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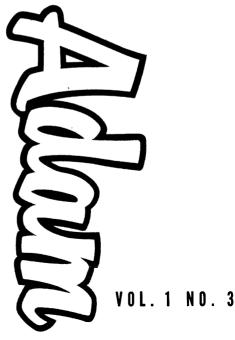
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MITCHEL GORDON was a cute tyke of 6, adored by his mother and fawned over by all the ladies of the neighborhood. But the little girls of the neighborhood knew they had to watch out for Mitch if they had any pennies in their pockets. He once pushed 5-year-old Annie Blaine right into a mud puddle and took eight cents away from her. Looking back on the incident, he told his high school buddies, "I wanted the money, and she was smaller."

the time he was in high school, Mitch learned that he didn't have to so crude. The girls, with a set of emotions different from those of childhood, sought Mitch and offered favors in return for the company of his rugged good looks and masculine manners. Mitch acknowledged to himself that he was a prized commodity, and any girl who wanted him would pay. So they did - they paid for his ice cream sodas, hamburgers and the so forths, as well as their own.

Mitch petted well, but he had never been able to quite go the full route. The girls were still more children than adult about sex. And perhapshe hated to admit this-he was still more boy than man.

So Mitch reached the second year of high school, still a virgin at the age

He took a summer job as a delivery boy for a neighborhood grocer. One of his best customers was Mrs. Schmitt, friend of his mother and their next door neighbor. He brought her groceries twice weekly, and often catching her in the informal house attire of shorts, Mitch noticed new things about Mrs. Schmitt; shapely legs, nicely padded rump and an immense bosom. He would never dare anything, however, not with her knowing his mother and all

So he was surprised really when he was helping Mrs. Schmitt one afternoon unload some boxes of groceries in her kitchen. She leaned close and then pressed her body against him, breathing hot on his neck. Mitch could smell beer on her breath, and guessed she was a little tight. He tried to control himself, but he could not conceal a certain reaction which caused him great embarrassment.

"That's all right, kid. I wish my old man was that young again.'

One thing led to another and soon Mitch found himself kissing her, and her mouth was moist and warm. Her tongue parted his lips with an expert-

ness that made all his high school stunts nothing but childish fumblings. He could feel her enormous breast swelling in his hand and he became tremendously excited. She allowed him to fondle her, but when he attempted to lead her off to the bedroom, she held back and protested.

Mitch thought that she was only teasing. She gasped, "No time for the bedroom. My husband'll be home any minute now. Here, I'll show you."

She leaned against the kitchen sink and pulled her dress up around her waist so that Mitch could see that she wore no underclothing. The gleaming whitness of her thighs surrounding the black patch assailed his eyes and his hand fell to his belt buckle.

"C'mere. Ole Myra don't need no bed. It's just as good this way."

Mitch did as he was told. She surrounded him like an octopus, cursing and moaning.

When it was over, he was vaguely disappointed. The sordidness of the situation became more apparent, now that the physical pleasure had been enjoyed. He looked at her panting like a bitch, and felt disgusted and wanted more than anything else to get out of there. Yet he remained, waiting expectantly. She asked him why and he answered, "You usually give me a quarter tip for bringing the groceries, Mrs. Schmitt."

She laughed, "Why you young squirt. You've just had your tip."

"The hell I have, You got more out of this than I did."

She put her hands on her hips and stopped laughing. "Beat it junior, or mama'll spank.'

"Yeah," Mitch said, letting her know that no woman was going to order him around, "Give me my two bits or I'll tell your old man a story."

He left Mrs. Schmitt's kitchen, twenty-five cents wealthier and immeasureably richer in other ways.

Mitch now knew exactly what he was aiming for in a date, and he polished his charms and technique with all the studiousness of one studying for a trade in life. Part and parcel

-turn the page

Mitch was cheap but the girls wanted him badly enough to pay his way; would Betty be different?



LOVE, from page 13

of his approach was to never pay. In high school and college, Mitch was known to be tighter than a two-dollar pair of shoes. He puzzled his comrades; how could he keep getting the girls. One of his "fans" explained, "he's as good in bed as on the dance floor, and this boy is the greatest dancer around."

She added, however, "I sure do pity the girl who marries him. He's the cheapest bastard in the world. He

never spends on a girl.'

After graduating from college, Mitch pushed his way through one love affair after another. He managed to land a job in a top advertising agency and was doing pretty well for himself. He took money from his female friends strictly for fun.

Mitch went his merry way for a while, and got so he never had to carry more than fifty cents with him when he went out on a date. Then he

ran into Betty.

Mitch met her at a company party. He danced with her, holding her tight against him, and threw a swivel hip movement just to test her.

She ground herself right back at him and Mitch smiled. He always liked to know the score before the game. A jerk would wait until the end of the ninth inning. "Let's dump this madness," he whispered against her ear. "I've got my Thunderbird in the hanger and she's all fueled up."

"I just love to fly," she answered, nuzzling him and almost sinking her teeth into his ear lobe.

"Then leave us depart."

She followed him outside to his red Thunderbird and slid in demurely next to him. Mitch chose red because he wanted the attention of onlookers.

About ten minutes later he parked and lit two cigarettes. There was a bright moon that night. He looked at her breasts which thrust out against the restraining white cloth of her blouse. Damned if he couldn't see the nipples glowing as though they were luminous.

"What are you staring at?" she sked.

"You've got the most beautiful eyes I've ever seen."

As though they had exchanged mental signals, two cigarettes flipped out of the car and she popped into his arms. She kissed him in a way that showed Mitch she knew what she was doing, and Mitch immediately got the idea that she enjoyed it. He went through the Mitch Gordon routine of pressing her bosom and running his hand along her slipn legs, but when he started to open the top button of

her blouse, she stopped him.

"Ball game's over," she whispered, and then kissed him once more lightly. When Mitch insisted that they stay a little longer, promising to be a good boy, she gave him a real going over. When he drove her home, he was in a deep sweat. He walked her to the door. She wouldn't let him in.

"What's the story?" He asked politely.

"It's time I went to bed."

"I hope

"That's not a bad idea. I hope you've got a double. It's a little uncomfortable, I mean two in a single

"Good night," she said.

"Wait a minute," Mitch put his arm against the door, blocking her way. "I thought that routine in the car was leading up to something more than a good night kiss."

"You can think whatever you like."

"You sure fooled me, I hate to insist, but it's a long way back home and I can hardly keep my peepers open. Now, you wouldn't want me to fall asleep at the wheel and kill myself, would you?"

"That would be a pity."

"Then how about my sacking in with you tonight? Think of the life you'll save."
"You're breaking my heart," she

replied.
"Well, at least you didn't blush.

That's always a good sign."

"Listen here, Mitch ole boy," she said, firmly pushing his arm away and walking past him into the doorway. "I never claimed to be a maiden and I'm not pulling any coy act on you. I like you and I like the way you kiss. But I'm just not a first night girl, so why don't you shove off now like a good boy and pick me up tomorrow. And bring your own gas money this time. I don't think I can forgive you for lying about that full tank."

Then she kissed him lightly on the cheek and slammed the door heavily in his face. Mitch thought about kicking the door in, but the wood looked too thick, so he left. At least, the evening was not completely wasted, he reasoned. "I got a full tank of gas out of the deal."

The next evening Mitch planned on a full program. They parked in the hills. She let him slip his hand into her blouse this time but when he attempted to unsnap her brassiere, she halted him again.

"Damn you, Betty . . ."

"Not here," she said. "Thunderbird's just aren't built for it. Let's go to my place."

The Thunderbird took off as though it had a mind of its own. And sure enough, she had a double bed.

"So you're just a second night girl?"
"Complaining?"

"Nope," he answered. They were lying together on the bed and Mitch was smoking one of her cigarettes. He couldn't even begin to remember when

he had last bought a pack of his own. She crawled on top of him and began to poke her fingers into his ribs. He pushed her off, and they played around like that for a couple of minutes. Then he was lying back relaxed, feeling good and Betty was stroking his forehead and making curls in his hair with her fingers.

"Watcha thinking?"

He smiled and kissed her neck and shoulders. He reached over and patted her on the backsides.

"You'd never guess."

"Come on and tell."
"All right, I need some money."

"What?"

"No kidding. I'm kind of short this week. How about lending me a few ducats.

"Oh god," she laughed, "do you have character."

She got out of bed ignoring her nudity and walked over to the dresser for her purse. She threw a few bills at him.

"You know darling," Betty said, "this almost makes me feel like I've been bundling with a male whore. Someone else might say that I'm paying for you." She added, "But I hope you spend it in the right places."

"Don't worry," he said. "I will."
They looked at each other and then

They looked at each other and then she suddenly burst out laughing again. She flopped down beside him on the bed and reached out her arms.

"C'mere you cheap bastard," she said.

\* \* \*

Mitch's affair with Betty lasted far longer than any of the others. They enjoyed each other's company, and Betty never hesitated when he demanded money. She accepted the fact that Mitch was an habitual sponger, but as long as she thought he was worth it she didn't mind his asking, no matter how degraded she may have felt.

They were sitting over a couple of highballs in a club one night and Mitch had asked for money to pay the check, when she said.

"You know Mitch, I've got you all figured out."

"Yeah?"

"Money must be some sort of fetish with you. I mean money you get from a woman. You don't really need it, but by taking it you're trying to prove something to yourself."

"What's that?"

"You think you're a real he-man because you can get away with this petty business. I mean like asking for money in front of the waiter. Because I let you get away with it you think it proves your power over me and all women in general."

"Is that what you really think?"

"It is."

"Then I guess you want us to break up." He reached over and took one of her cigarettes. "Why the hell don't you buy a fresh pack?""

"Oh, for Chris's sake, No, I don't want us to break up. I don't understand it myself, but there is something about you I find awfully hard to resist. Maybe, it's because you're so damn good in the hay. I must be insarte; you're such a moocher." Then Betty, half-seriously said, "Let's get married and then you can bum your own money."

"That's not such a bad idea," he said, exhaling the smoke through his nose and mouth as he talked. "But what for?" What will that give us that we don't already have?"

"How about respectability?"

"Please, baby. Let's not get nauseating."

"Wouldn't you like children? Some little people running around, heirs to the good name of Gordon?"

"Now you're really sickening. Besides, I'm probably sterile, anyway."
"I wouldn't be too sure of that,"

Betty smiled. "I was a little late last month. I was more surprised than worried. Now what do you think about that?"

Mitch reached over and took her hand, He looked into her eyes and thought that she was a true beauty. A man could certainly not do better for a good-looking mate.

"I think you're a dumb broad. That's what you get for lying around so long and not doing what you're supposed to. One of these days you'll find yourself really knocked up."

"But don't you think that the purpose of man and woman is to have children and continue the human race?"

Mitch was annoyed, thinking that she was trying to trap him. "If you think that every time I lay you, you're supposed to conceive a little brat, then you've got the wrong slant. Let someone else propagate."

"All right, let's change the subject."
"That's fine with me. What shall

we talk about?"

"Let's talk about money."
"My favorite subject."

"I've got a brand new theory."

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LOVE, from page 15

"What's this one?"

"Well," she said, finishing her drink and playing with the stick and cubes. "I believe your cheap money habit is just a conditioned reflex."

"A conditioned reflex?"

"Uh huh. That's a theory some Russian scientist thought up. I'm not so dumb. You know, I read that every time he fed his dog, the mutt's salivary glands would act up. And when that happened, he rang a little bell. After a while it got so that he could ring the bell and serve no food and the dog would still spit.

"Was that called a conditioned re-

"Whatever it was called, I think that's your trouble. Maybe when you started on this mooching-from-dames kick, you really were broke. But now, even when you got dough, a woman is like that bell ring. Only when you drool, it's for cash. What do you think about that?"

"I don't know," Mitch answered, taking another of her cigarettes. "I like the first theory better. The one about me having a money fetish, And I don't believe that humans behave like animals in this instance anyway. We're too smart."

"Is that right? Speaking about animals. I seem to remember something you did last night . . ."

"Okay, okay. Let's beat it now. You didn't get me enough to cover another round of drinks."

Eight months after they started going around together, Betty gave up her apartment and moved in with Mitch. It meant that one way or another she also turned over most of her pay check to him.

Betty had no inhibitions, being a naturally passionate young thing, and so their lovemaking was never without an original and exciting flavor. She liked to experiment and was more than willing to meet Mitch half way. She had developed one special habit with Mitch, While Mitch was expe riencing that moment of ultimate consumation, Betty would squeeze the back of his neck and whisper huskily, her lips touching his ear, "You cheap bastard." This never failed to amuse Mitch and he often told her that nobody could pronounce the word "bastard," and make it sound so sexy as she could.

But as much as Betty liked Mitch, she decided one day that she would have to teach him a lesson. One day, Mitch asked her for five dollars to wash his Ford.

"Later," she told him.

"What?" He thought that they had settled this arrangement a long time

ago.

She put her arms around his neck and pressed up against him tight.

"I want it now," he said.

"Let's see if I can talk you out of it," she said, her lips lightly brushing against his mouth.

against his mouth.

Mitch sat down in his chair and Betty sat on his lap. "Start trying," he said. And she did. Her kisses were all encompassing, and her darting tongue was like a flaming match thrust into his mouth, burning his lips and searing the insides of his cheeks. She ran her hand inside his shirt and scratched his chest. Mitch decided to play along and nibbled at her ear. She opened her blouse, pulled the restraining pink cloth down and pulled his face against her bare breasts.

"Damn," he said. Mitch was all set to carry her into the bedroom, only he wanted to ask for the five dollars first Betty spoke before he could say any-

thing.

"You remember what I said one night about conditioned reflexes? You said you were too smart for something like that to happen to you."

"Let's not talk about that now. Let's have the . . . "

"Well, watch Mr. Smarty Pants."
She grabbed the back of his neck
and put her mouth against his ear.
You cheap bastard," she breathed.
Mitch tensed and relaxed suddenly in
her grasp.

Betty got off Mitch's lap and smiled. A knowing smile. He was sitting there, flushed and shaken, and completely unbelieving.

"What do you say now, lover?"

He didn't answer.

"I rang the bell and you . . ."
Mitch clenched his fists and for an instant wanted to hit her.

"You bitch," he said. Then he got to his feet and walked past her out of the room. Betty was breathing hard; she had a feeling of victory.

Mitch came back a few minutes later. "Let's have the five bucks," he said.

After that, things were never quite the same. No matter what he did, Mitch could not forget that she had beaten him.

More than anything, he couldn't stand that

One night while they were taking a drive, they knew the parting had come.
"I'll move out tomorrow," she told

"There's no hurry about it."

"I think it would be better."

"You seem to be in an awful goddamn hurry," he said. He didn't know why he should be so upset when he could see that there was no other way. He figured he should be the one to do the breaking.

"You got someone else to service you already?"

She slapped him so hard he almost drove the car off the road, His cheek was stinging.

was stinging.
"What the hell did you do that for?"

"No one can talk to me that way."
"You never blew up before," he

"Oh, shut up! Just get me someplace where I can catch a bus."

"If that's the way you feel," he answered, reaching across her and opening the door, "get out and walk." Even when he had finished, he thought the whole thing sounded ridiculous.

"Are you serious? We're miles from the nearest bus stop or cab stand."

"You bet your sweet behind I am. But before you go . . " He reached over and took her purse. Betty could not believe her eyes as she watched Mitch open it and take out all the money it contained. His eyes met hers and he dropped a few coins back into the purse. "Here's seventeen cents so you can

"Here's seventeen cents so you can catch a bus. I won't be home when you get there, so take your things and drop the key in the mailbox."

There was nothing more to say and so Betty got out, standing alone in the gathering darkness, looking awfully pitiful. Mitch stepped down hard on the accelerator and left.

As he was driving, Mitch began to think. He recalled the wonderful times they had had together and how he had once said he loved her. Now she was alone, God knows where, helpless, lost and with seventeen cents to her name. He could almost hear her crying. He put the brakes on and came to a screaming stop. "Damn it," he said, and turning the car around, speed back to where he had left her. He found her walking along the road and she had not been crying.

"You think I'm a skunk, don't you."

"Yes," she said.

"Well, you're right." He got out of the Thunderbird and seized her purse. He put the seventeen cents into his own pocket and then got back into the automobile. "Let's make it a complete bréak," he told her before his voice was drowned out by the sound of the motor and the rush of the night wind.

Betty looked out after him long after the car was out of sight.

"You cheap bastard," she called out, and she was laughing "you cheap, cheap bastard."

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