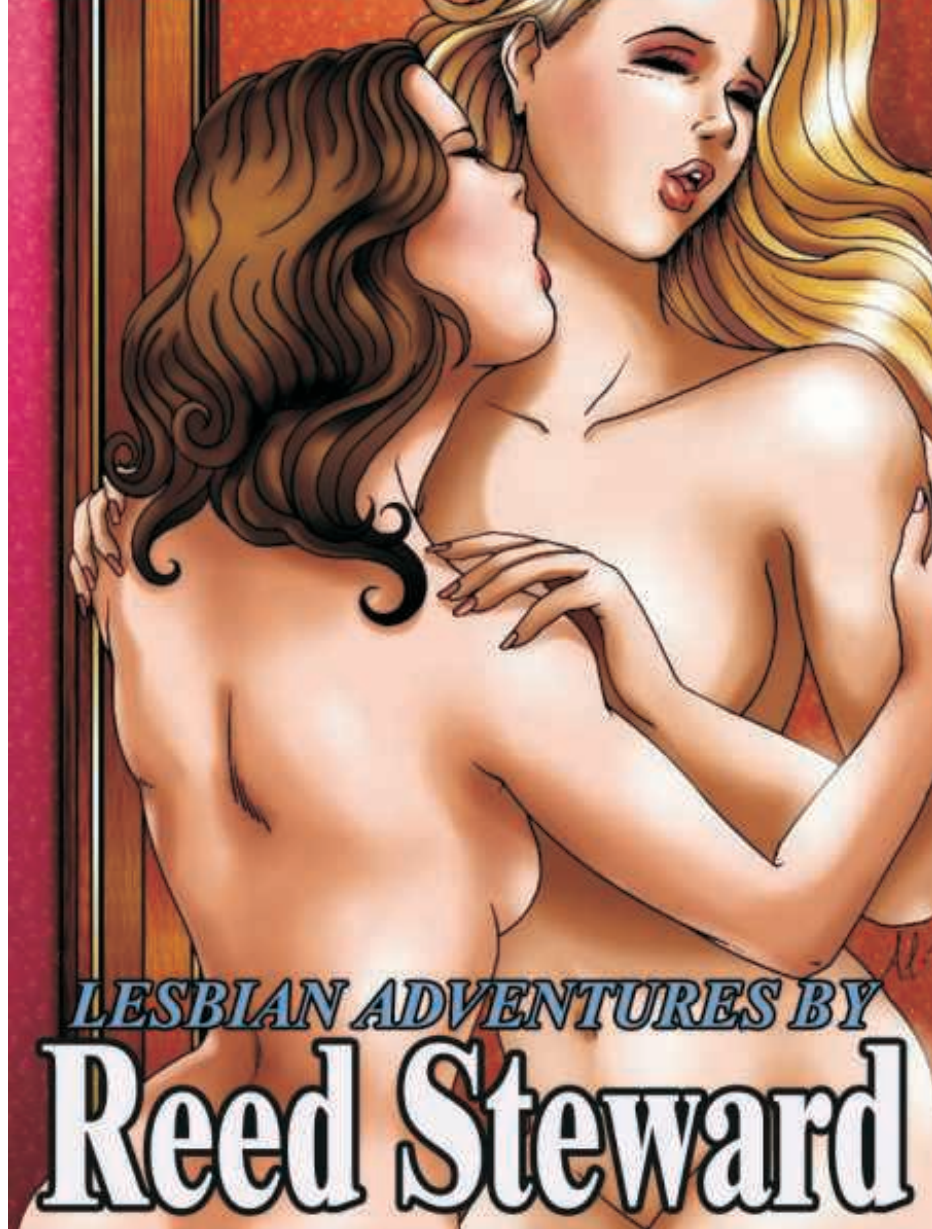


THE HEIST



LESBIAN ADVENTURES BY
Reed Steward

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By Reed Steward

CHAPTER I - A Charity Case

Cherise struggled with the door of the bank until the uniformed guard stepped forward and helped. "Thanks" she said and flashed him a wide smile. "Guess the same guys who built the doors to the street designed the doors to the vault." The guard grinned and tipped his hat.

She stood in the line set aside for 'Business Deposits'. The lustrous blue envelope holding the receipts for the day was tucked firmly under her arm. The line was moving slowly but she didn't mind, it was expected. That was when the lights in the large hall-like plaza to the bank dimmed but not out completely. It was a signal that the bank closing hour was at hand.

"Everyone relax," a pleasant, sonorous voice boomed from a few feet behind her. "This is a robbery. The money we collect is going to charity, after we deduct expenses."

Several women screamed in alarm; two fainted. Cherise maintained her place in line and waited. One of the robbers, slightly over-weight but obviously muscular, bumped into her and snatched her bank deposit. Cherise was surprised. "Hey, don't push. And you sure don't look like Robin Hood."

"Wise ass-bitch," the callous woman said and pushed Cherise sideways until she tumbled onto the marble floor. She looked up and saw that her assailant was a woman dressed in male clothing. She scrambled to get support from the divider that controlled the queue.

Cherise steadied herself by holding her position to 'all fours'. Thus out of the confusion, she could poke over the divider to see that the activity was well planned. The uniformed guard who had been so courteous was slumped unconscious on the floor near the door. The heartless gal hurried along the lines collecting deposit envelopes. It occurred to

Cherise that there could not be much of value in a lot of checks marked 'deposit only'. Next, looking behind the row of teller windows, she saw a large, beefy guy moving from one cash drawer to the next, scooping up currency and stuffing it into a black bag. Working from the other direction, a rather sedate, stylish, woman was doing the same thing.

At this point, the girl in the lobby was finished and walked evenly to the center of the rows of teller cubicles. Two black cloth bags stuffed with money came sailing over the rails. She caught them and quickly sped to the door.

It would have ended there but Cherise, not one to take being shoved around lightly, sprinted behind the robber and pushed her firmly in the small of the back. The woman fell heavily, sending the money collection sailing forward. It was an insane thing to do, she later admitted. She didn't think; just reacted.

The three of them were on her by then and she scrambled out of the way fully expecting to be gunned down like a victim in a "B" movie. To protect herself, she grabbed one of the sacks and held it in front of her face.

"Come on, let's go; leave it." It was the same voice that only moments earlier had announced the robbery.

In a New-York-skinny-minute the three of them were out the door and scrambling into a van parked in the alley. Cherise decided the danger was over so she picked up the sack full of money and walked out of the bank. There was a lot of calling and commotion as employees tried to restore order.

Police, alerted by the 'silent alarm', descended on the bank as if 'on cue'. The robbers, they learned, were long gone. Cherise crossed the street, picked up a shopping bag at a shoe store and stuffed the sack of money in that. Next she took a tall seat at Starbucks which overlooked the scene and observed the mayhem caused by the robbery. She took her cell phone from the sheath at her waist and punched the number at work.

"Did you hear about the robbery?" she asked Rhonda, her partner. "They took our entire deposit with them when they left. They said the money was going to charity but I don't believe that."

"I'm thankful you weren't hurt. Did the police question you?"

"No, indeed, not me. I got out of there. No sense in taking a risk." She hugged the shopping bag in her lap. "I'm at the Starbucks across the street. When my heart beat returns to normal, I'll come back." She snapped the phone shut. 'Decisions-decisions' she thought idly. 'How do I tell Rhonda about being a charity case? Mom always said 'Charity begins at home.'

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After interrogating Cherise to get every morsel like it was gossip, Rhonda sighed and sat back. "Know something? We're out of business. That money the robbers got had two large checks we were depending on. Just chance that they came in on the same day."

"So what? Call the customers; explain what happened, offer to pay for their 'stop payment' entry at the bank. They'll issue another check."

Rhonda shook her head. "Sadly, no. They'll be delighted. I've been trying to collect that debt for six months, at least."

"Do the best you can; we've been in worse spots. Don't forget that."

After closing, Cherise, with the shopping bag advertising the shoe store, walked to her car and drove slowly to her house. She hadn't mentioned the sack of money to her partner, Rhonda duValier, and was feeling guilty about it. She decided to take care of it the next day.

In the morning, Cherise was arranging some costume jewelry in the cosmetic display case. Rhonda had left earlier for a meeting with some company agents. Satisfied that the jewelry enhanced the showy colors of the bottles and tubes, she sat back.

She looked up when a customer came in the door. A flood of goose bumps spread across her skull and down her arms. It was the attractive lady-robber who worked the inside teller cages. The look in the lady's eyes was anything but friendly.

"My I help you, Miss," she squeaked. She knew she was being observed, studied, as was the case. There was no doubt in her mind that this very lady, pretty as she was, was one of the robbers. The word 'brazen' came to mind but she said nothing and tried to smile.

The lady was satisfied she had found who she was looking for. She had noticed Cherise in the business deposit line when she first entered the bank because the young girl was so radically attractive. 'Yes,' she thought. 'This has to be the one.'

"We have some new fragrances," Cherise said, voice still unsteady, as she pointed to the display case.

Her voice was crisp, direct, serious, intense. "You have our money; give it back."

"I beg your pardon?" Cherise said with as much indignation as she could muster.

The smile was sinister but there could be no mistake about the meaning. "We planned that caper down to the last detail. We did not need some bumbling chick with an attitude messing us up. After all, we're just making a living, same as you." Her dark eyes flashed in interest and anger.

"I don't know what to say," Cherise mumbled. "By losing our deposit envelope we nearly are out of business."

"Pity. It's irony, isn't it? Without your deposit info I couldn't have found you here today. Where is our money?"

"I don't have it any more. The bank has it. Nothing I can do," she lied.

"Maybe you're telling the truth; maybe not. But there is something we can do and you will not like getting your pretty face caved in."

"Oh, yes; I saw the heavy weight you worked with yesterday. Guess he could get mean."

"You think it over," the svelte lady said softly. "And, by the way, the guy you're referring to is not a guy but a girl, like me, like the 'butch' who shoved you down and the

driver of the van — all girls.” She turned and walked out. Cherise, mouth still open in amazement, watched her go.

It was near closing time when Rhonda came in following a long business lunch with some sales reps. Cherise, by that time, was in tears.

“Hey, what’s with this? If you’re worried, don’t be. The vendors are waiting until we get on our feet to pay for the supplies. Don’t cry.”

Cherise sniffed. “Come into the store room when you lock up. There is something we have to discuss.”

Rhonda shook her head. ‘Such drama,’ she thought. “OK, I’ll be right there.”

She locked up and turned the sign around —closed, call again— before heading back to the stock area. When she arrived, Cherise was standing next to the product composition table. The wide wooden planks were empty except for a bulky shopping bag from the shoe store. “So, again; what’s up?”

Cherise took the cloth sack out of the bag and turned it upside down. A flood of hundred dollar bills tumbled onto the table. Some were loose, others neatly packaged.

“Oh m’god!” she exclaimed. “What bank did you rob?”

Cherise sighed. “This is part of the loot those thieves took yesterday. There was some confusion and I grabbed this to protect myself. I thought they were going to shoot up the place; they didn’t. Nor did they wait to arm-wrestle me. Good thing, too, for them, not for the bank. The cops arrived just as they were pulling away in their getaway van.”

Rhonda put her hands on her hips. “Why didn’t you tell me? What now?”

“Trouble, in spades,” Cherise answered trying not to show her anxiety. The holdup

trio were girls; two were dressed to look like men; another girl drove



the van they got away in. I know that because one of them was in the store today. They want the money; they say it belongs to them. I don't agree and, more important, we need some cash to tide us over."

"Some cash," Rhonda said, exasperated. "Have you counted this?"

"Yes, I came in last night, divided up the loose bills from the bundled ones and made a rough tally."

"And?" Rhonda asked tapping her foot.

"Each of the bundled stacks has the amount penciled on the top bill. It comes to over a half million dollars."

"Good Grief! And we were worried about a mere eighteen hundred dollars in checks between us and abject starvation. We were ready to put on our short skirts, spike heels, and join the hooker platoon. Do we get to keep it? Are the bills marked or coded?"

"Just when you are ready to do something really interesting, we are rich. Hard to imagine you as a hooker. But, the lady said we are to give her the money or something really bad is going to happen. I told her you had nothing to do with it and were to be left out entirely."

Rhonda flushed, angry at first, then thoughtful. "I think you hurt their pride when you screwed up their bank job. They plan something, check everything, watch the timing, know when to make the hit, it all goes off without a problem and, what happens? A neat girl with very bare and very pretty legs trips them up."

"You never noticed my legs before." Cherise considered the situation, tried to get everything in proper perspective. "I think what you said about damaging their pride is true. The other side of the same coin is that I wouldn't have reacted like that if the cruising robber hadn't knocked me down. That got to me and, when I saw my chance, I went after her. Insane, I know; that's what I did."

Rhonda started to cry. She was alternating between fear and grief. "Let's pack up and get out of town. We can stay at my dad's place, the cabin on the lake, until we figure out what to do."

"Calm down; we can't make good decisions when we're stressed out. We need to talk."

Rhonda hiked up on the tall stool and tucked in her skirt. "Yes; that's one thing we do well, talk."

"I'm changing the subject to your sex life." She made it seem like an off-hand comment, as if they could as well discuss the weather.

Rhonda's eyes lit up and the expected raised eyebrow posed the question. "Why are you interested in that all of a sudden?" It was a serious response.

Cherise smiled. 'Not so all-of-a-sudden' she thought. "Just that when you mentioned my pretty legs, which you've never done before, I reminded myself that you've been celibate since your divorce. Are you immune to sexual anxiety?"

Rhonda snapped back with anger. "Your interest in my sex life is uncalled for."

“Perhaps; it came to mind when you realized we have worked so hard to build this business and now are in danger of losing it. Your response was to go to short skirts and high heels to sell our last valuable commodity; self.”

Rhonda was caught off-balance. “Just that this extreme situation seems to call for extreme measures.”

Cherise put one hand on Rhonda’s shoulder. “I meant no harm, you know that. Maybe you’ve noticed my sexual anxiety level is as low as yours. Somehow I think we both are aware of it from time to time.”

“And you think this money and robbery and threats came in an emotional package. You’re right, it really disturbs me. That’s no reason to go off the deep end, is it?”

“Relax, all I said was that you need to get laid.”

Rhonda jumped down off the stool. “That’s all; no more of this talk. You’re beginning to sound like my ‘ex’. He had to be the horniest male on the planet.”

Cherise smiled and walked back to the table. With her back to Rhonda, she said, “That can’t be me, I’m not a male even though I am on this planet.”

That struck Rhonda as funny. “You left out the horny part.”

They both laughed.

“I like your suggestion to go to the lake cabin. Take the money and go right now. They would never think to look for you there — they don’t know what you look like, for one thing. You settle in, get some groceries, then call me. We can figure it out later.”

Rhonda started to cry again. “I can’t leave you like this. What if ...?”

“There’s always a fearsome follicle in your hairdo. Take the loot and get going. Go out the back. I’m going to turn on some lights and make it look like I’m re-doing the window display. Remember, they won’t hurt me as long as you have the money. They can’t chance it.”

“What are you going to do?” Rhonda asked still crying.

“Disappear, I hope. Now, neat girl with very bare and very pretty legs, move it!”

In a moment, Rhonda was gone.

“Hell of a way to treat a charity case,” Cherise mumbled.

Chapter II Butch and Femme

The next morning, Cherise packed one medium size bag with what she considered necessary for an overnight stay. Next she drove her car onto an auto wholesaler’s lot and accepted a check for its value.

Though she couldn’t see any evidence, she had the deep down intuitive feeling she was being followed. If that was true, she thought, the small overnight bag she was carrying might well be perceived as holding the greenback treasure. The potent situation was beginning to get to her. She had no confidence in her safety.

At the Hot Shot Travel Agency she purchased a teaser vacation package to a small island in the Caribbean. To close the gap, time wise, she booked the earliest flight she could get, planning another flight later. 'Thank all the powers,' she considered, 'for credit cards.'

Cherise hailed a taxi and jumped in the back seat. SHE was there in the cab with her.

"Hello, let me introduce myself," the robber-lady said with a cultured tone. "I'm Elise Sutton, at your service."

Cherise was speechless. In spite of her careful planning, she found herself in the same taxi with her tormentor. She settled back on the leather seats saying nothing. But her mind was racing with possibilities. If, If, If.

Once, when the cab was stopped for a traffic light, she bolted and grabbed the door handle. It was locked tight. "Child protection," Elise said. "Just relax, Cherise; we are going to be together for awhile."

Having said that, Elise opened Cherise's pocket book and took out the travel plan folder and flight ticket. "Interesting. And I do like the idea of a sojourn to the Caribbean Islands, so many beautiful places."

Cherise frowned. "Only a single ticket; it was all I could afford." It was her way of directing the bandits away from Rhonda.

Elise smiled, a gracious gesture. "The money you took from us should keep you for awhile."

"I did not take money that belongs to you."

"When it comes down to that, it doesn't belong to you either. I bet you did not return it to the bank knowing they have all that depositor insurance to cover their losses. We've hurt nobody and we want our money."

Cherise shrugged. "If I had walked back into the bank at that moment, I'd be in jail now charged with bank robbery." She said no more. She knew the driver with the broad, beefy shoulders was the same thief who busily emptied the cash drawers. 'Wow,' she thought, 'that girl needs Weight Watchers.'

The taxi swung around a corner in the warehouse district and pulled inside a large metal storage building before screeching to a halt. The driver jumped out and opened the door so Elise could exit first, next came Cherise.

"I'm Brenda Benz," she said, a slight wheeze in her voice. "This is my cab; I have a license."

'Um, this one is short two sandwiches of a picnic lunch,' Cherise observed. She nodded at Brenda, said nothing. Inside, she was led to an apartment partitioned off at one end of the building. Next, Elise shoved her into a smaller room, sparsely furnished but the bunk was comfortable. A moment later, Brenda threw in the luggage she had so carefully packed. They were satisfied the bag did not contain what they hoped, not even a locker key or safety deposit identity.

For most of the next three hours the brigands discussed the situation. They knew having Cherise was the best course toward reclaiming the money but, from there, nobody knew what to do. They decided to wait. In the lengthy proceedings, Cherise learned that

the attractive and apparently worldly woman, Elise Sutton, was the leader. That did not surprise her because the woman was obviously devious enough to be dangerous. Also, Cherise considered, Elise had a wandering eye, one that included many glances at Cherise's elegant figure. The scenario was heating up.

Around midnight the cell phone jangled. Elise answered it and there was a short discussion. The mood after that was more jovial. Rhonda duValier had been located hiding in a cabin on Moon Lake, north of the city.

Elise came into the room and switched on the small table lamp. She looked at Cherise sitting on the bunk hugging her knees like a schoolgirl. "Do you know enough to put three plus one together? Three inside the bank, one driving the van. Our fourth member, Gina, we staked out behind your store. When your partner came out, Gina followed her to some shack out in the country. She is there now."

"So? Nothing I can do about that. Rhonda ditched the money in a place unknown to any of us, probably not even Gina. Harming her or me will not serve you."

Elise sat on the bunk and ran one finger along Cherise's calf, stopping at her knees. "The reason Gina was driving the van instead of proper cover in the bank is because Gina is an impulsive slut who does not like to take orders. What Gina wants, Gina takes and being a little psycho doesn't qualify uncontrolled behavior."

"Like I said, so what? But I do question why you've included some sociopath in your little tribe of Indians. You seem smarter than that. Why are you feeling my legs?"

Elise smiled. "Gina is family, enough about her. I'm admiring your figure. It was your good looks that tagged you as a suspect in this little adventure of yours. I know Brenda was wrong to rough you up. But, when it came time to identify the girl who delayed our exit, it was a small matter to go to the businesses listed in the deposit envelopes to find you. I knew you as soon as I walked into your shop."

"If I ever have grandchildren, that'll be a story to tell. You have enough money already, why bother us? I can understand this all may be a point of pride. For myself, I don't like being pushed around. I'm sorry if I upset your little plan, I just reacted and, now that it's over, it's just you and me, isn't it?"

While Cherise was talking, Elise continued to fondle the shapely legs. When she spoke up, it was in a different tone. "Your idea is correct. But, it is our money and we want it; more directly, we don't want you to have it simply because of what you did. Next time, keep your nose out of business that doesn't concern you."

"Life's lessons lost, if you'll pardon the phrase. Call Gina back, let me talk to my friend."

"Is she your friend, or partner or lover, which?"

"All of the above except lover; we're straight. Rhonda is divorced. We went in as partners to buy the shop when she received her settlement. It's been a tough year or so but we're beginning to see daylight. I wish you'd keep your hands off my body."

"You are very pretty and have a lively nature that attracts me. Keep in mind that it will be well for you to cooperate rather than irritate me. I'm in charge here."

"Then keep your hands at home," Cherise answered but her voice faltered.

Elise raised one eyebrow in question. "You've had sex with a woman?"

Cherise sighed; she knew the discussion was leading Elise into a more intimate area. "In college; I majored in dance, minor in performing arts. I had to keep up my muscle tone then and I continue to do it. Makes me feel more accepting of myself, somehow."

"And?" Elise's eyes shone in interest. She reached over and touched Cherise's hair.

"My modern-dance partner was, like me, curious but inexperienced. She was a great dancer then, probably still is. A beautiful, um, ravishing, energetic girl. She had that light cocoa skin so attractive on dark French girls or light skinned Africans. We were both very physical because of our dance studies so it was easy to be romantic with each other."

Elise sighed at the word romance. "She go down on you? Did you like it?"

Cherise had a far-away look for a long moment. "Yes and yes. But there was more to it than just the physical. We were both safe. Being faithful to each other, there was no sexual disease, no fighting with some jock with overflowing testosterone, a warm accepting of each other."

"What happened? She leave you?"

"Yes. She went to New York to study at Juilliard. We still keep in touch, less often because we're busy. I think she has taken up the gay life there and feels uncomfortable because she recognizes I'm straight. She was my only lesbian lover. Not much to tell."

Elise smiled. "The acronym is LUG; 'lesbian until graduation.' It happens to lots of girls."

Cherise took the opportunity. The more she kept Elise talking, she knew, the better chance she and Rhonda had of making sense of this mess. "You didn't waste any time starting to feel me up. So, tell me; was it that way always with you?"

"Quite different, actually. I had an amorous boyfriend when I was about fourteen. I believed we were in love and headed for a great life together. There was another girl in our group. She was a lot like you; attractive, vivacious, winsome. She made no secret that she wanted my boyfriend and proceeded to do exactly that."

"Not enough to change your lifestyle; especially at fourteen."

"Correct. As it turned out, this bizarre chick came on to me at a pajama party; wee hours of the morning, most celebrants asleep or entangled in each other's bodies. I was astonished. She began by fondling my legs and hips and I, of course, objected. She said she wanted to have sex with me. This after some success at stealing my boyfriend! The word 'bisexual' came to mind but I didn't say it. I was willing to negotiate. Finally, we agreed that if she would give me back my boyfriend, I would agree to sleep with her."

"So, that seems logical enough. How did it go?"

"At first I felt exploited. Then, as love-making goes, I began to like it. When I had an explosive orgasm, the girl sat back with a satisfied look on her face. It was then she confessed that she and the boyfriend had made up the little ploy to see how far it would go."

"Wow; your first lesson in betrayal."