

A Funny Pair of Shorts



Three short stories by
Edward G. Talbot

A Funny Pair of Shorts

three short stories
by

Edward G. Talbot

SAMPLES

To get the complete version of the stories for 99 cents, go to

www.edwardgtalbot.com

OR

www.smashwords.com

OR

[The Amazon Kindle Store](#)

Sample of Story #1

The Devil and Rashid Schwartz

I was relieved to discover that my head was still attached. Decapitation has a way of ruining your day.

But wait a minute. How did I escape? And where the hell was I?

I looked around and saw white walls and floor. A little booth with a clipboard and a single red rose in a crystal vase. But no one sat on the stool inside. To the right, I saw a huge set of gates constructed from some sort of shiny pink stone.

Then it hit me, more like a gut shot than a blinding flash of light. I guess the guy with the Samurai sword *didn't* miss. I was looking at the pearly gates. I was in Heaven.

I laughed out loud, a booming sound that echoed in the small room. Heaven existed after all. And somehow I wound up here. Me, in the afterlife.

What's that? Oh sorry, I'm a bit self-involved here. Allow me to introduce myself. No, no, I'm not a man of wealth and taste. Far from it, I'm just a guy named Rashid Schwartz from Brooklyn. My paternal grandparents were Hasidim, living strictly by Talmudic law. My mother's parents hailed from Saudi Arabia, devout followers of the Wahhabi branch of Sunni Islam. My folks met on the subway between Grand Central and 52nd street, and it wasn't long before they decided to pursue their own form of religious accord. The wording of the wedding ceremony walked a tightrope narrow enough to topple a flea. Instead of a Nobel Peace Prize, they got me.

Their little atheist. Two different deities kept me from really knowing my grandparents. A third – the benevolent and misunderstood hippie with the Spanish name – permeated the culture of my birth country. I had no use for any of it. I guess I was wrong. But man, if someone had to be right, couldn't it have been the dudes who believed in Paradise with seventy-two virgins?

What else can I tell you? A problem child. That describes me as a teenager. It describes me still, if I'm being honest. But I'm getting ahead of myself. I fell in with the wrong crowd, and fractured a law or ten before I dropped out of Boys High School in Bedford Stuy at age 15. By 25, though, I had “reformed”, and redirected my six foot, two-hundred pound frame to the not unpleasant task of ejecting undesirables from a strip club called *The Greased Pole*.

The line between undesirable and regular patron at *The Greased Pole* was a moving target, but the bosses had no problem with erring on the side of busting heads. They were more concerned with how much cash they could pump through the joint to scrub the proceeds from their less respectable endeavors. As long as I got paid to hit people, it didn't matter much to me. But one day, someone pulled out a samurai sword.

A friggin' samurai sword. In Brooklyn. I never wanted to know what the club owners were into, but clearly they had pissed someone off in the Land of the Rising Sun. And with the sword visibly hanging off black robes, there was no way I could just let him in. The second-to-last thing I ever said was, “You're gonna have to leave the sword with me, buddy.” The last thing was “Oh, Sh-.”

What a drag. I didn't even get to finish my syllable. And now, here I was. But something was wrong. I mean besides the beheading. I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Then it hit me. If I was at the pearly gates, where was Saint Peter?

...*Continued in the full ebook*

Sample of Story #2

The Pink Tower

"So you'll do it then?"

The offer tempted me. Hell, it more than tempted me. The cash would set me up for life. But anything that seems too good to be true usually is.

I sat in a plush office. Leather everywhere, and not the cheap kind they get from roadkill. This kind wouldn't be out of place on a baby's posterior. I saw a bunch of sculptures in a glass case, and I just knew the guy called them objets d'art when talking to his friends. A mahogany desk – kind of behind the times, but monstrously expensive nonetheless. My host definitely had money, and he'd just offered me a big chunk of it to steal something for him.

"Why don't you just go over it one more time?"

I looked at Rodney Gorton. His face couldn't hide much, but it didn't need to. The prominent cheekbones and gray-eyed stare spoke of one thing. Power. No need to dissemble when you can roll right over anything in your way.

"You don't hafta know all the details. It's a prototype of a tiny voice activated cell phone. When it hits the market in six months, the rest of us'll be dead in the water. But she made a mistake. Too paranoid. She didn't submit a patent for the critical pieces, 'cause she was afraid of someone gettin' hold of it. If we can get our hands on it, we'll own it. Mebbe a long court case and we might even lose eventually, but lawyers are great at muddying the waters.

"Anyway, you gotta break into her plant and steal it. There's a little office on the third floor tucked in back, where they keep stuff like this in a vault. That folder I gave you tells you all about the vault and its manufacturer. I don't have the combination, sorry.

"Deliver it to me, and I'll pay you seven million, seven hundred dollars. Cash, all tens, twenties and hundreds. Do we have a deal?"

I had to ask. "Why seven million, seven hundred? That's an odd number."

"Heh, heh. The bailout my friend. Seven-hundred billion dollars. A windfall for guys like me. I like to use the number seven to remind myself how good I have it."

What a sick bastard, but not my concern. "How do I know you won't screw me at the handoff and just take it?"

He sat back in his chair and spread his hands in front of him, palms up.

"Hey, name your arrangement. I'll send some guy in his boxers with a briefcase if that eases your mind."

I smiled. "That won't be necessary. Look, I'm gonna scope this out. If I can do it, the next time you hear from me will be a phone call giving you thirty minutes notice to meet me with the briefcase. If I can't, you won't ever hear from me again."

"Hey, wait a minute. If you won't do it, I'll have to find someone else-."

I stood up. "Find someone else then. I won't bother. Nice talking to ya'."

His mouth dropped open, and then he sighed. "Okay, okay. Just get it."

I didn't shake his hand, but I held his gaze for a beat longer than necessary.

"You'll hear from me. Or not."

* * * * *

An hour later, I sat on a hill overlooking the headquarters of the Digicall corporation. Not

too imaginative a name, but then neither is General Electric and they do OK. A privately held venture, wholly owned by one woman. Monica Pittman. By all accounts a ruthless and shrewd businesswoman, she'd made half a billion dollars trading commodity futures and dumped most of it into the company. Digicall owned a small share of the digital cell phone market, but that was apparently about to change.

I should tell you a bit about myself. Kash Klark is the name. That's right, both names begin with K. My parents are morons. Bad enough to have a last name that gets spelled right about as often as a lunar eclipse, they had to go and name me Kash. I suppose I should be grateful my middle initial is B.

Anyway, I'm not a very nice guy. I steal things for a living. Always from people who can afford to lose them, but they'll cut off your hand for it in Arabia. I've even killed for money on two occasions. No one with any more redeeming social value than a cockroach, but still I don't kid myself. I'm not just the type of guy your mother warned you about. I'm the type of guy Charles Bronson would have filled with holes.

I'm good at what I do, and I've never come close to getting caught. Part of it is that I don't look the part. I'm a small white guy with good teeth and not much hair. You look at me and you think middle management, mostly glad that my life is more boring than yours. If only you knew.

...Continued in the full ebook

Sample of Story #3

World Wide What

Janet Higginbottom was having a banner week. On Tuesday she received the divorce papers, and while most women would have felt at least a twinge of regret, Janet felt only jubilation. Her husband, Winthrop, was a perpetual student working on his doctoral thesis in archeology. She knew he didn't care for the actual work involved in digging under a hot sun, but he had carved out a niche for himself in the lab. Janet suspected the main appeal was the large amount of unsupervised free time, which allowed him to continue his lifelong quest to create the perfect bong.

In any case, Janet no longer had to support the jerk. The papers cited irreconcilable differences, but she knew the truth. After years of serial philandering, Winthrop had struck gold in the daughter of the founder of the largest waste disposal company in the country. The girl was devoted to the handsome teaching assistant and determined to support his ambitions. Even in his perpetual drug-induced haze, Winthrop had recognized the opportunity, and described his modest dissertation as a cross between the hunt for El Dorado and the opening of King Tut's tomb.

A breathless and blonde twenty-one, the girl needed no more encouragement to join him in a search for the treasures of the past, provided she didn't break too many nails. Buoyed by visions of a six-figure sugar mama, Winthrop had informed Janet that she was stifling his creative growth and he needed to move on. Janet had barely managed to contain her laughter. She was considering sending the young woman a thank you note once the divorce was final.

Janet worked in the marketing department of a euphemistically titled "fertility clinic." Two men from Boston owned the facility, and they seemed particularly interested in generating clients willing to pay in cash. Janet did have to give them credit for originality; the idea of a federal investigation into money-laundering at such a business was almost comical.

...Continued in the full ebook

Like what you've read?

The ebook of these stories is available for 99 cents at the following:

www.edwardgtalbot.com

OR

www.smashwords.com

OR

[*The Amazon Kindle Store*](#)