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GENERAL GAYETY • LESLIE ROBINSON

Looking in on the troops

We take you now to an American army convoy somewhere in Iraq, where two gay servicemen drive a truck:

"Honest to God, I haven't had this much sand on my body since that weekend with Brian in Provincetown," says Adam. "Slow down!"

"The wind is driving this rig, not me!" Miguel replies.

"Hey, I got an email from Brian. He told me some pro-gay military group says gays weren't booted out of the service as much last year."

"How come?"

"Probably so there would be more people to get shipped over here," Adam says. "They need us in wartime. Hell, they need us all the time, they just don't know it."

"Man, if I'm gonna get kicked out, why couldn't it have happened before you drove the truck over my foot?"

"I said I'm sorry! I just couldn't see you with all this sand. Anyway, Brian said people figure there are about 10,000 gays serving over here."

Miguel whistles. "You'd think I could find a friggin' boyfriend!"

"Maybe we'll hook up with the Brits. I heard if you have a British boyfriend who gets killed in this war, you get a pension."

"Christ, I don't even have a boyfriend yet and you're already killing him off!"

"That's not what I mean, Miguel! I mean, the English government has the balls to acknowledge gay partners. So let's say that, uh, Malcolm gets taken out. Then his boyfriend, um, Trevor qualifies for money. Trevor doesn't get dissed."

"Do you know Malcolm and Trevor?"

"No, but I know you're a pain in the ass."

Miguel laughs.

Adam continues, "If I take a bullet, Brian won't get anything."

"You're not going to die, Adam," Miguel says. "You're the luckiest guy I know."

"How do you figure?" Adam asks.

"Honey, you're obviously gay, you act like you never even heard of 'Don't Ask,

Don't Tell,' but here you are in the middle of the Iraqi desert."

"Yup, I'm lucky all right."

"Somehow you haven't been kicked out of the Army, when a whole bunch of other gay folks have. That's lucky," Miguel explains. "Me, I want to stay in, so I'm trying to dodge the US military at the same time I'm dodging the Iraqi military."

"I never was good at dodge ball."

"I was. I'm even better now," Miguel says.

"It's funny. In war they need our bodies. In peacetime they're afraid of what we do with our bodies."

"I guess," says Miguel.

"They give us the right to die, but not the right to live as we are."

"Adam, I love my country."

"So do I. That's the bitch of it. I just wish my country was fond of me too."

Miguel slows the vehicle down and points. "What's that?"

"With any luck, a mirage of Brad Pitt."

"No, no, look! It's people. They've got their hands up! They're wearing uniforms! Iraqis!" Miguel shouts.

"Be careful! They could be faking surrender!" Adam shouts back.

Miguel halts the truck next to the group of men. "What are they yelling at us?"

Adam responds, "I hope it's not 'Unclean!' 'Unclean!'"

"Get serious! They have guns!"

"We don't have a translator, remember? The army fired a bunch because they were gay!"

"Jesus!" Miguel yells. "Does the Army want to win this war or not?" Miguel motions to the men with his gun and they all lie on the ground, soon surrounded by American troops.

"Well," Adam says, "we've just liberated some Iraqis."

"Yeah," says Miguel, shaking his head violently. "Maybe it's time we all got liberated."

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