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My Favorite Mistake

I've made a lot of mistakes. Supposedly, they help you learn. Outside of the world of motivational posters, they inconvenience you at best and start a nuclear war at worst. Occasionally, they actually- well, not help you, that's a bit of a stretch. But they can teach you a little bit about yourself, whether you want them to or not.

To set the scene: I'm seven or eight years old, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and not yet possessing the knowledge of current events to go on a fatalistic rant about the state of the economy. Having read everything on my bookshelf, I decide to look at my parent's- they have a few science/humor books that I'm interested in. Today, another book sparks my interest. It's lemon yellow, designed to be eye-catching, and has a cartoon person on the front that looks like something I would draw. The second I decide to read it, my mother sweeps into the room, takes it out of my hands, and puts it on the highest shelf in the closet. She tells me I can read it *when you're older* and says to go play outside. However, I know two things she doesn't: children are fueled purely by spite, and there's a stepstool in the kitchen.

It's 10:58 AM. My parents are at a meeting. My sister is too young to understand the concept of *not supposed to*. (Then again, she still hasn't learned what that means, so maybe it's not about age.) At my seven-year-old reading speed, I'll finish the book nearly an hour after my parents get home. However, this calculation doesn't account for righteous fury and the fact that I only had skittles for lunch. I start reading.

About two seconds in, I understand why my mother didn't want me to read it. The author treats expletives as particularly useful adjectives. Ignoring these, the book is actually funny- to a

seven-year-old, which concerns me on behalf of the author. I finish right as my parents pull up the driveway. I put the book back on the shelf and run up to greet them with a slew of questions about the meeting. Mission accomplished.

I don't know what this taught me, other than the fact that it takes me five years to admit that I did something wrong. I do know why it's my favorite mistake, because most of the humor in this essay is based off of that book. This implies that, had I not read the book, I would have the same sense of humour as my dad, which wouldn't be good for anyone. I suppose I did learn that there is such a thing as a happy ending. I believe that all good stories should have an unexpected twist, which makes this ending perfect: A few weeks ago, my mother asked me if I had ever ended up reading the book. Like any good child who regretted their actions, I said I didn't remember. (I hope that was a lie, or this essay just got a whole lot sketchier.) I asked why, and my mother said there was a sequel- she was planning on buying it for me.