

(1)

~~22~~

~~(How MANY?) weeks after his release~~

~~did try to get back to him.~~

~~Sterling said he'd tell Gary. In Ann never did hear
from him.~~

~~FROM MARION PRISON IN ILLINOIS, GARY GILMORE~~

~~Gary didn't drink all afternoon. He came back to the
shop for a couple of hours and seemed to sober up. Vern
had advanced him money already so there wasn't anything
due, but when Gary said he was short, Vern slipped him a
ten, then he said, "Gary, if you don't think this job is
going to be satisfactory, I want you to let me know. We'll
find something else."~~

~~Sterling Baker,~~
at the home of a young

907 ~~Gary was invited to dinner that night at Sterling
Baker's home. He had recently met her in Provo, Utah, when
he was in prison. He made an impression on Ruth Ann, Sterling's~~

~~wife, by playing with the baby for quite a while and bounc-
ing her on his knee. He liked the country and western
music playing on the radio so he bounced the baby in time
to that. Johnny Cash, it came out in conversation, was his
all time favorite. Whenever he had been out of the coop
for a little while, he had spent whole days listening to
nothing but Johnny Cash records.~~

~~asked how long had he been in jail altogether, Ruth Ann
wanted to know. She was small and young enough to look
like a child. She had long hair that was so light she~~

~~looked like a natural platinum blond. If she had been a~~

~~boy, they would have called her, "Whiter".~~

Well, Gary told them, he had been in, on and off, since he was thirteen. If you added it up, he guessed he'd been in 18 of his last 22 years. *He was now 60 years old. But it seemed,* he said, as if life had stopped when he was twenty years old. He'd been on ice somewhere and now he'd come back and he was still twenty years old. Sterling Baker felt sorry for him.

Over dinner, Gary told ~~me~~ stories about prison.

There was a girl named Becky that he was going to marry.

Back in '68, he had been in some prison riots at ~~Corvallis, Oregon State Prison~~

Penitentiary, and

a TV crew selected him as one of the leaders and had him on television saying a few words. His looks, or something in the way he spoke, attracted attention. He got some mail out of it including a beautiful correspondence ~~that~~ ~~began~~ with this girl named Becky. He fell in love with her through her letters. Then she came to visit. She was so fat that she had to waddle through the door sideways. Yet he still liked her enough to want to marry her.

It was not that uncommon, Gary explained. You could always see fat women in the visiting room of a jail. For some reason, very fat women and convicts got along. "I guess once you get behind bars, you're inclined to pick an

earth mother," Gary remarked.

Before they ~~got~~ ^{were able to get} married, Becky went into the hospital for an operation, and died on the table. That was his prison romance.

~~Of course,~~ ^{told} he ~~had~~ other stories. He had a friend, LeRoy Earp, one of his best friends when they were kids, and LeRoy had come to Oregon State Penitentiary two years after Gary. Having killed a woman, LeRoy had a life sentence and not much to look forward to. So he had a bad habit. LeRoy, Gary explained, would stay fucked up on Valium for months.

"LeRoy got in debt to this guy named Bill, who was dealing in prison dope," said Gary, looking at Sterling and Ruth Ann, "and fucking with people. One time LeRoy sent word to me that Bill had come to his cell and beat him up, all that shit," said Gary, "put the boots to him while LeRoy was on the floor and then Bill walked off with his outfit, you know, his syringe and needle, his money, everything LeRoy had." Gary took down half a can of beer at a swallow. "Well," he told them, "Valium can make you hallucinate, ^{so} I wasn't certain LeRoy's story was true, ~~so~~ I talked it over with a guy who was going in the hole for seven days and he checked it out for me. When he came back,

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he said the story was true. This guy wanted to know if I wanted any help stabbing Bill, or did I want to pipe him?

"I told him I would do it myself since LeRoy was my personal friend. We were doing some construction out in the yard, ^{and} ~~so~~ I went over, stole a hammer and that night caught Bill watching a football game on TV, ~~and~~ I planted the hammer in his head. I felt the hammer go in his skull. Then I turned around and walked off." Gary nodded, studying their reactions. "They took Bill up to Portland for brain surgery. He was pretty fucked up."

"What happened to you?" asked Ruth Ann.

"There was two or three snitchers in the TV room and they saw me do it and told the Warden, but the snitchers were afraid to stand up in court and reveal themselves. So the Warden just kept me in the hole for four months, and during that time a buddy of mine sent away for a little toy hammer that he gave me to wear on a chain and he nicknamed me Hammersmith."

Gary told this story in a Texas accent, sort of, very even voice. No passion. No pride. He was kind of informing Sterling that he ~~had~~ ^{had} a code and was an instrument of that code. The code went: be loyal to your friends when they need you.

Gary now asked Ruth Ann if she knew any girls who would

go out with him.

She 'didn't, off-hand.

(((line of space)))

A few days later, Gary was ^{at dinner}
at his cousin Brenda's house. ^{Thirteen} ~~was~~ ^{of}
~~12~~ people from the family ^{had} gathered together
to celebrate Easter Sunday, 1974, and ^{they} were,

to
p. 72

"Yeah," Gary said, "pretty good egg."

"Gary," Brenda said, "you work with him and he'll work back with you."

Gary gave her a smile. After a while, Gary said that a lot of men had been put in charge over him. People who worked in prison, and people who worked for the prison system, and he didn't really know anyone who'd been particularly willing to work with him. Still, he said, he'd give Monty a chance.

Dinner didn't work out as well as Brenda had hoped. She'd invited Vern and Ida, and Howard and Tony, with their kids, and of course she and Jimmy, and all the brood present, including Jimmy's son, Tommy, in a previous marriage, so counting them all, they came to thirteen.

They made jokes about that. ^{Eating} Dinner was spaghetti, cooked Italian-style, promised to Gary the way her Sicilian grandfather used to make it, with mushrooms and pepper and onions and oregano, and garlic bread. She had some hot cross buns for dessert, with a white icing on the top and plenty of coffee, and she said she would have enjoyed the meal if it hadn't been for her loss. Gary looked.

Everybody was jelling back and forth. It was not a quiet meal. Occasionally, somebody would ask a polite question of Gary, or he would volunteer a remark here and there.

~~say things like, "Boy, this is better food than what they~~
~~had at Marion," but it was as if a cloud came over him.~~
~~He didn't know what to say. The fellow tried to hide his~~
~~silence by keeping his head down as he ate. And he ate very~~
~~fast as though he wanted to get the meal over in a hurry.~~

→ Brenda had to decide that Gary was an atrocious eater,
a glum conclusion, for table manners were one of her personal
hangups. She couldn't stand to see a man with both elbows
on the table shoveling and slobbering. Gary really bothered
her when she ate with him. "God, you sure enjoy shoveling
in the food," she said, but he didn't seem to get it.

~~From his letters she had somehow expected him to be~~
~~very much of a gentleman.~~ ~~Then~~ ~~she~~ realized she should have
been more aware that his manners would be common to prison,
where they didn't eat with napkins and place settings. Still,
it got to her. Gary had long artist's fingers, small at the
tips, nice-looking hands, like a pianist might have, but there
he was gripping his fork on the end with a fist and ate very
fast, just bulldozing it in. He also had a lot of trouble
chewing. His four bottom teeth seemed to be missing. In
order to make his mouth come up with the spaghetti, he tended
to dredge it all in whole.

~~Since Gary was sitting at the end of the table by the~~
~~refrigerator, the fluorescent light over the sink was shining~~
~~on his face and it lit up his eyes. Brenda said, "Wow, now I~~

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~~got the bluest eyes I've ever seen. You've got pretty blue eyes, Gary."~~

~~He didn't like that very well. He said to her, "They're not blue, they're green."~~

~~Brenda looked him back in the eye and said, "They're not green, they're blue."~~

~~This went back and forth. Finally Brenda said, "OK, when you're mad, they're green, when you're not mad, they're blue. Right now, they're blue. Do they feel blue?"~~

~~Gary said, "Shut up and eat."~~

Later,

~~after ^{alone,} and Ida and Howard and Tony and the children left, Brenda and Gary were sitting ^{alone,} having a cup of coffee and she asked, "Did you have a good time?"~~

"Oh, yeah, I did," said Gary quickly. Then he looked her in the eye and shrugged a little sadly and said, "Boy, I felt out of place."

She said, "I know. I wish we could get over that hump. ~~Maybe after you get used to being around people who aren't behind bars, things will be easier."~~

~~He said, "Come on, you've got your family to talk about and jobs. Who wants to hear about prison?"~~

~~Then Brenda said, "I'm just afraid of bringing back bad memories."~~ Would you rather we didn't walk so lightly around the subject?"

He said, "Yeah. I don't have anything else to talk about."

So he told her a couple of stories about prison. What he called war stories. God, they were crude. Gary could tell an awfully gross story. It seems there was this fellow SkeeziX, who could perform fellatio on himself. He was very proud of this because nobody else in OSP could.

"What's OSP?" asked Brenda.

"Why, Oregon State Penitentiary," said Gary. "You know, college."

Gary had taken a little cardboard box, painted it black and put a tiny hole in it to make it look as if it were a no-lens pinpoint camera. He told the fellow he had film in the box, and it would take a picture through the pinhole without a lens if he could freeze for a second. Everybody gathered around to watch Gary take a picture of old SkeeziX going down on himself. SkeeziX was so dumb he kept waiting for the photo to come back. He kept asking every time he ran into Gary in the yard.

On finishing this story, Gary went off laughing so hard, Brenda thought he'd sling his spaghetti around the room. ~~She was so amused she had fallen into silence and there were no more words on her walls and ceiling. Except Gary fixed her with his eye as if to say, "Now, do you see~~

((11 line of space))

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(10)

ONE NIGHT, GARY WAS INVITED TO A ~~POKER~~ POKER GAME AT Sterling, Baker's house. Sterling's

~~getting out. Later, when he met Gary at the shop, the guy~~
~~seemed to Rikki like a new worker, uncertain of himself,~~
~~that's all. It was only when he saw him at the poker game,~~
~~that he realized Gary was the nephew Vern had mentioned.~~

~~The nephew sure had a different personality at poker.~~

~~Rikki could see right off that he wasn't too honest for-~~
~~one thing, and knew Sterling saw it too.~~ GARY
Gary had a lot of
habits that were just bad manners like leaning over in his
seat to see if he could pick up what a fellow had in his
hand, and he was a real lawyer about rules, always inter-
preting them in his favor. Since he kept putting down the
other players because they didn't know the poker rules con-
victs played by--what could be more official?--he kept
causing arguments. Everything had to be Gary's way. He ~~was~~
was making no friends.

Playing dealer's choice, ~~they had some pretty big pots,~~
~~not really big but~~ ten cent ante, quarter raise, a pot could
go to \$5 or \$10. It was obvious Gary had no interest in poker,
~~only in~~ the money. The money was about it. Still, he didn't do
~~that well. Too many of the players were mad at him.~~

After that evening, a couple of Sterling's friends in-
dicated they were going to stop coming over. Sterling said

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to them, if that's the way you feel about it, fine with me. ~~He was constantly being loyal to Gary. But when Rikki was left alone with him, Sterling started to put Gary down. Rikki went along with it. They didn't like his temper, and there wasn't too much they were going to take from him, they agreed, if he started pushing them around. Rikki had a funny feeling about this conversation. He figured if Gary gave trouble, he would fight him. He wasn't afraid to just right out fight him, but he was a little afraid of what Gary could pull out of his pocket, or what he might do behind your back. They agreed, however, that they also felt sorry for Gary, and was about his problem, he had no patience.~~

↓
The poker games continued with different people ^{but during} ~~one of them,~~ ^{on} Sterling got Rikki aside and asked if he would take Gary somewhere, ^{so they'd be} ~~to get rid of him.~~ ^{Gary.} The guy was really getting on everybody's nerves.

So Rikki asked Gary if he wanted to go out and chase down some girls. Gary said Yeah.

Rikki soon decided that Gary was the horniest guy he had ever met. He was crazy.

~~For example, Rikki had split up with his wife, and had just split up this time. He had been with Sue for six years ever since he was 17 and she was 15. They had three kids, and they didn't get along that much. They knew how to fight~~

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So Rikki now started to kid Gary. Told him how beautiful Sue was, which was true, big beautiful mean-looking blond but a nice chick. Maybe since she was mad at her husband, she'd like to meet Gary.

Actually, Rikki had been so mad at her when he left that he had taken all the money in the house plus the food stamps and the welfare check. All he had to do now to put her out of her mind for sure was to send over a steamed-up dude like Gary. So he had said it, kind of half-joking.

Once said, however, Gary wouldn't quit bugging Rikki about it. Rikki told him he had only meant it as a joke, but Gary kept asking when Rikki would take him over to Sue's house, and got so mad when Rikki finally admitted he didn't want to, that they could have had a fight right there, but Rikki got Gary off the subject by suggesting they go out and drag Center Street. Rikki was pretty good at chasing

They went up and down Center Street in Rikki Baker's GTO. They would pass girls cruising in their cars and try to wave them over, then circle round past and go back down Center Street, circle again, see the same girls, try to wave them over a second time, driving side by side in traffic along with all the other dudes in their cars, and pickup trucks, and the chicks in theirs, the radio going real loud.

Just a little fever coming ahead of the summer.

Gary soon got bored with the lack of positive results. When they came to a red light and a carful of girls was ahead of them, he jumped out and ran right up to the other car and stuck his head in their window. Rikki couldn't hear what he was saying, but Gary certainly scared the girls. The light turned green and the girls tried to take off, but Gary wouldn't get his head out of their window. He didn't care about the people behind their car or anything. When the girls finally got away, Gary came back, jumped in, and wanted Rikki to chase them down. "That ain't the way," said Rikki.

"Do it!"

The girls were over in the other lane and there was a lot of traffic and Rikki couldn't get over. All the while, Gary was yelling at him to make a move. ~~I really getting on Rikki to then him he was as good as he said at chasing girls.~~

~~they had started too late, however, there were a lot of cars with guys but only a few with girls still in them.~~

P Rikki explained that this late in the evening, on a weekday **here in the conservative Women town of Provo, Utah,** night, the girls were just fooling around and very cautious about who they would go with. One had to come on them easy,

not scare them right out of the water. Gary got him to promise ~~that they'd go~~ ^{that they'd go} out a little earlier next time.

As they were saying good night, Gary came up with a proposition. What would Rikki think about teaming up to make a little money at poker?

Rikki had already heard about this from Sterling who had been given the same proposition, so he gave Gary the same answer Sterling had given him, Well, Gary, I couldn't cheat against my friends.

For reply, Gary said, "Can I drive your car?" ~~What~~
~~with being a CTO, it was a pretty fast automobile, and~~
 Rikki had already said no half a dozen times, ~~counting once~~
~~that~~ ~~since they'd lost the poker game,~~
~~when Gary got in, again ten minutes later, and all through~~
~~but now he~~
~~the chase. Gary had even tried to take over when Rikki~~
~~wouldn't cut over in the other lane. "Let me drive this~~
~~thing."~~

~~This time, Rikki~~ said yes. He figured he'd better, or Gary would reach over and smash him. Not getting his way bent Gary too far out of shape. *[physical description Gary; physical description Rikki]. Rikki wasn't afraid to ~~beat~~ right out fight him, but he was a little afraid.*
 Gary ~~he~~ said he hadn't driven since sixteen, and had no license and didn't know what gear to put it in--Rikki had to show

of what Gary could pull from his pocket, or what he might do behind your back.

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him--but ~~gary~~ knew he could do it. The moment he got the wheel, he almost killed them. Took a corner fast and nearly hit a stop sign. Then he didn't slow down at the intersection and went cata-humping over the drainage ditch that was there to slow you down. Next he almost ran some people off the road, in fact, he did, one car coming toward them had to go into the shoulder, it was such a crazy drive. Rikki kept yelling at him to stop, begging him not to drive no more, but it felt like an hour with a madman, Gary telling him all the while that it was not bad considering how long it had been since he drove, Rikki was sitting there near to having a heart attack. It was a fast car. Rikki couldn't get him to stop and change places until Gary popped the clutch without giving enough gas and the motor conked. Then he couldn't get it started. The GTO had a bad battery.

That's what it took for Rikki to get back behind the wheel. Gary was awful depressed the battery had died on him. He was upset about it the way people can brood over bad weather when it comes down like a message.

- end chapter -

* "~~I never~~ ^{than} ~~than days,~~ ^{than} ~~Gary said to her,~~ ^{than} ~~"I was as happy~~
~~than as I have ever been in my life."~~

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~~Gary and Ida got along fine. They began talking right~~
~~away about how it was when he was a little boy, and Grandma~~
~~and Grandpa Brown used to take him out in the fields and~~
~~show him the fruit trees. Together, Gary and Ida made a~~
~~sight in her small living room. Although Vern's shoulders~~
~~could fill a door way, and any one of his fingers was as~~
~~wide as~~
~~anyone else's two fingers, Vern was not that tall, and Ida~~
~~was short. They were probably not bothered by a low ceiling.~~
~~Gary was, however.~~

~~It was a sweet living room with a lot of stuffed fur~~
~~niture in bright autumn colors and bright rugs and pictures~~
~~and mirrors with plenty of gold frame, even a ceramic statue~~
~~of a black stable boy with a red jacket standing by the fire~~
~~place. Chinese end tables and different colored hassocks~~
~~took up space on the floor. Ida loved to dress in good warm~~
~~colors that were fine for her red brown hair.~~

~~Having lived among steel bars, reinforced concrete,~~
~~and cement block walls, Gary would now be spending a lot of~~
~~time in this living room.~~

2

At his cousin's

~~That evening, back at Brenda and Johnny's~~ ^{is} ~~that~~ ^{one} night,
Gary talked about the briar bushes. "It'll sound like a
strange incident to you," said Gary in that laconic voice

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with which he always told a story, a voice soft and precise and ready to suggest that it did not want to be interrupted for too little, "but it was a personal thing for me. I think it had a lasting effect."

He was about eleven years old, he recollected, and coming home from school ^{he} ~~and~~ thought he'd take a short cut and climb down a hill. "It was a drop of about fifty feet, but I got tangled in briar bushes and some blackberry and thornberry. Those bushes must have been thirty feet high cause it was in a wild overgrown area around Southeast Portland where there weren't many houses then.

"I thought," said Gary, "I could see a path or pass-through, but it just disappeared. Nobody had gone through before. At one point I could have turned around and gone back, but I decided to go on."

It took him about three hours to pick his way through. He knew if he kept going he would get out, but he was aware of being a block from the nearest house. His shouts would go unheard. "I could have died, I suppose," said Gary. "I just kept going. It was a personal thing." He looked at them as if remembering the moment when he realized he could be trapped in there. "It was kind of fun," he added. "It left me with a distinct feeling that I had been overcoming myself."

He nodded, as if to step around the size of his last remark ^{which was certainly large} ~~for the feelings of an eleven year old.~~ "I finally

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got home about three hours late, and my mom said, 'Well, you're late,' and I said, 'yeah, I took a short cut.'"

"This story," said Brenda, "must make you feel different from everybody else."

"I've always felt different from everybody else," said Gary. "Like I could get into trouble and get out of it."

((underline of space))

~~On Sunday evening, he moved down to Vern and Ida's house. On the pretext of helping him pack, Brenda got a peek at the contents of his tote bag. It held a can of shaving cream, a razor, a toothbrush, a comb, some snapshots, his parole papers, a few letters, and no change of underwear.~~

~~Vern slipped him some underclothes, some tan slacks, a shirt, and twenty bucks.~~

~~Gary said, "I can't pay you back right now."~~

~~Vern said, "I'm giving you the money. If you need more, come and see me. I don't have a lot, but I'll give you what I can."~~

~~Brenda would have understood her father's reasoning: a man without any money in his pocket ^{can} get into trouble.~~

~~^{Sunday} In the afternoon, Vern and Ida drove him over to Lehi, about twelve miles from Provo, for a visit with Tony and~~

Insert --

Flashback section of approximately ~~xx~~ ^{to six} ~~four to five~~ pages should include:

It was (info)
 Brenda had gotten Gary out of prison and ~~xxxxxx~~ to Provo. She had known him ~~xxxxxx~~ when they were little kids and would meet at family gatherings ~~xxx~~ at their grandparents' house, had lost ~~xxx~~ touch with him until she was 13, when she

learned he was in reform school and began a correspondence with ^{Lachlan, etc.} ~~him~~ that went on, intermittently, over the years. **Over of basic bio of Gary, moved to Portland, etc.** Brenda remembered

Gary, as a little kid, being **WHAT KIND OF PERSON?** From the letters she got the impression of him now as **WHAT KIND OF PERSON** (bring in material marked on pages 4 and 5 of manuscript, attached here).

She shared those letters with her mother, father, kid sister Tony and Johnny, her fourth husband, to whom she'd been married **HOW MANY YEARS.** With their support she had sponsored Gary for parole. **For parole,**

~~xxxxxx~~ Gary was living with her parents, Vern and **who was the sister of Gary's mother. He** Ida, ~~and~~ had a job at Vern's shoe shop. Since he'd been out and ~~living~~ living in Provo, Brenda had new impressions of Gary.

In capsulizing these impressions could include that, to her (p. 23),

"His eyes had the expression of rabbits she had flushed, scared-rabbit was the expression, but she had looked into those eyes of scared-rabbits and they were calm and tender and kind of curious as if they did not know what would happen next. It was just that they were as fixed in position as any animal with a collar; so it was a short-cut to call them scared." ~~xxxx~~ Also that (p. 30)

"Maybe it was lack of sleep, but he gave off the impression he'd been living in a coffin for one hour a night these last ten years. Or was it the kind of pinched look you'd see on the faces of miners when life had taken a gouge out of them?" Also that he could drink beer faster than anyone, that he got along well with her kids and her sisters, that he told strange prison stories (not only the ones ~~xx~~ recited previously, but also the tattoo story, ~~xxxxxx~~ marked on

~~the sun to make her tough and tanned and tan her. Her skin was very white, very ivory looking, and she wanted to keep that look. She didn't want to look like a farmer's daughter. Even if they were Mormons living on a desert farm, she wanted pretty clothes and finery. Bessie would wear white dresses with wide Chinese sleeves and white gloves she'd made herself. Bessie would go with her girl friend and hitch hike to Salt Lake City. Now she was old and arthritic.~~

~~Brenda started writing to Gary. Before long they were~~ into quite a correspondence, and Brenda noticed that Gary's intelligence was really coming through. He hadn't reached high school before[#] they put him in reform school, so he must have done some reading in prison to get this much education together. He certainly knew how to use big words. Brenda couldn't even spell a few of the longer ones, let alone be sure of their meaning. She found, therefore, some real fascination in corresponding with Gary. Sometimes he would delight her by adding little drawings in the margin; they were damn good. After she mentioned that she was trying to do oil painting herself, Gary sent along a few of his more serious sketches, and when she mailed back a little of her own work, he corrected her drawing in order to show a couple of the mistakes she was making.

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~~of the mistakes she was making. He was tutoring at long distance.~~

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Once in a while Gary would remark that having been in prison so long he felt more like the victim than the person who had done the crime. Of course, he did not deny that he had committed a crime or two. He was always letting Brenda know he was not Charley Good Guy.

Yet after they had been corresponding about a year, Brenda noticed a change taking place in Gary. He no longer seemed to feel he would never get out of jail. His letters became more hopeful. Brenda said to her husband Johnny one day, Well, I really think Gary's ready.

~~She had gotten into the habit of reading Gary's letters to Johnny, and to her mother and father, and to her kid sister Tony who was now thirty and more of an attractive woman than a kid sister. Since Johnny got along beautifully with Tony's husband, Howard Garney (who was six feet six and had a pepper and salt goatee and could fit Tony under his arm) the six of them plus the kids frequently gathered at Vern and Ida's house, her own, or at Tony and Howard's. Sometimes after reading Gary's letters, the family would express their passion for him. Often they would discuss what Brenda caught~~

"Yeah, I would," said Brenda. "Just checking."

Half an hour later, driving home, they went by Point of the Mountain where to the left a long hill came out of the body of the ridge like the limb of a beast whose paw was touching the highway. Just off the Interstate to the other side, in the desert to the right was Utah State Prison. They made jokes about it.

Back in her living room, drinking beer, Gary began to unwind. He liked beer, he confessed, he loved it. In prison, you see, they could sneak some in from time to time, and of course they made a weak watery moonshine beer out of bread. In fact, both Brenda and Johnny were observing that Gary could put away beer faster than anyone they knew.

Johnny soon got tired and went to sleep, but Gary and Brenda really began to talk. Prison stories began to come out of him. He told of hitting a fellow over the head with a hammer and putting him in the hospital for a month, then about tattooing a cock and balls on the back of a fellow's neck without the fellow knowing it, then more stories. Each seemed wilder than the one before.

Brenda thought he was talking out of his hind end and

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insert

~~She certainly looked like Brenda. Same popping black eyes, same sassy look. It was just that Brenda was on the voluptuous side and Tony was slim enough to model. Take your pick.~~

~~When they sat down, Gary kept reaching over and putting his arm around Tony, or taking hold of her hand. "I wish you weren't my cousin," he said, "and married to such a big tall dude."~~

~~Later, Tony would tell Brenda how good and wise Howard had been for saying, "Go over and meet Gary without me. He doesn't even know me by any means." She went on to describe how warm Gary made her feel, not sexy, but more like a brother. He had amazed her with how much he knew of her life. Brenda kept herself from remarking that he had not learned about Tony's life from any letters Tony had written, since Tony had never written a line.~~

~~Before Brenda took him over to visit Vern and Ida,~~

Johnny showed a test of strength. He took a bathroom scale and squeezed it between his hands until the needle went up to two hundred-fifty pounds.

Gary tried it and reached one hundred and twenty. He went crazy and squeezed the scales until he was shaking like a man with palsy. The needle went to 150.

"Yeah," said Johnny, "you're improving."

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"What's the highest you've ever gone?" asked Gary.

"Oh," said Johnny, "the scale stops at 280, but I've gone past there. I suppose 300."

~~Driving to the shoe shop,~~ Brenda told Gary a little more about her father. Vern, she explained, might be the strongest man she knew.

Stronger than Johnny?

Well, Brenda explained, maybe nobody could top Johnny at squeezing the scales, but she didn't really know if anyone had ever beaten Vern at arm wrestling.

"I'm not bad at that," said Gary. "My arms are stronger than my hands."

Well, said Brenda, Vern was very strong. He was certainly strong enough to be gentle all the time. "I don't think my father ever gave me a spanking except once in my whole life and I truly asked for that. It was only one pat on the hind end, but that hand of his could cover your whole body." Staring at the road, she said, "I guess I've looked for a man all my life like my father and every time I tried to find one like him, I couldn't get along. Dear

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1"

God."

Gary said, "My father hated me."

~~It was ugly country, really. As they drove South, the mountains were on their left and the desert was on their right. The mountains were big and bald ^{and gray} and had snow on the ridges they could see. Up in the high ridges above ten thousand feet that were back of these ridges would be canyons and forests and great rock faces and ten feet of ^{spring} snow at their base, but on the flank of the first ridge they could see, was nothing but rock and brown mountain meadow grim as the desert.~~

~~On either side as they drove were the wide wide side-streets of the West. The distance from the north side of Orem where she lived to the center of Provo, might have been six miles, but going along State Street, it took awhile. There were shopping malls and quick-eat palaces, used-car dealers, chain clothing stores and a new Orem city hall with courts and police station and the town library all in one big dark new red-brown modern building. There were gas stations and appliance stores and highway signs and fruit stands and banks and one and two-story office-compounds. More than a few real estate firms ran between rows of condominiums with short shingled mansard roofs. It looked like a hundred thousand new constructions all one-story high--only a few went to two~~

around.

Gary had never been to a shopping mall before. It proved mind-stopping. He couldn't keep his eyes off the girls. Right in the middle of goggling at them, he ^{walked into} bumped the ledge of a fountain and almost fell ^{over.} If Brenda hadn't grabbed his sleeve, he'd have been in. "Whoops," he said, and Brenda ^{gave him a dig.} dug him in the ribs. "You certainly haven't lost your taste," she told him. He had ^{only} been ^{but only at the most} gawking at beautiful girls. He was almost all wet, but he had very good taste.

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In the Levi department at Penney's, Gary just stood there. After a while he cocked his head, and said, "Hey, I don't know how to go about this. Are you supposed to take the pants off the shelf, or does somebody have to issue them to you?"

Brenda really felt sorry for him. "Find the ones you want," she said, "and tell the clerk. If you want to try them on, you can."

"Without paying for them?"

"Oh, yeah, you can try them on first," she said.

~~Brenda would hear everything about Gary in the days to come. Vern was in the habit of sharing many of his thoughts with Ida, and Ida would soon be on the telephone to Brenda and Tony. It didn't matter where Gary went or what he did,~~

4.

~~Monday morning, Gary broke the twenty dollar bill that Vern had given him, and bought a pair of gym shoes. He would wake up every day around six, and go out to run. He would take off from Vern's house in a fast long stride down to Fifth West, around the park, and back more than ten blocks in about four minutes, good time. Vern, with his bad knee, thought Gary was a fantastic runner.~~

In the beginning, Gary didn't know exactly what he could do in the house. On the first evening they were alone, Ida, Vern, and himself, he asked if he could get a glass of water.

"This is your home," Vern said. "You don't have to ask permission for a glass of water."

Gary came back from the kitchen with the glass in his hand. "I'm beginning to get onto this," he said to Vern. "It's pretty good."

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~~It was a warm week for April, and it was pleasant
talking through the evenings, thinking of the summer to
come.~~

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About the third night he was there, they got to talking about Vern's driveway. It was wide enough to take no more than one car but Vern had a strip of lawn between the driveway and the house that could be converted into space for another car once he could remove the cement curbing that separated the grass from the paving. The curbing ran for thirty-five feet from the sidewalk to the garage. It was about six inches high, eight inches wide, and it would take a lot of work to chop it out. Because of his bad leg, Vern had been holding off.

"I'll do it," said Gary.

Sure enough, next morning at 6 A.M. Vern was awakened by the sound of Gary taking a sledgehammer to that cement curbing. It resounded through the neighborhood in the dawn. Vern winced at the thought of all the people in the City Center Motel who would now be awakened by the reverberation of steel on stone. Gary was playing his thunderous tune. All day he worked, cracking the curbing with overhead blows, dropping the sledgehammer down from the sky, then prying chunks of cement out inch by inch with the crowbar. Before

he was done, Vern had to buy another crowbar.

It took one day and part of another. Those thirty-five feet of curbing took a long time. Vern offered to help but Gary wouldn't let him. Not with that leg. "I know a lot about pounding rocks," he told Vern with a grin.

"What can I do for you?" asked Vern.

"Well, it's thirsty work," said Gary. "Just keep me in beer."

It went like that. He drank a lot of beer and worked real hard and they were happy with the job. When he was done, he had open blisters on his hands as large as Vern's fingernails. Ida insisted on bandaging his palms, but Gary was acting like a kid--a man don't wear bandages--and he took them off real quick.

~~Being the week, however, had loosened him up. He was ready to do his first exploding around town.~~

~~Drove was laid out in checkerboards. It had very wide streets and even a few buildings that were four stories high. Two movie theaters. One was on Center Street, which was the main shopping street, and the other was on University Avenue, the other shopping street. The equivalent of Times Square in Drove was where the two streets crossed.~~

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whether it was good or not so good, indicative that he would yet make a solid citizen or counter-indicative, Brenda heard about it. It was not only Vern and Ida's and Tony and Howard's thoughts she came to hear, but the reactions, it seemed, of just about everyone who came to know Gary. Then she felt as if she came to know even the passing thoughts of ~~relative strangers,~~ ^{relative strangers,} Before it all came down, Brenda got to the point where she was living in many a mind. It didn't matter what hour of the day or night--she felt as if she could see people's expressions across Orem and Provo. What gave her new state some confirmation was that ~~people were~~ ^{whenever she} happened to meet people who knew Gary, they were in exactly always in the mood she expected them to be in, whenever she ~~happened to meet them.~~ ^{get} That could be spooky.

Gary's first working day in the shop was good. He was enthusiastic and Vern was not displeased. "Look," Gary said to him, "I don't know anything about this, but tell me and I'll catch on."

Vern started him on a bench jack, tearing down shoes. The jack was like a metal foot upside down, and Gary would put the shoe on it, pry off the sole, take off the heel, remove the nails, pull out the stitching, and generally prepare the shoe for a new sole and heels. You had to watch not to rip the leather or make a mess for the next man.

Gary was slow, but he did it well. The first few days

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45

he had an excellent attitude, humble, pleasant, nice fellow. Vern was getting to like him.

The trouble was he couldn't help Vern enough. Vern wasn't always able to be teaching him, Vern had to handle all the rush jobs he had to get out. The real difficulty was that Vern and his assistant Sterling Baker were used to moving the work out between them. It was easier to do something themselves than show Gary how to do it. So Gary had to spend time waiting when he really wanted to go on to the next step right away. If he took a heel off, he wanted to put the new one on and finish the job. Sometimes twenty minutes would go by before Vern could get back to show Gary what to do next.

Gary would tell him, "Vern, I don't like this standing around and waiting. I feel like a dummy, you know."

The problem as Vern saw it was that Gary wanted perfection immediately. He wanted to be able to fix a pair of shoes like Vern could. It just wasn't going to come that quick. ^{Vern}~~Vern~~ told him, "You can't learn this immediately."

Gary took it fine. "Well, I know that," he said, but his impatience was back again in a little while.

~~Vern thought of breaking Gary in for waiting on customers. He didn't expect Gary, however, would be able to take~~

FOR INSERT

team

~~Handwritten scribbles and marks at the bottom left of the page.~~

20

~~he looked at one, then the other, "give me another week."~~

~~After work, Gary went to the food store, and came back with a sack of groceries. It was just odds and ends, nothing to do with putting a meal together, but it was still a gesture. Ida took it as a happy gesture. It turned back her thoughts to a time when Gary was young and she had had to loan Bessie forty dollars because Frank Gilmore was in jail. It took Bessie almost ten years, but she paid back that forty dollars. Maybe, Gary had that characteristic, too. Ida~~

~~His second date, a few days (??), weeks (??) ceased debating whether to tell Gary about Vargie Quinn. After going galloping with R. K. K. K., was with Marge Quinn,~~

~~Ida knew this girl, Marge, the daughter of a friend of hers. They drove up to a canyon, and then, about a year ago, Marge had had a baby without getting married, but she was a lovely, good girl, lived a quiet life, raised her baby nicely. In fact, she was living with her sister now, and working just down the street.~~

~~"Good looking," Ida told him. "A fine expression. A little sad, but she has beautiful blue eyes. They're deep-set."~~

~~"Are her eyes as beautiful as yours, Ida?" asked Gary.~~

~~"Oh, git along, little deggie," said Ida. But she was pleased.~~

~~Where was she working, Gary wanted to know.~~

it can't hurt.

There was a smile on his face when she opened the door. He had a silly hat on, but otherwise seemed all right. She asked if he wanted a beer, and he sat and drank one in the living room, sitting back nicely on the couch. Marge introduced him to Sandy, her sister, who was living with her, and her daughter. Gary said hi. Marge then asked him if he wanted to go for a ride up the canyon, and he agreed, and they headed out.

Before they got very far, Gary said, "Let's get some beer." Marge said, "Well, I don't care."

She didn't ask about prison. She thought: If he wants to say something about it, he will. She asked: Was he into any sports? He told her he had won a competition at prison for playing handball. Also, he painted. ^{She} He nodded, but had to be a little distant to such information.

Halfway up the pass, they stopped by Bridal Falls where a narrow stream of water fell some sort of record drop, maybe a thousand feet, but they didn't take the gondola up.

~~It was too expensive.~~

→ They sat by the river and talked for a while. It was beginning to get dark and Gary looked at the stars and told

her how much he enjoyed them. When he was in prison, he rarely got to see them, he said. You could get out in the yard in the daytime, he explained, and catch plenty of sky above the wall, but the only time you'd ever see the stars might be if you went to court on some beef or other. In the winter, if your case took a while, you might not be taken back to the penitentiary until late afternoon when it was already dark. If it was a clear evening, you could see the stars then.

He began to talk to Marge about her eyes. They were beautiful, he told her. There was sadness in her eyes but also glints of moonbeam.

She thought he was a pleasant conversationalist. When he asked if she'd like to make a date to see a movie, she consented.

After that, however, a state police car happened to go up the canyon and his mood shifted. He started talking about cops. The more he spoke about them, the angrier he got. He still spoke in the same quiet voice, but she could feel his anger. It came off him like an oven with the door open. She had ~~her first~~ second-thoughts about going to the movies with him.

After the night got really dark, they continued up the

canyon ~~to Heber~~, stopped to get ~~no~~ beer, then headed back. It must have been 10:30 or 11 by then. As they were coming over the hill down into Provo, she said, "You don't mind if I take you home now? You know, over to Vern's."

He said, "I don't want to go over there."

Marge told him, "I have to get up for work tomorrow."

"Let's go over to your house for a while."

She said, "OK, for a little while. It can't be for too long."

With whom Marge lived, was

Her sister had gone to bed, so they sat in the living room on the couch. He kissed her. Then he tried to do more.

She said, "I better take you home."

"I don't want to go there," he said, "they're not home."

She said, "How do you know they're not home?"

She drove him over. It was just a few blocks away and the lights were out and he said, "They're not here."

Now, she realized she was more than a little bit drunk, she was smashed. She managed to say, "Where do you want me to take you since they're not home?"

Sitting there in front of Vern and Ida's house, he said, "Take me over to Sterling's."

24

Marge said, "Can't you get in here?"

"I don't want to."

So she took him over to Sterling's. When they got there he said, "Sterling isn't up." She said, "You can't stay at my house."

Still, they went back to her apartment. She didn't want to get picked up for drunk driving or anything like that, and at least she knew the way to her house. She could just about handle the car.

Once in her living room, Gary started kissing her again. She was sitting there, feeling miserable, wondering how to get out of this, when she passed out. By the time she came to, he was gone. She had fallen asleep with her arms folded and her head down and she woke up remembering she'd made a date with him to go a movie sometime the following week.

25

3

In the morning, Saturday morning, Gary phoned early. Marge told her sister to say she was not there. He called half an hour later, and Marge said, Well, you know, just tell him I'm not here. That ended it. She thought,

By Saturday night, Gary was drunk. He had spent the evening over at Sterling Baker's, trying to convince ~~old~~ Sterling to drive him up to Salt Lake City, but ~~that buddy~~ ^{to} ~~only~~ ^{stoolie} talked him into going back Vern's. Now, Gary tried to talk Vern into the trip. Vern said it was close to midnight and he could forget the idea.. Gary answered, all right, just lend me your car. "Well," Vern said, "you can't take it."

Gary gave him a look. His eyes at such times had the bald gray-green fury of an eagle in a cage. His eyes said to Vern, "There's your '69 gold Pontiac out in the driveway, and your '73 green Ford pickup in the driveway, and you won't

lend me either." Aloud he said, "I'll hitch."

Vern could see Gary in a bar in Salt Lake looking to demonstrate a little talent for trouble. He was not what Vern would call a nice man when he got his tank full. ~~The trouble with Gary was capacity—he could drink almost as fast as he drank it, so he had to fill up frequently.~~ When he got going, you didn't want to taunt him. Vern knew that at such times, if you dared Gary to throw a rock through a window, the window was broken.

~~"Do what you wish," said Vern. "I'd like you to stay here."~~

~~"I'm on my way."~~

~~After he left, Vern couldn't take it. Before three minutes were gone, he said to Ida, "Hell, I'll drive him," and got into his car. He was thinking of the look there would be on Gary's face when he pulled up alongside, opened the passenger door, and said, "Why don't you go to Salt Lake with this damn fool?" But he couldn't find Gary. There was one obvious place on West Fifth where anyone would start hitch-hiking, but nobody was there. Vern went back and forth through the streets. Gary must have picked up a ride immediately.~~

Eight o'clock in the morning, Gary called from Idaho.

He was 300 miles away. "How," said Vern, "did you get there?"

Well, said Gary, this dude had picked him up and he fell asleep, and the driver went right around Salt Lake. By the time Gary woke up, it was Idaho he was in. "Vern," Gary said with his best voice, "I'm broke. Could you come and get me?"

"Maybe," said Vern, "Brenda will go, but I sure won't."

He took a breath.

? → "You won't come and get me?" Gary sounded real aggravated. *Prison yawned between them. Back to prison.* Vern said, "Stay where you are. I'll call Brenda."

"Hey," said Brenda, "what are you doing up north?"

"I wanted to drop in on my mom," Gary told her. "You see, I ran into this fellow in Provo who has friends in Idaho, and he said, 'let's visit my buddies, then shoot on up to Portland.'" *...*

"Oh, God," said Brenda. He had violated his parole. No technicality about it. He had been told not to leave the state of Utah.

None, this
"This *(guy)*," said Gary, ~~"I decided to go to Idaho, he decided~~ not to go to Portland. That *(made)* me mad, and he took off. I got left at this bar, Brenda. I figure I better get back. Can you come for me?"

Brenda told him she couldn't. She had more to say but it was Sunday morning.

(Gary's parole officer)

A few hours later, a long distance call reached Monty's

Court. He was asked to contact Detective Jensen in Twin Falls, Idaho. Monty Court then learned that his parolee, Gary Gilmore, had been arrested there for driving without a license. It was Mr. Court's recommendation to Detective Jensen that Gilmore be returned to Utah where he was to report in immediately.

Now Gary was calling Brenda from Twin Falls. It seems he had started to hitch-hike back and got a ride with a fellow driving a pickup truck. They stopped in a bar to have a drink and the guy started making passes, so Gary began to beat the hell out of him right in the bar. Then, he said to Brenda, they went to the parking lot to finish it off, and he knocked the guy out. Cold!

"Brenda, I thought I killed him. Oh, God, I really thought I killed him. I put him in his outfit, and drove like a maniac. I figured if I could find a hospital I'd drop him off there, or if I could get a cop to pull me over for speeding, he could tell me where to find the hospital at least.

"Then the guy went into some sort of seizure. I was sure he was dying now. I stopped the car, got the fellow's wallet out to see what his name was--in case he was dying. Then I got behind the wheel and started speeding again for

a hospital. The cops pulled me over.

"Sure enough, the guy starts coming to, and tells the police he wants me to be taken in for assault and battery, for kidnap, for stealing his wallet, for taking his pickup. Every charge in the book."

Brenda was trying to take it in.

"I had about fifty dollars on me," said Gary, "and that was enough to post the bail for driving without a license. But now, I don't have to go back. The fellow was talked into dropping the charges."

It seems, Gary explained, that this guy was a particularly well known faggot around there, and the cops were used to him getting in trouble.

"Come on, how did you talk him," asked Brenda, "into dropping the charges?"

"I guess," said Gary, "it was my boyish smile."

"Brenda," said Gary, "one thing. I got to get out of here."

"Well, Gary, I'm not coming to fetch you."

"Brenda, I used up my money to post the bail. What am I going to do?"

"You poor thing," said Brenda, "you just get your thumb out of your rear end and put it in the air. If you're not

here by morning, I'm calling Monty Court. He'd just love to pick you up and give you a free ride back."

"Monty Court knows already," said Gary.

Brenda blew. "You dodo bird," she told him, "what's the matter with you? We get you set up in damn near perfect existence considering where you've been, and you screw up this way. You're really dumb!"

It was a long Sunday. A spring snow had started and by evening it was close to a blizzard. Brenda kept going over it with ~~John~~^{her husband,} Johnny. She was trying to find some kind of hope for Gary in all this. It was good, she thought, that he hadn't run off from the guy he beat up after he thought he killed him. That showed some sense of responsibility. On the other hand, had he robbed the fellow? Had he calculated to go off with him in the truck because it would be easier to rob him there? What was the real story on how he had gotten the man to drop the charges?

It was time to recognize, Brenda decided gloomily, that around Gary there were questions for which you would never get answers. The snow kept coming down.

Around 9:00 in the evening, he called from Salt Lake. He was broke for sure and practically stranded in the snow.

Johnny was watching a show he liked on TV. "Well," he

said, "I'm not going to get the damn fool."

Brenda said: "He's my responsibility. It is my side of the family that's acting up, so may I take your truck?" *Johnny's own car, a*
~~truck~~ *truck* had a front-wheel drive and a CB radio, and her *Maverick* was too light. *Brenda's sister,*

Johnny was all for Brenda taking the truck. Tony, who had come over, said she'd go along. Brenda was glad. Tony knew the roads better in Salt Lake.

It was snowing pretty hard and Brenda almost missed the exit from the Interstate. The bar was out past the airport, and it was the dippiest damn dive Brenda ever laid eyes on. Leave it to Gary, she thought, to find the trashiest place to land.

When they walked in the door, he was chatting with the bartender. It struck Brenda immediately that after carrying on about how broke he was, he still had change on the counter. That pissed her off.

Gary gave them a great wide smile. "How's the two foxiest ladies in the whole world?" Oh, was he sopped! He was so proud: his private preserve had just come walking through the door. *(PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF EACH (NAME))*
 Brenda looked at Tony and said, "What do we do with the drunken sot?"

Tony didn't know.

They had their arms around his neck. He put his arms

around their waist.

"Are you ready to go, Gary?"

"Well, let me finish my beer."

He had about half a glass left and that would take no time whatsoever, so Brenda said, "OK, we'll wait by the door." She didn't want to stand where they were. Not with these guys leering at them. Never in her life had she been undressed as many times in 30 seconds.

"Gary, you really found yourself a dandy place to stop."

"Well, it was warm," he said. He always had a real simple explanation for things.

"By the way," he said with his mouth on the glass of beer, "I've got my turn coming up to play pool."

"You," she said, "are going to stay here and play pool after I come clear out from Orem to get you?"

"Well, yeah," he said, "I got a good bet in the making."

"You told me you were broke."

They looked at the dollars on the counter next to his glass and he said, "Well, there's been this guy who's been buying me drinks all night."

Brenda said, "You lying turkey, I'm leaving."

Gary came around then and said, "All right, all right. If it'll make my little ladies happy, I'll go now." He made a delicious face of regret at the lost pool game.

Brenda said, "Gary, how the hell am I going to stay mad at you if you keep making me laugh? That isn't fair. You're not fighting fairly."

He said, "Oh, sweetheart," and gave her a kiss on the nose. Then he gave Tony a sweet little peck on the cheek and said, "C'mon, you two foxy bitches, let's go."

He probably would have fallen on the ice if they had not held him up long enough to get him in the truck. ~~he seemed~~

~~wiped out. But after they did away with him between them~~
on the front seat, he said, "Oh, no, I can't stand this. I'm gonna barf."

Brenda shrieked, "Let me out."

Finally they got it rearranged with Tony in the center and Gary on the outside, window part open. The damn fool sang to them on the way home. He couldn't sing.

"Bottles on the Wall," was the song. There were one hundred bottles on the wall, and something happened to one of them, so there were only 99 bottles on the wall. It was like "Roll me over in the Clover." They went through 100 bottles on the wall. He sang the whole thing, one hundred verses, pretty fast.

Brenda said, "Why don't you try something you can do?"

"Don't you like my singing?" he asked.

"I have suffered through 99 bottles. You're a delightful person, but, my God, you can't sing."

He said, "I can too." Brenda didn't know what he was singing now, and couldn't have recognized it if she had known. She had nothing to do but suffer.

~~When they hit the bottom of the mountain, it was that~~ ^{so}

snowy on the Interstate Brenda could not see the taillights ahead of her. With no load in the back, the pickup was ~~certainly~~ beginning to slide. Soon it would be like driving in a barrel of snakes. So she got on the CB and picked up the weather report on the other side of the mountain. She figured if that was bad, she could pull over and let the storm pass for a while.

Gary, however, was upset about Brenda hitting the CB. He had heard of ~~them~~ ^{CB's}, but he didn't really know what they did, so he got paranoid. He thought Brenda was talking to the cops.

He kept looking at her, frowning, raising one eyebrow, the way Ida and his mother would. When anybody in the Brown family raised an eyebrow, it meant thunder was on its way. "What are you doing?" he asked.

Brenda told him she was getting a weather check and a Smokey report.

"What in hell," asked Gary, "is a Smokey report?"

"That," said Brenda, "is the name for the police."

"What," asked Gary, "are you going to do--turn me in?"

Brenda said, "For what? Being drunk? Being an asshole? You can't turn somebody in for being an asshole."

"Oh," said Gary, "OK, I got you."

~~"No," Brenda said, "I'm not going to turn you in. But I'm not going to put up with your shit. That was a dumb thing to say."~~

~~He stated, "I'm not dumb."~~

~~She said, "Gary, you have a high I.Q., but you do not have a drop of common sense to go with it."~~

~~"Well, that's just your opinion."~~

~~Brenda knew he prided himself on common sense. So she took pleasure in telling him he had none. He seemed to think getting into the damndest situations and finding a crazy way out of them, was common sense.~~

~~The Smokey report gave the weather as less bad on the other side of the mountain, but Brenda still wasn't decided to try it.~~ Two eighteenwheelers were coming up behind her and over the CB ~~Brenda~~ asked what they knew. They

told her that the road ahead was treacherous. She should be careful.

One fellow asked what kind of unit she was driving. When Brenda described Johnny's pickup, the trucker said, "I got you. You're right ahead of me." Then he said, "I have a buddy right behind. We'll escort you down to where you're going."

"Well," said Brenda, "I don't get off till Orem."

"OK," the guy said, "we'll stay with you."

So she, Tony, and Gary traveled down the highway between two large semi's. She stayed on the taillights of the fellow up ahead and the guy behind her kept close. They just moved right along with her.

One truck was in position to the left so she wouldn't slide off toward the island. The other truck was to her right and just behind her. If her back end skidded out in a slide to the shoulder, he could move up and tap her on the back bumper near the right wheel. That would stop her slide. Truckers knew how to do it. What with the weather, it was crucial assistance. for on this part of the Interstate, ^{due} ~~due~~ to the drainage problem, the shoulder chopped off sharply into a drainage canal, and this time of year, being spring, there weren't old snowbanks to protect you. Nothing to the right but gravel and a drop-^o~~ff~~. So the fellow behind kept

talking her in. "Don't worry," he kept saying, "you aren't going over."

This all impressed Gary. He said to Brenda, "I guess that's why John lets you take the truck by yourself. You've got protection." Then he gave his wide evil smile and said, "Do you think you have to have protection against me?"

"Why," Brenda said, "what a curious thing to say," then added, "No, I don't think I've ever had to have protection against you. Would you hurt me?"

Gary said, "Well, that was a dumb thing to say."

Brenda said, "Not any more dumb than what you just asked."

Tony said, "Children, children, don't quarrel."

So they drove along and got home and Gary went to bed at Brenda and Johnny's house ~~later~~ that night.

In the morning, Monday morning, in the wet and slush, Gary went in to see Monty Court. He told his parole officer the following story:

He had gone to a party, become somewhat intoxicated, then decided to go to Salt Lake to solicit a prostitute. En route, he thumbed a ride with a man who had in his possession some whiskey, and proceeded to become more intoxicated. The driver of the car told him that he knew some

girls in Twin Falls, Idaho, that they could shack up with. But by the time they reached Twin Falls, the fellow who had made this promise denied knowing any girls, and just dropped him off.

He then made telephone calls to Utah and was instructed by his cousin to thumb a ride back. He was able to secure such a ride with a man he met at a bar. En route the man began to have convulsions and finally passed out. So he was obliged to get behind the wheel of the car and try to locate a hospital. That's when he was arrested for driving without a license and at this point Mr. Court had been contacted. He, Gary Gilmore, was now reporting in as instructed.

Pos →
Mont Court wasn't too happy with the story. He thought it was far-fetched. ~~Mont was sitting there in his office, super nice, very polite. But he wasn't talking an awful lot. He was just answering questions. It didn't give a good feeling. Still, there were a lot of cases where Court didn't have that good a feeling but you kept living with them.~~

~~Court had about eighty people on parole or probation and got to see thirty or forty a week. You might see them from five to fifteen minutes, time enough usually to decide what kind of state they were in. It meant you had to take chances. He had taken one yesterday. He had certainly been very sur-~~

~~neither a hard nose, nor super heat, but a person who was~~
~~willing to talk openly when a problem developed and would~~
~~take a reasonable chance on you. He was there to counsel~~
and to help, not to rush a man back to an overcrowded prison for the first little infraction.

FOR Gary :

~~of course~~ he laid it out. Gilmore had most certainly been in violation of his parole agreement. Further violations would jeopardize his parole. Gilmore nodded, Gilmore listened politely. He was looking old. They were about the same age, but Gilmore, Court was thinking, looked much older. On the other hand, if you put up a profile of what an artist of thirty-five might look like, Gilmore could fit that physical profile.

Gilmore's artistic
Court had seen some of ~~his~~ work. Before he had met *Gilmore's*
Gilmore ~~him~~, Brenda Nicol had shown Mont Court a couple of ~~his~~ drawings and paintings. The prison information coming in ~~when~~
~~from Oregon~~ made it clear that Gilmore was a violent person, but in the paintings Court had been able to see a part of the man that was ~~simply~~ not reflected in the prison record. Mont Court saw tenderness in the paintings and thought, he can't be all evil, all bad. There's something that's salvageable.

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[^{4.} NEW START OF CHAPTER TO

When they finally met, Brenda thought Spencer McGrath introduced ~~me~~. Fact that Gary was really okay, a little guy with rough features, dark hair, looking for new job and had come a mustache, and a real down-to-earth manner. You could have to see a man named Spencer thought he was a carpenter or a plumber when you first McGrath, who ran what kind looked at him. The kind who probably would walk around and of company. say to his people, "Okay, guys, let's get this done." She thought he was big-headed even if he was short

Gary was frank about his trouble getting a job. A couple of days back, he had been to see a man with a sign-painting company and the employer had offered only \$1.50 an hour. Gary told him that wasn't even minimum wage, and the guy said, "What do you expect? You're an ex-con." Gary didn't think he wanted to work for that man. Spencer agreed it wasn't fair. If Gary was doing the same work as somebody else, he should be paid the same money.

It turned out, however, that Gary did not have much

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experience that would be applicable here. He was good at painting, but they didn't do much sign-painting, just covered machinery with a paint gun. "Still," said Spencer, "you impress me as intelligent. I figure you can learn." He would put Gary on at \$3.50 an hour. It was not altogether munificent. The government, on a program for ex-cons, would pay half of his salary. Next day, he would start. His hours would be 8 to 5 with breaks for coffee and lunch.

It was seven miles and more from Vern's home in Provo to the shop in Linden. The first morning Vern drove him there. After that, Gary left at six to be sure of reaching work by eight A.M. if he wasn't able to hitch a ride. ~~Once he arrived at 6:30, an hour and a half early after catching a quick ride all the way. Other times it took longer. Sometimes there was an early cloudburst off the mountains, and he walked in the rain. At night he would walk home if he couldn't hitch a ride. It was a lot of travelling to get to a job in a shop that was hardly more than a big shed on the old highway through Linden with trucks and heavy equipment parked all over a muddy yard.~~ Once he arrived at 6:30, an hour and a half early after catching a quick ride all the way. Other times it took longer. Sometimes there was an early cloudburst off the mountains, and he walked in the rain. At night he would walk home if he couldn't hitch a ride. It was a lot of travelling to get to a job in a shop that was hardly more than a big shed on the old highway through Linden with trucks and heavy equipment parked all over a muddy yard.

On the job he was real quiet those first few days. He didn't know exactly what to do. If they gave him a board to plane, he wasn't certain what to do after he cleaned it off. They had to tell him to turn the plank over and plane

the other side. One time the foreman, Craig Taylor, a quiet medium-size fellow with big arms and shoulders, discovered that Gary had been working an electric ~~hand~~ drill for fifteen minutes with no results, Couldn't even get the hole started.

Craig told him he had been running the drill on reverse. Gary shrugged. "I didn't know these things worked in reverse," he said.

On the job, the word about him was that he was all right, but knew nothing more than a kid ~~17-or-18~~ just out of high school who had no experience with his hands. Poly-grinders and sanders and paint-guns ~~all~~ had to be explained to him. Also, he was a loner. Brought his lunch in a brown paper bag and took it ~~by~~ himself the first few days. Just sat on a piece of machinery off to the side and ate ^{the} ~~his~~ food in all the presence of his own thoughts. Nobody knew what he was thinking.

Night was different. Gary was going out just about every night with Rikki Baker.

Rikki was getting a little in awe of him. He knew he didn't want to mess with Gary. At the poker game at Sterling's, Gary told them ^{about} the fellow he had ~~just~~ left in a hospital ^(last weekend) after the fight.

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t.1d

Right around the table, Gary ~~was~~ also ~~was~~ telling everybody about this black dude he ~~had~~ killed in jail, a ~~bad~~ nigger who was trying to make a nice white kid his punk ~~A~~ -
~~DEFINE "PUNK."~~
 The kid ~~had~~ asked Gary for help, so he and another buddy caught the man on a stairway and beat him with pipes, had to, because the convict they were beating on had been a professional fighter. Then they put him in his cell and stabbed him with a home-made knife 57 times. Rikki believed the story was talk. Telling it to everybody, Gary had to be trying to make himself look big. Still, that did not make Rikki comfortable. Any fellow that lived on such a story could hardly back down if he started to lean on you, and you pushed back.

~~Now~~ ~~R~~ Running after the girls in Rikki's GTO, Gary hadn't seemed to learn much. Rikki tried to explain how you talk to girls, come on soft and easy ^{like Sterling Baker} instead of big and mean, but Gary said he wouldn't play their games. It wasn't hard for Rikki to get a girl to pull over her car and talk to them, but Gary was sure to scare them off.

One night, ~~he did it all the wrong way.~~ In the traffic on Center Street, Rikki started idling along next to a pickup with three girls in it. The truck was on Rikki's side and he just talked to them pleasantly through the window until they could feel he was ^{all} ~~at~~ right and goodlooking enough. Then they cut down a dark street, and he followed and parked behind.

The driver came back to Rikki's car, and Rikki got out and walked up to their truck and continued talking nice to the other two girls about going to their place for a party, but not a couple of minutes gone, the driver walked back. She looked pretty scared. She said, "You ought to do something with that guy you've got along. He's crazy. Get rid of him. Then come back." She got into her truck fast and took off.

"What happened?"

"Well, I just came right out and asked her for it. I said, 'It's been a long time and I'd like some right now.' She answered me with something I didn't like, and I drew back and almost hit her." Gilmore shook his head. "I've had enough of this. Why don't we just grab a couple of bitches and rape them?"

Rikki chose his words carefully. "Gary, that's something I just couldn't go for."

They drove around until Gary said he knew a girl named Margie Quinn. "Real nice." Now, he wanted to go to her place, only to her place. She lived on the second floor of a two story building with several apartments on each landing. It looked like a small motel.

Gary pounded on her door for about ten minutes. Finally, a girl came to the door. It was Marge's sister. She was

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in her nightgown and opened the door just a crack. She said, "Marge has gone to bed."

"Tell her I'm here."

"She says she's gone to bed."

"Just tell her I'm here, and she'll get up."

"I'm not going to wake her."

"You better."

"She needs her sleep."

The door closed.

"Cunt," Gary shouted.

Then he got really mad. On the way down the stairs, he said to Rikki, "Let's tip her car over."

Rikki was pretty drunk himself. It sounded like it might be kind of fun. Rikki had never tipped a car over.

She had just a little old foreign car, but ~~it was~~ heavier than ~~it~~ ^{she} looked. They both got down and put their backs up against ~~it~~ ^{her}, and gave it what they had, but they couldn't lift ~~it~~ ^{her}, just rocked ~~it~~ ^{her}. Gary told Rikki to go over to the GTO and get a tire iron. Then Gary grabbed it and ran up to Marge Quinn's car ~~and~~ ^{and} just busted the windshield out.

The sound of glass breaking scared the heck out of

Rikki. He jumped in his car and took off. It was only as he was driving by, that Gary grabbed the door, opened it on the run, and jumped in. Rikki started laughing at how Gary would have busted the rest of the windows if Rikki hadn't decided to get moving.

They decided to go to Sterling's. On the way, Gary said, "Do you want to help me rob a bank?"

"That's something I've never done."

"Thought you said you boosted a few things here and there."

"Yeah, but I've never gone into homes. Things like that."

Gary tried to tell him a bank was easy. A lot easier than working for a couple of dollars an hour. He knew how to do it. Gary would cut Rikki in for like 10 or 15 per cent if Rikki would just sit in the car and drive it off when he came out. Rikki, he said, would make a good getaway man. *He really knew how to drive.*

"You,"

"Look, Gary said, ~~you~~ wouldn't have to come into the bank, or get otherwise involved."

"I couldn't do it, Gary."

He got inflamed. "You said you'd done things. You're supposed to be a big shot to your friends and not afraid of

anything."

"I wouldn't do it, Gary."

They went the rest of the way to Sterling's house in silence.

Once there, Gary cooled enough to get them working on an acceptable story in case Marge Quinn called the cops. They would say they drove up to Salt Lake for the night and got back early in the morning.

~~Some joints were passed around but Rikki noticed that Gary wouldn't take more than a little bit and then blow it right out with what he had in him. Rikki guessed Gary didn't need reinforcement to get him started.~~

In the

~~Friday~~ morning, Marge found the window smashed. That Gary did it, was the ^{first} obvious thing to come to mind, but she was hoping he hadn't. She asked the neighbor downstairs what he ~~had~~ heard, and he said, "Yeah, ^{that} really loud car with those two drunk guys, they pulled up right next to your car, and I don't know what happened after that."

She let it go. It was just one more unhappiness at the bottom of things.

The same morning, Gary ~~called~~ ^{called} up Brenda. He would be

getting his pay that night. His first real pay-check.

"Hey, I want to treat you guys," he told her.

"Gary, you need your money, save it."

They decided to go to a movie. It was one he had seen before, he told her. "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." He had watched it being filmed right down the road from the penitentiary in Oregon, watched it right from his cell window. Besides, he told her, he had even been sent over a couple of times from the prison to the mental institution. Just like Jack Nicholson in the film. They had brought him in the same way, with handcuffs and leg irons.

Since the movie was at the Una Theatre in Provo, Brenda and Johnny drove over from Orem and picked him up at Vern and Ida's. Gary had had about four or five beers before they got together. A paycheck was a celebration.

In the truck, he smoked a joint. It made him happier than hell. By the time they drove the few blocks to the theatre he was snickering and giggling. Brenda said to herself: this is going to be a disastrous evening.

When the movie went on, Gary started to give a running commentary. Loudly. He said, "You see that broad? She really works there. But the guy next to her is a phony. Just

an actor. Hey," Gary told the movie theatre at large.

After a while: ~~his language got to be too forbidd~~
"Oh, look at that fucker over there, ~~he said~~ "I know that fucker."

Brenda could have died. ~~No pain~~ "Gary--there are people trying to hear the show. Will you shut up?"

"Am I offensive?"

"Yes. You're loud."

~~that the marijuana was doing! What a true nature to come out~~
He spun around in his seat and asked the people behind him, "Am I being loud? Am I bothering you folks?"

Brenda slammed ^{her} his elbow into his ribs:

Johnny got up and moved over a space or two.

"Where's Johnny going?" asked Gary. "Does he have to take a piss?" More people started to move away.

Johnny slid down in his seat until no one could see his head. Gary's narration of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" continued. "Son of a bitch," he shouted, "that's just the way it was."

Behind them, people were saying, "Down in front. Shhh!" Brenda grabbed him by the shirt tail. "You're obnoxious."

"I'm sorry," In a big whisper, he said, "I'll hold it

down." But his voice came out in a roar.

"Gary, all kidding aside, you're really making me feel like a turd sitting here."

"All right, I'll be good." He put his feet up on the back of the chair in front of him and started rocking it. The woman sitting there had probably been holding out on every impulse to change her seat, but now she gave up, got up and moved away.

~~"What'd you do that for?"~~

~~"My God, Brenda, do you have to ride herd all the time?"~~

~~"You had to make that poor lady move?"~~

~~"Her hair was in my way."~~

~~"Then sit up straighter."~~

~~"Not comfortable sitting up straight."~~

Going back to Vern's, Gary looked pretty smug. Brenda and Johnny didn't go in with him.

"What's the matter?" asked Gary, "don't you like me any more?"

"Right now? I think you are the most insensitive human being I've ever known. ✓"

"Brenda, I am not insensitive," said Gary, "to being called insensitive."

He whistled all the way up the steps.

At breakfast, ~~his mood was fine.~~ He saw Vern watching him eat and said, "I guess you think I eat pretty sloppy, gobble like a pig, kinda quick."

Vern said, "Yeah, I noticed that."

Gary said, "Well, in prison you learn to swallow in a hurry. You've got fifteen minutes to get your food, sit down and eat it. Sometimes you just don't get it."

~~"Did you manage to get it?" asked Vern.~~

~~"Yeah, I worked in the kitchen for a while. My job was to make the salad every day. It took anywhere from three to five hours to make that much salad. I can't touch the stuff now."~~

~~"That's fine," said Vern, "you don't need to eat it."~~

"You're a pretty strong fellow, Vern, aren't you?"

"Just the champ from Fifth West to University Avenue."

"Let's arm wrestle," said Gary.

Vern shook his head but Ida said, "Go ahead, arm wrestle him."

"Yeah, come on," said Gary. He squinted at Vern: "You think you can take me?"

Vern said, "Yeah, I don't have to think. I can take you."

~~"Well, I feel pretty strong today, Vern. What makes
you think you can beat me?"~~

~~"I'm gonna make up my mind," Vern said, "and I think
I can do it."~~

~~"Try it."~~

~~"Well," Vern said, "you eat your breakfast first."~~

Gary got into^{it} before the table was cleared. Vern kept eating his breakfast with his left hand, and arm wrestled ~~him~~^{Gary} with the other.

"Son of a bitch," Gary said, "for an old bastard you're pretty strong."

Vern said, "You're doing pitiful. It's a good thing you had your breakfast. If you hadn't, I wouldn't give it to you now."

When he got Gary's arm half-way over, Vern set down his fork, picked up a few round wooden toothpicks and held them in his left hand. He said, "Okay, my friend, any time that you want to say uncle, you quit. If you don't, I'm going to jam your hand right on these toothpicks."

Gary was straining with every muscle, and every call he could make on buried centers of strength. He started giving karate yells. He even got half out of his seat, but it

didn't make much difference. Vern got him down on the point of ^{the} toothpicks and started to push. Gary quit.

"One thing I want to know, Vern. Would you really have stuck me with those toothpicks if I hadn't hollered uncle?"

"Yep, I told you I would, didn't I."

"Son of a gun." Gary shook his hand.

A little later, Gary wanted to wrestle with the left arm. He lost again.

Then he tried finger wrestling. No one beat Vern at that.

"You know," Gary said, "I don't usually take a whipping very kindly. It's hard for me to take a beating and you beat me."

When Vern didn't look away, Gary said, "Vern, you're all right."

Vern wasn't so sure he thought so.

II

III Gary and Nicole

It could have gotten away perhaps with less work, but it was Spencer's idea that you gave the idea that was necessary to each person and each problem which had to be done in the day. That could take to midnight after dark.

When the Purple Off, Coast had called Spencer about a job for Gary and Nicole and spent to the end and over, if in his opinion, his job was on a first, and he looked like he wanted to be a good citizen. Spencer added that he once had four, five and released during from halfway house working for him in the hospital plant in Richard City, and they had been already and worked for him.

The way McNeill saw it, Gary began to open up a little after the first week. It probably took that week to find out the other men wanted to be friends. Nobody was trying to hurt or intimidate him in any way. Everybody was willing to trust him like any other person. The men knew, of course, he was an ex-conv. Spencer thought it was only fair to them (and to Gary for that matter) to have it known they were a good crew. If anything, such knowledge was

It must have been a week before Spencer McNeill

See 123

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He could have gotten away perhaps with less work, but it was Spencer's idea that you gave the time that was necessary to each person and each problem which came before you in the day. That could take to midnight often enough.

When the Parole Officer Monty Court had called Spencer about a job for Gary, McGrath said he would speak to the man and see, if in his opinion, his head was on straight, and he looked like he wanted to be a good citizen. Spencer added that he once had four ^{or five} semi-released convicts from a halfway house working for him in an insulation plant in Redwood City, and they had been steady and worked out good.

The way McGrath saw it, Gary began to open up a little after the first week. It probably took that much time to find out the other men wanted to be friends. Nobody was trying to hurt or incriminate him in any way. Everybody was willing to trust him like any other person. The men knew, of course, he was an ex-con--Spencer thought it was only fair to them (and to Gary for that matter) to have it known--but they were a good crew. If anything, such knowledge was likely to work in Gilmore's favor.

1
It must ~~also~~ have been a week before Spencer McGrath

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~~It had been a week~~

became aware that Gary was walking to work when he could not hitch a ride. ~~He found out because there had been little snow that morning and Gilmore came in a few minutes late. It had taken him longer to walk all the way on this occasion.~~

That got to Spencer. Especially since Gilmore had never complained or even told a soul. Such pride was the makings of decent stuff. McGrath made sure ~~he~~ ^{Gilmore} had a ride home that night.

Later, that day, they had a little talk. Gilmore wasn't real anxious to get into the fact that he didn't have a car and most people did. It got to Spencer again. Forget pleasure riding. Not even a jalopy to go to work in. Spencer told him that with another paycheck or two, he would take him to a used-car dealer he knew who sold cars for a little down and small weekly payments. Gilmore seemed to be appreciative of their conversation.

Spencer felt all right about that conversation. Gilmore, he thought, was coming to see that Spencer didn't like his people to think of him as a boss. He did the same work they did, and therefore, didn't want any superior relationship. ~~Spencer looked to get an easy atmosphere without a~~

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~~lot of pressure.~~ If, as expected, his employees were faithful to what they were all trying to do, that was enough. No need to ride anybody hard. ~~It was not that kind of program.~~

~~Next day Gary asked Spencer if he was serious about helping him get a car. He wanted to know if they could go down there that afternoon and look at one.~~

~~Spencer told him he was serious, but thought Gary ought to save the best part of a couple of paychecks. It ought to be feasible, Spencer suggested, to get together a down payment since Gary was staying with Vern and that should not cost him a lot to live.~~

~~How much would he need?~~

~~That, said Spencer, depended on what they could find.~~

At VJ Motors where Spencer knew the car dealer well, there was a 6 cylinder '66 Mustang that seemed to be pretty clean, tires were fair, body was good. Spencer thought it was a reasonable car. It sat on the lot for \$795, but the dealer said that he would move it at five and a half for Spence. It beat walking.

That Friday when Gary got paid, Spencer took him down

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to the car lot and introduced him to the car dealer, Val J. Conlin. It was arranged that Gary would put up \$50, Spencer McGrath would add another \$50 against future salary, and Conlin would carry the rest of it in weekly \$25 payments. Since Gary would be getting \$140 a week and ought to be taking home \$95 or \$100 of that, the deal could be considered functional.

Gary wanted to know if he could take time off on Monday to get a license. Spencer told him all right. It was agreed that Gary would pick up his license Monday morning, stop off for the car and come to work.

Monday, when he got into the shop, ^{Gary} told Spencer that they said he would have to take a training course unless he had a previous driver's license. Gary told them he had one in Oregon, and they were going to send for it. All he had to do was come back in 3 or 4 days and take the written test. In the meantime, he would wait on the car.

On Wednesday, however, he picked up the Mustang after work. To celebrate he had an arm wrestling contest with Rikki Baker at Sterling Baker's house. Rikki tried pretty hard but Gary won and started bragging it up through the night and feeling good about it.

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From Sterling's

Sister Rikki felt embarrassed at losing and stayed away a few days. When he dropped in on Sterling again, he heard that his ~~wife, Sue, and Nicole, his sister,~~ had gone over to visit Sterling one evening, and Gary had been there.

Nicole and Gary ended up spending the night together. Now, Gary was living with Nicole out in Spanish Fork. ~~It all~~

~~came down on Rikki that his sister Nicole [who was like a small] but beautiful animal that nobody could train and nobody could break, Nicole who loved to go her own way, because she was truly wild, not mean and not cheap but wild, was living with Gary Gilmore.~~

Rikki didn't like the news one bit. ~~He was cross about~~ Nicole ~~she~~ was the best thing in his family as far as he was concerned. He told Sterling that if Gary ~~with his crazy~~ ~~if he~~ did anything to hurt her, he would kill him.

Yet when Rikki saw them together, he realized that Nicole kind of looked up to Gary and really liked him a lot. Then Gary came over to Rikki and said, "Man, you've got the most beautiful sister in the world. She's just the best person in the world." Gary and Nicole held hands like they were interlocked forever at the wrist. It was ~~very~~ different from what Rikki had expected ~~when he first heard the news~~

He guessed Gary had ~~gotten to fall in love kind of quick~~

Sunday morning, Gary brought Nicole over to meet Spencer and Marie McGrath. Spencer saw a ^{slim} very good-looking slim full-curved girl, not too tall, with a figure, ~~to put in a computer--if you had to program the computer for some kind of optimum sex.~~ She looked to be 19 or 20 and had a faraway look. She was wearing Levis that had been cut off at the thigh, a T-shirt, and no shoes. ^{Kind of like Daisy Martin in Lil' Abner.} There was a baby crying in the car she had just left, but she made no move to go back to it.

Gary was immensely proud of her. He acted as if he had just walked in with Marilyn Monroe. ~~Except it wasn't that long since Spence had seen a movie. Nicole looked more like Carolinne Chaplin or one of those Swedish stars like Liv Ullman.~~

~~They were cheery, Spencer thought. Gary had only met her a day or two before but they were getting along in super good shape. "Look at my girl!" Gary was all but saying. "Isn't she fabulous?"~~

When they left, Spencer said to Marie, "That's just about what Gary needs is a girl friend with a baby to feed."

Spencer's just to the dinner with the

etel

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It doesn't look like ^{she'll} ~~she~~ be too much of an asset to him."
He squinted after their car. "My God, did he paint his
white Mustang blue?"

"Maybe," said Marie, "it's her car."

"The same year and model?"

"Wouldn't surprise me a bit," said Marie.

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~~"I guess," he said, "I like an apple slice."~~

- 2 -

Brenda didn't want to disturb anything in the cosmos by thinking too many good thoughts, but the idea of Gary working at Spencer McGrath's was giving her a little hope. God willing, Gary might come around the bend.

She was, for that reason, all the more upset when Gary brought Nicole over for the first visit. ~~Brenda had heard already from Sterling Baker that he had introduced his cousin Nicole to Gary--that was the first Brenda heard of her and thought, if Nicole is like Sterling it might be all right since Sterling was pleasant and a good worker. You would be wiser than find Sterling Baker's cousin.~~

~~Still, her heart dipped when Gary walked in. Brenda was, to say the least, not impressed with his girl.~~ She had a dirty-faced little girl named Sunny by the arm and didn't seem to know the arm was there. The girl, a tough-looking four year old, lived in one caterwauling dream world and Nicole lived in another--a ^{roomier} spacier one. Oh, God, Brenda said to herself, Gary would end up with a space cadet. Nicole just sat there and looked at her.

Brenda asked: "Where you staying?"

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Nicole roused herself. "Yeah." She roused herself again. "Down the road," she said in a soft and somewhat muffled voice.

Brenda must have been on radar. "Springville?" she asked. "Spanish Fork?"

Nicole gave an angelic smile. "Hey, Spanish Fork, she got it," she said to Gary as if little wonders grew like flowers on the highway of life.

"Don't you love her looks?" Gary said.

"Yeah," said Brenda, "you got yourself a looker."

Actually, Brenda was thinking that Nicole was much like many another girl who popped a kid or two before she was fifteen and lived on ^{the government} welfare ever after. ^{Another poverty-stricken welfare wife} Except that Nicole was better looking.

~~My God, she and Gary were in a trance with each other. You really didn't have to visit with them. They could sit and gaze at one another for the rest of the day. Brenda and Johnny could be damned.~~ Brenda was ready to ask the fire department to put out the burn that was beginning to spread in her.

Nicole went out to check on the other kid, Jeremy, who was sleeping in the car.

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"She's 19, you know," Gary said the moment Nicole was gone.

"Oh?" said Brenda.

He said, "Do you think she is too old for me?" At the look on Brenda's face, he began to laugh.

"No," said Brenda, "quite frankly I think you are both on the same intellectual and mental level of maturity. Good God, Gary, she's young enough to be your daughter. How can you mess around with a kid?"

"I feel 19," he told her.

"Why don't you try growing up, before you get too old?"

"Hey, coz, you're blunt," said Gary.

"Do you agree it's the truth?"

He said, "Probably." He muttered it.

They were sitting on the patio blinking their eyes in the sun when Nicole came back. Smiling tenderly, Gary pointed to the tattoo of a heart he kept on his forearm.

When he had come out of Marion, it had been just a blank heart. Now the blank was filled with Nicole's name. He had tried to match the blue-black color of the old tattoo, but her name came out in blue-green. "Do you like it?" he asked Brenda, pretending nothing had been said in Nicole's absence. It was a summons to the family to draw together.

"Looks better than having a blank," said Brenda. "Who

wants a blank tattoo?"

"Well, I never did," said Gary. "I was just waiting to fill it in. But first I had to find me a lady like this."

In turn, Nicole had a brand new tattoo on her ankle.

GARY it said.

"How do you like it?" he asked.

Handwritten: Brenda's husband
Johnny ~~said~~, "I don't."

Nicole was grinning from ear to ear. It was ^{as} if the best way to ring her bell was to tell the truth. Something about the sound of the truth set off chimes in her. "Oh," she said, extending her ankle for all the world to see the curve of her calf and her thigh, "I think it looks kinda nice."

"Well, it's done with good lines," said Brenda, "and a nice steady touch. But a tattoo on a woman's ankle makes her look like she stepped in shit."

"Now, well I dig it," said Gary.

"Okay," said Brenda, "I'll give you my good opinion. I like that tattoo as much as I like that silly-ass hat you wear."

"Oh, don't you like my lid?"

"Gary, when it comes to hats, you've got the rottenest taste I've ever seen."

She was so mad she was ready to cry. He had come over just a week ago and probably to apologize for the way he

acted in the movie theatre, came over all decked out in beige slacks, ~~and~~ ^{with} and a nice tan shirt, ~~but he was wearing a~~ white Panama hat with a wide taffeta rainbow band ⁹ that hat wouldn't even have looked happy on a black pimp.

~~Yes, Gary came over to visit with the brim of the hat~~ ^{had been} tilted down in the front and up in the back, the old George Raft style like the Godfather might wear it. He ^{id} stood on the mat outside, his body slouched back, his hands in his pockets, and kicked the base of the door.

"Why don't you just lift the latch and come in?" Brenda asked in greeting.

"I can't," he said, "my hands are in my pockets." He waited for her to applaud the effect.

"It's a pretty hat," Brenda said, "but it doesn't fit your personality, not unless you've turned into a pimp."

"Brenda, you're rotten," he said, "you're really ignorant." His whole posture was gone.

^{Now,} she had done it to him again. It didn't strike him well that she wasn't going to like Nicole's tattoo any more than his hats. He got up to leave ~~then~~ and Brenda walked them to the door. Coming outside, she was also surprised by the sight of the pale blue Mustang.

The look in her face was enough to restore him. That

had to be fantastic, he told her. He and Nicole had both bought exactly the identical model and year. It was like destiny. They had both been driven by the same force to buy the same car. It was a sign.

~~Brenda wanted to be nice. She said, "Hey, here's some-
thing that's cute. My last name is almost the same as your
girl's first name. Only the initials reverse. Brenda Nicol
Nicole Barnett."~~

~~Gary just smiled and kissed her on the forehead. He
never said a word. Brenda didn't know how to take it, but
that's what he did.~~

~~She was in all wrong sorts~~ ^{Brenda} the rest of the day as if
~~she'd run so fast her system would not calm down.~~ She kept
thinking of the tattoo on Nicole's leg. Every time she did,
her uneasiness came back.

^{OVER}
The worst story Gary had told, even worse than Hammer-
~~about a tattoo, and hadA been been~~
smith, had been the funniest to Gary. On that first night
home, five weeks ago at three in the morning, he had regaled
them with the story of the tattoo he put on the convict named
Fungoo, and he couldn't stop laughing.

"Fungoo?" said Brenda. "Do you know what that means in
Sicilian?"

"I got an idea," said Gary, "and that fellow was well-named. Poor Fungoo. He was strong and he was dumb and he loved me. I would do terrible things to him and he loved me like a dog.

"One time we're all in Isolation. They let us out for half an hour every day at separate times. We could walk past six cells, turn around, and go back.

"Fungoo was on the cleaning detail. So he was out there more than half an hour. 'Gary,' he asked me, 'do a little rosebud on my neck.' I got my needle with the thread wrapped around it an eighth of an inch from the point and my India ink, and he leaned his shoulder against the bars. I tattooed him with a real skinny little dick and peanut-sized balls across the back of his neck.

"Well, his parents were coming the next day. He went crazy when he found out. He had to go see them with a towel wrapped around his neck, and it was over a hundred that day. He told them he liked to wear a towel in the heat," said Gary, and he was laughing helplessly.

"Oh, Fungoo was so dumb," said Gary. "He never got mad at me. He came back and said, 'Gary, you've got to fix this. I can't go around with a pecker on my neck.'

"'Okay,' I told him, 'I'll make it into a snake.' But what I did was make it into a big three-headed cock. It was terrible. It was the biggest ugliest thing you ever laid

eyes on., I could hardly keep from laughing while I was doing it. 'Now make sure it's a nice snake,' Fungoo kept telling me. 'Oh,' I said,"--right in her living room, Gary had laughed uncontrollably as if even the memory of that hour was life again in his veins--"Oh,' I said, 'I believe this is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.' When poor Fungoo finally looked in the mirror, he went into shock. He couldn't even hit me. He said it wasn't my fault--it was marijuana's fault. Some hash had been smuggled into Isolation, and he decided I was bombed out of my head while I was doing it, yeah. Fungoo called it the 'killer weed' and he blamed it, not me. The last time I saw him, he had a giant rattlesnake tattooed all over the side of his neck to cover the three pricks. You couldn't tell it was a rattlesnake until he told you what it was. He didn't trust nobody by then so he did it hisself. Borrowed a Bible and burned it to make some soot, then mixed it with water for ink, used a mirror. Guess that's an ugly story, huh," said Gary looking at Brenda and Johnny's smiles which had become as congealed as the grease on a cold steak. "Yeah," said Gary, "a couple of times I got to feel bad about it. It fucked up Fungoo's whole world. Yet I got to laugh about it a lot too. Still do, you see. I guess I really racked up some bad karma on that one . . . just couldn't resist." He sighed.

It was exactly five weeks and two days since he had come

them from prison
to Orem that night. Now she could believe the story.

"God, how can he be so horrible?" she asked Johnny now.

"How could he have done that to a man who loved him and trusted him?"

"Don't you see what he was trying to tell us?" said Johnny. "It's that prison is so awful you will do anything to amuse yourself, even torture others. Because if you can't amuse yourself, you're gone."

"Gone where?" she asked.

"Ask Gary."

~~She loved Johnny for saying that, loved him with that melting of the heart that comes from having been cheated in one's infidelity, and so unfaithful still, and would be unfaithful again if only in the mountain air of the higher regions of the heart and never in the flesh, and knew Johnny knew this too and her husband, her whole big strong whole heart of a husband who could have compassion for rivals which was more than she could say for herself. "Oh, Lord," said Brenda, "Gary loves Nicole."~~

~~She hoped it wasn't in the way Fungus had loved and trusted Gary. Silently.~~

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~~BARTLETT NICOLE~~

3.

Right before

~~About the time her mother and father split up, Nicole
luck began to improve and she found a little house in Span-
ish Fork. Changes were coming in and she thought some of
them were for the better. She had, for instance, broken up
with Bartlett but this time she thought it might be a real
separation. She wanted to live alone and the house made it
easier.~~

It was a very small house, about ten miles from Provo,
at the foot of the foothills on a quiet street in Spanish
~~Fork~~. Her little house was the oldest building on the block
and next to all those ranch bungalows that were lined up
like pictures of suburban living in supermarket magazines,
her place looked as funky as something out of a fairy tale.
It was kind of pale lavender stucco on the outside with Her-
shey-brown window trim, just a living room, bedroom, kitchen

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and bathroom and the roofbeam curved in the middle. The front door was practically on the sidewalk--that's how long ago this house had been built.

~~In the back yard was a groovy old apple tree, kind of tall for its size, with a couple of rusty wires to hold the branches together, and she loved it. The tree looked like one of those stray animals that doesn't get any attention and doesn't care. It's still beautiful.~~

~~Then,~~ just as she was really settling in, getting to like herself because she was really taking care of her kids this once, and putting her head together in such a way that she wouldn't have to worry it would rattle whenever she was alone, why just then Kathryne and Charles chose to split, her poor mom and dad married before they were hardly in high school, married for more than twenty years, five kids, and they never did get, Nicole always thought, to like each other much, although maybe they'd been in love from time to time. Anyway, ~~they were~~ ^{their} split ~~and that~~ would have dislocated her quite a bit if she hadn't had the house in Spanish Fork. That was better than having a man. Nicole amazed herself. She had not slept with anybody for weeks, didn't want to, just wanted to digest her own life, three marriages, two

kids, and more men than you could count unless you really knew how to count.

~~Well, the groove continued. Nicole had a pretty good job that provided the money to make the move in the first place. She was working as a waitress at the Grand View Cafe in Prevo, a rinky-dink Chinese joint that served good food on Fifth Street, and, of course, she'd also hassled the welfare and gotten some money for the kids.~~

~~Then she got work sewing in a factory. It was just one little step up above being a waitress in her mind, but it made her feel really good about herself. When she had asked for the job she made it clear she didn't know how to sew, but they said okay we'll send you to school for a week, which they did. ~~When she went to Trade Tech and learned how to use the power sewing machines, and after a week was making decent money, better than she had ever brought in before.~~~~

Two-thirty an hour. Her take-home pay came to about eighty a week.

~~Of course, the work was hard. Nicole didn't think of herself as being especially well coordinated, and certainly she was not fast - her hand was too bumped out for sure. She would get flustered. They would put her on the machine and just about the time she started getting the hang of it, and~~

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~~was near the quota she was supposed to produce, they put
her on another. ^{like} the machines would fuck up when she
least expected it.~~

~~Still it wasn't ^{enough} for her. Welfare was paying
for a baby sitter for the kids, and the kids liked it at
the baby sitter's. Good luck there ~~for once~~. One way and
~~another~~, she got enough money together ^{for} to get a car. She
had a nest of a hundred bucks from screwing welfare out of
an extra ^{money} hundred they'd given her ⁱⁿ at some mix-up of checks.
She put that hundred away in the bank and would not touch
it, and put another seventy-five together from working. She
was able to pay out in cash a hundred and seventy-five for
an old Mustang that she bought from her next-door neighbor's
brother. He had wanted two to three hundred dollars, but
he liked her. She just got a little lucky.~~

(Note: establish that this is Rikki's wife, & he'd just walked out on her)

The first night Nicole met Gary, she had taken Sunny
and Jeremy for a drive, ~~the kids loved the car~~. With her
~~was her sister-in-law~~ ^{Sue} While she and Sue Baker weren't tight
exactly, they did spend a lot of time together. For Sue's
life wasn't so different from Nicole's. ~~The way Nicole
saw it, Sue was looking for some kind of attention now that
she and Rikki were split up.~~ ^{Nicole} Hell, just like herself and ~~the her~~
Jim Barrett, Rikki and Sue were always hassling, then com-
ing together. ~~For now they were split up, it was the~~
dumps. Sue was pregnant.

*second
hand husband (?)*

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While driving, they passed about a block away from her cousin Sterling Baker's house and Sue suggested they go see him. Nicole agreed. She figured Sue kind of liked Sterling and probably had heard that he had also split up with his old lady, just that week, ~~a pretty big deal considering they had a baby, although not that surprising anyway.~~ ^{He didn't matter} ~~Besides Sue was pregnant.~~ Sterling ought to be used to that.

It was a cool dark night, one of those cool nights in May when the mountain air still gets down into Provo with the feel of snow in it. Except not that cold, because Sterling's door was open a little bit, and the girls knocked and walked in. Nicole wasn't wearing anything but her Levis and some kind of halter, and there was this strange-looking guy sitting there on the couch. She thought he was just plain strange looking. He hadn't shaved in a couple of days, and he was drinking a beer. Sterling didn't even introduce him what with being ~~too~~ busy saying hello to Nicole and Sue.

Nicole made a pretense of ignoring the new guy, but there was something about him, she couldn't figure out what it was. When their eyes met, he looked at her and said, "I know you." Nicole didn't say anything in reply. For a split

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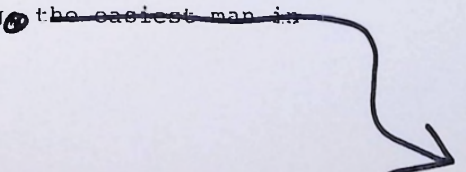
second, something flashed in her mind but then she thought, No, I've never met him before, I know that. Maybe I know him from another time.

That started everything off. She hadn't been thinking in such a way for quite a while, but now that feeling was around her again. She knew what he meant. She had heard him.

His eyes looked very blue in a long thin triangular face and they stared at her and he said again, "Hey, I know you." Finally Nicole kind of laughed and said, "Yeah, maybe." She thought about it a moment more and looked at him again and said, "Maybe." Then they didn't talk anymore for awhile.

She always thought her life was lived on two levels, *(and the other level every day)*
Like living on land or floating down the river. The other level
One was special ~~and it was~~ mysterious, and it had to be the
place dreams came from. ~~She always thought of that place~~
~~as real life,~~ ^{So} something you wouldn't take too much of ^{it} at
once. It was not only beautiful but kind of sinister. This
new fellow obviously was talking about that. *About that imaginary*
river she saw in her head.

She gave her attention to Sterling. In fact, both girls were clustered around Sterling, ~~the easiest man in~~



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to Sterling that she had a crush on him for years when she was a kid. He told her right back that he'd always been crazy about her. They just laughed. This other fellow, who was very tall, sat in his chair and kept looking at her

BUT After awhile Nicole decided the new fellow was pretty good looking. He was much too old for her, he looked like he could be near forty. And he was hardly on the juicy side. But he had beautiful eyes and a pretty good mouth, and a long triangular face. He looked intelligent and yet bad at the same time, like an older guy who could fit into a motorcycle gang. Maybe that was because he hadn't shaved. She was a little fascinated, even if she wasn't about to admit to much interest.

Sue wasn't saying anything to him either, in fact she wouldn't even look at him, pretended he wasn't there. It ^{got} seemed pretty obvious Sue didn't like the way he looked.

In compensation, Sunny started being a real bad four-year-old in front of the stranger, ^{and carried on} carrying on as ornery and bossy as she could, ^{she} and began ordering Nicole to do this and to do that. ^{Soon} Sunny got flushed and pretty-looking, and now was flirting with the man. Then, Sterling's friend looked

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at Nicole and said, "You're going to have a lot of trouble with this little girl. She could end up in reform school before she's 12."

It
That struck Nicole hard. That was one remark to get to her. Maybe she had been the kind of mother who could do that to her kids. Something certainly gave a twinge. Nicole knew those words were going to stick in her like a hook over the next couple of days.

She began to think this guy had some kind of psychic power. Maybe he knew people well enough so he could really see into what was going to happen. As if he were a hypnotist or something of that ilk. She hardly knew if she was about to like that.

Anyway, he seemed to think that was enough to start a conversation. Before long he was talking to her in a very persistent way. He wanted to go to the store to get a six-pack of beer and had the idea she ought to go with him. Nicole told him no. He kept bugging her to go with him. She kept shaking her head. Sue and she had been getting ready to leave and she didn't want to go to the store with this man now. He was too strange. There wasn't

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any sense to it anyway since the store was just a little down the road.

What worked in his favor, however, ~~is~~ ^{was} that Sue wasn't really ready to leave yet. She was just beginning to get off on talking to Sterling, and obviously wouldn't mind being alone with him for a little while. So Nicole said Okay, and took Jeremy for protection. Sunny was asleep by then.

When they got to the store, it was closed. So they continued downtown. Nicole didn't even get out of his car. She stayed there while the tall dude went in and got a six-pack or two of beer, and brought back a banana for Jeremy. That was his idea.

It was odd, but he had a Mustang just like hers, same model, same year. Just the color was different. So she felt comfortable in it.

When he got back with the beer, she was leaning against the door, and he put the six-pack on her knee. She joked ~~back~~ and said, Oh, that hurts. He started rubbing her knee. He did it decently; it wasn't too personal, but it felt pretty good in a nice simple way, and they went on home.

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When they got to the end of Sterling's driveway, before she got out of the car, he turned around and looked at her and asked if she would kiss him. She didn't say anything for a minute, then said Yes. He reached across and gave her a kiss and it didn't do any harm at all to what she thought about him. In fact, to her surprise, she felt like crying. A long time later, she would remember that first kiss. Then they went back in the house.

Now Nicole didn't ignore him quite so much, although she still made a point of sitting across the room from him. Sue obviously couldn't stand the fellow, and was paying even less attention to him. In fact Nicole was surprised that he seemed indifferent to Sue disliking him. Sue might be obviously pregnant now, but in Nicole's opinion she was a beautiful-looking blond. Maybe Sue was even the more spectacular of the two of them. Yet nothing was moving. After awhile, it began to seem as if it would all go nowhere.

With the down drift of the evening, Nicole and Sue started talking in private about hassles they got into with guys. Nicole often had the feeling that Sue, when she was living with Rikki, had thought of her as something of a whore because of all the guys she ran into and lived with, or dated around, in fact Sue and Rikki had told on her

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when she took a guy into bed at her great-grandmother's house, and she never trusted Sue completely after that. She certainly didn't want Rikki or Sue to think she was still that easy. So Nicole got a little stiff when Gary said he wanted her address and phone number just as she and Sue were starting to get ready to get the kids home to bed. Nicole felt funny about looking too available in front of her sister-in-law, especially after all the remarks she'd made tonight about living a new kind of life. Besides, she had pretty much convinced herself she was never ever going to shack up with a guy again. She told him, therefore, he couldn't have the phone number, and he was amazed.

He said, It just doesn't make any sense for you to walk out of here and never see you again. It would be a waste of a good thing, he said. He even got a little mad when she kept saying No, and sat there and looked at her. She stared into his blue eyes and told him she wouldn't give it to him, and then what with the kids, and saying goodbye to this fellow, and Sue saying goodbye to Sterling, it took awhile to leave. By the time they were out of the house, Nicole felt like screaming, she had wanted to give him that phone number so bad.

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She didn't even have a phone. All she could have given him was her address, or the nextdoor neighbor's phone.

On the ride, Nicole didn't like the way she was feeling at all. She took Sue home, drove all the way out to Spanish

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Fork, pulled up to park, and didn't move from the car. Then she said, To hell with it, and decided to go back to Sterling's after all, and decided next that she was an idiot, and the guy wasn't even going to be there. By now, there was probably another girl there. Sterling would call one over for him.

Nicole was really scared of what she was getting herself into. She couldn't figure out why she was doing it.

~~It was the first time she'd chased after a guy since Doug Brock, and that was the only guy she could think of that ever rebuffed her. Brock had lived around the corner in Salt Lake and was a lot older, and handsome. She had really liked him. Nicole had been working at a motel and he lived right around the corner, and mentioned something about paying her to clean his house. Once he got her in the house, it turned out pretty terrific and he told her to come over any time, talk, make it, whatever--just come over. One night she couldn't sleep and was tired of being by herself, so she walked around the corner and knocked. It was two in the morning. He came to the door naked and got a little rude, said, What the hell you doing up at this hour? Then he mentioned some other guy she had been going with, and told her he didn't want anything to do with a chick who was getting down with somebody else. He was just like a foreman~~

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when he said it--which happened to be what he did for a living. Right after, he said he was busy with another girl, right there at his door at two in the morning. That was gross. Nicole never went back to see him again, in fact, had hardly thought of him until now, going back to Sterling's, wondering whether Gary would be around.

Then she became really scared of what she might be getting herself into. In fact her heart was so high, she could have been breathing some strange gas that was making her half faint, half exhilarated. She had never felt anything so strong as this before. It was as if it would be impossible to let this guy go.

His car was still there and she parked right behind. The kids were asleep in the back seat so she left them. It was safe to leave kids on a quiet street like this. And went up and knocked on the door, even if it was still open a little bit. And heard him say something just before she knocked. It was incredible but she heard him say to Sterling, Man, I like that girl.

When she went in, he came over to her and he touched her, he didn't grab her for a big kiss, just touched her

lightly. She felt really good. It was all right. She had done the right thing. They sat on the couch for a couple of hours and they laughed and talked.

After a while, when it was obvious she was going to stay, they went out to the car and picked up the sleeping children and put them in the house and laid them still sleeping on Sterling's bed, and they went on talking.

They did hardly anything but laugh. They had a great big laugh about counting her freckles and the impossibility of that because he said you couldn't count ~~the~~ freckles on an angel or an elf, and she ^{had to be} ~~one~~ one or the other. Then in a quiet moment he told her he had been in prison a lot of his life. He told her in a matter-of-fact way.

While Nicole wasn't afraid, she was scared. It was the thought of getting mixed up with another loser. Somebody who didn't think enough of himself to make something of himself. She felt it was bad to float through life. You might have ^{to} pay too much for that in the next life.

They got to speaking of karma. Ever since she was a kid, she just believed in reincarnation. It was the only thing that made sense. You had a soul and after you died,

your soul came back to earth in another body. That is you had to come back if you had left something undone here. When her life was over, she wanted it to be done right so she wouldn't have to come back.

To her amazement, he agreed. He had believed in karma for a long time. Punishment, he said, was having to come back and face over again anything you couldn't face in this life.

Yes, he told her, if you murdered somebody, like you might have to come back and be the ^{child} parents of that person. You'd have to face whatever you'd been doing. That was the whole point of living, he said, facing yourself. If you didn't, the burden got bigger.

It was getting to be the best conversation she'd ever had. She had thought the only way to have conversations like that was in your own head.

Then he sat on the couch and held her face in his hands and he said, "Hey, I love you." He said it from two or three inches away, and she loved him too. But she felt reluctant to say the word. Nicole hated the word. In truth, she despised it. She had said it so many times when she

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didn't mean it, it was just a bad word. It sounded all right when he said it, but coming out of her own mouth it wouldn't have been the same thing. She didn't want to say ~~the words,~~ ~~it,~~ but she supposed she had to get it out. And had an uncomfortable feeling right afterward. As she expected, it didn't come ~~out~~ right. *Left a bad echo in her head.*

He said, Hey, there's a place in the darkness. You know what I mean? He said, "I think I met you there. I knew you there." He looked at her and smiled and said, "I wonder if Sterling knows about that place? Should we tell him?" Then they both looked at Sterling, and he was sitting there with ~~it,~~ ~~well,~~ just a funny kind of smile on his face ~~like he knew there was something going on. It was - it was coming down that way.~~ Then Gary said, "He knows about it too. You can tell. You can see in his eyes that he knows." Nicole laughed with delight. It was funny. The guy looked twice her age, yet there was something naive about him. He sounded smart, but he was so young inside.

He kept drinking the beer, and Nicole would get up once in a while and go in to give Sterling's baby a bottle and change her, because Ruth Ann was out working ~~even though~~ ~~Ruth Ann and Sterling had split,~~ they were still living in the same house. It was all they could afford.

After a while, Gary kept telling Nicole that he wanted to make love to her. She kept telling him she didn't want to start that night. He'd say, "I don't want to just fuck you, I want to make love to you."

After awhile, she went to the bathroom and when she came out, Sterling was leaving. It gave her a funny feeling. Sterling didn't show a sign that he'd been forced to leave them alone ~~inside his own house,~~ ^{from} he didn't look like he was being ejected. But she thought Gary was being ~~just a little~~ ^{quite a lot} rude. ~~Quite a lot rude, if you wanted to get into it.~~ With all that beer, he was also getting gruff. Still, now that they were alone, there was hardly any logic left to refusing. ^{Soon,} ~~After awhile,~~ ^{she and Gary} her clothes were off and they were on the floor.

4.

Then the longest part of the evening started. It was sad. He looked like he had just been hit with an axe but was trying ^{anyway} to smile. He couldn't get a hardon. He wouldn't stop and rest. He had half a hardon.

He was so heavy on top of her, and his skin felt so hot, and he was breathing hard, and he just kept trying. After awhile he began to apologize, and blamed it on too much beer. And ^{he} asked her to help. Nicole began to do what she could. When she was ready to give up, when her face and neck were as tired as they were ever going to be, he still wasn't ready to quit. It became straight hard work and it made her mad.

She told him they ought to cool it for awhile. Maybe get back later. He asked her then to lay on top of him, and asked her gently. She had mentioned earlier how good that felt.

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Now he said in her ear, that he would like her to lay there forever. He asked her if she would be able to sleep that way, laying on top of him, because that would please him. She tried for a long time. She told him he should rest, and just lie by her side and not worry about it so much. After the heat, and the exhaustion, and the fact that it just wasn't going, she still felt tender toward him. She was surprised at how tender she felt. She was sad that he was drunk, and sorry because he was that anxious, and she would even have been loving him but she was also irritated that he was too worked up to let it go and get dressed or fall asleep. And he wouldn't stop apologizing. He said again it was the beer and the Fiorinol. ^{DEFINE FIORINOL.} He told her he had to keep taking Fiorinol every day for his headaches.

One time Sterling knocked on the other side of the door and asked if he could come back and Gary told him to get lost, he and Nicole were busy. She told him she didn't like at all how rude he was with Sterling. Gary finally pulled something over her, a blanket or a rug, and unlocked the door so Sterling could get in and came back and climbed under the rug and bothered her a little more. It went on all night. They got very little sleep.

(91)

About six in the morning Ruth Ann came home from where she worked at some old folks home. ~~Although she and Sterling had split, they didn't have enough money to live apart. So she was there to greet them in the morning.~~ It was mildly embarrassing to Nicole because she knew Ruth didn't necessarily have that good an opinion of her. And Nicole was tired. Time spent trying to sleep had been spent on top of Gary. He ~~loved her too much~~ ^{wanted} in that position.

Yet, before they separated, and he went to work, she gave him her address. It was a real step. Earlier, before they got on the floor, he had told her that he wanted to move in with her. And she had told him that things didn't work out if a guy moved in. When she gave him the address, therefore, he doubted her. He kept asking whether it was really her house. When she said again it was, he told her he was going to come over after work.

Sure enough, he was there. She had had to go to the store for something, and left a note. All it said was, "Gary, I'll be back in a few minutes. Make yourself at home." But that note managed to stay around the house all the time they were together. She would stash it, and the

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kids would get ahold of it, and then she and Gary would run across it again and it gave them a special feeling.

On this afternoon, when she came back, he was already in the house, standing there in the front room, grubby looking. His pants didn't fit, they were ugly pants anyway, baggy pockets, the kind that look like they were made for a telephone man to carry tools in his pockets. He had on a grubby T-shirt and he was dirty from working with insulation, and Nicole thought he looked beautiful.

Her grandfather came by a little later, just dropping in, and began to give her sly looks like, what the Christ, are you doing it again, Nucoa Butterball?---that had been his nickname for her when she was a child. Her grandfather knew all the situations she could get herself into. Of course, her grandfather could also tell when she wanted the guy to be there, so he didn't stay very long this time.

Gary seemed uncomfortable to be in somebody else's house and paced a lot. While she was busy with the kids, changing them or feeding them, he would go outside and walk around. Later, then things quieted, they stayed up real late talking, and it made her uneasy at how close this guy was already to moving in on her. It truly scared her.

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She was feeling a few new things she wasn't that familiar with. Nicole had always thought of herself as being phony when it came to love. She might start out sincere, but she didn't believe she'd ever really been in love with a guy. She'd care about guys, and have a lot of crushes, and some of them pretty heavy. Mostly it was because the guy was good-looking, or did nice things for her. There was even one or two she liked because they could make a living--her last husband, for example, Joe Bob Sears, Only he turned out to be a sadist. But when she looked at Gary, she didn't just see his face and the way he looked, she had this funny sensation--~~she didn't always understand him too well, or know what was in his head, but all the same he gave her this funny sensation--~~ she felt like she was in the right place for the first time. So she didn't worry too long. She was enjoying every minute of his being there.

Later, she would no longer remember what bed had been like the second night, although it was certainly better. Maybe it set no records, but it wasn't as hassled as the first. Then the days and nights began to run together. He didn't move in completely for a week, but he was living with her just about all the time. ~~Just about all the time~~

By the weekend he took her over to meet Vern and Ida,

(94)

and acted pretty proud. She liked the way he introduced her, and how pleased he was of Sunny and Jeremy. He made a point of telling Vern and Ida that Jeremy's nickname was Peabody. Had they ever heard a better nickname? Nobody was surprised when he announced, "Vern, I've decided to move out and live with Nicole." They all knew it was already that way, but he seemed to like the sound of saying it.

Vern ~~attitude~~ ^{said that} was fine, ~~and Gary wanted, was what~~ ^{and flat} he wanted. Vern allowed that with Nicole also working, maybe by the combination of the two of them, the ~~two compensa-~~ ^{and} tions, maybe they could swing it. ~~To his meaning,~~ Gary ~~and~~ could feel free to keep his room. It wasn't like he was a boarder who lived in the basement and paid weekly rent.

When ~~she~~ ^{Nicole} saw his room, ~~however, Nicole~~ ^{she} thought it was a rat-hole. There were no pictures on the walls, no lamps. It looked like a cubicle in a cheap hotel, and Gary had just a few things, one pair of pants and a few shirts in his drawers. A bunch of pictures, in a green folder, of his friends in prison. She hardly knew why he had brought her to the room until he got out his hat and put it on, sort of a crazy fishing hat. He looked at himself in the mirror, and acted as if he really looked cool. It took her a few hours, or

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was it a few days, to realize he was serious. He didn't know how ridiculous that hat looked. Then he produced another with red, white, and blue stripes. That was one of the oddest things about him, the absolutely nutty hats he thought looked good.

But he was awful generous. She guessed afterward that he must have skipped a payment on his car to give her \$50 for clothes. She told Ruth Ann all about it. ~~now that~~ Ruth Ann and Sterling were back with each other; ~~it~~ ^{Nicole} was as if ~~she~~ and Gary coming together had pulled them in too. ~~They~~ ~~certainly all had one big goofy night together.~~

she was telling this to Ruth Ann,

While Gary was off with Sterling getting beer, Nicole and Ruth Ann decided to hide ^{Gary's} ~~his~~ hat. When he returned, Nicole told him that she had put his hat in the oven, ^{and} ~~it~~ ^{had} shrivelled up.

He went directly to the oven. Then he went looking all over the house for it. He was that upset about the hat. They told him it didn't leave but one cinder.

Yet when they finally gave it back to him, he laughed it off. Sterling couldn't believe how mellow Gary was becoming, ~~so fast~~

Sue Baker didn't ^{even} know Gary was seeing Nicole, let alone

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living with her. But one day Nicole called ~~her~~ and said she had decided to take the day off from the sewing machine factory. She wanted a chance to talk to Sue. So they took the kids to the park for a picnic. It was there Nicole spoke of how she had never felt for anybody the way she felt for Gary. She loved him.

Why, asked Sue. About the third or fourth night she knew him, he had gotten drunk, Nicole said, just so drunk on his butt that she was getting angry at him. Then he sat down and drew a picture of her. It amazed Nicole. He had been talking about drawing up to then and how good he was at it and how he got prizes in contests, but she'd never seen him do any. She hadn't believed him. She had listened to guys talk forever about what they could do. She had heard a lot of bullshit. But then he had drawn that picture, it was really good. He didn't just draw a little--he could draw like a real artist. Thank you, he said to Nicole afterward, I didn't know if I was ever going to pick up a pencil again.

It had been hard, Nicole explained, for Gary to communicate with anybody. It was because he had developed a personality where you had to be hard all the time. Having spent most of his life in prison, that was what he was used to--being hard.

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It was time to leave the park. There was still a little warmth in the afternoon, but Nicole had to pick Gary up at work. His car had broken down. ~~Something~~

~~with the Mustang.~~

~~Seeing a light of expectation in Nicole's eye, the light that came just at the thought of picking him up, Sue didn't need anybody to tell her how her sister-in-law felt. She loved Nicole who was a super sister-in-law. If Nicole was in love with Gary, then, no matter her first impression, Sue was ready to change her mind about the guy.~~

~~Now that Rikki was split,~~ Sue had no transportation and so she went along with Nicole, ~~74:3 time,~~ ~~ed~~ ~~to Landon, and, in fact,~~ she ~~did~~ like Gary ~~on the way back.~~ He was so agreeable this time, and kept talking about how good he felt to be picked up by two gorgeous women. Sue took that as quite

~~It was a compliment considering how big her belly was getting. Sue might have a date now and again these days, and she'd even gone dancing once, but she was undeniably big and Rikki had sure done it to her. First he had complained about her IUD, said it hurt him, then she took it out, then he made her pregnant, then he left her. She was the youngest of ten kids in her family, the outcast at the~~

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~~bottom and Rikki had now left her.~~

~~It hadn't been for Gary and all the nice conversation
he was making, Sue Baker would have sunk right into the swamp
of misery.~~

~~Still, if Nicole could have a change of luck, then may-
be there was a turn for herself as well. It was equal to be-
lieving that a good thing could happen on any given night.~~

*Poss
Stet*

Sue *Then,*
~~After they dropped her off, Nicole, with a big smile,
showed Gary the pillow she had brought along. Since Nicole
always sat in the middle of the front seat rather than on the
seat itself, and since that was not very comfortable consider-
ing the Mustang had only the two bucket seats, she had finally
gotten smart enough to bring a pillow. Not only did it prove
more comfortable, but she could sit with her hips raised and
so put an arm around his neck. He, in turn, drove with his
free hand in her lap, holding hands.~~

Gary
~~This day, for some reason, as he pulled up to the store
for their shopping, he did not get out but began to talk to
her of his mother. He hadn't seen her for a long time, he
explained, and she had arthritis bad and couldn't hardly walk.~~
Nicole
Gary looked at her and stopped talking and tears came to his
eyes. He was crying. Nicole was amazed that he felt something

so strong so suddenly for his mother. Then she was amazed he could cry. She thought he was harder than that. She didn't say anything but sat close to him and looked at him, and touched his tears. Then he laughed and made a joke, and to her surprise after that, there was something even bigger between them. Usually when she saw men cry it was disgusting to her. She'd had guys cry when she left them. She was good at turning herself off when they got like that, thought it was a weakness for a guy to cry over a girl. With Gary, she wasn't thinking at all about weakness. She didn't even understand what she was feeling--she wanted to do something for him. Snap her fingers, so to speak, and have his mother there.

Then they began to talk about going up to Portland to visit ~~her~~ ^{Gary mother's}. Maybe they could save a little money and make the drive in her car or his ~~could last for the ride~~ ^{hers}. Everything he had been saying came over and she felt like crying too.

On the way ~~back~~ ^{home} they began to talk about islands they could lease for 99 years. Gary said he didn't know that much about the subject but was going to get some information on it.

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III Nicole

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1.

He had to get up early to go to work, but he was used to that. For thirteen years in prison, he'd been getting up at five-thirty every morning. Now he would wake Nicole as well.

She found it really okay to have him hugging her in the early morning dark, and whispering that he loved her. They both slept nude and it was almost as if he had to lay hands on her to enjoy again that she was there. Of course, that could also be a problem because Nicole did not like to do much in the morning. She didn't want to kiss him then. He didn't smoke and his breath was good, but she sure did smoke. Her mouth always tasted awful at 5:30 A.M. Before too long, she would get out of bed, go in the kitchen, fix him sandwiches for work, and set the coffee on. She had a real short little bathrobe and sometimes she wore that, or she'd run around nude. He'd sit and drink his instant breakfast of Carnation with a handful of vitamins. He

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was a vitamin freak and believed them good for energy. Of course, if he'd done a lot of drinking after work, he was tired in ~~the~~^{the} morning. Still, he was good company. He'd sit with her over coffee as long as he could, and keep looking at her, and would tell her she was beautiful, and that she amazed him. He had not believed a woman could be as fresh and sweet-smelling as she, and indeed Nicole was willing to hear that, for she liked her bath, and no matter how the house or kids might look at times she really cared about being dainty.

Without make-up, her face was as fresh as dew, he told her. She was his elf. She was loveliness, he said. After awhile, Nicole got the impression that he, like her, could hardly comprehend the things that were happening. It was the feeling of something beautiful next to you all the time.

~~Then, just before he was ready to leave, he would get up and lock himself in the bathroom for twenty minutes. Nicole supposed he combed his hair and did his thing. Afterward, they would spend five minutes at the front door, and he'd watch from there while he got in the car. A lot of times~~

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he'd have to push the car to get it started. It seems
like there was always trouble starting it. Sometimes,
after slipping on her Levis, and still wearing her robe,
she'd come out to help him. Sometimes he would have to
take her car, dependent on which Mustang had the most gas
in it. They got pretty broke sometimes.

But she never regretted quitting her job. After the
day she played hooky from the sewing factory to have a pic-
nic with Sue, she knew she wasn't going to keep working.
She needed time to think. It was hard to stay serious about
a sewing machine when you wanted to dream all the time about
your man. Besides, they had his paycheck, and her welfare,

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and Gary was just as happy if she quit.

While he was away, she'd piddle around, clean the house, feed the kids. She'd work in the garden a lot, and drink coffee. Sometimes she would sit and drink coffee for a couple of hours and think about Gary. Sit there and smile to herself. She felt so nice she couldn't believe some of the things she felt. A lot of times she could drive over with his lunch just to be with him, and he'd come sit in the car. ~~Sometimes~~

~~she'd get there late and he didn't have too much time to spend with her. One time she waited about forty-five minutes because he was late getting in from a job they'd sent him out on. Everytime she got up to go she'd tell herself wait five more minutes, and that way waited for forty-five minutes until he finally came.~~

She began to visit her mother a lot because that was another good excuse to go and have lunch with him. Her mother's house was near where he worked. So she'd leave Spanish Fork around ten, have coffee with Kathryne, then leave the kids in order to be alone with Gary while they ate. She really enjoyed that time. Then she'd go back to her mother's for an hour or so, then home to straighten out the house and wait for him. It was the first time in her life she felt like a lady of leisure.

One Sunday while she was digging away in her garden, Gary carved their names on the apple tree. He did it with a pocket knife, real nice, really neat: GARY LOVES NICOLE. Nobody had ever done that before.

The next day when he was at work, she had a lot of things to do all day, and kept wanting to get back, went rushing through the day. When she finally got home, she cleaned his car out first, then climbed up the tree to a place above where he had done it and carved out: NICOLE LOVES GARY. Then she went into the house and was just in time to meet him.

He came out in the backyard with a beer and she said, Look at the apple tree. He didn't see anything and she finally had to point it out to him. Then he was happy as a little kid when you've just given them the whole world. He hugged her and said she had done her's better than his. He loved the heart she had carved around the names.

Maybe the cuts in the tree reminded him of the crucifixion. It had to be some such far-out connection for Gary began to tell Nicole about a man who had been a thief and a murderer too, but had been a pretty great man, nonetheless, in his own definite way. He had been crucified on the cross

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some years after Christ. His name was Barrabas. Gary told the story so well that Nicole went out and got the book from the library and read it and never took it back. Once in a while, talking to Gary, she would call him Barrabas. He was like a thief who had lived a hundred lives and had his own special relation to God.

Maybe a week after Gary came to live with her, she found a big yellow folder of his that had a bunch of papers stapled together. It was all about a dispute between him and a prison dentist. Gary and this dentist Jarvis had actually gone to court about it a couple of times. Something about Jarvis' statements and Gary's statements, and the arguments between them about how Jarvis had made his teeth, all typed up in lawyer's language seemed so funny that she just sat there and laughed. All those big words about a set of false teeth. When she told Gary about it, however, he got upset. He had never told her he had false teeth. It bothered the hell out of him that she had found out.

Of course it wasn't new to her. She had discovered it already, probably the first night. She had lived before with a guy who had a plate and she knew how they felt. You could always tell when kissing a man. Gary never wanted Nicole to

put her tongue in his mouth, whereas he was always putting his tongue in her's. She joked with him a little, then went so far as to tease him about the chompers, but he took it bad. He changed like somebody just turned out the lights. None-

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theless, she kept teasing him, as if to make him see it didn't bother her, that however he came into her life was all right with her. ~~She was ready to buy the package,~~
~~string and all~~

~~On the other hand, Gary was usually not a one to brood. Both of them could go through a lot of moods fast. That was fun. Nicole hadn't found many people whose moods changed as quickly as her own. This was also about the time Nicole noticed that she had no desire to compare him to other guys, or to decide how he rated in one department or another. She was just interested in him. She kept coming across the realization each day and it would surprise her enough to sit down and think about it. Some of the little things he did, gave her surprising pleasure. He didn't smoke, for instance, yet when he saw her rolling her own, a funny look came on his face, and next thing, he brought home a carton of cigarettes. It was beautiful, those little lifts.~~

They would sit around and drink beer in the evening, and it seemed there was hardly enough time together. She could be as honest as she wanted with him, tell him anything about her past and he would listen. He would observe everything she had to say, everything about her, even the look on her face. If another fellow would have sickened her with such

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attention, now it didn't bother Nicole a bit. She was giving Gary the same attention.

All she wanted in life these days was more time with him. She had always appreciated any minute she had to herself, even valued it. But now time spent together was even more important than time she spent alone. She would get impatient with wanting him to be back. When four-thirty or five o'clock rolled around and he was there, her day was made. She loved opening that first beer for him.

~~Sometimes, he would take his B-B gun out into the back yard and they would shoot at beer cans and bottles in the twilight until you couldn't tell when you were hitting except by the sound of the ricochet or a plink of glass. The twilight came down slowly, ^{It was} as if you were taking one breath and then another from a cluster of roses. The air was good as marijuana then.~~

In those early evenings when they stayed home, there were always kids around. Their babysitter was a girl named Rosebeth, a cute adolescent who had a lot of ^{little cousins,} brothers and sisters, and they came with her. Sometimes when Gary and Nicole got back from a ride, these kids would be around and he would play with them. He'd give them piggy-back rides.

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Inside the house they'd stand on his shoulders and he was tall enough so they could walk with their hands on the ceiling, as if the ceiling were the floor and they were walking upsidedown on their hands. He liked to play with the ones that had enough nerve to walk all the way across the room like that. They just loved the holy shit out of him.

~~Kids knew more than us, he would like to tell her.~~
~~They're not worn out and dumb.~~ A lot of the time, though,
~~the five days out of the week,~~ as soon as ^{Gary} he got home,
~~he and Nicole would~~ ^{alone.}
~~they wanted to go for a ride without Sunny or Jeremy, and~~
~~so called Rosebeth, and she came over, and they took off.~~

Usually they would eat at a drive-in, and a couple of times he took her to the Stork Club to play pool. Once she began to get good at it, he took her more often, and told her before long she'd be able to beat him.

There were afternoons right after work when they went to the shopping mall and he picked out sexy underwear for her. Or ~~to Albertson and Allen's to wait while Gary pick~~ ^{would}
~~up beer and cigarettes for the drive-in movie~~ ^{and}
~~pretty soon after they were parked~~ ^{at the drive-in,} ~~he'd want her to~~
take clothes off, and she almost always did. Then they would make it in the front seat.

4 That is, most of the times they would. Gary actually ^{at the Drive-In} just liked to have her naked. Once, while watching Peter Pan, which they both loved, they got out and sat on the ^{rear} back deck of the car, over the trunk, back to back, protecting her bottom with blankets and pillows, and she was naked. The car was parked way in the ^{out field} back but there were cars around, not too near but still around, and she was naked. God, it was the nicest feeling. After all those years in prison, Gary was insane about watching her walk around with her butt exposed and boobies bouncing. She adored it that he liked her and not her clothes. He had her right around his finger and she loved it. She let him know she didn't mind it a bit.

Yet he was so touching when he wanted her to do something and she'd do it. One night, late at night, she even took off her clothes in Provo Park, right near the first Mormon Church, practically in the center of town. It was late at night. And they just sat there on the steps, her clothes on the grass, and maybe she danced a little, and ~~the passing cars didn't~~ ^{at most} ~~seem to pick her up with their headlights~~ and Gary even began to sing ~~after a while, singing away in a voice like Johnny Cash,~~ although not nearly as good of course, unless you were in love with Gary, and he sang Amazing Grace--

"Through many dangers, toils and snares,

We have already come,
Twas Grace that brought us safe this far,
And Grace will lead us on"--

while she sat beside him naked at two in the morning, on a hot Spring night, with the heat pushing in from the desert instead of the cold settling down from the mountains.

That night, very late at night, back in bed, they really made it. Just as the sex was going really good, he talked of putting his rough hands on her soft warm bootie and of breathing into her soul, and she came with him then, really came with him for the first time. It was just a few days after he had put the tattoo on her leg.

In the morning she sat down and wrote him a letter to tell him how much she loved him, and that she didn't want to stop loving him. It was just a short letter and she left it waiting out there by his vitamins or something. He didn't reply when he read it, but a night or two later they were walking by the same church right off Center Street, and saw a falling star. They both made a wish. He asked what her's could be. She wasn't going to tell him. Then she confessed her wish was that her love for him be constant and forever. She really wished that with all her heart. He told her he hoped no unnecessary tragedies would ever befall her. She had a rush of memories then like falling downstairs in a dream.

2

Nicole's first memory was of her parents being away. She was three or four years old. She was in their bedroom and her big brother came in and slammed the door. He told her that one of these days she was going to have to fuck somebody ^{in this bed,} When she grew up, that's what she was going to have to do. Nicole screamed at Rikki and didn't believe him. It was a terrible thing, she thought, for a six year old boy to say. Later, when Gary would ask her if she remembered the first time she did fuck somebody, Nicole paused in her reply and said, "Vaguely."

"'Vaguely?'" Gary asked. "What do you mean, 'vaguely?'"

"It wasn't that big of a deal," said Nicole. "I was probably eleven or twelve."

Telling him the truth became a way of taking a vow on their love. She would come to him as a virgin in the only way she knew--by the purity of her head. She would keep no memory away. Or leave any half-unhappy truth half-unsaid.

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Of course, she did not tell him all of it at once. Releasing the truth was a game. She enjoyed the way he understood that game. She told him sweet stories first, and funny stories, such as the one about the pet raccoon she had when she was six. It belonged to everybody in the family but she wouldn't admit that. She could remember walking to school with the raccoon on her shoulder and thinking she was ~~really~~ hot shit.

Or the time her mother cut her hair so short you could see the skin behind her ears. People used to think she was a boy. Boys especially thought so. She remembered one time when there were three or four boys on the playground and they all said she was a boy, and she proved to them she wasn't. Nicole ~~would~~ ^{ad} laugh at that memory.

Gary did too. ~~In terms of the game, she had a lot of fun.~~

Poss *(*
~~She used, she told him, to play hooky a lot. Sometimes she would just drift on up to the hill above the school. It was beautiful up there. She could sit in the middle of the pine trees and look down on all these little idiots in class. One time Nicole was being smart ass and instead of keeping to the woods, went walking back on the road. Just then her mother drove around the corner. There Nicole was. She could remem~~

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~~ber her mother saying, "All right girl. Get in the car."~~

She also remembered, when she was ten or eleven, writing a pornographic letter to a very nasty little boy who had a very dirty mouth. Now she couldn't remember why she wrote it, just that when she finished, she took one look, and tore it up. Kathyne fished it out of the garbage and taped it together. Then her mother told her how horrible she was. For a long time Nicole wanted to forget what happened. Especially since she had written: Okay, you talk about it so much, let's do it.

There came moments when Nicole thought her mother was very intelligent, for Kathyne could pick up on what other people were thinking. Nicole never believed Kathyne listened much to her own soul, but she could sure fasten in on others. If you lived around ~~her~~ ^{Kathyne} long enough you didn't have to think about something before ~~her mother~~ ^{she} would mention it. That gave her a way of telling people off that cut to the bone. Kathyne was a tiny woman but she would tell her big handsome husband with his beautiful black mustache that he was nothing but a slob, and she would tell him to go fuck the lady he had just spent time with. She could get downright rude about his drinking. When he came home from work, which was usually late, because he'd stopped off to have a few at a bar, he'd come in, well, it wasn't that he walked drunk or his speech was slurred,

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but he'd have a sort of half-smile on his face like Clark Gable, and Nicole could tell he was feeling good. Then Kathrynne would start, with just a few words, to fix his mood. She would keep going until she could get him to explode.

One time, it went in reverse. Her mom almost shot her dad. Kathrynne caught him coming down the stairs in some motel. He had a girl on the second floor. And Kathrynne had ~~gun~~ ~~maybe it was his Service pistol~~ ~~and wanted to shoot him.~~ ~~he was a career soldier~~ ~~threatened military~~ ~~WHAT--~~
But she didn't. In turn, Nicole's father would always accuse Kathrynne of adultery, her mother!--he was the first man ~~she~~ Kathrynne had, and she never had another one. But ~~her father must have been feeling so sorry at what he had done that he would go~~ ~~Charley Bacon~~ ~~Chavley~~ crazy with accusing her. Like once he got home late and nobody was there and he thought she'd gone off with the kids and a man. Instead she had just taken the kids to a drive-in movie. When they came home, Charley wouldn't believe it. He and Kathrynne got into a big fight, the kids ran out of the house and jumped in the car, ~~he~~ Kathrynne then leaped in to drive away, and Charles jumped on the roof of the car as it was pulling out, fell off, and broke his leg. That was when Nicole was around seven.

That was also when there were fights about money. Her

Gary had said he would like to meet her mother so Nicole didn't tell him about her recent fight with Kathrynne. The first time she visited her mother after she began to live with Gary, Kathrynne sure enough had to remark that this new boyfriend she hadn't seen was a little old, didn't she think? ~~And then~~ his having been in prison. That had to be a very good influence.

Yet when the meeting took place, it was amazing to Nicole how little did happen. Gary was very polite and stood at the cupboard holding ~~Peabody~~ ^{Joey} in his arms all the time. He just looked at everybody and drank it all in and didn't say anything, just kept staring like he'd been wound up to stay in position and just send light out of his eyes. "It was nice to meet you," he said to Kathrynne when he left, and Nicole

knew he'd also left a very uncomfortable feeling.

It was almost as if she loved him more because of the odd things people could do to him. He could be as stiff as a fourteen year old boy with the wrong people, and she understood it. She knew what it was like to be in prison. Nicole felt as if she had lived in prison too. Prison was being kept from doing something simple when you wanted to do it, like wanting to breathe and somebody else had a finger up your nose. When they took it out, the air made you crazy. Prison was being married too young and having kids.

Sometimes she couldn't even remember if she had told him a particular story already. It didn't matter. ~~Thoughts passed over to his head with only a couple of words to help them along, like jumping a creek from stone to stone. She even told it better when it went into his thinking on the leap of her thoughts as naturally as the sound of her words. Before she knew it, gone by tarnished gone,~~ she was telling him the story of her life. It took hours, night after night.

When she was eight or nine, she was still ugly in her own mind, a skinny little kid who looked like a gawky little bird without fuzz. Then suddenly in the sixth grade, she blossomed. She had the biggest boobs in the sixth grade. In fact, there

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was a time when she had the biggest boobs in the whole elementary school. Suddenly she didn't have to go looking for attention, it came to her. They called her Foam Rubber. She didn't like it. She knew why she was that well-developed.

Before she was eleven, she would not let anybody put anything in her, but she used to like to get naked, that is, for the good-looking boys. She would let them touch her anywhere. She liked getting attention from the best-looking boys at school ~~because she never thought of herself as popular at this time~~ ~~Boys didn't ask her out much on dates. She got a lot of put downs a lot of the time.~~

By junior high, Nicole was making friends with the worst kids. Some were the biggest troublemakers and some were just the ugliest-looking ones. She was sneaking out of the house and getting into trouble, stealing a lot, particularly stuff from school, things out of other kids' lockers. Once in a while, she'd get caught at it, and even if not, her parents and other people were always suspecting her. Everybody was dissatisfied and disgusted with her. Yet nobody was interested enough, she felt, to want her to be something better. That hurt. She had the feeling that if she was a good girl and went to church and got good grades, who would acknowledge it?

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She got into the nuthouse at thirteen. There was a far-out lady they sent her to for counseling after all this trouble, and the lady talked her into going. As Nicole remembered, they told her she would only be there for a couple of weeks but after she spilled the beans about making it with Uncle Lee, she stayed for seven months.

Right from when she started school, an Army friend of her Dad's lived with them, practically a built-in babysitter. He looked enough like Charley Baker to be his brother. His closest buddy, her father called him. Of course, her dad liked anybody who reminded him of himself, and Lee, the bosom buddy and boarder, was a mint image. The kids called him Uncle Lee even though he was no real uncle, or any kind of relative, no blood tie, but her dad looked on him as a brother, was a lot closer to him than to his own brothers. Since her father tried to look like Elvis Presley when he was young, you would have thought when seeing Charley and Lee together, that Elvis Presley was walking down the street with Elvis Presley.

No one in the family knew what Uncle Lee was doing to Nicole's head. She even thought she became a slut for a few years because of him. That was saying a lot. Her definition of a slut was nobody or nothing you wouldn't do it with. Dogs, donkeys.

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~~Wait~~, Uncle Lee ~~was nowhere now, but he~~ had lived in the house off and on from the time she was six, and Nicole always ~~blamed her mother and dad for Lee, or at least~~ blamed them in her heart whenever they condemned her. ~~On~~ ~~the~~ ~~fact~~, there were years when she couldn't look straight at her father ^{because} Uncle Lee had ~~just~~ ~~been~~ ~~up~~.

~~It used to happen off and on all those years when Lee~~
~~was living with them off and on.~~ There were so many times ^{when} ~~that~~ her father would work on the Base at night, and her mother would also work late, and her brother be asleep. Then Lee would start. Whenever it was late in the evening and her mother was out with her father, Nicole would know something was coming. She'd be watching television and begin to feel nervous while waiting for Lee to come out of the tub. Soon after, sitting in the living room with her, he would open his bathrobe and ask her to play with it. He called it, rubbing pee-pees. He would rub lotion between her legs and undress her. Maybe once in a while she would kiss him there. With the lights out, she never really knew what was touching her or what he was asking her to kiss. She would always be bashful at such times. After a while, it wouldn't even seem that unusual to be meek and answer him politely when he asked a question like, Does that feel good? She would say, Yes.

~~He would~~

She was twelve before she could tell him that he was not going to make her do it anymore. That happened one night while she was sleeping next to April and Lee came on, ^{her little sister} ready to whip it out. Nicole thought April was awake anyway, so she told him No. Then, to her embarrassment, Lee said he had seen her in the bathroom. He went into detail how he had seen the masturbating. He said, You're such a free spirit, you can do it with me. She said, I don't care what you saw, you tell the world. A little while after that, he went off to Nam and was killed, which made Nicole wonder if she had a curse, cause she had enough evil thoughts about Lee.

She never told anyone in her family what he had done to her. She had been afraid her father would go crazy. Or maybe not believe her. But she wondered why they couldn't have guessed. ^{These days,} ~~But~~ they seemed to know ~~her~~. Maybe the ~~niece~~ lady she told about Uncle Lee who sent her to the nuthouse ^{who} got around to telling them.

Gary was silent for a long time. Then he said, "Your old man ought to be shot."

"He sure could be blind," Nicole answered, "to what I was feeling."

"Are you sure you want to hear all of it?" she asked.

"I want to hear it."

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She could feel his strength as he spoke. At that moment, she felt as if he was the strongest man she had ever known, as if the best kind of steel was in his features and his blood. He was so good looking. The strongest and most sensitive face she had ever been near. "I'll tell you," she said, "I'll tell you all of it." Her life came out like one long continuous non-stop breath.

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3.

It was really only half a nuthouse and half a reform school. Kind of a youth home. It wasn't all that bad, except it was really lonely. Nicole felt crazy all the time she was there and locked up. It was crazy and ridiculous to her that she was locked up. Why are they keeping me here, she would ask herself, when I'm not nuts? So it was a sad place, a lonely place. You could laugh, but it would get quiet in the night, and she would feel lonely whenever somebody would scream.

The first time they let her home for a visit she went to stay at her grandmother's and was going to walk back to her mother's about a mile away, when some ~~some~~ ^{dudes} next door asked her if she wanted to party a little bit. So she stayed in that house with those dudes, a few days, and was in trouble when she went back to the nut-house for overstaying her leave. It took six more months before she could go AWOL.

~~She was a good kid by then as far as the nuthouse was concerned and so they allowed her downstairs to where the cokes were. One time, there was a real dopey old lady at the door and Nicole was able to take a walk.~~

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When she went AWOL, she

~~she got out the door, ran through the field, past the~~
~~fences, through a few backyards, found a fairly good sized~~
~~road and~~ ^{kk} hitchhiked over to her brother Ritchi's house where
she hung around with Sue and her brother for a few days, then
went with the guy who became her first husband, Jim Hampton.
Jim had had one date with her a year before and claimed to
be in love and wanted to marry her from the first night on.
She thought he was a big immature clunk, and was very con-
ceited about being superior to him. Yet every day she was
AWOL from the hospital, she went with him, ~~during those~~
~~couple of weeks.~~ She slept with him every night. She even
ended up staying at his parent's house.

Then her dad found out she was there and he came over.
He wasn't mad ~~or nothing~~. He thought it was kind of neat
she'd run away from the nuthouse, and got a chuckle out of
it, and suggested that she get married.

Nicole always felt as if she got Mack-trucked into
that marriage, which was a saying they used up in the nut-
house for when you got pushed into marriage by parties
larger than yourself. Besides, it was obvious to Nicole
that her parents wanted her off their hands.

On the other hand, even if she didn't like Hampton's
^{not} personality, or could be impressed much with his intelligence,

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she thought he was awfully good-looking. Moreover, her dad was telling her she wouldn't have to go back to the nuthouse if she was married. So when Hampton asked for permission, why Charles just said, "Let's go." Never did ask Nicole, just told her she was going. **She was Fourteen!**

He got in the car with Jim Hampton like they were old buddies--her dad wasn't even thirty and Jim was over twenty-- put her in the back seat and the car took off. Nicole knew damn well she wasn't gaining any freedom by marrying Jim Hampton. They drove along, drinking it up, and ~~Nicole told herself that she'd gotten into it and so might as well give it a good try.~~

~~Sitting in the back seat, and watching them drink, Nicole remembered a time when she was twelve years old and her dad took her to a bar that day. She thought he was showing her off, and then she found out he had a girlfriend in there, and knew damn well she wouldn't tell her mother about the girlfriend. Anyway, at the door, it said, No one under 21 admitted.~~

~~Her father pointed to the 2 and the 1 and he said, See, it says, No one under twelve, so you're old enough. She was flustered enough to read the numbers backwards, thought 21 was the number for 12, and believed him.~~

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~~Thinking of that now she had become fourteen, it was~~
~~all she could do to keep from laughing at her father and~~
~~Hampton drinking. In fact~~ her father looked so much like
his new bosom friend that she felt as if both guys in the
front seat, her father and her husband~~to be~~, had both been
her lovers instead of just looking like Uncle Lee, damn him.

Well, the trip turned out to be not too bad because they
stopped to pick up a friend of hers named Cheryl Kumer, who
drove up with them. And they went on to Elko, Nevada and ^{she} got
married, and lived ~~together~~ ^{with Jim} about four or five months.

Jim was never rough with her, but kind of sweet, and
treated her like she was a precious antique doll, or some-
thing. He was always pointing her out to the rest of his
friends who weren't married, and saying, Hey, look what I
got. You know? He didn't have a job and they were living
on unemployment and he wouldn't go to work. But then there
was a little money. Nothing major, but he really knew how
to do a finger-nail file. He could open coke machines.
Nicole thought that was fun even if she didn't wholly like
the idea of having to get their living in dimes and quarters.

~~It was fun all the same, sneaking around at night,~~
~~opening every coke machine from Lahi to Springville. After~~
~~three or four months, she was still faithful to him, which~~

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~~wasn't a bad trip because she was trying to wear her
languages. They went from too little to too much every way
you could figure it. She could never come in those days
even though she'd had enough experiences to keep another
woman for a lifetime. Which didn't let her forget that it
was not altogether Hampton's fault if she wasn't that happy
about him. She had another big secret she never told Hampton
which made two, counting this one. Maybe the second was~~

~~worse.~~ *telling these things to Guy*
In telling these things to Guy,
~~As she would talk, memories would come to fill her
with all that had been good in them, even if often there
was no more than the taste of sweet in a lot of sour. Some-
times she told Guy everything, sometimes she held the
worst parts back, although never if it was really important,
or she believed ^{what?} ^{- - that} he said he wanted to know everything
about her.~~

~~Who else could bear all the horrible details? Yet~~
the most horrible details as if they
~~he did. He took it in ~~as if~~ it did not matter. In fact,~~
he would tell her she was made of fantastic stuff. He made
it seem as if everything she had done, and others had done
to her, was okay again. Every way she had been bent out of
shape could come back.

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what happened at the

So she finally told him about the first time when she ~~first went to the nuthouse they let her out. She left the nuthouse on a home visit to her grandmother's, and got invited to that party in the house next door that she went to without telling anybody.~~ ^{house the}
~~Party next door to her 9.~~
~~First time they let her home from the~~
~~nuthouse~~

to the party

The guy that talked her into coming was about twenty-eight and there was booze and dope to smoke and she really liked him. He babied her, and paid a lot of attention, and kept her close by, and made love to her and left her feeling kind of mellow in the bedroom. Then he told his friends there was a sweet little thing in there, go talk to her. His friends did. Nicole was really hung up on the first guy who began to hint to her that she would be be-friending him if she would fuck his friends, you know. She wanted to please him.

Nicole felt a lot of things as it was going on. It was as if she took herself off to a distance, and just watched it. ~~It was hard to think about things, think out problems, as funny as that.~~

Bottom of all, she was proud, because even if the fellows were fucking her over to some degree, she was

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doing something her friends would be too chicken to do. That was exciting. So she got a little wasted and ended up in bed with just about every guy in the house. Maybe she was there for two or three days. She just never went out.

In the middle of it was when she met Barrett for the first time. He came walking into the bedroom, a skinny little guy she'd never seen before. There she was in bed by herself, on the second or third day, feeling spacey, and he walked in, and spoke to her from the hallway and said, You know you don't have to do this. Yes, he said, you're better than this, you don't have to waste it all. That was her first memory of her second husband, Jim Barrett. He was only there a few minutes, but she always remembered his face the way he looked then. And never could think of anyone else's face at that party.

She didn't see him again until a month later when they met in the nuthouse. He wasn't the least bit crazy but he had been AWOL from the Army at the time of the party and so his father had signed the papers to have him committed. The nuthouse was preferable, after all, to the stockade, and considering that Barrett came from a good respectable family, and his father had been a State Trooper before he became an

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insurance agent, the son had to be, from the point of view ~~of the authorities~~, a little nuts. She really fell in love with Barrett in the nuthouse. They were like almost the same two people. He was so cunning-looking, so really sweet, a real pussy cat. All smiles and all sweet, wearing cowboy boots, navy pants, tight shirts, well combed, well groomed, never full grown, just a little guy. Then they took him back in the Army and for the longest time, she never heard from him. So ~~when~~ ^{and} she went AWOL from the nuthouse, ~~it was~~ ^{and} ~~she~~ ^{married} the other Jim, Hampton.

Then months later, Barrett showed up one day. Was waiting for her in the parking lot of the supermarket. They were so happy to see each other. How could she get married on him? Didn't she love him? Hadn't they talked of living in a house of their own where nobody could hassle them? If she was happy with his guy she had married, then he, Barrett, would bow out. He loved her enough to wish her love and luck. But if she wasn't as happy with this fellow as she could be with him ^{...} it was a beautiful headgame he played on her and he kept it up. After awhile she just ^{first husband} ~~gave him~~ her hand and ran away with Barrett from her first ~~husband~~ ^{husband}.

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Iv. Nicole on the River

and sometimes she would tell him she had been talking to him for over an hour and he had been listening to everything, listening eagerly. ^{He} ~~He was like~~ he was a blind man who didn't know the back of anything, and she was describing things to him almost every day. As she longer he listened, the larger he became in just the way ^{he} ~~he~~ became very important, and they sit listening with such attention that it is as if they are filling themselves with your voice. So she told him more and more. Maybe not everything, but most of everything, and even enjoyed getting some of it out.

But when she got tired of this, and wanted to hear about his life, wanted his stories to hear, Gary could be unwilling. He didn't want to talk about himself. Not that much. Not at this time. He kept preferring to hear about her, as if her life was blood to him impoverished part of his brain. It took so long for her to realize the answer that

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1.

Her stories were long and they would wind everywhere, and sometimes she would realize she had been talking ~~Quiet~~ ~~by~~ for over an hour and he had been listening to everything. Listening hungrily. ~~It was like~~ he was ^{like} a blind man who didn't know the look of anything, and she was describing sights to his closed eyes. So the longer he listened, the larger he became in just the way ^a blind ~~person~~ ^{people} can become very important when they sit listening with such attention that it is as if they are filling themselves with your voice. So she told him more and more. Maybe not everything, but next to everything, and even enjoyed getting some of it out.

Yet when she got tired of this, and wanted to hear about his life, wanted his stories to hear, Gary could be maddening. He didn't want to talk about himself. Not that much. Not at this time. He kept preferring to hear about her, as if her life was blood to some impoverished part of his brain. It took so long for her to realize the answer that

when she did,
Nicole decided she must be stupid, ~~when she did~~ for the answer was simple. He had spent his adolescence in jail and just about every year since. So she might as well have been Parisian, or Chinese, for all he knew about the kind of things that went on in her little mind every day. He just hadn't grown up with sweet little things like herself.

In fact, when he would tell a story once in a while, it was usually about when he was a kid. She enjoyed the way he told a story. It was like his drawing. Very definite. While she couldn't even ~~always~~ remember who owed money to who, Gary had no such confusion in his mind. He just gave his stories in a few words. Like A happened, then B. Here am I--that's C. For example:

1. His seventh grade class voted whether they wanted to send out Valentines to each other. He was opposed to that. He thought they were all too old to send Valentines. It turned out that he was the only one in the class to vote against it. So, Gary then bought Valentines to send everybody. But nobody gave him one. After a couple of days he got tired of going to the mailbox.

2. He was passing a store at night that had guns in the window. He found a brick and broke the window. He cut his hand doing it, but he stole the one he wanted. His first crime. It was a Winchester semi-automatic that cost

\$125 back in 1953. Later he got a box of shells and would go plinking with that .22. "I had," Gary told her, "these two friends, Charley and Jim. They really loved the gun. I was tired of hiding it from my old man--if I can't have something the way I want it, then I don't really want it. So I said, 'If I throw the gun into the creek, do you guys have the guts to dive for it? It's yours if you come up with it.' They thought I was bullshitting. Then they heard a loud splash. I'd flipped the rifle just past a big old sharp rock four feet from the bank. Jim jumped for the rock but he hurt his knee. Never got the gun. The creek was too deep. I laughed my ass off."

C. For Whenever he had a

3. On his birthday his mother allowed him to choose between ~~being given~~ a \$20 bill or a party. ^{The day.} When he was thirteen, he picked a party and invited Charley and Jim, that's all. However, they took the money they had been given for buying him a present and spent it on themselves. Then they told him what they had done.

4. He soon had a fight with Jim. Got angry and beat him half to death. Jim's father, a rough-and-tumble fucker, lifted Gary off. Told his son to go out in the yard with Gary and finish. Jim backed down. So Jim's dad turned to Gary and said, "Don't come around here again." Gary just got

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on his bike and left. Soon after, he got in trouble for something else and was sent to reform school.

He would tell stories like that. He gave them no more. They were logical propositions. Like his life.

On the other hand, he was capable of the nicest changes of mood. Whenever his stories began to get too cut and dried, when it got too much like listening to some corny old cowboy who would cut a piece of dried meat into tiny chunks and eat them like food nuggets, why then Gary could amaze you. He had another side altogether. It would have been sentimental if the way he told it wasn't so neat.

3. On his birthday he would speak of his celestial guitar. He could play music on it while he slept. "It's just a big old guitar," he would tell Nicole, "but it has a wheel with hand spokes like a ship's wheel. In my dreams I turn the wheel, and music comes out of the guitar. I can play any tune in the world."

4. He told her about his guardian angel. Once when he was three, and his brother was four, his father and mother stopped to have dinner in a restaurant in Santa Barbara. Then his father said he had to go out and get some change. He'd be right back. He didn't come back for three

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months. His mother was alone with no money and two little boys. So she started hitchhiking back to Provo.

They got stuck on the Humboldt Sink in Nevada. In later years his mother would say she knew they were going to die in the desert. They had no money and had not eaten for the second day in a row. Then a man came walking down the road, and he had a brown sack in his hand, and he said, Well, my wife has fixed a lunch for me, but it's more than I can eat. Would you like some? His mother said, Well, yes, we'd be very grateful. The man gave her the sack and walked

a wheel with hand spokes:

I turn the wheel, and I will

play any tune in the world

Then he told her about

the way to Provo, and all the

things to do when he was a little

boy. Then his father said,

on. They stopped and sat down by the side of the road, and there were three sandwiches, three oranges, three cookies. When Bessie turned to thank him, the man had disappeared. This was on a long flat stretch of Nevada highway.

Bessie was a Mormon. That little event was only equal to her Mormon belief there are three men who have been here since the time of Christ, and they are empowered to help those in distress. When his mother was old, however, and arthritic, and his father was dead, she had to work in a restaurant bussing dishes off the tables, and the Mormon Church wouldn't help Bessie save her house. With all their money! So she lost it and lived in a trailer. Gary preferred to believe that the man who saved them on the Humboldt Sink in Nevada was not a Mormon saint but his own Guardian Angel. He very grateful.

He told Nicole about the time, a year later, when he was standing in a parking lot. There was snow all over the ground and his hands hurt in the freezing cold. It was then he found new fur-lined mittens on top of the snow right there in the parking lot. They fit his hands exactly.

Yes, he had had a guardian angel when he was a little kid. But it had left a long time ago. On the night, however, that Nicole walked into Sterling Baker's place he found his

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guardian angel again. He liked to tell her this when her legs were up on the dashboard of the car and her panties were off. He loved to tell her after he'd just shoplifted a bikini. Would she try it on? Would she take it off?

She loved being naked with him. It didn't bother her if somebody looked over from a car passing by. A big truck, for instance pulled alongside at the light, and the guy up in the cab looked down into their car, but Gary and Nicole both laughed because they didn't give a fat fuck. Then Gary lit a stick of pot and said it was going to be the best lid ever. As they took a toke, Gary said, "God created it all, you know. And we're going to end up with God again. Or whatever it is we created." That was as beautiful as it ever got. Was not a Norman saint.

But then the littlest things were beautiful. Things they did and things they only thought about doing. As for an example, the loud speakers. One night they had gone to the drive-in really early, and it wasn't even dark yet. They were the only ones in there. So Gary began to ride over the bumps between each row just for the fun of it, and then damn if this fellow from the management didn't come chasing them in a pickup truck and he was rude and told them to quit riding around like that. Gary stopped, and got out, and walked

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over to the guy and told him off until the fellow whined,
"Well, you don't need to get that mad."
Afterward, when it was dark, Gary got out a pliers
he kept on his belt and they drove around and clipped off
a couple of speakers. They made a point of clipping off a
couple of more each time they went to the drive-in. Those
speakers were nice things to have around. You could hook
one up in every room, and they would work great for having
music throughout your house. They never got around, however,
to installing them. They stayed in the trunk of her car. It
was beautiful just to think about them being there.

Two days, I went to get some...

Sometimes they went wandering up in the grass between
the nuthouse and the mountains. It had a nice hill there.
Even the idea of being up in the country behind the loonies,
gave Nicole a charge. What the hell. This was the same
nuthouse where they put her six years ago.

All these forgotten memories...

The kids didn't always like it too much and would get
scared at night when it would grow kind of chilly. A funny
chill. It would swoop in like a wind, and the mountains
above looked cold as ice. She and Gary would go there alone
then. What really, Gary got...

thing. It really got cold around there. Then he told Nicole...

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Once she was running around the place naked in the grass and he called to her to come back. Something in his voice made her tear all the way down and she couldn't stop fast enough and banged into him, hitting her knee so hard it really hurt. Gary picked her up then. She had her legs wrapped around his waist, and her arms over his neck. With her head on his shoulders and her eyes closed, she had the odd feeling of a new presence near her. That was certainly the word. The presence seemed kind of evil, and very black in the dark, but it came from Gary and she found it kind of half agreeable. She almost said to herself, well, if he is the devil, I want to get nearer.

you know. And we're going to end up with

It wasn't a terrifying sensation so much as a strange and strong feeling, like Gary had brought down a lot of spirits upon himself and was carrying them around in back of the nuthouse. Of course, those psychos and loonies behind all those screened windows could draw up anything out of the night ground. They might be a force when it came to calling spirits together. Maybe, Gary was a magnet to bad spirits.

She asked him there in the dark: "Are you the devil?"

At that point, Gary set her down and didn't say anything. It really got cold around them. Then he told Nicole

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that he had a friend in jail named Ward White who once asked him the same question.

Years ago, when Gary was in reform school, he walked into a room unexpectedly and Ward White was being butt-fucked by another kid. Gary never said a thing about it. He and Ward White were separated for years, and then ran into each other again in Oregon State Penitentiary. Then, they never spoke of it. Yet one day, Gary came into the prison hobby shop and Ward had just got hold of some silver. When Ward asked him to make a ring with it, Gary put the Eye of Horus into a design he copied from Egyptian drawings. He had seen them in a book called "The Ring of Osiris." Then Gary decided he wanted the ring for himself. He never mentioned the old memory; he didn't have to. Ward White just gave the Eye of Horus over. Nicole always thought of the ring as being taken from the kid who got butt-fucked.

Now Gary wanted to give it to her. He told her that every soul had a third eye in the middle of their forehead. The ring might help one to see it. He had her lie on the ground and lower her lids. He said she should look for the eye between her eyes--the eye that was usually closed. She must concentrate until it opened. When it did, she could look through it.

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Nothing happened that night. She was laughing too much. She kept looking for a pyramid in the center of her head, and saw nothing.

But on another night, she believed she did see the eye. She was shaken by the fact that she saw something open. It wasn't that she could glimpse anything much, it was more that answers seemed to come. Maybe it was the good lid they had smoked. At times she could see her life coming back to her through that eye and she even asked a question: Where does God come from? With it, Gary put the eye of

Gary now told her that he believed God was in everything. Evil was also a part of God.

That told her. It came down on her that Gary never acted like he was afraid of anything, and yet he seemed to expect something ugly to happen. It was like he would have to pay for his good luck in finding her, and wanted it to be over with, you know. She would think more and more about her past life these days as if it were the only education she could use, but so often her past life went by in her mind like a movie of herself floating down the river, seeing no more than the last time.

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2.

The day she left Jim Hampton, Nicole and Barrett headed out for Denver. It was a cold trip. They went to see a friend of his, visited for a week or two, then came back to Utah and stayed with his folks. Nicole kept trying to call ^{A.M.} Barrett, Jim, but that was also Hampton's first name, so she was more comfortable ^{calling him "Barrett."} His mother, Marie, was real nice, and took them in every way except one--(she wouldn't let them sleep in the house. Get yourself an apartment, or get married if you want to stay here, was the way she drew the line. Nicole didn't care. The happiest she'd ever been in her life was when she ran away and slept a few nights in an orchard, so she didn't mind staying in a Volkswagen on the street. It was Barrett who felt exposed. He found out from his father that Jim Hampton had been over with Charley Baker looking for them while they were in Denver. Nicole thought it was stupid that Hampton and her father couldn't mind their own business, but, as Barrett explained to Nicole, he wasn't built to be confronted with a physical challenge, so they found themselves another place and split.

Next:

~~they~~ they lived above a little bar on the main street in Lahi, a scungy little apartment where the stairway leading

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up was really bad with winos. They were right above the bar. At the end of the street was the desert and the wind whistled in from it. The main window looked out on the street. She could stand at the second floor window and watch her dad come in the bar.

Then one day her dad showed up at the door. Everybody had been looking for them, but it took her dad to find out they were not only in the state, not only in town but, in fact, right above his favorite hangout. When Nicole answered the door, her dad walked in and gave this shitty smile, asked how she was. Then Barrett came over, and Charley said, "Barrett, boy, I'm gonna cut your goddam balls off. I'm going to tear them out." He sounded like Clark Gable saying ever seen in her. Barrett said something kind of mild and cool like "Can we talk about it first?" Then he told her dad that he wasn't evil and loved Nicole very much. Nicole just kept looking Charley in the eye. Before it was all over, her dad went home peacefully. She could hardly believe it.

A couple of days later, the cops came and busted Barrett for being an improper person. That was the term for poor Jim -- Improper Person. She figured it was her mother, learning about it from her father, who blew the whistle. Anyway, the guy who supplied Barrett with dope to sell came along and bailed him out. Then it was Nicole's turn. She and Barrett

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sat up one night in a friend's van, eating orange sunshine out of a matchbox, and the next day passed all burned out and the next night they all took another hit from the orange sunshine and Nicole freaked. They were sitting parked on Center Street in Provo, the radio on and Grand Funk came on, the song with the sirens, and suddenly everybody's vibes in the van kind of blended. All of a sudden, Nicole felt herself winging down the road, just running, you know. Barrett took off after her, caught her, dragged her back, but he was feeling too loose himself. Nicole was unhandle-able. She was blowing it, freaking out and screaming. Barrett did a stupid thing and took her to the hospital, but they couldn't handle her. She began to run around telling the nurses how ugly they were. She was seeing lions and tigers on the wall. So they took her to the Youth Home.

The trouble was, once into the youth home, her mother wouldn't let her out. ~~Kathryn~~ told Barrett that if he wanted to marry Nicole, he had to pay the hospital expenses first. Otherwise, she'd be sent on to Reform School. Barrett had to say to his folks, "Just let me marry her. That's all I ever wanted," and talked them into putting up the \$180 that was necessary.

Her mother gave her a black dress to be married in. It was short and slit at the sides. That really affected Nicole, made her sad. She didn't feel it was appropriate

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getting married in a black dress at fifteen. She didn't say anything to her mother, but it also bothered Nicole that no one would even take a picture of them. She kept thinking, they've got a camera in the place somewhere, they might want a picture of us getting married. Nobody would take one.

Living with Barrett, sex was pretty much the same as with Hampton. She was a novice in those days. She wouldn't feel good nearly so much as she would make believe. Like she never got her rocks off until a month after she was married. Of course, she would no more start with Barrett than she would flash to that first time when Uncle Lee told her, if you stay up without your underwear, we'll eat marshmallows. She could be six again and on his lap. Now, that he was dead her memory was playing tricks. In her memory he got to look more and more like her father. So for the longest time, it was hard for her to realize that anything like sexual intercourse could let her feel good. In fact, whenever it went on too long and she felt sore and burning, or her breasts were tender from a mauling, it would simply feel the same as when she was a child. Right after the wedding, such memories were heavy. Still, she was crazy about Barrett. He was so sweet and a kindred soul. They swore to be poor but happy all their married lives.

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Of course, at the onset, they weren't that happy. Barrett had a big worry and came in with a rap to his father. It was real dramatic like a television series. Barrett's father, being an ex-cop, tended to buy it. "Look," Barrett told him, "Some guys fronted me a little dope and I blew it all, you know, I went and spent the money. Now, I can't pay, and they're coming down on me. I gotta get out of town." With that, he talked his father into getting him some wheels, so he and Nicole could get away. She was scared. But they now had a used van, thanks to his dad, put a mattress in back and took off. Only a long time later did Nicole realize Barrett had run a line on his father and probably wasn't in trouble at all.

They ended up in San Diego at an old wooden hotel called the Commodore, and she found a half-grown black kitten about to get run over in the middle of the road and went out and got it, and it was pregnant, and had kittens. She thought that was pretty neat.

It was a funny time. They were kind of happy and miserable at once. She had started to come with Barrett, and that opened her up to a lot of crazy feelings. She didn't dwell on telling this to Gary but it was like she was not there all the time and it reminded her of when she eleven years old and used to fool around with dogs. She

had been at a stage in life then where she also felt hot all the time, provided it wasn't people doing it to her but herself. It embarrassed her to think of the dogs now and she wanted to tell Barrett, but he didn't like to talk about sex nearly so much as he liked to experiment with it. They were having a rough time with money and welfare and the trip was in danger of becoming a bummer, so Barrett even played with the idea of selling her. It wasn't her so much as that he was a born salesman and just wanted something to sell. She told him she wouldn't mind too much at that point. It was right about when she learned she could get her rocks off, and so she was kind of ready to go out and do a little experimenting with the world. But after she considered it, she finally decided she wouldn't mess with Barrett's ego. He was such a jealous person.

Then they decided to leave San Diego and gave the cats away and drove back to Utah. When they got to Orem, they left the car parked right on an exit to the Interstate, and Barrett didn't even stop at his folks house, just mailed them a card telling them where he'd hid the keys to the van and apologized for being unable to keep up the payments. He felt funny, he kept telling Nicole, that his folks would get their card post-marked Orem all the while they were picturing their son in California.

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Now they hitchhiked around and went up to Modesto where they ran into a weird guy who had one eye all screwed up, and rented them a \$50 a month tiny cabin, it had cockroaches. They would turn off the lights, then turn them on to kill the cockroaches. She discovered she was pregnant there, and they had a fight whether they should have the baby. It was not going to work, he argued, but it was just a time of depression, no money, and cockroaches. Later, Nicole decided, it might have been a fork in the river. Because she wanted him to get a job, and he kept promising he would. Saying it and doing it didn't work out equal, however. Barrett got them a thirteen room house in American Fork for \$80 a month from a woman who was selling her place and wanted to be able to show it. He didn't work so much as he had his friends over and liked to party and got back into dealing. By the time Nicole was six months into pregnancy, the party didn't let up. One day the chief of police came over with the landlady, and they gave Barrett back half a month's rent and evicted him on the spot. He wanted to stay, but they put the money in his hand, told him to go. Pregnant like she was, Nicole was upset at having to go live at her grandmother's for a few days while he stayed with his folks. They owed a lot of money, and Barrett did nothing all day but get stoned

At that point, her dad came in from Midway on some business. Just joking, he said, "Want to come back with me?" She said, "Damn right!"

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That was how she left Barrett the first time, just took off in her seventh month as suddenly as she had left Hampton. On the airplane she kept thinking of early days with ~~him~~ ^{Barrett} when there was so much love she could even feel the things ~~Barrett~~ ^{he} was feeling. Feel the breath go into his lungs and know if it was sad or made him soft and warm. She and Barrett had been so much alike. Of course, such thoughts came only after she was able to get on the plane with her dad and had time to think. The onset of the trip didn't go that smoothly. She and Charley spent hours trying to get on a military plane to Hawaii, and kept getting bumped. One of the problems was that Charley didn't have her birth certificate to show how Nicole was his daughter, and so, she couldn't go on his military card. Being pregnant, she looked considerably older than usual. Since her dad always looked young, Charley appeared more like a boy friend or husband than a father, which got her thinking about Uncle Lee like crazy. For awhile she had the fantasy it was her father who got it in Vietnam, and Lee who had come back pretending to be her dad, so that she was really his equal. They were finally going to get it on like adults. Come to think of it, her dad always

treated her with the special courtesy you give a sexy lady. Maybe her thoughts were tickling his ear for Charley certainly got upset now at the idea of them being stuck overnight. "If I don't get my daughter on this god damn plane,"

he swore, "I'm going to hijack the son of a bitch." Then he walked out to the mess hall with her, and next thing they knew, four MPs came up, saying, Would you go with us, Mr. Baker? They took them right outside, and spread-eagled her father against the wall, shook him down, took him to jail. Left Nicole sitting back in the mess hall with eighty horny sailors, and only about three chicks in the whole place. When she went to go look for her father in jail, she saw the largest cockroach ever in her life. It looked as big as a mouse, and it came running out into the lobby where Nicole was waiting, ran outside. She followed it, down the steps, and around the building. She had nothing better to do than run along with her big belly following that big old cockroach.

Then her dad came out grinning from ear to ear. He now had everything all straightened away. Because of the mistake, they were now treating him and Nicole like king and queen and the red carpet was out. So she got to Midway in style. Her mother had no idea she was coming. When

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Nicole

walked in the house, Kathryne's eyes almost fell out of her head. Nicole remembered how skinny ~~she~~ ^{Kathryne} was, and how as she hugged her, there was something hollow-looking about

he walked out to the back hall. When he ran up his old
know. Now she came up, say, say. Finally worked up he told
they were their wives outside. He had even gone to work
against the... He was going to come
Nicole's father and the rest.

sailors, and only about three times on the phone, but said
when she went to get her father, cause he had brought her
the largest porchcoat ever to her on the fare and so
as a mouse, and it came running for mother.

Nicole was waiting, ran outside. She
steps, and around the building, up at the hospital anyway.
So that ran along with her big little take which his dad
all the way.

and flew over, went to the hospital on the
ground floor, found out what building she was in, and sat
that her dad was out. Father left the room,
now had everything all straightened. saw him, it was a very
... but she was happy he had come. He made a
and got... She couldn't forgive
way in style. Her mother had not...

Kathryne, as if it was all getting too much for her. April and Mike, who had just been kids, were now getting wild. In compensation, Nicole didn't even like to smoke in front of her for a couple of days.

When Barrett found where she was, he ran up his old man's phone bill. He got so emotionally worked up he told her he felt so much in love that he had even gone to work and had started a checking account. He was going to come see her.

Nicole talked to him lovingly on the phone, but said it would get her father in trouble, cause he had brought her over as a dependent by way of saving on the fare and so everybody thought she was an unwed mother.

Damn if Barrett didn't show up at the hospital anyway. He wrote a check at the airport in Salt Lake which his dad had to make good, and flew over, went to the hospital on the ground floor, found out what building she was in, and sat outside the window, as soon as her mother left the room, waiting to catch her. When Nicole saw him, it was a very short meeting, but she was happy he had come. It made a difference. Not a big one, however. She couldn't forgive him everything.

After Nicole had the baby, she got into a new kind of cycle. On Midway, she began to date guys that never had a piece of ass, or had never been laid right. That was in part because Barrett had convinced her she wasn't any good in bed, so she preferred to go with somebody who didn't know what good was. Of course, Barrett had his hangup, which was that he couldn't count on getting it up with any girl but her. So he could be jealous as a maniac in a kind of quiet way. Sometimes they'd be walking through town and some guy would smile at her, and Barrett would be convinced she had fucked the fellow, but would hold it to himself. Three or four days later, it would come out. Then he'd treat her like a slut. Make a point of the number of times she had been tooled before she ever met him. The cruelest innuendos about how big she was. She always wanted to reply that it wouldn't be so bad if he had something thicker than a finger's worth of dick. His member was thin, that was for sure. Still, it embarrassed the hell out of her. Occasionally, a little air would get in, and there'd be these embarrassing sounds. Maybe Nicole needed a period where she was just making it with guys who were absolutely grateful. Her ego could take a little boosting.

When
 him ever. By the time Sunny was four months old, ~~and~~ Nicole
~~to return - Utah~~
 came back from Midway, she had done lots of exercise and

come
 back
 when

was looking real good, brown and slim and feeling good about herself. The baby was beautiful, it was summer, and Barrett was there to greet her at the airport looking prosperous himself. He was moving a couple of pounds a day of the best grass and he wanted her back with him. She had a new rap, however. "I'm not your old lady," she told him, "and you're not my old man. I can do what I want to do." Still, she moved in. That was a summer when they got high all the time on the best THC and Cannibanol. She ~~she~~ really felt like fucking. Maybe that's when she began to enjoy sex, and Barrett became the guy she could get her rocks off with consistently, the guy with whom she was supposed to work it out. Maybe it was conditioned reflex, but Barrett could make her a little hot by walking into a room. The THC had mellowed her out and picked her up, and she felt like dancing all the time. (Except she started getting headaches whenever she was straight, and her teeth began to hurt, and her kidneys. Powerful stuff.) Still, it made for some awful good sex with Barrett. It seemed the longer she lived with Barrett, the better that sex got. Only it was lonely. Because better the sex, less he knew about her head. He just liked to be the big man, letting people come in for what they needed. He enjoyed walking around like the dealer that people were watching. He was

By the time Sunny was free of personal troubles, too.

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a real actor. It was just that karma was a blank to him. No way to get to Barrett about Karma. Nicole gave him a book "A World Beyond" by Ruth Montgomery Ford. He told her later he read it, but that's absolutely all he said. Such a comment wasn't much for a man as smart and quick-witted as he was. It certainly did no good for Nicole, since that was the summer she was also getting kind of suicidal, what with smack and Cannibanol. She had one nightmare where she thought[†] she'd died, and the impression lasted for a week. In the dream she took pills and laid down in a grave dug in the desert. It was comfortable, and dark outside. She just lay there getting sleepier. When her last seconds came, a complete soft blackness also came over, and she welcomed it. Just as she slipped into the blackness, she woke up. Death had spoken to her and said, Come to me.

She was so shook up she told Barrett how death was something she wasn't afraid of. I would always welcome it, she said. He said, Hey, look, I love you. You're much too valuable. But he didn't have anything to give her on the subject.

They began to have a couple of personal troubles, too. One night, feeling as horny as the hot summer night, she went

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up to him in a sweet little way and said, "Why don't you sleep on the couch and give Vaughn a break," Vaughn being the partner staying with them. She just wanted to sleep with Vaughn, and it freaked Barrett out. He lay down on the couch, and Vaughn got in bed with her, but Barrett was so pissed, he took off in his car, then came back about 15, 20 minutes later, told Vaughn to get out of the bed, and Vaughn went back and lay on the couch. That seemed to be the end of that.

A couple of nights later, Barrett must have started figuring this is what she really wants, you know, because he took her to a party up the Canyon and went out of his way to share her with a couple of friends. After that, Barrett kind of broke down. They had a big fight and Nicole threw a machete at him which missed. It went through the screen door. Then she threw a hammer--that went through the kitchen window. Then they broke it off. She took Sunny, and went to live with Rikki and Sue at her great-grandmother's house.

That only substituted one misery for another. She never got along worse with Sue who actually made off with a pair of her shoes. Sue always left shitty diapers around and Nicole kept giving her a bad time for that. The house stank.

Before too long, the scene blew up. Rikki and Sue came in on her making love in her great-grandmother's bed with Tom Fong, a Chinaman. He was nice people and made good money ripping off his boss in a Chinese restaurant, and he wanted to marry Nicole. Just another man in her life who wanted to marry her. Anyway, it wasn't even her great-grandmother's bed, but her great-grandmother's ^{Father's} twin bed, and she had been dead for months. She'd taken ~~Tom Fong~~ ^{Tom Fong} up there for some privacy -- he was giving her massages, which was his specialty and Rikki and Sue just happened to walk in. After Tom Fong left, there was a terrible argument and Rikki promised to knock her on her ass if she ever talked that bad to him again. Then an aunt and uncle came over and were horrified at how it had taken place in that bed. Her aunt was so mad she wanted to fight. One word, she warned, and she'd beat the shit out of Nicole. Her uncle got so mad, he was shaking from head to toe and wouldn't listen to anything she said. Then he called her a whore, and actually hit her across the face. She got out with Sunny in her arms and left, threw a bunch of stuff into a pillowcase, diapers, baby food, bottles, found a back-pack, took off. A guy picked her up. He was driving to Pennsylvania. She didn't care where she was going. The fellow had busted up with a girl not long before. Nicole didn't know if she liked him or not, but he sure needed somebody. So she took off with him and they

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ended up living together in Devon, Pennsylvania, where he made a pretty good living in his leathercraft shop. They talked of getting married. He was a real performer in bed, and worked very hard to please her.

to marry Nicole. Just when she was about to say yes, she thought of her mother. She'd been with her mother for years, and she'd been given the message that after this affair, about 1960, and for years afterwards, after she'd been out to there was a terrible argument and in the process of it, her mother had said to her, "I never did love you, but then an aunt and uncle came over really so horrified at it had taken place in that bed, and they were so mad they wanted to fight. One word, she was up, and she'd been shit out of Nicole. Her mother said, "God, he was all from head to toe and wouldn't let me do anything and then he said, "I'm a fucking idiot and you were right on the face. She got out with Sunny in the morning and before long, she'd a bunch of stuff into a pillowcase and there, there were bottles, found a book-pick, and a guy picked her up. He was driving to Pennsylvania and they were on the way, and she was going. She talked to him at her life, and she was almost before. Nicole didn't know what to do and him or any had tried to, and to make him understand that she was faithful. She

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This fellow, whose name was Kip Eberhart, proved difficult to live with, however, after she told him about herself. It provoked his paranoia. Now when he was out to work, he worried that Nicole was in bed with a guy in their very trailer. In fact, she never did have anyone there, but she couldn't convince him. It really messed her head up. What bothered her was ^{at} that she did have thoughts of bringing in this or that stud to while away an afternoon.

Kip went to ridiculous lengths. He even accused her of going to bed with a fat old man who came to work on the trailer and had a face black from dirt. Occasionally, Kip'd beat her up. Oh, Jesus, it was shit. It hurt Nicole that she loved Kip and he was such an asshole. Maybe that hurt her more than all the other guys put together. Later, considering she gave a year of her life to him and he almost took her mind away, she was bitter about him. She had tried so hard to make him understand that she was faithful. She

...and so happy for both of them. They were
...a baby he kept saying and she felt disgusted. She
...didn't want to spend the rest of her life with this guy.

She had never known how to keep from getting pregnant.
In fact, this second time she only knew that while she was
got to despise him for hitting her. He was only a little
guy, small and wiry and stoop-shouldered, so they had some
pretty mean fights, she even came close to winning a couple.

Nicole was seventeen when she found out she was preg-
nant again. The moment she told Kip he was so happy for
she could cry. Besides she never thought about it much.
What he was just a kid and growing up with Sunny. She
in this even getting a marriage until Sunny was a year old.
Nicole started thinking about it. She somehow knew she
wasn't going to get pregnant. But after she'd been with Kip
for a while, there was a student nurse who lived nearby and kept
telling her to make an appointment at Planned Parenthood. By
that time she finally got in an appointment, it was to learn
she was carrying a baby.

Telling Kip made it worse. He was so happy that she
took a long time trying to believe she was also happy. It didn't work.

himself, and so happy for both of them. They were going to have a baby he kept saying and she felt disgusted. She didn't want to spend the rest of her life with this guy.

She had never known how to keep from getting pregnant. In fact, this second time she only found out ~~while~~ she was pregnant while she was in the Planned Parenthood Association building near Devon, after going over one fine day to get an IUD. Nicole had never taken pills, or watched the calendar. She had read how at certain times of the month you get pregnant more than other times, but didn't know when. She'd read about it in different places, and they seemed to mention different days. Besides she never thought about it much. Hell, she was just a kid and growing up with Sunny. She hadn't even gotten a diaphragm until Sunny was a year old. Merely started thinking about it. She somehow knew she wasn't going to get pregnant. But after she'd been with Kip a while, there was a student nurse who lived nearby and kept after her to make an appointment at Planned Parenthood. By the time she finally put in an appearance, it was to learn she was sure carrying a baby.

Telling Kip made it worse. He was so happy that she began trying to believe she was also happy. It didn't work.

Impossible to discuss it. He would sit there with his beautiful black beard and his curly hair and all he could say was "I love you." He loved her enough for both of them. On and on. He became so emotional she couldn't handle it. But then he was always difficult to listen to. He'd start to say something and it would take hours for him to get two words out. She'd have to sit there waiting, a smile on her face, wanting to say, I'm not a mindreader, you know. But then it was worse when she could tell what he was going to say. He would still drag it out. She would just sit there waiting and waiting. She couldn't be that loving and affectionate to wait for hours for Jesus Christ to get out his two words. That made her want to escape as much as anything.

Plus the paranoia. He sure had a lot. Every so often he would say somebody was following him, or some trouble was going to catch up. Weird messes. He'd explain it, and say, See, you know? She wouldn't see anything. She couldn't see at all.

In any case, she said goodbye and took the Greyhound to Utah. Twenty-four hours after she left Kip, she was in bed with a nice guy she met on the bus. It wasn't a big deal, but he made her feel relaxed, and she laughed and talked.

After all, she wasn't in a real big hurry to get back to anything.

Coming in from Pennsylvania pregnant, she thought about having an abortion. All the time, every day, all day. But she was afraid to. She had kept putting it off until it was too late. She couldn't bring herself to kill a baby. She loved Sunny so much, and she had had Sunny with Barrett who she couldn't stand any more. So she couldn't see killing a new baby she might also love like that.

When Jeremy was born, there was nobody with her except the doctor, and her mother's kid sister, Aunt Kathy, who was terrific. Kathyne and Charles were in Hawaii where he was working on a Navy base.

It was a premature birth and so fast and easy, even if it hurt like crazy the last few minutes. She kept thinking of Kip whom she'd just seen the day before. He'd been just passing through Utah, he claimed. He had driven out from Pennsylvania, but he made a point of saying he hadn't come out only to see her. She knew that was so she wouldn't be angry and think he was still checking up on her. Anyway, he had no address. Maybe he really was just driving around. There was no way to call him when the baby was born.

Barrett, however, was on the spot. Later Nicole couldn't believe the games he had played with her. Even though he knew

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it was Kip's kid, Barrett came to the hospital. She'd been living with Barrett a little bit since she'd come back. It was a tricky scene. They were living together, but she was trying to get him to sign papers for a divorce. All the while he was playing his little game about how hurt he was, and how much he wanted her. He was not himself without her. They were going to be a family yet. It was bullshit as far as Nicole was concerned, but solid enough to keep her on and off with Barrett.

The day after she had Jeremy, there he was at the hospital. Even though they'd very recently told each other to go to hell. Barrett said that when he saw Jeremy, he felt the boy was just like his kid, it even felt like his son.

Nicole decided to live with Aunt Kathy after she got out of the hospital, and Barrett kept coming around. Still, she felt as if she were getting out from his subtle clutches. In the meantime, Jeremy had been so premature, she had to leave him at the hospital. She would hitch-hike over to see him about every other day.

Barrett would thumb a ride with her. He carried on over the baby. He told her how it didn't matter to him. He really wanted her, new baby and all. But she didn't care the way he did. It was very emotional for Barrett but just

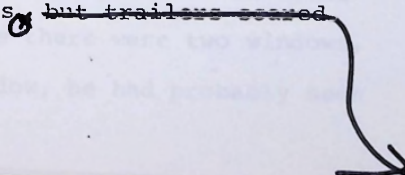
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an everyday thing to her. Their life together, that is. She said, well, I'll live with you for a while.

Being two months premature, Jeremy spent something like four weeks in an incubator. She had to admit that Barrett really seemed to like going to the hospital, putting on the white shirt and mask, and looking at the baby. He had never had that with Sunny.

Nicole just enjoyed the hitchhiking. Up to the time Jeremy was born, she had been working full hours in a motel, changing beds and scrubbing bathrooms. That was about all she'd command, considering she had finished the seventh grade and went through bits and pieces of the eighth. Anyway, she finally called Kip in Pennsylvania. She wanted someone besides Barrett to relate to the fact she had a baby. Kip couldn't believe he already had a son. He thought it was still weeks away. Anyway, he didn't stammer a bit, and was so nice on the phone that she decided to try again with him. She waited until Jeremy could come out of the hospital, then took a plane Kip paid for. After she got back to Pennsylvania, however, she still kept thinking about Barrett. Jim was maintaining that confusion by sending little postcards and gifts. Terrible to say but she was not without second thoughts.

She and Kip lived in the same trailer as before. It was a pretty place up in the mountains, ~~but trailers seemed~~



Nicole. Fires broke out easily, which made you worry about the kids. In fact, before Jeremy was born, they'd already had a fire. Everybody thought it was a miracle they got the flames out before it all went up. Nicole had seen the smoke, and Kip hassled with the fire.

For those first few days back in the mountains, however, it was beautiful. Her best honeymoon with Kip. It lasted until the second day he was back at work in the leathercraft shop. She been busy with the kids and the place was a bit messy, at least the front room, so she was rushing back and forth picking things up, sticking them under the couch. He really liked the house clean. If it didn't look right, he always thought she'd been fucking off for the day with some guy--at least that's how he'd been before. So she was trying sidesaddle to pick up when Kip came in.

Nicole was standing there waiting to kiss him, but he didn't look at her. Instead he began to squint. She had that horrible sinking feeling. She had seen that look before.

He kept prowling around the house. Then he went into the bathroom. As she strolled by, Kip was in the hamper looking over her underwear for gunk. It was really gross. She kept trying to get him to say what made him so suspicious. Finally he told her that he'd seen two people walk in front of the window as he drove up. Since there were two windows, the inside window and the storm window, he had probably seen

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two shadows, but he wouldn't believe there was nobody but her in the house. He swore to God he'd seen two people. That was enough to get her screaming.

Back in Utah everyone in her family carried on how lucky she was to have a girl and a boy. Nicole didn't think it was that great taking care of two kids when she didn't necessarily want one. Her main feeling was getting to be that she had missed out on a lot.

Once again, Barrett met her at the airport. They talked about old times and went to his pad and listened to some favorite records. He moved in her stuff. Barrett had told her he had been getting this very house ready for her and wouldn't bother her. But in fact he had a couple of friends staying with him, and they were blowing dope, and he kept putting off leaving. After a few days, he got mad and said it was his fucking house. Right on. Back with Barrett and nothing to do about it. No money, no car, no house, two kids. Her parents were home from Midway and they offered to let her stay, but she didn't like to come home whipped. Besides they were having their own problems. Charley had had to resign from the Navy because of a mess the kids got into, and April was starting to flip out. It looked like they were all going to be graduates of the nut house. One education or another. Anyway, her own life was

too fucked up to listen to Kathrynne and Charley fighting.

Right about now, Barrett's business fell in on him.
~~There was a cop in Springville who pulled him over every~~
~~time he passed. Any excuse to search him. The cop'd say~~
~~that Barrett's license plate wasn't screwed down properly.~~
~~Whatever. This time he got pulled over late at night having~~
~~a tail light out. The trouble was that Barrett had shot up~~
~~100 wads or speed, done a hit of coke, and made the mistake~~
~~of thinking he was alone. Just before he left the house,~~
~~however, he had put on some pants lying on the floor, and~~
~~there was a core of speed ⁵ down in the bottom of the~~
~~pocket. He didn't know till after the cops pulled him over.~~
~~There he was outside, his hands up on the car, being searched,~~
~~and he was just fine, real high. As he told it to her later,~~
~~he was looking down, you know, and the cop was searching~~
~~and pulled out the packets. Barrett looked down to see~~
~~this little baggie of whites, about 25 or 30 whites. The~~
~~cop held it in his hand and Barrett grabbed it. He should~~
~~have popped it in his mouth but instead he threw them as far~~
~~as he could. Oliver Nelson, the cop, handcuffed him at that~~
~~point, and started searching the area, dragging him around~~
~~by his handcuffs. There was snow on the ground and it was~~
~~hard to find whites in the snow, but Barrett could see Nelson~~
~~wasn't going to give up till he'd found what was thrown.~~

~~After a while, Barrett was able to locate the whites. They had hit a telephone pole and bounced back. Finally, Oliver got him close enough, and Barrett tried to squinch them quietly into the snow but when he went to stretch his leg, the cop felt it, found the whites, and took him down to the station.~~

Barnett Rikki came over and paid the \$110 bail and brought home. It was like two in the morning. Took him home to Nicole, and she wasn't mad at that point. She was really understanding. But Barrett was in trouble. They packed up their stuff in the next couple of days and moved to Verno, Utah. It was the end of business for awhile.

there was a cop Barrett drove up that road heading home. So pocket. He did a big fight. He seriously tried to beat the There he was over. Instead she got hold of Sunny's toy chair and he was pretty good. He had black and blue marks he was looking. Therefore, she didn't leave. It was too after and police look at him. this later on. cop held it in a while, she'd think about going back to school have stopped for a few phone calls, or wrote letters to a couple or he could. But whether Barrett or Rip, it didn't matter, they print money. Yeah, yeah. Rip, especially, had to tell her she by his parents to go to school. He could support her. She loved to say they saw her as a stupid chick who was nice to call when she was home, hell, she was always following a guy around the

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By now Nicole was letting things slide, really smoking grass, doing a lot of speed. Things didn't bother her as much. Barrett was driving oil trucks in Verno, which is to say, he would get a job, lose it, get another. He had a short fuse. ~~He~~ in fact, could tell his boss to go to hell without much provocation. Once she did get so desperate for a little security that she tried picking both kids up and moving out, and was walking down the street with a few belongings when Barrett drove up that road heading home. So they got into a big fight. He seriously tried to beat the shit out of her. Instead she got hold of Sunny's toy chair and marked him up pretty good. He had black and blue marks everywhere. Therefore, she didn't leave. It was too agreeable to look at him.

Once in a while, she'd think about going back to school and even made a few phone calls, or wrote letters to a couple of places, but whether Barrett or Kip, it didn't matter, they would say, Yeah, yeah. Kip, especially, used to tell her she didn't need to go to school. He could support her. She decided they saw her as a stupid chick who was nice to call their own, hell, she was always following a man around the country.

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Then Barrett talked her into moving again. At least, so she thought. Barrett borrowed a truck and started to transport their stuff. Before she knew it, he had sold the furniture, their stereo, her blow-dryer and the lamps. He took the money, bought drugs to deal, and took off. Furniture or no, she got registered in school, then picked up some money from welfare to rent another trailer. She got something like \$130 a month for Jeremy in stepchild support, and lived in a little trailer court, away from everything, just a small store. She loved her privacy there. With Barrett gone, it was kind of a happy time in her life. Only the rent, \$90 a month, bugged her. She didn't have enough left for food and began to get uptight again. shit out of her. instead

and picked him up again.
 ~~she~~ Along came a guy named Joe Bob Sears, a lot older than
 ~~she~~ Maybe he was only thirty, but he seemed ages older.
 She felt more sensible about him than she had felt about anybody up to then. He was straight. Been through some pretty heavy-duty things, but now he was trying to straighten his life out, and was going to church. She went with him for a few months before they got married. Two weeks later, she learned he was a sadist. He truly liked to be rough. She had to get used to the new Joe Bob sitting on her and smacking her, spanking her. She found out all that two weeks from the day they were married, after learning nothing about this side of him for all the three or four months of sleeping

with him before they got married. For all that time, she only knew that he took good care of himself, worked hard, and really liked her kids. He had good ideas on how to raise kids. In fact, Joe Bob was better with Jeremy than she was. Somehow she'd never been able so far to love Jeremy like Sunny. Maybe because she had gotten to hate Kip so much for fucking with her head. Even when ~~the baby~~ ^{Jeremy} was four months old, he'd start to cry and she'd pick him up. If he didn't stop, she'd throw ~~him~~ ^{him} back in his crib. She never hurt him, but still she was thudding him against the mattress and spanking him once in a while. Joe Bob actually treated Jeremy more like a human being than she did. So she had to face into that. Maybe it was because Joe Bob had a child enough left of his own that he'd hardly ever seen.

After they got married, Nicole and Joe Bob left Sunny her. Nicole and Joe Bob left Sunny and Jeremy with Charley and Kathryne, and took ^{off} for Mississippi. His father was dying there of cancer, and Joe Bob wanted to visit. Nicole had a funny kind of respectability with her mother this visit. She was being approved of in a marriage for once. They took off with her parents' blessing and headed for Joe Bob's home. There they spent a nice week before the stuff started.

One night Nicole got the shock of her life. Joe Bob's folks had the biggest butcher shop in town, and they kept a

few cows for their own use, back in the barn. On this night, Nicole happened to be out in the barn and she looked through the planks and on the other side of a small fenced-in enclosure was a calf sucking on her husband.

Once in a while, Joe Bob had talked funny about books where he'd seen pictures of a chicken fucking a dog, crazy things like that, and he had wanted to know if she'd ever seen such a picture. He had a male dog that made her nervous, because the dog hated her so bad that Joe Bob used to keep him in a cage, or put a muzzle on him when he tried to get the dog used to her. Never worked. Joe Bob would say queer things about animals, but she just let them slide. Now, she could say to herself, Man, what am I doing here? Yeah. Really. At that moment Nicole said to herself, "I'm going to be a loser forever. Face it." She was shivering with the thought it had all come to visit her because of the time she fooled around with a dog when she was eleven.

for a What gloom. She had to pretend to herself she hadn't seen Joe Bob with the calf. All the while, he was talking about taking over his father's butcher shop. They'd be surrounded by animals then. Dead ones. It turned out his father wasn't sick the way Joe Bob had let on in Utah, but

ready to retire. They were even going to go back and pick up Nicole's kids, then come down to Mississippi again. Nicole felt trapped worse than ever.

Fifteen minutes after they got back to his house in Utah, there couldn't have been more trouble. They walked around the house, and his little trailer was gone. Joe Bob knew immediately who had stolen it, since he had ripped it off the guy in the first place because the fellow owed him money. Now it was gone. Some of his animals were out of their cage and running around wild. The house was being repaired and there was paneling being put up, floors torn, floors lifted up, sinks being put in. It was all supposed to be finished, and nothing done. Joe Bob was out talking to the cops. Nicole was standing at the door, and had a splitting headache. The kids, whom they'd just picked up from Kathyne and Charley, were crying, and she heard the cop explaining that possession is nine-tenths of the law and there wasn't much Joe Bob could do since he'd never taken legal possession of the trailer. Then Joe Bob came back and started explaining it to her. She said, I know, I know. I heard. I don't want to hear. She swore she was faint, and didn't want to talk. He began to get rude. She began to get rude back. She must have said something to set it off because fifteen minutes after they were home, he picked her up and threw her across the room.

Then he came over, picked her up and threw her again. There were mattresses on the floor, but she bounced off a few walls. Was that how it felt to Jeremy?

Then he sat on her, and he choked her, and said he wasn't having any more of this. He wasn't having any more of that. He was telling her how she was his slave now. Nicole had never been in such a situation before. He was over 200 pounds and most of it up in the back and shoulders. She didn't dare lift her finger. One time, she put her hand up to protect her face, and he thought she was trying to hit him. Man, for that, he flipped out, and sat on her for hours, smacked her now and again when he felt like it. He kept her in a little room for a few days while the kids were in the front room. He halfway fed the kids.

splicing here and there. She said, "Joe Bob didn't lock the door, but she still couldn't leave that room. He wouldn't let her. She cried a lot. Sometimes she screamed. Sometimes she'd sit there for hours. When he would come in, he would cuff her for making noise. Then she wouldn't let any emotion come over her face, or make a sound. She would act like he wasn't there. She knew she would leave as soon as she could, but he kept her there. Gave the kids a meal or two a day. Only allowed them to come in the room with her once in a while. Joe Bob also fucked

her a lot during these times--no change in his habits there
--and called her Poopsie and Baby Doll and Honey. Sometimes
she'd scream and holler, other times act like it wasn't
happening. After a while she remembered he had a gun and
wondered how she could get hold of it. She wanted to shoot
him. It was a hand gun and huge. That was what kept her
going. That she could find the gun and kill him. She made
it clear that he could wipe her out but she wasn't going
to stay with him. Never.

About as soon as he realized she meant never, between
God and herself, never, he said, "We're getting a divorce."
He took her to the courthouse and then to his lawyer's house
and said to Nicole, "One word of complaint, and, lady, I'll
get you when we're home."

When they were done at the lawyer's office and she
realized she would have to go back to Joe Bob's house and
spend even one more night there, she freaked out. Her
voice got hysterical about how she didn't want to go back
with him. The lawyer's secretary was there, but didn't
do anything. And the kids were in the car. As soon as
Joe Bob got her down the road a little ways, he started
smacking her, you know. The kids were climbing in and out
of the front seat and he threw them in the rear.

Well, it went on, maybe another week. He'd only punish her once or twice a day now, even allowed her to go out in the yard. He even left for work. She suspected a trap and didn't move at first. But after a couple of days she took off one morning and went to the bus station. It was Jeremy's first birthday. She called Sue Baker who came and got her and let her stay for a few days. Then Barrett was over to rescue her once again. He always showed up when there was nobody else in the whole fucking world. He knew it. He loved it. He was the only one who would help her out of the worst situations. Prince Charming. They lived with the kids in a little tent on the lawn of a friend of his. Then they got an apartment in Provo and had Christmas together. All the while she was trying to make it clear to Barrett she didn't want to live with him, and he was trying to convince her she did. Finally they had one more fight, one more fight, and Barrett split to Cody, Wyoming with a friend of his also named Barrett. ^{Perfecto} That was just after she found the house in Spanish Fork, the house that was like something funky out of a fairy tale.

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IV Gary and Pete

182

(with Nicole,

1.

(Gary had moved in)

(How many?

~~THE~~ WEEKS AFTER

On the second Saturday in June, they lost their babysitter temporarily. Rosebeth had to go off with her parents to visit relatives and so Gary and Nicole needed somebody bad. ~~Now that [unclear] [unclear] in the car,~~ they had plans for the ~~the~~ weekend.

little
his cousin

Gary got the idea that ^{little} Annette Gurney, Tony's daughter, might be available. He was working that morning over at Vern's shop lettering a sign when Annette came into the store with Ida. ^{Annette} ~~she~~ was staying with Vern and Ida for the weekend while Tony and Howard Gurney were ~~off with Brenda~~ and Johnny on a short vacation in ^{Elko} ~~Elko~~, Nevada, with the slot machines and the ~~the~~

Ida was opposed to the idea of Annette babysitting for Gary. Her grand^Edaughter might look sixteen, but ~~she~~ was twelve. It was too much responsibility for Annette to look after two little kids by herself.

Gary didn't relinquish the possibility. While taking cans of paint from Vern's store out to his car, he asked Annette to help. As they were moving the stuff, Gary said he'd give her \$5 to babysit. She wanted to, she told him, but couldn't. Then she smiled and told him she had a present ^{for him} and took it out of her pocket. It turned out to be a plaque. She had painted it expressly for Gary in appreciation of a couple of painting lessons he had given her. It had a little photograph of Fonzie in part of the plaque. Annette said that Gary reminded her of the Fonz. Gary was so pleased he gave Annette a peck on the cheek, and put his arm around her. They strolled down the street hand in hand while Gary kept trying to talk her into talking Ida into agreeing on the babysitting.

Pete Galloway, who rented a cottage back of Vern's house, happened to be coming into the shop as they were going out and he noticed Gary and Annette walking closely together and he didn't like the sight of it. ~~There had been bad feeling already between Gary and Pete. On that April day, back when Gary had just gotten out of jail, and was taking up Vern's concrete curbing with the sledgehammer and the crowbar, Pete Galloway had been watching from his window, and was impressed with the amount~~

~~or work Gary put out in two days. So, first opportunity,
he invited him to a church dance.~~

→ Pete, as Brenda later told Gary, was more religious than anyone under God. It was like he had come out of the shell a little wobbly. ~~So he had a tendency to take people around the neck and get them to pray with him. He was also an immense fellow, six three, heavy, a little blown out around the middle and he had a big dough-faced friendly expression that looked at you so intently through his eyeglasses that you could hardly ignore him.~~

~~Maybe that was why~~ he had no sooner come into the store when the picture of Gary and the young girl began to bother ^{him} ~~him~~. He went back out to the street and walked after them, and saw that Gary had Annette leaning against a wall while he talked to her, and his arm was on the wall. He was chatting with her as if trying to make a lot of points as fast as he could. Pete went back into the store. "Ida," he said, "I think Gary is propositioning your granddaughter." Ida came to the window and saw Gary and Annette strolling back, hand in hand.

home

When Tony came ~~in from Elko~~, Ida told her about the

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episode. Ida was very upset. *she had already* ~~Three months ago, while~~
~~confronted Gary's~~
~~Annette had been staying with them, the child had been~~
~~hit by a car right in front of the hotel next to their house.~~
~~The car was hardly moving and it was nothing serious. Still,~~

Maybe that was why she had no account
store when the policeman Gary and the y
to bother him. Doubtless, I went down the
walked after them. I think Gary ran
against a wall when I talked to her. I
myself. I was sure that Gary was
lot of points as far as I could see. I
store. "Ida, I don't think I'm
your granddaughters. I came to the
and Annette's. I don't think I'm
Annette gave Tony a look like she was apt
When Tony came to the Elms, I don't

~~she had been staying with her grandparents and she got hurt.~~
~~Now, this, Ida didn't want Tony to think something had to~~
~~happen to Annette every time she visited. So Ida was out~~
~~spoken with Gary.~~

~~"I don't know if that was the right thing for you to~~
~~do," she said.~~ "You just stay away from Annette."

~~Wein said. "I don't ever want to see anything out of~~
~~the way."~~

"Mama," Annette said to Tony, "honestly, we didn't do anything wrong. I gave Gary the plaque, and he gave me a little kiss on the cheek."

"Well, why did you walk down the street with him?"

"Because a big red bug--the biggest beetle I ever saw-- was flying by. We just followed up the street looking at it."

"And you held hands."

"I like him, Mama."

"Did he touch you anywhere? Did he kiss you on the mouth, or give you anything more than just an affectionate kiss?"

"No, Mama." Annette gave Tony a look like she was nuts to ask.

~~When Tony talked to Howard about it, her husband said,~~
~~"For one thing, I don't think Gary would try anything in~~
~~front of the shoe shop right on the sidewalk. For another,~~
~~Vern would kill him."~~

~~Finally Howard said, "Honey, I don't think there's any-~~
~~thing to it. Let's just watch, and be kind of cautious."~~

~~Next day~~ ^{Wanted} Vern told Pete that Gary had said he was going to punch him out real good. ~~Pete should watch it.~~ Vern said, "If Gary comes in and wants to start a scrap, I don't want that in the store. You go in the back and fight it out." ^{Pete} ~~was~~ ^{an immense fellow, six-three, heavy. But he} didn't want to fight, he didn't believe in it. He knew Gary had been in fights before, and he'd heard all about ^{Gary's} trip up to Idaho and the man he put in the hospital. So, Pete worked with an unhappy heart. He didn't want to fight anybody. He had too many responsibilities. Besides ^{working} ~~this particular job he was doing for~~ ^{in 1st store} Vern to pay part of his rent, he ^{held} ~~was also working~~ at three other jobs. He was employed by the Provo School District to take care of the swimming pool, he was a part time bus driver and he cleaned carpets on the side. He was also trying to get back in the good graces of the Mormon Church and that made calls on his time. Moreover, he was doing his best to help his small beautiful blond ex-wife Elizabeth with the multitudinous finances of raising seven kids from another marriage.

~~What with all that, he was tired all the time. And this was not even to mention his various nervous breakdowns which required hospitalization and lithium treatment. It wasn't comfortable when a man as big as himself had a nervous breakdown.~~ Just thinking about getting into trouble with Gary, stiffened up Pete's muscles and back. *Pete already had had*

Monday, in the lunch hour, Pete was working in the shop, when Vern said, "Here comes Gary."

He looked just the way Pete had pictured him in his mind--all steamed up, the ugliest expression you could encounter.

trip up to Idaho and the man he got.

Pete and Gary started by saying, "I don't like what you said about me the other day. I want an apology."

Pete said, "I'm sorry if I upset you, but I can't apologize for what I said. My ex-wife has girls around that age, and I feel..."

Gary interrupted, "Did you see me do anything?"

"I didn't actually see you do anything," Pete said, "but the appearance left no doubt in my mind what you were thinking." That sounded too strong, and so he added, "I apologize for what I said to Ida. That was wrong. Maybe I should have kept my mouth shut. I apologize for talking too much. But your interest in the girl still didn't look

honest to me." Pete just couldn't step all the way down ~~was convinced~~ when he ~~is~~ he was part right. "All right," Gary said. "I want to fight."

Vern was right there and told them, "Out back, not in here." There was a customer in the store.

Pete was exhausted. He sure didn't want to do this. But he walked to the back of the store a step or two ahead of Gary and tried to get himself psyched up by remembering some of his own little feats of strength. He ~~had been~~ ~~break stay until he shot himself in the foot by accident at the age of fifteen, and some~~ thought of ~~that~~ and how he had won the high school state title for the shotput. He had done construction work and knew his way around weight-lifters --Pete was concentrating to build himself up to an idea of strength as large as his own body, when, just as he reached the rear door to the yard, he was slammed on the neck from behind, and almost went down. He staggered and he swung around, and as Gary rushed, ~~he~~ ^{Pete} caught ~~his head~~ ^{him} in a headlock. Immediately, ~~he~~ ^{Pete} dropped in that position right to the floor. That was a lot better than boxing. Then he proceeded to bang Gary's head on the cement. Keeping the grip put a great deal of pressure on Pete's ribs, and his glasses broke in their case. Next day Pete even had to go to the chiropractor

for his neck and his ribs, but he had Gary now. He could see Vern standing right there and observing.

The bind Pete had across Gary's face was so tight that Gary began to bleed from the mouth. Pete said, "Had enough?" He was thumping Gary's head on the floor^{or} with a regular beat.

Vern thought that if Gary had wanted to stand up and punch nose to nose, he could have whipped Pete. But here the guy had got the hold and was using all his 220 pounds. That hold was the luckiest thing in the world for Pete. Gary could hardly breathe. He was just going "Oh, ohhh, ahh, ahh," mumbling. That was about all he could manage. Vern waited a minute, cause he wanted Gary to get what he was getting, then he said, "OK, he's had enough, let him up," and Pete undid his grip.

strength, as I can see his own body,

Gary
He was white in the face and bleeding from the mouth. He had a look in his eye. It was as mean as any look Vern had seen.

Immediately Vern cursed him out. "You asked for it," he said.

"That was a rotten thing to do, hit somebody from behind."

"Think it was?"

"Call yourself a man?" Vern got him by the arm. "Get in the bathroom. Clean yourself up." When Gary just stood

there, Vern pushed him directly into the bathroom. He didn't push too easily, but Vern pushed him anyway and then Gary turned around and said, "That's the way I fight. First hit counts. Get the job done."

"First hit," said Vern. "But not from the back. You're no man. Get yourself cleaned up and go home."

Pete started collecting himself. He was shook up too. When Gary came out of the bathroom and still wanted an apology, and looked ready to fight again, in fact now looked ready to do anything, Pete walked over to the telephone and picked it up. He said, "If you don't leave right now, I'll call the police."

There was a considerable pause at this remark, and the air must have echoed the determination in his remark, for, after a pause, Gary most certainly left.

Pete made the call from the pay phone anyway. He didn't like the look in Gary's eye. When a cop came, he filled out a preliminary report and then told Pete to come and file another report at the station. Which Pete did.

Nor were Vern and Ida altogether opposed to this. They told Pete that Gary was getting more out of line every day. So, Pete went ahead and got the name of Gary's parole officer, Mont Court, and gave him a call as well. When Mont Court said,

that Gary came from another state, and so he wasn't even sure he could send him back to jail that routinely. Pete had the feeling that the buck was being passed. Mont Court was listening to him just cause he had to listen. Pete began to think that Gary wouldn't be arrested unless he really worked at it.

That night, Pete went to visit his ex-wife Elizabeth. "The next time it happens," he said to her, "Gary is going to kill me. He wants to fight all the time." Elizabeth was ~~tiny and voluptuous and had a fiery disposition and was wiser than~~ ~~far as far as Pete was concerned for she had kept happy spirits~~ ~~through a hundred personal~~ ~~troubles~~ ~~Now she told him to~~ ~~never mind and just ignore it.~~ ~~air~~ ~~But Pete said no.~~ "It's a certainty," he said. "He's going to kill me. Either me or somebody else. I know what he's going to do." ~~He told her he was really sensitive to the~~ ~~agitation Gary had inside him. The way Pete saw himself, he~~ ~~was highly sensitive. It was part of the equipment God had~~ ~~given him to be that sensitive. But if Pete got involved with~~ ~~too many heavy physical things in life, then he could not~~ ~~continue to be that responsive to things without having a~~ ~~breakdown. He tried not to have breakdowns any more. So he~~ ~~told Elizabeth,~~ "I want to put him back in jail. I want him there where he won't harm anybody. That's where he belongs, and I'm going to press charges."

to think that they would 2.

wonder at it.

That night, Peter went to visit

Next day at work, Gary's mouth was swollen and his face discolored.

"What happened?" Spence asked.

"Ah, I was drinking beer," Gary said, "and a guy said something I didn't like. So I took a swing at him."

"Looks like the guy got the best of it," Spence said.

"Oh, no. You ought to see him."

"Gary, you're on parole," lectured Spencer McGrath.

"If you're at a bar and get in a fight, they'll throw your tail in jail. Then there's a world of trouble. If you can't handle a drink, leave it alone."

Later that morning, Gary came over to him. "Spence, I thought about it," he said quietly, "and I believe you were telling me for my own good. I'm going to quit drinking."

~~Spencer agreed. He tried to reinforce the lecture.~~

~~Suppose that he, Spencer McGrath, went into a bar, had a few drinks, got into a fight, and the police came and threw him~~

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~~in jail. He would be in a fix, right? But that would never
be nearly as much trouble as if Gilmore got thrown in. That
would be a direct violation of parole.~~

~~Gary asked, "Spence have you ever been in jail?"~~

~~"Well, no," said Spence.~~

~~This day,~~ Gary was expecting Nicole for lunch but when
she did not show up, he sat down next to Craig Taylor, the
foreman. They had gotten to be friendly enough to eat to-
gether time to time. It worked out well because Gary liked
to converse and Craig never said a word more than he had to,
just flexed his big arms and shoulders over his medium-size
body. Today, Gary began to speak of his prison days. ~~He~~
~~and again he would go on about that quite a lot. This morning,~~
~~what with the pop talk from Spence, may have been one of~~
~~those days. Gary's friend, mentioning that he knew~~
~~Charles Manson.~~

Name dropping, Craig decided, blinking his eyes behind
his glasses as he looked at Gary. They were sipping beer,
and Gary was always a lot braver when he had a few beers.
"Once I killed a guy," said Gary, "in prison. He was black
and big and I stabbed him 57 times. Then I propped him up
on his bunk, crossed his legs, put his baseball cap on his
head, and stuck a cigarette in his mouth. That day I had a

fight with three other black people in a row. Just to let them know I was there. I called them niggers."

Craig noticed that Gary was taking pills at the time. A white downer or something. Fiorinol. He offered Craig one. Craig said he didn't want any. Since Gilmore was drinking, the pills didn't seem to make much difference in his personality.

Nicole's visit made a change, however. She came in just as they were done eating, and took Gary aside. Craig could see how the two of them looked upset about something, and were squeezing each other's hands. Then they gave each other a big kiss and said goodbye. The big kiss didn't impress Craig. He knew that was Gary's way of showing he had a beautiful chick and everybody better know it. But the squeezing of hands. Craig did think of that a little.

~~Afterward, Gary acted odd all afternoon~~

~~Craig had sent him out with an eighteen year old named Gary also, Gary Weston, in a 2-ton truck loaded with material to insulate a house. The work consisted of first blowing a plastic coat into the walls, then the insulating material, dry work for the nostrils. Somewhere along the afternoon, Gary dropped into a store, lifted a six-pack and began drinking on the job.~~

Gary said: "That test is for kids. I'm a grown man and it's beneath me."

Spencer tried to get him over this. "The law," he said, "is for everybody. They're not picking on you." He tried to explain to Gary that nobody was singling him out. "If I were in some state and didn't have a driver's license they would make me take it too. Do you think you're any better than I am?" Such sort of conversation.

"Excuse me," said Gary at last, "I've got to call Nicole." As he walked off, he said, "Real good advice. Thanks, Spencer for the good advice." Quick to get away

beer. During her visit, Nicole had told Gary that Mont Court had come by the house in Spanish Fork that morning to tell her that Pete was pressing charges of assault. Gary was in big trouble if the charges weren't dropped.

Gary told her not to worry about it.

As soon as she left Gary, however, Nicole began to worry. She couldn't believe that he might go back to jail. It was like a doctor had come to the house and told her they were going to amputate her legs or take out an eye. It was weird. The Parole Officer, Mont Court, had been a big good looking kind of innocent-looking Mormon, like he was captain of the swimming team or the tennis team, kind of blond and

and just a little strait-laced. He had been embarrassed terribly by her sister April who was sitting in Nicole's Mustang when he arrived, and must have liked his looks, or just been too warm--who knew what April was ever up to--but she anyway took off her halter, and was sitting with her bare back up against the car window when he came out. He made a point of walking around the back of Nicole's car so he wouldn't be caught staring at April's bare breasts on that quiet street. Nicole would have loved to be able to laugh at that moment but she was sick with panic.

Seeing Gary did not reassure her. She knew the way he felt. He was not that far from slaughtering Pete. She decided she better go over and talk to Galovan herself. During her visit, Nicole had

had come by the ^{Pete} Grubby. ~~He~~ lived in a little cottage and it stank. She had told him that Gary had his problems and was trying to straighten out. She said the last thing that would do anybody any good was to send Gary back to prison. All the while, Pete was dressed in a smelly T-shirt and dirty pants. He just kept telling her a lot of stupid things. He said Gary got him pretty good.

She tried to keep calm and say sensible things. She wanted to explain Gary to him and not get real upset. Pete, she told him, this guy's been locked up a long time. It takes a while to get used to being out.

But Pete Galovan was rude. He kept interrupting her all the time as if he didn't want to hear. Just a big plain old oaf, a rude person. "The guy is dangerous," Pete said to her. "He needs help." Then he added, "I've been working hard long hours, and I shouldn't have to take this kind of thing. He treated me badly. I'm now in pain."

She kept working on his sympathy. Pete would understand what she was saying, she said to him. He could see that she loved Gary, and love was the only way to really help a guy.

"Love," said Pete, "is the only way to bring in the spiritual power of God on a situation."

"Yes," said Nicole.

"But it's a tough situation. Your man is far gone. He's a killer, I believe. He wants to kill me."

At that moment, Pete was looking so ugly to her that she finally said, "Even if you go and press charges, he'll be out on bail. He'll have a chance to get you then." She kept her eyes on him. "Pete, even if they lock him up right away and he doesn't have a chance to do anything, he's still more important to me than my life. He's a hell of a lot more important to me than your life. If he don't get you, I will."

She had never said anything she meant more than that, and she could feel the shock come over Pete as if he were bleeding inside over every part of him, past and present.

~~Now he sat on the bed of his little cottage room feeling~~
~~dirty and stale from sleep, exhausted from the way he needed~~
~~his sleep, all those jobs beating him into fatigue and death~~
~~and there was Nicole across from him saying that she was~~
~~ready to kill him if he pressed the charges.~~ # Pete felt so
 miserable, he could cry. ~~It didn't scare him at first so much~~

It hurt him that this girl who he judged to have a good
 heart inside and a hectic rough life on the outside, ~~this~~
~~girl who was humble and would like flowers, and yet liked~~
~~excitement too much, this girl who wasn't frivolous and was~~
~~looking for a man~~ could yet dislike him so much she could
 kill him.

Four months later, he moved over to Venn.

the ~~fact~~ he also knew he was scared. Elizabeth was depending
 on the money he would give her. He didn't have time to mess
 with this problem. Under the fear, he also felt pricked in-
 side. Nicole loved Gary so much she was willing to commit
 murder for him. It hurt that no woman had ever loved him
 that much.

He thought about it, breathing in all the sorrows of
 his thoughts, and felt sorry for Nicole and touched by her.
 "Well, relax," he said, "calm down. Maybe you're right.
 Maybe the guy deserves another chance." Pete said, "I'll
 drop the charges."

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He got on his knees. "With your permission," he told her, "I'd like to say a prayer with you."

Nicole said okay.

"It's for both you and Gary. You're both going to need it."

He prayed that the Lord have mercy on Nicole and Gary, and bless them, and that Gary get some control of himself, and the Lord help them in what was ahead. Pete didn't remember all the things he said in the prayer, or even if he held her hand while he prayed. One was not supposed to remember what was said and done in prayers, for it was sacred at the moment, sacred only for whoever was there, and not really to be repeated.

When Nicole went out the door, there was a very calm spirit in the room and Pete felt happy enough to go over to visit Elizabeth. But by the time he got there, he was upset all over again. He could feel horror all over the city of Provo. The kids were in the room, but he didn't care. He sat on the couch and told what happened with Nicole and he began to cry. Pete said, "He's a very dangerous man and he's going to kill me." The more Pete got upset, the less Elizabeth would show. She just told him again to cool it, and let things take care of themselves. If Pete wanted to press charges, to

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Early Sunday morning, lying in bed, Gary came to talking about Jesus. He told her of a book read in jail called "The Passover Plot". It gave the idea that Jesus was a revolutionary and many of his miracles were tricks any good magician could have done. For instance, the miracle of the fish. Jesus probably did it at night with a lot of fish buried at his feet. Multitudes of people might think he was feeding them from a single fish, but he was digging into a sizable catch one by one.

A little later that morning, he asked Nicole to shave her pubic hair. He had been asking that for the last couple of weeks. Now she said, Yes. She was thinking as she climbed into the tub. "It really means something to him."

He came and helped. They were using a big pair of scissors, and being careful, and smiling a lot back and forth.

Nicole felt bashful, but also thought it was the thing to do. He sure wanted it. She was not so much afraid of cutting the hair off as of what it might look like naked.

Afterward, he carried her from the bathtub to the bed and they had a session. It was the second time she had an orgasm with Gary and she knew it had something to do with being a six-year-old pussy again. When her memory flashed to Uncle Lee, it even helped to carry Nicole over the place where she usually slammed into the wall and stopped.

In any case, that little shaved old tooty certainly made a hellion out of Gary this Sunday morning. Ever since that thing with Pete, he had been adoring her twice as much. It was like he truly trusted her now.

Once in a while Nicole would think of Annette and didn't have any doubt that when Gary had given her that peck on the cheek, he could have been having thoughts. ~~He did love girls that age. But~~ Nicole was also certain that no matter what was going through his mind, he would never do anything physically ~~not to Annette.~~ ~~So from Nicole's point of view,~~ Pete ~~still~~ had been out of line. *But Gary did love girls that age.*

fish buried at his feet. *their 00-year-old baby-sitter,* he was Sometimes, late at night, after Rosebeth had sent her little cousins home and only she was there with Gary and Nicole, and Sunny and Jeremy had been put to sleep, ~~it became obvious that Rosebeth was mooning over Gary. She would~~

sigh just looking at him. First, Gary would kiss her a little, then Nicole. After a couple of evenings, it got to the point where they had their clothes off, and would lie around in bed. (203)

He came and helped. They

You couldn't call it an orgy exactly. Rosebeth remained a virgin. She was ready, however, for just about anything else, and it got sweet between the three of them. Nicole really liked the idea of giving this gift to Gary. He was really digging it.

Then, for Nicole, it got a touch spooky. When Rosebeth would come over, Gary would close the doors and windows. Since the neighbor kids were used to hanging around, they began to get curious: so did the neighbors. God knows what they heard. It wasn't all that quiet. Nicole began to get a little paranoid. After all, Gary could blow his total shit. If it ever came out now that he was fooling with minors, back to the slammer. It began to enter Nicole's head that while she was only nineteen herself, it could hurt her too. They might take her children away.

It was like a heavy burden.

around Rosebeth, Rosebeth was sweet and just like a little kid. She was so innocent. Nicole loved that. Loved the way everything was new to Rosebeth. Sex had never been new to

TRIAL & ERROR. FOR

Nicole. How beautiful it would have been if she'd been introduced to sex the way she was introducing it to Rosebeth. Of course, Gary could get very demanding with the girl and order her to suck him good, stuff like that. Yet Gary all the while was real happy. It turned him on the way the girl would tag along, and had this tremendous crush on him. Also, it was exciting to watch Gary make her blossom. Nicole adored the look in Gary's artist's eye when he would stare at both of them under the light without clothes.

Then Nicole had to face another problem. While Gary was at work Rosebeth would still come over, and Nicole would want to get it on with her. She wondered if she was moving into that side of sex a little deeper than she cared to.

Once in a while Nicole would have any doubt that when Gary left school, he could have been having the sex. But when she was going through his mind, he was really, not to mention, it from his still had been out of line.

Because Rosebeth was so young. She was so innocent. Nicole loved

[illegible]
 [illegible]
 COURT, [illegible]
 her to [illegible]
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 too [illegible]

4

after Nicole's visit to Pete,

A couple of days later, Gary stopped off after work
 to pay Val Conlin for the Mustang. Since he had already
 missed one fifty-dollar payment, Val Conlin was upset. Of
 course, it was no big incident. Half the people to whom Val
 sold cars were delinquent one time or another in payments.
~~It was just part of the ongoing hell of a success story~~
~~that was his life.~~

~~In the last fifteen years, Conlin had gone from be-~~
~~ing general manager of Great Salt Lake Chevrolet to owning the~~
~~Lincoln Mercury dealership. Then he got into a suit with~~
~~the Ford Motor Company and won the son of a bitch for a~~
~~million dollars. After settling for the real amount which~~
~~came to somewhat less, his attorney and his partner put the~~
~~money in the stock market without his knowledge. So now he~~
~~was in another suit, and everything was tied up. He had~~
~~gone from being the largest new car dealer in Utah County~~

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~~to being the smallest used-car dealer in Utah County. One~~
~~hall of a success story. V.J. Motors, now occupying what~~
~~used to be a drive in restaurant, sold more very old cars~~
~~than recently old cars, sold them off the lot for a little~~
~~bit down. The reason you could watch them.~~ Welfare,
divorcees, ex-cons, people who couldn't buy a car anyplace
else. Those were his clients.

Val was a tall slim guy with eye glasses and a keen
and friendly face. He had the build of a golfer, relaxed
shoulders and a bit of a paunch. He was dressed this day in
polyester red-checked pants and a pale-yellow sports shirt
and Gary was grubby with insulation whose powder coated his
face, his nostrils, and his clothing. Kind of a pale yellow
to match Val's shirt.

Conlin ~~gave~~ gave Gary a lecture about missing the fifty
dollar payment. ~~Val's desk was in the showroom, which~~
~~used to be the kitchen and counter of the drive in restaurant.~~
~~It~~ wasn't large enough to show any cars. There were just
a couple of desks, plus anybody who was there. Salesmen, or
people coming in to pay over an installment on their car,
could hear everything there was to say.
was in "Gary," Val declared, "I don't want to go out and start
knocking on doors. I told you how it works. We try to set

a rate that people can handle. We all agreed you could handle fifty bucks every two weeks. So don't give me this manure you're going to come in and pay me a hundred dollars next week, or two hundred next month. You've got to start bringing the money in on time."

"I don't like this car," Gary said.

"Well, it's not a real slick car," said Val.

"It gets left at the intersections by every other heap. It's a bad car."

"Hey, partner," said Val, "Let's get it straight. When you buy a car here, I'm doing you the favor, you're not doing me a favor. You can't buy from anybody but me."

"What I really want is a truck."

"You better get the payments in on time. Once you pay this off, we can swap for a truck. But I want my fifty, Gary, every two weeks. Otherwise, you walk."

Gary cashed his paycheck and gave him fifty dollars.

That night Nicole and Gary had a bad one in bed. It went on too long and once again he was three-quarters erect, half-erect, it finally went real bad. Like they were each beating with their fist on a door. Gary got up, got dressed, stomped out of the house, and went to sleep in the car. ~~It made Nicole mad as hell that he had walked out, and it didn't help that he woke the kids up en route.~~



She told herself that if she was going to mellow him out, she'd have to calm herself down. There had been other times, after all, when he just blew out of the house and sat in the car. Usually that was when the kids' noise was drilling him. She knew from what he told her that the level of noise in prison was always high, and his ears were over-sensitive. Somehow with all the years he had put in, he could never get used to the noise. Sometimes he believed that was why he hadn't studied as much as he thought he would in prison, or worked on his art.

you lay a car noise, I was a car noise. Now she managed to get the kids together, changed them, gave them warm milk, tucked them in with middle of the night pats, and went out to the car. He was sitting behind the wheel like a god of stone when she went out to him. She did not talk for ten minutes. Then she slipped a hand over.

Gary caught his payment.

Once in a while, Gary would talk about a dream he kept having of the guillotine. ~~On this night~~ ^{Now}, sitting in the car, he spoke of it again. He believed that once in another life, he had been executed, had had his head chopped off.

In the dream, there was something about Oldness. About something really ugly and old and moldy. As he talked, she had a chill. She was thinking of how, if he fell asleep

in the daytime, he would often wake in a real cold sweat, and would speak about another dream where he was put in a box barely long enough for his body to fit. Then he would be put in a hole in the wall. It had a small door like an oven.

On the next weekend, Gary was helping Sterling Baker move some heavy stuff out of the shoe shop and ran into Vern. They looked at each other. Good Lord, Vern said to himself, he is giving me one dirty look. They stared hard at one another and Gary said, "You don't think I'm much of a man, do you?"

"No, I don't." Vern turned and left him. He did not feel any way good toward Gary, yet he did. Part of him kept saying "Walk up and shake his hand." He wouldn't.

Same day, while Tony was visiting Brenda, Gary dropped by. Tony certainly felt uncomfortable. She didn't know what to say. She wasn't about to accuse Gary--poor Gary had been accused of enough things in his life. On the other hand, she didn't think it was right to let it all ease by unspoken. Annette was a beautiful young lady and Gary could have had intentions.

She went into the kitchen to get another cup of coffee, and Gary chose to come out of the bathroom then, so they were obliged to look at each other.

Gary said: "Tony, you haven't mentioned this thing with Annette." She answered, "Gary, I feel if there's something to say, I'll say it." He smiled and took hold of her hand and said, "Hon, I'd never hurt you or your family." There was a silence. Tony believed him. That is, she believed she could accept what he said. Still, she also felt she wasn't going to let Annette be alone with him. There was always the other possibility. So, she said, "Gary, I believe you, but I'm a mother first." He smiled and said, "If you weren't, I'd be disappointed in you." She could see he understood that she would not trust him completely with her daughter. He gave her a kiss on the cheek and walked back to the front room.

~~Brenda tried to amuse Gary by telling a story about Val Conlin. In the old days when Val had the Lincoln Mercury dealership, he always acted like a big shot at the Riverside Country Club. He was the type to snap his fingers at the waitresses. Brenda had been working his table once and she thought Val was being kind of brusque to her. Brenda said, "How'd you like me to drop this soup on your head."~~

~~Val said, "How'd you like me to get you fired for that last remark?"~~

~~"I'd tell my boss you were lying," she said.~~

~~Gary laughed. He made a play of enjoying the story.~~
He hugged her and lifted her up in the air with no trouble.

Considering, Brenda thought, that she was 155 pounds at that point in her life, he was awfully strong the way he could lift her. He might be a little slow and awkward in his movements, just a little like Frankenstein, but he sure was strong. How had he ever lost the fight to dumpy Pete?

Gary must have been sitting in her mind. "Brenda," he said in that soft patient voice that would look to educate you, "it's not through yet. In prison you don't leave things like that undone."

VIGary on the Slide

Gary on the radio

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1.

the following Saturday,

On Memorial Day, Gary and Nicole planned to take a trip into the canyons, but both Mustangs were having trouble. It made Nicole think that their luck might be near taking a bad turn. Up till now, she wouldn't complain about the luck, ^{didn't dare to after Pete,} but all last week, Gary's car had been dead every morning in a row. Having to get it pushed made him late for work. ~~In fact, he even decided on this Saturday to visit Spencer McGrath who might know how to find what was wrong.~~

Spencer, however, said right off he probably needed a new battery. Gary said, "There's nothing wrong with the battery."

Spencer said, "How do you know?" Gary said, "well, I looked at it and it looked all right." Spencer told him, laughing, "You can't tell by looking at a battery."

They went out, and, sure enough, the car wouldn't start. Spence went over to the shop, got some tools, checked it out. The reading was awful low. Spence connected a set of jumpers and started the engine off his pick-up. "The battery," he said, "has a dead cell in it, or a short." Gary said, "Well, what am I going to do?" Spence said, "Buy yourself a new one. You can get a battery for twenty to thirty dollars, along in

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there." Gary said, "Gee, I don't have that much money." Spence said, "Well, you got paid just yesterday." "I know," said Gary, "but I made the car installment, and a couple of other things, and there's not much left." Spence said, "How will you last till Friday?" Gary said, "Well, I probably can make it. I just don't have enough to buy a new battery." Spencer loaned him thirty.

Gary came back in half an hour. He had gone to K-Mart and bought a honey for twenty-nine-ninety-five. With tax, it was thirty-two dollars. Spence said, "You had to take a couple of dollars out of your pocket?" Gary said, "Well, yes." Spence said, "Gary, you only had a few dollars before. How are you going to get to work this week?" Gary said he didn't know. Spence gave him another five for gas and Gary said he'd get it back to him next week. Spencer said, "Pay the car off first. Then we'll work it out."

problem, he learned on Saturday, was a

The dead battery ³ was the beginning of ^{7a} the real run of rotten luck. ¹ ~~A couple of nights later, Gary went to pick up Nicole at driver's training school, thinking to surprise her, and found his lady sauntering down the hall with four guys in tow. As soon as she saw Gary, she rushed right up, gave a big smile, and tried to let everyone know that she was his. But for an instant she could feel how the belt went through~~

~~On the way home, she tried to talk about it. He said, "I won't tie you down." She knew he was thinking of Uncle Lee, Jim Barrett, and three-day party and her life.~~

~~Later, she found out that he told Sterling about it. and said, "She's free. I don't want to lean on her freedom." Then he crossed over to the cemetery that faced all the houses on Sterling's street, and Sterling went with him. There was one grave that had no flower on it. A little boy's grave. Gary went around and took a flower from each of a number of other graves and put them in a pretty little vase by the boy's headstone.~~

yes.

at Sterling's,

→ One night soon after, she had to recognize a real flaw in Gary. It came out when he arm-wrestled her brother. Gary started needling Rikki to wrestle. He bragged of how he had beat him once. They got into it.

~~Nicole didn't know if Gary had been giving too much of himself to her, but~~ Rikki beat him. That is, Rikki was about to beat him when Gary began to cheat something obvious. He lifted his elbow off the table to save himself. That made Nicole directly mad.

Now Gary wanted to try with the other arm. Rick got him again. That left Gary twice as mad as Nicole. He kept giving dirty looks to Rikki. On the way home ~~from Sterling's,~~

Gary dropped by a little store that was open all hours and stalked out with two ^{stolen} six-packs of beer.

It was risky to steal from that small a store at that late an hour, but he had technique. He would pick up two six-packs, not one, and go out the door. Not a single hesitation in his walk. At the same time, he would manage to make his face look as unpleasant as possible. You would not break into the thoughts of such a face for too little. Especially if you had to ask who paid for the beer.

In the beginning it was fun. ^{✓ BUT} now it had started to get on her nerves. He was too brave. It seemed like whenever something was bothering him, he wanted to steal something. Nicole had never been above boosting this or that little article ^{✓ KEROSENE} out of a place if she needed it. ~~of course she was almost always broke, so she may have even been the first to pick up something. he laughed when she got away with it, and then showed her how he could do it better. It had all started as a joke. But she began to notice that if anything went wrong between them, even something small, he'd steal to cheer them up.~~

~~the trouble was, he'd drink it afterward. He was always getting loaded on beer. She came to realize that in~~

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~~all the time she knew him there had only been a couple of days he hadn't been drinking. She would try to keep up, but didn't like it that much, even if she had learned lately how to swallow her share. That was cause he wouldn't let her leave any beer in a can. Even if it had gone flat he didn't like to waste it, not even a rinse. So if she popped a can and drank half of it, he kept after her to finish.~~

(and getting loaded on it every night)

Worse. Not only was Gary ripping off the beer, but he ~~was bragging to~~ he was vipping it off. ~~letting everybody know that Nicole was kind of liked when he told her about bragging to Vern. That's all not that made up with Vern~~ Vern's

He had dropped by one day with the gift of a case. When Vern noticed that the trunk of the Mustang held more ~~cases~~ cases, ~~of the same~~ he asked how Gary could afford to buy beer in such quantity.

"I don't need money," Gary said.

"Do you realize," said Vern after a pause, "that you're breaking your parole?"

"You wouldn't turn me in, would you?"

"I might," said Vern. "If it persists, I might turn you in."

Nicole knew he wanted her to ask, Why show off for Vern? But if she did, Gary would shrug as if it was too much for him. She knew the answer, however. She was enough

like Gary to know he dared Vern for the same reason he stole beer--it was because the thing that felt most alive in him, ^{He would show Vern whether he was a man.} said, "let's do it." Of course, nothing you did that way could be understood by common sense. From the point of view of common sense, God had to be full of kinky corners.

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2.

One day he came home with water skis, and that bothered Nicole a lot. It wasn't worth the risk to steal something when it would only bring you \$25, and yet the price tag was over \$100 and they could get you for felony. She hated him suddenly for his dumb habits that would take a chance on all they had for so little. It came over her that this was the first time she ever disliked him.

As if he sensed it, he then told her the worst story she'd ever heard out of him. It was gross. When he was a kid, he pulled off a supermarket robbery with a friend who was a true sadist. The manager of the supermarket happened to be there alone after closing and wouldn't give them a combination to the safe. So his friend took the guy upstairs, heated a curling iron, and rammed him with it.

She couldn't help herself. She laughed. The story got way in to an ugly part of her and relaxed the ugliness. She had a picture of that fat supermarket manager, she saw him as fat, trying to hold everything he had--and then the hot poker going up his ass. Her laughter reached a place more bitter than she would have believed--bitter at all those people who had a lot of things and were superior about it.

There were days when she thought she shouldn't be living with Gary every day all the time, because she still ~~didn't feel free of the idea~~ ^{felt} that her lack of freedom could make a lot of ugly things happen. A part of her simply didn't like living with a man for too long a stretch. She could never tell him this. He would have to brush it aside for it would hurt him too much. After all, he didn't just want to live together, he expected their souls to breathe together. More and more, however, a familiar steady ugly feeling was beginning to build in her, the exact feeling she always got when she had to fit herself to somebody. It was a feeling she could put off only so long. When she felt good with Gary, she still felt better than she felt with anyone else. It could be just riding in the car. Super. But that wasn't going to change the fact that when she got into a bad mood, it was like she had two souls, and one of

them loved Gary much less than the other. Of course, maybe there was a part of him that was the same way. He couldn't be loving her so much when they got into one of those five hour ~~and~~ battles.

It happened on the night ^{Gary} ~~he~~ brought home the water skis. A bad one. Later, she wondered if it had to do with Barrett. ^{He} ~~she~~ had popped up just the other day, walked through the door, cool as you please, while Gary was out at the store. If Barrett was the only man in the world who'd ever been able to make her come regularly-even though she thought he was a pussy--well, she still got a little hot when he came around. Maybe it was just conditioned reflex, but it had to undercut some of what she felt for Gary.

~~These last couple of nights, when Gary had been down a little and trying to make it up by a contest of wills, she found herself indulging a mind-trip on Jim's visit, and, worse, realized she was doing it to get herself a little more in the mood for Gary. Boy, Barrett's timing could sure be riding just as Gary's she had to admit could sure be~~

~~crude.~~ ^{Gary} For instance, ~~he~~ had to make love six or seven times a week. Maybe they'd skip one night, and make up for it with two in another. That was his rhythm, not hers. She enjoyed it more every other day. But he could seldom let it go at that, just kept pressing his damn luck.

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This night, from seven to midnight, they argued first about the water skis, then everything else. ~~Barrett had told her that,~~ ~~finally she convinced him she wasn't going to fuck him. He had gone too far on uppers, downers, and around 'ers.~~

When it came to bed, ~~Barrett had ended up telling her she had a gift to offer--no girl was as good as her. ~~Willa didn't know about that. He had told her enough bad things as well. Still it tickled her vanity.~~~~ If she had a gift, Gary was not exactly bringing it out. Not with his demands to do this, do that. Suck him now. She looked at Gary across their bodies and said into his eye, "I hate sucking cock."

Even through the glaze of the Fiorinol, it hit him. He took off. Left at midnight and wasn't back until two in the morning. He was hardly through the door when he was telling her to suck him.

~~Why, she would ask. ~~Finally she would ask like a dance.~~~~ ~~Do it because I want you to, he would tell her. It was almost as bad as the first night. Hence when you took into account the good things that had passed between them since.~~ They didn't get to sleep till five. At five-thirty, he was up looking like a maniac, ready for work.

3.

During those two hours from midnight to two A.M. Gary went over to see Spencer McGrath. He arrived a little after midnight, knocked on his door, and asked Spencer and Marie if they wanted to play three-hand poker.

Marie was already in bed, but she got up and made a cup of coffee. The McGraths, however, did not want to play poker. Not at this hour. Spencer kept himself from saying, "It's a little rude to come by this late."

In fact, they were used to seeing Gary drunk. Already, there had been a couple of times he came over at these odd hours. Once he really needed a little calming down. He had started to talk about what he would do to a fellow named Pete.

sketch
~~Another time Gary just dropped in when Spence and Marie were having a barbecue in the back yard. As Gary got out of~~

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get

the car he was so drunk he couldn't lift the latch over the gate. Spence went over, brought him in, wouldn't let him leave until he sat there and had some barbecue. There were other people around but Spencer gave him attention and made him drink a couple of cups of coffee. Gary wasn't bothersome to any of the guests, but he wasn't exactly rational either. He talked about things that were wild. Got into reincarnation, for example.

"You really believe in it?" asked Spencer.

"Oh, you bet," said Gary.

Spencer said, "A lot of people think we come back as other species, a horse or an insect. Seems to me it would be hard to straighten things out if there's all that shuttling back and forth."

Gary didn't go for Spencer's idea at all. He was going to come back as a human. If he messed this life up, he'd do a better job in the next one. "Why not a better job in this one?" Spencer thought. Chose not to say it.

These visits started about the time Gary learned that Spencer knew how to fix cars. He began to come by on Saturday to have Spence work on his. A muffler fell off once, and Gary didn't know how to get it back by tightening the clamp. Hadn't the slightest idea. It wasn't that he was

lazy, but a month before he might have tried to figure the situation out. Now, he didn't seem to have any initiative. Instead he would be offended there was something wrong with his car. ~~what he wouldn't recognize was how much that was due to his inability to drive knowledgeably. One more reason that Spence was after him continuously about the study program for the driver's license. Talking to the wind.~~

Thinking about Gary kept Spence up. In the beginning, on the job, Gary had always been coming over to ask Craig Taylor or himself to look at what he had done. If he painted a sign real good or got the hang of something new, he was pleased when they praised him for it. Swelled up proud. Now that Gary had been living with Nicole, Spence didn't know if he cared whether he did a good job or not. More like he was putting in his time to get a paycheck. ~~Those cut-off lewis Gary seemed to be going down in her love~~

Moreover, Gary was always finding a reason to goof off during the day. You had to notice how long he took for lunch. Then, every Thursday he had to leave an hour early to see his parole officer. Then he would take other hours for other excuses. Plus the fact that not a week had gone by without Spence giving him extra money. Never deducted the lost time

or the out-of-pocket from his paycheck. Once, Gary did talk of doing a painting to wipe out the debt, but so soon as Spencer and Marie began to think about it seriously, sure enough, Gary didn't bring it up any more.

Spence decided he might just as well have played poker for all the sleep he got.

Then, on the job next morning, right after spoiling last night, Gary asked one of the kids on the job if he'd like to buy a pair of water skis. The kid came up to Spence to inquire if Gary might have stolen them. Spence said, "Are they brand new?" He couldn't believe Gary had stolen water skis. You could slip cufflinks or a watch into your pocket, but how did you lift those big slats right out of a store?

Spencer looked upon himself as a real simple character, but he was beginning to wonder if Gary was taking marijuana on the job or something. He sure looked awful this morning.

Gary tried to tell him about some guy he had tatooed in an obscene way on the back of his neck. "Come on, Gary," Spence said, "that's a little far-out for me. Let's get down to something basic. Every week you're broke, you need cash. Why don't you take some of the money you spend on beer

and save it? Maybe then you wouldn't have to borrow from me every week." Gary said, "I don't buy beer. I don't pay for it." Spence said, "Where in hell do you get it?" Gary said, "I just walk in a store, take a six pack, and walk out the door."

Spence said, "Nobody catches you, huh?" Gary said, "No." Spencer said, "How long you been doing that?" Gary replied, "For weeks." Spencer said, "Steal a six-pack of beer every day and you've never been caught?" Gary said, "Yeah." Spencer said, "I don't know. I just can't see that. How come people get caught stealing and you don't?" Gary said, "I'm better than they are."

"I think you're pulling my leg," said Spencer. "I'm not going to believe you."

Gary proceeded to tell Spencer about the black convict he had stabbed 57 times. Now Spence thought Gary was trying to impress him with how tough he was, see if he would scare. "Come on, Gary," he said, "57 times sounds like a variety of soup."

After they finished laughing, Gary broke it to Spence that he'd like to get off early on Friday.

"I don't know if you've noticed," said Spence, "but the other fellows don't take off. They work all day, and take care of things after hours. That's the way it's normally done."

Still, he gave him the time. One more time. Spence felt a little uneasy. After all, the state, on an ex-convict's program, was paying half of Gary's \$3.50 an hour. Maybe that was why Gary was giving him half an hour on the hour.

4.

While Nicole was away one afternoon on a visit to Kathryne, Barrett was at the house in Spanish Fork visiting with Rosebeth. By the time Nicole came back, Rosebeth was not a virgin any more.

At first, Rosebeth merely mentioned that Barrett had been there. Oh, Nicole asked, how long was he here? About an hour, said Rosebeth, and a half. Nicole began to laugh. If Barrett wasn't feeling bashful, he was in bed. An hour and a half was time enough for Barrett. She got it out of Rosebeth, soon. Just so soon as Nicole could show her that she wasn't upset, Rosebeth began to giggle. Now, she knew why Gary had never been able to get in. He was too big. Nicole and Rosebeth were having a long laugh waiting for Gary to get home from work.

Gary, however, had dropped in on Val Conlin. The six-pack of beer he brought was ice-cold. Right from the

store refrigerator. After that run-in for not paying on time, Gary had a practice of bringing Val a six-pack when he went by. Val was appreciative.

This visit, however, was not routine. Gary had his eye on a truck. The one out on the lot that was painted white.

"Gary, it's too much money. Pay off the Mustang and I'll get you something better."

"Well," Gary said, "I got to have that truck."

"No can do without mucho mazuma." The truck was up for sale at \$2100. "Listen, pardner, I just got done painting and really fixing it up. It's too good a truck for you, unless you can find a co-signer."

Gary thought maybe he could. Maybe his Uncle Vern.

"My uncle will sign."

"I know Vern," said Val, "and I don't think he's in shape for this kind of credit. But, if you want, have him fill out the credit application. We can always see what we can do."

"Okay," said Gary, "okay." He hesitated. "Val," he said, "that Mustang is no good. I had to put a new battery in, and an alternator. It came to fifty dollars."

"What do you want me to do about it?"

"Well, if I buy the truck, I think you could allow for what I had to lay out on the Mustang."

"Gary, you buy the truck, and we'll knock that fifty dollars off the price. No problem. Just get a co-signer."

"Val, I don't need a co-signer. I can make the payments."

"Pardner, no co-signer, no truck. Let's keep it simple."

"The goddam Mustang isn't any good."

"Gary, I'm doing you the favor. If you don't want the Mustang, leave the son-of-a-bitch right out there."

"I want the truck."

"The only way you get the truck is by putting a lot of money on the front end of the loan. Or coming in with a co-signer. Here, take this credit application to Vern."

Gary sat across the desk, looking out the window at the white truck on the end of the line. It was as white as the snow you could still see on the peak of the mountains.

"Gary, fill out the application completely and bring it back."

Val knew Gary was madder than hell. He didn't say a word, just took the application, got up, walked out the door, wadded it up and threw it on the ground.

Harper, who was Val's salesman, said, "Boy, he's hot."

"I don't give a shit," said Val. A lot of people got hot around him. That was run of the mill. ~~Just his hell of a success story boiling away.~~

In the middle of making love that night, Gary called Nicole, Pardner. She took it wrong. She thought he was jiving at her for getting it on with Rosebeth. But as he tried to explain later, he often called people, men and women alike, Buddy or Pal, things like that.

She knew why she'd gotten mad. She was wondering how much she was actually being attracted to this girl scene. She found herself thinking more and more of this place the Rusty Bell, that her mother had mentioned. Kathryne had been on a date, and they'd gone to a couple of places in Salt Lake to drink and just accidentally walked into this place, the Rusty Bell, and got kicked out because Kathryne's date started asking the ladies to dance.

The Rusty Bell wasn't entirely for women. You could go in, Kathryne explained, and find guys dancing together. But ~~what~~ you better keep the sexes straight. Just thinking about it, got Nicole real restless. She took a drive to Salt Lake City next day, and stopped in the Rusty Bell. The people there were nice, but told her it was a private joint, and to come back at night. They were just cleaning now. Nicole decided to get her shit together and so she told Gary about her rap with these people. Then she said she'd like to go back by herself, and see what was happening. It was obvious he didn't like the idea too well but he let her do it,

said she might as well find out. Told her to bring back a girl for both of them. It would be the first time they hadn't spent a night together.

But nothing happened at the Rusty Bell. She was all keyed up and it was a dull evening. No girl came up to ask her to dance, and she just sat at the bar having four or five beers. She felt alone. It left her kind of flat. Like a dunce. She was ready for a big evening and nothing had happened.

She'd been so bored she started falling asleep on the drive home. She was drunk and kept weaving on the road. When that happened a few times, she pulled over and really did sleep. She woke up barely before light and got home about five in the morning, and Gary oddly enough didn't say much about it. After they made a little eye contact, he did ask, "Find out what you needed to know?" She said, "Yes. I found out." Of course, she hadn't, but she got herself giggling about Barrett and Rosebeth by thinking that Barrett might be at his best when he didn't have to fuck a hole that was too big for him.

Just as she began to sleep, Gary began to tell her about an experience he had in State Hospital in Oregon. This

13 year old boy had been sent there cause he couldn't get along at home. He was as pretty as a girl, and he liked Gary.

"I was 23 then," said Gary. "He'd come up and put his arm around me, just natural, it was a show of friendship. One time, he came up to me in the locker room and asked if he could read a Playboy I had. I said sure. For a kiss. five. Oh, he was dumbfounded. His eyes got big and his mouth dropped open. He said, 'No!' It was really pretty. I fell in love on the spot.

"Well, he thought it over, and decided he wanted to read the magazine so he let me take a very tender little kiss on the lips. Then I used to watch him in the swimming pool. I don't think I've seen a prettier butt than he had." Gary sighed. "I used to kiss him now and then, and we got to be pretty good friends. Then they transferred me back to the penitentiary. Never saw him again. Shit, there wasn't anything to it. Except I did love the boy."

about Nicole liked his story. It really made everything all right. There in the middle of wanting to own everything about her, he could show all this funny tolerance. ~~To~~
~~loosened her up, and she began giggling to herself about Barrett~~
~~and Rosebeth, thinking Barrett might be at his best when he~~
~~didn't have to fuck a hole that was too big for him.~~

Yet, on second thought, she didn't trust Gary's story or his tolerance. There was something too smooth about it. Maybe she didn't trust him completely any more. ~~So the~~

~~morning, she remembered that he said something to her while she slept. She asked him what it was. He told her that whenever she was asleep, he would whisper, I love you. Whereas, if he thought she wasn't really asleep, he'd say, let's fuck. He smiled. But Nicole wasn't sure. She had the idea he was whispering certain words, almost like magic words, in order to pull her closer, as if he were hypnotizing her a little against her will.~~

I don't think I've seen Gary as happy in bed then he is now. He sighed. "I used to kiss with her his sister, April. They were pretty good friends. With April, he would give a big sympathetic penitentiary. November April wasn't what he wanted. The thing was and wonder why was all fucking with her head. She was thinking she'd be better off without anybody."

Nicole liked him right. There in the room Gary had been sitting at her feet while about her, as could her armchair. He had to pick the woman loosened her up, and she thought of Gary as being in his and November, thinking, "I really love you the way and didn't mind for her." She looked back at him. "Yeah," she said, "and he's got other motherfuckers."

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Sometimes Nicole thought that the beginning of the really heavy trouble started on a night when she was feeling awfully cooped up with Gary, and they couldn't get out. She had been thinking of Barrett all day. Despite herself, she was having impulses toward ~~him~~ ^{Barrett} again. *Because Barrett could pass you a cigarette and make something out of it. Tickle your memory like he was tickling your palm.* Moreover, Kip was writing letters. He had just asked her to come back. She wouldn't even open his letters. But the thought that Kip still wanted her had to crowd in. She could hate his paranoia, but she couldn't exactly despise the careful considerate way he used to make love, always trying to make her more happy in bed than himself. Now, *also,* ~~and~~ Hampton was going around with her kid sister, April. Every time she saw Hampton with April, he would play a big sympathy trip, and tell her that April wasn't what he wanted. He really loved her. They were all fucking with her head. She was thinking she'd be better off without anybody.

Then the thought of the night up
the ~~the~~ All this while, Gary had been sitting at her feet while she was brooding in her armchair. He had to pick this moment to look up at her with all the light of love shining in his eyes. "Baby," he said, "I really love you all the way and out of sight, and forever." She looked back at him. "Yeah," she said, "and so do seven other motherfuckers."

Gary hit her then. It was the first time he'd ever struck her, and he hit her hard. She didn't feel the pain so much as something that began to break apart. Soon enough, he apologized. He kept apologizing to her all night.

had been thinking of Barrett all

was. It always ended the same way. They hit you when they felt like hitting. At that moment, everything he had said of her importance to him was blown. She had been hit so many fucking times before. The kids were ⁱⁿ bed, and she looked at Gary and said, "I want to die." It was how she felt. He kept trying to make it up to her. Finally, she told him, and she never felt as if she was telling the truth more, she told him that she felt like dying a couple of times in the past but had done nothing about it. Tonight, she'd just as soon, she saw Harpoon with April, trip, and tell her that April was still Gary got a knife and held the point to her stomach. He asked her if she still wanted to die.

After a few minutes, she finally said, "No, I don't." Yet it was frightening that she wasn't more afraid. It was as if the first feeling that would come to her in death would be intimate. Like knowing that in a little while you would be making out with somebody new.

she said, "and" so it never was

After he put the knife away, she felt truly trapped. She couldn't believe the size of the cloud that came down on her.

He apologized. He kept apologizing.

Then they had one more marathon. Up all night about whether to fuck. In the middle, around midnight again, he took off. Awhile later, he came in with a bunch of boxes and opened them up. There was a pistol in every box.

~~Cary took over it a little. She had to. The guns hung~~

~~around.~~

and she never felt as if she was

told him that she felt like dying

past but had done nothing about

soon.

After a few minutes, she

Yet it was frightening that she

as if the first feeling was like that.

be intimate. Like knowing that

he would grab her by both breasts,

this little girl on her cousin, sweet Sterling, gentle and

After he was the house down, he started about a high
and women's bodies and the first of the day up on the. Nicole
on her. One of the other girls was giving Sterling a

5.

Then they had one more marathon. And on Sterling's
whether to fuck. In the middle, when would tell him. It
took off. A while later, he came in.
and c. Sterling Baker's birthday party was on the last Sunday
in June. You could feel the mood. Even the cemetery looked
good in the sun. The next weekend was July Fourth and a
carnival was going to be in town. It looked like a good
week might be coming. Nicole was thinking they could kind
of desperately use one.

Inside Sterling's apartment and outside in the back-
yard, the party was going on. ^{15 or 20 good people,} ~~Budes came pouring in.~~ A lot
brought bottles. ~~Lots of dudes,~~ Nicole had cut-offs on,
and a halter top, and knew she was looking pretty good. Gary
was sure showing her off. A couple of ^{dudes} ~~guys~~ began to get
pretty forward. Told Gary what a hot lady he had. Gary
would say, "Know it." Then he would grab her by both breasts,
or pull her into his lap, things like that.

Well, it was Sterling's birthday, and Nicole ~~was~~ had
this little crush on her cousin, sweet Sterling, gentle and

good enough to eat. ~~Gary knew it. Ruth Ann was out~~

~~of the room~~ Nicole started kidding Sterling about a birthday kiss. Sterling said he'd take her up on it. Nicole talked one of the other girls into giving Sterling the birthday kiss first. Then she asked Gary if it was okay. He gave her a look. Still, she went and sat on Sterling's lap. She gave him a long kiss that would tell him a lot about her.

~~Sterling, Baker~~ around the side of the house

in. When she opened her eyes, Gary was sitting there with a funny look on his face. He said, "Had enough?"

~~celebration was going to be~~

week. They were keeping a keg of beer out in the back. The fellow upstairs had invited a few of his friends, and one of them happened to be Jimmy, the Chicano. ~~Jimmy~~ picked up a pair of sunglasses that Gary had given to Sterling. They happened to have been left by Sterling on the roof of a broken down old car out in the back lot, just a little old car, and Sterling had laid the glasses there while tapping a keg. Jimmy just picked them up. Claimed he thought they were really his. ~~old lady~~ of the house and all his to Jimmy would say, "How is it?" Gary came on strong. "I want them glasses back," he told Jimmy. "They're mine." Jimmy got kind of upset and left. Nicole got pissed off. You're fucking up the party, she this little fuck at her

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shrieked at Gary, you're fucking up yourself. All his horseshit over a fucked-up stupid pair of glasses that couldn't be worth fighting over.

When Jimmy came back, it was with a couple of friends. He must have thought people were going to gang on him because he returned with backing. Returned ~~right to the party~~ to face Gary.

As soon as Jimmy walked around the side of the house, Gary was on his feet heading toward him. They were into it. Sterling had no idea what was happening. They were throwing hands before anybody could stop it.

Maybe Gary was too drunk, but he got hit wide open. Jimmy split his eye with the first punch thrown. Blood was running all over Gary's face. He got hit again and went down to his knees, then got back up and started swinging again, but Jimmy was getting the best of it.

About that time, everybody broke the fight up. Sterling walked Jimmy around the front of the house and got him to leave, and just as he got rid of Jimmy, Gary came up holding a gear knob that he'd taken off the car in the back yard. Sterling stepped in front, and said, "Listen, Gary, you're through with that, you're not going to hit him." Just talking in a normal

tone of voice. But he had another fellow standing next to him to reinforce what was said.

Nicole saw the look in Gary's eye about the time Sterling saw it. One cold look: I'll cut your throat. He was. Sterling started telling Gary he had to get stitches in his eye. Then Nicole got Gary out and took him home. to face Gary.

He had gotten his ass whipped. She hated to see her man lose a fight. Especially when he started it. She thought he was a fool all the way. Ruining the party. Then showing he couldn't fight that good. And a blowhard and a cheater as well--like when he arm-wrestled her brother.

Maybe Gary was too drunk, but he Jimmy All the way home he wanted to go back and pick it up again. By ~~him~~ keeping him from knowing how disappointed she was in his fighting, she managed to get him back to Spanish Fork. She had hardly ever known a guy who hated to lose a rumble as much as Gary. That softened her feelings somewhat. After all, he had taken his beating and he hadn't quit. That Jimmy, on second thought, had been one very tough dude. Really knew how to use his hands.

When she washed him off, Nicole discovered that the cut was bad. So she took him next door, to their neighbor Elaine, who had just gotten through taking this emergency course on

being an ambulance driver, and Elaine said he definitely needed stitches. Nicole started to worry. She remembered hearing how the oxygen in the air could enter a cut near the eye and go right to the brain and kill you. So she did take him to the doctor. Through the rest of the night she kept ice packs on his face and babied him, and kind of enjoyed it, considering how bad things had been lately. In the morning, when he tried to blow his nose, his cheeks blew up right around his glands and sinuses.

At work, Spencer said, "Gary, it doesn't make much sense putting your body up to be abused."

"They can't hurt me," said Gary.

"Oh, no? Your eye is cut and it's turning black, and you've got a lump on your forehead and he gave you a good one on the nose. Don't stand there and put that stuff on me, Gary. I just can't believe you keep getting the best in these deals."

Gary said, "I sure did, you know."

Spencer said, "What's going to happen is some little guy about five-foot-six"--which was around Spencer's height--"is going some night to stuff a mudhole right in the middle of your face. Because that's what happens. A guy doesn't have to be seven feet tall to be mean. Some little guy is really going to work your tail over some time, and you'll learn something about it."

"I'm Gary Gilmore," Gilmore said, "and they can't hurt me."

In the evening, driving around with Nicole and Sunny and Peabody, he stopped at VJ Motors to talk to Val Conlin about the truck, and got to take it out for an hour. Gary was that happy up high behind the wheel with something like a real motor in front of them. All the while she could feel him thinking of the guns. They were shining like \$\$\$ in his head.

At work, Spencer said, when he got back, he talked to Val about the size of a down payment. Nicole was hardly listening. It was boring to sit in the showroom with all the freaks and dead-beats who were trying to get some piece of a car. One girl was wearing a turban and a big swipe of mascara under each eye, and had her blouse just about pulling out of her belt. She said to Nicole, "You have very beautiful eyes." "Thank you," said Nicole. All the while she was watching Val Conlin scowling at Peabody who was drooling around the showroom with no diapers on.

Gary was one record with a scratch. "I don't want that Mustang," he said to Val.

"We're not near the truck, buddy. Get yourself a co-signer or come in with more money than you're talking."

Gary stalked out. Nicole hardly had time to gather the kids and follow. Val watched them go. Gary was swearing like Val had never heard him swear before. When ^{Val} looked out the showroom, he could see Gary sitting outside with Nicole and the kids in the Mustang, and it wouldn't start. Gary tried pounding on the wheel. He sat there hitting the wheel as hard as he could.

that "Jesus," said Harper, "this time, he is really hot." down "Hey, I don't give a shit," said Val, and walked through the people with their debts on different cars, yeah, I'm right on top of the mountain in my hell of a success story, thought Val, and went and said to Gary, "What's the matter?" "This son of a bitch," said Gary, "this Goddamn car." Nicole "Well, now, hold it. Let's get some jumper cables, we'll get it started," and, of course, Val did, just needed the boost, and Gary took off in a spray of gravel like he had a whip to his hind end. *e*

By the following night, When Gary came home from work, he was in a rush to sell the guns. That meant travelling

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driven's

with them. Nicole was opposed. Gary didn't have a license
and her car ~~was illegal~~ ^{had illegal} ~~was~~ ^{plates (?)} licensed. Both cars had the
crappy kind of look a state trooper would pull over for
nothing at all. So they argued over that. He won. They
~~got it all together,~~ put the pistols in her Mustang, and
started out, bringing the kids along. The kids might be
insurance against a state trooper waving them over for too
little. Gary tried ~~coupling~~ ^{coupling} on the wheel. On the other hand, Sunny and Jeremy really got on his
nerves. That meant his driving definitely made Nicole
nervous. He swung into the Long Horn Cafe, a taco joint
between Orem and Pleasant Grove, to make a phone call. Only
he couldn't get ^{hold} of the guy who was to peddle the guns.
Gary was getting more and more upset. It looked like the
evening was going to get really squandered.
He came back out of the Long Horn and looked in the
car for another phone number, then started tearing pages out
of the book. By the time he finally found the guy, ^{is number} ~~he was~~
and called, the guy was out. The kids were beginning to make noise. Next thing she
knew, Gary spun out of the Long Horn and headed back towards
Orem. He was going along eighty. She was petrified for
the kids. She told him to pull over.

By the following night, ~~she~~
He slammed over to the shoulder. A screeching halt,
He turned around, and started spanking the kids. They hadn't

even been making noise the last couple of minutes. They had been too scared of the speed at which he was driving.

She started hitting Gary right there, hit him with her fists as hard as she could, hollering for him to let her out of the car. He grabbed her hands to hold her down, and the kids started screaming then. Gary wouldn't let her out, and she kept screaming and hitting. Then this really dumb-looking guy walked by, and looked at the two of them. It must have sounded as if Gary was killing her, but the fucker just stopped and said, "Anything wrong?" Then he walked on.

She wouldn't stop hollering. Gary finally wedged her into the space between the front seats and got his hand over her mouth, so she couldn't be heard, but he was choking her more than he knew. She was trying not to pass out. He had his other hand on her throat to hold her down. She couldn't breathe. He told her then that he would let her go, if she promised to be quiet and go home with him. Nicole mumbled, Okay. That was the best she could get out. The moment he let go, she started yelling again. When his hand came back over her mouth, she bit real hard into the flesh near his thumb. Tasted the blood.

He turned around, and started up.

Somehow, she didn't know how, she got out of the car. She couldn't remember later if he let her go, or if she just got away from him. Probably he let go. But she ran across the street to the middle of the highway divider, a kid in each hand, and she held on to both of them. She would hitch-hike somewhere.

Gary began to follow on foot. At first he let her try to bum a ride, but when the first car nearly stopped, he tried to pull her back across the street. She wouldn't budge. He got smart and tried to yank one of the kids away. Then she'd have to go with him. But she wouldn't let loose of either kid, and he kept pulling. Nicole was hanging on with all she had. Between them, they must have sure been stretching the kids. Finally a pickup truck pulled up behind her Mustang and a couple of guys came over with a chick.

The chick happened to be an old girl friend Nicole hadn't seen in a year. Ginger whoever-it-was, used to be called Ginger Strauss, the first girlfriend Nicole ever had in her life. Yet, Nicole couldn't even think of her name, she was that upset. Ginger said, you're going with me.

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Gary said, Get out of here, this is a family matter. Ginger then looked at Gary just as tall as she could be and said, "We know Nicole, and you ain't family." That was all of it. Gary let go and walked up the street toward her car. Nicole and the kids got into the truck with Ginger, and Ginger's friends, and they took off. Nicole was crying a lot. She was remembering how she wanted everything to be good for Gary.

Gary began to think. He tried to stop him as he went to him a ride, but when he tried to pull her back into the budge. He got smart. Then she'd have to go of either kid, and he with all she had. Boy stretching the kids. called her Mustang. chick.

The chick happen. hadn't seen in a year. called Ginger Sara. in her life. Yet, she was that special.

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Gary sat in the car and
she looked at Gary and
he said "Nicole, I'm going
Gary let go and walked
and she said "Go into the
friends, and they took
was remembering how
Gary.

6.

He got back into her Mustang, drove down to Grand Central Supermarket, picked up a stereo off the shelf, and walked out. A security guard tried to stop him as he went through the door.

"Get fucked," said Gary and threw the stereo into the guard's arms. Then he ran to the parking lot, jumped in Nicole's car, backed up, and slammed into a car parked behind him. Then he whipped forward, careened out of the space he was in, banged another car, and took off.

He zipped through Provo and got as far as the highway to Springville. There he stopped at the Whip. He hid the pistol boxes under an oil drum in the parking lot, then went to the men's room, put Nicole's car keys in the tank of the water closet, and came out to have a beer. While he waited, he called Gary Weston ^{IDENT TK} to come and pick him up.

Sirens came along the highway toward the Whip and wound down outside the door. Two cops came in. They wanted to know who owned the blue Mustang. They asked everybody. They took down the name on every I.D. The revolving lights of their car were flaring through the window of the bar. When Gary left with Gary Weston, Nicole's car stayed behind. The cops had impounded it.

Gary Gilmore

Brenda heard him knocking on the door. It must have been eleven o'clock. ^{She went} ~~There was Johnny asleep, same as every night, on the couch. He had been there since eight. If dear John didn't get his ten hours of sleep, he couldn't function. Ask him to take nine and a half, and he'd be exhausted all day. Since his job required Johnny to get up at six, anyone could do the arithmetic. Brenda recollected falling asleep bored to death, as she came awake going to the door.~~

I had a hassle, Gary said, ~~in Grand Central.~~

A hassle, said Brenda.

I took a tape deck and walked out. Then I had to give the stuff back, so I threw it over to the guy. I hate long check-out lines.

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Then what did you do?

I hit a car.

He looked so tired, so sad and so wiped out that she couldn't stay very angry. His face was one holy mess.

~~Johnny was up and stirring. The look on his mug suggested that the reason he liked to sleep is that it kept him from hearing news such as this.~~

"Brenda," Gary said, "I need fifty bucks bad. I want to go to Canada."

He had it all figured out. "I want you to explain to the police that Nicole had nothing to do with it. I did it by myself. That way, they'll let her have the car back.

"You're a man," Brenda said. "Go down, and get the car yourself."

"You won't help me?"

"I'll help you write a confession. I'll see it's delivered to the right place."

"Brenda, there's a lot of loud speakers in the back of the car. I ripped them off a drive-in movie."

~~"How many?"~~

~~"Five or six."~~

~~the staff back. "Just to be doing something. Like a little kid," said~~

~~John.~~

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~~Gary nodded. There was the sorrow in his eyes of knowing
he would never see Canada.~~

You have to turn yourself in to Mont Court in the morning,"
said Brenda.

"Cousin, keep on my ass about it, will you?" said Gary.

Nicole didn't care if she ever saw Gary again, and so
spent the night at her great-grandmother's house where Gary
would never think of finding her. The next night, however, she
went back to her mother's. Gary called not long after. When
Nicole heard him say he was coming over, she was scared. She
put a call in to the police. In fact, she was talking to the
dispatcher when Gary walked in, so she said to the phone, "Man,
get out here as fast as you can."

"You're a man," Brenda said,

She didn't know if Gary had come to drag her away. But
when he walked in, he just stood at the kitchen sink. She
stood a ways off. Nicole told him to go away and leave her
alone, but he just kept looking at her. He had a funny look,
as if everything inside him hurt, man, really hurt. She didn't
even like seeing his stitches and his black eye. Then Gary
said, "You fight as good as you fuck."

"Give or take."

That made her frown. She was trying hard not to smile,
but, in fact, it made her a little less afraid of him. He

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came over and put his hands on her shoulders. Again, she told him to leave. He turned around and went. To her surprise! He practically passed the cops as they were coming in.

Later, she regretted not letting him stay. She couldn't sleep. She was really afraid he would never come back. A voice in her head kept sounding like an echo in a tunnel. It said, "I love him, I love him."

He showed up next day with a rose, and a carton of cigarettes, she couldn't help but smile. She went on the porch to meet him, and he handed her a letter.

Dear Nicole,

I don't know why I did this to myself. You are the most beautiful thing I've ever seen and touched. . .

You just loved me and touched my soul with a wondrous tenderness and you treated me so kindly.

I just couldn't handle that. There's no bullshit or meanness about you and I couldn't deal with an honest spirit like yours that didn't want to hurt me. . .

I'm so fucking sad. . .

I see it in detail like a movie. And it makes no sense. It makes me scream inside.

And you said you want me out of your life. Not that I can blame you for that. I am one of those people that probably shouldn't exist.

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But I do.

And I know that I always will.

Just like you.

We are both very old.

I would like to see you smile at me again. I hope I don't have to wait until I reach the place of no darkness to see that.

She was
back. A voice in her head

GARY

A tunnel. It said, "I do"

After she read the letter, they sat on the porch for awhile. They didn't say too much. Then Nicole went in and got the kids, picked up their diapers, and left with him.

porch to meet him, and as

On the way, he told her about the new trouble. When they reached Spanish Fork, he put in a call to Mont Court, who said it was too late in the evening to do anything. First thing next day, he would pick him up and drive him over to the Orem police. Gary and Nicole slept with their arms around each other. It would be their last night together for they did not know how long.

Don't want to hurt me. . .

I'm so foolish

I see it is
no sense. It makes

And you said
that I was
people that

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I would like
hope I don't have
is dangerous to

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The Lieutenant of Detectives in the Orem Police Department was a pleasant-looking man of average size with a big face, bald head, and a crown of yellow-reddish hair. He wore eyeglasses. His name was Gerald Nielsen and he was a good Mormon who grew up on a ranch and was an Elder of the Church. He was sitting in his office when the dispatcher called and said, "There's a fellow out here wants to turn himself in." That was an event which might happen from time to time, but it wasn't common. So Nielsen went out to meet him. A fellow could lose his courage about turning himself in during the time it took to walk from Reception to his office.

It was early in the morning and the fellow looked like he hadn't slept too well. "I'm Gary Gilmore," he said. "I want to talk to somebody." He was wearing dark glasses and his eyes were black and his nose was swollen. They had hardly said hello before Gilmore mentioned that he had been

in a fight. Considering the number of stitches Nielsen would have supposed it was a car accident.

ONE paragraph summing up what

~~When they got back to his office, Gerald Nielsen heard Gary say, "and why he poured him a cup of coffee out of the pot they kept for let Gary go.~~

~~prisoners a different expense account and then they sat~~

~~ONE paragraph stating that Gary got the there without talking for a little while.~~

car back, then summing up Gary's appearance at the Judge's,

~~"I stole a tape deck at Grand Central," Gilmore began,~~

~~"and as I was leaving, I bumped another car. The car I was driving belongs to a friend of mine and they ended up impounding it. I thought about running to Canada, but my girl friend told me to face what I have coming." He said it with his battered face.~~

~~patcher "That's all that's involved?" asked Nielsen.~~

~~to turn "Yes." "I am." "That~~

~~from to "Well, I'm wondering why you're so nervous about it."~~

~~on to "I just got out of prison."~~

~~turning While they were waiting for the police report of the episode at Grand Central to be brought in, Gilmore explained how long he had been in prison and how he had been working for his uncle and was now at an insulation factory. As he spoke, Nielsen got the impression more and more that Gilmore hadn't wanted to show up, but had probably been brought there by his parole officer. They usually took men to the door of the police station.~~

said he was on parole from another state. The judge said he would give him until five o'clock to post bail of \$100, or else he could report to the county jail. Nicole hated the way it was said, like jail might just be the answer. expression on his face like he good Gary said he didn't have the money. He said he did not have any hope of getting that much money before five o'clock. He wanted to know about a release if his probation officer would vouch for him. The judge said, "I'm a firm believer that people should not necessarily be punished because of lack of funds. Since you walked in of your own accord, I will consider your request. Let your probation officer call me." Gary made a couple of phone calls and came out of the booth smiling, told her they wouldn't have to worry for a month. It looked like Mont Court had come through again. Of course he would have to appear on July 24 for sentencing after the pre-sentence investigation, but maybe it would cool off by then. They walked out of the courtroom together.

And now, after all that had happened, after the fight with the Chicano, and the terrible night when she screamed at him on the highway, after being apart for two days and having felt the fear of being apart for a lot more than that,

they were together again, and for a few hours, maybe it was a day and a night, everything was better than if they had never been apart. She saw something deeper in the idea of loving him. Like there was a crack in a tree she could open a little with her hands, and the more it split, the more there was to see, as if somebody had hidden sparklers and diamonds way inside where you didn't expect it, God, she loved him while his face was mending.

Afterwards--she would never know if it was bad luck or never meant to be--things did not get better. Mainly it was the Mustang. Morning after morning that car would not start. It was as if Gary had something in his makeup that killed off the electrical system every morning.

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