

4 Interracial

A Knife in Her Hand

Race relations: what is fun, what is dangerous stupidity?

by Neale Sournia

Sand had been to community junior college before transferring away to a residential college, at a later age than one normally thinks; at age twenty-four. She wasn't the only one, there were several in her group, all recruited for their maturity, ambition and commitment to learning. They transferred in as high freshmen or sophomores or higher, from junior colleges and other schools and universities. They had already been out in life, real life, dealing and coping, not like their roommates and classmates who still slept with teddy bears, and who were all normally seventeen to twenty-two years old and had entered straight from high school.

This latter group was boldly naïve about the actual dangers and adversity in that outside, real world.

It was October and October is damn cold in Ohio at night and someone opened Sand's locked dorm room door, without her permission, in the middle of that dark night and entered.

Her sister's knife.

Her sister Dara had worried for her and before dropping Sand off at the dorm, which was her first time away from her family, Dara had given her a three inch pearl handled folding knife.

"Gee, thanks," she'd said, perplexed.

"It's for protection."

Yeah, well, Sand kinda figured that but even while working in the urban, downtown streets of Cleveland, Ohio, she hadn't had her own personal knife before. So, she'd arrived at school, met her roommate from Japan, and put the knife in her desk drawer, until....

Through a dark night.

That dark night came, and the next morning it was over, and the arguing began.

You see because one of the main reasons these older students were attracted to this school was because it lacked frats and sororities and all that foolish you-have-to-do-this-and-that-foolish-crap-to-be-one-of-us. The entire school was female, that was the sorority, the sorority of femaleness, but those who went straight from high school to college were believed in that crazy, childish foolery. The others of her group, the older, no nonsense group who'd paid their own tuition and not their fathers, met with administration that next morning and so did Sand, who had her knife in her pocket.

“We didn't come here to be harassed in the night by those illegally opening our doors at night, for a stupid hazing, in the middle of the cold, damn night to walk miles through the woods to the president's manor, in our jammies in flu catching October. We're adults, paying money for an education not for this stupid shit.” And so on and so on. The school apologized and the hazing stopped.

Revelation

What Sand never told them nor Mary P. who'd said that Sand had to go out into the cold night in just what she already wore.

Sand said, “No,” bluntly and fervently. Twice. Her younger roommate went, but not our Sand.

What Sand never told the others or Mary P., who was that dorm's president with the master key in her hand opening Sand and her roomy's door late night, was that she'd had that knife, open and in her palm, ready for use. Mary's Anglo and so is most of the student's who've ever attended this hundred fifty year old college.

Our Sand is mixed and of an African American look [of Native American + African + European]. She has the collective affiliated background of those many colors inside her, which includes night riders, and klansmen, and other horrors that go bump in the middle of the dark, cold night for one of color in America. MLK was shot on an early school evening. JFK during the bright school day. And a black guy was dragged in Texas by “his white friends” under Gov. G. W. Bush's admin just before the millennium went out.

So, when you're having “fun,” sneaking up on a friend of another persuasion, think first if death squads, concentration, and interment camps might be in her past and if she might be prepared to defend her life and honor, with your blood, with a her sister's knife in her hand.