

The
**SECRET
LIFE**

of WALTER MITTY

**BY JAMES
THURBER**

RETOLD BY
SARA SIMPSON



The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (1939)

James Thurber

Retold by Sara Simpson

"We're going to fly through the storm!"

The air force commander was shouting. He pulled his cap down over one eye.

"We'll never make it! A bad storm is coming!" Lieutenant Berg yelled.

"I'm telling you we're flying through it!" the commander shouted. "Turn the engine all the way up!"

The engine went faster. It made a sound like pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. There was ice on the plane's windshield, making it hard to see out. It didn't matter; they had to fly anyway.

"Turn all the engines up to full power!" the commander yelled to the crew.

The crew smiled at each other.

"The commander will get us through the storm!" the men said. "He isn't afraid of anything! Not even Hell itself scares him!"

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"Stop driving so fast!" Mrs. Mitty said to her husband. "Why are you driving so fast?"

"What?" said Walter Mitty.

Walter Mitty looked at his wife sitting next to him in the car. He had been daydreaming again, and it took him a minute to come back to reality. He wasn't the commander of an air force plane, driving his men through a storm. He was middle-aged Walter Mitty, driving his wife on her errands.

“You were driving 45 miles an hour!” said Mrs. Mitty. “I don’t like to go faster than 40, and you were up to 45!”

Walter Mitty didn’t say anything. He just kept driving. His daydream was fading away.

“You look stressed again,” Mrs. Mitty said. “You’re having one of your bad days. You should let Dr. Renshaw look at you.”

Walter Mitty stopped the car in front of the hair salon to drop off his wife.

“Don’t forget to go buy snow boots while I’m getting my hair done,” Mrs. Mitty said.

“I don’t need snow boots,” said Walter Mitty.

“Don’t argue with me,” Mrs. Mitty said. “You’re not a young man anymore, and you need to wear snow boots to keep your feet dry so you don’t get sick.”

Walter Mitty was getting annoyed, but he didn’t say anything else to his wife. He revved the car engine a little.

“Why aren’t you wearing your gloves?” Mrs. Mitty asked her husband. “Did you lose your gloves?”

Walter Mitty got his gloves out of his pocket. He put them on. His wife went into the hair salon. Walter Mitty drove down the road. At the next red light, he took the gloves off again.

“Hurry up!” yelled a cop when the light turned green. Mitty put his gloves back on quickly and drove. He drove around for a while. He drove past the hospital on his way to park the cart...

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“Hurry, doctor!” cried the pretty nurse. “Millionaire banker Wellington McMillan is in surgery. Dr. Renshaw and Dr. Benbow are in there now. So are two doctors from London, Dr. Remington and Dr.

Pritchard-Mitford. They are doing their best, but they need you right away!"

Dr. Walter Mitty slowly took off his gloves. He was calm and ready.

Dr. Renshaw came out of the operating room. He looked tired and very upset.

"You have to come right now!" Dr. Renshaw said. "It's McMillan, millionaire banker and close friend of President Roosevelt! He has obstreosis of the ductal tract! It's bad! We need you!"

"Glad to help," Dr. Mitty said calmly. "Let's see the patient."

Dr. Mitty put on a surgical gown and gloves and went into the operating room. All the doctors looked up at Dr. Mitty.

"Dr. Mitty, it's an honor to get to work with you," said Dr. Pritchard-Mitsford. "I read your book on streptothricosis. It was brilliant!"

"I couldn't believe our luck, catching you home from traveling the world," Dr. Remington said.

Just then, a huge, complicated machine full of wires and tubes started to go pocketa-pocketa-pocketa.

"The new anaesthetizer is breaking!" cried a nurse. "There's no one within 100 miles who knows how to fix it!"

The machine was now going pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-queep, which was even worse.

"Everyone be quiet," Dr. Mitty said in a calm, cool voice. "Give me a pen!"

Someone handed Dr. Mitty a pen. He pulled a piece of metal out of the machine and put the pen in its place.

"That will fix the machine for 10 minutes," Dr. Mitty said. "Let's finish this operation."

"Oh, no!" cried Dr. Renshaw. "Coreopsis has set in! McMillan will never make it!"

"I'll take over," Dr. Mitty said. All the other doctors looked relieved. Dr. Mitty put on gloves, a nurse handed him a scalpel, then---

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“Mister! You’re trying to go in the parking lot the wrong way! Look out for that car!” shouted the parking lot attendant. “The sign says ‘exit only!’”

Mitty slowly and carefully backed his car out.

“Just leave the car there,” the parking lot attendant said. “I’ll put it away. Give me the key.”

Mitty got out of the car and gave the key to the parking lot attendant. The attendant jumped into the car and parked it perfectly.

“That guy is a jerk,” Mitty thought to himself as he walked down Main Street. “He thinks he knows everything.” One time, Mitty tried to take the snow chains off his car himself, but he got the chains so tangled up the car had to get towed to the repair shop to get fixed. After that, Mrs. Mitty made him go to the mechanic to get the chains taken off.

“Next time I need the chains taken off,” Mitty thought, “I’ll wear a sling on my arm. The guys at the garage will think I have a broken arm, and they won’t laugh at me for not being able to take off my own snow chains.”

Mitty kicked a pile of slush on the sidewalk. He remembered: snow boots. Mitty went into shoe store and bought snow boots. When he came out of the shoe store, he tried to remember the other thing his wife wanted him to buy. She told him twice before they left the house. He hated running errands for his wife; he was always messing up and

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“I’m going to take your temperature when we get home,” Mrs. Mitty said. “You aren’t making any sense when you talk. You must be sick.”

Mr. and Mrs. Mitty walked to their car. It was two blocks away. Mrs. Mitty stopped when they got to the drug store on the corner.

“Wait here,” she said to Walter Mitty. “I need to run in. I forgot to buy something.”

Walter Mitty waited on the sidewalk. He lit a cigarette. It started to rain. He leaned against the side of the building and smoked...

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“To Hell with the blindfold!” Mitty said, yanking it off his eyes. “I’m not afraid to look death in the face!”

He took one more drag on his cigarette then threw it down. He smiled a little and turned to face the firing squad. He stood up tall. He knew what was going to happen to him, and he accepted his fate.

Walter Mitty stayed a mystery, even at the end.
