

The Hint of the Century

By David Lindsay

She cooked the eggs. Three fried, like always, like every day for nineteen years. The yellows nice and runny like he liked them, not too hard.

She poured his coffee. Stirred in the sugar and dropped in just the right amount of condensed milk, not that bullshit creamer, he hated that bullshit creamer.

She put his plate in front of his chair at the head of the table. Sat the biscuits to the right and just within arms reach. He hated it when he had to reach too far for the biscuits. Coffee on the left, at eleven o'clock. The bacon on a napkin at nine o'clock. Knife and fork on the right, almost but not quite under the lip of the plate so he'd see them. She stepped back like an artist before the last stroke of the brush and examined the still life before her. When she was satisfied she walked out of the kitchen, grabbed his keys off the nail by the front door, walked out onto the porch, down the steps, across the yard and climbed into his pickup. She put the key in the ignition and turned it over, giving it just a little throttle like he always did on cold mornings. The engine whirred and hummed and growled and fired. She revved the engine a few times, her eyes on the front door. When nothing happened immediately, she held the pedal to the floor until the engine screamed.

He came running out of the house then. In his jockey shorts and open robe, hanging out the crotch hole and swinging in the breeze, looking stunned, then confused, then mad. She couldn't hear him, but she could read his lips. She knew what he would say before he said it. The same thing he always said when he decided she was doing something stupid.

"What the fuck are you doing?"

She smiled and waved, flirty, inviting. He cocked his head like a dog and opened his arms.

"What the fuck are you doing?"

She pulled it down into drive, one foot on the brake, one on the gas. She pushed down as hard as she could with both feet. The truck lurched and reared but went nowhere. The light blue smoke coming from the exhaust pipe began to darken. She saw him grit his teeth. He squatted, like he was going to shit on the porch. Then he ran and jumped off - rather than using the steps, which she thought was just like him - flying up, his robe flapping behind him like Superman's

cape, then down to the ground. He landed wrong, or at least not as he had intended. He crumpled like an old potato chip bag and rolled over on his back, grabbing for his ankle.

She lifted her left foot from the brake. She never did put it back down, the police determined later. One cop said she'd still be driving if the house hadn't stopped her.

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