



Jesse's Girl

By

C. N. Pitts and Debbie Kuhn

Jesse James stomped across the old Talbott Tavern's dining room, muttering imprecations and wishing he could spare the energy to upend a few of the tables. His presence went unnoticed by the living guests, wallowing as they were in an orgy of well-made burgoo and corn fritters. The dead ignored him.

The many ghosts of the Talbott had learned long ago to avoid Jesse when he was in a bad mood.

He stormed through the lobby, pausing only to snarl at the gift racks, before making his way down into the empty Bourbon Bar. Jesse preferred to avoid the bar when it was open – between the horrendous musical acts and watching people enjoy all that fine whiskey – it was absolute torture. It was hard enough just staring at the bottles as he was now, all those delicious looking malts parked regally in the center of the three-tiered liquor selection that sat below the wall-length mirror. What he wouldn't give to taste alcohol again.

"So," said a sultry voice beside him. "Are we ready to try this?" He didn't bother turning; he knew who it was. Only one ghost in the Talbott would dare intrude upon him when he was in one of his *moods*.

The Lady in (not-so-virginal) White. Once a young, frisky flapper, she'd been strangled at the inn by a jilted mobster.

"Tonight, yeah," he told her, feeling his anger fade. She had that effect on him most of the time, even when he was at his most bitter over being condemned to an existence where he could look but not enjoy the many things that had made life worth living.

“God, I’m excited. It’s been *so* long.” She eased herself closer, sensing he was coming out of it. “I wonder if it’ll be painful.”

Jesse chuckled. “Hell, it’ll hurt like a sumbitch at first. I took a shot at it, way back.” He winced. “It was the only time since I died that I ever felt pain. Lotta pain. I couldn’t go through with it.”

“It’ll be worth it, baby,” she said, smiling. “After all these years of never being able to touch you... to feel pleasure, to feel *you*, why any price would be worth it.”

“Damned straight, little darlin’,” Jesse said, staring at the whiskey bottles. “But I ain’t had a woman for so long I only hope I remember how to do it.”

“Honey, I remember enough for the both of us.”

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The Anton Heinrich room was widely considered the most romantic at the inn, a minor irony as Anton was one of the few famous guests who had chosen *not* to spend his afterlife back in the once rowdy Talbott.

The ghostly duo hovered outside the lovers’ door, listening to a melodic voice singing a Stephen Foster song in the shower.

“Who are these people again?” Jesse asked.

“A very nice young couple from Ohio,” replied the Lady. “I picked them special. Trust me; you’re going to like them.”

“Okay,” whispered Jesse. “There’s the water stopped. I hear her getting into the bed. Won’t be long now.”

A few moments later they could make out the creaking of the antique bed and the soft moans of someone trying desperately to be quiet in the face of someone *else* trying desperately to make them not be.

Jesse looked at his girl. “Let’s go, darlin’.”

They drifted through the door and into the pitch-black room.

“Damn, but this has been a long time coming,” Jesse said, lust overriding the dread he felt. He knew how much pain he would have to go through to get to the pleasure. He didn’t care. “You ready?”

“You bet I am.”

Of the two, Jesse had the easier possession. All he had to do was hover and drop. The Lady on the other hand had to slide herself in under. Poor gal. Jesse raised himself up on the bed, closed his eyes, and fell...

Into a world of hurt unlike any other he had ever known. Every nerve in his spectral body protested and then exploded, like fire burning him from the inside out. It was like trying to swim through lava. Jesse could feel the Lady drawing on his strength to get through it.

A little further... and in.

What the hell?

He looked down in horror, unable to believe what his borrowed nervous system was telling him. He had long, blonde hair. He had breasts...

The Lady beneath him laughed, pushing him away. "It worked! Thanks Jess, I couldn't have done that without you." She switched on a lamp and jumped out of bed.

The strange redhead was wearing a black silk nightie.

Jesse stared at her, disbelieving, and then down at his uncomfortable new body. He felt *violated*. Hell, he had on something pink and filmy.

Goddammit!

"We're... wimmin'!"

"It's a new world, Jesse. I couldn't risk becoming a man."

"But..."

"Sorry, honey," the Lady said, hurrying into the adjoining bathroom. "No time for love making. I want to spend some more of my money. I hid it well enough before that schmuck Paulie snuffed my lights out."

She re-appeared, fully dressed. "Hope you can take a joke, sugah."

Jesse swore, except now his voice was soft, feminine. The hussy had led him on for decades. He leapt out of bed and grabbed hold of her. "By God, I ain't never hit a woman before, but....."

The redhead was taller. She shoved him backwards and started for the door.

Jesse pulled himself up with the antique desk chair. "Here's a funnier joke, *honey*."

He slammed the chair into her skull as she was reaching for the knob. Wood met bone with a wet smack as she dropped like a pole-axed steer.

Jesse grinned. Wench would be impossible to live with now – if he ever saw her again.

In the meantime, all was not lost. Downstairs in the Bourbon Bar was a bottle of whiskey with his name on it.

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