

A Beautiful Life by Brenda Foster

Excerpt:

“Damn, this place isn’t big enough for two people!” Elle scrambled to get to the side of the sink. “Move Ray, I’m running late!”

“Get up earlier!” he said and stood his ground.

“I was up all night with Baby Ray,” Elle said.

“Is he feeling better?” Ray asked standing in his underwear with a morning hard on.

Did he have any shame? Elle thought. Of course he didn’t!

“You’d know if you paid more attention to him!”

“I love my son but you’re making a sissy out of him. He’s a cry baby!” Ray said.

“The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree, now does it?” Elle rolled her eyes and jabbed her mouth with the tooth brush. It hurt but she hid the pain. Ray stopped brushing and stared at her. She ducked her head to rinse her mouth, and then stormed out the bathroom.

“I can’t believe you sometimes,” Ray said. She ignored him. He continued to brush his teeth and heard the front door slam. The house was quiet while he stared at his reflection. “Who the bleep did I marry?” he whispered. He rinsed his mouth then entered the bedroom and got dressed in his blue Gas Company uniform. Before he could button it, his cell phone rang.

“Yeah, this is Ray.”

Chris was on the other end.

“I need a jump, but we don’t have time. You have to pick me up, dude!”

“Aren’t the buses running?” Ray questioned.

“Man, come on. I need a ride!” Ray knew Chris wouldn’t be calling unless he really needed to. He was the proud type who would work at McDonald’s if he had to.

“Okay, okay! I’ll be there in about twenty minutes.”

“Cool, I’ll be on the porch,” Chris said.

Ray grabbed his keys off the night stand. He turned to leave but noticed Elle’s night gown on the bed. He lifted it to his nose and took a long whiff of her. He breathed in her essence.

Another erection threatened and he imagined having banging sex with her, but then he dropped it back on the bed and left.

Under a late September blue sky, he jumped into his truck and headed to Chris's house. On the way he stopped at the Dunkin' Donuts on the Boulevard for breakfast sandwiches and coffee for him and his coworker. After arriving at Chris's house he sat in the truck, opened his breakfast sandwich and devoured it. It was delicious so he thought about eating the other one. Instead, he got out and handed it to Chris.

"Thanks! We have to hurry. We only got fifteen minutes or we'll be late," Chris said.

"So what happened to your ride?" Ray asked.

"I don't know. I must have left the lights on," Chris said and then hurried up and got in the truck

"You probably need an alternator," Ray said.

"Don't say that. I don't have money for that. Let's go! We don't have much time." Chris tucked his breakfast sandwich into his pocket. "Oh, Thanks! I'll eat this later. Summer made me breakfast."

"Alright, let's go already!" Ray said. Damn I could have eaten that, he thought. They climbed into his truck and rolled out of Chris's drive way.

Ray's eyes canvased a vacant restaurant along Wayne Avenue. He often scoped out different sites in search of the perfect location for his future cheese steak shop. 'You don't know what you want. Make up your mind, Ray!' he heard Elle say.

Remembering her discouraging words made him more determined than ever to live out his dream of restaurant ownership.

"Let's go! No slowing down," Chris said. Ray sped up. They made it to the Philadelphia Gas Works with just one minute to spare.