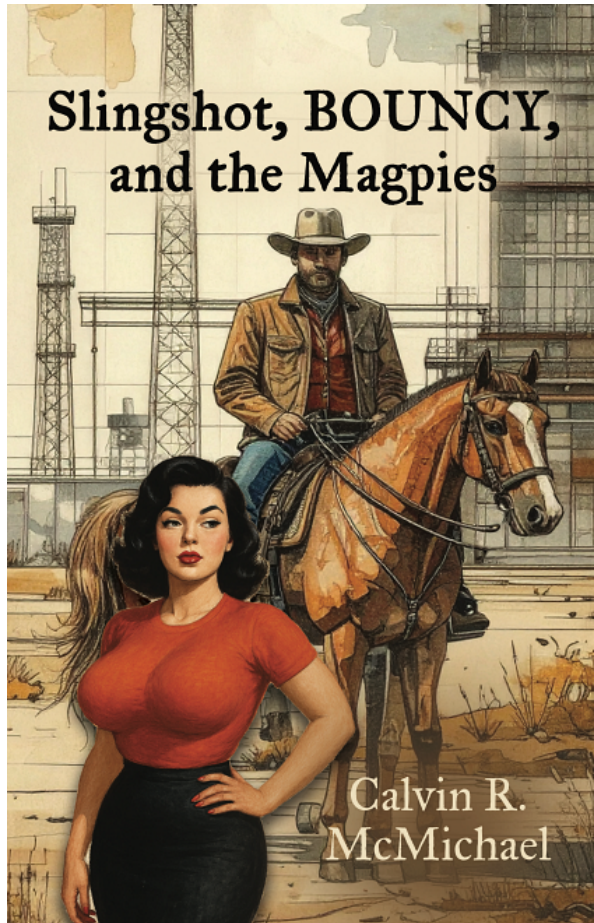




Story of a man who grows fast in Louisiana (gambler), joins the Air Force for around the world adventure. Lots of romance with various women while making lifelong friends and associates. Crazy romance with risqué ending.

Slingshot, Bouncy, and the Magpies

By Calvin R. McMichael

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Slingshot, BOUNCY, and the Magpies



Calvin R.
McMichael

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Chapter One

The harsh buzz of the alarm started at 4 a.m. This was early, even for someone raised on a ranch. He usually got up at five or sunrise, whichever came first. Most people knew Michael John Morgan as “Slingshot,” “Double Zero,” or “Tiger.” He reached over and shook his sleeping companion. They engaged in “therapy” until very late although he intended to get up at four. They got out of bed and prepared to leave. She would return to her apartment. He would go to an industry convention in Miami.

They kissed each other goodbye, and both were on their separate ways to the hospital and to the airport.

Michael John finished his breakfast in the seat by the window. He thought of the events in his life. He still felt guilty over the recent loss of his wife, Autumn, in a plane crash. Otheila slept with him for a few days. Then, Celeste moved in with him for “Therapy.” He gradually regained some semblance of his normal cheerful disposition. He slipped down in the seat and relaxed.

He thought of his grandfather, Robert Samuel Morgan, who told him of the funny events of his life. He dozed off to sleep sitting there in the seat by the window.

“Grandpa,” Robert Samuel Morgan, was born March 30, 1896, to poor dirt farmers in North Louisiana. He attended school as much as possible—mostly in the winter. The farm required only minimal attention during winter. Robert, now sixteen years old, finished the seventh grade. That was as high as you could go in the local school system. All who advanced that far were considered well educated. He

dragged his cotton sack across the field, picking two rows at a time. He thought, *there must be a better life somewhere than on this farm growing cotton*. In the spring it was planting, hoeing, and chopping. In the fall it was picking time. The only occasion for fun came when the cotton was all picked. He could get in the old cotton house and turn somersaults, or whatever, to his heart's content.

Robert heard of and read about a wonderful city in South Louisiana: New Orleans. Somehow, he intended to go there. He saved a few dollars from doing odd jobs helping his neighbors. His father gave him a few dollars when the cotton crop was all in. Now, he had enough money to ride the train to New Orleans. His mother packed a sack of food to take with him. He put his few clothes in another sack and said goodbye to his family. Then, he struck out walking to Shreveport to catch the train to New Orleans.

He hitched a ride on a couple of wagons hauling the cotton bales to Shreveport for shipment elsewhere. He caught the train and started the long trip to New Orleans. The trip to New Orleans took a longer time then. The train stopped at all the little towns. He had no place to stay when he arrived. The kindly station agent said he could sleep on one of the benches for the rest of the night. He would have to leave early in the morning. He arose at daylight and ate some of the food.

Robert started a tour of the city, taking in the strange sights and sounds. He didn't understand much of what went on. Most of the people spoke French. He was tired by noon. Nobody wanted to hire him for any job he inquired about. He didn't speak French and couldn't talk to any of the store customers. He sat down on a park bench and ate some of the food he brought with him.

A man sat down beside him and looked him over. Finally, he asked, "Where are you from kid?"

"North Louisiana."

"Do you have any education?"

"Seventh grade, sir."

"My name is Felix Beauregard. What is yours?"

"My name is Robert Samuel Morgan sir."

"I can use a fellow with some education. I'm a gambler. You can go along with me and help me."

"What would you want me to do sir?"

"Keep everyone's glass filled, clean up afterwards, light the other men's cigars, and all that stuff. Do you have a place to stay or clothes that look any better than those?"

"No sir, I don't have a place to stay. My other clothes look about the same as these."

"If you want to give it a try, come with me. I have a small place where you can sleep on a cot. We'll dump your stuff and let you take a bath. Afterwards, I will take you to find some better-looking clothes."

Robert, almost six feet tall now, didn't weigh much. He went with Felix to his room. Felix could tell that Robert had never been in a bathroom before. He explained to him how everything worked. Robert put on his clean clothes. Felix took him to a local haberdashery

and outfitted him with a suit, shirt, shoes, and underwear. Then, he took him to a barber shop for a haircut.

They returned to Felix's place. He gave Robert some of his old clothes to mix in with the new ones. Now he would have a change.

Felix showed Robert the proper way to light a cigar. He showed him how to hold the box and when to offer the cigars. Then, he showed him the bottles of liquor he kept. Robert needed to know how to pour each and what to mix with it. Felix pulled off his coat and lay down on the bed. He told Robert to stretch out and take a nap too. Robert lay down and soon was asleep.

Felix woke him. He told him to freshen up and they would go to eat. Robert didn't know what to order. Felix ordered a steak for him. On the farm he didn't get steak—beef rarely as far as that. Felix showed him the proper way to hold his knife and fork and everything. They went back to the room and freshened up again.

Felix sat down and showed Robert the box of chips and the value of each. He would have to keep each player's tab on the number of chips taken to play with. The liquor would be in the hotel room he rented for playing poker. Robert would have to keep up with the amount of liquor used. Felix would pay for it at the end of the poker session.

They went to the hotel room. Robert set out the chip box and arranged the liquor bottles in the order that Felix told him. He set out the glasses and waited for the other players. They soon filed in and took seats around the table. Felix told Robert he would just call him "Rob." Rob poured the drinks and issued the chips. He made note of the table position for each player and lit all the cigars. They were

ready to play. No one introduced himself other than a single name. Felix dealt first.

Soon more money lay on the table than Rob ever dreamed existed. Rob pulled a stool over near the table. He could jump up and fill a glass or whatever more easily. He watched the players and their reaction when they won, lost, or obviously had a good hand. When they quit at two in the morning, he could almost tell which player held the winning hand. He cleaned up and Felix settled with everyone. Rob gave Felix the tab on the liquor. He went by the bar downstairs and paid for the room and liquor.

On the way to the room, Rob asked Felix about the reactions of the players. Felix told him that played a major part in high stakes poker, whether you won or lost. He told Robert that he just told him a clever way the two of them could cheat. Instead, he always played an honest game. Besides, if you cheated, you would probably wind up in the river. Felix played every night except Sunday and Monday. He said he had to rest his brain, and it was a relief to get away from the cigar smoke.

Soon the players commented on the service they received. This made the game more enjoyable to them. Felix and Rob continued the routine for several months. Felix taught Rob the elements of poker. They enjoyed these sessions together. Soon it was a battle to see who could read the others face more than anything.

Felix began to let Rob sit in for him when he had to leave the game. Some of the other players also let him sit in for them when they had to leave the game. Felix usually dropped out on those hands when Rob played. He wanted to watch how he played and didn't want

anyone to say anything about both playing in the same game. As Rob became a better player, Felix didn't want to wind up in a showdown with him.

Rob found a high school nearby and inquired about enrolling. After approval, he went to school from 8:15 in the morning until 2:15 in the afternoon. This was a rugged schedule for him to follow. If you have a desire to learn, you can usually surmount the obstacles that face you. He spent all day every Sunday poring over his lessons—both catching up and trying to study ahead.

Felix now gave him 10 percent off the top of his winnings for helping him. They moved into a small two-bedroom apartment. Rob could study when he needed to, and this didn't bother Felix while he slept.

On Rob's seventeenth birthday, Felix asked him if he had ever been with a woman. Rob said no. Felix said every man needed a woman and told him to get ready to go out. Felix took him to one of the local houses of joy and informed the madam of the situation. She said one of the older women would be better for his first time. She would instruct him in the ways with a woman and not be in a hurry. She selected a woman for him. She took Rob with her to her room. She told him to get undressed and get in bed. Then, she taught him the proper ways to make a woman enjoy the act—as well as the man. Rob partook of his first sex at the age of seventeen. They left the house. Felix told Rob not to get involved with, or think he was in love with, any woman he had there. Sex could become addictive, just like liquor or gambling, and therefore should be done in moderation.

With going to school and helping Felix or actually playing poker, Rob had no time for foolishness. He received an occasional invitation for dinner at the home of some of the girls he went to school with. When their parents learned he was gambling or helping a gambler, that usually ended the friendship. Rob would go down to the house again. Young and pretty women were available. He continued to see the older woman who first had sex with him.

Chapter Ninety-Two

One important event occurred the spring of 1965. Miss Autumn Joan Nelson graduated from high school. The senior prom would be on Friday night. Grandpa came over and picked up Michael John at noon. He skipped afternoon classes. He would take Autumn to the prom. He presented her corsage to her upon arrival at her house. Then, he took her to dine at one of the better restaurants. They were the center of attention. She was the belle of the ball or at least thought so. After all, she was the only daughter of one of the local bank presidents.

The dance was over and everyone left. Most of the kids were anxious to slip off somewhere and have a drink. Autumn wanted to go down by the river. They parked and she crawled over into Michael John's lap. She started kissing him and said, "Michael John! I will be going to college at Texas this fall. I wish you would go there too."

"Autumn, you could go to LSU. Then you would be a Tiger instead of a Tea Sipper."

"Michael John, I can't! I want to compete in the beauty pageants and become a singer."

"I wish you a lot of luck. I wish you would sing something other than those mournful songs and pick that guitar. You have such a beautiful voice. If that is what you have to sing, I guess that will be what you sing. I wish you would sing something I like."

"What do you like, Michael John?"

"My mother always played 'Brahms Lullaby' for me. I like something soft and sweet. You know, something that makes you want to snuggle up to a girl and start feeling of all her soft, farm spots."

"Stop it, Michael John. You are trying to get in my pants again."

"No, Autumn. I told you I can't bring myself to do that to you. I want to feel differently about you."

"Michael John, if I let you, will you put your hand in my panties, touch me, feel of me, and nothing else?"

"Yes, I promise you. I will." Michael John started laughing.

"What are you laughing at, silly?"

"Still feels like peach fuzz to me."

"Michael John Morgan you are horrible; take me home. I won't ever let you do anything else."

I have heard that before, he thought.

He kissed her good night. "Michael John Morgan, I might never let you do anything again. One of these days I'm going to get you."

As he drove off, he said to himself, "I know I heard that before."

Michael John returned to LSU and took his final tests for the semester. Then, he stored the furniture, and everyone went home to the ranch. Grandpa bought a small trailer. He sent Michael John and Gordo to Tierra del Sur to paint all oil well equipment. They would drive home Friday afternoon after work and then drive back Sunday evening after supper. Gordo sure hated to be away from Sylvia. The money he would make during the summer would surely help out.

Isabella stayed with her father during the weekend, so they had the house to themselves. Michael would go over for a real quick visit with Autumn when they got home. Then they would go out on Saturday night.

Soon it was time to return for fall practice. School started and the routine returned to normal. LSU went seven and three and went to the bowl in Houston. Grandpa took everyone from the ranch to see the game. The rest of the semester passed quickly, spring semester too. Summer went by painting the oil field equipment, then back to school.

Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Four

They all walked over to the house and went to the big dining room. Isabella and Otheila set up everything buffet style. Everybody served themselves as they came in. All of them were obviously looking for “Senora Rojo.” They wanted to see if her hair was still damp. They laughed among themselves.

Bouncy could hear “Submarine.” Those who had already seen the twins were waving at them. Bouncy saw Rafael and Carlos and Rudolfo and waved to them. They all knew Michael would talk to them when they finished eating.

Bouncy whispered to Michael, “Does everyone eat here?”

“Only on special occasions, like tonight or tomorrow. We’re all one big family here. They’re all here to see you.”

Bouncy said, “Am I that popular?”

“We’ve never had a redheaded woman here on this ranch before.”

When everyone finished eating, Michael stood up and said, “*Amigos y paisanos*, Rosa, Juan, Berta, Eduardo, and their children will be here late tonight. Gordo, Sylvia, and their children will be here tomorrow. This beautiful redheaded woman, who has come to live with me, is Melinda Ann Jones. I call her ‘Bouncy.’ She hops up and down like a worm in a tequila bottle when she gets excited. Rosa nicknamed her ‘Senora Rojo.’ You can call her whichever you wish. These young ladies here are Esther Lee Hector, I call her ‘Left.’ This one is Ruth Ann Hector, and I call her ‘Right.’ They are my playmates and pals. I love all of them very much. I hope that you will too.”

Michael then proceeded to repeat the whole speech in Spanish. Then, everyone clapped and yelled wildly. Michael held up his hand and looked for Isabella. "*Cerveza bastante* (Plenty of beer)?"

"*Si Miguel.*"

Michael said, "*Bailando desde ocho hasta diez on the patio* (dancing eight until ten on the patio)." They all began to come by Michael's table. He introduced them: old Manuel Rodriques, the Ranch Boss; old Ramone, the boot maker, and his two sons, Jesus and Ricardo; and their families.

Ramone said he needed to talk to Michael tomorrow. Michael said anytime. Next came Rafael and his wife Consuela, Carlos, and Rudolfo and their families, and a couple of new people. Michael didn't know them—Pedro and Paschal Domingues and their families. Mabel explained they were new to Michael. They took care of the mowing around the ranch, the horses, or whatever needed to be done. Michael told the twins to get a coat. They could stay up too. He and Bouncy went to get light jackets.

Everyone returned in a few minutes. The men who played, gathered on a small stand on one side, and started to warm up. The women lit the oil lanterns around the patio. They went and helped Isabella and Othelia bring out the beer, glasses, and chips for snacks. The smaller children grabbed brooms and started sweeping the patio. As soon as they finished, the bigger boys and men went into the storeroom. They brought out wood panels about 4-by-8 foot each. They put them together until they formed a floor about 16-by-24.

Michael yelled, "Othelia."

"*Si Miguel*".

“Es tiempo (it is time).” The band led by Rafael began to play “Cucaracha.” Everyone began to clap and sing, and Mabel leaned over and told Bouncy. This was the traditional way they started the dances that were held here.

Bouncy asked how often they had one. Mabel said this was the first one since Grandpa died. Michael’s wife rarely came and didn’t want anything to do with the ranch folks. They used to have them on all the holidays before she came.

A couple of the older boys took the twins and began showing them how to dance around the hat. By the time the musicians finished the number, they were becoming fairly adept (from their mother obviously).

The men all made that peculiar barking sound when the dance finished. Mabel again explained that was the sound of a coyote barking. The band launched into one of their traditional slow numbers with all the muted brass. Bouncy told Michael that sounded like some of the current popular music.

Michael whispered into her ear, “Grandpa used to call it ‘whorehouse music.’ All the bands always played loud and brassy.”

Everyone looked at Bouncy as she laughed and laughed with her. They didn’t know what she was laughing about. They could plainly see the new “Senora Rojo” was much different from the other one. The ranch was soon to become a joyous place to live again.

Bouncy danced with Old Manuel and Old Ramone and Rafael. Michael danced with Isabella and Mabel and Valerie. Michael danced with Valerie and Bouncy thought to herself, *She’s the one who taught him to dance. I know I will have to thank her.*

The *cerveza* flowed freely, adults and kids alike dancing. The twins rapidly caught on to the dances. About nine o'clock, the band said they would take a brief intermission.

A horn sounded and everyone ran to the front to welcome Rosa, Juan, Berta, Eduardo, and their daughters. Juan told Michael that he and Eduardo went to work without breakfast. They worked really fast and finished. They left at two o'clock and only stopped once for gas. They all sat down and ate (Isabella always had something to eat).

The intermission was over, and they joined in the dancing too. Michael danced with Rosa and Berta, and Bouncy danced with Juan and Eduardo. Then, Michael motioned for "Left" to join him. This surprised her, but she went on to the dance floor. Michael led her through one of the graceful dances. Then he danced the same dance with Right.

Bouncy had a tear in each eye. Mabel and Valerie held hands with her. Mabel said, "Cheer up, honey. They'll be grown before you know."

With the lively dancing, it was soon ten o'clock. Rafael held up his hand. He said the last dance would be for Michael and Bouncy. They started to play and the dancers to dance. Bouncy said, "That is such beautiful music. What is the name of it?"

"'Quiza Quiza Quiza' or 'Maybe Maybe Maybe.' Songs are hard to translate. They often lose their meaning. It is roughly a man saying, 'Always I am asking you, if you care for me. Always you are answering 'Quiza Quiza Quiza.''" Bouncy kissed him and sang with the music, "Maybe Maybe Maybe."

The music ended and Michael said to leave the floor down. They could dance tomorrow if they wanted to, and tomorrow night.

Everyone again laughed and clapped wildly. Then he said, "Cleanup time." Everyone joined in and rapidly put everything back in place, then started to leave. "*Buenos noches*," was heard in all directions. Michael checked to see if Isabella and Othelia needed any help. They said no. The twins reached up and kissed Michael on both cheeks. They thanked him for dancing with them. They left with Valerie and Mabel.

Michael and Bouncy went to their room. Bouncy danced around the room singing, "I could have danced all night."

Michael said, "Sweetheart, you better dance into the shower. The rooster crows here awful early."

"Want to join me?"

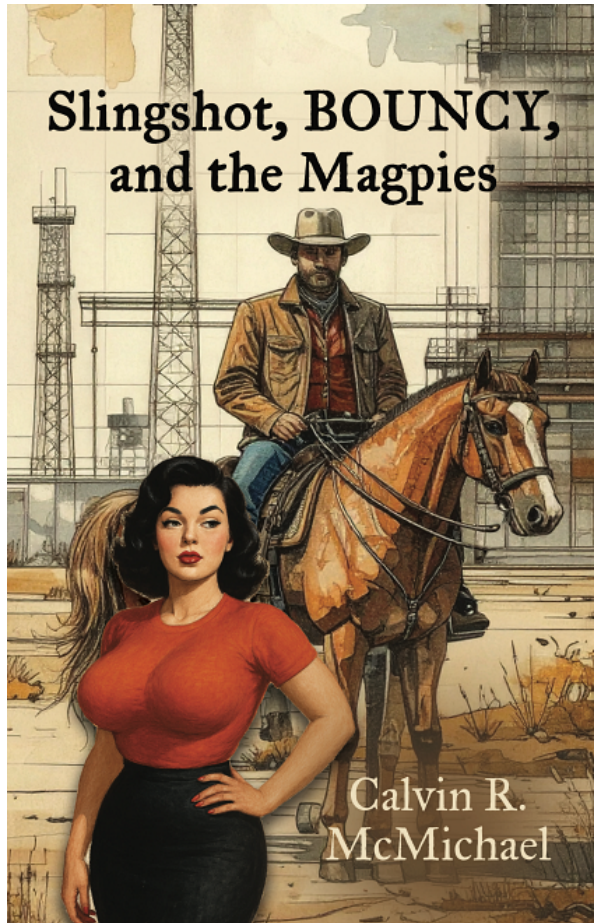
"I can't. It's too little."

She showered rapidly and then Michael did likewise. He joined her in bed. She showed him the outfit that Marsha gave her. She told him this wasn't a showtime item. She just wanted to put something on. She wanted to lie beside him and do pillow talk with him. She asked him if Valerie taught him to dance. He asked how she knew. She just told him she knew.

He began to nuzzle her hair and run his hands all over the softness of her body. He told her to get everybody's name tomorrow. Find out what they wanted for Christmas— especially the little ones. She could decide what to get the twins. He would try to get in touch with Sarge and Celeste and tell them to come Christmas. He would have to call Marcel. He would try also to get in touch with some of his old football mates. They had settled here— maybe they could come out in the afternoon after Christmas dinner. "Got all that written down?"

Bouncy jumped up in bed. Michael began to laugh. "Asshole! You just did that because you knew I would call you 'Asshole' and have to kiss you." She leaned over to kiss him and bit him on the lip, "So there."

"Guess I won't try that again." He turned out the light.



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