

Panes of Blue

By Jason P. Henry

(Segment 2)

“Blue's Moon... keep on a shinin'...”

“Blue!” Slumpy yelled. “What, in the name of God, are you doin?”

“I'm singin.”

“With your pants around your knees and your rear-end pressed against the window?”

“Well, yes. Pants up or pants down, my vocal cords seem to work just fine.”

“That's all good, but the folks in that store gonna get offended and call the cops on ya.”

“Offended?! It's an adult store, Slump. Have you seen some the stuff they're sellin' in there? My ass pressed against their window is like a trip to Sunday school. Besides, the owner been tellin' me to move my ass all morning, so, it's a movin'.”

“But, Blue... what if they start throwin' them big ol' lawn darts at ya?”

“Those *aren't* lawn darts, my friend. But you do bring up a valid point. Better safe than sorry! Anyway... I got an idea.”

So, I pulled up my britches and began rummaging through my carry all. I found what I was looking for and turned to my newspaper covered friend. “You had your morning coffee yet, Slump?”

“B, you know I don't drink... wait a minute... that's your *coffee* tin.”

“Yup. I replied.”

“That's your *coffee savings* tin.”

“Uh-huh. Chock full! Been saving up for three months.” I gave my tin a little rattle to get Slumpy in gear. “I was thinking about one last go around before I head up town.”

“You mean...”

“Yup, penny slots. Me and you, Slumpster. Let's see what we can do.”

“Blue, you the best friend I ever had. Let's do it.”

It took the two of us awhile to stow our things behind the dumpster and then make our way down to Main St. Still, in less than two hours, we were having a grand time playing penny slots. It was our favorite past-time albeit an expensive one: Do you have any idea how long it takes a bum to save enough pennies to make it worthwhile?

“Man, Blue. I have not won yet. Lady Luck just don't seem to be smilin' on me today. I can't hit the

jackpot, and my best bud is movin' uptown. Here I am... wastin' all your coin."

"You ain't wastin' nothing, Slump, I invited you here. Now shush and pay attention. You gotta focus. You gotta want it. Hold the penny lightly and rub a little love into before you let it go."

Slumpy rubbed the penny between his finger and thumb a little and then released it.

"Damnit, Blue."

"C'mon, do it again. We ain't leavin' until you get a winner; I don't care if it takes me till midnight to get to Willow Park. Now get another penny and do what I said. This time, try closing your eyes and thinking about the win."

Slump grabbed a penny.

Slump closed his eyes.

Slump rubbed the penny between his finger and thumb.

He opened his eyes, gently flicked his wrist and let the penny go...

JACKPOT!!!!!!!!!!

"WHAT-THE-HELL?!" yelled the guy in the flannel as he whirled around.

"Bingo, Blue! I got one!"

"Shut up, Slump, before you get us caught."

"Blue... that's my first ever win."

"Hey, you . . ." Flannel Guy again. "Was that you? What the hell did you throw at me?"

"*Throw?!?*" I yelled back. "Shit, that was a contribution."

"*A contribution? To what?!?*"

"To the buy-yourself-a-damn-belt fund! We're bums and we both got one. Not all of us are addicted crack, pull them drawers up!"

"You're about to be homeless *and* toothless you son-of-a . . ."

"Run like the wind, Slump!!"

We both sprang up and hightailed it, hoping Flannel Boy would have to dig the penny out of his crack before he could run comfortably. I could hear my best friend yellin' all the way back to his bench.

"Jackpot, Blue. I got a jackpot!!!"

I was sure gonna miss the little guy.

(To be continued... .)

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