

# **ANOTHER PRODIGAL STORY**

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**"HELLO, Pal."**

**"Hello, Buddy!"**

**"Have a drink?"**

**"Got one!"**

**"Come over on the next stool I'm  
lonesome. Hell of a world."**

**"You said it, brother,-hell of a  
world."**

**"You taking rye? Mine's gin. God, I'm  
up against it now!"**

**"How's 'at?"**

**"Oh, same old hell-hell-hell. She's**

**going to leave me now!"**

**"Your wife?"**

**"Yeah. How am I going to live? Can't go home like this; too damn drunk to stay out. Can't land in jail-will if I stay out-ruin my business-business going anyway-break her heart.**

**Where is she you ask? She's at the store, working I guess, probably eating her heart out waiting for me.**

**What time is it? Seven o'clock?**

**Store's been closed an hour. She's gone home by now. Well, what the hell. Have one more-then I'll go."**

**That is a hazy recollection of my last debauch. Several years ago now. By the time my new "bar fly friend" and I had soaked up several more, I was shedding tears and he, in the tender throes of drunken sympathy, was working out a guaranteed plan**

**whereby my wife would greet me with great joy and out-spread arms as soon as "we" got home.**

**Yes "we" were going to my home. He was the finest fixer in the world. He knew all about how to handle wives. He admitted that!**

**So, two drunks, now lifetime buddies, stumbled out arm in arm headed up the hill towards home.**

**A draft of cool air cleared some of the fog away from my befuddled brain. "Wait a minute, what's this so-and-so-plan of yours? I got to know about it," I said. "I got to know what you're going to say and what I say."**

**The plan was a honey! All he had to do was to lead me up to the apartment, ring the bell, ask my wife if I was her husband, and then tell**

her he had found me down at the river about to jump from the bridge and had saved my life.

"That's all there is to it," he kept mumbling over and over, "works every time-never fails."

On up the hill we staggered, then my "life saver" got a better idea that would clinch the deal. He'd have to go home first and put on clean linen. Couldn't let the nice lady see a dirty shirt.

That sounded all right. Maybe he'd have a bottle at his home. So we stumbled up to his place, a dreary third floor back room, on a third rate street.

I have a hazy recollection of that place, but have never been able to find it since. There was a photograph of a quite pretty girl on his dresser.

**He told me it was a picture of his wife and that she had kicked him out because he was drunk. "You know how women are," he said.**

**Some fixer!**

**He did put on a clean shirt all right and then reached into a drawer and pulled out a .38 calibre revolver. That gave me quite a sobering shock. I reached for the gun realizing in a hazy way that here was trouble.**

**He began to pull the trigger and every moment I expected to hear an explosion, but the gun was empty. He proved it!**

**Then he got a new idea. To reconcile my wife and make her happy, he would tell her the gun was mine, that I stood on the bridge, with the gun at my head and that he snatched**

**it away just in time to save my life.**

**God Almighty must have, at that moment, granted me a flash of sanity. I quickly excused myself while he was completing his toilet and, on the pretext of phoning my wife, rushed noisily down the stairs and ran down the street with all my might.**

**Some blocks away I came to a drug store, bought a pint of gin, and drank half it in several large gulps, staggered on up to my apartment, and tumbled into bed, fully dressed and dead drunk.**

**This wasn't any new terror for my wife. This sort of thing had been going on for several years, only I was getting worse and worse with each drunken spree and more difficult to handle.**

**Only the previous day I had been in an accident. A Good Samaritan saw my condition and got me away quickly, before the police came, and drove me back to my home.**

**I was dreadfully drunk that day and my wife consulted a lawyer as preliminary to entering divorce action. I swore to her that I wouldn't drink again and within 24 hours, here I was in bed dead drunk.**

**Several months previously I had spent a week in a New York hospital for alcoholics and came out feeling that everything would be all right. Then I began to think that I had the thing licked. I could practice a little controlled drinking. I knew I couldn't take much but just one drink before dinner. That went all right, too. Sure I had it licked now! The next step was to take one quick**

**one at noon and cover it up with a milk shake. To make it doubly sure, I'd have ice cream put into the milk shake, and the n, so help me, I don't know what the next step down was, but I surely landed at the bottom with an awful, heartbreaking thud.**

**The next morning was June 7th. I recall the date so well because the sixth is my daughter's birthday. And that, by the grace of God, was my last spree.**

**That morning I was afraid to open my eyes, surely my wife would have kept her promise and left me. I loved my wife. It is a paradox I know, but I did and do.**

**When I did stir, there she was sitting at my bedside.**

**"Come on," she said, "get up, bathe, shave and dress. We're going to New**



**York this morning."**

**"New York!" I said, "To the hospital?"**

**"Yes."**

**"I haven't any money to pay a hospital."**

**"I know you haven't," she said, "but I arranged it all last night over long distance and I'm going to give you that one chance, once again. If you let me down this time, that's all there is."**

**Well, I went into that hospital again feeling like a whipped cur. My wife pleaded with the doctor to please do something to save her husband, to save her home, to save our business, and our self-respect.**

**The doctor assured us that he really had something for me this time that**

would work and with that faint hope, we separated; she to hurry back home, 150 miles away, and carry on the work of two people and I to sit trembling and fearful there in what seemed to me, a shameful place.

Four days later a man called on me and seemed interested to know how I was coming along. He told me that he, too, had been there several times but had now found relief.

That night another man came. He, too, had suffered the same trouble and told how he and the other fellow and several more had been released from alcohol.

Then the next day a fine fellow came, and in a halting but effective way, told how he had placed himself in God's hand and keeping. Almost before I knew it, I was asking God to

**clean me up.**

**I suppose there are many who feel a strong resentment against such a spiritual approach. Some of Alcoholics Anonymous whom I have met since that day tell me they had difficulty in accepting a simple, day to day, plan of faith. In my case I was ripe for such an opportunity, perhaps because of early religious training. I have always, it seems, had a keen sense of the fact and presence of God.**

**That, too, like loving my wife and at the same time hurting her so dreadfully, is paradoxical, but it's a fact. I knew that God, was there with infinite love and yet, somehow, I kept on drifting further and further away. But now I do feel that my heart and mind are "tuned in" and by His grace there will be no more**

**alcoholic "static."**

**After making this final agreement (not iust another resolution) to let God to be first in my life, the whole outlook and horizon brightened up in a manner which I am unable to describe except to say that it was "glorious."**

**The following day was Monday and my non-drinking friend insisted that I check out from the hospital and come over to his home in 'Jersey. I did that and there I found a lovely wife and children all so "happy about the whole thing."**

**The next night I was taken to a meeting, at the home of an ex-problem drinker in Brooklyn, where to my surprise, there were more than 30 men like myself, telling of a liberty of living unmatched by**

**anything I had ever seen.**

**Since returning to my home, life has been so different. I have paid off the old debts, have money enough now for decent clothes and some to use in helping others, a thing which I enjoy doing but didn't do when I had to contribute so generously to alcohol.**

**I am trying to help other alcoholics. At this writing there are four of us working, all of whom have been kicked around dreadfully.**

**There is no "cocky" feeling about this for me. I know I am an alcoholic and while I used to call on God to help me, my conclusion is that I was simply asking God to help me drink alcohol without its hurting me which is a far different thing than asking him to help me not to drink at all.**

**So here I stand, living day to day, in  
His presence, and it is wonderful-  
This prodigal came home.**

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