

# Inkslingers Blended Session

5<sup>th</sup> October 2024

The Prompt from The Bag Was



## *The Great Escape*

*“Love yourself first and  
everything else falls into line.”*

*– Lucille Ball*

## **To Find an Escape**

### **Greg Fields**

Flynn Murphy locked the door behind him, double-checked it, then took the first few steps of the familiar, daily walk from the store to his condominium three blocks away. This night his shoulders sagged and his steps were slow. He walked the measured pace of a beaten man, a man with only a vague grasp of who and where he was. He had no answers to those basic questions. He had had no answers since the shooting.

Things had died down, to be sure. Almost as soon as Dashawn Roberson's lifeless body had been loaded into the ambulance to bring him to the city morgue, the rush had been overwhelming. It had not eased after the police reports, several of them, and the interviews at the precinct, several more. For days afterward microphones had been shoved in his face, all turned away without comment on the advice of his lawyer who, to that point, had only handled the drafting of Flynn's and his wife Ellen's wills. Reporters called daily, seeking their stories, trying to find a wedge that might explain the shooting of an unarmed black teenager by a quiet, older white man in a neighbourhood that rarely saw a black face.

His small store, the one he had owned and managed for thirty years, had been boycotted. Three times a brick had been thrown through the windows. He had been accosted behind the counter by angry neighbours who read into that awful night the ugly intersection between violence and racism. Perhaps worst of all, he had been congratulated by a handful of neighbors who thanked him for his bravery, for removing one more of the city's stains.

To this day, weeks later, Flynn Murphy did not know why he pulled the trigger, what impulse led him to react so quickly and so irrevocably. Was it fear? Not really. He had been robbed before, and by tougher thieves than this slightly built young man. There was a knife, sure, but what did that matter? He could hand over the money and be done with it, leave the settling of it to his overpriced insurance.

It certainly wasn't bravery. He had no notion of protecting his turf, or vanquishing a marauding foe. None of that.

And in the darkest corner of his subconscious, the place where the things we never want to acknowledge or confront hide in murky, web-filled nightmares, he considered that he might well not have pulled the trigger if the face before him had been white.

Murphy arrived home, rode the elevator to his floor then unlocked his door. On the other side of it Ellen was waiting, as she usually did, with a glass of scotch. Murphy took it, kissed her cheek, then settled into the chair across the way.

"Tough day, love?" Ellen asked.

"No tougher than most. Than all of them." He drank his scotch and remained silent for several minutes while Ellen watched him. After a time he faced her.

"I think it's time to escape," he said softly.

"Escape?"

A deep drink of the scotch, then Murphy said, "An escape, Ellen. A great escape. I've had enough. It's time to sell it. Sell it all and move on."

Ellen said nothing, and Murphy continued after another pause.

"I'm tired, Ellen. I'm so tired. I'm not used to being a villain. I'm

not used to being the guy everybody recognizes, the one who killed the kid.”

“It’ll all go away, Flynn. Give it time.”

“I’ve no more time to give, Ellen. No more energy.” He finished his scotch. “It’s time to quit.”

Ellen Murphy sat back and remained silent. There was nothing to say. She looked across at her man, the one who had given too much of his soul to the store that carried his name, a name now tarnished beyond repair.

There would be time to think about the logistics of it all. Who might buy the store, and who might buy their condominium before they moved to God knows where.

But for now there was only Flynn, sitting there, as small and as lonely as she had ever known him. There was the scotch to soothe their broken souls, the silence of a quiet night, and the simple surety of each other’s company.

And, as always, there was the ticking of the clock on the far wall to mark the time.

## **Growing Older**

**Bernadette O'Reilly**

Youth never thinks of growing older  
Till the day a letter arrives  
It's time  
To apply for the old age pension  
What happened  
Where have the years gone  
It was only yesterday...

## Love

### Laura Alves

Whenever the theme “love” turns up, it seems to be everybody’s favourite and the most recurrent answers to the question

“What is love?” is “ “Love is a feeling between two people, and sometimes more, in the case of a family”.

However there is something that always gets to me with these answers:

There is no other kind of love without self-esteem. If you don’t love yourself first, you won’t ever attract another person to even look at you.

They probably won’t look at you either if you feel desperate to find someone to love you, so my suggestion is: Love yourself and figure out what it is that you enjoy doing on your own or with friends and family or even maybe with other people, but without having to select someone specifically for doing that.

Go out there and enjoy life! It is likely that among people who enjoy doing the same thing as you, you will find some other common grounds.

Live life to the full and let things happen. Looking at the baby in the picture, he (or she) might grow up to be an Olympic gymnast after all, but parents, please be careful, as babies are still very fragile beings, even though they might not realise that yet!

## **Love Yourself First and Everything Else Falls into line**

**Angelina Kelly**

Julia sipped her wine and stared unseeingly at the garden in front of her. She heaved a big sigh and turned to her companion.

“Coming to terms with the new me is difficult. I don’t look the same, I don’t feel the same and I certainly don’t behave the same. I’ve changed and I don’t know how to adjust.”

“I’m not sure that you have a choice”, Sophie replied. “I think it’s something you have to accept, in faith, and then go along with.”

“But how do I do that?”

“Little by little, day by day, I think – at least that’s what the self-help books claim.”

“But it’s all so big. It’s all so overwhelming.”

“I’m sure it is. I have no idea what you’re going through, Julia and forgive me for saying, I hope I never do but, you really have no choice. If you don’t you’ll descend into black depression and possibly mental hospital, pills and god knows what else.”

“Perish the thought.” Julia replied, holding her hands on both sides of her head. Looking at her best friend she enquired, “Where do I begin? What do I need to do?”

“Love yourself first and everything else falls into place. Learn to love the ‘new you’. Learn to work with her, befriend her, invite her into your life and see where she takes you. She knows what you need, follow her.”

“But-but-but.” Julia stammered.

“Now, you sound like a boat.” Sophie laughed. “Get into that boat and sail away. You have a life waiting for you elsewhere, people who will encourage you to be well and will help you in every way to achieve that. Go for it, Julia. You owe it to yourself. Haven’t they shown you how to love yourself? Haven’t they shown you how to live? What have you got here? You’ve

outgrown us, Julia. Your family are busy living the life they have chosen. You made your choice some time ago. Admittedly this is an unexpected glitch, but that's all it is. It's not your life and it doesn't need to be. Get yourself well enough to get on that plane and get back to the life that you chose."

Julia looked at Sophie and sighed deeply. "I know you're right."

"Damn right, I am." They clinked glasses.

"Here's to you. And here's to Florida."



## **Love yourself first**

**Miguel A. Rivera, Jr.**

“Love yourself first”. The words of her dearly departed best friend echoed in Lucy’s head. Words that had encouraged her to take charge of her life and flee from a monster. Brad, the abusive creature who’d been posing as her husband for five years. Her newfound freedom however, came at a price. Lucy was tired, miserable and sweaty, but as always, the show must go on. The odd duality of her new existence was difficult to fathom and few, especially those close to her, would understand it. First grade teacher by day, dancer at a gentlemen’s club every other night. Her divorce had been costly, exhausting, and more than a bit humiliating. She recalled how some of the women in the courtroom had looked upon her with pity or even disgust upon hearing the sordid tale of mistreatment, objectification, and neglect that she’d endured.

But when all was said and done, Brad had hidden most of his assets through his shadow companies and shady business partners, leaving her with very little to start her life over with. Lucy could not understand this equation. Three years of beatings, infidelity, and humiliation all to end up shaking her booty for dollars. Swinging from a pole in her underwear while entertaining jeering, horny alcoholics, was now her lot in life. Combining exotic dancing with a teaching job just so she could make her rent and car note.

She was almost glad that her parents had died in a crash during her childhood and did not have to witness the debacle that had become of her life. As one particular patron with crooked, yellow teeth waved a dollar at her, her mind went to the stack of ungraded papers awaiting her at her home. She looked down and the man in front of her could easily have been her grandfather. If her opinion of the male species had been low before, it was now deep in the negative numbers.

It was at that moment that Butch, the club’s owner, waved her over and whispered in her ear. “There’s a guy in the back who

wants a personal and he specifically requested you.” Lucy knew a personal meant a one-on-one lap dance, the type she simply despised. She also knew she was about 300 short on her phone bill and that it might fill that little gap. She nodded in agreement and walked toward the curtained area where her would be client awaited.

Butch took note of her slight hesitation and then offered a supportive smack on her backside for encouragement. Lucy shot a look of venom at him but continued toward the client. Upon entering the dark area, she was astonished to see none other than her former abusive husband Brad, sitting in the chair with his tie loosened, and a drunk look of satisfaction. “Come to Daddy, baby.”, were the drunk words that tumbled out of his mouth. Lucy began dancing and then some odd power overtook her brain. The shot glass next to Brad became an instantly useful tool. With healthy force she drove it into the Adam’s apple of her former spouse and then watched as he bled out, as loud disco music boomed in the background.

What followed was a swarm of cops, bright lights as the club was shut down, and a young, surprisingly handsome Detective in charge of the now gory crime scene. “Ma’am, you don’t have to speak to me without an attorney, but can you tell me what happened?”, he asked.

“Self Defence.”, was Lucy’s trained and curt response.

The Detective stared at her for a few moments. “I completely understand and I’ll see it gets submitted to the District Attorney’s office as such. After all, you have to love yourself first”.

Lucy smiled. She still had papers to grade.

## **Re Incarnation**

**Michael O'Brien**

A man had been feeble for a long time, he drove to the mountains as darkness was falling and parked his car on a cliff's edge. He knew these mountains and the surrounding areas well as he had lived here all his life.

It might have seemed strange to most people that a man who was so seriously ill would seek this type of solitude, particularly now as he was feeling so weak. But he had been comforted through his illness by a lifelong faith and like most people in his position he'd found comfort in books on spirituality and the afterlife, however recently he had been struck by a book on something he had never considered before, re-incarnation, and not only that, but the idea that if you were aware enough you could choose your rebirth, he smiled gently, spooky voodoo or what.

He loved these mountains and would be sad to leave them, this is where he met and later proposed to his wife, raised his children and grandchildren, he reckoned he had breathed the air up here at least three or four days a week his whole life, all the way back to when his father brought him up here to fly kites.

To his left he overlooked the city where lights had started to come on. To his right was the countryside where the lighting was sparse and more spread apart, he found the view pleasing and relaxed in his seat enjoying the stars sprinkled before him.

His gaze drifted to the right at the lights of individual houses that glowed cosy in the cold night, and he smiled softly as he realized he could actually see into each house he chose, strange that I'm not surprised by this, he thought.

The first was a man and woman fighting as two unkempt children sat watching Television, the noise and untidiness of the

place tensed him and he left this place and went to another house.

He looked in the next window and saw an elderly man sitting in his filth reading a newspaper, ignoring the T.V blaring in the background.

He drifted through the Human Galaxy beneath him until he saw two children in a window, their father was laughing with them, upstairs was a woman lying in a bed heavy with child, she was reading a book of Babies names, a pleasant smile on her face.

All along the walls there were books on mountains and local history. He found this home peaceful and relaxed, letting out a long deep breath he had taken, he would stay here a while.

Catherine smiled to herself as she heard her husband and two children run up the stairs, she placed the book she was reading by her side and watched as they poured into her room.

They came in for their night-time kiss and cuddle before their father got them ready for bed. As they crawled up the bed towards her, she let out a soft groan,

“Everything ok?” her husband Paul asked as he placed his hand on her head.

“Yeah, babies just moving”

“He’s moved before, right?” Paul was a little concerned by her reaction which was usually delight when she felt movement.

“Yeah just felt a bit different this time, but its ok, quick, kids, have a feel”.

The three of them gathered round and oohed and aahed at the wonder of their future brother or sister, announcing they were eager to join their new family.

The next morning the body of a man was found in his car, the medical examiner said the man had passed away peacefully during the night.

## **The Great Escape**

**Elaine Reardon**

Dad lifted me over the bars of the crib and tucked me in for the night, saying that tonight the Easter Bunny would come, that the Eater Bunny was magic, like Santa. would bring me a wonderful basket filled with surprises. I was hooked, and obediently went fast to sleep. The next morning I woke early; The bedroom shades were down, and the room was dark. My parents lay across from me in their own bed, so they wouldn't be of any help. I looked about the room, wandering the length of the crib, for signs of magic. There, on the floor at the foot of the crib, was a basket, wrapped in coloured cellophane. The bunny had been here! I tried to climb out, but couldn't, so I hollered loudly enough to wake my parents. Mum grumbled, but Dad came over, lifted me out, and I was able to access this new basket of magic.

A whole year passed, My mother perhaps remembered that I woke her up shouting about the basket, or maybe they just forgot to take care of it the night before. I was still in the crib that Easter Morning. I remembered the drill- the basket would be at the foot of the crib; but it wasn't. I surveyed the dim bedroom and my sleeping parents. There was no magic in this room.

But there was a new chair next to the crib. I was able to make my great escape; over the bars, onto the chair, down to the floor. I was free. The house was still, no one awake yet. I carefully looked around our bedroom, making sure the Easter bunny hadn't left it by my parent's bed.

I walked down the hall, past my aunts room, grandmother's room, to the stairs. I noticed that the door to the attic as slightly ajar, and slowly pulled it open. There, on the other side, was the Easter Basket! Imagine! the Bunny had put it in such an odd place!. I swooped it up and ran back to my room, shouting for my parents, saying I'd found my Easter Basket where it had been hidden.

My parents were chagrined that I'd woken them up again, and alarmed that I'd also reached this new state of independence. Soon after, my crib traded up for a cot, and I was down moved to the old sunporch. And The Easter Bunny always left the basket by the doorway, as there wasn't room for more than a bed there, and I think my parents liked to sleep in a bit.