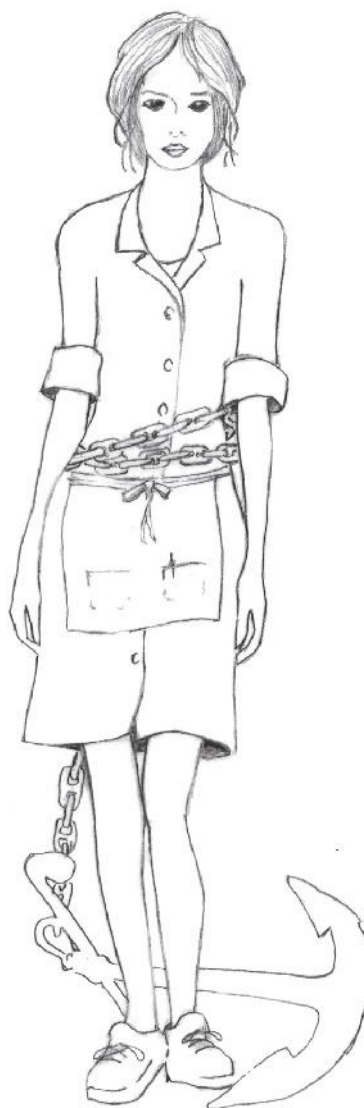


Moonie

By

M Randolph Mason



2023

* * * * *

Stunned by the brightness of the Carolina morning sun as I departed the sea-side café, I turned left toward my ancient, rent-a-wreck SUV. Coming around to the side of the white painted, cinderblock building I looked up just in time to see my old rental disappear behind a white delivery van backing to a side door of the building.

I crunched over the broken oyster shell parking lot, around the white van, and discovered that the van was so close to my vehicle that I would not be able to get in. Of course, the driver's door of the long van cleared the rear of my vehicle... not a problem for him. However, I had experience at crawling in from the other side. So, rather than accosting the driver to have him move his truck, I circled around to the passenger side of the vehicle.

And there was Moonie.

She was leaning back against the building. Her short white apron was double tied around an impossibly skinny figure. She wasn't exactly attractive... but certainly not ugly. Her long salt and pepper hair was tied behind her head with a long, black, cloth ribbon whose strands came to a halt approximately at the uneven ends of her ponytail. She looked to be in her fifties. Under the apron, she wore a loose fitting, one piece, serviceable, food-stained dress. On her feet were old, fake leather, walking shoes.

Her eyes were closed. I was sure she was enjoying the warm sunshine.

Not wanting to disturb her, I quietly opened the passenger door and began my contorted advance to the driver's seat. But the damn door hooked onto my right shoe and slammed onto my left ankle. My exclamation would have been at home after a shanked tee shot into the woods on a long par five.

As I turned my head to peer over the dashboard, her eyes were definitely not closed anymore. Reversing direction, I painfully backed out of the passenger door.

The ankle was bleeding through my socks and into my Sperry topsiders. She walked over to me and uttered an understatement, "Ummm."

Not capable of standing erect, I still had the good manners to apologize for my expletive.

“There is a first aid kit under the passenger seat,” I announced and attempted to stand... unsuccessfully.

“Maybe I should help,” She offered and opened the right rear passenger door.

After fetching the first aid kit, she knelt in the oyster shells at my feet while I sat crossways on the front passenger seat. “This doesn’t look good at all. It’s beginning to swell. I’m taking off your shoe.” She took off both the shoe and sock.

“Oooo! You are on your way to an emergency room,” she announced.

She added, “Let me tell someone I am leaving... and get my purse.”

Upon her return, “Hello. I am Richard,” I said somewhat sarcastically as I offered my hand.

She spelled out her name, “M-O-O-N-I-E... Moonie. I may enlighten you later. Give me your keys.”

I offered the keys but felt compelled to warn her, “It’s a stick shift.”

“Okay,” She shrugged.

As I teetered holding on to the door frame, she, oblivious of modesty, climbed through the passenger side and maneuvered into the driver’s seat. After my painful and desperate repositioning on the passenger seat, we were away. The hospital was across the bridge - in Nags Head.

* * * * *

“...it’s broken. Right now, it is not compound... it’s not broken through-and-through. But, with just a bit more torsion, you can have it... a big problem.”

Then the doctor turned to Moonie, “Ma’am, you must keep him off of it. He should sit - or lay - with it elevated. I’m putting a cast on it. I don’t trust him with a boot. I don’t trust him with a cane. I don’t even trust him with a crutch. I’m going to prescribe a walker for him. **You** will have to control him. **Only** the walker!

“In situations like this,” he continued, “I have little faith... with physically fit men in general. If you care, you have to be persistent... bossy... mean... a **bitch**!

“Don’t bring him back here with a useless ankle. There’s a direct correlation between big balls and self-induced medical complications.”

It was a conversation between the blunt talking ER doctor and Moonie.

The wheelchair and folded walker arrived.

* * * * *

“So... now what?” I asked as we drove out of the parking lot.

“Is this my problem?” She asked.

So, I opined, “We are in my vehicle. I can’t drive. I have to get back to my place... which is a boat. You are sitting in my driver’s seat.”

She responded, “We go to your... uh... boat. I wrangle you onto the damn thing. We call me a cab. I am done with you.”

Well, that’s not exactly what happened.