

Pancakes Oh Pancakes

By: Alice Campbell

Bling, Bling! Bling, Bling!

"Ehh," Charlie said as he woke up. He had stayed up late, all the way until 8:00 pm last night! Charlie reached out and pushed the big red button to stop the loud blaring alarm. Then, he put his head on his soft pillow and started snoring, a slow steady rhythm.

Finally the light from the window and bird song made him get up. He was angry at the birds and sunlight for waking him and he was even angrier that they were happy when he was mad and grumpy. Charlie got out of bed and put on his warm slippers and robe. Then, slowly and unsteadily, he walked across his white carpeted bedroom to the door. His vision was fuzzy even with powerful bifocals, so Charlie walked slowly to make sure he didn't trip, fall, and kill himself. Charlie didn't think dying was so bad as long as he got to see his dead son.

Then, Charlie opened the door and walked into the hall. He walked to the end of the hall and down the chair lift. When he got to the kitchen, Charlie went into his usual dull morning routine of making the coffee and making the pancakes, then drinking the coffee and eating the pancakes. Slowly but surely the morning slipped away.

It was now 11:00 am. Charlie slowly walked to the library, picked up a dusty old volume from his bookshelf and started

reading. From the window, Charlie could see kids playing in the snow that had just fallen. They looked like they were having fun, laughing and talking. He didn't like anyone who laughed or played. As a matter of fact, he didn't like anyone period.

Charlie was probably lonely sitting in that big house and reading dusty volumes. But even if he was lonely he wouldn't admit it to anyone. He didn't need anyone and no one needed him. Ever since Charlie's son, Charles jr., died Charlie had been a rude, grumpy man. His face was twisted in a permanent scowl and he didn't talk to anyone.

A couple weeks passed and Charlie did as he always did. He made coffee and made pancakes, then drank coffee and ate pancakes in the mornings. Then, Charlie would read his dusty volumes and settle for a late brunch. At 5:00 pm each day Charlie would go to bed (and sleep late into the morning)

At long last it was January first and Charlie had to go to the grocery store. He only went once a month, if he could help it. Today was the day he must go. He didn't want to but, what kind of excuse could he make to his inner self that said, you need more pancakes!?

He put on his coat and got into his old 1999 buggy (It was actually only 10 yrs. old but he preferred to call it old, like he was) Charlie started driving down roads slowly and carefully, but once he got the hang of it again he was speeding through red lights like an old pro. He wanted traffic people to be grumpy like he was.

And he certainly attracted a few honks on his little drive through town.

Finally, Charlie made it to the grocery store, Harris Teeter. Normally, he saw little kids on the Dragon ride and got angrier that they were having so much fun. But not today. There were no kids on Harry the Dragon. This made Charlie sad. He had almost liked getting grumpy at the kids, but now they were gone and no one was laughing and playing.

Charlie thought it was definitely strange no kids were on Harry the Dragon. All the other times Charlie had come there kids had been playing. Maybe Harry the Dragon was broken? Charlie shook this thought off and tried to open the door, but it wouldn't budge. He was angry at the door until he saw a white sign in the window. It said " Harris Teeter closed. Samantha's Spa coming soon!" in small blurry writing. "WHAT!!!!" Charlie shouted to no one in particular "That's not fair!!!" Charlie stomped back to his car, got in, and drove to the closest store (which happened to be a fairy garden supply store).

Charlie was extremely angry and was rude to people when he got out of his car. He would get up into everyone's face (even people who were just looking at him) and say, "What are you looking at!" Then, people would back away slowly and leave. By the time Charlie was actually in the store, he had scared off most of its customers. The only ones left were people who were hurriedly buying things, then making a dash at top speed for the door.

Charlie went up to the clerk and asked him in a not-so-polite tone "Where's the closest grocery store!" The clerk started backing away but, Charlie blocked his path "Tell me!!" Charlie said and the clerk said in a fast voice "go down Cedar Avenue and keep going all the way to the third block. Then, turn left after six blocks and the grocery store is second shop on your left." Charlie hadn't heard the clerk very well, but he let the clerk go, walked out of the door, and got into his car.

Charlie went over the directions in his head to make sure he had them memorized. Go up Cedar Avenue all the way until the seventeenth block. Then, turn right and after sixteen blocks the grocery store is the ninth shop on your left. Good, he had them memorized, so he drove off.

He finally got to the grocery store and thought in the back of his mind that this must be a big grocery store because there were so many cars. When he was entering the grocery store he went under this big arch and saw a lot of kids playing. Because of his fuzzy vision he couldn't see what they were doing, but he thought maybe the park was to attract customers; kind of like Harry the Dragon was to attract customers for Harris Teeter. Next, he walked around to find a map. He found a map and was hoping the groceries were listed on it. He really needed to find the pancake mix.

He first looked at the heading on the top of the map. He wanted to know which store it was, so he could shop there in the

future. It was so big that there must be a lot of food, Charlie thought. It took him a little while to decipher the title. But, he finally got it. The title was NORTH CAROLINA ZOO. "What!!!!!!" Charlie screamed so people stared. It certainly was odd seeing an old man scream in a kids park.

Charlie stormed out of the park in a rage yelling at random kids and families. Charlie got into his car, too busy screaming at a family to notice a dark shadow jump on his roof. Whatever the creature was, it was stealthy.

Charlie drove down the road still speeding through red lights at 80 miles per hour. He was way grumpier than before and never stopped honking his horn for the whole car ride! He noticed people looking at his roof with surprised expressions, so he stopped in the middle of the road and got out of his car to see what was wrong.

What he saw took his breath away. He almost fainted because THERE WAS A MONKEY ON TOP OF HIS CAR!!!!!!! First he was very angry at the monkey, but the monkey ran down and gave him a hug. He hadn't had a hug since his son had died. Charlie hugged back and loved it. He had always been a "hugger" and now he finally had someone to hug. A huge grin spread across Charlie's face and he was happy.