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## Well Respected Man

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**A Train Ride to Happiness** Christina Chuang

## **Well Respected Man**

Amy Holt

He's the kind of guy that would give you the penny in his pocket, even if it was the last one he had. It just didn't faze him. He didn't waste time on frivolous things like money. A man of faith need not worry about that.

Well, time moves me forward whether I like it or not, and I find myself at yet another crossroad. I wonder what he would do in my place. If humility and discipline are the way to go, he would always come out on top. Maybe if I act like him, I will get the same results. So I do every chance I get. If someone needs a ride, I don't hesitate to offer one. I once loaned two hundred dollars to a heroin addict in high school so he could pay his probation fines. I always try to listen to people before I speak. I try hard to put others first and sometimes I succeed. I don't know how he does it all the time. I wonder how naturally it comes to him, or if he's had to work hard to attain that ability.

Out of the many jobs he has had over the years, one was being a limo driver. I was about fourteen years old at the time. He was driving some rich, business men to the cowboy's game. Since he knew that I liked going to Dallas, he invited me along for the ride. I said yes because I knew that meant we could go out to eat at some fancy-shmancy restaurant downtown. We picked the limo up just as the sun was setting. We got to the hotel and the men came out of the front door with some ladies tagging along behind them. The moment they got in the car, I could smell the booze. They were already wasted before the game even started. After arguing with the men about the fastest way to get to the stadium (they weren't even from Dallas), we dropped them off at the front and one of them slipped us a twenty and told us to wait there.

I sat in the back of the limo, sipping soda and watching a movie on the small T.V. I fell asleep for probably half an hour before I felt a hand on my forehead. "Get up. They're coming back. I promise we will get something to eat after this." He sounded calm and collected but I can tell when he's really angry.

The men got in the car right as I was climbing back into the front seat. They were hammered at this point, yelling out of the sunroof as we were driving off. The women were just as drunk as the men, and I think they were getting frisky back there but I heard the tinted window shut behind my head before I could get a glimpse. The engine started and we were finally on our way to drop these yahoos off at the hotel and get some food at an expensive place. I think I had decided on seafood. We got to the hotel and the men showed the ladies to the front lobby.

I saw them talking for a long time and finally he got in the driver's seat. "They want me to take them somewhere else."

"Do you have to?" I asked, pleadingly.

"It's my job."

We started driving again and someone rolled the tinted window down again. A man asked, "Hey driver! You know any places we find some good hookers? Come on, I bet you know places around this city! How long you been a limo driver? We'll throw some more cash your way if you can get us some ladies for the night."

"I don't know any of those places. I haven't been a driver for very long. I don't live around here."

After some arguing over that, they finally just told him to take them to the strip club we passed earlier. "That's a classy joint, right Kev?"

He didn't answer them, simply rolled up the tinted window.

We waited in the parking lot for these guys to finish what they were doing. Around 4 am, they come stumbling out.

The ride home was a rather quiet one. Up front we were listening to NPR, because that is what we like to listen to. The window behind my head was down and one of the guys managed to finally notice me sitting in the passenger seat.

"Who's that?"

"My daughter."

"How old is she?"

"Sixteen."

I don't know why he lied.

The man said, "I have a sixteen year old daughter too." He sounded sad and didn't say anything after that.

We got to the hotel and the man gave my father a hundred dollar bill. We left right after, and went to eat at IHop. It was six o'clock on a Monday morning. On the ride home I fell asleep on his arm, wondering if all this meant I didn't have to go to school and what exactly his plan was when it came to telling mom.

## **A Modest Proposal: Drunk Driving**

Erica Harvey

In 2006, the national number of fatalities from car crashes was 42,532. Of these, 15,829 deaths were alcohol related. So, 37% of fatal crashes in the United States that year were due to one of the parties involved being under the influence. The state of Texas had the highest number of driving fatalities due to alcohol out of all the other states. Out of the 3,466 fatal crashes, 1,544 were due to alcohol consumption. That's 45%, 8% higher than the national average! These outlandishly high numbers are ridiculous, and something needs to change. So I have a new proposition to offer the federal and state governments, and it will be so effective I suggest it be put into effect immediately. Statistics show that of the 45% of fatal crashes due to one person being under the influence, the fatality was not the guilty party. This means that innocent, sober citizens are being killed while the idiot breaking the law and drinking and driving survives! How can this be?

According to studies, this is because under the influence, as we all know, a person's reflexes (and judgments) become slower. So, upon impact, the driver is less likely to tense up, making themselves like Jell-O. As their car collides with another and spins and tumbles out of control, their body is flopping around inside, not breaking anything or damaging any organs. This is why, on average, the drunk driver walks away with a few bruises and mild soreness. The sober victim however, sees the impact about to happen and tenses up, "bracing themselves." Upon crashing, the force of impact goes right to their bones, breaking them and damaging crucial organs. In 2004, Cody Bilbraid was struck by a drunk driver head-on along the highway. With the severity of the crash, and the high speeds both parties were traveling, Cody died on impact. The drunk driver walked away. In 1996, Maria Hegg and her father Ted, who was driving, were traveling through an intersection when a drunk driver ran the red light and crashed into the car. Maria died on the ride to the hospital, Ted was in ICU for weeks, and the drunk