

GOTTA LOVE THE FICTION

Black Highway

By: Daniel L. Wiedenfeld

Keach let the clutch out on 5th (Name rhymes with peach, but a friendly word of advice, don't ever call him that to his face!) He settled back against his sleeping bag that was wedged between him and the sissy bar. Why couldn't he just learn to say no? Locking on the dead man's throttle he settled in for what would be a long, dark, lonely ride. He locked the throttle on around 70 mph; he didn't want to push it tonight. The last thing that he needed now was trouble from the law.

How did he always get into these situations? 20 minutes ago, he was warm and comfortable in his own bed, with Sally, and the whole weekend ahead. He had planned to spend the whole weekend with Sally, just taking it easy, and doing what comes natural between a man and a woman. And he knew that she was looking forward to it as well. And now here he was, riding his Harley, hell bent for leather outside and cold, on the most remote and God forsaken stretch of highway known to man. But it had to be done, and he was the only one who would do it. Why couldn't he just learn to say no?! Then they would have to hire somebody else to take care of the job, wouldn't they?

As the Harley dropped down into the valley, the temperature dropped as well. It had to be at least 10 degrees cooler down in the valley, and he felt it too. Felt it deep down into his bones. He cursed to himself as he thought about Sally, not more than 20 minutes ago, with her warm naked body pressed up against his...

An Armadillo darted out from the side of the road running across his bikes path! At 70 mph it could easily send him and his Harley flying off the road. At the very least, blowout his front tire and bring this job to a screeching halt. Pushing hard on the right handle bar, the bike veered over hard to the right, just missing the armadillo as it kept running across the road. Did the little armor-plated rodent have a death wish? He must have waited until the very last second, and then made a mad dash for it. Why couldn't he have just waited until his bike went by? Surely he could see and hear the bike coming, he must hate bikers too.

Keach shoved hard on the left handle bar, bringing the bike back upright, only now the bike was off the road on the side of the shoulder, throwing gravel and sand as it fought to stay upright. Keach flipped off the dead man's throttle and

sand as it fought to stay upright. Keach flipped off the dead man's throttle and brought the bike back onto the highway. His chest and the arteries on the sides of his neck hurt painfully. He had received such a blast of adrenalin that he thought he was going to have a heart attack. That little bastard! Looking back in his rear-view mirror he could just see the tail of the armadillo slipping into the brush on the other side of the road. Now he wished he would have hit that little desert rodent.

Resetting the cruise control at 75 mph, Keach sat more alert on the bike; he wasn't going to be caught off guard again. You would have thought that after a close call like that, Keach would have slowed down. But then, you don't know Keach. It had pissed him off. And when Keach was pissed, he did everything harder and faster. An old mean streak that wouldn't go away. Why was it so dark out? No moon tonight. Great Keach thought to himself, just what I need. This stretch of highway was always dark enough anyway, what with the highway paint having worn off years ago, and now this, no moonlight. He could have gone around, taken the longer way, but no, why couldn't he ever listen to himself? Even Sledge had told him not to take the black highway at night.

The desert started to press in around him now; the darkness seemed to be getting thicker, even his headlights seemed less bright. He flipped them from high beam down to low, and back to high beam again, checking to make sure they were on high. The darkness seemed to be eating the headlight's beam. He thought that he could see the shape of a figure hiding just off of the side of the road, no just an old cactus. Why was he getting so jumpy? Sally...


Why hadn't he let Sally come along with him? She had asked him to let her come along. He knew the reason why she couldn't come along, this wasn't going to be a social call, and it could get ugly; it could get ugly real fast. He wasn't ready for Sally to see or hear about his dark side just yet. He was pretty sure that Sally was falling in love with him, but he wasn't sure how she would handle learning about what he did for a living. A living, if you could call it that.

Pulling into the ranch's desert driveway, he could see some lights on in the barn. So it was going to go down in the barn... well there's really no good place to take care of matters like these. And then there was always the talking, they always wanted to talk first. They always wanted to talk about options, about other ways out. But, there were no other ways out, by the time they had called in Keach the decision had been made. Why couldn't they just accept that and let him do what needed to be done, to get it over with. He was good at what he did, and he always tried to keep it as painless as possible. Then people let's move on and put it behind us. These things happen, it wasn't Keach's fault. He was just the one they had to call when they wanted their little problems to go away. Well, he wasn't going to let them down; after all, he had bills to pay too.


Shutting off his headlight, he pulled around to the back of the barn, shutting off the Harley the darkness and silence surrounded him. The only light was now coming from the barn windows. Reaching into his saddlebag he felt for the .45 it was right where he had left it, it was always there, and he definitely could find it in the dark.

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