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Mary Margaret Road-Grader

By Howard Waldrop

29 January 2001

It was the time of the Sun Dance and the Big Tractor Pull. Freddy-in-the-Hollow and I had traveled three days to be at the river. We were almost late, what with the sandstorm and the raid on the white settlement over to Old Dallas.

We pulled in with our wrecker and string of fine cars, many of them newly-stolen. You should have seen Freddy and me that morning, the first morning of the Sun Dance.

We were dressed in new-stolen fatigues and we had bright leather holsters and pistols. Freddy had a new carbine, too. We were wearing our silver and feathers and hard goods. I noticed many women watching us as we drove in. There seemed to be many more here than the last Sun Ceremony. It looked to be a good time.

The usual crowd gathered before we could circle up our remuda. I saw Bob One-Eye and Nathan Big Gimp, the mechanics, come across from their circles. Already the cook fires were burning and women were skinning out the cattle that had been slaughtered early in the morning.

"Hoo!" I heard Nathan call as he limped to our wrecker. He was old; his left leg had been shattered in the Highway wars, he went back that far. He put his hands on his hip and looked over our line.

"I know that car, Billy-Bob Chevrolet," he said to me, pointing to an old Mercury. "Those son-a bitch Dallas people stole it from me last year. I know its plates. It is good you stole it back. Maybe I will talk to you about doing car work to get it back sometime."

"We'll have to drink about it," I said.

"Let's stake them out," said Freddy-in-the-Hollow. "I'm tired of pulling them."

[Before Paphos](#)

by Loretta Casteen

8 January 2007

It starts again. The baby begins to cough and choke.

[Locked Doors](#)

by Stephanie Burgis

1 January 2007

You can never let anyone suspect, his mother told him.

That was the first rule she taught him, and the last, before she left him here alone with It.

[Heroic Measures](#)

by Matthew Johnson

18 December 2006

Pale as he was, it was hard to believe he would never rise from this bed. Even in the darkest times, she had never really feared for him; he had always been strong, so strong.

[Love Among the Talus](#)

by Elizabeth Bear

11 December 2006

Nilufer raised her eyes to his. It was not what women did to men, but she was a princess, and he was only a bandit. "I want to be a Witch," she said. "A Witch and not a Queen. I wish to be not loved, but wise. Tell your bandit lord, if he can give me that, I might accept his gift."

[Archived Fiction Dating back to 9/1/00](#)

