

Working Girl

by Jake Barnes

Cory was born off a trail in Yellowstone Park. The family moved to Illinois and her mother got a Rosie the Riveter job in a factory during the war. She says she remembers the two water fountains in the Five and Dime. The little one, her mother explained, was not for little girls like her but for colored people.

Later she married and moved with her husband to California. She got a part-time job hawking cigarettes in San Francisco. She handed out little packs with four smokes in them to anyone who wanted one. She teamed up with a street mime who later became a famous entertainer. His name was Robin Williams.

One day she was hawking her wares next to a downtown park. From time to time she would call out to let people know she had free samples. Suddenly a hand shot up on the other side of a hedge. "I'll have one of those!" cried someone who remained invisible. The voice was that of a woman.

Cory peered over the hedge and there was a hooker servicing a john. The hooker was lying on her back waving her hand in the air. Cory handed one of the four-packs to the woman and tossed a second on her customer's back. "Afterwards he'll probably feel like having a smoke," Cory said.

