

Booming

by Kevin Myrick

The couple walked along the beach with drinks in their hands - something with rum in them - and talked about children. Maxine wanted children and Will didn't want anything to do with them. He didn't to deal with the stinky diapers and the vomit on the baby clothes.

It didn't really matter because Will was sterile. Will never told her and they tried over and over again to get pregnant until finally one day she stopped going to the store for pregnancy tests. She stopped enjoying the trial and error at night in bed.

Now they did things just like walking along the beach on vacation when they went with their family. Maxine's mother always wanted to know when they planned on having children, pestered her constantly. "I want more grandchildren to spoil," the woman said. Will took a swig of beer at such moments. Maxine only answered with "someday" and looked over toward her husband. She knew it was his fault, didn't really know why, but blamed him anyway.

She asked him if he ever thought about adopting a child. "There's so many babies out there in the world without parents. We could have children Will!"

"Why are you in such a rush to have children?"

"My time is running out to be a mother," she said. "Don't you feel that way about being a father?"

Will didn't say anything as he sipped on his drink and looked along the shoreline. Bunched up in piles from where it washed ashore the night before was more of the yellow booming. "Look at that," Will said. "How is this crap supposed to hold back the oil?"

"Why don't you want to have children with me?" she asked and brought them back to the conversation at hand.

He again remained silent. She stared into his deep blue bloodshot eyes and saw no caring and no remorse. Will, she guessed, would rather be screwed up all the time than have a boy to toss the ball in the yard with in the summertime. "Are you afraid you can't be a good?"

"Look at the world now," he said. "Oil spills and hurricanes in Haiti and starving children in Africa. What will adopting one child do? Beside, if we have a child now our lives will be over."

She looked away and wiped a tear from her eye. "This is what life is supposed to be about," she said between a sob. "Having a family, a legacy."

"I hated my father," he said. "I don't want my legacy to be having a screwed up kid who hates me."

"You don't have to be like your father. Your life with a family could be different, maybe even better."

Will said he believed that life had no real meaning. She walked back to the beach house as he took a last swallow of his drink. A string of the booming meant to keep the oil off the shoreline was being carried away by the tide and Will dragged it back onto the beach. There wasn't oil along their shoreline yet, but he guessed the government wanted to be prepared. Disaster seemed to always be around the corner.

Maxine had always hoped a child would be around the corner in life for her and Will. It wasn't to be. When they got home from their vacation with her family, Maxine moved out of his apartment. Will

watched as she loaded her things into boxes. "We want different things," she said as she handed him the keys. "There's no hope for saving it?" Will asked.

"Less hope than that booming holding the oil back from washing onto our beach," she said.

