

Cats

Calling in sick to work makes me uncomfortable. No matter how legitimate my excuse, I always get the feeling that my boss thinks I'm lying.

On one recent occasion, I had a valid reason but lied anyway, because the truth was just too darned humiliating. I simply mentioned that I had sustained a head injury, and I hoped I would feel up to coming in the next day.

By then, I reasoned, I could think up a doozy to explain the bandage on the top of my head. The accident occurred mainly because I had given in to my wife's wishes to adopt a cute little kitty.

Initially, the new acquisition was no problem. Then one morning, I was taking my shower after breakfast when I heard my wife, Deb, call out to me from the kitchen.

"Honey! The garbage disposal is dead again. Please come reset it."

"You know where the button is," I protested through the shower pitter-patter and steam. "Reset it yourself!"

"But I'm scared!" she persisted. "What if it starts going and sucks me in?"

There was a meaningful pause and then, "C'mon, it'll only take you a second."

So out I came, dripping wet and butt naked, hoping that my silent outraged nudity would make a statement about how I perceived her behavior as extremely cowardly.

Sighing loudly, I squatted down and stuck my head under the sink to find the button. It is the last action I remember performing.

It struck without warning, and without any respect to my circumstances. No, it wasn't the hexed disposal, drawing me into its gnashing metal teeth. It was our new kitty, who discovered the fascinating dangling objects she spied hanging between my legs!

She had been poised around the corner and stalked me as I reached under the sink. And, at the precise moment when I was most vulnerable, she leapt at the toys I unwittingly offered and snagged them with her needle-like claws. I lost all rational thought to control orderly bodily movements, blindly rising at a violent rate of speed, with the full weight of a kitten hanging from my masculine region.

Wild animals are sometimes faced with a "fight or flight" syndrome. Men, in this predicament, choose only the "flight" option. I know this from experience. I was fleeing straight up into the air when the sink and cabinet bluntly and forcefully impeded my ascent.

The impact knocked me out cold.

When I awoke, my wife and the paramedics stood over me.

Now there are not many things in this life worse than finding oneself lying on the kitchen floor butt naked in front of a group of “been there, done-that” paramedics.

Even worse, having been fully briefed by my wife, the paramedics were all snorting loudly as they tried to conduct their work, all the while trying to suppress their hysterical laughter . . . and not succeeding.

Somehow I lived through it all. A few days later I finally made it back in to the office, where colleagues tried to coax an explanation out of me about my head injury.

I kept silent, claiming it was too painful to talk about, which it was.

“What’s the matter?” they all asked, “Cat got your tongue?”

If they only knew!