

Saturday, 27 June 2015

Ashley Greendale gave ~~the a client~~ customer his change then sat down ~~on her chair again~~ to finish ~~the an~~ article on tips for mothers of young children. Starbucks was now empty, less than half an hour until the end of the working day,

The door ~~of the Starbucks café~~ opened and ~~in came~~ Peggy came in. y.

“Ashley, ~~how are you doing? h~~How ~~is your business going today?~~ Mine ~~is~~ dead in the water. Don’t people buy flowers during the summer?”

Ashley smiled and lifted her ~~eyes gaze~~ from the magazine. Peggy, the florist from ~~the next door, neighboring shop,~~ was ~~being very~~ emotional, as usual.

“It’s normal here. ~~P;~~ people ~~will~~ always buy muffins and tea.”

“Yeah, ~~...~~ you’re right, ~~;~~” Peggy ~~took a~~ looked around ~~and then~~ sat on the closest chair ~~available~~.

~~Starbucks was empty and there was less than half an hour until the end of the working day. It was Saturday, 27 June 2015.~~

“Do you have any plans for tonight? How about going to Dada in San Francisco, ~~to Dada?~~ Barney, Will’s friend, is interested in you, ~~;~~” Peggy winked ~~at her~~.

“Barney? Have I really come to the point of dating a truck driver?” Ashley ~~left~~ dropped the magazine ~~tiredly~~ and tiredly smoothed back her hair. “I’d love to hang out with you but ~~today tonight~~ I’m seeing the guys from The Jackal.”

“The Jackal?” Peggy asked, ~~;~~ puzzled.

“Yes, the band I used to sing in ten years ago. ~~Do you remember when~~ I told you once about the showcase we had at The Viper Room, ~~?~~”

“Oh, that one, ~~?~~ And where are you seeing them?”

“At Gordon Biersch, San Jose. Craig suggested the place because it’s close to Cisco’s office.”

“Your buddy works for Cisco?”

“~~Mhm~~Uh-huh.”

“Are the guys from your former band cool? Is Are any one of them single?”

Ashley laughed ~~out~~.

“Wayne is always available but he’s not exactly what I’d call ‘the dream boyfriend’.”

“But is he good-looking?”

“~~He’s unarguably attractive~~ Oh yeah, but he’s only good for a flirt, not for a long relationship.”

Ashley ~~let set~~ the cash register to run an end-of-day sales report while she ~~open~~ed the cash book. She ~~had~~ decided to close fifteen minutes ~~earlier~~ today because of ~~the date~~ her plans.

“So I can join, then? Do you think Wayne ~~will~~ might like me?” Peggy came ~~closer~~ to the cash desk and leaned on the glass.

“~~As If~~ you ~~wish~~ want,” Ashley replied absent-mindedly. ~~She was too busy~~ calculating the sales for the day.

“So how did you end up having a showcase at Hollywood’s glitziest nightclub?”

~~No answer. Peggy kept asking but there was no answer.~~ Ashley was taking out the receipts.

Peggy tried again. “It must have been awesome playing at The Viper Room ~~among~~ among so all many those stars. ~~Did~~ Did you enjoy it?”

Ashley ~~lifted~~ looked up her head when she heard The Viper Room ~~being~~ mentioned but then ~~her eyes dropped~~ concentrated back to on the report. ~~After a while~~ The the silence ~~that had descended~~ was suddenly broken by ~~Ashley’s~~ her joyful ~~exclamation~~ cry.

“One thousand five hundred and five dollars for the day! Not bad.” ~~She~~ She gave Peggy a satisfied look.

“I ~~have~~ did just a bit over five hundred. Yesterday it was below a thousand, too.” Peggy ~~gave a slight~~ issued a dramatic sigh.

“Why don’t you ~~move~~ come over here and work with me? We ~~dre~~ are going to have fun and ~~we’ll pass the time more easily~~ time would go faster together. I’ll talk Mike into hiring one more girl. ~~My colleague~~ The other one is probably quitting soon, anyway.”

“Ashley, I just don’t get why you didn’t keep ~~on~~ singing ~~i~~ ~~and~~, instead ~~of~~, you’re working ~~such~~ ~~at~~ ~~this~~ dead-end job. Was it luck that brought ~~Were~~ you ~~with~~ ~~to~~ The Jackal ~~out of luck or something?~~ What happened?”

“We were too young ~~and~~, ~~too~~ inexperienced—and not stubborn enough. We thought our band would conquer the world all on its own.” Ashley smiled bitterly. “During the showcase at ~~T~~he Viper Room I was only ~~eighteen~~ ~~18.~~ ~~and~~ ~~at~~ ~~20,~~ Wayne, ~~at~~ ~~20,~~ was the oldest in the band.” ~~S~~she turned off the computer. “I guess if we’d been more ~~realistic,~~ ~~zealous~~—and if we’d gone on, someone ~~would~~ ~~might~~ have noticed us. Who knows?”

“That guy, Wayne, is he coming tonight?”

“You can’t get him out of your head and you haven’t even seen him!”

Ashley ~~remembered~~ ~~recalled~~ how ten years ago they’d had a fling. God, how fast ~~did~~ the time ~~flew~~! Back then she was just graduating from high school, full of big dreams about life. Now, ~~t~~en years later, she ~~worked~~ ~~as~~ ~~was~~ a barista at Redwood City’s Starbucks and ~~was~~ ~~at~~ the single mother of a four-year-old girl.

“Come on, let’s go! It’s at least a thirty-minute ride to Gordon Biersch.” Ashley ~~took~~ ~~picked up~~ her bag and drew the blinds.

Peggy was already out ~~side~~, waiting for her.

“Scene two, take one! Aannnand, action!”

Wayne Bonner started the motorcycle and hit the ~~J~~jeep coming from the opposite direction ~~in~~ ~~at~~ full speed. In the last second before the crash he jumped ~~out~~ ~~off~~ and ~~fell~~ ~~rolled~~ on the ground.

“Cut! End of scene two. Nice job, boys! Thirty-minute break. We’re resuming at ~~3~~ ~~three~~ o’clock.”

~~T~~he director left the film set. ~~and~~ Wayne saw him going down the alley along the shore.

“What’s up, bro? ~~H~~how’s it going?” Joe, the actor whose stunts he performed, ~~firmly~~ patted him ~~once~~ ~~firmly~~ on the shoulder.

“Perfect—as usual!” Wayne smiled widely and ~~patted the actor warmly in his~~ ~~turn~~ ~~returned the action.~~

“Are you free tonight?; ~~W~~we’~~are~~ going out with the boys~~s~~...” Joe didn’t ~~manage~~ ~~to~~ finish because Wayne’s cell phone ~~rang loudly~~ground out the beginning strains of a hard rock classic.

“Yes?” he answered. “Baby, what is it? I think we agreed that tonight I won’t be able to...” Wayne ~~made~~took a long pause to listen ~~and~~ then spoke nervously. “What are you talking about?; ~~I~~ never went out with your friend Brittany! Yes, I’m seeing my friends from the band... What? The band I played in years ago! ~~T~~Yes; ~~that’s~~ right. No, they’re all men, except for Ashley... God, you’re crazy! Go see a psychiatrist!” Wayne ~~pushed~~jabbed the end call button ~~angrily and then~~and quickly put ~~his~~the iPhone ~~back~~ into his pocket.

“Your girlfriend’s plugging you?” Joe asked.

“Women! They’re crazy! She blames me for sleeping with her best friend, all because I once said she had great legs. ~~and~~ I’ve never even been alone with her! ~~And all that is because I once said she had great legs.~~”

Joe clicked his tongue in disapprovalingly.

“You can’t do that, man. Don’t talk about other women in front of your girl,; M~~make~~ her feel unique,;...”

“Since when did you start talking like Dr. Phil? Has your wife begun throwing *Cosmo* tips ~~of~~for ~~f~~Feng shoon bullshit at you or what?”

“It’s called feng shui, not feng shoon...”

“I don’t care! You’ve become a real softie, man. I guess that’s one of the cons of family life.”

Joe ~~looked at~~studied Wayne thoughtfully. He liked him as a friend but he couldn’t ~~really~~ imagine him as a good husband, or even a decent boyfriend. He’d ~~changed~~ his girlfriend every three months, E—either they caught him red-handed or he’d find “a hotter babe,”; as he’d ~~would~~ say. He was obviously an incorrigible womanizer.

“I heard you’re seeing your old buddies from your ex-band?”

Wayne ~~was just~~ opening a bottle of beer ~~and~~ then ~~he~~ sat ~~down on one of the~~ closest chairs. He ~~took a~~ looked around. —~~F~~fifteen minutes later, when the break ~~would’ve been~~was over, the place would be full of people ~~and~~ awfully crowded. Now it ~~just looked like~~was just an empty set.

“Yeahs, that’s right,” ~~Wayne~~he answered vacantly. “We haven’t seen ~~one~~another~~each other~~ in almost a year.” ~~H~~His ~~eyes~~gaze wandered ~~in~~around the empty space before him. “The four of us keep the tradition of holding a reunion at least once a year.”

“Talking about reunions, are you playing with the Masters of the Dark at Mr. T’s Bowl this week?”

Wayne had given up on his music career ~~and worked as a stuntman in Hollywood,~~ but he still played in a pop rock band in his spare time.

“Yeah, we should.” ~~H~~he took a sip of beer.

Joe looked around and then asked.

“So what happened ~~to~~with your former band? ~~W~~Why did you break up?”

“Buddy, could you do me a favor and stop ~~making~~asking me ~~talk~~ about that?”

“Okay. I was just curious ~~and wanted to know some more.~~”

“Ask me anything ~~else~~ but not about The Jackal! It’s painful ~~to me.~~”

Joe looked at Wayne with interest; ~~he wondered~~ Wwhat could have happened then to make Wayne react so sharply now?