

JAMES

..... A COLLECTION .....  
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KING

FLASH



FLASH FICTION POEMS & QUOTES



JAMES KING

Flash

*A Collection*

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*This book is dedicated to John Dell Riley, a young teacher from South Africa teaching Thai children in Chiang Mai. (See Autor's Note)*



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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

On 13th December 2019, John Dell Riley was seriously injured in a road accident near his home. At the time of writing, no witnesses have materialized, nor have any other persons involved in the accident come forward. So John is left to find the money to pay the hospital bills.

This book is FREE, and I hope you enjoy it. And while you are reading, spare a thought for John. If you think the book is worth a small donation please [visit backabuddy](#) and read all about John, what he is doing for Thailand's kids, and how you can help him.

Follow John's progress here on [Facebook](#)



# You

Leave a part of yourself with every hello and every goodbye.

## The Cat with a Bowler Hat

Becoming a butler had appealed to me for some time. After all, I had the name, Jeeves, a white bib in the front of my all-in-one black suit, and I lived in a posh English castle. More than anything else the chance to carry a walking cane and wear a bowler hat, when I went to town, convinced me to ask my boss, Lord Melberry, if I could take over from James. His butler of sixty years, James, had just died and Lord Melberry himself was eighty-nine. He needed a much younger cool cat, like me, to take care of him, and it wouldn't cost him much. Money was important to Lord Melberry, not because he was skint, but because he was a mean old geezer. I was the logical choice, as I already lived in the castle. Maybe I needed a bigger basket, but I could make do for a while. I ate his leftovers, so I was well fed, and my wardrobe was adequate. All I wanted was a walking cane and a bowler hat for my visits to town to shop for his special needs.

I thought it might be a good idea to get a second opinion, so before making a move on his Lordship, I agreed to meet my friend Ginger Tom in the vegetable garden, after breakfast. It took me a while to find him. After breakfast, he slept on the straw in the strawberry patch, but that day he wasn't there. It was a big garden, so I worked my way up and down the rows,

meowing out to Tom as I walked. By the time I found him, fast asleep under a very large rhubarb leaf, I was peeved and tired from walking in the hot morning sun. I gave him a nudge to wake him up, and... phew!! I recoiled. Tom smelt so ripe it made me choke. He'd been eating the stinky fish cook kept giving us. There's no way any self-respecting butler would dream of eating that smelly stuff. When I'm the Butler I'll be very careful to keep myself smart and smelling sweet. Tom will never be a butler.

"So what do you think, Tom? Is it a good idea?"

"Yeow, Jeeves. Brilliant. You're the perfect colour too."

"So, shall I ask Lord Melberry?"

"Yeow. Don't be a pussy. Do it today."

In the evening after dinner he relaxed in his wing-back chair, with a big fat cigar and a glass of brandy, in the corner of the lounge. I knocked on his door and asked the question. I half expected him to dismiss me without discussing it. But to my surprise he asked me to sit in the chair opposite him so we could talk. I knew he was serious because I normally sat on his lap. It was easy, especially when he knew it would only cost him a walking cane and a bowler hat. James' old hat was much too big for me, and anyway it was a trilby, and I didn't like trilbies. I wanted a bowler.

The next morning, I took the bus to town and went to the gent's outfitters where I bought a very smart walking cane with a bone handle. Then I went to the milliners and had a fitting for my new bowler hat. They said it would take a week to make because of the extra small size and invisible hearing pinholes. My ears had to be inside because they were on top of my head, and the standard bowler wasn't designed for cats. After they kitted me out, I shopped for the old man's special

needs. Shaving cream, after shave lotion, toothpaste, soap, talcum powder, Brylcreem (they still made the disgusting slimy stuff), and other bibs and bobs.

Since that eventful day, I have enjoyed every moment of butlering for Lord Melberry, especially the greetings I receive from everyone when I go to town. I have never looked back, but now his Lordship is ninety-nine, I am thirteen, half blind and need more care than he does. Ginger Tom snuffed it, two years ago, so at least the place smells better.

Well, that's it. My leg is hurting, and I have to serve dinner now. Where on earth is my bloody cane?

# The Boy

When I look back,  
I now can see,  
The boy is not  
The man in me.

## In Search of Happiness

When I think of all the things I've given up in search of happiness, I wonder why I did it and how there is anything left.

I am not sure if I am happy or not. In truth, I can say I am never miserable. But, not being miserable, is not the same as being happy. There are degrees; degrees of happiness, as in a little happy, somewhat happy, very happy, temporarily happy. I like that last one best. Temporarily happy is probably what happiness is, a temporary state of well-being we all enjoy and strive to be in as often as we can. So, can permanent happiness exist? Well, if it does, I haven't experienced it. And I have come to doubt it ever could. You could say I've given up, but you would be wrong.

The Dalai Lama once said: "I believe that the very purpose of our life is to seek happiness." We are entitled to be happy, and we have a right to happiness.

I don't know about you, but I find happiness difficult to grasp, preferring the word content to the word happy. I know what I mean when I say someone looks contented. I can't say the same, with any certainty, when I say someone looks happy. But let's stick with happy, for the purposes of this story.

I'm sure I'm not the only person to struggle with understand-



ing happiness. And until you know what it is, how can you find it? Like the needle in the haystack.

I don't know how many spouses you've had, but I've had four wives and a few serious girlfriends. None of them made me happy, even though I was often happy while I was with them. It wasn't their job to make me happy, although they all said they wanted to, and I believed them. It was years after they had gone, died or moved on, that I began to understand. You have probably noticed I am still using happy instead of my preferred contented, so as not to cause any confusion.

When I was younger...

I've noticed as I get older, I don't use young and old when referring to myself, anymore. It's become, older or younger.

So, back to my point before I forget.

When I was younger...

Shit, I've forgotten.

Now it's back. Sorry.

When I was younger, I was seldom unwell. I was lucky enough to be vital and healthy, most of the time. Happiness was, therefore, a mind thing. Now I'm older I don't see it that way. My physical condition affects my happiness as it does my state of mind. If my back aches, as it often does, particularly in the morning, then I am not happy until I loosen it up. It doesn't matter about my mind, as it doesn't work in isolation. Everything is connected in some way, and I can't find any degree of happiness until everything is in sync. Maybe I expect too much. I am never satisfied with a job half done.

God only knows what the four wives and few girlfriends thought. But when they weren't there anymore, I concluded that it was my responsibility. No-one else could make me happy. It was up to me. Did coming to that conclusion change

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