

A Parentally Sow

by Brian Trepanier (979 words)

There was a knock on Joe's bedroom door.

"It's mom, can I come in?" Joe's mom asked, opening the door and walking in.

Joe turned off the computer monitor and turned to face her. "What's up, mom?"

She sat on his bed, springs creaking under her substantial weight.

"You remember when I bought the computer, how I took on the second job to make ends meet, but did it to make sure you would have the proper tools to write?"

"Of course, mom, I'm going to be a zillionaire and you're going to get more gifts than you could possibly imagine!"

"Always the dreamer!" she said, a smile growing on her face briefly, before sliding back to a look of concern. "But we need to be serious right now."

"I remember the day you brought home the computer, and I've been busy with it ever since."

"I know, Joe, I've heard the clickety clack of the keyboard for the past few months, and I've left you alone to write a masterpiece."

"When you gave me the computer, you told me to write something wonderful, something people will love and especially something people will pay for."

"I lost my second job today."

"Oh no, mom, I'm sorry to hear that."

"Honey, things are going to get pretty tight around here. Now, I know you've been working hard and I don't want to rush anything, but is there any chance you'll be able to make some money with the computer program you've been writing?"

Joe paused for a second.

"Mom, I'm writing a novel, not a computer program."

Joe's mom's eyes grew wide and her body straightened out.

"You're what?" she asked, her voice puffing up and her ears turning red.

"A novel, mom, you know, a long story."

“Don’t get smart with me, young man!” she said. “You’re telling me that while I’ve been working two jobs, you’ve been writing a novel?”

“Yes, mom, and it’s almost finished. Soon, I’ll send it to some agents and...”

“Oh, my lord.” Joe’s mom said, standing and putting her hands on her head. “A novel. We can’t buy food, and my only child has been playing author!”

“You said to write something wonderful!”

“Yes, wonderful like Angry Birds or Minecraft. Something useful that people will buy. How are we going to put food on the table with a novel? I gave you a computer to write computer stuff. If I had wanted you to write a novel, I would have given you paper and a pen.”

“Um, gee, mom, I don’t know what to say. Maybe if you read it...”

Joe’s mom took a step forward and pointed a finger straight at his face. “No one should ever have to read a writer’s first novel! Oh, this is such a disappointment. What in the world led you to this?”

“C’mon, mom, it’s a novel...”

“No, it’s not!” she yelled. “It’s a waste of your life. It’s a dead end journey ending with my son becoming a hobo in a filthy suit, spreading pestilence and disease. Well, I will not have some bum living under my roof and eating my food!”

“Seriously, mom, you need to calm down. I’ll get a job, don’t worry, it will work out.”

“Any fool can get a job! What you needed was a career, but you’ve thrown that away, haven’t you? You had the chance, thanks to my blood, sweat and tears, but it’s too late now. The buffer zone has disappeared.”

Joe’s mom grabbed a sweater and quickly pulled it over Joe’s head and the back of the chair, effectively locking him to it.

“What the heck? What’s this?” he said, as he tried to sit up and free himself, but his mom pushed him back into his seat and started wrapping a sheet around him, tying him to the chair.

“No son of mine is going to burden me.” she said, wheeling the chair Joe was bound to out of the room and down the hallway.

Joe was smiling at the ridiculous situation. “Okay, I promise I will not be a burden to you.”

“Oh, don’t you worry, I know you won’t be a burden because I do not let garbage rot slowly in my house. Since you want to throw your life away, let’s not wait until you start to stink.” she said, opening the front door and wheeling Joe down the walkway.

“Okay, mom, I get it. The neighbors might see...”

“Let them see. Let them see the hard decisions that come with good parenting. Let them see me throwing away what appears to be a perfectly good teenager, but appearances are deceiving. You’re wired wrong for success, Joe. You didn’t come out properly.”

“It’s a book! A friggin’ book!” Joe yelled, the humor having left the situation.

“Looks like we’re just in time.” his mom said, as a garbage truck came driving down the street and pulled up alongside the curb. The driver came around the side of the truck and greeted Joe’s mom, who told him how Joe wanted to throw his life away. The driver nodded in understanding and wheeled Joe to the garbage truck.

“Mom! Stop! What are you doing?” Joe screamed as the driver tipped him and the chair into the back of the truck.

“How does it feel to throw your life away now, mister author?” Joe’s mom yelled, as the driver pulled the handle and the motor kicked in and the truck started compacting the trash. The last sounds Joe made were his bones snapping as his body was folded in ways nature never intended. The job done, the driver climbed back into the truck.

Joe’s mom watched the garbage truck drive away, then she went to throw away the contents of her dead son’s room, thinking to herself that one truly reaps what one sows.