

DOUBLE SUICIDE

"Miranda's coming out from Spokane next weekend. You remember — she's the one who used to work at the paper — whose father and brother committed suicide?"

This is Mark talking.

Mark occasionally tries to set me up with women. We've exhausted Port Angeles with no success, so now he's importing them from other parts of the state.

"Yeah, I remember you telling me that story. You think I should meet her?"

"Might be interesting. You're just the sort of head-case she usually goes for."

It looks good, at least from Mark's vantage point. He knows that my father blew his brains out when I was 12 and figures mutual suicide is as good a basis for a relationship as a shared interest in line dancing. Of course, Miranda's one up on me with the brother.

I meet Miranda at a party that Saturday night at Mark's. But we barely speak beyond introductions as she is caught up reminiscing with her former newspaper cronies. I get a little drunk and decide to leave, another bust. But before I go, I offer to drive Miranda to the ferry Sunday morning.

"That'd be great," she says, and I leave.

As we're driving to the ferry, after the usual small talk, she says, "So Mark tells me your dad shot himself when you were a kid."

"Yeah. I understand you went through the same thing with your dad and brother," I respond.

"Yeah. It really fucked me up for a long time."

"I know what you mean."

"But," she says with a smile, "I've learned how to deal with it."

"Oh? how's that?"

"I use it," she says confidently.

"In what way?" I ask, expecting a tedious stream of psycho-babble.

"To meet men," she says.

I smile and fight off the urge to jerk the car into an oncoming Peterbilt.

TWIN WEBERS

Vince invites me to his place for a bonfire
He's got this huge pile of rubbish
what passes for rubbish here
tree tailings, etc.
He's got this girlfriend with tacky hair and
an incredible body
rare in these parts
And he's got a pit bull named Mau Mau
So I go

Vee's asked me to bring my Weber
He's going to do a turkey and a ham

I get there early
And we set up the Webers

Vee takes a shower
So I play with Mau
scratch his tummy
as if he's a parakeet
instead of some snarling version of Vee's id

The people begin to arrive
There's a guy with a bad limp
A familiarly off-center group (family?)
from Port Townsend
And a former King County cop
who's surveying things almost as
pathologically as I am

I know from experience
these people are all big beer drinkers
but beer is too slow for me
So I've brought a plastic jug of
rum and fruit juice for me
so I can keep up with the game

And I do, actually
I exchange small talk with the gimp
I'm almost chatty with the bulimic
bartendress from the Lucky Logger
And I get into an all-too-familiar boogaloo
with the ex-cop about serial killers
Turns out he was on the Bundy
and Green River cases