

In the Red

by Gary V. Powell

He saw them across the street, an older woman and her apprentice. Saturday, and Scott was home alone, his wife out spending money. He hated working weekends, but had no choice. They were in the red, three months behind on their mortgage.

Right off, he identified the two women as Witnesses—Bibles clutched in their hands, skirts well past their knees. His neighbor Dale turned them away. They crossed over and marched up his drive.

Her face wrinkled as a paper bag, the older woman pulled her hair tight into a severe bun. Her thin smile forced a brochure into Scott's hand. He flipped through it, pretending to read while stealing glances at the younger woman. He liked the curve of her nose, the fullness of her lips. She fidgeted with buttons on a red raincoat that held her breasts in a lover's embrace.

After the older woman tried and failed to get money from him, the younger woman asked Scott if he loved Jesus.

He was thinking life might have turned out differently with a woman like this, a woman who loved Jesus instead of credit cards.

He wondered how it would play if he told her he loved the color red.

