

The Legend of Prince Valium

By Mark Edgemon

In all actuality, my father was as close to a pet monster as one could ever hope or not hope to have in this reality. I never figured out if he was just mean or without concern for anyone other than himself or plain spiteful or just in part...retarded. What I do know is I could count on him one hundred percent of the time to embarrass the hell out of me no matter how I hoped for a break from his tormenting escapades.

Folks would call us Chuck and Chuck junior in passing, although I passionately did not want to be associated with this man or linked to him in any way. I don't think people thought that I was like him in my traits or mannerisms. It was more like people pitied me for being his son, for they could see he was an idiot.

Hundreds of memories of him are forever burned into my mind, never to be erased, haunting me as I go through each day of my life, now that I am an adult.

One day, while studying in the kitchen of my parent's home during my high school years, I had a friend over cramming for the next day's exam when all of a sudden, I heard the bedroom door open, which to me meant one of two things; either my father had awakened from his mid day nap and would head to the bathroom to get ready for work or he would parade into the kitchen in his underwear on his way to the fridge.

"Is he in his boxers?" I whispered to my friend who was sitting at the table facing the kitchen, while I sat across the table with my back to everything.

He shook his head in amazement as I took a sigh of relief. I turned around in time to see my father's naked ass heading down the hall back to his bedroom.

'Why does he do things like this? I have no freakin' idea!' I exclaimed to myself.

I was a prisoner in my parent's home for the fact that I was under age and had little money to get out and live on my own. I had years before I could get the hell out of there and so I just abided my time until then.

The pastor of my church had asked me to do some landscaping in his yard one Saturday morning and so I had made a list of what I needed and prepared to go to the lawn and garden store to pick up the supplies, when my father who found out what I was doing horned in and insisted he go to help me. After all, he was the expert. He wasn't really, but I thought that maybe for the first time he was trying to be a father to me and wanted to share some quality time. So I relented and let him come along.

I worked and sweated in hard labor while he talked to the preacher's wife, not letting up his non-stop speaking for a millisecond. As I passed him by with a load of mulch, I over heard my father telling her that they wouldn't let him in the Army when you were a young man, because he had only one testicle. Whether that was true or not, this was another association botched by the pet monster that wouldn't stop his insane meanderings.

How he held down a job, wore shoes and carried on with the day-to-day affairs of life, I'll never know. But he did, so I guess he was normal.

He had a contact at a Pharmacy who sold him all the Valium he wanted which he consumed in abundance. One could decorate birthday cakes with the amount he would take on an on going basis. I don't know if they helped or hurt him, but he would have his own way no matter what.

One morning, I was half asleep sitting up on the couch when he said something to me that I couldn't understand. When I didn't answer him, he threw a bowl of food at me and missed my head by an inch. I don't know what happened to me at that moment, but I flew into a fit of rage and stood up moving fast toward him. He stood up equally as fast and hauled off kicking me in the shin as hard as he could. Never knowing when to stop, he ran over to the television and pushed my thousand-dollar video recorder backwards into the floor, something I had paid for with my own money, working part time on weekends.

I took a step toward him when he shouted, "Where's my gun!" as he ran out of the living room and toward the bedroom.

I ran after him and tackled him as he got to the bedroom door, knocking the door off the hinges and landing him on his bed, which broke under the pressure. I sat on his chest pounding his face with both fists, completely oblivious to what I was doing. Then seeing I was not having the effect I wanted, I started strangling him with both hands around his throat. His face turned blue, then purple and I finally realized I was killing him. I looked into his face and strangely enough, I saw the unexpected, the fool hearted grin that I had come to know and loathe.

I let go abruptly and slowly rose to my feet. I turned and left the room, walked into my own bedroom, sat in my chair and cried bitterly. I didn't hate my father; I hated what I was becoming because of him.

I never engaged him in battle again. I now understood. He was at all times...high as a kite.

The End