

A Day In The Life of Monochrome Contest
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Knock Knock Open Up
A Fun Police Story

By Jordan Riley

The local laugheasy *The Grainy Toon* was packed with a wide array of patrons that Tuesday night to ring in the winter holiday season.

On stage was the popular vampire jazz singer named Maurelle and her skeleton band, The Punny Bones. To match the festive season, the usually dark dressed crew had adorned themselves with festive but spooky icicles. As Maurelle sang a jazzy number about dancing icicles at her castle, the drummer Boney Basil noticed an extra loud beat occurring every other time he hit the drums. It had a great beat to it. Boney Basil matched his beats with these out of nowhere BANGS and THUMPS.

THUMP! THUMP! BUMP! BUMP! THUMP! The noise went on in a rhythmic fashion.

The entire audience grooved along to their song even more with every extra beat. When suddenly:

CRASH!

The door to *The Grainy Toon* flew off its hinges hitting the opposite side of the room. The festive tunes came to an abrupt halt. A tall goat toon in a trench coat and badge stepped through the newly doorless archway brushing away some wood chips and debris out of his horns. He placed his fedora on his head as he scanned and addressed the room in a loud terse manner.

“Nobody move, this is a raid, hands where we can see them. No funny business” said the officer. Behind him, an assortment of officers clad in traditional police uniforms and trench coats filled in and began inspecting the patrons of the laugheasy. This was Da Fun Police of Vaudeville, the law enforcement wing of Mayor LeStache’s administration.

A hand reached up and tapped the glaring goat in the shoulder. A clown toon in a decorated captain’s uniform with curly hair underneath his hat stepped out from behind the goat. He wore comically oversized dress shoes and a fist-sized tomato nose. A wide and unsettling painted smile adorned his mouth. His entire presentation was a comical smorgasbord of attempting to look both respectable and silly but not quite being able to decide which to present with.

“At ease Lieutenant Gruff. All we’re doing is a simple inspection. No cause for alarm,” the Captain assured the laugheasy patrons. “You’ll have to excuse Bill here, he tends to really get into his job.”

The Captain gestures for the performers to continue playing as he moseys over to the bar. Maurelle and her skeleton band awkwardly continue as The Fun Police searches the members of the audience.

At the bar an unbothered Owl Innkeeper cleans a glass as several of the patrons sitting there quickly clear away seeing the Captain’s approach. He pushes a lifeless Raggedy-Ann style doll to the floor which was propped up on one of the stools. He takes a seat on the stool in front of the bartender. The Innkeeper looks the Captain up and down whilst continuing to clean his glass.

“You’re back early. But, I seem to recall the *look away tax* is collected on the first week of the month, not the second. Might I direct you to a calendar to peruse for your edification?” asked the InnKeeper gesturing to a nearby calendar.

The Captain chuckles.

“Good one. Have you ever considered taking that onstage?” The Captain gestures to the stage behind him.

“Nah, not my department. I just run the joint.”

“That you, do. Speaking of which, how ‘bout serving up a clown special for an on duty cop?”

The InnKeeper takes out a seltzer bottle and squirts it in a old fashioned glass with a dash of tomato juice, lime, umbrella and an animal cracker. He slides it over to the Captain. He sips it, very satisfied.

“I was hopping you could help me with something. A few hours ago Mayor LeStache’s prized McGuffin was stolen from his collection.”

“Really, a McGuffin? I can’t believe they still make those after ol’ Stachey took up office,” the InnKeeper chuckles.

The Captain’s hand very casually slips down towards his billy club at his side as he continues to nurse his drink.

“That is to say, I seem to recall obtaining a McGuffin to be difficult these days. Ever since Mayor LeStache took office and banned them” he says a little more cautiously and composed.

The Captain turned to look at Lt.Gruff interrogating the patrons. Lt.Gruff looks in the Captain’s direction and shakes his head in mild disappointment.

“One of our informants clued us in that a celebration was being held at this laugheasy, not long after Mayor Lestache was robbed” the Captain continued. “You wouldn’t happen to know who’s hosting this little shindig, would you?”

“Do you see a cake around here?” the InnKeeper replied.

“Is that how you want to play it?” the Captain asked. He gestures around to the entire speakeasy pointing out a few patrons smoking giggle gas and drinking jitter juice. “There’s enough vice in here for me to lock you and everyone else up in here until your grandkids have great great grandkids.”

“Besides we all know this is the place to be for no-goodniks!” The Captain pulls out a small piece of stuffing. “So tell me, which one of your patrons works with this kind of material? We have reason to believe one of the thieves left this behind at the scene of the crime.”

“Are you sure this isn’t from a torn from a pillow or something?” the Innkeeper says examining the stuffing piece.

“No, we checked, none of the stuffing matches this material here. The only possible source is one of the local crooks.” insisted The Captain.

“Look, Cap, I don’t know anything about this. For all I know it could probably be the work of the mafia.”

The Captain slams his ballon shaped billy club on the table with a firm THUD and looks square in the InnKeeper’s eyes.

“Quit pulling my leg, the mafia don’t exist! They’re just a myth invented by the lower classes to scare rich folks. Now tell me, who stole the mcguffin? The Undergrounders? The Bee-Union? Who?!”

The InnKeeper is silent as he holds his gaze on The Captain and continues to clean his glass. The Captain swiftly smacks the glass out the InnKeeper’s hand with his ballon billy club causing it to shatter against the floor.

“You know, for a toon that’s supposed to have his ear to the street, you have to be the dumbest person I’ve ever had the pleasure of interrogating in all my years on the force.”

As the Captain continues to hound the InnKeeper for information, a small squeaky toy pelts him from behind. He looks around for the source. Finding no one, his eyes are drawn to spot where the Raggedy Ann doll had fallen. No longer on the floor, it now sits upright and crosslegged on the bar counter staring straight at him with its cold black button eyes. Although it appears to be inanimate something about it’s cold stare made the Captain feel dreadfully unnerved as though something were staring back at him with those lifeless eyes.

The Captain coolly whistles to Lt.Gruff to wrap up the force’s interrogation. He slides the Innkeeper a card with his contact info.

“In the event you really start to wisen up, give me a call.”

The Captain slid away from his barstool and began to head out the door. He gives the doll another look before he quickly exited *The Rainy Toon*. The rest of Fun Police follows his lead and files out of the laugheasy. As the last last cop exits one of the heavy set bouncers picks up the toppled door and propped in its original place as a woodpecker and beaver repair workers began to to repair it.

The patrons breathe a collective sigh of relief as the unbothered festive atmosphere picks up and the party continues. A few workers from the backroom proceed to roll out a large celebration cake and tons of giggle juice bottles. Several of the laugh easy patrons don party hats and cerebrate.

A loud POP, breaks out in the laugheasy.

Sitting on barstool where The Captain was, is the Raggedy-Ann doll casually chewing some bright pink bubble gum. She unzips her side and pulls out a large box labeled McGuffin’s SuperBubble Bubblegum.

“I thought that guy’d never leave. Those guys really like to break up a good party. You want some?” the doll asked indicating the gum.

“Stefanee, you’re really starting to cut it close,” says the InnKeeper taking some gum from the box and chewing some gum. “The Captain could’ve busted all of us! It’s hard enough to stay in business with Da Fun Police’s *Look Away Tax* to stay in operation.”

“Aw, you worry too much. Live a little, watch ol’Stachey and his goons fume and stomp. I told you we’ve got your back. The mafia always looks out for family. Keep business going, you’ll have no problems.”

She notices there is a small tear in her arm with some stuffing hanging out. She whistles and gestures to someone at a nearby table. A small needle toon quickly rushes to her side and begins to sew up her injury.

“Of all the things to steal from Stache, why Stache’s stash of bubblegum,” the Innkeeper inquired.

“For our last heist of the year, I thought we’d end things on a little pop. Plus we planned on swiping his personal soda stash next time to ring in the new year.” she shrugs and smiles blowing another bubble.