

Guy Who's in Love With Modern Notions of Love and a Good Thing Happens to Him After a Bad Thing

by Ivan Reyes

It was a blood orange 1960's Chevrolet, Camaro. He'd bet his life on it. He'd become celibate if he could own it. He walked around the lot and Gus, the owner of the lot and also it's best salesman, leered at him through the glass doors of his glass office, through the glass through the showroom floor. Gus thought Vince was a loser, and not a loser with money. Just a regular, plain jane, run of the mill loser with an ill fitted shirt, rolled up pant cuffs, a receding hairline, a fake Rolex, no brand sunglasses. Probably the last time he fucked anyone, Gus mused, was probably with a prostitute and so he wondered what VD he might be carrying -- or even worse, as losers like this are prone to do, his sad, pathetic wife -- and Gus was filled with a nauseous wave of feelings, imagining the poor girl reeled in by this guy, and his nausea skyrocketed as the thought occurred to him suddenly that she might not have noticed she married a tarmac stain of a man.

Vince did a dance of love and courtship around the Camaro moving crab-like around it with his arms hung low, raising them only to lower his sunglasses. "Baby, you're gonna be mine," he whispered to it. Gus came running onto the lot.

"Can I help you, sir?" Gus nervously canted.

"Just checking your wares for now, padre. I'll come in when I'm ready to buy," challenged Vince. "Probably tomorrow."

Gus walked back in and into his well air conditioned office. He went on with his paperwork.

Vince blew the car a kiss and made his way to the nearest bus stop. It was about three blocks south, and five blocks west. He waited and it started raining. He lit a cigarette and smoked it proudly, inhaling deep breaths of smoke and exhaling meditatively. The bus squealed to a stop. He hopped on and the driver punched a hole in his bus pass with a hole puncher he kept near him in a pouch and he returned it to the pouch and adjusted his hat. Vince found a seat and the driver moved in his seat, adjusting himself, and pressed on the gas and the bus lurched onward and towards a hill and it went over the hill and Vince sat quietly and comfortably resting his head against the plastic window, seeing all the poor souls who could not afford to ride a bus down on the sidewalk pushing carts or carrying groceries.

He went upstairs and found the keys to his apartment, each step up each stair ached. Once inside he sat on his bed and rubbed his feet. He spread his toes. He dug out the debris between each toe, mostly lint. He paced around his apartment. He turned on the tv and watched Wheel of Fortune. He guessed mostly right on this show. He also knew most of the answers on Jeopardy. And the answers he got wrong were simply not worth knowing. He took a shower. He went to bed.

He dreamt of a beautiful girl, Daisy, a girl he dated in the eighth grade and who had broken up with him by slapping him when he tried to grab her rear end -- but now he was dreaming of her. He dreamt he took her to a restaurant with three Michelin stars and he wore a tuxedo and she wore a revealing dress with a low cut neck and a slit down her legs. They ate crabs and ordered champagne.

They laughed. She laughed at his joke. His joke was sophisticated. His joke took eight minutes to complete. He knew the pianist. The pianist knew him. They nodded to each other. Daisy's breast heaved with excitement and lust for Vince. They ate until he woke up, and when he woke up he could still see her eyes through candelabra lighting and smell the crab.

He masturbated and felt better.

He downs a tall can of bud light, cracks open another and downs it, too. Then he cracked open another. He found a pack of cigarettes and shook it, three left. He smoked one and threw the little box onto his dresser near his keys and the remote control to his tv. He looked at his eyes in the mirror. They were brown and kind. He stuck his tongue out at himself. He unloaded a wad of snot onto a tissue. Then he went out to go to a bar that was on the same block as his apartment complex. He went in and the red light hid the stains on his shirt. "Tim!" he yelled, "a double of jack." The bartender poured it and nodded and handed it to Vince. Vince winked and took the drink as he sat on a stool at the bar. He looked around. The usual crowd. He drank down the shot and went over to the jukebox. He put in a dollar and played "Claire de Lune".

"What is this bullshit," yelled one of the regulars.

"You shut your filthy horse's ass mouth, Mitch, you filthy mongrel or so help me I'm ramming my doc marten boot down your shithole," yelled Tim. "And by shithole, I mean your mouth."

Mitch muttered something and Vince bought another double and the soothing vibrations filled the bar and a woman in the corner noticed Vince and she walked over to Tim and asked if he was single. "Hell if I know," said Tim. "He's always here alone."

"I think I'll ask him," said Trixie.

"You do that," said Tim cleaning a pint glass.

Vince saw Trixie walking towards him and began trembling. He adjusted his hair and moved nervously in his seat. She sat next to him at the bar and asked, "How's life, cowboy?" She was naturally charming and that put Vince at ease to talk to her honestly. She was at least ten years older than him, but that couldn't deter him. She was beautiful, all the same. She had done up red hair and sad, droopy eyes and she wore heavy eye make up to accentuate them further. Her voice was young and girlish. She wore a tee shirt and long shorts and chuck taylor gym shoes. Vince didn't know what look she was going for, but it worked for her. Her waist was small and her hips small and her breasts small. She lit a cigarette and repeated herself, chuckling quietly and not taking her eyes away from him as the music swelled and Vince said, "Life's good, cowgirl," and he bit his lip. He was embarrassed at the clownish tone his attempts at flirtation took on suddenly. "I'm looking to buy a car, a Camaro."

"A Camaro," Trixie echoed.

"Going down to the lot tomorrow. Got it all squared away, and everything."

Trixie laughed in his face. "Must be a piece of junk!"

"You bitch!"

"Oh, calm down!"

They kept drinking and then Trixie put another dollar into the jukebox. "(How Will I Know) I'm Falling In Love Again" by Willie Nelson came through the speakers and it had been ages since Vince had listened to a country song. As a boy he'd watch his father whittle his wares that he'd sell to the people in the town, listening to

country music, drinking, a kerosine lamp lending a tender glow to everything. "Why did you play this," asked Vince. Very drunk.

"Everybody loves Willie Nelson."

Vince thought she was fucking with him. Delusional and drunk he imagined she knew his father disowned him. She did not know. There was no way she could know. Mitch walked over and demanded that Vince stop being so mean to Trixie, so Vince punched Mitch so hard that he fell to the ground and slammed on the wooden floorboards unconscious. Tim told Vince he had to leave, to come back tomorrow because he doubted Mitch would remember, "But right now, you got to go, Vince."

Trixie went home with Vince. "I'm getting a Camaro tomorrow, Trixie. Dad'll love me then, I think, right?"

Trixie implored him to shut his mouth or his neighbors will hear him and start a racket. She put his key in the door and it swung open, knocking over a side table and everything scattered in the dark across the floor. She flicked the switch. All it was, was coins and lighters. "Good, god, you're heavy." Vince darted into the bathroom. He pissed all over the floor and into his toilet. Trixie looked at all his things. She touched them or prodded them with a finger. He had a vast collection of comic books, and novels, and philosophy books and records and tapes and an SNES console and a small stack of game cartridges in a corner. He had artistic paintings hung up on the wall as well as posters for classic movies -- King Kong, The Bridge on the River Kwai, East of Eden. She had seen East of Eden.

He came out and was silhouetted by the bathroom light. They went to bed together.

In the morning, she left in a cab and left him a note with her phone number on it, and an imprint of her lips in black lipstick. He picked

it up later. He picked up a Superman comic and thought about that blood orange 1967 Chevrolet, Camaro.

