A Token Of My Love And Goodnight

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And Goodnight

by Tessie Pappas

OLLIE’S gorillian jaws gyrated between his skull and shoulders and finally came to a syncopated stop. He swallowed the cough drop. His well-scrubbed face reflected headlights from passing cars, especially in the area of the nose, which he was picking at the moment.

Watching him, Alice blinked a couple of times and fixed her gaze on the shiny gear-shift lever emerging gracefully from the floor between them. She raised a lightly-penciled eyebrow in restrained disgust. He was a football player, of course, but this was uncalled for. She flicked on the radio, hoping to lift the foreground tension with a little background music, but they were playing Mozart’s Finlandia or something that sounded an awful lot like it, and she didn’t feel like fiddling with the dial, so she just hummed instead. She had a very haunting hum.

Ollie was lost in concentration. His brows thickened and he wondered, “Should I put the four fingers on top of the cigarette and the thumb below, or should I use the classic between-the-forefingers hold?” He held the cigarette nonchalantly between his teeth for a moment and deftly maneuvered his roommate’s car into an anonymous parking space. He checked his watch. Ten more minutes.

Meanwhile, Alice crossed her legs and remembered to tuck her skirt under at the knees. The whole gesture of modesty was lost on Ollie, who was patiently picking lint from his blazer. Shyly, Alice reached over to snag a nice lump of lint from his shoulder, and all at once their eyes met. For a moment, they were tense and hypnotized, but then Alice ducked her head and snickered her come-and-get-me snicker, and it was all okay. Right then and there, Ollie decided to hold the cigarette between his thumb and index finger.
Without warning, Alice suddenly swooped toward him, landing in the no-man’s-land between the bucket seats. Ollie checked his watch. Eight minutes. Alice’s little snickers were very close to his ear now, and her fingers were fiddling with his button-down collar. Ollie, as usual, responded favorably. Alice snuggled into his arm-pit, and then nibbled at his earlobe.

When she opened her eyes, Alice noticed her best girlfriend, similarly occupied in the car just behind Ollie’s. The girls waved to each other. Six more minutes (Alice sneaked a look at her watch).

Ollie’s lips were sliding over Alice’s throat and shoulder, stopping periodically to implant a tiny love-bite here and there. She gasped ecstatically—Ollie’s cigarette was burning a hole in her sweater. Ollie apologized and continued beating a path across the nape of her neck. She pulled him away gently and held his head between her hands, pressing both thumbs firmly into his cheeks. She hardly noticed the cold wet saliva trickling down the back of her neck.

“Oh!” they whispered lovingly. “Oh, oh!” they whispered again together.

Ollie’s cheeks were beginning to ache where Alice’s thumbs were digging in. Tactfully, he removed her hands and looked at his watch. Four minutes.

After a last, very passionate, soul kiss (which was spoiled somewhat by Ollie’s bad aim) Alice pushed Ollie away, realizing that it wouldn’t do for her to go in with her hair in such a state. She straightened her little chignon hairpiece, which was falling flirtatiously over one eye. Pulling out a big teasing comb, she began to tug at her forelock, and then frizzed up her bangs until they stuck out nicely.

Ollie lit another cigarette and this time held it between his thumb and little finger. Bashfully, he returned Alice’s bobby pin which had somehow been lodged between his teeth. When he came around to open Alice’s door, he checked the tires with a quick glance. All okay.

They pushed and shoved their way to the door, for, as usual, they had timed it perfectly, as had the busily affectionate couples around them. They embraced for the final thirty seconds. Ollie breathed heavily into Alice’s ear. She got goose-bumps on her stomach. Suddenly, he drew her very,
very, close and whispered something. Alice nodded vigorously and opened her hand to receive the cough drop. Ollie gazed passionately into her eyes. The cough drop was warm and sticky in her hand. She held it tightly as she stepped inside.

Alice just stood at the door with a most radiant smile spread out all over her face. She held out her hand, cocked her head, and cooed happily at the big brown lump nestling in her palm. She rubbed it on her coat. No, I can’t just eat it, she thought.

Contentedly, Alice bounded up the stairs to her room where she could be alone with Ollie’s big 10 by 14 inch picture.

Rhinocerous Antiquitatis

by Bruce Becker

THE SUN seared the red-brown earth with malificent intensity. The wind blew the dust in the air into little swirls of ghostlike figures which lurched across the plain drunkenly. Covering the ground like a five-o’clock shadow was a sparse growth of tan grass. On the far horizon a tree attempted to break the monotony but the effort was masked by the dust and the heat-distorted air. High overhead a small brown tic-bird coasted on toward the tree with leisurely ease. He sailed downward to land on one of the more leafy branches, and shook the dust from his wings before folding them. Several hundred feet in front of him, the rhinoceros pawed the ground in intense concentration, like a football player listening to the coach before being sent into the game. The rhinoceros tore the ground with his horn, tossing the earth over his head with snorting anger. Then, with one last paw at the dusty earth, he lurched forward with lumbering strides into a full gallop. He picked up speed as he ran, shaking the ground with his weight. At the last second he lowered