

Flash'em Tag'em Bag'em

by C.D. Reimer

He wore dark sunglasses, a fedora, and a raincoat on a hot summer day in downtown San Francisco, drawing little attention from his walk around the busy intersection with a coffeehouse on each corner. The independent coffeehouse on the southwest corner had more wide-eyed tourists than jaded natives sitting at the tables. A raven-haired woman sat alone at a table near the entrance, taking small sips as she waited for her coffee to cool off. She wore a t-shirt, shorts and running shoes, and the strap of her purse hung diagonally across her bosom. He walked up to the table and pulled apart his raincoat, flashing his nude body and grinning like an idiot.

She gasped with her hand covering her mouth, her eyes widening in surprise.

Her initial reaction pleased him. More so than having the chairs scraped the concrete behind him or the people inside the coffeehouse pointing at him. When her hand dropped down to reveal a maniacal grin and a predatory glimmer appeared in her eyes, his grin faltered from the realization that she might be different.

No shock, no horror, no fainting.

She flipped the lid off her cup with her thumb and threw hot coffee down at his bare feet. He jumped back to flap his raincoat like the wings of a startled pigeon. She pulled a gun from her purse.

"Christ!"

After wrapping the raincoat around his midsection with both arms, he plunged back into the crowd and ran two blocks before looking over his shoulder. Her upraised gun surfed above the crowd. Without looking where he was going, he stumbled into a group of burly bikers standing in front of their parked motorcycles. They pushed, shoved and pummeled him through their ranks, popping him out like a naked babe, bloodied and bruised from a difficult birth. He careened into an alley in blind panic.

Something pricked his ass.

He fell across the garbage-strewn pavement with his rubbery legs. Reaching behind to pluck at his ass, he found a tranq dart with a hot pink tailpiece in his hand. The woman approached him with her gun pointed at the ground. A crowd formed at the mouth of the alley entrance.

"The tranq will wear off in twenty minutes," she said, answering his obvious distress. "You're under citizen's arrest."

"You can't arrest me!"

"Sure I can." She put her gun away as the crowd parted for a police cruiser with flashing lights. "City hall pays a nice bounty to get perverts like you off the streets."

"I have rights!" He tried to get up but couldn't. "The First Amendment!"

"If you live in the Castro district and left home with only your sunglasses, a fanny pack and slippers, it's debatable whether the First Amendment permits you to sit outside a coffeehouse in the buff. Anywhere else in the City, you're committing a criminal act. With that pitiful sack between your legs, you should have used the Fifth Amendment to not incriminate yourself in public."

