The Lives of Inanimate Objects: Part 1 – A Hose nozzle

Synopsis: How quickly can the excitement of a life full of opportunity be shunted by the situation in which an individual finds themselves in? How easily do these unforeseen circumstances take a toll on our attitudes towards life and our self-perception? What truly decides your worth? These questions are explored in this short story told from the perspective of an everyday object.

The mold pulled away from the outer edges of my exterior as my extreme heat created the mirage-like effect of looking across the scorching horizon of the desert at high noon. I immediately rolled down a small ramp, unable to stop. Then everything went dark. I could hear the sizzle of my hot metal body and feel the cold, dirty water quenching and hardening my exterior. Then the light came back. Vibrations bounced me up and down, left and right, knocking me into hundreds of other copies of myself. I thought, perhaps they are my family? I wondered, are they feeling the same thing as I am? A rush of wind washed over my body sending the last drops of water on my skin into the abyss below. Once more I began to fall, this time down a steep ramp into the unknown.

My body landed righted. I quickly entered a carousel sending me around and around. With each rotation I could feel my body changing – parts being added one by one until the spinning stopped. I felt more… complete.

I left my birthplace soon thereafter, unsure of what would come next, unable to understand my role in this world, my purpose.

The days passed slowly on the way to what I thought was my final destination. I sat patiently in my spot, next to my kin traveling towards the unknown. I tried to prepare mentally for what was to come, but given the unpredictability of my situation, I knew this was merely a coping mechanism.

Then we stopped. I was the first taken out. I thought maybe I was special for some reason. I was quickly transferred from one hand to another, then set down on the cold, dark, dusty surface of a shelf. My kin, who I had spent so much time with on the journey, were placed one by one in front me. Why was I at the back, in the dark, in the dust?

The days began to blur together. I would see the lights turn on at the front. Then, some time later, they would turn off again. Occasionally, one of us would get removed from the front of the line, never to be seen again. After two or three of us would disappear, the line would be shifted up, towards the light. I could feel the energy in myself growing as I came closer to the front of the line, moving ever closer to my destiny in life.

Then, a gap developed between me and the one in front of me. I was forgotten. Soon thereafter, I saw the quick movement of hands that could only mean a new shipment of my kin. I was pushed back and back and back until I was right where I started who knows how long ago. This couldn’t be the meaning of life. I had so much more to offer than just a dust collector at the back of a dark store shelf.

I sat for a long time. Unmoving. The shine of my body giving way to tarnish. I watched more of my kin come and go, until they too stopped coming. A new generation had begun to appear. A plastic generation.

I could tell just from looking that this generation was cheaper. Easier to produce? Maybe. But were they of the same quality as me? I thought not. However, just like my kin before me, this new generation came and went while I sat collecting an ever-thicker layer of dust. I lost all hope.

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One day, the lights didn’t turn on. The doors didn’t open. Silence rang all around me. I truly was forgotten.

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The warmth of a wrinkled hand woke me up out of the silence-induced coma. The light hit my tarnished body for the first time since I had been placed on the shelf so long ago.

“They don’t make them like this anymore.” Said the raspy, but soothing voice of whose hand I was being held in. “This is the only one I’ve ever seen in this condition.”

Had I heard him correctly? Was I truly unique? I was one of many when I was born. For so long I had been overlooked; left in the dark while others were chosen ahead of me to fulfill their purpose. I had been led to believe that I meant nothing to anyone, until I started believing it myself.

I felt again. I felt the smooth and cool polish as it removed the years of dust and tarnish from my exterior. I felt the sunlight reflecting in all directions off me. I felt important, more so even, than the day I was born so long ago.

The wrinkled hand set me down delicately. Another shelf. Only this time, on display.

Lives of Inanimate Objects: Part 2 – A Toothbrush

Synopsis: Life is full of ups and downs. Sometimes, we get caught up in what it is we call life, without taking the time to step back and reflect on how truly blessed we are. This short story uses the perspective of an everyday household object in snapshots to show the beauty and hardship which life can hold.

mostly following the same routine. When he was younger, he didn’t always visit on his own volition. As he got older though, that changed. I even remember a few times he came to visit before dinner. I didn’t understand why, but I didn’t mind the extra visit. It was a simple relationship that we shared, but one I quite enjoyed. I could count on him to come visit me for a few minutes every day, and he could count on me too, to always be there.

I am the first generation of the newest model. Rather than replace the whole thing every three to six months, only the head must be replaced, reducing the amount of plastic waste entering the earth’s landfills every year. A practical and environmentally friendly alternative to older products. He chose the red attachment, his favorite color.

For my first four or so years his life was stressful. Most times he would come to visit exhausted after a long day. To what end, he questioned. What was the purpose of all his work? Would he actually make a difference in the world? Unlike me, an object designed for a specific purpose, he had to search for his. Slowly he began to discover it, and I was witness to it.

We moved after that as he continued in his journey of life. I thought that it was going to be the same as before, but it wasn’t. Sometimes I would worry about him because he wouldn’t come to visit until late at night. Other times, he forgot about me altogether, for days at a time even. I would be lying if I said it didn’t bother me at all, but in the end, he always came back, so I forgave him. Through his toils, he began to carve out his niche in the world, but there was still a void that existed.

When we moved again, he got another attachment, a purple one, since it was her favorite color. Not only did he come to visit me twice a day, but she also did. Sometimes they would come together, laughing, smiling, enjoying each other’s presence. She even spent extra time near me fixing her hair or putting on makeup, all the while singing in her smooth falsetto. I had never heard or seen such beauty before.

Some years later, they got another attachment, a green one, because it was a neutral color. They, I, we waited in anticipation.

Then one day the laughing stopped, the singing was silenced. Where laughter and songs had once filled the air, only silent, choking sobs now existed. The green attachment sat, unused, a brutal reminder of what could have, should have, been.

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Eventually, the sobs gave way to smiles, albeit shadows of their joyful faces of the past, but smiles all the same. A new attachment was bought, a blue one. I waited with the same anticipation as I had before. To my delight, and their surprise, a second attachment was needed, a pink one.

Each of them would spend time with me. Much like him in his younger years, the young ones didn’t always want to spend time with me. Then other times, they would fight over who would go first. It didn’t much matter to me as long as I got to be with them.

I knew the day would come, but that didn’t change the mixed emotions. The young ones moved out. Their presents were third generation models. Their mom, of course, let them know their attachments would always have a place in her home. They hardly ever came back to visit, so there sat their attachments with the others.

Time passed with a comforting sense of monotony as life pressed on towards the inevitable conclusion that everyone is aware of but chooses not to think about. For her, this fate came sooner than expected. Soon after the diagnosis treatments began. He could see the writing on the wall. They tried to be strong for each other, but with me, they need not hide it. All I could do to help was to be present, and that’s what I did until the day she stopped visiting; the purple attachment sat unused.

Once again it was just me and him like so many years earlier. So much had happened since that day that he chose the red attachment. I shared the joyful times when young love was flourishing, I was there in the moments of growth as he and his family made their way through life, and I felt the sorrow as a new attachment sat unused.

The day came that he too stopped visiting me. Five attachments – red, purple, green, blue, and pink, each one a unique part of his story that began so long ago, one that I was thankful to be a part of.

Through the ups and downs of life, I was a constant, perhaps the only one he had ever known.

Rinse – without rinsing, the paste wouldn’t possibly turn to the sudsy consistency necessary to coat the surfaces of the teeth and ultimately clean them. Estimated time: 3 seconds.

Paste – without adding the minty fresh paste, what is the point of brushing? Estimated time: 3 seconds.

Brush – the act of mechanically removing the plaque buildup on the surface of the teeth through repeatedly running bristles up-and-down and side-to-side, aided of course with the help of the paste (see previous step). Estimated time: 2 minutes.

Rinse – the second time, to wash the sudsy and bacteria-ridden paste down the drain. Estimated time: 3 seconds.

Every single time I am called to action, this is the order. A total of 2 minutes and 9 seconds. If I’m lucky, this happens twice a day, to make a grand total of 4 minutes and 18 seconds. This raises the question of what I do with the rest of my day? I wait.

Lives of Inanimate Objects: Part 3 – The Car and the Plane

Synopsis: The grass is always greener on the other side. Is it true? This question is explored from the perspective of two common objects which humans interact with every single day.

The gravel crunches underneath me as I roll towards the end of the driveway. A slow approach followed by a slight pause to check for oncoming traffic, then a right turn – always a right turn since there’s less of a chance of getting into accidents than turning left. There’s a ping-ping-ping as gravel is kicked out from underneath the tires as the accelerator is pressed just hard enough to break traction. A cloud of dust lingers momentarily until the warm afternoon breeze whisks it away as I continue down the country road.

I come to a lurching halt as my orientation is righted at the start of the two-mile long runway. We’re waiting for clearance to begin the rapid acceleration necessary to get such a large body into the air. Finally, it comes. The jet engines are pushed nearly to full throttle as the g-force of the take-off is likely sending the lunches of the passengers to the back of their stomachs. At the 1.25 mile-marker

Resources about writing a novel:

* The Snowflake Method