

#3

Sammy's Night Out

ALL SAMMY JOHNSON NEEDED when he went into the Scotsman was a pack of condoms. The ribbed kind 'cause Joleen said they really did feel better than the regular kind. And not to get the ones that were lubricated; that stuff messed with her system. Did the opposite of what it was supposed to do. Dried her out.

And while Sammy was at it, he was going to get a can of that Red Bull, see if it really gave him wings, let him and Joleen go all night long. Maybe get her one too. And a Snickers for later, 'cause it really satisfies, like the commercials said. And maybe one of them pink carnations they sold in the little jar by the register, for Joleen. Show her he cared.

He went in to get a three dollar pack of condoms and ended up with almost ten bucks worth of stuff. Damn place was worse than the Walmart's.

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A fat lady wearing short shorts and sandals was in front of him, putting all her cottage cheese out there for everybody to see like she was showing off. She had a bunch of crap in her flabby arms, twice as much as he had, hell, *more'n that*. Potato chips and milk and orange juice and deodorant and toothpaste and a box of Strawberry Pop Tarts. *Damn. She need a fucking cart at a convenience store?*

All that was missing was a screaming two year old that wanted a stupid plastic toy she wouldn't let him have, then slap him around and tell him to shut up or she's going to knock him into next Wednesday. Then it'd be just like the Walmart's.

The lady turned around like she forgot something, maybe garbage bags or tampons or batteries, and Sammy saw her nipples poking out her thin shirt. *Holy Shit!* Them things were the size of the hubcaps on his 280z. She wasn't wearing a bra and she should've been, trip over them if she wasn't careful.

The old man in front of her left with his pack of cigarettes and she waddled up to the counter and dropped all her crap onto it. A Snickers fell to the floor and Sammy knelt to get it; the last thing he wanted to see was her bent over showing him things that'd stunt his growth.

He held the candy bar out to her fat stubby fingers and she said thanks, her breath smelling like Doritos. She had a voice he'd swear he heard on one of them late night ads for a 900 number. *Singles in your area just waiting to get to know you.* Ninety-nine cents a minute gave you a chance to get laid over the phone. *Yeah, with a fatty.*

Her having a Snickers and him having a Snickers didn't feel right; gave him a creepy feeling, like when you show up at work one day with your mullet in a ponytail sporting a Fu-Manchu mustache and the guy you hate most—the one that's always got oil on his face like he just rebuilt an entire engine when all he's done is change the stupid timing belt—has come in

FOLLOW THE MONEY

with the same look. Makes you want to shave and cut your hair you spent two years growing out, just 'cause somebody'll say both of you look like brothers. And the truth is, you wouldn't piss on the guy if he was on fire.

Sammy thought maybe now he should get a Zero bar, with that white chocolate, something a little different. But he had his mind set on a Snickers. Fifth Avenue's got that peanut butter in it. Same with Butterfinger. Three Musketeers are good but too fluffy, not filling enough. Maybe they got some of them Whatchamacallits; he ain't seen them in a long time. Wonder if they still made them? Nah, he'd stick with the Snickers, keep it simple. Anyway, he was next in line, practically there, once the fat lady finished with her monthly grocery shopping.

At a convenience store. The place is for convenience, not buying everything you needed for your damn house. You get the same crap half that price at the Walmart's, if you just got off your lazy ass to drive there.

The Walmart's parking lot was too big, was probably why she didn't do that; too far for her fat ass to walk. Chafe those thunder thighs of hers. Joleen better not ever get that fucking big or she'd be out on her damn ass. All two hundred pounds of it.

No sir. Joleen better stay one-twenty and fit. He'd allow her to get to one-thirty, maybe one-forty when she was pregnant. But then she better lose that fucking weight when she spit the kid out, and lose it pronto.

The fat lady finally paid for her stuff and was waddling out of the store the same time a dude came in waving around a gun like he hadn't had his meds that day. "Alright everybody, this a fuckin' hold-up!" Yelling like anybody with a third grade education couldn't figure it out by themselves.

Damn, Sammy thought, he needed this like he needed a fat ass chick in his bed.

The guy with the gun didn't look too old, white guy maybe in his early twenties. Hard to tell 'cause he hadn't shaved in a few days and his eyes

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were bloodshot and surrounded by dark circles. *Strung out* was the first thing Sammy thought. Crack, maybe meth. No, the way the guy was darting his eyes all around, then looking out the door, then back again, it was crack. Sammy'd had some of that shit before; never again. Made you paranoid as fuck and didn't last long enough. Ten minutes after a hit and you wanted more, *needed* more. Sammy wasn't made of money like that.

No, pot was his drug of choice. Nice and mellow, last all night, never get sick, never get wiggled out, and could get it at a pretty good price when you bought it in bulk like he did. Had this nice water bong made out of some plastic two liter Coke bottles. Took all the harshness out. Smooth as all get out.

The dude was yelling at everybody to shut the fuck up, which Sammy thought was pretty funny 'cause the dude was the only one talking. Pointing his gun now at the fat lady and telling her to back the fuck up real nice and slow. Sammy didn't think she had any speed but slow. Yeah, he thought that was pretty funny and wanted real bad to say it out loud but he didn't think anybody'd get it. Or, at least, they wouldn't laugh with a gun in their faces.

The fat lady, a grocery bag in each arm, backed up real nice and slow just like the dude said. Sammy wanted to make a beeping sound like a garbage truck makes when it's in reverse. *God, that would be funny.* He wished Joleen were here; he'd do it then and she'd get it, think it was funny as hell and laugh out loud, gun or not.

There were three other people in the store: a teenager that looked like he'd just come off his learner's permit, an old woman with poofed out gray hair and thick glasses, and a guy with a business suit on, probably worked late at his office and just got off.

The dude with the gun was jerking his head back and forth, spinning around and trying to look everywhere at once. Sammy wondered if he'd