Mona

by Jack Swenson

As soon as Doc unpacked his bag, we got in his car and drove to the liquor store. The car was a Mercedes. The leather seats were luxurious. Doc was very pleased with his car.

I asked Doc if he had a good trip. Doc said he got twenty-three miles per gallon on the way up.

When Mona arrived, we got our coats and drove up El Camino Real to a restaurant where I had made dinner reservations. The food was so-so, but the drinks were wonderful. Mona ran her fingers lovingly over the surface of the leather seats of Doc's car. Mona looked sensational. She was all gussied up. " I wanted to look nice for you," Mona said.

There was a rule in the restaurant that nobody was allowed more than two of their potent drinks. Doc and I had three each.

After dinner, in the parking lot, I held the front door open for Mona, but she opened the back door, got in, and pulled me in with her. She put her arms around my neck. She kissed me. "I've always wanted to fuck in the back seat of a Mercedes," she said.

Doc had bad luck at the races the next day. In the last race, he bet on the favorite, and the horse threw its rider in the starting gate. Doc sat there, sneezing and sniffling, blowing his nose into a pocket-handkerchief the size and color of a bed sheet.

He felt awful, Doc said. When we got back to my apartment, I gave him a bottle of Vitamin C. I went to the store and bought several cans of soup. After supper, we sat and talked.

Doc and I talked for several hours. When I told him Mona was pregnant, he turned his head and looked at me. "Who's the father?" he asked. Don't know, I said. Mona didn't know, either.

Mona and her friend to showed up a bit later. They were both a little drunk. Barbara staggered off to the bathroom on her high heels in a cloud of perfume and yellow hair. Mona sat down next to me. When she touched me, I felt the way I always did when she was nearby. Frightened and aroused. Her attraction for me was

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something that was bone deep and cold. Mona put her hand on my leg. “I'm horny,” she said..

We went into the bedroom, and when we returned, Barbara was curled up in a chair, asleep. Doc was on the couch with a book in one hand and a Kleenex in the other. “What are you reading?” Mona asked. “*Goodbye to All That* by Robert Graves,” Doc said.

The next morning, we went out for breakfast. Doc was feeling better, and he ordered bacon and eggs. As I sat watching him shovel in the hash browns, I felt sick to my stomach.

After breakfast, the conversation turned once again to Mona. Doc confessed that he didn't like Mona very much. She was willful and selfish, he said.

“She's young,” I said weakly.

“Very,” Doc said.

That evening I picked Mona up at her parents' house and drove her to her dormitory at the state university in San Francisco. As she got out of the car, Mona told me that she had decided to have the baby after all. “We could name it Tom, Jr.,” she said.

“That would be nice,” I said.

Mona laughed. “Just kidding,” she said. As she walked away, she waved gaily and blew me a kiss.