

# The Winston Peacock Transpiration

*by* Matt Rowan

Winston Peacock had had a long day that New Year's Eve of the final full year of his old life. There had been contemplation about the grave failures, the money lost. The third quarter of this past fiscal year had been especially dismal.

But that was ok, maybe. It was in the past, and he was going to look toward the future.

He would start by baking a cake.

But over the course of preparing his ingredients, he had a certain kind of idea. It was come from nowhere, out of nothing, but it seemed to make sense. He decided to go with it, just let it happen. He went to work baking a cake in his own image.

He built it up tall. He built it up equal to his height. He made it bald. Gave it the same male pattern baldness he'd been unfortunately endowed with. It looked like him, but it was edible.

The raspberry jelly in its cinnamon stick circulatory system was without doubt his most impressive accomplishment. He was pleased that the cake had inside all sorts of delicious viscera like a root beer gumdrop liver, gingerbread intestines, and a chocolate heart. But probably that latter sugary organ was where he had erred. He'd used dark chocolate for the heart, because that was what he preferred, but the dark chocolate was bitter.

And his weird but appetizing cake self was bitter, too. It had not asked to be made in his image.

It came to life inexplicably, miraculously, and chased Winston Peacock underneath his staircase, which had a door he was able to close and which his cake self was not able to pry open.

He was trapped there for hours, until he heard a knock at the front door. He heard the creak of floorboards as his cake self went to investigate. Here was his chance. He left the safety of beneath the staircase slowly. The door was opened when he peeked into the front room.

The paper girl stood staring in horror at Winston Peacock's cake self. Her arrival was unexpected.

She reacted quickly, retrieved one of the revolvers Winston kept for decoration on the wall next to the front door, and she shot his cake self through the heart. His cake self staggered, and for some reason the paper girl thought to roll up the expensive oriental rug in the middle of the room, which his cake self finally dropped then onto the space that the rug had once covered. She'd spared the rug's ruin.

"He's dead," she said, before Winston could come out of his hiding space. "He's finally dead. I really did it." The papergirl thought this was the real Winston lying prone on the floor, bleeding raspberry blood. So alike had they been.

She put on gloves and wiped the handle of the gun, placing it in the grip of his cake self. She had a drill with her and she drilled a hole in his front door, a not very inexpensive antique. She attached a coat hanger wire to the lock's latch and ran the rest of it through the hole she'd made. She checked that all the windows were closed and locked. She took quick inventory of the rest of the house, prominently displaying whatever unsettling financial statements were lying around in plain sight, such as on his desk and elsewhere about the front room. She let herself out, closing the door and then

tugging on the coat hanger to lock the latch, which she then disentangled from the latch with a little bit of struggle, and pulled it through the hole.

She'd faked Winston's suicide. He was glad he had made a cake in his own image. It had saved his life.

And maybe in more ways than were obvious at first. Now that Winston was "dead" he could leave his dire financial straits and make a new life for himself with the few but significant assets he did still have. He'd leave the front room untouched but he went elsewhere and packed up his expensive watch collection and the cash he kept in his safe.

He escaped out the secret exit built into his bookshelf. He'd never be seen again.

He hoped the paper girl was found out, too. In a way, she'd killed Winston Peacock, and for that she ought to pay.

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Later at his cake self's autopsy the pathologist examining the corpse reported the cause of death "inconclusive." But when the orderlies went to retrieve the cake Winston's remains, all they could find was an empty gurney covered with piles of crumbs and frosting.

A bonesaw, similarly caked with frosting and crumbs, laid on a table nearby.

