

The Bachelor Party

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And so, this is how it happened. This is how the whole sordid business began. I don't even think he saw it coming. Poor fucker. But he did have it coming to him, that much is for sure. He deserved every ounce of misery, every inch of pain, and every pang of despair. He had been his own undoing.

He woke up that morning the same as he ever had, in a foul and bitter mood. It was his MO, his stamp upon life, his reason for being. He loved to hate more than he hated to love.

But it hadn't always been like this. He once wore a halo of happiness that was unrivaled by any that new him. His friends, family, even his enemies were unable to penetrate his undying love for life. Yes, he had been an optimist. That halo had unfortunately turned into a veil of melancholy so unsettling, that not even a good, boot-knocking fuck could cure. He had become hopeless.

It is funny, that word "hope". It had been so synonymous with this man. It was alliterative of his own name. Yes, The Tope was miserable, and had been for some time. Some would say that he was now helpless. What The Tope needed was a ride out of town.

As I have said, he woke up that morning to the status quo. His alarm clock sounded at the very wee hours of the morning, not long after he had finished his previous night's work. His fingers were still sticky from the tons of alcohol he had poured for his pathetic patrons just a few hours earlier. His back ached, his feet throbbed, and the putrid smell of Jack and coke clung to him like munge on a Tijuana whore. He hadn't noticed the time change from the evening before, and he was already an hour late.

"Fuck! Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!" He noticed the yellow post-it note on his alarm clock that had gone typically unheeded, instructing him to set his clock ahead before he stumbled into bed. He dashed to the bathroom, slamming a warm glass of Kentucky straight bourbon that was on his nightstand from the evening before, and in doing so, slipped on one of the ten thousand cat toys lying on the linoleum, and fell with a great thump, smashing his temple onto the white bathroom sink. A few drops of blood splattered onto the mirror, and he slid, serpent-like onto the cold, hard floor. A small pool of warm blood gathered near his left cheek, and his alarm clock ran the sleep

cycle, as his vision slowly faded out to the muffled sound of the Spice Girls.

The Tope was unaware of just how long he laid there on the floor, curled up in the fetal position, but when he got up, a congealed mat of blood stuck to the side of his face. His head was throbbing, and he saw little white, purple and black stars in the corners of his eyes. He shook his head violently, and they soon disappeared.

"This is nothing new," he thought. It felt just like the time he was in Mexico with the Bear during high school, when the two had drunk tequila for seven hours straight and he had fallen from the two-story balcony overlooking a terrace filled with half-naked women, broken bottles, and several used condoms.

The thing is, any human would have immediately called in sick after such a terrible accident. Not the Tope. When it came to work, he was spineless. He was determined this morning not to miss work. He never missed work. He even worked when he was not supposed to, a fact that had caused some consternation among his friends. Some even believed that his compulsive desire to work slave hours had also contributed to his not so rosy outlook on life. But he did not care. His shortsightedness forced him into the shower stall, where he was not greeted by the comfort of a tepid stream of water, but a blast of icicles that left him so short of breath, he nearly fainted again.

"Damn. Forgot to pay that fucking gas bill again," he said aloud to himself.

By the time he reached the Health South Center, he was already three hours late. This was not a good sign. First of all, the Tope's morning job for a second-rate Los Angeles based sports team was hardly rewarding. They actually treated him like a little bitch. And the fact that the team was a perennial cellar dweller did not help. The man whom Tope served was almost as bitter as he was. The fact that the team had lost by several goals the night before was not going to make the Tope's tardiness any easier on him. His desk greeted him with a pile of paperwork so high, that he could not see his computer monitor. In this, he was lucky, for someone had changed his screensaver to read "the Tope is a cum-gargling gutter slut." He was always the butt of their jokes. He sat down at his desk, pulled open the bottom drawer, retrieved a small bottle of Maker's Mark, and took a good, healthy pull. The booze stung his mouth. Apparently, upon falling earlier that morning, he had bitten the inside of his mouth, and the whiskey began to burn so violently that he

turned and spit the contents onto the floor, or what he thought was going to be the floor. He was shocked to see an expensive pair of Italian loafers, flecked with bright drops of top-shelf American bourbon.

"Tope, what the fuck is this?" His boss's eyes were vehemently glaring down on the poor wretch.

After the Tope had finished spit-shining his boss's shoes, he got right to work on the mountain of papers that covered his desk. He was responsible for sorting and calculating the receipts of his boss's many expense accounts. He thought it was funny that for someone who sure didn't win very many games, he sure did spend plenty of money. "Oh, well. I can only hope that someday I will have enough money to get that Barry Melrose haircut I've always dreamed about," he thought to himself.

He was happy when noon arrived. While everyone else in the office enjoyed their expensive lunches, the Tope had to head downtown to pick up his boss's new denim jacket. He was going to a function that night, and his boss always wore crisp, new jeans, with a crisp new denim jacket. Tope had always secretly admired his boss's fashion stylings. At least he got a chance to get out, though. The cut near his eye was beginning to hurt again, and he needed some air.

He arrived at the Staples Center about fifteen minutes later, although he was not allowed into the same lot as any of the team's staff. He did not yet have his stickers. He began the trek to the staff offices, located underneath the floor of the arena. 45 minutes later, he had reached his destination. In one of the larger offices, he found, hanging well starched like Jesus on crack, his boss's new denim jacket. It was specially designed to be worn with the collar in the "Arthur Fonzarelli" eeehhhhh! position. He was salivating. Before returning back to the office, he decided to make a quick trip to the arena floor, where many of the players were engaged in their afternoon skate. He had the faint hope of maybe shaking hands with one or more of the thick-wristed, toothless athletes. For some reason, the Tope really enjoyed their scent on his hands, and would sit in his cubicle back at Health South, and masturbate furiously while smelling his hockey hands.

He was not to be rewarded today. The players merely howled obscenities at the poor fellow, and he climbed the stairs to the exit in complete and utter dejection. Typical situation. He couldn't be sure what, but it must have been a frozen puck, careening at an ungodly speed,

that struck him square in the back, right between his shoulder blades.

"Biiiiiiiiitch. Who was that mother....." was all he could mutter before experiencing his second fade-to-black of the day.

He regained consciousness once again to muffled sounds of laughter, a few blurry images, and a fierce, pounding headache. As he became more lucid, he was able to discern that his surroundings were somehow unfamiliar, but at the same time, recognizable. He could see his friends the Bear, Archie and Nigel hovering above him, and they were all giddy with laughter. He could see that he was in a hotel room with many others, mostly friends. He slowly rose to his feet.

"Tope. You okay, man," Nigel asked, barely able to contain himself. "You passed out after that last shot. Are you man enough, or were you going to sleep like a little bitch ass?" He was now on his own unsettled feet, and he could see himself in a small mirror above a Vegas-styled sofa. He reached for his cheek, at the large, deep, red stain that ran from his left temple to the corner of his mouth. When he looked at his palm he expected to see the blood, but was confused by what seemed to be women's lipstick. He looked down at his exposed chest to see that it was covered in tiny characters written with a black Sharpee. He swayed in his stance, completely annihilated by Jaeger and Patron, while everyone around him was engaged, one way or another, in complete debauchery. His bachelor party was not yet half way over, and he knew then that it was going to be a long fucking weekend.

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