

RONDO ROND WE GO

by Rich Haber

What was the second thing Marty wanted to do that morning? He skipped to the third and continued his day, desperately seeking peace of mind about what he'd forgotten. When he got to the office, he opened the drawer with the new can of fish food and realized he'd forgotten to buy a fish tank. He hated fish, hated the thought of a "hobby" but his girlfriend's therapist had suggested it. Hobbied, hobbled, whatever. Why anyone would listen to someone else's therapist was the question he might have asked himself but within minutes of sitting down at his desk, all questions ceased. He was the office manager and had only answers for everyone else's questions.

Juaquita needed paper clips, which normally was not a big deal. Used to be you stuck a request for them in an inter-office envelope and wrote OFFICE MANAGER on the first empty line. But in 2010, it was all electronic. It wasn't that Juaquita didn't know which key had been set for inter-office memos. And it wasn't that she was going blind from her monitor's radiation. She simply couldn't focus her thoughts enough to hit the fucking key, type in Martin Fortalis — Ofc. Mgr. on the pop-up email and ask for paper clips. All Juaquita wanted to do was get out of her seat, walk down the hall to the stock room and take a box of clips off the fucking shelf.

Had he ever felt the pain of memories so intensely overbearing as now? Memories that were countless infinities, that if he started crying over them now, he'd never stop: of times his heart was broken, seeing a lover, confidante, friend, this person so intimately connected to him, kissing one of his friends, kissing deep and thrusting, seeking that which only he possessed... or so he thought? Of his spirit piteously broken when his mother cursed his birth, with such hatred she must have held it in for years? Of his fractured heart that crumbled with each word his sister told him, about how Mom, lying, dying from Christmas til New Year's Day, refused to see

him, refused to let her call him? Of his first wife, after swearing she'd never lie to his daughter Maya about the divorce, did exactly that, so that thirty-five years later, he heard the lie come from Maya's mouth, because she'd heard it so long ago that it must be true. "You sued HER for divorce! I saw the papers!" she laugh-shouted at him. Was there some way he could tell her that her mother had tricked him into doing it that way, "because it will be so much easier, Marty, and cheaper. I swear she'll never see the divorce papers, and if she does, I'll tell her the truth."

Shewulf stared at the moon in the cold December air, every nerve on overdrive. The cubs were safe under the snow in the mountain cave a mile away. The howl came up from her empty belly, her need for touch, the scent of a male nearby. The howl echoed off the oil shale the humans craved but left exposed, stinking of long extinct sisters and brothers. Shewulf bent her head back for one more howl when the bullet entered her throat and tore through the neck bones of her spinal column.

"I need my space!" he screamed. The hammer was in his hand one moment, flying toward the 57-inch plasma the next. The explosion was so unexpectedly under-whelming they both laughed.

"Geez, Greg, why don't you tell me how you REALLY feel?" said Moira.

"Oh shit! Fuck, I... Fuck! That's eight fucking hundred bucks... fuck! I can't believe I did that... shit!" He started toward the kitchen to get the broom but as he passed where Moira sat, she grabbed his balls through his undies, stopping him in his tracks. She smiled up at him, then squeezed, watching his smile disappear.

"You're some piece of artwork, you know that, asshole?"

"Yeah, I agree," he spoke in falsetto. "I agree with anything you're even about to say, hon."

"Really."

"Yeah, really. Every fuckin thing you're ever gonna say, from now til December 21st, twenty twelve, hon."

"Don't 'hon' me, you piece of artwork," Moira said, standing up and leading Greg around the coffee table by his huevos rancheros, toward the bathroom. She had him get into the tub, then turned the cold water on him. "Ya cooled off now, smallfry?"

"Fuck, Em, it's freakin winter." Through chattering teeth, he said, "Yer supposed to get me hot first, babe."

"Now it's Babe? You scumbucket freakazoid. How are we gonna live without your fuckin 57-inch, you dickheaded idiot?" She turned off the water and led him to the bedroom.

"My fuckin balls are gonna come off in yer hand, sugar lips." He reached for her housedress and tore it off in one yank. She swung a leg over her arm, the one with the hand holding his balls, so that he was facing her back. She slowly bent over, bringing his balls down til he had to kneel, bringing his face into her upturned ass.

"Lick me until I tell you to stop." Two and a half minutes later, she came so hard she let go his balls. A minute later, he entered one then the other of her until he came so hard they both howled like wolves.

