

I Am Joe's Prostate

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The year is 1994. You are 50 years old. It is three domiciles and one wife ago. In the bathroom of your somewhat classy north Copenhagen bungalow, you stand over the porcelain and pee. You have not yet learned the word *micturate*. You are so innocent. Finished, you wash your hands and open the door, startled to find your wife of twenty-years marriage listening there.

She says, "You piss like an old man." She is a physician. She says, "You need to have that checked. I'll make an appointment for you."

Three weeks later, you ride your classic, green, three-speed Raleigh twenty-five minutes north to G _____ Hospital. Through the maze of hallways without a thread or a clue as to what you are about to experience, you find the urology department. An extremely large first resident with no name plate on the pocket of his white coat extends his extremely large hand of extremely large fingers and mumbles his name. His first name. Surnames here, you will learn, are not offered, delivered only begrudgingly upon explicit request.

With a file under his arm, Dr. Mumble leads you into an examination room, has you remove your pants and perch on

your knees on a metal, paper-decked table. Without prelude or warning, he rams a long fat finger up your kazoo.

You bellow, then croak, "Is that supposed to hurt so much."

"It varies," he says absently, his back to you, washing his fingers at a sink, and continues, "There is a certain enlargement, but not more than might be expected for your age." You wonder what it is that has a certain enlargement. You finally, some years ago, learned about the existence of the clitoris, but still know nothing of the prostate. Dr. Mumble looks in the file—*your* file, instructs you to go to the nurses' station for further instructions. There you are given a large glass of colored water to drink and directed by a woman in white into a long narrow room where you are further instructed to micturate into an odd-looking steel vase with a slanted, recessed lid. Kindly, the woman in white steps out and shuts the door. You understand intuitively what micturate means, recognize it as the word of choice here in the land of white and yellow.

The odd-looking steel vase, however, does not look like something you would *want* to micturate in. Nonetheless, you do so. The slanted recessed lid flutters like a butterfly under your stream, causing a kind of needle on a machine you only just noticed to zigzag along a moving belt of graph paper. When the last few drops have dripped, causing the needle to twitch and fall still, you zip away that of you which most rarely sees the light of day and wonder what to do. You have no further instructions. Perhaps you should just go home. Yes, perhaps that is what you should do.

But the woman in white is waiting outside the door for you. You notice that she has beautiful eyes and sensuous lips. You caution yourself not to occupy your imagination with such details in your current situation, and the woman in white with sensuous lips turns you over to another of her sort, though larger of build and darker of complexion. She leads you into another room and instructs you to undress.

You never have been naked in front of a strange woman unless the object was hanky-panky.

Everything? you wonder, but trust she will say stop at the appropriate moment.

"You can leave your shirt on," she says with a smile, and you think of Joe Cocker and wonder if she is teasing you. There is no name tag at her breast pocket, and she has mumbled neither her name nor her rank. She pats an examination table, indicating that you are to lie there. Face up, you presume. You do as you are told, noting distantly how passive you have become.

She takes your penis in her fingers. *Your penis!* She sprays something into it. "Ow!" you say.

"Yes," she whispers and begins to stuff some manner of wire down your penis. You are rather amazed that such things go on so close to the civilized streets on which you until today so innocently dwelt. It reminds you of a scene in an Alfred Hitchcock film. *Frenzy*. It occurs to you that some men would no doubt pay a great deal of money to have a woman perform this kind of act and curse your imagination, turn your eyes away from her lips, which are also sensual. You concentrate on not noticing the sensation of her fingers touching you, but anyway there seems no real danger that the jaunty head of Eros will poke up here.

She says, "Tell me when you feel the urge to micturate."

You felt the urge to micturate the instant she started stuffing that wire into you. Now you notice that the remainder of the wire is attached to another machine, the nature or function of which you are not destined to come to know.

You say, "Now, please."

She encourages you to stand before another metal vase and says, "You may micturate now."

Nothing happens.

She taps her foot.

Nothing happens.

She says, "Would you like me to wait outside?"

"Yes, please."

She withdraws. Still nothing happens.

When she returns she looks into the empty vase and sighs. "It would seem you didn't really have to micturate," she says.

"I thought I did."

She hums. "Well, we'll just have to try again."

It seems to you this would be an appropriate moment for her to stroke your hair and say, "You poor guy, you, it will all be over shortly, I promise," but instead she says, "Back on the table."

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