

Daylight Robbery

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Madiline Mazcowitz had always loved meeting people and working in the newsagents next to the station was an ideal job even though the hours were long. She couldn't imagine doing anything else. She and her husband of sixty years bought the business twenty years earlier when they had retired from the stage. Her husband, Jack the Knife, as he was called, had passed away eight years ago. Still, she couldn't complain. Sixty years of mutual love was a gift of the gods.

One morning, as Madiline was opening the shop, a boy came up behind her and said, 'I have a knife. Open the door, come on, move it, let's go'. Madiline unlocked the door and the boy pushed her through it slamming it shut behind them.

The boy said, 'Where's the money?'

'It's in the safe'.

'Well, get it out.'

'I'm sorry, but you'll have to wait for another fifteen minutes.' she said, making a show of looking at her watch. The boy looked at her in disbelief.

With a bit of whine in her voice Madiline said, 'It's not my fault, I can't do anything about it. It's the safe you see, it has a time lock. What's your name?'

The boy said, 'David, no! It's John.'

'Well, ah, John, they call me Mad Maz,' she said rolling her right eye, This being her best party trick.

The boy was getting jumpy and asked, 'Why Mad Maz?'

'Oh, it's nothing really. Just that I once killed a man.'

'You what?' The boy shouted.

‘Oh yes,’ she said in her best little girl voice. ‘I Stabbed him thirty seven times and cut his ears off with a pair of scissors.’

‘It wasn’t my fault. He wouldn’t listen to me,’ she continued in a slightly shriller voice all the while rolling her eye.

The boy backed away and Madiline picked up a pair of scissors from the counter and casually cleaned a finger nail with them.

‘I’ve got a knife,’ the boy said, waving it in front him

‘Oh yes, I see and a very nice one it is too, is it sharp?’ She said sweetly.

‘Open the safe,’ the boy demanded again.

Madiline just looked at her watch and told him it would be another thirteen minutes. She turned and looked at the other end of the counter and said, ‘Now Billy you will just have to wait your turn. John was here first.’

‘Shut up,’ the boy said, ‘there’s nobody there.’

She giggled. Just a little bit to long.

The boy stared at her with his knife thrust out in front of him. Madiline stared back and slowly reached out with the scissors and said, ‘Snip, Snip.’ The boy nearly fell over backward though she was a full two metres away. She took a step towards him and said, ‘Are you listening to me?’ The boy took a step backward and came hard up against a magazine rack.

‘I’ve got a knife!’ The boy said trying to sound menacing but could only manage a squeak.

‘So you said. I have a pair of scissors. Are you listening.’

Madiline took another step. The boy stood as though he was paralysed. As she stared into his eyes she took another step and said, ‘Are you listening to me?’ All the while staring into his eyes. The boy stood transfixed with his

knife held stiffly out in front of him.

Madiline took a last step and without taking her eyes off his, reached out with the scissors and snipped the button off the shirt sleeve of the arm holding the knife. The button hit the floor with a small tap, tap, tap and as the boy looked down to where it had come to rest Madiline snipped a bit of hair off next to his ear.

A puddle started to form around his feet and the boy slumped to the floor. Madiline picked up his knife and put it on the counter, took out an indelible laundry marker and wrote "I've been a naughty boy" across his forehead. As an after thought, she drew a big curly moustache on his upper lip as well. She stood back to admire her art work and thought to herself 'You're an evil woman Madiline. You should be ashamed of yourself.'

She unlocked the door propping it open. Taking the money out of her hand bag she filled the cash drawer. The boy recovered enough to pull himself to his feet, took one look at Madiline, and bolted nearly knocking over the first customer of the day.