

Moon Mullet



Moon Mullet knew that if ever there was a wrong place to be at the wrong time, this was it. Late last night, he and ol' Paint had pulled into Beener, Oklahoma, pop. 310, all tuckered out from a hard day on the trail. He tethered his trusty nag to the hitching post in front of the Fliederer Family Saloon, the only establishment open at that hour, and sidled up to the batwing doors. An unmistakable aroma grazed his nostrils as he stepped inside, and he smiled as he recollected why the joint was better known in these parts as the "Floozy Flophouse." And there, seated at the concierge table, was the head hussy herself, Muriel d'Bonnaire. She offered Moon the Jello Shooter she'd been nursing, but he declined, wanting only a room – a single – and some shuteye. She obliged, reluctantly, and handed him a key and a chamber pot. "Second door on the left," she muttered, gesturing toward the stairway. "Checkout's at noon, sharp." No matter he slept well, dreaming of fields of synchronized dancing liver flukes, Moon awoke to a feeling of foreboding. His anxiety was not misplaced, for Muriel – who hated to be snubbed for *any* reason – had spent the night in high dudgeon designing, constructing and then hanging a large sign opposite her saloon. It was this sign – the proverbial writing on the wall – that Moon saw as he crept to the window and pulled back the curtain. Half a dozen cowpokes were already congregated around the sign. One who brandished a pair of scissors pointed up towards his room, and Moon immediately opted to remove himself from the premises before someone else did it for him. He scooped up his belongings – a jew's-harp and a sachet of duck beaks – and was pulling on his boots when the door was flung open. There stood Muriel, her flashing eyes suggesting the very antithesis of debonairness. As he preceded her down the stairway, motivated by the razor-sharp shears she wielded, Mullet was one blue Moon.