

MAGGIE ROSE

By: Jonathan Masters

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The first time I ever stole from my mother was two weeks before my fourteenth birthday. The last couple of years, she took me to the mall and handed me a wad of cash saying, “go nuts,” while she mumbled about taking sips from a flask that she’d hide in her purse.

I figured I had this money coming to me anyway, and I could pay her back by not going for broke on my birthday like I usually did.

I had just gotten back from school and my mom was still sleeping. She works the graveyard shift, so I had a fifty-fifty shot of finding her passed out when I get home, especially when she decides to get liquored-up and argue with the morning news like she did that morning.

I could see her purse on the dresser from the hallway. It was wide open with money and makeup mixed about. My sixteen-year-old boyfriend, Justin, had asked me to bring some cash to pitch in for booze that night. Normally, he would cover me, but this time he was strapped for cash from the insurance payments on his T-Top Camaro. Just thinking about how that car purred and hugged curves makes me wet.

Why do you keep fiddling with your phone? Are you recording this?

You perve.

Whatever; it’s your time.

Anyway, I make it all the way across the room and pinch a twenty from her purse. When I pivot to make my escape, the floor makes this deafening creak, and I freeze. Like, I'm not breathing and neither is my mom. I don't know how long that went on, but it felt like forever.

Finally, she took this big inhale, half-snore, and I busted out of there.

I was so hyped. I almost ate a whole bag of chips while watching music videos until Justin picked me up at six. We met up with the rest of the crew at a playground behind the liquor store we liked to go to. Justin's buddy Zeek had this lame fake ID that I'm sure the clerk knew about, but a sale is a sale, right? And, Zeek usually walked out with at least fifty bucks worth of booze.

It was Friday night and Renee's parents had gone to a wedding or something. We teased her that they were gonna grind on each other all night then "make love" in the hotel suite at, like, 10:30 before passing out. We really didn't give a fuck because it gave us a place to party.

Renee was a little jumpy because she was paranoid that her parents would show up or send someone to spy on us. Justin turned on the charm with his crooked smile and put an arm around Renee to share the plan. We'd keep the lights off upstairs and party in the basement. Mellow music kept low, so if anybody did come, we could sneak out the well-window with the booze.

By eight o'clock, Renee was well on her way to being toasted, and we all forgot about the threat of intrusion.

Later, when everyone was good and sloppy, Justin gave me a half-smirk with a tipsy twinkle in his eye and led me to Renee's backyard. There was a hammock that we sat on sideways, so Justin could rock the hammock with his toes.

We passed a bottle of fruity wine and stared at the stars. Nothing was really said. I'd giggle a little which prompted Justin to kiss my forehead. After a while, the stars got bigger and were, like, rimmed with rainbows as I faded into oblivion.

I woke up shivering, and my legs were wet. I was still drunk, but I could feel the hangover had started which didn't help as I tried to figure out where the fuck I was. I tried to stand up off the grass, but I found my pants were wrapped around my knees. The moon was full, and I could see my underwear were dark and wet.

At first, I thought I had my period. But, I remembered that treat had ended five days ago. I buttoned my pants and tried to get back into Renee's house. The lights were off, and the door was locked.

I went through the gate on the side of the house and couldn't find Justin's car. So, I thought it best to walk the two or so miles back to my apartment in the dead of night.

The liquor was still keeping me warm, but I had to blow on my hands and rub my arms a couple times. At first, I was mad as hell. I replayed over and over in my mind how badly I was going to bitch out Justin's dumb ass.

But, as I could see my apartment building, I realized Justin had just broke up with me. He screwed me and left. He was

probably freaked out about my virgin vagina blood all over his dick.

Even to my naïve, middle school brain, the message was becoming pretty clear. You don't do that to someone you're hoping to see again.

When I got in our place, I stripped down and took the hottest shower I could stand. Despite washing and washing, I couldn't get the sticky feeling out from between my legs.

When the water went cold, I stayed in as long as I could stand it, hoping the freeze would numb the pain.

I put my bloody clothes in two grocery bags and stuffed them under my bed. I put on a t-shirt, sweats, and a hoody with the hood pulled over my head and shivered myself to sleep under the blankets.

That was my first time.

Memorable, huh?

Is this getting you off, Doc?

You want anything else from me because our time's almost up?

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My full name is Rosa Margarita Gonzalez. When I tell people my name is Margarita, they think it's like a fake, "stripper"

name or something. My mom named me Rosa as the Mexican equivalent of my grandmother's name, Roselyn.

I think Mom was trying to be clever or romantic with the middle name. Mom didn't think it practical to hide the fact that she got knocked up by some Cholo at an all-night taqueria or something. "Tequila" would have been a bit much, so mom kept it classy with "Margarita" as a wink and a nod to how trashed she was when I happened.

Mom gave me His last name thinking that a one-night stand would stick it out. To his credit, he took my mom on a couple dates she tells me. He didn't show up on my birth day and has been scarce ever since.

Since we've lived on and off with my grandparents for as long as I can remember, the adults decided "Rosa" was too close to "Grandma Rosie." So, my mom started calling me Margarita, even trying to roll her "R's" like a true gringo.

My grandfather had a difficult time acknowledging my bastard origins, so being the Irishman that he is, decided to call me "Maggie Rose." Though he refused to put up with an inch of my mom's bullshit, Grandpa Bill always said my name with tenderness. Every time he said, "Maggie Rose," it felt like I was his and his alone.

My dutiful grandmother fell in line calling me "Maggie," and my mom respected the rent and did her best to remember to call me "Maggie" while grandpa was around. I think Mom intentionally slipped up when it was just her and Gram to make Rosie blush.