



The Rooster & The Raven



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FREE

THE POOR, THE BAD, AND THE ANGRY

A Short Story by
Kevin Keating

The bell rang, I got up, I turned it off. Twenty minutes later I walked through delivery. Miller's Chevy with the capacious trunk was in the lot. That was good. The big clock said it was three or four minutes past, and when I punched my timecard it said 10:08. I was in trouble again. Asshole was coming straight at me from dry storage. I put the card back in the slot. He eyeballed me as he passed. I didn't look back at him. I just went into the office.

I was counting the money in my cash drawer and Asshole came in. This time I kept my eyes on him as he moved across the room, staring at him without blinking, because I know Asshole doesn't like that.

"You're late again, Max."

"Yeah, I'll be on time tomorrow."

"You know, you're fucking up around here."

"No I'm not, man. I was just late, that's all."

"None of us can afford to shop here. But that's okay, because we steal a lot..."

"Well...I'm gonna have to write you up." Then he went back to the closet with the safe in it.

I didn't say anything. Being written up was about three steps away from being fired. I took the cash drawer out front. Miller was on register four, and with Miller working everything would be alright. He was my buddy, my partner in crime. Asshole would probably be leaving within a half-hour or forty-five minutes. Then we could all relax and start having fun at his expense.

"Asshole says he's going to write me up for being late again."

Miller made a snorting noise, half-laughing, "Man, fuck him, he's not gonna do anything. Anyway, it's Sunday..."

He smiled, then disappeared to the back of the store.

I think the place used to be a Piggly-Wiggly, or an A&P, or some shit like that. Then Asshole bought it, gutted the interior, redesigned it, and divided the building up. Now the east half of the building is offices, a rental listings place and a travel agency. We work in the market, under bright white lights glaring on black and white tile floors. A produce market, deli and bottle shop. Miller and Asshole had opened at ten. Customers were starting to trickle in; some guy in Italian clothes with an Andre-Breton-look-alike haircut and a clinging female with a Roadrunner haircut. Boutique owners and Volvo-driving hippie-liberals with money shop here. The store stereo plays dumbbell-rock; music by The Who and the Stones, sound to shop and sleepwalk by. The place feels sterile; it's too white and suspiciously clean. None of us can afford to shop here. But that's okay, because we steal a lot of shit, especially on Sundays.

'Us' is me, Miller, Leslie and Susan. The disloyal employees, The Wild Bunch. There are others who work the rest of the week. This guy Peter works here. I don't include him when I say us. He's some kind of evangelical Christian nutcase who's planning to go to Ecuador after college and fuck the culture of the Jivaro Indians with a Wycliff Bible in the name of Jesus-Christ-Our-Lord.

What a fool. I can see him a few years from now, standing in the middle of the woods somewhere, asking short, dark-skinned men with guns, "Have you been dipped in the blood of the lamb?" I hope they shrink his head. He's the only person who works for Asshole who can't be trusted.

Sunday is employee theft olympics day. Usually Asshole is gone, with a straw up his nose or a glass pipe in his mouth. Leslie, Susan, Miller and I try to rip off as much money, food and alcohol as we can. When I work hard I can almost double my cash income, and that doesn't include the "take-home" items, cases of microbrewery ales, German beers, juices, cheeses, deli items and fresh



Illustration by Richard Sala

pasta. I've acquired a taste for Nova Scotia Lox, the kind that melts in your mouth, \$21 a pound but I never pay for it. And I'm developing a very discriminating taste for pricey California 'Reds'. He has some dynamite Anderson Valley Cabernets here, the kind that, with the first sip, create a galaxy of bouquets on my palate. I've gotten spoiled and I just can't drink the cheap stuff anymore. There are certain brands and labels that I favor and might even recommend, but obviously I'm not

the type to make commercial endorsements. Even given his high volume of sales I can't figure why he doesn't notice the loss. He is an asshole but he is smart and alert. Thus it has been my sweet pleasure to outwit him and take what I want.

Out in the aisles I heard the man and the woman talking, their fashionable images reflected in the anti-shoplifting mirror that lines the upper back wall. The man spoke, his voice was indistinct. Then the woman

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Common Sense

Anton Musial

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R&R EXCLUSIVE:

THE MR. T EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW

By Paul Houseworth

The Mr. T Experience is a very good example of what happens when the drive for fun is the most powerful driving force in the band. While talking to Dr. Frank and Aaron at a recent interview, I could not help but realize that these guys are not out to make statements. They are playing to remain young. Aaron is the bass player who joined the band about two years ago. Dr. Frank plays guitar and "makes up most of the songs" Getting ready to release their fourth album titled "Making Things With Light," the band stays blissfully unaware of

what the future holds in store. Says Dr. Frank, "I don't even call the astrology number anymore. I don't even want a hint of what is going to happen in my day."

MR. T EXPERIENCE formed about five years ago and has three out of the four original members playing.

"We've been around longer than we have a right to be," says Frank. Mr. T. Experience's first "hit" came off of their self produced first LP. The song "Danny Partridge Got Busted" became a hit on the college radio scene and "The End Of The Ramones" is still making its rounds. The latest song to hit the airwaves is "She's No Rocket Scientist" a real

catchy tune. MR. T EXPERIENCE, however is not a "joke" band. They don't have any gimmicks to their shows and the songs are straight-ahead guitar-rip-roaring attacks. As Aaron said, "There are only about eight chord changes to the kind of

"It's like camping, only sometimes you sleep inside."

—Aaron, bassist

songs we do. So its a matter of putting them together in different ways"

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