

THE TALLY STONE

Fiction Serial
by Gilbert Bouchard

Part Seven

The coffee was cold. Neither of them could bring themselves to speak to each other, much less drink the coffee.

Tracy was just surprised that her ex-fiance Arnold hadn't men-

tioned the fact that he'd caught her sleeping with her seventeen-year-old neighbour, Spencer Blackburn. In fact it was sort of hard for him to miss the fact, considering that Spence had wandered through the living

room *au naturel* and asked for directions to the 'head' as he put it.

"OK, spit it out. I know what you're thinking. So he's a bit young. I know that you slept with that 20 year old in the mailroom the first two months we dated, so don't get saintly with me!" Arnold fiddled with his tie and even raised the coffee cup to his lips (but stopped short of actually drinking it).

"I don't care who or what you sleep with. I'm here for another reason."

"So that's it, shit head, come 600 miles and leave me in suspense, way to go."

"I'll tell you when we're alone. By the way, where's your

ring?"

Tracy tried to think of a nice way to tell Arnold that she'd gotten drunk and buried his ring in the backyard, the first night out. Just before she'd worked out a reasonable lie, Spencer screamed.

The sound originated in the kitchen. Tracy saw it first.

"The trap door - it's open." She ran to the opening and peered into the basement. "What do we do?" "Get the flashlight by the door," she pointed in the general direction.

Arnold was scared - a wet your pants, lose your breakfast type of scared.

"My dream, shit this is just like that fucking dream," he groaned just softly enough so that Tracy couldn't hear.

The sound of his own voice calmed him enough so that he could follow Tracy into the basement with at least an appearance of courage. Tracy swept the room with the flashlight's narrow white beam but Arnold didn't even have to look, he knew it was there.

The coffin, the large black sarcophagus in the far corner.

That was it. He couldn't move, couldn't talk, and his vision clouded as if he was wearing his glasses again and they'd fogged over, as if he had just come in out of the cold. For that matter, he might have just come in from the cold - he felt an icy chill come over him.

Tracy must have thought it

was some kind of joke. She stamped over to the coffin and proceeded to pull off the lid.

Arnold wanted to cry out, to move, anything constructive. All he did, however, was release his bladder and impotently watch her pulling off the lid.

She had barely done so when some thing leapt out of the coffin and spun the flashlight across the basement's dirt floor. Arnold felt the fur, matted, dirty, and felt the claws tear across his cheeks.

By the time Tracy recovered the flashlight, Arnold was weeping freely as the blood trickled across his face in four parallel furrows.

"He's not here," Tracy rasped, "he's not here."

The rest of the afternoon was spent in furious search, the yard, the house, but to no avail.

By five o'clock, Arnold and Tracy had retired to the living room, and later the bedroom. It was almost like before, almost like she'd never left him, almost like before the... accident.

The last thing she thought of, before falling asleep was what she thought she saw in that horrible box. At first it looked like Spencer but elongated, with a distorted animal-like visage and torso with downy white fur. Strange, so terrible strange.

Then she drifted to sleep and dreamed about her mother for what seemed like hours.

to be continued

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Trudeau talks

Gateway News Service

Prime Minister Trudeau announced last night that he will invade one of the Kuril Islands in an attempt to achieve world peace.

Trudeau said, "in light of Britain's recent victory in the Falklands and the successful invasion of Grenada by the Americans, Canada needs to invade something... anything."

"We must earn international prestige and recognition to build momentum for my peace plan."

"As a historical movement towards world peace, Canada will invade one of the Kuril Islands southeast of the Bering Strait."

Political experts generally agree Kuril is a good choice.

Dr. Ian W.B. Pellington BA, MBA, PhD, LIB, QB, ALCB, commented "an invasion along the

eastern border of Russia is a brilliant contribution to the Western Alliance."

Trudeau's speech was made in conjunction with an announcement by External Affairs Minister Al MacEachan to test the Cruise twice.

The decision, said MacEachan, "was in response to pressure from our powerful neighbour to the south who accused us of not contributing enough to NATO."

The missile will pass over the country once and back the other way, along the same path. Brian Mulroney, Leader of the Opposition, said, "the decision to send it back the same way is nothing more than a cheap shot at the voters Trudeau knows are goners."

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