

# A Pita Full Tale

*by* John Olson

Every time I hear the word 'pita' I think of a sunny, California afternoon in 1973. I had just been fired from a job. I had been hired as a factotum by a recovering alcoholic who was putting together a half-way house for other recovering alcoholics. I liked this man. He was elegant. He was tall, genteel, had a froth of pure white hair on his head and drove a Cadillac. I was a hippie. I despised anyone who drove a Cadillac. But I liked it that this guy drove a Cadillac. It suited him. And I liked the feeling of contradiction it gave me.

I got to know this man when I worked as a factotum in a building in downtown San José. I would drop by his office and chat. He was invested with the owners of the building and had requested my services for his half-way house, a two story Colonial style building a few blocks away in which he put me to work installing beds and other miscellaneous chores.

I was recently divorced, still in a state of dejection. It's so hard to believe it when someone doesn't want you. Even when it's been months and they've been screwing other people.

It didn't help that we did, on occasion, get together for some real hot sex. This was pity sex. I am to blame for this. It was my begging that broke her down and allowed these things to happen.

There is nothing like the sex you get after you break up with somebody. It's intense. I don't understand it. There is something very deep going on there but I don't pretend to understand what it is. I just know it's fantastic. And incredibly sad.

So the afternoon I showed up at the building and the doors were locked and no one was there, I figured cool, a day off. I took this afternoon as an opportunity to wheedle the ex into some sweet afternoon sex.

The next morning I showed up at the building again and there was a flurry of activity. My distinguished white-haired boss sat behind a table at the entrance of the building and gave me a forbidding look. You're fired, he said. Get out. I was stunned. Why, I

asked. He said I hadn't been there when a workman came by later and was unable to get into the building. I explained my distress over my divorce and said it affected my thinking. Which was entirely true. It was like coping with an addiction. He was in no mood to argue. I was fired. Banished, exiled, shit-canned.

I passed a pita stand on the way home. The pita looked good. Comforting. I wasn't used to eating pita sandwiches, or gyros, as the Greeks call them. But it was good. It had been the right decision. The perfect thing to do at that point in space and time. Stop, sit down, and soothe my hurt with a toothsome pita.

