

SUFFERING THE WITCH by David Foley

excerpt

RANDY: Hey.

SHARON: *[looks back]* Oh hey, Randy. How's it hanging?

RANDY: OK. You come out here to have a cigarette?

SHARON: Came out here to be alone.

RANDY: *[abashed]* I'm sorry. I guess—I guess I should leave you alone, huh?

SHARON: *[absently]* Huh? No, I don't mean you. I mean—those people. They give me the willies. You're OK.

RANDY: Well, thanks. I guess.

SHARON: *[smiles]* Hey, you want a cigarette? *[He looks at her doubtfully]* Oh, I forgot. Smoking's sinful.

RANDY: *[a little defiantly]* I smoke a cigarette once in a while.

SHARON: Well, ain't you the rebel. Well? You want one?

RANDY: *[hesitates; then:]* Sure. Sure. I'll have a cigarette.

[He takes one from her, and she lights it for him. They smoke silently for a bit.]

I reckon this is pretty boring to you, huh?

SHARON: What is?

RANDY: This little town. After the big city.

SHARON: It's OK. *[Pause.]* So you're gonna be a pastor?

RANDY: Aim to. If God's willing. I'm taking courses at the Community College in the fall.

SHARON: Courses in preaching?

RANDY: Naw. Just to learn a few things. You gotta know a few things to be a preacher.

SHARON: Who told you that? *[beat]* So how's your Mama?

RANDY: You remember my Mama?

SHARON: Sure. Big blue-eyed girl. Red hair. Didn't talk much. Married young.

RANDY: That's her. She's just fine. Still working at the Winn-Dixie.

SHARON: Still? My God. She must own the place by now.

RANDY: Naw. She's still checkout.

SHARON: And your Daddy?

RANDY: *[matter-of-factly]* Daddy's still in the grip of Satan.

SHARON: That so?

RANDY: He gives Mama a terrible time. It's the alcohol.

SHARON: I remember him. He was a terror.

RANDY: He still is. 'Cept it's gotten harder for him now. He can't hold down a job no more. So he just hangs around home, causing trouble.

SHARON: Why don't she divorce him?

RANDY: Pastor says no. Pastor says we gotta keep holding onto him and praying for him. And that's what we been doing.

SHARON: Well, ain't that—swell.

RANDY: Are you married?

SHARON: Nope.

RANDY: Do you wanna be?

SHARON: You proposing?

RANDY: *[abashed]* Um... no... I was... I was just asking.

SHARON: *[laughing]* Aw, see! Now that's sweet! You're blushing! *[She lets him suffer a moment longer, then relents.]* Naw, I don't reckon I'll be marrying anytime soon. What about you?

RANDY: Me? Well, you know, I'm kinda young.

SHARON: Naw!

RANDY: I mean, I guess I'll wait a bit.

SHARON: Good idea. *[beat]* So what else?

RANDY: What else?

SHARON: What else do you want to do? What's your biggest dream?

RANDY: Oh, I don't know. I guess... I guess maybe just to serve the Lord.

SHARON: Boy, oh, boy, they got you full of it, don't they?

RANDY: What?

SHARON: Nothing.

RANDY: Well, what should I want?

SHARON: *[shrugs]* Some people want money. Some people want love. Some people want to get out and see the world.

RANDY: What about you? What's your dream?

[Beat.]

SHARON: I just wanna sleep. I just want one good night's sleep.

RANDY: Don't you sleep well?

[She shakes her head.]

SHARON: No. No, I don't. I get these crazy dreams that go on and on. I wake up and it's still dark. I don't know where I am sometimes. It scares me. I don't remember the last time I slept—peacefully—through the night.

RANDY: I'm sorry.

SHARON: Don't let it worry you, baby.

RANDY: *[helpfully]* Sometimes if you pray...

SHARON: *[ironically]* Yeah. Sometimes if you pray. *[She looks at him speculatively for a moment. Then:]* Hey.

RANDY: What?

SHARON: Would you kiss me, Randy?

RANDY: What?

SHARON: I'd like you to kiss me. You know how, don't you?

RANDY: Yeah. Sure, I mean, but—why?

SHARON: 'Cause I feel like being kissed and you're the nearest thing to me. *[He hesitates, looking at her in puzzlement.]* It won't hurt...

[Tentatively he leans forward and kisses her softly and briefly. Pause.]

Now that was nice. Thank you. Well, I'd better go back in before Mama comes hunting me down. See you around.

RANDY: Sure.

SHARON: *[turning as she goes]* You're a real sweet kid, Randy. Don't let 'em fuck you up.