

The Literary Savant

by Robert Vaughan

After I bring her back to the house, I show her my new temporary license. I look like a demented tard. Or a fat ex-con who gained a hundred pounds in prison eating chips and bean dip while watching Judge Judy re-runs.

"I would date a dog," she says.

"Really?" I squeeze the fresh limes into our drinks. "Any particular breed?"

She shrugs. "German Shepherds and herding dogs. Not those little ones that sometimes jump out of wedding cakes."

But when I show her photos of a Border Collie her nose wrinkles. She says, "Did you know that it's illegal to harass a seeing-eye dog?"

It reminds me of my recent fruit fly infestation. I tell her how I forgot I'd left the balsamic vinegar on the counter the entire July 4th weekend I was in the Wisconsin Dells. Mom told me to put the bowl in the microwave and leave the door open. After the fruit flies all rush in there, slam the door, fifteen seconds. Zap!

She sips her gin and tonic. "Bet it smelled like pork chops."

"More like a reduction sauce."

We're sitting on my back patio, and it's getting cozy with my baby until a mechanical repetitive sound, disturbing and oddly melodic starts up. "They're fracking at my neighbor's house," I joke. "Maybe we can sneak into their pool when it's finished?"

"That's not funny," she says. "If I didn't have a passive yeast resistance condition I could be the next Heidi Fleiss of the Midwest."

"My cousin Helga moved to Switzerland last year for a sex change- and she, well, he said just avoid that cheese with the holes."

While she chews her ice, I think of the Three Stooges, trying to decide if I look more like Curly or Larry. Then it dawns on me, who I look like in my damn license. "Hey- ever hear of Tolstoy?"

She fingers the ice around in her glass. "Is that some other kind of cheese I have to avoid?"

