

Carrion

By Max Glaessner

It was a hot, sweltering morning when Larry the Buzzard, so-called because of the long bulbous nose that protruded from his face like a beak, awoke in his East L.A. shit pad next to a flabby, perspiring prostitute. The song *Cherry Pie* by Warrant was blaring out of the junk radio that sat positioned next to his mattress on the floor.

Begrudgingly, he rolled over on his side, and with a bony finger flicked the noise box shut. Then he rolled oppositely into the girth of the whore, nestling closely into her gut. To a fly on the wall, he would have looked like a sick baby bird curled within the folds of a giant pulsing nest. Timidly, he scampered up her stretch-marked belly. He leaned in close with his purple lips, like he was about to give her a kiss, but then whispered into her ear.

“I’m sorry, fat tits. But I think it’s time for you to go.”

She flopped from her back onto her belly. There was lint in her afro, and it was getting on his pillow. Larry the Buzzard only owned one pillow. It was already covered in gunk, and he didn’t want to go buying another one. With a frown, he crawled to his feet, and threw a tiki Hawaiian shirt over his shriveled rib cage. He paced back and forth across the trash-strewn floor, then poked her in the dark meat of her leg, with his gimpy toe.

“Hey Congo woman! Did ya hear me? I said it’s time to get up and get out girl.”

She was starting to stir, but she kept her eyes squinted shut like two damn pieces of copper, and she was mumbling something into the pillow. Something he couldn’t understand.

“muuthafucka mayy I help you?”

Larry winced. “I’m sorry, toots. But I don’t speak no African.”

“I said, MOTHAFUCKA, MAY I HELP YOU? MOTHAFUCKA MAY I HELP YOU--MAY I HELP YOU MOTHAFUCKA?” She was definitely awake now, sitting up on the makeshift bed in all her Amazon glory, curves spilling out over lacy white panties.

“Yeah you can help me lady. We made it last night and it was so-so. But now I’d like you to do me a favor and get the hell outta my room.”

The hooker shook her fuzzy head in frenzy and snapped her panties against her thunderous ass, which to Larry the Buzzard sounded like the crack of a whip.

“NAH, I AINT GOIN NOWHERE YOU CRACKER MOTHAFUCKA. NOT TILL YOU PAY ME MY MONEY, YOU LITTLE BITCH.”

The few grey hairs on his freckled skull stood on end. Spit flew from the chapped corners of his mouth.

“YOU BETTER BELIEVE I PAID YOU YER STINKING WAGE LAST NIGHT, YOU FILTHY AUNT JEMIMAH. NOW I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO SCAT!”

Larry the Buzzard was worried. He owed money to his landlady Alma who lived next-door in her bathrobe. Alma had three grandchildren to feed, one of whom was a big retarded son of a bitch that liked to throttle cats for fun. She wouldn’t like this much ruckus this early in the morning. He needed to think fast. At first he thought that hitting her in the face was a good idea. About as soon as he swung he realized it was a mistake.

She wouldn't go down no matter how hard he smacked her. She bled in spurts from her flattened nose but she glared, and wailed, and clawed at cheeks. She'd just about popped a boil on his chin, when he reached into his shirt for the knuckles. He clobbered her good with those, finally bringing her down to the ground where he could make her eat brass. She shook like a big Kahuna wave, but her face imploded like one big bruise. By the time she was swollen and leaking pus, the Buzzard knew she was gone.

Of course a plus-pound dead prostie on his hands didn't make the day much easier. Amazingly enough, Alma wasn't banging and clanging on the walls, but he knew he'd still have to make this right with Coyote.

"Where the hell did you stash it?" He was rifling through her bra, finding nothing but endless tit. He checked the elastic waist of her panties - even between the cake layers of her flesh. He was just digging through the contents in her leopard print purse, when someone came knocking at the door. It was actually more like the scratching of paws - which made the greeting unmistakable.

"Yo, Buzzard! Open up," called the voice behind the door. *"My girl never dragged her ass home last night and I'm checkin' to see if shit's straight."*

"You'll need to come back later Coyote.," cried Larry the Buzzard from his mattress filled with corpse. *"She's not here no more, and my toilet's all stuffed up."*

"Just the same," said Coyote. *"I was in the neighborhood and I thought I'd drop in to say wass up."*

In a panicky fit, gangly old Larry threw a sheet over the African queen - then with a spell of shakes he hadn't felt for years, unlatched the chain on the door.

"So this is where the Buzzard nests," said Coyote. He opened his mouth and flashed his golden jaws, parted past the old man and strode confidently into the room with his famous walking stick - the handle of which was fashioned like the leering face of a wolf. There was no local myth from where Coyote derived his name. He was exactly what they called him - a sly desert dog, with a devilish grin and a strut in his step.

Coyote wore a black pinstripe suit to match his slicked back jerry curl.

Sometimes when folks saw him, he reminded them of Little Richard.

"Aint nothing little in my game," he liked to say, and judging by the size of his ladies, he seemed to be speaking in earnest. As amiable and friendly as Coyote was, and he certainly could appear that way, Larry the Buzzard knew that he only made house calls to collect. A cold filmy sweat enveloped his forehead, while Coyote limped around the filthy den, stopping to stare at the mammoth breasts that were poking through the sheet on the mattress.

"Shiit, son, who you been layin in here, the Bride of Frankenstein?" Larry the Buzzard tried to think of something funny he could say in retort. Coyote was such a funny guy. He really liked to make jokes. Instead Larry just stood there while Coyote started lifting at the sheet with his cane.

"You mind if I take me a look at the monster?" Coyote never really asked questions, though. The veil was lifted to reveal the face of the recently departed. Her face was as crushed as a beer can.

“You damn Buzzard,” said Coyote shaking his head. “Always pickin and lickin at dead things. Wuz you savin her for later? Cuz I know how you done that one girl.”

“No honest, Coyote,” said Larry the Buzzard. There were tears welling up in his bloodshot eyes. “I wasn’t savin her for nothing. She said I didn’t pay her, but honest I did. She was makin a big scene, so I tried to put her down. I wasn’t trying to kill her, you know. At least not at first I wasn’t.”

“Larry you is one sick old bird,” said Coyote. “But I can still respect your handiwork.” Without shifting his eyes for a second, he removed the .38 from the pocket of his coat. Larry’s wrinkled Adam’s apple did a hula dance. “Lets make us a deal,” said Coyote. “Have you ever played this game: Riddle Roulette?”

Larry the Buzzard shook his head no. He’d heard about it though. Heard it was a game that Coyote liked to play.

“Well here’s how da game work, Mr. Buzzard. See, I’m gonna toss you some riddles. And if you’s able to guess one right, then the game is over and I leave you be. But for every one you guess wrong, Mr. Buzzard...well then a shell just might riddle itself inside yo mouf.”

Larry opened his mouth to protest this arrangement. There was probably money in his wallet and his wallet was in his pants. His pants were on the ground by the mattress but before he said anything the barrel was stuffing his speech.

“Do you know what they call a whore who suck everyone’s dick but yours?” Asked Coyote. He removed the gun from Larry’s mouth. It leaked a little slime down the front of his suit.

“Please don’t kill me,” gurgled Larry.

“That answer is incorrect!” Said Coyote. “The answer is a bitch, Larry. You would call her a bitch.” He pushed the barrel back into Larry’s skull, pulled the trigger till it went click. Empty chamber. Riddle number two.

“Larry, what is the difference between a hooker and a drug dealer?” He pulled the muzzle out and let the bastard huff and puff.

“Don’t do this,” he said. “I can pay you.”

“Buzzard, if I was you, I’d be thinking this shit over. We playin for keeps here,” said Coyote. “The difference between a hooker and a drug dealer is that a hooker will sometimes wash her crack before she go out to sell it.”

Coyote plugged Larry’s face back up with metal, tensed his trigger finger and pushed back once more. Buzzard choked and gagged in anticipation. Still nothing happened. There would be a third riddle. Larry the Buzzard knew he should try and guess this time around, but he couldn’t stop looking into Coyote’s beady yellow eyes. They were merciless. Two burning streetlamps. The flashing of searchlights. Fixed in their stare, he felt like prey. It was the first time in his life that this had happened, and he pissed inside his boxer shorts.

“Now for my third question Mr. Buzzard. And I would like you to consider this matter rather thoroughly, if you please. Mr. Buzzard, do you know how you can always get a whore to moan?”

“Sweet Jesus,” said Larry the Buzzard. “Sweet Jesus God.”

“Larry...Larry. What’s happening, baby?” Coyote pinched the old timers nose until he opened up his mouth. He stuck the gun inside again. “I would have thought

you'd have the answer to this one. You can always get a whore to moan. IF--you don't pay her no money."

Larry screamed into the .38 special. Click-*BANG* went the gun. Blood and brains and pieces of scalp on the wall, the mattress, the noise box. Coyote waded through the mess with his cane, then knelt down by the corpse of his girl. He pulled her panties down around her thighs, then reached up her fat twat to find a folded twenty dollar bill.

"Damn Doris. Always thought she was more than what she was worth."

There were about thirty more dollars in the Buzzard's wallet. Coyote handed this money to Alma on his way out the door. He also made sure to swipe the Buzzard's wretched beak before he left. It was surprisingly intact, and looked just as crooked as it did when the man was alive.

Coyote gave the beak to Alma's grandkid. The retard ate the beak with strawberries and whipped cream while he sat around on Saturday morning watching reruns of Hogan's Heroes. He told his grandmother it tasted like sweet cherry pie.

Max Glaessner spent some formative years in adolescent treatment programs throughout the Salt Lake City area, where he was schooled by older thugs in how not to act like such a nancy. Though he's still known to behave like a nancy sometimes, Max thinks he does an ok job of thuggin' it. Max currently lives in Chicago, IL, where he is pursuing his BA in creative writing from Columbia College. In his recreational time he enjoys beer and tacos.