

## THE SOCK STORY

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All at once, I looked about and found myself—I found myself alone and wandering through a wholly unfamiliar part of campus. I had earlier decided to take a brisk afternoon stroll in order to allow my recent lunch (comprised mainly of raw oysters, apricots, and key lime pie) to settle down into place.

I suppose, as I strolled, I was day-dreaming a little too much and in my day-dreamy state I wandered past one cherry tree too many; I ambled through one more stone archway than was prudent; I strolled past one stately old building too far, and now I found myself to be rather lost. But, I felt glad to be lost—still on campus somewhere, but away from my familiar surroundings. I looked around in awe at my newly discovered stately old buildings and stone archways and cherry trees. These buildings and archways and trees were both familiar and unknown, like the faces of long-lost relatives.

In this sublime state of lost wonderment, I felt that all was right in the world—except for one thing: a certain curious rumbling in my tummy. I hoped that the rumbling and tumbling would go away, but to no avail. And now, as the rumbling grows worse, I am jolted into the present; what was once a tiny trembling is now a thunderous grumbling. A groaning and bubbling. A bumbling and a tumbling, even. The rumbling belly-thundering continues and suddenly I feel as if a lightning bolt has stabbed me in my gut. I must find a bathroom. I must find a bathroom now! But where?

I try to calmly walk towards the nearest stately old building and, for a brief moment, I envision myself inside that ancient air-conditioned building strolling coolly up to a sharply dressed young girl. The girl would be sitting cross-legged in her short, yet professional, gray skirt. She would be sitting behind a long polished wooden desk emblazoned with a placard reading “Information.” In my mind’s eye I smoothly drawl, “Darling, be a dear and direct me towards the nearest restroom, would you?”

But, no—I’ve got to go now! I break into a jog, and then a sprint. I burst through the great oak double doors of an unknown stately old building and I scream, “Where’s your bathroom!!” A startled passerby (hardly a cute young receptionist) points dumbly down the hallway and I’m off like a flash. I run like hell down the hall. I blast into the restroom and throw myself into a stall. Finally, I’m able to release all the evil inside of me, and I proceed to do so with a noise not unlike the emptying of a giant squeezable ketchup bottle... A giant squeezable ketchup bottle full of shit.

Oh, the humanity! Oh, sweet merciful crap-covered Jesus! Oh, fat cats and little kittens! Oh, obtuse saints and acute angels, save me from this horrible fate!

And then the horror is over and I’m purged of my demons, saved by my own sweet ass. No longer in danger of exploding, I relax a bit and lean back in my seat; I’m contented with the joy that can only come from a good shit. I feel good,

alone in my stall, the whole bathroom to myself—sweet privacy. And, on top of all that, this particular bathroom is quite clean and smells of processed flowers (or rather, a moment ago it smelled of flowers). But still, as I sit on my throne, I have the sinking feeling that something is slightly amiss. Abruptly, I realize what the problem might be and I look down at the toilet paper dispenser to find that it is utterly empty! Oh, the humanity! Oh, sweet shit-caked Shiva! Oh, my stars and garters, this is awful! But, of course, this situation is not really so awful. Perhaps a helpful passerby will be kind enough to hand me a roll of toilet paper under the stall door. And if not, well, I will resort to a little piece of folk-wisdom: You can always use your socks! This is a last resort, but it certainly has gotten me out of a jam or two in the past.

I'm halfway through unlacing my left shoe when I realize that I still feel as if something is amiss...but what? It's something I can't quite put my finger on, something that perhaps only my subconscious had picked up on as I burst into the bathroom and ran for the stall. What was it? "Think back, Adam," I tell myself. "What important point were you missing as you threw open the bathroom door and ran for the stall?" Think back. Think back.

I close my eyes and I begin to remember the recent past; I can see myself, as if from above, running through the bathroom door. I'm remembering slowly, as if in slow-motion, as if through a veil of fog. In my mind's eye, I look all around the beautiful gleaming jewel of a bathroom—so clean, so empty, so pure, what could possibly be amiss? And then it hits me—Oh, the humanity! Oh, holy poo-encrusted god of pig-fuckers! Oh, snake-belly mongoose! Oh, I now know what is amiss! There are no urinals in this bathroom! Ahhhh! Ahhhh! Ahhhh! I'm taking a shit in the women's bathroom!

Now, I'm just about to pull up my pants and make a dirty-assed break for it when I hear the most horrible sound: the sound of the bathroom door opening. Now I know what death will sound like as she walks slowly towards me and takes me away to the deep dark pit. Click clack, click clack. I hear the unmistakable sound of heels on tile getting closer and closer. Click clack, click clack, closer and closer. CLICK CLACK, CLICK CLACK, CLOSER AND CLOSER! I can feel those high heels pounding in my brain! And then, horror of horrors, the sound stops and I hear the stall door next to mine being opened. Oh, devil-women, she-satan, lady-Lord-of-the-flies, why?! Why, out of all the stalls in God's great green beautiful bathroom would you choose the one next to mine?

I suppose that there is no sense in questioning one's fate, and so I resign myself to mine. I sit quietly in my stall and await my eventual eventuality; I will be found out; I will be cast out and humiliated; this is life. Or, perhaps not, perhaps I could just sit very quietly and wait her out; there may be hope; maybe life is not just a meaningless stumbled through a random indifferent universe. As I ponder this deep and worthless idea from within my cloistered stall I can't help but take a quick peak under the stall divider at the shoes of my companion. I see red stiletto heels... Well, the worst has come to pass; this truly is the devil sitting next to me; I truly am alone in the universe: I will live and die and never know why. Still, even knowing all this, I decide to remain quiet and try to wait this she-devil out. I hope against hope and sit in my stall until now—Oh horror, oh woe, she (the devil) knocks twice on the stall divider and calmly she speaks. She says, "Excuse me...Excuse

me, you in the next stall. I'm all out of toilet paper over here, could you hand me some of yours?"

I'm caught. I'm done for. The jig (as they say) is up. What else can I do but swallow my pride and suavely state, "I'm out of toilet paper too; would you like to borrow a sock?"