

The Perfect Day

Excerpt from Agatha Umphagoy's famous interview of Edwardo Edsburgerus

Agatha (interviewer): How is your life now, after *it* happened?

Edwardo: I want it just to be normal, like it was before. I still think I get too much attention from people like YOU! If you haven't noticed, we're the only house on this whole section of the lake! We bought this house to try to get away from everybody. I mean, in New York, your neighbor was a big part of your life because they live so close. Here, there's space. I can't even see my neighbors they live so far away.

Agatha: (nervous laughter) I'm sorry. But would you mind telling us how you felt when *it* first appeared out of the lake?

Edwardo: I was scared stiff, after I realized I wasn't dreaming. *It* smashed my deck to splinters and sent me flying onto the lawn. Yeah, I realized what kind of danger I was in as soon as I hit the ground... (Edwardo's eyes become blank)

Agatha: Sir? Edwardo!

Edwardo:... Oh! I'm sorry. I just got thinking about my younger years (laughter)

Agatha: (cough, cough) before we continue, may I get a drink? I'm thirsty.

Edwardo: Hi thirsty, I'm Ed! (Laughter on Edwardo's part). But yes of course you can. (Edwardo gets up and shuffles around the kitchen) here you are (he hands her a glass of water).

Agatha: Aaahhhh, thank you. May we continue?

Edwardo: Yeah, OK. Where was I again?

Agatha: You just told us about how you realized you were in trouble when you hit the lawn.

Edwardo: Ah, yes. It was a perfect day. The sun was shining, and my grandchildren were coming over to swim in the lake. But then... you know what happened. I think that it is kind of ironic that they used to call me Fast Edwardo when I was still fire fighting.”

(laughter)

Agatha: Would you mind summarizing the most important events of that day?

Edwardo:... (silence)

Agatha: Sir?

Edwardo: No. No. I am done for today. I don't want to think about it. GOOD BYE!

This is the end of Agatha Umphagoy's famous interview of Edwardo Edsburgerus

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“Edwardo!” Helena’s voice croaked. It was a morning voice, as it was morning. Edwardo snored on. Helena lay in bed trying to zone out all the noise in the room, but she soon found out that it was impossible. “Aaaarrggg” Helena’s bones creaked as she got out of bed. She started down the stairs.

The sun was just poking its head out from behind the trees on the other side of the lake. It was going to be a perfect day. Everything was so beautiful that Helena thought nothing could go wrong...

THUNK.

“HUH?” murmured Edwardo who was now wide awake and sitting up in bed. He looked out the window which was splattered with glistening, red blood. He let out an angry growl. “THOSE STUPID BIRDS!” he yelled. He didn’t feel like dealing with the mess on the window. What a way to wake up. He reached for his old transistor radio to listen to the news. It was plastic, though it was made so that it was supposed to look like wood. It was one of his most prized possessions. He listened to it every morning, and enjoyed every moment of it. Somehow, everything just sounded better on that old radio. He had had it since he was a young boy. *That was a long time ago*, he thought. He fondly remembered playing stickball on the streets of New York outside of his apartment. He reached for his radio but his clumsy fingers didn’t quite grasp the smooth surface. The old radio shattered as soon as it hit the floor.

Edwardo couldn’t believe what luck he was having. First, a bird hits the window and wakes him up (and he has a huge, gross mess to clean up). Now he dropped his radio. He just couldn’t believe it. Edwardo decided that everything would be better off if he just went to back to sleep. He tried, but the sun was now up and shining through the gory window, casting him in a red glow. He lay in bed for several long minutes before he realized he couldn’t go to sleep again. It was kind of creepy for Edwardo, lying in bed covered in blood red light. Just after he got up, the sun had risen enough so that it shone through above the bloody section.

Edwardo went downstairs to sit with his coffee.

Later, he went outside to start his yard work. He enjoyed not having to work in the heat of the afternoon, and the cool morning air soothed him. Long ago many of the other lawns on the lake had died and become yellowed and brown, but Edwardo spent a

lot of time working on his lawn. It was one of the greenest on the lake. Today, he only had some raking and watering to do before his grandchildren arrived. It wouldn't take him long. Then he remembered about the bird on the window. *Great! A whole other thing to deal with! This will take hours!*

He went down to the beach instead. He raked his beach every morning. He knew that he should have dealt with the window first, but he was retired and there wasn't any hurry. To Edwardo it seemed like every year the beach got a little bigger. He didn't like to admit the fact that he was growing old, but he still enjoyed outdoor activities. It was one of the smaller little beaches on the lake, only about ten by fifteen feet.

It was approaching noon, and that meant lunch. Edwardo had finished tending to his lawn and cleaning the window (which turned out to be a VERY unpleasant experience). He had also taken his daily bike ride down the road to get the mail. He quickly dipped his feet in a bucket of cold water to get the sand off and hiked the stairs to the deck.

"Helena?"

"Yes Ed," she called from the kitchen.

"What's for lunch?"

"Well, I was thinking that you could grill some hamburgers for the kids. Delilah just called and said that she would drop the grandchildren off soon. In the meanwhile, I'll start making us some leftover sandwiches from last night."

"OK, I'll start the grill"

"I'm just going down to the supermarket to pick up some root beer and ice cream for the kids after lunch. Is there anything that you would like?"

“No, I’m all set. Thanks anyways.”

Edwardo was a master in front of the grill. Or so he thought. His grandchildren preferred their own father’s perfectly shaped burgers cooked to perfection than Grandpa’s ‘meatballs on buns’. He had a tendency to cook abnormally large, round hamburgers. He unaware of this, though. He walked into the kitchen and started shaping the meat. The grill would take a while to heat up. *It’s almost time to get a new grill*, Edwardo thought as he washed his hands.

Helena had finished the sandwiches and brought them out on the deck. These were Edwardo’s favorite sandwiches. Pretty much, every thing that was part of the turkey dinner the night before had been piled on. Cranberry sauce, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, turkey, corn, everything.

“That was fun last night, wasn’t it Ed?”

“Yeah, it was nice to see all of my old firefighting buddies. It was great that they could all come up.”

Helena and Edwardo finished their lunches. Helena got up to go to the supermarket.

“I’ll be back in a half an hour. If you’re still hungry, there is still more leftovers in the fridge.”

“Helena, I’m almost 60 years old, I can make my own snack!”

“OK, OK, I’m leaving,”

Edwardo had decided that the grill was hot enough. He went inside to get the burgers. Suddenly he paused. Something had just changed. *The sun must have just gone behind a cloud*, he thought. He walked back out to the deck. There was something else

that was wrong though. He couldn't quite figure out what was different. Then he looked out at the lake.

"Oh my God,"

The lake held its breath.

Absolutely everything was still. It was completely silent. All of the usual birds on the lake were gone. The lake was as still as a corpse.

Then one, tiny bubble broke the surface in the center of the lake.

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What a nightmare I'm having! This is a really bad one. I think that I am having a psychological nightmare. I mean, first I woke up in the worst way possible, then I dropped my radio, and now Helena put me in a bad mood about the snack thing, and to top it all off, this, **THING** came out of the lake. This is extremely horrible. I can't even imagine I am imagining this, this, *abomination*! Yeah, what a nightmare I'm having. But the coffee tasted so real...OH MY GOD! WAKE UP! WAKE UP!

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Something erupted out of the center of the lake. Edwardo couldn't depict exactly what it was, but it was big. The thing started swimming towards him. If that was what it was doing. It wriggled through the water towards him like some kind of horrible, mythical sea monster. As it got closer he began to see it more clearly. It looked like a

giant worm from hell. It was a hideous grey color and it had huge fangs that Edwardo could see even when the creature closed its mouth. Its mouth opened and several huge flesh colored snakelike tentacles erupted out of its fanged mouth and started flailing wildly in the air. Some of them started writhing through the air towards Edwardo. They smashed his deck, upon which he was standing, to pieces, as if there were nothing there.

“AAAAARRRRRGGGHH!” Edwardo was sent into the air and landed with a sickening thud upon his (thankfully) soft, green lawn. It was now he realized it wasn’t a dream. Shards of his splintered deck still rained down around him. Then the creature looked at him. Except Edwardo realized that it didn’t have any eyes. Its tentacles retracted and it opened its mouth and screamed.

Edwardo had never heard a scream like this one. It was a piercing shriek that left his ears ringing even afterwards. It sounded like all of the pain, all of the terror, and all of the distress in the world compacted into a couple short seconds.

Edwardo stumbled back. His grill, still smoking, landed just inches in front of him, where he was standing only a split second before. *If that hit me, I would already be dead.* He bolted out from the yard and started sprinting for the front of his house, and as far from the lake as he could get. He reached the driveway and automatically jumped into his truck out of instinct and began to speed away. Then he remembered: his grandchildren would arrive at the house soon. *But that thing! I am never going back to that!*

Edwardo sped on, ignoring all speed limits. The wheels on his trucks screamed as he flew around the turn. And then he saw his grandchildren.

Only for a brief second did he see their faces in the window of Delilah's car, heading towards the lake. And then he was gone, speeding away from the lake, from his house, from everything that he owned, and everything that he loved

NOTE: E.E. SAVES THE VICTIM
1971: New York, New York

Edwardo leaped off the back of the truck, which came to stop a few feet away. He hit the ground running towards the flaming building. He ran to the commander and reported that ladder 49 had arrived. He could see his comrades unraveling hoses, checking their equipment, and looking for the nearest fire hydrant. He could see around all of the confusion the six other fire trucks and crews parked around the block. He heard the commander's radio blare:

"Still several left in the building! Two of our men lost inside as well. No radio communication. I fear the worst. Over."

Edwardo leapt into action. He lowered his mask and entered the building...

Almost a full hour later, he had managed to locate one of the people stranded in the building. She was in a closet and was about to pass out. The fire had just started to ravage that part of the building. Her face was blackened with soot and she was bleeding in several spots. He started to step forward, but the burning floor collapsed just ahead of him.

"Edwardo, where are you?" the radio asked. He grabbed it and yelled into it

"I'm on the fifth floor. I have just located a victim. It doesn't look good; she needs to get out of here. I can't quite reach her; just give me a couple more minutes. I've almost got her."

"You need to get out now! We'll have a bucket ready for you. The fifth floor is going down!"

Edwardo's face paled. This was exactly what any fire fighter dreads.

He could see the woman clearly through the smoke. All he had to do was jump across the burning gap in the floor...he knew he could do it. It wasn't that far, only a step or two. He had done more courageous deeds in the past. He prepared to leap but a sudden burst of flame blasted through the hole. He stumbled backwards. The flames subsided, and he could have reached her now. He could feel the heat radiating out of the floor through his boots. He couldn't save her. He just couldn't make himself do it. He just couldn't.

"Help me" she whispered. Her cracked voice was barely audible above the roar of the fire. He looked down at her just before he dashed way through the flames. The woman gave Edwardo one look, and fell through the collapsing floor in a puff of flame.

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He grabbed the steering wheel and threw it around. He slid out, almost off the side of the road, and hit the gas. He was going back. He jammed the gas pedal all the way down and started speeding back towards the house. He soon passed his grandchildren. They were almost at his house. He spun out into the driveway and slammed the brakes.

He kept sliding, drawing ever nearer his house. He skidded into his garage, hit the far wall, and jumped out.

No sooner than he had got out of his car, the whole back part of his garage collapsed, crushing the seat where he was just sitting, split seconds before. His truck was crushed before he even had time to slam the door. He ran out of the garage. The monster was still attacking the house. He could feel the earth shudder as the enormous tentacles demolished. The whole house suddenly shook at one terrific blow, and the garage door shuddered and dropped shut.

He turned around to find Delilah with his grandchildren, pulling into the driveway.

The car stopped and all the kids hopped out and started running towards the lake. Edwardo couldn't move. He was just shocked.

"I'll be back later to pick up the kids, OK dad?"

Delilah pulled out of the driveway and left Edwardo standing there. It was now that Edwardo realized that his house still looked normal from the front, with the garage door shut.

He leaped into action and started sprinting after his grandchildren, who by now were about to turn the corner and witness the destruction that the monster had caused. *And the monster would see them!* At this thought, Edwardo started running as fast as he could. He got there just in time. He made a flying dive and tackled his fastest grandson who was going to round the corner first. He brought him to the ground easily, and the other kids all tripped over him.

"Grandpa, what are you doing? We wanna swim!"

"I know you do, but you can't right now. Uuuhhhh, one of the neighbors spilled some chemicals in the lake so you can't go in it now."

"OK guys, let's go play!"

The grandchildren hopped back up and were about round the corner again.

"Uummm, wait a second," Edwardo said. "You can't even go near the lake, because you would get very, very sick if you even breathed in the chemicals. Just try to play out in the front yard. OK?"

"OK," they groaned.

"Kids? I'm going to be out by the lake trying to clean up the chemicals, so just stay in the front here and play. If you need anything, just holler and I'll come over. But whatever you do, DO NOT go back there. Understand?"

"Do we have to? I mean, the front yard is so boring."

"We wanna swim!" shrieked his youngest granddaughter.

"I'm sorry but you don't have a lot of choice. There are dangerous chemicals back there"

"Fine."

Edwardo felt horrible as he watched the kids run off to play. He hated disappointing his grandchildren. He also really hated lying to them. But he couldn't let them go back there.

The kids ran off and Edwardo began to contemplate what he should do about the monster. He dashed into his basement and brought out his old, double barreled shotgun. He hadn't used it in a very, very, long time. He came back outside and loaded the gun. He could hear the creature moving around in the lake in front of his house. He snuck out

from behind the corner and started creeping towards the monster. He was surprised at how shallow the water was that it was in. He snuck from one bit of his shattered home to another, until he was as close as he could get. He took a deep breath and jumped out from his hiding spot behind a large portion of his deck which was sticking out of the ground like a crooked tooth.

He couldn't believe how huge it was. He pointed the gun up at it. He was practically pointing the gun straight up. It had to be at least twenty feet wide and hundreds of feet long. It seemed so much more deadly up close.

He aimed at the creature's head. Or where he thought the head would be. He fired. The impact slightly jarred Edwardo. He could see the bullet hit the creature directly on target, and he could see it being absorbed by the creature's grey flesh. Then he saw it continue flying out the other side.

The creature opened its mouth and the giant tentacles started hurtling straight for Edwardo. He was so close to the hurtling tentacles that he noticed for the first time that each of individual tentacles had little mouths full of razor sharp daggers. He dropped the gun and ran as fast as he could. He dived behind his grill. As soon as did he felt the tentacles smash the grill and send it flying. He jumped back up and kept running. He just made it around the house before the tentacles reached him. He was just out of reach. He quickly glanced around the corner and he saw one of the horrible tentacles still flailing about and gnashing their horrid little teeth, only a couple inches away.

"Grandpa, what was that loud bang?"

Oh, honey, don't worry about it. It was one of the special machines used for cleaning up special chemicals."

"Well, could you tell the person driving to not do it again? It hurt my ears."

"Of course."

Edwardo hated lying to his grandchildren, but he couldn't let them know what really lay in wait for them on the other side of the house. Then he noticed Helena pulling in. he ran over to the car and jumped in the passenger's side.

"For Christ's sake Ed, what are you doing!?"

"Just listen to me. I need to talk to you. What I am about to say you're probably not going to believe, but you will if you just walk around the corner. There is a giant sea monster in our lake that is currently destroying our house."

"No it's not Ed! There is no sea monster, and the house is still in perfect condition! I don't believe you!"

"I knew you wouldn't. Now, just go and take a peek around the corner of the house. Then you'll believe me"

"No. Edwardo..." Helena gave Edwardo a disapproving stare. *I bet all the grandchildren are waiting on the right around the corner with water balloons and squirt guns* she thought. Edwardo hopped out of the car and came around to the other side and opened Helena's door and dragged her out.

"You're coming with me."

"Oh, fine," she could live with getting a little wet. Especially if meant that it would make her grandchildren happy. She rounded the corner and she didn't get soaked. In fact, nothing happened. She looked up and gasped.

"Oh my God." Her mouth hung open for several long minutes. Before her was a scene of total desolation. There was debris scattered everywhere. The deck was gone. The

whole back half of the house was gone! And there was the grill, still smoldering in one corner. Then some movement caught her eye. She looked out onto the lake and saw the monster. It was a huge gray thing that loomed over everything else. It appeared to be a huge worm. It didn't have any eyes or facial features. Except for the mouth. It was a huge gap extending across the creature's face (or where its face would be). She could see the huge, dagger like fangs protruding from its mouth. The creature turned and opened its mouth. Out shot the enormous tentacles, hurtling towards them like rubber javelins. They wiggled and squirmed through the air, but they were as accurate as a heat seeking missile, as Edwardo knew. He was ready for them though and pushed Helena behind the corner of the house. He dived after her.

"Edwardo... what are we going to do? Go call the Army! The FBI! The CIA! The National Guard! Anyone! Edwardo!"

"Helena, the telephone is gone, Buried under countless feet of rubble. It's probably crushed and smashed to bits. We are on our own. But don't worry. I have a plan...

Edwardo revealed to Helena what he was planning on doing.

"Edwardo, you know how much that boat hurts my back!"

"Helena, I'm sorry but there isn't anything we can do." Edwardo remained calm.

"Get out a gun and shoot it! Shoot it in the head!!" Helena was losing her nerve.

"I have already done that"

"What about you? You would be putting yourself at great risk! We are all going to die! Oh no, no, no, no!"

“Helena, think about the kids. Just stop and think for a moment. You need to reconsider what is happening. Take a deep breath.”

Helena paused. “OK. I guess I’ll do it.” She sighed.

“Alright, now listen. I’ll run to the shed first, and then when I come out, run for the boat. Got it?”

“OK”

Edwardo took a deep breath, and then dashed out into the open. He sprinted for the small shed. He didn’t look back, he didn’t look at the monster, he just ran. He dived through the window onto the floor.

“Oomph,” he muttered as he hit the ground.

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What is that man doing? Thought Helena. She was waiting, ready to start running towards the boat as planned. She saw her husband sprint towards the shack, and she saw the monster’s gargantuan, *I don’t know what to call them*, she thought. She decided that they were tongues. She saw the tongues erupt out of its mouth and fly towards Edwardo. She saw him dive through the window into the shack. And she saw the shack become flattened.

A split second after he landed on the floor, the monster attacked the shack. Edwardo felt the shack shudder as if it were alive. He could feel the wind of the whole roof being blown off. He crawled over and grabbed the water skis. Small pieces and bits

fell down onto him, but the impact was so powerful that it blasted all of the larger chunks of rubble away. He looked up and a piece of debris crashed into the back of his head. He saw spots, but he shook it off. He knew that he would have to suck it up. He knew that he would be able to run past the monster if he caught it in its follow up of the devastating blow. He gripped the water skis tighter and jumped out of the shack, which was now only a foundation and about a foot of the original walls. The monster had sliced the shack like bread. It was a perfectly straight line of devastation. He dashed past the monster with the water skis.

“Oh my God!” Helena saw the shack explode Then she saw Edwardo jump out of the debris unharmed! She began sprinting towards the boat. She got there before Edwardo and started it up.

“Go Helena! GO!”

She hit the throttle. The boat coughed and started moving through the water, leaving the dock and Edwardo behind. She saw Edwardo throw the towing handle rope and saw that he had lassoed it onto the boat. She turned around and sped on.

Edwardo pounded down the beach and onto the dock. He tossed the rope onto the departing boat. He took his water skis out from under his arm and jumped off the end of the dock. As he flew through the air, he reached down and quickly stepped into the water skis. He felt the handle of the rope tug as the boat shot forwards but he landed on the water smoothly and started skimming across the water behind the boat.

He glanced backwards. The sea monster was dragging itself out of the shallows and beginning to follow the boat. *OK, here we go* Edwardo thought.

Now the sea monster had reached deeper water and began swimming much faster.

“SPEED IT UP!” screamed Edwardo up to Helena who was driving the boat. “Oh boy,” murmured Edwardo.

The sea monster was almost in range to lash out its tongues. They shot out, but Edwardo was ready for them. He cut back, cutting a clean arc through the water. The tentacles missed by a mile. The sea monster reeled them back in, all the while gaining on Edwardo. He gave Helena a thumbs down, which meant slow down. She did, and the sea monster didn’t even bother with its tentacles. Edwardo was so close to the thing that he could feel its sickly breath upon his back. It opened its gaping mouth, but Edwardo cut back around again, leaning way down on the edges of the skis. Helena turned the boat around the opposite way.

The rope was going to get caught on the sea monsters neck, and Edwardo saw it coming. He tossed the handle into the air while continuing to turn. He let his momentum carry him through the rest of the turn, then he grabbed the handle again after it had soared over the monster’s ugly head. Helena gunned the engine and they shot off in another direction.

Edwardo saw that he had the monster twisted into a ridiculous position. He took his advantage and arced another clean turn straight towards it. The monster was looped around backwards in an attempt to catch Edwardo. But he was too quick and was already on the next turn.

The boat had made enough waves now that the lake was fairly choppy. Edwardo dug down into the water with his skis. His legs were straining under the pressure of the turn. This was to be his final turn and the monster would be finished. It was so sharp that even he, the 1975 water skiing world champion, never would have thought it was

possible. He completed the turn and was headed straight for the monster's mouth. It opened its mouth, revealing all of its fangs. Edwardo saw his life flash before him, and then hit a wave and soared over the gaping, empty black hole. He landed on top of the monster's head and was still moving. He skidded down the beast's neck. He almost didn't have enough momentum to slide all the way back into the water, but he made it and the monster plunged its head after him. He continued to ski away. The thing's head was trying to follow, but the rest of its body couldn't move.

Edwardo had defeated the monster, and he knew it. The monster was now in a complete knot and there was no way that it could ever untangle itself. It started slowly sinking down, down, down, to the very bottom of the lake. Edwardo could feel the lake rising as it sank deeper. He realized what danger he was in now because as soon as the monster sank completely, the water would suck him down as well. He needed to get out of there. He was too exhausted to move. He couldn't even get his skis off to swim away. He had defeated the monster, but the monster had defeated him. He fainted.

Helena saw her husband floating face down in the water. Edwardo wasn't moving at all. She zoomed the boat in as close as she could, and then reached over the side and hauled him up. She knew what danger they were in too, and so she let the boat fly as fast as it could back towards the house, ignoring the jarring pains in her back as they bounced across the waves.

When they crashed into the beach and hopped out, Helena splashed some water on Edwardo's face to revive him. He woke up instantaneously. His grandchildren came running over to the boat.

"Grandpa! Grandpa! That was awesome!" they screamed.

"Thanks, guys."

Edwardo was so tired. He wanted nothing more than to sleep for a while. A long while. Helena brought out an old beach recliner and set it among the debris. Edwardo tiredly hobbled over and laid himself down. He fell asleep right away.

"Grandpa! Grandpa!"

"Ssshhhhhh! Grandpa needs to sleep for a little while, OK?"

"OK," they ran off to play among the debris.

"Kids? Try to stay in the front yard. There is a lot of sharp stuff around back here."

Helena looked back at Edwardo, who was snoozing on an old, tan recliner in the middle of their lawn, which was covered in rubble.

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For their heroic deeds, Edwardo and Helena were paid handsomely by the government. They received enough money to rebuild their house (and repair their lawn) and quite a bit extra.

A few months later:

THUNK

"HUH?" murmured Edwardo who was now wide awake and sitting up in bed. He looked out the window which was splattered with glistening, red blood. He let out an angry growl. "THOSE STUPID BIRDS!" he yelled. He didn't feel like dealing with the

mess on the window. What a way to wake up. He reached for his old transistor radio to listen to the news. Then he remembered that he didn't have a transistor radio any more.

"Oh no! Oh, no! No! No! Not again!"

Edwardo went about his business as usual, and tried to forget about what happened the last time he woke up to a bird splattered on his window. The sun was shining brilliantly, and everything looked so beautiful. His grandchildren were coming over later to swim. Everything was peaceful. He thought nothing could go wrong...

And he was right. It was a perfect day.