

Saturday Special by Anne Walk

"Beauty!" says the wheat blond man with his checkered shirt tucked into the back of his sagging jeans. He's inspecting a statue, carved oak, fringed and feathered, one hand raised like a visor, skin stained red.

Another man, white haired, looks up from a chair under a blue tarp next to a jacked up four by four.

It's the last Antique Market of the season and the white-haired man needs a sale. He advances slowly, sussing out the customer with a wary eye.

"Where'd you get it?" asks the blond man.

"Oh, at some auction or other."

The white-haired man stands beside the statue and slaps a hand down on its wooden shoulder.

"You don't see a lot of these anymore," says Blondie. He shakes his head.

"No, well, you know. Like I said. It was an auction." Whitey juts his chin out, stands tall, buries his fists in his front pockets.

They eye each other for a moment, the statue between them.

"My granddad used to have something similar when I was a kid." says Blondie with a nervous chuckle.

"Issat so?" Whitey's posture relaxes. He looks at his watch, looks up at the setting sun.

"Yeah. Part of a wild west theme he had going on in his den. He was a real collector. I grew up just over there off Gilmour." Blondie looks in the direction of the road and Whitey turns and looks with him.

Standing side by side, they could be brothers.

"How much are you asking?" Blondie looks the statue up and down, his gaze lingering here and there, settling on the stoic mouth. He leans into the face, notes the curve of the nose, raises a finger and traces the war paint on its cheeks.

"I'm asking a thousand."

"A thousand? That seems steep for what it is." Blondie rubs the flat top of the cigar bundle in the statue's hand. "It needs a fresh coat of paint." He'll put it at the front door, use it to catch his keys when he comes in.

"I'll give you five hundred."

The other vendors start packing up. Whitey sighs and says, "Eight hundred. Any less and I might as well keep it myself. Take it over to Niagara Falls next month where I can get twelve."

Blondie shifts from foot to foot, kicks at the dirt, considering. Eight hundred is a lot for what it is. But he nods. He'll take it. And Whitey smiles and heads over to the truck to get his iPad.

"Do you have a tarp?" Blondie shouts over. "Don't need any trouble on the ride home. You know how some people are."

"Sure thing," says Whitey. He gives Blondie a sympathetic pat on the back. "No extra charge. Where are you parked? I'll help you carry it over. It's a bit of a beast."

They both laugh.

"Thanks, man. You're a good guy."

"Thanks," says Whitey. "I try to be."