

His Fiftieth Birthday

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The ranch house on the slopes of the hill with the shake roof, there resides an adult child still living with his parents. It is late summer, he is 49 years old. He has his bedroom in the back corner of the house where he lives rent free. He sleeps on a twin sized mattress and is very untidy.

He is my brother, Ernest. He is six years older than me. I work in technology and am one of the best experts in the world. My brother is a military veteran but he got to do easy duty in the Navy. He moves from job to job doing easy menial work. His latest job was a salesman for a construction contractor. He makes estimates and sells projects for his boss. He works on a commission basis. This month his output is in want. But the boss keeps him on. He insists that he is getting the business from his employer and shows no appreciation. My brother's former job was in security, where he would guard at a warehouse in San Leandro near City of Oakland's limits. He was not equipped with personal protection in an area notorious for being dangerous without a backup guard. The pay was low and the risk was high and he quitted that job.

Ernest loved to play table games at casinos and contract bridge was his specialty. He would spend his pay money on bridge tournaments. He would meet interesting and attractive women. He would go on dates and have short term affairs. In his bedroom he had on the floor pornographic magazines spread all over. One of his favorite hobbies is eating; the fattier it is the better he likes it. Forget about fruits and vegetables. He weighs about 475 lbs. He considers eating a legal way to commit suicide just as with smoking. "Lord, take me away!" he says.

Today he takes me to the Peppermill. It is a coffee shop with a very dark bar. The whole place is dark. The waitresses are clad in very short skirts and are provocatively dressed. We go into the bar. I order a beer he orders a margarita with extra salt on it. He meets some of his former dates, Cyndie, Ellen and Daniele. He introduces me to them. I have a good time. He says I can pick one for a future date. I pick the blonde bombshell. He insists that I can have her. But I kind of know that I am being set up, and refrain from this for I know what I am in store for. At a later time he dates the blond one, Daniele. I know dames can be troublesome but I know it can be so hard to resist these babes. And, without a doubt, Ernie takes the cake and only just because of my interest in her he gets serious with her. And just as certain the relationship fizzles out in about a month. Poor Eerie! So I learn not to show interest in a woman around Ernie. Ernie will snatch her every time!

My name is Pete and I work as a researcher in security technology. I work in a campus in Mountain View. I love my job for the most part, but it can get very stressful at times, a cup of Joe is the prescription but my teeth show the signs. I like to go outside when I can to get some exercise. I go for a stroll. I stay off the busy streets where there is heavy traffic going at a high speed for sake of safety. I default to the parking lot; there is no other alternative unless I take the car. I am a little heavier than I should be to maintain good health. The daily walking is good and relieves stresses and helps me maintain mental acumen. The problem is with other people who don't understand what I am doing in the parking lot. The security is quite tight and there are women that come and go to their cars. One day one of them complained to authorities because she thought I was following her. I learn about this later when the head of the personnel department notifies me of this.

I was fearful that I might face some serious legal problems. Lucky for me, I didn't lose my job. I learn of an undercover cop now on the premises. I have done nothing wrong, so why is everybody so suspicious? I live in a world that is paranoid. I find alternative way to get exercise. Now I do my walks around my own neighborhood close to home but I have to get up in the morning early about 4 o'clock. I have into take account the commute times and the work hours. I have to be at work at 7 o'clock. This works quite well, the air was refreshing, but later another problem comes up with the security. I find that I am questioned by the cops about neighborhood events because the neighborhood I reside in is not a safe area. Burglaries and assaults are a common occurrence here. So I take time out and let things work out. I do my workout after work when I don't work overtime. I don't want to go to a gym and pay the initial and monthly fees, \$400 a year. I invest in a treadmill and some other exercise equipment. Once the women chill out at work, I resume my former pattern. I have no more additional problems, the woman that caused me problems is no longer there - the firm she once worked for has closed down at that location. And, another firm moves in – Oracle.

Today is my brother's birthday and I get on my computer and log on to AOL and use the e-mail function. I write a letter of congratulations and offer encouragement and advice, some of the advice was critical. I told him to wean off of Mom and Dad and to get a life. "If you don't do something about your weight, one day Mama is going to diaper you". I made the mistake of writing it too soon. I wanted him to get it later, after the birthday celebration. But be known to me he gets it before the celebration. I arrive at Walnut Creek where the ranch house is. I go into the foyer and there is mom who is glad to see me. She only gets to see me about once a month. The conversation is quite casual, offer congratulations to by brother. I get my coat and keys; leave the foyer and get into my Suzuki sedan and my brother comes out steaming, "Don't be such a smart ass!" and along comes my mother. We all get into the car. I am on the left side as the driver and my brother is seated on the right front seat – the only seat that can accommodate him. The seat belt had to be pulled fully to wrap around his carcass. My mom attempts to seat herself on the right rear seat but I ask her to move to the other side, for the car's suspension would lean too low on the left and would make the fender hit the tire. Once mom was on left side, the car was balanced better; "we have to balance the payload", I said. I revealed that remark to my father at a later time about the "payload" and he chuckled – he thought it was so funny! After this celebration, I encounter an expensive brake job, because of the additional stress on the brakes, a brake pad uses up the last of its abrasive layer and the rotor get damaged from the medal-to-medal contact. It cost me about \$500 to fix that Suzuki sedan.

I have a conversation with him on the route to the Peppermill. A conversation I remember so well - is when I asked him if he has seen a doctor lately. He said yes, one from the Veterans Administration. I then asked: "Did he give you a digital exam to check your prostate gland?" He misunderstood me and thought I talking a about an electronic exam. "Did he find anything?" I said. "What?" He said. I said, "I congratulate you for your fiftieth birthday". Soon we approach the Peppermill restaurant. I help mom up the stairs. We enter and wait in the foyer for a table. And, a scantily clad waitress takes us to a dark table. Ernie introduces me to her, "Hi Peaty!" says she in a flirtatious way, obviously disturbing my mother. I say, "Hi, it is nice to meet you." She turns out to be one Ernie's regulars that he sees at the card club on Morello Avenue in Pleasant Hill. I order the baked salmon and Ernie orders - of all things — PORK. I ask him, "Why do order pork, why not fish? Why do you order alcoholic drinks? Do you not know this is not good for your health?!" Mother orders the Cobb salad. I have Pepsi, mother has decaffeinated coffee and Ernie has a Cadillac margarita. About twenty minutes later the waitress returns with our orders. The food

cooked to perfection. Next, something very strange happens that is metaphysical, Ernie slices into his food and the food is good order but as he draws the bite into his mouth the food morphs to rotten pig meat loaded with maggots. As the food enters his mouth, he gags and spits it out. PHEW! And humorously, I make a sarcastic remark congratulating him for his epicurean taste. At this moment he is furious about the quality of the food. He is about ready to leave at once. But he gives them a second try and he goes with the fish this time. He finds the food is now more to his liking. The Cadillac margarita that he now spoons into his mouth, the ice cream of it morphs into the dung of the cow while in his mouth. Again he spits it out. He can't figure out what is happening; he thinks he is losing his mind, hallucinating from smoking too much marijuana. But I reassure him these events occurred, because I witnessed it too. I tell him it is better to order something non-alcoholic this time. I tell him to eat his fruits and vegetables, in particular the green and yellow kind. I repeat again and again to "Eat your squash and broccoli!" He offers resistance, saying no, claiming he gets sick eating them, such as with an allergy. I suggest to him to find alternative vegetables that he can consume and gradually introduce over time to change his eating habits. Mother tells me to layoff of Ernie. My brother fumes and is most upset. We finish up and leave. I joke about his epicurean taste. And, Ernie is about ready to explode. We go back to the ranch house. This time things are quiet in the car, except for Ernie's nigger jokes. An Afro-American overhears him while the car is stopped at the Stop sign. Ernie presses me to step on the gas and I say, "I think you need to be more sensitive to minorities." A gang of Afro-Americans pulls him out of the car and are about ready to bloody him up. I say to them, he hates squash. They say, "We will fix whitey!" So they pin him down which is not an easy task and they just to happen to have some squash cooked up, a whole two pounds of it. They save some for themselves. But the remainder they force on Ernie. Ernie is made to eat it! Ernie gasps and cries like a baby.

When they are done with him, I take Ernie home. When we approach the front door, I snicker at Ernie's foolishness. We are all in the house; there are a few moments of silence. He goes to his corner bedroom. He come out and goes to bathroom, shouting "Shut Up!" And then he traverses to living room through the hallway. His face red and biggest frown that I ever seen on him; he was so very shook up and believed to be crying. He spoke with tense anger, "Smartass! Why did you have to spoil my fiftieth birthday!?" He pauses. "You hypocrite! You overeat too, you had that stromboli, the last time I visited you and you ate the whole thing fast." I say, "Hey birthday boy, Mama has baked you a cake. Go eat your cake! Go eat your cake and die early!" I added, "The choice is yours, continue with your eating habits, and live a short life." He shouts, "Shut Up!" And, my father hears the commotion and tells Ernie to "Cool It!" repeatedly. And I vex Ernie. Ernie is so upset and goes back into his room and I leave at once to the south bay, where I work and reside. My mom begs me to stay in the hope that Ernie's birthday can somehow be saved. She is on the verge of crying; she feels such sorrow for Earnest. Mom defends Ernie.

Ernie begins to suffer trauma and fatigue the very next day. He begins to notice that his testicles are starting to get warmer. And gradually they would heat up and would really become inflamed. Tumors and cyst begin to form on them. I vexed him, for he would not go to church, for he would not listen to me, for he wouldn't listen to God. He would cry in pain day and night without fail. Mother would suffer with him. He would not go with the flock of sheep. I did not relent with the curse. He died about a week later. He dared to mess with God!

This story is fictional for entertainment purposes only.