

Erotique

The Wapshott Journal of Erotica

Issue 6



The Wapshott Press

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Collected Stories

David W. Landrum

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Goosey Goosey Gander

*Goosey goosey gander,
Whither shall I wander?
Upstairs and downstairs
And in my lady's chamber.
There I met an old man
Who wouldn't say his prayers,
I took him by his left leg
And threw him down the stairs.*

---Mother Goose

Everyone in town knew the White Goose Inn was a house of prostitution. Cressida, the madam, employed two younger women, Amelia and Allison. One would wait bar while Cressida and whichever of her employees happened to be free serviced men. The priest of the town, Father Claus, repeatedly tried to close the place down, but the men of the village availed themselves of Cressida's services and covered for her so he could not prove her business was a den of iniquity. He racked his brain trying to think of a way to expose her sinful enterprise.

At last, he realized only one stratagem would serve to uncover her practices. Sinful, he

admitted to himself, but it would be for the good of the community and he could confess and be absolved after the constable had sent her packing—her and the two young whores who worked for her.

As a soldier, before he took his priestly vows, he had learned the importance of good reconnaissance. He went to a local pub and met with a couple of men who had frequented the White Goose Inn but had since abandoned their sinful behavior and regularly attended his church. He asked them about her establishment.

“Why will no one name her as a whore?” he asked over mugs of ale one summer night.

“She has protection,” Wye, a grizzled old tanner, answered.

“Does she hire thugs who protect her and make sure her customers pay and do not expose her sinful trade?” Claus had done some reading on brothels and learned that this was how the women who ran such dens of iniquity regulated their customers.

“No,” Wye replied after swallowing a huge gulp of ale. “She uses a different means.”

Blount, the second informant, learned toward Claus. “She uses sorcery.”

Claus could not hide his smile. If he could convict her of sorcery, she would be burned, not merely run out of town.

“Men who don’t pay her or who go blabbing about what she does end up the losers,” Blunt continued. He raised his eyebrows. Claus

did not understand. "They lose," he clarified, "what men value the most—though no one knows how it is done."

"Ah. Like what happened to Peter Abelard."

Everyone in town knew the sad fate of Peter Abelard, a priest who ended up emasculated for getting a woman pregnant.

"Not exactly," Wye put in. "Those who see the bodies say it was not a clean, even cut such as Father Abelard received. It was a shredding, as if it were clawed away by a demon."

Claus set out the next morning, arriving early, hoping to be the first man through the door. At the entrance he saw a fresh, fair wench sweeping the steps. She smiled merrily at him. Behind her stood a large, white goose—a gander.

"Good morning, Father," the girl said.

"Good morning to you, daughter." The goose stepped closer to them. Claus admired the bird, especially its snowy feathers. He reached out to stroke the creature's neck.

"I wouldn't do that, Father," the girl warned. "He is not a friendly bird. He'll take your finger off before you know what happened. Would you be seeking Mistress Cressida?"

He nodded.

"I imagine you wish to pray with her?"

He caught the sly look in her eyes and the subtle intonation she gave to the word "pray."

"Indeed I do."

"She has devotions this time of day," the

A Discourse with the Incorporeal Air

The university had never produced a stage play that featured nudity. Sossity Chandler had never acted Shakespeare. Somehow, though, the two things seemed to work together to her advantage. She saw the call for auditions and read the note done in red so no one reading the notice would overlook it: **PART OF GERTRUDE WILL REQUIRE ACTRESS TO APPEAR TOPLESS IN ONE SCENE.** That night she ran the idea past her suite mates. Nerissa, from Greece, said she thought Sossity should audition. "In Europe, girls go topless on public beaches to get a tan," she said, "And we don't even think it's a big deal." Kathy Farisi was dead-set against it and expressed shock and disgust that her friend would even considering such a thing. "It's sleazy. Besides, what would your family think?" Cheryl, her roommate, reacted more judiciously. "I probably wouldn't," she said, "but if it's done right and the nude part really contributes to the overall effect of the scene, I'd say, fine." Sossity had hoped for an opinion that took aesthetics into consideration and decided she would audition.

“You’ll probably get the part just because you’ve got big tits,” Kathy responded sourly when she learned of Sossity’s decision. Sossity did not have to worry about what her boyfriend, Brian, would think about it because they had split up a month earlier.

She went to the studio the next day. Quite a few women had come to try for parts. The director was playing Horatio as a woman (renamed Horatia); Rosencrantz and Osric would also be played by women. As she got in line, she wondered how many of the women were auditioning for those parts or for Ophelia and how many would be willing to play Gertrude. When Sossity appeared before the director and her advisers, they asked her which part she wanted.

“Gertrude.”

The director, a woman named Amy Cogan, asked if she had seen the statement.

“I saw it.”

“You’re willing to play the scene topless?”

“I don’t have a problem with that.”

“Have you ever played a part on stage that required nudity?”

“No. But I’ve been nude in the locker room a lot; and with more than one boyfriend, if you would call that public.”

Amy laughed. “I was thinking on stage, but I like your attitude. What have you acted in?”

“I played Emily Webb in *Our Town* and was Maria in *The Sound of Music*—both of those

were in high school. I was Nellie Forbush; we did *South Pacific* in a local production just before I came to school here." She paused and added, "I wasn't topless in any of those roles."

"Especially not as Maria, I suspect. You've never acted Shakespeare?"

"No."

"Well, let's have you read one of Gertrude's speeches."

She read through one, trying to show a little of her dramatic abilities. The panel listened carefully. Sossity thought she had done well and left the theater feeling good about the audition. She, Kathy, and Cheryl went to the gym and worked out. Sossity swam a mile at the pool after her suite mates went back to the dorm. When she got there, a message waited on her email. She had got the part. "Five women auditioned, Amy's message said, "but you nailed the dialogue. Rehearsals began at the end of the week."

On Wednesday she had a date with Jerry Watanabie, a guy she had been out with twice. He owned a plane and had offered to take her on a flight. They rose above the campus at dusk. She took in the beauty of the sky and the lengthening shadows below them. After landing, they went to Quincy's Bar she told him about the role she had landed in the upcoming Shakespeare play and that through part of it she would be topless.

"Do I get a preview?" he joked. The remark caught her off guard. After a moment nonplussed, she laughed at his audacity. She also

A Big Cat

Marci and I just finished a post-coital joint when we heard a familiar thumping noise downstairs. It was Ribbs, our cat, pulling on a window screen.

"You let her in," Marci said. "I'm too stoned to walk."

I was not much better but I got up, threw on a pair of track shorts and a t-shirt, and went downstairs.

I opened the door and went cold when I saw a police cruiser pull into my driveway. Two cops got out. The cat slipped in as they came up the front steps.

They were big guys, as most cops are. I stared at them, dumb.

"Mr. Daryl Shepherd?"

I nodded, realizing that anyone who even took a glance could tell I was high.

"I'm Officer Thompson, this is Officer Collie, of the Grand Rapids Police Department. May we come in and ask you a couple of questions?"

Still unable to speak, I stepped away from the door, stumbling as I did. I reeked of marijuana. They came in. I stood by the piano and

faced them.

“Mr. Shepherd, we wonder if you know Jason Vanderkodde.”

The name registered slowly in my mind.

“Yeah, I know him.”

My voice sounded slurred and thick. This was not good.

“Were you aware, Mr. Shepherd, that Jason Vanderkodde deals drugs?”

I tried to act surprised but could also tell they saw through my act. A knowing glint shone in their eyes. Before I could answer their question, Collie let out a tremendous sneeze then four more short but forceful ones in rapid succession.

“No, I didn’t know that.”

Collie sneezed twice more. These were not little sneezes. Thompson looked over at him.

“You okay, Hal?”

“I’m fine,” he answered, his jaw tight.

It occurred to me that Collie must be allergic to cats. I also realized he probably had not admitted this to anyone because such an admission would have disqualified him from being a cop. I bent down and picked up Ribbs. I moved close to the two police officers, making sure Ribbs was on the side nearest to Collie.

“Jason Vanderkodde was arrested for possession of marijuana this afternoon,” Thompson said. “We found your name and phone number on a list he kept on this person and we wondered”

Encounter

They parked a hundred yards from the shelter they had found. The sun hung above the horizon of Lake Michigan. Purple and burgundy clouds towered upward. The beach, clear but for a few driftwood logs, darkened, its scrub grass casting shadows and the waves falling in a sure, slow cadence.

As they kissed, she remembered how much she had missed the lake. The man she had been married to for so long would never bring her here. Once or twice she had come on her own or with the children, but never with him. And though she kissed her new lover passionately, the kissing was not spontaneous but prescribed for what they planned to do. He opened her blouse and ran his hands over her breasts. She rubbed his jeans at the crotch. Eventually he slipped his hands under her skirt and touched her—she had not worn underwear.

Not much time passed before she said she was ready. They got out of the car. He draped a blanket over his shoulder and carried a small gym bag in one hand. They walked to a rise of stone and negotiated a narrow passage until they

were inside a natural enclosure, open but canopied with trees and vines. The rock walls rose up above a floor of sand. The woman took off her blouse and skirt and lay face down on the blanket.

"Lots of lube," she said. "Remember what we read on the internet."

"Got it," he replied.

He disrobed, squeezed a generous dollop of a recommended lubricant jelly on one hand, pulled the cheeks of her buttocks apart, and spread the gel around her opening. He got more and spread it on top of what was already there, gently opening her anus with his fingers, making sure a good amount of the lubricant coated her sphincter, which would be sensitive. It was the first time either of them had done this. He did not want to cause her any pain.

"Good?" he asked.

"Um huh."

"You ready?"

"I'm ready."

He slipped on a condom and slathered lubricant on it, just like the internet sites said to do. He knelt above her.

"Here goes," he said.

She made an affirmative sound. He lowered himself and pulled her buns apart. Finding the place, hoping it would go well, he pushed into her.

He had slid in easily but heard her gasp and felt her tense.

“Carrie?”

“It’s okay.”

“You sure?”

“Yes. Put it in a little further. I’ll tell you when to stop.”

He thrust carefully another inch into her.

“Okay, stop,” she said, her voice even.

A moment of silence passed. Both of them were relieved that they had negotiated the beginning so successfully, but now neither seemed to know what do.

“Well, come on,” Carrie said after a moment. “Fuck me.”

They both laughed muted little laughs. The man—his name was Jesse—began to move, gently, remembering what the articles they had read said about being easy, smooth, and not penetrating more than three inches. As he thrust, he heard her gasps and murmurings—of pleasure, he realized. He had felt her body relax. With that, he was able to relax as well.

Carrie rejoiced that it had gone okay. They had done it. It had hurt just a little when he put in in—the books said it would and she had had expected it—but they had got past the painful part. Warmth radiated from her perineum upwards. She enjoyed feeling his body against her back and his breath on her neck and ear. When he reached under and took hold of her breasts, waves of pleasure surged through her. She breathed out with delight.

No one would see them here, she thought.

The Slave Girl and the Angel

Israfael

The man who purchased her went over every inch of her body. He cupped his hands over her breasts, measuring them and her small red nipples with his thumb and fingers. He felt her smooth, curved hips, probed the nest of hair between her legs, felt her shoulders and ankles, looked at her teeth. After admiring her trim stomach and the curve of her lower abdomen to the rise of her delicate mound, he nodded, gave the slave owner a bag of money, and took her out into the arches of the hallway. A eunuch gave her a cotton smock to wear. Two servant girls and a strong, handsome young man, apparently a guard, joined them as they stepped out of the slave house and on to the crowded, noisy streets of Baghdad.

Her new master looked to be near sixty and showed his age. He did not move with energy and she shuddered at the certainty she would be in his embrace, and probably not before long. She glanced at the guard. He wore a blue shirt and trousers, a white turban, and gold shoes. A round shield covered his back and he wore two

scimitars in sheaths over his chest and stomach. He walked with powerful steps. She noticed the muscles of his arms and his stern, vigilant, well-formed face. She also noticed a small silver cross around his neck. Two guards, one a fair-skinned Frank, one a black Nubian, walked behind them.

The street was thronged with jostling figures hurriedly pursuing tasks, carrying things they had bought in the market, hurrying forth on errands—nothing at all like the quiet town by the sea where she had spent her childhood. Hala, from a Christian family in Anatolia, had been sold as a slave to pay a debt when she was only four years old. As a girl, she worked in the kitchen of her master's home and helped with cleaning. Her owners were kind, practiced her religion, and did not abuse her. The household she lived in was a household of merchants in a seaport town on the coast of Lebanon. Evenly divided between Christians and Muslims, people got along and the local ruler was benevolent to all religions. The family she served made a great deal of money exchanging goods with English and Italian merchants and treated her more like a daughter than a slave.

Well, she thought, as she walked along the teeming streets of the huge city, maybe not exactly like a daughter. At age sixteen the midwife examined her and her mistress spoke vaguely of the “new duties” she would soon undertake.

Hala understood what the mistress expected her to do and felt fear, but this melted

away when she found the sole recipient of her favors would be the son of her owner. Handsome and strong, he took her virginity gently. She came to cherish when he parted the curtains to enter her room. The servants would sprinkle spices on her bed. She would strip naked and wait for him. He usually came when the first stars shone over the sea and kissed her lips and breasts as the salt breeze blew through the windows. Her secret parts quivered and luxuriated. The hot fluids of her passion ran down her thighs and her nipples became hard like rubies. He would climb onto her in the strength of his youth and fill her with joy and ecstasy. She moaned and writhed, caught in a storm of pleasure that swept over her like the sea and shook her like moving of the earth.

Life returned to its routines. The son of the family came to her once or twice a week. She craved the days when he took her. When she knew he would come for her, she could hardly do her other duties. All of this, however, ended. The son got in some kind of trouble and had to flee the country. Soon the family sold her off. She suspected they needed money to pay bribes to the local officials so they would not retaliate against the family for their son's infraction, whatever it was. She ended up in the slave market in Baghdad.

The group surrounding her and her new owner arrived at a spacious house enclosed within a wall. The young man, who reminded her of the son of her former owner, went in and

The Dryad Grove

Barry Phipps smiled, feeling an amused surge of frustration that as a lawyer he was not allowed to have any social interaction with clients. His firm had taken the case of an ecological advocacy group that wanted to save a stand of old-growth timber outside his town. Their legal representative, Sylvia Collins, was one of the most beautiful women he had ever seen, but restrictions based on legal ethics prevented him from even speaking to her in a familiar way, let alone asking her out.

Worse, he thought, that he had to sit this close to her.

Sylvia Collins had a well-shaped face and a pretty, wide mouth; she had a nice smile. Her large eyes framed by long lashes were green shot through with brown. Tall and slender, she looked like a basketball player or a runner—trim, strong, alert. Today she had on an earth-tone blouse, a green skirt, and darker green tights. Her charm had overwhelmed him. The beauty she exuded naturally had claimed his gaze.

He shuffled a stack of papers.

“I think we have a good case,” he said.

“The grove is government land because it was purchased when the state bought that section of the old Grand Trunk Railroad line. Under state law, no old-growth stands of timber can be sold off—and the grove falls within that state’s definition of a stand of old-growth timber.”

“If that’s the case, Mr. Phipps, then what is the issue?”

“At issue is that we are up against a wealthy, rapacious development company that can hire good lawyers and wants that piece of land. Michigan law also states that the government may sell off any land if ‘emergency’ warrants the sale. The firm asserts that the sale will fall under the emergency clause due to the dire economic conditions that prevail in our state—and the fact that their project will bring jobs and commerce to the area, which has been particularly hard-hit by the economic downturn. To a state that is billions of dollars in debt, the sale of a property for multiple millions is attractive. And, since it’s more than a mile from the scenic trail to which the old railroad line was converted, they claim it will not diminish the natural beauty there.”

She shifted nervously in her chair.

“Is the state persuaded?”

“The state needs money, Miss Collins. The attorney general and the governor seem taken with the idea of selling.”

“When you put it that way, it doesn’t sound particularly good for us.”

“We do have the law on our side—the argument comes down to natural resources versus economic development. The state needs economic development, but the people still value natural beauty. We need to make the issue a public issue, get it in the papers and TV so we can garner some public support.”

“I’m working on that,” she said. “I have an interview with The Press this afternoon and tomorrow I’ll be making a pitch to the local FOX station to do a report on it.”

“That will help. We will do the legal side and your organization can do its part to build popular appeal.”

“I just hope we can do it well. Our funding is limited.”

He wanted to say that her charm and beauty would go a long way toward promoting the cause; he wanted to ask her to lunch. Ethical regulations prohibited him from doing either of those things.

They concluded their meeting. Sylvia Collins departed. He noticed she did not go to the parking lot but exited through the front door. She turned and started down the sidewalk. It was unlikely she had parked on the street. Probably she used public transportation or walked. The Press was four long blocks from his office.

He sat back. The case did not look as promising as he had presented it. The state needed money. The newly elected administration cozened up to business quite a lot. They had

The Last of the Wine

I

When I saw the crowd of people waiting for me on the shore, I knew it was time to get the wine out. I was saving it for the end, and the end had come before my eyes. The people lining the shore carried spears and bows. They played instruments that made loud, droning, disagreeable music. As I tried to turn my boat around (impossible for one man against contrary wind), something hit the hull. The sound came twice more. At first, I thought they meant to kill me with arrows, but then my vessel lurched violently. I lost footing and tumbled down. They had let fly harpoons with lines attached to them and were pulling me in to shore.

I had sailed in thick, cold mist through the last two dawns, unable to see the sun or stars, and had no idea where I was. As they pulled me closer to shore, I got out a knife, thinking to cut the lines, but decided against it. What good would it do? They had me. If I cut the lines, they would shoot out other ones or just kill me with their bows.

I was somewhere in the northlands—Europa or Vineland. Oak and laurel trees grew just beyond the beach; rocky outcroppings, moss and lichen told me it my location lay somewhere in the upper reaches of the Atlantic. As they pulled me in, I calculated the size of the crowd assembled on the sandy beach at around three hundred.

A group of burley men pulled the lines. I threw my knife away so as to not antagonize my captors. The prow of my boat hit the wet, slushy sand. The men stood thick-chested, with mighty arms, dressed in kilts and coarse tunics. Most of them had red hair and beards. Their women, in long dresses, hair braided, stood taller than any women I had seen. They looked strong and muscular, though they carried no weapons. They growled and screamed, though as I got closer, the screaming and growling quieted to a low, even chant. I could not tell if was hostile—but the eerie, tone frightened me more than the angry shouting. They had pulled my boat out of the water by now. I stood on the deck, legs shaking from fear and fatigue, ready to accept whatever Fate had decreed for me. Four men grabbed me, dragged me off the deck, and hauled me over to a thickset man with a braided beard and bright blue eyes—their chieftain, I assumed.

He looked me over and spoke. I could not understand and shook my head to indicate this, all the while trying not to show the fear that was tying my insides into knots. Two more men and a

woman joined him. The men were bearded like him, though one of them had dark hair. The woman wore a burgundy cloak. A pendant decorated her forehead. She was beautiful, with piercing grey eyes, blonde hair, and an intelligent gaze. The men spoke to her and to each other in their language. She said nothing but observed me and her compatriots thoughtfully as they went back and forth in their peculiar tongue. Though I could not get any of it, it seemed from the tone that the dark-haired man wanted me dead—his eyes flashed murder when he looked at me and he kept stabbing his finger at me. The man I assumed was the tribal leader seemed to contemplate, giving me evaluative gazes as he listened. He spoke only twice, both times in an even tone. The tall woman listened.

The debate went on perhaps twenty minutes. My legs grew numb. I felt hunger and fatigue and wondered if I might collapse. I grew fainter until, in the midst of a vociferous exchange between the main speaker and the other man; the woman broke in, bringing me out of the miasma of lethargy that had stolen upon me.

Her clear, even words silenced them both. She looked from one to the other. When she had their full attention, she spoke at length. I stood there, trying not to look decrepit, thinking from her tone that she might be speaking in my favor. The men listened. When she finished, both of them nodded. The chieftain, the tall woman, and the two men departed. The guards who had taken me

David W. Landrum has been published widely in journals and anthologies in the US, UK, Canada, Europe, and Asia. His novellas, *Strange Brew*, *ShadowCity*, *Mother Hulda*, *The Prophetess*, *Le Cafe de la Mort*, and *The Last Minstrel*, are available through Amazon.

