



THRONE FOR A LOOP
There's always a poison chalice to ruin a guy's wedding night.

If It Happened to You...

Movie and TV scriptwriters insult us with the same old clichéd catastrophes that never happen in real life. But if one did? Here's what you'd do.

BY STEVE CALECHMAN

I'VE NEVER...

Been poisoned at dinner, maybe by a family member.

Driven through a fence.

Broken a beer bottle and then threatened someone with it.

Found a suitcase full of money.

Been ratted out by a parrot.

Received ancient wisdom from an elderly Chinese man.

Had a shouting match turn into wild sex.

Covered a poker bet with a watch.

Stood on the ledge of a building to elude capture.

Had to pretend I wasn't a rich guy.

Fallen face-first into a woman's crotch or a bowl of chili.

Been the unpopular guy and, after giving my farewell speech, had a single clap turn into thunderous applause.

Ended a fight by saying, "And one more thing," then punched the guy in the face.

Cleared off a desk in anger or to have sex.

Crawled through an air-conditioning duct.

Jumped out of a window into a dumpster filled with soft trash.

Hidden under a desk.

Picked through my pockets to piece together the events of the night before.

Woken up next to a dead body.

Led a ragtag bunch of misfits to victory.

Met a zookeeper as hot as Scarlett Johansson.

Heard a computer as hot-sounding as Scarlett Johansson.

Met a nanny as hot as Scarlett Johansson. Probably just as well.

BUT IF YOU DID

No, you can't keep it. Granted, a bag of Benjamins in a rental car's trunk probably won't be reported, but taking property that you know isn't yours has legal consequences. Even good-faith efforts to find the owner won't suffice. Hand it over to the police. There may be a reward, or not, but there won't be any guilt-ridden sleepless nights.

Real-world expert: Mark Bennett, criminal defense attorney in Houston

BUT IF YOU HAD TO

Get used to heights through graduated exposure. Identify your triggers—open-air balconies, looking down, whatever—and face them. Deep breathing, phone calls, friends, and beverages won't help. Face the void and track your anxiety level. As it rises, resist leaving. Wait until it flatlines or drops. Congrats, you're building tolerance.

Real-world expert: Simon Rego, Psy.D., director of the Cognitive Behavioral Training Program at Montefiore Medical Center at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York City

BUT IF YOU HAVE TO WIN OVER A GROUP

Open with a point of agreement to establish rapport—you take away any simmering resistance. Will you hear applause? Probably not. But by going in alone and showing conviction, you earn the group's respect, and they'll be more likely to treat you as a guest and at least let you make your point.

Real-world expert: Michael Sheehan, a media and speech coach in Washington, D.C.

BUT IF YOU WANT TO TRY, KNOW THIS

Ducts are not shiny-clean, easily accessible, or sound muffling. Plus, they're filled with hardware to redirect air and suppress fires. Can you escape through one? Possibly, but bring a map. You can just as easily get lost up there.

Real-world expert: Mark Zarzeczny, president of Schoen Air Duct Cleaning, Edgewater Park, New Jersey

BUT IF YOU'RE STUCK COACHING A BAD TEAM

Build unity. Before the first practice, have a party where the kids run fun relay races—the dizzier the better. When they finally hit the field, they won't care who sucks and who's good since they've laughed together.

Real-world expert: John Engh, chief operating officer, National Alliance for Youth Sports