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Father's Last Party

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FATHER'S LAST PARTY

Mother called me a couple of days ago, or was it a week ago, reminding me not to plan anything for the twenty-fifth of May since that day was set aside for father's funeral party. Even though it was a week away she insisted that I should immediately call up the airlines and make reservations for a flight. Her letter was sweet and encouraging as usual, but also contained a certain amount of bitterness concerning my lackadaisical attitude about spending time at home. "This is your father's last year. You could have spent more time with him." Thank God, I won't have to put up with this constant nagging much longer.

As I sit here looking out the window I see nothing except clouds, and memories of my childhood come back to me.

If it wouldn't have been for father I probably could never have made it through college.

Everything was fine as long as I was away at school, but as soon as I came home for the summer things would quickly return to normal. Father would say, "Why don't you do this, and why don't you that, and can't you see that this needs to be done. You're just a good time Charlie." However, when the grass was cut, and the flowers were watered, and the car was washed and waxed he never told us how nice it looked. Father was never satisfied until he got all of us out of the house so he could sit back in his chair and be king again-- the center of attention. It was almost like we had never been born. Sometimes I think that's the only reason the old bastard sent us to college. So we would get a good job, and wouldn't hang around the house like a lamprey on a Lake Erie Lake Trout.

The loud speaker reminded me to buckle my seat belt and prepare for a smooth landing. As the plane started to go down I thought that it would be nice to get together with my family for I haven't seen them for such a long time.

Michael was a successful surgeon in Boston, and Mark was an ecologist in South Carolina. The rest of my relatives, the ones still alive, I really couldn't give two shits about. I could just hear that old bitch, Aunt Edith, at father's funeral party, "Here sweetheart, I bought you some candy, some good Italian candy." She and Aunt Stella would probably discuss the procedure for the distribution of ashes after father's cremation.

I think next year it's time for those two twin sister bitches to call it a day and go to the big Italy up in the sky. And I'll be damned if I'm going to fly all of the way from San Francisco to Pittsburgh for their funeral party. I'm not even going to send a card, not even one of those long skinny funny ones.

As the plane landed I folded up my newspaper and put it in my back pocket. Getting off the plane I could see my brother Mark sitting in the lounge tapping his foot, waiting for me.

"How's it goin, buddy?" We threw our arms around each other.

"Not bad. And from those pictures you sent me I don't think I even need to ask you how's Frisco. It looks just beautiful. And that girl of yours, wow, is she nice!"

"Didn't believe me, hey, when I told you that she was really fine. And she's really a nice person too. She really has her head together."

"Wait until you see the car I have."

"Porsche, Vet, Pintera, what?"

"Just wait and see; it's just parked outside."

As we walked through the parking lot I spotted a silver Maserati glittering in the sun light, and immediately turned my head to Mark and said, "No, that's not yours, is it?"

He just smiled.

"You lucky bastard, that's really nice."

"Wanta drive?"

"Ya, I'd love to."

Within minutes we were home. As we joined the party a crowd of people surrounded me, and I excused myself for I wanted to see mother, father, and Michael.

"Hi Mom."

"Well if it isn't..." She hugged me and kissed me and said, "Well, come and say hello to your father."

"Hi Dad."

"Hi son. How are you? Come and sit down and tell me all about the west coast."

Father was in a surprisingly good mood. He even told me a couple of his corny jokes which made me smile and think that the old bastard was all right. I guess everyone has their bad points.

Later on that night we had the funeral toast. I said that I would take care of the champagne, but father insisted that he pour it even though it was against custom.

When I sneezed I went into the kitchen to get a kleenex, and found father slipping a pill into everyone's champagne. I got mad at first but did not want to spoil father's party so I asked him to sit down at the kitchen table.

"Look Dad, you can't take all of us with you. O.K.? I won't say anything if you don't. I don't want to cause any commotion and spoil your party. Now spill out those drinks and please go in the living room and sit down."

"Son I'm sorry. I only meant to do..."

"No big deal, Dad. I understand. Now come on, please go in the living room and make yourself comfortable. I'll be right in after I pour the champagne. O.K.?"

He hugged me and brought my head to his heart and said, "You always were a momma's boy, but I love you just the same." He smiled and left the kitchen.

When everybody was situated in the living room with a drink Uncle John turned off the baseball game, and father gently dropped a little red death pill into his champagne. Everyone then made a toast, contributing a compliment to father.

Before long the company had left. I kissed mother and father good night before they went to bed.

After watching the late movie I set my alarm for 7:30, and went to sleep. I had to make an early flight tomorrow morning and could not stay for the cremation ceremony.

Vic Coccimiglio