

Asphalt

by

Vixxy Fox



“Says here they’ve invented somethi’n to make roads smooth and hard,” Wirewolf mentioned as he put his newspaper aside to take a sip of coffee. He was taking a break from morning chores and having found the discarded paper left by one of the Inn’s patrons, decided to indulge himself. “That’s a change from using cobblestones or pavers bricks.”

“I like smooth and hard,” Miss Buns chuckled from her place in front of the oven. Winter had finally broken its back on the green of spring and though the nights were still cold, the days were warm and luxuriant. She was feeling generous being that the Inn’s grounds keeper had brought her an armful of wildflowers for her kitchen. She’d placed them in a pitcher of water next to her window where the light from outside showed off their beauty; though she was torn between admiring them, smelling them, and eating them.

“Indeed I do hear you do,” the old sailor responded honestly, “But that’s not for me to decide. It is that time of year when we begin thinking of such things, isn’t it?” He sipped at his coffee and then whispered, “I’ve seen that Wirez Fox looking in your direction more than a few times. I believe he is single and he’ll be around for a time being that he’s talked the old girl into the business of wire talkies.”

The Hare sighed as she stirred the day’s soup now boiling on the stove in a huge pot. She’d discretely added a few of the flowers to the mix. “One of these days perhaps the Brush Bunny will be back and I can take advantage. He’s a short little guy but he can sure do the Bunny Hop.”

“That’s a dance ain’t it?”

She turned and smiled at the Wolf. “You could say that.”

The cook made herself busy for a moment cutting up winter vegetables for the soup; the ones that kept well in the root cellar during the cold months, and then asked, “What’s this new smooth hard stuff called?”

“Ass Fault,” he told her plainly. The paper was fully in front of his face so when she looked up to see if he was pulling her tail she couldn’t be sure.

“Ass Fault?”

“It’s spelt kinda funny but that’s the word I’m read’n. Apparently it’s made out of the oil they pump from the ground. Just guess’n, I figure they came up with the name cuz they had to stick a pipe into the ground to get the oil kinda like when you get all bound up inside.”

“I been there,” she replied, “But there are other remedies that are a might bit smoother than a pipe up the back side. They might not taste so good but they work.”

Wire folded the paper down and looked at her, “Such as?”

“The juice squeezed from a rotten carrot,” she replied sniffing at the soup. “My mama used to threaten us with it and just the thought was enough to keep us in the outhouse squeez’n our guts.”

“Fish oil works to help things slide along,” the old sailor told her, pausing to take a sip of his coffee, “Our old cook Charlie Noble used to use it to keep us regular. Part of the cook’s duties is to keep his shipmates healthy.”

“Seems I keep you healthy enough,” the Hare teased. “In fact I’ve been boiling the coffee with a small piece of iron in the water just to give you that little bit of extra zip you need to keep Miss Vixyy happy.”

“Is that a fact?” he asked, looking down at his coffee cup.

“It is indeed.”

“And what might I ask keeps you... well... functioning at such a high level of things. Poor Duroc tells me...” His voice tapered off as his brain caught up to his mouth and he realized he was in a tar pit.

Buns turned and placing her paws on her ample hips asked, “And what does Mr. Duroc say to his good friend the sailorman gardener?”

Wire smiled his most disarming of smiles and told her, “He says, ‘Yes sir Friend Wirewolf; that big Bunny doe sure can cook.’”

Buns took a step towards the window and snatched one of the wild flowers out of the vase and popped it into her mouth, chewing on it most violently.

“He says that does he?” she managed between chomps. Reaching out she grabbed another and shook it at the Wolf in a threatening manner, looking for all intents and purposes to be conjuring up an evil genie. “Tell me exactly what he said,” she demanded.

“Well... he might have muttered something about a sore cock, but I was thought perhaps he really said core rock since we was talking about digging outhouses. I figured he might also meant he loved the way you rocked him back and forth when you cuddled and such.”

“And you should hear what Miss Vixyy says about you!” the Hare remarked in retort.

Wire set his newspaper to the side and sat a little straighter in his chair sensing the brewing storm and knowing he was a little too close to the source. “What does she say?” he asked, not really sure he wanted to know.

The cook opened her mouth to share this secret when the door to the kitchen opened and the little vixen in question walked in carrying a basket of sweet clover. “I found a good patch down by the stream Miss Buns, so I thought to bring you some for your rumbly stomach.”

Spying the wild flowers in the vase she asked, “Where did those come from?”

“I brough’em to Miss Buns in trade of some of her good coffee,” Wire told her honestly, “And we just naturally started a conversation of sorts.”

Miss Vixyy’s eyes squinted ever so slightly.

“Really... and what were you talking about?”

“Ass Fault,” they both responded in an overly loud manner.

The gardener’s expression changed suddenly as his guts twisted about. “And I’m just out the door to the outhouse with this here paper,” he said in a rush for the back door.

Walking to the table, the Inn Keeper raised his cup of coffee to her nose and sniffed at it. “Smells like rotten carrots,” she said softly.

“A cook’s duty is to keep her crew’s health,” the Hare told her with a coy smile, “And I just figgered a good purge might liven up the old Wolf’s love life.”

“He won’t have a love life if his backside is anchored to that outhouse seat,” the Fox quipped. Reaching into her pocket she took out a small jar of something and placed it upon the table. “I also stopped by Marvin’s and got Duroc a jar of ointment.”

She smiled a vixen to doe smile and added, “He’s to apply it to his sore parts and not use’em for a spell. You think you can manage that?”

“But it’s springtime,” the cook protested.

“And the creek is still ice cold,” the Fox added, “Might I suggest a good soak?”