

“Imagine a different revelation: The Devil rising to Earth remorseful for what he has done! Knowing damn well that no matter what he does to try and repent, nobody can or will ever trust him again; and rightfully so! Now welcome to the world of a recovering alcoholic/addict!”

Far Behind

By Langdon Hues

The guitar's twangy repertoire filled my vintage Ford truck as I turned left into the packed parking lot.

"Wow, that takes me back a bit," I respond by turning up the thunderous eruption of drums and bass and after a couple of measures the singer enralls:

"Some say the end is near; Some say we'll see Armageddon soon; Certainly hope we will; I sure could use a vacation from this bullshit, three ring, circus-sideshow of freaks and..."

Then I realized the song was now considered a classic since it was released sixteen years ago in 1996. Then the song "What a drag it is getting old" raced across my mind as I realized I too am classic since I graduated High school seven years before that. Thank God perpetual tardiness kept me from dwelling on those negative feelings any longer.

I consider myself a gracefully lanky individual as I climb the steady ramp. Trying to be debonair can sometimes come easy to a person with slight Hispanic tones, so my thin goatee and thick black hair tied back into a ponytail don't look to out of place. Well let's face it, slicking long hair back into a ponytail is

the quickest and easiest way not to look disgusting, especially when that wedding is in an hour and you haven't even showered yet.

Yep, the two phrases my mother used often to try and compensate for all of my shortcomings were "He has potential" and "He cleans up nicely." Hey, at least I shaved?

The tight black overcoat I was wearing kept repressing my shins as I walked past the sign for this locally known hall affectionately dubbed the "Beal House". I held in a deep breathe of nervousness, all the while trying to remind myself that this place and ones like it are the most inviting sanctuaries to those in recovery.

I looked inside the single glass entrance door, exposed was a tiny great room with a stage towards the back that was used for theater events and the occasional local rock band that would put on a show or two. Before the stage was an intimate table of a dozen or so people listening to the chairperson introduce himself, the purpose of the gathering, and the few simple rules.

I was late! *Damn I hated that.*

While entering I was reminded of my first time at this meeting about four month's ago, *New Years Eve*. How one of the members and I talked for an hour and a half after the meeting about

how our addictions had ended up methodically ruining our lives.

“There’s Russ there” I said to myself, easily identifying him by his waving and gesturing to an empty seat to his right. I walked over and sat down beside him after customarily shaking my new friend’s hand.

Lapsing back to that first meeting talking to Russ, how he had told me his sponsor-to-be approached him at his very first time with open arms and support.

I may be green to this stint of sobriety, but I wasn’t virgin to the program. “Never” I said, “I’ve invested over a decade to these halls and no one ever so much talked to me none the less.”

Yeah, but I then realized Russ was doing just that so I shut up and took it as the closest thing to a sign, asking Russ for the same type of support though not exactly sure what that entitled.

After the chairperson Don, an agnostic with over a decade of sobriety (another reason I liked this meeting) finished speaking, he asked if there was anyone who wished to share their experience, strength and hope. A stocky bald man raised his hand and was called upon.

“Hi, my name is Jack but my friends call me Happy- because if I wake up in the morning I’m already happy!”

There was a call out of “Hi Happy Jack.”

“Anyways, I started drinking, drugging, and smoking cigarettes all by the age of ten. Back in the early eighties you could walk up to any gas station with a forged note saying you were allowed to purchase cigarettes for your parent’s and score. That and the easy access to cigarette machines made it seem almost acceptable.”

“Older brothers or kids from the neighborhood supplied most of the pot and alcohol. We also stole booze from our parents, and even weaseled into restaurants after hours through scarcely secured access panels or cubby holes to get our fix. Sometimes we’d even just snatch-and-grab from the open back doors of package stores, social lodges, or bars. And much like an animal that has all day to find ways into your home, it wasn’t that hard to do.”

“At thirteen I had my first overdose. After drinking too much vodka I was found on the side of the road and wound up spending the next three days hospitalized in a coma. I remember waking up in the hospital to mother by my side. For me,

high school was just a social medium where you could obtain any drug you wanted. Weed was always there, yet during the eighties cocaine and acid were extremely plentiful where I grew up.”

“By sixteen a friend and I were working as dish washers at a local restaurant. Not only did they feed us drinks during the night, we would regularly steal alcohol and one of the cooks was the biggest coke dealer in the area.”

“Everyone was high!”

“My mother would pick us up and I’d ask if I could drive home because I had my learner’s permit and would be holding my breath and one-eyeing it all the way there.”

“It was my intention to experience every drug by any means within my reach. The more intense the pleasure the better, so when someone mentioned they had a friend who use to shoot up alcohol, I gave it a try. Unfortunately you’re better off just drinking it if you want the best effect. But I soon learned that wasn’t necessarily the case when it came to cocaine.”

“So it really shouldn’t have been any surprise that I got into my first drunk driving accident only a year after getting my license. I nearly killed my passenger and the other driver when I took a quick left turn in front of an

oncoming SUV. Both cars were totaled but somehow I left the scene, still obliterated, and nursed my car two miles to my house without getting caught.”

“I went into work the next day, because no good alcoholic misses a day of work due to his drinking, and turned myself in to the police afterwards. I said I was scared and received a hundred dollar fine for driving to endanger, basically it was a slap in the wrist I just didn’t learn from.”

“The easiest way to best describe my childhood would be “I was a pass out, black out, piss your pants drunk” by the age of twenty, and it didn’t get any better after I turned twenty-one. But I was a hard worker and always had a job, I just chalked it up to “I work hard and I play harder.” But we’re not here to compare or bore each other with ‘War stories’, we all have them and they’re all pretty much the same.”

“I drank and drugged to excess and here I am!”

“But it was that car accident at seventeen where I was first introduced to this program. And here I am almost twenty years later hopefully just starting to get it.”

“I often hear this program being referred as a tool, and at first it became a tool I used to wait out the storm until people got off my back about my drinking. Don’t get me wrong, I was remorseful, but that faded quickly and after a couple of months even my family and friends thought I was cured.”

“And that’s how it went for twenty years, enduring the unnecessary bullshit I caused by my drinking, occasionally coming in these halls when the shit really hit the fan, and then going right back out and trying it again.”

“I’ve always had a love of learning, whether it’s new experiences and emotions or just reading about something. That’s pretty much the reason I first tried alcohol, I was curious and wanted to know what it was about. And after I found out, I was in love with the instant gratifying pleasure that alcohol and drugs would easily bring.”

“And I learned how to use this instant pleasure as an emotional tool to help influence any negative feelings I may feel; sadness, loneliness, anger, boredom, fear. Even when I was already happy I would get greedy and want to get happier. And when I made a mistake I

dwelled on it and beat myself up with heavy drinking to the point of obliteration.”

“So when I finally crashed after twenty five years of drinking it was no surprise I just wanted to learn what the hell happened, where did I exactly go wrong?”

“Now I could go on about all of the cognitive distortions, the so called ‘alcoholic way of thinking and behaving’ that I suffer from and just assumed everyone thought that way! How I see everything as ‘all or nothing’ or how I would dwell on the negatives and discredit any positives in a vicious cycle of worthlessness. But instead, to quickly finish up, I recently read a true story that I believe help’s sum up my twisted way of thinking.”

“It was about a man, who after years of abusive drinking burned out his throat and couldn’t drink anymore, or so you would think. But he somehow came up with the idea of an “Alcoholic enema.” After some time of convincing his wife to help him with the procedure, they poured a full bottle of sherry into the enema bag and went into the bathroom to do it.”

“But apparently when you do this you bypass the liver which usually filters out about 90% of the alcohol you drink. This instantly left the man wasted before he could reach the bedroom with a blood alcohol level of 5.7%, where anything over 4.0 will usually put someone in a coma. His wife thought he would just sleep it off, but he died rather quickly.”

“Now the fact that this man came up with, and followed through on this idea is a great example of an alcoholic’s way of thinking on its own.”

“But instead of saying ‘Man, that guy was sick’ or even ‘What an idiot,’ my first thought was ‘If you only did a quarter of the bottle you’d probably be alright. You’d have a BAC of about 1.5%, plus you’d be bypassing the liver and not have to worry about damaging it.’ And that’s how really SICK I am! Well anyways, thanks for listening. Take care!”

“Thank You Jack” everyone replied.

Before the meeting ended there was a raffle and collection, as the program is entirely self supported and refuses any outside help of any kind; therefore avoiding any outside influences, distractions, and possible conflicts of interests.

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