

## HUNGER PAINS

Kathleen balanced eight bags of groceries and two gallons of milk, straining her already aching back. She hunched over to clench a jug of milk with her chin as she attempted to open the front door; only increasing the ever growing pressure on her contorted spine. Her purse squirmed in evasion, like a bag of wet cats, as she maneuvered her two free fingers through it fishing for her house keys.

She had text Ralph on her way home and asked him to come outside and help her bring in the groceries. Although she had known him far too long to maintain the illusion that he would be outside waiting to assist, she at least thought he would get off his planetary ass to open the door for her. Her anticipated disappointment came to frustration when, after nudging the doorbell five

times with her elbow, she heard Ralph's thunderous footsteps echo through the house then stop after what couldn't have been more than five labored steps.

"You inconsiderate fat fuck!" yelled Kathleen after a gallon of milk exploded on her favorite two thousand dollar shoes when it escaped her grasp and fell to the cobblestone doorstep.

"Awwwwwwww, you asshole!" she yelled once more to ensure he heard her. Tears pooled in her quivering eyes as she fought the urge to fall to her knees and cry.

With the burden of the heavy milk relieved from her arm she finally managed to get the front door open. Before walking into the house Kathleen wiped the milk from her shoes onto the back of her pants while contorted in a flamingo like stance. When she walked through the front door the scent of pizza, peperoni fueled gas, and body odor assaulted her senses; she choked back her urge to vomit. You would think that after ten years of marriage to an overflowing sack of shit like Ralph she would be immune to any foul sent; but she had in fact lived in a constant state of nausea for at least the last nine years since Ralph stopped trying to impress her with luxuries like showers and closing bathroom doors before he released his monstrous bowel tearing shits.

The living room looked like it had been ravaged by a frat boys' house party. On the antique marble coffee table, at least a dozen empty soda cans formed a fort atop two pizza boxes which were undoubtedly empty, if not licked clean. A third open pizza box lay on a handmade Parisian rug several feet from the pillow covered couch. Two cans of soda and a crumbled chip bag sat inside the open box; three more cans and a candy bar wrapper lay by its side as evidence that Ralph was practicing his free-throws from his perch on the couch.

"Fuck, at least he got a little exercise," thought Kathleen as she kicked the box out of the way to walk towards the kitchen.

Their house was an extravagant monument to the muse of money. Every modern luxury and gadget was utilized within its walls; the fine art, antique furniture and high-tech electronics stood as a bridge between the then and now.

“What a fucking waste,” thought Kathleen, through her cloud of depression, as she navigated down the trail of snack food wrappers leading to the kitchen.

Like a water buffalo being stalked by a lion, Ralph’s pungent scent betrayed his presence long before Kathleen saw him. When she turned the corner into the kitchen there he was; nearly six hundred pounds of self-abusive, living, wheezing, barely human lard, piled onto a lazy boy chair in front of the kitchen table. What an embarrassment it was when anyone came to their home and saw that chair at the table and asked why; as if it wasn’t obvious that no dining room chair could hold such a monstrosity as Ralph. It was like they took pleasure in making her say it. Like she didn’t know she was married to a man so fat that his dick pissed on his own thighs because they were too thick for it to reach past them. At least Kathleen didn’t have to be bothered with having to have sex with such a creature. If he was even still capable of getting an erection with his suffocated penis, his pelvic thrusts would only cause him to fuck his own thighs and gut; never coming within a foot of her vagina.

Despite Ralph’s limp member, Kathleen wasn’t sex starved at all. Her personal trainer Ricardo left more than her muscles sore after each session. Her chiseled body was a testament to her devotion to him and his training methods in the gym and at his studio apartment before and after each session.

Ralph sat reclining in his chair at the table like a king awaiting court. He strained a tilt of his sweaty head to look at her.

“Stop being such a whiny bitch and put the groceries away, before I go buy me a newer model,” wheezed Ralph; the arrogance of his wealth outweighed his self-awareness of his grotesque appearance.

“Don’t talk to me like that you pig!” yelled Kathleen as she threw the groceries on the kitchen table.

“I’ve got two words for you bitch, prenuptial agreement. You wouldn’t last a week on your own.”

Kathleen knew there was truth to that statement; but she also knew that when the time bomb that was Ralph’s butter marinated heart exploded, she would be a very, very rich woman. She and Ricardo would be together and Ralph could rot in Hell after a forklift lifted his gigantic corpse into a Guinness book worthy coffin.

For now she was silent. She looked in pity at Ralph’s clothing. His flowing rolls of lard spewed from both sleeves and his shirt collar like a Play-Doh fun factory; she giggled at the thought of his head as a tubular crescent moon stream of clay.

“Here’s your food. I’m going to be gone for three weeks so you have to remember to call the store and have them deliver groceries every three days or so. I don’t want you living on fast food,” she said, more concerned about having to clean up the paper bags and pizza boxes than about his health.

“If there is one thing I won’t forget lady, it’s to order food,” Said Ralph laughing at his own fat joke as he picked through the grocery bags.

Kathleen quickly went upstairs to pack a bag for her trip and to escape the disgusting sight of Ralph popping Twinkies down his throat like vitamins. She perused through her vast closet and

carefully selected her skimpiest underwear and shortest skirts. She wasn't going to visit her mother like she had told Ralph; she only used that as an excuse because her mom lived across the country and there wasn't a passenger plane in existence that could accommodate Ralph's enormous behind. Kathleen would really be going to stay with Ricardo for his birthday; followed by a much needed three week sexual Olympics which she secretly hoped may even involve a few team events. After she finished packing, Kathleen walked out of bedroom eager to leave the disgust in her heart behind with the disgust in the kitchen.

"Oh shit! Ricardo's present," she mumbled before she turned around and went back into the bedroom to go shopping.

After perusing Ralph's matching fifteen by fifteen maple shelved closet, she found the perfect gift for Ricardo; one of several of Ralph's Rolex watches. It was a gift that would surely secure her place in her young lover's heart; after all, it was worth at least twice as much as his shitty little car. Ralph wouldn't even notice it was gone anyway, he had several Rolex watches and hadn't been capable of wearing a watch for years, due to the sheer girth of his wrist. She could only speculate that he saved them because if he gained a few more pounds he could start wearing them as rings; she giggled out loud at her cruel joke.

With her two suitcases in hand and the stolen watch in her pocket she walked past Ralph in silence then out the front door. Ralph wasn't surprised by her cold shoulder, he knew she never loved him, just his money. Although he wasn't surprised that she didn't say goodbye, he was upset that she failed to put away the groceries prior to leaving.

Ralph picked his cell phone up from the table and sent a quick text, "THANKS FOR PUTTING AWAY THE FUCKING GROCERIES, I'LL MISS YOU SOOOOOOO MUCH!"

He smirked hoping that reading the text distracted her and made her run into a light pole or God willing, a semi-truck. Kathleen and he both took out enormous life insurance policies on each other after they were married; so he wouldn't be too sad if she, "accidentally," died.

He only kept Kathleen around to have something sexy to look at and to clean his house. He often considered getting a divorce then hiring a hot young maid who would serve both purposes without all the back talk; but that sounded like so much damn work. He hadn't left the house in months and didn't like the idea of meeting with lawyers and going to court dates. Besides, he had nothing to wear, his suits hadn't fit him in years. He lived in clown sized sweat pants and t-shirts; often even abandoning those to lurch around his mansion in briefs stained with ten shades of yellow.

"Fuck it! I guess I'll put this shit away," he said to himself as he nearly collapsed the table by using it for leverage to stand up.

It was only a fifteen foot walk from the table to the fridge but when your legs weigh a hundred pounds each it may as well be a marathon. Ralph picked up the remaining gallon of milk, opened it, and took a drink as if it would provide him with the strength to put away the groceries. When he walked towards the fridge with the uncapped milk swaying in his hand it spewed onto the tile floor like Hansel leaving his trail of bread crumbs through the woods. Ralph opened the fridge and placed the milk on the shelf. Without closing the door he slothfully stumbled back to the table where he grabbed a gallon of ice cream.

While walking back to the fridge, "Uh, uh, uh, uh, FUUUUUUCK!" Ralph slipped in the spilt milk.

In a vain attempt to stop himself from falling, he reached his gelatinous arm out in front of him and clasped onto the refrigerator door. Ralph's collapsing body transferred all its weight to the fridge's open door, it was more strain than it could bare. The fridge lost its footing and came crashing down onto Ralph's legs, pinning them to the ground and shattering his brittle bones.

"Ahhhhhhhhh, fuck, fuck, my legs!" screamed Ralph as the pain set in.

He lay there screaming on the floor in a puddle of spilt milk and misery. The reality of the situation set in; no one was home or would be home for three weeks. The recluse would not be missed nor even expected anywhere by anyone. He was all alone. Ralph cried in despair for hours before passing out from physical pain and emotional exhaustion.

When Ralph awoke the house was dark, the fridge had become unplugged during the fall rendering its light and its on-door computer useless. Ralph was momentarily startled when he realized he was on the floor and not in his bed. Seconds later, the pain from his two broken femurs jolted him back into the reality of his dire situation; it was too much to bare, he wished he would have never woken up.

Ralph thought desperately about how he could escape the situation. Yelling was useless, depending on anyone else helping him was unrealistic, and calling for help.....

"My phone! Where the fuck did I leave my phone?" he asked himself.

He saw it, his salvation was sitting on the table only fifteen feet away. He looked for anything he could use to reach it. His XXXXL t-shirt was his only viable option. After ten minutes of struggling, like a beached whale, he got his shirt off and rolled it up to form an improvised lasso. He tried numerous times to whip it towards the table but it only fluttered impotently to the floor. He had an idea, it needed to be heavier. Ralph soaked the shirt in the

puddle of spilt milk and other various liquids that had fallen out of the fridge. Now he could whip the shirt nearly to the table. He only needed a couple more inches. Ralph laid down the shirt and refocused his efforts on trying to pick the fridge up off of his mangled legs so he could slide out a little farther. He pushed with all the strength he had left but years of inactivity had stolen his muscle. He may have been as big as a bull but he had the strength of a kitten. He collapsed in defeat, quickly going to sleep in an attempt to escape his Hell.

When Ralph woke up it was daylight, perhaps mid-afternoon. He regretted being too lazy to reset the clock on his stove after the last power outage; the blinking 12:00 was now a constant reminder of his lethargy. He was ravenous. It was inconceivable for him to miss one meal but now he'd missed several. His stomach roared as if ordering him to feed it. He began his breakfast with the little milk that remained in the carton. Then he ate a jar of pickles, and a loaf of bread all washed down by two cans of cola. Eating made him so happy that even two broken legs could be effortlessly ignored while he gorged himself. What he could not ignore, was the ever growing urge to urinate. He placed his shriveled penis in the milk carton and released a stream of piss that sounded like a power washer spraying a sidewalk; such relief.

Darkness came after hours of staring at the ceiling and crying. The misery was too much to bare and it had only been one day.

“Errrrrrrrr,” whined Ralph as he regained consciousness. It appeared that it was dawn but within half an hour or so he realized it was actually dusk. He had slept at least a whole day. Again he was hungry, but this time his options were far more limited. His dinner consisted of a dozen raw eggs that gaged him with their slimy texture as they slid down his throat. He drank two more sodas to settle his stomach. Hours passed in silence. The solitude and darkness of his



remote house that he normally cherished so much, was now the inspiration of terror in his heart.

To escape he slept.

Day after day passed. He abandoned the milk jug resorting to pissing on the floor and shiting in his pants. All hope and any pride had long left his heart. Every consumable item in the fridge, right down to the last drop of steak sauce, had been eaten.

The doorbell broke the week of silence.

“Help, hellllllp me!” screamed Ralph with every last ounce of his energy.

His house was too big and well built. Whomever was at his door would not hear his cries. Three more rings of the doorbell hit him like kicks in his teeth. He slept and dreamt of death.

A whole day passed with Ralph staring at the bags of groceries that remained on the table. What a torture it was for him to see food so close when his stomach ached with hunger pains.

Two more days passed before Ralph was struck with an infuriating realization as he fiddled with the drawstring in his sweat pants.

“Why the fuck didn’t I use you to get the phone days ago? God I’m so fucking stupid!” he yelled at the string as he removed it from its hiding place under his bean bag chair of a belly.

With the shirt tied to the string and the string tied to an empty ketchup bottle for weight, he was ready to get his phone. He threw his contraption at the table, it fell short by at least a foot. With an agonizing sigh, Ralph, reeled in his line. He twirled the bottle like a cowboy and threw it again. It missed; he reeled it again. Ralph threw the bottle once more; the bottle hit just passed the phone and came to a clattering rest nearly touching it. He reeled in his line, this time inspired by his near success. It took him only three more tries to knock the phone off the table and two more to drag it to his hand.

“This Hell is finally over,” he thought as he excitedly grasped the phone in his bloated hand; already envisioning firemen kicking down his door to rescue him.

He held the phone over his face which now dripped tears of joy. He hit the power switch, nothing happened. He hit it again, and again, but nothing happened. The dark screen reflected his expression of misery as he realized the battery was dead; his tears of joy turned sour with sorrow. In anger he threw the phone against the wall shattering it. He cried; he cried and he pounded his head against the ground in anger; then he came to another realization. If he could get the phone off the table he could surely get some of the groceries from the table.

Happiness and hope replaced rage; he set to his task. After two strenuous hours of casting his line he had retrieved nearly all the groceries. Some had rolled out of his reach when they fell from the table and some of the bags contained non-food items, but he was more than pleased with his bounty. He devoured half the food in the bags then spent the rest of the daylight reading a tabloid magazine that Kathleen had bought yet forgot to take with her when she stormed away in anger.

The pain of the next couple days were eased by the food which he now rationed and by his frequent retreats into slumber. The downside to his continuous sleeping was that he had no idea how many days had passed or what time it was.

The doorbell rang. It rang two more times but he did not even bother screaming. He knew it would be in vain. Even though he accepted that whomever was ringing the bell wouldn't hear him, he still hoped that they may become worried and call for help.

Days passed and Ralph's hunger grew in bounds. He could not wait much longer. Not just because of the hunger but because he now ran a high fever and frequently vomited. His legs were surely infected from soaking in his own excrement for days on end.

His home phone rang. It rang until a voice mail was left, "Hi Ralph, I'm sure you are listening and just too lazy to answer the phone. I decided I'm going to stay at my mom's house for another two weeks. I hope that's ok, if not, call me back. Bye," it was Kathleen.

"Oh no, oh fucking Hell no; this can't be happening. Come home you bitch!" Ralph yelled at the phone.

His only chance at rescue would now not arrive until long after he was dead. All hope was lost.

"Fuck you-u-u-u-u-u!" Ralph shouted at the fridge as he bombarded it with a flurry of punches. He violently shook the fridge in rage causing a glass shelf to fall on the tile and shatter. A large, blade like, shard of glass reflected his image as it lay spinning on the tile floor; he was a fat, pathetic, crying, fool who was about to die at the hands of his beloved refrigerator. He would not, could not, let that happen.

He yelled at the Gods, "I am a fucking multi-millionaire for God's sake. I will survive this and have this fat sucked from my ass by the best cosmetic surgeons in the world if I want. I can start over. I won't die here!"

In a flash of courage Ralph grabbed his homemade lasso and disassembled it frantically. He used his shirt as a crude tourniquet on his right leg and his sweat pants string to tie the other. He grabbed the large shard of glass holding it firmly like a knife, it cut deep into his plump hand. The pain in his hand was numbed by the fear of what was to come; he plunged the glass into his

knee. The tip of the shard chipped off when it struck his kneecap but he did not falter. The pain ripped through his body with more violence than the glass itself. Blood poured from the wound as he sawed and stabbed at his leg. Bubbling bulges of cottage cheese like fat oozed from the open wounds. His teeth cracked as he clenched them in pain but he did not stop. He screamed in agony but he did not stop until his thigh burst free from his calf. Blood spurt into the air; he twisted the shirt tighter until the ruby rain stopped, then he tied it off once more. The pain became euphoric. His face and hands were soaked in blood and sweat, Ralph, tightened the string as tight as he could then slashed repeatedly at his other leg until every muscle, vein, and tendon was severed releasing him from his trap. He fell back and screamed in mutilated victory as blood pooled around him.

Ralph looked down at his severed legs. The sight of his missing legs was unreal to him even though he was their executioner. His mind couldn't process what horror he wrought upon his own being but the pain was undeniable. It hurt, it hurt like he had never felt in his comfort filled life. It was pure agony now, the endorphins that had numbed him before were no match for the massive trauma he had inflicted.

He was free but his ordeal was not over. He rolled as best he could towards the phone, stamping the floor with his blood soaked nubs as he went. Each hobbled crawl released a tremor of agony through Ralph's trembling body. He reached the counter where the phone sat but he could not lift his heavy torso high enough to reach it. He flopped furiously on the floor attempting to reach the white marble counter top which stood before him like the crest of a snow capped mountain. The kitchen began to spin and light gave way to darkness; he collapsed into an unconscious heap of lard in a soup of his own blood, urine and feces.

Ralph woke to the sound of the front door opening. “Did I sleep for three weeks?” thought Ralph.

Regardless of why someone was coming in his house or how long it had been, he was alive and salvation was within his grasp.

“Thank you God,” whispered Ralph.

Kathleen walked into the kitchen and gasped in horror; nearly fainting from the sight of Ralph laying with both legs severed within the chaos of the room. His dismembered shins still poked out from under the fridge telling the story of what had transpired.

“What happened!” yelled Kathleen as she carefully walked towards him attempting to not step in any of the bodily fluids that coated the floor.

“Just call an ambulance, now!” ordered Ralph with what was nearly the last of his energy.

She walked to the phone and picked it up. As she reached to dial nine-one-one she looked at Ralph and realized that this was a pivotal moment in their marriage; its end.

Kathleen disconnected the phone from the wall; retrieved the bottle of medicine she had returned early to sneak in and get, then walked out of the house. No one would know she had come home early, no one would recognize the false tears that she would shed when she was notified of Ralph’s death, and surely no one would blame her when she moved on with her life.

As she closed and locked the front door she replaced the several, “Sorry we missed you,” notes from the post office, then joined Riccardo in his awaiting car. Her smile betrayed her joy as they drove away from the life that would soon be theirs.

The End

