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## GLOCKENSPIEL

by

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Ted Meachum is my owner. I love to sit under his shirt flap, snug in my holster. I make him feel secure and confident because that's how I feel.

Ted owns dozens of guns, but I'm his favorite because I'm a classic. A first-generation Glock 17. Sleek, lightweight, and lethal.

Well, not the third thing yet. Ted hasn't gotten there, but he will, I know it. I live for it.

It almost happened last week, I swear. His wife Sally got pissed off for the zillionth time about how he sits around the house, watching movies like *Scarface* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. She started yelling at him, and I could feel his hand begin to move toward me, I really could.

Ted retired two years ago, and they moved down here to concealed-carry country, so I get to see lots of places now. Like Rambo's, the bar where he hangs out with his other retiree buddies. They talk about NASCAR and football, and crack each other up with jokes about women, gays, and minorities. I don't know if they're funny or not. I don't understand jokes.

What interests me more is when they talk about getting rid of the filth living all around us, supported by the government. I can sense a tightening in Ted's body, and I feel it too. I'm

ready.

We were at the shooting range this afternoon, and that's always fun. It would be even better, of course, if he didn't bring the AK-47 and the TEC-9 along. Clumsy assholes, in my opinion. No style. You don't even have to aim the stupid AK-47, and the TEC-9 is so full of himself that he's always jamming. I wish Ted would bring that cute, little Beretta he gave his wife.

Actually, the shooting range isn't fun at all. Because it's phony. Who gives a crap if you hit the center of a circle or shoot up a bunch of cartoons? It's a pale imitation of what I'm really created for. It demeans my skills.

But I don't dwell on it. Firearms live only in the moment, and at this moment, I'm in a credenza drawer next to the dining room table. It's where he keeps me when they have guests.

Tonight, their guests are Leo and Marie, their son and daughter-in-law, who came down for the holidays. And since Leo is the complete political opposite of his father, sometimes, their dinner conversations turn a bit contentious. In fact, it's happening now.

"So, Dad," says Leo, "I guess you saw on the news about that theme park massacre yesterday. What do you think?"

"Leo..." his mother warns him, which never works. "Don't answer him," she advises her husband, which never works either.

"The hell I won't," says Ted. "Are you blaming me for what someone else did, because I happen to believe in the right of gun ownership? Is that what you're getting at?"

"I'm not blaming you, but I do blame your mindset."

"Come on," Sally urges them both, "we don't need to..."

"My mindset? Some nut goes out and kills a bunch of kids, and I'm supposed to just roll

over and give up my Second Amendment rights?”

“See?” Leo says. “That’s all you care about. Fifty children are dead, and your only reaction is: ‘Uh-oh, they’re gonna take away my guns.’ Doesn’t your conscience bother you?”

“I’ll tell you what bothers me, you do. With all your bleeding heart bullshit.”

You go, Ted!

“How’s your golf game, Dad?” Marie asks brightly, trying to change the subject.

“Let me educate you,” Ted says, ignoring her and leaning across the table toward his son, gesturing with his fork. “Gun control legislation does nothing to stop bad guys from getting guns. The only people it stops are good guys.”

“Bad guys? Good guys?” Leo’s voice has risen an octave. “It sure would’ve stopped yesterday’s bad guy. A simple background check would’ve shown what a raving psychopath he was, but he didn’t have to get one. And that’s because it’s fine with people like you, evidently, for a homicidal maniac to go to a gun show, or go online, and instantly become a one-man death squad.”

“People like me? What do you mean, people like me?”

“Dad?” Marie puts in, raising her hand. “Can I ask you something? Please?”

Everyone looks at her.

“I can understand how you feel about needing a gun, or even several of them, to protect yourself. I might not agree, but I understand it. What I don’t understand is why you love guns so much. It would be like a woman who’s pro-choice saying that she loves abortions.”

“Whoa!” says Sally. “You’re way out of line here, so let’s not...”

“No, really, Mom, it’s very similar, if you think about it. Abortion is a right that shouldn’t be used unless it’s absolutely necessary, just like a gun. It’s not something you’re

supposed to love. But people don't see anything wrong with loving guns. They even brag about how much they love them. Why is that?"

At times like this, I wish I had the power of speech. If Ted ever let me, I could put a few holes in her argument, but it's not up to me.

"Listen, honey," says Sally, "everyone's entitled to their own opinions and hobbies, and not everyone else needs to understand them. But if we can move on to more important things, I want to know about these friends of yours that are coming tomorrow, Gail and Frank. They're getting here pretty early and they have some sort of special needs, is that right? Is there anything I can..."

At this point, I've stopped paying attention and so has Ted. He's too busy thinking about how he's grown to hate his son and daughter-in-law, who have the balls to come into his home, sit at his table, and insult him. As for his shrill, domineering bitch of a wife...well, don't get him started.

Yeah, he's seething. I can feel it way over here when Ted gets angry. I love it. It puts spring in my trigger.

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Okay, it's several hours later, and I'm in the night-table drawer. Ted's still asleep but I just woke up from a dream that's left me sweating gun oil (not bullets, we never sweat bullets). It's a dream I've been having lately.

We're walking down a dark alley, me and my owner. Sometimes it's Ted, sometimes it's a stranger. My slide is racked. He's pointing me straight ahead, saying, "Who's there? Who's there?" Nobody answers, but I know someone, or some thing, is hiding in the darkness.

Out of nowhere, a large shape looms in front of us. It's holding a weapon I've never seen

before, something like a miniature howitzer. A deafening roar comes out of it, just as my owner ducks and fires.

His aim is perfect. Both my sites tell me we're locked in, dead center. No way this is not a kill shot.

But I can't make a sound. And to my horror, what comes out of me is not a high-power, hollow-point, nine-millimeter round. It's a flag, and a frilly pink one at that. It says "Bang!"

I can't tell you how that dream creeps me out.

Whoops, it sounds like Ted is up. I can hear him groan as he stumbles out of bed. He went into his den after dinner and had a few, so he's not at his sharpest right now. It must be, what, five in the morning? It's hard to tell in this drawer.

Uh-oh, he's opening it and taking me out, so something's wrong. Man, it's dark in this room. There must have been a power failure, since the alarm clock isn't lit and neither is the radio on Sally's side of the bed, which is unoccupied. That's not right either.

Did someone cut the wires outside? It's a distinct possibility, what with all the crime around here, and I know Ted thinks so. And if he does, who am I to argue?

Easy now. We're creeping down the stairs toward the kitchen. He's calling out Sally's name and there's no answer. Not good, not good at all. We're approaching the kitchen doorway. Ted looks inside.

Holy shit, there's a man in the kitchen! He's got his back to us, and he's rummaging in one of the drawers. A shaft of moonlight through the window catches the side of his face. He's a young black man.

"Hold it right there!" Ted calls out. "Raise your hands and turn around, real slow."

The guy pays no attention. He just keeps rummaging through the drawer.

“Hey, I’m talking to you,” says Ted. “Raise your hands and turn around.”

The guy suddenly turns. He’s holding something and he’s pointing it at us. Do it, Ted, do it now! YES! YES! YES!

The guy crumples to the floor, just as someone else’s hand reaches out and grabs Ted’s shoulder. Ted doesn’t hesitate. He whirls around and YES! YES! I hear another body fall in the darkness.

Wow, not only have I just lost my virginity, but twice! This is the greatest moment of my life.

“Ted! My God, are you crazy!?” Sally rushes in with a flashlight, along with Marie and another woman, who sees the guy on the floor. There’s another flashlight lying near him. It must have been what he was pointing at us. The woman screams.

“They’re robbers,” says Ted. “They broke in. I told the first one to put up his hands and turn around, but he didn’t listen.”

“Of course, he didn’t!” Sally sobs. “These are Leo and Marie’s friends. They have a disability. They can’t hear. They’re deaf!”

Now the other woman is on the floor, hugging the dead guy and wailing. I guess Gail and Frank got here early. Go figure.

“What about the second one?” Ted says.

“Second one?” Sally shines the flashlight into the corner, where Leo is lying absolutely still. A growing pool of blood is puddling out from the back of his head.

“No!” Ted cries, gaping at him. “No! No!”

See, now I always thought he hated Leo. I’ll never understand people.

He lurches from the kitchen, toward his den. I’m still in his hand. Sally is right behind

him, blubbering something about 911. Ted pays her no mind. He collapses onto his favorite chair and stares at me.

It's a look of love, I can tell. He's bringing me up close to his face now. You're a handsome devil, Ted, you know that? Aww, he's putting me in his mouth for a kiss. Hey, I love you too, Ted. Do it. Do it!

But I'm yanked away. Sally is a lot stronger than she looks. She sends me flying through the air, and I bounce off the wall, landing behind the TV set. What a bummer. Now I'll have to stay here until the cops come and get me.

But, boy, wasn't that fun while it lasted? Even if I spend the rest of my life in a dusty evidence bin, it was worth every moment. Not all weapons get to do what they were truly intended for. I'm one of the lucky ones.

You know, I once heard the odds are over four times greater that you'll use a gun on a family member, a friend, or yourself, than you will to stop a dangerous, armed intruder.

Family member. Friend. Yourself.

Hey, two out of three ain't bad!

THE END