

Reelin Inn

By C. Angelo Caci

"Oh boy! I can't wait! Tonight that rare opportunity comes my way. The Lord of Illusion, that benevolent king of the Ether-land is gonna bestow unto me a late evening fog. Heh, Lord of Ether-land, that's a good one, gotta remember that one!"

The old man takes a long pull from a can of Coors and looked around his room. The morning light made a desperate attempt to filter through years of grime plastered to the only window, where no curtain hung, of a one room apartment located over a liquor store on Main Street, illuminating the rabbit's foot that hung on a wall over the single, unmade bed, casting a hundred tiny shadows from other such crucifixions from tenants past—cheap prints of Renoir, Arian Jesus, and such, ad infinitum.

"And it sure is unusual for this time of year, I mean, yeah...only happens in the early summer months usually, like June. That's what I'm reading though, sure as hell, the paper says today...Wonder what makes fog anyway? Heh, I know when I had a few too many...like at the Reelin Inn...Heh, another goody from the mind of ol'Goodie Epstein! Reelin in the fog. Oh boy! Yeah...it's in the Times though. *Evening Fog*, it reads right here, *expected tonight. Atypical - boy, they've got that right for this time of year.*"

The old man sets his newspaper down upon the only other piece of furniture in the room purchased from a second-hand shop down the street, then sat down on the one chair, that came with the table, took a last healthy swig, then set the empty down on the table. It made a hollow, empty sound, of the sort that heralds the desperation of:

what-do-I-do- now. He'd already been through the reminisce of miserable experiences held while spent in the employ of the Post Office, which he's since retired from, some two years and change past...Of how he'd put up with the likes of: "Why are you people charging two cents more for stamps? Don't I pay enough already in taxes to..." And, or "I know why there's an increase, it's to pay the salaries of the likes of youse who're already overpaid as it is."

"Fog...yeah! I practically live for the joy of these moments. Well, I wouldn't go that far ol'boy. Heh! Oh but, joy to the world the fog has come / Da da, da da, da da. I can't wait to get out in it!"

Boy, people'd think I was nuts if I went on rant'n-n-rave'n over something like, like fog. My little secret.... Yeah. We'll just keep that one at home and not tell a soul, living or dead. Dead!

"Oh boy, another Goodie!"

The old man continues his reverie in silence, though augmenting it here and there aloud.

"Ahh, the last time there was fog....I remember it well, my last covert opportunity to play in the fog...course, what else could I do with the outboard motor...nice one too? Not a damned thing. No, couldn't do a damned thing with it, but then again, that's not the point. If I did do something with it...Why that'd make me nothing more than a common thief. Of course..."

A thief in the night...

"...now that conjures up a nice sort of romantic image. I could go with that. But...well what about me selling the damn thing...make a few off it? Oh jeez yeah, and suppose I were to get caught selling it? Yeah, that'd be just my luck. I could give it away. Oh yeah, right! "Thief in the night steals outboard motor off of a harbor patrol boat, gives it away and then gets himself arrested for grand theft motor," or whatever they would call it. And then, wouldn't I sure look the jerk! I can see it now: The five o'clock news...that skinny guy, what's his name?"

I'll just call him

Toupee Harry...

"Tonight, News at Five, we'll have more about Robin Hood. Using the fog as cover...steals the Sheriff of Nottingham's..."

Oh boy, yeah...Sheriff of Nottingham, that's what ol'Toupee would say alright, "outboard motor, and get this...

"...he GIVES IT AWAY! That's right... gives it away to an undercover officer, and gets arrested in the process for grand theft outboard!"

Tempting, but not quite enough, considering the great risks involved. Noo. I'd probably get thrown in the clink and they'd throw away the key! I probably wouldn't make many friends in there either.

"They'd all think I was nuts...probably laugh at me, and tease me the

whole time I'm in there. Nope, I did the smart thing by throwing it overboard.

Maybe what I should have done was to maybe call them afterward and tell them where it was.

“Yeah that'd be something.”

Oh yeah, right...call the Harbor Patrol? Oh no; they'd just trace the call. Oh man, think of what the press would do with that one...

“No fucking thanks!”

News...the papers...call them anonymously. Yeah, that might....

“Now that'd work. Oh yeah, now that I like. Oh boy, that is good!” I'll have to remember that one...put it in my notebook,

Things to do!

“Oh man! I don't have time. What am I to do tonight? I wasn't expecting fog, not this time of the year. I better get it together.”

I'll just go down to the Reelin Inn and have a few beers with the guys...The idea will come. You can't just jump into something like this with just any old plan, not something as important as this; you gotta give it time...time to manifest itself, naturally like...

“Yeah, I'll do that.”

The old man exits his apartment and fumbles with the key, experiencing some difficulty with the lockset.

"Damned door!" One of these days I'll fix it...not now. I've got more important things to do...Now, let's see...Do I have my keys?

“Yeah, here they are. Don't wanna lock myself out now...Boy, that'd put me in a bad spot. Oh yeah! ...Hav'n to deal with a lock-out on special events night?”

...still a little early, but there should be a few of the Flies down there at the bar...

Stepping out into the fog onto the street where others appear only as apparitions, the old man made his way down the street to the Reelin Inn.

Think I'll walk instead a-takin the

car...Don't need to get a DUI...Nope, there's nothing that's gonna ruin my covert evening. Besides, it's a nice day anyway...Nice cool mid-afternoon breeze. If I would'a read the papers yesterday I'd a had somethin right now...Oh well, better late than never, as they say...whoever THEY are....Asshole!

"Hey, watch out where your goin!"

Dumb son of a bitch...Asshole!

"Damn..."

He almost run over me!"

Maybe I'm not paying enough attention in crossing this street...Thinking too hard...Apprehensive about what to do tonight...It'll come, It'll come...Leave it alone, it'll....

"Oh

shit!"...Don't wanna walk under that ladder...

"Nope, I'll just go around it."

Boy, this is a twist, usually I walk home from the Inn, now I'm walkin to the Inn...Heh, heh...Then again, I always have to walk there the next morning, of course, to get the car...

"Two more blocks and I'm there."

The Inn's always good for to get an inspiration. That's where I was that day of the night I pirated that outboard...

"Now THAT was good one!"

Under cover of fog he pilots his vessel through dangerous channels! Ha ha; I know this marina like the back of my han...

"like the back of my dick! Oops..."

The old man looks around to make sure no one has heard him, but that's all he sees are vague renditions of humanity. No one has paid him any mind.

"Hey Charlie! Charlie, hold up! You goin to the Inn, Charlie?"

"Yeah, me too."

"Okay, and you?"

"Still bothers ya, huh? Get it pulled Charlie, get it pulled. Whatayalookintodo Charlie, get buried with all your teeth? Get it pulled. Get it pulled, for Crissake! Hell, I've got five missing and

I'm doin alright. I can eat corn on the cob, steak, all of it Charlie; anything I want...pussy too! Heh, heh, heh. Yeah, get it pulled. Tell ya what Chuck, you buy the tequila, mine included, and I'll pull the fucker for ya, sound fair?"

"Jeez! Chuck, will ya look at that! Boy I'll tell ya, I really like the way those girls wear them low pants and halter tops. Man!"

"What's that? Turned on for nothing?"

"Do you believe that? The mouth on her! What the fuck you lookin at, she says ta me..."

"No Charlie, I wasn't. Was I? I was just lookin...normal like."

"Yeah I was! You know me, I'm not no damn lech, just lookin, thats all."

Touchy!

The darkness inside the Inn reveals a few at the bar. They're as still as manikins, blurred outlines reflected by thousands of broken shards of ambient light reflected of the bottles that stand like sentries in front of the mirror behind the bar. No one acknowledges the old mans entry.

He takes a seat at the far side of the long bar away from the regulars. He looks in the dingy mirror where everything appears as apparitions, dark and anonymous, without detail, including himself. He feels somehow reassured because of this. His shadowed figure in the mirror faces him...

"Here we are. Watch your step, Charlie. You might fall and knock that thing out. Hey, ya know, I can't see from here without my glasses. Damn it! I had that feeling...I was forgetting something when I left the house...just as I was about to close that broken door I never get around to fixing....Hey, who is that behind the bar, someone new?"

"Really? Damn! Boy, she sure looks good without my glasses on, maybe I shouldn't wear them more often. But eventually I would hafta wear them, and then I'd see her face full on in all its glorious and raw, livin gory, and then I'd hafta say to myself: You slept with that...Mary?"

"Ya, I know, I know...Hell, you know I don't mean anything by that, she's a good kid. It's just talk, Charlie, just talk. Motorcycle accident huh? Gee, that's too bad."

"Hey Mary, how are ya kid? Everything alright?"

"Good. How about a coupla Bud's here, for Charlie and me?"

God, she is ugly...poor thing. I wonder what she looked like before? Ahh, probably still ugly...Nice personality though,

gotta giver that much. Boy, they don't come nicer'n her's.

"Thanks Mary. Hey Charlie, here's to your tooth...Panther piss, but it's cheap."

"Hey Mary, here's a couple bucks, back me double and you get to pick half the tunes...live'n things up a bit here. Whataya say?"

*Damn, who died anyway, anyone I know...like
a morgue in here...all these stiffs....*

"Cheap fucks, huh Charlie? Always me what's gotta come up with the do-re-me. What the hell would these skates do if I stopped comin-in ta this here dump. Maybe that's what I'll do tonight for fog night...get lost in the fog and let these morons try to get along without me. That'd be a good one. Hell, without ol'Goodie here to show-um where the toilet paper is, the whole lot of'm as one joint moronic brain wouldn't think ta wipe their own ass! Buncha...."

"Hey, anyayou pall-bearers in here wanna donate to the cause here, feel free, huh. Let's oil the hinges on yur wallets here...They get rusty when you don't use them!"

"That's a good one, huh Charlie...wallet, oil, rusty hinges? Speakin of which, Charlie, it's you should be buyin huh, since it's you that won the Bowl, huh Charlie...all them Lincolns you got outta that?"

"Atta boy, I knew you wasn't no cheapskate, not you Charlie. Hey Mary, whatsa guy gotta do to getta drink around here...sleep with the cockroaches? Man, I saw one in here last night, Charlie, that could'a matched Holyfield, remember him...kicked Tyson's ass. And in this corner, Reelin Inn at two hundred and sixty pounds, Big Bite Buggy! Hey Charlie, your Catholic, right? Gotta good prayer for ya...Listen ta this, Hail Mary / full of booze / it's heads I win / it's tails you loose. How bout flippen for the next round, Charlie?"

"No, Charlie. We'll use one a your coins, you know me, I don't cheat!"

*Man...what's eaten
him...Must be the tooth.*

"Heyyy, now there's a tune...Ol'Dino. Good choice Mary. Oh, when she stoops and you see through the lace and you think it's a her face / It's amore....Yeah, there ain't gonna be no more Dino's anymore, uh uh....Nope, them days are flushed down the toilet of history. Whatta ya think Charlie?"

"Hey, Mary, Mary / quite contrary / How's the bush in your garden grow?"

"No, no, just talk Mary, just talk, you know me, just talk, that's all."

"Jeez Charlie, why's everybody so touchy?"

"Yeah, but you know I didn't mean nothin by it...just tryin ta livin things up a bit, ya know? Do my part ta entertain the troops here."

"Yeah, I know, but ta say she's gonna eighty-six me?"

"Huh?"

"Yeah, I been comin here since, what...I don't know, twenty-five years or so."

"I know she don't, but hell, that's not exactly what I'd call profane, huh?"

"Yeah? I don't know."

Jeez, oh man, seems like everybody in here's fell into the same touch-hole. I'll refrain from sayin that out loud. Shit, Mary'd probably think I want in her pants after her stinky touch-hole... Hail Mary / pussy full of cheeze!

"Hey Bloody Mary, coupla more Bud's here and don't tarry. Have one yourself, Mary, on me, not you, the drinks. Heh heh. There's another good one from the mouth of ol' Goodie Epstein, huh Charlie?"

"Okay, okay Mary, no more profanity..."

Jeeze!

"But, it's still early! Hey, you ain't mad at me are ya...You know me, it's just talk, Charlie, just talk?"

That was hardly what I'd call profanity. Damn, when did these become such hallowed halls?

"Yeah sure, Charlie, sure...probably see ya tomorrow, heh? Sure you won't have just one more, huh? Okay...You take care. Oh, and give my best to...whatever her name is there Charlie. You do that for me...See ya."

"Hey Mar...."

"Whattaya mean no more drinks?"

"No I'm not, I've only had...I don't know, there was no more than a few between the both of us, Charlie an me....Huh?"

"Whattaya sayin? whattaya talkin? I do not...."

"What the hell's the weather got to do with anything?"

"Yeah, I know there's fog out there...Whatta ya sayin?"

"No way! Ya say'n I got drunk and..."

"Shiver me what? me timbers? Mar...."

"All my clothes...off? Whaddaya sayin?"

"Then what...threw a blender in the toilet? Whattayamean? It was...noo it wuz an outboard motor an it wuz in the harbor that I...It was...

What...

Who's Charlie?"

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