

92

**JENNIFER  
MANNING**

## BREAKING THE BARRIER: A CONTORTED SATIRE OF CONTEMPORARY WHORES

Anderson is lifeless on his couch, a molded man of doubt so anxious with words that the ink on his fingers has aged and soured. “Cat Eats Mouse” was his last narration, an absurdly unsuccessful tale about a rat jailed in heaven. Its failure incarcerated Anderson, and with tail intact, he strives to break the barrier.

His eyes climb into his head as he strangles his lips with his pen. “Ah,” he says when the vision arrives, bending towards the table to test it. On a piece of paper he writes in cursive: *God is on a Date with Satan*.

Aroused by these words of his first paragraph, Anderson collects more paper from the neighboring desk. One page. Seven pages. 50 pages no less. But when he sets the pile next to the line he says, “This is suffocating,” and compresses the idea into a fickle depression.

Back to the couch he slouches and fidgets, whirling his fingers around like a child. “That’s it,” he says, picking up the pen again and scribbling onto a page: *Death is Excessive, by Anderson J. Evans*. But the second he finishes the “s” on the end of Evans, he negates the title, and continues to fidget.

“I’m dried up,” he confesses to the defaced endeavor and dials his psychiatrist, Dr. Yule B. Sedated. “Doctor,” he says, “My mind has been arrested by my life’s vacant impressions. I need to escape this condition.”

“I take it the Wellbutrin isn’t too effective?” Sedated asks with emphatic inflection.

“It makes me hesitant, and I have no direction. It’s like a wedge between me and inspiration,” Anderson says, staring at the pile of blank pages.

“Then perhaps something more effective: Prozac, Xanax, Lunesta, or Effexor?”

“But those are all pills resistant to sensation,” Anderson stresses.

“I must remind you, Mr. Evans, you are the patient.”

“A patient so embedded in recession he can’t put pen to paper,” Anderson replies, disconnecting with Sedated. He slams the receiver onto the table and extracts his prescribed suppression, a bottle wedded to his deadened fingers. Tightly gripping it and glimpsing at the crumpled pages on the floor, he says, “Writing is too sacred for this cowardly invention,” and he hurls the bottle at the front door.

Planting his feet, he leans toward the desk again, opening the bottom left drawer. Next to the hoard of half devoured Wellbutrin awaits a network of unclaimed medicine: Dexedrine, Desoxyn, Adderall, and Ritalin. He examines the side effects of each digestive, fiddling with the label as he reads it, and after brief consideration, Anderson exchanges his downer for a stimulant and guides a white pill to his mouth. With a swig of spit, he pays his pimp then reclines back onto his couch. When the tablet kicks in, his mind races out of the cage, and Anderson sprints straight into another pen.