

A day in the life

by Rye

"Excuse me, ma'am," I said to the lady behind the white laundry mat table, "that green washing machine over there, Ahh, yes, the one in the corner against the wall — it ripped me off fifty cents. There wasn't any 'out of order' sign on it — could ya take a look at it?"

"Sir, if you'd just kick the machine a couple of times near the bottom — it should start. We've had a lot of problems with that one, it tends to get off balance rather easily lately," the lady in the bleached white uniform dress informed me.

"Thanks, Mister," I replied as I coolly, calmly and collectedly restrained any sudden explosively violent thoughts I might impulsively act on as I turned away from her. I was

relieved that no one had overheard that lady when she mistook me for a man. I guess it's because I wear a flannel shirt and faded blue jeans. "It's kind of interesting," I thought, as I checked to see if anybody would notice a swift kick in the shins of this green zonk of a machine. "There are those people who would never have a problem identifying my sex, but on the other hand, there are the slightly arrogant people who believe that if you are a woman in pants and appearing independent of a 'need' for a man, you must be a man." I guess I just don't fit my "man-given" societal role, I rationalized, sociologicalized and philosophized as round one with this stupid space age machine continued.

I think that if one more person refers to me as a man today, I just might lose it! I mean three strikes and you're out, right? Well,

twisting of fate to avoid one more disheartening incident.

It had been a threatening sky all day, all clouded over, on the verge of rain or snow. I really hadn't felt like doing much of anything. God knows, there were dozens of things I should've been getting done, though. Like the dishes. They were overflowing in the sink from the weekend before. It was kind of making me nauseated to look at, seeing all those cigarette butts floating around, mingling with the "what once was" a very tasty spaghetti dinner.

But at the time, I just couldn't bring myself to do them. My motto's always been, "Put off today what you might be able to put off tomorrow, as well." So, letting them slide, I hoped that little fairies might clean up the mess.

tended — but I had been out of clean underwear for several weeks now, and the idea of wearing underwear again kinda appealed to me.

So I picked up all the strays that hadn't quite made two points in one bag or another and dug out a couple of brown pairs of corduroys that I had stashed away, figuring another day couldn't hurt.

It all amazingly fit into the K-Mart shopping cart (the one that the employees had so graciously refused to let me borrow) with little room to spare, and headed out the back door.

Squished faces with pug noses pressed against steamed up passing by car windows and pointing fingers with toooo close to be called "near misses" staged my path down Sage Street. It seemed like no one had ever seen a shopping cart outside of its natural surroundings before. By people's expressions I figured it must have been the funniest sight since sliced bread.

I'd say halfway there as I clang — clang — clang down Sage Street, Grams and Gramps mosey on by. I'd swear they were moving slower than I was and they kept pointing at something behind them. It really kind of bothered me — old people are gonna start giving me a hard time too, huh?! What is this world coming to?! I ignored them and pretended I was preoccupied by making sure I wasn't stepping on any cracks in the pavement.

The car came to a jerky halt an arm's length away and Grandma was rolling down her window. "Tits," I thought, "Jesus, ain't this tits!" A very attractive Grandma tone said, "Is that your underwear?" half wanting to know if I wore women's underwear and the other half informing me of a sparsely marked trail I was leaving. "Yeah," I sputtered, probably more like I muttered "thanks," not even caring to straighten her out.

She smiled a high cheek-boned smile and

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there's gotta be somebody who won't mistake me for a man. But Lord, I don't know, the way my day has gone, it would take some

I had to get something done. I mean one has to get something accomplished during the day or so I've been told. Well, with that type of eager beaver thought in mind I kinda slaundered back into my bedroom and was greeted uneasily by the laundry piles waiting for me to get them done. It'd been close to a month since my last visit to Mr. Sud's, but I would imagine my clothes would dispute that statement. They think it's been too long for comfort and they're conspiring against me, plotting and threatening that if they didn't get done today my whites would never be whiter, the blues would never be bluer and frankly, my clothes would disown me.

I had to take sympathy with 'em (more like a gut level response, but a little lower) 'cuz I was feeling the pinch myself — no pun in-

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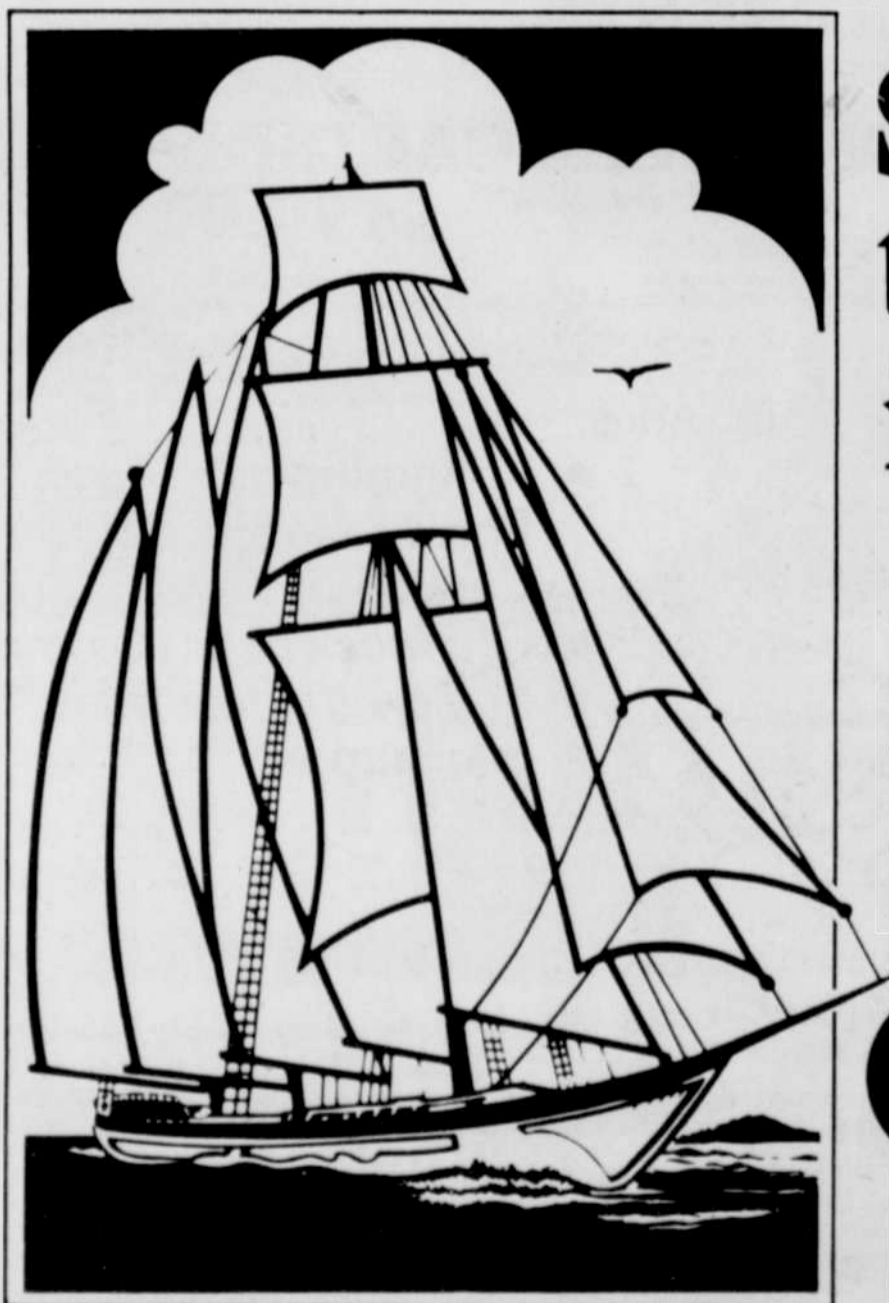
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