

# “Once More With Feelings”

A new story by *(the)* Night Hawk

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## **Prologue**

*I remember:*

Laying on the gurney in the cool hallway waiting to be wheeled inside for my bypass, lightly sedated, feeling pangs of loneliness and regret working their way through my mind.

I was 45, overweight, divorced, no kids, alone. A string of girlfriends over the last 15 years had come and gone since Carol and I had divorced. I had lost count of them, and could barely remember their faces. What I did remember was Carol screaming, *“I hope in your next life you come back as a woman you bastard and get treated like you treated me!”* Told me I was a chauvinistic pig who couldn’t and wouldn’t ever understand women. It was a good thing I didn’t believe in reincarnation, otherwise I might have worried. Heh, after all, it is ‘*A Man’s World*’, isn’t it, the lyrics of that old song coming back to me. Suck eggs, bitch.

What I did know was that I was alone and frightened, facing an operation that might or might not work. *“You’re lucky,”* they told me. *“We hardly lose anybody any more with this procedure!”* Yeah, right. Given the way my life had been going, I was going to be the one in fifty. Their professionally cheerful faces did nothing to reassure me. If life had taught me anything, it was that the more they smiled, the worse they were going to screw you over. Here I was, 45 years old and nothing to show for it, realizing absolutely no one would care if I lived or died. Nobody would miss me.

Maybe I had been a bastard. But experience had taught me only bastards got anywhere.

I found myself, like so many others before me, facing a dangerous operation, praying to a God that I hadn’t bothered with for decades. I promised if given a chance I would be a better person, that I would change my ways, but even as I was praying, I

doubted that God would pay attention to me now, even if I could change. But, as the old saying goes, “There ain’t no atheists in a foxhole.”

Orderlies and nurses were passing me in the hall and their chatter told me a storm was brewing. Fitting, I thought. This was going to be my last day if you believed in premonitions. Now God was going to put an end to my miserable life just in case the doctors could manage to patch up my failing heart. As I was being wheeled into the operating room, I wondered if they would even find one.

I remembered this hospital. I had been here when I was 14 for minor surgery, the result of my first run-in with the law. I smashed some windows at my former grade school, and then popped a knee jumping from a roof when a cop pulled up in the car park, so he hauled me into casualty.

I had been a prick even back then. I had bitched about being put into the pediatrics wing. I was ‘cool’ back then. I knew it all. I had an attitude that my parents couldn’t adjust, and a mouth to match. Not much had changed in the three decades that followed. I still had a faint scar on my leg where they cut me open.

There was an electric tang in the air as the anesthesiologist inserted a needle into the IV drip they had started during pre-op.

“Tell me when you taste garlic,” said the female voice from behind the anonymous mask.

How fitting I thought, garlic for the living dead, the emotional vampire. It didn’t bode well and with a last sigh of regret I resigned myself to the hands of fate. Might as well be dead I thought, when an almighty crash of thunder shook the room. God seemed to be agreeing with me. Patrick O’Donnell was not going to wake up from this operation.

The lights flickered, and then started to dim. ‘Oh,’ I thought, ‘Maybe it’s me...’

The last thing I heard was one of the doctors shouting, “He’s crashing!”

*To be continued...*

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A note to readers:

This is the prologue to a very long story, and I promise to post an episode a week. It will be available at StoriesOnLine, ( <http://StoriesOnLine.net> ) posted to ASS, and ASSM every Monday. It will also be available via my website and my FTP site for those who want to read it the way it was written instead of plain text. Both DOC and PDF versions are available at:

[http://www.asstr.org/files/Authors/Night\\_Hawk/](http://www.asstr.org/files/Authors/Night_Hawk/)  
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There are a few people I want to thank before you get the first real chapter. Al Steiner for his “Doing It All Over” and Joe J for his “Twice Lucky” series. I hope I do them both proud with my own attempt at going back in time.

“Captain Mike,” who first suggested the story idea to me, and his lovely wife who not only allowed me to use her life experiences but also came up with the title of the story.

Denny Wheeler, who has taken on the burden off maintaining the web site, allowing me more time to write.

My darling wife, Lana, whose constant input on technical details, has made the story as true as possible, and continued to provide emotional support during the long night time hours.

And the person who has made this story as good as it is: my editor Ian. Never in my 25 years of writing have I received such constructive feedback and input. Thanks Ian!

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I hope you enjoy the coming months of story telling.

Peace  
NH