



# 'The Road'

by Jude Acers (US senior master)  
In Between Things There Is...

## THE ROAD Part 2

Jude meets Sandy...Why Peter Manetti, US chessmaster, is a goodie...Sandy tells Jude why people are trying to murder her...Jude plays Sandy in two exhibitions and is gone...Will you still love me tomorrow?

She comes into Denny's restaurant and she comes in strong. She is radiant, stacked, luscious, evil, good and fun. She plays chess. She has been on heroin for eight months and has left Berkeley at last to get away from it all. She is off drugs now and works at a drug rehabilitation center, a miraculous job she obtained twelve hours before going to go to Miami and do heroin all over again. "It is an evil flower," she says. And her name is Sandy.

Sandy is a professional people user, retired. She loves to play chess and scored 3-2 in her first tournament, winning the ladies prize, which was not difficult because she was the only lady. "I love to steal. It excites me. I plan it. Even now I contemplate taking." She is 5 feet 2 inches, brown-black haired, and has excellent stealing equipment, with just enough V-neck in her denim shirt to seduce touring chessmasters. She also has, by vote of three cameramen and the local chess club president, the most photogenic face around these days. She is chain smoking and moves in to seduce Jude Acers. And it will be done mentally. Because Sandy is bright, razor sharp. "So you're doing a tour, really doing quite well, I hear. You're supposed to be really, really famous."

You just sit there, gripping your Denny's chair arm with a good solid Jude grip. You have to play an exhibition in 15 minutes. Heavy time pressure. What would Walter Browne do now? Sandy pauses, thinking about yesterday, recalls, "You know, I knew master chessplayers like Jim McCormick and Peter Manetti in Berkeley. Oh, God, I saw

McCormick just sit there for hours and kill people in Hardcastle's coffee house. He was great!"

She is certain of the past. "I know I'm good looking. I used it to bleed people in Berkeley. That's what smack (heroin) makes you do. There was one guy in Hardcastle that was, you know, just easy. I mean I could get anything I wanted. It wasn't even a challenge. There was a time when I did nothing but smack and play chess every day for months. I had to steal just to stay alive."

"Sandy, did you hold up filling stations or what? How did you rob people?" you ask.

Her eyes brighten, her boobies shake a little bit. "Well, glad you asked!" She laughed. "I gained dealers' confidence, you know, moved into their pads and then, after learning where they stored their dope, I just ripped it off at some beautifully timed opportunity. I mean I took all their dope, Jude. Not to use it myself, of course, but to sell it. And there are at least two guys looking for me right now that would kill me if they could locate me. I mean I wouldn't have any chance to live at all. I can never go back to California again. The only good thing that is there is Peter Manetti."

You smile an "I-know-what-you-mean-smile" and say, "What do you mean, exactly, Sandy? How could Manetti help you if you were freaked out on heroin all the time? I've known addicts before. You can't really get through the clouds."

"Oh, Jude, you would never, never believe how that man gets through! He is a good person. When I had nowhere to stay, he and his wife (Jenny) took me in. Don't they have a kid?...yes, a baby was there, too. Anyway, I expected Peter to hassle me, you know, but he just let me alone. He is very strong, I mean, have you ever met anybody so secure?"

You tell Sandy that Peter Manetti still walks around the

house with no clothes on and greets all comers at-the-door courteously as if it happens every day. It is a treat to take the Manettis for coffee on Telegraph. They have learned to live simply, happily. They are the few survivors of my time in Berkeley. I sat in his living room and played Peter Manetti hundreds of speed chess games for 20 straight hours once. William Bills came over in 1968 and we both played Manetti ad infinitum without a break except for my usual gallon of coffee and tea.

Sandy nods, smiling, "He called me on using my body to control people. I mean he really called me on it several times. He never cracked. I couldn't use him."

Then Sandy slithered those sexy, slithery fingers toward me and touched me on my left arm, which I have not washed for two months since. You tingle, tingle. Sure beats Greyhound buses.

"Jude, you must come over to my apartment and teach me more about chess. We must talk more about Manetti and Jim McCormick. I am so glad we know the same people. And I want you to meet Rhonda Blank."

Now isn't that a dreamy name for a 37-25-34 lady? Rhonda Blank, Rhonda Blank, Rhonda Blank, Rhonda Blank.

"Time to go, Jude," calls Jack Randall, who is setting up an exhibition at a shopping center one block away. (You will see Sandy tonight and tomorrow. She will be at you two exhibitions later on.)

You climb into the car, waving to Sandy.

The Shirelles are singing an oldie but goodie by Carol King that tore up the car radios of the '60s, "Will you still love me tomorrow?"

Five minutes later flash bulbs are popping, people are exclaiming, "There he is now!" Children are looking at you in awe. And you forget Sandy, Rhonda Blank, Jack Randall, Peter Manetti, Jim McCormick and move...move...move...move...move...move...

-More next week-

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