

It's so easy to cry

I inherited many strange and grotesque things from my father. A nose of behemoth proportions, an overabundance of gray hair, and a remarkable flare with the opposite sex. Having a flare with the opposite sex isn't grotesque, but it is strange considering the big nose and gray hair.

My Father had many good qualities but my brother got every one of them. My brother was intelligent enough to take from my father only those qualities he deemed worthy. And I took what was left.

The strangest characteristic I picked up from my father was his ability to cry at the drop of a hat. Daddy was a very strong individual and he never cried when he was confronted by frustration or anger. His tears appeared only when he encountered something beautiful or sad. If any of his children performed in church, or school, his pride would overflow. And so would his tears. He would actually sob aloud, which caused my mother to pinch the living hell out of his arm.

I can remember my father watching a sunset and he would turn to me, and say, "Isn't God's world lovely?" His eyes would be misty and I thought how strange it was that a grown man would cry.

And Daddy WAS a man. There

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wasn't one living soul who had the guts to laugh at his tears. He was a quiet sort with muscles almost unbelievable. There are old, old men in Virginia who still talk about my father's strength. And yet his beautiful warmth saddled him with the feminine trait of crying.

And he gave that trait to me.

The first time I knew this type of plague affected me was when my middle daughter, Amy, gave a short speech in church. She was so tiny, and so cute, and my pride for her was overwhelming. I sat in that church and the tears fell down my cheeks like raging cataracts. It was only when I sobbed aloud that my wife pinched me on the arm.

I have lived with this embarrassing situation for many

years. It was only recently I attended a ceremony on Veterans Day at the American Legion Post in Ridge. When the band marched past, a band composed of young students from both Great Mills and Chopticon, it was too much for me. To think these kids had given up their Saturday morning to pay tribute to our noble warriors, to think they cared enough about civic duty to march on this cold, damp morning... well... I started to cry. This performance was beautiful to me and I cried. And to hell with all those morons who stood around looking at me as if I were having a nervous breakdown.

I will cry, just like my father did, at some wondrous thing of nature. I cried when my daughter had her baby and I first saw that glorious look of happiness upon her face. I cry with great sincerity when a loved one passes on.

But mostly I cry at movies.

I cannot see a sad movie without washing away the theatre. And this inherited characteristic caused a hilarious situation several months ago. I had gone to the theatre to see, "Love Story". At the end of the movie the lights came on and there I was... crying my eyes out. I didn't feel too badly because everybody was crying. I wiped my eyes, blew my nose, and left the theatre in reasonably good condition. But as soon as I got outside I started crying again. Great, loud, anguished sobs. A strange man was walking past the theatre and he noticed my dissolving condition. He walked over to me and pressed a twenty dollar bill in my hand. As he walked away, he said, "Remember, my friend, it is always darkest before the dawn."

"Thank you," I sobbed.