

CHEW ON THIS

By Jerry Rabushka

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CAST: TOM and TREVOR

(TOM is sneaking around, making sure no one is watching, and eventually pops a wad of chew into his mouth. HE tastes it for a while, likes it quite a bit, and calls to his co-worker. The tobacco should be mimed.)

TOM: Trevor! Come here a minute, man!

TREVOR: **(enters, doesn't like what HE sees)** What you doin' here in the tobacco lab, Tom?

TOM: You gotta try this stuff, Trevor! It's great. It's better'n just about anything.

TREVOR: We ain't supposed to be here in the lab, Tom! I thought we weren't supposed to touch the experimental stuff.

TOM: Oh, I know we ain't. But sometimes I just like to come in here and see what's goin' on. It gives me ideas as head marketing man, you know. **(tries to calm TREVOR's fears)** Besides that, I'm too important to the higher ups here, after that last ad campaign I ran. They can't fire me. And they can't fire you either! I hired you. I got 'em rollin' in gold with that new product of ours takin' off the way it is. I'm an indispensable commodity. **(takes out another wad)** Here, open wide, I'll drop it in for ya'.

TREVOR: Nah.

TOM: Then here, you put it in your mouth. This ain't no regular tobacco here. It's got a ching to it! It just kinda soaks in and whizzes you out. I know our stuff usually gives you a little buzz, but this is the whole cotton pickin' beehive!

TREVOR: I better not, Tom. I know you hired me on and everything, but this is the first job I've been able to hold onto in a long time. I'd hate to lose it now.

TOM: You mean you'd hate to lose it *because of the rules!* Rules, rules, rules! You know why rules were made, don't you? So people who don't know no better can follow them. If you got your own mind, then you don't need anyone else's rules. You'll love it. I guarantee it. Or your money back. Tell you what, Trev—you don't like it, I'll eat dog food for dinner.

TREVOR: I don't care if you eat dog *poop* for dinner. I've seen what this does to people. It takes over your life, then wears it away. Sometimes I feel bad enough that I'm working at a place selling this stuff. The boss is right. You can't chew and keep a clear head. It's like consorting with the enemy. (*thinks*) But here, the enemy really is us.

TOM: (*flying high by now*) Awe, Trevor, you don't know a good thing when you see it. Look at me.

TREVOR: (*calms TOM down*) Slow down! You're like a puppy on speed!

TOM: Well, I ain't lickin' your face, so don't worry. Hey! You work for me. You got to do what I tell you. That's why I'm the boss and you're the employee.

TREVOR: This ain't business. It's pleasure. And it ain't even that. I'm cuttin' out of here before they catch us.

TOM: Trevor!

TREVOR: No! (*starts to go*)

TOM: Drat! (*a little surly*) You ain't bein' much of a friend, are ya'?

TREVOR: (*incredulous*) What?

TOM: I'm tryin' to do you a good turn here and you're walkin' out on me. Don't you trust me by now?

TREVOR: It's got nothin' to do with me bein' your friend.

TOM: I don't know 'bout that. Here I'm trying to share a good time with you and you're tellin' me about rules. Like rules are more important than friendship. A man don't need to be bound by rules every minute. You know, sometimes, you don't seem to be the man I pegged you to be. Maybe I made a mistake hiring you on here.

TREVOR: Oh, I've broken a fair share of rules in my time. No one could tell ol' Trev-boy what to do. That's why I wound up working for a tobacco company, selling products to wreck people's lives while we sit pretty up in the Blue Ridge mountains. We're breaking enough rules already. That's why I aim to follow the ones they laid down for us, like not fooling with the test tobacco.

TOM: Oh, I'll stand by you if they get wind of your breath. (*rubbing it in*) "Cause I'm a good enough friend to you!"

TREVOR: If you're a good enough friend, then why can't you let this be?

TOM: Remember when I hired you here? You were nothin' and nobody! I got you position and I got you power! But Trevor, as I see it, we still ain't turned you into a man. And that's what I aim to do. I told you that when I hired you. I said, "*Listen to me, and I'll make a man outta you*". And you ain't listenin' to me!

TREVOR: I'm man enough for my taste. I'm man enough to follow company policy. And I'm man enough to follow my own mind, even if it means turning you against me a time or two.

TOM: But you ain't man enough to share something important with your friend. And you ain't man enough, for once in your life, to make someone feel like they're important to ya'.

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