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Follow the Directions*

Publix: Welcome! So glad you could make it to this paragraph. We are now drawing straws for a set of drawn straws. The drawn drawn straw will win access to mons pubis, but the card here does not indicate whose. Please, don't Pet the cat. And Refrain from Refried beans. This mons pubis won't last long. Will you: **A.** draw for a drawn straw? **B.** Pet the cat. If **A,** turn to **Tune.** If **B,** visit **Fish.**

A: The sing-a-long at long last. As soon as the last sweet notes of "Set on You" fade, everyone in the hall—you included—sings the chorus of George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord." The singers wear nothing or next to nothing. Plenty of mons pubis to go around. Yours is certainly no longer lonely and you take it out of the box. The cat seems incredibly uneasy and begins to bristle. But since she is in a suitcase you imagine she won't hurt anything, and you suspect her yowling would actually improve the music. Tomas, the asthmatic lead singer, warbles: "Really wan du see you; really wan du be wid you" as if that's the only words in the whole song. It sounds Just awful. Just terrible. It's awfully unjust. The crowd sings louder to drown him out. In spite of yourself, you begin to croak out another "Guru Ramah" and attempt a demi-plié with a sloe-eyed girl when you spy the suitcase cat scratching the unfurled mons-less pubis box and the asthmatic singer's eyes are closed and he wafts closer, CLOser, CLOSer, CLOSER to the cat-scratched pubis box and BAM he falls onto the box and is cut by the cat to ribbons. You finally understand the meaning of *schadenfreude*, and you smile. You hated that wheezing bastard. He slept with your sister last month and has had his eye on your mons pubis ever since. Visit "*" to see what happens next.

Sterile: The cat is unwilling to travel by leash. She proceeds to draw more blood from your leg and your offerings of tender vittles fail to assuage her. You are at the pharmacy, looking for astringent and 25mm gauge dental floss. You eye a cardboard suitcase in the flip-flop aisle and pay the three dollars and lure the cat into the case by placing your foot inside it. The trap works: when she pounces, you close the case and go back inside the pharmacy to buy new flip-flops and more bandages. You are almost late for the sing-along but you realize the poor cat might need some decent food. If you go straight to the singalong, Choose **A** (please consider making a better choice if you've already chosen "**A**"). If you decide to feed the cat Pizza, see **Monacle.**

* Welcome to the story! This is the beginning. Please refer to this paragraph first before proceeding to other paragraphs. The specials today are Vincent streusel or mons pubis raffle benefactors. Which one? If **Vin,** see paragraph **Monacle.** If **pubis,** refer to **Publix.**

Tune: You draw a straw for the straw you just drew and you get a straw, drawn and win the mystery mons pubis. It is in a large red box and thank goodness you brought a wheelbarrow. You wheel it home in the barrow, along with the drawing of the drawn straw, and brush your teeth, preparing yourself for mons. But when you unwrap it, it looks chalky and white and bony. This is a concern because you had expected skin and meat and the dull fuzz of mons and maybe a pair of skintight jeans to Inspire Mystery. But the pubis is just a bone. There is no mons. You repackage the pubis and bring it back to the drawn straws gathering to return it in exchange for more straw. But no one is there except for the janitor who looks at you funny-like when you ask him about getting some mons

for your pubis. Dejected, you look at the box in the barrow and either **A**: take it to a sing-a-long you had read about in the paper or **V**: take it out for a soda and a slice of pepperoni. If **A**, visit **A**. If **V**: go to **Monacle**.

Skank: If you are reading this paragraph you are probably not adhering to the directive aspects of the title to this story, which respectfully requests that you "Follow the Directions." A strict interpretation of this directive would indicate that you shouldn't be reading this section, because there is no option called "Skank." Perhaps the lewd word lured you here. Shows what kind of person you are, doesn't it?

Monacle: The sign over the door of the pizza store says "Pizza" but you aren't all that interested right now in a hot wedge of cheese. It's the Vincent Streusel you seek: the minty bacon dressing amid the pleasantly clotted bits of smoky pigfat and zucchini. The strata of lasagna. The strata of lasagna! Your heart soars: it's on special and you careen past the pizza eaters, the soda slurpers, the one-armed man eating catfish from a can of tuna and someone ahead of you has brought a wheelbarrow and is looking nervous, patting at freshly combed hair. Hair grease traps dandruff on the shaft. You are looking for a giveaway for tonight's festivities, and you wonder about the box in the wheelbarrow. Your suitcase rustles with anger. The line is long. Do you **4**: Proceed with your order for Vincent streusel and head on to the sing-a-long, or **G-4**: consider purloining the box in the barrow. If **4**, visit **A**. If **G-4**, re-read this section and then proceed to **4**. There's no room in this story for thieves.

Fish: Well, you had to go and pet the cat. Now the Guard of Arts will have to circumscribe your range of activity, because blood on any of our silk shoes or crepe paper car pets simply will not do. All this blood concerns me. Maybe the hospital is where you need to be. Or perhaps a dose of Mercurochrome will do you just fine. I'm a professional singer; I know these things. Just be careful not to drink it all! Those doctors charge you for every drop. By the way... You know the rules: You break what you pay for. That's ten dollars, please. Yes, for the cat. Thank you. The cat is now yours. Do you **A**. Take her for a walk? Or **B**. Bring her to a sing-a-long at a drawn straws straw convention. If **A**, please see **Sterile**. If **B**, go to **A**. To start over simply **Follow the Directions**.