

Just Me, Hard at Work

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Steve's Short Story

And so, there I was, standing, all by myself, in the kitchen, on the hot boiling line at the Portly Penguin, twirling a pair of tongs in my right hand. Now, just so we are all on the same page; the prep is done, everything is spotless and I sent everyone home for the day, including the dish pig. So a little leisure activities seemed in order, how many times and how fast can you twirl a pair of tongs? That was what I was going to do with my time because I deserved it.

Sure, there are several different kitchen line games one can play, the one I am presently playing is tong twirling, then there's the accurate towel flicking, where you set up obstacles/targets throughout the line and try to flick them down using only your white towel. Or of course, what can we deep fry next? I think that one is self-explanatory; grab something you wouldn't think to deep fry and well, drop it in the deep fryer and watch what happens. There are more but maybe we'll get to them later, tong twirling was at hand.

Was a lonely day at the old restaurant, just a few people already eating, one bartender/server was working and the manager/owner was around doing manager/owner stuff, so really no one to talk to.

"I'm just going to the bank; I'll be back in a bit Steve, okay?" The headcheese told me as I nodded. Now, we all know what he means by, going to the bank, don't we? He means that he's had enough of the phone calls and dumb questions and he wants to get the hell out of here and go work on his putt.

But who am I to judge? If I were him, I would do the same bloody thing. What am I going to say to him? No, I don't think so, get back to work you lazy bum? Hell no, that man can do whatever he wants cause, why you ask, that man signs my pay check. I may just be your average line cook, but I aint dumb, you know the old saying, don't bite the hand that feeds/pays you.

It was Monday of course, just after three. My shift ended at five and there was absolutely nothing to do. So I twirled those tongs, oh, I twirled. Eventually I picked up another pair and began to twirl two, one in either hand. Man, I was doing quite well; I should go on the road, twirl tongs for a living. I reversed spun, flipped them in the air and caught them and continued on with the twirl.

Needless to say, after a few minutes, I got a little cocky and an over flip here, and a fling there, eventually, since there is always a margin for error, I dropped the tongs and of course, could they land on the floor where it would be safe? Of course not, one of them landed in the hot oil of the deep fryer and managed to splash hot oil onto my arm, damn, that burns. I managed to get them out using a longer pair of tongs and placed them in the dish pit so I wouldn't accidentally grab them and they could cool off.

Then I really got bored, so I thought, twirling tongs is the past, I need something to keep the crowd intrigued, so I grabbed all four knives from the line and began to juggle them. Now considering I've never juggled before, I was doing quite well, hell I impressed myself. But that was when I caught the blade of the bread knife and sliced opened my right hand. Now, you might think, hey, it's only a bread knife, at least it wasn't the chef knife. WRONG! The bread knife is serrated, that means it cut pretty damn deep and wide.

I then screamed out every cursive word you could imagine and then some. I then ran, dripping/shaking blood everywhere, back to the prep room so that I could rinse off the wound. So I turned on the cold water on at the hand basin and held my hand under the running cold water.

Two little words were repeated constantly through my brain, they were "You Idiot!" How could I be so dumb? Easy answer, if I practice enough, eventually I'll get quite good at it and impress everyone. It'll be impressive enough if I'll ever be able to use my fucking hand again. `Maybe next time, juggle something that can't kill or injure you`. That idea flowed through the

back of my mind, now that sounds like a clever idea, doesn't it? But come on, it wouldn't be as impressive. Where's the danger side of it?

If there's no danger, than no one gives a shit if you can do it or not. People want to be impressed, if they look at you and say, 'Even I can do that.' Then they don't care, but if they look at you and say, 'Holey shit! This guys insane and incredible' at the same time, than that's worth doing right? Wrong. Look at me now; I'll probably never use my right hand again. But I've seen kids on skate boards jump off the stupidest things, fall flat on their faces, break their noses and even crack their skulls in and spent the next half a year in the hospital eating through a straw and when they're able to speak, the first thing that comes out of their mouth is "I can't wait until I get better, I know what I did wrong, I can fix it." Yeah, you know what they did wrong; tried the stupid insane death jump in the first place. But that's Mother Nature weeding out the stupid gene; you don't see intelligent people doing dumb things... Yeah right, the smart folks are the ones that design the chemical, biological nuclear fucking weapons so ask yourself this, wouldn't you rather see an idiot kill himself than a genius kill us all?

But I can just see the faces on everyone now as someone yells out "Hey guys look, Steve's juggling carrots or celery perhaps." This isn't the reaction we want, is it? We want, "Holy shit balls, Steve's juggling knives!" As everyone rushes over to watch me, oh yeah, watch me as I slice off my freakin' hand, no doubt maybe next time imbed one right in my skull.

No, no my juggling days are long over. I made this decision as I watched the blood pour from my wound. I spent this time thinking of a safer, long term talent, mud wrestling with naked girls came to mind. But mud's too messy; let's crack out the Jello, this way, we can wrestle with a soft landing and eat it off of one another, I say brilliant.

With no one here but the bartender, who will cover for me while I go and get some stitches? Oh, that's right, no one. What prefect timing on my part, the owner just left and I sent everyone home not too long ago. So now I have to come up with a plan.

It takes me back to the war that I was never in, the boy scouts that I never joined and the sports that I never participated in. I really haven't got the slightest clue what to do in a situation like this. Well except to bleed to death, but that's just common sense.

Common sense, a.k.a. common knowledge, tells us how to handle every day complications, like how to put out a fire, what to do it rains. It is how a person deals with the problem at hand, at that particular moment in time. What do you do when you spill liquid on the floor? Well for most of us, our common sense dictates that we mop it up, while others say to themselves, there's water there, don't slip on it. And you don't, so that's good right? No it is not! Because what if someone else walks by and slips, what are you going to do then? Oh right I forgot, their common sense should click in and tell them that this place is full of lazy bastards and they should walk around with their heads observing the floor at all times.

Some people's common sense doesn't function as well as others. When a sign says that this is hot, 99% of us agree, and won't try to prove the sign wrong, but that one percent; they'll say hey, I don't believe them and they will touch it and burn themselves, wondering why it hurts. It's because the people at the factory knew it would burn you, silly, that's why they put a sign there. They didn't put it there to try and trick you, nooo, they put it there to protect you!

Or common sense might tell you that if you've never juggled a day in your life, then don't start with sharp objects that could end your career, before it begins. Use something safe, it will tell you and if you do decide to juggle knives in the future, don't start with four right away.

So there I was, bleeding into the sink with my hand under the cold water, common sense told me that the cold water will help slow down the blood flow. Sure enough, the water slowed down the blood flow in my hand, but I was still out of options.

Steve's Short Story

What to do? What to do? I kept on asking myself. Then a chit, that's what we call a food order at the Portly Penguin, print up through the kitchen printer. That means that a customer would like a bit to eat, but that also means that I would have to cook and I was in no shape to cook. Well, unless the customer wants lots of blood on his burger.

Oh wait, I could always wear a glove, sure my hand is gushing out pints of blood by the minute, but.....Wait a second, how..much..blood..is..in.....the...human ...body.. anyhow? Wow, I'm felling a little dizzy all of the sudden. I wonder how much blood I've actually lost by now.

Boom! That was when I hit the ground and blacked out; actually I passed out from lack of blood. I assume the bartender came looking for me to make the order but found me on the ground. After a few minutes of her screaming out in shock, she must have called the paramedics to come and get me. Because when I came to I was in a hospital bed with my hand all bandaged up with a doctor, waiting there to ask me a few questions.

"How did you injure yourself?" The doc asked me, I didn't like his angry tone.

"I was cutting stuff." I told him. There was no, how are you feeling? Or a simple hello would have done too. I mean come on, you stitched the damn thing up, couldn't your expertise answer that question for you, can't you tell a slash wound when you see one? No, I was jerking off really fast, broke the sound barrier and with my cock as hard as it could be, all jagged like, it sliced right down the palm of my hand.

"Cutting what?"

FOOD you moron, what do you think? Isn't the answer obvious? I work in a restaurant; I use a knife to cut food, now in simple physics, if I cut food and hold the product, using my hand, chances are, all thou slim, I probably will let the knife slip and it will probably cut my hand. Right, but that's not the case is it? No, I was goofing around, but I won't admit that, that's just plain stupid.

"I was cutting garlic bread." I B.S.ed, my way through that.

"But you're right hand is cut. How did you manage that?"

Simple genius, I was cutting and I sliced my damn hand off. But I didn't quite get where he was going with this, so I asked "What do you mean?"

"Well, are you not right-handed?"

Is this guy serious? Does he not know that one in every seven people are lefties? What, does he just assume that every body's the same? I just gave him a blank expression when he asked me that. "I'm left-handed."

Funny that he didn't think of that, since about 60% of household deaths are because left-handed people try to use and operate devices that are made for right-handed people. You need to look at that like I did though, 60% of dumb lefties die from using the right-handed version and messed up. The can opener, how can one seriously die from this? The stupid left handed scissors, I get why there is such a thing, but I've never had a problem cutting/using scissors with my left hand, the mechanics are they same, but some people can't figure it out...

"Oh." He actually said oh, like he didn't know that there was such a thing, as left-handed people. I must be a monster to him. Look out everyone, here comes a lefty! RUN! I can see the small children in the playground now, building their sandcastles when along comes the new kid, grabs his shovel with his left hand and builds his castle, all the kids stare at him like he was a creature from the black lagoon.

Appalled and bitter, I didn't feel safe to be here, if this Doctor that patched me up didn't know about lefties, wait, should I tell him about gay people, maybe he doesn't know some men enjoy being with other men and girls like being with girls, or scientologists, people who love money, or the microchip, it didn't matter, I just wanted to go home at this point, I asked "Can I go now?"

“Sure, just sign here”

I went to grab the pen with my right hand because I actually do write with my right hand and not my left, I tore the muscle once and never looked back, but that was when he gave me a confused stare. Since I didn't want to explain that, or where babies came from, I just grabbed the pen with my left hand, sucked it up and signed my name and then left the damn building. Never to venture back there again.

But here's the next exciting part. I'm at the hospital right and guess where my car and stuff is? That's right, at work and I have no money for the stupid bus. So I had to walk to work. YEEHAHH!!

It took a good hour to get my ass up to work; sure I took my time, but honestly, who would actually rush to work? Especially when you know all of the questions that are going to be asked once you get there, then followed by all the jokes that will be told once you reveal the truth. Because I sure as heck know I would poke fun at a guy who cut his hand badly from juggling knives. Or does that mean that we don't reveal the truth, not a bad idea.

So on my way to work I had plenty of time to think up a good bullshit excuse to replace the whole, I got real bored, so I decided to juggle four knives, excuse. Because frankly, that probably wouldn't of set sail too well, if you ask me, especially on a professional level. Could you imagine trying to find another job and when they call for a reference, the boss man brings up, “oh, him, yeah, when he gets bored, he likes to do dumb things like juggling knives” I doubt the new boss would hire that idiot.

So, being the creative writer that I am, I was trying to come up with a convincing heart warming story to tell, making everyone feel sorry and looking like a hero. I was out on the loading dock, pretending to be smoking when I saw a small child in danger. I ran swiftly towards him, made a slow motion dive as the car came to a slamming brake halt, I grabbed possession of the unaware toddler and rolled along the ground with him and rolled to safety as the car swerved by, saving the life of the child and prison time for the driver.

I had plenty of time, constructing up the best story imaginable and about five minutes before I reached work, I forgot the story, I drew a blank, had a brain fart, man, don't you just hate when those happen, and always at the worst times.

So I finally made it to work, told them that I tried to slice the roast on the meat slicer, they saw straight through my B.S. shield. Because there was no reminisce of meat or blood anywhere by the slicer when they got in. I then brought up that I cleaned my mess before I passed out and was dragged to the emergency room. Then they pointed out that there were four knives lying on the floor and one had blood all over it and not to mention the blood trail that lead all the way back here. So in the end my story didn't cut it, no pun intended, so I told them the truth and got made fun of for the next long ass month.

Boy, were my feelings hurt.

THE END

(This isn't a true story)

(Well except for the Doctor scene, that, sadly, was real)