

## Pop A Top Again

Description Essay by Kenan Reeh

It is Friday evening, and I know that it will be the start of another short, but quite relaxing weekend. My buddies and I were just picked up at the local corner convenience store for nineteen dollars plus tax. There are a total of thirty of us and we are headed out to the country to have a good, relaxing, carefree time at Les McCain's reloading room.

This rural hangout is very popular among the locals, and there is always quite a brouhaha. People all over the north divide come here every weekend to talk about old times and simply relax. On our twenty-mile trek to the country, we pass through multiple creek bottoms that are eerie and damp. When we pull up to the yard, a chocolate-colored lab that has a spot of white on its nose greets us. Her appearance is that of a s'more with a hint of marshmallow oozing out. I notice that the canine has been eating on a decomposing porcupine, but it appears that she has not been stuck by any ever-so-treacherous quills. My buddies and I are carried to the gun room, where we are shut up in the fridge. Then I am chosen to be the first subject of the night.

My cold aluminum top is cracked open, and a sensation of carbonation and rich barley flavoring bubble to the top of my can. The warm, balmy touch of a man's hand is ever so present. The bitterness of salt and the burn of Tabasco are mixed for a distinctive blend.

The room isn't very big, as it only measures twelve foot by twelve foot. But this modest room gives off a rather homey gesture, with its tight outdoorsy touch and its one-of-a-kind character. Multiple windows are cracked open and a cool autumn breeze fills the room with the aroma of juicy hamburgers, which after a long hard week taste just as good as a Big Ed's fillet.

Endless chatter of the day's events echoes through the room. Tales of the latest pole hunting trip or best new gun circulate throughout the space.

“I shot a coyote at 300 yards the other day, and he dropped like a fat kid in dodge ball.”

“The other day I bought a new gun, and it can shoot a quarter-inch group at 200 yards.”

The crisp crunch of the reloading press and the monotonous buzz of the tumbler are ever present as the evening moves on. Sweet cleaning solution and scalded gunpowder permeates the room as though a priest were blessing all with incense. Rigid plywood countertops circle the room, and the gashes and crevices that they bear show the abuse of being a workman's bench.

Orange chairs are well broken in and show their age with the wrinkles, tears, and scuffs to the coarse leather surface. Bookshelves are filled with many pages of wisdom and knowledge. Countless hours have been spent studying ballistic charts and trying new loading tricks. A coyote fur cascades from the wall, and its silky and sleek fur can be handled and experienced by all who pass. The trash can is filled with empty aerosol cans, as well as many Busch Light cans just like me. Many pictures of generations past are suspended from the wall. Through these photographs, old times are remembered and dwelled upon for hours.

“I remember when Dad used to wear those old tight bell bottoms and that hideous plaid.”

“Yeah, and what about Mom with those big, bulky shoulder pads.”

It is nearly midnight and a full moon shines bright. I am tossed into the trash along with many others as people say their goodbyes and goodnights. Everyone heads for home to take a Tylenol and hit the pillow. The darkness, chills, and silence of the empty room soothingly tickles my aluminum shell, and I doze off to sleep. I dream of the weeks to come when once more someone will pop a top.