

Dinner at Wendy's

by Larry Strattner

“What are we doing,” he asked, “sitting here writing shit in the middle of the day?” She is in the brown recliner chair with the foot thing cranked up. Her pajamas are also brown with an all-over pattern of moose and bear silhouettes; probably men's pajamas, but she is a bit mannish, with the exception of a couple of fairly bodacious tits.

“Writing is what we like to do.” she answered, brushing a few potato chip crumbs off the chest of her pajamas.

“I like to get laid too but I can't do it all day long, every day.”

“Well,” she looked interested, “we could do it right now. It only takes a few minutes.”

“Yeah, well, thanks but no thanks. I don't want to disturb your moose herd. Besides, I have to get this thing finished. Christ, I'll probably get ten bucks for it, or worse a free subscription to this rag I'm writing it for. I'm almost out of cash. How the hell are we going to eat?”

“Let me think a minute,” she said. Then, “the paperboy comes today.”

“The paperboy comes every fucking day.”

“Yeah, yeah. But today he comes to collect. He has money. By the time he gets to this part of his route he always has a few bucks. At least enough for a couple of burgers and some fries from Wendy's. Is there any Jack Daniels left in that bottle?”

“Yeah. There is. Get the Glock. It's over in the drawer.”

They put on their ski masks. His is blue. Hers is pink. His screensaver kicks on, flipping through photos from the family reunion. In one picture everyone wears a ski mask. Uncle Herman's not in any of last year's photos. He got twenty to life for shooting up a Seven Eleven even though the Pakistani clerk got the last laugh by shooting Herman in the ass as he ran out the door.

In gathering afternoon dusk they await the paperboy. It is difficult not to think about flame-broiled cheeseburgers and salty French fries. After dinner they'll get around to worrying about the body.

He is the one who writes nonfiction and technical articles. She writes mostly poetry and romance. If he only makes a small amount of money she makes even less. Grappling with technical subjects makes him far more disciplined in his thinking.

He thinks, *why are we sitting here in these stupid ski masks?*

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