

Chapter 6: Virginia Beach

“Don’t forget your skateboards!” dad announced as he tied down the surfboards on the top of the car.

“Skateboards?” Chris asked surprised, “thought we were going surfing.”

“We may have time to ride them if there aren’t any waves.”

Bob knew from previously living in Virginia Beach, that most of the time, there weren’t *any* rideable waves; but even a two-foot wave was OK with Chris.

It didn’t take long for everyone to pack up and pile into the cars. Chris, Bobby, Brad, and Danny rode with Bob and Lorene, and Kenny followed them with Kelly and Curtis.

As they were driving through the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, Lorene explained to them, “When I was a kid, we had to take a ferry from Hampton to get off the Peninsula to go to Virginia Beach.”

“What’s a ferry?” Bobby asked.

“It’s like a boat that carries cars across the river,” Danny explained.



“That’s right,” Lorene replied, “when they put in this tunnel, it opened up the Peninsula to the *rest of the world*, thank God.”

“This river sure is wider and deeper than any rivers we have in San Diego,” Bob said as they drove down into the dark tunnel that crossed under the James River from Hampton to Norfolk.

“How old were you?” Chris asked.

“About ten. The world sure was different then.”

“How?” Bobby asked.

“Hampton was like a small town. We were pretty isolated.”

Chris asked, “what did you do for fun?”

“We played in the woods, in the snow, at the lakes, and in the pool,” Lorene explained. “We had plenty of fun, but we rarely went to Virginia Beach until this tunnel was built.

“We still do some of that!” Brad said.

“Is Kenny still behind us?” Bob asked.

Lorene looked back and saw that Kenny was still close behind, “Yep.”

“This is a long tunnel,” Bobby said.

“We’ll be out in a minute,” mom said pointing to the end of the tunnel.



They drove out from under the tunnel and could see that they were approaching land on the other side of the river.



“Is that Virginia Beach?” Bobby asked.

“No, that’s Willoughby Spit”, Danny said, “Virginia Beach is still another twenty minutes away.”

After a while, Bobby noticed something that definitely caught his eye, “What is that?” he pointed to a huge skate ramp.

Dad laughed, “Oh,” looking over at the skate park, “that’s Mount Trashmore Skate Park.”



“Mount Trashmore?” Chris said with a confused look.

“Yeah,” mom explained, “It used to be the city dump until they filled it in years ago and made it into a park. They built the skate park later.”

“We rode down that hill on our skateboards before there was ever a skate park,” Bob said, “your mom fell off her skateboard riding down that hill cut open her foot pretty bad. I had to carry her up that hill and down the other side to take her to the hospital. She was bleeding pretty bad.”

“Yeah,” Lorene said, “don’t remind me. But I didn’t let you take me to the hospital remember?”

“You should have gone,” Bob said, “it was a pretty deep hole in your foot. You hit an artery and blood was squirting out everywhere.”

“I survived and still have the scar to remind me.”

“Can we go there?” Chris asked.

“Yeah!” Bobby and Danny shouted.

“I’ve never been there,” Brad said, and Danny said the same thing.

“Why do you think I told you guys to bring your skateboards?” dad said a little louder.

“Cool!” Chris yelled and Danny high-fived him.

“But,” Bob looked at Chris in the rear-view mirror, “let’s try to catch some waves first.”

As they drove to the end of the Virginia Beach expressway, the ocean came into view.

“Wow!” Bobby shouted, “there’s the ocean -- it looks *green!* How come it’s green instead of blue mom?”

“I heard it’s because it’s not as deep as the Pacific Ocean,” she looked at Bob for agreement.

Bob nodded in agreement, “Won’t be long now,” dad said as he turned onto Atlantic Avenue.

“Can we get out here?” Chris asked.

“No, we’re going to the pier. That’s one of the few surfing areas,” Bob explained.

“I remember when y’all lived here,” Danny said, “somewhere near a lake with ducks?”

“Yeah,” Lorene pointed, “over there across the lake.”

Dad pulled up into the parking area with Kenny right behind. The kids were excited to get to the beach and just as they started to run to the ocean, Kenny shouted, “hold on there! You kids need to wait for us and help us carry some of this stuff.”

“OK,” Chris said and put down his board and grabbed some beach chairs.

They found a spot next to the pier that was partially in the shade and spread out the blanket and chairs.

“I’m gonna sit right here and read the paper,” Kenny said, “and Kelly and Curtis don’t go where I can’t see you.” Kenny sat down on the beach chair with his paper and popped open a soda from the cooler.

Chris led the way with his surfboard under his arm as Danny, Brad, and Bobby followed close behind. They were in the warm water in an

instant to share Chris' board. Kelly and Curtis took their sand tools down to the water's edge and started digging in the sand.



"The water is so warm!" Bobby said as they walked out into the ocean.

"Yeah," Chris agree, "I miss this warm water, but it's *freezing* in the winter.

Bob and Lorene grabbed their boards and paddled out near the boys to keep an eye on them. Every once in a while, Bob would catch a wave and do some tricks, like a switchfoot, off-the-lip, cutback, and the boys would hoot and holler. They watched Lorene catch get some good rides too.



“That’s so cool that your mom and dad surf,” Danny said and Brad agreed.

The kids watched them for a couple minutes, then Chris instructed Danny to lay on his board.

“Get your body in the center so the board doesn’t pearl,” Chris explained.

“What do you mean, pearl?” Danny asked.

“The nose of the board goes under the water,” Bobby answered.

“Do you surf too Bobby?” Danny asked.

“A little,” Bobby said, “but I like skateboarding better.”

Danny found his center on the board and Chris showed him how to paddle around, then Chris took the board back and said, “watch me catch a wave.”

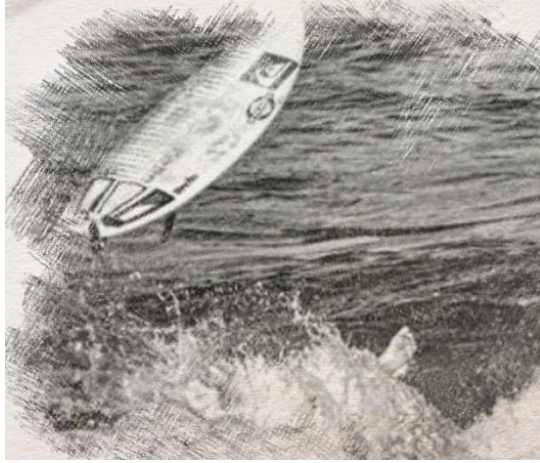
It didn’t take long for Chris to paddle for a wave, catch it, stand up, turn, and kick out. He then pushed the board towards Danny to give it a try.



Danny paddled pretty good for a beginner and paddled out towards a wave.

“Now turn around,” Chris said, “then paddle straight.”

Danny paddled hard to catch the wave, tried to stand up, but he fell off the board and it went flying.



Bobby caught the board and tried it out while they all watched. He popped up quickly on the board and rode it to the shore, then spun around and pushed it back out to Chris.



They continued to take turns and finally Danny caught a wave and stood up and Chris and Bobby cheered.



“This is so much fun!” Danny yelled, “like nothing else!”

“Yep,” Chris agreed as he grabbed the board pushed it over to Brad to give it a try.

After a couple hours, everyone ended up back on the beach looking for something to eat.

Kenny saw them coming, “The sandwiches are in the cooler,” and he lifted the lid.

“Got any chips?” Bob asked and Bobby handed him the bag he’d been eating from.

“You kids have fun playing in the sand?” Bob asked Kelly and Curtis.

“Yeah!” Kelly squealed, “didn’t ya see our sand castle Uncle Bob?”

“You mean the one that just got swallowed up by that last wave?” Kenny said as he pointed to where it once was.

“Oh no!” Kelly yelled, “we worked hard on that.”

“The tide’s comin’ in,” Bob said, “that’s what happens.”

“The waves are gonna get smaller as the tide comes in,” Bob announced, “After we eat, you guys wanna stop at the skate park on the way home?”

“Sure,” Kenny said, and the kids got more excited.

“The skate park?” Bobby asked, “Now we’re talking!” he said as he pumped down his arm in agreement.

“The waves *are* pretty small but fun,” Chris said, “But, I’m ready to go.”

“Surfing’s fun,” Bobby said, “but I feel more comfortable on a skateboard.”

After lunch they piled everything in the cars and headed for Mount Trashmore, which was only about ten minutes from the beach.

When they got there, Chris and Bobby jumped out of the car and ran up to the fence and watched the kids inside skate on the moguls.



“Wow!” this is a rad park,” Bobby said as he watched the kids riding around.



“Look at that half pipe Bobby!” Chris pointed to a seven-foot half pipe that one guy was riding really good.

“I don’t know about this,” Danny said, “I’m not that good.”

“Same here,” Brad agreed.

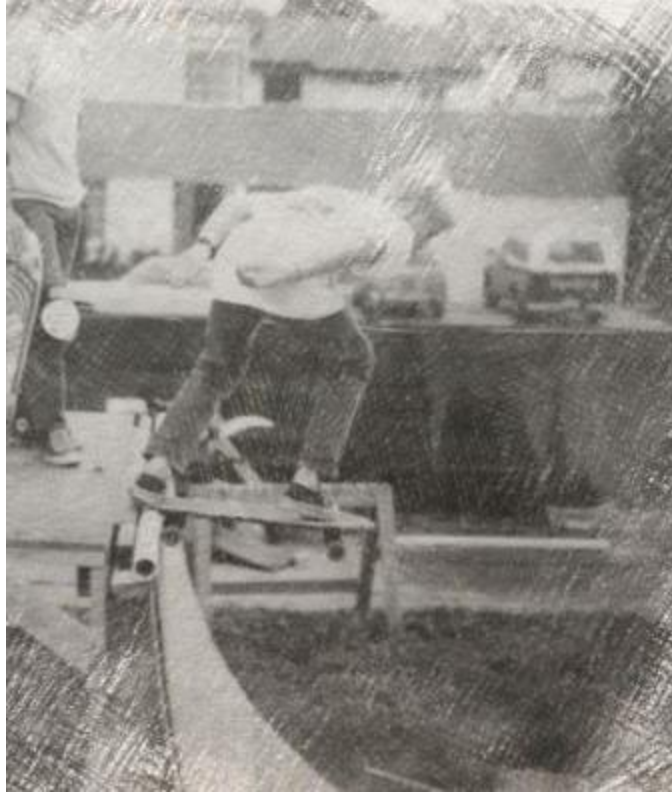
“Look,” Bobby pointed, “there’s a beginner area over there.”

It wasn’t long and everyone was geared up and skating all over the park.

Kenny sat on a bench near the little ones to watch as they sat on their boards and rode down a small hill. Bob and Lorene rode straight over to the pool area, dropped in and flew up the other side.

Danny sat down near the half pipe to watch.

“Watch this Danny,” Chris dropped in, pumped up to the other side, flew in the air, flipped around and came back down the other side. Then Bobby followed and did the same thing.



They howled as Chris pulled it off a couple times.

“Wish I was that good,” Bobby said, but Chris has been skating since he was three-years-old!



“What? three-years-old?” Danny said surprised.

“Yep.”

Bobby dropped in, came up the other side, turned around and came back. Then he tried a rock ‘n roll but fell and slid down to the middle of the ramp.



Bob showed off at the pool, while everyone watched in awe. He dropped in, did a hand plant and came down the other side. Lorene showed off her Bert move.



Danny was impressed that his aunt Lorene could ride the pools, “what was that move she just did?” he asked Chris.

“The Bert.”

“What’s that?”

“Larry Bertleman is a hot surfer and skateboarder, and he made up that move in the 70s, so they call it the Bert.”

“I wanna try that some time,” Danny said. “Never seen anyone do that before.”

After a couple hours, everyone was ready to go home.

“This is a fun place,” Chris said as they walked back to the car.

“Yeah,” Bob said, “pretty fun.”

“Wish we could come back,” Bobby said.

“Yeah, but we’re leaving in a couple days, so maybe next time,” mom said as she closed the trunk after they put in their boards.

Chris and Bobby seemed a little disappointed that they were leaving so soon. But, little did they know what surprise was coming their way on Monday. Or, maybe they wouldn’t think it was such a great surprise at first.

