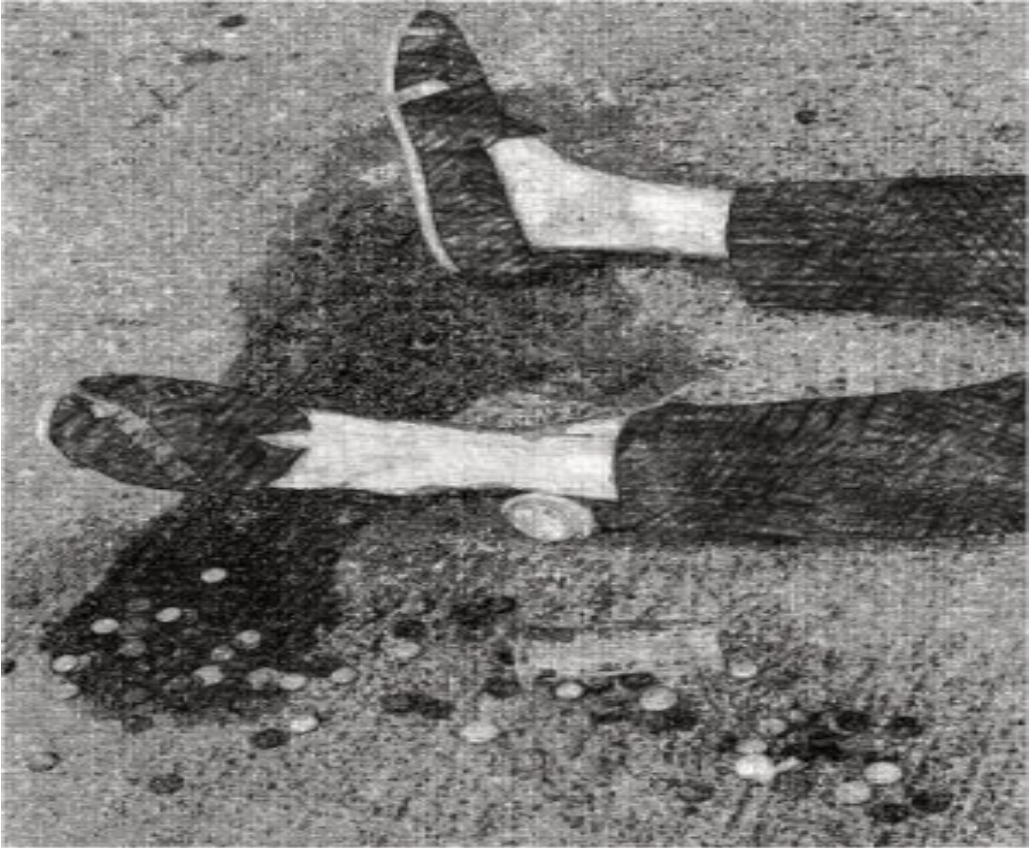


*VI*

*THE*

*CHALLENGE*



# CHAPTER 40

Following the X-rays and a nutritious hospital lunch, with pretzels- trail mix- and sour cream potato chips to munch; along with a roast beef cold cut sandwich on wheat bread, that I did quickly wash down with an ice cold and delicious fruit punch

I found myself right back in that heartless street, with no clothes- or shoes upon my feet; searching through alleys, looking for that karate man- whom I intended to meet

I did ask of a few familiar faces, those that I had ran across at different times- and in different places; and while some of them were forthcoming with information, others were just flat out dismissive and overly evasive

Saying- **“Who in the fuck are you?”**

**“Why you lookin’ for him?”**

and- **“I don’t know- DOO-DOO!”**;

**“Don’t know- and I still wouldn’t tell you!”**

to- **“You don’t find the master- SQUARE!.....He-finds- YOU!”**

It wasn’t until I was lucky enough to have finally came across none other than Edna Jean- The Pigeon Queen; who rambled my ear off for a good moment, before she responsively led me to the place in which he had last been seen

**“Yes’sssssss- baby! .....I sho’ enjoyed dancin’ ta some of Teddy P’z- smooth groove romancin’!”;**

**“Do you know where I can find him- Edna?”**

**“He might be standin’ out front of Hanson's”**

With this most helpful word- I immediately thanked Edna Jean and then left her behind to tend to a filthy ass bird; then swiftly embarked on a nonstop route for Hanson’s Market store, first traveling southeast down Louise Street- and Twenty-Third

I took a quick left on street number Twenty-Two, where Burnett grade school was in view; continued for one block, and then hooked a right turn onto Atlantic Avenue

Near the corner of Twenty-First and Atlantic- I did come to my stop, just outside the brink of the local market shop; where I instantly caught sight of the karate man, panhandling- while chugging on a can of grape Shasta soda pop

After giving the scene a scan, I did then slowly approach the karate man; who’s brown eyes lit up with recognition, as he swiftly lowered his Shasta can

Within the all-pervading light of the after-morn, his faded black and white Kungfu suit appeared even more used and worn; it seemed to be permanently creased and wrinkled, while both of its sleeves and arms were slightly ripped in many places and torn

Quite the sight of amuse, his Kungfu pants did flood well above his black slide on shoes; and to prevent the shoes from falling apart, many strips of duct-tape he did use

The man would by no means ever be described by anyone as short or small, in fact he was extremely lengthy and tall; tall enough to play the front row in a match of volleyball, or a small forward in a game of NBA basketball

*....He was tall!*

He wore a hat like some Chinese Imperial, made of bamboo material; he was damn skinny, skinny enough to hula-hoop with a breakfast Cheerio

Though his brown eyes appeared a bit less colder, he had a long salt and pepper ponytail resting over his right shoulder; I could not determine his correct age, because the streets had a cruel way of making folks look prematurely older

I stopped both my bare feet up close to where he did stand, with an extended right hand; yet he just stood there silently eyeing me, with a hard appraisal type of gand'

**“How’s it hangin’ there- my righteous Nubian bro .....My name’s Alleycat- but most folks around these parts just call me plain ole Joe”**; I greeted the karate man, whom just oddly replied with- **“Brother! ....You have such a- magnificently-erecting ....GLOW!”**

**“GLOW?”**, I had replied, as the karate man continued to ogle me- wide eyed; while he circulated both hands about me, with his head bouncing from side-to-side

**“YES- YES- BROTHER! ....The warm pulsating glow of the Vageena dwells heavily upon you! .....You are one of the chosen few!.....; .....And once this Vageena is spread wide open .....It will allow for the most powerful of spiritual juice to freely spew!”**

**“I’m confused here- cause you see .....I could swear that you just compared -ME! .....To a- COOCHIE!”;**

**“NO! .....For it is the Fot-Koo-Chi that you seek”**, he strangely- went on to say to me

**“Sure- whatever man .....It’s your fifty-one-fifty show I just wanted to thank you for dropping me off at the medico.....; .....I truly appreciate what you did for me and all .....But- I’m afraid it’s about time for me to giddyap -and go”**

*..... SUDDENLY!*

His grape Shasta can swiftly fell from his hand- down to the surrounding market grounds; with spare change bounce- bounce- bouncing, making ‘CLING’- ‘BING-’ and ‘PING’ing slot machine’ish like sounds

Both eyes rolled far back into his skull, while his head dropped and wobbled- as if he had been put to sleep with a lullaby lull; and his towering frame began to teet- teeter back and forth, rocking upon the front and back of his karate shoe sole

*.....Seconds later- HE FELL!*