lay back down and faced Robin.

“Well, you should go out and patent yourself or something.” Robin thought about that a minute. “On second thought, don’t you *dare* do that. The entire camp will come sniffing. I’d just as soon keep you a secret.” He nuzzled behind Jack’s ear and took an exaggerated sniff followed by a very wet swipe of the tongue.

Jack shivered. Man that was a turn on—as if he needed one. “Do you want to do the same as yesterday?”

“If you insist. But I like sucking on your face a lot better.”

“There you go again, stealing my exact thoughts!” Jack was amazed. He reached over to take Robin’s cock in his hand.

“Later on, I might lick you from head to toe. You happen to taste almost as good as you smell.” Robin filled his palm with saliva and took Jack in hand. He waited for Jack to follow suit.

No more words were spoken for a long time. They kissed and stroked each other with care and fascination.

Jack had some KY in his back pocket, but he left it there. This is more honest, somehow. He liked having to refill his palm. Licking it tastes so good—it has traces of Robin that he enjoyed so much yesterday. He was learning to focus on those smells—Robin’s scent is just as wonderful as mine could ever be!

Robin paid attention to the contours of the object in his right hand. Jack is slightly smaller, maybe by half an inch. That made it possible to completely surround his with all his fingers. He moved his left arm from behind Jack’s shoulder and put it down at the base of Jack’s cock. He pulled the foreskin down to the base while he pulled his right hand back. Each fingertip crossed over the cleft at the tip, drawing some pre-cum along as it passed by. The effect was instantaneous.

Jack moaned. “Wait a while for that one! Two or three of those, and I fire!” He panted briefly, smiling. “Let me try that on you!” He moved his right hand down.

As luck would have it, Jack was left handed, which made this position ideal. He refreshed the saliva in his palm, returned to the lip lock, and repeated Robin’s move.

“*Mmmm!*” Robin pulled back. “Wow. Jack, Jack, Jack! You do that so much better than I do!” Robin was amazed. He’d done this one solo for a long time. Why is it so superior here?

“I’ve played around quite a bit, but this is a new one. I plan to learn it well, O great teacher.” Jack looked at Robin. That in itself is a thrill.

“Oh good. Today, let’s practice doing it lightly, saving the tippy top for the glorious finish. Let’s see how long we can go before we have to come.”

Jack was delighted. “I like that. Should we try to come together?”

“Hmm...” Robin spiraled Jack. “The first time, yes. Later we can go individually. Sometimes that’s better because you can control things so much better.”

“Exactly.” Jack marveled again at how they saw things so alike! “If I back up suddenly it means stop now unless you’re there too and want to go for broke.”

“Perfect. Back to work now...” Robin slicked his palm again and puckered his lips, daring Jack to meet him half way.

Jack did just that, after filling his palm.

The nuances of integrating careful pumping of the hips with the manipulations of their hands, kissing all the while were learned, perfected. Kissing took precedence for both of them—it was the *basso continuo*, the foundation, the generating force that energized everything. The delights being felt below were sublime and exciting, but were also an excruciating interruption. They had to do both, but they hated to do both at the same time. Yet if one was paused or neglected, the other seemed lessened. The challenge was to focus on them both at once. That was a new skill. They welcomed the opportunity. They didn't stop to analyze this, of course. Now, they learned, they practiced, they enjoyed, they shared.

The first signs of the impending climax grabbed Robin: he moaned softly. Jack moaned a response—he was ready too. They opened their eyes and watched each other as their thrusts grew slow and deliberate. They squeezed their hands tighter by subtle degrees, and it began. Their moans merged into a high, constrained peal... soft, muted “uhms” accompanied each shot. It was wondrous. It was exhausting.

They removed their hands and embraced as hard as they could. They rolled over and over to the far side of the clearing and stopped. They broke out laughing and lay on their backs. They rested. Jack's left hand moved over to Robin's right. They held them together until their heart rate and breathing returned to normal.

“That was the best...” they said in unison. They laughed, embraced, and laughed some more.

