Los Niños Locos

Fiction by William Burroughs

This story is excerpted from William Burroughs’s unpublished novel Port of Saints, a companion volume to The Wild Boys.

Run-down hacienda in Mexico, mountain stronghold of the once-powerful De Carson family. The family has lost ground lately, perhaps because of an old-fashioned sense of honor which has presumably put them at a disadvantage in competition with American methods used by their opponents. Now they are preparing a comeback. Tio Mate, the family pistolero, has been summoned by the young Don.

"Take care of the so inconvenient Vestori family, and smile only when absolutely convenient...."

Tio Mate smiles...

The moment is now propitious to bring up the matter of his young nephew and his friends. The young Don is interested. He asks for particulars.

Flashback shows the wild boys mowed down by cold-eyed narcotics and Southern lawmen backed by religious women and big money.

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Los Niños

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The young Don quotes . . . “Battles are fought to be won and this is what happens when you lose . . .”

Tio Mate: “Survivors have learned this kindergarten lesson . . . They could be valuable . . .”

Looking into the skull he sees the boys as this lance . . . a spear of stars across the sky . . . huummmmyes the precise uh dead child . . . Immune to death . . . Immune to birth . . . if we could cut off the supply of uh male issue?

Lawmen disappear from a Southern street . . . Insolent youths black and white bar the way of a Southern Belle . . . they take her bag of groceries and strip her clothes off, camping around in her drag . . .

The young Don caresses the skull . . . a sweet sour musky flower smell drifts from the skull . . . a nitrous ozone smell laced with stomach-grabbing whiffs of carrion and cyanide . . .

Buzzards eat a dead cow in a hot Mexican landscape . . . Condemned man in gas chamber. His face changes into the face of the White Goddess . . .

A musty dry smell of deserted houses and empty locker rooms . . . a humid rotten flower smell . . . the smell of mutation . . .

As the skull smell fills the room cats and foxes and weasels and coyotes and raccoons and minks slink into the room and rub themselves against the furniture and the legs of the young Don and Tio Mate . . .

The smell of the skull is the trademark of the De Carson family. There have been many attempts to steal the skull . . . Tio Mate has 18 deer on his gun.

The young Don nods and looks into the crystal skull. Camera tracks into the skull, tracing the convolutions of his plan. His family is losing to the American Invasion. Soon there will be no families like his. But if he could throw a lance straight into the heart of the American White Whale? Into the heart of the White Goddess?

Here is the young District Attorney just up from the capitol. Tio Mate drops by to give him a lesson in folklore.

Tio Mate: “You know senor abogado I am going to send you a deer.”

D.A.: “Oh really that’s very kind of you but please do not give yourself so much trouble . . .”

Tio Mate: “It is my pleasure senor abogado.”

Horse with dead man draped over saddle like a dead deer is led to the police post by a stolid Mexican cop. He jerks his thumb back matter-of-factly as the D.A. comes to the door:

“Un venado.”

Now the D.A. understands this expression peculiar to rural Mexico. Across the blue Mexican sky and black buzzard wings, Tio Mate smiles . . .

Tio Mate is come to call
Un venado? No trouble at all
Across blue sky and empty miles
Tio Mate smiles.

Inspired by the skull, the boys roll around in Mexico like cats in catnip. Willy the Actor gets himself up like a Macho in the days of President Aleman—glen plaid suit, false mustache, pearl-handled .45. He careens through the streets in a black Cadillac screaming “CHINGOA!” as he blasts at cats and chickens with his .45. Now the Cadillac screams to a stop in front of a neon-lit cocktail bar. He gets out with Audrey and Jerry in drag as Chapultepec movie starlets, one on each arm, and staggers into the bar singing:

“ANNO BORRACHO
ANNO TOMANDO
YAHIIHHOOOOOOOOWWWWWW”

The bartender turns greener. This looks like trouble. The bar is lit in green neon with a tank of tropical fish along one wall. A party of American tourists stands at the bar. Willy stares at a blonde girl in slacks.

“Buenas noches senorita?”

On the roof of the Palace the boys appear, naked except for gunbelts and .45s, fucking each other in plain sight of the crowd.

She turns her back on him. He edges closer and gooses her with his .45. Jerry and Audrey titter and nudge each other.

“Isn’t he marvelous . . . Never repeats himself.”

A crew-cut American youth starts to intervene. Willy shifts the .45, levels it at his stomach, and smiles. Another American is edging towards the phone booth.

“CHINGOA!”

Willy blasts the glass front of the phone booth and shatters the phone into fragments.

“Never repeats himself.”

Now another boy got up as a Macho gets out of a Cadillac and staggers in with two blondes and a troop of mariachi singers. The two Machos rush into each other’s arms, pounding each other on the back.

“RODRIGUEZ”
“BERNABE”
“CABRON”

They give the Grito, which is taken up by the mariachi singers, who go into ‘Anndo Borracho.’

Bernabe throws money on the bar and orders Old Pharr Scotch for the house. He turns to the American tourists.

“Practically everybody in Mexico drinks Scotch.”

“Never repeats himself.” (This litany is taken up by the four blondes.)

Now they go into a Mexican cop shake-down act. Bernabe pops a huge embossed golden badge into his mouth and snarls his lips back from it.

“Never repeats himself.”

They make the round of the bar. Bernabe flashing the badge while Rodriguez holds passports upside down, glaring at them suspiciously and belching garlic.

“Papers very bad Meester . . . You come along to the Comisaria.”

“Never repeats himself.”
Bernabe leaps up onto a table and pisss into the fish tank.

"Never repeats himself."

They put on Charro costumes and ride around terrorizing the local peons. They stage dossin' contests, sitting along a wall with hats over their eyes to see who can sit the longest and move the least. Davey Jones wins these contests hands down.

Now they get out the Aztec and Mayan Codices and camp around in Moctezuma feather robes. Codex shows someone spitting out flint... hard words... Mayan codex shows a little green scroll coming out of mouth. Audrey and Davey Jones sit opposite each other, Audrey in a hummingbird robe, Davey Jones as a Black Captain. Davey Jones spits out flint arrows. Audrey blows out a little green scroll which bursts in a reek of rotten eggs. This gives him an idea and he decides to work with molds and hard candy. The candy is ready. Naked except for his hummingbird robe, flanked by Jerry in a bulging loincloth, he sweeps into a bar where a Macho is drinking. The Macho looks at them and spits on the floor.

"MARICONES."

Audrey splits a candy on the bar which slides along and stops in front of the Macho. A little figure labeled YO is fucking a woman labeled TU MADRE. There it is on the bar... "CHINGO TU MADRE" (I FUCK YOUR MOTHER). As the Macho stares in disbelief another candy slides down in front of him... a church with the label EN.

"I FUCK YOUR MOTHER IN CHURCH."

"CHINGOA!"

The Macho reaches for his .45 and spits on the floor.

The scandal of Los Ninos Locos is bringing the De Carson family into disrepute with their neighbors. The boys plan a farewell performance.

Independence Day... All the vecinos, pistoleros, rancheros, peons, opium smokers, and policías gather in the town square in front of the Governor's Palace waiting to give the Grito. On the roof of the Palace the boys appear, naked except for gunbelts and .45s, fucking each other in plain sight of the crowd. As they come, they give the Grito and blast vultures out of the sky which rain down into the square, spattering the citizens with carrion. As the enraged crowd storms the palace the boys make their escape in a huge glider in the shape of a vulture powered by six motorcycle engines. The time has come for the boys to travel.

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