

LONELY NO MORE

**a short story collection by
Seymour Shubin**

What A Day

I mean, it started off wrong. The alarm didn't go off, and Bette who was up before me didn't wake me. Said she forgot. Can you imagine, forgot? Or no, that wasn't it; she thought I'd told her I was going into work late. Hell, that had been two days ago. And then, now that she knows I'm running late, wants to make me a full breakfast, as though that could make up for it. So I said something like, "Where's your head?" and she gets that stunned look and starts to cry, and says she's been up since six and has fed the two kids and the dog, and seen the kids off to school, and now only wants to do good. So I sit down at the table and have orange juice and two eggs and bacon and a cup of coffee, though I can barely swallow. And now I'm running out to the car. And of course it won't start, we have to call AAA, which takes them an hour get there, and I have Bette call the office to say I'll be late.

So now I'm driving, going rather fast, I admit, down the Expressway, and this guy cuts me off, and then I do what I know I shouldn't, I catch up with him and give him the finger, and then oh boy. He's racing after me and all I want to do is get him off my back, he's crazy, and I take the first cutoff I can, praying that the squeals

Lonely No More

behind me don't end up in an accident, which of course they do, which of course I don't know about until much later, when they tell me; all I want is off the Expressway and I take this cutoff and this guy's behind me, and now there's a truck in front of me and I can't get by, and this crazy guy is riding alongside of me, his head out his open window screaming at me, and then I see this gun in his hand and he's firing at me and I duck, and somehow I get around the truck and ride almost with my head under the wheel past a zillion other cars, and finally I'm rid of him, but oh now, now there's these dazzling lights behind me and I pull over and the cop comes over and I can't find my license right away, and when I do find it I drop it out the window and I open the door to pick it up, and he says, this ugly bastard, "Who says you can get out?" and I say, "I'm only trying to help, officer," and he says, "Get back in the car," but I bend over and get the license and start handing it to him, but I'm shaking so much wouldn't you know, I drop it again. When I bend to pick it up again, he shoves me, and let me tell you, it's just not that he shoved me, it's that the whole world goes white and all I know, next, is I'm grabbing this gun out of his holster and his eyes are this big and he's saying, "It's only a ticket, mister, it's only a ticket," but I'm driving away, and somehow he must have another gun because I hear the back window splatter, and I'm ducking again and driving and there's this siren in back of me, and soon, though I don't recognize what's happening right away, there's this helicopter over me, and there's like shadows over the windshield, it may be from those propellers, and I want to warn them away, that's all I want to do, so I fire into the air, which I know right away is a mistake, because the next I know that big bastard bird is flopping all around and the next thing I know it hits the ground and turns upside down,

Lonely No More

and guys are running out of it, and all I can think is oh boy, you've done it now. Which is no reason, understand this, why at least five more cars are behind me, and God knows how many more are going to join in, because -- try to understand this -- it's only aggravating the situation. Now I'm only afraid they're going to kill me on sight and wouldn't you know, just at that second, I start to get sick to my stomach, it's that goddam breakfast, I ate too fast because all I wanted to do was get to my job, and now with all this racing and turning and aggravation I am sick to my stomach. But I manage to hold it in, and even with one hand search my pocket for a Tums or Rolaids, I usually carry one or the other, and I find this tubular thing in my pocket and I pluck one off and chew it, though I don't know until much later that it's really only a Lifesaver, so it just shows you how the mind can work.

Anyway, I miss the hay truck by this much, which is the first I really know I'm in the country, and suddenly the gas is low but I find a turnoff and I take it, but I hit a ditch and am almost tossed from the car. But I manage to run even as those police cars turn into the lane, there must be a million of them by now, and I'm running and running, and that's when I get to the barn and check my gun, which isn't really my gun, of course, it's the cop's gun, and I don't even know how to use it, and there's this bullhorn yelling, "Come out and you won't be hurt." But it isn't until a little later, when they bring Bette, and she cries out, "Tommy, I love you," that I realize what I never thought possible -- that this could have a happy ending after all.

--- END OF SAMPLE ---

Full Version Available on Amazon and MurderSlim.com