



Stories for the Train

Tales on the go

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The Little Red Car

Author: John Bolton

He'd cycled that way before, seen lots of cars parked up, some with a cargo of dogs, others with steamed up windows and some just parked randomly for no apparent purpose in the small gravel car park at the edge of the woods. He'd never really noticed any particularly, except today, the little red car caught his eye. It was on its own, neatly arranged exactly in a slot demarked by the chopped wooden logs. From inside there was the indistinct sound of arguing, shouting, aggression, pleading, all in equal measure. But only one occupant, the man's disembodied voice from the speaker, muffled to him, through the glass, steel and plastic of the car. He splashed his way past the car through the muddy puddles left by the recent rain, looking back as he went, feeling uneasy. Stupid really, no excuse for it, but he had three daughters and was just bothered by the situation. Something wasn't right.

A mile down the track he stopped and checked his progress, the rain had started, dripping off the overhanging leaves. Eleven miles to go, in the resurgent rain, or three miles home. He turned around. He would normally have persevered, but he had an excuse to take another look at the little red car. Why? Not sure. He rounded the long slightly uphill bend as the rain continued to fall splashing onto his goggles. He slowed and approached the car from the right-hand side, looking a little lost as if using it as an excuse to get a better look inside.

She was young and pretty, staring straight ahead. You can tell when someone is crying without seeing the tears, and she was crying. Not sobbing, just sitting there blank faced with puffy eyes and with red cheeks, tears clearly running down. He coasted to a gentle stop at the front of the car. He looked inside and inclined his head a little with a frown. He mouthed "you OK?". She shook her head slowly. Raising both hands with palms upwards, he shrugged as if to say, "so what's up?". As he watched she placed the pistol in her mouth and fired. The car immediately full of blood, smoke and hair He fell back, off the bike and into the ditch. Getting up, he walked dazed to look into the car, sickened by the sight.

The door was locked from the inside, he tried but it thankfully stayed shut. He stared in disbelief through the window. He phoned the police. They arrived, he was taken away and questioned, then released. They never really knew why, who the caller on the other end of the phone call overheard from the little red car was, or the significance, months later, of a small toddler picking up a discarded mobile phone crushed with what looked like mountain bike tyre imprints, beside the path leading up to the small gravel car park at the edge of the woods where the little red car had been parked.