



Sensors
C. Diff

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Table of Contents

	Page
Winnebago Wendigo Wins The Winnipeg Wicked	1
Welcome to Cuba, Comrade Kissenger	3
Cultural Imperialism	5
The Eggplant	7

Winnebago Wendigo Wins The Winnipeg Wicked

by

Robin Wyatt Dunn

It was an imperfectly egalitarian, but still a thrilling, competition. The Wendigo roared over the frozen plains in its streamlined road-ship, screaming its unholy cry into the bright air, trailing Yeti in his Yolomobile, painted a bright and frightening yellow, with Yeti's lucky human ear hanging from the antenna.

It must be said that it was not, strictly speaking, an auto competition, because the victors of the Winnipeg Wicked were invariably those supernatural creatures able to bend space and time to their will, as well as handle the wheel like a boss.

Wendigo snarled again and floored the gas, and reached with his mind into the engine, to tinker with its torque. He was gaining on Yeti.

But Stiff-Legged Bear was coming up from behind on his ghastly Space Skateboard, venting its green noxious fumes into the ice, and moaning his unearthly delight as he slammed right into Wendigo's chrome-plated bumper, scratching its lovingly polished finery. Wendigo let out a roar!

Fight! Fight on the track at 150 mph!

The humans in their weakness screamed plaintively at the sidelines, some drunk on the evil energy of the race, some crying but unable to leave. They HAD to watch this race. Or face the spiritual consequences of 12,000 years of Mankind's Rape of the Continent. It was a small price to pay, really. Watch an auto race once a year, while maintaining nominal rule over the land . . .

Stiff-Legged Bear activated the vertical accelerator on his board, with one stiff leg! Zoom, onto the top of Wendigo's Winnebago! Wendigo snarled. He could not believe it! Someone had to have SOLD Stiff-Legged Bear illegal off-planet goods! Well, he would get his revenge. On the track!

Swerving mightily from side to side, Wendigo still could not dislodge his ursine attacker, who was now turning the ghastly jets on the Winnebago's roof, and burning his way in. Wendigo slithered one of his grey, horrifying arms out the window, leaving only six on the wheel, and tried to jab out one

of Bear's eyes, but settled for scarring his cheek. Bear flesh began to cook at the touch of Wendigo, and the skateboard, momentarily out of alignment, shot off on its own, leaving Bear motorless and still clinging to the roof. Wendigo smiled.

But Yeti was pulling too far ahead! Only one mile left to go!

Grimly calculating the odds in his noxious and proximately immortal brain, Wendigo activated the roof clamps for just this eventuality. Huge bars shot out of the sides of the Winnebago, and pinned Stiff-Legged Bear to the roof. They were going to have to go over the finish line together.

Yeti yodeled up ahead; he was mocking them now. Tempting fate.

Afterwards, many witnesses claimed to have fallen asleep at the crucial final moment; most likely they did not want to state what their eyes had seen. Who would? It is unnatural to feel the Earth move in its opposite direction.

Creatures of Earth (and Yeti is one of us) have a naturally deep and profound bond with this our homeworld, having evolved on its steady rotation. To feel that rotation SHIFT in one moment . . . it is more than most can bear. Even I, who have done quite a few mind-altering drugs in my short and rich life, cannot claim to have completely recovered from the experience.

Yeti crashed! His Yolomobile burst into flames, and the few standers-by who were still conscious, our jaws hanging open, then saw Yeti crawl out mostly unscathed, screaming his rage at the finish line as Wendigo and his Winnebago roared over the finish, with Stiff-Legged Bear clinging to the roof.

Not many know of this competition. But in its fate, is the fate of Earth. Let us have a moment of silence for Wendigo and his Winnebago who won the Winnipeg Wicked.

He totally, awesomely, destroys! Under the wheels of Wendigo and Winnebago, we are reborn!
(He paid me to type that)

Robin's website is at www.robindunn.com.

Welcome to Cuba, Comrade Kissenger

by

Gary Ives

“Wake up señor. Es no good you sleep in the playa. Es ver’ cold? Please.”

The dazed former American Secretary of State opened his eyes His head throbbed and without his glasses his focus was poor. My God he wondered; what has happened? Where am I? His \$2500 Armani suit was thoroughly drenched, ruined. Some sonofabitch was going to pay for this. How in the hell had he got onto this, this beach? Where was his flunky, that asshole Martinez?

“From the sea, señor, perhaps you fall into the sea? This man bring you here in his boat.”

The two solicitous old men, the fisherman and the taxi driver leaned over him offering their hands. Standing was difficult but the old men kindly supported the woozy old diplomat. Where was his aide? His glasses? Where was that shit Martinez? He better have packed an extra suit.

“This man señor, he bring you from the sea. He want to know you can give him one dollar, yes? Can you please to give him one dollar; he wan’ to know?”

“Where am I? Is this Colombia? You must take me to the American Embassy. I am a diplomat. Do you understand ‘diplomat?’ The American Embassy will pay you and this man. Is that your taxi? Please get me to the embassy. Now, I have an important speech to deliver in Bogota.”

“Señor, we don’ got no embassy here. You are no in Colombia, señor. This place Isla de la Juventud. We help you get in my taxi. You can give this man one dollar, please?”

Into the back seat of the 1953 Chevy Bel Air the old men gently guided the dizzy man who had fallen from the sky. Still woozy, Dr. Kissenger stretched out minus his \$800 pair of Gucci shoes which

the old fisherman now had in lieu of the dollar requested for having fished out of the sea this fat gringo who had no courtesy. “Driver, do you have a mayor? Take me to your mayor. Let’s go, I need to contact our embassy.”

“ El Mayor? Por supuesto, si señor I know where is the mayor, el commandante. I take you. Is you American, señor? My son he live in Miami. You know Miami, señor?” However this passenger had fallen asleep.

Before arriving at the gate of the cuartel at the military prison the taxi driver gently removed the Rolex from the sleeping fat man in lieu of his fare. His jacket and the pants contained neither wallet nor passport as Dr. Kissenger’s aide, Roberto Martinez had stolen both before dropping his drugged boss from the private plane shortly after takeoff from Miami International. Martinez’s contacts at Occupy Wall Street would pay extra for the bad man’s documents.

After the taxista had signed his statement the teniente had him sign a receipt for the customary twenty Pesos reward with a sincere “Gracias, comrade”. Capture of a yanqui spy happened only infrequently nowadays. However spies from the north still attempted to infiltrate the country by many clever and devious means. El Lider often closed his speeches with warnings of just such occurrences. The slogans “Death to Spies!” and “Be Vigilant! Appeared on walls and billboards all over the island.” He was proud to serve his country and The Revolution. “Viva la Revolucion! Viva El Lider! Viva Cuba!”

At the military prison Commandante Ramirez addressed his newest prisoner. “Welcome to Cuba, Comrade Kissenger. We’ve been expecting you.”

Gary Ives lives in the Ozarks where he grows apples and writes. He is a Pushcart Prize nominee for his story "Can You Come Here for Christmas." His website is at <http://garyives.wordpress.com/>.

Cultural Imperialism

by

Jon Wesick

“Star Captain Rock Treadwell stared at the wreckage of the Gallusian battle cruiser on the monitor before checking his ship’s status. Dozens had died due to explosive decompression on deck alpha and the port laser banks were offline but the starship SS Reliant had survived to fight again. She would fight again.” I closed the cover of my novel and looked at the dozen or so listeners gathered in the bookstore lobby.

The applause was polite but not enthusiastic. I glanced from face to face, from the woman with wire-rimmed glasses to the guy with shoulder-length hair looking for some sympathy, some indication that they would actually buy my novel and that my decision to spend my five-thousand-dollar advance on this book tour was not in vain.

“Thank you, Bret.” The bearded store owner in a fleece vest shook my hand and then addressed the audience. “We have Bret’s novel *Treachery at Gallusia* on sale. I’m sure he’d be happy to sign your copy after a question and answer. Does anyone have anything they’d like to ask the author?”

“How come there are no blacks or Latinos?” someone asked.

“Oh well.” I paged through the book. “It wasn’t in the section I read but after the Third Genetic Congress the entire human race’s skin tone was changed to the color of milk chocolate and the world government adopted Esperanto as the universal language.”

“So you had the government essentially commit genocide so you wouldn’t have to write about people of other races? “

“I.I.”

“Why are there no strong, female role models?”

“Again it wasn’t in the section I read but Star Captain Treadwell’s superior is Galactic Admiral Stacy Walker. If sales of this book go well, I’m going to write a prequel about how she lost her arm putting down the robot rebellion on Epsilon Eridani IV.” I looked out at the crowd. “Anyone else?”

Twelve tentacles each curled into something resembling a 1960s clenched, power fist rose from the back row and a creature who resembled a cross between a push broom and a pile of limp spaghetti got to its feet.

“Your depiction of Gallusians is full of racist stereotypes,” the creature said in a voice that sounded like an alley cat caught in a garbage disposal. “Eating human women, destroying planets with C bombs, and torturing captives for the sheer pleasure of it are parodies handed down by cultural imperialists. I find them highly offensive!”

“Yeah!” someone yelled. “Only a Gallusian can write about Gallusians!”

While I pondered how to both include characters who weren’t white men while simultaneously not writing about them, the audience, money in hand, swarmed the Gallusian who brandished copies of his novel *Me Eat Humans* in his tentacles. I packed up my books; snuck out of the store; and hoped there would be no Martians, Jovian Gas People, or Centauri Moth Women in Tucson.

Jon is host of San Diego’s Gelato Poetry Series and editor of the San Diego Poetry Annual. He has had over seventy short stories published in journals such as The Berkeley Fiction Review, Space and Time, Zahir, and Tales of the Talisman. His poetry has been published in journals such as the Atlanta Review, Pearl, and Slipstream. He has a Ph.D. in physics and is a longtime student of Buddhism and the martial arts. One of his poems won second place in the 2007 African American Writers and Artists contest.

The Eggplant

by

Eric Suhem

On the flight, the stewardess moved down the aisle with a cart of refreshments. She eyed the passenger in seat 17A warily, as it was an eggplant. The eggplant was securely fastened with a seatbelt. “Why did you put an eggplant in seat 17A?” the stewardess asked the passenger in seat 17B.

“I have no idea why this eggplant is here, can you move me to another seat?” the passenger asked the stewardess, feeling uncomfortable as the eggplant nuzzled its purple skin against the blue synthetic fabric of the airplane seat.

“I’m sorry, but the flight is full,” said the stewardess, who was soon on the phone to the flight reservations desk, asking about the name of the passenger in seat 17A. “It just says ‘Eggplant,’” said the reservations person, looking at a computer screen. “But the seat is paid for.”

Accepting the situation, the stewardess asked the eggplant what it would like from the refreshment cart. The eggplant made no response or movement when the stewardess offered coffee or tea. When the stewardess asked the eggplant if it would like to be sprayed with a water bottle, it bounced up and down within the confines of the seatbelt, so she gave it a few spritzes.

As the flight progressed, the passenger in 17B decided that the eggplant was a good listener, and proceeded to regale it with a full account of the events that had led to her divorce, replete with a full description of her ex-husband’s infidelities. The eggplant fulfilled a role as a competent sounding board.

A man walked by, and told the eggplant that it reminded him of some of his finest experiences around the globe. “In France, I had a marvelous ratatouille with eggplant and zucchini in a Paris café near the Seine. In India, I dined on a sumptuous eggplant curry at a beautiful restaurant. In Italy, an eggplant was prominent in my transcendent parmigiana di melanzane near the golden hills of Tuscany.”

The woman in seat 17B grew impatient listening to the man go on and on about his travel adventures, feeling that the man was dominating the eggplant’s listening time. She had more to say

about her divorce, leaning over to whisper to the eggplant, “I’d like to talk with you some more about this when you get a chance.”

At the conclusion of the flight, the woman in 17B and the global trekker both asked the eggplant whether it had a connecting flight. The eggplant remained noncommittal. When the man reached into seat 17A to grab the eggplant, the woman in 17B hit him with an inflight magazine. As the flight crew stepped in to lead the man and woman off the plane, the eggplant rolled down the aisle and out the exit as well, but not before the stewardess cut off a large chunk of its purple fruit, to be inserted into lunch sandwiches for the next flight. During meal service, she would say that the sandwiches were in honor of one of her favorite passengers.

