

Convenience Store

by John Wentworth Chapin

"I said, what's your lucky number, babe?" the drunk guy at the counter says, again. I'm casing the place; my boyfriend Jimmy is about to bust in and rob the store. I'm pretending to be looking at puckered hot dogs rolling behind the glass case but am really eyeing the Indian clerk at the counter. Jimmy's waiting outside for me to raise my hand as a signal. I wander away toward the microwave and condiments so I can get a better look under the counter where the foreign clerk waits to enter the drunk's last Pick Six number.

"Hey, stuck-up bitch, you know I'm talking to you," the drunk says.

"Don't talk to my customers like that," the clerk warns; he doesn't have an accent.

"I'm the fucking customer, Achmed," the guy says. "She ain't bought shit."

"Get out of my store," shouts the clerk.

"Fuck you," the guy snarls. He starts toward me, fast, eyes narrowed.

"Leave her alone!" In a flash, the clerk whips out a long black revolver and cocks it, aiming at the guy's face. "Get out!"

The guy's hands go up in the air. "Don't shoot! Fuck!"

Time stops: my stomach clenches because I can see what's coming. The drunk pisses himself.

Jimmy rushes in, gun drawn, "GIMME YOUR FUCKIN' MONEY!"

The clerk swings, gun pointed at the door.

I hit the floor before the shooting starts. All I smell is piss.

