

Desert Rose

Labor Day weekend for over twenty years meant a trip to Durango, Colorado for the Iron Horse Motorcycle Rally. Sometimes with a group, sometimes as a lone wolf, I usually made a loop out of it, going down by Hwy 50 pasty Blue Mesa Reservoir, south on Hwy 149 through Lake City, Creed, then into Pagosa Springs for the night.

One year, stretching the holiday weekend, I left home on Thursday. I was on my own, just south of Lake City, when I passed a black object in the center of the road. As I carefully passed by, I noticed it was a freshly dropped piece of clothing, not yet crushed, or soiled by passing vehicles. I turned back to retrieve it and found a clean, soft, black sweater with a very familiar scent.

I recognized the perfume on the sweater, Desert Rose, which was one my former girlfriend used to wear. I like it so much I used to buy I for her. It is said that smell is the sense most tied to memory, and I smiled as I recalled that soft, beautiful lady. I put the sweater in my leather saddlebag and headed south almost able to feel her pressing into my back.

I pulled into Pagosa Springs just at sunset and backed the bike into a spot among dozens of others in front of Boss Hog's Saloon. The place was packed as I took the only seat at the bar. I still must have been thinking about the sweater because the perfume was still in my head, or so I thought, until I realized the sent I was smelling was from the tall redhead to my left.

She was with another biker, and I hesitated to ask her about a lost sweater being concerned that her friend might take it as me hitting one her. I was powerless to miss the opportunity though, and finally said, "Excuse me, but are you wearing Desert Rose?"

"Yes," she replied with a neon smile.

"And," I asked, "Did you lose a black sweater on the ride here?"

“How did you know that,” she asked?

I told her I would be right back and retrieved the sweater from my saddlebag, returning it to her. She was most appreciative. Her friend was not. He shot me a deadly stare and exited the saloon after paying his tab. She gave me another smile, shrugged her shoulders, thanked me, and followed him outside.

I finished my margarita and some great barbeque ribs, paid, and headed out for the cabin I had rented next to a hot spring. Outside sat the redhead, alone and sitting on a bench, in tears, holding an overnight bag.

I sat beside her and said, “Sorry if I am the cause of this. I’m Ric.”

“Kim,” she said softly. “Things were not going well before that,” she said, “He was looking for trouble. I should not have come with him. My mistake. Now I have no way back to Denver and no room.”

I asked her if I could give her a ride somewhere, and she told me she was just regrouping, not sure what to do next. It was now after nine, and I knew there were no rooms to be had with the rally in town.

I explained that I had a cabin with two beds reserved for the weekend, and that she was welcome to one of them, no expectations or conditions, and that she could explore options on getting back to Denver in the morning. After a minute, she smiled and nodded yes, climbing on the back of the bike.

After checking in, I gave her the choice of beds, told her I was heading for the hot spring and that she was welcome to join me. She declined, saying she did not have a swimming suit. When I laughed, her hands went to her hips, wondering about her choice to join me.

“It is clothing optional, and I have never seen anyone wearing anything there,” I told her, “You are welcome to stay in the room. I won’t be long. I am tired from the ride here.”

I had been alone in the soothing hot water for only a few minutes when she showed up, wrapped in a towel, which she theatrically dropped with a, “TA DA!”

She was near or just above six feet tall, dark red hair hanging at least a foot past her shoulders, partially covering her perfect breasts. Her skin was pale but healthy, a hint of freckles high on her cheeks and chest.

She slid into the water and after a minute or two made eye contact and said, “You must think I am a wild woman biker babe slut.”

“No,” I told her, “I think you are a damsel in distress, and this is an opportunity for me to be your knight in shining armor. Let’s agree right now that nothing is going to happen tonight so you can relax and figure out what to do tomorrow.”

The neon smile appeared again, and she nodded yes. “Do you want to talk about it,” I asked?

After a heavy sigh, she related how she had never been on a bike road trip before, and as an adventure had reluctantly accepted a fellow lawyer’s invitation for the Denver to Durango weekend trip, Thursday to Monday. He was romantically interested, she was not and clearly explained that it was as friends if he could accept those conditions.

He did agree, but then grew gradually more irritated as the trip progressed. Things were a little tense before my appearance at Boss Hog’s, and his perception of her flirting with me was the last straw, with him throwing her bag on the ground and riding off, leaving her in the parking lot. She was stunned and unprepared by the desertion.

Reluctantly, after she insisted, I agreed to give her my observations. “First, his attraction to you is understandable, as you are beautiful, intelligent, and communicative. No, I do not think it is reasonable for two healthy adults to not react physically to the intimate contact of riding a bike for hours. On the short

ride from Boss Hog's to the cabin, I sure noticed the feel of your arms around me and you pressing against my back. It felt good."

I also told her I did not understand anyone abandoning a lady like that, and that she was better off away from him. It showed a lack of character.

Back at the cabin in our own beds, the conversation continued, but with me warning her that after the ride and the hot tub, that I was prone to falling asleep at any moment, and I did.

From a bad right shoulder, I always sleep on my left side, which was facing away from Kim. As I slept, I dreamed of her naked freckled breasts against my back, and her arm around my waist. I could smell the Desert Rose in the air. I did not want to wake up. Then I woke up and now knew it was not a dream.

I did not take her back to Denver until Monday, and it was not our last long weekend together.