

## Lucky

The nurse left work at five o'clock. Down the corridor and out the back of Saint Francis where the daffodils and tulips were a second thought, she stepped onto the dirt path that led her behind a bank of ochre apartment houses and directly out onto the bustle of the avenue. Ten minutes walk took her to Abdul's and her purchase of an ice tea and a Reuben sandwich for tonight's dinner; a few more minutes to her street – Plenteous Way and her red brick building; an interminable wait for the elevator up – the brown paper sack of dinner in one hand, her purse and white shoes in the other.

She was thinking about what she would wear later. Something that said spring – like light denim and the new jacket with suede lapels. That one had jumped right out at her.

Her sandwich dripped pink juice when she unwrapped it and laid it on a plate. Ice into a glass. Just about to pour.

“Elizabeth?” she heard him say on the other end of the line. “Elizabeth...” He fumbled. She could hear the movement of a piece of paper in air. “Carlos? Elizabeth Carlos?”

“Yes,” she answered him as she looked across her kitchen table and out the open window, catching a glint of something happening below. Someone was having a piano removed – or delivered, she couldn't tell which – through the courtyard doors. It was huge. Four men in matching uniforms and caps easily set it onto a dolly. They wrapped it in a blanket, strapped it, and rolled it away.

He said, “I have it on paper here that you were one of the lucky ones who bought *Snapple* at two dollars.” She sat back down, stretching the phone cord along the kitchen counter.

“What a run you had, huh?” He chuckled, gleeful at her grand prosperity. “And now you can do it again with this little beauty.”

She nudged at her sandwich. The black bread was getting soggy with its heap of sauerkraut. “Where are you calling from?” she asked politely.

“Insta-Futures. Equities. California,” he answered, but wouldn't wait for that to sink in. “Everyone goes to the movies, right?”

I do, she said to herself. He has one leg she thought, as if the notion came to her in a boy-oing-oing moment. And an old dog. What else, she wondered. It would come to her.

“Don’t you ever just wish you could eat pizza at the movies? Right? But they won’t let you, right? So my subsidiary came up with a real wise move. They pretty much packaged pizza into a bag of crisps and you’re on the ground floor of...”

She interrupted him. “No, I’m on the sixth.” She watched her long fingers encircle the ice tea bottle in front of her. “But I do like *Snapple*,” she said.

“Exactly my point. You don’t want to be on the dance floor when the music stops.”

He might also have bad skin. Burnt when he lost the leg. But dancing sounded fun.

She was hungry so she gently placed the phone onto the receiver. Then Elizabeth Carlos poured her ice tea.

Her shift was done. Her dinner waiting. And the whole lucky night ahead of her.