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Bag of Tricks

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Colostomy is a surgical procedure that creates an opening or stoma on the abdomen for the drainage of stool from the large intestine.

In other words my dad has this bag attached to his hip that fills up with shit from this big swirly thing inside of him, and he now has to empty it out or have it emptied out by a male nurse that comes to his house once a day to change his dressing and wash his penis. He also has this gargantuan scar that runs from six centimetres above his belly button down to his pubic region.

And sure this upsets me, the fact that my father is confined to a house in Freehold attached to his own fecal matter, unable to digest most solid foods, paranoid over the bag breaking or bursting, scared to death that his incision might get infected, and still worrying about me finding health insurance...
And I realize NOT EVEN I HAVE THE STOMACH FOR THIS.

I mean yes this was better than dying,
better than cancer cells multiplying, spreading throughout his 56 year old,

now 25 pound-less-body, but it's difficult to watch him bite his lip in pain every time he stands up or wait for him an extra three minutes to get to the door when I arrive to spend the day with him.

I'm finding it tough to see him grasping at his side in intervals, checking to see if his new body part is still attached. And I have to turn away, cuz NOT EVEN I HAVE THE STOMACH FOR THIS.

It bothers me that I have to put on his left sock because he can't bend down to do so himself yet, and do you think I want to hear him saying every five minutes or so, "I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy." I mean what can I say? So I say nothing, and we watch old movies like the *Hustler* with Paul Newman and some early Pacino flick where Al's blind as a Batman and Chris O'Donnell, who played Robin, takes him all around town. And when I doze off on the couch, he actually makes me lunch and microwaves some leftover meatloaf that's waiting for me at the kitchen table when I awaken. And this is disgusting— No, not the meatloaf but this which not even I HAVE THE STOMACH FOR.

I gobble it down guilt-fully, and all I can offer is to refill his water glass. To further compensate I go out in search of a newspaper, but contemplate not giving it to him. Alonso Mourning's on the cover— they say he's got kidney disease and will never play pro-basketball again. Well my dad now has no colon, and I don't want him to have to take care of me ever again. Here he is considerably sick at his absolute most humble, beaten and weakened by a life saving procedure, and I'm the one WHO DOESN'T HAVE THE STOMACH FOR THIS???

So in that single afternoon I grow-up more than I have in 4
years of college
and 3 years of floundering.
I realize no one should be there to baby me, pamper me, or
put my socks on,
until I'm at least 55 and am blessed (fingers-crossed)
with a wife who actually wouldn't mind doing that.
So I cherish every food I can still eat, stay healthy,
and make my Dad dinner at least once a week.
Together we stomach each other's company and savour
every second.

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