

Susie

a sf short story

by John Argo

Buck spotted the little girl walking alone, and felt a dryness in his mouth that told him he was about to risk more prison time.

She had blonde hair, was about seven, and was walking along the sidewalk toward a strip mall parking lot with supermarket, drycleaners, video store, household robo repair, liquor store, and the like. The setting sun made her hair glow like spun silk.

Buck followed her a while, his van hovering with a whisper of fans, as he studied the situation. From the feelings inside, he knew he was going to take her sexually. After that, he would strangle her, tie a barbell to her ankles, put her in a garbage bag with her clothes, and dump her off a bridge into a river where she would not be found for months, even years.

The little girl walked slowly but purposefully. Perhaps her mother had given her a dollar or two and told her she could have an ice cream. Or told her to pick up a large bottle of soda.

The inside of the van smelled of coffee and cigarettes. In the back were blankets, some pots and pans for cooking out, some towels and soap for washing along rivers. He had some nudie holos, including kid porn. Buck lit a cigarette with trembling hand. He held the cigarette just near his mouth, his eyes hungrier than his mouth, following her every step.

There were four things that could spoil it now. Buck had been through this exactly thirteen times, by his count. He had it down. Number One, she took a different way home, and he lost her. Number Two, she came back with other kids, and that did it. Number Three, she ran the minute he started propositioning her. Number Four, a cop or some smart enough adult came by and spoiled everything for Buck. No matter, he'd move on, find another one. But this looked like an exceptional one. His stomach was in knots, his mouth watered, his groin seemed on fire. He resisted the temptation to just drive by, grab her, and drive off; someone might hear; someone might see and get his license plate number. It was his third time out of prison; next time the judge might put him in for good; he'd better be careful.

There! He could not believe his luck. She came out of the corner drug store with a popsicle. She sat down on a low wall and licked her popsicle. Buck shut off the engine. The van settled on the street with a barely audible sigh. Buck slid open the side door, exposing a large stuffed tiger with a bandanna and cowboy hat. He stepped carefully out of the van and looked around. Nobody in sight. He knew he was nondescript looking, neither pleasant nor ugly, just this kind of forgettable figure in baggy corduroy pants, dull striped shirt, maybe a wool sweater on a cold day. He had curly gray hair that made him look his age, 45. "Hi," he said, walking slowly up with hands in pockets. "That a grape one?"

"No, orange," she said. She gave it another lick, favoring him sort of sideways around it. There was an orange smear around her mouth, and her fingers looked sticky. She had beautiful dark blue eyes. Buck began to get really turned on. She wore a summer dress that revealed her smooth

skin, knobby knees, featureless chest.

"Aren't you cold?"

"A little."

"Can I sit down next to you?"

"No."

"I'll just stand then. I'm waiting for someone."

No answer.

"Do you live near here?"

"Yes."

"Are your mommy and daddy nice?"

"No."

"Do they..." His mouth got dry; this one was going to be good. "Do they do bad things to you?"

"They said I should never talk to strangers. They said I should run." She rose.

He blocked her. "It's okay. Don't run. I just want to talk with you." As they turned around each other, she was between him and the van. On impulse he stepped forward, picked her up, jumped into the van, and slid the door shut.

She banged on his shoulders with her fists and yelled. Her popsicle went down his shirt in like a freezing little sled of sludge, and he yelped.

"I want you to let me go right now. I don't want to be here. I want to go home. I am afraid of you. You are an awful man."

He grinned, wiping his belly with an oily rag. "Look at the tiger, honey. I think he's waving to you."

"Let me go right now!"

"Listen, honey, nobody can hear you if you scream. Now don't be mean. I'll let you go if you kiss my tiger."

"I don't want to."

"If you give me just a little kiss, I'll open the door."

"No."

He laughed, drew her close. She struggled and he slapped her across the face. She touched her cheek in shock and stared at him. Tough little bitch, he thought, not a tear in her eyes. Hormones raged in him as he began tearing at her clothes, which came off. She bit him on the shoulder,

hard, drawing blood, pissing him off, and he began to choke her.

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ROBERT ONE, ROBERT ONE, THIS IS UNIT SUSIE, DO YOU COPY?

ROGER, UNIT SUSIE, THIS IS ROBERT ONE. I AM TRACKING YOU. YOUR TRANSMISSION OF FINGERPRINTS IS COMPLETE.

THIS IS SUSIE, ROBERT ONE. I HAVE A BLOOD SAMPLE. UPLOAD, UPLOAD, ROBERT ONE TO SATELLITE NANCY.

SATELLITE NANCY, READY TO RECEIVE.

THIS IS SATELLITE NANCY. UPLOAD COMPLETED. DOWNLOADING NORTH AMERICAN CRIMINAL ID BASE, SPECIAL UNIT SEXOFFENSE INVESTIGATION ELEMENT 5634. HOLD, ROBERT ONE.

HOLDING. HOLD, SUSIE.

HOLDING, ROBERT ONE. VIDEO TRACKING ACTIVE. SUBJECT NOW COMMITTING 6789.07 WITH VIOLENCE LEVEL 3. I AM TRANSMITTING THE DNA ANALYZED BLOOD WORK RESULTS.

THIS IS NORTH AMERICAN CID BASE, SUSIE 5634. DOWNLOAD COMPLETE. SCAN SHOWS THREE PREVIOUS OFFENSES LEVEL TWO. BLOOD/DNA AND FINGERPRINT I.D. VERIFIED; NO HUMAN INVOLVEMENT REQUIRED. LEGAL STATUS: SUSIE 5634 CONTAINS HUMAN TISSUE, THEREFORE VIDEO EVIDENCE REVIEWED BY DATABASE AND SUBJECT GUILTY. BEGIN PARSE SENTENCING. [BOOLEAN (1.CRUEL = YES) AND (2.UNUSUAL=NO IN RE NATURE OF OFFENSE)]. SENTENCING COMPLETE PER U.S. CODE 99104.56. NO HUMAN INTERVENTION REQUIRED IN THE FIELD. RECORD FORWARDED TO 4TH CIRCUIT FOR HUMAN POSTMORTEM REVIEW. TRANSMISSION OVER.

NANCY OUT.

ROBERT OUT.

SUSIE OUT.

* * *

Buck felt himself building up to a climax. Great shivering waves of joy weakened him to a state of ecstasy as he slammed against the small, hard body of the girl. She was no longer screaming. She regarded him with great luminous blue eyes. Eat it up, baby, he said, eat it up, bitch. Then--

His joy turned to intense pain. It was pain such as he'd never known before. He was so breathless he could not scream. It was as though a huge pair of pliers or garden shears were being applied to his genitals, twisting while cutting. Screaming hoarsely, he tried to back away. The little bitch stayed attached to him. The light seemed to be fading, and still there was the horrendous tearing pressure between his legs. Then he screamed again, with a feeling as though someone were

cutting his penis off with a dull but serrated knife.

At last he came free. He shoved her away. Dimly, in horror, he saw his privates lying in pieces on a blood-soaked blanket. Looked like some pitiful giblets, all dark red and mashed up, with bits of white skin. The van smelled of something scorched, and he realized she had somehow cauterized him. He sat holding the volcanic agony in his hands, crying softly and helplessly as the little girl rose. The pedophiles whispered rumors of such things, but nobody believed the stories. Besides, appetites were stronger than reasoning. He watched helplessly as she extended her hands and three inch steel claws popped cat-like out of the ends of the fingers. She came closer as if to kiss him. Her mouth opened, much wider than a little girl's should, and he saw the steel teeth and grinding gears inside. Her tongue looked like a corkscrew one would use to open a wine bottle. More stuff in there than on a swiss army knife.

He sobbed and closed his eyes, waiting for the end.

SUSIE TO ROBERT ONE.

THIS IS ROBERT ONE.

IT IS SAFE TO COME COLLECT THE WASTE TISSUE. I HAVE TORN THE SUBJECT'S HEAD OFF. OVER AND OUT.