Finding Trevor

By Jessica Monhollen

Trevor had been sick for days, and I wondered how the rest of us had put up with him. He'd been running a fever, and we'd all fought about who should take care of him. Kes suggested that we let him sweat it out, and Sarah offered her body heat, but we ended up giving him plenty of water and leaving him alone to sleep. It wasn't exactly the way we'd planned spending our week on the lake.

"You know how much I love him," Sarah whispered to me on the third night. "It's driving me crazy."

"We came here to get away from all that," I reminded her. "Besides, it's almost like he's not here."

"Yeah, but the fact that he needs someone to take care of him isn't making this any easier."

"I told you that I'd watch him. You don't need to worry about it."

"I know, but it's just not easy."

"Go sit with everyone else," I said, resting my hand on her arm. "I'm going to make sure Trevor's okay and then I'll come down."

I watched Sarah's silhouette sway in the moonlight as she walked down the beach to the bon fire. She sat down between Kes and Jeremy, wrapping a slender arm around each of them, laughing. Her long, dark, curls seemed to reflect the flames in front of them. I wondered why she kept loving Trevor and why he never loved her back.

The house was dark, so I slowly felt my way up the steep steps to the back door. I entered and the lights wouldn't turn on. I flipped the switch a few more times, but there was still no electricity. Finding a candle and matches in the drawer beside the sink I made my way to Trevor's room, careful not to spill any hot wax on the way. His door was closed, so I knocked.

"Trevor," I called. "It's me." I heard rustling, but no response.

Pushing open the door, I went to open the window. The air smelled stale and I wanted to let the germs escape.

"How are you doing?" I asked, sitting on the bed beside him. Short blond curls clung to his damp forehead. His lips were cracked and bleeding. I wondered if he had been this pale this morning, or if it was just the lighting.

No one had seen him since the first morning except me. I'd volunteered to take care of him and I was beginning to wonder how good of an idea that had been. He was only getting worse: his fever, his coloring, his energy. And then there was the growth on his chest. I hadn't noticed it until the first night. It had started out looking like a mosquito bite: small, red, and swollen. By the second morning it was about the size of a baseball and had begun to ooze greenish puss. I'd covered it up with gauze and hadn't mentioned it to anyone, hoping that it would go away. It was still there this morning, six inches in diameter and growing. I was afraid to touch it, so I'd left it covered and kept quiet.

"Let me take a look," I said, holding the candle up for better light and pealing back the gauze. The covered area had flatted out and spread. It no longer resembled half of a sphere, but instead a large plateau. The center of it was pulsating, releasing green puss with each exhale. I turned away, wondering what I should do. Looking back, I found Trevor staring at his chest in horror. I quickly covered the area up with fresh gauze.

"Don't worry," I told him before leaving. "You're going to be fine."

I got out of the house as quickly as I could. What was I going to do about Trevor? I knew I should have told the others about the bite and his worsening conditions. I couldn't even remember why I hadn't. I'd tell them now, and they could help me. Then everything would be fine, and Trevor would never know the difference.

"How's he doing?" Clayton asked, as I sat between him and Jeremy.

"He's fine," I responded. "I think the fever may have broke."

The lie came out before I could stop it and I knew it was too late to tell the truth. I sat there, staring at the burning embers, wondering what I could do to fix everything. I promised myself that if Trevor's growth wasn't any better in the morning I'd show it to someone. I'd tell them that I hadn't really noticed it, and they wouldn't care what I had to say, because they'd be too worried about Trevor. Then Sarah could take over my position of caregiver, and everyone would be happy.

"I'm going up," Sarah said to me. "Are you coming?"

Following the others up to the dark house I considered checking on Trevor before going to bed. I paused by his door and then decided against it. He was probably sleeping, and I didn't want to disturb him.

Wiping the grit from the bottom of my feet I slid between the soft sheets. Through my open window I could hear the waves rushing up the shore. It was so beautiful there. And so

peaceful. Nothing to bother me except Sarah's occasional complaints and Kes' sarcastic moments. I was glad that we'd made the decision to go away together.

Closing my eyes, I thought about Clayton, who was in the next room. I'd noticed him watching me all afternoon as I'd made it a purpose to pass by him as often as possible in my new bathing suit. I'm not sure if you could actually call it a suit, because there's hardly any fabric there, but Clayton seemed to be enjoying it. In fact, all the boys did, but I only cared about Clayton, and his dark, sensual eyes watching me walk.

Opening my eyes, I found the sun high in the sky. My watch said it was almost one in the afternoon. I jumped out of bed and ran to Trevor's room, because I figured no one else would have thought to check on him.

Pushing open the door I saw that the window was still open from the night before. The room was full of sunlight, which unfortunately did nothing to help Trevor's appearance. He looked worse than he had the night before. He didn't even open his eyes to acknowledge me.

"Trevor?" I said, feeling his forehead. It was very cold and clammy. "Trevor!" this time more urgently. He didn't stir. I felt for his pulse and couldn't find it. I began to panic. He was dead and I'd done nothing to help him. I'd have to tell the others that the growth had just appeared that morning. I pulled back the gauze and held back my screams. It had continued to spread on his dead body, covering his torso and working its way up his neck. It was bright red, still the plateau shape, and pulsating. The entire thing was pulsating, like it had taken Trevor's life and was using it to survive.

Throwing a blanket over his body I ran out of the room, not knowing what to do. Who do I tell? What will I say? I wasn't sure of anything. I found Kes sitting in the kitchen eating lunch.

"You sure slept late," Kes commented, as I sat down across from him. Pubic-like hair covered much of his face, entering his mouth with each bite. The "Star Wars" logo stretched across his full belly, causing Princess Leah and Han Solo to look warped and out of proportion on the stained t-shirt. I wasn't sure where to begin, so I decided to start with another subject.

"I was up late," I replied.

"Doing what?" His eyebrows arched up with the question and I knew by his expression that he had also seen Clayton watching me.

"It wasn't anything like that. I was just thinking."

"Too bad for Clay."

I went out to the beach to find someone else. Kes was never going to ask about Trevor, and I couldn't just come out and say, "Guess what? He's dead." I could see Clayton and Sarah out in the water swimming. I wasn't wearing my suit, so I decided to find Jeremy. He was sitting on a towel in the sand reading.

"How's your book?" I asked, sitting beside him.

"Pretty good," he replied, not looking up. He was wearing the green striped GAP swim trunks I'd bought for his birthday. They looked really good. Especially with his tanning skin and dark, thick chest hair. It was too bad he was gay.

I knew he'd never ask about Trevor. Jeremy was too engrossed in his book, and he didn't really like Trevor. They hadn't gotten along in years, but no one really knew why. I'd wondered if maybe Jeremy was attracted to Trevor and it caused tension, but Sarah didn't agree with me. She said it had something to do with football.

I noticed that Clayton was swimming to shore, so I got up and walked to the waters edge to wait for him. My feet sunk in the sand with each wave, and I noticed how good the cool water felt on my ankles. Clayton stood up and waded the rest of the way. I watched his chest muscles flex as he brought his arms over his head to stretch. His silky dark hair fell in wet strands around his face. I couldn't understand how Sarah would choose Trevor over this.

"No bikini?" he asked, with a disappointed smile. I wanted to kiss him.

"No," I replied. He was standing only inches in front of me. I looked up into his eyes and wondered what he would do if I melted. "Did you have a good swim?"

"Yeah, well, it was okay, until Sarah started to bug me, so I came in."

"I can understand that." I felt slightly guilty for saying this.

"I thought maybe you were going to come into my room last night."

"Really?" I tried to sound casual. "My door was unlocked, you know."

"I'll keep that in mind for tonight." He slowly walked back to the house, teasing me the entire way.

Now I was screwed. Clayton didn't like Trevor anymore than Jeremy. They were always interested in the same women and seemed to fight about everything else. I couldn't tell Sarah, because I knew she couldn't take the news alone. Wasn't it just last night that she'd pledged her love to him, or at least she told me she wanted to. There was only one thing left to do and that was for me to leave, and pretend that Trevor was still alive.

I quickly threw my clothes into my duffel bag, making sure not to forget my bikini that hung drying in the bathroom. Everyone was in the water, so I knew they wouldn't hear me driving away. I quickly wrote a note and taped it to the door. I was going to miss being with Clayton that night, but if he could forgive me for leaving, I'd be at home when he returned from the vacation. Dust surrounded the car as I drove down the driveway. The house grew smaller in

my rearview mirror until it vanished. I headed towards I-95 not looking forward to the three hours I had left on the road. As I turned on the radio I wondered who would find Trevor.