

A Family Tradition



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by

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I was going to need four shots to get through this visit. The smoky liquid sloshed in the decanter as I swung it up to fill my glass.

“Are you ready to go pay your respects to the old man?” My younger brother, William, asked.

The words were addressed to me; however, I noticed his gaze didn’t meet mine. Instead, it rested about a foot below my wife’s face. Not unusual for him to be focused on her best assets. I know that’s what had captured my attention. However, this didn’t seem the time or the place on our February 14th annual visit to the cemetery to put flowers on my father’s grave. Shelli insisted we go; she said it kept ‘the talk’ down.

But hell, nothing kept ‘the talk’ down when you married your own step-mother, especially when she was a twenty-year old blond bombshell. Nor had ‘the talk’ died down in the five years we’d been unhappily married. If I had possessed the gift of foresight, Dad would still be alive, and I would be free of the narcissistic harpy. But, it was too late for that.

I slugged down the whiskey. The fiery liquid burnt a comforting trail down my throat.

“Here’s to dear old Dad,” I said as I poured another shot. Then, I noticed William. He was standing with his lips pressed to Shelli’s and his hands were caressing portions of her body that should have been mine alone to touch.

“Hey, what do you think you’re doing?” was what I meant to say. Instead, I fell to the floor, my mouth gaping open while the smell of bitter almonds filled my nostrils.

I’m just glad the old man didn’t live to see this. He would have died laughing.

