

The Quest for Brotherhood

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There is no bond like the bond of brothers. It is a bond made infallible. The word “brothers” connotes the dripping, sweet glue that binds men, young and old, together for life.

Brotherhood has no limit, it has no age. It is an unconditionally bound relationship.

Let this be the eulogy to your days as an only child in this great, big world, dear newly-initiated fraternity boys.

Look, men. Look at the days that have passed. Remember them well, those preliminaries. Remember the beginning, when many of you were taken out to fancy dinners. Remember the delicious free meals and the kind smiles that were flashed at you. Remember the petty conversation that may or may not have reeled you in to your respective house. Remember being a chosen one, how good it must have felt to know you were wanted.

The Sorting Hat had done its bit, and you became another component in the category you apparently fit well. Some of you were jocks, some of you were cowboys, some of you were smart, some of you were stupid, some of you were attractive, some of you spent money in great amounts, some of you wore Polo well, some of you had impressive fluid capacities, some of you were good at getting girls, some of you really knew how to party. You all truly had your uses for your respective houses.

As new initiates, we can look back together on all the things you've had to do to make yourself worthy of admission. It has been a brutal trek, but you have made it.

When you were just wee little monkeys (we can't call you pledges, since it's illegal, and I rather like the name "monkey" — it has a cute little dehumanizing effect), you were made to do awful things. But those awful things were intelligently and symbolically designed so you would feel brotherhood seeping from your pores as you sweat while doing your duties, such as cleaning up the after-party leftovers in a fraternity bathroom while dressed in a nice suit. You were asked to be humiliated for a noble cause, making right-angle turns and speaking to no one but your pledge brothers for a week. You were deemed house-keeper at any hour of the morning, be it 2 or 5 a.m.

Boys, you were disrespected by the guys you would call your brothers, and you trusted they had dignified intentions; they trashed the house and yelled in your face while you were made to clean it all up. Your older brothers taught you lessons in presentation, forcing you to wear a suit everyday for a week without washing it. You were stripped of your identity, given no choices, brought down to a lowly level. You memorized names and numbers and more names and "star facts" about all the members of your respective houses. You were sleep deprived, abused, belittled, humiliated and asked to love it.

I envy you, though, for all that you gained from the experience. You formed a brotherhood with those experiencing the same struggles you were. You have learned, from deprivation, to appreciate so fully the honor bestowed upon you to be a part of something so much greater than yourself. You are one of them now.

You have truly accomplished something in life. You can now proudly display those prized Greek letters. You have been given a number — and it represents you!

You are now four digits that say one thing: “I made it, I’m somebody!” And you are. You are somebody.

You’ve come so far. Your traits have blossomed. In fact, you might have added some you didn’t have in the first place.

Many of you have truly been changed. And it’s only the beginning.

Maybe, if you didn’t once sport Polo and Sperrys, you do now. Maybe, if you didn’t have long, side-swept hair under a backwards cap, you do now. Maybe, if you didn’t wear cowboy boots originally, you do now. Maybe, if you didn’t dip before, you do now. Maybe if you couldn’t do the frat snap, you can now. Maybe, if khaki wasn’t your color, it is now. Maybe, if getting chicks in bed wasn’t on your agenda before, it is now. Maybe, if you didn’t drink then, you do now. Maybe, if you cared more about school work than Greek letters, you don’t now.

Maybe, if you were different from everyone else, you’re not now.

Congratulations, guys, you’re a whole lot like everybody else!