

# **NOTES FROM NIGHTMARES AND DREAMSCAPES**

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Not long after I published *Skeleton Crew*, my previous book of short stories, I spoke to a reader who told me how much she had liked it. She had been able to ration the stories out, she said—one a night for about three weeks. “I skipped the notes at the end, though,” she said, keeping a close eye on me as she said it (I think she believed I might leap upon her in my anger at this terrible affront). “I’m one of those people who don’t want to know how the magician does his tricks.”

I simply nodded and told her that was her perfect right, not wanting to get into a long, involved discussion on the subject when I had errands to run, but I have no errands this morning, and I want to make two things perfectly clear, as our old pal from San Clemente used to say. First, I don’t care if you read the notes that follow or not. It’s your book, and you can wear it on your head in a horserace for all of me. Second, I am not a magician and these are not tricks.

That’s not to say there isn’t magic involved in writing; I happen to believe that there is, and that it twines around fiction with particular luxuriance. The paradox is this: magicians don’t have anything to do with magic, as most of them will readily admit. Their undeniable wonders—doves from handkerchiefs, coins from empty pitchers, silk scarves from empty hands—are achieved through exhaustive practice and well-tested misdirections and sleights of hand. Their talk of “ancient secrets of the Orient” and “the forgotten lore of Atlantis” is so much patter. I suspect that, by and large, stage-magicians would deeply identify with the old joke about the out-of-towner who asks the New York beatnik how to get to Carnegie Hall. “Practice, man, practice,” the beatnik replies.

All that goes for writers, too. After twenty years of writing popular fiction and being dismissed by the more intellectual critics as a hack (the intellectual’s definition of a hack seems to be “an artist whose work is appreciated by too many people”), I will gladly testify that craft is terribly important, that the often tiresome process of draft, redraft, and then draft again is necessary to produce good work, and

that hard work is the only acceptable practice for those of us who have some talent but little or no genius.

Still, there is magic in this job, and it comes most frequently at that instant when a story pops into a writer's head, usually as a fragment but sometimes as a complete thing (and having that happen is a little like being hit by a tactical nuke). The writer can later relate where he was when that happened, and what the elements were that combined to give him his idea, but the idea itself is a new thing, a sum greater than its parts, something that is created from nothing. It is, to paraphrase Marianne Moore, a real toad in an imaginary garden. So you need not fear to read the notes that follow on the grounds that I will spoil the magic by telling you how the tricks work. There are no tricks to real magic; when it comes to real magic, there is only history.

It is possible to spoil a story which hasn't been read yet, however, and so if you're one of those people (one of those awful people) who feel a compulsion to read the last thing in a book first, like a willful child who is determined to eat his or her chocolate pudding before touching the meatloaf, I'm going to invite you to get the hell out of here, lest you suffer what may be the worst of all curses: disenchantment. For the rest of you, here is a whirlwind tour of how some of the stories in *Nightmares and Dreamscapes* happened to happen.

"Dolan's Cadillac"—I'd guess the train of thought which led to this story is pretty obvious. I was idling my way through one of those seemingly endless road-repair sites where you breathe a lot of dust, tar, and exhaust and sit looking at the ass end of the same station wagon and the same I BRAKE FOR ANIMALS bumper sticker for what feels like about nine years ... only the car in front of me that day was a big green Cadillac Sedan DeVille. As we inched our way past an excavation where huge cylinders of pipe were being laid, I remember thinking, Even a car as big as that Cadillac would fit in there. A moment later I had the idea of "Dolan's Cadillac" firmly in

place, fully developed, and none of the narrative elements ever changed so much as an iota.

That is not to say the story was an easy birth; it most definitely was not. I have never been so daunted—so nearly overwhelmed, in fact—by technical details. Now I'll give you what the Reader's Digest likes to call A Personal Glimpse: although I like to think of myself as a literary version of James Brown (the self-styled "Hardest-Working Man in Show Business"), I am an extremely lazy sod when it comes to research and technical details. I have been twigged again and again by readers and critics (most accurately and humiliatingly by Avram Davidson, who writes for the Chicago Tribune and Fantasy and Science Fiction magazine) for my lapses in these areas. When writing "Dolan's Cadillac," I came to realize that this time I could not simply fudge my way through, because the story's entire underpinning depended on various scientific details, mathematical formulae, and the postulates of physics.

If I had discovered this unpalatable truth sooner—before I had roughly 15,000 words already invested in the story of Dolan, Elizabeth, and Elizabeth's Poe-esque husband, that is—I undoubtedly would have consigned "Dolan's Cadillac" to The Department of Unfinished Stories. But I didn't discover it sooner, I didn't want to stop, and so I did the only thing I could think of: I called my big brother and asked for help.

Dave King is what we New Englanders call "a piece of work," a child prodigy with a tested IQ of over 150 (you will find reflections of Dave in Bow-wow Forno's genius brother in "The End of the Whole Mess") who went through school as if on a rocket-sled, finishing college at eighteen and going right to work as a high-school math teacher at Brunswick High. Many of his remedial algebra students were older than he was. Dave was the youngest man ever to be elected Town Selectman in the state of Maine, and was a Town Manager at the age of twenty-five or so. He is a genuine polymath, a man who knows something about just about everything.

I explained my problems to my brother over the telephone. A week later I received a manila envelope from him and opened it with a sinking heart. I was sure he'd sent me the information I needed, but I was equally sure it would do me no good; my brother's handwriting is absolutely awful.

To my delight, I found a videocassette. When I plugged it in, I saw Dave sitting at a table piled high with dirt. Using several toy Matchbox cars, he explained everything I needed to know, including that wonderfully ominous stuff about the arc of descent. Dave also told me that my protagonist would have to use highway equipment in order to bury Dolan's Cadillac (in the original story he did it by hand), and explained exactly how to jump-start the big machines your local Highway Department is apt to leave around at various road-repair sites. This information was extremely good ...a little too good, in fact. I changed just enough so that if anyone tries it according to the recipe in the story, nothing will happen.

One last point about this story: when it was finished, I hated it. Absolutely loathed it. It was never published in a magazine; it simply went into one of the cardboard boxes of Bad Old Stuff I keep in the hallway behind my office. A few years later, Herb Yellin, who publishes gorgeous limited editions in his function as head of Lord John Press, wrote and asked if he could do a limited edition of one of my short stories, preferably an unpublished one. Because I love his books, which are small, beautifully made, and often extremely eccentric, I went out into what I think of as the Hallway of Doom and hunted through my boxes to see if there was anything salvageable.

I came across "Dolan's Cadillac," and once again time had done its work—it read a lot better than I remembered, and when I sent it to Herb, he agreed enthusiastically. I made further revisions and it was published in a small Lord John Press edition of about five hundred copies. I have revised it again for its appearance here, and have changed my opinion of it enough to have put it in the lead-off position. If nothing else, it's a kind of archetypal horror story, with its mad narrator and its account of a premature burial in the desert. But

this particular story really isn't mine anymore; it belongs to Dave King and Herb Yellin. Thanks, guys.

“Suffer the Little Children”—This story is from the same period as most of the stories in *Night Shift*, and was originally published in *Cavalier*, as were most of the stories in that 1978 collection. It was left out because my editor, Bill Thompson, felt the book was getting “unwieldy”—this is the way editors sometimes tell writers that they have to cut a little before the price of the book soars out of sight. I voted to cut a story called “Gray Matter” from *Night Shift*. Bill voted to cut “Suffer the Little Children.” I deferred to his judgement, and read the story over carefully before deciding to include it here. I like it quite a lot—it feels a little bit like the Bradbury of the late forties and early fifties to me, the fiendish Bradbury who revelled in killer babies, renegade undertakers, and tales only a Crypt-Keeper could love. Put another way, “Suffer the Little Children” is a ghastly sick-joke with no redeeming social merit whatever. I like that in a story.

“The Night Flier”—Sometimes a supporting character in a novel catches a writer’s attention and refuses to go away, insisting he has more to say and do. Richard Dees, the protagonist of “The Night Flier,” is such a character. He originally appeared in *The Dead Zone* (1979), where he offers Johnny Smith, the doomed hero of that novel, a job as a psychic on his awful paper, the supermarket tabloid *Inside View*. Johnny throws him off the porch of his dad’s house, and that was supposed to be the end of him. Yet here he is again.

Like most of my stories, “The Night Flier” started off as nothing but a lark—a vampire with a private pilot’s license, how amusingly modrun—but it grew as Dees grew. I rarely understand my characters, any more than I understand the lives and hearts of the real people I meet every day, but I find that it’s sometimes possible to plot them, as a cartographer plots his or her maps. As I worked on “The Night Flier,” I began to glimpse a man of profound alienation, a man who seemed to somehow sum up some of the most terrible and confusing things about our supposedly open society in the last quarter of the century. Dees is the essential unbeliever, and his confrontation with the Night

Flier at the end of the story recalls that George Seferis line I used in 'Salem's Lot—the one about the column of truth having a hole in it. In these latter days of the twentieth century, that seems to be all too true, and "The Night Flier" is mostly about one man's discovery of that hole.

"Popsy"—Is this little boy's grandfather the same creature that demands Richard Dees open his camera and expose his film at the conclusion of "The Night Flier"? You know, I rather think he is.

"It Grows On You"—A version of this story was originally published in a University of Maine literary magazine called Marshroots back in the early seventies, but the version in this book is almost entirely different. As I read through the original story, I began to realize that these old men were actually the survivors of the debacle described in *Needful Things*. That novel is a black comedy about greed and obsession; this is a more serious story about secrets and sickness. It seems a fitting epilogue to the novel... and it was great to glimpse some of my old Castle Rock friends one last time.

"Dedication"—For years, since I first met and was appalled by a now-dead famous writer, whom I will not name here, I have been troubled by the question of why some enormously talented people turn out to be such utter shits in person—woman-pawing sexists, racists, sneering elitists, or cruel practical jokers. I'm not saying that most talented or famous people are this way, but I have met enough who are—including that one undeniably great writer—to wonder why. This story was written as an effort to answer that question to my own satisfaction. The effort failed, but I was at least able to articulate my own unease, and in this case, that seemed enough.

It's not a very politically correct story, and I think a lot of readers—the ones who want to be scared by the same comfy old bogies and funhouse demons—are going to be outraged by it. I hope so; I've been doing this job for quite awhile now, but I like to think I'm not quite ready for the old rocking chair yet. The stories in *Nightmares and Dreamscapes* are, for the most part, the sort that critics categorize (and then all too often dismiss, alas) as horror stories,



and the horror story is supposed to be a kind of evil-tempered junkyard dog that will bite you if you get too close. This one bites, I think. Am I going to apologize for that? Do you think I should? Isn't that—the risk of being bitten—one of the reasons you picked this book up in the first place? I think so. And if you get thinking of me as your kindly old Uncle Stevie, a sort of end-of-the-century Rod Serling, I will try even harder to bite you. To put it another way, I want you to be a little bit afraid every time you step into my parlor. I want you unsure about how far I'll go, or what I may do next.

Now that I've said all that, just let me add that if I really thought "Dedication" needed to be defended, I never would have offered it for publication in the first place. A story that can't serve as its own defense lawyer doesn't deserve to be published. It's Martha Rosewall, the humble maid, who wins this battle, not Peter Jefferies, the big-shot writer, and that should tell the reader all he or she needs to know about where my sympathies lie.

Oh, one other thing. It seems to me now that this story, originally published in 1985, was a trial cut for a novel called Dolores Claiborne (1992).

"The Moving Finger"—My favorite sort of short story has always been the kind where things happen just because they happen. In novels and movies (save for movies starring fellows like Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger), you are supposed to explain why things happen. Let me tell you something, friends and neighbors: I hate explaining why things happen, and my efforts in that direction (such as the doctored LSD and resultant DNA changes which create Charlie McGee's pyrokinetic talents in Firestarter) aren't very good. But real life very rarely has what movie producers are this year calling "a motivation through-line"—have you noticed that? I don't know about you, but nobody ever issued me an instruction manual; I'm just muddling along as best I can, knowing I'm never going to get out of it alive but trying not to fuck up too badly in the meantime.

In short stories, the author is sometimes still allowed to say, “This happened. Don’t ask me why.” The story of poor Howard Mitla is that sort of tale, and it seems to me that his efforts to deal with the finger that pokes out of his bathroom drain during a quiz-show form a perfectly valid metaphor for how we cope with the nasty surprises life holds in store for all of us: the tumors, the accidents, the occasional nightmarish coincidence. It is the unique province of the fantasy story to be able to answer the question “Why do bad things happen to good people?” by replying, “Feh—don’t ask.” In a tale of fantasy, this gloomy answer actually seems to satisfy us. In the end, it may be the genre’s chief moral asset: at its best, it can open a window (or a confessional screen) on the existential aspects of our mortal lives. It ain’t perpetual motion ... but it ain’t bad, either.

“You Know They Got a Hell of a Band”—There are at least two stories in this book about what the lead female character here thinks of as “the peculiar little town.” This is one; “Rainy Season” is the other. There will be readers who may think I’ve visited “the peculiar little town” once or twice too often, and some may note similarities between these two pieces and an earlier story of mine, “Children of the Corn.” There are similarities, but does that mean “Band” and “Season” are lapses into self-imitation? It’s a delicate question, and one each reader must answer for him-or herself, but my answer is no (of course it is, what else am I gonna say?).

There’s a big difference, it seems to me, between working in traditional forms and self-imitation. Take the blues, for instance. There are really only two classic guitar chord-progressions for the blues, and those two progressions are essentially the same. Now, answer me this—just because John Lee Hooker plays almost everything he ever wrote in the key of E or the key of A, does that mean he’s running on autopilot, doing the same thing over and over again? Plenty of John Lee Hooker fans (not to mention fans of Bo Diddley, Muddy Waters, Furry Lewis, and all the other greats) would say it doesn’t. It’s not the key you play it in, these blues aficionados would say; it’s the soul you sing it with.

Same thing here. There are certain horror-tale archetypes which stand out with the authority of mesas in the desert. The haunted-house story; the return-from-the-grave story; the peculiar-little-town story. It's not really about what it's about, if you can dig that; this is, by and large, the literature of the nerve-endings and the muscle-receptors, and as such, it's really about what you feel. What I felt here—the impetus for the story—was how authentically creepy it is that so many rockers have died young, or under nasty circumstances; it's an actuarial expert's nightmare. Many younger fans view the high mortality rate as romantic, but when you've boogied your way from The Platters to Ice T, as I have, you start to see a darker side, a crawling kingsnake side. That's what I've tried to express here, although I don't think the story really starts to move and groove and creep and crawl until the last six or eight pages.

“Home Delivery”—This is probably the only story in the book which was written to order. John Skipp and Craig Spector (*The Light at the End*, *The Bridge*, plus several other good horror splatterpunk-ish novels) came up with the idea of an anthology of stories exploring what things would be like if George Romero's zombies from his *Dead* trilogy (*Night of*, *Dawn of*, *Day of*) took over the world. The concept fired off in my imagination like a Roman candle, and this story, set off the coast of Maine, was the result.

“My Pretty Pony”—In the early eighties, Richard Bachman was struggling to write a novel called (naturally enough, I suppose) *My Pretty Pony*. The novel was about an independent hit-man named Clive Banning who is hired to put together a string of like-minded psychopaths and kill a number of powerful crime figures at a wedding. Banning and his string succeed, turning the wedding into a bloodbath, and are then double-crossed by their employers, who begin picking them off, one by one. The novel was to chronicle Banning's efforts to escape the cataclysm he had induced.

The book was a bad piece of work, born in an unhappy time of my life when a lot of things which had been working pretty well for me up until then suddenly fell over with a resounding crash. Richard

Bachman died during this period, leaving two fragments behind: an almost complete novel called *Machine's Way* under his pseudonym, George Stark, and six chapters of *My Pretty Pony*. As Richard's literary executor, I worked *Machine's Way* up into a novel called *The Dark Half* and published it under my own name (I did acknowledge Bachman, however). *My Pretty Pony* I junked ... except for a brief flashback in which Banning, while waiting to begin his assault on the wedding party, remembers how his grandfather instructed him on the plastic nature of time. Finding that flashback—marvellously complete, almost a short story as it stood—was like finding a rose growing in a junkheap. I plucked it, and I did so with great gratitude. It turned out to be one of the few good things I wrote during an extremely bad year.

"*My Pretty Pony*" was originally published in an overpriced (and overdesigned, in my humble opinion) edition produced by the Whitney Museum. It was later issued in a slightly more accessible (but still overpriced and overdesigned, in my humble opinion) edition by Alfred A. Knopf. And here, I am pleased to see it, polished and slightly clarified, as it probably should have been in the first place—just another short story, a little better than some, not so good as others.

"*Sorry, Right Number*"—Remember how I started off, about a billion pages ago, talking about Ripley's *Believe It or Not*? Well, "*Sorry, Right Number*" almost belongs in it. The idea occurred to me as a "teleplaylet" one night on my way home from buying a pair of shoes. It came as a "visual," I suppose, because the telecast of a film plays such a central part. I wrote it, pretty much as it is presented here, in two sittings. My West Coast agent—the one who does film deals—had it by the end of the week. Early the following week, Steven Spielberg read it for *Amazing Stories*, a TV series which he then had in production (but which had not yet begun to air).

Spielberg rejected it—they were looking for *Amazing Stories* that were a little more upbeat, he said—and so I took it to my long-time collaborator and good friend, Richard Rubinstein, who then had a

series called Tales from the Darkside running in syndication. I won't say Richard blows his nose on happy endings—he likes a happily-ever-after as well as anyone, I think—but he's never shied away from a downer; he was the guy who got Pet Sematary made, after all (Pet Sematary and Thelma and Louise are, I think, the only major Hollywood films to end with the death of a major character or characters since the late 1970s).

Richard bought "Sorry" the day he read it, and had it in production a week or two later. A month after that, it was telecast ... as a season premiere, if my recollection serves. It is still one of the fastest turns from in-the-head to on-the-screen that I've ever heard of. This version, by the way, is my first draft, which is a little longer and a little more textured than the final shooting script, which for budgetary reasons specified just two sets. It is included here as an example of another kind of story-telling ... different, but as valid as any other.

"The Ten O'Clock People"—During the summer of 1992, I was walking around downtown Boston, looking for an address that kept eluding me. I eventually found the place I was looking for, but before I did, I found this story. My address-hunt took place around ten in the morning, and as I walked I began to notice groups of people clustered in front of every expensive highrise building, groups that made no sociological sense. There were carpenters hobnobbing with businessmen, janitors shooting the breeze with elegantly coiffed women in power clothes, messengers passing the time of day with executive secretaries.

After I'd puzzled over these groups—granfalloons Kurt Vonnegut never imagined—for half an hour or so, the penny dropped: for a certain class of American city dweller, addiction has turned the coffee-break into the cigarette-break. The expensive buildings are now all no-smoking zones as the American people go calmly about one of the most amazing turnabouts of the twentieth century; we are purging ourselves of our bad old habit, we are doing it with hardly any fanfare, and the result has been some very odd pockets of sociological behavior. Those who refuse to give up their bad old

habit—the Ten O’Clock People of the title—constitute one of these. The story is intended as no more than a simple amusement, but I hope it says something interesting about a wave of change which has, temporarily, at least, re-created some aspects of the separate-but-equal facilities of the forties and fifties.

“The House on Maple Street”—Remember Richard Rubinstein, my producer friend? He was the guy who sent me my first copy of Chris Van Allsburg’s *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Richard attached a note in his spiky handwriting: “You’ll like this” was all it said, and all it really needed to say. I did like it.

The book purports to be a series of drawings, titles, and captions by the eponymous Mr. Burdick—the stories themselves are not in evidence. Each combination of picture, title, and caption serves as a kind of Rorschach inkblot, perhaps offering more of an index to the reader/viewer’s mind than to Mr. Van Allsburg’s intentions. One of my favorites shows a man with a chair in his hand—he is obviously prepared to use it as a bludgeon if he needs to—looking at a strange and somehow organic bulge under the living-room carpet. “Two weeks passed and it happened again,” the caption reads.

Given my feelings about motivation, my attraction to this sort of thing should be clear. What happened again after two weeks? I don’t think it matters. In our worst nightmares, there are only pronouns for the things which chase us back to wakefulness, sweating and shuddering with horror and relief.

My wife, Tabitha, was also taken with *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, and it was she who suggested that each member of our family write a short story based on one of the pictures. She wrote one; so did our youngest son, Owen (then twelve). Tabby chose the first picture in the book; Owen chose one in the middle; I chose the last one. I have included my effort here, with the kind permission of Chris Van Allsburg. There’s no more to add, except that I’ve read a slightly bowdlerized version of the tale to fourth- and fifth-graders several times over the last three or four years, and they seem to like it a great deal. I have an idea that what they really get off on is the

idea of sending the Wicked Stepfather off into the Great Beyond. I certainly got off on it. The story has never been published before, mostly because of its tangled antecedents, and I am delighted to offer it here. I only wish I could offer my wife's and son's stories as well.

"The Fifth Quarter"—Bachman again. Or maybe George Stark.

"Umney's Last Case"—A pastiche—obviously—and paired with "The Doctor's Case" for that reason, but this one is a little more ambitious. I have loved Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald passionately since I discovered them in college (although I find it both instructive and a little scary to note that, while Chandler continues to be read and discussed, Macdonald's highly praised Lew Archer novels are now little-known artifacts outside the small circle of livre noir fans), and I think again it was the language of these novels which so fired my imagination; it opened a whole new way of seeing, one that appealed fiercely to the heart and mind of the lonely young man I was at that time.

It was also a style which was lethally easy to copy, as half a hundred novelists have discovered in the last twenty or thirty years. For a long time I steered clear of that Chandlerian voice, because I had nothing to use it for ... nothing to say in the tones of Philip Marlowe that was mine.

Then one day I did. "Write what you know," the Wise Old Dudes tell us poor cometary remnants of Sterne and Dickens and Defoe and Melville, and for me, that means teaching, writing, and playing the guitar... though not necessarily in that order. As far as my own career-within-a-career of writing about writing goes, I'm reminded of a line I heard Chet Atkins toss off on Austin City Limits one night. He looked up at the audience after a minute or two of fruitless guitar-tuning and said, "It took me about twenty-five years to find out I wasn't very good at this part of it, and by then I was too rich to quit."

Same thing happened to me. I seem destined to keep going back to that peculiar little town—whether you call it Rock and Roll Heaven,

Oregon; Gatlin, Nebraska; or Willow, Maine—and I also seem destined to keep going back to what I do. The question which haunts and nags and won't ever completely let go is this one: Who am I when I write? Who are you, for that matter? Exactly what is happening here, and why, and does it matter?

So, with these questions in mind, I pulled on my Sam Spade fedora, lit up a Lucky (metaphorically speaking, these days) and started to write. "Umney's Last Case" was the result, and of all the stories in this volume, it's the one I like the best. This is its first publication.

"Head Down"—My first writing for pay was sports writing (for awhile I was the entire sports department of the weekly Lisbon Enterprise), but that didn't make this any easier. My proximity to the Bangor West All-Star team when it mounted its unlikely charge on the State Championship was either pure luck or pure fate, depending on where you stand in regard to the possible existence of a higher power. I tend toward the higher power thesis, but in either case, I was only there because my son was on the team. Nevertheless, I quickly realized—more quickly than Dave Mansfield, Ron St. Pierre, or Neil Waterman, I think—that something pretty extraordinary was either happening or trying to happen. I didn't want to write about it, particularly, but something kept telling me I was supposed to write about it.

My method of working when I feel out of my depth is brutally simple: I lower my own head and run as fast as I can, as long as I can. That was what I did here, gathering documentation like a mad packrat and simply trying to keep up with the team. For a month or so it was like living inside one of those corny sports novels with which many of us guys have whiled away our duller afternoon study-halls: *Go Up for Glory*, *Power Forward*, and occasional bright standouts like John R. Tunis's *The Kid from Tomkinsville*.

Hard or not, "Head Down" was the opportunity of a lifetime, and before I was done, Chip McGrath of *The New Yorker* had coaxed the best nonfiction writing of my life out of me. I thank him for that, but I owe the most thanks to Owen and his teammates, who first made



the story happen and then gave me permission to publish my version of it.

“Brooklyn August”—It pairs with “Head Down,” of course, but there’s a better reason for putting it here, at what is almost the end of this long book: it has escaped the wearisome cage of its creator’s questionable reputation and lived its own placid life quite apart from him. It has been reprinted several times in various anthologies of baseball curiosa, and appears to have been selected upon each occasion by editors who seem not to have the slightest idea of who I’m supposed to be or what it is I’m supposed to do. And I really like that.

Okay; stick it on the shelf and take care of yourself until we meet again. Read a few good books, and if one of your brothers or sisters falls down and you see it happen, pick him or her up. After all, next time you might be the one who needs a hand ... or a little help getting that pesky finger out of the drain, for that matter.

Bangor, Maine

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