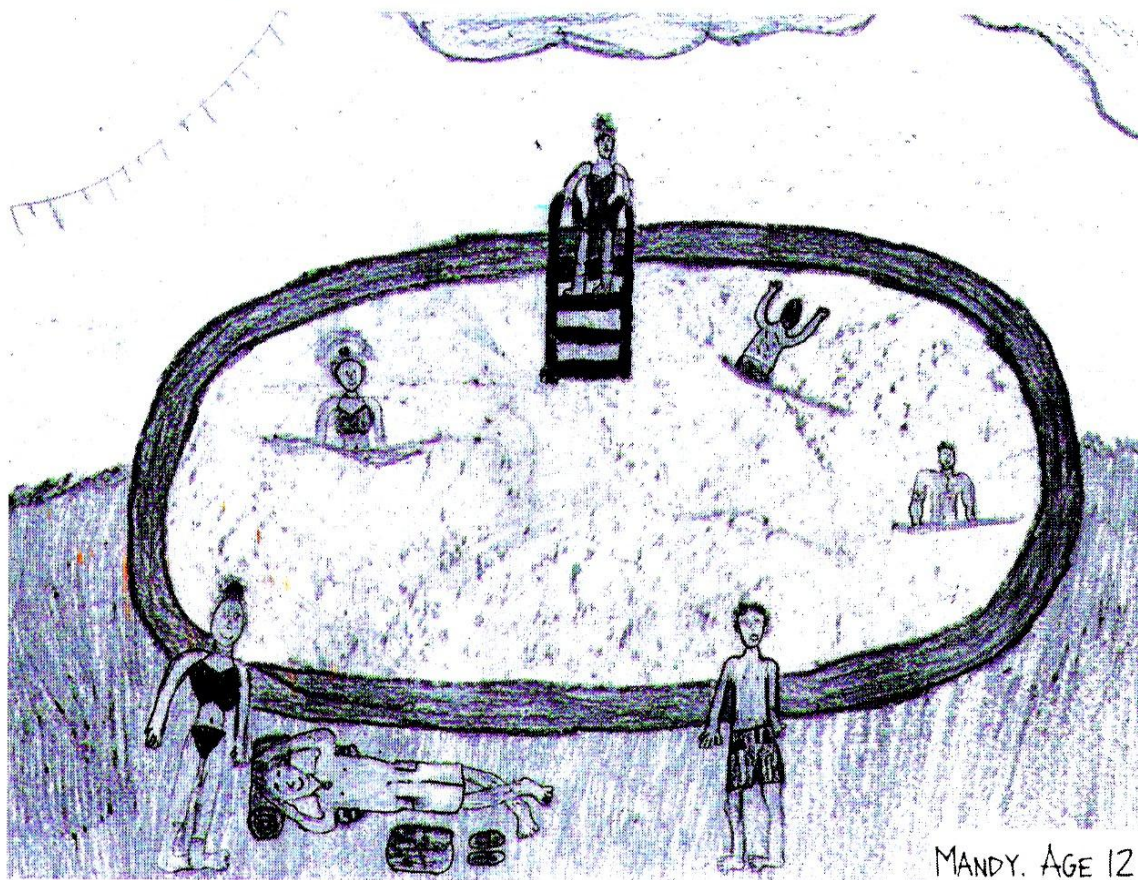


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I hope you enjoy my story.



Humbled

by

TJ Fritz

Most boys grow up thinking they are wonderful. They are told a hundred times a day – while they're lying in a crib, still wearing diapers – that they are the best, the smartest, the most handsome boy ever. That they are smarter than anything. That they will probably be placed in special class because they learn

faster than anyone. That they are child prodigies and they will never be understood by average teachers and average people.

This is the story about such a boy. He thinks – and he’s wrong – that men are the strongest gender, that they are the best, that they are superior, and that every girl wants them.

As he grows up he hears his parents talking to others about him. Mom and Dad tell friends and relatives that he’s getting great grades in school. That he should probably be in the advanced class. He’s so smart! He has the highest IQ of any kid who ever lived. He is exceptional! He is wonderful! He excels in everything! His grades don’t show it because he’s bored. School is just not challenging for him. He’ll be rich and successful and be anything he desires. He might even become President.

You can always find something in the Bible that describes every situation. The description is usually brief, but oh so powerful, so accurate, so fitting. The appropriate Bible phrase that applies here comes from Matthew 23:12 which says, “whoever exalts himself will be humbled.” Humbled. And here is a classic example of a lesson in humility.

It was 1963. Our special boy had turned 15. It was time for him to reveal himself to the world, to stand center stage, to be in the spotlight, to let the world know that he was here. By next summer he would be driving. So, now was time.

To present himself to the unsuspecting world would take careful thought and planning. He took his paper route money and went to the discount store to

buy a “killer outfit.” He needed a shirt and a pair of shorts. He searched diligently.

He found the perfect shirt. It was short sleeve, solid purple and had huge white buttons the size of half dollars. The collar was so wide, its ends laid over the shoulders like the wings of a huge purple bird. It was a little baggy, but it would do.

Now to find the perfect shorts. Again a diligent search. There they were, green and yellow plaid. They went down to his knees but they looked really great with the purple shirt.

Next he bought a bottle of the most popular cologne for guys. This would make him irresistible! As he selected the cologne he noticed that there was something new available, an underarm stick deodorant in the same scent as the cologne. He thought that this might make him overwhelmingly appealing to the girls. This may all be a little unfair, but this was going to be his special day!

Now, off to the shoe store to get a pair of burgundy penny loafers. And he'd have to get two new pennies, shine them bright, and stick them into the little slits in the front of the shoes.

Socks? Oh, come on. Cool guys don't wear socks!

Now. Where to go for his unveiling, his presentation to the world? Oh, yes. He would go to the city swimming pool. It was summer. Admission was affordable. Everyone who was anyone would be hanging out there. It was the perfect place for his world debut. He wouldn't swim. Instead, he'd be in his killer

outfit, lay in the grass on the edge of the pool, and let all of humanity stare at him, ogle, drool, admire, and envy him. This would be his special day, a day he would never forget!

The plan was perfect. The city swimming pool was only two miles away, a fifteen minute trip by his bike. But cool guys don't ride bikes, they drive sporty fast cars, "babe magnets," and play music really loudly. By next summer he would be driving, and somehow he'd get some hot wheels and find a pretty girl to ride with him. Then he would drive around town and let people gawk him and say things like, "Wow! Cool guy! Look at his pretty girl! Lucky guy!"

The plan was carefully laid. He thought of every detail. He woke the next morning, shaved his fourteen whiskers, then splashed on the cologne. He splashed on some more. Then more, and more and more. That should be enough. Then he took the stick deodorant and applied a dozen layers to each armpit.

He donned his killer uniform - the purple shirt with the wide collar and big white buttons, and the green and yellow plaid shorts. Then he slipped his sockless feet into the penny loafers with the shined-up pennies peeking through the slits.

What a hunk! Fifteen years old! Completely irresistible! This was so unfair to all the other guys in the world. And the girls just wouldn't be able to control themselves! He wondered if it would be necessary to hire a bodyguard.

It was a bright, beautiful, very warm summer day. The pool would definitely be crowded. It was going to be glorious! He grabbed a beach towel and

rolled it up to make it look like he was taking his bathing suit. Then he began his two-mile trek. As he walked he was sure he left a cologne trail behind him that was detectable for at least two blocks. Yes, today would be a day he would never forget!

Almost immediately his feet began to hurt. Brand new stiff leather shoes, no socks, a long walk in this heat. . . he was bound to get a blister or two. Besides, cool guys are tough. They don't complain. A little pain would be worth all the glory.

The more he walked the more his feet hurt. Halfway to the pool his feet were screaming with excruciating pain. He knew that the wetness in his new shoes was a combination of sweat and broken blisters. But he forged on. He ignored the incredible agony. This would be his special day. Only he could feel the pain. No one else could see or feel it. After all, he was on a mission.

He finally arrived at the pool and paid the teenage boy who was inside the admissions booth. When he turned and entered the boys' locker room, he heard the teenager say, "Whew! Wow! He must have been dunked in it!"

The young stud quickly walked through the locker room and out to the pool. Everyone who was anyone was there. There must have been a thousand kids, half of them were beautiful girls in bathing suites, one-piece, two-piece and bikinis. It was like a smorgasbord of teenage humanity. The smell of suntan lotions and the sounds of portable radios, laughing and splashing made his heart race with glee.

He found a great location on the grass near the edge of the swimming pool, used the rolled-up towel like a pillow under his head, and sprawled out. The silent throbbing of his feet subsided a little.

He laid there quietly and alone in the fierce sunlight. His dark purple shirt absorbed the heat making him feel like he was in an oven. So, he casually, carefully and coolly removed his shirt, neatly folded it and set it beside him. He laid back down on the towel, this time interlacing his fingers behind his head. He closed his eyes and toplessly displayed himself for all the world to admire. The sun shown on him like a spotlight shining on a great actor at center stage.

Within a few seconds he felt the sunlight go away. When he opened his eyes, sure enough, there stood two beautiful girls staring at him, grinning. He looked at them and smiled back. Then they glided away and he watched as they went to a gathering of their friends, a dozen more beautiful girls.

He could just imagine what the girls were telling their friends. "You've got to see this gorgeous guy over there. He's a dream. Where did he come from? Who is he? He's a hunk! A Hottie!"

He felt the sun go away again. When he opened his eyes, instead of more attractive girls in bathing suits, he saw a guy, an old friend. Instead of saying hello to his friend, the young hunk yelled at him. Not out loud so his friend could hear, but deep inside his head. "Go away!" he thought with all his might. "Get out of the way! Don't you realize I'm here for the girls to adore me?" His friend must have sensed the silent yelling because he quietly move on.

Within minutes the “Admiration Parade” began. Beautiful young girls in pairs or threes or fours or more came by, paused, admired him and moved on. Sometimes they would smile and giggle. He always smiled back, sometimes he gave a little wave. It seemed like the whole female population at the pool came by to take a gander at this masterpiece of manhood.

This went on for fifteen or twenty minutes. He lay there soaking it in, devouring it, enjoying every morsel. He was on top of the world. This was the most delicious day of his teenage life.

Suddenly he again felt the sunlight blocked. He opened his eyes expecting to see more gorgeous girls, but it was his old friend again. The friend just stood there. Again, in his mind he yelled at him. “Go away! Can’t you see I’m busy? I’m here for the girls! You’re blocking the view! Get out of here!” But this time his friend stood firm so he yelled at his friend, this time using his voice.

“WHAT!?”

His friend kept gazing at him, shook his head slowly and said softly, “Do you know your armpits are foaming?”

In a desperate, whisper of disbelief the hunk said, “What?”

The friend said it again. “Your armpits. They’re foaming!”

The hunk of hunks glanced down, first toward the right, then toward the left. Sure enough, both armpits were filled with a strange, yellowish foam, obviously the result of the many layers of stick deodorant, the long walk and the

overwhelming heat. Desperately trying to appear cool and to not draw attention, he slowly got up, took his shirt and towel, and headed for the locker room.

With his head down he walked through the locker room, slipped on his purple shirt and limped home. By the time he arrived he had made a decision. For the sake of his reputation and his pride he felt it would be best if he did not return to the city swimming pool for at least three years. Just as he expected this had turned out to be a day he would never forget!

The End