

BIG CITY

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from
“ANOMIE”
by Eric Schwartz

Synopsis: A wealthy industrialist has died. His family is furious as he has left the bulk of his wealth to...Smiles and Charlie? And they've never met him. What the hell is going on?

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Smiles could feel Kredge's eyes burning into the back of his head. Kredge was one of Smiles' least favorite creatures in existence, a disgusting goblin lawyer. He found it hard to not show his distaste openly. Smiles turned and smirked at him. Kredge turned and looked out the window swiftly. Smiles looked back at Mrs. Mackery, who sat at Kredge's desk sifting through the pictures.

"I'm sorry Mrs. Mackery. I was hoping not to find anything, but..." Smiles nearly always said it, and he nearly always meant it. Not this time. Mrs. Mackery said nothing for a long time. She just stared at the last picture. Smiles saw that it was the money shot. He was bracing himself for the onslaught of emotion that usually followed this ritual. He began scanning his memory, for all the comforting things he could find to say.

"This is perfect," Mrs. Mackery finally blurted. "This is exactly what I need to nail that bastard in court. You've done well Mr. Johnson."

Kredge's leathery, gray goblin face came in close to Smiles who was standing stunned. "I told you Mrs. Mackery, Smiles is the best."

"He certainly is. This will ensure that I get a fair divorce."

Kredge gurgled a goblin laugh, "And more money." Smiles shook his head in disgust. He turned to leave.

"Thank you Mr. Johnson. We will inform you of the court date." Mrs. Mackery said. Smiles pulled his raincoat on and grabbed his umbrella. He stopped at the door.

"Look. I don't normally ask this. Is there anyway we can do this without dragging Emily and her boy through the dirt? She just seems real misguided, like a good girl that your husband is taking advantage of."

Mrs. Mackery and Kredge burst into laughter.

Smiles stood for a moment, stunned. He knew it was an out of the ordinary request but he didn't think it warranted THAT response.

"How noble of you, Mr. Johnson." Kredge managed to gurgle out between chuckles.

Smiles stared at the two for a moment. "What do you mean?"

"Mr. Johnson, the cost of her tarnished reputation was more than compensated for." Mrs. Mackery said as she slipped the pictures into her brief case. Nothing more was said. She just stood, smirking at Smiles. When it finally hit Smiles, it felt like a hang over.

"You set him up. You paid her to set him up." His hands began to shake with anger. "I am not getting sucked into this!"

Kredge threw 2 returned checks down on the table. "You've already cashed your retainer and your first payment. You're in it up to your balls, Johnson."

Smiles turned and burst out into the hallway. He could hear Kredge's voice behind him.

"I'll be in touch, Smiles." Kredge said, breaking into fits of laughter.

Alone in the elevator Smiles felt his ulcer flair. He stood there, staring at his own distorted reflection in the doors, thinking that the hardest thing to deal with when you're seething with rage is a slow elevator ride.