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Eddie's Sin

J. D. Robinson

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It didn’t matter much what Eddie said.

We never knew for sure what sin he hid. He’d drink with us and when the talk would turn to tits and ass and sex and getting head he’d look ashamed or hurt, so there’s a clue. Then once he had too many shots and said “It’s not illegal, but it’s wrong,” then burned a hateful look through me that he thought hid the hurt and shame and fear that shot him through.

It never mattered what his buddies said, but it was never much. We all could see the way his wife and sister turned away or closed their eyes pretending not to hear when someone ignorant or new would say out loud what we were thinking: what could be that bad? To seal him in his guilty head, to lock him in with his remorse and fear?

We never knew for sure what Eddie did or said to make things worse but worse they got. A month, a spring, a year went by and none of us believed he’d stick around another week much less another season. What he’d done or not done, how immoral, crime or not—it hardly mattered, but he never hid from it. He faced it down, alone and meek.

It never mattered much what Eddie did.