

Is That You, Bugs?

by Jack Swenson

I should have known better. It was a bad idea to start up with a woman married to an Italian. I don't know what Coco's nationality was; I think she was from the moon. Coco was a ditz, but she had qualities that I admired. She was friendly and free with her favors. She was also very pretty.

Never dip your pen in the company ink, I have been told, but I couldn't help myself. I was twitterpated. How about a drink after work? Okay. Wanna go back to my apartment and see my etchings? Don't mind if I do.

Poor kid. She didn't mean to leave my business card on her kitchen counter next to the telephone. It was a mistake. The next thing I know there is a loud pounding on the door. I get out of bed, put on my pants, and peer out the peephole in the door. It's a man wearing a black fedora. I open the door and stand there hanging my head.

Coco's wearing one of my shirts when she comes out of the bedroom. She sits down and lights a cigarette. She looks off into the middle distance. "Well, well. Ain't this cozy?" her husband says.

I apologize. No, that's not what I do. I grovel. *Mea culpa, mea culpa.* "You want her, she's yours!" her husband says. He walks out banging the door behind him. Coco and I look at each other. She shrugs.

The next day she calls me and tells me that Rico (that's her husband's name, I swear) threatened violence, but she talked him out of it. Then she told me how he found us. "Sorry," she said. Don't worry about it, I said. These things happen. Everyone makes mistakes.

