

Short Stories

Prescription Dreams



BOBBY W. LEE

Prescription Dreams

She had worked the last nine days straight. Three of those were doubles, including tonight. Dina was bushed. Her feet and back ached as she finished rolling her silverware, and put the chairs up on the tables in the restaurant she worked at the last two years. She just wanted to get home to her boyfriend who better have a hot supper cooked!

Another month or so, and she would have the down payment for the house they planned on buying. At twenty-two years old, Dina wanted some permanency in her life. She had most of it now, between what she and Chuck had saved over the last year, taking their lunches and skipping going out to eat. It hadn't been easy what with having to pay the rent on the small two-bedroom apartment, and there always seemed to be some expense or another. It would be nice to own something, rather than have someone else pay for their property with her hard-earned money.

The fry cook was a part-time chiropractor, and he offered to pop Dina's back for her. The crack of vertebrae released some of her tension, but didn't do anything for her weariness. "Thanks Ricky, see y'all Friday." She said, as she let herself out of the door of the restaurant. Her apron bulged with change and bills.

Dina was a good server. She always took good care of her customers and was attentive. On top of that she was not hard on the eyes, shoulder length brunette hair, big brown eyes, and a body to die for, completed her package.

Dina worked out twice a week, and ran a mile or two when opportunity provided itself. Lately, there had been no time to do anything but work it seemed, but this was her two days off, and she looked forward to going home and getting some sleep. She made the short drive to the apartment, and whipped the little Cobalt into the parking space beside Chuck's old Ford truck.

Chuck was ready with a smile and a kiss. "Got some meatloaf, mashed potatoes, pinto's, and cornbread when you get your shower, Babe." He said as she went into the bedroom and poured the change into the big water bottle they used for a piggy bank. The bills she put in an envelope in the dresser after carefully counting it and adding the new total to the outside of the fat envelope. She laid her apron and ticket book on the top of the dresser, and went into the bathroom, but the smell of the meatloaf brought her right back out.

She had been busy all night and forgotten to grab a bite, and now she was starving. They ate together and talked about their day, then Chuck went into the living room to play a quick game of Halo, while Dina loaded the dishwasher.

She showered and pulled on a nightgown and brushed her teeth. She was tired, but not sleepy, as she lay down for the night. A few minutes later Chuck came in and kissed her goodnight, as he climbed in beside her. Soon he was snoring, while she lay there awake.

An hour passed, and she got up and went to the kitchen to fix her something to drink. Her body was exhausted, but her mind raced as she opened the cabinet to get her glass. A bevy of pill bottles sat in the right corner of the cabinet. She reached for the aspirin, but a bottle caught her eye, and she grabbed it instead. It was a prescription for a sleeping medication made out to Chuck's mom.

She had stayed over with them a couple of weeks back, and must have forgotten to take them with her. She tried to pull up what she knew about the drug, but all she could remember was that it was a drug to help you sleep. The idea of reading the warning label never crossed her mind. She shook two of the pills out into her palm, and swallowed them with the tea she had poured herself. She screwed the lid back on the bottle and put them up in the cabinet, and closed the door.

Taking the half-full glass of tea with her, she returned to the bedroom where the T.V. was now on, but cut down to where you could barely hear it. She smiled, Chuck always fixed the T.V. this way, but most of the time it was after she had gone to sleep. She set her tea glass on the nightstand beside her side of the bed and crawled back in. She lay there watching the soundless T.V. for a few minutes, and her eyes closed.

She must have dozed, but she heard voices' whispering, and her eyes flew open. She had rolled over toward Chuck's side, and was looking at the mirrored closet doors. The reflection from the T.V. was making strange figures in the glass; it looked like little men with long hair.

She turned her head and looked toward the set, but there was only snow, as the station had gone off

the air. She was sure she heard whispering! She sat up and looked around the room and then at Chuck lying there sleeping, snoring softly. She looked at the mirror again, and was fascinated. The small dark figures were flickering, and she could make out more detail. The whispering indeed seemed to be coming from the mirror. She felt a shiver of fear run down her spine but closed her eyes and shook her head angrily.

This was no way for a grown woman to act, afraid of shadows on a mirror! She opened her eyes, and looked defiantly at the mirror. Bad mistake! It was indeed! Little white-haired men were staring back at her, and their numbers had grown!

The whispering was increasing to a level where she could almost make out their words. Her first instinct was to jump out of the bed and run, as far away from there as she could get, but fear had her in its cold grip now.

Her frozen eyes were glued to the mirror, as the numbers grew to about fifteen or twenty now, of the dark little men. Their white beards were moving, as they whispered together; their eyes glued on her. She grabbed Chuck's arm and shook him violently as the whispers rose in a crescendo, but he was dead to the world.

The whispering had reached the level of screaming now, and her panicking mind picked out random phrases, as the number of little men swelled to fifty or more.

"Take her, need her, going to run, stop her, need her, grab her!" finally took hold in her discordant brain, reeling from the shriek of the muffled whispering, and the fear of the gnome looking figures in the mirror.

She leapt out of the bed and tried to run, but made the mistake of looking back at the mirror to see if she was going to be chased. A tall dark figure stood behind the little gnome like creatures with his hand outstretched toward her, palm up.

She couldn't make out his features, his image flickering like a candle flame. However, she heard the hypnotic sound of his voice, "Come to me. We need you, come to me! Now!"

Sobbing, her eyes locked on the glowing red orbs in his flickering shadow face. Her body betrayed her, and slowly shambled forward like a zombie; closer toward that shadowy hand with the long claw like nails reaching toward her behind the glass of the mirror. The little gnome men gnashing their sharp fang-like teeth, and whispering at the top of their lungs.

"No, please God no!" She wailed as her arm raised of its own accord, and her hand went toward that clawed appendage. Her image was transparent and growing darker, beginning to flicker, as her hand traveled the last few inches to the glass.

She screamed as her hand passed through the glass-like water, and the shadowy hand clamped on hers and jerked her through. "He has nothing to do with it!" the black flickering image laughed; as he snatched her up on his shoulder and strode away, the little hellions turning and following him.

Chuck awoke the next morning and got up to relieve himself. Coming back from the bathroom he looked over at Dina lying there so still and pale. She must be worn out he thought and went into the kitchen to start breakfast. He didn't notice that she wasn't breathing.

Bobby W. Lee

Isle De la Muencas

The three little girls had been playing around the edge of the canal bordering the island. The smallest of the three had a baby doll her mother had painstakingly hand-made for her out of scraps of quilt and cotton. The face and head was made from clay pottery, delicately and lovingly, hand painted. She loved her baby and called it Esmerelda.

The other two girls were a bit jealous, and made a game of snatching the beautiful doll from her and throwing it over her head to each other. She ran back and forth between them crying, with her arms upraised, and they thought this was fine sport. The two taller girls were laughing, and as the little girl got close to the doll, the oldest girl threw it long and high toward the other older girl.

It went over her head and fell on the steep canal bank, and slid down almost to the water. The older girls were still laughing, so the small girl ran like the wind past the taller girl to get to her baby first. She grabbed the doll, but stumbled and fell down the bank and into the canal, still clutching her prized doll.

Screaming and thrashing she fought to stay above water, but would not turn loose of her doll. The other two girls were terrified, and fled back to the tiny village on the other side of the island; behind

them, the small girl and her precious baby doll slowly sank out of sight. A few minutes later, the doll popped to the surface of the canal and leisurely floated to the bank.

Most of the village ran to the canal to try to save the little girl, Rosalita, who was only nine years old. However, the only trace of Rosalita they found was the doll floating face down at the canal's edge. That night the oldest girl awoke to see a wet Rosalita staring at her with her arms outstretched, and she screamed waking her parents but Rosalita was gone; but for a muddy spot beside her bed in the dirt floor of the hut. The next night she appeared to the other girl. Both families immediately left the island, never to return.

Rosalita's mother was inconsolable and so grief stricken that in a few months she passed away. No one knew who Rosalita's father was and the little hut and garden where Rosalita, and her mother had lived, was abandoned and fell to ruin; only the doll left in the little hut.

The villagers said the place was damned and several claimed to have seen a small soaking wet girl with big brown eyes and long soaked raven tresses, running around the hut at night, playing with the doll. They shunned the place, and after a short while all of them moved off the small island leaving it abandoned. It stayed that way for several years, the cleared land becoming overgrown.

A farmer's son, Ramone Santiago, had been at sea but had made his fortune. Some say he was a pirate, and others said he was just a thrifty sailor; but in any event he heard about the haunted island in Xochimilico, Mexico, and wanted to see it out of curiosity.

What he saw was a fertile island and a ripe opportunity to grow produce in the rich soil, and there was no lack of sunshine and water. So he set about buying the whole island with his savings, and had just enough left over to hire a few workers to help clear the land and plant. He would let them build huts and sharecrop.

Ramone was a smart man, a thinker and not overly superstitious. He bought tents for his eight men, and they came onto the island and set up to clear and plant. They put their tents in the small clearing where the aged village had been.

As Ramone walked his new land to get an idea of how he wanted it laid out, he came across the ruins of an ancient hut. The baby doll was lying on the remains of Rosalita's bed, and Ramone admired the craftsmanship of the doll. A little cleaning up and it would make a fine present for his niece, Carmella, who was seven years old. He carried it around with him, and put it in his tent on his makeshift table, when he arrived back at camp.

He was busy telling the workers what he wanted done to make his vision a reality and thought no more about the doll.

A tired but happy Ramone returned to his tent that afternoon. Things were off to a good start, and he was excited about his new venture. He had big plans for the next day, so he ate his meal and turned in early for the night.

He awoke to the sound of screaming and a lot of commotion, as several of the men burst into his tent babbling something about a dead girl. They were scared and on the verge of panic so Ramone got up and went outside lighting a lantern and told them to show him.

They took him from tent to tent and showed him the muddy spots where the ghost had stood by each bed glaring at them. Most had woken due to the close presence of the dead, but one or two she had actually touched with cold wet dead fingers.

This brought immediate wakefulness, not to mention scaring the life almost out of them. It took some doing but Ramone finally calmed them all down some, posting guards to warn of supernatural intruders. They all went back to their tents, some of the fainter hearted opted to double up.

Ramone puzzled as to why he had not been paid a visit, as his mind was convinced after hearing their tales and seeing for himself the muddy spots beside the cots. A very tired and worried Ramone re-entered his tent, and the hair on the back of his neck stood up when he saw the muddy spot under the table, and that the doll was gone.

He decided not to tell the men about it and spent most of the night thinking about the strange occurrences of the night and wondering what he would do if the ghost returned.

The next morning five of the men left, and no amount of talking could convince them to stay. The other three men were of sterner stuff, but Ramone wondered how long their nerves would hold up if this became a nightly occurrence. Hell, he wondered how long his nerves would hold up! But Ramone knew he had to hold out; he had sunk everything he had in this island, and couldn't afford to quit.

They went to work but the men were disillusioned; so he called it quits early, and took a walk around

the island to clear his head. There was no way he was leaving, but the thought of cold wet dead fingers touching him while he was asleep, jangled his nerves.

Kicking a tuft of grass he looked up and saw that he had wandered to the devastated hut, and before his astonished eyes was the baby doll lying in the demolished bed! He crossed himself, and walked quickly back the way he had come. As he walked he thought. Maybe if they left the baby doll there, and didn't bother the hut, the ghost would leave them alone!

So he went back to camp and told the remaining men what had happened the night before, and to leave the hut and baby doll strictly alone! Needless to say, it didn't take much convincing. That night Ramone finally fell asleep only to awaken to an icy touch on his outstretched arm.

His heart nearly stopped as he opened his eyes to see the little girl, Rosalita staring balefully at him; drenching wet, and making a puddle in his tent. Every hair on his body stood up as she glared at him for a few minutes, then disappeared into mist.

He lay there shaking for a minute, and subsequently heard the screams of the other men. There was no point trying to console them now, and they spent a miserable evening together taking what comfort they could in a bottle of tequila.

The next morning Ramone went into town to pick up some supplies, and walking down the street in Xochimilico, he passed a toy shop that had dolls hanging from the roof for sale. He bought one for his niece, and as he was paying, an idea crossed his mind. Slowly walking down the street he turned and went back and bought five more dolls. The more he thought about it the more excited he got, and practically ran out to the island.

The workers were packing to leave, but Ramone talked them into staying one more night. If his plan worked, then they would stay indefinitely. Ramone placed a doll next to Rosalita's doll, and afterwards went back to camp and put the other dolls in a chest, out of sight.

He and the men bolstered themselves with tequila, and settled in nervously for the night. Morning came and there had been no sign of Rosalita! Ramone and the men danced and sang, but the true test would come tonight. They worked hard all day and before nightfall, placed a doll in one of the empty tents.

Again, they fired their courage with tequila and bunked down. It was a success! There was a muddy spot in the tent, but no one had been visited by the ghost. From then on they would place a doll in the tent to appease the spirit. After a few weeks, they would just hang one in the nearby trees, with good results.

Ramone was ecstatic. He even hired a man just to place a doll in a tree every day. The crops grew and over the next ten years, cultivated a thriving produce business that made money hand over fist. Everyone came to buy Ramone's crops.

Ramone even built himself an expansive hut in the old village, and smaller ones for his men who had multiplied. However, he strictly forbade anyone to touch Rosalita's old home.

The elderly man who placed the dolls had a visitor in the spring of 2001, the youthful man had come to tell the old man that his brother was dying. The old man got the younger man to stay in his place and paid him to place the doll before dark, which the young man agreed to readily enough.

Nevertheless, young men being what they are, he got to drinking tequila with some of the workers and forgot. That night everyone was awakened by a blood-curdling scream from Ramone's hut. When they ran in order to see what was the matter, there was only a muddy spot beside Ramone's bed.

The next morning they found his body floating in the canal, his face frozen in a mask of terror, and small bruised finger marks on his arm.

Bobby W. Lee

Bad Day

Some days are just bad. It's a fact of life and there is exactly no getting around it. You wake up knowing it's not going to be a good day.

Greg opened his eyes, and daylight was streaming through the window. Leaping out of bed he looked at the alarm on his dresser. "No, no, no, oh shit; I'm late." He wailed to himself as he stumbled around the bedroom trying to get woke up and dressed all at the same time. "Not again, no, no, no!" He ran to the bathroom and wet his hair and face, combing back the thick brown locks into something presentable, while brushing his teeth in the process.

No time to make coffee he thought, as he scrambled around finding his work shoes. Racing out the door, he tripped on the threshold and skinned his right palm as he tried to catch himself. The neighbor's schnauzer, irritated at the commotion ran up and grabbed him by the sore hand biting down hard enough to draw blood, and when he instinctively snatched his hand, the flesh ripped. Cursing and kicking at the now smug little dog, he ran for his car.

Getting in he cracked his head hard enough to leave a bump. He turned the air blue as the starter ground slowly on the old Pontiac, and finally sputtered to life. He lit a cigarette and got a draw or two but the smoke burned his eyes, and as he rolled the window down the wind blew it out of his hand, and it landed in the seat trapped on the inside of his leg and burned a hole in his pants and burned a blister on his leg before he could slap it to the floorboard and stomp it out almost wrecking. The rest of them were broke, so he tossed the pack through the window in disgust.

Five minutes later blue lights came on behind him and fifteen minutes afterward he was headed for work again with a citation for littering. Could this day get any worse?. He pulled into the retail store he worked for, and ran to clock in. He slipped out to the floor and headed to his area. I might have caught a break finally, he thought.

Half the morning passed, and he was putting up a camera display when he looked up, and the manager was staring at him. He wasn't smiling. He motioned for Greg to follow him and headed back to the office where he invited Greg to sit down and closed the door. Not a good sign.

The manager went into a long spiel about tardiness and punctuality, and Greg figured a coaching was coming at the end of it, but the manager looked at Greg and smiled.

"Termination is at our discretion young man, and today I determine that you are terminated."

Greg tried to plead his case but to no avail. What a sucking day, he thought as he handed over his apron and cards.

Feeling pretty low Greg headed back to his apartment and actually managed to make it there without incident. Even the arrogant little schnauzer was nowhere to be seen, as Greg shambled in and started making a pot of coffee. Luckily, he had an extra pack of smokes in his dresser, and he lit one while he waited on his coffee to make.

I guess I had better start looking for a job he thought so he poured a cup of coffee and opened his laptop. He signed up on a job hunting site and started poring over possibilities. Nothing looked even vaguely acceptable, and just before he closed the cover an email alert popped up. Could it be a job alert this quick he thought?

It was from Nadine, his girl, so he opened the email. She was breaking up with him and to make it worse; she was doing it on the popular social site so his friends would all see and know. He started to get pissed now and jumped up from the table knocking the almost full cup of coffee over and frying his five hundred dollar laptop.

Really, really pissed now, he slapped the laptop off the table and kicked it toward the wall breaking his little toe in the process! He hobbled around for a few minutes cursing and nursing his toe then sat down on the couch exasperated. He had never had such bad luck in his life! A niggling thought worked its way into his mind, as he remembered bumping into the girl who was putting up stock in the convenience store that Greg usually stopped at and got gas and cigarettes. He had been quite rude, telling her to watch where she was going even though he had bumped against her, and almost knocked her down. She was one of those Goth types, with the eerie makeup and piercings. Long black hair and a face that was expressionless.

She had muttered something under breath and Greg had called her a bitch. " Nah, it was a coincidence," He thought. He hobbled to the shower and soaked under the hot water streaming down on him. The water turned cold, cold, and the fire alarm started shrieking as Greg spluttered out of the freezing water and grabbed a towel; wrapping himself, and running out of the bathroom. His forgotten cigarette had rolled out of the ashtray and was smoldering in the carpet and had set off the alarm, and as Greg grabbed it and ground out the smoldering carpet, the sprinkler system went off wetting everything in the apartment.

"That's it!" Greg screamed. Going to the bedroom he dug and found a pair of jeans and T-shirt that managed to stay dry and bare footed and tousle headed he left the apartment and got in his car. He headed directly to the convenience store. The girl from last night was on a register, and Greg walked straight towards her.

She had a knowing smile on her face and this was infuriating to Greg. Two weeks later they were married.

It was one of those days where the sky alternates between grey misty and rainy, to bright bird egg blue.

Right at that moment the sun was out and big puffy white clouds crawled across the blue sky not keeping pace with the brisk early autumn breeze like they were dragging anchors. Minutes later nature sucked the light away, giving everything a grey pallor.

The sky matched Randy's mood; his head thumped and throbbed, threatening to turn into a sure enough skull splitter. He was hitch hiking his way back from Jacksonville, Fla. where his job and his luck had run out.

He was going back to Atlanta, no shortage of work there for a skilled painter! He slung his OD green duffel over his shoulder and trudged on, few people picked up hitchhikers these days thanks to Hollywood! He didn't mind much, at twenty three his legs were strong and his stamina good in spite of a two pack a day habit.

Humming a Willie Nelson tune he soldiered on down I-95 with the Florida sun beating down on his back. He never should have gotten mixed up with Erica to begin with. Daddy always said if you find them in a bar, then that's where they'll be when you go to look for them. Daddy was right as usual. God rest his ornery soul. Yesterday the foreman told Randy and three other painters, they had to let them go, mumbling something about the cutback, this, that, or the other. He paid them and as they were leaving a paint van full of Mexican painters had pulled up to the job trailer and were unloading equipment.

"This shit ain't right!" one of the painters just fired growled. "Them goddamn beaners come over here and steal our jobs cause they live twenty to a house and work for friggin peanuts! We ought to go over there and kick their beaner asses!" he shouted loud enough to make them look up and the Foreman to scowl his way.

"Save your breath, it ain't their fault. Somebody up in Washington decided to do away with all of us independents. It started when they deregulated the Trucking industry, and it moved on to construction. All these self-employed assholes cheating on their taxes and making too much money got the big boy's attention, and they decided to take a giant shit on all of us good old boys. Them poor bastards just want a better life and wouldn't you rather have three workers for the price of one if you had the choice. Come on man, we wouldn't solve it here even if we kicked all their asses and the managements too. We got to solve this at the ballots. Let's go get a cold one and figure our next move. I don't know about your old lady but Erica's going to be pissed at me, like it's my fault the world is shit!!" Randy said throwing his arm over the other painter's shoulder.

The painter glared at the Mexicans but let Randy lead him out of the front gate toward his truck. The other guys followed them out, and they stood around bitching together for a few minutes until one of them reminded the others that they had money in their pocket. They agreed on a watering hole except for one guy. He made an excuse about having to get back home. He didn't drink. He was a part-time preacher or something, so they didn't give him a hard time, just wished him luck as he left.

The painter whom Randy had talked down asked him if he needed a ride so Randy thanked him and climbed in the dented Chevy pickup, and they headed for the bar along with the others. At the bar, they got a table and ordered a few pitchers of Draft. It being early afternoon on a Friday, the little joint was practically empty except for a few locals and a few tourists. Pitchers turned into bottles and after a while they were getting drunk and noisy.

The crowd in the bar had picked up by now and as Randy looked toward the dance floor where a live band was now playing he thought he saw a girl that looked like Erica with an older grey haired man wearing a cowboy hat. He started to get up and go see, but he knew Erica was at home probably in bed by now.

She had been coming down with something, and not feeling well the last couple of days. Randy's partner had bought another bottle of Jack Daniels for the table, so they went to work on it and bitched about the Foreman, and the company, and the Mexicans until the wee hours of the morning. Randy had to take a piss, so he pushed his way to the Men's room.

The bathroom reeked, and the floor was sticky. Half filled mixed drinks and beer bottles

practically covered the washstands and urinal backs. Tobacco smoke hung in the air so thick it made Randy's eyes water. He finished and scrubbed up grabbing an extra paper towel to wipe his eyes, and as he came out wiping his eyes, he saw the man in the cowboy hat leaving with the girl who looked like Erica (even from the backside) under his arm.

Randy went over to the table, and they knocked back a few more then decided to call it a night. When they pulled up in front of the double-wide Erica had rented for them when they first moved here from Atlanta using money Erica had made dancing, there was a brand new black Dodge pickup parked out front beside Erica's beat up Jeep Cherokee.

It had Georgia plates on it so Randy figured it was some of Erica's kin come to visit. Randy asked his partner if he wanted to crash, but he said he was okay and headed out. Randy started up the porch steps, and the overhead light came on.

The door opened, and Erica stuck her pretty brunette head out. "You got fired you piece of shit bastard, and you didn't have the balls to come home and tell me! I've got bills you fucking lowlife. You need to get the fuck out! You need to get the fuck out right now! You bastard!" she screamed at him throwing his duffel on the porch in front of him and slamming the door shut dead bolting it.

"Erica, baby, wait! It wasn't like that!" Randy spluttered confused. She was high as a Georgia pine on the pills that quack doctor had prescribed to her. It hit Randy like a bucket of cold water thrown on him! "That was Erica at the bar!" Furious now he beat on the door.

"Open the door Erica, we need to talk!" he shouted at the impassive door.

"Fuck you!" came the instant muffled reply.

He looked around for something to throw and saw Erica's cigarettes, lighter and keys lying on the rail next to the big crystal ashtray they used. Neither smoked inside. Seeing red he snatched up the keys and stuffed them in his pocket and shouldered his duffel. He threw the cigarettes and lighter on top of the neighbors double wide surprised they weren't all outside after all the streaming and shouting. I guess after a while people just get used to it.

He grabbed the keys from his pocket and headed for Erica's '92 Jeep tossing the duffel over the seat. As an after thought, he stopped, turned around and headed back up on the porch picking up the heavy crystal ashtray that had been a gift from his sister. He walked backward to the Jeep, reared back, and threw the ashtray through the back glass of the Dodge. Then whistling 'Gimme Three Steps by Skynard', he got in the Jeep and drove off.

Four blocks down the road was a big metal light post, and he sighted the Jeep's front bumper for the middle of it and hit the gas. The Jeep hit the pole so hard the rear wheels lifted off the ground, the front end wrapping itself around the pole like a kid hugging his mommy's leg close to Christmas.

The motor was shoved down under the Jeep snapping the drive shaft and dying in a cloud of smoke and antifreeze. Randy laughed hysterically, kicked the door open and got out miraculously unscathed.

All the Jeeps glass was scattered in a big V, and his feet crunched it as he walked around to the back and retrieved his duffel where it had ended up against the back hatch. Humming Freebird he shouldered the bag and started walking toward I-95. For the first time since before he went to prison in South Georgia for a drug-trafficking charge, Randy felt alive.

By the time a passing motorist noticed the Jeep and called the police Randy was miles away. He came up on a little hole in the wall bar close to 95 and went in to have a couple of beers to keep his buzz going. It was getting close to daylight and Moses the old black bartender told him to drink up, he was getting ready to close it down for the day so Randy chugged his last beer and paid up.

"Never trust a stripper, Moses!" he sagely advised as he was leaving. "

The old black barkeep grinned his toothless smile and waved him out.

"Never did, never will!" he cackled. "Take care young man!"

Randy walked to the ramp and down it heading for Georgia. "Sometimes a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do!" He told himself. It sounded good at the time. A trucker picked him up and gave him a ride all the way to Hwy 166 in Georgia down in Carrollton, below his sister's place in Villa Rica, Ga.

He figured he'd stop in and say hey. Lay up a few days then head on into Atlanta and get a job with a commercial paint crew. His mood brightened thinking about seeing "lil sis" and getting a home-cooked meal. The weather had turned to misty rain, and Randy figured he'd probably get rained on good before he got to Villa Rica.

He was on the outskirts of Villa Rica in a little community of Sand Hill, just a collection of scattered gas stations. There was a deep ditch on Randy's side of the four lane and a big bank on the other oncoming side. He walked the shoulder, and the mist had become a full-sized rain now.

To take his mind off the cold rain dripping down the neck of his shirt he started humming an old Door's tune, "When You're Strange."

He never saw the Dodge with the shattered back glass barreling up behind him.

To this day, people report seeing a young man walking in the rain humming to himself on Highway 166 but when the cops ride out to pick up the hitcher(it's illegal now), there's no one there. Some of the locals put two and two together after Darlene Crow's brother was found lying on 166, killed by a hit and run, and they swear the mysterious hitcher is Randy Crow a ne'er do well local painter.

A couple of truckers even report picking up a young male hitcher that disappears mysteriously when they take their eye off of him. What do you think? Well, the next time you're out on 166 around Sand Hill in the rain; keep your eyes peeled!

Bobby W. Lee

Incubus

I opened my eyes to the sound of my coffee grinder whirring, the wonderful smell of French Roast beans filling the early-morning air. Instinctively, my stomach growled letting me know it was time to get up and put some of that coffee in me! I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes and sat up digging my toes in the thick Berber carpet of my tiny bedroom.

Grabbing my jeans off the footboard, I slid them on and started down the hall steps to the cozy little apartment kitchen Linda and I shared, passing her immaculately spotless bedroom on the way. Mine looked like the police had searched it with clothes thrown willy nilly.

Turning the corner and into the kitchen, I almost ran into Linda, who was reaching up into the hutch to get our coffee mugs. Standing there in an oversize white Tshirt that read Tackle Me, she was a sight to behold!

Long shapely legs rose to firm round buttocks, a tiny waist and medium-size breasts, with lengthy blond sleep tousled hair cascading down around her shoulders and emerald-green eyes peering around the door of the hutch; she was still the woman of my dreams after two years of living together.

I reached above her and grabbed the mugs kissing her neck lightly as I did. She smiled and turned wrapping her arms around my waist and snuggling her nose into my shoulder.

"Morning Snuggle Bunny," she murmured into my neck.

I kissed the top of her head, "Morning Baby" and put my arms around her still holding the mugs.

"Did you sleep well?" She asked looking up at me mischievously.

"Not as well as when you're beside me!" I answered truthfully.

She had this thing about independence. She had her room, and I had mine but a couple of nights a week she would sleep in my room with me or invite me to sleep in hers. She said it kept our relationship strong and from what I could tell, it was working. I loved her and would sleep on a bed of glass in freezing rain if that's what she wanted! I still couldn't understand what she saw in me, but I knew I was a lucky man to have her.

I am in pretty good shape, not ripped but with muscle tone. I have brown hair, hazel eyes, stand 5' 10' and weigh in at 160. I'm not a pretty boy, but I look okay I guess. My nose is too big and my forehead a little high but Linda has never complained.

I work doing light construction, and I do alright but I want to get ahead and put some money away to buy a house for Linda, and I before I pop the question. We are both twenty-two and have an active life together. Linda is a hairdresser for a local beauty salon and makes a surprising amount of money.

We met at the library when she was working on her thesis, and I was looking for horror novels. We both love to read and will spend hours with each other, curled up reading separate books together. Linda loves romance novels, and I gulp down dark fantasy and horror like it's going out of style.

We watch a few movies together sometimes splitting between fright flicks and romantic comedy sharing popcorn and M&Ms. Linda always picks out the green ones and feeds them to me cause "I love you" she says.

She dropped out of college for a while but plans on finishing with a bachelor's degree in Business ed. I never went to college, although my grade average was good electing to work in

construction after High school.

I had seen her at a table by the non-fiction section, and I had picked up a new horror novel by one of my favorites, so I sat at the table across from her. I must have been staring cause she looked up with a funny look on her face then crossed her eyes and stuck her tongue out at me.

I burst out laughing and went over and introduced myself. We talked, and I walked her to class getting her number. I called her that night and asked her out. She accepted, and we dated for a while and as things got more serious, we moved in together renting a little two-bedroom apartment not far from the library where we met.

Now two years later I was crazy in love with her and looking forward to making her my wife. She poured our coffee from the little French press, and we sat at the tiny wooden table in the combo kitchen/dining room sipping the hot liquid and waking up to the day.

Staring at me with those heavenly green eye's half lidded she said, "That was some lovin' last night SnuggleBunny. I can hardly walk this morning!"

I choked on my coffee, spewing the tabletop!

"Ewww, Snuggle Bunny, that's gross!" she exclaimed.

Grabbing a hand full of paper towels I mopped up my mess.

"Sorry Baby, but that must have been one hell of a dream!" I said still chuckling.

She pouted, "Tell my poor monkey it was a dream!"

I looked at the round plastic clock hanging on the kitchen wall.

"Gotta get ready for work, Baby, or I'm gonna be late!" At this I leaned over and kissed her and scampered for my bedroom to get dressed for work.

"Love you!" I called out going through the door.

"Love you more!" came the sweet answer, I never got tired of hearing.

I finished my job early and got home before Linda, so I fixed us a nice supper of Tilapia and beans and had it all ready when she got home. We ate and did the dishes together. We made love in my bed that night, and I went to sleep with her head lying on my chest.

The next day was stressful for Linda, and she came in late and ate, afterwards took a sleeping pill and went to bed. I stayed up and watched a little TV for a while, then headed up to bed. When I started past Linda's room, I heard moaning noises, so I cracked the door to check on her.

I couldn't believe my astonished eyes! Someone was in there with her, and he was pounding away! I jerked the door unclosed and it (whatever it was, it wasn't human!) looked over its shoulder at me glaring with red glowing eyes and snarled then dissipated in a grey mist. I stood there shocked my mouth hanging open.

Linda opened her eyes and sat up. Grabbing my hand, she pulled me to her. Lost in passion, I didn't say anything about what I had seen. The next morning I woke up late, sore and tired. Linda had already left for work, and I sat at the table for a long time convincing myself I had had a nightmare or something.

I resolved to stay awake tonight and double-check to be sure though. I showered and went to work. It was a long day, and Linda was already there and getting ready for bed when I got home. I ate leftovers as Linda told me about her day then kissed me goodnight and headed for bed. I went in the living room and cut the TV down low.

I must have dozed off. When my eyes opened the TV was playing snow. I looked up at the ceiling. I heard Linda's head board hitting the wall in the bedroom above and the unmistakable sounds of sex!

Ashamedly I felt a stirring in my nether region, and a weird sensation like a hand was grasping me. I looked down and started to get up to run upstairs, but the grasping got tighter and a raven-haired beauty with red glowing eyes raised her head from between my knees and said in a husky voice, "Not so fast big boy!"

Bobby W. Lee.

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