

# BOX OFFICE POISON

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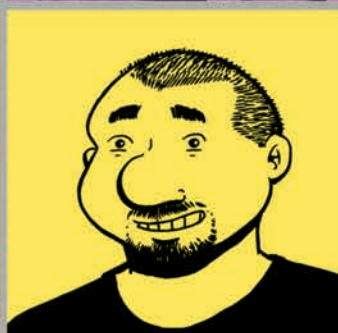
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ALEX ROBINSON  
PAT N. LEWIS



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Written and Illustrated by  
Alex Robinson

Colors by  
Pat N. Lewis

Edits: Carlos Guzman    Publisher: Ted Adams

Cover Artwork by Alex Robinson • Cover Colors by Pat N. Lewis

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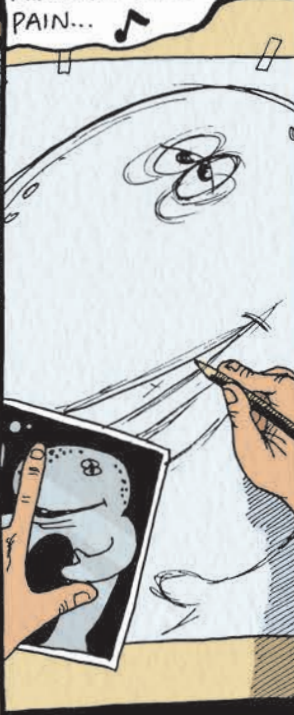
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"AUTUMN IN NEW YORK" PERFORMED BY BILLIE HOLIDAY

...GLITTERING CROWDS AND SHIMMERING CLOUDS... IN CANYONS OF STEEL... THEY'RE MAKING ME FEEL... I'M HOME...

IT'S AUTUMN IN NEW YORK THAT BRINGS THE PROMISE OF NEW LOVE ... AUTUMN IN NEW YORK... IS OFTEN MINGLED WITH PAIN...

DREAMERS WITH EMPTY HANDS... MAY SIGH FOR EXOTIC LANDS... IT'S AUTUMN IN NEW YORK



IT'S GOOD TO LIVE IT AGAIN... AUTUMN IN NEW



KLK



GOOD MORNING, ED.

'MORNING MR. FLAVOR.



Grant knew he should've called out sick. "Do you work here?" the two hundred and fifty seventh customer asked.

"Yes, can I help you with something?" Grant replied for the two hundred and fifty seventh time.

"Do you have a book called Basic Reading and Writing Skills? It's for a class. My teacher said you should have it and it's definitely in stock."

How would your teacher know that you moron? "It should be in aisle five, all the way in the back of the store."

"Really? Where's that?" the student asked with a vacant stare.

Grant let out an audible contemptuous sigh. "All the way in the back of the store. Aisle five." What kind of world is this where idiots are going to college to learn Basic Reading and Writing Skills anyway? Shouldn't that--

"And it would definitely be there?" the student asked skeptically. "Could you show it to me?"

"You'll have to ask a clerk back in aisle five, sir." Grant responded in his iciest voice possible, and he'd had a lot of practice lately so it was near absolute zero. The thick headed moron finally started walking away. "Can I help someone find a book?" Grant called to the swarming mob.

It was textbook season at Matthew's books again. Every year, Grant swore it would be his last. A cute girl approached Grant for help, which was trouble. As one of his co-workers pointed out, cute girls are the worst kind of customers because the only time they come into a bookstore is when they are forced to. When Chris told him this, Grant shook his head at the sexist and yet true nature of the comment.

"Do you work here?" the girl asked.

"Yes, can I help you with something?" Grant replied.

"Yeah, um, do you have...uh, Don Quixote? It's for my literature class?"

Ah. Don Quixote. "Hmmm. Do you know the author?" Grant couldn't wait.

"Uhhh..." the girl stammered as she scanned her syllabus. No one told her college would be this tough! "Servants?"

Yow, Grant thought, another one to tell everyone in the stockroom. Grant indicated ten feet to his left. "That would be on the fiction wall under the author's last name."

The girl smiled helplessly. "I looked but I couldn't find it. Could you maybe show it to me?" As she said this, Grant could sense her shifting into the If-I-Act-Cute-He'll-Give-Me-What-I-Want mode. Most guys fell for it like suckers, but Grant had been around long enough to know better. The hidden, sometimes deeply sometimes barely at all, subtext of the young girl's posturing was "If you find it for me I'll think you're cute and have sex with you." As stated, at this point, most guys would let their hormones do the thinking and show this girl everything, but Grant knew. She was just another stupid customer. He would show her all the books on her list and then she'd be gone.

When it came down to it, Grant just wasn't a people person.

"No, I'm afraid if it wasn't on the shelf then we are sold out." Grant smiled limply. Why doesn't your Monday Night Football asshole boyfriend find it for you?



IT'S... WELL, I DON'T GET IT. I MEAN, I UNDERSTAND IT... BUT...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? JAMES READ IT AND HE SAID IT WAS HYSTERICAL.

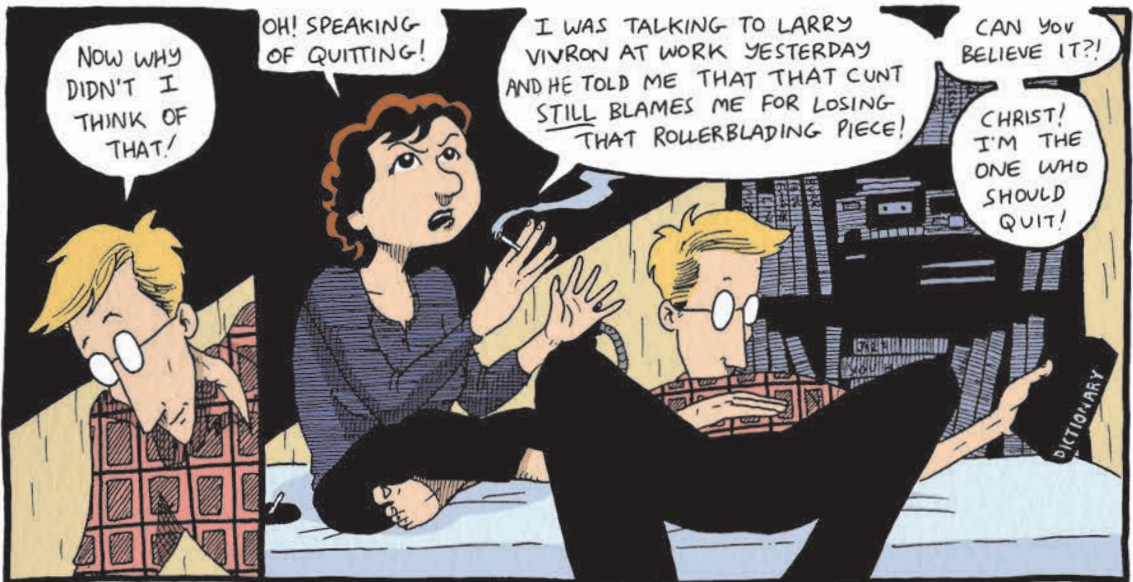
THAT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE JAMES WORKED AT THE BOOKSTORE WITH YOU. IT'S ALMOST LIKE AN INSIDE JOKE

HAVE YOU SHOWN IT TO ANYONE ELSE?

NAH... I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS IT WAS JUST SOMETHING I NEEDED TO GET OFF MY CHEST. I HATE THAT FRIGGIN' PLACE.

YOU SHOULD QUIT.





NOW WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT!

OH! SPEAKING OF QUITTING!

I WAS TALKING TO LARRY VIVRON AT WORK YESTERDAY AND HE TOLD ME THAT THAT CUNT STILL BLAMES ME FOR LOSING THAT ROLLERBLADING PIECE!

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?!

CHRIST! I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD QUIT!

WAS THIS THE ARTICLE THAT YOU GAVE TO THAT CABBIE TO GIVE TO HER DOORMAN THAT SUNDAY NIGHT?

EXACTLY. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? I MEAN I AM RIGHT, RIGHT?

UM.  
WHAT?

SHE PROBABLY LOST IT AFTER HER DOORMAN GAVE IT TO HER AND NOW SHE'S TRYING TO SET ME UP AS HER OSWALD.



YEAH, YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.

OH YEAH. ON FRIDAY I'M SUPPOSED TO GO TO THE MOVIES WITH ED. DO YOU WANT TO GO?

WHO'S ED? THAT TALL BLACK GUY FROM YOUR STORE?

NO, ED'S THE GUY WE SHOT POOL WITH LAST MONTH. SHORT, SHAVED HEAD?

OH, OKAY.

