

President Liz

by Joey Delgado

I fancy myself a spy.

Unofficial official of the H. O. A. Super secret free agent agent of the Glenwood Homeowner's Association. Even the board is unaware of the work I do in their name, without the faintest utterance of their name. Only the highest of the high, the uppermost of the upper echelon—who is frequently high on uppers—has access to my very particular set of skills.

President Liz.

A banshee in black yoga pants with a churned, oil-slick knot of a chignon, and a magenta chiffon robe, her ceremonial vestment, that flaps behind her as she moves with jittery purpose over the concrete pathways grid-lining the Glenwood Condominium Complex. This is her empire of stucco.

President Liz is outside my window, her presence felt before corporeal form seen. I pull back the curtain and she is nothing but a figure in shadow, the outline of her head and pile of hair making her look like a war-torn cerberus who lost a brother in battle. She lights a cigarette. The signal. I check my phone and suddenly my next mission is set.

She sent me a photo. A dog, night vision green with glowing eyes, presenting with an absence of leash and the the tell-tale hunch of a dog in mid-shit. The Hound of Glenwood. Below the photo, a message. “Find the oner [sic].”

So I do. The owner is walking the dog, a malamute named Molly. With the stealth and expediency of a seasoned professional with a job to do, I approached. “Oh my God, hi. I love your dog. Can I pet her?” The owner nods. I stoop down and tousle the dog's fur. “Hi, baby, aren't you the sweetest thing? She reminds me of my dog.” She doesn't. “I had to give my dog away.” I didn't. “I used to let her out in the morning to pee, while I got ready for work. The manager caught me, then the HOA sent a letter. ‘Either your dog goes, or you

go.' I miss her so much." None of that happened. Molly's owner looks at me, a flicker of understanding in the eyes.

I message the president. "It's done."

She responds with a thumb's up emoji, and I celebrate with a Diet Coke fizzing in a mug that says, "Always be yourself, unless you can be Batman, then always be Batman."

Huh, I *could* be fucking Batman. Both meanings.

