

## Isaac James Baker

### Err

The alarm barked violently, like a sleeping dog awoken by a swift kick in the ribs.

Adam always turned the dial on his clock radio to 1020 AM. It wasn't a station. It was just static, loud, bleating static. At 6:45 each weekday morning it would click on and scream out in chaotic cracks. It always did the trick.

Adam slapped at the alarm clock. It fell off the bedside table and hit the floor with a thud. He had only meant to shut the screaming thing up, not knock it over.

"Fuck," Adam huffed, as if there was someone around to hear him. There wasn't. Only Cream Puff, his fluffy white cat. "Well," Adam said to himself, "here goes."

He flexed his stomach to sit up. But he couldn't move. It felt like someone had pinned him down to the mattress. He placed his hands on the bed to push himself up. Still, he couldn't budge.

"Gotta quit drinkin' so much," he thought. He had drained half a bottle of cheap bourbon in bed. It knocked him out while he was reading a 14-month-old New Yorker, a magazine he had snagged from the waiting room outside his psychiatrist's office the day before. The bourbon was bad. The articles in the New York were worse. The meeting with his psychiatrist was worse still.

Adam's eyes were blurry and disoriented. He kinked his head to the right to look out the window. His vision followed a half a second after his head. His temples pulsed and throbbed and his eyes felt puffy and swollen. He reached to massage his forehead. His fingers felt numb and slightly tingly as he pressed. His face felt like a woman had just smacked him. And Adam knew exactly how that felt. He'd gotten more of his share of smacks in his 31 years.

He blinked his eyes. The room finally stopped streaking and spinning around him. He stared at the chipped paint on his ceiling. It was coming off like in sheets like dried glue. He'd been telling himself he needed to fix that crumbly paint for six months. "Not today," he thought. "No way."

Adam tried to roll over off of the bed, but his body didn't follow. He strained his neck. His head was tremendously heavy. "Jesus," Adam whined aloud. "The fuck's going on? I didn't even finish the bottle!"

Adam reached down to scratch his balls. But he couldn't reach his crotch. His forearm smooshed up against heaps of belly fat.

In terror, Adam threw off his covers.

"What the fuck!" he screamed as he saw his body. "What is this?"

Mounds of fat rolled to and fro as he jiggled himself up onto his elbows. His arms pinched in pain from having his weight on them. He stared down at rolls and rolls of chunky blubber and stretched out, pasty white skin. It was everywhere. A deep foreboding crevice was stuck into his stomach where his belly button had been the night before. He couldn't see the bones in his hips; they'd been coated with layers of jiggling fat. He couldn't see his pecker. It was hidden somewhere underneath flaps of glop. His legs looked like masses of silly putty. His boxer shorts lay in tatters underneath his massive right ass cheek. Adam snagged them. "Medium," the label read. "Size 30-32."

"You're dreaming," Adam said aloud. "This can't be real. No one can gain... How much do I even fucking weigh?"

With all his strength he leaned over the side of the bed and pulled his legs out to support his new immensity. Rolls scrunched between the back of his knees as he stood up, wobbling, like an overloaded ice cream cone about to topple over. He looked down at his belly, his massive flapping boobies. They looked like an old lady's, except thin scraggly hairs sprouted out defiantly from his stretched nipples.

"This can't be happening!"

He thundered into the bathroom. He stared at the metal scale on the floor next to the towel rack. For a few seconds, Adam didn't move. The thought of stepping onto the scale was too terrifying.

"C'mon," he said aloud, slapping his bulging palms together in a muffled clap. "Here we go."

He jabbed one of his fat feet onto the scale, then the other. He closed his eyes and squeezed his eyebrows together, as if, by sheer force of will, he could shed the massive amount of weight that now clung to his once skinny frame. When he opened his eyes the scale's digital screen read: "Err."

"Error?" Adam shouted. "The fuck's that mean?"

He heard Cream Puff purr from the bedroom and scratch at the bland yellow carpet with her claws. She had woken up and had come to see what all the noise was about.

“Cream Puff!” Adam shouted as he stepped off the scale and into the hallway. “Come here, girl!” He bounded out with his enormous arms outstretched and flapping. Cream Puff got one look at her bulbous owner and bolted under the bed.

“Get out here you little shit!” Adam yelled at the cat. It was no use. He couldn’t even bend over, let alone dig her out from underneath there.

Adam collapsed back onto the bed. It creaked and groaned under his tremendous weight. Cream Puff shrieked in pain but didn’t dare to run out from underneath the bed.

Adam saw his cell phone on the bedside table next to the half bottle of bourbon.

“Doctor Abraham!” he shouted. “Maybe he’ll...” Adam trailed off. He didn’t know what anyone else could really do for him. No shrink would possibly be able to help him. He knew that. But Adam smashed his fattened fingers against the keys anyways. He dialed the wrong numbers three different times; he had trouble hitting the right buttons with his blubbery fingers. On the fourth try Adam finally got the number right and pressed the green send button.

The phone rang. “C’mon,” Adam groaned. “Pick up. Pick up!”

Adam heard a crackle over the receiver, a few moans. “Yeah?” a voice mumbled.

“Doctor Abraham!”

“Yes, who is this?”

“It’s Adam.”

“Adam,” the doctor said, “what are you doing calling me this early? I told you this number was for emergencies only.”

“This is an emergency!” he screamed. “A major fucking emergency!”

The doctor wheezed into the receiver. “Alright,” he said reticently, his voice crackly with early morning phlegm. “What is it this time?”

“I gained 350 pounds!”

“Adam,” the doctor pleaded, “just stop it.”

“I’m serious, doc! I’m enormous! I can’t even see my dick! You should see me!”

“Adam, I will see you. I’ll see you next week at our scheduled session.”

“I’m so big I can barely walk! I can’t make the session! There’s no way I could fit into my Volkswagen like this!”

“I’ll see you Tuesday at 11, Adam,” the doctor said. Adam could hear a woman in the background calling the doctor away from the phone. “Goodbye.”

The phone clicked and buzzed like a dying bumble bee. Adam slammed the phone back onto the bedside table.

“Shit!” he shouted.

His neck, drooping like an inflated turkey’s gobble, shook as he spoke. He reached for the rest of the bourbon and unscrewed the plastic cap. He lifted it to his mouth and sucked hard.