

# A SLIGHT CASE OF NERVES

by Downtown

Mrs Johnson handed the letter to Pinky Carruthers. The logo was unmistakable and they both knew who it was from. Pinky muttered curses against Perfect Tommy name under his breath, knowing this situation would never have arisen if it wasn't for that blonde juvenile. He ripped the side of the envelope and extracted the letter from inside. Opening it up he read the contents and his worst fears were realised. The letter told him he had been accepted.

'Well?' inquired Mrs Johnson.

'Bad news,' Pinky said glumly.

'They chose you?'

'How could he do this to me?!' erupted the man of Pink in a rage. Perfect Tommy had better sense than to be around, so Pinky had no target on which to flex his finger muscles around the region between head and shoulders.

Mrs Johnson tried to be cheerful. 'C'mon, it's not *that* bad; you might even really enjoy yourself! Now calm down, Pinky, it's not as if you've been drafted, and you're used to audiences. You'll be fine. Listen, we'll all be there to support you. And if it makes you feel better, Buckaroo has told Tommy off for what he did. Face your fears, Pinky, you know it's what Buckaroo would do.'

Not having any argument against this, Mrs Johnson's words had the desired effect and he offered her a smile. 'All right,' he said, submitting. 'I'll do it.'

'Yeah!' shouted Mrs Johnson, jumping up and down with excitement. 'Way to go! It'll be great, Pinky, don't you worry about it!' She gave Pinky's cheek a quick peck and dashed off to the bunkhouse to spread the news to all and sundry. Pinky just stood there, dumbfounded, with a slight blush in his cheeks.

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It was the big night, and Pinky was surrounded by his friends backstage. They all offered words of encouragement, although Tommy's sounded more like teasing than support. All the time he told himself he would not be afraid; if you've performed for one audience, you've performed for them all. It did not matter that this would be the biggest audience of his lifetime... and without his fellow Cavaliers beside him. But it was not performing solo that worried him.

'Win one for the Gipper!' said Tommy through a smile. He was treading on thin ice.

'Take deep breaths,' offered New Jersey; his best medical advice for the occasion. He added, 'Well, it works for me.'

'Do it to them before they do it to you!' Reno said, slapping Pinky on the back.

'You'll be fine,' Buckaroo said calmly. When he says it, you tend to believe it.

'I guess it's too late to back down now,' conceded Pinky. He breathed deeply.

'Your moment of glory awaits you!' Tommy intoned.

'And you're asking for it!' Pinky replied threateningly, pointing at Tommy.

'Hey, Pinky, it's time, man!' and Reno waved him off.

Pinky said some quick goodbyes and made his way to the door.

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He sat nervously, waiting for the curtains to rise. Someone was counting down from five. He could hear the applause of the audience as the curtains moved upwards. This was it. Face the music. More deep breaths. And then it happened...

'Hi! Welcome to another edition of SALE OF THE CENTURY!! Let's hear it for your host, Cary Russell!!!!' Spontaneous rehearsed applause broke out and the cameras moved onto Pinky and the other two contestants, readying for the close-up shots. Pinky stiffened. All those people behind the cameras! He did double-time deep breaths! He looked to the wings for security, and found it as his friends gave him the OK sign all together. He broke out into an involuntary smile.

Suddenly the moment was broken. '...And how are you tonight, Pinky?' Cary Russell's voice chirped, and Pinky turned.

'Just great, Cary; never felt better,' he said with a smile.

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