

Molly was a F***ing Tourist

by Cheryl Anne Gardner

The boys drank in one room. The girls in another. Always the same, no matter the letters.

Greek Letters.

Shabby sofa on the burnt-out lawn.

Sometimes the lawn was wet and green, and sometimes the sofa was plaid, but not that night. That night, I stood on the lawn thinking that I should have brought a coat but didn't. I thought I might leave to get one, but just as I thought maybe, yes, someone handed me a smile in a red plastic cup, a cramped closet to hide in, and a warm hand to lead me there.

There were rules.

The foyer was for arrivals and introductions. The staircase meant you were easy. Some girls got carried up, kicking and screaming.

Others sobbing.

I heard that a girl came with a padlock on her jeans. She didn't get very far. They held her down and cut those pants off her with a straight razor that one of the kids had stolen from his grandfather's medicine cabinet.

She didn't know the rules. That's what I heard.

I was there that night. The shabby sofa was gold, the lawn muddy, and I'd pushed myself hard into the crowd of shadows, clutched my purse against my chest, and said nothing. Molly was her name. I didn't know her, and it doesn't matter how much Kool-Aid you drink or how much Drano you snort, you can't make yourself feel something when you just don't feel it. Not scared, not sad, not even the faintest bit guilty for doing nothing. None of us feels anything anymore. I don't think we are supposed to. Shit. The last time I had a good girl cry was when my roommate's fuck-buddy blew chunks all over my bed on the second day of first semester, freshman year. That

meant something for some reason, something personal to me at the time. I can't tell you why, only that it hurt a lot, in that quiet space between you and your bones and God, but since then. . .

There's nothing.

Molly was just a tourist.

I live here.

I'll be living here the rest of my life.

