



*I'm Fine, But You Appear to Be Sinking* will be available in February, 2017

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Finally, bind your mini book by stapling along the brown edge.



4  
step

Fold the whole stack in half vertically. Crease it like you mean it.



3  
step

Now stack 'em according to the number in the margin on the front. #1 goes on the bottom.



2  
step

Fold each sheet in half horizontally, so that the text is facing outward.



1  
step

**How to assemble a featherproof mini-book:**

1

An excerpt from the short story

## “Disruption”

Each morning a man in Detroit, Michigan pushes a button and everything falls out of my kitchen shelves and onto my kitchen floor. It is unclear to me if this is the primary function of the button or if it's simply an unintended consequence. Regardless, I find it to be an inconvenience.

This hasn't always happened. It's a fairly recent development.

I suspect the button used to do something else. It used to start an assembly line conveyor belt or open the bay doors

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Each Thursday, not only does everything fall out of my kitchen shelves and onto my kitchen floor, but everything also falls out of my freezer. I am unsure if this is the result of a separate button, or a separate one entirely. Since this only happens once a week, it is not an unbearable hardship. I just have to be diligent about getting out of bed quickly and

Every morning, I wake up to the sound of everything on my kitchen shelves falling onto my kitchen floor. The first thing I do is I put on my slippers and robe and then I pick everything up and put it back where it belongs. Then I go online to look up phone numbers for Detroit. I am trying to find the man who pushes the button.

of a warehouse. I'm certain everything would not fall out of my kitchen shelves each morning were it not for the tragic decline of the American auto industry. There are too many buttons out there no longer doing what they were designed to do.

returning everything to the freezer so it doesn't spoil.

I've got quite a lot of meat in my freezer. Definitely more than is necessary for one person.

I have decided it would actually be better to talk to the man who pushes the button's boss. The man who pushes the button is probably just doing his button pushing because he is paid to. I doubt he has the jurisdiction to decide whether or not the button should be pushed each morning. I wonder if he gets good health insurance and a living wage for pushing the button. I worry he may be a member of some sort of button pusher's union. If this is the case, it could be very difficult to get him to stop his work.

The man who pushes the button isn't Barrett. I could see how you might think he would be Barrett, but he isn't.

I do not ever go online and look up Barrett's phone number. I am not trying to find him.

The reason I know Barrett is not the man who pushes the

insurance benefits, maybe people wouldn't think he's such a bad guy.

When we'd fight, Barrett would say if he only had enough money, he'd leave and never come back. I didn't ever think he meant it though – about leaving. But then I guess there are a lot of things I didn't ever think Barrett would do.

## 2

Calling the autoworkers' union has yet to lead me to the man who pushes the button. But I keep trying because I think progress is being made. The operator's name at the union is Liz and she is very helpful. The first time I called, she didn't say, "Is this a joke?" She said, "What's your name, hon?"

Liz says she doesn't think anyone affiliated with her union pushes a button that would make everything fall off the shelves and onto the floor in some lady's kitchen in Tulare, California, as that isn't exactly a productive function for autoworkers. She says it would be a waste of resources on the part of that particular plant. However, she assures me if the man who pushes the button is in fact a union member, he would be entitled to a minimum of fourteen dollars and seventy-eight per hour and if he worked more than twenty hours a week, he would have medical and dental insurance with a twenty-five dollar co-pay, a retirement plan, and an optional life insurance policy.

I tell Liz that sounds like a good job. If Barrett had a good job in Detroit pushing a button for a living wage and

There are a lot of songs about Detroit, including “Detroit Rock City,” “Don’t Stop Believin’,” “Motor City Madness,” and “8 Mile.” Sometimes I hum these songs in the morning while I clean everything off my kitchen floor and put it back on my shelves.

So I also know Barrett is not in certain parts of Mexico City. I disagreed with Barrett about Tulare. In Tulare, we have a weekly farmers’ market and a very nice public library. We have small town charm with big city amenities. We have beautiful natural settings within driving distance. There’s even a song about Tulare, which children learn in grade school. It goes: *Tulare, Tulare/Your hills and mountains cry/ It’s either do or die/For Tulare, Tulare/The county where the mountains meet the sky*. When I told Barrett this, he said, “See, this place is so crummy even the mountains and the hills are crying.”

button is because Barrett once said Tulare is the worst place on Earth with the exception of Detroit, Michigan and certain parts of Mexico City.

The number I call most often in Detroit is Directory Assistance. When the operator answers, I say, “Hello, I’m trying to find the man who pushes the button that makes everything fall out of my kitchen shelves and onto my kitchen floor.” Then the operator says, “Is this a joke.” I say, “No, this isn’t a joke. I would also like to talk to this man’s boss, if possible.” Then she says, “I don’t have times for jokes,” and hangs up.

The number I call second most often in Detroit is the headquarters for a union that represents auto factory workers (because it turns out button pushers don’t have their own union after all). When the operator answers, I say, “Hello, I’m trying to find the man who pushes the button that makes everything fall out of my kitchen shelves and onto my kitchen floor.” Then the operator says, “Hi Irene, how are you today?” I always tell her, aside from having to clean everything up off my kitchen floor, I’m all right. I say this because she sounds like a nice person and I don’t want to worry her.

On Tuesdays, women from the church come over. They

Barrett and I never went to church together. If he were here, he’d say the women who come on Tuesdays are taking advantage of me. I’d ask how someone can be taking advantage if they’re the ones bringing lunch. He’d say, “There’s no such thing as a free lunch.”

knew right away it was the result of someone in Detroit pushing a button. Still, I was surprised when I saw the state of the kitchen. Barrett had been gone for two days and even though I didn’t know why yet, I already wasn’t looking for him. There was broken glass everywhere. Now all my dinnerware is plastic. I know it isn’t very classy, but it’s durable. That first morning though, the mess was so bad I swapped my slippers for a pair of Barrett’s boots so I wouldn’t cut up my feet while I cleaned. Needless to say, that was not a convenient time for Detective Wallitsch to visit. When I answered the door, he showed me his badge and said he’d like to ask me a few questions about my husband if I didn’t mind. He must have thought I was some sort of madwoman, stomping around in a robe and men’s boots with my arms full of thawing meat.

### 3

bring lunch and good tidings. Once, one of them told me a story about a cousin of hers whose husband disappeared and six months later the authorities called and told her he had died in Florida. She never found out the cause of death because they said she had to pay for a coroner’s report and she didn’t want to do that. The woman from the church told me this like she meant it to sound hopeful.

On other days, Detective Wallitsch comes over. He says, “Have you heard from him?” I tell him the truth, which is that I have not. He says, “You’ll call me right away if you do.” I lie and say of course I will.

Detective Wallitsch never calls before he comes over. I think this is rude. Sometimes I don’t mind his stopping by. He’s always very pleasant to me and does not stay long. But other times I’m busy and would prefer not to be interrupted.

For example, the first time Detective Wallitsch came over was also the first morning everything fell out of my kitchen shelves, and also out of my freezer, and onto my kitchen floor. The sound was so sudden, but also so automatic, I