

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/1

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3 Lions and a Goat out to Sea

TO THIS DAY WHEN I SEE HIM, I still connect with a feeling of wanting him to want me, wanting him to be jealous that I'm not at his side. I still hold my breath out of habit if he's within 10 feet. It is an unfortunate side effect of being smothered by someone's personal guide to life. Your body reacts without your permission, and you're stuck wondering if your murderous thoughts are really just love sugarcoated in twisted memories. But abuse is all the same to the abuser; it's the victims that live their game.

Anthony was waiting by the door of 359 Hammond, impatiently I might add, because he couldn't cultivate patience in his dreams let alone his reality. I was late, not by my car's clock, but by me being the chauffeur for another afternoon adventure that I had cut class for. His body fit into the frame of the fucked up screen door that the boys had ripped off at a party last weekend and had MacGyver'd it back up with the hinges from the living room closet door. That door was now being used as the pong table and although we had needed one, I was sure it too wouldn't survive the testosterone infused men doing lines – playing another tournament. I noticed a new t-shirt, he was expecting me to say something, but I held off because me speaking first never ended well. "Baby, aren't you going to tell me if you like the new logo?" the words slid out of his mouth past his cigarette and wrapped around my ears while the ashes from his last drag landed on the ground. "It's perfect, are they going to be ready for the show next week?" I asked. It never mattered what I said, but asking about the show was not the right answer today. "Tyler's a fucking twat and broke his wrist jerking off last night," Anthony hissed with disgust as he threw his fag down. I hesitated to say anything knowing full well that Tyler always had an excuse when he was struggling to learn the new songs, and that he was quite the elaborate schemer in seeking ways to get out of it. The show would go on, they always played, and Tyler always drank enough to fake it anyway. It was odd that out of the whole band I had a sweet spot for Ty. He was always happy to have me around even when nobody else was. That made Anthony mad, which always came back to bite me in the ass, but I ferociously flirted when I could get away with it.

I guess I had been quiet for too long, Anthony had moved out of the frame and had slid his hand up my shirt, "baby girl twist away" he sang to me as he leaned in to my neck and kissed me. I let him linger awhile longer, his sweet moments had been far and few in-between with all the band shit these past weeks so it was nice to feel bits of his silky stubble graze my veins. His hand was callused and I could feel his thirst filling up, tempo change, speed release and sweetness gone. "Go upstairs if ya gonna fuck yo whore" the milky white old crone that lived in the apartment next door called out of her window. "I can see woman parts on her that I can't even find on myself nomore!" She shrieked. "Kill yourself Martha" Anthony fed back as he grabbed me tighter. "Baby we have to go anyway, the sun won't stay out forever," I mumbled through his body. He let go and flipped Martha off while setting another display of his manly rights, that would be the dick in hand grab, and finally turned around and headed back in the house. I waited in the kitchen, I knew if I made it to the stairs then Anthony would pick me up and put me in his room so he could

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finish what he thought he had started, but I knew the trip out to the lake would be a long one and I had to make curfew by 10pm.

Halie came down first, smoking a joint while she fumbled around with an elastic band trying to coax her thick black mane into a manageable position. Her eyes were always so soft, surrounded in the darkness of her Amy Winehouse lookalike contest, and yet as dark as her makeup and as sharp as the metal objects protruding from every spot one could pierce, her smile always surrounded me with warmth and comfort that I had been lacking from my own mother recently. "Hi sugar", she kissed my cheek and passed me the joint, "Migo thinks Teej will let us take the canoe out". I knew that wouldn't end well, but I always wanted Halie on my side so I lied, "Hay, that sounds so adventurous!!" the words tripped out of the corner of my mouth and sounded more like a coughing child than full English. I could hear the boys trampling down the stairs like elephants in the old worn house, both of them were packing on the pounds and loving every minute of their powerful physiques. Powerful enough to plow you over, but maybe not bench all that much. The only lifting they would do for fun was lifting hotdogs into their mouths or hookers onto their laps.

We all piled into my tiny forest green 1996 Subaru Legacy, opened up the top and packed the bong for the road. It was sunny, but the wind was enough to catch kites so my nerves started to build long before we even set foot in the canoe.

Upon arrival, we discovered two things. One Teej was trippin', which meant Anthony and Migo wouldn't let us girls' stay alone with him. Two, ribs are impossible to cook when they are frozen. Both of my backup plans to get me out of canoeing on a lake with heavy men and whitecaps were thrown out the window. I tried every other excuse that I could muster. "I'm afraid of the water", "I'm too high to paddle", "I haven't eaten all day and I'll pass out", "I get sea sick", "I forgot I needed to call my grandma", each excuse I brought up into conversation got more desperate every hit we took. Anthony cleverly and eloquently disproved each one as a real issue and exactly 23 minutes later I was stuck in a canoe between 3 lions, feeling like a goat headed for a more than likely end of life situation. We had reached the max weight limit 2 people ago, and the canoe was so low in the water that it conveniently took until we were in the middle of the lake for the water to kick in enough to sink us.

Lucky for me, a racist old man in a pontoon boat showed up to rescue me, while my half white boyfriend was told to stay with the canoe...in the water. Halie and I climbed up on to the deck, and even in the midst's of the chaos I did a quick sweep for any blood splatter or woman's clothing that did not belong. Safe enough I figured, but Migo soon joined us as poor Anthony moped like a wet dog left out in the rain, but quite literally left in the lake to drown. Migo started to argue with the man about trying to get the canoe up on the boat, but the man slurred "I'm not helping no nigger" out of his mouth while the holes in his teeth played a wicked whistle. The comment had me so shocked I just shut up and drank the beer in his cooler while waving to the asshole that was paying for making me get into the canoe in the first place. I had thought up a scenario where the boatman runs Anthony over with his pontoon and we all decide that it is for the best and we let the body float along mixing with blood and fish

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poop until the birds discover him and peck out his eyeballs and his body rots away. The fantasy ends with my conscious pointing out that it's rather easy to not be killed by a pontoon boat while the motor is off because there is a giant gap between the giant metal pontoons. Putting away that thought for poetry inspiration later, I remember that I left my phone in the car and at least my mother won't have a reason to kill me, and since I won't tell her about this canoe problem as long as I make it home by ten I can rest peacefully now safely sailing on this bigots boat. Migo eventually dove back in and paddled the canoe back with Anthony, and the whole ordeal had tired them out so much that neither one of them could find a reason to blame me and Halie for any of it. We cooked up Teej's ribs by the time they got back and ate in silence over a bowl and some brownies. When darkness came to take the lake, it took our afternoon's adventure with her. We cruised home on the moon's path and I made it in time to walk my dog go to sleep and then sneak back out so my girlfriend duties could continue on like they did every stupid day that Anthony wrote the rules for the game.