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The Moon Is Always Full

By Charles Coleman Finlay

31 October 2005

The three men entered the treehouse. Martin groped in the dark for the light switch. The naked bulb that hung from the center of the low ceiling came on, throwing its harsh light over the room. Jim tossed down the bolt cutters he'd used on the padlock. Lionel went to the liquor cabinet and took out four jelly jars and a bottle of bourbon. He filled three of the jars and gave one to each man.

"To Ralph," he said. After a respectful pause, he added, "The hairiest son of a bitch I ever knew."

The other two men smiled, then they all chuckled. The glasses clinked. Each man took a long drink. When they lowered their glasses, Lionel knuckled the corner of his eye and turned his head away.

Jim, bushy-bearded, still smelling like oil, thrust one hand into the pocket of his tan coveralls. He lifted his glass again, saying, "And piss on the black dog that killed him."

He was the only one to drink. Martin's forehead wrinkled, and his mustache popped out a bit as he pursed his lips. "What's the black dog? I thought Ralph shot himself."

"Hell with that," Lionel said. "He was murdered."

There was a long pause. Lionel swallowed half his bourbon in one continuous gulp. He kept his hair cut in a military buzz and ironed his polo shirts. His voice always seemed on the edge of yelling. Jim asked him, low and even, "Why do you say that?"

"'Cause Ralph wouldn't kill himself," Lionel said, pounding his forefinger on the formica tabletop. "He just wouldn't!"

[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](#)

