

Fiction
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Creation

An angel and a demon sit next to each other on a sheltered bus stop located on the side of the road in South Bend, Indiana. It was a crisp rainy autumn evening and the last bus was due at their stop in roughly a half hour. The angel dressed in tan khaki cargo pants and a white tee shirt while the demon wore a long black trench coat that wore too big on his small wiry frame. The angel, having adopted the Earth name Jericho, glanced at his watch.

“Well, it’s time for the next round to begin. Same rules as before?” The demon, having switched his name from Rodney to Garrett in the mid 1980’s, glanced at his angelic counterpart and smirked. “Do you really have to ask that?”

“What do you mean?”

“We’ve been playing this game since Sodom and Gomorrah and every time you start out with the same question.” Jericho shrugged his shoulders.

“I was only trying to keep with tradition. Pardon the annoyance.” Garrett sighed and reached into the inside breast pocket of his trench coat. The small notebook he produced from his pocket was bound in human skin and the fountain pen that accompanied the notebook did not contain red ink. Cracking open the book, Garrett turned to the first blank page and uncapped the fountain pen. He wrote the time and location with small neat cursive. The angel watched him with disdain, Jericho would’ve preferred printing to cursive.

“What is the score?”

“Oh, let’s see. I’ve damned 87,891,002 and you’ve saved 87,891,002. Although I would have an asterisk next to your score, you cheated last time.” Jericho stood up suddenly and fixed his hands on his hips and scowled in shock at Garrett.

“That sir is a lie, but I doubt someone like you would be able to tell. I have never cheated nor would I ever. That last round was not my fault.” Garrett leaned back on the bench and smiled, pleased with himself for getting underneath the angel’s skin.

“Calm down, Jerry. I was only teasing.” Visibly ruffled, Jericho stood for a moment before sitting down again. He crossed his arms and huffed. He mumbled something that Garrett didn’t quite hear.

“What was that?”

“I said that the reason you are sore about last round is that you picked the man and still lost.”

“Well how was I to know that he was a Christian? He was wearing all that gothic crap that kids now a days are wearing. Thought he was a Satanist. Honest mistake really.”

“Have you not heard of Christian rock?” Garrett grimaced, then smiled at Jericho.

“You know back in the day that meant pummeling sinners to death. I guess it’s like that Bob Dylan song.”

“Which one?” Now it was Garrett’s turn to be shocked. “Are you telling me you haven’t heard ‘The Times They Are A Changing’?” Jericho thought for a quick second then shook his head.

“Nope.” Before Garrett could say anything else the bus pulled up alongside the shelter. After paying the bus fare and finding seats in the rear of the bus, they started to pick the next contestant. Garrett nudged his competitor and pointed to a chubby older bald man sitting alone in the third row from the front. Jericho eyed the man then shook his head.

“You know I never pick bald men, I never win.” Garrett smiled and went back to eyeing the riders.

Time dragged on as angel and demon went back and forth through the seats of people. After several arguments, Garrett finally spoke out,

“You know the rules; you have to pick someone before they all leave and the transfer center is getting close.”

“I do not like any of them.”

“But you still have to make a decision.” Jericho winced, taking another glance around the bus before finally settling on the third row.

“I guess I will pick the bald guy after all.”

When the bus pulled into the transfer center, Garrett and Jericho followed everyone off. They followed the overweight bald man to bus number 4 which would take them to the south side of the city. The bald man was startled when Jericho and Garrett came from nowhere to stand on either side of him. Jericho smiled at the man, showcasing his

full set of gleaming pearly whites, and stuck out his hand.

“Pleased to make your acquaintance, allow me to introduce myself. I am Jericho and this is my compatriot Garrett. Don’t mind his appearance, he’s just a sly devil is all.” Jericho laughed at his inside joke, but then noticed that neither the bald man nor Garrett shared in his joke. The bald man looked from Jericho to Garrett then back to Jericho and shook hands with the angel.

“The names Bob Robertson.” Garrett tapped Bob on the shoulder, which led to Bob turning to look at the demon.

“Yes?” Bob said with no curiosity.

Bob wasn’t really that interested with this encounter. He’d seen a lot of strange things riding local transportation in his day so when two strange men with even stranger appearances came up to him and asked him his name, it wasn’t that interesting. They probably just wanted to rob him. Good luck with that, Bob mused to himself as he waited for the other guy to respond. It wasn’t that Bob was a karate master or anything; he just didn’t have a dollar to his name. In fact, if one was to inspect the contents of Bob’s pockets and wallets one would find these following items: three quarters, a 10 cent Euro, his drivers license, a few paperclips, a maxed out credit card, a black ink pen, and four pennies that managed to hide in the inner lining of his wallet.

Garrett raised an eyebrow and asked, “Your name. Is it short for Robert?” Bob, knowing where this line of question was eventually heading, rolled his eyes and nodded. Garrett jumped up and down whooping laughter loud enough for the whole station to hear, his trench coat flowing in the air like crippled angelic wings. Jericho sighed at the sight and followed Bob in rolling his eyes. Garrett stopped to catch his breath before continuing even though his kind didn’t need to breathe. It was an unhealthy habit that was caused of being around humans for so long. Garrett had also formed an appetite causing him great humiliation when he went to Hell for holidays and special events. His fellow Hell bound brethren will never let him live down the time when Garrett asked Satan if there would be a buffet following the motivational conference.

“So your full name is Robert Robertson? Man, your parents must have had a sick sense of humor. Sounds like my kind of people.”

“Garrett, can we please proceed? You are being rather rude to Bob.”

Jericho gave his demonic friend a stern look. Garrett sobered up and patted Bob on the shoulder. "My friend is right yet again. Pardon my rudeness, allow me to pay for your bus fare." Bob showed Garrett his transfer ticket.

"Thanks, but I've already paid for it."

Garrett ripped the ticket from Bob's hand and shredded it into bits, the pieces scattering along the pavement like confetti during a parade only less colorful. Bob stared down at the ground watching the pieces of the ticket he had spent his last dollar on fluttering in the wind. The number twelve bus ran through the confetti scattering the remnants every which way. If the world wasn't so noisy, one might've heard the tiny screams of the ticket pieces as the bus crushed through their numbers.

"Those poor little things." Jericho said as they watched the people in front of them board the bus. Bob looked over his shoulder at him questioningly and Garrett just chuckled as they stepped up into the bus.

"This is for myself and for Robert Robertson behind me."

Garrett inserted eight dull worn quarters that had seen better days. They had seen better days in fact. They were minted at the Philadelphia Mint in 1969. Fresh from the Mint, they traveled their way down to Texas where they resided in the pocket of a troubled young man who sat in a window at a schoolbook repository building. After the man had done his deadly deed and was arrested, they were taken by a policeman where they sat in a jar for thirty years when his grandson found them while going through the old mans house. Coincidentally, they were found at approximately 11:59pm on December 31, 1999. Five years later, the grandson met Garrett and Jericho. Garrett was sad to see these quarters leave his possession, but everything has a journey and sometimes you just have to allow them to get along with their adventure.

Bob, whose personal journey was quickly coming to an important crossroad, sat down on the seat closet to the middle of the bus leaving an empty seat on the other side. Garrett had already taken the seat behind Bob while Jericho sat across the aisle from the two. No one tried to make conversation. It wasn't because there was nothing to say, quite the opposite in fact. Perhaps it was the gravity of the upcoming event that was keeping their lips shut.

At exactly fifteen minutes into the second half of the bus trip, Bob reached up with his meaty hand and pulled hard on the cord. The words Request Stop were highlighted in bright red. The bus driver almost instantly began to slow down and pull up to the side of the road, opening up the doors with a silent electric hiss. Bob stood and walked to the front of the bus without any kind of acknowledgement that he had even met the two strange individuals that had paid his fare.

If he had, he would have noticed that Jericho and Garrett had also stood and followed Bob off the bus. Oddly enough Bob didn't even notice that the two were following him just ten feet behind him.

"He must be off in his own world." Commented Jericho quietly, afraid to alert Bob to their presence.

"Isn't that what they say about your boss?"

Smiling at his pun, Garrett placed both his hands behind his head and stretched. The trench coat fluttered in the wind again. Jericho lightly pushed his accomplice. Garrett struggled to maintain balance, but eventually got back control. He retaliated by shoving all his weight into Jericho. The angel fell over, no pun intended, but didn't seek to maintain any kind of balance. Instead he simply floated in mid air. Garrett scoffed at this gravity defying display and continued to follow Bob. Eventually Jericho caught up with him.

"Why do you bother to maintain the charade of being human?" Jericho asked to which Garrett shrugged. "Guess I've just adapted to their mannerisms. What's so wrong about that?"

"Careful or you might just turn into one and one day you'll be the one I pick. Or the one that your replacement picks." Garrett waved this off. "That's just an old fairy tale. You can't seriously believe that by adapting to their mannerisms and way of life means that I'm going to become one of them."

Jericho didn't bother to argue with his demonic pal any further. He didn't feel the need to remind Garrett that demons and humans were already pretty compatible, with their sins and vices. It was like comparing apes and humans. You can see the similarities, but you know they're different. Although on more than one occasion, Jericho had caught Garrett looking through his hair for bugs.

Garrett tugged on Jericho's white shirt bringing Jericho back to the world. Jericho saw that Bob was currently staring at them. He wasn't wearing that indifferent look he had been wearing at the bus

stop. Now it was a befuddled type of look that scrunched his face up to the point that Jericho knew there were eyes on Bob's face, but he just couldn't see them.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Garrett stepped forward.

"We're actually on Earth. It's your choice if you'll be in Heaven or Hell."

Bob took that as a threat and turned towards his home. Before Garrett could say anything else, Bob bolted.

"You just had to say that." Jericho started walking at a quick pace. Garrett easily caught up with him. "What are you worried about? It's not like he can get too far. Plus, we can just teleport into his house."

"Oh, now you want to be an ethereal entity?"

"Shut up."

The pair caught up with Bob just as he opened the door to his two-story house. Garrett managed to get his foot in the door before Bob could completely shut it. The two stood there at the entrance.

"Excuse me, Mr. Robertson. Could we come in?"

Jericho sweetly said. From behind the door, the nervous timber of a defenseless man rang out.

"No! Go away or I'll call the cops!"

Garrett shook his head. Jericho looked at him curiously. "What's the matter?"

"I was hoping he would say 'not by the hair of my chinny chin chin'. They never say that. Over two thousand years and not once have I heard that. He even looks like a pig. It would have been perfect."

"I don't look like a pig!"

"Shut up Robby and let us in!" Garrett was given a reproachful glare by his angelic partner and tried making amends. "Mr. Robertson, Bob if I may, we do not mean any violence towards you. We would just like to talk."

Silence from the other door, Garrett found that he was holding his breathe anxiously and released it immediately hoping that Jericho hadn't noticed. Jericho had, but there wasn't any point in getting into that old argument.

"I guess so, the door's open anyway." Garrett looked at Jericho who only nodded. Garrett pushed the door open and walked into the house followed closely by Jericho.

"Where'd you go, Robby?" Garrett asked to the empty living room where they now stood. "It's Bob and I'm in here." His voice was not so nervous this time, Jericho noticed as they followed it into the bedroom.

As soon as Garrett entered Bob's bedroom, a shotgun blast erupted, hundreds of tiny pellets embedded themselves into Garrett's abdomen, knocking him back into Jericho. Stunned silence prevailed as two things happened simultaneously. The first thing being that Garrett was coming to terms that he had just been shot, which was a good thing because if he had actually been converted into a human he'd be as dead as the pieces of bus pass that had been ran down by the bus. The second thing was that Bob was coming to grip with the fact that he had just shot someone and that person was still standing in front of him.

"You shot me!" Garrett yelled.

"You're alive!" Bob yelled.

"You are both morons." Jericho quietly stated.

"But how can you still be alive?"

Bob raised the shotgun, but Jericho raised his hand and swiped it in the air. The weapon flew to the ground. It didn't go off, something that 80's cinema portrayed falsely, but just hit the ground and rested comfortably on the shag. Jericho calmly extended the hand in a soothing gesture.

"Bob, let us say our peace and we'll leave." Garrett sat down on the bed and fixated on his shirt. He couldn't stop inserting his fingers into all the little holes the pellets had made. "Garrett, would you please pay attention?"

"Sorry. Ha, my shirt is like you are...holy."

The pun fell on deaf ears as Bob sat down on the bed.

"What did you want to tell me?" Garrett looked at Jericho.

"I guess we're getting to the final round of this game, eh?"

Jericho looked solemnly back at him.

"I suppose we are now. Tell me Bob, what do you think we are?"

Jericho watched Bob think.

"We'll, you guys appear out of nowhere, rip my bus ticket up then insist on paying my way home only to stalk me and then you break in and refuse to die when I shoot you with a shotgun. My best guess is that you're some new genetically engineered perverts." Garrett smiled and nodded,

“Yup, because that makes sense.”

Jericho ignored the comment, “Garrett here is a demon and I’m an Angel.” Garrett interrupted Jericho, “What gives?”

“What do you mean?”

“When you just introduced us, what are you implying?” Jericho looked at Garrett puzzled.

“What?” Bob looked from one to the other, nothing was making any sense to him.

Garrett persisted, “When you introduced us just now, you capitalized your title, but not mine. Why?” Jericho looked at him like he was crazy, something that isn’t possible with ethereal creatures, except for Santa Claus. He’s bonkers. “What are you talking about?”

Garrett shrugged, “I don’t know. We should get on with it or else the creator will run out of words.”

“The creator? You mean God?” Bob stood from the bed and took a few steps from the arguing pair. “I’m going to use the bathroom. Don’t mind me.” They didn’t.

Garrett stood and spread out his arms, “Not God silly. The creator, little c not big C.” Jericho was confused before, but now he was lost.

“Garrett, you’re not making any sense.”

Garrett laughed and shrugged again, “Oh, Jericho, I can’t believe no one has informed you about the creator. He’s the only reason that we’re here talking. He made us angels and Demons.”

“You mean God.” To Jericho’s frustration, Garrett shook his head.

“I mean the Author. God created everything, just as he created the Author. It is the Author who created you and I. It’s a shame that we’ll never figure out who broke the tie.”

Giving up, Jericho replied, “And why is that?”

Garrett smiled, “Because he wanted to save two words.”

The End