

Lollipop, Lollipop

Sweeter than candy on a stick

Huckleberry, cherry or lime

If you had a choice he'd be your pick

But lollipop is mine

The Chordettes , 1958

By Ken Fischman

The blue Chrysler's headlights bored into the dark highway ahead of us. My cousin Elane's fiancé, Howard, was at the wheel and Margie Silverman, sat next to him. Cousin Barbara, her boyfriend, Ira, and her twin sister Elane, were all crowded into the rear seat with me. Margie and I were the youngest and only unattached kids in the car.

We were out for a summer joy ride, starting from Long Beach, Long island. The twins' parents, who were spending the summer at the beach, had entrusted their car and its human contents to Howard who was the most mature, and a student in medical school at the time.

We had crossed the bay over the causeway to the mainland, wending our way through various back roads and yukking it up, having a fine time as teenagers usually do under such circumstances, but how long can you just drive around and laugh at one another? Perhaps we had exceeded even the average teenager's capacity for nonsensical laughter. Margie, however, said she had a fun idea.

“Let's play Padiddle.”

This was a new one to me. Margie explained it. “It's a game you play at night in a car. You look for an oncoming car with one headlight burned out. The first one to spot one, yells out padiddle! and slaps the roof of the car with his or her hand. They win!”

“But what do they win?”

I asked, as the others snickered. Obviously, They knew this game and I was the only one not in on it. Margie smirked.

“That's easy. If a girl wins, she slaps the boy next to her. If a boy wins, he gets to kiss the girl next to him.

Wow! I liked the idea of this game, especially because I had a secret. I was fifteen years old and had never even kissed a girl before! If I win, this was my chance! I envisioned a lot of kisses. I never gave a thought to the alternative, the one in which I keep losing.

I had already had a couple of girlfriends. There was Sandra and also Barbara Marx. But perhaps girlfriend was not an accurate description of our relationship. I had never kissed either one and in fact do not remember even a good night peck on the cheek. Perhaps we had just been friends and our being male and female was not a factor. No, that s not true. I knew quite well that they were girls, but I had never even dared hold their hands. Wait. That was not quite accurate either. There had been some interesting occurrences. There was this time that Barbara and I were in Prospect Park and we had wrestled, rolling over and over each other, down a grassy knoll. That had been fun and I got a kind of funny sensation from it that I quickly dismissed until the next day when Barbara told me

“That was exciting. I got so hot, you could have done anything to me!”

I thought to myself. “Anything? What did she mean by that?” I know, I just seemed awfully innocent for my age, and very slow on the uptake, especially about sex, and

rather naïve altogether about the motivations of girls. Of course, there was that party at Barbara Marx's house in which her cousin had introduced us to another game, this one called "Trust me!" There was nothing innocent about our motivations in that one. Nevertheless, we boys did not get far, only just past their knees, before the girls chickened out.

So, for all these reasons, I looked forward to playing Paddidle and eagerly peered into the murky darkness, looking for a single light, that beacon of male teenage hope. Of course, Margie won the first round, promptly turned around and slapped me. Ouch, it stung, but it would be worth my momentary pain and the gales of laughter from the others when I got to win.

A few moments latter, Margie yelled "paddidle " again. Ouch! I redoubled my vigilance. But, as the Yiddish term goes, "gournish helfen." (nothing will help) Soon Margie struck again, if you know what I mean. I realized that she had a big advantage over me. Sitting in the front seat, she could spot the headlights faster. I was getting desperate. This score was beginning to look like a football game between Notre Dame and the Little Sisters of the Poor.

I leaned forward, and concentrated on the approaching lights. Finally, my persistence was rewarded. “Paddidle” I cried. Now I was going to get my reward. Margie smiled at me innocently. She was a beautiful young woman, with luminous blue eyes, curly blond hair, cut in a bob, and delicious looking lips. Boy, was I excited. She leaned back toward me, poised over the front seat. “Lean forward” she said sweetly. I did. “Now close your eyes and pucker your lips.” I obeyed.

Thereupon, she stuck a lollipop into my mouth, accompanied by gales of laughter from the others.

I do not remember the flavor, but it would have been appropriate if it had been a razzberry. Come to think about it, where did that lollipop come from? She must have planned it beforehand. In this way I began to learn about the perfidy of women. So, I was still “sweet fifteen and never been kissed. “ As old Brooklyn Dodger fans used to say, “Wait till next year.”

