

"Mud Tutu"

a short story by Andrzej Tucholski

(An Entry for Ksenia Anske Super Competition)

The Purse sucked on her beer-flavoured lollipop as she was preparing to study the new dead item that had rolled into the morgue an evening before. It was already clear to her, that it wasn't the case she would later like to recall. Straps tucked in inner compartment for more movement freedom, she decided it's high time for general examination. No more idle screwing around.

With a long, polythene stick she lifted up the lacy part of a stained Tutu. It looked like a piece of garbage. Used to be green, supposedly, now only presented the entire palette of shades of mud brown. Purse chuckled. Mud Tutu sounded in her mind almost like mad Tutu. She wondered, how mad Tutu could be like. The laughter paused after a moment. Purse, raised on the streets of Detroit, wasn't soft. Yet she never had anything in common with junkies or dealers. That was the final frontier of an item life in her eyes.

Apart from the dirt, the Tutu looked... okay. Purse played with her studs for a bit, bewildered with the mysterious cause of death of that particular green thing. She left the piece of cloth as it was and went upstairs. Brick stood next to the coffee machine, pouring espressos, shot after shot.

With crooked notches on his head he looked like he wasn't exactly sober.

"Tough night?" asked Purse and get her a coffee herself. She preferred flat white, but the milk wasn't anywhere around so she clicked for an espresso as well.

"Tell me about it," said Brick and gulped down the final dose of caffeine. He scratched the place below the gun strapped on his back and leaned against the wall with loud crunch of pupled plaster. "How's that poor little thing down in the deathzone?"

"It's a morgue, Brick. I hate to go there while it carries its real name, you really don't need to make it even less bearable."

"Sorry, Pur. It's just, I knew that Tutu, you know? She was a daughter of a friend of mine, old Coat. Actually you can know him too."

"That prick who got drunk at the annual police party and tried to sleep with an old Fridge?"

"Yep."

"Shit. I didn't like him but I wouldn't wish losing a child to anyone."

"Yep," said Brick once again.

They stood in silence for a bit.

"Hey, listen," started Purse in weary voice. "Do we at least have the weapon?"

Brick frowned.

"Yeah, we do. Or at least I think we do. This is when things get really ugly."

"What do you mean?"

"Go and check yourself."

They went outside and crossed the street. Brick swiped his identity card against the reader and they both entered The Official Police Warehouse, XIXth century building with ruined ornaments above the door.

The main space was occupied by only one object. Enormous, grey shape sheathed in the biggest ziploc bag ever created. Bag had some weird looking holes on one side. Purse snorted.

"And this is what, now?"

"An elephant, I suppose. That's what the professor from the university said."

"Is it... alive?"

"We don't know. It was the only thing found on the crime scene. Apart Tutu, that is."

"It can't be. Tutu wasn't shattered to pieces and this huge eyesore wouldn't be able to do any less than full destruction. I mean, look at its feet!"

"There are lots of things that do not fit together here, Pur. We have young Tutu killed in a mysterious way, extincted elephant coming back to life only to be found at the crime scene and absolutely nothing else."

Suddenly, the elephant trumpeted. His massive body moved a little as he was waking up from sleep. He opened left eye and looked at Purse and Brick standing frozen in deep amazement.

"Hi there," he said in weird, deep voice.

"You... you..." stuttered Purse, "you can talk?"

"Of course I can. I'm an elephant."

"Oh dear. That's unexpected," noticed Brick.

"To say the least," added Purse.

"Why am I held in captive? Is that a bag?"

"You are suspected. We think that you killed an innocent Tutu."

"What's tutu?"

"Uhm, a tiny skirt with lacy decorations."

"I do not know such thing."

"Every suspect always says so."

Elephant smiled, his tusks pointing in different directions.

"You can interrogate me, if you want. I weigh six tons. And you two combined?"

"Well, he has a point here," said Brick and backtracked a little.

"No. Elephant, if you're innocent, could you please help us solve that mystery?" asked Purse and raised her clasp to look as tall as she could get.

"Oh, and that's better. I'd like to help you."

"What are you doing?" whispered Brick, still unconvinced.

"Hush. I know what I'm doing. Elephants are proud," mouther Purse in return.

"What are you two plotting there?"

"Nothing, dear elephant. Are you able to free yourself?"

"Yeah, I should manage to..."

The storage door interrupted with loud explosion. Elephant got back to pretended sleep. A squad of skilled Guns ran inside and secured the perimeter.

"Purse?" said the leader, huge Shotgun with two barrels loaded inside.

"Yeah?"

"You will come with us."

"WHAT?" shouted Purse as one of the Guns went around her and was now trying to bind her straps together.

"You are suspected of an attempted murder of the green Tutu."

"Attempted?" she asked and stopped moving altogether.

What do they mean: attempted?

Then the green Tutu appeared from behind the back of the old Shotgun. She was still dirty but... alive!

"It's her! It's her!" she screamed and pointed at Purse with one of her laces.

"OH YOU DIRTY LITTLE LIAR!" roared Purse.

"LET HER GO!" Brick finally put himself together and entered the scene.

Shotgun killed him with single blow.

„Now, would you kindly use that breathalyzer?" asked one of the Guns.

Frightened Purse saw that Tutu sucked on a stolen beer-flavoured lollipop and understood that she's in deep trouble.