

The Christening

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A story of a young man at his lowest. Does need work grateful for any feedback.

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I was at the lowest ebb possible. I'd roll out of bed, directly hit the floor, crawl to the bottle of *taboo* I kept for the mornings (I wasn't the best drinker in these days so I'd have two or three shots of the lighter stuff before I'd hit the vodka). I'd switch on my stereo, already pre loaded with my break up album (Chinese democracy), and sit there listen, drink vodka, occasionally putting coke in it when I felt sick, and only left my room to go the toilet. This is a bit of a fib though as I'd accrued quite a few empty bottles by this point and it was easier just to fill *them* half the time. Around 4 o'clock I'd run out of ale and would *have* to leave the room. This wasn't an easy feat at this point; it took a lot of building up to. I'd to and fro towards the door and so on but really it took on a similar routine. This consisted of about an hour to two hours, 25 to 40 minutes getting dressed, changing outfits every five minutes all to find the most inconspicuous outfit possible, which would usually turn out to be the first one. Then I'd decide I didn't need to go to the shop I'd think I didn't need any booze. It'd take what I thought was an honourable 40 minutes to realize there was no way I'd finish the day without a drink. The headphones would come on (and yes the break up album was on my iPod as well) and I'd face the cold of the real world.

This went on for 11 days I must've left my room for a total of 52 minutes a week, not bad for a teenager I suppose. But unfortunately it had to end due to the three most dreaded words every youngest single son hates: a family do. A christening. I'd known it was coming and had tried to build up to it by taking the long route home from the shop. But this was in vein because every time I thought I could handle the world outside my four walls, someone would appear and I'd scarpers behind something or out the way like some gay hermit. I was paranoid I suppose worried they were going to attack me or say something to me, if I'm honest the latter scared me the most. I hadn't said more than 'a bottle glen's please' and 'thanks' in 264 hours now. How the fuck am I going to handle a christening?

I wanted desperately to avoid it but I knew if I didn't turn up at my father's house by 10:30 he'd be round to pick me up at 10:37 so I got myself as together as much as possible for 10:36. I had on a suit (not dry-cleaned) which normally cheers me up, I normally feel or pretend to be like movie star when I wear a suit but today I felt more like a dick. I shaved what little facial hair I could grow and prepared myself for the world at large. I knew there'd be ale and I wouldn't have to stay all day but these weren't my worries. There'd be family, so called friends, new people to meet, smiles to be forced, comments to be made, and merriment to be shown. I was dreading it.

As I psyched myself up in the mirror my dad, true to form, turned up. I looked at the clock: 10:36 I chuckled to myself. This was a bit of a shock to the system actually I hadn't laughed in ages. He just walked in like he always did 'alright son?'

'Hiya dad, I'm nearly ready'

'We thought you weren't coming' he said inquisitively 'Is everything ok?'

'Fine, just late as usual' a feint try at humour 'I'll be two seconds Da'

I ran upstairs, dug out my hipflask and half filled it with Glen's. I took a quick swig 'ready Da.' The car journey was short but awkward and filled with questions about my whereabouts over the last few weeks, that he'd tried to call, my sister was worried all the usual family nonsense that means so well but is so fucking irritating. Eventually we arrived at the church, Da must've known something was wrong because

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he passed me his hip flask, we mustâ ve more in common than I thought. â youâ re still on the scotch then?â I said as I passed him it back

â you look like you might need it sonâ he me gave a knowing nod as he placed it back in his inside pocket.

â Cheers Daâ

â Well, we better get inside theyâ ll be waiting and Janeâ ll go mental if Iâ m late.â Jane is my stepmother, I suppose in some ways sheâ s quite the cliché fairytale evil stepmother.. As we got out the car the glenâ s and scotch wore off instantly, my stomach sank and my balls seemed to shrink into my body. As we got in the church I was still trying to find them.

â Hi Damon, were have you been hidingâ it was Catherine my step brotherâ s missus and it was her daughter, Lexis, christening. â Just keeping out of troubleâ I tensely replied and quickly shot onwards into the rest of the folk around. I regretted this instantly as it was like being thrown to the lions.

I felt surrounded. They were all around me. I could see them slowly break their current conversations and head my way eager to know the gossip and stick their nose in. I panicked and tried to get away but was caught up in this mass of gossip mongers

â You still with whatâ s â er name?â

â Been up to much since I last saw you?â

â You look gaunt have you been eating?â

â I heard she left you....how are you coping?â

The answer to all these questionâ s was of course NO. I looked around for my Da but he was stuck with his duties for the day. I felt really hot and was sweating like a bitch, I was breathing heavy, I was ready to blow. But then I was saved â Can everyone make there way to their seats pleaseâ the Vicar asked. God mustâ ve been helping me out for once. I managed to sit as far out of the crowd as possible but was still within ear shot of them and could hear them discussing me.

The service went as smooth as could be expected. Just the usual baby crying incident but other than it passed rather quickly and gave me a minute to recover from everyone crowding me. Everyone got up to leave the church and I naturally hung back. I had another hit from the hip flask much to an elderly woman who clocked meâ s disgrace and saw Dad coming towards me â you coming with us, son?â he sounded as shook up as me â Can do.â We headed for the car and set off to the unity club, a very quiet journey as my Da and stepmother had obviously fallen out.

The pub was a collage of beige. An old fashioned labour club that had never moved on from the seventies complete with dim lighting and, despite the smoking ban, a waft of stale tobacco. Your feet stuck to the weathered floor boards and the lager looked flat as a pancake. The DJ was setting up in the corner just in front of the dance floor which was really just a selection of slightly darker flooring. We were one of the first to arrive so I went to the bar, ordered pint and decided to stay as close to the ale as possible. The room filled pretty quick and the DJ kicked in with a mixture of soul and motown music thus filling the dance floor. Four pints later I went to the toilet to get a minute to myself. As I walked in I was relieved to find it empty, except for someone in the cubicle. As I got to the urinal and unzipped I heard sniffing noises from the cubicle. *At least someoneâ s having a god day.* I heard the latch go and pretended I hadnâ t been listening and heard

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a familiar voice â Hiya pal, howâ s it goin?â I was joined, one on each side, by my step brotherâ s
â Not bad Lee mate...Alright Mark?â

â Ya ladâ he never said a lot really. As I looked up at him I noticed heâ d a fair chunk of white stuff
just under his nose.

â youâ ve got a bit of powder on your nose there mateâ

â Nice one lad, canâ t let me mam see thatâ he giggled.

â you sniff Sean?â Lee snarled.

â On occasion mate, not regular thoughâ I lied

He passed me the bag â Here, ave a couple of keys and just chuck it back to me in a bit.â I took the bag
and put it in my pocket â cheers mate iâ ll bring it over with a pintâ

â No worriesâ They left in unison *there goes beavis and butthead* I thought. But then I remembered the
bag. I didnâ t want it. I didnâ t do coke for godâ s sake! As I was about to leave the toilets however, I
changed my mind. *Itâ s been a shitty two weeks of wallowing and being fucking miserable so why not for
your own sodding sake enjoy yourself for once.* I nipped in the cubicle opened the bag, got my keys and took
out a fair amount and sniffed it up *aaah!* It was sore going up my nose. I stood and instantly felt my stomach
go and promptly shot back down and spent the next ten minutes shitting what mustâ ve been the entire
contents of my body.

Once I got over the shits I felt pretty good. Maybe this was the kick in the nadgers iâ d needed the last few
weeks. I was pretty pumped as I returned to the party. â Another two pints pleaseâ I shouted over the
crowded bar. Once I had these I returned lee his bag with a pint and was going to go for a cigarette when I
was absconded by my mad cousin Emma. â You coming for a dance?â she squealed

â I donâ t really want toâ I complained. She squirmed and hopped with excitement â I donâ t care
youâ re comingâ before I could say anything sheâ d dragged me like a rag doll to the dance floor. I
froze. *Shit shit shit shit.* â Come on dance ya berkâ she was shouting. I awkwardly started to move about
a bit and then I felt the coke kick in properly *fuck it.* I was boogying around like I hadnâ t in years. It was
great I literally didnâ t give a fuck. My cousins friends joined and then a few aunties and the odd uncle.

As the pints went down and the dancing continued I felt a sensation I hadnâ t felt in what mustâ ve years.
Iâ m alive! I love it! Iâ m dancing, Iâ ve got company, I out of the house and actually enjoying myself!
For the rest of the night I only left the dancefloor to go to the bar and shot right back. I was throwing shapes
you wouldnâ t believe well I was drunk so i probably wasnâ t really. I was surrounded by my cousins
surprisingly attractive mates whoâ d formed a circle around me as I danced the night away. I clocked my
dad looking at me. He was both grinning and shaking his head. This spurred me further *iâ m showing off!*
Me! Showing off! As the night went on people started to slowly leave and I was left slow dancing with some
girl. Nothing sexual between us we were just enjoying the evening. Then though something knocked me right
on my arse. *Time everyone please.* The bar had closed. Panic crept up my spine and a shiver hit me. I told the
girl I had to go and hurriedly said my goodbyes to my Da and so on.

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As I ran up the stairs towards my room I felt desperate. I flung the door open and bolted across the room and grabbed the Vodka and a glass. As I was about to pour though, I stopped. *Do I need another drink? Iâ m feeling strangely ok.* I stood there with the glass and bottle in my hands in a state of limbo for what felt like an age. *Fuck it.* I put down the glass and placed the bottle in the drawer. I undressed got in bed put the telly on at a low volume and felt a strange state of calm. *It wasnâ t a bad day today.*

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