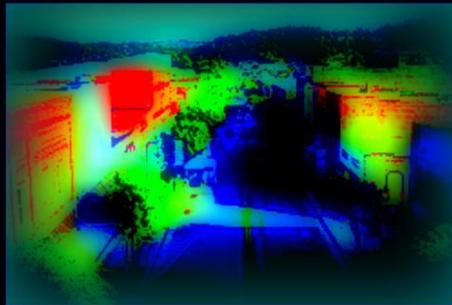


another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory

GALAX_ GALAXY



a psecret psociety
pshort pstory by
mike bozart

GALAX_ GALAXY

It was just another town in the Blue Ridge ...

by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | October 2012 (rev. Aug. 2018)

As we exited the Family Dollar store on West Jefferson Street, Agent 32 spotted him. He was there – shirtless – in a second-floor, curtain-less, half-open sash window. Monique (Agent 32) and I (Agent 33) watched him gyrating and waving his hands while on his cell phone. He was a well-bronzed lad, probably in his mid-20s.

“He looks like this town’s lead hipster,” Monique remarked.

“Yeah, he sure does,” I replied. “Maybe he will be the next Jack Kerouac, and we can say that we saw him here when he was ...”

“When he was a drug-addled specimen in a window,” Monique stated as she began to laugh.

“Well, who knows, 32? Let’s not prematurely discharge him.”

“Yeah, you’re right, 33. Who knows? Let’s not sell him short.”

“I love how you call me 33 when my digital audio recorder is on.”

“Your digital audio recorder is always on,” Agent 32 retorted.

We continued walking down the street, heading north towards Washington Street. It was a perfect fall Saturday evening, when one thinks back to previous October evenings. *I wonder if there’s any magic tonight in this little mountain town. What psychic goodies await? Anything? Any compounding waves?*

Off in the distance, around a corner, the faint screams and cheers from a Little League Baseball game on Calhoun Street could be heard through the autumn air as the sun began to set. My mind sailed away with the invigorating

zephyr. I wonder if he saw the excerpted copy of 'Gold, a summer story' [a novel by yours truly] that I slid under his apartment door earlier in the day, when Agent 32 was asleep. Was that what got him so agitated on the phone? Or, was he just mad at his girlfriend for running late and missing the big weed connection? I bet he's dating the minister's daughter. The bad boy de ville. [sic] Yep, he's Billy Bad-Azz.

"What are you thinking about, Agent 33?"

"Oh, nothing much, Monique."

"Some things never change." Monique guffawed.

I joined in on the laughter. "It sure is a perfect fall night. I sure could go for some Asian food."

"Yey!" Monique exclaimed. "Me, too." As a Filipina, she loved her rice-based dishes.

"Hey, I know where a Chinese restaurant is. I saw it on the way in to town."

"Ok, lead the way, Parkaar." [my ailing alias]

"Nicely pronounced, 32. Just call me that in the restaurant. You know, just in case."

"Why, of course, 33. I've memorized Ernie's game plan."

"Oh?" I asked with a raised right eyebrow.

Monique smiled. "Epicably," [sic] she then said.

"Epicably? Is that a real word, 32?"

“A sure-real word.”

We turned right onto West Center Street, went one block, and turned right on North Main Street. Soon we were under a sign that read: ||**Canton**||

We entered the antechamber, and waited to be seated. I cleared my throat, and a middle-aged Asian lady appeared in black-and-white attire. She said that we could sit anywhere.

We went to a booth near the salad bar and sat down opposite each other. A few minutes later, she returned to take our order. I told her that we would both like the dinner buffet. She motioned to the stack of plates and went back to the kitchen.

Agent 32 then jumped up and began to load her plate with steamed white rice and brown noodles. She was hungry; we hadn't eaten since Charlotte. She was going to get her money's worth of carbs.

After five minutes of nearly nonstop chowing down, I began the conversation as a fly alighted on the high ceiling.

“How long do you think this place has been here?”

“No idea, Parkaar, but the food is good. Yum-yum.”

An older Chinese man, perhaps the/an owner, overheard us, and told me that the restaurant was twenty years old. I thanked him for the info. Then the fly flew away with the knowledge gained.

Right after that, a Chinese-American-appearing high-school girl walked in with her Caucasian American friends.

Apparently, she was the owners' daughter. They made some small talk. Then the girl whispered something to her dad while shielding her mouth with her hand so that we couldn't lip-read what she said. *The winning lottery number?* Soon she and her teenage entourage departed.

After a round of desserts, we paid up and left. We walked north on Main Street. I glanced down East Grayson Street. *Rex Theatre. Hmm ... Rex means king in Latin. I wonder how it got that name. Rex de Grayson? Rex de Galax? Rexplax? [sic]*

Then Agent 32 suddenly spoke. "What are you thinking?"

"See that movie theater down there, the Rex Theatre?"

"Yes ..."

"Well, rex is Latin for king."

"Yeah, so what? You know, Rex is a common American male name. Remember Rex Chapman for the old [Charlotte] Hornets?"

"Yes, I do. And, well, that's really all I was thinking."

"I had to ask." She sighed and chuckled.

"And, now you know." I had a laugh.

Agent 32 gave me a wry grin and giggled a final time as I heard a motorized mechanism approaching. An old, nearly dead car limped down the street, lagging behind us. We turned around, and it was him – the young hipster who was in the window earlier.

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