

March 18, 2018

cleaning up the spilled mashed potatoes of life

The following story is true. It was Saturday morning in Metropolitan Spearville. The weatherman promised 72 degrees. What he didn't say was that the wind would be powerful enough to lift small pets into the stratosphere. Even now, dozens of small animals are orbiting the earth.

It was early. I went to the fridge to get some milk. I opened the door. Half a glass of orange juice, put there by persons unknown, came tumbling out the door, creating an orange lake on the kitchen floor.

"Dang it!" I said (except I spelled it differently).

I contemplated what to do: 1) Clean it up. 2) Use the Force to make it clean itself up. 3) Call in the cats to lick it up. 4) Move to a new house where no orange juice is spilled on the floor. 5) Watch TV. I finally decided on 6), Clean out fridge to avoid future orange juice spills.

I pulled out all the food, including several Tupperwares (yes, that's the way it's spelled) filled with leftover whatnots covered with small, green universes. When I opened the lid of what once was cream cheese, the once-cream-cheese substance leapt out and shouted, "I'm freeeeeeee!" and ran out the back door. Twenty minutes later, thanks to the high winds, it was orbiting the earth and someone's pet cat was about to have a nice snack.

I opened another container and heard, "We're here! We're here! WE'RE HERE!!!" The last sound they heard was that of the garbage disposal. (Man, I gotta stop reading those Stephen King books.)

I found an old dish of mashed potatoes. When I peeled off the saran wrap, the odor was so bad that my beard fell off. I tossed the contents into the trash, which was less than an arm's length away, only to have it bounce off the side of the can. Mashed potatoes went sailing like a vast asteroid belt across the kitchen floor.

I collected a bunch of the blobs into a paper towel and tossed it into the trash. The trash was less than six inches away, so naturally I missed. This is true. My paper towel of smelly mashed potato-like foodstuffs bounced across the floor for a second time. I didn't know that left-over mashed potatoes could laugh, but they can. Mashed potatoes are rude.

All my efforts were making me thirsty, so I decided to pour myself a nice cup of chocolate milk. (*Gosh Dave, I wonder where this is going?*) I spooned in my malted milk flavored Ovaltine and stirred. I took a drink or two — *mmmmm* — and set it down on the stove next to the fridge where I was working. A nice little reward for work well done.

Two minutes later I was looking at a pool of chocolate milk that was spreading across the kitchen floor. Yes, this is true too.

I decided to curse a few times, look at the mess, curse a few more times, and wonder if I'm about to break some sort of record for spilling things. (*Note to self: Call Guinness.*)

After another 30 minutes or so, I had managed to get the new universes that had been created in the science experiment that is my fridge cleaned up and cleared out, when I heard my wife, Charlene, stirring.

I pulled out a ham steak still in its wrapper and cut it open to fry up for breakfast. Did you know that ham steak packages are filled with some sort of weird ham steak juice? *What is it? Where does it come from? What's its purpose?* I asked all these questions as the entire contents of ham juice came spilling down the counter, creating Lake Ham Juice on the floor.

I looked out across Lake Ham Juice and contemplated my options: 1) Clean it up. 2) Use the Force to make it clean itself up. 3) Call in the cats to lick it up. 4) Watch TV. Or 5), Move to new house where no ham juice is spilled on the floor.

I called our real estate agent. She said she didn't know of any houses available that didn't have ham juice spilled on the floor, but that she would let us know of any ham-juice free houses came on the market.

Later I wondered why God would create a person who is as clumsy as I am. Had he been bored?

God just chuckled and replied, "Once you get down there and really scrub up all the stuff you spilled, you're going to have a floor that's cleaner than it was before you started. Nice idea, isn't it? It really works on so many different levels."

I thought about it. I thought about it some more.

"Um...", God finally said, "I'm referring to the renewal of the spirit."

"Yeah! Sort of like, 'Cleaning up the spilled mashed potatoes of life!' I said, proud of myself.

"I was thinking more along the lines of 'Confession will cleanse the soul,' but that works too."