



Chick Flicks

Open Marriage By Lockie Hunter

She was a fluffy poet. Hippy skirts, orange hair, loud laugh.

He was a stage manager. Shaved head, skin and bones.

Their world was one of candlelit clawfoots, hash pipes and polished sheets.

When I met them they had become a single word; ClydeandInez.

She expertly cat stepped around him, afraid to overturn the harmony. Her love for him was that of a mother's love for a sick child. She was ClydeandInez, not InezandClyde.

The new arrangement was his idea. Married nine years, the monogamy became monotony. She told me of the deal one smokynight. He'll call first, she said. Before he has anyone else. That was the compromise.

Clyde on the road. This time with Alvin Aley dance troupe. Clyde used a pink filter to light Ashling, the lead dancer. Ashling was slighter than Clyde. Her collarbone was unsettling. She moved with a grace that Inez could not manage, even when Inez was cat stepping. Ashling covered her mouth when she laughed as if joy were something foolish. Inez and I referred to her as pink filter. She's so weedy, Inez said. It's like she's not even there, but of course she is.



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Clyde on the road again. Inez begged me to stay. Just the night she said. She tugged a joint out of an embroidered bag. We ate angel hair pasta with artichokes and butter. Watched reruns of Andy Griffith. I changed into one of Inez's nightgowns. It swallowed me whole as Jonah was swallowed by the whale. The phone rang. Inez's eyes arched in their hollows. Only a telemarketer. No, we don't need to reconsider our long distance service. We had a giggle-fit.

Let's put on the Violent Femmes, Inez said. I stripped down to my panties. The pink gown puddled on the floor like a sick jellyfish. We sang why can't I get just one screw. Inez twirled. I pogoed. We ran into the bedroom and bellyflopped onto Clyde and Inez's feather bed.

We inhaled. Smoke in bed, wake up dead, Inez said. No, I said, that can't be right. You can't wake up dead. Smoke in bed, wake up on fire, Inez said. Yes, I said, but go to bed on fire, wake up dead. Who would go to bed on fire, Inez asked. I don't know, I said.

Inez brought the leftover artichokes to bed. We ate them with our fingers. Dipped them in Ranch dressing. The sheets were a mess. I have the new Chanel scent, Inez said. She brought the whole bottle to bed. We splashed Coco around. The artichoke gumminess mixed with the spray. I like number five better, I said. She laughed her 24-carat Inez-laugh. I rubbed her back.

The phone rang. We ran into the living room. Yes, she understood. Thanks for calling. I love you, she said. Pink filter, I asked.

We returned to the joint and the gooey sheets and the Coco air but the joy was gone from the room.

Wake up on fire, said Inez.

A long time resident of Appalachia and of San Francisco, **Lockie Hunter** now lives in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts with her husband, two small children and one large cat. She is working on a novel that is certain to find her disinherited if ever

published. Her fiction and essays have been published or are forthcoming in *The Morning News*, *Southern Hum*, *The Emerson Review*, *MadLovin Mama*, *Seattle Writergrrls*, *Muscadine Lines*; a *Southern Journal*, *ken*again*, the literary magazine, *Wild Violet* and *Literary Mama*. You may find more of her work at www.lockiehunter.com.

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