

All of Me

by Jack Swenson

He lugged in a case of Grain Belt Premium and set it on the kitchen counter. She found room for most of the bottles in her refrigerator, which was almost empty. She opened two beers and handed him one. He stood by a window at the front of the cabin and looked out at the lake. He pointed. "Whitecaps," he said. She stood by his side. She had to look up to see his face, which was shaved clean and ruddy.

They sat before the fire and played cribbage. He was a good player, but not as good as she was. She beat him twice before he won once. Nobody wins every game of cribbage, no matter how good you are. He was up and down to the refrigerator the whole time. He drank like a fish. She was young then, and she could put them away, too. They each had three or four, and then he challenged her. He was miffed the way she had beaten him the last game. He suckered her into answering his deuce lead with another; he had a third, which he slapped down and pegged six holes. She had the case deuce, and that took the wind out of his sails.

"Okay," he said. "Let's get serious. How about a wager?" He bet her, not on the outcome of the cribbage games, but that he could out drink her. "First one under the table loses," he said. She took the bet, which was foolish because there was no way she could keep up with him, and she knew it. The stakes were her sexual favors. "Good luck," she said. She told him to deal the cards while she got the beer.

He beat her hands down. After half a dozen she was blotto. She stood and whirled around and around, all the while removing her clothes. They made love on a rug in front of the fire while the wind howled outside, flapping the shingles and making the logs of the cabin creak.

Afterwards she told him she loved him, and he pretended not to hear. She was pretty sure he would tell their friends, but she didn't care. She had beaten him at cribbage anyway. She was

confident she could beat anybody at that game. She was that good.

