

# Pin Money

## *A Truck Stop Adventure*

by Alan Harris

JACK AND I GETS TO TALKIN over breakfast one day, and he tells me since I gotta be doin somethin or other, minds well be makin some extra pin money, he says. Hogs ain't payin and the corn don't look good this year, he says. All weeds and no rain since back almost May. Corn curlin up and all. And how the kids is all gone now so it's no big chore to keep them out of trouble. Times is hard for us farmers, he says.

So I tells Jack how I can't figure it. The city folks is drivin more and more Cadillacs and here we set, makin less and less every year. Nope, I can't figure it.

Well, nothin happens for a few days, but then Jack's out mowin one day, cuttin down oats for the diverted acres on the government plan, and comes in and says how I really ought to be workin in town for pin money. How the hog market is and all. And the corn so sicklike. So I says okay and I gets a job at Marge's truck stop restaurant down by the main highway, waitin on tables and helpin out in the kitchen if need be. Midnight to eight in the forenoon is all I can get on as.

So there I am all night, and Jack workin all day, and we wonderin what each other look like almost, while the city folks is drivin more and more Cadillacs. Makin pin money at a truck stop from midnight to eight in the forenoon. But the job's all right. The guys that comes in is all right. They ain't no truth to what you hear about truckers bein always after the waitresses. None of them never not once troubled me none. They're okay.

And Marge's daughter Janie is who I work for on my shift. She's okay too. Just a young kid and all, but she got some sense. She knows how to talk to them truckers, too. There might be a rough one once in a blue moon, but she knows what to do. She knows the words to say.

After I been there a few weeks, one night Janie's out of the restaurant makin a night deposit at the bank and me mindin things there by myself, and this young guy comes in sayin how everybody oughta get down on the floor cause this is a holdup. And I say how I'm the only one there and business sure is slack tonight. And he says shut up and empty out that cash register in a paper bag or he'll blow my head off. And then I see he's got a gun in his hand and I start to get all shakin and can't say anything right and how we ain't got no paper bags right handy.

I rings up no sale on the cash register and then I remember how Janie has took all but some loose change to the bank for the night deposit. So I tells him there's not much in here and it'll just have to do him till sometime when there's more. And he ups and slaps me on the face and calls me a dumb bitch, just them words he uses, and puts the change in his bluejeans pocket and walks out and drives away fast.

Some young kid. Was never weaned right, I says to myself. Can't go around like that to people, hittin em and callin em dumb bitches and then walkin out with all the loose change. How we gonna sell anything, we ain't got change? What if some trucker comes in and plunks down a dollar bill for a cup of coffee? There we are. No change.

Pretty soon Janie comes back and I tells her how this guy hit me and called me a dumb bitch and walked out the door with all the loose change. So she ups and right away calls Marge out of bed, and pretty soon the place is jumpin with Marge and Janie and Harry the town cop askin me what this man looks like and me tellin them how he hit me and called me a dumb bitch and walked right out the door with all the loose change.

He was never weaned right, I told them. And how he was kind of young and black-haired and sick-lookin and nervous, but that's all I know about him. And calls me a dumb bitch and walks out the door with all our loose change so a poor trucker can't even buy a cup of coffee or else we can't collect for it.

Well, come breakfast the next forenoon, I tells Jack how this all happened to me that night. Jack stares out the window awhile, and pretty soon he says how the hog prices ain't quite that bad now and it's lookin like rain in the northwest--kind of puffy like, he says. So he allows as how maybe we don't need that extra pin money after all. We can sure use some rain, though, he says.

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