

Susan Had a Rough Day

By Kate Simon

Susan walked down the street to the parking lot still seething from her audition. That snot nosed producer was barely out of diapers. What did he know about chemistry between a man and a woman? She thought she and John Salerno had plenty of chemistry. They worked well together and they knew each other from previous jobs. Then the little twerp tells her she's too old to play John's wife. John was ten years older than her.

By any definition of beauty, Susan Abeke was a stunning woman, five feet nine inches of Nigerian beauty. She'd never traded on her looks. Instead, she went to school, trained hard, acting coaches, singing coaches. She could do any accent required. She'd worked hard for years for her success and this peon thinks she's not good enough. Well fuck that.

She walked past the ever constant construction in New York and the equally present construction workers. "Hey baby. Why don't you bring those sweet legs over here," called one of the men. "and I'll show you what a real man is like."

"That tears it," she muttered. She wasn't dressed provocatively. Not that if she was, she's have deserved this kind of attention. She was wearing what her audition called for. Black pencil skirt, crisp blouse and jacket. The perfect uniform for the Generation X executive. She stopped and walked across the street. She smiled sweetly and crooked her finger. "Come here, sweetie. What's your name?"

"Hey there, baby. I'm Stan." A tall man with a hard hat and a large belly came toward the fence.

Susan looked him up and down. "I see from your cross you're a good Catholic boy." She leaned in close and smiled. "Well I'm a good Catholic girl." The man turned to his buddies and laughed and smiled. "I also see next to your cross is your wedding ring. Can't wear it on site, I assume. Too much dangerous equipment."

"Like me," he leered.

She looked over his head towards his friends. "How long has he been married? Twenty years?"

“Going on thirty,” said one of his friends. Stan looked over at him and glared.

“How many kids does he have?”

“Four. All girls.”

“All girls,” said Susan. Stan flushed bright red. “I’m sure they’re all lovely girls.”

“Yeah, they take after their mother,” shouted another friend.

“Shut the fuck up,” yelled Stan.

“Now I’m going to ask you one question Stan. What would you do if anyone of your friends spoke to your wife or your daughters the way you just spoke to me?”

Stan flushed bright red. “I’d deck them. They’d know better.”

“Then why me, Stan? I truly want to know. What makes me so different than your wife or daughters?”

“Ahh, you’re just some stranger on the street. I didn’t mean anything by it. It’s just something we do to pass the time. Everybody does it.”

“Well, I’m not just some stranger, Stan. I’m a woman who works hard just like you do, just like your wife and daughters.” Susan pointed to the other women passing by. “Just like all of them. Each one has a story, a struggle, something you know nothing about. And you add to their burdens with lewd comments. That’s not right, Stan.”

Susan looked around and worried if she’d overstepped and wondered how fast she could run in these heels.

Stan pulled off his hat. “I’m sorry, ma’am.”

Susan smiled. “I accept your apology.” She waved to the now quiet group. “Good afternoon, gentleman.”

Susan found a seat on the subway while she wondered what the hell possessed her to do what she'd done. They could have come after her. But she couldn't take one more thing today. Stan had the misfortune of being that one thing.

When she opened the door to her apartment her dog jumped at her for pets and kisses. After the day she'd had she didn't mind a little dog hair.

"Hey babe. How did it go?"

She stood for a moment and admired the handsome man she'd married. Sean had a way of making everything better. "The producer said I was too old to play John's wife."

Sean's mouth dropped open. "Is he fucking nuts? You're perfect for it. The character description said smart, beautiful and able to kick ass." He shook his head and then pulled her into a hug. "That's you to a T. Speaking of which, would you like some?"

"Yes, please. That would be lovely."

She kicked off her shoes and watched as he put a light under the kettle. This is how it would always be. Coming home to the man who always had her back. The man who had complete faith in her even on those days when her own faith wavered. She sat down on the couch and her pooch took the opportunity to sit in the lap of her best suit.

Yeah, it wasn't so bad a day after all.