

3 Kids

by Bud Smith

My girl, Tracey has three kids, but none of them are hers. She found these kids.

It's none of my business, really. The way things are going, we'll never be married. None of the boys call me daddy. I'm just Rye.

Rye to her. Rye to the boys.

First boy, Evel, she alleges she found crawling in the drainage ditch behind her parent's house. She was sun tanning on their roof, saw Evel below, moving through the reeds like a an animal in hunt.

The parent's were off to Disney Land. She was watching the house. Parents have gone to Disney Land every year since Tracey's dad turned 40. They've never taken Tracey.

I'm supposed to feel bad about his but I tell her, "The place is horrible, babe. I've been there twice."

Drainage ditch, back to the drainage ditch.

There he was, naked and covered in green mud, just slopping around on his belly. So she walked out into the yard and walked down the embankment in her blue jeans and pulled baby Evel right out of the muck.

He's good at drawing and loves to dance around the house. He won't touch the Nintendo like his "brother" Jim, but he still does hunt around the outside of the trailer sometimes, on his belly, like he's stalking some invisible force. Some things you never outgrow.

Tracey found Jim and Kim lying on their backs in a red hot parking lot. I was in the car. She was going to pull into a parking lot and there were the babies just laying there. We almost ran them over. But I screamed! So did Evel.

We took the babies into the store and stood on line for a few minutes at the customer service desk but ultimately didn't make it up there to return the babies. We didn't even get the Slip and Slide that was Evel's reward for a good first report card in school.

We just drove. I mean, she drove. I held these two babies. Kim all cross-eyed at first and Jim with his lone tooth. But they were docile

babies. And they were lovely babies. And Evel even cradled Kim in his room that night and I explained to him, "Probably you shouldn't mention these babies at school."

"Why?"

"People might get angry."

"Cause we're lucky to find such nice babies?"

"That, yeah, a little that."

"What else?"

"We should have called the cops."

"Why?"

"It's just what you're supposed to do."

"Why?" he said.

"Why what?" I said.

"Why what why?"

"Give me that kid, I want to hold him now," I said.

And Evel pinched my arm where my rose tattoo is and I ignored him, I'm posing as an Army Ranger, not a clerk at the Dollar Store.

And in the other room I could hear Tracey with Jim bouncing on her knee and she said, "Yeah, you're a good baby, yes you are, you're a good good boy. I'm going to take you somewhere so nice soon, I'm going to take you to Disney Land."

Evel has only asked me once to take him with me when I leave. That was years ago. I'm gonna take him hunting next week. I'm going to let him shoot a mean dog.

