

Turtles Don't Have Hair

by Jamey Genna

"You'll have to do better than that," Skip says.

My husband laughs. He has a high girlish chuckle when he's truly delighted. He can sing really high like a girl, too.

"All right," I say. I leave my headband around my hair. It's a purple, red, and violet-blue scarf to match the red silk shirt that I stole in Denver. We stole a lot of things in Denver while we were on vacation. I gave my mom one of the shirts, a white peasant blouse with embroidered trim, but she wore it to work and got it all dirty, so I wished I hadn't let her have it. Instead of the headband, I slip my suede skirt off my hips.

Beth laughs. "Chicken shit."

"Deal, lady," Skip tells me. I rifle the cards and shuffle, making them spray that sound. I deal fast to my left around the table.

Skip's got his shirt off, my headband's around his head. He's got Mexican black hair that's thick and flops over the band. He's in blue boxers and socks. I don't like guys who wear underwear. My husband's in his red cotton Hanes. His bare legs are long and his feet crossed under the glass and brass table and his knobby knees are sticking up. The guys' abs are glowing in the flickering candlelight.

"If Todd ever finds out I did this, he'll kill me." Beth says. She takes a drag on her Benson and Hedges slim 100's. He will, too. Beth told me how he took a bat to the window of their vehicle once when she told him about her past. He wanted to know. She used to fly on airplanes to Vegas with high rollers while she was still in high school. Gave blowjobs and got lots of money and jewelry. Todd got out of their brand new truck and he grabbed a bat from behind the seat and he walked around the vehicle and he went bam right on Beth's side and cracked the front windshield.

Beth is so thin. She's boot thin. That's when our Lee jeans have a little sag under the rear. She eats though and I don't. I can hear her barfing up her dinner sometimes through the wall between the bathrooms of our adjoining apartments.

I heard her one time in there having sex with Todd. Todd's blond and he's got a mustache and his own lawn trimming business. He gave me a job once for about two weeks, but he didn't like how much fun Beth and I had while we were working, so he laid me off. They were both noisy in the bathroom, so when they were finished I stood there and made moaning sounds through the wall and Beth came running over to my place, laughing, "Jeannette," she said, and she acted like she was going to hit me, but instead she hugged me with her big warm breasts inside her t-shirt.

Skip says, "Take your bra off, Jeannette. It's time." The stereo is playing Bruce Springsteen's *The River* album. "*Little girl, I wanna' marry you . . .*"

All right, I do. I still have on my leopard-spotted g-string underwear. I shuffle my hair around to cover up my breasts. Beth didn't do that, but she looks like Sophia Loren.

"Ahhh, no fair, we can't even see em," Skip says to me. He takes a hit off his roach. My husband is laughing sincerely.

They write stuff down on a piece of paper that they think is funny. Stuff we think is funny. Something about turtles.

Beth and I won't go past our underwear. We're all lying around the living room. There's this ceramic motif over the fireplace. Pheasants flying over wheat grasses and the fans I decorated with dried flowers. The fireplace is roaring. It's cold outside. It's blizzarding. Todd is out making money, yanking people out of ditches with his four-wheel drive. Beth is lying on the floor on the carpet in front of the fireplace, her hand and her arm across her nipples.

Beth says, "Did you rent this furniture or is it yours?" And we all laugh.

I'm on the chair, folded up in there, knees over my chest, but relaxed. My head on the arm of the chair.

We wake up the next day all over the room. Beth shambles into her clothes and hurries home before Todd pounces on our door and sees what's up.

A piece of paper on the counter says, *Turtles don't have hair.*

After Beth leaves, Skip says, "Shit, I thought we were all going to fuck last night." He's laughing again because he's high already. My husband laughs, too.

I pick at the browned leaves on my plant in the kitchen window. They are green with soft whitish stripes and a velvet purple furry back to the leaf. My mother has the same plant in her kitchen.

My husband says on Saturday that he liked that. Would I do it again? Skip will. I try my friend Debbie, but she's not having any part. She says, "I had enough of that shit with Fred. You guys'll learn better."

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Skip says, "You're going to go back to college and then you'll get smart and you'll leave all of us." He's driving my husband's pickup. He wanted to drive it. It's new. We're going to a bar downtown. My husband drove Skip's piece-of-shit car with some other guys.

It's a nice bar with brass fixtures. Not the kind we usually go to.

"Are you attracted to me?"

"What did you say?" Skip laughs. He hits a parked car. The pickup goes up a little on the guy's back end and then down.

Skip laughs uproariously. "What? Jesus!" he says while still laughing. "You surprised me."

"What were you saying?" he says.

"You had an accident," I say, then I laugh even though I'm not high. I don't repeat myself.

My husband's going to be mad about the truck. I don't want to be to blame.

