

TAKE 2

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD ALLEY - DAY

A handsome young man, PERRY CRANT, is standing next to the building at the mouth of an alley. He's wearing a suit with wide lapels and wide trousers, wingtip shoes, and a fedora. At his feet is a sample case.

A middle-aged, overweight ADAM KRAGER walks by the alley, then suddenly stops, a sour look on his face. He's wearing a white shirt, jeans and running shoes. Adam gently fists his diaphragm.

PERRY

Are you okay, mister?

ADAM

Huh? Oh, yeah. A little indigestion.

Adam walks to over to Perry and points to the case.

ADAM (CONT'D)

What're you pushing, kid?

PERRY

Pushing? Nothing. I'm just standing here waiting for my partner.

ADAM

No, what are you selling?

PERRY

I'm selling slide rules.

Perry opens case and pulls out a 10-inch white slide rule.

PERRY (CONT'D)

This slide rule is the most advanced manual computation device on this planet, sir. Along with the usual mathematical applications, you can do civil engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and business calculations.

Perry hands him the rule and Adam gives him a business card in return. As Perry looks at the card, Adam pumps his hand with the vigor of a president.

ADAM

Adam Krager, Mega-Jestic Pictures.
Big movies, big TV, big stars.

PERRY

Perry Crant. Good to meet you, sir.

Perry manages to extricate his hand in one piece.

ADAM

Perry Crant. Naw, that name sucks.
What have you done, kid? Porn,
right? Doesn't matter, I can get
you into straight movies. Or TV. I
know the right people.

PERRY

Uh, I sell slide rules.

Adam moves up close and personal, backing Perry up against
the building, waving the slide rule.

ADAM

You won't have to swing your wing,
anymore. Unless of course you want
to swing it, in which case I know
people who can help you swing it.

PERRY

Do you want to buy that slide rule,
Mr. Krager?

Adam rubs his left arm.

ADAM

What the hell is a slide rule?

PERRY

The greatest mathematical
computation device since the
abacus.

Perry takes the slide rule back and proceeds to demonstrate
how it works, moving the slide left and right, moving the
cursor here and there.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Lets divide 1.8 by 2.5. Set the
hairline to 1.8 on the D scale;
then 2.5 on the C scale goes under
the hairline. The result, 0.72, is
read on the D scale at the right
index since the slide was moved to
the left.

(MORE)

PERRY (CONT'D)

Of course you know the decimal goes before the 7 because dividing 1.8 by 2.5 results in a number less than 1. See?

Adam takes the slide rule with one hand and uses his other hand to grab Perry's hand, and examines it.

ADAM

I see you have great hands, Perry.

He smashes the hand against Perry's face.

ADAM (CONT'D)

And with your face, I can get you into shaving commercials. I know the perfect guy!

PERRY

What about the slide rule?

ADAM

This thing? This is crazy. Besides, I don't do numbers. My accountant handles all my numbers--and that guy is worthless!

Perry frees his hand from Adam's grip.

PERRY

It only costs a sawbuck.

ADAM

A sawbuck?

PERRY

Okay, how about a fin? Five bucks. That's very inexpensive for the finest device of its kind on Earth.

Adam puts the rule in a pocket, and out of the opposite pocket pulls out his smart phone. He scrolls it and shoves it into Perry's face.

CLOSE ON - SMART PHONE

On it is a PHOTO of the Hollywood sign taking from street level. Sign is missing the "LLY" and now spells "HO WOOD."

ADAM (O.S.)

Can your slide thingie tell me who terrorized the Hollywood sign?

BACK TO SCENE

Adam pockets the phone and pulls out the slide rule again. Perry slumps against the building, shamefaced.

PERRY

No. But I can.

ADAM

How's that again?

PERRY

I sort of lost control of the egg, and sort of crash landed on the sign a couple nights ago. Sorry.

ADAM

Egg? What egg? Are you on something, kid? Because if you're not, I know a guy.

PERRY

The lander. It's shaped like an egg. Your Earthling writer Robert Heinlein stole the idea from us.

Adam's left shoulder gives a jerk and Adam takes some deep breaths while massaging his left shoulder.

ADAM

Look, kid. Everyone steals in Hollywood--including that bastard business manager of--ow!

Adam clutches his chest in terrible pain and the now-yellow slide rule clatters to the ground. Followed a beat later by Adam, who topples forward like a felled tree.

PERRY

Mr. Krager...?

Adam's limbs twitch then freeze in place. Perry stares down at Adam, frowning.

PERRY (CONT'D)

I was going to throw in a genuine dinosaur-hide case for the slide rule. Mr. Krager?

He goes down on a knee and places two fingers on Adam's neck.

PERRY (CONT'D)

I think this is body part you're supposed to check...

His attention is drawn to the yellow slide rule, which used to be white.

FLOREN (O.S.)
What's up doc?

Perry looks up as FLOREN MCCALL steps into the alley. Floren is a pretty young woman wearing a dress with a full skirt, chunky shoes with straps, and a small hat. Oh, and she has a long cigarette holder poking out of one corner of her mouth. A dirty unlit cigarette drops out of the holder's end.

PERRY
Hello, Floren McCall.

FLOREN
Hello, Perry Crant.

She bends over and picks up the very dirty cigarette and sticks it back in the holder.

FLOREN (CONT'D)
What's wrong with that person?

PERRY
Cardiovascular malfunction is my guess. Too bad you can't redo the past.

He picks up the slide rule, stands, and shows it to Floren.

PERRY (CONT'D)
If he'd come by a little earlier, I might have been able to get him help.

FLOREN
Yellow. That's always fatal, right?

Perry nods and starts to put the rule back in the case, but stops when he sees that the slide rule has now developed three vertical black stripes against the yellow background.

PERRY
Good luck getting into heaven with three stripes against you, Mr. Krager.

He shakes his head sadly and drops it in the sample case.

FLOREN
Did you manage to sell any of those slide runes?

PERRY

Slide rules. And no, I didn't sell
a single one.

He gestures at the cigarette holder, which once more loses
its cigarette.

PERRY (CONT'D)

What about you and those things?
Sell any?

Floren shakes her head and bends down to pick up the
cigarette and accidentally steps on it.

FLOREN

It's a cigarette holder.

She straightens up and places the crooked coffin nail into
the holder.

FLOREN (CONT'D)

I almost sold a few to some
children, but all of a sudden, a
bunch of adult people started
yelling mean things at me. I had to
start running.

(jabs leg with holder)

I didn't know these stems could
move so fast!

She chuckles at the memory.

FLOREN (CONT'D)

I hope not all Earth people are as
volatile as those people were.

PERRY

You know, I think that the company
that bought the market rights to
Earth should have sent more than
one research expedition.

Floren disgustedly indicates the holder.

FLOREN

Yes. It's obvious that nobody wants
my cigarette holders or your slide
runes.

Perry indicates Adam.

PERRY

What should we do about Mr. Krager?

FLOREN

I've seen quite a few bodies lying around. Everyone ignores them. Just walks around them.

PERRY

I've noticed them, too. And some were quite pungent.

FLOREN

Probably natural decay setting in. I think they pick up the bodies at night.

PERRY

Then we should help the body collectors do their job.

FLOREN

Yes, it's our civic duty as good citizens of Ho Wood.

PERRY

Let's position Mr. Krager so that the body collectors can't miss it.

He picks up Adam by the shoulders while Floren grabs the ankles. They maneuver him to the center of the alley and set him down.

They study the placement from several angles.

PERRY (CONT'D)

What other products are in our inventory?

FLOREN

Well, we have some Enigma machines.

PERRY

What do they do?

FLOREN

They're electro-mechanical coding and decoding devices. They're useful in wars.

Perry bends down and makes a slight adjustment to Adam's position.

PERRY

Okay, but can we sell any of them on the streets of Ho Wood?

FLOREN

Probably not, but maybe we can start a war.

She bends down and straightens up the limbs.

PERRY

I don't believe the home office would approve. At least not until the company brings in the armaments division.

Both Perry and Floren start working on Adam's face, trying to erase the agonized expression. They have to settle for a lopsided grin.

They stand up and dust their hands off, satisfied with their handiwork.

FLOREN

Okay, so I guess we report our lack of success to the home office and move on to new products.

Perry and Floren pick up their sample cases.

PERRY

So, no Enigma machines or weapons. What is in our inventory package?

They walk off down the alley, side by side, leaving Adam behind them, forgotten.

FLOREN

I think that nylons and chocolates are next on the list. I don't know what nylons and chocolates are, but they're supposed to be especially appealing to women.

PERRY

You're a woman.

FLOREN

I am?

She jabs the cigarette holder at her breasts.

FLOREN (CONT'D)

Well, let me tell you something about this womanly body. This superstructure keeps throwing me off balance.

She misses a step and momentarily wavers on her feet. Perry looks closely at her chest, then snorts, and adjusts his crotch.

PERRY

You should see the thing between my legs!

Floren reaches her hand out but Perry bats it away.

PERRY (CONT'D)

It grows if you touch it. Makes it hard to walk.

FLOREN

What's it for?

PERRY

Elimination of liquid waste.

FLOREN

Does it work better the bigger it grows?

PERRY

It doesn't work at all when that happens.

FLOREN

That doesn't make any sense. I think your body has a lemon.

PERRY

Is a lemon. You may be right. Speaking of lemons, do you have any idea what product that big galoot, Juan Vayne, is trying to sell?

FLOREN

Fissionable materials, I think.

PERRY

What sector?

FLOREN

Persia.

PERRY

That's nothing but a desert! What a maroon!

They both laugh heartily.

FADE OUT.