**Dawn LeFevre**

**The Last Audition**

Rogue considered driving into Atlantic City to be about as enjoy-
able as having a gyno exam. She liked going into this neighborhood in
particular even less. And now, because of some tourists driving five
miles per hour, hanging out of their car windows, and taking pictures
of every goddamned thing they saw, Rogue was going to be late for this
audition. The ad read: *Thrash band Beastiality seeks lead guitarist.
Auditions held June 8.*

Rogue had seen Beastialiry play and knew they were one of the
few bands good enough to get paid for their performances. Hell, they'd
even played Philadelphia and made a demo. For a New Jersey band,
that was Big Time. She glanced at the newspaper and confirmed that,
yes, this shithole sitting before her was the right place. She grabbed
her guitar off the back seat and locked her ancient red Camaro. This
was the kind of neighborhood were people would be desperate enough
to steal even a car with a missing rear bumper and four bald tires.

Rogue started up the walkway gripping her guitar case tightly,
comforted by its weight. **In** case of an emergency like a heavy metal-
hating homicidal maniac, it would make a formidable weapon. The
front yard was landscaped with weeds, beer bottles, and other debris.
All but two of the house's windows were boarded up. Every fourth
shingle appeared to be missing as well. Rogue looked around for a
Condemned Property sign, didn't see one, and pushed the doorbell.
Naturally, it didn't work. She could hear someone inside playing a bad
rendition of Metallica's "Battery." "Idiot's in the wrong key," she
muttered disgustedly, kicking the door so she could be heard over the
noise.

A fat, twentyish guy whom she recognized to be Beastialitv's
drummer appeared with beer in hand. He looked Rogue over slowly
from top to bottom, taking in her spiral-permed chestnut hair, care-
fully ripped jeans, and faded Slayer tour shirt, with a prolonged pause
at her breasts. Finally, he spotted her guitar case and said, "Oh, your
boyfriend must be here to audition." He looked over her shoulder for
the absent male figure.

"Nope," Rogue answered, "I am."

"Huh? You? No way. No girls."He began to close the door. Swiftly,
Rogue rammed her guitar case into the doorjamb and forced her way

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into the house. And abruptly stumbled over a guitar cable. She had
entered what appeared to be the living room, but it was hard to tell. A
twelve-piece drum kit, various guitars, basses, and amplifiers were all
crammed into the room. Not the mention the musicians themselves, most
of whom were sprawled along a ripped sofa that was slowly vomiting its
stuffing onto the filthy floor. More beer bottles, assorted stale snack foods,
and an empty condom package were the decor of choice. Everyone -
including the Metallica-slandering auditionee - was staring at her. For an
eternity no one spoke; after all, these were people whose vocabulary
consisted mainly of the words "urn" and "dude". At last, Beastiality's singer
cracked, *"OK,* who ordered the strip-e-gram?" A hairbrush suddenly
materialized and he began preening his fake blonde locks.

"I am not a strip-e-gram. I'm here to audition," Rogue wearily replied.
"Audition, huh? Well let's go to my room and I'll give you a private
'audition." the singer said, putting his arm around Rogue's waist. In-
stantly, her guitar case shot out and whacked him on the knees. She
would've went for the crotch, but she needed this job too much. Holding
up her left hand, she said, "See this hand, Mr. Hormones? I'm married."
He walked away from her muttering "bitch" and other equally laudatory
adjectives.

Rogue had indeed been married - three years ago - but she wasn't·
going to tell them that. Now, there was one rule she always kept: never
sleep with other musicians. They were too competitive. Rogue knew this
because she'd been married to one for a whopping eighteen days. Of
course, that was when she was twenty-two ana still believed, naively, that
she'd find a band who wouldn't force her to wear tight leather miniskirts
onstage.

It was day fourteen of their wedded bliss that Rogue and her husband
both auditioned for the heavy metal band Dark Victory. Dark Victory was
about to fly to the heavy metal heaven known as L.A. when their guitarist
oh so conveniently O.D.'d. Rogue remembered her hubby saying, "I hope
you get it, dear." Well, when Dark Victory called two days later and said
that, yes, Rogue had the job, all hubby could say then was, "They only
hired you cause you're a girl." Another two days later, dear darling hubby
disappeared without even leaving a note. And yet, if it had been reversed,
Rogue knew she probably would've done the same thing. As for Dark
Victory and Rogue, they never made it to L.A. and broke up six months
late, citing "musical differences," i.e. - they couldn't stand each other.

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Rogue glanced around. The mutilated sofa was already full. The floor
was a gamble she'd rather not take. No telling what forms of wildlife
she'd encounter there. So she sat straddling her guitar case as if it was a
horse. The next hour or so was spent enduring the music of three very
mediocre and two speed demon players. With the mediocre ones, Rogue
got to playa game of guess which famous guitarist they're trying to
imitate. George Lynch? Paul Gilbert? How about Randy Rhoades? Christ,
couldn't these bozos play something *original?*

Rogue could spot the speed demons even before they plugged in their
guitars. Most of them were skinny pale types who looked like they hadn't
been outside, slept, ate, or got laid in years. Or played with a band for
that matter. The speed demons were too busy locking themselves up in
their rooms for twelve hours playing Yngwie Malmsteen songs note for
note than to learn how to stay in time with a band. Keep practicing,
boys, she thought maliciously, maybe you'll discover what a time signa-
ture means.

And there was Rogue's favorite - a thirty-five-or-so-year-old guy
wearing John Lennon shades and a Grateful Dead t-shirt, His chances of
being hired were nil even before playing a note. There was no way this
group of twentysomething guys would hire a sixties leftover like him. As
it turned out, he was awesome. At jazz, that is. Must've done too many
drugs when he was young, Rogue mused, because he's certainly at the
wrong audition.

And then only Rogue was left. *"OK,"* the singer told her, "I guess it
wouldn't hurt if you gave it a shot." Beers were opened and the band
began chatting merrily among themselves, ignoring Rogue. And then she
pulled out her purple Paul Reed Smith Signature Series and slammed the
case shut. "How did you get an axe like that?" the drummer asked.

"Oh, I sold my body for it," Rogue sarcastically replied, unable to
control her irritation. Jeez, what'd they expect her to play? A $199 K-
Mart special? She was tired of their lustful leers and presumptions that
she'd suck. No, infuriated was more like it. So, she sauntered over to the
amp and twisted the volume knob as far as it would go, hoping she'd
blow the damn thing. Then she plugged in her six string and launched
into something that sounded like a lawnmower grinding up live cats. Her
fury coursed from her brain down to her fingers and they flew up and
down the guitar's neck, spewing out venomous riffs. Now *this* was thrash
- music for all the malcontents like herself who know the world is

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screwed up but feel powerless to do anything about it. Except maybe
bang their heads, letting the music scream out their frustration.

Rogue didn't know how long she went on like that until she
suddenly became aware of everyone gaping at her. An attack of
tendonitis flared in her left arm so she stopped her musical onslaught
"Whoa, dude, you play like a guy," the drummer said. Rogue decided
to take that as a compliment.

"Can you play 'Spanish Fly?'" the singer asked her.

"Sure,and just to be unique, **I'll** even play it on my electric here.
she answered, trying to sound casual. To herself she thought, "God
not 'Spanish Fly,' the song from Hell. The song that used artificial
harmonics requiring her fingers to not only be on the exact fret
location but also to apply just the right amount of pressure to produce
the correct tone. Rogue tried to smile. It looked more like a grimace.
And then Rogue began to play, a little too slowly perhaps, but even
Eddie Van Halen would not have been displeased with the way she
handled his song. Suddenly the band was in a huddle, debating
whether or not they wanted her. Rogue just stood there, pretending
be cool, that it didn't matter.

Then He walked in. He had wavy, sandy-brown hair flowing d
to the middle of his tanned back, cheekbones that are usually found
on *Vogue* covergirls, a complexion that should be in Noxema comer-
cials, and full lips that gave the impression that He'd just eaten a
cherry popsicle even when He hadn't. He was beautiful. Only the
spider and scorpion tattoos on His biceps ruined an otherwise angelic
appearance. But He was still beautiful. Female fans would worship
every note he played like a sermon. Hell, Rogue even caught herself
checking out his ass. And so, even though He was over an hour late
Beastiality let Him audition. And He was good. Not great, mind
He had trouble with the more technical stuff and made minor mis-
takes, but He was good enough. Rogue was out the door long before
He was finished playing.

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