

One Night at Magee's: Face the Music

by Ellie Dauber

"You're sure about this," Jim Bergmann asked. He was a tall, heavysset man about forty. His thinning brown hair was streaked with premature gray, and he badly needed a shave. He wore a green baseball cap, a dark blue sweat shirt, jeans and an old pair of sneakers.

"I saw the thing, man," Don Haskins said. "He's got it hanging in a frame above the juke box. 'The King' on *SunRise Records*, his first commercial album. Even before Colonel Parker. There's only about fifty copies known to exist, and Magee's has one. I checked in one of those collector magazines. It's worth \$150,000 at least, more if it's in the mint condition that Simon says it is."

Don was in his late twenties. He was a skinny man with long, lusterless light brown tied behind him in a ponytail. He had a narrow face with a scraggly beard. Don was wearing a dark brown leather jacket over a yellow t-shirt and brown slacks tucked into military boots.

The two men sat in a booth in a neighborhood restaurant, not a fancy place, but comfortable and homey for the folks who lived nearby and liked to eat out once in a while. They'd been nursing their coffee and talking for almost an hour, but it was mid afternoon, and they were the only customers in the place. Annie, the waitress, came over and refilled their cups. She doubled as waitress *and* cashier in slow shift. 'Somebody had to drink the coffee before it got dumped to make fresh for the early supper crowd,' she thought. Besides, Don was kind of cute in his way.

The two men had stopped talking when Annie came near the table. They watched her walk away, ass and hips swiveling in the tight skirt and high heels she wore to attract tips. It wasn't a bad show. Don was definitely getting ideas.

"Probably got a ton of security on it," Jim said, restarting the conversation. "It won't be easy getting it out of that high tech stuff."

"That's the sweet thing about it. Simon says he don't trust all that stuff. Says it costs too much to put in and breaks down when you really need it."

"So what's he got?"

"A steel box set in the wall with a wire mesh glass door and a big old padlock. Dangerous stuff. Take the two of us, oh, maybe, *five* minutes to get it open, boost the record, and split."

"So when do we do it? After he closes?"

"No, he closes the place down himself. Then he must have a room in the back or something, 'cause nobody ever sees him leave."

"When then?"

"I been watching the place for a week. He leaves about two every afternoon, doesn't get back till almost four."

And the bartender doesn't show until just after four to set up for 'Happy Hour'. We'll have almost two hours."

"Right, tomorrow afternoon, then. We meet here at 2:30, have a cup of coffee, and head over by three." The two men shook hands. Jim pulled a dollar from his pocket and left it next to his cup as he stood up to leave. Don went over to talk to Annie at the register. She was busy that night, but she agreed to go out with him the next. He offered to take her to Magee's. 'Return to the scene of the crime,' he thought to himself.

"Sounds good," she said. "But I hear that they're closed tomorrow night. Harry Vitelli's bachelor party. My boss is going; he's Harry's cousin."

"Well, there's lots of other places. I'll pick you up here at six." He smiled and told her to keep the change from the five he used to pay for the coffee and donut he'd ordered. He was thinking of it in terms of an investment in tomorrow's date. She smiled back as he left.

The two men were back the next afternoon. Both were dressed much the same as the day before, dark colored "work clothes". They took the same booth as the day before, waiting for Annie to bring coffee and leave before they began to speak. Don told Jim about the party at Magee's that night.

"Yeah, I know," Jim said. "I was in there last night and saw a sign he's got posted. I asked about coming in early, having a drink during 'Happy Hour'. They said that was when Harry's friends were coming by to put up decorations. Said they all worked and couldn't get there till about five. I watched this afternoon, too, before I got here. The old guy left just before two today, same as always."

"Sounds like we're on," Don said. "If he does come back early, well, there's *two* of us."

"Right. Let's go." As they got up to leave, Don motioned that he'd pay the tab. He handed Annie another five as they walked out. "See you tonight," he said. By tonight, he'd have plenty of money, and he wanted Annie to be as cooperative as possible with his plans for that evening.

It was only a couple of blocks to Magee's. The two men walked around to the alley behind the building. Jim kept watch while Don pulled a thin metal rod from his jacket pocket and knelt by the door. He worked the lock for only a few seconds before they both heard a "click". The door knob turned freely in his hands. They opened the door and walked in quickly. Jim locked the door behind them just in case anybody else came by while they were inside.

The lights were off, but the back room had high barred windows that let in some of the afternoon sun. They walked past a small desk filled with papers and past shelves filled with boxes of liquor. Jim thought about grabbing a bottle or two to celebrate on their way out. There was another doorway between two sets of shelves with a dark blue curtain instead of a door. "Must be Simon's room," Don thought.

Both men had been in the bar enough times to know their way around the main room, even in the dim light that managed to get through the curtains covering the front windows. As they walked past some booths, Don noticed the stage over in a corner. It wasn't big, there wasn't much room. But Simon used it occasionally, bringing in a local rock group or a folk singer. Today, he'd hung a curtain across the front. It reached completely from floor to

ceiling, blocking the view of the stage from anywhere in the room. "Must be planning something for the party," he thought.

The juke box was halfway down the same wall. It was a big old machine from the 50s, blinking red and gold in the dim light. It had about 200 selections, old 45s that you could see stacked inside it. Simon had a pretty good selection, too, scrounged from "oldies" shops across the city, everything from "Happy Birthday" and "Louie, Louie" through classics of rock to a few ethnic favorites.

Their prize was in a case set in the wall just above the juke box. Most of the front wall of the box was glass to allow its display. A very conspicuous lock was connected by a latch near the bottom. There was also a signed certificate of authenticity in a small wooden frame next to the box. Jim decided that they'd take that, too. "Probably get us a better price," he thought.

The men put on thin leather gloves. Jim pulled a small work kit from a jacket pocket and unfolded it on top of the juke box. He studied the lock for a few moments before choosing a hooked metal rod very much like the one Don had used on the door. He stuck it in the lock and turned it this way and that feeling for the tumblers. This lock was far more complicated than the one on the back door. Jim had to work his pick for almost a minute before they heard the "click". The weight of the lock separated it from the bar. Jim took the lock off the latch and stuck it on the top of the juke box. Then he put his pick back in the kit, sticking the whole thing back in a pocket.

Don had a small padded bag wadded up in the pocket of his sweat shirt. He took it out and opened it. Jim had the box door open and was about to carefully lift the record out from the straps that held it in place.

The lights went on. "*That's enough,*" they heard an angry voice behind them say.

Both men spun around. It was Simon, standing near the doorway to the back. He knew them both as customers, so there was no chance of an alibi. They were caught. Don panicked. He dropped the bag and pulled a small pistol from his pants pocket. "Don't count on it, old man."

Simon's eyebrows furrowed in anger. "You presume to pull a gun on me in my own place." He made a strange gesture with one hand. The pistol was suddenly red hot. Don let out a yelp and dropped it to the floor.

"I sensed that someone was after the record, so I came back. I'm sorry to see that it was two of my customers, my friends. I had planned to just have you charged with breaking in for a couple bottles of liquor, a much less severe crime than attempted grand theft." He pointed at Don. "You ruined that chance by pulling the gun. Now you'll face a different justice."

Simon gestured again, and the two men felt a charge of energy run quickly through their bodies. When they tried to react, they found themselves unable to move. Simon walked over to where they were standing. He walked around them looking up and down. "Hmm, unlikely, but passable with a little work. Well, best to get started."

He stepped back and made a rather broad gesture from his head down to his waist. The two men stared in disbelief. Simon was a slender man in his mid 50s with graying hair. A moment before, he'd been wearing a blue work shirt and a pair of charcoal gray slacks. Now he was suddenly in a long dark blue robe that hung almost to the floor and had all sorts of crazy symbols sewn onto it. He seemed taller, too; seemed to tower over them.

The room seemed different, too. They had the impression of ancient stones lit by blazing torches, a great many voices chanting as one in a language they had never heard. Yet all they saw was Simon shaping the air as if he were making a giant snowball; a snowball of pulsing green light. The ball of light drifted out away from his hands and towards the two men. As it came near them, it split in two. Jim and Don tried to get out of the way, but they were still unable to move. One of the energy balls struck each of the men in the chest. They screamed silently, expecting intense pain. Instead, they felt a warmth that seemed to flow out through their entire bodies.

Simon gestured at the curtains on the stage. They parted. "Please go up onto the stage to wait, gentlemen," he said with not a little sarcasm. Jim and Don found themselves walking forward. They both tried to resist, tried to run for the door, but they had no control. They walked onto the stage and stood there about five feet apart, half facing one another.

"Thank you, gentleman. I'm afraid that you'll just have to wait to face the music. I have a party to get ready for." The curtains closed, leaving the two men standing on the bare stage. Over the next few hours, they heard voices, laughter, furniture moving, and glassware clinking. They tried any number of times to move, to escape. But it was hopeless. Their bodies might well have been made of stone for how little they were able to make them obey their mental commands.

The juke box played throughout the party, mostly classic rock from the 60s. It was playing louder than usual to be heard over the laughter of the party. Don and Jim could actually feel the music as the stage vibrated to it. They waited nervously to see what was going to happen to them. Was Simon going to leave them there till after the party and then cart them off to the cops, they wondered, or was he planning something *really* weird?

About an hour or so into the party, they heard Simon call for the room to be quiet. "My friends," he said. "I like to think of Magee's as a nice quiet, neighborhood bar; a friendly place where people can come to relax, and nothing unkind or vulgar ever happens."

There were a few cheers, but also a couple of catcalls, and somebody yelled, "Get on with it already, Simon."

Simon waited for the noise to die down before he continued. "Tonight, of course, we're gathered here to see our good friend, Harry, off down that long, lonesome road of monotony -- excuse me -- *monogamy*." The room was filled with laughter. "That calls for a little vulgarity, I think, and so -- without any further ado."

The juke box had been silent the entire time of Simon's speech. Now it started up again. The music was low and raucous, a slow sensuous rhythm that seemed to go through the air and into Don and Jim's bodies. Their arms raised, and they began to move to the music, their bodies swaying back and forth. The two looked at each other in amazement; trying to figure out what was happening to them.

Jim saw that Don seemed to be getting smaller.

Don saw that Jim seemed to shrink by about six inches, even as his clothes shrank to fit him.

Jim saw that Don's hair was getting blonder and blonder and that his ponytail was now a braid that hung down to his waist

Don saw Jim's hair getting longer and thicker until it hung down past his neck in auburn curls.

Jim saw Don's features seem to change, becoming more feminine.

Jim saw Don's body seem to fill out a little. He was still slender but not skinny.

Jim saw Don's jacket and pants disappear. Don suddenly had no body hair.

Jim saw breasts swell under Don's shirt. They grew out to a truly magnificent pair that swayed as he moved to the music.

Jim saw Don's t-shirt ride up from his waist to just below his breasts. The sleeves disappeared as the fabric molded itself around those breasts becoming a bright yellow demi-bra trimmed in lace.

Jim saw the bulge under Don's bikini briefs undershorts melt away. The briefs shrank a little becoming a yellow thong panty. Garters hung down from beneath the panty, moving as Don swayed his hips to the music.

Jim saw Don's sneakers change into a pair of bright yellow woman's shoes that rapidly grew a three inch heel. Don's socks moved up his legs becoming a pair of sheer stockings that hooked themselves to the garters.

Jim's head suddenly seemed to fill with cotton. He had trouble concentrating on anything but the music.

Don saw that Jim suddenly seemed to be wearing lipstick and make up. Jim seemed younger, too, no older than Don.

Don saw Jim's beer belly shrink away. His muscles seemed to go, too, until he was almost as slender as Don.

Don saw that Jim was standing in just his underwear, shoes, and socks. He was hairless!

Don saw Jim grew a pair of tits, not too big, but not bad. Jim's waist seemed to narrow and his hips were getting wider. He rolled them in movements that became ever more feminine.

Don saw the sleeves of Jim's t-shirt shrink to narrow straps. The bottom moved up to just below his breasts as it became a bright red uplift bra that made them seem bigger and more rounded.

Don saw Jim's boxers shrink down to a bright red thong panty that lay flat against Jim's crotch. Garters crept out from under the thong and seemed to inch down Jim's smooth legs in time to the music.

Don saw Jim's short boots shrink down to a pair of woman's shoes, red shoes with a high spiked heel. His socks grew sheer and moved up Jim's legs to become a pair of stockings.

Don head spun. He couldn't remember where he was, or why he was there.

All this had happened in only a few moments. Simon had walked over to stand near the stage and began pulling open the curtains as he talked. "Without any further ado, tonight's entertainment."

As the crowd cheered, Jamie and Dawn, the exotic dancers Simon had hired for the evening, turned to face the music, the audience, and their new lives.

The End

