



## Line Edit Sample

Toast and jelly served alongside black coffee and the sound of her long, cigarette-yellowed ~~fig~~~~n~~~~n~~~~a~~~~i~~~~l~~~~s~~~~f~~~~i~~~~n~~~~g~~~~e~~~~r~~~~n~~~~a~~~~i~~~~l~~~~s~~ tapping across the dingy room table as she played game after game of solitaire was all Jerry could think about as she was carted off to the plot. The day was not ~~ae~~ particularly memorable, but he had made a nice spread of eggs and fried potatoes for breakfast, and she had refused to eat any of it. ~~n~~Not angrily, but with an “~~e~~Oh, nonsense!” and a wave of the hand; ~~and~~ she lifted her menthol to her mouth intermittently, peaking over her glasses in search of a stack where her queen of hearts could go. In a huff, he had thrown all the food into the big plastic dog bowl by the door, the one they kept even though the dog had died about ~~9~~nine months ago. And she didn’t laugh or pay much mind to his antic, crunching her toast, nearly burnt, ~~jellied~~ barely ~~jellied~~, butter beneath.

He had circled around the living room for a few minutes, as if he was thinking of what to do next, kneading his palms red. He unfolded his pouch of tobacco and sucked and spit and thought and sulked, ~~and~~ ~~w~~When he came back to the kitchen to give his wife what for, she had put on lipstick ~~and~~, started a new game, ~~and~~ ~~t~~The dog bowl and its discarded breakfast content were gone. “You’re a damned stubborn broad,” he said as he kissed her on the forehead, ~~and~~ ~~s~~She gave an “oh nonsense” wave of the hand, and the rest of the day, nothing really happened that is worth mentioning. And really, the whole little spat, ~~—~~ if you could even call a half-hour period in which only about six words ~~aw~~ere spoken a “spat” ~~—~~ was pretty insignificant.

Not like the time they’d gotten into an argument in the car on the way to dinner, over some trumpet player on a jazz tune playing on the radio or some ~~thing~~ ~~or~~ other musical nonsense, ~~and~~ ~~t~~They had sat across from each other at a candlelit table in their favorite restaurant and sipped ~~a~~Anisin and soda and ~~b~~Beefeater gin and tonics, ~~and~~ ~~T~~They ordered and ate and had after-dinner drinks and did not speak a word to each other. It was not so memorably and terrifying as the time when her mind was going and she left the house silently while he napped, ~~and~~ ~~S~~She returned two hours later, the car dinged innumerable ~~e~~timesy, a new bag of ~~c~~Circus ~~p~~Peanuts half-eaten and left in the passenger’s seat.

But it was the dog bowl and the uneaten breakfast that he remembered as he smoked a cigarette under the awning of the funeral parlor, the wind blowing his tie about. And he remembered that he hadn’t even had the damn sense to eat anything the rest of the day, until she had reminded him, ~~and~~ ~~n~~Now he wondered how the hell he would remember to do anything without the damned stubborn broad there to remind him.

Yes, by all accounts, he was feeling rather sorry for himself, as people are apt ~~and~~ ~~a~~appropriate to do in such a situation. But he puffed his cheeks in and out and considered what tomorrow would be like, when he wouldn’t even need to agonize about whether or not to visit the nursing

home, and he also wouldn't have to feel bad for living in their home alone and watching television and knowing what was going on and being able to bathe himself and ...

*Damn.* He stubbed the cigarette out under the toe of his creased but polished black dress shoes. He was thinking too much, which had always been a problem, and why he was prone to anxiety and the general sullenness when a person thinks less of himself and yet expects more of himself than anyone else. He knew that this sort of internal monologue was only going to get worse, and so he decided that right now, yes, right now, he was going to turn over a new leaf. No more feeling sorry for himself because life had handed him a rotten deck. No more being crotchety and mean because he was actually just sad and didn't understand or want to let such vulnerability show.

He decided he would call a shrink, because, well it wasn't like he had anything better to do. After he'd had cold cuts and red punch at the VFW hall, and the family members had stayed the appropriate amount of time, and hugs were administered, and his boys had asked if he was okay and whether he wanted to stay with him, with a look in their eyes that you just knew meant they were only asking because it seemed like the right thing to do, and well, hell, there was nothing wrong with trying to say the right thing and mean well. After all of this, Jerry begged off home alone to the relief of the kids, as anyone under the age of fifty had now become.

He started in the Yellow Pages, searching under "doctors," but that was too vast and there were too many foreigners in there, names he couldn't pronounce, names so unfamiliar, he couldn't tell whether one or the next belonged to a man or a woman or some sort of pet, for all he knew.

"Psych" was the next go he had, and he grabbed a gnawed arm-pencil with a stubby eraser and jotted down a few names and numbers of some fellas that sounded distinguished, Charles M. Walsh, Henry Worthing, Roger Sharpe, and so on. The kind of white-bread names that Jerry was comfortable with. He made a pot of decaff and sat in the worn armchair, falling asleep after a few hours of TV that didn't even register. The blue lights of the tube played a Technicolor show that splayed across his beluga-white belly, darts of light jabbing around his snoring mouth.

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