

I HAVEN'T GONE TO SEED; I'M JUST GETTING STARTED

Chapter 1

I heard he was stuck in his toolshed and ate his way through the door, dying a short time later due to splinters in the stomach. I heard he cheated on his mistress, and she ran over him with a Segway. I heard he was struck by lightning, and due to the amount of hairspray he used to style his hair, he went up in flames. They had to identify him solely by his designer toe ring. I heard he was buried alive by the lioness at the zoo because she believed he was a turd. I heard he tripped and fell into a big-bosomed woman and was smothered. Quite frankly these causes of death aren't our best work, but a lot of people have met their demise lately.

The Circle of Evil had been assembled, this time called together by Holly, who had been laid off due to a difference of opinion between herself and a much younger supervisor. As always, all five members had arrived with their imaginations and the ingredients necessary to concoct their favorite martinis.

The sole purpose of the Circle of Evil is to work through the stages of grief -*denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance* - quickly with the aid of one's friends and an obscene amount of alcohol. Interestingly enough, the first Circle of Evil was assembled in high school, when Missy was stood up for our high school's homecoming dance. After a unanimous agreement among the founding members of the Circle of Evil, the guilty homecoming dance ditcher's cause of death was determined and a eulogy was held. For the remainder of the senior year, the Circle of Evil failed to recognize the metaphorically deceased party, referring to him in the past tense and often making comments about the tragic way his crotch caught fire while strutting around the school Bonfire the night of the homecoming's big game. Since then the

Circle of Evil has come together every time one of us has been disappointed by a boss, lover, or otherwise-deemed-deplorable person.

Every assembly is the same and begins with each of us sharing an account of how the newly deceased—metaphorically dead, of course—had met his or her maker through humorously detailed accounts. This and the flowing of martinis eventually leads to an acceptance of the loss, after which we hold a mock eulogy, where each of us says something nice about the newly departed. I mean, it's just not right to speak ill of the dead.

Tonight's eulogy should not be confused with the one to be held on Sunday for Rosie's metaphorically departed husband. Rosie just wasn't quite ready to forgive him for running off with his twenty-something secretary and wanted to cremate all his belongings first; under the circumstances we all deemed the postponement necessary.

To begin tonight's assembly, each of us had prepared a pitcher of our favorite martini. The rules are simple. Each member tells their tale of how the deceased met their maker. Once each member has told her humorously concocted story, the group agrees on the cause of death. The eulogy follows.

Since Holly was closest to the deceased, she started first. Holly took a huge gulp of her chocolate martini and explained how the deceased had been making banana holders in his tool shed, and how a huge gust of wind had blown the door shut. Because the deceased was too narrow minded and stuck in his ways, he failed to recognize the fact that he could crawl out of the window. Thus, the poor thing seeing the door as the only exit, gnawed his way out. It took him the entire weekend, but eventually he chewed a hole big enough to fit through and went to bed. He was found dead in the morning due to internal bleeding from the wood splinters he had ingested, poor thing. Holly downed her second chocolate martini, and nodded to Rosie.

Rosie poured herself her third bikini martini, which she insists reminds her of the tropics, and wove a story about cheating lovers, obviously still focused on this Sunday's upcoming eulogy. I did think the death by Segway idea was an interesting twist though.

Next up was Victoria, currently savoring the olives after her third dirty martini, who described in detail the horrendous demise of the poor thing by fire, with a comically orchestrated twist where the deceased was transformed into the witch from the Wizard of Oz, and died repeating, "I'll get you my pretty", in a Donald Duck voice.

It was my turn next, so I took a swig of my second Irish cream martini and began by describing how the deceased had climbed into the lion cage to get a picture with the beast. Which means he had to have been the dumbest man ever. At first the lioness ignored him, believing this was just too good to be true. However, once he was standing beside her, the lioness decided this creature's stupidity might wear off on her young and decided to defecate on him instead. After which she buried him. The poor thing died of manure drowning.

Finally, it was Missy's turn. Missy's favorite martini is apple which she insists fulfills her daily requirement of fruit. By this time, she had downed three. According to Missy, the deceased fell into a large breasted woman on a crowded subway and was asphyxiated before he could free himself. After each tale, we all voted for what we believed to be the best cause of death other than our own. This evening's winner was, death by lioness dung. I rarely ever win, but like I said this evening submissions weren't our best.

As the evening was wrapping up, we had finished our martini pitchers, and it was time for the eulogy. Holly started by saying the deceased had the ability to balance on the highest heels she had ever seen, a skill he obviously had picked up during a prior profession. We all shook our heads disapprovingly because Holly was obviously still harboring some resentment, so

she tried again. She raised her glass and said, "To David may you find peace." I was so proud of her; I threw my arms around her and hugged her. Finally, Holly had said David's name out loud rather than referring to him as simply the deceased, so I knew she was feeling better.

Next, Rosie raised her glass and said, "To David may you be forgiven for your stupidity." Which made perfect sense since everyone knew Rosie was struggling to forgive her ex-husband, so she could move on.

Then, Victoria raised her glass and said, "To David who would now have to do the work of two people, had he not died."

I was next, so I followed Victoria's lead and also made my contribution work related, "To David who was stuck in his ways and thus eternally stuck."

Finally, Missy raised her glass and said, "To David who will never know a good thing or the value of a lifelong friend." As the evening had progressed, we had laughed, cried, and had forgiven Holly's previous boss, David, and the circle of evil disbanded.

The next day, Holly began her search for a new job because, after all, it's absurd to work for a dead person.