

## The Best Laid Plans *by Marilyn Reeves*

Marvin Putz was a somewhat dull, unassuming little man. For the past 27 years he had worked as a tax accountant for H&R Block. While on the job, Marvin was both very punctual and precise, as was required by the demands of his job. But when he was at home, Marvin displayed an entirely different side of his personality. He became a procrastinator and suffered from frequent bouts of forgetfulness.

Because, over time, his once adventurous wife Muriel, embittered by her lot in life, became increasingly more shrewish and demanding. Everyday she found something new to nag him about: “Marvin, did you take out the trash? Marvin, will you please fix that broken shutter? Marvin, don’t wear that shirt – it’s a disgrace! Are you listening to me, Marvin? Marvin!” On and on. Nag, nag, nag!

The latest cause for constant complaint was: “Marvin, you need to fix the brakes on my car! They’ve been squealing and I know they’re not safe. Marvin, will you please take my car in and get those brakes fixed!”

Unbeknownst to Muriel, those bad brakes had given Marvin the possible “break” that he had been hoping for. A couple of years ago they had each increased their life insurance policies to \$500,000. And it so happened that the Putz’s lived at the top of a rather long, steep hill, toward the bottom of which was a sharp curve. Marvin had been secretly waiting for winter, and that treacherous phenomenon called “black ice”. He nearly laughed out loud at the thought of his wife skidding down that long hill and heading into that curve, and ... oops! No more nagging wife! Did I mention that below the curve was a 40-foot embankment? Visions of insurance money danced in his head.

But one dreary fall day his wife gave Marvin a list of errands to run: “Go to the store, then to the post office and drop off the mail. And take my car! Do not come home until you get those blankety-blank brakes fixed!”

“But, Muriel! It’s starting to rain!”

“I don’t care. Do it!”

So, dutifully, Marvin got into the driver’s seat of Muriel’s car and started heading down the long hill toward town. He hadn’t gotten more than a few hundred feet when there was a loud crack of thunder and lightening and the heavens parted, emitting a deluge of hail. Marvin tapped the brakes to slow his speed, but they didn’t respond. Then suddenly a big black dog crossed in right front of him and Marvin stomped on the brake, sending the car into a tail spin and through the guardrail right at the middle of that sharp curve. Fortunately the dog came out unscathed.

Later, when the emergency responders arrived at the scene to remove poor Marvin’s mangled body, they found the car littered with outgoing mail, which was gathered and posted on behalf of the deceased. One of the envelopes was addressed to the life insurance company – their annual premium was due next week.

Imagine Muriel’s delight when she heard the news that she was free, free at last from that miserable husband of hers, Marvin Putz. And soon she’d be receiving a nice check for half a million dollars in insurance money!

Poor Marvin. The best laid plans of mice and men can sometimes backfire.