

PINK EYE

By Jeff Blechle

WHY WE LIKE IT: *We love this ribald, down-for-the-count literary slug fest with its brass knuckle prose and punch happy dialogue: “Where’s Harmony, Joy?” ...”She raced out of here like she was on fire and the water to put her out was in Yonkers. Drunk as sin.” Blechle owns dysfunctional family when it comes to fiction and his shoot from the hip ask questions later hijinks, bomb-squats the hilarity meter. But what do you want when a mother and son-in-law’s TNT relationship resembles a barroom brawl, gloves off? But don’t let the author’s WTF facility fool you. There’s meticulous craft and great talent behind this flash that in lesser hands would fall flat. And many funny, funny lines, like: ‘Crash grunted and strained into the bathroom and bent his mind over the sink, “God, do me just one favor,” The lights flickered, “Really? Why not?”*

Crash came home to his TV-lit mother-in-law chain-smoking on his lemon-yellow couch. He shelved his motorcycle helmet. She shushed him so she could hear Judge Judy.

“Where’s Harmony, Joy?” Slapping at smoke, Crash noticed empty Red Bull cans on the floor and one of the window curtains, well, she had fashioned it into a noose. A Styrofoam wig head lay on its cheek on an end table.

“She raced out of here like she was on fire and the water to put her out was in Yonkers. Drunk as sin.” Joy shook her large fleshy head, the same head she had rammed into Father Hudak’s belly when his sermon touched on obesity. “Wedded bliss.”

Crash ran to each room, flipping light switches, slamming doors. His pot was missing.

Joy called, “Sure glad her pa ain’t around to see this.”

Crash returned to her fat pink knees. “What?” He always feared for his father-in-law’s well-being. “What happened to Tom?”

“Huh? Why, I accidentally killed him while I was trimming his bangs.”

Gulp. Blink. “Joy, do *not* light another cigarette.”

She did. “Yep. Harmony run off with three pigtails, red eye shadow, orange pants, and a butcher knife. I told her she didn’t have to get all prettied up to run wild in the streets. Huh. Shit.”

Crash turned to toppled, emptied beer bottles on the hutch, then thundered into the bedroom, retrieved his chromed .500 Nitro Express, loaded, safety off, and holstered it under his black button-up shirt. “One of us has to go,” he muttered, fluttering back into the laughter-filled living room.

“Oh my God, Joy. Is that my porterhouse on your eye?”

Her shoulders rose to her ears and she nodded and chuckled. “Wittle infection.”

Baby talk! He tore a pillow from behind her neck and the steak backslapped his crotch and he didn’t breathe or think any more than necessary.

“Just—get out of here!”

“Who, me?” Joy teetered on her beach-ball belly. “I’ll cry discrimination to your slumlord, the cops, *and* the gay guy next door!”

He drew his gun on her. “And I’ll blow your head off and put a steak knife in your hand and stab myself in the back with it!”

“Touché!” She lifted her pointed-toe shoe into his crotch and the gun discharged, destroying Harmony’s nearby lava lamp with a volcanic *phzzt*.

Crash grunted and strained into the bathroom and bent his mind over the sink. “God, do me just one favor.” The lights flickered. “Really? Why not?”

“How’d it go, Mom?” Harmony asked, breezing into the kitchen with sacks from the mall. “Did you talk to Crash? Did you smooth things over between us?” She noticed the lamp fragments and the steak on the carpet. “What happened?”

“Your hubby tried to blow my f’ing head off, is all.”

Sacks and jaw dropped. “How’d he miss?”

“Don’t get cute.” At the hutch, Joy splashed gin into a Nirvana mug and blew smoke at it. “Ol’ G.I. Joe tried to light my fire, but I kept blowing out his match. Then he went Ram-bo retard.”

“Mom!”

“So, I racked his balls. Then broke.” She gulped, opening her medium-rare eye on Harmony. “That urban gorilla ever feels me up again, I’ll take his head off and put it back on straight.”

“Mom!”

“Don’t try me, daughter. It ain’t no use. Nope.” She royally disgraced the couch and struck a match. “I’m moving in here. Tonight.”

A gunshot roared in the bathroom, then came onerous, mixed-up thuds.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: *Growing up in low rent areas around degenerates , it became easy, thanks to my superiority complex, to laugh and make fun of repugnant situations and I thought it was a pretty idea for an unarmed, full-of-shit broad to supplant her son-in-law with homespun diplomacy. Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Schultz, Woody Allen and a steady diet of sitcoms may take credit for this tale, and many others.*

BIO: *My work has appeared in 13th Warrior, Frigg, Funny in Five Hundred, The Jewish Magazine, Sidewalk’s End, Literally Stories and Timber Creek Review among others.*