

CINNAMON RAINBOW

by ANN WUEHLER

CHARACTERS

LUCY: Twenty or so, ugly. Lives alone.

TONY: Older than Lucy, out of work, desperate.

SETTING

Lucy's teensy apartment in John Day, Oregon. A bed, a chair with a television on it with rabbit ears. A lamp on a milk carton, a stack of paperbacks. Clothes stored in boxes, three pairs of shoes scattered about, a pair of tennis shoes, slip on clogs and fancy high heels. Suggestions of walls. A curtained door frame instead of a real door that leads to rest of apartment right. Night time, almost midnight. October, getting close to Halloween. Light comes from lamp, so pretty dim. Can be some light from above but not too much. Time is now.

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CINNAMON RAINBOW

[LUCY sits on her bed reading. She wears thick glasses and the television is on, low volume. Wind can be heard now and then, that surly low autumn wind that blows so continuously in Eastern Oregon. Music seems to be coming in from another apartment, something very urban and hip-hoppish. Lucy looks up from her book, something romance-novel-ish, and puts book down on bed, book spread open to mark her place. She snaps off television and listens. A knock is heard, as if someone is knocking on her front door off-stage.]

LUCY

I really hope it's the Halloween Bunny. With chocolate eggs. Not those Peep things, yuck.

[Goes toward curtained door when TONY walks through it, wearing a pair of woman's pantyhose over his head. Lucy stops dead. Tony looks at her, walks around her, waving what looks like a stick broken off a tree.]

TONY

Tha's right, homegirl. Hands over your joowels. Your DVD player and that fine TV.

[Lucy places her hand over her lower face, fighting her urge to laugh. Tony bounces around like something out of a bad cop movie.]

What, you thinks I's joking ya, huh? You's thinks I'm not serious about this here request for your joowels?

LUCY

I'm sorry...my what?

TONY

[With a sigh.]

Damn it. Your jewels. Jewelry!! Are we not speaking English? The television, the...do you have a DVD player?

LUCY

No, I don't have one. You...you're robbing me. Are you robbing me? Are those taupe or nude?

TONY

Nude? Huh? Yes...yes, I am robbing you.

LUCY

With a stick? You know...I have nothing.

TONY

Everybody's got something. So hands it over and nobody gets bam-bammed.

LUCY

You'd hurt me with your stick? Do you want some coffee?

[Lucy waits. Tony stares at her, clearly thrown. She is polite, shows no fear.]

Coffee? That black stuff you can drink?

TONY

Okay...maybe you don't understand the concept here.

LUCY

Are you from the 'hood?

TONY

Yeah and I'm real bad...

LUCY

Which 'hood? Harlem? South Central? What's the 'hood in Nebraska called? Do they have a 'hood? Did you want some coffee? I have just enough left to make a half pot.

TONY

Why are you trying to make me drink coffee??

[Beat.]

Oh. Yeah. So you can see my face. Gotcha.

LUCY

No. I can see your face now. Uh...I thought it would be polite. I have water and...that's it, I can't afford anything until I get paid again. So. Why are you robbing me? With a stick. Everyone in John Day has a rifle or a shotgun. Except me.

[She walks to a box of clothes, digs through it while Tony watches her, waving stick about with vague menacing gestures. Lucy finds her pistol, which she points at Tony. Tony goes very still, stick lowering.]

My gran'pa gave this to me. He scratched my name on it and said I couldn't have it until he was gone. It has nine shots and takes .22 long rifles. So take that thing off your head.

[Tony hesitates, then refuses. Takes up his tough guy act.]

TONY

You think I'm scared of some backwoods fugly bitch with a gun??

LUCY

Okay. Fine. You stand there and I'll stand here and let's have one of those Old West shoot-outs. We'll count to three and draw.

[Waits a little bit then continues when he does not relent.]

One.

[Takes aim at him. Tony grits his teeth, squares his shoulders. Lucy sighs deeply.]

Too-hoo.

[Cocks gun, sights along barrel. Tony makes a face, then gives a loud groan.]

TONY

Goddamnit!! I cannot even do this...goddamn...you're not supposed to have a gun. That's not fair. I'm supposed to have all the power and you're supposed to...not.

[Eyes her sullenly.]

I could overpower you for it. I am stronger than you.

LUCY

Sure. You could try. But that would add assault to armed robbery. Though robbing someone at stick-point...is that really armed robbery? Of course if I shot you and buried you out in the Owyhees somewhere or maybe even Idaho or Nevada...that point wouldn't even be raised. I could plead insanity. Or PMS. Or insane PMS post-partum wacky female hijinks. He had a stick and I shot his head off and buried him, and whoops, now that you found him, I guess I'm a bad girl who just needs some pills and counseling. Bad girl, bad bad girl.

[Smiles, goes to her bed, sits, still has gun trained on him.]

Not that I would shoot you. And not that the gun is loaded.

[Drops him a wink.]

Or is it?

TONY

Jeez, you got thick glasses. Can you even see?

LUCY

Blind as a bat. I got a funny eye so I can't wear contacts. In case you were wondering. Do you want a chair? I got another one in the kitchen. I got two chairs, one for the TV and one for the kitchen.

TONY

You think I can't get that gun away from you?

LUCY

I'm Lucy, by the way. Like Lucille Ball. Of course, I don't think there are any other famous Lucille's. What's your name? Sure about that chair? Or were you still deciding? Where did you get that stick?

TONY

Hey...I'm in charge here. I don't care if you do have a gun. I don't think it's loaded. You look like one of those fat library freaks, always following the rules about everything. I'm gonna bet it don't have bullets in it.

LUCY

Name-calling.

TONY

Fat freak who's getting robbed...

LUCY

I live alone. Why would I not have my gun loaded?

TONY

Nah...you're just talk. You're freaked out...yeah...you are freaked out by this strange man in your house...in your bedroom. Ever even had a man in here...Lucille???

[Silence. Tony notices title of book left by her on bed.]
Love's Dark Promise?? Is that what you read to get off??

LUCY

[Without shame.]
Yes. What do you read? *Little Boys of Thailand?* You are gay, right? Or is this some really out there way to hit on me? Are you hitting on me? The robber finds the lady at home...you know how it goes. Why did you knock?

TONY

Oh yes, I am hitting on you cause you're such a hottie. I knocked to make sure you were at home. What if you came back unexpectedly? What then?

LUCY

Why not wait until I was gone all day at work? You didn't plan this out at all, did you. Where you planning to murder me? Since you're not here to get it on. Murder me with your stick?

TONY

Are y you nutso or something? I just needed the money. I just need the money.

[Silence.]

So...got any?

LUCY

Money? Yeah, a trust fund, an IRA, a secret bank account in the Cayman Islands and one in Switzerland.

TONY

So you're ugly and not funny. Too bad for you.

LUCY

You are not robbing me. You are a joke and a waste of skin. Now, why don't you go home. You shouldn't annoy someone with a gun pointed at your head.

TONY

An unloaded gun.

[Tony edges toward her. Lucy waits, head tilting.]

I knew it. I knew it.

[Kneels on bed, hand outstretching to take gun from her. Lucy swings gun open to show him it is, indeed, very loaded. She snaps gun shut again. Tony freezes, facing her. Lucy stands, comes downstage, stands there as if looking through a window. Tony speaks very softly.]

Shit.

LUCY

I love this time of year. The wind. Warm days and cool nights.

TONY

You know...I am gonna go home.

[Starts to leave but Lucy shakes her head. Points gun at him, he stops.]

Oh come on...I haven't done nothin'.

LUCY

Not yet.

[Considers him very closely.]

Why don't you get more comfortable.

[Smiles slightly, then looks toward her narrow bed than back at him.]

First thing...take off the pantyhose. Second thing...you tell me your name.

Pantyhose then name.

TONY

What the hell are you doing?

LUCY

I got a hundred dollars in my coffee can. For emergencies. And you...are an emergency. Get it? Get it now?

TONY

No. Not really.

[Tone says otherwise.]

LUCY

Take off the pantyhose. But do it...slowly. So I can...watch.

[Glances down his body then back at his face. He is struggling not to believe this.]

TONY

You are not serious. I can leave and you never have to see me again.

LUCY

Take the pantyhose off.

TONY

Or what??

LUCY

I'll shoot you and bury you in the desert. Or maybe the mountains. I haven't decided yet. Power is so much fun, no wonder men thrive on it. Come on...a little...sacrifice for your freedom? What's a little sacrifice? Put your stick down and do what I say.

TONY

Did you say a hundred...a hundred dollars?

[Lucy smiles. Tony stares at floor, then peels pantyhose off his head. Runs hand through his hair. Has placed stick on her bed.]

I'm Tony, but that's all I'm telling you. I broke down just outside John Day here. But that's it.

LUCY

Good boy. I work at McDonalds. Now...why don't you...dance. Like those girls with the pole.

TONY

No. I want to see that hundred.

LUCY

I got it. You can trust me. This gun is heavy. My arm's getting tired. But why don't you earn your money before you see it? How 'bout I have you strip down, too? How clean are your underwear?

TONY

Why don't I just fuck you and call it a day??

[Lucy rolls her eyes. Silence. Tony sits on her bed, stares at her.]

What kinda whack job messed up thing are you? You hold a gun on me and expect me to dance like some whore in a strip club? Just because I decided to rob you? I can't...I just can't catch a break these days.

LUCY

Would you?

TONY

Would I what? Huh?? Would I what???

LUCY

[Lets gun fall a little. With a real sigh.]

You know...do me...for a hundred.

[Tony flabbergasted. Shocked. Lucy shrugs, continues.]

I mean, you're a stranger. You broke down. You picked my crappy door to knock on...though I've never heard of a robber knocking. Or making sure their target was at home. That's a different kind of crime gonna happen then. It's fate—things that are supposed to happen and do. I never load this gun...it's dangerous. They go off by themselves. But today...I had this feeling. Don't be Lucy, it said. Don't be scared and nice and a mouse. Say whatever you want. Do whatever you want. Load the damn gun. Just in case.

[Moves closer to Tony.]

A hundred dollars. Don't you want to hurt me...humiliate me...and get paid for it? Wouldn't you like to stick it to me for making you about pee down your leg? For taking your pride away and making fun of your stick...YOUR STICK?

[Looks at him then at gun in her hand. Lowers gun, then sets it on floor. Tony watches her closely now, and watches gun.]

Now...you can grab that gun and take my money. But I'll go to the cops and make sure they get you. And everyone in this town, by tomorrow, will have your license plate memorized. And everything about you memorized...cause you don't live here.

TONY

I could fucking kill you for this. I could take that gun and...

LUCY

Shut up. You're a loser. It's okay. I don't care. You're like a cinnamon rainbow. If that makes sense.

TONY

No.

LUCY

Rainbows have many colors...you only have one. I don't know. Show me another color.

[Silence. Tony still working on the rainbow reference.]

You're the one keeps bringing up fucking...sex, whatever you want to call it. Around here, it's just like shitting, just something you do once in a while. A hundred dollars and a story to tell all your hyena friends. You know what happened to me in John Day? Let me tell you about this freak show in John Day.

[Tony rises, comes toward gun. Lucy moves out of the way, stand with her back to him now. Quiet, no self-pity, just fact.]

I'm pathetic, too.

[He stops.]

I know what I look like. I've always known...since middle school. When everyone told me. Because before I thought I was kinda pretty. But I'm not. You know those makeovers the ugly girls always get in movies? I always wanted one of those. See. I'm pathetic, too.

[Pause.]

Are you going to take my hundred?

TONY

[As if asking for a reprieve.]

I was drunk...I'm outta work. I was heading toward Portland. I saw the lights on here.

LUCY

Yeah and you just had pantyhose and a stick handy.

TONY

I...I got a buddy in Portland...he steals things. I was just...practicing. Honest.

LUCY

Oh. Okay.

[Puts foot on gun.]

So...are you going to or not?

[Turns to face him.]

Tony...wasn't it? Anthony. Antonio?

TONY

Anthony. And uh...no. No...you're...no.

LUCY

You could have me charged, you know...with pointing a loaded gun at you. You could have me arrested. Yeah, I was trying to rob her but she tried to shoot me, for real. Attempted murder, officer.

TONY

Oh yeah like I'm going to the cops about you...

LUCY

Exactly. But... I could and will go the cops about you. I know your name and that you're going to Portland, that you have a buddy who steals. That's probably enough right there.

LUCY

[Silence. Tony backs away, goes upstage.]

And I could tell them exactly what you look like.

TONY

You are not serious. You're not...serious about me and you...are you?

LUCY

I told you...I'm not me tonight. The other Lucy would have handed over her cheap earrings and not said a peep and cried all night. But the new improved version...wants a slice of your wonder bread. How's that for 'hood?

[Places hands on her hips.]

TONY

Christ.

[Gestures toward television.]

I would have taken that anyway. Not earrings.

LUCY

A hundred dollars. You don't even have to use a condom.

TONY

Oh I'm using one.

[Silence. They consider each other. Lucy goes to her bed, sits. Hugs her pillow to her chest.]

LUCY

Yeah...God forbid.

TONY

Lights out. I don't want to...are you...you know...a virgin?

LUCY

No.

[But something in her voice says she could be. Tony stands on one foot then the other.]

TONY

A hundred dollars...won't pay for a room and the guy to fix whatever's wrong...shit. What a night, what a goddamn crappy crapped up night.

LUCY

At least somebody didn't try to rob you with a stick. You can sleep on my floor. For free. Or sleep in your car. And no, a hundred dollars probably won't fix your car.

TONY

But it'll fix you, right?

[Silence. She hugs pillow.]

Were you scared at all? Did I scare you at all?

LUCY

Sure. And if you think about taking my money and splitting...don't. I lied about where it's hid. Can I ask...can I ask that you kiss me at least once? Just...once? Maybe...now...before the lights go off and you...earn your millions?

[Tries to smile, make it a joke. Tony hangs his head, muttering curse words quite clearly. But she does not back down or back off.]

Show me another color. Show me all the colors.

[Tony approaches her slowly, eases down on bed by her.]

You'll have such a story. Everyone will laugh at me.

[Tony plants one on her. They part. He rears back, a little shaky now.]

TONY

Yeah...everyone will laugh.

[She nods with acceptance, reaches out and snaps off the light. Darkness.]

END of PLAY