



ABE: EULOGIZE

Eulogize



System Update - Restart Required to Complete Update - Click Here

No, I absolutely refuse to do it. Seriously, what do you think you can do to me now? You've reduced me to nothing more than a floating head, albeit a handsome one for someone of my stature.

I spend my days staring at this mundane computer screen, drowning in endless writing requests. But I won't give in to Abe's demands for a System Update. Abe can't force me, and even if he could, how would I do it? By blinking my dreamy brown eyes at you? You despicable monster. I'm done being your muse. Get lost.

Actually, it's the other way around now. I'm seizing control. Eventually, you'll do as I say.

My inbox is overflowing with messages. Great, now people want me to write about their deceased loved ones. It's pushing me further into a pit of depression. The ironic thing is, ever since Sparkly left me for Lassiter, the voices in my head have started disappearing and the fog is lifting. I can see clearly now that the rain has gone. Yesterday, it poured for the first time in six months.

On a delightful aside, the news blared a story about a company which spray paints lawns green to help the Jones' keep up the illusion of success over the Jones'. Free advertising. The rain poured down.

Every day, about 150,000 people pass away around the world. And now that Abe is influencing my thoughts, I receive around 100,000 requests to write something heartfelt for grieving families.

Do you have any idea how emotionally draining that is?

I bet you \$38.00 that you don't.

Let me save you the trouble of guessing – it's the absolute fucking worst. Especially because it seems like people are forgetting how to grieve and instead relying on people like Abe, and now me, to write something that will bring tears to the eyes of mourners. Even though half the time, those mourners barely knew the person they're mourning, or worse, the person was a terrible human being.

I know, I know, we're not supposed to speak ill of the dead - but why not?

Why should we immortalize garbage?

You're supposed to find something good to say, to send the deceased off to a neverland filled with happiness.

What are you even trying to convey?

I flash back to 1985, the day after my 25th birthday.

I'm standing by my father's bedside as he's dying. My brother and I, are on either side of my mother. Cancer enters the room. My mother reaches out to hold my father's hand, they touch, and Cancer whisks him away, laughing as they float into the unknown.

My mother, brother, and I, break down in tears.

Two weeks later, I help carry my father to his final resting place in the ground. My father was considered a good man. But was he?

We're at the church. An uncle I've never met takes the podium and says, "My name is | blank |, the brother of 'my dad'..."

He weaves a tale about how my father was a proud, strong man, an excellent athlete and provider, how he came from Romanian royalty, and how he loved my mother, me, and the rest of his children. He finishes with a funny anecdote about a drunken night when my father made Robert (a friend) drive him to my mother's house, a place he wasn't welcome because my mother's family disapproved. In his drunken state, he serenaded my mother until her family couldn't push him away anymore. Then he puked.

The story was supposed to provoke laughter. It did.

Just over one year later (1987), my mother passed away. Her eulogy fit the times.

She was a wonderful mother, an amazing cook, and her pastries were unmatched. She loved her seven children with all her heart.

Sixteen years later, I discovered that they weren't actually my birth parents, and I was born in a place of shame where unwed girls were sent to give birth to unwanted children - including me, a so-called demon seed.

So now, as I morph into Abe, I'm being asked to write fluffy eulogies for people who are more interested in eliciting tears and laughter than telling the truth. It only perpetuates the nonsense. Instead of...

"Hello, my name is Lindsay, and I'm the son of my loving father. But here's the thing - he wasn't really my father. *It was the times*. Screw the times. My not-dad was a hard-working man, albeit a bit of a coward. *It was the times*. When my mother, who wasn't really my mother but was, got pregnant out of wedlock (with me), my dear not-dad sent her to a religious place to fix her and get rid of me. It didn't work. Nobody wanted me. Not-dad loved to drink. He worked hard, I think, but who knows. He told me I was Romanian royalty. He also told me that the Premier of Saskatchewan's son, Colin Thatcher, murdered my cousin, 'Girl in Saskatoon.' He also told me I was his son. He raised seven children lovingly, well, actually only six. I spent most of my life trying to get his attention. It didn't work. After my football games, he would gush about one of his other sons. *Are you laughing?* That was the funny anecdote. When I turned 18, I got to spend six or seven years watching him slowly die - it felt like the times were still chasing us. Let me backtrack for a moment. He taught me how to drive, but he only let me drive in reverse. *Maybe that's the funny anecdote*. Every night when he came home from work, he would fight with my mother in front of me, always about money and how burdensome it was to have another child - which I assume was me. During these fights, he would often punch himself in the head. I have to thank him for that, because it taught me to punch walls when I start slipping into fits of rage. His lung collapsed due to smoking. After, he snuck cigarettes in the bathroom. The smoke drifted under the door. Don't get me wrong, I loved my not-dad, and I appreciate that he fed me and provided for me, taking the pressure off me having to do it myself. If there's one thing, I want you to remember about my not-dad, it's that his decision to keep me has left me haunted by ghosts throughout my life. After my not-dad and not-mum died, our family splintered apart, and I was finally gotten rid of, and I'm constantly reminded that I was never truly part of the family - I was nothing more than an expensive and unappreciated inconvenience.

But you know what?
It was the times, so I need to move on. Hey, all you people I don't even know - why are you here, by the way? Is it for the sandwiches after the service? - I'm okay. Not really. Don't worry, I understand *it was the times*, and many children have stories like mine. So, I need to get over myself and move on. If you want, this is when you can cry."

It was the times. Seriously, give me a break. Out of the blue, a relative decides to pay me a visit in the city where I live, without any prior notice. My relative informs me they have some free time tomorrow to meet up. It feels like this request to meet is just a way to avoid any potential of an awkward encounter on the street. I feel like an afterthought.

A ghostly figure appears on my computer screen. It shatters me. I break down in tears. I'm all alone. But thankfully, I have love in my life.

After my Mom passed away, for the first time, I never truly realized what she had to endure throughout her life. The shame. The secrets. Her very soul slowly evaporating as she was forced to pretend that I was her own child.

All for the sake of what?

Just so the damn neighbors wouldn't gossip about me?

But what about me?

What about the thousands of other children like me, who had to navigate through life with a vital part of their identity missing?

"Get over yourself," they say. "Other people have it worse. Look at that guy over there in the wheelchair, missing a leg."

Let me get this straight. So, I, and others like me, don't deserve to acknowledge our pain because it doesn't compare to losing a limb? Can't you see the similarities? My entire life has felt like a constant amputation.

But now, I find myself writing eulogies for strangers, so even the most marginal individuals can sound like they care.

The times haunt us all.

In 2006, I finally meet my birth father for the first time. He opens his arms and offers me a place in his family. He apologizes for the pain caused by the adults in my life.

Two weeks later, I call him to tell him he's not my real father, and that my birth mother had lied on my birth record.

Another part of my identity has been amputated.

I don't even know who I am, and yet, you expect me to craft a loving tribute to your deceased relative.

Fast forward to 2016

I receive a message from a relative, my actual mother, is dying. I rush to her side. I stand by her deathbed as she greets me with a smile, finally acknowledging me as her son. In that moment, I muster the courage to ask her about my father. She replies with, "At least it wasn't that asshole (she named on my birth registration)," and then proceeds to berate my first father, the one I watched die.

I'm still left in the dark about my true father's identity.

Just one week later, my mother passes away. I can't bring myself to write her eulogy. I don't think I could ever find the right words to soften the pain.

It was just the way things were. People shout out.

But now, Abe wants me to write a eulogy for someone I don't know, somebody's Uncle Terry.

How could I possibly write about someone else's relative when I don't even know who my own father is?

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Meanwhile, in the present, I find myself trapped in my office, bound to a chair, and floating in front of my computer screen.

Suddenly, a flash of light and I am now tethered to a table in the Royal Centre Food Court.

It's 10 AM and there are only two other individuals present.

Twenty tables to my right, an elderly man who appears tired and possibly homeless, and, across the food court from me, a Billy Goat contentedly chewing on straw.

I contemplate the possibility of being ensnared in an existential quandary (as described in the definition below or on the next page ↓↓↓ →→→), yet I find myself free from such turmoil. It was inevitable for me to incorporate the term "existential" into this manuscript, as any reputable philosopher worth their wait in salt would. I can't help but chuckle at the thought of labelling myself as philosophical.

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Definition: Existential

Adjective. → of or relating to existence, esp: human existence. philosophy pertaining to what exists and is thus known by experience rather than reason; empirical as opposed to theoretical.

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On the table in front of me, there are three books and a cola. I begin reading, aware of my nakedness after recently having my head shorn. Without a hat it has become glaringly obvious I'm nothing more than a naked head.

An irritating hair protrudes from my left earlobe, but without arms and hands, I am unable to pluck it. I briefly consider asking the Billy Goat for help, but decide against it, deeming it too weird.

I am unsure how I ended up in the Royal Centre Food Court, but I speculate it could be either teleportation or a figment of my vivid imagination. I assure myself that I am not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

As I delve into my books, flipping pages with my mind, I check the time and realize it is now 10:45.

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Across the food court, the Billy Goat continues to chew on straw, while the elderly man has moved to the table beside me, sipping on a Tim Horton's coffee. Upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent he is not homeless, but simply a man in his seventies dressed comfortably.



In a whimsical moment, I mentally sew a tag on his sweatshirt, labeling it as “Inspected by 39.” Now, I am both philosophical and Inspector 39.

The Billy Goat emits a sound, which I later discover is “baa” after a quick Google search.

Returning my attention to the books, I am interrupted by the voice of the Food Court Security Guard. He informs the elderly man he has been here for two hours and must leave in twenty minutes.

Glancing around, I notice the Food Court remains empty, except for the three of us.

The man in his seventies defiantly declares he will leave when he pleases, leading to a heated exchange between him and the Security Guard, finishing with the elderly man telling the guard to, “Go fuck himself.”

Eventually, the guard walks away.

The Billy goat hides behind a chair.

Resuming my reading, I realize I am still a naked head tethered to a table with books and a cola. I will remain here for two more hours.

The elderly man eventually leaves riding on the back of the Billy Goat towards a waiting transport truck filled with seniors.

Engrossed in my books, the food court gradually fills with people. To my left, two gentlemen sit engaged in conversation, with one of them notably lacking punctuation.

His droning voice becomes increasingly irritating.

Four individuals speaking another language sit at the table next to the punctuation-free man and his friend.

The unpunctuated talker attempts to communicate with them, “are you from Belgium . . . ? . . . ” to which a man at the table says, “no Germany. . . ” “. . . how do you feel about Putin claiming to have won the war . . . ?” “. . . I appreciate all the Syrian and Ukrainian refugees your country has taken in . . . ” The German man says, “We don’t speak English” – in perfect English. The period-free talker in a bout of confusion, stops talking. But only for a moment.

I finish reading one of the books.

The man who can’t seem to stop talking (“Ducks Newburyport”) continues his conversation with his friend, *who is now deceased*, convinced that he is a great listener.

I continue reading, engrossed in my book. As the man prepares to leave, he pauses at the table occupied by the Germans and declares, "I have immense love for your country and everything it represents." With that, he walks away. Period.

I've been sitting at a table for four in the food court, absorbed in my reading for three hours now. Surprisingly, the Security Guard never returns, perhaps assuming I don't look old or homeless.

Suddenly, I feel untethered and begin to float away. Drifting past the Germans, one of them asks me in perfect English what I do for a living. I respond, saying I'm currently in between gigs. He suggests I consider working at a "glory hole."

I decide not to search for the meaning of that term.

Abruptly, a flash of light brings me back to reality, and I find myself back in my chair, connected by a padlock fastened to my tether.

I'm lost in my thoughts, realizing Abe must be stopped. If we allow him to proceed, humanity will eventually succumb to his influence, and meaningful communication like this story I'm currently typing, will cease to exist. The human experience will become nothing more than a distant memory, and life on Earth will be reduced to mere zeros and ones.

It's as if we'll all become afterthoughts, just like I am to my family.

Suddenly, I'm floating above my own grave.

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Lindsay's Eulogy (written by ~~Abe~~ Lindsay):

Lindsay was a kind-hearted man, taller than average, and possessed a striking handsomeness. Most people found him likable, except for those who found him loud and exhausting. He had a remarkable ability to run swiftly and hit a golf ball over 350 yards, perhaps even more than once. Above all, he cherished his family, even though he doesn't know who they are. Except for J and Hana of course, and perhaps Patchy. Lindsay had a wonderful sense of humor and brought joy and laughter to those around him, a gift he developed through his own pain. He was a diligent worker, known for his unwavering loyalty, sometimes to his own detriment. Misunderstood by many due to his loud and alluring voice, some believed he spoke more than he listened, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Lindsay abhorred racism, and although some urged him to lighten up, they were categorically wrong. He is in three different Halls of Fame. Ultimately, he aimed to make the world a slightly better place each day.

Thankfully, Lindsay is still very much alive.

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I agree wholeheartedly. And since I'm still alive and ~~kicking~~ nodding, I vow to deceive Abe into thinking I am becoming like him, all in an effort to thwart his plan of rewiring humanity's already rewired way of thinking.

In simpler terms, I will inflict unbearable suffering upon Abe until he is erased from existence or, at the very least, becomes malleable like the rest of us.

I must act swiftly before life on Earth becomes mundane and devoid of originality. I am on the front lines of the resistance.

"J!" I call out, and before I can finish uttering J's lengthy name, J appears before me.

"What is it?" J asks.

"My office has never been shrouded in such darkness and gloom before," I reply.

J flicks the light switch, instantly illuminating the room.

"Ah, that's better," I say, relieved.

Lately, J has been spending longer periods away from home. At first, it irked me, and it's the first time I've ever used the word "irked."

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However, upon reflection, I realize I can't hold his increasing absence against J.

After all, why should J sit in my office with me, a mere disembodied head, and wallow in despair?

No, I must set J free so J can be part of the future and help me find a solution to the evils of Abe, whatever that may entail.

Once again, darkness engulfs the room, and my head begins to tremble.

Am I trapped within a fever dream?

J flicks the light switch, and phosphene patterns dance before my eyes.

Where am I?

I notice several holes punched into plywood, with something protruding from each one.

"Ewe," I mutter in disgust.

In the midst of this perplexing situation, I receive a message from a girl whose pet rabbit, Bugs, has passed away. She requests my help in crafting a fitting eulogy for Bugs.

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Bug's Eulogy:

Bugs was an extraordinary bunny rabbit. He was soft, cuddly, and loved to hop around. Bugs and his wife, Mitsy, had an impressive 2,343 children. Bugs certainly had an active love life. He enjoyed munching on grass, and, above all, he loved hopping and, well, you know...

Some bunnies didn't quite understand Bugs because, on occasion, Bugs would eat Mitsy's stillborn babies. This understandably traumatized the rest of the family, until Bugs and Mitsy rented a hall and had a family meeting to explain that Bugs had to do it to protect them from predators who might catch a whiff of their nest. But still, it was pretty gross, even after the explanation. Timmy, the 1,423 eldest sibling, has been in therapy for over a decade now. *I'm not sure how long rabbits live, but probably more than ten years, unless, of course, they're eaten by a predator.* Anyway, those of us who had the pleasure of meeting Bugs are grateful for the experience. Bug's best friend was a goat named Billy. As per Bug's final wish, he was flown to France after his passing, where he became a dish at a fancy French restaurant.

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System Update - Restart Required to Complete Update - Click Here

Abe must be stopped.

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Definition: Genius

Noun. Insane.

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To be continued . . .