

Albert's Ride
by KN Schultz

Placing the credit card slip in my pocket, I meander towards the storefront from the gas pump and company car. Needing to squirt another pot of coffee to the devil gods for reasons I no longer remember, I saunter expediently.

"Hey, Mate. Spare a minute?", some low whispering voice speaks from behind the dumpster. I wrinkle my nose at the stench of the rotting refuse and at owner of the voice lurking behind that rubbish bin. "Sorry, I don't have any change."

I stop at the sight of the voice's owner, a rotund hairy brown elephant wearing four neon colored tutus and a garish amount of eyeliner. A purple frizzy haired wig sits askew on its head as if put on hastily. "In a pinch and need a favor, Mate.", the mastadon says as looks around for witnesses, "I'm in a bind with my gorilla."

My need to urinate washes away. "What?"

"My fucking gorilla. What are you, dim? I've got gorilla problems. *Big gorilla problems.*"

I shake a cube of gum out of its tin. "Fine. Spill it, then. I'll just piss myself."

The elephant hands me a clutch purse it pulls out of its assortment of tutus. "I need you to buy me some beer flavored lollipops."

"You've got to be funning me." Grinning, I look to my sides as I shake my head. *A strange elephant asking me to buy him beer flavored candy behind the dumpster of the filling station, like I'm the type of guy help circus animals go on a bender.*

He hands me the argyle purse bulging with many bills of different denominations. "As much as they got on the stand."

"Sure.", I say as a play along with this mad pachiderm. I honor his request and emerge with a shopping bag fills with the sinful treats to see him already sitting in the passenger seat of my new convertible delivery pickle mobile. "Hey, I can't take you along. I'm on the clock. Pickle deliveries."

His trunk, snorting hard, snatches the brown paper bag from my hands.

I slide into the driver's seat and give the ignition key a twist.

"Thanks, Mate. Name's Albert by the way."

"Lovely. Albert the Talking Elephant."

"Just one more favor. I need a lift back to the circus."

Rubbing my eyes, I lean my forehead against the steering wheel. I beat my noggin against, wishing I just ignored this clear hallucination.

The elephant smiles, batting his exaggerated eyelashes at me as his wig bounces in the breeze.

"Fine. But I have to finish my route first."

"Ooo does that mean take away?", Albert says, hopping in his seat, forcing the crates of pickles in the trunk to clatter, "I just love take away! Some Thai? Or Ethiopian? I'm *so hungry* for Ethiopian."

I motion for him to settle down. "I can't deliver broken pickles or on broken axles."

"Sorry about that, Mate." Albert rolls his head to the side as the car moves into traffic. "I'm just a bit peckish."

"Eat a lollipop then.", I mumble.

Albert looks indecisively into the bag.

Blood flushes my cheeks. "Just one until we find some place to order from."

Wrapping me around the shoulders with his trunk, Albert licks my face. A large swath of drool and wiry brown and purple hair covers my cheek. "I'm buying."

"Hey now, I'm trying to bloody drive here." I wipe the goo of my face. "If I may ask, what's problem

with this gorilla?"

Albert rolls his eyes and trunk. "Lost in a game of cards."

"I see.", *A talking elephant with a gambling addiction?*, "In for the beer pops, then."

Albert removes a treat from the bag and sticks it in his mouth, plastic and all. I remove the lollipop and its cellophane.

"Thanks.", Albert mutters before blasting a loud round of flatulence that rumbles the car and hangs low amongst the seats.

Finding a restaurant, I order boxes of Thai noodles in peanut sauce for Albert. I return to find him urinating on the car next to the convertible. He sways, obviously drunk off the candy. A mortified woman shrieks inside her car. Enticing him with the food, I get him to stumble into the car as he farts a chain explosions that sounds like machine gun fire. Quickly, I speed away before the police arrive.

I yank the lollipop from his mouth to discover he ate the whole bag while I was inside.

Absentmindedly, I stick the candy in my shirt pocket as I scold Albert for his shenanigans. "*What is wrong with you?* Pissing on some poor lady's car like a dirty hobo."

Ignoring me, he dumps the boxes of noodles into his mouth, spilling it all over the upholstery.

"Bloody Hell.", I mutter as I swerve the car as I try to keep the damage to the company property to a minimum.

Lights and siren flash behind the convertible. I pull over and two officers approach. Leaping out of the car, Albert flees. One of the officers pursues with arms flailing. Bright purple hair bounces frantically.

"Have you been drinking?", says the officer approaching my side of the car with his hand on his side arm.

"No sir."

"I smell beer."

Remembering the lollipop in my pocket, I groan.

"Step out of the vehicle."

Slowly, I follow the officer's instruction. As he searches me, I see Albert and a gorilla wearing a bikini and sunglasses crawl into the squad car with the other cop still running after them.

Shots and yells fire. Pop. Pop. Pop. I'm thrust to the pavement. Albert's trunk waves out of the window as the squad car speeds away with a gorilla arm that flings a brick out the other window.

"Thanks for the ride, Mate!"

The police shoot at the squad car's tires and miss. I feel the crushed beer candy against my breast as I stare down the plastic tube of a breathalyzer.

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Bio:

Farts frequently. Writes through the tears.

