



The Adventures of
Guy
written by a guy
(probably)

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Maryland

The Adventures of Guy

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Dedication

Dedicated to Boo
(now you have to read it, huh?)

Acknowledgements

“If it’s true that our species is alone in the universe, then I’d have to say that the universe aimed rather low and settled for very little.” George Carlin

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Prologue



In 2003, the Federal Trade Commission issued an amendment to the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR) mandating a Federal “Do Not Call” registry. Millions enthusiastically signed up, happy that they might recapture the sanctity and serenity of their dinner times, and the freedom to answer their phones without having to worry about fending off some jerk, whose thinly veiled purpose is to convince you to take your money and put it in his pocket.

Unfortunately, though, not everybody paid attention to what their government had done for them (quite likely because most people are not used to this kind of help by our elected officials).

“Ring...”

“Ring...”

“Ring...?”

“Ring!”

“Ring...ring...ring...”

The answering machine didn’t kick in.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Mostly because we don’t have an answering machine.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Which doesn’t matter, because we won’t answer the phone anyway...

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“Ring...ring...ring...”

...because of telemarketers.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Telemarketers don't seem to mind that we don't answer the phone.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

They keep calling.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Over and over.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Patience and stamina...telemarketer virtues.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

That is, well, if you feel like you can put ‘telemarketer’ and ‘virtues’ in the same sentence.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

We didn't know that the attorneys had waged successful war against the telemarketers, giving us certain rights against their invasion of our privacy.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

As a result of the litigation, the telemarketing firms had to cut back on employees.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Nearly wiping out their whole industry almost overnight.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

But not everybody knows about the Opt-out laws.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

There are still some clueless people out there.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Like us.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

For all I know, there's only one telemarketer left in the world.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

And he has our number.

Chapter One



It all started when the phone rang at the house one day...
“Ring...ring...ring...”

The phone kept ringing.

And I kept ignoring it.

Actually, it wasn't that I ignored it. Since it's always ringing, we just tune it out, so now it's part of the background noise of our apartment, like Dave Matthews, Monday Night Football and DVD's that usually have a woman's name in the title. Nobody important ever calls us anyway. They know better. Even Mom gave up trying to call, and when she wants to reach me, she simply sends a messenger-kid to me, like my little brother Seth.

Seth's over right now, in fact, playing Donkey-Kong on the PlayStation. After his message from Mom was delivered, he was released from further responsibility, regardless of my response, or lack of response.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Outside, I could hear one of my roommates, Tim, shooting hoops on the neighbor's driveway. The neighbor doesn't know Tim plays on his driveway while he's at work. Tim figures that what he doesn't know, won't hurt him. After all, why let a perfectly good hoop go to waste all day? He's got similar thoughts about their

refrigerator.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

Tim works nights at a lab, and...

Wait. I can't keep calling him Tim, because that's not what we call him. We call him Knob. I couldn't tell you why, though. We were pretty drunk when we came up with the nickname, and later we couldn't figure out where it came from. Still, the nickname stuck.

Me? My name's Guy.

And...get this...I'm a guy.

“Ring...ring...ring...”

That's when it happened.

At first, I didn't notice it, because all of a sudden it was silent in the house. Even Dave Matthews was between songs.

Then a great echoey feeling took shape in my head as a thought successfully passed completely through without bonking into ringing and music.

The thought was, *What is that?*

The 'that' I was trying to identify was something we had not heard in the three years of rooming together.

Silence.

Not only silence, but a huge silence. One of those silences so huge that it had its own echo. I was hearing silence, and then its echo. Silence squared.

A shiver went down my back.

Then it came back up my back.

It took a turn or two around my chest, and my nipples hardened from fear, anxiety, surprise, and some unexplained emotion I'd rather not explore.

The ringing had stopped.

All of a sudden, Dave Matthews started in on his next song, splintering the silence into little shards of chords and notes and coolness.

But I was frozen because of the strange sound I didn't hear.

It was like the time a tornado had hit our neighborhood, wiping out Madame Nirvana's little house down the road. It hadn't destroyed anything else, except for her house and a little sign advertising that Madame Nirvana would read your palm and

tell you whether your future would include huge clumps of ear hair.

So wouldn't you think Madame Nirvana would have noticed something like a tornado in her own future?

Her little house had been found a mile away, wrapped around a telephone pole. It knocked out our phone lines for thirty-seven minutes, wiping out pizza delivery profits on a crucial Friday evening.

That's what I was reminded of now.

"Seth?"

My words sounded freakishly loud.

"Knob?"

The silence overwhelmed me with its silence.

Silence, quiet, stillness, calm, and other words that evoke the image of absence of noise. Not even the twitter of a bird.

Well, there was a Dave Matthews song going on, but that doesn't count. Because other than that, there was nothing.

"What?" a voice said quietly behind me.

"Shit!" I screamed, whirling around.

It was Knob, his mouth stuffed with a Cardiac Arrest, a monster sandwich stuffed with whatever's in the kitchen at the time of creation. Ingredients can vary from french fries, SourPatch Kids, hot peppers, jalapeno peppers, entire slices of cold pizza, green beans, conch fritters, cow tongue, ice cream, and whatever else one can find.

Dagwood would swoon with envy.

The caloric count alone could support the entire world's population of people on the Atkins diet for a week. And I won't even get into the overabundance of bad carbohydrates, which shouldn't be confused with good carbohydrates, which I guess do their chores and wash their hands after going to the bathroom.

Somehow though, Knob's metabolism takes it all in and everything runs pretty smoothly. Well, except maybe for his brain. There's definitely something not getting through there. Still though, he's lanky and friendly, and a good friend to hang around with.

A fly buzzed through the room.

Our eyes followed it as it zigged through the room.

We followed it as it zagged through the room.

Something registered on its sensors, and it veered for the sandwich in Knob's hand.

Knob, who while he has nothing against mosquitoes, at least female ones (we'll get into that later), hates flies, so he tried to whap it, swinging the Cardiac Arrest like a racquetball racquet.

The sandwich missed the fly by about a foot, but, strangely, the fly stopped in mid-air, and fluttered to the ground.

We watched until it fell out of sight. Yeah, out of sight. We aren't very good at housecleaning. The fly disappeared somewhere into the clutter that makes up our floor. Bits of paper with music notes scribbled on it, cardboard pizza containers, puzzles and games, stuff like that. Essential stuff. The stuff that makes our home, ah...well, uh...a mess. Hey, I admit it. It's a mess. I told you we aren't very good at housecleaning.

Something nibbled at my brain, reminding me that there had actually been an earlier thought that hadn't been brought to satisfactory conclusion.

Oh, yeah.

The silence.

Dave Matthews was taking another break, so the quiet was even more oppressive.

"What's that?" Knob asked, looking around. He crammed more sandwich into his mouth in hopes it would reduce inertia in his brain.

"I don't know."

"It's weird, like maybe church or something." Bits of sandwich flew through the air like errant meteors.

"Yeah."

"Remember that time with the tornado?"

"Yeah."

"Yeah, it's like that," he mumbled, cramming more into his mouth. Something that looked like an albino worm dangled from the corner of his mouth, before his tongue snaked out and swiped it away. Spaghetti, whew.

"Weird."

"Yeah."

Then it registered.

“What?” Knob asked.

“Do you hear that?”

“No, what?”

“Donkey Kong,” I said.

“No, I don’t hear any Donkey Kong,” he asserted.

“That’s just it, we should hear Donkey Kong.”

I ran out into the living room, my eyes searching out my little brother.

“Seth?” I skidded to a stop.

He wasn’t at the computer.

“Maybe he answered the phone,” Knob said.

“Why would he do something like that?”

He shrugged. “I dunno.”

“Okay, so where’s the phone?”

We looked at each other. We had no idea where it was. We never use the phone, not even for the pizza delivery guy. We didn’t need to, because our other roommate Thurman brings home free pizzas often enough to keep our marinara sauce levels from getting too low.

“I’ll check the bedrooms,” Knob volunteered.

I split off to go check out the basement.

Our house is located in what’s known as the college slums; a hundred year-old part of town that went to seed when all the old people died off. All the houses were thin and deep, with steep driveways and old brick. People in this neighborhood were born and lived here until they died. Then they watched their sons and daughters move away and never come back. After the old people died, college kids moved in, renting entire houses, four to eight or more per house.

So we had an entire house to ourselves, for just two hundred bucks a month per person. Pretty slick, especially with the graveyard in the backyard. How can you get any cooler than that?

But the basement. That’s another story. Dark, damp, scary, and home to our other roommate. In fact, that’s what Thurman likes about it. He’s into Goth. Secretly, I think it’s just so he can wear black. The girls dig him in black, and he knows it.

He’s working the early shift, delivering pizzas between

college classes, so I have to go down into the pit to see if maybe the phone's down there.

Whap! Whap! Whap!

"Bastard!"

Something upstairs. I bolted back up, and ran into the front bedroom.

"What's the matter?"

Knob was at the window, his shoe off, a disgusted look on his face.

"Ah, man, put that shoe back on."

"I was after a mosquito," he apologized.

"Well, don't do that," I told him angrily. My brother's missing, and Knob's out squishing mosquitoes and fostering foot odor.

"C'mon, we have to find Seth."

I promised I'd tell you about Knob and mosquitoes. He once read that only female mosquitoes bite, because they need the blood for egg-laying. And when he learned that a male mosquito is about a bazillion times bigger than the female, Knob, with a heart as soft as his head, concluded that the big hairy male jumps on the female and has his way with her. Afterwards, he merrily buzzes off to play miniature golf with his buddies, leaving the female stuck with whole egg process. Knob didn't think this was fair at all. So ever since, he eradicates any male mosquitoes that he can find, and wouldn't harm a female if she was sucking corpuscles out of his nose.

"It was a *Culex Pipiens*," he said defensively.

"Huh?"

"A *Culex*," he said, slanting a look at me like I was a nit.

"C'mon, you weirdo," I said angrily.

As part of his campaign to help the female mosquito, he'd done considerable research. This research is conducted with liberal amounts of beer, so his facts sometimes got a little scattered.

We headed back to the basement after having concluded the upstairs was Seth-free.

"Did you know that the *Culex* doesn't usually prefer humans?" he asked as we strode through the kitchen towards the basement stairs.

I ignored him.

“And it’s known as the common house mosquito?”

I ignored him harder, and started down the stairs.

“In fact, what they actually prefer are birds.”

“Shhh!” I hissed. There was something in the dark.

He lowered his voice. “And, did you know that mosquitoes actually don’t eat blood? They eat stuff like nectar and…” his voice trailed off as he saw what I was looking at.

“What’s he doing?” he asked.

“Shhh!”

It was Seth.

Then again, it wasn’t.

