

Running.

His bare feet slapped the concrete as he ran through the darkness. Bob knew where he was. It was the same dreadful spot that each dream sent him. He was in the basement of the hospital.

Gasping for breath, Bob rounded the corner to the stairs. Fear was fully strapped into the driver's seat and panic was riding shotgun.

The shapeless mass was closing the gap between them. Soundlessly it pursued. It was everything that terrified him, while being nothing he had ever really experienced.

Blind terror took over and he bolted to the stairway door. He fumbled helplessly with the door handle as his hands turned to flippers.

"Come on! Oh! COME ON!" Bob shouted.

Suddenly, without warning like a cold blast of arctic air, it was upon him. It consumed him and all that he had been without compassion or concern.

Bob woke abruptly as his face smacked the living room floor. Although not a large drop from couch to carpet, Bob preferred to rise from his couch with his feet and not his face.

Bob ran to the bathroom.

"Hurl. I'm gonna ..." Blood poured from his nostrils in brilliant flashes of bright and dark red. Blood clots crawled like snails from his nose, slid down his face and executed the free fall. Bob watched in horror as quarter sized clots covered his bathroom sink.

"What the ..." Bob screamed before round two began. He vomited such an excessive amount that it seemed he was literally puking for two people. Quickly the bathroom was covered by liquids, as Bob ice skated to his final destination. The floor.

While he lay on his back, marinating in his own goop, he considered his landing. "Ha. Nailed it."

Although thoroughly disgusted, it wasn't the clean-up that affected Bob the most. He feared the why question. Why him? Why now? Why, why, why?

The easy answers came with the cleaning. Because when cleaning, Bob knew the mess was of his own making, literally. He scrubbed and mopped the compilation of food products that had once encompassed his "healthy diet." These special items were sautéed in his digestive tract for just the right amount of time before exiting via the entrance at warp speed. No more questions there. It was pretty much black and white. And then red, pink, yellow.

Bob stepped back and studied his bathroom. He had successfully sprayed every inch of the walls, ceiling and floor

with vomit. It was that fun material that was both liquid and solid with the ability to cause "sympathy puking" from the strongest of stomachs. Bob's stomach churned.

"This should really be an Olympic event. I would totally rock the shit out of ..." Bob vomited again. His stomach muscles burned as he vomited for the next several minutes, non-stop.

As the drool dripped from his chin, Bob looked into the mirror and cocked his head. "How did this happen to me?" He stepped back from the sink and frowned. "I just don't understand. I'm a good guy, quite handsome with a quick wit." He smirked. "Ok, quick sarcasm."

Bob's stomach rolled and threatened to burst as he was forced to double over in pain.

After a few minutes, he stood upright and looked into the mirror. Bob resembled death warmed over. His crystal blue eyes were faded, sunken and surrounded by moats of mottled, gray skin.

Bob cocked his head once more. "I raced to the gym and then to the vitamin store. I took vitamins and pills for everything from joint care to weight loss." Bob wiped his nose with a smooth motion that started at his left wrist and ended at his fingertips. "I went to the doctor when I needed to for exams." Bob's rib cage vibrated as a low, menacing growl crept from his soul. "Doctors."

Bob stomped out of the bathroom. "I was perfectly okie dokie until I was told I was dying. Dying! It was like he purposely waited to tell me at the last possible minute. Aw, shucks. Too bad, so sad you're dying. But, just keep coming to my office for visits and pills. Pills! PILLS! Take this, do that! All the money to those bastards and I am STILL DYING! Hell. I'M WORSE! CLOWNS! Nothin' but a mutiny of worthless CLOWNS!"

Bob hated his lack of sleep, the horrible nightmares and the hell his doctor was putting him through.

"Doctors and clowns. Clowns and doctors," Bob spoke to his empty apartment. "One in the same friggin' family."

Bob's hatred of doctors was much like his hatred of clowns. It was unsubstantiated and full of "what ifs." For Bob, the only difference between doctors and clowns was that the clowns probably would not give him the bad news he feared. He may, however, get a really cool balloon animal and two weeks of nightmares. But, not the horrifying diagnosis of death.

"Unless," Bob pondered. "The clown's name was It. Then that would be a totally different animal. Ha! Love that King guy."

All in all, death was the bundle of joy handed out by the doctor. Perhaps he should really be the one in the face paint.

A full 24 hours passed and Bob did not vomit.

"Out of sight, out of mind. All better." Bob drifted off to sleep.

Bob abruptly woke in a sweaty panic. He gasped for breath. A heaviness was on his chest and down both arms. He was unable to move, scream or breathe. But, he could panic and panic he did indeed.

Bob kicked his legs and moved his hips from side to side. He was fighting and gasping with such a fury that his vision blurred and then began to darken.

Bob watched in horror as a dark figure moved off his chest to stand next to the bed. Bob was finally able to draw a deep breath. His chest burned as he regained control.

The dark figure leaned over Bob. No words were exchanged. Much like the crane game at the grocery store, the dark figure used his immense claw to reach into Bob's chest and pull out a lung. Bob stared in disbelief. The corroded lung was removed without pain.

The dark figure leaned in closer. Bob could feel the hot, rancid breath of the beast as it opened its mouth and consumed his lung.

Plastic.

Bob flexed his jaw and felt plastic. It reminded him of the straws he would get at the ice cream parlor down the street. Except, Bob thought. This one is much bigger. Silence. Bob was immersed in a silence so thick that he thought his ears would pop at any moment. He opened his mouth to scream. Plastic.

Bright lights shone down from above and invaded his covered eyelids. Bob could tell he was in a bright room, however he couldn't open his eyes. He reached up and found small bandages taping his eyes shut. When he removed them, he also removed half of his eyelashes.

Bob fought tears and pain as the bright light pierced his newly opened eyes. Other than bright light, all Bob could see was a thick white fog.

Reaching for the plastic tube securely planted in his throat, Bob's thoughts raced. Well, I have really done it. I am dead. Dead. Dead. Dead. I really screwed the goose this time.

"Bob." A voice called to him from elsewhere in the room. It was the first sound Bob heard in a long time.

"Ugh." Bob replied. "Ugh, ugh, oogk." Drool ran from his lips, down his chin and onto the bed. Bob's thoughts tickled his sarcastic funny bone. Shit, tell me I'm not suddenly Klingon. Ha! Even through this, I still found a chuckle. There is hope.

"Bob. Yes, you screwed the goose. However, you are not Klingon. Come to me." The male voice boomed through the silence.

Bob sat up in bed. His surroundings were just as he imagined. Everywhere he looked was a thick haze. It was as if he woke up and found himself inside a vanilla cupcake. He threw his feet over the edge of the bed. He looked below his feet and the floor was not visible. White. He swung his legs and found no difference. White.

"Come now, son."

I am hoping the floor is there. Otherwise, this first step is gonna be a doosey.

Bob stepped down and found the floor. It was a lush carpeted floor that was soft and luxurious between his toes. He reached for the tube in his mouth, braced himself and pulled. Bob was surprised to find it exited without much force. However, it did inspire his gag reflex.

Bob vomited everywhere. Well, he thought, at least I have that.

"Bob. It is time." The voice boomed again.

"Are you God?" Bob's voice was a squeak as he tried to speak through his burning vocal cords.

"I am who you want me to be."

Bob swallowed hard. "Fine. I want you to be Mr. Spock. I have been dealt horrible cards and I need some logic in my life. Please." Bob managed a chuckle.

A figure stepped out from the fog and into the light created in the center of the room. His magnificent posture, brilliant uniform and beautifully stunning ears stopped Bob's chuckling. It was indeed the logical, Mr. Spock.

Bob's mouth gaped open and he began to drool without the help of the super-sized milkshake straw.

"Satisfied?"

"Fascinated." Bob took one step forward. The fog had cleared a spot in the middle of the room and Bob was in Star Trek heaven.

"You are being given a second chance, son. A chance to make a difference in your life and the lives of countless others." Spock reached out and put a finger to Bob's forehead.

"But, I ..."

With that, Bob was thrust back into the bright white light of the operating room.

"He's back!" Someone shouted. "He's back!"

Scrubs and aprons flapped like the capes of super heroes as equipment and personnel returned to Bob's bedside with much clatter and excitement. Men and women scurried about the operating room as Bob returned to life. His vital signs were slowly returning to a normal level and the hospital staff was elated.



Bob soon found himself inside an ICU room with nothing but time to figure out what he needed to do to satisfy Mr. Spock's request.

Many weeks later, Bob was finally home and stockpiling the necessary equipment. He had a plan and the means to accomplish it. He left his house with high hopes and a strong will.

Bob found the house and rang the doorbell. Dr. Smith answered the door with a smile and soon found himself forced back inside his home at the business end of a machete.

Bob sighed. "You know me. I know you. Small talk over. I need to extract some healthy revenge." Bob spoke frankly as he wheeled the machete with the swift precision of a professional.

Blood flowed and the struggle was short. The doctor begged for his life to Bob, the dispassionate soldier in his own war for justice.

"Oh, hey, Doc. You're gonna need band aids. You know? The fifty-dollar band aids, right? Nah. You can just bleed out you soul sucking bastard." Bob's voice was calm and soothing while inflicting various horrors upon the doctor.

After unrolling the large roll of plastic, Bob smiled. "I saw this on TV." He looked to the dead man. "It seemed to work quiet well. I'm gonna give 'er a shot. Roll you up, I will." Bob laughed. "Now this is a Yoda moment."

He was diligent in his cleaning of the scene, as he followed internet directions to the T.

Bob returned home. He was satisfied, but not finished. He spoke to his reflection in the bathroom mirror, "I am back with a second chance. It didn't kill me yet. My body is weak, but my mind is strong. I am sent to fix the rights that they have done wrong."

END