

Notel Motel
By Tyler E Patrick

A *splat* echoes through the room as a used condom is thrown in the trash cart.

“Another virgin bites the dust,” Rosie says, “I swear if it weren’t for horny teenagers and daytime hookers, we wouldn’t have a job.”

Old beer, baby oil, and Avon perfume create a musk that permeates through the tiny room. Taking a long drag off her cigarette, Dinah wrinkles her nose and gags.

“How have you done this for twenty years?”

“Simple, I had whiny ass kids to take care of.”

“Oh, yeah. I guess they explain your thick ass,” Dinah says with a wink.

Rosie picks up a washcloth and tosses it in the bin. She sticks out her rear and smacks it.

“No, chocolate chip cookies explain my ass. What explains your scrawny ass? You look like Kermit the Frog in a skirt.”

“Hey! I’m younger, hotter, and do things you’ve never even dreamed of,” Dinah says.

“You’ve also had more penicillin shots and morning-after pills than I have.”

Dinah chokes on her laugh, coughing up smoke that wisps into the air.

“That’s messed up. True, but messed up.”

Dinah snuffs her cigarette in the overflowing ashtray. She flips on the radio dangling from the cart and slips on her gloves. An 80s power ballad escapes through the small speakers.

“I can’t let you do all the work. I think that’s a form of elderly abuse,” she says.

She picks up a rag and begins dusting the walls. Flakes fall from the yellowed 1950’s wallpaper.

“I caught my son in this room one time,” Rosie says.

“No way! Was he with one of the hookers?”

“Worse. He was with an inflatable sheep.”

“Oh, my God,” Dinah says.

“Yeah, if he didn’t pop out of me, I’d swear he wasn’t mine,” Rosie replies.

Shaking her head, Dinah walks to the tiny, nautical themed bathroom. Spraying down the tub and toilet, she starts to scrub the stained, chipped porcelain. The power ballad ends on the radio and DJ Rockin-Ron starts telling the news.

“Trouble erupted yesterday during the annual St Patrick’s Day parade. A little person, hired as a leprechaun, started punching people in the groin and kicking shins. The suspect announced at the scene that he wasn’t getting paid enough to take the *bleep*-ing stereotype bull-*bleep*.”

“Can’t say I blame him,” Rosie says.

Rockin-Ron continues to drone on in his cartoonish morning DJ voice about weather and traffic. The women return to the trash cart when he mentions an art heist that happened overnight and a \$3,000,000 reward for any information regarding the crime.

“I would leave this weirdo town in a heartbeat if I had that kind of cash,” Dinah says.

Rosie passes her arm through the air, pointing around at the cigarette stained, moldy, broken down room they're cleaning. A cockroach notices the movement and scurries back to its hiding spot.

“Why would you want to leave this castle of ours? Don't you have a boyfriend here?”

“Yeah, but all he does is sit around playing video games. I have to shove my tits in his face to talk,” Dinah says.

“But, you're flat as a Mississippi pancake.”

“That's why I only get a little bit of attention,” Dinah says while staring down at her chest.

She shrugs and returns to the bathroom. She resumes scrubbing the tub and pulls a clump of wet hair out of the drain. Slings it off her glove, it makes a *thud* as it hits the faded blue linoleum.

“Freaking disgusting,” Dinah mutters.

She finishes the tub and sweeps up the wet hair and dirt off the floor. She wipes down the cracked countertop and checks herself in the mirror.

“I think I have a cute ass,” she says to herself.

A quick hair adjustment and she walks out of the bathroom to see Rosie vacuuming the filth ridden carpet. The high pitch whine of the old machine fills the small room. Rosie unplugs the limping contraption and wraps the ratty cord around the base. She presses her hand on her back and lets out a *sigh*.

“Mind checking the communicating door while I catch my breath?” she asks.

“No problem, old lady,” Dinah says.

Rosie sits on a faded orange chair as Dinah walks toward the cracked, paint layered door. A twist and pull of the bronze handle produces a *squeak* as it opens. A zippered cylinder falls to the ground.

“Open it up,” Rosie says.

Dinah picks the cylinder up and places it on the bed. Unzipping the top reveals the rough edges of canvas. Carefully sliding the piece out, she slowly unrolls the thick fabric and is shocked to see an old landscape painting.

“What is it?” Rosie asks while standing up.

Silence takes over the room. Dinah points at the painting lying on the bed with her mouth agape. Rosie pulls her glasses out of her pocket and slides them on. The two stare at the artwork, bumping heads as they lean in for a closer look.

“We just hit the jackpot!” Dinah exclaims while jumping up and down like a child. “Let’s call the museum, collect the reward, and get out of this town.”

A blank face stops her excitement.

“Why are you looking at me like I’m kicking babies in the balls?” she asks.

“I’ve been here all my life,” Rosie says.

“Even more reason to get out.”

“My kids, though.”

“Let them take care of themselves. You deserve a break, Rosie.”

“But-“ Rosie begins to say.

“What do you have to lose? Your kids are grown and banging sheep, they’ll be fine,”

“Well, when you put it that way,” Rosie says.

“Yes! Let’s *Thelma and Louise* this bitch.”

“Wait, didn’t that movie end with them driving off a cliff?” Rosie asks while miming a car falling with her hand.

“Yeah, take that part out,” Dinah says, “We’ll leave the picking up Brad Pitt part in, though.”

“Or, the first hot guy to walk into McTafferty’s,” Rosie says.

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