

DESIGNATED DRIVER

By Carolyn West

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CAST: one male

AT RISE: PETER, a regular guy, stands center stage. Perhaps HE has a chair, but one is not needed.

PETER

I don't drink much. I never did, which makes this whole incident rather embarrassing.

I was out with some friends. We were at a sports bar actually, watching the basketball game on their big screen. My friends are having beers and I'm drinking coke after coke. No problem there. I'm still having a good time. The game ends, sudden death overtime, very exciting, and we leave.

I drove my friend, Jim, home because he'd had a little too much to drink. He lives in the opposite direction and it added an extra hour to my drive, but I didn't mind. A little inconvenience for me is better than Jim getting arrested for DUI or worse.

So I drop him off and I head for home. It's about that time I realize maybe I had one or two cokes too many. I think about heading back to Jim's for a pit stop. But it's late and I want to get home. It's not that bad anyway.

I'm driving on. There's no traffic. I'm making great time. But I can't stop thinking about how many sodas I had. I probably should have turned back. But it's not worth it now. I go a little faster just so I can get home that much sooner.

I guess I could have pulled over and taken care of business by the side of the road. But this was a residential area and I do my best to respect private property. Considering what happened, I should have stopped. But I couldn't see into the future. I didn't know.

About fifteen minutes later I start feeling the potholes. Not just the big ones. I find the little ones jarring too. It dawns on me that I may have a problem. One too many potholes and I could have a...a...personal accident, if you know what I mean.

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I don't know what to do. I can't drive with my legs crossed. I decide just to miss the potholes. So I'm swerving to avoid them and I drive a little faster.

I'm not sure exactly when the cop saw me. All my concentration was on my bladder. I heard the siren and realized there were flashing lights in the mirror.

I pull over.

The cop waits an eternity before he gets out of the car.

Come on. Come on.

When he does finally get out he takes his time. An arthritic dog can walk faster than that.

Step. Step. Step.

Come on.

I have my window down and my license and registration out before he passes the trunk of my car.

Step. Step.

When he gets to the driver's side door, I shove my papers at him.

"Was I driving too fast? Sorry about that, officer."

He looks at me.

(As the cop, HE speaks very slowly.)

"Have you had anything to drink tonight?"

"No."

He nods his head and starts writing the ticket.

I don't know if he was new on the job, but he wasn't very good at filling out tickets. He had to cross out things and start over more than once. He would look at my license for a couple minutes, frowning his

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brow and squinting his eyes. Then he'd write a word or two, cross it out, and go back to studying my license.

Don't they have a minimum grade level you have to read at to be a cop?

It's about that time when my kidneys must have passed another liter of soda. I'm aware of a lot more pressure.

"Can you just give me the ticket? I need to go."

The cop, and I can only describe his movements as turtle like, lowers his pad and pen and looks at me.

"Would you please step out of the car."

Oh dear.

He instructs me to stand up straight, hold my arms out to my side, close my eyes and touch my nose.

(HE does so, but with one minor problem.)

I do it all pretty well, except that I can't actually stand up straight.

He's not impressed.

He asks me to walk the white line next to the road.

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