



*As our guest, we want to provide you
with the utmost experience.*

*While we strive to meet all your needs
away from home,
allow us,
to fulfill one more.*

*We know most guests love to read before
retiring for the evening, and we appreciate
that everyone has different tastes.*

*From true crime novels to love stories,
from history books to science articles,
from horror stories to lighthearted fare,
reading preferences are diverse.*

*Within these pages we submit several genres
to accommodate your tastes.*

Enjoy.

Walk into the lobby of this handsome five-star restaurant and you'll find over two hundred photographs of famous politicians and movie stars from the '60s. As you step down the four short stairs into the formal dining room, the floor-to-ceiling windows offer a spectacular view of the harbor.

The maitre'd pulls out the plush, overstuffed chair from the table as he ever so slightly bends at the waist, so that you know it is his extreme pleasure to be seating you at this very fine table.

And it is a fine table.

There is a white linen tablecloth, crisp napkins, crystal stemware filled with sparkling water, and fresh flowers that offer both visual and sensory delights. The table is located in the middle of the dining room, and since the restaurant isn't crowded yet, any one of the seats offers a panoramic view of the water.

Are you ready to partake in the succulent seafood that is offered? I was.

But before the meal begins let me introduce you to my dining companions. There's The Model with the Idea. As an aging, professional model she feels another line of work is in order and has picked fundraising as her next career move—the Homeless as her cause. She is planning a fashion show for the rich, and some of the money (less the cost of putting on this EXTRAVAGANZA) will go to the Homeless.



Seated next to The Model is the man with the model. He's her, oh, I don't know, 'wannabe boyfriend' comes to mind. As well as working with The Model on this project, he's started a "nice guys" club. It's a club whereby women can be introduced to nice guys, but it's not a dating service. He was very emphatic about that! The club is open to men only; however there's a means by which women are involved. I'm not sure how since I didn't ask any other question than, huh? when he started talking about it.

Seated between The Model and the wannabe boyfriend is the Boss. My boss. He has convinced me to join him (hard to say no when it's your boss) and to keep the whole thing quiet from the BIG BOSSES back at the office. The Boss is not my favorite person.

This is not my favorite meeting.

By the time the after-lunch coffee is served it's apparent the fashion show is no more than a showcase for The Model, the wannabe boyfriend, and The Boss. They've all decided that at the end of the fashion show each one will be called to the stage and take "the walk" down the runway to toast themselves. And the Homeless, I ask? How much money do you see us raising for the Homeless and how will the money be distributed?

They continue to talk as if I hadn't said a word.

Thankfully the meeting concludes and I lead the charge past the (now) many diners. Around the tables I go with the trio traipsing behind me. I stop and talk to the waiter letting him know what a wonderful meal



I had, and even engage in a bit of conversation with some patrons waiting in the lobby.

I walk three blocks on a crowded street to the Boss's car.

When we arrive at the office I hop out and make my way past at least twenty-five people before stopping to have a chat with a coworker.

A colleague approaches and asks if I could step aside for a private chat. Curious, I follow her to a vacant office where she proceeds to ask if I've felt a bit cold today?

Huh?

She asks when was the last time I was in the restroom. Thinking her question odd, I nonetheless answer that it was right before I left for lunch.

What gives?

She needn't have answered, for at the moment I address her question my hand involuntarily wipes the back of my skirt.

It isn't there.

My skirt isn't there!

It's caught up in my panty hose.

My backside has been exposed to the naked world!



Thoughts collide and slide through my head.
I picture the last three and a half hours—
walking past the many restaurant patrons with The Model,
the wannabe boyfriend,
and the Boss behind me,
the three-block walk to the car,
and my travels through the office.

I have been mooning everyone in sight.

I go back and forth between being mortified and
being amused. I settle on amused when a final
thought comes into play:

Now I know why the Boss thought I made a fool of
myself at lunch today.



A VIEW FROM AN EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD

WHO CARES?

If I am happier without her, why am I so lonely?

Why do I think about her all the time?

Am I that weak emotionally?

I was the wall, that was me; I put up a brick wall
that no words or emotion could break me down.

Have I been Trojan horsed?

Have I been infiltrated so easily?

It was only 13 months.

13 months is a snippet in time, if that.

Why? Just why?

I'm 18, I'm supposed to be a mindless fun-loving guy
that just wants to hook up with every girl,
but that's not me,
that's not who I am.

I could never be that.

I need to get out of here for a while; I need to go
somewhere where I can be by myself for a while.
Somewhere without distractions or attractions.

Mr. Sprag was right; I need to find me.

Am I just a character every step of the way?

Do I hide behind my sarcasm and wit?

What am I doing with my life?

I want more, I need more,
I am more than this.

I was supposed to be born a leader; I was supposed
to be born something great for people to look up to.
Something not corrupt, something that people can
truly model off of and know that the world can be
a wonderful place.



ALICE

One day, after twelve years of marriage, I had the sudden, sweeping urge to marry my wife. I woke her up to tell her. (It was 2 a.m.)

"Alice, I want to marry you."

"What? You are married to me!" she replied, almost incoherently (from sleep).

"Yes, but I want to marry you anew!"

"You are nuts," she said, and rolled over. Soon I heard her snoring.

The next morning I explained: "We'll get a divorce and get married again. In a small church. You can buy a new gown."

"First of all, we're already married," Alice replied. "Secondly, my friends will think I'm weird. And third, it's a waste of money."

I agreed, for the time being—because I know the art of compromise.

Besides, I was in love.

But I had some secret savings I'd never told Alice about. Three weeks later, I claimed my uncle had suddenly given me \$3,500. "Now we can have the wedding, without wasting any money."

To my surprise, Alice agreed.

My lawyer, Carl Hettinger, drew up the divorce papers.



Alice walked into his office and quietly signed the documents.

"Would you like to start shopping for the gown?" I asked.

"No," said Alice.

"Why?"

"Because I'm not sure I want to marry you."

"You're not?"

"No."

"What do you mean?"

"You are an annoying person, and suddenly I am a free woman."

Alice and I continued to live together, to eat breakfast and dinner at the same table.

But she was remote,
like a woman on a Greyhound bus.

After three weeks, Alice said: "Now I will marry you."

We went shopping and bought her a white Ebersole wedding gown, with an 8" veil. I found an Episcopal church on 27th Street with a charming priest named Hal. He let me write our vows.



"Do you take this man, with all his toenails and awful puns, to be your lawfully wedded husband?" Hal asked.

"I do," replied Alice, firmly.

"Do you take this woman, whose beauty could break all the windows in Ankara, Turkey, to be your lawfully wedded wife?"

"I do."

"Then by the power vested in me by the State of New York, I now pronounce you man and wife," Hal decreed.

We kissed. Alice had tears in her eyes.

I had succeeded! I had married my wife!





RANDOM THOUGHTS

Mystery trumps misery—
always go with mystery.

If the hokey-pokey
is what it's all about,
why aren't more
of us dancing?

A good guffaw turns an
unpleasant experience around.

We humans are
programmed to seek
pain or pleasure.
We make the choice.
What's not to love?

Is that the pulse?

When worries overwhelm,
remember what true friends
will tell you to do. . .
Sleep on it.

Good night!

Piece:

Skirt
Who Cares?
Alice

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