

Like An Endless Rain

by Paul Steven Stone

Part One...

In my life, good luck seems to fall like an endless rain.

Sometimes the toast lands on the jellied side, of course, but most times on the dry.

Now, some of you might wonder "What's he got to be so upbeat about?" And I would tell you the same thing I told that thin but highly attractive Sergeant-Detective last night: "Long as the screen door snaps back doesn't matter how hard it was pushed open."

And see what I mean about good luck...? Fate could have sent me any number of Sergeant-Detectives, but fate sent me one of Boston's finest, Sergeant-Detective Sheila Magnuson. Aside from being a little undernourished Sheila Magnuson is possibly the world's most beautiful Sergeant-Detective. Virtually a standard unto herself!

And educated...? I learned more new things from Sheila Magnuson in my brief forty minute interrogation than I learned all last year from anyone else. Remind me later and I'll show you some of her more interesting intimidation exercises.

As to why I was talking to a Sergeant-Detective in the first place...? I should probably preface my remarks by mentioning I was arrested by our city police around 12:30 this morning for breaking and entering. It was all a mistake, of course, but it gave me a fascinating inside look at our criminal justice system.

You wouldn't know it, but I'm basically an optimist. If you tell me it's raining, I'll remind you that rainy weather always passes on by. If you complain about your bad leg, I'll remark that half a set is better than no set, and that half your wood is still dry and ready to burn. But when police sirens start to converge, and colored lights begin swirling around me, and spotlights catch me standing on a window ledge outside my upstairs bedroom...I have to admit, I get a little concerned.

Still, I was pleased to discover I had done such an excellent job painting the bedroom window shut. It was clearly burglar-proof,

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having resisted my frantic attempts to yank it open for a good ten minutes.

Which was why, of course, the police had so much time. They could have stopped for coffee and doughnuts en route to the house, and still ended up catching me...*en flagrante*, I think the expression goes.

I find it especially amusing since I was the one who called the police! Only I had called to report a stolen car. Can you believe some thief stole my VW Passat out of my driveway? With the keys hanging from the ignition! Which explains why I was climbing onto window embrasures in the dark hollow hours of the night.

Did I mention how invigorating the nighttime air felt against my skin?

But what a night! Robbed, forced to scale my house in the dark, arrested by the police, grilled by a vicious and lovely Sergeant-Detective and incarcerated for hours in a jail whose images and inmates will never completely fade from memory. Not many men can boast an adventure like that!

See what I mean about being lucky?

Though it wasn't lucky for Mom. She and I were laughing about my 'night of crime' and I'm sure it set back her recovery. Poor dear was in a car accident and her jaw's wired shut. She shouldn't have carried on like that, but it was all too funny not to laugh.

I don't think she added more than a day or two to her hospital stay. But Mom likes to take things slow, anyway.

Isn't it wonderful how things always work out?

Even for Fergie, the little schnauzer that was sitting in the back of my Volkswagen Passat.

I'm sure whoever stole the car must like dogs.

Part Two...

In my life, bad luck and strange men seem to fall like an endless rain.

Maybe that's what happens when you're a female cop.

Take what happened last week.

It was early in the morning, about 12:30 or 1. We were answering a 44C, which is a stolen car report, when we came across the guy whose car was supposedly stolen. For some reason he was standing on a ledge outside the second story of a tudor-style single-family.

Clearly, he'd been drinking. In the glare of the spotlight you could see he was listing back and forth on the ledge. And when we asked him to come down he called back in a slurred taunt, "I won't, and you can't make me." Just like a bratty child.

So I told him we had his dog, and let him see the little schnauzer we had picked up on the way over. Poor thing was in an accident and had a bandage on his front paw to prove it.

"Fergie," he called down with great warmth. Then, a quizzical look crossed his face as he asked, with great wonderment, "...but what did you do with the car?"

Later, when he finally climbed down, it was my job as Sergeant-Detective to fill out the report. Usually it's no big deal, but I couldn't get the fellow to focus. Despite everything I said to the contrary, he kept insisting he was being interrogated.

"Do your worst," he said defiantly. "Whatever you do to me, no matter how many bones you break, I will never confess."

"Confess!" I shouted in disbelief. "Confess to what? This is not an interrogation. You are not under arrest. For God's sake, you're the one who called us...!"

At this point, with little break in stride, he turned up the heat on a slightly amorous smile and insisted, "Oh, please, you just have to tell me your name!" Any attempt to be charming was greatly diminished by the alcoholic haze through which he spoke.

"Sergeant-Detective Sheila Magnuson," I responded in a business-like tone. "...and from now on I'll ask the questions. You know how long it takes to fill out one of these?"

I lifted up my book of forms—just to show him the size of the report—and he jumped like a startled rabbit. "Don't hit me!" he whined, his hands rising up protectively. Once he saw nothing was happening, he dropped his arms and confided, "If you weren't so damn cute I'd ask the Red Cross to witness this interrogation."

"This is the last time I'm saying this," I struggled, trying to make meaningful contact with his unfocused eyes. "This is not an interrogation. You are not being intimidated. Once I fill out this accident report you can haul your sorry ass out of here. You *capische?*"

"We don't need an accident report, Sergeant-Detective Magnuson," he said smugly. "We need a stolen car report!"

"Your car wasn't stolen."

"Now why would such an attractive police officer say such a thing?"

"For the simple reason you crashed your (bleeping) car into a tree two blocks from here. On Brighton Ave."

"Go on! Me? A 99 Volkswagen Passat? Blue? With a beautiful and sweet—yes you are—schnauzer in the back seat?" He was bent over, patting the dog and rubbing its ear.

"You forget something?" I asked.

"Like what?" he replied, looking up.

"Like your mother? She was in the car, too."

"Go on! *Mother?*" he laughed, standing up unsteadily. "I know what you're doing! You're playing with my emotions. Trying to break me down." He smiled. "Do you realize how well you do this? It's quite impressive."

Honestly, I didn't know what to do with him. In the absence of a workable, non-violent solution I decided to let him sleep things off in the slammer. Before sending him away, however, I tried once more to convey some sense of reality.

"Listen to me; you need to hear this. Your mother was banged up in the accident and they took her to Beth Israel. It looks like she might need some facial work."

His first instinct was to chuckle, as if I had called something humorous to mind. Then he apologized, explaining, "You should understand, the one thing Mother has in plentiful supply is facial work. Now a tummy tuck, that might be something she could use! Hate to say this but lately Mother has been, well . . . a little *slack*."

That was it. No more Nice Lady Cop. No more reasoning with drunks. So I grabbed his arm and brusquely led him to the cruiser. "I'm locking you up for your own protection," I told him. "We'll talk in the morning. Anything you need before I send you off?"

"You know what I'd *like*," he asked with that irritatingly boyish grin, "I'd really like to see you gain a few pounds."

"Goodnight, Paul Steven!" I responded, pushing him into the cruiser.

Once the door was shut, he grinned lovingly out the window and added, "Then you'd be perfect."

