

Flossie's Bordello and Bar-B-Q Shack

by Joe Lyons

The women of Bixby, Texas, united in their frustration and general thirst for arson, cheered as *Flossie's Bordello and Bar-B-Q Shack* burned to the ground. Even though fire has no inherent sexual nature, most of the ladies agreed that it was the "smuttiest" inferno to grace their corner of Texas since an aromatherapy candle claimed Clovis Entwhistle's trailer after a particularly rigorous day of exposing himself to motorists. While the women applauded, the men watched in horror. *Flossie's* was gone and life would never be the same.

My father was one of the men that barely escaped with their lives that night. I was too young to know why *Flossie's Bordello and Bar-B-Q Shack* was a bad thing for the town; I just knew it was where every single man over the age of 17 (and Tyler Jenkins with his convincing moustache) disappeared to every Friday and Saturday night. It's what the men did. They disappeared and then they were back in the morning, all smiles, and eagerly awaiting when Flossie would open her doors again.

Before I left for college, my dad took me and a bottle of Jack to where *Flossie's* used to stand. As far as peaceful moments with my father went, sitting on the hood of his truck, looking at the scorched earth where a brothel used to stand, had to be my favorite. After a couple of slugs from Dr. Daniels, Dad reached into his pocked a pulled out a Bar-B-Q sauce jar. It was lovingly wrapped in a handkerchief and it shined liked he polished it every morning. He gently handed the jar to me. It was heavier than it looked and it had a firm brush attached to the lid, tinted orange from soaking in sauce for God knows how long. Even though it was empty, it smelled like

tomatoes and onion powder and...and something else I couldn't put my finger on. Whatever it was, it smelled like home. It was hypnotic.

"What your mother never understood," he said, "was that none of us went there to cheat on our wives. It was the food."

"What?" I replied.

"Hell, I don't think anyone *ever* bought sex there," he continued. "It was the barbeque. It was the kind of barbeque you would find yourself dreaming about. I loved your mother, but she was never able to cook like that."

I smelled the jar again. It was spotless, but I could smell what my father was talking about. Truly this was barbeque worth risking a marriage over.

"You keep it", he said as he hauled his frame back into the truck. "It's just reminding me of something I'll never get to have again."

And keep it I did. Even though I never got to set foot inside *Flossie's Bordello and Bar-B-Q Shack*, I know it was truly the best restaurant / brothel that there had ever been....an honor with some stiff competition, I'm sure.

