

**How to Suck a Million Toes  
Without Being Electrocuted  
Once**

by Johnna Adams

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# How to Suck a Million Toes Without Being Electrocuted Once

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JENNIFER and BARRY's backyard.

Fourteen pairs of shoes are lined up across the stage. JENNIFER is kneeling behind the line of shoes. She leans forward and sniffs at a pair of tennis shoes. She compares the odor emanating from each sneaker and makes notes on a clipboard.

BARRY enters from the house with a bucket and rag.

BARRY

Honey, have you seen my-- . . . .  
(He breaks off, staring at her.)

JENNIFER

What?

BARRY

My squeegee.

JENNIFER

Your what?

BARRY

The little thingie I use to clean the car windows, the squeegee.

JENNIFER

Oh. Check the garage.

BARRY

Okay. . . . Honey, what are you doing?

JENNIFER

Odor eaters.

BARRY

You're doing odor eaters?

JENNIFER

Consumer Awareness Magazine. I get forty dollars for each article I write for them. You know that, sweetie. Don't drip water on the grass. I'm getting forty more dollars for an article on the effects of grass fertilizer in drought conditions.

BARRY

I'll give you forty dollars to stop writing articles. And please stop doing that. Please!

JENNIFER

Doing what?

BARRY

Smelling my tennis shoes and making notes. I find that disturbing.

JENNIFER

Oh. It bothers you when I smell your feet? I didn't know.

(JENNIFER leans over and sniffs at the shoes BARRY is wearing. He skips away from her, violently-deeply irritated by her intrusive smelling. She crawls around trying to smell his feet.)

BARRY

Stop it! God! Will you stop it? That's disgusting. It's disgusting. Geez.

JENNIFER

Why is this so disturbing? Do you have some sort of childhood trauma about foot odor? Good thing I'm conducting a study! Odor eaters can help you.

BARRY

I just find that really gross, Jennifer.

JENNIFER

All right. All right.

BARRY

Come on, put these back in the closet.

(BARRY tries to pick up a pair of his shoes and discovers that they are glued to the ground.)

BARRY (cont.)

What the hell?!?

JENNIFER

(Makes notes on the clipboard)

Super glue. I'm comparing brands of ultra adhesives.

BARRY

Those are my bowling shoes.

JENNIFER

Well, when I pour acetone on them they'll unstick-

BARRY

You can't pour acetone on my bowling shoes-

JENNIFER

Well, I have to. That's the solvent.

(BARRY slowly sits on the ground beside her.)

BARRY

Jen. Honey. We need to talk.

JENNIFER

Let me just do the Arm & Hammer-

(JENNIFER inhales deeply over one of the shoes. BARRY makes gagging noises and recoils. He pulls her away from the shoes..)

BARRY

Oh, honey! Come on. You're obsessed. Stop it.

JENNIFER

No. I'm not. Oh! Before I forget-don't change your underwear until Friday.

(Pause.)

BARRY

Why?

JENNIFER

I have your underwear sorted on the dining room table by manufacturer in alphabetical order and am going to perform wear and tear tests.

BARRY

On my underwear?

JENNIFER

Well, of course on your underwear.

BARRY

Why not on your underwear?

JENNIFER

They only want to know how men's underwear reacts to suction.

BARRY

Suction?

JENNIFER

Yeah. Don't use the vacuum cleaner until Friday either, I need it.

BARRY

Interesting study, but, honey, can we talk about this a minute?

JENNIFER

Sweetie, I have a lot of odor eaters to get through today, and then I have to write up a report on how a million different cans of spray paint coat a metallic surface and-

BARRY

I understand that. But, honey, I don't think I can live with this much longer. This isn't going to change anything. You know that. Jen. Honey. Porkchop is gone.

JENNIFER

Well, I know Porkchop is gone. I'm not crazy, Barry.

BARRY

He was an old dog. He thought the extension cord was my big toe and he chewed on it. That's what happened. And no matter how much time and energy you spend on consumer activism, honey— no matter how many articles you write on product safety or consumer awareness—Porkchop isn't coming back.

JENNIFER

I know that. I just have to deal with it somehow, don't I? And I am not going to be able to deal with it just sitting around this house.

BARRY

Porkchop was 20 years old. In dog years he was Methusalah.

JENNIFER

I know.

BARRY

And he was stone blind. And he had some really bad habits. He peed uncontrollably, he thought my big toe was his personal chew toy. He kept running into the walls. He was kind of sad.

JENNIFER

I can't talk about this right now.

BARRY

But, honey, this isn't natural. This isn't a natural reaction.

JENNIFER

They shouldn't make electrical cords with those little nubbins of rubber that look like toes. You know that isn't right, Barry.

BARRY

I don't think that in Porkchop's case it made any difference what the little nubbin of rubber looked like. Porkchop was blind and dumb as a doorknob.

JENNIFER

Don't say that.

BARRY

Okay. Okay. But can you just tell me how we got from electrical cord re-design to odor eaters, honey?

JENNIFER

I started out with a hyper-awareness of electric cord safety features because of Porkchop, yes. But now I want a more complete understanding of all manufacturer safety standards before I allow us to continue on down the blind path of consumer frenzy. Don't you see, Barry? We're all like Porkchop. I had that realization at the Pet Cemetery standing over his-

(Gets weepy)

His poor little coffin. We're all just one nibble away from death.

BARRY

Only if we're dumb enough to nibble electrical cords like Porkchop.

JENNIFER

You don't know that. Are odor eaters poisonous?

BARRY

No. I'm sure they're not.

JENNIFER

Let's eat one and see.

BARRY

Why would we do that?

JENNIFER

What if one day we accidentally ate one?

BARRY

We are not going to accidentally eat one.

JENNIFER

Yes, we might. I might be cooking one day. Cooking spaghetti in a big pot. And I have the odor eaters stored on the refrigerator over the stove. And one might fall in.

BARRY

You don't cook.

JENNIFER

If I did.

BARRY

Honey. We are not Porkchop. We're a lot smarter than Porkchop. Not only are we humans, not dogs—but even as dogs go—Porkchop was bottom of the barrel stupid. Am I right? Honey, I think Porkchop was retarded.

JENNIFER

How dare you? Barry!

BARRY

Come on, don't get mad. Jen—honey. I loved our little Porky-choppy baby doggy. You know that. I loved him too. But let's be honest. When God was passing out brains to dogs—Porkchop was pissing on his carpet and missed out. Am I right?

JENNIFER

You're an asshole.

BARRY

I just don't want to see you sniffing my shoes for the rest of our lives. You have to snap out of it.

JENNIFER

I'm not just doing this just for Porkchop. I'm doing this for all mankind. I'm doing it for you. It's very noble of me actually. And if you can't appreciate that, then you should at least have the decency to go squeegee your car and leave me alone, Barry. I mean it! I don't want to talk about it.

(She puts her fingers in her ears and hum the Battle Hymn of the Republic loudly.)

Resigned, BARRY picks his bucket and rag up and stalks off stage.)

BARRY

(shouts)

Fine! Fine, Jen. Go back to whatever the hell you were doing. But don't expect me to wear this same pair of underwear forever!

(BARRY exits and JENNIFER goes back to sniffing shoes. BARRY screams offstage and runs back in slopping water from his bucket.)

JENNIFER

Barry! My drought conditions! You're getting water every where!

BARRY

Jennifer! What did you do to the car?

JENNIFER

Spray paint trials. I'm preparing a metric on drippage and time to dry. Forty-seven different brands and 300 different colors, it's very elaborate.

BARRY

ON MY CAR??!!

JENNIFER

Well, where else am I going to find a metallic surface big enough?

BARRY

Come here!

(BARRY drops the bucket and starts chasing her. They run in circles around the shoes.)

JENNIFER

No! Barry!

BARRY

I have some clinical trials I want to perform on you, Jennifer. Wear and tear tests. Get the vacuum cleaner.

JENNIFER

Stop it! You calm down, Barry!

BARRY

Calm down? Calm down?? I can't calm down--this is a stress test! You can't be calm during a stress test, can you? Huh? You're the expert you tell me.

(He grabs her. She screams.)

JENNIFER

Stop! I did it for you!

BARRY

For me? You did it for me? Are you out of your mind? You are, aren't you? You're as insane as your evil little dog was. Can I tell you something, Jen? I'm glad Porkchop fried! I'm glad!

(He releases JENNIFER and she glares at him.)

JENNIFER

Don't say that! Porkchop was a good dog!

BARRY

He was an irritating little shit. I had to get stitches because of that stupid dog.

(He kicks off his shoe and shows her his big toe.)

JENNIFER

Oh, he didn't mean to hurt you. He just thought your toe was a little mouse or something. You said it earlier. He was a slightly retarded.

BARRY

If any animal on the planet deserved to die in a one in a million freak accident it was Porkchop. If he's stupid enough to mistake an electrical cord for a toe, I'm glad he's out of the dog gene pool. Like people who dry their hair in the bathtub or stick their fingers in blenders. We are better off without them! Damn it, Jennifer! People who eat odor eaters deserve what they get! They don't need watchdogs! Comparison studies aren't going to keep these people safe— they're too stupid to read them. Stop looking out for people who don't deserve it. I need you to look out for me.

JENNIFER

You do?

BARRY

All the time. I'm a walking time bomb. I don't even know what brand of odor eaters I need.

JENNIFER

I can tell you.

BARRY

I'm sure you can. But let that be the last consumer test we conduct. This isn't a laboratory. I can't take anymore.

JENNIFER

I have to do one more. A brand comparison. You can help.

BARRY

Oh, god, no.

JENNIFER

Just one more, then I'll stop. You have to help.

BARRY

Forget it. No way. What is it anyway? You have to taste test bug spray? No, no-- you need to test sledge hammers, the effect of sledge hammers on a mid-size economy sedan, right? Honey, just stay away from the car, please.

JENNIFER

No. It's condoms.

BARRY

Oh. Condoms, huh? Are we going to split the forty bucks?

JENNIFER

60 / 40?

BARRY

I better be getting 60. I'm doing all the work. All right. I can handle this test.

JENNIFER

(Hugs him)

Oh, good! I'll get the vacuum cleaner.

(She runs off. He stands stunned.)

BLACKOUT.)