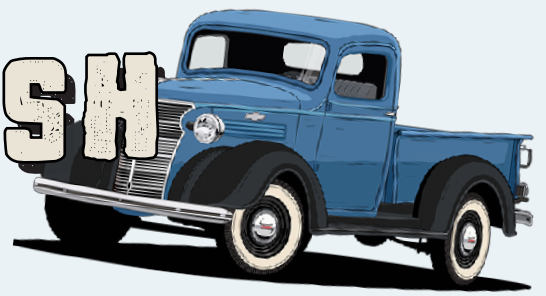


THE CRUSH



By Gloria Jean Hansen

Would he go by today? The trucks were hauling, but I hadn't seen his yet. He was late.

"Gloria! Get in here and finish these dishes!" Mom sounded edgy, and that spelled trouble for me. She was bad enough calm. I wondered if she had ever had fun in her life. She was always so serious, always looked ready to give someone a 'lickin', as she called it.

"Boy-bitty--" She always said that just before she exploded. Time to go back inside.

I couldn't wait to leave here for good. God, I hated this place. Could never bring anyone over, it was so disgusting. The linoleum showed bare floor wherever we stood or walked, like in front of the stove, or by the sink, in all the doorways. I wished we had a house like Carol's—I loved going over there. She actually had a bedroom to herself, and her floors gleamed. Everything in her kitchen was white, and so clean, smelling of cinnamon. And her mom smiled while she worked!

"Quit yer daydreaming and get those dishes done so I can start the washing. I need water carried too."

I felt like Cinderella. From the time I got up in the morning, until I went to bed at night, it was work, work, work.

"O—kayy, Ma. But how come the boys can't come in and do these dishes, and carry the water?"

"There you go again, popping off at the mouth, talking back. Pipe down and do as you're told."

Just then, I heard him. The low drone of his truck as he climbed the hill back of the house, in 'bull' gear, my stepfather used to say. Frantically, I searched the messy

kitchen for something that I could haul outside. I didn't have much time. The slop pail. As I grabbed it from under the sink, some of the nasty sludge spilled on my knee and onto the floor. I would deal with it later. Right this minute, I had a cute Frenchman to wave at.

"What the heck are you up to now?"

"I'm taking out the slop pail! It's full."

The sound of the truck was closer. I left the filthy pail behind the porch door, as I straightened my hair a bit. He was almost in sight. I heard the gears shift as he crested the hill. I sauntered toward the mailbox as I saw the blue nose of the truck. If I hurried, I would be close enough to jump on the running board and run my fingers through his gorgeous black curls, or chew on that pouty bottom lip of his.

"He was coming! I could hear the truck speeding across the flats by the store, then slowing for the curve by our house. I pictured those rippling muscles grabbing the gearshift, powerful legs jamming the clutch and the brake. I bet he looked pretty good in jeans, and I vowed I would see him stretched out somewhere soon, minus his jeans, maybe by the creek. Right next to me, telling me he loved me."

"Gloria! Get IN here!"

Oh, she'd spoil it. I knew it. I would reach the mailbox at the same moment as the truck. As it approached, I looked up into the most beautiful dark eyes I had ever seen in my life. My movie star! In the heat of the morning, he had taken his shirt off. Muscles. Rippling, tanned muscles. I went weak as our eyes met. For a brief moment, he smiled shyly down at me—white teeth gleaming. I grabbed a fencepost for support.

And then, with a clash of gears, he sped off, dust everywhere.

"What in blue blazes are you doing out THERE? You're

getting crazier every day! Can't get anything out of you on a Saturday, sitting around mooning over those darn True Stories! 'Screw' Stories,' more like, head in the clouds, and now you're out prancing around in front of those truckers--"

Just one trucker, Ma. Just one.

If I timed it right, I could have the dishes and the floors done by the time he came back with a load of gravel. I might even have time to get my good slacks on and be out on the road.

"I need some water here! Hurry up with ya!"

Yeah, yeah, Ma. Coming.

"Why can't those lazy boys get the water? You never make them do anything!"

"Shut up! You never learn. You're a girl. This is all you're ever going to be doing, all your life."

If you only knew, Ma.

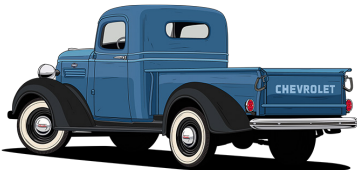
I finished everything, and ran to get changed. I snuck into her bedroom and dabbed a bit of her lipstick on. Lord knows she never used it! She barely combed her hair. Now to get out the front door. I could hear the washing machine sloshing in the kitchen, and my mother cursing at something or other.

He was coming! I could hear the truck speeding across the flats by the store, then slowing for the curve by our house. I pictured those rippling muscles grabbing the gearshift, powerful legs jamming the clutch and the brake. I bet he looked pretty good in jeans, and I vowed I would see him stretched out somewhere soon, minus his jeans, maybe by the creek. Right next to me, telling me he loved me.

I headed down the road as the truck appeared. I kept my head down until the last minute, pretending I didn't notice him. I heard the engine, so close now. I could feel the heat and smell the diesel fumes. Oh, I knew in my heart he felt something for me.

In my twelve-year-old mind he was my hero. He would get me out of this miserable place, my ticket to paradise, my knight in shining armor. His steed was a blue gravel truck, his shining armor jeans and a T-shirt. As the truck crawled alongside of me, I looked up at him with the sexiest half-lidded gaze I could muster. And nearly passed out.

He wasn't alone. There in the cab with him, a beautiful blonde woman smiled, holding a little boy on her lap, an older child sitting between them. One happy little family. The kids waved as he leaned out the window and breathed, "Hi there, cutie!" ♦♦♦



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gloria Jean Hansen was born and raised in the small Scandinavian farming community of Kipling in Northern Ontario, Canada. She is mother of four, grandmother to eight plus, retired nurse, and bluegrass musician who enjoys playing and jamming at various festival circuits with her friends. In her spare time she enjoys writing, painting, skiing, camping and fishing with her family. Gloria has penned long-running newspaper columns, several magazine articles and has several published books, which can be found on Amazon. A year or two ago, she said, "One day Gloria will retire to a cabin by the river to write full time."

Well, her cabin is pictured below, along with Gloria, and we are always so happy to publish her work.

