

A Short Story

FAT #2

TEEN & ADULT



STUART R. DENIKE

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Ah! The arcade is empty. Good! I really can't handle the crowds that are usually here. All the stares and snickers. Well, to heck with'em; they're all too skinny anyway. Yeah, sure. Believe that Jim, and you'll start believing in the tooth-fairy too.

Man, is it hot! Why can't they ever seem to get the airco cool enough here? Oh swell, just my luck, the nasty one's got the counter. He always gives me a hard time. I'll bet it's because I'm fat. Not worth the hassle; easier to just go home. Home? What a jerk. Spend twenty long, hard minutes walking here, and I'm gonna let some pinhead - - OK, take a deep breath. Here goes.

"Hey kid, can't ya read? The sign says nobody under eighteen until three o'clock on school days."

"Yes sir," (you moron), "but school's out today. Teachers' conference. Really!"

And when did he learn to read? Come on, come give me the change, you Neanderthal.

"Yeah sure, kid."

All right, let's get this card in; it's 'Outriders' time. Stupid name for a great game. Oh jeez, I can't believe they've raised the price *again*. Boy, so greedy, but then so what. With all the freebies, I never pay more than once.

"Take a look at fatso, the race car driver."

Great! That's all I need. Don't listen; don't react and maybe he'll go away.

"I doubt if two-ton can even get in the seat."

My problem, birdlegs. Go slither under a rug or something.

"Man, if he even breathes, the whole thing's gonna explode."

If I knew it would blow you away, buster, I'd take a double deep breath. Oh forget him, and get this show on the road. The noise this thing makes when it cranks up is great. And the way the seat tilts and bumps is super. Well, here goes. Red - - orange - - green. Go, go, go! Straight-a-

way, get it in high, and floor it. Ease off - - a touch of brake, now down shift! Gas. Shift up. Watch those cars up ahead.

"Lookout, lookout!"

"Shift it!"

"Brakes, use the brakes."

Awful noisy. Place must be filling up now. Better go soon. Well that takes care of run number two; let's see what three has to offer. Of course the first few usually aren't much of a challenge anyway.

Whew, it's getting really hot in here; my clothes are sticky. If only I didn't sweat so much. Let's see, I should have, uh - - three more runs, yeah. Oops, hard chicane. OK, easy, keep hands light on that wheel. Now, make this "mother" move.

Did it again! Wish they'd keep the noise down. Say, what is that sound?"

"Oh, sorry." I can't get outta this thing. "I didn't know anyone was waiting to play." I can't get out! Why do I have to be so fat? Why? It's just not fair. Now the razzing starts. Remember, don't let those snide sods get to you. Is that clapping?

"Pal, you are the best - - "

What? What's he talking about? "Really?" Oh that's a nice squeek. Sound as if I've been inhaling helium. Clear your throat you dope.

"Kid, what's your name?"

"Jim." Sure, stupid, sound like you're apologizing. I feel lousy. My stomach's queasy.

"What? What's the champ's name?"

Champ? They think I'm good? *They* think *I'm* that good. I'm a champ. Well, yeah, I guess I am! So - - let'em know.

"Uhum, Jim!"

"- - do it again."

Someone is paying for me to play? This is unreal! I love it." Yup, here we go, go, go: "I love it!"