

Story 3 – (The Country Girls and) the Power of Lipstick

They smeared their lips in glistening red under the ghastly florescent lights of the ladies room. They smiled at each other now that the war paint was donned. They walked out into the bar confidently and hung out by the pool table, bending over things to show off their breasts and asses.

“Hey girls, who wants a drink?” he said.

“I do, me, over here,” they chimed.

“Mikey, drinks all around. What I’m having.”

“Thanks,” they said.

“So, what are your names?”

“I’m Adia, and this is Tara and Victoria.”

“Hi girls, I’m John.”

“Oh, we know,” Victoria said.

“How about some music?” Tara said. “I want to dance.”

“Sure thing,” he said, and started up the jukebox.

They spent the next few hours dancing and drinking. He didn’t notice that they passed their drinks around between the three of them, sipped a little, and threw out most of it. A few hours later he was passed out and drunk.

When he woke up he was sitting tied to a chair with duct tape over his mouth. The three young women were sitting across from him, glaring at him, arms crossed over their chests.

“*Wha- th- fu--!*” he muffled angrily through the tape.

“Did you think we were just going to let you get away with it?” Adia said.

“You raped our friend Talula,” Tara said. “She had to have an abortion. We had to pool our money together for it. She cried.”

“*N-, do--!*” he muffled through the tape.

“Oh, what’s that? I can’t hear you,” Victoria taunted. “Kind of like having someone hold their hand over your mouth so you can’t scream, huh?” and she walked over and kicked him with her stylish pink and black high heels with the little tied bows. They took turns kicking and hitting him for a good 10 minutes then stood back from his bruised and bloody body, panting angrily.

Adia checked her watch. “It’s 4 a.m.”

“My mom gets home from her trip at 6 a.m.” Victoria said.

“Well then...” Adia said.

They walked across the room to the open doorway then picked up gas cans. Adia and Tara poured lines of gasoline around the room as Victoria got the matches. They poured the trail of gasoline to John last, and dropped the last of it on him, up his legs to

his crotch, his chest, and the last drops on his head as they heard his muffled “No--!!”s and futile struggling.

They regrouped at the doorway, smiled through blood red lipstick then Victoria lit a match. She held it and moved it around, playing with it as John’s eyes turned to sheer panic. She blew on it, almost blew it out, then smiled and let it drop to the floor. The little flame burst onto the lines of gasoline and the flames ran across the room, dancing from place to place as John struggled until the chair fell over, his screams still muffled by duct tape.

The ladies laughed and closed the door. They walked away from the old, dilapidated cabin, past a sign saying “Welcome to the Reilly’s house”, and back to their car as a lite drizzle began falling.

“Ooh, not my hair,” Victoria said protectively, and covered it, rushing to the car to get under cover. Adia got in the driver’s seat of the Ford Mustang and drove away from the abandoned farm house as the rain picked up and effortlessly washed away all the evidence of their having been there.

They drove east, past Chehalis Reservation and Lucky Eagle Casino on Independence Road SW. Turning left onto Moon Road before Helsing Junction and making it to Highway 12 on their way back to the freeway.

They headed south on Interstate 5, out of Rochester, Washington, for an hour as they song favorite songs. An hour later Adia took an exit left, off the freeway, and through Kelso and Longview, Washington. They took Washington Way to Oregon Way and the Lewis and Clark Bridge over the Columbia River, and into Rainier, Oregon.

They headed east and south on Highway 30 for half an hour, into Saint Helens, and turned left onto Saint Helens Street running into Columbia Boulevard. They drove past the main grocery store on their right, and rode dip down the hill that they used to race their bicycles down, and turned sharply right up a small incline off First Street to its frontage and stopped in front of Victoria’s classic house overlooking the Columbia River.

They ran up the stairs and into the house, to the upstairs, threw off their clothes, and slipped on some pajamas as they removed each others’ makeup. Ran downstairs and into the front room.

“How’d it go?” Scarlet asked.

“As planned,” Adia said as they all sat amongst the sleeping bags, popcorn, and VHS tapes thrown about the room.

Victoria took out some bonbons and cautiously sat next to Talula. She gave her chocolate and put her arm around her. For the first time in months Talula smiled.

(From *A View from the Bottom: Short Stories* by Ava Collopy;
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