

THE BOLD MAN AND THE SEMEN

by
Peter Smagorinsky

(The following is an original manuscript found in the attic of an obscure grand nephew of the great American writer, Ernest Hemingway, and is thought to be from an early draft of his famous novel, The Old Man and the Sea. It is printed here for the first time.)

I remained seated. So that was it. They'd finally got me, the dirty bastards. You play the game your whole life without even knowing the rules, and finally you slip up and that's it.

I heard a knock at the door.

"Who's there?" I asked.

"Samantha."

I paused. "Samantha, they've got me. I'm trapped."

"Trapped?"

"Yes, trapped."

"Darling, do you mean you're trapped?"

"Yes, Samantha, trapped. T-R-A-P-P-E-D. I'm trapped."

"Hmm. Sounds like a trap to me."

I didn't say anything.

"Have courage, darling."

"Courage? Hah. Don't talk to me of courage." I said as I looked, impotent, at the jammed stall door. "Courage means nothing." I watched a cockroach scurry across the floor. As it neared me I lifted my foot and stomped it into the tiles.

"Try not to think about it, darling."

"Think? I was not made to think, Samantha. I was made to eat and drink and sleep with you. Thinking makes me nervous," I said as I took out my magic marker and began to doodle on the panel.

"Can't you crawl under, the way you did last time?"

"And get my new khakis dirty? Not on your life," I replied.

"No, this time they've finally got me."

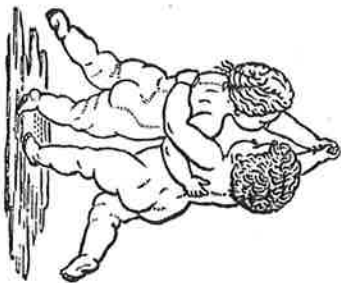
"Well, darling, what are the other customers supposed to do?"

"Damn the other customers," I said.

I looked at the stall door. There's only one way out, I thought. I'll have to blast my way. I took out my harpoon. I held it with both hands. I prepared my thrust. I began to rock. My aroused harpoon seemed to grow and bulge with power. I frothed slightly. I moaned with heat and urgency. My heart beat hard. My hands, now raw, burned from the sweat and oil. I grew dizzy, as if in a dream. The moment came. I released. The stall door exploded with a crash. It burst across the room. I felt faint, and could not see well. I heard Samantha calling outside the door.

"Is everything all right?"

I waited till my chest stopped heaving. Slowly I put my weapon away. I rose from my seat, and waded back towards her voice. Well, that was over now, anyway. I would go out and have a drink with Samantha.



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